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EMBELLISHING THE ART OF WRITING INSTEAD OF IMPAIRING IT
DURING FIRST-GRADE STUDIES

A Project
Presented to the
Faculty of
California State University,
San Bernardino

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Arts
in
Education

by
Maria Carmen Canelo

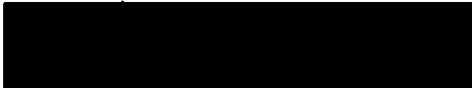
June 2000

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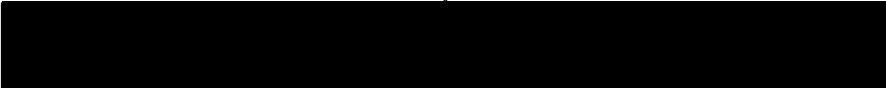
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San Bernardino

by
Maria Carmen Canelo
June 2000

Approved by:


Adria Klein, First Reader

May, 2000
Date


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ABSTRACT

Teaching a written language is an essential component of a valid educational curriculum. Learning to write well is a fundamental skill for effective communication throughout life. Currently, California state-adopted language arts textbooks, however, neglect the need for teaching written language. Moreover, these texts focus primarily on the acquisition of language skills such as grammar and mechanics. Language Arts textbooks are a mandatory part of the curriculum and the main source of language instruction used by teachers. Therefore, students are not learning about the process of writing, nor are they receiving valuable practice utilizing the various writing approaches.

The focus of this project is to highlight the importance of perceiving writing as a work of art rather than merely just another activity in the curriculum. Additionally, this project portrays several approaches to writing that teachers may utilize to embellish their students' writing. These many approaches may be put into practice with the lesson plans which I have included at the end of this project.

It is hoped that teachers who use this project will learn more about the importance of allowing

children in the first-grade to express themselves without restricting students in their writing. Instead of restricting student written expression, teachers can embellish it by using different teaching strategies so that the children can apply these strategies in their writing. The author also hopes to encourage and inspire teachers to rethink and renew their commitment to teaching writing. Finally, a balanced writing program, when implemented correctly, can help students build a strong foundation on which to build quality writing and a lifetime of effective writing communication.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This project is dedicated to two persons without whom I might not have had the needed inspiration and incentive to take what I trust will be a positive contribution to the youthful scholar of the future. First, to my father, Felipe Canelo who deceased when I was a child of three.

To Edward J. Hopp for his support, encouragement, insights, and educational knowledge. They have been not only invaluable, but a strength to make a difference in the lives of our future legacy, the youth of America.

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CHAPTER ONE

Statement of the Problem

A great emphasis on the teaching of writing in education has surfaced recently. In several schools in a southern California district with a diverse population, it is noted that students in kindergarten through sixth grade did not score to a state satisfactory standard. Therefore, these results indicate that primary-grade students in those schools are not presently learning how to write to a promotional standard. Since southern California is not the only area with this concern, California has addressed this perceived writing crisis through a number of publications and initiatives (California State Department of Education, 1987). Yet, continued efforts need to be made by educators so that all students can work toward their potential in writing.

The school where I teach is scheduled this year to conduct a Program Quality Review. As a result, teachers have been asked to test students in reading and writing. Since the focus of this project will be in the first-grade, it should be mentioned that the first-grade students have scored extremely low in these given tests in the recent past. If educators review more closely the curriculum of writing for first-grade,

we would probably discover the answer to our posed question. I am suggesting that the problem is that our curriculum is too rigid for first-grade students to follow. More time is needed and some created latitude provided within which their limited, if not nil skills may feel at ease for trial and error expansion. At school none of my colleagues have spoken up to address this issue. For example, in order for the teacher to promote students successfully to second-grade, students must express ideas well in writing. In other words, students are required to write stories with a distinct beginning, middle portion, and summation or end. Additionally, students must use correct grammar in writing. For example, they should implement sentence structure, naming words, action words, describing words, and capitalization and punctuation.

I am not implying that these grammar aspects are unimportant as such, but that they should not be the central focus in first-grade. Since our school receives an average of three to four new teachers each year, the writing programs are never firmly organized and children's progress in the area of writing is both slow and not uniform. New teachers have difficulty implementing a progressive writing program. The cause of this problem seems to be that from the beginning of

the school year we are told to teach a prescribed form of writing. Moreover, new teachers teach only on what is mandated by the district, forgetting that, notwithstanding, writing is an art to be developed, embellished, and supported.

I deeply believe that writing is an art and it has to be developed starting in the first-grade and thereafter. My personal experience in writing has been less than desirable. For example, as a primary grade student, my assignments consisted merely of copying a story and writing three pages of repetitive words or sentences. Consequently, I was never really allowed to express myself. This type of educational practice is what Paulo Freire (1968) refers to as banking education in which the scope of action allowed to the students extends only as far as receiving, filing, and storing the deposits.

Throughout my teaching experience in the first-grade, I have discovered the marvelous writing activities and results students can accomplish at such an early age. How I envy their opportunity to express themselves in writing without worrying only about grammar. Furthermore, through my teaching of writing, I have discovered that writing is a developmental process which is produced by children daily.

Specifically, it is essential for first-grade students to write freely and for us as educators to accept their stories. We must encourage them to use different styles of writing. This is paramount for this will facilitate a liberal climate within which their unique persona will develop naturally. The integration of this approach of writing will contribute much to a student's understanding as well as retention of knowledge (Cunningham and Cunningham, 1987).

Theoretical Orientation

In order to explain my theoretical orientation, it is best understood through an explanatory focus of the three models of the continuum: the sound/symbol model, skills model, and whole language. The sound/symbol orientation perceives reading as an offshoot of oral language. The major concern of this model is to develop and manipulate the relationships between sounds and their graphic symbols. Once the readers use the sounds to form words, it is assumed that they then have meaning. The sound/symbol model does not see syntax and meaning as primary factors in the reading program.

In the middle of the continuum lies the skills model of reading. It views reading as a system of three skills--grammar, vocabulary, and comprehension. These play various roles of importance when reading.

The skills model is the foundation from which the traditional basal series is formed. Workbooks are provided for skill development and practice.

Finally, in the whole language model, the systems of language are shared and they are interdependent and interactive aspects of the reading process. The most important element of this model is comprehension (Harste and Burke, 1977, p.34).

My theoretical position and my project's placement on the continuum is on whole language, but I also lean toward the skills model. In retrospect, however, I consider myself a whole language teacher. In my four years of teaching and in experimentation with this complex process, I have learned that writing cannot be taught in isolation. On the contrary, I believe it would best be integrated through thematic units in the content areas at the first-grade level. It is important for young writers to utilize their background knowledge though limited, to construct meaningful thoughts in their writing. Furthermore, I believe it is wise to teach young writers to integrate the three language interacting cuing systems in written language. They consist of the graphophonic (sounds and letter patterns), the syntactic (word order), and the semantic (meaning); comprehension is the goal; and children are

not limited by their knowledge of writing and life in general (Goodman, 1986).

