1999

A writer's workshop approach to teaching the California English-language arts standards in writing

Katherine Anne Maloney

Follow this and additional works at: https://scholarworks.lib.csusb.edu/etd-project

Part of the Education Commons, and the First and Second Language Acquisition Commons

Recommended Citation
https://scholarworks.lib.csusb.edu/etd-project/1713

This Thesis is brought to you for free and open access by the John M. Pfau Library at CSUSB ScholarWorks. It has been accepted for inclusion in Theses Digitization Project by an authorized administrator of CSUSB ScholarWorks. For more information, please contact scholarworks@csusb.edu.
A WRITER'S WORKSHOP APPROACH TO TEACHING THE CALIFORNIA
ENGLISH-LANGUAGE ARTS STANDARDS IN WRITING

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
Katharine Anne Maloney
September 1999
A WRITER'S WORKSHOP APPROACH TO TEACHING THE CALIFORNIA
ENGLISH-LANGUAGE STANDARDS IN WRITING

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

by
Katharine Anne Maloney
September 1999

Approved by:

Joseph W. Gray, First Reader

Terry G. Maloney, M.A., Middle School Teacher, Cope Middle
School, Redlands, Retired, Second Reader
ABSTRACT

First grade students come from many different backgrounds and possess different abilities in writing. In accordance with the new California English-Language Arts Content Standards for writing, all first grade students will need to attain certain criteria to be able to pass to second grade. In order to help each student meet these standards teachers need an effective writing program. This paper investigates skills-based and whole language approaches to teaching writing. Graves (1983) shows the importance of allowing the students to choose their own topic and share their work while the teacher provides good modeling and support. Writer's Workshop is a whole language method based on these ideas that is described in detail. This process focuses mainly on content in writing, with skills taught as needed in a natural setting. Research (Boone, 1996) supports this method as an effective way to teach writing, and it also provides an excellent framework for teaching the standards. The accompanying project on Hyperstudio contains useful lessons and information for teachers as well as a writing template for students.
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Thank you John, Michael, Jimmie, and Kevin for supporting me through this entire process. I couldn’t have done it without you.
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ABSTRACT</td>
<td>iii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACKNOWLEDGMENTS</td>
<td>iv</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INTRODUCTION</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>REVIEW OF LITERATURE</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GOALS AND LIMITATIONS</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APPENDIX A-Victoria School Writing Continuum</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APPENDIX B-Hyperstudio Lesson Plans</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>REFERENCES</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
INTRODUCTION

The new California English-Language Arts Content Standards for Writing present a challenge for first grade students and their teachers. By the end of Kindergarten, students are expected to write words and brief sentences that are legible (Calfee, 1998). Yet, the first grade writing standards expect that students will write clear and coherent sentences and paragraphs that elaborate a central impression, and consider audience and purpose using stages of the writing process. Students are also expected to write compositions that describe and explain objects, events and experiences that are familiar to them while demonstrating command of standard English and use drafting, research, and organizational strategies (Calfee, 1998). When teaching first grade, my problem is developing a writing curriculum to meet those standards.

When I became a teacher, I was trained in whole language theory and techniques. Whole language is the philosophy that refers to meaningful, real, and relevant teaching and learning. Whole language is based on the idea that the language processes are learned naturally and in meaningful context as a whole, not in little parts (Routman, 1988). When I started teaching, I found that most of the teachers around me were heavy into skills based
teaching, as this was right at the end of the Basal reader era. They were teaching from the outlook that the small parts, such as phonics and spelling, should be taught first before moving into teaching the reading and writing process. Although I did not want to teach from a skills based approach, I found that some of their techniques worked for certain students. I am still based on the socio-psycholinguistic side of the continuum, which reflects the whole language philosophy, but I am working to incorporate everything that the students need for a balanced curriculum. I believe that whole language is the best model for motivating children and teaching them to read and write. However, using the whole language approach requires a great deal of organization on the part of the teacher and an ability to work independently on the part of the students. I think that it is something that I will always be working to perfect. I agree with Regie Routman who says:

I prefer to use the term 'process teaching' which values the process as well as the product to denote whole language concepts and developmental learning. Process teaching implies that I am in process too. My theories about learning and teaching are continually developing and changing (p. 26).
The theory of whole language reveals that reading is learned naturally, like oral language. Studies have shown that this is also true for writing. Dahl (1985) reports that research done by Harste, Burke, and Woodward has shown that children use written language long before coming to school. The need to make sense of the environment and communicate meaning leads children to begin to write. Writing is learned naturally and for real purposes. Data show that 90% of students entering first grade believe that they can write, while only 15% believe that they can read (Graves, 1983). In school, children who have someone to model good writing techniques and give them a nurturing environment in which to work, have a greater chance of being successful in their endeavors. The teacher can model different purposes for writing, and classmates become the audience for each other.

