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A Curriculum Guide Based on Developmental Stages of Kindergarten and First Grade Writing

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A CURRICULUM GUIDE BASED ON DEVELOPMENTAL STAGES
OF KINDERGARTEN AND FIRST GRADE WRITING

by

Heidi E. Borrud

August, 1984

The relationship between the developmental stages of a child and the acquisition of written language was studied. Through research, developmental stages were identified. The stages were used to develop objectives for a kindergarten and first grade writing curriculum guide. Activities that would aid in the achievement of the given objectives are suggested.

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CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

Written language is a highly complex skill. Many adults take for granted the ease with which they are able to convey a written message. The acquisition of written language is a developmental process which starts before formal education.

When does writing begin? It is clear that writing development begins before a child ever writes a letter or composes a sentence. A child is constantly surrounded and exposed to written language. Everyday objects, such as cereal boxes, television advertisements, labels and signs, all contain a printed message. Writing development begins when the child understands that the print stands for something other than itself. The realization that the symbol represents words, ideas, or messages is what allows a child to assign meaning to their own invented marks.

When a child enters the public school system, s/he is usually able to differentiate writing from other symbolic forms. The student now has the developmental background to begin an uninhibited exploration of the written language.

Through teaching experience in preschool, kindergarten and first grade, the project author has observed the need

for a writing curriculum based on the developmental stages of written language acquisition. When speaking of written language, she is referring to both the mechanics of writing and the ability to convey a message in written form. A practical writing guide cannot be produced without a clear understanding of the developmental stages a child goes through in written language acquisition.

Scope and Problem

The scope of this project was a kindergarten and first grade developmental writing guide. The problem of this project was that the school district, in which the author taught, lacked a kindergarten and first grade independent writing curriculum based on a child's developmental writing stages. The focus of the project was on utilizing research to create a writing guide based on a child's developmental writing stages.

Purpose

It was the purpose of this project to develop a kindergarten and first grade writing curriculum guide based on the information found through research on the acquisition of written language. This project was designed as the foundation for a second and third grade writing curriculum guide developed by Dana Persson-Zora (1984).

Limitations

This project was limited by certain factors:

1. This guide was designed for use with the second and third grade independent writing curriculum mentioned above.
2. This guide emphasized the use of phonic skills and so would probably be more adaptable in a school district which uses a phonetic reading series.

Assumptions

The following assumptions were made:

1. These activities were designed to be the foundation of a second and third grade guide being simultaneously developed by Dana Persson-Zora (1984).
2. The goal of this guide is independent writing through the use of phonic skills.
3. The ability to convey a written message is a developmental process which begins before entrance in school.

Definition of Terms

Independent Writing - This term is used to refer to writing that is done by a child in order to convey a meaningful message. The child employs phonetic spelling so that s/he does not have to be dependent on the teacher for spelling.

Key Word - Key word is a word or phrase that a child chooses to dictate to a scribe and copy or write

phonetically, to complete a sentence. It is a means of developing a foundation writing vocabulary using words that are most meaningful to the student (Adapted from Sylvia Ashton-Warner, 1973).

Word Banks - Word banks are containers in which a child keeps words he has chosen to learn because they have personal significance to him.

Story Starters - Story starters are designed to spark the student's imagination. They are usually a couple sentences long and include an idea for the child to write about.

Remainder of the Paper

Chapter 2 contains a review of the literature. Chapter 3 includes the procedures used for this project. Chapter 4 gives the teacher strategies for developing a writing program and activities to encourage a child's growth in written communication. Chapter 5 summarizes the research that has been done on the developmental stages of a young child's writing and provides recommendations for future research in this area.

CHAPTER TWO

Review of the Literature

Writing is a process that is meant to convey a message. Recently, this process has become a focus of concern to educators. Adults are so familiar with written language that we often forget the complex nature of the skill. Knowledge of a child's developmental stages in writing will serve to enhance a child's innate ability to write.

This review of the literature explores the connection between oral and written language, the features children use to discriminate writing from other graphic forms and the processes they use to generate their own writing. A limited number of actual studies were found that applied directly to the specific subject area.

The Oral Language-Written Language Connection

While a child is still unable to manipulate a pencil, he is expressing himself through oral communication. Written language is firmly rooted in a child's oral language. King and Rentel (1981:1) stated that:

Learning to write in the context of formal schooling represents for most children not a fresh beginning, but a continuation of a process which is well under way and has its origins in children's acquisition of oral language.

Oral sounds are a child's first attempt at expression. By using his receptive oral language and other sensory modes, he creates an inner language system that corresponds with his experiences. The child uses his inner language system to develop his oral language. Dyson (1981:783) revealed that, "Talk is an integral part of beginning to write, giving both meaning, and for some children, the systematic means for getting that meaning on paper."

Sulzby (1982:39) suggested a natural sequence that eases transition from ". . . interactive face to face oral language to written language." The six modes include conversation, storytelling, dictated composition, handwritten composition, re-reading and editing.

Conversation: In a conversation two speakers are exchanging ideas or information. Neither of the speakers does all the talking, instead it is a shared responsibility. Garvey (1977) showed that even very young children were capable of an informative exchange.

Storytelling: Storytelling is different from conversation in that storytelling is a monologue while conversation is a dialogue. One speaker does all the talking in storytelling while the other person or persons are the listeners. Since there is no linguistic interaction expected between the speaker and the listeners, the speaker needs to be clear, complete and interesting. If the listener must ask a question, the form is adapted back to the conversation mode.

Dictation: In this mode, one person talks while another person writes down what the speaker says. The speaker has to compose a message that can be written down and then read by an audience. This is a more complex step. Although oral language and written language have many similarities, writing is not speech. Graves (1983:161) said that, "Writing wears the guise of speech since it uses the same material; words, information, order, organization. But there is a chasm between speech and print." The speaker must adapt his speech to the conventions of written language.

Handwritten Composition: This mode serves as the transition from oral language to written language. In young children, this form may not be recognizable by adult standards. As the child matures, his writing will also take on the constraints of accepted written language. The audience is not present so it is even more important that the writer be the monitor of the effectiveness of his message. Graves (1983:161) explained it in the following manner:

When I write, I supply everything. Alone and in silence I provide energy, initiative, information, language, order, and the conventions to communicate with an unseen audience of one or thousands, who may not read my writing for days, months, or years.

Re-reading. In this mode, the reader/author keeps in mind the needs of his absent audience. When re-reading is done by the author, he needs to see that the message is

clear and in proper sequence. The author also needs to check his work to see if he has achieved the desired message.

Editing: Editing is defined here as a self-correction and clarification process. With children, the editing process involves the teacher working with the student on editing that is within his grasp. The ultimate objective is to have the writer edit as much of his own work as possible. Editing should be looked upon as a positive experience. Sulzby (1982:39) explained that, "For a young child, editing of written material may provide the most concrete evidence that one's composition is an entity that can be reflected upon and manipulated."

