DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 357 634 FL 021 221

AUTHOR Hayes, Curtis W., Ed.
TITLE Migrating Towards Literacy.
PUB DATE [93]
NOTE 178p.
PUB TYPE Guides - Non-Classroom Use (055)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC08 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Classroom Techniques; Content Area Writing; Creative Writing; Elementary Education; Elementary School Students; *English (Second Language); Hispanic Americans; Journal Writing; *Limited English Speaking; Poetry; Student Journals; Teaching Guides; Teaching Methods; Writing Across the Curriculum; *Writing Instruction

ABSTRACT

Strategies to address the reading and writing needs of reluctant and hesitant students with limited English proficiency (LEP) are provided in this guide for teachers. It is drawn from experiences with six elementary school teachers and an elementary school principal in San Antonio in the Southwest Independent School District/University of Texas Reading and Writing Project. The project began in 1985. The students in the project, mostly Hispanic, had been labeled as "non-learning" and at-risk. The chapters in the guide are as follows: (1) "Are These Kids Different?" (Valerie M. Camilli, Corine Drumm, John P. Harrison, Eilene Wright, and Janet R. Drane), which addresses the notion of teaching children whose first language is not English; (2) "Writing for Fun" (Corine Drumm), which shares the interactive nature of writing; (3) "Poetic Justice" (John P. Harrison), which addresses the structures inherent in poetry and some strategies that LEP students can use to be successful poets; (4) "Have You Heard of the 'J'?" (Eilene Wright), which discusses journal writing as expressive writing from the self; (5) "Writing Across the Curriculum" (Janet R. Drane), which addresses transactional writing or content-area writing; and (6) "Classroom Realities" (Valerie Camilli), which is about grading and evaluation. The guide is generously illustrated with examples of student work. Contains 78 references. (LB)

Migrating Towards Literacy

Curtis W. Hayes, Editor

CONTRIBUTORS:

Valerie M. Camilli

Corine Drumm

John P. Harrison

Eilene Wright

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Migrating Towards Literacy

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In 1987, Dr. Lily Wong Fillmore ("Promoting the Academic and Linguistic Development of LEP Students in the Early Years." Symposium in Literacy. Texas Education Agency. June 1987) pointed to an alarming statistic: national writing scores fell below those in mathematics. Only 20 percent of the students tested could write "acceptably." Reading scores were also low. In the past, we were bombarded by statistics which revealed that Juan and Susanna couldn't read; it appears they can't write either.

Acknowledgements

Our efforts to institute a literacy project would not have succeeded without the advice and encouragement of a number of administrators: Dr. Dwight Henderson and Dr. Berry Sutherland, Dean and Associate Dean respectively of the College of Social and Behavioral Sciences at the University of Texas at San Antonio, supported our duplicating costs through a Dean's Research Grant; Dr. Joseph Michel, Division Director of Bicultural-Bilingual Studies, and his successor, Dr. Robert Milk, provided space for us to meet, discuss, and compile materials; Dr. Ronald Caloss, Superintendent SWISD, and his successor, Dr. Richard Clifford, attended our working lunches and presentations, and their presence encouraged our efforts; Dr. Barbara Herrington, Director of Curriculum, provided computers for our use, in addition to disks, paper, printers, and a Xerox copier. Dr. Bonita Lowrie, Director of Community Education, gave us a room, with an air conditioner(!), shared computer programs, and offered solutions to the computer glitches which we encountered (and which we no doubt caused). Dr. Gilbert Garcia, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum, Ms. Pauline Kee, and Ms. Irma Campesi were always available to make sure that the project paralleled the curriculum and to listen to us whenever they could; Ms. Beth Jackson, Principal of Bob Hope Elementary School, gave us access to her school, made coffee and provided doughnuts, and became part of the "team." Without her patience, and her affability and encouragement when we were at low ebb, we could not have "remained on task." We also used materials generously provided to us by teachers Ms. Nelda Weist, Ms. Susan Stimson, and Ms. Mary Recker, teachers whose children also read and wrote in their classrooms.

And finally we acknowledge our mentors, some of whom we have met and some known to us only through their articles and books. Don Graves and Jean Hansen met with us during the Reading Research

Council meetings in Austin; Frank Smith participated in an ESL literacy institute at the University of Texas at San Antonio during a summer session, as did Courtney Cazden; and Lucy Calkins portrayed the writing and reading of her children so well and so lovingly in her books that we were captivated. We unashamedly borrowed from these teacher-scholars and also from others (they are listed in our references). We believe we have portrayed well what they taught us. Our students -- our kids! -- tried so hard for us: they read and wrote, and eventually became, as Frank Smith puts it, members of "The Literacy Club."

Preface

Curtis W. Hayes

The Southwest Independent School District/ University of Texas Reading and Writing Project began in the fall of 1985, when Janet Drane dropped by my office to talk about a course she needed for her English as a Second Language Endorsement. At the time I was interested in locating a school where I could validate some of the reading and writing theories that I had been working with. I had finished research on the writing abilities of fifth grade ESL/ Limited English Proficiency/"at risk" students living in a small rural town in south Texas (Hayes and Bahruth 1985; Hayes, Bahruth, and Kessler 1991). Now I wished to extend into other grade levels. I told Janet that if she would get six teachers, one from each grade level at her school, to enroll in my composition and reading course I would help them with their reading and writing curriculum.

Janet not only persuaded six teachers to enroll (Valerie Camilli, Corine Drum, John Harrison, Eilene Wright, Susan Stimson, and Janet herself), she also persuaded Beth Jackson, the principal of Bob Hope Elementary School, to agree to be a cooperating partner. The Bob Hope contingent grew eventually to include more than one teacher from each grade level. We also had teachers who taught at the middle school. This organization from K through middle school was fortuitous. We considered ourselves as a "school within a school." The KG teacher could talk with every grade-level teacher and the fifth grade teacher could do likewise. Questions proliferated: Corine would ask, "What are you doing, Janet?" John would query, "Do you think this will work, Val?"; or Val might be overheard saying, "That's a good idea, Eilene; do you think it will work with fifth graders?" It is helpful for teachers to organize themselves into such a "task group" -- a network, a support group, observing what other teachers, at other grade and proficiency levels,

are doing. Teaching then becomes less lonely if teachers talk "shop", encourage and support each other, in this "learning club" atmosphere.

Since they were in my class, I could talk with them weekly; and I visited at least once during each two-week period, observing their classes (and sometimes participating). We had lunch together and talked about their classes and students. We invited the superintendent and curriculum coordinators to these lunches. We shared success stories. We became a team. Eventually, word on what we were doing spread to other schools within the district, and their teachers began to ask for advice, hence the writing and sharing of this text.

One of the problems in education is that we expect results much too soon; we are extremely impatient: we look for short term answers to long term problems. Shortly after we began, the teachers complained to Beth: "None of what I am doing is working"; "My kids still don't want to write"; "They say writing is boring." These first complaints, impressions -- and I have only shared a few -- surfaced after two weeks; the same complaints remained after six weeks, but now one or two of the teachers were beginning to experience some success. A bit of belief began to seep in. But learning is not a linear process; it progresses by fits and starts; it is quite natural for students to regress. Sometimes students would experience enormous gains; but the next month we might discern little if any progress. These experiences are frustrating, of course, but we recognized that students are not merely "information assimilators", gobbling and then disgorging facts on cue. They were learners and learners will progress if learning is meaningful, interesting and relevant and if time is provided for learning. Test scores at the end of the first year revealed to us that the children were learning but not substantially more than the children who were in other classes. They had not made that great leap, even though we knew they had learned and they were better students. At the end of the second year, they had made significant improvement and progress. At the end of the third year, the students had made such

progress that the school and the district received a number of awards.

I am grateful that Janet dropped by that afternoon to talk about the limited English speaking children for whom she was responsible. Her visit led to a discovery. I have learned much from Val, Eilene, Janet, Corine, Susan and John, students/researchers/teachers, and their students. While their students developed better reading, writing and learning skills, they have developed strategies for bridging the gap between what students already know and what they are learning. I wish to point out some of the most significant changes in teaching and learning philosophies you will see in the following chapters:

All teachers wrote the same assignments as their students, to show them how they also tussle with writing, how they experience some of the same difficulties and frustrations in getting meaning down on paper. As a result of these demonstrations, attitudes toward writing changed. Both teachers and students became better and stronger writers as well as better readers. They gathered their papers into class-published books, designed covers, provided title pages, as well as dedication and "copyright" pages, and tables of content. Students had the opportunity to read, hear, and evaluate writing done by others, including their teacher. All children had the opportunity to solicit peer and teacher help on difficult spelling and punctuation problems, on organization, on topic selection. Classes became cooperative hives of activity; but most of all they were centers of learning. Adversarial relationships disappeared; discipline problems diminished, although some remained (one child was sent to the office for reading an encyclopedia in his math class -- he was gathering information for a social studies paper). Most of all, these teachers became competent, caring teachers; they learned to applaud progress, even infinitesimal progress, and to ignore mistakes that would eventually decrease or disappear as their students increased in writing and reading proficiency. Val, John, Corine, Eilene, and Janet know the literature of writing and reading

and of language development; they know what works; what does not; and how kids learn. They are able to share with other teachers in their district. I often think when observing Val, Eilene, Janet, Corine, and John working and learning together with their children of Sylvia Ashton Warner's book, *TEACHER*.

Classes which are organized for reading and writing are different: students are actually reading and writing, talking and listening to others. Principals and evaluators should know what to expect because the model we recommend in this guide will look and sound different. This manual is written by teachers for teachers. We believe that we have a great deal to share. We tell our audiences: we have experienced the joy of teaching writing and reading. Please join us. We urge you to use what you can; add to it; and then let us know of your own successes.

About Writing and Reading

The following anecdote comes from Donald H. Graves: as a high school teacher in a small town in rural New England, Don regularly set aside Friday afternoons immediately after lunch for "the weekly theme." While his students were at lunch, Don wrote the topic for that week on the board and pulled the map down to conceal it. When his students returned, he rolled up the map to reveal "the topic." His students spent the afternoon writing and turned in their papers before leaving school for the weekend. One year he inadvertently kept a set of papers written during the the first week of the term and compared them to those written just before his students left for the summer. He found little -- if any -- improvement! Don began to investigate the reason his students' writing had not improved. The results of his research are published in a number of articles and books, and in one, *Writing: Teachers & Children at Work,* he chronicles how he improved his own teaching of writing. We learned from Don. The story of what we learned and how we obtained better

reading and writing performances from our own students is the subject of this text.

THE TEXT

You might think that *Migrating Towards Literacy* is just another text on the teaching of writing and reading. Its fate may be that of so many "how to" texts: to gather dust on some shelf, to be ignored and eventually to be discarded. In truth, some guides -- "how to" books -- are not much help. Our hope is that your use of our guide will help your ESL/"at risk" students become better, more confident readers and writers. While you read through it, understand that we wrote it to encourage ourselves to continue to search for ways to bridge the gap between teaching and learning. We decided to write about what helped us to become better teachers of reading and writing. We should qualify "better." Our students improved in their writing and reading, and we would characterize the improvement as enormous (see Chapter 1). We also changed as teachers. We became more confident as we learned more about our craft, more understanding, more caring, more interesting -- better -- as we emphasized our students' learning.

But what is a "better" reader or writer? Progress in writing and reading is often measured by a standardized, multiple choice test. Scores are important to school districts: in Texas, local newspapers publish scores of individual districts and schools, sometimes to the embarrassment of administrators, teachers, and school boards. Parents often measure the strength of a school district's programs and its teachers from these scores. But that elusive quality of "better" cannot always be quantified. As former University of Texas President Peter Flawn said, "We know good writing when we read it; we also know bad writing when we encounter it. Attempting to quantify the difference is the difficult part" (see Chapter 6, Classroom Realities).

NEW AS WELL AS OLD STRATEGIES

Allan Bloom in *The Closing of the American Mind* (1987) argues that "The criticism of the old is of no value if there is no prospect of the new." We are interested in compiling strategies that have helped us in teaching reading and writing. You will discover that we do not advocate remediation or a return to the old, to the "basics", as many would advocate. Rather, we suggest "re-seeing" writing and reading in a different light, a light that reveals more about process and development. We confess we are not at all certain of what we mean by "re-seeing." We do conclude that more reading and writing must be done in as well as outside of school, that libraries must be accessible and stocked, that good, interesting books must be purchased and made available to children (after all, isn't reading for pleasure the payoff for learning how to read?), and that schools must be organized so that reading and writing are the focus of the school day.

Reading and writing are mirror activities. As our students write about what they read and read what they have written, they learn both subject matter and higher-order thinking skills. Janet Emig says, (as paraphrased by Fulwiler in Young and Fulwiler 1986: 21), "The act of writing . . . allows us to manipulate thought in unique ways because writing makes our thoughts visible and concrete and allows us to interact with and modify them." We can cite a more concrete example: Dorothy Parker is remembered for saying, "I don't know what I think until I read what I have written." You are partially correct If you think that a re-scheduling of priorities, a re-seeing and re-thinking of what you are doing in the classroom, requires a different attitude toward the teaching of reading and writing. We emphasize the right kind of "work" leads to successful teaching and learning. Everyone becomes better: students improve; they will begin to feel confident about school and about what they are learning; and as a result teachers improve in their craft, bridging the gap between successful teaching and successful

learning. Success feeds and speeds improvement. Not one of us had talked professionally about successful teaching with the others until we began reading and writing, with our students, among ourselves -- together. Now you can't get us to stop!

Talking can improve learning and it can also improve teaching (Enright and McCloskey 1988: 72). If we chose to sub-title our guide, we would use "Teaching and Learning as Interactive Listening, Speaking, Reading, and Writing Experiences with ESL/ 'at risk' Students." We all learn by interacting with others. Our classrooms are now noisier (not unruly!). It is difficult not to become mentally engaged with so much discussion, and reading and writing, taking place. Becoming "mentally engaged" is crucial as students who are not mentally engaged, who become mental dropouts, may later become physical dropouts. (Approximately 50% of all minority students in Texas drop out before graduating, some as early as the 6th grade!) Students who do not learn are some of the worst discipline cases in the school. Students will avoid pain, and there is pain associated with not learning.

WRITING AS A CREATIVE PROCESS

Writing as a creative process is not the same process as writing creatively. The latter usually refers to writing poetry and short or longer stories. All writing is creative. As I sit here at the processor I create. I sometimes don't know what I'll be writing next; I may suffer a writing block (a cup of tea and a trip to the 'fridge to sample some Oreos usually helps me to overcome my block); I may go back and delete, or add, or re-arrange, or think of a different way of expressing an argument. As I write I think, I create, I learn what I didn't think I knew, until like Dorothy Parker, I read what I have written. Sometimes writing comes easily; sometimes it can be frustrating. Sometimes it takes me days to write a page; sometimes I can write for just a few hours and generate pages. The attributes that I have described in myself are

some of the same attributes characteristic of professional writers. It has been reported that Ernest Hemingway revised the conclusion to *Farewell to Arms* many times before he was satisfied with the result. Nancie Atwell (1990) re-wrote the first chapter of *In The Middle* fourteen times before she was satisfied. Writers agonize!

DEMONSTRATIONS, ENGAGEMENT, AND SENSITIVITY

We want our students not necessarily to be professional writers -- but writers, willing to risk. Bill Martin has said the best gift we can give children is the gift of risk. Risk means no penalty for trying. Students who don't try may have been frustrated by past failure. We urge you to create an environment where your students will try, where they will risk. Children are natural risk takers. They unhesitantly risk learning how to ride a bicycle. We don't fail our children because they can't keep a bicycle up the first, second, third, or any number of times. We pick them up, dry their tears, and urge, "Try again, you'll get it. Don't be afraid. I'm here to help." We don't expect them to fail; and they don't expect to fail. And once they learn, they don't need us to help them anymore. We don't know actually how kids learn to ride a bike -- surely we don't teach them. There are some principles (they must pedal, balance, hold on); we can only say, "Don't forget to pedal" and let the child discover what else is important. They learn by watching successful bike riders, by seeing themselves as future bike riders, and by having no illusions that they will fail in learning how to ride a bike. (Are there many teenagers who think they will "fail" to learn how to drive a car? Many learn before they are "taught!")

Learning to ride a bike has a great deal to tell us about learning in general. Frank Smith (1982: 201), for instance, says children learn to read and write by seeing "demonstrations" (for example, seeing authentic writing and reading being done in their presence); "engagement" (seeing themselves as readers and writers); and "sensitivity" (seeing themselves as successful learners). How

many times have we told our students, "I only want you to try" but end up assigning them a low grade for what we judge to be a poor performance? Students may back off and become afraid to risk, as Valerie Camilli points out in the Introduction, because the consequences of risk are too high: children as well as older students have a difficult time in coping with failure.

We can help students to succeed even though we really don't know that much about the teaching of reading and writing. In fact, Lily Wong Fillmore (1987) of the University of California says that we really can't teach reading and writing: students can only learn. And we know students can learn if they don't experience failure -- or embarrassment. If we teachers expect students to learn, they more often than not will -- unless they already have a history of failure (but these students are still salvageable). Teaching is a tough job; it is not an 8-to-4 vocation. It is a profession.

KINDS OF WRITING

There are various kinds of writing; James Britton defines three: Expressive, Transactional, and Poetic. We would add a fourth -- Mechanical. And it is Mechanical we wish to discuss first. Applebee (1982) argues that mechanical writing is actually "writing without composing." Activities such as, "Copy these sentences/words down I have put on the board"; "Answer the questions at the end of the chapter"; "Fill in the correct words on this ditto"; "Do this grammar lesson" are mechanical writing exercises. (By the way, whether to teach grammar as a part of the writing curriculum remains a controversial subject. In a study completed a few years ago, and since replicated, students who had no grammatical instruction wrote just as well as those who did; and those who did not study grammar enjoyed writing more!)

There is a place, however, for grammar, even a place where spelling and mechanics can be addressed. Yet correct spelling,

punctuation, and grammar are never very useful unless one writes, and a classroom which emphasizes grammar and mechanics to the exclusion of writing may never be a classroom where students feel safe and comfortable and where composing occurs. Students eventually learn correct form, learn to be accurate in their punctuation and spelling as they progress toward fluency in writing, as they come to grips with the writer's task of grappling with meaning and of getting meaning down on paper. An emphasis upon meaning will help to improve accuracy of the final product. Students want their manuscripts to look neat, to be devoid of punctuation and spelling errors, as all good writers do. In short, we can stifle writing growth by emphasizing, especially at the beginning stages, grammar and editing skills. We teachers, like Graves, may have been too interested in having papers "look" good, in putting the best look on a corpse!

THE CHAPTERS

Some of us may have experienced a fear of flying. I sometimes do, but because of my job I fly periodically. Students who express a fear of writing don't write much. And this is especially true with second-language, "at risk" students. We experimented with a number of strategies for addressing this fear (commonly in second language research referred to as part of the "Affective Filter"):

In Chapter 1, Are these Kids Different?, Val, Corine, John, Eilene, and Janet address the notion of teaching kids whose first language is not English. A great majority of the students in their classes were Hispanic. What is it that makes these kids different? And what difficulties do they encounter in learning English, the language of instruction? Many children did not comprehend everything their teachers said to them in English. Reading and writing English, then, were extremely difficult tasks for them to learn. As a result of their non-fluency, they were labeled LEP (Limited English Proficiency), "at risk", and in danger of

failing and being held back a year. Many of them had already failed a year.

Chapter 2, Writing for Fun, with suggestions from Corine Drumm, shares the interactive nature of writing. We all can write for fun; we can display what we write; we can enjoy what we write; we can use Corine's activities in small, cooperative groups; we can publish our writing in classmade books for sharing, for taking home, for "showing off." Earl Stevick (1971) says all instructional activities should have some pizzaz; and Corine has selected some fun, pizzazy writing and reading activities that serve to lower the "Affective Filter" that is high among ESL/ "at risk" learners.

Chapter 3, Poetic Justice is John P. Harrison's contribution on poetic writing. Poetic composing is a different kind of writing. Students sometimes cringe when the teacher announces, "We are going to read and write poetry today" -- and it was no different for ESL/"at risk" children. Occasionally students experience failure in writing poetry, or their poetry is not very good. They can come away with the belief that poets are born, not made. Teachers, as a result of their students' attitudes, may avoid the teaching and writing of poetry. Our ESL/"at risk" students write poetry. John shows them how.

John addresses the structures inherent in poetry and some of the strategies that ESL/"at risk" students can employ to be successful poets. Students as well as teachers (we exhort all teachers to write with their students) can write poetry and be successful at it. John himself had not attempted to write poetry before; in fact, he had never been asked. But once he knew how, once he had written some successful poetic lines, he showed his students (he "demonstrated" to them) that they could do the same thing.

Students may be shy and resistant about writing poetry. A large class setting, where each student may be asked to read what s/he has written, is often inhibitory and frightening. (Who wants to

risk one's reputation in front of 25 peers?) The inhibiting effects of large classes can be reduced if kids read to each other in small groups. It is less inhibiting (some would say embarrassing) to share with five students than with the entire class. Kids often listen more attentively if they are put into small groups to discuss poetry and other writings.

Chapter 4, Have You Heard of the "J"?, is about the journal -- but not just any journal. Expressive writing appears in journals. Expressive writing is writing from the self. Dan Kirby and Tom Liner (1988) might say that writing expressively is writing from the "inside", about what we already know. Writing about what we know is a path to transactional writing (discussed in Janet's chapter). Expressive writing is riskless. Students cannot fail, and once into expressive writing they are able to absorb a sensitivity to all kinds of writing. For ESL/"at risk" kids, it is crucial that they be allowed and encouraged to write first about what they know. Then they can be gradually introduced to transactional writing.

We begin expressive writing on the first day of class. We have found it is relatively easy and non-threatening for ESL/"at risk" students to develop fluency (quantity) through expressive writing. Corine includes some expressive writing ideas in her "Fun" chapter; and Eilene discusses and describes various kinds of journals, and one type in particular that she has had success with, the dialogue journal. The "DJ" demonstrates that writing is an interactive process, as students are encouraged on a daily basis to write to their teacher on any subject, who then responds. The "DJ" evolves into a conversation between student and teacher.

Chapter 5 addresses transactional writing or, as it is popularly known, Writing Across the Curriculum. We write about what we know before we write about what we have learned. Transactional writing is the writing required by the school and is also known as academic writing or content-area writing as well as "writing across the curriculum." Students are asked to compare and

contrast, to discuss cause and effect, to write expository science reports, to use what they have learned or are learning from their reading, or from their teachers, in their writing -- in short to employ the rhetorical modes found in academic discourse. It is a useful kind of writing, different from Expressive and Poetic writing. Students learn about subject matter by writing about it.

There is a difficulty inherent in Transactional writing: it appears to be enormously difficult for students, especially ESL/"at risk" students, to learn to do well, a fact that could help to explain why writing as well as reading scores are low for this population. But there is no good reason that students can't learn to write in the various content or academic areas, with logic and organization, with the proper voice, to the proper audience, and they can even learn to enjoy and master this kind of writing. Janet takes us into Transactional writing and assembles a number of activities that will be useful to you and your students.

Chapter 6, Classroom Realities is about grading...evaluation. What about evaluation, assessment -- or for want of a better term, grades? We have to assign grades; we have to cover the curriculum. There are grading periods. Grading and some sort of evaluative process are part of our daily function in a milieu that incorporates tests and identifies grading periods. Valerie will offer you some tips; her suggestions are certainly better than most: for instance, how many of us take a bundle of papers home on Friday and worry about them until Sunday evening? After reading, and perhaps correcting, we assign a grade before returning them to students the following morning with the remark, "Here are your papers," only to be queried, "What papers?" There has to be a better way -- perhaps ways -- of accounting for what students can and cannot do. The payoff in writing, as in reading, is that students learn the joy and satisfaction of writing well. But they cannot grow and develop if we are constantly marking their efforts and pointing out their errors. We can no longer, if we expect students to improve

and develop, append an "F", even a "D", or if their writing is so bad, a "See me!" to their papers.

Valerie discusses strategies to assess progress in writing (notice: she measures "progress"). Teachers and administrators are interested in assessing -- we are. At the beginning of the project, we didn't have a clue on how to measure ability and/or progress; yet as experienced educators we knew that our students had made substantial progress in their abilities to write and read. Our students also knew that they had improved. We looked for ways to measure improvement. Val's chapter is useful for those looking for ways to measure improvement. Read what she has to say about evaluation and see if it fits in with your philosophy. We have high standards -- let us make that clear -- but we can "teach" and react to writing so that kids experience success. As they experience success, we do too!

From a failed curriculum that emphasized bits and pieces of the curriculum, which were taught through drill, to a successful one, which immersed our kids into reading and writing, was a migration none of us foresaw when we first started to address the needs of our LEP/"at risk" students. In our guide we portray how a curriculum evolved into extensive reading and writing activities that the entire school adopted. How this happened and how teachers can begin to incorporate reading and writing more extensively into their own curriculum is the story portrayed in this guide.

Introduction

Valerie M. Camilli

What we seek to provide the teacher in this guide is not a "magic" formula which will instantly transform reluctant, hesitant students into brilliant readers and writers. Rather, we hope to provide strategies to address the reading and writing needs of reluctant and hesitant students who are limited in English literacy proficiency (LEP). We include a brief explanation of the process or stages which many students go through in learning to read and to write. We provide a number of activities which teachers can use to encourage and develop reading and writing within their classrooms. We have designed the activities to fit together as pieces of a jigsaw puzzle to provide opportunities for students to be successful. The strengths of these activities are certainly in the theories which underlie them.

Frank Smith maintains that "writing is learned by writing, by reading, and by perceiving oneself as a writer" (1982: 199). He focuses on the student learning to read and write rather than on the teacher "teaching how to read and write." His distinction between learning and teaching is critical, given the time constraints faced by teachers. Our purpose is, first, to "demystify" the process of writing and reading; second, to demonstrate that writing, especially writing within and across the curriculum, leads toward increased reading and learning; and, third, to respond to the teacher whose plaint is, "How do I get more reading and writing into my daily lessons? I just don't have the time!"