With the adoption of the English-Language Arts Content Standards (Calfee, 1998), a first grade teacher can now expect that all students coming from Kindergarten will be able to write words and brief sentences that are legible. In my ten years as a teacher, I have found that very few students are able to write sentences that are legible when they begin first grade. It has been my experience that most students get nervous when asked to write because they
have not had enough opportunity to write in Kindergarten. They are unable to put down any words to go with their pictures and need to be taught to write a sound that they hear to match their drawing (for example, a student draws a picture of a house and asks for help with writing. The child still has to be taught to say the word "house" and write the /h/ that is heard at the beginning of the word). This lack of confidence in writing comes from the Kindergarten class, where writing has not been a focal point. Not knowing what impact the Standards will have on individual teachers to improve their curriculum, I need a program that will suit the needs of all students beginning with non-writers, because I know that I will have these students in my classroom.

My school is in a low socioeconomic area with many groups of immigrant families. Our school has 95% free lunch rate and 14 different languages spoken there. It is a year round school with four tracks. We have clustered our Spanish speaking population on one track where bilingual assistance is provided. We have clustered our second biggest population, Cambodian, on another track where they receive assistance from a teacher’s aide who speaks fluent Cambodian. This leaves two tracks in which to divide up the remaining 12 languages. It is not unusual
for me to have students from seven different ethnic and language backgrounds in my class. An important part of my curriculum, then, is also to find an appropriate teaching method that works for the students from Korea, Saudi Arabia, Poland, Indonesia, and other parts of the world. A model of writing that is beneficial for both beginning writers and second language learners is Writer’s Workshop. In this process, students are able to begin with only drawings if that is where they feel comfortable. The main emphasis is to tell a story whether the correct words are there to go with it or not. This makes it stress free for the student who does not know the alphabet yet or who is struggling to learn another language. The teacher takes advantage of individual conference time to be able to help that student one-on-one with letter/sound relationships or any other area that the student might be having trouble with. The students also benefit from whole class sharing time by learning from their peers. Whether they are able to write yet or not, the students are able to take pride in their ability to share a story. Writer’s Workshop allows students to enjoy writing while learning the writing process. Writer’s Workshop is described as a curriculum for process-centered instruction. Students write daily on self-selected topics. They go through the processes of
writing, conferencing, revising, editing, publishing, and sharing (Dahl, 1985). The teacher gives guidance through mini-lessons on various topics and spends conference time with each student to talk about their work.

The learner plays an important part in Writer’s Workshop. Much of what the students learn about writing they will learn from each other through sharing and conferencing. They will be given the opportunity to examine their own work as well as each other’s in making decisions about writing. They will also provide the teacher with important feedback about which skills are still lacking.

In order to teach the Writing Standards, the first grade teacher has many areas to cover. I propose that the use of Writer’s Workshop in the classroom will facilitate the teaching of these standards, while providing a nurturing environment for all writers. My project will include useful strategies and mini-lessons for working towards the English-Language Arts Content Standards in Writing for first grade in a Writer’s Workshop environment.
Whole Language vs. Traditional Writing

The two main approaches to teaching writing are traditional and whole language. The traditional, or individualized mode, is skills oriented. It is based on using programmed materials and individualized tutoring sessions (Hillocks, 1986). The teacher relies heavily on phonics during instruction and uses worksheets for student practice. The traditional approach is based on the idea that writing begins after reading. The focus of writing is not on the content, but on neatness, correct spelling, and proper letter formation (Klatt, 1996). The whole language, or Natural mode, is based on authentic experiences. The writing experience is meant to be functional as well as interesting and meaningful. Reading and writing are related experiences that are learned simultaneously. In whole language, all types of writing are practiced and inventive spelling is encouraged (Klatt, 1996). In this method, the teacher acts as a facilitator to guide the students through the writing process. Students are given generalized objectives, the opportunity of free choice in their writing, and the sense of audience provided by their peers. The teacher's main role is to set up general
guidelines and provide feedback on an individual basis (Hillocks, 1986).

