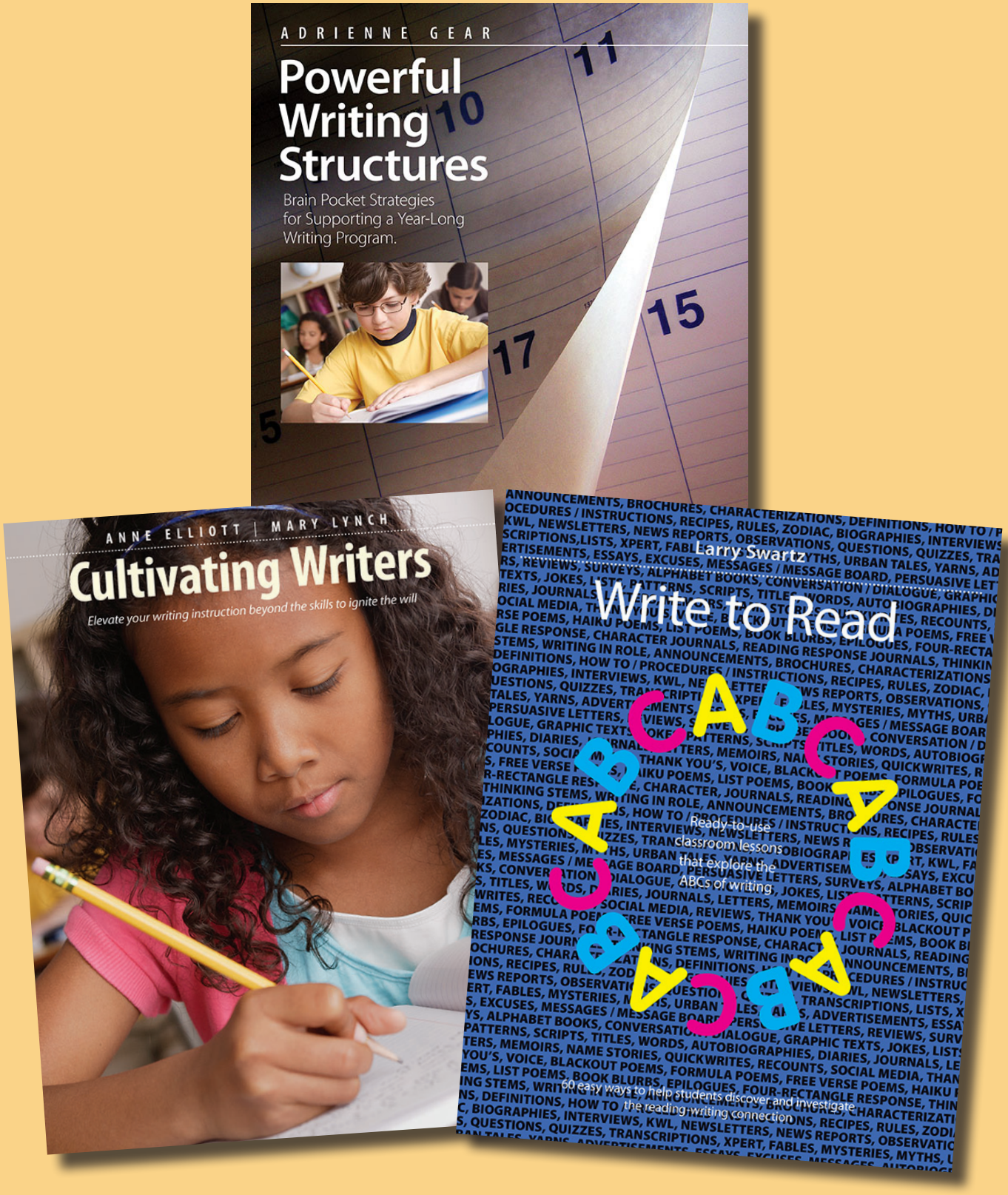
A Sampler of Pembroke's Newest & Best in…

Writing



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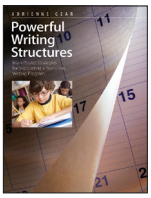
We are pleased to offer sample chapters from three of our newest and bestselling titles on writing—a peek inside three key resources. This sampler is provided as a PDF, which can be easily read on PC or Apple computers, as well as any number of commercially available e-readers and mobile devices. You can also copy the file to multiple devices, or print the reproducible pages for classroom use.

As a PDF, this sampler is also easily searchable—if you are looking for information on a particular topic, just enter a word or phrase into the Adobe Reader search box, and you'll find every place that word or phrase appears in the document. If any (or all!) of these chapters intrigue you enough to want to read further, simply click on the cover page within the sampler to be taken to the appropriate "buy" page at **www.pembrokepublishers.com**. We offer each title in print and eBook versions—or package the two versions for only $10 more than the print price. And don't forget, any purchase made from Pembroke is eligible for our **10% education discount**!

We hope that you enjoy this special look into Pembroke's practical books for teaching and learning.

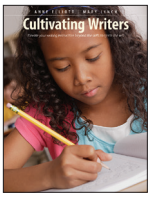


Powerful Writing Structures.....3

Discover thinking strategies and structures that improve personal narrative writing, non-fiction, and story writing. Lessons revolve around anchor books, and include sample student work from real classrooms, book lists, and assessment tips.

Write to Read 17

Explore the ABCs of writing with 60 practical, hands-on lessons that guide students to write in a variety of forms. Organized alphabetically, the lessons give students opportunities to read books that can inspire their writing and to write for a variety of purposes.



Cultivating Writers.....26

Cultivating Writers introduces educators to six essential beliefs that will nurture and grow complete writers who have the will to write. Teachers will discover how to foster authentic engagement in a vibrant writing community.

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ADRIENNE GEAR

Powerful Writing Structures

Brain Pocket Strategies for Supporting a Year-Long Writing Program.

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1 A Balanced Writing Program

Writing Structures and Brain Pockets

It's hard to bake cookies without a recipe. You can guess how much flour and baking soda to add, how hot the oven should be, and how long to bake them, but without knowing the exact formula, it is unlikely your cookies will turn out. They might resemble cookies, and you may have included high-quality chocolate chips and expensive butter, but they likely won't look very appealing or taste very good. It's the same with writing: if you don't have the recipe and know the formula, it is likely your writing won't turn out. You may have included some great words, some impressive literary techniques, and your capitals and periods, but the writing falls flat. You get where I'm going. Without knowing the recipe, it's hard to bake; without knowing the text structure, it's hard to write.

Text structure is the key to successful writing. It's the keys to the car, the frame to the house, the combination to the safe, the recipe for the cookies. Every piece of writing, whether a persuasive letter, a story, or a comparative essay, has its own unique structure. Without knowing what that structure is, writing a successful piece is as about as likely as baking delicious and beautiful cookies without a recipe. (Okay, enough with the cookie analogy!)

Often, I hear friends with children in middle and high school saying their kids are "stuck" in their English homework because they don't know how to write their essay, story, or report. And the most likely reason they are stuck is not that they have nothing to say, but is instead that they don't know how to organize their thoughts. In a school year, students are expected to be able to write a wide range of different writing forms—from persuasive to narrative, from report to comparative. But how many of us are actually teaching our students explicitly about the importance of knowing the text structure for each of these forms? When you know the structure, frame, or skeleton of a piece of writing, it helps you organize your ideas and then the "filling in" becomes much easier.

We write differently for different purposes. In a balanced writing program, students are exposed to a variety of different writing forms throughout the year. Explicit instruction in the structure, language, and traits of that particular writing structure is provided and students are given many opportunities to practice. Among the different structures children need to be comfortable writing in elementary school are personal narrative or personal recount (there are two substructures within this category), nonfiction writing (there are several substructures within this category, including description, instruction, and persuasion), and story writing (one main structure). Each is unique, with its own form, language, and writing techniques. These different forms of writing are not intended to be taught in a single one-off writing lesson, but rather are taught, modeled, and practiced with many different topics over several months.

Brain Pocket Writing has become my way of helping students understand different types of writing, and I thought it would be a useful way of organizing my year-long writing program. Based on the three Brain Pockets—Memory, Fact, and Imagination—I developed a plan to focus on one form of writing per term. The order you teach them is entirely up to you, however, there are reasons behind my choices. I like to start my year focusing on Memory Pocket Writing (personal narrative) because it allows me to get to know my students through their writing. Also, because it is a relatively easy structure, it allows me to introduce a variety of literary devices (word choice, similes, sensory details) through mini lessons. As well, the anchor books I use for Memory Pocket Writing also work well for teaching students the Power of Making Connections, with which I like to start my year. Fact Pocket (Nonfiction) Writing has several different structures, including description, instruction, persuasion, comparison, explanation, and biography, and each one can be easily linked to your content areas. I recommend that teachers choose only two nonfiction structures per school year so that students can get lots of opportunities to practice and to link this form of writing to a content area you are working on. I like to introduce Story Writing, the most challenging type of writing to teach and master, towards the end of the school year, after students have developed sound writing skills and techniques, and when they are ready for the challenge of new literary elements, including character development and plot development.

