

Planning Your Project: Laying the Groundwork

When beginning to plan your writing-for-publication project, there are a few critical things that you should be looking for and working on. Knowing the following information will better help you to get a sense of what type of project you and students might have the most success with.

Over-arching project planning and curriculum mapping

What is the “entry point” for your SPI project? What are your and/or your school’s objectives? What do you want your students to experience as a result of this project?

What will the project look like? What will the main genre study be?

What scaffolding will be needed to help your students be able to succeed? What do students need to know and be able to do in order to write in the genre you’ve chosen? What “mini-projects” might help to introduce the students to the genre (skills, concepts, structure, etc)?

How might the SPI curriculum intertwine with and support other aspects of your curricula and vice versa?

Questions to ask yourself

Do you have experience with long term, inquiry based project planning? Can you get someone in your school to help you with your planning?

How do you approach the teaching of writing? Where might you get support (principal, other teachers, professional development opportunities, publications?) to help you develop your writing curriculum?

How do you organize your classroom? What structures are in place for homework assignments, grading and assessment, collecting and keeping track of student work, journaling, daily agendas, etc.?

Are you available to work with students before/after school and/or at other points during the day? When outside of the classroom might you help students with their writing and revising?

What technology is available to you and your students? Do you have access to laptops so that students can type up their writing? Do students have access to the Internet? What is the process for signing up/using computers? Is it easy or difficult to secure computers for a fairly long period of time?

Would your administrators be able to help you if needs arise (such as needing more planning time, gaining more access to computers)?

Laying production groundwork

Gathering student photographs – Many final publications include students’ pictures. We recommend that you set up a time to take the pictures early in the project. Often, one day will suffice with a couple of follow up days to get students who were absent.