Graduate Research Papers   Graduate College

2003

Morning message : bringing interactive writing to life in a kindergarten classroom

Kay M. Hoffman
University of Northern Iowa

Morning message : bringing interactive writing to life in a kindergarten classroom

Abstract

The purpose of this article is to inform the reader of one way of implementing interactive writing into a kindergarten classroom, which is through the use of morning message. Interactive writing means different things to different people and my interpretation will be discussed throughout the article. I will share where I have been as a teacher of young children as well as some of the things I have learned along this invigorating journey.

Morning Message –

Bringing Interactive Writing to Life

In a Kindergarten Classroom

A Journal Article

Submitted to the

Division of Literacy Education

In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Master of Arts in Education

UNIVERSITY OF NORTHERN IOWA

By

Kay M. Hoffman

August, 2003

This Journal Article by: Kay M. Hoffman

Titled: Morning Message – Bringing Interactive Writing to Life In a Kindergarten Classroom

Has been approved as meeting the research requirements for the

Degree of Master of Arts in Education.

Rick Traw

_____
Graduate Faculty Reader

August 8, 2003
Date Approved

Penny L. Beed

_____
Graduate Faculty Reader

August 8, 2003
Date Approved

Rick Traw

_____
Head. Department of Curriculum and Instruction

August 8, 2003
Date Approved

Morning Message – Bringing Interactive Writing to Life

In a Kindergarten Classroom

The purpose of this article is to inform the reader of one way of implementing interactive writing into a kindergarten classroom, which is through the use of morning message. Interactive writing means different things to different people and my interpretation will be discussed throughout the article. I will share where I have been as a teacher of young children as well as some of the things I have learned along this invigorating journey.

As a new teacher I was aware that I wanted to get my students excited about writing, but exactly how I was going to do that was another question. I got my first job teaching kindergarten in a small parochial school in rural Iowa. Although I had tremendous support from the staff and administration I, like most new teachers, felt like I still had a lot to learn. When I was hired both parents and staff told me that I had big shoes to fill, that many children in the past had left kindergarten reading. With that on my mind all year I regretfully say that I spent too little time writing with those students. The next year I was hired as a Title I Reading teacher for a public school in the same area. That year, although we did some story extension writing activities, I spent most of my teaching time helping children learn to use reading strategies and helping them to increase fluency and comprehension. Again, during that year there was tremendous pressure to get kids reading. I met with small groups of first, second and third graders for 30 minutes at a time. There just wasn't time for much writing, or so I thought. On to year three, in yet another new building at a new position, teaching a multiage class of first and second graders. I had more opportunities to work on writing with my students that year. They kept journals, worked at the writing center, wrote stories both independently and through writers' workshop, but I still felt as though I needed to do more.

My next assignment put me back in a kindergarten classroom. I would be team teaching in a classroom of 32 students with the teacher with whom I had student taught with a few years before. I had some time to really think about how and why children learn to write the summer before that as I was taking classes working toward my Masters degree in Elementary Reading and Language Arts. Through my reading I came across the term interactive writing and became excited by what I was reading. As I continued to read such authors as Fountas and Pinnell (1998) I knew I wanted to incorporate their ideas into my new kindergarten classroom. As I talked with my co-teacher and other kindergarten teachers in the district I began to learn about their use of morning message. As I listened I thought about how I could implement interactive writing into the classroom through morning message. In the following section, I synthesize some of the ideas about writing that I have applied over the past two years with kindergarten students.

Literature Review

Interactive writing is a fun and exciting way for teachers to introduce students to writing. Callella and Jordano (2000) define it as a "method of writing during which the teacher and children write meaningful text together" (p.8). During interactive writing lessons the students and teacher are working together to create meaningful text for authentic reasons. They are sharing the pen in the creation of this text so many can be involved. The students are given the opportunity to share what they know about words and how words work together to create a message to be communicated with others. Students must be given encouragement, time to discuss their writing, opportunities to select their own topics and time to be engaged in the entire writing process (Walvoord, 1986).

