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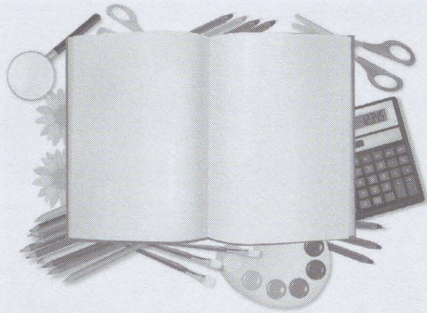
## Recommended Citation

# Engaging Learners in Multimodal Meaning Making to Inspire Writing

by Rebecca R. Norman, Ph.D. and Janine Bixler, Ph.D.

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*"I hate reading. I hate writing."* Nina (all names are pseudonyms), a fourth grader at the time, told her literacy tutor in February. *"I'm no good at it. I don't like it."* This statement of dislike was supported by her Elementary Reading Attitude Survey (ERAS; McKenna & Kear, 1990) scores, for which she ranked in the 19th percentile, and her Elementary Writing Attitude Survey (EWAS; Kear, Coffman, McKenna, & Ambrosio, 2000) score, for which she ranked in the 24th percentile. These scores indicated that her enjoyment of reading and writing was lower than over 75 percent of her fourth-grade peers.

*"What do you like?"*

*"Art. Making slime. Being with my friends. Art. I come here [the community center] for coding. That's cool."*

The following October, after participating in our after-school arts-based literacy program, Nina's mom found us one Saturday. *"Nina's report card came in. I have to show it to you. I tried everything to help her in reading and writing, but nothing helped until we found this program. Now she reads and writes."* Nina's more recent ERAS and EWAS scores supported that she now viewed herself as a reader and a writer, placing her at the 70th percentile and 88th percentile respectively.

*"Why do you think her grades and attitude improved?"* one supporter of the tutoring program asked. The answer was simple: *"We inspire reading and writing through art."*

Like many of the reluctant writers with whom we work, Nina did not view herself as a writer, and saw writing as a school requirement and not something she chose to do or valued. She struggled with getting her own ideas on paper. She needed something more than the traditional writing instruction, something that allowed her to make meaning the way she knew best—with pictures, actions, and conversations with others—before putting words to paper. Nina needed to experience ideas in these multimodal language art forms (Kress & Leeuwen, 2001) to inspire words and her writing.

In this article, we explain the importance of engaging students in multimodal literacy opportunities to support writing and meaning making. Although a multimodal perspective recognizes that meaning can be created and understood in many ways, with language being just one mode in which to make meaning (Jewitt, 2008), we discuss multimodal literacies as a way to support learners to use non-language modes, specifically art and movement that are many children's strengths, to become writers and more sophisticated language users. We also provide examples of teacher-student conversations and artwork from artists'/writers' workshop sessions (Olshansky, 2008) conducted at a local community center in collaboration with our graduate students. For the different stages of the workshop, we include examples from case study learners to demonstrate how using multimodal learning opportunities can

support learners in viewing themselves and engaging as writers. Finally, we present recommendations for how to create these opportunities in your classroom or community program.

## Why Writers' Workshop Should Be More than Writing

Research shows that using a process approach to writing instruction and explicit teaching of strategies and text structure through mentor texts are effective practices for improving elementary students' writing quality (Graham, McKeown, Kiuhara, & Harris, 2012). Yet, there are learners who still have challenges with entering and moving from prewriting to drafting meaningful ideas. Providing ways to make meaning through other modalities or sign systems, such as art, drama, and conversation, engages learners in ways they can easily and eagerly express themselves (e.g., Andrzejczak, Trainin, & Poldberg, 2005; Bogard & McMackin, 2012; Cowan, 2001; Franco & Unrath, 2015; Martens, Martens, Doyle, Loomis, Fuhrman, Stout, & Soper, 2017; Moore & Caldwell, 1993; Olshansky, 2014). For example, Franco and Unrath (2015) studied a writing club with 45 first-grade boys in which the boys studied and created art as a way to write. They found that the boys were highly engaged throughout the process and improved in all areas of English language arts. Bogard and McMackin (2012) studied third graders as they used storyboards, oral rehearsing recordings, and digital storytelling. They found these modalities improved the students' processes for planning and developing ideas for their stories. Furthermore, Moore and Caldwell (1993) found that second and third graders who rehearsed their stories through drawing or drama wrote higher quality narratives than those who planned their stories in monomodal, traditional ways.

