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Creating and using wordless picture books to stimulate fictional writing in first grade students

Kathryn Nicol Thompson
University of Northern Iowa

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Creating and using wordless picture books to stimulate fictional writing in first grade students

Abstract

Beginning a written composition is a difficult task. Anyone who has ever , attempted to create a piece of writing can identify with this statement. Whether it is a blank piece of paper or a blank computer screen, getting started on a piece of writing is often the hardest part. 1 The first sentence of this paper encompasses my own struggles as a writer, even with this composition. I tried to imagine how much greater this must be felt as I observed first graders wrestle with how to begin their own writing. Even for adults, thinking of the first sentence can be excruciating. How much more is this frustration felt by a first grader whose vocabulary is limited, who has less experience to draw upon for ideas, and who is just beginning to learn all the conventions of writing? This question stemmed from my observations of one first grade class, when I was working as a classroom assistant with a specific focus on literacy. As these students worked their way through the various stages I of the writing process (Graves, 1983), it seemed that the biggest hurdle was writing the first sentence or two. Despite this difficulty, I wanted the students to feel comfortable with putting their ideas down on paper, because each time they go through the writing process, it helps them improve their writing ability (Kostelnik, Soderman, & Whiren, J, 1999). I began to ask myself, "How can I help these students get their ideas down on paper?"

CREATING AND USING WORDLESS PICTURE BOOKS TO STIMULATE
FICTIONAL WRITING IN FIRST GRADE STUDENTS

A Graduate Research Project

Submitted to the

Department of Curriculum and Instruction

in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Master of Arts in Education

UNIVERSITY OF NORTHERN IOWA

by

Kathryn Nicol Thompson

December 2004

This Research Project by: Kathryn Nicol Thompson

Titled: Creating and Using Wordless Picture Books to Stimulate Fictional Writing in First Grade Students

has been approved as meeting the research requirement for the

Degree of Master of Arts in Education.

January 20, 2005
Date Approved

Deborah Tidwell

Graduate Faculty Reader

24 Jan 2005
Date Approved

Linda May Fitzgerald

Graduate Faculty Reader

January 27, 2005
Date Approved

Greg P. Stefanich

Head, Department of Curriculum and Instruction

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Introduction

Beginning a written composition is a difficult task. Anyone who has ever attempted to create a piece of writing can identify with this statement. Whether it is a blank piece of paper or a blank computer screen, getting started on a piece of writing is often the hardest part.

The first sentence of this paper encompasses my own struggles as a writer, even with *this* composition. I tried to imagine how much greater this must be felt as I observed first graders wrestle with how to begin their own writing. Even for adults, thinking of the first sentence can be excruciating. How much more is this frustration felt by a first grader whose vocabulary is limited, who has less experience to draw upon for ideas, and who is just beginning to learn all the conventions of writing? This question stemmed from my observations of one first grade class, when I was working as a classroom assistant with a specific focus on literacy. As these students worked their way through the various stages of the writing process (Graves, 1983), it seemed that the biggest hurdle was writing the first sentence or two. Despite this difficulty, I wanted the students to feel comfortable with putting their ideas down on paper, because each time they go through the writing process, it helps them improve their writing ability (Kostelnik, Soderman, & Whiren, 1999). I began to ask myself, "How can I help these students get their ideas down on paper?"

I also became interested in the type of writing the students were choosing to do. This interest was first sparked by one particular observation of a lesson conducted by a student teacher. She attempted to create a web for a story (Strickland & Morrow, 2000) during a large group lesson by bringing in her favorite teddy bear and asking the students

to think of ideas for some adventures that this teddy bear could have, such as places he could go or things he could do. These students had great difficulty in coming up with any ideas. It was as though they could not think outside of their immediate surroundings. And so I formed another question: “How can I help these students generate ideas for fictional stories?” – or was this expecting too much? According to the Work Sampling System (Dichtelmiller, Jablon, Marsden, & Meisels, 2001), which is the assessment tool we were using at our school, it seems that this was not too much to expect. The following expectations are cited for first graders:

Uses writing strategies to convey ideas.

First graders benefit from having many opportunities to write throughout the day. They begin to demonstrate understanding of the writing process as they generate ideas, make simple plans, and develop main ideas that are supported with some detail and description. They are beginning to organize their writing in a sequence, including a basic beginning, middle, and end. Examples of first graders using writing strategies include:

- drawing on personal experiences to generate ideas for stories;
- hearing a story read aloud and using it as the basis for writing a story;
- brainstorming with a friend concerning what to write about;
- writing about going to the basketball game, staying focused on the topic, and including some details;
- making a web before writing;

- folding a paper into thirds and drawing a picture in each third to help themselves clarify their ideas for the beginning, middle, and end of the story (p. 59).

