

Living the Life
of a Writer
✦
Second 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

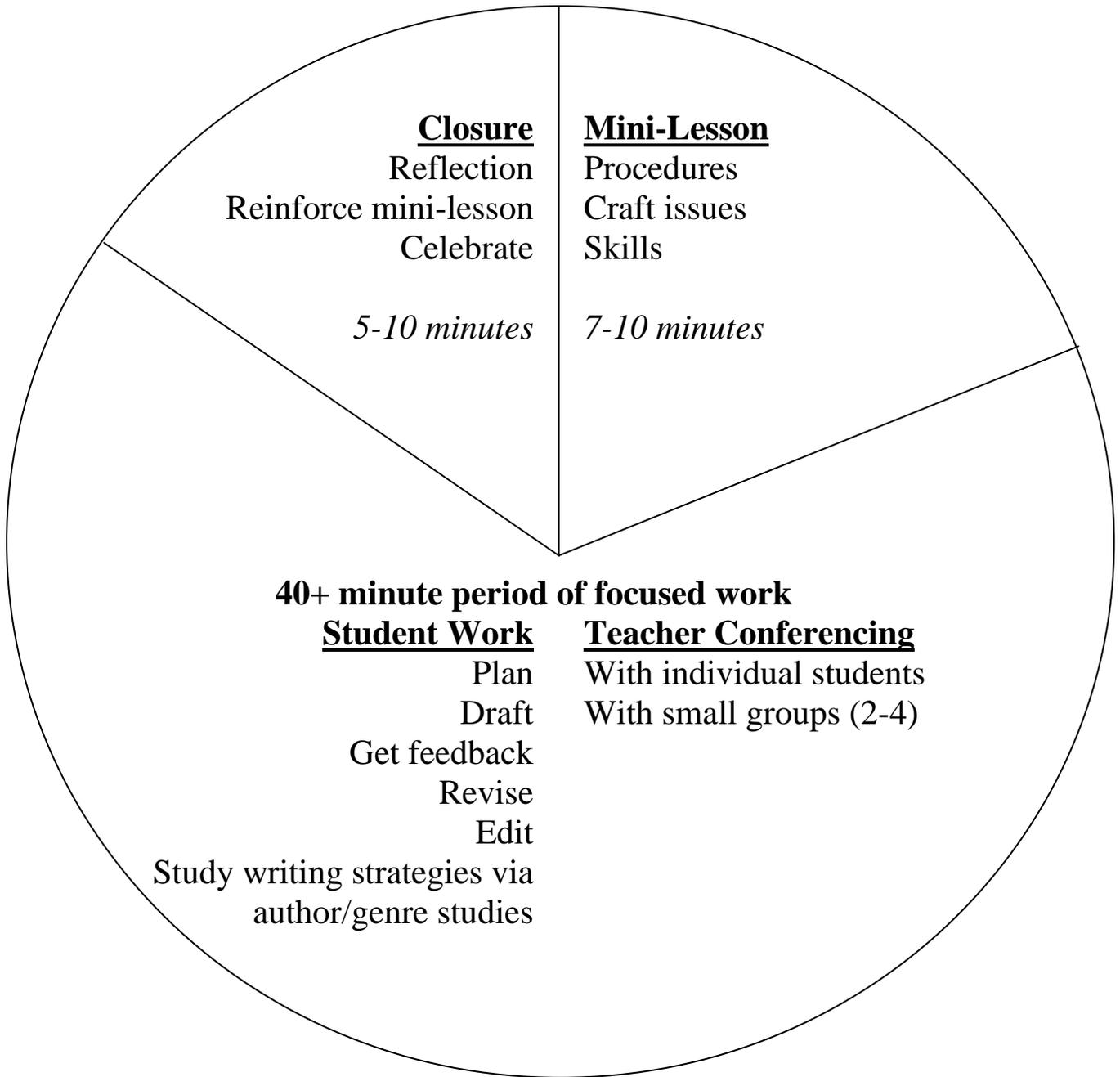
The structure of Writing Workshop is one of predictability. At the same time each day, teacher and students gather for a mini-lesson. This is followed by independent work time, which allows students to write on their own or in a variety of collaborative groupings, while the teacher confers with students.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

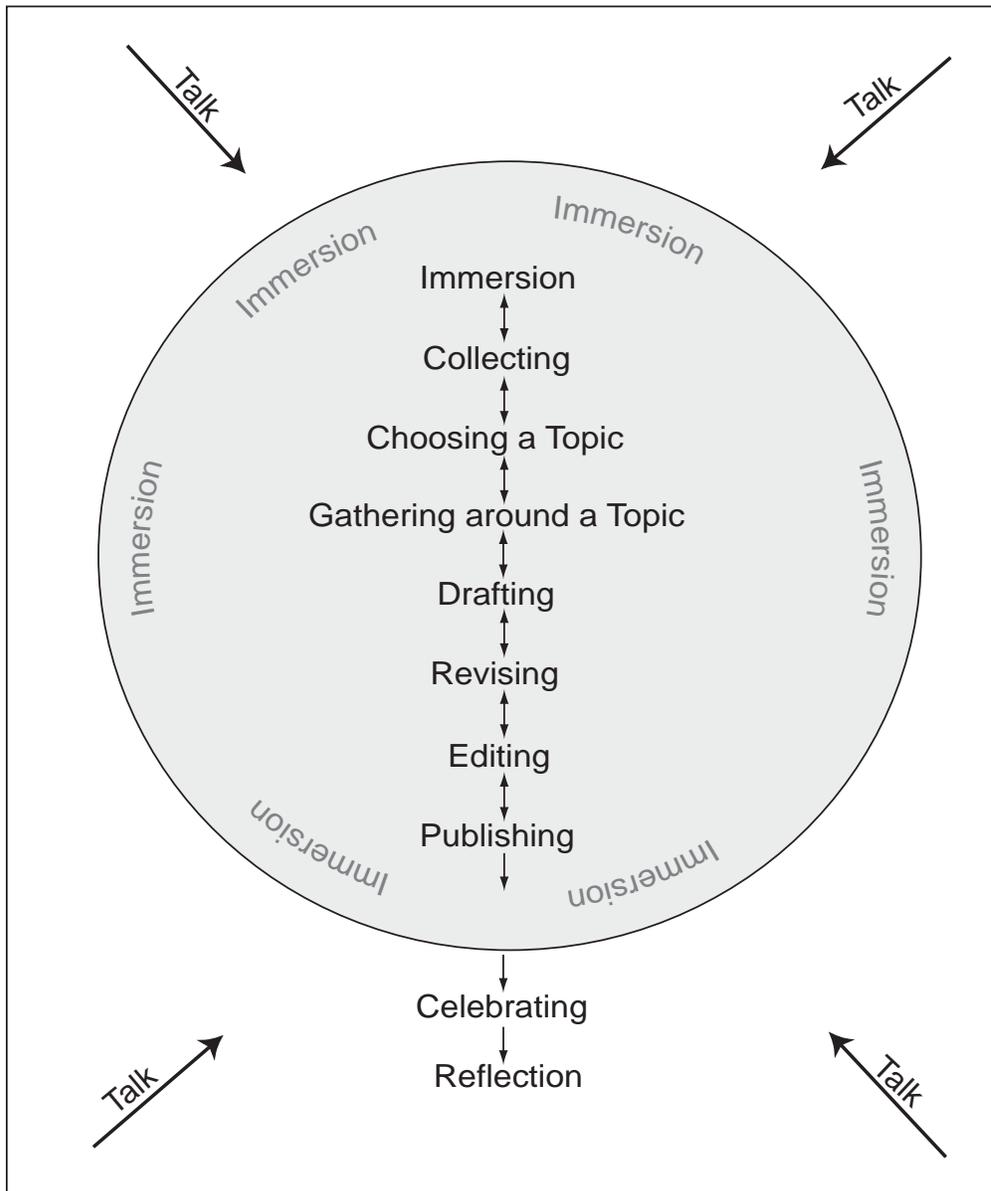
Sometimes teachers speak to the class in the middle of *work time* to show an example of good work, share with the whole class something from a conference, invite students to work with their writing partners or briefly return focus to a teaching point.

