

Living the Life
of a Writer
✦
Kindergarten

The Noyce Foundation
Every Child a Reader & Writer
Summer 2005

Living the Life of a Writer

Launching Writing Workshop

Writing Workshop Overview

Writing Workshop nurtures children as writers, giving them time and space to learn how to write for a variety of audiences and purposes. To ensure that each writer can write to the best of his or her abilities throughout the Workshop we systematically teach the rituals and routines which facilitate our behavioral and academic expectations. In Writing Workshop students are supported as they choose topics and carry their writing through the writing process towards publication. To ensure that each writer flourishes we deliberately and thoughtfully teach them the skills, strategies and craft they need to grow.

Several features are essential to this model of Writing Workshop. They are:

- a daily, one-hour block that is devoted to Writing Workshop
- a classroom environment that supports productive student work
- reading and writing as complementary activities
- student choice
- differentiated instruction to ensure that the needs of all students are met

The Structure of Writing Workshop

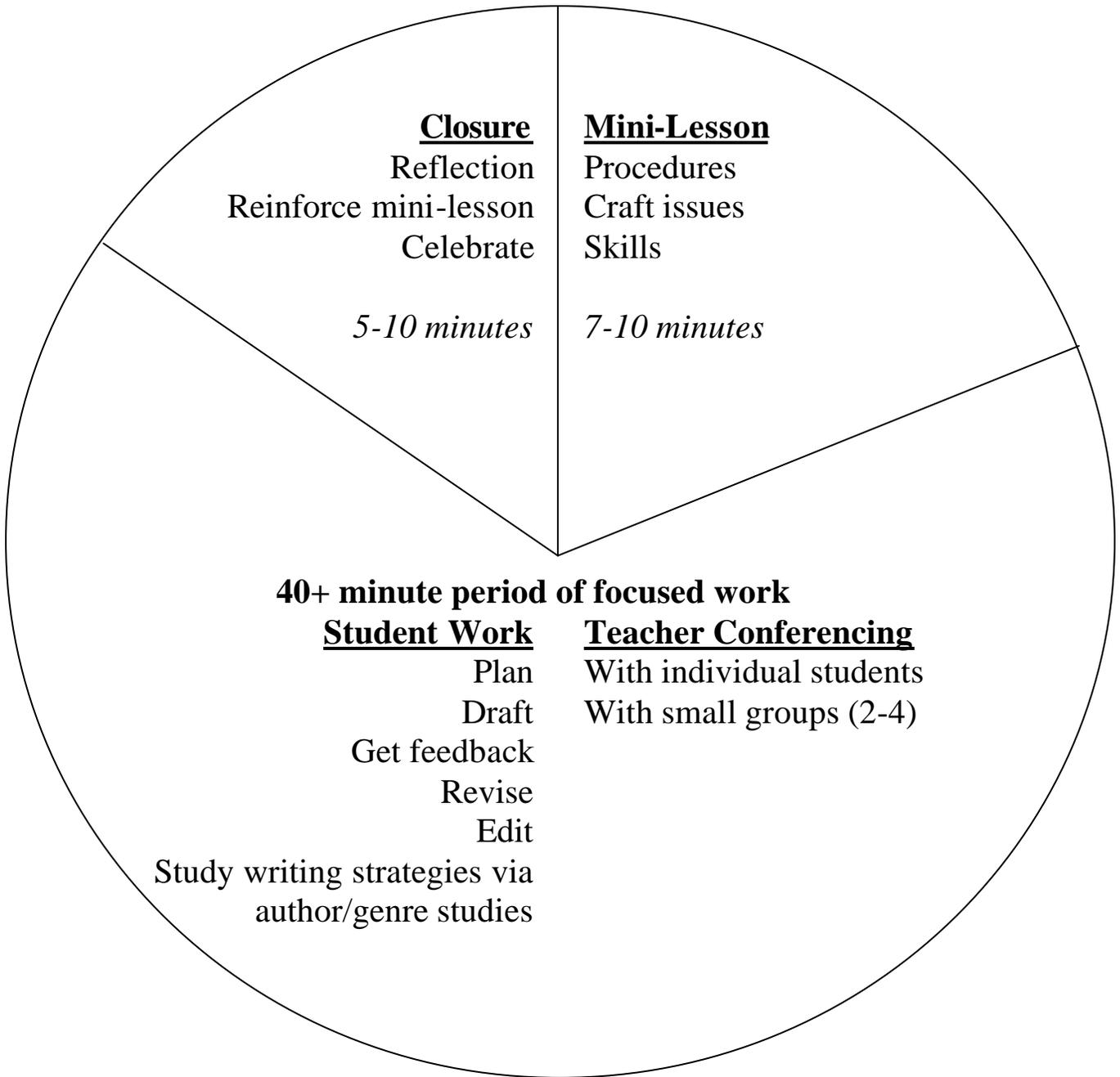
The structure of Writing Workshop is one of predictability. At the same time each day, teacher and students gather for a mini-lesson. This is followed by independent work time, which allows students to write on their own or in a variety of collaborative groupings, while the teacher confers with students. During the last five to ten minutes of the Writing Workshop, everyone comes back together to share the day's work and learning. [See Figure 1]

Mini-lessons

A *mini-lesson* is a period of direct instruction which focuses on a quality of good writing, a skill or strategy, or a management expectation. Management lessons establish the rituals and routines of the classroom. Skill and strategy lessons and qualities of good writing lessons, which teach craft and structure, equip children to develop as writers. Lessons are taught based on students' needs, which are continually assessed during conferences and sharing.

The *mini-lesson* is brief, approximately ten minutes long, and has a single teaching objective. A variety of strategies can be used in mini-lessons: the teacher can model using his or her own writing, that of a published author, or a student; can provide guided practice; can enter into a brief inquiry with students; or can explain and give examples.

Figure 1



At the beginning of the year *mini-lessons* focus on how students can work as a member of a writing community. At first, many lessons revolve around management and setting up rituals, and routines. Later, as routines are established, lessons shift more to strategies and craft.

Many teachers have come to value the predictable structure known as The Architecture of the Mini-lesson, which was developed by Lucy Calkins and her colleagues (The Art of Teaching Reading). This structure supports having a clear objective for the mini-lesson, an awareness of instructional language, and helps keep the lesson “mini”. The Architecture of the Mini-lesson is composed of the following parts:

The *Connection* facilitates students accessing their prior knowledge by the teacher briefly stating what was previously taught in the unit and what today’s teaching point will be.

The *Teaching* is the actual instruction of the day’s lesson. One focused point is taught through modeling or direct instruction.

The *Active Involvement* engages students in a brief opportunity to process or attempt the concept or strategy taught. The teacher listens in to monitor students’ understanding.

The *Link* restates the teaching point and quickly connects the day’s instruction to the students’ continuing independent work. Students are sometimes invited, sometimes required to “try-it”.

See Appendix III for a daily planning template of the Architecture of the Mini-lesson.

Work Time

Work time, the largest block of time during the Writing Workshop, is when students work independently on their own writing, or with a writing partner or a response group. Students learn to write by writing and giving them adequate time helps them develop the discipline of daily writing.

While the students are writing independently during *work time*, the teacher is able to devote his or her time to conferring with individuals or small groups of students with common needs. This valuable time offers teachers the opportunity to assess and meet the individual needs of each student writer in a structured and purposeful conversation.

Possible mid-workshop teaching point

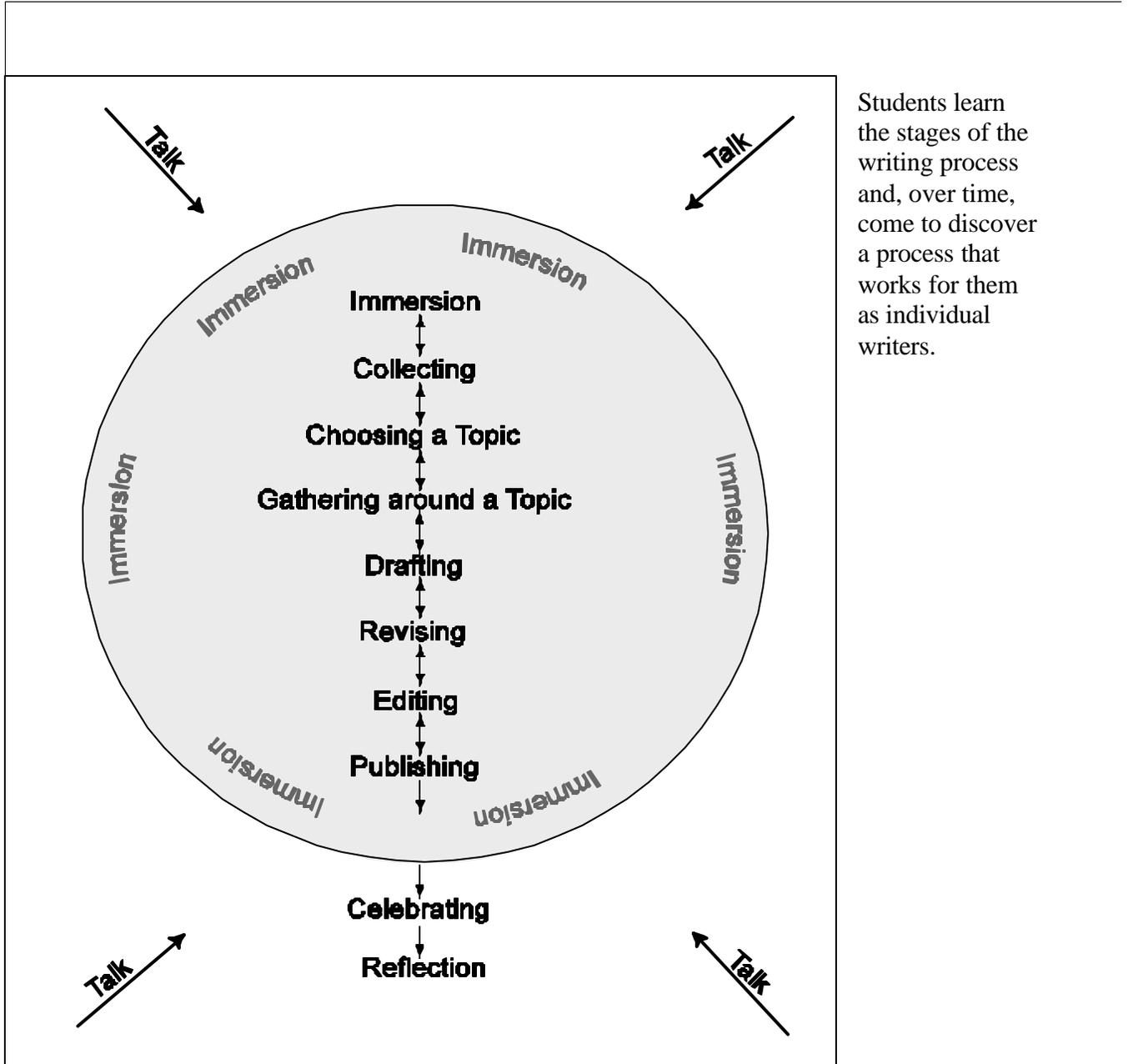
Sometimes teachers speak to the class in the middle of *work time* to show an example of good work, share with the whole class something from a conference, invite students to work with their writing partners or briefly return focus to a teaching point.

