

Motivating Students to Write as an Unmotivated Writer

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Abstract

How can an unmotivated, bad writer help children in first grade to become motivated writers who enjoy their writing and writing projects? Children learn to write at a very early age and can become unmotivated to write by early experiences. My inquiry was brought on by my lack of writing ability and motivation to write, as well as my desire to motivate my first graders by having them enjoy better experiences with writing.

Background

I am an intern teaching a self-contained heterogeneous classroom of twenty-two first grade students. The class is very diverse as far as socio-economic status is concerned. We have children who live in trailer parks and apartment complexes as well as children who live in single homes in newer developments. The range of incomes for parents of students in our classroom is best described as wide. As for family background of our classroom, there are four to five students whose parents are separated or divorced. All of the students who come from families with divorced parents spend time in each parent's household to some degree. Through a math project in our classroom, which asked for family member ages, we found that four of our students were born to parents who at the time of birth were under the age of twenty.

Racial diversity in our classroom is not overwhelmingly present, but it is present nonetheless. We have one African American student and one Malaysian student. The rest of the students can be classified as Caucasian.

The diversity of learners in our classroom is also wide. About four students are very dependent on adult involvement for getting work done. Of those four students, two are dependent for instructional reasons (work seems to be too hard for them), and two are dependent for motivational reasons (have trouble focusing).

Writing is taught in two different ways in my classroom. My mentor or I have one large group lesson on Monday afternoons and have several follow-up lessons over the next four days in stations to support the large group lesson. When we do not teach lessons in large group setting on Monday, mini-lessons are taught to small homogenous groups of students.

Students are grouped by reading ability into five groups. Each group's members are consistent in reading styles, techniques, and abilities. Backgrounds of groups can be characterized not only by reading, but also by family background. Students in the group with the highest reading ability can be characterized as students coming from families

with two parents in the home and in the middle to upper class in terms of socio-economic status. Students in the lowest level reading ability can best be characterized as coming from families that are either separated, or from families in the lower class of socio-economic status, or both.

Students in the three middle groups can best be described as a mix of the previously described classroom, ranging from low socio-economic status to high economic status.

The two lowest groups in the classroom receive support in stations from an Instructional Support Teacher at Park Forest Elementary. In her station, they work on letter sound relationships, reading, and writing.

During station times students visit five different stations. I lead the writing station in which some type of writing occurs everyday, whether it is as a group or independently. My cooperating teacher leads the guided reading group in which students work with one book during a given week, and work through that book to do several activities involving word study and comprehension. The Para-professional leads a station in which students engage in word study activities including spelling. The fourth station is usually lead by a volunteer parent who facilitates a science or social studies activity in which students will usually need to read a book to, or produce a book to be read to the parent or cooperating teacher. The fifth station ranges from a listening station, computer station, or a browsing box station. The listening station involves students listening to books on tape. The computer station usually involves the website www.starfall.org, in which students complete reading activities. The browsing box station involves leveled books in which students can pick to read for the allotted station time which is twenty minutes.

Rationale

I was drawn to this inquiry because I am a poor writer and have never enjoyed writing. I have never been motivated to write for enjoyment, nor for any of the projects that I have had to complete. My most recent memories of writing include high school in which I failed two or three papers because of quoting in MLA format. I have never been fond of my English teachers until half way through my senior year. I realized my English teacher made English fun. He made class enjoyable; he gave feedback and let students fix their work. He truly was the teacher that led me to the education field. He made me realize writing and learning to write can be enjoyable.

I was drawn to this subject because I was concerned that I could not make writing fun for my students and that I would push them away from writing like I had been pushed away from the subject. I feared that my negative experiences with writing would negatively impact my teaching of the subject. I worried that I would not know enough about writing to teach it to my students and that I would put off a feeling that I did not like writing, which in turn, could cause my students to become poor, unmotivated writers.

I jumped into this inquiry with little hesitation. I took over teaching writing and planning writing full time in January. I wanted students to enjoy writing while I was teaching it and I wanted students to also gain something from writing with me.

I believe this inquiry will greatly affect my own future teaching. It will inform me of my own ability to teach writing. I came into the year with a fear and hesitation to teach writing. This inquiry will tell me what I have done well, what the students appreciated, if I can help students be motivated writers, and if I can help students in the process of being successful writers. The results of this inquiry can result in greater

confidence in my teaching of writing, or result in further decline of my confidence in teaching writing.

At the start of this inquiry I was interested in what lessons would be successful and unsuccessful in motivating students to write. In motivating students to write I was hoping to improve their writing.

Literature/ Experts

Regie Routman believes:

.... with regard to writing, an activity in which we start with a blank page (or screen) and literally have to create something out of nothing more than our own thoughts. It takes enormous energy, courage, confidence and skill, not to mention a positive attitude (2005, p. 7).

The quote by Regie Routman in her book *Writing Essentials* forms the basis and the background of my inquiry. Writing is a skill that takes everything she mentioned. Some of these skills are skills that I was not sure I had until this inquiry. Confidence, courage, and the positive attitude are areas that I struggle with as a writer. My goal as a writing teacher is to give my students those feelings and those skills to be good writers.

One of the essential problems of writing is that students come to school as good storytellers. If you give a student your ear, he/she can use it for a good amount of time. “Anyone who has been around young children knows that they can be great storytellers” (Stucynski, 2005, p. 4). The problem seems to come when students are asked to put their great stories down on paper. The transition from mind to paper seems to be too laborious for students to think of it as worthwhile and enjoyable.

Students need to see that their work in writing can be enjoyable, not only for them, but also for other classmates. "When students share their writing, they begin to think of themselves as authors and it validates their thoughts. Ways that students can share their writing include; reading aloud in class; submit their work to writing contests; make a big book; read at a school assembly..." (Joanne, 3rd-4th Grade Teacher: Fargo, North Dakota). Part of this inquiry was to make my writers feel as if they are doing special things and to put them in the spotlight. Allowing students to become authors and having the spotlight may allow students to become more confident in their writing.

Regie Routman again expresses herself as I feel about writing.

The celebration of children's writing needs to move right up front to become a major teaching goal. Too many of our students find writing painful, and much of that pain comes from too much concern with correctness at the expense of enjoyment. Enjoyment and writing have not coexisted, and they do so if all our students are to become proficient writers. We are much more apt to do optimum work when we know our best efforts will be supported and celebrated and when we believe we can succeed (2005, p. 18).

I feel that much of this celebration and enjoyment in writing was not present in my classroom as a student. I feel that I might have benefited more from writing for enjoyment rather than correctness. As a result of this literature, I tried to focus the inquiry more on the enjoyment of the writing process rather than the correctness and mechanics of writing.

However, I was not going to let correctness be totally forgotten. Correctness was a part of the lessons, but it was not what took center stage. My opinions of writing are concurrent with the views of Nancy Bertrand and Carole Stice when they explain, “Facility with writing comes with engagement---- children learn to write by writing. Knowledgeable teachers set up conditions to engage students in great amounts of writing across the curriculum” (2002, p 181). Children need to write to become better writers. The same principle applies to pianists, baseball players, dancers, and racecar drivers: the more one practices something, the better one will get at it.

“The purpose of publishing is to share and celebrate finished products” (Bertrand, 2002, p.186). The purpose of publishing mentioned by Nancy Bertrand was a goal that I feel was never achieved in my classrooms as a student. I want to achieve the goal of celebrating student’s work in my classroom, not just during this time of inquiry, but through my career as a developing teacher.

Over the course of inquiry my goal was to engage students in writing outside of writing time. Science is an excellent opportunity to have students write. Over the course of the inquiry project I have tried to engage students in experiments that lead to observations, which ultimately lead to more writing.

Wonderings and Questions

I came into this inquiry wondering if I could truly be an effective writing teacher knowing that I was not an effective writer through most of my career as a student. This wondering led me to the main question of this inquiry:

How can a teacher who struggled in writing, use his experiences to more effectively teach first graders how to write?

This main question led me to other sub-questions that went along with my inquiry project and fit in naturally to what I was trying to do with my students as writers. My other questions and wonderings at the beginning of this inquiry were:

Which lessons seem to motivate my struggling writers?

