I have been unfair to my students, in the same way that teachers have been unfair to me. I have divorced reading from writing. I have given writing assignments without models. I have expected students to produce without instruction, and then held them to unknown standards. I have told them to create a paragraph, or a memoir, or a poem, etc... and given them little clues as to what those forms actually are. I have been unfair.

Out of a desire to foster students’ imaginations, our own laziness, an attempt to minimize copying, curriculum structure, or innocent omission, teachers often fail to connect reading to writing instruction. However, students benefit greatly from being immersed in, and analyzing a writing form before being required to produce it themselves. For this reason, I decided to change the way that I teach writing units.

This project is based on a unit that I have changed to reflect a reading / writing connection. It consists of a series of assessments designed to evaluate reading and writing standards for non-fiction texts. The reading standards are not comprehensive, as they are tailored to enhance the writing standards. Curriculum and lessons are not the goal of this project. Included are: learning standards, authentic assessment tasks (with a few traditional assessments as well), and rubrics for measured evaluation. An alignment guide shows how the standards and tasks relate.

The assessments created for this non-fiction reading and writing unit stem from an immersion style of writing instruction, and (hopefully) reflect best practices in assessment.