For more on Making Connections, see *Reading Power* (2nd edition).

	Personal Narrative	**Nonfiction**	**Story Writing**	**Poetry**
Brain Pocket	Memory Pocket	Fact Pocket	Imagination Pocket	Any
Structures	Walking Stories: topic/detail/detail /detail Event Stories: beginning/middle/ end	Descriptive Instruction Persuasion Comparison Explanation Biography	Climbing Stories: setting/character/ problem/solution/ ending	Free verse Acrostic List Cinquain Limerick Concrete Sonnet
Suggested Writing Techniques	• interesting details • word choice • hook sentence • endings • using the senses	• organization • text features • transitions • effective openings • effective endings • voice	• character development • dialogue • transitions • plot development	• simile/metaphor/ personification • word choice • using the senses
Language Features	• transition words • word choice	• transition words • interesting fact phrases • comparative words • persuasive words • instruction words • tips	• transition words • sensory description • voice	• rhyme • repetition • rhythm

Although poetry lessons are not included in this book, poetry can be written about anything: memories, facts, and imaginative things. I make a point of weaving poetry lessons into all three Brain Pocket structures.

Poetry

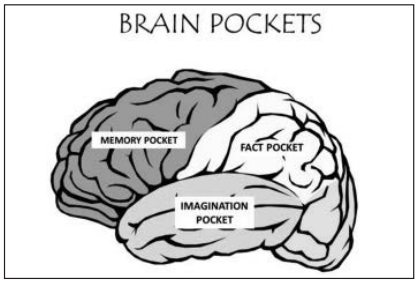
Teachers either love teaching poetry or they don't; they either avoid it and "run out of time" or make it a staple throughout their school year. For me, poetry is reading, writing, speaking, and celebrating language. There is no better way to teach structure, language, and writer's craft than through poetry. I encourage you to find ways to weave poetry throughout your yearly writing program and to share the joy of poetic language with your students. I will often use an anchor text to teach a specific poetic structure or literary technique. Whenever you share an anchor poem, I recommend writing it out on chart paper so that students can see the form of the poem and, as well, visibly identify features, such as rhyming words or repeating words or phrases. It is important to introduce poetry to your students and discuss the key features of this type of writing. After reading aloud several poems, brainstorm some of the key features of poetry and create an anchor chart.

Poetry...

- Can be about anything
- Is usually written in shorter lines
- Has a unique form and shape
- Includes at least one of the 3 R's: rhyme, repetition, rhythm
- Often ends with a surprise
- Has a title
- May be serious or humorous
- Can express important personal feelings

Introducing Brain Pocket Writing

Brain Pockets originated from a student in my class many years ago. I admit that when this student raised his hand, I avoided eye contact. His ideas were filled with imagination and creativity, but often not connected to what we were learning about. I wanted to find a way to gently guide his thinking, while not squashing his creativity, and so I developed Brain Pockets as a way of redirecting his thinking.



If you use the Daily 5, or some version of it, Brain Pocket Writing works fits nicely into the Work on Writing stage.

I explained to him that our brains hold our thoughts and ideas in three different "pockets": one pocket stores our experiences and memories; another holds facts and information; and the third holds our imagination. Depending on what

we are reading or learning, we can find thoughts in our brain pockets to help us understand and make connections. If reading a story about friendship, we might visit our memory pocket; if reading about volcanoes, we would go into our fact pocket. I told him that I noticed that he seemed to be spending a lot of time focusing on his imagination pocket, which was obviously very full of amazing imaginary thoughts. I pointed out to him that sometimes he needed to visit his other pockets! A few days later, he told me, "Ms Gear, you know that imagination pocket place? I think I live there."

For more on Independent Writing, see page 18.

Since then, I have used Brain Pockets not only for teaching reading and making connections, but also when I teach writing as Independent Writing. At the beginning of the school year, I provide students with a blank Brain Pockets page (see page 31) and invite them to record different ideas from their three brain pockets that they could possibly use as a writing topic.

Anchor Books for Introducing Brain Pocket Writing

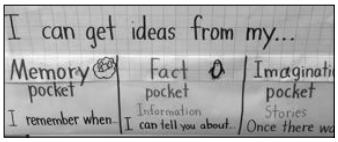
Hanlon, Abby. *Ralph Tells a Story* (memory pocket)
Bram, Elizabeth. *Rufus the Writer* (memory pocket)
Lehrhaupt, Adam. *Idea Jar* (imagination pocket)
McNaughton, Colin. *Once Upon an Ordinary School Day* (imagination pocket)
Stead, Phillip C. *Ideas are All Around* (all pockets)

INTRODUCTORY LESSON

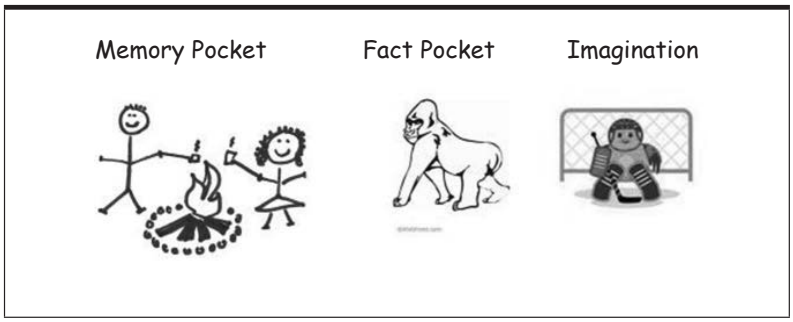
- Ask students, "Where do writers get their ideas for writing?"
- Tell them that our brains are powerful places in our body that store all our thinking. Explain that our brain stores our thoughts in three big pockets: Memory Pocket, Fact Pocket, and Imagination Pocket.
- Draw and label the brain pockets; see page 11.
- Explain that writers use their brain pockets to help them find ideas for writing. Depending on what they are going to write about, they might visit different pockets.
- Give examples of what you might have stored in your different pockets:

> I have lots of camping stories in my memory pocket, so I'm going to add *camping* to my memory pocket. I know a lot of facts about gorillas, so I will put *gorillas* in my Fact pocket. I was imagining one day about a penguin who plays hockey so I will put *Penguin Goalie* in my imagination pocket.

Jessica Suurallik, teacher from Rutland Elementary School in Kelowna (SD 23) developed an amazing lesson when she introduced brain pockets to her class. She created actual pockets with folded chart paper, placed small cards with topics into each of the pockets, and provided excellent prompts: *I remember when…* (Memory), *I can tell you about…* (Fact), *Once there was…* (Imagination).



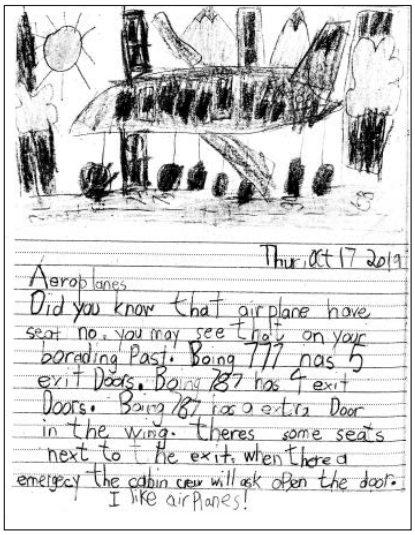
SAMPLE OF MODELING BRAIN POCKETS

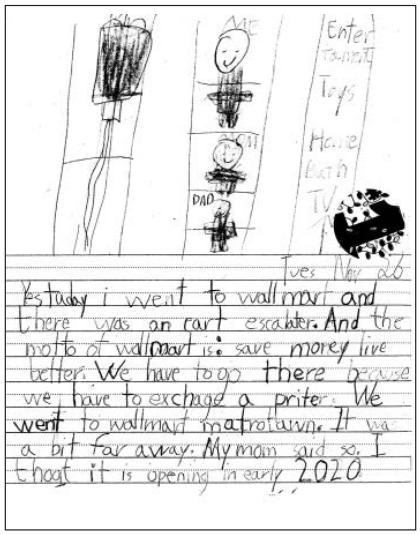


- Explain that not every thought in our brain pockets will get turned into writing, but that it's helpful to think about different ideas that you could write about.
- Pass out the blank Brain Pocket handout (page 31). Invite students to use them to make their own personal Brain Pockets and draw and label ideas in each pocket.

Once complete, the brain pocket ideas can be glued into a lined or half-lined notebook. Instead of weekly journal writing, your students can do brain pocket writing in their Brain Pocket Notebook. Encourage them to look over ideas from their Brain Pocket plan and choose one pocket they would like to write from that day. Making the shift from journal writing to brain pocket writing has made a huge difference to my students' free writing. It is far more focused, interesting, and enjoyable to read.

