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WRITING ACTIVITIES FOR FIRST GRADE STUDENTS USING
CALIFORNIA YOUNG READER MEDAL NOMINATED BOOKS FOR 2000

A Project
Presented to the
Faculty of
California State University,
San Bernardino

In Partial
Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Arts in Education:
Reading/Language Arts Option

by
Della Mae Larimore

June 2000

WRITING ACTIVITIES FOR FIRST GRADE STUDENTS USING
CALIFORNIA YOUNG READER MEDAL NOMINATED BOOKS FOR 2000

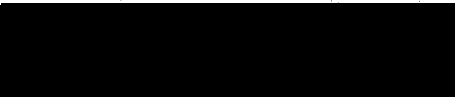
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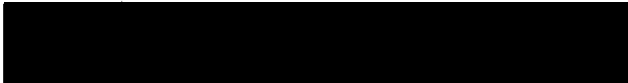
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June 2000

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ABSTRACT

Our society is very judgmental regarding literacy. The process of reading and writing begins in Kindergarten. This research is done from a sociopsycholinguistic perspective. Drawing upon the student's prior knowledge, experience, and background in order to construct meaning is essential. Reading and writing needs to serve a purpose for the learner. Children working and learning from each other is crucial.

This project provides the first grade teacher a handbook of lesson plans on writing ideas focused around the five California Young Medal Nominee books for 2000. The activities give students the freedom to write across the curriculum. The lessons plans are meant to increase the amount of writing activities in the first grade classroom. These activities are not a writing curriculum but an enhancement of an existing program through good literature.

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STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Introduction

Reading instruction and reading test scores are a very hot topic. Weekly in the Los Angeles Times stories are published about reading instruction and changes that have to be made in the reading curriculum. Related issues about individuals that have not been able to learn to read due to other factors have also been published. Reading techniques have been a great debate for many years. The argument has been either the phonics approach or the whole language approach for the best method of teaching reading. Many teachers never swing on that pendulum and teach reading through a combination of both direct, systematic phonics and rich literature, drawing upon a child's prior knowledge to gain meaning from the print. While so much energy is devoted to the teaching of reading very little is spent on the teaching of writing. Writing is an important component of the reading process. Research shows teachers are not sure about strategies to use when teaching writing. This has been apparent in my own school.

My school is a multi-track school with four tracks. In the primary grades there are four Kindergarten teachers, one on each track; A, B, C, and D. In the first, second, and third grades there are two teachers on A track, two teachers on B track, and only one teacher for each grade level for both C

and D tracks. Out of these 22 teachers only three of them are first year teachers, and two of them are second year teachers. The remaining teachers have been teaching at least five years. In the upper grades we have eight teachers, six of them in their first year of teaching. Assisting in our classrooms are Title One aides. Each classroom receives from 30-60 minutes of aide time daily based on the number of Title One students. There are also two bilingual aides that assist with our non-English speaking students.

The area has a low socioeconomic background, with 90% of our student population on free and reduced breakfast and lunch. Our ethnic breakdown is as follows: 504 Hispanic or Latino, 130 African American, 9 American Indian or Alaska Native, 3 Asian and 213 White not Hispanic. Special programs are provided for the gifted and talented child, as well as special day class, and a resource program for students with individual education plans.

In this past year my school went through a State of California Program Quality Review. These reviews occur every three years and require schools to adjust the school programs and curriculum if necessary to align with the California framework, due to this review technique. The beginning step of this process is to collect work samples across all grade levels in specific curricular areas. The curricular area is chosen by the school site. The work samples can confirm

areas of needed curriculum reform or areas of success. In my school we had selected language arts. Within language arts the four components being looked at were; phonemic awareness and phonics, oral language, comprehension, and writing. One of the questions for the work samples was, "What evidence do we have that all students on an on-going basis are able to write clear and coherent sentences and paragraphs which demonstrate standard English conventions as they progress through the writing process?" The work samples were collected in October, December, and March. For our school, the first collection was the third month of school. After the collection of work samples was taken, a summary for each grade level was written for the review team, by the leadership team, or the grade level. The two grade levels with the greatest discrepancies about the definition of writing after the work samples were collected, were the Kindergarten and First Grade classrooms.

The previous Kindergarten writing assignments focused primarily on dictation to the teacher. This writing assignment was new to the students and the teachers could not produce a sample other than dictation at this time.

The first grade teachers had different understandings of the writing question, as shown in the work samples. Three of the teachers had their children copy a poem from the board, two classrooms had their classes copy a modeled morning

message, and one teacher had authentic writing from her students. The analysis of these was not possible due to the inconsistency of the interpretation of this assignment. The teachers agreed to use the same writing assignment for the next collection to ease the analysis process. Assigning writing and teaching writing are two different things. For both of these grade levels, two things were obvious based on these samples: the definition of writing within the grade levels was very different, and these teachers did not have the necessary skills to teach writing to these emergent writers. It is unmistakable that the writing process can not magically begin and happen in third grade or above, it needs to develop along with the reading process. One is reciprocal of the other. For this curriculum project I will be conducting an inservice on interactive writing demonstrating the reciprocity of reading and writing and I will be developing a handbook of lesson plans, for the first grade teachers, of writing activities using the California Young Medal Reader Award Nominee books as the literature basis for the writing. I have chosen the California Young Medal Reader Award Nominee books for many reasons. First these books have been published within the past five years. One of the qualifiers for the nomination is that the author is still alive. These books have a strong appeal to the children and are accessible to the children, if they would to

like to purchase them. Both the interactive writing inservice and the handbook of writing lesson plans will reflect my beliefs that it is the process not the product, that holds importance. Children have to institute meaning and express themselves through their reading and writing. Through text children learn it is important to be understood. Calkins (1994), states, "for some children, writing something significant means entering one's text in a contest, mailing it to readers, rewriting it into a play script, or submitting it for publication" (p. 151).

Theoretical Orientation

I began teaching in 1977. Never once in my college method classes did I actually consider how a student magically learns to read. I quickly realized by endeavoring the task of teaching reading, how unprepared I was. It was almost as if those issues of classroom management and teaching strategies were avoided. I modeled my teaching after mentor teachers I observed. Some behaviors I modeled were those to definitely use, other behaviors were those I certainly never wanted to use with my students. Instinctively some of the strategies I used were not in my teacher's guides or observed behaviors, they were coming from my own belief system. I had never considered my theoretical orientation, until I began my pursuit into the Reading/ Language Arts masters classes and specialist program. I was

not aware I had one, or that if I did, it had an impact on my teaching and my students.

I identify myself as holding true to the sociopsycholinguistic theory on the reading continuum. I believe in the construction of meaning, drawing upon the individual's prior knowledge, experience, and background (Weaver, 1994). Children need to be taught with multiple modalities so they can all be reached regardless of their learning style and "reading, writing, and literacy have to be introduced naturally" (Weaver, 1944, p. 92). Reading and writing need to serve a purpose for the learner. An example of this would be environmental print. For the emergent learner, reading and writing have to be taught together and not as separate entities. According to the California Language Arts Content Standards (1997), reading, writing, listening and speaking are not disembodied skills. Each exist in content and in relation to one another. What is learned in one area makes it easier to learn in the other area. Fountas and Pinnell (1996) talk about children using language in every component to learn. Children working together and learning from each other is crucial.

In order to place myself on the reading continuum, I had to ask myself: What is reading? I discussed this issue in a staff meeting last week. Our staff was debating over a phonics program we were currently using. One of our seasoned

teachers remarked "as a sixth grade teacher I need the students to be able to sound out the words. It does not matter if they know what the word means, but it keeps the kids out of my hair if they can read the words." Her definition would be that of the decoding model on the continuum.

On the reading continuum there are three areas. The first area of orientation is the decoding model. This is the sound/symbol model. In this model, syntax and meaning are not the primary factors in the reading process. The belief of this model is that with word identification comes instant meaning. The next orientation is the skills model of reading. In this model four separate skills of listening, speaking, reading, and writing are used in learning to read. Once the meaning of individual word is gained, the meaning of the whole (paragraph or text) will take care of itself. The third orientation on the reading continuum is the sociopsycholinguistic model. This belief states, "that meaning results not necessarily from the precise identification of every word in a sentence, but from the interplay between the mind of the reader and the language of the text" (Weaver, 1994, p. 15). Within all three of these models of reading the three cueing systems still have their place. These three cueing systems are the sound/symbol, the semantic, and the syntactic. It is the delivery of these

systems that make the difference.

