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Writer's workshop: Teaching students to own their work

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WRITER'S WORKSHOP: TEACHING STUDENTS TO OWN THEIR WORK

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A Thesis

Presented to the

Faculty of

California State University,

San Bernardino

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In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Master of Arts

in

Education:

Reading/Language Arts

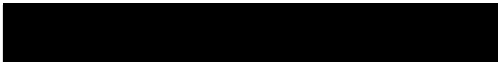———————————————

by

Amanda Kaye Naimy

March 2006

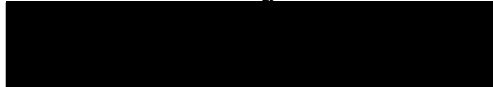WRITER'S WORKSHOP: TEACHING STUDENTS TO OWN THEIR WORK

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ABSTRACT

Writer's workshop, when used in the classroom, helps create students who take ownership of their writing. This thesis shows one way of presenting a writing process to students in conjunction to other writing programs, which are mandated to teach by the school district. When teachers are required to teach writing in a certain way, it takes the creativity out of students' writing. It is important for the students to be able to express themselves with their own voice in their writing. Using a process model to teach writing, such as writer's workshop, will help students show pride in their writing. This document will also show how this was achieved in one classroom over the course of two years.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER FOUR: RESULTS

CHAPTER FIVE: SUMMARY, CONCLUSION, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

LIST OF TABLES

CHAPTER ONE

DEFINING THE PROBLEM

Introduction

One of the key ideas of this document is that when young writers are led to take ownership of their written language, they tend to develop pride in themselves as writers and make the writing process an authentic learning experience. Toward that end, there are many benefits and strengths to including a writer's workshop into the school day. According to the writings of some prominent authors and teachers of writing, such as Atwell (2003), Graves (1994), and Calkins (1983), writer's workshop can help students look at themselves as authors. In other words, when students are given the chance to create their own stories they will feel as though they own them.

Allowing students to write using the writing process with a strategy such as writer's workshop will enable them to show themselves what they can do as authors. It will also allow them to express themselves by using their own choices and desires within their work.

Ray states that students who are invited to "make something with writing instead of just [being asked] to

write, they go about their work differently" (p. 14, 2004).
This becomes a great strength to using writer's workshop.
The students become authors in charge of their own work.

Ray also expresses that "when young students see
themselves as people who make books, they develop beginning
understandings about genre, craft, style, voice,
organization, audience, process, and purpose. This sense
of identity is key to much of their development as writers"
(p. 15, 2004). This is important because it shares how
much of a benefit writer's workshop can be for students.
When students are able to picture themselves as actual
authors they will start to live up to that title and treat
their writing with the care it deserves.

Another benefit to a writing workshop is to have a
consistent and predictable structure, according to Atwell
(2003). She also states that it is important for "student
discretion about topic, process, pace, approach, and
audience" (p. 17). This is so because it helps the
students become motivated to write. If each student is
able to write what he or she chooses, then his or her
motivation leaps ahead. Another quote from Atwell is
simply put that "choice is the bedrock" (p. 17).

There are a sea of stories, reports, and letters that
all sound alike within the writing program of Step Up to

Writing (Auman, 1999) at Julius Corsini Elementary School in the Palm Springs Unified School District (PSUSD). Each student has become a carbon copy of the structure presented and won't deviate from that structure, even a little. If one were to go off the beaten path, she may fall into a fiery pit. Told that writing with the same transitions each time is the "right" way to write, these students have given up their imaginations and free will where writing is concerned.

As will be noticed, there is a distinct lack of a solid writing program within the district. There are many attempts to share how to teach writing but not one program has been able to stick.

Writing programs differ widely in schools throughout the country. Some of the programs out there are, Step Up to Writing (Auman, 1999), and Write Traits (Spandel, 2002). There are many programs that are provided to teachers with the basal or anthology programs used in their districts as well. There are also programs that come into play through the many staff development days that occur each year. If the PSUSD would be willing to share with their teachers the breadth of resources available through a writing process approach to teaching writing such as writer's workshop, during the many training days available, teachers may not

become quite as frustrated with teaching writing to their students.

The reason the district should do this for their teachers is because, although the programs currently used by the district have some good qualities, they don't allow for much imagination from students. The students don't appear to enjoy writing when they are asked to write using the techniques from Step Up to Writing (Auman, 1999), or the anthology used to teach reading and writing. The anthology used to teach both reading and writing in PSUSD is *Open Court Reading* (Bereiter, C., Brown, A., Campione, J., Carruthers, I., Case, R., Hirshberg, J., Adams, M. J., McKeough, A., Pressley, M., Roit, M., Scardamalia, M., Treadway, G. H., Jr., 2000). It includes a writing program that is to be used in conjunction with the reading program. This program lacks a lot where writing comes into play. The PSUSD administrators have expressed their concern with the writing program and have established another writing program to be used by the teachers. The program, or rather, strategy, which uses particular strategies used in Palm Springs Unified School District is called *Step Up to Writing* (Auman, 1999). This strategy shows students the "bones" of how to write.

4

Lastly, there is Writer's Workshop, a strategy that allows students to write more content while also giving them room to breathe within their writing.

Three years ago, Palm Springs Unified School District had their teachers trained on Vicki Spandel's 6-Traits Writing Assessment and Instruction. This broke up each element of the writing process for teachers and also for students. Teachers felt they now understood how to teach writing. However, teachers felt the presenters were claiming 6-Traits should be taught to students who already had a clear understanding of how to create content within a written piece. One year later, teachers were trained in *Step Up to Writing* (Auman, 1999) and it was thought this new "program" would be the answer and would help teachers expand on the knowledge they received from the 6-Traits training. Unfortunately, this did not solve the challenges with the district's writing curriculum nor the quality of the district's students' writing.

<div align="center">Research Problem</div>

The problem that needs to be addressed in this research study is the lack of a solid writing program. If the teachers could be shown how to teach their students

<div align="center">5</div>

through a process-writing model the students may not become so stuck in their ways with writing. Students at Julius Corsini Elementary School are in the rut of a very structured writing regime. The program that has been implemented through the district is entitled *Step Up to Writing* (Auman, 1999). It color codes sentences to help give students an idea as to how a paragraph should look. The first sentence is green, which denotes the topic sentence. The next color is yellow and that denotes a supporting detail or fact for the topic sentence. There could undoubtedly be more than one yellow sentence in the paragraph. Red is the third color, which tells students that it is an explanation in further detail about the yellow sentences. Finally, the last sentence is green to summarize the topic sentence.

In looking at the website for *Step Up to Writing* (Auman, 1999), it is clear that its rationale is that students should learn how to write using logical steps as stated in the previous paragraph. They should, also, be able to transfer their learned skills from this program in order to write multiple paragraph essays and research reports as well as exciting narratives. This isn't a bad idea, however, it needs more refinement. Students do not

tend to transfer into exciting writing from using this model.

In *Step Up to Writing* (Auman, 1999), the students are given the basic structure of a paragraph. This strategy helps students create cohesive paragraphs. However, this strategy doesn't always give the students who are taught this way first a well-rounded view of writing because it doesn't allow for students to write with much content or imagination. On the flip side, if students were taught *Step Up to Writing* (1999) after they were taught to write content then the program would help them format their writing into a nice structure. *Step Up to Writing* (1999) gives bones but no flesh to the structure of the paragraph when introduced before content has been taught to students.

The main complaint from teachers in all grade levels at Julius Corsini Elementary and also from various other schools within the district with *Step Up to Writing* (Auman, 1999) is one of no imagination. The students all can and do write the same type of paragraph for each genre of writing. When they write a narrative they use little imagination and it is embedded within the confines of the transitional words of first, second, next, then, finally, and last. The program is useful in teaching summaries and report writing in order for the students to understand the

strict structures of those genres. However, some imagination is still needed for these genres. For the other genres, however, it becomes very limited in its use.

Because the writing is embedded within the reading program it's important to understand how the writing is broken up into units just as the reading is separated. Open Court Reading (Bereiter, C., Brown, A., et al., 2000) is broken up into units. Because of this, the major writing projects are broken up into the different units as well. There is a written project, which follows the basic premise of the writing process theory that is developed through the course of five, or six weeks, depending on how many stories there are to read within a particular unit. There is one section of the written project to be worked on per week. The first week could be all about brainstorming, and then the next week could be prewriting, etc.

The anthology has not given teachers much help where writing is concerned in this respect because it lays out the one writing skill the students need to work on for that week and may not spiral back to that skill for six or seven weeks. Although some teachers do deviate from the "script," because they feel it lacks what the students need, they try to stay as close as possible because the district looks down upon anyone who doesn't teach the

program in its entirety. The skill for the students to learn may be given to teachers in a manner that is understandable, but it doesn't give variations on how it could look. It prompts the students on what to write in the application portion. Students can spend a full week brainstorming for one written piece, however, that doesn't allow for much writing to be done. Through this reading program, the students do very little meaningful writing.

When the students are prompted to write they are only writing for one purpose, the teacher. If the students were allowed to chose their writing topic they would then change their focus of writing to themselves. When this is accomplished, students begin to write with more meaning. By addressing this concern, the hope is teachers will be able to help students write more imaginative and unique pieces. This is important because students need to be able to find their voice in their writing. By allowing them the chance to write their own choice-driven pieces, students will become more creative. Sharing with students the "whole" of writing, instead of a "part" of writing will move them from the structured color coded paragraphs to imaginative and colorful written pieces of art full of their own voice. The writing will also be more authentic and the students will feel as though they own their writing

because it came from their imaginations and not from the teacher's imagination of what the writing should look or sound like.

Purpose of the Study

Once content is in place for the students, the writing program in *Open Court* (Bereiter, C., Brown, A., et al., 2000) and *Step up to Writing* (Auman, 1999) can be utilized in the manner in which it was intended.

Parkay and Hass (2000 describe the "nature of knowledge" and how it creates a curriculum that is meaningful to students. Writer's Workshop will do just that; it will share with students a writing curriculum that is meaningful.

Students are allowed free choice with their writing within writer's workshop; therefore the writing becomes more meaningful. When students are given the chance to choose a topic to write on, they are the authority on it; they are the ones in charge of the piece, of where it will lead the reader, and also, of the feelings they want to the reader to feel about their characters or stance. By using their own voice in their writing, the written pieces become authentic and the students will then own their writing.

They will want to share their writing because it means
something to them not because it means something to the
teacher.

Also, under "curriculum criteria" and the need for
teacher and student planning the authors, Parkay and Hass
(2000), state, "The teacher's and learner's goals for a
learning experience must be understood by both the teacher
and the learners, and the goals must be compatible or they
are not likely to be achieved" (p. 274). Writer's
workshop, which is based on the writing process theory,
supports this curriculum criterion because students play a
role in developing their writing, even though teachers have
a criterion for the writing. The teacher's goal of
creating successful writers aligns with the student's goals
of publishing.

The writing medium is very enjoyable and sharing that
with each group of students is a necessary step. By
starting a "writer's workshop" in each classroom the plan
is to evoke a love of writing in each student. It is not
necessary for students to be carbon copies of each other.
With the *Step Up to Writing* (Auman, 1999) program, they
become just that. Each student is capable of generating a
well-rounded piece of writing when the implementation of a
writer's workshop is available to him or her.

There are many scholars who have been using the method of writer's workshop for many years and who have written books on the subject. Some of these greats are Calkins (1994), Atwell (2003), Graves (1994), as well as Fountas and Pinnell (2001).

