WRITING AND FICTION:
AN INSTRUCTOR’S HANDBOOK
FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF AN AFTERSCHOOL
WRITING WORKSHOP FOR 3RD TO 6TH GRADE STUDENTS

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WRITING AND FICTION:
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A Project

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Abstract

of

WRITING AND FICTION: AN INSTRUCTOR’S HANDBOOK FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF AN AFTERSCHOOL WRITING WORKSHOP FOR 3RD TO 6TH GRADE STUDENTS

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Tierra J. Runner

This project, a handbook, was designed to incorporate all current research in order to assist instructors in implementing a writing workshop during non-school hours for grades third through sixth. Once used, it is going to provide an opportunity for students to write outside the regular school day.

Along with time provided, the writing handbook explains strategies to implement that have been proven successful in other studies. This project will present a review of literature in support of the handbook that addresses:

- Today’s educational system.
- Fiction
- Writing Instruction and Instructional Strategies
The goal of the present research is to incorporate the use of effective writing strategies and fiction in a writing workshop in an afterschool setting.

________________________, Committee Chair
Nancy Cecil, Ed.D.
________________________
Date
DEDICATION

To my Son, Drake Stephen Runner, for giving me infinite joy.
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Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

This project, a handbook, was designed to incorporate all current research of writing instruction in order to assist instructors in implementing a writing workshop during non-school hours for grades third through sixth. The handbook is called *Writing and Fiction: An Instructor’s Handbook for the Implementation of an Afterschool Writing Workshop for 3rd To 6th Grade Students*. A shortened title, *Writing and Fiction*, will be used when referencing the handbook.

Purpose of the Project

*Writing and Fiction* can be used by a teacher, pre-service teacher and/or an active community member. Once used, it is going to provide an opportunity for students to write outside of the regular school day. It is not designed to be standards-based because the workshop is implemented as a separate system that focuses more on providing time to write as a process rather than focusing on the writing standards mandated in schools. There is a possibility that student will practice what has already been taught in a regular classrooms however, the standards are not used as the basis of the handbook’s design. It is designed for students to practice the skill of talking about their writing and improving their writing through the use of their conferences. The handbook will provide that extra time for writers to slow down and really care about their pieces. Once the time allotted for the lessons and writing time is over, students will feel proud of their work as their fictional narratives, or other genre of choice, get published.
Since the handbook promotes the writing process, students will be able to practice the skill of looking back at their writing and thinking more critically. Chapter 2 discusses how writing as a process translates to other genres as well as success in other subjects. Academic success can help standardized test scores (Higgins, Miller, & Wegmann, 2007) which is a focus in today’s educational school system.

Significance of the Study

Chapter 2 also discusses how teachers are not providing enough time for writing instruction. Some schools don’t have an adopted writing curriculum. Thus, here is a need for an opportunity for students to get writing time and instruction outside the normal school day. Studies were examined to discover which effective instructional strategies were to be included in the Writing and Fiction handbook. Using effective instructional strategies will benefit students and students’ writing.

Students will benefit from the writing opportunity afforded by the handbook. Students will improve their ability to write and grow accustomed to the writing process. Students will write more and think more critically, improving in the normal school day.

Methodology

Methodology is expressed in Chapter 3. Chapter 3 introduces the Writing and Fiction and discusses how the handbook was designed. Other considerations for the handbook are explained. Chapter 3 shows what was included in the handbook as well as how it was organized. Using this handbook in the manner in which it was intended will provide an opportunity for students to practice writing through the recursive
writing process in addition to what is practiced in the regular school day. Successful studies were examined to determine which instructional strategies were used. Those specific strategies were then brought together, if not already in other studies, as procedures to form the body of the handbook.

The handbook was designed to give students more time to write as a process. The workshop aided by the handbook is suggested to be 10 to 12 weeks long, each having a focus on either a component of fiction or a trait from the Six Trait Model (Abbott, Greenwood, & James, 2001). The handbook is comprised of an introduction, a section that explains the six main strategies suggested, lesson plan structure and methods, ten lesson plans, and master templates corresponding with the appropriate lesson. Each lesson includes a connection between lessons, objective, introduction, inspirational thoughts, prewriting, writing, conferencing, revising, and notes to the instructor. The lessons were each designed to be about a week long.

The lesson plans guide a recursive writing environment. Students will be expected to look at other works of authors for examples and inspiration. Also, students are to have dialogue with their teachers about their own works. Students are expected to go back to their work and continue to apply past learned concepts to new ones and make it all work together, Writing and Fiction gives the time necessary for writers to slow down and really embrace the process of writing.
Limitations

Similar to other designed projects, *Writing and Fiction* can have limitations. Its success is dependent on several factors: implementation, resources, and community. A well-designed handbook must have an instructor who will properly carry out the strategies suggested by the handbook. The handbook suggests strategies that would expect the facility where the writing workshop takes place to have the appropriate resources. Also, the community will play a major role in the success of the handbook. The degree in which the workshop is valued and supported will be a factor in the success of the handbook.

Implementation is essential in carrying out the suggested strategies contained in the handbook. Although the handbook is designed for a teacher, pre-service teacher and/or community member, it is assumed that the instructor will have the ability to maintain a healthy professional writing environment. That includes behavior management skills. The ability of the instructor was assumed when *Writing and Fiction* was designed. The instructor must be an advocate for the procedures designed in the handbook and know how to facilitate those procedures with his or her group of students.

Resources vary among school sites. The handbook suggests resources that may be available in some sites and not others. For example, the use of computers during the writing process was suggested only to those schools that had a computer for every writer in the writing workshop program. It also assumes some resources will be available in all school sites. However, some schools are more limited than the
handbook assumes. The handbook promotes studying other works from other authors which means that the facility in which the handbook is being implemented would have to have literature available to the writers afterschool. Not all sites would have or provide access to that type of resource.

Community will also be a factor in the handbook’s success. Community includes the students, parents, school facility, administrators, and so forth. Students need to be willing to use time, conferencing, and other pieces of literature to improve their own piece of writing. It is assumed that the instructor will insure a diligent working environment. Also, the handbook assumes parent support because without the parents, student may not value the workshop experience. The school’s facility makes a difference as well. Students and instructors need to have access to literature, computers for composing and/or publishing, accessibility to the workshop after school, etc. The administrators can promote the workshop by handing out flyers, providing incentives, providing an opportunity for students to publish their work.

The handbook’s assumptions and hopes for implementation contribute to the success of the handbook itself. Without a proper instructor, appropriate resources, and community support, Writing and Fiction is limited. The handbook depends on these factors because without them, the handbook would just sit on a shelf. Students wouldn’t be discovering their writing triumphs through a writing process.
Definition of Terms

The following terms are defined here for the purposes of project clarification:

*Expository text*: A text written with fact(s) for the purpose of informing or describing.

*Narrative text*: A text that tells a story with a beginning, middle, and an end.

*Process oriented approach*: an approach that encourages writers to change and discover their meaning as they go because they don’t have to produce a perfect product immediately (Reeves, 1997).

*Word processor*: a computer program that allows one to type a composition.

Organization of Project

This project is organized into four chapters with appendices. Chapter 1 is the introduction which includes: purpose of the project, significance of the study, methodology, limitations, definition of terms, organization of the project, and the background of the researcher.

Chapter 2 is the review of literature. One focus of chapter two is today’s educational system in terms of curriculum and standardized tests; and teacher output and perceptions. It also looks at the components of fiction as well as instructional strategies and procedures for writing. The instructional strategies and procedures include: using literature, the writing process, assessment tools, and methods with the six trait model, conferencing, and publishing.

Chapter 3 describes the handbook. It discusses how the handbook was designed, other considerations, and strategies suggested.
Chapter 4 contains reflections on the creation of the handbook. It is organized into three parts: summary, conclusions, and implications.

The Appendices, which makes up the handbook itself, includes an introduction, instructional strategies and procedures, lesson plans, and master templates.

A list of references is last and lists the references used.

Background of Researcher

As a child, the author always wanted to write a book. Writing didn’t have to be a profession; however, she fantasized about her story’s characters and plot. The author was always a creative idea maker. At the approximate age of 10, she began to write about a galaxy far away in the universe that was governed by an evil ruler that segregated people of class and punished those that defied his irrational law. Imagine trying to write a concept such as this at the age of ten. The author didn’t have the developed skills as a writer. Furthermore, she was easily discouraged when the writing process began to be meticulous. The author never wrote that book. She grew older, her ideas multiplying, without an outlet of writing to expel them and share with others. The author intends to write that novel; however, wouldn’t it have been empowering to be able to start or finish that novel at the age she wanted so badly to write?

Perhaps the lack of writing skills deterred her from a profession of writing; however, the author knew she was going to pick a career that made a difference in the lives of others. She chose to be a teacher. College was the best thing for her. The author grasped basic to advanced concepts that she couldn’t when she was younger.
All the grammar, editing, and other writing skills necessary for polished writing was being taught to the author to the depth she needed it. The author, as well as other pre-service teachers, were given access to research that encouraged proper instruction including writing instruction. With knowledge of proper instruction, she plans to continue to be a classroom teacher.
Chapter 2

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Many children are not getting ample time to write in a typical classroom. With today’s focus on state standards and test scores (Higgins et al., 2007), reading and math instruction often dominate the school day (Bassett, Devine, Perry, & Rueth, 2001). Thus, there isn’t much time left in the day for a rich learning experience in writing. When essential writing skills and attitude toward writing are not developed, students struggle in writing as well as other subjects (Higgins et al.). Students can obtain writing skills and a healthy writing attitude by being given more time to write. According to Bassett et al., “If our students are going to have the chance to do their best and then to make their best better, they need the luxury of time” (p. 53). How can students have more time to write within an educational system that devotes most of its day to only reading and math? An avenue outside the guidelines of school, such as a writing workshop may be a solution.