My expectations did not appear to be out of line, and yet the students were still struggling. Surely I was not the only teacher who has watched children go through this and wondered what could be done about it. I spoke with the lead teacher about the difficulties these students seemed to have with generating ideas for fictional stories. She informed me that the students generally did not choose to write fictional stories, but usually wrote personal narratives. She said she was interested in any ideas that would enable them to write in a different genre to stretch their experiences at writing. I began to think that if we had these thoughts, certainly other teachers have had them, too. My questions were now changing. I was very interested in answering my initial questions, but if other teachers had the same questions, then it would be much more useful to expand my thinking and ask, “How can I help teachers to help their students to get their ideas down on paper?” and “How can I help teachers to help their students generate ideas for fictional stories?” This became my goal.

Review of Literature

According to Vygotsky (1934/1987), children have a greater potential for learning through adult assistance that allows them to perform at developmental levels that surpass what they can do independently. This is known as the zone of proximal development and is determined by the “...difference between the child’s actual level of development and the level of performance that he achieves in collaboration with the adult...” (p. 209).

These students generally were not choosing to write fiction independently, but it seemed

feasible that they could do it with adult assistance. Therefore, the teacher would need to take an active role in helping students generate ideas for fictional stories. Based on my observations of these first graders, they needed a springboard that would go beyond using story starters that only give the students “a beginning sentence that children must finish” (McCarrier, Pinnell, & Fountas, 2000, p. 171). In the lead teacher’s previous work with first graders, such story starters had been found to be frustrating or uninteresting to the students. As I thought about a strategy that teachers could use, I began to reflect on my experiences working with preschoolers and how they read books.

Where Children’s Sense of Story Begins

In my work with preschool-aged children, I can recall many times when I observed children “reading” books, but they had no idea how to actually read words. These children were “reading” the pictures. According to Soderman, Gregory, and O’Neill (1999), this ability ranges from children labeling pictures with words and sounds to doing what is known as finger-point reading, where children point to the words as they “read” familiar books even though they are not actually reading the words. By doing this, children show an understanding that the words read come from the text and not the pictures in the book. “Children eventually ‘read’ books based on picture clues and good memories” (Soderman et al., p. 38). I have observed many young children reading stories by focusing on the illustrations in a variety of picture books. “Encouraging young children to tell their own stories and listen to the stories we can tell them and read to them is the most significant contribution we can make to ensuring that they become not just sufficiently literate, but passionately hooked on books and keen to write” (Whitehead, 1999, p. 43). Combining their previous experiences of listening to adults reading stories

to them with studying the illustrations in the books, they talk about what is happening by interpreting what they see and emulating how stories sound. Could this ability, which appears several years before children begin learning to write in a conventional way, be the basis for how children's story writing can be enhanced? If so, how can teachers draw wonderful story language and creative ideas from young writers that stems from skills that they possess long before they begin to learn how to write?

The Benefits of Picture Books

When children read books by looking at the pictures, they might report what is seen in the illustrations (e.g., "There's a bear and he's reading a book...") or tell a story about what is seen in the illustrations (e.g., "The bear was reading his favorite book..."). The knowledge that children bring to the reading of a book through its pictures is a reflection of the children's previous experiences with literacy: how a book is held, how to track print in English from left to right and top to bottom, and what language to use in describing the pictures, all of which come from their experiences with oral communication and shared readings of books (Roskos, Christie, & Richgels, 2003).

One way to exercise this knowledge of books, as well as to support language development, is with wordless picture books. In their joint position statement, NAEYC and IRA (Neuman, Copple, & Bredekamp, 2000) recommend using wordless picture books to allow children to dictate their versions of the stories according to the pictures. Using wordless picture books is a way to draw upon children's knowledge of story language and structure; they translate their ability to tell stories from looking at picture books into a written story that is unique in its interpretations of the book. In addition, they provide a scaffold (Wood, Bruner, & Ross, 1976) for topic selection, for including a

beginning, middle, and end in order to have proper story structure (Dichtelmiller, Jablon, Marsden, & Meisels, 2001), and for basic story elements within their writing such as characters, setting, problem, and resolution (Buss & Karnowski, 2000). In order to help other teachers help their students, I needed to try out this strategy with the first graders I had been observing to see if using a wordless picture book would be an effective strategy for stimulating fictional writing and helping the students to get their ideas down on paper.

Methodology

Based on the preceding literature cited, I created a wordless picture book specifically for the students to use as a scaffold for writing. It was a simple, five-page book that I made on my computer using a basic paint program. I created the illustrations in a very specific format: a simple and short story without any text that had a clear beginning, middle, and end as well as a character, setting, problem, and resolution. A more detailed account of the process I used with the students as well as the results of using this book with the students will be highlighted later in the descriptions of the workshop sessions.

My ultimate goal is to help teachers of young writers by providing a method for helping children generate ideas for fictional stories and getting their ideas down on paper. Therefore, I have created a professional development workshop for teachers of first grade students. The purpose is to provide training in one full-day workshop of six hours, divided into four sessions. The action research of this project was completed three years ago, followed by a journal article written to be submitted for publication, and culminating with this professional development workshop.

