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ABSTRACT
        Based on the idea that creative writing in the
classroom need not begin with writing as the first step in the
composing process, this guide suggests an oral approach to creative
writing. The guide describes the "Telling to Write" process which
begins with a structured exploration, continues with a series of
story-related activities imitating the form literature takes,
proceeds with story composing and revising orally, and concludes with
writing and revising what has been composed orally. (NKA)

TELLING TO WRITE:
REVERSING THE COMPOSING PROCESS

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Too often creative writing begins with writing as the first step in the composing process. Students usually feel their writing must be perfect as they write. Creative writing can begin from a different point... first a structured exploration into literature, second a series of story-related activities imitating the form the literature takes, third venturing into story composing and revising orally. Then (and only then) writing and revising what has been composed orally.

STEPS IN THE "TELLING TO WRITE" PROCESS

✔ Choose one of the story types (see reverse side) and get as many titles from the library as you can. Then tell, read aloud, assign silent reading, listen to tapes---any and all of the above to saturate the students in the particular type. Discuss likes and dislikes, what makes one better than another, etc.

✔ During another period invite students to find similar qualities in the stories. Write on board what you hear. Keeping in mind the story pattern(see reverse side).

✔ When you have a clearly defined story pattern (written on the board) break the students into groups of three (this size works best) and give them 10 minutes to brainstorm the bare bones story pattern that follows (but is unique in its application). Make sure you keep to time schedule...too long and student digress too much.

✔ Then ask each group to appoint a "storyteller"--·the person who will share the bare bones of the story they brainstormed. The students will surprise themselves at how much they improvise on the spot..

✔ Group discussion of the story ideas should follow. encourage the students to see that the revision can take place at this point. Ask them what they like and dislike and why. Then ask them to apply this to their bare bones story.

✔ When students have a feeling for the story pattern, encourage them to write down the bare outline of their story in their groups or individually.

✔ You may want to have students practice their stories aloud in small groups at this point or not, depending on the motivation of students.

✔ Now ask the students to write the story idea in full narrative form. If there are still problems with the story at this point you may want to discuss the story with students individually,or have them tell it and get feed back or let them read it aloud.

✔ The very last stage is the rewriting, correcting of grammar, spelling, etc.

✔ Then display the stories in some form: on a bulletin board, read over the intercom, put in book form, told to the younger children, etc.

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STORY TYPES

1. Circle Story A story whose plot structure bends back on itself, bringing the listener to the point at which the story began. Two examples are "King Solomon and the Otter" & "The Stonecutter". Often the main character of the story learns through this circuitous process that he or she is the best or the strongest

2. Cumulative Story Simple plot with repetition. Chain tale in which each time a new part is added and the whole refrain repeated. Often told with a sense of rhythm. E.g. "Little Red Hen", "Gingerbread Man".

3. Fable A brief story that teaches a moral lesson. Usually the main characters are animals This is one of the most widespread forms of teaching in the world. E.g. Aesop's fables or more recently Arnold Lobels' "Fables".

4. Ghost Story is a story which has some element of the supernatural, usually a ghost or some apparition. The story can be merely anecdotal yet "give goosebumps" because it mirrors for us a sense of otherworldliness. E.g. Jacob Marley's ghost in Dickens' "Christmas Carol".

5. Scary Story usually brings to life through images a common fear (e.g. crocodiles in the sewer). Two types: the jump story (e.g. "In a Dark, Dark House..") and the horror story (e.g. "Friday the Thirteenth")

6. Myth A story usually about gods or demigods that explains a natural event or the creation of the world or of a race. The myth differs from why story in scale. The why story usually tells the origin of a certain trait or physical characteristic, whereas a myth deals with the creation of worlds, or events on a larger scale.

7. Tall Tale Exaggerated stories about extraordinary persons or animals. Best told with a swagger and lots of bravado. E.g. Paul Bunyan, Pecos Bill.

8. Why Story The tale explains the origin of some characteristic (e.g. why cats have nine lives) or event (e.g. why there are stories in the world). These stories are best told with such customary beginnings as: "In time before time." or "When the world was much younger than it is now." Examples of this type: "Why the Bear Has a Stumpy Tail" or "Why the Snake Has Rattles".

STORY PATTERN

1. A very common pattern for this type of story is that the main character wishes to be considered greater than his lowly station, as in the "Stonecutter" story: first a prince, then king, then sun, then cloud, then mountain which is being chipped away at by a stonecutter, then returning to his former state, realizing that it is the best.

2. "One Fine Day" by Nonny Hogrogian is an excellent one to use as a model. Old woman cuts off fox's tail because he drinks her milk. He must go to the cow for more milk before she will sew tail, cow says bring grass, field says bring water, river says bring jug, girl says bring bead, peddler says bring egg, chicken says bring grain, miller says "here take the grain. Fox returns to each their request. "Ask students what if there wasn't a pail of milk, but rather gold, or meat or, honey, etc. Make a story based on this set of consequences.

3. This form is best used with a light hand. Begin by asking students to share anecdote about a lesson they learned when they did something they shouldn't.

4. In every ghost story the apparition returns because of some unmet need: revenge, lost love, warning, misplaced meaningful object. Have students brainstorm, spooky settings in their school. Who might haunt it? janitor? principal? teacher? Why? What unmet need? Setting, character and motivation are essential.

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5. Brainstorm things of which students are afraid. In small groups share, then share results in large group and have students decided what works best as subject of story. Compare to horror films. Stephen King's movies all revolve around common fears but he makes them bigger than life---how? How can this be incorporated into their stories?

6. Myth is more complex and should be attempted after students are help to realize that these are religious stories for each culture. If they seem strange it is only the unfamiliar symbols being used. Allow students to create a world in space, peopled by their own race of beings. Who are they? What do they look like? What is their creation story? Sources for examples Ursula LeGuin, J.R.R. Tolkien.

7. Read lots of tall tales, play exaggeration games like "I saw a mosquito big as a....., and when he flapped his wings the air.....". Then pick a tall tale character from literature. Identify the structure and ceate the "further adventures of........"

8. Choose one characteristic of an animal the students know well, or can research in the library. Begin the story with" In the time before time.." or some other traditional beginning, then introduce the animal without that characteristic, adding detail to clarify the situation, then create a dilemma in which the animal gets the new characteristic and the last line should read, "And .... have had..... ever since."