PDIG Final Report

1) **Project Description**

Following our PDIG's in the 2017-2018 and 2018-2019 school years, on how to improve teaching and understanding of Competencies 1 and 2, our team felt it necessary to partake in a third year to review the ELA Secondary Program and the Progression of Learning with respect to Competency 3, to determine essential understandings and expected outcomes by each grade level. Another key focus of the PDIG was to focus on how assessment for learning can inform practice, determine feedback and scaffolding to help move students forward. Our PDIG took place over 4 days and allowed us the opportunity to not only create new tools to bring back to our department, but it also allowed us the opportunity to share best practices

2) **Project Goals**

Goal #1: Identify the global skills associated with Competency 3, identify the global skills at each grade level as well as create different assessments at each grade level and Identify the ways to establish consistency amongst team members when it comes to different types of texts.

With these goals in mind, we were able to complete the following:

- **Identify the global skills associated with Competency 3:**
  a. Investigates and applies codes & conventions of written and media texts
  b. Compares own writing style to those of other authors
  c. Learns how a variety of texts are constructed
  d. Awareness of audience when constructing texts
  e. Confers with peers and teachers during the production process
  f. Applies feedback to own work after conferring
  g. Monitors own learning
  h. Plans and organizes texts

- **Create a Global Skills Chart:**
  a. Creation of a chart that outlines at which grade level different styles of texts will be produced by students, with teacher support and independently.

- **Establish consistency amongst team members:**
  a. CFA (common formative assessment) allows teachers to get a benchmark of where students are at and allows teachers to identify what they should focus on in their teaching.
  b. **PLC** meetings could be great opportunities to evaluate writing samples, like Grade 11 anchoring sessions.

Goal #2: Identify tools for global skills and establish expectations for spoken, written and media texts produced by students

With these goals in mind, we were able to complete the following:

- **Check-In Tickets for Writing**
    a. Open-ended form to allow teachers to check-in with student learning, regardless of type of writing being produced.
    b. Potential questions a teacher could ask on the ticket:
        o Something I am struggling with / something I need clarification on right now is . . .
        o How I got my main point across in my writing is . . .
        o Two things in my writing that I will use to communicate my main point . . .
        o My target audience is . . .

- **Road Maps for different types of writing:**

    a. Persuasive Text Road Map – An Example:
        ▪ Phase 1:
            • Practice identifying persuasive techniques in famous videos
            • Review ethos, pathos, logos
            • Practice identifying ethos, pathos, logos using commercials
            • Practice identifying appealing techniques in self-selected videos
            • Practice identifying persuasive techniques in texts
        ▪ Phase 2:
            • Establish timelines for the writing process
            • Selecting a topic to write about
            • Brainstorming arguments for your topic
            • Get peer feedback on your brainstorm
            • Identifying your audience
            • Review the differences between opinion, argument, fact, and proof
            • Have students do a *Check-In* on their understanding
            • Outlining the order of your arguments and your thesis
            • Get peer feedback on your outline
        ▪ Phase 3:
            • Review timeline and adjust accordingly
            • Reviewing how to source accurately
            • Learning how to research effectively
            • Identifying which techniques you are trying to use in your text (use *Make and Impact* form)
            • Produce at least one draft
            • Get teacher feedback on your draft
            • Have students self-reflect during the process (use *Check-In* form)
            • Create final polished copy

b. **Narrative* Text Road Map – An Example**:
- Phase 1:
  - Review elements of story
  - Practice identifying elements of story in videos
  - Practice identifying elements of story in texts
- Phase 2:
  - Establish timelines for the writing process
  - Selecting a topic to write about
  - Brainstorming ideas for your narrative
  - Get peer feedback on your brainstorm
  - Identifying your audience
  - Determine elements of plot (Freytag's Pyramid)
  - Have students do a *Check-In* on their understanding
  - Outlining the order of your story
  - Get peer feedback on your outline
  - Complete storyboard chart
- Phase 3:
  - Review timeline and adjust accordingly
  - Review how to integrate dialogue in a story
  - Have students do a *Check-In* on their understanding (optional)
  - Produce at least one draft
  - Get teacher feedback on your draft
  - Have students self-reflect during the process (use *Check-In* form)
  - Create final polished copy

c. **Article* Road Map – An Example**:
- Phase 1:
  - Review elements of different types of articles
  - Practice identifying elements of different types of articles in videos
  - Practice identifying elements of different types of articles in sample articles
- Phase 2:
  - Establish timelines for the writing process
  - Selecting a topic to write about
  - Brainstorming ideas for your article
  - Choosing the type of article to be produced
  - Identifying your audience
  - Get peer feedback on your brainstorm, type, and audience
  - Have students do a *Check-In* on their understanding
  - Outlining the order of your article
  - Get peer feedback on your outline
- Phase 3:
  - Review timeline and adjust accordingly
  - Review how to integrate quotes and attributions in an article
  - Have students do a *Check-In* on their understanding

