The Writing Workshop Implementation Scale (WWIS)

Purpose
The Writing Workshop Implementation Scale was developed to provide a picture of sound writing workshop practice at the classroom level. Implementation of an instructionally effective writing workshop takes time. The WWIS is a developmental scale that describes some important stages in this learning process.

Teachers are encouraged to use the scale for self-assessment and to set personal goals for next steps. Coaches, principals and teachers will find the scale to be a helpful basis for discussion of progress, challenges and possible needs for additional support.

Structure of the Scale
The scale is divided into six categories which reflect the major components of the writing workshop: 1) Literate Environment; 2) Mini-lessons; 3) Independent Work Time; 4) Conferring; 5) Closings; 6) Assessment

The first three columns comprise the heart of the actual developmental scale. In the 'Getting Started' column, we have described typical teacher and student behaviors during the initial stages of implementation. The center column, 'Effective,' describes the stage in which the teacher has mastered the logistical aspects of workshop. The final column lists those indicators which typically are observed in a workshop setting that is highly effective for students.

The final two columns are not actually part of the developmental scale. Instead, they further define the parameters of good practice and the limits of adaptation for each of the components. Every teacher will necessarily modify the program to better accommodate their students' needs . . . this is fundamental to good teaching. Regardless of the efficacy and strength of a program, it is most effective when the teacher makes adaptations that recognize the strengths and support the needs of the learners in the class. That said, it is also important to recognize that each of the components of writing workshop is an important element in creating an effective learning experience for students. Although adaptation is necessary and desirable, adaptations that neutralize the effectiveness of a particular component will undermine the instructional impact of the workshop learning experience. Examples of appropriate, helpful adaptations are described in the 'Creative Adaptations' column. Examples of adaptations that change the fundamental nature of the component and its effectiveness are described in the 'Misconceptions' column.

Expected Progress
Experienced workshop teachers tell us, and our own observations verify, that it requires several years for a teacher to move classroom practice to a highly effective level. They also report that although workshop practice is never easy, it is rewarding and more fun than many other approaches.
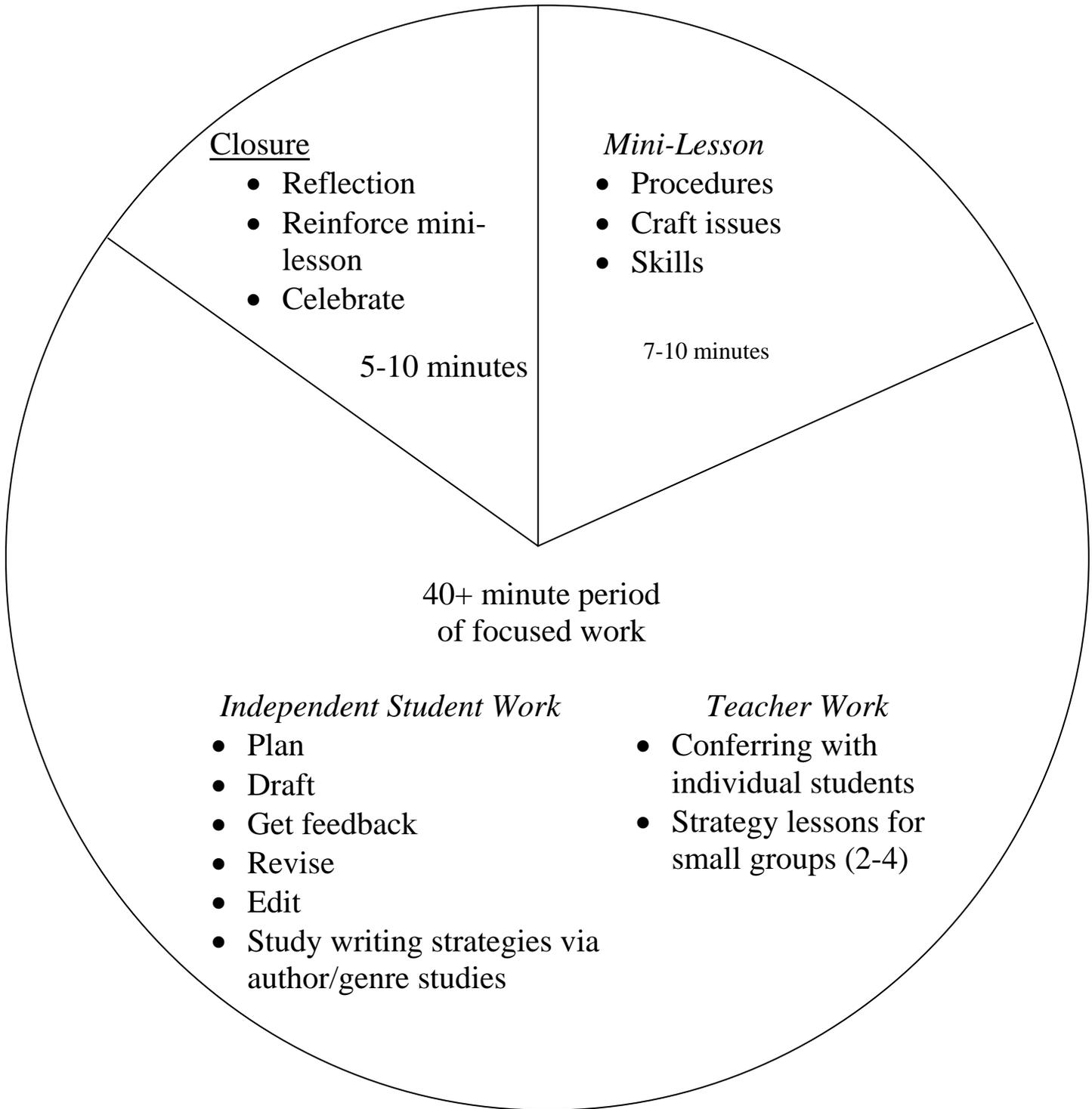
Final Note: The writing workshop is generally viewed as a complement to a reading workshop. See graphics entitled *Daily Classroom View: Literacy* and *Daily Classroom View: Writing*.

