Transactive Writing: Across the Grade Levels and Content Areas

Summer 2007
Writing Training

Facilitators: Depeka Croft, Dena Cole, Lee Ann Hager

Contact Information
Kentucky Department of Education
500 Mero Street, CPT 19th Floor
Frankfort, KY 40601
(502) 564-2106

Depeka.Croft@education.ky.gov
Dena.Cole@education.ky.gov
LeeAnn.Hager@education.ky.gov

Transactive Writing

In transactive writing, students will

- analyze and communicate through authentic transactive purposes for writing (e.g., explaining, persuading, informing, analyzing).

Program of Studies

Transactive writing, which is written from the perspective of an informed writer to a less informed reader, is functional writing intended to present information. Transactive writing is writing for a variety of realistic purposes that is intended to "get things accomplished" or to help the audience understand something better. Using this category of writing, students often draw a conclusion, advocate a position, and/or solve a problem. Much of the writing completed in academic contexts and in the workplace is transactive writing. In fact, academic writing and technical writing are examples of transactive writing that can be potentially publishable and portfolio-appropriate.

In order to present authentic purposes to real-world critical readers, students may choose from a variety of forms such as: a letter for the local newspaper, an editorial published in the school newspaper, an article for a class or team magazine, or a speech or proposal for the school-based council.

Transactive writing should

- have a focused purpose – an authentic reason for being written besides completing an assignment.
- take the form of writing seen in the world beyond the classroom (e.g., article, letter, editorial, speech, proposal, manual).
- address a targeted audience besides the teacher as an assessor.
- engage the reader with an interesting beginning – one which gives some context/reason for the information which follows.
- develop ideas with specific, relevant details.
- move the reader(s) through the piece with logical, appropriate transitional strategies.

Note: While transactive writing occurs for many purposes and in many forms, not all "real-world" forms work well in the writing portfolio. For example, though a brochure is "real-world" and the assigning of such a task may have value in the classroom, by definition of the genre, the brochure is intended to be a brief sketch of information that may not be sufficiently developed. Since the writing portfolio calls for writing that provides depth of idea development, a brochure is not likely to be the best choice for inclusion in the portfolio.

Teachers should always consider using the various types of writing to support the teaching of content. However, when helping students make selections for inclusion in the portfolio, teachers should be aware of the writing criteria to help students make the best selections.

Grade 7 - Speech

Support Stem Cell Research

Imagine that you have a life threatening disease and you need an organ donation. Your name is placed on the bottom of a long list and you must either wait for a live organ donor to donate an organ or for an organ donor to die. Now, imagine you die before you receive the organ you need. How does this scenario make you feel knowing that there is something out there that could save your life?

The something I'm talking about is stem cell research. Maybe you have heard about this but don't know exactly what it really is. I didn't know either until I studied it in science class and now I know a lot. In fact, that is why I am here today. I want to encourage you to support stem cell research.

You should first know what stem cells are and how research is conducted. Stem cells are blank cells. Stem cell research involves growing organs and tissues from cells that have not taken on a specific form. Until cells mature, they aren't differentiated and may be made to grow into what ever organ someone may need. Knowing this, can you imagine the possibilities of stem cell research?

One of the main reasons I support stem cell research is because it can save lives. Like I mentioned earlier, organs can be grown from stem cells and can be used when no organ donations are available. This would be extremely beneficial to our medical field. Think of a person who needs a new kidney. Instead of being on dialysis for a long time, they could have a kidney grown and not depend on a donor. Imagine what the world would be like with no need for donated organs?

Another reason I support stem cell research is because, in the long run, it could even end up saving the government money. The fact is that research is expensive. But, when it is eventually perfected, there would be less long-term illness, which could possibly lower insurance premiums and reduce the prices of Medicare and Medicaid. I am sure that you have all saw commercials on television about the rising costs of insurance or you may have heard your grandparents talk about it. Wouldn't it be great if this would no longer have to be a worry?