Share

At the end of Writing Workshop the class gathers together for a reflective sharing session. The teacher may select a few students to share parts of their writing or to talk about their process in achieving their writing goals that day. Alternatively, students may “partner share” or all students may share a word or a line in turn around the circle or randomly, “popcorn” style. To wrap up teachers often facilitate students’ responses to their peers’ writing. The *share* reinforces the teaching of the mini-lesson.

The Writing Process

The writing process, the notion that a writer takes a piece of writing from a thought through a recursive process of drafting, revising and editing towards publication, is central to Writing Workshop.



Students learn the stages of the writing process and, over time, come to discover a process that works for them as individual writers.

Immersion

Immersion is an important part of any unit of study. Students read and investigate many published examples of the genre or feature. Throughout the Living the Life of a Writer Study students are immersed in good literature and the habits of good writers.

Collecting

Students write throughout all genre studies. At this stage they are collecting writing in their folders or notebooks. During the Living the Life of a Writer Unit students learn how writers live their lives, constantly aware of the world around them as subject matter for their writing which they record in their notebooks. Students begin to learn about themselves as writers and to form their own writing identities (“I’m the type of writer who...”).

Choosing a topic

Students reread their writing and thoughtfully choose a piece they want to “make big” and publish. They select a piece or topic that they care about and that they can stick with and develop over time.

Gathering

Students develop their topic by “writing around it”, researching, writing more and adding new meaning to it.

Drafting

Students learn how to envision what their published writing will look like. They reread their gatherings, craft a plan to begin to draft, and write a draft.

Revising

Students re-see their first draft and polish their writing using a variety of revision strategies, including craft strategies they are beginning to learn from mentor authors.

Editing

Students come to understand the need to make their writing easy for their reader to comprehend. Most writers edit as they go along and also do a final edit. Editing includes reading for sense, punctuation and spelling.

Publishing and celebrating

Students enjoy the opportunity to share their finished pieces with an audience. For their first piece this is usually their own writing community. Later in the year, audiences may include the principal, another class or parents but it is important to remember that not all celebrations need to be on a grand scale. It is also important to celebrate process as well as product – posting treasured words or sharing examples of students adopting aspects of the life of the writer.

Reflecting

Students need the opportunity to reflect at the end of a unit of study about what they have learned during this particular study and how it has enabled them to grow as a writer.

Building Community in the Writing Workshop

A community of writers will flourish in a classroom environment that supports its members' independence and interaction. Intentional arrangement of the furniture and supplies is important in helping the community run smoothly. Explicitly teaching behavioral rituals and routines ensures that students work purposefully together in a learning-centered environment.

Room arrangement

A large rug serves as the meeting area to bring the learning community together for *read alouds*, *mini-lessons*, *shares* at various times throughout the day. Easy access to a chart stand, overhead projector, writing supplies, etc., makes this an ideal teaching place.

Desks are clustered to encourage accountable talk and, in addition to spaces where they can work alone quietly, students also need room to work in partnerships or small groups, at tables or on the floor.

Supplies

Easy access to writing supplies is essential. A central writing center with a selection of paper, pencils, pens, staplers, date stamps etc. can be established or table-top mini-writing centers also work well for some writing communities.

Management mini-lessons teach student writers the procedures for collecting and returning supplies each day and the importance of treating the community's writing tools with respect.

Rituals and routines

Consistency is a key ingredient in building community. Students come to expect a predictable structure to the Writing Workshop. Expectations about behavior are explicitly taught and modeled in the first few days of school. These include expectations about such things as, how to come to the rug and how materials will be distributed after the mini-lesson. Transitions are marked by a signal such as a chime or a chant which alerts the students to a predictable change of activity.

Storytelling

Sharing the stories of our lives is an important element in building community for both teachers and students. We honor the contributions of each and every student by listening to the stories they choose to bring into the classroom and students come to see the similarities and differences in their classmates' lives. In addition, oral storytelling often serves as a rehearsal for writing, an essential precursor for many young writers.

Reading Aloud

Filling their classroom with the sound of wonderful children's literature is such a priority for many teachers that they rise to the challenge of finding time for many *read alouds* throughout the day. *Read alouds* help build community by providing shared experiences of enjoying beautiful language and important stories.

Informing our instruction through assessment and reflection

Writing Workshop provides us with many opportunities to informally assess our students so that we can tailor our daily instruction to meet their needs. Sometimes, simply stopping to “read the room” during *work time* is a valuable assessment tool. We can observe whether students are purposefully engaged in their writing or whether our gaze meets with a sea of perplexed little faces, in which case we can stop and regroup by reiterating our teaching objective.

Through conferences and daily shares we can see how well our students have taken on the instruction of the *mini-lesson* and whether we need to repeat or extend it on another day. Talking to individual students about their “try-it” and asking students to do “process shares”, for example, often reveal their depth of understanding of the mini-lesson’s objective. Keeping notes of our conferences is essential for monitoring individual and class patterns of strengths and needs. Throughout the year there will be many opportunities to add to these notes and maintain a profile of each student writer as they progress towards mastery of grade-level standards.

Becoming reflective on our practice is the most effective way of growing as a Writing Workshop teacher. Taking time to make notes on the effectiveness of our mini-lessons, as manifested in our students’ writing, is a useful habit.

Schools participating in the Noyce sponsored Every Child a Reader and Writer Initiative will give their class an on-demand writing prompt at the beginning of the school year which will provide a baseline assessment for each student. (Other schools may give a simple prompt such as asking their students to write or draw about something that happened to them.) Analysis of these papers will form an important part of your student assessment which will be augmented by mid and end of year on-demand writing samples.

Our First Unit of Study: Living the Life of a Writer

As we begin the school year and introduce our Kindergarten students to Writing Workshop we establish the behavioral and academic expectations for the year. During Writing Workshop we work together as a community of writers with shared goals. These shared goals are the product of systematic teaching through direct instruction in mini-lessons. During the first five to six weeks of school we invest time in establishing the classroom rituals and routines that enable our students to become independent writers for the rest of the school year... and beyond.

The Living the Life of a Writer Unit is organized around five interrelated themes:

- **Building a community of writers** : establishing the rituals and routines which facilitate trust and shared expectations within our writing community
- **Telling the stories of our lives**: sharing the power of storytelling with our students, both orally and in writing
- **Becoming independent writers** : equipping our students with the strategies and skills they need to become independent writers
- **Learning from other writers** : ensuring that we immerse students in the craft of published authors through ample opportunities for Read Alouds and independent reading
- **Publishing and reflecting**: working collaboratively to “publish” and taking time to reflect on our learning

The first few days of Kindergarten are an important time for us to get to know our young students and for them to become familiar with us, their peers and their new learning environment. During this time we begin to establish some routines and start some activities that set the stage for powerful literacy learning. These first week essentials include:

- **modeling, practicing and reinforcing routines and procedures** such as how to come to the rug, sit and leave; how to use materials such as books and crayons; how to listen to (and soon, appropriately interact with) a Read Aloud
- **creating and beginning to use resources** such as the *abc* Chanting Chart (/a/.../a/... apple a, /b/.../b/... baby b) that comes with most reading programs and the Name Chart
- **immersing our students in oral and written language throughout the day as a foundation for literacy learning** such as stories, rhymes and songs; Read Alouds (frequent and interactive), Shared Reading (Name Chart, pocket charts, rhymes etc.), Interactive Writing (starting with one word labels)

Towards the end of the first week or at the beginning of the second week we could begin the lessons in this unit of study that introduce our students to Writing Workshop. As all good teachers, we know that our teaching must be responsive to our students' needs and so it may be that we need to repeat, skip or change the sequence of some lessons in order to best help our students. Each day we need to ask ourselves, "Based on what I observed my students doing today, what should I teach tomorrow?" This unit is offered to you as a road map, not an itinerary.

It is strongly advised that you read the entire unit before starting to teach in order to get "the big picture" and be able to envision what you and your students are working towards in this unit.

Two or three of the lessons each week are written out in full but this is not intended as a script, rather as a model of Writing Workshop content and the tone and language of instruction. The content of the other lessons is suggested and you can fill in your own language to help you become more familiar with mini-lesson planning.

The purpose of the reflections at the end of each lesson is to illustrate how continually assessing our teaching and our students' learning informs and improves our Workshop practice. Many of the reflections refer to layers and nuances of practice that we may not be able to take on when implementing Writing Workshop for the first time but which may extend our thinking if we are launching Workshop for the second or third time.

"Creating writing workshop is enjoyable and challenging. It requires passion, creativity, hard work, a certain stick-to-itiveness, and talent. Writers create habits of mind as collectors, talkers, listeners and readers. In writing workshop classrooms, teachers and students come together to explore their worlds in new ways. Go for it!"

