

DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 347 832

FL 020 496

AUTHOR Samway, Katharine Davies
 TITLE Writers' Workshop and Children Acquiring English as a Non-Native Language. NCBE Program Information Guide 10.
 INSTITUTION National Clearinghouse for Bilingual Education, Washington, DC.
 SPONS AGENCY Office of Bilingual Education and Minority Languages Affairs (ED), Washington, DC.
 PUB DATE 92
 NOTE 32p.
 PUB TYPE Guides - Non-Classroom Use (055)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
 DESCRIPTORS *Child Language; *Class Activities; Editing; Elementary Education; *English (Second Language); *Language Skills; *Limited English Speaking; Program Implementation; Workshops; Writing Assignments; *Writing Instruction; Writing Skills

ABSTRACT

Examples of writers' workshops and ways to implement them for children's second-language learning are described in this handbook for teachers. Writers' workshops are important structured classroom events that provide children with opportunities to demonstrate their facility as writers. The theory behind writers' workshops is that children acquiring English are capable of much more than is generally expected of them. Writing is described as a process that is meaning-making, recursive, and developmental. Classroom procedures for designing a writers' workshop are outlined; they cover the following areas: classroom set-up, classroom procedures, teacher and student roles, native language literacy, and teaching English to speakers of other languages (ESOL) classes. A step-by-step approach to implementing the workshop is offered that includes getting started, topic generation and selection, audience and publication, writing conferences, contextualized skills teaching, editing (e.g., self-editing, peer editing, adult editing, copy editing), and publishing. A sample chart illustrates how to document a child's progress by recording dates, time spent writing, what was worked on, and comments. Contains 19 references, including books, journals, and videos useful to teachers. (LB)

 * Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
 * from the original document. *

ED 347 832

NCBE

10

National
Clearinghouse
for
Bilingual
Education

Program
Information
Guide
Series

Spring 1992

Writers' Workshop and Children Acquiring English as a Non-Native Language

by



Katharine Davies Samway

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS
MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

Del Gomez

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES
INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION
CENTER (ERIC)

- This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.
- Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

FL 020 496

Acknowledgments

My teaching of writing has been greatly influenced by the work of Donald Graves, Nancie Atwell and Lucy McCormick Calkins, as anyone who is familiar with their work will probably recognize as they read through these pages. I have taken their ideas, tried them out, mulled over them, altered them to fit my teaching situation, and generated my own ways of teaching. I am indebted to them for the practical insights they offered and the stimulus to consider my own solutions and ways of teaching. That may be the greatest gift that one teacher can give another.

I would like to thank Dorothy Taylor, Jennifer Jones-Martinez, Laurel Cress, and Sui-Mui Woo for continually sharing with me their experiences and insights into children's writing development and writers' workshop—you will read their students' writing in the following pages. I also appreciate the insights of Josie Cirone, Ronnie Gruhn, Sharon Roddick, Stephanie Steffey, and Emily Vogler. Lorraine Valdez Pierce was a stimulating person to work with throughout the writing of this publication—I value all that she did as editor.

The National Clearinghouse for Bilingual Education (NCBE) is funded by the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Bilingual Education and Minority Languages Affairs (OBEMLA) and is operated under Contract No. T289004001 by The George Washington University's Center for the Study of Education and National Development, jointly with the Center for Applied Linguistics. The contents of this publication do not necessarily reflect the views or policies of the Department of Education, nor does the mention of trade names, commercial products, or organizations imply endorsement by the U.S. Government. Readers are free to duplicate and use these materials in keeping with accepted publication standards. NCBE requests that proper credit be given in the event of reproduction.

National Clearinghouse for Bilingual Education
1118 22nd Street NW, Washington DC 20037

Director: Joel Gomez

Publications Coordinator: Lorraine Valdez Pierce

Introduction: One Writers' Workshop

The sixth grade students in Ms. Ramirez' Spanish/English bilingual class are catching up with each other after a long weekend. The language that is shared in this classroom is English, but other languages are spoken and respected, including Spanish, Farsi, Lao, and Vietnamese. At the sound of a small bell, the students head for their desks, which are clustered in groups of four around a worn area rug in front of the blackboard. Once she has the attention of all thirty-four students, Ms. Ramirez comments that she noticed when reading through the children's writing folders that many of them were writing poetry. She wonders if they realize that poetry doesn't have to rhyme and adds, "Sometimes I felt as if you were limited by the need to find a rhyming word. I thought it might be a good idea to read some poetry that doesn't rhyme and try to figure out what these poets do when writing poetry."

Ms. Ramirez then reads a selection of poems, some written by students from previous years, some written by famous writers, others written by her. English is not the native language of many of her students, and she believes that they need to develop their native language literacy in order to be fully literate. Ms. Ramirez, therefore, encourages her students to write in whatever language they are most comfortable. Most of the poems that she reads are in English, but some are in Spanish and one is in Farsi. Because she does not read Farsi, Ms. Ramirez invites Homah, an Iranian student who had arrived in the United States five weeks earlier, to read it. After Homah has finished, Ms. Ramirez reads the English translation. As she reads each poem, she places a copy on the overhead projector to aid the children in their understanding and to help them see how poets structure their poems. She has made copies of these poems so that the children can begin to put together their own poetry anthologies. She reminds them that they may find it helpful to read other people's poetry and points to a section on the long bookshelf where poetry books are stored.

"I'm gonna write a soccer poem," announces Hugo at the end of this ten-minute mini-lesson. Ms. Ramirez says, "Hugo has just mentioned what he's going to do. Let's do our quick check-in." She then calls out the children's names, and one by one, they briefly say what they are planning to do during writers' workshop. Ms. Ramirez jots down short notations of each child's plans. Several children mention that they will be helping other children who speak very little English: Roberto says that he's going to help Antonio translate his "teaching book" on industrial pollution from Spanish to English; Mary is going to help Thang and Muang with their picture stories; and Freddy will read to Homah from a selection of predictable books that the children have come to love since studying picture books in preparation for tutoring first grade students. Whenever Ms. Ramirez comes to the name of a child whose English is not fluent, she encourages the child to show or point to what s/he will be doing and then verbalizes the child's intentions, e.g., "Muang, will you be working with Mary?" Muang nods and lifts up a sheaf of pictures. "Okay, Muang is going to work on her picture story with Mary." At the end of this quick check-in, the children disperse to different areas of the classroom.

For the next forty minutes the children engage in a variety of activities. Some work on their environmental science reports; others work on stories, letters, memoirs, poems, advertisements for the upcoming bake sale, and comic strips—the children are responsible for deciding on the topic and format for their writing. They are engaged at different stages of the writing process. A couple of children are trying to decide what to write about and Ms. Ramirez reminds them to look at the list of topics in their folders to see if that gives them any ideas. Some children are working on a first draft, while others are working on a second, third, or fourth draft, or editing their writing. Still other children are conferring together about their writing. Several children are reading, doing research for their writing—gathering information, checking into how others write, looking for ideas. One child is at the publication table, putting the finishing touches to a pop-up book she has written for a first grader she tutors once a week. During this forty-minute writing time, Ms. Ramirez circulates around the room conferring with children. Sometimes she just talks briefly with them, asking how things are going or if they need help. At other times she spends a few minutes listening to them as they explain what they are doing or the problems they are encountering, suggesting alternative ways of approaching their writing, or teaching them skills and strategies she sees they need.

During writers' workshop, Ms. Ramirez does not have time to meet with every child, but she makes a point of briefly meeting with the children who understand and speak little English, even though they are all paired with other students who are more fluent English speakers. She pulls up a chair next to these pairs to find out what they are doing, give them an opportunity to talk with her, or make suggestions. The peer tutoring program is very effective, and Ms. Ramirez spends time with tutors each week evaluating the success of their work and demonstrating new teaching/learning strategies (e.g., writing picture stories, helping rather than doing for other children).

At the end of this intensive writing time, the class comes together to talk about what they accomplished in that day's writers' workshop, comment on how things went, share finished pieces, and discuss problems they are experiencing. Hugo comments that he didn't have time to write much because he spent a lot of time reading the poetry books, "To see how to do it." Gloria mentions that she had a good conference with Angela and Adam: "They liked how I started my soccer story with dialogue, like in *Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry*. That's where I got the idea 'cuz I thought it was boring before when I just said what happened. They liked that. The dialogue in the beginning." "How did you start it?" Tony asks. Gloria glances down at the sheets of paper in her lap. She clears her throat and reads: "'Get back, get back!' I scream at the fullbacks. A skinny tall girl is racing down the wing towards me. She's all alone and she's moving the ball towards me and the goal. She's fast. Real fast. I look at the net and position myself." Gloria stops reading. "Ooh, that's good," says Monica, "Did she get a score?" Gloria shakes her head, "No, I looked her in the eye and she missed!" Everyone laughs.