Stem cell research could also help blood banks. The Red Cross usually has blood shortages and that is the reason they have blood drives. If you are in an accident or must have emergency surgery, sometimes blood banks are the only source for blood that matches. If stem cells can become any kind of cell, then they could be used to help supply blood banks with

fresh blood to match all types. This would be really helpful for people with rare blood types. In fact, you may be one of those people.

I know many of you may not think that stem cell research is morally right since stem cells come from embryos. But, I want you to remember that stem cells do not have to come from embryos. Stem cells can also be extracted from umbilical cord blood, adult bone marrow, and the brain. No, I don't believe embryos should be harvested just for research either, but I do believe stem cell research is necessary for the advancement for deadly disease treatment.

You may not think there is a lot you can do to be a hero, especially in our small community. However, you are wrong. You can contact your state representatives and let them know how you feel about stem cell research. We can help find cures for the people we love through federal funding for stem cell research. Please join me and encourage our state representatives to support stem cell research today.

Bibliography

1. www.religioustolerance.com Date accessed: 10-18-06

2. www.stemcellfacts.com Date accessed: 10-18-06

From The Kentucky Marker Papers

Draft

Speech

The writer of a competent speech demonstrates most or all of the following skills:

PURPOSE/AUDIENCE

- Shows an understanding of the audience's perspective
- Writes from the perspective of an informed speaker to a less-informed listener
- Focuses on the purpose (e.g., to entertain, to persuade, to inform, to demonstrate)
- Anticipates audience's reactions, questions, lack of understanding
- Uses appropriate tone for the event, audience, and purpose
- Makes it clear what the audience member should know, do, and/or believe as a result of hearing the speech

IDEA DEVELOPMENT/SUPPORT

- Develops ideas which are connected to the core content of the course in which the speech was written
- Uses appropriate strategies to develop ideas (e.g., statistics, stories, personal reflections, visual aids)
- Uses information from a variety of sources (when necessary)
- Clarifies and interprets ideas
- Uses persuasive technique (when necessary)
- Provides support which is accurate and thorough enough to achieve the purpose of the speech

ORGANIZATION

- Writes an engaging lead to get the audience's attention
- Introduces the points of the speech in the introduction
- Places ideas in a meaningful order
- Uses transitions between ideas
- Maintains coherence and unity
- Reviews the points of the speech in the conclusion
- May use visual aids (e.g., graphic organizer, power point presentation)

SENTENCES

- Presents complete sentences
- Varies structure of sentences without becoming overly complex

LANGUAGE

- Chooses language appropriate to the audience and purpose
- Uses specific language
- Maintains consistent verb tense
- Makes subjects and verbs agree
- Employs correct usage

Draft

CORRECTNESS

- Cites references and documents sources in an unobtrusive manner
- Spells correctly
- Uses correct end punctuation, commas, quotation marks, apostrophes
- Capitalizes correctly
- Makes few errors in correctness which do not interfere with the meaning of the piece

It is important to keep in mind that speeches are meant to be heard by an intended audience. During the delivery of a speech, other skills such as facial expressions, eye contact, gestures, speed of speaking and volume would be necessary in order to successfully present the speech.

As students move from grade to grade, they demonstrate growth in the control and complexity with which they use these skills.

BOO!

Stay Safe On Halloween

It was Halloween night and my family and I were walking down the block. While we were walking, we'd stop at lighted houses. I'd stay close to my parents when we did this, for I knew I could be unwillingly pulled into a stranger's house easily. That's why you should know what could happen on Halloween and safety tips. Here are some things you should know…

History

Several thousand years ago, the Celts (a group of pre-Christian mystics who worshipped nature) considered October 31st the end of the year. They threw a big party, which was known as Samhain. It was a celebration of the Celtic New Year, where they believed spirits could come back and acquaint with living relatives. The Celts would put out food and drinks for the dead and left there gates, doors, and windows unlocked to give spirits free passage into their homes. Later, as Christianity spread, November 1st became a religious holiday known as All Saints' Day. The night before became known as All Hakkiwe'en, or Halloween.

