

**Writing For Understanding:
Using Backward Design to Help All Students Write Effectively**

Written by the Vermont Writing Collaborative

Foreword by Grant Wiggins

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Study Guide Introduction

This study guide, written by the authors, will help you and your colleagues, deepen your understanding of the text. We have written exercises for each chapter focused on key concepts and big ideas we feel are crucial for an understanding of the text. We hope you enjoy reading the book and use the study guide in the way that works best for you.

Ways to use the study guide

On Your Own: One way to use the study guide is to read the book from beginning to end, one chapter at a time. After reading a chapter, go to the study guide, read the various exercises, and choose the ones you find to be the most helpful for you.

In a Group: The study guide is currently set up for use with a faculty in a school or a small group of teachers that want to read the book together over eight or nine sessions. Each session would last an hour, has a set schedule and recommends particular exercises for the group. The teachers would read one chapter before coming to the book group, then use the hour to discuss the chapter and complete at least two or three exercises together. At the end of each session, there is time devoted to sharing out and setting the agenda/goals for the next session.

About the Authors

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Reading a Shared Text: A Protocol

Reading a shared text can be a useful experience for any group of people who will be working together and who want to structure a discussion around that text. The protocol, adapted from Critical Friends protocols, is an easy one to follow and ensures that all voices are heard. It is most effective in groups of four or five.

Step One.

- One member of the group agrees to be facilitator / timekeeper / summarizer.
- Everyone in the group reads the text (usually one short enough to be read in 15 minutes or less). *During this time, nobody talks or comments on the text.*
- While reading, each participant notes ideas that seem particularly important in some way - maybe especially interesting, maybe raising a question, etc.

Note: if the text has been read ahead of time, begin with Step Two.

Step Two

- After reading, each person takes a turn, reading a passage he/she has chosen. He explains a bit why he has chosen that passage, then the group discusses the passage. Each person has 4-5 minutes for the discussion of that passage before moving on to the next person in the group.

Step Three

- After each person has had a turn, the facilitator briefly summarizes what the group noticed, or what questions were raised, implications discussed, etc.

Book Group Schedule for Session #1

1. 10 Minutes
Lay groundwork for the book group study sessions
Explain how the study guide works by going through each section
Establish goals for the 8-9 sessions

2. 15 Minutes
Sharing in small groups using the *study circles* protocol which is provided in the appendix.
*teachers share key quotes, sections, big ideas, connections, questions...

3. 25 Minutes
Exercise #1-*Before and After Writing for Understanding*
Exercise #2-*Making Choices in Writing Instruction* (optional)

4. 5 Minutes
Reporting Out
Set goals for next session
Reading Homework

Exercise 1 for Session #1

Before and After Writing For Understanding

Directions: Think about the teacher in the *Message To Teachers* before she used the Writing for Understanding approach and after. Use the questions in the chart below to record similarities and differences in her teaching of writing.

Before and After Writing For Understanding		
Questions	Before (in tears)	After (happy)
<p>Similarities:</p> <p>1. How can we see how committed this teacher is to making sure her students learn to write well?</p> <p>2. How does this teacher make sure the topic is engaging and appropriate for the students?</p>		
<p>Differences:</p> <p>3. Focus: How does the teacher plan for the students to have a focus for their piece of writing?</p> <p>4. Structure: How does the teacher plan for the students to have structure for their piece of writing?</p> <p>5. Knowledge: How does this teacher plan for students gaining knowledge and understanding of their dinosaur?</p>		
<p><i>As a teacher, what questions, and connections or ah-ha's do you have at this point?</i></p>		

Exercise 2 for Session #1 (Optional)
Making Choices in Writing Instruction

Directions: Reread the quote below from page XIII. Take notes about your thinking as you read. Discuss your thinking with your small group, then share one key thought with the large group.

In a genuinely academically diverse classroom—as most public school classrooms are—trying to effectively provide writing instruction has been a Herculean task. Often, working with writing this way, teachers have found themselves making impossible choices: either find a way to work adequately with each child or group in what amounts to tutorials (at lunch, at 7:00 in the morning, during recess, after school, for weeks), or else settle for some number of students producing substandard writing—writing which makes sense to neither the writer nor the reader. (XIII)

Notes:

Notes after your small group discussion:

Key thought for the large group:

Exercise 3 for Session #2
What Good Writers Do

Directions: Reread pages 3 and 4. As you read, jot down your notes in the section below. Discuss the focusing question below.