The inspiration of this project came from my observations in one first grade classroom. The questions that I formed based on these observations led me to do some library research in order to seek out any existing literature base for my questions. After completing a review of literature, I decided on the procedures I would use with the students and carried out the action research. During this phase, I encountered a roadblock that sent me back to the library to seek more wordless picture books. When I was unable to find what I needed, I created my own wordless picture book and used that to complete the action research. I collected writing samples from the children; analyzed them looking for patterns, similarities, and so on; and wrote up my findings. The final paper was written according to the specifications for publication in *Young Children*, The National Association for the Education of Young Children's bi-monthly journal.

Detailed outlines for each of the four sessions were written in order to layout the entire workshop. The text from the final paper was then condensed and compiled into a PowerPoint slide presentation (see Appendix A). Scanned copies of the children's writing samples as well as imported drawings and photographs were also included in this PowerPoint slide presentation. Handouts were created from the PowerPoint slides and the original reference lists from the yet-to-be published journal article (see Appendix B). An additional handout was created to give step-by-step directions of how to use the KidPix Deluxe 3 drawing program similar to how it is laid out in the section of this paper entitled "Session 4" (see Appendix C). The outlines written for each session of the workshop were turned into timelines. Lastly, the write-up of the project was completed and all the parts were assembled so that they would be ready for use.

Overall Project Rationale

The purpose of this project is two-fold. I have created a full-day workshop in order to: 1) educate first grade teachers about the strategy of using wordless picture books for stimulating fictional writing, and 2) provide first grade teachers with a tool for creating their own wordless picture books to use with their students as a scaffold for fictional writing.

The attendees will be given opportunities to be reflective about their students and their practice. Glazer (2004) states that reflective teachers "...question themselves, discuss their ideas and strategies with colleagues and write on a daily basis" (p. 90). This workshop enables not only the attendees to write, discuss, and reflect, but also allows me to do the same as I talk about my experiences of trying various techniques for using wordless picture books with first graders in order to answer my own questions about encouraging fictional writing. I want the attendees to think about the needs of their students by reflecting on specific actions, attitudes, and behaviors exhibited by their students during writing activities. They will also be encouraged to think about the writing strategies they have tried with their students and the effectiveness of those strategies. This is time away from the stresses of their day-to-day experiences in the classroom and provides an excellent opportunity for the teachers to have their minds free to be reflective. This will be guided by specific questions and activities designed to direct their thinking toward their students' needs in writing, ways to stretch their students' experiences with writing, and how their current practice addresses both of these areas.

Leonard (1993) highlights the importance of active involvement for adult learning through processes such as reflective thinking, learning in a participative environment, and

dialoguing in the educational process. The attendees will be actively involved during all four sessions of this workshop. This will be accomplished through activities such as large and small group discussions, participation in activities where the attendees become the students as I model some of the procedures I used with the students in my study, and experimentation with a computer program that will begin to create a bridge from theory to practice.

Flake, Kuhs, and Donnelly (1995) talked about teacher research as having "...a natural life in schools because the questions are more appropriate, the investigations are more natural, and the findings are more credible and valid for school practices..." (p. 405). I will exemplify the importance of the teacher as researcher by talking about my experiences as I tested this strategy so the attendees can learn from some of my mistakes and discoveries. I will also show the attendees examples of students' work so that they can see how the students responded to the intervention. Through discussions of my experiences as a teacher researcher, I hope to inspire the attendees to see the value that this role can play in any classroom.

The attendees will also be shown how this strategy of using wordless picture books as a stimulus for fictional writing is grounded in existing research and literature. It is important for them to know that the work I did was based upon knowledge gained from well-known sources in the field of literacy education. The information presented, however, does go beyond simply restating what others have said. As stated previously, I will present my own questions and the processes used to answer those questions, which has a basis in what I have read but also came from personal theorizing, which is the "...systematic process undertaken by teachers in an attempt to recognize and utilize

personal understanding as part of instructional improvement...” (Chant, Heafner, & Bennett, 2004, p. 26). This workshop is designed to do more than present theory or research findings, but rather to bridge the gap between theory and practice. In discussing the goals for the Master of Arts in Teaching program at the University of South Carolina, Flake, Kuhs, and Donnelly (1995) stress the importance of their teacher interns seeing “...theory, research, and practice as dynamically interrelated and interdependent” (p. 405). I intend to do this by highlighting the connections of using wordless picture books to the relevant literature and then giving the attendees a realistic way of applying what they learned once they leave the workshop. This will occur through teaching the attendees how to use KidPix Deluxe 3, a basic drawing program designed for children that will enable the attendees to create simple illustrations with minimal effort. This program is affordable and can be used by the students in the classrooms as well.

My overall goal in this workshop is to supply both information and an opportunity for application. It is not enough to serve as a talking head about a given topic. I want the teachers to leave with knowledge of the underlying theories and principles that guided *my* practice linked with ample time for reflection on their own practices as well as a way to take the information and make it become a reality in their classrooms.

