

Eastern Illinois University

## The Keep

---

Masters Theses

Student Theses & Publications

---

Summer 2022

# Hybrid Learning and Standards Based Grading: Fostering Writing Instruction During a Pandemic

Elizabeth Dietz

*Eastern Illinois University*

Follow this and additional works at: <https://thekeep.eiu.edu/theses>



Part of the [Curriculum and Instruction Commons](#), and the [Secondary Education Commons](#)

---

### Recommended Citation

Dietz, Elizabeth, "Hybrid Learning and Standards Based Grading: Fostering Writing Instruction During a Pandemic" (2022). *Masters Theses*. 4959.

<https://thekeep.eiu.edu/theses/4959>

This Dissertation/Thesis is brought to you for free and open access by the Student Theses & Publications at The Keep. It has been accepted for inclusion in Masters Theses by an authorized administrator of The Keep. For more information, please contact [tabruns@eiu.edu](mailto:tabruns@eiu.edu).

## **ABSTRACT**

Hybrid learning is steadily growing in popularity and is showing to be an effective learning modality to accommodate diverse student populations through the incorporation of digital and online teaching resources. While the pandemic certainly expedited the implementation of online and hybrid learning at the K-12 level, these models have been a topic of exploration for years pre-pandemic. The pandemic is an unexpected outlier in the overall picture of hybrid learning, and it is helpful for educators to reflect upon best academic practices, including grading methods, during this transitional time to help mitigate loss of learning and to continue to make improvements in pedagogical practices. This thesis explores the relationship between the hybrid learning model and evaluation, specifically Standards Based Grading (SBG), and how this combination of methods influences best writing practices. Today's learners belong to a generation coexisting with technology, and hybrid learning shifts the traditional teacher-led mode of instruction to a collaborative and self-paced experience. Similarly, SBG is an overhaul of how grades are reported, separating behavior from content knowledge. Using reflections gathered from teacher surveys via a case study conducted at Rantoul Township High School in Rantoul, IL, it appears the hybrid learning model has increased the amount of real-time feedback given to students through means of conferencing both in-person and virtually. Additionally, hybrid learning, paired with smaller class sizes, appears to have positively influenced student motivation and confidence in writing. Collaboration in online and remote settings requires trust among the learning community as well as student-centered evaluation. Potential concerns that need addressed are that students are not adapting to the remote aspects of hybrid learning that require self-paced learning. Teachers have found modeling writing processes to be a challenge when instruction is not in-person. Further, there is a natural resistance to change regarding

evaluation practices that is then amplified when SBG is not consistently implemented among educators. The results of this case study find that hybrid learning and SBG can be an advantageous pairing. This study does not conclude that each one necessarily influences the other because that was not the focus of the research. However, SBG does influence digital writing instruction and can be a powerful blend. This research study suggests that restructuring seat time and evaluating the frequency of evaluation are practices to better support the implementation of hybrid learning. Additionally, this study suggests that when allotted smaller class sizes, students receive more differentiated writing tasks and individualized feedback through the hybrid model.

## **DEDICATION**

To my mother, the one who instilled in me an appreciation for education. She is a continuous learner and has nurtured a work-ethic that I will always carry. What started as reading Harry Potter books together before bed as a child, transformed into proofreading my graduate assignments as an adult. She is my biggest supporter and has been there for me every step of the way. My mother, Debbi Dietz, is the smartest and strongest woman that I know.

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

To my knowledgeable thesis committee members, thank you for your encouragement and feedback throughout all stages of this project. To my thesis chair, Dr. Tim Taylor, your knowledge of writing pedagogy encourages me to be mindful in my teaching practices. You inspire me to not become a stagnant educator just skimming by, but to always be reflective of the changing practices of writing instruction. I would not have completed this thesis if it were not for your extreme patience, lively feedback, and willingness to stick with me and this project. Thank you for your time and for mentoring me. To my committee member, Dr. Robin Murray, your passion for the environment, education, writing, and merging all these interests together have made my graduate experience full of life. I cherish my experience with the Eastern Illinois Writing Project and thank you for helping me become a better educator and writer. To my committee member, Dr. Melissa Ames, thank you for guiding me with your deep knowledge of teaching pedagogy and helping me craft better quality survey questions. Your passion for teaching is contagious and I am thankful to have learned from you.

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

|   |     |
|---|-----|
| Abstract.....   | i   |
| Dedication.....   | iii |
| Acknowledgments.....                                    | iii |
| Table of Contents.....                                  | iv  |
| List of Tables.....                                     | vii |
| Chapter   |     |
| 1. INTRODCUTION.....                                    | 1   |
| Background.....   | 1   |
| Significance of the Case Study.....                     | 15  |
| Statement of the Problem.....                           | 16  |
| Research Objectives and Questions.....                  | 17  |
| Limitations of the Case Study.....                      | 19  |
| Terminology and Definitions.....                        | 22  |
| 2. LITERATURE REVIEW.....                               | 26  |
| Introduction.....                                       | 26  |
| 2.1 Evaluation  |     |
| Evaluation and the Role of the Teacher.....             | 26  |
| Defining Purpose of Evaluation.....                     | 28  |
| Implementing Standards Based Grading.....               | 29  |
| Frequency of Evaluation and Alignment of Standards..... | 33  |
| 2.2 Hybrid Learning                                     |     |
| Secondary Education and Hybrid Learning.....            | 35  |

|   |    |
|---|----|
| Critical Considerations with the Hybrid Learning.....               | 36 |
| Evaluation Practices for Online Learning.....                       | 37 |
| 2.3 Writing Practices   |    |
| Early Writing Models in the Age of Hybrid Learning.....             | 38 |
| Process Writing in a Hybrid Model.....                              | 41 |
| Conferencing and Collaborating: Recursive Writing Strategies.....   | 42 |
| Best Online Composition Practices.....                              | 44 |
| 3. METHODOLOGY.....   | 47 |
| Formulating a Plan of Action.....                                   | 47 |
| Remote Learning at RTHS.....  | 48 |
| Hybrid and Blended Learning at RTHS.....                            | 50 |
| Design of Case Study and Rationale.....                             | 50 |
| Participants.....   | 54 |
| Case Study Objectives.....  | 55 |
| Technology, Vulnerable Students, Remote Learning: Two Surveys.....  | 57 |
| 4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION.....                                      | 59 |
| Overview of Data.....   | 59 |
| Instructional Methods Synopsis.....                                 | 60 |
| Student Engagement Synopsis.....                                    | 72 |
| Evaluation Synopsis.....  | 80 |
| 5. CONCLUSIONS.....   | 86 |
| Overview.....   | 86 |
| Learning Loss and Restructuring Instructional Time Conclusions..... | 89 |

|  |     |
|--|-----|
| Technology and Equitable Teaching Conclusions.....     | 90  |
| Standards Based Grading Conclusions.....               | 92  |
| Writing Instruction in a Hybrid Model Conclusions..... | 95  |
| Moving Beyond COVID-19 and Future Considerations.....  | 97  |
| Appendix.....  | 99  |
| Works Cited.....                                       | 106 |

## LIST OF TABLES

### Table

|   |    |
|---|----|
| 1. Traditional Grading System vs. Standards-Based Grading System..... | 11 |
| 2. Two Mindsets.....  | 14 |
| 3. Abbreviations Used Throughout Thesis.....                          | 25 |
| 4. Standards Based Grading Rubric Example.....                        | 31 |
| 5. Remote Learning: Apex Courses Passed Data.....                     | 50 |
| 6. Number of Participants by Department.....                          | 55 |
| 7. Survey Questions.....  | 59 |
| 8. Chunking as a Writing Strategy Example.....                        | 68 |
| 9. Grading Method Used by Study Participants.....                     | 80 |
| 10. Strengths Versus Concerns of Standards Based Grading.....         | 83 |

## **CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION**

### **Background**

An unfamiliar strain of coronavirus, COVID-19, hit the United States like a tidal wave during the early months of 2020. Schools transitioned to remote learning out of necessity during the wake of a national shutdown. According to the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), more than 1.5 billion students, or 91.3 percent of global enrollments, were directly affected by school closures at the height of the COVID-19 outbreak in April 2020. With little time to prepare for distance learning, school administrators, teachers, and parents scrambled to meet educational needs through remote instruction. Fortunately, improvements in technologies are continuously emerging, and K-12 education took full advantage of such developments to provide greater access while engaging with students in a dynamic learning experience. The pandemic accelerated the need for modalities such as blended, online, and hybrid learning at the K-12 level. However, non-traditional learning models were a topic of exploration for several years pre-pandemic. K-12 classrooms and especially higher education were offering full online and hybrid learning options prior to the 2020 shutdown. Before considering the potential of what hybrid learning can offer when moving forward in education, one must understand how the model was facilitated pre-pandemic.

The pandemic is an unexpected event in the overall picture of hybrid learning, and educators must reflect upon best academic practices, including grading methods, during this transitional time to help mitigate loss of learning and to continue to make improvements in teaching practices. This thesis explores the relationship between the hybrid learning model and evaluation, specifically Standards Based Grading (SBG), and how this combination of methods can influence best writing practices.

Today's learners have unlimited access to information and are digital natives. Through continuous technological advances such as with laptops and smartphones, familiarity with technology expands beyond the classroom (Nava 1; Garrison and Vaughan 147). Students are skilled and want to interact with digital resources when it leads to a collaborative learning experience (Garrison and Vaughan 147). Blended learning offers such integrations by using online teaching tools in a traditional face-to-face (F2F) model. Using digital learning resources for the sake of exclusively implementing technology is not a best practice. However, using technology that supports and encourages learning is a routine that students seek during a digital age. Increased access to learning and more effective pedagogical practices are commonly cited reasons for blended learning because the technology supports individualized instruction and pace of learning. (Bonk and Graham 8). A hybrid learning model is enhanced blended learning in that it expands into distance learning, finding relevance in technologically enriched education.

The origins of distance learning paved the way for the hybrid learning model, and it is necessary to distinguish between distance, remote, and online learning terminology. Remote instruction is curriculum that was intended for F2F and then transitioned into an online format. In contrast, online instruction is created with the purpose of being used online. Distance learning is classified by geographical separation between the teacher and the learner; therefore, it umbrellas both remote instruction and the online portions of hybrid learning. Soren Nipper was the first to use a generational framework in relation to distance education. Nipper suggested three generations of distance education that "linked to production, distribution, and computer conferencing" (Anderson and Simpson 2; Sumner 271). Subsequently, these three generations are often labelled correspondence, broadcast, and computer mediated (Anderson and Simpson 2).

The distance learning model was first recorded in America in the late nineteenth century (Afshan and Ahmed 487; McIsaac and Gunawardena 2). Early means of distance learning took the form of “parcel post correspondence” where education was provided to nonresident students through the mail and was then returned when completed (Kentnor 23). In 1840, Sir Isaac Pitman developed the first ever correspondence course in Great Britain by mailing postcards to students and students then mailing completed assignments back to him (Kentnor 23). The University of Chicago established the earliest college correspondence program in America, offering full credit for successful completion and using the same standards as in-person learning. The extension division was established in 1892 and according to The University of Chicago “Breakthroughs: 1890s” information on the university website, “by 1895, students were attending courses at 54 extension centers (39 outside of Chicago).” Another notable correspondence education program called the “Society to Encourage Home Studies” was established in Boston, Massachusetts by Ana Eliot Ticknor in 1873 (Bergmann 447). Ticknor founded this society as a network of women teaching women through the mail. Prior to the correspondence innovation, an effective form of instruction was to bring students together in one place and one time to learn from one of the masters (McIsaac and Gunawardena 2). Early correspondence study was viewed as inferior education by critics. However, this design was envisioned to provide educational opportunities for those “not among the elite and who could not afford full-time residence at an educational institution” (McIsaac and Gunawardena 2). The motivation behind early distance learning was the need to provide equal access to educational opportunities.

The next generation of distance learning took hold as the development of the radio and television provided new delivery systems outside of a traditional classroom (McIsaac and Gunawardena 2). In 1956, a Chicago public television station partnered with the local Board of

Education and televised college courses for credit resulting in “over 15,000 students enrolling in 5 years” (Debter 1). Under the “Distributed Museum” information found on the University of Illinois website, “PLATO (Programmed Logic for Automated Teaching Operations) originated in the early 1960s as a distributed computer-based learning system at the University of Illinois and was the first generalized computer assisted instruction system.” By the late 1970s, PLATO was engaged with several thousand terminals worldwide and was a precursor to current online learning. Advancements in technology afforded more opportunities with distance learning during the electronics revolution of the 1980s. The introduction of broadband technologies allowed students to communicate with one another and their teachers through more interactive means. The “National Technological University established the first accredited "virtual" university with financial support from companies like IBM, Motorola and HP” (Debter 1).

Rapid growth of distance learning began in the late 1990s as a response to the advent of the use of personal computers with internet capabilities and thus made the transition from distance learning to online learning (Kentnor 28). In 1989 the University of Phoenix became the first institution to launch a fully online college institution that offered full degrees. The development of internet technologies influenced the number of universities adding online education to their curriculum (McIsaac and Gunawardena 3). In 2006, 89% of 4-year public colleges in the United States offered classes online, along with 60% of private institutions (Debter 1). According to the National Center for Education Statistics, 34.7 percent of college students were enrolled in at least one online course in 2018, compared to 33.1 percent in 2017. This shows an upward trend of online learning in higher education pre-pandemic and that similar trends were happening on the K-12 landscape.

Many early K-12 online learning programs evolved from correspondence schools or distance education programs. For example, the University of Nebraska High School offered correspondence courses in 1929, launched its first “Tele Learning courses” where students submitted work by email in 1985, and then offered full online classes in 2001 (Watson and Murin 1). Secondary education saw an increase in online course offerings during the early 2000s to expand course catalogs and better serve students seeking to recover credit. During this time, K-12 online presence ranged from providing fully online education options to schools offering supplemental online classes to students (Watson and Murin 1). Hybrid learning has an increasingly important existence in K-12 education and is rooted in the foundation of early distance and online learning. Hybrid learning has evolved from F2F models seeking to “provide students with flexibility and increase individualization” and from fully online schools that recognized a need to provide some students with F2F support (Watson and Murin 12). In many cases, the move to hybrid learning is an evolution with a foundation in educational technology, while in others it is a dramatic shift from entirely online or entirely F2F classrooms. Hybrid learning is not a new framework, and the pandemic has acted as an unexpected outlier in the overall development of hybrid learning by expediting the need for alternate methods of teaching for many. Educators that were predominantly teaching online or in the hybrid format, prior to the pandemic, were positioned for success during this trying time. However, teachers whose familiarity was with the traditional classroom rushed to adapt traditional lesson plans into formats more suitable for remote learning. These make-shift practices happened out of necessity during the pandemic and do not necessarily reflect the wide practices of hybrid learning since the objective is not to force F2F materials into a digital format. Like correspondence education,

hybrid learning risks becoming unexplored in the landscape of higher education without informed decision making early on that explores the nature of alternative modalities.

Hybrid models have an element of student control over time/pace/path/place that, in one or more ways, changes the instructional model away from teacher-to-students instruction and toward a personalized approach (Watson and Murin 13). Since hybrid learning relies on both F2F and online practices, there are educators that worry about the loss of physical seat time in this model (O'Byrne and Pytash 137). Seat time, or the amount of time spent in a classroom studying a particular subject, has traditionally been connected with measuring attendance. Critics advise that requiring a fixed amount of seat time is placing value on attendance over attainment of skills and suggest the following as alternative methods to track attendance: time on task (task can include engagement); participation; evidence of student work; and a competency-based attainment with demonstrations of building skills, competencies, and knowledge (Patrick and Chambers 1). Some educators worry a loss of physical seat time and in-person instructional minutes will negatively affect learning. The hybrid model was implemented as a temporary solution for many school districts during a traumatic time, and despite this situation, hybrid learning has the promise to enhance learning by allowing students to engage outside of the physical classroom.

A drawback of hybrid learning considers the equitable implementation of remote aspects for students and/or districts that lack access to technology (Chen et al. 1). High-speed internet, with the average internet speed more than twice that of the rest of the world, can be found in most U.S. regions ("U.S. Speeds Double Global Average"). Online learning is not uniform throughout the nation, especially in communities of color and rural areas, even with remarkable developments in internet speeds. While technology continues to improve online learning, the

advancements benefit students who have access to internet and devices. The Pew Research Center conducted a survey in 2018 where rural adults were asked about their internet accessibility. In the survey, 24% of rural adults say access to high-speed internet is a major problem in their local community and an additional 34% of rural residents see a minor problem, meaning that roughly 58% of rural residents believe access to high-speed internet is a problem in their area (Anderson 1). An additional study done by the Pew Research Center in 2015 reports that “roughly one-third of households with children ages 6 to 17 and whose annual income falls below \$30,000 a year do not have a high-speed internet connection at home, compared with just 6% of such households earning \$75,000 or more a year” (Anderson and Perrin 1). Internet disparities are particularly pronounced for Black and Latino households and those from lower-income households, creating a distinct disadvantage when it comes to education and technology (Anderson and Perrin 1). The disparity in access to high-speed internet and home devices creates a significant number of students, thus contributing to the digital divide present in hybrid learning. Advantageously, the pandemic has further highlighted disparities and may bring great opportunity to bridge the digital divide moving forward.

The success of hybrid learning depends, in part, on the paired evaluation strategies and whether both formative and summative evaluation authentically measures the intended outcomes of the curriculum. Educational researchers question if the traditional method of grading and reporting, widely being used in secondary schools, is an inferior system of evaluation compared to other models of reporting (O’Connor 2; Feldman 53). Joe Feldman adds that the history of the traditional grading system is rooted in inequitable practices:

In the early 20th century, as techniques of mass production reshaped the U.S. economy and families from rural areas and immigrants flooded to cities, the need

to educate large numbers of students led educators to apply the efficiencies of manufacturing to schools. So, just as manufacturing sought to increase production and maximize value, our schools were charged with sorting students into academic tracks that best reflected their supposedly fixed intellectual capacity and prepared them for their assumed life trajectories. (Feldman 53)

The traditional grading system, supported by the A-F scale, was used to justify unequal educational opportunities based on a student's race or class (Feldman 53). All students can meet challenging academic standards and teachers want classrooms "to interrupt the cycle of disparities that allows us to predict students' success based on their race, resources, and native language" (Feldman 53). Best pedagogical practices in promoting equity include implementing culturally responsive instructional strategies, teaching diverse authors, and expanding one's repertoire of assignments and evaluations to address the different ways students learn. Then, by continuing to use traditional grading methods, "we inadvertently perpetuate achievement and opportunity gaps, rewarding our most privileged students and punishing those who are not" (Feldman 54).

Thomas R. Guskey adds that prior to 1850, percentage grades were relatively unknown, and teachers instead reported learning progress orally to parents and students (1). As enrollment increased in the early 1900s, the shift to percentage grading was gradual. Few educators questioned this move since it seemed a "natural result of the increased demands on high school teachers, who now served growing numbers of students" (Guskey 2). In 1912, a study was conducted by two researchers, Daniel Starch and Edward C. Elliot. The study found that 142 high school English teachers in different schools assigned widely different percentage grades to two student papers. Scores assigned on the first paper ranged from 64-98, and scores assigned on

the second paper ranged from 50-97 (Guskey 2). One paper was given a failing mark by 15 percent of teachers and a score of over 90 by 12 percent of teachers (Guskey 2). Starch and Elliot determined that their results confirm the wide variation in percentage grading (454).

This conclusion is not surprising since teachers have varying criteria for evaluation. Further, the role a teacher plays in a student demonstrating mastery of writing was in question:

The pupil who wrote paper B, the poorer of the two, received from his teacher a mark 5 points above the passing grade, whereas twenty-two out of the hundred and forty-two teachers did not give a passing grade to the pupil. Therefore, it may be easily reasoned that the promotion or [delay] of a pupil depends to a considerable extent upon the subjective estimate of his teacher. (Starch and Elliot 454)

Some teachers were attentive to elements such as grammar, style, punctuation, whereas other teachers focused primarily on content and communication of message when assigning a grade.

This 1912 study was challenged by critics claiming that good writing is highly subjective in nature. However, the findings sparked discussion among educators and created a gradual move away from percentage grading to scales that had fewer and larger categories (Guskey 2).

Evaluating on a scale led to a greater consistency in grades, but percentage grading made a resurgence in the early 1990s, “when grading software and online grade books began to gain popularity among educators” (Guskey 2). The problem is that grading software programs are developed by technicians, rather than educators, and scales and percentages are incorporated to appeal to computer technicians. Guskey adds that like “monetary systems based on the dollar, percentages have 100 levels that are easy to divide into increments of halves, quarters, and tenths” (2). Percentages are easily calculated and the revival of percentage grading “appears to

come mainly from the increased use of technology and the partialities of computer technicians, not from the desire of educators for alternative grading scales or from research about better grading practices” (Guskey 2). Ken O’Connor and colleagues argue that instead of emphasizing mathematical precision and the accumulation of points, “a better system would produce grades that are fair, accurate, specific, and timely (FAST)”<sup>1</sup> (O’Connor et al. 67). In place of percentage, or traditional grading methods, K-12 schools are beginning to implement Standards Based Grading (SBG) as a system to communicate accurate achievement data to both students and families.