Printing: *In order to print the scale, use landscape view and legal-sized paper.*

Daily Classroom View:
Literacy

2
hours

Writing
Workshop

Rituals &
Routines

Author
Studies

Genre
Studies

Reading
Workshop

30
min.
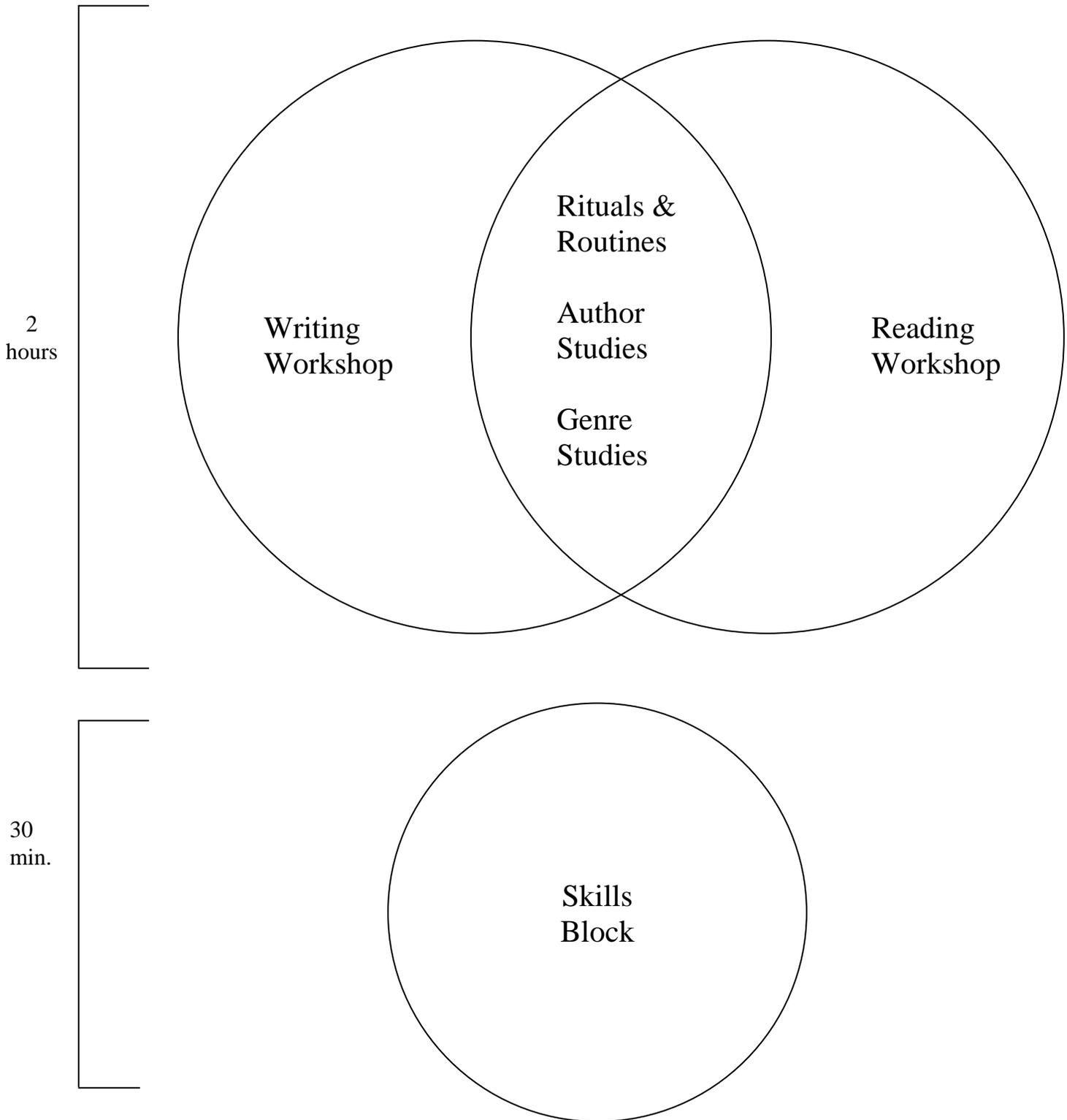
Skills
Block

Daily Classroom View:
Writing

Closure
- Reflection
- Reinforce mini-lesson
- Celebrate

5-10 minutes

Mini-Lesson
- Procedures
- Craft issues
- Skills

7-10 minutes

40+ minute period
of focused work

Independent Student Work
- Plan
- Draft
- Get feedback
- Revise
- Edit
- Study writing strategies via author/genre studies

Teacher Work
- Conferring with individual students
- Strategy lessons for small groups (2-4)