

Living the Life
of a Writer
✧
First Grade

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

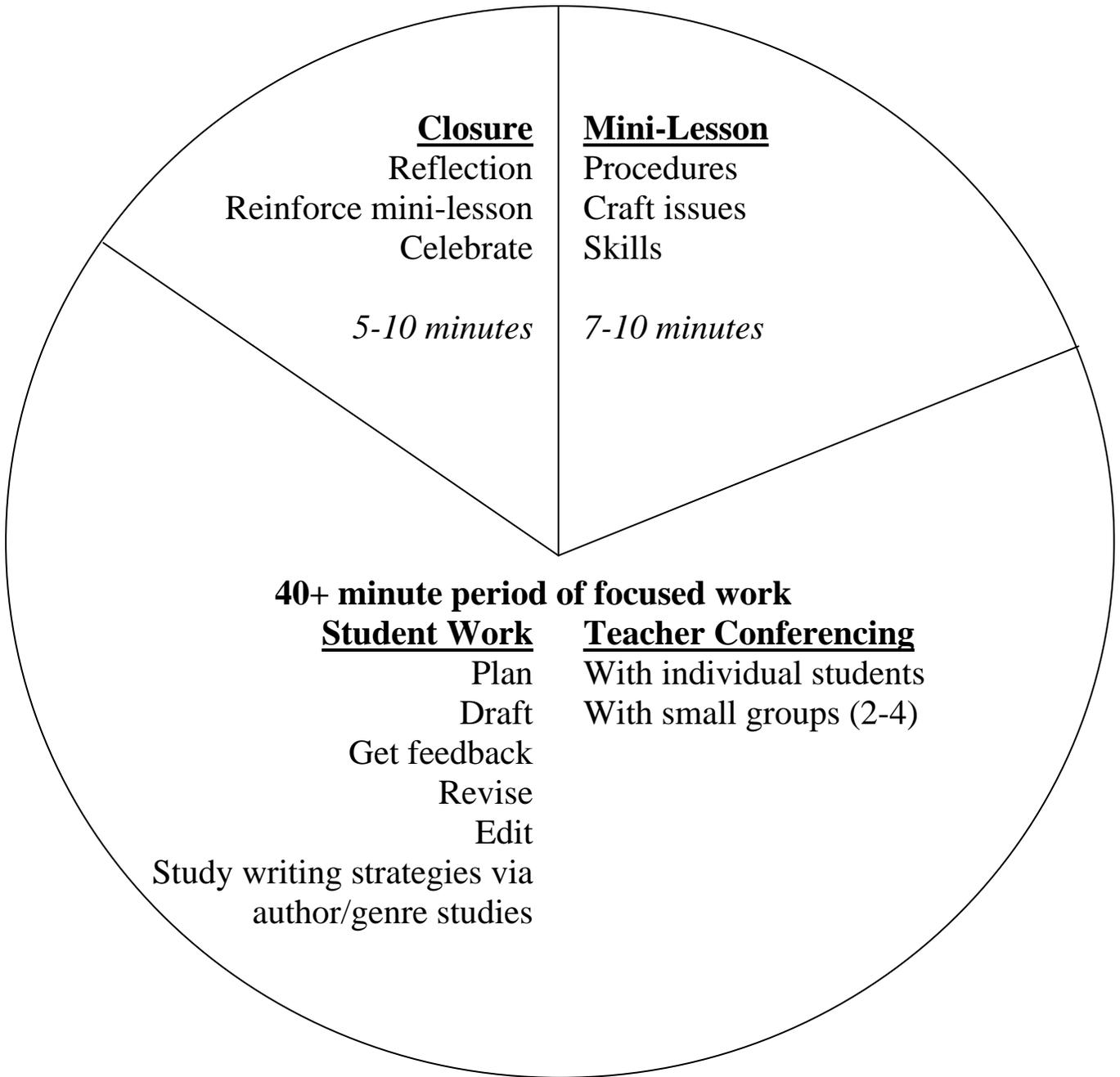
The structure of Writing Workshop is one of predictability. At the same time each day, teacher and students gather for a mini-lesson. This is followed by independent work time, which allows students to write on their own or in a variety of collaborative groupings, while the teacher confers with students. 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

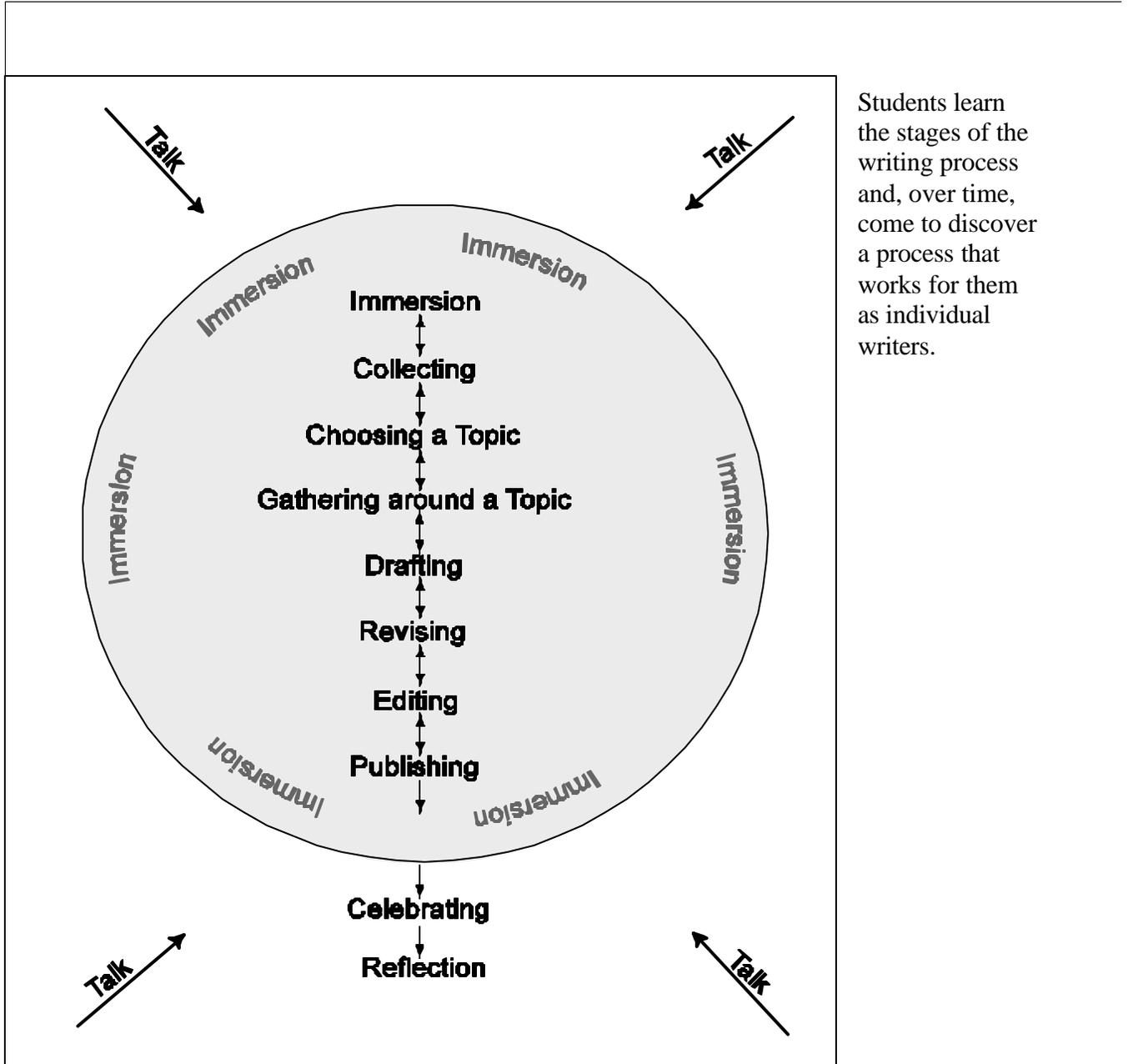
Sometimes teachers speak to the class in the middle of *work time* to show an example of good work, share with the whole class something from a conference, invite students to work with their writing partners or briefly return focus to a teaching point.

