Promoting Children's Writing for Publication

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PROMOTING CHILDREN'S WRITING
FOR PUBLICATION

A Project Report
Presented to
The Graduate Faculty
Central Washington University

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Education

by
Minnie Mary McKay Merrill

July, 1989
I wish to express my thanks to my husband, Ed Merrill, and my sister, Phyllis Link, who have supported me 100 percent through this project.
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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Statement of the Problem

The main emphasis of this project was a description of a writing program "Promoting Children's Writing for Publication" as it evolved at Grass Lake Elementary School, Kent School District, Kent, Washington. Experts in the field agree that reading and writing are intertwined in the development of language arts skills (Anderson, Hiebert, Scott, and Wilkerson, 1984; Willinsky, 1986). Their recent studies reveal that only fifteen percent of the school day is spent in writing in first, third, and fifth grades, and that two-thirds of this time is used to copy one word answers into workbooks.

In discussion with teachers, parents, and school administrators about writing skills at many levels of instruction including high school, the author determined that these skills were weak and need improvement. Upon further discussion with the teachers at Grass Lake, the two reasons teachers gave for not having students do more writing were the overwhelming task of correcting the students' work, and motivation to get students to write for a meaningful purpose on a daily basis.
Purpose of the Project

The review of literature reflects a concern that writing needs a new emphasis. Believing that students who can write can also read indicated a good reason for pursuing a creative way to use writing in the school curriculum. The purpose of this project was to outline positive approaches to writing by elementary children with the goal of having the writing published in a national children's magazine. This anticipation brought on great excitement and gave a concrete purpose for writing every day.

A network of parent volunteers to assist the teacher in editing children's work was organized. The possibility of seeing a student's work published accelerated the interest of these volunteers. After initial writing, a progression of self-editing, peer-editing in groups of two in a cooperative learning setting, and final editing by a volunteer or teacher completed the cycle.

Limitations of the Project

The writing program "Promoting Children's Writing for Publication" was limited to a fifth grade classroom of 31 students. The classroom students wrote for three deadlines set up on the trimester time line throughout the year. Each author, working with peers, and teacher, chose his or her best manuscript to be submitted to the publisher at these specific times. The students also had available several other deadlines to encourage individuals to write and submit manuscripts for publishing on an individual basis.
Parent volunteers were used in the editing process. These were a cadre of volunteers who felt comfortable encouraging the use of correct writing mechanics when editing with the student and reinforcing self-editing techniques. Without this parent cadre, the program would have become overwhelming.

Definition of Terms

Children's publishers: A publishing house that solicits writings of children. These publications are available through subscriptions and come through the mail.

Curriculum Night: An evening in early October set aside for parents to meet the teachers, and be briefed on the academic goals for the coming year.

Dialogue Journal: A written conversation with two people.

Edit: Revise writing with improved clarity as a goal.

Journal: A notebook containing blank pages that a student writes in at regular intervals. The previous writings are kept in order of writing.

Language Arts: The curriculum of writing, reading, listening, and speaking as they intertwine to enhance the use of language.
Writing for an Audience: The writer knows in advance who might read the story. The audience of a personal letter would be the addressee. The audience for published stories would be subscribers to the publication.
CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Writing is a proud and ancient profession, and it is a genuine feeling to achieve even a little success in entertaining and enlightening millions with your words (Jakes, 1987). Students who have a chance to entertain the thought that a story belonging to them would have such value as to be published, would write with enthusiasm.

To begin writing, one of the teacher’s first tasks is to make students aware that the writing process occurs in stages (Vacca, R. & Vacca, J., 1986). Most writers never commit words to paper without changing at least one or two here and there (Lindeman, 1982).

In the planning stage, the writer may obtain guidelines from the magazine for which he or she is interested in submitting a manuscript. Cobblestone, as an example, is devoted to a particular theme each month. These themes are announced six months or more in advance, and are available in the magazine itself. Examples of themes are Albert Einstein, The Amish, and Alexander Hamilton. Writer’s Digest, a magazine devoted to authors and those interested in being authors, also has information with some guidelines such as due dates, editors’ names and addresses, and length of manuscript. Guidelines are available for the writing from all publishers.

A writer needs the alphabet, the five senses, and a creative mind (Newman, 1988). The job is to wake up to the beauty and magic that exists in your life every moment and then write it down. The mind, which includes memories, dreams, beliefs, fantasies and attitudes will
make your writings unique (Newman, 1988). There are seven states of being for a person to be a writer—be sure, be determined, be patient, be open, be curious, be serious, and be yourself (Jakes, 1987). One must be willing to work day after day to learn to write. It takes strong determination, practice, and guidance. A solid writing career usually happens as the writer matures. The writer must be open to tough criticism and be willing to do something about it. He or she needs to read widely in many different areas and notice everything. Laugh at yourself but give 110 percent and let who you are, what you are, what you believe shine through every sentence or piece you write (Jakes, 1987).

Positive Image of Writing

Writing in the elementary classroom needs a positive image. Many students experience the stress from the mechanics of writing. The demand for a perfect product discourages a child and free thinking is dampened. Go deep inside yourself and find out what's there (Newman, 1988), does not mean perfect spelling, paragraph form, and punctuation. Research points up that being able to use adult writing methods is a developmental process that students accept as they mature. Many writing activities accepted as traditional exercises are unnatural and will result in disinterest and negative feeling (Anderson, et al. . . 1984). Our classrooms must begin to value the writing process as an important segment of the curriculum before proper time and attention will be funneled into that area. There is recent research on the values of reading-writing and the correlation it has across all grade levels which
will result in more emphasis upon writing (Willinsky, 1986). An enthusiastic atmosphere set up by the teacher will aid students to enthusiastically write down their ideas, dreams, and experiences.

Children should be taught to write because they like to write (Ellis, 1988). The satisfaction of writing an original story or happening is rewarding and gratifying.

Robert Frost, when asked why one should write, said, "I don't know why you should write, but I know why I do. I just don't get the same satisfaction out of doing anything else." The positive approach to teaching writing can create an unsurmountable desire to write and write, to play with words and write from the heart (Newman, 1988).

Writing Begins Early

Writing begins before formal schooling. The first scribble in the preschool age group is more than a simple mark because it incorporates intention and meaning. The next steps are drawing, letting single letters represent people or things, followed by putting down several letters, with the message decided on later. In the next stage some appropriate beginning consonants are used. There is some spacing between "words" and, eventually, letters are related to sounds (Anderson, et al. . .1984). The student writer has many intricate skills to master before becoming a polished writer. The writing process includes the rules of language in regard to the chosen context, having a smooth flow of the story (syntax) and saying what is meant (semantics). After a writer chooses a theme, the next step is deciding what strategy would best make the idea accessible to the audience (Vacca, et al. . .
1986). Each writer must begin writing with freedom to write uninhibitedly. He or she should write about what is important and known to him or her. Direct experience draws upon the real emotions of reaction and gives the writer his or her own chance to make decisions about what matters (Mavrogenes, 1986).

In rereading his or her written material, the author has been forced to think accurately and consecutively because there are no cues from gestures, facial expressions, and other nonverbal aids to convey meaning.

The best way to learn language is to write it. The National Assessment of Educational Progress confirms that better readers are better writers, and that writing more results in better achievement in all areas (Lapointe, 1986).

Volunteers and Involvement

Research shows that parents in America are not involved enough with their child’s education. A study (Gallop, 1986) brought out the fact that more than 33 percent of parents do not spend any time helping with homework. Lamm (1986) stated that parents feel a student’s ability will determine success. The entire responsibility for this group’s education falls upon the public school system.

Parents can help students with writing skills by taking an interest in their child’s writing by reading what the student has written, and giving positive feedback (Kristofferson, 1988). This interest in the child’s writing can strengthen family ties, and it can strengthen the relationship of parent and child. It can strengthen a
positive attitude between school and home. All of this together gives the child a sounder education, and the positive feelings of self-esteem are strengthened.

Publishing Reality

Children can become aware of the business side of literary endeavor by learning about marketing, typesetting, and production. Many of today's children are pushed into an adult occupation and are stressed by the fear of not achieving. A child with written ability should still learn to climb trees, ride bikes, and eat their vegetables (Ellis, 1988). The rejection from publishers can be cruel, and the emphasis on fame and money can stand in the way of a writer being a writer (Ellis, 1988). The fine line between writing because it brings satisfaction and writing only to be published must be presented to any aspiring author.

The life of many writers is not exotic (Newman, 1988). It is about the same as anyone else's. A writer must select a place to write and set up a realistic schedule. Self-motivation and determination coupled with fantasies, dreams, and memories will make the writing unique (Newman, 1988).
CHAPTER THREE

PROCEDURES OF THE STUDY

To set up a time line for "Promoting Children's Writing for Publication" the author of this project progressed through the following stages:

1. The review of research on writing reveals that elementary children need more emphasis and opportunity to write for a purpose. Writing is not only a means of communication, an avenue of expressing emotions and ideas, and a way of excelling and finding satisfaction within. It also enhances and strengthens the reading ability, strengthens literal interpretation and comprehension of authors' intent. The author of this paper decided to emphasize writing for a purpose.

2. The preliminary step was to excite the classroom of students to work on writing stories and experiences with the intent of sending them off to a publisher.

3. Then curriculum that dealt with writing compositions from parts of speech, sentence structure, topic sentence, and paragraph development was reviewed and taught. Assignments gave writing practice in these areas.

4. Parent volunteers were solicited and trained in working with students on an individual basis in editing. They guided the children correcting punctuation, spelling, and choosing "other" words to improve clarity of intended meaning.
5. The guidelines that publishers furnished were studied. If the manuscript required typing, typist volunteers from the parent cadre were contacted. If the child's handwritten work was acceptable, best efforts in penmanship were then put into the final draft, and upon completion, it was reread by the author with parent volunteer and/or teacher.

6. Manuscripts were mailed to the chosen publisher. Students waited for acceptance, acknowledgment, or rejection from the publisher. The hope of actual publication of a story was a great motivator; however, to see the story in print was not the major emphasis of the author of "Promoting Children's Writing for Publication" project.

7. The major accomplishment of this project was to involve students and parents to work together, to convince parents that these valuable writing skills are necessary, and that the teaching day is far too short for a teacher to have the exclusive responsibility to teach students to write.

8. School leaders can assist in the task of making parents feel capable in instructing their own children. This was done at a Curriculum Night where parents were introduced to the idea of "Promoting Children's Writing for Publication." A series of three training sessions was set up for the purpose of teaching editing techniques and mechanics of language, and the stages of the writing methods were presented to the interested volunteers. The positive encouragement of the student was heavily emphasized. Parents respected suggestions and felt capable of enriching and extending this learning experience.
9. Writing assignments that were given as homework had to be carefully planned and flexible enough for the working parent's schedule. Such activities were preliminary experiences such as a trip to the city, the zoo, or quiet countryside before actual writing about the setting took place. The writing assignment would include making a list of adjectives, for instance, of sight, smell, or feeling. These words were incorporated into the next writing assignment.
CHAPTER FOUR

THE PROJECT

After evaluating her fifth grade classes over a period of three years, the writer determined that approximately 25 percent to 31 percent of the students were unable to write about a personal experience using an introduction, a plot, and a conclusion. To reduce this percentage, and to reinforce and extend all students' writing skills about an experience, it became a personal interest to expose young writers to publication. It became a challenge to the author of this paper to provide more meaningful writing opportunities and experiences for the regular classroom. The value of writing for a purpose and the uninhibited imagination of young students provided a wealth of new material that editors of current publications would be interested in considering for their magazine.

Introductory Activities

Discussion about how children's writings get into national publications was debated and questioned. Excitement over the possibility that any child could do this came out as a result. Available publications such as Jack and Jill, Highlights, McGuffey's Writer, were perused and displayed on the writing supply table in the classroom. The students read and discussed articles, stories, and poems by student authors that had been published in these familiar magazines. The confidence in being able to write as well themselves became evident.
Curriculum

Curriculum embracing the student learning objectives for the fifth grade was reviewed and the new writing skills were taught. During this same time, elements that make up cooperative learning techniques were introduced, practiced, and used. The writing assignments began with weekly dialogue-journal writing. This was in letter form (to the teacher) consisting of written thoughts, ideas, and recollections. The teacher responded in letter form with thoughts and additions to ideas, but never corrected errors of any kind. Short writing assignments were kept in a writing notebook. The notebook also had a brainstormed list of possible writing topics on the first page to keep the "I don't know what to write about" syndrome at a minimum. Opportunities to choose writing topics were integrated into the regular curriculum, and topics were integrated into the regular curriculum, and topics for possible writing subject matter were constantly added to the first page of the notebook.

The "Promoting Children's Writing for Publication" was presented to the parents at Curriculum Night. The invitation for a workshop to learn how to help students edit was issued. Three workshops were set up for the convenience of parents. Two of them were scheduled before school began in the morning, and one was after the dismissal of students in the afternoon. These workshops emphasized listening to the student read orally his or her paper. Pointers on positive interruption by the parent editor when written communication was not clear were given (Appendix A). All corrections were to be written by the student on his
or her own paper. Parents were not to easily give correct spelling of misspelled words. When the misspellings of common words expected to be mastered at fifth grade level were found in the manuscript, suggestions were given as to where the word could be found spelled correctly. If, as an example, the writing was an extension of Social Studies, the word "colonies" would be found in the chapter on New England Colonies. The first three letters of a word would be given, if the dictionary had to be used. It was discovered that just giving the correct spelling encourages dependence upon a corrector, rather than the writer taking the responsibility of correcting and being aware of correct spelling. This procedure develops independence and enhances the success of the student.

Editing

Editing is an integral part of writing and, without it, much writing is mediocre. In addition to this, the writer is not making improvement in the art of written communication. The mountainous task of correcting manuscripts takes large blocks of time for the teacher. Editing one's own writing in this project was taught as a step-by-step process to the entire class. The first step consisted of each student reading his own original work, looking for errors of a skill just reviewed. This editing skill began with looking for capitals at the beginning of sentences. The second step concentrated upon punctuation only. Then capitalization of all proper nouns, the indentation of paragraphs and added use of adjectives followed one at a time. After the student had gone through his own paper, he would read it orally to a
peer "editor" who would follow along using a checklist, while looking for omissions of the emphasized skill or skills. The order of skills edited was always the same. The peer editor silently read along with the author of the paper. When an error was found, it was identified by the peer editor or parent editor, and the student crossed out the error and put the corrected form above. As the students practice in editing developed and improved, they began to check for more than one skill at a time. A list of writing mechanics evolved, as teaching of writing continued throughout the year. This list was followed each and every time a manuscript was edited. The most difficult rule for both peer editors and parent editors was that no one was to make corrections on the manuscript other than the author of the paper. (Appendix B)

This procedure was used for every skill that was expected to be practiced. The student read his manuscript to one peer editor, ready to defend or change his choice of wordage, topic sentence, adjective or whatever skill was challenged by the peer. This ritual caused the student to think about his reason for his choice, and gave opportunity to practice oral communication.

The student who had been the editor then switched roles and read his writing to the first student. This procedure could be used with another student editor, and/or a parent or teacher editor. The teacher was not always the final editor. However, at each editing the author of the writing was the only one who wrote out corrections on the manuscript. It has been discovered by the author of this project that when the student recopied a "corrected" manuscript, he or she read in, under and over "red" (teacher corrected) corrections made by any other corrector than himself. This final "corrected" draft was a repeat of
the original errors because the teacher's red marks seemed to have no value in the mind of the student.

The regular signals of an editor were used. These consisted of the use of the caret to indicate words left out, a line drawn through a phrase or word to be eliminated, and the paragraph symbol. These signals will be familiar as the student continues with his schooling in junior and senior high school. A partial list similar to that presented below was posted in the writer's classroom for referral by students at all times.

Symbols Used to Indicate Correction:

- Word Misspelled
- Incorrect capitalization
- New Paragraph
- Reread - wordage not clear
- Not a complete sentence
- Indent paragraph

After the symbol had been made by the student, the correction was done above rather than erasing the error. The writing on every other line gave room above for corrections and added words.

When this described procedure was used, the writer became more and more aware of spelling, capitals, and punctuation that were his own weaknesses. Not every rough draft deserved the full editing treatment, and the student was encouraged to choose those stories that were his or her "best".

When the student handed in the final draft (ready for mailing to the publisher), the rough draft was included. Upon the teacher's final reading, if an error was discovered, referral to the rough draft would
indicate whether or not there had been a previous correction. This error could indicate that the student had added something new as he was recopying the final draft. The changing or adding of words was certainly permissible, but a new error was not acceptable. So, as the student practiced this procedure, he or she became sensitive to written communication and developed a desire to write down clear thoughts. The willingness to make corrections increased a great deal as this writing process continued.

Guidelines

Guidelines are individual for each publisher. A written request for these guidelines encouraged letter writing. Some publications would indicate certain guidelines within the issue, if manuscripts were being solicited for a contest. The reading and sharing of these written directions provided opportunity to interpret the written word, gave opportunity to share individual interpretations, and gave practice in writing for a real purpose.

Students took the responsibility of choosing the writing assignment. One requirement of the author of this project was regular participation and meeting the deadlines set up. If the manuscript was to be submitted in a typed form, the student would coordinate between teacher and parent volunteer to arrange for the typing. The typist was asked to do no further editing.
Parent Enlightenment

The work, effort, and energy that goes into teaching both reading and writing was highly understood by the parent volunteers who worked as editors. This cadre of parents thoroughly understood the necessary help and encouragement that each student needed in order to be successful. One teacher and one student make a lot of progress compared to one teacher to thirty-one students. In addition to this, every student is writing at an individual level of ability. To witness the progress of these students could be likened to the Chinese proverb that says, "One picture is worth more than a thousand words". The volunteers were true examples of this understanding.

The experience and practice of one lesson does not always give the writer the expertise and ownership of the skill. Some students master a skill with one or two tries, while others may need to try twenty-five times. The parent volunteers were quick to realize this and practiced to the twenty-fifth try, using patience and encouragement with those who required the help. An encouraging response occurred when other parents asked if they could be considered for editors for next year's new group of fifth graders.

Multisensory Activities

Multisensory language arts activities included such experiences as sifting sand through the fingers, floating brilliantly colored feathers through the air—all the time writing adjectives that described feelings, looks and color. Many times the choice of just the right word
was pondered before a decision was made. Experimenting with poster paint, yellow lemons, and fabric was encouraged, using each sense one at a time to evaluate and choose descriptive words. Directions such as "Close your eyes, reach into the paper bag and feel velvet, silk, fur or textured leather; close your eyes and bravely taste lemon peel or kiwi; dip a paint brush into thick fluorescent paint and observe patterns, shape and texture; examine a maple leaf for design in nature", were often given. During and after these experiences, each student would write down words that were synonyms, similes and metaphors in notebooks. Students could refer to the entries in their notebooks during the writing assignment. This encouraged the students to write words whenever a new setting was explored or a new experience happened to remind them of their thoughts. (The author of this project found the enthusiastic response to looking at notes delightful.) The choice of just the right word was pondered before a decision was made many times. This experience in itself could set habits for those naturally inclined writers who may want to be serious writers some day.

Other writing assignments came from direct experiences (i.e., write about the time you almost died or someone well-known to you almost died. Write about the time you were very, very bad. Write about when you were scared or you had a most unusual dream).

The teacher who directs the writing class to write a creative story, and does not build up a direction for the story or prior knowledge, will receive shallow efforts. Many students will write stories of blood, guts, and gore—a typical fifth grade interpretation of "creative". Most children have had no true experience with blood,
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guts, and gore. This type of story seldom flows naturally and does not lend itself to self-satisfaction.

The parent volunteers enjoyed supervising these hands-on activities and followed the experience with written description. The involvement gave the volunteer confidence and an enthusiastic attitude. They wanted the class members to experience new activities using smell, taste, sight, feel, and sound. They looked forward to seeing them recorded in descriptive paragraphs, rhymed or free-form poetry, or a story.

Not all parents feel comfortable helping the child. These simple ideas for suggesting interesting topics, exploring words and pursuing new ideas were only a start. It was always hoped that a child’s interest and increased writing ability would encourage parents to be involved. Strengthening the home-school relationship might result in an increased writing ability and positive attitude toward education on behalf of those parents who do not ordinarily support actively the learning process.

Building Prior Knowledge

As an introduction to a new unit of study, the students wrote letters home asking parents and family for information. This helped to build background knowledge about the new subject matter. The students would write down the information gleaned by interviewing parents, grandparents, and neighbors. In the letter the child might ask to go on outings, such as a local museum to extend the experience of the topic. The student would write a written account of the experience. These
interviews and accounts were returned to school and became part of their writing folders.
CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary

"Promoting Children's Writing for Publication" provided a whole language continuity, supported improved reading skills, and enabled the students to experience the joy of self-expression of ideas and emotions. It provided oral sharing and communicating the written work, and this writing opportunity strengthened the often-times sporadic and negative attitude given to writing. A child who can write can read is the belief of the author of this project. The opportunity for writing for a purpose must be offered if this whole language emphasis is well balanced.

Conclusions

After using an emphasized writing program for a year, and seeing the positive attitude of class members, a more concentrated effort will be put in "Promoting Children's Writing for Publication" next year. The interest shown in reading publications for individual enjoyment increased. The librarian at Grass Lake Elementary made an effort to announce to the classroom that the new monthly issues of popular publications had arrived, and there was a scramble to read them first.

The invitation for parent editors to be willingly trained NOT to correct manuscripts but to guide the child to correcting his own writing was a challenge. Most students have always had a rough draft corrected
by the teacher, handed back for recopying and lost interest because the changes really were not what the author wanted to say. The parent volunteer could well have experienced this, and so assumed that "editors" were only correctors. The process suggested here is time-consuming initially, but the satisfaction of seeing increased student editing is worth the effort. Peer editors are of different abilities, and so the capable student becomes a sought-after editor. However, every student's skill in editing grows, so one must not let only the exceptional writer and speller be the valued editor.

The class members become very tolerant of the one-to-one editing with volunteers and teacher. With high expectations and direction they will keep on-task until their "turn" comes. The suggestion of bi-weekly editing sessions without fail encourages home-editing and peer-editing before presenting manuscripts to the teacher or volunteers for final editing. Upon the completion of the final editing, the author earns the reward of the special paper for his or her final draft. This paper or submission form is what the publisher had indicated in the guidelines and it keeps the positive excitement and attitude high.

The excitement of being published was never far from the student's mind. Also, knowing that a manila envelope was going out in the mail next Wednesday to Jack and Jill or McGuffey Writer was another incentive to meet the deadline.

Recommendations

A program that uses volunteer help needs careful planning. The one classroom, the teacher, and the volunteers were of manageable size.
With more students involved, a high recommendation is suggested that the teacher leadership also be employed. Encourage the volunteers to bring their friends on board, so that throughout the year enthusiasm does not wane.

A written outline of how to edit should be in the hands of the volunteer. (Appendix C) This outline should be readily available to new, interested parents often recruited by the present volunteer's enthusiasm. Intervals of time when the objectives of skills are introduced, practiced, and mastered should be listed. Examples of responses to a child should be listed. These suggestions to a volunteer helps him or her substitute as the teacher, because time does not allow the teacher to always get to each child as often as he or she needs guidance. This waiting period often is the death of a writing program. The teacher is overwhelmed with the task of editing thirty-one manuscripts, and the students' interest in the writing topic wanes in the waiting period.

Four valuable tips by the author of My Father's Dragon for young writers are listed below:

TIPS FOR YOUNG WRITERS (Ruth Gannett, 1986)

1. The most important thing is to write to please yourself because if you are not interested in your own writing, how can you expect anyone else to be?
2. Another thing is to read aloud to see what it sounds like, because writing has a kind of rhythm, and, like music, it should sound right.

3. Always look for the best word that does what you want it to do -- strong words, not so many adjectives and adverbs, but strong verbs, for example. "He sped down the road," is more effective than "He ran down the road." He seems to be going faster with "sped."

4. Don't be afraid to cross things out and start over again. You have to work at it to achieve good writing.
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APPENDIX A

SUGGESTED RESPONSES TO ORAL READING AND PREPARATORY GUIDE
SUGGESTED RESPONSES TO ORAL READING
FOR PARENT VOLUNTEERS

Did I hear your voice drop? That means you need a period.

Did I hear your voice raise? That means I should see a question mark.

What do we use at the beginning of every sentence?

Everyone's name is capitalized—even your dog!!

What makes a sentence complete? (subject, predicate) Tell me the subject or what you talking about is in this sentence. Tell me what the actions are because that is the job of a predicate.

Do you think a color word might improve the description of your dog? (Let child express reasons.)

What signals the reader that you are going to tell something new? (Indented paragraph)

Strong verbs give good mental pictures. Does "The boy ran down the road" sound as fast as "The boy sped down the road?" Can you think of another verb for ran or sped?

I keep hearing the word "said". Let's think of other words that could be used in its place.

I keep hearing the word "and". Tell me what could be substituted for some of them. (They could be crossed out, and a new sentence formed.)

I am feeling that the end of your story hasn't been stated. What are some words that signal the end? (Finally, never again, lived happily ever after. . .)

I do not get a picture of your main character. Think in your mind just exactly how he looks. Now, tell me. Now, let's write down just what you said.

What is the plot of your story? What have you just said to me that is not on your paper? Where should your thoughts be inserted? Maybe, we should draw an arrow and write on the back of your paper. When you see your arrow you will know that you have more to add in this place.
Look forward to every session you spend in the classroom. (It will never be an exact repeat of another day).

Work with student at his or her desk.

Do not rewrite the story or poem for the student.

Help with spelling and punctuation.

Make suggestions of alternate words if many sentences begin with the same word.

Encourage the use of a thesaurus.

Encourage the use of resource material and dictionary.

Guide student to research or fact finding tools if this does not seem an alternative to student.

Encourage the child to read stories and poems that are about the same topic as is chosen.

Share personal writing with a reluctant student.

Write an opening and closing sentence for a poem or story together. Each of you, at the same time, write the body of the writing.

Discuss what editing or correction means to student.

Discuss skills and possible uses that will be in this writing.

Try to pace time as to get to several students rather than just one or two.

The students will look to you for approval. Be as honest, in as positive manner, as possible.

Go to your "corner" when you get back home and write a creative story or poem!
APPENDIX B

PARTIAL LIST OF SKILLS AND TIME LINE
A partial list of skills evolved during this project are listed below along with approximate time they are introduced and emphasized.

**First Trimester** (September - November)

1. Always skip lines on the rough draft so that there is room for word or thought changes and additions.
2. Capitals at the beginning of sentences.
3. Punctuation at the end of sentences.
4. Capitals of all proper nouns.
5. Correct spelling.
6. Each sentence is a complete thought.

**Second Trimester** (December - February)

7. Adjectives are used to increase details of mental pictures.
8. Paragraphs are indented.
9. Paragraphs have a topic sentence with supporting details.
10. Verbs can be stronger when action is described.
11. Over use of familiar verbs can be extended to words that could be substituted (said--exclaimed, answered, cried, yelled. . . ).
12. Elimination of repeated phrases.

**Third Trimester** (March - June)

15. Description and development of setting.
APPENDIX C

EDITING SYMBOLS
EDITING SYMBOLS

The following are symbols used to indicate correction:

- Word Misspelled
- Incorrect capitalization
- New Paragraph
- ? Reread - wordage not clear
- n Not a complete sentence
- s
- --> Indent paragraph
APPENDIX D

MAGAZINES THAT PRINT WORK BY STUDENT WRITERS
MAGAZINES THAT PRINT WORK BY STUDENT WRITERS

Adapted from Teachers and Writers Collaborative,
October 1984

This compilation is a listing and not an endorsement of magazines which print work by student writers (an asterisk indicates a purely literary magazine):

Action  Scholastic, Inc., 730 Broadway, New York, NY 1003.
Publishes student writing based on writing assignments in its previous issues. For students 12-14.

*Chart Your Course.  P.O. Box 6448, Mobile, LA 36660.

Child Life.  The Children's Better Health Institute, 1100 Waterway Blvd., Indianapolis, IN 46206. Ages 7-9.

Children's Digest.  The Children's Better Health Institute, 1100 Waterway Blvd., Indianapolis, IN 46206. Ages 8-10

City Kids.  1545 Wilcox, Los Angeles, CA 90028. Ages 11-14.

Cobblestone: The History Magazine for Young People. 20 Grove St., Peterborough, NH 03458. Each issue devoted to a particular theme. Ages 8-14. Tel. 603-924-7209.
Cricket. Box 100, LaSalle, IL 61301. Note: Considers only material that complies with current contest rules and descriptions (see each issue for current contest rules). Ages 5-13.


Jack and Jill. 1100 Waterway Blvd., P.O. Box 567B, Indianapolis, IN 46206.

McGuffey Writer. 400 McGuffey Hall, Miami University, Oxford, OH 45056.


Sprint. Scholastic, Inc., 730 Broadway, New York, NY 10003. Publishes student writing based on assignments in its previous issues. For students aged 9-11.

*Stone Soup. P.O.Box 83, Santa Cruz, CA 95063. Ages 6-12.


Young American. P.O. Box 12409, Portland, OR 97212. Tel. 503-230-1895.
APPENDIX E

EXAMPLES OF GUIDELINES
Below is an example of guidelines for *Jack and Jill*:

Send your manuscript to "Stories" in care of *JACK AND JILL*, 1100 Waterway Boulevard, P.O. Box 567B, Indianapolis, IN 46206. Your story can be up to 500 words in length. If your story is chosen, it will be published -- along with your picture, if you send it -- in a special section of *JACK AND JILL*. The editors will select stories which they feel are interesting to other *JACK AND JILL* readers. Please be sure your story is ORIGINAL -- one you have made up by yourself. Be sure your Name, Age, and Full Address (Street, City, State, and Zip Code) are on everything you send. You may wish to make a copy of your story, because NO MATERIAL CAN BE RETURNED.
The McGuffey Writer Guidelines

The McGuffey Writer is a magazine of children's own writing published for a nationwide audience.

Contributions: short stories, essays, poems, cartoons, and illustrations in black and white.

Themes for 1988-89:

Fall - "Everything and Anything: Whatever You Want to Write" Due Oct. 15
Winter - "Friendship" Due Dec. 1
Spring - "City and Country: People, Places, and Things" Due Feb. 15

Age Levels: grades kindergarten through twelfth

Criteria: Items are accepted on the basis of merit, originality, and appropriateness to the overall balance and theme of the issue.

Manuscript Requirements:

a. Student's name, grade level, school, and address must appear on every submitted page.
b. A teacher, supervisor, or responsible adult must sign the initial page for verification.
c. Typed or handwritten submissions are equally welcome as long as they are readable; however the child's original copy is preferable.
d. Due to the limited space, excerpts may be taken from work that is longer than two double-spaced typewritten pages.

Subscription Information: three issues per year

Individual: $5.00 for a single subscription
Institutional: $10.00 for three complete yearly subscriptions sent to a single address
Patron: $15.00 for a subscription plus an opportunity to help defray costs. Patrons are listed on the inside of the spring issue.
Subscription Form for The McGuffey Writer Fall, Winter, Spring

Name ____________________________________________

Address ____________________________________________

                            street                       apt.

                            city                   state                   zip

Type: Patron__$15.00   Institutional__$10.00   Individual__$5.00
       Single Issue__$2.00

Return to: The McGuffey Writer, 400A McGuffey Hall, Miami University
            Oxford, Ohio 45056
Dear Educator:

As many of you may know, the BIC "Quality Comes in Writing" program has become an important part of the writing curriculum of many educators. Enclosed is your program for the 1987-1988 school year. We are again sponsoring a writing contest because it provides an excellent opportunity for students to hone their writing skills and to gain recognition for their efforts.

Last year we sponsored our first BIC "Quality Comes in Writing" Contest and nearly 20,000 students sent in excellent essays. We were impressed with the writing skills these students showed and the enthusiasm educators had for our contest. We were extremely pleased to award the top prize to Stephanie Bianchi, a sixth grade student of Jackie Drinkwater at Cocopah Middle School in Scottsdale, AZ. We can't wait to hear from your students this year!

The enclosed BIC "Quality Comes in Writing" program includes six worksheets. You might consider the essay contest the program's seventh worksheet. We have structured the contest so that there will be three national winners and 51 state winners -- one from each state and the District of Columbia.

We know that contests like this are a lot of work for you so we are again awarding a prize to the teacher of each student whose entry wins. In addition, we will send a free BIC Pencil to each student who enters the contest because BIC wants to recognize the efforts of those students who put extra effort into their writing by entering our contest.

This year, students will complete a story on the importance of writing in 125-150 words. The story begins: "I was only 26 when I walked into my boss's office. Tucked into the crook of my arm was the report I'd been writing for months." Judges will weigh originality and creativity heavily towards the winning entries. Encourage your students to use their imagination when they begin to complete these sentences.

The three national winners will receive U.S. Savings Bonds: the first prize will be a $1,500 bond, second prize a $1,000 bond, and third prize a $500 bond. The teachers of these students will receive a Minolta X-370 camera with a 50mm f/1.7 lens and case. The 51 state winners will receive a Panasonic stereo/cassette/radio system and their teachers will receive a black and white GE Kitchen Companion TV/Radio.

Here's what you and your students have to do to enter the BIC "Quality Comes in Writing" Contest:

OFFICIAL RULES

1. On paper no larger than 8½” x 11” (one side only), students must print their name, school, school address, grade, teacher's first and last name, and date in the upper right hand corner of the first page and in 125-150 words, finish the story that begins: "I was only 26 when I walked into my boss's office. Tucked into the crook of my arm was the report I'd been writing for months." Only teachers -- not parents -- can enter a student's essay.

2. Each student may enter only once and all entries from each class must be submitted at one time with an entry form completed and signed by the teacher. Three national winners will be selected and 51 state winners will be chosen, one from each state and the District of Columbia. BIC will award a first prize of a $1,500 U.S. Savings Bond, a second prize of a $1,000 savings bond, and a third prize of a $500 savings bond and each state winner will receive a Panasonic stereo/cassette/radio system. The teachers of the three national winners will receive a Minolta X-370 camera and the teachers of the state winners will receive a black and white GE Kitchen Companion TV/Radio.
3. Full-time fourth, fifth, and sixth grade students are eligible, except children of BIC Corporation employees, its affiliates, subsidiaries, and advertising and promotion agencies. Taxes, if applicable, are the sole responsibility of the prize winners.

4. All entries received will be judged on the following criteria under the supervision of Lifetime Learning Systems, an independent judging organization, whose decisions are final on all matters relating to this contest: originality and creativity (60%), correct grammar and spelling (20%), and adherence to contest rules (20%).

5. All entries become the exclusive property of BIC Corporation and none will be returned. Entry constitutes permission to BIC Corporation for use of winners' names and photographs without any further compensation. Contest is void wherever prohibited by law and no substitution of prizes is permitted. All federal, state and local laws and regulations apply. All prizes will be awarded.

6. All entries must be postmarked by Friday, March 4, 1988 and mailed to Lifetime Learning Systems, Post Office Box BC, 79 Sanford Street, Fairfield, CT 06430. Winners will be notified by June 1, 1988.

7. For a list of prize winners, send a separate, stamped, self-addressed envelope to: Public Relations Department, BIC Corporation, Wiley Street, Milford, CT 06460.

If this is your first experience with the BIC "Quality Comes in Writing" program, we hope you find it as helpful for teaching writing skills as other educators have. If you've already received a kit and saved it, please feel free to pass this one on to one of your colleagues in the fourth, fifth, or sixth grade. Ideally, we would like as many teachers as possible to receive the kit and use it with their students. For your information, we've enclosed a list of the 1987 winners and their schools and teachers. This year, we'd like to hear from your students!

Good luck to you and your students this school year. We look forward to hearing from you!

Sincerely,

Please note:
The signature has been redacted due to security reasons

BIC CORPORATION
Gary Prushansky
Communications Manager

Attach this completed form to your class's entries in the 1985 BIC "Quality Comes in Writing" Contest. For students to receive their free BIC Pencils, entries must be made as a class. To be eligible to win, all entries must be postmarked by Friday, March 4, 1988 and sent to Lifetime Learning Systems, P.O. Box BC, 79 Sanford Street, Fairfield CT 06430.

TEACHER'S NAME: ______________________________________ GRADE: ___
SCHOOL: ________________________________________________
SCHOOL ADDRESS/STREET: ________________________________
CITY/STATE: _______ ZIP: __________
SCHOOL PHONE NUMBER: _______
DATE: __________ NUMBER OF ESSAYS INCLUDED IN PACKAGE: ____
TEACHER'S SIGNATURE: ________________________________

(This form may be duplicated if more than one class is entering essays.)