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I am an associate professor at the University of Dayton (UD), where I work in pre-service teacher literacy education. The Department of Teacher Education at UD is a four-year licensure program that is committed to the preparation of culturally responsive educators. My department aspires to embrace diversity for the promotion of social justice, to facilitate the development of scholarly practitioners, to build community, and to support students as they engage in critical reflection.

One of the courses I teach, *Foundations of Literacy through Literature*, provides pre-service teachers (PTs) in early childhood (K-3) and middle childhood (4-9) knowledge of contemporary issues and trends in children's literature. The course prepares PTs to facilitate reading-writing connections through genre study (Ray, 1999). Throughout the semester, they use children's literature to teach writing craft techniques. My students and I read widely across genres and analyze the text features of picture books, realistic fiction, informational texts, biography, historical fiction, poetry, and traditional/modern fantasy. In the process, we evaluate literature for diversity, text complexity, and quality of style, content, and illustration.

In the wake of the Covid-19 pandemic, the classrooms where I had built my teacher identity collapsed overnight. So I – like many thousands of educators—used spring break to transition my courses to remote learning. I recognized this moment as a seismic shift toward E-learning—one that would require broadening my skillset in online course development and virtual pedagogies. Driven more by my instinct than technological prowess, I wondered, "How do I make content accessible, clear, and impactful? How do I find ways for my students to apply their content knowledge meaningfully? And how will I monitor their progress as learners in a remote learning environment?" My initial answers to these questions fell into four instructional design considerations:

1. Meeting times: When and how the class will meet during remote learning.
2. Content structure: How content is to be organized for accessibility, brevity, and relatedness to learning goals.
3. Participation structure: How students will engage with content individually and within collaborative learning groups.
4. Task structure: How learning tasks build upon one another to develop students' knowledge and skills.

These four instructional design considerations became my heuristic for building a remote learning environment that could preserve continuity of instruction during a period of
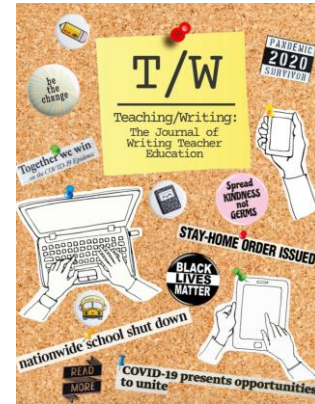
discontinuity. They also frame the story of how I made the transition to teaching reading-writing connections online to pre-service teachers (PTs) in extraordinary times.

Establishing Meeting Times

My university suspended in-person classes and instituted remote learning on March 10, 2020, to slow the spread of COVID-19. Up till then, my course met in-person once each week for three hours. The first half of class included mini lecture, discussion of readings, and genre study. During the last 90 minutes, PTs worked in teams to plan and demonstrate a literature-based activity that focused on reading-writing connections.

Initially, I was perplexed at how I might facilitate those same experiences online. To my mind, the interpersonal dynamics and teachable moments that arise in the situated practices of the classroom were going to be difficult to replicate in a distance-learning course. Teacher preparation relies on demonstrations of methods that make use of the material affordances of a traditional classroom. In my course sharing storybooks, examining text features, and using mentor for teaching writing craft depended on the materiality of texts and embodied actions of readers and writers in a shared space. Furthermore, in an online environment, it did not seem practical or pedagogically sound meeting with my class on Zoom for the entire three-hours that we usually met in-person. I did not see how to sustain in that medium the material, social, and embodied actions that situate skills application, deliberate practice, and formative feedback that lead to deep learning (NRC, 2012; Glasswell & Parr, 2009). Therefore, I let go of the idea that my class would meet during its slated time on the course schedule. Anticipating that PTs would want to decide for themselves when to engage course activities, I stretched each class session into a five-day module. This setup allowed for PTs to engage asynchronous learning tasks on their own time, but still required them to meet once each week for a 50-minute webinar session (see calendar below).

