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IMPLEMENTING A WRITING WORKSHOP IN A SECOND GRADE CLASSROOM

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RESEARCHER STANCE

Many children come into my second grade classroom as reluctant writers. "How long does it have to be, Mrs. Smeltzer?" is a question I hear often. They seem to agonize over each word, even when given free choice of topic. At the beginning of the school year, many have difficulty writing more than one sentence for a topic. My first hurdle is to get them to write. Once they start writing, we can worry about revising and proofreading to "make it pretty." But this hesitancy is a huge obstacle to overcome.

I understand and empathize with the children's lack of enthusiasm for writing. For I was a reluctant writer in school, and I remain a reluctant writer today. My memories of writing in school are not pleasant. In fact, I cannot think of a single enjoyable writing memory in my school experiences. I feel that these negative memories and feelings toward writing have had a long lasting effect. Dewey (1938) defines a mis-educative experience as one which "has the effect of arresting or distorting the growth of further experience" (p. 25). My past writing experiences taught me the writing skills I needed, but negatively influenced future writing experiences. I still choose not to write, unless my teaching or graduate studies require me to do so.

I do not want the children in my classroom to feel this way. I remember writing EVERY September about "What I Did on My Summer Vacation." I hated

writing about this topic. I started to resent my parents for not taking my brother and me somewhere exotic and exciting over the summer months. I was sure that everyone else in my class had something more interesting to write about than I did. So when the children in my class experience these feelings of writing inadequacies, I understand how they feel.

I did not personally realize the power of writing until years later. My grandmother was moving, and I was helping her pack her things. She had a little metal box filled with mementos of her grandchildren's childhoods. Since my brother and I were her only grandchildren, each keepsake reminded me of a special memory. My grandmother smiled at me as she handed me a folded piece of paper and asked, "Do you remember writing this?" I opened the paper to find a writing piece entitled, "What I Want for Christmas." I had written that all I wanted was my grandmother to get well, because she was in the hospital and very sick. I didn't remember actually writing the piece, but I wasn't surprised that I wrote it. I can remember both of my grandparents in and out of hospitals when I was a child. Back then my brother and I weren't allowed to visit because we were younger than twelve years old. So my parents let us stand on top of the car hood and wave to my grandmother through her hospital room window. I probably showed the writing piece to my grandmother to cheer her up, having no idea that it would mean so much to her that she would keep it for 25 years in a little metal box.

I try to show the children in my class how the everyday things in their lives can provide powerful topics for writing. I want them to write about the things in their lives they feel strongly about—their families, their friends, their thoughts and opinions. Calkins (1994) states, "Writing allows us to hold our life in our hands and make something of it" (p. 4). She continues, "We care about writing when it is personal and interpersonal" (p. 14). I try to give them choice in topics – choice that I felt was lacking in my schooling. With time constraints and the constant threat of standards, it is easy to tell yourself, "I don't have the time for writing today." I've also heard teachers say, "It's easier to just give them a story starter. It takes too long for them to think of an idea to write about on their own." But when we take away this choice, we often take away the chance for children to discover that writing can be meaningful in their own lives. By always giving them an idea to write about, we give children the message, "You can't come up with your own ideas. I must do this for you." That is not the message that I want to send in my classroom.

With the current emphasis on standards, it is very easy for me to become preoccupied with topic sentences, punctuation, and other writing conventions. After all, these are important concepts to teach. Although I don't remember a specific time that I have ever been more concerned with conventions than content, I can remember times that children in my class have been so worried that they've completely frozen up and are unable to write at all. In fact, many would refuse to

write even a single word unless they are sure it is spelled correctly. They are so obsessed with spelling, capitals, and periods that the entire process is blocked. In their quest to make the rough draft "perfect," their train of thought is constantly interrupted. Sometimes they forget details that they had wanted to add. Other times they limit their vocabulary to the words that they can easily spell.

Their preoccupation with conventions may be a behavior learned as a result of my actions or a previous teacher's actions. Or maybe it is just a by-product of being a second grader who has more of an awareness of a "right" and "wrong" way to write and spell. In their study, Kos and Maslowski (2001) found that second graders focus on handwriting, mechanics, and spelling during teacher interviews even after the teacher emphasized the importance of ideas over conventions. They felt that the children were more comfortable talking to the teacher about handwriting, mechanics, and spelling. The children were less comfortable talking to the teacher about planning, organization, and idea development because the children "were not yet able to use independently the language to explain these processes in their writing" (p. 18). However, "during writing groups, students' talk about their story plans both before and during drafting demonstrated a great deal of thought about how to put a story together" (p. 18).

During Writing Workshop, I want the children in my classroom to learn to focus on ideas. I want them to realize that the message is more important than the

conventions when writing. After all, we read stories for their content. The children will hopefully learn through Writing Workshop that the conventions allow us to share the message with others.

I also want the children to feel that they have choice in writing topic, genre, and presentation. I am trying to provide a variety of writing activities, hoping that each child will have gained a positive writing experience to remember. I want the children in my classroom to have what Dewey would call a series of educative writing experiences. Dewey (1938) uses continuity and interaction as criterion for judging the value of experiences. Growth is one example of continuity. But growth in itself is not enough. The growth needs to promote future learning. Interaction refers to the internal and external conditions that influence any experience. In my Writing Workshop I try to create objective conditions conducive to learning. But I also recognize the fact that children are individuals that bring their own internal factors that will also affect the writing experience. I hope to provide a worthwhile educational experience that will encourage further writing experiences. The choices within Writing Workshop allow the children to construct their own purposes and carry out these purposes to an end. Dewey (1938) states, "Such freedom is in turn identical with self-control; for the formation of purposes and the organization of means to execute them are the work of intelligence" (p.67).

I want the children in my class to become lifetime writers, not reluctant writers. Graves (1994) identifies a variety of characteristics in a lifetime writer, but "the most important one, the one that underlies all the others, is 'child initiates (writing)" (p. 155).

I worry that the children will have my same negative attitude so engrained that I can only begin to chip away at the shield that they have constructed to protect themselves from criticism. I really don't think that they have had the time to develop such a negative attitude. At least I hope not. If they have, I hope that they will see Writing Workshop as a positive writing experience.

I hope the children in my class can look back and remember that writing isn't only about periods and capitals, it is about a message and an idea. It is about a child's voice, a child's view, a child's reality.

PILOT STUDY

Since the beginning of my teaching career, I have taught the writing process in my classroom. For many years, I taught my third grade class as a whole group, each child writing in the same genre, each child at the same step of the writing process. I saw the children's writing skills improve, but rarely did they seem excited about writing. Although the children had a journal to write in,

they seldom wrote in it other than during "writing time." The excitement came at the end of the year, when each child published a story that was bound in a hard cover book, pages sewn with thread, and read to the younger children in the school. "How can I capture this excitement on a more daily basis?" I wondered.

I had heard about Writing Workshop. But it seemed that those classes were smaller and "more perfect" than mine. I was concerned about the chaotic nature of the Workshop. Would I be able to keep track of everyone? Would children fall through the cracks? Would I wind up with a daily headache?

As I became a more seasoned teacher, I felt more comfortable with taking chances, but there was always a reason not to attempt workshop: I just changed grades this year. It's too early in the year. The kids aren't comfortable with the writing process yet. We don't have enough time in the day. The school year's almost over now. Other teachers have also felt this initial hesitancy when first attempting a Writing Workshop (Lovelace, 1995).

But then I started graduate school. In my Teacher as Researcher class I had the opportunity to attempt Writing Workshop and get college credit for it! I also had a great group of second grade students that year. I thought, "Well, if it doesn't work with this group of children, it won't work with any group." So I decided to make Writing Workshop one part of my writing curriculum. Periodically, I would still have whole class writing time to ensure the children were writing a variety of genre. Other times, the children would collaborate on

class books or small group books. I also occasionally would provide a prompt as a writing topic. I decided to provide these prompts to prepare the children for standardized testing. The children's writing would then be assessed on their responses to the prompts provided in our Reading program. I would explain the prompt and assessment rubric to the children a day or two before the writing assessment, allowing the children to prepare and organize their thoughts in advance.

However, Writing Workshop would be the lion's share of the children's writing time. Here they could choose the topic and genre of their writing without a formal assessment. I was concerned that if I assessed the children's Workshop writing with a rubric, creativity and experimentation with language would suffer. I was afraid that the children would write to the rubric. During Writing Workshop, I wanted the children to focus on process, not product.

Sanacore (1998) suggests guiding children through a variety of writing experiences to encourage the lifelong love of writing. Reeves (1997) felt that providing a variety of writing modes could help children become less apprehensive about writing. I wanted, through Writing Workshop, to provide a variety of writing experiences for the children in my classroom to make them more confident, lifelong writers.

I started Workshop for the first time in January of that year. I had read about Workshop years ago, but didn't really consciously structure my Workshop

after any model. I wanted the children to write five pieces, then sign up for a partner to revise and proofread. After they had "fixed" the piece as much as they could, they would sign up for a conference with me. The student would read the story to me. Sometimes, we would do a final edit, if there were many misspellings or many run-on sentences. Afterward I would point out the things they had done well and the things they could improve on. Then I would tell them something that they could focus on improving for the next story. After the conference with me, they would publish the story on white lined paper and draw a picture to go along with the story. About once a month we would have a sharing time to share the stories we had published.

As Workshop progressed, I found that I had to revise the student sheet I had been using for the children to keep track of their writing. The children found them confusing. They did not understand the layout of the sheet. I also had to revise the teacher sheets because they were too time-consuming for me. I simplified both the student sheet and teacher sheet to make them more user friendly. Eventually I decided to let the children choose the focus that they wanted to improve. I found out that most of the time they chose the same thing that I would have, but I wasn't telling them they had to do it. They were discovering something they wanted to improve on their own.

I found that Writing Workshop, while rewarding, has its difficulties. Even with a group of children that, for the most part, worked well independently and

with each other, problems arose. I saw talking as "being off-task," and sometimes there were periodic behavior problems. The children often had trouble thinking of a topic to write about, so I would put an idea on the board in case they were stuck for a topic. But, during interviews, I found that some children found the suggested topic distracting. They said that the topic would get stuck in their heads and they couldn't think of anything else. As a direct result of these interviews, I changed to an idea bag, which was filled with little slips of papers with different ideas. The children could pull an idea from the bag if they couldn't think of an idea, and there wasn't a distracting idea on the board for those who could think of their own ideas.

The benefits far outweighed the drawbacks, however. The children's writing skills showed their individual growth as writers. Perhaps, more importantly, the children seemed more interested in writing. I noticed student behaviors I hadn't seen earlier in the year. I saw more children writing on their own time and heard children discussing story ideas throughout the day. The children's attitudes toward writing seemed to improve markedly by the end of the year. These improvements made Writing Workshop worthwhile to me, regardless of its somewhat chaotic nature.

The following school year I had a less-than-perfect group of children, but I was determined to implement Writing Workshop as a part of my writing program for a second time in January, just as I had done the year before. This group of

children, however, refused to write silently on their own during Workshop time. I could choose to be a guard dog during Workshop time, endlessly patrolling the classroom and looking for talkative students to reprimand, or I could adapt my Workshop to fit this group of children. I chose to put their talkativeness to good use. Dewey (1938) states that learning is a social process. Freire (1993) agrees, noting that dialogue is essential to learning. Terry Burns (2001) discussed the importance of social interaction during writing. Burns, in an action research study, discovered that children interact in a variety of ways during Writing Workshop, and even casual dialogue with friends can be useful for story idea generation. Calkins (1994) also feels that "in second grade, chatting about one's subject with an interested friend seems to be an ideal method for rehearsal" (p. 88).