I have found that the cueing systems in the teaching of writing enhance children's love for the art of writing. For some time, I sensed that my teaching of writing was not as productive as I desired, but I did not know specifically what was lacking. The written work was not of the quality that I expected. In reflection, I realized that I was overlooking their emerging flair. It is conceivable that students knew that I was not showing much interest in what they wrote, consequently, it was unimportant for them to write quality work. As so often in the educational process it was some more busy work. Soon after this valuable but unfortunate discovery, I planned some time each morning for writing. During the time they wrote, I also wrote in my journal. This helped them see that writing is important. Through this technique, students learned to value indeed and embellish the art of writing and appreciate the importance of it in our lives. Through this experience, I learned that learning to write is a beautiful language activity that must not be overlooked. Additionally, involving students in writing activities directed to real people, and creating stories for real audiences, is the essence

of the teaching of writing.

A more succinct analysis of holistic writing could be better likened to a focus on the student of reality.

For reality is that which is as it is before man disturbs it. Therefore, the benefits children obtain writing in a whole language setting is that writing is not simply a job. It is their unique focus and creation of that which they feel and express. I do not want my students to write for me, but instead, for themselves. Howard Wills (1993) states that writing does not have to be a job that students do because they are required to do. Therefore, allowing students to write without imposing all the grammatical restrictions of language, gives them opportunities to blend school learning with their hands on world concerns and experiences. Such activities help make learning purposeful individually, and more fun.

Relation of Philosophy to Project

Finally, the purpose of this project is to delineate my theoretical beliefs concerning the curriculum of writing in first-grade. As I mentioned, the structure of the writing curriculum in my district seems to surround the need to circumvent the many standards which are applied presently. Then, with the easing of traditional complexity standards, we could

develop a more successful group of writers in our first grade students. According to Les Parsons (1991), writing is an active, independent process in which individuals attempt to understand and cope with their world and their lives. The more student writers depend on the teacher, the less growth and creativity will be noted. And conversely, those who are more independent of the teacher will become better writing achievers and by comparison prodigious in what they are able to write and communicate. Therefore, I plan to develop a set of lesson plans for teachers interested in their implementation of a writing curriculum. This will enable them to enrich the results of the writing efforts of first-grade students.

Children want to write. The excitement begins the first day they attend school. They expect to write on day one. It is noteworthy to realize that before they went to school they marked on newspapers or any paper with the proverbial crayons, pens, or pencils, in fact, anything that makes a mark. At this time, children, are expressing or saying I am. However, it is my contention that some of our many elementary school teachers inadvertently impair or inhibit the initial writing experience. This is done by their limiting the scope of written expression focusing too much on

mechanics.

We exclude the surprises children have for us because we do not let them write. According to Donald Graves (1987), we ignore the child's urge to show what he knows. We underestimate the urge because of a lack of understanding of the writing process and what children do in order to control it. Quite often, teachers wrongfully take control of what or how children write. We take the rightful control away from the students, which only serves to place unnecessary road blocks within the avenues they intend to use in their writing. According to Richard Gentry (1987), a first-grade student was found to be writing quite unhappily because the form and presentation of his writing was a priority. His teacher focused too much on correctness. When teachers set those standards in children's writing, they cultivate a problem for then they say that students do not want to write. This creates a problem for teachers because they have to find a way to motivate them.

Surprises come when children begin to control writing as an art. Children learn to control writing only if teachers practice the teaching of writing as an art. Both teachers and children see the beauty of the art of writing. This should be seen as a long process

done with the job of discovery. For example, on the first day of school, I passed out blank pages with children's names on them and I told them they could write on those papers. They all did in their own way.

How interesting. I had not stifled creativity. They drew pictures, wrote their names and some wrote numbers. What I found to be fascinating was to see that they all believed they could write. This is the crux of the writing process. Donald Graves states the following: The tone for writing is set by what the teacher does, not by what the teachers says (1983, p.12).

Moreover, it is important that teachers, especially at the first-grade level, allow children to express their ideas in writing without imposing too many structural aspects. I realize that the ability to write is one of the keys toward improving students' self-esteem and their regarding school with confidence and pleasure. It is common knowledge that our students in some of the southern California school districts are having difficulty in mastering the ability to write well. There are still many rocks in the long road ahead.

Have the educational systems in these districts failed in the first-grade writing curriculum? What are

the factors behind this problem? According to Bill Honig, California's former Superintendent of Public Instructions, teachers have received little formal instruction on how to teach writing (California State Department of Education, 1987). When I was an undergraduate and when in some of our educational classes, I saw that we were not offered classes on how to teach writing. According to Nancy Atwell (1987), who is a successful elementary school-teacher, our models were merely those teachers who taught. If we apply this old-fashioned method in our writing instruction, our children will not learn to love and enjoy writing. Additionally, sufficient time needs to be devoted to writing and writing instruction on a daily basis. Insufficient amounts of classroom time are allocated to writing (California State Department of Education, 1987). There exist several reasons why time for writing is often too short, not only in southern California, but in State-wide classrooms. Our current State adopted language texts focus primarily on the acquisition of language skills such as grammar and mechanics and thus we neglect the area of written language.

In summation, meeting out rigid, hard fast rules does not lead students to the thresholds of their

desired creative capacities, rather, it tends to delineate them to the uninspired position as just another grade-school robot, void of any innate expression and creativity as well as their rightful need for individuality. It is my firm belief that each fledgling writer I teach must be seen as a type of young filly spurting randomly through shady, green pastures, eyes wide with expectation, tail erect, excited and free to express themselves through their writing.

Purpose of the Project

This project is designed to be a teacher's resource guide for the implementation of a balanced writing program. It inculcates and describes the various approaches to writing which are as follows: writing aloud, shared writing, interactive writing, guided writing, and independent writing.

Each of these approaches is defined clearly and is integrated into language arts. Included are lessons for the first six weeks of the school year. The lessons are designed for lower, average, and high achieving levels of students. The lessons are designed in accordance with all the aforementioned approaches in writing. With the integration and implementation of these various approaches, a writing program can be

quite successful and rewarding to the needs of students. Therefore, it is my plan that the lessons will both assist and be found useful by the first-grade teachers.

CHAPTER TWO

Literature Review

A history of change exists when both the study and instruction of writing are examined. Although this topic has been of notable concern during this century, it is simplistic to assume that neither the particular issue nor the theoretical sources have remained the same. For example, according to Judith A. Larger and Richard L. Allington (1992), at the turn of the 19th century, concerns then focused almost exclusively on writing at the college level and on reading at the primary level. However, throughout more recent times, the focus on writing has spawned new issues with the role of writing in the curriculum across the grades.