Can I motivate my confident writers? How?

Can I build the confidence of the young writers in my classroom?

Will there be improvement in the writing in my room from the beginning of my take over of writing lessons?

These questions form the basis of this inquiry project. This project was meant to test my confidence as a writing teacher as well as my effectiveness. I came into this project as a writer with low confidence and I was hoping to come out of it with an answer to my question of whether or not I can be an effective teacher and motivator for writing.

Inquiry Plan

The inquiry started on January 30th and lasted until April 7th. Throughout this time I continued to try and find what lessons students enjoyed, and which lessons seemed to motivate students. To carry out the inquiry, I started to plan the writing station and group-writing lesson on my own under the supervision of my mentor teacher. My planning during the time of inquiry involved two major portions of our writing standards. I started by planning out a long-term process of publishing a creative story. I was also to plan a poetry-writing unit after spring break until the end of the inquiry.

The creative writing project involved writing an original story for the Schlow Memorial Library. (Examples of published stories are included in Appendix E.) When they arrived at the library they would be judged on several characteristics, including creativity, illustrations, and mechanics. The students were able to select their own topics. The lessons started with a group lesson on selecting the topic. In this lesson students were given a lot of free choice to move around the room and to get comfortable to think. The main focus of this lesson was the publishing and sharing of the stories with people outside of our classroom. The stories were not only shared with Schlow Library, but also with the whole class during morning meetings and with the students' book buddies. The stories were also shared during parent-teacher-student conferences on our "Young Author's Day." I stressed the importance of including details so that people outside of our classroom could understand their stories.

The creative writing project also emphasized free choice for students. They were allowed to choose their own topics and write about them without much opposition from me. Some students chose topics that could have been considered inappropriate for school but I managed to steer them in a direction free of violence and from things that are not appropriate for school. The students were also able to illustrate knowing that they would be the judges of their own work. I did lay some base rules down, but they understood that it had to be their best work.

The poetry portion of this writing inquiry was an area that I was afraid of. I wanted the students to get a good taste of poetry. I tried to pick poetry that appealed to the students as well as poetry that would emphasize skills that first graders begin to use.

I chose couplets, for their rhyming, cinquains for their rules and line structures, and acrostic poems to end the inquiry.

I planned to collect data on students' attitudes to find out what they liked. I also planned to use observations of my students during writing lessons to see which lessons seemed the most enjoyable and engaging to the students.

Data Collection

A. Observations

While students work at my station, they talk and say a lot of things. Usually the things they say pertain to how they feel about the writing they are doing at the time. Not only do they talk about whether they like what they are doing (or if they don't like it), but also I can tell if they are engaged in the lesson by the type of talk that is occurring. My observations of students were mainly to capture quotes that they were saying that pertained to the writing assignments. I was also trying to capture the meaning of the conversation as to whether it had anything to do with what we were talking about or if the talk was about something unrelated to the topic at hand.

During stations I asked students what I could do to make writing more fun or to make stations more fun. I also asked questions about what we were doing and whether they were enjoying it, or if they would rather be doing something else writing related. This gave me some good insights to the students' opinions and even helped me adjust how I taught stations.

B. Student Surveys (See Appendix B)

The end of the inquiry brought a student survey about their feelings about certain types of writing. The questions asked specifically about the types of writing that I

planned and worked on with the students. It asked about writing in certain subjects. The questions were to get the opinions and feelings of the students down on paper. The observations allowed me to get perceived feelings through actions and words. The surveys allowed the students to tell me how they felt about topics we covered.

The surveys were administered the last day of data collection. Unfortunately I did not give a pre-survey about students' feelings about writing. This would have made my inquiry project and data more measurable.

C. Student Interviews

Student interviews were also conducted the last day of data collection. This is another data collecting strategy that I would have liked to use prior to taking over the writing station and writing planning in my classroom. However the student interviews were not a total loss. Students were able to verbalize what they liked and did not like about writing, especially over the past two months. The interviews played an important part in my data collection.

Originally, student interviews were a part of my inquiry plan. They slowly fell out of the plan until the last day of data collection. The questions I interviewed with were supposed to be answered as part of the survey. I changed my mind about interviewing during station time. This allowed me to get further information that students may not have written down due to time constraints and or a lower level of writing ability. The interviews allowed me to dig deeper into students' answers and ask the important question: Why did they like or not like something about writing?

D. Student Work Samples

I collected students' writing folders to be analyzed on the last day of data collection. The folders contain all the students writing from writing stations and whole group lessons for the entire year. The folders are kept in the students' desks and the

students organize their work into a finished side and an unfinished side. I looked at the students' work samples to find out how much students wrote, to look for conventions, and to check the content of the students' writing.

E. Writing Assessments

This data was collected to measure student improvement in writing and to see if it correlated with student attitudes towards writing as well as my lessons in writing. The assessments are mandated by the State College School District. They were given on three separate occasions thus far. The first was given in early September, the second in early November, and the third in mid-February. I had the opportunity to assess the mid-February assessment, but for this project I used the marks that my mentor gave to the students papers. The papers were scored on content and conventions; however, my inquiry was designed to focus mostly on content.

F. Reflective Journals

Over the course of this inquiry project I have kept numerous journals about writing stations, as well as reflective journals about lessons on writing that were submitted to my PDA. These journals serve as the part of the inquiry that reflects my feelings about my teaching of writing. The journals catch my feelings about lessons I have taught as well as my reactions to students' feelings about writing. The journals keep track of my confidence and motivation as I attempt to improve my teaching in the area of writing.

G. Parent Surveys (See Appendix A)

Near the end of the inquiry project, I sent home a survey for parents to fill out. The parents were to answer questions regarding student's discourse at home about

writing, as well as motivation to write, and perceived confidence of their child with regard to writing. The surveys were to be anonymous and sent back to the classroom.

Data Analysis

Analysis of all of the data collected for this inquiry project was done the weekend after the inquiry was complete. All the work students had done in writing was put in their folders for me to go through. While the students' work was in my possession, I went through their work samples to see what the students had written from the beginning of the year until the end of the inquiry. Looking at the students' work showed me how much the students were writing and how much they have been writing lately. I was also able to check conventions and content of their prior writing and recent writing.

In order to analyze the data I needed to put it all together in one place so that I could see it. I needed to see class data, as well as individual data. To accomplish these needs I took all the assessment data and placed it into two charts. One chart has students' assessment scores for content for September, November, and February side-by-side. The other chart shows assessment scores for the students in the area of conventions for each of the assessment dates. This allowed me to see their scores and improvements and /or decreases in writing ability. These charts are located in Appendix C.

I also collected data from parent and student surveys. I put the results of these surveys in charts as well to compare side by side. The parent charts are located in Appendix A and the student charts are located in Appendix B as well as samples of students' surveys. The two aforementioned sets of data were collected and put together as a class. To see individual data I took assessment data, survey data, survey responses,

writing sample notes, and class observations and put them together in individual student reports. These individual reports are located in Appendix D.

I was able to look at class data and individual data at one time. I was mainly looking for trends of student achievement and motivation to write. I looked for whole class improvement. I also searched for trends at home and whether my lessons were so engaging that students went home and talked about them. I also looked for trends in student responses to surveys as far as what they liked and what they did not like. I looked for trends in student responses to the questions about writing in certain areas of study. I also looked through observations to see if I perceived the students feelings correctly towards writing. I checked to see if the responses to the surveys matched my observations of their quotes and actions.

Claims

Claim 1: *The lessons that motivated writers were lessons that included elements of free choice and options for sharing for the students.*

Evidence: On February 8, 2006, I asked a couple of students in the lower level reading groups, “when is writing fun?” One student in the lowest level reading group explained that it was fun “when you get to sit in the chair.” This student was talking about my chair where they get to sit when they shared their ideas a couple days before I asked this question. This is from a girl who I observed as “impossible” to work with on some days. See Appendix D for other observations of this student. (Student #2)

Another student responded to the same question of “when is writing fun?” with this response: “I don’t want anyone to tell me what to write about.” This student is a

student who responded in her survey to the question “how do you feel about writing?” with the response of “I really dislike it!” This student has voiced her displeasure with writing numerous times. She has mentioned several times that sharing her story and sitting in my chair are activities that she enjoyed to do in writing stations. She has asked on numerous occasions when we would share our stories according to observations.