Notes:

Focusing Question:

How does Charlotte's writing exemplify what good writers do?

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Discussion Notes:

Exercise 4 for Session #2
Writing Instruction and Equity

Directions: Reread pages 6 and 7 below, then, discuss this section as it relates to the issue of equity.

Writing and Equity

One of the most ardent proponents of writing, particularly nonfiction or expository writing, is Doug Reeves (2000). In his work he describes the "90/90/90 schools" as successful schools where 90% of the students are on free or reduced lunch, 90% are members of minorities, and 90% are achieving high academic standards. According to Reeves, one of the key common factors in all of these schools is frequent opportunity for students to use nonfiction writing. Reeves writes,

The benefits of such an emphasis on writing appear to be twofold. First, students process information in a much clearer way when they are required to write an answer. They "write to think" and, thus, gain the opportunity to clarify their own thought processes. Second, teachers have the opportunity to gain rich and complex diagnostic information about why students respond to an academic challenge the way they do....The association between writing and performance in other academic disciplines was striking, and gets to the heart of the curriculum choices that teachers must make. (Reeves 2000, pp. 189-190).

Reeves's work pulls no punches. If we are serious about raising the achievement of our most disadvantaged students, about making sure they are in the game, then writing in school-frequently, clearly, tied to understanding-matters. (pages 6 and 7)

Discuss this section as it relates to the issue of equity.

Jot your notes here.

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Further References: Ruby Payne and Doug Reeves

Exercise 5 for Session #2
The Pillars of Writing for Understanding

Directions: Working with a partner, and lots of conversation, paraphrase the major concepts of the 3 pillars described on pages 13 and 14 of the text. Jot down your notes about each concept on the chart.

<u>Explanation of the Pillars</u>	
Writing for Understanding (WU) is built on three premises: Backward Design, an emphasis on Understanding, and Direct Instruction.	
Writing For Understanding Pillars	What are the major concepts of this pillar?
1. Backward Design	
2. Understanding	
3. Direct Instruction	

Final Thoughts to Share with the Large Group:

Schedule for Session #3

1. 15 Minutes Sharing in small groups using the *study circles* protocol
*share quotes, sections, ideas

2. 15 Minutes Exercise #6-*Longest War*

3. 20 Minutes Exercise #7-*Level of Understanding*

4. 5 Minutes Reporting Out/Reflect
Set goals for next session
Reading Homework
Exit Card-Optional

Exercise 6 for Session #3
The Longest War

Directions: Reread the *Longest War*, a report by a fifth grade Vermont student. Think about the strengths and weaknesses of the piece as you read, then record your thinking in the chart below. Discuss in your small group. Record your collective thoughts on a large chart, then discuss the focusing question in the box below.

The Longest WAR!!!

The longest war was also known as the Vietnam War. Was it a good idea for the U.S.A. to help Southern Vietnam to keep their freedom? Yes, because we fight for freedom not letting people take over people. Two main topics involving this war are freedom and the fact that it is the longest war.

The reason I picked freedom is because I believe in freedom and they should have their own rights, own laws and be two different countries. They did succeed in this task as there is a North Vietnam and a South Vietnam today.

The Vietnam War was the longest war known to history. It started in 1957 and ended in 1975. It ended over two decades ago. There was a lot of blood shed and lives lost in this very long war. Because of the length of this war it is one that is still very much thought of in the minds of many adult Americans. The North and the South fought against each other and we helped South Vietnam.

What I learned about this war, which to me can for any war, is that war can mean you may or may not have a winner, but no matter what we always help and support our troops. I think war is scary and I don't really like the fact that people just can't be nice and treat one another as everyone should be treated.

Strengths:

Weaknesses:

Focusing Question: So, what does this tell us about how teachers need to plan for effective writing?

Exercise 7 for Session #3
Level of Understanding

Directions: In preparation for the rest of the chapters that show you how to use the Writing For Understanding Planning Approach, let's look closely at a sample planner that's already been filled out. Find *The Christmas Truce* planner on pages 44-46. Read over the planner aloud with a partner. For each icon (section of the planner), think and talk about your understanding of this section. Mark the sections of the planner to reflect your level of understanding with the icons below. Discuss any confusions that still exist with the large group.

<u>Level of Understanding</u>	
<i>How well do you understand the Writing For Understanding Planning Approach illustrated on pages 44-46 in the text?</i>	
Icon	Level of Understanding
!	Yes, I get this. This planning element is familiar to me.
~	I sort of get this section.
?	I'm confused about this element of planning.