The first major attempt to define the teaching of writing, and set curriculum standards and goals across the grades was undertaken by the national Educational Association in 1894 (Judith Larger & Richard Allington (1992)). The recommendation of this association included one point that primary-grade children acquire some fluency of expression by retelling in their own words stories either read or told to them and by creating stories of their creation.

In the mid-1960s, the United States Office of Education developed a new writing curriculum. In

contrast to the curriculum of the 1880s, this curriculum recommended a writing curriculum which covered preschool through graduate school levels. The curriculum guidelines suggested that written expression begins in the primary grades. This is based on the personal need to communicate (1992). According to this new change, copying, spelling, punctuation, and capitalization were also to be taught in the primary grades. Whereas, in the 1870s, primary-grade students were not introduced to grammar and other aspects until they were matriculated into third-grade.

By the 1980s, few changes in the writing curriculum became evident. The whole language viewers helped to change the focus from the individual language learner to the language learner perceiving the context of the writing (Sinclair, 1975). With the advent of this new curriculum change, teachers were urged to postpone attention to both mechanics and presentation of their writing until the final draft stage.

From what is being discovered in today's California's curriculum, the focus appears to be similar to the one in prior years where the curriculum in writing focused primarily on form and presentation.

A workable, written overview of the writing of curriculum is best described as follows: During the

past 100 years, the curriculum of writing was not as restrictive as it has now become.

The main focus in the 19th century was to allow students to gain fluency of expression and to create their own stories. Later, in the 1870s, students did not receive formal introduction to writing until they reached third-grade.

However, in the 1960s, a new curriculum was formulated. This new direction in curriculum specified that formal writing was to be started in preschool and to continue through the graduate level in college. Lastly, in 1980, the socio-linguistic view emerged. According to this view, education would be wise to postpone attention on mechanics and rather focus on the value of writing content.

People have always seemed to have had a deep need to represent their experience through configurations and writing. Albeit, today, teachers are blessed with magic markers, pens, and pencils, which when used appropriately spruces up the fun of writing for children. Children often leave their marks on bathroom walls and on their siblings' homework. Lucy Calkins (1986), states that writing allows us to turn the chaos into something beautiful, to frame selected moments of our lives, to uncover and to celebrate the organization

of patterns of our existence (36). This is why as human beings, must write in order to function intelligently in this millennial period. I truly believe that writing spawns from deep seated urges to express emotive feelings.

The following writing approaches are especially designed for primary grades: writing aloud, shared writing, interactive writing, guided writing and independent writing. Each of these approaches make up part of the daily writing program. According to Regie Routman (1991), these approaches offer abundant opportunities for student choice, involvement and response, and teacher guidance (322).

Writing Aloud

This approach is also known as modeled writing. In this approach, the teachers write their own ideas on any subject and, therefore, engage in model writing for various purposes or audiences. Additionally, the grammatical skills of language such as phonics, grammar, and spelling are taught altogether (Dodge and Guyton, 1997). During writing aloud activities, the teachers verbalize their thought processes to provide students with explicit hands on demonstrations as to how to write (University of Arkansas, 1996). The teacher instructs the students to outline textual

information by encouraging students to dictate a story while the teacher writes the story on a chart. Also, the teacher guides children in developing skills about writing techniques through summarizing information and adding descriptive details. After the guided activity, the teacher then asks the children to write independently.

Deborah Gee Woo (1999), relates her experiences during an observation in a classroom. This particular teacher wrote the morning message that was later dictated by her students. Her writing provided a fine model of a manuscript. This approach is a wonderful way of motivating children to role-model. It also helps them see how expert writers function (Routman and Butler, 1996). The goal of this approach is to introduce children to new genres. During a writing aloud lesson, the teacher holds the pen, while the children are actively involved in the thinking and meaning-making process while they employ the writing activity. According to Regie Routman (1991), writing aloud increases students' interest and fosters an innate motivation in writing as well as bettering the quality of students' writing.

Shared Writing

Shared writing is one of the components utilized

in today's teaching in order to offer children more techniques for writing. Frank Smith states the most direct and relevant way to demonstrate to a child the power of writing is to write with the child (Smith, pg. 35). During shared writing, the teacher and students write collaboratively, with the teacher acting as the expert for the group. In shared writing, the writing is a negotiated process where topics and choices of words, are discussed together by students and said teacher. Regie Routman states that in shared writing the teacher's role is an enabling, supportive one that encourages and invites students to participate and enjoy writing experiences they might not be able to do on their own (1991, 60).

Shared writing is a powerful tool to help promote individual development and the enjoyment of writing. This approach makes it possible for all students to participate. With this technique, students learn to recognize the conventions of writing, such as: spelling, punctuation, and grammar; and most of all, it gives students growing confidence in their personal writing ability. Shared writing differentiates from past writing techniques in various ways. Students are not writing for the teacher but for themselves. Additionally, the focus of this type of writing is not

one of an editorial aspect, but rather, of creativity, and composing parts. This will eventually lead them to the desired independent writing. This approach to writing is a way for students to express their thoughts on paper even when their writing skills are not fully developed. They will dictate what they want to say, and I as the teacher, will write it for them. This will be done by the whole class when they share a common experience and by individual students when they are writing about their own experiences. I will avoid correcting grammar or substituting my own vocabulary. However, shared writing is often an appropriate time to talk about various functions of writing and grammar. For instance, it may be appropriate to point out that every new sentence begins with a capital letter and often ends with a period. In short, we need to allow ourselves time to experiment and incorporate these different approaches in an attempt to construct a window through which we can empower the successful development of writing for our first-grade students. With all these aforementioned practices children will gradually and naturally take more ownership and responsibility for their own writing.

Interactive Writing

Interactive Writing is a valid approach to

writing. In reality, this approach and shared writing are intertwined and interdependent. In a balanced writing program, writers regularly both interact with and overlap all of these approaches. This approach demonstrates concepts of print, early strategies, and how words work. It provides opportunities to hear sounds in words and connect with letters. Also, it helps children understand building up and breaking down processes in reading and writing. For the teacher, it provides opportunities to plan and construct texts (Button, Furgerson, and Johnson, 1996). Unlike shared writing in which students compose messages and the teacher acts as scribe, interactive writing involves a sharing of the pen between teacher and students. The interactive writing process focuses students' attention on concepts and conventions of print, the sounds in words, and how those sounds connect with letters. Students are actively involved in the planning and construction of text, and, to the greatest degree possible, students control the pen for the writing of the text. The teacher guides the process and the pacing and provides assistance and instruction when they need it (Dodge and Guyton, 1998).

