



Provincial Outreach
Program for the Early Years

Building a Successful Classroom: Proven Strategies for Primary Writing

Friday, May 10th

9:00 – 3:00

*Handouts available at – popey.ca/workshop-resources

Presenters:
Jen Kelly

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

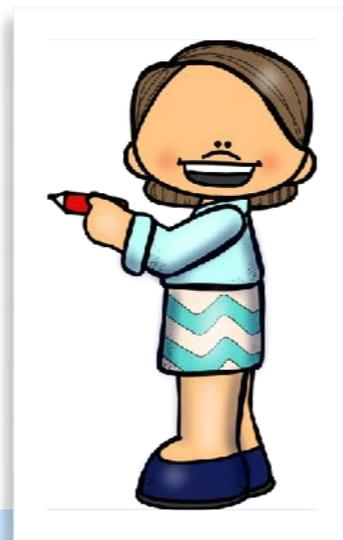
Literary writing

- 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 **1–2 things** from your life that you would be **KEEN** to write about?

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.

Craft and Process Writing Units

Craft Writing Teaching:

- ✓ Illustration Study
- ✓ Paragraph Decisions
- ✓ Punctuation
- ✓ Realistic Fiction
- ✓ Author Study

Process Writing Teaching:

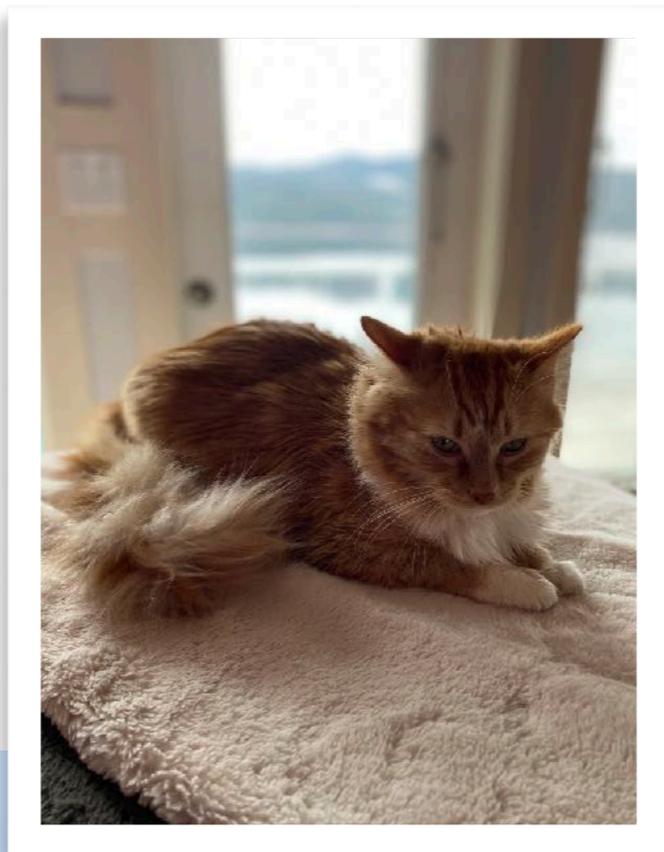
- ✓ Launching Writers Workshop
- ✓ Reading Like a Writer
- ✓ Using Strategies to Find Topics
- ✓ Planning
- ✓ Peer Conferences
- ✓ Revision



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

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:

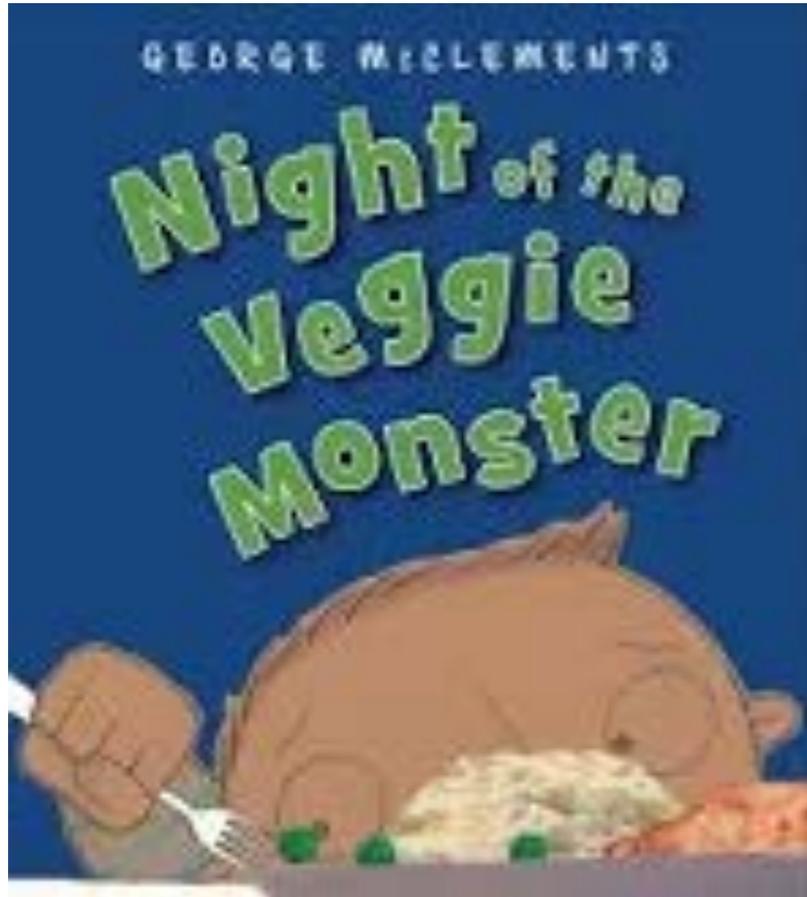
Having immersion days will make teaching much clearer and much easier.