Focusing Question: What connections/questions do you have at this point?

Schedule for Session #4

1. 15 Minutes
Sharing in small groups using the *study circles* protocol
*share quotes, sections, ideas

2. 35 Minutes
Exercise #6-Making Sense of Chapter 2 with *The Wind* and/or *The Boy*

3. 5 Minutes
Reporting Out/Reflect
Set goals for next session
Reading Homework
Exit Card-Optional

Exercise 8 for Session #4
The Wind and The Boy
Understanding and Using the WU Planning Tool

Directions: Choose either *The Wind* (primary selection) or *The Boy* (middle school social studies selection) to read with a partner. One of you will be “the teacher” and read aloud the teacher’s thinking in Chapter 2 as she plans for writing instruction. The primary teacher’s thinking begins on page 56 and ends on page 58. The middle school teacher’s thinking begins on page 58 and ends on page 62. Fill in the first two sections of the planning tool on page 190. (the first page of the planner on page 190 has been copied below in case you don’t want to use the one in your book)

Writing for Understanding Instruction
Teacher Plan

Teacher	Date	Class	Writing Genre
Topic/Subject/Text			
<p>Central Ideas</p> <p><i>What do I want students to understand about this content?</i></p> <p><i>What understandings about the craft of writing do I want them to develop?</i></p>			
Content:			
Reading:			
Writing:			
<p>Focusing Question</p> <p><i>What question will I pose so that students can see how to approach this thinking and writing in a specific, appropriate, manageable way?</i></p>		<p>Focus (answer to focusing question)</p>	

Schedule for Session #5

1. 15 Minutes
Sharing in small groups using the *study circles* protocol
*share quotes, sections, ideas

2. 15 Minutes
Exercise #9-*Understanding Content Knowledge and Writing Craft*

3. 20 Minutes
Exercise #11- *Building and Processing Working Knowledge
Understanding and Using the WU Planning Tool*
Exercise #10-*The Cat Who Went To Heaven* **Optional**

4. 5 Minutes
Reporting Out/Reflect
Set goals for next session
Reading Homework
Exit Card-Optional

Exercise 9 for Session #5
Understanding Content Knowledge and Writing Craft

Directions: Choose either the elementary teacher’s planning process on pages 78-83, or the middle school teacher’s planning on pages 83-91. With your partner, read the pages that describe the classroom instruction, before the teacher begins to think aloud about their planning for these pieces of writing. (Elementary-Abenaki, Middle School Social Studies-Little Boats) When you get to the teacher’s planning process (retyped below), one of you be the “teacher”. As you read aloud the teacher’s planning for content knowledge and knowledge of writing craft, circle or highlight the elements of content knowledge or writing craft on the left side of the chart, and on the right hand side of the chart, describe how these elements specifically showed up in this teacher’s thinking.

<p align="center">Teacher’s Thinking and Planning For Content Knowledge and Writing Craft</p>	<p>Describe how these elements, planning for content knowledge and writing craft, show up in this teacher’s thinking.</p> <p><i>Note: The first has been done as an example.</i></p>
<p align="center">Abenaki Dialogue-Elementary School Teacher</p> <p>(Read pages 78-82, then read the teacher’s thinking written below. Highlight the thinking the teacher does as she plans for opportunities for her students to learn more about teaching the content (Abenaki information).</p> <p>“Let’s see...I’m really asking these kids to think in terms of cause and effect here. Do they really get that? I think I’d better make up some sort of activity that zeros in on cause-and-effect thinking-maybe a game. If we can play a game with something they already know, hopefully they’ll be able to think in terms of cause and effect with this new information they’re going to be getting about Vermont’s land and about the Abenaki.</p> <p>“Okay, so far so good. Now what about the information? I have several books that I think will be useful. Some of them are library books-I’ll read those out loud. I also have a few short texts with multiple copies that we can all read. One is hard, I know-I’ll need to make sure the students get to hear that one aloud first before they read it to each other. And I have those wonderful Abenaki folk tales-they’ll be great as a literary source for kids to draw knowledge from.</p> <p>“Oh, and they need to talk. That will mean lots of guided discussion-oh, and I have a reader’s theatre play about Abenaki life. Perfect! They love acting, and it’s a great way to get them to work with the ideas over and over with out getting tired of it.</p> <p>“Now...there is going to be a LOT of information...I need to have a good way to keep track of it, stay very familiar with it...I want to make sure the students get very familiar with the information on both Vermont’s geography and the Abenaki, so that the cause-and-effect connection can be really clear for them. I think I’ll make a big chart on that wall by the flag...we can use it for the ‘public notes.’ I can have the kids draw pictures of the geographic features of the land, and also pictures of the Abenaki using those features to get their food, their transportation, and so forth. That will help with the vocabulary, too-some of this vocabulary is fairly specialized.</p>	