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 First Grade 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

In this first unit of study, our students develop the habits of writers such as writing daily with volume and thoughtfulness and “reading like a writer”. 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)

Putting all these elements together during the Living the Life of a Writer Unit, students demonstrate their growing capacity for independent work by taking a piece of writing of their choice from their folder to a draft, through revision to publication. 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 – Grade 1

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

Week 1: Getting started

- Lesson 1: Introducing Writing Workshop: telling the stories of our lives
Lesson 2: Telling our stories: oral rehearsal
Lesson 3: Working independently: managing our writers' tools
Lesson 4: Generating a list of writing ideas: topics we can write about
Lesson 5: Beginning of the year on-demand writing assessment

Week 2: Growing as writers: independence and stamina

- Lesson 6: Generating details through sketching
Lesson 7: Generating details by adding words
Lesson 8: Deciding what to do when you think you're done
Lesson 9: Using a spelling strategy: "stretching a word like a rubber band"
Lesson 10: Deciding what to do when we don't know how to spell a word

Week 3: Generating more writing

- Lesson 11: Rereading and adding on: questions that help our writing
Lesson 12: Sharing our writing with a partner
Lesson 13: Showing not just telling
Lesson 14: Observing closely helps our writing
Lesson 15: Choosing words to make our writing interesting to read

Week 4: Putting it all together

- Lesson 16: Choosing a piece for publishing
Lesson 17: Revising our writing
Lesson 18: Editing our writing
Lesson 19: Adding "the finishing touches"
Lesson 20: Sharing, celebrating and reflecting

Week 1: Getting started

This week we will begin to establish the rituals and routines that will 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 recording their stories in pictures and words. They will write an on-demand baseline assessment, which you will analyze. In conferences we are enjoying conversations with our students about their writing and recording our observations.

Lesson 1: Introducing Writing Workshop: telling the stories of our lives

Lesson 2: Telling our stories: oral rehearsal

Lesson 3: Working independently: managing our writers' tools

Lesson 4: Generating a list of writing ideas: topics we can write about

Lesson 5: Beginning of the year on-demand writing assessment

Suggested literature

- My Dad is Awesome: Nick Butterworth (topics we can write about)
- My Mom is Excellent: Nick Butterworth (topics we can write about)
- David Goes to School: David Shannon (topics we can write about)
- When I Was Little: Jamie Lee Curtis (topics we can write about)

Charts

- *When it is time for Writing Workshop...*
- *Pie-chart depicting the structure of Writing Workshop*
- *Writers write about...*

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

- understand the purpose and the behavioral expectations of the mini-lesson, independent work time and the concluding share
- understand that writers write about things they do in their lives
- use storytelling as a way to get ready for writing
- work in pairs
- use pictures and words
- know where to find the necessary tools for writing
- write to an on-demand prompt

Teaching point: *Introducing Writing Workshop: telling the stories of our lives*

Method: demonstration guided practice inquiry explain & give examples

Materials needed: *chart paper, writing paper, pencils*

Note: If possible, take photographs of model student behavior on the rug today to be used on a chart.

CONNECTION

Boys and girls, when you hear that signal (e.g. bell, chant, clap), I want you to come to the rug.... Sit cross-legged in rows (or in designated spots) like this. ... I want you to listen carefully and keep your eyes on me because I'm going to teach you something important. ... Today we are going to begin something very exciting: Writing Workshop. Every day we will have Writing Workshop. We will gather here on the rug for a lesson where I will teach you something about writing. We will be writing books this year just like our favorite authors do, like Mem Fox, Kevin Henkes. ... These authors tell stories and so will we!

TEACH

Writers often tell stories about everyday things that happen in their lives. Writers think, "What can I write about? What is my idea?" Watch what I do as I write my story. Think Aloud to model deciding what to write about. Briefly tell about a small but interesting incident. Now I'm going to draw. Here's me ... Think Aloud as you draw. Writers, first, I thought about something interesting that I did. Next, I drew my idea. Now, I'm going to add some words under my picture. Think Aloud as you write one or two sentences.

ACTIVE INVOLVEMENT

Close your eyes and think about something that you can draw and write about today. Now we are going to practice talking to a partner about our ideas. Turn to the person next to you: eye-to-eye, knee-to-knee like Mariah and Susanna. Good. Now, use your good manners to decide who should go first today. Allow time for the first child to briefly tell a story. Now let's switch and the other person tells their story.

LINK

Now it's your turn to write! I am going to give you each a piece of paper. When you get back to your seat, neatly write your name on the top like this. ...Then begin writing and drawing about the idea you just shared. While you are working I will be meeting with some of you to talk about your writing.

Work time: At the beginning of the year, work time for first graders is usually about 15 to 25 minutes. By the end of this study you will find that you can extend this time to 30 – 40 minutes.

Conferring: During work time confer with students at their desks. Be sure to sit or kneel so that you are at eye level with the student. You might ask: Where did you get the idea for this story? What's the story in this picture? What have you been working on? Make notes of their responses, such as, "Mei - detailed drawing of story about learning to ride a bike. Labeled bike: bk"

Possible mid-workshop teaching point: (Signal) *Writers, thank you for listening. Sometimes in the middle of Writing Workshop, I will stop you to tell you something important about writing or our Workshop. One of the things we'll learn this year is what Writing Workshop sounds like: what noise level is best for us to write. It feels too noisy in here right now so let's remember that our talk is only about our writing.*

SHARE

(Signal) *Boys and girls, I want you to gather together again at the rug. This time we are going to sit in a circle. (Take time to ensure the students understand your expectations for sitting around the perimeter of the rug.) During the mini-lesson you sit facing me because I am talking, during the Share you sit facing each other because you are doing the talking! Sometimes during Share Time we will talk about the mini-lesson, sometimes we will learn from each other's writing. Today we learned that writers write about their lives. I noticed that Mei was writing about learning to ride her bike, Javier wrote about collecting rocks with his dad and Matt wrote about his new sister. Would you all hold your paper in front of your chest, please, so we can admire each other's wonderful writing. What writers we are!*

REFLECTIONS

- I think the students did quite well on the rug given that it was their first time.*
- I was really pleased how most students started drawing and writing right away. A couple didn't know how to get started but were OK after a brief conversation. I think our storytelling during the day is so helpful.*
- I'm impressed how many students are writing even if it's not intelligible words yet. Only a few drew the whole time.*
- Many students wanted me to help with spelling so I'll need to do some mini-lessons that encourage independence and "having a try".*

Teaching point: *Telling our stories: oral rehearsal*

Method: demonstration guided practice inquiry explain & give examples

Materials needed: Charts: *When it is time for Writing Workshop...* and pie chart depicting the structure of Writing Workshop

Before the lesson: Make the *When it is time for Writing Workshop...* chart using photographs or pictures to remind students how to assemble for the mini-lesson, sit on and leave the rug. Make a pie chart depicting the structure of Writing Workshop. Think about a shared class experience that you can tell as a story.

CONNECTION

Remind the students that every day Writing Workshop will start with a mini-lesson. Thank them for coming to the rug and sitting cross-legged. Show them the chart you made:

When it is time for Writing Workshop...

- *we walk to the rug and take our places. Photo/picture*
- *we sit with our legs crossed and our eyes on the teacher. Photo/picture*
- *we listen to the teacher. Photo/picture*
- *we walk to pick up our writing folders as our group is excused. Photo/picture*

Show the students a pie chart depicting the structure of Writing Workshop and the (eventual) relative amount of time spent on the Mini-lesson, Work Time and Share. Tell students that yesterday they learned that writers write about their lives and today you are going to teach them more about where writers get their ideas for writing.