- * 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?

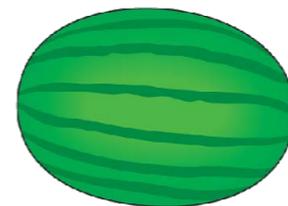
Reading Like a Writer - What do you notice?



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

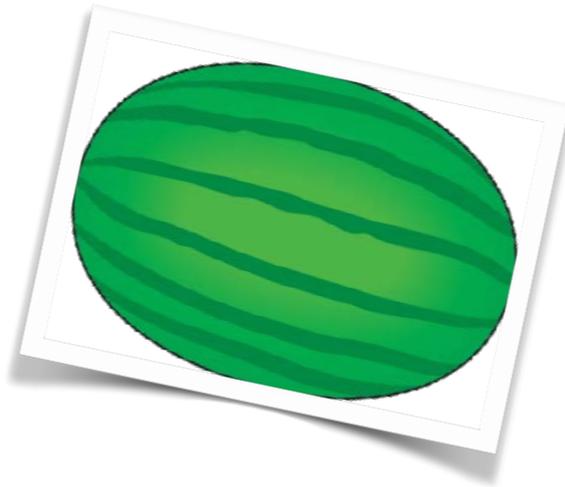
- those are BIG STORIES – as big as a



- 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

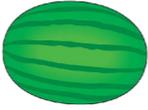
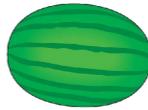
One sunny morning before I started work, I let Pix outside to get some fresh air. When he came back inside, I didn't notice that he had a squiggly, scared mouse in his mouth. I was so surprised that I screamed and that caused Pix to drop the mouse and run upstairs. The mouse started to run around the 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



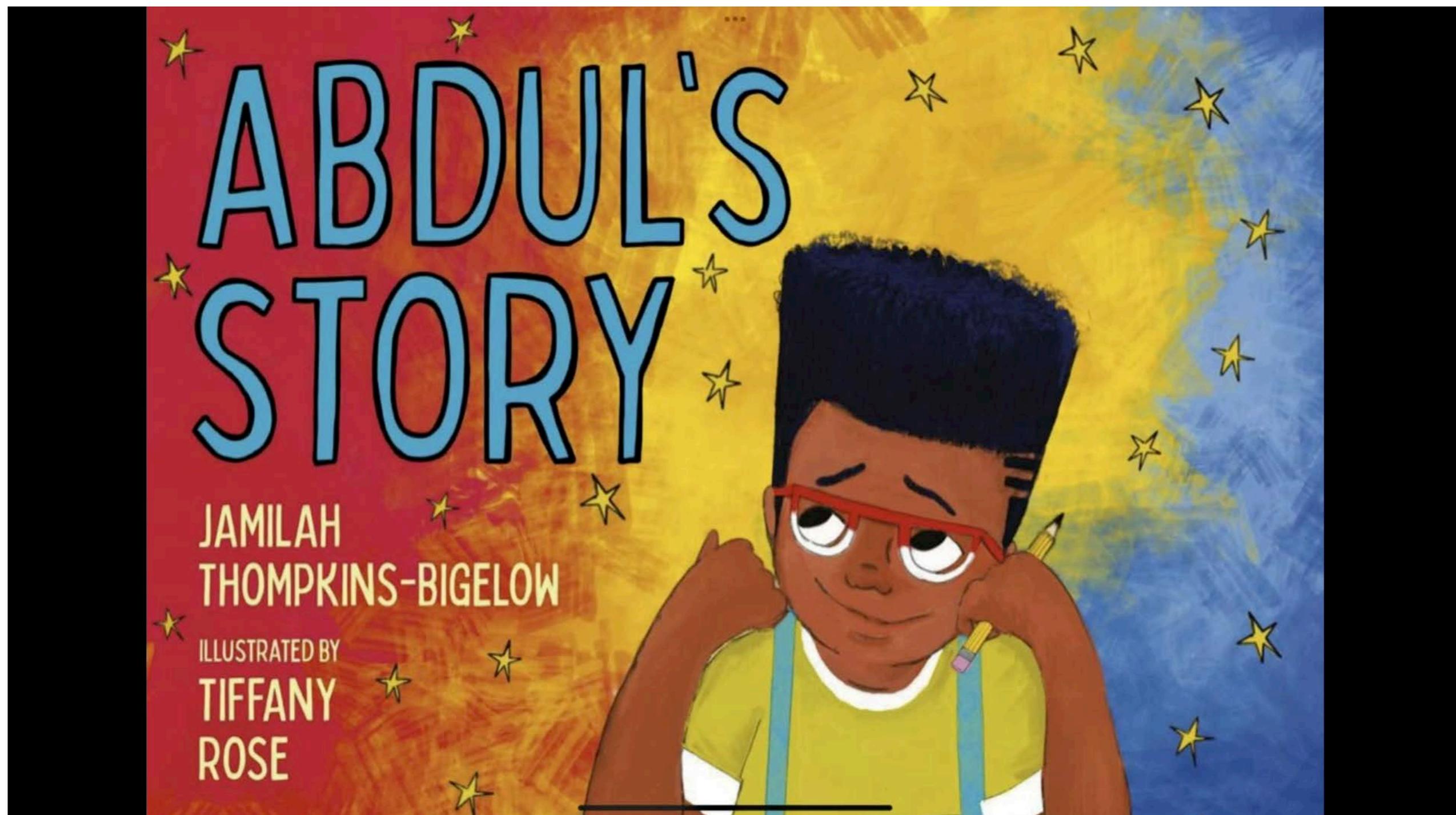
Separates the **formulating** of sentences from
the difficult task of **writing** sentences