The Use of "Voice" in Language

Oral and written communication has purpose. These purposes are denoted by the term voice. Sealey, Sealey, and Millmore (1979) divide the voices into three categories. They are the expressive voice, the transactional voice, and the poetic voice.

The Expressive Voice: This voice includes personal language. It usually takes the form of ideas and feelings. "The purpose is pure expression" (Temple, Nathan, and Burris, 1982:131).

The Transactional Voice: In the transactional voice the communicator is concerned with accomplishing some goal. This voice can often be found in giving information or instructions, giving advice or attempting to be persuasive.

The Poetic Voice: The poetic voice is the most difficult to develop (Sealey, Sealey, and Millmore, 1979). It is a verbal art form that is meant to stand alone. It includes stories, plays, songs, and poems. Because of the deliberate patterning necessary in the poetic voice, this voice will not be found frequently in a young child's written communication.

In order for the child to have well rounded, written and oral communication skills, he must be given opportunities to practice all three voices. As Sealey, Sealey, and Millmore pointed out (1979:4), "Any set of contrived writing experiences designed for children should be concerned with all three postures."

A Child's Perception of Writing

Much of a child's writing progress is based on his perception of what writing is. Clay (1975:2), in her book, What Did I Write?, believed that a child's writing development is based on ". . . a child's gradual development of a perceptual awareness of those arbitrary customs."

To fully understand the relationship of early writing to perceptual development, one must first understand the

process of perceptual development. In a study of perceptual learning (Temple, Nathan, and Burris, 1975), it was shown that children first paid attention to the whole and only later attended to the parts. As a baby starts his perceptual learning, he can only make gross distinctions. For example, things that move would fit into one category, while things that are stationary would fit into another category. As the baby's perceptual learning develops, he finds distinctive characteristics of items within the category and further defines and develops new categories (Gibson and Levin, 1975).

If perception starts with gross distinctions and goes to finer distinctions, a child's first step in writing development would be the gross differences between writing and similar objects. Letters, being the fine elements of writing, would be the last parts of writing to be distinguished.

Several studies have been done on what distinctive features children use to differentiate writing from other symbolic forms. Gibson (1969) a psychologist at Cornell University, believed that children learned to recognize writing through its "features," not through individual letters. She experimented with young children and concluded that they were using generalized features to recognize writing and not memorized letters.

Lavine (1977), a doctoral student under the direction of the previously mentioned Gibson, did research on what

sort of graphic forms different ages recognized as writing. The children were divided into three, four, and five year old groups with fifteen children in each group. Lavine showed pictures of familiar and unfamiliar objects and also showed three types of figures to the children as follows:

1. Class I consisted of real English writing, both cursive and printed letters and words.
2. Class II dealt with writings that looked much like English writing, such as Hebrew letters and graphemes.
3. Class III was made up of writing not found in the children's environment. This included Chinese characters and Mayan motifs.

The figures were presented in horizontal and linear groups, six units to a line.

The results of this study showed that no child in the experiment said that the pictures were writing. Only the youngest saw the class III figures as writing. The younger children used linearity, variety, and multiplicity as features of writing, while the older children found the finer features, such as the actual letters, the most important feature of writing. Lavine's study supported the idea that a child comes to learn about writing through perceptual learning. Children identify distinctive features they use to separate writing from other graphic forms. As they mature, children progressively refine the features they use to define writing.

A Child's Writing in Action

The next stage of writing is when a child moves from pictures to productions that look more and more like writing. The child has not yet begun actual writing if we define writing as ". . . using letters to represent words by their sounds" (Temple, Burris, and Nathan, 1982:27).

Clay (1975) has done research on the principles children use when they begin to write. She was most interested in five year olds in the first two months of kindergarten. She collected many writing samples from the classroom, but also many spontaneously written works from the child's home. She found that when children produce early "pseudowriting" they are trying to put into use the principles that they have generated from looking at features of writing. Temple, Nathan, and Burris (1982:28), in their book, The Beginning of Writing, stated, "When we produce writing we employ principles; when we discriminate writing, we use features." The principles of writing are numerous. A child uses many of them simultaneously and in different combinations. These principles are the sign concept, the recurring principle, the directional principle, the generative principle, the flexibility principle, the contrastive principle, and page arrangement (Clay, 1975:20-41).

The Sign Concept: One of the most important concepts that a child must understand before he can start writing is

the sign concept. This concept utilizes the fact that print stands for something other than itself. Writing is arbitrary, pictures are not. In order for writing to be understood, it must be agreed upon by the users. Children have developed this concept when they can put marks that resemble writing on paper and have them stand for words, ideas, or messages. The sign concept is most pronounced in children whose parents practice literacy. When parents first begin to read to their children, the child thinks the story comes from the picture. Later, a child realizes that the words are what tell the story. If the parents point at the words, the sign concept is acquired more quickly. Children who are not read to still encounter print on labels, signs, and other everyday objects, but they may not acquire this concept as quickly as the child who has specific and concentrated exposure to print.

The Recurring Principle: This principle is the discovery by the child that writing consists of the same moves made over and over again. Too much repetition by a teacher makes the letter activity boring with a subsequent lack of interest by the child. If a child initiates the use of the recurring principle, they often feel a wonderful sense of accomplishment. A child will learn later the constraints placed on how many times something may recur, but this principle will lead to a better understanding of written language.

The Directional Principle: The directional principle states that a child learns early that change in perspective does not change the item. Thus, if a chair is tipped on its side, it is still a chair. In writing, when the perspective is switched it changes the identity of the objective, for example the letters b and d. In addition to having the letter facing the correct way, one must also "start at the top left of the paper, move left to right across the word or line, return down left, and locate next starting point" (Clay, 1975:23). After a child has developed correct directional principles, he may continue to occasionally have confusion in this area. Often parents become upset when their child begins to reverse letters after writing correctly for some time. Many times they fear the dreaded "dyslexia!" The parents need to be assured of the normal fluctuation of this skill. Clay (1975) noted, in her study of five and six year olds in New Zealand, that children continue to have problems with direction in their writing even after this issue is settled in their reading.

The Flexibility Principle: The English language has a limited number of signs but many acceptable scripts. The flexibility principle is an exploration of the amount of variation that can be made in an alphabetical sign before it ceases to be a letter. Exploration of the flexibility principle by a child eventually leads to more and more orthodox signs. If a child practices the flexibility

principle, he will be able to recognize many different print types. He is not memorizing specific letters, but features that constitute a letter in general.