Classrooms, we believe, must be organized far more than they are today for writing and reading. Teachers must provide sufficient reading and writing time within the course of the day; the student needs to see authentic demonstrations of writing and to participate in drafting pieces of writing, in revising, editing and eventually in

sharing his/her efforts with peers and teacher. Writing, as well as being a studio subject, is also an act of discovery, as writing leads to making ideas visible and concrete. Writing allows and encourages students to scrutinize, to explore and to develop thoughts: students think as they write and as they write they also learn. Students who write will learn more, read more, we as well as others have discovered, than those who do not. And finally reading and writing are reciprocal acts; it is difficult not to talk about one skill and ignore the other. Readers read what others have written; writers write what others will read.

The Victory Garden

"*Let us cultivate our garden.*"
Voltaire, Candide

Expectations sustain the gardener every spring, waiting patiently for the first sign of growth to appear. For seed to sprout, much nurturing is needed. The earth must be broken and tilled before seed can be carefully and patiently sown. Tender sprouts must be protected from the weather. Weeds must be eradicated to permit the plants to flourish and eventually produce. If the gardener is diligent and the weather hospitable, a rich and abundant harvest may follow. As teachers, we need to emulate the gardener's patient strategies of preparation and expectation and employ them in our classrooms which house immature, sensitive, developing readers and writers.

A young child is immersed in a buoying atmosphere of expectancy. A child will expect to learn to walk, to run, and to talk -- to grow. As the child develops language, we neither demand nor expect perfection. We understand that learning language involves a constant process of trial and error. During the child's initial inaccurate attempts at language, we focus on the meaning that the child attempts to convey, not on whether the message is

grammatically correct. Correctness only becomes a consideration as the child matures in language development. As the child matures in proficiency we celebrate and applaud his/her growth.

Just as we exult in the growing child's use of language, we teachers must celebrate other beginnings -- a child's development of reading and writing competence. Proficiency in reading and writing can be encouraged and fostered within a classroom in which meaning takes precedence and accuracy follows.

Within every learner there is a writer waiting to write, who is also anxious to read what others have written. As teachers we must nurture the learner's reading and writing development and expectancies of success. Premature or excessive error correction can seriously impede the beginning or non-proficient reader/writer and create a hesitant, tentative student afraid to risk for fear of being wrong. We must cultivate the buds of literacy in our students, as the gardener cultivates his or her garden, by providing time for authentic reading and writing experiences in class and by reading and writing ourselves, sharing with our students what we read and write. We consider students as developing readers and writers, just as our gardener considers the bud as developing toward maturity.

When we plant a rose seed in the earth, we notice that it is small, but we do not criticize it as "rootless and stemless." We treat it as a seed, giving it the water and nourishment required of a seed. When it first shoots up out of the earth, we don't condemn it as immature and underdeveloped; nor do we criticize the buds for not

being open when they appear. We stand in wonder at the process taking place and give the plant the care it needs at each stage of its development. The rose is a rose from the time it is a seed to the time it dies. Within it, at all times, it contains its whole potential. It seems to be constantly in the process of change; yet at each stage, at each moment, it is perfectly all right as it is.

T. Gallwey (1974)

Chapter 1
Are These Kids Different?

Valerie Camilli, Corine Drumm, John Harrison, Eilene Wright, and Janet Drane

Profile of the School and District

Southwest Independent School District, one of sixteen Bexar County School Districts, is located in a less affluent area of San Antonio. Hence, the district has a restricted assessment rate upon which to tax. Until a few years ago the older schools in this district were not air-conditioned (a bond issue eventually provided funds to refurbish and update several of these schools). Bob Hope Elementary is at the extreme southern edge of the district's eastern boundary and draws kids from the least affluent neighborhoods in the district, and these neighborhoods tend to be occupied by Hispanic minorities. At Bob Hope Elementary the ethnic mix was around 85% Hispanic and 15% Anglo.

Bob Hope Elementary test scores were the lowest (of the four elementary schools in SWISD), and hence the reason why the district pushed for their increase. The teachers who have contributed to this manual were involved in providing their students with increased opportunities for reading and writing. Other Bob Hope teachers, discovering that what their colleagues were doing was meeting with success, asked whether they could incorporate some of the same opportunities for reading and writing in their classrooms. Thus, reform was teacher-driven., bottom-up.

Are the kids we taught different?

Yes: they are different because they are "labeled" as non-learning kids. The children in this book have been affixed with a number of labels common to the labeling practice of Texas public schools. They were ESL

(they spoke English as a second language); they were"At Risk" (kids who were failing or behind their mainstream classmates); and they were LEP (while bilingual they remain limited in English proficiency). A child may have one or more of these labels attached to his/her name. Most of the children, while knowing some English, spoke Spanish in their homes. A few, indeed, spoke only Spanish (but did not necessarily read or write Spanish) while others came from homes where Spanish and English were spoken. The kids could speak English sufficiently well to communicate on the play ground with English-speaking peers, but experienced difficulty in their school work as they did not know how to speak and write academic English -- the English that is found in textbooks in the various content areas, such as science, math, social studies, and language arts, and the English "style" they would have to learn to write. Most labels serve to identify children who borderline on chronic failure.

The "at risk" child is not always the English-as-a-second language learner. He or she could be a mono-lingual Anglo; but in the classrooms of these teachers "at risk" children were Hispanic. These were the kids who needed help. They were placed in classrooms with teachers who could presumably help them attain sufficient proficiency in English to succeed in school. With scores historically low on state-mandated standardized tests, these children with their teachers present not a unique problem to state-supported education in areas populated with second language learners. Schools and their districts and their teachers were judged on the basis of standardized scores; and teachers were encouraged -- even mandated -- to raise scores. After all, scores were what the public understood. From one innovative program to another, each promising success, schools and their teachers sought to become better -- to raise scores. Principals as well as teachers sought short term answers to long term problems. Nothing seemed to help. Teachers were asked to teach test taking skills -- and in some cases to "teach the test." Children still did not do well on the tests regardless of how often they practiced test taking -- because they could neither write or read sufficiently well to insure success in a language that was not their first. If scores rose, the school experienced an aura of success. It seemed that tests were the overriding criterion of success.

Our journey began more as a mission than as a carefully orchestrated expedition toward excellence. We were teachers, frustrated by feelings of inadequacy despite our best efforts and driven to do something, anything, to alleviate the discouraging situations existing in our classrooms. We were hopeful teachers in dysfunctional, "broken" classrooms. Standardized test scores indicating poor student performance shattered our self-images. We taught a curriculum splintered into myriad of fragmented objectives. Our students were dispirited, discouraged by years of failure. Although the principal was supportive and appreciative of our efforts, she could offer no new solutions that had not already been explored and abandoned. The "fads" that so often appear in education had not helped (the schools in the district were introduced to each as they came along). The children and the teachers remained helpless.

A serendipitous relationship evolved when we in concert with our principal and a professor at a local university initiated an intensive reading and writing program, including an integration of the content areas, and addressing the needs of the limited English proficient (LEP, "at risk") students entrusted to us. We planned strategies, melding theory into practice, to repair the broken classrooms. We began our migration by looking at where we were and where we wanted to go. As we retrace the steps of our journey and reflect on the variables which contributed to our success, perhaps we may provide insight and guidance for those who have had similar experiences.

We turned to business world advice which we believed to be applicable to our situation: "Think big and start small." Organizing ourselves into a team, a coalition, we became a "school within a school," as we sought to develop, model, and encourage the sharing of innovative practices in teaching and learning. Our efforts progressed through a number of stages: We pledged ourselves to improve our teaching and our students' learning. What we did was not the result of administrative fiat or direction. Change was teacher-driven and as a result "bottom-up." Administrators longed for an improvement in standardized test scores

as much as we did; but our principal, supervisor, and superintendent did not require us to institute a new program. We were not conscripts who grudgingly resisted or went through the motions. Administrators and teachers became team members. They did not blame others when something did not go well.

Two characteristics proved to be beneficial. We taught in the same district, some of us at the same or adjacent schools. Our principal arranged schedules to accommodate time for bi-weekly team meetings. During these meetings, we shared what was working and what was not. We became learners; we listened to each other tell how his or her students were progressing; we listened to problems; and we offered solutions. We learned from each other and from our students.

The feedback from administrators assured us of their interest and willingness to "think new thoughts," with much more class time devoted to reading and writing. The team included one teacher from each primary grade level plus a teacher from the middle grades. This arrangement proved fortuitous as we shall see. As kindergarten teacher Susan Stimson shared samples of her students' emerging literacy, she provided us with insight as to how literacy develops early in a student's career.

We shared the common goal of improving our effectiveness as teachers. We not only wanted to teach well but we also wanted to know the latest research (and theory) on how literacy develops in second language learners and to gain an understanding of Whole Language and the reading/writing connection. We enrolled as a group in Curt Hayes' courses in second language literacy. The courses were spread over thirty-two weeks. In the meantime, he visited our classes weekly, offering suggestions, providing additional readings, and interacting with our students. He encouraged us to read prominent researchers and practitioners, including Donald Graves, Frank Smith, Kenneth and Yetta Goodman, Lucy Calkins, Nancie Atwell, and Toby Fulwiller. We profited from his previous work with LEP children (see *Literacy con Carino).* In the research we were particularly interested in the organization of the school

day around theme-based instruction, with much emphasis on reading and writing.

We were faced with the question: how does the teaching of reading and writing in a student's first language differ from the the teaching of those same skills in his/her second? Gibbons (1991) says that teachers must recognize "that a child's learning and literacy difficulties are *language-related*" and identifies a number of attributes that ESL, "at risk" children have: in reading they

Read slowly
Have poor comprehension if the topic is unfamiliar
Have trouble paraphrasing and isolating the main idea
Have difficulty reading for meaning, drawing conclusions and, in a narrative, predicting what will happen next
Rarely self-correct when reading aloud

In writing, they

Have generally poor written language skills, especially in subject areas
Can write sentences but have difficulty writing a paragraph or sequencing paragraphs
Write only in an informal, "chatty" style
Use a limited vocabulary which lacks descriptive words
Use simple sentence structures only
Make grammatical errors not typical of a native speaker -- for example, in word order, word endings, tense or prepositions
Have poor spelling
Lack the confidence to write at length
Tend always to write the same thing (such as a simple recount) in free choice writing

Certainly, most of the attributes of second language learners can be found in the reading and writing habits of native speaking children. But in

ESL, "at risk" children's reading and writing habits, there are more. In our determination to address the writing and reading problems of our students, we relied on Leki, XI) who says, "Teaching writing to ESL students is not radically different from teaching writing to native English speakers. Many of the same attitudes, techniques, and even syllabuses work well with ESL students." But still they were different: they were poor, many from single parent homes. They did not know how to read and write in their first language, Spanish. In the chapters which follow, we address the problems that ESL/LEP/ 'at risk" children have.

The affective environment of our classrooms was crucial to any success. So many hours had been placed in the past on instruction, and the instruction had failed to produce readers and writers. How do you take reluctant, unsuccessful children who have been embedded in a cycle of failure and teach them? Our answer: by placing emphasis on success -- what they can do -- rather than on failure -- what they can't do. Initially, many of our children did not want to try to read and write for fear of failure. But by giving them a "gentle nudge" (Lucy Calkins), we were eventually to convince them that they could learn. (Test scores later appeared to contribute to a recognition of their improvement) We changed our classrooms, and our direction, so that reading and writing became the focus of our teaching day. When our students read, we read; when they wrote, we wrote, often the same assignment.

Our readers will see improvement as they read the efforts of these children. However, there is no quick fix. Some kids improved -- and, in fact, some learned to read and write -- during the first year. Others took longer -- sometimes three years. But they all eventually became competent, successful writers and readers. Since a number of teachers participated in this change, there was a sense of community -- of working together -- of a school within a school. What began with a few teachers seeking solutions grew to be a whole school responsibility. In these pages is a story of success -- two stories in fact --, of teachers who became better at their craft and the other of students who profited by having teachers who were capable of addressing the needs of second language students.

We began with the journal. Our premise was simple: students must write and read every day. The "J" was non-threatening to students who were anxious about having to write. Our students shared experiences with us and we with them. Fluency increased from a few lines to multiple pages. In order for the students to respond, they first must read our entries. And before we could respond, they had to make clear their message. The "J", as Eilene points out, provided a reading lesson each day. We cannot undervalue the "J." Students experienced the joy and power of writing; and we came to know and understand our students, their problems, their wishes, dreams, more than we had ever imagined.

Once students were fairly comfortable with writing, we asked them to write about what they were learning. As students studied topics in science, social studies, and mathematics, they wrote about what they had learned. They paraphrased, they related information to their own experiences, they reflected on its significance to their own lives. We also wrote about what we taught and found that our writing help to "demystify" the writing process. (We found we wrote more in our classrooms, for our students, than we had ever written before.) We demonstrated to our students how we brain-stormed through ideas, how we selected and narrowed a topic, how we began, how we revised, how we prepared a final draft, how we published. The students were intrigued and willing to try for themselves.

Instead of having our usual weekly library hour, we brought books from the library into the classroom. Our classrooms became "print centers." We began to read to our students more often during the day. We read a few pages from new library books and asked whether anyone wanted to take one of the books home to read to parents. We always had more hands than books; but everyone eventually had a chance to read the trade books we ordered. We set aside more time for pleasure reading.

We didn't instruct as much as we once did. We know that may sound odd, particularly since we were prepared in our education courses to instruct and then test. We looked at our students' reading and writing and

judged where they needed help. We provided mini-lessons on common areas where students needed to improve, such as the use of editing strategies, or how to begin and/or end a piece, determining how textbooks are organized, how to skim, how to narrow a topic. Mini-lessons only took us 10 to 15 minutes. We did not provide workbooks or generate dittos to reinforce skills learned in isolation. Our most productive teaching activity centered around a student's paper, projecting it on an overhead (with the name withheld), going through it and asking for suggestions for improvement. We found the students, aided by mini-lessons, equal to making useful suggestions.

We began by bridging past practices with new. We were hesitant. We were unsure of what we were attempting to accomplish. A few of us were still centering on drills to improve mechanics. We had little idea of what was "right" -- as one of us put it -- or what would work We gained momentum when Janet brought samples of her students' work to the weekly session and began to talk about her observations. All of us could see signs of improvement in her students' work. We returned to our own classrooms and began to look for the those signs in our students. At the next weekly session all of us had student work for sharing. We now had samples of student work to show and discuss. We found ourselves at the end of the school day talking in the parking lot about our classes. This awareness did not happen overnight. New strategies and techniques take time to be absorbed, but we gradually began to provide one another with encouraging results regarding our efforts.

Can classroom intangibles reflect success? Classroom atmosphere is difficult to measure, yet the first inkling of our success was an improvement in classroom climate. Our students knew they were learning; we knew they were learning, even without a test. They appeared to be more content, self-confident. All of us smiled and laughed and shared more. Writing was invigorating rather than the much dreaded drudgery of the past. These changes were evident to our colleagues, and they asked us about our methods. We organized after-school-sessions on classroom strategies for these teachers. acting as coaches and mentors for them.

Other school districts and teacher organizations requested us to present inservices, to talk to their teachers and administrators, and to share with them reading/writing activities which we had found useful. The word of our success spread: our school district was selected for a number of honors, including the National Council of Teachers of English award and designation as "a Center of Excellence."

We know that teachers care about the results of standardized tests. Standardized test scores are an outward and visible indication of a school district's success in educating students. It was low test scores that led our school district to explore the alternatives that we proposed. Though dramatic gains did not appear immediately, test scores did improve, especially after the second year of the project. Fifth grade scores on the Comprehensive Test of Basic Skills (CTBS) rose by 25% in reading. Test battery scores demonstrated an average gain of 24% and our mathematics scores rose by 11%. The increase in math scores we attribute to the fact that students were able to comprehend word problems and solve them since the scores on the computational portions of the test remained relatively stable.

Of significance were the increases in the scores made on the state-wide composition examination. In a four year period, the fifth grade scores on this examination increased from 37% to 95%. 100% of the LEP, "at risk" students scored at the top of the scale (a grade of 3 or 4 on their holistically assessed compositions, with 50% of the LEP students receiving a score of 4). These figures compare to the rest of the district where 70% scored at the 3 or 4 levels. LEP, "at risk" 5th graders performed better on reading and writing tasks than the "gifted and talented" students at our schools. With these published results, our colleagues inquired even more as to the approaches and strategies we were incorporating in our classrooms.

As we began to read and write intensively, sharing sessions evolved into discussions questioning how to utilize writing and reading in the curriculum as a whole. We wanted students to become as enthusiastic about reading and writing in the social studies and sciences as they were

about writing in their journals and in reading our responses. We began to take writing "across the curriculum." We were initially tentative because the class day provided little time for increasing reading and writing activities in all disciplines. The fragmentation of the curriculum into separate disciplines was an impediment. Attempting to teach the curriculum in the sequence organized in the textbooks was about as effective as attempting to push a chain. We needed to move to the front of the chain and pull it in the direction we wanted to go. We needed to link subject matter with reading and writing. We organized our daily and weekly activities into themes, and the pieces of the curriculum came together.

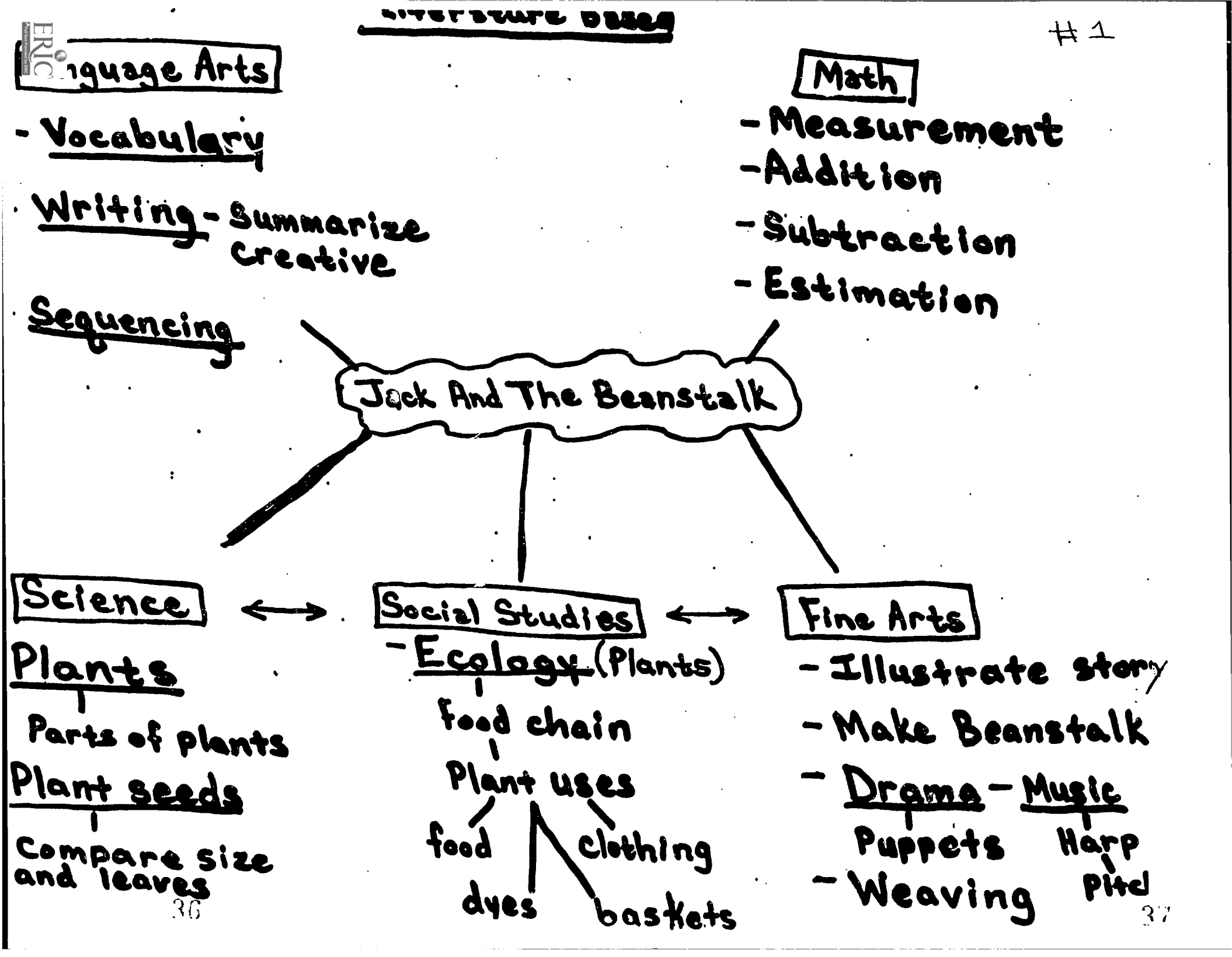
Themes were selected integrating several disciplines of the curriculum. We identified sections of textbooks which contributed to the development of a theme and gathered literature which included the subject matter of the chosen theme. We selected theme topics for each of our grade levels. We found that students began to observe that the disciplines were indeed related.

Theme-driven interdisciplinary units afforded us more flexibility than we were accustomed to. Such a simple theme as "birds" presented us with opportunities. We found information on the life of birds, how they enhanced the environment, and what their extinction would do to cause an increase in crop-destroying insects. We also incorporated a theme centered around *Jack and the Beanstalk* (see Figure 1), a familiar story that every school child knows. We wound the sciences and social sciences into the fabric of the story (see Figure 2).

Using themes provided us time where we thought we had none. Since activities in one discipline applied those from another, students seemed able to comprehend more. The LEP, "at risk" student, for example, may have a difficult time understanding concepts and vocabulary. Previously, we had spent considerable time on isolated vocabulary drills. In theme-driven curriculum literacy increased, judging from standardized test scores.

Literature Based

#1



Language Arts

- Literature
  - The Ugly Duckling
  - The Duck Who Loved Puddles
  - Donald Duck
  - The Rooster Who Refused to Crow
  - The Little Red Hen
- Sequencing
- Details
- Writing
  - Descriptive
  - Summative
  - Informative
  - Creative

Math

- Comparisons
  - Size / Shape
- Problem Solving
  - Addition / Subtraction
- Graphing

Science

- Birds
  - Characteristics
  - food
  - shelter
  - Comparisons (Birds that fly/don't fly)

Social Studies

- Ecology
  - Pets
  - As food
  - Helpful / Harmful
  - State & National Symbol

Fine Arts

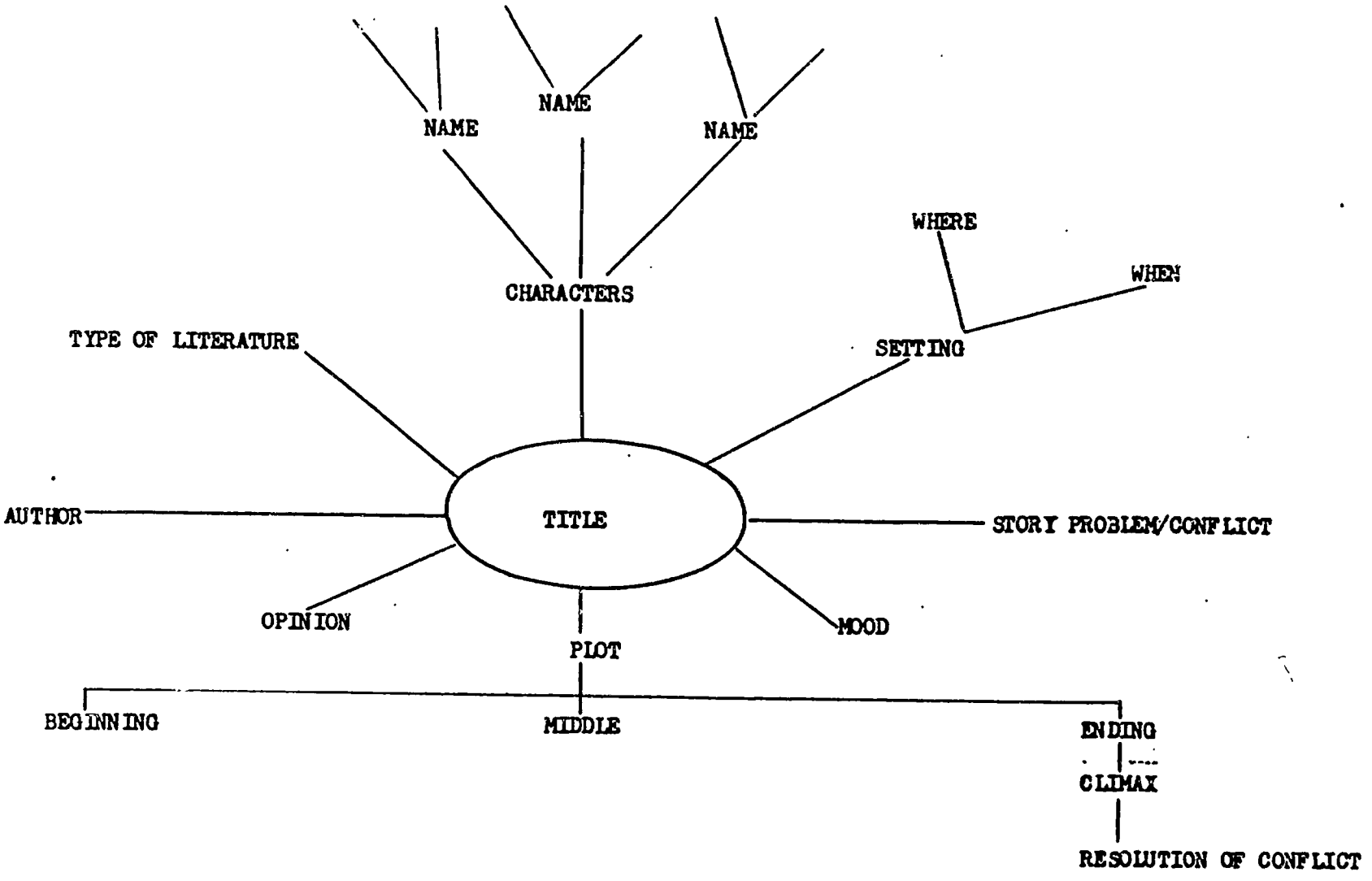
- Build Nests
- 3-D Swan
  Penguin
- Music - Sounds
  Bluebird ♫
- Mobile

Several considerations guided our selection of theme topics. We chose themes which clearly lent themselves easily to an integration of the curriculum. We selected themes across the curriculum as well as across grade levels. Semantic mapping, webs, or thinking sheets helped our students organize factual information encompassing all content areas (see Science in "Reading and Writing Across the Curriculum"). We used a variation of semantic webs to label and discuss books. The parts of our story map included author, type of literature, character development and description, setting, conflict(s) or problem(s), mood, plot (beginning, middle, and end) and opinion. We placed the title of the story in an oval in the center of the page, with spokes, as on a wheel, pointing to the various elements of the story that we wanted the students to be aware of. We could use the map to compare and contrast the differences in books: the various kinds of conflicts in stories, and the moods that authors depicted (see Figure 3). In this manner we brought several books together, talking about them singly or cooperatively and at the same time, avoiding the assignment, "Write a book report when you are finished."

