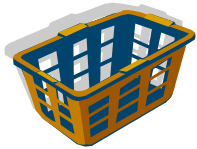


Launching the Writing Workshop



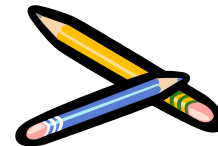
Before the Students Arrive

- **Things that Need to Be in Place for Writing**
 - Literacy-rich room
 - Permanent place for minilessons
 - Desks in groups
- **Get Yourself Organized**
 - Writers' Toolboxes for each group
 - May include pencils, colored pencils (revising/editing), strips of paper, sticky notes, stapler, staples, extra paper folder, students' folders
 - Writing folder for each child
 - Published pieces portfolio for each child
 - System for keeping a portfolio for each child (i.e., crate, binder)
 - Conference Notes
- **Decisions to Make in Order to Have a Successful Workshop**
 - Decide that you will sweat the small stuff
 - Decide that you will help your children become independent individuals and learners, not just independent writers.
 - Decide how long your workshop will be, and stick to it



Structure of a Workshop (7:40 – 8:30 a.m.)

- **Minilesson** (7:40 – 7:50)
 - Connection (1 minute)
 - Teach (4-5 minutes)
 - Active Engagement (3-4 minutes)
 - Link (1 minute)
- **Independent Writing and Conferring** (7:50 - 8:07)
 - Confer with 2 or 3 students
- **Mid-workshop interruption** (8:07 – 8:08)
- **Independent Writing and Conferring** (8:08 – 8:25)
 - Confer with 2 or 3 students
- **Share** (8:25 – 8:30)



Once the Students Arrive

Partnerships

- Establish long-term partnerships
- Assign rug spots
- Teach students to **Turn and Talk**
 - Sit knee-to-knee, eye-to-eye
 - Don't touch each other
 - Turn quickly
 - Decide quickly who goes first



- Push yourselves to say something
- Only talk about what the teacher has asked
- When you're done, turn back to me
- If someone at your table's partner is absent, invite that person into your partnership
- Teach students how to share
 - Speaker
 - Speak loudly so everyone can hear
 - Look at your audience, not at me
 - Make your ideas clear (think before you talk)
 - Listener
 - Look at the speaker and have a calm body
 - Take charge of your listening (if you can't hear, speak up)
 - Be able to retell the speaker's ideas
 - Be able to respond to the speaker's ideas
 - Think along with what the speaker is saying

Possible Launching Lessons

- Explain workshop structure/Practice coming to the floor
- Establish writing partners/How to Turn and Talk
- Practice oral storytelling (across your fingers)
- Writing from our own lives (Think back over your day)
- Writing from our own lives (Look at what you are wearing)
- Respect for each other and your writing tools (not interrupting during conferences)

***It will be important to practice these things throughout the first few weeks of school in various parts of the day. Don't limit these basic practices to just writing. To make your Writing Workshop and management tight, this is where it is extremely important to "sweat the small stuff".**

Classroom Management



When They're at the Floor

- **Decide on a Way to Get the Students' Attention**
 - "3, 2, 1. Talking's done."
 - "Writers, turn back please."
- **Thinking of an idea**
 - Have kids point to their heads as they're thinking. When they have an idea, they put their hands in their laps.
 - Have kids give you a thumbs-up on their knee when they are finished thinking



When They're at Their Seats

- Use music during the transition from the floor to their desks. Be firm that they should be on task when the music comes to an end.
- Reinforce not interrupting during conferences
- Decide on a good noise level for your classroom while the students are writing
- Establish partnerships rules during independent writing

- **Decide on a Way to Get the Students' Attention**
 - “Magic Five” (“Give Me Five”)
 - “Stop, look, and listen”.... “Okay!”
 - “And a hush fell over the crowd...” “Hushshshsh.....”
 - Rainstick
 - “2nd Graders...”
- Ⓢ Management is not lecturing; it’s teaching kids to manage themselves

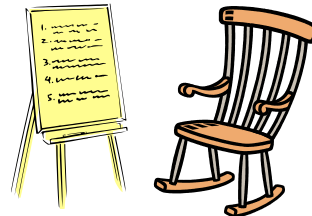
Other Things to Know About Beginning Your Workshop



Use clear and consistent language

- “Today I want to teach you....”
- “Turn and talk”
- “So today and everyday when you...”
- “How’s it going? What is your writing work today?”
- Ⓢ Your teaching point needs to always be a strategy. You can be sure of this by planning out the teaching point exactly the way you want to say it and writing it on the board in your meeting area before the children arrive for the day.
- Ⓢ Don’t give in to providing a topic; they will become dependent (including oral storytelling)
- Ⓢ Throughout the day when things happen, point out to the kids: “What a story!”