Little Boats Dialogue-Middle School Social Studies Teacher

(Read pages 83-91, then read the teacher's thinking written below. Highlight the thinking the teacher does as she plans for opportunities for her students to learn more about teaching the content (WWII Battle of Dunkirk information).

"There's so much to learn about history (as my principal used to say, 'Why would anyone want to teach history? There's more and more every year! It never gets smaller!') I do know that I want to make sure my students recognize that human history is not simple...that's my central idea. I want them to get lots of opportunity and practice in thinking critically about human events, both in the past as well as they happen around them-and teasing out multiple causes and multiple effects is a big part of that. So is seeing patterns.

"At the same time, I know that these concepts are tough! I think they'll be able to get 'technology' pretty well-but values? Economics? Even geography?

"So, I clearly need to start with making sure students have an adequate understanding of those terms. We'll gather lots of examples of those forces, then generalize from those to come up with definitions that are as concrete as possible. I think we'll also do a drawing display of graphics of these terms for the classroom wall, so we can refer to it as often as we need to.

"Now-the 'Little Boats' article itself. It's hard in some spots, with lots of complex sentences, so it will be a challenge for some students to read independently. Still, it's so dramatic-I think even my most concrete-thinker students will get pulled into it if I read it aloud to them first. Then I'll have them work in pairs to read it aloud with each other before we summarize as a group. Maybe I'll use a reciprocal teaching approach to that reading.

"In any case, that group summarizing will be important. I want to make sure they have really synthesized the key ideas about the event before they have to try to analyze it in terms of the forces of history. I'll see how well they can manage this synthesis on their own (they've written quite a few summaries before), but I'm going to check these 'little boat' summaries before we go on to analysis.

"Then what? How do I make sure they really get to work with those hard, abstract concepts in this context so that they know what they're doing when they write? First, I think I'll guide them through a partial third read, and we'll gather notes on 'geography' in this event together...and maybe strong ideas and beliefs. I'll make a graphic organizer for this. I want them to get it well. Then they can take the rest of their notes with their partners-that will give them plenty of time to talk and go back to the text (which I know they'll have to do a lot).

"Is this enough, though? These are such abstract ideas, and I'm asking them to juggle a few of them at the same time. Well, I do have those colored pencils...maybe if I give each student five tag-board circles (the base of that vase will be just the right size), they can create a drawing of the way each of these concepts shows up in the article. They'll work in partners, of course, and then share their drawings, explaining in words, in a class circle. That way, I'll be there to help guide the conversation if I can see some misconceptions popping up. And both the tag-board circles and student notes on the class discussion will provide helpful records of the information, so the kids have access to it for writing.

"Oh, my gosh-I can see that this is going to take a lot of time. Well...so be it. I want to make sure every kid in this class is successful...and I know they *can't* be successful if they don't have a really good grasp of these ideas."

Exercise 10 for Session #5 Optional

The Cat Who Went To Heaven

Directions: Read the following passage. Discuss with your partner or small group. Answer the question below individually, then as a group.

So, knowing at last how the Buddha must look, the artist fell asleep and slept for twenty-four hours as though he were dead, while the housekeeper held her breath and the little cat walked on the tip of her white paws. At the end of twenty-four hours, the artist awoke, and, calling hastily for brushes, ink, spring water, and a great roll of silk, he drew at one end the figure of the great Buddha reclining upon a couch, his face filled with peace. The artist worked as though he saw the whole scene before his eyes. It had taken him three days to know how the Buddha should look, but it took him less than three hours to paint him to the last fold of his garments, while housekeeper and Good Fortune looked on with the greatest respect and admiration.

---The Cat Who Went To Heaven, Elizabeth Coatsworth

Focusing Question: So, what does this quote have to do with writing?

Exercise 11 for Session #5
Building and Processing Working Knowledge
Understanding and Using the WU Planning Tool

Directions: Reread pages 69-76 and discuss each element Writing For Understanding teachers feel are critical to plan for so students gain sufficient content knowledge in a variety of ways to be able to write effectively with knowledge and skill. As you read, discuss each element with your partner. On the chart below, check off the elements that are familiar to you. Think about a time in your own planning where you used one of these components in your own planning and share your ideas with the large group.