Research has shown that writing workshops increase student writing achievement (Abbott et al., 2001; Rigolino & Freel, 2007; Thomas, 1992). Research also demonstrates the power of creative writing through the use of fiction (Beene, 1995; Glenn, 2007). Furthermore, there is research that supports the use of specific writing instructional strategies (Abbott et al.; Bassett et al., 2001; Black, 1989; Dix, 2006; Glenn; Higgins et al., 2007; Minot, 1989; Moxley, 1989; Reeves, 1997; Rigolino & Freel, 2007; Stemper, 2002; Thomas; Watts, 2009; Westervelt, 1998). This project, a handbook, was designed to incorporate all current research in order to assist
instructors in implementing a writing workshop during non-school hours for grades third through sixth.

The use of an afterschool workshop was supported through research from various studies. One study by Reeves (1997) justified a writing workshop with a practice-like atmosphere emphasizing the fact that writing is a process. In this study, traditional lecturing and grading weren’t used. Rigolino and Freel’s study (2007) uses their Writing Workshop (SWW) program as a supplemental system on top of the regular school system. Having a separate system in addition to the regular educational system was inspiration for the handbook. The SWW program is an example of an “intensive” model that provides students with extra time and individual tutoring added to the coursework already established (Rigolino & Freel, 2007). The handbook suggests extra time and one-on-one assistance in addition to the regular school day partly because of the successful outcome of the SWW program.

Along with time provided outside the school day, the proposed writing handbook explains strategies to implement that have been proven successful in other studies. This chapter will present a review of literature in support of the handbook that addresses:

- Today’s educational system
- Fiction
- Writing Instruction and Instructional Strategies

The goal of the present research is to incorporate the use of effective writing strategies and fiction in a writing workshop in an afterschool setting. Fiction is used
because research (Beene, 1995; Glenn, 2007) supported its use and the author
designed a handbook that fits personal philosophies and interests which includes
fiction. The information given in chapter two was synthesized in order to design a
Fiction Writing Workshop handbook that a teacher, pre-service teacher, and/or an
active community member can use to administer a writing workshop program after
school. A workshop afterschool may help given the present educational school system.

The Impact of Today’s Educational System on Writing Instruction

The concerns regarding the current educational system and where it stands in
regards to writing instruction have been addressed in the research such of Bassett et al.
(2001); Higgins et al. (2007); and Zacharias (2007). This section justifies the use of a
handbook for the implementation of a writing workshop on top of the regular school
day. Many schools do not have a formal writing curriculum and yet students are
expected to take a Standardized Test that assesses writing skills (Bassett et al.; Higgins
et al.). As a result, there has been a change in the amount of time teachers give for
writing instruction as well as opportunities for students to write.

Curriculum and Standardized Tests

Curriculum drives instruction in schools today. Writing curriculum drives
writing instruction, but “without a formal program that builds throughout the years in
school, the students are starting over again each year with a new process to
conceptualize” (Bassett et al., 2001, p. 15). Bassett et al. questioned if adopted district-
wide writing programs were being used at all. Among the teachers being studied, there
was confusion, even among the teachers, as to if they had an adopted writing
curriculum. According to Bassett et al., writing curriculum is one of many subjects brushed aside to make room for subjects such as reading and math. If districts, schools, and/or administrators are inadequately supporting proper writing instruction, then a change, perhaps, in the way teachers teach writing is evident.

Additionally, teachers have been focusing on standardized tests (Higgins et al., 2007). According to Higgins et al., “there are draw-backs to this shift in focus and to the prevalence of these tests” (p. 1). High-stakes standardized testing can greatly influence the teaching of reading and writing (Higgins et al.). Due to time constraints, some teachers teach the writing concept a few weeks before the standardized writing test is given so at least students are familiar with what is being tested; however, there isn’t any time provided for continual practice of writing in the classroom. “Given the present climate of accountability, most schools see no alternative other than to work toward meeting the states’ standards and legislative mandates” (Higgins et al., p. 7). As a result, both practice in writing and the joy it can engender are compromised. Indeed, according to Bassett et al. (2001), “it is important that teachers and parents both work to maintain the creative and joyful expression that is writing” (p. 61). A writing workshop can be used to encourage students to find the joy in writing using the skills that can be applied to many tasks in the classroom and on standardized tests because most teachers are not finding time in the school day to provide proper writing instruction.
Teachers’ Output and Perceptions

In Bassett et al.’s study (2001), teachers were asked: “How much time is devoted to the teaching of writing,” and “Do you find it difficult to find time because of the demands of the curriculum?” Forty-seven percent of teachers being studied stated that they spend two hours or less teaching writing per week (Basset et al.). Additionally, Bassett et al. noted 67% of teachers struggle finding time to teach writing due to the demands of the curriculum. Teachers have very little time to devote the time necessary for every subject. Without altering the “ever-changing” educational system, students can be given an additional opportunity to practice writing after school with the handbook proposed.

Writing has always been considered one of the important skills contributing to students’ language learning (Zacharias, 2007). This is particularly so because in almost every subject, there is a writing demand of some kind starting in the elementary grades and more so in higher education levels (Zacharias). According to Rigolino and Freel (2007), the SWW program model “accelerated the progress of our basic writing students toward their Bachelor’s degrees” which implies that success in writing influences success in other subjects (p. 57). According to Bassett et al. (2001), teachers claimed that creativity suffered when looking at students’ writing. Research has shown writing workshops increase student achievement (Cline, 2004). This, alone, provides rationale for a creative writing workshop. The writing workshop supported by the handbook will provide additional time outside the school day for students to
practice writing which will improve their writing skills and their motivation to write through fiction.

Fiction

For the purposes of the proposed afterschool writing workshop handbook, one genre is used as a basis for focus: fiction. The use of fiction for writing instruction has been supported in research (Beene, 1995; Glenn, 2007). Although fiction guides the lessons in the handbook for a writing workshop after school, the handbook also suggests that instructors encourage students to write in whatever mode they choose as long as it fits the criteria of the writing process (refer to writing process section of this chapter). The lessons are simply a place to start. Beene stated adamantly that “teachers of writing know writing is writing (its processes, products, or a balance of both) teachers use whatever the student is using” (p. 9). To insure that students experience success, a particular literary form should not be prescribed, ultimately (Moxley 1989). According to Moxley, creativity takes many forms. Moxley added: “All writing carries the seeds of creativity. When our images and concepts develop, combine, and connect and take shape in the form of words, writers discover and construct their meaning” (p. 46). Even though a particular genre is not forced in the handbook, the handbook will be organized to guide student through writing fiction.

Furthermore, students of lower grades, more likely, are expected to write narrative pieces and to write more expository text as they age (see definition of narrative and expository text in Chapter 1). Glenn (2007) concluded that students gravitate toward the writing of fiction and often write more effectively in this mode
than any expository mode. Thus, it is more motivating for students to write narrative work in some cases; therefore, it is imperative that fiction be used in a workshop after school.

If a student writes fiction, that practice is bound to aid in the development of other genres (Beene, 1995). It “aids students new to academic discourse genres to get the ‘feel’ of writing persuasively, of tracking facts against assumptions, of assessing credibility, and of recognizing and responding to different contexts and imagined audiences” (Beene, p. 3). For example, a teacher can teach contemporary detective fiction to allow students to practice some important basics of writing. According to Beene, detective fiction can require tight plotting, abilities to spice text with puzzles and to let readers think they found the answers, ability to place the ordinary within the extraordinary circumstances, and establish and sustain a perspective. Any genre of writing can demand the use of critical thinking and observation from its writer (Beene). The writer must possess the skills needed to transfer thought to paper.

A student can use fiction as a starting point to encourage the type of writing needed in academic discourse (Beene, 1995). According to Glenn (2007), writing fiction encourages students to become better readers which is valued in today’s educational system. Glenn questioned how does the process of writing fiction effect reading skills and behaviors. It is argued that students that are able to write fiction actually improve their reading skills versus simply writing a literature response. “When we allow students to write fiction unrelated to a particular text, their commitment to and resulting understanding of texts may be enhanced and might serve
as an additional means to encourage student engagement and skill” (Glenn, p. 10).

Reading becomes a tool in which students learn to improve their writing and thus when students write, they become active readers which is important in an educational system.

Some Components of Fiction

Active reading focuses on the writing which “requires a close examination of literary techniques” (Minot, 1989, p. 107). Like most genres, Fiction has specific parts. The included parts are: planning/plotting, characterization, point of view, and dialogue. According to Bradley (1989), plotting is writing down adventures and figuring out what order they come in. “Take a character, start writing about the character, and let him or her generate the plot” because it is easier to plan ahead (Bradley, p. 130). Figure out what the character wants (Bradley). Have complications. According to Bradley, complications are what keep your hero from getting what he wants. And for point of view, a poor understanding and control of it will usually “result in a dull, poorly told story, no matter how interesting the characters, plot, language, or theme” (Ude, 1989, p. 149). According to Holinger (1989), fiction usually has characters speaking which requires dialogue. All parts of Fiction discussed above are included in planned lessons for direct instruction. The terminology and related concepts are discussed in conferences to improve specific pieces of works in progress. Along with the planned lessons with the genre focus at hand, a teacher should “create a feeling of comfort, confidence, or enthusiasm for the writing process” (Bassett et al., 2001, p. 35) to inspire and be inspired by writing.
Inspiration in Fiction Writing

Inspiration arose when Jauss (1989) discussed aesthetic prejudices representing his private absolutes in fiction writing. These private absolutes in fiction writing can be inspirational to the instructor as well as the student. They can be used as an additional tool to expose students to writing. The following are selected excerpts in list form from “Articles of Faith” (Jauss):

- Fiction is nothing more than gossip about imagined characters.
- It is a mistake to want to exile uncertainty from the writing process.
- Fiction revises and reconstitutes experience- can explain reality better than reality itself can.
- Writing is a higher form of reading.
- You will find it much easier to approach fiction writing as a process of discovering a story.
- Fiction should embody ideas, give them sensory form.
- All subjects are legitimate, and all can be fascinating, depending upon how they are approached.
- Good fiction derives much of its effect from careful omission
- Put your characters into a situation requiring action.
- Endings do not necessarily have to answer the obvious questions in the reader’s mind.
• The best stories “play chicken”- coming as close to crashing as possible but veering away at the last minute.

