



## Provincial Outreach Program for the Early Years

# We Are All Writers! Building K–3 Students' Identity as Growing Writers

Friday, October 20th

12:30–2:30 pm

Presenters:  
Jen Kelly & Calico Clark

POPEY 

# Workshop Goals & Objectives

- evidence-based evidence-based instructional practices, strategies, and routines to support young writers in building their writing identity, confidence, and skillset
- developing writing for authentic purposes and audiences within classroom communities

# What does writing look like in Kindergarten?

Kindergarten – Create & Communicate (writing, speaking, representing)

Using oral, written, visual, and digital texts, students are expected **individually** and **collaboratively** to be able to...



- Exchange ideas and perspectives to gain understanding
- Use language to identify, create, & share ideas, feelings, opinions & preferences
- Create stories and other texts to deepen awareness of self, family, & community
- Plan and create stories and other texts for different purposes and audiences
  - ★ This involves **experimenting with print and storytelling**; supporting **communication**, including through stories and the use of **manipulatives** such as puppets, storyboards, digital tools and toys

# What does writing look like in Kindergarten?

## Kindergarten – Comprehend & Connect (reading, listening, viewing)

Using oral, written, visual, and digital texts, students are expected **individually** and **collaboratively** to be able to...

- Use sources of information and prior knowledge to make meaning
- Use developmentally appropriate reading, listening, viewing strategies to make meaning
- Explore foundational concepts of print, oral, and visual texts
- Engage actively as listeners, viewers, and readers, as appropriate, to develop understanding of self, identity, community
- Recognize the importance of story in personal, family, and community identity
- Use personal experience/knowledge to connect to stories/other texts to make meaning
- Recognize the structure of story



# What does writing look like in Grade 1?

## Grade 1 – Writing Stories

Creating imaginative writing and representations, often modelled on those they have read, heard, or viewed...

- *listening to or reading stories and then discussing them: events, characters, setting, problems, solutions, word banks to describe characters, recording beginning–middle–end, retelling/dramatizing stories*
- *brainstorming, retelling, and writing familiar stories*

# Writing in Grade 2

## Personal writing

- writing that expresses connections to personal experiences, ideas, likes, and dislikes *e.g., writing about family*

## Writing to communicate ideas and information

- informational writing and representations about non-complex topics and procedures *e.g., writing about Canadian animals*

## Literary writing

- creating imaginative writing and representations, sometimes based on models they have read, heard, or viewed  
*e.g., reading stories and then discussing story structure and characters; writing shared, guided, and independent stories; listening to stories/fairy tales and practicing writing stories using the same story structure or characters*

# Writing in Grade 3

## Personal writing

- a variety of clear personal writing and representations that express connections to personal experiences, ideas, and opinions  
*e.g., journal writing about a field trip*

## Writing to communicate ideas and information

- a variety of clear, easy-to-follow informational writing and representations  
*e.g., books, reports, articles, letters that explain to/share with an audience*

## Literary writing

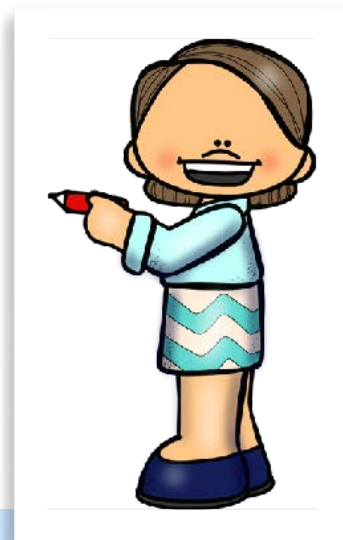
- creating a **variety** of imaginative writing and representations following **patterns modelled from literature**  
*e.g., writing stories on a variety of topics, discussing/developing criteria to help them shape/edit their stories; studying animals in the environment and then writing animal stories*



# What We Know About Writing Development

## Kids need:

- explicit and sequenced instruction that helps them progress along a learning continuum
- critical feedback that helps them know next steps
- extensive opportunities to write on topics they care about





# What Topics Do You Care About?

Kids need **extensive opportunities** to write on topics they care about

Think of some of **your favourite topics** and the people, activities, places, things you do in your regular day-to-day life:

- \* Hobbies & activities (*yoga, birdwatching, baking, hiking, photography...*)
- \* Sports
- \* Places you like to go
- \* People you spend time with – family and friends
- \* Music, movies, books...