MODULE	TIMEFRAME	WEBINAR	READINGS	SESSION DUE DATES
Informational texts and text structures	March 24-March 29	4:30PM March 24	PDF article(s) in module	Complete activities in this module by 11:59PM 3/29
Biography and historical fiction	March 31-April 5	4:30PM March 31	PDF article(s) in module	Complete activities in this module by 11:59PM 4/5
Mentor author project Work time	April 7-April 12	4:30PM April 7	Review guidelines	Complete activities in this module by 11:59PM 4/12
Integrating poetry in the content areas	April14-April 19	4:30PM April 14	PDF article(s) in module	Complete activities in this module by 11:59PM 4/19
Teaching traditional and modern fantasy	April 21-April 26	4:30PM April 21	PDF article(s) in module	Complete activities in this module by 11:59PM 4/26
Developing critical literacy in the content areas Mentor author presentations via Zoom	April 28-May 3	4:30PM April 28	PDF article(s) in module	Complete activities in this module by 11:59PM 5/3
Final exam	May 4-May 8	N/A	N/A	Submit final exam by 11:59PM 5/8

Online Participation Structures

After much thought about how PTs would build their knowledge of course content, I decided that team forums and a weekly Zoom webinar would serve as the primary tools for facilitating social interactions online.

Team forums. Thirty PTs were enrolled in the course. Prior to moving online, they worked in teams of five or six members. I kept them in the same teams online so they could continue working together. Now, however, they engaged asynchronous discussions to construct meaning of course concepts, and apply their understanding of literature-based reading activities (see image below).

Weekly webinar. Because the modular approach drastically reduced synchronous meeting time, I implemented a weekly 50-minute Zoom webinar during the same time we ordinarily met on campus. I used the first 20 minutes to check in with students, to see how they were doing and to debrief the prior week's module. During the debriefing, PTs reflected on their learning, and I critically framed the patterns of thought that emerged in the team forums. I used the last 30 minutes to introduce the new module and unpack the concepts it covered. Using the screen share feature in Zoom, I provided a visual overview of the module tasks, allowing time for Q&A. The PTs appreciated the weekly webinar. It helped them pull together what they had learned, and oriented them to how they would move that learning forward in the next module. Mostly, however, the webinar kept me in touch with my students' experience of remote learning and constraints they encountered. Together, we found workarounds that led them to the same learning outcomes.

Structuring Course Content

When I began conceptualizing moving the course online, I perceived a need for providing students a predictable content structure. That is to say I wanted all learning tasks and resources in one place, organized by topic and timeframes. Therefore, I used my university's learning management system to develop content modules for each week (see image below).

Modules for EDT 350: Foundations of Literacy through Literature

> Remote Learning Calendar

> Module for March 24-29: Informational Texts and Text Structures

> Module for March 31-April 5: Biography and Historical Fiction

> Module for April 7-April 12: Mentor Author Project Worktime

> Module for April 14-April 19: Poetry in the Content Areas

> Module for April 21-April 26: Fantasy Genre Study

Each module introduced a literary genre along with learning objectives, a task checklist, and a timeframe for completion. The PTs appreciated the checklist because it helped them track their progression through the module (see image below).

▾ Session Overview

This session begins on Tuesday, April 21 at 4:30PM and ends on Sunday, April 26 at 11:59PM.

In this session, we will:

- Discuss genre study as an instructional approach for developing reading comprehension and writing craft
- Identify characteristics of traditional fantasy (folktales/fairy tales) and modern fantasy
- Share ideas for implementing a genre study for traditional or modern fantasy

To Dos for this Session

☐ Watch video and read two articles on structuring a genre study

☐ Discuss readings with your team (post and respond by established deadlines)

☐ List characteristics of traditional and modern fantasy

☐ Share annotated recommendations for 2 picture books and 2 chapter books for either traditional or modern fantasy

☐ Describe how you would implement a fantasy genre study

The transition to remote learning made it imperative that PTs self-regulate their learning, beginning with them discerning connections between learning objectives, content media, and activities. Therefore, I cut readings and activities from the in-person sessions that did not directly relate to a learning goal, leaving only the essential concepts. To avoid overwhelming them with too much content all at once, I structured each module into segmented tasks that aligned to a specific learning outcome.