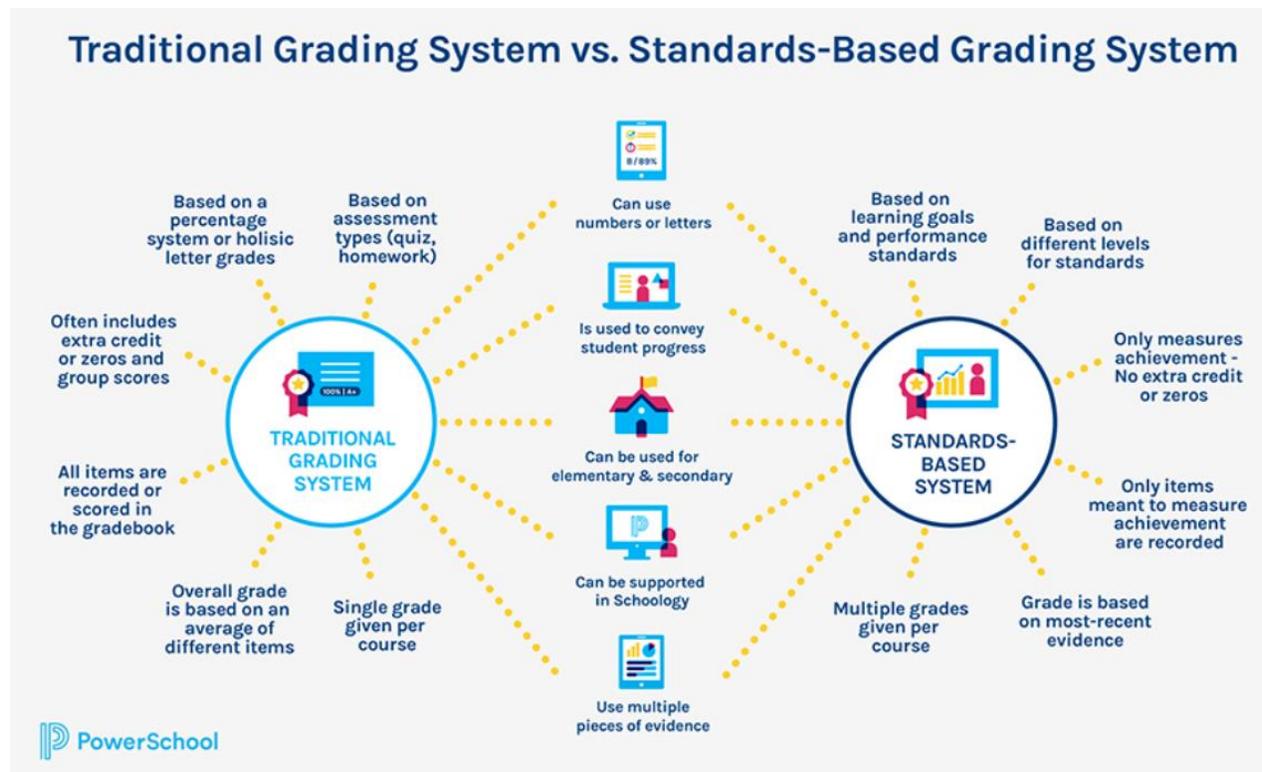
SBG provides a clearer justification of a students’ understanding of skills compared to a letter grade on a traditional grading system (Feldman 53). SBG differs from previous models in that students receive feedback in multiple learning targets opposed to a single percentage for a class. This type of reporting benefits students since purposeful evaluation should clearly convey achievement of learning goals and provide specific feedback on how to improve skills (O’Connor 2). Typically, skills will be assessed on a range of 0-4 in the SBG model and grades are calculated by using most-recent evidence. Unlike in traditional grading, old evidence of learning is not averaged with new evidence of learning. PowerSchool<sup>2</sup> created the graphic organizer below. This visual shows similarities, differences, and commonalities between the traditional grading system and the SBG system (see table 1).

---

<sup>1</sup> O’Connor et al. further explain the FAST acronym in the article, “Gearing up for FAST grading and reporting.”

<sup>2</sup> PowerSchool is a provider of cloud-based software for K-12 education in North America.

**Table 1: Traditional Grading System vs. Standards-Based Grading System**



Ideally, the hybrid learning model paired directly with SBG could nurture student success by separating non-academic factors and academic factors. A common difficulty encountered in online learning is administering accurate reporting of students' ability from afar. Teachers have varying criteria for evaluation of in-person work and this overlaps into online evaluation. Some teachers may want to report on if a student shows up to a Google Meet, and others might worry about whether students are submitting their own work, given the ease of online plagiarism (Saltzman 1). Standards applicable to online models are similarly applicable to hybrid course designs. However, because hybrid courses have fundamental differences, new standards are introduced to serve what teachers see as the critical needs of a blended course design (Stein and Graham 3). With SBG, students are measured on their proficiency of standards and the more

arbitrary elements of grading such as assigning a point value or deducting points for late completion are eliminated (Munoz and Guskey 64; Wormeli 19).

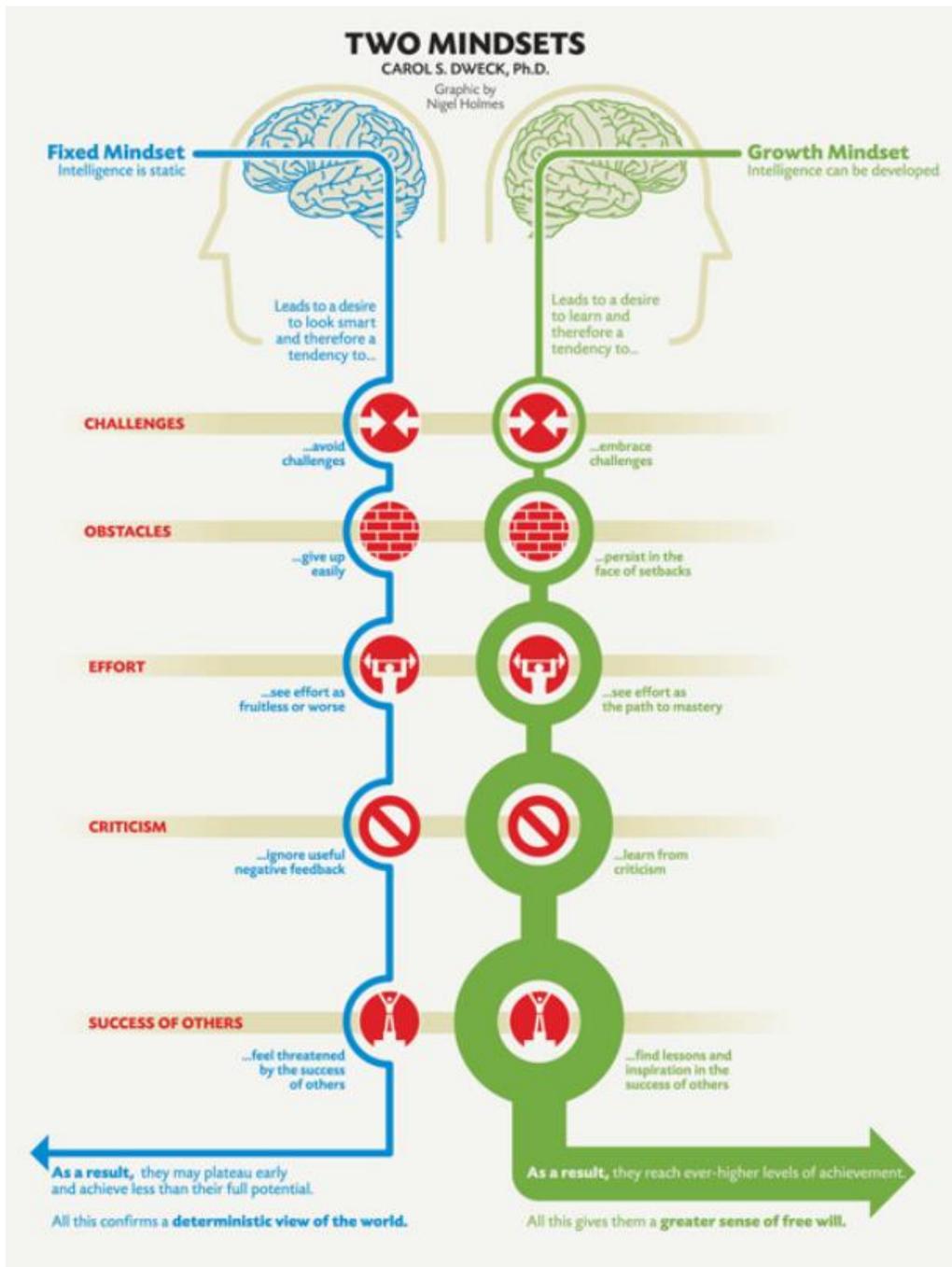
Traditional reporting combines all factors, both academic and non-academic, muddying what a student needs to practice next. A grade should be “an undiluted indicator of a student’s mastery of learning standards” and a grade is “not meant to be part of a reward, motivation, or behavioral contract system” (Wormeli 19; Vatterott 20). SBG distinguishes between students’ work habits (e.g. effort, participation, homework) and whether a student can do what a specific course standard describes. Non-academic behaviors such as punctuality and work ethic (such as attending a Google Meet) are still important and “merit their own reporting mechanism” since these skills are needed in both higher education and in a career (Townesley and Buckmiller 3). While important, communicating a single grade that has combined behavior with academics can make parents feel deceived by an inaccurate calculation. Cathy Vatterott elaborates with the example of a student compensating for low understanding of content and standards by maintaining perfect attendance, turning in assignments on time, and behaving in class. Similarly, she uses the example of a student understanding the content and standards but receiving a low grade because he or she is late to class, fails to turn in work on time, or has inappropriate behavior in class (43-44).

Central to writing instruction is that students practice writing and receive timely feedback on their efforts. Students must learn vital knowledge about writing: strategies, techniques, principles, but knowledge about writing contributes to writing skills only when accompanied by practice (Hesse 2). Writing is a skill developed significantly with learning by doing, much like developing a talent such as being able to shoot a free throw or practicing a complicated cheer routine. Writing instruction depends a great deal on student practice and instructors providing

formative feedback using a writing-process method counter to a lecture-based model. Traditional hybrid learning encourages a flipped classroom approach and forerunners such as Aaron Sams and Jonathan Bergmann describe, "In this model of instruction, students watch recorded lectures for homework and complete their assignments, labs, and tests in class" (Hertz 1). Many educators have approached writing instruction as "flipped" for decades, with class time involving relatively little lecture with a more active learning-based approach centered on students' writings (Hesse 2). Time in writing classes is best spent discussing strategies in example texts, peer reviews, and workshopping in addition to, time spent brainstorming, drafting, collaborating with peers, and practicing techniques with immediate feedback from the instructor (Hesse 2). The hybrid learning model allows for students to encounter writing principles and techniques via online resources and then use F2F instructional times as an opportunity to apply and practice the topics presented.

Confidence in writing ability is intertwined with practice, and whether students want to learn depends on if they believe that they can improve. Carol Dweck establishes a theory of two mindsets and explores how those who believe that abilities improve with practice (growth mindset) tend to show higher motivation than those who believe that abilities are unchangeable (fixed mindset). Dweck's theory of a fixed mindset versus a growth mindset is illustrated below (see table 2).

**Table 2: Two Mindsets**



A student’s mindset about whether their intelligence is fixed or can grow based on effort shapes how they learn (Patrick and Sturgis 5). A function of the hybrid model is to empower students in their own learning through an active learning-based approach. SBG has the potential to promote a growth mindset by allowing students to learn by doing through stages of writing. Similarly, a

factor of SBG and encouraging a growth mindset, regarding writing instruction, is to design classes where students can pace themselves and track their own progress towards mastery by using the SBG rubric (Saltzman 2). In traditional grading, rigor is evidenced by the amount of content a teacher can cover and the ability of a student to commit knowledge to memory. With the SBG model, rigor is defined by the quality, not quantity, of material covered and by “the complexity of tasks and the level of mastery of higher-level thinking skills that students can attain” (Vatterott 37-38). Additionally, mistakes become an inherent part of the learning process rather than an outcome and this further supports writing development (Patrick and Sturgis 5). The hybrid model then adopts SBG well by providing personalized evaluation and goals, and thus planting the potential for practices that lead to growth mindset development which is more effective in the long term (O’ Conner et al. 68).

### **Significance of the Case Study**

This case study explored how a secondary school grappled with implementing hybrid learning with SBG and examines how these models possibly affected the teaching of writing. A case study is a detailed examination of one setting, or a single subject, or one event. The goals of this case study were to observe possible connections between hybrid learning and SBG, and to examine how hybrid learning and SBG may influence best writing practices. By interviewing current educators and administrators from Rantoul Township High School in Rantoul, Illinois, this study is the culmination of research synthesis, literature review, personal observations, comments provided by colleagues, personal teaching reflections, and case study data collected from teacher surveys. This case study took a mixed-methods approach to exploring the reflections and experiences gathered from Rantoul Township High School—where I teach English 1, English 3, and AP Language and Composition— and presents a valuable first-hand

perspective on hybrid learning and SBG from educators that are currently using it in their classrooms.

RTHS has used SBG as a main form of evaluation for approximately six years, and instructors have gotten accustomed to this system. Hybrid Learning has been relatively unexplored in many K-12 environments, including RTHS, but the model is rooted in methods that have been implemented for decades such as online and blending learning. Drawing upon research and practices from online learning and best online evaluation methods will be necessary framework in observing the hybrid learning model in correlation to SBG. The rapid changes that were made as a proactive response during the 2020-2021 school year is an outlier in the overall view of what hybrid learning may provide to K-12 school.

The knowledge gained from current teachers and administration on what has worked and what is not working, in reference to SBG and hybrid learning, will help to inspire new ideas and will encourage informed practices moving forward. The purpose of this research was to reflect upon and suggest areas of improvement for instruction of online writing and by understanding the hybrid learning model. Educators can then implement stronger evaluation practices throughout the various stages of the writing process. Examining and improving understanding on the current shift occurring in secondary education, due in part to a pandemic, will further reveal the potential risks and benefits to implementing a hybrid learning model with the intent of using SBG as means of evaluation. Further, this case study may serve as references to other schools and educators looking to evaluate their own practices.

### **Statement of the Problem**

The hybrid learning model has the potential to transform learning experiences due to restructuring of rigid seat-time requirements by allowing students to receive and learn materials

through online technologies as well as in-person instruction. Hybrid learning encourages students to engage with information through both F2F instruction and online interactions—altering how students receive and learn information. This calls for a restructuring of the traditional lecture style teacher-to-student type of learning in place of a more interactive and personalized approaches (Watson and Murin 13). Since hybrid curriculum transfers much of the student-educator interaction to online and encourages collaboration both online and in-person, this may call for a restructuring of evaluation practices as well. Likewise, SBG is being implemented increasingly at the secondary level in place of a traditional points-based system, and there is little guidance on how to best use SBG in a hybrid model. Due to Covid-19 and the rapid need for alternative modalities, more courses were offered in either an online or hybrid format, and considering SBG in connection with these models is important since many schools have transitioned or are starting to implement SBG as their evaluation method. This study then seeks to further reveal if and how SBG, the hybrid model, and the learning technologies utilized for these modes of instruction, change or impact how educators approach writing instruction.

### **Research Objectives and Questions**

Many educators experienced hybrid learning for the first during the 2020-2021 school year and felt an overwhelming sense of being underprepared to make informed choices with their instruction and evaluation methods. However, while new to some, hybrid learning is richly rooted in online education and this realization is a comfort to those that have experience with blended and online learning. With my initial research, the following observations helped to shape and develop what later turned into my research questions:

- I observed several educators make the move to a flipped classroom model, which is a type of blended learning where reading and exploration takes place at home and live

problem-solving, and practice/modeling happens in the classroom. Additionally, teachers are moving to a tutoring style of instruction or adapting more of a self-paced classroom.

- I also noted that while backwards-design planning is essential for all instruction regardless of modality or evaluation system, it seems to be even more essential with hybrid learning and SBG.
- A concerning observation, was that students did little work outside of the classroom and hybrid learning functions on the idea that students successfully, in part, complete tasks independent of the classroom. I then wanted to see how engagement, or lack of participation, intertwined with evaluation methods. My initial belief was that SBG would be the best system of evaluation with the hybrid model. I also wanted to question if an evaluation method does impact the model of learning and whether the model of evaluation contributes to success in the hybrid model.
- I observed that the hybrid model implemented at RTHS, due in small part to COVID restrictions, allowed for smaller class sizes by having fewer F2F students in each section. This could be an anomaly considering that hybrid models do not have to be structured with small class size, and I anticipated that less in-person students would benefit writing instruction and personalized feedback. I wanted to then examine if having fewer in-person students increased the quality of feedback and/or ability to give more substantial verbal and written feedback. Since smaller class size allows for individualized instruction, my hypothesis was that educators can give stronger feedback and support during the writing process and would be able to individualize writing instruction.
- I observed that smaller class sizes have the potential to positively impact students' participation and how teachers then model writing instruction. I wanted to also consider

best methods of making hybrid learning interactive for learners. Learning timeframes are condensed in the hybrid model at RTHS, and I wanted to consider if purposeful skill practice afforded with SBG is of greatest importance. My early thoughts were that students who show early mastery can be challenged with more difficult tasks or presented with enrichment, while others may require reteaching or additional support due to the condensed direct instruction.

With the above observations as a guide, I then decided that I wanted to break my study into three categories: methods, engagement, and evaluation. The driving force behind my research was that I was experiencing this shift in real-time, and I found that our district, like many, was receiving little professional development on hybrid learning since the pandemic was creating a list of other matters that took precedent over professional development at that time. I wanted to do my own investigating and find conclusions that I could then share with other educators. Again, the intention of this case study is to draw upon past and present research surrounding hybrid learning and SBG and then find whether advancements gained through a pandemic will be of value to future planning and implementation.

### **Limitations of the Study**

The limitations of the case study are that the survey questions and research examine a single high school. Additionally, educators who are confronting a pandemic may have biased attitudes and experiences related to hybrid learning. COVID-19 is one event in the overall development of hybrid learning but has become synonymous with the pandemic for many, perhaps to its detriment. Rantoul Township High School has important demographics and considerations in relation to the surrounding area. The student population is approximately 780 students and the town has approximately 13,250 residents. According to the Illinois State Report

Card, 15% of students qualify for an IEP, and 12% of students are ESL/ELL. Attendance is a concern because 30% of students classify as chronically truant, and 34% fall within the chronic absentee category. Illinois law defines “chronic truant” as a student who misses five percent of school days within an academic year. This count does not include students with excused absences. Illinois law defines “chronic absentee” as a student who misses ten percent of school days within an academic year with or without a valid excuse. Attendance is more fluid during our current pandemic, but I mention this as a consideration since being frequently absent can be linked to risk of academic and social concerns and may be a point of observation during this study. When designing curriculum, especially when crafting hybrid material, teachers at RTHS create two-step lessons that will utilize two or three class periods. If a student misses one of the paired lessons, they can still achieve the intended outcomes and be on track. However, many students struggle with content because of the amount of both in-person and remote school that is missed.

Culturally relevant pedagogy is a current consideration within the school and modifications have been inspired during the various transitions of the 2020-2021 school year. RTHS’ largest racial/ethnic populations consist of 38% White, 25.6% Black, and 26.1% Latino. An additional consideration is that RTHS has approximately a 18% mobility rate. Meaning, that several students transition both in and out of the district during mid to late semester. With the hybrid model, we condensed a traditional 18-week semester into a 9-week semester, and I anticipate this traditionally high-mobility to be a concern with this model.

The Illinois State Report Card shows 71% of our students as low-income status, and this percentage is reflective of the demographics of Rantoul where the median annual individual income is \$26,500. The graduation rate is 84%, and currently 91% of Freshmen are on track to

graduate. Approximately 55 students from each graduation class attend postsecondary education such as community college or a university. In 2020, 50 graduates enrolled in higher education. I mention this because when considering writing instruction, many teachers focus on practical writing and skills that can be transferred to trades and career post-graduation. Teacher retention rate is scored at 80% for the overall school. However, the turnover in the English department has been considerable during my five years on the team. There are nine English teachers on our department, and I am fourth seniority. The RTHS teaching staff consists of 63 individuals, and approximately 43% have their master's degree. 94% of staff is white and this does not accurately reflect the demographics of the school or town. There have been concerns raised from the town considering the demographics of staff and RTHS has recently made strides in how to approach our hiring process.

A case study, such as this one, that examines one school environment in-depth does propose limitations. Since I am studying a school where I work, a limitation could be that I do not model an outsider's perspective. Then again, I present an insider's perspective and can add value since I am familiar with the school culture and the surrounding area. Rantoul Township High School is a feeder school that includes students from the following middle schools: J.W. Eater (Rantoul), Gifford Grade School (Gifford), St. Malachy (Rantoul), Thomasboro Grade School (Thomasboro), Ludlow Grade School (Ludlow), and Prairieview (Flatville). My knowledge of each school provides important prospective to this study. Additionally, as someone that has taught English 1 at RTHS, I have insight to the various writing instructional methods students have received prior to high school as well as what RTHS does to help level the various writing abilities consolidating into 9<sup>th</sup> grade. Currently, none of our feeder schools have implemented SBG and work with a traditional grading system. SBG is an entirely new concept

for students entering high school. My experience with our feeder schools also provides the knowledge that hybrid learning is new for all incoming 9<sup>th</sup> grade students since our middle schools did not use hybrid learning or remote elements of instruction prior to the pandemic. The hybrid learning model is a new style of learning for all students attending RTHS during the 2020-2021 school year.