TEACH

Tell the students that sometimes writers get ready for writing a story by telling it to someone first. Take time to Think Aloud deciding which story to tell. Tell the story of a shared class experience e.g. the first day of school when you all met each other, bringing in the class pet, losing your keys, a fire drill. Include important details that will make your story interesting. Tell the students that telling the story first helped you think about how to write the story. Model writing the beginning sentences of the story.

ACTIVE INVOLVEMENT

Ask students to close their eyes and think of a story. Encourage them to get a picture of the story in their mind. Ask them to turn and sit eye-to-eye, knee-to-knee with their partner. Tell the students to take turns telling each other their story. Listen in as the partners talk to each other.

LINK

Praise the students for telling their stories so well. Encourage them to go off and write the story they just told to their partner.

Work time: As you circulate the room, watch for students who are struggling to get started. Occasionally, immediately after the mini-lesson, it is a good idea to keep on the rug students who are unsure of what to do so that you can go over your expectations.

Conferring: Reinforce the mini-lesson by praising students who are working on the story they orally rehearsed during the Active Involvement.

Possible mid-workshop teaching point: Comment on how proud you are that students are working so hard today. Let them know this is allowing you to confer with writers.

SHARE

Invite a student with whom you have conferred to share their work with the class. Help him/her to read his/her writing and talk about his/her picture. Model complimenting the author and then invite students to pay the writer a compliment. Model asking the writer a question about his/her work and then invite students to ask the writer questions. Tell the students that we often respond to writers who share their work by complimenting them and asking them questions.

REFLECTIONS

- Think about your students: Who is just drawing? Who is writing?
- Do the writers' pictures and stories match?
- What are your students writing about? You may want to consider devoting another day to oral storytelling, encouraging your students to tell different stories. When I Was Little by Jamie Lee Curtis is a good model to use for stories about everyday happenings.

Teaching point: *Working independently: managing our writers' tools*

Method: ___demonstration X guided practice ___inquiry ___explain & give examples

Materials Needed: *Individual and/or group containers of writing supplies: pencils, date stamps, crayons, colored pencils etc. Classroom Writing Center equipped with different types of paper. Student folders.*

CONNECTION

Writers I am so proud of you. You are writing about your lives, things that you know about and things that are important to you. Marisol is writing about making pancakes with her grandma, Brannan is writing about his fish dying and Felipe is writing about our class getting a pet tarantula. Yesterday you learned how telling our stories before writing them down is helpful. Today before you start to write I'm going to show you the special writing tools we have in our classroom, how we use them and how to look after them.

TEACH

Writers like Mem Fox and Kevin Henkes need certain things like paper and pencils to write. We are all writers in here so we need those things too. On your table... Show the students the table or individual supplies containers and what is in them. Explain your procedure for always having a sharp pencil. Show them how the date stamp works and tell them why we use it. *We also have a Writing Center in our classroom where we keep paper.* Show the students the choices of paper currently available to them. *And then we need to keep our work neat and tidy so I am going to give each of you a writing folder.* Show the students the folder and how to neatly put their papers inside. *These folders will be kept...* Show the students where their folders will be stored and explain the procedure for getting them at the beginning of Writing Workshop and putting them back at the end.

ACTIVE INVOLVEMENT

Let's practice getting our folders. I will call the Red Group by reading the names on the red container. When you hear your name called you can get your folder, put it at your work spot, and then come back to your rug spot. Let's watch as the first group gets their folders, puts them at their work spots. ... Wow! What a great job! Continue reading the names of the children in the other groups. *Now, we are ready for writing.*

LINK

Writers, this is how we will get ready for writing everyday. When you go to write today, look through your folder and you will find the writing you have been doing. You can choose today to continue with one of those pieces or get another piece of paper and start a new piece. Ask yourself: Can I add more to my picture? Can I add more words? Should I get another piece of paper from the Writing Center to start a new story?

Work Time:

Conferring: As you talk to students today, reinforce the information you gave about managing their writing tools.

Possible mid-workshop teaching point: *Writers, thank you for listening. I want to remind you to share the date stamp with your table and take turns stamping the date on the top of your paper like Ben did here.*

SHARE

Boys and girls, I'd like you all to bring your writing and your folder to the rug today. ... I was really impressed how well you managed your writers' tools during Writing Workshop. I gave you lots of information and you remembered it well! Everyone, hold up your paper to show me how you remembered to use the date stamp. Excellent! Now I'd like you to carefully put your writing in your folder. Well done! Now let's practice putting our folders away. Would the blue group quietly go and put their folders in the blue container. ... Thank you so much for all your hard work today. We are a community of writers and we must all work hard together to keep our Writing Workshop neat and tidy.

REFLECTIONS

- *Observing the students, it seems that they can easily access the writing resources they need.*
- *There are one or two students who will need extra support managing their materials, I think. I'll make a note of whom they are.*
- *The grouping of students at their tables is working well, I think.*

Teaching point: *Generating a list of writing ideas: topics we can write about*

Method: ___demonstration ___guided practice ___inquiry Xexplain & give examples

Materials needed: *Familiar Read Alouds about an obvious topic e.g. Nick Butterworth's My Dad is Awesome, My Mom is Excellent and David Shannon's David Goes to School*

CONNECTION

Thank you for putting your folders at your tables so we are ready to write after our mini-lesson. Today we are going to think about different topics we can write about using our writing tools.

TEACH

Here is one of our favorite books... Nick Butterworth's My Dad is Awesome. I love this book! It's about this boy's dad. We know this one too, don't we? My Mom is Excellent it's about this girl's mom. You know, I've noticed that lots of authors like to write about their families. We do that too, don't we? We write about our families. Look here at another of our favorite books David! Goes to School, this book is about school, isn't it? We write about school sometimes too.

ACTIVE INVOLVEMENT

Turn and talk to your partner about some of the other things you like to write about... I heard Jamie say she likes to write about her friends and Christian said he writes about his puppy.

LINK

Look at this chart I've started to make.

<u><i>Our favorite authors</i></u>	<u><i>Topic</i></u>	<u><i>Room 13 Authors</i></u>
<i>Nick Butterworth (photocopy of book cover)</i>	<i>Family (photo/drawing)</i>	
<i>David Shannon</i>	<i>School (photo/drawing)</i>	

Now I can add to our chart:

	<i>Friends</i>	<i>Jaime</i>
	<i>Pets</i>	<i>Christian</i>

Explain the chart. *Today you can continue with a piece of writing in your folder or start something new. Look at our chart and that might help you think of what to write about today.*

Work time:

Conferring: Reinforce the mini-lesson by asking students to name the topic they are writing about. Carry the published books with you and refer to them in the conference, "Wow! You're just like Nick Butterworth. You both write about families!"

Possible mid-workshop teaching point: Comment on how proud you are that students are working quietly and are really focused on their writing.

SHARE

Boys and girls you are all working so hard today, In one minute, I'm going to give you the signal to come to the rug... Let's hear what topics you all wrote about today! We'll go around the circle and I want each of you to tell us in a loud and proud voice so I can add your name to the chart. ... And add new topics too.

REFLECTIONS

- I'm so pleased with how quickly the students settle to their work! It's a little noisy and we'll have to work on that but for the most part they are talking about their writing.*
- The students focused well on the chart. They will have to learn how to actively use the charts to help them grow as writers.*
- I think using the published books in the lesson worked well. I shall have to start thinking about which books will become our Touchstone Texts. They certainly love David!*

Teaching point: *Beginning of the year on-demand writing assessment*

Method: ___demonstration ___guided practice ___inquiry Xexplain & give examples

Materials Needed: ECRW prompt received from the Noyce Foundation, paper

- Tell your students that Writing Workshop will be different today. Explain that you want to see how well they write and so you are going to ask them to do a piece of writing that you will collect and look at.
- Tell the students that they are going to write a story (a narrative). They just have today's Writing Workshop time to do it and so they need to work hard and not talk to their neighbors.
- Read the students the prompt. Ask students if they have any questions.
- Give students an hour (maximum) to write to the prompt.
- Collect the students' writing and analyze them in a way that will inform your instruction. Look at and make notes on what the students are able to do, what they are almost able to do and what habitual errors they are making. Think about content, structure, craft and conventions.
- Put the students' writing in their portfolios as a base-line assessment.