(Student #5)

Other quotes from students occurred during interviews in which I asked the students to tell me their favorite thing about writing for the year. These quotes indicated a tendency for the students to enjoy choosing their topics as well as sharing. (Some quotes are paraphrased) Some examples are:

- Favorite Thing: “Writing stories, it was fun “ I liked making poems about me. I like writing about me.” (Student #10)
- Favorite Thing: “Writing cinquains got to pick your own topic.” (This is paraphrased; this student enjoyed picking her topics for her cinquains. (Student #18))
- Favorite Thing: Making your own stories, “because we got to make our own, and send it to the library.”(Student #22)
- Favorite Thing: “Writing our stories, because they were so cool and we get to share them.” (Student #8)

There are more quotes like these from students located under “favorite thing” in Appendix B. The students’ tendency to respond in ways that suggest they enjoy writing tasks which allow them to choose their own topics and share their writing was a tendency I observed often throughout my inquiry project. Students seemed to respond better to

work they knew would be shared, as well as work in which they got to choose their own topics to write about. This tendency is not just found in the lower level reading groups either; rather, it is found consistently across all levels of reading groups in my classroom.

Claim 2: *Students in my room improved in their writing during my time of planning and implementing writing stations and writing lessons in my classroom.*

The following evidence validates this claim:

- Ten students out of twenty-two (45 percent) increased their rubric scoring by one step in the area of content. Two students out of twenty-two (9 percent) decreased their writing score one step on the writing rubric found in Appendix C. Ten of twenty-two (45 percent) students had the same score in the area of content from the November Assessment to the February Assessment.
- Seven Students of twenty-two (32 percent) improved one-step on the writing rubric for conventions between November and February. Fifteen of twenty-two (68 percent) students scored the same for conventions between November and February.
- An observation of a lower level reading group girl reveals improvement. This girl was a student who showed no improvement in either of the graded areas. “As of the past two weeks this girl has become far more independent in her writing. She has learned to go to other parts of the room to find words. She does not rely heavily on my help. She still asks but I do not have to be there the entire time she is writing a word.” (Student #2)

- Another observation of a student reveals improvement in elements of the story as well as conventions. He has shown improvement within his level but has not been able to move up to the next level of the rubric. This is a student from the middle level reading group. An observation found in Appendix D, “lately, Student 17 has been adding more details to his stories. His publishing story had a solid beginning, middle and end in which he described events and how things happened. His conventions have improved as well. He is including more punctuation and using capital letters where they are appropriate.”

Disclaimer 1: Students in first grade experience a large amount of language and literacy instruction. My part in this literacy instruction in my classroom is one part of three. Students learn words, sounds, and comprehension in a reading station. Students do word study activities in another station. The two lower level reading groups experience further word study with a support teacher. The three aforementioned stations take place four out of five instructional days a week. I cannot take all of the credit for students’ growth over the year

Disclaimer 2: Students in first grade experience great growth, not only physically, but also mentally as readers and writers. I took over writing at a time when much natural growth and brain development occurs.

Claim 3: *I can be an effective writing teacher.*

Evidence: I have planned lessons to increase engagement in students as well as make the lessons fun and interesting for students.

- Survey Results: What do you think you learned?
“I learned that making poems and stuff like that could be pretty fun.”(Student #3)
- Survey Results: What did you learn?
“I learned to write.” (This response was from the lowest level reading group member who struggles to write independently. (Student #2))
- “Sometimes writing is fun and sometimes it’s not.” “Fun to do poems and cut out, not fun when they are too long.” (Response from the second lowest level reading group member when asked, “What did you learn in writing this year?” (Student #21))

- What do you think you learned?

“I learned how to write, because I wrote my own story at home.”

This was a response from a student in the second lowest level reading group. His work from home is included in Appendix E. (Student #10)

For more evidence that proves that the students in my class enjoy writing and view me as an effective teacher please see Appendix B under the question, “What do you think you learned in writing this year?”

Conclusions

The implications from this inquiry project on my future teaching will be long lasting. I have learned, most importantly, that I can be an effective writing teacher. I have also learned that I need to build more confidence as a writer to indicate to students that I really understand what I am talking about. In the case of developed writers like my

highest level reading groups, I believe they saw me hesitate on answers to questions, which lead them to believe that I myself was not a confident writer and did not enjoy writing.

I have learned that the word “writing” takes on a negative connotation. Where this feeling comes from is beyond me. Students seem to come to school knowing the word “writing” means something not fun. I do not know where this negative connotation comes from but I know it is there. Students who answered positively to certain types of writing in my survey answered that they really did not like writing. These students act as proof that writing is one of the toughest subjects to teach. In this toughest subject I can take pride and some confidence away from this inquiry project knowing that I motivated and built confidence in some of the weakest writers in my class. I can help to improve students’ writing and change their attitudes towards writing.

In future practice of teaching writing, my first lesson will revolve around how my students feel about writing and why they feel this way. I think it is important to take the negative feeling away from the lessons to better help the students improve their writing. I think it is important to let them know how the writing will be taught before the writing lessons commence so they can be motivated to reach their final products. I will publish and share stories in my future teaching. These have proven to be powerful motivators to students and I will continue to use them.

I need to improve my writing and my confidence as a writer to help students who are well-developed writers. One of my problems with the highest-level reading group is hesitating for questions about writing or rules with writing. I believe this hesitation gives the students the wrong idea about writing. They may think, “if he does not know it right

away, why should I.” To improve this I will write more with the students and let them see me as a struggling writer to let them know that they may never have all the answers but they can continue to try.

Further Wonderings

This inquiry has led me to further wonderings about teaching writing in my future classrooms.

The first of which is partly supported by evidence. I have noticed through observations that higher-level writers tend to ask more complicated responses. In order to answer these questions, I need to develop myself further. I hesitated at times to answer students’ questions about complicated writing rules. I think the hesitation in my answer lead the students to believe that I was not a confident writer, decreasing my ability to motivate the confident writers. The wondering from this is:

How can I motivate students who are already developed writers to take a deeper interest in writing?

Other Wonderings:

Can I be an effective writing teacher in a classroom by myself?

Will the same motivators for first graders be effective for students at another grade level?

These wonderings will push me to experiment with my future teaching. This inquiry has led me to some solid techniques and has reiterated what prior studies have shown about motivating students to write. It has proven to me and built my confidence to be able to go into a classroom and be an effective teacher of writing.

References

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Appendix A

The following are responses by parents to questions about students' writing motivation and enthusiasm at home. The question is asked and it is followed by the responses of the parents to the particular question. Following those questions in the survey was an open ended question with parent answers immediately after.

1. Does your Child talk about what we do during writing time when they are at home?

Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
2	7	3	2

1a. Open Ended Responses:

If you answered often, sometimes, or rarely to the above question, can you please explain or describe what your child talks about:

Parents who answered often:

“----- has talked a lot about writing her own story. She has shared many of the details of the story with me.”

“She talks about writing stories. She enjoyed writing the story for the Library.”

Parents who answered sometimes:

“She talks about the beginning, middle, and end of her story.”

“He talks about his themes, plots, characters and what he has them say.”

“When prompted, he answers specific questions I put to him about class. He doesn't volunteer information.”

“He has been talking about the book he has been writing. He explained a bit about the subject he chose, and said that he exaggerated a little to make it more interesting.”

“He talks most about the story he wrote with you. He’s very proud of it!”

“----- talked a lot about the story writing project for the library contest.”

“Usually homework gets her talking about when she did similar activities in class. She talks about some of the other kids.”

Parents who answered rarely:

“Making a book.”

“Writing poems, she doesn’t like writing what’s on her mind because she can’t spell the words, but she likes to copy sentences.”

“----- has told me that he wrote a story and is having it published.”

