

Project-based Integrated Reading and Writing Units

Nell K. Duke
University of Michigan

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Project-based Approaches

Students work over an extended time period to achieve a purpose that is beyond satisfying a school requirement—to build something, to create something, to address a question students have, to solve a real problem, or address a real need.

Projects are typically interdisciplinary in nature.

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Research on Project-Based Approaches

Project-based approaches have a long history dating back at least to the Progressive Era in the U.S. in the early 1900s.

Research suggests positive impacts on both achievement and affective dimensions (see, e.g., reviews by Halvorsen, Duke, et al., 2012; Thomas, 2000; and at <http://www.edutopia.org/pbl-research-learning-outcomes>).

Groups studied include students with learning disabilities and students of low SES.

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Some of the 'Big Ideas' about Project-Based Integrated Reading and Writing Units

1. Writing and reading for different tasks, purposes, and audiences
2. Integrated reading, writing, speaking, & listening
3. Situating genre instruction in rich science and social studies content
4. Using text sets and reading multiple texts for reading and to inform writing
5. Developing metatextuality
6. Writing with strong and recursive attention to planning, editing, and revision

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Writing (and Thus Reading) for Different Tasks, Purposes, and Audiences

From the CCSS Anchor Standards for Writing:

4. Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.
10. Write routinely over extended time frames (time for research, reflection, and revision) and shorter time frames (a single sitting or a day or two) for a range of tasks, purposes, and audiences.

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But in school . . .

The task is typically the “assignment.”

The purpose is typically to get a grade, to do what they're told to do

The audience is typically the teacher and maybe some of the students

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The Influence of Audience

Cohen and Riel (1989)

- Grade 7
- Teacher or international peers
- Compositions for peers stronger in overall and in content, organization, vocabulary, language use, and mechanics

Crowhurst and Piche (1979)

- Grades 6 and 10
- Teacher or best friend
- Compositions for best friend had more effective argumentative language

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The Influence of Audience and Purpose

Meghan Block Dissertation (2013)

- Grade 2
- Local public librarian or classroom teacher
- Specified purpose or no specified purpose
- Compositions for local public librarian had:
 - higher holistic scores
 - higher primary trait scores including focus, accuracy, details, illustrations complementing text, language of informational texts, addressing the audience, and navigational features
- Compositions with specific purpose had:
 - More content-oriented revisions
 - More mechanical revisions

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The Influence of Purpose and Text

Second and third graders in classrooms in which informational text and procedural text reading involved more real-world texts for real-world purposes showed higher growth on several measures (Purcell-Gates, Duke, & Martineau, 2007).

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The Zoo Guide Project



Credit to Kathryn Roberts for curriculum development

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Integrated Reading, Writing, Speaking, & Listening

In the zoo guide project children:

- read letters from the head veterinarian at the zoo and sent her letters in return
- emailed questions to zoo personnel and interviewed them in person
- listened to presentations by zoo personnel
- listened to factual books that were read aloud to them
- observed animals and took notes or drew pictures of what they saw
- gathered information from books and websites about animals (with help from mentors).

(Duke, Caughlan, Juzwik, & Martin, 2012)

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Integrated Reading, Writing, Speaking, & Listening

- Reading and writing are integrally related (Shanahan, 2006).
- More effective teachers have students writing more (e.g., Pressley, Allington, Block, Morrow, & Wharton-McDonald, 2001).
- Combining reading and writing instruction may improve reading and writing (e.g., Graham & Hebert, 2010).

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Integrated Reading, Writing, Speaking, & Listening

Example from grade one:

Reading:

8. Identify **the reasons an author gives to support points** in a text.

Writing:

1. Write opinion pieces in which they introduce the topic or name the book they are writing about, **state an opinion, supply a reason for the opinion**, and provide some sense of closure.

