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Effective writing strategies for primary grades

Abstract

Writing instruction has undergone changes throughout history to become what it is today; an integral part of a balanced literacy program. This project examines appropriate and effective writing strategies for primary grades. Four current writing strategies are examined in three professional development sessions for primary teachers, including: shared writing, interactive writing, writing workshop and journaling. Appropriate means of writing assessment are also examined. These professional development sessions are presented in a series of three Power Point presentations including implementation activities for teachers.

EFFECTIVE WRITING STRATEGIES FOR PRIMARY GRADES

A Graduate Project

Submitted to the

Division of Literacy Education

Department of Curriculum and Education

In Partial Fulfillment

Of the Requirements for the Degree

Master of Arts in Education

UNIVERSITY OF NORTHERN IOWA

by

Rebecca Gardemann

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Abstract

Writing instruction has undergone changes throughout history to become what it is today; an integral part of a balanced literacy program. This project examines appropriate and effective writing strategies for primary grades. Four current writing strategies are examined in three professional development sessions for primary teachers, including: shared writing, interactive writing, writing workshop and journaling. Appropriate means of writing assessment are also examined. These professional development sessions are presented in a series of three Power Point presentations including implementation activities for teachers.

Introduction

Through this project, I examined appropriate and effective writing strategies for primary grades. As in all aspects of education, writing instruction has changed throughout the years to become what it is today (Newkirk, 2007). In this project, I looked closely at four writing practices for primary grades currently most prominent in the literature, including: shared writing (Fountas & Pinnell, 1996), interactive writing (Fountas & Pinnell), writing workshop (Graves, 1983) and journaling. I also examined views of researchers on effective and appropriate ways to assess writing development in the primary grades. Then I prepared a professional development workshop in which I presented these strategies in detail, including ideas for classroom implementation. The workshop consists of three sessions, all of which include a Power Point presentation.

Rationale for Choosing Topic

I chose to create a project on implementing writing strategies because it is an area in my teaching that I believe I could improve, and because I would like to share the ideas that I have researched with my colleagues. Since becoming a teacher, I have realized that my undergraduate classes did not thoroughly prepare me for writing instruction, and I wanted to learn more about the topic. I wanted to determine whether the writing instruction I was using in my classroom was developmentally appropriate and effective, and if not, learn more about what other effective practices were available. Also, the writing instruction currently being used in my school district is varied and inconsistent. There is not a district-wide writing curriculum, leaving teachers to decide independently what they will teach their students about writing. Because of this, there are many gaps in writing instruction between grades and sometimes major differences in the quality and type of instruction between

classrooms of the same grade. I also focused my project on effective assessments of writing, as I think that instruction and assessment should go hand-in-hand.

Assessments should be used to identify students' strengths and areas of need, and then drive instruction. It would be helpful to my district if we had common assessments to use with students so that we could track growth from year to year.

Purpose of the Project

The purpose of this project was to examine what effective writing strategies are currently being implemented in primary classrooms and to prepare a professional development sequence in which to inform my colleagues about quality writing instruction and assessment. Writing is an invaluable skill necessary for students to achieve success in school and in life (Graham, MacArthur, & Fitzgerald, 2007). In a survey of 120 American corporations that employed nearly eight million people, the National Commission on Writing found that writing is a prerequisite skill needed to gain entry into the working force and be considered for promotion (Colby & Stapleton, 2006). I wanted to trace the path that writing instruction has taken throughout the years and to learn from these changes in order to inform other teachers about current best practices. I wanted to look more closely at what practices teachers are using to teach writing and what makes those practices effective. I also wanted to learn about the types of writing assessments that are being used in classrooms today, and how they can be used to guide instruction. The result was to be a series of three staff development sessions designed for primary teachers.

Importance of the Project

Primary teachers often consider themselves unprepared to teach writing to students, or they think that their own writing skills are lacking (Bridge & Hiebert, 1985; Mavrogenes & Bezruczko, 1993). As a result, many teachers believe that they

do not have the knowledge and skills to adapt their writing programs to students' needs (Fink-Chorzempa, Graham & Harris, 2005). The teachers in my district are no different, and many have expressed concerns about their knowledge of effective writing instruction. Most children learn to write through experiences with writing (Brotherton & Williams, 2002); however, if teachers are uncomfortable teaching writing, the time they set aside for writing instruction may be less than adequate or inconsistent. Therefore, teachers need to be not only aware of current best-practices in writing instruction, but also comfortable and confident about using effective writing-based strategies.

Terminology

In this project, there are terms that will be used in reference to writing-based strategies that I will define for clarity and understanding. *Shared Writing* is a language experience technique that has been used in kindergarten and first-grade classrooms for years (Fountas & Pinnell, 1996). In this form of writing, teachers encourage a student or group of students to compose aloud a written message about a common experience. The students dictate the message, while the teacher acts as the scribe. In this form of writing, the teacher assumes more than an equal role, writing as a model for the students. *Interactive Writing* is a process in which a teacher and students interact to compose a text together, often modeling after the structure of a piece of literature (Fountas & Pinnell). It differs slightly from Shared Writing, in that the teacher and students "share the pen" (Fountas & Pinnell, 1996, p. 32) at strategic points in the writing (Button, Johnson & Furgerson, 1996). *Writing Workshop* is a practice in which students independently construct individual pieces of writing with the teacher's guidance, assistance and feedback (Graves, 1983). *Journaling* is a form of

independent writing in which students create entries that can be either self-selected or assigned (Bous, Thompson & Farlow, 1997).

Goals

My interest in effective writing instruction and my desire to learn more about it led to the creation of three professional development sessions. Through these sessions, I hope to achieve the following goals: 1) To inform and further educate teachers about effective writing instruction for primary grades, 2) To create a more consistent, uniform writing curriculum in my district, 3) To improve teachers' confidence in teaching writing, and 4) To improve students' writing skills and motivation to write. These goals guided the creation of my professional development project.

Methodology

The purpose of this chapter is to explain my methodology for locating and selecting sources for my literature review. Through my review of the literature, I hoped to answer questions I had about best practice in writing instruction for primary grades in order to inform my practice and the practice of others in my district. I used an organized and selective approach throughout my research process, moving from broad search terms to more specific as I narrowed my search.

Methods for Locating Sources

In the process of locating appropriate sources, two major databases were used: Education Full Text (Wilson) and ERIC (EBSCO). Once I located sources using these databases, I also used the reference lists from the articles I found to broaden my search. The searches were based on the following keywords and various combinations of these words: *writing instruction, process writing, writing workshop, shared writing, interactive writing, journaling, creative writing, primary grades, struggling writers, writing strategies, composition, writing assessment, portfolios, and writing development*. I chose these terms based on my primary and secondary research questions, as well as key terms found in article abstracts.

Methods for Selecting Sources

After locating several sources, I selected sources that I considered pertinent to the areas I wished to cover in my project. These sources came from well-known, peer-reviewed journals and books in the field of education and focused on important aspects of my research questions. I looked for current research-based articles from published journals and books. I also selected some sources containing historical information about past writing instruction outlooks and practices. I started my search broadly, looking for research about writing instruction in general, and then refined my

search to primary grades. Once I began to see a pattern in the strategies being discussed in the sources, I limited my search to those specific strategies. After focusing on specific writing strategies, I searched for assessments that could be applied to those strategies. As I collected sources, I coded them according to the strategy or strategies to which they pertained.

Review of the Literature

Writing is an important part of a balanced literacy program in any classroom (Fountas & Pinnell, 1996) and remains an invaluable skill for anyone who wishes to communicate in today's world. In this section, I will give a brief history of writing instruction and discuss how instruction has changed to become what it is today. I will also discuss four writing practices that are prominently used in primary classrooms today, including Shared Writing (McKenzie, 1985), Interactive Writing (Button, Johnson, & Furgerson, 1996), Writing Workshop (Atwell, 1987; Graves, 1983) and Journaling (Bous, Thompson & Farlow, 1997). Finally, I will describe several forms of assessment currently being used.

A Brief History

Before becoming what it is today, writing instruction has gone through many changes throughout the years, based largely in response to research and trends in education. School books dating from the sixteenth century show instruction on sharpening quills and appropriate size and slant for cursive strokes, but show little, if any, recognition of the communicative aspect of writing and writing usage (von Bracht Donsky, 1984). Before the 1960's, writing was seen mainly as a linear process in which success was achieved by mastering the individual parts such as punctuation or capitalization, presumably leading to the understanding of the whole process of writing (Bridge & Hiebert, 1985). Teachers often assigned writing topics and then waited to correct them, giving little instruction on composition or revision. In the past, the focus of instruction has been largely based on grammar, spelling and syntax. The writing process was disassociated from this instruction, making connections between mechanics and composition writing difficult (Kara-Soteriou & Kaufman, 2002).

In the late 1960's and early 1970's, there was a wave of change in theories about effective writing instruction. Many writers and researchers, including Donald Graves (1983) and Lucy Calkins (1986), advocated teaching writing as a process. Process writing emphasized the importance of allowing students to choose their topics and spend time composing several drafts. Writing began to be viewed as an act of communication, and in response instruction shifted to give more attention to the process of composing, instead of focusing solely on the end product and its mechanics. Classroom conditions that promoted writing were also advocated by many researchers (e.g., Kara-Soteriou & Kaufman, 2002). These conditions included blocks of time for students to write, a choice of topics, and chances for students and teachers to respond to student writing as well as share their own writing (Kara-Soteriou & Kaufman, 2002). This shift in instruction impacted the quality and length of student writing.

Despite the wave of change that researchers introduced in the 1960s and 1970s, in the early eighties, little time in the classroom was spent writing, and the majority of the writing was composed mainly of handwriting exercises and copying texts, or transcription (Bridge & Hiebert, 1985). Writing instruction was generally disassociated from other classroom activities or subjects, further emphasizing writing as an isolated activity.

In the 1990s, however, the amount of time spent on writing instruction had nearly doubled and an emphasis was placed on writing for a variety of purposes, with less time being spent on copying texts or filling in worksheets (Bridge, Compton-Hall, & Contrell, 1997). The teaching of process writing began to play an important role in writing instruction.

Current Instruction

In many classrooms today, teachers have the knowledge from past decades as well as current research to create writing curricula that meet the needs of their students. A variety of strategies for developing writing are currently found in primary classrooms, including *Shared Writing*, *Interactive Writing*, *Writing Workshop*, and *Journaling*. The amount of teacher support falls on a continuum from total support through demonstrations to very little, if any, support when children are writing independently.

Even before students are able to write conventionally independently, it is important to give them opportunities to experiment with writing and text and to be exposed to good writing (Fang, 1999). In order to build confidence in students' ability to write and to help develop proficiency in writing, teachers must surround them with meaningful demonstrations of language. Shared Writing and Interactive Writing are strategies that provide teacher supported writing experiences for primary students.