Writer's workshop allows for content writing instead of skeletal writing such as is found with using *Step Up to Writing* (Auman, 1999). Fountas and Pinnell (2001) state that writer's workshop has been used to teach writing for over twenty years, this being the case, something about teaching students to write using the workshop method must be working! Students can use the basic structure of the *Step up to Writing* (Auman, 1999) program and expand upon them.

Since success on yearly standardized tests in reading, writing, and math are held in high esteem, the items students become tested on tend to be what is more important to teach. The Palm Springs Unified School District is concerned with students' writing proficiency in all grades, especially in the fourth and seventh grades. These two grades are the ones where the students are asked to respond to a prompt. Because there were only three percent of the fourth graders in 2003 who were proficient on the California Writing Assessment in the PSUSD, the district

feels writing must become more important within the classrooms.

If each student receives the basic "bones" of the *Step Up to Writing* program (Auman, 1999) and then moves beyond that and into more authentic and real writing, the students will benefit greatly. It is necessary to prove to the district that yes, their strategy of *Step Up to Writing* (1999) works, but not all by itself.

Within Julius Corsini Elementary, the majority of the teachers are in the same writing rut. They know they need some program to go along with *Step Up to Writing* (Auman, 1999); however, they are unsure how to get to that point. First year teacher's, as well, would benefit from implementing a Writer's Workshop since they are worried about doing everything the district tells them to do and they don't want to upset anyone by going against the grain.

In knowing that there are people who would benefit from knowledge about whether doing a Writer's Workshop in the classroom will further students' writing abilities, it would definitely be appropriate to spread the wealth of the findings. If one person was able to give her students a chance to express themselves in a more unique manner rather than the same structured paragraph then she would be able

13

to see that her students really do have something in their heads other than what follows: "First, I went to the store. Next, I bought some milk. Third, I paid for my milk. After, I walked home. Finally, I drank all my milk."

It is important to address this problem of teaching writing in order to force those in charge to see what sort of students they were letting teachers turn out, compared to the quality of the students who will go out into the world after being able to set their imaginations free. Finding a solution to this problem may not be the answer to all the problems in education; however, it may help ease a bit of the pain that comes at times. What should really be emphasized by this suggestion of less pain is that students seem to buy more into writing when using the approach of writer's workshop to teach writing. When the students do in fact buy into this writing approach or anything for that matter, there is undeniably less pain involved for the teacher.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Introduction

The information presented in this literature review is
organized under the three different writing approaches
published. These programs are: *Open Court Reading*, *Step Up
to Writing*, and Writer's Workshop. The discussion about
these three different programs will allow one to evaluate
the writing components within them.

Step Up to Writing, (Aumann, 1999) with 6-Traits,
supplements *Open Court Reading.* They both have important
elements for effective writing, but they appear to some
teachers as missing those elements, which writer's workshop
incorporates, that takes timid non-writers and turns them
into published authors in their classrooms.

Writing is a curricular area where assessments are
subjective. There are many rubrics available to use in
evaluating writing. Rubrics for letter writing, expository
and narrative developed for the PSUSD are available to view
in Appendix A. It's important to give students a program
that develops at their individual pace. This review will
show how the writing is set up in each program and how the

use of these writing approaches can aid the students in their writing.

Theoretical Framework

Teaching students is important to society since teachers are creating those who will run the country in the future. By giving students a new basis for learning such as a more open-ended or free-choice writing time than the more structured writing time, the students may then become more apt to produce work that is more authentic than they may have previously. Because free-choice, rather than prompts, is the main factor, the students will be able to take charge of their work instead of always writing for their teacher; they will be writing for themselves.

Open Court Reading

"To assure success in writing, the students need: A writing journal... a writing portfolio...[and] a writing-in-progress folder" (Bereiter, C., Brown, A., et al, 2000, Appendix p. 22). There should be a writing center that contains all of the materials the students need for writing

as well. In the appendix of the Teacher's Edition of Open Court (2000), the authors' state that students should be provided with the writing process as this will enable them in learning a systematic approach to writing. Also, by giving the students a vehicle to communicate with, such as writing, they will be able to see the importance of writing out in the real world.

The Open Court Reading anthology (Bereiter, C., Brown, A., et al, 2000) sets up writing projects that take anywhere from five to six weeks to finish. It is based on the unit that is being studied in the reading program. For example in the third unit, Imagination:

Table 1. Unit 3 Exploration Management from Open Court Reading (2000, p. 216B)

Lesson 1	Introduce students to the classroom library and brainstorm the name of imaginative people. Students decide on a focus for their biography.
Lesson 2	Students create a research plan and a template fro their biography. They begin their research.
Lesson 3	Students identify ways of presenting biographical information. They continue to do research and begin their rough drafts.
Lesson 4	Students complete rough draft of biography, then

	give and receive peer feedback.
Lesson 5	Students complete rough draft of biography, then illustrate and prepare author/illustrator notes.
Lesson 6	Students create title pages and display and share work, create anthology index, and bind all their work in a single volume.

The lessons correspond to weeks and each lesson corresponds with a story being taught. The anthology is mainly geared toward the teaching of reading, although there is a writing component within it. As stated earlier, each part of the writing process through Open Court Reading (2000) is supposed to be done in the week a story is being taught.

The way in which OCR (Bereiter, C., Brown, A., et al, 2000) has outlined writing is that each week the students are to focus on one element of the writing process. For example, in the third week of the first theme the students are being taught revision. In their application method, the students are prompted to write about feelings they have at that moment, or at any other moment on that particular day they are asked to do this writing. During the fifth week the students move from revision to proofreading and their application for writing is to write a persuasive

letter to one of the characters in their story for the week.

Conventions are taught through the context of writing. There are activities such as "sentence lifting," which is when the teacher takes sentences from student writing to model to the students how to check for conventions, which will help students with proofreading skills. Another activity is "writing seminar" that allows students to discuss their writing at the different stages. Students are to be writing daily.

The first unit in *Open Court Reading* (OCR) (Bereiter, C., Brown, A., et al, 2000) for third grade is Friendship. The writing for this theme asks the students to interview a family member and then create a story from the answers. For the first week, all the students get to do is make a list of interview questions, interview, and then make a first draft. The skills being taught, however, for the first week are an overview, or an introduction, of the writing process. The second week, the teacher is supposed to teach paragraph writing to the students. The students are told that a paragraph is made up of a group of two or more sentences that are somehow related. Then the students need to look at the story they are reading for the week and find a specific paragraph and pick out the main idea. For

19

application, the students are asked to look at what their brainstorming notes are and also to start on their drafts.

For prewriting, OCR (Bereiter, C., Brown, A., et al, 2000) doesn't discuss the need for modeling. For the drafting stage there is a section that informs teachers how to model. The authors want teachers to model turning their own list into sentences and paragraphs. "The purpose of drafting is to let words pour out on paper and to express ideas quickly" (2000, Appendix p. 22). There are ideas for modeling revision, editing, and publishing as well.

According to Adams at Harvard (2003), Open Court's curriculum "has demonstrated that instruction based on tested, research-based practices gets results" (p. 1). This statement suggests that the research-based program helps students succeed in writing. Adams discusses how OCR (Bereiter, C., Brown, A., et al, 2000), being around for forty years, has the "strongest lessons research could offer" (2003, p. 1).

Adams (2003) also claims those who have been taught with OCR (Bereiter, C., Brown, A., et al, 2000) do better on state tests, standardized tests, and any other test a district or state can throw at a student.

Although Open Court Reading is claiming research shows that school districts using the reading program are gaining

in test scores in reading more than those school districts that are not using the program, others who have reviewed the research have found otherwise. Moustafa and Land (2003), professors at California State University, found problems with the reports that the Open Court program is responsible for scores improving. They report that:

The schools in the published reports by McGraw-Hill [publisher] that did not use Open Court and scored lower than the schools that did had 71% of the children on the federal lunch program. The schools that scored higher and used Open Court only had 40-43% of the students on the federal lunch program (p. 1).

Because the positive research for Open Court was taken from schools where the student's socio-economic status is higher it makes sense that the program comes out on top. For those schools where Open Court was not used but the socio-economic status of the population was remarkably lower, it most likely, wouldn't matter what program is in use. Therefore, Open Court cannot show proof that the increase in test scores is due to the reading program. Moustafa and Land also found that the researchers determined reading as being able to pronounce a printed word, whether or not the students could make sense of the word. Along with this, children in the classrooms without the scripted Open Court

program scored higher in areas of comprehension than those using the Open Court program. They also determined that McGraw-Hill did not follow the same students each year, but rather, what happened in the same grade level each year. When evaluating the results, the students' scores actually decreased from second to third grade.

The significance to writing by discussing the reading scores is that if the students were improving in their reading scores by using the Open Court Reading (Bereiter, C., Brown, A., et al, 2000) then that should mean that the writing program involved with Open Court (2000) would improve as well.

Another researcher finding differentiating evidence for Open Court showing higher testing scores than non-scripted programs was Coles (2003). Coles (2003) concluded that there were similar test results in reading comprehension and no significant difference in student achievement through either approach. He states, "poor readers remained poor readers" (p. 77). This statement about poor readers connects to the writing program in Open Court (Bereiter, C., Brown, A., et al, 2000) because if a student comes into this program not knowing how to write well then it should teach them the components of the writing process. Although all of the components of the

writing process are included in the Open Court (2000)

program, it is not laid out well enough for students to

gain a great understanding of the process.

Coles also voices his concern about California school

systems having to choose between Open Court and another

program in order to receive state education funds. This is

because there is an assumption that Open Court is a

research-based program, whereas if teachers were allowed to

teach holistically, there would not be any single research-

based program available. Although Open Court claims to be

research-based, there tends to be only one research study

that is acknowledged by the publisher. This study,

conducted by Barbara Foorman, is the only study McGraw-Hill

cites and due to criticism of the study, it is no longer

available for review. Presently, Open Court is simply

supported by results obtained through California school

districts; however, these results have yet to appear in any

educational journals and are not supported as scientific

research. This is important to the topic of writing

because if there is no supported scientific research for

the reading program one can assume that the writing program

thrown into the mix is not any better supported.

Step Up to Writing

Step Up to Writing (Auman, 1999) gives pages and pages of helpful ideas and hints to get students to write. There are many reproducible pages that allow the students to just fill in the blanks with their own words. For the most part, the program is a pre-packaged piece of writing. This means that each student who writes with this program will write in the exact same manner. Nothing will be different from one student's writing to another student's writing.

Swartz's article (2003) fits perfectly under the *Step Up to Writing* (Auman, 1999) approach. Swartz believes in giving students a type of pre-made form for writing. This format for writing a particular type of genre is not necessarily bad since this article is only speaking of one genre that needs a more formatted way of writing. The how-to writing this article emphasizes the use of transitions such as: first, second, third, next, then, finally, last, etc. that are taught through the *Step Up to Writing* (1999) program. When writing a how-to piece, the students need to follow an order that is rather strict.

Step Up to Writing (Auman, 1999) helps students organize their ideas by using the color-coding based on a traffic signal to help students visualize the organization.

24

By using the color-coding, the students are able to produce a structure which places the main ideas and supporting details into organized paragraphs (Simon, 2003). The students are guided, or directed, in practicing this form of organization.

The teacher explains and models how to compose paragraphs with all the necessary parts. The students, according to the *Step Up to Writing* website, learn to independently write topic sentences, clearly support and develop the position in the topic sentence, and finish with an appropriate conclusion (Auman, n.d.). Students work collaboratively on each part that has been modeled. *Step Up to Writing* (Auman, 1999) was developed based on information that "Writing depends on several processes that operate recursively with one another – generating and organizing ideas initially, then translating ideas into words, and finally revising" (Simon, 2003, p. 9).