• Fiction writers should concentrate not on finding their own voices but finding their characters’ voices.

According to Jauss, the ideas stated above, although they sound like rules, represent his private absolutes. He stressed that it’s not necessary that his students share these ideals, but he asked for those students to consider them (Jauss). The author finds these aesthetic prejudices to be inspirational and they were taken in consideration as they provided the author inspiration for the design of the handbook.

Fiction may be the genre of choice for the designed handbook; however, essential instructional strategies are incorporated in its design. There are strategies that have been used in successful programs, studies, and/or action research. One strategy used in effective writing instruction is using literature as a tool for writing. It provides a model for fiction.

Using Literature

Literature written by other authors motivates students to improve their stories with the help of looking at other author’s work through a “writer’s eye” (Glenn, 2007) and also teaches them connections between their own writing and reading through authentic purpose. When real writers read, they have unique responses to the why, how, and what of the reading process because they are active readers (Minot, 1989). With respect to the why, these real writers approach reading with a clear focus and intention and are committed to reading beyond what is expected as a means to meet
their writing goals (Glenn). This model induces students to ask questions when they read based on the needs of their writing process. This study (Glenn) encourages the use of creative writing and is able to articulate the benefits of drawing from written narrative forms as a means to enhance reading skills among students.

Results have supported a conclusion that writing improved the reading habits of young authors (Glenn, 2007). According to Glenn, writing can make good readers and reading can improve writing by giving students models to emulate. In studies, the use of literature was largely used (Bassett et al., 2001; Glenn). Students were given the opportunity to study authors and their work. Literature was explored consistently and books were available for students to read. During data collection, questions were asked during the writing process that encouraged students to look at author’s style and other aspects of the author’s work through their reading (Glenn). Literature is used to help writers go through the writing process.

The Writing Process

An important question as it relates to the present study is how do students feel about writing as a process? Some studies have suggested, according to Bassett et al. (2001), that students preferred to share their work rather than make changes to improve the composition. However, Reeves (1997) insisted that students should be “encouraged to do several drafts giving them direction between drafts reinforce the principle that good writing takes time, effort, and patience” (p. 40). Thomas (1992) suggested that writing as a process with provided feedback influences success in writers. Writing is a process; it simply doesn’t happen overnight. However,
“[traditional] schooling primarily teaches students to sort information in multiple-choice, true-false tests, and short answer forms” (Moxley, 1989, p. 49). Perhaps, that is why students are uncomfortable with the sheer length of the recursive writing process.

The writing process is the process by which writers write (Thomas, 1992). The use of the writing process has been used in many effective writing programs (Abbott, et al, 2001; Bassett, et al, 2001; Dix, 2006; Moxley, 1989; Thomas, 1992; Westervelt, 1998). “Advocates of process writing look at how students write, what they do, say, write, and express as they move from conceiving an idea to the final product; and in many cases, never reaching a final product” (Thomas, p. 5). Students writing cannot be treated as completed products but rather emerging texts (Moxley). The SWW program, for example, “expected that administrators and other faculty would make a paradigm shift to a process-oriented approach” (Rigolino & Freel, 2007, p. 55) (see definition of process-orientated approach in Chapter 1). According to Abbott et al., the students’ responsibilities included prewriting, drafting, editing, peer conferencing, revision, and publishing in a writer’s workshop. Literature and Language Arts: First Course text (Beers & Odell, 2003) simplified the core steps from the recursive writing process.
Table 1

The Writing Process

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(Beers & Odell, 2003)
The writing process described above is designed to be recursive. This means, according to Beers and Odell (2003), the writing process is flexible; you can always go back to an earlier stage or even start all over again.

Westervelt (1998) observed students’ behaviors in relation to the Process-Oriented Approach. According to Westervelt, using the approach made a difference when taking their piece of writing through a process. They did not feel as though they had to commit to their words in the first draft (Westervelt). And “with our heightened understanding of the dynamic, recursive nature of composing, we can help students try new strategies when writing” (Moxley, 1989). Students appeared more relaxed because they were discovering knowledge rather than just presenting ideas (Westervelt). It was concluded that students who get to write as a process increase their enjoyment and eagerness to write, (Dix, 2006; Thomas, 1992).

Using the word processor to publish written work is one way to feel like a real author and increase the enjoyment and eagerness to write. The use of the word processor presented positive outcomes in students’ writing (Black, 1989). According to Bassett et al. (2001), “bringing technology into the writing process not only makes editing in writing easier for the young child, but also sparks enthusiasm” (p. 57, see Chapter 1 and Appendices). Some students made improvements in the use in grammar, adjectives, and adverbs toward the end of the program (Black). According to Black, assignments weren’t as overwhelming as they had first seemed.

With the use of technology and other strategies, as well as the use of the writing process, students had a chance to improve their writing skills and their
attitudes about writing (Abbott et al., 2001). According to Abbott et al., the data collected displayed a connection between research and practice and was accomplished by bridging the gap between low and high achieving writers. The results from using the strategies involved were positive. In a study of young writers and their revision practices (Dix, 2006) stated:

It demonstrates the richness of the teacher-student interactions around texts and in particular the cognitive decision making that children may use when composing their own texts. A study such as this shows young students as active participants, operating in more complex and thoughtful ways than is evident in research studies based on contrived tasks imposed, controlled and assessed from outside the learning classroom. (p. 10)

Because of the focus on the writing process, students became more advanced in terms of questioning during conferences (Thomas, 1992) (see Conferencing section of this chapter). Additionally, according to Thomas, they were now aware of audience and they were writing for a purpose.

Teachers can also experience the writing process with their students. According to Watts (2009), “teachers could experience the triumphs and trials faced by student writers—topic choice issues, revision concerns, and first person limitations” (p. 1). Teachers who write understand their students as writers (Watts). It is a way to connect to the students within the writing community. Watts supported a conclusion that teachers who write know how to provide powerful and effective writing instruction through the writing process.
Since students prefer to write using the process writing, if given the opportunity, they will write more often and develop their writing abilities through this practice. There are instructional strategies to assist them proposed within the writing process. However, there also needs to be a diagnostic tool for modifying instruction to guide writing and fit students’ writing needs (Abbott et al., 2001). Students need opportunities to talk about their writing with someone that provides effective feedback during the drafting and revision processes because “most students have inadequate skills in providing support and imagery, maintaining focus and clarity, and organizing their writing” (Thomas, 1992, p. 32). Even though a piece of writing can be considered a constant work in progress, students should have an outlet to publish or share their work. Particular assessment tools and methods, conferences and publishing are instructional strategies that are included in the writing process.

Assessment Tools and Methods

The Six Trait Model, an effective teaching strategy for assessment (Abbott et al., 2001; Higgins et al., 2007), was used as a method of guiding students through their written work recursively. The model includes components such as these: ideas and content, organization, voice, word choice, sentence fluency, and convention-- all of which can be used for improving fictional writing (Abbott et al.). Higgins et al. used Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory (2004, as cited in Higgins et al.) to display six key qualities that defines strong writing:
1. Ideas—The idea or purpose of the message is clearly conveyed with necessary information

2. Organization—The internal structure of the writing

3. Voice—The personal tone and style of the writer

4. Word Choice—Words the author chooses in order to get the meaning across

5. Sentence Fluency—the flow of the language

6. Conventions—Mechanical correctness (p. 3)

An Internet search of all 50 states’ standardized writing tests was conducted to see if Six Traits were indicated as a standard for each of the states’ tests (Higgins et al., 2007). “Traits used during the writing process should be able to meet the objectives of the state tests because the tests use the same criteria,” (Higgins et al.). It was concluded that having a workshop that includes the writing process and Six Traits will help students meet the standards as well as develop skills to become effective writers (Higgins et al.).

Assessment strategies and methods were used to guide students to alter their writing in a way that differentiated instruction for all students with different ability levels (Abbott et al., 2001). According to Abbott et al., teachers can use the Six Trait Model as a diagnostic/prescription tool for modifying instruction to fit students’ writing needs. Not only is the Six Traits good for preparing students for state standardized test, but other modes of writing within the writing workshop help students to focus and reflect on the processes involved in writing (Higgins et al.,
2007). The typical writing to the prompt test preparation that students receive in most classrooms focus on the product of their writing and provides students no instruction or direction in reflecting on the process involved (Higgins et al.). Therefore, the need for a writing workshop after school hours is justified.

**Conferencing**

According to Higgins et al. (2007), “Through Six Traits, assessment is integrated with the writing curriculum as a tool for revision” (p. 3). Also, conferencing is a beneficial way for students and teachers to provide feedback to a student’s writing progress (Stemper, 2002). Lessons using the six traits tailored to specific needs through conferencing and teacher observation (Abbott et al., 2001). The SWW Program model (from which the workshop handbook is inspired) included one-on-one tutoring “once a week to work individually with students on brainstorming or revision activities” (Rigolino & Freel, 2007, p. 56). Stemper demonstrated growth in writers even though the number of daily conferences was reduced due to other challenges such as behavior and interruptions in the daily schedule. Abbott et al. showed that the smaller student/teacher ratio (7:1) in the low group allowed more frequent one-to-one conferencing and instructional guidance. In the study done by Thomas (1992), mini conferences were held between teacher and student. Because of conferences, students felt more in charge of their writing.

Research has shown conferences with the teacher and with peers (Abbott et al., 2001; Bassett et al., 2001; Stemper, 2002; Thomas, 1992). Teachers themselves consider teacher feedback as the most important as well as students concluded in the
study (Zacharias, 2007) in which aimed to explore students attitudes toward teacher feedback. However, “Students are lacking many revising and editing skills and without proper instruction, mastering these skills is a challenging task,” (Stemper, p. 11). Conferences will not be beneficial if done incorrectly. Despite the declaration of importance by both teachers and students, there were difficulties among students according to Zacharias. They were as follows: the coding, feedback is too general, feedback on content is too difficult to follow, the use of complex language when giving feedback, and teacher feedback may contradict student ideas (Zacharias).