### **Terminology and Definitions**

The following list of terminology provides definitions through which this case study operates and are provided to help understand the connections between the terms and the theories related to the topic under investigation:

#### Face-to-Face (F2F)

Face-to-Face interactions define the exchanges between students and their teacher and/or their peers, which are conducted in a setting that is in-person such as in the classroom or teacher's office hours. F2F interactions would not include using online formats such as a Google Meet or Zoom meeting.

#### Blended Learning

Blended learning occurs with both students and teacher interacting F2F in a traditional classroom setting. Blended learning refers to using online resources, technology, and digital tools to enhance in-person instruction.

#### Distance Learning

Distance learning is defined by geographical separation between the teacher and the learner. Distance learning takes place remotely and not F2F. Students are not physically present in a traditional classroom environment.

#### Remote Learning

Remote learning falls under the category of distance learning and occurs when the teacher transitions the delivery of instruction from F2F to online. Information is taught through digital tools, such as Google Classroom, video conferencing, and online applications. Remote Learning can occur synchronously with real-time collaboration, or asynchronously, with self-paced learning activities.

### Online Learning

Online learning occurs when the delivery of instruction was planned for and intended to be delivered online. Typically, online learning is self-paced in nature, but can happen both synchronously and asynchronously. Online learning falls under distance learning and students are not physically present in a traditional classroom environment.

### Hybrid Learning

Hybrid learning includes a combination of F2F learning with online instruction or interaction. This model of learning heavily relies on technology integration. Hybrid learning does not have time constraints of the traditional course setting and work is completed both at home and in the classroom.

### Google Classroom

Google Classroom enables teachers to create an online classroom space that functions as an area to find all class materials. Google Classroom provides a teacher-student interface, which is designed to mirror how teachers and students work together in a traditional classroom space.

### Google Meet

Google Meet is a virtual conferencing application where anyone with a Google account can create a video meeting. Conferencing can take place from a computer or from any mobile device.

### Asynchronous Learning

Asynchronous learning refers to a self-paced learning environment. Asynchronous online learning requires students to take more ownership of their own learning. It also requires students to become proficient with the technology required of the curriculum.

### Synchronous Learning

Synchronous learning is when instruction is delivered virtually in real-time. In this delivery model, students and teachers engage with the content at the same time, but from separate locations.

### Traditional Grading

Traditional Grading is an evaluation model based on criteria set by the teacher.

Typically, a grade is assigned between a letter range of A-F.

### Standards Based Grading

Standards-based grading, or SBG, is an evaluation model that focuses on mastery of skills based on standards. Instead of assigning a letter grade, students receive grades in multiple different learning targets. Typically, skills will be assessed on a range of 1-4.

**Table 3: Abbreviations Used Throughout Thesis**

| <b>Full Terminology</b>  | <b>Abbreviation</b> |
|--|---------------------|
| Apex Learning Virtual School                                     | Apex                |
| Common Core State Standards                                      | CCSS                |
| English Language Arts  | ELA                 |
| English-Language Learner   | ELL                 |
| English as a Second Language                                     | ESL                 |
| Face-to-Face   | F2F                 |
| Instructional Review Board                                       | IRB                 |
| Online Writing Instruction                                       | OWI                 |
| Rantoul Township High School                                     | RTHS                |
| Standards Based Grading  | SBG                 |
| United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization | UNESCO              |

## **CHAPTER TWO: REVIEW OF RESEARCH**

### **Introduction**

The purpose of this chapter is to review research on evaluation, hybrid learning, and writing practices. This chapter explores the relationship between the hybrid learning model and evaluation, specifically Standards Based Grading (SBG), and whether this union can influence best writing practices in online formats.

### **2.1: EVALUATION**

#### **Evaluation and the Role of the Teacher**

Reporting on student growth and areas of improvement are important aspects of any teaching and learning system. With online and hybrid learning models, the instructor's role can be seen as a facilitator, a mentor, or a coach. Further, an essential role is to overcome incoherence, provide feedback and scaffold student learning (Vonderwell et al. 311). The role of the teacher is to structure a feedback mechanism to encourage student inquiry and self-assessment strategies. Similarly, SBG is not only about changing the way grades are used, but it is "a complete overhaul of the teaching-learning process" which aligns with the shift from the lecture style of traditional F2F instruction (Vatterott 35). The SBG paradigm is different from traditional grading in four major ways: "how learning is defined, how learning is structured, how learning is experienced, and how grades are used" (Vatterott 36). The structure of SBG provides an individualized learning experience, like online instruction, by using grades as detailed feedback that then lead to gradual skill mastery. Marco A. Munoz and Thomas R. Guskey, proponents for SBG, define evaluation as a "foundational element" of an education system.

They state, "Because of the fundamental nature, educators must ensure that grading and reporting always meet the criteria for validity and reliability" (64). The role of the teacher is to ensure that grading and reporting are "meaningful, accurate, and fair" (Munoz and Guskey 64).

The first step in observing if grading practices are meaningful, is to define the purpose of grades. In a traditional grading system, teachers typically merge scores from major evaluations, both formative and summative, “along with evidence from homework, punctuality in turning in assignments, class participation, work habits, and effort” (Munoz and Guskey 64; Wormeli 17). Computerized grading programs, such as Skyward<sup>3</sup>, help teachers apply categories and weights to produce one, cumulative grade. Reporting one cumulative letter grade can cause distortion by “weaving in a student’s personal behavior, character, and work habits” and cannot be used “to successfully provide feedback” to students (Wormeli 19). This practice ultimately results in inaccurate evaluation data and challenges in interpreting scores.

Many high school students are developing emotional and intellectual maturity and when a teacher records a “F” in hopes to “teach the importance of working hard, using time wisely, and the tough realities of life” they are no longer assessing their academic abilities (Wormeli 17). Wormeli adds, “Letting the low grade do our teaching is an abdication of our responsibilities as educators” (17). Munoz and Guskey propose that “to make grades more meaningful, we need to address both the purpose of grades and the format used to report them” (65). Teachers often use varying criteria in determining a grade and these discrepancies paired with students not being well-informed of criteria, create concerns of equity in evaluation. For a student to have ownership in their learning, they must know and understand the intended learning targets (Vatterott 55). Further, it is the responsibility of the teacher to communicate these targets and to include students in the process of evaluation.

---

<sup>3</sup> Skyward is a school management system specializing in K-12 software. Launched in 1981, it primarily functions as a grade reporting tool and partners with approximately 1,900 schools worldwide.

## **Defining Purpose of Evaluation**

The purpose of evaluation is to measure how well a student understands and applies a learning objective or skill established for a particular class or unit of study. This purpose remains a constant no matter the modality of learning and naturally: “grades should reflect students’ performance on specific learning criteria” (Munoz and Guskey 65). A teacher who establishes clear criteria and then articulates the expectations to students is what makes for a more equitable evaluation process. Munoz and Guskey add that, “recognizing that merging diverse sources of evidence distorts the meaning of any grade, educators in many parts of the world assign multiple grades” (65). This idea further complicates traditional grading systems in that soft skills are merged into a students’ academic evaluation, confusing the purpose of what a traditional grade is measuring (Wormeli 19).

Research shows that soft skills are an important component of success beyond secondary education, whether that includes higher education or career-related work, but should these skills be intertwined with academic skills as a single, cumulative grade? Soft skills such as work-ethic and punctuality matter and are “so important we must report them separately and not mask them in the other grade” (Vatterott 107). Vatterott continues that, “our current system of grading does not support and value nonacademic skills” and educators must stop distorting the achievement grade by intersecting the behavior grade if education wants to value nonacademic skills (107). However, when nonacademic behaviors are removed from the academic grade, they must be placed somewhere. Vatterott continues with “once you show parents that such a system actually gives them a clearer and more detailed picture of behaviors, they see the advantage [in SBG]” and will be more invested (Vatterott 108). This question is precisely the foundation of standards-based approaches in that students are assigned multiple grades. Munoz and Guskey add that

“educators distinguish among the product, process, and progress”<sup>4</sup> as learning criteria and this should be directly reflected in evaluation (65). When teachers then assign separate grades to each indicator, soft skills such as effort, work habits, or timeliness are kept distinct from academic assessment of skills.

Similarly, evaluation that occurs in an online or hybrid format requires a collaborative experience between learner and teacher since nonacademic behaviors can be imperative to the success of an online student. Evaluation drives learning outcomes and is essential for the design of a learning model. According to Elwood and Klenowshi, “There is a distinction between “assessment of learning (assessment for the purposes of grading and reporting with its own established procedures) and assessment for learning (assessment whose purpose is to enable students, through effective feedback, to fully understand their own learning and the goals they are aiming for)” (243). The concept of evaluation with the intended goal of growth in knowledge allows both learners and teachers to share the ownership and responsibility for evaluating their own performance and learning outcomes (Vonderwell et al. 310). Student-centered evaluation encourages dialogue between students, collaboration, peer and self-evaluation, and a sense of community for a shared purpose. Online and hybrid technology provide the ability for every learner to respond to questions, participate equally, and offer a potential to support the co-construction of knowledge through meaningful discourse (Vonderwell et al. 310-11).

### **Implementing Standards Based Grading**

Once a teacher has developed “explicit indicators of product, process, and progress learning, teachers then assign separate grades to each indicator” (Munoz and Guskey 65). With

---

<sup>4</sup> Thomas R. Guskey & Jane M. Bailey go in-depth with the product, process, and progress learning criteria in their article, “Developing Grading and Reporting Systems for Student Learning.” This criterion will be referenced in Chapter 5: Conclusions.

this practice, soft skills such as effort, work habits, or timeliness are kept distinct from academic assessment of skills. Typically, the academic grade<sup>5</sup> is communicated as a letter grade “that represents the teacher’s best judgment of the student’s level of performance relative to the explicit learning objectives for the class or course” (Munoz and Guskey 65). The nonacademic factors, or soft skills, are typically recorded<sup>6</sup> as numerical marks ranging between 4-1 (e.g., 4 = consistently, 3 = usually, 2 = sometimes, and 1 = rarely). Teachers who report multiple grades on the established criterion no longer must worry about how to weight or balance the evaluation evidence. SBG is best practice in that communicating multiple grades for multiple skills increases “the validity, the reliability, and the fairness of the grading process” (Munoz and Guskey 66).

To illustrate SBG in practice, here is an example of how reporting on multiple skills leads to more equitable evaluation practices. Standards require application and writing evaluation must demonstrate application “in the learning process as well as in the demonstration of learning” (Vatterott 58). Student A, Student B, and Student C are reading Bryan Stevenson’s *Just Mercy* and complete both reflections and small analysis writing tasks throughout the process. After learning about racial bias and reading the first chapters of the novel, student A, B, and C are then asked to make connections between the character’s experiences, historical events, and what they have experienced/seen in their present world. Simply, students are asked to consider the author’s purpose in connecting experiences of the past to the current situation of the character. On this task, students are asked to compose a paragraph with a claim, two pieces of textual evidence with

---

<sup>5</sup> Academic grade can be synonymous with “achievement grade” as referenced by Marco A. Munoz and Thomas R. Guskey (65).

<sup>6</sup> Marco A. Munoz and Thomas R. Guskey include on (65) the importance of rubrics and this will be referenced in the Chapter 5: Conclusions.

elaboration, and a concluding sentence. Students are evaluated on the following skills: 1. Determine a central idea of a text and analyze its development over the course of the text. 2. Analyze author’s use of structure, point of view, literary elements, and style to achieve purpose, and 3. Compose writing appropriate for a specific purpose and/or audience. Included is an example of how these skills would appear on a SBG rubric. (see table 4).

**Table 4: Standards Based Grading Rubric Example**

|  | 4  | 3  | 2   | 1   | NA   |
|--|--|--|---|---|--|
| <b>Reading:</b><br>Determine the central idea of a text and analyze its development over the course of the text      | The student correctly identifies the author’s central idea and uses textual evidence to thoroughly discuss how the author develops this throughout the text. | The student correctly identifies the author’s central idea but lacks detail in discussing how the author develops this throughout the text; or the student uses sufficient detail but shows a misconception about the central idea | The student correctly identifies a central idea but lacks an explanation of how the author develops this throughout the text; or the student uses sufficient detail but shows a major misconception about the central idea. | The student fails to correctly identify the author’s central idea or fails to discuss how the idea develops throughout the text.                    | The student did not attempt this standard. |
| <b>Reading:</b><br>Analyze author’s use of structure, point of view, literary elements, and style to achieve purpose | The student effectively identifies and describes how the author creates the central idea through literary elements.  | The student identifies how the author creates the central idea through literary elements, but the discussion needs to be more specific.  | The student begins to identify literary elements the author uses, but the student needs to connect these elements to the author’s main point and add more specific discussion   | The student incorrectly identifies literary elements used by the author.  | The student did not attempt this standard. |
| <b>Writing:</b><br>Compose writing appropriate for a specific purpose and/or audience                                | The student makes a clear claim and provides detailed evidence with appropriate elaboration and explanation.   | The student makes a claim and provides evidence, but the evidence is general or is not supported by appropriate elaboration. The student needs to add more explanation for the claim.  | The student attempts to make a claim, but the claim is not supported by evidence. The paragraph is not properly explained. The student needs to focus on the prompt and answer the prompt more directly.                    | The student attempts to make a claim, but the claim is based on a misunderstanding of the assignment and does not show understanding of the prompt. | The student did not attempt this standard. |

**Student A:** Student A constructs her paragraph to include thoughtful connections, supported with textual evidence, that demonstrates her understanding of the theme. She identifies literary

elements that the author uses but does not connect these elements to the author's main purpose. Her writing provides a clear claim, and she uses textual evidence. However, Student A needs to add more elaboration to fully support her claim. With SBG, Student A would receive a 4 on determining central theme, a 2 on analysis of author's purpose, and a 3 on composing writing for a task. Student A is now provided with specific feedback that shows there is an understanding of the text and themes present in the text. The teacher can then add individualized practice in identifying author's purpose. Further, the teacher can help Student A develop her ability of identifying elements to then analyzing their use in context. Finally, the student is aware of the need to provide deeper elaboration moving forward in her writing.

**Student B:** Student B has not been regularly attending class and has missed reading the first chapters. However, Student B draws from his personal observations and makes connections to modern examples of racial biases. His writing identifies a central theme but lacks the connection to how the author develops this theme. In his writing, the student does not analyze author's purpose or reference literary elements present in the text. However, the student does make a claim and supports his claim with rich personal examples and applies the theme to observations he has experienced. The writing does not use the text as evidence, but each example is supported by ample elaboration. With SBG, Student B would receive a 2 on determining central theme, a NA(0) on analysis of author's purpose, and a 3 on composing writing for a task. The feedback given to Student B reflects that while he has not read the book, his ability to apply a theme and discuss relevant examples is there. Student B is not discouraged since he has received a high score on his writing abilities and knows that he will need to read the text to further apply concepts and evidence. However, his feedback shows that he is able to create a claim, support his claim, and can thoroughly elaborate.

**Student C:** Student C crafts a paragraph where he attempts to determine the central theme. However, his writing is general, and he lacks explanation of how the author develops the theme. His writing applies literary elements he believes is used by the author but has incorrectly identified the elements. Student C attempts to make a claim, but the claim would be better supported with more evidence. The student uses one piece of textual evidence and does not fully elaborate upon his ideas. With SBG, Student C would receive a 2 on identifying central theme, a 1 on identifying author's purpose, and a 3 on composing writing for a task. The feedback shows that Student C needs additional supports and individualized practice moving forward. Accessing both reading and writing standards show that the student may not be comprehending the reading. Additionally, he is struggling to identify theme and literary elements present in the text. However, the Student C receives a higher score on his writing skill since he can make a claim and provide some support of that claim. Moving forward, both student and teacher know that elaboration and identifying text evidence would be skills to practice.

### **Frequency of Evaluation and Alignment of Standards**

Educators understand that the timeliness and frequency of feedback given to students allows for more adjustments and improvements when learning skills. The role of frequent evaluation and subsequent feedback is to “develop, encourage and extend learning” (O’Connor et al. 70). With both SBG and online learning, evaluation must be regular and paired with feedback. A student can improve drafts of a paper when given swift feedback and this helps to extend learning. Many educators voice the concern that measuring learning and communicating in a timely fashion presents real challenges at all levels (O’ Connor et al. 70). Secondary-level teachers can have hundreds of students to evaluate, and elementary teachers must evaluate learning for every subject area. Educators need to then question if what is being measured

matters and whether it is valuable evaluation. O'Connor et al. adds, "If we have more checklists, quizzes, and assignments than we have time for, it may be best to reduce the quantity of evaluations in order to increase the quality" (70). SBG allows teachers to thoughtfully evaluate students' performance on a single project that can showcase their skills authentically across multiple standards (O'Connor et al. 70). This strategy, compared to marking several quizzes or participation assignments that provide little fuel for reflection and improvement, allows for teachers to give more quality feedback on a single activity that covers multiple skills.

Many states have adapted the Common Core State Standards (CCSS).<sup>7</sup> Despite having common standards for ELA, research indicates that not all schools have well-aligned standards-based reporting forms. For Standards based evaluation to align with reporting, teachers need to evaluate grades on "explicit criteria derived from the clearly established learning standards" and the end result is a "transformation of the traditional approach into a standards-based report card that creates a straightforward link between curriculum and assessment" (Munoz and Guskey 66). The purpose of an aligned reporting system is to have standards reported that mirror the CCSS strands for ELA.<sup>8</sup> If evaluation is measured and reported correctly through the SBG model, evaluation will inspire best pedagogical practices and inform instruction. Munoz and Guskey add that SBG can "be invaluable as teachers work to implement the Common Core standards, which are meant to prepare all students for college and/or career" (67). Guskey has found that based on

---

<sup>7</sup> According to the Common Core State Standards website, Forty-one states, the District of Columbia, four territories, and the Department of Defense Education Activity(DoDEA) have adopted the Common Core State Standards" (<http://www.corestandards.org/standards-in-your-state/>).

<sup>8</sup> Thomas R. Guskey & Jane M. Bailey add that three to five standards assessed in each subject is sufficient.

interactions with teachers, the first step in quality assessment practices associated with grades is to make them meaningful (67).

## **2.2 HYBRID LEARNING**

### **Secondary Education and Hybrid Learning**

The pandemic forced many secondary schools to evaluate how their instructional system is serving students. Like the evaluation models discussed above, there are options outside of the traditional F2F learning model that may better serve students moving forward. Hybrid Learning is best described as a “harmonious balance between online access to knowledge and face-to-face human interaction” (Rovai and Jordan 24). Higher education has acknowledged the merit of hybrid learning for some time before the pandemic. However, this current event is what influenced secondary education to make rapid transitions into the hybrid model. Researchers are showing an increased interest with hybrid courses and hybrid learning models, but there is still a gap in existing research that seeks to understand the perceptions of hybrid learning environments in secondary education. Fortunately, hybrid learning is richly based in online practices and understanding best online methods will help to better use hybrid learning.

Incorporating the strengths of in-person learning, hybrid learning also provides the flexibility of self-paced remote learning. The idea that teaching consists primarily of the transmission of knowledge from an expert to a learner in real-time is a misconception that has resulted, according to Albers, *et al.*, from an overreliance on the F2F instructional format (186). While this overreliance is a problem despite the method of delivery, it becomes especially problematic in a traditional classroom setting. Hybrid instruction fosters an increased focus on students being involved in the co-creation of curriculum—proactively creating their learning experience by contributing with their comments and ideas (Money et al. 1). The hybrid model

encourages learners to not only receive instruction, but to also proactively participate in the learning experience to ensure success. According to Ian O’Byrne and Kristine E. Pytach, “the power in hybrid learning comes from modification or manipulation of time, space, and place to improve teaching and learning” (138).

Asynchronous and synchronous instruction have different properties that may be used for different purposes. With the hybrid learning model, synchronous learning is made possible through the marriage of using digital texts, tools, and video with a remote element such as the student learning outside of the classroom. Digital texts and technology that encourage asynchronous learning include tutorial videos, readings, and writing or blogging activities. O’Byrne and Pytach add, “Asynchronous learning events allow the educator to build in elements of metacognitive delay, in turn allowing learners to "press pause" on learning or perhaps delay an immediate response” (138). When developing best practices for hybrid learning, this model should be viewed as a bridge between full F2F instruction and full online learning.

### **Critical Considerations of the Hybrid Model**

Best practices in developing a hybrid structure, have proper scaffolding and student learning objectives at the core of planning. Educational advancements in technology have afforded learning to be both independent and individualized. Educators, researchers, and administration alike are currently experimenting with versions of hybrid learning and have noted multiple possibilities for blending online and F2F instruction.<sup>9</sup> No matter how teachers envision hybrid learning, there needs to be a focus on instructional objectives. As online education and hybrid courses become more popular, there is a growing sense of concern that the

---

<sup>9</sup> O’Byrne and Pytach note, “One of the more comprehensive models (Staker, 2011) details six versions of hybrid learning: F2F driver, rotation, flex, online lab, self-blend, and online driver” (138).

implementation and focus on good pedagogy will not be as important in online and hybrid learning experiences (O’Byrne and Pytach 139). Important practices are not about how to integrate technology into the curriculum, but rather, “a matter of uncovering the most powerful uses of technology to accomplish learning goals for specific students” (DeVoss et al. 29). Collaboration is key in developing a successful plan in implementing hybrid curriculum. Both teacher and student co-collaborate with this model and have equal responsibility in the development.