Step Up to Writing (Auman, 1999) first gives students practice writing five sentence paragraphs. This includes the structure of green, yellow, yellow, yellow, green. The first green sentence is the topic sentence, followed by the supporting sentences, and finally the conclusion. When the students are comfortable with writing this way, they are then introduced to the red sentence and how to produce more

of an explanation. As the students become more and more advanced they can be introduced to a final color - blue. The blue color is the background information of a multiple paragraph essay.

There are revision activities to help students improve their writing. Models of writing are available to share with the students as well. This gives them examples of what writing should look like, and also what it shouldn't look like. *Step Up to Writing* (Auman, 1999) also provides many different activities that students can use to practice writing.

Students need many opportunities to write. According to one researcher for *Step Up to Writing* (Auman, 1999), "Through direct instructions, step-by-step guidelines, and detailed examples, coupled with guided, interactive, and independent writing practice, *Step Up to Writing* makes writing easier, faster and more rewarding" (Simon, 2003, p. 3). He also believes that each step must be taught directly and practiced consistently by students in order for improvement in writing to occur.

The skills that are taught are sequential. The genres are also explicitly taught. This program focuses on parts of the writing process and skills until the students are successful with each skill, or part. This tactic of

wanting the students to learn to write successfully is not a problem. The problem is that each student who uses this program becomes a carbon copy of each other.

According to a workshop given on *Step Up to Writing* (Auman, 2002) at Julius Corsini Elementary there are two reasons this program is successful in schools. One reason is because all the students learn the same language for writing and the second is the expectations are the same for all students. Because the students learn the same terminology, they will be able to build upon the instruction given for writing each time they write. Also, since the expectations are the same for each student that means that all students are creating quality pieces of writing all of the time.

Although *Step Up to Writing* (Auman, 1999) sounds like a great idea because the terminology will be consistent, the students do not create imaginative pieces with this program. If they were being taught using writer's workshop then the students would not be using the same transitions nor would they sound like their neighbors.

Another part of the workshop stated that students need the following five things to happen in order for them to be able to write a well-organized paragraph:

Direct instructions

Step-by-step guidelines

Examples

Opportunities to practice

Specific feedback   (2002, p. 35)

Students should be aware that effective paragraphs all

need, "a title, a topic sentence, transitions, good

explanations and examples, and a conclusion" (2002, p. 36).

The "power statements" are important in this program.

It helps the students with their topic sentence by

indicating "the number of points for items to follow"

(2002, p. 49) in the piece. For example: "I love yoga for

three reasons." By using this power statement the readers

would know right away that the topic was yoga and that

three reasons why it is so loved will follow. Although

these statements are powerful, they become too much of a

crutch for students. They tend to use them too much and do

not rely on their own imaginations to write something

powerful without those "power statements."

By setting up the paragraph with a power statement, or

topic sentence, the students are then ready to start using

transitions. For the lower grades the beginning

transitions taught are: first, second, next, then, finally,

and last. Once the students have enough practice using

these transitions then the teacher can introduce other transitions that may work.

There are also ideas for how to write summaries and other genres using this program and the color-coding. The other genres are as follows, a) narratives, b) expository, c) persuasion, d) response to literature, and e) letter writing. All of the strategies used in this program are to help students organize their thoughts into well-structured paragraphs.

The National Reading Panel, which was established by Congress to help ensure that all teachers are teaching students to read in the best manner possible, states, on the Step Up to Writing website (n.d.), "Step Up to Writing addresses the instructional variable - explicit and systematic instruction, collaborative learning, and scaffolded teaching of the writing process – associated with improved outcomes as identified in syntheses of research." Maureen Auman, who created this formulaic program for her eighth grade students believes, "This strategy [Step Up to Writing] gives students the guidance, support, and directions they need to become successful writers" (1999, p. 1).

Writer's Workshop

Because writer's workshop allows the students to

express themselves, and not write to prompted materials,

students start to feel a freedom to share who they are and

by that, they can learn how to write well.

The components of the Writer's Workshop include a

mini-lesson, which should last at the most ten minutes.

This is the point where the teacher can teach a lesson on

anything from management issues during independent writing

time to conventional issues in writing. Mini-lessons

should inspire or instruct the students (Calkins, 1994).

The independent work time can last anywhere from

thirty to forty minutes. This work time can begin with

"status of the class." This allows for the teacher to know

where each student is at in the writing process (Calkins,

1994). During this time several different activities may

be taking place. Students might be prewriting, drafting,

conferring, revising, editing, or publishing.

Writer's Workshop allows teachers to give a mini-

lesson on anything students need extra help in

understanding, or to remind students the way authors write

down information. Because of the mini-lesson at the

beginning of the writing time, the students take back to

their desks the information they just learned about and usually try to implement that within their own writing.

Goldberg's book (1986), although geared toward adult writers, will enable teachers to pick mini-lessons and use them in a way that will work for their students. Since the book can be read by whatever chapter one would like, it becomes helpful for the teacher to choose what her students are having difficulty with in order to provide that mini-lesson which will help each student.

For example, a mini-lesson that could be generated based on Goldberg's work (1986) is from her chapter on how to put first thoughts down on paper. She has six guidelines to follow:

Keep the hand in motion

Don't erase or cross out words

Don't worry about sentence structure, punctuation,
    or spelling

Let everything flow, "Lose control"

Don't think about what is being written, and don't
    become logical about it

"Go for the jugular" let anything scary be written

(1986, p. 8)

First thoughts are unencumbered. They are filled with

31

expression that is also filled with a truth and strong energy for readers.

According to Calkins in (1983) after visiting in a first grade classroom, she noticed the students felt they could write because no one had told them otherwise yet. She discusses that the teacher, whose room she was observing had a writing approach that mirrored how children learn to write with how children learn to speak (1983). The use of mini-lessons allows students a chance to use their voice in a piece of writing that means something to them. It takes practice and needs to be nurtured. One should look at students' errors as close approximations of the correct form of writing (1983).

Calkins (1983) also implies that providing students with a "predictable timetable for writing" (p. 32) along with consistent expectations helps makes the workshop run smoothly. By having the consistency for students to write it will help free those students to choose their own topics as they write (1983). The students can also begin to plan what they want to write and start looking at their day in school for ideas. Graves' (1994) states, if a teacher is only able to teach writing one day a week, then they should not teach writing at all. Graves (1994) says students need to write daily in order to move their pieces forward until

they finish what they want to do. Graves (1983) also states "children who are fed topics, story starters, [and] lead sentences...rightfully panic when topics have to come from them" (p. 21).

Calkins (1991) imprints the message that by having writer's workshop, teachers are helping their students to become better people as well as being able to write well. Within the chapter focusing on writing gives teachers an idea of how to let students choose what they write and in what form they will write (Burke, J., 2002). The way in which the chapter relates how to teach writing, one understands that it is up to the writer to choose what she will write and what it means to be "finished" with her writing. This goes with the premise of writer's workshop since it allows the student to make the decision for herself.

Christensen (2000) helps give teachers a way to teach mini-lessons on how writing can be powerful, and done with and for a purpose. It also provides mini-lessons in poetry that allows students to share themselves with others through the written word. She focuses a lot of her writing on student choice. This works with the writing process theory because Christensen (2000) knows that students who

are able to choose their topics will own their writing and their voice will shine through each piece.

When teaching writing, one should allow the students to use their background knowledge in order to help each student own her work. There should be time where the students can work cooperatively and collaboratively. Discussions should be encouraged as well (Alexander G., Castillo, R., Gardenhire, J., Gibbs, S. E., Gonzalez, R. D., Gutierrez, K., Hogan, L., Inada, L., 1986).

Teaching writing in a writing process manner is also useful for the second language learners. It helps to develop their knowledge and skill in a gradual process. Teachers should not drill their students or give them exercises that aren't meaningful. Instead, teachers should allow for frequent writing time. Teachers also need to respond to students' work in a supportive manner (Alexander, G., Castillo, R. et al., 1986).

There are some basic topics that comprise the use of writer's workshop. Conferencing and publishing are among them. There is also a useful a chart from the *Learning* Magazine (1998), which can aid teachers in helping students work on each part of the writing process depending on the type of learner they are. The chart is shown in Appendix B. The chart can also come in handy for mini-lessons

because a teacher can use the information to structure their lesson to help students who are kinesthetic learners, for example, by showing those students how to pre-write by writing their ideas on index cards and sorting them into an order that makes more sense to them. It also helps students who are visual/spatial learners, auditory/verbal/linguistic learners, analytic learners, and global learners.

When students are ready to publish one of their pieces of writing, they must have a peer content conference. This means they and a peer get together to check if the story being published sounds good, and that there is enough detail in the piece where readers won't be asking too many questions because of lacking information. Once students have finished their peer content conference, they need to go back and revise their work by taking a few of their peer's suggestions. They then move onto a peer editing conference where the peer has the paper and makes any necessary corrections.

Once the peer conferences are finished, a student can confer with the teacher. This is a time for the teacher to check on how the students are faring in their writing. It's a time for the teacher to make notes and a few suggestions for a student to work on.

After all the conferencing is complete, the students can officially publish their writing. This will give the students a sense of authorship. Sunflower's (1993) book is helpful for students to gain ideas of how they would like to publish their writing.

Once independent work time is over the students should be allowed to come up to the front of room for share time. This should last about ten minutes. This time can be used to help students with a writing piece or to give the author another set of ears in which to hear a piece of writing. The teacher chooses who shares during share time. Those who share may be those who tried what the teacher introduced during the mini-lesson. A student who has been working extremely hard on a piece of writing could be chosen as well.

Because not all students are excited to share in front of the whole class, teachers can ask the students to share with one or two peers so that each student gets a chance to share to at least a small group.

By taking the best components of the Step Up to Writing Program (Auman, 1999) as well as the writing component for OCR (Bereiter, C., Brown, A., et al, 2000) and embedding them within Writer's Workshop, a more powerful and student-centered writing program can exist.

Chapter Three will describe such a program, along with the results noted after its implementation.

CHAPTER THREE

THE REFORM

Introduction

Writer's Workshop can be implemented and structured many different ways to fit into a teacher's daily schedule. The workshop should last for at least forty-five minutes, three to five days a week (Atwell, 2002). This is dependant on the age of the students and available time. Ray (2004) states, "Learning about time is part of the curriculum of writing..." (p. 102). This is important because she knows that students need to be aware that engaging in writing requires a lot of time for practice. If there is not a lot of time put into the practice of writing then the writing becomes quantitative rather than qualitative. Teachers want quality work as well as a quantity of work, but most would be satisfied with a great quality piece that a student took time on. The following (see Table 3.1) is a guide to structure a forty-minute workshop into the day:

Table 2. Structure of Writer's Workshop

Time	Activity

10:35-10:50	Mini Lesson
	    Procedural (Calkins,
	    1994)
	    Demonstrational (1994)

10:50-11:20	Status of the Class
	(Fountas & Pinnell,
	2001)Quick Write
	Independent Practice
	    Drafting
	    Peer Content Conference
	    Revising
	    Peer Editing Conference
	    Teacher Conference
	    (Can be done after each
	    Peer conference)
	    Publish

11:20-11:35	Share Time/Author's Chair

If there is more time available, the students can add that time onto their independent writing time. After the writing schedule has a place in the day, which should occur three to five times a week, the writing teacher can then plan out how he or she will structure each part of the writing period.