The Generative Principle: In our language, writing has a limited number of signs that are used in different combinations. The generative principle states that after a child has learned some letters he begins to use these letters over and over to form words and messages. The words are ones that he assigns meaning to, but are not readable by others at first. As the child matures and becomes aware of the sounds letters make, he will use the generative principle to form readable words and then sentences.

The Contrastive Principle: Children use this principle to make the comparison of two things that are similar but different. For instance, M and W are similar in that they are both formed by using three lines in a zig-zag formation. They are different because one is facing up and the other is facing down. Children use the contrastive principle to refine and group items in various ways to encourage flexibility.

Page Arrangement: Even after children know the directional principles, they may still have trouble with page arrangement. When a child is given a paper with no lines, he often arranges the words to best utilize the available space. This can happen on lined paper when a child runs out of room and he puts the words underneath or

on the back of the paper. Teachers need to be careful not to confuse beginning writers by giving them empty sheets of paper without writing guidelines.

After a child has begun to apply principles to writing, it is necessary to know why the child chooses the marks he makes and what those marks are attempting to communicate.

Usually a child's first meaningful written communication is his name. The importance of this communication, for a child, should not be overlooked. His name, in writing, often becomes the first connection between the written word and a specific object. A teacher has a child learn to write his name because of management and instructional concerns within the classroom. Name writing provides the child with some important skills. Temple, Burris, and Nathan (1982) listed the following benefits of name writing:

1. Writing his name gives the child his first chance to check out his hypothesis about writing and language. For example, he may wonder why the biggest boy in the class has the smallest name.
2. The letters in one's name give the child a group of known letters that can be used to form other words.
3. Name writing provides a child with a variety of letter forms that he can use to create new letters.
4. The process that the child uses to write his own name can be repeated to write other words.

During the developmental stage of writing, a child uses three common processes. Clay (1975) observed that most children begin writing by tracing, copying, and then generating; however, not all children utilize all three methods. Some children trace, then generate, while others copy, then generate. In Clay's (1975) observations of children, she found that although copying may be a shortcut to accuracy, most children prefer to generate their own writing and exhibit more "on task" behavior when they do.

Temple, Nathan, and Burris (1982) felt that some copying is necessary to produce standard letter forms, but that children need to be encouraged to do more generating. Teachers need to concentrate on giving opportunities for independent written communication. "In our schools many children need to be encouraged to take risks--to rely on their own devices and generate writing even if it's 'wrong'" (Temple, Nathan, and Burris, 1982:49).

As can be seen from the research that has been done on early writers, children are extremely complex learners who do a great deal of learning on their own. Teachers and parents need to stimulate and motivate a child's natural developmental processes.

CHAPTER THREE

Procedure

Through an examination of the literature, the key developmental writing stages of young children were identified and activities were suggested to aid in the child's sequential writing development.

Criteria for the Selection of Writing Activities

1. The activity should stimulate oral or written communication.
2. The activity should appeal to a kindergartener or a first grader.
3. The activity should be versatile enough to be easily adapted to children in different developmental stages.
4. The activity should encourage expression in the expressive, transactional, or poetic voice.

Format of Activities

The following format was used to describe the activities:

1. Name of activity
2. Purpose - This describes the voice in which the children will be practicing communication: expressive, transactional, and poetic. It also gives suggested formats for some activities: pseudowriting,

individually dictated, group dictated, or phonemic writing.

3. Materials - If necessary, a list of materials are included.
4. Procedure - This section usually included some ideas for oral discussion and the actual directions for carrying out the specific activity.
5. Examples - On some activities this section was included to further explain the activity or give possible variations to the activities.

CHAPTER FOUR

Project

The purpose of this project is to provide strategies that will help the kindergarten and first grade teacher effectively teach written communication. Because of the important role of oral language in the development of written language, a part of the project is devoted to this area. The remainder of the guide is devoted to activities that encourage a child's growth in written communication.

The kindergarten and first grade oral activities are combined. The nature of the activities make them easily adaptable to either grade. Teacher expectations will vary according to the child's developmental level. The activities are meant to be used many times. Simple modifications will allow the activity to be reused while maintaining a high interest level. The oral language activities are divided into three sections. They are the expressive voice, the transactional voice and the poetic voice. The teacher needs to make a conscious effort to have the child practice expression in all three areas.

The written language portion of the project suggests activities that offer a child a variety of written language experiences. The grade levels are interchangeable on most of the writing activities. Teacher knowledge of her

children's developmental stages will determine the activities she uses with her class or individual students. The writing activities are also divided into the three voices: expressive, transactional and poetic. This insures that the child will have a broad range of writing experiences.

Tips for the Teacher

Environment

1. Provide models of writing in the classroom.
 - a. Label items in the classroom with words.
(blackboard, chair, table, sink, etc.)
 - b. Have a classroom library well stock with books.
 - c. Be sure to display group and individual writing.
Change the displays often.
2. Provide easy access to writing materials such as pencils, paper of different sizes, blank books, markers, etc.
3. Provide a quiet corner or a center specifically for writing.

The Teacher's Role

1. Be accepting of a child's ideas. When a child is beginning to express himself, he is very sensitive. Too much criticism in the early stages of writing could lead to inhibition or dislike of the writing process. As the child's confidence in his ability to write grows, he will be more willing to make writing revisions.

2. Encourage originality and creativity. Welcome the outlandish.
3. Participate in the writing program. If the children see that writing is important to you, they will also see the importance of written language.
4. Write everyday. There are such a variety of written language experiences that it should be easy to find a writing activity for each day.
5. Conference with your students on their writing. Remember that conferencing is a joint venture. The teacher is there to help the child edit his own paper. The goal is to have the child do more and more of his own editing. Teacher "red pencil" correction is not the same nor as beneficial as conferencing.
6. Keep some of child's writing in a folder so that his progress can be monitored.

Instructional Sequence

1. The motivational phase establishes interest and explains the purpose of the activity.
2. Oral exchange encourages discussion on the topic.
3. Composing period is the actual writing of the activity.
4. Conferencing is a cooperative effort between the student and the teacher to discuss the writing activity.
5. Sharing permits a child to show his final product to his intended audience.

Oral Language

1. The expressive voice. This is language that is meant to elicit personal information. This is usually the easiest form of language. It is personally and inwardly directed. The child expresses a egocentric message that is not audience dictated. Expressive language deals with ideas and feelings.
2. The transactional voice. This type of language deals with getting things done. The two types of transactional language that are most important to work on in kindergarten and first grade are:
 - a. Expository language - Expository language is used to explain things. Giving direction, telling how to do something and giving a factual report are all examples of exposition.
 - b. Descriptive language - This is language that helps the listener make mental pictures. It focuses mainly on how an object looks. The speaker needs to look at a subject's unique characteristics so that the listener can clearly visualize what the writer is describing.
3. The poetic voice. Language expressed in the poetic voice is a creative medium. It includes stories, plays, songs and poems.

