

The K-Crew Presents:

Write

“The ‘Right Writing’ at the ^{Write}~~Right~~ Time”

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Questions? Comments? Want to know more?

Check out our website: www.thekcrew.net

Balanced Literacy Method

We've been using the Balanced Literacy method since 1996. This method blends the best of "whole language" and "phonics" instruction. Neither is completely effective without the other... and the results are amazing! The main components are:

Reading

reading TO children: read alouds

reading WITH children: shared reading

focus poetry

language experience

reading BY children: guided reading

independent reading

Writing

writing FOR children: teacher-modeled

writing WITH children: Buzz Book

shared writing

writing BY children: independent writing

Writing Center

Modeled Writing:

*print awareness

*language and vocabulary

*sound/symbol association

*grammar, sentence structure, word usage, mechanics

*editing

*writing tools

*voice/print match

*directionality

*thinking through

Modeled Writing Activities:

***Name of the Day:** Begin by writing each of your students' names on strips of paper. Each day choose a new name to discuss.

- Step 1: Place the "name of the day" name strip on the board for everyone to see. Write the name (again) on a blank strip, announcing each letter as it's written. For example, "Capital T, lowercase r, lowercase a, lowercase v, lowercase i, lowercase s." Then ask what those letters spell.
- Step 2: Cut the second name strip apart, letter by letter. As each letter is cut, ask "Who has an s in his name?" Hand the letter to a child who knows where he/she has that letter (first name, last name, or middle name). Repeat this process until all letters are handed out.
- Step 3: The "name of the day" child then comes to the front to "call" for each of the letters in order. "Give me a T." (Then the child with that letter comes forward, places it in the pocket, and shouts, "T!") The "name of the day" student repeats the procedure until all letters are in the pocket, then asks, "What does that spell?"
- Step 4: Have the students spell back the name as you write it on the board. This is a good time to do lots "noticing." Ask them what they notice about the name. How many letters? Does it look like another word? Does it have any little words in it? How many vowels? How many consonants? How many syllables? Does it have any silent letters or vowel pairs? If you ask specific questions about what they notice from the beginning, they'll begin to notice them on their own later. They'll also begin to apply them to other words!

***Mystery Sentence:** Create a mystery sentence using the “name of the day” child.

- Step 1 Ask the child to whisper something he/she likes (can do, can go to, etc.).
- Step 2 On a sentence strip, write the mystery sentence: *Travis likes (cookies).*
- Step 3 Cover up the “mystery,” read the sentence with the class, and ask for ideas. Once they’ve shared a few ideas, uncover the first letter in the mystery word. Check to see if any of the guesses could still be correct. Keep repeating until the word is revealed.

***Think It, Say It, Repeat It, Write It:** For this activity, gather students together in a group.

- Step 1 Choose a student to think up a sentence (“story starter”). Before the sentence can be written, the rest of the class must be able to repeat it. (At first you and your class will have to repeat the sentence many times before it makes sense and can be remembered by everyone.)

“My brother is going to have a birthday party?”

- Step 2 Students dictate the sentence to you as you write it on chart paper, sentence strips, the board, or the overhead projector. Encourage them to speak the entire sentence as you write it... not choppy or word by word dictating.

- Step 3 Read the sentence together and urge students to ask questions about it. We call it “wondering.” (We have to teach early in the year the **difference** between asking a question and telling a personal experience.) This allows the author to begin elaborating on the original sentence.

How old is your brother? What is your brother’s name? Where is the party? When is the party? What kind of party will it be? Will he have a chocolate cake? Who gets to go?

- Step 4 The child may answer any of the questions, however the answer must be in sentence form. Continue to add as many sentences as the child chooses.

“My ~~brother~~ brother, Alden, is going to have a birthday party. He will be five years old. My mom will make homemade ice cream and we will play in the pool. It will be lots of fun!”

*Keep in mind this activity works best if it lasts no longer than 15 minutes once or twice a week.

***Riddle Tubs:** Students work on their descriptive writing skills here.

- Step 1 Place objects in a “feely tub”
- Step 2 Students reach in and describe the object to a partner and then record their descriptions in a riddle format: *It feels _____.* *It is _____-size.* *It is _____-shape.*
- Step 3 Students add their riddles to the class riddle book. Lots of fun!

***The Everyday Modeled Writing You Didn’t Even Know You Were Doing:**

- | | | |
|----------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------|
| *Calendar | *Letter Introduction | *Parent Folders |
| *Notes | *Word Wall Words | *Names |
| *Language Experience | *Predictable Pattern Charts | *Class Books |
| *Reading Responses | *Graphs | |

Shared Writing:

- *models how phonics works,
- *models conventional spelling,
- *Helps in hearing/sequencing sounds in words
- *develops print concepts
- *models mechanics of writing- capitals at beginning, punctuation (. ? !) at end, etc.,
- *aids in understanding the reciprocity of reading and writing,

Shared Writing Activities:

*All Modeled Writing activities can be modified and/or extended to become Shared Writing activities. Just let the students actually do some of the writing on the paper (or board or sentence strips or overhead transparencies, etc.). Basically.... Share the pen!

***Buzz Book/Shared Writing:** Just by utilizing “Buzz Book,” your class will learn more about:

- | | | |
|-------------------|-------------------------|----------------------------------|
| *letter formation | *letter characteristics | *letter/sound relationship |
| *sight words | *punctuation | *blends and digraphs |
| *word endings | *sentence structure | *vocabulary |
| *brainstorming | *editing | *organizing ideas into sentences |

***WRITING & READING!!!**

- Step 1: Begin with a “message skeleton.” (You may want to follow a predictable pattern but something should be missing or incorrect.)
- Step 2: The “buzz” (Students tell each other their ideas before sharing with the group.)
- Step 3: Share! (A few students share with the group. This should only last about 3-5 minutes, so not every student will have time to share with the group.)
- Step 4: Write! (Both teacher and students may share the marker to write group ideas.)
- Step 5: Reread and discuss! (Use this time to correct any mistakes, teach mini-lessons, and develop vocabulary.)