Brenda Wallace and Susan Radley Brown, ECRW Writing Consultants

Living the Life of a Writer – Kindergarten

- **Building a community of writers**
- **Telling the stories of our lives**
- **Becoming independent writers**
- **Learning from other writers**
- **Publishing our stories**

Week 1: Getting started

- Lesson 1: Storytelling: Telling stories about things we do
Lesson 2: Storytelling: Telling our stories to a partner (Turn and Talk)
Lesson 3: Storytelling: Telling our stories to a partner
Lesson 4: Drawing a picture to tell a story: think first, then draw
(This student work can be used as the ECRW first on-demand (growth) piece)
Lesson 5: Introducing the structure of Writing Workshop

Week 2: Growing as writers: independence and stamina

- Lesson 6: Managing our writing tools
Lesson 7: Trying my best to draw my story
Lesson 8: Using our writing folders
Lesson 9: Making our stories better by adding to them
Lesson 10: Working for the whole of Work Time

Week 3: Growing as writers: the reading-writing connection

- Lesson 11: Making our pictures match our stories
Lesson 12: Using the *abc* chart to write letters and words
Lesson 13: Sharing our stories with a partner
Lesson 14: Using the Name Chart to write letters and words
Lesson 15: Making our story, picture and words match

Week 4: Generating more writing

- Lesson 16: Using a picture rubric to help us make our work even better
Lesson 17: Using words to tell our stories
Lesson 18: Listening for sounds and writing them in order
Lesson 19: Thinking of a new story to draw and write
Lesson 20: Reading the words we write

Week 5: Putting it all together

- Lesson 21: Using the Word Wall to spell some words
Lesson 22: Reading our stories and choosing one to publish
Lesson 23: Revising our stories
Lesson 24: Practicing reading our story for sharing
Lesson 25: Sharing our published stories

Week 1: Getting started

This week we will begin to establish the rituals and routines that will eventually enable our students to work independently as members of a community of writers. We will enjoy storytelling with our students in Writing Workshop and at other parts of the day. Telling and listening to the stories of our lives will help us grow as a community. We will take time to read wonderful literature aloud throughout the day. We will start some charts that will serve to record and remind students of the content of our mini-lessons. Students will live the life of a writer by telling their stories in pictures. We will collect one of their first pieces of work as a beginning of the year baseline assessment, which you will analyze. In conferences we are enjoying conversations with our students about their stories and recording our observations.

Lesson 1: Storytelling: Telling stories about things that happen to us

Lesson 2: Storytelling: Telling our stories to a partner (Turn and Talk)

Lesson 3: Storytelling: Telling our stories to a partner

Lesson 4: Drawing a picture to tell a story: think first, then draw
(This student work can be used as the ECRW first on-demand (growth) piece)

Lesson 5: Introducing the structure of Writing Workshop

Suggested literature

- At the Beach: Anne Rockwell (simple narrative)
- Apples and Pumpkins: Anne Rockwell (simple narrative)
- My Little Brother: David McPhail (simple narrative)
- Deep in the Forest: Brinton Turkle (wordless book)
- Good Dog, Carl: Alexandra Day (wordless book)
- The Snowman: Raymond Briggs (wordless book)

Charts and classroom resources

- *abc* chart, Name Chart etc.
- *Writing Workshop*

Observe your students during this week to assess how well they:

- are beginning to understand the behavioral expectations of the mini-lesson, active involvement, independent work time and share
- can tell stories to a partner
- can draw a picture to tell a story

Teaching point: *Storytelling: Telling stories about things we do*

Method: demonstration guided practice inquiry explain & give examples

Materials needed: *Simple narrative e.g. At the Beach by Anne Rockwell*

Before the lesson: Read a simple narrative that the children can relate to their own lives e.g. At the Beach by Anne Rockwell. Talk about how the stories we read remind us of things that we do. Think of an incident in your life that you can tell the children as a story (ordinary, everyday experiences are best).

Note: On this first day there is only a mini-lesson, the children do not leave the rug for Work Time.

CONNECTION

I know that you love to hear stories and yesterday we read a story about a girl who went to the beach. Anne Rockwell who wrote that story was telling us about something that happened to her. That's what writers do and that's what we can do too. We can tell stories of things that happen to us.

TEACH

Hmm... I'm thinking of a story to tell you... something that happened to me recently... I could tell you the story of what happened when I went on a hike this summer... or when I went shopping at the mall yesterday with my family... or maybe about the time when I was riding my bike and got a flat tire! That's it! I'm going to tell you the flat tire story. Are you ready to hear it?

Briefly tell the story as a simple sequence of events.

ACTIVE INVOLVEMENT

Now I want you to think of a story about something you did. Think quietly for a moment and then we'll hear some of your stories. ...

Solomon, tell us your story. ... Wow, that's an interesting story. ...

Mahogany. ... I can just picture you and your family in the park, well done! Today, boys and girls, we all got to think of a story to tell and tomorrow everyone will get to share their story!

REFLECTIONS

- I think the students did well sitting and listening on the rug. They all looked as if they were trying hard to come up with a story.*
- Solomon is a good student model as he always has stories to tell!*

Teaching point: *Storytelling: Telling our stories to a partner (Turn and Talk)*

Method: demonstration guided practice inquiry explain & give examples

Before the lesson: Make sure that everyone knows the meaning of “knee”. If not, a few rounds of “Head, shoulders, knees and toes...” would be beneficial.

Note: As on the first day, today there is only a mini-lesson, the children do not leave the rug for Work Time.

CONNECTION

Yesterday we learned that we can tell stories about the things we do. Today I'm going to show you how to tell your story to another person.

TEACH

I'm going to ask Nua to come and help me. ... Nua let's sit facing each other, eye-to-eye and knee-to-knee. I'm going to go first and tell Nua my story about when I got a flat tire and she is going to listen. Tell your story as in the previous lesson. ... Now Nua, will you tell me your story, please, and I'll listen. ... Model active listening. What we did is called “Turn and Talk”. When I say, “Turn and Talk” I'd like you and your partner to do what Nua and I just did.

ACTIVE INVOLVEMENT

Close your eyes and remember the story you thought of yesterday. ... Now you are going to Turn and Talk and tell that story to your partner. Assist the students in pairing up and deciding who should go first. Listen in on their conversations and give support as needed. Give signal (clap, bell...). When you hear me clap in that way, boys and girls, that means it's time to stop talking and you should turn back and face me. ... You did such a great job telling your stories. I saw Danielle and Colin were knee-to-knee so that they could really hear each other. ... Jacob was telling Jose a really interesting story about going to the zoo and I saw Maria looking at Tyler and really listening hard to his story. You did such a great job with Turn and Talk.

REFLECTIONS

- *For a first try, they did well at Turn and Talk. Some will need to be coached how to sit correctly but they'll get there!*
- *I need to watch for my ELL students who are just beginning English and think about how they can best participate in Turn and Talk*

Teaching point: *Storytelling: telling our stories to a partner*

Method: demonstration guided practice inquiry explain & give examples

Materials needed: *Simple narrative e.g. Apples and Pumpkins by Anne Rockwell or My Little Brother by David McPhail*

Before the lesson: On chart paper draw two students doing a Turn and Talk.

Note: On this day there is only a Mini-lesson and Share, the children do not leave the rug for Work Time.

CONNECTION

Remind your students that yesterday they learned how to Turn and Talk. Show them your picture of two students doing a Turn and Talk, pointing out how their knees are close together, their eyes are looking at each other and their ears are listening: just like they did. Tell the students that today we are going to read a story that will help us think of more stories to tell our friends.

TEACH

Tell the students that you are going to read them a story. Ask them to be thinking, as they are listening, about things that they have done that the story reminds them of. Briefly discuss the story, inviting students to tell of similar experiences. Model thinking of a story to tell prompted by the story.

ACTIVE INVOLVEMENT

Give your students time to think of a story they can tell today. Tell them to Turn and Talk with their partner. Point to the chart: knees, eyes and ears. Listen in on their conversations, prompting and reinforcing as necessary. Note successful examples.

SHARE

Ask two students who did well at their Turn and Talk to model for the class as reinforcement. Praise what they do well.

REFLECTIONS

Start writing some notes on how individual students are doing with Turn and Talk and coming up with a story to tell.

Teaching point: *Drawing a picture to tell a story: think first, then draw*

Method: demonstration guided practice inquiry explain & give examples

Materials needed: *Wordless picture books, plain white paper, pencils, crayons*

Before the lesson: Share with your students some wordless picture books such as Deep in the Forest by Brinton Turkle, Good Dog Carl by Alexandra Day or The Snowman by Raymond Briggs, there are also some wordless stories in the reading programs' resources. Put the materials out on the tables ready for the students.

At other times of the day: Some teachers like to start teaching their students how to draw, beginning with simple shapes and then using those shapes to draw objects, people etc. Ed Emberley's books are a good resource for directed drawing lessons.

Note: 1. Today's student work can be used as the Noyce ECRW first on-demand (growth) piece.

2. If possible, take photos of students during the mini-lesson, during work time and during the share to use on the next lesson's chart.

CONNECTION

Over the past few days we've been telling each other stories and we have seen in some of the books that we are reading together that pictures can tell stories too. Today I'm going to show you how you can draw a picture to go with your story.

TEACH

Listen and watch as I show you how I think of a story and then draw a picture that tells that story. Take just a few minutes to model, thinking, telling and drawing a simple story. Did you see what I just did? First, I thought of my story and got it in my head and then I drew a picture to show my story. I tried to put everything into my drawing that was important in my story. ...And when something was hard to draw, I just did the best I could.

ACTIVE INVOLVEMENT

Now close your eyes and think about something from your life that you want to tell about and draw a picture about. ... Turn and talk to your partner about your story. ... You may want a few children to share their story idea.

LINK

Today you are going to go back to your table and draw a picture of your story, just like I did. I know some of you know how to write some letters and some of you know how to write your name and some other words, so if you want to do some writing on your picture, that would be great. When you hear this signal... you'll know it's time to stop.

Work time: This period will be fairly short. Just give your students as long as they are able to sustain work on their pictures. Look out for students whose pictures match the oral story you heard them tell during the Active Involvement and ask these students if you can share their work with the class. Encourage students who are attempting to add letters or words.

SHARE

Signal. Boys and girls you all worked so hard today: you went back to your tables and drew the whole time until you heard our signal. Well done! You've all done such lovely drawings. Look how Colin's picture tells his story of going to the market with his dad... and look at Mariella's picture of her cousin's birthday party. You can see how their pictures tell their stories.