Introducing Writer's Workshop to the Class

The best way to understand how to start a Writer's Workshop would be to have someone who has done Writer's Workshop in their classroom come in to model the process. It's always much more helpful to see it in action and even

more so when it's modeled with the students that are
currently being taught. If having someone come in to model
won't work or finding no available time to observe someone
in his or her own classroom, then start out by "talking up"
writing with the students! Tell them that writing is so
cool and they can be writers and publish their own books
just like the books they check out from the library! The
students normally eat up the enthusiasm and always say they
want to be authors as well, even the upper primary grades!

Once the stage has been set for writing, allow the
students to write for a bit. Get them used to the medium
of writing before engaging in the whole process. As they
are beginning their writing, start to bring up a few
students each day to share what they wrote with the rest of
the class. Most students enjoy sharing their pieces, and
the others who don't get the chance to share the first day
will often try to be the person who gets to share one of
the other days.

Once this has been going on for a few days then
writer's workshop can be introduced to the students by
giving them a mini-lesson on something to do with writing.
A narrative mini-lesson may be one of the easiest to
perform. It is also helpful to show how authors think
about what to write by sharing what you are thinking about

writing and why before writing anything down at first.

Think out loud about the sorts of things you want to write

and also how you decide on one topic. Then begin writing

on an overhead or chart paper while the students watch, all

the while you are still thinking aloud so the students can

hear what an author thinks as he or she writes.

Mini Lessons

Mini lessons, according to Calkins (1994), can be

procedural or demonstrational. She also believes that mini

lessons should last for five to ten minutes. It should

also be presented to the students to inspire them or to

instruct them. Mini lessons can be about workshop

procedures, a demonstration of writing strategies, or brief

experimentations.

Procedural mini lessons can include how students

should gather for the writing time, what to do if some

people are conferring and others are writing, and where all

the writing tools are - i.e. paper, pencils, and stapler

(Calkins, 1994).

Demonstrational mini lessons provide the students with

a model for how the teacher goes through the writing

process. It can show the thought process or how to re-read

a passage marking the parts that are well liked.
Essentially, demonstrational lessons are packed with a lot
of modeling (Calkins, 1994).

Within mini lessons, one can model writing by using a
variety of instruments. These include: white board, chart
paper, easel, and overhead projector. While modeling, it
is important for the teacher to share his or her thought
process by thinking aloud for the students.

As well as modeling, it may be good to develop some
shared writing mini lessons. Shared writing (Routman,
2000) is when the teacher and the students compose
collaboratively. The teacher acts as the expert and scribe
for the students. The students become more involved with a
mini lesson if they are involved in creating the writing
piece.

Mini Lessons: Generating Ideas for Writing

Some beginning mini-lessons may include how to
generate ideas. Making a list of ideas to write about and
then choosing one based on whatever reasoning one has could
help those students who are unsure of what to write about
on their own. Another mini-lesson could be showing
students how one topic can be used in a few different
forms. Maybe the students aren't aware they can write a

poem or a letter during this time. If one were to mini-lesson how to take a story about tennis, for example, and turn that same topic into a letter to a friend asking them if they would like to go out and play, or even just generating a list of all of the equipment needed in order to play tennis, the students will see that writing doesn't always mean a "story."

Mini Lessons: Syntax and Story Structure

When one performs a mini-lesson one wants to focus it on one thing that the students need to work on or that the students might like to begin trying. For example, if students are writing too many "ands" and too few periods, it may help to mini-lesson where they can end their sentence and show them how too many "ands" makes stories sound too repetitive and boring. They usually pick up on it after you read a story that has the "and" syndrome.

Status of the Class

After the mini lesson, a great way to manage where the students are in the writing process is to take status of the class each day right before independent work time. One can have a chart up that has each part of the writing

process on it as well as a card with each child's name and quickly go through the students names and ask them what stage they are in. This should only take about three to five minutes at the most.

Quick Writes

Once the status of the class is complete, in order to transition the students into their independent writing time, they can perform a Quick Write. Each student should have a journal or a folder only for the quick write. This is two minutes where the students are writing non-stop about anything that comes to their mind. They can write about how their day has been going or a problem they are having with a friend. It doesn't matter what they write about during this time. It is a matter of getting their brains thinking about writing and helping them to transition into their independent writing more smoothly. Using a timer helps the students hear when the time is over. They can then quietly and quickly move into their own authoring once the beeping of the timer is heard.

Independent Writing

Now that the students have been reminded about where
they are in the writing process and their brains are
thinking like authors, they are ready to begin writing
independently. This independent writing time is broken up
into the parts of the writing process: drafting, peer
content conference, revising, peer editing conference,
teacher conference, and publishing.

When students begin drafting, it is helpful to have
them skip lines. This saves time on revisions and editing.
To have students focus mostly on the content of their
writing, train them to circle misspelled words in order to
maintain the flow of their thought process. If the
students get too caught up in how to spell every other word
it becomes more difficult for them to continue their
writing in a fluent manner.

In order to remain positive for the students when it
comes to publishing, it may be necessary to ask the
students to complete three to five pieces before moving
onto the publishing step. Having the students do this will
help to stagger teacher conferences, also.

The next step for the students, after they have
written their three to five pieces and chosen one they want

to publish, is to mini lesson how to conduct peer content conferences. One way to mini lesson this stage is to model it with a student ready for this phase. It's very important for the students to understand that the author is the only person who has any physical contact with his or her writing. Meaning, the author holds his or her paper; the peer does not get to hold it. The peer is there to listen and give feedback on the writing. The peer should also be filling out a pre-made checklist or questionnaire that the author can use for his or her revisions. If an author realizes that a peer chosen to conference with hasn't given adequate responses, she or he may choose to confer with one or two other peers in order to have enough feedback to revise. It is important to once again remind students that the peer does not touch the author's paper. Since this is a content conference the students need to focus on just that, not on conventions. They should be told that the editing conference occurs after the revision step in the writing process.

When revising it is very important for the students to use their checklist in order to refresh their memory of what their peers want to know more about. The students can use a pen or pencil in a different color that will show them the revisions they make easily. They may revise on

their draft or use a clean sheet of paper to rewrite and revise.

It is just as important for the teacher to mini lesson how to conduct a peer editing conference just as it was for the peer content conference. If the mini lesson is done modeling how to peer edit with a student at that stage the students will be able to see the procedures the teacher is expecting. When the students are peer editing, the peer reads the writing piece and the author chooses which corrections to make. Together the students can complete a checklist. There is one major difference between an editing conference and a content conference: the peer has a hold of the author's writing while the two work collaboratively to correct the writing. It is also important to repeat that the author uses their judgment with what will change in their writing.

Teacher Conferencing

There are two different types of teacher conferencing. One is a butterfly conference where the teacher walks from child to child as writing is happening and checks on the progress of each. The teacher can aid the students who are stuck, ask the students what they are working on and how it

is coming along, and take anecdotal notes of what the students are doing as they write. The second teacher conference is formal. This is where the student and the teacher are one on one and focusing either on the content of the story or on the editing of the story. During one of these conferences it is important to focus on only two or three areas that need improvement. The teacher should take notes time to discuss the writing, the comments are easily available. It is crucial to give positive feedback so as on what was heard in the writing so that when it comes not to dissuade the student's writing. The teacher should not mark on the student's paper. It is better if the student makes the corrections they feel are important to make. The final note on teacher conferencing is not to expect the child's writing to be perfect!

Publishing

The last phase of independent writing is publishing. The students can publish in a plethora of ways. They can use computers to type their final drafts, or they can use special paper to neatly write their stories on. The students can become illustrators at this time as well to help their stories come to life.

The teacher becomes the final editor after the typing

is finished. He or she should go through the stories and

correct spellings and punctuation. It is important not to

change content though. It is equally important for the

students' stories to still be their own stories and not the

teacher's story. Once the stories are printed out allow

the students to illustrate them and then put on a cover

with the title on the front and your students now have a

book!

Sharing Writing

Author's Chair

At the end of each day it becomes important to have

the students share their writing. The teacher can choose a

student who tried what the mini lesson was, or maybe a

student needs help in continuing his or her story, even a

student who may not have followed the mini lesson, but

wrote an outstanding paragraph or sentence that the rest of

the students may benefit from hearing could be chosen. It

is necessary to make this time about the writing and what

these young authors can do to help improve upon in their

writing. For lower grades, kindergarten through third,

it's helpful to have the students sit on the floor in front of the author. This helps to focus their attention.

Once the students have shared their piece of writing the rest of the group can offer out questions, comments, or suggestions. This is something that the teacher should model as the first person who comments or asks a question. The author sharing should not answer the students' questions at the time they are asked, but rather answer those questions in their story when they go back to it the following day.

Portfolios

It is necessary to have the following items in place in order to organize the writer's workshop time: folders, portfolios, binders, pencils, pens, paper. Calkins (2003), talks about giving the students a writing folder with pockets. On the left-hand side of the folder place a green sticker which denotes to the students that the writing being placed on that side is writing that is still being worked on. The right-hand side should have a red sticker. This sticker tells the students that the writing is finished, or the student no longer wants to work on a piece. This helps the students organize their writing.

The portfolios are for the finished products of writing the students want to share with others. The binders are helpful for teacher organization. During conferences it is useful to have a binder sectioned off by students' names so notes can be taken about positives and things that need to be worked on for each individual student. This helps with the conferences to come as well. The teacher can check the notes made formerly and be able to evaluate the progress the student has made.

Bulletin Boards/Public Display of Writing

It is encouraging for the students to see their work presented in the room. Teachers can make a bulletin board just for writing to be shared. See Appendix C for an example. The students could be allowed to take the writing off the wall to read at their desks or they may just need to be at the wall in order to read the writing. Another way to show off the writing is to add the published books to the classroom library. The students will be able to see their "books" in among the other library books.

After the students have published their first books, they will start becoming experts on how things should look and sound in their own stories. They will become more independent and will also be filled with imagination and

51

gusto during the writing time. Continuing to provide mini-lessons focused on what the students' need and allowing for the authors' to share their work each day will help carry you through your year of writing. Remembering to take it slow at the beginning and building on the expectations of authors will enhance your workshop and your students' portfolios.

Year One

The first year of implementation of Writer's Workshop came with a few stresses. First, it was something that was going against what the district wanted to see - they wanted Step Up to Writing (Auman, 1999). Although OCR (Bereiter, C., Brown, A., et al, 2000) description of writing looks like process writing, the district has forgiveness for those who don't use the writing component. Gaining permission from the site administrator was a little bit of a chore as well. However, in the end, she understood that the children would benefit from what would come from Writer's Workshop provided I embedded some of the Step Up to Writing (1999) elements into my teaching.

The very beginning was hard since I had no idea how to even begin and what Writer's Workshop actually looked like.

Luckily one of my professors was willing to give her time and come out to my classroom to help with setting up the routine for myself and also for my students. This was at the beginning of October. Her demonstrational lesson was excellent. I only had thirty minutes carved out for writing at that point in the year. She took ten minutes to model a narrative to the students. Prior to allowing the students to go back to their desks to write she wanted to make sure they had an idea. She allowed those who had ideas to hurry to their desks and begin writing. Those who were unsure of what to write were kept near her. She asked them questions about what they liked to do. Soon all of the students were at their seats writing. I was utterly amazed with my students' ability to come up with a topic to write about and then go to their desks and write. All of this was done without talking as well which became a small miracle. After ten minutes of writing, my professor pulled the students back up to the front of the room for author's chair. She asked a few of the students to share their writing and elicited some questions from the rest of the students to help the sharing author. Once I was able to see writer's workshop in practice it became clear as to how I needed to continue the magic of writing within my classroom.