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 Second 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 you 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 2

- **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: Generating a list of ideas we can write about
- Lesson 3: Working independently: managing our writers' tools
- Lesson 4: Using our lists of ideas to generate notebook entries
- Lesson 5: Beginning of the year on-demand writing assessment

Week 2: Collecting notebook entries

- Lesson 6: Collecting notebook entries: observations
- Lesson 7: Reading like a writer: choosing our words with care
- Lesson 8: Conferring with the teacher about our writing
- Lesson 9: Collecting notebook entries: re-reading our notebooks
- Lesson 10: What to do when you think you're done

Week 3: Opening up the possibilities for writing

- Lesson 11: Making our writing come alive: "show not tell"
- Lesson 12: Using the spelling strategies we know
- Lesson 13: Choosing a topic
- Lesson 14: Gathering around a topic
- Lesson 15: Writing a first draft

Week 4: Putting it all together

- Lesson 16: Improving our drafts by revision
- Lesson 17: Discussing our drafts with a partner to aid revision
- Lesson 18: Editing our writing
- Lesson 19: Writing and illustrating our final draft
- Lesson 20: Going public and reflecting on ourselves as writers

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 start some charts that serve to record and remind students of the content of our mini-lessons. Students will live the life of a writer by writing a number of entries in their notebooks. They will think about topics that they can write about that are important to them. Students will write an on-demand baseline assessment that 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: Generating a list of ideas we can write about

Lesson 3: Working independently: managing our writers' tools

Lesson 4: Using our lists of ideas to generate notebook entries

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

Suggested literature

- The Dot: Peter Reynolds (community building)
- ish: Peter Reynolds (approximations)
- What Authors Do: Eileen Christelow (writers' habits)
- When I Was Little: Jamie Lee Curtis (memories)
- When I Was Young in the Mountains: Cynthia Rylant (memories)

Charts

- *The Structure of Writing Workshop* - pie chart
- *Notebook page layout*
- *Good writers...* (habits of good writers)
- *We can write about...* (topics we can 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 closing
- manage accountable talk
- are able to generate ideas to write about
- understand that there are opportunities for writing all around us in our daily lives
- can independently access the tools they need 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: *signal e.g. bell, rainstick, student notebooks, teacher's notebook*

Before the lesson: Make a pie chart of *The Structure of Writing Workshop* (mini-lesson, work time, share) and a chart to show notebook page layout

CONNECTION

Signal. *Boys and girls that sound is a signal to tell you that Writing Workshop is about to begin. When you hear that sound, I want you all to come quietly to the rug. Leave your tables, push your chairs under and come and sit in rows on the rug. Sit cross-legged. You need to be aware of the space between you and the people around you. So let's try that. ...*

*We'll begin each day in Writing Workshop on the rug with a short lesson, called the mini-lesson. Then you'll go off to your seats and write while I come around and talk with you individually about your writing. At the end of our Workshop we'll all come together again on the rug to talk about our writing. Show *The Structure of Writing Workshop* pie chart. Today we're going to be telling and writing stories: stories about our lives.*

TEACH

I want to tell you about something that happened to me last month. Briefly tell an anecdote of a small but interesting incident in your life. I often write about things that happen to me in my notebook. Let me show you how I start. Model writing entry on chart paper with margin etc. to look like a notebook page. First I write the date, then I start to write my memory, taking it slowly, sentence by sentence. ... Think Aloud as you write the beginning of your story on the chart, pausing to think, crossing out (tell the students that we don't erase) etc. We all have stories to tell and today I want you to tell the story of something that you did, a story from your life.

ACTIVE INVOLVEMENT

Take a moment and think of something you'd like to write about. I chose a summer memory but you can write about anything you like... Now you are going to turn and talk to the person sitting to your left. Decide who will go first, then after a minute, I'll signal that it is the other person's turn to talk. ... I heard some writers say they are going to write about going to the zoo, Kava said he just got a new baby sister and he wants to write about her. You've all got such great ideas!

LINK

Writers, today I'm going to give you each a notebook. This will be a very special place for you to write in. We'll have lots of time this year to write memories, poems, information... all sorts of things. So let's get started today. Look up at this chart. This is what your notebook pages should look like. Each day you should write the date here, write up to the margin and the edge of the page and remember to skip lines. When you get back to your seats, neatly write your name on the cover, open to the first page and begin to write about the idea you just shared.

Work Time:

Conferring: Move during the workshop and talk to students about their writing. Pull a chair alongside students to engage in short, quiet conversations about their writing or topic selection by asking, "What are you writing about?" Make notes of their responses, such as, "Miguel is writing about baseball camp. He got started right away."

Possible mid-workshop teaching point: *Writers. One of the things we'll learn this year is what Writing Workshop sounds like: what noise level is best for us to concentrate on our writing. It feels too noisy in here right now so let's feel and hear what silence is like for a few minutes as we write.*

SHARE

Signal. I'm going to stop you now and ask you to come quietly back to the rug. ...Chairs under. ...Sitting in rows. Be aware of the space around you... So we'll come back together at the end of Writing Workshop each day to think about and share our writing. Point to pie chart. I was impressed today how everyone has something in his or her notebook. Some of us were able to start writing right away. Some of us took time to think. And now we all have our first notebook entry. We are all writers! Maya can you tell us how you felt when you started writing today? ... And Alex, how about you? This is what we'll do every day in Writing Workshop: meet together for a short lesson about writing, spend time writing and talking about writing and then come back together again to share what we have been doing.

REFLECTIONS

- I think the students did quite well coming to the rug given that it was their first time. Maybe I'll need to separate a few students but I think I'll give them a chance first.*
- I was really pleased how most students started writing straight away. A couple didn't know what to write but were OK after a brief conversation. I'm a bit worried about Jorge since he is so new to our school and has little experience with English.*
- I need to think more about the noise level during work time. There should be a quiet hum; we definitely need practice!*

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

Method: ___demonstration ___guided practice ___inquiry Xexplain & give examples

Materials needed: *student notebooks, teacher's notebook, chart paper*

Before the lesson: start a *Good writers...* chart listing writers' habits mentioned in Lesson 1

CONNECTION

Signal. *Yesterday, on our first day of Writing Workshop, I noticed many of you doing things good writers do and I wrote them on this chart.*

Good writers...

- *sometimes start writing right away*
- *sometimes think for a few minutes*
- *before starting to write*
- *write about what they know*

We're going to add to this chart over the next few weeks as we learn together the habits of good writers. Today I'm going to teach you how to make a list of topics to write about so that you always have ideas for writing.

TEACH

I'm going to give you a walkthrough of my notebook and show you some of the things I've written about. Here's the memory I wrote with you yesterday. ... This is a piece I wrote about camping in Yosemite with my family.... Here's a funny memory about when we first got our puppy. ... Here's a photo of my nephews and some writing about when we all went to the zoo (all nine cousins!).... Here's a sad story about my daughter's rabbit... Read just a few lines from each. I write about all sorts of different things in my notebook and I expect you like to write about some of the same things.... Look here in the back of my notebook. I keep a list of writing ideas, topics I can write about. Sometimes I have an idea for writing but I don't have time to write about it right then and there so I add it to my list so then I can write about it when I do have time. ... Let's make a chart together of topics we can write about.