- Produce at least one draft
- Get teacher feedback on your draft
- Have students self-reflect during the process (use *Check-In* form)
- Create final polished copy

d. **Letter Road Map** – **An Example**:
- Phase 1:
    - Review elements of different types of letters
    - Practice identifying elements of different types of letter in samples
- Phase 2:
    - Establish timelines for the writing process
    - Selecting a topic or issue to write about
    - Brainstorming ideas for your letter
    - Choosing the type of letter to be produced
    - Identifying your audience
    - Get peer feedback on your brainstorm, type, and audience
    - Have students do a *Check-In* on their understanding
    - Outlining the order of your letter
    - Get peer feedback on your outline
- Phase 3:
    - Review timeline and adjust accordingly
    - Produce at least one draft
    - Get teacher feedback on your draft
    - Have students self-reflect during the process (use *Check-In* form)
    - Create final polished copy

e. **Literary Analysis Road Map** – **An Example**:
- Phase 1:
    - Review elements of the literary essay
- Phase 2:
    - Establish timelines for the writing process
    - Selecting a topic or theme to write about
    - Brainstorming your topic or theme
    - Get peer feedback on your brainstorm
    - Research outside supporting evidence (optional)
    - Outlining the order of your arguments and your thesis
    - Get peer feedback on your outline
    - Have students do a *Check-In* on their understanding
- Phase 3:
    - Review timeline and adjust accordingly
    - Reviewing how to source accurately (optional)
    - Learning how to research effectively (optional)
    - Produce at least one draft
    - Get teacher feedback on your draft
    - Have students self-reflect during the process (use *Check-In* form)

- Create final polished copy

    f. **Expository Essay Road Map – An Example**:
- Phase 1:
  - Review the characteristics of expository writing
  - Practice identifying expository techniques in famous videos or podcasts
  - Practice identifying expository techniques in texts
- Phase 2:
  - Establish timelines for the writing process
  - Selecting a topic to write about
  - Brainstorming your topic
  - Get peer feedback on your brainstorm
  - Research outside supporting evidence (optional)
  - Outlining the order of your ideas and your thesis
  - Get peer feedback on your outline
  - Have students do a *Check-In* on their understanding
- Phase 3:
  - Review timeline and adjust accordingly
  - Reviewing how to source accurately (optional)
  - Learning how to research effectively (optional)
  - Produce at least one draft
  - Get teacher feedback on your draft
  - Have students self-reflect during the process (use *Check-In* form)
  - Create final polished copy

Goal #3: Create various types of rubrics for the different types of texts.

With this goal in mind, we were able to complete the following checklists:

- **Checklist for Articles:**
  - You have completed a planning document prior to writing the article;
  - Your article has a headline that is compelling and accurately relates to your topic;
  - Your article includes a byline and the date;
  - Your article has a lead that is engaging and on-topic;
  - Your article uses paragraphs of appropriate lengths to create a body;
  - Your article uses pull quotes to help orgainze your ideas;
  - Your article has a conclusion that gives the reader a sense of closure;
  - Your article integrates evidence from reliable sources (beware of Wikipedia or blogs—educational websites are preferred);
  - Your article correctly sources each and every direct quote or paraphrased fact using the MLA parenthetical style (see Owl Purdue— https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/purdue_owl for more info);
  - Your article uses a copywrite-free image which is correctly sourced (see Pixabay);
  - Your article does not contain any errors in writing mechanics: spelling, grammar, punctuation, sentence structure (no fragments or run-ons)

- o Your article must be typed in size 12 Times New Roman or Arial font;
- o Your article must be double-spaced with a one-inch margin on all sides;
- o Your article must be 500-600 words in length;