Zooming in on Writer's Craft

- What do you notice?



Read Aloud



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?



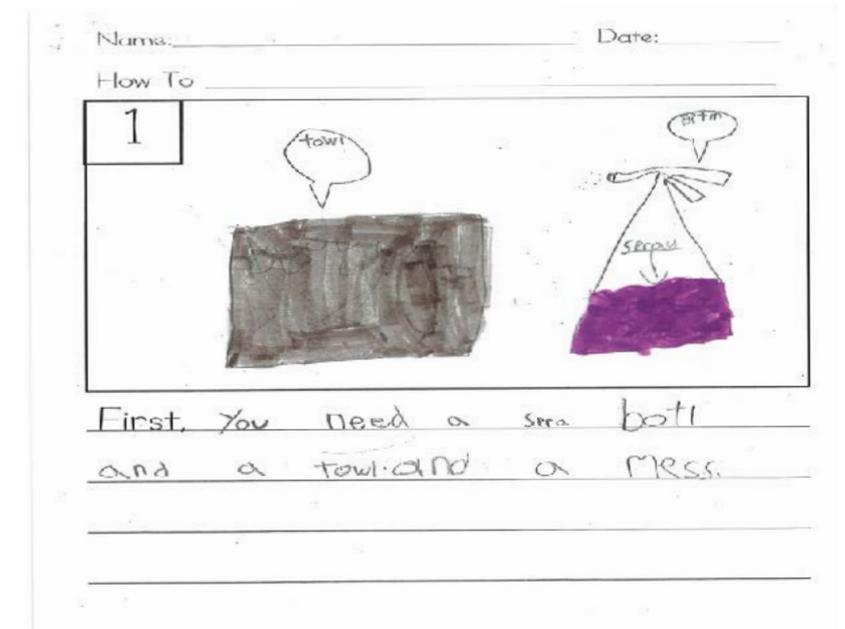
The only way we can find out what is the next small step is if
we can find out what he can do on his own.