Ms. Ramirez knows from meeting with Thang, Muang, and Mary that Muang has finished her picture story about the birth of her baby sister. She invites Muang to share her finished book. At first Muang is reluctant, but at the urging of Mary and Thang, she comes to the front of the class, sits on the special chair reserved for authors, and with eyes downcast, slowly turns the pages that show in great detail this special event. Mary proudly tells the story for Muang, but at the end, Muang herself speaks up. "This my baby," she whispers as she points to the final frame of a woman holding a tiny baby whose eyes are shut tightly. The class erupts into applause.

Muang smiles for the first time. Because it's time for recess, the day's writers' workshop ends with this exchange.

The sketch of this classroom is a composite of many classrooms where children engage in writers' workshop. These classrooms share several characteristics. In them, children:

- write on a regular basis for extended, predictable periods of time;
- are responsible for selecting their own topics;
- confer with each other and with adults about their writing goals, processes, products, problems, and accomplishments;
- write for many audiences—their class peers and teacher, family members, the immediate and wider community, and themselves;
- read a great deal and have many opportunities to talk about reading and writing;
- choose the language that they write in—this is influenced by many factors including their fluency in English, the purpose of their piece, and the needs of their audience; and
- have teachers who are themselves avid readers and writers who share their reading and writing processes, habits, successes, and struggles with their students.

Teachers like Ms. Ramirez did not always have writers' workshops. In fact, in past years many of these teachers rarely focused on writing. In many cases, greater knowledge of the writing process prompted them to redesign their curricula to include time for writing and authentic opportunities for students to develop as writers. Teachers such as Ms. Ramirez have moved towards writers' workshop because of their knowledge about children's writing processes. The purpose of this guide is to introduce writers' workshop to teachers in Grades K–6 who have students acquiring English as a non-native language.

Theory Behind Writers' Workshop

Contrary to learning theories implied or stated in instructional and methodological materials that equate writing with fill-in-the-blank worksheets or patterned writing, it is now known that children acquiring English are capable of much more than is generally expected of them.

Writing as a Meaning-Making Process

Writing is an active, personal, theory-building, theory-testing process that facilitates the making of meaning. Through writing, one can create and clarify meaning. Writing is not simply a mechanism for expressing preconceived, well-formed ideas; instead, it allows one to explore and articulate one's thoughts. Smith (1982) argues that knowing how to write involves being able to delicately integrate global and local conventions with one's own global and local intentions—when we write we try out our theory of the world and in the process discover what we know and think. As a consequence, our own thinking develops through writing. Despite the frequency of writing tasks in school that deny this cognitive function of writing, “a writer's normal task is a thinking task” (Flower & Hayes, 1977, p. 457).

In the process of writing, texts unfold as writers attempt to understand and discover what they want to write about. This is true for both children writing in their native language (Calkins, 1982, 1986; Edelsky, 1986; Graves, 1982, 1983b) and children writing in English as a

non-native language (e.g., Hudelson, 1989; Samway, 1987a, 1987b; Urzúa, 1987). When exploring their writing with both peers and adults, children's thinking (and, subsequently, writing) is enhanced.

Writing as a Recursive Process

Writing is not a simple, static, or linear process of pre-writing, writing and revising. This linear view of writing has given birth to several misguided maxims, including "writers know what they have to say before they say it" (Murray, 1982, p. 26). In the process of writing, new ideas are generated and plans and goals are altered. This phenomenon has been described by Perl (1979, p. 17) as:

a kind of 'retrospective structuring'; movement forward occurs only after one has reached back, which in turn occurs only after one has some sense of where one wants to go.

Even young writers go back and forth in the text (written and pictorial) while composing. They are constantly re-reading and re-evaluating their writing, drawing, and organization, and they make changes accordingly.

Writing as a Developmental Process

Children's writing development is irregular, regardless of whether they are writing in their native language or in English. Although Edelsky (1982, 1986) found patterns of development for individual children acquiring English, she did not find a developmental pattern that characterized children's writing. Other studies have also indicated great variation in children's writing in terms of both quality and quantity (Hudelson, 1989; Samway, 1987a; Urzúa, 1987).

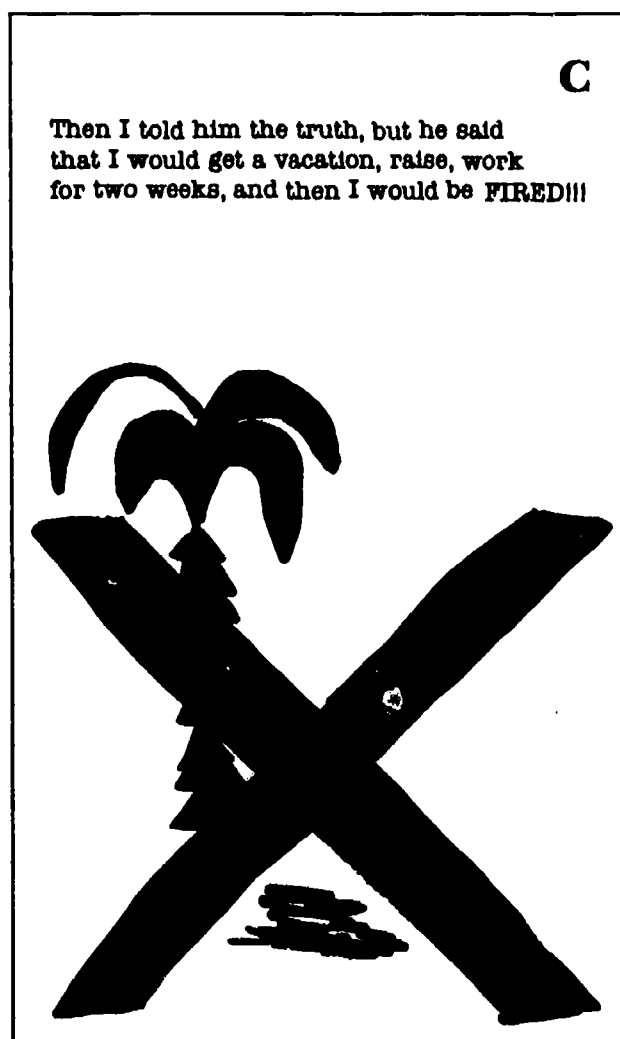
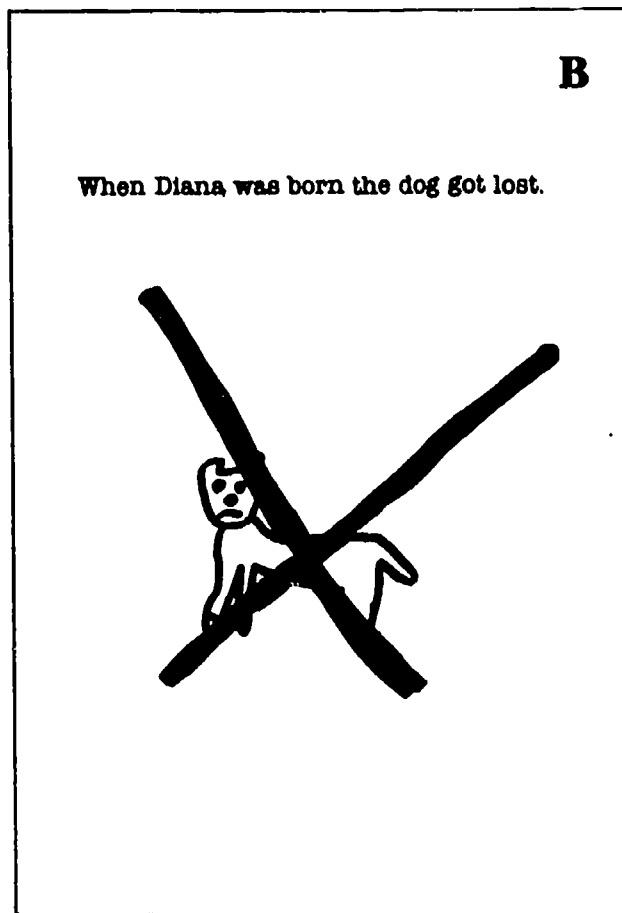
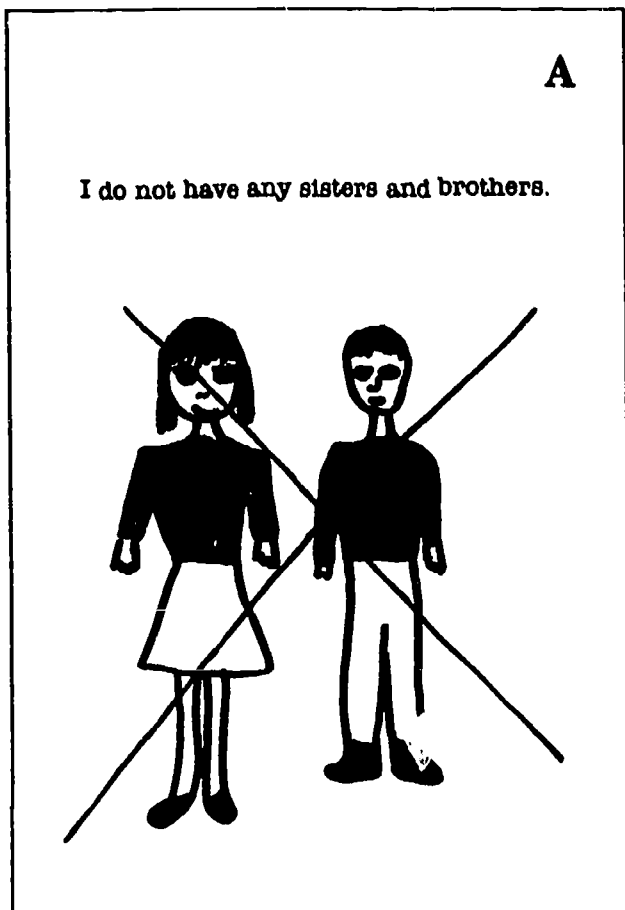
High levels of oral language development are not necessary for children acquiring English to successfully communicate their thoughts and experiences in writing. Even if they have not yet mastered the English system of syntax and semantics, children are nevertheless able to express their thoughts effectively (Hudelson, 1989; Samway, 1987a; Taylor, 1990; Urzúa, 1987). Writing is a developmental process that is accessible to all children, regardless of their relative proficiency in English.