We can write about...

- *our vacations (like I did about Yosemite)*
- *our families (I have lots of family stories don't I? Our families are very important to us and so we write about them a lot)*
- *our pets (I showed you my writing about our puppy and my daughter's rabbit)*

We can add more to this chart but this is a good start.

ACTIVE INVOLVEMENT

I'd like you to turn and talk to your partner about some of the things on our chart you would like to write about. Don't just say "my family". Think of one special time with your family you would like to write about or one special member of your family and something you did with him or her. ... I heard a good variety of topics that you can put on your lists. Kara and Melissa were talking about going to the park together and that made me think of something else we can add to our chart...

- our friends

LINK

So today you are going to make a personal list of ideas you would like to write about in your notebook this year. Put it on the back page of your notebook like mine. You could write "family" and then list all your family members and some of the things you like to do with them. Just start listing all the things you'd like to write about this year in 2nd grade. If you think you've finished your list, then take a moment to re-read what you wrote yesterday. Think about whether you want to continue with that or whether you want to start something new. Then write today's date and if you're continuing yesterday's memory keep on writing, if you're starting a new entry, just skip a line and continue. ... Just keep on writing until you hear the signal that it's time for us to share!

Work Time: As you circulate the room, watch those students whom you feel struggle to get started. Occasionally it is a good idea to keep a small group on the rug immediately after the mini-lesson to ensure they know what to do.

Conferring: Reinforce the mini-lesson by making comments about good writer habits e.g. "I see you doing what good writers do, you are..."

Possible mid-workshop teaching point: *I really like the way many of you are thinking hard and putting specific ideas on your lists. Jacob didn't just write "my family", he wrote "my brother Isaac".*

SHARE

Signal. Today when you come to the rug, I'm going to ask you to sit in a circle around the edge of the rug, around the perimeter, so that you can all see each other. In the mini-lesson you want to be facing me so you can see and hear what I am teaching you but during the Share we want to see and hear each other so we need to be facing each other. ... Wow! What a smart class! We are going to have so much fun in Writing Workshop this year! I'm going to ask you all to share three things from your list. Take a moment to re-read your list and choose three interesting ideas. ... Maria would you like to go first and then we'll continue to the right, around the circle so that everyone has a turn. ... Thinking about our Workshop today we can add four bullets to our Good writers... chart:

- write every day
- re-read their writing
- write about many different topics
- share their ideas and their writing with fellow writers

REFLECTIONS

- Most of the students seemed to settle well to writing today. Sustaining for the whole 40 minutes is obviously difficult for some of them and so I think I was right to cut things a bit shorter today. We'll build up gradually over this first week.
- I need to make a decision about homework and whether they should take their notebooks home. Maybe I'll wait a while and introduce this later. It's important though that they begin to understand that writing isn't only something we do in the classroom. Perhaps at Back to School night I could suggest they have a notebook at home.
- I think it would be a good idea to have a lesson tomorrow about managing our writers' tools independently. I see a lot of time being wasted sharpening pencils etc.

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

Method: ___demonstration ___guided practice ___inquiry Xexplain & give examples

Materials needed: Classroom Writing Center equipped with writers' tools and/or tabletop containers of supplies

CONNECTION

Remind students that they are learning to work independently and as part of a writing community. Today they will learn how to manage the writers' tools in the classroom so they can sustain their writing independently.

TEACH

Tell students that writers' tools are very important to them: they are the tools of their trade. Part of working independently in Writing Workshop is taking care of one's writing tools. Talk the students through the tools in the Writing Center and/or table-top containers e.g. two pots of pencils, one for sharpened pencils and one for pencils that need sharpening, blue pencils for revision, red pencils for editing, erasers, staplers, different types of paper etc. Explain to students that as a community of writers we share responsibility for these tools and their safekeeping.

ACTIVE INVOLVEMENT

Ask students to look around the room and do a mental check to ensure they know where everything is kept.

LINK

Tell students that while you are conferring you cannot be interrupted. Explain that they need to be self-reliant or ask a fellow writer. Tell them that today they are going to write another entry in their notebook or continue one they have already started. Bring their attention to the *We can write about...* chart. Tell them that there is another important writers' tool: *time*. We need to use our time wisely, we can't waste time sharpening pencils etc.

Work Time:

Conferring: Take notes on your conferences. Make a note of each student's strengths in writing. Aim to talk to four or five students each day.

Possible mid-workshop teaching point: Comment on a student's self-reliance in managing their writing tools e.g. getting a sharpened pencil rather than wasting time sharpening one.

SHARE

Have two students model the procedures for a partner share. Ask them to turn and sit facing each other eye-to-eye, knee-to-knee. Whilst one student reads her work, the other listens carefully, leaving his work on the floor. Tell the students that we often respond to someone sharing their work by paying them a compliment and then asking a question to help us clarify our understanding.... Give students a few minutes to share today's writing with their partner, responding with a compliment and a question.

REFLECTIONS

- Observing the students, does it seem that the writing resources are well placed for ease of access?
- Do students seem to understand the importance of not interrupting during conferences?

Teaching point: *Using our lists of ideas to generate notebook entries*

Method: ___demonstration ___guided practice ___inquiry Xexplain & give examples

Materials needed: teacher's notebook, students' notebooks

CONNECTION

Ask students to bring their notebooks to the rug today. ... Remind them that yesterday they learned how to manage the writers' tools in the classroom so they can sustain their writing independently. Today they are going to learn how to use their lists of ideas to generate notebook entries as another way of sustaining their writing independently, so that they can never say, "I don't know what to write about."

TEACH

Tell the students a quick anecdote about something simple that happened to you that morning such as "losing" your keys. Add this to your own topic list to model that our lists are constantly growing. Think Aloud as you reread your list and select one idea to write about today, say why you are choosing this one rather than that one... Model opening your notebook and beginning to write a story related to that idea.

ACTIVE INVOLVEMENT

Ask students to reread their lists and choose one idea they would like to write about today. ... Invite them to turn and talk to their partner about their writing plan for today. Listen in and share a few good ideas for writing.

LINK

Tell the students to start writing the story they just discussed with their partner. They can leave space to finish yesterday's writing later if they would like to.

Work Time:

Conferring: As you confer each day you will be looking for students who are doing well at carrying out the work of the mini-lesson. These students can be invited to share their writing during our end of Workshop Share.

Possible mid-workshop teaching point: Name students who are really focused on their idea choice and writing.

SHARE

Ask a pre-selected student to share his notebook entry. Ask him to discuss how he chose that idea to write about today. Praise the students for their hard work.

REFLECTIONS

- Think about how Turn and Talk is working for your students as an “oral rehearsal” strategy for them to think and talk through what they want to say before starting to write.
- How specific were the students' lists? They may need support in making their lists specific in order for them to be truly helpful in generating ideas for writing.

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

Method: ___demonstration ___guided practice ___inquiry ___explain & give examples

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

- Tell 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 narrative (a story). They just have today's Writing Workshop time to do it and so it will be first draft writing, they will not have time to revise or recopy. They should, however, allow time to proofread and edit.
- Read the students the prompt. Ask students if they have any questions.
- Give students the rest of the hour to write to the prompt.
- Collect the students' writing and analyze it 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.

Note: Personalizing notebooks by decorating them with photos, stickers, drawings etc. is important. You can choose to do this as a class activity or for homework. Use your notebook as a model, showing how you used things that are important in your life e.g. a family photo, a ticket stub from a play, a quote from your favorite author.