Grade 1: Fact Pocket Writing (left)
Grade 2: Memory Pocket Writing (right)





Elements of a Balanced Writing Program

Reflect and *refine* are two of my favorite "teacher words." I often invite teachers at workshops to take time to reflect on their current practice, to think about what is working well and what may need a little tweaking or refinement. It's not about changing everything, but recognizing that there is always room for a little tune-up. A balanced writing program consists of a variety of elements, from explicit instruction to independent free-choice writing; from word work to writers workshop. While there is no one perfect writing program, there are some components I believe support an effective one. I encourage you to reflect on your own practice and think about one or two elements you could refine or add to your current writing program:

- Formative Assessment to inform teaching practice
- Writing Joy: a positive attitude towards writing
- Writing Goals
- Writing Routine: weekly practice writes with a focus on process
- Mini Lessons: explicit instruction with regular teacher modeling in writing structure, language, and writer's craft

- Word Work
- Independent Writing
- Anchor Books/Mentor Texts to use as models for language, structure, and techniques
- Writing Conferences: regular one-on-one meetings with students to discuss their writing and to develop personalized writing goals

Formative Writing Assessment and Responsive Teaching

"I don't know how you can teach kids until you know what they know." — "The Sisters" Gail Boushey and Joan Moser

Teaching writing looks easy on Pinterest. So many shiny objects to choose from, some with glitter, others with fancy borders and sparkles. But the problem with Pinterest is that it promotes isolated writing lessons that might look fantastic when complete but that aren't helping students, over time, develop their writing skills by doing them. So how do you know what lessons to teach? Be responsive. Look up! Look up to see where your students are as writers and discover their strengths and stretches. Find the gaps! Fill the gaps! The most effective writing teachers teach lessons their students need, not ones they find on Pinterest.

Ongoing assessment of your students' writing is important for helping them focus on specific writing skills they need to work on. While I believe the most value we can provide happens during individual conferences (see page 19), using a basic rubric for different writing structures can also help track your students' progress. See rubrics for different forms of writing on pages 38, 69, and 169.

I believe the most important first step in developing an effective writing program is formative assessment: assessment to inform our practice; assessment that leads to responsive teaching. This is usually done in the form of a writing sample from each student at the beginning and end of each school year. The purpose of the fall assessment is to see how well the students are doing; I like to think that the purpose of the spring assessment is to see how well I did! I am not a fan of "cold writes," but like to have a writing sample done in the context of a regular writing lesson, beginning with a read-aloud and allowing time for students a chance to brainstorm, plan, and discuss their ideas prior to writing. The only difference from a regular lesson is that there is no modeling of the writing by the teacher, and that students are given a limited time to write and only a few minutes at the end to read over their writing and make any changes they wish to make.

Once the writing samples have been assessed (by using a criteria-referenced performance standard rubric provided by your school district, region, province, or state), the information you have gathered can be analyzed and next steps can be planned. Look for trends in your class and ask yourself: *Collectively, what are they doing well? What do they need to learn through whole-class instruction?* Your students will show you what they need through their writing. Look for small groups of students who might need support with certain skills. You can use the Assessment Summary Sheet on page 26 to help you track your students' assessment results as well as to help you analyze, look for trends and needs in your current class, and help you plan your next steps. Through this process, your students' writing will tell you what they need support with.

Writing Joy

"Teaching writing is a matter of faith. We demonstrate that faith when we listen well, when we refer to our students as writers, when we expect them to love writing and pour their heart and soul into it." — Lucy Calkins

One of my very first writing lessons at the beginning of the year is meant to establish why it is important to learn to write well and to promote writing joy!

- Ask students "Who likes writing?" Survey a quick show of hands.
- Extend the conversation by asking anyone who said no to explain why. Invite them to discuss with a partner. Most often you will get answers like these: *it's boring*; *I don't have anything to write about*; *not good at it*.

- Now ask students what the difference is between *having* to do something and *getting* to do something: "have to" is something you don't want to do; "get to" is something you do want to do.
- Invite students to discuss in partners and try to give examples: e.g., "I *have* to clean my room"; "I *get* to play with my friends."
- While they are discussing, write on the whiteboard or chart stand: *This year, you don't* have *to write…* Invite students to read the sentence and ask, "What do you think?" (Be prepared for cheering and fist pumps!)
- Tell them that the sentence isn't quite finished and add *You* get *to write*. Invite students to discuss what they think that means.
- Explain that one of your goals this year is that everyone in the class not only learns to become better writers, but also grows to love writing. You don't want to hear anyone in the class saying, "Ahh… do we *have* to write?" You want everyone to say, "Yeah! We GET to write!!!"
- Tell students that you love to write and you want all your students to love writing too.

Writing Goals

"Don't write for the market, write for your readers. It's not about writing a best seller, it's about sharing something that can touch hearts and shift minds."
— Bryana Beecham

- Show a picture of a party invitation or ask students if they have ever been invited to a birthday or a special event where they had to bring a gift.
- Describe going to a store to pick out the perfect gift for your friend, then taking it home and wrapping it up in special paper. Invite students to think about the excited feeling they have when they give that gift to their friend, and the anticipation of watching their friend opening the gift, knowing what it is and that they picked it out especially.
- Explain:

> When you write this year, I want you to feel the same way as when you give a special gift to your friend. When we write, we are actually "gifting" our reader with a gift of words and ideas. And just like we make sure that the gift we give our friends is special and wrapped up in nice paper with a bow, writers always want to make sure that their writing is special and wrapped up with a bow. Nobody gives their friend a broken, used toy wrapped in an old paper bag. So as writers, we don't want to be giving our readers "broken toys" to read. We want to always make sure that our writing is the very best gift we can give our reader!

- Explain that, in order to make sure we are gifting our readers with our very best writing, we need to focus on two writing goals: 1) Making the writing **interesting** *for my reader*; 2) Making the writing **clear** *for my reader.*
- Discuss the common idea in both goals: the reader.

> The reader is the most important part of your writing.

- Create a class anchor chart of the two goals written at the top.
- Begin with goal #1: *Make Writing Interesting for My Reader*. Tell students that the bottom line is if your writing is boring, your reader will be bored. Explain that there are many things a writer can do to make their writing interesting. Begin listing: *interesting details, triple-scoop words, similes, good hooks*, etc.
- Move to goal #2: *Make Writing Clear for My Reader.* Explain that if the present you give your friend is too complicated or hard to figure out, they likely

won't want to play with it. Similarly, if writing is too confusing or hard to read, a reader likely won't want to or be able to read it. Explain that to make writing clear you need to focus on spacing, spelling, punctuation, etc. Create a list under that goal.

- Depending on the grade, students can create their own Goal Chart to include or glue inside in their writing folders to keep track of the lessons as they learn them.

MY WRITING GOALS

To make sure my writing is INTERESTING **for my reader**	To make sure my writing is CLEAR **for my reader**
• Interesting details (page 41) • Triple-Scoop words (page 40) • Similes (page 48) • A great beginning (pages 81, 119) • A great ending (pages 63, 83, 122) • Using the senses (page 46) • Voice (page 82) • Nonfiction text features (page 71)	• Spacing • Spelling: No-Excuse Words (page 17); GUM It strategy (page 18) • Punctuation • Organization (page 45) • Stay on target

Writing Routine

One of the most important aspects of an effective writing program is establishing a writing routine. Students work better when they know what is expected of them; I teach better when I know what I'm doing! My weekly writing routine is based on three stages of the writing process: Plan, Draft, Revise. Each week, over the course of three writing blocks in my timetable, the students spend time working on a short practice write, focusing on one stage of the writing process per day. This way, when students see *Writing Power* or *Writing Workshop* on their agenda, they know exactly what is expected of them each day. New writing skills are introduced or reinforced through weekly mini lessons and students are encouraged to apply the new skill or technique to their weekly practice writes. By the end of the week, my students will have completed a revised practice write.

See page 21 for Implementing Weekly Practice Writes.

Practice writes are just that—practice. Classrooms that provide children with regular opportunities to express themselves on paper without feeling too constrained by correct spelling and proper handwriting help children understand that writing has real purpose (Graves 1983; Sulzby 1985; Dyson 1988). I encourage students to try their best, but not to worry or focus too much on conventions or spelling during this stage of the writing process. They will have time to edit later; the important part about drafting is getting their ideas down. While I encourage students to finish their practice writes, not all will finish every piece, and that's okay. There will be another practice write next week. I never send the practice writing home as homework. Students publish only one practice write per term and the rest are kept as practice writes in their writing folders.

Here is an example of a weekly writing routine schedule. Part-time teachers or those who may not be able to fit this schedule into a single week can spread it over two weeks.

Monday **Plan**	Tuesday **Draft**	Wednesday **Optional**	Thursday **Revise**	Friday **Optional**
Students make a writing plan based on a topic you introduce	Students use their plan and begin writing their draft	Continue writing if not finished	Students share writing, then revise and edit	Students share their practice write with a partner or whole class

Mini Lessons

Lessons are short or mini because students don't become better writers in the course of the lesson. They improve after the lesson when they attempt the skill in an authentic piece of writing.