Some teachers may choose to edit a student’s written work for him or her. However, editing by the teacher reduces student ownership in their writing (Stemper, 2002). This may cause students to withdraw personal investment or simply not invest at all which prevents a level of growth within the author. Instructors need to teach students to be critical readers of their own writing (Moxley, 1989). Reeves (1997) explained that “through problem-posing and dialogue, students often see communicative effectiveness, voice, and sensitivity to a particular audience as ‘higher order concerns’ and sentence structure, punctuation, spelling, and usage as ‘lower order concerns” (p. 41).

Stemper (2002) explained that teachers have been concerned about student editing skills for several decades; however, they seem to impede the revising skills of their students by utilizing poor evaluation procedures, poor instructional practices, and by developing an inadequate classroom environment where students are unable to discuss their writing. As a result, the students’ misconceptions on how to edit, their
low self-esteem, and their poor motivation seem to hinder their writing progress (Stemper). There is a wrong time to edit. According to Bassett et al. (2007), “students who are not pressured to spell correctly, or have perfect grammar feel safer about taking risks and writing more creatively” (p. 60). Moxley (1989) stressed that students need to shut off the editor sometimes and let the material flow. It is important to implement the use of conferencing correctly and at the appropriate time so results are positive. For example, Stemper displayed post intervention achievement data and post intervention attitude data which indicated significant growth in the revising and editing process. Once students have done all that they could on their piece, they may share it.

Publishing

Students, overall, like to share their work (Bassett et al., 2001; Thomas, 1992) rather than go through a feedback process. Author’s chair provided an opportunity for students to share and publish their works (Bassett et al.). According to Thomas, the class he observed had a publishing company and a print shop. A publication of short stories and essays were put together and as a result, the students were very proud when their pieces were selected (Bassett et al.). According to Bassett et al., publishing student’s written work inspired some to higher achievements than they otherwise would have aimed for, and the writings contained many elements for discussion. Publishing can be done on any scale. The goal is to appreciate the student as an authentic author and to motivate that student to keep producing and thinking as an author. An author can seek inspiration by looking at quality literature.
Conclusion

It appears that many students are not getting enough time to write during the regular school day. There needs to be a consistent opportunity after school, where students can receive additional instruction in writing. This need is supported by abundant research. Effective strategies were extracted from successful studies and utilized to benefit students’ writing. It is important that students learn a writing process that they can take through any genre and task at any school and any school year. The use of fiction will act as the starting point within the workshop. Literature is used to provide a model for students. The Six Trait Model, an effective teaching and assessment strategy, is included and guides discussion during conferences. Conferencing is an effective way for students to get constructive feedback on their written pieces. Publishing students’ work is highly encouraged due to its success in other studies. The information stated was incorporated in the design of a Fiction Writing Workshop handbook that a teacher, pre-service teacher, and/or an active community member can use to administer a writing workshop program after school.

Once the handbook is administered, it is hoped that students will become better and more confident writers in order to be more successful in today’s educational system. Looking at today’s school system, there is a true need for a supplemental writing program that gives students the time to write. According to Bassett et al. (2007), “The teacher – researchers strongly believe that the ability to write well will benefit students throughout their lives” (p. 16). In society, there is a need for people who think critically by means of a logical process. Critical thinkers are problem
solvers. Problem solvers are needed to propel the world in the direction it needs to go in order to improve (Westervelt, 1998). It is crucial that educators teach students that learning *anything* is a process. According to Westervelt,

> teaching children how to communicate effectively using written language is challenging no matter what program is used, however, teaching them how to direct their own efforts in writing by following a logical process encourages self-confidence that is necessary for them to develop or maintain a positive attitude toward writing. (p. 25)

Learned writing skills and a positive attitude can aid in academic success and in life.
Chapter 3

INTRODUCTION TO THE HANDBOOK

The handbook *Writing and Fiction* is included in its entirety in the Appendices. Using this handbook as it was intended will provide an opportunity for students to practice writing through the recursive writing process in addition to what is practiced in the regular school day. Students can be exposed to effective writing strategies, which they may not be getting within the normal school day, through the use of this handbook. Myriad studies were examined to determine which instructional strategies resulted in successful writing experiences for students. Those specific strategies were then synthesized as procedures to form the context of the handbook. Additionally, a review of literature supported a writing focus in fiction.

Other decisions about implementation, organization, and expectations were made based upon research. The handbook was designed to give students more time to practice writing as a process. The workshop suggested by the handbook is to be ten to twelve weeks long with each week having a focus on either a component of fiction or a specific trait from the Six Trait Model. The use of technology in an after school program will be proposed in the present writing workshop handbook because research suggests it may be successful in developing improvement in writing; however, the use of technology is limited to the availability of resources at the site. In order for the use of technology to be successful, each student would have to have access to a working computer 100% of the time to maximize productivity and motivation. Sometimes that
may not be possible. Therefore, the use of technology will be suggested in the handbook but may be overlooked by some workshop instructors.

The handbook is comprised of an introduction, a section that explains the six main strategies, lesson plan structure and methods, ten lesson plans, and master templates corresponding with the appropriate lesson. Each lesson includes a connection between lessons, objective, introduction, inspirational thoughts, prewriting, writing, conferencing, revising, and notes to the instructor. The lessons were each designed to be about a week long. When appropriate, needed master templates were provided in the handbook for the instructor to copy and hand out to the students indicated in the lesson.

The lesson plans provide guidance for a recursive writing process. Students will be expected to look at other works of authors for examples and inspiration. Also, students are to have consistent dialogue with their teachers as well as with their fellow writers. Each lesson is meant to build on the lesson before it. Students are expected to go back to their work and continue to apply past learned concepts to new ones and make it all work together. Finally, Writing and Fiction gives the concerted writing time necessary for students to slow down and really embrace the process of writing.
Chapter 4

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND IMPLICATIONS

Summary

The author conducted a review of literature which focused on three main topics. The first main focus explored was today’s educational system and writing instruction. A need for additional time for students to write was discovered. The second main topic examined was the use of fiction in an after school writing workshop. Many students enjoy fiction and it also fits the philosophies and interests of the author. The third point was the effective instructional strategies which tended to show positive results in various studies. The instructional strategies included were: the use of literature, the writing process, the Six Trait Model as an assessment and guiding tool, conferencing, and publishing. Once the review of literature was completed, the author created Writing and Fiction, a handbook for the implementation of an after-school writing workshop for third to sixth grade students.

Conclusions

With the designed handbook, educators will have the resources to provide an opportunity for students to write and enjoy their success in writing. The handbook explains effective instructional strategies that instructors can use to guide their students through the writing process. Students will use literature to model after other authors while they are creating their own pieces of work. The handbook’s design also encourages the recursive nature of the writing process. Students will slow down and go back to what has already been written, connecting new written additions, and
creating an original story inspired by published fiction. Above all, students will be
proud of what they accomplished during the after-school writing workshop.

In addition to becoming accomplished in one genre of writing, students will
hopefully carry over their skill in the writing process to other genres of writing and/or
other disciplines that require critical thinking and problem solving skills. After the
writing workshop, students may be more comfortable with evaluating and reevaluating
a problem or situation until a solution can be developed. They may be more aware of
their own meta-cognition---concentrating on their own thinking processes. The
handbook also encourages active readers, as they reread their own and other pieces.
With this, students may do better on standardized tests, which appears to be the
primary focus in most educational school systems today.

Implications

*Writing and Fiction* can have implications for the future. The strategies in the
handbook are meant to be used outside the regular school day, giving ample time for
students to go through the entire process along with other strategies. Additionally,
through the handbook, writers will have a chance to slow down and look at other
author’s work. They will also be expected to communicate their ideas and work with
the instructor through conferencing. Lessons are designed to guide students to look at
specific parts of their fictional narratives through components of fiction and the Six
Trait Model. Instructors are to write along with the students as well. If an adequate
amount of computers are available, it also suggested that students write using the word
processor either when publishing their last draft or during the other stages of the writing process.

The author advocates for more time for students to explore writing through a recursive process. Additionally, through the review of literature, effective strategies that were identified have been included in the handbook. In the future, the author hopes that a school or schools will implement a writing workshop after school using the strategies and philosophies of the *Writing and Fiction* handbook. Studies could then be conducted about the effects of the program on writing production and motivation. It is hoped that future studies will show that an after school writing program, such as the one suggested in the present handbook can make a positive difference in the ability and attitudes of young writers.
APPENDIX A

Writing and Fiction:
Introduction
Introduction

This is an easy to read Fiction Writing Workshop Handbook that a teacher, pre-service teacher, and/or active community member can use to administer a writing workshop program after school for grades third through six. Through this handbook, students can be exposed to effective writing strategies which they may not have the time to pursue during the normal school day.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Suggestion!</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Work with your site’s administrator to help you promote the new writing workshop. Brainstorm ways to get students excited. Be organized on how students can sign up. Have good follow-up. Can teachers pass out flyers? Is there a school paper where students can publish their work? Can the principal of the site organize a book signing after the students’ work is published? Can any part of the workshop be integrated with celebrations of events that already exist?</td>
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The workshop to be administered is suggested to last about 10 – 12 weeks with ideally a small instructor to student ratio.