Strengths of the writer

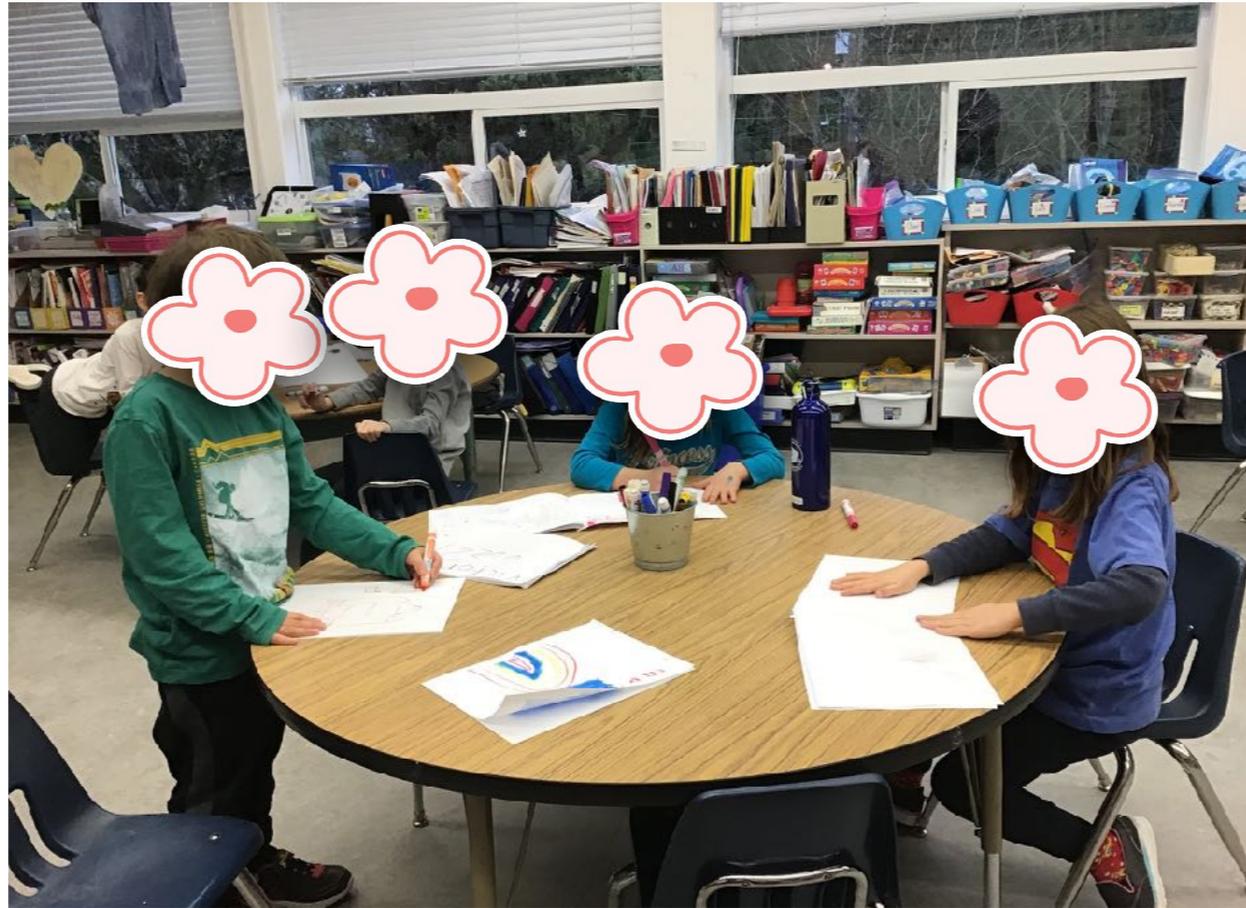
What do you notice about this student's writing?

What can this student do?

