A Kindergarten Writing Workshop:
Learning from Young Writers
Introductions

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Solon City Schools
Writing Stages

- Picture Writer
- Verbal Informer
- Letter Copier
- Labeler/Inventory Taker
- Sound Maker
- Sentence Maker
- Story Maker

Where Did We Start?

1. Journaling

2. Interactive Writing:
   - Modeling how to stretch words (phonemic awareness) to label and write sentences
   - Modeling conventions: spacing, capital letters, punctuation
   - Modeling message construction
What’s Different?

1. Writing Workshop
   - Daily practice and feedback
2. Modeling forms of writing in a developmental progression
3. Making connections between forms to scaffold
4. Sharing using children’s examples as minilesson
Writing Workshop

Mini-lesson
(Whole group)

Frequency: Daily brief, powerful, whole group demonstrations about how writing works.
Teacher role: Teachers determine focus and attempt to connect minilessons so that they build upon one another. Teachers reinforce and support minilessons through guided writing, independent writing, and independent conferences. Minilesson topics include: specific focus on one of the criteria from the writing rubrics; procedures for writing workshop; conventions of writing; or lessons about writing craft. Teachers often use read aloud novels/picture books or shared reading selections as a basis for minilessons.
Student role: Students listen to and participate in minilessons. They may be asked to respond to minilesson work in independent or guided writing.

Independent Writing
(Individual)

Frequency: Daily unless engaged in guided writing. Independent writing happens simultaneously with guided writing, conferencing or investigations.
Teacher role: Teacher monitors independent writing through status of the class, guided writing notes, observation or conferencing.
Student role: Students write on self-selected topics, teacher directed topics, or investigation topics. Students maintain a writing folder or writer’s notebook.

Guided Writing
(Small group)

Frequency: Guided writing happens as teachers observe the need to bring a small group together to reinforce some aspect of writing.
Teacher role: Teacher meets with small groups of 6-8 students to teach and give feedback to group/individuals. Feedback usually reflects current or previous minilesson work. Teacher keeps anecdotal notes which count as conferences for these children.
Student role: Students meet with teacher in guided writing groups. Children might focus on a teacher directed topic, investigation topic or individual choice during guided writing.

Conferencing
(Individual)

Frequency: Conferencing happens daily, whenever guided writing is not happening.
Teacher role: Teacher conferences with students to give feedback on writing, collect data, and to teach specific elements of writing/spelling. Feedback usually reflects current or previous minilesson work. Conferencing is used primarily with children not currently meeting in guided writing groups.
Student role: Students meet individually with the teacher in conferences to share written pieces that serve as a basis for assessment and instruction.

Investigations
(Whole group, small group or individual)

Frequency: Investigations happen as part of unit studies from content area or as directed by teacher or as selected by individuals. They may last as long as several days or several weeks.
Teacher role: Teacher confers with individuals or groups about investigation topics and progress. Minilesson might center on how to write about a particular topic/theme.
Student role: Students research and write about investigation topics and usually produce some product that involves writing that is shared with the whole group.

Group Sharing
(Whole group)

Frequency: Daily time for individuals to receive whole group feedback on writing pieces that are completed or that are in process.
Teacher role: Teacher maintains focus and directs student learning, often reflecting back to minilessons pertaining to specific aspects of sharing.
Student role: Students listen to writing and offer feedback in a three point discussion— for example, positive comments, corrective criticism, questions for student author.
Successful Workshop

- Time
- Ownership
- Feedback

- Mary Ellen Giacobbe
How To

• Writers study writing to learn new ways to write about what they like.
• One easy kind of writing that authors use is called a “How To” book.
• A “How To” book explains or gives directions about how to do something.
• To write a “How to” book:
  – First, think of something you know how to do
  – Think about what to do first and write that on the first page
  – Think about what to do next and write that on the second page
  – For the ending page, tell what to do last
  – Draw your illustrations
  – Sometimes authors illustrate first and then write
How to Make a Cup of Tea

Written by:
Mr. Williams
• First, get some hot water, a tea bag, a cup, some sugar and milk and a teaspoon.
Next, pour the water into the cup and let the tea steep or sit a while.
Add some sugar and milk if you like. This makes the tea taste yummy.
Finally, sit down and enjoy your tea while you read a book or magazine.
All About Books

- This is an information book that works like a how-to but you are not telling someone what to do but instead you are telling all about something you know about.
- Authors write about things they care about:  
  - sport, animals, places, people
- They tell two or three interesting facts, true things, about their topic
- They use an emotional word to show how they feel about it as an ending.
All About Deer in Winter

by

Mr. Williams

2004
Winter is hard for many animals, especially deer.
They have a thick coat to stay warm.
They travel together in herds.
They look for food everywhere, even by my house.
I love watching the deer in winter.
Lost and Found

• Begins with something you love or need
• You loose it
• You look for it
  – Magic of 3—look for it in three places
• You find it and usually show some feeling
Memoir

• French word that means “memory”
• Memoir is a kind of memory writing—you are writing about a memory
  – Something you did
  – A place you’ve visited
  – Something that happened
• Memoir is usually about something important that we care about
• Always tells our feelings
Pattern of Memoir and other stories

Beginning
Tells where and who

Middle
Tells about what you did or saw
Usually three things

Ending
Tells how you feel
Poetry
Sawns in my haws

The fon is regina
Regina, Regina, Regina!

Dogs are barking
Brk. Brk. Brk!

Cats are

Mawing maw
Ma whma w
Kis are playing

On their bikes
Some soon
Some, mom and
dad are sleeping

Snor. Snor. Snor.
I like Cetos
Croch Croch Croch
Soo see Set
Sweet

Orange Yellow Green yum yum!
Balloons!

Balloons soar like the wind
Go to the sky like a kite
Different cars like a rat
Different tops
Balloons everywhere
in the sky

By: Aubrey
fins
fins look like a hot
fins smell like love
fins stink bro
in 10 bro
by 6aco 13
Children

Happy Faces
Picnics Greeds
Swing Shrug
Back Flap

Night Moon Night

In the Night

SCI

By: Talia
Friends

I have lots and lots of friends
I just can’t decide
One of them wants to play with me
The other wants to go on the slide
I have lots and lots of friends
I just can’t choose
What friend is my best friend
by
Marcie
Impact on Grade One

• Reading:
  - In October, 50% of the children were at the January benchmark for reading

• Writing
  - In January, many children are at year end benchmarks for Grade 1:
    • 55% in sentence construction
    • 82% in word choice
    • 50% in punctuation
    • 45% in capitalization
    • 64% in spelling within writing
    • 78% in handwriting
Listen to the Musn’ts

Listen to the mustn’ts, child,
Listen to the don’ts.
Listen to the shouldn’ts,
the impossibles, the won’ts.
Listen to the never-haves,
Then listen close to me—
Anything can happen, child,
Anything can be.

Shel Silverstien
Resources

• *Growing Up Writing* by Connie Dierking & Sherra Jones
• *About the Authors* by Katie Wood Ray
• *Kid Writing* by Eileen Feldgus & Isabelle Cardonick
• *No-nonsense Guide to Teaching Writing* by Judy Davis & Sharon Hill
• *Interactive Writing & Interactive Editing* by Klein, Schwartz & Cook
• *Units of Study for Primary Writing* by Lucy Calkins
• *Teaching the Youngest Writers* by Marcia Freeman
• *Building a Community of Writers* by Marcia Freeman
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