Pinnell and Fountas (1998) suggest nine features on interactive writing that help to explain its usefulness in a primary classroom (see Table 1). According to McCarrier who worked in conjunction with Pinnell and Fountas in the creation of Interactive Writing, (2000) this process gives all children,

even those who read and write very little independently, a chance to see themselves as writers and as readers. She emphasizes that the high engagement present in interactive writing lessons and the lively pace it requires create an ideal setting for helping children keep the meaning of a text in mind while focusing on the details of print. Students are having fun and learning at the same time.

Through the use of interactive writing students are also introduced to many necessary writing skills. These may consist of teaching the concepts of print, how words work and the "building up" and "breaking down" processes in reading and writing (Bickel, et al., 1999). A multilevel approach to writing includes allowing the children to decide upon their own topics and write about what they know (Sigmon, 1997). It gives them a chance to plan and write with others, thus developing their confidence in their own writing abilities.

"Interactive writing is an important part of the early literacy framework because it provides so many opportunities to teach directly about language conventions, sense of story, types of writing, and concepts about print" (Button, 1996, p. 448). Students will take the skills they learn through interactive writing with them to their independent writing. During interactive writing lessons they will learn to stretch out words and listen for all of the sounds, which they can then do when writing independently. Students also learn that it is not only okay, but sometimes necessary to use the word wall, name charts, and other resources to write words. Temple et al (1993) suggest that students need many meaningful examples of writing in order to learn how language works. Students need modeling from both teachers and peers. They need to "hear the teacher speak aloud about the thinking that accompanies the process: topic choice, how to start a piece, lining out, looking for better words, etc..." (Graves, 1983, p.43).

The theoretical and methodological roots of interactive writing can be directly connected to the use of the Language Experience Approach. According to Galloway (1976) the Language Experience

Approach uses a child's own language and experiences as the basis for the first reading material or lessons. In interactive writing lessons teachers and students are doing just that. They are deciding on the language to be used to tell about what is happening in their classroom. Galloway (1976) suggests a progressive four-step scaffolding process to be used over time: (1) oral expression by the child with another person acting as a recorder, (2) oral expression with a recorder doing most of the writing and the student making some contribution, (3) writing by the student with the aid of the teacher or another person, and (4) writing by the student alone. In looking at theses steps it seems as though interactive writing mirrors step 3. The students are doing most of the writing with the support of the teacher and the writing being done is meaningful to the students.

Social interaction between teacher and student as well as between student and peers is a key element of interactive writing. During interactive writing the teacher scaffolds the learning. "Scaffolding is a teaching technique that includes responsive conversation, open-ended questions, and encouragement for children to verbalize their thinking" (Callella & Jordano, 2000, p. 4). Hogan and Pressley (1997) describe scaffolding as instruction that provides students with the intellectual support to function at the cutting edge of their development. Just as in the Language Experience Approach, in interactive writing lessons the teacher is constantly moving students from the known to the almost known, probing and questioning, guiding them to new learning.

Seng addresses the application of Vygotsky's zone of proximal development (ZPD) to the use of scaffolding. He writes of ZPD as "the difference between a child's 'actual development level as determined by independent problem solving' and the 'potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers'" (Seng, 1997, Abstract). In interactive writing lessons the children are constantly in conversation with the teacher and their peers. They are deciding on what they want their writing to say, who they are writing for,

and the best words to use to get their message across to the reader. As this language is occurring, the teacher is continuously evaluating each child and determining the best way to expand learning. She is always thinking ahead, determining which child will be called on next and how the writing they will do will advance their individual learning as well as the learning of the whole group. As seen in Table 1, it is necessary for the teacher to have specific learning goals for each lesson.

In my introduction I expressed concerns with the lack of time I had to teach writing to my students due to the great demand to teach them to read. Through my work with interactive writing I have learned how closely the two are related, especially in the early years. Interactive writing not only enhances writing skills, but vicariously, it enhances reading skills too. McAllister (1990) suggests that the reading and writing abilities of children work together from the inception of thought to produce literacy. Each activity enhances the other's development at all levels; thus, writing should not be held back until reading is accomplished at a set level. Reading and writing can work together as tools, leading children down a path of literacy. Tierney and Leys (1984) found that there are numerous benefits that can be accrued from connecting reading and writing. For example, selected reading experiences contribute to writing performance, just as selected writing experiences contribute to reading performance. Also, writers acquire certain values and behaviors from reading, while readers acquire certain values and behaviors from writing.