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



Writers' Workshop



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

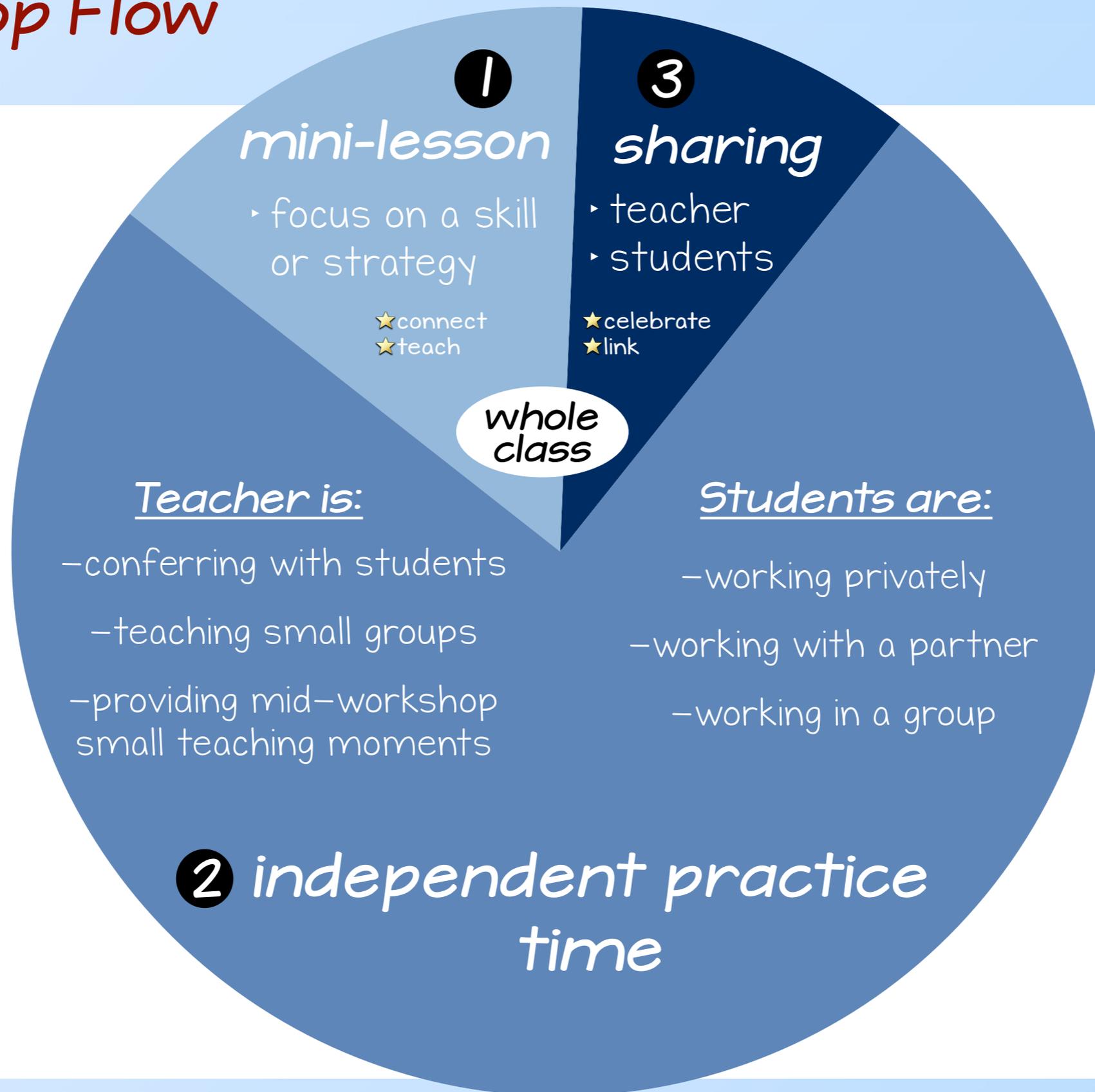
Lisa Cleaveland

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

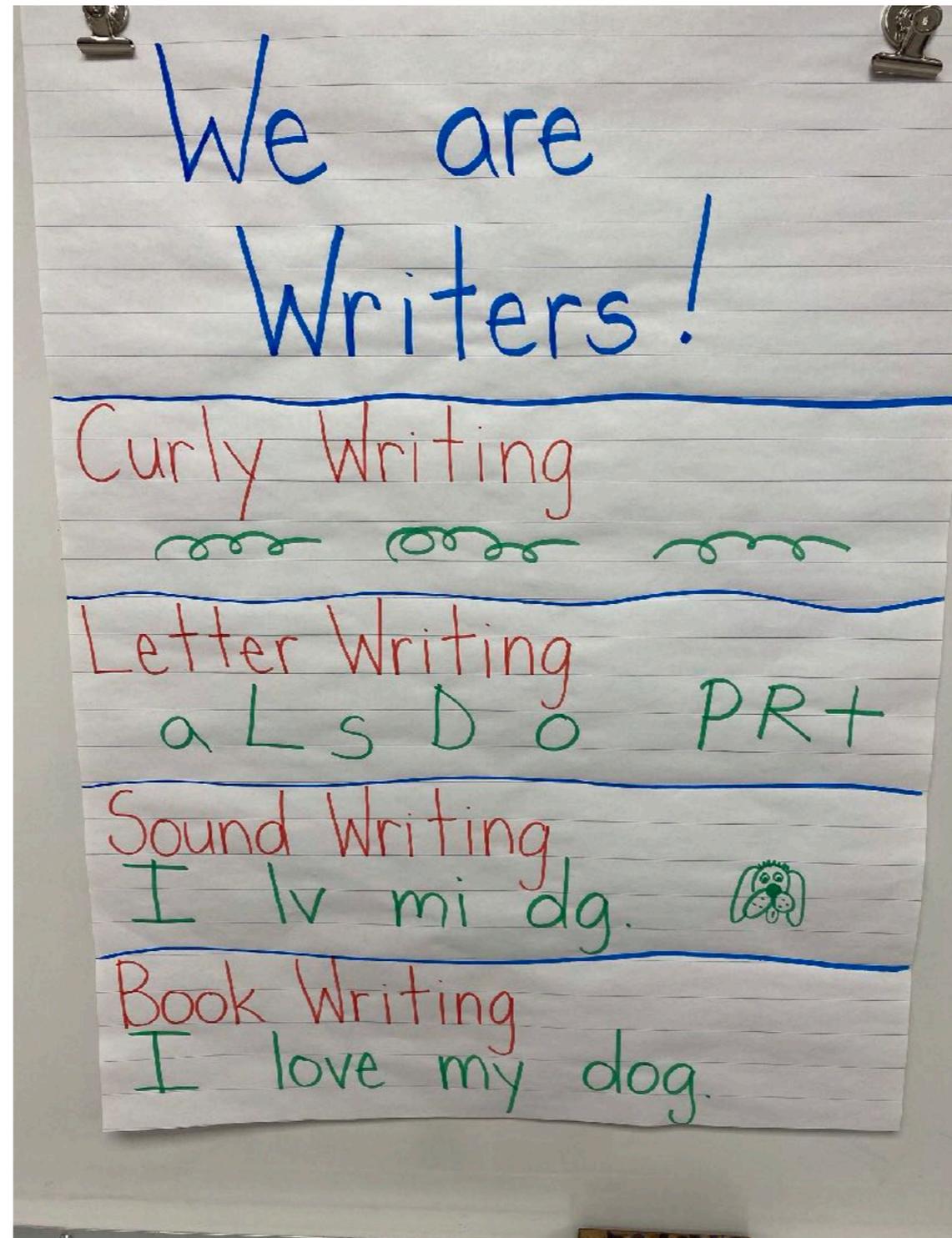
Active Engagement

- "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

Continuum of Writing Development