### **Evaluation Practices for Online Learning**

An essential component of communication, feedback, interaction, and evaluation for an online classroom, or one with online elements, is through writing (Vonderwell et al. 311; Speck 8). Since writing is the major means of communication for an online learning environment, or one with online elements, issues related to the evaluation of writing should preoccupy any discussion of how teachers evaluate student performance in the virtual classroom (Speck 8). The oral nature of F2F instruction is replaced by writing for both teachers and students in an online format. This is also true about portions of the hybrid format. Remote students have ways to communicate with teachers such as through digital meetings and F2F conferences, but the intention of the online classroom is to foster communication by writing (Speck 8).

Writing, for educational purposes, can be defined as a process that then leads to a product. How students learn to write in online classrooms, as in other classrooms, is reflective of what students write to show that they are learning (Vonderwell et al. 311; Speck 16). Evaluation of online learning and online elements are not to be conducted as it has been in a traditional F2F classroom since traditional evaluation “measures are unlikely to reveal the complexities of student-centered online learning environments that are radically different from the dominant

teacher-centered instructional paradigm” (Reeves 109). Robles and Braathen add to the evaluation discussion: “By keeping in mind some basic tenets of assessment, online educators can adapt their assessment activities to provide useful feedback, accountability and opportunities to demonstrate quality” (39).

## **2.3 WRITING PRACTICES**

### **Early Writing Models in the Age of Hybrid Learning**

Writing instruction is a complex task requiring both knowledge of context and conceptual understanding of the writing process. Early writing models sometimes taught that writing consisted in somewhat linear stages: pre-writing, writing, and revision. Modern composition teachers agree that writing is not a static, linear process but one that requires recursive attention. However, conceptions of writing as a process vary from theorist, and these conceptions complicate the definition of process (Faigley 527). The writing as a process movement can assume three major perspectives on composing: an expressive view including “authentic voice” (i.e., Coles, Elbow, Macrorie, and Stewart), a cognitive view (i.e., Flower, Kroll, and Lunsford), and a social view (i.e., Bizzell and Bruffee) (Faigley 528).

Expressive theory, or Romantic expressivism follows that “good” writing includes integrity, spontaneity, and originality. Theorists such as Peter Elbow extend this idea to mean that “good” writing does not follow rules but reflects the processes of the creative imagination (Faigley 529). Using integrity as a measurement of value has since been criticized since evaluating the sincerity of a text is problematic. The spontaneity component of expressive theory has found more popularity among teachers of writing and pairs especially well with the hybrid learning model. Methods such as free writing provide an outlet for students to explore writing spontaneity and should not be an exercise that seeks “the truth.” Elbow encourages writers to

view a task as an organic process “in which you start writing at the very beginning—before you know your meaning at all—and encourage your words to gradually change and evolve” (15).

Similarly, Elbow discusses revision as the shaping of unformed material, and this is an especially relevant concept in the age of hybrid instruction and writing. Originality, the third pillar of expressive theory, is not as adaptable to current theory since “originality” is linked to the notion of natural genius” (Faigley 531). Modern expressive theory replaces this concept instead with the innate potential of the unconscious mind, or with “self-actualization.”

Early cognitive theorists envisioned the writing process as a linear three-step exercise. Janet Emig, an early opponent of writing being linear, “described writing as “recursive,” an adjective from mathematics that refers to a formula generating successive terms” and coined a writing belief that is modernly used in education (Faigley 532). Cognitive researchers Linda Flower and John R. Hayes indicate that the writing process is not linear but has recurring steps embedded throughout as the writer’s goals continue to change. A recursive process provides the student with inventive authority and affords less power to the product. Goal-oriented writing is influenced by the development of the authors’ ability to build on related ideas and provide fresh inferences (Flower and Hays 381). It was common belief that knowledge develops as one writes. However, writing is more complex and entangled in the process of utilizing experience as well as generating goals that guide the process. In their cognitive process theory, Flower and Hayes affirm that “the act of writing is a goal-directed thinking process and is guided by the writer’s growing network of goals” (365). The model set by Flower and Hayes encourages instructors of writing to consider the internal processing of our students and thus, shifts the focus from the product of their work to the process of their writing. This goal-directed writing pairs well with SBG in that students are evaluated by their most recent work. Meaning, as the goals and

intentions of writing shifts, the grade will accurately reflect their internal process and development.

The social view of composing is defined by the assumption that “human language (including writing) can be understood only from the perspective of a society rather than a single individual” (Faigley 535). A more modern concept is the idea of discourse communities. Patricia Bizzell explains in her article “Cognition, Convention, and Certainty” that communities are often defined by how an individual speaks, writes, and reasons in correlation to society. Bizzell adds, “Producing text within a discourse community, then, cannot take place unless the writer can define her goals in terms of the community’s interpretive conventions” (398). As someone specializing in college writing instruction, Bizzell claims that writing is partially measured by the community one belongs.

Modern instructors of writing know that “good” writing does not consist of three linear stages: pre-writing, writing, and revision, and process theory further supports this mindset. Theorists from expressive, cognitive, and social views agree writing is a complex process that requires recursive attention. The conceptions of process writing may vary between theorist and even educator. However, smart process-based pedagogy allows both teacher and student to go through the process of producing writing together. Process-based practices assumes that the meaning of the writing task, or the learning, is created and evolves while composing and revising. With process writing, students have an opportunity to brainstorm, draft, revise, edit, and receive feedback on writing all before producing a final version of work. The following three guidelines ensure best writing practices in the hybrid classroom: 1. Use writing to acquire knowledge and learn. 2. Use goal-directed writing tasks where students consider the internal process and view writing as non-linear. 3. Help developing writers refine their strategies by

encouraging students to seek feedback from peers through peer reviews and feedback from instructors through conferencing and written or spoken formative feedback.

### **Process Writing in a Hybrid Model**

Student-centered learning is an important philosophy of the hybrid model since engagement must take place both in-person and remotely. Since the sum of in-person instructional time is reduced, fostering recursive writing instruction can be a daunting task for teaching. Good writing practices require time and consistent practice of writing skills. To foster a recursive mindset under the constraints of a hybrid model, skill application and quality of writing must take precedent over the quantity of writing that is produced. Donald Murray, author of “Teach Writing as a Process Not a Product”, believes in a student-centered approach that allows students to immerse themselves in “unfinished” work. Immersion includes students collaborating with their peers, pondering, and revisiting their writing throughout each stage. Murray urges those that teach writing to put emphasis on the process over the product. As more educational models shift into hybrid or remote learning, the curriculum timeframe may condense for the semester. The priority of writing instruction is now teaching skills rather than collecting a finished and perfect product; timelines are more fluid, and the importance is placed on developing writing skills.

With hybrid instruction, it is important to explore the affordances and constraints of using technology to teach emerging writers. In *The Handbook of Research on K-12 Online Blended Learning*, Ian Pytash and Kristine O’Byrne identify three specific strands of research about how technology can be used to facilitate the writing process:

- (1) Technology provides students with a more thorough understanding of purpose and audience when writing,
- (2) technology becomes a means for

receiving detailed feedback about writing, and (3) technology provides an impetus for reconceptualizing writing. (183)

Purpose, context, and audience are closely intertwined and assigning authentic writing tasks help students better understand the purpose of audience. Incorporating technologies such as social media writing tasks, blog posting, and digital portfolios provide access to a wider audience and more authentic feedback opportunity (Pytash and O’Byrne 183). With the hybrid learning model, a teacher must utilize online writing and technology to support and instruct the writing process. Randy Garrison and Norman Vaughan note that blended or hybrid writing instruction must be thoughtfully designed to integrate both face-to-face and online learning, encouraging student engagement in both formats, and restricting traditional instruction to meaningfully use face-to-face instruction (5). In this model, students spend less time receiving information directly from the instructor and more time independently analyzing text, conducting research, and writing, resulting in student-centered learning.

### **Conferencing and Collaborating: Recursive Writing Strategies**

Janet Emig argues in “Writing as a Mode of Learning” that talking is a powerful learning tool that can contribute to a student-centered classroom. Learning is an active process and with collaboration, students become producers and not just consumers. With hybrid learning the relationships between reading, writing, listening, and speaking are even more intertwined. Emig reflects, “Writing is stark, barren, even naked as a medium; talking is rich, luxuriant, inherently redundant” (124). Talking is a needed pre-writing strategy that will enhance the writing process. The collaboration and brainstorming between student-student or teacher-student provides a collaborative experience that will better support writing. Chris Anson, an early skeptic of imbedding technology with writing instruction, adds:

The teaching of writing, unlike some other disciplines, is founded on the assumption that students learn well by reading and writing with each other, responding to each other's drafts, negotiating revisions, discussing ideas, sharing perspectives, and finding some level of trust as collaborators in their mutual development. Teaching in such contexts is interpersonal and interactive, necessitating small class size and a positive relationship between the teacher and the students. (Anson 807).

Anson makes valid claims in that relationships and collaboration are the core of the writing process. Further, he is right in worrying that some of this interaction is lost in the hybrid model. Anson voiced his concerns in 1999 and much has advanced in technology since providing better means to collaborate virtually. Student-centered learning is especially important as many schools' transition into hybrid or full remote learning that requires digital tools for collaboration such as Google Meet or Zoom conferencing. Relationships are built through digital communication and the sense of trust is built more gradually but is present. Collaboration now transcends the walls of a classroom and extends to the remote corners of the community.

The value of collaboration far outweighs the drawbacks, but there are factors to consider. Sharing and collaborating are a vital part of the academic community and a fundamental part of classrooms across the world. However, many teachers assign group work as a time filler or to make an assignment/task easier for students. Kenneth Bruffee claims that "a way of engaging students more deeply" is to encourage collaborative learning, but for this to be true a teacher must have the intention of effective implementation (635). A concern is that teachers lack the resource, especially in our hybrid age, to make collaboration more than just a task that could have been completed independently. The pandemic is stripping socialization from many students

and the social-emotional needs of our students are high; teachers should make every effort to ensure that working with peers is worthwhile. Bruffee adds, “our task must involve engaging students in conversation among themselves at as many points in both the writing and the reading process as possible” (642). With this type of collaboration, students will practice making their own discourse community full of rich and valuable experiences.

### **Best Online Composition Practices**

In 2013, the Conference on College Composition Committee, consisting of leading academics in online learning and writing studies created a *Position Statement of Principles and Example Effective Practices on Online Writing Instruction* (OWI). This list is considered standard by the field of writing studies. The following is the subsequent 15 OWI Principles:

#### Overarching

- Online writing instruction should be universally inclusive and accessible.

#### Instructional

- An online writing course should focus on writing and not on technology orientation or teaching students how to use learning and other technologies.
- Appropriate composition teaching/learning strategies should be developed for the unique features of the online instructional environment.
- Appropriate onsite composition theories, pedagogies, and strategies should be migrated and adapted to the online instructional environment.
- Online writing teachers should retain reasonable control over their content and/or techniques for conveying, teaching, and assessing their students’ writing in their OWCs.
- Alternative, self-paced, or experimental OWI models should be subject to the same principles of pedagogical soundness, teacher/designer preparation, and oversight.

## Faculty

- Writing Program Administrators (WPAs) for OWI programs and their online writing teachers should receive appropriate OWI-focused training, professional development, and assessment for evaluation and promotion purposes.
- Online writing teachers should receive fair and equitable compensation for their work.
- OWCs should be capped reasonably at 20 students per course with 15 being a preferable number.

## Institutional

- Students should be prepared by the institution and their teachers for the unique technological and pedagogical components of OWI.
- Online writing teachers and their institutions should develop personalized and interpersonal online communities to foster student success.
- Institutions should foster teacher satisfaction in online writing courses as rigorously as they do for student and programmatic success.
- OWI students should be provided support components through online/digital media as a primary resource; they should have access to onsite support components as a secondary set of resources.
- Online writing lab administrators and tutors should undergo selection, training, and ongoing professional development activities that match the environment in which they will work.

## Research and Exploration

- OWI/OWL administrators and teachers/tutors should be committed to ongoing research into their programs and courses.

The Principles<sup>10</sup> were created to help establish best writing practices in online writing instruction. One focus is that online writing instruction should focus primarily on writing and not on technology. Further, pedagogical commitments, not technological capabilities, should be the focus in designing online writing activities (Sheppard 71).

Best online composition practices require that educators consider the outcomes and experiences that are integral for the class and future success. As mentioned by the Principles above, the goal of online writing instruction is to help students develop a critical approach to reading, analyzing, and writing. Often, this is not done through direct instruction, but through activities that have students, “negotiate different perspectives by discussion with peers and through their own writing, which help them think about rhetorical considerations, such as addressing varying audiences and utilizing credible, persuasive evidence” (Sheppard 72) Additionally, a foundational element of best online writing practice is inclusively and helping students develop communication skills that will help support their success in a variety of academic and personal contexts.

---

<sup>10</sup> For each of the OWI Principles, the Committee describes a rationale and provides an example of Effective Practices found here: [ncte.org/statement/owiprinciples/](http://ncte.org/statement/owiprinciples/)

## **CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY**

### **Formulating a Plan of Action**

Going into the 2020-2021 school year, Rantoul Township High School (RTHS) prepared to implement a hybrid instruction model that offered both F2F and remote learning. The intention was to offer in-person learning as part of hybrid instruction throughout the entire school year with the guidance of Centers for Disease Control in conjunction with the Champaign County Health Department. As RTHS transitioned into the hybrid learning model, students were presented with options on how they could receive instruction. RTHS offered three learning model choices: the traditional hybrid model where students receive both F2F and remote instruction, a blended model where students remotely receive instruction and Rantoul Township High School curriculum, or a full remote model that utilizes the Apex Learning Virtual School platform and students are not blended into a RTHS classroom. Because of these options, it allowed for smaller in-person class sizes.

At the start of the pandemic, the digital divide was further highlighted, and rural schools throughout the nation were presented with the challenge of not all students having access to electronic devices and/or internet. For a hybrid model to be equitable, students need adequate access to technology and reliable internet. Like many schools, RTHS provided paper resources and modified lessons during the early stages of transition to help bridge the equity gap of remote learning, but this proposed challenges such as students not having transportation to the school and/or administrators having an increased amount of home visits. Administration and staff delivered work to students at home and gave a collective effort to get devices and internet hot spots to each student. The pandemic afforded discussion on equity for many districts and schools formulated plans on how to provide essential devices and internet to students. Our school, like

many, is classified as a Title I<sup>11</sup> school, and this designation allowed for students in our district to receive a Chromebook and/or a hot spot to use while learning remotely or with the hybrid model. Many devices needed to be purchased and ordered and this took time to get tools into the hands of all students. During this time, it became increasingly harder to reach students that did not have access to online learning and topics such as the mental health and well-being of students began to take precedence over curriculum. The experiences of our school are not unique in that schools throughout the nation had to adapt their instruction through means of telephone conferencing, home visits, and virtual meets.

### **Remote Learning at RTHS**

With the early structure of our hybrid model, it was decided that if a student and/or family member living with the student has concerns about receiving instruction in-person, the student is able to receive education in the option of blended remote or full remote learning. Initially, the administrative plan was to have all full remote learners enrolled in the Apex Learning Virtual School platform. Progress would be monitored by teachers working as an Apex case manager; our Eagle Academy staff would be solely responsible in working with the remote students. Eagle Academy is a voluntary credit recovery program run by the Rantoul Township High School District whose objective is to provide support to students that have fallen behind on credits to then have the ability to graduate on-time. The plan was for Eagle Academy staff to oversee all remote learners during the 2020-2021 school year.

During the first quarter of the 2020 school year, remote students were enrolled in Apex for the majority of their classes. More diversified courses were added during the second semester

---

<sup>11</sup> According to the U.S. Department of Education, Title I is defined as schools where at least 40 percent of students are from low-income families. Title I funding is intended to raise achievement of low-achieving students

and some RTHS teachers were then asked to take full remote learners into their classes as a blended remote student. The assistant principal of curriculum and instruction at RTHS and principal of Eagle Academy, Megan Anderson, adds:

These classes were primarily ESL services such as ESL Resource and ESL 1 and 2, Keyboarding 1 and 2, some Modified Special Education Classes and Special Education Resource. The sheer number of remote learners made managing the students on an individual basis onerous. As a result, we asked RTHS staff to take many remote learners in their google classrooms. That reduced the number of students by approximately 30 kids. The remaining students were scheduled into a mixture of Google classroom classes and Apex classes.

RTHS teachers found that most remote learners adjusted well with this change, but some struggled with the adjustment and this prompted further adaptation for the third quarter of instruction. RTHS moved students that were having a difficult adjustment back into as many Apex classes as possible. Anderson adds that “decisions are made in conjunction with the counselors, Eagle Academy staff and the parents and students” and that “fourth quarter looks very similar to the third quarter but our total number of students in Apex has been reduced to approximately 50 students.” The following chart provides the number of students who were primarily in the care of Eagle Academy staff as full remote learners (see table 5):

**Table 5: Remote Learning and Courses Passed 2020-2021 Data**

|             | <b>Total Students</b> | <b>Courses Attempted</b> | <b>Courses Passed</b> | <b>% Passed</b> |
|-------------|-----------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------|
| 1st Quarter | 231                   | 924                      | 680                   | 73.59%          |
| 2nd Quarter | 206                   | 789                      | 617                   | 78.2%           |
| 3rd Quarter | 177                   | 682                      | 498                   | 73.02%          |
| 4th Quarter | 58                    | 220                      | 173                   | 78.63%          |

### **Hybrid and Blended Learning at RTHS**

The hybrid learning model used at RTHS had students learn on a modified block schedule where students were in the classroom twice a week for 65 minutes. The Monday of each week was a remote learning day for all students and then Tuesday through Friday was alternated with in-person/remote for “Purple” and “Gold” learning groups. Students learned remotely three days of the week and in-person two days of the week. To accommodate social distancing and guidance recommended by the CDC, class sizes were typically 12 or less students in-person. This model, specific to RTHS, created a hybrid learning opportunity to best allow for smaller class sizes. Teachers may have had a section with as few as 1-3 students within the in-person setting. Families had the option for their student to be fully remote instead of following the hybrid learning model. Blended learners were given instruction by a RTHS teacher and placed in the Google Classroom of their class. Material was transferred either synchronously or asynchronously through means such as Google Meet and students learning remotely.

### **Design of Case Study and Rationale**

With the approval from The Institutional Review Board (IRB), this case study voluntarily surveyed colleagues who teach at Rantoul Township High School and Eagle Academy in Rantoul, IL to better understand teacher experiences with the blended and remote models of learning at RTHS. A qualitative survey was created in two tiers, and participants were separated

with the following criteria: teachers who do have writing instruction/evaluation as a considerable portion of their curriculum and teachers who do not have writing instruction/evaluation as a considerable portion of their curriculum. Considerable, regarding this case study, is defined as over 65% of instruction and evaluation pertaining to writing. The survey was divided into three sections: methods of instruction, engagement, and evaluation. Tier 1 and tier 2 participants were asked to answer three survey questions in the instructional methods and engagement sections of the survey. Tier 1 participants were asked two questions in the evaluation section and tier 2 participants answered three questions. Participants of tier 1 responded to eight questions overall and participants of tier 2 responded to nine questions overall. Participant feedback took approximately 20 minutes to complete. The case study questions were administered both digitally and in-person throughout a three-week timeframe ranging from the 5<sup>th</sup> of April to the 23<sup>rd</sup> of April, 2021.

The method of conducting a case study with open-ended survey questions was best suited to collect the necessary data on hybrid learning. The survey reflections were the single method used for the research conducted in this study. The design of the case study allowed for the appropriate collecting and analysis of teacher and administrator responses to open-ended questions on hybrid learning, writing instruction, and Standards Based Grading. Through Google Forms, the digital responses were collected and organized. The in-person interview responses were recorded and kept in a password protected computer file. The responses were transcribed and recordings were necessary to accurately reference responses. No participant withdrew from the study but in that event, all responses from the participant would have been omitted. The following are the research questions that were sent to case study participants:

**Tier One Survey:** All Disciplines (educators from departments who do not substantially teach/evaluate writing in their curriculum including agriculture, business, family and consumer sciences, fine arts, math, physical education, science, career technology and engineering, and special education co-teachers for the above listed subjects)

### **Methods**

- In what ways have you transferred and/or adapted portions of your existing curriculum to the online platform?
- How are best pedagogical practices (e.g. feedback, accessibility, modeling) implemented in hybrid learning?
- What adaptations to instructional design and/or teaching style (e.g. instructional tutorial videos, flipped classroom, self-paced instruction, backwards planning) have transpired with hybrid learning?

### **Engagement**

- Have you used asynchronous activities as part of your learning? What challenges and/or successes have you encountered?
- What about engagement (e.g. student motivation, participation, attendance) has been revealed with the hybrid learning model?
- What does the shift in instructional practices reveal about how different learners (e.g. ESL/ELL) are impacted by hybrid learning?

### **Evaluation**

- What evaluation methods do you use for your course?
  - Standards Based Grading
  - Traditional Grading

- I use both Standards Based Grading and Traditional Grading
- What have the various shifts in instructional practices during hybrid learning revealed about Standards Based Grading as a mode of evaluation?

**Tier Two Survey:** Narrowed Writing Focus (educators from departments who do substantially teach/evaluate writing in their curriculum such as the following departments: Eagle Academy, language—including English, Spanish, and speech, social sciences, and special education co-teachers for the above listed subjects)

### **Methods**

- In what ways have you transferred and/or adapted portions of your existing curriculum to the online platform?
- How are best pedagogical writing practices (e.g. conferencing, recursive instruction, modeling, chunking, student choice) implemented in the hybrid learning models?
- What adaptations to instructional design and/or teaching style (e.g. instructional tutorial videos, flipped classroom, self-paced instruction, backwards planning) have transpired with hybrid learning and has this influenced writing instruction?