Oral Expressive Activities

PUPPET CONVERSATIONS

- PURPOSE:** Practice oral expressive language
- MATERIALS:** Puppets
- PROCEDURE:** The teacher puts one puppet on each hand and carries on a conversation using the puppets. The teacher then gives one puppet to a child and they carry on a conversation. You can then break the children into group or pair the children and have them carry on dialogue using the puppets. The children often feel more free to express them selves through the puppets.

MY TIME OF WONDER

- PURPOSE:** Practice oral expressive language
- MATERIALS:** Robert McClosky's book A Time of Wonder
- PROCEDURE:** Read the children Robert McClosky's book A Time of Wonder. After reading the story, have the children describe the wonderful things the family experienced on the island. Ask the children if they have ever had their own experience with a time or place of wonder.

MAY I INTRODUCE . . .

- PURPOSE:** Practice oral expressive language
- PROCEDURES:** The teacher will discuss what kind of important information you need to give when introducing yourself. Have the children practice introducing themselves.
- EXAMPLES:** Important information might include:
1. full name
 2. address
 3. age or grade level
 4. personal information

LONG DISTANCE

- PURPOSE: Practice oral expressive language
- MATERIALS: 2 play phones
- PROCEDURES: Put one child on a toy telephone and put yourself on another phone. Model conversations on phones. Pair children and have them practice carrying on conversations with another child. The teacher may want to suggest a topic to give the conversations direction.

ALL ABOUT US

- PURPOSE: Practice oral expressive language
- PROCEDURE: Get the children in a circle. Have each child get up and tell one thing about himself or herself. Encourage the children to use complete sentences. You can limit the topic by specifying distinct things you want them to tell about themselves. For example, you might have them tell one thing about their mother or what kind of pet they have.

POLICEMAN*

- PURPOSE: Practice oral expressive language
- PROCEDURE: Explain that each person has a name given to him or her. It is important that all people know their names and are able to tell them to other people. The game they are going to play is to see how names are important. One child is the policeman. All other children stand up and cannot sit down until they say their full name. The policeman asks each child "Who are you?" or "What is your name?" If a child has trouble, encourage them by giving hints.

(Toole and Boehm 1983:7)

JUST SUPPOSE

- PURPOSE:** Practice oral expressive language
- PROCEDURE:** Ask the class "What if . . ." questions.
- EXAMPLES:**
1. What if your house caught on fire?
 2. What if no one were home when you got home from school?
 3. What if you found a wallet with lots of money in it?
 4. What if you were the principal?
 5. What if you were the teacher?
 6. What if you got lost in the woods?
 7. What if the cows gave chocolate milk?
 8. What if you were able to fly?
 9. What if candy grew on trees?
 10. What if there was a green, boogie man under your bed?

WHAT MIGHT HAPPEN?

- PURPOSE:** Practice oral expressive language
- PROCEDURE:** The class is asked to respond to questions relating to cause and effect relationship.
- EXAMPLES:**
1. What might happen if your mom leaves the car window open and it starts to rain?
 2. What might happen if your dog gets out of the yard and runs away?
 3. What might happen if a building is on fire and no one calls the fire department?

Oral Poetic Activities

STORY DRAMA

PURPOSE: Practice oral poetic language - drama

PROCEDURE: Read the children a simple story. Pick children to be characters from the story. Act out the events using words and movements.

HOW DOES IT END?

PURPOSE: Practice oral poetic language - narrative

PROCEDURE: Read a story stopping before the end. Brainstorm all the possible ways to complete the story. Read the way the author ends the story.

IMAGINE AND PROJECT FEELINGS

PURPOSE: Practice oral poetic language - narrative

PROCEDURE: Hold up pictures of people showing emotion. Have the children volunteer their observations.

Ask:

1. What is happening in this picture?
2. What do you think happened just before this picture?
3. What do you think will happen next?
4. How do you think this story will end?

TELL A TALE

PURPOSE: Practice oral poetic language - narrative

MATERIALS: Flannel board and figures

PROCEDURE: Put felt figures on a flannel board. Have different children come up and manipulate the figures to tell a story. You can also have one child put up the figures and another child tell the story.

PICTURE BOOKS

- PURPOSE: Practice oral poetic language - narrative
- PROCEDURE: Find picture books in the library. Show the children examples of this type of book. Have the children make up stories to go with the pictures in the book.

YARN STORIES*

- PURPOSE: Practice oral poetic language - narrative
- PROCEDURE: Cut yarn to uniform lengths (3-5 feet). Tie the strands together at one end and pass each of the free ends to a different child. Begin to tell a story. When you come to a spot that needs a describing word or a noun or verb, tug at one of the strands. The child supplies the word. When children become more advanced you can have them supply sentences or phrases instead of just one word.

(Sealey 1979:71)

DIFFERENT VOICES

- PURPOSE: Practice oral poetic language - narrative
- PROCEDURE: The teacher talks about different sounds that voices can make. Read a story with a lot of dialogue. Have the children practice changing their voices to sound like different people. Have the children show a dad's voice, a baby's voice, a mother's voice, etc. You can also have them try to make their voices sound like various animals might sound if they could talk (bears, giraffe, turtle, duck etc.).

RHYTHMIC WORDS

- PURPOSE: Practice oral poetic language - poetry
- PROCEDURE: Explain that two words that sound alike are said to rhyme. Give examples. Read a poem and after each line or every two lines, ask which words rhymed. After the children become good at picking out the rhyming words, have them brainstorm other rhyming words they would substitute.

SILENT MOVIES

- PURPOSE: Practice oral poetic language - narrative
- PROCEDURE: Have the children watch a short movie with no sound. Discuss with the children what they think the story was about. After your discussion, you can show the class the film with sound. discuss the differences between their story and the real story.

ACTIVITY SEQUENCE

- PURPOSE: Practice oral poetic language - narrative
- PROCEDURE: Have a group of pictures that, when ordered, tell a story. Have the child put the pictures in order and tell the story. There may be more than one way to put the cards in order. Be accepting as long as a child can justify the sequence.

HOMEMADE READ ALONGS*

- PURPOSE: Practice oral poetic language - narrative
- PROCEDURE: Give the child a small blank book which he fills with pictures. Have a child use a tape recorder to tape two or three sentences about each page. Make sure you have the child use some signal to show when to go to the next page. The book can then be put in a bag with the tape and put in a place for other children to enjoy. You can develop a whole listening library.