Week 2: Collecting notebook entries

This week, as we bear in mind our analysis of the on-demand writing, students will be taught different ways to increase the volume and variety of entries in their notebooks. We will use a Touchstone Text to introduce the concept of “reading like a writer”. Our students will learn strategies for sustaining effort and writing fluently during Work Time. Students will learn their role in a conference and we will focus on listening to them and thinking about “teaching the writer, not the writing”.

Lesson 6: Collecting notebook entries: observations

Lesson 7: Reading like a writer: choosing our words with care

Lesson 8: Conferring with the teacher about our writing

Lesson 9: Collecting notebook entries: re-reading our notebooks

Lesson 10: What to do when you think you’re done

Suggested literature

- Night in the Country: Cynthia Rylant (observation, reading like a writer)
- A Fawn in the Grass: Joanne Ryder (observation)
- Right Outside My Window: Mary Ann Hoberman (observation)

Charts

- *Our topics*
- What to do when you think you’re done...
- Adding to existing charts: *Good writers...* and *We can write about...*

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 writers’ tools
- understand the concept of reading like a writer
- are able to participate in a conference
- have written a number of entries in their notebooks

Teaching point: *Collecting notebook entries: observations*

Method: demonstration guided practice inquiry explain & give examples

Materials needed: A familiar Read Aloud with text that shows the author closely observes the world around her e.g. *Night in the Country* by Cynthia Rylant

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 Cynthia Rylant to support this lesson can be found at: <http://www.kidsreads.com/authors/au-rylant-cynthia.asp>

“I also like to go for walks with my dogs. Sometimes we have adventures -- someone will fall into a lake or someone will meet a raccoon -- but mostly we just have lovely, quiet walks. This helps my writing. I think probably most writers need to take walks.”

CONNECTION

Remind students that they have been writing a lot of interesting notebook entries and tell them that most of them have been memories: personal narratives. Tell them that writers write many different types of entries in their notebooks, including observations. Today you are going to show them how to observe something very closely and then put the details they see into their writing.

TEACH

Show the students a familiar Read Aloud such as *Night in the Country* by Cynthia Rylant. Point out a few lines e.g. “Great owls with marble eyes who swoop among the trees and who are not afraid of night in the country.” “A raccoon mother licks her babies.” Tell the students that Cynthia Rylant couldn’t have written those lines unless she had observed owls and raccoons. Give supporting biographical information. Tell the students that today they are going to do something very special: they are going to go outside and find something to closely observe and then they are going to write about it. 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. Model choosing something to observe and starting to write about it in your notebook.

ACTIVE INVOLVEMENT

Ask the students to look around and think about what they could closely observe. Tell them to share their ideas with a partner.

LINK

Tell the students to choose something to observe, look at it very carefully and then write about it including as many interesting details 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 each tell one detail about what they chose to observe. Praise the students for living the life of a writer: writers closely observe the world around them. Add to the *Good writers...* chart:

- *pay attention to the world around them*
- *observe things closely*

REFLECTIONS

- The children enjoyed being outside and hopefully learned something about living the life of a writer by observing the world around them!

Teaching point: *Reading like a writer: choosing our words with care*

Method: demonstration guided practice inquiry explain & give examples

Materials needed: *Familiar Read Aloud used in the previous lesson e.g. Night in the Country by Cynthia Rylant, teacher's observation*

CONNECTION

Writers, last night I took a look at the observations you wrote yesterday and I'm very impressed at how closely you observed what you chose to write about. Today you are going to work on your observations again to make them even better by carefully thinking about the words you choose. Our teacher today will be Cynthia Rylant: we are going to look closely at the words that Cynthia Rylant chose in her book Night in the Country and then try choosing our words as carefully as she does so that our writing can be as powerful as hers.

TEACH

I've typed out the text of Night in the Country for you and, as I read, I want you to follow along and listen carefully to the words Cynthia Rylant chooses to tell us about the things we see and hear at night in the country. Listen out for a word or phrase that you particularly like.

ACTIVE INVOLVEMENT

I'm going to give you a highlighter now so that you can quickly re-read the text and highlight the words and phrases you like. ... Now let's fill the room with Cynthia Rylant's powerful language. Let's go around and hear some of the words and phrases you like.... Wow! Wasn't that great? Now I'm going to ask you to set aside the text and highlighters for a moment, please, because I want to show you how Cynthia Rylant can be a teacher, a mentor, for us and help us make better choices about the words we use in our writing.

TEACH (cont'd)

Here's my observation and I want you to listen as I reread it... It's OK but I think I can make it better by thinking more carefully about the words I choose, like Cynthia Rylant does. Cynthia Rylant wrote, "Great owls with marble eyes who swoop among the trees and who are not afraid of night in the country."... I like that. ... "marble eyes" not just "eyes"... maybe I could do that for my spider and write "spindly legs" instead of just "legs". ... And here Cynthia Rylant writes "A raccoon mother licks her babies." ... She's telling us what the mother raccoon is doing... maybe I could write what my spider is doing... "The spider scurries quickly away on his spindly legs." Can you see how Cynthia Rylant is helping me? I'm "reading like a writer", reading not to find out what happens in the story but to see how I can learn to be a better writer. That's one of the things you'll practice doing this year in Writing Workshop: reading to learn how to be a better writer.

LINK

So before you take another look at your observations, I'm going to ask you to neatly copy the words and phrases you highlighted from Night in the Country onto a sentence strip so I can put them up on the wall to fill our room with beautiful written language. Then I want you to re-read your observation and think about making it make it better by using words and phrases like Cynthia Rylant does. That's a lot of instructions so if you're not sure what you have to do today, stay on the rug and we can talk about it.

Work Time:

Conferring: This lesson will be a stretch for many 2nd graders so today might be a good day to work with some more able students to make sure that they are rising to the challenge.

Possible mid-workshop teaching point: *Isn't it great to have a famous writer like Cynthia Rylant for a teacher?*

SHARE

Today we're going to do a Popcorn Share! 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 person can speak at a time so if two of you start to speak at the same time then one must stop and let the other go first. Everyone is going to share their favorite word or phrase from their observation. Take a moment to decide which part of your writing you want to share... Ready, let's begin ... You know, boys and girls, just as we learn good writing from famous authors, we learn from each other too by sharing our writing like this. Let's add that to our Good writers chart...

- *learn from other writers*

You have all worked very hard today! Give yourselves a pat on the back!

REFLECTIONS

- *I expected a lot of them today. I'll definitely do more work on word choice when we go into our narrative study but it was a good vehicle to introduce them to the concept of reading like a writer and to help them in lifting the level of their language in their observations, I think.*
- *It was good to use the same book in two different lessons: this will definitely be one of my Touchstone Texts this year.*
- *They did quite well with the Popcorn Share! This type of share takes practice as they need to learn the give and take necessary for it to run smoothly!*

Teaching point: *Conferring with the teacher about our writing*

Method: ___demonstration guided practice ___inquiry ___explain & give examples

Materials needed: student volunteer

CONNECTION

Remind students how you have talked about being a community of writers and about community members helping each other. We learn from our professional writer friends like Cynthia Rylant by studying her books and we learn from our classmates by talking about and sharing our writing with them. We also learn from the teacher when she teaches us something about writing in the mini-lesson. Another important part of learning from the teacher is when we have a one-on-one conversation with her during a conference and so today we are going to learn how to talk with the teacher during a conference.

TEACH

Tell the students that the purpose of a conference in Writing Workshop is for the teacher to understand what you are working on and then offer some support that will help you become a better writer. The teacher's job is not to fix your paper for you but to help you think and talk through how your writing is developing. Your job is to talk to the teacher about your writing and the things you do as a writer. So if the teacher says, "How's it going?" and you say, "Fine" then that's not much help. You have to be ready to talk to the teacher about your writing. Thank your student volunteer for helping you today and tell the class that he is going to help you model how to have a productive conference. Support the student in giving full responses to your questions and give a commentary on what you are doing and what the student is doing to make this a good conference. Mention body language, that the student is holding the writing etc.