The next day I tried the strategy of performing a mini

lesson and then allowing the students to write and finally

bringing them back together for author's chair. It was a

little more difficult than I thought it would be. The

students had a difficult time getting started on continuing

their stories from the day before. They didn't seem to

think they needed to add more to their stories. It was

also not quite as quiet as it had been the day before.

As the first week progressed, I was becoming more and more

excited about the process and how my students were

performing. I thought I could jump the gun and let my

students publish since they had been writing a lot of

stories throughout the week and they were getting the hang

of daily writing. Plus I was surrounded by teachers who

were having their students publish a story each week and

since I had no published stories as of yet, I felt I needed

to get moving a little quicker. I was told by my professor

to slow down! The students needed a much longer time with

just writing before any thoughts of publishing came to

mind. However, by the end of October I was feeling anxious

about not having any of the students published especially

since Parent/Teacher conferences were around the corner. I

once again posed the question of allowing my students to

publish and this time my professor agreed that I had a few students who were ready.

For the most part, at the beginning of this learning experience, I tried to keep my mini lessons to ten minutes. I realized soon after I started, I needed to set a timer so that the students would be able to have enough time to write and share out. Setting the timer really helped to keep my mini lessons mini. As teachers, we tend to talk for long amounts of time and for writing lessons, it really should be short enough for the students to gain an understanding of a small insight into one aspect of writing. Another good reason for using the timer is that it helped the students see that the teacher has a time limit for writing as well. When the timer goes off it's time for the teacher to end her writing demonstration and the students to begin their writing. This can help when it's time for the students to share their writing. Many students want to continue writing on their story and if they understand that the teacher had to stop writing for the day because of time, then it may become easier for them to finish writing for the day as well.

The mini lessons I focused on at the beginning were mostly conventional. Most of the students didn't know how to write a complete sentence. They didn't know where to

place the ending punctuation and they would forget to capitalize the beginning of their new sentence. I would model where the punctuation should go and demonstrate through thinking aloud how I knew the punctuation should go in a particular spot. I would allow the students to help me put the punctuation where it belonged as well and have them explain why that was the case. These lessons seemed to help the majority of my students with their conventions in their writing.

Another example of a mini lesson I did with my students was to show them how a narrative should look. Since the majority of my students had been "stepped up", or used Step Up to Writing (Auman, 1999), the previous year they were writing narratives that were not exciting. I took an example of a narrative that Step Up to Writing (1999) uses and then I expanded on that to make it sound more exciting. I asked the students to look at both stories and just from the length of the stories I asked if they thought one would be more exciting to read. They all chose the longer one. I then read both of the stories to them. They could see how too many transitional words made the narrative boring to read. Examples of a few students' writing using a lot of transitional words as well as their later work can be seen in the text of Chapter Four.

As a result of performing that one lesson, it appeared that it had given the students permission to use more imagination and go further in their writing. I had students who were taking a week to write on a story, whereas at the beginning they were writing two or three stories in one sitting with the longest piece being only half a page long. They began to gain confidence in their writing abilities.

As I floated through the classroom and did my butterfly conferences I was always amazed at how much more the students were writing and how much they wanted to add to their stories. They were excited, which in turn, kept me motivated to keep this part of my day a constant. Because of this excitement I extended their writing time from thirty minutes to forty-five minutes.

Through my master's program my professor, who had come into my classroom and helped me implement Writer's Workshop, had formed a group with about seven teachers in the program. We decided to call ourselves Writer's Anonymous. Once a month we all met to discuss the good and the bad of what had been happening in our classrooms where writing was concerned. We would bring in writing samples and discuss the concerns that were creeping in and what each one of us was doing that was working. It was

interesting to me to hear everyone speak about his and her students' writing. We ranged in grades from first grade to fourth grade. All of us seemed to be going through the same frustrations with teaching writing. There seemed to be a plateau period after the first few months. The students were writing but they weren't writing more than a page because they didn't think they could do it. Or they were constantly writing the same type of story over and over again. Although the teachers in our group were of different grades, there were a lot of great suggestions given by each one of them that could be adapted to each different grade level.

Our professor brought to the table a Teacher as Researcher Grant given by the International Reading Association (IRA). She thought we had a good chance of receiving the grant, which would benefit the study we were doing with Writer's Workshop. She asked if anyone from our group would be willing to go for the grant. A fellow group member and I decided we would try for the grant, with the help of our professor. We sent in the paperwork in January and didn't hear from the IRA until May. It turned out that the IRA liked our proposal and gave us the grant. Our obligations were to write an article for *The Reading Teacher* and perhaps present at the International

Conference. This was big and we were both excited about the opportunity.

.Throughout the whole first year of implementation with Writer's Workshop I focused mainly on my mini lessons. All of my anecdotal notes relate to what I taught for the mini lesson and whether or not students were trying out what I showed them. For the most part, the first year, I needed to focus on the mini lessons. It was helpful for when I began to plan for my second year and what I felt I needed to add to my agenda on writing with my students.

Year Two

The beginning of the second year of teaching writing through the process model proved to be much easier. I knew exactly how the writing time should look for my class and I knew what I wanted to do with the students. Having already seen how positive the writing was for my students the previous year, I knew that this group of students would have just as good of an experience with the writing. I had three students who had been involved in a writer's workshop model the previous year with their second grade teacher's and I had high hopes that these students would be able to

help the other students become excited with writing as well. It did seem to work for a few of the other students.

The hardest part about beginning the second year was primarily to remember how it all began the year before. I was still in the mindset of where my students were at the end of the last school year and unprepared for the beginning of the writing process. It helped to talk to a fellow Writer's Anonymous group member and co-grant partner. We both helped each other with what we could do for the beginning of our writing year. Just making sure that the managerial things were set up was the biggest factor. Having the folders ready for the students, the paper station and where students would put their papers when it was time to conference with me in a particular spot, and also having the status of the class chart where it would make sense to have it helped in maintaining a sense of order and management. There were just a lot of factors that had come in late in the process as the year progressed last year. This year, I wanted to be on top of everything before I even saw my kids. It worked! I felt more prepared to be teaching writing this year than I had the year before. Having all of those management issues out of the way really helped me focus on what I wanted more!

Our first day of writing was for me to get a look at

what they knew. I had the students' free write a story for

me. The mini lesson I did was procedural. I explained

what we would be doing during the writing time each day and

I told them that they were going to be doing some writing

for me just so that I can see how much they already know.

The students were really great about it. They didn't

really grumble and they were able to just come up with lots

of great stuff. I collected that writing and took it to

our first Writer's Anonymous meeting of the year.

We had lost a few members from the previous year, but

gained some new members through discussions of the grant

and a presentation on Writer's Workshop that my grant

partner and I had given to a class of newer master's

students. They were excited about what we had done and

wanted to see how it could work for them. This was

exciting that people were inspired by what we had done in

our classrooms.

The WA appeared to be starting strong for its second

year. I hoped that it would be just as helpful this year

as it had been previously. The biggest difference with the

way the first meeting went was based on the fact that there

were the old members mixed with new members. The old

members were continuing our conversations from the previous

year and it seemed we were a bit stifled by the new members and all of their questions. However, we were able to step back and remember how it had all began for us and give them the support and advice they needed to hear.

What I've found most interesting with these two years of WA meetings is that no matter if a teacher just started teaching Writer's Workshop or if they've been doing it for awhile the frustrations all seem to be the same. For those of us who have been doing it a little longer, the frustrations are different, but still there. For the new members, they are exactly the same frustrations we had at the beginning! I think it helps those new members to know that the rest of us have been through this before and we were able to succeed. They are able to ask their questions and get advice from us and try it out in their own classroom.

I have found that I have more confidence in my teaching of writing this second year. I know that the students can write and that they can write well. They just need to be shown the tools! I have gone further with my students this year than I did the first year. I have taught them how to paragraph and how to write with dialogue as well as a few different genres. All of this was done before the winter holidays. At this point in my first

year, I had just been focusing on one good paragraph and narratives.

During author's chair one day, I had the students share what they had written that day with a partner before someone was chosen to come up and read. One partnership caught my attention. The student who read his story had written something that was apparently confusing. His partner was trying to suggest how he could change his wording to make it work better and so that it made more sense. I sat back listening to this conversation and being, yet again, amazed with how great this concept of Writer's Workshop is. The students aren't just letting their friends read to them, they are actually listening and helping each other become great authors! I don't know if I'll ever get over hearing students discuss something with such authority and understanding. I think I underestimate them sometimes. This conversation, however, helped me to open my mind up a bit more for what the students are capable of doing. They are not just writing to write; they are becoming little authors.

Another example of students discussing their writing with each other came when I started to teach the students letter writing. We decided, in order to make the letters more meaningful, we would write to celebrities and hope to

get a few autographed photos in return. As I was preparing

to conference with a student I was looking around the

classroom and heard a lot of talking happening. Before I

asked the students to continue to quietly continue their

writing, I listened to the words being spoken. The group

of students that had caught my attention with their

talking, were not just talking about anything, they were

asking each other if their letter looked right and also if

it sounded right. I heard a few of them read to their

neighbors and ask them for advice on what they should say

or ask next in their letter. It was, again, amazing to me

to hear that. I was impressed by the attitude my students

had with their writing. They were definitely taking their

work very seriously and asking for their peers to take it

just as seriously.

This moment helped me to see that I had impressed upon

these students a love of writing and also a love of

learning how to write. They want to make their writing

make sense to their readers and they already appear to feel

like full-fledged authors, of which they certainly have

become!

CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS

Introduction

As a result of using the Writer's Workshop approach to teaching writing in the classroom, students created authentic writing that led the young writers to take ownership of their writing experiences. Students were able to use their imaginations and were, therefore, not dependent upon the skeletal outline Step Up to Writing (Auman, 1999) uses. Also, by not using the prompted writing assignments Open Court Reading (Bereiter, C., Brown, A., Compione, J., et al., 2000) wanted students to use, the writing became about the child and what they could accomplish as writer's and less about the amount of writing they could put on paper. It was more about the content and less about the quantity, as, in the past, the quantity seemed to win out.

Another result of using Writer's Workshop in the classroom is the students produce great content in their writing, the quantity is greater, and the students' attitudes are positive.

Presentation of the Findings

In one third grade classroom at Julius Corsini Elementary School in Desert Hot Springs, California, the students came into their year being in "step up mode." This meant they had been taught Step Up to Writing (Auman, 1999) the previous year and everything they wrote sounded alike. Some students' writing was filled with so many of the transitional words that the Step Up to Writing program(1999) finds so important, that the content of the children's writing was lost. For example, Jake's writing at the beginning of the year is as follows:

Table 3. Jake's Writing Sample from September 30, 2003

First I want to go to Chuck E. Cheeses. Second I want to go to Boomers and the fair. Third I want to go to Disneyland. Then I want to go to Universal Studios. Last I would like to go to Las Vegas. Second to last I will go to school!

This was an unprompted writing task. Because this student, the year before, had been taught Step Up to Writing (Auman, 1999) he wrote his narrative the only way he knew how. It didn't appear that this student knew there

was a way to write without his stories always following the same format with the transitions being the same in each one.

By taking the time to teach the students the steps to the writing process slowly and methodically, the teacher was able to let the students work at their own pace. These students weren't forced to start and then publish a story each and every week as some other classes were said to be doing. This teacher was able to teach an important concept such as punctuation for ten minutes during a grammar mini lesson and let the students try to figure out how it works for them. Allowing the students to answer the question within the mini-lesson as to why a punctuation mark doesn't go in a particular place, or why a mark is even needed, is helpful for the students. It encourages the students to become active learners who have a true understanding of the concepts presented. They are able to articulate their reasons for selecting or not selecting a particular punctuation mark and then transfer this learning into their daily writing. At the end of October, the third grade teacher did just this. She had a story with punctuation marks missing or in the wrong places. She even used the wrong punctuation mark in some instances. She asked the students to help her fix the problems and as the students

responded, she required them to explain why the punctuation
was wrong in the first place and then why the punctuation
they were suggesting was correct. Once that mini-lesson
was complete the students were asked to try to add
punctuation to whatever story they were continuing to work
on or fix any punctuation mistakes. There were two
students who stood out as really trying to make sure they
had punctuation in their story where it belonged.