*(Toole and Boehm: 1983)

Oral Transactional Activities

MULTIPLE LABELS

- PURPOSE:** Practice oral transactional language - descriptive
- PROCEDURE:** Explain to the students that a picture, an object, or a person can often be identified by different labels. Discuss with the children what label means and when you would use different labels. Provide pictures that suggest multiple labels.
- EXAMPLE:** John is a boy.
John is a first grader.
He is Sharon's brother.
He is Mr. and Mrs. Wilson's son.
John is the owner of that black dog.

DESCRIBING ACTIONS

- PURPOSE:** Practice oral transactional language - descriptive
- PROCEDURE:** The teacher will complete a sequenced action such as touching her nose, bending over and crossing her fingers. Have a child describe in complete sentences what the teacher did. You can make the activity more difficult by addition actions. This can also be repeated having a child do the actions and then another child describes what the child did.

SEQUENTIAL COOKING

- PURPOSE:** Practice oral transactional language - explanatory
- PROCEDURE:** After the children have done a cooking activity, talk about the sequence they used to make the food. You can extend this activity by writing a recipe that is dictated by the group.

IF I WERE THE TEACHER

- PURPOSE: Practice oral transactional language - expository
- PROCEDURE: Discuss with the children the different things that a teacher has to explain to her class each day. Brainstorm as many ideas as possible. Tell the children that they are going to practice being the teacher. When the teacher is explaining assignments for the children in the morning, have the children take turns explaining how to do certain papers or re-explaining an assignment that the teacher has given. This will make the children feel important and will also give them practice giving sequential and clear instructions.
- EXAMPLE:
1. When someone breaks a rule in the room, have the child or another child explain what the rule is.
 2. Have the student tell the directions for one of the daily papers.
 3. Have a child explain to another child how to do an assignment that he is having difficulty on.
 4. Have the children practice explaining to a substitute how the class does an activity.

CAREER AWARENESS

- PURPOSE: Practice oral transactional language - descriptive
- PROCEDURE: Have community speakers come in and tell about their careers. Send a letter home with each student asking parents to:
- a. Describe their occupation to their child.
 - b. Jot down a few words on the letter in case their child forgets what he or she is saying.
 - c. Return the letter to school with any objects that might help show the parent's occupation.
- Give each child an opportunity to describe what their mother or father does. Allow the student to call on three student for questions.

I'VE GOT A SECRET

- PURPOSE:** Practice oral transactional language - descriptive
- PROCEDURE:** Use pictures of objects mounted on cardboard. Pass the pictures out and have a child describe the picture without saying its name. Have the other children guess what the picture is.

MEMORIES FROM A STORY

- PURPOSE:** Practice oral transactional language - descriptive
- PROCEDURE:** Read a simple story. Have the children draw a picture of one thing they remember from the story. Have them tell about their picture. Help them use complete sentences in their descriptions.

SEEING WITH YOUR FINGERS

- PURPOSE:** Practice oral transactional language - descriptive
- MATERIALS:** A box with a hole in the lid for the child's hand
- PROCEDURE:** Put an object in the box. Have a child put his hand in the box. Have him describe what he feels. The other children guess what is in the box from the child's description. If no one can guess, pass the box to another child and have him try to describe what is in the box.

A FAIRY TALE*

- PURPOSE:** Practice oral transactional language - descriptive
- MATERIALS:** The books The Ugly Duckling and Cinderella
- PROCEDURE:** Explain to the children that The Ugly Duckling and Cinderella are alike in many ways. Read both stories and then compare them.
- EXAMPLES:**
1. How are the Ugly Duckling and Cinderella alike?
 2. How were the Ugly Duckling and Cinderella treated?
 3. How did you feel about their treatment?
 4. What happens to the Ugly Duckling and Cinderella in the end?

(Morton 1980:313)

Written Language

These activities are meant to be used with the following instructional sequence:

1. The motivational phase is to heighten interest, expand ideas and establish purpose for the writing activity.
2. An oral exchange to encourage discussion.
 - a. Use questioning strategies to stimulate discussion.
 - b. Brainstorm to gather ideas.
3. The composing period in which the child writes or dictates his story.
 - a. Pseudowriting (scribbles, individual letters, and words)
 - b. Individually dictated stories
 - c. Group dictated stories
 - d. Individual phonemic writing (letters and sounds are used to form words)
4. The conference allows the child to read his writing to the teacher and work with the teacher to help him clarify and develop his ideas.
 - a. A kindergarten conference should mainly focus on meaning. Some children will be ready to work on sentence structure and some simple writing conventions such as periods and capitals. The most important thing is that the student begins to see himself as an author.

- b. A first grade conference also focuses mainly on the meaning but will begin to concentrate more on sentence structure and writing conventions such as periods and capitals.
5. The sharing period gives the student a chance to voluntarily share with an intended audience.
- a. May be read to the class.
 - b. May be displayed on a bulletin board.
 - c. May be bound and placed in the class library.
 - d. May be shared with groups outside the classroom.

Written Expressive Activities

FINISH THE SENTENCE

- PURPOSE:** Practice written expressive language - group dictated
- PROCEDURE:** Have the individual child finish a sentence for you. Then choose sentence starters and see how many different ways the group can finish the same sentence. This will help the child to see that there are many different forms of writing but they are all acceptable.
- EXAMPLE:**
1. I am happy when _____.
 2. Love means _____.
 3. My favorite food is _____.
 4. Mother wants to _____.
 5. I like to _____.
 6. My father _____.

DRAWING STORIES

- PURPOSE:** Practice written expressive language - individually dictated
- PROCEDURE:** Have the children draw pictures. Ask each individual to tell about his picture. The teacher acts as a scribe and records what the child says on his picture or the back of his picture. Have the child read it back to you.

HATS CHANGE MY IDENTITY*

- PURPOSE:** Practice written expressive language - phonemic
- PROCEDURE:** Provide a collection of different hats that suggest various characters or occupations. Put on a hat. Ask students to suggest who might wear a hat like the one you're wearing. What would the person do when wearing the hat? Did the hat cause the person to have a special adventure? Have the children choose a hat and imagine themselves as the person wearing the hat. Have students share with the class and guess which hat the student chose.

* (Morton 1980:188)

WOW! I JUST WON \$100*

- PURPOSE: Practice written expressive language - phonemic
- MATERIALS: Run off a \$100 check made out to each student.
- PROCEDURE: Talk about how they are going to pretend that they have just won a contest and the prize is a check for \$100. Have the students write a story about what they would do with their money.

THREE WISHES

- PURPOSE: Practice written expressive language - phonemic
- MATERIALS: William Steig's Sylvester and the Magic Pebble
- PROCEDURE: Read Sylvester and the Magic Pebble to your class. Give each child a "magic pebble." Have the children write about what they would wish for if they had a magic pebble.