Workshop at a Glance

Workshop Components	Total Time	General Description
Session 1	1 hour, 30 minutes	Introduction, setting stage for importance of current study
Break	15 minutes	
Session 2	1 hour, 15 minutes	Present supporting literature for ideas and procedures used with students, describe/demonstrate procedures used with students during study
Lunch	60 minutes	
Session 3	50 – 60 minutes	Discuss benefits/drawbacks of wordless picture books, show book created for study, present supporting literature, show student examples of writing from book
Break	15 minutes	
Session 4	1 hour, 45 minutes	Present an introduction to KidPix Deluxe 3 software in a computer lab for attendees to learn to make their own books, allow majority of time for exploration of software

Table 1.1

Overview of Session 1	
Time	Activity
5 minutes	Introduction – overview of day's events
15 minutes	Individual participation – attendees each write a story from short books with words covered up
20 minutes	Break into small groups according to book selected Attendees introduce themselves to large group Attendees read their stories to large group Attendees share observations about stories with large group
5 minutes	Presenter talks using PowerPoint – describe how research began from observations in a first grade classroom
10 minutes	Individual reflection – attendees record responses to three questions
15 minutes	Group discussion – attendees post their responses Individuals share reflections with large group
5 minutes	Video clip of student during writer's workshop
5 minutes	Brief discussion of video
10 minutes	Presenter talks using PowerPoint – description of school and classroom, classroom practices for writing, supporting literature, general research question
Total time = 90 minutes	50 minutes of group participation, 40 minutes of slides/video
15 minutes	BREAK

Table 1.2

Rationale for Session 1

Session 1 lays the foundation for my research question (Figure 1.16) and introduces the attendees to the need I saw for using wordless picture books with first grade students. The stage will be set for the benefits of using wordless picture books as a stimulus for writing stories by having the attendees write a story from a book with the words covered up as their first activity. This activity also mirrors one of the procedures I used with the children and will be discussed in more detail later in the day. This allows the attendees to know what the students experienced with this procedure, provides them with a method for obtaining an initial writing sample to be used for assessment purposes, and gives them a frame of reference when we discuss the procedures I used later on. They will share their stories as a way of introducing themselves to the large group *and* so they can notice the differences and similarities in each of the pieces of writing. This will help the attendees to begin to recognize the potential for variety in the writing that can be obtained from using this method.

I will begin to discuss why this topic was of such interest to me by sharing some observations I made of these first graders during a Language Experience Activity. This will contribute to setting the stage for my interest in finding a way to help the children write stories.

I will have the attendees do some reflection on the top and bottom students in their classrooms so that they can put into perspective the range of abilities that exists pertaining to writing. I will provide specific questions to guide their reflection, which further sets the stage for discussions we will have later in the day. I will show a video of Alexander so the attendees can see what it was about him that piqued my interest in

wanting to help him with writing. They may see similarities between him and students in their own classrooms, so this is intended to help the attendees see a connection throughout the day between how I helped Alexander and how they can help the “Alexanders” in their classrooms. I will refer to the reflections they have posted around the room about their top and bottom students to note similarities and differences. This will lead me into my own reflections I had during the study and how I arrived at my research question. This will be the basis for our conversations and group participation for the remaining three sessions.

Session 1

- I will begin the day by welcoming the attendees to this workshop and have the title PowerPoint slide on the screen (Figure 1.1, also see Appendix A for complete set of PowerPoint slides). I will give a brief introduction of myself, talk about where I work and what I do, and give a brief description of my education and work experience relating to literacy. I will then go to the next PowerPoint slide (Figure 1.2) and quickly highlight the day's events during this workshop. (5 min)

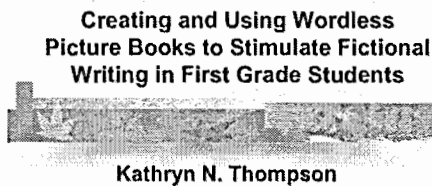


Figure 1.1

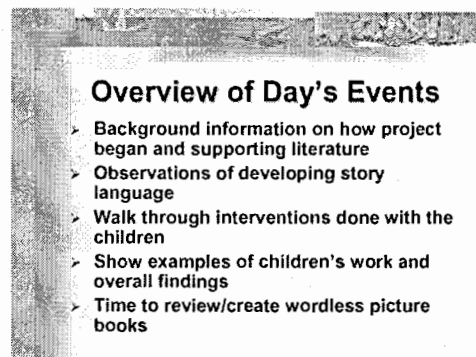


Figure 1.2

- The first activity will be to have the attendees write a short story from a book with the words covered up. (All words on each page will be covered with Post-it notes.) There will be multiple copies of each of four books on their tables from a series written by Carmel O'Mara-Horwitz (1997) that I used for the initial writing sample with the children during my study. (Note – To obtain multiple copies, these books can be found at www.barnesandnoble.com) I will ask the attendees to each select one book and write a story about what they see happening in the illustrations. I will tell them not to look under the Post-it notes at the words because I want them to come up with their own words and their own ideas about what is happening simply by looking at the pictures. Paper and pencils will be

provided on each table. I will give them no further instructions so that the process is consistent with how I instructed the children during the study. (15 min)