### **Engagement**

- Have you used asynchronous activities as part of your learning? What challenges and/or successes have you encountered?
- What about writing engagement (e.g. student motivation toward writing, participation, attention to feedback, revision) has been revealed with the hybrid learning model?
- What do writing evaluations reveal about how different learners (e.g. ESL/ELL) are impacted by hybrid learning?

## **Evaluation**

- What evaluation methods do you use for your course?
  - Standards Based Grading
  - Traditional Grading
  - I use both Standards Based Grading and Traditional Grading
- What have the various shifts in instructional practices during hybrid learning revealed about Standards Based Grading as a mode of evaluation?
- How are best pedagogical writing practices evaluated through the Standards Based Grading systems?

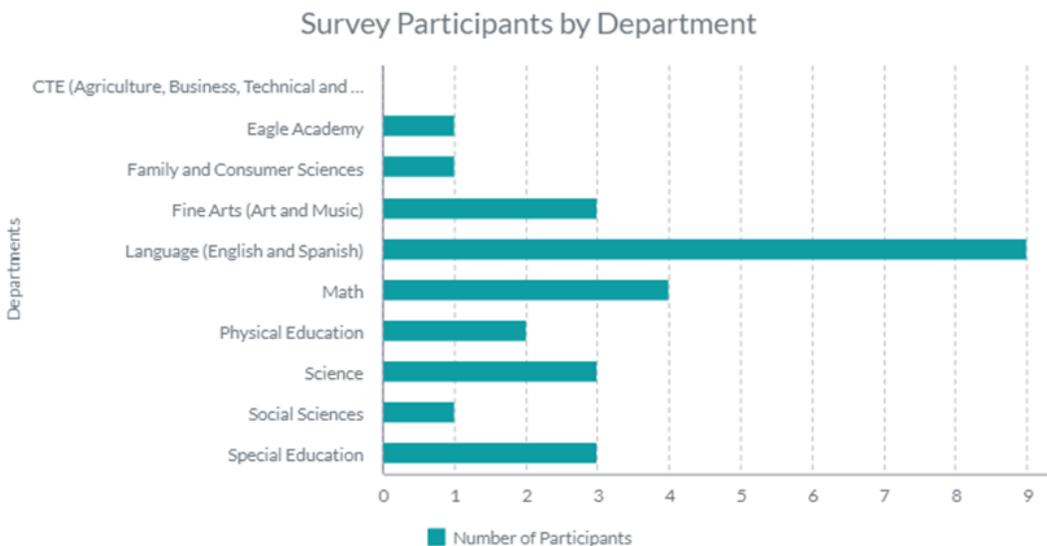
## **Participants**

Those who provided feedback on the digital survey, specifically RTHS teachers, received an email invitation<sup>12</sup> asking for their consent and participation. This email included a description of the study, the intent, and its importance in the advancement of research on the hybrid learning model. The email directed participants to the survey via a link to Google Forms. Participates were accessed through the faculty listserv at RTHS. The survey was sent to 63 teachers, and I received feedback from 27 of the 63 possible survey submissions. The graph below shows the 27 participants broken down by department (see table 6).

---

<sup>12</sup> Reference Appendix 1.1 for the email template sent to participates.

**Table 6: Number of Participants by Department**



Surveys that were conducted in-person, specifically with RTHS administrators, functioned as a one-time interview<sup>13</sup> that lasted approximately 30 minutes and followed the similar construction of the digital survey with the ability to follow up on a given response. Four out of seven RTHS administrators provided in-person feedback for this case study.

### **Case Study Objectives**

The objectives of this case study were to gain insight into considerations of a school moving into a new learning model, to expose possible connections between hybrid learning and SBG, and to observe how hybrid learning and SBG potentially influence best writing practices. The responses from the tier one survey, those who do not teach/evaluate writing, collected feedback on experiences surrounding hybrid learning, SBG, and current student engagement. Tier 2 responses provided a narrower focus by investigating writing instruction in relation to hybrid learning and evaluation. The goals of the study were to reflect upon the transition into

---

<sup>13</sup> Reference Appendix 1.2 for the interview introduction and informed consent.

hybrid learning as well as to evaluate how hybrid learning has the potential to make an impact on secondary educational practices post-pandemic. Further, the goals of the study were to reveal if and how learning technologies utilized with the hybrid model change or impact instruction regarding writing as a recursive process. My initial observations made during early stages of my school transitioning into hybrid learning are what inspired this case study as well as influenced the following predictions:

- My predicted concerns surrounding the hybrid learning model, were that less student participation will occur during the remote activities. I also questioned whether students would adapt to the self-paced nature of asynchronous online learning.
- My predictions were that SBG would pair well with hybrid learning and will result encourage a teacher focus on developing skills. I also predicted that SBG encourages the teaching of recursive writing and would be an advantage to writing instruction paired with the hybrid learning model.
- As a result of the pandemic, RTHS made adjustments that allowed the hybrid model to have smaller class sizes. Since this model allows for less in-person students per section, my predictions were that smaller class sizes would be an asset to providing quality feedback and/or the amount of real-time feedback that could be given to students. I predicted that smaller class sizes would contribute to better differentiation of instruction and the ability to individualize writing tasks. I also predicted that teachers would give less direct instruction in place for one-on-one or small group direction while working with smaller class sizes

## **Technology, Vulnerable Students, Remote Learning: Two Surveys**

Education Week Research Center surveyed K-12 educators in the spring of 2020 to explore how pandemic-related school closures have influenced the role and use of technology in K-12 education and what that might mean for the future of education. 87% of educators, almost nine in 10 teachers, believed that their ability to use technology improved, and that this progress made them better, more innovative educators. 58% of survey respondents reported that their opinion of educational technology has grown more positive because of the increased usage of technology. 93% of teachers reported that they were doing at least some online instruction, with 50% of teachers saying they were teaching fully online. The survey investigated concerns of equity and 42% of educators said their students had more access to school-issued personal devices than they did prior to the pandemic. However, 18% of these educators reported that expanded access is temporary and will end when schools reopen. Survey participants in districts where more than 75% of student populations qualify for free or reduced-price lunches reported that 59% of their students had to share digital devices with parents, siblings, and other family members and/or friends to complete their schoolwork (Bushweller).

Similarly, a survey conducted by McKinsey & Company asked teachers in eight countries to rate the effectiveness of remote learning in response to school shutdowns between March and July of 2020. An average score of five out of ten reflected those educators feel a computer alone is no match for a classroom as a place for students to learn. The study claims that schools will soon be facing a learning loss crisis. Li-Kai Chen and colleagues examined the impact of remote education on student learning through teacher's perspective and responses. The study identified concerns with remote learning ranging between missed assignments, disengagement, and

learning loss (Chen et al. 1). Access to resources heavily influenced teacher's rating of the remote learning model.

Reflections confirmed what many educators are voicing in the era of technology-driven curriculum: resources make a difference. The study found, "Teachers who taught at public schools gave remote learning an average global score of 4.8, while their peers in private schools, which often have better access to learning tools, averaged a rating of 6.2" (Chen et al. 4). Teachers working in high-poverty schools found virtual classes without an in-person pairing "to be especially ineffective, rating it 3.5 out of 10, bolstering concerns that the pandemic has exacerbated educational inequalities" (Chen et al. 4). It may be too early to fully assess the pandemic's impact on student learning, but educators can help mitigate loss of learning by identifying ways the learning model can improve. This study found that a critical first step to improving the quality of remote learning is for districts to provide resources to students such as devices and internet. Offering individualized support for students who are behind and needing more time in the classroom were identified as additional next steps. The teacher reflections further support the need for the F2F elements of hybrid learning. The above surveys assisted as a guide when creating the case study exploring hybrid learning at RTHS. All findings and statistics from the RTHS study are discussed in Chapter 4.

## CHAPTER FOUR: RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Overview of Data

To investigate my early predictions, a qualitative approach was taken to collect teacher responses via an online survey in two tiers. There were 27 overall survey participants. 17 subjects (63%) participated in tier 1, and 10 subjects (37%) participated in tier 2. Questions 1-3 of the survey correlated with teacher reflection on instructional methods. Questions 4-6 investigated student engagement and topics surrounding participation. Questions 7-9 asked about experiences pertaining to evaluation methods. Collectively, the themes in the survey sections overlap and synthesize data on hybrid learning, SBG, and writing practices. The following research questions were explored, and the table below can be used as reference (see table seven):

**Table Seven: Survey Questions**

| <b>Instructional Methods</b> |  |
|------------------------------|--|
| <b>Question 1</b>            | Tier 1 and Tier 2: In what ways have you transferred and/or adapted portions of your existing curriculum to the online platform?   |
| <b>Question 2</b>            | Tier 1: How are best pedagogical practices (e.g. feedback, accessibility, modeling) implemented in hybrid learning?<br><br>Tier 2: How are best pedagogical writing practices (e.g. conferencing, recursive instruction, modeling, chunking, student choice) implemented in the hybrid learning models?  |
| <b>Question 3</b>            | Tier 1: What adaptations to instructional design and/or teaching style (e.g. instructional tutorial videos, flipped classroom, self-paced instruction, backwards planning) have transpired with hybrid learning?<br><br>Tier 2: What adaptations to instructional design and/or teaching style (e.g. instructional tutorial videos, flipped classroom, self-paced instruction, backwards planning) have transpired with hybrid learning and has this influenced writing instruction? |
| <b>Engagement</b>            |  |
| <b>Question 4</b>            | Tier 1 and Tier 2: Have you used asynchronous activities as part of your learning? What challenges and/or successes have you encountered?  |

|                   |   |
|-------------------|---|
| <b>Question 5</b> | <p>Tier 1: What about engagement (e.g. student motivation, participation, attendance) has been revealed with the hybrid learning model?</p> <p>Tier 2: What about writing engagement (e.g. student motivation toward writing, participation, attention to feedback, revision) has been revealed with the hybrid learning model?</p> |
| <b>Question 6</b> | <p>Tier 1: What does the shift in instructional practices reveal about how different learners (e.g. ESL/ELL) are impacted by hybrid learning?</p> <p>Tier 2: What do writing evaluations reveal about how different learners (e.g. ESL/ELL) are impacted by hybrid learning?</p>  |
| <b>Evaluation</b> |   |
| <b>Question 7</b> | <p>Tier 1 and Tier 2: What evaluation methods do you use for your course?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Standards Based Grading</li> <li>▪ Traditional Grading</li> <li>▪ I use both Standards Based Grading and Traditional Grading</li> </ul>  |
| <b>Question 8</b> | <p>Tier 1: What have the various shifts in instructional practices during hybrid learning revealed about Standards Based Grading as a mode of evaluation?</p> <p>Tier 2: What have the various shifts in instructional practices during hybrid learning revealed about Standards Based Grading as a mode of evaluation?</p>         |
| <b>Question 9</b> | <p>Tier 2: How are best pedagogical writing practices assessed through the Standards Based Grading systems?</p>   |

### **Instructional Methods Synopsis**

The first instructional methods question explicitly asked both tier 1 and tier 2 teachers to expand on the process of developing curriculum for the hybrid format. Three ideas were repeated by subjects and presented as the main areas of reflection for those adapting their curriculum for hybrid learning: use of third-party applications, accessibility of material, and usefulness of video and audio recordings. The following snapshot provides a quick reference to the data collected from teacher reflections surrounding how educators are adapting curriculum for the hybrid learning model.

**Inquiry:** How are educators adapting curriculum for the hybrid learning model?

- 74% (20/27) of teachers highlighted the usefulness of educational third-party applications for online learning.
- 21/27 (77%) of survey participants indicated that they explored online learning tools that they had not previously used in the traditional learning model.
- 88% (24/27) of teachers indicated that the hybrid model encourages inventive instruction that better meets the diverse needs of students.
- 20/27 (74%) of participants identified that they are utilizing video and audio technologies for academic support and scaffolding purposes.

Of participants, 26/27 (96%) indicated that they digitized elements of their curriculum during the 2020-2021 school year. One participant commented that their curriculum was fully digital prior to moving into hybrid learning, and this fact was helpful when planning for online instruction. 20/27 (74%) of teachers emphasized the usefulness of Google applications and contributed additional third-party applications as important for their transition into hybrid instruction. One response included that “utilizing 3rd party apps/sites to help create content such as Edpuzzle,<sup>14</sup> FlipGrid,<sup>15</sup> Quizizz,<sup>16</sup> etc.” has helped in transferring physical materials and curriculum to digital (Tier 1 Survey). The increased use of applications and digital

---

<sup>14</sup> Founded in 2013, Edpuzzle allows teachers to use self-paced learning with interactive video lessons. Features include the ability to add voice narration and questions to video clips.

<sup>15</sup> FlipGrid, powered by Microsoft, is a video discussion experience where students can record a video of themselves and engage with a community of learners.

<sup>16</sup> Quizizz has a tagline of “we’re on a mission to engage every student.” This application makes quizzes interactive.

resources brought an increased attention to various student learning needs and is encouraging educators to move away from the one-size-fits-all type of instruction by providing materials to students in multiple modalities. Two reflections discussed the diversifying nature of online learning and commented, “There is increased use of differentiation and individual teaching to meet students where they are at” and this differentiation is attributed to “individual lessons held over zoom or google meet and using the google classroom platform to make materials and recordings available to students for whenever they can complete their work” (Tier 1 Survey, Tier 1 Survey).

41% (11/27) of participants indicated that the increase in online adaptations allowed for better use of differentiation and implementing digital resources created mindful practices of personalized instruction. Those 11 participants indicated that the increased differentiation came about as a need for better scaffolding in the hybrid model. One participant noted that the increased use in technology afforded for well-being checks with students and this established stronger teacher-student relationships. Since the shift into full digital curriculum was rapid at RTHS, teachers spent time with students on basic computer skills in hopes to increase accessibility to material. In addition, teacher reflections confirmed that digital organization and presentation on the instructional end is paramount to best meet the needs of students learning in a hybrid model. It is relevant to note that RTHS uses Google Classroom and Google extensions for much of their assignments and organizational means. One reflection discussed this practice, “Google Classroom serves as a "home base" for my students where I post all of their materials week-by-week” (Tier 2 Survey). Another survey contributed, “We have condensed a lot of information to fit into one "activity." We keep all activities simple so

that students do not have to access multiple documents to be able to get to where they need” (Tier 1 Survey).

Nine teachers specifically commented on the need to put multiple resources for an assignment into one collective activity or space that is then shared with students. The reason was that this move simplifies the potential confusion students may encounter when locating material and everything is in one place. One teacher offered that they help students stay organized in a new learning model by, “I run all my work through day-by-day slides that includes my videos, notes, and links to activities” (Tier 2 Survey). One teacher reflected those digitizing assignments has significantly cut down on students misplacing or losing work. 77% (21/27) of teachers indicated that they have used new apps or online learning tools while implementing the hybrid model. In addition to better organization of information, teacher flexibility was indicated as an essential for online learning. One reflection encouraged the need to share material in multiple format options to best make learning individualized and more equitable:

I had to create more options for students to participate and engage with the class materials I design. For instance, if students participate in class using Pear Deck<sup>17</sup> or another tool, I gave students at home the option to type directly into their copy of a Google Slides presentation, instead. (Tier 2 Survey)

88% (24/27) of participants expressed that implementing hybrid instruction encouraged more inventive instruction that they felt better met the diverse needs of students. Teachers indicated video recording as a tool, and one teacher added, “For assignments that might be

---

<sup>17</sup> Pear Deck is a Google Slides extension designed to embed formative evaluation into presentations.

confusing, I recorded myself explaining the assignments while showing them how to do it by sharing my computer screen with them” (Tier 1 Survey). This strategy is beneficial to students working remotely and will serve as a resource for students that are absent or need additional support. For example, another teacher indicates that they “recorded lessons and turned them into YouTube videos” to supplement learning now and to also have as a resource for students in the future (Tier 1 Survey). The usefulness of audio recordings has been utilized in the English classrooms and one teacher reflects, “I’ve adapted curriculum this year by making each text that students read available to them online. Students can read a digital copy or listen to audiobook versions of the texts” (Tier 2 Survey). Many teachers, 20/27 (74%), indicated that they are now utilizing video tutorials and audio technologies to better support their students.

The second question in the instructional methods section asked tier 1 participants to reflect on how best pedagogical practices are implemented in hybrid learning. Similarly, tier 2 asked participants to reflect upon how best pedagogical writing practices are implemented. Real-time feedback (including conferencing), modeling, chunking assignments, and building relationships were among the top suggested best practices and/or points of concern. The following snapshot serves as a quick reference for data collected in response to best pedagogical practices, including writing practices, implemented in the hybrid learning model.

**Inquiry:** How are best pedagogical practices, including writing practices, implemented in hybrid learning?

- 15/27 (55%) teachers expressed that having smaller class sizes has increased the quality of feedback they can give to each student.

- 70% (7/10) of tier 2 participants indicated that individual conferencing with students has increased under the hybrid model
- 5/27 (18%) of participants indicated that modeling has been more difficult for them to use with the hybrid model.
- 60% (6/10) of tier 2 instructors suggested that combining modeling with a chunking approach has been an asset when teaching writing.

Survey reflections indicated that 15/27 (55%) of teachers credited having smaller class sizes and increased access to communication with students as allowing better quality and timeliness of feedback. Further, the mixture of F2F and online elements allowed teachers to individually conference and check-in with students. 7/10 or 70% of tier 2 survey participants indicated that the hybrid model has increased their implementation of individual conferencing due to smaller class sizes and allowed the ability to meet with each student individually. One reflection explores how technology has increased feedback:

One of the most useful tools that I have discovered this year is being able to look at students' writing on their assignments in Google Classroom. Teachers can look at students' assignments as they are completing them, which enables me to give immediate feedback and implement formative assessments more in my instruction. (Tier 2 Survey)

Similarly, another teacher delves into conferencing in the hybrid model by adding that it “can be enhanced by a hybrid schedule because I have more opportunities for one-on-one discussions with students. The smaller class sizes and time built into the day for working with students allows this” (Tier 2 Survey). Conferencing is an important aspect of revision in the

writing process. Four participants specifically stated that providing feedback to full remote students has been unproportionally difficult compared to students with the in-person opportunities of the hybrid model. These teachers found providing written feedback in a remote setting more especially difficult “if the student refuses to have a Google meet or phone conversation because you cannot gauge their understanding as opposed to when you deliver feedback in-person” (Tier 1 Survey). One teacher reflected that there is a disconnect with students applying written feedback and it is then “limited to class period times” since students will not utilize the written feedback provided on remote assignments (Tier 1 Survey). A common concern among educators is that students are provided with feedback and students may not be utilizing this resource. A participant comments how educators are now presented with more opportunity to provide feedback, but there are considerations:

I feel it has been surprisingly easy to provide feedback for the students electronically, but students taking advantage of that feedback has been lacking. Also, I have discovered that some students just need the exact same feedback read to them through a Google meet. They need the relationship component to respond appropriately to the feedback or even acknowledge it. (Tier 1 Survey)

Along with conferencing, tier 2 participants identified modeling as an important strategy and 8/10 (80%) reflections confirmed that modeling is best practice for writing no matter the learning model. One reflection included that they use a modeling style where they explain a writing technique, then show an “expert” piece, an anchor text, and have the students identify and evaluate the writing skill in that piece. The teacher then provides “a formative assessment where students practice implementing the skill in their own writing, and then finally a summative assessment where students combine that skill with other writing

techniques” (Tier 2). However, one tier 2 teacher felt that modeling has been hindered for remote students since the strategy “is best when done in-person with students interacting during the session. Posting video instruction of modeling does not seem to be as effective (either because of lack of engagement or lack of understanding)” (Tier 2 Survey). 5/27 (18%) participants indicated that modeling has been more difficult for them to use with the hybrid model.

Because of the condensed learning timeframe, 60% (6/10) of tier 2 instructors specifically suggested that combining modeling with a chunking approach has been an asset. One reflection included that they chunk assignments by creating and/or adapting templates that break longer writing assignments into smaller, more manageable parts. For instance, one teacher suggested that they break a writing paragraph down by creating a box for their claim, evidence, and analysis/elaboration with helpful hints about what to include in these sections next to each box. They added that, “Similarly, I have broken down papers into introductory, body, and conclusion paragraphs” (Tier 2 Survey). I have included an example of what this chunking method would look like, provided in a graphic below (see table 8):

**Table Eight: Chunking as Writing Method Example**

## Body Paragraphs

Each body paragraph should have its own main idea. You want to be strategic about what you talk about in each body paragraph. You should make sure you follow an order that makes sense for your thesis.

Some options for organizing your body paragraphs include...

- Chronological - beginning, middle, end
- Order of importance
- Cause and Effect
- Compare and Contrast

Your body paragraphs should be focused. You want to choose a main idea for the body paragraph and write your claim to show your argument about that main idea. Make sure that all of the evidence you provide in the paragraph supports your main idea's claim.