PARTS

- PURPOSE: Practice written expressive language - individually dictated
- PROCEDURE: Discuss with the class the various parts of a face. Teacher writes down what they say. Ask each child to look in the mirror she is passing around. Then ask which feature each child likes best. Have the children watch their favorite feature as they change their expressions to sad, happy, frightened, and surprised. Discuss with the class what their features did when they changed their expressions. Have a mirror available for the children to look in. Have them write about their favorite feature.

DIARIES

- PURPOSE: Practice written expressive language
- PROCEDURE: Explain to the class what a diary is. Have each child bring a spiral notebook from home or make books at school. Every morning, have each child go to his private spot and make an entry in his diary. These entries may take the form of pictures, pseudo-writing or phonemic writing depending on the stage in which the child is.

IF I WERE TEENY

PURPOSE: Practice written expressive language - phonemic

MATERIALS: A collection of miniature objects that can fit in a child's hand.

PROCEDURE: Make a collection of miniatures each of which can be clasped in the hand of a child. Talk about the meaning of the word "teeny" and synonyms. Have a child hold a miniature during discussion. Questions to stimulate conversation are:

1. Where would you live?
2. What could be your bed?
3. What would things in this room look like?
4. How would you feel?
5. What things would you do that you can't do now?

Provide very small books for the children to write their stories about being "teeny."

EXTENSIONS: Read stories about being small.

1. The Borrowers
2. The Littles
3. Thumbelina
4. Tom Thumb

PERSONAL SCRAPBOOK

PURPOSE: Practice written expressive language

PROCEDURE: Talk about what a scrapbook is. Show an example of one, if you can. Encourage the children to bring things of meaning from home or they can put in items of personal meaning from the class. Some suggestions might be:

1. photographs
2. magazine pictures
3. drawings
4. cards of all kinds
5. letters
6. newspaper clippings.

Encourage the children to write about their entries or to dictate words to the teacher about their entries.

AUTOBIOGRAPHY

- PURPOSE: Practice written expressive language - pseudo-writing
- PROCEDURE: Talk about the different children's families and things that are important in their life. Teacher can model by telling about her family. Talk about what an autobiography is. Give each child a blank book. Have the child draw pictures about himself and things that are important to him. Have the child write anything he would like. Encourage them to try to do their own writing. Have them read or tell their autobiography.

DREAM TALK

- PURPOSE: Practice written expressive mode - individually dictated or phonemic writing.
- PROCEDURE: You can start the discussion of dreams with a book about a child having a dream. Maurice Sendak books, In the Night Kitchen or Where the Wild Things Are, both talk about a little boy that has dreams. Have the children discuss their own dreams. Talk about dreams that make them happy, scared or sad. Have the children dictate or write their own dreams explaining what happened.

KEY WORD*

PURPOSE: Practice written expressive language

PROCEDURE: Key word is a word or phrase that a child chooses, to dictate to a scribe and copy or write phonemically, to complete a sentence. The teacher writes an incomplete sentence on the blackboard. The child copies the sentence and then finishes it with his own word or phrase. An important part of this activity is that the child read back what he has written. This builds meaning into the activity.

EXAMPLES: Expressive mode

1. My name is _____.
2. My favorite color is _____.
3. My favorite animal is a _____.
4. My favorite toy is my _____.
5. My mom's name is _____.
6. I live in _____.
7. My dad's name is _____.
8. I like to eat _____.
9. I am special. The thing I like most about myself is _____.
10. Everyone needs help sometimes. Sometimes I need help when I _____.
11. In school I can learn. I want to learn _____.
12. Weekends are fun. On Saturday I like to _____.
13. The witch cast a spell on me. She turned me into a _____.

* Term adapted from Sylvia Ashton-Warner (1963).

STORY STARTERS

PURPOSE: Practice in written expressive mode

PROCEDURE: Story starters are used to spark imagination. They should include the setting, initiating event and the internal response of the main character. Questions to help a young writer incorporate the important elements of a story might be:

1. Who is in the story?
2. Where does the story take place?
3. What happens?
4. What does the main character want?
5. How does he get it?

EXAMPLES:

1. Your mother tells you that you can have a new pet. What do you ask for? Why?
2. One day you are riding your bike. You hit a rock and break your wheel. How does it make you feel? What are you going to do?
3. The fire is burning the forest. You are one of the animals running away. What are you? How do you feel? What do you do?
4. What if you were only three inches tall? What would you do? Where would you go?
5. Your best friend is mad at you. Why is your friend mad? How do you feel? What are you going to do next?

WORD BANKS

PURPOSE: Practice written expressive mode

PROCEDURE: The word bank is a container in which the student keeps words he has chosen to learn because they have personal significance for him. They are printed on strips of lined tagboard. The child will continue to choose new words throughout the year. A child should be able to read the words he already has before he adds a new one. If a child can't seem to remember a certain word after repeated exposure, it is acceptable to remove the word because it doesn't have personal significance to the child. When the child receives his word bank at the beginning of the year, it should contain a word card with his name on it.

The teacher send home duplicates of the students word-bank words. With a letter explaining to the parents what the words are. Encourage the parents to have the child read his words to them frequently.

The following are options for the choice of a new word-bank word:

1. Child chooses any word he wants.
2. Teacher chooses a word a child may need.
3. Teacher gives a category and the child chooses a word in that category.

Things to do with word-bank words are:

1. The child reads his words to an adult or another child.
2. The child makes sentences with his cards.
3. The child copies his words.
4. The child copies sentences he has made with his words.
5. The teacher asks questions and the child sees if he can find a word in his word bank to answer the question.
6. Children are given a sentence with the last word missing. The children take turns trying different words from their word banks in the sentence. The group decides whether or not the sentence makes sense.

EXAMPLES: Categories:

feeling words	names	songs
colors	toys	towns
food words	things to do	school words

Written Transactional Activities

T.V. GUIDES

- PURPOSE: Practice written descriptive language - phonemic
- MATERIALS: Dittos of T.V. sets with lines inside for the children to write on
- PROCEDURE: Have the children draw a picture of their favorite T.V. show. They should include the title and one or two sentences about the show. Bind them together to make a classroom T.V. guide.

ADVERTISEMENTS

- PURPOSE: Practice written descriptive language - phonemic
- MATERIALS: Magazines
- PROCEDURES: Talk to the class about what an advertisement is and why we have advertisements. Have the child cut out a advertisement and past it on paper. Have the children describe the product and what it does. They may also want to write a sentence describing why a person would want to buy the product.

DISAPPEARING OBJECTS

- PURPOSE: Practice written descriptive language - phonemic
- MATERIALS: A tray with various objects
- PROCEDURE: Put a tray of items out in clear view of all the children. Have them look at the objects for one or two minutes. Take the tray away and have the children identify what was on the tray.