Reading happens through the construction of meaning, drawing upon the individual's prior knowledge, experience, and background. Phonics does play a role in learning to read, but it has to be taught authentically and have purpose in order for that connection to happen. Not all children need a large amount of explicit phonics instruction. I agree with the statement, "that rather than phonics instruction that makes reading possible, it is reading that makes phonics work" (Smith, 1997, p. 42).

In the public school system, and my district, I have many required curriculum areas I must address. It does not matter what my individual beliefs are, I still have quarterly criterion and assessment that is binding. My district is very quick to jump on the assessment band wagon if it looks good regardless of how it fits into the curriculum. Their belief is anecdotal records are only useful as a back up grading system secondary to the traditional method of giving grades based on the criterion.

I believe assessment needs to drive instruction rather than be the final product. Assessment can be empowering for teachers because it can serve as a tool for reflecting and improving teaching. Too often the terms of evaluation and assessment are confusing and misused. Evaluation connotes making judgments about students and programs with products

that result in a mark, score or a grade. Judgments are made that have little connection with the teacher's instructional plans. Assessment implies the process of carefully collecting or recording and analyzing students literacy products and processes in a way that provide a strong connection between the assessment data and the teacher's instructional plan. Consequently, students are constantly evaluated but seldom assessed.

One's theoretical orientation does affect the students. An important role in being a sociopsycholinguistic educator is accepting all schemas and prior knowledge a student has to bring into reading. Reading will come easier for a very young child who has been exposed to a lot of print at home or at a preschool, because that child can create meaning through transacting with meaningful written text and his or her environment. Those children will not be as affected by a particular teaching model. It has been stated, "a student with very little exposure to print may have difficulty using prior knowledge if an extensive focus on phonics is used to teach reading" (Weaver, 1994, p. 197).

Look at the example of learning a primary language. We do not directly teach children to talk. Children learn to talk by being talked to and interacting with us in a language rich environment. Children also learn what is accepted and not accepted with language in the same way. (Weaver, 1994)

Learning to read begins long before formal instruction. When a mother is lap reading to her child, no formal instruction is taking place. Prediction and retelling of the story can be happening. A child develops a love of books and wants to have the story read over and over again. Reading has to have a meaningful purpose for a child. Reading is a social activity. Just as oral language, a child has to be able to explore written language in order for it to make sense (Weaver, 1994).

I agree with the statement that, "a teacher's first role is that of a role model" (Weaver, 1994, p. 336). Teachers need to demonstrate how to be risk takers. They must demonstrate and discuss reading and writing strategies. Further she stated, "a teacher must facilitate scaffolding to help learners do, or ask others to help them do, what they can not yet do for themselves" (Weaver, 1994, p. 337).

The decision of what curriculum is used is also affected by one's theoretical orientation. The decoding model curriculum leaves no room for teacher judgment. The materials are based on systematic explicit phonics with a connection to decodable text. The published materials are scripted to tell teachers, when, where, and how. Examples of such materials are Open Court, Reading Mastery, or Renee Herman, which is a remedial phonics series. Currently the state of California is strongly suggesting school districts

with low performing children, based on the Stanford Nine scores, use a directed teaching curriculum.

In the skills model the broadest spectrum of materials and kits is found. Basals, workbooks, and blackline masters fit into this category. These are tied to state frameworks, documents, and standards. They are highly directed by the teacher with the materials being leveled and segmented. These materials are often fragmented and the teacher must make the connections for the kids.

In the sociopsycholinguistic model, the curriculum will not be found in worksheets and workbooks, as it consists more of opportunities. The teacher starts with what the kids already know, teachers set parameters, and students may suggest a better way of doing things and make choices. I agree with the statement, "learning opportunities need to be meaningful, natural and whole" (Weaver, 1994, p. 336). For instance, a teacher would not ask the class to write a story about being a flower because it has no meaning for them. Learning is a social event, therefore working collectively is very important. Individual voices are valued. The physical environment is very evident in this classroom. There would not be much teacher made material on the walls, it would be very child-centered. Play is a form of inquiry, and inquiry is very important in this type of classroom. In a sociopsycholinguist's classroom a teacher would help her

students become empowered to find their own voice, and help her students focus on what they need to know.

When determining curriculum it is important to stay consistent within the model chosen. For instance, a student working from a workbook and follow up black line worksheets, which is the skills section of the continuum, should not be expected to switch gears to the other end of the continuum in the same setting, such as moving into a cooperative group. This is not to say I would not want my kids to be exposed to different strategies, only that this would confuse and compromise the student's learning.

Along with determining the curriculum for students, another important issue is praise. Praise also has a place on the reading continuum. When a statement of praise is made it determines a judgment call. An example could be, "I am so proud of Bobby", which falls into the decoding model. The teacher is very powerful and acts as a director in this model. The children become dependent on someone else's praise and could become hesitant to take a risk. On the sociopsycholinguistic place on the reading continuum, acceptance, not approval, connects the action with that praise. An example would be, "I like the way David put a capital and period on his sentence." The power a teacher has in their classroom is overwhelming. It is important that all teachers realize where their theoretical beliefs lie so they

can be consistent within those beliefs.

I believe my role as a teacher is to guide, coach, and facilitate my students. In the past years of my teaching I have given too much direction to my students leaving them very dependent on me for guidance and approval of their work. I always wondered why my children were not more independent in their learning. I was amazed when I realized I had created that dependency. I have learned to realize, "a teacher must always avoid getting in the way of children's learning" (Smith, 1997, p. 119). Reading and writing need to be modeled on an ongoing basis.

I now believe it is not necessarily the framework that determines the balance, but the knowledge the individual teacher has and from which she is able to pull. It has been said a balanced curriculum is much like a balanced diet. Different people have different needs according to their individuality. A nursing mother needs more protein than a senior citizen. A diabetic needs to eat smaller meals with protein every several hours. A balanced curriculum is very similar. One student may need a large dose of phonics, while another needs more oral language development. It is the teacher that has to be empowered with a plethora of literacy tools that can be used based on the individual needs of his or her students. The individual needs are determined through careful observation and on-going assessment. I strongly

believe the effectiveness of the teacher harmoniously maintains the balance.

The purpose of this curriculum project is to increase awareness of the reciprocity between reading and writing through an inservice on interactive writing. This strategy will provide the Kindergarten and First Grade teachers a strategy to use with all of their children, from the very beginning of school. Next, I will be developing a handbook of 15 lesson plans, designed specifically for the first grade, of different writing activities that can be used with the California Young Medal Reader Award Nominee books. This handbook will demonstrate how reading and writing are reciprocal within a balanced framework.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

This literature review will look at the reciprocity of reading and writing within a balanced framework and the elements of an effective writing program as suggested by the State Department of California. The project following will be expanding these elements into specific writing lesson plans for a first grade classroom.

According to Johns and Lenski (1997) there are many connections to reading and writing, writers can learn much from reading. Atwell (1987), Graves (1983), Tierney and Pearson (1983) all agree that:

Reading and writing are both acts of making and interpreting meaning for communication purposes. In reading students use background knowledge and information from the text to construct meaning. Writing requires students to use background experience and knowledge about written texts to compose meaning that can be communicated to those who read the text. (Johns and Lenski, 1997, p. 369)

By having read, or been read to, different genres of literature, child's connection to real life and fiction can evolve. Baker (1994) states that, "children must be taught that people who will read their writing have different needs from informational to pleasure and that it is the writer's job to fulfill those needs" (p. 377).

When children read and write a variety of texts, they improve their skill in both areas. The California Department

of Education (1997) discusses that, "through the reciprocal engagement of reading and writing students understand the different purposes and audiences appropriate to different texts" (p. 61). Reading and writing are critical components across the curriculum not as separate subjects. Johns and Lenski (1997) state, "effective writers tend to read widely which provides many models of how to write stories" (p. 383).