### Body Paragraph 1

|  |  |
|--|--|
| <p><b>Main Idea 1</b><br/>Before you write the essay, you need to plan out your main idea for each body paragraph. What is this paragraph going to be about?</p> |  |
|--|--|

|   |  |
|---|--|
| <p><b>Try this format for your claim:</b><br/>The author uses / highlights / emphasizes ----- to show / prove / explain / detail -----.</p>                     |  |
| <p><b>Claim</b></p> <p><b>Evidence 1</b><br/>Quote 1<br/>Elaboration</p> <p><b>Evidence 2</b><br/>Quote 2<br/>Elaboration</p> <p><b>Concluding Sentence</b></p> |  |

An important commonality identified by survey participants is the belief that building relationships as teacher-student as well as creating a learning culture where students build relationships with one another is a best practice. Building relationships is a well-known best practice. However, it is important to note that educators especially found the importance of building positive interactions during a traumatic time to be an important factor during

pandemic learning. A positive of the hybrid model that one reflection noted is that “accessibility to teachers is even better (in my opinion) since we have office hours” (Tier 1 Survey). Prior to the 2020-2021 school year, RTHS did not have a built-in time for office hours and now teachers are scheduled two office hours per day. This time is used to build relationships with students, answer questions in-person, or to set up phone conferencing and/or Google meets.

One teacher reflected on the usefulness of online communication, “students feel safe asking questions while working on computers because they are not in front of their peers feeling that pressure” and this safe feeling also applies to asking their teacher for help (Tier 1 Survey). However, seven teachers felt that the aspects of remote learning, present in the hybrid model, does not build powerful enough relationships and students are hurting academically (and social-emotional) because of a lack of connection to the school and/or their peers. One teacher inquires on building relationships that, “The best [way to connect] is with in-person opportunities. The second best, I feel, is through synchronous classes. Lastly, dialog through email/text works” (Tier 1 Survey).

The final survey question in the instructional methods section, asked tier 1 participants about what adaptations to instructional design and/or teaching style have transpired with hybrid learning. The tier 2 participants were asked to consider if/how these adaptations have influenced writing instruction. Both tiers of participants referenced self-paced learning as a new instructional approach in their classroom and noted that tutorial videos will remain as part of their teaching routine moving forward. The following is a snapshot that synthesizes the data collected surrounding responses to adaptations happening to instructional and/or teaching style with the hybrid model.

**Inquiry:** What adaptations to instructional and/or teaching style have transpired with the hybrid model and has this influenced writing instruction?

- 7/27 (25%) teachers indicated that the hybrid model encouraged them to evaluate the effectiveness of their curriculum and use the most important parts.
- 37% (10/27) of participants implemented a self-paced or flipped style of classroom in conjunction with the hybrid model to best cover curriculum.
- 9/10 (90%) of tier 2 teachers indicated that they use and will continue to use tutorial videos as supplemental resources for writing instruction.

92% (25/27) of survey participants referenced paring down curriculum to the most essential for the 2020-2021 school year. Seven participants indicated that the condensed learning timeframe, present in the RTHS hybrid model, encouraged them to pinpoint most important curriculum and focus on scaffolding needed for successful evaluation. 10/27 or 37% of participants noted that they applied a self-paced or flipped style of classroom in conjunction with the hybrid model to best cover curriculum and meet the needs of a condensed learning timeframe. Two participants indicated that they have been doing a flipped classroom prior to hybrid learning and this helped throughout the transition. With self-paced learning, “students have the power to slow down or speed up instruction. They can work at their own pace and not be held back by the pace of the class” (Tier 1 Survey). As teachers implement more diversified instruction, the self-paced nature of the classroom is increasing. Additionally, participants reflected on the potential of continuing to use technology supports moving forward.

88% (24/27) of participants indicated that they would like to continue to explore ways to implement technology into lessons, specifically video tutorials. 9/10 (90%) of tier 2 teachers

indicated that they use video tutorials as a supplemental resource for writing instruction. One response reflects on the usefulness, “If I record my demonstrations and post, students have these to view before, during, and after the assignment. In fact, I wondered why I waited for a pandemic to discover the benefits of recorded demonstrations” (Tier 1 Survey). One reflection added that videos are allowing students to move at a pace comfortable for their learning, since “all the assignments posted are published at the beginning of each week” (Tier 1 Survey).

The value of videos, included for many, the ability to be a resource for those that are absent or missing in-person instruction for an extended time. However, one teacher pondered if this self-paced nature will negatively affect the social development of students. They added that tutorial videos have “streamlined my curriculum, though since assignments are more individually oriented, it's more difficult to bring discussion and collaboration into the classroom” (Tier 2 Survey). Similarly, another teacher reflected on social interactions, “I worry sometimes that students who are fully online lose some of the questioning, discussion, and interpersonal/intrapersonal skills that are developed in an in-person setting” (Tier 2 Survey). When considering the development of social skills and ability to interact with others, one reflection provided insight into the approach of maintaining guided instruction combined with self-paced activities:

I have been encouraged by how well students pick up new terms and concepts when they are given the opportunity to learn about and explore them on their own. For instance, I use Edpuzzle to create instructional videos, which allows me to embed questions in the clips. This allows me to gauge whether students grasp a concept or need more time to learn about it, and students may complete these in class or at home, so they are very inclusive. However, sometimes

students prefer not to watch another video and would rather read about an idea or discuss essential questions with their peers. I find myself trying to break up the year with different opportunities for students to participate. (Tier 2 Survey)

The self-paced nature of hybrid learning coupled with the task of then creating instruction that is individualized and compatible within this structure was a new task for many teachers that completed the survey. However, one reflection offered a collaborative approach that includes students in the organizational and planning process. They offered that it is “helpful to hear from the students what's working and not working for them. Their feedback has impacted how I then approach each of them with writing instruction” (Tier 2 Survey).

### **Student Engagement Synopsis**

The first student engagement survey question asked both tier 1 and tier 2 participants if they have used synchronous activities as part of their hybrid learning and to reflect upon challenges/successes they had encountered. The trends show that while teachers are willing to implement synchronous activities into their curriculum, many are facing struggles with technology, split attention as a management concern, and lack of engagement from students. The following is a quick-reference snapshot of reflection surrounding synchronous learning.

**Inquiry:** Are teachers using synchronous learning and what challenges/successes have they encountered?

- 48% (13/27) of teachers are using synchronous learning in the hybrid model.
- 5/27 (18%) of participants reported that technology issues created frustration and a lack of motivation to use synchronous activities.
- 48% (13/27) of teachers observe a lack of engagement from students with synchronous learning opportunities.

- 6/27 (22%) of participants expressed that they would choose individual and small group meetings over synchronous learning.

Out of the 27 survey responses, all 27 (100%) participants had attempted synchronous instruction while RTHS faced a short-term complete shutdown with remote instruction only. However, once hybrid instruction resumed, 13 of the 27 (48%) of participants continued to use synchronous activities. 5/27 (18%) of teachers reflected that their inability to use synchronous activities stemmed from technology problems connected to having students both in-person and remote. One teacher reflected that the technology concerns were a point of consideration especially for our ELL/ESL students and that synchronous learning is “challenging for a lot of our student population [since] just having to change their entire learning environment has not been easy for most of them” (Tier 1 Survey). Another participant provided that the audio aspects of synchronous learning made for a difficult try:

During a club meeting, I had one student join in-person, but several others join remotely. This made it incredibly difficult for the in-person student to communicate with both their peers at home and me since we were in the same room and the audio overlapped. It seems like students in-person view students at home as if they are part of a different class and not all part of the same team. It is incredibly challenging to extend a classroom culture of trust, support, and rapport to students at home. (Tier 2 Survey).

Six survey responses indicated similar frustrations and opted to swap synchronous learning for individual or small group meetings. One reflection offered that they would “focus on in-person students when they were here and at-home students in small groups (all virtual) or one-

on-one later. This caused less split attention from me and from students” (Tier 1 Survey). 5/27 (18%) of participants indicated that synchronous learning created a feeling of divided attention and there was a struggle to attend to both in-person and remote students equally. In addition to technology issues, 48% (13/27) of teachers were concerned with the lack of engagement from students and reported that students would not attend synchronous activities and/or would not engage with the class material.

Question two in the engagement section asked tier 1 participants to reflect on what the hybrid model has revealed about engagement. Similarly, tier 2 participants were asked to reflect upon what has been revealed about writing engagement. Responses presented the following commonalities: relationships motivate engagement, small class sizes are impacting motivation, the patterns of students that typically participate versus those that do participate remains consistent in the hybrid model, and students are not adapting as well as anticipated to remote learning. Tier 2 contrasted in response in that teachers reported an increase in writing motivation, including attention to revision and engagement with the writing process. The following snapshot provides a concise reference to participant reflection surround the hybrid model and engagement, including motivation towards writing.

**Inquiry:** What has the hybrid model revealed about engagement, including writing motivation?

- 66% (17/27) of teachers saw a lack of student engagement with remote/online portions of hybrid learning.
- 7/27 (25%) of participants noted that smaller class sizes has a positive impact on student engagement.

- 70% (7/10) of tier 2 participants identified an improvement in writing engagement and revision with the hybrid model.
- 4/10 (40%) of tier 2 teachers included that motivation toward writing has improved because of a condensed learning timeframe.

22/27 (81%) of teachers recognized the usefulness of building relationships with students in relation to motivation and participation. 66% (17/27) of participants commented on a lack of student engagement with remote work, and how this challenge is a concern since the hybrid model relies on online elements. One teacher clarifies that low motivation may be due to relationship building since some students remain motivated by grades or parents: “But I can just tell that the students that would have gotten through because they felt cared for and respected in the classroom just aren't making that connection through their remote days. It takes so much longer to build relationships” (Tier 1 Survey). 18/27 (66%) of reflections concluded that a lack of engagement is evident with the remote elements of hybrid learning. However, seven teachers elaborated on small classes and how this has been helpful with the hybrid model. 7/27 (25%) of participants contributed that smaller class sizes increased engagement and motivation in both F2F and online settings. A teacher elaborates on how smaller class sizes helps better support students that previously went unnoticed:

Engagement with our small class sizes has allowed us to see some of the lowest students gain confidence and realize they are smarter than they even thought. A constant number of years of not doing well in school has these students thinking they are not smart when they are when in the right environment. It is

amazing to see the number of students this year smiling and growing confidence. (Tier 1 Response)

A boost in participation and engagement was also noted by tier 2 participants since, “The smaller class sizes and Google Meet conferences have helped students be more open and engaged in the writing process” (Tier 2 Survey).

8/27 (29%) of responses theorized that students showing motivation F2F are the same students engaging in online activity. Further, this idea aligns with previous trends of student engagement, no matter the learning format, and was not a surprise for teachers. One response elaborates on this idea in connection to hybrid learning: “A number of students seem to be doing great. I think these are the same students who would be doing great in a traditional classroom” (Tier 1 Survey). One teacher, expands further and suggests that some students are not adapting to remote work as hoped, “Our same students who are engaged while in the classroom are still engaged in remote settings. However, there is a group of students who, while engaged in the classroom, struggle to participate in any kind of virtual learning situation” (Tier 1 Reflection).

40% (4/10) of tier 2 responses included that motivation toward writing has improved because of a condensed learning timeframe and added, “students knew they had a time limit for work before we had to move on to a new skill. This helped to motivate a lot of students to complete work in a timely fashion and practice the skill while they were learning it” (Tier 2 Survey). 7/10 (70%) of tier 2 teachers concluded that student motivation to revise and revisits stages of the writing process has increased in the hybrid model. Conferencing was identified as a best practice in encouraging engagement toward writing. One survey response felt that attention to feedback and revision has increased and the “biggest reason for this is because of

small class sizes. I am able to give instant feedback as students write live in class, so they are constantly seeing my feedback and making revisions” (Tier 2 Survey).

For the third question in the engagement section, it is important to note that RTHS has a high population of ESL/ELL students. The third question asked tier 1 participants to reflect on what the shift in instructional practices reveals about how different learners are impacted by hybrid learning. Tier 2 participants were then asked to reflect on what writing evaluation and assignments reveals about how different learners are impacted by hybrid learning. The following snapshot provides a reference to what participants indicated the shift in instructional practices reveals about different learners.

**Inquiry:** What has the shift in instructional practices revealed about how are different learners impacted by hybrid learning and how does writing contribute?

- 15/27 (55%) of teachers indicated that fully remote learners are especially struggling without F2F support.
- 62% (17/27) of participants indicated that different learners are having difficulty adapting in the hybrid model.
- 7/27 (25%) of surveys indicated that meeting with students individually and in small groups has helped close the learning gap for those needing more F2F supports.

15/27 (55%) of participants indicated that different learners that are fully remote are significantly struggling without the in-person elements and added supports of F2F. 12/27 (44%) felt that different learners are struggling in the hybrid format even with the in-person elements. 6 teachers communicated that the combination of an added language barrier and less opportunity for the provided technology supports is creating concerns for our ESL/ELL

learners. One teacher elaborated on this concern, “The activities that are designed to be done with limited teacher support at home, still require a SUBSTANTIAL amount of ESL/ELL support that is not present when the students are home” (Tier 1 Survey). Another reflection detailed that for online days, “ELL students are much more successful when they come into the school in the afternoons to complete their "at home" work with teacher/ELL support” (Tier 1). Being available to students and diversifying the implementation of assignments has been helpful in hybrid instruction. One teacher reflects on the efforts of the RTHS staff:

I can see that teachers are working their best to make their content adaptable however they can for ELLs (providing translated copies, having aides for assistance with class/phone calls to families). I noticed that first quarter there were a lot of failures in that student body group but by this quarter it seems like there have been adaptations to help serve various populations. This also could be in part to teachers learning and adapting as well. (Tier 1 Survey)

Smaller class sizes have made it possible for teachers to provide more one-on-one with students.

Seven teacher reflections shared that in-person and virtual meetings were used during office hours to connect with their learners needing extra supports. One teacher expressed the need for individualized time, “English language learners and students with disabilities benefit the most from having small group time, in person, with teachers” (Tier 1 Survey). Regarding writing instruction, 8/10 (80%) of tier 2 teachers expressed concerns with reaching their ESL/ELL students on remote learning days. One reflection provided that that ELL students are impacted negatively since this student population struggles to complete asynchronous work. Further, “while other students can "fake it" if they haven't read or catch on to the idea of

the text quickly, ELL learners struggle to do this. This gap in knowledge then affects their writing because they don't understand the content of the writing assignment” (Tier 2 Survey).

Three teachers specifically identified the digital divide and little computer training for the lack of engagement from struggling learners on online days. Additionally, a composition teacher from tier 2 elaborates on how a lack of digital presence creates concerns:

Hybrid instruction has additional challenges for students who are emerging English learners. One of my responsibilities is to help students identify their own spelling and grammar mistakes. However, an important and often overlooked part of this responsibility is communicating feedback to students. When students are remote, I find it helpful to set up a Google Meet with students so we may stop and talk about sections of their writing. If students do not attend these meetings, I worry that the feedback I provide goes unread or misinterpreted. For students who are emerging English learners, I also worry that the feedback I provide might come across as overwhelming, since it can be challenging to succinctly explain the reasoning behind editing suggestions. (Tier 2 Survey)

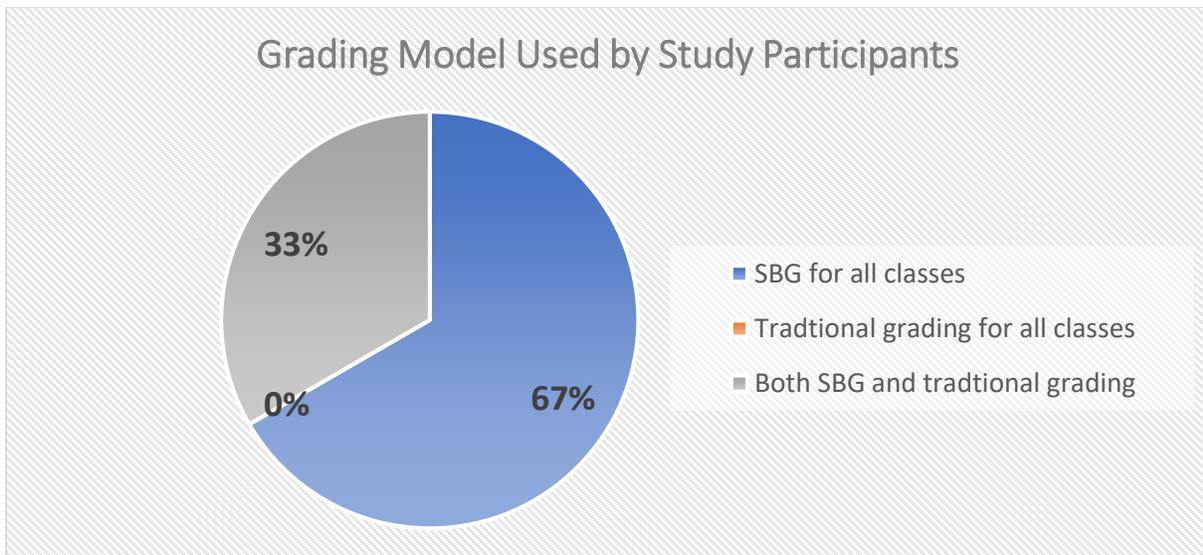
Two survey reflections added that they felt all students were struggling with the online aspects of hybrid learning. One teacher draws upon her experience, “I imagine students who are English Language Learners and/or Special Education students are having a difficult time. But, having recently switched to General Ed from Special Ed, I see that many of our General Ed kids are struggling as well” (Tier 1 Response). A participant claimed that the patterns of success are influenced by factors outside of the learning environment. While all learners benefit from added supports, struggling students may not receive what is needed for success while at home, “It seems that students with high organization and very high internal motivation do perhaps even

better relative to peers in this environment, as do those with highly supportive, education-centering, and organized homes” (Tier 1 Survey).

### Evaluation Synopsis

Question 1 of the evaluation section on the teacher survey asked both tier 1 and tier 2 if they use SBG for all classes, if they use traditional grading for all classes, or if they use both SBG and traditional grading for their classes. The chart below shows these results (see table 9):

**Table Nine: Grading Method Used by Study Participants**



The second evaluation question of the case study asked teachers from both tiers to reflect on what the various shifts in instructional practices during hybrid learning reveal about SBG as a mode of evaluation. The results offered polarizing responses in overall perceptions of SBG between tier 1 and tier 2 participants. Commonalities between tier participants indicated that SBG evaluates what students know and allows for flexibility like the nature of hybrid learning. The following snapshot provides a quick reference to data collected from reflections surrounding SBG as a mode of evaluation.

**Inquiry:** What have the shifts in instructional practices revealed about SBG as a mode of evaluation?

- 13/17 (76%) of participants expressed general concerns with SBG as a mode of evaluation.
- 70% (7/10) of tier 2 participants articulated that SBG is valuable for writing evaluation and is a useful pairing with hybrid learning.

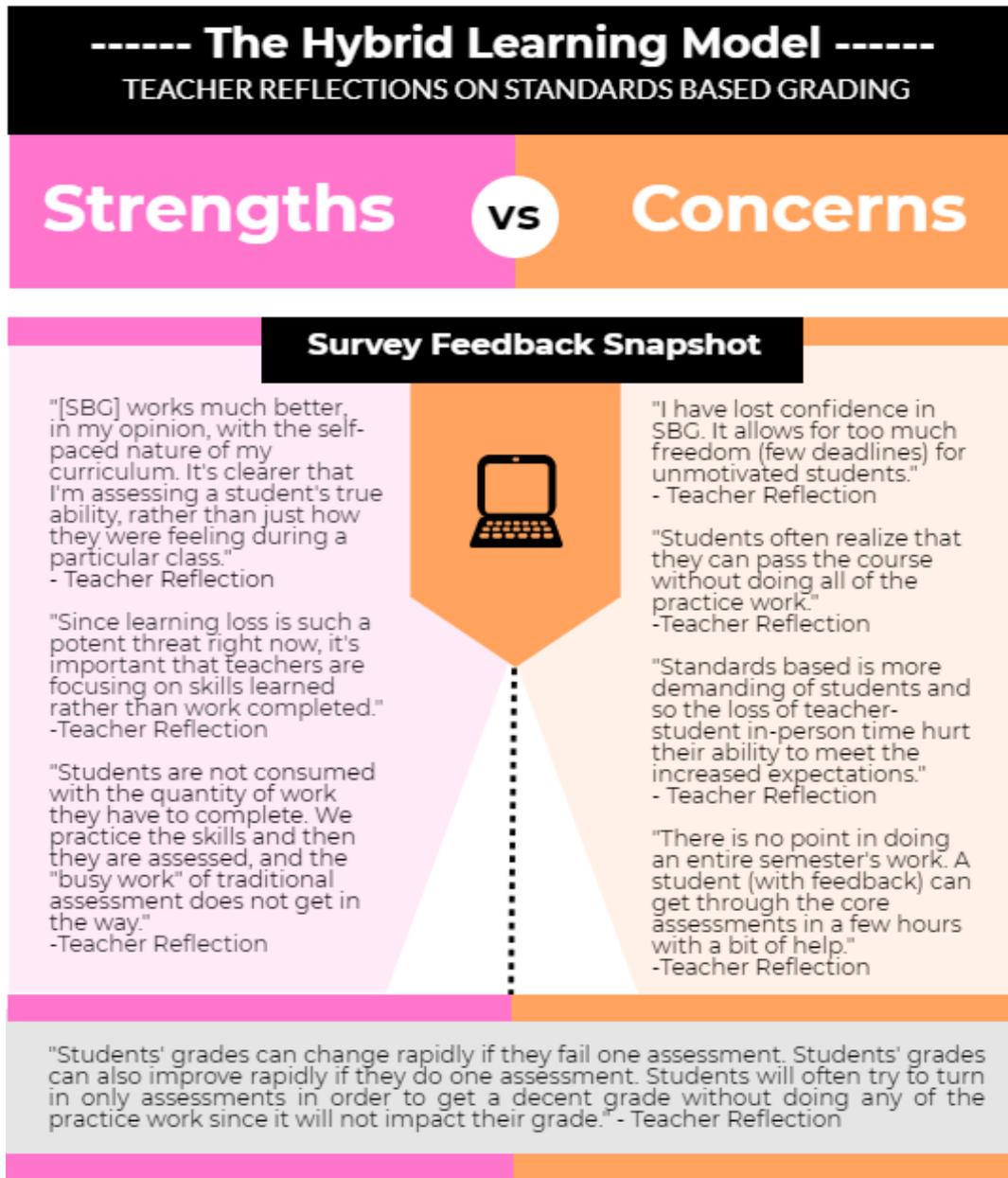
11/17 (64%) of tier 1 participants expressed concerns with SBG as a mode of evaluation, 3/17 (17%) felt SBG has little to no impact on evaluation practices, and 2/17 (11%) felt that SBG has positively impacted students and/or been an asset to the hybrid model. In contrast, 2/10 (20%) tier 2 surveys are skeptical of SBG evaluation practices, 1/10 (10%) felt that SBG has little impact on evaluation practices, and 70% (7/10) of tier 2 expressed that SBG is useful for writing evaluation and hybrid learning pairs well with this mode of evaluation. Those reporting positives surrounding SBG felt that it “lends itself well to the hybrid teaching model, specifically because it is easier to adapt for individual student achievement and for a classroom where there is a high level of differentiation between students” (Tier 2 Survey). One teacher adds that SBG “eliminates a lot of "fluff" which coincides with the pandemic. SBG classes are more streamlined to work during hybrid learning” (Tier 1 Survey). Others reported that “SBG is useful for stopping kids from feeling overwhelmed. Understanding of the skills on the most recent assessment doesn't punish a student who's been struggling” (Tier 2 Survey).