A mini lesson is a period of direct, explicit instruction, and an essential part of any writing program. Mini lessons or *micro-teaching* was invented in the mid-1960s at Stanford University by Dwight W. Allen and popularized by Lucy Calkins and others involved in the Reading and Writing Project at Columbia University in New York City. Because there are so many aspects of writing that young writers need to learn, from conventions to word choice to engaging opening sentences, breaking down these strategies into small, manageable mini lessons and focusing on only one objective at a time can help your students not feel so overwhelmed when they begin writing.

I usually teach a mini lesson on Tuesday just prior to students starting their draft, so it is fresh in their mind as they begin to write. If I teach a mini lesson on similes, for example, students will work on using similes in their practice writes. Mini lessons are not introduced every week; instead, we spend several weeks focusing on one technique before moving to another.

Mini lessons are a wonderful opportunity for teachers to incorporate shared writing, an instructional approach of teaching writing through writing. Teachers demonstrate writing skills and the composing process through a write-aloud approach, writing in front of the students while talking through the process. When students see us writing and hear us talking through the process, they become more engaged and motivated to want to write more, write better, and write independently.

Word Work

I am not a huge fan of weekly spelling lists. Back when I was a beginning teacher, I loved the weekly routine and daily exercises associated with weekly spelling, but over the years I have come to realize that memorizing a list of ten random spelling words does little to help a student really know how to spell, and rarely do these correctly spelled words transfer over into writing. I believe that students should learn a variety of sound-out and stretch-out strategies to use when they are writing words they don't know how to spell. At the same time, I also believe that there are some high-frequency sight words that they should be consistently spelling correctly in their writing.

NO-EXCUSE WORDS

I created the No-Excuse Lists (see pages 27–30) as a way of providing students with a list of high-frequency sight words they should be spelling correctly. These accumulative lists, based on the Dolch Word List, include the most frequently used words in children's writing for each grade. Early primary teachers can use

this list as the base words for their Word Wall. Each student can be given a copy of the list to be included in their writing folder. I like to have students glue the list onto the front of one of the pockets in the writing folder so that it's visible for them when they write, and they will have "no excuse" to ever spell the word *was* as *w-u-z* again!

GUM IT ANCHOR CHART

GUM It!

- **Give it a try:** encourage students to stretch out the word and use their "sound printing"
- **Underline it:** students mark word so they can come back to the word during editing
- **Move on:** so they can focus on their ideas and not their spelling.

GUM IT STRATEGY

While a No-Excuse list helps with high-frequency words, students are going to be faced with numerous unknown words while they are writing. From what I know, most students' go-to strategy for spelling a word is putting their hand out and asking their teacher. (Some may even follow you around the room!) In my experience, if you spell out one word for one student once, you are doomed for the rest of the school year. If you don't want to spend every moment during writing workshop spelling out words for your students, you need to be clear with them at beginning of the year that you will not be spelling out words for them during writing time. Depending on your grade level, you will likely already be teaching and practicing sound-out or stretch-out strategies, but I recommend introducing your students to the GUM It strategy (see anchor chart, left). Students can GUM It when they come to a word they want to write but don't know how to spell. Quite frankly, it has saved me from ever having to spell out a word for a student again! I highly recommend sharing this strategy and posting it in your classroom.

Remind students that it is a practice write and it does not need to be perfect. If you teach emergent writers, it is important to be explicit about what *Give it a try* looks like. I usually introduce students to different options for giving it a try:

1. **Clap it:** clap out the syllables
2. **Stretch it:** stretch out the word slowly
3. **Sound it:** say each sound in isolation
4. **Write it:** use "sound printing" to write each sound

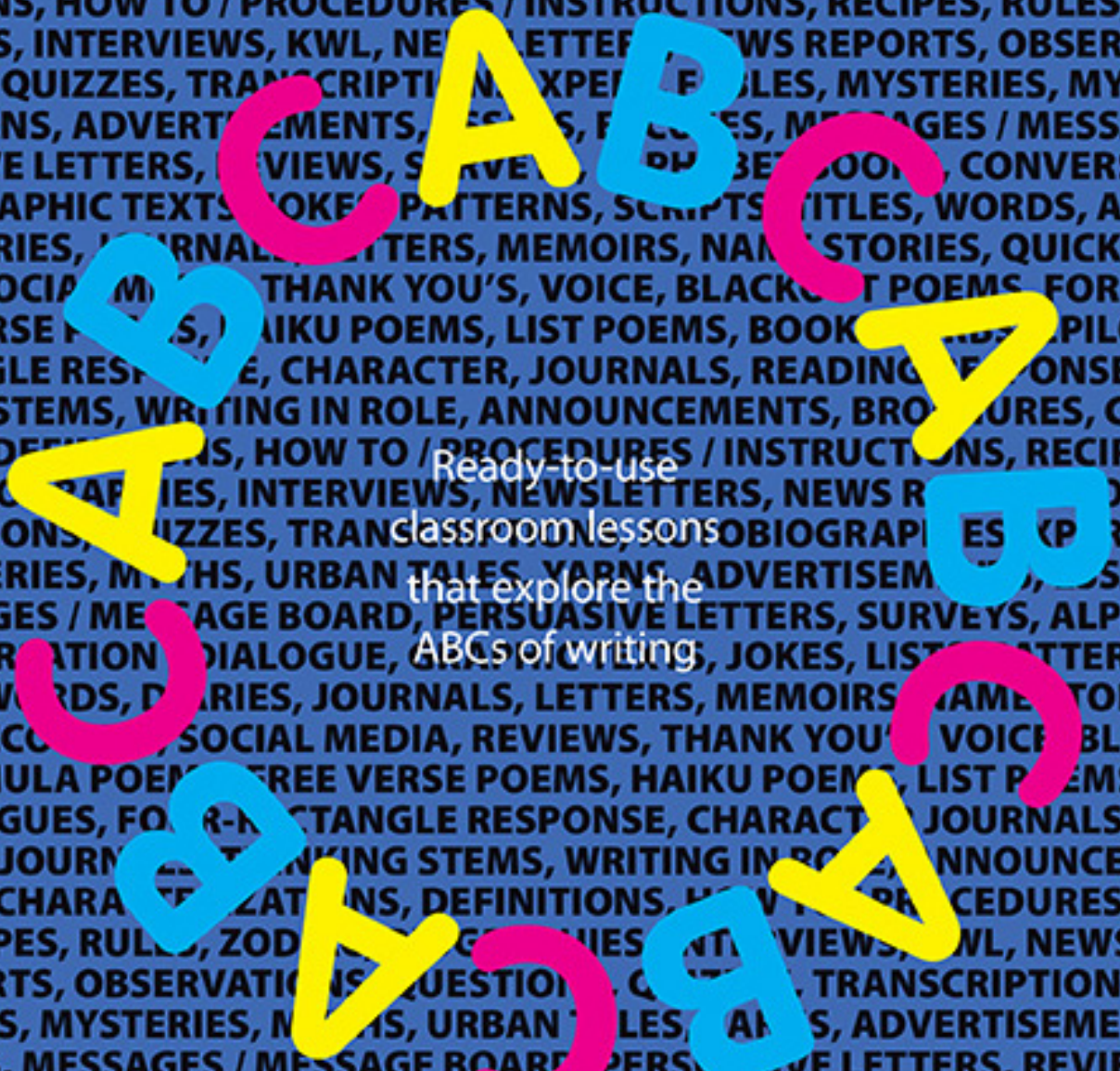
Independent Writing

An effective writing program should include a balance of guided instruction with time for unstructured, independent writing. While weekly practice writes make up about 70% of my class writing time, there are other times during the week when I want my students to write freely, choosing their own topics and forms and working without structure or support. For many teachers, including myself, free writing has always meant journal writing. I used to love journal writing when I was a beginning teacher. I loved the quiet; I loved that I didn't really have to teach; and I loved that I could sit at my desk and take a short, much-needed break. But let's face it, I would rather do just about anything than read through page after page of boring journal entries about My Weekend: *On Friday I went to McDonalds. On Saturday I went to the park. On Sunday I went swimming with my Mom. I love my Mom. My mom is beautiful. My Mom is cuddly. I love to cuddle my stuffy.*

Here's what I believe to be true about journal writing: it can be counterproductive. Most journal entries are a boring list of events that may or may not be connected. All the writing craft lessons you have taught seem to fly out the window during journal writing. I do value the freedom of journals, but have developed a version of journal writing that I find lends itself to more interesting and productive writing: Brain Pocket Writing (see pages 11–13).