Strong reading/writing connections are inherent in the elements of interactive writing. Letter learning and phonological and orthographic awareness have been shown to be factors in children's learning to read. The more they know in these important areas, the more likely they are to be successful in early reading (Snow, Burns, and Griffin, 1998). Interactive writing also creates a setting for children to construct meaningful text that they will be able to read. The teacher and the students together decide upon a topic, talk about the topic, and accept each other's suggestions and support.

Quality reading and writing experiences where children work with the support of their teachers and peers expand literacy abilities (Jalongo in Bruneau, 1997). Now I know that when I am working with my young students on an interactive writing lesson it also counts as yet another way to tie reading and writing together. They are not only becoming writers, they are also becoming readers.

Morning Message

As might be expected, interactive writing can be implemented in any primary classroom through many avenues, but especially through the use of morning message. I like to introduce morning message at the beginning of second semester, which allows for assessment of what the students are ready for and where there may be some weaknesses. I gather the children in our meeting corner with an easel, chart paper, and marker. I explain that we are going to begin something new called Morning Message and that we will be doing this every day for the rest of the year. Next I tell the children that they will be helping me with the writing and that we will also be doing lots of reading with this activity. The children are also told that they will learn something special about each day through our Morning Message.

Morning message is first introduced in my classroom by reviewing the skills that have been talked about already in school. For example, the importance of a capital letter at the beginning of a sentence and some form of punctuation at the end are emphasized. The important role that spacing has in writing is discussed, as well as how spacing helps distinguish one word from another. I model using two fingers as spacers between each word and have the children do the same from the very first message on. This first message usually consists of writing about something that is going to happen that day. A discussion occurs about something simple such as what will be for lunch or what the special class for the day is. I begin the message as though it is a letter. After I write the greeting, a student volunteer is asked to write the first letter in the first word, remembering that it should be a

capital letter. Students continue the message of just a few short sentences by contributing where they can. A typical, beginning morning message in kindergarten looks like the following:

Dear Friends,

Today is Monday. We will go to Art class today.

It will be fun.

Love,

Mrs. Hoffman

As the children learn the routine of morning message, other aspects of writing are introduced. Some days questions such as, "I wonder if it will snow today?" are asked. This leads into great discussion about the use of question marks. On physical education (P.E.) days a discussion about abbreviations would be appropriate and the students may be asked to share any abbreviations they already know.

I believe that the product created from writing is important, but that the road traveled to get there is most valuable in helping our young students become writers and readers as they grow. I try to keep all of my students involved, even if they are not writing on the chart, during morning message. Sometimes I have them write the word we are putting on the chart in the air with their finger. They also write on their neighbors' backs with their fingers. Another option is to give all students small white boards and markers and have them write on their board while we write on the chart.

Interactive writing is used for meaningful purposes and displayed in the classroom so that children have the opportunity to reread the writing a number of times. When the writing is placed in the classroom it supports the children's independent writing and reading (Oldfield in Dahl & Scharer, 2000). Our morning message chart hangs in the room and each day the message is displayed so that if the students need to look at it during independent writing it is available. Another way my students get

practice reading the message is on the daily newsletter. At the end of every day a note goes home with important information for the parents and at the bottom I type in the morning message with a note that says, "Ask me to read today's message to you!" The parents love to hear about the day and to hear their children reading, and the students get yet another chance to read their writing. Some parents have commented that it has helped open up communication about each school day. When they ask their children what they did at school, they don't just get answers like, "I don't know," or "I can't remember." They can have their child read the message, which helps the child remember some important aspect of the day. By assessing other writing going on in the classroom, it is possible to determine skills that need to be addressed through morning message. For example, using capital letters in different writing situations (names, days of the week, beginning of sentences...) is discussed as well as the use of apostrophes and commas. The following is an example of one interactive writing lesson in my kindergarten classroom. Student names have been changed to avoid their identification.

An Example From My Classroom

It was a Wednesday morning in February. Our special letter for the week was Vv, as we were preparing for Valentine's Day. Through our work with the letter on Monday and Tuesday I had noticed some of my students mistakenly saying /b/ when saying words that began with Vv. I had heard things such as, "It is almost Balentine's Day," and wanted to make a distinction between the two sounds. I had already planned to have a special visitor in our room on Wednesday as one more way to use a Vv word that week so I decided to implement the word "visitor" into our morning message. By thinking ahead I was using the key feature of Teaching Explicitly, forming specific learning goals for my students.

As we met for message that morning I shared with the students that someone was coming to our room that afternoon to share a story with us. I told them that they did not see this person very

often and that there was a special word we could use to describe her. One student offered that the person was a friend. I agreed that she was a friend but that the word I was thinking of began with our special letter of the week. After some think time another child came up with the word "visitor." As we discussed this, yet another student agreed that "bisitor" was the word we should use. The students and I decided that our sentence should say, *Today we will have a visitor.* The second sentence was to say, *It will be a surprise.* Together we wrote the words, *Today we will have a.* As we finished rereading the words we had written so far, several children began saying /v/ for our next word.

Mrs. H.: V. V is for what word?

John: *Visitor.*

Mrs. H.: John said V is for visitor, is that right?

Nicole: Yep!

Mrs. H.: Before we begin writing the word *"visitor"* can someone tell me the name of one of our friends that begins the same way?

Jared: I know, Tori, well Tori doesn't but her real name, Victoria, does!

Mrs. H.: Is Jared right? Do "visitor" and "Victoria" both begin with the same sound?

Students: Nod their heads in agreement (and smile at their friend Victoria).

Mrs. H.: Let's look at our name chart to see if Victoria begins with our special letter, Vv. Does it?

Susan: Yeah, they both begin with the letter Vv.

Mrs. H.: That's right, they do. Okay John, would you like to show us where you are going to make the *v* on the chart paper?

John: Points to the correct spot, takes the marker and writes the letter *v.*

Mrs. H.: Wonderful *v* John, thank you.

Mrs. H.: Now say the word we are writing very slowly with me--*visitor*. There are some smaller words that we know in this big word. Watch and listen while I say it again, *visitor*.

Kate: *Is*. I hear the word *is*.

Mrs. H.: That's right Kate, would you come up and add the letters that make the little word *is* right behind the *v* for us?

Kate: Adds the letters *is*.

Mrs. H.: Great Kate. Now let's all say the word again; listen for another little word that you know. I'll give you a hint--it is on the word wall.

All: *"Visitor"*

Tori: Is the next part *it?*

Mrs. H.: You bet, Tori. The next little word in this big word is *it*. Will you please add those letters to our word, *visitor*?

Tori: Writes the letters *it*.

Alex: I hear an *r* at the end.

Mrs. H.: Yes Alex, there is an *r* at the end of the word *"visitor."* Before you put that letter in I'm going to add the letter *o*. The word *"visitor"* has an *o* before the *r*.

Alex: Writes in the *r*.

Mrs. H.: Wow! Way to go Alex, now before you sit down tell us what this word is please.

Alex: *"Visitor."*

Mrs. H.: Yes, now let's read the whole sentence.

Students: *Today we will have a visitor.*

Mrs. H.: Nice reading. Tell me one more time the sound we hear at the beginning of the word *"visitor."*

Students: vvvvvvvvvvvvvvvvvvv

Mrs. H.: Wow, does it tickle your lips to make that sound? It does mine.

We went on to add the next sentence, *It will be a surprise*, and the closing, *Love, Mrs. Hoffman*, with the students helping with words, word parts, spacing, and punctuation. I wrote the word *surprise* as well as my name at the end of the message.

When the message was complete we reread it in its entirety and I summarized the work we had done with the word "*visitor.*"

Mrs. H.: We wrote a very nice message today boys and girls. I bet you are excited and wondering who will be coming to our classroom later. Who can tell me the word we wrote in our message that tells us someone is coming and begins with our special letter?

Hayley: We wrote the word "*visitor.*"

Mrs. H.: That's right, we did. What letter does "*visitor*" begin with (emphasis on vvvvvvvvvvvvvv)?

Students: Vv!

Mrs. H.: When we make the sound for Vv what does it do to our lips? Try it.