After the students had worked with the map, we were delighted to hear students among themselves, "Oh, that's the setting" and "Now I understand the problem." They also used webs to organize their own stories. Some may criticize this activity as "formula" writing. Yet students found it helpful in generating as well as organizing and talking about their writing. It was a useful "navigator." We shared it with our colleagues as we found ourselves collaborating more and more.

School wide themes served to unify the curriculum and the school. The hallways were now filled with writing on related topics. The librarian gathered books on the themes and displayed them in a special section of the library. A student on his or her way to the library or to the cafeteria passed by displays he related to his or her own learning. We believed that we were, teachers and students, links in the same web of learning and teaching as we migrated toward literacy.

#3


NAME
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WHEN
SETTING
TYPE OF LITERATURE
AUTHOR
TITLE
STORY PROBLEM/CONFLICT
OPINION
MOOD
PLOT
BEGINNING
MIDDLE
ENDING
CLIMAX
RESOLUTION OF CONFLICT

Chapter 2
Writing for Fun
Corine Drumm

During the year we began to realize results from our focus on reading and writing activities, discovering that when students write freely and regularly they become adventurous with language -- they take risks --, expressing new ideas as well as rehearsing those previously known. Students experience a real need for finding just the "right" word to convey the right meaning. Reading lead to increased writing proficiency (see, for example, Hayes, Bahruth, Kessler 1987), and writing increased their reading proficiency. Through reading and writing, they acquired word analysis skills, grammatical structures, idioms, and vocabulary, without losing sight of a crucial language fact: *language is meaningful.*

Large chunks of the school day for writing and reading are requisites for "mainstream" children, and for children who are ESL/ "at risk" the need is even greater. We found they not only learned to speak English but to write and read it as well. To encourage writing, we stopped marking errors (errors, in fact, can be evidence of language-development -- see Chapter 1 and Constance Weaver, "Welcoming Errors as Signs of Growth"). As students moved from a strategy of error-avoiding and we from error-identifying, we found that writing improved. We no longer "attacked" papers (or took them home to correct); we "re-saw" writing as a developmental skill, a process. No one learns how to ride a bicycle without making mistakes, and this is true for writing: beginning writers make mistakes. In fact, ESL/ "at risk" children will make more mistakes because they are learning to write a foreign bicycle.

We began the year by writing for fun. Writing for fun is a natural and effective way for reluctant writers to begin to shed their fear of writing. Before beginning the activities in this chapter, we suggest that the teacher:

1. Discuss expectations. Explain to your students that while you are interested in the finished product, written and punctuated well, you are also interested in the process they follow as they write their drafts and wend their way to a finished product.

2. Provide a personal model of several examples of completed activities. We discovered (like Donald Graves' pottery maker) that children were more willing to accept suggestions for revision -- for making their writing more effective -- if we wrote along with them. We modeled writing as we wrote with our students, demonstrating that mature writers, such as ourselves, are not innately "gifted" -- far from it in fact.

3. Solicit ideas for writing. (Brainstorming through "thinking sheets" -- see following chapters.)

4. Write the activity as a small or large group activity (our activities lend themselves to group work).

5. Students share their writing by reading aloud to small groups of four to six classmates. The teacher reads, too. One caveat: only positive, constructive comments are allowed.

6. Bind the completed activities into a class book for sharing with parents.

ACTIVITIES

1. Name games

To use each letter of a student's name and write a word that could be part of a sentence or title. Use the dictionary if necessary:

Canadians Are Taxing Hairy Youngsters

as many had difficulty in hearing the difference between, for instance, the <sh> and the <ch> sounds:

She sells sea-shells at the seashore.

Peggy Peebles picked perfect plums.

Peter Piper . . .

How much wood does a woodchuck chuck . . .

Debra dropped damp dirt down Don's dirty drain.

Such strong smells started Susie sneezing.

Becky bought a box of buttered biscuits.
Mandy missed Monday's math mast Months.
Charlie chose chewy chocolate chips to chomp on
Sandra

3. Puns

Share some puns with students, and urge them to create their own or collect them from other sources. Each pun is a source of vocabulary. Have them design a "pun fun" notebook for homework:

Baby teeth are drop-outs.
A nervous mosquito is a jitterbug.
Gravity will let you down.
A talking dog is smarter than a spelling bee.
Custer wore Arrow Shirts!
Radar cops study speed reading.

4. Feeling Words

For vocabulary development have children think of words that might make someone feel:

frightened, angry, sick, thirsty, cold, warm, nervous, wet, lazy, sad, worried, in a hurry, surprised, silly, slow, lonely, hurt, confused, hungry, like laughing

frightened - scared shocked
afraid bloodcurdling
screams fear

5. Idioms

Idioms cause particular difficulties for ESL/ "at risk" students. Begin a collection of idioms such as:

tickled pink
frog in her throat
kicked the bucket
chip off the old block
born with a silver spoon in his mouth

Brainstorm a list of others. These can be a challenge for the whole class when given as an in-class assignment. Later, put them into sentences and illustrate them.

6. Name Antics

Have the students for each letter of their name write a word that describes them. For example,

S = Sweet
A = Adorable
N = Nice
D = Dear
R = Reliable
A = Adventurous

Smart
ENlightening
Trustful
Understanding

Fami: Neat
Intellegent
Terrific
Excellent
Nice

7. Alphabet Animals

For each letter of the alphabet, write two names of different animals; use the dictionaries when necessary. This activity (and ones like it) is particularly important for developing vocabulary in the content areas:

Names of Animals

Alligator
Butterfly
Camel
Dinosaur
Elephant
Fox
Gorilla
Hyena
Iguana
Jaguar
Koala
Llama
Mole
Nuthatch
Opossum
Porcupine
Quail
Rattlesnake
Spider
Tiger
Unicorn
Viper
Wolf
Xiphosuran
Yak
Zebra

8. Using Literature

- All of us can see ourselves in Judith Viorst's *Alexander and the Terrible, Horrible, No Good, Very Bad Day* because we have all had a "terrible, horrible . . . day!" Read Viorst's book to your class; share your "bad day" experiences. Write down ten things that happened on a "horrible" day.

Children's literature can help students use the same pattern in telling a short story of their own. After reading aloud Remy Charlip's story *Fortunately, Unfortunately*, ask the students to tell you the fortunate and unfortunate things that happened to Ned. Make up a story patterned after Charlip's story and have the students fill in the missing parts.

Fortunately, _____
Unfortunately,_____

Fortunately, our teacher, Mrs. Drumm, was so tired last night, she went to bed very early.
Unfortunately, the alarm did not go off, and she woke up very late.

9. Warnings

Read "Warning" and "Early Bird" from Shel Silverstein's *Where the Sidewalk Ends*; ask students to make a list of things they have been warned NOT to do. For example, I learned the following in my childhood. Your students will have others:

If you cross your eyes
They'll probably stick.

If you eat with dirty hands
You'll end up sick.

If you ever smoke
You will surely choke (or your growth will be stunted)

If you ever drink alcohol
You won't be able to drive at all.

Never tell an ostrich a joke
Because he then may begin to poke
And rip off the name tag you wrote
Dustin

Never say bad words carlos
You'll probably be heard.
And when your teacher writes
You won't feel very bright!

10. Write Cures

Make up some cures for colds, chicken pox, freckles, sore throats, warts, hiccups ... anything! Read some cures from Alvin Schwartz' *Cross Your Fingers, Spit in Your Hat:*

If you catch the chicken pox, eat lots of chicken soup and put a dozen eggs under your bed.

If you want to get rid of your hiccups, put your head in a brown paper bag and sing "Mary Had A Little Lamb."

11. Listen to Wordless Music

Let the melodies and moods and rhythms induce...

- word lists
- lines and phrases
- song lyrics
- descriptions of feelings
- word-images
- a poem

(Listening to "Flight of the Bumblebee")

I hate flies because they bite and they bother me and make me so mad. makes me want to scream. I wish there was no flies in the whole world. I hate flies too because they bite my baby sister. And they make me so mad. Sometimes they come in front of my face. The flies are very... very mean. They make me scream and shout and cry. — Raquel,

Try music of differing styles and feelings.

12. Embarrassed

Some rewarding writing and reading experiences emerge from shared memories and common feelings. After sharing some of embarrassing moments, ask students to share their memories in small groups. Write about

A most embarrassing situation or time

The worst trouble I've ever been in

The most stupid or dumb thing I did when I was little

I was so embarrassed when our principal asked me to read my story over the intercom one morning and I had trouble reading my own writing because I was so nervous. Josie (4)

13. Epitaphs

Write some silly epitaphs:

Here lies Georgia Meg
She tripped on a a toothpick
And broke her leg.

At rest here is John MacBest.
He froze in the East.
He should have moved West.

Write one for Bugs Bunny or Christopher Columbus, or any other famous figure in history. These can be lively activities and epitaphs can lead into how we handle death in our society. For example, how do we mark burial plots?

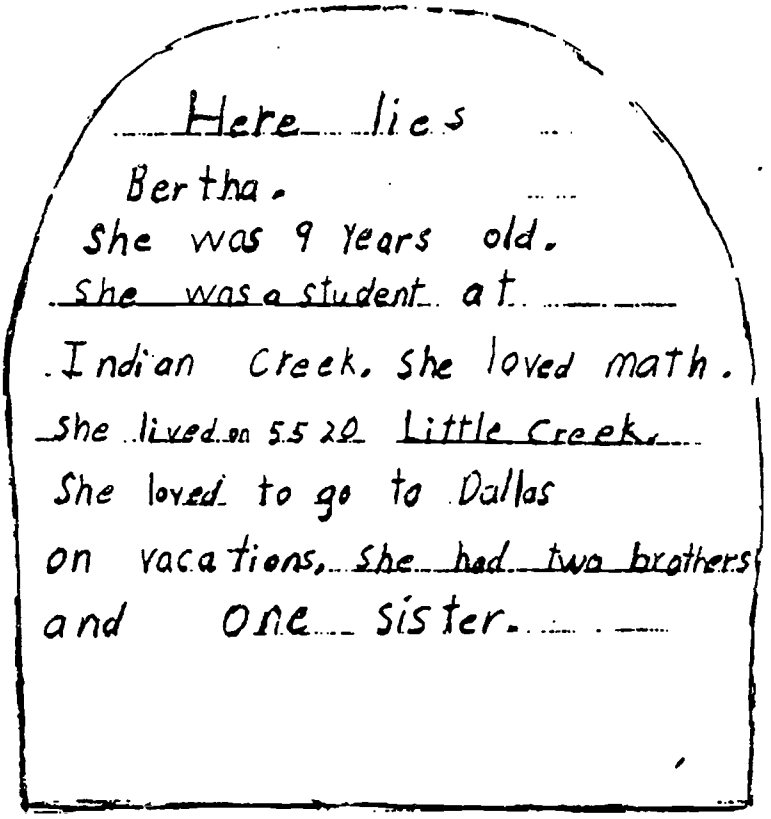
14. Tombstones

Group students into pairs so that they can interview each other by asking for answers to these questions:

1. What is your name?
2. How old are you?
3. Where do you live?
4. What do you do?
5. What do you like to do best?
6. Where do you like to go on vacation?
7. How many brothers and sisters do you have?

Discuss tombstones and how they are inscribed with information about the deceased. Use the information from the interviews to write about the person in an epitaph. Stress that the sentences are to be written using the past tense. Give everyone a sheet of paper

with the two top corners cut off diagonally to resemble a tombstone. Students write using the information they collected about their partner. Cesar wrote:



15. How to ...

Write the directions for:

Making tamales or any other dish
Getting bubblegum out of hair
Brushing your teeth
Petting a lion

Collect these and bind them into a book. A book of favorite recipes would make a wonderful gift for Mom.

16. Complaint Department

Pretend to be in charge of the complaint department of a grocery or department store. Write a list of the possible complaints you might receive. For each complaint have ready a possible response and explanation.

17. Come to your Senses!

Explore a human emotion. Think about it and experience it with all five senses. Write a line that tells what color it is. Then write other lines to describe it, using just one of the senses.

Joy is bright yellow.	(color)
It tastes like lemon juice.	(taste)
It smells like sunshine.	(smell)
It looks like bright fireworks.	(sight)
It sounds like a crackling fire.	(sound)
Joy makes me feel like laughing.	(feel)

18. Don't use these Words!

Write a description of your eating an ice cream cone without using any these words. This exercise is particularly effective in developing the concept of synonym for children:

ice cream, delicious, vanilla, cone, creamy, cold, lick, bite.

19. Tall Tales

Write
a story
about
something

in a way
that
stretches
the facts
a little
or a lot.
Do your
writing
on a
piece of
adding
machine
tape
that you've
turned
the long
way.
Mount
the
tall tale
on
black
paper
and
cut out
legs
for it
so that
it is
very
tall.

Bigfoot
asked us
if he could
join us
at our
picnic.
He was
fun and
he told
jokes.
Later he
took us
to visit
his family
at their
cave. We
met his
wife and
two kids.
Next week
they asked
us over to
their cave
to play
cards.

Casey, grade 5

OR...compose a list of words that someone could use in describing "Bigfoot" (sound, smell, appearance).

OR...make a list of ten reasons why people might believe "Bigfoot" exists and ten reasons why they might not.

20. Descriptions, Descriptions

Have students find a picture from a magazine. Compose a detailed description of the picture. Then exchange descriptions but do not show the picture! Ask students to re-create the picture by drawing it according to the description they have received. Then compare the drawings with the originals!

21. Caution Signs

Write warnings of possible hazards in school or at home or in the streets or on the school bus or at a circus or in a gym or anywhere else that safety is important.

22. Invention Advertisement

Have students invent and describe a new product and compose and design an advertisement for their invention. Or they can use the inventions from their readings and pretend they are to sell it.

23. My Favorite Place

Have students think of a special place and describe what it is like and why it is special. Students can be encouraged to describe where they are from.

24. Remembrance

At the end of a school year, have your students write a short note of comment or advice or appreciation to each person in their class, telling that person something important or helpful for him to know or remember. Don't forget yourself!

25. Ten Reasons

Think and write ten reasons:

for having or not having a pet
for going to school
for eating vegetables (and what kind)
for brushing your teeth
why I feel like . . .

Ten reasons to brush your teeth

1. they'll turn yellow
2. they may begin to stick
3. they may begin to stink
4. they may begin to rot
5. you don't want them to fall out
6. the dentist will give you a long talk
7. You don't want to give mom something to complain about
8. You don't want to get false teeth
9. You need to get out all the meat
10. You don't want to be the one the class talks about.

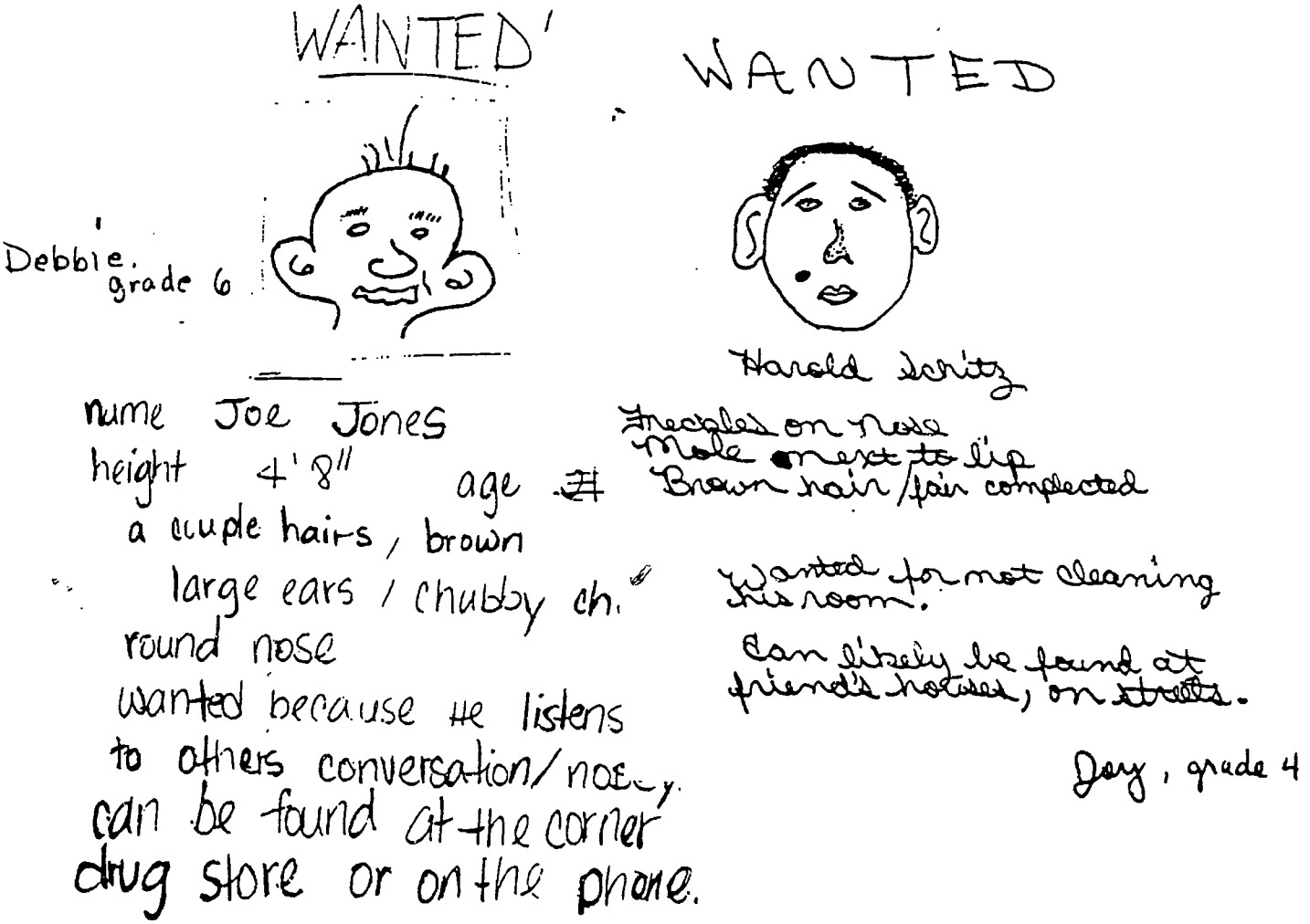
26. Home Remedies

Write remedies for common diseases, illnesses, minor accidents likely to occur around home or school. The cures can be serious or silly:

How to get rid of freckles
What to do for a broken heart
How to live with a big or small nose
How to cure a sore throat or stuffy head
How to get rid of pinkeye

27. Wanted

Make a poster describing a person who is missing. Tell about the person's physical characteristics and habits. Explain why he/she is missing and suggest the kinds of places the person might be likely to be found. Draw or cut out a picture for the poster. (Use with discretion: bring in wanted posters from the Post Office.)



28. New News from Old Tales

Turn a fairy tale or any well-known story into a modern day news story. Give it a sensational headline! (I borrowed this exercise Frank 1979:154). I use *The True Story of the Three Little Pigs.*

> Woodcutter Saves Girl in Daring Rescue
> Population Explosion Comes to Shoe-Town
> Juvenile Attacked by Hungry Spider

29. Hallowe'en Tales!

Place the scariest words your students can think of on the board. Use the words to write a very spooky ghost story. Then, turn out the lights and tell your ghastly ghost story.

Or create (with paint or paper or any other material) and describe an imaginary creature. Write a story about its habits and adventures.

30. Half Animal Half Human

Find some pictures of animals and/or people. Choose pictures that are similar in size. Cut each one in half and match a half with a different picture to form a new animal, person or creature. Then write a story about the new creature.

31. Follow our Directions

Hide something in your classroom. Choose something small enough to be easily hidden but large enough to be found. Share your hiding place with a few students and have them together write directions for others to follow that will lead them to the hidden object.

32. Stories in the Round

Have someone start a story with one sentence. Then pass the story around the class. Each student should add at least one sentence. If the story needs an ending, the teacher may want to add a finishing touch.

33. Excuses Excuses

Have students write ten excuses explaining why they didn't do their homework.

Hulk Hogan came to my house and bashed my door down and crushed my book up to little tiny pieces.

I put out bird seeds and birds came and tore it up with their beaks.

I spilled lime green cool aid on my homework and my hamster thought it was lettuce and ate it.

My paper flew out the bus window.

Michael

Or, they can list ten things:

They do before breakfast
That make them mad
To say to a gorilla
They'll never forget
About their city
Never to do

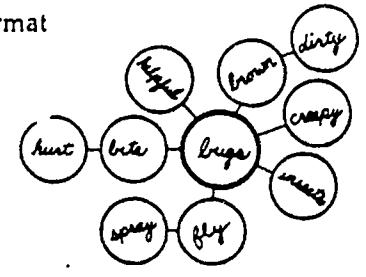
These things make me mad,
1. Waiting in long lines
2. People being late
3. Gum on my shoes
4. Flies in my face
5. A hole in my cup
6. A hair in my food
7. Scissors that won't cut
8. A gummy eraser
9. holes in my slacks
10. A soggy sandwich

Have them list 15 uses for a brick
Write a dinner invitation from a cat to a mouse.
Explain why a nose is more valuable than an elbow.
Have them write a letter to their parents telling them why their glad they were born in the month they were.
Write the directions for how to make a banana split.

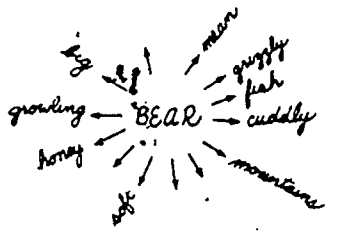
34. Word Association

Associating a word with others is a strategy to generate vocabulary. Children can quickly cover a paper or board with words. Put a word on the board and elicit associations from students. A clustering format (sometimes called a "semantic web" or "thinking sheet") is useful for demonstrating to students that they know more words than they thought they knew.

Clustering format



Explosion format



When students understand the format, give them a new word and have them do their own associations. Then for a follow-up activity, have students use several or most of the words on their list in a writing assignment (Tiedt 1983:42).

35. Acrostics

The letters of the name of a person, place or thing are written vertically. Then each letter of the word is used to write a word describing or telling a story about it.

Turkey
Ham
Apple pie
New potatoes
Kettle
Sandwich
Grace
Indian
Very Good
Ice Cream
Noodles
Grandfather

F is for fair
A is for attentive
T is for thoughtful
H is for helpful
E is for eager
R is for responsible

36. Name Games

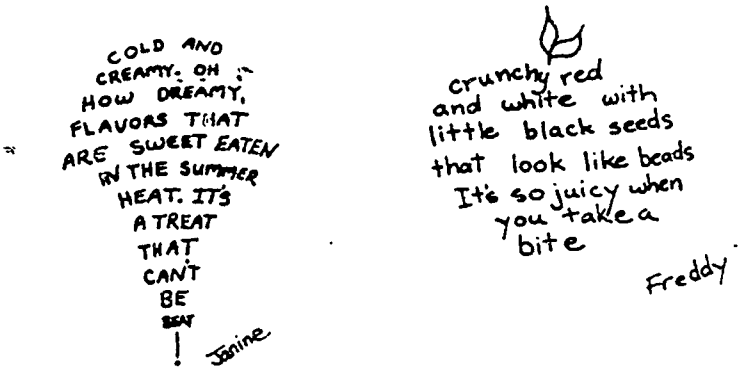
Have students compose short, rhyming "poems" about themselves. First, ask them to list all words they can think of that rhyme with either their first or last names. Using this list, students compose a poem with their names as the focus. (Students can work in teams of two for this activity.)

My name is Setu
And I am quite new
You see I arrived just
yesterday at two.

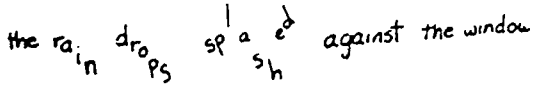
Using an overhead projector, make silhouettes of your students and display their name poems on them.

37. Shape Poems

The subject of the poem dictates the shape, and descriptive words are arranged to form a shape.

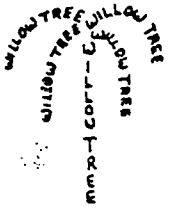


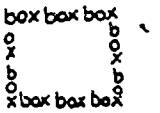
Using only one word, have students write the word in such a way that it suggests its meaning.



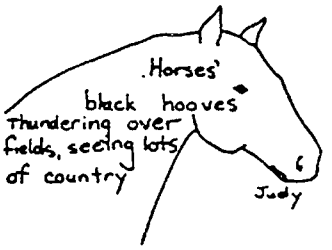
Have students write words arranged to picture their meaning.

Have students experiment with words that include a word picture within their sentences.