Larry Swartz

Write to Read



60 easy ways to help students discover and investigate the reading-writing connection

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Introduction

> "Writing is a complex act, a symbolic system—a means of representing thought, concepts and feelings—that involves memory and ordering of symbols to communicate ideas and feelings to others."
>
> —David Booth, *Literacy Techniques*

> "Writers 'gift' their readers with words in the hope of touching them in some way—through laughter or tears, questions, connections, visual images. Writers share pieces of themselves and the things they care about with their readers, reaching out to them with an unspoken invitation to think."
>
> —Adrienne Gear, *Writing Power*

Talk is thought out loud. Writing is putting thought on paper (or screen), and learning to communicate through writing is a cumulative, lifelong process. No matter the curriculum subject, the topic, or the reason for writing, it is important that teachers explain how each function of writing works in each genre, from recounts, to letters, to journals, to reflecting on our reading. It is important that students know the purpose/function of their writing activities and who the audience for their writing will be. Reading and writing are closely connected processes of learning. A student writing down their thoughts thinks and reads while composing, revising, rereading, and editing the final product. Sometimes the audience for the writing is the self. Moreover, writing, as a form of communication, needs to be read by others. Students need to write to be read.

Our literacy programs need to provide explicit instruction in the writer's craft particular to each genre/mode/form. Mini-lessons, demonstrations, and mini-conferences are essential to the development of students' writing. Reading a genre should support student genre writing. Mentor texts can provide students with useful models of writing that provide patterns and suggestions on how to arrange thoughts and information. Students need to read to write.

The traditional motivation of writing in the classroom has not been a student's inner compulsion to write, but the completion of assigned writing tasks. It is important that today's writing curricula stress the uses of writing and lead students to understand that they are writing for real purposes. When writers write in a context that has personal significance, they reach for the necessary skills to explore both content and form. As students begin to think of themselves as writers, they discover that they can control what they want to say to the people they want to reach presented in *Write to Read*.

With social media, students in the 21st century are writing more than they ever have. Sending an email or a text is part of our everyday lives that likely doesn't require motivation or direction. However, our classroom writing programs can be, should be, a place where students are taught about the sea of writing possibilities. Student writing can be one of any number of modes—personal,

narrative, anecdotal, research-related, fantastical, questioning, in-role, opinionated, explanatory, etc.

The words of two popular children's authors can serve as a stepping stone for this resource as teachers and their students work together to write more, write better, write with purpose.

> "Writing is like any sort of sport. In order for you to get better at it, you have to exercise the muscle."
> —Jason Reynolds

> "Do not sit there like, 'Oh I don't feel like it today. I don't feel like it tomorrow.' Feel like it! Do it! Force yourself!"
> —James Patterson

Read to Write

Reading and writing are learned hand in hand, the one enriching the other. We can reinforce the reading-writing connection in two ways:

1. Using children's literature as mentor texts
2. Providing time and strategies for students to write about their reading

Mentor Texts

"The 'fingerprints' of the authors' craft found in mentor texts often become our own. … They ignite the writer's imagination and determination to create high quality text that mirrors the mentor text in many ways."
—Lynn Dorfman & Rose Cappelli (2009, page 7)

To help young writers learn how to do what they may not yet be able to do on their own, we can turn to mentor texts. When students borrow from their reading as they write, they are writing as readers and reading like writers. We cannot teach writing without providing the best possible examples of how it is done. Picture books, novels, poetry, and nonfiction texts provide inspiration, springboards, and authentic demonstrations of the craft of writing. Students who learn to read with real books see how writers represent experience. Whether listening to a book being read aloud or reading a book independently, students can learn

- to borrow ideas, structure, and vocabulary for their own writing
- about the craft of writing, (e.g., word choice, style, description, transcription)
- how text features work (e.g., headings, captions, lists, speech balloons)
- how to describe characters and places, and how to emphasize what is significant in a plot for narrative writing.
- how to present factual information and inform readers of important ideas

Written Responses to Reading

When readers are asked to write about their reading, they are being encouraged to reflect on what a book has meant to them and how they made meaning of the text. Written responses, whether derived from teacher questions/prompts or independent of instructions, invite students to present ideas in a variety of genres. Moreover, the thoughts, questions, and connections students reveal can be, and should be, shared with others to read and to discuss, thus helping students consider the thoughts of others, which may or may not be similar to their own. In this way, the classroom further becomes a community of readers and writers.

Write to Read

All writing is meant to be read, if only by the writer. The audience for a piece of writing depends on its function and the reasons for sharing it. Journals, notes, and first drafts, for example, are often private and personal. Students may decide to discuss some pieces with a trusted adult (a teacher, a volunteer, a parent) who will respond to the content in an interested and supportive way. Other pieces will be read by peers—at a draft stage, in a group conference, in a collaborative activity, or as published or displayed finished work. Emails and text messages have given authentic purpose for writing to be read. Students may also write for unknown audiences (e.g., a persuasive letter, a school newsletter, a classroom blog, or for passers-by who glance at a bulletin board). Each context can provide young authors with a sense of the various functions, styles, and conventions of writing, and of the importance of accuracy and neatness.

Authentic audiences include

- Self (diary, lists, reading responses)
- Friends (emails, questions)
- Classmates (essays, narratives, poetry, brochures, autobiographies)
- Parents (newsletters, published works)
- Teachers (reports, response journals)
- Known and unknown audiences (reviews, announcements)

Adapted from *Reading and Writing in the Middle Years* by David Booth

Writing Goals for Students

1. Write each day for a variety of purposes.
2. Keep a writer's notebook in order to gather and collect observations and ideas for future writing projects.
3. Record feelings and experiences.
4. Choose most topics for your writing projects.
5. Write in a variety of genres.
6. Use different formats for different projects.
7. Learn about the craft of writing from noticing how authors work.
8. Participate in conferences with the teacher and other students.
9. Share your writing with classmates, and listen to and read theirs.
10. Request feedback from others in planning and revising your writing.
11. Revisit writing to revise and edit original drafts.
12. Integrate reading, talk, and writing.
13. Understand and apply success criteria to complete writing projects.
14. See yourself as a writer in all areas of the curriculum.
15. Use digital tools effectively in writing projects.
16. Publish a writing project each month.

Ten Essentials for Writing to Read

Choice Matters

How much choice do students have in their writing topics? Does the notebook or reading response journal give students freedom to write in different forms and record personal responses? Do writing prompts serve to motivate student writing? Do mentor texts inspire students to write? Are students inspired by the writing of their friends? How much choice do students have in the way they

present their writing, share their writing, publish their writing? Is there a balance between assigned writing tasks and student choices? In this book, teachers are given the opportunity to introduce a format or pattern for students to practice. Still, throughout the resource, suggestions are provided that invite students to make choices about the topics, prompts, and content that they choose to use, while still meeting the success criteria for each format.

The Thought Starters list on page 117 provides students with prompts for writing. Students can choose items from the list to motivate their writing in a variety of genres. Alternately, you can choose and post items from this list for students to focus on.

Mentor Texts Matter

Mentor texts help develop relationships with authors and their work. If you want students to write effective lead sentences, it's important to provide them with examples from literature as models. If you want students to write memoirs, mystery stories, or myths, share examples of how published authors have done this effectively. One of most meaningful ways to teach students about different writing genres or writing formats is to provide literature and, through writer's workshop, explain and analyze how the author has been successful at engaging readers. Mentor texts (aka Anchor Texts) are written pieces, whether found in a book, magazine, or teacher and/or student writing, that can serve as an example of good writing for student writers. The texts are read for the purpose of studying the author's craft, or the way the author uses words and structures in the writing. The goal is to provide students with a model they could emulate in crafting their own written work. Moreover, when we use mentor texts in our classrooms, we teach students to read like writers.

Resources that can effectively serve teachers in the use of mentor texts in their writing programs:
Mentor Texts by Lynn R. Dorfman and Rose Cappelli (also: *Nonfiction Mentor Texts*)
Powerful Writing Structures by Adrienne Gear.

Talk Matters

In a writing block of thirty minutes, how much time do students actually spend putting pencil to paper, or finger to keyboard? To prepare for writing with any given task, many students need time to talk to percolate ideas. For many students, opportunities to talk prepare and motivate them in their writing. For example, when writing a recount, the oral retelling of events is a rehearsal for what students will put into writing. For expository writing, students might turn to a partner to explain instructions and this conversation helps them with sequencing and the need for presenting ideas with clarity. *Let Talk Precede Writing* is a good rule to implement in the writing program.

Talk, however, shouldn't be limited to before-writing experiences. Some students need to chat with others to help them clarify ideas, receive advice, request information (including spelling and grammar). The oral feedback that students receive from their classmates as they write can be supportive and motivating. And when students share their completed writing projects with others, they invite feedback and suggestions from an audience, thus determining how successful they were at keeping the reader in mind for their written work.

Feedback Matters

When assessing student work, avoid simple judgments, such as "That's interesting!" or "I liked your story." It is important to look for a piece's strengths and perhaps weaknesses and to consciously provide constructive advice that relates directly to the student's written work. When receiving feedback, whether written or in a writing conference, a student feels their knowledge of the writers' craft is acknowledged. Also, less is more. Feedback should be focused, be explicit, and offer examples or specific suggestions for improvement.