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 and strategies for generating details that will enhance the quality of their work. In conferences we are focusing on listening to our students and thinking about “teaching the writer, not the writing”.

Lesson 6: Generating details through sketching

Lesson 7: Generating details by adding words

Lesson 8: What to do when you think you’re done

Lesson 9: Spelling strategy: “stretching a word like a rubber band”

Lesson 10: Deciding what to do when we don’t know how to spell a word

Suggested literature

- See Appendix I for suggested Read Alouds and Touchstone Texts

Charts

- *What to do when you think you’re done...*
- *What we can do when we don’t know how to spell a word...*
- Adding to existing charts: *What writers write about...*, *Good writers...*

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

- understand the behavioral expectations of the mini-lesson, independent work time and share
- are able to sustain their independent work for longer periods of time
- are self-managing their writing tools
- are adding details to their work
- are able to talk and listen about their writing with the teacher and a peer

Teaching point: *Generating details through sketching*

Method: demonstration guided practice inquiry explain & give examples

Materials needed: chart paper, markers

CONNECTION

Thank students for being ready by putting their folders at their tables and sitting nicely on the rug. Tell the students that you looked at their writing and are so proud of what a great class of writers you have. Tell them that today you are going to model how to make our writing even better by thinking about the details of our stories and adding them to our sketches.

TEACH

Retell the story you told and wrote about in Lesson 2. Think Aloud as you sketch the story adding important details as you draw. Emphasize that the details help the reader to understand the story. “Read” your picture explaining why you put those specific details in your sketch.

ACTIVE INVOLVEMENT

Ask the students to take turns telling your story to their writing partner by “reading” the details in your sketch. Listen in and thank them for their help. Add some more sentences to the writing you began on Day 2 including some of the details the children gave.

LINK

Tell the students that today they will draw a detailed sketch of a story they want to write about. Ask them to close their eyes and picture their sketch before they leave the rug. Tell them they can begin to write their story too, if they want to. Invite students who can't envision what their sketch will be to talk it over with you before leaving the rug.

Work Time:

Conferring: Move during the workshop and talk to students about their sketches. Remember to make notes of their responses. Aim to talk with 4 -5 students each day.

Possible mid-workshop teaching point: Ask the students to stop writing for a moment and listen to the quiet hum in the room. "This, writers, is what Writing Workshop should sound like – a quiet hum of pencils on paper and whispering voices talking about their work. Let's remember this!"

SHARE

Invite three pre-selected students to share their detailed sketches. Invite listeners to give compliments and ask questions.

REFLECTIONS

- Do the students seem to understand what "important details" mean?
- Remember to keep underscoring the reading-writing connection for your students. Point out details in the Read Alouds you are enjoying with your students throughout the day.
- How well do students listen to their classmates during the closing?
- How is your record keeping of conferences working for you? Are you jotting something down after each conference?

Teaching point:

Method: X demonstration ___guided practice ___inquiry ___explain & give examples

Materials needed: *chart paper, markers*

CONNECTION

Writers, the sketches that you drew yesterday were great because you put in lots of interesting details that help the person looking at your picture understand what really happened. Well done! Today we're going to do the same thing and try and put some details into our writing so that the reader can understand what really happened by reading our story.

TEACH

Here's my sketch from yesterday about when I went to the pet store to buy Sammy, our class guinea pig. And here's the writing I've got already. "Christina and I went to the pet store. Sammy was the cutest guinea pig in the store." I think I can add some details to make my writing more interesting. Look I drew some other pets at the store. I think I'll write about that. "There were rabbits and hamsters too." That makes my writing more interesting, doesn't it?

ACTIVE INVOLVEMENT

Help me out here. Look at my sketch. What else could I write about? Turn and talk to your partner about what else I could write. Listen in as students share. Thank you so much! You had so many great ideas. Vinnie said, "There was a rat too!" I think I'll write that. Thank you for your help, Vinnie!"

LINK

Can you see, boys and girls, how using my sketch helps me to add details to my writing that make it more interesting? Today, let's take out the sketches we did yesterday and try to write about them. Let's see if we can include some interesting details.

Independent Work Time: Scan the room and think about which students are really ready for this lesson. Maybe those are the ones to focus on today to stretch them. Other students won't be ready to take on the lesson and it is fine for them to continue working on yesterday's sketch, add the few words they can or start a new piece.

Conferring: Praise all students for their best efforts.

Possible mid-workshop teaching point: *I am so pleased, writers, with how many of you are working hard to add details to your work. Details help the reader understand your story!*

SHARE

You are becoming such good writers! You are doing just what good writer do. Look at this chart I made.

Good writers...

- *write every day*
- *write about different topics*
- *put details into their drawings and writing*

Do you agree? Do you do these things? ... Definitely!

REFLECTIONS

- *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 did a great job yesterday adding details to their pictures but struggled with the words today.*
- *Some students are gaining stamina and stick with their work but others think they're "done" too soon. It's time for the "what to do when you think you're done" lesson!*

Teaching point: *Deciding what to do when you think you're done*

Method: X demonstration ___guided practice ___inquiry ___explain & give examples

Materials needed: Chart paper, pre-made chart *What to do when you think you're done*

CONNECTION

Tell students that over the past few days you have seen some students who draw or write just a little and then think that they are “done” and so they start talking to their friends and disturbing others. Today we are going to learn what to do when we think we're done.

TEACH

Act out doing a very quick sketch, putting down your pencil and turning to talk to a neighbor. Acknowledge students' responses by saying this is not good Writing Workshop behavior. Think Aloud the options for what a good writer would do after completing a quick sketch... “OK so I've done a quick sketch so now I'm going to look at it again and think how I can make it better... I could add some detail to my picture... I could add some words... I could look back in my folder and see if there is another piece of work I want to re-read or add on to... I could start a new piece of writing... Wow, I have lots of choices!” Re-affirm that we are never “done “ in Writing Workshop: we always have more writing to do! Show the students the chart you have made which lists the choices of things they can do so they can keep working until sharing time. (Add sketches if necessary for those students not yet able to read the chart).

What to do when you think you're done

- look at your picture again
- add more details to your picture
- add some writing
- look at other pieces of work in your folder
- *add on to an old piece of writing*
- *start a new piece of writing*

ACTIVE INVOLVEMENT

Ask students to think about what they plan to do today when they go back to their desk. Invite them to turn and talk to their partner about their plan.

LINK

Today students will continue with their current piece of writing or start another one. Remind them to refer to the chart if they think they have finished before sharing time.

Independent Work Time:

Conferring: Think about students who are often "done". Confer with them today to reinforce the mini-lesson.

Possible mid-workshop teaching point: Name a student who is re-reading or adding on.

SHARE

Tell students how impressed you were by how well they kept on working for the whole Work Time today. Add to *Good writers...* chart:

- work hard all through Work Time

REFLECTIONS

- Sustaining for the whole Work Time is obviously difficult for some students so early in the year but their stamina will grow. Other students are reluctant to stop!
- If you notice that some students are letting not knowing how to spell a word inhibit their writing then this would be a good time to teach some strategies that would encourage independence.

Teaching point: *Spelling strategy: "stretching a word like a rubber band"*

Method: demonstration guided practice inquiry explain & give examples

Materials needed: *Teacher's sketch, chart paper, rubber band*

Note: The purpose of this lesson is to build independence, not that students will hear and write every sound in a word. Students are very likely to hear and write one or two letters to represent a word.

CONNECTION

Boys and girls, you worked very hard yesterday in Writing Workshop and I am so pleased how well you are able to get on with your work by yourselves while I enjoy having conferences with some of you. Today I'm going to teach you how to do something that will help you when you don't know how to write a word. It will help you to get on with your writing without waiting for me to help. Today we are going to learn how to stretch out a word like a rubber band so that we can hear all of its sounds. Some of you may have done this in Kindergarten and for others it might be something new.