Can you come up with a list of **3–5 things** from your life that you would be **KEEN** to write about?

Please share in the Chat box...

# Nurturing and Supporting Young Writers

- \* Writing must be a predictable, daily ROUTINE
- \* Children need to see themselves as writers, each with a unique IDENTITY
- \* Writing is a process of DECISION-MAKING and ACTION
- \* Writers need a disposition for RISK-TAKING
- \* Writers need a sense of MOMENTUM to know they are growing
- \* Writers work with a sense of CRAFT guiding them, and they learn craft from MENTORS
- \* Teachers must ACT AS IF children are capable, competent writers

*Holding these beliefs about writing will help shape our plans, actions, and responses as we support and guide young writers.*

## *Learning Through Language, Learning About Language*

- ▶ Is developmentally appropriate. *Brings a sense of PLAY to making.*
- ▶ Encourages children to do bigger work and develop stamina for writing.
- ▶ Causes children to live like writers
- ▶ Makes the 'reading like writers' connection so clear.
- ▶ Helps children begin to understand the process of composition and decision-making.
- ▶ Helps children begin to understand genre, purpose & audience.

beliefs guide actions

# Book Making

1. **TIME** – conversations, demonstrations, students writing, sharing their process
2. **SPACE** – deciding **where** they can do their best work as a writer is a decision the children can **own**
3. **BLANK BOOKS** – **lines** set an **expectation** for print that makes some children think “I don’t know how to do that, so I **can’t**.”
4. **WRITING TOOLS** – Students **choose** from separate tubs for crayons, coloured pencils, and markers; bins for blank, pre-stapled books; ABC charts
5. **AN IMAGE OF BOOKMAKING** – students know what books look like; that **PEOPLE** make books; a finished book is the result of someone’s work to make that book – taking **action** from **ideas**

Bottom Line: If children aren't TRYING to write,  
they aren't LEARNING to write.

# Book Making

## 1. TIME

- \* 10–20 minutes – WRITERS' MEETING (whole class)

The teacher leads conversations, demonstrations, and inquiries connected to a unit of study.

- \* 30–40 minutes – INDEPENDENT WORK

The children make books.

- \* 5–10 minutes – SHARE & REFLECTION (whole class)

Writers tell stories of process.

Extend the time for independent work a little each day

# Ellin Keene: True Engagement

## The Four Pillars:

How we experience true engagement

Intellectual  
urgency -

"I have to  
know more."

Emotional  
resonance -

"I'm into  
this with all  
my heart  
and mind."

Perspective  
bending -

"Other learners  
affect my  
thinking...and I  
can affect  
theirs."

The aesthetic  
world -

"This is so cool.  
I feel like it  
was made for  
me."

# Engagement

There is a difference between engagement and compliance. Our goal is engagement.

- \* Talk about yourself as an engaged writer.
- \* Help students identify how to engage an audience.
- \* Teach students how to choose an engaging genre.

If we value something, we talk about it with our students.

Our enthusiasm for writing is contagious. Spread it to your students and see them flourish.



# Teaching with Mentor Texts

## What is a mentor text?

A well-crafted text that you show students to help them see how they can better craft their writing and use conventions.

- \* Creative people in all fields have mentors.
- \* Students learn reading and writing are interconnected.
- \* Mentor texts help you teach writing descriptively, instead of prescriptively.
- \* Mentor texts help students teach themselves about writing.

The 'how' is the craft of writing.

What are you doing as a writer to make your writing better?