Writing with Others Matters

"The writing workshop is a gathering place of passionate ideas and opinions. It is the room where our students can go to imagine and reimagine the world."
—Kwame Alexander (2019)

Most often, students are given the opportunity and choice to write independently. However, some writing formats are more conducive to the collaborative experience (e.g., group reports, brainstorming, brochures, transcription). As students plan, develop, and present written work with a partner or small group, they can share ideas, negotiate ideas, and hitchhike off one another's thoughts. Having students work together, blending skills, talents, and interests, helps to promote communication and build a writing community.

Revising and Editing Matter

See Revision Checklist on page 118.

Revising and editing are two different processes. Students need to become aware that what most interests readers about their writing is what they have to say, not just their typos and errors. Editing is about correcting errors in grammar and spelling. Revision deals with the flow of narrative or ideas, relevance of information, and clarity of expression. Teachers tend to spend too much time focusing on editing, but by providing feedback suggesting changes, by providing explicit instruction on the craft of writing through one-on-one, small-group, or whole-class demonstrations, teachers can help students to revisit and refine their work.

Teachers need to engage students in their writing so that they will want to continue the writing process, which means students rethink and revisit their writing to develop strength or clarity, to alter its organization, or to select effective words and language structure. Not every piece of writing will be edited and revised. Many pieces benefit from being left unattended, even for a day or two. A fresh reading often can highlight changes that need to be made. Sharing a published piece by each student in the classroom at various points in the year (once a month?) is a positive reinforcement for their work.

Audience Matters

Students may be motivated to refine and polish their writing when they are preparing for an authentic audience. Yes, the teacher should be considered an important audience, but not the only one. Do students have opportunities to share their work with classmates, with a writing buddy or editing group, with others in the school, with families, with others in the community, with anonymous readers? A classroom blog or website is a meaningful tool for students to share their writing in a variety of capacities (e.g., newsletters, reports, collaborative books, persuasive letters). It is also worth noting that writers themselves are significant audiences; some writing can be, should be, kept personal, private.

Success Criteria Matter

Each piece of student writing provides data for the student's skills and knowledge of the writing process. A piece of writing can be assessed individually or comparatively (i.e., a revised version of the original). Another model is to choose writing samples from early in a semester and compare it to student's writing at a later stage.

For each of the writing formats in this book, provide students with three success criteria to consider. Different formats address different expectations; by displaying and explaining criteria, students can determine how well they have done for a particular genre. Clear instructions and a consistent routine with self-assessment checklists can help to support and enrich young writers.

Process Matters

Writing is a process. Teachers may understand and implement the stages of writing—drafting, composing, revising, rethinking, redrafting, editing, and publishing—but writing never occurs in such neat phases. Students need regular and frequent time to draft if they are to learn the art and craft of writing. Often a piece that will eventually be published has to be set aside and developed at a future date. I'm reminded of my dear colleague Brian Crawford, who was concerned when teachers said, "Hand in your good copy." All copies, Brian claimed, were "good."

Across-the-Curriculum Matters

Although there is a need for a consistent, designated time within the literacy program for independent writing and writing workshop, students write throughout the day in school. It is recommended that we take note of the strategies they use as writers. Students can connect their writing projects in a variety of curriculum areas: recording observations in science and mathematics, using notebooks to record information in social studies and health, developing projects for individuals and groups in a variety of subject areas, writing in role in drama lessons. To value writing and consider authentic purposes for writing, students need to see themselves as writers outside of the language program and outside the classroom walls.

Consider Your Writing Program

Here are some questions to ask yourself about your current practices. Are you satisfied with your answers? How might these questions help you rethink, rework, and improve your practices?

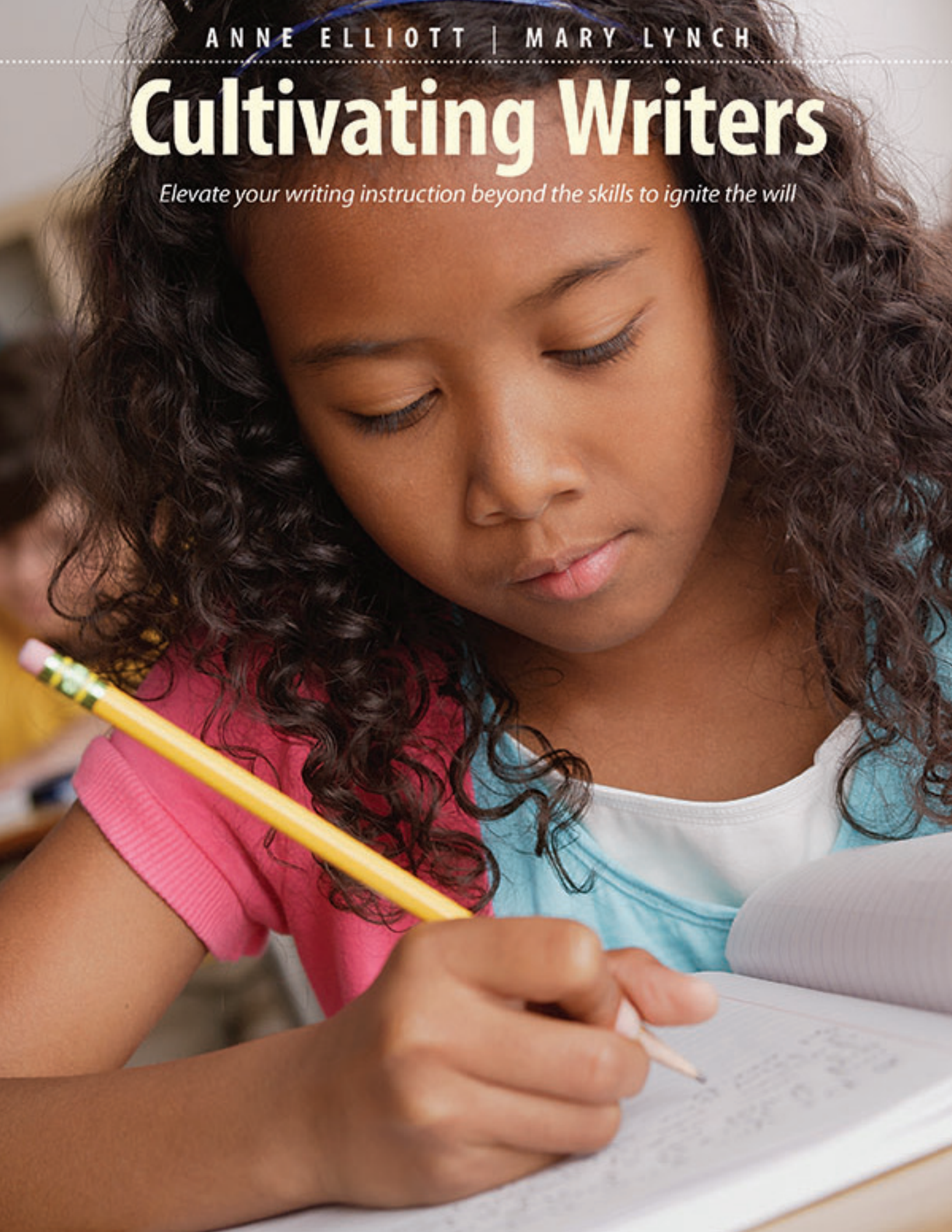
- ☐ Do you have a writing period scheduled each day?
- ☐ How often do you present reading workshops with explicit instructions for demonstrations of genre-writing, craft lessons, revising and editing skills?
- ☐ Is there a balance between student choice and teacher assignment for writing projects?
- ☐ Is there a balance between writing fiction and writing information?
- ☐ Do students have opportunities to write independently, in pairs, and in small groups?
- ☐ Do you organize writing conferences to allow you to connect with each student weekly?
- ☐ Do you monitor each writer in order to give feedback and support when needed?
- ☐ Do you provide oral feedback to student writing?
- ☐ Do you provide written feedback to student writing?
- ☐ Do you use mentor texts to demonstrate the craft of writing?
- ☐ Do you provide students with opportunities to write in different subjects?
- ☐ How often do you provide opportunities for students to write in order to express and reflect upon their reading experiences?
- ☐ Do you encourage students to write outside of the classroom experience?
- ☐ Do you show students your own writing?
- ☐ Do your students have writing buddies?
- ☐ Do your students have different audiences, besides you, for their writing (e.g., peers, school community, families)?
- ☐ Do students have opportunities to publish their writing? How often?
- ☐ Do you provide prompts to motivate students?
- ☐ How important is talk in your writing program (before, during, and after writing)?
- ☐ What part does technology and/or the internet play in planning and developing student writing?
- ☐ How often is poetry writing introduced into the program?
- ☐ Do you have a successful program for using journals/notebooks?
- ☐ What opportunities do you have for writing in role or perspective writing?
- ☐ How comfortable are you with assessing student writing?

See Assessment Checklist on page 119.