We, and others (e.g., Andrzejczak et al., 2005; Cowan, 2001), have seen transforming results when learners engage in art and writing, using the arts-based literacy approach, Picturing Writing (Olshansky, 2008). This nationally recognized proven practice has been shown to improve student writing quality and reading comprehension with all learners, including English learn-

ers, boys, children of low socioeconomic status, and students with special needs—populations who often do not score as high as their peers on literacy assessments (Olshansky, 2014). One common thread in these is the use of multiple modalities, which not only engage learners in a process they enjoy and find accessible, but also allow for transmediation, the act of moving ideas and meaning from one sign system (e.g., a picture) to another sign system (e.g., words), thus deepening learning (Siegel,1995). One might describe the traditional writing process as linear, in which writers progress through stages and record words sequentially to form sentences and build meaning. But, the act of drafting and revising can be recursive, as the writer moves back and forth through stages to convey clear ideas for an audience to understand. By inviting children to use more familiar modes, such as re-enacting what it looked and felt like to walk in knee-deep snow when writing about a snow day, learners transmediate the actions to words to engage in the writing process. Additionally, creating a picture is a nonverbal way of communicating a snow day experience, which then becomes a conversation point to transmediate the visual ideas into rich conversations and then to print. Engaging young learners in multimodal opportunities to make meaning supports their thinking as they transmediate ideas from more familiar modes and learn to use the writing process to convey ideas. These opportunities to compose texts through pictures values both modalities, with each mode—picture and words—contributing partial meaning and complementing each other to create the whole (Jewitt, 2008).

Inviting children to operate in multiple sign systems allows all learners the opportunity to succeed as communicators in ways they understand, particularly children who find writing challenging, like Nina. Siegel (2006) and Dyson (2004), advocate that a multimodal approach to teaching and learning needs to be the new "basic" in order to provide access to literacy for all children. We, too, have studied how a multimodal focus transforms roadblocks into pathways to learning and meaning making for all learners. Our experiences include an after-school literacy tutoring program, Saturday enrichment programs at a local community center,

and testimonies of our teacher graduates who now utilize artists'/writers' workshop in their own classrooms.

## Our Context

In the sections that follow, we focus on snapshots of children and their literacy successes from our literacy tutoring programs as compelling evidence for why writers' workshop should be more than writing. We share these examples to illustrate the power of multimodal opportunities in the artists'/writers' workshop model (Olshansky, 2008) that we use as we (along with graduate literacy tutors) work with children at the local community center. For about ten weeks, the children meet with their graduate tutors twice a week for an hour and a half with the goals of developing independence as readers and writers and participating in a community of lifelong literacy learning.

The K-6 children who enroll in the program are recommended by their teachers. Typically, the children read at least one grade level below their peers based on either Fountas and Pinnell's (2008) *Benchmark Assessment System* or Leslie and Caldwell's (2017) *Qualitative Reading Inventory-6*. Many of these children do not view themselves as readers and writers, as demonstrated by their comments while discussing the questions on *ERAS* and *EWAS* with their tutors. The tutors also use other developmentally appropriate assessments such as Clay's (2013) *Observation Survey*, Ganske's (2013) *Developmental Spelling Assessment*, and a state-recommended writing rubric. The tutors use this information to determine students' strengths and areas for growth.

Although we do not collect demographic data from the families in our program, we know the population of the urban school district in which the tutoring takes place is approximately 50% Hispanic or Latino, 24% Black or African American, 20% White, and 6% other ethnicities/mixed race. Approximately 75% of the students are eligible for free and reduced lunch and 14% are classified as English Language Learners. Our group of children enrolled in the tutoring program emulates the demographics of the school district in many ways, although over half of the students live in Spanish speaking homes.

## Artists' and Writers' Workshop

The artists'/writers' workshop is a multimodal approach that provides access and opportunities for learners to transform into intentional and engaged artists and writers who learn the many ways we can communicate ideas purposefully and aesthetically. In this section, we describe the artists'/writers' workshop and provide examples from our experiences with case study learners that depict how multimodal literacies invite children who do not perceive themselves as writers into the exciting world of writing.