One method of teaching writing using the whole language method is the Authoring Cycle created by Short, Harste, and Burke. In this model, the writing process is seen as a continuous circle of learning beginning with the students' life experiences. The students become immersed in various styles of writing with differing purposes (notes, journals, letters, responses, etc.). The student will choose some of these pieces to develop further as drafts and proceed through the writing process. These pieces will be placed in the Author's folder to share with other students during the Author's circle. During this small group meeting with peers, the author receives feedback on the meaning and content of the writing. The next step in the cycle is self-editing where revision of the first draft takes place. If the student then decides to publish the story, it may be done informally by sharing it with others, or formally as a book or article. A piece that will be formally published is then teacher and peer-edited. The student can then make, or choose not to make, final changes and type the story before it is bound. Through this process, the student has had the opportunity to learn new writing strategies and ideas for writing that
Shared or Interactive Writing is another component of whole language writing. It provides an opportunity for all students to participate in writing with the help of the teacher. This approach allows the students to share their ideas with the whole class, and do as much of the writing as they feel comfortable with. The student may write words or letters with the help of the teacher and other students, while the teacher helps with writing that is too difficult (for example, words that are not spelled phonemically). This method reinforces and supports the writing process and is an excellent way to display conventions of print. The teacher is able to discuss grammar and punctuation conventions throughout the writing of the story. The students are able to focus on composing because they are receiving support in putting their thoughts down on paper. This is especially helpful for the student who has stories to share but has difficulty writing those thoughts down. This approach helps promote development and enjoyment of writing while supporting and reinforcing the writing process (Routman, 1994).

Writer's Workshop is another venue that allows the teacher to use the natural or whole language, method of instruction in writing. Graves describes it as a
curriculum for process-centered writing instruction (Dahl, 1985). The writing process consists of three distinct phases: pre-writing, composing, and post-writing. Pre-writing is the thought and planning that are done prior to actually putting words down on paper. For younger students, pre-writing includes drawing pictures when planning the story. Composing is the writing phase when words are actually being put down on paper. This phase may include the use of resources such as dictionaries or books. In post-writing, works of writing are shared with others and improved upon (Graves, 1984). It is during this time that proofreading and spelling checks are completed.

Writer’s Workshop incorporates these phases through a distinct organizational process. Writer’s Workshop is founded on the principles that students must write every day to improve their skills; and that they should have choice in their writing. The main components of Writer’s Workshop are as follows: mini-lessons, work time, group sharing, peer conferencing, revision, and celebrations (Calkins, 1986). These components are explained below:

Mini-lessons: The teacher gives a mini-lesson every day, either at the beginning or the end of the writing period. The concept of mini-lessons was first introduced by Lucy Calkins as a time for the teacher to address writing
issues that need whole class attention (Atwell, 1987). At the beginning of the year, the mini-lessons are usually based on procedural issues relevant to the Writer's Workshop. As the year progresses, the lessons may focus on writing conventions (spacing, grammar, punctuation, etc.) or writing strategies (style, topic selection, genre, etc.). The topics that are covered in mini-lessons are often drawn from problems that have arisen in the students' writing.

Work time: If at least thirty minutes per day is devoted to independent writing time, then the students have ample opportunity to improve their writing skills. The students use this time to work on the project of their choice. The writing is an ongoing process with students in various stages of work. It is not expected that the students would begin and end a story in the same writing period.

Group share sessions: This time is designed for students to share, with a small group or the whole class, a piece of writing that is not yet finished. The author may be looking for help in solving a problem that has been encountered, or may just be looking for audience response to the story. As the unfinished work is shared, the author will receive ideas for improvement in the content or
grammatical aspects of the story, or be given alternative approaches to solving a problem (Atwell, 1987).

Peer conference: When the student has a finished piece of writing it is time for individual peer conferencing. The teacher first instructs the entire class on the proper behavior for individual peer conferences, including how to be a good listener, how to give a compliment, and how to give suggestions for improvement. The writer chooses a student with whom to share the finished story. The listener provides positive feedback and also points out items that appear to be missing from the story or are unclear. The writer is then able to begin the revision process.

Revision: Using suggestions gained from peers or the teacher during conference time, the student then goes back to the story to make the necessary changes to improve grammar and punctuation and the clarity of the story, as well as to fix spelling errors.