The frequency of evaluation was a point of concern for one teacher in tier 1. One teacher reflects how SBG, stacked with a condensed learning timeframe, is not a valuable system of evaluation:

It can be hard to just use SBG as it takes time to get to a formal test. It could take 3 weeks before a grade gets put into the gradebook and the student will not see another test for another 3-4 weeks. Those who are not participating will not see the repercussions until that grade is posted. (Tier 1 Survey)

Another teacher provided that they felt SBG has disserved students this year and elaborated that there is a heavy weight placed on the final assignments of the class, “students who have skipped the first half of assignments can pass the class with a high grade if they seek out assistance. However, students who have done the majority of assignment but struggled on the last few assignments risk earning lower grades” (Tier 2 Survey). Since results on this question are divided, the following infographic provides further reflection on the strengths versus concerns of SBG paired with the hybrid learning model. Reference the infographic below (see table10):

**Table Ten: Strengths Versus Concerns of Standards Based Grading**



The final question of the survey asked participants in tier 2 to consider how best writing practices are evaluated through the SBG system. Commonalities in responses identified rubrics as essential, standards are to be used as benchmarks to determine writing growth, and that evaluation practices should be reflective of the writing process. The following snapshot provides a concise overview of responses collected surrounding writing practices and evaluation.

**Inquiry:** How are best writing practices evaluated through the SBG system?

- 90% (9/10) of tier 2 participants indicate that detailed rubrics are best to evaluate writing.
- 6/10 (60%) of teachers use SBG standards as benchmarks for student writing goals.
- 80% (8/10) commented on modeling, including chunking, as a best practice to lead into evaluation of student writing.

All 10/10 (100%) participants in tier 2 use SBG in their composition classes apart from Advanced Placement and Dual Credit sections. 90% (9/10) of participants indicated that they use detailed rubrics to evaluate writing. One reflection provided that detailed rubrics are key to evaluating writing through SBG and when done correctly, “a rubric can serve as additional feedback for a student and can aid in the revision process” (Tier 2 Survey).

6/10 (60%) of participants commented how the evaluation standards set by each composition level are helpful benchmarks “to gauge student growth over the course of a school year or semester” (Tier 2 Survey). One response included that they “discuss with students why [teachers] have chosen the standards that we did” to include students in the evaluation process. Additionally, one teacher reflects on working with peers, “Teachers collaborate with each other to help their students meet the writing standards, and I have felt that this has been very useful for my development as a teacher” (Tier 2 Survey). 4/10 (40%) of participants elaborated on the usefulness of SBG as a tool to track student writing growth from 9<sup>th</sup> through graduation since teachers use common evaluation measurements and can easily share data and observations with one another.

8/10 (80%) of teachers confirmed that some form of modeling is best practice when teaching writing such as the “I do, we do, you do model which allows the teacher to model exemplary writing along the way” (Tier 2 Survey). 80% (8/10) of participants felt that SBG has helped teachers create mindful writing standards and evaluations that encourage students to develop skills throughout the writing process. One response reflects on SBG, “The writing standards for our English courses all go along with part of the writing process” (Tier 2 Survey). Similarly, 7/10 (70%) of teachers commented that SBG allows students to make important mistakes in their writing. One response elaborates on writing practice, “Standards Based Grading takes the learning process into account and doesn't punish students for the practice they need to learn new concepts” (Tier 2 Survey).

Frequency of practice was identified as important by 6/10 (60%) of survey participants and one survey elaborated, “Standards grading makes for a more honest assessment of the skills we've taught and the consistency with which the students keep them” (Tier 2 Survey). Similarly, another survey felt the SBG system is reflective of the writing process in that “the revision and resubmission aspects are key to me since writing with SBG is more of a conversation about smaller ways to improve each time, and I think students are benefiting from that” (Tier 2 Survey). The hybrid model affords fluidity in learning for both student and teacher and when considering the structure of SBG, one teacher reflection proposed that “there does not seem to be one set way that a student needs to demonstrate that they have met a standard, which gives teachers the flexibility to design their own activities or borrow from a colleague, which I appreciate” (Tier 2 Survey).

## CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSIONS

### Overview

The purpose of this study was to reveal if and how the hybrid learning model and the learning technologies utilized for instruction change or impact best teaching practices. The objective was to explore the relationship of the hybrid model paired with Standards Based Grading (SBG) on writing instruction. This section contains the conclusions on my case study, including what I envision will happen in classrooms and secondary education moving forward. Additionally, I discuss strategies for educators to further improve the implantation of hybrid learning, SBG, and writing instruction. A summary of my conclusions are as follows:

**Direct Instruction and Seat Time:** The hybrid model encourages teachers to approach content with less direct instruction and instead utilize a self-paced or flipped classroom style of teaching. As mentioned earlier in Chapter Two, the instructor's role in a hybrid classroom is to act "as a facilitator, a mentor, or a coach" (Vonderwell et al.) Structured seat-time will be a concept that needs reevaluation moving forward since the hybrid model has shown the benefits of allowing students to learn and engage outside of the classroom and on their own time. Reevaluating structured seat time, as Vatterott supports, "is a complete overhaul of the teaching learning process" and allows for the shift from the lecture style of learning that is predominately seen in F2F instruction (35).

**Collaborative Work and Synchronous Learning:** Building a culture of trust and willingness to share ideas between hybrid students and remote students is a challenge. This then influences participation on collaborative work. The case study found that several teachers feel that a minimal number of students engage with remote learning assignments. 48% reported they observe a lack of engagement from students with synchronous learning. This is in-part to a lack

of instructors effectively using synchronous learning due to challenges with technology and an increased expectation of responsibilities on the teacher. Additionally, many high school students are struggling to have their emotional needs met and intellectual maturity is developing at a different rate since surviving a pandemic. These realizations are why SBG can be especially helpful within the frame of hybrid learning. Wormeli confirms that a low grade, in hopes to teach the “importance of working hard, using time wisely, and the tough realities of life” is no longer an assessment of academic ability and is an “abdication of our responsibilities as educators” (17). Building a trusting and fruitful learning community starts by separating academic and behavior objectives and recognizing that “merging diverse sources of evidence distorts the meaning of any grade” (Munoz and Guskey 65). This brings the conversation full circle and leaves to question; how do educators encourage their students to participate and contribute while in online formats? Since nonacademic behaviors can be imperative to the success of an online student, Vonderwell believes the answer is linked in evaluation. Student-centered evaluation encourages “dialog, collaboration, peer and self-evaluation, and a sense of community for a shared purpose” (310). Hybrid technology can offer the ability for all students to respond to questions and participate equally.

**Modeling:** Teachers identified that modeling, whether connected to the writing process or isolated skills, when in a full remote and even hybrid setting, was difficult. Different learners, such as ELL/ESL students, need added support in a hybrid model and benefit from conferencing and additional in-person instruction. The rapid transition into hybrid learning highlighted concerns of equity including the digital divide and learning gaps among students. This has encouraged educators to utilize various materials to engage with all learning styles. Teachers are

experimenting with differentiating not only material, but the multiple mediums where lessons can exist and be shared with students.

**Frequency of Evaluation:** While SBG was found to have benefits as a method of evaluation, the case study did not show that SBG directly influences hybrid instruction. This study and research conclude that no matter the system being used, although SBG can be perceived as superior to traditional grading, it matters more how the system is being implemented, communicated with students, and if it is being used consistently among educators. I found that the frequency of evaluation is what makes SBG a successful measurement of student achievement. SBG does influence how writing instruction is approached by teachers since SBG is goal-directed and evaluates student's most recent work. Approaching writing through goal-directed thinking "encourages instructors of writing to consider the internal processing of our students" and shifts the focus from the product to the process of writing (Flower and Hays 365). A growth-mindset approach (Dweck) that is conducive to recursive writing is present in SBG by focusing on skill development and viewing learning as a continuous development.

**Class Size and Feedback:** Hybrid learning allows for smaller class sizes, and this creates an opportunity for more quality and timely feedback. O'Connor previously highlighted that educators "voice concern that measuring learning and communicating in a timely fashion presents real challenges at all levels" (70). Thus, smaller class sizes help to elevate some of these pressures. Further, Anson confirms that class size determines relationships among students since teaching writing is founded on students "responding to each other's drafts, negotiating revisions, discussing ideas, sharing ideas, sharing perspectives, and finding some level of trust as collaborators" and this necessitates small class size to build positive relationships (807). Formative feedback given to redirect and assist students increases both in-person and remotely

by using applications such as Google Documents that allow for co-editing. Further, hybrid learning contributes to better differentiation of instruction and allows for individualized writing tasks. Writing is best implemented in a hybrid model through conferencing with students, modeling writing processes, and chunking writing tasks.

### **Learning Loss and Restructuring Instructional Time Conclusions**

Educators worry that this generation of students face the threat of learning loss. However, students have gained resilience, computer skills, and the ability to communicate professionally in a digital space. The pandemic is stripping socialization from many students and social-emotional needs are high. Hybrid learning condenses the in-person instructional time, and this factor has refocused how educators approach content. Bruffee, a major advocate for collaboration, reminds educators that instruction “must involve engaging students in conversation among themselves at as many points in both the writing and the reading process” in hopes to make working with peers worthwhile (642). A misconception, that has primarily resulted from an overreliance on the F2F instructional format, is the concept that teaching consists primarily of the transmission of knowledge from an expert to a learner in real-time (Albers et al. 186). With instructional time constraints, there is an emphasis on skill development and quality of instruction/understanding opposed to the amount of content that can be covered in a designated learning timeframe. Additionally, allowing for virtual and asynchronous modes of learning found in the hybrid model, provide educators time to “build in elements of metacognitive delay” as outlined by O’Byrne and Pytach (138). Encouraging students to “press pause” on learning or perhaps delay an immediate response directly models what is encouraged in a recursive mindset for writing by allowing time to digest and revisit.

The case study confirmed that patterns present in a traditional learning day remain in a hybrid model. For example, those who typically would attend during traditional learning days participated in learning both in-person and remotely with the hybrid model. Those who would not regularly attend during a traditional learning day, did not attend regularly in-person, and struggled to complete work remotely with the hybrid model. Further, this study emphasized that the hybrid learning model may not work for all learners, but hybrid learning can benefit many students. Different learners, especially ELL/ESL students, benefit from instruction provided in-person and the hybrid model was an adjustment for many of those types of learners. The high mobility rate, present in our school and many others nationwide, was of a high concern with the hybrid model. The learning timeframe is significantly condensed and students moving in or out of our district struggled to join and understand the content of the class.

### **Technology and Equitable Teaching Conclusions**

Educators cannot ignore the digital divide in our nation and the pandemic has further exposed concerns of equity that must be considered. Adapting material into a hybrid format is best supported with the use of third-party applications, as indicated by 74% of case study participants. Technology is beneficial when implemented with a clear intention to improve teaching or access to material in some way. Accessibility of material is vital for the success of the hybrid model and teachers have made materials more available to students by utilizing several styles of resources such as paper material, digital activities, audio pairing, visual enrichment, and a hybrid of all. Teachers identify the usefulness of video and audio recordings in the hybrid model and 90% of tier 2 participants identified as a strategy that will continue to be used for supplemental writing resources in the future. Video tutorials are a resource that will

benefit students with an extended absence, those needing to further practice a skill, or those that learn best from modeling.

Many schools struggled to provide internet access and/or computers to students and brainstormed creative solutions such as offering open internet in the school parking lot and renting school devices to students. A more permanent solution such as providing all students with Chromebooks and hotspots is becoming available to many schools and will be an improvement moving forward. Equitable teaching, in terms of considering learning styles, has seen a positive adjustment in the hybrid model. This model encourages educators to consider various learning styles and to differentiate learning through means of material and the actual medium the material is presented. Teachers, like any fallible human, use varying criteria in determining a grade. However, these discrepancies “paired with students not being well-informed of criteria, create concerns of equity in evaluation” (Vatterott 55).

To encourage student ownership of learning, and thus combat learning loss, a student must be presented with clear and identifiable learning targets. Additionally, schools like RTHS, have now imbedded office hours into part of the workday. This then allows students to meet one-on-one through virtual means or in-person. Having a set time for students to receive additional supports has been especially helpful for struggling learners or students that have been absent. Published in the April 2022 edition of the Superintendent’s message from the Illinois State Board of Education, RTHS discusses their use of ESSER funds in the form of office hours. ESSER funds are intended to provide services to all schools that are authorized by Local Education Agencies. RTHS is using their funding to “support social-emotional health, and academic recovery by adding office hours” at the end of each school day. Attempting to confront learning loss, students can meet with their teachers, social worker, or counselor during this designated

time. RTHS reports that they are seeing an improvement in pass rates since office hours have been implemented. Resources such as office hours can work as a supplemental strategy to combat learning loss and field concerns of equitable learning.

### **Standards Based Grading Conclusions**

This study concluded that the means of evaluation and/or the mode of grading used by the school, does not directly influence the model of instruction being used. This revelation was not surprising since all instructors were launched into remote and hybrid models, and this mode of instruction was required. However, this study confirms that it is *how* a system of grading is being implemented that matters and then influences other aspects of the educational environment. No matter the grading system being applied, it comes down to the consistency and the understanding of how the model is best used and then communicated with staff, parents, students, and the community.

Through the case study, I found inconsistencies within my school, and I believe that the implementation of SBG is inconsistent nationwide. The purpose of an aligned reporting system is to have standards reported that mirror the CCSS strands. If done correctly, SBG evaluation and reporting, will inspire best pedagogical practices and model the CCSS strands for ELA. Munoz and Gusky believe that SBG can be “invaluable as teachers work to implement the Common Core standards, which are meant to prepare all students for college and/or career” (67). However, the case study identified an inconsistency with evaluation and SBG. The frequency in which a teacher uses evaluation strategies and provides feedback is vital since this is core to a writing-process approach. As stated in Chapter 2, cognitive researchers Flower and Hays add that “the act of writing is a goal-directed thinking process” and “is guided by the writer’s growing network of goals” (365). Writing goals can be developed through feedback and feedback is an

essential form of frequent, timely evaluation. My suggestions, using feedback and research as backing, are that the frequency of evaluation must be consistent throughout all departments, students should be involved in the process of constructing evaluation, and there needs to be open-communication and development opportunities for staff.

The case study shows that there is an irregularity among staff as far as frequency of evaluation. I found that tier 2 responses had an overwhelmingly supportive outlook toward SBG compared to the tier 1 counterparts that showed a more critical viewpoint. My conclusion is that tier 2, or those who instruct/evaluate writing more frequently, are evaluating the skills through means of smaller formative assignments. Those in tier 1, such as subjects like science and math, report on skills evaluated for quizzes and tests only. Those in tier 1 are giving feedback throughout the practice and formative work but are not as frequently reporting on them for a grade. SBG is useful for parents and students in that it only reports on the most current attempt of a skill. The more frequently this skill can be updated, then the more informative the grade can be for students. Additionally, a concern from many teachers is that SBG does not have an accountability component for students that choose to do little work until the end of a learning timeframe.

For this valid concern, I have two points of reflection. First, if a student can attempt the final or last assignment and achieve high marks for all skills with little practice beforehand, this act shows the student can perform and has the knowledge of the skills. Therefore, a teacher can respond by providing enrichment and/or increasing the rigor of the course. The student is demonstrating the mastery of the skills and the ability to progress. This brings in the idea of competency-based education and a further point of study would compare this model with SBG and/or see how SBG can transform into competency-based education. I would like to further

investigate how competency-based education would be used in a high school. My second point of reflection offers a suggestion for educators that do not have the means to implement a competency-based curriculum or for those that feel an accountability component is vital for their students. In addition to reading and writing skills, an English teacher can implement content standards. Content skills can be implemented in a variety of ways. However, this is my suggestion on how to use them to encourage students to participate in each unit present in a learning timeframe:

**Content Standard Example:** A teacher instructing a Puritan Literature unit is teaching Arthur Miller's *The Crucible* and includes a content skill on the final writing assignment of the unit. The content skill reads, "analyze how justice was manipulated during the Salem Witch Trails" and will not be reevaluated during another unit in the learning timeframe. Since this content skill is only applied in one unit, students will then need to complete the work to have a score on this standard or the standard will remain as missing and will not be replaced. While the reading and writing skills from the Puritan assignment will be replaced throughout the next unit of learning, the content skill will remain unchanged and may encourage students to go back and attempt the evaluation and skill.

The next major conclusion I found pertaining to SBG is that students need to feel invested and understand the grading criteria of SBG for it to be a useful source of feedback. Including students in the decision process of creating evaluation tools is a way to increase a collaborative culture and investment from students. For example, teachers can allow students to decide whether the evaluation will be a project, paper, or some of other type of activity. In situations where there is a set evaluation, such as an essay, teachers can allow prompt options and student choice to encourage engagement. Further, rubrics are a requirement for best SBG

evaluation practices and a way to include students is to allow them to help create a rubric and/or spend time explaining the intended goals of an evaluation and how the rubric will be used to measure these specific goals. The feeder schools of RTHS do not use SBG, and this discrepancy requires that teachers spend a great deal of time explaining the system to both students and parents.

The survey revealed that some teachers feel the bulk of responsibility is placed on teachers to communicate with students the system of SBG and this practice then breeds inconsistencies. Teachers are allowed autonomy in how standards are evaluated, and this practice can create discrepancies from department to department if there is a lack of collaboration. My suggestions to alleviate concerns and to take a proactive planning approach are to have open communication with anyone involved in the process. Meeting with any feeder schools helps to proactively provide scaffolding and build a bridge between traditional grading systems to the SBG system. Additionally, collaboration among staff helps to identify any inconsistencies. This means branching outside of a department and working in partnership with various departments. Once a new system has been implemented for a few consecutive years, that is when it is best to assess what is working and what is not working. Finally, as schools hire new teachers, or teachers that are new to a building, there must be professional development to ensure there is a strong understanding of SBG and best practices among all teachers. All staff benefits from routine development and discussion.

### **Writing Instruction in a Hybrid Model Conclusions**

The hybrid learning model affords having fewer students in-person and thus creates an ideal environment for feedback throughout all stages of the writing process. The case study confirmed that 84% of participants felt that the hybrid model encourages diversified instruction

that better meets student through an increase in the amount of verbal feedback and individualized redirection/feedback. The oral nature of F2F instruction is replaced by writing for both teachers and students in online formats. The study found that providing written comments to assist students increased both in-person and remotely by using applications such as Google Documents that allows for co-editing. 74% of participants identified that using video and audio technologies was useful for additional academic support and scaffolding regarding writing instruction.

Hybrid learning contributed to better differentiation of instruction by individualizing writing tasks. This study highlighted that writing is best implemented in a hybrid model by conferencing with students, modeling, and chunking writing tasks. 70% of tier 2 participants indicated that the use of individual conferencing increased with the hybrid model. Further, the study confirms that SBG does influence writing instruction and can create a positive pairing. The self-paced nature of many classrooms during the 2020-2021 school year allowed students to approach writing as a recursive task. This process approach method to writing instruction is supported by those such as Murray who argues that students should be able to immerse themselves in “unfinished” work. Additionally, by using rubrics to evaluate writing, teachers gain individual goals for their students and can better implement instruction that supports the needs of a class.

Conferencing with students is an approach that teachers often eliminate for the sake of time in the traditional learning model. Due to the nature of the hybrid model, teachers gained valuable time to individually conference and meet with students. The extra conferencing built stronger teacher-student relationships and allowed teachers to understand each of their students’ strengths and areas of improvement for each individual student. Janet Emig, as discussed earlier, supports conferencing since “talking is a powerful learning tool that can contribute to a student-

centered classroom” (124). Modeling paired well with conferencing and teachers were able to incorporate elements of modeling in both in-person and remote assignments.

