

Think A-loud, Monitoring:

Objective: To model the writing strategy of Monitoring to students. To model how capable writers think during the writing process.

Target Grade: 7th

**See sample essay below.

Say, “Today we’re going to work on the writing strategy of monitoring. This is a strategy that plays the role of supervisor or boss. The writer has to ask himself how well their writing is progressing – so you’re asking yourself questions, evaluating, developing ideas, organizing kinda all at once.”

“This is an essay I wrote. Our assignment was to write a reflective essay about the effects of technology (smartphones, iPads, social media, etc.) on communication. We had to have a face-to-face conversation with somebody and avoid using any technology.”

“ So, you all are 7th graders. And you’ll be writing a 3 paragraph essay next week. So, I want to think today about what that looks like.”

“So this is not finished. We’ll say that I’m still in the middle of writing my first draft.”

“We’re going to go through paragraph by paragraph.”

Paragraph 1

“How is my spelling in this paragraph?”

Paragraph 2

“How is my spelling in this paragraph?”

“How am I doing on punctuation in this paragraph?”

“How could I develop this idea? Is there any more interesting information I have about this?”

PASTE FOLLOWING HIGHLIGHT (developing ideas) -- It was almost like I physically craved my phone. I had such a strong desire for the information I could access on my phone - this bothered me a lot.

Paragraph 3

“How’s my transition here? How can I help my reader go from what I was talking about to what I’m introducing here?”

ADD “My conversation with May helped me to reflect on our society’s use of technology.”

“How is my spelling in this paragraph?”

“How am I doing on punctuation in this paragraph?”

“How is my grammar in this paragraph?”

“How could I develop this idea? Is there any more interesting information I have about this?”

ADD after next highlight – “The underprivileged have increasing access to smartphones and other devices, opening up to them a new world of information. This increase in access gives them more power.”

“The last question I might ask myself is, ‘Am I fulfilling the expectations listed on the rubric?’
--I don’t have the rubric with me, but you will have one, with the requirements of the assignment.”

“Monitoring is a strategy that’s going to help you become a better writer. It’s...

-going to make your writing process quicker

-going to help you develop your ideas on your own

-going to help you get rid of errors in punctuation, grammar, spelling faster”

SAMPLE ESSAY:

This week I went to visit my friend, May, at a local donut shop that her family own. Over twenty years ago, I worked at this donut shop. May was my first employer. In a world without smartphones, I worked many shifts where people would come, sit, and talk. On this day, I sat at the coffee bar with May and we talked; she occasionally got up to work. I left my cell phone and computer in the car. For my part, the conversation was technology-free. There were several things I noticed during our conversation. Also, there are several conclusions I’ve come to about the ways that technology helps and hinders communication.

May and I were a bit awkward in the beginning of our conversation. We’ve actually kept up a bit on Facebook, and this has been helpful. May is originally from Cambodia, and she speak with a accent. I noticed myself leaning forward and following her with my eyes as she spoke I also noticed that I was nervous sometimes. I tried to calm my nerves by talking. I noticed that there were several times I really wanted my phone. It was almost like I physically craved my phone. May had an iPad in front of her for part of the conversation. When she looked at her iPad and pushed buttons, on the screen, the conversation sometimes slowed to a lull. I noticed that the conversation was light-hearted, and there were a lot of smiles and laughter.

My conversation with May helped me to reflect on our society’s use of technology. While the power of technology is a bit scary, I think it’s important to remember that it’s only a tool. Sometimes we try to replace relationships with technology. I think it would be misleading, however, to say that technology is largely harmful to humans. I don’t think that it ruins real relationships. Social media, a big part of contemporary technology use, is what’s helped May and I to keep in touch over the years. Technology has opened up vast amounts of information to disadvantaged parts of society, which increases the capability for success for these people. This gives them more power. It also helps start movements. Remember the example of the Arab Spring in Egypt, a movement in which technology played a major role. Humans are always behind the use of technology, and we are at the receiving end as well. We need to remember that? We need to use its power wisely. For me the idea that we have the ability to organize for positive change – whether it’s social, political, or spiritual – is exciting!