

Writer's Workshop



Process Over Product

Writing *instruction* in the form of a Writer's Workshop should be a whole class everyday occurrence.

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This is not the same as giving a writing *assignment*.

Developmental Writing Levels

- Lucy Calkins uses numbered levels to describe a child's developmental writing progression.
- Levels range from 1-8 for grades K-5
- Levels align with grade-specific writing standards and are broken down into 4 areas - Generating Ideas, Drafting, Revision, and Editing
- Developmental levels will vary within a grade level and will require developmentally appropriate expectations for each individual child

School-Wide Writing Assessment

- Administer personal narrative baseline writing assessment next week - ALL grades!
- Prompt - Write about a special day
- Materials needed: grade specific writing paper, pencils, privacy shields
- Brainstorm ideas whole class, post on chart paper
- Go over expectations- Write about ONE special day, sound out words you don't know, be sure to include a beginning, middle, and end and add details about your special day! (You can NOT help students with any part of it!)
- Scoring - Make 2 copies of each student's writing. Cut the name off the top of their papers. Number each student's writing. Score using the grade specific rubric. Bring all scored writing samples to PD on December 8.

Writer's Workshop

Starting writer's workshop is exciting for the whole class! Soon enough, many kids will express that their favorite part of the academic day is writing.

Writer's Workshop creates a space where students are encouraged to share their thoughts, feelings, opinions, and knowledge with others. Students soon begin to gain a deeper understanding of themselves as *real* writers.

Mini-Lesson

Writer's Workshop always begins with a whole group gathering. This element of the workshop is called "Mini-Lesson".

During the Mini-Lesson, teachers explicitly teach a targeted writing skill i.e. (finger space, checking spelling, adding details, etc.)

Often, the teacher will lead in a group writing with the help of the kids.

Remind students that they will not finish in one day because good writing takes time.

The Mini-Lesson should be no longer than 15 minutes. Remember, you're not trying to teach them everything about writing all in one lesson. Take it slow!

Conferences

After the Mini-Lesson, send students to whatever spaces you would like to write in (academic groupings, table seats, comfy place in the room)

No matter what seating is used, teachers must spend time meeting with one student or a small group of students for “conferences” during the free write period.

Conferences are a time where writers can build skills with the help of adults. Teachers will scaffold the writing behaviors they want the students to use. Student’s should be flying the plane, but teachers are there to be their caring copilot.

For example, if the student has drawn a picture and added one or two letters, encourage them to stretch the words out to get more letters. If a student is missing some details in their writing, ask them what more they could add. Ideally, kids are able to see what is missing from their writing on their own with the support of teachers.

During the Writing Time

While circulating around the room, occasionally stop and hold up a student's work as a motivator for everyone. The work can be from any student no matter the level of their writing. Make sure the student is comfortable with you showing off their work. You can also make it obvious that you are praising a positive writing habit without holding up work.

Describe what you see, "I notice . . ."

If a child has spent time on their drawings and they are very detailed, mention it!

If a child has added interesting vocabulary, show that off!

If a child has been working hard and staying on task, point out their efforts!

Reflection

Regroup everyone into the communal space.

Select one or two students to show off their work (using name sticks may help reduce jealousy and make sure everyone gets a chance eventually).

Emphasize the process you noticed taking place and ask the student to reflect on their process as well as something they could add to their piece. Eventually, the class will begin peer reflection and editing. These self-reflection skills will build their skills in giving and receiving meaningful feedback. These skills will also often function as reason to revisit a piece of writing.

Writing is about the process, *not* the product.

Our Mini-Lesson Schedule

1. Introducing Writer's Workshop
2. Mini-Lesson on Small Moment Stories
3. Writing (5 minutes)
4. Reflection
5. Questions