Module Task Structure

Each module guided PTs through a progression of micro learning tasks. Typical of micro learning, I made these tasks short, focused pieces of content that PTs could access from smart phones, laptops, smart pads, or any mainstream mobile device. The tasks progressed from building knowledge of a concept, to discussing the concept with teammates, then applying their understanding by creating a learning product. Finally, they shared their product with peers for feedback.

Task 1: Build your knowledge. The first task in each module embedded multimedia that PTs accessed to build their knowledge of reading-writing connections within the particular genre being examined. Instructional media included PDF articles (one theory, and the other practice, typically a case study of how educators in the field applied the concept). I also

included video demonstrations from The Teaching Channel, YouTube, and other streaming sources such as podcasts from teaching journals. The first task in each module, therefore, contained bundles of media offering lucid examples of educators bridging theory/practice in teaching scenarios centered on building reading-writing connections (see image below).

▾ **Task 1: Build your Knowledge of How to Structure a Genre Study**

A Genre Study is an inquiry-based approach to teaching genre. In this session, we will learn how to implement genre study that engages students in inquiry-based learning with an emphasis on reading comprehension and the craft of writing.

I. VIEW: First, watch how this teacher engages her students in a genre study of fantasy. What do you notice about the focus of her questions?

II. READ: Next, read these two articles about genre study in the order they appear here. The first article describes how to implement a genre study. The second article describes how two educators conducted a fantasy genre study in their classroom. In the second article, notate the key actions or decisions that the educators made as they engaged their students in a genre study of fantasy. As you read both articles, notate key quotes to share and discuss with your team.

📄 (2012) What is Genre Study?

📄 (2004) Stepping into the Wardrobe: A Fantasy Genre Study

Task 2: Discuss readings. The second task in each module asked PTs to discuss the module's content with their team in relation to their prior learning. To facilitate responses, I embedded discussion prompts with separate deadlines for posting their initial commentary and responding to their teammates in the forum (see image below). The forums discussions generally expanded their understandings of the material, and let me discern how individual students were processing the concepts in the module.

▾ **Task 2: Discuss Readings**

POST: By Wednesday April 22, at 5PM, create a single post in your team forum in which you respond to the following prompts:

- What are your thoughts about using genre study for strengthening reading-writing connections?

- Based on your reading of *Stepping into the Wardrobe: A Fantasy Genre Study*, identify three instructional decisions or actions that the educators made that you think are important when engaging students in a genre study. Describe why you think so.

- Finally, share one quote from each article that you think is particularly insightful and explain why each quote has meaning for you as a literacy educator.

RESPOND: By Friday April 24 at 5PM, respond to at least one member of your team with a comment, question, or connection to what they have posted. Be thoughtful and elaborative so that your response helps your team to build greater insight and meaning from the readings.

Task 3: Apply your understanding. Task 3 challenged PTs to integrate the concepts they had learned in the prior tasks to plan literature-based literacy instruction. The task introduced a teaching scenario, which provided PTs a situational context for selecting children's literature, developing an annotated text set, and planning a writing-craft activity using the text set. Task 3 reinforced the enduring understandings that I wanted PTs to be able to know and do: teach reading-writing connections across genres, and use authentic literature to reinforce disciplinary knowledge and discourses in the content areas (see image below).

▼ **Task 4: Share Your Ideas for a Fantasy Genre Study**

For this task, you will share your ideas for how you would structure a genre study for either traditional or modern fantasy.

First, decide which category of fantasy you want to focus on: either traditional or modern. If you choose to focus on traditional fantasy, read Chapter 9, Folk Literature (p. 108) of your Tunnell textbook (this the book with the green cover that is titled Children's Literature, Briefly). If you choose to focus on modern fantasy, read Chapter 10, Modern Fantasy (p. 123). As you read, list the characteristics that you think would be most important for students to notice and name in a genre study. If you do not have your textbook with you, then you can Google "traditional fantasy" or "modern fantasy." There is an abundance of online sources that provide the characteristics of these genres.