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Integrated Reading, Writing, Speaking, & Listening

Example from grade five:

Reading:

2. Determine two or more main ideas of a text and explain how they are supported by key details; **summarize the text.**

Writing:

8. Recall relevant information from experiences or gather relevant information from print and digital sources; **summarize or paraphrase information in notes and finished work**, and provide a list of sources.

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Situating informational text instruction in rich science and social studies content

- Informational text reading and writing should be **about** something.
- There is considerable evidence that literacy and content area learning can improve, synergistically, from their integration (e.g., Seeds of Science/Roots of Reading research, CORI research).

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Social Studies: The Park Improvement Project

- **Students visit a local park and document deficiencies.**
- **Students develop and present a proposal (persuasive text)** to a local government official to make improvements to the park.
- Along the way, students learn about local government; write, carry out, and analyze results from a survey; and so on.

(Halvorsen, A., Duke, N. K., Brugar, K. A., Block, M. K., Strachan, S. L., Berka, M. B., & Brown, J. M. (2012). Narrowing the achievement gap in second-grade social studies and content area literacy: The promise of a project-based approach. *Theory and Research in Social Education*, 40, 198-229.)

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Civics Michigan Grade-Level Content Expectations (GLCEs)

2 – C1.0.1	Explain why people form governments.
2 – C1.0.2	Distinguish between government action and private action.
2 – C2.0.1	Explain how local governments balance individual rights with the common good to solve local community problems.
2 – C3.0.1	Give examples of how local governments make, enforce, and interpret laws (ordinances) in the local community.
2 – C3.0.2	Use examples to describe how local government affects the lives of its citizens.
2 – C3.0.3	Identify services commonly provided by local governments (e.g., police, fire departments, schools, libraries, parks).
2 – C5.0.1	Identify ways citizens participate in community decisions.
2 – C5.0.2	Distinguish between personal and civic responsibilities and explain why they are important in community life.
2 – C5.0.3	Design and participate in community improvement projects that help or inform others.

Public Discourse, Decision-Making, and Citizen Involvement GLCEs

2 – P3.1.1	Identify public issues in the local community that influence the daily lives of its citizens.
2 – P3.1.2	Use graphic data and other sources to analyze information about a public issue in the local community and evaluate alternative resolutions.
2 – P2.1.3	Give examples of how conflicts over core democratic values lead people to differ on resolutions to a public policy issue in the local community.
2 – P3.3.1	Compose a statement expressing a position on a public policy issue in the local community and justify the position with a reasoned argument.
2 – P4.2.1	Develop and implement an action plan to address or inform others about a public issue.
2 – P4.2.2	Participate in projects to help or inform others.

Some of the Common Core State Standards Addressed

Reading Standards for Informational Text:

5. Know and use various text features (e.g., captions, bold print, subheadings, glossaries, indexes, electronic menus, icons) to locate key facts or information in a text efficiently.
6. Identify the main purpose of a text, including what the author wants to answer, explain, or describe.
7. Explain how specific images (e.g., a diagram showing how a machine works) contribute to and clarify a text.
8. Describe how reasons support specific points the author makes in a text.

Some of the Common Core State Standards Addressed

Writing Standards:

1. Write opinion pieces in which they introduce the topic or book they are writing about, state an opinion, supply reasons that support the opinion, use linking words (e.g., *because*, *and*, *also*) to connect opinion and reasons, and provide a concluding statement or section.
5. With guidance and support from adults and peers, focus on a topic and strengthen writing as needed by revising and editing.
6. With guidance and support from adults, use a variety of digital tools to produce and publish writing, including in collaboration with peers.

Again from the CCSS

“To build a foundation for college and career readiness, students . . . learn to appreciate that a key purpose of writing is to communicate clearly to an external, sometimes unfamiliar audience, and they begin to adapt the form and content of their writing to accomplish a particular task and purpose” (p. 18).

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Using text sets and reading multiple texts for reading and to inform writing

(see esp. p. 33 of the CCSS)

From the CCSS Anchor Standards for Reading:

7. Integrate and evaluate content presented in diverse formats and media, including visually and quantitatively, as well as in words.
9. Analyze how two or more texts address similar themes or topics in order to build knowledge or to compare the approaches the authors take.