There needs to be time for reading and writing to take place every day. The California Language Arts Curriculum Framework stresses that classrooms be highly interactive and provide instruction, constructive feedback, and high levels of engagement on appropriate materials and activities. Ongoing assessment ensures that appropriate materials will be chosen to meet the individual needs of the students. There is agreement with the statement that, "literacy needs to be the centerpiece of the class' day" (Vacca and Rasinski, 1992, p. 97).

A balanced literacy framework encompasses the teaching of skills and strategies with the construction of meaning. Reading and writing are interrelated. A child can read what he can write, and write what he can read. The skills involved in reading and writing are connected. It was stated, "these skills must not be taught independently of one another" (California Language Arts Standards, 1997, p. 3).

It is important to recognize that components are not separate elements but are linked together in two powerful ways: "(1) through the oral language that surrounds, supports, and extends all activities and (2) by the content or topic of focus" (Fountas and Pinnell, 1996, p. 21). Fountas and Pinnell (1996) talk about children using language in every component to learn. Listening is also important in the learning process. Children working together and learning from each other is vital. It is important to note that, "within a balanced literacy approach the classroom is orderly and quiet enough to work, but is no means silent" (Fountas and Pinnell, 1996, p. 25).

Balanced literacy meets the needs and strengths of each child through assessment. According to Cunningham (1995), on-going assessment is necessary and "to determine how various children are developing in their reading, writing, and word knowledge, teachers need to be keen observers of children" (p. 42). Marie Clay (1993) states "assessment provides documentation about what students know and can do. The primary purpose of assessment is to gather data to inform literacy instruction" (p. 28). There are many forms of assessment. Some of which are: anecdotal notes, running records, student portfolios, teacher/student conferences, student learning logs and observation checklists. If assessment does not improve teaching, student learning

diminishes. A metaphor Clay (1993) used was that of a football game; the coach does not improve the play of a team by looking at the outcome score. The coach must look closely at how the team is playing the game and help them to change the moves or strategies that produce a better final score. The classroom teachers can observe students as they construct responses by moving among them while they work.

Phonemic Awareness and Phonics

Research has shown "the lack of phonemic awareness seems to be a major obstacle to reading acquisition" (Yopp, 1988, p. 160). Phonemic awareness is the ability to hear sounds and syllables in words. As Snider (1995) stated "instruction in phonemic awareness is much more explicit when the teacher models, rather than explains the concept" (p. 448). Once print is involved it becomes phonics. Without the ability to hear these sounds and parts in words a child cannot be successful in decoding. But, as teachers, we can explicitly teach them about the phonemes in the language, and directly teach them to understand the decoding process. Bradley and Bryant (1985) stated:

Prereferral instruction to increase phonemic awareness may provide an alternative to special education placement for young children. Direct teaching of phonemic awareness has increased reading achievement among preschoolers. (p. 245)

Because "phonics" can be so many things, some people treat it as a dirty word, others as the salvation of reading.

"Phonics" merely refers to various approaches designed to teach children about the orthographic code of the language and the relations of spelling patterns to sound patterns. Grossen (1998) found "the most reliable indicator of a reading difficulty is an inability to decode single words" (p. 5). The delivery of phonics does not "require phonic worksheets, that involve children barking at print" (Stahl, 1992, p. 209). Stahl (1992) had a great analogy about teaching phonics. He referred to teaching baseball. For a person learning to play baseball, batting practice is an important part of learning how to play the game. However, imagine a person who has never seen a baseball game. Making that person do nothing but batting practice may lead to the misconception that baseball is about standing at the plate and repeatedly swinging at the ball. That person would miss the purpose of baseball and would think it was a boring way to spend an afternoon. Balanced literacy is a tightrope walk between whole language, phonics, and skills.

Balanced Framework

At Ohio State University, a comprehensive balanced literacy framework was developed called the Early Literacy Learning Initiative (ELLI). The value of each component is dependent upon the effectiveness of teaching with it. Fountas and Pinnell (1996) discuss oral language as the

"constant vehicle and support for learning" (p. 25). Through discussions, dialogue, verbal interaction, and active oral engagement throughout the framework, each child is encouraged to participate orally. Skill development is also emphasized across each of the framework elements. Emergent readers have the opportunity to develop phonemic awareness and decoding skills. It is emphasized, "these skills are best acquired in the context of meaningful activities and should be given extensive practice by reading quality literature and engaging in authentic writing activities" (Swartz, Shook and Klein, 1996, p. 2).

Teachers are encouraged to use literacy activities across the curriculum throughout the day. Reading and writing are the foundation for all later academic achievements. The elements are not fixed and separate. These include four reading elements and four writing elements. Fountas and Pinnell (1996) state, "each element requires a different level of support from the teacher" (p. 25). These are:

Reading Aloud: Teacher provides full support.
Shared Reading: Teacher provides high level of support. Readers support each other. Group problem solving and a lot of conversation about the meaning.
Guided Reading: Some teacher support. Reader problem-solves a new text in a way that is mostly independent.
Independent Reading: Little or no teacher support is needed. The reader independently solves problems while reading for meaning.
Shared Writing: Teacher provides full support. Teacher models and demonstrates the

process. Interactive Writing: High level of teacher support. Teacher models and demonstrates writing processes but also involves children. Guided Writing or Writing Workshop: Some teacher support is needed. Students select their own topics to write. Teacher provides specific instruction in mini lessons and conferences. Independent Writing: Little or no teacher support is needed. Reader independently composes and writes. Children know how to use the resources in the room to get to words they cannot write independently (Fountas and Pinnell, 1996, p. 25).

Reciprocity of Reading and Writing

I believe strongly in the reciprocity between reading and writing. Atwell (1998) states too often in our schools reading and writing are separated and sometimes taught by a different faculty. For the early elementary age child, "a link appears to exist between reading and writing, but it must be incorporated into the language arts curriculum by the teacher and actively encouraged by the parent" (Baker, 1994, p. 376). Reading and writing are critical components across the curriculum, not separate subjects.

As stated by Lyons, Pinnell, and DeFord (1993)

It is every child's right to receive the needed level of support to be successful in their early literacy experiences and to continue that success throughout their years of schooling. Meeting the needs of a diverse population of students is a challenge for educators, one that must be met if we are to maintain the quality of life of our citizens...The most important component is the quality of teaching. (p. 1)

According to Presley and Allington (1998), an effective first-grade instructor must have high expectations for all of the students. The teacher must provide prompts and scaffolding during reading and writing activities. Reading and writing have to be connected across the curriculum. Presley and Allington's (1998) research shows the emphasis needs to be on reading, writing, and literature. The access to books in the classroom is very important. The materials chosen by the teacher need to be appropriate for each individual child. Children need literacy skills taught explicitly in context. Whether materials or the teacher were the issue in quality of teaching, it was summarized by stating, "it is the quality of the teacher, not variation in curriculum materials, that is identified as the critical factor in effective instruction" (Allington, 1998, p. 4).

One element that dynamically demonstrates the reciprocity of reading and writing is interactive writing. The process of interactive writing "is a form of shared writing that supports young children's involvement in the literacy processes" (Pinnell and McCarrier, 1994, p. 159). In interactive writing, both the teacher and the children construct the written text. The teacher will guide and assist the students to write as much of the text as they can. A teacher should never do for the child "anything that he can do for himself" (Clay, 1979, p. 4). Oral language is the

foundation for the writing. Literature, a shared experience or interests can be the basis for the writing. After the text is negotiated, the number of words to be written is then counted. The text is then written word by word, with the teacher demonstrating the process and the children participating in specific aspects. An accepting environment is necessary to encourage risk taking. After each word is written it is read by the class reinforcing the connection between reading and writing.

In a kindergarten class maybe only a few of those letters will be filled in by the students, "perhaps those that can be linked with the names of members of the class" (Fountas and Pinnell, 1996, p. 33). Later a few known letters can be supplied by them. The teacher's modeling of stretching out the words and making connections of the sounds to the letters that represent them is very powerful in context. The teacher can "demonstrate how print works explicitly" (Fountas and Pinnell, 1996, p. 33).

Interactive writing can be done with any writing purpose. For example: a grocery list, labels, retelling of a story, an innovation of a story, a letter or a note, a recipe, or even a math story problem could all be written interactively.