- After they have written their stories, I will go to a table, hold up one of the books, read the title aloud, and request that all who chose that book come to this table. I will repeat this process at three more tables (or areas of the room) with each of the other three books (see References for book titles).
- When all four groups are assembled, I will ask each person from one small group to introduce themselves to the large group (name and school where they teach) and share their story by reading it aloud. After everyone from the first small group has shared, I will ask them to briefly tell us what they noticed was similar and/or unique about the stories written from the same set of illustrations. This process will be repeated with each of the remaining small groups. Depending on the time and number of people in attendance, I may have them share their stories within their small groups, then introduce themselves to the large group, and have one or two from each group share what they noticed about their stories in terms of similarities and differences. (20 min)
- After everyone has shared their observations about their stories, I will talk about what piqued my interest for this project and what I was thinking as I observed one class of first grade students struggling to generate ideas for a story during a Language Experience Activity conducted by a student teacher. I will use the text on the PowerPoint slide (Figure 1.3) as an outline for my thoughts. (5 min)

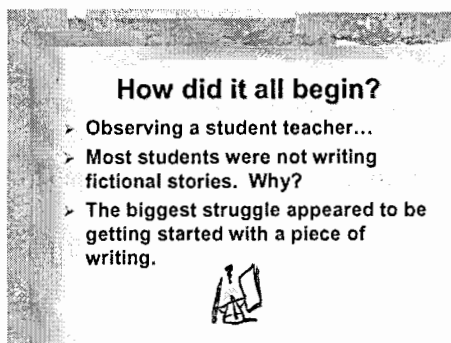


Figure 1.3

- The next activity will be for the attendees to do some individual reflection. I will ask them to think of their top student in writing and their bottom student in writing. I will have them create two columns on large paper that I will provide, one column for the top student and one column for the bottom student, and have them answer three questions (Figure 1.4). (10 min)

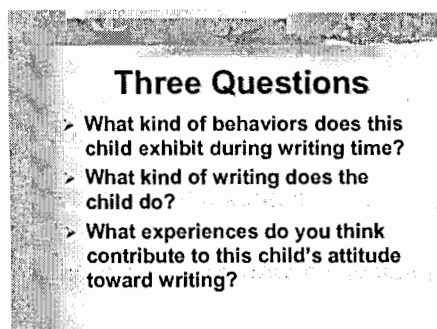


Figure 1.4

- I will ask them each to post what they wrote somewhere in the room and ask a few people to share what they wrote down about their top and bottom students. This is intended to create some dialogue that will help the attendees to reflect on what each of those students brings to their writing, experiences/lack of experiences that have helped/hindered their writing, what can these students do/what do these students need. (15 min)

- I will follow this discussion with a video of Alexander to show an example of some behaviors exhibited during Writer's Workshop to set the stage for why I was so interested in helping him. (5 min)
- I will discuss my observations of Alexander (Figures 1.5 – 1.7) and note some similarities/differences to things mentioned in the previous discussion by referring to the writing that the attendees posted around the room. (5 min)

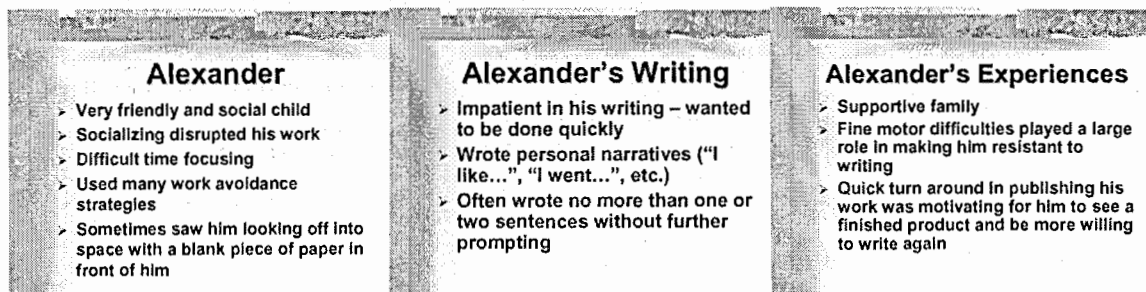


Figure 1.5

Figure 1.6

Figure 1.7

- Next, I will describe the school and classroom settings and how time was structured in Alexander's classroom (Figure 1.8 and 1.9). I will talk about the methods that Alexander's teacher used for teaching writing (Figures 1.10 and 1.11) and refer to the assessment tool used for report cards to talk about what was reasonable to expect from first graders in writing (Figures 1.12 and 1.13). I will end this session of the workshop with my thoughts and questions about what I was observing, using the PowerPoint slides below (Figures 1.14 and 1.15) as an outline. I will end with my research question (Figure 1.16) to give the attendees something to think about during the break and to provide a smooth transition into the next session. (10 min)