**Building and Processing
Working Knowledge**

How will I make sure that students learn enough about this subject to actually be able to write about it?

- Vocabulary
- Guided Reading
- Text Mapping
- Paraphrasing
- Summarizing
- Visualizing
- Imaging
- Dramatizing
- Oral processing/Guided conversation/Think pair-share
- Constructed response
- Experience
- Debating
- Taking notes (graphic organizers, T-charts, 2-column notes, etc.)
- Other

Exercise 12 for Session #6
Structures

Directions: Reread pages 95-112. Use the space below to take notes. Use the focusing question below to focus your discussion in your small group or with your partner. Share key ideas with the large group.

Notes:

Focusing Question:

According to the authors, why is it important to teach structures?

Exercise 13 for Session #7

Directions: Reread *The Three Little Pigs* (page 113) re-typed below for your convenience below. Cut out the annotations from the box below and glue them next to the section of the text that matches that thinking.

*The book **The True Story Of The Three Little Pigs** by Jon Sciesz is about a wolf named Alexander T. Wolf, and three little pigs. There are many things in the book that are the same as the original story, and there are many things that are different from the original story.*

One thing that is the same as the original story is there were three houses made by the pigs. One thing that is the same as the original story is the brick house would not fall down because bricks are strong. Another way the story is the same is there is a wolf who blows down the straw houses.

Although there are things that are the same in the two stories, there are also things that are different. One thing that is different from the original story is there was a mean pig who was impolite. The wolf goes to jail because he ate two pigs. The wolf had a cold which blew down the straw and stick houses.

As you can see, there were things that were different and the same.

Evidence from the text supports the controlling idea that there are similar things in both stories.

The conclusion is a restatement of the controlling idea.

A group introduction is one way to support the thinking and writing of novice writers.

Evidence from the text supports the controlling idea that there are different things in both texts.

Provide compare/contrast language for young writers learning literary language.

Exercise 14 for Session #7

Directions: Reread Beatrice’s Goat (page 118) re-typed below for your convenience below. Cut out the annotations from the box below and glue them next to the section of the text that matches that thinking in the text.

Beatrice’s Goat by Page McBrier is about a little girl named Beatrice whose life is suddenly changed to the best by a goat. Beatrice lives in Uganda and belongs to a lucky family who receives a goat from Heifer International. Things were very different for Beatrice and her family before and after Mugisa arrived.

Before Mugisa came Beatrice and her family had no or very little nutrition. This meant that her family was more open to diseases and and not very healthy. Another thing Mugisa changed was there roof. Whenever it rained the roof would leak and they could not afford a new one. Imagine going inside to escape the rain and still be getting wet. Funny to think about but not funny if it happened to you. One more thing that changed was school. Often Beatrice would watch the school children with envy, longing to go, but thinking she never would be able to. Wanting to where a yellow blouse and blue dress studying her school books, but deep inside knowing unless some miracle happened she never would be able to. The other need Beatrice’s family needed was money. There family was low on money like most familys around there. They needed money to buy supplies they needed like a new shirt for Moses (her brother) and a new blanket for the bed Beatrice shared with Grace (her sister).

You see now how her life was before Mugisa arrived.

Now (that) you got a taste of what Beatrice’s life was like before Mugisa came, I will show you how her life changed and how different it was when the goat arrived. For one there health and nutrition of her family changed a lot because now they could drink healthy nutritious goat milk. They also could sell the goat milk for money to afford lots of things they need. One especially good thing they could afford was school for Beatrice!! Another wonderful thing Mugisa brought was two kids, Expected and Surprise. They sold Surprise for a lot of money, enough money to knock down there old house and replace it with a new one with a steel roof that would not leak and blue furniture. Now you see how much Mugisa changed Beatrice and her family’s life.

Beatrice’s life was drastically changed after Mugisa came. I think it’s amazing how something as small as a goat can make such a significant change in someone’s life.

An introduction sets the context for the reader.

The conclusion is a synthesis of the information and reflects on the significance of the information in the text with an “Aha” statement.

Evidence from the text supports the controlling idea.

Transitions help the reader move from one controlling idea to another in the text.