### Literature Share and Modeling

Each workshop session begins with a mini-lesson introduced with carefully selected literature, focusing on communicating ideas through painting/image-making or one component of the writing process, supported by the pictures created by the illustrator. These lessons center around mentor texts, or "...pieces of literature that...help our young writers learn how to do what they may not yet be able to do on their own" (Dorfman & Cappelli, 2017, p. 6). The teacher reads the mentor texts and leads the students in a discussion about what the illustrators and authors did well (e.g., develop suspense through the picture, embed facts in the story) and how the techniques and vocabulary (e.g. sponging to add snow, close ups of faces for suspense, similes to describe characters, strong verbs to convey actions) can be applied to students' own pictures or descriptive writing. During these conversations, the teacher starts with what the children observe about the text, rather than what she notes. "When children notice things, instruction can begin with a joint focus of attention because the children are already attending" (Johnston, 2004, p.18). Because the teacher wants the children to initiate the conversation with their observations and ideas, it is important to choose high quality mentor texts that lead the children to notice the techniques and vocabulary we want them to acquire. One example of a conversation around the mentor text occurred with *The Snowy Day* (Keats, 1962).

*"Those trees are cool,"* one child shouted out, commenting on the way the illustrator created the snow covered trees.

*"What painting techniques might you use to emulate his illustrations?"* Sam asked, even though she had not planned on talking about that specific page.

*The children suggested "crayon rubbing on sandpaper" and "sponge dabbing."*

*"Maybe you could try those techniques in your pictures"* Sam suggested before continuing with her next planned question.

*"What silver dollar words does the author use to describe what happened?"*

*The children noted the use of the word smacking instead of hitting, and crunching instead of walking. "They make the pictures come alive as if you are there and can hear him walking and swinging the stick." Two boys raise up on their knees and pretend to swing sticks like Peter.*

As these "silver dollar" words (Olshansky, 2008) are added to words walls, students often act them out. For example, when writing research-based animal stories, we demonstrated how animals moved (e.g., butterflies flutter, eagles glide). These dramatizations solidify the definitions and help them choose words that convey their exact meaning.

Next, the teacher models using these techniques with her own topic and "writing" project as she works through the different stages of the art/writing process to show how she plans and represents her ideas. Throughout, the teacher references her use of the mentor text to make meaning, being careful to include observations made by the children during the literature share. One example of this occurred as I (Rebecca) modeled painting a picture of my problem, an out of control sled in my winter story, after reading *Wild Horse Winter* (Honda, 1995).

*"We noticed how Tetsuya Honda really zoomed in on the horses to show that they had a problem. That close up really helped us feel the suspense, right? I'm going to do that with my picture of myself to show the out of control sled. How would I look?"*

*"Your mouth would be open like this."* Nina opens her mouth wide. *"You'd probably be screaming because you would be scared."*

*"True. So, I'm going to make my head take up a lot of my page. I want to see part of my body, maybe my arms holding onto the sled, but I'll really show fright with my face."*

The use of mentor texts and modeling does transfer to the children's artwork and writing. One example of using the mentor text to inspire artwork occurred with Zina, a second grader.

*During one of our literature share sessions, which take place at the beginning of every tutoring session, Zina sat quietly, with her eyes on the illustrations of The Snowy Day. She rarely initiated ideas at this time, as she would arrive just as we started and seemed to use the time to settle into our shared space on the floor. Later, during our group share, I (Janine) asked, "Zina what winter techniques did you choose to create the textures and colors for your character painting?"* See Figure 1 for Zina's image.



*Figure 1.* Zina's image inspired by *The Snowy Day* (Keats, 1962).

*Zina grabbed* The Snowy Day *from the front room display and opened the page to where Peter ventures through the snow with a stick. The textures and colors in her sky closely resembled Keats's sky, and she explained, "I used the sponge and the blues and pinks to create the sky." Her details became opportunities for rich descriptive language and complemented the playful mood of her story.*

**Work Session**
After the mini-lesson, children are given time to engage in the art and writing process (e.g., Murray, 1972; Olshansky, 2008) with their own pieces. They create pictures, brainstorm, draft, revise, and edit their pieces.