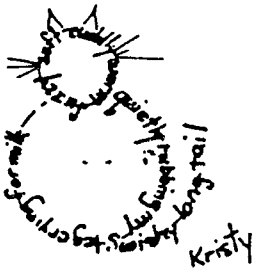




Have students draw a simple outline picture of something they like (an animal, a friend, a food, a toy). Ask students to write their feelings about the object they have drawn on the inside of their picture.



Or students can lightly outline a picture of an object, then cover the outline with words that describe the object. (Tiedt 1983:48)



All of the above activities can be done in small groups. Occasionally, students will not share with large groups (such as an entire class) but will share with members of a a small group.

38. Stream of Consciousness

Have students write continuously for a given length of time and record the flow of thoughts they have while doing this writing, for example,

> This will be hard writing because three minutes is a long time and I don't know what to write. Tom's pencil just broke. My stomach is growling. Janie wants to play at my house after school. I like her. She lets me ride her new bike. I wish it was recess. School's hard. Sometimes I like school. David just sneezed. My birthday is soon. I wonder if we will have...

Have students choose partners and read to each other what they have written. As a follow-up activity, have them turn their papers over and write for three more minutes.

39. Writing Lists

Ask students to write lists such as:

Ten things I do before I come to school
Ten wishes I have
Ten things that annoy me
Ten things that could never happen
Ten ways to ride a bicycle

Have students compose individual lists. If some children finish before others, have them go ahead and list more items. Then when time is called, have them choose the ten best from their list. Give students the opportunity to share their writing with their group. You can select several to post on the bulletin board, or include all in a book. The following is an example of a student's list:

Ten Ways to Get into the Water

1. Dive in
2. Get pushed in
3. Hold your nose and jump
4. Grab a friend and go in together
5. Tiptoe down the steps into the water
6. Climb over the edge and go in slowly
7. Sit on the edge and slide in
8. Have your dad pick you up and throw you in
9. Run and jump
10. Go down the slide

40. Lovely

Do you want to know what beautiful thoughts your students have? Ask them to write down the things they love. They can list up to 50 things they love in this world. Then they can narrow the list to the ten most important. The result can be almost similar to a verbal photograph of each child:

The things I love are

Brand new puppies,
The smell of baby powder,
The perfume my mother wears everyday,
Going to dances knowing I won't get asked to dance, but going anyway,
Watching little kittens playing around,
Trying to get babies to smile,
Getting my hair cut,
Eating Chinese food,
Writing a story and not putting my name on it,
Walking on the beach in the evenings.

41. Pictures Tell a Story

Students will enjoy writing stories and assembling books inspired by magazine pictures. Use these instructions:

Leaf through several magazines, cutting out a collection of pictures that appeal to you. Next, spread these pictures out, letting them suggest characters, settings, plots, ways they might fit together to tell a story. Discard or add pictures if you want. Now write the story suggested to you by your pictures.

42. Play Writing

Drama gives children a chance to express themselves and to use their bodies and voices. After they listen to a folktale or fairy tale, ask students to write a short drama, giving the characters in the story lines to speak. You can do one for them to show them how. This is a different exercise from having them write a narrative. Their plays can be performed in front of the class. Use this activity to have them get a feel for the placing of quotation marks and other punctuation marks.

Magic Fish

Fish "Put me back in the water. I am a magic fish." I am really a prince." Man "Very well if your a prince. I will let you go." Wife "Why didn't you catch any fish today?" Man "I did it was a magic fish." Wife "Go back to the fish tell him I want a pretty house." Man "But I don't want go." Wife "Go." Man "Oh fish in the sea come listen to me." Fish "What does she want?" Man "My wife wants a pretty house." Fish "Go home now your wife has a pretty house." Man "This is very nice." Wife "Tell the fish I want more than a pretty house. Tell him I want a castle." Man "But I don't want to go." Wife "Go." Man "Oh fish in the sea come listen to me. My wife begs a wish from the magic fish." Fish "Very well what does she want now?" Man "My wife wants to be queen of the land." Fish "Go home now your wife is queen of the land." Man "now where happy." Wife "We shall see. Tell him I want to be queen of the sun and the moon and the star." Man "But I don't want to go." Wife "Go." Man "oh fish in the sea come listen to me. my wife begs a wish from the magic fish." Fish "What does she want now?" Man "She wants to be queen of the sun and the moon and the stars." Fish "Now your wife asks to much. go home to your hut."

The End

Roy - grade 3

43. Put it in a Bag

In brown bags place a variety of everyday items, such as an onion, a mothball, a piece of sponge, a burnt piece of toast, a shoestring, a feather. Distribute the bags and instruct students not to remove the objects from the bags or show them to anyone. Each student then writes a description of the item in their bag. Take turns reading descriptions and have the class guess the items.

44. Vegetable Stories

Ask students to bring a vegetable from home. The day the vegetables arrive, let the students examine their color, shape, texture, and size. Does their vegetable resemble anything else? How does it grow? How is it cooked? Do they like it? Then have each child write a story about his or her vegetable. The personality and adventures developed for each vegetable are limited only by the child's imagination.

45. Potatoes on Parade

Buy a bag of potatoes. Give one to each student, or have students work together with one potato. Ask students to generate vocabulary for describing their potato. Also ask them to use a metaphor(s) to describe its shape and then to write a description of their potato so that it can be identified by someone reading their paper. Have potatoes placed on a table. Exchange papers and have students choose the potato described. If enough information is not available in the description, students can provide more information.

Brainstorming can be a useful activity for many of these activities. Encourage students to talk freely as a class or in small groups, sharing general ideas for topics to write about. Sharing ideas

allows students to become aware of other points of view, of what other students are doing.

46. Writing Conversations

Tell your students that they are going to write a conversation for another person, an animal, or an object. Brainstorm some possibilities on the board. Here are two examples:

The Football

I am a football, so nice and brown.
Everyday I am kicked around. I can't
stand it any longer. My air is running out
to absolute zero. I am getting flat, like a
flat straw hat! I'm suffering to death.
Please air me up! I can't stand it
any longer--being kicked around.

The Plant

I love to sit by the window where I can get lots of sun. Sometimes they forget to water me and I feel so dry and thirsty. I hope someone gives me plant food. That really makes me green. I think I'm sprouting two more leaves!

Kathy 4th

Have students illustrate their conversations with cartoons, using dialogue bubbles. Or give students photos of two people and have them write a conversation between the two people.

47. Rewriting Mother Goose

Read Mother Goose rhymes to your class and have your students memorize and recite them. Then read aloud additional Mother Goose nursery rhymes. Then read examples of parodies of rhymes found in Wallace Tripp's *Grandpa Grig Had a Pig*. Explain the meaning of "parody". Tell the students they are going to write parodies of nursery rhymes. Compose class collaborations of parodies:

There was an old woman
Who lived in a shoe
She had so many children
She dressed them as different animals
And sent them to the zoo.

You can also change names in nursery rhymes to a famous hero, TV personality, or movie star.

Darth Vader
went to the shuttle
to get R2-D2 his gun.
But when he got there
the shuttle was bare,
and so R2-D2 had none

Little Miss Smurf sat on her turf,
Eating her blue cheese.
Along came Spiderman and said
How are you, Ma'm? And then all
of a sudden She sneezed.

Have students edit and recopy their rhymes, illustrate them, and then collect and bind them into a class-published book. Or post them outside the room for children from other classes and teachers to read.

48. I Remember When ...

In this activity students write from their memories (from "inside"), beginning each line with "I remember" as in the following example;

> I remember when my Daddy came home with two big fish.
> We had a big fish fry the next day!
>
> I remember when I used to jump on my mom's bed.
> My dad got mad!
>
> I remember when I did my best coloring.
> It took me a very long time and
> my sister wrote all over it!

Elicit examples from the students. When they are comfortable with the idea and with sharing memories, invite them to string together a number of their memories. This is an activity for small groups. Ask students to share their memories with each other.

You can also vary the activity by asking kids to think about their "then and now" physical appearance, favorite things to do, hobbies, beliefs, fears, preferences, and friends. Then write, and use this form:

I used to be _____
But now I am _____

I Used To Be

I used to be chubby
But now I'm thin

I used to be messy
But now I'm neat

I used to hate boys
But now I like them a little.

I used to be clumsy
But now I'M not.

I used to be afraid of big kids
But now I'm a big kid.

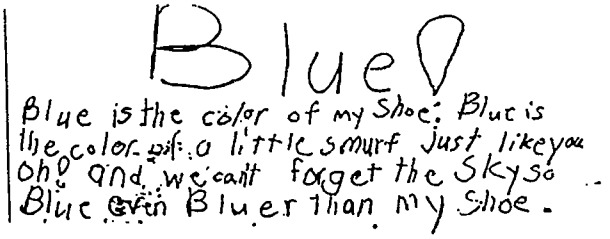
I used to be nine
But now I'm ten

Janice, grade 5

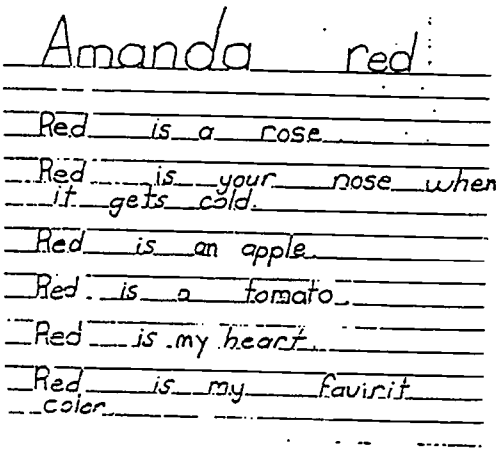
49. Color Poems

Color is a familiar notion to children; you can encourage them to brighten up their images, moods, sounds, and special associations. Writing about color is a comfortable way for children to begin to

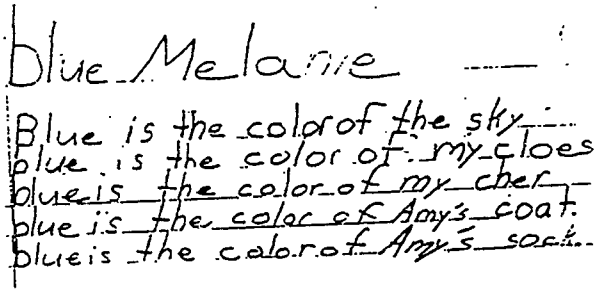
become fluent with colors. In this activity we use similes and metaphors to define colors.


Blue

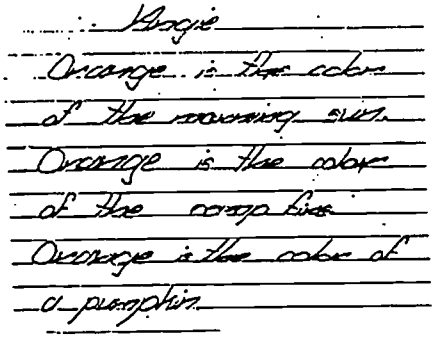
Blue is the color of my Shoe. Blue is the color of a little smurf just like you oh and we can't forget the Sky so Blue even Bluer than my Shoe.


Amanda red

Red is a rose
Red is your nose when it gets cold.
Red is an apple
Red is a tomato
Red is my heart
Red is my favirit color


blue Melanie

Blue is the color of the sky
blue is the color of my cloes
blue is the color of my cher
blue is the color of Amy's coat
blue is the color of Amy's sock


Angie

Orange is the color of the morning sun.
Orange is the color of the pumpkin
Orange is the color of a pumpkin

50. Comic Strips

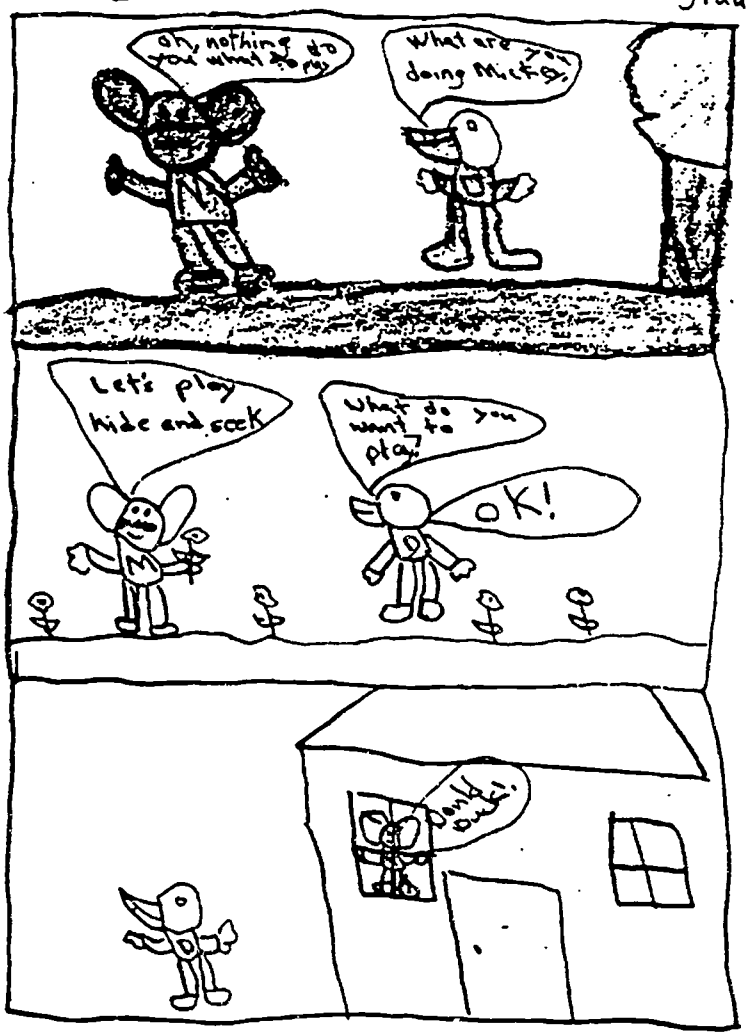
This is a good Friday activity. Ask the students to bring several comic strips that they enjoy reading and would like to share. Then have them write one of their own.

Beetle Bailey

Jessica - grade 3

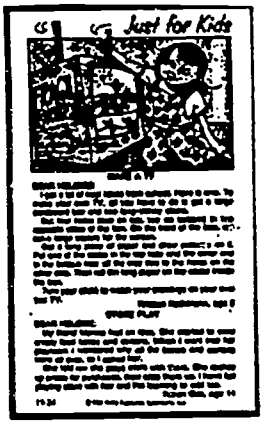
Mickey Mouse and Donld Duck.

Pablo - grade 3



51. Hints from Heloise

For this activity have students read the "Hints From Heloise" you've cut from newspapers. Then ask them to write any good ideas they might have for having fun or for making jobs easier. They can ask their parents to contribute any helpful hints they might have (all cultures have them). They can send them to Heloise and/or bind them together to make a book. This is also a strong strategy for letter writing. By having the students share their letters, they can review punctuation and spelling before writing a final draft.



Dear Heloise,
When I bring my art pictures home from school my mom always put clear plastic over it and that way I can use it as a place mat.

Raquel - grade 3

52. Believe it or not!

Show examples of Ripley's "Believe It or Not." Then ask the students to write anything unusual that's happened to them or anyone they know. This is a good activity for details and elaboration. Ask them to give names, dates or times, ages, and any other information needed to lend believability to their unusual event.

Jack Smith from Boerne, Texas raises chickens that lay different colored eggs.

Jackie, grade 5

On Halloween night Terry Walls who lives in Los Angeles, California thought he saw a witch's shadow flying across the moon. Other people saw it too!

Robin, grade 5

53. Hocus Focus

This is a great activity to do in groups or at a learning center. The students are asked to write down about six differences they see in each of the sets of pictures. (Some newspapers subscribe to a strip that calls for their readers to point out the differences.)

Juan
grade 3

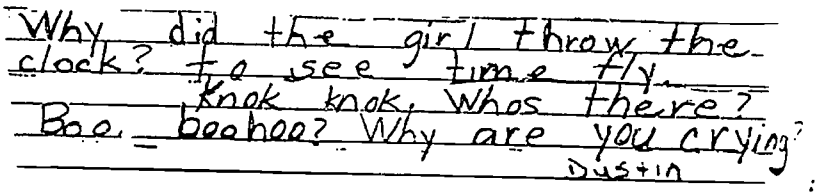
I, There is a ribbon on the white box in her hand.
2 there is a nuther box white box
3 The man has a paper in his arm.
4 There is a bush in one
5 The lady's dress sleeve is short.
6

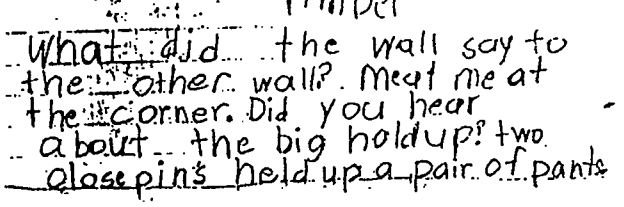
II 1 the stairs pole is different
2 her neck of the dress is different
3 the bench is different
4 the lamptop is different
5
6

III 1 a [fasten the seat belt] sign is not there.
2 The gray lady's neck of the dress is big
3 a man is not reading a paper.
4 The man whith black hair is different

54. Jokes

Students will enjoy writing down funny stories they have heard. Even those who are still reluctant writers will attempt to write a joke that they know.





Collect the jokes and publish a "Funny Book".

Some jokes may be appropriate for acting out in one-minute plays.

Students may illustrate their jokes.

Ask students to collect funny stories or jokes from members of their families.

Collect single cartoon strips from the newspaper. Cut out the dialogue and have students create new dialogue to fit the picture.

55. Write to next year's class about what to expect and how to be ready for this class.

"Fun Writing" is our longest chapter -- for a reason: we discovered the above activities lead to increased reading and writing. It took thinking to complete them. They were fun, motivating, and interesting. Students helped each other by listening and responding to their classmates. They published their writing in class-made books, illustrating a cover and designing a title page and table of contents. We used a bulletin board where students selected by their classmates as being EXTREMELY PUBLISHABLE posted their papers. We discovered that having students post papers on bulletin boards or on the walls outside the classroom gave students added motivation for revising papers to "look good", devoid of punctuation and spelling errors. We all celebrated writing by making writing visible.

Activities such as these are easy to do and at the same time lead students to an awareness of what writing is.

Chapter 3

Poetic Justice

John P. Harrison

"Wasting Time"

I always waste time.
I sharpen my pencil for spelling,
break it to get away from reading,
go to the bathroom for math,
drop things for science,
but waste no time for poetry.

Christopher Quigley
(in Caroselli, 1981:72)

"What if" is a popular children's game. Let us play "what if" for a minute. What if we believed that all students can learn to write and read? What if students are, as Smith (1983:4) says, "ready and willing to learn to write"? What if we say, as Corine demonstrated in the preceding chapter, that writing and reading are fun and fulfilling activities? These "what ifs" can pave the path to increased reading and writing skills. We will suggest in this chapter a number of activities that will increase proficiency for writing and reading, to make the "what ifs" a reality, those which will turn reluctant readers and writers into students who value learning. We even intend to do something about the groans accompanying the teacher's "Let's write poetry today." Self confidence is the key to writing well, especially writing poetry: students will need us to build their self-confidence. We must *always* find the good in their writing before we even hint at revision

or alternatives. As the song goes, "We must accentuate the positive," and find the unusual in their poetry.

Today, we can read of "Whole Language" instruction and that reading and writing are whole-brain functions. The brain consists of two hemispheres, two specialized halves. Rico (1983:76) suggests that the left hemisphere is largely responsible for the rational, logical representation of reality. In writing, it acts as critic, censor, and editor. The right hemisphere constantly "thinks" or codes in images. It lends itself to the formation of ideas, insights, and discoveries. Successful writers and readers draw upon the strengths of both hemispheres. Successful readers and writers, Winterowd (1980:20) maintains, are "hemisphere hoppers." And here is where poetry fits in. Poetry relies upon the strengths and attributes of both hemispheres.

Poetry allows us to play with language. The mere act of writing poetry may be easier than the writing of prose because students have more latitude for experimenting and teachers do not have to correct -- they just have to nurture their students' attempts and look for the good. Creative writing, as poetry is, allows students to consider alternatives, to call upon what is within them. If children are captured by poetic language, it "can become such a part of the fabric of our students' lives" (Fox, 1987). To watch students express themselves in writing is a gratifying experience for any teacher.

Children like to invent games and to impose alternative rules on games they already know. Some of the first games we play with children are rhythmic language games such as "Pat-a-cake" and chants, such as "One Potato-Two Potato-Three Potato-Four." When children recite nursery rhymes, utter a chant, or even when they "rap", they demonstrate a poetic interest in what language can do. They view poetry as fun, as worth doing. McCracken and McCracken (1984:70) urge that "poetry should be read often to children." Children love to hear and feel within themselves the rhythms of

language. Children like to chant and repeat poetic verse, whether in the school room or outside while they skip rope.

We have two additional suggestions or points. We are kind in our grading as we read and respond to our students' efforts. Nothing dampens enthusiasm quite as much as a teacher who criticizes heavily. Graves says that a writer writes with his skin off. Our students will, too. We leave our red pen in the desk. We do not suggest that you not evaluate, but, rather, we suggest alternatives to traditional "red pen" markings on papers that don't quite measure up to the "standard" (See Chapter 6 for tips on evaluation).

We also urge you to write and read along with your students. Teachers are the source for strong demonstrations of writing and reading practice. Graves (1975:6) reminds us that "seldom do people teach well what they do not practice themselves". Perez (1983) points out that writing is best learned by doing. And one of the easiest ways for teachers to teach writing is to write out their own assignments with their students and be willing to let their students see and evaluate their work. Teachers who enjoy writing and reading themselves are the best models for children.

Let us enter now, accompanied by our students, the world of poetry.

ACTIVITIES

1. Name Poetry, an activity that Corine includes in her "Fun" chapter, is easy and interesting and I give one of my own name poems here. Names are personal. We know our names and we can use them to reinforce English-language learning. As a first-day-of-class activity, I use names as an introduction exercise.

A supply of butcher paper and crayons or markers are all that is needed. Students write the letters of their names vertically, one letter per line. Each letter becomes the first letter of the line.

Begin with adjectives, asking students to describe themselves. Use your own name to get students started. Encourage use of the dictionary or thesaurus as an aid, if needed:

Jovial
Open
Happy
Nutty

Here are some additional examples:

Joyful
Organized
Energetic
Joe (Age 12)

Intelligent
Nice
Gallant
Active
Inga (Age 12)

Angry
Muncher
Young
Amy (Age 11)

2. Couplets are a simple form of structured poetry. McCracken and McCracken (1984:71) found that a "natural progression from oral to written, from couplets to triplets exists", and that "teachers should gradually omit the beginnings of these sentences and encourage and guide students toward independent thinking and writing". The following are couplets written by two sixth graders:

There Once Was a Girl Named Grace

There once was a girl named Grace.
She trained her horse daily for a race.
She ran her horse at a very fast pace.
She named her horse The Ultimate Ace.

Today was the day of the big county race,
And she stored Ace's bit in a leather case.
Then she shoved the bit in Ace's face.
Ace was the leader of the chase.
He left the others without a trace.
She won the race with a smiling face.
And they gave her a very large golden vase.

by Daniel (Age 12)

Pumpkins, pumpkins,
On the patch!
Pumpkins, pumpkins,
By the batch.
Pumpkins bread and
Pumpkins pie!
Pumpkin ice cream
I want to try!

By Hector (Age 12)

By a second grader:

Little wind, little sun,
little tree-only one.
little song he can sing.
little need he should stay,
little up-now away
little speck and he's far
Where all little things are
little things for me too.
little sad that he flew.

Alonzo (Age 8)

From a ninth grader we find a well focused use of couplets:

The dog fight was on, oh what a fight!
down swooped the camel, in perilous flight.

With machine guns roaring the Fokker did climb
but with that action it to be its last time.

For that split second the bi-plane dove down
firing at the Fokker and sending it aground.

The pilot looked down with sorrow in his eyes
knowing the other pilot, and how he had tried.

Because of his choosing to do this mission
he finally did gain a higher commission.

Now he was an airplane Ace
free to fly in sky's vast space.

by Luis (Age 14)

3. The following use of poetry is related to song. All -- including students -- respond to music. Music also lowers anxiety (the "affective filter") in the classroom, thus aiding in language acquisition. Haiku -- although Japanese in origin -- can be adapted to English. Haiku is a form of Japanese short verse, consisting of three non-rhyming lines. The first line contains 5 syllables, the second line contains 7 syllables, and the last line contains 5 syllables. Haiku is expressive and beautiful. Beginning ESL students are able to write Haiku. Here are examples from some sixth graders:

Christmas is coming
the best day of our life is
to be with Jesus.
JOHN (AGE 12)

Mr. Harrison
is a cool guy to chill with
that is for a fact!
Dewayne (Age 12)

The wind is blowing.
I lay a sleep in the cold.
But the wind still blows
Yvette (Age 11)

Christmas is coming.
Santa is coming to town.
November is here.
Playthoun
Age 12

4. The Tanka, another popular form of Japanese verse, is closely related to the Haiku. Instead of three lines, the Tanka consists of five lines of 5-7-5-7-7 syllables. Tanka challenges second language learners to make a connection between meaning and form. The following are some examples:

The Snow falls gently
Over the land and on us.
It glides through the air
Like moths flying in the sun
And land all over the earth.
Patty (Age 12)

The tumbling boys
run and jump and laugh and kick
all during lunchtime.
Then they cry all afternoon
because they are all very tired!
Jay (Age 12)

5. The Syntu is still another Japanese verse form of five lines. The lines consist of

(1) a single word, say the name of an insect;
(2) an observation about the insect, using one of the five senses;
(3) a feeling about the insect;
(4) an additional observation, using the senses, of the insect; and
(5) finally, a one-word synonym for the insect.

