**Statement of Purpose**

Over the past decade, schools have promoted a culture of oral communication – speaking and listening in our classrooms are often seen as more than reading and writing – yet employers complain that graduates lack writing skills (Lengel, 2006). Many recent theorists, however, insist that writing is an imperative 21st century educational skill as “the fact that people have written well has forever changed history, defined communication, shaped our society, honed our ability to speak, and helped to shape the future of Computer Mediated Communication” (Kelly).

Few argue that writing is an important skill, but writing has become even more important to students when considering modern technological advances and the work environment in which they will operate. Many businesses no longer rely on phone calls (oral communication), but rely instead on e-mails or instant messages (written communication) instead. These written correspondences can be personal or formal, but they are permanent copies of communication, so words and phrases must be chosen carefully.

Additionally, a focus on writing is imperative for the development of students as people. Writing gives students an opportunity to express their feelings or individuality, it presents opportunity to pose meaningful questions, it promotes ones ability to explain positions or processes, and it stimulates thought (“What makes writing”).

The new Common Core standards address many of these issues as they attempt to encourage the production of clear writing for a variety of purposes.

While it is important to present the stylistic choices of various genres to students, my aim is to also enable students to explore individual choices within the genres with the hope of producing fresh, personal perspectives. These new standards support a culture of free-thinking and exploration when teaching writing styles, hoping that this nurturing of expressive thought will transfer to real-world writing skills.

The 7th Grade Writing curriculum design is intended to present a variety of modes of writing, building from previous learned concepts and addressing state standards. The goal is to teach these students proper skills in writing while complementing the school reading program by addressing terms and concepts addressed when reading texts. The ultimate goal is to improve cross-curricular writing with the intention of strengthening student response in every class while simultaneously encouraging free expression and creative stimulation.

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