Publication celebrations: These celebrations allow the student to share a finished piece of work that has been typed, bound and illustrated. First, the teacher will work with a student who has gone through the entire process up to this point. This is when the teacher can make any editing changes that still need to be done and check on the
student’s progress to date. The student is then able to send the finished story to the “publisher” to be typed and bound. The “publisher” is the teacher, a parent volunteer, or the student who wrote the story. The story is typed on a computer, printed and bound. The student then receives the book back and will provide the final illustrations.

Now it is time for the publication celebration. During the celebration the student sits in a place of honor and reads to the entire class. These celebrations allow the student to share a finished story that has gone through the entire writing process. It gives everyone in the class a chance to participate in the author’s accomplishment. It is an important step in allowing the students to see themselves as authors. It is the culmination of the hard work that has been done during the writing process.

The traditional method of teaching writing teaches basic skills and makes the assumption that by isolating these skills students will learn to write more quickly and easily (Holdaway, 1985). A year long study on writing conducted by Graves (1978) found that writing instruction usually consists of drills in vocabulary, penmanship, punctuation, capitalization, grammar, and spelling. “Only 3% of the school day is actually spent on composing” (Calkins, 1985, p.26). Although students spend more than
40% of the day with a pencil in their hands, most of that time is spent doing exercises, not composing (Applebee, 1984). Students are required to learn the basic skills and are given tests that measure these skills. The whole language approach to teaching writing is meant to improve the quality of student's writing and spend less time practicing isolated skills. In Writer's Workshop, the teaching of skills is incorporated through mini-lessons or brought out during group share time or peer conferencing. The students are not given worksheets on grammar or punctuation, but rather learn how to incorporate proper skills into their writing. The focus on writing is content.

Varble (1990) conducted a study to assess the writing quality of second graders and sixth graders who had been taught using the two different writing approaches. The study was conducted in seven schools in Indiana. Of the 120 second graders in the study, 62 were taught for one year using whole language methods, and 58 were taught for one year using the traditional approach. For evaluation, the students participated in a 45 minute writing session that included 15 minutes of pre-writing and 30 minutes of composing. The researcher was the teacher for the writing periods for both groups. The criteria for evaluation of
the writing were based on quality of content and mastery of mechanics. The results showed that the quality of content for the second graders was statistically significant ($F = 0.0260$) for the students that were taught using the whole language method. Mastery of mechanics was found not to be statistically significant ($F = 0.4295$) for the students in the whole language group, which indicates that the students taught using the traditional method of basic skills did not perform any better than those who learned these skills as part of their writing content. The second grade students taught with the whole language method for one year showed superior quality of writing content and were on equal ground in regards to mechanics.

Donald Graves has conducted the most definitive research done in the area of beginning writing. Prior to his 1973 study, only two studies had been done that investigated the actual writing process. One investigated the use of metaphor by fifth graders, and the other one observed the composing process used by a group of twelfth graders. Graves conducted a case study on the writing processes of seven year olds in both formal and informal settings. Two classrooms were designated as formal and two informal based on the degree in which children were able to function without specific directions from the teacher and
the amount of choice that the student had in the learning activities.

The study took five months to complete and was composed of four phases that included 94 children. In phase one, the children kept writing folders that were assessed based on general writing habits. These habits included writing frequency, assigned vs. unassigned writing, use of illustrations accompanying the writing, writing length, and thematic interest. In order to qualify as a writing sample, the piece had to be intended as a sentence and be completely composed by the child. In phase two, 56 students (eight boys and six girls) from each of the four classrooms were chosen. These students were observed during writing episodes. The researcher did not structure these episodes, in order that valid information about the writing process could be gathered. A writing episode consisted of the three phases of writing: pre-writing, composing, and post-writing. Pre-writing consisted of thematic choice, artwork, and discussions with other students. Composing was the actual writing of the message, including spelling, use of resources, proofreading, erasures, and teacher participation. Post-writing was behaviors that occurred following the finished piece such as solicitation of approval and disposition of
materials and products. A researcher closely watched the students and recorded the flow of their writing behaviors. In phase three, twenty-five students were interviewed about the writing in their folders to gain insight into their view of their own writing. The students were asked to rate their writing from best to worst. This phase also consisted of interviews in which the students were asked what they thought a good writer needed in order to write well. Phase four was a case study of eight children throughout the entire process. The case study design used by Graves, backed with added depth from the data of selected children and from the large groups, was used as an effective means for determining the many variables that influence children’s writing. With this case study data, Graves was able to identify behaviors common to all of the children as well as behaviors unique to each child (Moss, 1982).