HALLOWEEN SAFTEY TIPS

This holiday sure has changed over the year's .Now we dress up in costumes and go trick or treating. If you are new to this, trick or treating is getting dressed up and going to neighbors houses. You walk up; knock on the door, and say, " TRICK OR TREAT!!" They will give you candy. It *is* a fun day, but you still need to know some safety tips.

TRICK OR TREATERS

- Always carry a flashlight, so other people can see you and you can see other people.
- Always walk, don't ever run.
- Stay on the Sidewalks, or if there isn't any, stay on the left side of the street facing traffic. Don't cut across driveways or yards.
- If there are traffic signals in your neighborhood, obey them.
- Stay in neighborhoods you are familiar with.
- Wear a watch that you can read in the dark so you can observe what time it is, because trick or treating time is limited.
- Make sure your costume doesn't drag on the ground, so you don't trip on it. You should wear costumes with reflective marking or tape, so headlights or flashlights can shine on it and the tape or markings will reflect the light so they can see you!
- You're shoes should always fit (even if they don't match your costume!).
- You should avoid wearing masks when walking from house to house.

- Only carry flexible swords, knives, and other weapons or props.
- Approach only the houses that are lit. Stay away from pets and animals you don't know.

PARENTS

Parents may not walk up to houses and say trick or treat, but they sure do have a role in Halloween. So listen up!

- Make sure your child eats dinner before setting out. You know how candy hungry they are!
- Children should usually have an adult accompany them.
- You NEED to know where there headed.
- Don't let your children eat their candy on the way home, because it needs to be checked for drugs, poison, and other **mean** people tricks *very* carefully when you arrive back home.
- Look at the wrapping carefully and throw out anything that looks suspicious.

HOMEOWNERS

You know that it is October 31st, and you know that people are going to be trick or treating. So here are some rules for you homeowners to make your Halloween easier.

- Make sure your front lawn is clear of things such as ladders, hoses, and pet leashes, so no one trips on them.
- If you have any pets, put them up safely, because pets can get very frightened on Halloween, and might bite a trick or treater.
- Make sure all paper and yarn decorations are safely away from open flame.
- Battery powered jack-o'-lanterns are more preferable then real flames because nothing will catch on fire.
- If you do use a real candle, put it away from were trick or treaters will be standing.
- Healthy snacks are better than giving away junk food, and hey! Treats don't have to be food! They can be pencils, plastic rings, etc.

Every one, including trick or treaters, parents, and homeowners, can all have fun on Halloween! Just follow these Halloween safety tips. We all need to be careful on Halloween, because you never know what can happen. Happy Halloween!

RESOURCES

- www.sosnet.com/safety/halloween.tip.html
- yahooligans.yahoo.com/content/ask-earl/page?d=20001020

from The Kentucky Marker Papers

FEATURE ARTICLE

GRADES 4 - 8

The writer of a proficient feature article demonstrates most or all of the following skills:

AUDIENCE/PURPOSE
- shows an understanding of the reader's perspective
- writes from the perspective of an informed writer to a less informed reader
- meets the reader's needs by adhering to the conventions of a feature article
- focuses on the purpose (i.e., presents new information or a new perspective on old information)
- narrows topic
- writes to a reader other than the teacher
- anticipates reader's reactions, questions, lack of understanding
- writes a beginning which gives the reader some context or reason for reading the article
- makes it clear what the reader should know, do, and/or believe as a result of reading the article
- uses an individual voice and/or appropriate tone
- creates a title which captures the essence of the piece and creates reader interest

IDEA DEVELOPMENT/SUPPORT
- develops ideas which are connected to the core content of the course in which the article was written
- uses appropriate strategies to develop ideas
- uses information from a variety of sources
- supports ideas with facts and opinions; demonstrates knowledge of the difference between fact and opinion
- uses persuasive techniques, if appropriate
- uses subheads, pictures, captions, charts and graphs, headings, other publishing conventions as appropriate
- provides support which is accurate and thorough enough to achieve the purpose of the piece

ORGANIZATION
- writes an engaging lead
- places ideas and details in meaningful order
- organizes the article into paragraphs
- uses transitions between ideas
- maintains coherence and unity
- concludes the article effectively

SENTENCES
- writes complete and varied sentences

LANGUAGE
- chooses language appropriate to the audience and purpose
- uses specific language
- maintains consistent verb tense
- makes subjects and verbs agree
- employs correct usage

Transactive Writing with an Analytical or Technical Focus

While any kind of writing may use analysis as a means of idea development (e.g., reflective writing asks the student to *analyze* literacy growth; personal writing assumes writers *analyze* the significance of an experience or relationship; literary writing often indirectly *analyzes* something about the human condition), the Kentucky Writing Portfolio for Grade 12 requires that one (1) transactive piece have an analytical or technical focus.