- **Checklist for Persuasive Essays:**
  - o Your essay describes and develops your chosen topic;
  - o Your essay must include an introduction with a clear thesis statement;
  - o Your essay must include a new paragraph for each new point that you are trying to make;
  - o Your essay must include an impactful conclusion;
  - o Your essay must include persuasive language, to convince the audience of your point of view;
  - o Your essay must use facts from reliable sources (not Wikipedia or blogs—use educational websites such as www.school.eb.com **username**: *newfrontiers* **password**: *schools*);
  - o Your essay must correctly source each and every direct quote and paraphrased fact, if used, using the MLA parenthetical style (see OWL Purdue— https://owl.english.purdue.edu);
  - o Your essay must include a bibliography in MLA format, if applicable (see EasyBib.com and OWL Purdue);
  - o Your essay must not contain any errors in mechanics (spelling and punctuation);
  - o Your essay must be typed in size 12 Times New Roman or Arial font;
  - o Your essay must be double-spaced with a one-inch margin on all sides;
  - o Your essay must be 500-600 words in length;
  - o Your final draft must have the persuasive language indicated (highlighted) with an explanation of your choices;

- **Checklist for Speech:**
  - o You must use conviction as you speak (tone);
  - o You must speak clearly (enunciation);
  - o You must make eye contact (non-verbal communication);
  - o Your must speak slowly (tempo);
  - o You must speak loudly (volume);
  - o You must maintain good posture and not fidget as you speak (body language);
  - o You must stay on topic and not pause unexpectedly;
  - o You handle unexpected slip-ups well;

- **Checklist for Expository Essay:**
  - o Your topic is well researched and accurate;
  - o You explain your topic in a way that the audience can understand your message;
  - o You use examples to support your ideas;
  - o Your essay effectively integrates paraphrased information & quotes from the texts used; quotes are not "parachuted" in (if applicable);
  - o Your essay uses a variety of reliable resources (if applicable);
  - o Your message demonstrates a logical progression of ideas;
  - o You use an appropriate tone based on the context;

- You avoid artificial supports in your essay (in this essay, my three points will be, firstly, secondly, thirdly, in conclusion, etc.);
- Your facts are sourced using the MLA parenthetical format—see https://owl.purdue.edu for more information (if applicable);
- You include a bibliography formatted according to the MLA style-- see http://www.easybib.com for more information (if applicable);
- Your essay includes an original title that gives the reader a hint as to what your topic is;
- You make sure to check your spelling and punctuation, including appropriate spacing before and after punctuation;

- Your essay is typed, size 12 Times New Roman or Helvetica font, double spaced, 1.5" margins, and fully-aligned;

- **Checklist for Descriptive Essay:**
  - Your first sentences describe the topic in a general way or ask a question, before becoming more detailed and specific;
  - You have used several descriptive devices, such as metaphors, similes, or figures of speech, thoughtfully;
  - Your descriptions are clear and can be imagined by the audience;
  - Your descriptions are effective, as they do what they are intended to;
  - Your word choice is rich and colourful—nouns are chosen purposefully, verbs provide energy, and the audience's senses are evoked;
  - Your word choice is striking and impactful— key sentences catch the audience's eye and stay with him/her;
  - Your word choice is accurate and precise—the audience knows exactly what is being said;
  - Your word choice clarifies and expands on the ideas presented—the audience isn't confused;
  - Your text demonstrates an ability to use everyday vocabulary well—your language usage feels natural;
  - Your use of repetition is deliberate and effective—it contributes to the overall meaning and the audience's enjoyment of the text;
  - Your ideas are organized in a logical way, in order to make the most sense;
  - Your paragraphs are linked together using transition words;
  - Your overall language usage is appropriate (be sure your vocabulary reflects your maturity and sophistication);
  - Your last sentence summarizes the topic or returns the reader to the original question;
  - You use a new paragraph whenever a new idea is introduced;
  - You have given your piece an interesting and appropriate title to catch the reader's attention;
  - You have made no spelling errors;
  - There are no errors in your mechanics (sentence structure, punctuation, and paragraphing).
  - 200-250 words in length
  - Typed, double-spaced, 2-inch margin all around, size 12 font,

o   Includes an image within the text, to compliment what is being described (hand drawn, photographed, or taken from the internet with sourcing provided!)

- **Checklist for Literary Essay**:
  INTRODUCTION

  o   Is there an effective hook – question, quote, anecdote, or statement which introduces the topic?
  o   Are important terms defined in your own words?
  o   Are the authors and titles of the works of literature given?
  o   Does the hook clearly illustrate the topic of the essay, as well as capture the reader's attention?
  o   Is the definition used clearly explained?
  o   Have you ordered the reasons in the thesis statement to get the maximum effect for your essay (weakest to the strongest)?