Writing Processes of Children Acquiring English

Children acquiring English develop as writers in idiosyncratic ways (e.g., Hudelson, 1989; Samway, 1987a; Urzúa, 1987). Some children are more fluent speakers, while others are more proficient writers. It is clear that sophisticated oral language development is not necessary for children acquiring English to successfully communicate their thoughts and experiences in writing. In fact, as a result of their exposure to environmental print (e.g., advertising, product packaging, and television), children can write quite early in their English language experience (Hudelson, 1984). This writing growth frequently reflects a development in oral fluency. Students often compensate for their lack of fluency in English by using symbols to express complex thoughts (Taylor, 1990). For example, **Figure 1** illustrates how students who were just beginning to learn English used the X to indicate negation (Box A), the loss of a pet (Box B), and the loss of a vacation (Box C).

We also know that children can write in English before receiving formal reading instruction in the language (Edelsky, 1982; Hudelson, 1984; Hudelson & Serna, 1991), and that this

Figure 1



Source: D. Taylor. 1990. "Writing and Reading Literature in a Second Language." In N. Atwell (Ed.), *Workshop 2: Beyond the Basal*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann. Reprinted with permission.

writing may form the basis of their first reading experiences. Children acquiring English are also aware of the need to write in the language that is most accessible to their audience (Hudelson & Serna, 1991). For example, a child may write in English for monolingual English-speaking peers but in Spanish for monolingual Spanish-speaking grandparents. When children are given opportunities to write for authentic, meaning-making, message-sharing purposes, they can accomplish much, even when they are emerging readers and writers and/or writing in a language which they have not yet mastered.

Designing a Writers' Workshop

When planning a writers' workshop for students acquiring English, it may be helpful to remember that this learning event is designed to do the following:

- encourage children to become enthusiastic, experienced writers capable of communicating their ideas in clear and evocative ways;
- enhance children's knowledge of the craft of writing and give them opportunities to bring that knowledge to discussions about literature (both fiction and non-fiction);
- provide children with opportunities to read and write across the curriculum;
- offer children opportunities to write for real audiences, that is, audiences other than the teacher;
- provide a means to use writing to think and vice versa;
- build a collaborative learning and work environment in which children view each other as valuable resources; and
- show students the relationship between oral and written language.

The classroom procedures indicated on the following pages are intended as suggestions. Every classroom is unique and teachers will therefore need to develop their own procedures to match the experiences and needs of their students. The following factors can influence the scope and/or success of a writers' workshop: classroom set-up and procedures; the roles of the teacher and students; native language literacy; and ESOL classes.

Classroom Set-up

Writing is both a solitary and social act; it requires both quiet time and time to talk. It is important, therefore, that the classroom be set up to accommodate these differing functions. There should be places that are quiet and places where writers can freely communicate with each other. The social aspect of writing is particularly true for young writers—their writing is enhanced by the give and take that occurs when they talk and watch each other at work. Setting the room up with round tables, small rectangular tables, or clusters of four to five desks seems to work best. As some children need a very quiet writing environment, it may be helpful to also establish a secluded writing corner where talking is discouraged. In addition, some teachers designate areas in the room for conferences, such as a corner with pillows or chairs. Teachers may find it helpful to set up classroom work stations for such functions as editing, illustrating, and publishing. These centers can be as simple as a small table, a few chairs, and the appropriate resources stored on shelves or in boxes.

An editing *center* should help children refine the mechanics of their writing. They need reference guides such as dictionaries, thesauruses, and style sheets that explain, for example, the uses of punctuation symbols or features of grammar. It is also helpful to have lists of frequently used words that are added to throughout the year as children become more conscious of their vocabulary needs. Children also need to have tools at their disposal that allow them to revise. Cutting and pasting is an efficient way to rearrange texts—scotch tape, scissors, and staplers are invaluable for doing this.

An *illustrating center* should contain a variety of materials (e.g., collage materials, pens, brushes, colored pencils, crayons, paints, different kinds of paper), and reference books or charts describing illustrating techniques and guidelines (e.g., for washes, mosaics). Examples of illustrators' work are also helpful.

A *publishing center* should contain paper of different textures, qualities, sizes, and colors—many print shops will donate or sell for a small fee odd pieces of paper from the ends of rolls. Children often use color and other techniques to express emotions and provide emphasis, both in the text and in the illustrations. Therefore, a publishing center should be equipped with a variety of writing utensils (e.g., pens, pencils, and crayons of different thicknesses, types, and colors). If children are to publish their own writing, they need guidelines for bookmaking or mounting pieces. A computer or typewriter is also very helpful for typing final drafts. Handwritten final drafts, however, can be very attractive. In some schools, children go to a publishing center to illustrate and publish their books. These publishing centers are located in a separate resource room and staffed by volunteers from the community.

Classroom Procedures

At the beginning of a writers' workshop, one is likely to hear children briefly stating what they will be doing (whole class check-in). Although the children are often working at their own pace, one will also find the whole class meeting together for a mini-lesson, a time when the teacher gives focused instruction on a particular skill, strategy, or organizational issue. One is certain to see a lot of children writing; some will be beginning or continuing with a first draft, others will be revising their writing and working on a fourth or fifth draft, and still others will be editing their writing. Some writers may be conferring with each other or with the teacher. Others may be searching for a topic to write about, or adding topics to their topic list. Still other children may be doing research (e.g., reading, watching a film, or conducting an interview). Children may be illustrating a piece of writing that is about to be published. Others may be publishing or making final, clean copies; depending on the kind of writing, children may be using a computer to write a final draft, mounting their writing for display on a bulletin board, or making a cover for a book. Toward the end of the writers' workshop, one is likely to see the children all come together for a whole group share where they talk about their writing and writing processes. If a child has just published a piece, the writer may sit in a special chair (the author's chair) to read it—this is an opportunity for the whole class to celebrate in the accomplishments of class members.

If children are to write well, they need to write often. They also need to write at regular, predictable times. This means that writers' workshop cannot occur sporadically. It must be at an agreed-upon time that is well known to the children. Pull-out teachers who meet with students only two to three times a week need to decide on which days to have writers' workshop. Self-contained classroom teachers need to decide on which days and at what times to have writers'

workshop. It is best to hold writers' workshop every day, but if this is not possible, teachers may want to aim for at least three times a week, preferably the same days and times each week. Students also need to know what will be predictable about the scheduling of the workshop. For example, once they understand that there will always be a mini-lesson, a brief check-in time at the beginning of the workshop, and a whole group share at the end of the workshop, children will be able to better prepare themselves for these times.