Shared Writing. A strategy called Shared Writing was developed by McKenzie (1985) as a form of writing designed to provide opportunities for teachers to engage in instruction at the point of student need. Shared Writing is a language experience technique that has been useful in kindergarten and first-grade classrooms for years (Fountas & Pinnell, 1996). In this form of writing, teachers encourage a student or a group of students to compose a written message aloud. While students talk, their teacher acts as the scribe and records the message in written form, modeling the writing process. Using think-alouds, teachers can model the process of taking the students' thoughts (or spoken language) and putting them into written form. Using this strategy, students are able to turn their collective ideas into a written message, while observing the writing process as the strategy unfolds. The stories that are

created are typically much more elaborate than the students could produce on their own, and can later be displayed for children to reread (Fountas & Pinnell, 1996). The message is usually related to a group experience. For example, a class that has just visited a farm may want to write about the things they saw at the farm. Their teacher would ask for volunteers to share something they saw at the farm. As the student is sharing what he or she saw, the teacher is writing what the child is saying on a large piece of paper for all to see. The class works together to create the piece of writing.

Observing the modeling of good writing and the thought processes behind the composing of the message is an important experience for students because it provides opportunities for them to solve, in a group setting, many of the problems they will encounter in their own writing (Brotherton & Williams, 2002). Shared Writing is a way for teachers to expose students to important skills, while teaching them in an authentic, holistic setting (Button, Johnson & Furgerson, 1996). Students learn important concepts about print such as writing moves from left to right, contains letters and words and that we write to communicate thoughts and ideas. This approach also provides an appropriate format for introducing new skills such as learning about quotation marks or punctuation.

Students who continually struggle with written tasks eventually lose their motivation to engage in writing activities. Shared Writing is one method teachers can use to support student learning, giving them a chance to experience success, thereby improving motivation. It has also been used successfully with students with learning disabilities (Mather & Lachowicz, 1992). Shared Writing can be modified according to teachers' goals for their lesson, students' skill level, or the writing assignment type. Teachers may control the complexity of the sentences and gradually introduce more complex sentence patterns and vocabulary as students' writing skills progress. This

ensures that students are experiencing success in the writing experience. Another modification that can be made is the varying of writing partners. Shared Writing can occur one-on-one between a teacher and a student, student and student, in small groups or in large groups. In some cases, it may be beneficial to pair a less skilled writer with a skilled peer or a volunteer (Mather & Lachowicz, 1992). Thus, in addition to emergent writers, older students with low achievement levels and low motivation can benefit from this activity through interaction with their classmates (Mather & Lachowitz).

The Shared Writing approach is grounded in theory. Many aspects of Shared Writing incorporate principles key to the process approach to teaching writing (Graves, 1983). These principles include students' choice of writing topic, emphasis on what a student knows, immediate response to a student's writing, emphasis on basic skills in the context of meaning, and establishment of a community of writers (Mather & Lachowicz, 1992).

Shared Writing is also helpful for collecting informal assessment information (Mather & Lachowicz, 1992). This approach allows teachers to observe students' strengths and weaknesses in their ability to express ideas and apply general understanding of the writing process. During the Shared Writing process, the teacher can observe the students' ability to contribute to the writing. In asking for the students' help (orally) as he or she writes, the teacher can also informally assess the students' knowledge of basic concepts of print, letter-sound correspondence, and other early literacy skills.

Interactive Writing. Interactive Writing is a strategy that is similar to Shared Writing, but differs in a few significant ways. Instead of the teacher being the scribe and writing exactly what the children verbalize, the teacher and students interact to

compose and transcribe a text together, often modeling their work after the structure of a piece of literature. Unlike Shared Writing, students are more involved in the writing process by helping the teacher come up with sounds and their corresponding letters, words and spelling patterns. Over time, as students participate in these experiences, they become more and more involved with the writing, “sharing the pen” with the teacher (Fountas & Pinnell, 1996, p.32). To begin Interactive Writing, the teacher and students work together to determine a purpose for writing. Teachers then help the students convey their message in written language by performing the tasks that the students cannot do independently. Students eventually come up to the writing easel and fill in known letters or words, thereby engaging in an Interactive Writing process. There is no one way to conduct interactive writing, but according to Fountas & Pinnell (1996), the following procedures have proved effective with beginning writers:

1. The teacher and children negotiate a text, which the teacher helps them remember as the writing proceeds. This text is reread from the beginning each time a new word is completed.
2. The teacher and children share the pen at various points in the writing. The message is written word by word and is reread each time a new word is added. Sometimes the teacher writes the new word, or different children contribute a letter, several letters, or the whole word.
3. When appropriate, the teacher invites the children to say the word slowly, predicting the next letter. Children may come up with any letter in any order, and the teacher fills in the rest.
4. Some words are known words to the class or student and are filled in quickly. These words can be referred to as “words we know”.

5. As the teacher and children write the message, the teacher may help children attend to important concepts about print such as spaces, punctuation, capitalizations, or the features of a specific type of writing (p. 33).

An Interactive Writing session can typically last from five to thirty minutes, depending on age, experience and interests of the children involved (Fountas & Pinnell, 1996). The flexibility of Interactive Writing provides an excellent opportunity for students to explore many different ways of using written language (Hall, 2000). Although children's literature is often used as a base for Interactive Writing, texts can vary in form and may include lists of characters from a story, retellings, or writing an alternative text. Through this interactive process, teachers help students develop skills they need within an authentic context, making this one of the most beneficial early literacy strategies (Fountas and Pinnell, 1996).

When the strategy of Interactive Writing is implemented, a setting that gives teachers the opportunity to explicitly demonstrate how written language works is created. In a study of Interactive Writing, Brotherton & Williams (2002) examined the use of the strategy using videotape analysis. The researchers documented the concepts about print and writing strategies that a Title 1 reading teacher taught her first grade students across the school year. The study showed that by using Interactive Writing, the Title 1 teacher taught her children many fundamental and critical concepts about written language such as directionality, spacing and punctuation, as well as focusing on sounds in words, talking about specific phoneme-grapheme correspondences and spelling patterns as she engaged with them in the writing process. In a study of the teaching of phonemic awareness during Interactive writing, Ukrainetz, et. al (2000) identified the use of "sound talk" within meaningful literacy experiences of shared reading and writing. The results of this study showed that students who are exposed to

phonemic concepts in this authentic writing setting also develop an increased phonemic awareness.

The learning environment teachers create during interactive writing should support risk taking as a part of student learning. Because students are encouraged to take an active role in negotiating text, teachers must assume children are in the process of learning about print, and that some of their responses will be approximations (Button, et. al., 1996). For example, a student may spell the word “when” using the sounds he hears and write “w-e-n”. It is important for teachers to acknowledge students’ approximations and efforts, but also help students spell conventionally. Teachers must balance being sensitive to students’ responses, while teaching the standard conventions of print.

Writing Workshop. Writing Workshop is another writing strategy that is currently used in primary classrooms. Writing Workshop is another way for teachers to help children learn to write, but students work more independently on their piece of writing than with other strategies, and process writing is stressed. A simple, predictable structure is important when implementing Writing Workshop, so students can focus their attention on writing (Fountas & Pinnell, 1996) instead of wondering what will happen next or worrying about what the next step will be. According to Atwell (1987), most writing workshops consist of five basic ingredients, 1) mini-lessons, 2) status of the class reports, 3) writing time, 4) conferences, and 5) sharing sessions.

A mini-lesson provides opportunities for teachers to give explicit instruction about writing skills, strategies or processes, and is a key to a successful Writing Workshop (Fountas & Pinnell). Mini-lessons are concise and focused. Teachers give explicit instruction important for students’ continuing improvement in writing. The

focus of the lesson can come from observations a teacher has made about the students' writing or some strengths and weaknesses.

According to Fountas & Pinnell (1996), Mary Ellen Giacobbe, an expert in writing development, categorized mini-lessons as procedural, strategy/skill, or craft. In the procedural lessons, the teacher would model and discuss routines or materials that would enable writers to carry on independently. These lessons are important early in the year because they show students how to manage their time as well behaviors that are acceptable during Writer's Workshop time. Strategy/skill lessons address the skills a writer needs to develop, such as leaving spaces between words, using capital letters for names and punctuation and strategies such as when and how to include dialogue. Finally, craft lessons address what writers and illustrators do to communicate their message to readers. Sample lessons may include eliminating unnecessary information, providing detail or choosing a title. Mini-lessons can last anywhere from 10 to 15 minutes and may occur any time during the Writing Workshop.

Writing and conferencing time usually follows mini-lessons; however a mini-lesson does not necessarily need to be included in each Writer's Workshop session. According to researchers Kara-Soteriou & Kaufman (2002), providing adequate time for writing is important. All students should be writing during designated writing time (generally 20-30 minutes, but the time may vary according to age), and may be in various stages in the writing process. According to Atwell (1987), the writing process contains the following five components: 1) prewriting and planning, in which students think through what they will write, often completing graphic organizers to organize their thoughts, 2) drafting, or writing a first copy, 3) revising, when writers consider and polish the content or message of their writing, 4) editing, when writers find and

correct errors in mechanics, and 5) publishing, or creating a final, polished product. Some students may be brainstorming ideas for a new story, while others may be writing a final copy.

Writing time also gives instructors an opportunity to conference with individual students about their work. Writing conferences are opportunities for teachers to individualize instruction based on each child's strengths and weaknesses (Cunningham, 2000). This level of teacher support plays an important part in preparing students to become independent writers, according to Cunningham (2000).

Students may also learn to conference with each other. In a study of Writing Workshops in three first grade classrooms, Bradley (2001) looked closely at the understandings, performances and perceptions young writers have about writing. The author determined that primary students are capable of evaluating the writing of other students and can participate in peer conferences as well.

Sharing time commonly follows writing time. Students may share a piece of writing of their choice that has been through the entire writing process. In sharing what they have written, students have a chance to understand what it is to be an author (Calkins, 1985) and to increase their confidence in themselves as writers. The opportunity to share what they have written with the class can also provide motivation for struggling or reluctant writers. Sharing can take place when a student has finished a piece and is ready to celebrate his or her completed work (Fountas & Pinnell, 1996), or students may choose to share a work in progress with the class in order to get constructive feedback from their classmates.

Within the writing workshop framework, teachers give students the opportunity to learn about and practice the writing process recursively. Many teachers, however, treat writing in this setting as a step-by-step process, in which the

process of prewriting, drafting, revising, editing and publishing must be completed in a linear fashion. Some even require all students to be on the same step at the same time (Kara-Soteriou & Kaufman, 2002). The word “process” may lead teachers to believe that teaching the writing process must be linear; however there is not a one-size-fits-all, sequential order common to all writing events. The steps are recursive and overlapping (Calkins, 1985). It is important for students to know the process of writing (Porcaro & Gudemann Johnson, 2003) and understand that it is an ongoing process that is not necessarily sequential. Unlike in the instruction of past decades (Bridge & Hiebert, 1985), the process of writing a piece is emphasized in Writing Workshop and teacher assistance is available throughout the process. The goal of Writing Workshop is for students to continue to grow in their writing as they work through the writing process, while receiving editorial feedback and guidance from their teacher and eventually their peers (Fountas & Pinnell, 1996). Additionally, writing workshop allows students to write creatively and communicatively while preparing them to pass all necessary standardized tests in writing.