The handbook is organized in the following manner:
-Introduction of Instructional Strategies and Procedures including some useful information, how it helps, and how to implement it.
-Lesson Plan structure and methods
-Lesson Plans
-Templates corresponding with the lessons

The components of the workshop are described before the lesson plans to give a basic background of the “big picture” before lessons are implemented week by week.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The importance of a good instructor</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The instructor must pay attention to what is going on. Pre-read the handbook before administering any of the procedures and strategies suggested. The instructor must be an advocate for the procedures, maintain control, and create a safe and proper classroom atmosphere. Be clear on your expectations and stay consistent.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Each lesson is expected to be approximately a week long. If procedures and expectations are in place, having week long lessons shouldn’t be a problem. Be aware that it may take time to condition students to be comfortable in the recursive writing process, however. “Encouraging students to do several drafts and giving them direction between drafts reinforce the principle that good writing takes time, effort, and patience” (Reeves, 1997, p. 40). The lessons are a week long because the extra time allows students to slow down for the writing process, work at their own pace, read other author’s work for answers, and have ample opportunities for conferencing with the instructor.
Some expectations for behavior

- Come in quietly every day with new ideas to make your story better
- Be eager to try your very best
- Work diligently
- Discuss about your story in a quiet voice
- Actively read in and outside of the time given during the workshop
- Think about how to make your story better while you read other author’s work
- Speak positively only about your and other’s work
- Strive for great work but great work will come later so don’t get discouraged – keep trying.

Do your own written work along with the students. You can model your own thinking and effort during the writing process. Furthermore, if students see you excited about what you are creating, then they may get excited too.

The way you choose to implement the handbook’s suggestions may vary depending on the available resources and/or demographics. For example, you need a lot of literature for students to read so they can answer their own questions in their own writing. Does your school site have a place where students can go after school? Does that place allow unlimited access to literature as students are writing? If not, how can you get literature in the place in which you have access?

The use of the word processor is encouraged while students are composing their drafts as a process. Research suggests its success for developing writer’s improvement; however, the use of this strategy is limited to the availability of resources at the site. In order for this strategy to be successful, each student would have to have access to a well working computer 100% of the time to maximize productivity and motivation. Sometimes, that may not be possible. If it isn’t possible for students to have access 100% of the time, find a way for students to type their stories to get it ready for publishing? Collaborate with the site and/or community to make it happen.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Publishing Ideas!</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- Author’s chair- students read their work to an audience</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Post students’ stories on the wall in the site’s main office or library</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Publish their work in a school or local paper, newsletter, etc.</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Make a hardback anthology.</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Students can craft their own hardback books</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Have a school rally where the principle can present the main idea of the author’s creative stories to the school to promote the next 10 to 12 week workshop.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Take time now to read over the strategies presented next. Implement these strategies as procedures for the writing workshop.
APPENDIX B

Instructional Strategies and Procedures
Instructional Strategies and Procedures

Recursive Writing Process

Some Useful Information
The recursive writing process is where writers focus on the process rather than the final product when writing. The phases of the writing process are prewriting, writing, revising, and publishing. These phases are to be recursive. Recursive means that you can always go back to an earlier stage or even start over again.

How it helps
- Writing as a process influences success in writing.
- Writers try new strategies when writing as a process.
- Writers don’t have to commit to their words in the first draft; it alleviates some stress.
- Writers can be more relaxed because they are discovering themselves as writers
- Enjoyment and eagerness to write can increase.
- Writers can start thinking in more complex ways including the way they think about their own writing.

How to implement it
A writer is never done. Each draft should get the writer a step closer to a final product, but that writer may never reach a final product. Think of each piece as emerging texts rather than a product. Students should be aware that writing is expected to take time and unfold slowly at we write draft after draft. They are not expected to have a flawless final product; however, each student will work diligently making the steps to improve his or her piece. The goal is to have it near perfect. This handbook expects writers to work of one special piece for several weeks. Like dieting, writing as a process is a lifestyle change. A writer must eat, sleep and drink writing as a process to see results. A writer won’t improve his or her writing skills if he or she writes for a little while and says “I’m done.” Do not allow this to happen. Students are expected to write, think about their writing, and write again the entire time allotted. They are not to simply add to the end of their story. They must make changes where needed: beginning, middle, and end. Set this expectation.
Using Literature

*Some Useful Information*
Writers can read with a “writer’s eye.” They are not simply passively reading. They are taking note of the author’s style, word choice, organization, voice, etc. Literature can be used to inspire and validate ideas.

*How it helps*
- Writers can improve their writing by emulating other author’s work.
- Writers look at author’s style and other aspects of the author’s work through their reading
- Writers learn to make connections between their own writing and reading through authentic purpose
- Writers ask questions when they read based on the needs of their writing process helping in comprehension

*How to implement it*
The goal is for students to read with a clear focus to meet their writing goals. When students experience a degree of writer’s block, they can read to discover how their can solve their writing dilemma. Reading other author’s work may help with organization trouble, descriptions, dialogue, and/ or other ideas. Also, for those students that are ready to move on to the next phase of instruction within the workshop, they can read for enrichment. Expect that students are working 100% of the time and working towards their personal writing goals during the writing process. If they are not writing or listening to the instructor’s lessons, then they are reading quietly making sure not to disturb anyone. Establish that environment. Discuss about evidence students found in literature that helped with their writing during conferences.
Conferences

*Some Useful Information*
Conferencing is for the instructor and a student to discuss aspects of the writer’s written work providing feedback.

*How it helps*
- Conferences are a way for students and instructors to provide feedback to a student’s writing process
- students can be in charge of their writing

*How to implement it*
Conferences are to be done one-on-one. You can designate a particular spot for conferencing. Sit with your back to the wall so you can see your entire class. Number one rule when it comes to conferences: DO NOT EDIT FOR YOUR STUDENT. It lowers student ownership. That doesn’t mean you cannot provide feedback. The way to provide feedback is to guide a discussion about one aspect of the writer’s work by asking questions. Most of your conferences will focus on the lesson done that same week. However, keep in mind that students are writing recursively and may be working at different stages. The writer can improve his or her writing with your guidance. While you are conferencing with individual students, other writers must be working diligently on their own independent pieces. Before each student leaves to continue his or her draft, have him or her tell you their plan of action. The goal is to guide the writer rather than evaluate him or her.
Six Traits

Some Useful Information
The Six Trait model is an assessment tool as well as a method in which to guide writers through a process. It includes components such as: ideas and content, organization, voice, word choice, sentence fluency, and conventions:

1. Ideas- The idea or purpose of the message is clearly conveyed with necessary information
2. Organization- The internal structure of the writing
3. Voice- The personal tone and style of the writer
4. Word Choice- Words the author chooses in order to get the meaning across
5. Sentence Fluency- The flow of the language
6. Conventions- Mechanical correctness

How it helps
-It helps students meet standards
-Writers develop the skills to become effective writers
-It provides a means for differentiated instruction which allows students to work in their different ability level
-It breaks up the writing process for students in more obtainable chunks

How to implement it
Focus on one part of the Six-Trait at a time allowing students to revise their work with a clear focus in mind. Let the trait dictate discussion during conferences. Create a climate where students are using the six traits in their “everyday” vocabulary. Make it clear to the students that they are responsible for showing you evidence of the traits in their individual pieces of writing. They are not to ignore the important role that these traits play in the writing process. Encourage students to look through other pieces of literature to model the traits.
Word Processor

Some Useful Information
Students can type as they write through a word processing program on the computer.

How it helps
- It brings positive outcomes in writing.
- It makes editing easier.
- It can spark enthusiasm.
- It can improve grammar, adjectives, and adverbs.
- Writing is not so overwhelming for some.
- It is a way to publish work and make students feel like real authors.

How to implement it
Using the word processor is not a crucial component in a writing workshop because not every setting has a computer for each student to use. And yes, each student would need access to their own in order to work efficiently at their natural writing pace and process. If you have access to many reliable computers, then make sure that the computers are positioned in a way were you can see students’ computers screen even when you are pulling students for conferencing. Make it clear to the students that your expectation is for them to work on their written piece 100% of the time allotted. They are not to go on to anything unless it is for their written piece.
Publishing

*Some Useful Information*

Publishing a student’s written work is one way to have a student share his or her work on any scale.

*How it helps*

- inspires some higher achievements than otherwise would have aimed.
- motivates students to produce good written work.
- Students feel appreciated

*How to implement it*

Publishing can be done in many ways. It is your choice what to do. As long as students are sharing their “masterpieces,” they are publishing. It may depend on the community’s resources, student population, and/or your personal teaching style. One idea could be a print shop where students actively get their written piece for publication. Or you could have an author’s chair where students can share their work and discuss. The goal is to honor your little writer as a real author. Have a publishing party! Finalized drafts (remember their work is never finished, but the workshop is over.) can be posted at the school’s library, community’s center, school’s office, a school’s newspaper, etc. These students worked diligently for weeks drafting their stories. They should be honored. Be sure to tell your students that they will be expected to publish their work at the beginning of the workshop period that way they know that their work will be taken seriously. Please refer to the introduction of this handbook for more suggestions.
APPENDIX C

Lesson Plans
Lesson Plans

Lesson Plan Structure and Methods

You will see each lesson plan close to this format:

**Connection:** The connection part of each lesson creates a sort of transition between each lesson. It also can provide a rationale for the systematic order of the lessons.

**Objective:** The objective is a statement describing what the students should accomplish. I have given a week for each lesson because students are not just working on the new concept that week. They are reading other Literature for ideas and/or revising other portions of their fictional narratives.

**Introduction:** The Introduction is to guide the instructor on what can be introduced to the students at the beginning of each week. Templates are available in the back of the handbook to copy and distribute to your writers.

**Inspirational Thoughts:** Inspirational Thoughts are in almost every lesson because I simply wanted them available for those instructors that would like to share them and perhaps inspire their students.

**Prewriting:** The beginning lesson offers a prewriting activity for students to do to prepare for the writing phase of the writing process. Templates are available in the back of the handbook to copy and distribute. Gradually, students will be expected to pre-write the way that works best for them and specific to their task at hand.

**Writing:** Some lessons have the writing section explicitly stated while other lessons assume that most students are at different stages of the writing process. Students may have written what they needed but need to revise. Others may have to draft a whole new section. It all depends.

**Conferencing:** Conferencing should be done regularly for every lesson.

**Revising:** Revising should be done whenever a writer wants to make changes to his or her fictional narrative. Writing is a recursive process so revising can be done at anytime for any reason.