Other procedures should also be predictable, such as where children's writing is stored. Many teachers keep ongoing writing in manila folders filed in a cardboard storage box that is easily accessible to students; complete drafts of published and/or abandoned pieces can be stored by name in a filing cabinet. Students should be urged to save and date everything they write or draw, even very rough drafts, as these are precious manifestations of their development as writers and thinkers. Children also need to know where to put pieces that need an editing or publishing conference with the teacher.

The Roles of the Teacher and Students

In a writers' workshop, there are potentially as many teachers as there are members of the class. The teacher, however, is the head teacher, as well as a fellow writer and mentor. Through sharing their writing processes and products, teachers are able to demonstrate, inspire, and guide students. It is important to note that there seems to be a connection between the degree to which teachers are themselves writers and the quality of students' writing. It is helpful to spend a few minutes working on one's own writing before circulating around the room to confer with students. Some teachers do their writing on chart paper so that their students can see them at work. Other teachers bring in pieces that they have been working on at home. Teachers need to demonstrate to children what it means to be a writer.

When teachers share a letter to an author or a letter of complaint that they have written, it is very likely that some children will follow suit and write their own letters. By sharing a draft of a poem, explaining what they are trying to accomplish, discussing problems they are experiencing in the writing of the poem, and asking for feedback, teachers are letting students know that they know what it is to be a writer. They are also letting students know that they value their reactions and thoughts. When teachers share a letter from an editor informing them that their article will be published, they are letting students share in their exhilaration, while also demonstrating that writing is for real purposes—in this case, to be read by other people whom we may not know.

Children are typically thought of as being fledgling, inexperienced writers. However, even while they are in the process of acquiring English, children are budding teachers and can provide considerable support to each other by offering feedback, seeking feedback on their own writing, and sharing their successes and difficulties as writers. In addition to being responsible for their own writing, students are also responsible for helping each other grow as writers.

Native Language Literacy

Many teachers do not understand the native language(s) of their students, and children in these classrooms often write in English. Sometimes, however, they write in their native language. When teachers appreciate these efforts and encourage them to read their pieces to the class, children are supported as writers and as human beings.

If the teacher can read in the students' native language(s), it is advisable to encourage students to write in the language in which they are most proficient and comfortable; they should not be required to write in a language in which they are not yet comfortable. Children's increasing exposure to English and experience as writers will help them transfer their knowledge of the writing process to English. Children will write in English when they are ready. If the teacher cannot read in the students' native language, s/he can enlist the help of paraprofessionals, tutors, or students to translate.

ESOL Classes

Teachers of English to speakers of other languages (ESOL) may work in a variety of programs, e.g., self-contained classrooms, newcomer centers, and pull-out classes. Although the suggestions provided in this guide for implementing writers' workshop are particularly appropriate for ESOL and bilingual teachers in self-contained classrooms, they can also be implemented by those working in other settings. The scope of the workshop may be affected by the number of children teachers work with at one time, the frequency with which they meet with students, and the length of each session. For example, one pull-out teacher met with her ESOL students from two to four times a week, each session lasting about forty minutes (Taylor, 1990). Because the children attended schools where a great deal of emphasis was placed on reading children's literature, the teacher elected to focus on writing in her classes. Although only two to four children met with her at one time, she was still able to implement a successful writing program. The students wrote in class, conferred with each other and their teacher, and published their books, which were then read by other students. The students frequently solicited feedback on their writing from other students in the ESOL program, with the teacher acting as a conduit. In fact, students' writing became the initial reading experience for students who had just arrived in the country and spoke very little English. The students also corresponded with the teacher in dialogue journals.

Implementing Writers' Workshop

Getting Started

When introducing students to writers' workshop, it may be helpful to take them through the whole writing process in a week, from generating topics to publishing a piece (see Figure 2).

Day 1

On the first day, it is useful to begin with a mini-lesson on *generating topics* to introduce the class to the notion that we all have stories to tell (mini-lessons are brief whole-class sessions which focus instruction on a particular feature of writing that students have indicated a need for). Using the blackboard or overhead projector, the teacher lists and briefly discusses four or five topics that s/he knows a lot about and would like to write about (e.g., "the time I had my front teeth knocked out when playing field hockey" or "the time I wanted to write a letter to Kentucky Fried Chicken to ask them why they don't sell roast chicken in the local store"). *Select topics* that will interest the students. In an initial list, include a variety of genres so that children see that writing can have many purposes (e.g., personal anecdote, business letter). After

Figure 2

Day 1	
10 minutes	Mini-lesson on generating writing topics
5–10 minutes	Students generate own lists of topics
10 minutes	Students share their topics in pairs
10–20 minutes	Everyone writes
5–10 minutes	Whole class share
Day 2	
10 minutes	Mini-lesson on writing conferences
10 minutes	Students confer in pairs
5–10 minutes	Debriefing on the conference experience
20 minutes	Everyone writes
5–10 minutes	Whole group share
Day 3	
10–15 minutes	Mini-lesson on revising writing
20–35 minutes	Everyone writes and/or confers
10 minutes	Whole class share
Day 4	
10–15 minutes	Mini-lesson on editing
20–30 minutes	Writing and editing
10–15 minutes	Whole class share
Day 5	
10 minutes	Mini-lesson on publishing
40 minutes	Publishing books
10 minutes	Whole class share

demonstrating how you select topics, ask the students to list topics that they would like to write about; then give them five to ten minutes to write. Children can list their topics in the form of pictures, if necessary. Next, they can spend about ten minutes sharing their topics in pairs or in groups of three, followed by a quick whole group share; this is a way for children to learn from each other and help each other generate topics.

Show students how to select the topic they will write about by eliminating from your own list topics that are too broad or which you don't know enough about. Select one of the topics from your list and begin to write on the overhead or blackboard. Invite the children to select one of their topics and to begin writing on it. Urge students to write on only one side of a sheet of paper and, if writing on lined paper, to write on alternate lines in order to make revising easier. At this stage, the children may write for ten to twenty minutes, depending upon their age, confidence, and ability. While they are writing, move around the room, briefly checking in with

children. Complete this introduction to writers' workshop by having children share their reactions to the topic generation and writing time. Some children may read favorite parts of their writing or comment on what they learned from hearing other children's topics.

Day 2

On the second day, begin the workshop with a mini-lesson on *writing conferences*. Demonstrate the process with a student and ask the rest of the class to watch and listen closely. Before the student reads the piece aloud, it may be helpful to ask what s/he is trying to accomplish as a writer, what s/he likes best about the piece, or if s/he encountered any problems when writing it. After the student has read the piece, you can comment on what you learned from and liked best about it. You may also want to ask a couple of clarification questions. End the brief conference (two- to five-minutes) by asking the student what s/he will do next with the piece. Ask the rest of the children to comment on what they saw you and the student doing (e.g., asking questions, saying what you liked best, talking about favorite parts and why they are favorite parts). After clarifying the role of responders (to support a writer) with the students, have them confer with each other in pairs. After a short debriefing session in which the children comment on how the conferences went, you can all continue writing. After working on your own writing for about five minutes, circulate around the room, quickly checking in with as many children as possible. End the writers' workshop with a five- to ten-minute whole class share; the children may briefly mention something they learned while writing, read a favorite part, comment on an accomplishment, or raise a difficulty they are experiencing.

Day 3

On the third day, begin with another mini-lesson, this time focusing on *revision strategies*. Children are often not familiar with the revision options that are available to them beyond re-writing, a tedious and often painful task. You can show students how you and other writers revise. Show them how to cut-and-paste, how to use carets (^) to insert something, how to delete with a single line, and how to use symbols and arrows to signal the movement of text. Ask children if they are familiar with other revision strategies; if they mention re-writing, talk about the advantages and limitations of this method. Encourage the children to take another look at their writing to see whether it does what they want it to do. Urge them to revise as they see fit, considering the comments of those who conferred with them. Continue with the writing/revision. After writing for a few minutes, circulate around the room, briefly conferring with children. At the end, have a whole class share for about ten minutes.