Some important conclusions about the writing process from this study relate to the learning environment. The informal environments were found to give greater choice to children. Students write more when they can write what they want or when they want rather than when specific writing assignments are given. Children in informal environments do not need motivation or supervision in order
to write. They write because they want to. In both environments, formal and informal, unassigned writing is longer than assigned writing. When large amounts of assigned writing are given, the children are inhibited in range, content, and amount of writing (Graves, 1984).

**Classroom Environment**

The classroom learning environment relies on a sense of community and proper physical surroundings, along with the role of the teacher. In order to build a community, teachers and children must learn to share with each other and become active listeners. According to Avery (1993), the two most important aspects of building a community are talking and listening. "True community requires that children be recognized as individuals and respected and valued as equals, people with rights, not as puppets to be controlled or manipulated" (p. 58). Starting with the first day of school, children can work towards building a nurturing writing environment by learning to work together (Boone, 1996). In the Writer's Workshop environment, the students will come to depend on each other for input and will feel more comfortable doing so if they have been able to form a close working relationship. The teacher is responsible for providing a healthy intellectual atmosphere.
where children can feel free to take risks with their writing and not be subject to censure. If the students and teacher work together to build this environment, then the classroom will become a place where writing is received with respect and enthusiasm, and a purposeful audience exists for each student (Temple, 1988). But, just knowing all of the pieces to include will not make a successful Writer’s Workshop. A teacher can incorporate all of the necessary ingredients and still student can lack motivation and desire to write. It is up to the teacher to supply the “heart and the art of good teaching” (Atwell, 1991). The good teacher will model different styles of reading and writing every day. Even in first grade, students are expected to learn to write using a variety of genres. It is up to the teacher to expose the students to a wide variety of genre and voices in writing, and give them the opportunity to try them out. It is also important to set a certain schedule for writing each day. As Donald Murray points out, most productive writers establish a routine for writing and stick to that schedule every day (Bunce-Crim, 1991). The students will become more comfortable with writing and come to school prepared to write if they know what to expect every day.
The physical surroundings of the classroom are also important in creating the proper learning environment. The most vital resource is a wide variety and abundance of children's literature (Manning and Manning, 1994). A thorough library will include books of a variety of genres and range of difficulty. A writing center set up in the classroom will give students the chance to work with a variety of materials (Beeler, 1993). Examples of possible materials to include: different types of paper, booklets, stationery, pens, markers, and pencils. Display of print in the room is imperative in order for children to see the importance of writing and it's many functions. Examples of environmental print include pocket chart sentences, poems, and word walls.

These components were incorporated in a study of the writing process conducted by Boone (1996). Three classrooms (one early childhood, one first grade, and one third grade) began using Writer's Workshop in September 1995, and continued through the year with an evaluation of the program in March, 1996. In first grade, the students wrote for a period of 30 to 45 minutes four days per week. The classroom was filled with an abundance of print (high level frequency words, and pocket charts displaying words, books, and poems). The room had an extensive classroom
library with books attractively displayed. The teacher frequently modeled the writing process; and weaknesses in writing were addressed using mini-lessons. A typical first grade mini-lesson lasted 10 to 15 minutes, usually with a focus on mechanics. The class also participated in a whole group writing activity once a month.

Writing strategies developed strongly in two areas. First grade students were able to self-select topics 80% better by the end of the observation period; and the number of students who shared their writing increased from 21% to 100%. First graders were also found to use inventive spelling more and keep their attention focused on writing better (Boone, 1996).

Student Attitudes

In the same study (Boone, 1996), the students’ attitudes toward writing and abilities to use writing strategies were evaluated over the eight month period. Parent questionnaires and student attitude surveys were used to judge the student attitudes. In first grade, the number of students who enjoy writing increased form 37% to 47%, while those who rarely enjoy writing decreased from 10% to 0%. The amount of students that need help with writing also decreased from 58% to 33% according to parent
surveys. The attitudes of the children about writing changed from 16% who did not like to write down to 8%.