REFLECTIONS

- I'm so pleased with how quickly the students settled to their drawing! It's a little noisy and we'll have to work on that but for the most part they did well.*
- It will be interesting to look at these pieces of work and see where the students are in terms of their drawing. A few put their names on their drawings and some wrote letters too.*
- I'll make some notes on what each student is able to do and this will help me see what they need and plan my lessons.*
- Since this is the first of three growth pieces the students will be doing for their Noyce portfolios, I need to file them.*

Teaching point: *Introducing the structure of Writing Workshop*

Method: ___demonstration ___guided practice ___inquiry Xexplain & give examples

Materials needed: A pre-made chart showing the three parts of the Writing Workshop: Mini-lesson, Work Time, and Share. Photographs or drawings will make this easier for the students to understand. This can be either a linear diagram or a pie chart. (Ask colleagues at different grade levels which visual representation of Writing Workshop they use: consistency across grade levels is helpful). Paper, pencils and crayons at tables.

CONNECTION

Yesterday we told stories and drew pictures of our stories. And every day at this time we will be doing the same thing. This time is called Writing Workshop because we work on our writing and drawings and storytelling. Writers tell stories and we tell stories! This year in Kindergarten you are going to draw and write lots of stories and even make books with your stories in them just like our favorite authors like Eric Carle and David Shannon! Today I'm going to tell you what Writing Workshop time will be like so that you know just what to do every day.

TEACH

Every day, boys and girls, I will give our signal that means it's time to gather on the rug for Writing Workshop. Then I will teach you something about writing: that is called a mini-lesson. Show chart. Then it will be Work Time when you draw and write at your tables. I'll be walking around to see what you're doing and sometimes sit down beside you to talk about your story with you. You'll know when it's time to stop working when you hear our signal. Show chart. The last part of our Writing Workshop each day is when we come back to the rug to share our writing and talk about what we learned that day. Sometimes we'll sit just like we are now and other times we'll sit in a big circle - I'll let you know which way to sit. Show chart.

ACTIVE INVOLVEMENT

Today you're going to think of another story that you want to tell and then draw a picture of it. So close your eyes so you can really think about what story you would like to tell today ... Open your eyes, still thinking about your story. Joshua, can you tell me what you were thinking about? Graciela ... I am so pleased that you were all thinking so hard. Now you're ready to draw your story when you go back to your table.

LINK

Our mini-lesson is finished so now it's Work Time. It's time for you to go back to your table and draw the story you just thought of. Use every minute until you hear our signal bell so that your story will be your best work.

Work Time: Watch as students settle to their independent work, then move around the room and decide on a student with whom to confer.

Conferring: Sit beside the student and have a conversation about the content of his/her story: What are you working on? What's the story in your picture? Confer with a few students in this way.

Possible mid-workshop teaching point: *I'm so pleased to see how hard you are all working on your pictures.*

SHARE

Signal. *We just finished Work Time so now it is time for our Share. If you didn't finish your picture today, that's OK, you can work on it again tomorrow. Tomorrow we'll have Writing Workshop just like today. Fany will you show us your picture and tell us your story, please?... Ruth... Tyler... Wow! What great storytellers you are.*

REFLECTIONS

- *The students seemed to settle to work more quickly today and were happy to work a few minutes longer. Day by day we will be able to extend their independent work time.*
- *Looking at the students' folders it is interesting to see the range of abilities students start Kindergarten with. Of course, there is quite a span in ages and linguistic and educational backgrounds that will account for these differences. I must keep reminding myself to think about what the students can do and what they can "almost do" rather than what they can't do!*

Week 2: Growing as writers: independence and stamina

As we enter the second week we will continue to reinforce the rituals and routines that help to make our Workshop a productive community of writers. Bearing in mind our analysis of their on-demand writing, students will be taught strategies for sustaining effort and writing independently during Work Time so that the teacher may confer more efficiently. Students will manage their own folders and we will begin encouraging students to add print to their work in the form of labels. In conferences we are focusing on listening to our students as we support them all in moving towards adding more content and some towards adding print.

Lesson 6: Managing our writing tools

Lesson 7: Trying my best to draw my story

Lesson 8: Using a writing folder

Lesson 9: Making our stories better by adding to them

Lesson 10: Working for the whole of Work Time

Suggested literature

- See Appendix 1 for suggested Read Alouds

Charts and classroom resources

- *abc* chart, Name Chart etc.
- *Writing Workshop*

Observe your students during this week to assess how well they:

- understand the behavioral expectations of the mini-lesson, work time and share
- are able to sustain their independent work for longer periods of time
- are self-managing their writing tools
- are adding to their work
- are growing in their ability to talk and listen about their writing

Teaching point: *Managing our writing tools*

Method: ___demonstration X guided practice ___inquiry ___explain & give examples

Materials needed: chart paper, markers

Before the lesson: Think through how you expect students to independently manage their writing tools e.g. where to get paper, what to do if they need another pencil, what to do if they need a different color crayon.

CONNECTION

Tell the students that they will be writing and drawing stories every day in Writing Workshop. Today you are going to teach them how to take care of the things they need to write and draw.

TEACH

Tell the students that all workers have tools so they can do their job. Writers need tools to do their job too. Our favorite authors like Rosemary Wells and Donald Crews have tools so they can write and illustrate their books. They have pencils and paper and crayons and... and they have to look after their tools so that they are always ready to write. We are writers and we have tools too. Show classroom supplies. Tell the students they need to look after their tools so they are always ready to write. Explain your expectations for managing Writing Workshop tools. Be explicit and give just one or two procedures e.g. getting more paper, getting another pencil.

ACTIVE INVOLVEMENT

Invite one student to model how to get another sheet of paper. Ask another student to model finding a different color crayon.

LINK

Tell the students that now it is Work Time. Today they can continue yesterday's story or start a new one. Invite one table group to show how well they can organize their writing tools (paper, pencil and crayons) and begin work whilst the other students stay on the rug and observe. Name examples of good self-management. Ask the other tables to do the same.

Work Time: Look for students who are managing their writing tools well.

Conferring: As you confer, observe how the student is managing his/her writing tools and make specific comments to reinforce desired behaviors. Start to jot down some observations after each conference.

Possible mid-workshop teaching point: Compliment a student for a specific behavior that is helping him or her to work independently and/or problem solve a situation.

SHARE

Review with the students what they did to manage their writing tools independently. Thank them and tell them their independence allows you to have great conferences with them that will help them become great writers. If time, invite a few students to share their stories.

REFLECTIONS

- Observing the students, does it seem that the writing resources are well placed for ease of access?
- Which students are likely to need extra support with their management of materials?
- Think about how to record your conference notes. What record keeping system will work best for you? Talk to colleagues about how they keep records of conferences.

Teaching point: *Trying my best to draw my story*

Method: demonstration guided practice inquiry explain & give examples

Materials needed: *chart paper, markers*

CONNECTION

Yesterday I saw you getting the materials you needed for writing and drawing, things like paper and pencils and crayons, all by yourselves. I'm very happy about that and I'm also really happy about the interesting stories you have been telling. Sometimes though, we have a great story we want to tell but we think we can't draw the picture for it because it's too hard. So today I'm going to teach you how to draw those tricky pictures, so that we can tell the stories that we really want to share.

TEACH

So today I want to tell the story of how my son learned how to ride his bike. But I'm not a very good at drawing bikes. Oh no! Maybe I should just tell the story of when we went to the park instead. ... But no, I want to tell about Doug learning to ride his bike. So here goes, even though I'm not a great artist, I'm going to just try my best. I know you probably can't tell that's a bike but I'm just going to keep on trying my hardest. Now I need to draw our dog. Hmm... What should I do?

ACTIVE INVOLVEMENT

Help me out here. Turn and talk to your partner about what you think I should do. ... I heard Collin and Isabelle say, "Do your best. Keep going." So that's what I'll do ... Here's our dog, Copper.

LINK

So when you work on your drawings today and you get to a tricky part, do what I did and just try your best.

Independent Work Time:

Conferring: As you confer with students today, praise them for taking risks and making approximations in their drawings. “I like the way you tried to draw the horse even though it was hard for you because it’s such a great part of your story.”

Possible mid-workshop teaching point: *I am so pleased with how many of you are working hard to tell your stories even when we have to try and draw things that are not easy to draw!*

SHARE

Today I had a conference with Edwin and he was really trying his best with his drawing. Edwin, can you tell us what you did today, please? ... And Danielle, can you tell us about your work today, please? Well, today we learned how to be brave about drawing our stories... to say, “I’ll try my best” and then just keep going!

REFLECTIONS

- *Today’s teaching point is pretty abstract - that students should value their approximations in drawing so that they can tell stories that are important to them. I have to keep reminding myself that it’s OK that some students are not ready for some of the lessons we teach. That’s why we revisit lessons throughout the year. Some students seemed to understand today’s lesson but others didn’t...*
- *It’s fun to talk to the children about their stories. I’m learning a lot about them and their families. And it’s encouraging how many students are reluctant to stop when they hear the signal!*

Teaching point: *Using a writing folder*

Method: demonstration guided practice inquiry explain & give examples

Materials needed: A pocket folder for each student with blank pages secured inside. Turn the folder sideways (landscape) and write the child's name on the front.

Note:

1. This is one way that Kindergarten teachers have successfully dealt with paper management and supported their students in managing their writing day by day. There are obviously many other ways e.g. some teachers prefer students to have stapled booklets of blank paper. Later in the year students will be able to make choices about which type of paper is best for their writing project.
2. You may want to take time during the day for the students to personalize their folders. Sometimes photographs from home help students generate ideas to write about.
3. Today's Share will involve the children sitting in a circle on the rug. It would be a good idea to teach this ahead of time

CONNECTION

Remind the students that yesterday they learned how to try their best when they draw their interesting stories. Today we are going to learn how to keep our interesting stories safe in a writing folder. Show the students your folder and tell them how we use it "sideways". Open it to show there is a top page and a bottom page.

TEACH

Model thinking of a story to tell. Open your folder and model drawing your picture on the top page, as you tell your story. Tell the students that you will teach them how to use the bottom page another day.

ACTIVE INVOLVEMENT

Ask students to close their eyes and think of something they did that they can tell about and draw a picture of. Tell them to turn and tell their story.

LINK

Invite a student to model how to start telling her story in her folder today. Talk through what the student is doing, “Look at the way Emily picked up her folder and opened it so there is a top and bottom.... That’s right, she’s going to start drawing on the top page.”.... Distribute the folders to the students and ask them to hold them up and show where they are going to start drawing their pictures. Tell them to go to their tables and start their stories.

Independent Work Time:

Conferring: Observe how students are managing their folders and give support where needed by telling the students how to orientate them etc. We want them to be able to do it independently the next day so don’t do it for them!