FAIRY TALE DETECTIVES

- PURPOSE:** Practice written descriptive language - phonemic
- PROCEDURE:** Have the children brainstorm common characters from fairy tales. Then tell the students they are going to write a description of that character without using its name. You can assign each child a character or have him pick his own. The rest of the class gets to be detectives and guess who the writer is trying to describe.

GETTING TO KNOW YOU

- PURPOSE:** Practice written descriptive language - group dictated
- PROCEDURE:** Choose a child to write about each day. Have that child come to the front of the group. The rest of the class gives sentences telling about that person. The teacher writes what they say on a big piece of paper. Then have each child draw a picture of that child and bind all the pictures into a book for the child to take home. After the children have read back what they have written, roll the chart up and let the chosen person take it home.

WITCHES BREW

- PURPOSE:** Practice written descriptive language
- PROCEDURE:** Read the children some books about witches. Talk about what a witches brew is and what kind of things might go in it. Give each child a piece of paper shaped like a witches cauldron. Have them write a sentence about one thing that would go in the brew. Have them draw a picture of their ingredient. Make a class book.

SPACE ADVENTURE

- PURPOSE: Practice written descriptive language - phonemic
- PROCEDURE: Have the students pretend that they were given a chance to go far away to planet Mars. While away, they decide to write a letter home describing the planet and people. Be specific. Remind the students that they are the only earthlings which have visited the planet.

DOCTOR, DOCTOR

- PURPOSE: Practice written expository mode
- PROCEDURE: Have the children pretend they are sick. Have them write about their symptoms as though they were talking to their doctor. After the children have completed this assignment, you can let different children pretend to be the doctors and either write their prescription to the patient or give their diagnosis orally.

MY FAVORITE RECIPE

- PURPOSE: Practice written expository mode - individually dictated
- PROCEDURE: Have the student draw a picture of his favorite food. Have him explain to the scribe how the recipe is prepared. After each child has dictated his recipe, compile the recipes into a class recipe book.

THE GRIPE BOX

- PURPOSE: Practice written expository mode - phonemic
- PROCEDURE: Set up a box with a hole in the top. Explain to the children what a gripe box is. Tell them that if something in the class is bothering them, they can explain it on a piece of paper and put it in the gripe box. Make it clear that the children don't have to sign their name. The teacher can read the gripes on Friday and the class can brainstorm possible solutions.

TATTLE BOARD

- PURPOSE:** Practice written expository mode - phonemic
- PROCEDURE:** Decorate a bulletin board and put the words Tattle Board in the middle. Tell the children they are going to try to catch their classmates being good or doing something nice. When they see another student doing the indicated behavior, they should write down who did the deed and explain why it was nice. Have the child try to sneak the note up on the tattle board. Read the notes at the end of the week.

LET'S GO TO THE MOVIES

- PURPOSE:** Practice written expository mode - phonemic
- MATERIALS:** Copies of large movie tickets with lines in the middle for the children to write on
- PROCEDURE:** Talk about movies the children have seen. Have them practice explaining the movie to their classmates in complete sentences. Tell the children that they are writing for a newspaper. Their job is to explain the movies so that people will know whether they want to go see the movie. Have them include the title of the movie.

SANTA CLAUS IS COMING TO TOWN

- PURPOSE:** Practice written expository mode - individually dictated or phonemic writing
- PROCEDURE:** Tell the children that Santa Claus has trouble remembering where their houses are. Tell them that they are going to write letters to Santa explaining exactly how to get to their houses from the North Pole.

WANT ADS

- PURPOSE: Practice written expository mode - phonemic
- PROCEDURE: Read the children want ads from the newspaper. Discuss what qualifications a person has to have for different jobs. Have the students choose a job or pick one out of a hat. They are to explain what the job requirements are.

KEY WORD

- PURPOSE: Practice written transactional language
- PROCEDURE: Key word is a word or phrase that a child chooses to dictate to a scribe and copy or write phonemically, to complete a sentence. The teacher writes an incomplete sentence on the blackboard. The child copies the sentence and then finishes it with his own word or phrase. An important part of this activity is that the child read back what he has written.
- EXAMPLES: Transactional mode

Descriptive

1. The weather is _____.
2. Our classroom has _____.
3. Another teacher in this school is _____.
4. Shoes have _____.
5. A kitten's fur feels like _____.
6. A rose looks like _____.
7. The food that tastes the worst is _____.
8. The prettiest thing to look at is _____.
9. Something that makes a very loud sound is _____.
10. My house is _____.
11. I am delicious. I taste like _____.
12. There are many creepy things. The creepiest thing is _____.
13. I am glad I'm not a slug. Slugs are _____.
14. I like to walk barefoot. It feels _____.
15. Things go bump in the night. At night I hear _____.
16. On a cold night it feels good to snuggle under my covers. On a hot night, it feels good to _____.
17. Cold juicy watermelon looks delicious. On my tongue it feels like _____.

Expository

1. The wheels on a bike are for _____.
2. Coats are worn because _____.
3. Fish live in the water because _____.
4. To bake a cake you need _____.
5. If a plane had no wings, it would _____.
6. A chalkboard is used for _____.
7. We go to school because _____.
8. Kindergarten and first grade can be alike.
One thing that is the same is _____.
9. Skunks really stink. They get their smell
from _____.
10. Being a doctor is an occupation. A doctor
_____.
11. It is fun to talk on a telephone.
Telephones work by _____.
12. Astronauts go up in space. Up in space
they _____.

* Term adapted from Sylvia Ashton-Warner (1963).

STORY STARTERS

- PURPOSE:** Practice in written transactional mode
- PROCEDURE:** Story starters are used to spark imagination. They should include the setting, initiating event and the internal response of the main character. Questions to help a young writer incorporate the important elements of a story might be:
1. Who is in the story?
 2. Where does the story take place?
 3. What happens?
 4. What does the main character want?
 5. How does he get it?
- EXAMPLES:**
1. You are climbing the ladder to your treehouse. As you near the top, you hear something. Describe the noise and what made the sound.
 2. You find a magic key. It will unlock a room in an old mansion. As you open the door describe what you see. What do you find?
 3. The door-bell rings. You open the door and see a big box sitting there. What is in the box?
 4. You are blowing bubbles with your bubble pipe. Each bubble has something in it. Describe what you see.
 5. You go fishing. You catch a fish. It is bigger than you. Describe what the fish looks like. Explain how you caught the fish.
 6. What if you could be a store. Describe what kind of store you would be. Do you like being a store? What kind of people come in to your store?
 7. You walk into a spider web. You touch it with your hands. How does it feel? Tell about it.

Written Poetic Activities

RIDDLE BOOK

- PURPOSE: Practice written narrative language - phonemic
- PROCEDURE: Read the children some riddle books. Then have the children write their own riddle books. Have the child write the descriptive riddle on one page and the answer on the other side. They can illustrate the answers and then read them to the class.