The value of this writing process is that it is a powerful tool for teaching many skills at once:

determining text, matching print to speech, separating words in print, left-to-right directionality, return sweep, hearing sounds in words, conventions of print, common rhymes, and more. Foremost, as children participate regularly in interactive writing, they begin to transfer those skills into their independent writing (Dodge and Guyton, 1998). Those who benefit the most from interactive writing are the emergent and early readers and writers who need a supportive approach to written language.

According to Kitty Dodge and Barbara Guyton (1998), the first day of kindergarten is not too early to begin interactive writing. Children can use what they know about the sounds represented by letters in their names to participate in the writing. Obviously, at this stage, the text would be kept simple and brief, and the teacher would be an active writer as well as an active coach.

As students become more and more able to write independently, they display knowledge of concepts of print, and writing conventions, as well as sound-letter matching and the spelling of high frequency words. Interactive writing may no longer be the most effective tool for increasing student literacy. Interactive writing can be used both with an entire class of young

children and in a small group setting (Dodge and Guyton, 1998). In first-grade classrooms there may be so much diversity in student literacy levels that interactive writing is not appropriate for the entire class. In that case, small group work would be much preferred and to the students liking. (Anonymous, 1998).

Basic Structure of an Interactive Writing Lesson

1. Establish the Topic

The topic for an interactive writing lesson should be meaningful to the children involved.

2. Establish the Text

Narrative text is best established one sentence at a time.

3. Prepare the Paper

The chart paper is folded up and the fold is creased across the center of the paper to create a practice space above the actual writing space.

4. Write the Text

The agreed-upon text is written, word by word, on the lower half of the chart paper. With coaching and guidance by the teacher, the children write all they possibly can.

5. Maintain a Model

There is an expectation of correctness.

6. Read the Text

After the writing of each word, the text is read.

7. Use the Text for a Purpose

A letter can be delivered, a label can be posted, or displayed in an appropriate area of the classroom.

(Bureau of Education and Research, anonymous, 1998)

Guided Writing

Another writing process essential in the embellishment of writing is guided writing. This process demonstrates the process of writing (Button, Furgerson, and Johnson, 1996). According to Regie Routman (1991), the teacher's role in guided writing is to guide students, respond to them, and extend their thinking in the process of composing text. In this approach, the student holds the pen and does the writing.

The teacher's role in guided writing is one of the facilitator. By being the facilitator, the teacher helps students discover what they want to say and how to say it in a clear manner in writing. In this case, teachers are supporting the children's writing rather

than directing. The students own their writing. Our role is to empower writers to discover their own meanings (Routman, 1991). According to Regie Routman, guided writing is the heart of the writing program. It takes place everyday when students have time to write and the teacher is available for guidance. Before a guided writing lesson takes place, the teacher provides many opportunities to students by demonstrating aloud and in shared contexts how to write. Students and teacher together brainstorm, select ideas, compose and shape sentences, then reread, reconsider and revise (Weaver, 1994). Mechanics are taught strategically and in context of the writing situation.

Regie Routman believes that guided writing is the heart of the writing program. Her contention is that it takes place when students have time to write and the teacher is available for guidance. Group writing more often takes the form of guided writing, rather than student-by-student dictation of sentences (Weaver, 1994). In this approach, the teacher guides the process and provides instruction. For example, the teacher provides opportunities for explicit teaching of various aspects of writing and gives students the guidance they need to learn writing processes and produce high quality products. In conclusion, the role

of guided writing is to lead the learner toward the desired goal of independence.

Independent Writing

Proficiency in independent writing finalizes a successful writing program, even at the first grade level. This focus is to build fluency, establish reason for the writing habit, make personal connections, explore meaning, and use writing as a natural and pleasant activity. In this kind of approach, the students have abundant opportunities from their own initiatives, to write without the teacher's intervention nor evaluation. The students take responsibility for the writing process (Routman and Butler, 1996). Students are completely free and encouraged to choose what they will write. Even in their writing journals, students are given the choice to write something of their own choosing.

In a whole language classroom, every student is encouraged to write independently. At first, their writing may consist only of rough drawings to convey their message. As they are exposed to language daily, soon, they show progress by writing sentences even if only a few consonants are written. Constance Weaver (1994), states that all students, even the least proficient emergent writers, are treated as writers.

Then, it is paramount that the teacher provides an environment which is rich in writing. Summarily, the classroom is seen as the confine within which independent writing is not only welcome, but respected in high esteem.

CHAPTER THREE

Goals, Objectives, and Limitations of the Project

The goal of this project is to provide first-grade teachers with a variety of writing process strategies with which they can teach their students.

Objectives

The two main objectives are as follows: 1) the teacher will describe key elements involved in the writing process and 2) the teacher will demonstrate the use of at least two writing strategies for each key element of the writing process. They are: the teacher will provide teachers with specific strategies that can be developed during small or whole group writing activities. These may vary as follows: examples are guided writing, modeled writing, independent writing, etc.

The teacher will illustrate how the user employs sets of strategies, coordinates those strategies, and shifts strategies when appropriate. If one thing does not work, it should prompt good strategy users to try something else. The teacher desires to have an overall idea of what it means to be strategic, that is, how to adopt and adapt and combine individual strategies within an overall plan (Dole, 1997, p.3).

Secondly, the teacher will provide teacher prompts in order to help children apply all the cueing systems in their writing activities.

Limitations

One limitation of this project is that the lessons included are designed solely for first-grade students.

However, the lessons could be adapted to other grade levels. Limitations of this project could involve teacher interest, inadequate teacher understanding of whole to part learning, and lack of district-wide support related to process over product when writing. It is always important that the teachers being instructed are interested in using what they are being taught. For without teacher interest, there is the probability that the material learned will not be utilized as needed, or in fact, it might be relegated to discard. Additionally, the teacher feels that the district administration is supportive of the teaching of writing as a process rather than as a product. The teachers will feel at ease in taking the risk of teaching writing process strategies. Finally, the lessons included in the next chapter do not necessarily attempt to bring children's writing to an entropic perfection. Rather, it is hoped that they will incorporate and embellish the various writing

approaches offered into their writing experience. For
it is not by one a solo, but by many a symphony.

APPENDIX A

EMBELLISHING WRITING

Children need to be taught how to think critically, make educated decisions, and communicate effectively with others in order to be productive, contributing citizens. Our job as educators is not only to teach children how to write, but also how to use different tools to assist them in learning on their own. One way to help accomplish this goal is to allow children to express themselves in their writing without applying too many restrictions. As educators, our goal in the teaching of writing is to let children have ample room to both express and embellish their writing.