(See also the “Research to Build and Present Knowledge” standards in CCSS for Writing.)

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Developing Metatextuality

From the CCSS Anchor Standards for Reading:

3. Analyze how and why individuals, events, and ideas develop and interact over the course of a text.
5. Analyze the structure of texts, including how specific sentences, paragraphs, and larger portions of the text (e.g., a section, chapter, scene, or stanza) relate to each other and the whole.
6. Assess how point of view or purpose shapes the content and style of a text.

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Developing Metatextuality

For example:

Reading Informational Text #5, Grade 2:

Know and use various text features (e.g., captions, bold print, subheadings, glossaries, indexes, electronic menus, icons) to locate key facts or information in text efficiently.

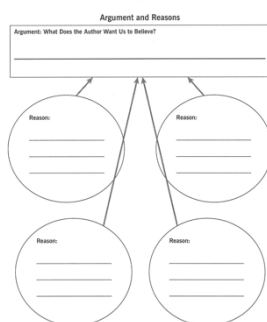
Reading Informational Text #8, Grade 2:

Describe how reasons support specific points the author makes in a text.

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Text Structure Instruction with Graphic Organizers

(See, e.g., Shanahan, et al., 2010, for a review.)



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Developing Metatextuality

Mindful of the genre-specific nature of reading and writing, teachers need to be highly metatextual, thinking about:

- text purpose(s)
- text features
- strategies for reading and writing that type of text
- the ever-changing nature of text
- the value of textual innovation

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Use of Model or Mentor Texts

- Model or mentor texts are strong examples of the kind of writing we are asking students to do.
- Model or mentor texts should reflect the genre and craft we are asking for.
- Model or mentor texts need not be on the same topic as that on which students are writing.
- Use of model or mentor texts hold promise in improving students' writing (e.g., Dean, 2008, Hillocks, 2006).
- ALL ASSIGNMENTS SHOULD INCLUDE A MODEL OR MENTOR TEXT.

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Writing with Strong and Recursive Attention to Planning, Editing, and Revision

From the CCSS Anchor Standards for Writing:

5. Develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach.
6. Use technology, including the Internet, to produce and publish writing and to interact and collaborate with others.

Writing with Strong and Recursive Attention to Planning, Editing, and Revision

- Graham and Sandmel (2011) meta-analysis: Positive effects, though modest, of process writing on writing quality (but not motivation and not for struggling writers)
- Morphy and Graham (2012) meta-analysis: Even for struggling writers, word processing increases writing quality, especially if programs provide prompting or feedback.

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Project-Based Informational Text Unit Structure

- Launch Session
- Reading and Research
- Writing and Research
- Revision
- Presentation

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Session Structure

- ~10 minutes: Whole class read aloud, hands-on experience, and/or mini-lesson
- ~ 25 minutes: Small group or individual work, teacher circulating, working with small groups or individuals as needed
- ~ 5 minutes: Whole group wrap up

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Project Launch

Think about . . .

- Needs in your school
- Needs in your community
- Needs in the broader world
- Your connections and resources
- Students' interests and assets
- Opportunities for students to exert change

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Texts for Projects

- Launch text
- Source texts
- Mentor texts

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Reading and Research

- Hands-on experiences, such as:
 - science investigations
 - interviews
 - surveys
 - field trips
- Source texts, such as:
 - books
 - articles on internet
 - videos

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Writing and Research

- Planning
- Researching
- Drafting
- Researching
- . . .
- Mini-lessons and small groups pulled together based on student needs and challenges

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Revision

- Feedback from Target Audience
- Revision checklists
- Editing checklists
- Multiple read-throughs by students with different foci
- Multiple rounds of feedback from teacher with different foci
- Mini-lessons and small groups pulled together based on student needs and challenges

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