School Setting

- Public constructivist school
- Low-income neighborhood
- First year of operation
- Four classrooms: three-year-olds, four-year-olds, kindergarten, 1st grade

Figure 1.8

Classroom Setting

- Active experimentation and projects that follow children's interests
- Guided reading groups (Fountas & Pinnell, 1996)
- Writing about their activities
- Writer's Workshop




Figure 1.9

The Writing Process

- Writing is done in drafts
- Written work is reread, revised, edited, and rewritten (Graves, 1983)
- Conventional rules and spelling taught within context of children's writing
- Relieves burden of producing correct work up front
- Does not address difficulty of selecting topics for writing

Figure 1.10

Writer's Workshop (Calkins, 1994)

- Engage in writing process
- Students allowed to choose their writing topics
- Children at various stages in the writing process at the same time
- Individualized instruction
- Large group writing lessons conducted

Figure 1.11

Reasonable Expectations

According to the Work Sampling System, 1st graders should be able to:

- Draw on personal experiences to generate ideas for stories
- Hear a story read aloud and use it as a basis for writing a story
- Brainstorm with a friend concerning what to write about
- Write about going to a basketball game, staying focused the topic, and including some details

Figure 1.12

Reasonable Expectations (cont.)

- Make a web before writing
- Fold a paper into thirds and draw a picture in each third to help themselves clarify their ideas for the beginning, middle, and end of the story

(Dichlekniller, Jablon, Marsden, & Meloels, 2001, p. 59)




Figure 1.13

Teaching Practices

- In line with existing literature and research
- Considered best practice by NAEYC for writing instruction (Neuman, Copple, & Bredekamp, 2000)
- Assessment tool supports teaching practices

Figure 1.14

My Lingering Thoughts...

- Many students seemed to struggle with what to write about, even when writing about their own lives
- Open-endedness of approach to writing instruction can be overwhelming at times
- Encourage students to get their ideas down on paper despite these difficulties
- Each time they go through the writing process, it improves their writing ability (Kostelnik, Soderman, & Whiren, 1999)

Figure 1.15

The Big Question

How do we get students to translate their ideas into written form, while alleviating some of the burden of topic selection?




Figure 1.16

- Total time = 1 hour, 30 min – 50 min group participation, 40 min slides/video (not more than 15 min of a talking head at one time)
- BREAK (15 min)

Overview of Session 2	
Time	Activity
2 minutes	Introduction – review final slide from Session 1 (general research question)
5 minutes	Presenter talks using PowerPoint - what students needed for writing prompt, previous observations of preschoolers “reading”
3 minutes	Video clip of preschoolers reading
5 minutes	Group discussion of video clip
5 minutes	Presenter talks using PowerPoint – present supporting literature and more refined research question
10 minutes	Group discussion – brainstorm list of successful/unsuccessful strategies used to stimulate writing, presenter records
14 minutes	Presenter talks using PowerPoint – present supporting literature, describe overall process used with students
4 minutes	Show examples of student work
2 minutes	Presenter talks using PowerPoint – brief description of small group work done with students
15 minutes	Large group activity – model picture walk through wordless picture book
10 minutes	Individual or small group work – attendees look through a selection of wordless picture books
Total time = 1 hour, 15 minutes	40 minutes of group participation, 35 minutes of slides/video
60 minutes	LUNCH

Table 2.1

Rationale for Session 2

Session 2 delves more deeply into how I linked my ideas to the literature and refined my research question (Figure 2.6). We will begin by revisiting my broader research question to provide a springboard for discussion of the personal theorizing (Chant, Heafner, & Bennett, 2004) I did as I reflected on observations made of preschoolers “reading” books and how this ability might be translated into written form by first graders. This will be further illustrated by another video clip, this time showing three-year-olds “reading” books during a free choice activity or library time. The attendees will be asked to share some observations from the video segment to get them thinking about what these young children were actually doing as they were reading. This will provide a transition into the next set of slides as I discuss more connections of my ideas to the literature to give these observations and ideas more validity. This discussion will bring us to the more refined research question and launch us into the next activity.

I will ask the attendees to do some more reflecting and we will brainstorm as a large group a list of strategies that they have tried with writing that were both effective and ineffective and discuss the possible reasons. At this point, I will introduce my idea of using wordless picture books by writing this on the list. I will talk about my interest in the idea of using wordless picture books and link this to the support I found in the literature to show that I based my thinking on my experiences as well as what I have read.

This will bring us to a discussion about the process I used with the students, so that the attendees can be fully aware of the strategies I implemented throughout the entire study. The procedures I followed will also be linked to the literature to show that the process was thought through carefully. I will talk about how I did the initial assessment

first by describing how I took an initial writing sample. I will remind the attendees that the process I used with the students was exactly the same as what they experienced earlier in the workshop. I will show a few examples of writing samples that I gathered from the children and ask the attendees to notice similarities and differences in the children's writing samples to their own to show the varying levels of sophistication that came from the children.