Although we present it below as occurring in steps, it is important to remember that the writing process is recursive (Hayes & Flower, 1980), with writers moving back and forth between the stages. Writers do not work through all of these stages in one work session, but instead typically focus their energy on one or two stages each day.

**Painting/Image Making.** In the artists'/writers' workshop, children begin the creating process by either painting watercolor pictures or creating collages. These images go beyond quick sketches used to brainstorm ideas in other classes. They are works of art that inspire writers to write with rich details and vocabulary and are included in their published pieces. What truly distinguishes this process is the fact that the artwork comes first, rather than as an afterthought for students who finish their writing (Andrzejczak et al., 2005). The children use this time to compose their story in pictures, as they purposefully choose to include details, colors, and textures (Martens et al., 2017) that they will utilize later to compose the words for their text.

> *"Can I use the black?" Bryan asked his sister, Sarita.*
> *"In a minute." She intently colored her groundline a dark black. "This has to be black."*
> *"What is it?" Bryan asked as he waited impatiently.*
> *"The concrete in our backyard. It's black like the night sky and hot."*

Some of these very words appeared in her description of setting, "The concrete was black like the night sky." See Figure 2 for her image and writing.

The tutors and children also use videos as mentor texts while painting. For example, Jorge, a sixth grader, wanted to perfect the way he drew a soccer player kicking the ball. His college tutor found a video online on how to draw a soccer player. Jorge played the video over and over as he sketched his character into his picture. He wanted to capture the detail of the muscles in the player's leg as he dribbled the ball down the field. These details served to create the rich description of his character page of his story. See Figure 3 for his image and writing.



On a blazing hot summer morning, in Angela's yard, it was a perfect scene for a barbeque. The concrete was black like the night sky. The long green grass surrounded the aqua pool. Angela's mother grilled on the bright red grill. Juicy hamburgers sizzled on the hot rack. The smell of lunch lingered in the air. Angela's mother told the girls not to get close to the pool.

*Figure 2.* Sarita's image and writing.



It is 1pm on the soccer field. Max is playing soccer with his friends. He is athletic, muscular, and swift, making him a skillful player.

*Figure 3.* Jorge's image and writing.

**Brainstorm.** Writers plan their writing, whether it is through graphic organizers, talking with a friend about a story, or sketching their ideas. In our artists'/writers' workshop, children brainstorm their whole story using

storyboards (see Figure 4 for a sample storyboard) prior to beginning their painting and drafting. Then, after they have created their detailed artwork, they read these images to brainstorm the words and phrases they might use in their writing. These images become concrete signs to generate ideas with other learners or graduate tutors, places to begin transmediating words from the pictures. An example of how writers use their pictures while brainstorming can be seen with this vignette of Manny, a kindergartener.

*Manny placed his picture of our community center, a repurposed Armory building in the city, onto his easel. His graduate tutor prompted, "Tell me about your picture." As Manny described his details, he generated the words "fragile" to describe the windows, because "they are old and one of them over there is boarded up," and "sprouting*

*grass" and "uneven ground" to describe the worn grass and dirt landscape of the building's entrance. As he explained, "There is grass coming up in some spots, and dirt holes in other spots, I notice this when I run out there with my brothers and friends." He described the sun as "crying" as his sky showed a storm approaching, and he had learned that authors use personification by asking, "If the sun was a person, what would she be doing?"*

The time devoted to brainstorming, with the support of a graduate tutor who could help him write these "big words," was meaningful and lead to a descriptive story. See Figure 5 for Manny's image and writing.

**Drafting.** As stated above, children use their images to inspire vocabulary and rich description. For many children, such as Nina, this is enough. But, other children
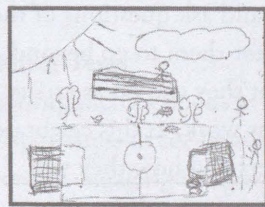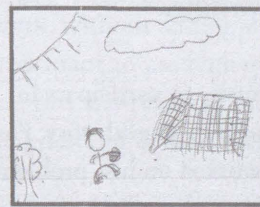