Another report on writing achievement also shows the importance of student attitude on the writing process. This report conducted by the National Assessment of Educational Progress (1980), found that the students' enjoyment of writing decreased with age. While 66% of nine year olds enjoy writing, only 59% of 13 year olds do, and a mere 53% of 17 year olds said that they like to write. 25% of these students had negative attitudes towards writing, and said that they weren't good at it. As students improve in their writing abilities, their dislike of writing increases. They seem to be sacrificing self-expression by becoming overwhelmed with mechanics (Shook, 1989). There is concern that the schools are promoting these unhealthy attitudes by focusing on meaningless assignments with no motivational purpose. Bereiter (1980) found that students who write well have made a connection between the writing and their lives.

Shook (1980) surveyed 108 first and second grade students regarding their attitude towards writing. The open ended questions dealt with perception of the purpose for writing, individual preferences, and self-concept. First and second grade students were found to understand
the communicative nature of writing, and have personal topic preferences (animals or people), and style preferences (notes and lists). Most children wrote first for parents, and second for teachers. The home environment was the preferred place for writing. Regarding self-concept, many students indicated the need for practice of mechanical aspects in their writing, but 76% revealed that they were happy when writing. The survey showed that the students understand that writing is important. They observe it at home; and have reasons to write there. Children tend to prefer writing at home because they have their parents as models and unconditional acceptors of their work. Teachers should work toward this type of environment in the classroom in order to help the students feel good about writing at school. Modeling writing is important, as well as allowing the students time to write.

Of utmost importance in the field of teaching writing, then, is getting and keeping the students exited about writing. Beginning writers need to feel free to write without being hindered by spelling of artificial writing assignments. Research supports the belief that students are able to produce the best writing content when they have their choice of topics and materials; and are free to write at their own developmental level. Writer's Workshop
provides the perfect atmosphere for achieving these goals. Students are able to write and share about subjects that are meaningful to them while inherently gaining the skills they need to be proficient writers.

Assessment and Evaluation

Assessment (data collection) and evaluation (bringing meaning to the data through analysis, interpretation, and reflection) are a vital part of the writing process (Routman, 1994). In a Writer's Workshop, peers evaluate each other's writing on an ongoing basis. Every time children engage in group share time or peer conferencing, the writer is receiving feedback about what changes can be made to improve the story, either in content or mechanics. While this is a very informal method of evaluation, it does provide an opportunity for revision and improvement. The teacher spends time every day observing students during writing time. This observation with note-taking allows the teacher an opportunity to see which students need help and in what areas. There are different ways in which to observe a student's writing in order to provide help that is timely. The teacher can observe the student's writing folder, conduct a distant observation, close-in observation or participant observation (Graves, 1983). When looking
through the writing folder, the teacher should be looking for topic choice, voice in writing, and skill development. The distant observation is when the teacher observes the child from across the room for about five minutes without the student knowing that the observation is taking place. This allows the teacher to see how the child works and if there are things that prevent the child from working such as lack of materials or knowledge of how to use resources. During the close-in observation, which also lasts about five minutes, the teacher will sit with the student and observe the writing process in more detail. Does the child struggle when it comes to punctuation? Is it hard for the student to come up with an idea? Looking at issues like these allows the teacher to provide some individualized instruction. The participant observation is used less often than the other two. In these cases, the teacher asks questions while the student is writing. These are questions that can’t be answered by observation such as "How did you figure out that correct spelling?" According to Routman (1994) good observation is the most critical component in evaluation. In order to help a student grow in their writing, the teacher must be able to look at the student’s work, listen to their meaning, and be able to incorporate the various learning styles with strategies for
improvement. Along with observation, the teacher spends conference time with each student reviewing finished writing projects before publication. This is the time for giving one-on-one instruction in specific areas. The teacher can also monitor at this time whether the student should try new writing styles or formats. “The goal of evaluation, like the goal of teaching, is to make the learner self-monitoring, self-regulating, and independent” (Routman, p.303). Ultimately the student becomes a good self-evaluator, and is not only able to reflect on their own work, but is able to set their own course for improvement. Student self-evaluation can be in the form of responses to teacher questions, checklists, and response logs.