Possible mid-workshop teaching point: Tell the students that Work Time is going to be a little shorter today because you are going to teach them a new way to share.

SHARE

Ask the students to bring their new folder with them to the rug, If they haven’t sat in a circle around the perimeter of the rug yet, you will need to instruct them how to do this. Tell them that when we sit this way, everyone will share and this is the best way to see each other’s stories and hear each other’s voices. Tell them that writers like to get together to share what they are working on with other writers. Model holding up your folder and telling what your story is about: “My story is about...” Go around the circle fairly quickly giving everyone a turn at sharing. Collect the students’ folders.

REFLECTIONS

- Think about how well the folder system worked for you and your students. Having all of their work together in a folder often helps students understand the concept of adding on to previous pieces rather than starting anew each day.
- Do you need to clarify or reiterate any of your expectations tomorrow?
- How did the students do with the circle share? Did they seem interested in each others' stories? Could they sustain long enough for everyone to have a turn?

Teaching point: *Making our stories better by adding to them*

Method: demonstration guided practice inquiry explain & give examples

Materials needed: Teacher's folder

Note: Some students are ready to move forward by adding words to their pictures at this stage, others are not. Know that children will take on only those parts of the lesson they can, whether it is adding to their picture or trying to label with letters or letter-like marks.

CONNECTION

Yesterday you drew great pictures in your writing folders to tell your stories. Today I'm going to teach you how you can make your story even better by adding more to your picture and by writing words, too. We can put labels on our pictures just like we have been putting labels on things around our classroom.

TEACH

Here's my folder and here's the drawing I started yesterday. I'm looking at my picture to remember the story I was telling yesterday ... Now I remember! I tickled my cat on his stomach and he got mad and scratched me! I had to put on a Band-aid. ...I think I can make my picture of my cat better by drawing some claws on him. Now I'm going to add some writing to my story. I can write some of the letters and words I know then people will be able to read my story. I know how to write "cat" so I'll write that next to my picture. I'll label my cat. Watch ... And I could write "b" for Band-Aid next to the Band-aid.

ACTIVE INVOLVEMENT

There does not need to be Active Involvement in every mini-lesson, just in those where it would help the students to have some "think time" or the opportunity for oral rehearsal. Today it seems better for the students to go ahead and attempt what has been modeled for them.

LINK

So, Kindergarten writers, today when you go to your table, I want you to do what I did... open your folder, look at your picture, remember your story and then add more to your picture to make it even better. You can also write some words on your paper to go with your story if you like. At sharing time today, we will get to see what everyone added to his/her picture. (Sometimes we give students a choice whether or not to do a "Try-it" but the expectation today is that everyone will try the strategy modeled.)

Work Time

Conferring: Conferences today will be in support of students' adding on to their pictures. Some students will need help talking through their story to extend its content pictorially, others may be amenable to being supported in adding letters or words.

Possible mid-workshop teaching point: *Wow, I'm so pleased with how you are all making your stories better! I can see so many of you adding writing.*

SHARE

Let's share around the circle again today so we can see how everyone is adding on to his or her story. I conferred with Jacob today and I want him to tell you how he added on to his picture and added some words... Now let's go around the circle and hear what everyone else did. ...What smart writers you are: you all made your stories better by adding on to them!

REFLECTIONS

- *It's great that we are investing so much time in Interactive Writing to label the room. The children are familiar with the idea of naming things in writing by labeling them and can begin to transfer this concept to their drawings.*
- *Students sharing their thinking is empowering for them and it is an important teaching tool. By thoughtfully selecting students during conferences, I can enable the class to learn from the smart work of their peers.*
- *For the most part the children are sustaining well throughout Work Time but I think this would be a good point for a lesson on how writers can keep working the whole time.*

Teaching point: *Working for the whole of Work Time*

Method: ___demonstration X guided practice ___inquiry ___explain & give examples

Materials needed: Pre-select an articulate student volunteer who can help you show how we can work on more than one piece of writing during Work Time

CONNECTION

Remind your students that yesterday they worked really hard to add on to their stories to make them better. Remind them that it is important to keep on working all the time during Work Time. We can't just stop working or start talking to our friends or get up to find a book to read: we need to keep on writing. Tell them that Mariela is going to help you show the class how we make good choices so that we have something we are proud of at the end of Work Time every day.

TEACH

Help Mariela show her classmates what she started working on yesterday and how she added words to make it better. Then help her show how she went back and added on to the piece she had worked on previously and then help her show how she started a new piece. Explain how Mariela worked on three different pieces because she is a great writer and wants to do her best every day. (The teacher could also model this with her own folder.)

ACTIVE INVOLVEMENT

Ask students to decide what they want to do when they get their folders today. Do you want to work more on a story already in your folder or start something new? Tell them to turn and talk to their partner about their plan. Ask a few students to tell the class what they told their partner.

LINK

Tell the students to go back to their tables, open their folders and start working. Tell them you will be watching to see who can keep drawing and writing for the whole of Work Time.

Work Time: Observe as students get to work. Do they take time to review their folder and decide what to do?

Conferring: Notice and praise how students are able to sustain their effort by revisiting old pieces. Some conferring may be directed at teaching the expected behaviors.

Possible mid-workshop teaching point: Congratulate the class on working so hard today.

SHARE

From your conferences tell the stories of a few students who worked the whole time today, asking them to share their work. Connect quality to productivity by using such phrases as, “ You can be really proud of this... I noticed how you were working the whole time.”

REFLECTIONS

- This lesson is a great foundation for developing the important skill of re-reading our writing. How many students revisited “old” work rather than automatically starting something new today?
- Consider the noise level during Work Time. Can you comfortably converse with students during conferences? Does it seem that the chat is productive?

Week 3: Growing as writers: the reading-writing connection

Our students are becoming great storytellers, recounting the stories of their lives orally, in pictures and in novice attempts at print. They now have a few pieces of work in their folders that they have revised by adding on to their pictures or by adding words. This week we will encourage our Kindergarten writers to use the resources in the room such as the abc chart and the Name Chart to help them use letters and words. Students will learn how to share their work with a partner. In our conferences we are becoming more systematic about recording our observations and we are beginning to see conferring as an opportunity for assessment.

Lesson 11: Making our pictures match our stories

Lesson 12: Using the *abc* chart to write letters and words

Lesson 13: Sharing our stories with a partner

Lesson 14: Using the Name Chart to write letters and words

Lesson 15: Making our story, picture and words match

Suggested literature

- I Like Books: Anthony Browne (matching picture and story)
- My Spring Robin: Anne Rockwell (matching picture and story)
- Dandelion: Don Freeman (matching picture and text)
- Owl Babies: Martin Waddell (matching picture and text)
- Apples and Pumpkins: Anne Rockwell (matching picture and text)

Charts and classroom resources

- *abc* chart, Name Chart etc.
- *Writing Workshop*

Observe your students during this week to assess how well they:

- are able to make their pictures and their words match their story
- use the classroom charts to help them write letters and words
- share their stories with a partner

Teaching point: *Making our pictures match our stories*

Method: demonstration guided practice inquiry explain & give examples

Materials needed: A simple Read Aloud with pictures that closely match the text

Before the lesson: Read a few simple books and notice how the story and pictures match e.g. *I Like Books* by Anthony Browne, *My Spring Robin* by Anne Rockwell

CONNECTION

Remind your children of their noticing about the Read Aloud that the pictures and story match. Tell the students that good writers make sure that their pictures match their story. Tell them that today you are going to show them how to make sure that their picture matches with their story.

TEACH

Model revisiting one your pieces. Retell the story showing how what you are telling matches what is in the picture. Think Aloud asking yourself: Is everything in my story in my picture? Are there things in my picture that aren't in my story? Model adding to your picture things that will make it match the oral story more closely.

LINK

Tell the students to ask themselves as they work today whether their picture matches their story. Invite them to add more to their pictures if need be. Tell them that everyone will share today.

Work Time:

Conferring: Be sure to jot down your observations of students' developing skills as you confer with them today about their stories and pictures.

Possible mid-workshop teaching point: Name and praise students who are working hard to make their pictures match their story.

SHARE

Share around the circle, reinforcing procedures and adding expectations, if appropriate e.g. telling students to look right at the person who is talking and really listen to what they are saying. Each child tells their story and shows their picture: comment on how well they match.

REFLECTIONS

- Think about how your students are growing in their independence in Writing Workshop. Are there some students who seem needy and attempt to interrupt your conferences etc.? What specific behaviors need to be developed in these children?
- Think about how far so many students have come in terms of their Workshop behavior and their developing oral and literacy skills in such a short period of time.

Teaching point: *Using the abc chart to write letters and words*

Method: ___demonstration ___guided practice Xinquiry ___explain & give examples

Materials needed: *abc chart with upper and lower case forms and a picture for each letter*

Before the lesson: Beginning on the first or second day of school, the *abc* chart is chanted many, many times (/a/.../a/...apple.... a) so that the children are already very familiar with it.

Note: 1. Decide, based on your children's letter knowledge, whether to model only the initial consonant for two or three words today or to go further into the words, listening for and writing other dominant sounds.

2. The purpose of today's lesson is to teach the children to connect chanting the chart (which they can already do) to finding the letter they hear. It also establishes the expectation that they must do the work of saying words and writing what they hear rather than have you do the work for them!

CONNECTION

You have been drawing pictures every day to tell your wonderful stories and today I'm going to teach you how you can use our abc chart to write words for your story too.

TEACH

So I'm looking in my folder here for my most recent story... Here's the picture of my soccer practice story. I want to make it even better by adding some words. Then when people see my picture they can read my words and they will know more about what happened to me. I want everyone to know that this is a cone... so I'll figure out what I hear when I say "cone" and then use the abc chart to find the letter. Watch my mouth and listen... cone... did you hear the /k/ sound? Let's look at the chart... oh yes, that's like /c/... /c/...cat... c. So now I've figured I can write a 'c' for cone. Watch as I make my 'c' on my paper, right by the cone... Decide whether to model hearing, finding and writing the other dominant sounds in 'cone' or the initial consonants of two or three other words.

ACTIVE INVOLVEMENT

Think of something in your story that you are working on that you could write a word for. I want you to tell your partner what that word is and see if you can look at the chart to figure out which letter to use first. OK so think of your word... now turn and talk. I heard Mahogany say "watermelon" to her partner because her story is about eating watermelons. Then they figured out that it starts with /w/ just like /w/.../w/... worm...w. So now Mahogany will know just what to do when she opens her folder... she'll write 'w' by the watermelon in her picture.