Journal writing. Journal writing is another writing strategy currently being used in primary classrooms. This is a strategy that has been used in many content areas as a form of informal assessment. When using journal writing as a means for writing application, students have the opportunity to write in a journal about a topic that is either assigned or self-chosen. Journaling allows students the opportunity to express themselves through the written word in a non-threatening manner (Fink-Chorzempa, et al., 2005). Allowing students to choose their own journal topics gives them an opportunity to express their personal thoughts, interests and concerns. Journal entries on self-chosen topics allow students to write about something they know and care about. Just like adults, students care about writing when it is personal (Calkins,

1985). When students are asked to write on a predetermined topic, some children have difficulty relating to the topic or have no prior knowledge, and motivation to write can be lost (Porcaro & Gudeman Johnson, 2003). However, assigning students a topic or genre style can help prepare them for state mandated tests that follow a similar format (Porcaro & Gudeman Johnson, 2003). When assigning journal topics, it is helpful for teachers to know students' backgrounds and interests so that topics in which students will find meaning can be selected.

Journal writing can also be an effective way to connect writing to other areas of the curriculum. Keeping a science or math journal gives students the opportunity to record their findings, thoughts or questions about topics they are currently studying in the content area. Journaling in a specific subject area allows students opportunities to reflect on their learning, retain information and make connections with prior knowledge and experiences. It can serve as means for informal assessment (Gammill, 2006). Writing about interactive learning and interesting subject areas in journals can also provide motivation to students who struggle with writing. Writing in the context of subject areas creates an authentic writing opportunity for students to practice what they have learned about writing.

One of the attractive aspects of journaling is that it can take many forms and serve many purposes. Students can write journal entries for their own record and use, or teachers can assign topics to which students respond and connect. Journals can be used to record information learned in content areas in their own words, therefore creating ownership. However journals are used in the classroom, they are an excellent way for teachers to help students connect writing with the conveying of a message.

Assessment

In this age of increased accountability, teachers are being asked to make data-driven decisions in relation to their instruction. At the same time, they are also expected to show student growth through standards-based assessments (Kern, Andre, Schilke, Barton, & Conn McGuire, 2003). This can be a frustrating task for teachers. Some believe that these standardized tests are not always the best representation of what their students can do. The assessment of writing is not different. If tests more closely represented the way students write in class, with time to brainstorm, choice of topic, and time for planning and drafting, some teachers believe their students' performance on these tests would improve (Mabry, 1999). The challenge, then, is for teachers to connect authentic writing experiences and instruction with the skills that are required of students in order to show growth on standards-based tests and other assessments. Ideally, assessment is related directly to instruction, and instruction is directly informed by assessment. The assessments teachers use in their classroom can provide them with information about their students' interests, strengths and weaknesses in the area of writing. This information can be used to guide instruction.

Types of Assessment

Several different ways to assess student writing exist. When considering assessment choices, Piazza (2003) recommends referring to content features, which are divided into four critical components: the writer, the process, the text and the context. The writer factor includes background, interest and learning style. Process refers to the writing process and the use of writing strategies. The text includes genre, audience, purpose and mechanics. Finally, context includes the type of writing, time, where the writing takes place and the expectations of the teacher and students (Piazza,

2003). Rubrics, portfolios, checklists, inventories and informal assessments are a few of the most prevalent ways to assess these factors.

Rubrics, sometimes called scoring guides, contain a set of rules or expectations by which the quality of written pieces is determined (Mabry, 1999). They can be used to assess samples of various types of students' writing throughout the school year (Romeo, 2008). Many generic rubric forms can be found in books or on the Internet. However, rubrics created by a teacher to fit the particular assignment are preferred because they are a more direct indication of what was taught and more specifically address the desired outcome of the assignment. The rubric may be created solely by the teacher or with the assistance of students. When creating a rubric, teachers decide what is expected of students' writing in various areas. Spandel (2005) and Piazza (2003), recommend using the six writing traits of ideas, organization, voice, word choice, sentence fluency and conventions. By creating a rubric, every student's writing is evaluated similarly and according to the same criteria. An advantage of using a rubric is they are systematic enough that they improve inter-rater reliability (Mabry, 1999), creating a more consistent scoring pattern.

It is recommended that teachers show students the rubric ahead of time, so students know what is expected of them and what they must do to achieve the grade they want to receive (Romeo, 2008). Students might also complete a rubric indicating how they think they performed on a task, including rationales for their scores. In this manner, they can self-evaluate their writing. Teachers can use this information to guide instruction and to help students set goals for future writing (Romeo).

Portfolios are another method for evaluating student writing. Portfolios may be used in many different ways, but can be explained as "a process of recording learning that focuses on a learner's work in a given area of study and his or her

reflection on that work” (Jochum, Curran, & Reetz, 1998, p.284). In essence, portfolios are a collection of a individual student’s work and their thoughts about that work.

Artifacts for portfolios may be collected or chosen by the student, the teacher, or a combination of both. Allowing students to choose pieces for their portfolios gives a sense of ownership of the portfolio and involves the students in the self-assessments. Using portfolios for assessment tends to bring the focus back to the authentic writing performances of students (Jochum, et al., 1998). The artifacts that are collected are written in authentic learning environments and situations, not under time constraints or other mandates as in standardized testing.

Another important aspect of using portfolios for evaluation is that the assessment of the artifacts is then used to inform instruction, making assessment a tool, not the end of effective learning (Jochum, et al., 1998). This creates an authentic assessment and stays true to the purpose of evaluation—to improve instruction and therefore improve student learning. Portfolios are a representation of learning historically with authentic work, which gives teachers a history of student learning, rather than viewing a single end product.

A key aspect of portfolios is reflection. Students may reflect upon a few or all of the artifacts, depending on how the portfolio is set up. Reflections may be written, or made orally. When students reflect on their writing, they are self-assessing and in that process, becoming responsible for their own skill-development and learning. In time, students are given the opportunity to see their own growth in writing, and may use this knowledge to set goals for themselves. Students have a unique perspective on their own writing skills (Powers, Fowles, & Welsh, 2001) and their reflections can

provide powerful insight for teachers. Student goals may include adding more descriptive language, writing more clearly, or incorporating more details.

Portfolios are an interactive assessment tool, and in that way stand in contrast to students simply receiving a grade back from their teacher. Portfolios may serve many purposes to different people involved in the learner's education. Parents, administrators, teachers and students may all benefit from portfolio assessment. However, some question the validity of the evaluation of writing using portfolios. Two concerns include questionable technical characteristics, or how the portfolio is assembled and assessed, and a lack of empirical evidence documenting portfolio use, especially with students with special needs (Jochum, et al., 1998).

Another type of assessment is the inventory. It can be used to gather information about students' writing interests and their perception of their abilities in writing (Romeo, 2008). Inventories can be administered in several different ways. Students can be interviewed individually and asked questions regarding their interests and thoughts. This can be time consuming, but may be necessary for enabling struggling writers to accurately respond to questions (Romeo). Inventories can also be given in written form. Students can read a list of statements pertaining to their writing interests and abilities and then respond using one of the following descriptors: all the time, a lot, somewhat, not at all. Open-ended questions may also be included. For younger students, pictures can be used to make the descriptor choices more clear. One example of an inventory is the Writing Attitude Survey (Kear, Coffman, McKenna, & Ambrosio, 2000) in which students circle the Garfield character that best describes their feelings about different aspects of writing and indicates whether they enjoy writing during leisure time and other contexts. This inventory yields a raw score that can be converted to a percentile. The norms for the instrument were established with

students in grades one through twelve (Romeo, 2008). Inventories such as this can give teachers important insights into students' beliefs about their abilities to write and their interests in writing. This information can be helpful in planning instruction and increasing student motivation. Teachers can use the information gathered to make choices about the types of writing activities to use and the topics to include. It is important to note, however, that some students may choose responses they think the teacher would like to hear rather than selecting the answer that indicates their true thoughts about writing activities (Romeo, 2008). Therefore, this information should be viewed as one indicator of a student's attitude toward writing and should be used in conjunction with additional data.

Perhaps the most frequently used form of writing evaluation is informal assessments. Teachers use informal assessments nearly every day to evaluate student performance in many areas, including writing. Anecdotal records and notes are a helpful way to record student growth. They can be taken while students are working on drafts, making revisions, editing or during conferences (Romeo, 2008). Teachers may record areas of strength or weakness they see in their student's writing or in their ability to complete the different processes of writing. This information can be used to guide selection of mini-lesson topics. It may be helpful to observe students on a rotating basis. Setting up a schedule in which the teacher makes a point to observe a few specific students each day can organize the observations, ensuring that each student will be assessed regularly. These records are also helpful in planning instruction (Fountas & Pinnell, 1996), when determining with which skills students need additional assistance. Each teacher needs to find a method for recoding the information he or she observes in an organized and easy to manage way. Clipboards are helpful to use when moving around the classroom. Creating a simple form that has

each students' name, the date, and any specific items the teacher is looking for is one option.

However helpful this type of assessment is within the classroom, records such as these are not regarded as reliable and valid by those interested in assessing achievement and making individual and group comparisons in standardized ways. Anecdotal records are subjective and can vary greatly from teacher to teacher (Romeo, 2008).

Writing can be a complex process for young students. Checklists can make the writing process more manageable for writers, and is another helpful form of assessment. Checklists are easy to create and can be combined with other forms of assessment to assist students in goal setting (Romeo, 2008). Teachers can create checklists outlining what activities they expect students to engage in and any important points they want students to consider as they write (Tompkins, 1992). These checklists can be adapted to fit the criteria for various writing assignments. They can be used by the teacher, the students or both. As students move through the writing process, they can use the checklist to mark each activity as it is completed and to monitor their writing progress. Teachers use the checklist to assess students as they observe students writing and completing the expected activities. Not only can checklists assist teachers and students in assessing writing, they can also demonstrate to students the ways the writing process can vary according to the type of writing that is taking place. Just as with inventories, the reliability of checklists may vary from student to student, so they should be used in combination with other assessments.

Summary

Writing instruction has changed in many ways throughout history, based largely in response to research and trends in education. Although in the past writing has been

viewed as a linear process (Bridge & Hiebert, 1985) with the focus of instruction largely based on grammar, spelling and mechanics, views of writing today are much different. Today there is more of a focus on the composition of the message, and the act of writing is viewed as more of a recursive process. In many classrooms, teachers have the knowledge from past decades as well as current research to create writing curricula that meet the needs of their students. A variety of strategies for developing writing are currently found in primary classrooms, including *Shared Writing*, *Interactive Writing*, *Writing Workshop*, and *Journaling*. The amount of teacher support falls on a continuum from total support through demonstrations to very little, if any, support when children are writing independently.

Based on the content gleaned from my review of the literature on early writing, I created a professional development workshop entitled *Effective Writing Strategies for Primary Grades*. The workshop discusses four major writing strategies used in primary classrooms today, as well as appropriate assessment options, and is broken into three sessions.