Students: Vvvvvvvvvvvvvvv, it tickles them!

Lesson Review

Through this lesson I was able to reach my specific goal of reinforcing the sound that we associate with the letter Vv. I was also able to emphasize the usefulness of our name chart and the word wall when writing. It was beneficial to let the students see how words can be made up of smaller words as well. They saw that by saying the big word slowly, stretching it out, we were able to find the smaller words, which helped us to write the big word. By setting

these goals I was able to touch on a variety of the key features on interactive writing as seen in Table 1.

My assessment of the children's oral language that resulted in the decision to address the distinction between /b/ and /v/ are examples of two of the key features, Conversation (interactive writing is based on oral language.) and Teaching Explicitly (each lesson has specific goals.). Additionally, though my specific goal was met, other learning was also revisited. We talked about capital letters at the beginning of each sentence and my name. Punctuation was addressed at the end of each sentence as well as in the closing. The use of spacing within the message was also touched on during the lesson. These are all examples of the Conventions of Written Language feature.

The writing was authentic in that the children connected the message to an event in their day as well as to their special letter of the week. As the students took turns writing on the chart and I filled in where it was necessary, the feature of Sharing the Pen was also addressed. The feature of making Letter–Sound Connections, was exemplified as we talked about our special letter, Vv, and also when Alex shared that she heard an /r/ at the end of "visitor."

Through this particular lesson the children were also Connecting Reading and Writing, another important feature of interactive writing. They were able to hear the little words "is" and "it" in the big word "visitor" due to their prior experiences with these words in their reading. They were also practicing reading as we reread the message every time a new word was added, reinforcing the idea that what they say can be written and what they write can be read. This entire interactive writing lesson exemplifies the feature of Creation of Common Text in that we decided together which words to write in our message. I certainly knew key

words, such as "visitor," would be part of the message but the students helped to decide on the rest of the words used.

Benefits and Extensions

The episode described above illustrates many benefits of morning message and interactive writing. I saw this kind of learning occur over and over again with my students. For example, students quickly picked up on the importance of a silent 'e' at the end of many words. Initially this is introduced with the word "have," which comes up in our first few messages. After the students and I hear and write the first three sounds I tell them that oftentimes words have a magic e on the end that tells the other letters what to say. Usually within just a few lessons the students begin to try and guess which words are going to have a magic e on the end. If I get to the end of a word and tell them something is missing or that we need a little more they are quick to add the silent 'e.' Although "have" is an exception to the vowel-consonant-vowel-silent e rule, we go from the basic concept of some words having an 'e' at the end to the idea that the 'e' tells the other letters what to say. For example, at other times during the year we talked about words such as "gate" and "name."

Another of Fountas and Pinnell's key features of interactive writing that is addressed over and over again is that of Conventions of Written Language (see Table 1). By stressing the importance of beginning each sentence with a capital letter and ending it with a period, question mark or exclamation point and then actually having the students do the writing they begin to carry it over into their independent writing. There was an instance in my classroom in which the children were drawing a picture that showed something they had learned about penguins and then were writing a sentence telling about their picture. Earlier that day in our morning message I had spent a lot of time talking about capital letters and punctuation and told

the students that their job from then on would be to help each other remember those two important things when they were writing. As I observed the children while they were working, I overheard one little boy telling another not to forget to make his first letter a big one and they both agreed that exclamation points would be fun to add to the end of their sentences.

Similar connections were made when writing and talking about word families with my students. On one particular occasion I wanted to list words that would fit into the "ay" family. Many of my students were already aware of the fact that my first name is Kay so that is the first word I put on our list. Then I asked for volunteers to help me think of more words to add to our list. As I watched the children trying to come up with a word I noticed several of them looking over our morning message from that day. Almost as soon as they looked at it, hands were in the air. We had the words "day" and "may" in that particular message and the students picked up on the "ay" pattern and wanted to share their findings with the class. I called on Elle who shared that the word "day" would fit in with this word family. Next I let Quentin share. He was so proud of himself for finding the word "may" in our message that he ran up to it and proclaimed, pointing, "May, the word "may" rhymes with "Kay" and "day" and should go on our list!" We continued our list and used Quentin's idea of rhyming words to help us come up with twelve words. By using our message as a resource for our word family, the children were making meaningful letter-sound connections, using conventions of written language, conversation, as well as authenticity (see Table 1) in our list making.