The formal assessment of a student’s progress in writing will be done using the individual writing portfolio in which all pieces of writing are kept. The teacher will look at growth over time for each student to determine what progress has been made during the year. As Nancie Atwell (1982) reminds us, teachers are looking for growth in many areas: topic selection, level of involvement, degree of risk-taking and effort, editing and proofreading, and completeness and clarity. These improvements can be seen for each student, and may be minor or major changes. In
addition, a writer’s ability needs to be formally judged for a grade at report card time. And although a student may have made great progress during the year, it may still be below grade level. Ideally, especially in the primary grades, a holistic system of grading is used and a letter grade does not need to be assigned. An excellent continuum for looking at writing comes from Victoria Elementary School in Redlands, California (see Appendix A). This continuum shows six stages of writing ranging from pre-emergent to proficient and gives examples of what should be included in each style of writing. Before the student moves to the next grade level, the teacher marks all appropriate behaviors on the continuum writing card. This shows where the child’s developmental writing level is for grading purposes and as information for the next year’s teacher. At this level, it is important to see growth in writing throughout the year. A child who has the opportunity to write using Writer’s Workshop will be able to show progress through writing done every day.
GOALS AND LIMITATIONS

The goal of this project is to help first grade teachers meet the new California English-Language Arts Standards in Writing using a Writer's Workshop approach. This will be accomplished through the use of age-appropriate mini-lessons for teacher use and a template for publishing books for student use. These materials will be available on Hyperstudio (PC version).

The mini-lessons are based on literature selections that are appropriate for first grade. The literature pieces were chosen for their language and style as it relates to the teaching of the elements found in the California English-Language Arts Standards in Writing. Through these mini-lessons, teachers will have quick access to lessons that will help their students build descriptive language in their writing and be able to write brief narratives using sensory language. The mini-lessons will be accessible on the Macintosh computers that the teacher has in the classroom and school computer lab; and the literature selections will be available in the school book room.

The Hyperstudio program will also include a student friendly template for typing finished stories. The template is designed to be used independently by the students with
help from the teacher or parent volunteer only when it is ready to be printed. The graphics and design are simple enough for the student to follow after the teacher has given a brief overview. A basic knowledge of keyboarding is very helpful for the students to have prior to typing, but is not necessary. The opportunity to type their own stories when they are done writing is an incentive for completing the writing process.

For this project to be useful to teachers, they must be willing to use Writer’s Workshop (Graves, 1983, and Calkins, 1994) in their classroom. This project is designed to work in conjunction with the Writer’s Workshop approach. The teacher must also have access to a Macintosh computer.

For this project to be useful to the students, they need only to have a desire to learn. Since the Writer’s Workshop approach works with students of all developmental levels, there are no limits imposed by age, gender, special needs, or language. Students with different backgrounds will produce different stories, but it is a framework that all students can work within.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>GRADE LEVEL CODE</th>
<th>K - Pink</th>
<th>2 - Yellow</th>
<th>4 - Green</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1 - Blue</td>
<td>3 - Purple</td>
<td>5 - Orange</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## WRITING

Include a piece of writing that has been taken through the writing process

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PRE-EMERGENT</th>
<th>EMERGENT</th>
<th>EARLY</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Uses proper technique for holding pencils/crayons</td>
<td>• Knows difference between letters and words</td>
<td>• Has concept, writing conveys message</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Recognizes own name</td>
<td>• Uses left to right directionality</td>
<td>• Uses temporary spelling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Has some awareness of left to right directionality</td>
<td>• Uses 1:1 correspondence</td>
<td>• beginning, middle, ending consonants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Uses pictures to tell a story</td>
<td>• Prints upper/lower case letters legibly</td>
<td>• Leaves spaces between words</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Illustrates dictated sentences</td>
<td>• Copies simple words from board or overhead</td>
<td>• Begins to use sentence structure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Shares work with others</td>
<td>• Uses invented spelling/beginning and ending sound</td>
<td>• grammar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Generates ideas and vocabulary related to a given topic</td>
<td>• Hears and records some sounds in words</td>
<td>• Begins to use capitalization and punctuation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Expresses thoughts in complete sentences</td>
<td>• Beginning to leave spaces between words</td>
<td>• Willingly shares writing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Selects writing as a choice</td>
<td>• Shares, displays, and publishes selected writing samples</td>
<td>• Writes title</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Uses scribble writing</td>
<td>• Matches illustrations to text</td>
<td>• Can copy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Writes some letters</td>
<td>• Understands that writing symbolizes talk</td>
<td>• Chooses own topic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Can recognize most letters of the alphabet</td>
<td>• Retells own written story</td>
<td>• Matches text to picture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Knows some letter/sound relationships</td>
<td>• Writes complete original simple sentence related to a topic</td>
<td>• Writes in different genres</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Writes first name with correct letter form</td>
<td></td>
<td>• Has simple beginning, middle, end to story (at least 3 sentences)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Example 1: [Image]