TEACH

Here is a drawing of me in my friend Jagiro's beautiful garden and I want to write, "Your garden is beautiful, Jagiro!" I think I know how to write "Your" so I'm going to write that word, then leave a space, now I want to write "garden". I'm going to stretch out that word, like this (stretch out rubber band), saying it slowly, writing down the sounds I hear. At the beginning I hear /g/ so I'm going to write g. Now I'm going to say the word again, stretching it out like a rubber band "ga - r - d - en". I hear /r/. I'm going to write that down r. Let me say the word again, "ga - r - d - en". I hear /d/, I'm going to write d. What's the last sound I hear, "ga - r - d - en"... it's /n/. I'm going to write it. Look I have tried to write "garden" and I have "grdn". You can do this too: say the word slowly, stretching it out so you can hear the sounds and write them down.

ACTIVE INVOLVEMENT

Now, let's see if you can help me write the word "beautiful". What sound do you hear at the beginning? Meghan? "/b/" that's great, I'll write b. Let's say the word together, slowly, stretching it out. What other sounds can you hear? "/u/" Great How would you like to write that? "u" Excellent. What do you hear next?... What do you hear next?... What's the last sound in "beautiful"??...

LINK

So first grade writers, today when you want to write a word and you're not sure how to write it, practice saying it slowly, stretching it out to hear the sounds and then writing them down. You have such interesting stories to tell so just try stretching out those interesting words.

Work Time

Conferring: This may be a day when you need to do a small group conference with students whom you think are not clear on the expectations of the mini-lesson.

Possible mid-workshop teaching point: *I can see so many of you stretching out your words and listening for the sounds. Well done!*

SHARE

When I was conferring with Edgar today he did such a good job of stretching out a word and listening for its sounds. Edgar would you mind showing us what you did, please, so that you could write the word "baseball". ... What smart work! So many of you were doing smart work like Edgar today. Well done!

REFLECTIONS

- *Some students had obviously been taught how to stretch a word in Kindergarten but it was good to remind them. For some students they are only now ready to "hear" this lesson so it was definitely worth doing... others still aren't ready and will need this lesson again later on. We are also doing this in Word Work so it is important to make connections for students between the different parts of their literacy instruction.*
- *Some students are forgetting the letter that represents the sound they hear. I think I should make some tabletop abc charts for them.*
- *A few students are letting their desire to spell correctly get in the way of their writing. I think we need a lesson that reminds students of all the strategies they have access to when they don't know how to spell a word.*
- *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.*

Teaching point: *Deciding what to do when we don't know how to spell a word*

Method: demonstration guided practice inquiry explain & give examples

Materials needed: Word Wall, *abc* chart, tabletop *abc* charts, classroom labels, chart paper

CONNECTION

Praise the students for working conscientiously to stretch out their words yesterday. Tell them that it is important that we always try to write the interesting words that are in our heads even if we think we don't know how to spell them. They shouldn't, for example, write "dog" when they really want to write "Labrador". Tell them that today we are going to remember all the spelling strategies we know.

TEACH

Begin the chart by writing the strategy the class practiced yesterday.

Spelling strategies
▪ *Stretch out the word: s-w-i-m*
(stick a rubber band on the chart as a reminder)

Then remind students of the resources in the room to help them: the Word Wall, classroom labels, tabletop *abc* charts etc. Add these as separate bullets to the chart as you discuss them. Remind the students that there are people in the room who can help them too: we don't want to disturb the teacher when she is conferring but our friends may be able to help us. Finally, tell the students if they can't find the word using any of those strategies then they should just write down what they think the spelling might be and then draw a circle around it so that when they next confer with the teacher they can ask about it. Model this on the chart.

ACTIVE INVOLVEMENT

There is no Active Involvement in today's lesson.

LINK

Ask the children to go back to their tables and continue with their work in progress or start a new piece of writing today. Ask them to work hard at practicing the strategies on the chart to help them spell the words they want to write.

Work Time:

Conferring: If appropriate, discuss with students which strategies on the chart they use the most.

Possible mid-workshop teaching point: Name students who are actively using the Word Wall or one of the other classroom resources listed on the chart.

SHARE

Ask 2-3 students to share their work and talk about the spelling strategies they used today.

REFLECTIONS

- Think about which of the spelling strategies listed on the chart seem most popular with your conferees. Which aren't they using much? Why might that be?
- Getting the students to understand the importance of self-sustaining strategies in Workshop is so important: building independence is crucial.

Week 3: Generating more writing

Our students are writing a lot! They are learning how to tell the stories of their lives in pictures and are beginning to write words and sentences about the things that matter to them, adding details to their work to enhance the reader's understanding. This week we will focus on teaching students how to add more onto their writing and we will teach them strategies for lifting the level of their writing e.g. "show not tell" and conscious word choice. The students will live the life of a writer by closely observing something in their environment. In our conferences we try to use literature and begin to see conferring as an opportunity for assessment.

Lesson 11: Rereading and adding on: questions that help our writing

Lesson 12: Sharing our writing with a partner

Lesson 13: Showing not just telling

Lesson 14: Observing things closely helps our writing

Lesson 15: Choosing words to make our writing interesting to read

Suggested literature

- I Feel Silly: Jamie Lee Curtis (show not tell)
- Swimmy: Leo Lionni (observations)

Charts

- *Questions that help us add to our writing (Helping Hand)*
- Add to existing charts: *Good writers...*

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

- are able to re-read their work
- improve their work by adding on
- share their work with a partner
- understand the concept of "show not tell"
- draw and write from a close observation
- are beginning to be aware of word choice

Teaching point: *Rereading and adding on: questions that help our writing*

Method: demonstration guided practice inquiry explain & give examples

Materials needed: teacher's folder

Before the lesson: Begin to create a "Helping Hand" chart

CONNECTION

Tell the students that they are writing more and more every day and that you have been very pleased to see them using the strategies they know to help them write the words for their stories. Tell them that today you are going to teach them a way to make their stories even better. You are going to teach them how to use their "Helping Hand" to ask themselves questions. The answers to these questions will help them add on to their writing to make it even more interesting for their reader.

TEACH

Show the students one of your stories with which they are already familiar. Model re-reading your writing and looking at the picture to remind yourself of the story. Think Aloud as you wonder what you could add to your story to make it more interesting for your reader. Tell them about the "Helping Hand". Hold up your hand and, showing your pinkie, say, "Who?" Think Aloud as you look at your story and ask yourself, "Who was there when this happened?... Do I have everyone in my picture?... I should add..." Model adding someone to your picture. Repeat, holding up your ring finger, and saying, "What?" Think Aloud as you look at your story and ask yourself, "What was the weather like?... I should add..." Model adding a sentence to your writing. Repeat for where, why and how, demonstrating with your fingers, and Thinking Aloud to add to your story. Show the students a pre-made Helping Hand chart.

*Questions that help us add to our writing
picture of Helping Hand*

ACTIVE INVOLVEMENT

Ask your students to turn and ask their neighbor the Helping Hand questions about your story. Listen in and then share some of the children's questions that would help you improve your work. Add some of these questions to the chart, putting simple sketches alongside them as reminders.

Who are the people around you?

What is the weather like?

What do you see when you look around?

Where does the story take place?

How do you feel?

Why are you there?

LINK

Tell students that today they should do what you did and find a story in their folder that they would like to make better. First they should reread that story and then they should use the Helping Hand chart to ask themselves questions about their story. Then they should use their answers to the questions to add to their story, as you modeled.

Work Time:

Conferring: As you confer with students, try to informally assess what the student is able to do and what she is almost able to do. Be sure to make note on your observations.

Possible mid-workshop teaching point: Name and praise students who are using the Helping Hand to add to their work.

SHARE

Invite two or three students to tell how the Helping Hand strategy helped them today. Ask them to describe their story “before and after”: what did they add on? Which question helped them?