Day 4

On the fourth day, begin the session with a mini-lesson on *editing*. Demonstrate with your own writing. Point out that you first need to check to see that your story is clear and says what you want it to say. Then show students how to check for punctuation, capitalization, grammar, word use, and spelling. When checking for spelling, circle all the words you think may be misspelled. Select three or four of these words and try spelling them several different ways in an attempt to find the correct spelling. Encourage the children to edit their own pieces in preparation for publication the next day. Continue writing and editing, and circulate around the room, as on other days. End the session with a whole class share.

Day 5

On the fifth day, begin with a mini-lesson on *publishing*. Select a simple method of book publication, such as stapling sheets of paper in a construction paper cover. Talk about page breaks, illustrations, the front cover, writing a brief autobiographical sketch of the author, and the procedure for making a clean, final copy. This may be a lot of new information, some of which may have to be revisited in the future, but the point is for the children to experience the accomplishment of writing and publishing for a real audience (that is, people who will read their writing for the message it is conveying). Work on publishing students' books, and end the session with a whole class share devoted to celebrating the books that have been completed.

The purpose of this first week's writers' workshop is to give students a taste for writing, to show them what it's like to confer, to write for a real audience, and to be a published writer. This is the only time that children are all doing the same thing at the same time. Once children have been introduced to writers' workshop, they will work at their own pace, engaged in different activities. This first week's writers' workshop may take longer than one week with some classes.

Topic Generation/Selection

One element that often concerns teachers who are new to writers' workshop or are in the habit of assigning writing topics is that children will not know what to write about. Even very young children are able to write on self-selected topics, using invented spelling and pictures to express their thoughts. Most children will have something they want to write about, particularly after being encouraged to think about topics that they are interested in and know something about. This is not to say that a child will not come up blank on occasion.

There is considerable danger in assigning topics if one wishes children to become independent, resourceful writers. Graves (1983) has suggested that assigning topics has the effect of keeping children on writers' welfare. Instead, it is helpful to offer some useful strategies, such as re-reading one's list of writing topics or walking around the room and noticing what other people are writing about. Other suggestions might include conferring with another student about one's dilemma, reading one's dialogue journal to see if there are topics there, or reading a book. In addition, students can be encouraged to list ten good and ten bad things that have happened to them, to look back in their writing folder to see if there is an unfinished piece that they may want to complete, or to check a list of different kinds of writing that may include the following:

ads	diaries	news articles	riddles
advice columns	greeting cards	plays	songs
autobiographies	interviews	poems	spooky stories
brochures	love notes	proverbs	TV commercials
bumper stickers	menus	questionnaires	thank you notes
cartoons/comic strips	movie reviews	recipes	weather reports

When children are introduced to writers' workshop, it is common for them to write personal memoirs. This is a logical and very important aspect of being a writer as we write best about those things with which we are very familiar. However, children should be exposed to and encouraged to write in many genres, e.g., personal memoirs, poetry, reports, fables, essays, short stories, and letters. As teachers, we need to read from a wide selection of writing, teach about the special features of particular genres, and encourage (not force) children to try different kinds

of writing. Teachers can, for example, show how to take a first person narration and rewrite it as a poem or third-person short story.

Many teachers who implement writers' workshops correspond with their students in dialogue journals (see Peyton & Reed, 1990). Sometimes these journals are open-ended and give children the freedom to write about anything, as in the following journal entry by first grader, Annie, a native Cantonese speaker in a bilingual Chinese/English class. Annie had accompanied her class to see a play about Rumpelstiltskin and wrote about it in her daily journal. The teacher's response to her entry reflects a genuine interest in what she had written:

Annie:

I like are love The pork
word day marea and I Love The
baby bat The baby is
Fek is not The rew wun.

I like and love the part
where they marry and I love the
baby but the baby is
fake is not the real one.

Teacher:

How could you tell that the baby was not real? That it was a doll?

Annie:

bea Kus I soll is han cat
mev and his eaeyis not mev.

because I saw his hand can't
move and his eyes not move.

At other times, teachers ask their students to focus their dialogue journal writing on books or what they have learned in a particular class (e.g., math or science). In one pull-out ESOL class, students were investigating conditions for optimal plant growth and recorded their observations in a science dialogue journal. Pedro was able to express humor, even though he had been speaking English for only a short time:

My pea plant don't groon!
I am rungril
I don't no at rapend!
grrrr!!! THE END
My pea plant
(picture)
Where is the pea plat?

My pea plant don't grow!
I am angry!
I don't know what happened!
Grrrr! The end
My pea plant
[picture]
Where is the pea plant?

A first grade bilingual teacher asked her first grade students, most of whom were recent immigrants to the United States, to write about the books they had been reading. Phuong had read *A Hunting We Will Go* and wrote the following entry:

How can a
snake hod
a cupcake on
his hed tdats seley.

*How can a
snake hold
a cupcake on
his head. That's silly.*

Young children have concerns and opinions and should be encouraged to express them in writing. After taking the Comprehensive Test of Basic Skills (CTBS), students in a bilingual first

grade class decided to write to the publishers. Carmen wrote an indignant letter pointing out that she's not a number, but a person. She also alluded to her growing knowledge of the physical world:

Dear pepol im not
 an embr im a prsen
 If you bit me
 I Do not cer
 pico youll no
 Me and my frens
 wrok Togethr
 Ill chow you
 My Book
 Ill chow you
 My Batr fly
 Ill chow you
 My frends
 Ill chow you
 My Besarssss
 Ill chow y u
 My Best Best
 Tings

Dear people, I'm not
 a number. I'm a person.
 If you invite me
 I do not care
 because you'll know
 me and my friends
 work together.
 I'll show you
 my book.
 I'll show you
 my butterfly.
 I'll show you
 my friends.
 I'll show you
 my bees.
 I'll show you
 my best best
 things.

Carmen and her peers used writing to express opinions about events that had affected their lives. They also used writing to resolve problems. Carmen had been doing somersaults in the classroom, and her teacher suggested that she think about the wisdom of her actions. Carmen wrote a six-page letter of explanation and apology to Ms. Martinez, excerpts of which follow:

Thes is a chem off me
 I wod not like To do it
 any more I chodof Get a
 deTenchon for it
 My tings wor Bad

This is a shame of me.
 I would not like to do it
 any more. I should have get a
 detention for it.
 My things were bad.

I sarey Miss Martines
 I shood lisin To You
 But I did noT no That you
 Wood Get me in Tro Bol
 love Carmen

I'm sorry Miss Martinez.
 I should listen to you.
 But I did not know that you
 would get me in trouble
 Love Carmen.

Audience and Publication

Much writing in school is inauthentic (even in classrooms where the focus is on meaning rather than skills) because children rarely take their pieces to publication. That is, their writing stays in their folders and never has to face a real audience, except perhaps for the biannual or annual collection of stories that the teacher puts together. Children should be writing for many audiences (themselves, their peers, other children, the general public, adults). Not everything

needs to be published in book form. Children should be exposed to a variety of publishing modes and then encouraged to select the most appropriate for their purpose. These can include: class and school magazines and newspapers; bulletin boards; displays; books to be checked out of the class, school, and local library; books to be shared with younger children in a cross-age tutoring situation; publications to be shared with children and teachers across the country; competitions; personal and business letters to peers, teachers, administrators, family members, friends, the public; dialogue journals; how-to manuals; charts; and posters. When having a writing conference with children, it is helpful to ask them about their audience (e.g., "Who are you writing this for?"). Or, if a child indicates interest in publishing, ask, "Have you thought about how you might publish this?"

Writing Conferences

The purpose of writing conferences should be to help and encourage writers to continue writing. Graves suggests that when teachers confer they should focus on the writer rather than the writing (1983b). That is, instead of trying to alter a piece, to "make it better," we should focus on trying to help the writer acquire strategies that will help him/her in the future. When conferring with a student whose story or report does not seem to be well-developed, teachers often resort to gentle inquisitions that then become commands ("I'd like you to do this with your piece"). Instead, when conferring with children, teachers can ask them what they are hoping to accomplish with their piece (purpose), who it's written for (audience), what they like best or least about the piece (this helps to focus the teacher so that s/he can better help the writer), and if there's anything in particular that they'd like the teacher to pay attention to. In this way, inexperienced writers are given opportunities to reflect upon their purposes, processes, goals, and needs while retaining control of their writing.

Some classrooms display charts reminding children of steps in a writing conference (e.g., read your story, audience comments on what they learned and liked best, audience asks questions, author comments on what s/he will do next). However, children often become dependent on permanently displayed guidelines, glancing up at the chart and parroting the suggestions when conferring. Instead of relying on charts, talking about conference strategies with the whole group in mini-lessons, in whole class share sessions, or with small groups in writing conferences can be a very effective way of enhancing children's developing skills as responders to writing.