It is important that children experience different types of writing through interactive writing. Fountas and Pinnell

(1996) found that what children learn in interactive writing they use in their own independent writing. Children will become better independent writers "if they are encouraged to do a variety of writing" (Snowball and Bolton, 1999, p. 6). Some examples are letters or postcards, stories, nonfiction, signs or messages, class mailboxes or access to e-mail.

Interactive writing is a very powerful intervention to be used for whole or small groups. The children can be taught "letters, sounds, words, and all about concepts of print" (Pinnell and Fountas, 1998, p. 192). Pinnell and Fountas (1998) describe the values of using interactive writing and point out that every aspect of the writing process can be demonstrated, including: composing a message or story, using complex sentences and references to make the message coherent and clear; describing characters, using dialogue, creating episodes, and writing beginnings and conclusions; forming letters; hearing sounds in words and constructing words using a variety of strategies; using the full range of spelling patterns; using punctuation in simple and more complex sentences; selecting form to fit the function, such as letters, lists, narratives, and informational pieces; and last connecting writing to reading, as when the interactive writing is drawn from literature experiences and is then reread.

After a text is completed, which may take many days, it

is displayed in the classroom for rereading. I agree that, "the product does not need to be neat, but should be readable" (Pedron, 1999, p. 12). That is one reason why it is "important that the text be spelled conventionally" (Pinnell and Fountas, 1998, p. 200). Another reason that conventional spelling needs to be scaffolded is that, "it demonstrates the complex processes involved in spelling" (Pinnell and Fountas, 1998, p. 200).

Pinnell and Fountas (1998) discuss how interactive writing could be used as a resource for studying words. This is done as the text is being constructed and can be revisited for the word study. The word study would be for a very brief period, no more than a couple of minutes. Such revisits could reinforce word study looking for such things as: compound words, contractions, words with prefixes, suffixes, words beginning with consonant clusters, words having more than one syllable, words with silent letters, words tricky for the learner, a new written word learned that day.

The word-solving strategies, "help students to use and control the conventions of our written language" (Pinnell and Fountas, 1998, p. 204). The goal is to create independent writers in control with spelling, text, and punctuation. Interactive writing is a way to give students that control.

Writing Process

As children enter first grade, they come with a desire

to write. Donald Graves (1983) states, "Children want to write. They want to write that first day of school" (p. 3). Often though the message given to those first graders who are so ready to begin writing is "No, you aren't" (Graves, 1983, p. 3). This happens due to a misunderstanding of the writing process. The writing process was identified through Grave's research. The five stages of the writing process include: prewriting, drafting, revising, editing, and publishing. Harp and Brewer (1996) suggest, "instead of looking at the writing stages as a linear process... think of them as being recursive" (cited in Poindexter and Oliver, 1999, p. 420). Each one of these steps is very important and should not be skipped by even the very young child. It was said, "for younger students each stage of the process needs to be modeled and the students need many opportunities to practice each of the stages" (Poindexter and Oliver, 1999, p. 421). Depending on the age of the child the stages will look different and the amount of time spent on each stage will vary. Research strongly suggests, "teachers must be able to evaluate and assess each student's current abilities and progress and then move the student forward on the growth continuum. To plan effective instruction, teachers must be knowledgeable and informed" (Alexander, Bishop, Hirschman, Rankin and Schulz, 1999, p. 1).

Donald Murray (1982) believes, 70% or more writing time

for all children needs to be spent in prewriting. Prewriting can take many forms. A picture can be drawn before writing or a graphic organizer can be used. To help children understand the writing process "modeling is very important" (Poindexter and Oliver, 1999, p. 421). If a graphic organizer is used the observation of how to put information on the organizer is vital, but also how to take that information and write sentences from that is also an important step to be modeled for the students (Poindexter and Oliver, 1999).

The next step of the writing process is drafting. The students are writing their sentences and paragraphs. Harp and Brewer make note, "it is imperative that during the composing and drafting phase the focus is on the creation and communication of meaning, not on the mechanics" (Harp and Brewer, 1996, p. 88). In the past, Graves (1983) added, "teachers may have attended only to conventions, even at the expense of information" (p. 87). At times there may be a child overly concerned about the mechanics of their paper. Graves (1983) suggests that the teacher stresses to that child that at this stage information is most important, and only on the final draft conventions will be addressed.

Following drafting is revising, focusing on the content of the piece. Often in the primary grades editing is part of this stage making the piece readable. It is helpful to have

students read their piece aloud to a partner or to the teacher. The student can hear any errors when they read it aloud. Even with younger children if they are tracking each word as they reread it, "many children don't revise because they feel in just getting the message down was enough" (Graves, 1983, p. 86).

In the editing process young children can only focus on one element at a time. Capital letters, ending punctuation, or sight words are examples of elements for that young child. Editing involves many levels of complexity (Tompkins, 1990). Peer editing can be very useful. The California Reading Association handbook states, "Students often will accept criticism from a peer more easily than from a teacher" (Alexander et al., 1999, p. 10).

The final stage of the writing process is that of publishing. Children need a purpose to write, to understand that, "writing is a public act, meant to be shared with many audiences" (Graves, 1983, p. 54). Publishing is proof a child is progressing. Younger children will publish more than older ones due to the length of their pieces, but "publication is important for all children" (Graves, 1983, p. 55). It is in the publishing stage when handwriting, correct spelling, punctuation and grammar are given high priority, and it is at this time that "teachers have to make careful assessments about what can be taught in the zone of

proximal learning" (Graves, 1983, p. 58). Knowledge of all of these stages is important in an effective writing program.

Effective Writing Instruction

The California Department of Education published a handbook for Effective Writing Instruction (1986). In this handbook the basic principles for an effective writing program were listed. The first element strongly suggests writing school-wide is viewed as a means of learning in all curricular areas. Lucy Calkins (1994) points out, "many of us who are interested in writing as a vehicle for learning agree with Piaget, who says, 'to understand is to invent.' We develop rather than acquire ideas" (p. 487). In order for this to happen, Calkins (1994) says "it is a step ahead to move from note-taking, copying off the chalkboard, filling in blanks, and answering questions, toward using writing to gather ideas for a discussion, to reflect on a days lesson, and to generate questions" (p. 488). California Reading Association states, "students who have experiences with a wide range of reading in many genre translates into the student's ability to express oneself smoothly, succinctly, and with a natural flow" (Alexander et al., 1999, p. 45).

Secondly, the California Department of Education Handbook on Writing (1986) suggest the need to build "on students' interests and on their reading and oral language experiences" (p. 2). It is also stated that "the standards

for written and oral English language conventions have been placed between those for writing and for listening and speaking because these conventions are essential to both sets of skills" (California Language Arts Framework, 1999, p. 62). Activating prior knowledge in all phases of reading helps the child attach meaning to the text. The same is true in the writing process. The child is constructing meaning through communicating what he knows with his writing. A child who is able to verbalize what he wants to write will be able to organize the details easier. Research shows, "when writers draw upon personal experiences, they have a huge reservoir of information at their pencil tips" (Alexander et al., 1999, p. 8). Each child has something important to say and it is imperative for teachers to become good listeners of their children.

Another ensuing component in the California Department of Education Handbook on Writing (1983) is to offer "the opportunity for students at any level to develop fluency before they are overly burdened with the fear of error, but with the expectation that they will later attain mastery of form and correctness" (p. 2). In this document, fluency was defined as the ease and confidence to which a writer is able to put thoughts down on paper. This handbook stated, "perhaps the most ignored research finding is that the teaching of formal grammar, if divorced from the process of

writing, has little or no effect on the writing ability of students" (cited from California State Department of Education, 1983, p. 3). This suggests that the focus of the writing curriculum should include more emphasis and practice with writing strategies and less on the writing mechanics. It is in the editing and publishing phase of the writing process that the grammar issue will have more emphasis. Teachers who allow opportunity for students to write in more than one subject area and motivate them to write daily can improve fluency.

Time on task was subsequently referenced to in the California Department of Education Writing Handbook (1983) as basic to the process. Children learn to write by writing, therefore writing needs to happen everyday. Children learn to write by writing. Increased writing time has to be parallel with proper writing instruction. A child can not be expected to write and improve the writing unless modeling and instruction for individual needs has taken place.