Table 4. Mini Lesson for Punctuation

a little boy decided to go and visit his grandma he thought she would like it I hope grandma likes the cookies I'm bringing her? Maybe she will let me eat some with her and then we can dunk them in some milk

One interesting part of the day comes when students
from another classroom would be placed in the third grade
classroom for multiple reasons. If this were the case, by
Writer's Workshop time these students would be involved in
the writing task. Knowing, as the teacher knew, that most
of the other third grade teachers didn't allow their
students much freedom in their writing it was always an
interesting task to have these students write. These
students almost always needed extra help on an idea to

write about and were always surprised when the teacher explained they could write about anything they chose to write about. Most of the students were always told what to write about and had a very difficult time with the freedom part of the task. However, once they were started on a story, they showed such great imagination and creativity. Each student was always asked to show what he or she did to his or her teacher the following day and see what he or she thought about it.

One teacher came in to observe Miss N. teaching writing one day and she was overwhelmed by the way her students acted during that time. All of the students were quiet and writing after just a little mini lesson. She felt she would not be able to get her students to perform the way Miss N's students were performing. She thought Miss N. did too much and it would be impossible in her own class.

The transition between the mini lesson and independent writing began to take too long for the students. They were too talkative and would not begin the task of working right away. Because of this, Miss N decided her students needed a task to help them transition better. She implemented a "quick write." The students would leave the mini lesson and have to write for two minutes about anything and then

they would already be quiet enough and ready to continue their independent writing focus.

After implementing a "quick write" into the writer's workshop time, the students were able to bring their writing into more focus. Since they only had two minutes to write anything down they usually were able to come up with ideas that they wanted to write about after the time was up. This was a good thing for a few of the hesitant students. It was also a way to impede the talking that was occurring after the mini lessons and before the independent writing began.

Discussion of the Findings

By taking a closer look at the successes of using writer's workshop, the biggest success is the amount of enthusiasm for writing came from using this format. The students would argue with the teacher about there not being any writing in a day if for some reason it wasn't on the schedule for the day. Students were able to release the tight hold they had on the "stepped up mode" of writing. They were able to understand when to use appropriate transitions and not make their stories solely about transitions but rather about the content.

Table 5. Jane's Writing Sample from April 23, 2004

> On Halloween 2001 my dad took me and my sisters to Knot Berry Farm. When we went there it was not called Knot Berry Farm it was called Knots Scary Farm. First I went on a whole bunch of rides. Then I went to spooky mazes. In one of the mazes a vampire gave me a black squeeking rat with red eyes.
>
> Next my dad and one of my sisters went on a different ride. I was too small. My other sister did not want to go on it. When the ride was done me and my sister lost my dad and sister. We found them evencholy. Then we ate I don't know what it was called. After that we all went to or hotel and went to sleep. In the morning we went back home. I told my mother all about it. Last I went outside. I told all my friends about it all how I got the rat and all the other things. I love Knots Scary Farm.

As one can see, there are transitions in use on this personal narrative and yet they are utilized much more efficiently than in Jake's sample. Jane embeds the transitions within her writing not making them the key element of her writing. Jane's voice comes out in this piece a little bit. To compare this later piece of writing

of Jane's with one of her earlier pieces, one can tell just how far she came in her writing.

Table 6. Jane's Writing Sample from September 30, 2003

When I grow up I want to be a teacher. First, I want to be a teacher because it looks fun. Secont, I want to be a teacher because you don't have to work that long.

The biggest implications that arise from the use of Step Up to Writing (Auman, 1999) are the students becoming trapped by the use of transitions and no where to evolve to. In using the stoplight as a skeletal guide the students tend to focus more on whether or not they have their "green" sentences in the correct place and enough "yellow" or "red" sentences. Writing shouldn't be color coded. It should be based on thoughts and emotions and creativity.

Open Court Reading (Berieter, C., Brown, A., et al., 2000) appears to be based on the same principals of writer's workshop and it seems to want that form of writing in the classroom. However, the way in which the writing is presented for teaching does not follow the traditional writer's workshop ways. The prompts and the needs to

publish so frequently do not mesh with the freeness of a writer's workshop. The main pattern with the Open Court (2000) writing component is to start a story at the beginning of the story for the week and then have it published by the end of the story for the week. This pattern doesn't allow for the students to work through any problems they may be having, nor does it let the students choose what they publish.

Writer's workshop has some plateau periods. There are times when the students appear to be working so hard on their writing and the teacher is still thrilled with the output of writing. The pattern that comes from this is one of not pushing the students to that next plateau. If those students stay on one level they have no chances to increase their writing ability, nor do they step away from the easy writing genre and work on something different. This is where Step Up to Writing (Auman, 1999) lacks. When the teacher becomes aware that this pattern is occurring in her classroom, she needs to address it in her mini lessons. Perhaps the students need to see a new genre, or even a new technique for writing a sentence.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Overview of the Study

The use of Writer's Workshop in classrooms where
district guidelines are strict and checked on constantly
may be tough, but also very useful for students. Often
students are instructed using such scripted programs as
Open Court Reading (Bereiter, C., Brown, A, et al., 2000)
or Step Up to Writing (Auman, 1999) which can result in
formulaic and repetitive styles of writing. Because
teachers are mandated to use these highly structured
programs, they may become frustrated by the lack of
creativity and flow of the pieces of writing produced by
students. In an attempt to remedy the shortcomings of
these programs, teachers would benefit from utilizing a
more balanced approach to writing that also includes the
use of Writer's Workshop. It is through the Writer's
Workshop that the students will be able to build on the
basics taught through the scripted programs and begin to
develop their own unique style of writing.

To demonstrate the value of a more balanced approach
to writing, this study observed a third grade classroom

over the course of thirteen months. Within the classroom,

the teacher, Miss N, used not only the writing programs

mandated by the district, Open Court Reading (Bereiter, C.,

Brown, A., et al., 2000) and Step Up to Writing (Auman,

1999), but also embedded Writer's Workshop into the

students language arts program. Each week the students

spent three and a half hours time learning how to produce

writing they could own.

　　　If and when a teacher decides to implement the

writer's workshop method of teaching writing into his or

her daily schedule, it will be important for that teacher

to take it quite slow at the beginning. The students need

to have the time to adjust to the structure of the

workshop. They need time before the teacher brings in what

conferencing looks like. There are many teachers who want

things to be magically produced for them; they want the

workshop to run as it will run in June on the first day of

September. For these teachers the best advice to give them

is this basic mantra, "Take it slow. Take it slow. Take

it slow." If the teachers who "want it done now" repeat

that mantra each day, they will realize how beneficial

going slow will be for the workshop, the students, and

themselves.

If each step of the writing process is shown to the students through mini lessons and expanded upon while conferencing (once that point has been reached), then students will be happy authors. One will be amused to see a student excited over a task that has been, for some teachers, a hard one to sell to his or her students.

In the future it will behoove teachers to continue looking at the research by Calkins (1994), Atwell (2003), and many others who have shared their knowledge of teaching writing. While this research continues, the teachers who are invested in this approach can share their love of teaching writing with their colleagues through grade level meetings, staff meetings, or in-service presentations.

Meetings with other teachers who are introducing Writer's Workshop to their students could help as well. It can become a support group where positive aspects are shared as well as the concerns. This will be really helpful for the teachers who are just trying this approach. The teacher, or teachers, who is/are the "expert(s)" at teaching writing through workshop, will be able to provide advice and extended support by helping the classroom if that works for them.

Framework of the Study

The present study was conducted using both a qualitative and quantitative research methodology. Within this research design, work samples were collected from the students along with anecdotal notes taken by the classroom teacher. The teacher collected work samples on a monthly basis, noting the qualitative and quantitative changes in the students' writing across time.

At the beginning of the month, in the first year, the teacher made a copy of whatever the students were working on that could help to determine the strengths and also the weaknesses of the students writing. Through the reading program the students were mandated to write to a prompt every six weeks, which was graded using a district-wide rubric. In the second year, the teacher gave the students either a free writing prompt or an actual writing prompt at the beginning of the month which she would grade and take the high, medium and low students' work to make observations on. These writing prompts along with the same writing prompts from the reading were graded using the district-wide rubric.

Design of the Study

This investigation took place over the course of thirteen months with samples collected at the beginning of each month. The students had a consistent time each day in which they spent forty minutes writing.

The teacher began each writing lesson with a mini lesson that lasted for approximately ten minutes, the students would then write independently for thirty minutes, and the writing would end with the students sharing their work for the last ten minutes.

Design of Investigation

This investigation was set-up on a daily basis. The students had a consistent time each day for writing. Each workshop began with a mini-lesson; then moved into the independent writing stage and finally the sharing time.

Methodology. Using the works of Calkins (2003) predominately when beginning the workshop with the students, the teacher's methods for teaching writing became Calkins' methods. Throughout the year the teacher adjusted her methods to fit the needs of her students. The same basic principles were in place, however. Teaching a short mini-lesson, followed by time for the students to

write independently and then finishing up with the sharing session.

Results. The present study yielded several very interesting findings related to both the quality and the quantity of the students' writing.

As a result of using writer's workshop with students, the third grade teacher noticed her students began to own their own writing. They weren't just writing words down on paper because they had to, they were authoring stories. They had a purpose for what they were writing and it went beyond what the teacher could have expected for her students. Free-writing was very good to her students. They were able to come up with a topic on their own and write down anything and have a story complete with characters, plot, and setting.

The one unfortunate part of the first year was when the students had to write to a prompt based on their Reading Series. This was always difficult for the students. The teacher felt as though she shouldn't give the students prompts to write from and therefore never did. When these prompts made their presence noticed, the students did their best and most scored in the Basic level with a few scoring in the Proficient level of writing. Knowing her students writing as she did, the teacher felt

frustrated by her students scores. She knew they were much more competent writers than they showed during these prompted writing samples.

The second year, by giving the students more chances to write to prompts and know that they were going to be graded has yielded better results from the district prompts. The students are not as timid when it comes to the prompts. More students have scored proficient using the district-wide rubric than the previous year's students.

Significance of Study

Performing a study based on whether the use of Writer's Workshop in a classroom is beneficial while trying to adapt a districts teaching of writing has been exciting. The teacher involved in the study learned a lot about her students. They were able to discuss their writing with each other and the teacher and they were also excited about writing. They didn't want to stop when the time ended.

Engaging the students in becoming writers and not just in the act of writing has been thrilling for the teacher. She hoped this would be one result, and is overjoyed with all of the excitement from the students.

Because the students have, in previous years, been taught to get something down on paper and go through the writing process in a quick manner without ever really delving into the process, the students are now leaving third grade with a deeper knowledge of how to compose. These students are beginning to take ownership of their writing and will hopefully not stop there when they hit fourth grade.

Limitations

Julius Corsini is a Reading First school. It receives funding from the government based on low reading scores to work in compliance with the No Child Left Behind Act. One of the main limitations for the teacher is her Reading First coach frequently does not understand the reasoning for using Writer's Workshop. This one fact was very frustrating and disheartening at times. The Reading First coach would say that Open Court Reading (Bereiter, C., Brown, A., et al., 2000), no matter how incomplete needed to be used for writing.