Second, identify high-quality mentor texts that are clear examples of type of fantasy you have decide to focus on (traditional or modern). Go to the Horn Book database to locate 2 picture books and 2 chapter books that you would use to teach this genre.

POST: By Friday April 24 at 5PM, create a single post in the team forum in which you share the following information:

1. First, identify the category of fantasy you have focused on: traditional or modern. In a few sentences, explain to your team why you chose this category of fantasy.
2. Now, share annotations of the four books you selected as examples of the genre. Indicate which titles are picture books and which are chapter books. After each annotation, explain why the book is a good example of the type of fantasy you investigated.
3. Next, list and describe four characteristics of the genre that you would want students to notice and name across the texts you have selected. These characteristics might include character types, motifs, or universal themes (Refer to your Tunnell textbook for the characteristics of the category of fantasy you selected).
4. Finally, conclude your post with a well-elaborated paragraph describing how would you structure your genre study to help students notice and name the characteristics you identified. Use what you learned from the articles to inform how you would set up the study so that students create their own definition of the genre and build reading-writing connections.

RESPOND: By Sunday April 26 at 11:59PM, respond to a teammate's post with a comment, question, or connection about their genre study ideas.

Virtual Service Learning

For some of the modules, the Covid-19 crisis created an opportunity for me to frame the *Apply Your Understanding* segment a virtual service-learning project in response to local community needs (Gurthrie & McCracken, 2010). Because school closures made homeschooling the new normal, the Dayton Family Engagement Collaborative sought instructional resources that parents could use to support their child's literacy development. In the module on informational texts, Task 3 asked the teams to create an instructional toolkit that focused on informational text structures. The teaching strategies the teams contributed became part of a bundled set of activities to be included in a repertoire of toolkits that other volunteers provided through the Family Enagement Collaborative website.

In a different module that focused on integrating historical fiction and biography into the content areas, Task 3 presented PTs with the following scenario:

Assume you are teaching a 4th grade class and want to plan a unit on pandemics that will integrate language arts and science. Your literacy skills focus throughout the unit is for students to be able to 1) relate to texts with personal experiences and background information and 2) Recognize and apply cause and effect as a text structure. First, develop a text set that includes 2 biographical texts (1 picture book, 1 chapter book) and 2 historical fiction texts (1 picture book, 1 chapter book) that touch on some aspect of pandemics. Provide annotations of each text. Explain why you selected each text in terms of student interest, grade level, and the relevance of the book to the topic of pandemics. Second, decide on 1 text from your text set that you will use as a touchstone text. Explain why this text would be a good touchstone text. Give an in-depth description (in your own words) of 1 pre-reading activity, 1 during reading activity, and 1 post-reading activity that you would use for teaching this text. Explain how each activity will reinforce your students' knowledge of cause and effect as a text structure in a manner that builds their understanding of pandemics.

Initially, PTs struggled to find book for module tasks such as this one because they no longer had access the children's literature collection on campus and public libraries were closed. Therefore, I embedded hyperlinks to virtual libraries, e-book/audio book collections, and streaming services so they could access books in the genre of children's literature being studied.

Another skills application task that I had assigned before the quarantine required PTs to conduct an interactive read-loud for school children with questions focused on writer's craft. School closures prevented PTs from doing the assignment in their internship classrooms. Therefore, we adapted the assignment so that they did a virtual storybook. PTs filmed themselves reading aloud and overlaid the video with text questions that prompted reading-writing connections. The playback feature facilitated critical self-reflection of their higher-order questioning skills. Thus, we found workarounds for constraints caused by the pandemic. In instances such as the read-aloud, the workaround resulted in a dynamic, interactive pedagogical resource and tool.