Interactive writing is also a great way to introduce new vocabulary to young children. As I have stated already, I often use morning message to tell my students about special events. At the end of the year our school always has a carnival, and when we write about it in our message it opens conversation about the meaning of a "carnival." Another example of the

usefulness of the Morning Message in vocabulary building is in our theme work. We do a unit on the ocean in kindergarten that is full of new vocabulary for many of the students. When I wrote, "We will learn about the ocean" in our message a little girl raised her hand and wanted to know if the ocean was like the lake she visits in the summer with her grandparents, opening us up into a wonderful conversation about rivers, lakes and oceans.

Using morning message to inform the children of things that will be happening in our classroom helps to make the writing meaningful for them. For example, when I am ready to begin our unit on creepy crawlies in the springtime I begin my message with a different greeting. Instead of, "Dear Friends," I write, "Dear Bugs." Then, as we move from one bug to another, I continue to change the greeting. One day it may be, "Dear Bumble Bees," and the next, "Dear Worms." By doing this I am introducing the concept of audience and the students are having fun with writing.

There are a number of ways to extend the morning message. When the writing is complete, I have given students who did not get a chance to use the pen the opportunity to come up to the message and circle a word they know or tell about the use of a particular punctuation mark. My students also enjoy counting the number of sentences or the number of words in the message, looking for the letter we are studying that week, or pointing out other special parts of the message that they have noticed.

Interactive writing can be a powerful cross-curricular tool and integrative tool. It can be extended into any curriculum area. The example above of counting words and sentences focuses on kindergarten math skills. I have also used interactive writing when graphing to reach math goals. For example, during our bug unit I prepare a generic graph ahead of time and then together we decide which bug names to include on the graph. We give the graph a

name, such as "Which is Your Favorite Bug?" and then we fill it in. Social Studies and Science in my kindergarten classroom are addressed through our theme or unit work as well. Changing the greeting in the morning message to, "Dear Bugs," as seen above, as well as using KWL charts (Ogle, 1986) interactively throughout each theme carry interactive writing into these curriculum areas.

I have found that it is sometimes useful to make purposeful mistakes. The children enjoy using white cover-up tape, or 'magic tape' as I call it, to correct the mistakes. When I first introduce the tape I "forget" to capitalize the first word of a sentence. When one of the children recognizes my mistake he or she gets to cover-up my mistake with the tape and then correct it with the marker. The cover-up tape can also be used when the children make mistakes. As might be expected, children will often ask to use the cover-up tape when they are writing independently, which demonstrates their ability to edit their own work.

My experience with interactive writing has shown me that when the students are involved with the actual act of writing the morning message they find it is purposeful to them. They understand that they will learn about things that are going to happen during the day that will affect them. They enjoy learning what the special class for the day will be, when we have a change in our schedule, as well as some of the classroom activities for the day. They also know that the message will be going home and that if they help with the writing it will be easier to read to Mom and Dad.

Finally, it is so exhilarating to see the excitement in students' eyes when they get to be the one to show the rest of the class how some aspect of the writing process works or when a struggling writer contributes to a sentence he or she probably would not have attempted on his or her own. When a child who has held back from writing comes to the chart and proclaims, "I

can write the whole word myself," the advantages of interactive writing shine through. They see themselves as writers as well as readers. That feeling of success that teachers strive for in all students becomes evident through the use of interactive writing.

Although I am very much aware of the fact that I still have a lot to learn about children and how to lead them to become readers and writers, I am thrilled with where my journey has brought me thus far. Due to the work I have done with interactive writing and morning message I feel that I am much better equipped to guide young children on the road to literacy. I eagerly anticipate the new learning I am sure to encounter as I continue to teach and to learn!

References

Bickel, D., Holsopple, S., Garcia, P., Lantz, M.J., Yoder, D. (1999). Relationship of interactive writing to independent writing in kindergarten and first grade (Report no. CS16786). (ERIC Document Reproductive Service No. ED432015)

Button, K., Johnson, M.J., Ferguson, P. I.R.A. (1996). Interacive writing in a primary classroom. The Reading Teacher. Vol.49 No.6 March 1996 p. 446-454.