Another limitation in the study was the transient nature of the students at Julius Corsini. It became difficult to create a consistency with the study when

students would leave and others would come in mid-way through the school year.

Implications for Future Research

The teacher within this study applied for a grant from the International Reading Association with a colleague to further the study of writing. She and her colleague received the grant and will be continuing the study for another year to gather research. When the research is complete the two teachers will publish an article in "The Reading Teacher" and also present their findings at a national convention.

The Writer's Anonymous group also will continue to meet to help with the grant findings. This group will open its doors for more teachers who want to learn the Writer's Workshop methods as well.

Since this is such a big step the continued use of Writer's Workshop is necessary. The new students will need to be brought into the writing the same as the previous year and want to be writers. Starting again each year is what may be the hard part. The process has been going smoothly for the thirteen months and to look back at the

beginning of both years, it is difficult to remember what was done and what went well.

Recommendations

It would be very beneficial for all students to be involved in a writer's workshop model of writing from Kindergarten throughout the grades. This would help the students at becoming skilled writers with each succession of grades.

As with all new ideas, however, it is very important for teachers to take this process slow in the beginning. Moving too fast will cause chaos later in the year. As much as one may think their class is ready for the next step, it's very important for the students to be in the habit of writing, and writing a lot before they even hear how to publish anything. It is the hope of the researcher that teachers will be generous with their time at the beginning. Once the move is made to go ahead and publish, it is too hard to go back.

Another recommendation would be to give this model of writing a try. It can be done alongside other programs as long as one is aware of what from each program can be pulled into mini-lessons to work for their class.

APPENDIX A

RUBRICS

PSUSD
POWER STANDARDS

Palm Springs Unified School District
Third Grade
Letter Writing Assessment Rubric

Writing Standard 2.3 Write a personal and formal letters, thank-you notes, and invitations that: a. Show awareness of the knowledge and interests of the audience and establish a purpose and context. B. Include the date, proper salutation, body, closing, and signature.

WRITING APPLICATIONS CDE 2.0 Students write compositions that describe and explain familiar objects, events, and experiences. WRITING STRATEGIES CDE 1.0 Student write clear, coherent sentences and paragraphs that develop a central idea. Their writing shows they consider the audience and purpose. WRITTEN AND ORAL ENGLISH LANGUAGE CONVENTIONS CDE 1.0 Students write and speak with a command of standard English conventions appropriate to this grade level.

4	3	2	1
Applications • Writing demonstrates consistent use of standard letter form with correct accompanying punctuation and awareness of audience. • The writer uses colorful language and descriptive words. Writing Strategies • Writing strongly responds to the prompt. • All sentences clearly stay on topic. • Sentences are well organized and follow a sequential order. Conventions • The paragraph is indented and contains at least five complete sentences. • The writing contains very few or no spelling errors. • Correct capitalization, punctuation (commas, quotation marks, ending punctuation), and grammar are consistently used throughout the writing.	Applications • Writing demonstrates consistent use of standard letter form including date, greeting, body, closing and signature. • The writer uses descriptive words. Writing Strategies • Writing adequately responds to the prompt. • Most sentences stay on topic. • Sentences are organized and generally follow a sequential order. Conventions • The paragraph is indented and contains three to four complete sentences. • The writing contains a few spelling errors. • Correct capitalization, punctuation (commas, quotation marks, ending punctuation), and grammar are generally used.	Applications • Writing demonstrates some use of standard letter form. • The writer uses few if any descriptive words. Writing Strategies • Writing somewhat responds to the prompt. • Some sentences stay on topic. • Sequencing is evident but maybe difficult to follow. Conventions • The paragraph may or may not be indented and contains at least two to three complete sentences. • The writing contains many spelling errors, which inhibit the readability. • Correct capitalization, punctuation (commas, quotation marks, ending punctuation), and grammar are inconsistent throughout the writing.	Applications • Writing demonstrates no awareness of standard letter form. Writing Strategies • Writing minimally responds to the prompt. • Sentences do not follow any sequence. Conventions • The paragraph is not indented and contains less than two complete sentences. • The writing does not have a title or the title is inappropriate. • Most words are misspelled. • The writing contains little evidence of correct capitalization, punctuation (commas, quotation marks, ending punctuation), and grammar

87

Papers receive a score of 0: Blank, no response; Copied the prompt; Illegible response, Written in Language other than English (except for students in Spanish OCR); Paper off topic and does not address the prompt. Revised 8/17/2004 1:28 PM

PSUSD

Palm Springs Unified School District

Third Grade

Expository Description Writing Assessment Rubric

POWER STANDARDS

Writing Standards 2.2 Write descriptions that use concrete sensory details to present and support unified impressions of people, places, things, or experiences.
WRITING APPLICATIONS CDE 2.0 Students write compositions that describe and explain familiar objects, events, and experiences. WRITING STRATEGIES CDE 1.0 Student write clear, coherent sentences and paragraphs that develop a central idea. Their writing shows they consider the audience and purpose. WRITTEN AND ORAL ENGLISH LANGUAGE CONVENTIONS CDE 1.0 Students write and speak with a command of standard English conventions appropriate to this grade level.

4	3	2	1
Applications • The opening sentence clearly tells what the readers will learn. • All sentences are clearly relevant to the topic throughout the piece. • A clear, descriptive vocabulary is used. Writing Strategies • Writing strongly responds to the prompt. • Order words are clearly evident (first, then, next, last). • There is a logical sequence throughout the piece. • A closing sentence strongly relates to the topic. • Supporting details clearly explain the process. • A clear awareness of audience is evident. Conventions • The writing contains more than two paragraphs with complete sentences. • The writing contains very few or no spelling errors. • Correct capitalization, indentation, punctuation (commas, quotation marks, ending punctuation), and grammar are consistently used.	Applications • The opening sentence tells what the reader will learn. • Most sentences are relevant to the topic throughout the piece • A descriptive vocabulary is used. Writing Strategies • Writing adequately responds to the prompt. • Some order words are use. • There is generally a logical sequence throughout the piece. • A closing sentence relates to the topic. • Supporting details explain the process. • An awareness of audience is evident. Conventions • The writing contains at least two paragraphs with complete sentences. • Writing contains few spelling errors. • Correct capitalization, indentation, punctuation (commas, quotation marks, ending punctuation), and grammar are generally used.	Applications • The opening sentence does not clearly tell what the reader will learn. • Few sentences are relevant to the topic throughout the piece. • Little descriptive vocabulary is used. Writing Strategies • Writing somewhat responds to the prompt. • Few order words are used. • The sequence is evident but difficult to follow. • A closing sentence may or may not be evident or is unclear. • There is little evidence of a sense of audience. Conventions • Writing contains one or two paragraphs with some complete sentences. • Writing contains many spelling errors. • Correct capitalization, indentation punctuation (commas, quotation marks, ending punctuation), and grammar are inconsistent.	Applications • The opening sentence may or may not be present and/or may not tell what the reader will learn. • There is no opening sentence. • The writing lacks descriptive vocabulary. Writing Strategies • Writing minimally responds to the prompt. • No order words are used. • There is no ordered sequence. • No concluding sentence is evident. Conventions • Paragraph form is not evident. • All sentences may not be complete. • Many words are misspelled and inhibit the readability. • The writing contains little or no evidence of correct capitalization, indentation, punctuation (commas, quotation marks, ending punctuation), and grammar

Papers receive a score of 0: Blank, no response; Copied the prompt; Illegible response, Written in Language other than English (except for students in Spanish OCR); Paper off topic and does not address the prompt.   Revised 8/17/2004 1:28 PM

PSUSD / POWER STANDARDS

Palm Springs Unified School District
Third Grade
Narrative Incident Writing Assessment Rubric

Writing Standards 2.1 Write narratives that: a. Provide a context within which an action takes place. b. Include well-chosen details to develop the plot. c. Provide insight into why the selected incident is memorable.

WRITING APPLICATIONS CDE 2.0 Students write compositions that describe and explain familiar objects, events, and experiences. WRITING STRATEGIES CDE 1.0 Student write clear, coherent sentences and paragraphs that develop a central idea. Their writing shows they consider the audience and purpose. WRITTEN AND ORAL ENGLISH LANGUAGE CONVENTIONS CDE 1.0 Students write and speak with a command of standard English conventions appropriate to this grade level.

4	3	2	1
Applications	**Applications**	**Applications**	**Applications**
• The plot is thoroughly developed with no lapses.	• The plot is well developed with few lapses.	• The plot shows some development but has obvious lapses.	• The plot is not evident.
• All sentences stay on topic.	• Most sentences stay on topic.	• Some sentences stay on topic.	• Few if any sentences stay on the topic.
• The description of the setting is elaborated with details.	• The description of the setting has some details.	• The description of the setting is limited with few details.	• The setting is not described or is mentioned in few words.
• The characters are fully described in elaborate detail.	• The characters are described with detail.	• The characters are mentioned but few described in minimal detail.	• The characters may be mentioned but not described.
• A clear, descriptive vocabulary is used.	• A descriptive vocabulary is used.	• Little descriptive vocabulary is used.	• The writing lacks descriptive vocabulary.
Writing Strategies	**Writing Strategies**	**Writing Strategies**	**Writing Strategies**
• Writing strongly responds to the prompt.	• The writing adequately responds to the prompt.	• The writing somewhat responds to the prompt.	• The writing minimally responds to the prompt.
• Sentences are consistently well organized and follow a sequential order.	• Sentences are generally organized and follow a sequential order.	• Sentences are poorly organized and follow minimal sequential order.	• Sentences do not follow sequence.
• Supporting details are consistently used throughout the writing.	• Supporting details are used.	• Few supporting details are used.	• There are no supporting details.
• A strong sense of voice or self is exhibited.	• Voice or sense of self is exhibited.	• The writing exhibits little voice or sense of self.	• The writing exhibits no voice or sense of self.
Conventions	**Conventions**	**Conventions**	**Conventions**
• The writing contains more than two paragraphs with complete sentences.	• The writing contains at least two paragraphs with complete sentences.	• Writing contains one or two paragraphs with some complete sentences.	• Paragraph form is not evident.
• The writing contains very few or no spelling errors.	• Writing contains few spelling errors.	• Writing contains many spelling errors.	• All sentences may not be complete.
• Correct capitalization, indentation, punctuation (commas, quotation marks, ending punctuation), and grammar are consistently used.	• Correct capitalization, indentation, punctuation (commas, quotation marks, ending punctuation), and grammar are generally used.	• Correct capitalization, indentation, punctuation (commas, quotation marks, ending punctuation), and grammar are inconsistent.	• Many words are misspelled and inhibit the readability.
			• The writing contains little or no evidence of correct capitalization, indentation, punctuation (commas, quotation marks, ending punctuation), and grammar

Papers receive a score of 0: Blank, no response; Copied the prompt; Illegible response, Written in Language other than English (except for students in Spanish OCR); Paper off topic and does not address the prompt.
Revised 8/17/2004 1:58 PM