LINK

So Kindergarten writers, today you are going to label the things that are important in your pictures. Use the abc chart just like Mahogany and I did. If you finish labeling one picture you can label things in another of your stories or start a new story.

Work Time:

Conferring: Support students in their use of the *abc* chart but make sure you are not doing the work for them! Encourage them to listen for the sounds and look at the chart. **Possible mid-workshop teaching point:** Bring to everyone's attention students who are actively using the *abc* chart to help them add words to their pictures.

SHARE

I saw lots of you working very hard today using the abc chart to help you add words to your pictures to make your great stories even better. Rose, can you share your story with us today please? What a great job you did, Rose, using the chart to help you label your picture. Jose... Excellent work, boys and girls! Our abc chart really helped us work out which letters to write. It will be right here every day so we can keep using it when we write words.

REFLECTIONS

- I think this lesson went really well and many students were actively carrying out the work of the mini-lesson by using the chart but I think it would be a good idea to spend another day on this since it is so important that students begin to hear the sound in words.*
- As the students are deepening their understanding of the expectations of Workshop and growing in their independence, many things are coming together and the tone of our Workshop is definitely improving.*

Teaching point: *Sharing our stories with a partner*

Method: ___demonstration X guided practice ___inquiry ___explain & give examples

Materials needed: *(optional) carpet squares*

CONNECTION

Tell the students that writers work hard on their stories every day so that they can share them with other people. Today we are going to learn how to share one of the stories in our folders with a partner.

TEACH

Select two students and, in guided practice, help them model how to sit close to each other, knee-to-knee, eye-to-eye, with one child's folder in the middle and the other's off to the side. The child whose folder is in the middle goes first and tells her story whilst her partner listens and then tells his story.

ACTIVE INVOLVEMENT

Tell the students that we are going to do something different today. Ask them to quickly go and get their folders and return to the rug. Ask them to take a moment to find a story they want to share. Tell them to turn and face their partner and share their pieces just like their friends modeled for them. Circulate amongst the partners, listening out for interesting stories and noticing good sharing. Support partners as needed.

LINK

Tell the students that you heard many interesting stories today and comment on how listening to other people's stories gives us ideas for our own writing. Tell the students it is now Work Time and they should continue with yesterday's story or start a new one, perhaps using an idea they just heard from their partner.

Work Time:

Conferring: As you sit down to conference with students think what each child most needs at this point: some will need to talk through the content of their story and need support getting this idea into a picture, others will be trying to label using the *abc* chart. We differentiate our instruction in conferences to meet the needs of each child.

Possible mid-workshop teaching point: Comment on the tone of the room: "Look around the room, Kindergarten writers. Everyone is working so hard on their writing today. This is what Writing Workshop should look like. This is what Writing Workshop should sound like. Well done!"

SHARE

Ask students to bring their folders to the rug. Review the procedure for partner sharing and then have the students move into the same partnerships as earlier to share today's work.

REFLECTIONS

- Think about how well the students were able to work in their partnerships today. What went well with the sharing? What needs more practice?
- How are the conferences going? Are you feeling comfortable with seeing three or four students a day? Are you reaching all the students every few days? Is your record keeping helping you to do this?

Teaching point: *Using the Name Chart to write letters and words*

Method: ___demonstration X guided practice ___inquiry ___explain & give examples

Materials needed: *Class Name Chart created during the first week of school.*

Before the lesson: In order for this lesson to be successful, the children will have to be very familiar with the Name Chart and all the names on it. Work with the Name Chart as a shared reading activity just before this lesson.

CONNECTION

Look at how well Jose is adding words to his stories by labeling them. Jose told me he used the abc chart to help him write these words. Today Jose is going to help me show you how we can also use our Name Chart to help us write words for our stories.

TEACH

Jose told me when we were conferring yesterday that he wants to work some more on his story about his cousin's birthday party and he wants to write about the piñata. Can you see the piñata in his picture? So, Jose let's say the word "piñata" and listen for the sounds we can hear. What's the first sound? ... /p/ ... Well done! Now let's look at our Name Chart ... Does anyone in our class have a name that begins with that sound /p/? ... That's right! Patricia. I can hear the /p/ at the beginning of Patricia's name. Look here at the chart.

(How to proceed will depend on your students. How many sounds do you want to model in this guided practice? Should it just be initial sounds or initial and final or clear medial? Having observed your students and conferred with them you should have an idea of what would be "in the realm of doable" for some of your students.

ACTIVE INVOLVEMENT

So let's see if we can help Jose write another word for his story. What else do you want to write, Jose? ... "Soccer ball" ... OK. Let's all say "soccer ball" slowly. What sound do you hear first? ... /s/... Well done! Whose name in our room starts with /s/?... Solomon, you're right and here it is on the chart! S... Solomon.

LINK

So when you open up your writing folder today, find a story where you want to write some words like Jose did and see if you can use the Name Chart to help you like he did.

Work Time :

Conferring: Support students in thinking about where and how they can add words to their stories using the charts.

Possible mid-workshop teaching point: Name and praise students who are obviously trying to listen for the sounds in words and who are using the charts to help them write those sounds.

SHARE

I am so proud of my Kindergarten writers! They all have such interesting stories to tell. I'm learning so much about you and your families and the things you like to do together by hearing and reading your stories! Today I conferred with Ram and Sophia and they were both working hard on using the Name Chart to help them add words to their stories, so today I'm going to ask them to share. ... So now you know that you can use the abc chart and the Name Chart to help you work out which letters to write. We'll have the charts right here every day so you can keep using them when you write words.

REFLECTIONS

- *Jose did such a great job during the guided practice part of the mini-lesson. It is good to vary using published authors, my own writing and students' writing as models in mini-lessons.*
- *Using the charts throughout the day is really important to support the reading-writing connection.*

Teaching point: *Making our story, picture and words match*

Method: demonstration guided practice inquiry explain & give examples

Materials needed: *Read Alouds with pictures that closely match the text e.g. Dandelion by Donald Freeman, Owl Babies by Martin Waddell, Apples and Pumpkins by Anne Rockwell*

Before the lesson: Read one or two books and notice how the pictures closely match the text.

CONNECTION

Remind the students that yesterday they used the Name Chart to write some words to go with their story. Tell them that today we are going to work on making sure that our picture and our words match the story we want to tell.

TEACH

Model thinking of a story and draw the picture while telling it. Add a few labels and Think Aloud how your picture and words tell your story. The story, the picture and the words all match. Teaching by non-example might help here: “ Hmm... maybe I’ll draw a snake here... wait a minute... there’s no snake in my story! I’m not going to draw a snake.”

ACTIVE INVOLVEMENT

Ask the students to think for a moment about the story they want to tell today and then ask them to turn and briefly tell their story to their partner. Share a few story ideas.

LINK

Tell the students they may start the story they were just telling or continue working on a piece in their folder. Remind them to do as you did and ask themselves, "Does my picture match my story? Do my words match my story?"

Work Time:

Conferring: Remember that listening is very important in conferences. As the year goes on your conferences will have a research-decide-teach structure. Listening is part of the research and determines the success of your conference. Listen to your students as they tell you what they are doing rather than jump in and suggest how they should be doing it.

Possible mid-workshop teaching point: Praise students who quietly and purposefully discuss their work. Learning from other writers is one of our key objectives.

SHARE

Ask students to bring their folders to the rug because they will share their stories with a partner again today. Briefly review how to sit and how to actively listen in a partner share. Ask students to share their stories. Listen in and conclude by reinforcing the day's teaching point by praising the students for how well they made their pictures and words match their story.

REFLECTIONS

- Think about how students are progressing in their use of print. Sometimes it is helpful to confer with students who have similar needs in a small group. Take a look at your class list and see if this would be a helpful strategy. As long as the procedures for gathering these students together are easy and the rest of the class is fairly independent and productive, small group conferring can be an efficient way to support a number of students with similar needs.

Week 4: Generating more writing

Day by day our Kindergarten students are growing as writers, drawing more detailed pictures, listening for sounds and beginning to write letters and words to help them tell the stories of their lives. They are able to sustain independent work for longer periods of time which enables us, as teachers, to concentrate more on the quality of our conversations with students in conferences. More students are actively using the classroom resources to help them add print to their stories. Students are practicing talking about and reading their writing and listening to others share theirs.

Lesson 16: Using a picture rubric to help us make our work even better

Lesson 17: Using words to tell our stories

Lesson 18: Listening for sounds and writing them in order

Lesson 19: Thinking of a new story to draw and write

Lesson 20: Reading the words we write

Suggested literature

- Bunny Cakes: Rosemary Wells (using words to tell our stories)
- My Friend John: Charlotte Zolotow (using words to tell our stories)

Charts and classroom resources

- *abc* chart, Name Chart etc.
- *Writing Workshop*
- *Picture rubric*

Observe your students during this week to assess how well they:

- use the picture rubric
- use words to tell their stories
- listen for sounds and write them in order
- are developing their own preferred strategies as a writer: drawing first or writing first
- can read the words they write

Teaching point: *Using a picture rubric to help us make our work even better*

Method: ___demonstration ___guided practice ___inquiry Xexplain & give examples

Materials needed: Three pictures ranging from incomplete to well done. It is better that this is student work and it is a good idea to keep work from this year to use on your rubric next year. Do not use your current students' work for obvious reasons. If you have no student work you can draw pictures that represent the range of what a Kinder child, with time and teaching, can accomplish.

Before the lesson: Collect or draw the pictures and have a piece of chart paper ready to post them on.

CONNECTION

We are all growing as writers in this class. The pictures we draw to tell our stories are getting better day by day. So many of you are starting to add words to your pictures too. Today I'm going to show you a way to think about how to make your pictures even better.

TEACH

Let's look at these three pictures. I like this picture, can you see the boy and his brother. It's good but it doesn't have everything it needs. I wonder where they are? What are they doing? It's a good start but it doesn't really tell us a story, does it? ... How about this one? It's better, isn't it? I can tell the children are playing in the park, there's a soccer ball ... and it's colored carefully too. ...Wow! Look at this picture. It has all the important things in it that I need to understand the story - there's Mom and Dad and brother and the girl and they're having a picnic in the park. What beautiful coloring! I think she worked really hard on this story, don't you? Put the three pictures on the chart paper in order.