The following lesson plans are designed to be of assistance for first-grade teachers. Moreover, these lessons are directed to teachers who believe not only in the literacy of students but also in the empowerment of student writing. Thus, as a first-grade teacher, my goal for students in the first-grade has not been that of creating only a literacy curriculum of empowerment but also to do so by risking the change of the traditional curriculum at my school. I have focused in the five approaches previously addressed on writing because if they are implemented correctly, the results will be a successful writing program. However, in order for the program to function well, all the

teachers in a given school must work together as a team. If there is no teamwork among colleagues, all this shared knowledge is fruitless because one teacher will find it near to impossible to do all the implementation.

Because there are many teachers going into the teaching of primary grades and who do not have much experience as to how to teach writing, it is hoped that the approaches I have mentioned in this project will be of great benefit. When any new teachers start teaching writing they are naturally, quite preoccupied to meet the needs and interests of their students.

Additionally, the lessons included could be a great starting point for all those teachers who have been hired to teach first-grade for the first time.

Teaching children to write is not an easy task. It requires copious knowledge on how to reach them.

Moreover, different strategies and approaches are mandatory so that a balanced writing program is created. Additionally, the lessons and the explanations of each writing approach, are designed for teachers who will need more time and practice to acquire new knowledge as how to better their teaching of writing.

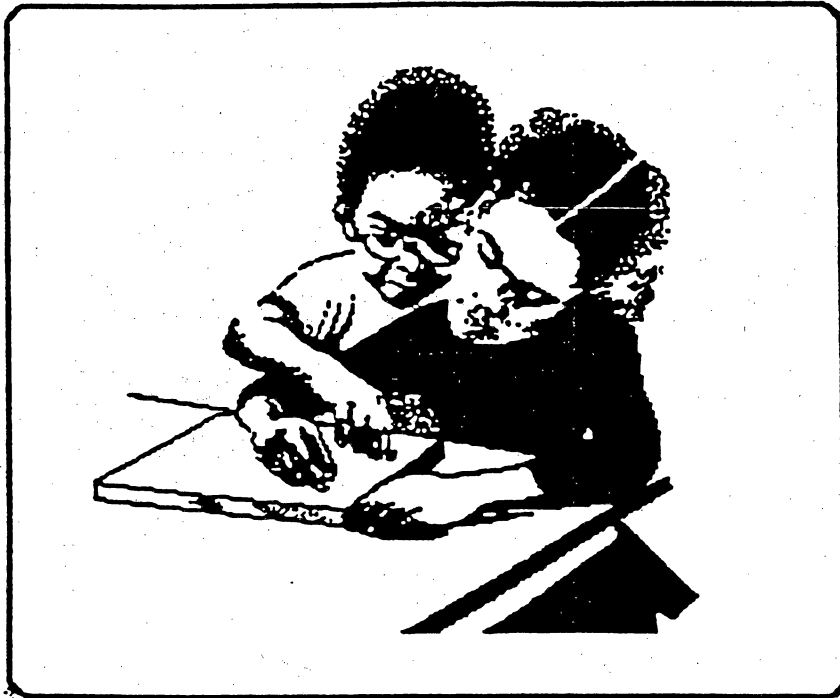
These lessons are designed for the time span of

the first six weeks of the school year. Therefore, teachers may implement these lessons at the start of the school year. Too, they will have the freedom to utilize these lessons in their classrooms as they see fit. Students and classrooms vary tremendously, making it difficult to design one delivery of a lesson for everyone. But, it is paramount to remind ourselves of the need for and importance of the varying the approaches to teach writing.

Lastly, my chief concern is that teachers who utilize these lessons and approaches realize the importance of permitting children to express themselves freely. For example, I have found during the first week of school a certain student does not know any letters, I permit and recommend that he/she draws a representative picture and I will accept it. My greatest concern is that children do not become fearful of holding the pen to express their ideas. If children are not allowed to express themselves, and if teachers do not accept what they write, the various approaches to writing will be fruitless.

APPENDIX B

Every Student is a
Writer



By
Carmen Canelo

The following suggestions are important paradigms in developing a balanced writing program. When these steps are followed as specified, an excellent literacy program will be the expected result. A balanced writing program focuses on To, With, and By. Teachers and others write To children; children write With their teacher and peers and write By themselves.

A BALANCED LITERACY PROGRAM PROVIDES...

- Excellent models of writing
- Systematic, intentional skill instruction
- Generous amounts of rich and varied literature
- Authentic reading and writing activities
- Ongoing evaluation

A balanced writing program focuses on To, With, and By. Teachers and others write To children; children write With their teacher and peers, and write By themselves.

BALANCED EARLY WRITING LEARNING

Balanced Writing Elements

Suggested
Groups

	<p>Writing Aloud</p> <p>Show me how to write</p> <p>Write To</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Increases vocabulary - Provides an adult Model 	<p>Whole Class</p>
	<p>Shared Writing</p> <p>Let me join in during writing</p> <p>Shared Writing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Provides opportunities to participate - Demonstrations of writing - Demonstrates concepts of print, early strategies and how words work 	<p>Whole class or Small groups based on needs</p>
	<p>Guided Writing</p> <p>Help me learn to write!</p> <p>Write With</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Sets students up to become 	<p>Small groups based on needs</p>

	independent writers	on one
	<p style="text-align: center;">Independent Writing</p> <p>I can read and write by myself</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Write By - Provides opportunities to employ and refine writing strategies - Provides chances to write for different purposes - Builds written vocabulary and punctuation - Fosters creativity and ability to compose 	Individual
	<p style="text-align: center;">Interactive Writing</p> <p>Let me do all the writing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Form letters and words in the air - Whisper what letter the child at the chart will be writing - Learn spacing of the words - Sentence sense 	Whole Group or Small Group

Grade 1 Mid-August

<u>Time</u>	<u>Activity</u>	<u>Grouping(s)</u>
8:32	Self-selected Reading Teacher handles administrative tasks Children write in their journals	Individuals
8:51	Daily News Teacher gives overview of the day; models and thinks aloud as she composes the news of the day Children witness and comments	Whole Group
9:00	Independent Writing Teacher roves and consults Children at assigned tables, write using one of the two options indicated: composing their own news of the day or copying the teacher's model.	Individuals
9:12	Shared Writing	Whole Group
9:22	Shared Writing	

- 9:34 Transition
- 9:36 Assign to Centers
- 9:45 Guided Writing
- 9:59 Transition
- 10:06 Shared Success
 teacher asks children to share
 experience about what worked
 really well and what they could
 do better
 Children reflect, respond, and
 discuss
 Whole Group
- 10:11 More Writing
 Teacher announces that there
 will be three books to get
 ideas from; reminds children of
 two they already know and then
 introduces and begins to read a
 new book.
 Children listen
 Individuals
- 10:17 Teacher stops reading and has
 children begin on one of the
 Individuals

writing options; then roves and
facilitates as needed

children work on topic of own
choice

10:30 Transition to recess

What Needs Managing

In Balanced Literacy Classrooms

The following techniques and suggestions will be of great assistance to first-grade teachers during their daily planning and organization. Space and time are important components to consider when organizing planning. It is hoped that the employment of these listed suggestions for the teaching of writing will benefit all the first-grade teachers who will choose to embellish their students' writing.