ACTIVE INVOLVEMENT

Take just a few minutes to have your students role play a conference, taking it in turns to be the student and the teacher. It is interesting to observe the children "playing teacher": do they take on the tone and stance you modeled or revert to stereotypical teacher behavior! Is the "student" able to talk about his/her writing? Ask the students to look at their notebooks and decide what their plan is for Work Time today.

LINK

Tell the students you are looking forward to some fruitful conferences today! Ask them to think about how they will respond today when you ask them, “How’s it going?” Tell them they will be writing in their notebooks, continuing a piece, revisiting a piece or starting a new piece.

Work Time:

Conferring: As you confer today you will be hoping that the quality of your students’ responses is improved by today’s mini-lesson!

Possible mid-workshop teaching point: Praise students who are making an effort to fully participate in their conference today.

SHARE

In a process share ask one of your conferees to tell how today’s conference went. Ask the student to share his/her writing and say what he/she did after the conference to carry out the work of the conversation.

REFLECTIONS

- Decide whether or not you think a chart of conference guidelines would be helpful to the students.
- Writing Workshop teachers use different systems to avoid students wasting time waiting for a conference. Most students understand that they cannot interrupt the teacher during a conference but too many then decide to sit and wait it out until they can get the teacher’s attention! Asking students who want to confer to write their name on the board is one way to allow students to request a conference. Be sure to limit the list to three students! Another way is to use three numbered cards that the children take from the board and place on their desk to alert you to their need.
- Conferences are such an important part of Workshop... and so hard! It takes a lot of practice to confer effectively so be patient and keep focused on helping the writer, not the writing.

Teaching point: *Collecting notebook entries: re-reading our notebooks*

Method: demonstration guided practice inquiry explain & give examples

Materials needed: *teacher's notebook*

CONNECTION

Every day we have been writing more and more notebook entries and today I want to teach you a way you can use the entries you have to generate even more entries.

TEACH

Today I'm going to show you a "notebook dig". Just as an archaeologist digs to discover buried treasures, so you can find treasures within your notebook. Watch me as I look through my notebook, reminding myself of the entries I have written. Here's where I wrote about going to the dentist... I don't want to revisit that! Here's about my camping trip to Yosemite.... This is an observation I wrote about the worms in my compost bin. ... Here's a list of places I'd like to visit in the world. I was trying to put them in order - where in the world would I most like to go?... Here's where I wrote about my birthday party. I'm going to re-read that entry because I had such a great time and it makes me happy to think about it! ... Read entry aloud and then Think Aloud as you "lift a line". "The sparklers lit up everyone's face in the darkened room." You know, I like that line. I'm going to take that line and re-write it at the top of the next page in my notebook and as I'm writing it, I'm thinking about the faces of my family gathered around the table and how thankful I was we were all together. And I'm thinking especially about my mother and it makes me want to write about her. So I'm going to write her name and now just free-write all the things I can think of about my mother.... Isn't it interesting that re-reading my entry about my birthday party is leading me into writing about something different: my mother. Can you see how I've taken something I already have in my notebook as the starting point for another piece of writing?

ACTIVE INVOLVEMENT

You have your notebooks with you on the rug. Take a few minutes to re-read your entries and see if you can find an interesting phrase or sentence in your writing... Turn to your partner and share your line and see if you can think where it might lead you in your writing today... Listen in and share a few examples.

LINK

Writers, you are all so smart! What we are doing today is called “lifting a line”. Re-reading your entries has sparked lots of new ideas for some of you and so now you can go and write them down in your notebooks like I did. Some of you might need more time to re-read, so if you do, why don’t you stay with me on the rug a little while longer? Confer with these students to ensure they understand the concept and how to proceed with today’s “try it”.

Work Time:

Conferring: Ask students how they are doing with this notebook strategy. Is it easy for them to generate another entry in this way or do they need your support?

Possible mid-workshop teaching point: *I am so impressed with how conscientiously you are all re-reading your entries and being courageous about trying something new.*

SHARE

I have asked Andy to talk us through what he did today, how he re-read his notebook entries and “lifted a line”. Then Andy, tell us what you chose to write as a result...What do you think? What can we say to Andy about his hard work today that will help him continue with this tomorrow?

REFLECTIONS

- *I think many students were pleased to see how many entries they already have and tried hard to think of ways to use them to generate even more writing. This was harder for the students who don’t have many entries but hopefully it helped them understand why we need to sustain our effort during Work Time.*
- *There are other re-reading strategies that I can model at another time e.g. circling a word, writing questions in the margin, looking for connections between entries but modeling one at a time is best.*
- *A few students have been asking for help in conferences to make their writing come alive and they are right; their writing certainly lacks energy. Perhaps a “show not tell” lesson soon might lift the level of their entries a bit.*

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

Method: ___demonstration ___guided practice ___inquiry Xexplain & give examples

Materials needed: teacher's notebook, pre-made

Before the lesson: make a 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 write just a little and think that they are “done” and then they disturb their fellow writers. Today we will learn what to do when we think we're done.

TEACH

Tell the children that some students have been telling you they are “done” because they have finished their notebook entry. 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.

What to do when you think you're done

- *re-read your entry*
- *re-read past notebook entries*
- *add on to one of your entries*
- *write off of one of your entries e.g. lift a line*
- *start a new entry*

Think Aloud as you model using your own notebook and the chart to help you decide what to do when you finish an entry.

ACTIVE INVOLVEMENT

Ask students to think about what writing they plan to do today and turn and talk to a partner about their plan.

LINK

Today students will continue with their current entry or start another one. Remind them of the different strategies they have learned over the past few days for collecting notebook entries. Remind them to refer to today's chart if they think they have finished before sharing time.

Independent Work Time: Take a break from conferring to "read the room" to gauge how well students are using their time. How many are writing? How many "thinking"? How many talking – on/off topic?

Conferring: A conference can be a good opportunity to model how to read and actively use the classroom charts.

Possible mid-workshop teaching point: Name a student who is working with interest and stamina.

SHARE

Tell your students how impressed you were by how well they sustained their effort for the whole independent work time today. Add to your *Good writers...* chart:

- *plan how they will use their independent work time*
- *work hard during writing time and produce their best work*

Ask students to think about what they have learned so far in Writing Workshop, both in terms of writing and behaviors. Invite them to think for a moment and refer to the charts, then do a Popcorn Share, each child sharing one important thing he/she has learned. Tell your students it is important in life to look back and think about what we have learned: we call this "reflecting". Add to chart.

- *reflect*

REFLECTIONS

- Think about your students' reflections on what they have learned so far about Writing Workshop. What do they tell you?

Week 3: Opening up the possibilities for writing

This week we focus on students' choosing a topic for publication, gathering around it to develop their ideas and then moving into drafting. We encourage independence and stamina by reviewing spelling strategies. We are beginning to see conferring as an opportunity for assessment.

Lesson 11: Making our writing come alive: “show not tell”

Lesson 12: Using the spelling strategies we know

Lesson 13: Choosing a topic

Lesson 14: Gathering around a topic

Lesson 15: Writing a first draft

Suggested literature

- *Amelia's Notebook*: Marissa Moss (gathering)
- *Hairs/Pelitos*: Sandra Cisneros (show not tell)

Charts

- *Types of notebook entries*
- *Using the spelling strategies we know*
- *Our topics*
- *Ways to gather around our topic*

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

- are beginning to have a variety of types of notebook entries
- are prepared to do “try-its”
- use the spelling strategies they have been taught
- are growing in writing stamina
- manage new writing tools: Work In Progress folders and drafting pads
- are able to move to a draft

Teaching point: *Making our writing come alive: “show not tell”*

Method: demonstration guided practice inquiry explain & give examples

Materials needed: *teacher’s notebook*

CONNECTION

Last time we took a few minutes to reflect on all the things we are learning in Writing Workshop and today I want to respond to a request a few of you have made in conferences. A few of you have been asking for help to make your writing “come alive”, to make your writing “more exciting” and today I’m going to use my writing to show you a technique that writers use known as “show not tell”. That means writers choose their words very carefully to make sure that their reader can really get a mental picture, can visualize, what they are describing.