**Notes to the instructor:** Notes to the Instructor gives insight to what students should be accomplishing, what the instructor should expect, what to allow, etc.
Characterization Lesson

Many authors choose to start their stories with their characters. What does this character look like? What does the reader need to know about this character? What is this character’s personality like? Once the characters are developed enough, the writer can then generate a plot, if haven’t already, with the characters in mind.

Objective: In one week, students will write a description of each possible character with diligent effort to jumpstart the plot of their fictional narratives.

Introduction: Tell the students that many authors prefer to start with thinking about the characters. Share other written pieces from published authors that show a description of a character(s) (see examples for writing characters in literature template). Also, be aware that students may need to see more examples other than the examples provided in the handbook to really understand. Make sure that you have some examples prepared to show from real books. Ask the students about what they can gather about the characters based on what the author wrote. What does this character look like? What is this character’s background and behavior? How is his or her relationship with others? What are some distinct things that the character usually says? Have a discussion about it and look at many examples of literature as necessary.

Before the tasks are explained, introduce them to this inspirational thought: Fiction should embody ideas, give them sensory form. In other words, describe your character so the we can see this character in our mind, feel what this character is feeling, and know how this character will react.

Prewriting: Show the students a graphic organizer (see graphic organizer for a character template). Provide copies to the students. Give a copy for every major character a student is developing. Once a student is done with prewriting, he or she can begin to write a description of each character that he or she may include in his or her piece. Remember to participate with the students and share out what you are creating. Keep in mind that some students may need additional guidance. Guidance can be provided through conferencing.

Writing: Students will write a description on each character that includes the information brainstormed on the graphic organizer. Remember that you are doing it too.

Conferences: Pull students one at a time to discuss their characters. Go over their rationale and their interests in the characters that they are developing. Does the student develop the character enough to give the audience a good sense of the character’s looks, personality, and possible relationships with others? Ask the student
questions that will help guide him or her to developing his or her character more clearly. Do not write it for the student and or give him or her specific details. Send the student back to refine his or her work. Students may go back to prewriting and/or writing for another character idea after conferencing. Also, some students may choose to revise what they wrote about the characters they already have developed.

**Revising:** Students take what was discussed during conferencing into consideration and makes changes to their descriptions of characters.

--Please keep in mind that different students can be at different stages of the writing process. Conferencing can occur several different times with each student during the week in which students are working on developing their characters. Each student can also choose to go back to prewriting, writing, and/ or revising at anytime during the week. If students are unsure on how to develop their character or how to write a description about their character, they can take this week to look at other written works from other authors. Students should have a better understanding of their characters so they can make better choices when planning their piece. Furthermore, students have the option to take their descriptions of their character and add it in their writing when a character is introduced. As students further develop their fictional narratives guided by other mini lessons, they can choose to develop characters more as needed within the context of their piece during the time when they are revising.
Planning/Plotting/Climax Lesson

Once you develop your characters, it is easier to see those characters in possible plots. What is your character experiencing? What are some of the complications? What does the character want? What does the character do to get it? How would your character react to certain events?

Objective: Given about a week of time, students will be able to map out the plot and compose it through writing diligently.

Introduction: Now that students have their characters developed, they can build a story around them. Read a few picture books with a clear plot. See the examples from plot templates. Have students discuss similarities that they noticed with regards to the plot of each read aloud.

Inspirational Thoughts:
- You will find it much easier to approach fiction writing as a process of discovering a story.
- Fiction revises and reconstitutes experience – can explain reality better than reality itself can.
- Put your characters into a situation requiring action
- Endings do not necessarily have to answer the obvious questions in the reader’s mind.
- The best stories “play chicken” – coming as close to crashing as possible but veering away at the last minute.

Prewriting: Show them a way they can create their own plot in their own writing. See graphic organizer on plot template. Give students as much time as needed to discuss their ideas with one another. Students can use the graphic organizer to organize their ideas into a specific plot structure. Guide students to start with their characters, think about the situation(s) that the character is in, and the problem or conflict that the main character will be facing. Remember, you are writing as well so share out your ideas and thoughts. Organize conferences for those students that will need a little more guidance.

Writing: Once students have filled out their graphic organizer on plot, they can start writing the events in their story using the characters they developed the week before. You are to do the same.

Conferences: Pull students one at a time as they are working on their drafts. Ask them questions that will enrich their piece. Where do they want to go from here? What is the problem that the main character is facing? What are the events doing to the characters? -- Students should feel like they have the biggest part of their story drafted. Lessons given from this point will allow students to work with what they have already created. Not to say that students can’t make total big changes as they see fit.
Point of View Lesson

Once you have the biggest part of your story done, it may be time to make your point of view clear if you haven’t already. Who is telling the story? Who is having thought about the events: a particular character or the author? A story’s point of view depends upon who is narrating, or telling, the story. A story can be different if it is told by someone involved in the events of the story rather than by someone who is not involved in the events.

Objective: Given about a week of time, students will be able to alter their story to have a consistent point of view throughout their piece diligently.

Introduction: Now that students have their plot written out, it is time to see if students wrote their storyline with an intentional point of view. Display Point of view template and discuss the different types of point of view: first person, third–person limited, and third-person omniscient. Discuss other work done in specific point of view. See example of point of view template. Have students read over their work and discuss what point of view they naturally used in their piece. What point of view would each student prefer to have in his or her work? Have them discuss what they might do to alter their piece.

Inspirational Thoughts:
- Fiction is nothing more than gossip about characters
- All subjects are legitimate, and all can be fascinating, depending upon how they are approached.

Prewriting: Have students write down what point of view they see mainly in their work already. Have the students write what point of view they would like to keep or change. Students can then “jot” down ideas that will help them make it clear to the reader what point of view they are using.

Writing: Give students time to add and/ or change sections that enhance point of view. One point of view should be used consistently throughout the whole piece of writing.

Conferences: Conferences should be happening throughout the whole week. See one student at a time. Discuss their point of view goal. Have each student point out intentional sections that make the point of view clear to the audience. Ask if they kept the same point of view throughout the piece.

-- Some students may find it difficult to apply point of view without a strong grasp on how it is used in other works. Have each student take the time to read other author’s work to find clear examples of point of view. You may want to have conferences with students to help guide their thinking about point of view.
Dialogue Lesson

Dialogue is something that enriches the sensory experience for the reader. It gives clues to the characters personality. The more details you give about how the character speaks and move, the better the reader pictures your story in his or her mind.

Objective: In one week of time, students will be able to implant sections of developed dialogue in their piece of writing purposefully and diligently.

Introduction: Tell students that implanting dialogue in their writing is one way to make a richer sensory experience for their audience. Show dialogue template. Show examples of dialogue in other authors’ work pointing out certain aspects of the dialogue that gives the reader inferences about the character’s personality and/or mood.

Inspirational Thoughts: Put your characters into situations that require action.

Prewriting: Have students look in their own writing and decide where should be good places to implant dialogue between two or more characters. Off to the side, students should take note on what should be happening in that particular conversation. Who would certain characters feel at that point? What do certain characters want to say? How will they say it?

Writing: Give students time to develop the character’s dialogue. They can implant the dialogue in their writing making sure it coincides with the events in the story and the overall personality of the characters.

Conferences: This week is to be devoted on developing dialogue in students’ stories. In conferencing, however, student may find that they might need to revise their story to allow dialogue to flow in their piece. Students can always change their work to fit their writing goals regardless of the lesson they were exposed to that week. Role playing or discussions about a student’s characters may help them develop a conversation between them on paper.

--As the students progress further with their ideas, students might revise at different paces. The extended opportunity of time is a good way to differentiate for each student. The students that are unsure where to go next can read other author’s work to get some ideas. Also, students that are satisfied with the parts of their writing that include dialogue after they revised and conference about their work may read as active readers. The goal is to maintain a writing working environment for all students.
Ideas Lesson

You have already come up with some ideas within your plot. You have description to your characters as well. Now it is time to look at your fictional narrative as a whole looking at the ideas.

Objective: In one week of time, students will be able to revise their work to ensure that their fictional narrative has good descriptive detail and clear content diligently.

Introduction: Tell students that they already thought of good ideas in their plot. They have written great descriptions of their characters. Their task now is to implant the descriptions of characters already written and describe more things providing a sensory experience for the reader. For example, students need to describe places-the setting. Provide examples from other authors. (See example of ideas template). Then display a list of what a writer should consider when using voice. (See idea check list template)

Inspirational Thoughts:
-Fiction revises and reconstitutes experience-can explain reality better than reality itself can.
-Fiction should embody ideas, give them sensory form.
-All subjects are legitimate, and all can be fascinating, depending upon how they are approached

*From this point to the end of the workshop, students will have the freedom, if they weren’t exercising that right already, to work in whichever stage of the writing process they need to work in for the purpose of developing a better piece of writing.

Prewriting (if needed), Writing, and/or Revising: Students look through their work and make sure that they used good, descriptive detail and made the content clear. They are to make changes where needed.

Conferences: Ask students if they have interesting information that they would like to share from their work. Where there any new ways to explain an idea? Did the details draw on touch, sight, sound, smell and taste?

--After this week, students should have more developed ideas within their piece. The audience should have a good sensory experience. Remember that students can go back to old concepts to revise and make their story flow together. Students should have the freedom to go through the writing process recursively.
Organization Lesson

You have already planned your organization during your prewriting stage using the graphic organizer for plot. This is an opportunity to see if the organization of your stories needs to be refined, changed, or enhanced. It is easy to stray from the original organization. Don’t try to make it go back, but simply make sure that you organize what you have written instead.

Objective: In one week of time, students will organize their fictional narrative diligently.

Introduction: Tell students that they have already developed organization for their pieces. Using the 6 trait model, they are to refine, change, and/or enhance their organization. Show the Organization check list template. Provide new examples that demonstrate clear organization. See template of examples for organization.

Inspirational Thoughts: If you don’t revise, or even abandon, your outline at some point on the composition, you’re not really writing.