I decided to allow the children to work with a buddy during Workshop time. I explained to the children that they could choose to work alone, that they did not have to write with a buddy unless they wanted to do so. I explained that some children like to write alone instead of working with a partner. I also explained that children shouldn't interrupt a buddy who was writing something because that child may lose an important train of thought. I also laid some ground rules: "If you argue, you work alone. If you goof around, you work alone." We also talked about how it is okay to use a different idea than a buddy suggests.

During this year, my second as a Writing Workshop teacher, I stopped writing story ideas on the board or in a bag. Calkins (1994) suggests that teachers can encourage children to find writing topics in their own lives by keeping a writer's notebook, or lifebook, a place to record little bits of a child's life that may or may not become longer pieces of writing. I had never liked the idea of providing the class with a story idea. Many times the children would seem compelled to write about it, thinking that because a teacher had offered this topic, it must be better than any idea that they could imagine. Instead of supplying the children with a topic, I now encouraged them to use their lifebooks to write down story ideas and little bits of their lives that could later become stories. I also told the children to have a buddy discussion if they were stuck for an idea and didn't have any ideas in their lifebooks. I structured my Writing Workshop after other components outlined by Calkins (1994): mini-lessons, work time, peer conferencing, and share sessions.

I also changed the way in which I conferenced with the children. During my first year of Workshop, I had scheduled conferences when the children were finished with revising and proofreading. I felt that the children needed to write their stories independently. However, Vygotsky (1978) proposes that "an essential feature of learning is that it creates the zone of proximal development; that is, learning awakens a variety of internal developmental processes that are able to operate only when the child is interacting with people in his environment

and in cooperation with his peers. Once these processes are internalized, they become part of the child's independent developmental achievement" (p. 90).

This year I decided to conference spontaneously as the children were drafting. Then I could guide them more effectively. Vygotsky (1978) also reminds us that "What a child can do with assistance today she will be able to do by herself tomorrow" (p. 87). So, instead of thinking, "This child wrote this story with help. She can't really write something like this on her own," I can think, "This child wrote this story with help. Soon she will be writing stories like this on her own." This change was among the most significant I made. I felt less like a writing corrector and more like a writing guide.

Although some children needed periodic redirection, the class responded well to working with buddies. The children talked, but they usually were talking about writing. Sometimes they showed each other what they were writing. Sometimes they read parts to one another. We had days with wonderful, dynamic Workshops, and we had days with frustrating, unproductive Workshops. But the good outweighed the bad, and I was motivated to start Writing Workshop the following year with a third group of children. However, this year I would brave the Workshop frontier in September – an exciting, but scary prospect.

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

My initial experiences with Writing Workshop encouraged me to discover more about it. I was excited about the children's response to Writing Workshop, and I wanted to capitalize on this success and learn more about how my students would respond to this learning environment even earlier in the school year. I created a new question to guide my inquiry, "What is the impact of a variety of self-selected writing experiences during Writing Workshop on second grade students?" I designed my research study to determine how I could encourage the children to write more and also to foster a positive writing attitude in the children. In my study, I implemented a writing workshop, as one part of my writing curriculum, in order to provide variety and choice to the students in their writing. I scheduled Writing Workshop four times a week for approximately 30-45 minutes. I encouraged the children to write about their own experiences and interests. I allowed them to discuss their writing with peers during all stages of the writing process. I provided the time and flexibility to enable the children to explore and experiment with their writing. By providing a variety of writing experiences and fostering positive attitudes toward writing, I encouraged my children to be life-long writers.

In September, the children are not writing very much at all. I wanted the children to write more in order to improve their writing fluency. Farnan and Fearn

(2002) feel that writing fluency is important, stating, "without it, there is no writing" (p.5).

Before formally collecting data, I shared my action research proposal with my teacher research support group and Moravian College's Human Subjects Internal Review Board (HSIRB). This board reviewed the plan to ensure the safety and confidentiality of the children involved in the study. The board, concerned that audiotaping was not a regular part of my classroom practice, was uneasy with my plan to audiotape the interviews. So I decided to take notes during the interviews instead. When the board approved my plan, I began to formally collect data for my study.

As a teacher-researcher , I used primarily qualitative methods (Bogdan & Biklen, 1998) and collected data in the following ways:

Fieldnotes: I documented my participant observations in a researcher log. My observations are considered participant observations because I am not merely watching the children as they write, but I am an active participant during Writing Workshop (Arhar, Holly, & Kasten, 2001). At least twice a week, I jotted down notes during Writing Workshop, documenting the children's interactions and comments. Later, at home, I then wrote detailed descriptions of these Writing Workshops, including personal reflections, or observer comments, concerning the progress of the children's writing and Writing Workshop. According to Ely, Vinz, Downing, and Anzul (1997), "Description and observer comments are part

of the same log and they work in tandem" (p. 340). I bracketed the observer comments in my log, as Ely, Vinz, Downing, and Anzul (1997) suggest, "not to ignore or put out of our minds our responses to experience but to articulate them and deliberately distance ourselves to look at them" (p. 351). Each day I also recorded the names of the children writing in their spare time and those taking home their writing notebooks. I also wrote down children's comments about writing and Writing Workshop that I had heard during the school day, including them in the researcher log.

Writing Data: I recorded the genre and number of words written for a "first day of the school year" piece, the children's published pieces, and the children's responses to a prompt about the best present ever. Since I am trying to increase the children's writing fluency, I needed to count the number of words that the children had written for these pieces (Farnan & Fearn, 2002). I used a Student Writing Data sheet for each child to keep track of this data. A blank copy of this sheet is included as Appendix A. Throughout the study, I collected the children's published pieces. Arhar, Holly, and Kasten (2001) discuss the importance of collecting student work as one way "to document student learning" (p. 161). I wanted to see if the children were writing a variety of genre and if their writing pieces were getting longer, improving their writing fluency.

Projective Technique: The children responded to a projective technique in October. Arhar, Holly, and Kasten (2001) define a projective technique as "an

open-ended type of self report interview in which the interviewee 'projects' her or his feelings, attitudes, beliefs, and values by answering open-ended questions" (p. 157). My projective technique consisted of two incomplete sentences for the children to finish.

1. The things that I like about Writing Workshop are...
2. The things that I do not like about Writing Workshop are...

Survey: Near the end of November, the students completed a survey, an attitude scale about writing and Writing Workshop. Attitude scales are devised to measure the strength of an attitude or opinion (Arhar, Holly, & Kasten, 2001). I wanted to see how the children felt about the various genre, drafting, and publishing choices. I also wanted to learn how the children felt about Writing Workshop and writing in general. A blank copy of the attitude scale is included as Appendix B.

Student Interviews: During November, I formally interviewed any interested students in order to gain a more detailed view of the students' perceptions of the Workshop. The interview focused on the children's feelings about both writing and Writing Workshop. Most of the children wanted to be interviewed (14 out of 18). I interviewed the children in the hallway to provide a little bit of privacy, hoping to make the children more comfortable to share honestly. I wanted the interviews to seem like a conversation, rather than an interview. But I had to take notes instead of taping the children, and I think the

note taking made the interview more awkward than a conversation. Although I told the children beforehand that I would be writing down their responses, the children still seemed more nervous than usual. I asked open-ended questions and tried to follow up on vague and one-word answers (Seidman, 1998). A copy of the interview protocol I used is included as Appendix C.

I wanted to ensure trustworthiness when making judgments about the data in my study. My judgments would be trustworthy and credible if I could verify them by triangulating multiple sources of data (Arhar, Holly, & Kasten, 2001). I was persistent in my observations. I tried to gain a better understanding of the children's views of writing and Writing Workshop through the attitude scale, projective technique, and interviews. I wanted the children to have a voice in my study. I asked the children for suggestions to make Writing Workshop better and tried to respond to these suggestions. I shared my data with a support group and colleagues to obtain other viewpoints as to how the Workshop was progressing. MacLean and Mohr (1999) stress the importance of teacher researcher groups, stating "The group challenges each other's assumptions, proposes alternative interpretations, offers suggestions about research methodology, responds to drafts, and often lends personal as well as professional support" (p. 21). The teacher researchers in my own support group helped me in the ways outlined by MacLean and Mohr. I revisited the data to see if my impressions were reasonable. I collected data for three months to help ensure credibility. I also reviewed the

literature concerning writing and Writing Workshop and structured my Workshop around it.

I used the data that I collected to tell my story of Writing Workshop using a variety of narrative forms. These narrative forms included anecdotes, plays, a vignette, a pastiche, and a poem. Vignettes are composites that can be used to illustrate research findings. They can combine data from different sources to show what has been learned over a period of time. A pastiche is an interweaving of data to create a thematic statement. It focuses the readers' attention to multiple perspectives (Ely, Vinz, Downing, & Anzul, 1997).

I teach in a public school located in an urban fringe of a nearby city. The community consists mainly of low- to middle-class residents. I have 19 children in my second-grade class. Eleven of the children are girls; eight are boys. Seven children receive Title I reading assistance. One of those children is also an identified ESL student and receives additional ESL support.

I obtained permission to collect data from 17 parents. All of the children in the class participated in Writing Workshop as part of the regular language arts program. All children completed the projective technique and survey and were given the opportunity to be interviewed. However, only the data for those children with parental permission to participate in the study is included in this action research report. One of the children moved during the study in November. I have included this child's data in the study. The children's identities are masked by

pseudonyms to help maintain confidentiality. My principal also gave me permission to conduct the study. Blank copies of the parent permission form and the principal informed consent are included as Appendix D and Appendix E, respectively.

Before distributing the parent permission forms to the children, I explained to the children that I am not only a teacher, but I am also a student. I told them that one of the things I am interested in learning more about is Writing Workshop. I told them that I want to learn what works in Writing Workshop and how we can make Writing Workshop better. I explained that I am doing a project about Writing Workshop for my Master's degree. I did not go into great detail about the research study because I did not want the children to be overly concerned about it. I wanted Writing Workshop to run as it would had I not been conducting a formal study about it. I told them that during Writing Workshop they may see me jotting down notes. I told them that I would be writing down what I saw during Writing Workshop. I told them I wouldn't be using their real names when I wrote my paper. I would make up "fake" names instead. I also told them that I would be asking their opinions about writing and Writing Workshop later in the marking period and would be interviewing anyone who was interested in being interviewed.

I then read the parent permission form (Appendix D) to the children. Most of the children seemed excited about being part of a study, offering to be interviewed

that day. I explained that I would be interviewing later in the school year, after we had been involved with Writing Workshop for a while. Some of the children, however, were concerned that being part of the study would mean additional class work for them. I told them that they did not have to be part of the study if they did not wish to be a part of it. I explained that the study did not involve any extra class work, and they did not have to be interviewed if they did not want to be. My explanation seemed to alleviate the fears and concerns of the children. I assured them that this study meant extra work for me, not them.

THIS YEAR'S STORY

This school year I have another challenging group. In general, I have found them to be among the most chatty groups in my 13 years of teaching. They have difficulty working independently – much more than my average second grade group. However, they are usually willing and eager to try new things. A few of the children have trouble staying on task and finishing class work. Some have problems working with other children. As I began this school year, I had serious misgivings about whether Writing Workshop would work for this group of children, especially this early in the school year.