Minilessons



Minilesson Structure

- Connection 1 minute
- Teach 4-5 minutes
- Active Involvement 3-4 minutes
- Link 1 minute

Tips on Minilessons

- Be careful not to let your examples overwhelm your point.
- Whenever possible, it helps to make your minilesson concrete. Showing the book you are talking about or using hand gestures is helpful.
- Minilessons often get derailed at the end of the Active Involvement, after children have talked to or worked with their partners. Having children “report back” shouldn’t be the next step. Mention a couple of things you heard, and then move on to your link.

- It would be rare to read aloud a brand new text as part of a minilesson. It is asking a lot of the students to listen for “strong verbs” the first time they are hearing a text. Children deserve the chance to first listen as an appreciative reader.
- Keep your vocabulary consistent.
- It often helps to role-play exaggerated versions of what not to do.
- Don’t try to fix every writing problem as it comes. Give your students a chance to mature as writers. When constructing minilessons, address what is necessary and important for the majority of your writers. Remember that specific student needs can be met in conferences and strategy lessons.

Adapted from *The Nuts and Bolts of Teaching Writing* by Lucy Calkins

Conferring



Conference Structure

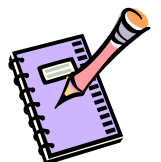
- Research
 - Observe and listen to student
 - Just find out what you need to know to teach the strategy
- Compliment
- Teach
 - Pick one teaching point and put it in the form of a strategy
 - You can begin your teaching point by saying, “Good writers....” Keeping this stem consistent will make the students aware of when they need to pay special attention.
- Link
 - Rename the strategy and remind the student to do this often by saying something like: “So anytime you’re writing remember that (skill and strategy).”

Tips on Compliments

- React as a reader
- Name the strategy the child used that is transferable
- Use clear and consistent language
- Say and point to the exact place where the child used the strategy
- Make the compliment in the edge of proximal development
- See students work in fresh new ways; allow yourself to see something other than what you just taught.

Tips on Conference Note-taking

- Have notes!
- Have a system of recording your conferences that is quick and easy. You don’t want to waste time between conferences trying to write a lot down. It should take you a maximum of 30 seconds per child.
- Your notes need to be portable. Keep prior weeks notes with you so you can refer to them.



Management that Makes One-to-One Conferencing Possible

- It works well to move among the children, conferring with them at their work places, dotting around the room with our presence
- Conferencing with 5-6 children a day allows us to work with at least one child from every section of the room
- We can make our presence matter more if, when talking with one child, we encourage nearby children to listen in. However, we deliberately ignore these listeners, looking intently into the face of the one child.
- We teach children that when we confer, we don't expect other children to interrupt the conference. Another child can come close and listen in, but he/she must wait until we have finished conferring to ask a question.
- Limit the length of each conference to 5 minutes.
- When children come to us hoping for solutions to problems they could have resolved on their own, we are wiser to take the time to put ourselves out of this job. Ask the child, "What do *you* think?" "So why don't you do that—and next time, I think you could solve a problem like this on your own."
- Pull together a small group of writers who might benefit from the same sort of help. Small group strategy lessons lasts for 10 minutes.
- Remember that strategy lessons should not always take the place of individual conferences. All writers benefit from one-on-one attention. Marking your conference notes with an "SL" beside those that have had a strategy lesson that week can help assure that those children get a one-to-one conference the next week.
- If a child is always zeroing in on your conferences instead of working, hold him/her accountable for those teaching points as well.
- Be determined. Don't say, "I try to confer with each child every week." Make it a priority, and make it happen.



Adapted from *The Nuts and Bolts of Teaching Writing* by Lucy Calkins

- Ⓢ Hold the kids accountable for what you've taught
 - At the beginning of a conference, remind the student of the last strategy you taught, and ask how it's going
- Ⓢ No magic happens in a conference until the child speaks. Push yourself to ask open-ended questions.

Small Moments



Teaching and Modeling

- Write and model stories to which children can relate. Be sure to include stories that express:
 - Humor
 - Sadness
 - Embarrassment
 - Anger
 - Loneliness
 - Fear

- You have to teach your students to write a focused story before you teach them a crafted one
- Make a list of struggles and turn them into teaching points:
 - Form a strategy by thinking, “What do *I* do when I do this type of writing?” Then make it sound official (“Good writers.....”)