Though this piece is not required of grades 4 and 7, it is critical that teachers of all grade levels understand that teaching analytical thinking and writing is developmental and does not occur only during high school. Teachers at all grade levels should be expecting students to think, read and write analytically.

In this type of transactive writing, students will write in the variety of forms acceptable for the category. However, to fulfill the requirement for an "analytical or technical focus," students must create a piece which has as its focus a controlling idea that calls for analysis as a major form of idea development. Students may also choose to write technical pieces that would be appropriate to certain fields of study. Often, when students choose to write technical pieces, they will utilize analysis as a strategy to help develop that technical piece. It is likely, then, that the student may have a transactive piece with an analytical AND technical focus.

While one piece in the Grade 12 Portfolio *must* have an analytical or technical focus, both transactive pieces *could* be developed this way.

Feature Article

Feature articles give information of human interests. It is an article that deals with real events and issues. It also places emphasis on people involved in the situation rather than the facts of the situation. Provides ideas and information published in a magazine that accomplishes several different purposes.

Types of Feature Articles:

- The human-interest feature article is the most common of the feature articles. It describes the unusual aspect of an ordinary person's life, an aspect that makes him or her interesting.
- The personality feature is a human-interest feature that focuses on the personality of the person you are writing about. For example, a person who is shy becomes a political figure.
- The how to feature is much like the process analysis but takes a do it yourself approach.
- The past events feature focuses on historical events and the human-interest story. For example, a soldier in the Vietnam War may recall his experiences of imprisonment.
- The news feature article focuses on human-interest story of some late breaking news.

Characteristics:

- Uses a lead that captures the reader
- Ends with a closing that connects back to the beginning
- Leaves the reader with something to think about
- Is nonfiction and factual

Dr. Charles Whitaker
EKU

- Finds and explains the extraordinary in the ordinary
- Is researched and well written
- Clarifies by giving depth and meaning to some complicated issue or item
- Has appropriate tone and voice for subject
- Focuses on subjects of interest to targeted audience
- Uses catchy titles, headings, subheadings,
- Uses layouts which may include bullets, various font styles, bold italics, and white spaces
- Evokes emotion from the reader
- May contain some short story elements

Dr. Charles Whitaker
EKU

WOW! WHAT A DIFFERENCE!

	Feature Articles *[Spotlight Your Ideas]*	Reports *[Records other Researchers' Data]*
Title	• Grabs a reader's eye and mind • Includes at least a noun and verb • Shows personality and originality	• Labels the information
Introduction	• Appeals to a reader's interests, previews (like a movie) why the article will be relevant/interesting • Whets your appetite for reading • Sets engaging tone	• Starts at the beginning with data/dry facts/definitions
Purpose	• Offers fresh, focused insights • Delivers data with a new angle • Connects facts to reader • Brings subject to life	• Presents research on a topic, usually "borrowed" data to inform rather than to interest readers
Audience	• Awareness of reader throughout • Precise word choice is geared to "language" of targeted readers • Shows knowledge of what readers know and need to know	• Generic, aimed at everyone and no one • At 6th grade reading level • Lacks importance
Organization	• Meaningful arrangement of ideas • Sub-heads, bullets, sidebars enhance clarity and effectiveness • Enhances/emphasizes analysis of ideas	• Usually chronological in order • Often the format of the reference book used for research
Physical Appearance	• Format is crucial – looks like a newspaper/magazine article! • Division of ideas into easy-to-see and remember "chunks" of information • Layout is designed to "feature" ideas with **BOLD**, eye-catching techniques	• Unimportant, encyclopedic format • Little or no use of visuals