As I do every year on the first day of school, I had the children write for me. I asked them to write about their favorite thing to do. I wanted to get an idea of how much they would write if were not given any direction other than, "Tell me ALL about it. Tell me where you do it, when you do it, with whom you do it, why you like it. Tell me EVERYTHING about it." The results, of course, were varied. One child wrote one word by the end of the day. The two children who wrote the most wrote 39 words. (See Table 2, Student Writing Data). Although I haven't kept official data on past classes' first day of school writing, I would suspect that this year's is average or perhaps a bit better than average. Still, I want to improve the children's writing fluency so that we can then take what they have written and work with it to make it better. I was hoping that by starting a Writing Workshop earlier in the year, the children would be writing more sooner, giving us more time to improve their writing later in the school year.

Since the children would be responsible for coming up with their own story ideas during Workshop, I felt it was important to discuss with the children how to think of a writing topic. I didn't want the children to spend all of their Workshop time saying, "I can't think of anything to write about." When I asked the children in my class how they came up with their own story ideas, only one child offered a suggestion, saying, "I sometimes get ideas from books that I've read." I told him that this was a great idea. Although we couldn't copy a story that someone else has written, we might read a book that will give as an idea for

our own story. We could also write a new adventure for familiar book, television, or movie characters. The children had no other suggestions of discovering a story idea.

I told them that children from other classes of mine sometimes got ideas for characters by looking around the room. If we had frogs on our bulletin board, they sometimes decided to write about a frog. But I told them how important it is to write about something that they know, something that they care about. I gave them an example.

"I probably wouldn't write about skateboarding. It's not that I don't like skateboarding. I think it's kind of neat. But I don't know anything about skateboarding. The only thing I know is how to fall off a skateboard and how it feels to fall off. So if I were going to write a story that had skateboarding in it, the character would always be falling off the skateboard, because that's what I know best! I could add details about how it hurts and how embarrassing it is when people are watching you fall off!"

I explained that published authors write what they know and care about. I told them that I want them to think of themselves as authors and do the same. We talked about getting ideas from our own lives. I encouraged them to notice the little things in their lives that can become story examples, like the squirrels that run along the top of my backyard fence. They look just like they are playing follow-the-leader! Then I showed them their lifebooks (a small composition book)

and told them that they could take their lifebooks home every night so that they could write story ideas in them. I told them that they don't have to write a whole story – they can if they want to – but they could just jot down a quick note to remind them of a story idea.

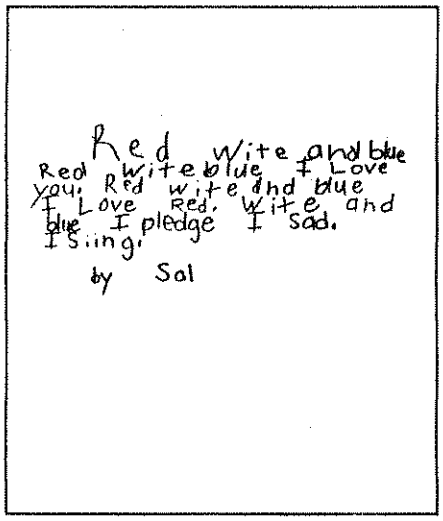
Before giving the children writing time, I modeled the writing process for the children. As a class, we wrote a story together. Then we revised and proofread it, learning or reviewing the steps of the writing process. I told them after writing five stories, they should pick a favorite story to publish. Then they should sign up for a partner to help with the revising and proofreading. I also showed them the folders with the revising and proofreading checklists, to help remind them what to do during these steps. (A copy of the revising and proofreading checklists are included as Appendix F.) I wrote a final copy of the story in my neatest handwriting with all the mistakes corrected. Then I showed them the student sheets, stapled inside their writing folders. I explained that during each Writing Workshop they would record the date of the Workshop, the title and genre of the story they were working on, and at which of the step of the writing process they were working. (A copy of the Student Sheet is included as Appendix G.)

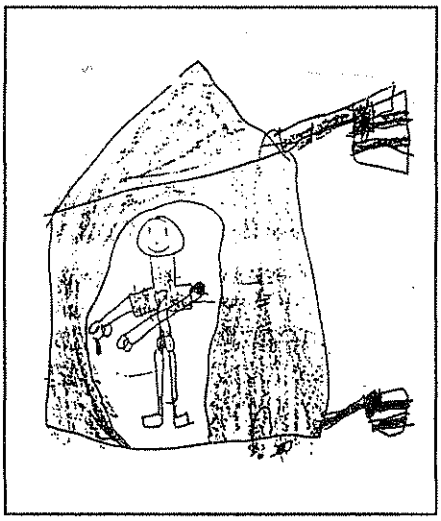
Many of the difficulties that we had in the beginning of the school year were about the writing process itself. Most of the children seemed unfamiliar with the process. Although I stressed that we would fix misspelled words during

proofreading, some children were preoccupied with spelling during the drafting stage. But during this first quarter of the school year, I reiterated to the children the importance of their ideas, not perfection, and the value of writing about the things we are interested in and care about.

In September, with the anniversary of September 11th on the nation's mind, one child, Sal, wrote this patriotic poem entitled "Red, White, and Blue."

Sal's Poem: "Red, White, and Blue"





"Red, White, and Blue"

Red, white, blue

I love you.

Red white, and blue

I love red, white, and blue.

I pledge.

I said.

I sing.

Sal wrote about something important in his world at the time. His illustration shows not only a flag on his house, but a flag on the mouse's house as well. He drew a heart on his shirt to reinforce the idea of loving his country. Sal was surrounded by patriotic images in his community, and his writing and illustration provided the opportunity for him to share his patriotic feelings.

After a few weeks, most children were writing independently, but others still needed reminders about the sequence and steps of the writing process. One child, Paul, however, seemed unable to stay focused on writing or any other class work during the school day. During Writing Workshop he was not getting much accomplished.

Paul

His Story

After two weeks of Writing Workshop, Paul had written just three words in his story notebook: The Unicorn Horn. He intended this to be the title of his story. I sat with him and asked him to tell me the story that he was writing. I wrote his words as he dictated them to me. I had to keep him focused once or twice, but he really did have an idea that he was thinking about; he just wasn't getting anything written down on paper. Together we wrote nine short sentences. Then I asked Paul what he planned to write next. He could verbalize his ideas to me. "I heard a gunshot. I went to look for the gunshot. The shot hit the unicorn."

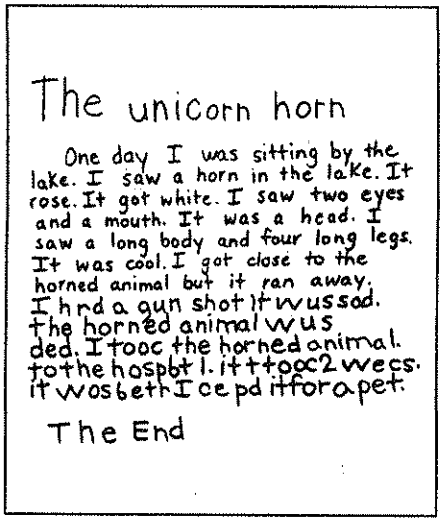
A stricken look crossed my face. "Yeah," he said to me, "it's a sad story, Mrs. Smeltzer."

I told Paul, "You have some wonderful ideas to write about, but I can't tell what your ideas are if all that I see is a blank piece of paper in your notebook." I asked why he couldn't write these ideas on his own during Workshop time.

"I'm not good at reading, and writing, and stuff," he responded.

"Well, you have some great ideas," I told him. "Do you mean spelling?" Paul nodded. I asked him, "Do I expect everything to be spelled perfectly in your writing notebook?" He shook his head. "No," I said, "Just try your best, right?" He nodded.

His Writing: "The Unicorn Horn"



The unicorn horn

One day I was sitting by the lake. I saw a horn in the lake. It rose. It got white. I saw two eyes and a mouth. It was a head. I saw a long body and four long legs. It was cool. I got close to the horned animal but it ran away. I hrd a gun shot It wus sad. the horned animal wus ded. I tooc the horned animal. to the hospbt l. it ttooc2 wecs. it wos bethI ce pd it for a pet.

The End

The unicorn horn

One day I was sitting by the lake. I saw a horn in the lake. It rose. It got white. I saw two eyes and a mouth. It was a head. I saw a long body and four long legs. It was cool. I got close to the horned animal but it ran away. I heard a gunshot. It was sad. The horned animal was dead. I took the horned animal to the hospital. It took two weeks. It was better. I kept it for a pet.

The End

My experience with Paul reminded me not to be quick to make judgments about why children are not being productive during Workshop. I could have easily thought, "Well, he plays with his pencil all day during class. He's not even thinking of any ideas during Workshop." But my conference with Paul allowed me to discover a key reason for his writing hesitancy, feelings of inadequacy. Paul still writes more slowly and takes more time to finish stories than the other children in the class. He does, however, continue to generate wonderful stories and help others during Workshop.

After about a month or so, most of the children seemed more comfortable with the writing process. If one child seemed confused what to do next, a buddy could usually help out. Although the children's stories were getting longer, many had difficulty writing interesting details. Some would actually repeat phrases and ideas to make the story longer. I designed a mini-lesson to provide the children with a larger repertoire of writing options. (A copy of the two versions of "Fun at the Beach" is included as Appendix H.)

Mini Lesson: Adding Details

One afternoon in the beginning of October, I began Workshop with a mini-lesson about adding details. I had an overhead with two versions of a story entitled, "Fun at the Beach." The first version had few details. The second version was longer and filled with many more details. I asked the children what

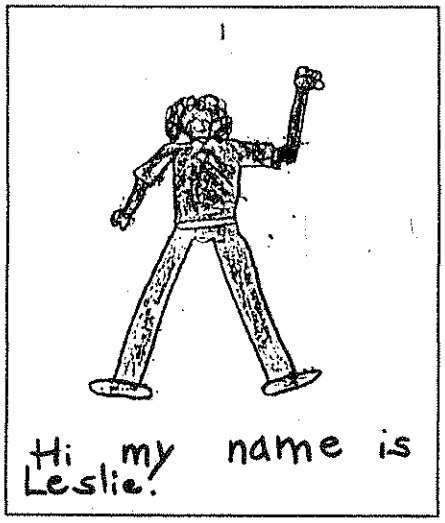
was wrong with the first story. Jeanne replied, "It's not very interesting." Then we discussed why the second story was more interesting. Cheryl said, "Because it's longer." I responded, "But what if I would have made the story longer like this..." and I made up another story that repeated the same ideas in the shorter version but did not give any more detail. "But you told us what you did in the second story," said another child. So then we talked about how the details of the story make it more interesting and enjoyable to read. By showing the children two versions of the same story, they could see more easily how details make the story more interesting.