The Project

The purpose of this chapter is to give a description of the professional development project *Effective Writing Strategies for Primary Grades*. This project is designed for primary (K-3) teachers. These workshop sessions were created for the primary teachers in my district. Many teachers in my district state that they do not feel knowledgeable about writing instruction and are uncomfortable teaching writing. The workshop is divided into three separate sessions, focusing on Shared Writing, Interactive Writing, Writing Workshop, Journaling and Assessment, respectively (see Table 1 for overview of the workshop timeline). It was evident through my review of the literature that these four writing strategies have been researched and deemed effective by researchers; therefore this project will focus solely on informing and preparing primary teachers to implement these strategies in their writing instruction. The intent of this project is to provide teachers with knowledge of effective writing strategies and effective ways to assess student writing, in order to improve the consistency of writing instruction in my district.

Table 1: Three-Day Writing Strategies Workshop Overview

Workshop Session	Session Overview	Session Time Frame
Session 1: Introduction and Background, Shared Writing, Interactive Writing	-Discuss what writing instruction is currently being used in classrooms -Learn about the importance of direct writing instruction -Learn about the strategies of Shared Writing and Interactive Writing and how they can be implemented	Week 1 One Hour, 30 Minutes
Session 2: Writing Workshop	-Identify the conditions for effective writing -Learn about Writing Workshop and how it can be implemented	Week 2 One Hour, 30 Minutes
Session 3: Journaling and Assessment	-Learn about the independent writing strategy of journaling -Discuss various ways of assessing student writing	Week 3 One Hour, 30 Minutes

Preparing the Project

Writing is an important part of a balanced literacy program in any classroom (Fountas & Pinnell, 1996) and is an invaluable skill necessary for students to achieve success in school and in life (Graham et al., 2007). Primary teachers often consider themselves unprepared to teach writing to students or think that their own writing skills are lacking (Bridge & Hiebert, 1985; Mavrogenes & Bezruczko, 2002). If teachers feel uncomfortable teaching writing, the time set aside for writing instruction may be less than adequate and inconsistent.

Following my review of research related to writing instruction, I created Power Point presentations (See Appendices A, B, and C) for three professional development sessions designed for primary teachers. The presentations were created to inform and further educate primary teachers on the use of the effective writing strategies of Shared Writing, Interactive Writing, Writing Workshop and Journaling in their classrooms. A section on assessment of students' writing was also included. In the following paragraphs, I describe each session.

Session 1: Introduction and background, shared writing and interactive writing. Session One of *Effective Writing Strategies for Primary Grades* will be an hour and a half session presented in the form of a Power Point (See Appendix A). I will begin the session by giving the participants copies of the Power Point handout for this session. I will give a short overview of what we will be discussing throughout the three sessions. I will then present the goals for the first session, which are to discuss what writing instruction is currently being used in our classrooms, learn about the importance of direct writing instruction, and learn about the strategies of shared writing and interactive writing and how they can be implemented in our classrooms.

For the first activity, I will ask participants to complete a quick write about what writing instruction currently looks like in their classrooms and how often they teach writing. This will give us a starting point for our discussions of where we are as a district in terms of writing instruction, and we will move into discussing where we want to be. Four underlying principles of effective writing instruction will be presented, followed by an overview of four types of writing and their varying levels of teacher support.

The session will then focus on Shared Writing. I will explicitly define Shared Writing and describe what it looks like when implemented in the classroom. A list of various ways to incorporate Shared Writing into the curriculum will be presented, along with specific examples (See Appendices D and E) and a video demonstration (See Appendix F). Participants will then be asked to think about a few ways they could use Shared Writing in their classrooms. They will share their thoughts with a peer. There will also be an opportunity for participants to share out to the entire group.

Interactive Writing will be the focus of the second half of this session. A definition of interactive writing will be given, as well as a description of what Interactive Writing might look like when implemented in the classroom. Suggested steps for an Interactive Writing lesson will be presented. A video demonstration of a sample Interactive Writing lesson is included (See Appendix G). This session will conclude with the invitation for teachers to implement a Shared or Interactive Writing lesson into their curriculum sometime in the coming week. I will go over the Implementation Log (See Appendix H) that participants will be expected to complete before the next session. In the log, participants will record whether they implemented Shared Writing or Interactive Writing and will include a brief lesson plan. They will

also have a chance to think back on how they felt the lesson went on the reflection section of the log. Finally, they will be invited to write questions that they wish to ask in order to improve their future teaching of these strategies. Participants will also be asked to complete the 3-2-1 Reflection sheet (See Appendix I) before they leave the session. This will serve as a reflection from the participants on their learning from this session. I will also hand out a reference list for this session that teachers may use to gain more information on the topics discussed (See Appendix J).

Session 2: Writing Workshop. In Session Two of *Effective Writing Strategies for Primary Grades* I will also make use of a Power Point presentation (See Appendix B). Session Two is entitled Writing Workshop, and is an hour and a half workshop. Participants will be given a copy of the Power Point slides before the session begins. I will begin this session by presenting the goals of the workshop which are to revisit our learning about Shared Writing and Interactive Writing, share our implementation logs, identify the conditions for effective writing, and learn about writing workshop and how it can be implemented into the classroom. We will then revisit our learning about Shared Writing and Interactive Writing from the last session. Participants will be asked to share their implementation logs with their grade level teams. One representative from each grade level will be asked to share out to the whole group. Questions about implementing Shared Writing and/or Interactive Writing will also be invited and discussed.

I will then focus the session on the Writing Workshop. Seven conditions for effective Writing Workshops (Graves, 1994) will be presented, as well as the basic components of a Writing Workshop. I will describe each component in detail, and give specific examples of each, including three different types of mini-lesson examples (See Appendices K, L, and M). I will ask the participants to incorporate at

least one component of the Writing Workshop into their writing instruction within the next week. Participants will again be asked to complete an Implementation Log (See Appendix H). On this log, a short lesson plan will be recorded, detailing the type of mini-lesson used. There is also a place for reflecting on how the lesson went. Finally, I will ask them to look back on their learning from today by completing the 3-2-1 Reflection sheet (See Appendix I). Participants will receive a reference list for the session (See Appendix N)

Session 3: Journaling and assessment. Session Three of *Effective Writing Strategies for Primary Grades* will also be presented in a Power Point format (See Appendix C). Participants will receive a copy of the Power Point slides before the presentation. I will begin by presenting the goals for this session which will be to revisit our learning about Writing Workshop and share our implementation logs, to learn about the independent writing strategy of Journaling, and to discuss various ways of assessing student writing. We will then revisit our learning from the previous session on Writing Workshop. Participants will get into their grade level teams to discuss their Implementation Logs. One member from each grade level team will be asked to share out to the whole group. Questions about Writing Workshop will also be invited and addressed.

I will next move into a discussion of Independent Writing, including a definition of Independent Writing and a description of what Independent Writing looks like in the classroom. I will then move into a more in-depth discussion of one form of independent writing, which is Journaling.

Next, different forms of writing assessments will be presented and discussed, as well as specific opportunities for assessing each of the types of writing previously presented (Shared Writing, Interactive Writing or Guided Writing and Independent

Writing). Rubrics, checklists, portfolios, inventories and informal assessments will be presented in detail with specific examples. At the conclusion of this session, participants will be asked to complete the Final Reflection Sheet (See Appendix O). They will also be asked to share a reflection of the entire workshop with a neighbor, and/or the whole group. This evaluation will provide an opportunity for participants to reflect on their learning as well as for me to evaluate the effectiveness of the sessions and my effectiveness as a presenter. I will again give teachers a reference list for this session (See Appendix P).

Conclusions

The purpose of this chapter is to provide a summary of the creation of the project entitled *Effective Writing Strategies for Primary Grades*. In this section I will also present the limitations of my project as well as recommendations for practice.

Writing instruction, like other aspects of education, has evolved to become what it is today. The focus of writing instruction has shifted from product to process (Kara-Soteriou & Kaufman, 2002). Writers and researchers such as Donald Graves (1983) and Lucy Calkins (1986) helped create this shift by advocating the teaching of writing as a process and emphasizing the importance of allowing students to choose their topics and to spend time writing and rewriting drafts of their pieces. The amount of time spent on writing instruction and guided and independent practice in classrooms has grown, and currently there is more of an emphasis on writing for a variety of purposes (Bridge, Compton-Hall & Contrell, 1997).

The strategies that I examined and presented in my project included Shared Writing, Interactive Writing, Writing Workshop and Journaling. The sequence of these strategies allows for the gradual release of responsibility and control by the teacher to the students; as a result, the teacher scaffolds knowledge about writing to help students ultimately to become successful, independent writers (Button, Johnson & Furgerson, 1996).

Shared Writing, which is a language experience technique in which teachers encourage a student or group of students to compose aloud a written message about a common experience, and Interactive Writing, in which a teacher and students interact and share the pen to compose a text together, provide a higher level of teacher support, and help students learn about writing through the act of writing. The stories that are created are typically more elaborate pieces than the students could produce on

their own (Fountas & Pinnell, 1996). Observing the modeling of good writing by the teacher and hearing the thought process behind composing a message is important for early writers. These experiences provide the opportunity for students in a group setting to solve problems they may encounter when writing independently (Brotherton & Williams, 2002).

Writing Workshop, in which students independently construct individual pieces of writing with the teacher's guidance, assistance and feedback, provides teacher support, but allows students to be more independent in their writing. Mini-lessons give teachers the opportunity to provide explicit writing instruction, and the writing time that follows allows students to practice skills independently. Writing workshop is a practice that lets students writing creatively and for a purpose. Students experience the recursive and overlapping process of writing (Calkins, 1986) through Writing Workshop.

Journaling, which can take many forms and serve many purposes, is a largely independent writing strategy that gives students the opportunity to express themselves through the written word in a non-threatening manner (Fink-Chorzempa, et al., 2005). Journal writing can also be an effective way to connect writing to other areas of the curriculum (Gammill, 2006). Writing in the context of subject areas creates an authentic writing opportunity for students to practice what they have learned about writing.

Numerous assessments exist for evaluating student writing. The forms of assessment presented in my project included rubrics, portfolios, inventories and informal assessments. Rubrics create a more consistent scoring pattern and can be completed by teachers, students, or both, allowing students the opportunity to self-evaluate and set goals for their writing (Romeo, 2008). Portfolios bring the focus of

assessment back to the authentic writing performance of students (Jochum, et al., 1998). Inventories help teachers gather information about students' writing interests and their perception of their abilities in writing (Romeo, 2008), and can be administered in several different ways. Informal assessments are used frequently as a quick way to record student growth or areas of need, and can be helpful in guiding instruction (Fountas & Pinnell, 1996). However, anecdotal records are subjective and interpretations of students' work can vary greatly from teacher to teacher.