Ultimately noted from the California Department of Education Writing Handbook (1983) was proper staff development for the instructional staff. Just like the time devoted to teacher training in the teaching of reading, writing is likewise as important. Staff development needs to be ongoing. The knowledge of the writing process as mentioned earlier by Graves is vital for the classroom

teacher. Modeling the different stages of writing and writing for different purposes is very important. The realization that writing is more than just conventions is crucial.

There is an old saying, "If you catch someone a fish, they eat for a day. If you teach someone to fish, they eat for a lifetime" (cited from Calkins, 1994, p. 498). Calkins (1994) goes on to say, "if we teach children the power of writing to learn across the curriculum, we will also teach them the power of writing-and of thinking-across their lives" (p. 498).

California Young Reader Medal Nominee Books

Dr. Becca Wachtmann was part of the creation of the California Young Reader Medal Program (CYRM) in 1974. The CYRM program is now sponsored by four statewide organizations. These organizations are: California Association of Teachers of English, The California Library Association, and the California Reading Association, and the California School Library Association. Each year children, teachers, and librarians submit names of favorite books to be nominated for the following year. The selection is made by the by the CYRM committee. There are four categories: Primary (K-2), Intermediate (3-6), Middle School (6-9), and Young Adult (9-12). To be nominated "a book must be an original work of fiction published within the last five years

by an author who is still living" (California Young Reader Medal Program, 1999, p. 1). The children will read or be read to all the books in one category. Then they will vote on their one favorite book. The winning books in each category are announced in May of that school year.

Conclusion

In closing, the literature review for this topic supports the fact that reading and writing are connected, with one supporting the other. Further, within a balanced literacy framework that supports the reciprocity of reading and writing, the delivery of the material by the teacher is critical. An effective teacher has to have a repertoire of literacy knowledge in order to make appropriate decisions. The curriculum can be balanced in all components but if the teacher is not knowledgeable of the needs of her students through careful observation and assessment, the individual student needs will not be met. The elements of an effective writing program need to be school-wide. Children need to be engaged and thought of as readers and writers as they enter into Kindergarten. In order to increase the awareness of the reading and writing reciprocity, I will be conducting an inservice on interactive writing. This inservice will provide an opportunity for teachers to have modeled and practiced the good first teaching that balanced literacy requires. The second part of this project is to develop 15

writing lesson plans using the California Young Readers Medal Nominee Books for 2000. These will be written for the first grade teacher.

GOALS, OBJECTIVES, AND LIMITATIONS

Goals

In the adult world the ability of an individual to communicate through writing is vital. When applying for a job, two candidates with equal qualifications are asked to complete an essay. One of the candidates is very articulate and very precise on the essay. The other aspirant has difficulty with spelling and phrasing of sentences. It is obvious which one of these prospects will land this position because unfortunately, society is very judgmental with regards to literacy. It is the school system's responsibility to teach all aspects of literacy to all age children. The process of reading and writing begins in Kindergarten. The first goal of this curriculum project is to give the Kindergarten and First Grade teachers a writing strategy to use with the emergent reader and writer, that of Interactive Writing. This process of writing is not the only form of writing these children will need to be exposed to in those early grades, but one that demonstrates the reciprocity of reading and writing, and allows the teacher to build on the skills the students know. A child is able to transfer those skills learned during interactive writing into independent writing.

The next goal of this curriculum project is to provide the first grade teachers a teacher-friendly handbook with

lesson plans on writing ideas focused around the five California Young Medal Nominee Books for 2000. These lesson plans have been designed specifically around the strategic elements suggested in the State Department of Education Writing Handbook (1983). There are three different lessons plans for each of the five books.

Objectives

In the inservice, I will demonstrate how to build on what a child knows with writing through the use of his or her name. Another objective I will verify during the interactive writing inservice is teaching the concept of print and phonemic awareness. Most importantly is the objective to teach the teachers how to help the students make the connection between writing and reading.

The handbook's main objective is to encourage the first grade teachers to have students write across curricular areas. This objective is supported by many lessons of different genres. The second goal is to give the students a choice in their writing within a given theme. Using the California Young Medal Reader Medal Nominee books many of the lesson plans draw upon both the theme of the literature and the student's prior knowledge to develop that personal selection in their writing. In the writing process, editing becomes the area in which to work on specifics of mechanics. An important objective of this handbook is to allow students

an opportunity to express themselves in the draft stage without fear of grammar. An understanding of the writing process from the teachers is important before the students can have the adequate practice at each of these stages. Lastly, but essential to all of these objectives, is to create activities that give students the freedom to write every day. Children in first grade have to know that in order to become readers they need to read every day, and in order to become writers they need to write every day.

Limitations

Although, the inservice I conducted was for the Kindergarten and First Grade teachers, some second and third grade teachers attended and did benefit from this strategy of Interactive Writing to use with small group instruction for low performing students. I specifically geared this toward Kindergarten and First Grade teachers to increase their awareness of this writing strategy. Interactive writing is effective for whole or small group instruction. This inservice was not intended to have teachers use interactive writing as the only form of writing conducted in their classrooms.

The lesson plans I have included in the handbook are suggested lessons using a theme carried throughout the literature books. These lesson plans are not meant to be used in any specific way other than to increase the amount of

writing activities in a first grade classroom. These lessons are not intended as a scope and sequence of skills to be specifically taught in any order. These writing lessons should not be considered a writing curriculum. They can and should be used along with a writing program or curriculum to enhance, not to take the place of, the program.

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APPENDIX A

The Writing Process

Lost

Author: Paul Brett Johnson and Celeste Lewis

ISBN# 0-531-09501-0

Objective: The students will be guided through the writing process over several days. The procedure can be used as a practice of the writing process or as the first exposure to the complete process.

Supplies:

- A copy of the book Lost
- Chart paper with the headings Beginning/Middle/End
- Art paper for each child

Procedure

1. On the first day, introduce the students to the book by conducting a read aloud. Have the students draw their favorite part of the story. Next have them decide whether their picture happened in the beginning, middle, or at the end of the story. They will be taping their picture to the appropriate section on the butcher paper. After all the pictures are in place the students will tell one or two sentences about the beginning, middle, or end of the story. The teacher will do shared writing of these under the pictures.
2. On the second day, a new story is started. Brainstorm with

your students other animals a story could be about. An animal is selected along with a setting and a problem. A solution to the problem is also determined by the class. The teacher is acting as a scribe during this shared writing.

3. On the third day, changes to the story are to be made. This could be looking at exciting ways to start the story as suggested by other literature that has been shared in the class, or changing the ending of the story. Words or phrases could be changed also.

4. The fourth day is used for editing. Word wall words, capitalization, and punctuation can all be used for editing. I always leave some mistakes in shared writing so editing is a natural process.

5. On the fifth day, the story can be rewritten on another chart paper, or put on the computer so all of the class can have a copy to reread together. They can illustrate the individualized copies before they take them home.

Using Descriptions And Writing

Lost

Author: Paul Brett Johnson and Celeste Lewis

ISBN# 0-531-09501-0

Objective: The students will be able to use oral language to describe a special object brought from home and then write about the object. They will have an opportunity to practice their description at home before they do this in front of the class.

Materials:

- A class copy of the book, Lost
- Teacher's special object in a brown bag
- A letter, or form for the student to use to practice his description of his object at home.

Procedure:

1. A class discussion of the word *precious* and *important* takes place before the first reading of the book, Lost.

This can be a rereading of this book if it has already been introduced to the class. After the read aloud the words precious and important need to be linked to this story and discussed. What was important to this little girl and why didn't she give up hope?

2. Next the teacher describes, without showing her special object, the students predict what the object might be based on the descriptions.

3. After at least three predictions the teacher shares her

special object.

4. The last step is for the teacher to model how to write a description about her special object.

5. Each student is assigned a day that week that they will bring in a special object prepared to lead the description and prediction time. Five students could do this on Tuesday, five students of Wednesday, five students on Thursday, and five students on Friday.

6. After all students have completed their prediction and description time orally they will write their own descriptions of the special object brought in that week.

7. Depending on the time of year and the maturity of your students you may want only one student a day bringing a special object in a bag. Then that same day the student is given an opportunity to write about his description. The oral language development level of the student will be an important factor for this activity. You might need to do only the oral descriptions for many weeks prior to any writing descriptions.

Description Chart

It starts with the letter.....