TEACH

Look at this notebook entry I’ve been working on. I’ve been thinking a lot lately about my grandma and I decided to write an entry describing her. I want people to know what sort of a person she was and so I started off by saying, “My grandma was nice.”... Well that tells you something about her but it doesn’t really give you a picture of her, does it? ... So I went on to say, “My grandmother used to walk me home from school everyday. Along the walk she would always make me laugh by telling me stories about her life. She would also take me to the local candy store and let me pick out special treats.”

ACTIVE INVOLVEMENT

Turn and talk to your partner about what picture you have in your mind of my grandma. What did I do in my writing to help you get a picture of the ways in which my grandma was nice? ... I heard lots of good points here... Evan said there were details like going to the local candy store... Celestina said I wrote about one special thing I used to do with her... You’re right, those are ways we can show and not just tell in our writing.

LINK

Today when you go back to your seats, perhaps you would like to think of someone special in your life and try to describe that person. Try to help your reader visualize that person by showing what is special about him or her: use details and write about special things you do together like I did. If you don't want to do a description that's fine you can continue with the notebook entry you are working on and experiment with "show not tell" in that. Remember, we are trying to include different types of entries in our notebooks so we're not always writing memories.

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

Conferring: Take your notebook with you as you move from child to child, so you can concretely refer back to the mini-lesson and reiterate the concept of "showing not telling". You could also point out examples in your Touchstone Texts.

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 us what his big brother is like. He wrote, "He shoots hoops all day and all night."*

SHARE

Writers, I am so proud of you! You are working so hard every day to become better writers. Many of you tried to write a description today and many of you tried to "show not tell" in your writing.

We heard one line from Juan's piece but I want him to share his whole entry because he did such a great job, I can really visualize his older brother...Writers, showing not telling really makes our writing better. Let's add this strategy to our Good writers... chart." ... And I also want to quickly start another chart to remind us that we can write a variety of types of entries in our notebooks.

Types of notebook entries

- *memories*
- *observations*
- *descriptions*

REFLECTIONS

- *I'm glad I listened and responded to those students who requested a strategy for bringing their writing alive, they seemed to enjoy today's "try-it" and they looked more engaged today.*

Teaching point: *Using the spelling strategies we know*

Method: demonstration guided practice inquiry explain & give examples

Materials needed: Classroom spelling resources e.g. Word Wall, personal dictionaries, chart paper

Before the lesson: Make a chart *Using the spelling strategies we know...*

CONNECTION

Praise the students for doing the “show not tell” try-it yesterday. Tell them you are a bit concerned by the number of children you observe who seem stuck in their writing because they don’t know what to do when they think they can’t spell a word. Tell them that you have been talking to their 1st grade teacher and you know they learned lots of different spelling strategies last year. Today you want to remind them of those strategies.

TEACH

Cover your pre-made chart with another piece of chart paper and reveal one bullet at a time as you discuss it. This will largely be review but you should model any strategy that you think your students are not familiar with.

Spelling strategies

- *s-t-r-e-t-c-h out the word*
- *think what the word might look like*
- *use the Word Wall*
- *ask a friend*
- *use your personal dictionary*
- *use a dictionary*

Finally, tell the students that if they can’t find the word using any of the charted 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). Remind them that it is important that we always try to write the interesting words we have in mind 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”.

ACTIVE INVOLVEMENT

Ask the students what they might do if they had to spell the next word in a sentence like, “Ryan woke up in a very good mood this.....”. Invite them to turn and talk to their partner about their options. Share the students’ suggestions.

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. It is important that they become independent learners and using the strategies they know helps them to do this.

Work Time:

Conferring: If appropriate, it might be interesting to discuss with students which spelling strategies they use most frequently.

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 the spelling strategies they used today, showing their before and after attempts.

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 use self-sustaining strategies in Workshop is so important: building independence is crucial.

Teaching point: *Choosing a topic*

Method: demonstration guided practice inquiry explain & give examples

Materials needed: *student notebooks, teacher's notebook, sticky notes, chart paper*

Before the lesson: make a chart of The Writing Process, chart "Our topics..."

CONNECTION

Tell your students that they have been writing in Writing Workshop for several days and so they have a good number of entries in their notebooks. Today they are going to choose one of their entries that they will draft, revise, edit and recopy as a published piece of writing.

TEACH

Show students the chart of The Writing Process and tell them they will learn about each stage as we move along. Today we are going to select the topic for our published piece.

Show the students three small sticky notes and model rereading your notebook and as you find something you think you might want to work more on and publish, put a sticky note on it. Model choosing three possibilities and then Think Aloud as you narrow our choices to one. Talk about your final choice being a topic that is interesting to you, that you care about and that you are prepared to spend more time on. Start the Our topics... chart by writing your name and your topic alongside it.

LINK

Tell your students to take time re-reading their notebooks and carefully selecting their three possibilities which they should flag using the stickies at their tables. Then tell them to choose one by asking themselves: Do I care about this topic enough to spend lots more time on it? When they have made their decision they can take turns in writing their name and their topic on the chart. Then they can continue working on a notebook entry.

Work Time:

Conferring: Circulate making sure that the students really are re-reading their entries to decide where to place the stickies.

Possible mid-workshop teaching point: Praise the students who obviously are making considered topic choices.

SHARE

Ask a few pre-selected students to talk about the process of re-reading and choosing their topic. How did they make their final decision? Point out the range of topics on the class chart.

REFLECTIONS

- How much time did students take actually re-reading and making their choice of topic? Considered topic choice is such a clear predictor of how engaged students remain with their piece throughout the publication process.

Teaching point: *Gathering around a topic*

Method: demonstration guided practice inquiry explain & give examples

Materials Needed: *teacher's notebook*

CONNECTION

Writers, just look at our topic chart! What a lot of interesting topics you are writing about! Today we are going to start the process of taking our writing to publication. Look at our Writing Process chart. This is where we are today: gathering around the topic. Today I am going to teach you a strategy for gathering around your topic.

TEACH

When we choose to write about a topic we need to do a lot of thinking, researching and “writing around” the idea before we can move to a draft. Let me show you one way to do this. It’s called “a web”: just like a spider’s web. I’m going to put my topic in the middle.. “taking nine cousins to the zoo!” Then I’m going to draw threads coming out and on each thread I’m going to write ideas that come into my head as I think of my topic... galumphing gorillas... pesky pigeons... hot, sticky baby... exploding bags of chips... You get the idea. Some of those things were in my original piece in my notebook but others are coming into my head as I think more about my topic...

ACTIVE INVOLVEMENT

Now I’d like you to think about the web that you could draw for your topic.. Think about a few things that you could put on the threads and then turn and share your thoughts with your partner.

LINK

Today I’d like you to try gathering around your topic by using a web to help you generate new thoughts about it. Take time to draw your web and brainstorm onto the threads. I’m going to give you about fifteen minutes to do that and then we’re going to do something a bit different. I’m going to ask you to come back to the rug because I’d like to teach you how to use your web to do another piece of writing.

Work Time:

Conferring: Enjoy your students’ creative brainstorming!