Honouring Approximations

Looks like:

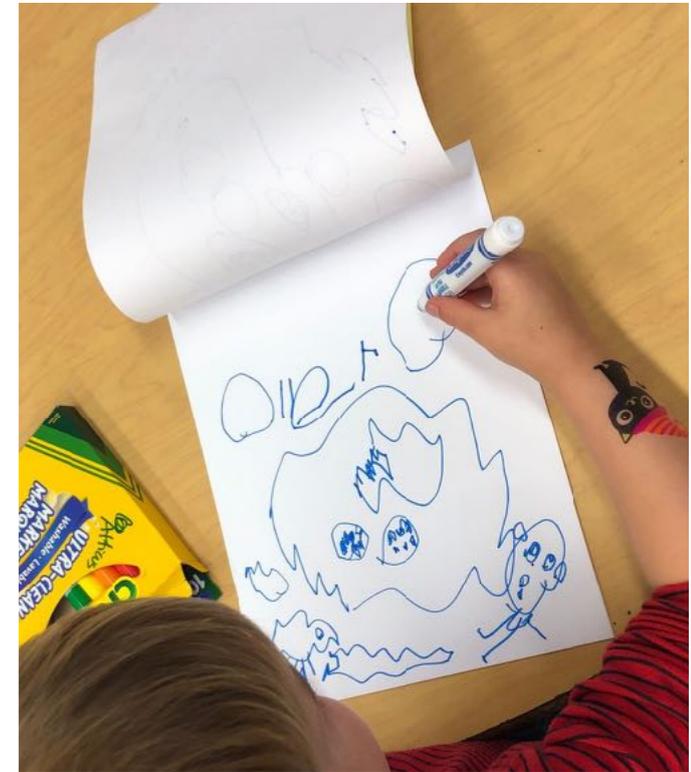
Taking a child's writing and seeing all they CAN do, not what they CAN'T

Looks like:

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

Looks like:

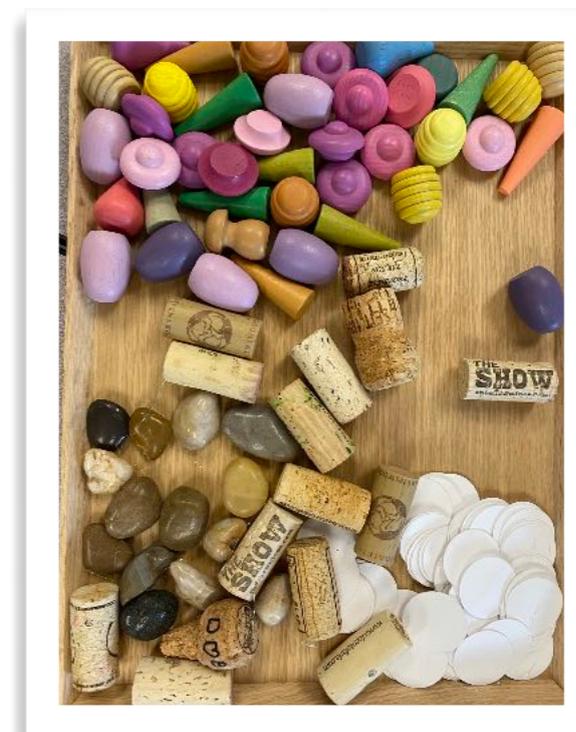
Adults feeling comfortable with children's approximations so that children also feel comfortable