Space As you look at the layout of your classroom are there:

- adequate areas for whole group work? for small group work? for individual work?
- separate areas for quiet small-group or individual work and louder activities and movement?
- clearly marked special work areas, such as

- o convenient, well organized display and storage facilities?

Time

Does your schedule call for a good mix of modeled, shared, guided, independent, and collaborative teaching/learning approaches?

- o Does your daily and weekly schedule include
 - an appropriate mix of teacher-led whole groups?
small groups? individual consultation?
 - peer work in small groups? with a partner?
- o Does the pacing of the school day
 - reflect children's developmental levels and capacity to stay on task for teacher-led, peer, or individual activities?
 - include well-established routines and expectations that foster self-discipline and facilitate positive, productive classroom dynamics?

The literacy Backbone: Classroom Management by Andrea Butler, celebration Press, 1997.

EFFECTIVE TEACHING/LEARNING APPROACHES

A Suggested Time Frame

Approach	Frequency	Duration	Grouping
Writing	1-2 times	2-10	whole group
Aloud	daily	minutes	small group needs-based group
Shared	2-3 times		whole group
Writing	a week		small interest or needs-based group
Guided	2-3 sessions	12-20	4-6 children;
Writing	a week	minutes	needs-based group
Independent	daily	5-20	individual
Writing		minutes	

*Durations are approximate and should be adjusted to the age and developmental needs of the children.

*Some children may need more guided opportunities.

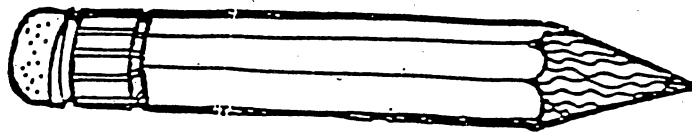
The Literacy Backbone: Classroom Management by Andrea Butler, Celebration Press, 1997.

Independent Writing

○ Journals

The outcome of journal writing can be powerful as students grow in expressing feelings and ideas in risk-free written form. Writing topics should be self-generated by the student. Teacher responses, if given should be non-judgmental and extend the thinking and writing of the student. Journal entries are never graded.

○ Students write in their journals daily. This is very important!



Week 1

Lesson Design - Grade 1 - Week 1

Orange is a Carrot

Writing Transferring student responses to written form:

Great room environment!

- Introduce the Big Book by showing the children the cover and reading the title. Discuss that this book is about colors all around us.

- Ask children to think of other things around them that are the same colors that are in the book. Using the same sentence structure that is in the book, list responses on chart paper, categorizing under the appropriate color word headings.

- Refer to brainstorm list from day 1 concentrating on the colors orange and yellow. Ask children to reread the sentences from the chart, then locate and circle the color words. Pass out individual student books and ask children to write in the color words (first two pages), read sentences and color pictures.

- For day three concentrate on the colors green and brown. Follow same procedure from yesterday.

- Follow same procedure but concentrate on the colors purple and blue.

- Follow the instructions from days 2, 3, & 4 concentrating on the colors black and red. Ask the

children to complete the last two pages and read their book with a classroom buddy!

Preparation

Day 1:

- Make sure the big book *Orange is a Carrot* is colored, laminated and bound.
- You'll need chart paper and markers for shared writing.

Day 2:

- Make sure you have run off and stapled together enough student copies of *Orange is A Carrot*.

Day 3:

- Have the Shared Reading text written out on sentence strips.
- Color, cut out and laminate the pictures to go along with each sentence strip.

Day 4:

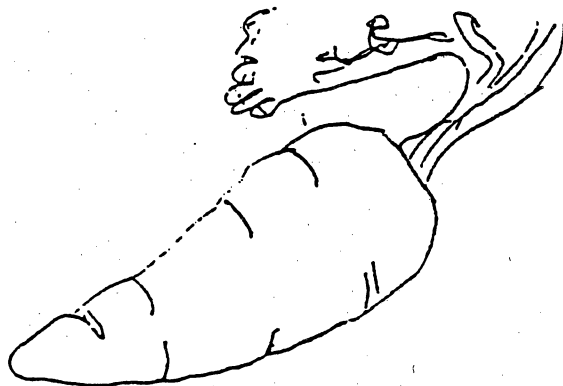
- Make one set of color cards to match with the original Shared Reading text.

Day 5:

- No preparation needed.

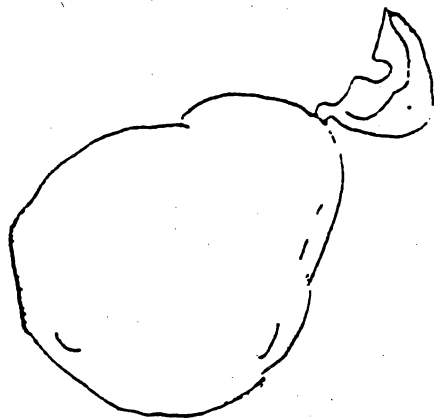
Orange is A Carrot

Name _____



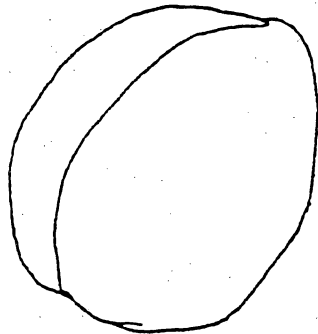
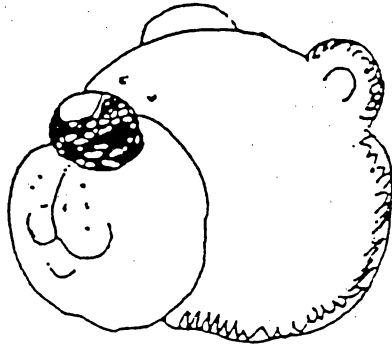
_____ is a carrot.