Prewriting (if needed), Writing, and/or Revising: Students are to look through their story and make changes to their organization.

Conferences: When it is time for conferences, guide them with questions. Is there an inviting lead? What is your sequence? Are you focused? Can your audience make predictions? What were you trying to do in your ending?

--Students, by this time in the program, are familiar with the routines and expectations. You will be giving more time to write by talking less. Most of the teachable moments occur during conferencing. Remember that students are studying other author’s work to help in their own writing so don’t worry about the time. It may take a student to read an entire novel to understand the organization of that particular novel. A program outside the regular school day has the luxury of giving the time needed for that specific inquiry.
Voice Lesson

You have already explored characters, point of view, and dialogue. Now you can revisit your writing looking for qualities of voice.

Objective: In one week of time, students will enhance voice in their fictional narrative diligently.

Introduction: Students have already used voice in their writing. Now it is time for them to be conscious of it. Show students a check list for Voice. See voice template. Then show them some examples of other author’s work in demonstrating voice. See example of voice templates.

Inspirational Thoughts: Fiction writers should concentrate not on finding their own voices but finding their characters’ voices.

Prewriting (if needed), Writing, and/or Revising: Give students an opportunity to read their work. They should be able to identify voice used in specific part of their piece. They must make sure that the purpose for their writing is clear in their writing through the use of the narrator and/or characters.

Conferencing: Have students explain their voice. Did they use distinctive words and phrases? Did they try something new? Is it consistent with particular characters?

--Students should take this week to finish their revisions on voice but also revisit old concepts. Also, for students that feel they are finished early, they should read as authors to develop a better understanding on how authors write.
Word Choice Lesson

The bigger tasks are near over. You will be focusing on things like word choice, sentence fluency and conventions. Word Choice may seem like an easy and maybe unimportant task but it can be what makes or breaks a fictional narrative. You want your word to be strong and appropriate for the sensory image you are trying to create for your audience.

Objective: In 2 days to one week of time, students will replace some words already written with words that are a better choice diligently.

Introduction: Tell students that they are at a point in their writing where they should be working out the details. The details can be very important. They are to change words or group of words to stronger more purposeful words that enhance your story. Show and discuss the Word Choice check list template. Present some examples of other authors work. See the examples for word choice template. Pick out some words from the example that you know can be changed to alter the quality of the piece. Have the students brainstorm possible words.

Prewriting (if needed), Writing, and/or Revising: Have students looks over their story circling words as they go that they know can be changed to make the sentence richer. Have them make their changes. Offer dictionaries, thesauruses, and written work from other authors.

Conferencing: Make sure students have given thought to this. Ask them what words they chose to change. Is the word they added memorable? Make sure you guide the student to have strong verbs and words that give vivid images. Make sure it is appropriate and fits the tone of the piece. Look out for words that are used over and over again.

--If you notice that you are running out of time toward the end of the program, this week and the lessons to follow can be condensed down. If you choose to focus on word choice for one week, students can read other examples of literature to see what words other authors like to use. Students are still allowed to make big changes to their story; however, they need to continue through the recursive process and address all the things they have learned and practices so far. Students can read as well. Note that you will be asking students to publish their work soon.
Sentence Fluency Lesson

You are now looking at your work more closely. You have your characters, plot, point of view, dialogue, refined ideas, organization, consistent voice, and calculated word choice. What about your story at the sentence level. Do your sentences vary in length? Does the beginning of the sentences vary? Make sure your sentences, when read, are fluid.

Objective: In one week of time, students will focus on sentence fluency and make appropriate changes to their fictional narrative diligently.

Introduction: Tell the students that it is time to look at their fictional narratives more closely. They have refined almost everything but the sentences and conventions. Show them the check list for sentence fluency. See sentence fluency check list template. Show and discuss the varying sentences used in other author’s written work. See example of sentence fluency templates.

Prewriting (if needed), Writing, and/or Revising: Have students read their written work out loud to themselves to see if “funny” things pop up. Have the students circle it to go back to it later. Students should use the check list to help guide them on what to look for and change in terms of sentence fluency.

Conferencing: Focusing on sentence fluency only, ask students about how they addressed the check list. Where did they make their changes and why? Are there any parts that sound “funny” to the student that the teacher can provide suggestions for?

--During this week, students are still allowed to make big changes to their story; however, they need to continue through the recursive process and address all the things they have learned and practices so far. Students can read as well.
Conventions Lesson

You are reaching the end of the workshop period. Although you can continue to make endless changes to your story, it is time to wrap up your written piece and proofread it.

Objective: In one week of time, students will be able to proofread their own developed narrative fiction diligently

Introduction: Tell students that this will be the last stage of changes they make on their piece before they publish their work. Show them the conventions check list. See conventions template. Then show them some examples from other authors. See example of conventions templates. Take any questions at this time because students will be expected to proofread their own work. Students may come with questions during conferencing but the teacher will not proofread their work for them.

Revising: Students are to check spelling, capitalization, punctuation, and grammar and make corrections as needed.

Conferences: Students should have questions in mind when it is their turn to have a conference. They are not to expect the teacher to do it for them. They can look up words together.

--Since students were giving ample time to write, students should have a developed story to stop and proofread. Once they do that, they can get their story ready to publish.
APPENDIX D

Master Templates
Graphic Organizer for a Character

Fill this out by answering the questions about your character that you are making up.

The details you give now will help you provide a sensory experience for the reader. We want the readers to be able to picture the character in their mind.

Remember that this is just a starting point and your ideas about your character can change to better suit your whole piece later.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Questions</th>
<th>Answers that you make up</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What does your character look like?</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>What is your character’s personality like?</td>
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<tr>
<td>List some details about your character’s background.</td>
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<tr>
<td>How does this character behave?</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Why does your character behave that way?</td>
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<tr>
<td>How does your character usually feel?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Question</td>
<td>Answer</td>
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<td>------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
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<tr>
<td>What are some common things your character says?</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>How will this character usually react to situations?</td>
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<tr>
<td>What else does your audience need to know about your character?</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Graphic Organizer on Plot

Start organizing your big ideas about your story. Keep your characters in mind. You can make lists, write paragraphs, and jot down some words.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Setting</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>How are you going to introduce your characters? Who are the characters and what are their lives like? What will your opening scene be like?</td>
</tr>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Set up</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>How will you set your story up so the reader knows what the problem is?</td>
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</table>
**Rising Action**
List some events that will occur. These events can be challenges for one or more characters. The challenge can be inside a character’s mind or happening to him or her. Include how this character or characters are responding.

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**Climax**
All the events have brought the reader to this point in the story. It is like the big crisis that the character or characters have to endure.

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Falling action</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Did the character or characters succeed or fail? How?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Resolution</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What is happening now after the crisis? Did your character or characters reflect on what has happened? What are the character’s lives like now?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Point of View

First person point of view

. The narrator is part of the story as one of the characters.
. The character who is that narrator feels and reacts to situations
. Use “I” and/or “we.”
. The character can be a main or minor character.
. The character may know a lot, acts like he or she knows a lot, or doesn’t know much but knows it.
. The first person point of view can allow a reader to feel very close to a character’s thoughts and ideas.
. It can also limit a reader.

Third person Limited point of view

. The narrator is not part of the story as one of the characters, but lets us know exactly how a character feels.
. Use “she” and/or “he.”
. The author knows only the thoughts and feelings of a single character.
. The other characters are described only from the outside.
. There is more freedom on how the story is told.

Third person Omniscient point of view

. The narrator is not part of the story as one of the characters, but lets us know exactly how the characters feel.
. Use “she” and/or “he.”
. The author knows the thoughts and feelings of all the characters in the story.
. There is even more freedom on how the story is told.
Dialogue

Helpful Tips
1. Listen to other people talk.

2. Look at how other authors use dialogue. How do they punctuate and/or add things.

3. If it doesn’t enhance your plot, don’t bother putting it in your story.

4. Don’t give too much information all at once.

5. Break it up with action or feelings.

6. It’s ok to use said many times
Ideas Check List

The ideas are in the content of the story and the details which develops the main theme.

__ Make sense
__ Important and interesting details
__ Details that enhances the main idea
__ Details that draw on touch, sight, sound, smell, and taste
Organization Check List

Organization is the internal structure of your piece and the logical pattern of your ideas.

___ inviting beginning
___ Purposeful sequence
___ Fun to predict, but some surprises too
___ doesn’t just stop
___ No “dream” endings
Voice Check List

Voice is the heart of you, as a writer, coming out through words.

____ Sounds like a person wrote it
____ sounds like this writer-no one else
____ makes you feel something
____ Your own style – take risks
____ Is your main voice clear: first person or third person?
Word Choice Check List

You pick your words wisely that are richer, colorful, and exactly what you mean to give the reader a clearer image in his or her head.

__ Vivid images
__ Strong verbs
__ The perfect words and phrases to express what you mean
__ Simple language used well
__ Minimal slang, jargon, inflated language
Sentence Fluency Check List

It is the rhythm and flow of the language through varied patterns. Sentence fluency changes the way we hear your story.

___ Easy to read aloud
___ Varied sentence length
___ Began sentences in different ways
Conventions Check List

Checking conventions is like proofreading. You are checking the mechanical correctness of your story including spelling, grammar, capitals, and punctuation.

___ Most things are done correctly
___ Easy to decode, decipher, comprehend, and follow
___ it’s edited
___ Easy to focus on ideas, voice, and organization
Examples of writing characters

This was taken from Goosebumps: The Haunted Mask II written by R.L. Stine:

“Let’s make Carly Beth scream.”
“You mean for old times’ sake?”
Chuck nodded, grinning.
For many years, making Carly Beth scream had been out hobby. That’s because she was a really good screamer, and she would scream at just about anything.
One day in the lunchroom last year, Chuck tucked a worm inside his turkey sandwich to Carly Beth.
She took one bite and knew that something tasted a little weird. When Chuck showed her the big bite she had taken was a worm, Carly Beth screamed for a week (p. 12).