Conference strategies need to be internalized as a natural part of our lives as writers, readers, and listeners. After asking children to carefully observe a conference in order to note salient features, teachers and students can talk about what people heard and saw. At this time, as the children share their insights orally, the teacher can list them on chart paper, the overhead projector, or the blackboard, adding his/her own insights if needed (children often refer to the features teachers would like them to notice). Instead of having a rather rigid list of steps in the writing process, the class has a list of conference strategies. If children comment during a small group conference that they had a particularly good conference, the teacher can ask them about it and suggest that they talk about their insights in the whole group share.

Conferences can focus on many issues, including the *content* of the piece (e.g., Is it clear? Does it convey the author's intentions? Does it grab the reader's attention?), *style* (e.g., the format in which it is written, the genre, and who the narrator is), and *editing* (e.g., mechanical or

form issues such as spelling, punctuation, grammar, and capitalization). It is advisable to limit the number of issues discussed in a conference to no more than one or two items.

Conferences can involve just students and do not need to be teacher-initiated. Students should be encouraged to confer with each other. Conferences involving a teacher should last for just a few minutes—short, focused moments for teachers to check in with children, offer advice, and/or teach strategies or skills. Children may need to be reminded that a conference can be very helpful at any stage of the writing process.

Conferences may lead to revisions, but that is not the primary purpose. Students need to know that revision is an option, not a requirement. Second grader, Alexis, wrote about an occasion when he almost got run over:

Yastrday I omos gat ran
ovr becas I was rag my balk
in the mire of the stret so I
was trap in the stret becas
tow cars was won in frat and wan
was in bak of me and wan
my mathre same she cat
so scir and I ran my balk
in the siwako

Yesterday I almost got run
over because I was riding my bike
in the middle of the street so I
was trapped in the street because
two cars was one in front and one
was in back of me and when
my mother saw me she got
so scared and I ran my bike
in the sidewalk.

When Alexis brought this story to a conference, the session was dynamic. It was the first time that he had shared his writing in a conference, and the other children in his ESOL pull-out class were captivated. The children commented on what had impressed them most about the story. They asked for details of the incident such as how Alexis got to be in the middle of the street and how he felt being there, incorporating this knowledge into their other comments (e.g., Pepe: “I likeded the part when you got scared, your heart was beating real fast. Boom, boom, boom, boom, boom, boom.”). They asked about the story’s origins (e.g., Pablo: “Is this true? Is it really, really? Is it true?” and Alexis nodded “Yes”). The conference was successful. Alexis left feeling confident about his writing (“I got more things in my mind,” he commented as he left the conference table), but he did not revise it, even though the children and teacher wrote comments on slips of paper. Talking about the story was apparently sufficient for Alexis at this point. Requiring Alexis to make revisions would have taken control of his writing out of his hands. However, Alexis may not have known *how* to revise his writing and could have benefited from direct instruction on how to cut and paste, use carets (^) and arrows and number sections. This type of contextualized skills teaching can be very helpful.

Contextualized Skills Teaching

Traditionally, teachers have placed considerable focus on mechanical accuracy and the form of writing. By contrast, in writers’ workshop teachers and children focus *initially* on meaning and the message. In early drafts children are not admonished to pay attention to spelling, capitalization, paragraphing, punctuation, or grammatical forms. Instead, they are encouraged to express their meaning as clearly and evocatively as possible. However, issues of form *are* important in writing as they help readers make sense of the message. The most appropriate

place to pay attention to these elements of writing is in final, pre-publication drafts, once writers have had a chance to develop their ideas as fully as possible. Contextualized skills teaching is essential in writers' workshop and can be provided in mini-lessons and writing conferences. Mini-lessons can target mechanical issues (e.g., writing conventions and spelling), as well as organizational issues (e.g., procedures and where to publish) and crafting issues (e.g., leads, setting, dialogue, and revision strategies).

Editing

Many teachers spend inordinate amounts of time correcting children's writing, even though children can only learn a few mechanical features at a time. Correcting all errors does not appear to lead to more standardized writing. Instead, focusing on one or two important features appears to be most effective. In writers' workshop, teachers teach skills as needed and then hold children accountable for applying those skills they have been taught. Therefore, before having an editing conference, children must take responsibility for checking their work and seeing if they have the best copy possible. If children have writing folders for work in progress it is helpful to keep one section for listing their writing ideas/topics and another section for keeping a record of skills taught (see **Figure 3**). In this way, children can refer to their skills list before handing in a piece for publication. Therefore, if Ahmed has been taught the use of "too," quotation marks, sub-headings, irregular past tense forms, and the spelling of several words, and these skills have been noted on his Editing Checklist, his teacher could expect him to check his writing for these features and make the appropriate corrections before handing in a final draft. It should be remembered that the amount and type of self-editing that one expects will be influenced by the age and language fluency of the students.

Self-editing should precede either a peer or adult editing conference. It may be helpful to think of the editing process as a series of steps for both students and teachers. These might include the steps indicated below.

Self-editing (check and change)

Read your story aloud:

- Does it make sense?
- Are there excess words?
- Check spelling and circle words you think are misspelled:
 - use resources in the room (e.g., word list in folder, charts, dictionaries, classmates);
 - select several words and try alternate spellings for each.
- Check punctuation: periods, commas, question marks, exclamation marks, quotation marks, and apostrophes.
- Check capitalization: names and first word of a sentence.
- Check paragraphing and/or page breaks.
- Decide what illustrations are needed and where they will go.

Figure 3

3.A. EDITING CHECKLIST (skills I've been taught)

- 9/17 Capital letters: I; at the beginning of sentences; names of people and places;
- 9/28 Cutting and pasting to revise (instead of re-writing)
- 9/28 Write on one side only
- 10/9 Punctuation: periods (.); question marks (?); exclamation marks (!)
- 10/20 Contractions: I've (I have); we'll (we will); don't (do not)
- 11/2 Overusing "and" (check that you really need it)
- 11/19 Page breaks for book
- 11/19 Where to put illustrations in book (to help the story)
- 12/2 Overuse of "then" (check that you really need it)

Spelling:

- 9/17 body, girl, I've, write
- 9/28 friends, could, else
- 10/9 because, surprise
- 10/20 new, knew (sound the same): "My jacket is brand new."
"I knew it cost \$2, so I brought enough money."
- 11/2 aunt, uncle (family members), ant (insect)
- 11/19 of, off (sound the same): "He helped me off the ride."
"The toy is made of plastic."
- 12/2 would, should (like could, 9/28)

3.B. WRITING TOPICS (things I'd like to write about)

1. When my girbel dide
2. Lurning to scat
3. My baby bruthr he got bornd
4. My burthday party
5. All about snaks

Peer Editing Conference (check and suggest)

Invite a classmate to check over the piece. Listen to your classmate's recommendations and decide whether to make the changes s/he suggests.

Adult Editing Conference (direct teaching)

- Read the piece in advance of the conference. Has the author self-edited? If not, send the story back to the author.
- Based on the piece, select one or two skills to focus on (e.g., quotation marks, excess use of "then," adding "ed" for the regular past tense).
- Give brief, direct instruction in the selected skill(s).
- Record the skill(s) taught in the writer's folder. Include the date.

Copyediting (preparation of clean copy for publication)

The following suggestions are intended for teachers who elect to copyedit.

- Depending on many factors (e.g., length of piece, degree of mastery of mechanics, personality of the writer, the needs of the writer, time, and availability of help), this stage may or may not be done with the writer present.
- Teachers need to decide whether to copyedit on the writer's final draft, on a xerox copy of the final draft, or on a separate sheet of paper (this is especially crucial if writers recopy for their published draft). In some cases, the teacher's copyedited version will be the final version.

Publishing

As stated earlier, not everything a child writes needs to be brought to publication. However, publication is an integral part of writing and children need to have that experience in order to know what it is to be a writer in the fullest sense possible. Although we sometimes write for ourselves only (e.g., in personal journals), most writing is also for other people. Although an intensely personal act, writing is also a public act. Through publishing, children can more easily understand the importance of strong leads, well-developed characters, sufficient information, and conventional spelling, to name just a few elements of writing that we all struggle with.

Most publications include a biographical sketch of the author. Readers like to know about authors; this is true for all authors, regardless of age. Many students insert biographical sketches at the end of their publications. It is very encouraging for children to get responses from their readers, and a Comments Page attached to a publication can serve the purpose quite well. Children need to see their writing displayed on walls, charts, and bulletin boards, published in newsletters, anthologies and newspapers, or bound as books. Publication need not be an elaborate process—the key is that children's writing must be celebrated and read by others.