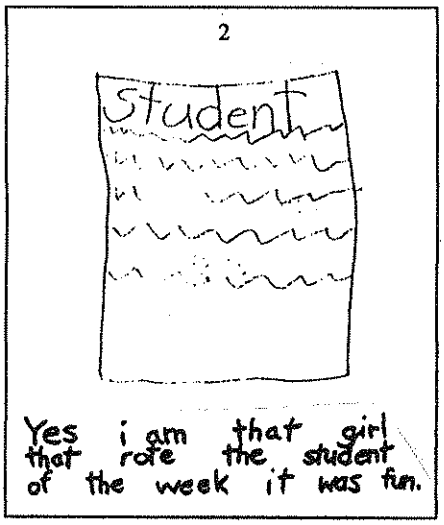
A few weeks later, I introduced to the children two new ways to publish their stories – booklets and mini-books. First I told the children about the booklets. The booklets are made of folded construction paper. Stapled inside are white pages with lines at the bottom and a space for an illustration at the top of each page. Some booklets have 8 pages in them. Others have 12 pages in them. I told the children that they should write at least one sentence on each page. So their story needs to be at least 8 sentences long to be published in a booklet. They can write more than one sentence on a page if the story is longer. A few days later, I explained that to the children that they could choose a favorite story to publish in a mini-book. I told them that I would be their editor and proofread the story for them. I would also type up the story for them on the computer, then publish it in a "hard cover" mini-book (5" X 7") made of cardboard and covered

with blue wrapping paper with yellow stars. I wanted to provide a variety of publishing options as an incentive to write.

Some teachers provide sharing time during every Workshop (Lovelace, 1995). I wish I could. However, I find that I don't have the time, and that goal is unrealistic for me right now. I have sharing time about once a week. The children enjoy sharing their own stories and listening to others' stories. They are usually quite supportive of one another during this time. I used Donald Graves' (1994) format when designing my sharing sessions. The play entitled Share, Share, the Gang's All Here illustrates a large group sharing time in which Leslie shared her story, "Student of the Week 2."

Leslie's Writing: "Student of the Week 2"





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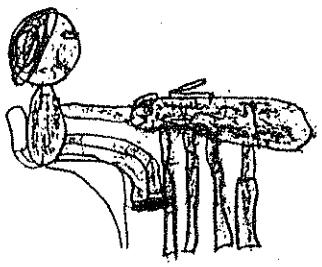
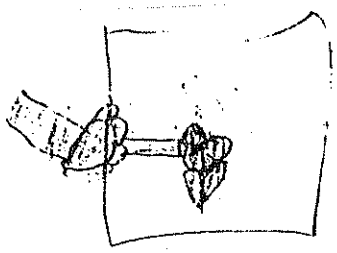


I am not a good writer.

4



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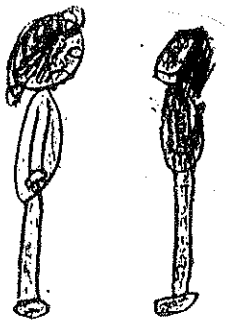
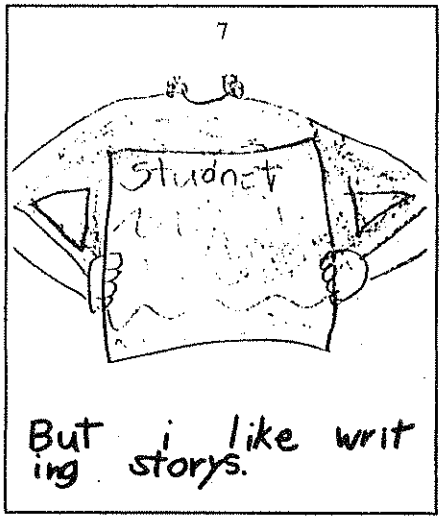
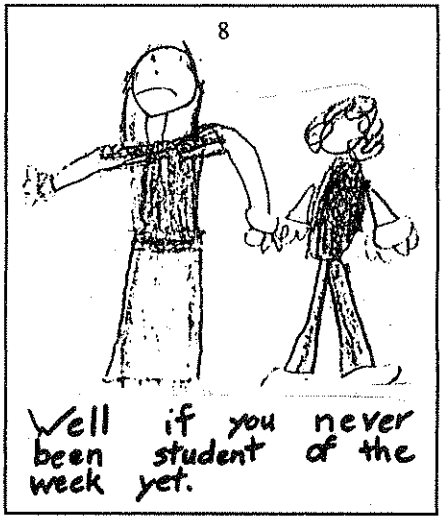


Well maby you thingk im good.

6

The reason wie i rate this story is becaus i was the frast student of the week in frast grade. i like to be it.


7
Student
But i like writ ing storys.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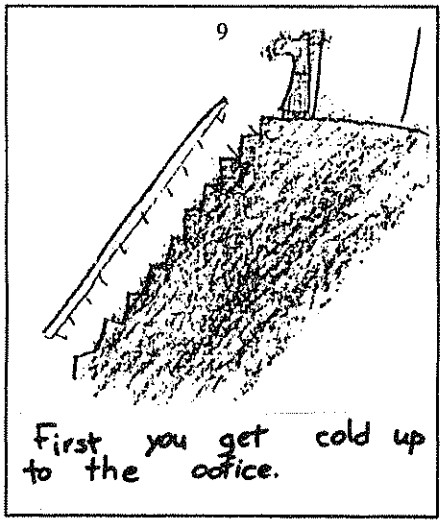
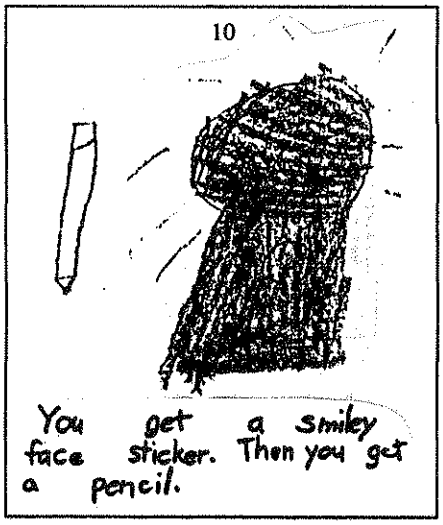
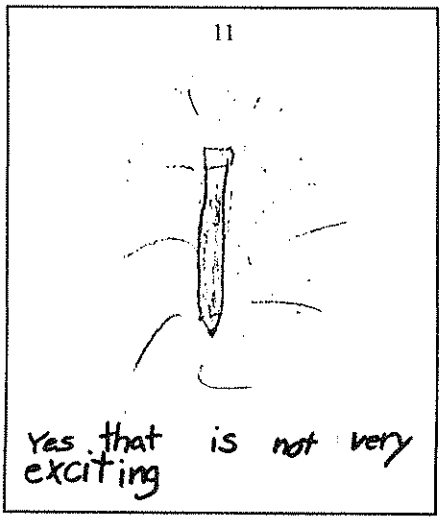
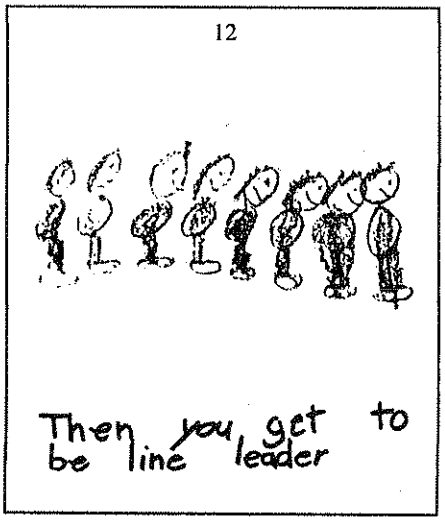
Well if you never been student of the week yet.


9
First you get cold up to the office.


10
You get a smiley face sticker. Then you get a pencil.





Play: "Share, Share, the Gang's All Here"

SCENE: LESLIE is seated in the author's chair with her story. The rest of the children and the teacher are sitting on the floor, facing LESLIE and ready to listen to her story.

TEACHER: What is the one thing your story is about, Leslie?

LESLIE: It's about me being student of the week.

(Leslie reads the story to the class, showing her pictures.)

LESLIE *(after reading)*: I am not a good writer.

CHERYL: If the teacher sees your work, I'm sure that she would say, "Good job!"

(TEACHER smiles.)

LESLIE: What do you remember about my story? *(Several children raise their hands. LESLIE calls on Alison.)*

ALISON: You were the first student of the week in first grade.

(Several children raise their hands. LESLIE calls on JOE.)

JOE: This is the second student of the week book that you made.

(Several children raise their hands. LESLIE calls on TABITHA.)

TABITHA: That when you're student of the week you get a pencil.

LESLIE: Does anybody have any questions?

(Several children raise their hands. LESLIE calls on BRITTANY.)

BRITTANY: Why did you write about student of the week?

LESLIE: Because I like being student of the week.

(Several children raise their hands. LESLIE calls on SAL.)

SAL: Why do you like being student of the week?

LESLIE: Because I was the first one in first grade.

CHERYL: Who was the second one in first grade?

LESLIE *(in an exasperated voice)*: How am I supposed to know?

CHERYL: Does anyone remember? Was it anyone in here?

(Children murmur to one another, some shaking their heads. ALISON raises her hand.)

ALISON: Why did you write this story?

SAL: Someone just asked that!

ALISON: Oh, yeah, I forgot.

LESLIE *(to teacher)*: Do you have a question for me?

TEACHER: *(Thinks for a moment.)* Well, you mentioned that you weren't that excited about getting a pencil when you were student of the week. So my question is, what would you change about student of the week if you were in charge?

LESLIE: I would give big prizes! Like a trip to Disney World!

TEACHER: Why doesn't our guidance counselor do that?

LESLIE: Because she doesn't have tickets!

TEACHER: That's right, because they cost too much.

(Leslie gets up to leave the author's chair.)

BRAD: Wow, that would be great to have prizes like that!

BETH: Yeah, I'd love to go to Disney World.

SAM: Or maybe we could get a motorcycle instead!

TEACHER: Great job, Leslie!

(Lights fade.)

Before sharing their stories, I have the children tell the class the topic of their story. This part of our sharing ritual helps the children focus their stories, instead of getting lost in a rambling of recollections or ideas. Then the children tell three things that they remember about the story. Donald Graves (1994) states, "What authors of any age need most is attentive listeners" (p. 133). He suggests that before the children ask question, they need to remember what the author wrote. He then has the children share "reminders" and questions. "Reminders" are things that are stirred up in the children's memories as they are listening to the author. In my classroom, we tell three comments or questions about the shared story. The comments may include reminders or compliments about the story.

After everyone had an opportunity to read their stories to the large group, I tried small group sharing. I did this for two reasons. First, the children were getting impatient when they had to wait to share a published piece. Second, I had a pile of eight published stories that children wanted to show the class. I felt like we were being buried with published stories, which was a good thing! But it takes quite a while to hear these stories if we always share with the large group.

Small group sharing was conducted the same way as large group sharing. I limited the mini-audience size to four children in the interest of organization and tranquility. I did not, however, choose the small groups. Each author picked two children to be part of the mini-audience. The rest of the children then chose which

mini-audience they wanted to join. Consequently, no child was last to be selected for a mini-audience.

Although I had initially decided to try small group sharing to solve the problem of a published story backlog, I found that some children preferred it to the large group sharing. One child, Brittany, had not chosen to share her published stories with the entire class. Instead, she would read them to me privately and take them home to read to her family. Once we started sharing with small groups, Brittany chose to show some of her stories to a mini-audience. Small group sharing was within her personal comfort zone; large group sharing was not.