Dr. Charles Whitaker
EKU

Tone	• Almost persuasive, always reaching out to connect with readers and maintain interest • Includes appropriate, rich details • Sounds more like "Have you ever thought about …?"	• Robotic, dry, removed • "Everything you want to learn about" but don't care to ask! (or think about)
Sentences	• Uses questions and varied sentence styles or length to produce natural rhythm of speech	• Consistent subject-verb sentence patterns • Little or no variety in sentence length or style
Conclusion	• Reminds readers of the importance/ relevance of the new ideas • Leaves readers new knowledge and insight	• Ends! (Often to the reader's relief)

Dr. Charles Whitaker
EKU

Feature Article Planner

Name_____

1. The unit I have been studying is _____.

2. Three interesting topics or ideas from this unit are:
   a.

   b.

   c

3. The one idea from my list above that I want most to write a feature article on:

   _____

4. Name at least three (3) groups of people who would be interested in my idea (possible AUDIENCES):
   a. b. c.

5. The audience I am writing for is _____.
6. My audience will need to know the following information (Give at least *three main ideas* you want/need to include in your article):

   a.

   b.

   c.

7. After carefully considering what my audience needs to know, I have decided that my PURPOSE in writing this feature is

   _____

8. In order to get my audience's attention and to let them know what my FOCUSED PURPOSE is, I will use the following LEAD (HOOK):

Dr. Charles Whitaker
EKU

9. The topic sentence of Paragraph 2 will be

10. The topic sentence of Paragraph 3 will be

11. The topic sentence of Paragraph 4 will be

12. A good writer must include details to develop his/her main ideas. Plan interesting ways to develop paragraphs 2, 3, 4...:

a. Quotes
b. Tables/Charts/Graphs
c. Comparison/Contrast
d. Definitions
e. Facts/Statistics
f. Reasons
g. Cause/Effect
h. Instructions
i. Directions

13. Where will you find your information for idea development?

Be sure to list the references that you use. We want to give credit for the ideas we borrow. We do NOT want to PLAGIARIZE!

14. Write several GOOD Titles for your feature article. Discuss with a friend which one you think is BEST. Check mark the ONE you will use.