2. Does your child struggle to get started on homework assignments that require writing?

Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
2	0	6	6

2a Open ended response:

If you answered often, sometimes, or rarely above, what part of writing does your child seem to struggle with most at home?

Parents who answered often:

“Often is she has no help, sometimes if she has help.”

“Not knowing how to spell the words, so she doesn’t even want to start because she wants to do it right or not at all.”

Parents who answered rarely:

“---- enjoys writing. I notice that she still writes a few letter backwards fairly

often- “P” & “b” & “d”.”

“She just questions on how to start or phrase her answer.”

“I just have to motivate her to just start when writing- then she is fine and can finish her assignment.”

“(self discipline) sitting down and getting started on the task at hand. Once he gets started, work goes smoothly.”

“Difficulty coming up with an idea- but rarely. Sometimes gets irritated if he thinks he has to write a lot of sentences.”

X No answer from one parent.

3. Since the beginning of the year, have you noticed improved confidence in your child when they write?

No, my child has not improved.	No, my child has always been confident as a writer.	Yes, my child has improved his/her confidence a little.	Yes, my child has improved his/her confidence a lot.
1	2	2	8

The person who responded that his/her child had not improved lists this next to the answer:

“ She doesn’t trust herself or think that her answer could be right- even when she is right.”

Appendix B

Student Survey

The very last day that I was recording data for my inquiry project, I surveyed and interviewed students. This was the most convenient time due to the change of roles for me going to teach reading and my mentor taking over writing. The survey was given on a Friday. I also interviewed students that Friday about the writing station and writing so far this year. The results of the survey as well as the interviews are as follows organized by the questions asked.

1. How do you feel about writing stories?

I really like it!	I like it most of the time.	I don't like it most of the time.	I really dislike it!
9	10	1	1

2. How do you feel about writing poetry?

I really like it!	I like it most of the time.	I don't like it most of the time.	I really dislike it!
2	8	6	3

3. How do you feel about writing in science?

I really like it!	I like it most of the time.	I don't like it most of the time.	I really dislike it!
8	6	2	3

4. How do you feel about writing for homework?

I really like it!	I like it most of the time.	I don't like it most of the time.	I really dislike it!
2	6	5	7

5. How do you feel about writing?

I really like it!	I like it most of the time.	I don't like it most of the time.	I really dislike it!
8	4	5	4

Open Ended Responses

These responses were to questions about favorite things in writing stations, least favorite things in writing stations, and what they thought they learned in writing this year. The responses to my interview questions are listed in order of groups that I see for writing four out of 5 days a week. I have arranged them to go from the lowest level reading group to the highest level reading group. One member of the class was absent the day of the interviews. Answers to the questions are either quotes or paraphrases.

Lowest level reading group responses:

Group Member 1: Student 19

Favorite Thing: "I like" my teacher, "she teaches us how to read books and you don't."

Least Favorite Thing: "It was boring, everything ----- and I try to do, you say is wrong."

What do you think you learned?

"You tried to teach us stuff we knew already."

Do you think you learned anything in this station?

"Nothing."

Group Member 2: Student 2

Favorite Thing: "Writing our stories, making up our own fish."

Least Favorite Thing: The syllable count cinquain, and word count cinquain, because they were long.

What did you learn?

“I learned to write.”

Second lowest reading level group responses:

Group Member 1: Student 21

Favorite Thing: “Making our stories, I already knew my whole story, so it was easy to write.”

Least Favorite Thing: Writing cinquains- “wasn’t fun, too hard to think of words.”

What do you think you learned?

“Sometimes writing is fun and sometimes it’s not.” fun to do poems and cut out, not fun when they are too long.

Group Member 2: Student 10

Favorite Thing: Writing stories, it was fun. “ I liked making poems about me. I like writing about me.”

Least Favorite Thing: “Making my dog poem.” (This was a peculiar answer, he was giggling and I asked why and he could not give me a reason)

What do you think you learned?

“I learned how to write, because I wrote my own story at home.”

Group Member 3: Student 1

Favorite Thing: Poems, rhyming because it was sometimes hard and our stories, because “I’ve never wrote a story before. I’d write one again. It was really cool.”

Least Favorite Thing: “The spring poem because you made me redo it.”

Group Member 4: Student 4

Favorite Thing: Rhyming couplets, Acrostic poem, “I get to write a lot and I normally don’t get to write a lot.” (I interpret this as I get to finish and I normally don't get to finish. This boy usually does not finish his work in the allotted time.)

Least Favorite Thing: Cinquain, “We had to write it by rules.”

What do you think you learned?

“How to write poems.”

Group Member 5: Student 5

Favorite Thing: “The spring poems because you don’t have to write a lot and I get to put it on a rain drop and cut it out.”

Least Favorite Thing: Writing long stories, “have to think of a lot of words, sometimes it’s boring.”

What do you think you learned?

“You have to write a lot to learn more words.”

Middle level reading group responses:

Group Member 1: Student 17

Favorite Thing: Got to write stories because it was fun, because it took a lot of work.

Least Favorite Thing: Writing rhyming, cinquains, “it was really, really hard.”

What do you think you learned?

Writing can sometimes be fun.

Group Member 2: Student 18

Favorite Thing: Writing cinquains, got to pick your own topic.

Least Favorite Thing: X (Interestingly she responded that she did not like

writing most of the time in the survey portion)

Group Member 3: Student 9

Favorite Thing: Stories, “they were fun.” Could write “something we wanted to write about.”

Least Favorite Thing: X

What do you think you learned?

“I learned how to make a story and a poem.”

Group Member 4: Student 3

Favorite Thing: “I think it was really fun. I liked poems, especially the spring poems.” “I liked how we got to read stories of other people’s writing.”

Least Favorite Thing: X (This student circled that he really disliked writing in the survey)

What do you think you learned?

“I learned that making poems and stuff like that could be pretty fun.”

Group Member 5: Student 22

Favorite Thing: Making your own stories, “because we got to make our own, and send it to the library.”

Least Favorite Thing: “Rhyming, it was hard.”

Second Highest level reading group responses:

(One group member was not interviewed, he was out of the group at the time)

Group Member 1: Student 12

Favorite Thing: “When you read “Runny Babbit” (by Shell Silverstein).” It was funny and had “cool rhymes.”

Least Favorite Thing: “Cinquains, because a lot of hard work, really hard for us,

think so hard that it blew our brains out.”

What do you think you learned?

“Poems”

Group Member 2: Student 20

Favorite Thing: “Writing the stories, because we got to type them and make pictures.” Spring Poem

Least Favorite Thing: “Writing in the beginning of the year, because of getting all the vowels in and sounds.”

What do you think you learned?

Poems

Group Member 3: Student 16 (Not Interviewed)

Group Member 4: Student 8

Favorite Thing: “Writing our stories, because they were so cool and we get to share them.”

Least Favorite Thing: “Rhyming couplets, so hard to think of rhymes, I didn’t even get three of them.”

What do you think you learned?

“How to spell words, like rainy.”

Group Member 5: Student 14

Favorite Thing: “We don’t have handwriting, it’s fun to make stuff here, make something for our poem.”

Least Favorite Thing: “Cinquains - think really hard, syllable count had to make sure everything was right syllables.”

What do you think you learned?

“have to work really hard, can’t just sit around and think. have to work faster so

you don't have to stay in at recess." (Interesting comment considering I have never told her personally that she would have to stay in for recess but I have said it to other members of the group who were not working)

Group Member 6: Student 6

Favorite Thing: "Poetry, because I like doing it at home, I have like a 100 of them around the house."

Least favorite Thing: "The stories, it was really hard to do, have to make really nice pictures and it takes a long time. Not hard to manage about my sister because I can think of a 100 things about her."

What do you think you learned?
"Reading and writing can be fun."

Highest level reading group responses:
(One group member was absent on the day of the interviews)

Group Member 1: Student 13

Favorite Thing: "Cutting out the umbrella because you did not have to write! I liked correcting sentences with the white boards- Challenge sentences, unscrambling sentences."

Least Favorite Thing: Cinquains, "not a fan of writing."

What do you think you learned?
"To write neater than usual."