Successes and accomplishments must be celebrated. In many writers' workshops, when a piece is published, the author reads it aloud from an author's chair. Students' development and progress also need to be celebrated, such as when they overcome writing problems, experiment with a new genre or technique, or receive responses to their writing in the mail. These celebrations are also wonderful opportunities to expose the rest of the class to more writing options.

Recordkeeping and Assessment

If teachers are to assist children at whatever stage of writing development they are at, they need to have accurate and detailed records of their individual development—their stops and starts, their accomplishments, and what they have been taught. Recordkeeping and assessment are therefore crucial elements in managing a successful writers' workshop. The goal should be to be well-informed about each child's language and literacy development so that teachers can talk with confidence with the child, his/her parents or guardian, another teacher, or an administrator.

Post-it address labels can be of particular assistance in keeping records. They can be used to keep brief, ongoing records of interactions teachers have with children, of actions they see and comments they hear, of questions they have and of children's answers. At the end of the day, these brief records can be easily transferred to a three-ring binder or to individual folders where each child's records are kept (See **Figure 4**). Stored with these individual anecdotal records are writing samples and other documents such as writing interviews or surveys. Teachers can read through these records periodically, assessing the development of each writer and determining the best way to help him/her develop further.

Figure 4

9/14	Alberto Dialogue journal writing. I noticed A. saying each word very slowly as he wrote, as if trying to sound out or listen to the sounds in each word.
9/17	I think he is a risk taker. He has risked speaking English before the whole group several times, saying, "Good morning" during role call, standing up and saying what he's wearing, "My shirt is blue," etc.
9/19	Purposely incorporated "si" in his story. Reading it and writing it. Now he's copying my question.
9/30	Reading w/ big kids — engaged.
10/7	Brought me a paper and asked me to read it. I read "Lo Lo." He looked disappointed so I asked him what it said. He said, "Jo Jo." I had written it on the board this morning.

Records can also be kept of students' daily plans as discussed in the check-in time (see **Figure 5**). In this way, teachers are better able to see if there are patterns in a child's writing and gather information that may help them in assisting the writer. For example, if a teacher notices that a child has been writing about her bird for the past two weeks, it may be advisable to talk with the student to find out whether she is stuck on a topic. It may turn out that she is actually very engaged with her topic and is writing a manual on how to take care of her bird for a neighbor who is going to be looking after it during the Spring vacation.

Figure 5
Sample Writers' Workshop Check-in

	5/5	5/8	5/9	5/12	5/15
Andrés	Conf. Magiver/ revise	Revise Magiver/ class share	Edit Magiver Illus. (Publish)	Finish binding Magiver	(absent)
Alexis	D2 poem – baseball win	D2 contd. poem – baseball win	Read poetry re. sports/ conf. poem	(absent)	Combine 2 poems re baseball win
Alroy	Topic search/ needs help. Conf.?	Letter to grandma – sick	Type letter to grandma/ picture	D1 story re. grandma & fishing	Conf. re grandma/ fishing
Aviva	Play (funny) re. rock concert	D1 contd. play – rock concert w. Jenny	Conf. re. play (w. Jenny)	Stage directions for play	Research stage directions
Chau	D2 science report (mysteries of the sea)	D2 contd. science proj./ research	D2 contd. science proj./ conf?	Conf. re science project	D3/ Final? science proj.?

Note: D1 = first draft; D2 = second draft; D3 = third draft; conf. = conference

Children also need to take responsibility for keeping records of their writing development, processes, and activities. For example, they can keep records of who they confer with and the outcome of each conference (see **Figure 6**).

Figure 6

NAME: Andrés				
DATE	STORY	CONFERENCED WITH	WHAT HAPPENED	WHAT I WILL DO NEXT
May 5	Magiver	Juan Peter Jeannie, Mrs. Anderson	They ask me lot of question	Revise the story.
May 8	Magiver	Class	They liked it and laughed	Edit it. I want to publish it
May 15	Magiver	Class	I read the book. Peter help with with illustrations.	It goes to library. Think of new story.

Students can also keep a record of what they did during writers' workshop (See Figure 7). In this way they can see how they have been spending their time and make observations about how they have progressed as writers.

Figure 7
Sample Writing Record for Children

Writing Record		Name: Aviva	
<i>Date</i>	<i>Time spent writing</i>	<i>What I worked on</i>	<i>Comments</i>
5/5	35 mins.	Funny play about rock concert	Jenny wants to write it to
5/8	30 mins.	Looked at other plays in library and wrote D1 play	Now I know how to write plays - I think
5/9	30 mins.	Conf. with Liliana and David.	Peopel were confuse we need to work on the stage derecshons
5/12	25 mins.	Did stage derecshuns with Jenny	This is hard!

Summary

Although there is no one single way to implement a writers' workshop, there are some key elements that are integral to the implementation and maintenance of this very important classroom event. As teachers, we must believe that children are capable of being writers, even at young ages or when they are acquiring English. We must provide opportunities for children to demonstrate their growing facility as writers. We must give them time to write, read, and confer. We must teach them strategies for becoming better writers. We must demonstrate the importance of writing by sharing our own writing and writing processes with our students. We must provide a simply and clearly organized learning environment that is print-oriented, respectful of learners, and challenging.

Resources

The following books, journals, and videos should be of help to teachers interested in implementing a writers' workshop. It is not an exhaustive list, but it includes materials that many teachers have found most useful and stimulating. Although many of the materials refer to native speakers of English, we have found the strategies and procedures discussed to be equally appropriate for use with children acquiring English as a non-native language.

Books and Journals

Atwell, N. (Ed.). (1990). *Coming to know: Writing to learn in the intermediate grades*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

Writing is often taught separately from other aspects of the curriculum. The contributors to this book, teachers of Grades 3–6, write about what happened when they invited their students to integrate their content areas and writing, to write as historians, scientists, and mathematicians.

Atwell, N. (1987). *In the middle: Writing, reading, and learning with adolescents*. Portsmouth, NH: Boynton/Cook. (Available from Heinemann)

This book is written by a former eighth-grade English teacher who replaced her traditional teaching approaches with extremely successful writing and reading workshops. It is a theoretically sound book offering practical suggestions for teachers at all grade levels, not just the middle school. Atwell writes well and her love of books and writing, as well as her respect for learners, resounds.

Atwell, N. (Ed.). (1990). *Workshop 2: Beyond the basal*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

Articles in this book are written by teachers in Grades K–8 who have been implementing process approaches in the teaching of reading and writing.

Baskwill, J., & Whitman, P. (1988). *Evaluation: Whole language, whole child*. New York: Scholastic.

This book addresses alternative assessment strategies, many of which are appropriate for writers' workshop (e.g., anecdotal records, interviews, surveys).

Bird, L.B. (1989). *Becoming a whole language school: The Fair Oaks story*. Katonah, NY: Richard C. Owen Publishers.

Fair Oaks School is located in Northern California and serves a predominantly language minority community. This book, written primarily by Fair Oaks teachers, describes their odyssey as they moved away from skills-based to meaning-based learning and teaching. Several chapters deal with teachers' experiences with writers' workshop.

Bissex, G. (1980). *GNYS AT WRK: A child learns to read and write*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Bissex has recorded the independent growth of her son as a reader and writer from the preschool years through the intermediate grades. The book is particularly insightful in its discussions of invented spelling and purposes for writing.

Calkins, L.M. (1986). *The art of teaching writing*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

This is a highly readable book that combines research and practice. Chapters deal with children changing as writers, writing conferences, the role of the teacher, writing across the curriculum, and the connection between reading and writing.

Calkins, L.M. (1983). *Lessons from a child: On the teaching and learning of writing*.

Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

The growth of children's writing in one elementary school is wonderfully portrayed. Calkins also describes the classroom contexts in which these children grew as writers.

Calkins, L.M., & Harwayne, S. (1991). *Living between the lines*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

This book builds upon Calkins' earlier book, *The art of teaching writing*. The authors discuss writers' notebooks, the reading/writing connection, conferring, mini-lessons, and recordkeeping, among other topics.

Dyson, A.H. (1989). *Multiple worlds of child writers: Friends learning to write*. New York: Teachers College, Columbia University.

Dyson is a gifted observer of children and writers. In this book she describes how young children in a multiethnic first-grade class become writers. It is a richly written book that explores the importance of symbols in the development of literacy.

