In the March 2014 issue of Educational Leadership, author Brent Duckor offers seven practices for effective formative assessments in his article entitled, “Formative Assessments in Seven Good Moves.” After looking at the work of John Hattie (2012), Duckor realizes that “...we don’t always know which practices are most effective, when to deploy them, and why a particular combination actually worked for a particular student in a particular classroom.” He says, “formative assessment is more than a checklist of qualities or collection of activities. Rather it’s made up of a sequence of moves that invite a positive, ongoing relationship between teachers and their students.” Duckor and his colleagues watched hours of videotaped lessons and observed more live lessons in middle and high school classrooms and identified seven basic moves that are essential to rich formative assessment practices:

**Move 1: Prime students first.** Establishing norms and routines is important for students who are not familiar with assessment practices outside the normal experience of “doing school.” Also, the author recommends reflecting on various moves teachers do implement.

**Move 2: Pose good questions.** The kinds of questions teachers ask matter. “A well-posed question creates an opportunity to meet learners at their current level of understanding. Thus, formative assessors need to know (or at least anticipate) their students’ learning progressions with complex material so they can scaffold questions at key points (pit stops and bottlenecks) in the unit.”

**Move 3: Pause during questioning.** The goal is to slow the process down. Teachers need time between their questions and their students’ responses.

**Move 4: Probe student responses.** Probing suggests there is always more to know: collecting more substantial evidence to make decisions about what to teach, reteach, or even preteach for a particular group of students.

**Move 5: Bounce questions throughout the classroom.** Feedback is about generating a loop. Increasing the breadth and depth of student response enables teachers the draw meaningful conclusions about student understanding.

**Move 6: Use tagging to generate a wide range of responses.** Tagging is recognizing student contributions to questions. Teachers must create a space for students to express both their understandings and their misunderstandings.

**Move 7: Build your bins.** Bins are how teachers categorize student responses. Teachers must become comfortable with answers that do not fall into their correct answer bin. Teachers need to know, through practical training and rich classroom experience, where kids get stuck and why.

Duckor encourages teachers to practice, practice, practice on making good moves. Thus, teachers can develop the expertise to become more skilled formative assessors.

While we could only provide a snapshot of the moves Duckor outlines in his article, readers can learn more at the following link: http://mathleadershipcorps.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/03/Formative-Assessment-in-Seven-Good-Moves.pdf.

For further reading: *Educational Leadership.*

Writing Effectively: What really matters?

We do not have time in our classes to teach everything about the rhetoric of a sentence. I believe in island hopping, concentrating on topics where we can produce results and leaving the rest...to die on the vine.

Francis Christensen, Notes Toward a New Rhetoric

In the April issue of our ELA Reporter, we challenged teachers with the notion of “Classroom Expectations to Cultivate.” While the recommendation to eliminate the Daily Oral Language (DOL) and replace that practice with Jeff Anderson’s recommendation of model sentences was viewed as a challenge to the old guard, the research confirms the ineffective practice of grammar in isolation used to improve student writing. In this issue, we seek to offer some practical application for the suggestion to eliminate the old OOL practice.

Let us, for a moment, embrace the notion that model sentences can help student writing more than incorrect sentences. Your next series of questions might be, “Then how do I teach grammar in context using model sentences? What should I focus on? What does that look like?”

In Jeff Anderson’s Mechanically Inclined: Building Grammar, Usage, and Style into Writer’s Workshop, he asks, and answers, similar questions: “In terms of writing effectively, what really matters? What should I spend my time on?” Anderson says, “If we were to island hop as Christensen suggests, we should hop on the islands that matter, that give our students the power to write effectively.” He continues.

For example, in order for students to be able to play with or manipulate sentence parts, they have to be able to understand what makes up a sentence. They need to have a notion of subject and verb. Students need to understand patterns of punctuation and the patterns of sentences. But that’s still a large territory, and it doesn’t give a lot of guidance to teachers in trying to figure out how best to spend their time.