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

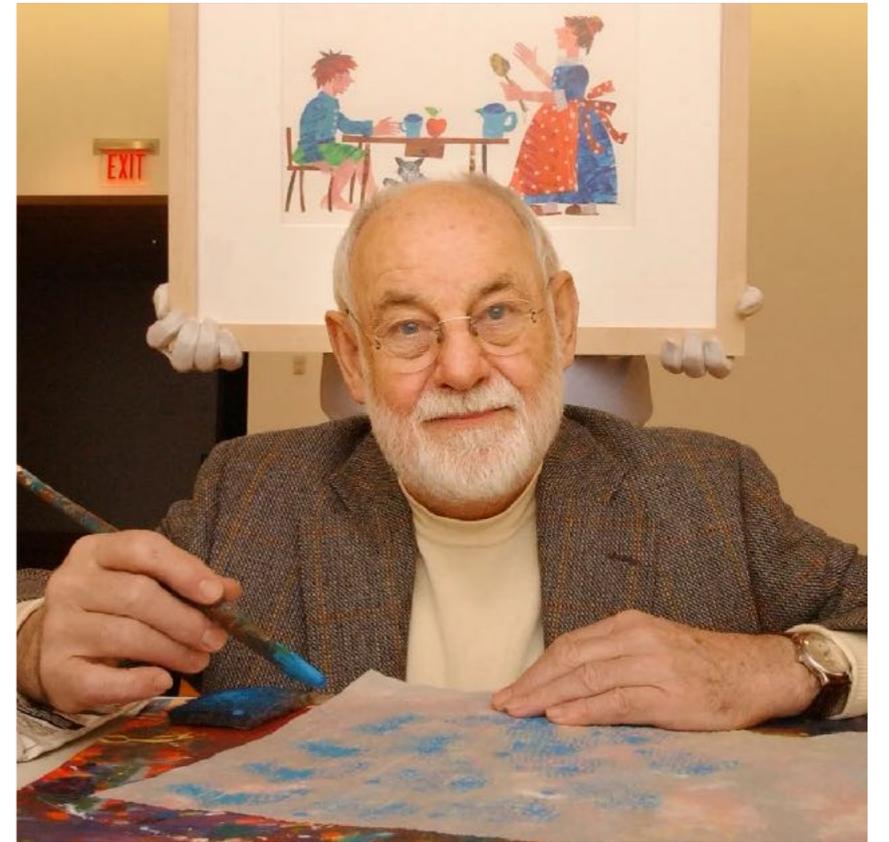


Some children don't believe they know how to write, and so the verb **MAKE** is more inclusive and inviting

In Your Classroom

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

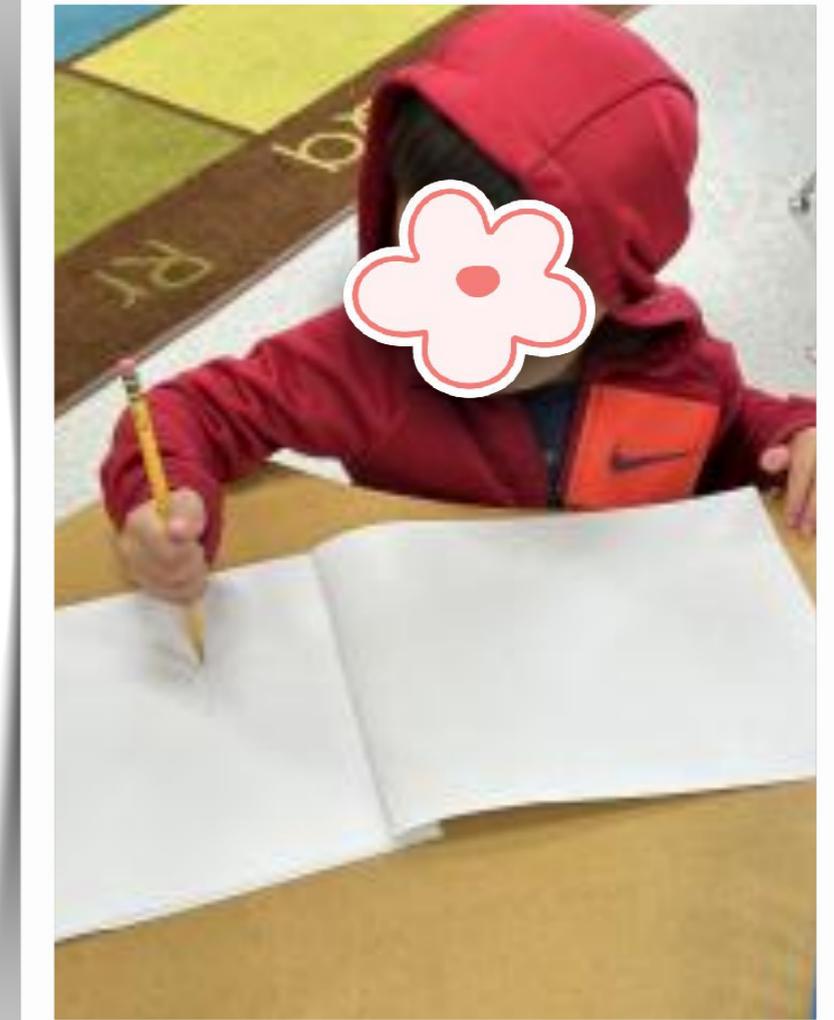
- * Compare to other time of the day children already know (centers, lunch, recess)
- * Show children a picture of someone who is an author and illustrator alongside a book that person has made (Eric Carle)
- * Show children books made by other children. Read one!