_____ is a pear.



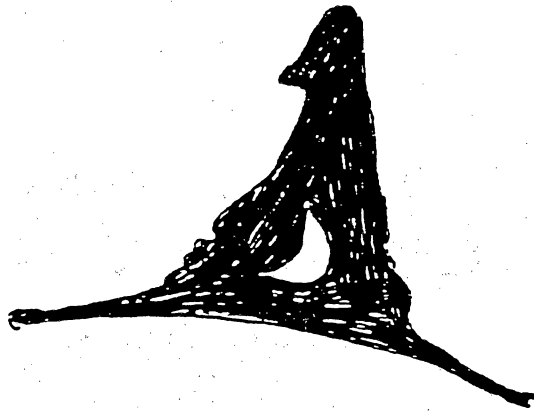
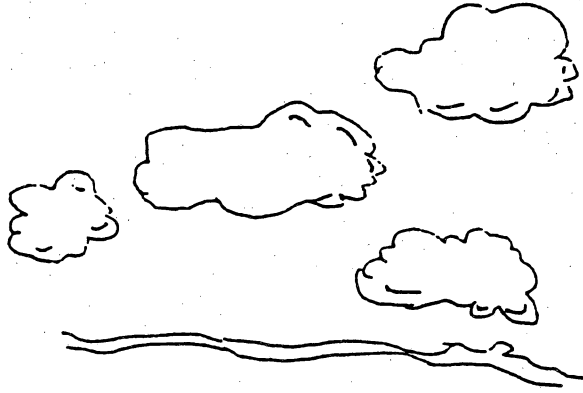
_____ is the grass.

And _____ is a bear.



_____ is a plum.

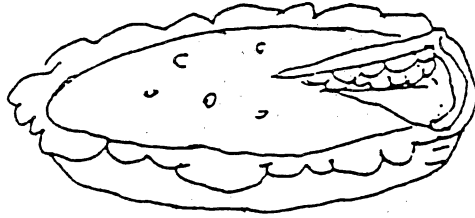
_____ is the sky.



_____ is a witch's

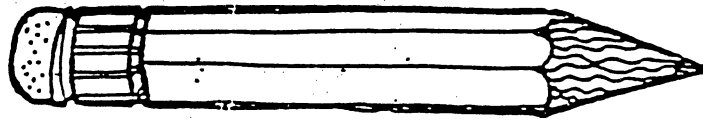
hat.

And _____ is a cherry
pie.



I am becoming a better reader and a writer. Please listen to
me practice my reading. Thanks for your help.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____



Week 2

Lesson Design - Grade 1 - Week 2

Buttons, Buttons by Rozanne Lanczak Williams

Day 1:

- Take the class through a picture walk of the Big Book discussing the illustrations. Read the story aloud for enjoyment.
- Follow-up text reading to describe the buttons they are wearing. On chart or sentence strips record individual responses. For example, Jean has round buttons. Extend the color theme by including color words. Encourage children to bring buttons from home for future activities.

Day 2:

- Discuss once again the buttons in the book and the buttons we wear. On chart paper, list several responses and draw a quick picture next to the response. For example, Blue Buttons. Picture: Draw some blue buttons so the picture supports the text. Children will need to access this during writing on days 3, 4 and 5.

Day 3:

- Refer to the brainstorm list from day 2 and let the children know that they will be making

their own button book. Allow children to make their own selections from the brainstorm list.

You can model this by making your own button book. Complete two pages, directing children to write and illustrate.

Day 4:

- Continue button books. Refer to the brainstorm list from day 2. Allow children to make their own selections from the brainstorm list. Complete the next two pages, directing children to write in their own button choices and illustrate. Children can reread their completed pages to a buddy for further reading practices.

Day 5:

- Continue button books. Follow same procedure from yesterday. Once completed, ask the children to read their book with a buddy.

Preparation

Day 1:

- Have students stash of assorted buttons available in a box labeled The Button Box.
- You will need chart paper and markers for

Shared Writing

- Have the chant Who Stole the Buttons Box? written out on chart paper or sentence strips for oral language activity.

Day 2:

- You will need chart paper and markers for Shared Writing

Day 3:

- Make sure you have run off and stapled together enough student copies of Buttons, Buttons

Day 4:

- Make one set of narrow paper strip text.

_____ buttons.

_____ buttons.

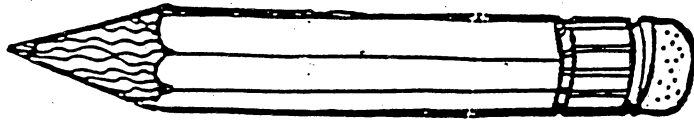
Buttons

Buttons

Name _____

I am becoming a better reader and a writer. Please listen to me practice my reading. Thanks for your help.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____



Week 3

Lesson Design - Grade 1 - Week 3

Follow me by Joan Nelson

Day 1: Take the class for a walk around the school. Prepare them by telling them they will be taking a walk just like the boy in Follow Me. On the walk have them use their five senses, noticing what they see, hear, touch, and smell. After returning, tell the children that together they will write a story about the class walk. Explain that the purpose of the story will be to tell others of their experiences. Brainstorm ideas. Have the children recall the things they saw, touched, tasted, and heard. Record their ideas on chart paper. Tell them that listing ideas is one way to prepare for writing.

Day 2: Writing continued from day 1. Making a story plan. Help the children expand their ideas and plan their story by writing the following questions on the chalkboard and having the children discuss their responses. Where did we go for a walk? What did we see, hear, touch, taste, and smell? Who did we meet? What will we remember most about our walk? Have the children discuss each question.

Day 3: Writing continued from days 1 and 2. Writing the story. Have the children dictate the story as you record it on chart paper. Tell them to use

their story plan to recall their ideas and the sequence of events. Then have the children suggest story titles, and help them choose the title that best fits the story.

Day 4: Writing continued from days 1, 2, and 3. Revision of the story. Read the story once again together. Ask them if they would like to add or change to their story.

Day 5: Writing continued from days 1, 2, 3, and 4. Publishing a wall story. You might wish to invite another class to read the wall story.

Preparation

day 1:

- * You will need chart paper and markers for Shared Writing

day 2:

- * You will need chart paper and markers for writing

day 3:

- * You will need chart paper and markers

day 4:

- * Prepare phrase strips (included in this project)
- * You will need markers for writing

day 5:

- * Set up pocket chart activity using sentence strips write out Big Book text:

I went for a walk
and what did I see?

A _____
was following me.

Follow Me

I went for a walk
and what did I see?

A _____

_____ was following me.

Story Strips

I went for a walk

and what did I see?

A little red puppy

was following me.

A fluffy orange kitten

A pretty blue bird

A jumping green frog

A soft yellow duckling

A round purple bug

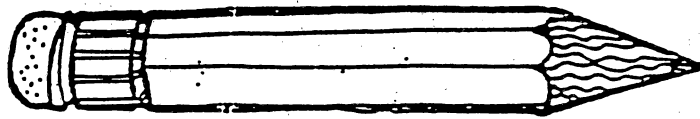
_____ / _____ /

what do you see?

I see a _____

_____ looking

at me.



Week 4 & 5

Lesson Design - Grade 1 - Week 4 & 5

Brown Bear, Brown Bear, What Do You See?

by Bill Martin, Jr.