Limitations

Research of writing instruction has lagged behind reading as an object of research for years (Fang, 1999). Although interest in studying writing has increased in recent years, there is still more research that needs to be conducted in terms of the efficacy of instructional methods and the socio-cultural aspects of the writing process. The focus of this project was limited to four specific writing strategies found in the literature to be effective. It is by no means all-encompassing in terms of available strategies for writing instruction. The strategies presented in this project are appropriate for primary grades. Other more complex strategies that may be appropriate for upper grades were not discussed. Additionally, a limited number of assessment options were also examined. There are numerous ways to assess student writing, and this project did not provide a comprehensive list of all assessments available and currently being used.

Recommendations

Writing is an essential tool to school success and has increasingly become a central component of daily life in society in general (Graham et al., 2007). Direct writing instruction is a crucial component in a balanced literacy program. It is important for teachers to incorporate explicit, authentic, meaningful writing

instruction into their daily literacy block. Time, choice, response, modeling and sharing are essential conditions for effective writing (Graves, 1994). Creating a predictable time for writing as well as adequate time each day to do so helps ensure that students can begin a piece of writing and carry it through the entire writing process. Students need to learn how to choose their own topics, and when they have that option, they have the opportunity to write about subjects that are meaningful to them, therefore creating a sense of ownership. Young writers need to hear the responses of others to their writing in order to discover what they do or do not understand in order to become better writers. It is extremely important for teachers to model writing and the thought processes that go along with it. Writing is a craft, and needs to be demonstrated in order for students to improve upon their writing and feel comfortable taking risks. Finally, sharing gives students a purpose and an audience for their writing.

The four writing strategies presented in this project entail varying levels of teacher support. Teachers should select writing strategies that meet students where they are in terms of ability and comfort level and scaffold new information. Shared Writing and Interactive Writing are effective ways to model the process writers go through while teaching them in an authentic, holistic setting. Writing Workshop focuses on the process of writing and provides an opportunity for direct instruction through mini-lessons and time for Independent Writing by the students. Journaling allows students to practice skills and strategies learned through direct instruction independently. Journaling provides an effective means for teachers to connect writing with other areas of the curriculum.

As with any curricular area, student writing should be assessed regularly. Assessments should be used to inform instruction as well as evaluate performance.

The type of writing and purpose of the assessment should be taken into consideration when choosing or developing an assessment. Portfolios, rubrics, inventories and informal assessments are all effective ways to evaluate student writing. Portfolios can be used to inform instruction and are an authentic means for assessment. Creating rubrics with students can increase ownership in writing and can encourage self-evaluation. Inventories and informal assessments are quick, simple ways to gauge student attitudes and daily progress.

The purpose of this project was to provide teachers with knowledge of effective writing strategies and ways to assess student writing, in order to improve the consistency of writing instruction in my district. I hope that through participating in the three workshop sessions, teachers will gain knowledge about the writing strategies of Shared Writing, Interactive Writing, Writing Workshop and Journaling, as well as appropriate assessment options. I hope to increase teachers' comfort levels in teaching writing, and therefore increase students' writing abilities.

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Appendix A

Effective Writing Strategies for Primary Grades

Session 1:
Introduction and Background
Shared Writing
Interactive Writing

Overview

- Throughout these sessions, we will be learning more about:
- ✓ The essential elements of a successful writing program
- ✓ Three types of writing, and the varying levels of teacher support required for each type
- ✓ Various ways to assess writing and student progress

Goals of Today's Session

- Discuss what writing instruction is currently being used in our classrooms
- Learn about the importance of direct writing instruction
- Learn about the strategies of shared writing and interactive writing and how they can be implemented in our classrooms

Quick Write!



- What does writing instruction look like in your classroom?
- How often do you teach writing in your classroom?

Does your writing program provide...

- Authentic reasons to write?
- Plenty of time to write?
- A predictable time each day to write?
- An atmosphere of helpful collaboration?
- Instructions for peers to support each other?
- Support from the teacher when problems arise?
- A predictable place for necessary materials?

What needs to be changed in order for these criteria to be present?

Gillet, J.W. & Beverly, L. (2001)

Underlying Principles

1. Writing is essential
2. We need to do a better job teaching writing
3. We know what skilled writing looks like
4. We have effective procedures for teaching writing

Graham, MacArthur & Fitzgerald, 2007

Four Kinds of Writing/ Four Kinds of Support

- See handout
- Four Types of Writing: Shared Writing, Interactive Writing, Writing Workshop, Independent Writing
- Each type falls along a continuum of teacher support, from more support to less

Why use these strategies?

- Shared writing, interactive writing, writing workshop and independent writing are all research based strategies
- These strategies have been shown to improve student writing and incorporate the essential elements of writing
- Each strategy requires a different level of support, creating the scaffolding necessary to create successful, independent writers.

Shared Writing and Interactive Writing

Even before students are able to write conventionally independently, it is important to give them opportunities to experiment with writing and text and to be exposed to good writing (Fang, 1999).

What Is Shared Writing?

- Shared writing is a language experience technique that has been useful in kindergarten and first-grade classrooms (Fountas & Pinnell, 1996).
- This method is a way of introducing students *to* writing *through* writing.
- This approach provides a way for teachers to expose students to important skills, while teaching them in an authentic setting.
- Shared writing is a holistic approach to writing instruction that focuses on student's strengths

What does Shared Writing Look Like?

- No one way to conduct a shared writing lesson
- Can take many forms
- When developing a shared writing lesson, consider the following:
 1. Purpose for writing
 2. Skills to be developed
 3. Level of teacher support or guidance needed
 4. Number of students (whole class, small group, individual)
 5. Who will do the writing

DaCruz Payne, C. & Browning Schulman, M. (1998)

What does Shared Writing Look Like?

1 of 2

- Using think-alouds, teachers can model the process of taking thoughts or spoken language and putting them into written form.
- Provides a basis for thinking, talking, writing, reading and listening
- Students are encouraged to focus on the meaning of the story first, and then on the writing skills

What does Shared Writing Look Like? 2 of 2

- Provides a format for the introduction of new skills
- Can be modified and adapted according to the teacher's goal, skill level of students and type of writing assignment
- Length of lesson can vary from five to 20 minutes, and may take place in one day, or over several.

Opportunities to Incorporate Shared Writing

- Can be used with expository as well as creative writing assignments, including:
 - ✓ Thank-you notes
 - ✓ Friendly letters
 - ✓ Lists
 - ✓ A new version of a favorite story
 - ✓ Shared experiences (field trips, etc)
 - ✓ Morning Messages

A Kindergarten Class' Shared Writing of the Daily News

- See handout

Today is Friday.

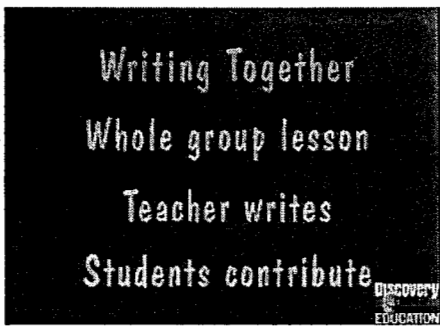
Sally is going to visit her grandma and Papa. Carlos is going to Matt's house. Jenna is going to ride her new bike.

A Second Grade Class' Shared Writing of a Class Message

- See handout

The class is going to the zoo tomorrow. We will see animals in their habitats. We will collect information about the animals we are researching, too. Carla said, "Let's go right now!"

A Sample Shared Writing Lesson

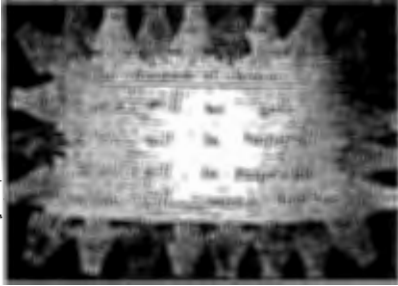


Think-Pair-Share



- Think about a specific way you could, or already do use shared writing in your classroom.
- Turn to your neighbor and share your thoughts

Interactive Writing



What is Interactive Writing?

- Primarily designed for preschool through first grade
- Especially helpful for students who haven't had many opportunities to interact with written language or who struggle to read or write
- The focus of the lesson is to create a meaningful message that the children can read
- The goal is to teach children the writing skills, strategies and conventions they need to become successful, independent writers.

What does Interactive Writing Look Like?

- There is no one way to conduct a lesson
- Each lesson may look different depending on the purpose for the lesson, age, experience or interests of students.
- Lesson begins by determining a purpose for writing

Suggested Steps in an Interactive Writing Lesson

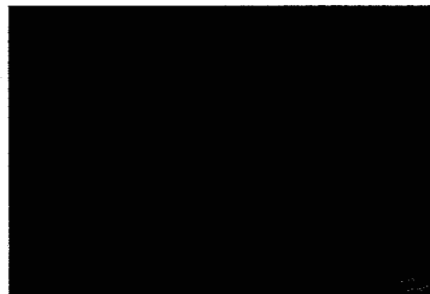
1. Teacher and children negotiate a text. The text is reread from the beginning each time a new word is added.
2. The teacher and children share the pen at various points in the writing
3. The teacher invites the children to say the new word slowly, predicting the next letter
4. Some words known to the class are filled in quickly.
5. As the text is written, the teacher helps students attend to important concepts about print.

Fountas & Pinnell, 1996

Figure 2
Interactive writing expectations and guidelines in primary classrooms over a school year

Beginning of the year	Later in the year
<p>Establish routine</p> <p>Negotiate before read (a label)</p> <p>Continuation of text may be completed in one day (news)</p> <p>Repeat orally word or line to be written</p> <p>The teacher will</p> <p>Model hearing sounds in words</p> <p>Model sound/spelling relationships</p> <p>Support letter recognition using alphabet chart or chart listing class members' names</p> <p>Model and question for Consonants About Print (CAP) spacing, left-to-right directionality, top-to-bottom directionality, word-by-word matching during shared reading</p> <p>Link words to be written with names of children in the class</p> <p>The teacher may</p> <p>Write more of the text</p> <p>Write or emphasize parts of handwritten</p> <p>Assist with letter formation</p>	<p>Routine established</p> <p>Negotiate a more complex text</p> <p>Continuation of text continues over several days</p> <p>Count the words to be written before starting to write</p> <p>Students will</p> <p>Identify dominant sounds in words</p> <p>Represent sounds with symbols (letters)</p> <p>Write letters without copy</p> <p>Have control of own words</p> <p>Begin linking known words to unknown words</p> <p>Leave spaces between words</p> <p>Use familiar context (e.g., sign)</p> <p>Continue word-by-word matching during shared reading</p> <p>Punctuate sentences on the line</p> <p>Write text with little support</p> <p>Make generalizations about print</p>

An example Interactive Writing Lesson



Try It!

- Implement a shared or interactive writing lesson in your classroom before our next session
- Complete the implementation log, including a brief lesson plan
- Be prepared to share and discuss your lesson at our next session
- Remember, there is no one way to conduct a shared or interactive writing lesson! Be creative, and think about what is most appropriate for your class.