  BODY OF THE ESSAY

  o   Does each of the body paragraphs have a clear topic sentence which refers back to the thesis and introduces the reason being developed?
  o   Is the evidence from the work of literature clear, specific, quoted correctly, and documented properly?
  o   Does each body paragraph end with a strong concluding sentence which connects the reason and the evidence with the thesis?
  o   Do you give specific, detailed examples as evidence in each of the three body paragraphs?
  o   Do you have at least three quotes (correctly documented) in each body paragraph?
  o   Does each body paragraph relate to and support the thesis?

  CONCLUSION

  o   Is there a restatement of the thesis and the three reasons?
  o   Is there a brief discussion of the larger implications?
  o   Does the essay have an effective clincher?
  o   Do your implications show what the reader can learn from this piece of literature?
  o   Does your clincher sentence say something important about the topic and maybe even come full circle to link up with the hook?

  CRITERIA

  o   Is the language in your essay academic and suitable for your audience?
  o   Are the references to the piece of literature written in the present tense?
  o   Is the sentence structure of the essay correct – no fragments, run-ons, or comma splices?
  o   Do you use connecting words or transitions to link the paragraphs in the essay?
  o   Did you choose your words carefully, avoiding unnecessary repetition and unclear language?
  o   Did you proofread for spelling errors?
  o   Do you have a proper title page?

- o Do you use in-text citations correctly?
- o Do you have a correct Works Cited page?
- o ARE YOU PROUD OF YOUR FINISHED PRODUCT?

- **Checklist for Narrative Writing**:
  Content

  - o Your story has an engaging opening;
  - o Your story identifies character and setting;
  - o Your story introduces a conflict early on;
  - o Your characters' motivations and actions build to a climax;
  - o Your story has a logical and satisfying conclusion; the final outcome is clear.

  Author's technique/craft

  - o Your story uses several descriptive devices, such as symbolism, metaphors, or similes;
  - o Your descriptions are clear and can be imagined by the reader;
  - o Your ideas are organized in a logical way, in order to make the most sense;
  - o The language that you use is appropriate (be sure that your vocabulary reflects your maturity and sophistication);
  - o The dialogue effectively advances the plot and is formatted correctly;
  - o You have made no spelling errors;
  - o You have used correct grammar;
  - o You have made no errors in your mechanics (sentence structure, punctuation, and paragraphing);
  - o You have given your piece an interesting and appropriate title to catch the reader's attention;

- **Checklist for Letter Writing:**
  - o The letter should contain a return address (usually two lines);
  - o The letter should contain a third line with a date;
  - o The greeting in a letter should have the first word and any noun capitalized;
  - o The greeting normally ends with a comma for an informal letter and a colon for a formal letter;
  - o The body of the letter contains the main text;
  - o Each new paragraph should be indented;
  - o Skipping a line between paragraphs, especially in a typed or printed copy, helps the reader;
  - o The closing should have an indent at the same column as the heading;
  - o The closing should begin with a capital letter and end with a comma;
  - o Skip 1-3 spaces (two on a computer) before adding in your signature;
  - o Type in the signature line, the printed name of the person signing the letter;
  - o Sign the name in the space between the close and the signature line;
  - o You have made no spelling errors;
  - o There are no errors in your mechanics (sentence structure, punctuation, and paragraphing).

3. Project Outcomes

By the end of the PDIG project, we not only accumulated new and innovative resources, but we also shared best practices, and each took away new teaching strategies to help improve our understanding of the progression of learning for competency 3. We were also able to discuss and determine the essential understandings and expected outcomes of each grade level.

Besides helping improve our understanding of competency 3 and the desired outcomes, we also created some useful tools that will help students better understand what is expected of them as writers. The road maps and checklists serve as guides to help students with the writing process and to also better familiarize themselves with the expectations of the different types of writing we focus on in class.

Overall, we feel that the discussions we had and the resources we put together will not only help teachers in the classroom, but ultimately help students better their writing and understanding of what is expected of them for competency 3.

4. Reinvestment

Our reinvestment plan is to use these new resources in our classroom to help students better understand what is expected of them for competency 3. We will also distribute these resources to the rest of the English teachers who were not part of our PDIG team, to ensure that we are building a continuum within our department to ensure that our expectations are common and fair across the board.