LINK

When you go to your tables today I want you to open your folder and find the picture you started yesterday. Think about your picture... Is it like this one? A start. ... Is it like this one? Good. ... Is it like this one? Wow! ... If it's not "Wow!" then you might want to think about how to make it "Wow!" You could add more to it... you could color more things...you could color more carefully... I'll be coming around to see exactly what you do and during our Share we'll talk about the ways you are making your pictures better.

Work Time:

Conferring: Talk to the students about the rubric and where they see their drawing in relation to it. Help them articulate how they might make their drawings better.

Possible mid-workshop teaching point: Praise a student who is looking at and thinking about the rubric.

SHARE

I'm going to write some words so that we remember what we noticed about these pictures. This one is a start, so I'm writing "a start" right above it.

Use positive descriptors that are meaningful to your students. This one is good, so I'm writing "good". This one is wow! so I'm writing "wow!". Boys and girls, we call this a rubric and it is a tool to help us make our work even better.

Let's see how people used our rubric today to help them. Collin, tell us how you used our rubric today and what you did to make your picture better.

... Marissa... Ram... Thank you! What a great job you all did using the rubric to help you make your stories better.

REFLECTIONS

- Some students seem to understand the purpose of the rubric but others will need more support in seeing how to use it. Later, I can add writing below the pictures and take it to another level.*
- The children definitely seem to be enjoying Writing Workshop. It's important for all of us that this is fun!*

Teaching point: *Using words to tell our story*

Method: demonstration guided practice inquiry explain & give examples

Materials needed: *A familiar Read Aloud that has pictures and text on each page e.g. Bunny Cakes by Rosemary Wells or My Friend John by Charlotte Zolotow.*

Before the lesson: Enjoy the Read Aloud noticing the way there are both words and pictures on the page to tell the story. Ask the children to find the picture and find the words on a couple of pages.

CONNECTION

You have been working hard at drawing pictures to tell your stories and you have been writing some words on your pictures to label your stories. This morning when we read Bunny Cakes we noticed that Rosemary Wells uses words and pictures to tell her story. So, today I'm going to teach you how you can write words for your story too and we're going to write those words on the bottom part of the page in your folder.

TEACH

So, here's my folder and first I need to decide which story I want to write words for. Model looking back through your folder at stories you have previously drawn. Oh, here's the one I want... remember the story about my cat scratching me? I tickled my cat on his stomach and he got a little bit mad and scratched me! I had to put on a Band-aid. Today I'm going to write that story. Here's where I'm going to write the words, underneath my picture on the bottom part of my folder, right here. I'll write the first part. ... I... tickled... my... cat... Model saying each word slowly. I know how to write "I". Now I want to write "tickled"... /t/ I can use the Name Chart to help me ... /t/ Tyler ... Continue modeling using the strategies and resources already taught in Writing Workshop and which you use daily in Interactive Writing. I'm going to read my words again now to see what comes next, just like we do when we write together...

ACTIVE INVOLVEMENT

Involve the children in your demonstration. Listen as I read my story and see if you can figure out what word I need next. I ... tickled ... That's right "my". What can I use to help me write "my"?...

LINK

So today, your job is to pick which story you want to write the words for and then do your best to write your words underneath your picture, on the bottom part of your folder. Right here. I can hardly wait to see your writing!

Work Time:

Conferring: Today might be a good day for a small group conference with children you feel are “almost ready” to take on today’s teaching. Immediate support may help to reinforce expectations.

Possible mid-workshop teaching point: Comment on how well everyone is doing using the bottom part of his or her folders.

SHARE

Hunter will you share your story today, please? Show us your picture and your words. ... And Steven, you did such a great job with your words today too... Wow! Today boys and girls you used a picture and words to tell your story just like Rosemary Wells does.

REFLECTIONS

- *This is an important step that a few students were definitely ready for. Obviously not all of them but I can repeat the lesson as more children become ready for it.*
- *I’m glad I’m keeping a note of who gets to share to ensure that it’s not always the same children.*
- *Some students seem to be telling the same story over and over. I need to model coming up with different ideas.*

Teaching point: *Listening for sounds and writing them in order*

Method: ___demonstration X guided practice ___inquiry ___explain & give examples

Materials needed: *Teacher's folder*

CONNECTION

Remind the children that yesterday they started to write words underneath their pictures on the bottom part of their folders. They did their best to say the words slowly and write down the sounds. Today you are going to teach them how to listen hard for the sounds in words so that they know which ones to write.

TEACH

Tell the students that you are going to continue writing the story you started writing yesterday. Model re-reading what you wrote yesterday. Then tell how you want to continue with another sentence. Say the next sentence. Model saying the words slowly and actively listening for the sounds. Take the most obvious sounds, one at a time, in order: say the sound... listen... Think Aloud which chart might help you write the sound. The goal here is not correct spelling, rather teaching the children a strategy so they can use what they know about letters and sounds to write their story. Yr modl mt lk smg lk ds.

ACTIVE INVOLVEMENT

Invite the children to help with the next word. Say the word together, ask them what sound they heard first. Say the initial sound together, listen together and elicit a strategy for deciding how to write it. Repeat for one or two more sounds.

LINK

Ask the students to find the story they want to work on today in their folder. Tell them to say the words of their story slowly, listening hard for the sounds and then write the words under their picture on the bottom part of their folder like they just helped you do.

Work Time:

Conferring: Support individual children by teaching them the one thing you observe they need next. Some children may be ready to write a sentence or even a second sentence while others may still need to tell you their story with your teaching focused on supporting their oral telling.

Possible mid-workshop teaching point: Thank the students for their hard work today in listening for sounds.

SHARE

Remind the children how to share their work with a partner and invite them to share their words and pictures. Praise them for writing words for their stories by listening hard and writing the sounds for the words.

REFLECTIONS

- Take time to regularly review your conference records to see how effective your note taking is. Are you using your notes to plan mini-lessons and assess individual and group needs? From today's notes, how many students are trying to listen for sounds and write them in order?
- Think about how you are making explicit connections for your students between Writing Workshop and the other literacy activities you do together during the day.

Teaching point: *Thinking of a new story to draw and write*

Method: X demonstration ___guided practice ___inquiry ___explain & give examples

Materials needed: *Teacher's folder*

Before the lesson: Think of a new story to model today

CONNECTION

Yesterday I wrote the words for a story I had already thought about and drawn a picture for. When a writer is ready to think about a new story, sometimes he draws the picture first, sometimes he writes the words first. Today, I'll teach you how to think of a new story, draw it and write about it.

TEACH

So I'm thinking about the time when I went to the beach with my family and we found a starfish. ... My husband and my children and our dog were walking on the beach when my son found a starfish. ... Tell the story while quickly drawing the picture. I'm not going to color my picture now because I want to write what I want people to read while I remember it! I can always color tomorrow. Model writing a sentence using the strategies and resources taught in previous lessons.

ACTIVE INVOLVEMENT

Think of a story about something that you have done recently. ... Now, turn and talk, so someone else can hear your story. Listen in on their stories. Eyes back on me. ... Ryan, tell us the story you were just telling Edgar, please...

LINK

So, all of you will work on your new story today, the one you've just been talking about. When you open your folder, find the very next new page, draw your picture up here and then write the words down here. At sharing time we will get to see everyone's story.

Work Time :

Conferring: Think about conferring with a student for whom producing a drawing and print will be a challenge today. Try to time your conference for when he has a fairly complete picture so that you can talk through how to move to the bottom of the page to add whatever form of letter approximations are possible for him.

Possible mid-workshop teaching point: *Wow! Just look at you all coming up with such great stories and telling them with pictures and words!*

SHARE

We're going to share around the circle today so that we get to hear everyone's story. Bring your folders to the rug please. Review procedures as necessary. So, Matthew, will you start for us please? Tell us about your story. ... That's really interesting, Matthew, thank you. Fany... I can tell you listened to the sounds so you could write your story. ... Wow! What great writers you all are. Today we told and drew and wrote new stories. It's OK if you didn't finish because we can work on these pieces some more tomorrow.

REFLECTIONS

- It's amazing to think how far these children have grown as writers in just four weeks - it is very exciting! Their confidence is building day by day... and so is mine!*

Teaching point: *Reading the words we write*

Method: ___demonstration X guided practice ___inquiry ___explain & give examples

Materials needed: *Teacher's folder*

CONNECTION

Remind the children that yesterday they all worked on a new story. Today they are going to work on that story some more and so you are going to teach them how to read the words they wrote yesterday so they'll know what to write next.

TEACH

Use your story from the previous day to model. Think Aloud as you look again at your picture and then your words. Pointing at your words, re-read to remember what you wrote and then re-read again to help you think about what to write next. Show where you are going to start writing again and quickly model writing your next sentence, saying each word and writing the sounds. Re-read your whole story, clearly pointing at each word as you say it.

LINK

Tell your students to find the story they started yesterday and read all the words they wrote. If they didn't write any words then they should tell their story from their drawing and then try to write some words today. After they write words, they should point under them and read them just like you modeled. Writers can read the words they write. When you are a writer, you are also a reader!

Work Time:

Conferring: Support students in pointing at their words and their approximations as they read them.

Possible mid-workshop teaching point: Tell the students how the hum of everyone reading their words that is filling the room makes you very happy!

SHARE

Ask a few children to share their written stories and comment on how well they are putting their finger under each word as they read it. Congratulate the students on what great readers and writers they are becoming!

REFLECTIONS

- Think about how you want to celebrate your students' first publishing next week. You will be having several celebrations during the course of the year so it is important that you do not set the bar too high for the first one! It may be that you simply want to celebrate the classroom community you have created over the past few weeks and that you want the celebration to be just for you and your students. You may want to invite parents, the principal or other school adults to participate in this important milestone: Kindergarten's first publishing. Think also about whether or not you want to provide a snack and/or a toast. Keeping the focus on the growth the children have made as writers and your pride in their hard work can be challenging if the celebration gets too involved.

Week 5: Putting it all together

This week brings to a close our introductory unit of study, Living the Life of a Writer. Our youngest writers have made great progress learning the rituals and routines of Writing Workshop, growing in their independence and stamina and laying strong foundations for their literacy development. They will learn another strategy for using classroom resources to help them write words. Finally they will choose a story to publish which they will revise and share. Conferences will focus on supporting students make their chosen piece their personal best.