Butterfly
Radiant in the sun
I love its gentleness
It caresses my face
Moth

by Moises

These forms I have incorporated into my classes encourage my students to think of and use their experiences in writing analogues to the Haiku and other examples of poetic utterances. In a sense, my students color their poems with their life experiences (they make the poem their own).

6. Vance Stevens (1985:13) encourages teachers to use Public Domain Software to teach the Cinquain. These computer programs "prompt"

students for each line and print the final result. The Cinquain, like the Syntu, can be written by beginning and intermediate students. The form is as follows:

One word title
Two word description of title
Three words expressing action
Four words expressing feeling about title
Synonym for title

Here are some examples:

Dog
Friendly, kind
It licks me.
It's nose is cold.
Friend
by Gerry (Age 15)

CAT
Cuddely, cute
It has nine lives,
Curiosity killed it
CAT
by Jamie (Age 12)

7. The Diamante provides students more of a challenge. A Diamante is a diamond-shaped poem that describes opposites. Students can begin with a pair of opposites, such as day-night or new-old:

NOUN
ADJECTIVE, ADJECTIVE
VERB, VERB, VERB
PARTICIPLE, PARTICIPLE, PARTICIPLE, PARTICIPLE
VERB, VERB, VERB
ADJECTIVE, ADJECTIVE
NOUN

Elizabeth (age 11)

Play
Dance Run
Moving Walking Jumping
Joyful Happy Sad Worried
Slowing Dancing Sitting
Walk Sit
Work

heavy
overweight burdensome
tiring massive unwieldy
giant large small tiny
empty easy little
buoyant underweight
Feather light

Joe (age 11)

HOT
Sultry – Sticky
Blister, boil, burn
Shining, shimmering, scorching, swimm.
Shiver, shudder, shake
Crisp, Chilling
COLD

Carlos (Age 13)

cube
square, box
block, slab, plate
unmoving, curving, rounding
circle, ring, surround
egg, round
sphere.

Ruby (Age 13)

8. Limericks are playful, exciting, and challenging, especially for older children and adults. Before attempting to write their own, have students listen to a number of examples. We need much modeling and much practice when we write in any form. And we need it here.

JACK
There once was a pilot named Jack
Who could fly through a sky full of flack.
Ahead was a duck
With really bad luck
Who became a swell midair snack.

Luis (Age 15)

Once there was a boy that was fat.
He tried to hit a ball with a bat.
He hit the ball.
And that was all.
And that was the end of that!

Adman (age 12)

9. Sestinas, six line poems, are a popular type of poetry:

If I was a flag
I would feel like
April with the
colors red, white
And blue. Like
a bird ~~Boom~~ swinging
on the air
I would feel pretty
good.

Kester (Age 12)

10. Color Poetry: Marge Frank (1979:73) suggests a verse form she calls Color Poetry. Folded typing paper is dyed with food coloring

in an ink-blot fashion. After the paper is dried, students can mix words and colors, sights and sounds, smells and thoughts in a creative display of language. We have used Color Poetry year after year and with all ages of second language learners. We have never been disappointed and we find that it gives valuable insights into the special interests of our students. Our sixth graders offer the following examples of their color poems:

Pink
Pink looks like a sunset.
It smells like roses.
It feels like soft velvet.
It tastes like berry tarts.
It sounds like a kiss.
by Laura (Age11)

"White"
White is soft as satin.
White is ice cream.
White is a fluffy cloud.
It smells like popcorn.
It sounds like a whisper.
Jamie (Age 12)

11. Class Poetry: When the class writes a poem together, the collaboration is called a Class Poem. Kirby and Liner. (1981:82), Marge Frank (1979:73), Kenneth Koch (1970:3), and Daniels and Zemelman (1985:55) point out that when children collaborate, anxiety levels decrease. Nervous laughter and silence will be replaced by discussion and productivity. The cultural experiences of our students give color and character to their poems. Sharing allows

and encourages students to see themselves and other differently. Here is a poem written by a sixth grade class:

Class Poems

Life is a beautyful thing to me and it is very nice.

Ice cream, pizza, & sodas make it twice as nice! The soda goes very good with ice. The pizza is nice with lots of cheese and spice. The ice cream also goes nice with soda It's sweet and nice for a hot summer day To take all the tears away

Love

Love is true.
Sometimes blue.
Love is the way.
Love is the truth.
Love is sweet.
Love is nice.
When you love
Love bleeds and bites.
Love sometimes hurts.
That's love.

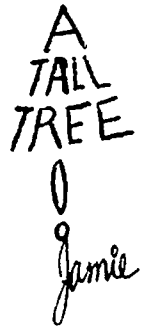
Mr. Harrison's Third Period
(Sixth grade)

Kirby and Liner (1981:69) use a form of poetry that works well with groups. Dada Poetry takes words, phrases, sentences, or lines from other writings and combines them in novel ways. Teachers can consult with students in choosing an order for their lines. This Dada was pieced together using lines from popular songs:

Here's a little song I wrote
You might want to sing it note for note.
Lost in a dream,
I don't know which way to go.
The flowers you gave me
Were just about to die!
You give love a bad name.
I'm wanted dead or alive.

Mrs. DeKing's Class (Sixth grade)

12. Concrete Poetry: When is a poem more than a poem? It is when the poem is also a picture. Concrete poetry appeals to the eye as well as to the mind. The poem's message springs not only from the meaning of its words but also fro he arrangement of words:



13. Unstructured Poetry: We have used in our examples rhyme and non-rhyming poetry. Many of us, including our students, may have

the impression that poetry has to rhyme. It doesn't, of course. Poetry can be unstructured:

A vendor
in a street
calling his goods
to Sell
— Vesuvius ErUpTeD —
an olive tree
bloomed
-covered in ash-
a child laughed
a grand mother yawned
Sun
Shadow
Dark SKY...
saved in time.

Luis (age 15)

We have presented some tips and techniques for teaching and writing poetry. In our own classes we call poetry a "community trip", to be enjoyed and shared and cherished with others. We gather our poems and publish them in class-made books. We post them on bulletin boards; we submit them to the local newspaper and publish them in our own school newspaper and literary magazine. The writing of poetry is a "big deal" and we want to celebrate that fact . . . we want others to know.

Poetry lends itself to increased language perception and sensitivity and acquisition. We look at language, we re-arrange language, we write metaphors and construct images, we look for

patterns and structures and the "right" word. We become better and more appreciative readers as we write. The writing of poetry turns us into readers of poetry. • Writing and reading are similar acts.

Chapter 4

Have You Heard of the "J"?

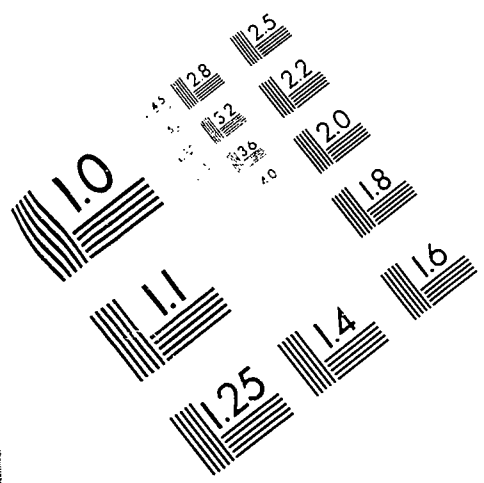
Eilene Wright

"Let's get out the journals." The literature on writing is filled with reasons for using journals. The journals may not be as widely used or as popular as they once were, yet I have found that students who are encouraged to write regularly in journals become writers as well as readers. Kirby and Liner (1981:46) advocate using them because,

> All kids have language inside their heads. The journal, because it's a private, protected place, becomes an invitation to open up, to explore, to dip into that stream of language. Good journal writing is fishing in the river of your mind.

We urge children to "fish" in our classrooms. They can test ideas, record thoughts, feelings, moods, events, reactions; they can ask questions of me and pose solutions. We need to know each other. I need to observe their progress, their needs, and their problems. Journals increase my students' fluency and at the same time their thinking and learning. I urge them to write freely and honestly and assure them I will not embarrass or fail them. Journals provide a path for them to prove to themselves that they can write.

Kids love to talk, to each other, to me, to anyone. They can learn through talking, but I do not always have time to listen to every student every day. For ESL/ "at risk" learners, writing may be their most effective means of communication. A journal, particularly a dialogue journal, the one that I use in my classes, gives me the opportunity not only to "hear" every student but also to write a response to each of their entries. My response to their entry provides a reading and writing model, and unlike many of the



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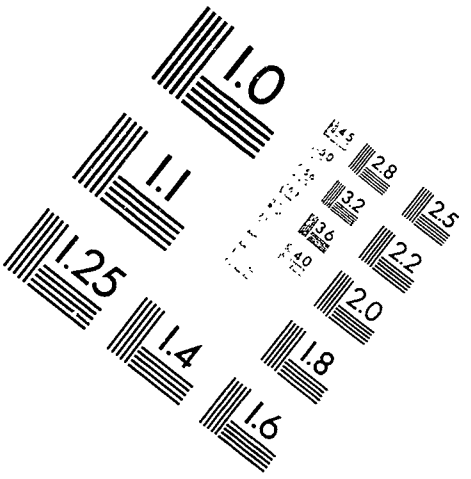

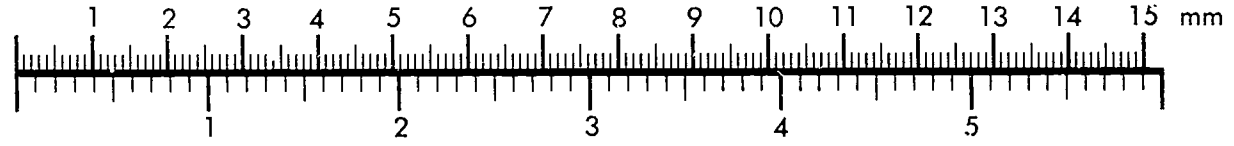

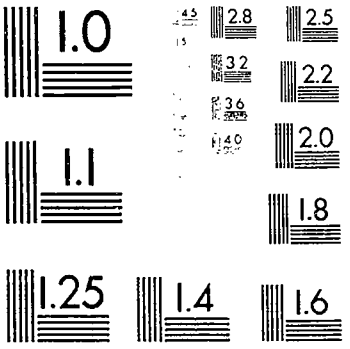

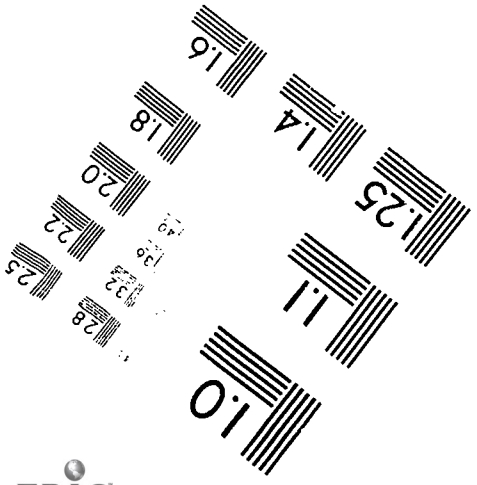

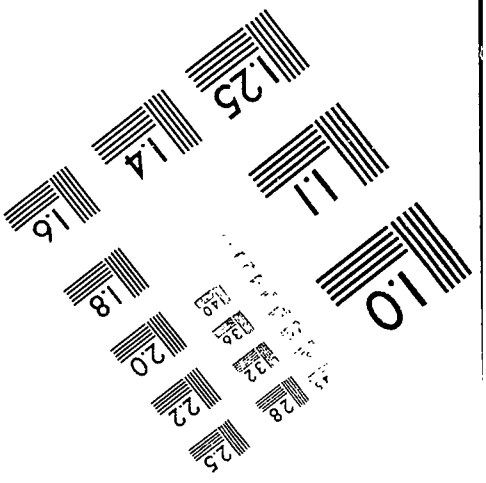

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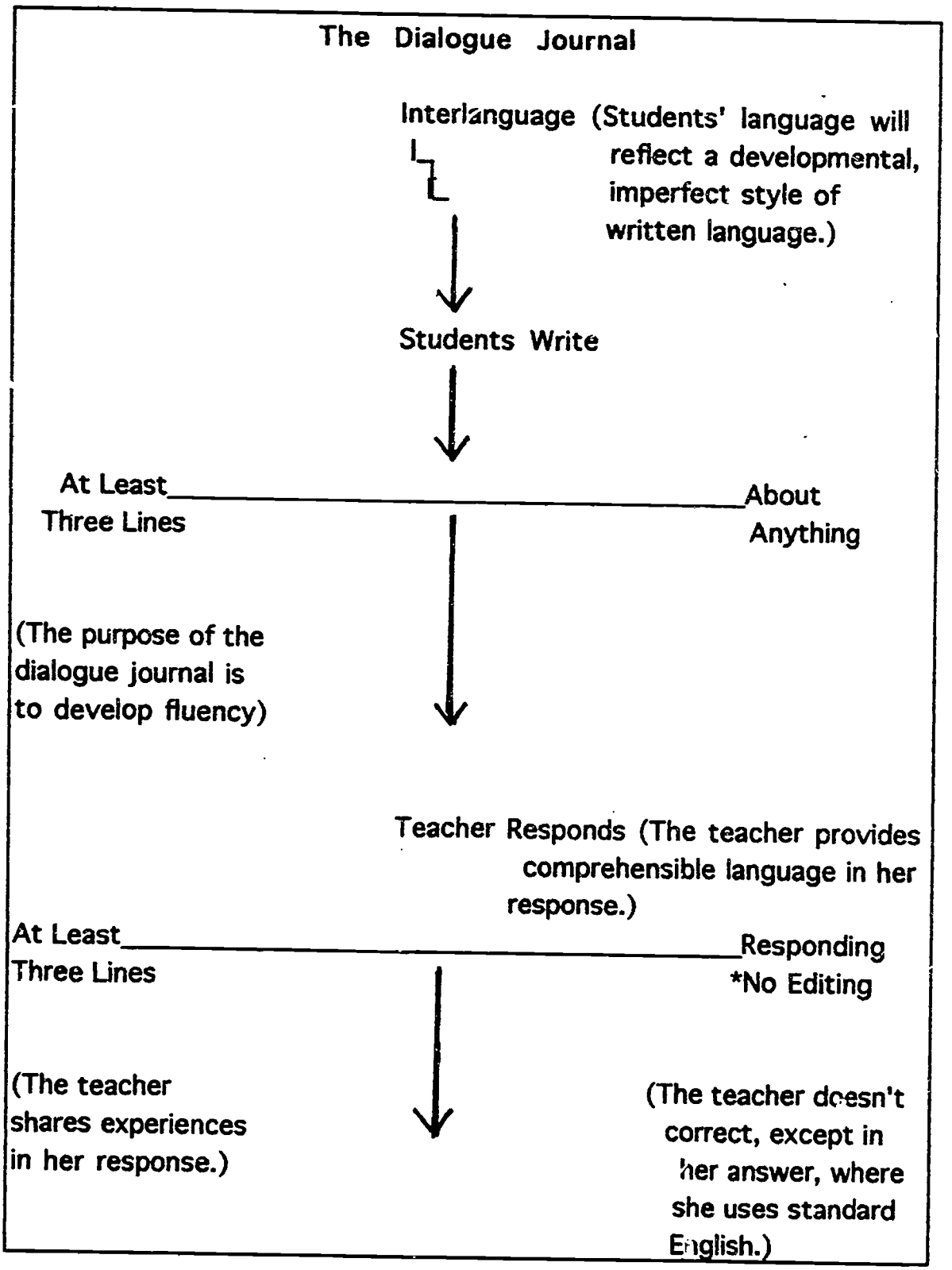
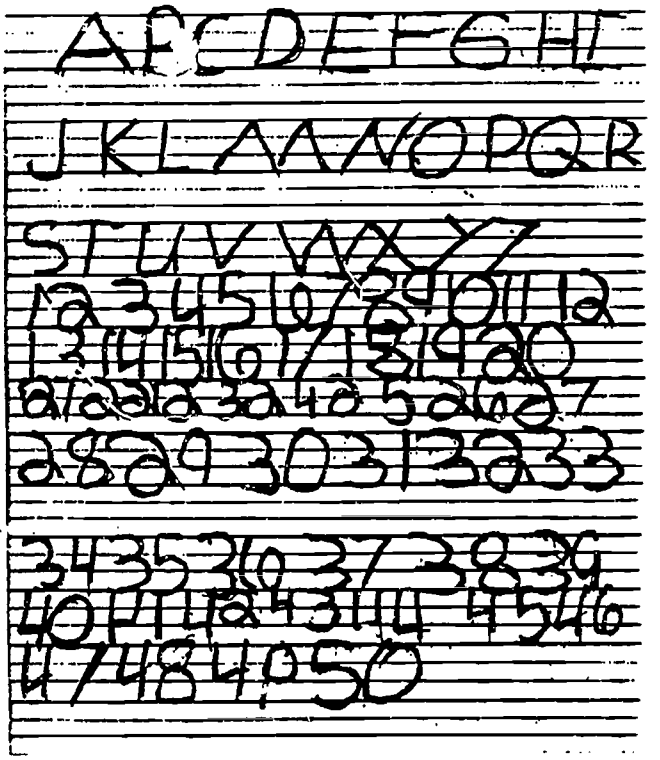
journals I have employed in the past, the dialogue journal calls upon both my students and me to write. For new arrivals to the United States, who not only must adjust to a new way of life as they learn a new language and start in a new school, communication with me, one-to-one, is crucial. The dialogue journal provides my students an opportunity to use their second language -- and at times their first -- to communicate with me in a non-threatening atmosphere, and at the same time it provides a context and medium for reading and writing development (Peyton1987):

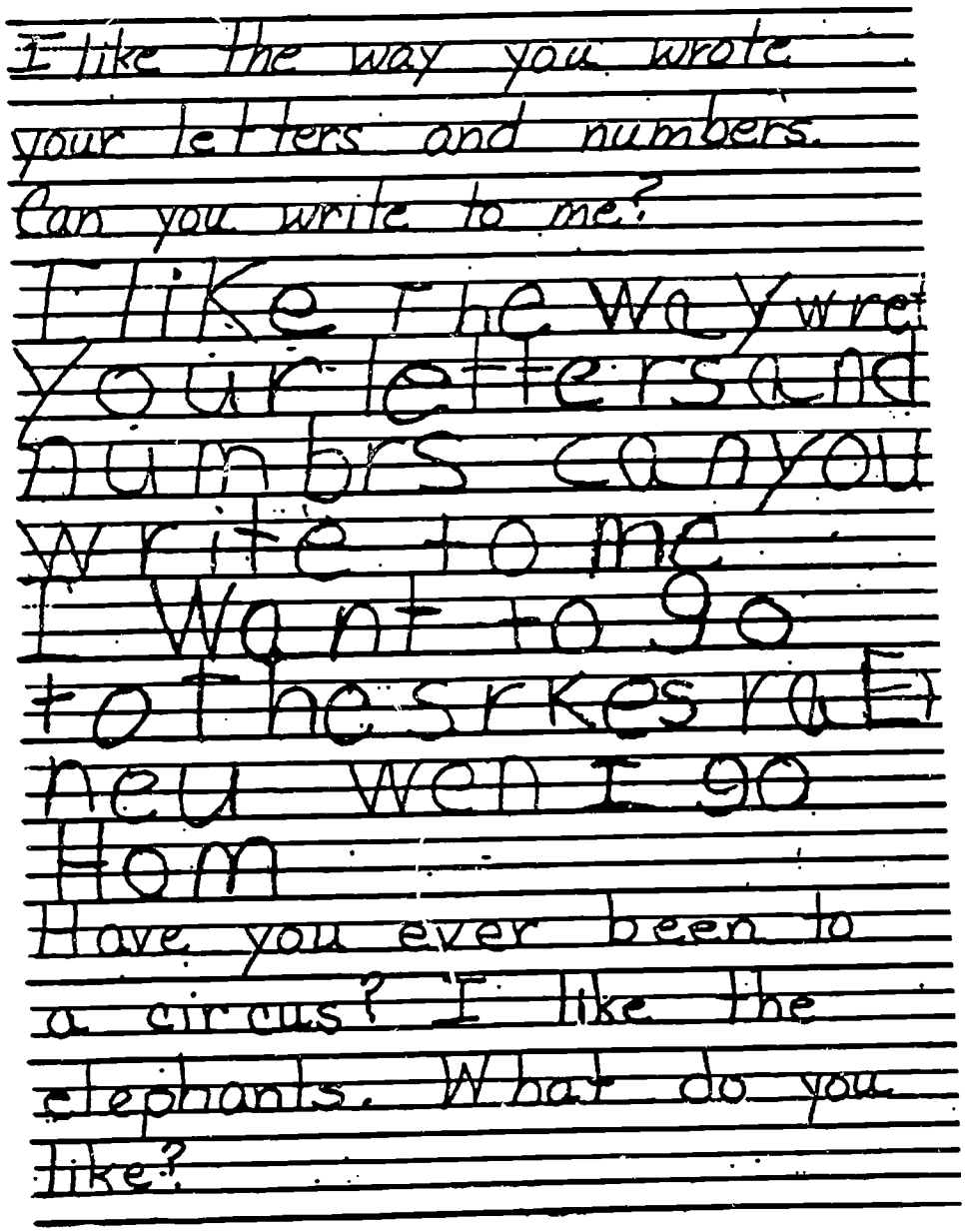

The Dialogue Journal
Interlanguage (Students' language will reflect a developmental, imperfect style of written language.)
Students Write
At Least Three Lines
About Anything
(The purpose of the dialogue journal is to develop fluency)
Teacher Responds (The teacher provides comprehensible language in her response.)
At Least Three Lines
Responding *No Editing
(The teacher shares experiences in her response.)
(The teacher doesn't correct, except in her answer, where she uses standard English.)

We use the "DJ" at all grade levels. A sheet of construction paper folded in half is all that is needed. We have students decorate it as it will be their cover. Stapled inside the cover are sheets of lined paper (string, clips, brads also work). We ask them to date their entry and write three or more lines about anything they want. We collect the journals and respond. Their entries and our response evolves into a conversation on paper. Leslie Reed (1984) says we can seek students' opinions on class topics, lessons -- and even whether they like the bulletin boards. We can share information on books, movies, TV programs, hobbies, and music. Students not only write, they also read our response on a topic which they have introduced. Their writing may be sprinkled with spelling errors, convoluted syntax, and incorrect punctuation, but we don't correct except in our reply: our response, however, serves as a demonstration of standard, edited English.

The following is a series of entries from second grade dialogue journals. The children are LEP/ "at risk" who barely made it to second grade. As a result, they have poor self concepts and little confidence. On the first day of the new school year, after he completed his cover, I asked Oscar to write.



I responded, and again he wrote - mirroring what I wrote to him - but now adding a sentence of his own. I now had a sentence to which I responded:



In his entry from early December: he begins to capitalize letters and invents spelling for words he does not know.

Does Enrique hit the cat?

I have a Cat naemed Enrique
he is dumm he Does
Jcekes all the time I Like
him Becaose he likes me
But my DaD hits him But
my mom likes him and Enrique
likes my mom to?
Why does your dad hit the cat? Does
he get in the way? Why did you name
your cat, Enrique? he alwayS r
my mom likes him

Your work is so much better. I bet
your mom is happy. You should be
happy, too.

Francisco is a child who recently arrived from Mexico and did not speak any English. I wrote to him his first day in class. He read aloud to me what I wrote, replying, "I don't understand." Again I wrote to him and his response was the same. Francisco's mother came in that evening with his younger sister, providing me with information I could use in my entry. Finally, on the third day:

2-9-87
Francisco, I am glad you are
in my class. Do you like
it here? Can you write to
me?
2-12-87
You read very well. Do you know
what the words mean?
2-18-87
How old is your sister? What is
her name? Karla my sister
is 3 ay lake [illegible] do play with he
her ay lake the schol vat ay
do not anderstend som words
I tak to do work
2-24-87
I am so glad you wrote
to me. You are doing very
well. Ask me when you don't
understand.

Jason is a child who has an obvious interest in dinosaurs. His entry is from the first day of school:

JasoN
I Wet SWen.
I RIYD mi BiK.
I PAed dinusR
I PAed Wet Wt imto

I would ~~yo~~ like to use your dinosaurs in Science class. I bet you had fun swimming and riding your bike.

OK You can use mY dinosaurs

Thank you for bringing the dinosaurs. They are nice. All the class liked them.