Even though we might think we know what students don’t know, the first thing we must do is find out what they don’t know. Anderson recommends starting with an analysis of student writing, looking for patterns of error. Here Anderson offers a list of the 20 most common errors that were revealed in an analysis of college essays from around the United States (Connors and Lunsford, 1998):

1. No commas after introductory element
2. Vague pronoun reference
3. No comma in compound sentence
4. Wrong word
5. No comma in nonrestrictive element
6. Wrong/missing inflected endings
7. Wrong or missing prepositions
8. Comma splice
9. Possessive apostrophe error
10. Tense shift
11. Unnecessary shift in person
12. Sentence fragments
13. Wrong tense or verb form
14. Subject-verb agreement
15. Lack of comma in a series
16. Pronoun agreement error
17. Unnecessary comma with restrictive element
18. Run-on or fused sentence
19. Dangling or misplaced modifier
20. It’s versus its error

Notwithstanding these errors derive from a college study, do these errors look familiar? Match it up with what’s tested on writing and grammar examinations. This list matches what Anderson’s kids struggle with, but at the same time it narrows the wide black void of grammar and mechanics he felt responsible for teaching.

Anderson developed his own list of common errors, he shuffled the items into categories, then added a few common errors he saw his students make, such as double negatives, as well as included concepts he knew his writers needed to learn in order to express themselves. A note about spelling: while spelling is a common error, he did not add spelling to his list.

Next, Anderson crafted lessons used to target errors and concepts. (All 35 lessons are provided in Part II of his book.) When deciding what to teach your students, Anderson encourages teachers to “choose lessons that will stretch [students] to their growing edge. Base your teaching on errors they make. Base your teaching on the strategies they need.”

Teaching grammar in context—one thing at a time; one thing kids can easily hold in their heads and apply; one thing we can scaffold: one shared experience—Anderson incorporates this focused approach in his writer’s workshop. He didn’t throw out what he was doing; he just tweaked the process. Shifting from the mindless worksheets and test prep, Anderson uses powerful literature and student writing to teach the rules of language, which he posits that grammar and mechanics are inherently linked to craft. Having students view grammar and mechanics as the writer’s craft “alters [their] perceptions of what mechanics and grammar do.”

Sixteen years of study and experimentation in his inner-city classroom has led Jeff Anderson to write his book Mechanically Inclined. In his book, Anderson provides detailed resources for teachers to use in guiding students to better writing. He offers the “Owner’s Manual” - section that outlines the error, followed by “Lesson(s)” to address those common student errors in writing. This book is a must-read for any teacher who wants to add to his/her repertoire of teaching strategies.

A Final Note About the ELA Summer Academy

A Special Thanks Goes Out to This Year’s Teacher Presenters at the ELA Summer Academy

This year’s Summer Academy featured 113 teachers from around the state of Georgia. Once the presenters made it through the proposal phase, they wowed us (GaDOE staff and RESA staff) during the vetting process! In the end, we were able to offer a total of 84 teacher-presenter sessions to participants. The two-day Summer Academies offered many professional learning opportunities each day. The success of each Academy site is due, in large measure, to the teacher presenters who poured their hearts into each presentation to make it the best for their fellow teachers. To access the Academy materials, use this link: [http://2014elasummerinstitute.wikispaces.com/](http://2014elasummerinstitute.wikispaces.com/).

We thank each teacher presenter as well as the anchor session and lunch and learn facilitators for his or her efforts to ensure that the sessions were research-based, standards-based, TKES-based, relevant, and creative.

Below is a list of each presenter and the county he/she represented for the 2014 ELA Summer Academy.