Clear focus

Exercise 15 for Session #7
Models Are Helpful

Directions: Read over the pages 99-100 re-typed below about models and discuss the ideas from the selection with your group. Think about the importance of using models in a variety of disciplines, then think of a time when a model was helpful to you. Turn your experience into a story to tell your colleagues after your discussion about models.

How Can Teachers Address Structure within Writing Instruction?

There are many ways to help students learn to use structures for organizing their thinking in writing. Here, we will discuss three that have been particularly important and useful: the study of models, the creation of graphic organizers, and the use of a basic essay structure called the Painted Essay.

Models. We sometimes hear teachers express concern over the use of models in teaching writing. Sometimes, they fear that giving students models will encourage them to imitate rather than create, to copy rather than think for themselves.

While it is certainly true that any approach can be misused, we have found that using models thoughtfully is of great help to students. Further, it is a practice widely used in all sorts of instruction, all sorts of apprenticeships. A basketball coach would not think of trying to explain dribbling to a novice player without first showing him what dribbling looks like. A woodworking teacher would not ask an apprentice to make an end table without first showing him what an end table looks like. A math teacher would not expect fourth graders to do long division without showing them the algorithm for it.

Is this imitation? Is it copying? Of course it is, because imitation is part of learning. But as the young woodworker grows in skill, he begins to use those table-making skills in his own way, with his own designs. As the math student grows, he applies his long division skills to his own problem-solving processes.

In much the same way, a teacher operating within the *Writing for Understanding* paradigm would not ask a student of any age to write a response to text or a persuasive piece without first making sure the student had a model of what the end product looks like. *Writing Next*, a report published by the Alliance for Excellent Education, lists "the study of models" as one of eleven elements of writing instruction shown by research to be effective in improving the writing of adolescents (*Writing Next*, 2007).

A model is more than a visual of a structure, though it includes that. Rather, a model is a completed, coherent body of thought. In a good model, the student can see and idea that has been thought through and developed clearly through a well-formed structure or pattern.

Pages 99-100

Discussion Notes:

Tell a story about a time when a model was helpful to you, or would have been, had there been one!

Schedule for Session #8

1. 15 Minutes
Sharing in small groups using the *study circles* protocol
*share quotes, sections, ideas

2. 40 Minutes
Exercise #16-*Helpful Revision*

4. 5 Minutes
Reporting Out/Reflect
Set goals for next session
Reading Homework
Exit Card-Optional

Exercise 16 for Session #8
Helpful Revision

Directions: Read pages 134-151. As you read each scenario, fill in the chart below and discuss each teacher’s approach to revision. When you have finished the chart and the focusing question below the chart, share the generalizations you have made about how this chapter has changed the way you think about revision.

<u>Revision in the Classroom</u>			
Four Scenarios			
Scenerio	Type of Revision	What did the teacher do?	How was this kind of revision helpful?
Grade 5 Pages 134-139 Upper Elementary Informational Writing	Revision at the Planning Stage		
Grade 4 Pages 139-142 Upper Elementary Narrative Writing	Revision during Writing		
Middle School Pages 142-147 Persuasive Writing	Revision for Knowledge and Understanding during Writing		
Grades 3-5 Pages 147-151 Upper Elementary Informational Writing	Revision after a First Draft		
Focusing Question: How does this chapter change the way you think about revision?			

Schedule for Session #9

1. 15 Minutes
Sharing in small groups using the *study circles* protocol
*share quotes, sections, ideas

2. 40 Minutes
Exercise #17-*It's All About Transfer!*

4. 5 Minutes
Reporting Out/Reflect
Set goals for next session
Reading Homework
Exit Card-Optional

Exercise 17 for Session #9
It's All About Transfer!

Directions: Read over the definition of transfer and the conditions that make transfer possible. Skim or re-read the actual pages in the book if necessary. With your group, discuss the definition, the conditions and then begin to answer the focusing question below. Share your answers with the large group.

What is Transfer?

According to the National Research Council, whose book *How People Learn* (200) has provided a rich explanation of what science knows so far about learning, transfer is "the ability to extend what has been learned in one context to new contexts."

Page 157

What Does It Take for Students to Transfer?

What Makes Transfer Possible?

- Adequate initial learning.
- The ability to abstract understanding of underlying concepts.
- Time to learn.
- Self-monitoring and using feedback as an ingrained habit of mind.
- Motivation to learn.

Pages 160-161

Focusing Question: What do these conditions that make transfer possible, imply for your planning for transfer in writing?

Final Thoughts on Transfer: