Identifying elementary teacher barriers in writing a focus on narrative, persuasive, and expository writing

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IDENTIFYING ELEMENTARY TEACHER BARRIERS IN WRITING:
A FOCUS ON NARRATIVE, PERSUASIVE,
AND EXPOSITORY WRITING

Michelle K Simmons

A Special Project
Submitted to the faculty of the Office of the Graduate School
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree
Master of Science in Education with a Major in Special Education
in the Department of Professional Studies
Indiana University-Purdue University Fort Wayne
April, 2013
Accepted by the Graduate Faculty, Indiana University-Purdue University Fort Wayne, in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Science in Education with a major in Special Education.

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Acknowledgements

This project took a lot of time, tears, and sweat this past year. First and foremost, I would like to thank Dr. Jane Leatherman, Director of the Special Education Programs at Indiana University-Purdue University, Fort Wayne, IN. If it weren’t for you, I literally would not have been able to finish my Master’s in Special Education Degree. You challenged, stretched, and encouraged me professionally. Your understanding and expertise in special education and understanding of life in general, nurtured me. In addition, I would like to thank Dr. Jeong-il Cho and Dr. Rama Cousik for your standards of high expectations. You both model what you teach, and you are a wealth of knowledge. I appreciate the time that you devoted to helping me with a product of high quality. Thank you for your honest feedback.

I would also like to thank Dr. Pat O’Connor, Superintendent of Whitley County Consolidated Schools, Mr. Jake Hoag, Principal of Northern Heights Elementary School, and the staff who supported me professionally, mentally and prayerfully. Northern Heights is a wonderful place to work, and I feel lucky to be among such expert educators. Special thanks goes to Lisa Kissinger, Teri Harmon, Heather Harris, Todd Geiger, Andrew Ferrell, Ryan Engelberth, and Candy Smith for listening to me vent my frustrations, whine about having no sleep, and providing me with emotional and verbal support. Thanks also to Julie Deathe for lifting me up with your words of encouragement as being a general education teacher and Jenna’s former teacher. Your words about Jenna’s learning in our classroom will always have a lasting memory.
Thank you to my forever friends, Susie Egolf, Julie Mast, Linda Landram, Barb Meyer, Lorraine Tartaglia, Wendy Meek, Kim MacDonald, Tara Tonkel, and Kathryn Purdy. You encouraged, prayed, and supported me in ways you will never know.

Thanks also to two special families, the Nolans (Zach, Jeanne, and Larry), and the Rennakers (Joe, Michael, Abby, Becky, and Paul). You took my son under your wing and allowed him to “live” with you any time that was needed. I know that you spent a lot of hours of your time and also money on him, and I will always remember your kindness.

Finally, I would like to thank my supportive family as well. Mom, thank you for seeing the value of having an education and supporting me when you saw how excited I was to go back to school. Thank you also for keeping Brayden and Kaylee on so many weekends, so I could work on my special project. Joey, I appreciate the time and money you spent providing transportation for your niece and nephew. Last but not least, I want to thank my son, Brayden, and daughter, Kaylee. You two saw a lot less of me, saw me stressed out to the max, and saw me functioning on very little sleep. I know I missed Turner’s and Chimer’s performances, basketball games, football games, and track meets, but every second I was away from you, it was you two who I thought of, knowing that getting my Master’s Degree would make things better for you. Brayden, I will never forget the words you said to me when I expressed how mentally and physically exhausted I really was and wanting to quit. You said, “Are you kidding me? You have two classes left. That is what… four months… no way you are quitting now!” Thank you for your words of encouragement, notes, hugs, and unconditional love. I love you two so much!
Abstract

Writing skills in students from the elementary to college level have declined in the past decade. Due to Indiana state legislation, the focus on writing in public schools has regressed, while reading and math have been pushed to the forefront of education reform. Writing skills are comprised of spelling, handwriting, cognitive, fine motor, and stamina skills. Teachers are reluctant to teach writing for a variety of reasons. This study focuses on different barriers that elementary school teachers, from one elementary school in the Whitley County Consolidated School district, have when teaching narrative, persuasive, and research pieces of writing to all students with varying abilities. Results of this study show that teacher barriers do exist when teaching writing at the elementary level, and it is important to identify and overcome those barriers, so students get the education they deserve and are prepared to compete globally for superior employment opportunities.

Keywords: barriers, narrative, persuasive, research, writing
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Chapter 1

Introduction

Statement of the Problem

Not too many years ago, public schools in the United States focused on the three R’s, which included reading, writing, and arithmetic. Presently, Indiana state lawmakers have passed laws in education with a strong focus on reading and math. Despite the large emphasis on these two subject areas, writing has not been a target area, even though the Indiana Statewide Testing for Educational Progress Plus Test (ISTEP+) contains a large written portion, which includes a writing prompt. Moreover, a national report produced by the National Commission on Writing in America’s Schools and Colleges in 2003 titled, “The Neglected “R”: The Need for a Writing Revolution” revealed that writing needed to be at the front of American school reform (“Report”, 2003). Additionally, current data from the 2008 National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) showed that “67% of eighth-grade and 76% of twelfth-grade students performed at or below the basic level in writing” (Gilbert & Graham, 2010, p. 494), with specifically, 70% of Indiana’s eighth-grade students included (Salahu-Din, Persky, & Miller, 2010). More alarmingly, only 5% of the students with disabilities performed above the basic level (Jacobson & Reid, 2010). If a focus is not applied to writing immediately for students of all abilities, our society will have individuals who can decode and comprehend reading material and figure out math problems, but who will not be able to write efficiently, effectively, accurately, and competitively for the global market (Kellogg & Whiteford, 2009).

In addition to a lack of writing focus in schools, students of varying abilities struggle with the actual task of writing. Knowing the prospective audience, holding a
writing utensil, thinking of ideas, writing legibly, spelling words accurately, writing complete sentences, persevering with stamina, and reading what has been written were some of the traits involved in writing. With so many different components, various students may struggle with one or more aspects of such a tedious task. Koutsoftas and Gray (2012) shared that the writing of students with a language-learning disability (LDD) can lack length, complex sentences, correct grammar, and correct spelling. Additionally, Sturm and Rankin-Erickson (2002) stated that revision skills and the use of higher-level vocabulary words were not used frequently. Teachers have to problem-solve and create lessons that effectively teach students with all kinds of behavioral, physical, language, and cognitive disabilities. Not only does a teacher have to figure out what each child is struggling with in the writing process, the teacher has to teach different skills and strategies to students individually and in small and large groups. Some educators disliked teaching writing for a variety of reasons, and to help other educators and students succeed at writing effectively, these barriers needed to be identified and overcome.

Specific problem. Teachers are reluctant to teach various forms of writing for numerous reasons, and the barriers included both tangible resources and mental attributes. Tangible resources are those resources that you can touch. Paper, pencils, computers, document cameras, white boards, chart paper, lesson plans, objective signs, and time would be considered tangible sources. If school districts have no supply money, tangible resources are affected. Due to the lack of language arts adoption materials, teachers are oftentimes left to support themselves, creating their own writing curriculum, which has no continuity among the grade levels. The lack of tangible barriers can be harmful in the classroom setting to teachers and students alike. Oftentimes, if school schedules are
interrupted and time is limited, writing is ignored, while math and reading still happen. Educators need to identify and acknowledge the barriers when it comes to the teaching of writing, so they can research, gain knowledge, and receive help in overcoming those barriers.

Teachers not only need to teach their students writing, they needed to be writers themselves (Morgan, 2010; Daisey, 2009; Grainger, 2005), modeling the thinking process as they write and giving suggestions from those experiences (Cremin, 2006). This can be a daunting task for some, as attitudes about writing began at a very early age and develop through adulthood. Mental barriers of writing teachers, including teacher efficacy, which was teacher confidence about their ability to teach students to learn (Klassen, Tze, Betts, & Gordon, 2010), has a large impact on the effectiveness and attitude of writing instruction in their classroom (Cutler & Graham, 2008). Some teachers do not see themselves as writers (Frank, 2003) and feel the education they received about writing when they were students was not high caliber (Morgan, 2010). Some teachers feel that their undergraduate work in the college they attended did not prepare them to teach writing successfully (Gilbert & Graham, 2010; Morgan, 2010). A few teachers have a fear of sharing and modeling their own writing in front of their students and other staff members, which caused anxiety and emotional distress (Cremin, 2006; Frank, 2003; Santangelo & Olinghouse, 2009). Still, others want or need positive reinforcement in how they are teaching writing is effective and accurate. When discussing different genres of writing, some teachers feel that teaching students how to write a narrative is easier than teaching a child the many steps involved with a research report or a persuasive piece of writing. Other teacher barriers include not knowing how to differentiate instruction or
lack of being an expert in multiple writing strategies to meet the ability levels of all students found in the classroom, including high ability, average ability, and low ability.

**Importance of the Study**

This study focused on elementary school teachers in one school in Columbia City, Indiana, which was part of Whitley County Consolidated Schools. An electronic quantitative survey was conducted with all elementary teachers at Northern Heights Elementary School. Investigating what tangible and mental barriers the elementary teachers possessed when teaching various genres of writing will help the principal plan for future professional development. The Northern Heights Elementary School administrator can discuss the issues with their prospective staff members and brainstorm ways to overcome the identified barriers to meet the needs of all children. Teachers will become more confident and effective in their teaching methods, and the students will become better writers, leading to higher success in college, and eventually to better jobs in the future. The researcher created a manual containing different strategies to help with teacher barriers when teaching persuasive, research, and narrative writing genres. By focusing on the results and conclusions of this study, professional development for educators at Northern Heights Elementary School would be relevant and beneficial, as the school administrator will have strong evidence in what the teachers need immediately and long term. The results of this research will also benefit all elementary school teachers and students at Northern Heights Elementary School with the written portion of the ISTEP+ test. Evidence-based writing strategies and skills will be focused on and taught, helping all students succeed. A last benefit of this study will be to help colleges organize and plan effective methods’ classes for prospective teachers of language arts in their undergraduate
Bachelors of Science degree programs, thus ensuring the confidence of new teachers that is needed in today’s public school systems.

**Definitions of Terms**

The language used when discussing barriers to effective writing can have multiple meanings. For the purpose of this study, the following terms were defined as follows.

**6 + 1 Traits™** – key components for assessing writing, which include: Ideas, Organization, Voice, Word Choice, Sentence Fluency, Conventions, and Publishing

**Barrier** – a physical item or emotional/mental condition that impedes

**Climax** – the most intense portion of a piece of writing

**Conclusion** – the ending of a piece of writing

**Document Camera** – an electronic visual presenter used to project materials in a larger format

**Genre** – a grouping of different pieces of literature based on similar characteristics. Examples are: realistic fiction, historical fiction, science fiction, mystery, poetry, non-fiction, etc.

**Introduction** – the beginning of a piece of writing

**iPad** – a tablet computer made by Apple with a large touchscreen on its face

**Mental Barrier** – an emotional/mental condition that impedes

**Mimio** – a vertical electronic bar that is used in conjunction with an overhead projector to make any flat surface interactive

**Narrative Writing** – a type of writing that tells a story in a fictional or non-fictional format
**Persuasive Writing** – a type of writing that is used to influence a reader’s way of thinking

**Research Writing** – a type of writing in which the author investigates and studies one particular topic and then writes systematically to explain that topic

**Rising Action** – the events of a piece of writing that lead up to the climax

**Smartboard** - an electronic, flat, interactive white board

**Tangible Barrier** – concrete, tactile items that impede

**Writing** – the task of creating words and symbols to communicate ideas or feelings

**Writing Workshop** – strategy that includes explicit instruction in the following steps of process writing: Brainstorm/Plan, Rough Draft, Revise, Edit, and Publish

**Research Approach**

This study was survey-based, which consisted of ten questions on an electronic Likert-type survey, created on Survey Monkey™. The survey was completed voluntarily and anonymously. A two-week time span was given for the participants to complete the survey on-line. Collection of data occurred by analyzing the findings of the electronic survey.
Chapter 2

Literature Review

Overview of Previous Research

New and experienced K-12 teachers have encountered barriers to teaching writing for a variety of reasons. Some teachers have felt they did not get proper training through the college classes that were a requirement to obtain a teaching license. Others felt that they did not have enough time in the day to teach, let alone grade different writing assignments. Many have felt inadequate to teach writing due to a lack of confidence in their own writing abilities or due to a lack of available writing curriculum. Certain genres of writing were more cumbersome to teach than others from a teacher’s perspective. In addition, American businesses have seen college graduates enter the workforce with minimal writing capabilities. This deficiency has cost employers billions of dollars to remediate struggling employees with writing skills that are needed in today’s job market. Through different literature studies, many deficiencies have become apparent in teachers and students alike. The barriers and deficiencies are further addressed in greater detail.

Undergraduate training of teachers. According to a national survey study of teachers who teach fourth through sixth grades by Gilbert and Graham (2010) and an article by Morgan (2010), teachers shared that they were not given proper instruction for teaching writing from their collegiate program for their undergraduate degree. Other important barriers the teachers revealed were the lack of writing time, lack of confidence, and inconsistencies in using evidence-based writing teaching strategies. Guo, Connor, Yang, Roehrig, and Morrison (2012) disturbingly found that teacher education and years of experience did not show a positive effect on student learning, which is concerning in
the education field, due to the number of teachers who pay to get a master’s degree so they can have a salary increase. Instead, this research proved that teacher efficacy, how teachers perceive themselves as being effective in teaching, having high expectations of their students, and how they respond to their students made the greatest gains in subject areas.

**College and career preparedness.** Due to the high stakes testing put upon national public elementary and high school education by the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) mandate, the focus on math and reading has increased while writing has decreased (Applebee & Langer, 2009). Half of high school graduates are not prepared for college writing (Kellog & Whiteford, 2009; Graham & Perin, 2007). Students who do not master the art of writing have a harder time being accepted into the college of their choice due to colleges putting more emphasis on writing tasks to apply and be accepted (Graham & Perin, 2007). Quible and Griffin (2007) discussed the necessity of making writing instruction a primary focus at all levels, including grammar and punctuation, so that high school and college graduates are more competitive in the job market.

Studies conducted by Kellogg and Whiteford (2009) and Quible and Griffin (2007) revealed the importance of writing in businesses and jobs. Quible and Griffin (2007) discussed that in the United States, many business owners are frustrated with the underdeveloped writing skills of newly-hired high-school and college graduates, and the amount of money, billions of dollars, that is being spent to help these employees develop more advanced writing skills. Businesses not only lose money due to poor writing skills of some employees; they also lose credibility, productivity time, and sometimes make poor decisions (Quible & Griffin, 2007). This study also has a strong focus on the amount
of time it takes to practice writing to become an efficient writer, starting at the kindergarten level. It takes practice to perfect any type of skill, and practice in writing is no different, especially when so many skills actually make up the writing process: cognitive, perceptual, visual, and fine motor. The more practice students have in writing, starting at an early age, the better writers our high schools will produce, thus leading to successful college careers and better employment opportunities.

Budig (2006) revealed specific points based on a report issued by the College Board's National Commission on Writing that was sent to lawmakers in 2004. This particular study stated that individuals with effective communication skills, both orally and written, were better candidates for higher paying jobs. It also stated that many corporations check writing skills of potential employees. Two-thirds of all working individuals have to perform writing tasks at their place of employment as well. Budig (2006) wanted a focus on money being put into public education now to promote effective writing skills, rather than employers covering the cost post-graduate level.

**Barriers to Teaching Writing**

Previous studies focused on kindergarten through sixth grade in schools nationally, where teachers responded in survey form, the barriers they encountered while actually instructing students in writing (Gilbert & Graham, 2010; Colby & Stapleton, 2006; Cutler & Graham, 2008). Every state has different laws, standards, and regulations regarding the teaching of subject matter. Teacher experience is not a clear factor in determining if that teacher has barriers when teaching writing, as both new and seasoned teachers have similar fears and confidences when teaching writing. Other studies have
listed different barriers, but the studies do not focus on how to help educators with those barriers.

**Mental barriers.** Colby and Stapleton (2006) shared information provided by the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), the National Commission on Writing, and the Conference on College Composition and Communication (CCCC) which is an interest group of the National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE). The NAEP scores from 2004 reflected that students nationally improved in math and reading while writing scores have been inconsistent. The National Commission on Writing explains that for teachers to be effective, they need to be writers, too. According to Frank (2003) barriers to effectively teaching writing skills to all ages include the following: teachers are not sure how or what to teach to their students, having writing apprehension and anxiety, and focus on editing skills, rather than how to write complex sentences.

Anxiety and fear of student results from high stakes testing can take a toll on a teacher physically and mentally. A study, by Lenski, Bellrose, Calvert, Filarski, Theleritis, and White (2005), identified one barrier to teaching writing as the constant stress of high stakes testing. Some teachers fear that if they teach writing using a Writing Workshop approach, their students will not fare as well as if they used traditional writing methods. Other teachers feel pressure about how and when to address Writing Workshop, genre studies, and district-wide mandated monthly writing prompts in their classrooms, and if the teachers are not positive how to teach those items or how to even get started with the instruction, sometimes the teachers put writing off, instead of tackling writing instruction first.
**Tangible barriers.** Some classrooms have had very little or no time given by their teachers to practice writing, while other classrooms have given no time for instruction of writing (Troia & Graham, 2003). The more time the students have to practice writing, the better writers the students become. Teachers who have low self-concepts do not put a high emphasis of writing time in their classrooms (Morgan, 2010). This is due to the teacher’s mentality how they perceive themself as a writer. The more confident and value that a teacher places on their own writing capability, the more time they provide their students to write every day. McGhee and Lew (2007) suggest that administrators provide time for colleagues to collaborate about best practices in teaching reading and writing. This collaboration could be grade level or across grade levels. When teachers discuss what strategies are working and not working, all teachers and students benefit, because no time is wasted on ineffective instructional techniques.

Time is not the only tangible barrier, but technology is also. Research is strongest on the subject of struggling writers using a word processor, which can be found on desktop computers or laptops. For struggling writers, word processing provides better quality, longer length, and improvement in spelling by using the spell-check feature (Santangelo & Olinghouse, 2009). Different websites, applications and software programs can be beneficial for the instruction of writing as well. Pixwriter software can be used to help students develop stories by clicking on words and making sentences that make sense (Pennington, Stenhoff, Gibson, & Ballou, 2012). Communication and writing has various formats for our student population inside and outside of the parameters of a school building. The technological vocabulary is constantly changing and adding new terms frequently. Students communicate by writing text messages, writing instant
messages (IM), writing on Twitter, writing an e-mail, posting information on numerous social networking sites, and sharing information on blogs (Sweeny, 2010). Much to an English teacher’s dismay, not all of the writing that students create in today’s world follow the correct English format. Nonetheless, it is the educators’ responsibility to stay current with technology to enhance learning in the classroom. Writing teachers need to have tangible resources to use during writing instruction time. Having an administrator who supports effective reading and writing strategies should make sure all classrooms have any supplies that are needed for this to happen (McGhee & Lew, 2007). Question 2 and 3 refer to how much time is spent on teaching writing in classrooms.

Writing Genres

Narrative writing, story writing, is a much easier genre to write for students in comparison to research reports or persuasive essays (Koutsoftas & Gray, 2012). Narrative writing may include characters, setting, plot, problem, solution, rising action, climax, and conclusion.

Persuasive writing, otherwise known as argumentative writing, is a difficult task for writers of all abilities. The author is presented with a topic, and then has to form an opinion using one point of view. After the author forms an opinion, he/she has to develop main ideas with supporting details to support the author’s thinking. Teaching students multiple points of view about one topic, and letting the students form their own opinions is imperative when teaching persuasive writing (Nippold, Ward-Lonergan, & Fanning, 2005).

Research reports involve researching information from professional websites, books, journals, and encyclopedias. After comprehending the reading material found in
various sources, notes need to be taken in the author's own words, avoiding plagiarism.

An outline can be created after the note-taking process to help the author organize his/her thoughts. Then a rough draft is written, revised, edited, and finally published.

**Evidence-Based Writing Strategies**

Santangelo, Harris, and Graham (2008) share that all educators have to, by law, use research-based teaching strategies in the instruction of writing, according to the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004 and the federally-mandated No Child Left Behind Act. The following sections will detail several research-based writing strategies.

**Writing workshop.** Writing workshop involves both process writing and cognitive strategy approaches (Santangelo & Olinghouse, 2009). Process writing includes brainstorming, planning, writing a rough draft, revising, editing, and publishing a piece of writing. Kissel (2008) suggested five areas that are needed for a successful writing program for young children, which describes writing workshop in action. The first step is brainstorming or coming up with ideas, followed by modeled writing by the teacher. The next step is the sharing of ideas among children to generate more ideas with a longer period of time for the students to actually write and meet with their teacher. The last step that Kissel (2007) recommended is for the students to share their actual writing.

Santangelo and Olinghouse (2009) share that another part of writing workshop is the inclusion of cognitive strategy instruction, which "includes explicit and systematic instruction, direct instruction, scaffolding, and modeling" (p. 8). It involves thinking about "how" writers think and write, not just "why" writers write. Graham and Sandmel (2011) list three benefits of using the writing workshop approach. First, students move
through the process writing stages. Second, improvements in student writing should occur
due to how the instruction is set up, with mini-lessons, conferencing, and sharing. Third,
student enthusiasm should be higher when a positive writing environment is established.
Writing workshop is differentiation in writing and beneficial for all students, no matter
the ability level, because each student works at their own level and pace (Furr & Bauman,
2003). Berry (2006) recognizes process writing, which can be taught through writing
workshop, as an intervention strategy that is found in many studies.

**Self-regulated strategy development.** Self-regulated strategy development
(SRSD) is a writing strategy that educators can use with any student. The strategy entails
goal setting, progress monitoring, and self-regulation in small steps (Jacobson & Reid,
2010). There are six steps to SRSD according to Graham, Harris, and MacArthur (2006).
Stage one is where the teacher provides background knowledge about a topic. Stage two
is discussing how the SRSD strategy works. In stage three, the teacher models the
strategy. The student memorizing the steps of the SRSD strategy is stage four. The
teacher assesses student mastery in stage five, and in stage six, the student is using the
strategy independently. Graham and Harris (2009) study found great increases in overall
writing ability when using the SRSD strategy. This strategy is effective in all different
genres of writing (Mason, Harris, & Graham, 2011).

**6+1 traits™ of writing.** Nauman, Stirling, and Borthwick (2011) explained that
the 6+1 Traits™ of Writing was developed by teachers, and then the Northwest Regional
Educational Laboratory (NWREL) used the traits to define what good, quality writing
had. Fry and Griffin (2010) went on to explain further that effective writing contains 6
components: ideas, organization, voice, word choice, sentence fluency, and conventions,
with the +1 trait of presentation. The 6+1 Traits™ provide a research-assessed way of writing defined by present-day writing gurus of what effective writing should possess (Nauman, Stirling, & Borthwick, 2011). Students who are taught to write to test-specific questions score lower on standardized tests versus students who write daily for meaning using effective writing strategies, 6+1 Traits™, taught from their teacher (Higgins, Miller, & Wegmann, 2006). So the 6+1 Traits™ should be utilized in all classrooms and used throughout any genre of writing to make student writing better.

**Writing tips using acronyms for essay writing.** Helping students understand how to write for many different purposes, including various genres, can be difficult. Teaching students, with the use of acronyms, can be beneficial to the student remembering and performing the best. One acronym to help students write essays is the DARE strategy, according to Jacobson and Reid (2010). The “D” stands for developing a sentence with a main idea. When a student writes an essay, they need to come up with a thesis sentence about what their entire essay will be about. Some thought and planning needs to occur, as coming up with supporting details can sometimes be a challenging task for students. The “A” stands for add at least three supporting details. When students add supporting details, their writing is more thorough and used with complete thoughts. The “R” stands for reject one opinion from the other side but support your ideas. Students need to be able to see both sides to an issue, and when the student writes about one view from the other side, while still supporting their view or idea, their writing has more validity. The “E” is where the student ends with strong voice and word choice, which are two of the 6+1 Traits™ of writing. Teaching students to use their voice and the right word(s) in their writing makes their writing stronger, instead of sounding robotic and
using basic vocabulary. Another writing strategy using the acronym STOP can also be used for writing persuasive essays, according to Jacobson and Reid (2010). The “S” stands for stop judgment, meaning the student needs to understand both sides of a topic or issue, and then they need to stop going back and forth on their opinion at hand. The “T” is where the student takes a side and then brainstorms supporting details for their side. The more supporting details the student has, the more content the essay will entail. The “O” stands for organize ideas mentally. The student is taught how to organize ideas in his/her head, which leads to the “P” of STOP, which is to plan continuously as he/she write their essay, adding details as they write.

**Writing tips using acronyms for planning.** Planning writing can be difficult for students at all levels, and Mason, Harris, and Graham (2009) discussed a planning strategy for research, persuasive, and story writing called POW. The “P” is when the student picks an idea, which sometimes can be the hardest step of writing for any student. Once the student knows what they are going to write about, they need to organize their notes mentally and visually, which is the “O” of POW. Coming up with a plan on how the writing flows is an important step. The “W” stands for write and say a lot. The acronym POW could be used at any level. In addition, Mason, Harris, and Graham (2009), shared another strategy to help in planning writing, especially expository writing, and it is known as PLAN. The “P” stands for prompt-pay attention. When a student is presented with a writing prompt, the student needs to pay attention and comprehend what the prompt is asking and what exactly is the purpose of the writing that they are asked to do. The “L” stands for list main ideas, where the student lists main ideas and adds supporting details for those main ideas, which is the “A” of PLAN. The “N” is number
major thoughts. The major thoughts are the main ideas for the paragraphs, and every student should be able to come up with at least three strong major thoughts, which will become the three paragraphs in the middle. One last strategy for expository writing, that Mason, Harris, and Graham (2009) showed, is WRITE. The “W” stands for work from your plan. The purpose of a student planning and putting forth the effort to come up with ideas and actually writing them down, helps guide the student when actually doing the writing. The “R” stands for remember the goals, which helps remind the student to remember the goals of the writing prompt and of their position of the topic. Teaching the student to include transition words and phrases is the “I” of WRITE. Transition words are important to use when writing essays, because they help the reader follow the thoughts of the author. The “T” stands for try to use varying sentence fluency, where the student uses short sentences and combines sentences to make more complex sentences. With sentence fluency, the writing also should flow. Not only should the writing have various sentence complexity, the writing should also contain exciting word choice, which is the “E” of WRITE.

More time in writing practice. Writing takes stamina, hard work, and time. Every student should write at school and at home daily (Troia & Graham, 2003). Santangelo and Olinghouse (2009) make a point that not enough time is spent on writing, and the time that is devoted to writing is not balanced. They state that out of a given hour of writing instruction, half of that time is spent on grammar, spelling, and handwriting and that the rest of the time is given to the craft of constructing sentences. Not only should students write during writing instruction, they should write across the subject areas (Santangelo & Olinghouse, 2009). Barlow (2003) stressed the importance of every
teacher being held responsible for teaching writing skills across all content areas. The more students write in math, social studies, reading, and science, the more practice the students are getting and the better they are at writing complex tasks. Another mentionable item that Barlow (2003) stated was that it was solely the teachers’ responsibilities to provide students with accurate feedback rapidly. The quick response time allows the students to reflect on how they wrote certain assignments. Increasing writing across the content areas gives students the needed practice to write for longer periods of time, focusing on different purposes for the writing. Allowing students to write, responding to writing, and learning writing as a process is the recommendation of teaching writing for teachers according to the CCCC (Colby & Stapleton, 2006). However, according to Fry & Griffin (2010), improvement in student writing will not happen with only with more time to write, but teacher improvement of instructional techniques have to be a must.

**Observing expert teachers.** Onafowora (2004) shared that all teachers should have plenty of opportunities to observe expert teachers in the areas of classroom management, teaching strategies, and effective instruction. Yost (2002) encouraged mentoring sessions to last a longer period of time, involve inquiry-based research, provide enough time for strategy practice, and build up teacher morale

**Researched-based strategies.** Troia and Graham (2003) listed many ideas on researched-based strategies for teaching spelling. They suggest that 60-75 minutes per week should be spent on spelling instruction. Additionally, a pretest should be given, so the child knows what words to study for the week, and when the child takes the posttest at the end of the week, the child should correct the words they missed. Wall charts should be used to give the students visual cues for words that are tricky or difficult. Spelling
accurately in writing is necessary for the audience to know what the author is actually trying to say.

According to Troia and Graham (2003), they additionally suggested several different research-based strategies to help improve handwriting skills. Seventy-five to one hundred minutes should be given for instruction at the primary grade levels. Letters that are commonly reversed should have special attention given to them. Modeling of the letters is done by the teacher, and the students are shown how to sit properly for the best handwriting to occur. Writing legibly is important for the audience to actually decipher the letters put together to make words to understand what the author is trying to say.

Several strategies for teachers to use for writing instruction were mentioned by Troia and Graham (2003). Classrooms should be literacy-rich, with words displayed on walls, books are readily available for the students to use, and student writing is displayed on the walls. Every day, a well-organized and well-managed writing time should happen in every classroom to help students think, write, and reflect, while teacher modeling of thinking, writing, and new strategies transpire (Troia & Graham, 2003). In fact, in Indiana, an uninterrupted 90-minute reading block is mandated for kindergarten through 3rd grade, while the 90-minute reading block for 4th and 5th grades can be interrupted with further reading time during the content areas of social studies, science, and health.

**Summary of Research**

The research provides examples of mental and tangible barriers that teachers of writing can possess when teaching students of all abilities. Not only are there barriers that teachers can touch and think about, but there are difficulties when teachers instruct students with writing problems in various genres. Teachers need to know a multitude of
ways to help struggling writers write narrative, informational, and persuasive pieces effectively. To find out this information, the following questions were addressed:

What barriers do elementary teachers have when teaching three different genres of writing: persuasive, narrative, and research report writing to students?

What genre of writing is the most difficult to teach students with writing disabilities?
Chapter 3

Methodology

Description of the Research Methodology

Before the study began, an email was sent (Appendix A) to Whitley County Consolidated School district superintendent, which requested permission to conduct a quantitative study on the certified elementary teachers from Northern Heights Elementary School in Columbia City, Indiana. Attached to the email was an outline of the study, which explained the time frame, goals of the study, and benefits for the district. Once permission was granted by the superintendent, an email was sent (Appendix A) to the principal of Northern Heights Elementary School, seeking permission to conduct the study. Once permission was granted by the principal (Appendix C), an email was sent (Appendix D) to the certified teachers at Northern Heights Elementary School, which explained and discussed the purpose of the study and asked for their participation to ensure all teachers have an opportunity to openly discuss the positives and negatives about teaching writing. The survey was emailed (Appendix E), and an explanation that the survey needed to be returned within two weeks was given. The survey was created using Survey Monkey™, so when the teachers finished the survey and hit submit, the results were immediately sent to the investigator electronically. Two reminder emails were sent to the participants one week prior and one day prior to the deadline. An email of appreciation was sent to all of the participants when the surveys were completed.

Research Design

A Survey Research design method was used in this study, consisting of an electronic Likert-type survey. Once the survey was sent electronically to the certified
teachers at Northern Heights Elementary School in Columbia City, Indiana, the participants had two weeks to complete. The collection of data occurred by using the reports and graphs found on Survey Monkey™. Based on the results of the study, the researcher created a teacher manual to assist general education teachers in overcoming barriers to teaching writing and provided ideas on strategies for writers at all levels.

**Participants**

The research participants included 28 teachers who teach kindergarten through fifth grade, including the related arts teachers, at Northern Heights Elementary School in Columbia City, Indiana. There were 12 primary, 11 intermediate, 3 related arts, and 2 special education/speech teachers. Analyzing what teachers think and feel about writing in their classrooms was done in a non-threatening, non-biased manner, and the results were shared with the administrator to provide additional professional development in the area of writing.

**Setting**

Rural Whitley County Consolidated School District is located in Columbia City, Indiana, and consists of four elementary schools: one middle school, one traditional high school, and one technological education high school. Northern Heights Elementary School is a rural school that averages five hundred students yearly, participating in Kindergarten through 5th grade. Ninety-five percent of the student population is Caucasian, with the other five percent is culturally diverse. Approximately 35% of the students receive free or reduced lunches. On the 2010-2011 ISTEP+ state assessment, the school scored an 84.9% for English/Language Arts, while in 2011-2012, only 83.7% passed.
Data Survey

A Likert-type electronic survey with approximately 10 questions was created and sent to all certified teachers at Northern Heights Elementary School in Columbia City, Indiana. Questions revolved around the teaching of narrative, persuasive, and research report writing. Other questions specifically asked what type of writing was the most difficult to teach all students, including students with a writing disability. Still, other questions related to the barriers of teaching writing, including mental and tangible barriers. The latter part of the survey focused on materials to assist with teaching writing.

Data Collection Procedure

The researcher accessed Survey Monkey™, collected the responses, and analyzed the data. Survey Monkey™ was user-friendly, with the collection of the responses easily documented and percentages of the total population given. After careful analysis of the data received, the researcher created charts and graphs to depict the information gleaned from the survey. After careful collection and recording of the data, analysis of all of the information followed. A summary of findings with an interpretation through data analysis, including appendices for the survey, graphs, and/or charts, was written which explained the findings of the certified teaching staff from Northern Heights Elementary School. In addition, the researcher created a Microsoft PowerPoint presentation, which was sent electronically by email to share with the administrator.

Project: Narrative Description of the Project

The idea for this research project developed from various colleagues who teach in different school systems. Discussing the quality of writing that is seen from students of today is much different than what has been seen in the past. Additionally, talking with
new and experienced teachers, many discuss how they really do not know what they are
doing when it comes to writing instruction. Many school systems have not adopted any
language arts books, so it is up to the educator to create or search for lessons to use for
this difficult subject area.

Listening to colleagues say, “I don’t know what I am doing.”, “How do you teach
note-taking?”, and “I am too embarrassed to write in front of my students.”, led the
researcher to want to find out what mental and physical barriers teachers have when it
comes to the actual physical task of teaching students to write. Wanting to know what the
teachers from Northern Heights Elementary School thought their barriers might be when
teaching writing to students with various ability levels is the goal of this research project.
A Likert-type electronic survey was given to all elementary teachers, including the
related arts’ teachers, special education teacher, and speech pathologist. Of the three
areas of writing, the researcher predicted that the staff of Northern Heights would reveal
research writing as being the hardest to teach to students due to the many cognitive steps
involved. Careful reading of the literature was done to ensure that accurate data and facts
were relayed.
Chapter 4

Results and Discussions

Of the twenty-eight participants that were sent the electronic survey, 15 teachers actually completed it, which is a 54% response rate. Some of the teachers might not have responded due to a variety of reasons, including lack of time, interest, or relativity. The results of the survey were both predictable and surprising in different areas: predictable when it came to teacher confidence of teaching the first three steps of the writing process and college preparedness, and surprising at the type of writing the teachers thought was the most difficult to teach their students. Some of the teachers did mark the neutral and \( \textit{N/A = Not Applicable} \) column on some of the questions, which could mean several things. One, the teachers had no experience with the information asked. Secondly, the teachers might not have known the definitions of specific vocabulary used. Last, the teachers might have honestly had no feeling either way of disagreeing or agreeing with some of the questions. Overall, the majority of the teachers had very few mental barriers and felt comfortable teaching writing in their classrooms using process writing. The teachers also had mixed reviews when asked about tangible items, technology in relation to teaching writing. Some teachers felt strongly that technology wasn’t necessary to teach writing, but that having enough paper, pencils, and space was. Even though the results were lower for the confidence level of teaching students how to write a research report, the teachers stated that persuasive writing was the most difficult to teach, while it was apparent narrative writing was the easiest to instruct. Most surprising was that 60% of the teachers teach writing for thirty minutes, while 27% teach writing for fifteen minutes, while only 13% teach for forty-five minutes. Of all the responses, almost 30% of the teachers do not
teach writing every day. This could potentially be a harmful practice, especially if the teachers who teach writing for only fifteen minutes, teach writing only one day a week.

**Mental Barrier Results – Writing Instruction**

Question number nine, with six sub-parts, asked about the components of writing instruction, and the teachers felt confident when knowing what mini-lessons to teach their students, as 87% agreed and strongly agreed, and 13% were neutral. When it came to creating effective anchor charts in mini-lessons, 67% of the respondents agreed they knew how to effectively do this, however; 33% were neutral. Seventy-three percent of the teachers felt confident when assessing student writing fairly and accurately, while 13% somewhat disagreed, and another 13% were neutral. When it came to teachers’ attitudes about their undergraduate college education, 73% of the respondents strongly disagreed and disagreed that their Bachelor of Science degree did not prepare them to teach writing, while 13% were neutral, and only 7% strongly agreed. These results coincide with Morgan (2010), where teachers shared that they were not given proper instruction in their undergraduate programs. Sixty-six percent of the respondents agreed and somewhat agreed to knowing how to differentiate instruction for students of all abilities, 20% were neutral and 13% disagreed and strongly disagreed. When the respondents were questioned about their knowledge on making accommodations for struggling students, 73% agreed and strongly agreed, 7% were neutral, and 20% disagreed and strongly disagreed.

Graphs 1 and 2 highlight two of the questions and results when teaching writing to all students of all abilities. Refer to these questions with full data in Appendix F.
Graph 1

Differentiating Instruction

I know how to differentiate my instruction

- Strongly Agree: 13%
- N/A - Not Applicable: 0%
- Strongly Disagree: 7%
- Disagree: 7%
- Neutral: 20%
- Agree: 53%

Graph 2

Accommodations in Writing for Students

I know how to make accommodations for students in writing

- Strongly Agree: 20%
- N/A - Not Applicable: 0%
- Disagree: 13%
- Neutral: 7%
- Agree: 53%
Graph 1 depicts that 66% of the respondents felt confident when making lessons that are differentiated, and Graph 2 shows that 73% felt confident when making accommodations for struggling writers, which is a good start. The results that should be looked at further are the other 27% to 34% of the teachers whom do not feel confident in these areas. There were also neutral responses to these two questions, which leads the researcher to believe that the participants who responded that way might not know what differentiation and accommodations actually mean, or they responded as neutral because they really did not want to reply with a negative answer about their teaching and understanding of effective teaching strategies. Not knowing exactly which participants responded with these answers, if all teach one grade level, this could pose a serious problem if not addressed promptly. All certified educators, no matter what grade level or subject matter they teach, should have enough knowledge and confidence to provide different lessons for varying abilities in writing and be able to make accommodations for students when deemed necessary. Research shows that teachers’ lack of confidence and inconsistencies in using evidence-based writing strategies is an issue according to Gilbert and Graham (2010). The mental barriers of uncertainty with accommodations and differentiating instruction should be addressed during professional development.

Mental Barrier Results – Process Writing Instruction

Question number four of the survey had six sub-parts, asking about instruction of the writing process. Confidence was greatest when teaching the first three steps of the writing process: Brainstorming, Planning, and Rough Draft. When it came to the last three steps: Revising, Editing, and Publishing, the teachers did not feel as confident. When asked about teaching the writing process, 100% of the respondents agreed and
strongly agreed in their confidence level when teaching students how to brainstorm ideas. Eighty-seven percent of the teachers agreed and strongly agreed that they felt confident when teaching their students how to plan out their writing, while 13% were neutral. When it came to the actual physical task of writing a rough draft, 87% of the certified educators agreed and strongly agreed that they knew how to teach the kids how to write a rough draft, 7% were neutral, and another 7% responded as not applicable. Results for teacher confidence in revision instruction were varied with 40% agree, 7% strongly agree, 27% were neutral, and 27% disagreed and strongly disagreed. Fifty-three percent of the respondents reported that they agreed and strongly agreed how to teach students to edit their writing, while 20% were neutral, and 27% disagreed and strongly disagreed. The final stage of process writing, publishing, also has a mixed review, as 67% agreed and strongly agreed they were confident with publishing ideas. Thirteen percent of the teachers responded as neutral, 7% disagreed, and 13% strongly disagreed as knowing how to give their students ideas for publishing. These results, specifically editing, negates the current research, which says that educators focus more on editing skills than how to write complex sentences, according to Frank (2003).

Graphs 3 and 4 highlight two of the questions and the results, that were the most surprising when it came to teaching process writing to all students of all abilities. Refer to these questions with full data in Appendix G.
Graph 3

Confidence when Teaching Revision

Graph 4

Confidence when Teaching Editing
Graph 3 depicts 53% of the respondents not being confident when teaching revision. Revision deals with how the students' writing sounds, while editing includes capitalization, punctuation, grammar, and spelling. When discussing the 6+1 Traits™ of writing, revision encompasses the first five traits, which are ideas, organization, voice, word choice, and sentence fluency. One reason that revision might be a difficult concept to teach is the teacher’s lack of knowledge of revision techniques. Some teachers might not know how to help a student create a better sounding introduction or how to teach a child to write sentences that flow. Other teachers might not know the best way to teach students how to use a thesaurus so there are not a lot of repetitive words in the writing. Another reason might be that the students all have their own individual piece of writing, and revision conferencing might be difficult to manage, especially in large classroom settings. These findings agree with current research in which revision skills are not used frequently, according to Sturm and Rankin-Erickson (2002). Graph 4 shows that 46% of the staff is not confident when teaching editing. Editing involves the sixth trait, which is conventions and includes capitalization, punctuation, spelling, paragraphing, grammar, sentence fragments, and run-on sentences. Teaching editing skills can also be a challenge for teachers, mostly due to the fact that there are so many different components to editing. A teacher might know several strategies to help students improve their spelling skills, but possibly might not be as knowledgeable when a student needs help with grammar. Research shows that students with disabilities in writing oftentimes struggle with all aspects of editing according to Koutsoftas and Gray (2012). At times, these children think their writing is perfect, even after multiple times of reading it. Professional development
in the areas of revising and editing should be addressed with certified staff members, so the teachers feel confident when teaching these parts of process writing.

**Tangible Barriers – Technology and Writing Materials**

Question number ten deals with technology and materials to use when writing. There were mixed responses on needing tangible items for teaching writing. All of the participants responded that they needed adequate amounts of paper, writing utensils, and plenty of space to teach writing effectively in their classrooms. As far as the technology related questions, the respondents’ answers did not have such a high agreement percentage, especially when it came to newer technology devices. This could possibly be due to a few factors. First of all, the staff members’ ages range from 23-63, and sometimes older teachers are afraid of change, they are nervous that they will not know how to use the technology efficiently. Secondly, when surveyed about the mimio, smartboard, desktop computers, and iPads, the responses ranged from 36% to 43% as neutral. This could be due to the fact that the participants might not have known what these devices were or how these devices could be used to teach writing. Third, when asked about having LCD projectors and document cameras, which a lot of the staff members already have, 77% to 86% responded that they needed these items to teach writing. Again, this could be due to the staff members being familiar with these two items and not being nervous how they work. One last thing to note is the number of participants who responded with N/A – Not Applicable. Technology should be applicable to all levels and all subjects. Santangelo and Olinghouse (2009) make a strong point when they stated that students have to have explicit training how to use new technology pieces, or that particular piece of technology is absolutely useless to the students’ improvement in
writing. Maybe it has to do with the mindset that technology doesn’t create effective learning, but teaching effective writing strategies does. To support this claim, one teacher responded with, “Would love to have the technology but it is not essential to have all of it…even though it would make it easier.” If we are moving into a technology-rich era, and students are going to have to compete globally for careers, it is imperative to keep up with current technological products in the classroom setting.

Question number ten results, of teaching writing effectively, were 77% agreed and strongly agreed they needed an LCD projector, while 15% strongly disagreed, and 8% were not applicable. Eighty-six percent of the teachers agreed and strongly agreed that a document camera was necessary, but 14% strongly disagreed. The responses of the teachers regarding a mimio were spread out, with 15% agreed, 36% were neutral, 14% disagreed, 14% strongly disagreed, and 21% were not applicable. Teachers also had mixed responses when questioned about the use of a smarboard in their rooms, as 15% agreed, 39% were neutral, 23% disagreed, 8% strongly disagreed, and 15% were not applicable. Having enough laptops for every child also created a mixed response, where 21% agreed, 43% were neutral, 7% disagreed, 14% strongly disagreed, and another 14% were not applicable, which is a lower percent when current research from Santangelo and Olinghouse (2009) showed that word processing provided struggling writers with a better quality product. Similar ideas were shared when asked about having enough iPads for every student, as 7% agreed, 36% were neutral, 14% disagreed, 14% strongly disagreed, and 29% were not applicable. Having enough amounts of paper, writing utensils, and space for students to write yielded the exact same results, with 80% strongly agreed and 20% agreed in all three areas respectively.
Eight sub-parts to question 10 were asked on the survey regarding tangible items. Graph 5 and Graph 6 highlight two of the questions and the results that the participants shared about tangible barriers. Refer to these questions with full data in Appendix H.

Graph 5

Laptop Use in Writing

In Graph 5, 46% of the participants claimed that every child should have a laptop to use for effective writing instruction, further investigation about laptop use in elementary schools during writing instruction needs to be addressed. Observing technology-rich schools and classrooms that use laptops, researching ISTEP+ data, and researching technology with writing is important when making decisions about future technological purchases for the school district.

Time. Questions 2 and 3 on the survey refer to how much time is spent on teaching writing in classrooms. Higgens, Miller, and Wegmann (2006) show that the
more time that is spent on writing, the better the students write, and the better the students score on standardized testing. According to the Whitley County Consolidated School District’s requirement, 45 minutes should be given to writing instruction every day. In Graph 6, only 13% of the teachers reported that they actually teach for this amount of time daily. Sixty percent of the teachers teach writing daily for 30 minutes, 27% teach for only 15 minutes, and no teachers teach writing for an hour or more. With pressures from the state to cover Indiana state standards and also the Common Core standards, teachers possibly might cut instructional time in writing to spend more time in math or reading. Even though 100% of the teachers responded that they teach reading daily for a certain number of minutes, 27% disagreed that they taught writing daily, and only 27% strongly agreed that they indeed teach writing every day, shown in Graph 7. Further discussions should happen with the staff to discuss the reasons as to why writing instruction is not being taught daily in every grade for at least 45 minutes.

Graph 6

*Number of Minutes Writing is Taught Daily*
Lack of writing curriculum. Question number one on the survey asks about the writing curriculum. The staff does not have one central writing curriculum to follow. The spelling component is covered through the current reading series, and some teachers have created units of writing, grammar, and spelling that they have shared with colleagues. When asked whether the teacher created their own writing curriculum, 47% agreed, 27% strongly agreed, and 27% disagreed. With 74% of the teachers creating their own writing curriculum, there are many different varieties and way of teaching writing in the building.
Further investigations need to happen to see if common language, common strategies, and common ideas are being used.

**Genres of Writing**

Teaching different genres of writing can be difficult to do in the general education classroom with students of all abilities. Knowing that different steps go into teaching different genres, graph 8 shows 60% of the teachers responded that the most difficult genre to teach kids of all abilities to write is a persuasive piece followed with the other 40% responding with teaching students how to write a research report. The teachers felt that narrative writing was the easiest genre of writing to teach.

Graph 8

**Genres of Writing**

![Bar Graph](image)

**Most Difficult Type of Writing to Teach**

All Students

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Genre of Writing</th>
<th>Number of Responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Research Report</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Persuasive Piece</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Narrative Piece</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Persuasive writing.** Persuasive writing entails many different components and can be used in essays, letters, stories, etc. Even though the scores were sometimes lower on the questions regarding research report writing, the participants shared that persuasive writing was the hardest. Most teachers feel comfortable instructing their students on how
to write a persuasive piece and conferencing, but feel uncomfortable with the formats, books for mini-lessons, and using the 6+1 Traits™ in persuasive writing. Some even feel uncomfortable with modeling how to write each paragraph.

Specifically, 93% of the teachers responded that they effectively knew how to get their students excited about their topic, while 7% were neutral. When asked about teaching students how to write a strong lead, 93% felt they were effective teaching this, while 7% were neutral. When asked about effectively teaching students how to write strong conclusions in persuasive writing, 80% felt comfortable, while 13% were neutral and 7% disagreed. Sixty-three percent of the participants agreed and strongly agreed that they felt comfortable modeling each paragraph for their students, 27% were neutral, and 7% disagreed. When asked about conferencing with students 80% felt comfortable doing this, while 20% were neutral. There were high percentages in the neutral and N/A – not applicable columns regarding teaching different formats for persuasive writing. Fifty percent responded as neutral, 21% responded as not applicable, 14% responded with agreed, and another 14% responded with disagreed. When asked about using books for mini-lessons, 87% of the teachers felt comfortable using them, while 13% were neutral. Fifty-four percent of the teachers felt that they effectively teach their students using the 6+1 Traits of writing, while 53% were neutral, 7% disagreed, and 7% strongly disagreed.

According to Higgins, Miller, and Wegmann (2006), students who write daily for meaning using effective writing strategies, 6+1 Traits™, taught by their teacher, score higher than students who were taught to write to test-specific questions.

Eight questions were asked on the survey regarding persuasive writing, and Graph 9 and Graph 10 highlight two of the questions and the results, that the participants shared
about persuasive writing. For all responses to survey questions on persuasive writing, see Appendix I.

Graph 9

*Persuasive Writing Instruction*

When analyzing the question about effectively teaching different formats of persuasive writing, Graph 9 shows 71% of the teachers answered with neutral or not applicable. These results could have happened for several reasons. The first reason might have been that they did not understand what the question was asking, using the term, format. Another explanation could be that they honestly do not know other types of formats for persuasive writing. Further discussions with the staff about various formats of persuasive writing would be beneficial.
Graph 10

**Persuasive Writing Instruction using 6+1 Traits**

![Pie chart showing responses: Agree 46%, Neutral 33%, Strongly Agree 7%, N/A = Not Applicable 0%, Strongly Disagree 7%, Disagree 7%]

Graph 10 shows the participants responded with mixed results when asked about using the 6+1 Traits in their instruction of persuasive writing. Even though over half of the participant teachers use 6+1 with their instruction, 47% disagreed or were neutral. This question could have been answered this way for a variety of reasons. One explanation could be that certain teachers use 6+1 Traits of writing for other genres and not persuasive. Another possibility could be that the teachers do not use or do not know how to use the 6+1 Traits in writing instruction. A third option could be that the teachers do not know what the 6+1 Traits of writing are. Because of this, professional development and discussions with the teachers need to happen, to have consistency throughout the grade levels and building. The research agrees, as Higgins, Miller, and
Wegmann (2006) showed that students who write daily using the 6+1 Traits™, score higher on standardized tests.

**Research report writing.** With so many challenges in the 21st century involving technology, like plagiarism, citing sources, and knowing what is good information found on professional websites, teachers are challenged daily when it comes to their students writing research reports. Surprisingly, the participants responded that this type of writing was the second hardest to teach all students with various abilities. In fact, there were more negative responses for the questions regarding the research report writing than persuasive writing, yet the teachers responded that persuasive writing was the hardest to teach. Teachers overall reported less confident when answering these questions.

When asked about knowing how to teach kids to narrow their topics in a research report, 53% agreed and strongly agreed, 20% were neutral, 13% disagreed, and another 13.3% were not applicable. Teaching students to take notes produced mixed results as 27% of the teachers agreed, 27% were neutral, and another 27% disagreed, while 20% stated that it was not applicable to them. Sixty percent of the teachers agreed and strongly agreed in knowing how to teach students about plagiarism, while 20% were neutral, 7% disagreed, and 13% were not applicable. Forty-three percent of the teachers agreed that they knew how to teach students how to organize their research, 29% were neutral, 7% strongly disagreed, and another 21% were not applicable. When it came to managing various research projects in their classrooms, 27% agreed they felt comfortable with that, 33% were neutral, 7% disagreed, another 7% strongly disagreed, and 27% were not applicable. Thirty-one percent of the teachers agreed and strongly agreed that they knew how to teach students the difference between professional websites and personal
homepages, while 23% were neutral, and 31% were not applicable. Fourteen percent of the teachers agreed and strongly agreed that they teach students how to cite their sources, 36% were neutral, 14% disagreed, 7% strongly disagreed, and 29% were not applicable. When asked about teaching students how to use search engines, 43% agreed and strongly agreed, 7% were neutral, another 7% disagreed, 14% strongly disagreed, and 27% were not applicable. Modeling writing every paragraph in the research report yielded a 73% result for agreed and strongly agreed, 7% were neutral, 7% strongly disagreed, and 13% were not applicable. Conferencing with students produced 87% of the teachers in the agreed and strongly agreed categories, 7% were neutral, and 7% were not applicable. Teaching different formats of research-type writing, 23% agreed and strongly agreed to know how, 39% were neutral, 8% strongly disagreed, and 31% were not applicable. Sixty-seven percent of the teachers use books, including picture books, as part of their mini-lessons, 27% were neutral, and 7% were not applicable. Teaching the 6 +1 Traits of writing during instruction of writing a research report happened with 47% of the teachers, 34% were neutral, 7% disagreed, 7% strongly disagreed, and 7% were not applicable.

Thirteen questions were asked on the survey regarding research report writing. Graphs 11 and 12 highlight two of the questions and the results. For all responses to survey questions on research report writing, see Appendix J.

When working with all students who are writing different research reports, it is sometimes difficult to help the students organize their writing and ideas. In Graph 11, over 50% of the respondents answered as strongly disagree, neutral, or not applicable. This could be due to the primary teachers doing more of guided shared research and writing, rather than the intermediate grades writing paragraphs. Another possibility is that
some teachers might honestly not how to organize research writing based on so many
different topics that could be researched. For example, the paragraphs when researching a
person would look different than writing about snails. Not only is organizing challenging,
but teaching the kids how to use search engines properly can be frustrating as well.

Graph 11

*Instruction of Organization of Research Reports*
Graph 12 shows only 43% of the participants felt comfortable in effectively teaching students to use search engines. On the other hand, 57% disagreed, were neutral, or replied as not applicable. Teaching students to use search engines can start at the primary levels, where a child might use Google to look up a picture of an apple. They would obviously have guidance and have the words printed for them to type in, but the process of using search engines can start early on. Some respondents might not have the technology to support such a task, or the district could possibly have strict filters on the search engines, where the search engines are entirely blocked. Teaching to a technology-rich generation requires current technology, administrative permission/buy-in, and teaching methods to keep students engaged, knowledgeable, and competitive globally.
**Narrative writing.** Narrative writing is story writing, and most of the teachers felt comfortable and successful when teaching this genre. Until recently, narrative writing was the most common type of writing that was taught at all levels. Current standards are putting a greater emphasis on students writing not just narrative pieces, but also persuasive and research reports starting at the kindergarten level. One area stood out when results were analyzed, which was effectively teaching students how to explode the climax in their story.

Specifically, 93% of the participants agreed and strongly agreed they knew how to effectively teach students what parts make up a narrative piece, while only 7% were neutral. When effectively explaining to students different formats of narrative writing 60% agreed and strongly agreed, 27% were neutral, 7% disagreed, and another 7% responded as not applicable. Eighty-seven percent of the teachers responded they knew how to effectively teach their students how to write a good lead, while 13% were neutral. When asked about helping their students develop primary characters, 73% felt confident, 20% were neutral, and 7% disagreed. When teaching students how to develop the setting, 94% responded that they felt confident, and 7% were neutral. When asked about teaching students how to explode the climax of the story, 40% were neutral, 33% agreed, 20% were not applicable, and 7% disagreed. When teaching students how to develop thorough conclusions, 60% of the teachers agreed and strongly agreed, 13% were not applicable, and 27% were neutral. Seventy-four percent of the teachers felt confident when teaching students how to develop the problem, 20% were neutral, and 7% were not applicable. Eighty percent of the teachers agreed that they felt confident teaching their students how to develop a solution, 13% were neutral, and 7% were not applicable. Using other books
to teach mini-lessons for narrative writing yielded a 93% confidence rate, and 7% were neutral. Fifty-seven percent of the teachers felt confident when using the 6+1 Traits with narrative writing, 29% were neutral, and 14% were not confident.

Twelve questions were asked on the survey regarding narrative writing. Graphs 13 and 14 highlight two of the questions and the results that the participants shared. For all responses to survey questions on narrative writing, see Appendix K.

Graph 13

*Instruction of Various Formats of Narrative Writing*

![Pie chart showing responses to a question about teaching narrative writing]

When teaching my students narrative writing, I know how to effectively explain different formats

- Strongly Agree: 20%
- Agree: 39%
- Neutral: 27%
- Disagree: 7%
- Strongly Disagree: 0%
- N/A = Not Applicable: 7%

Graph 13 shows only 59% of the teachers felt confident when explaining different formats of narrative writing to their students. Story writing can be presented in a number of different formats, including but not limited to, realistic fiction, science fiction, fantasy, fables, humorous, poetry, and mystery writing. When teachers introduce the term, format,
they also need to explain that narrative writing can be shown in different formats, so students, starting at an early age, can start seeing and explaining that fact. The 27% of the respondents that were neutral might have picked this choice due to not fully understanding the question or not understanding what the term, format, was. Since narrative writing is in the Common Core Standards from kindergarten through fifth grade, having knowledge and introducing the various formats is imperative.

Graph 14

*Instruction of Narrative Writing with 6 +1 Traits*

Graph 14 shows over 50% of the staff felt comfortable teaching the 6+1 Traits™ of writing during narrative writing instruction; however, there were 14% who were not confident, and another 29% who were neutral. The neutral percentage could have been due to the teachers honestly not knowing how to use the 6+1 Traits™ to teach narrative
writing, or it could be due to the teachers not knowing what the 6+1 Traits™ of writing are. With any type of writing, the 6+1 Traits™ are a necessary strategy for any student to know with any type of writing. A recommendation for professional development in the 6+1 Traits™ would be beneficial for all staff members and supports current research by Fry and Griffin (2010) in which they explain that effective writing contains 6 components, which happen to be the 6+1 Traits™ of writing.

**Summary**

Many of the teachers surveyed at Northern Heights Elementary School felt confident when teaching writing to students of varying abilities; however, there were some mental and tangible barriers present that need to be addressed. Mental barriers, when it comes to teaching various genres, having the knowledge to differentiate writing instruction, make accommodations, teach revision and editing skills, and having confidence in writer’s workshop using process writing and the 6 + 1 Traits™, stood out in the results. Tangible barriers, when it comes to time and technology, resulted in varying responses. The handbook that I created will help the Northern Heights staff in feeling confident in these areas.

**Limitations**

One limitation of this study in regards to the methodology of the research survey was a small sample size, in which 28 certified teachers were surveyed, but only 15 actually completed and returned the survey. This small sampling of teachers was a 54% response rate from one elementary school in Columbia City, Indiana. Having a larger sample size of various sized schools would have produced more data in regards to writing barriers. Another limitation is limited research about mental and tangible barriers that
teachers encounter when teaching writing to students. Due to the limited research, it was difficult to know what educators encountered when teaching writing. One last limitation was the amount of questions on the electronic survey. There were ten questions, but those ten questions had anywhere from 3-8 questions beneath the main question. Some teachers might have opened the survey and found it too cumbersome or time consuming, and they may not have completed the survey carefully.

**Future Research Suggestions**

Persuasive writing was chosen by the certified teachers of Northern Heights Elementary School, as being the most difficult genre of writing to teach students of all abilities. Surprisingly, teaching students how to write a research report was not chosen, and either was narrative writing. Further research, professional development, and team collaboration needs to happen in the area of persuasive writing, particularly at the primary level. Teachers at all grade levels need to feel confident teaching persuasive writing to their students.

The 6+1 Traits™ of Writing need to be incorporated into every classroom, starting at the kindergarten level. Even though there are teachers who feel they are experts with the traits, there are some staff members that are not as confident. Using the 6+1 Traits™ of Writing need to be taught in every type of writing genre, because it doesn’t matter what you are writing, the traits should be present. Introducing the traits at an earlier age helps the child learn and remember the traits as they progress through school. New teachers need professional development in the 6+1 Traits™ of Writing.

Teachers from our school have barriers to teaching writing, and more research needs to be done across the nation on teacher barriers. The studies on mental and tangible
barriers are minimal and researching and conducting studies on this topic would be beneficial to superintendents, principals, teachers, and students of public schools.
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W³

Wonderful World of Writing

Written by: Michelle Simmons
Illustrated by: Devin Blaine & Lucas Copsey
Acknowledgements

First and foremost, I want to thank God for creating me and giving me the perfect qualities to desire to be a teacher. If it weren’t for your blessings, this book would not even be in existence. I love you.

I want to thank my colleagues and administrators, both at Churubusco Elementary School and Northern Heights Elementary School for the years of watching, discussing best practices, and modeling awesome strategies in the area of writing. It is because of you that this book was written. You have challenged my thinking, teaching practices, and what is best for students of all abilities. Listening to your fears and uncertainty of how to teach certain things, combined with my own insecurities, was the basis for this book. Thank you for being the best educators to work with! You are teachers for a reason and have touched my life for even a more special reason. Kevin Kempton, former principal of Churubusco Elementary School, thank you for the multiple opportunities of professional development that you encouraged me to attend. Jake Hoag, principal of Northern Heights Elementary, thank you for your encouragement and high expectations this year, as I appreciated your support while working hard and earning M. S. in Special Education. Julie Mast, you are an incredible gifted writing teacher, and I am so appreciative of all of your creative methods of teaching writing. Robin Peterman, principal of Abett Elementary School and a former colleague who I team taught with, thank you so much for your drive to instill higher level writing and higher level thinking capabilities in all of our students. You always researched to find the best ways to teach everything!

I also want to thank all of my students that I have had over the past 14 years! I have always wanted to write a book, and from teaching and learning from you, it is now happening. Your ideas, suggestions, and questions have driven the research component of this book. Thank you for respecting me and working hard as a young author!

Finally, I would like to thank my own children, Brayden and Kaylee. You two created a drive in me to better myself and become a better provider for you. You two, even in your busy schedules, have shown me not only how to be a great mom but also how to be a great teacher. I love you both more than you will ever know.

Lastly, I want to thank my parents, Joe & Glenna Rugman, and my brother Joe Jr. Dad, even though you are no longer here in the flesh, you and mom made me who I am today, and I thank God for both of you instilling the morals, convictions, and work ethic that you exuberated. I know that you will be with me when I walk across that stage being handed my Master’s Degree…and I know that you are so proud of your little girl. I love and miss you immensely!
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Introduction

My name is Michelle (Shelly) Simmons, and what I want you to know about me...is that I absolutely love being a teacher...especially a 5th grade teacher! Receiving my B.S. degree from Indiana University-Purdue University, Fort Wayne, IN, I was hired and worked at Churubusco Elementary School. There, I worked 7 years as a 5th grade teacher and 1 year as an Information Literacy teacher, in which I worked with grades kindergarten through fifth. I am currently working at Northern Heights Elementary School teaching 5th grade, and I am also attending Indiana University-Purdue University, Fort Wayne, IN, attaining my M.S. in Special Education. For the last three years, our grade level has specialized in one subject area, and our students have rotated from class to class. I feel like the lucky one, because I teach writing, spelling, and grammar to all of our 5th grade students. Because of my interest in writing, this handbook and research was conducted.

Importance of the Study

Mental and tangible barriers, when teaching writing to students of all abilities, are present within the staff members of Northern Heights Elementary School in Columbia City, Indiana, part of Whitley County Consolidated Schools. Some mental barriers include lack of college preparedness, low self-confidence, fear of modeling writing, and not knowing what mini-lesson(s) to teach. Tangible items include any technology used for writing instruction, time that students actually spend writing, space to write, and writing materials. This manual contains different strategies to help with teacher barriers when teaching persuasive, research, and narrative writing genres.

What the Research Says

Not too many years ago, the United States had a focus on the three R's, which included reading, writing, and arithmetic. Presently, Indiana state lawmakers have passed laws in education with a strong focus on reading and math. Despite the large emphasis on these two subject areas, writing has not been a target area, even though the Indiana Statewide Testing for Educational Progress Plus Test (ISTEP+) contains a large written portion which includes a writing prompt. Additionally, current data from the 2008 National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) show that "67% of eighth-grade and 76% of twelfth-grade students performed at or below the basic level in writing" (Gilbert & Graham, 2010, p. 494), with specifically, 70% of Indiana's eighth-grade students included (Salahu-Din, Persky, & Miller, 2010). More alarmingly, only 5% of the students with disabilities performed above the basic level (Jacobson & Reid, 2010). If a focus is not applied to writing immediately for students of all abilities, our society will have individuals who can decode and comprehend reading material and figure out math problems, but who will
not be able to write efficiently, effectively, accurately, and competitively for the global market (Kellogg & Whiteford, 2009).

In addition to a lack of writing focus in schools, students of varying abilities struggle with the actual task of writing. Knowing the prospective audience, holding a writing utensil, thinking of ideas, writing legibly, spelling words accurately, writing complete sentences, persevering with stamina, and reading what has been written are some of the traits involved in writing. With so many different components, various students may struggle with one or more aspects of such a tedious task. Koutsoftas and Gray (2012) share that the writing of students with a language-learning disability (LDD) can lack length, complex sentences, correct grammar, and correct spelling. Additionally, Sturm and Rankin-Erickson (2002) state that revision skills and the use of higher-level vocabulary words are not used frequently. Teachers have to problem-solve and create lessons that effectively teach students with all kinds of behavioral, physical, language, and cognitive disabilities. Not only does a teacher have to figure out what each child is struggling with in the writing process, the teacher has to teach different skills and strategies to students individually and in small and large groups. Some educators dislike teaching writing for a variety of reasons, and to help other educators and students succeed at writing effectively, these barriers need to be identified and overcome.

Teachers are reluctant to teach various forms of writing for numerous reasons, and the barriers can include both tangible resources and mental attributes. Tangible resources are those resources that you can touch. Paper, pencils, computers, document cameras, white boards, chart paper, lesson plans, objective signs, and time would be considered tangible sources. If school districts have no supply money, tangible resources will be affected. Due to the lack of language arts adoption materials, teachers are oftentimes left to defend for themselves, creating their own writing curriculum, which has no continuity among the grade levels. The lack of tangible barriers can be harmful in the classroom setting to teachers and students alike. Oftentimes, if school schedules are interrupted and time is limited, writing is ignored, while math and reading still happen. Educators need to identify and acknowledge the barriers when it comes to the teaching of writing, so they can research, gain knowledge, and receive help in overcoming those barriers.

Teachers not only need to teach their students writing, they need to be writers themselves (Morgan, 2010; Daisey, 2009; Grainger, 2005), modeling the thinking process as they write and giving suggestions from those experiences (Cremin, 2006). This can be a daunting task for some, as attitudes about writing begin at a very early age and develop through adulthood. Mental barriers of writing teachers, including teacher efficacy, which is teacher confidence about their ability to teach students to learn (Klassen, Tze, Betts, and Gordon, 2010), has a large impact on the effectiveness and attitude of writing instruction in their classroom (Cutler & Graham, 2008). Some teachers do not see themselves as
writers (Frank, 2003) and feel the education they received about writing when they were students was not high caliber (Morgan, 2010). Some teachers feel that their undergraduate work in the college they attended did not prepare them to teach writing successfully (Gilbert & Graham, 2010; Morgan, 2010). A few teachers have a fear of sharing and modeling their own writing in front of their students and other staff members, which can cause anxiety and emotional distress (Cremin, 2006; Frank, 2003; Santangelo & Olinghouse, 2009). Still, others want or need positive reinforcement in how they are teaching writing is effective and accurate. When discussing different genres of writing, some teachers feel that teaching students how to write a narrative is easier than teaching a child the many steps involved with a research report or a persuasive piece of writing. Other teacher barriers include not knowing how to differentiate instruction or lack of being an expert in multiple writing strategies to meet the ability levels of all students found in the classroom, including high ability, average ability, and low ability.

Results of the Study

Of the 28 participants, kindergarten through fifth grade, special education, and related arts teachers, that were sent the electronic survey, 15 teachers actually completed it, which is a 54% response rate. Some of the teachers might not have responded due to a variety of reasons, including lack of time, interest, or relativity. The survey contained 10 questions, and within those questions, there ranged from 6-12 additional questions. Due to the amount of data collected, the results shared in this manual will highlight some of the questions asked. For full results of the survey, please see the appendix.

When discussing different types of writing genres, and which genre was the hardest to teach, 60% responded with persuasive writing. With this genre, there were mixed results when asked the question about feeling confident when teaching different formats: 50% of the teachers replied with neutral, 14.3% responded with agreed, 14.3% responded with disagree, and 21.4% replied with N/A - not acceptable.

Forty percent of the teachers felt that research report writing was the most difficult. When focusing on this genre, teachers had the least amount of confidence with the organization of the research and utilizing search engines. Only 43% of the teachers felt confident in teaching the students how to organize their research writing, while 29% were neutral, 21% were N/A - not applicable, and 7% strongly disagreed. When asked about confidence level when teaching students how to use search engines, only 43% felt confident or strongly confident teaching that, whereas 29% were N/A - not applicable, 7% were neutral, and 21% disagreed and strongly disagreed.

No teachers felt that narrative writing was the hardest genre to teach; however, there were some teachers that did have a lack of confidence in narrative formats and using the 6+1 Traits™ to teach narrative writing. With teaching
different formats, 40% felt confident, 20% felt very confident, 7% were N/A - not applicable, 27% were neutral, and 7% disagreed. Confidence, when using the 6+1Traits™ in narrative writing, showed mixed results as well. Fifty-seven percent of the teachers felt confident and strongly confident, 29% were neutral, 7% disagreed, and another 7% strongly disagreed.

Questions regarding mental barriers were also asked. Confidence in writing instruction, specifically differentiating instruction and making accommodations for struggling writers seemed to give the teachers to the most problem. Fifty-three percent of the teachers agreed to knowing how to differentiate, 13% felt strongly confident, 20% were neutral, and 14% did not feel confident. Seventy-three percent of the teachers were confident when making accommodations for students who struggled with writing, while 7% were neutral, and 20% were not confident. With teaching the writing process, teaching students to revise and edit their writing was the most difficult. Only 47% of the staff feels confident when teaching their students to revise, while 27% were not confident, and another 27% were neutral. In addition, 53% of the staff did not feel confident teaching their students how to edit their writing, 20% were neutral, and 27% were not confident.

Staff responses regarding tangible barriers were mixed as well, especially regarding the amount of time that is spent on writing instruction. Only 13% of the teachers taught writing for 45 minutes, while 60% taught for 30 minutes, and 27% taught for 15 minutes. This could be a potential problem due to the number of days that the teachers taught writing. Twenty-seven percent of the staff strongly agree they taught writing every day, 47% agree, but 27% disagree.

Recommendations for the Northern Heights Staff

Professional development in the following areas was recommended in the area of writing: persuasive writing, differentiating instruction, making accommodations for our students identified with a writing disability, revision, editing, the use of laptops, required time for writing instruction, and 6+1 Traits™ of Writing. The results of this research will also benefit all elementary school teachers and students at Northern Heights Elementary School with the written portion of the ISTEP+ test.
Rationale

Trying to figure out a way to give students a visual for all types of writing, I came up with a step ladder for an idea. When teachers introduce any type of writing, the step ladder visual could be used. Using the step ladder with my own students has made them understand how any type of writing should flow.

When writing a persuasive piece, the ladder starts at the bottom of one side of the ladder (Introduction), then moves up one step (1st Reason with Supporting Details), then another (2nd Reason with Supporting Details), then to the top of the ladder (3rd Reason with Supporting Details...Most Important Reason), and finally starting down the other side of the ladder (Conclusion). The students also were taught that the conclusion to any type of writing doesn't just end abruptly (Jumping off the Ladder), but that there are steps on the other side of the ladder, and that they need to write a conclusion that has lots of details (Climbing...Slowly...Down...the...Ladder).

For research report writing, the ladder starts at the bottom of one side of the ladder (Introduction), then moves up one step (1st Fact with Supporting Details), then another (2nd Fact with Supporting Details), then to the top of the ladder (3rd Fact...Most Interesting Fact with Supporting Details), and finally starting down the other side of the ladder (Conclusion).

For narrative writing, the ladder starts at the bottom of one side of the ladder (Intro), then moves up one step (1st event...rising action), then another (2nd event...rising action), then to the top (Climax), and finally starting down on the other side (Conclusion).
Persuasive Writing Visual

1st Reason with Supporting Details

2nd Reason with Supporting Details

3rd Reason
(Most Important Reason)
with Supporting Details

Conclusion
Narrative Writing Visual

Climax - 3rd Event
(Most Important Event)
with Supporting Details

2nd Event with
Supporting Details

1st Event with
Supporting Details

Conclusion
Rationale

These graphic organizer models were developed by a team of teachers from Churubusco Elementary School for the purpose of having a common graphic organizer that moved from kindergarten through fifth grade. The purpose of this particular graphic organizer was to help students plan what they were going to write about. The kindergarten graphic organizer looked a lot different than the fifth grade graphic organizer, but when used throughout the years, the students were accustomed to using this particular model, just building in content from year to year.

The graphic organizer can be used for any genre of writing, and the more the kids use it during Writer’s Workshop, the more familiar it will be for them to use it all the time in any type of writing, including prompt writing. The plan starts with a cloud for brainstorming, with the clouds being larger at the kindergarten and first grade levels. As the student moves to higher grade levels, the brainstorm cloud gets smaller, allowing the students to brainstorm on the back of the plan. At the kindergarten level, the students have a box to create a picture of what they want to write about. As the plan progresses, there is no picture box for later grades.

The following pages include the graphic organizers from kindergarten through fifth grade, but you might decide to choose one and modify it as needed.
Kindergarten Graphic Organizer

Taken from Churubusco Elementary School
1st Grade Graphic Organizer

Name | Date | Type of Writing

Brainstorming

Beginning (introduction)

Middle

End

Taken from Churubusco Elementary School
Taken from Churubusco Elementary School
3rd Grade Graphic Organizer

Taken from Churubusco Elementary School
4th Grade Graphic Organizer

Taken from Churubusco Elementary School
5th Grade Graphic Organizer

- Name
- Date
- Type of Writing

- Brainstorm
- Beginning: "Introduction"
- End (Conclusion)

Taken from Churubusco Elementary School
6 + 1 Traits™ of Writing

- Ideas
- Organization
- Voice
- Word Choice
- Sentence Fluency
- Conventions
- Presentation
Rationale of Using the 6 + 1 Traits™ when Teaching Writing

Students who are taught to write to test-specific questions score lower on standardized tests versus students who write daily for meaning using effective writing strategies, 6+1 Traits™, taught from their teacher (Higgins, Miller, & Wegmann, 2006). So the 6+1 Traits™ should be utilized in all classrooms and used throughout any genre of writing to make student writing better.

The staff of Northern Heights Elementary School were not 100% sure of the traits and how they are used when teaching writing in their classrooms. Professional development should be given to the staff members who are not knowledgeable in the traits and how to instruct students with them.

Professional Resources for 6+1 Traits™ of Writing

Shown and listed below are some great resources to help support you in your endeavors in teaching the 6+1 Traits in your classroom during Writer’s Workshop. I have listed resources for primary and intermediate levels.

6+1 Traits of Writing
The Complete Guide Grades 3 and Up
Author: Ruth Culham

6+1 Traits of Writing
The Complete Guide for the Primary Grades
Author: Ruth Culham

The Trait Crate - Grade 5
*There is one for every grade level*
Author: Ruth Culham

Trait-Based Writing Lessons & Activities
(Grades 4–6)
Author: Kristina Smekens

The Trait Mate 6-Traits Starter Lessons
Author: Kristina Smekens
Ideas
Ideas
"Ideas make up the content of the piece" (Culham, 2003, p. 35). For some students, coming up with ideas to write about is easy, while for some others, it is a difficult task. Not only do students need to know what they want to write about, but having original ideas with thorough and meaningful details is also part of this trait. The trait of ideas comes up with the brainstorming, planning, and writing the rough draft in the Process Writing steps.

Introducing the Trait of Ideas
I introduce the traits, one at a time, by reading a picture book and then discussing the many ideas and details present in the book that I read. One of my favorite books to read is, Tell Me a Scary Story, but Not Too Scary, by Carl Reiner. Whichever book I choose to use, I scan a color picture of it, label it with "Ideas", and keep it posted all year long.

Picture Books with Great Ideas
Picture books and chapter books can be used as mentor texts with excellent teaching points. Picture books are not just for the younger children; intermediate students and also adults love a great picture book. Some picture books that have great ideas in them, taken from Kristina Smekens, are listed below.

- Alexander and the Terrible, Horrible, No Good, Very Bad Day (Judith Viorst)
- Bat Loves the Night (Nocola Davies)
- Big Blue (Shelley Gill)
- Chickens Aren’t the Only Ones (Ruth Heller)
- First Day Jitters (Julie Danneberg)
- I Can Write (Rozanne Lanczak Williams)
- Lilly’s Purple Plastic Purse (Kevin Henkes)
- Monarch Butterfly (Gail Gibbons)
- Mudball (Matt Tavares)
- Piggie Pie! (Margie Palatini)
- Skippyjon Jones (Judith Byron Schachner)
Graphic Organizers
Graphic organizers are a research-based successful item to use in all aspects of writing. They are a tool for any student to use to help guide their thinking and develop and create the ideas that they have. On the following pages, there are some provided for all ages and abilities.

ABC Chart
Kristina Smekens presented the ABC Chart at a workshop. With this chart, the student places a topic or idea in the blank center box. Then the child writes as many things as they can think of that start with a particular letter. For example, if spider were in the box, then a "U" phrase might be "under the bed". A larger version of this is provided in Appendix A.

The topic of this ABC Detail Chart is plants.

Taken from Kristina Smekens 6+1 Writing Traits Workshop, 2005
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>J</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>T</th>
<th>Z</th>
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Taken from Launching the Writer's Workshop: Grades 3 and Up
Kristina Smekens & Dr. Maureen Scane, 2008
Treasure Map
This graphic organizer would be great to use with students who are "Art Smart". They can draw their ideas in the blank map area and then write their ideas below. This is a great way to brainstorm and plan a story.

Name ___________________ Date ____________

Idea Treasure Map

Ideas
picking apples until it turned dark
falling out of a tree

Ideas
getting stuck on the roof of the tool shed

Ideas
running races to the pond to catch frogs

Taken from Trait-Based Writing Graphic Organizers & Mini-Lessons
Jennifer Jacobson, 2008
Gumball Machine Graphic Organizer
This graphic organizer can be used to brainstorm words or phrases that go with one particular topic. The topic is written in the "Main Topic" bubble gum, and the student brainstorms other words that go with the topic.

Choosing a Topic

Main Topic: Weather

The subtopic I will focus on is: Snow

Taken from Trait-Based Writing Graphic Organizers & Mini-Lessons
Jennifer Jacobson, 2008
Choosing a Topic

Write the main topic in the center gumball and subtopics in the other gumballs.

Main Topic:

The subtopic I will focus on is:

Taken from Trait-Based Writing Graphic Organizers & Mini-Lessons
Jennifer Jacobson, 2008
**Topic Graphic Organizer**
This graphic organizer can be used by writing a topic on the line. Then the kids generate nouns, verbs, and adjectives that describe the topic. These words can be used to make sentences that are more descriptive.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic: ____________________</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Nouns</strong></td>
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</table>

*Introducing Organization lesson*
© 2008 Launching the Writer's Workshop: Grades 3 and Up, by Kristina Smekens & Dr. Maureen Scane

Taken from Launching the Writer’s Workshop: Grades 3 and Up
Kristina Smekens & Dr. Maureen Scane, 2008
ME Graphic Organizer
This graphic organizer can be given to each student. Each student would write words and phrases that describe him/her. This is a great organizer to use at the beginning of the year, to help develop a safe environment to write.

Taken from Launching the Writer's Workshop: Grades 3 and Up
Kristina Smekens & Dr. Maureen Scane, 2008
What Can We Write About?
I use this idea when we first start Writer’s Workshop. The kids create a colorful page like this in their writer’s notebooks and share. As the students share, I add more to our anchor chart.
Show, Don’t Tell Graphic Organizer

A lot of students like to “tell” their stories in their writing instead of “showing” us, in other words, writing with such detail and description, that we feel like we are right in the middle of the student’s writing. Beginning writers in kindergarten and first grade and struggling writers in fourth and fifth grade need a lot of help and guidance in this area. This graphic organizer can be used individually, in pairs, or even small group.

Name: Bruce

Date: Feb. 22

Show, Don’t Tell!

Scene Summary:
Jean tries to ride her bike up a steep hill, but she keeps falling down or she can’t pedal hard enough to make it.

Adjectives:
- mad
- angry
- furious
- frustrated
- disappointed

Sentence:
Jean clenched her teeth, folded her arms, and stomped off.

Sentence:
Jean fell to the ground and screamed.

Sentence:
Jean's face turned red as she fought back tears.

Sentence:
Jean kicked the bike, stuck her tongue out at the hill, then walked toward home.

Actions:
- crosses arms
- turns red
- stumps foot
- kicks
- stumps away

Taken from Trait-Based Writing Graphic Organizers & Mini Lessons
Jennifer Jacobson, 2008
Show, Don't Tell!

Scene Summary:

Sentence:

Sentence:

Sentence:

Sentence:

Adjectives:

Actions:

Taken from Trait-Based Writing Graphic Organizers & Mini-Lessons
Jennifer Jacobson, 2008
9-Grid Story Board Graphic Organizer

A lot of teachers teach students to have a beginning, middle, and end to a story, which is basically a 3-grid organizer. To “beef up” your students’ writing, use this 9-grid organizer. The kids will think of it as a “cartoon” and add more details and events!

**Beginning / Middle / End**

Typically, students quickly plan out three details and move on.

- **to grocery store**
- **shopping for ingredients**
- **baking pie**

- **plan to make Thanksgiving pie**
- **check for ingredients**
- **head to grocery with list**

- **shopping**
- **helping get ingredients off shelf**
- **waited in line, cashier friendly**

- **mom - crust**
- **me - mixed filling**
- **delicious**

**Making a Pie**

I was going to help my mom make a pie. We drove to the store. We bought all the food. Then we made the pie. It was yummy!

©2007 Trait Mate Starter Lessons • www.SmekensEducation.com

**Original**

Taken from Trait Mate Starter Lessons
Kristina Smekens, 2007
Narrowing the Topic
At times, students have such a broad topic that it is hard to write effectively. This activity can help students of all ages focus in on one aspect of a topic and write about that one part, using lots of details. This can be used with children of all ages.

\[ \text{SHRINKING THE TOPIC} \]
Use the idea of the nesting items to demonstrate how topics shrink or narrow in focus. Also be mindful that you can make a topic too small, especially for young writers. When that happens, the writer can't manage to develop more than 1-2 sentences.

\[ \text{NARROW, THEN PRE-WRITE} \]
A great way to test whether a topic is "just right" in size (narrow, but not too small), is to attempt some pre-writing. Take the narrowed topic (the idea in the smallest box), and brainstorm details that would be included within the writing. If it's hard to think of numerous details, the topic may be too small. Here is an example that takes the enormous topic of Vacation and narrows it down to just the "boring car ride."

- car games & activities
- license-plate games
- sang songs on radio
- read 2 books
- pesky brother
- kept pinching me
- wouldn't leave me alone
- couldn't escape him
- slept a lot
- woke up, ate, went back to sleep
- time went fastest when sleeping

\[ \text{FIND A TEMPLATE OF THIS ACTIVITY IN THE APPENDIX.} \]

Taken from Trait Mate Starter Lessons
Kristina Smekens, 2007
Taken from Trait Mate Starter Lessons
Kristina Smekens, 2007
Trait Connection: Ideas

Narrow the Topic

Taken from Launching the Writer's Workshop: Grades 3 and Up
Kristina Smekens & Dr. Maureen Scane, 2008
Finding the Smallest Topic

costumes

clown

make-up

clown

Trick—or—

Treating

Halloween

Taken from Launching the Writer's Workshop: Grades 3 and Up
Kristina Smekens & Dr. Maureen Scane, 2008
Nesting boxes show how to narrow the topic of Halloween.

Taken from Launching the Writer’s Workshop: Grades 3 and Up
Kristina Smekens & Dr. Maureen Scane, 2008
Adding Details to the Topic

Taken from Launching the Writer's Workshop: Grades 3 and Up
Kristina Smekens & Dr. Maureen Scane, 2008
Organization
Organization

"Organization is the internal structure of the piece, the thread of central meaning, and the pattern of logic" (Culham, 2003, p. 70). Some students might write in a logical order, but we all have some students who struggle with the concept of writing in an order that makes sense. Not only does organization deal with the layout of the writing, but it also deals with the introduction, transitions, pacing, and conclusion.

Introducing the Trait of Organization

I try to pick a new picture to our library every year to introduce Organization. Two Bobbies, written by Kirby Lawson and Mary Nethery is a book based on real characters. The kids love the story, and it is a great book to introduce organization. Whichever book I choose to use, I scan a color picture of it, label it with “Organization”, and keep it posted all year long.

Picture Books effective for Organization

Some picture books that have great ideas in them to teach organization, taken from Kristina Smekens, are listed below.

- Amelia’s Notebook (Marissa Moss)
- Best Friends (Steven Kellogg)
- Blood-Hungry Spleen and Other Poems about Our Parts (Allan Wolf)
- Chewy Louie (Howie Schneider)
- Children Who Smelled a Rat (Allan Ahlberg)
- Cook-A-Doodle-Doo! (Janet Stevens)
- Hot, Hot, Hot (Neal Layton)
- Inch by Inch (Leo Lionni)
- Max’s Logbook (Marissa Moss)
- Nothing Ever Happens on 90th Street (Roni Schotter)
- Oink (Arthur Geisert)
- One Duck Stuck (Phyllis Root)
- Paperboy (Dav Pilkey)
- Trevor’s Wiggly-Wobbly Tooth (Lester L. Laminack)
Introductions - “Hook” Your Reader

Teaching students how to write a good introduction can be difficult, especially if writing is hard for the teacher. One way to teach a student to write a good introduction to any type of writing is by teaching the kids how to “hook” their reader or by starting with a catchy “lead”. The following items will help you succeed in teaching introductions. I found this idea on Pinterest, and the students make this anchor chart in their writer’s notebooks.

1. Question
   - Why is that house exploding into space? “Ask Timmy, a three-year-old neighbor boy.”

2. Exclamation
   - Ohmygosh! Run!

3. Quote
   - “What are you doing today?”

4. Shocking Fact
   - “Surprised, Mr. Jones?”

5. Interesting Fact
   - “Did you know?”

6. Onomatopoeia (sound words)
   - Boom! Swish! Crack! Roar! Chirp!  Swoosh! Whoooooosh! Zzzzzz... Scream! Scream! Brrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrr
Hook Examples
Kagan Publishing provided the following examples for students to "hook" their reader.

**Question**
What woman was nicknamed “Moses”?

**Riddle**
She was a famous leader of the Underground Railroad who led over 300 slaves to freedom. WHO WAS SHE?

**Exclamation**
Wow! What an amazing person! I wish I could be as brave as Harriet Tubman.

**Onomatopoeia**
WHOO-WHOO. SWISH-SH-SH-SH. The dark night provided protection for the slaves journeying north to freedom.

**Alliteration**
Brave, bold, bright! These are all qualities of an exceptional woman.

**Exaggeration**
As the slave hunters drew near, Harriet’s heart jumped out of her chest.

**Description**
When Harriet crossed the line, making her a free person, she felt as if the Sun came like gold through the tree and over the field. She felt like she was in heaven.

Taken from Balanced Literacy Through Cooperative Learning & Active Engagement (Grade 5)
Sharon Skidmore & Jill Graber, 2008
Lead Lesson
I use this chart when teaching the students how to write a good lead. It doesn't matter what genre of writing the focus is either because writing a good lead should be done in all forms of writing.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Leads</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Can come from questions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Can create a picture in the reader’s mind</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Can be a quote</th>
<th>Can be your favorite bit of research</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“I have a dream!”</td>
<td>Leslie Lynch King Jr. had an abusive father, but overcame the abuse and eventually became</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Idea taken from Reviser’s Toolbox by Barry Lane
Created by Michelle Simmons
Mentor Texts (Books) with Incredible Leads

Marybeth Alley & Barbara Orehovec, in *Revisiting the Writing Workshop*, provide some book titles to use in mini-lessons about writing good leads.

Suggested Literature for Leads

We are always looking for great leads to show students how writers hook their readers. Our list includes just a sampling of some good leads.

**The story begins by establishing the setting:**
- *The Bat Boy and His Violin*—Gavin Curtis
- *Circle of Gold*—Candy Dawson Boyd (chapter book)
- *Lola*—Loufane
- *Poppy*—Avi (chapter book)
- *A Secret Place*—Eve Bunting
- *Up North at the Cabin*—Marsha Wilson Chall

**A question hooks the reader:**
- *Charlotte’s Web*—E. B. White (chapter book)
- *Duke Ellington*—Andrea Davis Pinkney
- *Momma, Where Are You From?*—Marie Bradby

**Dialogue often begins a book:**
- *The Comeback Dog*—Jane Resh Thomas (chapter book)
- *Emily’s Art*—Peter Catalanotto
- *Number the Stars*—Lois Lowry (chapter book)
- *The Raft*—Jim LaMarche
- *The Story of the Sea Glass*—Anne Wescott Dodd
- *The Train to Somewhere*—Eve Bunting

**Some leads get the reader in the action immediately:**
- *Harriet*—Deborah Inkpen
- *Knuffle Bunny*—Mo Willems
- *Snow Treasure*—Marie McSwigan (chapter book)
- *A Story for Bear*—Dennis Haseley

**Surprising facts are often used to catch the reader’s attention:**
- *A. Lincoln and Me*—Louise Borden
- *The Cats in Krasinski Square*—Karen Hesse
- *Eleanor*—Barbara Cooney
- *Fireboat*—Maira Kalman
- *The Other Dog*—Madeleine L’Engle
- *Wilma Unlimited*—Kathleen Krull

Taken from *Revisiting the Writing Workshop*  
Marybeth Alley & Barbara Orehovec, 2007
**Transition Words**

Using transition words in writing help move the reader along. In story writing, transition words play an important role, because the reader(s) need to follow the events of the story, from beginning to end. In persuasive writing, transition words are very important because the writer needs to have at least three good reasons with details, trying to persuade their reader. Kagan Publishing provided the following transition word list.

---

**Transitional Word List**

**RallyCoach**

*Instructions: Copy one list for each pair of students.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Transitional Word List</th>
<th>Transitional Word List</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• for instance</td>
<td>• for instance</td>
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<tr>
<td>• on the other hand</td>
<td>• on the other hand</td>
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<tr>
<td>• as a result</td>
<td>• as a result</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• finally</td>
<td>• finally</td>
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<td>• last</td>
<td>• last</td>
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<td>• the last thing</td>
<td>• the last thing</td>
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<td>• second</td>
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<td>• next</td>
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<td>• consequently</td>
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<td>• a consequence</td>
<td>• a consequence</td>
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<td>• therefore</td>
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<td>• and so</td>
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<td>• frequently</td>
<td>• frequently</td>
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<td>• in addition</td>
<td>• in addition</td>
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<td>• for this reason</td>
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<td>• in fact</td>
<td>• in fact</td>
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<td>• according to</td>
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<td>• along with</td>
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<td>• as well as</td>
<td>• as well as</td>
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<td>• for example</td>
<td>• for example</td>
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<td>• although</td>
<td>• although</td>
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<td>• otherwise</td>
<td>• otherwise</td>
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<td>• however</td>
<td>• however</td>
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<tr>
<td>• as I said</td>
<td>• as I said</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Taken from Balanced Literacy Through Cooperative Learning & Active Engagement (Grade 5)  
Sharon Skidmore & Jill Graber, 2008
Practicing Writing Transition Sentences
Kristina Smekens provides lesson ideas in all the traits. For transitions, she provides a practice sheet for your students. She also provides tangible ideas that your students could use as they move through a piece of writing. She suggests colored magnets and colored yarn, representing each section of the writing.

Transition sentences
Trait of ORGANIZATION

My kitchen is not very trendy. It is filled with wicker baskets. Pink and blue wooden hearts are everywhere. The furniture and wallpaper is outdates and old-fashioned.

Transition sentence possibilities
My kitchen may be old and outdated, but my living room is high-tech.
My friends would rather not hang out in the kitchen; they like the living room better.
When you walk through the kitchen, you enter the living room.
You'll find baskets in the kitchen and technology in the living room.

Trigger Ideas
Colored magnetic links can represent different paragraphs. Each colored ball represents a paragraph link. A link can represent the next or a transition sentence. Create a pattern to illustrate this idea.

Taken from Trait Mate Starter Lessons
Kristina Smekens, 2007
Conclusions
There is nothing worse than reading a story with an incredible lead (hooks me), then moves on to suspenseful rising action...and wait...wait, "Oh no, they jumped off the ladder!" Conclusions are just as important as introductions and the middle content in ANY type of writing. Showing students how to write effective conclusions is an important strategy that students need to learn, beginning in kindergarten.

Kagan Publishing provided the following examples for conclusions.

![Ending Examples](http://example.com/ending-examples.png)

- **Answer to Beginning Question**
  Moses was a fitting nickname for Harriet Tubman. Both Moses and Harriet were courageous people who led slaves to freedom.

- **Reference Back to Riddle**
  Now you know that it was Harriet Tubman—the brave woman who did not give up fighting for her people’s freedom. She was the famous leader of the Underground Railroad.

- **Generalization**
  Harriet Tubman was truly an amazing woman who encountered many hardships to help free hundreds of slaves.

- **Personal Comment**
  I learned that all through her life, Harriet Tubman was always ready to stand up for someone. I now know why John Brown said she was one of the bravest persons on the continent.

- **Restatement of Main Idea**
  After reading about Harriet Tubman, you can see how she used the qualities of braveness, boldness, and brightness during her life to make our country a better place.

- **Challenge to the Reader**
  Find out more about Harriet Tubman for yourself by searching the Web or checking out a book about her at the library. I’m sure you will discover some additional facts about her adventurous life.

Taken from Balanced Literacy Through Cooperative Learning & Active Engagement (Grade 5)
Sharon Skidmore & Jill Graber, 2008
Mentor Texts to Use for Conclusions
From Revisiting the Writing Workshop, Marybeth Alley & Barbara Orehovec provide some ideas on what books to use when teaching students how to write a great ending!

Suggested Literature for Endings

Our students know their stories should not end with simply "THE END." To help them finish their stories, we rely on some mentor authors. The books don't necessarily focus on the last sentence but on the structure of ending stories.

The ending surprises the reader:
- Charlie Anderson—Barbara Abercrombie
- Darby: The Special-Order Pup—Alexandra Day
- Dory Story—Jerry Pallotta
- First Day Jitters—Julie Danneberg
- Wednesday Surprise—Eve Bunting

Some endings leave you "feeling good":
- Amber on the Mountain—Tony Johnston
- Fireflies—Julie Brinckloe
- Silver Packages—Cynthia Rylant
- The Wholes—Cynthia Rylant
- Wilfrid Gordon MacDonald Partridge—Mem Fox

Some books end with a message or moral:
- Koala Lou—Mem Fox
- Lilly's Purple Plastic Purse—Kevin Henkes
- Seven Blind Mice—Steven Young
- Stellaluna—Janell Cannon

Endings are sometimes ambiguous and leave you wondering:
- Fly Away Home—Eve Bunting
- Grandpa and Bo—Kevin Henkes
- Hey, Little Ant—Phillip and Hannah Hoose
- Miss Rumphius—Barbara Cooney

Many stories end in a circular format so they end pretty much where they started:
- The Great Gracie Chase—Cynthia Rylant
- My Mama Had a Dancing Heart—Libba Moore Gray
- One Dark Night—Hazel Hutchins
- The Paperboy—Dav Pilkey
- The Relatives Came—Cynthia Rylant
- The Sick Day—Patricia MacLachlan

Taken from Revisiting the Writing Workshop
Marybeth Alley & Barbara Orehovec, 2008
Voice
Voice

"Voice is the writer's music coming out through the words, the sense that a real person is speaking to you and cares about the message. It is the heart and soul of the writing, the magic, the wit, the feeling, the life and breath" (Culham, 2003, p. 102). Teaching the trait of voice can be very tricky. I oftentimes explain to my students that their writing needs to sound like them...that no matter what they write, they need to elicit some type of emotion out of their reader. Teaching the students to sound like themselves instead of a robotic dictionary when writing a report is an important skill to master.

Introducing the Voice Trait (Sound like you!)
The book that I used this year when I introduced the voice trait was Let's Do Nothing, by Tony Fucile. This book is one of my favorite books, and if you read it, you will see why.

Picture Books effective for Voice
Some picture books that have great ideas in them to teach voice, taken from Kristina Smekens, are listed below.

- Because I Could Not Stop My Bike...and Other Poems (Karen Jo Shapiro)
- Bed Hogs (Kelly DiPucchio)
- Clementine [Chapter Book] (Sara Pennypacker)
- Diary of a Spider (Doreen Cronin)
- Enemy Pie (Derek Munson)
- First Year Letters (Julie Danneberg)
- From Me to You (Anthony France)
- Hey, Little Ant (Phillip M. Hoose)
- How Are You Peeling?: Foods With Moods (Saxton Freymann)
- Mean Soup (Betsy Everitt)
- Monster at the End of This Book (Jon Stone)
- Old Coyote (Nancy Wood)
- Secret Knowledge of Grown-Ups (David Wisniewski)
- Stand Tall, Molly Lou Melon (Patty Lovell)
- Stinky cheese Man and Other Fairly Stupid Tales (Jon Scieszka)
Playing with Voice

DIRECTIONS: Respond to each of the 7 questions using the indicated tone or feeling. Write at least 4 sentences for each question.

1. How do you feel about a special day of the year like your birthday or Christmas or a special family celebration?

EXCITEMENT ___________________________________

______________________________________________

______________________________________________

______________________________________________

2. What was your most embarrassing moment ever?

EMBARRASSMENT __________________________________

______________________________________________

______________________________________________

______________________________________________

3. How did you feel on your very first day of kindergarten (or first grade)?

CAUTIOUS ______________________________________

______________________________________________

______________________________________________

______________________________________________

Taken from Launching the Writer's Workshop: Grades 3 and Up
Kristina Smekens & Dr. Maureen Scane, 2008
4. How do you feel about your future?
HOPEFUL

5. What was the funniest movie you have ever seen?
FUNNY

6. What was a time you felt very confident and proud of yourself?
CONFIDENCE

7. Tell about a time you were so mad you didn't think you would ever get over it.
ANGER
Voice Descriptors
Ruth Culham produced a starter list of voice descriptors to help students use voice in their writing.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Starter List of Voice Descriptors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>happy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>superficial</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>thoughtful</td>
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<td>pleasing</td>
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<td>caring</td>
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<td>thrilled</td>
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<td>mean</td>
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<td>warm</td>
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<tr>
<td>delightful</td>
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<tr>
<td>entertaining</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>courageous</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Taken from 6+1 Traits of Writing: The Complete Guide Grades 3 and Up
Ruth Culham, 1995
Word
Choice
**Word Choice**

"Word choice is more than just about the use-or misuse of words. It is also about beautiful language. It is about the use of rich, colorful, precise language that communicates not just in a functional way, but also in a way that moves and enlightens the reader" (Culham, 2003, p. 142). Choosing the "right word" at the "right place" in writing is a skill that all students need to master. The words do not need to be the long words that are found in a thesaurus. The right word can be a short word.

**Introducing Word Choice**

*The Circus Ship* by Chris Van Dusen is a great book to use for kids to pick out words that stood out to them. The verbs are great, and the story line is wonderful. The kids even get to "seek and find" some hidden animals! Yes, even my 5th graders loved it!

![Image of a book cover with word "Word Choice" on it]

**Picture Books Highlighting Word Choice**

Some picture books that have great ideas in them to teach word choice, taken from Kristina Smekens, are listed below.

- Bat Loves the Night (Nicola Davies)
- Boy Who Loved Words (Roni Schotter)
- Fancy Nancy's Favorite Fancy Words: From Accessories to Zany (Jane O'Connor)
- Hello Ocean (Pam Munoz Ryan)
- In November (Cynthia Rylant)
- Let's Play Basketball (Charles R. Smith, Jr.)
- Max's Words (Kate Banks)
- Mrs. McBloom, Clean Up Your Classroom! (Kelly DiPucchio)
- My Mama Had a Dancing Heart (Libba Moore Gray)
- Sounds Funny!: A Book About Comic Sounds (Kevin Somers)
- Wide-Mouthed Frog: A Pop-Up Book (Keith Faulkner)
Vivid Verbs
A lot of students think that adjectives make their writing exciting, when in all actuality it is the verbs, vivid verbs, to be precise. Verbs can show action in any written work, and the reader can visualize verbs. Here is an example of a graphic organizer for picking more vivid verbs.

Taken from Trait-Based Graphic Organizers & Mini-Lessons
Jennifer Jacobson, 2008
Gettin' Better Verbs

DIRECTIONS: Replace each get/ got with a stronger action verb without repeating a word.

1. When I went to camp, I got a head cold.  
2. After dinner, my dad got a phone call from his boss.  
3. Jerry listened to the teacher explain the lesson,  
   but he still didn't get it.  
4. When will we get our school pictures taken?  
5. Ellen got an A- on her test.  
6. When dad sold his lawnmower, he got $1500.00 for it.  
7. Mom got all the items on her grocery list with a coupon.  
8. My dad thought he knew the directions, but he got mixed up.  
9. We got to the theater late and missed the opening act.  
10. My sister got free tickets for the concert next week.  
11. During our camping trip, I got bit by several mosquitoes.  
12. My teacher asked me how I got my unusual name.  
13. Dad got lost when we went on vacation this summer.  
14. Mom got really upset with my brother.  
15. Do you get that you shouldn't use "get" as a verb?

Taken from Launching the Writer's Workshop: Grades 3 and Up  
Kristina Smekens & Dr. Maureen Scane, 2008
Kagan Publishing provided this word choice chart with some vivid verbs for some common ones.

### Word Choice—Powerful Verbs

Possible Answers

*Instructions: Share these possible word choices with students after they generate their own.*

<table>
<thead>
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<td>scold</td>
<td>whoop</td>
<td>snap</td>
<td>protest</td>
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Taken from Balanced Literacy Through Cooperative Learning & Active Engagement (Grade 5) Sharon Skidmore & Jill Graber, 2008
Fresh Words

rained
- drizzled
- poured
- sprinkled

played
- competed
- participated
- pitched

stopped
- ended
- called
- canceled

Taken from Trait-Based Writing Graphic Organizers & Mini-Lessons
Jennifer Jacobson, 2008
Fresh Words

Date

Name

Taken from Trait-Based Writing Graphic Organizers & Mini-Lessons
Jennifer Jacobson, 2008
Here's a word choice classroom resource that focuses on better verbs:

**Synonyms for Said**

Don't just use said. Balance your dialogue verbs between said and its synonyms.

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<td>quipled</td>
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Don't misunderstand this lesson! Said is an important verb! There are times when it makes sense to use it. Other times, it's a good idea to choose a synonym instead of said. When might you choose to use said as your verb? When might you choose to use one if its synonyms? A good writer makes good choices, often balancing his/her use of verbs.

Look at some of your favorite novels and short stories to help you think about this. Look at newspaper and magazine articles. Who is using said and who isn't?
Dead verbs are words that are overused and can make writing stale. Instead, try using stronger words that add more interest and variety to your writing. To find synonyms for dead verbs, try using a thesaurus or online resource. Practice replacing dead verbs in your own writing to improve your style.
Sensory Words
Sensory words, when used in writing, help the reader visualize what the writer is trying to convey. Here are a couple of graphic organizers to help with this!

Taken from Trait-Based Writing Graphic Organizers & Mini-Lessons
Jennifer Jacobson, 2007
Word Choice—Powerful Adjectives

Possible Answers

Instructions: Share these possible word choices with students after they generate their own.

<table>
<thead>
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<td>little</td>
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<td>leggy</td>
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| bad    |                  |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |
|--------|------------------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|
| awful  | regretful        | deplorable| naughty| grisly| evil | vile |
| appalling | rotten         | terrible| unhealthy| scandalous | serious | atrocious |
| horrific | horrible       | shocking| poor | dreadful | adverse | unspeakable |
| unpleasant | inexcusable     | dire | outrageous | ghastly | frightful |

Taken from Balanced Literacy Through Cooperative Learning & Active Engagement
Sharon Skidmore & Jill Graber, 2008
Taboo words
Trait of WORD CHOICE

► PREDICTABLE WRITING
Without thinking twice, a first draft about winter would include several ordinary and predictable words.

Outside in the Winter
It's snowing big white flakes. It's cold. I'm freezing. I can see my breath.

► TABOO TIME
After a quick brainstorm of the first words kids think of when writing about the topic of winter, the "off-limits" words were identified. When pushed to be more choosy in their word choice, the second draft is much more descriptive.

Outside in the Winter
My fingers and toes are numb. My red-face is stiff. Every time I breathe in through my dripping nose, I feel miniature icicles forming in my nostrils.

Thanksgiving
Birthday party
Messy bedroom
Lost & Scared
Snowstorm
Getting hurt
Environmental pollution
Healthy hearing
Embarrassing moment
Bike riding
Mother's Day

◄ BUILD A LIST
Challenge students to brainstorm 3–10 Taboo Words that correspond with each of these writing topics and prompts.

◄ MORE TOPICS
List additional writing topics to create Taboo Word lists for. Write them in the space provided.
**Shades of words**

Trait of WORD CHOICE

Better words for _______ pink
- cotton candy
- carnation
- magenta
- mulberry

Better words for _______ mean
- pesky
- ornery
- naughty
- spiteful
- evil

Better words for _______ hot
- tepid
- luke
- warm
- simmering
- boiling

**SHADES OF COLOR**

Using the color names written on the crayons themselves, have students identify synonyms for the general colors—red, blue, orange, green, yellow, purple, pink, black, brown, etc. This activity can serve simply as a demonstration for synonyms in upper grades, or it can be the initial pages for a class thesaurus in the primary grades.

**FIND A SHADES OF COLOR PAGE TEMPLATE IN THE APPENDIX.**

Use the crayon shades to explain the idea of shades of word meanings. Then begin creating and maintaining lists of synonyms for some of the most overused words in the students' writing.
**13 Trait Connection: Word Choice**

Better words for ________________________

[Blank lines for students to write alternative words]

Taken from Launching the Writer's Workshop: Grades 3 and Up
Kristina Smekens & Dr. Maureen Scane, 2008
Sentence Fluency
Sentence Fluency
"Strong sentence fluency is marked by logic, creative phrasing, parallel construction, alliteration, and word order that makes reading feel natural" (Culham, 2003, p. 178). When students write fluently, their writing flows and does not sound choppy.

Introducing Sentence Fluency
My kids absolutely loved the book, *Long Shot* by Chris Paul. The sentences in this story have both short and long sentences. The flow of the sentences from beginning to end sounds smooth.

![Image of the book *Long Shot*]

Picture Books Highlighting Sentence Fluency
Some picture books that have great ideas in them to teach sentence fluency, taken from Kristina Smekens, are listed below.

- Big Talk: Poems for Four Voices (Paul Fleischman)
- The Miraculous Journey of Edward Tulane [Chapter Book] (DiCamillo & Ibatoulline)
- Hello, Harvest Moon (Ralph J. Fletcher)
- Hoop Kings (Charles R. Smith)
- In November (Cynthia Rylant)
- Magic Hat (Mem Fox)
- Math Curse (Jon Scieszka)
- Mr. George Baker (Amy Hest)
- Night in the Country (Cynthia Rylant)
- Paperboy (Dav Pilkey)
- Scrambled States of America (Laurie Keller)
- Soft House (Jane Yolen)
- Sunsets of Miss Olivia Wiggins (Lester L. Laminack)
- Switch on the Night (Ray Bradbury)
- There's a Frog in My Throat!: 440 Animal Sayings a Little Bird Told Me (Loreen Leedy)
- Yo! Yes! (Chris Raschka)
Expanding Sentences
This graphic organizer helps students expand sentences by having the child add words and phrases to make their sentences longer.

**Sentence Expansion Wheel**

Short Sentence:
*We walked.*

Expanded Sentence:
*On Saturday, my brother and I walked quickly to the playground so we could play on the seesaw.*

*Taken from Trait-Based Writing Graphic Organizers & Mini-Lessons*
*Jennifer Jacobson, 2008*
Sentence Expansion Wheel

Who:

What:

Where:

When:

How:

Expanded Sentence:

Short Sentence:

Date

Name

Taken from Trait-Based Writing Graphic Organizers & Mini-Lessons
Jennifer Jacobson, 2008
Long & Short Sentence Practice

Experimenting with Long & Short Sentence Writing

**DIRECTIONS:** Read the list of topics. Notice how the list on the left includes topics that create feelings of panic, urgency, and anger. The list on the right includes topics that create more calm and gentle, slow and relaxed feelings.

Select one topic from each list. Write several sentences about that event or topic using lots of short sentences for the "fast" topics and lots of long sentences for the "slow" topics.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FAST, ANGRY URGENT TOPICS:</th>
<th>SLOW, CALM, RELAXED TOPICS:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Late for the bus</td>
<td>Riding in the car on a long trip</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Running a race</td>
<td>Watching cookies bake</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Getting in line for recess</td>
<td>Watching a boring event (piano recital, ballet recital, baseball game)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fire alarm/fire drill</td>
<td>Floating on a raft in the lake/pond/pool</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frustrated at sibling</td>
<td>Sitting outside in a lawn chair, staring at a campfire</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Being picked on or bullied</td>
<td>Cuddling a cat or bunny or other soft creature</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Being grounded</td>
<td>Sleeping in on a Saturday morning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Told &quot;no&quot; when wanting to do something</td>
<td>Painting your nails</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Angry dog chasing you</td>
<td>Eating a picnic outside</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hurrying to the car in a thunderstorm</td>
<td>Watching snowflakes fall</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Giving a speech in front of strangers/adults</td>
<td>Relaxing while listening to music</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Getting a shot</td>
<td>Reading a book</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taking a timed test</td>
<td>Coloring a picture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rushing to the restroom in between classes</td>
<td>Blowing bubbles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Playing a fast section video game</td>
<td>Slowly licking an ice cream cone</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Being startled by a fast-moving snake</td>
<td>Watching a helium balloon float up</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**FAST WRITING WITH SHORT SENTENCES:**

________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

**SLOW WRITING WITH LONG SENTENCES:**

________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
Slinkey sentences
Trait of SENTENCE FLUENCY

**Original**

Winter Tunnels
My brother and I were making snow tunnels. My brother's tunnel got broken. He thought I broke it. That's when it started. He ambushed me with snowballs. They flew through the air like jets. I slid in my tunnel. I get hit and get angry. I crawl out and throw ice at him. He catches the ice and throws it back. Snow was dripping down my shirt. Eventually I lose and go back inside.

**Revised**

Winter Tunnels
My brother and I were making tunnels in a snow mound. My brother's tunnel broke. He stared at me, thinking I broke it. That's when it started. He ambushed me with snowballs. They flew through the air like jets. AHHH! I ran, dove, and slid into my tunnel to stay away from him. I get hit. I get angry. I crawl out of the tunnel and start throwing giant pieces of ice back at him. He fired back. Snow and ice chips were dripping down my shirt. Eventually I lose and go back inside.

**Making Sentences Longer:**
1. Add a descriptive detail (color, name, kind, etc.).
   - Original: The cat was playful.
   - Revised: The charming grey cat was cute and playful.
2. Add a description about smell, taste, touch, sound or sight.
   - Original: His bedroom was messy.
   - Revised: His messy bedroom stank like the boys' locker room.
3. Add a phrase about how the character said something.
   - Original: "Get out!" she screamed.
   - Revised: "Get out!" she screamed, with her hands on her hips.
4. Add a phrase that explains something or gives examples.
   - Original: Plants need nutrients.
   - Revised: Plants need nutrients to grow, like water and fertilizer.

**Making Sentences Shorter:**
1. Take out any "and" or "or" and "then" phrases, and make the sentences separate.
   - Original: I put on my skis and my boots and then I would go outside and play in the snow.
   - Revised: I'd put on my snow suit and my boots. I would go outside and play in the snow.
2. If you have multiple adjectives in a row, substitute them for a single stronger one.
   - Original: His hair was bright red, orange, and purple with gold.
   - Revised: His hair was a sunset orange.
3. Take out parts of the sentence that say the same thing more than once.
   - Original: I would walk through the cold river and feel the freezing water on my icy cold feet.
   - Revised: I would walk through the freezing river with icy cold feet.

**Passing the Slinky Test**
Strategies to lengthen or shorten sentences

**Slincy Time**
"It's Slinky, it's Slinky... for fun, it's a wonderful toy. It's Slinky, it's Slinky, for fun, a girl or a boy." Believe it or not, using a slinky as a model for slinky, fun for a girl or a boy. Believe it or not, using a slinky as a model for students to write short (slinky all squished up) and long sentences (slinky all stretched out) is something they always remember.
Experimenting with Parallelism

Not parallel:
In my locker I have books, a couple of coats for recess, and three pencils.

Parallel structure:
ONE-WORD NOUN: In my locker there are books, coats, and pencils.
ADJECTIVE/NOUN: In my locker there are school books, spring coats, and sharpened pencils.

Not parallel:
At the grocery, my mom shops for some grapes, a bunch of bananas, and a crispy, red apple.

Parallel structure:
ONE-WORD NOUN: At the grocery, my mom shops for grapes, bananas, and apples.
ADJECTIVE/NOUN:

ADJECTIVE/ADJECTIVE/NOUN:

Recopy a sentence from your own writing that is NOT parallel.

Rewrite the sentence two different ways to make it parallel in structure.
1) ________________________________
   ________________________________
   ________________________________

2) ________________________________
   ________________________________
   ________________________________
Did I leave spaces between words?
Did I use a title?
Did I use periods or question marks?
Did I use capital letters in the right places?
Is it easy to read my spelling?
Could another person read my paper?
Conventions
"Conventions are important, very important. But they aren’t the most important part of writing. Their purpose is to guide the reader through text and make ideas readable" (Culham, 2003, p. 214). Conventions include capitalization, punctuation, spelling, grammar, and paragraphs.

Introducing Conventions
My favorite book to use to introduce the convention trait to my class is Punctuation Takes a Vacation by Robin Pulver. In this story, there is a classroom of kids, and the kids take the punctuation marks for granted. The punctuation marks leave for a vacation, and when the teacher writes a note to them, the punctuation is all in the wrong places. It’s fun to read the letter how it is written…and this point is made strongly to the students that punctuation is important in their writing.

Picture Books Highlighting Conventions
Some picture books that have great ideas in them to teach conventions, taken from Kristina Smekens, are listed below.

- Chicken in the City (Maria Fleming)
- Eats, Shoots & Leaves: Why, Commas Really Do Make a Difference! (Lynne Truss)
- Fantastic! Wow! And Unreal!: A Book About Interjections and Conjunctions (Ruth Heller)
- From Me to You (Anthony France)
- Girl's Like Spaghetti: Why, You Can't Manage Without Apostrophes! (Lynne Truss)
- Love that Dog [Chapter Book] (Sharon Creech)
- Mega-Deluxe Capitalization Machine (Justin McCory Martin)
- Mink, a Fink, a Skating Rink: What is a Noun? (Brian P. Cleary)
- Mystery of the Missing Socks (Justin McCory Martin)
- Planet Without Pronouns (Justin McCory Martin)
- Things That Are Most in This World (Judi Barrett)
- To Root, to Toot, to Parachute: What is a Verb? (Brian P. Cleary)
- Wonderful Words: Poems about Reading, Writing, Speaking, and Listening (Lee Bennett Hopkins)
- Yo! Yes! (Chris Raschka)
Capitalization

Capitalizing proper nouns is introduced in kindergarten, but there are still some students who struggle with when to capitalize certain words. A word that is usually one of my first mini-lessons that some fifth graders miss is the pronoun, "I". The following chart highlights common rules for capitalization.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Common Rules for Capitalization</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Capitalize words at the beginning of a sentence:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hey, good job.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Why did she do that?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Capitalize the pronoun I:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I just love strawberry ice cream.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tell me what I have to do.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Am I going to go to school?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Capitalize the names of specific people, places, or things:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John Smith</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leonardo Di Vinci</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Dakota</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Duke University</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Africa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Statue of Liberty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Toyota Sienna</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Memorial Day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Atlantic Ocean</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grand Canyon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Capitalize the first letter of the first word in a direct quote:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Who's been sleeping in my bed?&quot; Papa Bear cried.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John F. Kennedy said, &quot;Ask not what your country can do for you...&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The teacher asked, &quot;Can you answer this question?&quot;</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

May be photocopied for classroom use. © 2008 by Karen Caine from Writing to Persuade (Heinemann: Portsmouth, NH).

Taken from Writing to Persuade/Karen Caine, 2008
Punctuation

Punctuation marks are needed in writing, so the reader knows how to read the writing: where to pause, where to go fast, where to stop, and how to read the sentences. Punctuation marks should be built upon from year to year. At the 5th grade level, the punctuation marks that the students struggle with the most are commas and quotation marks.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PUNCTUATION</th>
<th>WHAT DOES YOUR VOICE DO WHEN IT HITS THAT MARK?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>’</td>
<td>Pause at a comma.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>.</td>
<td>Stop at a period.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>?</td>
<td>Your voice goes up at the end of a sentence with a question mark.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>!</td>
<td>Your voice intensifies when reading a sentence with an exclamation point. (louder, firmer, deeper)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>...</td>
<td>Your voice drifts off at an ellipse creating a long pause for think time or suspense.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>—</td>
<td>Stop suddenly at a dash, and then finish the rest of the sentence quickly.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(  )</td>
<td>Pause before and after a parenthesis to alert the reader you're adding in a little extra information. It's like you're letting the reader in on a secret.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Taken from Trait Mate Starter Lessons/Kristina Smekens, 2007
**Anchor Charts**

During my mini-lesson time, I created anchor charts with one additional column added at the end…a “Purpose” column. When I did this, it was an eye-opening experience for me. I had kids that told me they knew what the punctuation marks were, but that they didn’t know why they were important. This one easy addition made for some great sharing time.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ellipsis</th>
<th>Purpose</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Used to build suspense.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Used when a thought is trailing off.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Used in a quotation where you have deleted words.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Comma</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. In a series.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. To set off non-restrictive information.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. In a series and to separate elements.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quotation Marks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. People talk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“I am so glad it’s Friday,” said Mrs. Simmons.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Titles of short works</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a) newspaper article</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b) magazine articles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c) poems</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d) short stories</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e) songs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>f) chapters of books</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Taken from Karen Caine Persuasive Writing Workshop
Created by Michelle Simmons
Punctuation walkabout
Trait of CONVENTIONS

My room has a dolphin on the wall. I have my dad's old bed. I have blue carpet so I pretend that it is the ocean. I have blue flowers on my bedspread. I have a lot of blue things. My room is my favorite place in the house.
First Grader at Roanoke Elementary (Roanoke, IN)

My room is upstairs. The best thing in my room is my closet because it is clean. Some times I lie in my bed and listen to the grasshoppers. I like my room because it is nice and clean. I like my room the best. I fell asleep all the time in my room.
First Grader at Lincoln Elementary School (Huntington, IN)

I fell off my scooter. The first time I rode a scooter was when I was 5. I fell off and scared my ney all up really bad. I could only walk because of that scrape on my ney. It was as big as a macadam slised frog. Win I turd 6 I didn't fall off agin on me scooter.
Second Grader at Horace Mann Elementary (Huntington, IN)

The Armadillo
The armadillo is a golden-brown desert animal. It has a hard, scaly shell that protects it like armor. The armadillo eats juicy roots, scorpions and beetles and grubs. It has two hungry predators. They are the coyote and the bobcat. It can burrow into a deep hole with its sharp claws. Its hard shell keeps it in the ground so that predators can't take it away. It can speedily jump into a creek and can close its nose and wait under deep water.
Fourth Grader at Sweetwater Elementary (Sweetwater, IN)

The Perfect Playground
My perfect playground would have a lot of things. There would be at least 10 swings. There would be a few slides here and there. Near the monkey bars would be some ant hills. There would be a dodge ball and a place to play kick ball. Somewhere there would be a big grass area where kids can just kind of do whatever they want.

When you were there you could hear birds chirping and the breeze flowing through your hair. You would smell the fresh air. Just thinking about it puts a chill down my spine. I really hope they do make a playground like this in the future.
Fourth Grader at Lincoln Elementary (Huntington, IN)

▲ WRITING SAMPLES
Here are different sample writings that all include accurate periods. Utilize one or more when demonstrating "punctuation walkabout" or "punctuation clapabout."
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Punctuation Mark</th>
<th>Purpose</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **Period**       | 1. To end all sentences except questions and exclamatory sentences  
                  2. Used in abbreviations |
| **Question Mark**| 1. To end question sentences |
| **Exclamation Point** | 1. To end a sentence that has a lot of feeling |
| **Apostrophe**   | 1. Used to show that a noun is possessive  
                  2. Used in contractions |
| **Ellipsis**     | 1. Used to build suspense  
                  2. Used when a thought is trailing off  
                  3. Used in a quotation where you have deleted words |
| **Quotation Marks** | 1. Used when people speak  
                          2. Used around titles of short works  
                             (newspaper articles, magazine articles, poems, short stories, songs, t.v. programs, chapters of books) |
| **Comma**        | 1. Used to join two complete sentences, and it comes before the conjunction  
                          2. Used after an introductory clause  
                          3. Used in a series  
                          4. Used around an APPOSITIVE  
                          5. Used after transition words  
                          6. Used around nouns of direct address  
                          7. Used around dates  
                          8. Used in between the city and state |
| **Colon**        | 1. Used to call attention to the words that follow it.  
                          2. To introduce a list  
                          3. Used in the greeting in a business letter  
                          4. Used in hours and minutes |
Spelling
A lot of my 5th grade students struggle with spelling in different ways. My more advanced spellers have problems with spelling different words, but they attempt to write more challenging words. My struggling writing students have been taught that they need to stretch out their words and try their best, and a lot of these students are shocked when I tell them I am not counting off for spelling...that I am more concerned about them getting the content down (which are the first 5 traits). I have some great writers that would be considered lower level to some due to poor convention skills, but some of the time, they are better descriptive writers. These kids need encouraged and praised...and they love their work shown or read to the class! Don't sell your struggling writers short...encourage them to take risks and move out of their comfort zone.

First-Draft Spelling Strategies

Brainstorm spelling strategies students can utilize when writing a first draft. List them on a wall resource chart for students' future reference.

Taken from Launching the Writer's Workshop: Grades 3 and Up
Kristina Smekens & Dr. Maureen Scane, 2008
Presentation

Be proud of your final copy!
Presentation

"Presentation is the final piece of the 6 + 1 TRAIT puzzle. How the writing looks to the reader is at its heart" (Culham, 2003, p. 248). Some teachers included this trait with conventions, but it is a separate category. Presentation deals with the "look" of the final, published piece of writing. Sometimes, students come to 5th grade, and they don't care what their final piece of writing looks like. Showing kids anchor papers or anchor projects helps the student know what is expected. Having high expectations is also necessary for all students, because the students will perform where the expectation is. The presentation of a piece of writing includes legible handwriting or if typed, legible fonts and font size. It also includes the formatting of the writing such as the effective use of margins and white space. One last component is a focus on a title, charts, tables, and illustrations.

Introducing the Presentation Trait

I don’t introduce this trait with a trade book, but I do make a sign and post it after the convention trait. This step I also refer to as their “published" copy of any writing they do. I show anchor papers of what I am expecting, and we create anchor charts on what the final piece should be like.

Books Highlighting Presentation

Any book can be used to introduce and as mini-lessons for this trait. With any picture book, you can discuss the white space, how the author put the words on the pages, and pictures. With chapter books, you can highlight the cover, prologue (if any), acknowledgements page (if any), chapter sections, epilogue (if any), and pictures (if any). Showing different presentations of books to your students will open a world of opportunity for them as they work through the writing process during writer’s workshop. Professional authors learn from other authors, and students are influenced by everything they see and hear. Surround your students with a lot of good writing samples!
Genres of Writing

(Kindergarten-5th Grade)

Taken from Genre Study: Teaching with Fiction and Nonfiction Books
Irene Fountas & Gay Su Pinnell, 2012
Genres of Writing

The three genres of writing that need to be taught at the elementary level are narrative, persuasive, and research writing. Narrative and some research done from kindergarten to 2nd, and then introducing persuasive from 3rd grade up. With there being so many different parts in teaching students how to research, my hypothesis was that the teachers of Northern Heights Elementary School would have picked Research writing. However, that was not the case. The staff responded that Persuasive was the most difficult to teach, followed by research report writing. The confidence level when teaching narrative writing was at 100% for the staff, so this manual focuses on persuasive and research report writing.

The following sections highlight the different genres and highlight some ideas that might help the staff when teaching writing to students of all abilities.
Persuasive Writing

Taken from: http://communicationissuccess.blogspot.com/2012/05/how-would-you-define-persuasion.html
Persuasive Writing Definition - a type of writing that is used to influence a reader's way of thinking. Persuasion is all around us. From infomercials to commercials and from billboard signs to magazine ads, we are constantly trying to be persuaded by someone or something.

Formats
Persuasive Writing can be delivered in various formats. A kindergarten student could draw a picture for Santa Claus and attempt to write what he/she wanted for Christmas. A first grade student could write a letter to his/her parents explaining why they needed a bike for his/her birthday. A second grader could write a story about a group of kids wanting new recess equipment for recess. A third grader could make a newsletter for his/her classmates persuading them to recycle. A fourth grader could create a persuasive poem and give it to the cafeteria seeking more food choices during lunch. And, finally, a fifth grader could create a T.V. commercial and ad for a product he/she designed, using a form of bandwagon to persuade his/her classmates to want to buy the product.

Professional Development
The best writing workshop that I have been to regarding persuasive writing was with Karen Caine, author of Writing to Persuade: Mini-lessons to Help Students Plan, Draft, and Revise. She taught us how to let our students think for themselves in regards to persuasive writing, instead of feeling like we have to have control over what the students write about. This was the first year (out of 14 years) that I thoroughly enjoyed my persuasive writing unit. All 92 kids chose what they wanted to write about, and they produced well written persuasive essays.

Professional Resources
- Genre Study: Teaching with Fiction and Nonfiction Books (Irene C. Fountas & Gay Su Pinnell)
- Writing to Persuade: Mini-Lessons to help Students Plan, Draft, and Revise (Karen Caine)
- 50 Debate Prompts for Kids (Patrick Daley & Michael S, Dahlie)
Mentor Texts to teach Persuasive Writing

Genre Study, Fountas & Pinnell

- But Excuse Me That is My Book - (Lauren Child)
- Love That Dog - (Sharon Creech)
- Click, Clack, Moo - (Doreen Cronin)
- Salamander Room - (Anne Mazer)
- I Wanna Iguana - (Karen Kaufman Orloff)
- True Story of the Three Little Pigs - (Jon Scieszka)
- Dear Mrs. LaRue - (Mark Teague)
- Don't Let the Pigeon Drive the Bus - (Mo Willems)
- Oil Spill! (Melvin Berger)
- The Polar Bears Are Hungry (Carol Carrick)
- The Vegetables We Eat (Gail Gibbons)
- Moon Bear (Brenda Guiberson)
- Almost Gone: The World's Rarest Animals (Steve Jenkins)
- The Busy Body Book: A Kid's Guide to Fitness (Lizzy Rockwell)
- The Buzz on Bees: Why Are They Disappearing? (Shelley Rotner)
- A River Ran Wild (Lynne Cherry)
- The Buffalo Are Back (Jean Craighead George)
- It's a Book (Lane Smith)
- A Place for Birds (Melissa Stewart)
- The Case of the Vanishing Golden Frogs (Sandra Markle)

Debate Topics

50 Debate Prompts for Kids, Daley & Dahlie

- Animal Testing
- Cell Phones in Class
- Children & Beauty Pageants
- Student Athletes & Good Grades
- School Uniforms
- Paddling in Schools
- Year Round School
- Girls & Boys Separate Schools
- Teens & Credit Cards
### Suggested Grade Levels for Persuasive Writing Studies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>3rd Grade</th>
<th>4th Grade</th>
<th>5th Grade</th>
<th>6th Grade</th>
<th>Beyond</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Editorial/Op-Ed</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Persuasive Letter</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Letter to the Editor</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political Cartoon</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political Speech</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Service Announcement</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advertisement</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advice Column</td>
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<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
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<tr>
<td>Petition</td>
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<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Taken from Balanced Literacy Through Cooperative Learning & Active Engagement (Grade 5)
Sharon Skidmore & Jill Graber, 2008
Things That Bother Me
This was the best strategy to get kids thinking about topics and ideas that meant something to them. At our mini-lesson area, I wrote “Things That Bother Me” in the middle, and then I gave the kids 2 minutes to write as many things as they could. I definitely had to model this, and once the kids saw what I was writing, they did much better. Shown below is an anchor chart and a couple of examples of student work for this.

Students from Mrs. Simmons’ Language Arts Class, 2012-2013
Anchor Chart

Things that bother me:

- Laziness
- Slow drivers
- Friends who gossip
- People who are mean, disrespectful
- Not getting to spend time with my kids
- Teachers that cuss at students??
- Having so much paperwork as a teacher (I need a secretary)
- Kids who bully families
- Kids who can't afford food/clothes
- People who think using drugs is ok

Created by Michelle Simmons
Shared Writing to Interactive Writing - Differentiation

With a group of struggling writers, we created a plan together. Once the plan was finished, I led the group, and the students helped me come up with sentences for our first paragraph based on our writing plan. I then had that group work together and they discussed as a group what they wanted the sentences to say for the next three paragraphs. I then told them to get my attention when they were finished with that, so I could guide a conversation on writing a good conclusion. Shown below is the essay that was produced.

Created by 4 Special Education Students, 2012-2013
Michelle Simmons
Second of all, paddling can be mental abuse too.

Some kids can be picked on. Some kids can be very sad.

Some kids are mad because kids make fun of them. They have no friends because they've been paddled.

In conclusion, that's why I think paddling should not be in school. By being paddled, you can break bones. The principal will embarrass you and kids will put you down. If I had you will join my side!
Don't You Agree?

On a separate piece of paper, draft a persuasive essay.

Reason 1:
What reasons can you give to convince your reader that your stand is the right one?

Reason 2:
Who should read this essay?

Reason 3:
My stand on the topic.

Are you for or against your topic?

Persuasive Essay Graphic Organizer - Differentiation

Money L. Whittle II & Mary C. McMechin, 2005

In several types of writing, but if you allow students to make choices, I would recommend the 5-square graphic organizer found earlier in this chapter.
Convince Me

Topic:

My Stand:

Who should read this essay?

Reason 1

What detail will convince your reader that this is an important reason?

Reason 2

What detail will convince your reader that this is an important reason?

Conclusion:

---

Taken from Teaching Writing Through Differentiated Instruction With Leveled Graphic Organizers
Nancy L. Witherell & Mary C. McMakin, 2005
Point and Counterpoint

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic:</th>
<th></th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>My Stand:</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>My Audience:</td>
<td></td>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reasons</th>
<th>Supporting Details</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reason 1</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Reason 2</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Reason 3</td>
<td></td>
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</table>

Now think about one reason a person who opposes your stand might give. Be prepared to state why this reason would not be convincing.

- Opposing Reason:

- Why wouldn't this reason be convincing?

Conclusion:
Persuasion Map

Name: ____________________________ Date: ____________________________

**Goal or Thesis:**

1. _____________________________________________________________
   1a. ___________________________________________________________
   1b. ___________________________________________________________
   1c. ___________________________________________________________

2. _____________________________________________________________
   2a. ___________________________________________________________
   2b. ___________________________________________________________
   2c. ___________________________________________________________

3. _____________________________________________________________
   3a. ___________________________________________________________
   3b. ___________________________________________________________
   3c. ___________________________________________________________

**Conclusion:**

- **Main Reasons:** Briefly state three main reasons that would convince someone that your goal or thesis is valid. Write your own goal or thesis here.
- **Facts or Examples:** Write three facts or examples to support each of your main reasons and validate your goal or thesis.
- **Conclusion:** Conclude your argument by summarizing the most important details of the argument and stating once again what the reader is to believe or do.

*Permission to reproduce indicated material granted by IRA/NCTE, 2009*
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stance/Thesis</th>
<th>Reasons Why</th>
<th>Example</th>
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<td>Reasons Why</td>
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<td>Reasons Why</td>
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<td>Reasons Why</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

May be photocopied for classroom use. © 2008 by Karen Caine from *Writing to Persuade* (Heinemann: Portsmouth, NH).

Taken from *Writing to Persuade*

Karen Caine, 2008
Persuasive Writing

Opinion - Give your opinion.

Reason - Give a reason for having this opinion:

1. 
2.

Example: Give an example that supports your opinion:

1. 
2.

Opinion - Restate your opinion.

Remember - giving 2 or 3 reasons and examples strengthens your argument and makes your writing more persuasive.

Taken from

http://www.google.com/search?q=persuasive+writing+templates&rlz=1C1CHBF&source=lnms&tbm=isch&sa=X&ved=0ahUKEwiGvajKfCReAhWPrbAKHgnWCQoQ_AUJ8&biw=1366&bih=674&imgrc=xF_FoOjz0vB01M:

http://www.google.com/search?q=persuasive+writing+templates&rlz=1C1CHBF&source=lnms&tbm=isch&sa=X&ved=0ahUKEwiGvajKfCReAhWPrbAKHgnWCQoQ_AUJ8&biw=1366&bih=674&imgrc=xF_FoOjz0vB01M:
Persuasive Writing Model

Instructions: Make into a chart or overhead transparency to guide students in persuasive writing.

Opening

Hook

Opinion Statement

Reasons

Reason #1

Supporting Detail

Supporting Detail

Supporting Detail

Supporting Detail

Reason #2

Supporting Detail

Supporting Detail

Supporting Detail

Supporting Detail

Reason #3

Supporting Detail

Supporting Detail

Supporting Detail

Supporting Detail

Closing

Restate Opinion and Main Reasons

Ending

Taken from Balanced Literacy Through Cooperative Learning & Active Engagement (Grade 5)
Sharon Skidmore & Jill Graber, 2008
Persuasive Writing Model Form

Instructions: Make into a chart or overhead transparency. The teacher may add labels—step by step—throughout the persuasive writing process.

Balanced Literacy Through Cooperative Learning & Active Engagement
Sharon Skidmore & Jill Graber, 2008
Persuasive Essay
Should paddling be used in schools?

Introduction

Reason #1

Reason #2

Reason #3

Conclusion

Opinion:

Fact from #1:

Fact from #2:

Fact from #3:

STRONG LAST STATEMENT:
A Handy List of Transitional Phrases

Transitional phrases allow the reader to link ideas together. They can be used in the following ways.

**To trigger addition:**
- additionally
- also
- besides
- equally important
- furthermore
- in addition
- moreover
- too

**To trigger an example:**
- for example
- for instance
- thus
- in other words
- as an illustration
- in particular

**To trigger emphasis:**
- above all
- after all
- again
- certainly
- indeed
- in essence
- in fact
- in other words
- of course
- that is to say
- to repeat
- surely
- truly

**To trigger a sequence:**
- afterward
- last
- length
- eventually
- finally
- first
- immediately
- in the meantime
- in time

**To trigger a summary:**
- accordingly
- after all
- as a result
- consequently
- in any case
- in brief
- in conclusion
- in short
- in summary
- in the long run
- on the whole
- to sum up

**To trigger granting a point:**
- at any rate
- be that as it may
- even so
- however
- in any case
- in any event
- in spite of this
- nonetheless
- still
- the fact notwithstanding
- while it may be true

**To trigger a relationship:**
- accordingly
- alternatively
- although
- as a result
- at the same time
- because
- but
- consequently
- conversely
- due to
- even so
- hence
- however
- in contrast
- in the same way
- likewise
- nevertheless
- nonetheless
- notwithstanding
- on the contrary
- on the other hand
- similarly
- since
- still
- therefore
- thus
- while
- while this may be true
- yet

**To trigger a generalization:**
- all in all
- as a rule
- as usual
- for the most part
- generally speaking
- in general
- on the whole
- ordinarily
- typically
- usually
## Student Persuasive Writing Plan

**Form A**

**Instructions:** Make one copy for each student.

### #1 Topic:

- [ ] For  [ ] Against

### Opening:

#### Hook Examples:
- [ ] question
- [ ] unusual detail
- [ ] quotation
- [ ] fact/statistic
- [ ] hyperbole (exaggeration)
- [ ] __________________

#### #9 Hook: (grab reader's attention)

- 
- 
- 
- 
- 

### #2 Opinion Statement:

It is my opinion/I think __________________

- 
- 
- 
- 

---

*Taken from Balanced Literacy Through Cooperative Learning & Active Engagement (Grade 5)*

Sharon Skidmore & Jill Graber, 2008
#3 Reason 

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Detail Suggestions:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>☐ real-life example</td>
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<td>☐ personal example</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☐ numbers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☐ research facts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☐ table/chart/diagram</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☐ analogy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☐ comparison</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☐ _________________</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#4 Supporting Detail

#5 Supporting Detail

#6 Supporting Detail
Student Persuasive Writing Plan
Form C

Instructions: Make one copy for each student.

Closing:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#7 (restate opinion and main reasons)</th>
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Ending Suggestions:

- prediction
- cause-effect
- question
- recommendation
- call to action
- quotation
- universal ending
- humor
  (play on words/personification)
- reference for additional information
- ______________

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#8 (add ending)</th>
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Taken from Balanced Literacy Through Cooperative Learning & Active Engagement (Grade 5)
Sharon Skidmore & Jill Graber, 2008
Debate Prompts - Primary
Pose a question to your class, and have them put an X on the line toward the side that they believe. You could have the students use 2 different colored crayons, one to use to first mark....then have a discussion about the topic...then have them mark the line again in a different color.

Taken from Write! Cooperative Learning & The Writing Process
Virginia DeBolt, 1998
Debate Prompts – Intermediate
I like to draw the line shown below on the white board. Then I pose a question to the class. They take a yellow sticky note, with their name, and place it on the timeline where they want to be. The kids then get into two groups and come up with their top 3 reasons why they believe what they do. The kids then get on opposite sides of the room, and we have an oral debate. After the debate, the kids write their name on a blue sticky note and put the new sticky note on the line. We then compare the responses from before.

Taken from Write! Cooperative Learning & The Writing Process
Virginia DeBolt, 1998
Bulletin Board Idea

Created by Michelle Simmons
Anchor Papers
All students at all levels need good examples of authentic writing. The following anchor papers can be used in your persuasive unit.

Response to an Article About Year-Round Schooling

Just because kids have time off from school does not mean that they will spend the bulk of their time watching TV and playing video games. Lots of kids do great things with all the time they have over the summer, like study abroad, learn how to play an instrument, read for pleasure, and spend time playing sports outdoors. Time without school doesn’t mean time without learning.

If students are not really learning academic skills, they will “forget” them over the summer, but if kids really understand what is going on in school, they really won’t forget that much. (Do I really believe this?)

It may be true that students who are struggling in a subject would benefit from continual school. I never thought about this in this way before, but if you are on the verge of learning something, summer break may not be a good thing. And I suppose that I have to admit that many students do forget their math facts over the long summer break.

The school year always feels so rushed, too. The weekends don’t seem enough of a break for the students. There is not enough down time or even rest for students, and the higher the grade, the worse it is. Maybe shorter vacations would help this situation.

Do more frequent vacations mean more homework? Many teachers give homework over vacation, and if there are more vacations, will there be more long-term projects assigned? If so, the idea of frequent vacations and rest will be a nonissue anyway.

Why do we give students so many long-term/vacation assignments as they get older?
Boys Are Invisible in School

Yahoo! I made it into the honor society. Despite my I-am-too-cool-for-this attitude, I was really happy to be a part of the awards banquet.

At this year’s awards ceremony there were also citizenship awards. I thought I was a shoo-in for this one! After all when Emily was sick with the flu, who called her every night and gave her the homework? I did. When Rick needed help with division, who came in early every day for a month to help him? I did. Would I get one of the ribbons or the big award on the table?

I listened carefully as names were called. Lindsey, Maddie, Emma . . . Denise, Jo Ann, Gabby . . . Maia, Danielle . . . Wait! They forgot to call my name.

What? Was it over? Yes, all of the citizenship awards were gone.

But how could that be? What about me? For that matter what about Mathew and Nate? Nate is the kindest kid in the school. Nate is the guy who everyone goes to for help in school. Nate is the guy that lets anyone play basketball at recess, even if they aren’t good at the game. Nate is the guy who always lets anyone use his pencil sharpener whenever they want to.

Not one boy in the fourth or fifth grade received awards for citizenship! Not one. How could it be that not one boy qualified for a citizenship award?

I have always felt that girls get called on more in school. Girls get in trouble less often and teachers compliment girls more than they do boys. Oh Sara, what neat work. Good Job. Maia would you help Brad with his Language Arts?

Boys get in trouble more than girls do. Sloppy work Jonathan, please work harder! Andrew, please stop talking when I am talking.

I have always noticed that girls get treated better than boys do. Were these citizenship awards proof of that? It seems obvious that the answer is yes.

Look for it and you’ll see it’s true—girls really do get treated better.

Here is my challenge to you my readers: If you are a teacher or work in a school, make an effort to notice the boys.

There are some really great ones.

—Blake, fourth grader
these letters, a third grade student named Max tries to persuade his mom to plant a vegetable garden. The first letter on the
was Max's first draft. The second letter is after Max did some revision. Why is the second letter more effective?

Vegetable Garden Letter (Draft)

Original Vegetable Garden Letter

Dear Mom,

I think a vegetable garden would be good for our family. It would save you
money on vegetables and they would be fresh from the garden. How cvenvenent! Plus it only takes a month or two to grow them. So we should grow a vegetable
garden in our back yard.

Vegetable Garden Letter (Final Draft)

Futher Developed/Expanded Letter

Dear Mom,

I think a vegetable garden would be good for our family. Who really wants to
buy them? They are so expensive and are not fresh!

It would save you money on vegetables and they would be fresh from the garden. How cvenvenent! With this you will never have trouble with unffreshenes for
example, have you ever tasted half dry squash? Well let's just say you don't
want to. With your own vegetable garden it will be the freshest thing you have
ever tasted!!!

Plus it only takes a month or two to grow them. So we should grow a vegetable
garden in our back yard. I know as you kid that you're thinking it will be a lot
of work but the only work you have to do is decide which ones you want to eat!
I will water them. Now you’re thinking it will cost a lot to buy seeds but you
have three kids and you want them to be healthy. (We can eat a lot). So why
spend money buying six servings of green beans.

This is a letter was written by a fifth-grade student named Ben who wrote to his cousin, Josh. As you will read, Ben really wants Josh to understand that he is not a nerd. He has some compelling reasons that prove that he is in fact just a regular boy. This letter shows that persuasive writing can be written about any topic.

I Am Not a Nerd Letter

Dear Josh,

Hey, how are you doing? I hope you are doing well. I just wanted to write to you about something that kind of upsets me. I want you not to call me a nerd anymore because I am not a nerd. I’m a regular boy. Now, I am going to tell you the reasons I am not a nerd.

The first one is that I’m not a nerd just because I read comic books. I’m a regular kid who likes to read about Spiderman. I even asked Papa and he said that he liked to read comic books when he was my age and I don’t think Papa is a nerd. Do you?

My second reason is that I don’t ACT like a nerd. I don’t go around playing Dungeons and Dragons and I don’t play any silly card games. I like to play basketball and make three pointers.

My third reason, is that I don’t DRESS like a nerd. I don’t run around in capes and costumes and act like a superhero. I have a most decent wardrobe. I don’t own a pair of pocket protectors and I don’t look weird... usually. I do own a pair of glasses. But they are only to help me see. Just because I own a pair of glasses does not really make me a nerd. (Is everyone who walks into a hospital necessarily a doctor?)

Josh, I just want you to reconsider. If you still think I am a nerd, I will tell you the reasons again so that you are convinced of the truth. I’m not a nerd just because I read comic books. I don’t ACT like a nerd. I don’t dress like a nerd.

I hope I have convinced you fully.

From Your Cousin,

Benjamin
Research Report Writing

1. Find a Topic
   - Think of an interesting topic
   - Brainstorm questions about the topic
   - Group similar questions together

2. Look for Sources
   - Gather information (libraries, internet, etc.)
   - Take notes
   - Record your sources for the bibliography
   - Avoid plagiarism

3. Organize Your Ideas
   - Use a writing web to sort ideas
   - Use note cards to organize by main ideas
   - Write an outline

4. Write a First Draft
   - Create an interesting introduction
   - Build paragraphs to support main ideas
   - Summarize with a conclusion
   - Reference sources in a bibliography

5. Proofread and Revise
   - Check for spelling and grammar errors
   - Have a friend check for errors, too
   - Correct mistakes and rewrite

Image taken from:
Research Writing Definition - a type of writing in which the author investigates and studies one particular topic and then writes systematically to explain that topic. Research report writing is a form of non-fiction. The skills that are involved with writing a research report need to start at the kindergarten level and add to the following year. A student has to choose a topic (not too broad), make a plan, research in books, magazines, encyclopedias, and online. They need to know how to read something, take notes in his/her own words, and not plagiarize. Citation of sources is important and knowing how to decipher between a professional website and personal homepage, when researching on the World Wide Web, is an important skill to master. With so many steps in the process of writing a research paper, my hypothesis was the staff would share that this was the hardest type of writing to teach, but I was wrong.

Formats
Nonfiction research writing can happen in a number of formats. Some suggestions, given by Fountas & Pinnell are:
- How-to/Directions
- Report
- Article
- Essay
- Interview
- Biography
- Autobiography
- Memoir

Professional Resources
- Genre Study: Teaching with Fiction and Nonfiction Books
  (Irene C. Fountas & Gay Su Pinnell)
- 51 Wacky We-Search Reports: Face the Facts with Fun!
  (Barry Lane)
- Expository Writing
  (Tara McCarthy)
Mentor Texts to teach Nonfiction Research Writing

Genre Study, Fountas & Pinnell

- My Five Senses (Aliki)
- I Read Signs (Tana Hoban)
- Starfish (Edith Thacher Hurd)
- Ocean Babies (Deborah Lee Rose)
- All About Owls (Jim Arnosky)
- Big Blue Whale (Nicola Davies)
- Horses! (Gail Gibbons)
- Dogs and Cats (Steve Jenkins)
- Water, Water, Everywhere (Mark Rauzon & Cynthia Overbeck Bix)
- All About Alligators (Jim Arnosky)
- The Big Bug Book (Margery Facklam)
- About Time: A First Look at Time and Clocks (Bruce Koscielniak)
- Big Wig: A Little History of Hair (Kathleen Krull)
- Puffins (Susan E. Quinlan)
- Volcanoes (Seymour Simon)
- A Drop of Water: A Book of Science and Wonder (Walter Wick)

Think-Outside-the-Box for Different Presentations of Research

51 Wacky We-Search Reports, Barry Lane

(Actual Directions to Use with Students)

- Stray Thoughts
  Find a picture of someone you are researching. After finding many facts, find a picture of the person and draw thought bubbles around him. Write different thoughts that your person is thinking based on what you found out about him/her.

- Wacky Notebooks
  Think about an animal that you want to study. After researching and finding as many facts as you can about the animal, start writing like the animal was writing in a daily journal. Include relevant facts that you researched.

- Press Conference Craziness
  After researching a particular topic (person, place, or thing), you become the person behind the podium and you answer and discuss questions posed to you by the press (classmates). You have to speak in first person as the topic you researched.

- Top Ten Lists
  The original founder of the Top Ten Lists is David Letterman. After researching various facts about your topic, create your list. Combine serious facts with silly ones.
**Ideas for Research**

This chart can be used to generate ideas for different topics that the class, groups of students, or individual students can research.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Kind of Research</th>
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</table>

Taken from *Writing to Persuade*  
Karen Caine, 2008
Expository Writing Model
This graphic organizer can be used when discussing hooks (leads), writing the middle, and then the end (conclusion) of nonfiction writing.

Taken from Balanced Literacy Through Cooperative Learning & Active Engagement (Grade 5)
Sharon Skidmore & Jill Graber, 2008
Expository Writing Steps
This graphic organizer shows and explains how the students need to break up their writing. For kindergarten through second grade, the students may write only one paragraph, while the intermediate grade levels could write three paragraphs.

1. Mighty Middle
   - The “Mighty Middle” is the action of the writing.
   - Students should begin their writing piece at the action. This will help keep their topic narrowed.
   - Focus lessons will be added after the students have their “Mighty Middle” draft completed.

2. Hook
   - Hook the readers with a statement or two that will make them want to continue reading: use a question, bold words, quotation, expression, riddle, etc.

3. Ending
   - The ending will restate, answer, or relate to the beginning hook, giving natural closure to the writing piece.

Taken from Balanced Literacy Through Cooperative Learning Active Engagement (Grade 5)
Sharon Skidmore & Jill Graber, 2008
Bibliography

This form can be used to teach students to cite their sources. Finding information in books, encyclopedias, professional websites on the internet, and Inspire database is what is highlighted on this bibliography sheet. Identifying sources should start being taught in kindergarten and progress every year.

Bibliography
How to Write
MLA Format

A bibliography is a list of sources organized in alphabetical order that you use to write your research paper.

1. Reference Books (Encyclopedias)

"Person or Term Looked Up." Title of Encyclopedia, Edition or Volume Number, Publication Year.

Example:


Practice:

Term you looked up

Title of Encyclopedia Underlined

Volume #

Publication Year

2. Book with an Author

Last name of author, First name of author. Title of the Book. City of Publication: Publisher, Year of Publication.

Example:


Practice:

Last name of author

First name of author

Title of Book Underlined

City

Publisher

Year

Created by Wendy Kovach, Former Media Specialist at Churubusco High School
Adapted by Michelle Simmons
3. Article in a Magazine:

Last name of author, First name of author. "Title of Article." Title of Magazine.

Volume Number, Issue Number (Year): Pages.

Example:

Last Name, First Name. "Title of Article with quote marks." Title of Magazine Underlined: Volume __, Issue __, Year (______): Pages.

4. Professional Websites:

Title of Professional Website, Date of Update, Sponsor, Date of Access. <Website Address>.

Example:

Journey of Christopher Columbus, June 2003, Indiana University, 1 Dec. 2003.


Practice:

Website Title Underlined: Update __ Date of Access __. Sponsor: <Website Address>.

Created by Wendy Kovach, former Media Specialist at Churubusco High School
Adapted by Michelle Simmons
Professional Websites vs. Personal Homepages

It is so important nowadays to know the difference between professional websites and personal homepages and where to get good information on the internet. The following page helps students practice and understand the important differences.

Name ____________________________ Date ____________

Professional Website Definition: A professional website is a webpage that has a sponsor and has good information that is backed up by experts, such as a business, school, university, museum, or library.

Personal Homepage Definition: A personal homepage is a website that does not have a sponsor. It is created by one person, usually looks homemade, and its information is not backed up by experts.

Activity One:

Type in each website address and identify if it is a professional website or a personal homepage:

1. http://www.inrcp.org/ ____________________________

2. http://cherokeesethan.org/ ____________________________

Activity Two:

Please identify two ways a professional website is different than a personal homepage:

1. ____________________________

2. ____________________________

Activity Three:

Use Forest Wanderer Express to locate and write down a professional website address for each of the following Native American tribes:

1. Plains Indians ____________________________

2. Cherokee Indians ____________________________

3. Pueblo Indians ____________________________

Created by Wendy Kovach, former Media Specialist of Churubusco High School
Adapted by Michelle Simmons
Questions to Ask Yourself When Doing Internet Research

1. Do I know any Internet websites that might have what I am looking for?

2. What words can I put into Google or some other search engine that will help me search for information on my subject?

   Key words related to the topic
   Research about/on [topic]
   A question about the topic

3. How can I change my key words to narrow the information that comes back?

Search Engines Especially for Kids

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Askforkids.com</th>
<th>Thinkquest.org/library</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kidsclick.org</td>
<td>Google.com.Top.Teens</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

May be photocopied for classroom use. © 2008 by Karen Caine from Writing to Persuade (Heinemann: Portsmouth, NH).

Taken from Writing to Persuade
Karen Caine, 2008
Organization - Differentiation
I have my struggling writers use a manila folder with envelopes (colored-coded) to assist them in keeping their research organized. The envelopes with different color marker on them represent one aspect of a person, place, or thing. The notecards are also highlighted for easy matching.
Taking Notes & Not Plagiarizing - Differentiated Instruction

I copy the text (book, encyclopedia article, or website information) and have my lower writers highlight the most important words or phrases. We talk about not plagiarizing and how they need to re-word their notes in their own words. The color highlighting matches the colored labeled envelopes in their research folder. For example, the blue envelope and notecards deal with his exploration, while the orange color deals with his early life.

HELP FROM A KING AND QUEEN

Columbus asked the kings of many countries for help. Everyone said no except King Ferdinand and Queen Isabel of Spain. They decided to help Columbus make his voyage. They gave him three ships: the Niña, the Pinta, and the Santa María. Columbus hired 90 sailors. In August, 1492, at the age of 41, Columbus set sail.

ESCAPE FROM PIRATES

Columbus began to plan for his life upon the sea. He learned to read and make maps. When he was 14, Columbus got his first job on a ship. He was a ship’s boy. He cleaned the ship. He helped the cook and the sailors.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>RESOURCES RECORD SHEET</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sources of Information</th>
<th>Specifics</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Where I Found It</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Books</td>
<td>(call number, author's name, publication date, Internet address, etc.)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Periodicals</td>
<td>(magazines, newspapers, newsletters, etc.)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internet Resources</td>
<td>(Web sites, newsgroups, online encyclopedias, Internet magazines, etc.)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Sources</td>
<td>(TV, radio, etc.)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Questions to Ask Yourself When Doing Internet Research

1. Do I know any Internet websites that might have what I am looking for?

2. What words can I put into Google or some other search engine that will help me search for information on my subject?

   *Key words related to the topic*
   *Research about/on [topic]*
   *A question about the topic*

3. How can I change my key words to narrow the information that comes back?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Search Engines Especially for Kids</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Askforkids.com</td>
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<td>Kidsclick.org</td>
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<td>Thinkquest.org/library</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Google.com.Top.Kids</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Google.com.Top.Teens</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

May be photocopied for classroom use. © 2008 by Karen Caine from Writing to Persuade (Heinemann: Portsmouth, NH).

Taken from Writing to Persuade
Karen Caine, 2008
RESOURCES SUGGESTIONS

Books
Almanacs
Atlases
Biographies
Dictionaries
Encyclopedias
First-person accounts
Histories
Nonfiction books
Reference books
Yellow Pages

Organizations
Chambers of Commerce
Clubs
Encyclopedia of Associations
Groups
Teams
Troops
Professional associations

Periodicals
Brochures
Catalogs
Diaries
Journals
Magazines
Newsletters
Newspapers
Trade magazines

Other
Documentaries
Field trips
Films
Videos

Places
Antique shops
Art galleries
Businesses
Cemeteries
 Colleges and universities
Historical sites
Historical societies
Houses of worship
Living history sites
Museums
Schools
Smithsonian Institution
Travel agencies
Weather stations

Libraries and Archives
Company libraries/archives
County records
Indexes to free materials
Indexes to periodicals
Library archives
Maps
Microfiche/microfilm
Newspaper files/archives
Public libraries
Reference libraries
School libraries
Specialized libraries
Specialized bibliographies
Specialized encyclopedias
State records

People
Experts in the field
Faculty members
Family members
Friends
Friends' parents
Government officials
Historical reenactment groups
Neighbors
Parents
Professionals in the field
Senior citizens
Teachers
Youth group leaders

Software
CD-ROM encyclopedias
Databases
Simulation programs

Taken from Teaching Gifted Kids in the Regular Classroom: Revised Expanded, Updated Edition
Susan Winebrenner, 2001
Final Checklist

Before you turn in your report, write “yes” or “no” before each of the following questions. These are many of the things your teacher will be looking for in a good report. This is your last chance to make it your best effort.

Does it have a good introduction? Does it get the reader’s attention and introduce your topics?

Does it have enough information and interesting details in the body?

Does it have a good conclusion? Does it summarize your important points and leave the reader with a lasting impression?

Check the paragraphs. Do they each begin with the topic sentence? Are they arranged in order?

Check the wording. Have you used your own words and given credit when you’ve used someone else’s?

Is it interesting? Have you used precise words, strong verbs, good descriptions? Have you added illustrations, charts, graphs, and maps?

Is it accurate? Check your facts for missing information. Check your spelling and grammar.

Does it have a title page? Does the title page meet the requirements your teacher gave you?

Does it have a bibliography? Be sure the bibliography is complete and in the correct form.

Is it neat and easy to read? Is it typed in dark ink and double spaced? Or is it hand-written in black or blue ink and legible? Do any pages need to be rewritten for neatness? Are the pages numbered? Are there margins of one inch all around?

Have you patted yourself on the back for your extraordinary effort and successful accomplishment of your first research report project?
## PRODUCT CHOICES CHART

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Auditory</th>
<th>Visual</th>
<th>Tactile-Kinesthetic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Audio recording</td>
<td>Advertisement</td>
<td>Acting things out</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Autobiography</td>
<td>Art gallery</td>
<td>Activity plan for trip</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Book</td>
<td>Brochure</td>
<td>Animated movie</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Classifying</td>
<td>Coat of arms</td>
<td>Collection</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commentary</td>
<td>Collage</td>
<td>Composing music</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crossword puzzle</td>
<td>Coloring book</td>
<td>Dance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Debate or panel talk</td>
<td>Comic book or strip</td>
<td>Demonstration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dialogue</td>
<td>Costume</td>
<td>Diorama</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Documentary</td>
<td>Decoration</td>
<td>Dramatization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Editorial</td>
<td>Design</td>
<td>Exhibit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Essay</td>
<td>Diagram</td>
<td>Experiment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experiment</td>
<td>Diorama</td>
<td>Field experience</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fact file</td>
<td>Drawing or painting</td>
<td>Flip book</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family tree</td>
<td>Filmstrip</td>
<td>Flip chart</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finding patterns</td>
<td>Flannel board</td>
<td>Game</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Glossary</td>
<td>Flow chart</td>
<td>Game show</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interview</td>
<td>Graphic organizer</td>
<td>How-to book</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Journal or diary</td>
<td>Greeting card</td>
<td>Invention</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning Center task</td>
<td>Hidden pictures</td>
<td>Jigsaw puzzle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Letter to editor</td>
<td>HyperStudio or other multimedia</td>
<td>Learning center—hands-on tasks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Limerick or riddle</td>
<td>presentation</td>
<td>Manipulatives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mystery</td>
<td>software</td>
<td>Mobile</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Newspaper</td>
<td>Illustrated manual</td>
<td>Model</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oral report</td>
<td>Illustrations</td>
<td>Museum exhibit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pattern and instructions</td>
<td>Learning Center visuals</td>
<td>Paper mâché</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Petition</td>
<td>Magazine</td>
<td>Photograph</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Position paper</td>
<td>Map</td>
<td>Play or skill</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Press conference</td>
<td>Mural</td>
<td>Pop-up book</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading</td>
<td>Pamphlet with pictures or icons</td>
<td>Project cube</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scavenger hunt</td>
<td>Photo album</td>
<td>Puppet show</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Simulation game</td>
<td>Photo essay</td>
<td>Rap or rhyme</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Song lyrics</td>
<td>Picture dictionary</td>
<td>Reader's Theater</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speech</td>
<td>Political cartoon</td>
<td>Rhythmic pattern</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Story or poem</td>
<td>Portfolio</td>
<td>Role-play</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Survey</td>
<td>Poster</td>
<td>Scale drawing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teaching a lesson</td>
<td>Rebus story</td>
<td>Sculpture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trip itinerary</td>
<td>Scrapbook</td>
<td>Simulation game</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Written report</td>
<td>Slide show</td>
<td>Survey</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Transparency talk</td>
<td>TV broadcast</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Travelogue</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>TV program</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Video</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Web site</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Taken from Teaching Gifted Kids in the Regular Classroom: Revised, Expanded, Updated Edition
Susan Winebrenner, 2001
ACCEPTABLE STUDENT PROJECTS

For primary students:

1. Draw or trace pictures that represent learning onto transparencies. Show them to an audience and narrate them.
2. Show your learning on a graphic map or chart. You might use a story map, character chart, or advance organizer.
3. Survey others. Transfer the information to a chart or graph.
4. Create a game that others can play to learn the information you researched.
5. Create a mobile, diorama, display, or other visual representation of your learning.
6. Create dictionaries for specific topics. Or translate words into another language.
7. Draw attribute webs. Write brief topic ideas on the spokes of the web.

8. Write a diary or journal of an important historical event or person. Write a speech a person might have made at the time.
9. Create a time line of events. They might be personal, historical, social, or anything else you choose.
10. Working with several other students, create a panel discussion about a historical topic. Or play the roles of historical figures reacting to a current problem of today.
11. Create an invention to fill a personal or social need.
12. Present biographical information about a person from the past or present, dressed as that person.
13. Write a song, rap, poem, story, advertisement, or jingle.
14. Create a travel brochure for another country or planet.
16. Make a model. Describe its parts and the functions of each.
17. Create a chart or poster to represent synthesis of information.
18. Write a script for a play or a mock trial.
19. Write a journal of time spent and activities completed with a mentor.
20. Collect materials from a lobbying or public service agency. Summarize the information. (Tip: Use the Internet or the Encyclopedia of Associations found in the reference section of most public libraries.)
21. Write to people in other places about specific topics. Synthesize their responses.
22. Create a learning center for teachers to use in their classrooms.
23. Rewrite a story, setting it in another time period, after researching probable differences.
24. Gather political cartoons from several sources. Analyze the cartoonists’ ideas.
25. Critique a film, book, television show, or video program. Write a letter to the editor and send it to your local newspaper.
26. Write a how-to manual for people who need instruction on how to do or use something.
27. Contact publishers to find out how to get something you’ve written published.
28. Come up with your own ideas.

For students in all other grades:

1. Choose an idea from the primary section above.
2. Make a filmstrip on blank filmstrip material. Narrate your filmstrip.
3. Create and present a puppet show.
4. Create a radio or television broadcast, video production, or Web page.
5. Hold a panel discussion, round-robin discussion, or debate.
Tic-Tac-Toe Choices for Expository Writing - Differentiated Instruction
I use the Tic-Tac-Toe Choice menus for my more advanced writers who already know the content for a particular assignment.

**EXPOSITORY WRITING EXTENSIONS MENU**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Write an expository essay to submit to the editorial page of a local newspaper.</th>
<th>Develop a lengthy piece of writing of your own choosing. Contract with the teacher regarding feedback.</th>
<th>Prepare to speak at a government meeting to convince legislators to support your position.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Present a debate on a topic of your choosing with one or several other students to an appropriate audience.</td>
<td>Prepare to speak at a school board meeting to convince members to support your position on a school-related issue.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Student Choice</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evaluate the effectiveness of several expository paragraphs in a current non-fiction bestseller.</td>
<td>Write an expository paragraph in another language.</td>
<td>Rewrite a paragraph or page from a textbook to make the expository language more effective.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Taken from Teaching Gifted Kids in the Regular Classroom: Revised, Expanded, Updated Edition
Susan Winebrenner, 2001
Writer's Workshop

I: 1:1 confer, small groups
You: Independently write
5min
Mini-Lesson
15-20 min.
I teach 1:1

You: Listen and learn

35-40 min.

Independent Writing
5min
Share back
Part time break

http://www.google.com/search?q=site:img/ptem/isch&surlc=hpdpw=1366dpb=657&q=writer%27s+workshop&usg=AFQjCNG7hK0bZzG5J2.P3sXlBiD56RdHgQ
Writer's Workshop

Writing workshop involves both process writing and cognitive strategy approaches (Santangelo & Olinghouse, 2009). Process writing includes brainstorming, planning, writing a rough draft, revising, editing, and publishing a piece of writing. Kissel (2008) suggested five areas that are needed for a successful writing program for young children, which describes writing workshop in action.

The first step is brainstorming or coming up with ideas, followed by modeled writing by the teacher. The next step is the sharing of ideas among children to generate more ideas with a longer period of time for the students to actually write and meet with their teacher. The last step that Kissel (2007) recommended is for the students to share their actual writing. Santangelo and Olinghouse (2009) shares that another part of writing workshop is the inclusion of cognitive strategy instruction, which “includes explicit and systematic instruction, direct instruction, scaffolding, and modeling” (p. 8). It involves thinking about “how” writers think and write, not just “why” writers write.

Graham and Sandmel (2011) list three benefits of using the writing workshop approach. First, students move through the process writing stages. Second, improvements in student writing should occur due to how the instruction is set up, with mini-lessons, conferencing, and sharing. Third, student enthusiasm should be higher when a positive writing environment is established. Writing workshop is differentiation in writing and beneficial for all students, no matter the ability level, because each student works at their own level and pace (Furr & Bauman, 2003). Berry (2006) recognizes process writing, which can be taught through writing workshop, as an intervention strategy that is found in many studies.

Format of Writer's Workshop

- **Mini-Lesson** - (10-15 minutes)
  A mini lesson is a short teaching moment, preferably on one skill. The mini-lesson can focus on management, writing process, craft, conventions, genres, or any other skill that your students need. This usually happens in a large group setting on the floor in front of a white board or easel with chart paper. The teacher can read a text, create an anchor chart, or model some type of writing. (This is also the first
step in the gradual release of responsibility, where the teacher is modeling.

- **Workshop Time** (30-40 minutes)
  This is the time that the students are given to work on their writing, while the teacher conferences with students individually or in small groups. If there are a number of students needing a particular skill, then meeting with that group of students and explicitly teaching them is best. I normally meet with my struggling writers more often than my higher ability students. In the beginning of the year, I try to meet with all of my students at least once a week. As the year progresses, I have the students sign up when they need to conference. The student then needs to know why they want to meet with me and ask specific questions.

- **Sharing Time** (5-10 minutes)
  All students LOVE to share their writing. I allow them to share or they can have me share. My students love when I read something incredible that they have written, and I am so excited to share...that sometimes I have to share right when I read it, and not at sharing time. Students love to be praised for their writing and their ideas. This is also a great opportunity for the other students in class to learn something from their classmates and possibly try something new in their own writing. I do keep a checklist of names, and I make sure that the kids have opportunities to share.

**Writing Workshop is Amazing!**
Try it, You WILL LOVE it!

**What’s Next?**
The following pages might help you get organized, help you plan a mini-lesson, or help you with ideas to “spruce up” your writing time. Enjoy!
Writing Workshop Goals

Long-Term Goals
- Teach a variety of genres
- Deepen the reading/writing connection
- Encourage more revision
- Teach conventions of print

Short-Term Goals
- Encourage students so they feel confident to write
- Create an environment that is safe to take risks
- Create a workable management system

What Does Workshop Look Like?
Writing workshop is a 45 - 60 minute block of time 4 - 5 days a week.

Focus Lessons: A lesson that is short and concise covering one of the basic areas: management, writing process, craft of writing, or conventions of writing.
- Management Lessons
  - Teach procedures to help the workshop run smoothly. You can readdress or add new management lessons during the year as needed. Typically these lessons are early in the year.
  - Examples: How to have a peer conference, how to peer edit, where supplies are located
- Writing Process Lessons
  - Teach students the stages of the writing process and possibilities of work during that stage. Share your writing process, as well as their favorite writers’ processes.
  - Examples: How to revise, how to plan, how to use your writer’s notebook
- Craft of Writing Lessons
  - Teach students what makes good writing. Look at text and notice the things the writer does to make their writing strong.
  - Examples: Adding supporting facts to a nonfiction piece, using dialogue, elaborating on a section of writing, leads, endings
- Convention/Mechanics Lessons
  - Teach students Standard English and how to use conventions to convey meaning.
  - Examples: Paragraphing, using quotation marks, parenthesis

Focus lessons are taught as “food for thought”. Not all students will try what was taught that day. This is why it is necessary to string your focus lessons together. Try to teach concepts as a series of focus lessons.

Throughout the year, you will have units of genre studies. During these units, your lessons will be specific to a genre of writing. Between genre studies, you will have units on other topics, such as adding voice to writing.

Taken from a Writing Workshop held at Akron Elementary School, Akron, IN
Work Time: Students are given time to work on their writing. The teacher will be conferencing with students, tailoring instruction to individual needs.
- Example Student Work: working in a stage of the writing process; conferencing with the teacher or another student; reading for ideas; working in their writer's notebook
- Example Teacher Work: conferencing with a single student or small group; doing a quick check of the group to see what direction they are moving or that they are on task; keeping anecdotal notes.

The teacher is constantly assessing students to see what to teach next. Focus lessons are derived from this assessment.

Sharing Time: Students are able to see other's work. There are many, many ways to share. Here are some examples:
- Small groups
- Partners
- Teacher highlights work for entire class
- Student highlights work for entire class
- Student reads a portion of her writing to the entire class
- Each student shares a sentence with the entire class. (Move around a circle to speed up the share.)

Workshop Time:
Writing Center Ideas

These are pictures of my writing center. Some items that I have here for students to use are:

- Pens
- Pencils
- Paper (All Kinds)
- Scissors (Straight edge and Decorative)
- Crayons
- Markers
- Colored pencils
- Gel pens
- Pencil grippers (AT Device)
- Pencil sharpeners
- Editing tools
- Scrap colored paper for revision
- Tape
- Glue sticks
- Sticky notes
- Erasers
- Hole punchers
- Printer
- Laptops (AT Device - Word Processing)
- Black template for good handwriting (AT Device)
- Green Finger Writing Helper for Spacing of Words (AT Device)

Pictures taken in Michelle Simmons' Classroom, Northern Heights Elementary School
Status of the Class Report
I like to know what part of the writing process each student is on every day. An easy way to do this is to post the writing process words in your room. Then it is each student’s responsibility to move their name to the part that they are working on that day. My Status of the Class is located on my cubby doors in my room.

Pictures taken in Michelle Simmons' Classroom, Northern Heights Elementary School
Rules of Writer's Workshop
You can create your expectations with your classroom about writer's workshop by creating a Writer's Workshop Anchor Chart. The list below might give you hints on what to include.

Sample Writing Workshop Rules

1. I will listen carefully during the Writing Workshop mini-lesson.
   - I will not talk with my friends at this time.
   - I will raise my hand to answer or ask a question or share an idea.

2. During independent writing time, I will write quietly.
   - I will quietly work on my own writing.
   - I will confer quietly with other students if I want help on my writing or if they need help.
   - I will listen and think carefully when I have a conference with the teacher.
   - I will only talk about writing during Writing Workshop.

3. I will not disturb others who are writing.

4. I will be responsible for my jobs:
   - I will record finished pieces on my log sheet.
   - I will put finished pieces in the completed basket.
   - I will keep my current writing in my writing folder.
   - I will clean up at the end of Writing Workshop.
   - I will maintain my writer's notebook.

5. During share time, I will share my writing and will listen to and be respectful of the hard work of other writers.

Taken from Revisiting the Writing Workshop: Management, Assessment, and Mini-Lessons
Marybeth Alley & Barbara Orehovec, 2007
Mini-Lesson Plan Ideas

There are so many different ideas on mini-lessons and the format of mini-lessons. Here are a few that you might want to try!

---

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mini Lesson Topic</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Name the teaching point.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Materials</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gather materials, mentor texts...</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Connection</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tell them what you taught the previous lesson. The last writer’s workshop, we learned how to...</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Explicit Instruction</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tell them what you will teach today. Today I’m going to teach you...</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Show them exactly how to do it. Watch me do it, or Let’s take a look at how (author) does this when she writes...</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Guided Practice</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ask them to try it out with a partner, or with you for a few minutes. Now try it out with a partner...</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Independent Practice</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Remind students how the teaching point can be used in independent writing. (There should be a link between the mini lesson and the students’ independent writing lives.)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group Wrap Up</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Restate the teaching point. Ask: Did you try what was taught? Did it work for you? How will it affect your future writing?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

*Template, CACD, Tufts University 2004*

Taken from rwd1.needham.k12.ma.us/program_dev/documents/.../mltemp.pdf
Gradual Release of Responsibility Lesson Planning Template

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DEPENDENT</th>
<th>SHARED</th>
<th>INDEPENDENT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

### I Do It
- **Teacher**
  - Provides anticipatory set
  - Identifies objectives
  - Provides input
  - Questions (CFU)

### We Do It
- **Teacher**
  - Demonstrates
  - Models
  - Thinks aloud
  - Explains
  - Questions (CFU)
  - Clarifies
  - Responds (Praise, Prompt, Correct)

### Guided Practice
- **Teacher**
  - Observes
  - Questions (CFU)
  - Assesses progress
  - Responds (puzzle, prompt, correct)
  - Intervenes as necessary

### You Do It (together/alone)
- **Teacher**
  - Monitors
  - Responds
  - Acknowledges
  - Evaluates
  - Assesses who needs intervention or extension
  - Sets new goals

### Collaboration/Continued Practice
- **Student**
  - Collaborates
  - Initiates
  - Self-regulates
  - Problem Solves
  - Self-assesses
  - Reflects
  - Explores
  - Extends
  - Applies to new setting

### Hand over of Responsibility

### Instructional Design: Standards/Objectives, Content, Context & Resources

### Independent Practice & Application
- In-class practice
- Homework
- Application Assessment

---

The Gradual Release of Responsibility (GRR) model may be implemented in a single period/lesson or over the course of several days, as a means of scaffolding instruction. Because students' content, language, and metacognitive needs vary, differentiation of instruction is recommended at key stages of the lesson, especially for struggling learners prior to assigning independent practice.

Adapted by GOUSD, Dept. of 7-12 Instruction, based on work by Pearson & Gallagher (1987) and Fisher & Frey (2008).
## Gradual Release of Responsibility Lesson Planning Template with guiding questions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DEPENDENT</th>
<th>SHARED</th>
<th>INDEPENDENT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Input</strong></td>
<td><strong>Modeling</strong></td>
<td><strong>Guided Practice</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Teacher</strong></td>
<td><strong>Teacher</strong></td>
<td><strong>Teacher</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provide anticipatory set * Identifies objectives &amp; purpose (content-language-metacognitive)</td>
<td>Demonstrates * Models * Thinks aloud</td>
<td>Observes * Questions (CFU) * Assesses progress</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>* Provides input * Thinks aloud</td>
<td>* Explains * Questions (CFU) * Clarifies</td>
<td>* Responds (praise, prompt, correct)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How did you:</td>
<td>* Knows that (all or a specific student) thought through and formulated a response to (specify question)?</td>
<td>* Intervenes as necessary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• make lesson objectives clear to your students?</td>
<td>• Provide corrective feedback to students?</td>
<td>How did you:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• connect to prior learning?</td>
<td>• Differentiate the modeling (or students think aloud model, performance model)?</td>
<td>• Assess the progress/understanding?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• build background knowledge?</td>
<td>• Provide multiple explanations for new concepts?</td>
<td>• Provide students with hands-on experience and practice?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• identify both academic &amp; content vocabulary so students can access new material?</td>
<td></td>
<td>• Determine grouping (pairs, groups) for this activity?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Student</strong></th>
<th><strong>Interactive Practice</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Input</strong></td>
<td><strong>Modeling</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Teacher</strong></td>
<td><strong>Guided Practice</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Observes * Sees * Processes * Responds * Interacts</td>
<td>Observes * Questions (CFU)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Based on student responses, how did you:</td>
<td>* Assess the progress/understanding?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• assess student’s prior knowledge?</td>
<td>• Provide opportunities for students to practice self-correction?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• allow students to process in small groups?</td>
<td>• Assist students in self-correcting their relative strengths and weaknesses in regard to the given task?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Instructional context, content & resources

- In what way might you utilize materials (e.g., Universal Access materials, other materials) to further support students reading below level or ELs?
- Have you provided a wide variety of materials throughout instruction? Specify.
- How are your activities, homework and assessments directly linked to the standards?

### Independent Practice & Application

- *In-class practice:* Does the practice allow students to transfer knowledge?
- *Homework:* How is it tied to the lesson?
- *Application/Assessment:* How did you check student understanding?

---

Adapted by GGUSD, Dept. of 7-12 Instruction, based on work by Pearson & Gallagher (1987) and Fisher & Frey (2008).

G. Muehl, 2007
Focus Lesson Planning Sheet

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Focus Lesson Topic</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Materials</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Connection**

1 minute

Tell them what you taught them yesterday and what you will teach them today.

Yesterday, we learned...

Today, I’m going to teach you ...

**Explicit Instruction**

3-10 minutes

Show them exactly how to do it. Read and think aloud while they watch, or demonstrate exactly what you want them to do.

Watch me do it. I’m going to read this book/poem/article called . Listen to me as I think aloud.

Pay attention to my thinking and my words. Notice how I (name new strategy) while I read.

(Describe here how you will model the strategy while students observe and listen.)

**Guided Practice**

3-5 minutes

Ask them to try it with you or with a partner.

Now you all try it with me. (Describe what they will try.)

**Send Off for Independent Practice**

So for the rest of your lives, I want you to remember that good readers .

Try it during your independent reading and see if it helps you as a reader.

**Group Share**

3 minutes

Reconvene the whole group to share strategy applications.
# Focus Lesson Planning Sheet

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Focus Lesson Topic</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Materials</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Connection**

| 1 minute |

**Explicit Instruction**

| 5-10 minutes |

**Guided Practice**

| 3-5 minutes |

**Send Off for Independent Reading**

**Group Share**

| 5 minutes |

*Taken from [www.wrsd.net/literacy/](http://www.wrsd.net/literacy/)*
Daily Lesson Plan for Writer's Workshop

Lesson Focus:
What is the focus of the lesson? How will I teach it?

Rationale:
Why am I teaching this lesson?

Assessment:
How will I know when my students are successful?

Prior Knowledge:
What prior knowledge do my students need in order to be successful with this lesson's focus?

Curriculum Expectations:
Which expectations will I address?

Materials/Preparation for Teaching:
What do I need to know, have, and be able to do before I can begin the lesson?

Differentiated Instruction:
How can I ensure that I am meeting the needs of all my students?
Daily Lesson Plan for Writer's Workshop (Continued)

Mini-Lesson – Content/Process/Product
(15 minutes)

Status of the Class

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Independent Writing Whole Group</th>
<th>Guided Writing Small Group</th>
<th>Conferencing Individual</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Sharing/Reflection

Were my students successful? Did my instructional decisions meet my goals of all students? What worked well? What will I do differently in the future? What are my next steps?

Taken from www.eworkshop.on.ca/
## Minilessons on the Management of Writing Workshop

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Managing Time, Materials, and Equipment</th>
<th>Managing Community Cooperation and Interaction</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- Schedule for writing workshop</td>
<td>- Voice levels during conferences and group work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Basic writing materials and how to use them</td>
<td>- The reasons for silent writing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Using stapler, staple remover, hole punch</td>
<td>- Self-evaluation of work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Different ways to bind a book</td>
<td>- Procedures for sharing work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Using space for writing, conferring, and sharing</td>
<td>- How to whisper</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Using different kinds of paper</td>
<td>- Places for peer conferences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Using draft paper</td>
<td>- Records and reporting for peer conferences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Using final draft paper</td>
<td>- Working according to the guidelines of writing workshop</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Parts of the writing folder—Record of Writing, What I Learned, Types of Writing, 500 Frequently Encountered Words, Words to Learn</td>
<td>- Procedures for editing—self-edit, peer-edit, teacher-edit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Using the Types of Writing form</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Using the Record of Writing form</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Using the What I Learned About Being a Writer form</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- How to use the frequently encountered word list</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- What is the writer’s notebook?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Choosing a writer’s notebook</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Using the hanging file to store finished writing projects—how to keep papers in order in the hanging file</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Learning the system for using the computers and printers</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- How to use word processing on the computer</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Learning to use computer software (PowerPoint, Excel, graphics packages, programs for using digital cameras)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Using AlphaSmart to prepare drafts</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- References and resources that writers use (dictionaries, thesauruses, all kinds of books)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Using the Internet</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Authors’ websites</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Figure 5.13. Lessons on Management**

Taken from *Guiding Readers and Writers Grades 3-6*  
Irene Fountas & Gay Su Pinnell, 2001
## Minilessons: The Writer's Craft

### Finding Something to Write About
- Your life and experiences are important
- Telling stories about your life
- Making a topics list
- Finding your own territories for writing—subjects, genres, audiences
- Noticing your world—sketching
- Collecting ideas

### Learning from Writers/Illustrators
- Noticing what writers and illustrators do
- What makes writing good?
- How authors choose topics
- Writers have territories
- How illustrations and text go together
- Role of illustrations/different mediums
- What writers say about their writing
- Why writers write
- How writers engage in the writing process
- How writers use a writer's notebook
- How writers make their work believable

### Using a Writer's Notebook
- Ideas for a writer's notebook
- Getting ideas down fast
- Writing and sketching quickly
- Jotting down possible genres to develop the ideas in your notebook
- Noticing entries that can be expanded or show something about writing (from teacher's or students' notebooks)
- Expanding ideas in the writer's notebook (leaving space to add more)

### Developing a Sense of Audience
- Writing for known audiences: self, friends, relatives, teacher, partners, other adults
- Writing for unknown audiences: letter to political leader or editor, newspaper or journal article
- Writing for publication to wider known audience: school newsletter

### Learning about Perspective
- Stories are told from a point of view
- How to tell the point of view
- How to change point of view: older/younger; different physical vantage point; participant to observer; participating to reflecting back in time

### Learning about Purpose
- Why do people write?
- Writing to express personal opinions
- Writing to express feelings
- Writing to describe beauty
- Using writing to get something done
- Using writing to persuade
- Using writing to inform or explain
- Using writing to engage readers in an experience

### Crafting the Writing Project
- Drafting—getting thinking down
- Writing small: five minutes vs. one week
- Eliminating unnecessary information
- Details in story
- Sequencing ideas
- Developing a good lead
- Drafting alternative leads and choosing the best
- Developing good endings
- Showing rather than telling
- Showing the reader the setting or background information
- Choosing a good title
- Making transitions—time, setting, points of view
- Using strong nouns and verbs
- Developing a character
- Describing action and events
- Describing people
- Taking different points of view
- Putting different points of view
- Writing epilogues and prologues

---

*Figure 5–17. Lessons on Craft*

Taken from Guiding Readers and Writers Grades 3-6
Irene Fountas & Gay Su Pinnell, 2001
### Minilessons: The Writer's Craft (continued)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Minilesson</th>
<th>Integrating Research Skills</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Revising</td>
<td>Taking notes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Revising versus copying; purposes of revision</td>
<td>Organizing information for writing informational pieces</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Using tools for revision/editing (carets, crossing out, spider legs, cut and paste)</td>
<td>Creating sections with headings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Using a red pen to make revisions</td>
<td>Using description to provide information</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ways to add information</td>
<td>How to compare and contrast</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adding details to make the writing more interesting or authentic</td>
<td>How to describe something in time sequence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recognizing when there are too many details</td>
<td>Using primary sources</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eliminating words you don't need</td>
<td>Using secondary resources</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Making decisions about word choice</td>
<td>Conducting interviews</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Writing</th>
<th>Writing in Different Genres</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Using a green pen to make edits</td>
<td>What is a genre?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Editing for word choice</td>
<td>Writing a memoir</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Checking grammar</td>
<td>Writing a letter (e-mail, personal, business, &quot;thank you,&quot; invitation)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proofreading a draft</td>
<td>Writing about sports</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When a draft is ready for editing</td>
<td>Writing an adventure story</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Checking spelling</td>
<td>Writing realistic fiction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final Draft</td>
<td>Writing a mystery (fiction)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Planning the layout of the final draft</td>
<td>Writing a true mystery</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Using final draft paper</td>
<td>Writing scary stories (fiction and nonfiction)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proofreading your final draft</td>
<td>Writing tall tales</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Filing your final draft</td>
<td>Writing humor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Publishing</td>
<td>Writing comics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Using different types of paper</td>
<td>Writing fables</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creating a title</td>
<td>Writing scientifically based fantasy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creating a title page</td>
<td>Writing biography</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creating a table of contents</td>
<td>Writing autobiography</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing &quot;About the Author&quot;</td>
<td>Writing a science report</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing the dedication</td>
<td>Writing a social studies report</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creating a glossary</td>
<td>Writing a diary or journal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Illustrating the borders of the final draft</td>
<td>Writing about current events</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Using call outs and labels</td>
<td>Writing a news report/article</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Publishing on the computer</td>
<td>Writing a book review</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Making a frame for your writing</td>
<td>Writing an advertisement/commercial</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Art techniques for publishing</td>
<td>Writing a short story</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Binding a book</td>
<td>Writing interview questions/report of an interview</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sending your writing to magazines, contests</td>
<td>Writing an essay</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Writing an opinion/editorial</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5-17. Lessons on Craft (continued)

Taken from Guiding Readers and Writers Grades 3-6
Irene Fountas & Gay Su Pinnell, 2001
Writer's Notebook

Each one of my students has a writer's notebook. I gave each child 4 page separators with tabs at the top. The four categories are: Mini-Lesson, Rough Draft, Revise/Edit, and Published Copies. Here are some ideas for your students' writer's notebooks.

This is a sample of a Reader's Notebook with tabs at the top.

You could create a Writer's Notebook based on this model.

My students have Writer's Notebooks with tabs on the Sides.
5th Grade Student Sample of Writing

Rough Draft

Published Copy
Once upon a time there was a boy named Chase. Chase was seven years old and had brown curly hair. Also, he had eyes as blue as the sky. He was roamin' around a forest in Tallahassee, Florida. When all the sudden.......

He fell down a hill and landed in a cupcake. This was very unusual for a boy. How did this happen?
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Title &amp; Page Number(s)</th>
<th>Types of Writing (Narrative, Persuasive, Research, Poetry)</th>
<th>Process Writing (Plan/Brainstorm, Draft, Edit, Revis, Publish)</th>
<th>What I Liked About This Writing</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Student's Name:**

**Grade:** 5th

Taken from *Teaching Gifted Kids in the Regular Classroom: Revised, Expanded, Updated Edition* by Susan Winebrenner, 2001
Writing Goals for this Week

Name: ____________________ Week starting ______

Monday:

Tuesday:

Wednesday:

Thursday:

Friday:

"Get black on white."  Guy de Maupassant

Taken from Reviser's Toolbox
Barry Lane, 1999
My Expert List

Taken from Launching the Writer's Workshop: Grades 3 and Up
Kristina Smekens & Dr. Maureen Scane, 2008
Conferencing

This is an image of my cover for my conferencing binder for my class.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Writing</th>
<th>Suggested Change(s)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10/23</td>
<td>The Harp - It's a song 2 My tutors' Library 3 The Third Floor Bedroom</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10/29</td>
<td>In the water.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10/29</td>
<td>Bib Cozy (Henry Hudson) - great star</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12/10</td>
<td>Intro, Early Life (Hit)</td>
<td>Catchy intro, detailed early life</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2/16</td>
<td>Rough Draft done - helped w/ PTSD</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3/11</td>
<td>ab</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Taken from Teaching Gifted Kids in the Regular Classroom: Revised, Expanded, Updated Edition
Susan Winebrenner, 2001
### Status of the Class Report

**Period #1**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student</th>
<th>Monday</th>
<th>Tuesday</th>
<th>Wednesday</th>
<th>Thursday</th>
<th>Friday</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sidney</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Megan B.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caroline</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Felicity</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ryleigh</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Austin</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parker</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emily E.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brian</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Allie</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kale</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emily K.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ben</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Malachi</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Nathan</td>
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<tr>
<td>Humzah</td>
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<tr>
<td>Luke</td>
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<td>Dillon</td>
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<td>Kat</td>
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<td>Angela</td>
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<td>Carter</td>
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<td>Kendall</td>
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<td>Weston</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tyler</td>
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<tr>
<td>Brandon</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Created by Michelle Simmons
The Reviser's Toolbox

**Curious Question Conference**

In a curious question conference the writer reads his piece as the reader listens and writes curious questions on a piece of paper. Curious questions can't be answered yes or no and they grow out of the reader's interest in the story. They don't try to fix the story. When writing curious questions you may want to consider the following.

- What do I want to know more about?
- What do I wonder about?
- What gets left unsaid?
- What do I want to know about the character?
- What confuses me?
- Where was I glued to my seat and where was I bored?
- Who did I want to get to know better in the piece?
- Which opinions needed more fact to back them up?
- Which ideas puzzled me?

**The Curious Question Conference**

1) Writer reads the piece aloud while partners listen and scribble questions during or after.
2) Writer collects the questions, then goes back to the paper to the places where the questions lead.
3) Writer tries answering the most interesting questions and adding the answers in the form or snapshots, thoughtshots, dialogue, etc. in the text.
4) Writer reads the piece with and without the rewrites. Does it get better?

Taken from Reviser's Toolbox
Barry Lane, 1999
The Reviser's Toolbox

Snapshot Conference

In a snapshot conference, the reader looks for a few places in a draft where she wants more physical detail. Such places are marked with this symbol:
The writer can decide which places make sense and write a snapshot to insert into those places. A snapshot can be just an extra phrase or sentence or even a whole paragraph or two. Length is not important. What's important is what the writer has to say and how to say it better. Here are a few ideas that can help. For more help see chapters 2 and 3.

- Show a character's movements and gestures.
- Paint a setting with a description of a place.
- Listen to sounds and speech.
- Zoom in close with physical detail of a person or place.
- Try to use more than one of the five senses.
- Paint a feeling in a setting without saying what the feeling is.

The Snapshot Conference

1. Begin by looking for places to add snapshots.
2. On a separate piece of paper, the writer writes a snapshot to add.
3. Read over the piece with the snapshot, then read it without it. Ask the reader, "Is it better?"
4. Repeat these steps. Remember, writing is an art like photography, and all art works by trial and error.

Taken from Reviser's Toolbox
Barry Lane, 1999
**Editing Conference**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Issue</th>
<th>Question</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Capitals:</strong></td>
<td>Do all sentences start with capitals? Are names capitalized?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sentences:</strong></td>
<td>Are all the sentences complete? Do the sentence rhythms vary?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Paragraph:</strong></td>
<td>Is the piece written in paragraphs? Does a new paragraph start with a new speaker?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Voice:</strong></td>
<td>Is the voice consistent? Does it sound like the author?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Comma:</strong></td>
<td>Are commas used after the salutation of a letter, in a series list, and to divide a subordinate clause from an independent clause?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Taken from Reviser’s Toolbox

Barry Lane, 1999
The Reviser's Toolbox

**Thoughtshot Conference**

In a thoughtshot conference the reader might look for places to add thoughts, reflections, flashbacks, flash-forwards, and internal debates into a piece of writing. Look for moments when the story seems too rooted in the physical, moments when your character would benefit by some thinking. For example:

- An important decision is coming up and your character needs to weigh the options.
- A character is lying and thinks of the consequences.
- A song triggers a memory.
- A character says something he or she doesn't mean and thinks about it.
- A matter of conscience weighs heavy.
- Something must be figured out.

**The Thoughtshot Conference**

1. Read draft aloud.
2. Look for some places to add thoughtshots.
3. Writer writes a thoughtshot or two on a blank piece of paper and inserts them into the piece.
4. Read the piece with and without the additions. Do they help?

Taken from Reviser's Toolbox
Barry Lane, 1999
The Reviser's Toolbox

**Time Conferences**

In a time conference the reader and the writer look for places to manipulate time within a piece of writing. We can slow down time by exploding moments or adding scenes. We can shrink time by cutting dialogue or skimming over events instead of writing in great detail about them (see chapter 4). Here are a few things to look for when reading for a sense of time.

- Does the piece move in real time? If so, does it start late enough in the day or can we shrink the morning and get to the good part sooner?
- Is there too much dialogue? Does the dialogue reveal character or could it be replaced with a sentence like "They talked for a while" and not leave a hole?
- Is there a big moment that just slipped by real fast, a line like "Then he robbed the bank and went home?"
- Are there more important moments in the story? If so, is there more time given to the more important moments?

**The Time Conference**

1) Read the story aloud. Pay attention to the exciting parts and also to the boring parts.
2) Mark the good parts and look for ways to expand them with more details, snapshots, thoughtshots, or dialogue.
3) Reader picks at least one slow part that the writer could cut or shrink.
4) Writer takes best suggestions and rewrites. Is it better?

Taken from Reviser's Toolbox
Barry Lane, 1999
The Reviser’s Toolbox

Snapshot Conference

In a snapshot conference, the reader looks for a few places in a draft where she wants more physical detail. Such places are marked with this symbol:

The writer can decide which places make sense and write a snapshot to insert into those places. A snapshot can be just an extra phrase or sentence or even a whole paragraph or two. Length is not important. What’s important is what the writer has to say and how to say it better. Here are a few ideas that can help.

For more help see chapters 2 and 3.

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- Listen to sounds and speech.
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The Snapshot Conference

1. Begin by looking for places to add snapshots.
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4. Repeat these steps. Remember, writing is an art like photography, and all art works by trial and error.

Taken from Reviser’s Toolbox
Barry Lane, 1999
Revision Cards
You can make copies of these cards for each of their kids, and they can cut them out. Then they read their writing and listen to how it sounds. They place their cards in places in their writing that describe the words on the cards.

Revised Conferencing Cards (published by Smekens Education Solutions)

Taken from Trait-Based Writing Lessons & Activities
Kristina Smekens, 2009
Mental Barriers

Revision
How the writing Sounds

Editing
How the Writing Looks

Revision Strategies
Re-entering a Draft
You can copy this chart for your children, obviously modeling each bullet point. When they get to the revision stage, they can use this chart to help them remember how they can revise.

The Reviser's Toolbox

10 Ways to Re-enter a Draft

- Cross out "THE END" and write some unanswered questions. Turn one into a new lead.
- Insert a snapshot.
- Insert dialogue or replace boring dialogue with snapshots.
- Break story into chapters.
- Chunk story into illustratable sections.
- Write the story as a poem. Write the poem as a story.
- Find a better lead.
- Cut anything.
- Read the paper aloud and listen to your voice. Where do you speed up? Where do you slow down? Mark places you’d like to change.
- Write a new title.
- Add a scene.

Taken from Reviser's Toolbox
Barry Lane, 1999

Using Binoculars
This strategy helps your students zoom in on the little details of their writing. The closer they get, the more finite details they put in their writing.

2

Using the Binoculars

Taken from Reviser's Toolbox
Barry Lane, 1999
The Reviser's Toolbox

Boxes Inside Boxes
When you use the binoculars you start big and move in. Details are boxes inside boxes, like those Russian nesting dolls. We start writing about a messy room and end up describing the argyle socks wrestling on the floor. Think of yourself as opening smaller boxes with each new detail.

It was a very old rug.

torn around the edges with big splotches of white paint.

It reeked of old dog and mildew, and when he stepped on it he heard it crunch like cellophane beneath his feet.

Taken from Reviser's Toolbox
Barry Lane, 1999
Spider Legs
Students absolutely love making their changes to their writing, and it is usually the struggling writers that do the best with revision. With spider legs, the student changes words, phrases, and even sentences in their writing to make the writing "sound" better. My students like to use colored construction paper and tape.

Revision Strategies

If a student wants to add a sentence or two, then spider legs is a perfect technique. The student writes his sentence on a strip of paper (a "leg") and then tapes it onto the "body" of the piece, right where he wants to insert it.

Taken from Launching the Writer's Workshop Grades 3 and Up
Kristina Smekens & Dr. Maureen Scane, 2008
Chapter 1: The Move

There was a knock at the door. I looked around. It was Spider Legs. I opened the door and Spider Legs walked in. She was wearing a blue dress. She sat down on the couch and said, "Hello, everyone. I'm Spider Legs. My name is Alice, and I'm here to help you with your writing.

Spider Legs is a spider who has six legs. She lived in a house with her family. One day, she was writing a book about her life. Suddenly, she heard a loud noise. It was the sound of a spider climbing up a wall. She got up to investigate and discovered that a spider had entered her house. Spider Legs was afraid of spiders, but she was also brave. She decided to face her fear and write about her experience. This is the story of how she learned to overcome her fear and become a great writer.

Examples of Spider Legs

Spider Legs
Surgery
This strategy is used in writing when students want to "cut out" a large portion of their writing. For example: introduction, ending, one whole paragraph, etc. Students literally cut out the section and tape or glue new paper in its place to re-write their writing.

When needing to add larger chunks of text (multiple sentences at a time), a spider leg won't provide enough space. Suggest story surgery. This is when the writer cuts apart his story (where he wants to insert an additional paragraph of text) and tapes in another sheet of paper. Compare story surgery to "cutting open the story" and "messing with the guts." NOTE: This technique also works well when students need to rearrange the order of sentences or paragraphs.

Taken from Launching the Writer's Workshop Grades 3 and Up
Kristina Smekens & Dr. Maureen Scane, 2008
Explode a Moment

If you were a movie director making a film of your life, where would you use slow motion?
Think of happy moments, sad moments, joyful moments. Talk with friends and trigger each other with ideas.
When you are ready, fill a piece of paper with that one moment. Don't go to the next day or later that same day. Stick inside that moment. Don't write big or add extra words just to fill the paper. Instead, allow yourself to get stuck, then try out some of these ideas.
* Use your binoculars: zoom in with sights, sounds, smells, tastes.
* Read your last sentence. If it's a snapshot try switching to thoughtshots, or if it's all thoughtshots try switching gears and adding snapshots.
* If you finish half-way down the page, go back and insert (*) a snapshot or a thoughtshot.
* Close your eyes and imagine yourself there. Wait for words to come.

Here are a few quick suggestions of moments to explode. Make a list of your own while talking with your classmates.

- A time you got lost
- A time you lost something or someone
- Something painful happened
- Something happy happened
- The big moment in the game
- The time a skill paid off
- A time you almost forgot
- A moment funny now, not then
- A moment involving a pet
- A moment involving a sister or brother

Is there a moment in your story to explode?

Taken from Reviser's Toolbox
Barry Lane, 1999
Leads are magic flashlights that shine down through a story showing the writer what to put in and what to leave out.

John McPhee

Taken from Reviser's Toolbox
Barry Lane, 1999
The Reviser's Toolbox

Sensory Detail

Learning to use all our senses can be a great way to dig for the kind of details that makes writing come alive. Put a place you want to write about at the top of the page and use your five senses. Look for places in your own writing to use some sensory detail. For example:

- **Come to the Cafeteria**
- See the children eating at the long tables
- Hear the teachers yelling to quiet down
- Touch the cold wiggly jello
- Smell the pizza in the big square pans
- Taste the hot tapioca pudding

Come to

See

Hear

Touch

Smell

Taste

---

Taken from Reviser's Toolbox
Barry Lane, 1999
New Thoughts
Pick a page in a book. Find an interesting character and give him or her four extra thoughts. (Thanks to Sherri Masson.)

Taken from Reviser's Toolbox
Barry Lane, 1999
"The only thing that really bugs me is when a student doesn't put his or her personality into an essay."

College Admissions officer commenting on reading college entry essays

Taken from Reviser's Toolbox
Barry Lane, 1999
11 Ways to Title a Story

1. Name a character in your story
2. Name a place in your story
3. Name a thing in your story
4. Quote a line in your story
5. Tell a theme in your story
6. Write a mysterious title
7. Write a straightforward title
8. Write a one word title
9. Describe the key action in the story
10. Describe exactly what you want the reader to take away
11. Find your own unique way to title it

Taken from Reviser's Toolbox
Barry Lane, 1999
Whisper Phones
Part of the revision process in my room is using whisper phones. When student whisper read their writing or a friend’s writing, and they whisper into the phone, they do hear themself loud and clear.
Editing Strategies

The kids use this editing tool before moving on to the published copy. The tool helps the child read each word looking for capitalization, punctuation, spelling, and usage. The students use the tool and the corresponding colored pencil when they edit their papers.
Read up, write down
Trait of CONVENTIONS

▲ READ UP, WRITE DOWN
Turn students into "readers" when they are editing their writing. The three steps for rereading include: lift the paper, whisper aloud, track the words.

▲ HANDS-FREE WHISPER PHONES
Some elementary teachers break out the whisper phones for students to reread into. This is a great opportunity for that tool. However, students are one-hand short if they are going to hold a phone, track with their finger and hold the paper all at the same time. Hands-free whisper phones are now available for just this purpose!

▲ THE EDITING HAND
As you introduce the 3-steps to rereading (lift, whisper, track), consider revealing them within the palm of an oversized hand.

When you're ready to target their rereading to include key convention skills, utilize the fingers to remind them. Consider writing each skill in a different color to represent the editing pens they are to use when rereading. Encourage them to switch pen colors as they edit for particular skills.
# The Editing Alphabet

The standard copyediting symbols will help you to change your work so that even editors in New York City will know what your correction marks mean. Learn them and use them.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Symbol</th>
<th>What it means</th>
<th>Example</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>__</td>
<td>Insert/add something</td>
<td>I need you. I need you.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>__</td>
<td>Delete something</td>
<td>I really need you.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/</td>
<td>Add space here</td>
<td>I really need you.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>__</td>
<td>No space here/close gap</td>
<td>I really need you.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>__</td>
<td>No paragraph</td>
<td>I really need to know.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>__</td>
<td>Reverse order</td>
<td>Will you tell me. I really</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>__</td>
<td>Make this a Capital letter</td>
<td>Dear bob,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>__</td>
<td>Make this a small letter</td>
<td>What are you doing?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>__</td>
<td>Insert a period</td>
<td>They went to the park. She</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>__</td>
<td>Insert quotation marks</td>
<td>“Hello, she said”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>__</td>
<td>Insert apostrophe</td>
<td>Sharon’s clothes were on...</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Taken from Reviser’s Toolbox
Barry Lane, 1999
The Reviser's Toolbox

Editing Checklist

- Circle words I am unsure of.
- Check "there," "their," and "they're."
- Check "know" and "no."
- Replace "a lot" with "much" or "many."
- Check paragraphing. Break long ones or meld short ones.
- Use apostrophes to show possession.
- Use capitals at the beginnings of sentences.
- Use a colon to begin a list.
- Put a comma after the salutation of a letter.
- Start a new paragraph when I have a new speaker.
- Keep the voice consistent (1\textsuperscript{st}, 2\textsuperscript{nd}, or 3\textsuperscript{rd} person).
- Check verb tenses.
- Softly read each word out loud
- Watch for typos.

Taken from Reviser's Toolbox
Barry Lane, 1999
Editing My Writing

I read over my work?

I did the words spelled correctly?

Have I organized my writing into sections like chapters?

I did punctuation correctly used?

Do I need to use chapters, side headings, other features to show the organization of the information?

I used correct spelling?

Do I need a table of contents, glossary, other aid?

I used correct grammar?

Do my illustrations and graphic features match the written text?

I used capitals when needed?

I organized my writing into graphs (if prose)?
Proofreader's Marks

Use these standard marks to show corrections needed in written copy. These symbols are used so that anyone who reads the writing will interpret the corrections in the same way.

Ｈ
(make a new paragraph)

-order
(take out)

as she
(capitalize)

someone
(close up space)

¿
(add)

by Α
(make lowercase)

thier
(reverse letters or words)

soúp, nuts
(add punctuation)

because
(change words)

for her
(move as shown)

(on the
(insert a space)

(add a period)

Taken from Write! Cooperative Learning & The Writing Process (Grades 3-8)
Virginia DeBolt, 1998
Tangible Barriers

Time

Technology
Time

Writing takes stamina, hard work, and time. Every student should write at school and at home daily (Troia & Graham, 2003). Santangelo and Olinghouse (2009) make a point that not enough time is spent on writing, and the time that is devoted to writing is not balanced. They state that out of a given hour of writing instruction, half of that time is spent on grammar, spelling, and handwriting and that the rest of the time is given to the craft of constructing sentences. Not only should students write during writing instruction, they should write across the subject areas (Santangelo & Olinghouse, 2009). Barlow (2003) stressed the importance of every teacher being held responsible for teaching writing skills across all content areas. The more students write in math, social studies, reading, and science, the more practice the students are getting and the better they are at writing complex tasks. Another mentionable item that Barlow (2003) stated was that it was solely the teachers' responsibilities to provide students with accurate feedback rapidly. The quick response time allows the students to reflect on how they wrote certain assignments. Increasing writing across the content areas gives students the needed practice to write for longer periods of time, focusing on different purposes for the writing. Allowing students to write, responding to writing, and learning writing as a process is the
recommendation of teaching writing for teachers according to the CCCC (Colby & Stapleton, 2006). However, according to Fry & Griffin (2010), improvement in student writing will not happen with only with more time to write, but teacher improvement of instructional techniques have to be a must.

The Northern Heights Staff is very disjointed when it comes to teaching writing daily. More time needs to be purposely put into your lesson plans, so that your students get an opportunity to practice all of the different writing strategies you teach them. At team meetings, share ideas with each other on how and where you are putting your Writer's Workshop Block. Know in your heart that your students will not become better writers if you just skip writing altogether. Time is necessary for practice and taking risks.

The following 5 pages, from the website, http://ruthayres.pbworks.com/w/page/7062176/Forms,%20Forms,%20Forms, provide a Writing Workshop Teacher Reflection. I hope you take the time and really self-reflect on how Writing Workshop is going in your own classroom.
## Writing Workshop Teacher—Reflection

### Environment & Resources

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Structure</th>
<th>A-Okay!</th>
<th>Working On It</th>
<th>Maybe next year!</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>My writing workshop is predictable.</strong> <em>(Time &amp; Structure)</em></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>My students know the procedures &amp; parts of writing workshop.</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>My students are able to work independently and make decisions as writers.</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>My writing workshop is a series of units.</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>o The units are driven by state standards.</td>
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<tr>
<td>o There is a balance between genre based units &amp; other units.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Students are writing for real audiences and purposes.</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Students select their own topics and projects.</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Focus lessons are taught as a series.</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Skills and strategies are revisited throughout the year.</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><em>(2nd &amp; up)</em> Writers Notebook</td>
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<tr>
<td>o Variety of entries</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>o Different than a journal</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>o Used throughout the year</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Organizational system established for student work.</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Organizational system attempted for teacher records.</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### The Environment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>A-Okay!</th>
<th>Working On It</th>
<th>Maybe next year!</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Meeting Area</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>o Open space for gathering</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Writing Center

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>A-Okay!</th>
<th>Working On It</th>
<th>Maybe next year!</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Students use the tools &amp; resources as writers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Student use Work-in-Progress Folders</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Literature is available for students to use.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

I have the following tools available:

- Pencils
- Erasers
- K-1: Spacers
- Drafting Paper
  - (K – 3) Choice appropriate for different abilities.
  - (K-3) Paper scaffolds writing.
- Publishing Paper
  - Wide variety
  - Stationery
  - Envelopes
- Resource books
  - Dictionaries
  - Thesaurus
  - Writer's Inc.
  - Other
- Revision Checklists
- Editing Checklists
- Stickie Notes
- Colored pencils, crayons, markers, etc.
- Stapler
- Paperclips
- Other
# The Workshop

## Focus Lessons

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>A-Okay!</th>
<th>Working On It</th>
<th>Maybe next year!</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>My focus lessons are an appropriate length. (Less than 15 min.)</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>The class gathers in a meeting area.</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>I use direct instruction by:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Talking as one writer (who is more experienced) to other writers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Showing examples from a text.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Modeling my writing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Showing examples from students.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Other: ______________________</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>My instruction is driven by student needs.</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>My lessons link to a bigger goal/unit of study.</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>I keep records of my focus lessons.</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## Writing Time/Application

|         | There is a smooth transition from the focus lesson to the writing time. |
|         | I expect students to apply what they learn in the focus lesson to their own writing. |
|         | I write the things I expect my students to write. |

## Sharing

|         | **Sharing time is a part of every workshop.** |
|         | **It is an appropriate length (5 – 15 minutes).** |
|         | **A safe sharing environment has been established:** |
|         |   - Students desire to share |
|         |   - Appropriate feedback is given |
|         |   - Audience is respectful of the speaker |
|         | **I use a variety of sharing experiences.** |

Questions or resources I need are:
### Conferring

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>A-Okay!</th>
<th>Working On It</th>
<th>Maybe Next Year!</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>I go to students.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>I use a quiet voice, but those close to me can still hear.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Students do not interrupt my conferences.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>I use open ended questions to learn what students are doing as writers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>I listen to students’ responses.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>I try to avoid questions that lead into a conversation about the student’s topic.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>I affirm the good work the student is doing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>I teach ONLY ONE skill or strategy.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>“Teach the writer, not the writing.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>When I am conferring with a student, I give him/her my undivided attention.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>I see 3 – 5 students during a workshop.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>I keep records.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>I walk around the room between conferences to make sure everyone is on task.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The one part of my workshop teaching that is most successful is:

The goal I have for my workshop teaching is:
Technology

When it comes to technology, research is strongest on the subject of struggling writers using a word processor, which can be found on desktop computers or laptops. For struggling writers, word processing provides better quality, longer length, and improvement in spelling by using the spell-check feature (Santangelo & Olinghouse, 2009). Different websites, applications and software programs can be beneficial for the instruction of writing as well. Pixwriter software can be used to help students develop stories by clicking on words and making sentences that make sense (Pennington, Stenhoff, Gibson, & Ballou, 2012). Communication and writing has various formats for our student population inside and outside of the parameters of a school building. The technological vocabulary is constantly changing and adding new terms frequently. Students communicate by writing text messages, writing instant messages (IM), writing on Twitter, writing an e-mail, posting information on numerous social networking sites, and sharing information on blogs (Sweeny, 2010). Much to an English teacher’s dismay, not all of the writing that students create in today’s world follow the correct English format. Nonetheless, it is the educators’ responsibility to stay current with technology to enhance learning in the classroom.

The results of the survey show that the majority of the staff at Northern Heights Elementary School would like us to get more laptops for student use. Moving into the 21st Century, we have to keep our students competitive, and providing laptop use during Writer’s Workshop would be a way to make gains. We need to share ideas on technology grant writing, and encourage one another to move in the technology direction.
"If you don't know where you are going, you might wind up someplace else."
— Yogi Berra
Assessment
How do I score my students' writing? There are some suggestions for you on the following pages!

Taken from 6+1 Traits of Writing: The Complete Guide Grades 3 and Up
Ruth Culham, 2005
Organization
From Beginning to End

1. How do I begin?
   This is confusing.

2. Just beginning
   Help! Which pieces go together?
   I don't know where I'm headed.
   How do I end this?

3. Half-way home!
   What comes next?
   What should I tell first?

4. My paper is PRETTY easy to follow.
   Maybe I need to move some things around.
   The ending doesn't grab me yet.

5. Ready to share!
   I see just how all the parts fit together.
   The ending really works!
   My opening will hook you!
   I know where I'm going.

Taken from 6+1 Traits of Writing: The Complete Guide Grades 3 and Up
Ruth Culham, 1995
Voice
Putting Myself in My Writing

1. SNORE!
   I wish I didn’t have to do this.

2. I don’t hear myself in this paper.
   This topic is boring.

3. I’m trying to speak to the reader.
   I’m starting to have fun in a few places.

4. This topic is OK.
   I’m half-way home.

5. Hear me ROAR!
   I love this topic.

Ready to share!
It’s me!!
This is what I think.
I’m speaking right to the reader.
It might make you laugh or cry.

I hear a bit of me in the writing.
I’m hiding my feelings and ideas a little.

I’m not speaking to the reader—yet.

Taken from 6+1 Traits of Writing: The Complete Guide Grades 3 and Up
Ruth Culham, 1995
Word Choice
Playing With Language

My words paint a picture.
My words make the message CLEAR.
I like the way my words sound and feel.

I need more IMAGINATION here!
Some of the words and phrases are great,
but some need work.
Some words are really vague.

These are some of the first words I thought of.
There is probably a BETTER way to say it,
but this is my first try.

These words are NOT my favorites.
The words I've used don't paint a picture in your mind.
Some of my words don't make sense to me when I read them over.
These words just don't make sense.

Taken from 6+1 Traits of Writing: The Complete Guide Grades 3 and Up
Ruth Culham, 1995
Sentence Fluency
Listening to the Sound

My paper is EASY to read out loud.
Some sentences are LONG and STRETCHY—some are SHORT and SNAPPY.
I like the sound of this paper—it has rhythm!

A lot of my sentences begin the same way.
I wish my paper sounded a little smoother in places.

There are lots of choppy little sentences, one after another.
My sentences are all about the same length.
It’s PRETTY easy to read out loud if you take your time.

Help! Some of these sentences don’t make sense.
My paper is HARD to read out loud—even for me!
I can’t tell where a new sentence begins.
Every word is strung together in one endless sentence.

Taken from 6+1 Traits of Writing: The Complete Guide Grades 3 and Up
Ruth Culham, 1995
Conventions
Editing

Punctuation smoothly guides the reader.
The grammar contributes to clarity and style.
Capitals are handled well. "Clean copy."
Paragraphing complements the organization.
Spelling is mostly correct—even on harder words.
Only light editing is needed—at the most.

5

My spelling is correct on common words.
Simple things are done well.
Paragraphing was attempted.

4

My errors are consistent.

Halfway home.

There are minor problems in grammar/usage. I hastily edited.

3

Punctuation is basically correct.
Capitals are correct at the beginning of sentences and names, but not in trickier places.

2

There are numerous errors. I couldn’t publish this yet.
Paragraphing is random or not present.
Errors are extremely distracting. This piece is not edited.

1

Struggling. Reader has to translate to get meaning.

Just beginning.

Taken from 6+1 Traits of Writing: The Complete Guide Grades 3 and Up
Ruth Culham, 1995
Presentation
How the Writing Looks on the Page

This piece is easy to read.
Everything is in the right place.
Even margins frame the text.

More bullets or numbers would help.
My margins and white space are inconsistent.
This is a draft copy.

I used the perfect font size and style.
This is a finished copy—
I'm proud of it!

Illustrations aren't always in the right spot.
I'm getting a little carried away using different fonts.

My spacing is uneven.
Things are too crowded on the page, it makes sense.
This looks more like notes than a finished piece.
The letters slant different ways.
It's too confusing to read—I'm getting a headache!

Taken from 6+1 Traits of Writing: The Complete Guide Grades 3 and Up
Ruth Culham, 1995
**Expository Writing Six Trait Checklist**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Word Choice</th>
<th>Organization</th>
<th>Ideas</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sentences</td>
<td>Writing has a strong beginning, middle, and end.</td>
<td>My writing has a focused and engaging topic.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- My writing uses words that are easy to read aloud.</td>
<td>My writing has supporting details and examples that help explain, persuade, or convince.</td>
<td>My writing has a purpose to inform, entertain, or persuade.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- My writing uses transitional words to connect ideas.</td>
<td>My writing follows a logical sequence.</td>
<td>My writing has a purpose to inform, entertain, or persuade.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- My writing follows an ending that brings the ideas to a natural closure.</td>
<td>My writing uses supporting details that make it interesting for things that not everyone knows.</td>
<td>My writing has a purpose to inform, entertain, or persuade.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fluency</th>
<th>Conventions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sentences</td>
<td>Writing sounds like it is copied from a book.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- My writing has some sentences that begin in different ways.</td>
<td>My writing sounds like it is copied from a book.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- My writing uses sentences that are easy to read aloud.</td>
<td>My writing shows that I care about the feelings.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- My writing has an ending that brings it to a natural closure.</td>
<td>My writing uses words that show my feelings.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Conventions</th>
<th>Voice</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- My writing uses words correctly.</td>
<td>My writing is appropriate for my audience.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- My writing uses capital letters correctly.</td>
<td>My writing answers questions that readers might have.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- My writing uses spaces between words.</td>
<td>My writing uses words that show my feelings.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- My writing uses spelling correctly. (Only light editing is needed for internal punctuation.)</td>
<td>My writing shows that I care about the feelings.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- My writing has been checked for spelling (or any other editing).</td>
<td>My writing shows that I care about the feelings.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Instructions:** The teacher determines how many of the six traits to evaluate. The student and/or teacher can make a place of writing by placing an X in each the indication the skill(s) being used.

**Name**

**Date**
### Persuasive Writing Six Trait Checklist

**Date: ___________________________**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ideas</th>
<th>Organization</th>
<th>Voice</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>My writing is focused and sticks to the topic.</td>
<td>My writing has a strong beginning, middle, and ending that makes the reader want to continue.</td>
<td>My writing sounds like me. It does not sound like it is copied from a book.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My writing has a purpose to inform, entertain, or explain (tell how to...).</td>
<td>My writing uses transitional words to connect ideas and uses supporting details.</td>
<td>My writing answers questions that readers might have.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My writing has enough information to make it interesting; it tells things that not everyone knows.</td>
<td>My writing follows a logical sequence.</td>
<td>My writing is appropriate for my audience.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Word Choice</th>
<th>Sentence Fluency</th>
<th>Conventions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>My writing uses new words.</td>
<td>My writing uses sentences that are easy to read aloud.</td>
<td>My writing answers questions that readers might have.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My writing uses strong verbs.</td>
<td>My writing has some sentences that begin in different ways.</td>
<td>My writing uses capital letters correctly.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My writing does not repeat the same words too many times.</td>
<td>My writing has some sentences that can be read expressively.</td>
<td>My writing uses spaces between words.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My writing lets the reader picture (visualize) what is happening.</td>
<td>My writing uses words that are easy to read.</td>
<td>My writing uses end marks correctly.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My writing uses strong verbs.</td>
<td>My writing uses sentences that begin in different ways.</td>
<td>Only light editing needed for internal punctuation.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Instructions:** The teacher determines how many of the six traits to evaluate. The student and/or teacher can evaluate a piece of writing by placing an X on each item indicating the skill(s) being used.
### Assessment Rubric for Writing - Primary

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>4</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>1</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Composing</strong></td>
<td>Writing is well-organized with a beginning, middle, ending</td>
<td>Writing shows some organization with a beginning, middle, ending</td>
<td>Writing is not well organized and is missing a beginning or ending</td>
<td>No evidence of organization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Stays on topic throughout the paper</td>
<td>Mostly stays on topic</td>
<td>Tends to digress and write off topic</td>
<td>Does not stay on topic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Elaboration contains interesting word choices for specific examples and descriptions</td>
<td>Some elaboration, although word choices are not specific</td>
<td>Little attempt at elaboration</td>
<td>Does not elaborate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Craft</strong></td>
<td>Words have been carefully chosen and specific</td>
<td>Words were chosen for the topic</td>
<td>Words are general and not well thought out</td>
<td>Words are not specific</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sentences show variety and fluency</td>
<td>Some evidence of sentence variety</td>
<td>Little evidence of sentence variety</td>
<td>No variety of sentences. Some are vague or awkward.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Writing shows an obvious structure</td>
<td>Some attempt at structuring the writing</td>
<td>Little attempt to structure writing</td>
<td>No structure to writing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Conventions</strong></td>
<td>All sentences are complete</td>
<td>Most sentences are complete</td>
<td>Some sentences are complete</td>
<td>Sentences are incomplete</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Correct use of capitalization</td>
<td>Most words capitalized correctly, but some capitals are found in the middle of words (doG, rEd)</td>
<td>Inconsistent use of capitalization</td>
<td>No attempt at capitalization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Uses proper punctuation</td>
<td>Most of the time uses correct punctuation</td>
<td>Sometimes uses punctuation</td>
<td>No attempt at punctuation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>All &quot;core&quot; words are spelled correctly</td>
<td>Most &quot;core&quot; words are spelled correctly</td>
<td>Some &quot;core&quot; words are spelled correctly</td>
<td>Numerous spelling errors including those that are &quot;core&quot; words</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Assessment Rubric for Writing Workshop

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Writing Workshop Component</th>
<th>Student Behaviors</th>
<th>4 Clearly evident</th>
<th>3 Mostly evident</th>
<th>2 Some evidence</th>
<th>1 Little evidence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mini-lesson</td>
<td>Actively engaged and participates in the lesson. Asks questions and responds to others. Demonstrates an understanding of the lesson.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Independent Writing</td>
<td>Views self as a writer. Uses the writing process and takes times to plan and develop the writing. Works independently and remains on task. Writes on a variety of topics.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conferring With Teacher</td>
<td>Involved in conference discussion. Able to articulate and use language appropriate to writing. Aware of where he/she is in the writing process. Accepts constructive criticism. Able to set goals for self.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conferring With Peers</td>
<td>Involved in appropriate conversations with peers. Able to be constructive and assist others while also being able to accept help when needed. Remains on task working with others.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project Completion</td>
<td>Student completes written projects. Able to find topics to write about. Tries a variety of genres.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Share Time</td>
<td>Demonstrates confidence and willingness to share writing. Shows good oral language and listening skills. Engaged in conversation on writing. Asks appropriate questions and responds to others.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Taken from Revisiting the Writing Workshop: Management, Assessment, and Mini-Lessons
Marybeth Alley & Barbara Orehovec, 2007
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Score Level</th>
<th>Ideas and Content</th>
<th>Organization</th>
<th>Style</th>
<th>Voice</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>6</strong></td>
<td>A score 6 is rare. It fully accomplishes the task and is an outstanding performance.</td>
<td>fully accomplish the task?</td>
<td>organize ideas logically?</td>
<td>demonstrate effective adjustment of language and tone to task and reader?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>include thorough, relevant, and complete ideas?</td>
<td>have a beginning, middle, and end?</td>
<td>demonstrate exceptional writing technique?</td>
<td>exhibit a strong sense of audience?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>stay completely focused?</td>
<td>contain smooth transitions?</td>
<td>demonstrate exceptional fluency?</td>
<td>demonstrate an original perspective?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>5</strong></td>
<td>A score 5 is a solid performance. It fully accomplishes the task, but lacks the level of sophistication and consistency of a score 6 paper.</td>
<td>fully accomplish the task?</td>
<td>organize ideas logically?</td>
<td>demonstrate effective adjustment of language and tone to task and reader?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>include many relevant ideas?</td>
<td>have a beginning, middle, and end?</td>
<td>demonstrate very good writing technique?</td>
<td>exhibit a sense of audience?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>stay focused?</td>
<td>contain smooth transitions?</td>
<td>demonstrate good fluency?</td>
<td>demonstrate an original perspective?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>have a solid introduction &amp; conclusion</td>
<td>exhibit varied &amp; complex sentences?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>4</strong></td>
<td>A score 4 paper represents a good performance. It accomplishes the task, but generally needs to exhibit more development, better organization, or a more sophisticated writing style.</td>
<td>accomplish the task?</td>
<td>organize ideas logically?</td>
<td>demonstrate an attempt to adjust language and tone to task and reader?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>include relevant ideas?</td>
<td>have a beginning, middle, and end</td>
<td>demonstrate good writing technique?</td>
<td>exhibit some sense of audience?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Stay mostly focused?</td>
<td>contain some transitions that may be rough?</td>
<td>demonstrate fluency?</td>
<td>attempt an original perspective?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>have a weak introduction or conclusion</td>
<td>exhibit some varied &amp; complex sentences?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>3</strong></td>
<td>A score 3 paper represents a performance that minimally accomplishes the task. Some elements of development, organization, and writing style are weak.</td>
<td>minimally accomplish the task?</td>
<td>attempt to organize ideas logically?</td>
<td>demonstrate an attempt to adjust language and tone to task and reader?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>include some relevant ideas?</td>
<td>have a beginning, middle, or end that may be weak or absent?</td>
<td>demonstrate average writing technique?</td>
<td>exhibit little sense of audience?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>stay somewhat focused?</td>
<td>attempt to include transitions?</td>
<td>generally fluent?</td>
<td>lack an original perspective?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>have a weak introduction &amp; conclusion</td>
<td>exhibit mostly simple sentences?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>2</strong></td>
<td>A score 2 paper represents a performance that only partially accomplishes the task. Some writing may have difficulty keeping a focus, while others may be too brief.</td>
<td>partially accomplish the task?</td>
<td>minimally attempt to organize ideas logically?</td>
<td>demonstrate language and tone that may be inappropriate to task and reader?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>include few relevant ideas?</td>
<td>have only one or two of the three elements: beginning, middle, and end</td>
<td>demonstrate minimal writing technique?</td>
<td>exhibit little or no sense of audience?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>sometimes lose focus or act a focus?</td>
<td>lack or have weak transitions?</td>
<td>demonstrate writing that is repetitive, predictable, or dull?</td>
<td>lack an original perspective?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>lack an introduction &amp; conclusion</td>
<td>exhibit less than minimal word usage?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>1</strong></td>
<td>A score 1 paper represents a performance that fails to accomplish the task. The writing is either very brief or rambling and repetitive.</td>
<td>fails to accomplish the task?</td>
<td>organize ideas logically?</td>
<td>demonstrate language and tone that may be inappropriate to task and reader?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>include very few relevant ideas?</td>
<td>have only one or two of the three elements: beginning, middle, and end</td>
<td>demonstrate less than minimal writing technique?</td>
<td>exhibit no sense of audience?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>have no focus?</td>
<td>lack or have weak transitions?</td>
<td>lack fluency?</td>
<td>lack an original perspective?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Score Level</td>
<td>Capitalization</td>
<td>Punctuation</td>
<td>Spelling</td>
<td>Grammar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------</td>
<td>----------------</td>
<td>-------------</td>
<td>----------</td>
<td>---------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>have very few or no capitalization errors?</td>
<td>have very few or no punctuation errors?</td>
<td>have very few or no spelling errors?</td>
<td>have very few or no grammar or word usage errors?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>have occasional capitalization errors?</td>
<td>have occasional punctuation errors?</td>
<td>have occasional spelling errors?</td>
<td>have occasional grammar and word usage errors?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>have frequent capitalization errors?</td>
<td>have frequent punctuation errors?</td>
<td>have frequent spelling errors?</td>
<td>have frequent grammar and word usage errors?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>have many capitalization errors?</td>
<td>have many punctuation errors?</td>
<td>have many spelling errors?</td>
<td>have many grammar and word usage errors?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Now It Is Your Turn!

Tangible and mental barriers do exist in educators across the country. Usually, the teachers that love to write themselves allow lots of time for writing in their classrooms. Teachers' past experiences with their own writing helps form their attitude and beliefs about writing in general. Always remember to lift your classroom of authors up and give them an opportunity to share their pieces of work.

I hope that this manual has inspired you and helped you to think outside of the box when it comes to writing with students of all abilities. Our struggling writers in our classrooms need encouragement, exposure to books, experiences for ideas, and praise.

Running a writer's workshop in your classroom can be scary to start, but through my years of experience, it is the only way to truly differentiate student learning. From the mini-lessons to conferences (individual, partner, or small group), to workshop and sharing time, the students absolutely love this approach to writing. Students become authors, and they teach each other so many things about writing. During conference time, the students write their name on the board if they want to conference, and it is my expectation that they lead the conference. They can ask me questions, share their writing, or express their frustrations too. I absolutely love being a writing teacher. In fact, even after 14 years of teaching, I still love to get up and go to work. To see my students grow as writers brings me a sense of happiness and pride. Every child can write, and now it is your turn to inspire the authors in your classroom!

Remember, this really is a...

WONDERFUL WORLD OF WRITING😊!
References


Churubusco Elementary School: writing graphic organizers.


Materials, Inc.


Appendix A - Letter to Participants

Information withheld for privacy.
Appendix A – Letter to Participants Continued

Information withheld for privacy.
Appendix B – IRB Approval

To: JANE LEATHERMAN
   NF 250L

From: JEANNE DICLEMENTI, Chair
   Social Science IRB

Date: 10/05/2012

Committee Action: Exemption Granted

IRB Action Date: 10/04/2012

IRB Protocol #: 1209012733

Study Title: Identifying elementary Teacher Barriers in Writing in Northeast Indiana Schools: A Focus onNarrative and Expository Writing

The Institutional Review Board (IRB) has reviewed the above-referenced study application and has determined that it meets the criteria for exemption under 45 CFR 46.101(b)(2).

If you wish to make changes to this study, please refer to our guidance “Minor Changes Not Requiring Review” located on our website at http://www.irb.purdue.edu/policies.php. For changes requiring IRB review, please submit an Amendment to Approved Study form or Paragraph Amendment to Study form, whichever is applicable, located on the forms page of our website www.irb.purdue.edu/forms.php. Please contact our office if you have any questions.

Below is a list of best practices that we request you use when conducting your research. The list contains both general items as well as those specific to the different exemption categories.

General
- To recruit from Purdue University classrooms, the instructor and all others associated with conduct of the course (e.g., teaching assistants) must not be present during announcement of the research opportunity or any recruitment activity. This may be accomplished by announcing, in advance, that class will either start later than usual or end earlier than usual so this activity may occur. It should be emphasized that attendance at the announcement and recruitment are voluntary and the student’s attendance and enrollment decision will not be shared with those administering the course.
- If students earn extra credit towards their course grade through participation in a research project conducted by someone other than the course instructor(s), such as in the example above, the students participation should only be shared with the course instructor(s) at the end of the semester. Additionally, instructors who allow extra credit to be earned through participation in research must also provide an opportunity for students to earn comparable extra credit through a non-research activity requiring an amount of time and effort comparable to the research option.
- When conducting human subjects research at a non-Purdue college/university, investigators are urged to contact that institution’s IRB to determine requirements for conducting research at that institution.
- When human subjects research will be conducted in schools or places of business, investigators must obtain written permission from an appropriate authority within the organization. If the written permission was not
submitted with the study application at the time of IRB review (e.g., the school would not issue the letter without proof of IRB approval, etc.), the investigator must submit the written permission to the IRB prior to engaging in the research activities (e.g., recruitment, study procedures, etc.). This is an institutional requirement.

Category 1

- When human subjects research will be conducted in schools or places of business, investigators must obtain written permission from an appropriate authority within the organization. If the written permission was not submitted with the study application at the time of IRB review (e.g., the school would not issue the letter without proof of IRB approval, etc.), the investigator must submit the written permission to the IRB prior to engaging in the research activities (e.g., recruitment, study procedures, etc.). This is an institutional requirement.

Categories 2 and 3

- Surveys and questionnaires should indicate:
  - only participants 18 years of age and over are eligible to participate in the research; and
  - that participation is voluntary; and
  - that any questions may be skipped; and
  - include the investigator’s name and contact information.
- Investigators should explain to participants the amount of time required to participate. Additionally, they should explain to participants how confidentiality will be maintained or if it will not be maintained.
- When conducting focus group research, investigators cannot guarantee that all participants in the focus group will maintain the confidentiality of other group participants. The investigator should make participants aware of this potential for breach of confidentiality.
- When human subjects research will be conducted in schools or places of business, investigators must obtain written permission from an appropriate authority within the organization. If the written permission was not submitted with the study application at the time of IRB review (e.g., the school would not issue the letter without proof of IRB approval, etc.), the investigator must submit the written permission to the IRB prior to engaging in the research activities (e.g., recruitment, study procedures, etc.). This is an institutional requirement.

Category 6

- Surveys and data collection instruments should note that participation is voluntary.
- Surveys and data collection instruments should note that participants may skip any questions.
- When taste testing foods which are highly allergic (e.g., peanuts, milk, etc.) investigators should disclose the possibility of a reaction to potential subjects.
Appendix C – Permission letter from principal

Information withheld for privacy.
Appendix D – Recruitment email

Information withheld for privacy.
Appendix E – Survey Questions

Identifying Elementary Teacher Barriers in Writing in Northeast Indiana Schools:

A Focus on Narrative, Persuasive and Expository Writing Survey

I. Conducting Lessons in Writing

When you see the term, “my students”, please consider all ability levels (high achievers, average ability, and struggling students). Use the following 1-5 scale to circle the response to the degree which you agree with the following statements that follow.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>N/A</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>strongly disagree</td>
<td>disagree</td>
<td>neutral</td>
<td>agree</td>
<td>strongly agree</td>
<td>not applicable</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1 2 3 4 5 N/A 1. I created my own writing curriculum.

1 2 3 4 5 N/A 2. I teach writing every day.

3. I teach writing for:

1 2 3 4 5 N/A 60+ minutes daily
1 2 3 4 5 N/A 45 minutes daily
1 2 3 4 5 N/A 30 minutes daily
1 2 3 4 5 N/A 15 minutes daily

4. For me, I feel confident when teaching the following steps of the writing process:

1 2 3 4 5 N/A a. brainstorming.
1 2 3 4 5 N/A b. planning.
1 2 3 4 5 N/A c. how to write a rough draft.
1 2 3 4 5 N/A d. how to revise.
1 2 3 4 5 N/A e. how to edit.
1 2 3 4 5 N/A f. how to publish.

5. When thinking about all of the students in my room with varying abilities, the most difficult type of writing to teach is:

1 2 3 4 5 N/A a. a research report.
1 2 3 4 5 N/A b. a persuasive piece.
1 2 3 4 5 N/A c. a narrative piece.

6. When teaching my students how to write a research report, I know how to effectively:

1 2 3 4 5 N/A a. teach the students how to narrow their topics.
1 2 3 4 5 N/A b. teach the students how to take notes in their own words.
1 2 3 4 5 N/A c. teach the students about plagiarism.
1 2 3 4 5 N/A d. teach the students how to organize their research.
Appendix E – Survey Questions Continued

1 2 3 4 5 N/A  e. manage various research topics.
1 2 3 4 5 N/A  f. teach the students the difference between professional websites
                and personal home pages.
1 2 3 4 5 N/A  g. teach the students how to cite their sources.
1 2 3 4 5 N/A  h. teach the students to use search engines.
1 2 3 4 5 N/A  i. model each paragraph of the report.
1 2 3 4 5 N/A  j. conference with students.
1 2 3 4 5 N/A  k. teach different formats of research-type writing.
1 2 3 4 5 N/A  l. use picture books as part of my mini-lesson.

7. When teaching my students how to write a persuasive piece, I know how to effectively:

1 2 3 4 5 N/A  a. get the students excited about their topic.
1 2 3 4 5 N/A  b. teach the students to use their voice in their writing.
1 2 3 4 5 N/A  c. teach the students how to write a lead in their introduction that
                grabs their reader's attention.
1 2 3 4 5 N/A  d. teach the students how to write an effective conclusion.
1 2 3 4 5 N/A  e. model each paragraph prior to the student writing their own.
1 2 3 4 5 N/A  f. conference with students.
1 2 3 4 5 N/A  g. teach different formats of persuasive writing.
1 2 3 4 5 N/A  h. use picture books as part of my mini-lesson.

8. When teaching my students how to write a narrative piece, I know how to effectively:

1 2 3 4 5 N/A  a. teach the students what parts make up a narrative piece.
1 2 3 4 5 N/A  b. explain different formats of narrative writing.
1 2 3 4 5 N/A  c. teach the students how to write a lead in their introduction that
                grabs their reader's attention.
1 2 3 4 5 N/A  d. teach the students how to develop their primary characters.
1 2 3 4 5 N/A  e. teach the students how to develop their setting.
1 2 3 4 5 N/A  f. develop their rising action.
1 2 3 4 5 N/A  g. explode their climax.
1 2 3 4 5 N/A  h. develop a thorough conclusion.
1 2 3 4 5 N/A  i. develop their problem.
1 2 3 4 5 N/A  j. develop their solution.
1 2 3 4 5 N/A  k. use picture books as part of my mini-lesson.

9. When teaching writing, I know:

1 2 3 4 5 N/A  a. what mini-lessons to teach my students.
1 2 3 4 5 N/A  b. how to create effective anchor charts.
1 2 3 4 5 N/A  c. how to assess my students' writing fairly and accurately.
1 2 3 4 5 N/A  d. that my undergraduate program prepared me to teach writing.
1 2 3 4 5 N/A  e. how to differentiate my instruction to reach all students.
Appendix E – Survey Questions Continued

1 2 3 4 5  N/A  f. how to make accommodations for my students who struggle with writing.

10. Please mark the following items if they are in your classroom.
   a. an LCD projector.
   b. a document camera.
   c. a mimio.
   d. a smartboard.
   e. enough laptops or desktop computers for every child in my class.
   f. sufficient amounts of paper for my students’ use.
   g. sufficient writing utensils for my students’ use.
   h. enough space for the students to write comfortably.

Thank you for your participation!
Please return your survey by hitting submit.
Appendix F – Mental Barriers

Table 1

Mental Barriers – Writing Instruction

*Number of Responses = Top Number Shown

*Percentage of Total Responses = Bottom Number Shown

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>I know:</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>N/A= Not Applicable</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>*What mini-lessons to teach my students</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>67%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*How to create effective anchor charts</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>67%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*How to assess my students’ writing fairly and accurately</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>67%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*That my undergraduate program prepared me how to teach writing</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>53%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*How to differentiate my instruction to reach all of my students</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>53%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*How to make accommodations for students who struggle with writing</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>53%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix G – Mental Barriers

Table 2

*Mental Barriers – Process Writing Instruction*

*Number of Responses = Top Number Shown*

*Percentage of Total Responses = Bottom Shown*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>I feel confident when teaching the following steps of the writing process:</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>N/A Not Applicable</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>Brainstorming</em></td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
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<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>47%</td>
<td>53%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Planning</em></td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
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<td>13%</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>How to write a rough draft</em></td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>67%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Revision</em></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Editing</em></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Publishing</em></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix H – Tangible Barriers

Table 3

Tangible Barriers – Technology and Writing Materials

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>I need the following tangible items to teach writing effectively:</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>N/A=Not Applicable</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>*an LCD</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>projector</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>54%</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*a document</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>camera</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*a mimio</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*a smartboard</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*enough laptops for every child in my class</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>46%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*enough desktop computers for every child in my class</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>43%</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*enough iPads for every student in my class</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*sufficient amounts of paper</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>80%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*sufficient writing utensils</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>80%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*enough space for the students to write comfortably</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>80%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Would love to have the technology but it is not essential to have all of it...even though it would make it easier
### Appendix I – Persuasive Writing

#### Table 4

**Persuasive Writing Instruction**

*Number of Responses = Top Number Shown*

*Percentage of Total Responses = Bottom Number Shown*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>When teaching my students how to write a persuasive piece, I know how to effectively:</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>N/A=Not Applicable</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>get the students excited about their topic</em></td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>teach the students how to write an effective lead in their introduction to grab the reader’s attention</em></td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>teach the students to write an effective conclusion</em></td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>model how to write each paragraph prior to the student writing their own piece</em></td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>conference with students</em></td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>teach different formats of persuasive writing</em></td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>use other books, including picture books, as part of my mini-lesson</em></td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>N/A=Not Applicable</th>
</tr>
</thead>
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<tr>
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<td>47%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Appendix J – Research Report Writing

Table 5

**Research Report Writing**

*Number of Responses = Top Number Shown*

*Percentage of Total Responses = Bottom Number Shown*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>When teaching my students how to write a research report, I know how to effectively:</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>N/A = Not Applicable</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>teach the students how to narrow their topic</em></td>
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<td>13%</td>
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<tr>
<td><em>teach the students how to take notes in their own words</em></td>
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<td>27%</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>teach the students not to plagiarize</em></td>
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<td>7%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>53%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>teach the students how to organize their research</em></td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>43%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>manage various research projects</em></td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>teach the students the difference between professional websites and personal home pages.</em></td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>31%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>teach the students how to cite their sources</em></td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>1%</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>teach the students to use search engines</em></td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>model writing every paragraph of the report</em></td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>sequence with students</em></td>
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<td>0%</td>
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<td>20%</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>teach different formats of research-type writing</em></td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>use other books, including picture books, as part of my mini-lesson</em></td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>teach the 6+1 Traits</em></td>
<td>8%</td>
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<td>39%</td>
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<td>8%</td>
<td>31%</td>
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<tr>
<td><em>use other books, including picture books, as part of my mini-lesson</em></td>
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<tr>
<td><em>teach the 6+1 Traits</em></td>
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<td>33%</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix K – Narrative Writing

Table 6

Narrative Writing

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>When teaching my students how to write a narrative piece, I know how to effectively:</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>N/A=Not Applicable</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>*teach students what parts make up a narrative piece</td>
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<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*explain different formats of narrative writing</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*teach the students how to write a lead in their introduction to grab their reader’s attention</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*teach the students how to develop their primary characters</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>53%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*teach the students how to develop their setting</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>53%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*teach the students how to develop their rising action</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>53%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*teach the students how to explode their climax</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>53%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*teach the students how to develop a thorough conclusion</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>53%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*use other books, including picture books, as part of my mini-lesson</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>7%</td>
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<td>53%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*teach the 6 + 1 Traits</td>
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<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Percentage of Total Responses = Bottom Number Shown
Appendix L - Special Project Timeline

September 4, 2012 – Meet with my principal, Mr. Jake Hoag, to discuss getting permission for my special project. Explain what my project will entail and discuss whether I need my superintendent’s permission. Write two parts of the Introduction (General Problem Area & Specific Problem). Search for articles to include in project proposal.

September 11, 2012 – Complete IRB/CITI training, and print off the passing score page to turn in. Continue searching for articles to include. Meet with Mr. Hoag and discuss what Dr. O’Connor’s expectations are of me. Write the next two parts of the Introduction (Prevalence & Definition of Terms). Continue searching for articles to include.

September 18, 2012 – Meet with Mr. Hoag, and give him the revised questionnaire and revised staff email. Ask him if he will write the permission letter for IRB approval for me to conduct the survey with the Northern Heights staff. Write the final component of the Introduction (Research approach). Begin reading articles and highlight the most important information to include for the literature review.

September 25, 2012 – Turn in all required paperwork for the IRB approval. Continue work on introduction with necessary revisions. Begin typing the Literature Review Parts (Description of past research, Thematic review, study-by-study review, and research questions for this).

September 29 & 30 – Work on the rough draft of Chapters 1, 2, and 3, and the powerpoint presentation of those chapters for the K500 class due Tuesday, Oct. 2. Continue researching articles and developing the Literature Review.

October 2, 2012 – The rough draft, including the Introduction, Literature Review, and Outline is turned in. Continue reviewing articles for literature review. Present a powerpoint presentation to the class. Begin typing the methodology (Brief description of the research methodology, subjects/participants and setting, describe data sources used to collect data, and data collection procedures).

October 16, 2012 – Continue to research articles and revise literature review as needed. Continue to revise and edit all parts of the proposal. Present the electronic survey to my staff. Give two weeks for the teachers to complete.

October 30, 2012 – Special Project proposal due to special education faculty. Continue revisions of first three chapters and begin to prepare for next semester, including the next three chapters. Send reminder email to teachers to complete the survey.
Appendix L – Special Project Timeline Continued

**November 6, 2012** – Collect survey results and begin analyzing the results/findings. Continue revisions of first three chapters.

**November 13, 2012** – Begin writing the analysis/findings (what I found out after conduction the research-results with no interpretations, and comparing/contrasting data with: charts, graphs, tables, and figures.

**November 27, 2012** – No class, but continue to work on all aspects of paper/proposal. Begin creating powerpoint presentation to present to the class on December 4.

**December 4, 2012** – Present special project to class (chapters 1-3, review and methodology), in powerpoint format. Continue to revise/edit all aspects of project.

**December 11, 2012** – **Present research project to class.** Continue to revise/edit all aspects of paper.

**Christmas Break** – Continue revising/editing all aspects of paper. **Create design for writing teacher handbook. Brainstorm different formats/designs for handbook.**

**January, 2012** – Begin working on creating writing ideas for teacher handbook, Chapter 5. Review and revise all aspects of paper.

**February, 2012** – Continue to create teacher handbook. Review and revise all aspects of paper.

**March, 2012** – Work on completion of all chapters, including final thoughts and reflections, discussions, and conclusions (Chapter 6). **Turn in completed project, including all six chapters. Prepare to present special project to peers and faculty members.**

**April, 2012** – Present special project to peers, special education faculty members, and my principal. Prepare for graduation.

**May, 2012** – Graduate, feel a sense of pride and enjoy a class-free/stress-free summer!
Information withheld for privacy.
Information withheld for privacy.