ANNE ELLIOTT | MARY LYNCH

Cultivating Writers

Elevate your writing instruction beyond the skills to ignite the will



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1

Decluttering Writing Instruction

Do you remember a TV program from the early 2000s called *Clean Sweep*? It focused on decluttering your home, and showed home owners sorting their items into three distinct piles: Keep, Sell, and Toss. And now there are many similar shows: *Clean House*, *Mission Organization*, *Master the Mess*, and the Netflix sensation *Tidying Up with Marie Kondo*. If you're like us, you are amazed and sometimes appalled by the amount of stuff people accumulate and allow to dominate their spaces. However, by the show's end, we are looking around our own homes with a critical eye to cleaning up and clearing out.

What should we keep and what can we toss? These are challenging decisions that require a measuring stick. For Marie Kondo, the question when deciding what to keep is always "Does this spark joy?"

Mary

When I had to determine what items I would keep following my father Dan's passing, the task was exceptionally challenging. The decisions were wrought with emotion, memory, and connection. Not all items could be kept, nor were important to keep. The essential question when making the choice was "What kindles a treasured memory of me and my father?" With this question at the forefront, selecting treasured items came to mind instantaneously. My father's Tilley hat, which he never went anywhere without, always perched on his head during his regular visits on my front porch, was definitely a keeper. It now sits prominently and proudly in my kitchen for all to see as a daily reminder. From his treasured Santa Claus collection, I selected an old-fashioned rendering of the jolly old fellow that reminded me of Christmases past. Lastly, my children requested the carved wooden checkerboard on which games were played with their Papa. Treasured keepsakes all.

As teachers we are routinely faced with the question of what to keep and what to let go. We accumulate a lot of "stuff": the curriculum, school-board

expectations, initiatives, programs, lesson frameworks, instructional strategies, resources—the list is endless. And like that of a homeowner, our spaces and minds can become cluttered and muddled. We need to give ourselves permission to stop, reflect, evaluate, modify, and let go, with our decisions based on sound research and pedagogy and our classroom practice. By merging these two fields of understanding, we can make informed decisions in the best interest of our students on what we should keep and what we can let go.

This ground-breaking research changed our understanding not only as writing teachers but also as writers ourselves. Our pedagogy and practice was raised to a new standard and our students grew and developed as strategic writers. The innovative work of these literacy leaders elevated our beliefs and practice. We are grateful for their research and contributions to literacy instruction.

These are the exact questions we asked ourselves when reflecting on our writing programs. The work of Gail Tompkins and Lori Jamison Rog highlighted the stages of the writing process and the various writing forms/formats, while Ruth Culham brought the writing traits to life and offered mini-lessons to teach them explicitly. Ralph Fletcher, Lynn Dorfman and Ann Cappelli, along with Elizabeth Hale, illuminated the importance of lessons focussing on craft techniques. We used their tangible lessons and activities with our students and ensured we provided ample opportunities for practice. Our writing conferences provided the evidence that our students were becoming skilful writers due to our explicit instruction.

When we took the time to stop and critically examine our classroom practices through the lens of writing, our observations indicated that most students were able to

- follow the writing process to produce grade-level text
- identify the forms of writing (e.g., narrative, descriptive, expository, persuasive)
- include the specific features of various formats in their writing
- craft pieces that utilized the traits of writing
- employ a variety of craft techniques

We were pleased to see students who were capable, skilful writers. Our writing instruction had met its mark. Bull's eye!

However, to be transparent, we were disheartened to also discover students who

- were not excited to write ("Ugh! Do we have to write today?")
- didn't talk proudly about the text they were writing ("It's not that good.")
- were not aware of their writing territories (i.e., ideas) ("I don't know what to write about.")
- found free writing overwhelming and challenging ("What do you want me to write? Aren't you going to tell me?")
- were not invested in revising their work ("It's fine just the way it is. I like my first draft.")
- were unaware of the rewards and value of writing in their life ("I only write at school and when given an assignment.")

It was clear that many of our capable, competent writers were the farthest thing from passionate writers, that their will to write was lacklustre or even nonexistent. They didn't seem excited about writing. They didn't derive joy from writing freely. They weren't actively on the lookout for their next writing idea. They were simply going through the motions to meet the assignment criteria. Think about your own classroom—does this sound familiar?

In our travels across Canada and the United States, attending and presenting at various conferences, we have heard teachers express similar concerns regarding writing will. In fact, Ontario's Education Quality and Accountability Office

statistics show that writing rates in Grade 6 have remained relatively stable going back over several years (i.e., 2017–2018: 78%; 2016–2017: 80%; 2015–2016: 79%; 2013–2015: 80%). This data does indicate that the majority of our students can write at the provincial standard. However, as part of this standardized testing, students are also asked to complete a writing survey. In particular they are asked to respond to the following prompt: *I like to write*. Since 2012/2013, Grade 3 girls reporting that they like to write "most of the time" fluctuates between 54% and 60%, while the percentages for boys range from 40% to 45%. When looking at this criteria for Grade 6 students over the same time period, the girls reporting that they like to write most of the time varies between 51% and 55%, while the boys range from 28% to 31%. From these statistics it is clear that our students' self-reporting of liking writing decreases over the years from Grade 3 to Grade 6, and that the percentages of our students reporting liking writing "most of the time" consistently and alarmingly lags behind their ability to write. Even though provincial, board, and classroom data indicate that writing achievement is relatively reasonable, the same cannot be said for writing engagement. Standardized testing reveals skilful but not wilful writers.

These statistics become more concerning when you consider the far reaching benefits of writing. In the *Handbook of Writing Research*, MacArthur, Graham, and Fitzgerald summarize the power of writing as

> one of humankind's most powerful tools… Writing makes it possible to gather, preserve, and transmit information widely, with great detail and accuracy. As a result, writing is integrated into virtually all aspects of our society… [and] provides an important means for personal self-expression. (2006 p. 1)

"Writing is a significant literacy activity in modern life that enables individuals to accomplish a variety of personal, intellectual, occupational, and recreational goals. It has been demonstrated, across a variety of investigations, that writing activities yield a number of intellectual, physiological and emotional benefits to individuals."
— M. Smith, www.niu.edu

As educators, we understand the vast and varied benefits of writing. In particular we know that writing enhances our ability to think critically, to understand concepts more deeply, to facilitate the formulation of our own ideas, and to construct rational arguments. We recognize that writing calls on us to be problem-solvers, creative thinkers, and effective communicators. There's no denying it—cultivating a writing life has long-term benefits.

Underlying Causes for the Lack of Writing Will

Too Many Expectations

In our province, the Ministry of Education outlines overall and specific expectations for each subject area: Mathematics, Language, Science, Social Studies, Music, Drama, Dance, Visual Arts, Physical Education, and Health; Grades 4–8 have French as well. Because the curriculum is so immense, teachers strive to make every moment count and to ensure that their instruction is directly linked to curriculum. In Language alone, there are 75 specific expectations. Of the 25 that specifically target writing, none—zip, zero, zilch—address student interest and motivation to write, nor do any explore the benefits and value of writing. Every single one focuses on students acquiring the skills.

Too Much Structure

In our quest to effectively model and deconstruct specific text forms and formats, have we adopted a spoon-feeding approach to writing instruction? We wonder if we have taken on the role of ultimate decision-maker in our desire to efficiently determine if students have demonstrated mastery of skills.

> *Today you're going to write a descriptive letter about winter in Canada to a friend who has never experienced this season before. As the teacher I tell you the form you're writing (descriptive), the format (a letter), the topic (winter in Canada), and the audience (a friend). I will even provide you with a template to plan with (i.e., a web) and I will set the time frame within which you are expected to complete this assignment. I'll be sure to share with you the success criteria which I will use to assess your piece. Ready, set, write!*

This example may seem extreme, but we've all been there. Certainly there is a time and place for on-demand writing, and structure has its benefits. But what happened to choice, play, and experimentation? These are the catalysts for young writers to discover their unique voice, to come to understand that their thoughts and ideas have meaning, and that their writing has purpose and power. So let them choose, let them select, let them decide. After all, it is their writing!

Too Much Instruction

A mini-lesson connected to a read-aloud and modeled writing doesn't sound like a tremendous amount of instructional time within a writing block; it sounds manageable. However, far too often our mouths run away from us, our minis become maxis, and modeled writing consumes the entire writing block. Before we know it, time is up and students have had little if any time to write. Doesn't that sound wrong? Think about it: your child would never go to a piano lesson without tickling the ivories; your daughter would never go to soccer practice and not make contact with a ball; your son wouldn't go to an acting workshop and not take the stage and run lines. Why would we have students attend a writing class and not have them pick up a pencil? We have to let students write regularly—for the joy it, to embrace the challenge, to discover that it is messy work, to know that sometimes their writing will pour off the pen while other days it will merely trickle, to uncover their writing territories, and, above all, to know that their voice matters in our world. So give them real opportunities and long stretches of time to write.