It is(color).

It's size is.....

It is the shape of.....

It is a person, place, or a thing...(Which one?)

It feels like....

It sounds like.....

It is special because.....

Similarities or differences to anything else....

It is used for....

Lost or Found

Lost

Author: Paul Brett Johnson and Celeste Lewis

ISBN# 0-531-09501-0

Objective: Students will be able to determine importance of detail through writing an ad for a lost pet.

Materials:

- A copy of the book, Lost
- Overhead transparency of page four from the book, Lost
- Classified section of the local newspaper
- Art paper and paint, or markers

Procedure:

1. The teacher will use the book, Lost as a read aloud. If this is a reread this activity is still very suitable. After the read aloud draw attention to page four where the little girl has made a lost-dog poster. It may be helpful to have this page duplicated for each student or an overhead of this page. A brainstorm session of the importance of this poster and what was on this poster is key. Next share some Lost and Found ads from the local newspaper. The teacher will now demonstrate how to write an ad for a Lost or Found pet using a different pet than was in the book Lost.

2. For the next day have the students bring in photographs of a family pet. If a photo is not available have magazines for them to cut out a picture of a pet they would like to own. As a class,

brainstorm essential items that would need to be listed in an ad whether it was a lost or a found ad. This needs to be posted so the students can use this information when they are making their own advertisements.

3. Have them make and paint their own posters for ads about their pets. This would make a wonderful "Lost" bulletin board.

Autobiographies

Saving Sweetness

Authors: Diane Stanley and G. Brian Karas

ISBN# 0-399-23645-1

Materials:

- A copy of the book, Saving Sweetness
- Duplicated copies of the student book form, see attached

Objective: Students will write their autobiographies for their classmates to be put in a class album.

Procedure:

1. Prior to the first reading of this book, a homework assignment needs to be completed. Tell about your family. How many people are in your family and your relationship to them. Tell what you like to do at home, especially with your family. I like to eat... (For example, I remember playing Monopoly many evenings with my Mom and Dad, I thought that was grand).

2. After the read aloud of Saving Sweetness the importance of the family is to be discussed.

3. Next the pages of the book can be filled out by each student. If this is later in the year for your first graders you can have them independently fill out four pages. The first one tell me about your family, Second, we like to.....together. Third, I like to.....when I am alone at home I.....,Fourth, my favorite food is/are.....

For your emergent writers the following frame may be used:

My family

has _____

belonging to it.

I remember when my

family and

I _____.

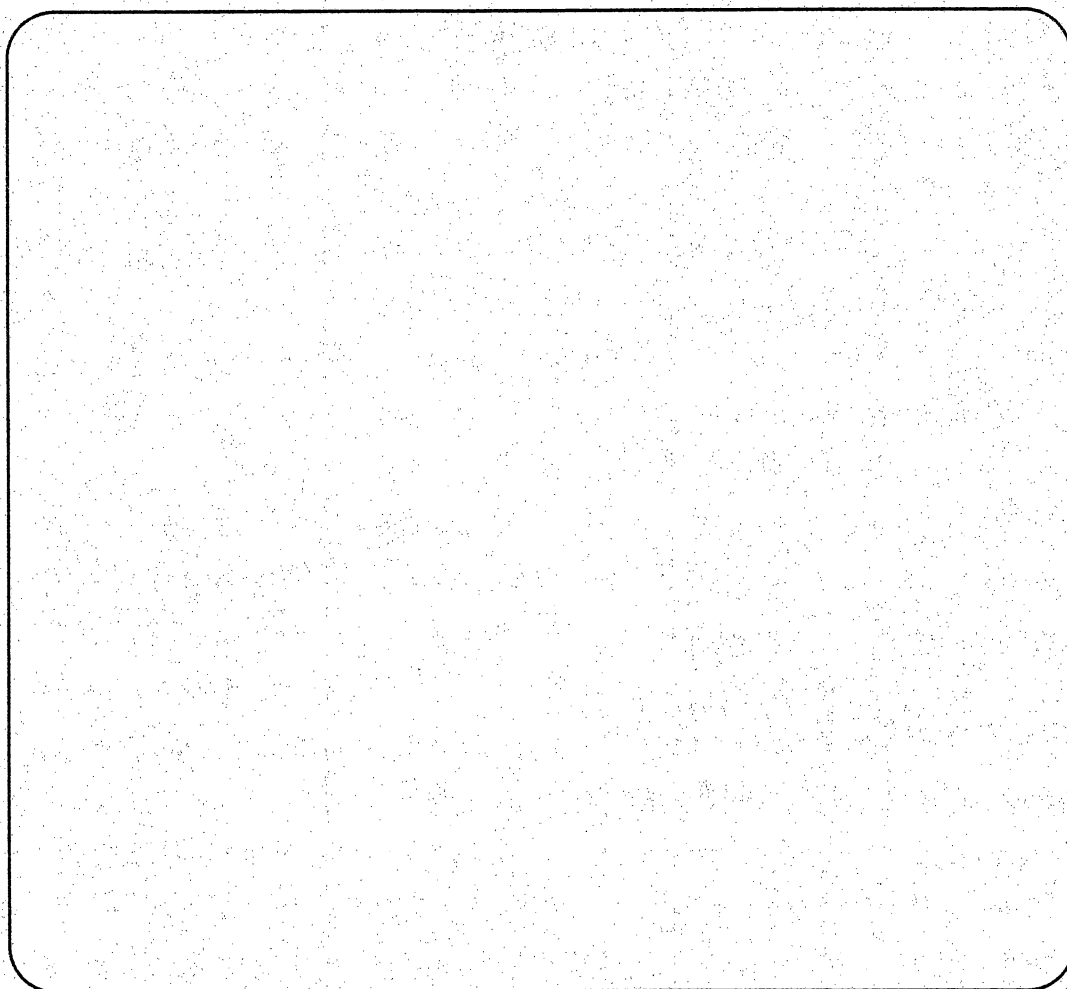
I like to

when I am by myself. My

favorite food to eat

is _____.

This is Me and My Family



Name

Sensory Writing

Saving Sweetness

Authors: Diane Stanley and G. Brian Karas

ISBN# 0-399-23645-1

Objective: The students will use sensory details through their shared writing experience with the use of sensory charts.

Materials:

- A copy of *Saving Sweetness*
- Graham Crackers enough for the class
- Chocolate Bars, half a chocolate bar for each student
- Marshmallows one per student
- 12" x18" construction paper or chart paper for the sensory charts with pictures of each sense on each one (eyes for see, hand for touch, mouth for taste, ear for hear, nose for smell).

Procedure:

1. The teacher will make S'Mores for the classroom using a microwave oven or a toaster oven. Melt the marshmallows and put one in between a graham cracker with some chocolate on it. The marshmallow will melt the chocolate.
2. Discuss how the S'More smelled, felt, sounded, tasted, and looked. Have the student fill charts with the sensory pictures. Next through shared writing, model and guide the class through writing sentences with the help of the sensory charts.
3. The following day revisit and reread the sentences written and the words on the sensory charts. Have the class write

independent sentences with the help of the sensory charts. You'll want to remove the modeled sentences for this activity.

4. If your students aren't ready for this independent activity model writing additional sentences using the sensory charts.

Comparing and Contrasting Characters

Saving Sweetness

Authors: Diane Stanley and G. Brian Karas

ISBN# 0-399-23645-1

Objective: The students will compare and contrast the characters in both Saving Sweetness and Lilly's Purple Plastic Purse.

Materials:

- A copy of Saving Sweetness and Lilly's Purple Plastic Purse
- Venn Diagram on a bulletin board or butcher paper

Procedure:

1. Use both selections Saving Sweetness and Lilly's Purple Plastic Purse as read alouds.
2. With the whole class complete a Venn Diagram comparing and contrasting the main character's spunky personalities.
3. After the completion of the Venn Diagram, model writing sentences about these two characters. Depending on the ability of your class the modeling can carry over for more than one day.
4. For your independent writers, writing can be encouraged using the Venn Diagram based on those comparisons and contrasts. It's important to understand how difficult it is for a first grader to move from a diagram to a sentence. The modeling and practice has to be in place for a long time before it is independent. The

practice of that modeling has to match the modeling.