SHAPE WRITING

- PURPOSE: Practice written narrative language - phonemic
- PROCEDURE: This is writing that is done on different shapes such as turkeys for Thanksgiving or Santas for Christmas. The children love the different format. It generates lots of creative thoughts just from the shapes.
- EXAMPLE: Make a large shape of an egg. Inside put lines for the child to write on. Have the children write a story about what it would be like to be the Easter Bunny.

OPPOSITES BOOK

- PURPOSE: Practice written narrative language - phonemic
- PROCEDURE: Discuss the meaning of the word opposite. Tell the students that they are going to make their own book of opposites. Read The Book of Opposites to give the children a model. As the children listen to the book, have them try to fill in the opposite term. Have them write the first term on one side of the page and the opposite term on the back of the page. When the child shares his book, he can allow other students to guess the opposite.

HOMEMADE READ ALONGS

- PURPOSE:** Practice written narrative language - individually dictated
- MATERIALS:** Tape recorder, blank tape, blank book
- PROCEDURE:** Give the child a small blank book and invite him to draw or paste a picture on the left hand page. Talk to the child about telling a story of one or two lines into a simple tape recorder. An adult or older student writes what the child has dictated. The child copies the writing into his book. They can read the book along with the tape or by themselves.

A STORY SEQUENCE

- PURPOSE:** Practice written narrative language - individually dictated
- MATERIALS:** Sequence of pictures
- PROCEDURE:** Have a group of pictures that tell a story when put in order. Have the child put them in order. The child will dictate one sentence about each picture. The teacher writes what the child says and places it below each picture. The child reads back his story to an adult. The student may want to mix up the cards and then put them back under the correct picture.

STORYTELLING WITH SECRETARIES

- PURPOSE:** Practice written narrative language - individually dictated
- PROCEDURE:** Invite older students to be secretaries. Show the children a film to stimulate interest in telling a story. Each child dictates his own story to an older student. When the story is complete, the child can recopy the story or draw a picture to go along with the secretary's writing. Students can share their stories with the class.

THE FANTASY OF MOTHER GOOSE

- PURPOSE:** Practice written narrative language - group dictated
- PROCEDURE:** After reading nursery rhymes, allow the children to choose nursery rhymes they would like to write stories about. Draw a large object that symbolizes that rhyme, write the childrens dictated story in the shape. Have them read back the story.
- EXAMPLE:** After reading "Peter, Peter Pumpkin Eater," you would have them imagine that they lived in a pumpkin. Ask:
1. How would you decorate your room?
 2. What could you do inside your shell?
 3. Would a pumpkin make a good home? Why or why not?
 4. What do you think your neighbors would think of your house?

LIMERICKS

- PURPOSE:** Practice written poetic language
- PROCEDURE:** Read a large selection of limericks to the class. They really love the absurdity and like all children, love the idea of writing somethings that seems ridiculous. Give them a choice of a first sentence and have them write the second sentence.
- EXAMPLES:** There was a man from Trent.
There once was a duck that ate cheese.
There was a tall man from short.

PICTURE POSTCARDS

- PURPOSE:** Practice written narrative language - individually dictated or phonemic
- MATERIALS:** Postcards
- PROCEDURE:** Make a collection of picture postcards. Have a child dictate or write, on his own, one or two sentences about the postcard. Write in on tagboard and mount it next to the postcard. Have the child read his story back.

KEY WORD*

PURPOSE: Practice written poetic language

PROCEDURE: Key word is a word or phrase that a child chooses, to dictate to a scribe and copy or write phonemically, to complete a sentence. The teacher writes an incomplete sentence on the blackboard. The child copies the sentence and then finishes it with his own word or phrase. An important part of this activity is that the child read back what he has written. This builds meaning into the activity.

- EXAMPLES:
1. In the great grey-green, greasy Limpopo River lived a _____.
 2. John stuck his hand in a dark hole and pulled out a _____.
 3. A gorilla escaped from the zoo. It _____.
 4. Santa's reindeer all got the flu on Christmas Eve. Santa will have to _____.
 5. A city under the sea would have _____.
 6. Mite, the martian, kidnapped me. On mars I saw a _____.
 7. Here comes a giant, green and yellow slug. It is going to _____.
 8. A fat, red lobster cam snapping out of the ocean. It is heading straight for _____.
 9. Tom was sitting on the beach one day when all of a sudden a bunch of pirates carried him off. When he got on the pirate ship they _____.
 10. Joan saw a terrible giant lumbering toward her house. She _____.
 11. Ellen went on a picnic with a gorilla. They had lots of fun _____.
 12. A mouse was exploring our house. He found _____.

* Term adapted from Sylvia Ashton-Warner (1963).

STORY STARTERS

PURPOSE: Practice in written poetic mode

PROCEDURE: Story starters are used to spark imagination. They should include the setting, initiating event and the internal response of the main character. Questions to help a young writer incorporate the important elements of a story might be:

1. Who is in the story?
2. Where does the story take place?
3. What happens?
4. What does the main character want?
5. How does he get it?

- EXAMPLES:
1. The little train is filled with toys. Where is it going? What will happen to all of the toys?
 2. A family is living in this shoehouse. Why are they living in a shoe? Tell what is going on inside.
 3. You have a magic car. It will take you anywhere. Where will you go? What will you do?
 4. You're locked in a castle. Who owns the castle? Who locked you in? Where are you locked? Why are you locked in?
 5. You crawl into some leaves. You meet a little elf. What does he tell you? What do you do?
 6. You are riding on a merry-go-round. Suddenly it stops and your horse runs away. Tell about your adventure.
 7. Your grandmother buys you three balloons. You are holding them. Suddenly a big wind lifts you up in the air. Tell about your ride.

CHAPTER FIVE

Summary and Recommendations

Summary

Writing has been a focus of concern by both the public and educators alike. The apparent lack of good written communication skills in many of our youth has prompted a deeper look at the teaching of this significant lifetime skill.

The author's anxiety over her own school's lack of regard for the importance of written language in the primary grade motivated her to research the writing process and develop a writing guide that would assist in the teaching of effective written communication.

Research shows writing as a developmental process that is started long before a child enters the public school system. A child's natural curiosity about oral and written language needs a nurturing environment in which to develop.

The guide gives teachers activities that encourage exploration of the language processes and tips for the effective use of these activities. It is hoped that through this guide teachers will feel more comfortable providing instruction in written communication for young children.

Recommendations

Few studies were found that dealt specifically with the

natural development of written communication in young children. More research needs to be done on writing development in young children and its implication for the classroom teacher. Attention needs to be focused on giving teachers strategies that will foster the teaching of writing as a total communication skill.

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