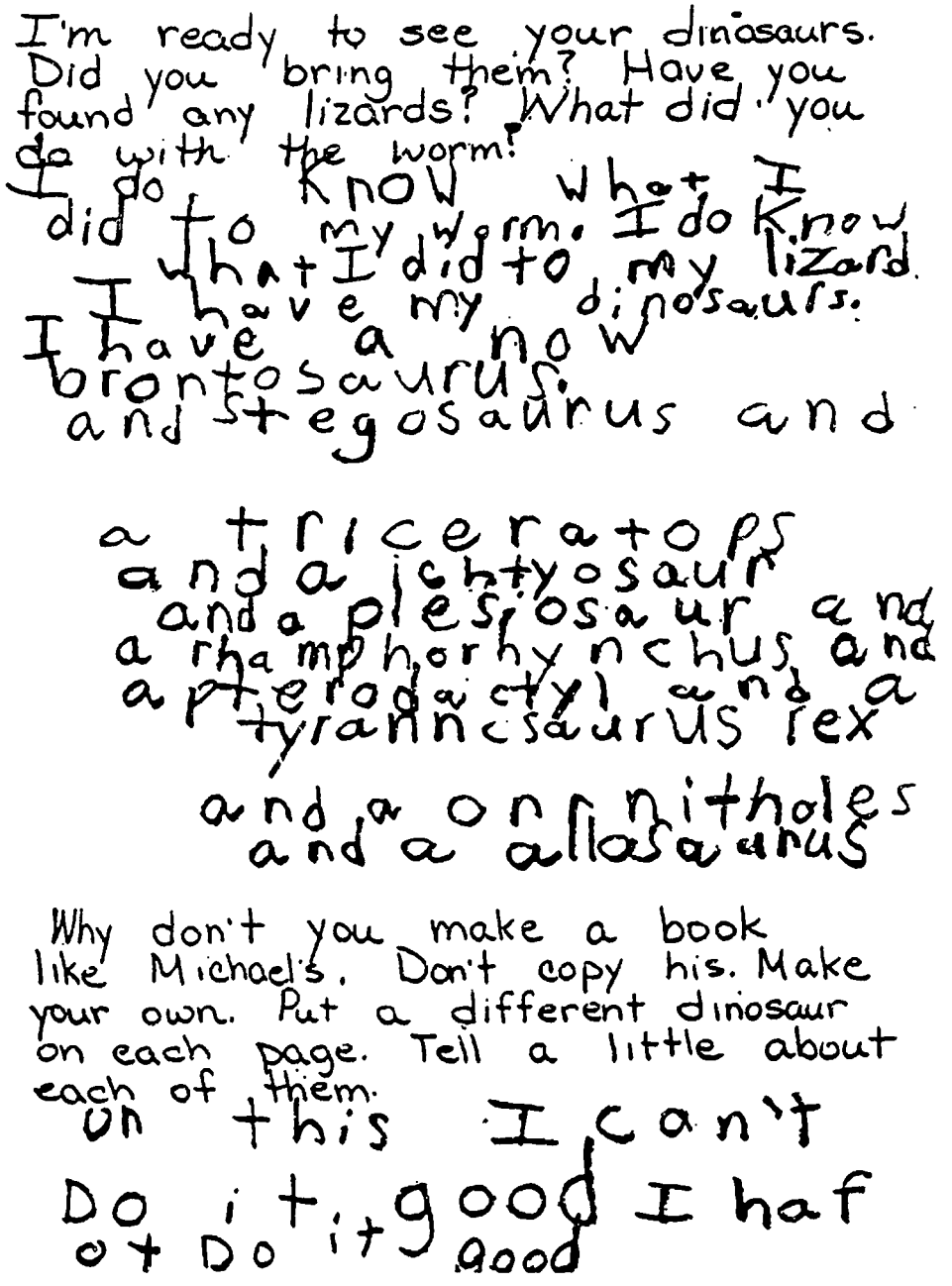
DO YOU

September 8, 1985

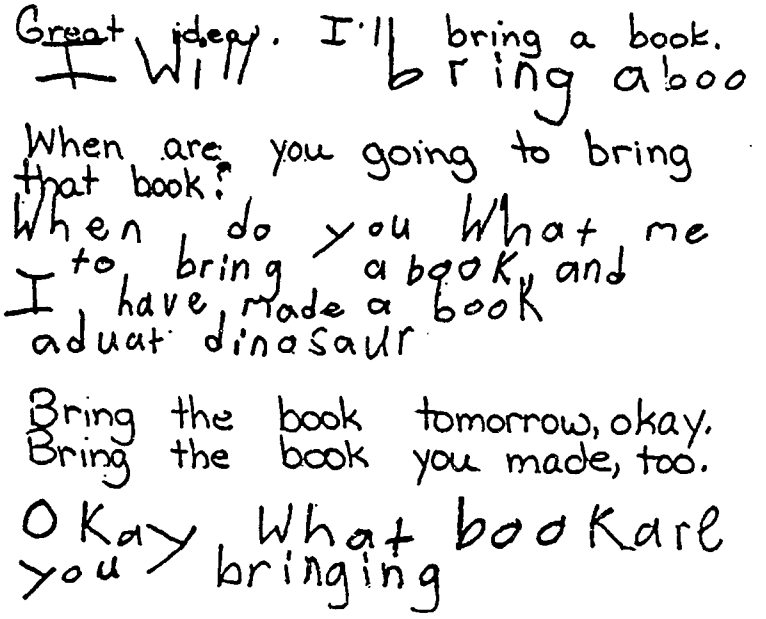
What can you tell me about dinosaurs?

DRT WiTh The
DUCKbill

Approximately a month later I requested that he make a book about dinosaurs, similar to the one his brother had made. He replied, "I can't Do it good I haf ot Do it good."



Shortly thereafter Jason wrote, "I have made a book abuut dinosaur"



and he had. Jason had hurdled his initial fear of writing and increased his self esteem.

We always wonder how best to teach spelling. I correct it through modeling. In her entry Anna wrote about her "baybey kusze." In my response I spelled "baby cousin" correctly. The next day she responded:

I like my baybey
Kusze becuse the waru
she tokse sha tokse
fnee

How old is your baby
cousin? Babies do talk
funny. They are cute.

my baby cousin is
2 erode and name is
cate and I have
a udr baby cousin
her name is norma
and she is 0

Your cousins are still
babies. Do you help
take care of them?

I uost take kir
uv dem and now
I dote be-use
my big cousins
cums

Gerardo comprehended most of what he read and heard and began to write on his first day in class. He apparently stopped writing when he arrived at a word he did not know. After asking him to write more, he responded:

I gon at The

You need to write more so that I can write to you.

I gon to the Park and I run fast

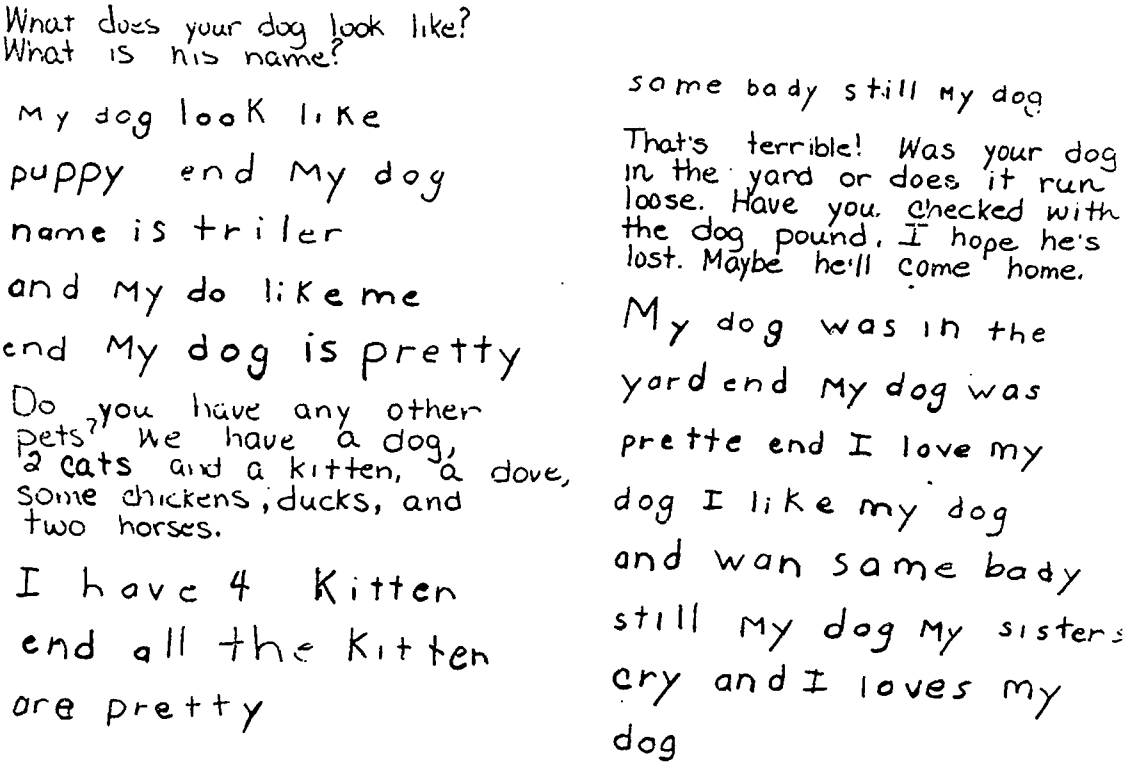
It is fun to play in the park. Can you win a race?

yes I can win a race runenfast

What did you do this summer?

I did this white my to sisters

A few weeks later he lengthens sentences by conjoining them with "end" [and].



What does your dog look like?
What is his name?

My dog looK like
puppy end My dog
name is triler
and My do likeme
end My dog is pretty

Do you have any other pets? We have a dog, 2 cats and a kitten, a dove, some chickens, ducks, and two horses.

I have 4 Kitten
end all the Kitten
are pretty

same bady still My dog

That's terrible! Was your dog in the yard or does it run loose. Have you checked with the dog pound. I hope he's lost. Maybe he'll come home.

My dog was in the
yard end My dog was
prette end I love my
dog I like my dog
and wan same bady
still My dog My sisters
cry and I loves my
dog

Three months later, Gerardo's fluency had increased, and he began to be sensitive to standard spelling, ("polo bear" was corrected to read "polar bear"). He makes judgments about his topic: "The polar bears smell ugly and I know that becase here is not cold and they smel so ugly..." He also began to speak. Gerardo had a silent period during which he said little or nothing. But once he began to write and read, he also began to speak:

Deanna

I like the zoo when I went and I see a bear and it was a polo bear and I see a horse it was in the water walking across and I see a fish in

When did you go to the zoo? I haven't been since last year. The polar bears are pretty. I bet they liked the cold weather.

The polar bears smell ugly and I know that because here is not cold and They smel so ugly when I went to the zoo then I dont like the polar bears because they smell ugly that's why and I like the black bears alot because they dont smell ugly and I like the grown bears and I like bears and I like alot bears because they are big and fat and I like bears

Gabriel uses crayons to spell words he is unsure of. By using his "colors" he was able to correctly spell "gray" and "black"; however, he misunderstands "crayola" as meaning "color":

Do you have other pets besides your cats and rabbits? Do you live in the country?

I play whith my dog
I Love you dog
I Love my cat

What color is your dog? What color is your cat?

my cat is gray
my dog is black
what Crayla is
your dog

I have a big black dog named Leo. We have two cats. One is Beau and the other is Tache We have a dove and two horses, some chickens and three ducks.

In a subsequent entry he uses standard capitalization and punctuation.

Yes my brother run fast.

Do they run faster than you? I bet you can run fast too.

I like to run after my chicken.

I like to run after all my animal.

Your mom says you are always running around. Why do you chase the chickens and other animals?

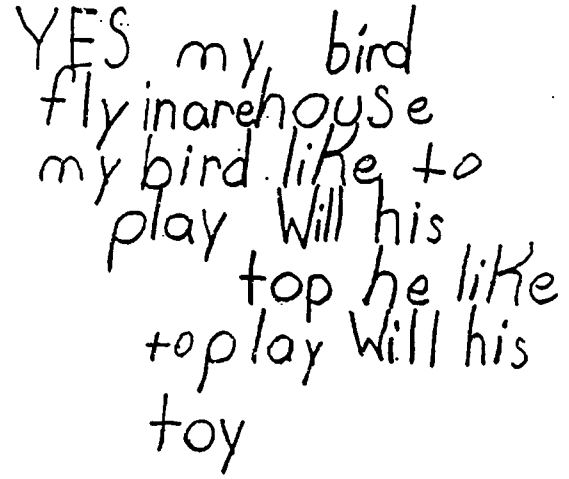
I Like to run after my dog.

I Like to run after my cat.

Don't you ever get tired of running after your dog and cat, chickens, horses, brothers, and sisters. What else do you do besides run?

For several days Caroline writes about plants. She wants me to give her some. In my response I share that we will study plants and then plant some. We exchanged entries for several days on plants. One day I wrote "plant" on the board and asked her, - "Caroline, you know this word?" and she proudly replied - "paper". For days we had been writing entries about what I thought were plants, and she became frustrated because I was not giving her paper. She had wanted paper!

Subsequent entries from Caroline's journal begin to show increased fluency and coherence. Her writing and reading are more fluent.



We had a green bird. Our cat knocked the cage over and caught the bird.

I bet you're excited about Christmas. Your sister will like the lights on the tree.

I Just hope my sister grow Bigr. But She is a baby. She is cute she has Fat Cheeks to me. I like her. I wish that She was born. She play with us She Cry at home. But no one can't here her

She will grow bigger - before you know she will be getting into things. When will your mother bring her to school? I hope she came to school? when I was a little girl I hate school But now I like school much then home. Bust of all is school. things is fun of do, today is a fun day. my sister is a good baby But she crys a lot. I like it a lot to. I like when my sister cry she cry cute. when she laugh I see what she once. she once some milk.

She wants milk when she cries. She probably wants dry diapers, too. I bet she's cute. I'm glad you like school. I'm glad you're in my class. I'm glad to go to school. I what my baby sister to go to school not just me. I what her to be in your class. But first she haveis to grow!

She might be in my class some day, but it will be awhile. You will be in Junior High.

Ricardo, a third grade student, "butters up" his teacher, Ms. Weist, in hopes of receiving a Christmas present:

That is ringht mis. Wrist
I Love you so. I dirr
of you in the ninght
are you going to my me sonthing

As he writes more, Ricardo's fluency increases:

The stangest animal I
ever saw was a Bonkus. It has a long
and Fuffly ears. I took it some
meat and It got fat. It did not like
meat. It likes junk food out of cars.
It is a special animal because
it likes to play and giggle
It likes to play hide-and-eat. Then
it looks like hairy scary. It has
long beautiful hair. It has a
long, long scary teeth. It looks
like medusa. It looks like a aniaml
with alot of snakes. Then I went
to Hawaii to vist him. It hates the
sun but it likes the snow. It thiks
It is ice cream. with ice.
It likes to play with its baby.
It looks like a baby nose.
The end.

by Ricardo

Israel is a fifth grade Special Education student who is also LEP. He writes to his teacher, Ms. Recker:

Israel

I went to my aunt and. She gave me a pappy. There my said that we could not take it.

Don:t it make you feel bad when you want a pet and can't have one. I would like to have a puppy but they need more care than I have time to give one.

I like the letter you write to me Miss Recker my mom find a cat. So that is what we have now.

I'm glad you have a pet. Cats are nice and they don't take as much care as a dog. I hope this year goes well for you.

I well have a good year Miss Recker I known I am going to pass.

Rubi, a third grader, who spoke Spanish at home to her monolingual parents, asked if she could write in Spanish to Ms. Drane:

maestra vs ted es mui Guena
porque siempre nos lee
munhos Libros y nos yeba a
Gugar a Guera casi todos
Los días i siempre bamos
a P.E

Querida Rubi, 11-24-89

Estoy muy alegre que te gusta leer libros. Estas haciendo un trabajo muy bueno. Tengo gusto en saber que te gusta estar aquí en la esquela de Bob Hope. Deséo que haigas tenido un felíz día de dar gracias.

maestra quiero saber
que si aqui asen
fiestas cuando es
dia de crismes y
qque usted pase un
dia mui felis Miss Drane
eso esitado

Querida Rubi, 12-1-89
Si, tenemos una fiesta para Navidad. Celebramos el día antes de la vacacion. Cada que trae algo para la fiesta y todos disfrutan.

Miss Drane

Students must have time to write, in Spanish or English. If they write in Spanish, we respond in Spanish, and later in the year, when they feel comfortable about their progress in English, we respond in English. As a result, they begin to be biliterate.

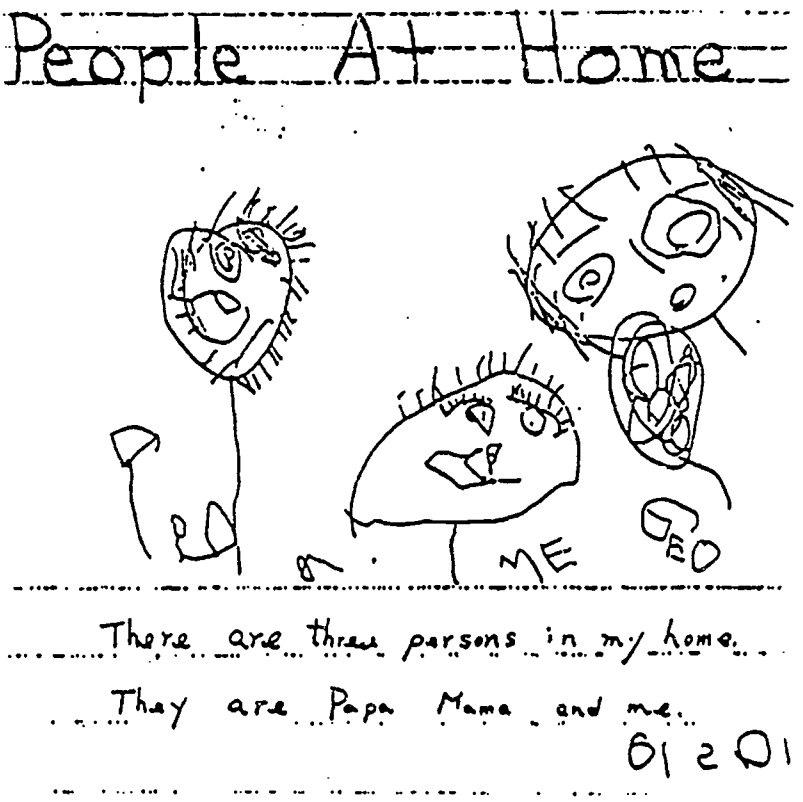
The dialogue journal is an "on going" daily conversation. It is private; only we read it. Children are provided a regular time in class to write. We use the first minutes of class to write. It takes time to respond. At the beginning of the year we were spending twenty minutes writing responses; toward the end of the year, as entries increased in length, it took us longer. The time spent responding was well worth the effort in increased reading and writing proficiency.

A variation of the dialogue journal is used at the Kindergarten and first grade level. These children also "write" entries, and they learn to "read" what they have written. We recommend taking advantage of their enthusiasm at this age and use the journal with them as well. Kindergarten teacher Susan Stimson staples together a few blank pages. Together she and her children brainstorm topics on which they can write, such as "Me at Home," "Friends at Home," "Toys at Home," "Adults", "Books", "Cooking". These stapled pages are taken home each Friday.

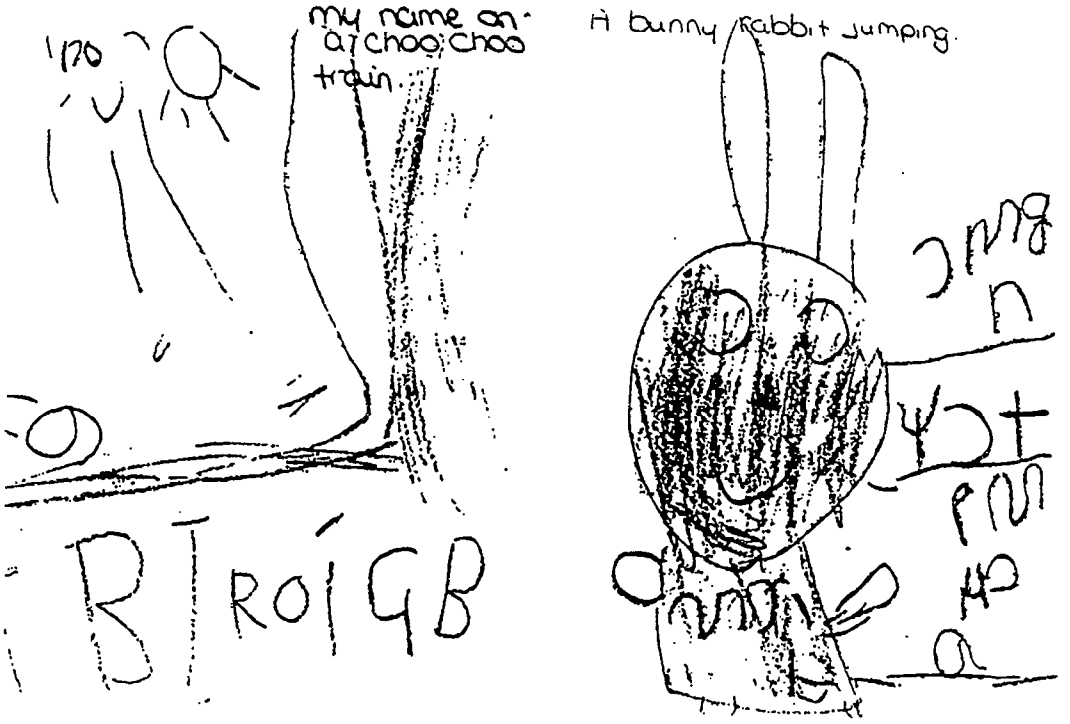
The child draws a picture of one of the topics and shows it to one of her parents or older siblings and talks about it. The parent or sibling records what the child says. The child returns the journal to school on Monday and reads his/her entry to the class. The teacher writes a response and returns the journal to the child. The teacher then aids the child in reading the response.

The "Friday" or weekend journal continues throughout the year. There are variations: the child draws a picture to reflect the topic, explaining to her teacher its significance. The teacher records what the child says; the teacher then responds with her entry. The two entries are taken home, where the child and parent together read the

child's entry and the teacher's response. With the parent's help, the child responds to the teacher. Since most kindergarten children are beginning readers and writers, this is an activity that requires a great deal of cooperation of the parent, or sibling, and teacher.



Two kindergarten children emerge into literacy by printing letters:



Another variation of the journal requires students to record what they know and what they have learned. Fulwiler (1987:16) says that this variation "encourages writers to become conscious through language of what is happening to them, both personally and academically." We ask students to write about what they know before the topic is introduced and afterwards to summarize what they have learned. We thus monitor student progress, our own teaching, what is comprehended or misunderstood. Writing about what has been learned is one way of reinforcing learning. Howard (1984:16) makes the point that "writing is an essential means of learning, and the best reason for writing in school is to learn."

Here are some effective suggestions for such a journal:

1. At the beginning of a lesson or unit, students record what they know about the subject or topic.

2. Stop midpoint in the week and have the students write questions they still might have or points which they would like clarified. Stopping to think and write may clear up any misunderstanding or vagueness, and we have a way of assessing our own performance.

And, finally, we have children use the journal to "save" language: a word, a phrase, a thought, the title of a poem or song, a topic worth exploring -- all can be seeds for further writing.

Journals are an effective means for insuring that students write every day. They will increase in fluency the more they write. We have seen tremendous reading and writing growth in our own students.

Chapter 5

Writing and Reading Across the Curriculum

Janet R. Drane

Why can't Juan and Susanna read? Conferences, articles, and books -- and this guide -- ad nauseam have addressed that question. A partial response (?): perhaps the reason that reading does not "take" is that the reading materials kids are exposed to are irrelevant to their lives as well as uninteresting. Why can't Juan and Susanna write? They don't want to: the classroom activities that go on in the name of writing are also boring and irrelevant. We all know that to do anything well, such as learning to ride a bicycle, we must practice; and we must practice on real bicycles. We need help in learning, but the need for help decreases as we become more proficient bike riders. The same holds true for learning to read and write. But let's twist reading and writing practice around: if students write first, they might be interested in reading what they had written.

A paradox: how can children write if they can't read? Should we be teaching reading -- more accurately reading skills -- first before we provide time for them to write? Should we teach decoding and word identification skills before we give them opportunities to write? While it is true that skills for sounding out or identifying words can be taught to children, we feel there is more to reading and writing than just figuring out what a word is. Forcing children to memorize letter and word identification cues results in the practice of "calling words". There is a big difference between reading for meaning and calling words. We have listened to children while they painfully "read" word after word as those listening to them (their teacher included) nearly fall asleep or have their attention diverted to something more interesting. And that same child who was dutifully "reading" hasn't been listening either. Just

ask her a question about what she has read and nine times out of ten she will not be able to answer.

By the time children get to the third, fourth, and fifth grades a great many of the stories in their readers are good stories, even award winners, written by professional authors. But by that time reading may have become so difficult, stressful, and unpleasant for the child that any enjoyment is lost. Children cannot be taught to enjoy reading; however, most children "discover the joys of reading" if they are allowed and encouraged to read authentic books which are interesting, useful, and relevant.

I did not enjoy reading until the summer after my fifth grade year. I had always been a poor reader -- at least that is what I was told -- and, as a result, almost failed the fourth grade. I loved the books my fourth grade teacher read to us, but I didn't like the questions in the readers and the workbook pages we were required to complete. During that summer I was so bored I thought I would go crazy. My family vacationed where there were no TVs, radios, telephones, or friends. I could either swim, walk in the woods, or play cars with my little brother. One day when I was tired of everything, I found a large stack of *Saturday Evening Posts*. I discovered that each included several exciting short stories, some of which were serials. After that summer, I was hooked: I read everything I could get my hands on.

Children should not have to be so desperate for something to do that only then do they read. Reading should be an enjoyable activity in and outside of school. When people enjoy reading, they become lifetime readers.

Ideally children learn to love reading and writing long before they enter school. From the time they are able to sit in their parents' laps they need to be read to regularly. Young children appreciate the rhythm of poetry, especially nursery rhymes and songs (Bohannon, 1980). They love to take pencils and crayons and

markers and "write like big people." Ask a young child to read what he has written and he can usually tell you a story. Something happens, however, when a child begins school. He is told to stop scribbling his stories and to start practicing letters. I have seen a paper marked with an "F" because a child only wrote one line of capital A's instead of the four or five lines that the teacher had requested. The love for reading and writing should be the end result of schooling. Children should believe that they have something to say and that others want to read what they have written.

Often times children receive the message early in their school careers that their writing is deficient unless all sentences begin with capital letters, end with periods, and every word is correctly spelled. For a child, a budding writer, to stop writing and be forced to go to the dictionary every time she can't spell a word breaks the train of thought, interrupts the creative juices, and stifles spontaneity. We teachers often lament the fact that children lack imagination. They don't lack imagination as much as they lack the desire to risk writing. And writing does involve taking risks!

Limited English Proficient children start school with even more of a hurdle to read and write than do monolingual children. So many times I have heard teachers complain that the LEP children don't have *any* language. Of course, that isn't true, though sometimes it may seem that way to their teachers. These children do have a knowledge of their first language. They get along fine at home, with their family. Children who do not know English when they enter school are at a disadvantage, leading teachers and administrators to believe that they are not as capable of learning as are monolingual children. Their norm-reference test scores, given in English, are usually low.