REFLECTIONS

- How well did the students seem to understand the concept of the Helping Hand? Did the chart help them add on to their work?
- Are you remembering the importance of listening to the students during conferences ?
- How are you feeling about the tone of your Workshop? Is there a good sense of community and cooperation?

Teaching point: *Sharing our writing with a partner*

Method: ___demonstration X guided practice ___inquiry ___explain & give examples

Materials needed:

Note: Ask the students to come to the rug with their folders today and place them on the rug in front of them. The Active Involvement in this lesson will be longer than usual.

CONNECTION

Remind students that yesterday, during our share, some of our friends told us how they used the Helping Hand questions to add on to their writing. We all learned from listening to them tell us about their thinking and their writing. In Writing Workshop we are a community of writers who help each other and learn from each other. The writers that we love like Mem Fox and Leo Lionni share their writing with other writers too so they can learn from each other. Today we are going to learn how to share our writing with a partner so that we can help each other.

TEACH

Select two articulate students and, in guided practice, support them in modeling how to sit close to each other, knee-to-knee and eye-to-eye, with one child's writing in the middle and the other's off to the side. Ask the child whose writing is in the middle to go first and read her work, holding her paper so both can see the drawing and writing and being sure not to cover her mouth as she speaks. Ask her partner to listen and then respond by first giving a compliment and then asking some "Helping Hand" questions. Support the writer in answering the questions and in thinking how she might add some of those answers to her writing to make it even better.

ACTIVE INVOLVEMENT

Tell the students that today they will be on the rug for longer than usual because everyone is going to share a piece of work with a partner. Ask the students to select a piece of work from their folder that they would like to share. Let the students decide which partner will go first and ask them to share in the way that their friends modeled. Circulate amongst the partners, listening out for interesting stories and noticing good sharing. Support partners as needed.

LINK

Praise the students for specific partner share behavior e.g. eye contact, active listening.

Tell the students that their partner's questions might help them decide what to add on to their writing today.

Work Time:

Conferring: Ask the students about their partner share. Did they enjoy it? Did it help them think more about that piece of writing? Did they add anything to their piece because of a question they were asked?

Possible mid-workshop teaching point: Praise students for adding to their work.

SHARE

Ask students to bring their work to the rug. Review the procedures for partner sharing and then have the students move into the same partnerships as earlier to share their pieces again showing each other what they have added on today.

REFLECTIONS

- Productive partner sharing takes a lot of practice! We'll keep practicing as a class for a while before allowing the students to do it independently during Work Time.
- The Helping Hand questions give structure to the partner share and move it beyond "I like your picture."

Teaching point: *Showing, not just telling*

Method: demonstration guided practice inquiry explain & give examples

Materials needed: *I Feel Silly* by Jamie Lee Curtis, teacher's writing

Before the lesson: Reread *I Feel Silly* by Jamie Lee Curtis

CONNECTION

Yesterday you learned how to make your writing better by talking about it with a friend, just like published authors do. Today I am going to teach you something else that good writers do. It's a writing strategy called "show not tell". That means writers choose their words very carefully to make sure that their reader can really understand what they are writing about.

TEACH

We all know this book, I Feel Silly by Jamie Lee Curtis. Let's see if we can learn from Jamie Lee Curtis how to make our readers really understand what we are trying to say by showing them not just telling them. Read the first page of the book. Jamie Lee Curtis wrote, "I feel silly". She's telling us how she feels but then she shows us how she is feeling by describing a silly time and writing, "I put rouge on the cat and gloves on my feet". That sure is silly! Let's read another page... "Today I'm angry...". First, she tells that she is angry, then she shows by describing what she looks like: "My face is all pinched and red ear to ear." Jamie Lee Curtis is doing some smart writing. First she tells us her feeling, then she shows us how she feels by describing what she is doing, what she looks like and how she feels. If I wanted to show my reader how I feel when I am joyful or happy, like on this page, I could write, "Today I feel joyful. I'm skipping, I'm jumping, I'm grinning ear to ear!" Yes, that's what I do when I'm happy or joyful.

ACTIVE INVOLVEMENT

Let's turn to this page "Today I am sad...". Hold up the picture. Can you think of a time when you were sad? How did you feel? What did you look like? What did you do? Turn and talk to your partner about your feelings. How could you show your sadness in your writing? Listen in and then have a few students share.

LINK

Today when you go back to your seats, I'd like you all to try and find somewhere in your writing where you can help your reader understand your feelings by showing them how you feel. You might want to add a "show not tell" about your feelings to the piece of writing you started yesterday or you might want to look back and add it to an older piece or you could start a new piece today and show your feelings in your story. See if you can do what Jamie Lee Curtis did by showing your reader your feelings.

Work time: This may be a day when you need keep a few children who are not clear on the expectations of the mini-lesson on the rug to discuss it with them.

Conferring: Take a copy of the book with you as you move from child to child, constantly bringing their attention to Jamie Lee Curtis' words and reiterating the concept of showing not telling.

Possible mid-workshop teaching point: *Writers! This is hard work, isn't it? Don't worry though, we're just giving it a try today. We'll have lots of time throughout the year to practice "showing not telling". Listen to how Juan showed in his writing that he was angry ...*

SHARE

Writers, so many of you tried showing your feelings in your writing today. Shatira, went back to her piece about giving her dog a bath and changed the first line so that she really showed the writer how much fun the job was. Shatira, will you share your piece, please? Leo experimented with adding his feelings to his piece about his new baby brother. Leo, will you share the line you read to me, please.... Writers, showing not telling really makes our writing better. Let's add this to our Good writers... chart."

Good writers...

- write every day.
- do their best job.
- reread their writing.
- make their picture and story match
- add details to their pictures
- add details to their writing
- help their readers by "showing not telling"

REFLECTIONS

- This lesson raised the bar. Some students were ready for it, others weren't. We'll need to come back to the idea of "showing not telling" repeatedly this year. I will need to find more accessible examples in books, maybe have students role play and also weave in some students' writing that does a good job.
- I'm really happy with the way the students are able to write independently for longer periods of time and they look as if they are more engaged now.

Teaching point: *Observing things closely helps our writing*

Method: demonstration guided practice inquiry explain & give examples

Materials needed: Familiar Read Aloud with text that shows the author has been able to describe something effectively because he has closely observed it e.g. *Swimmy* by Leo Lionni. Something to observe such as a shell or a rock

Before the lesson: If you have time, it is interesting to research on the Internet about the lives and writing habits of the authors you are reading with your students. Information about Leo Lionni to support this lesson can be found at: <http://www.randomhouse.com/kids/lionni/index.html>

“He usually spent spring and summer at his beloved Tuscan farmhouse near Rada in Chianti, and fall and winter at his apartment in New York City. Most of his children's books were conceived and completed in Italy where he was close to nature. The beauty he saw in pebbles and blades of grass, caterpillars and crows--all manner of flora and fauna--was an integral part of his books for children. Once during a long phone conversation he began absent-mindedly doodling a lizard like the playful little ones that scurried about on the stones outside his studio. But this one he drew standing on its hind legs. And soon thereafter the story of Cornelius, a crocodile who saw and changed the world because he walked upright, evolved. He liked to think that a little mouse he once saw in his garden became Frederick, who made the winter days pass more quickly for the other mice with his stored-up poetry of summer. And from a pier off Martha's Vineyard, his observation of a school of minnows was perhaps the beginning of Swimmy, who found a way to outsmart the big bully fish through cooperation.”

CONNECTION

Remind students that yesterday they did a great job helping the people who read their story understand it better by “showing not telling”. Today you are going to teach them something else that will make their stories better. You are going to show them how to look at something very closely, observe it closely, and then put the details you observe into your drawing and writing.