Group Member 2: Student 15 (Absent)

Group Member 3: Student 7

Favorite Thing: Cinquains, "the panda one, because I like pandas." (She picked her own topic, we did not do one together.)

Least Favorite Thing: X

What do you think you learned?
“learned a lot about animals.”

Group Member 4: Student 11

Favorite Thing: “Coloring the umbrella, cutting the umbrella, drawing for the cinquain, writing the cinquain, because you go to think about stuff. I liked everything.”

Least Favorite Thing: X

What do you think you learned?
“to write neater, different kinds of poems.”

Appendix C

Writing Assessment Tables: (For current students only)

Over the course of the year the district calls for the evaluation of writing.

Throughout the course of the year there will be 4 writing assessments. Three have occurred thus far. The following are scores for content and conventions. they are organized side by side by date to see differences over the course of the year.

Content

Name #	Sept Assessment	November Assessment	February Assessment
1	Below Basic	Basic	Proficient
2	Below Basic	Below Basic	Below Basic
3	Below Basic	Basic	Proficient
4	Below Basic	Below Basic	Basic
5	Below Basic	Basic	Basic
6	Basic	Proficient	Proficient
7	Basic	Proficient	Proficient
8	Below Basic	Basic	Basic
9	Below Basic	Basic	Proficient
10	Below Basic	Basic	Proficient
11	Proficient	Proficient	Basic
12	Basic	Basic	Basic
13	Basic	Basic	Basic
14	Basic	Proficient	Basic
15	Proficient	Proficient	Advanced
16	Basic	Basic	Basic
17	Basic	Basic	Basic
18	Below Basic	Basic	Proficient
19	Below Basic	Below Basic	Basic
20	Below Basic	Basic	Proficient
21	Below Basic	Basic	Basic
22	Basic	Basic	Proficient

Conventions Assessment

Name #	September	November	February
1	Below Basic	Basic	Basic
2	Below Basic	Below Basic	Below Basic
3	Below Basic	Basic	Basic
4	Below Basic	Basic	Basic
5	Below Basic	Basic	Basic
6	Basic	Basic	Proficient
7	Basic	Basic	Proficient
8	Below Basic	Basic	Basic
9	Below Basic	Basic	Basic
10	Below Basic	Basic	Basic
11	Proficient	Proficient	Advanced
12	Below Basic	Basic	Basic
13	Basic	Basic	Proficient
14	Basic	Basic	Proficient
15	Basic	Proficient	Advanced
16	Basic	Basic	Basic
17	Basic	Basic	Basic
18	Below Basic	Basic	Basic
19	Below Basic	Basic	Basic
20	Below Basic	Basic	Basic
21	Below Basic	Below Basic	Basic
22	Basic	Basic	Basic

Appendix D

The following are recordings of student work samples and what they were doing from the beginning of the year compared to now. The recording of the work samples are my judgments based on amount of writing and content. Each student is numbered and their survey results are given in this section. This section allows for a complete report on individual students including, students work samples, survey answers, and assessment results. The last pages of this appendix are the writing rubrics that were used to assess student papers.

Reading Group Level: Lowest

Survey Responses: Group Member 1: Student 19

Favorite Thing: “I like Mrs. Milutinovic, she teaches us how to read books and you don’t.”

Least Favorite Thing: “It was boring, everything ----- and I try to do, you say is wrong.”

What do you think you learned?
“You tried to teach us stuff we knew already.”

Do you think you learned anything in this station?
“Nothing.”

Story Writing: “I really like it!”
Writing Poetry: “I really dislike it!”
Writing in Science: “I really like it!”
Writing for Homework: “I really dislike it!”
Writing: “I really dislike it!”

Assessment Results:

Name #	September	September	November	November	February	February
19	Content	Convention	Content	Convention	Content	Convention
	BB	BB	BB	Basic	Basic	Basic

BB= Below Basic

Student 19 would not write independently in the beginning of the year. Her scores were below basic for both content and conventions. Her work samples show the same. She did not know many of the letter sounds. Many of her early stories require looking at the picture to understand what she was writing about. She did not use vowels in early writing. She also mixed upper and lower class letters and did not use punctuation.

Recent work shows that she has mastered most of the letter-sound correlation's as well as writing complete thoughts. She now uses correct casing for the most part. She mixes in one or two upper case letters per writing sample where they should not be. She has also become more independent at stations.

Survey Responses: Group Member 2: Student 2

Favorite Thing: “Writing our stories, making up our own fish.”

Least Favorite Thing: The syllable count cinquain, and word count cinquain, because they were long.

What did you learn?
 “I learned to write.”

Writing Stories: “I really like it!”

Writing Poetry: X

Writing in Science: X

Writing for Homework “I like it most of the time.”

Writing: “I don’t like it most of the time.”

Name #	September	September	November	November	February	February
2	Content	Convention	Content	Convention	Content	Convention
	BB	BB	BB	BB	BB	BB

BB= Below Basic

Student 2 is a girl who would not work independently on writing until about two weeks ago according to journal entries. Her early writing consisted of scribbling letters down on her paper with no meaning. At the time of asking her what she

wants to write I will usually get a one word answer and try to work it into a sentence with her. I usually then work with her to sound out each word and each letter in words. Early writing samples show no letter-sound recognition, as well as a letter sound assessment performed on her. As far as conventions in early writing sample, none were present. She did not leave spaces and her writing of capital letters and lower case letters was nonexistent. All the letters were the same size.

As of the past two weeks this girl has become far more independent in her writing. She has learned to go to other parts of the room to find words. She does not rely heavily on my help. She continues to asks but I do not have to be there the entire time she is writing a word. I will usually ask her what a word starts with when she asks me to spell a word for her. She is then able to tell me the rest of the sounds as well as write them down. She has started to remember some of the sentences she wants to write. She is not always consistent with remembering her sentences. She has started to remember to put spaces between words, I can see her put her finger between words to simulate a space. She is not consistent in her spacing yet either.

My judgment of this girls writing is that she has shown great improvement even if only a little, her attitude towards writing has changed deeply. A quote from her about a writing time in which we were writing about our class town, "We can't stop writing, I need more time. I'm not done." The next day brought another quote of improved attitude, "I am going to work on writing about my town first." She said this without any prompting. Earlier in the year she would have thrown the town paper in the finished basket and said that she was done.

Second lowest level reading group:

Survey Responses: Group Member 1: Student 21

Favorite Thing: "Making our stories, I already knew my whole story, so it was easy to write."

Least Favorite Thing: Writing cinquains- "wasn't fun, too hard to think of words."

What do you think you learned?

“Sometimes writing is fun and sometimes it’s not.” fun to do poems and cut out, not fun when they are too long.

Writing Stories: “I really like it!”

Writing Poetry: “I really dislike it!”

Writing in Science: “I really like it!”

Writing for Homework “I really dislike it!”

Writing: “I don’t like it most of the time.”

Name #	September	September	November	November	February	February
21	Content	Convention	Content	Convention	Content	Convention
	BB	BB	Basic	BB	Basic	Basic

BB= Below Basic

Student 21’s work sample reveals that her assessments were right on. In the beginning of the year to the middle of the year, her stories lack a beginning, middle, and end. She also used a lot of capital letters where she should not, as well as not using punctuation. She also was not able to separate words nor find specific letters for sounds. A lot of her early stories had to be looked at through the pictures to be understood.

Her work has changed a great deal since that time. In her creative story, she did not have a clear beginning, middle and end. The first signs of these elements do show. She has become much stronger in her letter sound relationships. She has included and become proficient in putting beginning, middle, and end sounds in each word. She has also added spaces between her words and started to add punctuation.

Observations of this girl show that she is a very hard worker. She does get upset when she cannot think of ideas, but she is always trying her best.

Survey Responses: Group member 2: Student 10

Favorite Thing: Writing stories, it was fun. “ I liked making poems about me. I like writing about me.”

Least Favorite Thing: “Making my dog poem.” (This was a peculiar answer, he was giggling and I asked why and he could not give me a reason)

What do you think you learned?

“I learned how to write, because I wrote my own story at home.”