Do this 10-15 minutes every day and you will notice a difference.

***Predictable Pattern Charts:** Create a chart (or sentence strips) programmed with a predictable sentence frame. We suggest using thematic units, vocabulary, or a recently read book for ideas.

During the Farm Unit, a chart might look like this:

On the farm, I can see _____.

On the farm, I can see _____.

On the farm, I can see _____.

On the farm, I can see _____.

On the farm, I can see _____.

Choose between 5-10 children to write/complete the sentence frames... this activity should only last 15-20 minutes.

Guided Writing:

- *same components as above, but with a smaller group or one-on-one instruction
- *planned mini-lessons for individual students’ writing needs
- *conferencing with students during journaling

Independent Writing:

- *builds confidence as a writer,
- *develops understanding of uses of writing,
- *provides practice in different types of writing,
- *develops understanding of writing as a recursive process
- *strengthens story structure,
- *supports reading development,

Independent Writing Activities:

***Journal Writing:** Students write their own ideas with their own writing in their own journals. We believe that students will write more prolifically and more descriptively when given the opportunity to write about topics of their own choosing. That way they won't become dependent on someone else for writing topics.

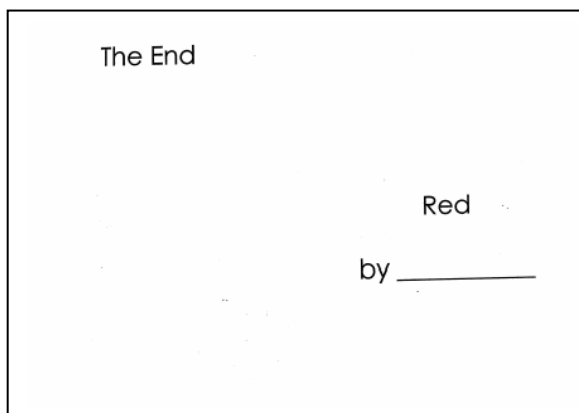
- Step 1 Students make plans for their own writing. Let them discuss their plans with each other for a minute **before** sending them off to write.
- Step 2 Students begin writing.
- Step 3 Students meet again with their journals to share with the group. This is a great time for other students to ask questions or “wonder” about the student’s writing. Then students may go back to their journals throughout the day to complete their thoughts.

***Prompted Writing:** Students respond to a simple writing prompt based on a thematic unit or story. Their writing may be as simple as an illustration or a one-word response. It could also be as elaborate as a few sentences.

A prompt for the beginning of the school year may look like this:

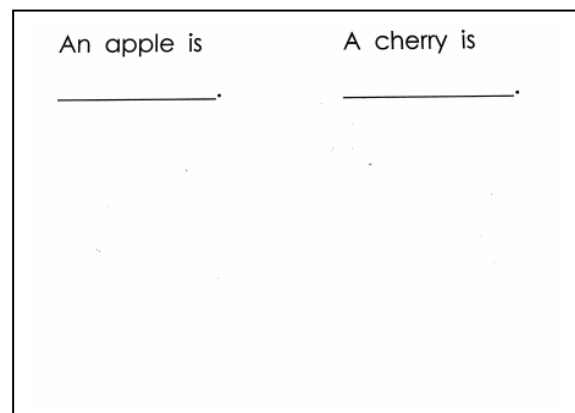
“I want to learn to ...”

***Patterned Booklets:** Students will write and illustrate in response to a patterned text. Their writing may be as simple as a one-word response or as elaborate as a few sentences. A patterned text for a Colors Unit may look like this:



(page 3)

(front cover)



(page 1)

(page 2)

Through these booklets, students get their first “taste” of publishing for others to read. They learn about audience, presentation, and confidence in themselves.

***Publishing:** Students are the authors here. There are no limits or boundaries.

Teachers provide the materials:

- *paper of all sizes, textures, and colors
- *writing instruments (pens, markers, pencils, chalk, etc.)
- *magazines (for pictures and words/letters)
- *stickers
- *ink stamps (pictures, date, words, etc.)
- *envelopes
- *binding rings, paper/tape book spines

Students provide the ideas, the words, and the illustrations. Encourage students to read their books to the class and share in the class library before sending home.

***Survey Says!:** Students become “pollers.” They will go around asking others their opinions on a given (or self-created) topic. They must keep records of whom they’ve polled and each person’s response. These results should be immediately posted so that the class is aware of preferences.

***Writing at the “Write Time” :**

*Writing should occur **all day** through **all subjects**, including math, art, science, and social studies.

***Teachers should be seen writing** so that students will write.

*Writing should have a **real purpose**, It should not be just for handwriting exercises or language arts worksheets.

*Encourage students to **“jot their thoughts”** before they forget that great idea... teachers should do the same.

*Students should also have the opportunity to express their **feelings** through writing... missing a parent, feeling tired, tattling on someone else, bragging about an accomplishment, or even a suggestion for the classroom. Teachers may even want a box to collect all these “writings” to be read aloud each day.

*Writing should also be viewed as **functional**. Students may write their own notes about lunch money, things to bring, field trips, homework, etc. They may even want to write the “recipe” for a project done at school so that it may be done at home.

*Writing should have an **audience** (besides the teacher). Students who learn about the different types of audiences, learn to write in different tones. They know who will be listening and make more of an effort to express themselves clearly, to entertain, or to be informative.