If LEP children are to receive the writing practice necessary to develop English language competence, writing must be fostered in all subject/academic areas. Unfortunately, studies show us that most writing is limited to the language arts classes. Even in

language arts classes too much of the writing may be limited to copying, note taking, and filling in the blanks, writing that Applebee (1982) calls "mechanical." Moreover, research shows that a great deal of writing is employed to test how much a student has learned. The student writes to the teacher, who evaluates or grades the performance. Moffett suggests

> Instead of using writing to test other subjects, we can elevate it to where it will teach other subjects, for in making sense the writer is making knowledge.

We believe that there is a better way to get LEP children to engage in authentic writing and reading tasks -- to make them integral parts of all subjects or content areas: as we have been saying, children need to write and read every day.

The following is an sample of an integrated piece of writing where the fourth grader is not only learning to capitalize and separate paragraphs but is also displaying knowledge of how horses arrived in America:

George
Oct. 23 1986

How Indians Got Horses

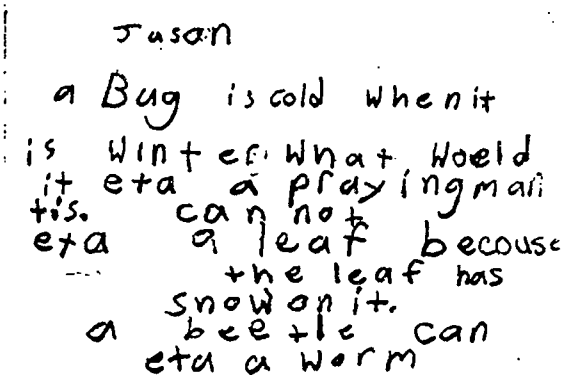
First Columbus discoverd a new world. Then some other persons came to get what Columbus saw

They brought some horses. they landed far from shore They coldnt get the horses off. So they pushed them off, and there were other person on shore to get the horses. Som horses got away and went to the mountains and the Indians got them They saw some men riding.

They thought it was one piece. And they saw a man get off of the horse and they got the idea of riding on horses.

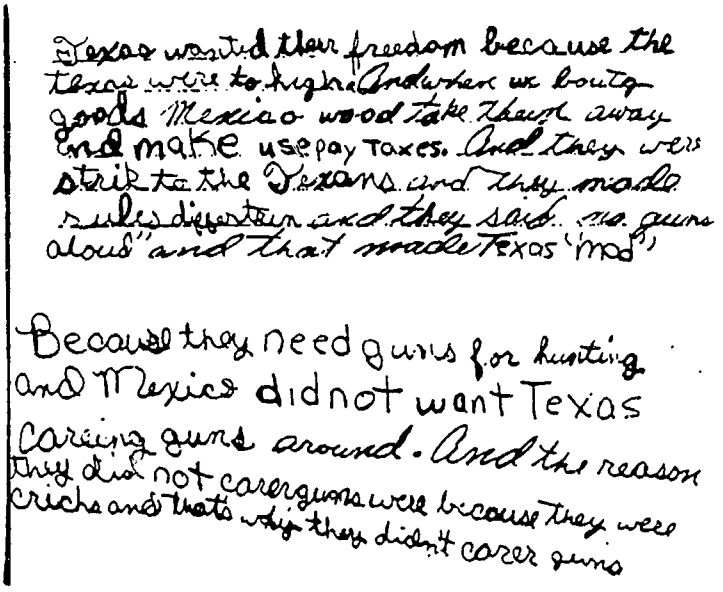
How the horses changed there lifes because they could hunt easier for the Indians.

One reason that teachers do not have students write is that there may not be time to complete the assignment during writing time. Here is where we may be missing an opportunity: we must provide more time to write. As students write about what they are learning, the material is assimilated. Students learn because they think as they write, they are involved; and we can read what they have learned. I use writing assignments in helping children learn facts as they are using their second language. Jason, a second grader, learned and wrote about the effects of the weather on insects:


Jason

a Bug is cold when it is winter. What Woeld it eta a prayingman tis. can not eta a leaf becouse the leaf has snow on it. a beetle can eta a worm

One of Mary Recker's fourth graders learned of the reasons for Texas declaring its independence from Mexico:


Texas wanted ther freedom because the texas were to high. And when we bouty goods Mexico would take them away and make us pay taxes. And they were strik to the Texans and they made rules diferten and they said no guns aloud" and that made Texas "mad"

Because they need guns for hunting and Mexico did not want Texas caring guns around. And the reason they did not carer guns were because they were cricks and that's why they didn't carer guns

"Texas [Texans] wanted their freedom because the texas [taxes] were too high. And when we boutg [bought] goods Mexico wood take them away and make use [us] pay taxes. And they were strik [strict] to the Texans and they made rules differtrin [different] and they said no guns aloud" and that made Texas "mad" Because they need guns for hunting and Mexico did not want Texas careing [carrying] guns around. And the reason they did not carer guns were because they were crichs [crooks] and that's why they didn't carer guns"

What might happen to the quality of students' writing if they were encouraged to write their own daily journal in their social studies class, story problems in math, to record their reactions to a piece of art, to music, literature or if they wrote an interpretation of the results of an experiment in science? It is probable that not only would they learn, but they would also improve their writing abilities.

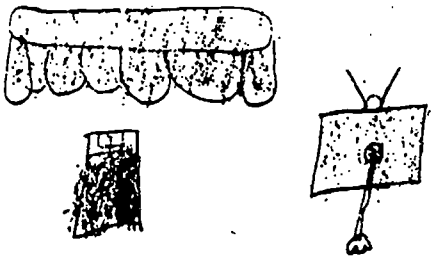
The following are suggestions for using writing in the content areas. Many of these suggestions can be adapted to more than one content area and for most grade levels:

For the English and Language Arts class:

Picto-biography: bring in old and recent photographs of yourself, family, friends, etc.; paste pictures in any order on the paper; for each picture, write a sentence that tells about some piece of your life revealed in that picture.

My Favorite Room: have students choose a special area in their house or yard and write about how they feel when they are in that place and why it is special to them, what is in it, how it looks.

Anna
I Like The living rooni
because I can sleep
I can see the VCR
I can play there
and when I have to
go eat I Just have
to stand up and walk
strata that is all
I have to do When
I go eat I do not
have to take a long
walk



General Life:

"Me" Poems: write a poem in which every other line begins:
I seem to be_____
But really I am_____

or

am good at _____
I am not so good at _____

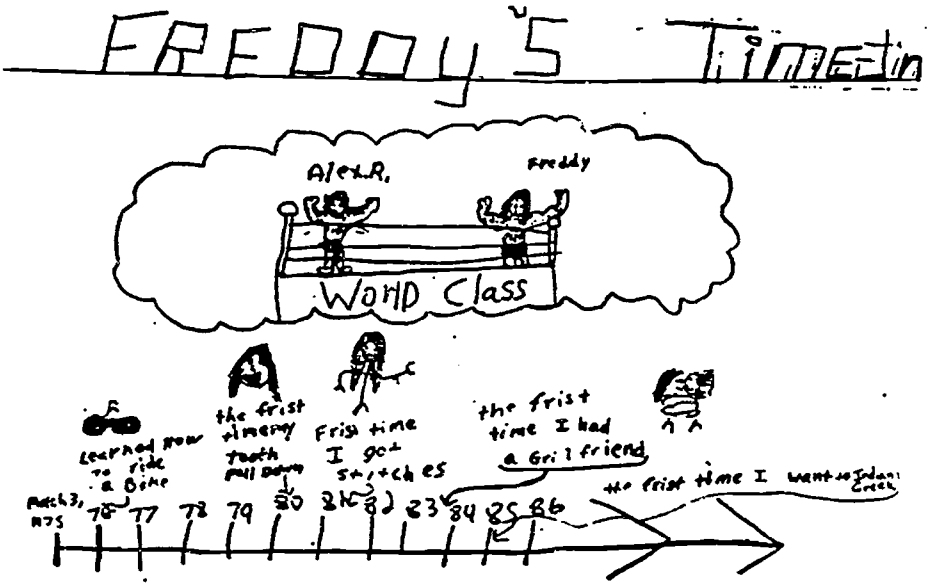
"Me" Pictures: make a silhouette of a student and have students write words or paragraphs about him/her; make a mobile by attaching the silhouette with words that tell about the student.

Biographies: real or fictitious

Family history: scrapbook including a family tree and information about a student's past.

Cultural Traditions: students write about traditions in their own family or traditions around the world. Compare and contrast present traditions with past.

Time line: show major events and influences in the students' lives.

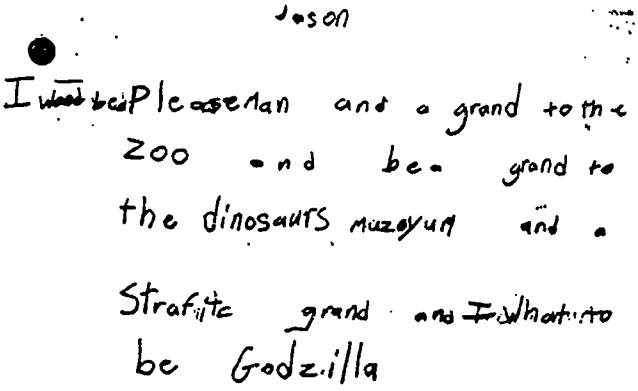


Other Biographies: have students make out questionnaires to help them write biographies of

Authors of books
Classmates
Parents
teachers

Biopoems: (see John Harrison's chapter) can be useful in summarizing the life of a famous figure:

Role Biography: a student chooses a role she may play in life (son, daughter, sister, brother, student, niece, her future career, etc.) and describes the norms of behavior for that role.

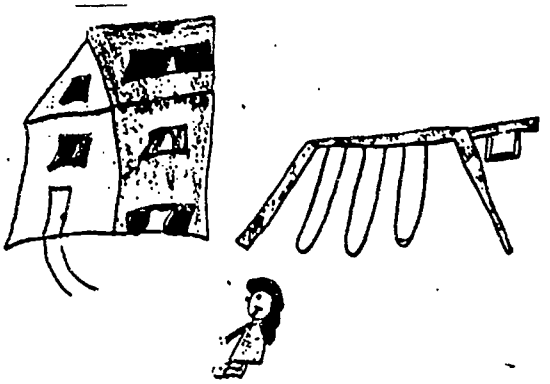


"I wood beaPleaseMan [police man] and a grand [guard] tothe zoo and bea grand [guard] to the dinosaurs muzeyum [museum] and a strafite [starfighter] grand [guard] and I what [want] to be Godzilla"

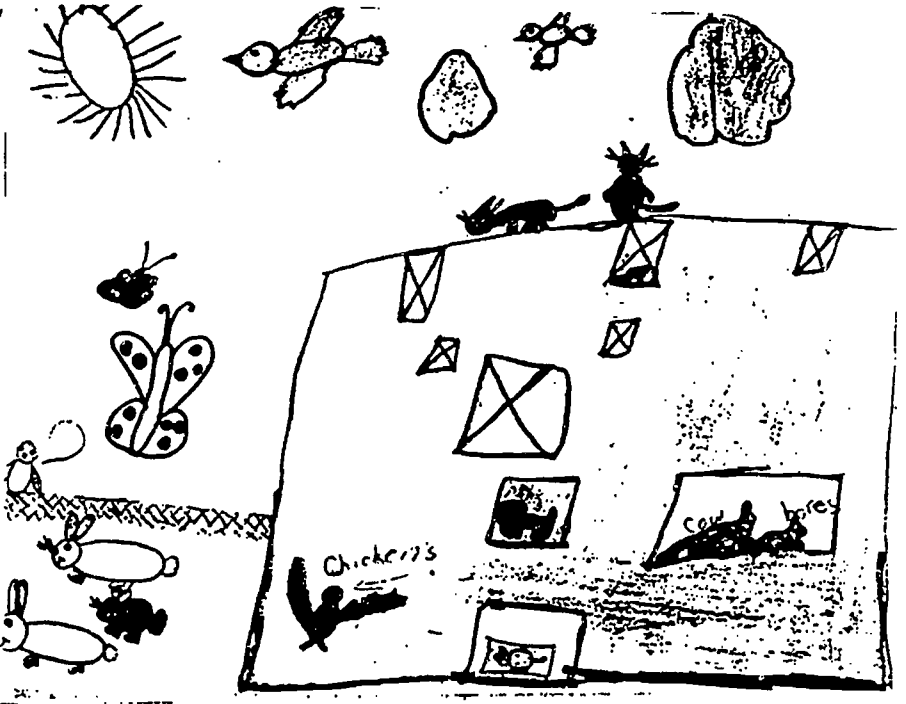
News Articles: write facts and/or opinions about
- School Events
- A Special Student
- A Special Teacher
- Current events: What is happening in the city, state, country, world, universe.

Fiction:
- Epitaphs (See Fun Writing)
- Wills -- read examples of real wills; write, in legal language, what the student wishes to leave the school, the teacher, or new students when they move on to the next grade.

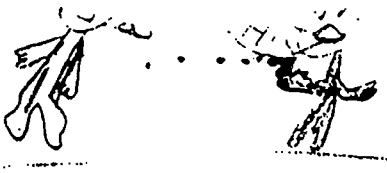
And a man kidnap her and she was crying alot and wanted her mom and dad and brother to come for her.



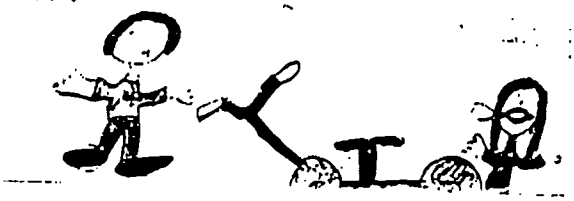
The man let her go and another man got her. And she couldnot find her home when the man let her go. She ran and ran and ran until she got to a house and she did not know who lived there. And A lady and a man came out of the house to see what was going on outside. And she throght that they were her mom and dad and they were nice to her. And she whanted to stay with them forever. She wished her other mom



And when her real mom and dad found her they got her what ever she wanted and they lived in a ranch. She loved the way it was going. One day she said mom and dad you are being very nice to me. Now I will be nice to you.



Her brother took her to the movies everyday and got her a new bike and took her bikeriding too. And he took her home. And she never ever ran away again. And at the ranch they had cow's, pig's, horse's, chicken's, dog's, fish, hen's, cat's, kitten's, butterflye's, a bird.



And they had a baby boy and his name was Ray. And he loved his mom and dad and brothe and sister.

Fantasy:

Fairy Tales (See Fun Writing Chapter)
Fables- after studying the form of fables, students then write their own legends.

Science Fiction: students write fantasies about space travel and visits in space.

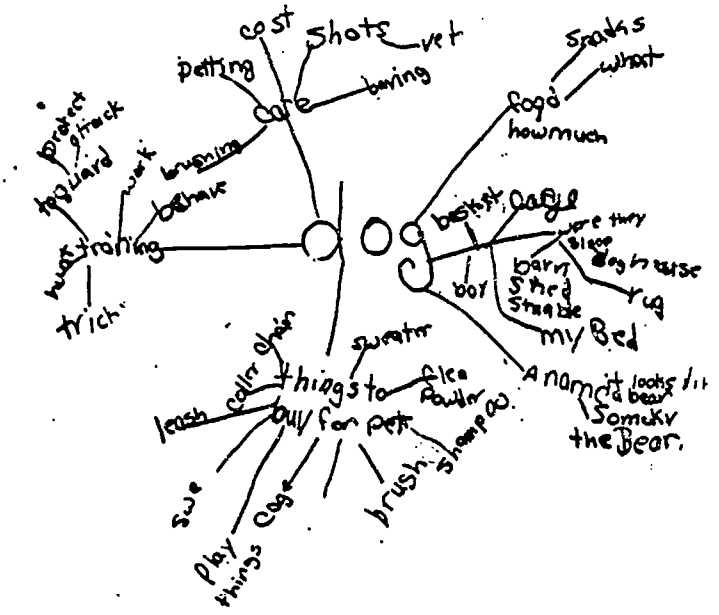
Free Writing: ask students to write continuously for a specified amount of time (even if they can't think of anything to write; they can write, "I can't think of anything to write" until something comes to them.

Completions: students supply endings to sentence fragments or partial stories.

Collaborative Writing can be employed in any size group; each student writes a word, sentence, or paragraph on a pre-discussed topic; each student should continue from what the previous writer has written; the finished product will be a story.

Science:

Thinking Sheets for brainstorming (Semantic Mapping): a prewriting activity which helps students map out and organize their ideas; they can be an alternative to outlining.



Food Chains: list each food in a food chain on a strip of paper, have the students glue the strips together in a real chain in the proper sequence (this activity is especially strong in the primary grades).

List the foods in a food chain in the form "This Is The House That Jack Built."

This is the grass that grew from the decomposed body of the alligator.

This is the grasshopper that ate the grass that grew from the decomposed body of the alligator.

This is the frog that ate the grasshopper that ate the grass that grew from the decomposed body of the alligator

This is the heron that ate the frog that ate the grasshopper that ate the grass that grew from the decomposed body of the alligator.

This is the alligator that ate the heron that ate the frog

that ate the grasshopper that ate the grass that grew from the decomposed body of the alligator.

Experiments: data sheets -- students explain what happened in the experiment and why they think it happened as it did.

Research Reports: pick a letter out of a box and find an animal in a resource book; discover everything possible about that animal; become an expert on that animal; report to the class.

Biographies (real or pretend):

Animal: select an extinct animal and find out how it was classified and the reasons for its extinction.

Insects: write a story about the students' community from the viewpoint of a fly, an ant, a cockroach.

Plants: have students write and report on the uses of roots, stems, flowers, and leaves as food.

Haiku: (see Chapter on Poetry)

Tall, majestic, sad
My spot is mostly for birds
All gone for the year.

What plants need: students write a narrative.

Carol ann V.

How to Grow Plants

I learned about plants.
And i learned about how to grow
plants and how to plant them.
All of us now how to grow them.
I now my parts of it to,

What plants need to Grow

Seeds Soil Water and Sun.
Plants need rain also.
Vegetables grow from plants.
now my parts.
My parts are stem leaves flower roots
fruit vegetables.

Donna.

How to plant plants

First put some soil in a pot.
Second plant the seeds in the pot.
Third give them water and sunlight.
After that they will be flowers or fruit or wh
ever you planted.

Rocks: write a poem describing the characteristics of rocks:

Cinquain (See Chapter on Poetry)

Rocks
Chemical ancestors
Tossed, broken, buried
Ordinary magicians of nature
Stones

Life Under Sea: write a story on what people and their lives would be like if they were adapted to living in the ocean instead of on land.

Biocrostics: (See Chapter on Writing for Fun)

S slimy
L long
U ugly
G gruesome

Lists: select a topic and have students write as many words related to that topic as they can in a certain amount of time (especially strong when introducing a new topic).

Role Playing: become an animal, plant, stone, etc. and write "A day in the life of..."

Think and Write Slips: Distribute papers to students at the end of class. Ask them to summarize what has been learned during the that class; this activity provides closure for the students and, when read by the teacher, it can indicate needs of students.

Health:

Educational Campaigns:

Just Say No
Posters
Poems (Jingles for products)
Prepare a Consumer's Guide describing 50 ways to conserve water

Manners:

Telephone:

Write an advertisement for your school as it would look in the yellow pages of the phone book.

Write a booklet of tips that will help people use the telephone wisely and quickly in emergencies.

Make a guide to proper telephone etiquette.

Choose one name from the phone book and write a description of that person's appearance, personality and life.

Choose two names from a phone book and write a story about a romance and how the telephone helped start the romance.

Choose two names from the phone book and write a conversation that the two might have on the phone; write a conversation you might have if you were calling the library, a theater, your mother/father at work, etc.

First Aid Procedures:

Compile a booklet of first aid procedures for home, school, or camping trip.

Safety procedures (sequencing)

Prevention (fire, accident, illness, etc.)

Menus:

Write a menu and a description for the "Special of the Day" in the cafeteria.

Design a new menu for a Sandwich Shop, Sausage Hut, Seafood Shanty, Yogurt Bar Avocado Pit, Ice Cream "Saloon" Onion House, Tamale Factory.

Dialogues:

Between two students on peer pressure situations.

Role Play:

Write about situations students of any age encounter; help a student work out his/her own feelings and attitudes about difficult situations.

Social Studies:

Read Historical Fiction, Adventure Stories

Diaries/Journals: from what they have read have children pretend to be a real or imaginary person living during a certain time in history and keep a journal of feelings or facts.

By Belinda
This Thanksgiving. Grade 2
We selubradid to gether with my
family I selubradid with my sister
and too Cousyn and Uncle and with my Aunt
and with my Grandma and Mother and
Father. and we ate turkey and we
played all day. The reason I
like Thanksgiving is becase the
Indians selubradid with the Pilgrims
and the Pilgrims tadid on a ship
Caled the Mayflawer and so thay
Selubradid.

Debates: choose a certain event in history from the reading, research it, defend or attack it with supporting details.

Map Directions: guide a partner with oral or written directions using directional words north, south, east, and west.

Develop: a flag, seal, symbol, pledge or national anthem for a new country.

Research reports: choose a letter from a box and look up a city, country, person, etc. and find as much information as possible from resource books and become an expert on that subject; then report to the class.

Weather Grams or Bulletins:

Unsent Letters: using material being studied, students draft a letter to a friend or relative; these letters involve role playing and imaginative involvement in the material being studied.

Focused writing: writers concentrate on a single topic during a non-stop, limited time writing session; enables a student to see how much she has to say on a subject.

Example: Students select a favorite vacation spot and describe it; describe the natural geography of that part of the state and explain why that type of geography appeals to them.

Legends: create a legend about the origin of the name of a person or place.

"I am..." Papers: describe land forms using the first person

Example: (see Gere 1987:142)

I am lava all around,
Gases emerging and burning into steam,
  Taking everything that stands before me
I move sluggishly across the land

Slowly,
My outer layer cools,
  But my inside still turns
Forming a tunnel.

I feel movement beneath,
Rushing air,
  The still liquid part
Tries to fill the tunnel
cooling as it descends.

Forming
A column of basalt
dangling from the roof of the cavern.

I am
A pillar formed from fire,
now frozen as ice.

I am
A stalactite.
I am.

Guided Imagery: Combines relaxation techniques with oral narrative to provide writers with an imaginative experience which becomes the basis for writing. Like role playing and dramatic scenarios, guided imagery asks students to become directly involved in what they are studying.

Example: " Describe what you are thinking about, what the river looks like, what the trail is like, and make other observations about what you see as I read" (see Gere 1987:143-144).

The sun has come out, yet it is still cool...Why?

Something brushes your face ....What is it?

Time for a rest stop. You look around and find an ideal spot. Describe it. Then you begin to speculate how it got there and why it was there.

Hiking along later, you observe some animals off in a clearing. Describe them.

Later, along the trail, you crouch low to look at something. What is it?

Midafternoon, you set up camp. What are you going to do with the rest of the day?

After dinner, as the sun is setting you listen quietly to the sounds of the rain forest. Describe them.

Describe the weather the next morning.

The following is an example of one student's response to the guided imagery:

A Hike through the Rain Forest

We're starting on the bark-covered trail into the wild wonder of the the Rain Forest. There's no moss growing over the trail so you can barely tell there's bark underneath it. I can tell they haven't covered it with bark in a long while. The river is moving rather rapidly, dodging the rocks and fallen trees and branches. The sun is coming out and shining rather bright. The forest is still cold though. It's like there's a giant reflector over the forest reflecting the heat so it will stay cold. We're taking a break to rest up a bit. There's an old nursing log with some trees and rocks by and on it. We like this place because there's a good place to sit and rest. There's a lot of action going on here. Some birds are in the trees above us. We're back on the trail now some moss hanging from a tree brushed my face. It's fascinating how it just hangs from this tree . . . .

Art and Music:

Written Descriptions: students search for descriptive phrases that create pictures in their minds; reproduce the images on paper with paints, crayons, ink.

Self portraits: draw a self-portrait and then write in or around the portrait an autobiography.

Paint with words: associate colors with feelings, tastes, sounds, smells, thoughts, sights and experiences; then illustrate writings.

Green (a collaboration by fifth graders -- Frank, 1979, 73)

The taste of a pickle
The sound of crickets chirping -- these are green.
Spring and mint and freshly mown grass smell green.
Green is mold.
Green is the color of pride.
Green is sour.
Green is a tree, rushing water, and a slimy frog.
Green is a fluoride treatment at the dentist.
Green is the feeling you get when your best friend moves.
And green is spinach and broccoli
And the way a sourball pinches your tongue.
Green is crunchy.

Lyrics: write lyrics and then add music (existing or original).

Listing: after viewing a painting, students describe the concrete or visual properties of the subject matter and design elements; use single words or phrases.

Visual Literacy: use language to actively respond to art; build specialized vocabulary by using description, analysis, and interpretation of aesthetic qualities.

Describing Art: students hold back all judgements and objectively list concrete features of the work.

Interpreting Art: write a description of the owner of the objects in a painting; this helps students obtain a sense of the personality behind the painting; increases understanding of the artist.

Free Writing: students write continuously, for a set time period, about what they see and feel about a painting or sculpture.

MATH

Multiplication: students make up rhymes to say while are jumping rope using multiplication facts. There are a number of these rhymes still around and children may know them. Have them share

Shapes: write a story about a romance between a circle and a trapezoid.

Write: directions for an original math game that will help players learn math facts.

a contract between a student and a friend who wants to buy the student's bike on time payments.

After: reading the part of *Guliver's Travels* which deals with math, have the students write a story about what the world would be like without numbers.

Have students: compile a math dictionary that has clear definitions of the math terms they need.

Write: a menu for a restaurant where a family of four could eat dinner for under $12.00.

rhyming couplets to help someone remember his/her addition facts.

math jokes.

Admit slips: these are helpful in discovering how much students understand (See Science, this chapter).