Possible mid-workshop teaching point: Name and praise students who are generating lots of ideas using their web. Ask students to return to the rug.

TEACH cont'd.

I'm so impressed with all the ideas you're capturing in your webs! Now I want to model for you the next step. I'm going to write about "taking nine cousins to the zoo!" again using one of the ideas on my web. Let me show you.. So here I wrote "hot, sticky baby" and I'm going to use that thought to write about my nephew at the zoo..."Arthur was hot. Arthur was tired. Arthur was hungry. Arthur wanted ice cream!"... Now I'd like you to try that. Go back to your writing tables, take one thought from your web and expand it into another notebook entry related to your chosen topic.

SHARE

Today I saw many of you generating lots of ideas through webbing. I'm going to ask Austin and Diana to share their webs and the writing they did from them.. Didn't they do well? There are many different ways to gather around a topic and that is what we'll be doing during Work Time over the next few days. Here's a chart of some of the different things we can do.

Ways to gather around our topic...

- *write everything that comes to mind when you think of your topic*
- *make a really long list of words that come to mind*
- *choose one word and write a lot about it*
- *draw a sketch that makes you think of your topic*
- *look at photos or objects that generate memories about your topic*
- *observe closely*
- *talk to people and ask questions about your topic*
- *research in books or on the Internet about your topic*

REFLECTIONS

- *It was great to see students using the ideas from their webs in another piece of writing; it will really help them when they move to a draft to have lots of writing around their topic.*
- *Now I need to think about how many days we can spend gathering. This is an important step but it is important to think of this as a quick publishing and to move through the writing process fairly quickly.*
- *Now we are moving towards publication I should decide on how to celebrate our 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 this first one! Perhaps 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 best 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: *Writing a first draft*

Method: demonstration guided practice inquiry explain & give examples

Materials needed: Work In Progress folders, drafting pads

CONNECTION

Remind your students of the Writing Process and show them on the chart that today they are ready to start drafting. Tell them they are going to get some important new writing tools today: drafting pads and Work in Progress folders.

TEACH

Tell your students that writers move from their notebooks to their drafts in many different ways. Today you are going to model one way. Model re-reading all of the entries that you gathered around your topic. Tell them that your head is now full of thinking about your topic and that you are going to start writing. Close your notebook and set it aside. Begin writing your draft on chart paper, modeling writing on every other line, telling the students you are leaving room to add on and cross out etc. As you write, Think Aloud about how you are weaving together ideas from all your gatherings.

LINK

Show your students the drafting pads and tell them to write on every other line, on one side of the page only so they can make changes and additions. Invite the students to do as you did, re-reading their gatherings, closing their notebooks and just starting to write. Remind students of their responsibility for being prepared for a conference. Tell them to get into the habit of thinking, “If I have a conference today, I’d like to talk about...”

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 describe how they are thinking of moving to a draft rather than suggest how they should do 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 a pre-selected student to share how moving to a draft worked for him or her.

REFLECTIONS

- Setting their notebooks aside is a good way to make sure students don’t just rewrite their notebook entries onto their drafting pad. How did it work for them?

Week 4: Putting it all together

This week we will work on revising and editing our writing in preparation for publication. We will look at grade level standards to set appropriate editing goals. We will revise with our writing partners and share 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 who work productively within a community of writers. Much of our time in conferences this week will supporting students with revision and editing, showing them how to make their writing easy for the reader to understand

Lesson 16: Improving our drafts by revision

Lesson 17: Discussing our drafts with a partner to aid revision

Lesson 18: Editing our writing

Lesson 19: Writing and illustrating our final draft

Lesson 20: Going public and reflecting on ourselves as writers

Suggested literature

- What Authors Do: Eileen Christelow (revision and editing)

Charts

- *Revision strategies*
- *Editing*

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

- make minor revisions to their first draft
- are able to give and receive feedback on their writing and use it to improve their writing
- edit for conventions, capitalization and spelling
- understand the importance of presentation and try to make their published piece visually pleasing
- can participate in a community celebration
- can reflect upon and articulate what strategies work for them as a writer

Teaching point: *Improving our first drafts by revision*

Method: demonstration guided practice inquiry explain & give examples

Materials needed: Work In Progress folders, drafting pads, pre-made *Revision Strategies* chart, blue pencils

Before the lesson: Copy a portion of your draft onto chart paper including some parts in need of revision and some spelling and conventions errors.

CONNECTION

Remind your students that last time they started drafting. Show them the *Writing Process* chart and tell them that today we are going to improve our drafts by doing some revision.

TEACH

Show the students how the word “revision” means looking at again (re-vision). Tell them that most writers do a lot of revision before they are satisfied with their writing. Tell your students that today we are going to look at our drafts again and work to improve them so that they are easier for the people who read them to understand. Show them a chart of a few revision strategies e.g.

Revision strategies

- *adding on*
- *deleting*

Tell them that they will be studying revision throughout the year and that they will learn lots of other strategies but for now we are going to make just a few changes to improve our drafts. Think Aloud as you model revising part of your draft on the chart paper by deleting and/or adding on. Use a different color marker, as they will use blue pencils, to make the changes obvious. Be sure to focus on revision and not editing.

ACTIVE INVOLVEMENT

Ask the students to work in pairs to re-read the next part of your draft and suggest some possible revisions. Listen in and try some of the suggestions on your draft.

LINK

Today students will work on revising their draft. They should re-read what they wrote and think about where adding on or deleting could make it better. Ask them to use blue pencils for their revision to make their changes obvious.

Work Time:

Conferring: Understanding the importance of revision takes time and many students simply copy over from their notebook to their draft to their published piece thereby wasting a lot of time. Pull aside as a group the students whom you see doing this and demonstrate for them the power of revision using your own writing.

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

SHARE

Ask a pre-selected student with clear evidence of revision to do a “before and after” reading of part of their writing to show the benefits of revision. Tell the students that this week they will be working towards a publication deadline (give date) and, using the *Writing Process* chart, outline the day by day steps they will be taking.

REFLECTIONS

- How much experience do the students seem to have had with revision? Take some notes to start your thinking about what revision strategies you will need to teach later in the year.
- How are you feeling about “letting go” during this phase of the writing process? Resist the temptation to “fix the writing” rather than “teach the writer”!
- Students often begin trying to help each other with revising their drafts. It might be a good idea to teach them how best to do this.

Teaching point: *Discussing our drafts with a partner to aid revision*

Method: demonstration guided practice inquiry explain & give examples

Materials Needed: *Work In Progress folders, drafting pads, sticky notes, blue pencils*

CONNECTION

Last time, writers, we started to improve our writing by revising and I noticed many of you discussing your drafts with a friend. Today I am going to show you how talking over your work with a partner helps you improve your writing even more.

TEACH

I have asked Dylan to do a “fish bowl” with me today so we can model for you how partners can really help each other. Explain the “fish bowl” if need be. When we are revising we have to keep asking ourselves, “What can I do to make sure my reader understands what I want to say?” Dylan is going to listen as I read a part of my draft that I think I need help with and he’s going to be thinking of questions he has about it... So Dylan, from your question it seems I haven’t made it clear that... I’m going to write your question down on a sticky and put it right here on my draft so I can go back and work more on that part to make it clearer... What other comments or questions do you have, Dylan? ... OK, so that’s important. I’d better make a note of that point too. Thank you so much for your help, Dylan.

ACTIVE INVOLVEMENT

Turn to your partner and talk about any other questions you had about my writing that Dylan didn’t ask. Take a few more questions from the group and write some of them on stickies and place on your draft.