Edelsky, C. (1986). *Writing in a bilingual program: Habia una vez*. Norwood, NJ: Ablex.

Edelsky argues for authentic writing opportunities. She bases her discussion and recommendations on a longitudinal study she conducted into the writing development of children in a bilingual elementary school.

Gordon, N. (Ed.). (1984). *Classroom experiences: The writing process in action*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

Chapters are written by public school teachers in Grades K-8. The authors describe the changes they went through in moving from a skills-based to a process approach to teaching writing.

Graves, D.H. (1990). *Discover your own literacy*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

How many teachers are responsible for reading and writing development? Of these teachers, how many read and write and share their literacy with students? Graves paints a very compelling picture of the need for more teachers to do this and the benefits of doing so.

Graves, D.H. (1989). *Experiment with fiction*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

When youngsters write fiction, their stories often lack plausibility and cohesion. In this book, Graves gives concrete suggestions for helping children and teachers become better fiction writers. He often refers to his own writing processes and strategies.

Graves, D.H. (1989). *Investigate nonfiction*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

Graves shows how we can help youngsters write nonfiction (e.g., letters and reports) that builds upon their knowledge of the world around them.

Graves, D.H. (1983). *Writing: Teachers and children at work*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

This book is intended for teachers who want to establish writers' workshops. It is very practical and highly readable. Topics that are discussed include how to establish a writers' workshop, conferences, when and how to teach skills, how children develop as writers, and how to record children's growth.

Hall, N. (Ed.). (1989). *Writing with reason*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

The focus of this book is on how children between the ages of three and seven function as authors. Most of the chapters are written by classroom teachers, many of them in England.

Hansen, J. (1987). *When writers read*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

A maxim in discussions on literacy development is that reading enhances writing. In this book, Hansen documents the influences of reading on children's writing and the equally powerful effects of writing on their reading.

Hansen, J., Newkirk, T., & Graves, D.H. (Eds.). (1985). *Breaking ground: Teachers relate reading and writing in the elementary school*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

This collection of articles written by teachers and researchers shows how a process approach to reading and writing can be successful. The book includes discussions on how reading and writing can be used in content classes and how skills taught in writing help in reading.

Heard, G. (1989). *For the good of the earth and sun: Teaching poetry*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

Heard is a poet who has worked extensively with children. This book is a compelling invitation to teachers to immerse children in poetry as readers and writers.

Hudelson, S. (1989). *Write on: Children writing in ESL*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Center for Applied Linguistics/Prentice Hall Regents.

This is a comprehensive review of the literature on the writing development and processes of children acquiring English as a non-native language.

Inner London Education Authority (ILEA), Centre for Primary Education. (1988). *The primary language record: Handbook for teachers* (distributed by Heinemann).

This book has some excellent suggestions for informally recording children's language and literacy development.

Language Arts. Published by the National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE), 1111 Kenyon Road, Urbana, IL 61801.

This is a monthly journal for teachers in Grades K-8. Articles deal with all facets of language arts teaching and learning; many focus on writing.

Newkirk, T., & Atwell, N. (Eds.). (1986). *Understanding writing: Ways of observing, learning and teaching K-8*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

The essays in this book have been written by teachers. The book consists of thoughtful discussions of the writing behaviors of the authors' students. Topics include: writing in the early grades; conferring; the interrelatedness of writing, drawing, and reading; and assessment of writing.

Perl, S., & Wilson N. (1986). *Through teachers' eyes: Portraits of writing teachers at work*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

The case studies of six writing teachers in Grades 1-12 implementing a process approach to writing comprise the core of this book. Teachers share their doubts, successes, and struggles. The authors remark that the book "is about vision—how teachers see their students, how they act toward them, how they help them become writers."

Peyton, J. K., & Reed, L. (1990). *Dialogue journal writing with nonnative English speakers: A handbook for teachers*. Alexandria, VA: Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL).

The authors offer a comprehensive overview of what a dialogue journal is, the role of dialogue journals in the classroom, and how to introduce and maintain dialogue journals.

Rigg, P., & Enright D.S. (Eds.). (1986). *Children and ESL: Integrating perspectives*. Washington, DC: Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL).

The seven chapters in this book discuss ways in which all facets of language are interconnected. The authors share the belief that language is best learned and taught in an integrated, authentic way. Some of the chapters focus on writing.

Turbill, J. (Ed.). (1982). *No better way to teach writing!* Rozelle, N.S.W., Australia: Primary English Teaching Association (distributed by Heinemann).

This book relates how Australian teachers and children in the elementary grades established a process approach to writing. Although the major focus is on children in the first three grades, teachers of older children also contribute their insights and perspectives. A sequel, *Now, we want to write!*, is also available.

The Quarterly. Published by the National Writing Project and the Center for the Study of Writing, Bay Area Writing Project, School of Education, University of California, Berkeley, CA 94720.

This journal, published four times a year, features articles dealing with many facets of the writing process, including classroom instruction.

Videos

Calkins, L.M. (1987) *The writing workshop: A world of difference*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

This videotape leads viewers into several classrooms in New York City where children are members of writers' workshops. Viewers observe children and teachers working together, writing, conferring, and talking about their writing.

Graves, D. (1986). *One classroom: A child's view*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

In this very engaging videotape, a young girl serves as guide to her classroom during writers' workshop. She introduces viewers to children at work, explains what they are doing, and questions them. She also describes work areas and routines.

References

- Calkins, L. M. (1986). *The art of teaching writing*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.
- Calkins, L. M. (1982). *A study of children's rewriting*. (NCTE Final Report.) Urbana, IL: National Council of Teachers of English. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 229 750)
- Edelsky, C. (1982). *Development of writing in a bilingual program*. (NIE Final Report.) Tempe: Arizona State University. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. 221 057)
- Edelsky, C. 1986. *Writing in a bilingual program: Había una vez*. Norwood, NJ: Ablex.
- Flower, L. S., & Hayes J. R. (1977). Problem-solving strategies and the writing process. *College English*, 39(4), 449-461.
- Graves, D.H. (1982). *A case study observing the development of primary children's composing, spelling and motor behaviors during the writing process*. (Final Report). Washington, DC: National Institute of Education. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 218 653)
- Graves, D. H. (1983a.) Break the welfare cycle: Let writers choose their topics. In Patricia L. Stock (Ed.), *Fforum [sic]: Essays on theory and practice in the teaching of writing*. Upper Montclair, NJ: Boynton/Cook Publishers.
- Graves, D. H. (1983b). *Writing: Teachers and children at work*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.
- Hudelson, S. (1984). Kan you ret an rayt en ingles: Children becoming literate in English as a second language. *TESOL Quarterly*, 18(2), 221-238.
- Hudelson, S. (1989). A tale of two children. In D. M. Johnson & D. H. Roen (Eds.), *Richness in writing*. New York: Longman.
- Hudelson, S., & Serna, I. (1991, August). *Mira, teacher—Escribí mi nombre en inglés: Beginning to become literate in English in a whole language bilingual program*. Paper presented at the Second Annual International Whole Language Umbrella Conference, Phoenix, AZ.
- Murray, D. M. (1982). *Learning by teaching*. Montclair, NJ: Boynton/Cook Publishers.
- Samway, K. D. (1987a). Formal evaluation of children's writing: An incomplete story. *Language Arts*, 64(3), 289-298.
- Samway, K. D. (1987b). *The writing processes of non-native English speaking children in the elementary grades*. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of Rochester.
- Smith, F. (1982). *Writing and the writer*. New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston.
- Perl, S. (1979). Unskilled writers as composers. *New York Education Quarterly*, 10(3), 17-22.
- Peyton, J. K., & Reed, L. (1990). *Dialogue journal writing with nonnative English speakers: A handbook for teachers*. Alexandria, VA: Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL).
- Taylor, D. (1990). Writing and reading literature in a second language. In N. Atwell (Ed.), *Workshop 2: Beyond the basal*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.
- Urzúa, C. (1987). 'You stopped too soon': Second language children composing and revising. *TESOL Quarterly*, 21(2), 279-304.

About the Author

Katharine Davies Sanway is an Associate Professor in the College of Education at San Jose State University in California. She has conducted research on the development of literacy in children acquiring English as a second language since 1985. Over the years she has worked with and learned alongside many teachers who have been implementing writers' workshops. Her most recent publication is "Reading the Skeleton, the Heart and the Brain of a Book: An Alternative Reading Program," in *The Reading Teacher*, Vol. 45, No. 3.