Give: oral directions to a partner on how to draw a specific shape; the partner cannot see the shape and the director cannot say the name of the shape.

Unsent letters: (See Social Studies, this Chapter)

Graphs: students write a paragraph explaining the use of graphs
Line Graphs
Bar Graphs
Picto Graphs

Story problems: Write: imaginative word problems for others to solve. Use a problem from the math text: have students make up their own. Or have students write story problems; use macaroni as counters.

4. Ricky has 15 pieces of gum.
Pablo has 18 pieces of gum.
Nancy has 19 piece of gum.
How many do they have in all?

5. Greg has 20 pieces of candy.
Jessica has 29 pieces of candy.
Helen has 5 pieces of candy.
Donnie has 10 pieces of candy.
How many do they have in all?

Ricky has 51 pieces of candy.
Pablo has 35 pieces of candy.
How much more does Ricky have then Pablo?

Susie has 9 pieces of candy
Yvonne has 11 pieces of candy.
Ruth has 8 pieces of candy.
Who has more candy?

Ricky has 41 pieces of candy.
Crasar has 45 pieces of candy
Raquel has 46 pieces of candy
Jo Francis has 44 piece of candy.
How mand do they have in all?

Bertha has 84 pieces of gum
Gabriel has 51 pieces of gum.
How many does Bertha have then Gabriel

Lisa had seven candies. She ate all. How many candies does she have left? 0

Helen had three macaronies she ate one macaroni. How many macaronies does she have left? 2

Ruth had one pumpkin. They gave her two more pumpkins. How many pumpkins does she have in all? 3

Book Reviews: write about the scholars who discovered math and about the different numbering systems in the world; find out how calculators and computers work and about those who invented them; these books and the reports about them can heighten students' interest in math. Begin the book report with a map of the countries from which the mathematicians come.

Writing across the curriculum, writing and reading in the content areas, writing about what is being learned have received increased attention lately. The exercises and activities that we have proposed focus upon the content areas. A few may seem trivial; yet at the same time these and the others lead to writing, thinking, and learning. If increased attention to reading and writing brings a "re-seeing" of the curriculum as a whole, where talking, listening, reading and writing are the focus of the school day, then we believe that learning will improve. Students will learn more if they are not corrected but shown, if teachers do not become merely "error hunters" but rather facilitators and guides, so that reading and writing are carried on in the classroom, in partnership with a capable and understanding, nurturing teacher. We urge upon our readers to assume particularly a nurturing role in their teaching of reading and writing, to participate in the same reading and writing activities, to learn with their students.

Chapter 6

Classroom Realities

Valerie M.L. Camilli

We know the "magic" of learning and teaching. It binds us to our profession. We sense its presence; its glow sustains us. Efforts to quantify and dissect it seem to elude us. Yet we doggedly search and in our search often forget that the interaction among individuals -- between teacher and student -- sparks the "magic." *In Coming on Center* James Moffett (1981: 22, 25) suggests that America and its ideals should be nurtured, especially its diversity and flexibility -- in classrooms with visible welcome signs and "magic" teachers.

What exactly is a "good" teacher, a "good" classroom? Some of us may identify with the teacher that Jim Graham (1986: 773) describes as "having one big jug full of knowledge and pouring it all into the little receptacles around the room." Who finds fault with his description of a "good" teacher standing before the neatly ordered rows of silent students, imparting information, correcting errors, and directing learning? Janet Emig did.

Emig, former president of the National Council of Teachers of English, portrays the irony in such an image in her anecdote about a principal who appears one morning to evaluate a teacher (Calkins 1986: 11):

> For a moment, he stood in the doorway, glancing around the room. There was no sign of the teacher. Two youngsters worked at the chalkboard, one of them drawing a crude diagram depicting the sections of his volcano report. Nearby, three children clustered closely together on the floor, listening to Act 2 of Jorge's play, "The Missing Egyptian Pearl." Other children worked at their desks, some scrawling furiously -- or

> doodling idly -- on pads of legal paper, and some carefully copying their work onto white paper. Occasionally a child would turn around in his or her chair to read a line or discuss a point with a classmate. On the edges of the classroom children met in twos, listening to each other's pieces. In the far corner, three or four children worked at a table full of dictionaries and editing checklists. The principal finally spotted the teacher, who was sitting alongside one student in the midst of the workshop; the principal made his way across the room to where she sat and leaning down, said in a stage whisper, "I'll come back when you are teaching."

We need to resurrect the elusive "magic" that the principal misses. Principals and others who evaluate will need to recognize the wisdom, knowledge and "magic" of teachers who foster classrooms where all kinds of learning and teaching take place. We also need to find ways of assessing and evaluating the teaching and learning going on in these student-centered classrooms. Calkins puts it this way:

> In most American classrooms, the teacher's focus is not on the child, but on a unit of study, the textbook, the prepackaged curriculum (1986: 6).

She suggests that we center on less of what we should say and do tomorrow and ask instead how we can establish a classroom environment that focuses on students' needs today. Her suggestion is especially critical in addressing students of limited English proficiency. Although the needs of the students may be many, a student centered classroom will build on each student's linguistic and cultural strengths to foster growth, not only as an individual learner but also as a contributor to a community of learners.

The image of "magic" classrooms are beginning to emerge. We must believe in our students' ability to succeed. Too often the a"at

risk" appellation carries with it lowered expectations of academic achievement. Frank Smith says,

> Athletes are rarely trained by being told that the goals of their instruction are probably beyond their reach, and the education of artists and musicians is not not often based upon persuading aspirants that they are likely to fail.

We need to share our understanding that the classroom chatter of students absorbed in learning is a sign that everything is going well (Smith 1982: 236) and that sharpening pencils, doodling, wiggling, stretching and sighing are but a few signs of learning in process (Britton in Hughey 1983: 7). Jim Graham (1986: 774) sees himself and other teachers

> ...as sailors alone in dories setting off across the water, being asked not only to bring our small craft to harbor but also to rebuild them during the voyage, plank by plank. There we are, isolated in our tiny vessels, barely in contact with those others we glimpse across the waves. Coast Guard warnings of impending inspections only make us more likely to isolate ourselves even further.
>
> Although I sometimes feel like abandoning my leaky craft, I realize our plight. I want to learn from others but still maintain my dignity and professional independence and no one in their right mind is going to jump ship until they have an alternate way of staying afloat.
>
> And so another image looms out of the mists; that of the fabled schooner Bluenose which won fame in the Fisherman's Cup Races but earned her keep as a working vessel. A number of dories worked out from her, they fished on their own but always in contact with the mother ship. A much safer situation, one that minimized the risk and yet maximized the potential for independent work. If I want to help people

change, I have to bring my schooner alongside and invite the lone sailor to join the flotilla -- just as I invite children to join the world of reading and writing.

The "world of reading and writing..." The phrase has a nice ring to it. But is it possible to provide such a world? Frank Smith's (1982: 207) observes that "Neither the brains of children nor the nature of writing will change for the conveniences of schools." We are faced with a dilemma: which path to follow. A child's writing reflects the level of his or her thinking because thought is revealed in writing. Any attempt to stretch beyond current levels of written competence requires experimentation and risk. If teachers penalize students for risking, they penalize them for thinking. Some students can cease to learn and become mental dropouts -- maintaining a minimal level of work that will not lead to undue attention. They are "at risk" in the school.

What then of students who do not measure up, who do not improve? We know that students do not handle failure well. If they have a history of failure, they learn to expect less from themselves and so will their teachers. There are no simple solutions to the dilemma which will work. However, there are several strategies which may aid teachers in their evaluation and tracking of student progress in reading and writing. We like so many teachers gave a writing assignment, collected and corrected papers. We deducted points for misspellings, faulty mechanics, lack of organization, and so on, finally arriving at a grade. Several problems appear to be inherent in this practice: first, it takes an inordinate amount of time and energy and results in requiring fewer and fewer papers. (Wo among us wants to spend evenings and weekends marking and grading papers?); second, more time and effort are spent in pointing out errors than reacting to content and development; third, students pay little attention to corrections, more attention to grades, and at the first opportunity toss the paper into the nearest trash can. If they react at all, they react to the grade ("What did you get?").

Many of our successful students write to please us (we being their only audience), and not themselves. When this happens the danger is that the sense of "ownership, or "responsibility," as Atwell (1991) puts it, is missing. In their efforts to please, writing becomes more of a "let's get it done" rather than a form of art. Smith (1982: 207) submits that

> Writing should not be perceived as something different, an end in itself. The whole point of the writing act is what it does, the experience and understanding it makes possible. A child who believes that the main purpose of writing is to get a grade from a teacher is clearly not likely to develop into an interested or particularly competent writer.

We will weave, in and out of our narrative, some additional concerns about evaluating. Even with the system, or systems we use, problems remain. Evaluating -- grading -- is tough duty. We evaluate and provide help during the writing process: miscues can be flagged and correct prior to the final draft. Especially for the LEP child, who can easily become overwhelmed by the writing task, the availability of support and encouragement during the process is crucial. For these children we have found on-going evaluation and feedback to be powerful and effective strategies in their learning the craft of writing.

Students need feedback, consisting of positive, helpful, and encouraging responses. Feedback helps students to assess how they are doing. There are a number of ways to provide feedback, and one of the most effective ones is to provide time for short writing conferences. Kirby and Liner (1981: 2301) say,

> Extraordinarily successful teachers of writing have one thing in common: they spend very little time in isolation, reading and marking papers, and a great deal of time responding and discussing student writings with the writers themselves.

Conferencing takes place during writing time. We sit down beside a student and answer his or her questions. We pause to to read a draft and to make suggestions. Conferences last as long as ten minutes or as short as one. During the conference students talk about the draft while we listen. Not surprisingly,our hardest task is to listen.

The conference is a forum for talking about revisions. All writers revise. Students, however, are rarely aware that writing well is revising well. We "demystify" revising. Students need strategies which lead them to treat revision as a process. In the first draft stage students write quickly and concentrate on getting their ideas down on paper. Then revising begins. Donald Murray (1968: 11) says to beginning writers, "The amateur thinks the job is finished and the professional knows the job has just begin."

What questions can we give students to evaluate and revise? They may ask: "Does it make sense?", "Does it say what I intended it to say?", "Is the meaning clear?" and even "Do I like it?" Answers guide revising. For beginning writers the process may not be internalized. Talking about writing enables the writer to see her or his writing again from a different perspective (literally "re-vision") and a conference is natural place of revising to begin. Additional questions that we ask are

> Tell me about your writing.
> How is your writing going?
> What help do you need?

We find that some writers don't revise. Young children, for example, do not revise extensively and appear to be happy with their draft "just the way it is," the satisfaction of having written anything being of primarily importance. LEP children are often

reluctant writers because they feel the visibility of their lack of fluency. A conference which points to their competence, however limited, encourages further writing. We comment on their ideas, their organization, as well as grammar rules which have been learned. More competent writers experience the problem of not knowing when to stop. It seems that revision could go on unless limited by a deadline.

Conferences take time -- more time sometimes than we think we have. Effective management of time and efficient record keeping are necessary concerns of teachers who must document the progress of their students. We suggest several strategies to document this progress and to manage time. Peer (classmate) conferences, called "helping circles" by Macrorie (1980) provide a different, but useful forum to aid students in receiving feedback. Peer feedback can foster a group consciousness and a supportive atmosphere. Macrorie (1980: 86) says

> The most surprising outcome of work in the circle is that your remarks about other persons' writing strengthen your own. One day writing a metaphor or ending, you will think of what you once said in the circle, and your help to another person will become help to you.

Any point in revising may lead the student back to the beginning to narrow or broaden the topic. (We have had students who have abandoned their topic -- they didn't know enough about it!) When the student feels that he or she is ready to write the final draft, the time has arrived to move to the editing phase. Although the terms revising and editing are sometimes used interchangeably we consider revision as a re-examination of ideas, their arrangement and development, in light of purpose and audience. Editing is correcting the draft for spelling, punctuation, grammar, and appearance. Revision deals with content and editing with form but upon occasion the writing process blurs these distinctions.

In our experience, too often we see students so concerned with being "correct" that they are reluctant to move beyond a few sentences (they want to be "right"). Writing is a messy activity, and students need to know that (so many of our children were spending time erasing rather than writing that we have banned erasers -- if they wish to make a change, they cross out and go on). Students need to be given a chance (and help) to edit their paper before they prepare their final draft. When students see themselves as writers, they are concerned with having their final draft conform to the conventions and appearance of edited English.

Audience is always important. When writing is shared, students will demonstrate an interest in editing. At one time a paper was written for an audience of one, the teacher. In our classrooms writing for publication occurs. Just as someone who practices a musical instrument eventually wants to perform for a wider audience, writing can follow the same path -- performing for a audience that is wider than the teacher. We publish in our classroom: we post papers on the writing board, we have an author of the week, we submit writing to the school newspaper, we prepare copies for parents, we bind papers into a classmade book. Writing becomes visible.

Evaluation. Were it not the case that after so many weeks we must evaluate our students for the administration and for their parents. We have taken the advice of Kirby and Liner (1981: 187), who say, "at least with younger children you grade anything but their writing." Reality dictates that the teacher who deemphasizes grades must record a grade. To make the painful less painful we use the following. For example, in assigning a grade to the journal, if the student writes, she or he earns a grade. There is value judgement made about the quality of the writing, only that the student completed the assignment. All of our students do: the more they write, the higher the grade. Writing in a journal increases fluency, but is helped by the carrot.

Folders

We provide a folder for each student. In addition to its being a repository of a student's drafts, the folder also contains a record of the number of drafts that the student has written, what he/she is currently writing, and an evaluation sheet indicating progress or where revision is suggested. This record serves both to encourage goal setting and to measure progress. We chose to measure student writing from several points of view:

Clarity of expression Inclusion of supporting details Evidence of revision and editing Handwriting, spelling, and mechanics

Record

We staple the following form to the inside cover of the folder.

Title	Date Started	Date Completed	Published/Shared

A caveat: If we trash rough and even final drafts, a record of growth is lost. But if all papers are retained, improvement, or where improvement is needed, is clear to the student as well as to the teacher. A final dividend: we see children and parents experiencing pleasure when reviewing the papers in their children's

folders. They will be able to see progress and development from one set of papers to the next. (and papers placed in a portfolio can also be shared with next year's teacher.

In evaluating "at risk", LEP children, a record such as the above is invaluable. Standardized testing will often do little more than indicate that these children are working below grade level -- a deficit view. Test scores may indicate no progress. If, however, a writing folder is maintained, information on progress is seen -- and may allay the fears of those who maintain that these children, who are second language learners of English, are falling behind. They are making progress.

Future Topics and Territories

The folders are useful for an additional reason. On the inside front cover students can jot down possible topics. Donald Graves suggests using a portion of the back cover of the writing folder as an area to record "Things I Know and Can Write About". A topic is listed only if the student demonstrates a substantial amount of knowledge about the subject. By keeping both lists in the folder, students have an available source of future writing ideas and topics. Even the youngest writers can add to these lists regularly. One of my third grade students developed a list of approximately seventy-five topics. In conference with me, she commented, "I want to write about everything!" Lisa had an interest in sharks. She wrote a book on the subject for the classroom library. She learned about how to use reference materials as well as adding to her knowledge of sharks by reading challenging texts. She became the class authority on sharks. During a school assembly given by Sea World, I found that her reputation extended beyond our class. The presenter showed a slide of a scuba diver with several sharks and remarked that he wasn't sure if the sharks were man-eaters. A student from another class yelled, "Ask Lisa, she'll know."

Skills Assessment: Things I can do

A list of the editing skills the student has mastered is documented and kept on the back inside cover. The following set can be expanded as students acquire new skills. One advantage of the set is that it can be employed as a checklist, which allows the student to pinpoint miscues in his or her own manuscript. Students can also list on this part of the cover "Things I'm Working On".
(the following is designed for students just beginning to edit their work):

I can put capital letters on the names of people. I can start each sentence with a capital letter. I can indent the first word in a paragraph.

More than once in this guide we advocate writing in class on a regular basis (every day, in fact). If students write each day and keep their drafts in their folder, we can judge where we need to instruct. Mini-lessons (short in duration) targeted on specific skills are provided at a time when students need them rather than lessons scheduled according to an arbitrary curriculum which may be ahead of or behind the students needs.

Spelling

Words which a student consistently misspells are listed correctly spelled by the student on the back cover of the folder. The list provides a personalized dictionary, or word bank.

Conference Records

We needed a record of what we discussed in writing conferences. We use the following:

Conference Journal We keep a spiral notebook in which we indicate the date, student's name, and the points we discussed. Similarities that students exhibit in their writing development are visible. In addition to the spiral we also employ a student conference record form:

Conference Record Form

We complete the Conference Record Form at the conclusion of our conference with the student and place it in the folder so that the student can review the comments as he/she revises and progresses toward a final draft. The record functions as a reminder of the goals discussed with the student as well as a record of the comments. We staple the form to the drafts and final copy.

CONFERENCE RECORD

Name: _____

Date:_____

Topics We Discussed and My Comments:

Goals:

Peer Responses

We ask for peer responses. We group students into "helping circles" (a group of four to six classmates). As part of the evaluation and revision process we have students read their work

aloud to their classmates and encourage them to listen for passages which are not clear. We encourage the listeners to be helpful "coaches." In our helping circles at the beginning of the year we model helpful responses and pose questions which are intended to help the writer. Comments such as, "Could you tell me more about . . ., I'm not sure I understand why . ." gently focuses the writer on areas of his/her writing which may be unclear and need to be re-worked.

Other comments such as "I really liked the part of the story where you describe how the robot moved because you used words like 'creaked' and 'shuddered.' I felt like I could see and hear that robot coming across the floor!" help the process by looking for passages that "work."

After students are accustomed to providing feedback, comments are written on the Response form (see sample). Since trust is essential for helpful responding, we focus only on positive comments at first. As students acquire more confidence in receiving feedback, we then use the section of the form which asks for suggestions and requests for additional information:

RESPONSE FORM

DATE _____

Title of Composition: _____

Author:_____

Does this paper have major strengths? Which part (or parts) did you like the best (be sure to tell why)? Were there any words or sentences that you thought were especially effective (please copy)?

_____

_____

_____

Was there any part of the composition that was not clear to you? Is more information needed? Was anything left out? Is there enough detail -- can you see in your mind what was described? Do you have any suggestions?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Person responding: _____

Editing

Editing is the last step to publishing a paper, and editing is what some teachers emphasize the most. We share several editing strategies to portray editing as what we do to make the paper "nice to look at." We model these strategies by projecting a student paper on an overhead and offering editing suggestions (for example, spelling, paragraphing, punctuation). We also ask for suggestions and questions from students. After our demonstration, students edit their own papers.

Young children can begin to edit. They begin by proof-reading their papers for one feature, gradually increasing the number of features they are responsible for. For example, I have provided a mini-lesson on capital letters at the beginning of sentences. My children are asked to read a paper other than their own and check for the proper use of the capital letter. The next feature I address is end punctuation.

Students eventually gain confidence and pride in applying the conventions of capitalization, punctuation, and spelling -- the mechanics -- to their own drafts. A strategy that aids editing is an editing checklist. We place checklists in writing folders, on posters, and at the editing table. Students attend to one editing point at a time. They proof their drafts for incomplete sentences, spelling errors, and punctuation. We also use student tutors: if "Joaquin" is a good speller, he is designated as the spelling editor, and other students are encouraged to seek his help.

Group Editing

Group editing with small groups -- a "helping circle "of no more than six students -- is also effective. Students circulate their drafts to members of their circle. As students receive and read drafts, they sign their name on a response sheet and write comments

on the line next to their name. Drafts can have several readers in the span of one class period:

The author of this paper is Carlos Pena (5th Grade)

Name	Suggestions/Corrections
Joan Jones	You might want to check run-on p.1 2nd para.
Donna Baker	Looks OK to me
Gina Morgan	Underline title of book p. 3
David Garcia	Looks good
Fred Smith	Fragment 2nd line p. 1
Amy Trevino	Check spelling p.2, 4th line: "defence"
Robert Diaz	Super job
Carlos Pena	[His paper]

After the draft has been read, it is returned to Carlos and he prepares his final draft.

We find that students develop proof reading skills and become sensitive to the appearance of their manuscripts. Additional techniques, such as reading drafts aloud, help writers recognize miscues, such as word omissions or unclear passages. Occasionally, we use a sequence method to locate spelling mistakes, where students begin with the last word on the page and work through the manuscript in reverse, which forces them to analyze each word in isolation. This strategy may seem tedious, but it works.

Evaluation

Evaluation often is a problem for teachers. But evaluate we must. How do we grade? Our system (an adaptation) allows recognition for variations in quality. A student earns a C for completing all required steps (for example: prewriting sheet, rough draft(s), peer response sheet, final draft. These are stapled together in order, with a cover page of comments). An A or B is earned for a draft of above average or of exceptional work. We reward students for progress and work -- if their paper has improved, and if they are revising substantially. Grading is heavily subjective and we worry. What we do not want to do is to punish with grades.

We share and discuss our grading criteria with students. Students are assured they will do well provided they complete the above steps in the process. Our assurance is designed to remove the risk of writing and to encourage them to experiment, to grow in their competence. The added incentive of receiving an A or B encourages students to revise and improve their papers (there is still a bit of the behaviorist in us). We even evaluate the dialogue journal. Each time the journal is turned in we put a check in the grade book. At the end of the marking period we calculate a grade by counting the number of times the student turned in the journal and dividing that figure by the number of times the journal was collected (if the journal is used on a daily basis an adjustment is needed for absences). We may even count the number of lines and/or pages that the student has written in his/her journal.

We have selected our grading criteria from a number of sources. Halley (1982), for example, employs the following criteria in her high school classes. One week prior to the end of the marking period (a duration of six weeks in Texas) her students choose a selection from his or her writing folder, revise it further and submits it to her, with the entire folder, for a grade. Since the piece has already been through the pre-writing, drafting, some

revision, and peer response stages, the student can take another look at the paper (to "re-see" it, as Don Graves puts it) before writing the final draft. Even as the final draft is being prepared, we provide conference time to discuss their paper with us and their circle before they submit it to us.

Halley's grades are based partially on the the process and the final draft and students, she says, usually concur with her assessment. She places few marks on a paper, comparing such marks to "tracking mud on a clean floor." Instead, if something needs to be brought to the student's attention, she places a dot in the margin next to the line she is questioning. The dot does not mar the paper but its presence does require the writer to determine why it was placed there. Halley (151) feels comfortable with her system and points out that

> When grades are made secondary, the writing becomes primary. My task is to get them to write and to keep them writing for as long as we share the classroom. I don't want to worry about grades, so this system also frees me.

Holistic Evaluation

Holistic evaluation is becoming increasingly popular, and it can save teachers time (yet it is not easy to do). However, holistic scoring is a quick, guided method of rating writing. Charles Cooper (1977:3), a leading authority on evaluation of writing, states that

> Holistic evaluation of writing remains the most valid and direct means of rank-ordering students by writing ability. Spending no more than two minutes on each paper, raters, guided by holistic scoring guides, can achieve a scoring reliability as high as .90 for individual writers.

In holistic scoring an evaluator considers the manuscript he or she is evaluating as a "whole" and assigns a rating to it. Even with holistic scoring, a number of alternatives are available to the evaluator. The rating employed may be a single one for the draft or, alternatively, a group of ratings reflecting different skills (the first alternative is more holistic than the second). Again, we always share whatever criteria we use with students. We offer one example (there are others as well) of a holistic scoring guide employed in Texas.

Written Composition Scoring Criteria Employed by Texas

The State of Texas' test of competencies requires a composition. The composition is assessed using focused holistic scoring (Texas Education Agency 1987):

> The scoring system is 'holistic' because the total piece of writing is considered; it is 'focused' since the writing is evaluated in terms of the composition's organization and its response to purpose and audience/topic .

The scoring guide (see Focused Holistic Scoring guide at the end of this chapter) describes the features of composition that raters look for. Scores range from "0" (low) to "4" (high.

Conferencing with students and an on-going assessment of writing began to give us a more complete picture of the progress that the students were making. We felt more confident that the lessons and time we provided from our school day were meeting the needs of our students. The progress in writing evaluation led us to seek alternative assessments of reading progress. The reciprocal

nature of reading and writing led us to modify the manner in which we assessed reading performance.

The Reading Log

The reading log provides a check on reading performance. Columns headed

Title	Author	Pages	Date Finished	Rating

are listed on a sheet of lined paper. Each time the student read I had him or her enters the appropriate information in their log. The rating column provides an opportunity for the student to evaluate the book.

Reading Conferences

Talking about a book with me gives the student an opportunity to go over his or her "rating" and the reasons for his or her rating.

Reading Aloud

I record students reading aloud. Their recording provides me with a record of pronunciation and reading fluency. My students love recording and rehearse for it by reading to a classmate.

Reading-Response Journals

While my students wrote in their dialogue journals, I also had them write in a reading journal. The reading journal provided them with a forum to discuss books they had read or were reading. Their entries provided me with information on whether the text was appropriate and/or if they were reading with comprehension.

Anecdotal Records

I kept anecdotal records of my students, consisting of brief notes describing what students did during the day. I always wrote notes on what they were doing correctly. I have found that writing on "sticky notes" and then at the end of the day attaching the notes to a sheet of paper, on which the student's name appears, and including them in a notebook provides me all kinds of good things to tell parents and administrators.

Evaluation Criteria: an Uneasiness

We are still left with an uneasy feeling about evaluation. We have learned to live with it, knowing that professional critics use different criteria for evaluating a play, a book, or a poem. So be it with us -- and perhaps with you. We believe that we are consistent in our grading. Primarily, we are interested in whether we can document growth of reading and writing proficiency during a semester and/or year. We believe we can. We also encourage students to add their own comments and judgments, as an entry in their dialogue journal, to ours. We have found their feedback to our evaluation interesting, sometimes useful, and at all times, revealing. We have cited in our References additional sources of evaluation that our readers may find useful.

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