# Teaching with Mentor Texts

## Immersion Phase:

2–4 days at the beginning of the unit we will study our stack of mentor texts.

- \* Students get to know the stack of texts (just enough)
- \* Teachers can use the mentor texts in mini lessons without having to read them again (time saving!)
- \* Students become better at reading like a writer over time.

Immersion allows students to get better at noticing what author's do and trying it out.

You may need to start with modelling noticing during immersion.

# Teaching with Mentor Texts

## Structure for Immersion Phase:

Having immersion days will make teaching much clearer and much easier.

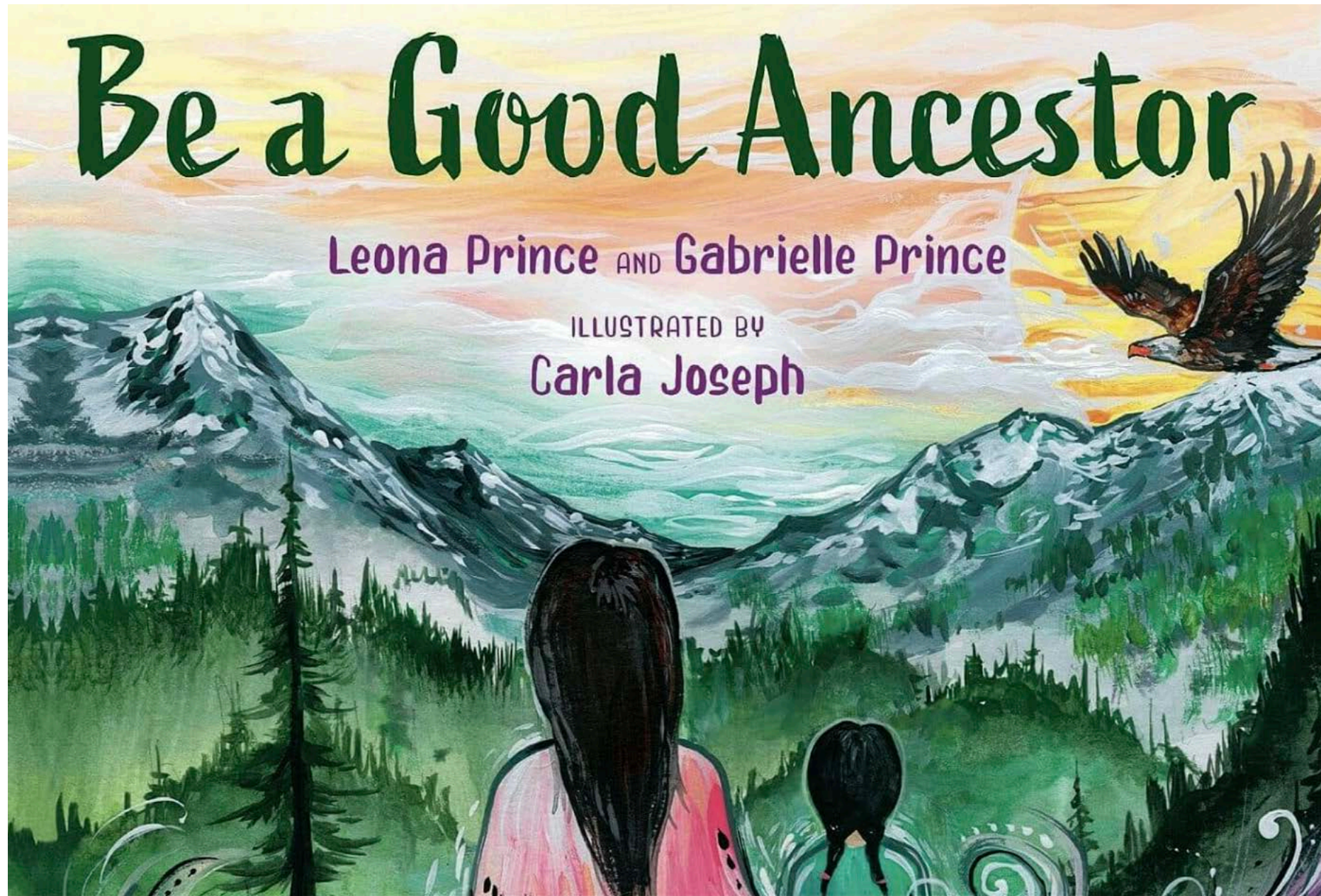
- \* First read through all the texts for enjoyment and sense of story.
- \* Do 'noticing' as a whole group, then put them into partners to notice.
- \* Model how you, the teacher, will add to your writing based on what you are noticing.