Descriptive Writing

The Secret Shortcut

Author: Mark Teague

ISBN# 0-590-67714-4

Objective: After reading The Secret Shortcut, students will compose their own story about frogs.

Materials:

- A copy of The Secret Shortcut
- Non-fiction books on frogs
- Chart paper
- Art Paper
- Paint

Procedure:

1. Read several non-fiction books to your class about frogs.
2. When reading and discussing The Secret Short, emphasize the use of descriptive words in the story. Have students draw and paint their own swamp with frogs. Brainstorm words to write relating to frogs.
 - How a frog looks...
 - How a frog feels...
 - How a frog sounds...
 - Settings ...
 - Problems frogs might have...
3. A story frame can be used for less able writers and used for a directed lesson.

My frog looks like

He lives in

He likes to eat

When he is a baby he looks like

Neighborhoods

The Secret Shortcut

Author: Mark Teague

ISBN#0-590-67714-4

Objective: After reading The Secret Shortcut, students will construct a neighborhood. Then they will be writing directions to get to their favorite places in their neighborhoods.

Materials:

- A copy of The Secret Shortcut
- 10 small milk cartons (lunchroom size work well) for each collaborative group
- tag board one for each group
- copies of the neighborhood for each collaborative group
- glue
- scissors/crayons

Procedure:

1. Before the reading of The Secret Shortcut, do predictions of the story and a picture walk, changing predictions throughout.
2. During the reading of The Secret Shortcut, discuss the meaning of the term shortcut, and check predictions.
3. After reading The Secret Shortcut, students work in collaborative groups to build a neighborhood over milk cartons mounted on the tag board so the neighborhood can be moved. Completion of this neighborhood could take several periods.

Included are some example pictures that could be used over the milk cartons. You'll want the students to construct some of their own depending on their neighborhood.

4. The teacher and students will generate neighborhood words to be added to the word bank.

5. Each group will be describing their neighborhoods to the rest of the class.

6. Each student will then be writing directions how they would go from their house to three other places in their neighborhood.

7. For emergent writers have them verbalize their directions from their house to three other places. Then have them write one direction at a time.



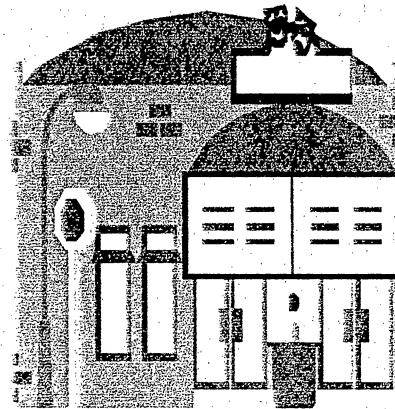
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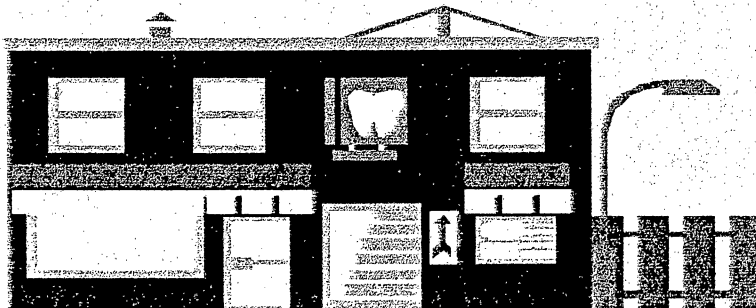
church



factory



theater



store

Enjoying Myself

The Secret Shortcut

Author: Mark Teague

ISBN# 0-590-67714-4

Objective: After reading The Secret Shortcut, the students will use of photograph taken of themselves to describe what the student likes to do.

Materials:

- A copy of The Secret Shortcut
- A photograph brought from home or taken by the teacher
- A teacher photograph doing something you enjoy
- A word web for each student

Procedure:

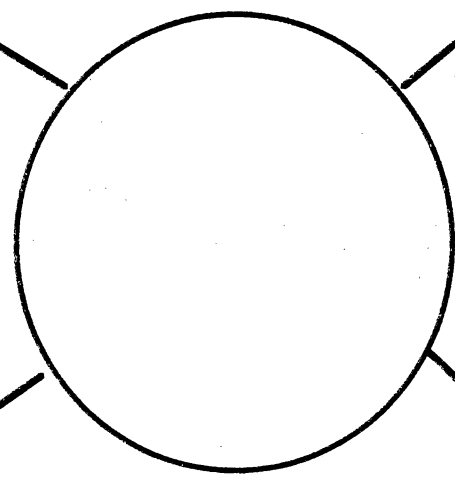
1. Each student is asked to bring from home a photograph of themselves doing something they enjoy. For those students who aren't able to do this have an instamatic, regular, or digital camera to use on the playground with your students to capture them doing something they enjoy. Allow enough time for these to be developed prior to this activity.
2. Read The Secret Shortcut to the students. Discuss with your students why the boys were having these adventures. Did Wendell and Floyd have a problem or were they enjoying themselves? Discuss with your students something you enjoy doing when you are not in school. Share your photograph of yourself participating in that activity. On the overhead complete the story web about you and that favorite activity.

3. Have each student complete their word webs using their photograph. This activity can be done in heterogeneous pairs.
4. The following day model writing three to four sentences about your favorite activity you completed using the word web form.
5. Have each student write three to four sentences about themselves and their favorite activity using their word web.

Name _____ Date _____

What I'm doing.

When I do it.



How it makes me feel.

Why I like it.

Mama Provi and the Pot of Rice

Author: Sylvia Rosa-Casanova

ISBN# 0-689-31932-0

Objective: After reading Mama Provi and the Pot of Rice, students will create an alphabet book about favorite foods.

Materials:

- A copy of Mama Provi and the Pot of Rice
- Blank books with 26 pages
- Magazines for cutting out pictures of food

Procedure:

1. During the reading of Mama Provi and the Pot of Rice, discuss each food that is mentioned and the reason that food is special in this book.
2. Reread several favorite alphabet books to the class.
3. Over the next few days create a class alphabet big book about things you do when you visit your Grandparents or relatives. Individual students, or small groups, can add the illustrations for each of the pages written interactively with the class.
4. Then have each student create their own alphabet book about their favorite foods. If your students are emergent writers this can be done in small groups or in pairs.
5. The illustrations can be cut from magazines or drawn by the

students. A sentence can be added to each page describing the food.

*Proper modeling and practicing is necessary for this activity to be successful.

Beginning, Middle and End
Mama Provi and the Pot of Rice

Author: Sylvia Rosa-Casanova

ISBN# 0-689-31932-0

Objective: After reading Mama Provi and the Pot of Rice, the students will identify the beginning, middle, and the end of the story. The students will write a sentence for each part of the story and illustrate that.

Materials:

- A copy of Mama Provi and the Pot of Rice
- Three cards each with one of the parts of the train, engine, cars, or the caboose
- Several familiar story book
- Pencils, crayons, scissors and 18" x 11" construction paper folded into thirds
- 1"x6" strips, each child will need three

Procedure:

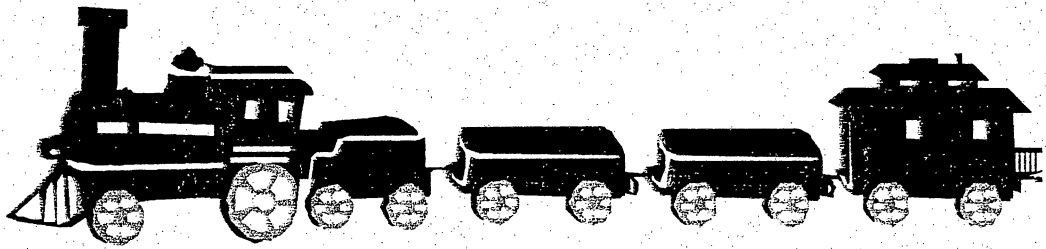
1. Discuss the concept of beginning, middle, and end with the class. Show them how the train has a beginning (engine), a middle (cars), and an end (caboose).

2. Reread a familiar book to the class deliberately separating and discussing the beginning, middle, and the end.

This procedure should take place several days with familiar books. Each day letting the children take turns holding up the appropriate train part for the story.