The Writing Process

- Planning (Telling the Story Across Your Fingers, Partner Work)
- Drafting
- Revising (working with the words)
- Editing (conventions)
- Publishing (Cover, *About the Author* page, *Dedication* page)

Writing Stories

- Stories need to be written as if it’s happening again (not summarized)
- If you can’t tell your story on three (K-1)/five (1-2) fingers, you are too close or too far from the moment

Qualities of Good Writing

- Clarity
- Focus
- Elaborations
- Show, don’t tell
- Stretch the moment
- Conventions

Problems to Look Out for in Writing

- Kids writing about a movie
- Stories that cast into the future (they haven’t happened yet)
- Writing about something they weren’t present for
- Fictional stories



Five Crucial Things

- Your students need to be independent spellers
- Your students need to write every day
- Your students need to develop a sense of story
- Make sure your students can generate their own topics
- Make the writing in your classroom purposeful (and convey this well)



How Writer’s Get Ideas

- They think back over their day
- They look at what they are wearing
- They spark a memory by
 - Looking around their world
 - Hearing sounds, words, or songs
 - Smelling a scent
 - Touching a texture





Add More Details!

- Character thinking
- Character action
- Dialogue
- Setting
- Sensory detail



- ⊗ Involve students in building stamina
 - On the second day of *Small Moments*, you might say, “Writers, yesterday you wrote for 12 minutes without stopping! Let’s see if you can write for 14 minutes today!” Increasing your workshop in small increments will help keep your management strong and the students on task.
- ⊗ Your low writers can still be good partners.
- ⊗ Some students are not as “struggling” as we think they are; they just lack focus

Charts

- ⊗ Be careful not to fool yourself into thinking that writing something on a chart suffices as a way to make your teaching memorable. Writing on the chart can be a way to *record* your teaching, but it can’t substitute for teaching.
- ⊗ A chart that lists five strategies should be a record of a week or more of teaching, not one day.
- ⊗ The charts should consist of strategies, not skills
- ⊗ Displayed charts should reflect current teaching



What Writers Do When They *Think* They’re Done

- Reread their piece
- Add words
- Fix confusing parts
- Start a new piece



Five-Finger Plan

- Tell it across your fingers
- Tell it across your fingers again
- Sketch
- Outside story
- Inside story



Purposeful Writing

Share

- Ⓢ The Share portion of the workshop is not an “Author’s Chair”; it’s a time to teach or demonstrate something specific
- Ⓢ The Share should not be skipped. It is an important tool in bringing value to student work.

Some Share Suggestions

- Students (or you) can read excerpts of their writing which demonstrate a particular strategy or quality of good work
 - Students can talk to a partner about how the writing work is going or about the strategies they’ve used to accomplish a particular goal
 - Students can meet with a partner to plan tomorrow’s writing work
 - You can share a successful conference that would benefit all writers
 - You can highlight partners that worked well together and teach the other students how they can do that same work
 - You can address management issues
- Ⓢ If you choose to highlight a student, be sure to ask that student’s permission ahead of time.

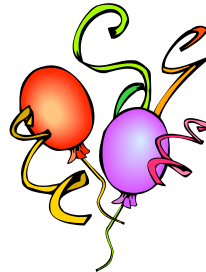
Celebrations

- Ⓢ Each unit should conclude with a celebration
- Ⓢ Celebration dates should be well-planned, purposeful, and feel celebratory
- Ⓢ Set celebration dates and stick to them

Ways to Celebrate

Students Could:

- Read it aloud to the class
- Send it to someone special
- Hang it up at school
- Send it to a magazine or newspaper
- Tape record or videotape them reading it
- Make copies and give them away (Students should sign each copy)
- Buddy read their pieces
- Go to a nursing home to read the pieces
- Have visiting writers from an upper grade class
- Invite one special school friend (principal, custodian, media specialist, sibling, friend) to hear the readings
- Have a genre celebration
- Make a class book of the pieces and add it to the classroom library



- Invent ways to share with the school community (i.e., post poems around the school)
- Celebrate writing from the beginning of the year alongside new writing (a writing museum)
- Attach the pieces to balloons and ask for the finder to send a response
- The teacher could make a slide show of the writing process throughout the unit