Taking the time at the beginning of each unit will save you time in the long run!

Inquiry approach to writing – what are we noticing about this text?



*Reading Like a Writer - What do you notice?*





## Strengths of the writer

What do you notice about this student's writing?

What can this student do?

What would be his  
next small nudge?  
What would you  
teach in a  
conference?



The only way we can find out what is the next small step is if we can find out what he can do on his own.

# Writers' Workshop



“ Writing workshop is a place where children’s first writing will be celebrated in all its glorious approximation”

Lisa Cleaveland

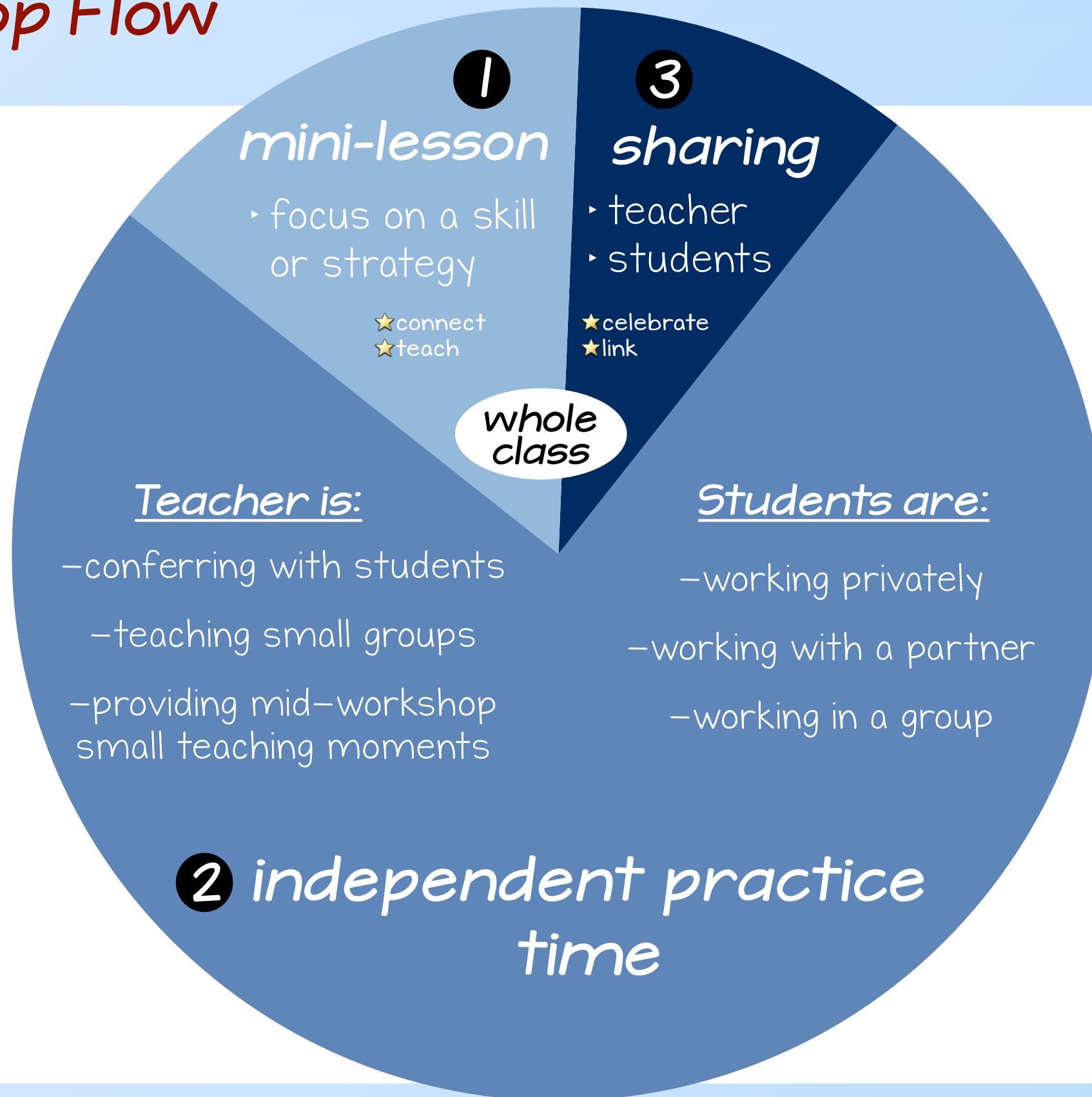
# Goals for Launching Your Writers' Workshop