Writing Stories: “I really like it!”

Writing Poetry: “I don’t like it most of the time.”

Writing in Science: “I really dislike it!”

Writing for Homework: “I like it most of the time.”

Writing: “I really like it!”

Name #	September	September	November	November	February	February
10	Content	Convention	Content	Convention	Content	Convention
	BB	BB	Basic	Basic	Proficient	Basic

BB=Below Basic

Student 10’s early early writing was characterized by repeated sentences and missing sounds in his words. He also did not use punctuation. He was very good at leaving spaces between his words. Sometimes he would leave out words in his sentences making them harder to understand. His early stories did not have beginnings, middles, and ends.

He has show dramatic improvement in story content. His published story had a beginning and a middle. He did not have a clear ending, but the story did make sense. He has included more sounds into his words. Part of this students problem with including all of the sounds is a slight speech problem with certain sounds. He has started to include punctuation.

Student 10 has also been very excited and motivated to write stories. He wrote a story at home and brought it in to show it to my teacher and I. He is very proud of his writing according to observations. He enjoys sharing his stories with the class.

Survey Response: Group Member 3: Student 1

Favorite Thing: Poems, rhyming because it was sometimes hard and our stories, because “I’ve never wrote a story before. I’d write one again. It was really cool.”

Least Favorite Thing: “The spring poem because you made me redo it.”

Writing Stories: “I really like it!” “I like it most of the time.” “I really don’t like it!” (She circled three responses)

Writing Poetry: “I really dislike it!”

Writing in Science: “I like it most of the time.” “I don’t like it most of the time.” “I really dislike it!” (She circled three)

Writing for Homework: “I really dislike it!”

Writing: “I really like it!”

Name #	September	September	November	November	February	February
1	Content	Convention	Content	Convention	Content	Convention
	BB	BB	Basic	Basic	Proficient	Basic

BB= Below Basic

Student 1’s early work is definitely below basic for first grade. She did not put spaces between words, nor did she include all the sounds in her words. Her stories were incomplete. She did not write to finish the story , she wrote to write during writing time. At the end of writing time, she would declare that was the end of her story. She never really finished her stories. She did not include punctuation, and capitalization occurred all over the place in her writing.

Student 1’s later experiences have shown that she can write a complete story. She lacks focus especially in her published story. Each day she comes with a new idea and puts it in her story without reading what she did the day before. She has started to include capital letters although she is not consistently using them properly. She also has no sense of complete sentences as of yet. She believes each line is a sentence so that is where she puts her end punctuation.

She has shown great attitude during the writing time. She is eager to get started and finish her story. She is not eager to proofread. Her work tends to be sloppy and hard to read. She does not like fixing her work according to her interview responses and observations. This can be something that will bring her motivation down.

Survey Responses:Group Member 4: Student 4

Favorite Thing: Rhyming couplets, Acrostic poem, “I get to write a lot and I normally don’t get to write a lot.” (I interpret this as I get to finish and I normally don't get to finish. this boy usually does not finish his work in the allotted time.)

Least Favorite Thing: Cinquain, “We had to write it by rules.”

What do you think you learned?

“How to write poems.”

Writing Stories: “I really like it!”

Writing Poetry: “I like it most of the time.”

Writing in Science: “I really like it.”

Writing for Homework: “I really like it!”

Writing: “I like it most of the time.”

Name #	September	September	November	November	February	February
4	Content	Convention	Content	Convention	Content	Convention
	BB	BB	BB	Basic	Basic	Basic

BB= Below Basic

Student 4’s earliest writing was pictures. He did not get words down. He was and continues to be a very slow worker. It is hard to motivate him to do work according to observations and journals. Some of his first writing work was very good for a first grader. He had many of the sounds in his words. He had spaces between words. He did not punctuate at first but this has become a strong point for him.

As of late this students has taken pride in proofreading. He proofreads while he writes. His publishing story included a beginning middle and end. His conventions have included spaces and punctuation.

According to observations this students has a tendency to miss one to two days of school a week putting him at a severe disadvantage. He falls behind in projects and there is no rhythm in his writing. He starts but cannot finish projects. His motivation to write has improved. He is working more independently and does not require me to ask him for ideas to get him started. He can now jump start himself.

Survey Responses: Group Member 5:Student 5

Writing Stories: “I don’t like it most of the time.”

Writing Poetry: "I really like it!"

Writing in Science: "I don't like it most of the time."

Writing for Homework: "I really dislike it!"

Writing: "I really dislike it!"

Name #	September	September	November	November	February	February
5	Content	Convention	Content	Convention	Content	Convention
	BB	BB	Basic	Basic	Basic	Basic

BB=Below Basic

Work samples not collected for this student.

Middle Level Reading Group

Survey Responses: Group Member 1: Student 17

Favorite Thing: Got to write stories because it was fun, because it took a lot of work.

Least Favorite Thing: Writing rhyming, cinquains, "it was really, really hard."

What do you think you learned?

Writing can sometimes be fun.

Writing Stories: "I like it most of the time."

Writing Poetry: "I don't like it most of the time."

Writing in Science: I don't like it most of the time."

Writing for Homework: "I don't like it most of the time."

Writing: "I don't like it most of the time."

Name #	September	September	November	November	February	February
17	Content	Convention	Content	Convention	Content	Convention
	Basic	Basic	Basic	Basic	Basic	Basic

Student 17's early writing mostly revolved around Star Wars. Since then we have gotten him to move away from writing about Star Wars for the most part. He is very creative and his writing samples indicate that from the beginning. He imagines stories in his head and can put them down on paper. His early writing lacks consistency with conventions as far as capitalization and punctuation. His early stories do have elements of the beginning, middle, and end and do stay somewhat focused.

Lately student 17 has been adding more details to his stories. His publishing story had a solid beginning, middle, and end in which he described events and how things happened. His conventions have improved as well. He is including more punctuation and using capital letters where they are appropriate.

From observations this student works very hard. He spends a lot of time thinking and sometimes it seems as if he is just daydreaming but he is actually picturing his story. He has told me that when I tried to get him to start writing. He is eager to share his stories and be creative.

Survey Response: Group Member 2: Student 18

Favorite Thing: Writing cinquains, got to pick your own topic.

Least Favorite Thing: X (Interestingly she responded that she did not like writing most of the time)

Writing Stories: "I like it most of the time."

Writing Poetry: "I like it most of the time."

Writing in Science: "I really dislike it!"

Writing for Homework: "I really dislike it!"

Writing: "I don't like it most of the time."

Name #	September	September	November	November	February	February
18	Content	Convention	Content	Convention	Content	Convention
	Basic	Basic	Basic	Basic	Proficient	Basic

Student 18's early writing included short sentences that were related. The sentences were hard to read due to limited words, and also words without middle

sounds. As far as conventions in her early writing she does not use capitalization anywhere, nor does she use punctuation. She does leave spaces between words.

Student 18’s publishing project was much improved compared to prior writing. She included punctuation and capitalization where it needed to be. She was adding some capital letters to the middle of sentences but she did not do it in every sentence. Her story had a beginning, middle, and end. The middle included details and steps to the solution. She clearly thought out her story and wrote it.

From observations student 18 has become very good at finding words that do not have all of their sounds through proof reading. She always has ideas to write about, but sometime has difficulty getting them in words. She is an independent writer but very talkative. She is distracted from her work very easily not only in writing but other areas of study.

Survey Responses:Group Member 3: Student 9

Favorite Thing: Stories, “they were fun.” Could write “something we wanted to write about.”

Least Favorite Thing: X

What do you think you learned?
 “I learned how to make a story and a poem.”

Writing Stories: “I like it most of the time.”
 Writing Poetry: “I don’t like it most of the time.”
 Writing in Science: “ I like it most of the time.”
 Writing for Homework: “I don’t like it most of the time.”
 Writing: “I like it most of the time.”

Name #	September	September	November	November	February	February
9	Content	Convention	Content	Convention	Content	Convention
	BB	BB	Basic	Basic	Proficient	Basic

BB=Below Basic

Student 9’s early writing was very basic. He used only beginning and end sounds in all of his words. His writing was very hard to read. His early writing only included one sentence about something he was usually familiar with. He

used capital letters loosely, in the middle of sentences and words. He did not punctuate anything. He did leave spaces between words.