However, the study did reveal that educators felt a disconnect with modeling done remotely and struggled to implement modeling while students were not F2F. 18% of all participants indicated that modeling methods have been more difficult under the hybrid model. Students that were full remote learners had a harder time developing their writing skills and this is where chunking the evaluation assignments and providing tips and tricks with each section helped students. 60% of tier 2 participants felt that combining modeling and chunking was an asset when teaching writing digitally. Conveniently, chunking helped all learners and is a strategy that many will continue to use moving forward. The number of students in-person may increase moving forward in education and schools may return to traditional learning models; however, writing instructors have gained a vast number of tools that will continue to better their ability to provide feedback and individualized writing instruction.

### **Moving Beyond Covid-19 and Future Considerations**

As schools return to in-person learning, there will be students wanting a remote or hybrid option. Student and parent demand will drive these changes, and I see schools offering both in-person and remote instruction options moving forward. Schools now have more possibilities in assisting students that need extended leave from in-person learning and will have better tools to support the learning of students in unique situations. How teachers approach curriculum design is something that was altered during the pandemic, and I see this approach continuing to adapt and change. For example, video tutorials were identified in this case study as beneficial by many educators. Taking a flipped classroom approach, where students engage with learning in modules is how I envision many classrooms will look moving forward. Video tutorials will become the

new normal and provides an option for students to view material later and approach learning through a self-paced lens. The demand for educators to find creative teaching options increased to combat the safety concerns of in-person learning during a pandemic. This demand will remain, and teachers will continue to be asked to provide alternative means of instruction as well as options of engaging with evaluation activities that best support various types of learners.

Pairing hybrid learning with SBG encourages a competency-based approach, and I predict that traditional seat-time and academic calendar constraints will become more flexible for many schools. RTHS has already seen this in action during the 2021 portion of the school year. We are providing resources to students such as extended learning time that goes beyond the 4<sup>th</sup> quarter and into the first days of summer for students that extra time in completing requirements. Additionally, our school and many others, have implemented what is called intercession. Intercession acts as a credit recovery program where students can work at their own pace, with the mentorship of a teacher, and this resource provides more flexibility for students.

The pandemic presented a traumatic experience for educators and students alike. However, the experiences and rapid shifts in practices forced educators to confront the harsher realities of parts of our system needing improvement such as equity concerns, required seat-time, learning gaps among different types of learners, and the digital divide. Teachers are creative, resilient professionals and took this experience and reflected on how to better support our students moving forward. The conclusions made in this thesis will help to direct my practices moving forward and educators can celebrate in the knowledge that we are navigating a traumatic experience in a way that will develop and grow the future of education in the context of hybrid and online learning.

**APPENDIX**

1.1.....Teacher Survey Email Template

1.2..... Interview Consent Information

## **Appendix 1.1**

Good Morning,

I am currently completing my master's thesis at Eastern Illinois University. I am conducting research on hybrid learning and you are invited to participate in a case study. The purpose of this research is to explore the relationship between the hybrid learning model and writing evaluation. The goals of this study are to reflect upon the transition into hybrid learning as well as to assess how hybrid learning has the potential to make an impact on educational practices post-pandemic.

Your participation in this study is entirely voluntary, but is greatly appreciated. Your experiences are valuable since you have directly experienced the shift into hybrid learning and responses will be kept anonymous. You can participate by taking the attached survey below. All responses will be recorded on a Google Form and will take about 20 minutes to complete. Again, this survey is an important part of a successful thesis and I appreciate your participation.

### **The Google Form Link Was Included Here:**

Thank you for your time!

--

Liz Dietz  
Rantoul Township High School  
English 1&3, AP Language

### **Statement of Informed Consent (attached on survey)**

You are invited to participate in a research study conducted by Liz Dietz from the English department at Eastern Illinois University. The purpose of this research is to explore the relationship between the hybrid learning model, evaluation, and writing evaluation. The goals of this study are to reflect upon the transition into hybrid learning as well as to evaluate how hybrid learning has the potential to make an impact on educational practices post-pandemic. The survey should take 20-30 minutes to complete. Your participation in this study is entirely voluntary. Please ask questions about anything you do not understand before deciding whether to participate.

There are minimal risks involved in this study. However, if you feel any stress when recalling details surrounding a pandemic you can end your responses or skip the question. The case study questions are academically geared and will not ask you to include personal experience outside of the classroom. Any information that is obtained in connection with this study and that can be identified with you will remain confidential and will be disclosed only with your permission or as required by law. Responses to this survey will come directly to me, the principal investigator, and be stored on my computer, which is passcode protected.

By submitting survey answers, you indicate that you voluntarily agree to participate in this study. You also acknowledge your freedom to withdraw your consent and discontinue participation at any time, and that you were given an electronic copy of this information.

In the event of questions about the study, please contact Liz Dietz by email (elizabethdietz@rths193.org) or by phone (217-778-8190) or Dr. Tim Taylor by email (tntaylor@eiu.edu) or phone (217-581-6309). If you have any questions or concerns about the treatment of human participants in this study, you may call or write:

Institutional Review Board  
Eastern Illinois University  
600 Lincoln Ave.  
Charleston, IL 61920  
Telephone: (217) 581-8576  
E-mail: [eiuirb@www.eiu.edu](mailto:eiuirb@www.eiu.edu)



## Thesis Case Study - Hybrid Learning at RTHS

You are invited to participate in a research study conducted by Liz Dietz from the English department at Eastern Illinois University. The purpose of this research is to explore the relationship between the hybrid learning model and writing assessment. The goals of this study are to reflect upon the transition into hybrid learning as well as to evaluate how hybrid learning has the potential to make an impact on educational practices post-pandemic. The survey should take 20-30 minutes to complete. Your participation in this study is entirely voluntary. Please ask questions about anything you do not understand before deciding whether or not to participate.

There are minimal risks involved in this study. However, if you feel any stress when recalling details surrounding a pandemic you are able to end your responses or skip the question. The case study questions are academically geared and will not ask you to include personal experience outside of the classroom. Any information that is obtained in connection with this study and that can be identified with you will remain confidential and will be disclosed only with your permission or as required by law. Responses to this survey will come directly to me, the principal investigator, and be stored on my computer, which is passcode protected.

By submitting survey answers, you indicate that you voluntarily agree to participate in this study. You also acknowledge your freedom to withdraw your consent and discontinue participation at any time, and that you were given an electronic copy of this information.

In the event of questions about the study, please contact Liz Dietz by email (elizabethdietz@rths193.org) or by phone (217-778-8190) or Dr. Tim Taylor by email (tntaylor@eiu.edu) or phone (217-581-6309).

If you have any questions or concerns about the treatment of human participants in this study, you may call or write:

Institutional Review Board  
Eastern Illinois University  
600 Lincoln Ave.  
Charleston, IL 61920  
Telephone: (217) 581-8576  
E-mail: [eiuirb@www.eiu.edu](mailto:eiuirb@www.eiu.edu)

## Questions that were included on the Google Form:

**Tier One Survey: All Disciplines** (educators from departments who do not substantially teach/evaluate writing in their curriculum including agriculture, business, family and consumer sciences, fine arts, math, physical education, science, career technology and engineering, and special education co-teachers for the above listed subjects)

### Instructional Methods

- In what ways have you transferred and/or adapted portions of your existing curriculum to the online platform?
- How are best pedagogical practices (e.g. feedback, accessibility, modeling) implemented in hybrid learning?
- What adaptations to instructional design and/or teaching style (e.g. instructional tutorial videos, flipped classroom, self-paced instruction, backwards planning) have transpired with hybrid learning?

### Engagement

- Have you used asynchronous activities as part of your learning? What challenges and/or successes have you encountered?
- What about engagement (e.g. student motivation, participation, attendance) has been revealed with the hybrid learning model?
- What does the shift in instructional practices reveal about how different learners (e.g. ESL/ELL) are impacted by hybrid learning?

### Evaluation

- What evaluation methods do you use for your course?
  - Standards Based Grading
  - Traditional Grading
  - I use both Standards Based Grading and Traditional Grading
- What have the various shifts in instructional practices during hybrid learning revealed about Standards Based Grading as a mode of evaluation?

**Tier Two Survey: Narrowed Writing Focus** (educators from departments who do substantially teach/evaluate writing in their curriculum such as the following departments: Eagle Academy, language—including English, Spanish, and speech, social sciences, and special education co-teachers for the above listed subjects)

### Instructional Methods

- In what ways have you transferred and/or adapted portions of your existing curriculum to the online platform?
- How are best pedagogical writing practices (e.g. conferencing, recursive instruction, modeling, chunking, student choice) implemented in the hybrid learning models?
- What adaptations to instructional design and/or teaching style (e.g. instructional tutorial videos, flipped classroom, self-paced instruction, backwards planning) have transpired with hybrid learning and has this influenced writing instruction?

### Engagement

- Have you used asynchronous activities as part of your learning? What challenges and/or successes have you encountered?

- What about writing engagement (e.g. student motivation toward writing, participation, attention to feedback, revision) has been revealed with the hybrid learning model?
- What do writing evaluations reveal about how different learners (e.g. ESL/ELL) are impacted by hybrid learning?

#### Evaluation

- What evaluation methods do you use for your course?
  - Standards Based Grading
  - Traditional Grading
  - I use both Standards Based Grading and Traditional Grading
- What have the various shifts in instructional practices during hybrid learning revealed about Standards Based Grading as a mode of evaluation?
- How are best pedagogical writing practices evaluated through the Standards Based Grading systems?

## **Appendix 1.2**

### **CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH**

#### **Hybrid Learning: A Model Response to Academia During a Pandemic**

You are invited to participate in a research study conducted by principal investigator Liz Dietz with faculty sponsor Dr. Tim Taylor, from the English Department at Eastern Illinois University. Your participation in this study is entirely voluntary. Please ask questions about anything you do not understand, before deciding whether to participate.

You have been asked to participate in this study because your experiences in the educational field are valuable and because you directly experienced the shift into hybrid learning.

#### **PURPOSE OF THE STUDY**

The purpose of this study is to examine the hybrid learning model paired with Standards Based Grading in relation to the instruction of writing processes. By interviewing current educators, I hope to gain insight into the transitional requirements of a school district moving into a new mode of instruction. This study will also help me evaluate the potential hybrid learning has to influence writing pedagogy post-pandemic.

#### **PROCEDURES**

If you volunteer to participate in this study, you will be asked to allow me to interview you during the spring 2021 semester. The in-person interviews will take place in our conference room. In-person interviews will be recorded by using a recording software that will be running on my laptop.

#### **POTENTIAL RISKS AND DISCOMFORTS**

There are minimal risks involved in this study since you are providing your reflection and experiences. However, if you feel any stress and/or trauma when recalling modifications that took place to accommodate a pandemic you can end the interview or skip the question. The interview questions are academically geared and will not ask you to include personal experience outside of the classroom.

#### **POTENTIAL BENEFITS TO SUBJECTS AND/OR TO SOCIETY**

While you personally may not benefit from this study, you may develop a higher awareness or curiosity toward hybrid learning and/or Standards Based Grading. In addition, the results will be instructive to other learning communities.

#### **CONFIDENTIALITY**

Any information that is obtained in connection with this study and that can be identified with you will remain confidential and will be disclosed only with your permission or as required by law. All answers will be recorded on my personal digital voice recorder and/or in my personal files. I will be the only person who has access to this data, and it will remain in my possession. My thesis committee members will have access only to typed transcripts of the interview responses and the answers to the Google Form.

**PARTICIPATION AND WITHDRAWAL**

Your participation in this research study is voluntary. You may choose to withdraw at any time without risk of any penalty whatsoever. In addition, you can refuse to answer any of the questions during the interview.

**IDENTIFICATION OF INVESTIGATORS**

If you have any questions or concerns about this research, please contact:

Principal Investigator  
Liz Dietz  
217-778-8190  
eadietz@eiu.edu

Faculty Sponsor  
Dr. Tim Taylor  
217-581-6309  
tntaylor@eiu.edu

**RIGHTS OF RESEARCH SUBJECTS**

If you have any questions or concerns about the treatment of human participants in this study, you may call or write:

Institutional Review Board  
Eastern Illinois University  
600 Lincoln Ave.  
Charleston, IL 61920  
Telephone: (217) 581-8576  
E-mail: eiuirb@www.eiu.edu

You will be given the opportunity to discuss any questions about your rights as a research subject with a member of the IRB. The IRB is an independent committee composed of members of the University community, as well as lay members of the community not connected with EIU. The IRB has reviewed and approved this study.

I voluntarily agree to participate in this study. I understand that I am free to withdraw my consent and discontinue my participation at any time. I have been given a copy of this form.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Printed Name of Participant

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Participant

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

I, the undersigned, have defined and fully explained the investigation to the above subject.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Investigator

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

## Works Cited

- Afshan, Gauhar, and Aliya Ahmed. "Distance Learning Is Here to Stay: Shall We Reorganize Ourselves for the Post-Covid-19 World?" *Anesthesia, Pain & Intensive Care*, vol. 24, no. 5, Oct. 2020, pp. 487–489.
- Albers, Philip P., et al. "Eight Educational Considerations for Hybrid Learning." *Handbook of Research on Hybrid Learning Models: Advanced Tools, Technologies, and Applications*, 2010, pp. 185-202.
- Anderson, Bill, and Mary Simpson. "History and heritage in distance learning." *Journal of Open, Flexible, and Distance Learning*, vol. 16, no. 2, 2012, pp. 1-10.
- Anderson, Monica. "About a quarter of rural Americans say access to high-speed internet is a major problem." *Pew Research Center*, 2018.
- Anderson, Monica, and Andrew Perrin. "Nearly one-in-five teens can't always finish their homework because of the digital divide." *Pew Research Center*, 2018.
- Anson, Chris. "Process and Its Legacy." *A Guide to Composition Pedagogies*, 2nd edition. Eds. Gary Tate, Amy Rupiper Taggart, Kurt Schick, and H. Brooke Hessler. New York: Oxford University Press, 2013. pp. 212-30.
- Bergmann, Harriet F. "'The Silent University': The Society to Encourage Studies at Home, 1873-1897." *The New England Quarterly*, vol. 74, no. 3, 2001, pp. 447–477.
- Bizzell, Patricia. "Cognition, Convention, and Certainty." *Cross-Talk in Comp Theory: A Reader*, 3rd edition. Eds. Victor Villanueva and Kristin L. Arola. NCTE, 2011, pp. 367-91.
- Bonk, Curtis J., and Charles R. Graham. *The Handbook of Blended Learning: Global Perspectives*. Pfeiffer, 2005.

- Bruffee, Kenneth. "Collaborative Learning and the "Conversation of Mankind."” *College English*, vol.46, no. 7, 1984, pp. 635-652.
- Bushweller, Kevin. "How COVID-19 Is Shaping Tech Use. What That Means When Schools Reopen.” *Education Week*, 2020.
- Chen, Li-Kai, et al. "Teacher survey: Learning loss is global—and significant.” *McKinsey & Company*, 2021.
- Debter, Lauren. "From Correspondence Courses to MOOCs: The Highlights of Distance Learning Over the Ages.” *Forbes*, 2014.
- DeVoss, Danielle, et al. *Because Digital Writing Matters: Improving Student Writing in Online and Multimedia Environments*. Jossey-Bass, 2010.
- Elbow, Peter. "Being a Writer vs. Being an Academic: A Conflict in Goals.” *College Composition and Communication*, vol. 46, no. 1, 1995, pp. 72–83.
- Elwood, Jannette, and Val Klenowski. "Creating Communities of Shared Practice: The Challenges of Assessment Use in Learning and Teaching.” *Assessment & Evaluation in Higher Education*, vol. 27, no 3, 2002, pp. 243-256.
- Emig, Janet. "Writing as a Mode of Learning.” *Cross-Talk in Comp Theory: A Reader*, 3rd edition. Eds. Victor Villanueva and Kristin L. Arola. NCTE, 2011, pp. 7-15.
- Feldman, Joe. "Beyond standards-based grading: Why equity must be a part of grading reform.” *Phi Delta Kappan*, vol. 100, no. 8, 2019, pp. 52-55.
- Faigley, Lester. "Competing Theories of Process: A Critique and a Proposal.” *College English*, vol. 48, no. 6, 1986, pp. 527-542.
- Flower, Linda, and John R. Hayes. "A Cognitive Process Theory of Writing.” *College Composition and Communication*, vol. 32, no. 4, 1981, pp. 365-387.

- Garrison, Randy, and Norman D. Vaughan. *Blended Learning in Higher Education: Framework, Principals, and Guidelines*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2012, pp. 147-155.
- Guskey, Thomas R., “the Case Against Percentage Grades.” *Educational Leadership*, vol. 71, no. 1, 2013, pp. 68-72.
- Hesse, Doug. “The Nature of Hybrid Courses, Particularly in Writing.” *University of Denver Writing Program*, 2021.
- Hertz, Mary. “The Flipped Classroom: Pro and Con.” *Edutopia*, 2015.
- Kentnor, Hope. “Distance Education and the Evolution of Online Learning in the United States.” *Curriculum and Teaching Dialogue*, vol. 17, 2015, pp. 21–34.
- McIsaac, Marina, and Charlotte Gunawardena. “Distance Education.” *Handbook of Research on Educational Communications and Technology*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition. Routledge, 2004.
- Money, Julie., et al. “Co-Creating a Blended Learning Curriculum in Transition to Higher Education: A Student Viewpoint” *Creative Education*, vol. 7, no. 9, 2016.
- Munoz, Marco A., and Thomas R. Guskey. “Standards-based grading and reporting will improve education.” *Phi Delta Kappan*, 2015, pp. 64-68.
- Murray, Donald M. “Teach Writing as a Process Not Product.” *Cross-Talk in Comp Theory: A Reader*, 3rd edition. Eds. Victor Villanueva and Kristin L. Arola. NCTE, 2011. pp. 3-6.
- Nava, Sara. “The Hybrid Learning Model and Student Learning Experiences.” 2015, pp. 1-36.
- O’Byrne, Ian, and Kristine Pytash. “Hybrid and Blended Learning: Modifying Pedagogy Across Path, Pace, Time, and Place.” *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy*, vol. 59, no. 2, 2015, pp. 137–140.
- O’Connor, Ken. “Reforming grading practices in secondary schools.” *Principal’s Research Review*, vol. 4, no. 1, 2009, pp. 1-7.

- O'Connor, Ken, et al. "Gearing up for FAST grading and reporting." *Phi Delta Kappa International*, vol. 99, no. 8, 2018, pp. 67-71.
- Patrick, Susan, and Alexis Chambers. "Determining Attendance and Alternatives to Seat-Time." *Aurora Institute*, 2020, pp. 1-7.
- Patrick, Susan, and Chris Sturgis. "Maximizing Competency Education and Blended Learning: Insights from Experts." *International Association for K-12 Online Learning*, 2015, pp. 4-42.
- Reeves, Thomas C. "Alternative Assessment Approaches for Online Learning Environments in Higher Education." *Journal of Educational Computing Research*, vol. 23, no.1, 2000, pp. 101-111.
- Robles, Marcel, and Sandy Braathen. "Online Assessment Techniques." *Delta Pi Epsilon Journal*, vol. 44 no. 1, 2002, pp. 39-49
- Saltzman, David. "Distance Learning Pushed Us to Standards-Based Grading. We'll Keep it." *BetterLesson*, 2020.
- Sheppard, Jennifer. "Pandemic Pedagogy: What We Learned from the Sudden Transition to Online Teaching and How It Can Help Us Prepare to Teach Writing in an Uncertain Future." *Composition Studies*, vol. 49, no. 1, 2021, pp. 60-83.
- Speck, Bruce W. "Learning-Teaching-Assessment Paradigms and the On-Line Classroom." *New Directions for Teaching & Learning*, vol. 2002, no. 91, 2002, p. 5-16.
- Starch, Daniel, and Edward C. Elliott. "Reliability of the Grading of High-School Work in English." *The School Review*, vol. 20, no. 7, 1912, pp. 442-457.
- Stein, Jared, and Charles R. Graham. "A Standards-Based Approach." *Essentials for Blended Learning: A Standards-Based Guide*, Eds. Marjorie Vai. Routledge. pp. 1-7, 2014.

Sumner, Jennifer. "Serving the System: a critical history of distance education." *Open Learning*, vol. 15, no. 3, 2000, pp. 267-285.

Townsley, Matt, and Tom Buckmiller. "What does the research say about standards-based grading?." *A Research Primer*, 2016, pp. 1-10.

"U.S. Speeds Double Global Average". *NCTA-The Internet & Television Association*, 2018.

Vatterott, Cathy. *Rethinking Grading: Meaningful Assessment for Standards-Based Learning*, ASCD, 2015.

Vonderwell, Selma, et al. "Asynchronous Discussions and Assessment in Online Learning." *Journal of Research on Technology in Education*, vol. 39, no. 3, 2007, pp. 309-328.

Watson, John, and Amy Murin. "A History of K-12 Online and Blended Instruction in the United States." *Handbook of Research on K-12 Online and Blended Learning*, 2014, pp. 1-23.

Wormeli, Rick. "Accountability: Teaching Through Assessment and Feedback, Not Grading." *American Secondary Education*, vol. 34, no. 3, 2006, pp. 14-27.