- ★ Build a **safe** writing community
- ★ Establish **rituals** and **routines**
- ★ Generate lots of **thinking, talk and writing**
- ★ Develop the **understanding** that all good writing has **meaning, detail, structure and pacing**

You and your students **first** enjoy and respond to literature **as readers** and then later come back to the familiar text **as writers** in Writing Workshop mini-lessons.



# Workshop Flow



## Connection

- connect the context of the day's teaching with the work the class has been doing
- name the teaching point for the lesson
- about 1 minute

## Teach

- crystallize what you plan to teach in this mini-lesson - today's goal & steps to reach it
- *provide concrete instruction to demonstrate today's skill or strategy*
- 2-3 minutes

## Active Engagement

- "Now you try it" - and provide students with a little bit of guided practice (scaffolded learning)
- everyone has a go, working with a partner or small group, while the teacher listens and coaches
- 2-3 minutes

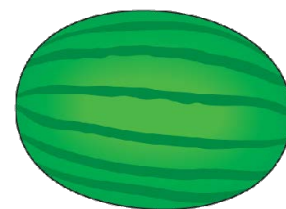
## Link

- re-state the teaching point - connect it to not just today, but every day
- they go and do their own work - working independently & collaboratively with their partners
- about 1 minute

# Writing About Our Lives - Small Moments

- think about some of the true stories that you could write about:
  - ▶ a story about my life
  - ▶ a story about school
  - ▶ a story about my family
  - ▶ a story about my vacation

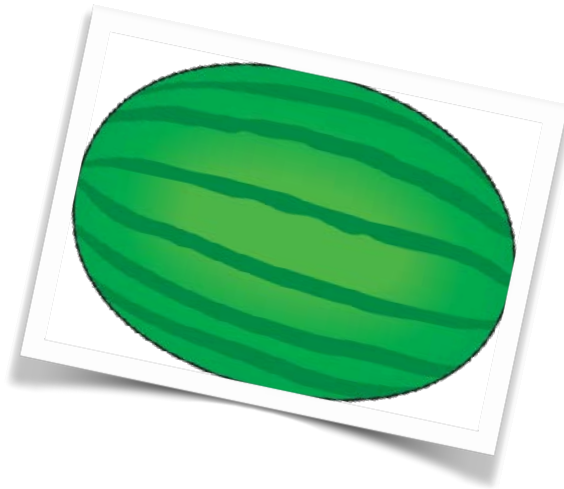
- those are BIG STORIES – as big as a



- when you pick a topic to write about – stop & think –

does it feel like I'm carrying a watermelon?

# Writing About Our Lives - Small Moments



- the good news is that inside a big watermelon topic, there are a TON of tiny seed stories that we can write about



- Here's an example of a personal seed story...