Reflection

- Look back on your learning from this session
- Complete the 3-2-1 Reflection sheet
- ✓ 3 Things You Learned
- ✓ 2 Things You Will Try in the Future
- ✓ 1 Question You Still Have about Shared and/or Interactive Writing

Appendix B

Effective Writing Strategies for Primary Grades

Session 2:
Writing Workshop

Goals of Today's Session

- Revisit our learning about shared writing and interactive writing
- Share our implementation logs
- Identify the conditions for effective writing
- Learn about writing workshop and how it can be implemented into your classroom

Revisiting Shared Writing/Interactive Writing

- Get into grade level teams
- Share your implementation logs. Discuss how the lesson went and how you may implement these strategies in the future
- Discuss any questions you may have about using these strategies
- Choose a representative to share out to the group

Writing Workshop

“In writing workshop, students have the opportunity to learn from a variety of instructional methods and demonstrate what they know through a choice of writing topics and genres.”

Higgins, B., Miller, M. & Wegmann, S. (2006)

Conditions for effective writing workshops

1. Time
2. Choice
3. Response
4. Demonstration
5. Expectation
6. Room Structure
7. Evaluation

Graves, D. (1994)

Basic Components of the Writing Workshop

1. Mini-lessons
2. Status of the class reports
3. Writing time
4. Conferences
5. Sharing sessions

Mini-Lessons

- Provide an opportunity for teachers to give explicit instruction about writing skills, strategies or processes
- Should be brief, concise and focused
- Focus of the lesson can come from standards and benchmarks and/or teacher observations of student need
- Represent needs-based instruction, therefore do not follow a structured scope and sequence
- Require systematic monitoring of students' needs.
- Can be procedural, strategy/skill or craft related

Possible Topics for Mini-Lessons

Procedural	Strategies/Skills	Writer's Craft
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Listening rules •Buddy conferences •Looking around the room to find words you need •Use a soft voice when music is playing •How to speak clearly for the audience 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Writing complete sentences •Capitalization •Using ending punctuation •"stretching" a word to hear the sounds •Plurals: adding -s or -es 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Brainstorming ideas for writing •Making a personal topics list •Writing a topic sentence •Using descriptive language •Describe a setting

Sources for Mini-Lesson Topics and Ideas

- Dierking, C.C. & Jones, S.A. (2003) *Growing up writing: Mini-lessons for emergent and beginning writers*. Gainesville, FL: Maupin House.
- Gillet, J.W. & Beverly, L. (2001) *Directing the writing workshop*. New York, NY: The Guilford Press.
- Rog, L.J. (2007) *Marvelous mini-lessons for teaching beginning writing, K-3*. Newark, DE: International Reading Association

Sample Mini-Lessons

1. Procedural Mini-Lesson
See "Silent/Quiet Writing" handout
2. Strategy/Skill Mini-Lesson
See "The First Word of a Sentence Has a Capital Letter" handout
3. Craft Mini-Lesson
See "Description" handout

Status of the Class

- Quick teacher survey of what each student is doing each day during the writing workshop
- Recorded in some way by teacher
- Helps ensure accountability and gives students a purpose

Writing Time 1 of 2

- Providing adequate time for writing is crucial
- May start with 10 min at the beginning of the year and work up to 35-40 min as students build stamina
- Consistency and predictability are key
- Developing routines helps students take control of their own actions

Writing Time 2 of 2

- Students may be in various stages of the writing process
- Gives teachers the opportunity to conference with individual students about their work
- Process writing involves five components: rehearsal, drafting, revising, editing and publishing

The Writing Process at Different Stages of Development

	Prewriting	Drafting/ Revising	Editing/ Publishing
Emergent Writer	•Draw first, then "write"	•Usually do only one single-draft writing •May use pictures, scribbles, letters and letter-like symbols	•Do not know that writing says the same thing every time you read it •Will "read" or tell about their writing in "author's chair"

	Prewriting	Drafting/ Revising	Editing/ Publishing
Early Writer	•Plan by pretelling	•Write first, then draw •Draft using phonetic spelling •Revise by "adding on" at the end	•Fix "word wall words" •Can read their writing and will share it in "author's chair"

	Prewriting	Drafting/ Revising	Editing/ Publishing
Developing Writer	•Use brainstorming and organizers to generate ideas	•Draft double-spaced and single-sided •Revise by inserting or changing words and ideas	•Can circle words that "don't look right" •Need teacher support for editing •Will recopy to publish

	Prewriting	Drafting/ Revising	Editing/ Publishing
Fluent Writer	•Use a variety of prewriting tools to organize as well as generate ideas	•Revise by adding information in the middle or by cutting up and reorganizing text •May start "cutting clutter" in text	•Take responsibility for self-editing •Will publish to share with a variety of audiences

Rehearsal/Planning

- Planning plays a central role in the writing of many successful authors
- Can begin as a group rehearsal time/sharing of ideas
- For some young children, drawing is a form of rehearsal
- Pre-writing activities can fit here, such as webbing, the "Five Finger Planner" or the "3-2-1 Planner" (Rog, L.J., 2007)
- Teacher modeling of rehearsal is helpful
- Mini-lessons can be directed toward helping students be successful independent planners

Example Rehearsal/Planning Mini-Lesson # 1

- The *Five-Finger Planner* is an organizer that can be used to help students generate several details about a topic.
- Students write the topic on the palm, one detail on each finger, and how they feel about the topic on the thumb.
- The organizer not only helps writers generate ideas, but it also introduces the idea of shaping a piece of writing with a concluding, or "ending" sentence.

Example Rehearsal/Planning Mini-Lesson # 2

- The *3-2-1 Planner* is a graphic organizer that represents three key ideas, two details for each idea, all in one topic
- Helps writers organize a piece of writing into three parts, usually beginning, middle, end
- Supporting details are added
- This tool lends itself to narrative writing, but can be used for informational writing as well

Revision

- Writers consider and polish the content, or message, of the writing
- They attempt to make writing as clear, interesting and memorable as possible
- Teachers must begin having students revise early
- We need to help students see that doing something over again is not a sign that it was badly done the first time

The Teacher's Role in Revision 1 of 2

- Model how to consider the message of a piece of writing first, rather than reacting to its physical appearance or correctness
- Respond to the content before responding to "correctness"
- Listen to the student read their piece to you and respond to what it is about, either with a supportive comment or a question

The Teacher's Role in Revision 2 of 2

- Limit revisions to one area to lesson confusion and avoid overwhelming students
- Focus mini-lessons on this topic if necessary to help guide students in the revision process
- Using literature is one way to teach revision

Four Basic Operations of Revision

- Writers can...
 - ✓ *Add* more words, ideas, sentences or details
 - ✓ *Delete* parts they deem unnecessary
 - ✓ *Substitute or change* parts of the writing
 - ✓ *Rearrange* parts of the piece by moving them around

Gillet, J.W. & Beverly, L. (2001)

Sample Comments That Respond to The *Message* of a Piece

- "It sounds like you know a lot about _____"
- "It sounds like you really enjoyed (or disliked) _____"
- "I can tell you have strong feelings about _____"
- "How did you find out so much about/get to be so good at _____"

Sample Comments, cont.

- "Where did you get the idea for this?"
- "How did you go about choosing this topic?"
- "I wonder what's going to happen next"
- "What do you think you'll do next with this piece?"

Gillet, J.W. & Beverly, L. (2001)

Goals and Checklists for Revision

- Helpful to establish revision goals initially
- Display goals prominently so writers can keep in mind what they are trying to do when they revise
- Establish goals in a guided group discussion, and they can always be changed or added on to
- Could allow students to produce goals themselves.
- Staple a sample checklist to first drafts for students to complete
- See sample revision checklist

Editing 1 of 2

- Writers find and correct errors in *mechanics* such as spelling, punctuation and grammar, creating a finished version
- Students should not concentrate on mechanics or surface features until after they have made their writing as interesting and understandable as possible (revising).
- Approach editing from a positive side, deemphasizing the "correcting mistakes" aspect

Editing 2 of 2

- Explain to students that their good ideas deserve to be expressed clearly, correctly and neatly so that others can read and understand them
- In primary grades, it's more important to familiarize students with the process of checking over their work than having them correct all of their errors
- Students can't correct errors if they don't know they've made them— direct instruction is necessary (mini-lessons)

Appropriate Editing Expectations

- By the end of *first grade*, most writers should be able to:
 - ✓ Find and mark at least a few words they're not sure are spelled right, and check the spellings by using a Word Wall or primary dictionary
 - ✓ Spell many high-frequency sight words correctly
 - ✓ Use developmentally appropriate spelling attempts for new or unfamiliar words

Appropriate Editing Expectations 1st grade, continued

- ✓ Use at least some ending punctuation correctly
- ✓ Use capital letters at the beginning of sentences, for names, and the pronoun "I"
- ✓ Use at least some complete sentences, although sentence fragments and run-ons may still be common

Appropriate Editing Expectations

- By the end of *second grade*, most writers should be able to...
 - ✓ Write a piece with at least two separate paragraphs
 - ✓ Indent the first sentence of each paragraph, and make sure all sentences in a paragraph are related to the same topic
 - ✓ Use end punctuation correctly in nearly every case
 - ✓ Capitalize the first word in each sentence, proper nouns, and "I"

Appropriate Editing Expectations 2nd Grade, continued

- ✓ Use plural and verb tense endings appropriately in most cases
- ✓ Use mostly complete sentences
- ✓ Correctly spell an increasingly large number of high-frequency words, while using developmentally appropriate spelling attempts for unfamiliar, complex words
- ✓ Find and mark a number of words that may be misspelled, and check their spelling using a dictionary or other source

Editing Aids

- Editing tools such as dictionaries, word walls, colored pens or pencils and sticky notes reserved for editing can make the process special and more interesting
- Editing centers can help organize materials and make them more accessible and intriguing to students
- Editing checklists help students apply skills they are learning and develop independence in editing their work
- Checklists should be developed cooperatively with students and should be appropriate to the age and grade of the class
- See sample editing checklist

Conferencing 1 of 2

- Occurs during writing time
- Conferencing is one of the most powerful ways to differentiate writing instruction because it provides teachers with the opportunity to offer individualized instruction at the point of need (Rog, L.J., 2007).
- One-on-one conferences can take different forms based on the needs of the student and the purpose of the conference.

Conferencing 2 of 2

- “Butterfly conferences” are appropriate for most emergent and early writers. The teacher “flits” around the room to each student’s desk for a few moments to discuss what the piece is about and to offer support or suggestions
- Developing and fluent writers require more concentrated attention as they revise, edit and publish a piece of writing

TAG Conferencing

Tell something you like
Ask questions
Give advice

A TAG conference is a revision conference

Steps in a TAG Conference

1. Telling something you like first gives students affirmation of what they’ve accomplished and makes them more receptive to hearing constructive questions and advice

Steps in a TAG Conference, cont.

2. Asking questions empowers the writer and reminds them that a reader may need clarification or more details
- ✓ Questions need to be meaningful and lead students to create a more interesting, clear and powerful piece of writing

Steps in a TAG Conference, cont.