I will then proceed with a description of small group work that I conducted and model how I did a picture walk (Tompkins, 1998) with the children through one wordless picture book by having the attendees tell the story as I go through the book page by page. This will illustrate the ways that I assessed the children's observation skills and knowledge of story language and structure while modeling a technique for introducing a new book and having the attendees again experience what the children experienced. I will end the session by allowing the last 10 or more minutes to look through a variety of wordless picture books that I have provided, most of which will be the same books I used with the children. I will ask the attendees to think about the possible benefits or drawbacks to using these books for writing. I want them to look through them so that they will hopefully conclude, as I did, that these books are too long for first graders to use for writing.

Session 2

- I will start this next session with a review of the PowerPoint slide I ended with in the previous session (Figure 1.16). I will talk very briefly about how this question kept coming up in my mind again and again as I observed the students. (2 min)

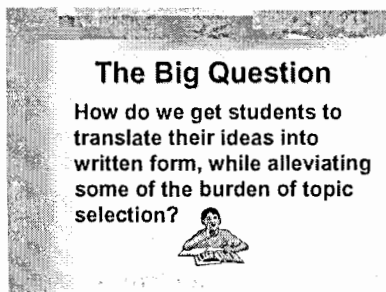


Figure 1.16

- I will talk more about Alexander and share my ideas on what I thought he needed, using the PowerPoint slide below (Figure 2.1) as an outline. I will talk about why I think a story starter would not work based on the observations made earlier of the students during the LEA in the video clip. I will then discuss my observations of preschoolers “reading” books by looking at the pictures or reciting portions of books that they memorized from repeated readings, again using the PowerPoint slide below (Figure 2.2) as an outline. This will provide a transition for the next video clip I will show of three-year-olds “reading” books during a free choice time in a preschool classroom. I will say, “I began to wonder if there could be a connection between how these preschoolers would read books and using that ability as an emergent writer.” (5 min)

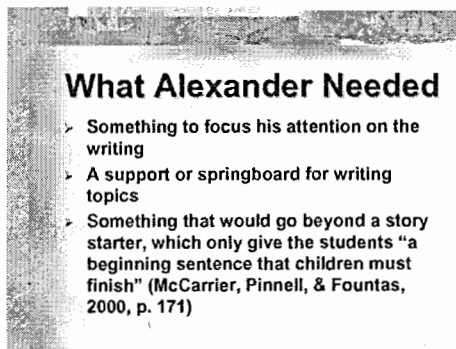


Figure 2.1

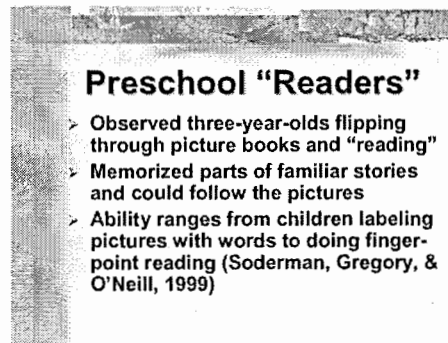


Figure 2.2

- The attendees will watch a brief video clip of preschoolers "reading" books during a free choice or library time. (3 min)
- After watching the video, I will revisit the slide about preschoolers "reading" (Figure 2.2) and ask for some observations from the large group of what they noticed the children doing/saying in the video segment. I will use the following questions for discussion:
 - "What did you notice these children doing as they were reading?"
 - "Which children do you think were using the pictures from an unfamiliar book?"
 - "Which children do you think were reciting parts of a book that had been read to them before?"
 - "Could you see evidence of what Soderman, Gregory, and O'Neill described?" (see Figure 2.2) (5 min)
- I will continue with the PowerPoint slides as an outline to talk about how preschoolers begin to navigate through books and what these actions mean for later literacy skills (Figure 2.3). I will connect this to what young children need early on in order to become passionate readers and writers as they get older

(Figure 2.4). I will then revisit what preschoolers are capable of in terms of reading (Figure 2.5) and link this to my next question (Figure 2.6). This will highlight a more refined research question and set the stage for the next activity.