# *A Small Moments Cat Story*

## **The Pix and the Mouse**

One morning I let my cat named Pix outside. He was waiting at the door to be let in. I didn't notice that he had a live mouse in his mouth when he came in. I screamed and Pix dropped the mouse. The mouse ran around the house. I finally got him outside.

# *A Small Moments Cat Story*

## **Pix and the Mouse**

One sunny morning before I started work, I let Pix outside to get some fresh air. When he came back inside, I didn't notice that he had a squiggly, scared mouse in his mouth. I was so surprised that I screamed and that caused Pix to drop the mouse and run upstairs. The mouse started to run around the house. I grabbed the broom and dustpan. The mouse ran behind the oven and I finally had him cornered. I carefully scooped him up and put him outside.

# *A Small Moments Cat Story*

## **Pix and the mouse**

“Eeek,” I screamed when Pix, the cat, came inside the house with a squiggly mouse in his mouth. I had let him out that morning and I guess he thought he would bring in a new ‘toy’ to play with in the house. I shouted, “Pix, what are you doing?” I guess I scared him with my shouting, so he dropped the mouse and scampered upstairs. I started running after the mouse, clop, clop, clop. Finally, I had him cornered behind the oven. He looked so small and scared, I felt a little sorry for him. I carefully scooped him up into a dustpan and ran outside. Whew, what an exciting way to start the day!



# Zooming in on Small Moment Stories

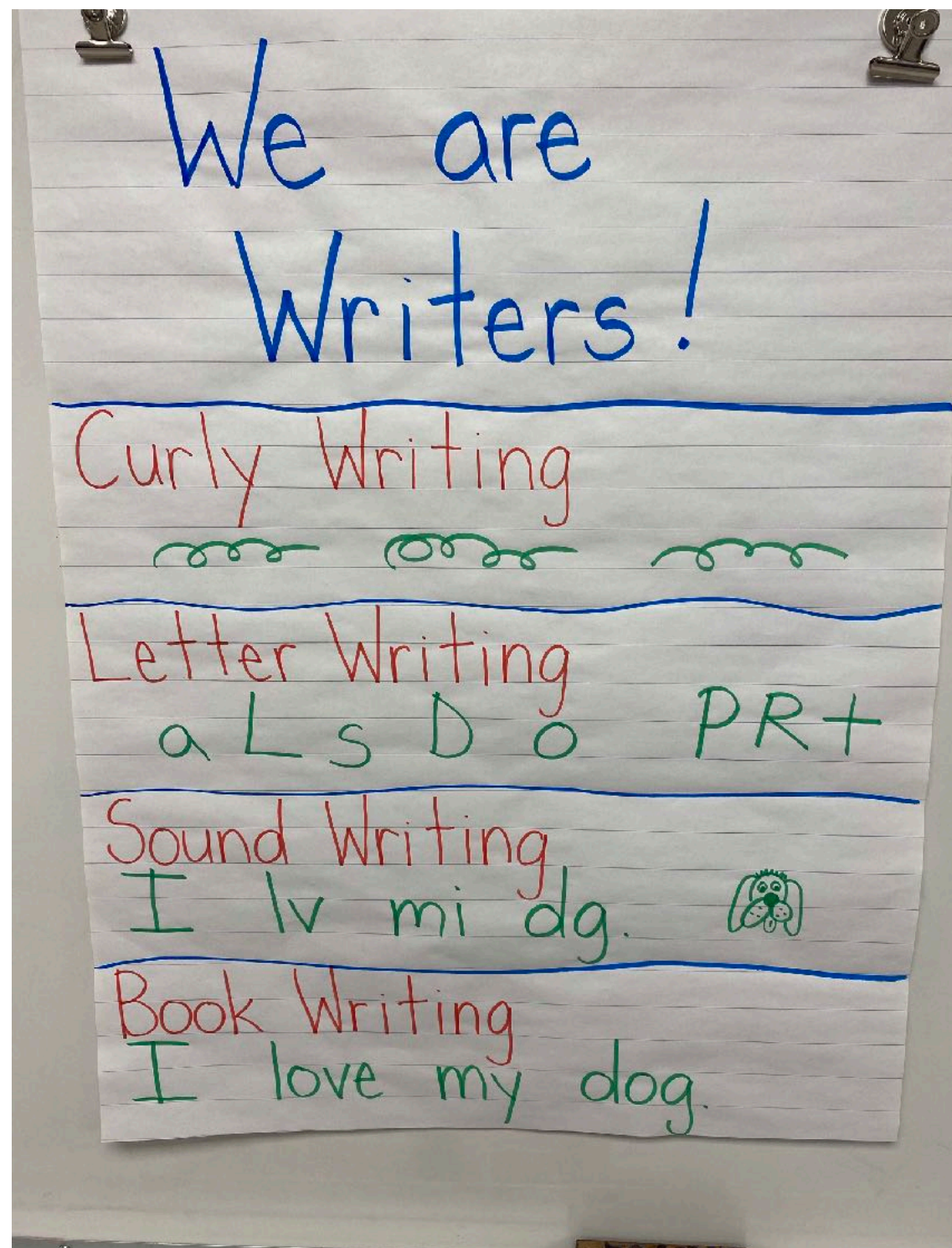
- think about our big  topic – *My Cats*
- make your own  story that came out of our big  topic
- list out different seeds – or ideas – for your story  
... count out each idea across your fingers 
- write out one of your seed ideas – to make a short story