From the beginning of the year until now this student has shown the greatest improvement in all areas of writing. This student's confidence has seen a huge jump. His published story was very creative. He wrote about a dog and turtle trying to be president. He had a beginning and a middle. His ending could have been clearer. He puts all sounds in the words that he writes now. The length of his writing has jumped from single sentences to multiple pages. He uses capitalization and punctuation properly, and consistently. (He may have one to two mistakes per story)

Observations of this student reveal that he is an independent and eager writer. Upon arriving to the writing station he is one of the first, if not the first to have his folder out and start writing quietly. He is not distracted by what is going on around him. His parent was one who reported him talking about his story at home. She mentioned him being very proud of what he had done.

Confidence in this boy jumped not only in writing, but expressing himself in whole group discussions, as well as being our shark for our primary division musical.

Survey response: Group Member 4: Student 3

Favorite Thing: "I think it was really fun. I liked poems, especially the spring poems." "I liked how we got read stories of other people's writing."

Least Favorite Thing: X (This student also circled that he really disliked writing in the survey)

What do you think you learned?

"I learned that making poems and stuff like that could be pretty fun."

Writing Stories: "I really like it!"

Writing Poetry: "I like it most of the time."

Writing in Science: "I really like it!"

Writing for Homework: "I really dislike it!" "Really"

Writing: "I really dislike it!"

Name #	September	September	November	November	February	February
3	Content	Convention	Content	Convention	Content	Convention
	BB	BB	Basic	Basic	Proficient	Basic

BB= Below Basic

Student 3's early writing includes pictures and no words. He would not write independently. He required an adult to be around him to write. His conventions and content cannot be described. When he did start writing more independently around November he was able to stay focused in his writing. His early writing as well as his recent writing include elaborate detailed pictures.

His recent writing including his publishing project include independently written pages of work. He wrote about 11 pages for his story. He does leave larger spaces, and he only wrote about one event per page but this is still a great improvement over how he started the year. He does not use conventions well yet. He does not use capital letters anywhere. He has started using punctuation.

Observations of this students reveal that he is eager and a creative writer. He is eager to start his writing but gets distracted telling group mates about what he is writing. This tends to slow him down. He is never stuck for an idea. He enjoys sharing his stories with others. This is a huge change in personality towards writing since the beginning of the year.

Survey Response:Group Member 5: Student 22

Favorite Thing: Making your own stories, "because we got to make our own, and send it to the library."

Least Favorite Thing: "Rhyming, it was hard."

Writing Stories: "I like it most of the time."

Writing Poetry: "I like it most of the time."

Writing in Science: "I really like it!"

Writing for Homework: "I like it most of the time."

Writing:"I really like it!"

Name #	September	September	November	November	February	February
22	Content	Convention	Content	Convention	Content	Convention
	Basic	Basic	Basic	Basic	Proficient	Basic

Some of student 22's early work contains single sentences with missing words, and missing sounds in words. The conventions are missing like capitalization, punctuation and even spacing at some points. Her early stories are hard to read.

This student's publishing project was very much improved compared to early writing. She has become better with letter sound relationships and includes beginning, middle, and end sounds in all of her words. She spells no excuse words correctly consistently. She did have a beginning, middle, and end to her published story although she lost focus of the story somewhere in the middle. Her conventions are also much improved. She is inconsistent with capitalization and will include capital letters in the middle of sentences and words. She has begun to add punctuation to her sentences.

This student has a very good attitude toward writing. When she has an idea she won't be distracted and will keep to work on her idea until it is complete. She enjoys writing about horses. Most of her work is about horses unless I choose something else for the group to write about. She is usually one of the first to be writing in her group.

Second Highest Level Reading Group:

Survey Response: Group Member 1: Student 12

Favorite Thing: "When you read "Runny Babbit" (by Shell Silverstein)." It was funny and had cool rhymes.

Least Favorite Thing: "Cinquains, because a lot of hard work, really hard for us, think so hard that it blew our brains out."

What do you think you learned?

"Poems"

Writing Stories: X

Writing Poetry: "I like it most of the time."

Writing in Science: X

Writing for Homework: “I really dislike it!”

Writing: “I really dislike it!”

Name #	September	September	November	November	February	February
12	Content	Convention	Content	Convention	Content	Convention
	Basic	BB	Basic	Basic	Basic	Basic

BB=Below Basic

Student 12’s early writing was usually two or three sentences with a relatively clear focus. His words are readable. They contain a beginning, middle, and end sound. He did not yet attempt to write stories with a beginning, middle, and end. Conventions for student 12 were definitely below basic. He included capital letters in the middle of sentences and he did not punctuate.

In the student’s publishing story and recent writing, he struggles to maintain focus. His stories are not very organized. He strays from what he is writing about and then comes back to it. His conventions have improved. He is adding punctuation where it needs to be. He has also improved his proper use of capital letters.

This is probably one of the most frustrating students to work with in the entire class as it relates to writing. Observations of this child show that he is constantly tired. He reports going to bed at 11 or 12 at night. This student is inconsistent in his writing and motivation. At times he gets right to writing. Other times this student will be falling asleep at the writing station. This is one of the students of the classroom who lives in a split family where the rules are very different in both houses.

Survey Response: Group Member 2: Student 20

Favorite Thing: “Writing the stories, because we got to type them and make pictures.” Spring Poem

Least Favorite Thing: “Writing in the beginning of the year, because of getting all the vowels in and sounds.”

What do you think you learned?

Poems

Writing Stories: "I like it most of the time."

Writing Poetry: "I really like it!"

Writing in Science: "I really like it!"

Writing for Homework: "I don't like it most of the time."

Writing: "I really like it!"

Name #	September	September	November	November	February	February
20	Content	Convention	Content	Convention	Content	Convention
	BB	BB	Basic	Basic	Proficient	Basic

BB= Below Basic

This student's early writing lacked spacing and sounds for each part of the word. He would struggle to come up with ideas of what to write about. He still continues to struggle with this. His content was weak because his main goal was to finish what he was doing. Unfortunately it took a while for him to realize that when he finished he was just going to start another new piece. His first writings included one to two sentences. He gradually increased over time.

This student's publishing project was a piece that was very well written for a first grader. The story contained a beginning, middle, and end. His words had beginning, middle, and end sounds. He knows how to spell many more words now without sounding them out. He used describing words. He described characters and setting. His conventions were near perfect. He used capital letters appropriately. He used end punctuation and started to use dialogue. His words were spaced.

Observations of this student reveal that he is much more independent as of late. He struggles to find ideas to write about, but once he has an idea he requires much less help than he did in the beginning of the year. He can write complete stories now. He is very eager to share his stories with the class. He is not easily distracted. His stories keep focus and include a lot of detail. He has improved his writing and his motivation a great deal this year.

Survey Response: Group Member 3: Student 16

(NOT INTERVIEWED)

Writing Stories: "I like it most of the time."

Writing Poetry: "I don't like it most of the time."

Writing in Science: “I like it most of the time.”

Writing for Homework: “I don’t like it most of the time.”

Writing: “I like it most of the time.”

Name #	September	September	November	November	February	February
16	Content	Convention	Content	Convention	Content	Convention
	Basic	Basic	Basic	Basic	Basic	Basic

Survey Response: Group Member 4: Student 8

Favorite Thing: “Writing our stories, because they were so cool and we get to share them.”

Least Favorite Thing: “Rhyming couplets, so hard to think of rhymes, I didn’t even get three of them.”

What do you think you learned?

“How to spell words, like rainy.”

Writing Stories: “I like it most of the time.”

Writing Poetry: “ I don’t like it most of the time.”

Writing in Science: “I like it most of the time.”

Writing for Homework: “I like it most of the time.”

Writing: “I don’t like it most of the time.”