**Teacher Presenters**

- David Abbott—Lanier County
- Dawn Allison-Ruiz—Cobb County
- Deborah Aughey—Cobb County
- Leila Barber—Cobb County
- Cyndi Barr—Houston County
- Carlos Barrera—Cobb County
- Heather Barton—Cherokee County
- Dawn Bennett—West Georgia RESA
- Sean Bennett—Fayette County
- Barbara Bishop—West Georgia RESA
- Laura French—Coweta County
- Vicki Owens—Cobb County
- Tim O’Neill—Cobb County
- Tina Mullinax—Floyd County
- Kayse Morris—Coffee County
- Ashley Morris—Cobb County
- Andrea Moon—Cobb County
- Luz Montanez—Cobb County
- Patti McWhorter—Northeast RESA
- Audrey Mazzotta—Lanier County
- Pati McWhorter—Northeast RESA
- Val Mick—Gwinnett County
- Luz Montanez—Cobb County
- Andrea Moon—Cobb County
- Ashley Morris—Cobb County
- Kayse Morris—Coffee County
- Tina Mullinax—Floyd County
- Tim O’Neill—Cobb County
- Vicki Owens—Cobb County
- Gilberte Pascal—Henry County
- Matthew Patterson—Fulton County
- Gina Pearson—Bleckley County
- Latrina Pennamon—Bibb
- Rebekah Phillips—Carroll County
- Patty Poltzer—Douglas County
- Michael Richie—Gwinnett County
- Deborah Ricks—Southwest GA RESA
- Valerie Roberson—Jefferson County
- Kaneisha Robinson—Gwinnett County
- Tabitha Roper—Cherokee County
- Lyssa Sahadevan—Cobb County
- Kim Shepard—Henry County
- April Smith—Lee County
- Robin Smith—Middle Georgia RESA
- Kelli Sowerbrower—Coweta County
- Sylvia Spruill—Cobb County
- Angelann Stephens—Fulton County
- Melissa Starn—Valdosta City
- Tiffany Taylor—Spalding County
- Marilyn Thomas—Cobb County
- Tameka Thomas—Henry County
- Valerie Thomas—Clayton County
- Amy Thompson—Jones County
- Joy Thompson—Spalding County
- Jennifer Wldrick—Floyd County
- Laura Walley—Floyd County
- Crystal Ware—Valdosta City
- Franchesca Warren—Atlanta Public
- Jennifer Weninger—Murray County
- Delina Wester—Franklin County
- Vic Marie White—Peach County
- Erin Whitley—Madison County
- Nakoa Wiley—Atlanta Public Schools
- Nadia Williams—Cobb County
- Reginald Williams—DeKalb County
- ShaWanda Williams—Peach County
- Hannah Zey—Fulton County

In addition to the teacher presenters, we offered participants Anchor sessions that were available to all grade levels, and we offered lunch and learn segments to provide information that teachers need to impact their teaching. Below is a list of those who conducted Anchor Sessions or Lunch and Learn segments.

**Anchor Session Presenters**

- Mary Lynn Huie, LOC
- Ami Polcaro, DBQ Project
- Jan Reyes, GaDOE Assessment
- Dawn Souter, GaDOE Assessment
- Kelli Wright, BADD Assessment

**Lunch & Learn Presenters**

- Hubert Bennett, GaDOE
- Digital Resources
- Mary Frieson, GaDOE TKES
- Stefany Howard, GaDOE TKES
- Lois Landry, GaDOE TKES
- Cindy Lee, GaDOE TKES
- Kathy Reese, GaDOE TKES
Keep an Eye out for the I^3 Triathlon!

ELA I^3 Triathlon

Professional learning designed to promote and build sustainability for rigorous academic writing across the state of Georgia.

**Phase I:** DBQ/LBQ Professional Collaborative

**Phase II:** Learning Progressions (Home Grown Institute)

**Phase III:** UBD Teacher Collaborative for the creation of Assessments that prepare students for academic success.

This ambitious three-year, three-part plan begins with Phase I in August, 2014, and includes I^3 (Instruct, Integrate, and Implement—the heart, mind, and soul part of our ELA Triathlon!)

Planning Ahead

Starting this school year, the ELA team will host a series of talks entitled “Talking with Teachers.” These talks will be conducted every six weeks starting in mid-September and will engage teachers in discussions on topics such as,

- writing to support testing,
- close reading, and
- research as a performance-based assessment.

We invite you to join us on this journey as we chart the course for ELA instruction in Georgia. If you have suggestions for additional topics that are germane to ELA instruction, please share your ideas via email (use email address in box at the right).

“Talk to you later.”

Explore! Wiki, ListServ, GSD


To Join the ListServ:
- Join-ela-k-2@list.doe.k12.ga.us
- Join-ela-3-5@list.doe.k12.ga.us
- Join-ela-6-8@list.doe.k12.ga.us
- Join-ela-9-12@list.doe.k12.ga.us

GSO ELA Homepage: see URL in address box at right