Separates the **formulating** of sentences from  
the difficult task of **writing** sentences

Please share in the Chat box...

# Continuum of Writing Development



# Honouring Approximations

Looks like:

Taking a child's writing and seeing all they CAN do, not what they CAN'T

Looks like:

Believing that young kids are writers and NOT doing their writing for them

Looks like:

Adults feeling comfortable with children's approximations so that children also feel comfortable





## Creating Purpose

Connect Writing Workshop to other familiar times in the day and their purpose.

- \* Center time = explore & play
- \* Recess = outside to play, run
- \* Writing Workshop = make books



Some children don't believe they know how to write, and so the verb **MAKE** is more inclusive and inviting

## *In Your Classroom*

Big Idea... Writing workshop is a time every day when you make books

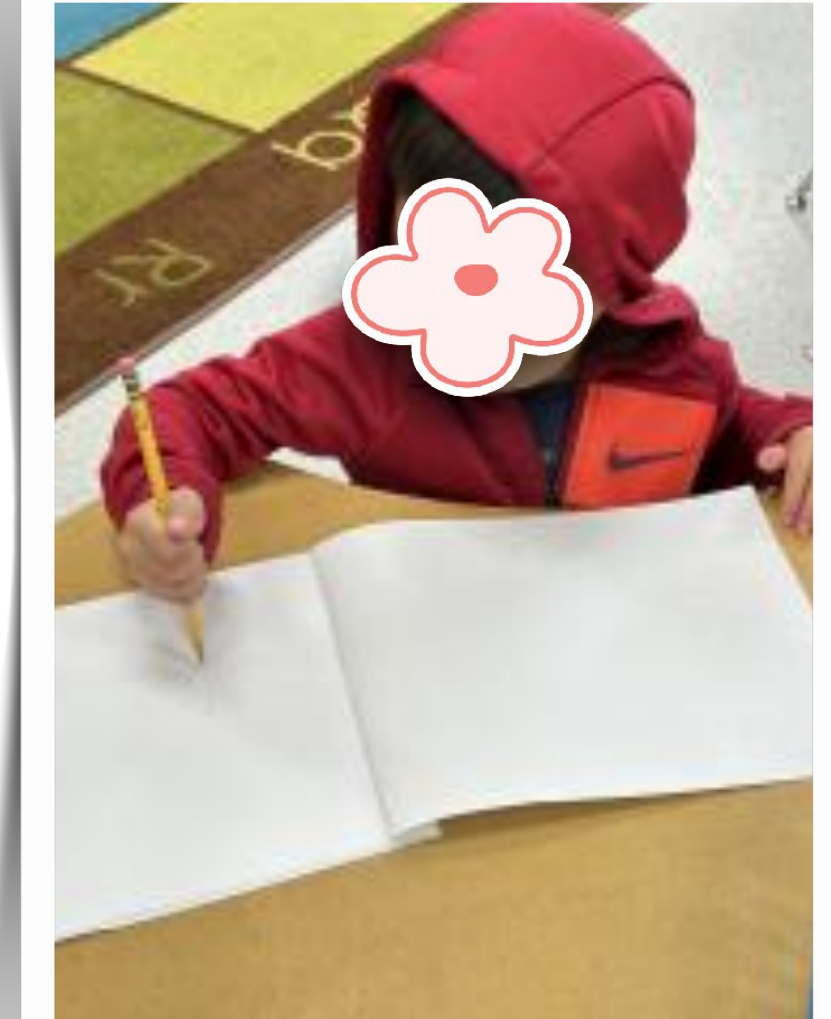
- \* Compare to other time of the day children already know (centers, lunch, recess)
- \* Show children a picture of someone who is an author and illustrator alongside a book that person has made (Eric Carle)
- \* Show children books made by other children. Read one!