Name #	September	September	November	November	February	February
18	Content	Convention	Content	Convention	Content	Convention
	BB	BB	Basic	Basic	Basic	Basic

BB= Below Basic

This student struggled with a severe lack of confidence in the beginning of the year. He would not let us look at his papers, he would scribble over what he had so we could not see it. By November he started to come around. His writing then lacked spaces between words as well as any of the convention such as

capitalization and punctuation. He did not include all the sounds of his words in his early writing.

This student's publishing project was much different from his early writing. His words contained beginning, middle, and ends. His story lacked a true ending but contained details in the beginning and middle. He left spaces between his words. He started to use capital letters at the beginning of sentences, but he also used them at some spots in the middle of sentences. He started to use punctuation at the end of sentences as well. He did start to use dialogue in his story. His story maintained a clear focus also.

Observations reveal that this student is highly motivated to get his work done, not only at writing station but any work. When he has an idea he is hard to distract. He will work until he runs out of ideas. He does get frustrated when he runs out of ideas, but we have talked through problems like that. He is now eager to show me his work, as well as share it with other members of his group, and class.

Survey Response: Group Member 5: Student 14

Favorite Thing: "We don't have handwriting, it's fun to make stuff here, make something for our poem."

Least Favorite Thing: "Cinquains - think really hard, syllable count had to make sure everything was right syllables."

What do you think you learned?

"have to work really hard, can't just sit around and think. have to work faster so you don't have to stay in at recess." (Interesting comment considering I have never said that to her personally but I have said it to other members of the group who were not working)

Writing Stories: "I like it most of the time."

Writing Poetry: "I like it most of the time!"

Writing in Science: "I really like it!"

Writing for Homework: "I like it most of the time."

Writing: "I really like it!"

Name #	September	September	November	November	February	February
14	Content	Convention	Content	Convention	Content	Convention
	Basic	Basic	Proficient	Basic	Basic	Proficient

Observations of student 14 reveal that she is a motivated writer. Sometimes she needs encouragement to add more detail to her story, but she can write independently.

Survey Response: Group Member 6: Student 6

Favorite Thing: “Poetry, because I like doing it at home, I have like a 100 of them around the house.”

Least favorite Thing: “The stories, it was really hard to do, have to make really nice picture and it takes a long time. Not hard to manage about my sister because I can think of a 100 things about her.”

What do you think you learned?
 “Reading and writing can be fun.”

Writing Stories: “I really like it!”

Writing Poetry: “I really like it!”

Writing in Science: “I like it most of the time.”

Writing for Homework: “I like it most of the time.”

Writing: “I really like it!”

Name #	September	September	November	November	February	February
6	Content	Convention	Content	Convention	Content	Convention
	Basic	Basic	Proficient	Basic	Proficient	Proficient

This student’s early writing was mainly one sentence pieces of work with a very detailed picture. When I took over planning writing, her stories already had more content to them. She was very good at sound spelling and including all the sounds in her words. She was also beginning to use beginning, middle, and end parts to her stories. Her conventions were ok. She wrote with mostly lower case

letters and did not include punctuation.

Her recent publishing project and poetry has brought out a strong point for her. She makes very detailed pictures to go with her poems. She is very meticulous in picking the right words for her poems from observations. Her story contained a clear beginning and middle. The end could have been stronger but I could tell that the story was over. She was very consistent in using punctuation in her story as well as capital letters in appropriate places.

Observing this students has shown me that she is very independent. I rarely have to talk to her. I only check in on her. She is eager to share her stories with me. She is not easily distracted by other students and is one of the first to start working in her group.

Highest Level Reading Group

Survey Responses: Group Member 1: Student 13

Favorite Thing: “Cutting out the umbrella because you did not have to write! I liked correcting sentences with the white boards- Challenge sentences, unscrambling sentences.”

Least Favorite Thing: Cinquains, “not a fan of writing.”

What do you think you learned?

“To write neater than usual.”

Writing Stories: “I like it most of the time.”

Writing Poetry: “I don’t like it most of the time.”

Writing in Science: “I really like it!”

Writing for Homework: “I really dislike it!”

Writing: “I really like it!”

Name #	September	September	November	November	February	February
13	Content	Convention	Content	Convention	Content	Convention
	Basic	Basic	Basic	Basic	Basic	Proficient

This student’s writing until November consisted of one sentence. He was able to use punctuation and capitalization as well as leave space between words. He did not describe events, nor did he finish a lot of his pieces of writing.

His publishing story was much improved over previous pieces of writing. He included a beginning, middle, and end, although the end could have been more clear. He has always been a good speller. He has many words memorized and rarely sound spells. He continues to use proper conventions.

Through observations of this student, I can tell that he really does not enjoy writing unless it is something creative. His publishing story was not very creative so he slowly worked through it. He would talk to other people in the group and spend long period of time staring, trying to think of how to make his story more interesting. He has been creative in the past but as of late his creativity has not been evident in his writing.

Survey Response: Group Member 2: Student 15

Writing Stories:

Writing Poetry:

Writing in Science: ABSENT DAY OF SURVEY

Writing for Homework

Writing:

Name #	September	September	November	November	February	February
15	Content	Convention	Content	Convention	Content	Convention
	Proficient	Basic	Proficient	Proficient	Advanced	Advanced

This student’s early writing was very good. He had all the sounds in his words. He had beginnings, middle and ends in his stories. He used details to describe events. He had started to use punctuation and capitalization in the beginning of the year.

His publishing story lead to new improvements in his writing. He started to use dialogue and wrote the whole story through two character’s voices. He was punctuating his dialogue near flawlessly after minor instruction from me.

This student enjoys reading and writing from observing him in the writing station and in the classroom. He looks to be creative and funny in his stories. He is always asking me about his ideas and if I like them. He is not easily distracted and has a good motivation to write.

Survey Response: Group Member 3: Student 7

Favorite Thing: Cinquains, “the panda one, because I like pandas.” (She picked

her own topic, we did not do one together.)

Least Favorite Thing: X

What do you think you learned?

“learned a lot about animals.”

Writing Stories: “I really like it!”

Writing Poetry: “I like it most of the time.”

Writing in Science: “I like it most of the time.”

Writing for Homework: “ I really like it.”

Writing: “I really like it!”

Name #	September	September	November	November	February	February
7	Content	Convention	Content	Convention	Content	Convention
	Basic	Basic	Proficient	Basic	Proficient	Proficient

This student’s early writing included a lot of details. She was very good at spelling from the start. She did not know how to use capital letters yet but she picked up on these very quickly.

Her publishing project brought out a creative side. She wrote a detailed story about an alien who got lost. She included a beginning, middle, and end. She was able to use capital letters and punctuation properly.

Observations of this student reveal a highly motivated student. She sometimes has trouble thinking of how to say what she wants or coming up with a topic to write about. She is not easily distracted. She is very independent after she gets started on her writing.

Survey Response:Group Member 4: Student 11

Favorite Thing: “Coloring the umbrella, cutting the umbrella, drawing for the cinquain, writing the cinquain, because you go to the about stuff. I liked everything.”

Least Favorite Thing: X

What do you think you learned?

“to write neater, different kinds of poems.”

Writing Stories: “I really like it!”

Writing Poetry: “I like it most of the time.”

Writing in Science: “I like it most of the time.”

Writing for Homework: “I don’t like it most of the time.”

Writing: “I like it most of the time.”

Name #	September	September	November	November	February	February
11	Content	Convention	Content	Convention	Content	Convention
	Proficient	Proficient	Proficient	Proficient	Basic	Advanced

When I took over planning the writing station this girl was in the middle of writing her own story. Every time we would have writing she would work on the same piece of writing about a panda. She knew how to spell and how to use conventions.

Her publishing project brought about another story about the same Panda. The story included a very creative and detailed account of how a panda learned to say “grr”. She included a beginning, middle, and end for her story. She used conventions properly. She started to use dialogue in her story.

Observing this girl work I noticed that she is very independent when she is writing. She finds an idea , usually about pandas and gets to work. She is not distracted. She includes a lot of details. She enjoys sharing her story with her group members and class mates. She is also very detailed when she is drawing about something she enjoyed writing about. When she does not enjoy writing about something her drawings are sloppier than normal.