Lesson 21: Using the Word Wall to spell some words

Lesson 22: Reading our stories and choosing one to publish

Lesson 23: Revising our stories

Lesson 24: Practicing reading our story for sharing

Lesson 25: Sharing our published stories

Suggested literature

- Have You Seen My Cat?: Eric Carle (publishing)

Charts and classroom resources

- *abc* chart, Name Chart etc.
- *Writing Workshop*
- *picture rubric*

Observe your students during this week to assess how well they:

- begin to use the Word Wall
- re-read their work
- are able to make a decision about which story to publish
- understand the concept of revision
- are able to read their work for sharing

Teaching point: *Using the Word Wall to spell some words*

Method: demonstration guided practice inquiry explain & give examples

Materials needed: *Word Wall, 2 -3 word cards with short, simple, high frequency words e.g. I, we, to, my, the, mom*

Before the lesson: The Word Wall has been built up with the children over time so that they understand that it is organized in alphabetical order, that it is the first letter that determines the placement of words on the Wall and that each card on the Wall is a word.

CONNECTION

Last time we all worked hard on our stories and practiced reading the words we wrote. In my story I wrote the word “the” (show your story and point to “the”) and I want to tell you how I was able to write that word easily. I didn’t have to sound it out because it’s not a long word or a tricky word. “The” is a word I write a lot and I know it well. It’s in my brain and I can write it easily. I want “the” to be a word that’s easy for you too so that you can write it whenever you need it. So today I’ll teach you how to learn some words so you can write them easily. We are going to use the Word Wall to help us learn those words.

TEACH

Look at my story and let’s find the word “the”. There it is! Now let’s look around the room and see where else we can see “the”. ... It’s in our song... Let’s spell it together... close your eyes and think of the way “the” looks... Now open your eyes and look at it written here! Were you right? So now you can write that word the easy way (some teachers say “in a snap”) when you need it. Now, just in case you forget, here’s the word “the” on a card that I’m going to put on our Word Wall under “t” so you can look at it if you need to. Teach another high frequency word in the same way and add it to the Word Wall. The object is to teach the children how to memorize words and use the Word Wall to remember or check words.

ACTIVE INVOLVEMENT

So now I’m going to ask you to help me put this word on our Word Wall. Turn and tell your partner where you think it goes.

LINK

When you want to write a word today, see if you have that word in your brain and can write it down. If you're not sure of a word or you don't know how to write it, you can see if it's on the Word Wall. Think about the first sound and then see where that sound is on the Word Wall and that will help you.

Work Time :

Conferring: Support students in attempting to write high frequency words fluently without using the Word Wall unless they need to.

Possible mid-workshop teaching point: *Wow! I can see how some of you are trying to picture the words you want to write in your brain and then writing them down. And look at Diana over there using the Word Wall. What great writers you all are!*

SHARE

Once a word is easy for you, because you remember it, then you are an expert on that word. I saw some experts at work today. I noticed that when Gregory was writing his story (show his work), he stopped for just a moment. I could tell he was thinking and then he wrote the word "the" pretty easily! Then he did another smart thing...I saw him look up at the Word Wall to check and see if he had remembered how to write "the" and he found he was exactly right! ...And then I saw Ruth write the word "my" all by herself. She didn't need to say it slowly and write the sounds... she was able to write it the easy way because it is a word she knows in her brain. So, boys and girls, good writers are able to write words easily because they know them. Day by day you will know more words and you will be able to write them the easy way because you have them in your brain.

REFLECTIONS

- *This was encouraging! Even some of the children who don't really get it approximated the behaviors they knew I wanted to see and that is a start!*

Teaching point: *Reading our stories and choosing one to publish*

Method: demonstration guided practice inquiry explain & give examples

Materials needed: *teacher's folder, picture rubric, sticky notes*

Before the lesson: Put a sticky note at each child's place.

CONNECTION

Writers write lots and lots of stories but they share only their best ones with other people. We all love Eric Carle's books and I'm sure he writes every day, just like we do. He has lots and lots of stories to tell but only some of them are made into books that we can read like Have You Seen My Cat? , only some are published. Today I'm going to show you how to decide which story in your folder you would like to share with other people.

TEACH

I want to choose a story that is interesting, that other people will want to read... and it should be one of my best ones... one of my "wow!" stories. Refer to picture rubric criteria. Model re-reading a few stories in your folder that are familiar to the students. I like all three of these stories but which one do I think people would be most interested in, which one would other people most like to read? ... I think the one about my cat scratching me. ... That's a good story and I did careful work on it and my picture matches my words. ... It's one of my best stories. This is the one I'm going to choose and I'm going to put this sticky note on it so that it sticks out. Look, when I close my folder I can find my cat story quickly.

LINK

So when you get to your table, read some of the stories you think are your best ones and decide which one you want to share with everyone. Then put the sticky note on that page, just like I did. At sharing time we'll tell each other which story we chose!

Work Time : Work Time will be shorter than usual today.

Conferring: Move quickly around the room, supporting students in the work of deciding which story to publish.

SHARE

This will be longer than usual today. Boys and girls, when we choose a story to share with lots of people and then work on it some more to make it our very best work, we call that “publishing”. We are going to publish the stories you chose today. Tomorrow we’ll work on them a bit more so they are really terrific and then we’ll share them with each other (and some grownups). Then we’ll put them up on the wall so anyone who comes into our room will get to see our great stories. So let’s see which stories everyone chose. Let’s tell each other a little bit about the story we are going to publish. Like this: “I chose my story about my cat scratching me...” ... You have made such great choices! Tomorrow we’ll work on these stories to make them even better and then we can share our finished stories. Well done!

REFLECTIONS

- It’s interesting to watch the children decide on one piece: some students stuck the sticky on the first story they came to, others consciously weighed one against another. Practicing decision-making is a good thing!
- The students are getting better about sharing around the circle. It’s going much more quickly now and I can hear almost all of them!

Teaching point: *Revising our stories*

Method: demonstration guided practice inquiry explain & give examples

Materials needed: *teacher's chosen piece, picture rubric*

Before the lesson: Remove the students' chosen piece from the folder and put it at their working place.

CONNECTION

Remind the students that yesterday they chose one of their best stories to publish, to share with lots of people. Tell them that today we want to make sure that piece is as good as we can make it so that other people will enjoy looking at it and reading it.

TEACH

Using your chosen story, model re-reading the words to make sure it says what you want it to say. Read slowly, pointing to the words as you read "to make sure all the words are there". Model changing something to make it better e.g. "I'm going to read the last part that I wrote. Listen to see if you notice something I need to fix up, "I put a Band-aid on arm." Add the word "my" then re-read to check.

ACTIVE INVOLVEMENT

Ask the students to turn and talk about other ways you could fix up your story. Remind them to look at the picture rubric. Share suggestions such as adding more words to the story, coloring the picture carefully etc.

LINK

Tell the students that their chosen piece is at their work place ready for them to re-read and think about how they might want to work on it some more to make it their best work. Encourage them to use the picture rubric.

Work Time :

Conferring: Talk to students about what they are doing to make their work better.

Possible mid-workshop teaching point: Commend the students' hard work making sure their story is as good as possible. Comment on careful re-reading, beautiful coloring etc...

SHARE

Select a few students to describe what they did to revise their story, to make it better. Congratulate the class on working so hard to publish such great stories.

REFLECTIONS

- It is a good idea for students to have a chance to practice reading their stories aloud, especially if they are going to do it in front of invited guests, so that should be the next lesson.

Teaching Point: *Practicing reading our story for sharing*

Method: ___demonstration Xguided practice ___inquiry ___explain & give examples

Materials needed: *students' published pieces*

Note: Today's Work Time will be shorter than usual as the students are simply practicing reading their pieces.

CONNECTION

Remind your students that yesterday they worked hard to make their chosen pieces the best they could be. Tell them that today we want to practice reading our pieces aloud so that everyone can enjoy them when we share them at our celebration tomorrow. Whenever we do something for other people to see or hear we have to practice like when we do a concert, a play, a dance or music recital. Today we are going to practice reading our stories.

TEACH

Tell the students that they are going to share their writing tomorrow and that it is really important that they are "loud and proud" so that everyone can enjoy their stories. Show students what it looks and sounds like when we mumble or cover our faces with our papers. Model how to read our work in a loud and clear voice, holding the paper appropriately. Model reading your published piece, showing how we try to remember the intent of our approximations to print by using our pictures.

LINK

Ask students to go back to their work place and practice reading their story several times. Tell them to think about how they are holding their paper etc.

Work Time : Work Time will be short and noisy today!

Conferring: Confer with students who need support re-reading their approximations to print.

Possible mid-workshop teaching point : Praise the students for practicing intently.

SHARE

Invite the students to share their story with a partner. Tell them that tomorrow they will share around the circle (and to parents, Principal, other school adults if that is what you have chosen to do). Tomorrow we celebrate publishing our first piece of Kindergarten writing!

REFLECTIONS

- Take a moment to think about the successes of the past few weeks as you have supported your Kindergarteners in living the life of a writer! Feel proud as you look at their published work.

Teaching Point: *Sharing our published stories*

Method: ___demonstration X guided practice ___inquiry ___explain & give examples

Materials needed: students' published pieces, optional refreshments

Before the lesson: Think about the tone you want to create for today's celebration. You want to make it a special occasion but the focus should be on the sharing of the students' accomplishments.

CONNECTION

Recount for the students (and guests) some of the things they have learned in the past few weeks in Writing Workshop: storytelling, telling a story in a picture, labeling, adding words etc. Tell them that today we are celebrating all that hard work by sharing our published pieces.

SHARE

Invite the students to gather in a circle and place their stories on the floor in front of them. Remind the students of the procedures for sharing into the circle and then ask one student to begin sharing "loud and proud" as they practiced the previous day. Proceed around the circle so that each student shares. After the whole group share, if desired and if time allows, the children can share their work with each other or the adult visitors at their tables. Tell the students that you are going to put their work up onto the wall so that everyone who comes into the room can enjoy it and know that this is a class full of excellent writers!

REFLECTIONS

- Take time to write a reflection on how this opening unit of Writing Workshop has gone. Feel good about how far you and your students have come in a short period of time and think about how you will be able to reinforce this foundational learning throughout the year.