Toward the end of the first marking quarter, I decided to share my own personal writing with the children. Although I had showed the class the story "Fun at the Beach" and other writing to illustrate a point, I hadn't shared anything to make me face the same risk-taking feeling that Brittany and other children may have been experiencing. I know that I should have been reading my own personal writing with the children, but I didn't feel comfortable doing it. I don't enjoy writing. I rationalized my non-sharing by telling myself, "Well, I don't make the children share with the whole group if they don't feel comfortable doing it. So I guess I don't have to!" I had read the literature which states the importance of the teacher sharing his/her own writing (Reeves, 1997; Sanacore, 1998; Graves, 1994). bell hooks (1994) admonishes, "In my classrooms, I do not expect students

to take any risks that I would not take, to share in any way that I would not share" (p. 21). I decided to grin and bear it. I started with a poem that I had written. (I figured I'd start small!) The following play is about my first personal sharing with the children.

Play: "Share and Share Alike"

SCENE: TEACHER is seated in the author's chair with her story. The children are sitting on the floor, facing TEACHER and ready to listen to her story.)

TEACHER *(holding up a smoothed-out, but once crumpled piece of paper)*: This is my rough draft of my poem. It's not very pretty, is it?

CLASS: No!

TEACHER: I almost threw it away. That's why it's all crumpled up. But then I thought that maybe I should show it to you so that you could see how many things I've crossed out and how much I've revised it. *(TEACHER holds up final draft of poem.)* It looks a lot different now.

BRAD: Yeah. Did you draw a picture, too?

TEACHER: No, I didn't have time because I just wrote the poem this morning, and I'm not sure if I'm going to draw one.

(TEACHER reads poem to class.)

TEACHER:

"You Choose"

A second grade classroom

A mix of personalities

Teasing, tattling, hurting

Mean and rude

Often angry, often upset

Playing with a pencil,

Then confused on the test

How can they learn?

(Children glance at each other, looking uncomfortable)

A second grade classroom

A mix of personalities

Laughing, sharing, helping

Kind and polite

Often cheerful, often excited

Paying attention,

Then discovering new things

Ready to learn!

Which do you choose?

PAUL: You forgot to tell us the one thing that the poem was about.

TEACHER: You're right Paul. I forgot. I must have been nervous. Thank you for reminding me. My poem is about a second grade classroom.

(PAUL nods.)

TEACHER: What do you remember about my poem?

(Several children raise their hands. TEACHER calls on TABITHA)

TABITHA: The title was You Choose.

(Several children raise their hands. TEACHER calls on MAGGIE)

MAGGIE: Someone played with a pencil.

(Several children raise their hands. TEACHER calls on JOE)

JOE: The classes were very different.

TEACHER: Before I ask for your questions, I have a question to ask. Do you know why I called this poem, "You Choose?"

(Several children raise their hands. TEACHER calls on LESLIE)

LESLIE: Because we have to choose which class to act like.

TEACHER: That's right. You guys have to choose the kind of class you want to be. I know which class I'd choose, but you guys are the ones that have to choose, not me. Does anyone have any questions?

(Several children raise their hands. TEACHER calls on SAL)

SAL: Why did you write this poem?

TEACHER: Because I'm worried about the choices that some of the children are making in this class. Some children are saying mean things and forgetting what is appropriate for school. Other children are having trouble paying attention. I wanted to remind everyone that you choose the kind of class that we are going to have this year, not me.

(Several children raise their hands. TEACHER calls on GINA)

GINA: Why did you type it on the computer instead of writing it with pencil?

TEACHER: Well, I'm faster on the computer than writing it out with pencil.

CHERYL: She is fast. I saw her typing when we were at the computer lab yesterday. Her fingers were like, zoom, she's fast.

TEACHER: And I found that while I was typing the poem, I was still revising it. I could easily go back and change things with the computer. I didn't have to rewrite the whole thing.

GINA: I know. You can just go backwards and erase it.

(Several children raise their hands. TEACHER calls on BRAD)

BRAD: That was a nice poem.

TEACHER: Thank you, Brad. You know, I was nervous about sharing my writing. I don't think I'm a very good writer and it makes me nervous to share it with other people.

JOE: You're a good writer, Mrs. Smeltzer!

OTHER CHILDREN *(nodding)*: Yeah!

TEACHER: Well, thank you. But it's still hard for me to share. When I was a little girl, my teachers always gave us something to write about, and I never felt like my stories and poems were good enough. Sometimes you might think, 'I'm only a kid. I can't write anything that special or important.' That's what I always thought, too. But writing can be very powerful when we write what we care about and what is important to us. That's why I let you write about whatever you want during Writing Workshop. So let's get writing!

(Children get up, get their writing notebooks, and start Workshop.)

Throughout the school day, I tried to provide a bridge between reading and writing. During Reading time, we read a variety of genre – realistic fiction, fantasy stories, non-fiction pieces, and poems. I reminded the children during Workshop that they could write any kind of story or poem that they wanted to. Most chose to write realistic fiction stories or non-fiction stories about themselves. But some ventured into fantasy, information pieces, and poems. We also read about the authors of our Reading stories. Many of the authors told how they wrote about what they liked and cared about. I would remind the class, "That sounds just like you writing during Writing Workshop!"

During October, I gave the children a projective technique. I wanted to find out what the children liked and didn't like about Writing Workshop. I told

the class that they did not have to write their names on the paper, although some of them did.

The projective technique responses were reflective of what I had been seeing in class. Many of the comments about writing and Writing Workshop were positive. Many of the children pointed out that they liked writing or making up their own stories. Some mentioned that they enjoyed having the choice in topic. One child stated that he liked, "writing about what we want." Another child noted, "I like Writing Workshop because I have a lot of ideas and stories." Generating story ideas does not seem to be an everyday frustration that I notice during class, and no child wrote that this was a problem on the projective technique.

The children also liked the supportive atmosphere of Workshop. Some wrote that they enjoyed working with a buddy. Others liked that the teacher helped them. Three stated that they liked sharing their stories with the class.

I was not surprised to see that a few children listed revising and proofreading as something they like about writing workshop, and a few children listed revising and proofreading as something they don't like about writing workshop. I think revising is difficult for many children because they think, "I can't think of anything to change or add. The story sounds fine to me." This is why I try to get the children to take baby steps into revising by telling them, "You don't have to change anything big if you don't want to. Try to add little details to

your story to make it even better." Other children may like revising because it makes their story longer, and in their eyes, longer is better. I think that some children like proofreading because they want their writing to be "perfect." They don't like the misspellings and mistakes. They want it to look like a "real" story. Other children do not like looking words up in the Quick Word book, a mini-dictionary. Maybe it seems like a tedious process, or maybe they just don't want to take the time to do so, or maybe they just are not strong spellers and have a lot of words to look up.

The children also commented on other things they did not like about Workshop. I was not surprised by most of the things, either. A few mentioned frustrations of having to wait to proofread, publish, or share their stories. One child did not get to work with the buddy of choice, since the children are not allowed to work with more than one buddy at a time. One child felt embarrassed when sharing for the first time. But this child must have overcome this embarrassment since all of the children have shared more than once with the class. Two children felt that it was too much writing. Two felt that there was not enough time! Six children indicated that there is nothing that they dislike about Writing Workshop.

The projective technique responses encouraged me to continue Writing Workshop. I could not realistically expect that every child in my classroom would have only positive things to say about Writing Workshop, and most of the

children were very positive. In addition, when reflecting on the things that the children did not like about Writing Workshop, I noticed I could not really adapt Writing Workshop to make everyone happy. So we would continue undeterred in our Workshop journey.

I was happy to see that the good outweigh the bad, and all but one child, Andrew, had something that they liked about Writing Workshop. I created the following vignette about Andrew from his projective technique responses, an informal interview, and observations noted in my researcher log.

Vignette: Andrew's Story

> I don't really like writing at all. Not a bit. Not even a tiny itsy bitsy bit. And I don't like Writing Workshop. Period. Well, I guess the mini-books were okay. Sort of. I worked on mine a couple of times in my spare time. My teacher helped with the proofreading. But when I'm writing, it's hard to sound out the words. And coming up with ideas is even harder. I struggle and struggle and my brain hurts. My brain pumps in and out. I don't like when that happens.

I feel a kinship with Andrew. He writes because that is what he is "supposed to do" during Workshop. Although he struggles with the spelling, he

writes faithfully because he's a good kid and does what the teacher tells him to. That is why I write, I write when I have to, and I write because the teacher tells me to. But Andrew and I are different, too. I was a good reader, and I don't remember writing hurting my brain. I noticed, too, that Andrew started writing in his spare time in October. He was working on his mini-book. I see this self-initiated writing as a positive sign toward lifelong writing.

The projective technique was not the only time that I was able to capture students' feelings about writing and Writing Workshop. The following piece is a pastiche of various students' comments to me and one another during the school day.

Pastiche: What Do Students Say About Writing Workshop During the School Day?

Listen to my story!

I'm going to RUN to my lifebook and write an idea in it, so I don't forget it.

I'm almost done with my story!

Can I please, please, please take this home to finish?

I'm not good at reading and writing and stuff.

Writing Workshop is the best time of the day.

I'm writing more and more!

Look at how long my story is!

What do I do when I revise?

I wrote two poems in here last night.

Guess what! I got two pages full of story!

Can I do this at home?

Yea! I don't have to write today!

(during center time) Can I write in my writing notebook?

Look how long my rough draft is!

Look at all I wrote!

This is my longest story yet! I can't believe that I'm writing this!

(speaking to teacher) Why don't you ever come over to me during Writing Workshop?

Look how long this story is! And I have a lot more details in my head!

Look how much I wrote today – a whole page!

Why don't we have Writing Workshop on Mondays?

What do I do next?

Can I write a story now instead of practicing math facts?

Spiderman – that's what I'll write about! I looked at his comic book (pointing to a classmate) and got the idea, just like that.

Me and my dad are gonna do the same thing that you're doing with those books. We already have one typed out.

I don't feel like writing.

Here is my book about leaves that I made at home.

See my illustrations!

I like writing stories better than poems.

Can I take a booklet home and start publishing there?

Most of the children's comments about Writing Workshop are positive. I overheard these remarks during the school day and recorded them in my researcher log. Many children state that they are excited about their writing. Most want to share their writing with the teacher and other children. Some show interest in writing at home and at times other than Writing Workshop time. A few of the comments are negative. Most of these remarks reflect their confusion, insecurities and frustrations about writing. Sometimes the children just do not feel like writing. For most of the children, however, this negative feeling toward writing is not a persistent attitude. It is usually fleeting, and only occurs

occasionally. Later I will see these children writing, smiling, and sharing during Writing Workshop and other times of the school day.

After the first marking quarter, I had the children complete a writing reflection. I had them choose a favorite story. They had to tell why they liked that story best and what they did well in that story. Then they had to tell what they want to do better in their next quarter's stories. I had the children come up to my desk. I explained that I would write down what they told me on the reflection sheet. Then they would not have to worry about spelling. The only time I interrupted was when a few children gave the answer of "writing" to tell me what they did well or what they wanted to do better. I asked them what they meant by "writing."

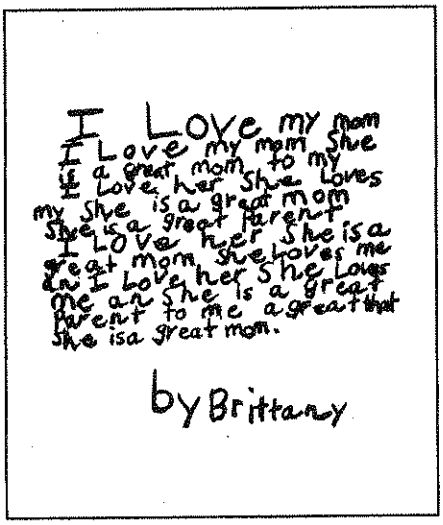
I was encouraged to see that the children focused on content when explaining what they liked about their stories and what they wanted to do better. When discussing what they did well, however, only half of the children discussed the contents and details in their stories. The other half answered pictures/illustrations (6), handwriting (2), spelling (1), and capitals/periods (1). At this point in the school year, many of the children do not see themselves as "good writers."