**Setting**

Time of Day: morning

Weather: sunny

Season: fall

Who? teammeat, coach, fans, other team

Doing: Playing a soccer game

Where? soccer field the field

Setting detail: big, Goals, colorful, my team's cobr is yellow

Doing: showing up to the game

Hint of Character: a goal & gloves
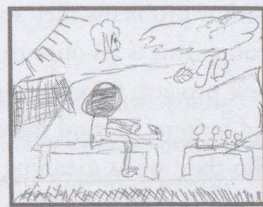
**Character**

When? 10:00

Who? Me and teammeat

Doing? Puting on our equipment

Facts: game starts at 10:30, Playing against tough team. Also supposed to be field at at 10:10 for warmup

Sounds: pasing the ball or kicking the ball

Hint of Problem: one teammate is running late

Where? on are side of the field

**Problem**

When? 10:25

What happens? The goaly is still not there

Where? On the soccer field

How does character react? Start getting Volunteer and stat to get ready

**Solution/Ending**

When? end of game

How is the problem solved? I went to be the goaly

What does character do at the end of the story? Did a good job, won the game, Deflected 15 shoots, won 4:2

Image-Making Within The Writing Process®

*Figure 4.* An example storyboard.

The giant red Armory with fragile black windows stands tall on the uneven ground, sprouting green grass surrounded by dirt.
The gloomy sky, split in two, ready to fight a storm, is causing the yellow sun to cry because it wants to play.

*Figure 5.* Manny's image and writing.

need more scaffolds and opportunities to participate in transmediation in order to create a meaningful story. For example, as Juan, a third grader, worked on his "problem page" (i.e., the page that introduces the conflict) of a winter story, he had trouble expanding on his picture.

> *"My uncle shot me with a nerf gun."*
>
> *"So, you went out riding your bike and your uncle shoots you with a nerf gun? I thought he was riding with you," I (Rebecca) commented.*
>
> *"He was."*
>
> *"Tell me about your picture. Tell me about the day."*
>
> *Juan pushed in his chair and pointed excitedly to his picture. "It was the big blizzard. My uncle, the 11-year-old one…you know him. Me and him decided to go out riding our bikes. So, we are riding around." Juan moved around the table. "Then, it really starts to snow, and I can't see him anymore. I was scared. Then, I felt a nerf bullet hit me. Then another. Pow! Pow! They hit me in the belly. I fell down." Juan slowly fell on the floor as if he were dying. Then he jumped up. "He had gone up on the roof of the shed with his nerf gun. That's him there." He pointed to the picture. "He shot me. Oh! Ow! He shot me." Juan slowly fell down again.*

*"Wow, that's a cool story," I replied. "And now I get your picture. Did you put any of that into your words here? Your readers would really enjoy those details to make your picture come alive."*

*"No. I guess I could." Juan picked up his pencil and slowly began to add more to his writing.*

Juan had participated in the mentor text discussion and modeling. He had painted a picture and brainstormed his story with the graphic organizers before starting to write. But, he needed something more. He needed to dramatize his story as part of his drafting process to help him cement the words and ideas before putting them on the paper.

**Group Share**
Finally, the artists/writers participate in a community share after the work session. Here, they are able to show their artwork and writing, highlight techniques they used or problems they solved, and ask questions of the group. This is an opportunity for them to go beyond their projects to reflect on what they can do as artists and writers; beyond the current work, as this celebrates who they are as meaning makers and how they will continue to learn and grow from each other.

> During one group share, I (Janine) asked,
> *"How have you grown as artists and writers?"*
> *"When I draw, I think about the shapes that I know to help me draw, like when the tail reminded me of a chili."*
> *"I use many more silver dollar words in my stories, and sometimes you challenged me to think of other descriptive words to make my picture come alive."*
> *"I think about the colors I use when there is a happy ending or when there is a problem."*
> *"I learned how to make a twilight sky."*
> *"This is the first book I painted and wrote, and it's sooo BEAUTIFUL!"*

**Author Celebration**
At the end of the program, we host an author celebration. This celebration brings together the children, tutors, families and other community members (e.g., members of the local school district, administration

from the local college, board members from the community center) to commemorate the accomplishments of these artists/writers. The children read selected pages from their spiral-bound, published books on a professional PA system, with the images and text projected for the audience to see. They then have time to share their books in small groups with light refreshments. This celebration is known around the community, and the artists/writers think about this authentic audience as they create their books.