Callella, T. & Jordano, K. (2000). Interactive writing: Students and teachers "Sharing the Pen" to create meaningful text. Huntington Beach, CA: Creative Teaching Press.

Dahl,K.L. & Scharer, P.L.. (2000). Phonics teaching and learning in the whole language classroom: New evidence from research. The Reading Teacher. Vol.53 No.7 p.584-594.

Galloway, E., Gray, G. (1976). Language experience – a reading approach. (ERIC Document Reproductive Service No. ED136205)

Graves, D. (1983). Writing: Teachers and children at work. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

Hogan, K., Pressley, M. (1997). Scaffolding student learning: Instructional approaches and issues. Advances in teaching and learning series. (ERIC Document Reproductive Services No. ED422375)

Jalongo, M.R. (1992). Early childhood language arts. Needham Heights, MA: Allyn & Bacon.

McAllister, E. (1990). The thought/ reading/writing connection: How to connect. (ERIC Document Reproductive Service No. ED319012)

McCarrier, A., Pinnell, G.S., Fountas, I.C. (2000). Interactive writing: How language and literacy come together. K-2. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

Ogle, D. (1986). K-W-L: A teaching model that develops active reading of expository text. The Reading Teacher, 39564-570.

Pinnell, G.S., & Fountas, I.C. (1998). Word matters: Teaching phonics and spelling in the reading and writing classroom. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

Seng, S.H. (1997). Zone of proximal development and the world of the child. (ERIC Document Reproductive Services No. ED416957)

Sigmon, C.M. (1997). Implementing the four blocks literacy model. Greensboro, NC: Carson-Dellosa Publishing Company.

Snow, C.E., Burns, M., and Griffin, S. (1998). Preventing reading difficulties in young children. Washington, DC: Committee on the Prevention of Reading Difficulties in Young Children, Commission on Behavioral and Social Sciences and Education, National Research Council.

Temple, C., Nathan, R., Temple, T., Burris, N.A. (1993). The beginnings of writing. Needham Heights, MA: Allyn & Bacon.

Tierney, R., Leys, M. (1984). What is the value of connecting reading and writing? (ERIC Document Reproductive Service No. ED251810)

Walvoord, B.G. (1986). Helping students write well: A guide for teachers in all disciplines. New York, NY: Modern Language Association of America.

Table 1 Key Features of Interactive Writing – based on Pinnell and Fountas (1998)

Name	Description	Teacher	Students
Grouping	Lessons can be taught with a whole group or in small groups	Group size decisions based on specific learning goals	Listen and participate in the lesson
Authenticity	The writing is meaningful to both the writers and the readers	Decide on form of writing – story extension, letter, recording of info., morning message…	Love to write about themselves and their friends Have ownership of the writing
Sharing the Pen	Both teacher and students are active in the actual writing	Supports the students in writing words or word parts and encourages everyone to try	Actively participate Volunteer to write
Conversation	Interactive writing is based on oral language – conversation between teacher and students	MODEL – comment on interesting features of words, make connections	Take part in decision making Begin to comment on words

		make connections to other text as well as personal experiences	words Make connections to text and self
Creation of common text	Teacher and students decide together what will be written	Make writing visible to all students Reread as each new word is added	Take part in deciding what to write about as well as in the rereading
Conventions of written language	Standard spelling and punctuation are used	Support what is almost known as well as promote new learning	Try out new words Not necessary to write known words
Letter-sound connections	Students become sensitive to sounds, sounds positions in words and connecting them to letters and letter clusters	MODEL– begin simple (initial and final sounds) Use references – word wall, name chart, labels	Use references to help themselves and others
Connecting reading and	Create text similar to those that are being read	Point out connections	Monitor the writing to be sure

writing	Learn that what is said can be written and what is written can be read	-letter formation, spacing, left to right – all help to make writing readable	it says what they want it to say Anticipate the next word
Teach Explicitly	Each lesson has specific goals	Lead students to new learning through discussion and questions	Listen and stay with the teacher on the journey to new learning