TEACH

Show the students a familiar Read Aloud such as *Swimmy* by Leo Lionni. Point out a few vividly descriptive lines e.g. “He saw a medusa made of rainbow jelly...” “... and sea anemones, who looked like pink palm trees swaying in the wind.” Leo Lionni put great details in his illustrations but, even without the illustrations, we can picture these things because of the words Leo Lionni chooses to describe them. Tell the students that Leo Lionni couldn’t have written those lines unless he had closely observed sea-life, unless he closely watched fish and other marine animals. Give supporting biographical information. Tell the students that they are going to closely observe something today so that they can draw and write about it. Model for them, Thinking Aloud as you closely observe a small object such as a shell or rock. Draw the object, noticing details as you draw. Look at the object and your drawing and write a brief description. Tell the students that today they are going to do something very special – they are going to go outside and find something to observe, to look at very carefully. Then they are going to draw what they choose to observe and then write about it.

LINK

Set ground-rules for behavior and then move outside for the children to find something to observe e.g. a rock, a plant, a bug within a clearly designated area. Tell them to first look at the object very carefully and then draw it and then write about it including as much interesting detail as possible.

Work Time:

Conferring: Your energies today will be invested in keeping your students calm and on-task since they will inevitably be excited by this change of routine!

Possible mid-workshop teaching point: Praise students for their close observations.

SHARE

Returning to the classroom for a circle share, invite the students to tell what they chose to observe and one detail about it. Praise the students for living the life of a writer: writers closely observe the world around them.

REFLECTIONS

- Most children focused on their drawings but that was to be expected.
- The children enjoyed being outside and hopefully learned something about writers and observing the world around us!

Teaching point: *Choosing words to make our writing interesting to read*

Method: ___demonstration X guided practice ___inquiry ___explain & give examples

Materials needed: The same Read Aloud as in Lesson 14 e.g. *Swimmy* by Leo Lionni, teacher's observation

Before the lesson: Select two articulate students to help with the mini-lesson

CONNECTION

Tell students that you have been looking at the observations they wrote and drew yesterday and that you are very impressed. Tell them that today we're going to work on them again to make them even better by adding more detail to our drawings and carefully thinking about the words we choose to describe our object.

TEACH

Show the students *Swimmy* by Leo Lionni again and revisit the same pages, re-reading the same descriptive lines e.g. "He saw a medusa made of rainbow jelly..." "... and sea anemones, who looked like pink palm trees swaying in the wind." Tell them that, as you said yesterday, even without the illustrations we can picture these things because of the words Leo Lionni chose to describe them. Tell the students that we can make our observations better by adding details to our drawings and interesting words to our writing just like Leo Lionni did. He wrote "medusa" rather than "jellyfish" and he told us what the anemones look like. Show your student modeling partner's observation. Praise the drawing and his attempts at describing it in words. Ask the student to talk a little more about his object; elicit details and descriptive language. Ask the student how he might add these new ideas to his work. Repeat with another student.

ACTIVE INVOLVEMENT

Invite students to share their observations with a partner. Encourage the students to talk about what they could add to their drawings to make them better. Encourage them to think of interesting words to describe their objects: not just "brown" but "chocolate brown", for example. Share and chart descriptive words and phrases the students come up with.

LINK

Ask the students to add to their observations today. They should add the details to their pictures and the interesting words to their descriptions that they discussed with their partner. Tell them to choose their words carefully and remember to write their interesting words even if they think they don't know how to spell them. Remind them to use their spelling strategies, especially stretching out the word

Work Time:

Conferring: Today might be a good day for a small group conference with some of your students, particularly some of your English Language Learners, who might need support in surfacing vocabulary.
Possible mid-workshop teaching point: Make connections for your students to vocabulary lessons you have done in Word Work.

SHARE

Teach the students how to do a Popcorn Share. Tell them that in a Popcorn Share we all have a chance to share but we don't go around the circle taking turns, instead anyone can speak when they feel like it! Pop! Pop! Just like the kernels of corn in the microwave! The important thing is that only one student can speak at a time so if two students start to speak at the same time then one student stops and lets the other go first. Everyone will share their favorite word or phrase from their observation. Give the students time to decide which part of their writing they want to share and then ask for a volunteer to start! ... Tell the students that just as we learn good writing from famous authors, we learn from each other too by sharing like this.

REFLECTIONS

- Take every opportunity to reinforce the reading-writing connection. Chart “golden lines” from Read Alouds to heighten students’ awareness of language.
- Using the same book in two different lessons illustrates the value of selecting books that our students and we love that we can use over and over again in our teaching. Over the course of the year, many teachers select about ten books, Touchstone Texts, to support their writing instruction.
- How well did the students do with the popcorn share? This type of share takes some practice: students need to learn the give and take necessary for it to run smoothly!

Week 4: Putting it all together

This week our students will publish their first piece of First Grade writing. They will choose a piece for publication and work on revising and editing it. Finally we will celebrate by sharing our published work within our writing community. We will conclude the Living the Life of a Writer unit of study by reflecting on what we have learned about ourselves as writers. Much of our time in conferences this week will be assisting students with revision and editing, supporting students in making their writing easy to read.

Lesson 16: Choosing a piece for publishing

Lesson 17: Revising for publication

Lesson 18: Editing for publication

Lesson 19: Adding “the finishing touches”

Lesson 20: Sharing, celebrating and reflecting

Suggested literature

- See Appendix 1 for suggested Read Alouds and Touchstone Texts

Charts

- *Editing our spelling*

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

- choose a piece for publication
- recall revision strategies they have used in the past and make minor revisions to their first draft
- are able to give and receive feedback and use it to improve their writing
- edit for punctuation, spelling etc.
- understand the importance of presentation and try to make their published piece visually pleasing
- can reflect upon and articulate about their writing

Teaching point: *Choosing a piece for publishing*

Method: demonstration guided practice inquiry explain & give examples

Materials needed: Teacher's folder, sticky notes

CONNECTION

We have been writing many stories over the past few weeks. Writers write many stories but they share only the ones they love and care about with other people. We all love Mem Fox' books and I'm know she writes every day, just like we do. She has lots and lots of stories to tell but only some of them are made into books that we can read like Koala Lou, only some are published. Today I'm going to show you how to decide which of your stories in your folder you would like to publish, to share with other people.

TEACH

I'm looking for a piece of writing in my folder that I think is interesting and that other people will want to read... I want to choose a story that I care about and that I would like other people to know about. I'm going to have to spend more time on this piece to make it my best work so it needs to be one that I'm willing to spend more time on.... Model re-reading a few stories in your folder. 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 this one... this is a good story and I worked hard to add some details to my picture and my writing and I tried to show not tell how I was feeling.... I'm going to put a sticky note on this one to show it is the one I want to publish.

LINK

When you get to your table, read some of the some stories you think are your best ones and decide which one you want to publish so that other people can read it. Then put the sticky note on that page and at sharing time we'll tell each other which story we chose!

Work Time : Work Time will be shorter than usual today because the students are just re-reading and choosing their piece to publish but the Share may take longer.

Conferring: Move quickly around the room, supporting students in the work of deciding on a story to share.

Possible mid-workshop teaching point : *Take your time rereading your stories and deciding which story to publish.*

SHARE

Boys and girls, when we choose a story that we want 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. This week we’ll work on them some more so they are really terrific and then we’ll share them with each other. Then we’ll put them up on the wall so anyone who comes into our room will get to see what great writers we are! Let’s see which stories everyone chose. Let’s go around the circle and tell each other which story we are going to publish. You don’t have to read it, just say something like, “ I chose my story about...”... You have made such great choices! Tomorrow we are going to work on these stories to make them even better.

REFLECTIONS

- It’s interesting to watch the children decide on one piece - some students stuck the sticky on the first piece they came to, others consciously weighed one against another. Practicing decision-making is a good thing!*
- I need to think about how to celebrate my students’ first publishing. We’ll be having several celebrations during the course of the year so it is important that the bar isn’t set too high for the first one! I think we should simply celebrate the classroom community we have created over the past few weeks and keep the celebration just for us. I can always invite parents, the principal and other school adults to join us for a publishing party later in the year. It’s important to keep the focus on the children’s growth as writers and how proud I am of their hard work and that can be challenging if the celebration gets too involved.*

Teaching point: *Revising for publication*

Method: demonstration guided practice inquiry explain & give examples

Materials Needed: *Teacher's piece chosen for publication, Good Writers... chart, students' publishing projects*

CONNECTION

Thank you for coming to the rug with your writing folders and sitting on them so that they are out of the way. Writers, we have all picked the piece of writing that we want to make better and publish. Today you are going to make your piece better by revising it.