## Making Writing More Multimodal

Throughout the artists'/writers' workshop, we engaged our learners in writing through multimodal meaning making. Although our examples come from an after-school tutoring program, these ideas are also being implemented by teachers in classrooms throughout the country and can be modified for any grade level and any class.

### Mentor Texts

Utilizing picture books as mentor texts allows young artists/writers to see how others have used art and words to create engaging images and texts that we want to read. It is important to pick texts that you and your students relate to, enjoy reading, and want to emulate. Before you use the text to teach writing, introduce it to your students as readers. Allow them to figure out how and why the book engages them. After all, "we must recognize and savor the impact of the writing [and artwork] as a reader to cultivate the desire to emulate those moves in our own writing" (Laminack, 2017, p. 754). Texts that can be used for multiple lessons are especially beneficial for this very reason. Additionally, opportunities to revisit picture books and experience art have been shown to benefit bilingual learners' literacy development (Carger, 2004) and can foster complex thinking through social conversations (Wolfenbarger & Sipe, 2007).

It is easy to find lists of mentor texts by searching the internet or asking colleagues. While this may help you begin thinking about using mentor texts in your instruction, it is important to only use books that you love. Also, be sure to choose texts that reflect the diversity of today's classroom so that your learners can connect with and see themselves in the images. One good resource to read about mentor texts is *Mentor Texts: Teaching Writing through Children's Literature, K-6* by Lynne R. Dorfman and Rose Cappelli (2017).

### Privileging Art

Many teachers and students view art as an add on; once we have completed our writing, we can draw a picture while the other writers finish up. These classrooms privilege the written text over the artistic text. As an example, Rebecca once had a second grader tell her, "Words are more important than pictures. They [her readers] don't have to look at the pictures, but they need to read the words." But, research demonstrates that the pictures in books often extend the written word (e.g., Bishop & Hickman, 1992), and children who create artwork first often write more elaborate and more interesting text (Andrzejczak et al., 2005). Furthermore, authors can, and do, convey all of their meaning through artwork, without adding words. We believe it is especially important to use high quality art supplies when creating this artwork as children have an easier time creating and describing their vibrant pictures.

### Break the Silence

Britton (1970) wrote that "...all that children write... takes place afloat a sea of talk" (p. 29). Yet, in many classrooms, children are expected to write in silence. For many, this silence stifles their ability to think or at least to clarify their ideas. Rebecca's kindergartener commented recently that she has to be silent during writing, but, "Sometimes I need to talk so I know what to write." For some children it is merely the act of speaking aloud to themselves that helps them think about what they want to say. For other children, they need to participate in collaborative writing (Yarrow & Topping, 2001), where they talk with other children. This collaborative writing allows them to converse quietly and make decisions about their writing, without looking to the teacher. They can ask each other, "Does this sentence make sense?" "I've used *said* three times. What other words can I use?" or "What is a good word to describe my bear?" For us, "writing" time is a noisy process as children talk to their tutors and each other, but it is also a productive time.

Children should also participate in whole-class conversations during the discussion of the mentor texts and modeling as well as the group shares at the end of each lesson. As seen in the excerpts above, these are all opportunities for the children to learn from each other and reflect on their progress as artists and writers.

### Bring Writing Alive Through Drama
"Too often children are asked to write about something that is totally removed from their knowledge, life experiences, imaginations...If we bring such a writing task alive for children first and give the pretext and context through drama, then they may want and be able to write successfully…" (Baldwin & John, 2012, p. 7). Drama allows children to breathe life into their writing. Writers, such as Juan, can better visualize how to describe an action, and thus choose more interesting words, if they first demonstrate that action. This is seen above when Juan acted out his story before diving back into writing. They also use drama to build their understanding of rich vocabulary, such as when children act out verbs they might use in their writing.