Day 1: After reading the story to your class, discuss where each of the animals might live. On a piece of chart paper, make two columns and title them Land and Water. Have them help you list each animal under the appropriate heading.

Day 2: Have the children complete the sentence structure activity included in this project. (Cindy), (Cindy), what do you see? I see a (blue (whale) looking at me. They fill in their name twice and then choose a color, word and object for the other blanks.

Day 3: To learn to distinguish between fiction and nonfiction. Start out by mapping (on butcher paper) what the children already know about bears and on a separate piece of paper write down what they wonder about bears.

Day 4: Print on cards the high frequency words in this text (do, you, see, I, a, at, me.) Pass out to each child blank word cards. Have them write the same words onto their own cards. Now they have their own set of cards that can be placed in an envelope and matched in their own book.

Day 5: Discuss that they will be learning about

Day 5: Discuss that they will be learning about four different types of bears. (Have prepared comparing real bears chart.) Start out by reading about Grizzly Bears. Fill in the information about Grizzly Bears on the chart as a group. This activity will go into next week so leave the chart accessible.

Bear

Ho! Ho! Ho!

I'm a bear

Come and catch me

If yo dare!

Game activity:

Take the children outdoors and have them gather in a large circle. One child is the bear. He/She walks around the outside of the circle. He/She taps a child and that child chases the bear around the outside of the circle and back to the child's original position in the circle. The bear recites the poem as he/she is being chased. If the bear is caught before reaching the child's original position he/she goes into the honey pot (the middle of the circle) and the other child is now the bear.

Teddy Bear, Teddy Bear

Teddy bear, teddy bear, turn around.

Teddy bear, teddy bear, touch the ground.

Teddy bear, teddy bear, show your shoe.

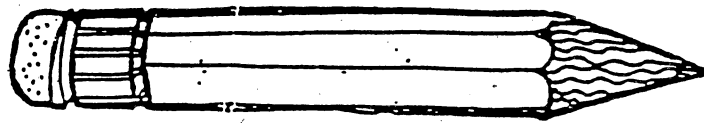
Teddy bear, teddy bear, that will do.

Teddy bear, teddy bear, go to bed.

Teddy bear, teddy bear, rest your head.

Teddy bear, teddy bear, turn out the light.

Teddy bear, teddy bear, say good night.



Week 6

Lesson Design - Grade 1 - Week 6

The Little Red Hen

Grade Level: First (middle of the year)

Objectives: Students will:

- * develop enlarged oral vocabulary.
- * develop more comprehensive written vocabulary.
- * attempt to write a story using descriptive words.
- * be exposed to the concepts of classification and sequencing in a limited format.

Materials: Big Book The Little Red Hen, crayons, a blank 8-page booklet

Procedure:

- * Divide the class into 5 groups of 3 or 4 students.
- * Read the story of The Little Red Hen to the entire class. Discuss with students the characters of the story and the plot.
- * As a whole class, shared group reading of the story, noting the sequence from grain to bread.
- * Pass out the copies of picture cards for students to illustrate by coloring. Students will cut them out and past one on a different

page per sequence, thus, creating a booklet.

- * Students will write about what developments or actions they see in each picture.
- * Teacher will circulate around the room for any questions students might have.

Evaluation

- * Each student will share their written story in front of class.
- * Teacher will assess their work by checking comprehension and content retention of the story.

Goal: Encourage students to seek more stories like The Little Red Hen.

The Three Billy Goats Gruff

Grade Level: First (end of the year difficulty level)

Subject: Language Arts

Objectives: Students learn to:

- * write new dialogue for The Three Billy Goats Gruff.
- * place question marks correctly.

Materials: Big Book of The Three Billy Goats Gruff,
writing paper, crayons, pencils

Introduction:

- * After the teacher has read the story, students are encouraged to discuss the parts of the story, (beginning, middle, and end).
- * Students will be required to identify the four characters and what they said.
- * To show students what the dialogue of a play is and how the characters use it when they talk to each other.

Procedure:

- * Pair students off. Prepare students to write

dialogue of The Three Billy Goats Gruff and Terrible (Troll).

Prewrite- free writing

- * Specify to student that the three goats speak to Terrible because they want to cross the bridge. Teachers write these questions on the board in simple language.

Questions:

1. What do I want the goats to say to Terrible?
2. What story dialogue do you want to change?

Then, invite children to give reasons why Terrible should let the goats cross the bridge.

Major focus.

- * Ask students to write a dialogue that follows the pattern of The Three Billy Goats.
 - What would they say?
 - Why would they say what they did?

- What actually happened as a result of the dialogue?

Assessment:

Use the self-styled rubric and determine if students completed it; then, place it in students' literacy folders.

Source: The Three Billy Goats Gruff by M. Thaler, MacMillan, 1981.

Alexander and the Terrible, Horrible,
No Good, Very Bad Day

Grade Level: First

Subject: Language Arts

Materials: story book titled Alexander and the
Terrible, Horrible, No Good, Very Bad Day

Introduction:

- Encourage children to share some very bad days they have had. Tell them to write what events made the day so bad. Teacher may supply examples such as: waking up with chicken pox on the day of the school play, losing a toy one has worked hard to earn, etc.
- Ask students to listen to Alexander's misadventures to see if any of the events have happened to them.
- As a whole class discuss the bad experiences in Alexander's day. Encourage each to take part.

Procedure:

- Pair or group students. Ask students to write about a terrible day they had in the past. After writing their story, they may illustrate it, and explain it.

Evaluation:

- Attach the scoring form to each child's writing. Complete the form with name and date. Then, place the writing sample into student's portfolio or display it in the classroom.

Table 1
Emergent Writing Assessment

Name _____ Birth Date _____

Strategy	Date	Comments
		The student is aware that marks on a paper convey a message.
		Understands that writers use letter symbols to construct meaning.
		Makes use of pictorial representations.
		May scribble letters of the alphabet.
		Makes use of isolated letters-stringing letters together.
		Word, letter, and symbol spacing are developing.

Table 2
Early Writing Assessment

Name _____ Birth Date _____

Strategy	Date	Comments
----------	------	----------

Uses a variety of strategies to spell words.

More high frequency words are evident
in student writing.

Writes with confidence and enthusiasm.

Shows beginning signs of organizing
thoughts to construct stories.

Has a beginning awareness of sentence
structure.

Generally uses temporary spelling and it is readable.

Table 3
Fluent Writing Assessment

Name _____ Birth Date _____

Strategy	Date	Comments
Uses complete sentences and displays a sense of organization.		
Makes use of temporary spelling in a predictable manner although the majority of spelling is correct. Misspelled words are understandable.		
Contributes effectively in shared (Modeled) Writing.		
Use descriptive words, adds details, and uses appropriate vocabulary.		
Remains on topic and demonstrates some supporting details.		

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