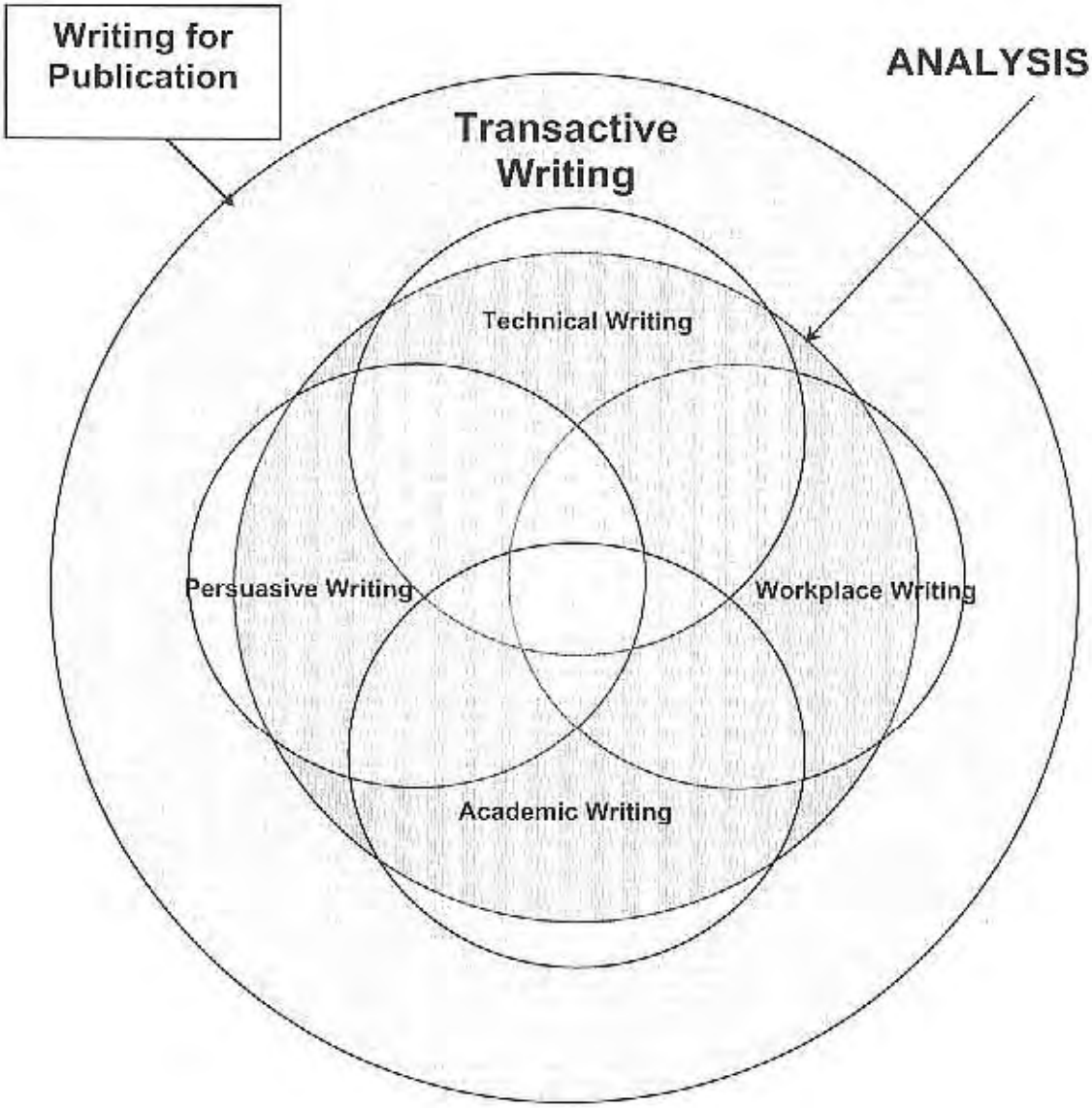
15. How would you like your feature to look? Do you plan to include a picture, list- numbered or bulleted, chart, columns, different sizes of font, subheadings,...? (Consider the needs of your AUDIENCE!) Draw your layout on the back of this page.

16. Write a first draft of your feature article.

Dr. Charles Whitaker
EKU

Analysis as a Foundation of Idea Development in Writing

The following diagram illustrates how analysis forms the foundation of many kinds of transactive writing typically found in the classroom. Since analysis is the process by which students develop their ideas, it is important for teachers to understand that many categories of writing may contain analysis. The diagram below references some common categories of writing that may serve transactive purposes: technical, workplace, persuasive, academic. (Please note: this is not a comprehensive diagram of all categories of writing that may be considered analytical and/or technical in nature). While teachers may view these categories as separate kinds of writing, it is also important to understand that the categories may overlap, and that a piece of writing could be, for example, academic and persuasive at the same time. The many transactive forms that serve transactive purposes for publication may also work to serve the requirement of the transactive with an analytical or technical focus.



Analytical Writing

People write analytically to accomplish a variety of purposes, but in general, analytical writing is that which examines a subject closely, isolating fundamental components of the whole and explaining their relationship to the whole or to each other to reach new conclusions about the whole or the parts.

Sometimes analytical writing makes connections or applications in order to help readers understand something, do something, or accept a viewpoint. Analytical writing will likely present information and other forms of support for its purposes, but it also will present the writer's ideas. It will show the writer's thinking about the subject. To be "authentic" for Kentucky's writing assessment, transactive analytical writing is not merely a school exercise; in analyzing, the writer seeks to accomplish a realistic purpose with readers who genuinely would need or be interested in such a writing.

Following is a sampling of approaches often taken in analytical writing. The list is not intended to be prescriptive or comprehensive; other options certainly are available. Whatever analytical approach is taken, it is important to emphasize that writers establish a justifiable reason for conducting the analysis—a purpose, need, a "So What?" for the writing. Doing so establishes an authentic, focused purpose and reveals awareness of authentic readers.