## *In Your Classroom*

Big Idea... People make books by drawing the pictures and writing the words

- \* Show and talk about the tools you have available for making books
- \* Show children photographs of other children making books
- \* Use share time to talk about how children put words and pictures in their books



## In Your Classroom

### Big Idea... Making books is a process that happens over time

- \* Ask children questions about what they plan to do **next** in their books
- \* As a whole class or in pairs, invite children to think with each other about what else they might do in their books
- \* As you observe children at work, look for those who are “going back in” to their books and invite them to share





# Choice of Genre

## Increasing engagement through choice of genre.

- \* Ask students, “what is your favourite topic to write about?”
- \* Modelling ‘think aloud,’ explain your favourite topic to write about and all the different genres you can choose to write.



- a small moment story about my cat
- A poem about cats
- A labeled diagram of a cat
- A 'how to' book about taking care of cats
- An information book about cats

# Craft and Process Writing Units

## Craft Writing Teaching:

- ✓ Illustration Study
- ✓ Paragraph Decisions
- ✓ Punctuation
- ✓ Text Structures
- ✓ Author Study

## Process Writing Teaching:

- ✓ Launching Writers Workshop
- ✓ Reading Like a Writer
- ✓ Using Strategies to Find Topics
- ✓ Planning
- ✓ Peer Conferences
- ✓ Revision



# Sources

## Resource Books

Units of Study in Opinion, Information, and Narrative Writing – Calkins, The Reading and Writing Project

Engaging Children – Keene

How to Be a Better Writing Teacher workshop – Anderson & Glover

Craft and Process Studies – Glover

Nurturing Young Writers: Supporting Thinking in Children's Book Making and Oral Language Composition presentation – Glover workshop

A Teacher's Guide to Getting Started with Beginning Writers – Wood Ray & Cleaveland

Launching the Writing Workshop – Leograndis

*Mindsets and Moves* – Goldberg

*The Daily Five* – Boushey & Moser

Engaging Young Writers – Glover

## Videos & Online Resources

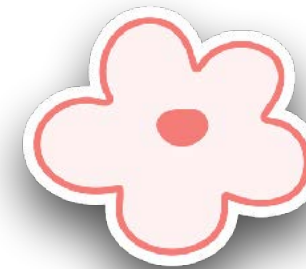
[BC Ministry of Education's Writing Performance Standards](#)

[Heinemann Online Resources for \*A Teacher's Guide to Getting Started with Beginning Writers\*](#)

[YouTube- World Teacher Day](#)



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