Example 2: [Image]

Example 1: [Image]

Example 2: [Image]

Revised 5/99 Victoria Elementary Writing Continuum

Writing Samples: Andrea Butler, 1996

Victoria School Writing Continuum
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>EARLY/FLUENT</th>
<th>FLUENT</th>
<th>PROFICIENT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- Chooses own topic</td>
<td>- Chooses own topic</td>
<td>- Paragraphs:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Spells many high-frequency words correctly</td>
<td>- Has a fully developed beginning, middle, and end to stories</td>
<td>- uses a topic sentence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Demonstrates advanced temporary spelling-uses vowels</td>
<td>- Consistently spells high-frequency words correctly</td>
<td>- uses supporting sentences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Starting to develop complex beginning, middle, and end to stories</td>
<td>- Reads for information to include in writing</td>
<td>- Uses punctuation and capitalization correctly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Begins to summarize information in own words</td>
<td>- Develops writing topic with details</td>
<td>- Spells accurately</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Writes in a variety of genres</td>
<td>- Summarizes information in own words</td>
<td>- Uses organizational structures:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Writing is meaningful and enjoyable</td>
<td>- Writes within a variety of domains:</td>
<td>- sequence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Experiences a variety of writing genres</td>
<td>- * narrative, descriptive, informational, expository</td>
<td>- flow</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Developing skills in using parts of speech and correct word order</td>
<td>- Understands own writing</td>
<td>- higher frequency of complex sentences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Makes lists</td>
<td>- Writes independently</td>
<td>- creates/uses outlines</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Does clustering and mapping as a group</td>
<td>- Writes for pleasure</td>
<td>- Writes within all domains:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Writes for a purpose and audience</td>
<td>- Takes notes, makes lists</td>
<td>- narrative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Is willing to revise</td>
<td>- Collaborates, talks</td>
<td>- descriptive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Willingly shares writing</td>
<td>- Uses clustering, mapping, webs</td>
<td>- informational</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Gives and receives advice</td>
<td>- Writes for a purpose and audience</td>
<td>- expository</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Accepts editing</td>
<td>- Willingly shares writing</td>
<td>- technical</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Learning editing conventions</td>
<td>- Uses dictionary or spelling aids</td>
<td>- Writing engages the reader</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Sees self as an author</td>
<td>- Gives and receives advice</td>
<td>- Sees self as an author</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Shares finished piece</td>
<td>- Initiates editing</td>
<td>- Borrows techniques or ideas from another author</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Correctly uses capitalization and punctuation</td>
<td>- Uses an editing checklist</td>
<td>- Uses audience-specific vocabulary:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Example 1</td>
<td>- Sees self as an author</td>
<td>(technical terms, etc.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Example 2</td>
<td>- Borrows techniques or ideas from another author</td>
<td>- Writing Samples: Andrea Butler, 1996</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Example 1**

```
I never thought I'd learn how to weight feathers. I thought if you said like that you'd make them. But we got our hens work. We can have five days to do it. What you have to do is find things that are discarded with birds. For example, an egg shell.
```

**Example 2**

```
What I learned about weight.

The bottom part of the feathers, when you touch them, they feel very warm. They help you not to be cold. Some feathers are from the paws of the birds, some are from the wings of the birds. When you're cold, they help you. They're warm.
```

Revised 5/99 Victoria Elementary Writing Continuum

Writing Samples: Andrea Butler, 1996
Appendix B

Hyperstudio Lesson Plans
REFERENCES


Calfee, Bob; Carrabino, Joseph; Coddington, Judy; Condron, Dan; D'Amelio, John; Davis, Linda; Eastin, Delaine; Evers, Bill; Galef, Andrew; Harris, Jerilyn; Hernandez, Sonia; Lee, Dorothy Jue; Ortiz, Mark; Panton, Judy; Paredes, Raymund; Pertossian, Alice; Simpson, Kate; Siskind, Lawrence; Stupski, Larry;
Treadway, Jery; and Wright, LaTanya (1988). English-language arts content standards for california public schools kindergarten through grade twelve. Sacramento, CA: Department of Education.