LINK

Today I'm going to assign you a writing partner to share your work with. Decide who is going to be Partner A and who will be Partner B. Partner A will read her piece and listen to Partner B's responses for five minutes and then I will flick the lights and it will be Partner B's turn to read and Partner A will respond. Remember to be thinking of questions for your partner that will really help with the revision process. So, find a good spot to work with your writing partner. When you've shared you will go back to your writing and use your blue pencils to revise it so it is easier for your reader to understand.

Work Time:

Conferring: Listen in on partnerships and comment on the quality of students' questions and how the writer responds to them.

Possible mid-workshop teaching point: Praise the students for how they are getting much better at talking about their writing.

CLOSING

Today I'd like you to go back and work again with your writing partner. Show your partners the revisions you made based on their feedback and ask them if they think that it is easier to understand now.

REFLECTIONS

- *This lesson is a good foundation for setting up Response Groups. We'll focus on that during our next unit of study.*
- *Some students commented that writing their partner's questions and comments on the stickies took too long. They would rather just listen to their partner and then write straight onto the draft.*
- *They could spend a lot more time on revision but this is fine for now. They obviously need instruction on different revision strategies and so I might do a short unit of study on revision later in the year.*

Teaching point: *Editing our writing*

Method: demonstration guided practice inquiry explain & give examples

Materials needed: *Work In Progress folders, drafting pads, teacher's revised writing*

Before the lesson: Make an *Editing* chart

CONNECTION

For the past two days, writers, we have been revising our work. We could spend much more time revising but our publication date is just a couple of days away so we're going to move on to editing today. Refer to Writing Process chart. I'm going to show you how to re-read your work and correct your punctuation, capitalization and spelling mistakes so that your work is easier to read.

TEACH

OK, so this is my draft that you helped me to revise but it's not ready for publication yet because it has some punctuation, capitalization and spelling mistakes that might confuse my reader. So I'm going to re-read my piece again (we do a lot of re-reading, don't we?), slowly, word by word to see where I need to make some corrections. ... Oh, look here, this word doesn't look right so I'm going to cross it out and think about which spelling strategy I can use to try again... and I'm going to write the correct version over the top. We don't erase, we want to see evidence of our editing... Now listen here, I think I need a comma there... Model editing a few errors. I'm using a red pen here just like you'll be using red pencils for editing.

ACTIVE INVOLVEMENT

So, help me out a bit here. I'm going to read the next couple of sentences and you see if you can spot anything that I need to edit. Turn and talk to your partner about what you notice. Listen in and share suggestions.

LINK

OK. So today is editing day. Using a red pencil so go ahead and edit your work. Use our classroom resources to help you: the walls, your personal dictionaries, your fellow writers...

Work Time:

Conferring: Be sure to help students edit rather than do it for them! Use a different color pen for your “editor-in-chief” edits to distinguish from what the student is able to notice alone. For some students it is better to focus on just one thing e.g. capitalization.

Possible mid-workshop teaching point: *You are all working so hard at your editing. I love the way you are using our writers’ tools so responsibly.*

SHARE

During my conference with Celestina today she told me that she thinks editing is hard because she can’t see her own mistakes and we had a conversation about that. I’ve asked Celestina if we could “replay” that conversation because I think lots of you feel the same way and listening in to what I have to say might help you too.

REFLECTIONS

- *Bearing in mind the 2nd grade Conventions standards, our Editing chart will grow through the year as I teach more conventions.*
- *I ‘m glad the children stayed focused on their own work at this point; too often peer editing is “the blind leading the blind”.*
- *I need to make a decision for each publication about what is acceptable for “going public” in terms of conventions errors. Some teachers act as “editor-in-chief”, others allow self-edited work to be displayed. At this point of the year I think it’s fine to post the work with student’s self-edits only.*

Teaching point: *Writing and illustrating our final draft*

Method: ___demonstration ___guided practice ___inquiry X explain & give examples

Materials needed: Work In Progress folders, drafting pads, selection of types of paper, two or three Touchstone Texts

CONNECTION

Using the chart, show students how far they have progressed through the writing process. Remind them of the deadline for “going public” with their first piece of 2nd grade writing! Today you are going to teach them how to envision what their published piece will look like and how to start their final draft.

TEACH

Tell your students that today they will rewrite their revised and edited draft as their final copy. Tell them they need to think about what their finished piece will look like on the page. Show them some pages from favorite Touchstones and talk about the placement of the writing above or below the illustration, the use of borders etc. Show the students the paper choices you are offering them: how they can turn the paper to have the lines at the top and their picture at the bottom or their picture at the top and their writing at the bottom, how they can create borders etc. They need to envision, have a picture in their mind, what their published work will look like. Think Aloud how you want your published piece to look, placement of text etc. and model choosing appropriate paper. Model starting to write, Thinking Aloud how you incorporate your revisions and copy your edits into your final copy.

ACTIVE INVOLVEMENT

Invite students to turn and talk about how they envision their published piece. Share some good examples.

LINK

Give students their choice of paper as they leave the rug and tell them they should start by writing; they will have time for drawing later. Tell the students that we will be displaying our work on the wall and so we must use our best handwriting and our best artwork to produce our personal best.

Work Time:

Conferring: Some students may need more explicit guidance in a small group on how to incorporate their revisions into their final copy.

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

SHARE

Praise students for their hard work. In a process share invite their comments about envisioning their published piece and the process of preparing to “go public”.

REFLECTIONS

- If they are to produce a well presented final copy with quality illustrations your students will probably need another day to work on their final copies.
- Do you feel overwhelmed? Do your students feel overwhelmed? We have moved through this unit at quite a pace in order to establish the rituals and routines that make our Workshop run smoothly and take the students through the writing process towards a published piece. We have introduced many concepts that will be revisited and reinforced throughout the year, so don't worry that your students haven't got it all yet: they will... in time!

Teaching point: *Going public and reflecting on ourselves as writers*

Method: ___demonstration Xguided practice ___inquiry ___explain & give examples

Materials needed: published pieces, sticky notes, binder paper

CONNECTION

Use the chart to show students how far they have come in the writing process. Tell them that authors celebrate their published books with book signings and publishing parties and that today they are going to do the same.

TEACH

Select four students to fishbowl a group share. Ask one student to read his piece aloud, slowly and with expression. Tell the listeners to listen attentively and, when he has finished, to take a few moments to write some responses on a sticky note to give to the author. Tell them this is different from responding to a draft as the author will not be making any further revisions: we should think about what the author has done well. Help them make specific responses. Rather than just writing, “Great job!” comments like, “I thought the part when your cousin got stuck in the laundry chute was really funny.” are more helpful responses. Explain to the class that the other three authors will then take turns to share their writing and receive responses in the same way. Tell them you will flick the lights when it is time for the next person’s turn.

LINK

Divide the students into groups of four and ask them to find a spot in the room where they can comfortably see and hear each other and then begin to share their writing.

SHARE

Congratulate your students on their hard work that resulted in such great published pieces! If you choose to, take a short time to enjoy a celebratory drink or snack together. Tell them that when we come to the end of something it is important to look back and reflect on what we have learned before moving on to something new. Using the charts remind the students of how much they have learned over the past few weeks: the rituals and routines which enable them to work together as a community of writers, how we all have stories to tell and how we can collect those stories (and much more) in our notebooks, how we can learn from other writers, how we can develop our ideas in our notebooks and how we can improve our writing through revision. Ask them to think back and consider some of the things they have learned. What was easy? What was challenging? What do they need to work on? What do they need more time to practice? Tell students that reflection is essentially personal since we all respond in different ways. Today we will use the remaining time in Writing Workshop to write our reflections. Reflection will be an important part of our learning throughout the year and so we will keep these reflections in our portfolios. Popcorn share one or two sentences from their reflections as a closing.

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.