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



Writing With Children: Interactive Writing about Reading

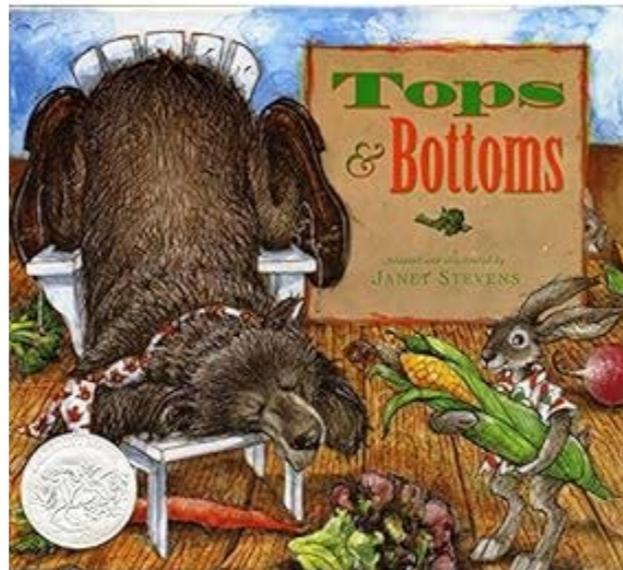
Interactive writing is dynamic and collaborative

- ★ students and educators *compose writing together*
- ★ *transitional tool* to move students *forward*
- ★ *find reasons to write* across the curriculum
- ★ *notice details* of the written language

Writing With Children: Interactive Writing about Reading

Interactive writing is dynamic and collaborative

- ★ students and educators **compose writing together**
- ★ **transitional tool** to move students **forward**
- ★ **find reasons to write** across the curriculum
- ★ **notice details** of the written language



Teaching Writing Supports Reading

1. Early writing helps children **crack the reading code**

Blending and segmenting

2. The **first words** children read are often what they write

Early writing builds reading **confidence**

3. Writing gives children a head start on **concepts of print**

4. Writing is a **brainpower** workout

5. Writing is a useful **assessment** of reading ability

Foundational Literacy Skills

Writing

Use pictures and words to show what I want to say

Stretch out words to hear the sounds

Place words next to each other (with spaces) to share a whole idea

Craft using fancy print, punctuation, and special words to make my words pop

Reading

Understand words and pictures show what the author is saying

Sound out the words, by thinking of the sounds that go with each other

Read each word, noticing how they come together to share a whole idea

Pay attention when a book uses fancy print, punctuation, or special words to notice author's craft

Comprehension Literacy Skills

Writing

Choose and develop
a topic

Show not tell

Elaborate through description,
quotes, list of facts

Craft for an audience and
reason

Reading

Find main idea(s)

Inference

Notice specific details

Identify author's craft and
Purpose

Write an Informational Text

What is something you know a lot about?
Write a 'how to' book.

Write an Informational Text

Write in sequence order steps/ Retell in order

Writing

Use your fingers to think of the order to tell your information

Write down what you thought
By using words like first, second, next, and finally

Reading

As you read, use your fingers to keep track of the order of the information

Retell what you read in order, using words like first, second, next, and finally and your fingers to keep track

Write an Informational Text

Go back to your 'how to' book and ask yourself,
what matters most to me about this
topic? What is really important?
Create a text feature for your text.

Describe to your table: what did you add and why

Write an Informational Text

Go back to your 'how to' book and ask yourself, is there information that distracts from the important parts? Add more information about the most important parts of your writing.

Describe to your table: what did you add and why

Write an Informational Text

Weight/Determining Importance

Writing

Write more about the parts
Of your topic that matter most
To you

Reading

Consider what is missing

Notice what takes up the most room

Writing and Reading Reciprocity

When writers are readers they...

- ★ Make direct connections between how reading and writing work together
- ★ Become more fluent in both
- ★ Notice craft moves designed to affect readers
- ★ Focus on what is included and not included
- ★ Know that they are authors and books are made by people
- ★ Are less likely to be manipulated

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

Writers Read Better: Strategies to Carbonate Reading and Writing Reciprocity
– Colleen Cruz POPEY Conference Presentation

Interactive Writing – McCarrier, Pinnell & Fountas

Videos & Online Resources

[Advancing Literacy](#)

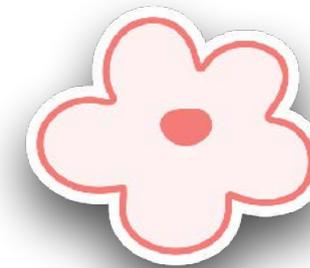
[BC Ministry of Education's Kindergarten ELA Curriculum](#)

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

[Five Reasons Why Writing Helps Early Reading](#)



Provincial Outreach Program for the Early Years



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