Brittany chose "I Love My Nan" as her favorite story this marking quarter. She has written about other members of her family, too. In September she wrote

"I Love My Mom." Brittany tended to repeat phrases, although it was clear that she cared about her mom and wanted to convey this idea to others.

Brittany's Writing

"I Love My Mom"



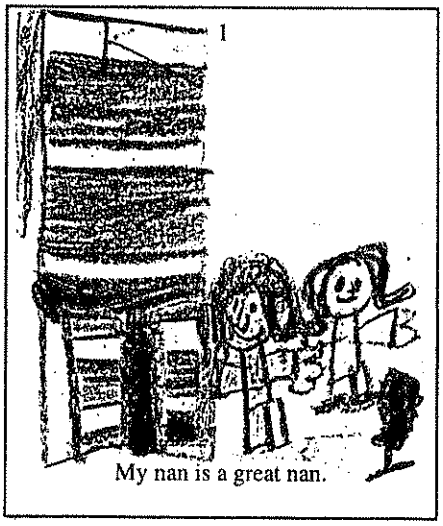
After the mini-lesson on details, Brittany wrote "I Love My Nan." She had included some details, such as "She bought me two orange pumpkins and made me a costume for Halloween" and "She buys me lots of things." When I helped her revise it, questioning her about the costume and the things that her Nan buys her, she had many details to add to her story.

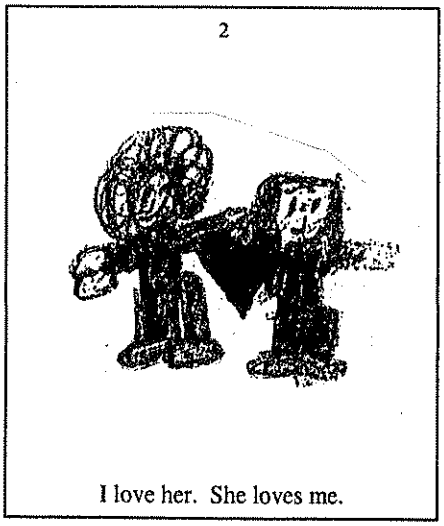
"I Love My Nan"

I Love My Nan

By

Brittany





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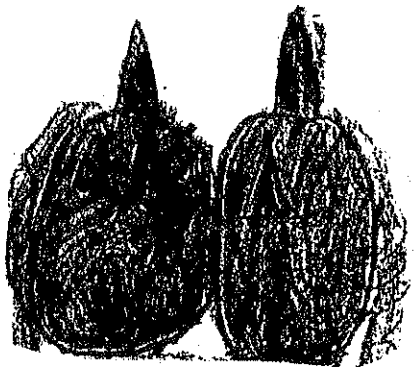
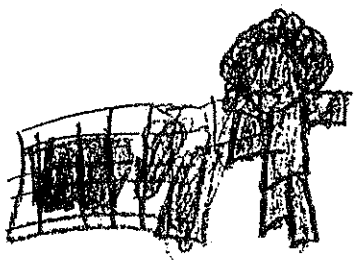


She bought me two orange pumpkins.

4

She made a costume for me for Halloween a couple of years ago. It was a Cinderella costume. It was a blue dress. And it had a blue necklace.

5

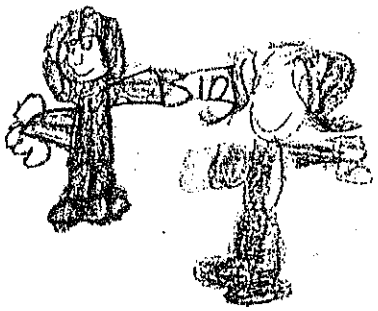


She buys me everything in the whole world. She buys me clothes, shoes, and socks.

6

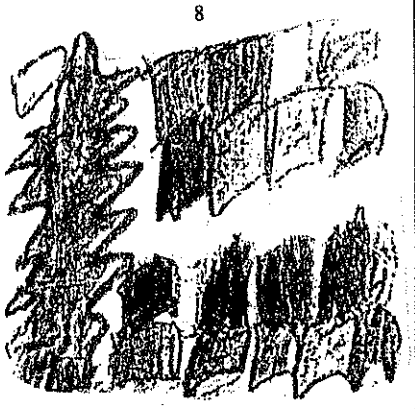
She is great! She is my dad's mother. I went to her work once. I shredded papers for her. Then her boss called me in and he gave me 50 dollars!

7



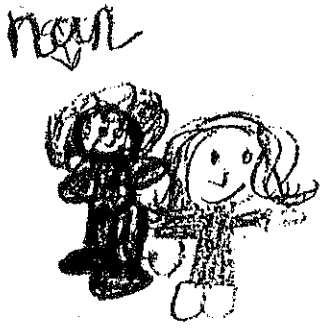
She took me to McDonald's and lots of times she gives me money.

8



She bought me new books. She gets me lots of things for Christmas and my birthday.

9



She is the best nan in the whole wide world.

When Brittany reflected on her "I Love My Nan" story, she told me, "I liked this story because it's about my nan." I was glad to see that Brittany was choosing topics that she cared about. She did not, however, consider herself to be a good writer. I asked, "What did you do well?" She responded, "Drawing pictures." Although Brittany had added several key details to her writing, she did not view this as an area of improvement. She instead focused on the illustrations. I then asked, "What do you want to do better?" She answered, "Write a longer story." Brittany's stories have continued to lengthen. However, although she is capable of adding meaningful details when revising with the teacher, she still struggles and is just beginning to add these details when writing independently.

Just before Thanksgiving, I gave the children a survey about writing and Writing Workshop. I had introduced various genre and a variety of publishing choices to the children. The children now had more choices in Workshop, and I wanted to learn their feelings about these choices. I also wanted to see how the children were feeling about Writing Workshop and writing in general. I asked the children not put their names on the papers so that everyone would feel more comfortable about answering honestly.

I was reassured by most of the survey responses. Most of the children reacted very positively toward writing and Writing Workshop. All the children except one felt that writing was important to learn. Although I had anticipated

that some children may still harbor negative feelings toward writing or Writing Workshop, I was still a little disappointed when three children felt writing stories was boring and did not look forward to Workshop. Two of these children believed that Workshop was a waste of time and did not help them write better stories. I was slightly reassured by the fact that these three children at least enjoyed publishing their stories.

Since these surveys were anonymous, I do not know the identities of these three children. Two of them also felt that writing was hard. Maybe their negative feelings were caused by the difficulties they encounter while writing. These children may resent that I spend more time with other, more demanding children during Writing Workshop. Or maybe these children are those students who demand my time during Workshop, and they want still more of my attention. I will try to look for signs of frustration in the children during Writing Workshop and support them the best that I can, while still helping those children who can work quietly and independently with their buddies.

The surveys were especially important to me because they reinforced my belief in presenting a variety of writing and publishing options to the children. Although most children in my class like to write stories, some also like to write poems. Most enjoy writing with a buddy, but some also like to write alone. All of the children like to publish on the computer, but some also choose to publish on white paper or in a booklet. By giving the children choice, I hope to provide a

positive writing or publishing experience for every child. The survey results are included in the table.

Table 1
Student Survey Results

Writing is important to learn.	No! 0	No 1	Yes 6	Yes! 9
Writing stories is boring.	No! 10	No 3	Yes 1	Yes! 2
Writing poems is boring.	No! 7	No 3	Yes 3	Yes! 3
I look forward to writing workshop.	No! 2	No 1	Yes 2	Yes! 11
Writing stories is hard.	No! 5	No 4	Yes 2	Yes! 5
Writing poems is hard.	No! 5	No 2	Yes 4	Yes! 5
Writing workshop is a waste of time.	No! 11	No 2	Yes 1	Yes! 2
Writing workshop helps me to write better stories and poems.	No! 1	No 2	Yes 1	Yes! 12
I write stories (or poems) at home.	No! 6	No 2	Yes 1	Yes! 7
I like to write stories.	No! 1	No 1	Yes 1	Yes! 13
I like to write poems.	No! 6	No 1	Yes 4	Yes! 5
I like to write alone.	No! 5	No 4	Yes 2	Yes! 5
I like to write with a buddy.	No! 1	No 0	Yes 3	Yes! 12

I like to write class books.	No! 3	No 0	Yes 4	Yes! 9
I like to publish my stories on white paper.	No! 2	No 3	Yes 2	Yes! 9
I like to publish my stories in a booklet.	No! 2	No 4	Yes 2	Yes! 8
I like to publish my stories using the computer.	No! 0	No 0	Yes 4	Yes! 12

In December I gave the children a writing prompt. Although I do not like to give the children prompts to write about, I realize that the children will have to respond to prompts for standardized testing purposes. I also wanted to compare the children's writing to their first day of school writing in which I had provided the children with a prompt. I knew that the children were writing more during Writing Workshop and on their own time, but they could choose their own topics during these times. I wondered, "Would the children write more when given a prompt and less freedom in subject matter?" The topic was "The Best Present Ever." I told them that they could write about a present that they had actually received for Christmas or a birthday, or any other occasion, or they could write about something that they really wanted to get, but haven't gotten yet. Nobody asked how long it had to be, but, as they handed their papers in, some of the

children said, "This is kind of short" and "I couldn't think of anything else to write about."

After the children finished their writing, they could draw a picture of the best present ever if they chose. When everyone finished, I told them that we would publish these rough drafts the next time we go to the computer lab. I told the children that if they wrote a longer piece, I would help them with the typing (if they wanted help) because it would take them longer to finish.

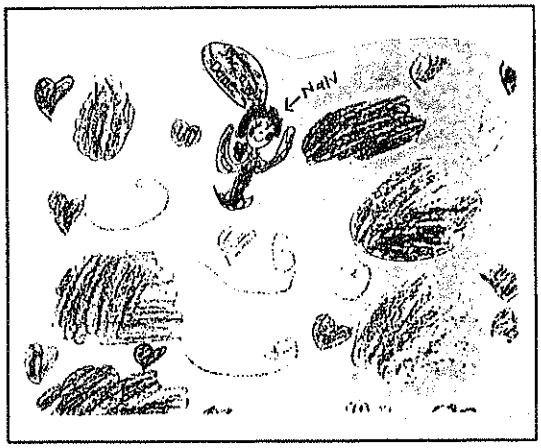
Most children wrote about a toy or pet that they have received or still want. Sal wrote about a toy, but used his imagination to describe a "fantasy toy" – an action figure of another child in our class! A few wrote about family – a brother, who's in the Army, coming home for Christmas or a grandfather coming back alive to give toys. One child, however, surprised me. Even when given this prompt, Gina found a topic that was meaningful to her and she truly valued. On the next page, I share Gina's response entitled, "The Best Present Ever."

Gina's Response to Prompt: "The Best Present Ever"

The Best Present Ever

The thing that I really want is for my nan as an angel to come down and bless us and love us so we won't be lonely. And so my dad won't cry. And we really loved her.

By Gina



All of the children wrote more than they had written for the September prompt, even though some children had apologetically commented on the length of their writing when handing it in. All of the children added at least one detail describing the present or explaining the reason they wanted that gift. I was pleased to see the children's writing improving in length and detail, with and without a prompt.