This was taken from Hoop Dreams by Ben Joravsky:

Arthur had long ago learned from his father that the first rule in negotiations- and that’s what this was-was never to show your hand. But when Big Earl mentioned Isiah’s name all rules were forgotten. Isiah Thomas was Arthur’s idol: a six-foot tall point guard, another West Side kid who against all odds climbed his way out of poverty and into the NBA. Arthur had Isiah’s picture on his wall. He had even adopted Isiah’s old playground nickname, Tuss, as his own (p. 17).
Examples of plot

This is an example of a rising action taken from *Pirates Past Noon* written by Mary Pope Osborne:

Jack started to run across the hot sand. He ran as fast as he could.
    But the pirates ran faster.
    Before Jack knew it, the biggest pirate had grabbed him!
    Jack struggled. But the pirate had huge, strong arms. He held on to
    Jack and laughed a mean. Ugly laugh. He had a shaggy black beard. A
    patch covered one eye.
    Jack heard Annie yelling. He saw her coming down the rope
    ladder.
    “Stay where you are!” Jack shouted (p. 21).

This is an example of climax from *The Little Seven-Colored Horse* written by Robert G. San Souci:

The monster, all its attention on the little seven-colored horse,
did not move quickly enough as Juanito arced above it, tugged
free the golden ring, and swam for the surface.
    But the moment Juanito let go of the pommel, his lungs
filled with water. Still he swam up and up, clutching the ring,
even as felt himself drowning (p.26).
Examples of point of view

Judy Blume, author of *Double Fudge*, uses the first person point of view:

I prayed no one from my class was at the store. No one who knows me or has ever known me. No one I might meet someday who would say, *Oh yeah...you’re the kid with the weird brother who threw the fit at Harry’s*. I backed away from the store windows and headed down the street, pretending I was just another guy strolling down Broadway – a guy from a perfectly normal family (p. 16).

Patricia Reilly Giff, author of *The Beast in Mrs. Rooney’s Room*, uses third person limited point of view:

Richard put the magazine back in the pile. He raced out of the room after the rest of the kids.
He made sure he stayed behind Emily Arrow. He had tried not to look at her all morning. He didn’t like to think about what had happened in the auditorium yesterday.
He wondered if Emily felt bad.
He wondered if she had told her father (p. 33).

O. Henry, author of *After Twenty Years*, uses third person omniscient to express the point of view of the main characters:

“We figured that in twenty years each of us ought to have our destiny worked out and our fortunes made, whatever they were going to be.”
“Sounds pretty interesting,” said the policeman. “Rather a long time between meets, though, it seems to me. Haven’t you heard from your friend since you left?”
“Well, yes, for a time we corresponded,” said the other. “But after a year or two we lost track of each other. You see, the West is a pretty big proposition, and I kept hustling around over it pretty lively. But I know Jimmy will meet me here if he’s alive, for he always was the truest, staunchest old chap in the world…” (p. 227).

The police officer quickly leaves. A man comes towards the man waiting. He thinks it’s his old friend, but it turns out that the police officer was his friend and had someone else arrest the man waiting. The man waiting is a man wanted in Chicago. The police officer didn’t want to arrest his old friend himself.
Examples of dialogue

This is from *The Summer of the Swans* by Betsy Byars:

He held out the candy and the stick to her.

“Not again!” She took it from him. “This piece of candy is so gross that I don’t even want to touch it, if you want to know the truth.” She put the stick back in and handed it to him. “Now if it comes off again- and I mean this, Charlie Godfrey- I’m throwing the candy away” (p. 7).

This is from *The Baby Beebee Bird* by Diane Redfield Massie:

“What,” said the elephant, “is THAT?”

“It’s the baby beebee bird,” said the giraffe. “He’s new to the zoo.”

“Well, tell him to be QUIET,” growled the leopard. “I want to sleep.”
Examples of ideas

This was taken from *The Big Wave* written by Pearl S. Buck:

Yes, he could remember the great yawning mouth of the volcano. He had looked down into it and he had not liked it. Great curls of yellow and black smoke were rolling about in it, and a white stream of melted rock was crawling slowly from one corner. He had wanted to go away, and even now at night sometimes when he was warm in his soft cotton quilt in his bed on the matting floor he was glad the volcano was so far away and that there were at least three mountains between (p.11).

This was taken from *WON’T SOMEBODY PLAY WITH ME?* Written by Steven Kellogg:

We can play ape family or spies or maybe we can pretend that we’re fierce, fat dinosaurs munching on bones (p.13).
Examples of organization

Marilyn Jager Adams, author of Help!, uses pictures with her words to write a story that is organized. Here is the entire text:

Would you help me? It would be good if you could.

Let me try.

I would if I could but I can’t.

Would you help me?

I can try.

If I could, then I would, but I can’t.

Oh my, oh my. I would be happy if I could get help. What should I do? I wish someone could help me. I wish someone would help me.

Oh no! Don’t cry. Maybe we could do it together. That would be good. Should we try?

Why not?

I could lift this side if you would lift that side. We can’t let her cry. We should try

Yes, we should. Push, push. Pull, pull. It’s looking good!

And they could!
Joy Cowley, author of The Magician’s Lunch, has purposefully organized her story. Here is the entire text:

The magician was hungry.
“I’ll make some butterfly pie,” he said.
ZAP!
He made some butterfly pie.

But when he sat down to eat it, the butterflies flew away.

The magician was still hungry.
“I’ll make some from soup,” he said.
ZAP!
He made some frog soup.

But when he sat down to eat it, the frogs hopped away.

The magician was still hungry.
“I’ll make some caterpillar salad,” he said.
ZAP!
He made some caterpillar salad.
But when he sat down to eat it, the caterpillars wriggled away.
Next he made some snake cake.
But the snakes slid away.
Then he made some beetle pudding.
But the beetles ran away.
ZAP!
The magician made a big micecream.
But the mice bit him on the nose and then they scampered away.
The magician had run out of magic and he was still hungry.

He stamped his feet.
“What shall I eat? Oh, what shall I eat?”
In came the magician’s mother.
“Make a sandwich, my dear,” she said.

“I can’t!” cried the magician.
“I’ve run out of magic.”

“You don’t need magic to make a sandwich,” said the magician’s mother.

And she took some bread from her basket. One the bread she put some butter. On the butter she put some fish. On the fish she put some jam. On the jam she put some lettuce. On the lettuce she put some honey. On the honey she put some sausage. On the sausage she put some bread. “Here is your sandwich, my dear,” said the magician’s mother.

The magician sat down to eat it.
“Delicious!” he cried, and he gobbled every bit.
Examples of voice

Marge Blaine, author of *The Terrible Thing that Happened at Our House*, uses her skill of voice to show how the main character thought about her mother going back to work. She thought her mom used to be a real mother:

My mother always had time to read to us and help us make things and take us to the park.

**BUT THEN SOMETHING TERRIBLE HAPPENED TO CHANGE ALL THAT.**

My mother went back to being a science teacher. She said it was important work. I always thought taking care of us was pretty important, but she said we could do a lot more for ourselves than we did.

Here is an example from *Saggy Baggy Elephant: No place for me* written by Gina Ingoglia:

“That’s really something,” said Saggy Baggy Elephant. “I wish I could do that.”

Baby Brown Bear scrambled to the ground.

“Why don’t you try it?” he suggested.

Saggy Baggy Elephant tried to climb up on the ball, but he flipped over and landed with his feet in the air.

“I bent my trunk a little,” he said, straightening it out. “I’d better look for another act” (p. 7).
Examples of word choice

Here is an example of word choice from Giggle, Giggle, Quack by Doreen Cronin:

Wednesday is bath day for the pigs. Wash them with my bubble bath and dry them off with my good towels. Remember, they have very sensitive skin (p. 11).

Giggle, giggle, oink.

This is from Goosebumps: Monster Blood written by R.L. Stine:

Mrs. Rosa, picked up Evan’s suitcase, glanced uncomfortably back at him. “Yeah… he’s big,” she said.

Actually, Evan was one of the shortest kids in his class. And no matter how much he ate, he remained “as skinny as a spaghetti noodle,” as his dad liked to say.
Examples of sentence fluency

This is from *The Day It Snowed Tortillas* retold by Joe Hayes:

But the poor man was not well educated. He couldn’t read or write. He wasn’t very bright either. He was always doing foolish things. But he was lucky. He had a very clever wife, and she would get him out of trouble.

One day he was working far off in the mountains, and when he started home at the end of the day, he saw three leather bags by the side of the trail.

He picked up the first bag and discovered that it was full of gold coins! He looked into the second. It was full of gold too. And so was the third (p. 9).

This is from *The Keeping Quilt* written by Patricia Polacco:

Anna grew up and fell in love with Great-Grandpa Sasha. To show he wanted to be her husband, he gave Anna a gold coin, a dried flower, a piece of rock salt all tied into linen handkerchief. The gold was for wealth, the flower for love, and the salt so their lives would have flavor. She accepted the hankie and they were engaged (p. 10).
Examples of conventions

This is from Four Puppies by Annie Heathers:

The next day-whoosh!-the wind knocked all the petals off a rose.
And-swoosh!-it blew the leaves right off the trees.
Those four puppies tried to put the petals back on the rose.
They tried to put the leaves back on the trees.
But they couldn’t, so they started to cry (p. 8).

This is from Song Lee in Room 2B by Suzy Kline:

“Would the tree speak louder, please?” Miss Mackle said with a big smile.
When Song Lee nodded, the pink Kleenex flowers jiggled.
“Korea is size of Virginia. It is like Switzerland because it has many mountain and beautiful blue sky. There are many palace, royal tomb, secret garden, and stone pagoda. We also have 3,000 island in Korea” (p. 15).
“Ooooh,” the class replied.
REFERENCES


Black, S. (1989). *Improving the written communication skills of upper elementary alternative education students by using a word processor*. Unpublished Master’s Thesis, Nova University, Miami, FL.