Aiming Too High Too Soon

You don't run a marathon without tackling a few 10Ks, you don't take on decorating a wedding cake before icing a few cupcakes, and you don't end up performing on Broadway without first taking the stage in a few local theatre productions. So why do we so often ask students to produce a complete piece of writing without adequate play and practice? Could it be that, when we feel the pressure to have marks in our assessment book, we transfer that pressure to our instruction? In many cases we move too quickly from modeling to drafting, and to having students submit a final piece. We have unintentionally taken away writers' opportunities for practice with different topics, experimentation with various techniques, and time to apply essential feedback. It seems that every time a student writes

something, it is expected to be handed in and assessed, given a grade, level, or mark. Can you imagine if every time you read something a running record was taken and a comprehension assessment was assigned? What impact would that have on your enjoyment, desire, and will to read? We are cognizant of the need to provide our readers with time to simply immerse themselves in the pleasure of reading with no strings attached. When it comes to writing, we seem to be caught in a cycle of write/assess, write/assess without giving our students the time to apply, develop, and grow as writers. Our students must be allowed to compose far more than we can ever provide feedback on and assess. Only that way will they develop their stamina, skills, and will. Our standards for young writers are too high, too soon. So close the mark book for a time, step back, and allow your writers to step up and write!

A Call to Action

With these concerns in mind, we realized that, in our quest to create the skilful, proficient writers outlined in the curriculum expectations, we had neglected to nurture the will to write. When we looked back on our instruction, we could not find any evidence that we explicitly explored the will to write with our students. We had clearly taught the skills. There was irrefutable evidence of that. But without a positive attitude and the motivation to use those skills, what good are they? Our new-found knowledge, instructional ideas, and mini-lessons crowded out what we previously identified as essential elements of our writing classrooms. We threw out what we should have kept, and our writers suffered the consequences.

The realization that we had contributed to the disappearance of the creative, independent writer that Calkins and Graves spoke so passionately about nurturing was startling to us. Steven Layne wrote that being a complete reader involves both skill (phonetics, fluency, comprehension, semantics, syntax) and will (interest, attitude, motivation, engagement) (Layne, 2009), and so does being a complete writer. To be complete, we believe that writers must possess both skill (knowledge of forms/formats, writing traits, process, and craft techniques) and will (interest, attitude, motivation, engagement).

In *Joy Write* and *Writing Workshop*, Ralph Fletcher calls on us to create environments in which writers have wide latitude to develop a love of writing and to recognize the value and importance of writing in their life. This plea is echoed by many literacy leaders, including Katie Wood Ray, Georgia Heard, and Ruth Ayres, who inspire us to think deeply and critically about the importance of turning students on to writing. Surrounded by experts who have inspired us, we reflected on our practice. While we were pondering how to develop the will to write in our students, the following questions emerged:

- How do I develop a writing community among my students?
- How might I create a classroom environment in which students feel accepted and comfortable taking on the risks and challenges required to develop as a writer?
- How can I ignite a desire to write in a way that prepares students to enter the classroom with enthusiasm and purpose?
- How can I share my passion for writing with my students? If I do not identify as a writer, what impact will that have on developing my community?

- How will I share my writing life with the class in a way that will turn them on to writing? If I do not see myself as an active writer, how could I begin to cultivate a writing life?
- In what ways can my students embrace writing outside of school?

In our relentless pursuit for answers, we embarked on a quest to find solutions for our students, ourselves, and our colleagues. These solutions have become our core beliefs for developing and fostering the will to write in students. We believe students must

- See writing as fun and enjoyable
- Understand that everyone grows and changes over time as a writer
- Realize that becoming a better writer takes time, effort, and energy
- See themselves as valuable members of our writing community
- Realize that we write for different purposes and audiences
- Understand that there is a world of text out there to be used as mentors
- Know that they have a writing voice and that what they have to say matters
- Uncover the vast number of reasons we write
- Discover their own writing habits
- Know that their teacher is a committed, keen, active writer
- Know that one of the defining characteristics of our classroom is that we are all authors

Six Essential Steps

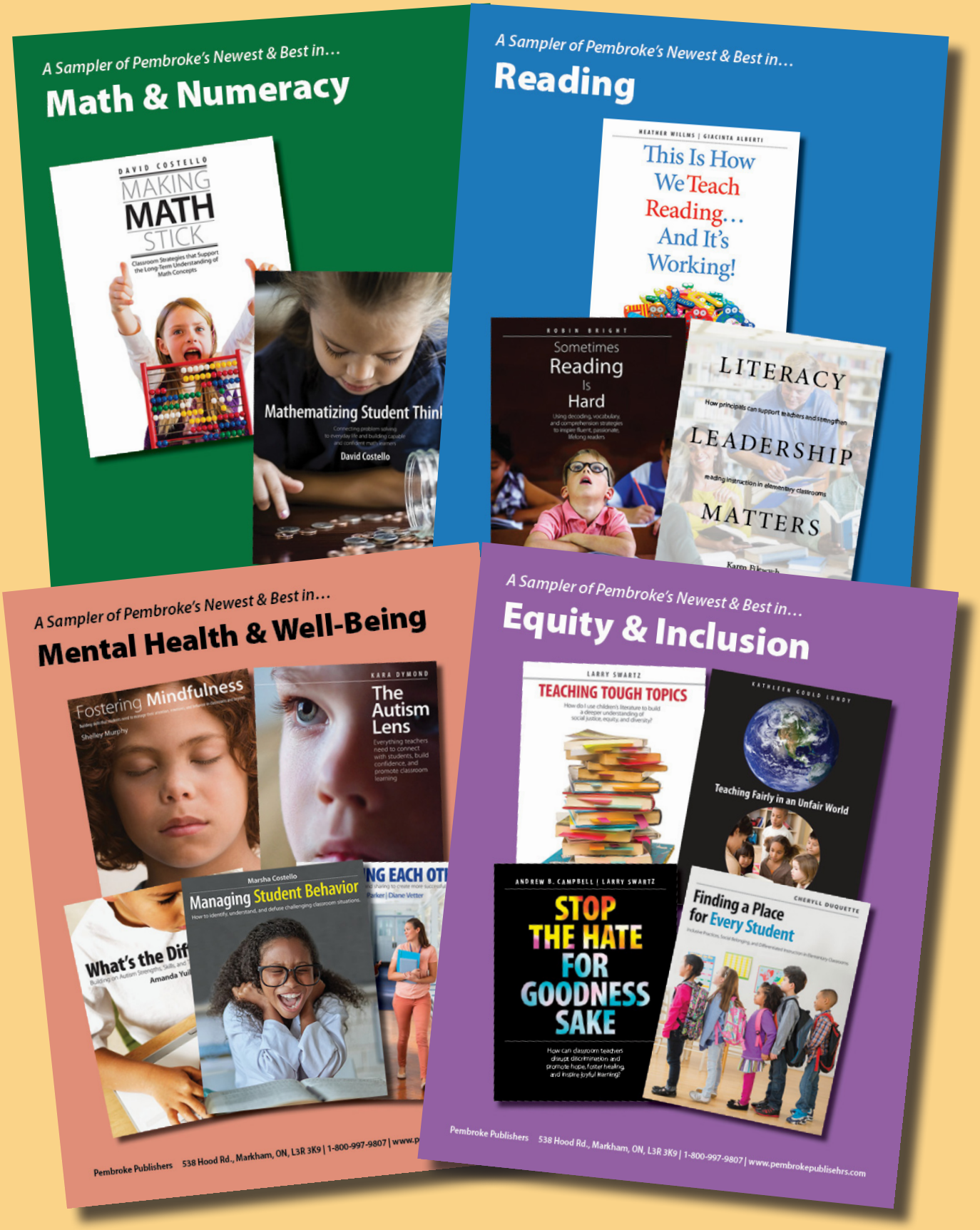
"Once we know who we are and what we're about in the classroom, we become intentional in our teaching; we do what we do on purpose, with good reason. Intentional teachers are thoughtful, reflective people who are conscious of the decisions they make and the actions they take; they live and teach by the principles and practices they value and believe in."
— Miller (2007, p. 4)

Cultivating Writers offers you our best thinking and practical suggestions to choose from as you foster the will to write in your students. We are not offering step-by-step lessons, but rather presenting opportunities for you to create your own personalized community for the students in your class. We believe it's critical that your own voice comes out loud and proud. What you will find here are activities that honor what we believe to be the essential steps in creating a community that cares about writing:

1. Developing Your Writing Life
2. Tapping into Your Students' Lives
3. Modeling the Habits of a Writer
4. Making the *Why* of Writing Visible
5. Providing What Students Need to Write
6. Nourishing the Will to Write

These steps form the basis of the chapters that follow, where you will discover how to intentionally develop the will to write. We share classroom-based solutions that have been developed, tested, and refined to significantly change the writing culture in classrooms. We offer you tangible ways to foster writing engagement through developing an active writing community. By targeting your instruction, you will begin to build a foundation for writers who are motivated to write and who will support each other on their writing journeys. For us, the rewards have been transformative, and there is no going back. Our hope is that you will be motivated to adopt the belief that influencing will is as important as teaching skills. We are excited to share our best thinking with you. Let's go!

Don't Miss Our Other Great Subject Area Samplers…



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