Restructuring Major Projects

Aside from the modules, there were course projects that I had assigned before we transitioned online that were meaningful for my students, and served as important indicators of their learning. Therefore, I adapted these projects so that they remained feasible in a remote learning context. For example, one project, a mentor author study, called for PTs to create visual a representation of the author's biography and read five to eight of the author's books. Reading "with a writer's eye" (Ray, 1999), they were to discern writing techniques the author uses, and demonstrate how the books can be used as mentor texts for teaching writing craft. In the online setting, PTs found apps for creating a visual aids for presenting their mentor author, including the author's bio, awards, major works, and reading activities for teaching text features typical of the author's work. The PTs used

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the Zoom breakout feature to demonstrate to their teammates---with storybooks in hand---how they would use the author's books to teach reading-writing connections in their content area. They then shared with the entire class a visual guide for introducing the author to young people.

Tensions and Reflections

At the time I write this, the pervading sentiment is that university professors will prepare to teach online in the fall, and be ready to adapt to a hybrid model. As a teacher educator, tasked with preparing educators with the skills to teach, it is imperative that whatever scenario emerges does not compromise teacher preparation. As the rapid adoption of E-learning increases learning technologies, my university is forming workgroups of collective expertise to pave a way forward in online course development and pedagogies. These skillsets—once distinct disciplines—are now part and parcel of one's teaching load. Like it or not, this is the reality to face and this requires adapting to the times by embracing the tensions, or problems of practice, that are to be solved in order to evolve teaching and learning in this new era.

One tension I experienced was balancing accessibility with digital boundaries. During remote learning, I kept frequent communication with my students. Research tells us that human connection and rapport as a critical factor in learning. One weekly webinar worked well for my class, and I was responsive to students' emails. But unlike teaching in-person, I had the looming sense that I was always on call, responding to student questions and requests. Work/home boundaries became porous. My living room became a virtual classroom. So I learned that it is important to set digital boundaries. I let my students know my virtual office hours. In addition, I said that I would respond to their email within 36 hours. I typically did so within eight hours, but I did not want this to be the expectation. Often, I gave myself permission to walk away from the keyboard, and turn off notifications, so that I did not feel compelled to respond at every moment. To mitigate numerous emails from students, I addressed their FAQs during the webinars. I also found that providing students a consistent structure and format for each module reduced many of their questions, as they became more acquainted with the course structure. My students appreciated having a checklist to monitor task completion. But some PTs struggled to keep track of multiple due dates during the sessions. Moving forward, I want to incorporate more self-regulation, or performance monitoring tools, including time estimates for task completion and automated reminders for module due dates.

Currently, the most concerning problem of practice that I am contending with is moving PTs from conceptual to embodied knowledge in the online environment. Embedding multiple content media for each module was effective for building their conceptual knowledge, particularly when they could perceive how the content related to a learning task. Several PTs had stronger articulations of theory in online team discussions than they verbalized in traditional class discussions. It appeared that the online forums provided sustained and structured "write to think" opportunities for connecting concepts to course readings, children's literature, reading-writing connections within the content areas.

However, more often than not, the online context kept PTs application of knowledge at the level of conceptualizing lessons. Of course, planning instruction is an integral component of learning to teach, but so is the actualization of those plans. It is, after all, in the act of teaching that PTs develop skills for engaging young learners with the activities they have planned. Thus, one limitation of remote learning, at least in my design of it, was the difficulty it presented in moving PTs from conceptual knowledge to embodied, real-time application of strategies and methods, ripe with feedback and teachable moments that face-to-face classroom dynamics afford.

Concluding Thoughts

I hope this moment provides a collective impulse toward integration of structured clinical experiences in virtual learning spaces that will provide opportunities for PTs to try out their plans, reflect on the outcomes, and simultaneously develop skill in teaching in-person and online. There is much potential for structuring case-based instructional scenarios and digital service learning in a manner that lets PTs robustly apply their knowledge of writing craft and revision strategies in a variety of genres. Gaining embodied knowledge in these areas requires deliberate practice, feedback, and critical framing within dynamic learning environments (NRC, 2012). Robust integration of simulations and experiential learning in online environments is imperative for developing PTs mental models of effective literacy instruction. This will require innovative online teaching methods that leverage new modes of instruction, and that delve deep into the pragmatics and complexities of teacher development.

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