In forming assignments and leading students through a writing cycle, teachers should be aware of the need for analytical writing to be justified, authentic in purpose. Selecting an appropriate audience is also important; the readership should be those who genuinely would need or benefit from the writing, those whom the writer seeks to influence through the analysis.

Common approaches taken in analytical writing:

Students may

- raise and address a significant or unanswered question about a subject.
- evaluate how well something works or will work for a particular purpose.
- compare/contrast to accomplish a justifiable purpose.
- identify and discuss cause and effects or influences.
- form and support predictions for an authentic, realistic purpose.
- explain relationships—how one thing contributes to another or to the whole.
- interpret the importance of a set of events or an action or of the features of something.
- examine techniques used in a product or performance, presenting ideas about their importance.
- investigate a problem, helping readers understand the nature of the problem and sometimes presenting ideas about ways to solve it. Identify and discuss forces influencing a problem, issue, condition, etc.
- present and interpret particular evidence to support a conclusion, thesis, position, idea, etc.
- explain reasons for an outcome, problem, condition, etc.

This following list of attributes of analytical writing is based on a list generated in January, 2004, at the Kentucky Department of Education by high school teachers, university/college professors, representatives from groups interested in education, and representatives from the KDE.

Attributes of Analytical Writing

In transactive analytical writing appropriate for the portfolio, the writer

- ❑ focuses specifically on an identified problem, topic, issue, condition, need, text, product, performance, situation, set of events, research results, etc. Though appropriate reference to personal experience may be included, analytical writing that is **transactive** in nature usually focuses on something external to the writer; the writing is not personal/expressive in nature.

- ❑ establishes a justifiable purpose for writing, an authentic need for the analysis, a meaningful situation, problem, issue, or context that leads to and justifies the writing. The reason for writing is not merely to engage in a mental exercise, such as comparison and contrast, but to use analysis **to accomplish a justifiable purpose.**

- ❑ reveals a genuine interest in communicating with authentic readers, not merely summarizing, transcribing information or reciting to the teacher what has been learned.

- ❑ investigates the subject to bring about a better understanding of it or to accomplish some realistic purpose; in some cases, persuades readers to take some action or accept some position/thesis, interpretation, conclusion, or recommendation.

- ❑ engages in analytical thinking, meaning that the writer develops ideas by examining closely selected features, parts, components, elements, influences, relationships, connections, evidence, data, actions, etc., that have a bearing on the subject; and, through this investigation, the writer draws conclusions, develops a thesis or controlling idea, shapes an interpretation, forms a recommendation, or presents ideas to help readers in accomplishing a goal or understanding the subject better.

- ❑ shows ownership, even though the writing well might include reference to ideas and information offered by others.

- ❑ reveals audience awareness, for example, by acknowledging differing viewpoints, addressing reasonable questions, providing needed information and support for ideas, reasoning logically, thinking critically, explaining and elaborating to help readers, interpreting the significance of the writer's ideas, conclusions, findings, crediting sources, etc.

- ❑ strives to think in depth about the subject and to sustain a logical discussion or examination of it.

- ❑ includes/selects specific, relevant, logical, creditable, thorough, and knowledgeable support for ideas, claims, conclusions, interpretations, recommendations, plans, etc.; selected support shows close attention to the subject or information concerning it and, as appropriate, a broad range of reading.

- ❑ integrates sources, if used, to support the writer's own ideas.

- ❑ explains connections, relationships; elaborates to help readers understand the writer's ideas about the subject; offers an interpretative commentary; develops a reasoned argument or interpretation.
- ❑ develops the writing through a logical organization or well-unified structure, providing transitions to assist readers; shows awareness of the patterns or structures often used in different forms (e.g., reports, technical articles, proposals, etc.).
- ❑ selects words carefully for meaning; writes concisely, clearly.
- ❑ constructs grammatical, effective sentences.
- ❑ uses standard grammar, spelling, punctuation, etc.
- ❑ identifies sources using an appropriate form of documentation.