TEACH

"Revision" means "look again". Writers always look again at their writing, and see what they can do to it to make it better. So I'm going reread my piece and use our Good Writers chart to remind me about the things we know good writers do... Model rereading your piece and then Think Aloud as you read the bullets on the chart. Well, I'm noticing that I have lots of details in my picture... Hmm, I don't have very many details in my story though. I really should add some more writing here to make it easier for my reader to really understand what happened when... Model adding some details to your writing. And now I remember from our chart that good writers "show not tell"... I don't think I really did that, I can add...

ACTIVE INVOLVEMENT

Writers, take out the piece of writing that you have chosen to publish and read it to yourself. While you are reading think (point at chart)... How can I make my writing better? Do my words and picture match? Do I need to add to my pictures? Do I need to add details to my words? Should I "show and not tell"?... Now, turn to your partner, listen to his writing and make suggestions on how he can revise his writing to make it better. Then switch roles and you read yours and listen to your partner's suggestions.

LINK

So today we are going to work on revising our writing to make it the best we can. While you are revising today use your friend's suggestions to help you.

Work Time: Young writers' understanding of revision will grow as they learn more about the process and grow as writers. Don't be discouraged if the changes your writers make are small: celebrate any changes they make!

Conferring: Support students in their decisions about what to revise and how to do it: for the most part, it will be adding on.

Possible mid-workshop teaching point: Validate all students' attempts at revision.

SHARE

Writers, you all did such a great job revising your pieces. Everyone found a way to look back at his or her work and make it better. Let's see the different ways we revised... Point at the Good Writers chart. If you reread your work, give me a thumb's up! If you added details to your pictures, give me a thumb's up! If you added details to your words, give me a thumb's up! If you tried showing not telling, give me a thumb's up! Did anyone revise in a different way?... Wow! We did a lot of revising today. Great job writers!

REFLECTIONS

- I think I'll put our publication date on our class calendar. It will help them begin to understand that we sometimes have to work to a deadline and add to the anticipation of our celebration.*

Teaching point: *Editing for publication*

Method: ___demonstration X guided practice ___inquiry ___explain & give examples

Materials needed: *Teacher's writing, What we can do when we don't know how to spell a word... chart, chart paper*

Note: There are many ways to teach students to edit. At this stage what is important is that students can see their changes and, hopefully, learn from them. This editing lesson can also be done with small stickies that are placed on top of the corrected word.

CONNECTION

Yesterday we made our writing better by revising it and today we're going to make our writing better by editing it. Editing is when you reread your work and see if you can make it easier for someone to read by doing things like fixing up the spelling. Today I'm going to teach you how to edit your work by fixing up some of your spelling.

TEACH

I'm really impressed by how many of you use the strategies you've learned to help you spell words. You stretch them out, you use the Word Wall... you are so smart. Jaime is publishing her story about when she went to the zoo with her dad and yesterday she revised it to show how happy she was to be with her dad on that special day. Today she's going to help me show you how to edit your spelling. Jaime, let's read your story together. "I... went... to... the... zoo... wt..." Jaime's not sure what that word is, are you Jaime? What do you think it could be?... "With?" Let's see if that makes sense? "I... went... to... the... zoo... with... my dad." You're right "with". So here's what Jaime is going to do to edit that word. She's going to draw a circle around it to show that's a word she wants to fix up. Then she's going to think of how to write it correctly. Jaime, do you have any ideas?... How about using our spelling strategies chart, will that help? ... "Use the Word Wall?" Let's see if "with" on our Word Wall?... "Yes!" So why don't you copy it here on your paper above where you wrote it before... Excellent! Well done! OK, Jaime, let's continue re-reading your piece looking for another word that you think isn't spelled right... Good. Now let's do the same again. Circle it and let's see if your friends can help you decide how to have another go at that word.

ACTIVE INVOLVEMENT

Jaime wants to write "tiger". How can we help her do that? Turn and talk to your partner about how Jaime could find the correct spelling...

Writers, eyes on me please. I heard so many of you suggesting that Jaime should stretch it out "t-i-g-e-r". So let's help Jaime do that and she can have a second try writing it above her circle... Thank you all for helping Jaime and thank you so much, Jaime, you were a great help in our mini-lesson today.

LINK

Today, I'd like you all to go back and reread your piece, looking for one or two words that you think may not be spelled correctly. Circle these words and then try to find the correct spelling by using one of the strategies you have learned. Then write your new spelling above the circle.

Editing our spelling:

1. Reread your writing
2. Circle 1-2 words you want to fix up
3. Stretch out the word or use the Word Wall
4. Write the new spelling above the circle

Work Time:

Conferring: Be sure to support students as they edit rather than do it for them!

Possible mid-workshop teaching point: *You are all working so hard at your editing, fixing up your writing to make it easier to read.*

SHARE

Writers, as you were editing, I heard a lot of people stretching words out to listen for the sounds and I saw others using our Word Wall. I'm going to call on a few students who I conferred with this morning and ask them to share some of the words they fixed up and how they did it.

REFLECTIONS

- *It's wonderful to see the children working so intently to make their work their personal best.*

Teaching point: *Adding “the finishing touches”*

Method: ___demonstration ___guided practice ___inquiry X explain & give examples

Materials needed: teacher’s writing, one or two well-illustrated favorite Read Alouds

CONNECTION

Remind students of the great work they have been doing revising and editing their pieces. Tell them that today is their last chance to make their writing the best they can and that you are going to teach them how to “put the finishing touches” on their pieces by making sure that they have their name on their work and that they are happy with their pictures.

TEACH

Hold up one of the children’s’ favorite Read Alouds and show that the author’s name is on the front cover. Tell them that it is important to know who did all the hard work that went into making the book. Then talk briefly about the illustrations: the use of color, small details, borders etc. Repeat with another favorite Read Aloud.

ACTIVE INVOLVEMENT

Ask your students to think about how they want to work on their pictures today and then turn and talk to share their plan with their partner.

LINK

Remind your students that today is the last day to make their published piece as good as they can. Ask them to be sure that their name is on their paper and to make their pictures beautiful for everyone to enjoy.

Work time:

Conferring: Talk with students about their illustrations and what they are intentionally doing to improve them.

Possible mid-workshop teaching point: Encouragement and praise: we are working towards a deadline like published authors do!

SHARE

Praise your students for all their hard work and tell them how beautiful their pictures look. Tell them they are going to practice reading their pieces with a partner so that tomorrow they will be ready to share them with the whole class. Model holding your paper away from your face so that the listener can hear clearly. Model reading “loud and proud”, speaking slowly and clearly.

REFLECTIONS

- Take a moment to enjoy your students’ published pieces! Appreciate all their hard work and how much they have learned.

Teaching point: *Sharing, celebrating and reflecting*

Method: ___demonstration X guided practice ___inquiry ___explain & give examples

Materials needed: students' published pieces

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 some of the things they have learned in Writing Workshop over the past few weeks: storytelling, telling stories in pictures and words, adding details to help the reader, using spelling strategies, showing not telling, sharing their work with a partner, revising, editing 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. Praise your students and tell them that you are going to put their work up on the wall so that everyone who comes into the room can enjoy it and know that this is a class full of excellent writers! Ask the students to think for a moment about the thing they are most proud of in their published piece. What is the best part of their writing? What did they work the hardest on? Invite them to turn and share with their partner. Listen in and then tell the whole class some of the reflections you heard. Congratulate your students on their hard work and tell them what wonderful writers they all are!

REFLECTIONS

- Take time to write your own 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.