3. Read the book Mama Provi and the Pot of Rice for enjoyment, letting the students predict as you read. Reread the book for the class having them listen for the beginning, middle, and the end.

4. Have each student then draw and color, on their paper folded into thirds, the beginning, middle, and the end of the story. Give them 1"x6" strips to write a sentence to accompany each part. Let them glue that to the bottom of their section of the paper. This strip can also be stapled to the bottom of each of the three sections.



Biography

Mama Provi and the Pot of Rice

Author: Sylvia Rosa-Casanova

ISBN# 0-689-31932-0

Objective: After reading Mama Provi and the Pot of Rice, students will write a firsthand biography about a special person in their life.

Materials:

- A copy of Mama Provi and the Pot of Rice
- Prewriting page
- Chart paper

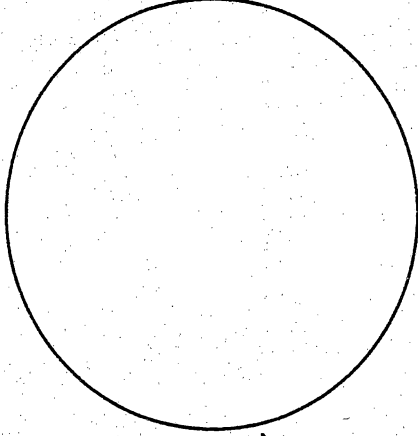
Procedure:

1. Discuss with your students the word *special* and what makes a person special. Discuss the personality traits a special person might have. Act out or role play some of these traits. Examples might be kind, helpful, or brave. Create a word bank with these words.
2. Read Mama Provi and the Pot of Rice to the class. Discuss the relationship Mama Provi and Lucy had. Who was special to Lucy? Why? Now complete the same prewriting sheet, on the overhead or a large chart, about Mama Provi to Lucy. Using the information created on the prewriting chart model how to write several sentences using that sheet.
3. On the following day complete a prewriting sheet together on a large chart or an overhead, about someone in your school that is

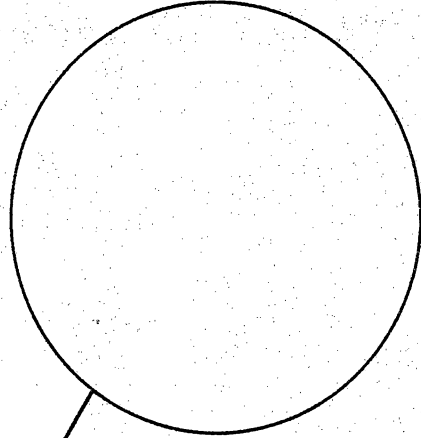
very special to the class (e.g., the janitor, a cafeteria worker, a rec. leader), once again demonstrating how to write a couple of sentences using that prewriting sheet. Have each student choose a family member that they think is very special. The students will complete their prewriting sheet about the special person in their family.

4. On the next day have each student write and describe their special person, describe what he/ she is like and how that person looks. Tell about an incident you shared with that special person and why that person is special to you. Have the students share these orally with the class.

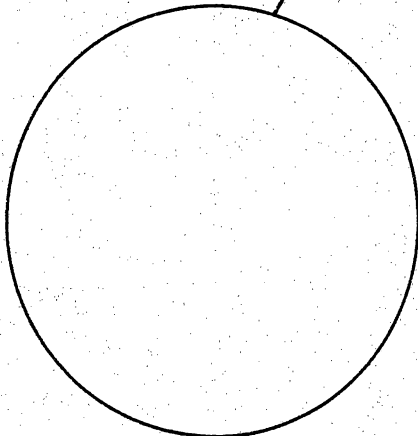
Looks Like



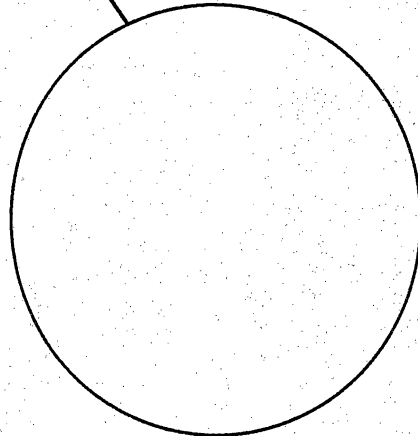
Acts Like



My Special Person



Why they are special.



One time I remember.

Same and Different

Meanwhile

Author: Jules Feiffer

ISBN# 0-06-205155-5

Objective: After reading Meanwhile, the students will discuss the similarities and differences in the adventures within the story.

Materials:

- A copy of Meanwhile
- Chart paper, divided into thirds vertically
- Two colors of highlight tape, or highlighters, two colors

Procedure:

1. Bring in a couple of comic books that use the word *meanwhile* throughout. Share a couple of pages from the comic book and discuss what happens when the word *meanwhile* is used. Begin reading Meanwhile, stop after the first adventure.
2. Discuss and chart what was happening on the pirate ship then *meanwhile* a new adventure begins. Read on in the text predicting about the wild west, stop to discuss and chart the adventure, predictions again about what is to come now. Read on for the final adventure in outer space, stop to discuss and chart that adventure.
3. Finish the book and discuss with the class why Raymond had these adventures.

4. The second day reread Meanwhile, telling the students to listen for things that are the same in the adventures and the things that are different in each of the adventures.

5. Review the charts written previously. Have the students generate what was the same in all three of the adventures. Using highlight tape or highlighters have the students highlight those similarities in the same color. Next discuss those things that were different in all three adventures. Highlight those on the chart in a different color.

6. Using the information highlighted that were the same the teacher will model writing a couple of sentences utilizing the chart. Go through the same process with the differences. The writing of these sentences may be done on a separate day, depending on the attention span of your first graders.

A Letter Home

Meanwhile

Author: Jules Feiffer

ISBN# 0-06-205155-5

Objective: After reading Meanwhile, the students will be writing letters to their parents.

Materials:

- A copy of Meanwhile
- Chart paper
- A letter format for each student

Procedure:

1. Read Meanwhile as a read aloud to your students, letting them make predictions and enjoy the adventures in the text. Then reread the story through the first adventure when Raymond had to walk the plank. On page 8 of this book Raymond tells the pirates he wants to write a letter to his Mom. Discuss with your first graders why he would want to write a letter to his Mom and what he must want to say to her in this letter.
2. Model on chart paper how to write a letter. This letter could be Raymond writing what your students want you to say to his Mom, or you could write a letter to your own Mom about something else. This could be the first introduction to letter writing or a review. The parts of a letter need to be introduced. If this is a first introduction to writing a letter it would be helpful to have the letter format written and laminated on chart paper so this writing can take place many times whole group before you ask

your students to practice this independently.

3. After appropriate modeling of how to write a letter, let your students practice writing a letter to their own Mom or Dad. Tell them this letter can be about an adventure they have experienced or anything they would like to tell their Mom or Dad.

4. The next step would be to model and practice addressing the envelopes with a correct return address. Stamps can be added for authenticity. If you order from Mystic Stamps you will receive 100 old canceled stamps for \$1.00.

4. For independent practice have letter writing as part of your writing center with a real mailbox for them to mail their letters to people in your school (e.g., secretary, custodian, former teacher, cafeteria helper, rec. leader). The letters get returned to the students if they are not addressed properly.

Cartoon Expression

Meanwhile

Author: Jules Feiffer

ISBN# 0-06-205155-5

Objective: After reading Meanwhile, the students will write captions in speech bubbles to accompany cartoon characters.

Materials:

- A copy of Meanwhile
- Assorted cartoon clips showing action
- Newspaper cartoons that use speech bubbles
- White out correction tape

Procedure:

1. Prior to reading Meanwhile to the students, speech bubbles are explained to the class. Examples of cartoons using speech bubbles would be helpful.
2. Read Meanwhile to the class as a read aloud, activating prior knowledge throughout the text.
3. After reading and discussing the adventures that occurred in the story, model the use of speech bubbles with a character on the overhead or on chart paper so all the students can see the text. This could be a series of actions from the character or characters so the sense of a story would be visible for the students.

4. Let the students choose a series of cartoon pictures to add dialog in the speech bubbles.

5. If you use a cartoon from the newspaper or from a comic book white out tape can be used to cover the writing in the speech bubbles, so the children's own words can be added.

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