Writing Workshop is a very hectic time of the day. I often felt pulled in many directions at once. In the beginning of the school year, some of the children would practically chase me around the room, asking and showing me things. I explained that I would try to touch base with as many children as possible during each Writing Workshop, but they had to be patient. I still struggle with those

students who demand my attention each Workshop, especially Brad, whom I suspect may be ADHD. I sympathize with the children who work independently and wait for their turn patiently.

I have tried to get a high school volunteer to help out. But all the volunteers were occupied in the first grade and art classes. Our school doesn't have a parent volunteer program in place, but I know that the PTA has a difficult time getting volunteers to help with parties. Sometimes I wish that I had an extra person in the room to help out, but I know that a volunteer would need to learn more about the Writing Workshop approach before helping out, or Workshop would be even more chaotic! I tried to convey the hectic pace of Writing Workshop in the poem on the next page.

Poem: "Go, Go, Go"

GO, GO, GO

Is everybody ready?

Does everyone have a writing notebook?

Someone needs a pencil.

Helping draft a story,

Just try your best with the spelling for now.

Is everybody settled?

Did everyone find a place to work?

Someone needs to settle down.

Helping revise and proofread,

I'll type your mini-book later.

Is everybody working?

Is there too much noise?

Someone needs a booklet.

Helping publish.

What a wonderful story!

ANALYSIS

According to Ely, Vinz, Downing, and Anzul (1997), analysis is "emergent and ongoing" (p. 164). Arhar, Holly, and Kasten (2001) agree, stating "interpretation (making sense of the data) is not a separate part of action research that comes at the end of a cycle" (p. 186). They define an analytic memo as "a memo to yourself about what you see emerging" (p. 187). I used analytic memos to note my reflections of significant events and patterns of behavior. I used them to record what was going well during Writing Workshop and the struggles that the children were experiencing. I also used them as reminders of what I wanted to do next.

A few weeks into the study, I began to code my field notes. Coding is a form of labeling the data in the field log (Ely, Vinz, Downing, & Anzul, 1997). I reread my log entries and wrote a one or two word description for each paragraph or so. For example, if I was writing about my own feelings about Writing Workshop, I would write FEELINGS—T in the margin.

Near the end of my data collection, I took these codes and put them into categories and sub-categories, or bins (Ely, Vinz, Downing, & Anzul, 1997). I used a graphic organizer, a web, to compile the bins into a more understandable arrangement. The graphic organizer helped me to see the patterns and relationships in the data. I then wrote theme statements describing these patterns

and relationships that I had seen in the data (Ely, Vinz, Downing, & Anzul, 1997). These theme statements formed an outline for my findings in my study.

I also collected quantitative data in my study. I constructed tables showing the results of the student surveys, the student writing data, and the self-initiated writing data. I analyzed this quantitative information to see how it supported or disputed the qualitative data and the theme statements I had written (Popham, 2000).

Throughout the study, I had collected the children's published pieces. I reviewed and reread these pieces to see if they confirmed the theme statements. I chose illustrative pieces of student work to include here.

FINDINGS

During my study, I found that Writing Workshop provided an atmosphere of support, even with a less-than-perfect class. The teacher and children provided support to those children struggling during Writing Workshop. The students supported each other during all steps of the writing process – drafting, revising, proofreading, publishing, and sharing. Although some teachers may be hesitant to attempt peer revision, Calkins (1994) also feels that, "With help, children can learn not only to listen, but also to help their classmates rethink what they have done" (p. 100). The teacher provided the students support through mini-lessons,

modeling, and individual guidance/conferencing. I found conferencing with the children during the drafting invaluable to the children who were unsure of how to add meaningful details to their stories. The students provided support to the teacher by offering suggestions about Workshop and writing. The teacher and children worked together to help create a supportive learning environment. Calkins (1994) stresses the importance of this sense of community in the Writing Workshop, stating, "...the quality of writing in our classrooms grows more from the tone, values, and relationships of our classroom communities than from anything else" (p. 142).

During Writing Workshop, the children made the final choices pertaining to their stories. They made drafting (ie: What will I write about? What genre will I write? How long will my story be?), revising (What will I add or change in my story?), and publishing (Will I publish on white paper, a booklet, or a mini-book?) decisions. The children often chose topics in which they were interested (such as family and animals). They also wrote about familiar book/movie/television characters. I encouraged the children to be like "real" authors and to write what they know and care about, just as Calkins (1994) does. Each child learned to accept this decision-making responsibility. Some easily accepted it. Others appreciated the assistance of a peer buddy or the teacher when making these choices.

Most of the children's stories became longer and more detailed over time. Writing, however, is not a clearly linear process. Vygotsky (1978) confirms this, maintaining, "The developmental history of written language among children is full of such discontinuities. Its line of development seems to disappear altogether; then suddenly, as if from nowhere, a new line begins, and at first it seems that there is absolutely no continuity between the old and the new" (p.106). I noticed in my Writing Workshop, that as the children experimented with longer stories, more complex sentence structure, and different genre, they struggled anew with organization, punctuation, and other conventions.

On page 66, Table 2 shows the quantitative writing data (number of words written and genre) for the writing prompt on the first day of school, published pieces composed throughout the Workshop, and the prompt asking students to describe the best present ever. Almost all of the children wrote longer stories when given the freedom to choose their own topics. Even when given a topic to write about, the children wrote more in December than the first day of school in September. All of the children's stories were longer when I helped them to revise the story. I helped all of the children revise some stories. Sometimes I helped during the drafting stage, and the children chose not to publish these stories later. These numbers are not included on Table 2.

Although all of the children showed growth as writers, the children progressed at varying rates. Considering the children's writing development

Table 2
Student Writing Data

Name	1st day	Pub 1	Pub 2	Pub 3	Pub 4	Pub 5	Mean Pub	Best present
Paul	1	39/nf	93/f				39	18
Maggie	15	21/nf	60/f				40	35
Sal	25	22/p	40/r	40/f	119/f		34	43
Tabitha	15	59/nf	171/f				115	38
Beth	8	44/f	94/f	165/f			101	57
Brad	7	24/f	21/nf	155/f			22	36
Gina	13	34/nf	77/nf	128/f			55	43
Joe	11	107/f	156/f				107	33
Andrew	32	89/f	142/f				115	57
Alison	39	89/nf	72/f	127/nf			96	140
Brittany	39	61/nf	79/nf	120/nf	132/nf		70	61
Sam	5	111/f	139/f				--	30
Leslie	11	64/nf	108/nf				86	46
Jeanne	24	93/f	103/f				98	135
Cheryl	10	133/f	99/f	59/nf			59	46
David	19	79/f	222/f				79	28
Abbey	13	45/f	49/f	53/nf	108/nf	46/nf	60	moved
Mean	17	58	84	88				52

Note. f = fiction; nf = non-fiction; p = poem; r = riddle. Underlined numbers represent writing that was revised with the teacher. These numbers are not included in the means.

when given a prompt, Alison and Jeanne showed the most growth. These girls were well-behaved, above-average students. They both had above-average writing skills in the beginning of the school year. They tried their best and did well when given a task to complete. As the school year progressed, their published writing flourished in length and detail. They were independent writers in that they often initiated writing on their own time.

Andrew and Sam had average growth when given a prompt. Andrew wrote and tried his best when given an assignment. He rarely chose to write on his own time, however. Although he said he did not like to write, his published pieces showed even more improvement than his prompt responses. Sam wrote very little in the beginning of the school year. While he sometimes chose to write on his own time, he had difficulty finishing pieces without the assistance of a buddy or the teacher during Workshop time.

David and Paul showed the least growth when given a prompt. Although they chose to write on their own time, they both had difficulty finishing class work during the school day. They were easily distracted throughout the day, and this was also evident in the amount of writing they accomplished. Both boys finished only one published piece independently, when given free choice of topic.

Considering the children's writing progress when given free choice of a topic, Beth and Tabitha showed the most improvement in writing fluency. These girls increasingly chose to write on their own. In all areas of the curriculum, they

did their best work when they were interested in a particular subject or when they were given choices.

Brittany and Sal showed average development in their published pieces for Writing Workshop. They seldom chose to write outside of Workshop time. They chose to write about topics that were meaningful to them, but sometimes had difficulty including details.

Brad did not show any growth when given choice in writing topic. He sometimes chose to write on his own time. However, he had trouble getting along with others. He wanted to work with a buddy during Workshop time, but he had difficulty finding someone willing to work with him. Therefore, he turned to me to be his "buddy" during the entire Writing Workshop time. He did not actually ask me to be his buddy, but instead came up to me every few minutes. He craved my constant attention during Workshop and throughout the school day.

For the remainder of the school year, I continued to monitor the children's development during conferencing using the teacher record sheet (Appendix I). As I conferenced with the children during all stages of the writing process, I gently nudged the children along as they grew as writers, as Graves (1994) suggests.

The children were usually on task during Writing Workshop, writing and discussing their stories. They wanted to share their writing with others, at home or at school. All the children in my class chose to share their stories, either with the class as a whole or in small group sharing sessions. Most students were

excited about sharing their stories during all steps of the writing process, and many chose to write on their own, other than Workshop time. Students rarely wrote on their own time when I did not use Writing Workshop. On the following page, Table 3 shows the number of times the children wrote on their own time or took their story notebooks home.

This table shows that all of the children initiated writing during the study. Andrew, who professed not to like writing at all, still chose to work on his mini-book during his spare time more than once. Although some children wrote more and more on their own as the study progressed, others showed an increase in October followed by a decrease in November. This decrease may have been the result of fewer school days, disruptions such as parent visitations and Thanksgiving vacation, or a natural ebb and flow of interest. For the remainder of the school year I would continue to observe if children were initiating writing in my classroom, as Graves (1994) recognizes self-initiated writing as the most important characteristic of a lifetime writer.

Most children seemed to enjoy Workshop. During the interviews, the children's attitudes toward writing and Writing Workshop were very positive. Many stated that they enjoyed being able to choose their writing topics. Even if they felt that coming up with ideas was hard, most did not want me to tell them what to write about. They would rather talk it over with a buddy, and discover a topic on their own. The children's responses in the interviews and on the surveys

Table 3
Self-initiated Writing Data

CHILD	SEPTEMBER	OCTOBER	NOVEMBER	TOTAL
Paul	6	10	11	27
Maggie	1	3	5	9
Sal	2	1	5	8
Tabitha	3	5	10	18
Beth	2	9	11	22
Brad	2	4	5	11
Gina	0	4	3	7
Joe	3	10	14	27
Andrew	0	3	0	3
Alison	6	20	12	38
Brittany	0	1	5	6
Sam	4	7	5	16
Leslie	2	11	3	16
Jeanne	8	15	12	35
Cheryl	3	7	13	23
David	5	5	9	19
Abbey	2	3	moved	5*

strengthened my belief in providing choice and variety in Writing Workshop.

Many children initially struggled with the steps of the writing process and generating story ideas. The children sometimes became frustrated when drafting their stories. Some couldn't think what to write next. The supportive atmosphere of Writing Workshop helped the children in these times of distress. Other children would get preoccupied with spelling. I then reminded the students to focus on ideas and fix the spelling later. Some children became disturbed by the noise level at times. As a group, we discussed this problem and devised a solution, showing a quiet signal as a visual reminder to the loud student.