3. Giving advice is a way for the teacher to offer a suggestion that is intended to improve the quality of the writing and improve the writer’s craft
- ✓ Suggestions may apply tools or ideas from previous mini-lessons

Editing Conference 1 of 2

- Takes place after all revisions are complete and the writer is ready to publish the piece
- Determine which mechanical errors are within the developmental range of each writer
- Recognize the fine line between setting standards for correctness and encouraging students to take risks

Editing Conferences 2 of 2

- Editing is the students' responsibility
- Have students fix their own errors, they learn and remember more from them
- Choose one or two editing issues to focus on when conferencing

Sharing 1 of 2

- Gives students a purpose for writing
- Remember that writing is a social act—writers write for audiences
- Divide students up so that a portion of the class shares each day

Sharing 2 of 2

- Gather the class to listen to the sharing, sometimes called "Author's Chair"
- Teach and model active listening to create an environment conducive to sharing (may need to include a mini-lesson on sharing expectations)
- Allow the group to give positive comments, ask questions or make suggestions for improving a piece of writing after each child shares

Try It!

- Incorporate a mini-lesson into your writing instruction. It can be a procedural, strategy/skill, or craft mini-lesson
- Keep in mind that a mini-lesson should be brief, concise and focused on a skill that meets your students' needs.
- Complete the implementation log, including a brief lesson plan, and be ready to share it at our next session

Reflection

- Look back on your learning from this session
- Complete the 3-2-1 Reflection sheet
- ✓ 3 Things You Learned
- ✓ 2 Things You Will Try in the Future
- ✓ 1 Question You Still Have about the Writing Workshop

Appendix C

Effective Writing Strategies for Primary Grades

Session 3:
Journaling
Assessment

Goals for Today's Session

1. Revisit our learning about writing workshop and share our implementation logs
2. Learn about the independent writing strategy of journaling
3. Discuss various ways of assessing student writing

Revisiting Writing Workshop

- Get with your grade-level teams. Share your implementation logs.
- Discuss what went well and any questions you still have about the writing workshop
- Choose a representative from your group to share out to the rest of the group.



Independent Writing

- Children write their own messages and stories
- Little or no teacher support is needed
- Students independently write, practicing and applying skills that they have learned through shared, interactive and guided writing
- Students know how to use the resources in the room to get words they cannot write independently
- Essential that expectations and routines be clearly established

Journaling

- Is one form of independent writing
- Can take many forms and serve many purposes
- May be incorporated into the writing workshop
- Can allow topics to be self-selected or teacher can select
- Can be an effective way to connect writing to other areas of the curriculum
- May use entries as means for informal assessment of student writing progress and/or content knowledge

Assessment

- Assessment of writing can be used for two purposes: to inform and guide instruction, and to accurately determine student achievement
- Assessment can take a variety of forms, depending on its purpose
- A variety of assessments should be used to ensure accuracy
- Both *process* and *product* should be observed and assessed
- Information can be collected through multiple sources, including: rubrics, checklists, portfolios, inventories and informal assessments

Assessment of Key Teaching Strategies for Writing

Strategy	Description	Opportunities for Assessment	Reflective Questions
Modeled Writing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •The teacher writes and "thinks aloud". •The short focused lesson is based on observed needs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Teacher observation •Interaction with students •Analysis of written response (when appropriate) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Were the students engaged? •Was the lesson focused on observed needs? •Did I achieve my purpose for the lesson?

Strategy	Description	Opportunities for Assessment	Reflective Questions
Shared Writing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Teacher plans the writing and holds the pen, but unlike modeled writing, involves the students in construction 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Observation of student involvement •Observation of contributions and suggestions made by the students •Interaction 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Were the students engaged? •Did I involve all students? •Did the lesson meet the students' needs?

Strategy	Description	Opportunities for Assessment	Reflective Questions
Guided Writing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Carefully planned small group instruction to meet observed needs or to extend •Involves student conferencing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Anecdotal records •Teacher checklist •Analysis of writing samples •Peer assessment and self-evaluation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Are the sessions meeting the observed needs? •What level of support is required? •Am I extending the students?

Strategy	Description	Opportunities for Assessment	Reflective Questions
Independent Writing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Writing for a clearly identified audience and purpose 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Analysis of writing •Observation of helping circle •Rubrics and student self-evaluation •Teacher and/or student checklists 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Are the students enjoying writing? •Do they perceive audience and purpose for their writing?

Rubrics 1 of 2

- Are a set of rules or expectations by which the quality of written pieces are determined
- Can be used to assess samples of various types of writing throughout the school year
- Can find many generic rubrics in books or on-line
- Use rubrics created by the teacher or by the teacher and students together

Rubrics

2 of 2

- Consider the desired outcomes for the specific assignment and the strengths and weaknesses of their students when creating rubrics
- Show to students ahead of time so they know what is expected of them
- Provides opportunities for self-evaluation when the student completes a rubric for their own work
- Plan future instruction using student completed rubrics

Checklists

- Can make the writing process more manageable for young writers
- May be adapted to fit the criteria for various writing assignments
- Created easily and can be used in combination with other forms of assessment to assist students in goal setting
- May be used by the teacher, the student, or both
- Can include what activities teachers expect students to engage in and any important points they want students to consider as they write

Portfolios

1 of 2

- Are a collection of student's work, and their reflection on that work
- Can be used to show improvement in writing over time
- May allow artifacts to be collected and chosen by the student, the teacher, or a combination of both
- Allow students to choose pieces for their portfolio to give a sense of ownership and involve self-assessment

Portfolios

2 of 2

- Are interactive assessment tools in contrast to merely receiving a grade from the teacher
- Direct students to reflect upon their entries
- Read student reflections to gain insight into students' perceptions of themselves as writers

Inventories

- Use to gather information about students' writing interests and perceptions of abilities
- Can be helpful in planning instruction and increasing student motivation
- May be administered in several different ways (orally, written form, individually, in groups, etc)
- Use open-ended questions or statements that require the student to choose a response
- May use pictures to simplify the process for younger students
- Use Writing Attitude Survey (Kear, et. Al, 2000) for younger writers

Informal Assessments

1 of 2

- Used nearly every day to evaluate student growth and performance
- Allows the teacher to record important information that may not be evident in the finished product (focuses more on process)
- Are helpful in planning instruction (mini-lessons)
- Supplemental of more formal assessments

Informal Assessments 2 of 2

- Organize and record informal observations with anecdotal records
- Find a way to record anecdotal observations in a manner that works for you (a simple form can be created, note cards can be used for each student, etc)
- May be helpful to set up a schedule for observing students on a rotating basis

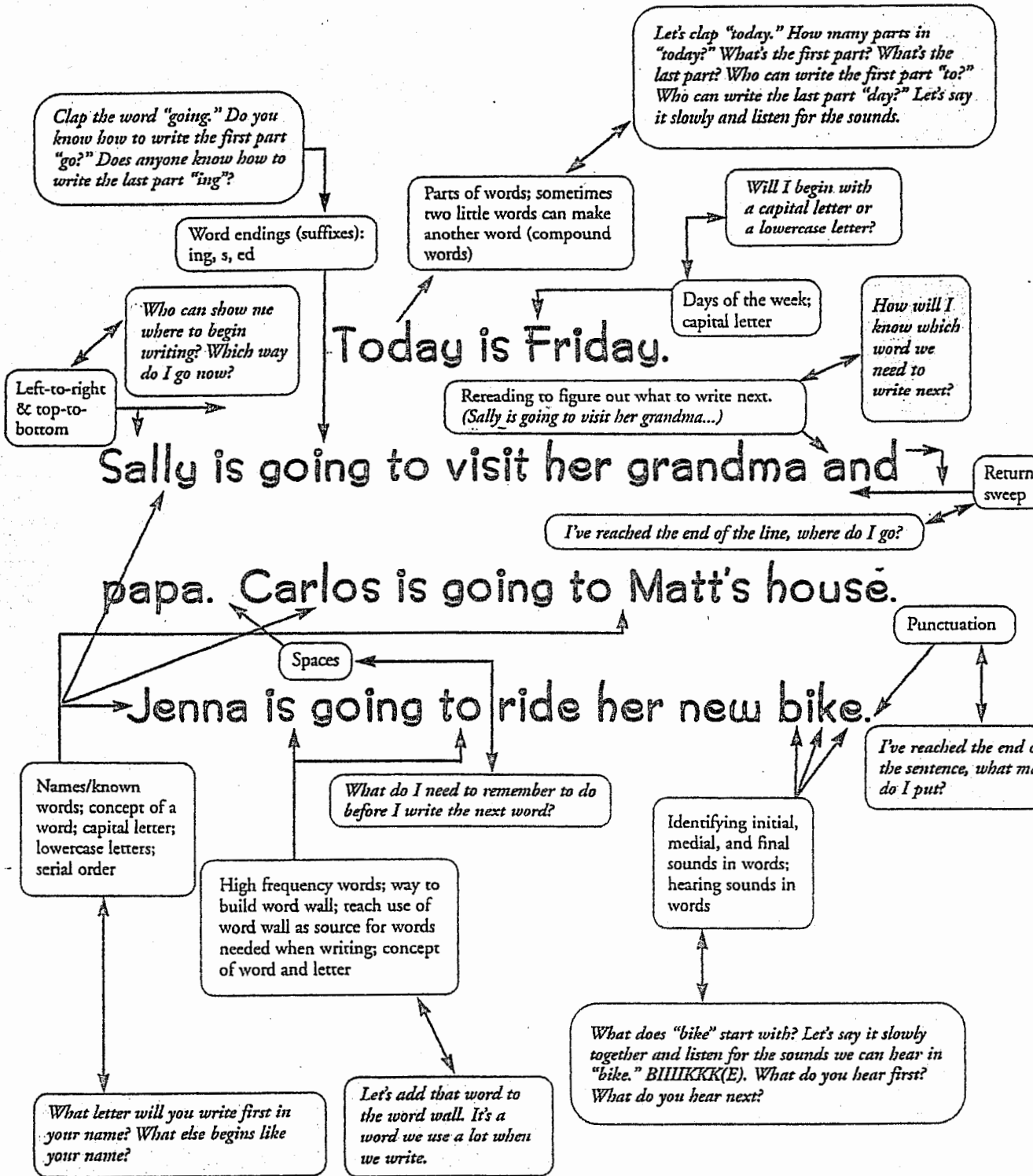
Reflection

- Complete the Final Reflection sheet
- Discuss your reflections with a neighbor
- Be prepared to share a reflection with the whole group