### Authentic Purposes and Authentic Audiences
In too many classrooms, literacy activities teach students to "do school" rather than "do life" (Pearson, Raphael, Benson, & Madda, 2007). Authentic literacy tasks, on the other hand, "have the primary function of helping students understand how content and reading [and writing] can be useful in their lives" (Parsons & Ward, 2011, pp. 262-263). These authentic tasks are motivating, as they include choice and emulate the writing purposes we encounter in real life. As we mentioned above, the children write picture books, just like "real authors" that are published as spiral-bound books, and shared with authentic audiences, audiences beyond their tutors and themselves. This authenticity inspires them to use rich vocabulary and description that allows the audience to understand the writing without further explanation from the authors. The students view themselves as published authors.

### Managed Choice, Manage Motivation
We know that choice is an important motivator that provides ownership in the experience; however,

managed choice (Allington, 2002), allows learners to choose topics and ideas within the parameters of a learning experience, so that genres and concepts can be explicitly taught. In our case, for each program, we chose the genre to teach based on learning needs and other motivating factors. For example, in the year of the 100th anniversary of our National Park System, children studied a National Park of their choice. During a very snowy winter, we embarked on winter story narratives and studied various art techniques for depicting winter weather. We have varied our focus to balance research and informational text opportunities with narrative formats, especially when learners might continue with us for two semesters. When modeling, we choose a topic or focus that is different from that of our learners, so that their art and writing are original to them.

## Conclusions
Although Nina's mother's celebration of her daughter's progress report is one indicator of progress, we hope that the snapshots of our learners engaged in multimodal meaning making prompted you to think about the Ninas in your classroom, who have little interest in or who struggle with the writing process. Our own experience in using an arts-based literacy workshop in school classrooms and tutoring programs confirms that building on children's personal and cultural assets through familiar and varied modes of communicating transmediates learners into artists and writers who make meaning with pictures and words. Including art and other transmediation opportunities in the writers' workshop has shown us how transforming a multimodal approach can be for learners like Nina, and especially our youngest learners, who evolve as artists/writers before our eyes, and proudly read their published books to a packed audience of family and community members. They enter as reluctant learners and exit our doors wide-eyed with broad smiles, clutching their books as treasures.

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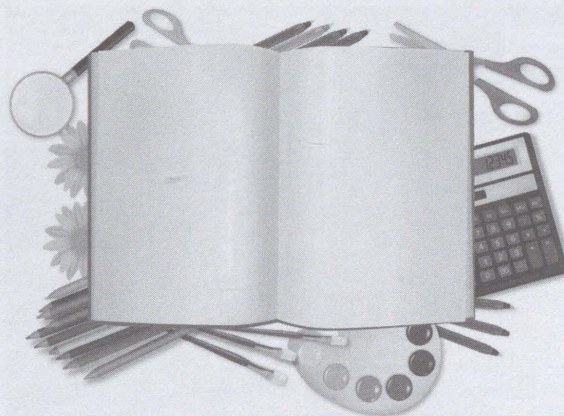
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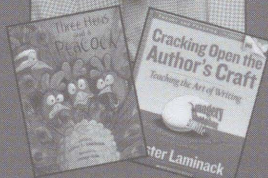
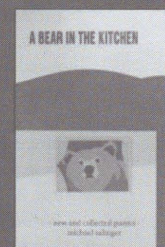## General Session Speakers

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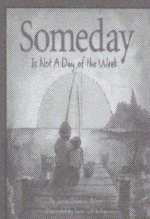
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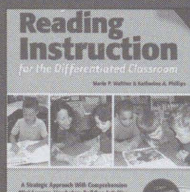
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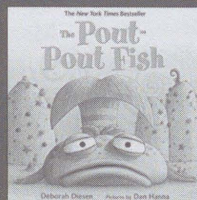
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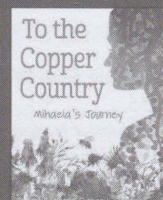
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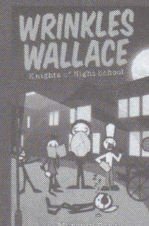
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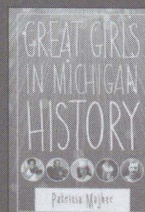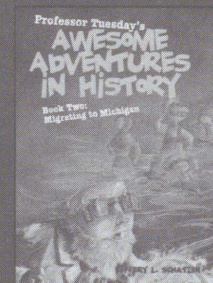Darya Owens
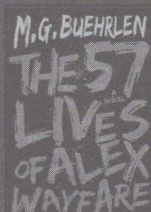
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