Writing Workshop had a frantic pace for me. Sometimes I became frustrated and worried if Workshop did not seem productive on a given day. The children's behavior problems during Workshop were evident at other times during the school day and were not unique to Workshop time. For example, some children struggled with focusing on their class work, taking longer to finish their Math work and Cursive papers. These children also took longer to write stories during Writing Workshop. Some children had trouble working with other children during cooperative Reading activities. Although sometimes these children got along with others better during Workshop, with buddies of their own choosing, other times they continued to have difficulties working with a classmate during Workshop time. In spite of these annoyances, I was excited about the children's increased interest in writing and wished I had more time for Workshop.

Some days Workshop ran smoothly. Other days it did not. Even if one child was having a bad day, it could throw off the rhythm of the Workshop and ruin the productive and cooperative atmosphere. On these days I was upset and sometimes discouraged. But then I would see the children writing longer stories, and I would notice the children writing more and more on their own. I knew that Writing Workshop, although always exhausting and sometimes frustrating, was very rewarding and worthwhile.

ACTION RESEARCH – THE CYCLE CONTINUES

I have discovered that refining and adapting Writing Workshop a little at a time is easiest for me. Hoffman (1998) assures me that "in the end teachers will continue to change in response to their students" (p. 13). He continues, good ideas "are reshaped, reformed, and strengthened" (p.13). He feels that teachers should not interpret these adaptations as failures.

As I continue Writing Workshop this year, I will shift focus from quantity of writing to quality of writing. Since I've started implementing Writing Workshop in September, the children are writing longer pieces. Now that the children are becoming more fluent in their writing, we can concentrate more on improving the writing content. I want to expand my mini-lesson repertoire to

include such things as organization, lead writing, and word choice. I will look for mini-lesson suggestions in *Scaffolding Young Writers: A Writers' Workshop Approach* by Linda Dorn and Carla Soffos.

I will search for ways to improve my Writing Workshop. Next year I will again begin my Workshop in September. I would also like to try something new. I would like to share our favorite published pieces with another class as a "publication celebration" (Calkins, 1994). We could share with another second grade class, or possibly a group of younger children. I hope to discover additional writing ideas in the books *In the Company of Children* by Joanne Hindley and *And with a Light Touch: Learning about Reading, Writing, and Teaching with First Graders* by Carol Avery.

In the larger picture, I would like to improve the sense of community in my classroom. In the past two years, I have noticed that some of the children pick at each other a lot, every day. Sometimes they subtly try to irritate others. At other times, these children can be very nasty to their classmates. I do not know if this negativity is due to "a bad mix" of certain children's personalities, or if I am not doing enough to foster a feeling of unity and cooperation. I need to browse through the literature for guidance in this area.

I am glad that, for the most part, this nastiness has not spilled into our Writing Workshop time, perhaps because the children work with a buddy of their own choosing. During some Workshops, children will tattle if they feel someone

is disturbing them or goofing around, which may develop into an argument. But the children are usually helpful and cooperative with their buddies during Writing Workshop.

As I look back to when I initially began Writing Workshop in my classroom, I am amazed at how much my Workshop has changed. I look forward to continuing my Writing Workshop journey. As my students improve as writers, I improve as a writing teacher. Workshop gives us the opportunity to learn and grow together. Cole and Knowles (2000) state, "Educators and other researchers have much to learn from students. As equal participants in the teaching-learning process, students can inform teachers in helpful and meaningful ways (p.95). I am sure that each year's class will offer new victories and new struggles. I know that each new group of children will help me to shape and transform Writing Workshop into what is best for that particular group.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A
Student Writing Data Form

STUDENT WRITING DATA

Name_____

Date	Title of piece (shared or published)	Genre	# of words

Appendix B
Copy of Student Survey/Attitude Scale

STUDENT SURVEY

Writing is important to learn.

No! No Yes Yes!

Writing stories is boring.

No! No Yes Yes!

Writing poems is boring.

No! No Yes Yes!

I look forward to writing workshop.

No! No Yes Yes!

Writing stories is hard.

No! No Yes Yes!

Writing poems is hard.

No! No Yes Yes!

Writing workshop is a waste of time.

No! No Yes Yes!

Writing workshop helps me to write better stories and poems.

No! No Yes Yes!

I write stories (or poems) at home.

No! No Yes Yes!

I like to write stories.

No! No Yes Yes!

I like to write poems.

No! No Yes Yes!

I like to write alone.

No! No Yes Yes!

I like to write with a buddy.

No! No Yes Yes!

I like to write class books.

No! No Yes Yes!

I like to publish my stories on white paper.

No! No Yes Yes!

I like to publish my stories in a booklet.

No! No Yes Yes!

I like to publish my stories using the computer.

No! No Yes Yes!

Appendix C
Proposed Interview Protocol

Proposed Interview Protocol

- How do you feel about writing stories or poems?
- What kinds of things do you like to write about?
- What kinds of things would you rather not write about?
- What type of writing do you like best—stories, poems, information pieces?
- Which people in your family (besides you) write stories or poems?
- Do you write at home or any other time than during writing workshop?
- How do you feel about writing workshop?
- Do you think writing workshop gets easier or harder as time goes on? Why?
- What is the hardest part of writing workshop? Why?
- What is the easiest part of writing workshop? Why?
- Does writing workshop help you write better stories? How?
- Is it important to be able to write good stories? Why?
- If we had a new student start tomorrow, what would you tell him about writing workshop?
- If you were the teacher, what would you change about writing workshop to make it better?
- Is there anything else you'd like to tell me about writing workshop?

Appendix D
Parent Consent Form

September 4, 2002

Dear Parents,

During the 2002-2003 school year, I will be completing courses toward a Master's degree in Curriculum and Instruction at Moravian College. These courses will help me stay in touch with the most effective methods of teaching in order to provide the best learning experience for your child.

Moravian's program requires that I conduct a systematic study of my own teaching practices. The focus of my research this semester (September 4 – December 20) is the impact of writing workshop in an elementary classroom. Writing workshop allows me to conference with the children while they are drafting their writing. This conferencing can help improve the children's writing skills, focusing on the needs of each individual student. I feel that a writing workshop gives the children more control over their writing. I hope that this empowerment will bring a more positive attitude toward writing.

As part of my study of the writing workshop, I will be observing and reflecting on how the writing workshop in our classroom is progressing. I will be collecting samples of student writing that the children have shared in the classroom. I will be interviewing interested children about their feelings about writing and the writing workshop. The children will also be completing two surveys about writing.

All children in my classroom will be involved in the writing workshop as part of my regular language arts program. However, participation in this study is entirely voluntary and will not affect your child's grade in any way. Your child may withdraw from the study at any time. If your child is withdrawn, I will not use any information pertaining to your child in my study.

All of the children's names will be kept confidential. Neither your child's name, nor the name of any student, faculty member, teacher, or public school will appear in any written report or publication of the study or its findings. Minor details of the student's writing may be altered to ensure confidentiality. All research materials will be secured in my home.

My faculty sponsor is Dr. Joseph Shosh. He can be contacted at Moravian College by phone at (610) 861-1842 or e-mail at jshosh@moravian.edu.

Our principal, (principal's name), supports this study and may be contacted at school by phone at (phone number).

If you have any questions or concerns about my in-class project, please feel free to contact me at school by phone at (phone number) or e-mail me at (e-mail address). If not, please sign and return the bottom portion of this letter. Thank you for your help.

Sincerely,

Susan M. Smeltzer

I attest that I am the student's legally authorized representative and that I read and understand this consent form, and received a copy.

Legal representative signature:_____

Child's name:_____

Date:_____

Appendix E
Principal Informed Consent

September 16, 2002

Dear (principal's name),

During the 2002-2003 school year, I will be completing courses toward a Master's degree in Curriculum and Instruction at Moravian College. These courses will help me stay in touch with the most effective methods of teaching in order to provide the best learning experience for the children in my class.

Moravian's program requires that I conduct a systematic study of my own teaching practices. The focus of my research this semester (September 4 – December 20) is the impact of writing workshop in an elementary classroom. Writing workshop allows me to conference with the children while they are drafting their writing. This conferencing can help improve the children's writing skills, focusing on the needs of each individual student. I feel that a writing workshop gives the children more control over their writing. I hope that this empowerment will bring a more positive attitude toward writing.

As part of my study of the writing workshop, I will be observing and reflecting on how the writing workshop in our classroom is progressing. I will be collecting samples of student writing that the children have shared in the classroom. I will be interviewing interested children about their feelings about writing and the writing workshop. The children will also be completing two surveys about writing.

All children in my classroom will be involved in the writing workshop as part of our regular language arts program. However, participation in this study is entirely voluntary and will not affect the child's grade in any way. Any child may withdraw from the study at any time. If the child is withdrawn, I will not use any information pertaining to that child in my study.

All of the children's names will be kept confidential. Neither the children's names, nor the name of any other faculty member or public school will appear in any written report or publication of the study or its findings. Minor details of the student's writing may be altered to ensure confidentiality. All research materials will be secured in my home.

My faculty sponsor is Dr. Joseph Shosh. He can be contacted at Moravian College by phone at (610) 861-1842 or e-mail at jshosh@moravian.edu.

If you have any questions or concerns about my in-class project at any time, please feel free to contact me at school, home (phone number), or e-mail me at (e-mail address). If not, please sign and return the bottom portion of this letter. Thank you for your help.

Sincerely,

Susan M. Smeltzer

I attest that I am the principal of the teacher participating in the research study, and that I read and understand this consent form, and received a copy. Susan M. Smeltzer has my permission to conduct this research at (school name), (city, state).

Principal's signature:_____

Date:_____

Appendix F
Student Revising and Proofreading Checklists

REVISING

During revising, the writer reads his story to a friend, pointing to each word as he reads. The friend must help give at least 3 ideas for making the story better.

THINK ABOUT:

- ❑ Did the story make sense?
- ❑ Did the story have a problem and solution?
- ❑ Did the story have a good beginning, middle, and end?
- ❑ What details can you add to your story to make it more interesting?

PROOFREADING

- ❑ I used capital letters in the beginning of sentences.
- ❑ I used capital letters in names.
- ❑ I used correct end marks. (periods, question marks, exclamation points)
- ❑ I spelled all of my no-excuse words correctly.
- ❑ I used my Quick Word book to correct my spelling.
- ❑ I circled any words that I could not find in my Quick Word book.

Appendix G
Student Record Sheet

Name_____

WRITING FOLDER

Date	Title	Fiction	Non-fiction (true story)	Poetry	Step of process

RD: rough draft REV: revising PRO: proofreading FC: final copy PIC: picture
(add/change ideas) (check spelling, endmarks, capitals)

Appendix H
Fun at the Beach

Fun at the Beach

This summer we went to the beach. We had lots of fun. I went with my cousins. We swam. It was really fun. We played. We had fun.

Fun at the Beach

This summer we went to the beach. We had lots of fun. I went with my cousins, Lauren and Justin. We all laughed after we buried Katie in the sand. You could only see her head sticking out! The rest of her was a huge mound of sand. Afterward, Katie had to run into the ocean to rinse all of the sand off her body. We swam in the ocean, and we ran away from the jellyfish. Justin cried when he hurt his foot stepping on a seashell. At night we would walk along the boardwalk, looking at all of the toys in the stores and listening to the ocean. We were all exhausted at the end of the day. I can't wait to go next year!

Appendix I
Teacher Record Sheet

Name _____	Name _____
Name _____	Name _____