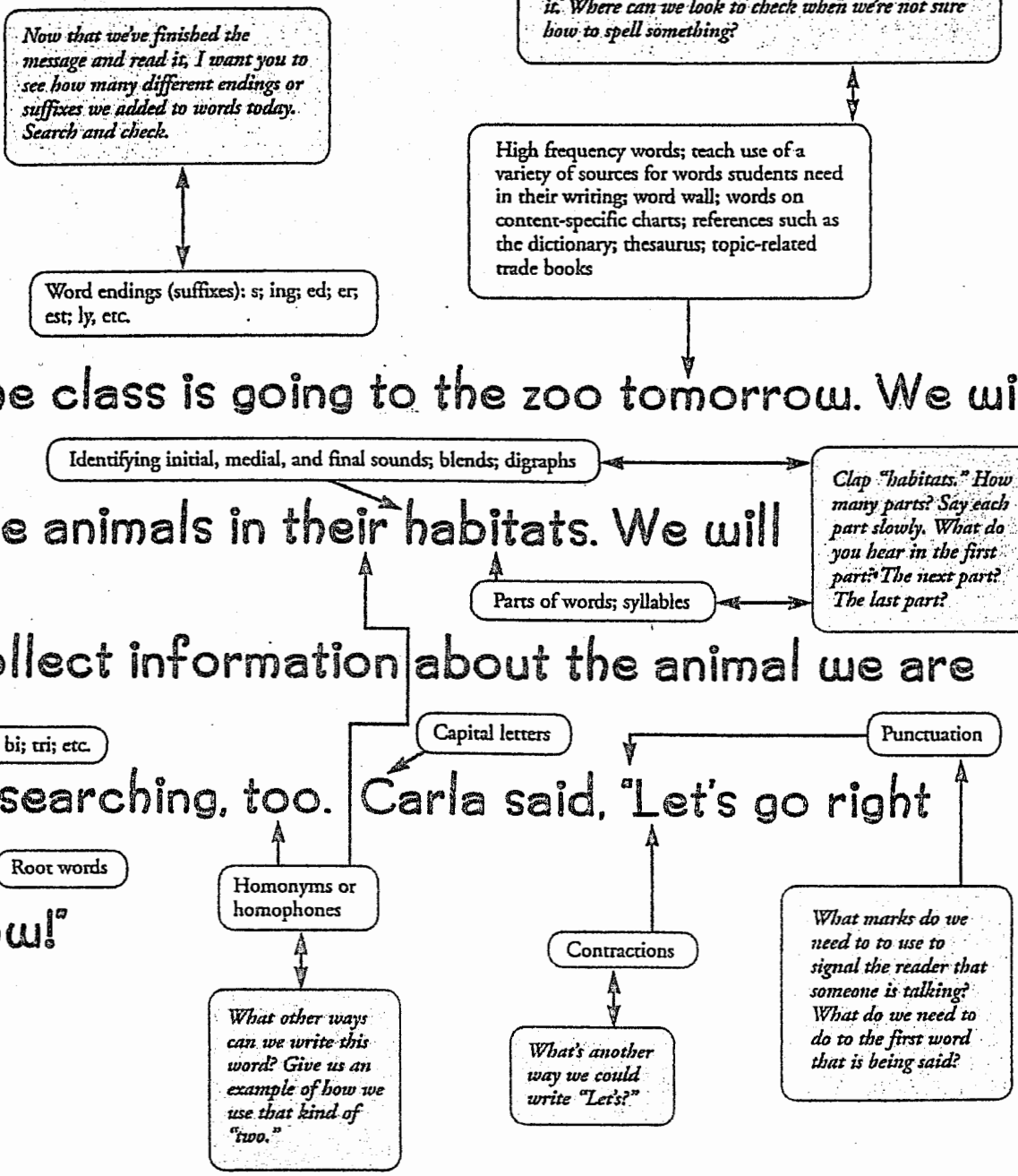
Thank You!

Thank you for participating in this workshop! I hope you have collected many strategies, tips and ideas that you can apply in your own classroom!

Teaching Possibilities: A Kindergarten Class' Shared Writing of the Daily News



Teaching Possibilities: A Second Grade Class' Shared Writing of a Class Message



Appendix H

Implementation Log

Name:

Date of Implementation:

Strategy Used: (Circle One)

Shared Writing

Interactive Writing

Mini Lesson

Journaling

Lesson Plan:

Appendix I

3-2-1 Reflection

Name: _____

Date: _____ Session Number: _____

3 Things I Learned...

2 Ideas I Will Use in my Classroom...

1 Question I Still Have...

Appendix J

Reference List

Session 1: Introduction and Background
Shared Writing/Interactive Writing

Button, K., Johnson, M.J., & Furgerson, P. (1996). Interactive writing in a primary classroom. *The Reading Teacher*, (49)6, 446-454

DaCruz, C.P., & Schulman, M.B. (1998). *Getting the most out of morning message and other shared writing lessons*. New York, NY: Scholastic.

Fang, Z. (1999). Expanding the vista of emergent writing research: Implications for early childhood educators. *Early Childhood Education Journal*, (26)3, 179-182.

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Graham, S., MacArthur, C.A., & Fitzgerald, J. (2007). *Best practices in writing instruction*. New York, NY: The Guildford Press.

Appendix K

OPERATIONAL MINI-LESSON 6

Silent/Quiet Writing

Materials: timer, chart paper, marker

Prep Step: None

Procedure

Engage your students in a discussion about how the words "silent" and "quiet" are different. Demonstrate the difference by having them sing the alphabet song quietly and then again silently in their heads.

Next, show them the timer and have them listen to its ring. Explain that after every mini-lesson we will have five minutes of silent writing followed by five minutes of quiet writing. (We have found that ten minutes total writing time is a good starting point for the beginning of kindergarten.) This time can and should be adjusted as the year progresses and your students mature.

You want to make clear that during silent writing there will be absolutely no talking. During quiet writing time only discussions pertaining to their writing will occur.

Follow Up

To help your students understand the concept of discussions that pertain to their writing, make a list of the types of talk you would expect to hear during quiet writing. Be sure to include non-

examples. Also point out that there will be many times during quiet writing when talking will not be necessary. It is permissible only on a need-to- collaborate basis. A sample list is found below.

Examples of Quiet Writing Talk

1. "Please help me sound out the word beach."
2. "What letter do you hear at the end of school?"
3. "Read this sentence and tell me if it makes sense."
4. "Can you think of another word for 'went'?"
5. "Will you show me how to make a lower case k?"
6. "What would be a good title for this picture?"

GOAL
To define the difference between silent and quiet writing, and to model what is appropriate to talk about during quiet writing

Non-Examples of Quiet Writing Talk

1. "Are you going to Jim's birthday party?"
2. "I brought my lunch to school today."
3. "Do you know how to ride a bike with two wheels?"
4. "I have two dogs and one cat."
5. "I know how to spell my name."
6. "I can't find my crayon box." ■

Appendix L

PRINT AWARENESS MINI-LESSON 6

The First Word of a Sentence Has a Capital Letter

Materials: alphabet strip with capital and lower-case letters, chart paper, markers
Prep Step: None

Procedure

Start by showing students the alphabet strip. Discuss how every letter of the alphabet is written two ways, "upper case" (or "capital") and "lower case." Explain that the first word of every sentence starts with a capital letter. Tell your students that you are going to write several sentences together to demonstrate this concept.

GOAL

**To capitalize
the first letter
of a sentence**

Start your story with this sentence: "Yesterday, I brought my lunch to school." Use a red marker to write the letter "Y" in "yesterday" and a blue marker for the rest of the letters. Write the word "I" in red since it is always capitalized. Make mention of that fact, but remember that the focus of this lesson is starting sentences with capital letters. Move to the next sentence following the same procedure. When you are finished, your chart paper will look something like this:

Yesterday, I brought my lunch to school. My mom packed my favorite sandwich, peanut butter and jelly. My best friend Kelly had peanut butter and jelly too. We laughed about how the peanut butter sticks to your mouth. Thank goodness we had cold milk to wash it down.

Again, color code the word "I" and the proper noun "Kelly." Simply mention to students why you are capitalizing those words, but do not lose the focus of your lesson.

Count the sentences. Point out to students that you know where one sentence stops and another starts because of the periods. After every period, you should find a word that starts with a capital letter.

Follow Up

Reinforce this lesson by asking students to highlight the words starting with capital letters in any copied text. Review the words together. ■

Appendix M

FOUNDATIONAL MINI-LESSON 5

Description

Materials: stickers, chart paper, markers, paper, pencils
Prep Step: None

Procedure

Place a large picture on the chalkboard or easel. Invite your students to look at the picture and tell you what they see. Write their observations on chart paper. For example, if the picture is a kitten you might write these observations:

"I see a kitten. The kitten is gray and white. The kitten is cute and looks like she is smiling. The kitten is tiny. The kitten looks soft."

Now take the picture away and read the class their observations. Ask if they can still picture the kitten in their heads. They should be able to. Explain that a good writer can paint a picture with words just as a painter does with color. Although pictures are important in a book, the reader won't be dependent on a picture if the writer uses descriptive words. Beginning writers need to practice writing descriptive words. Give each child a sticker on a sheet of paper.

Instruct them to write words that would describe the picture on their sticker. Tell them they can write single descriptive words or complete sentences. Invite them to share with a partner when finished. Instruct them to close their eyes and try to picture the sticker while their partner reads their descriptive words.

*To model and
practice the use
of descriptive
words*

Follow Up

One of your writing centers can include papers with stickers so students can continue to practice writing descriptive words. Papers can be stapled together to make a sticker book of descriptions. ■

Appendix N

Reference List

Session 2: Writing Workshop

- Dierking, C.C., & Jones, S.A. (2003). *Growing up writing: Mini-lessons for emergent and beginning writers*. Gainsville, FL: Maupin House
- Gillet, J.W., & Beverly, L. (2001). *Directing the writing workshop*. New York, NY: The Guilford Press
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- Rog, L.J. (2007). *Marvelous mini-lessons for teaching beginning writing, K-3*. Newark, DE: International Reading Association.
- Wagner, L., Grogan, J.G., & Agnew, A.T. (2001). The nuts and bolts of teaching first-grade writing through a journal workshop. *The Reading Teacher*, 55(2), 120-125.

Appendix O

Final Reflection

Please answer the following questions about the professional development sessions entitled "Effective Writing Strategies for Primary Grades".

Section 1

Please make a selection based on the following five-point scale:

1= Strongly Disagree 2= Disagree 3= Neutral 4= Agree 5= Strongly Agree

1. I found these sessions to be relevant to my classroom teaching.

1 2 3 4 5

2. I learned more about writing instruction and best practice for teaching writing to my primary students.

1 2 3 4 5

3. I came away with several strategies that I would like to try in my classroom.

1 2 3 4 5

4. I found the implementation portion of the sessions to be helpful and meaningful.

1 2 3 4 5

5. The information in these sessions was presented in a clear, easy to understand manner.

1 2 3 4 5

Comments:

Section 2

1. What did you find to be the most useful portion of these sessions? Why?

2. Has the information presented in these sessions changed how you will teach writing? Why or why not?

3. Is there something you would like to know more about, or on which enough information was not given?

Appendix P

Reference List

Session 3: Journaling and Assessment

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- Mabry, L. (1999). Writing to the rubric: Lingering effects of traditional standardized testing on direct writing assessment. *Phi Delta Kappan, 80*(9), 673-679.
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- Romeo, L. (2008). Informal writing assessment linked to instruction: A continuous process for teachers, students, and parents. *Reading & Writing Quarterly, (24)1*, 25-51
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