APPENDIX B

LEARNING MAGAZINE CHART ON WRITING

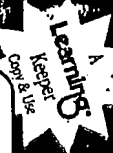|	**Visual/Spatial Learners** Learn best through seeing	**Auditory/Verbal/ Linguistic Learners** Learn best through hearing, talking, and paying careful attention to words
Prewriting	Clustering/mapping Free writing Drawing Visualizing Creating a list and making an outline from it Making a diagram, flowchart, or timeline	Brainstorming and discussing ideas with a group Guided imagery Telling the story to a partner Outlining with dialogue balloons
Writing	Filling in an outline or timeline Following an example Using special paper and pens	Dictating to a teacher, student, or tape recorder
Revising	Working on specific written feedback from teacher Scanning to see how well it flows, then recopying it	Reading aloud to self or partner
Editing	Using a dictionary and spelling checker Using a brightly colored pen	Hearing story read aloud by teacher or partner
Publishing	Publishing work in a class newspaper or magazine Posting work on a bulletin board Publishing a book	Reading aloud from an author's chair Dramatizing Recording on videotape or audiotape
Favorite kind of writing	Descriptions of people, places, and things Observation logs	Plays and dialogue

| Kinesthetic/ Bodily Learners	Analytic Learners	Global Learners
Learn best through doing	Learn best by first organizing discrete bits of information and then moving from these specific ideas to more general ideas	Learn best by starting with broad topics that they relate to personally and then moving on to the details
Clustering/mapping on large pieces of paper Free writing Drawing Sorting ideas written on index cards Circling or drawing arrows to identify main ideas	Free writing on a specified topic Answering a specific question Creating a list and making an outline from it Making a timeline	Clustering/mapping Free writing Guided imagery Listing main ideas
Using a word processor Using big pens and large paper	Following an outline or timeline	Using anecdotes to set the context
Peer editing in small groups Cutting and pasting by hand or on the computer	Working on specific feedback from teacher Following a checklist	Conference with teacher Peer editing
Circling potential errors Using a dictionary and spelling checker	Using a dictionary and spelling checker	Consulting with teachers and peers
Dramatizing Reading aloud from an author's chair Publishing a book	Publishing a class newspaper or magazine Publishing a book	Publishing work in a class newspaper or magazine Publishing a book Sending published work to friends Reading aloud from an author's chair
Descriptions of physical events Plays	Research reports Book reports Critiques, analyses	Personal journals Poetry Stories about day-to-day experiences

WRITING

89

APPENDIX C

PRESENTATION OF WRITING
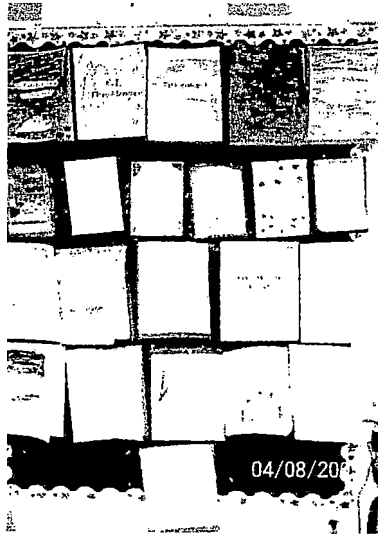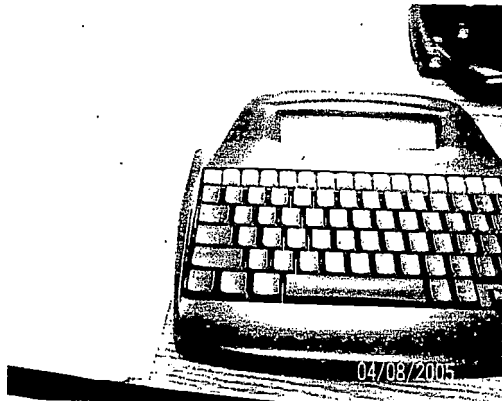
APPENDIX D

CONFERENCES
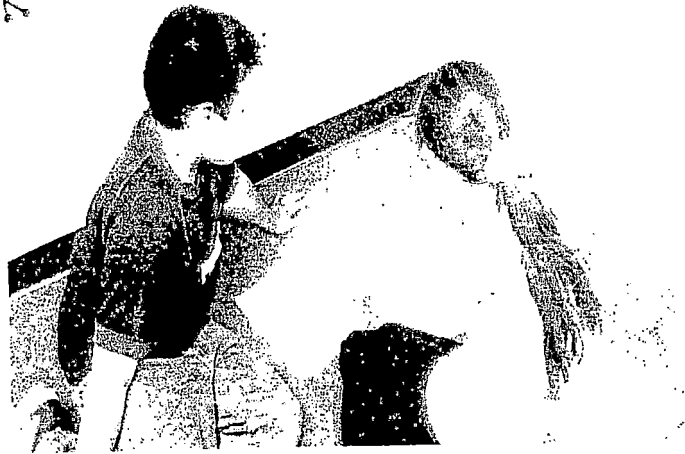
APPENDIX E.

STATUS OF THE CLASS

04/08/2005
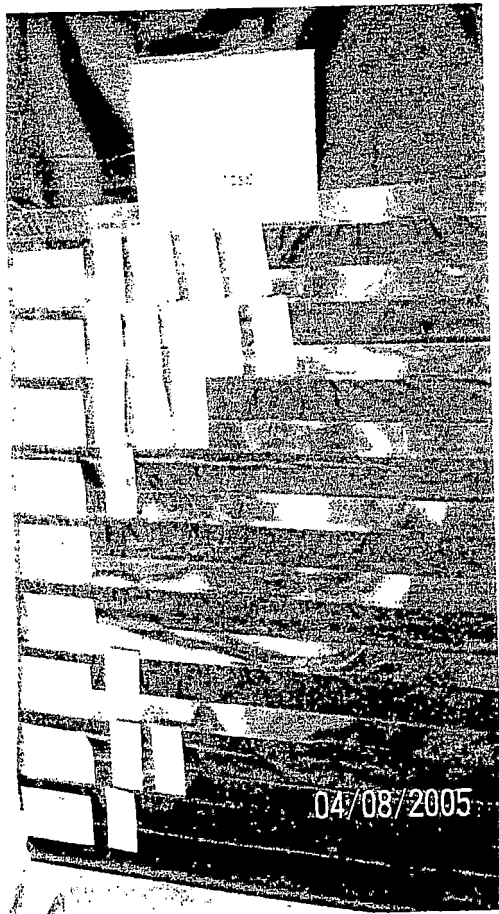
APPENDIX F

ORGANIZATION

Office/Notes

Content Sheet   Miss Naimy Content

Editing Sheet
                                Miss Naimy Edit

97

APPENDIX G

EXAMPLES OF WRITING

Eddy Murillo #15
9-30-?

I don't know what to all wriet
It is confusing and

My birthday
June 28 2003 I was very
happy becouse it was my
birthday. I woke up with
a smile on my face. I went
to my dad's room. his name
is Eduardo. He has black
hair and he has a mustach.
hes a tall man ant hes 40
years old. when he saw me
he said "happy birthday" and
he gave me a twenty dollar
Bill. Then we went to knots
berry farm. The rides are very
fun. we went on a roller
costers called Boomerrang.

Ghost ridder, Xcelator,
and these tow roller corsters
where you get wet I relly
don't know the names,

   Then we went home,

My Best friend

my best friend is Mitzy beca
when we were in Frist grade
I saw mitzy she did not
had a friend they I saw
then I say hiy and we make
friends and then she move and I
did not had a friend becase she
move alway and the next day she
came and we make four frend
and then we play together

When my mom had my baby
brother I was very excited.

My mom came home with my baby
brother he was so cute when my
brother sleeps I always take his bottle
away and I go to the other bed
and I drunk it is so good
and I sleep with it.

Next morning I fixed my
brother and he start crying
My mom came took my brother
away. One night he kick me
on the leg I said "ouch".
My Mom woke up and she gave

102

him a bottle and + teach

her leg and she said, "Do you

want a bottle" I said, "yes"

She gave me a bottle and

we went to sleep.

Danie is my neighbore, and I always play
with him but I have to finish my homework
first. His dad speak (Spanice) and English, but Dane
dad speak spaniece, but when I talk to him
he doen't speak spaniece he speak English.

When → ? *After (that)*
Childrens Musicum. *then*
next

One day I went to the

Childrens Musicum on January

2, 2004. When I got to the

Childrens Musicum, First, I played

rockclimbing it was hard

doing rockclimbing ~~it was hard~~
~~because sometimes you fall.~~
Next, I played dress up I
put on
was so imberessed ~~I dressed a dress~~
with a hat. I was ~~embarressed because~~
~~my aunt~~ Then I played walking
picture of the
piano, it wasn't that hard to

play. ~~It wasn't that hard to play~~
~~because you just have to walk on the~~
~~piano.~~ Fourth, I played soccer
after that
with my brother, my brother

hit hard, very hard. Fifth,

I went to do bubbles outside
and I couldn't make any bubbles ~~for~~
~~it keeps on popping~~
I just ~~blow~~ one bubble.
                    blew
        Sixth, I read five books
at the library its not really
a library but it looks like
a library.

        Seventh, I draw some

pictures in a paperplate then

I put it in a (machine). The
~~machine made the paperplate turn~~
~~and you could~~ Last, I played ~~an a~~
~~see it turning.~~
~~This~~ is shape like a square

and you have to go to the

finish line without touching.

any rope.

When we were finished
~~playing we went home to~~ Then we went

eat lunch, I ate a hamburger. I
went to Medows to get my hunter
It was a happy day.

I hope I could go there Children
because its fun going

there

#9

When someone needed
a friend, I was a friend
to them.

It happened at the
second-grade recess. A little
girl was sitting on the grass.
The grass was yellow-green.
The head-start children were
all playing on the playground
the other side.

The little girl had had
short blond hair, tan skin, and
kind of blue eyes. I said,

"What's your name?" (Sam)
said, she said "What's yours?"
"Liam, I said. Why do you
look sad? "I am very,"
she said "Do you want to
play hanging?" I asked "Sure." She said. And so we
went and she went higher
than me and- won.

When someone needs
a friend I was a friend to
them.
I saw someone who feel sad
I said "would you like to be
my best friend" she said yes.

When she came to my
house we were play but
I hand Talia and she
has Dora.

Talia had the big
house we could play
whitin. I had the boy
name Edick. I liked

109

to play whith my sister
all the time. And thats
the end of the story

The end

was in the classroom
sts   er w   a
door   was the
J   my
closet and (shot) the door
of Jone didend know was
that in the closet was a secret
door!   n and ran as fast as she
ou   saw him behind
s   pe from the   ec   wheat
(called) miss benely
to   wat was hapaning but
miss Nimmy and never came back

APPENDIX H

STEP UP TO WRITING NARRATIVE

NARRATIVE

A <u>narrative</u> paragraph tells a story. It explains what happens in a natural time order.

Write three <u>narrative</u> paragraphs. Choose one of the main ideas given or use one of your own.

****

The first time I ever (rode a bike, cooked, babysat) _____ _____was a total disaster. First, _____

Next, _____
Then, _____
Finally, _____

****

My (family, School, Money) _____
is very important to me. In the past, _____

Now,_____
In the future, _____

****

I had never been (happier, more embarrassed, madder) _____ in my life! _____

_____

_____

_____

(Remember, tell your story in time order.)

APPENDIX I

PEER CONFERENCE SHEETS

Peer Content Conference

Author's name:_____

Peer's name: _____

Title _____

Is the lead exciting? _____ Write it down.

_____

_____

Two parts of the story that caught my attention as being wonderful:

_____

_____

_____

_____

Three questions and/or suggestions I have for the author about his or her writing:

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Peer Editing Conference

Author's Name:_____

Peer's Name: _____

Title:_____

I helped my peer put capitals at the beginning of

sentences and for proper nouns.

I helped my peer spell tricky words correctly.

I helped my peer put punctuation in his or her writing

(periods, exclamation points, question marks, quotation

marks for dialogue, apostrophes, and commas.)

I checked to see if my peer indented his or her paragraphs.

There is a title for the writing.

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