(5 min)

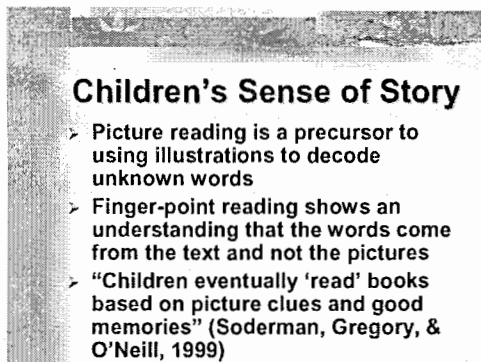


Figure 2.3

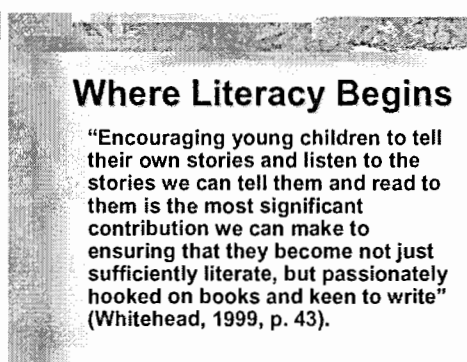


Figure 2.4

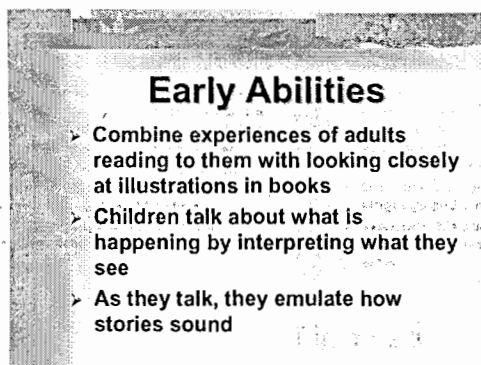


Figure 2.5

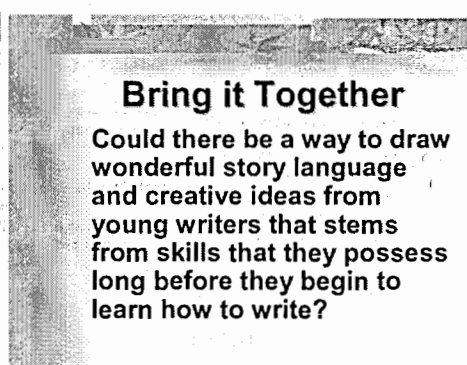


Figure 2.6

- I will ask the attendees to brainstorm a list of ways to stimulate children's writing that they have tried. I will ask them to think of strategies that worked well and strategies that did not work, and I will write down their ideas on large chart paper. I will create two columns on the chart paper for what worked and what did not work. I will ask them to discuss briefly why they think these various strategies were successful/unsuccessful. (10 min)

- After brainstorming and discussing the list, I will add my idea of using wordless picture books on both sides of the chart paper. I will tell them, “We will be coming back to this list so that I can elaborate on why I put this on both sides of the chart.” I will then begin to discuss my interest in picture books by first highlighting the “Benefits of Picture Books” (Figure 2.7). I will then talk about wordless picture books specifically, highlight NAEYC and IRA’s recommendation for using this type of book, and briefly discuss the possible link of using wordless picture books to writing (Figure 2.8). I will connect this to how wordless picture books can be used as a scaffold for story structure and basic story elements (Figure 2.9). (10 min)

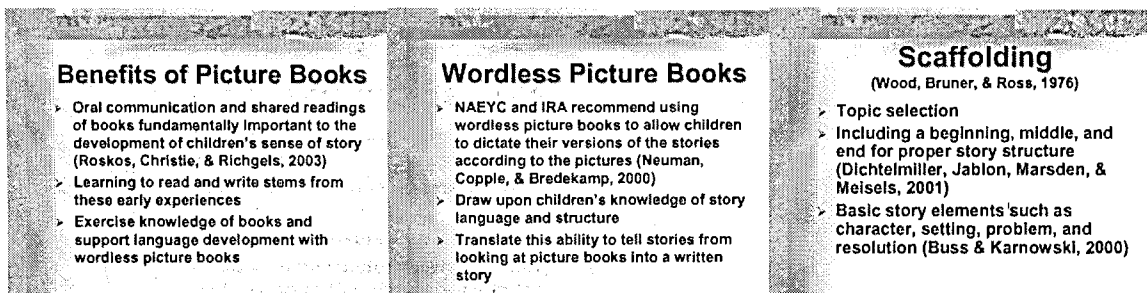


Figure 2.7

Figure 2.8

Figure 2.9

- Now that my research question (which I will put back onto the screen to briefly revisit my central point – Figure 2.6) has been grounded in existing research and literature, I will begin to give a description of the process I used with the students (Figure 2.10) in order to begin answering my research question. (2 min)

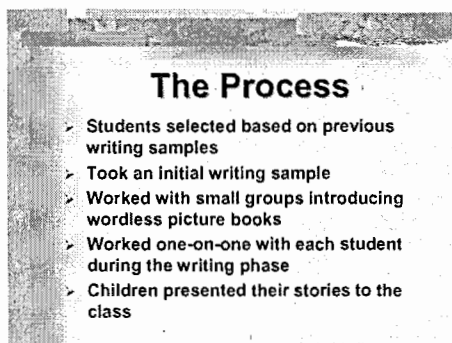


Figure 2.10

- Next, I will describe the process I used for obtaining an initial writing sample from the children (Figure 2.11) in order to find out how the children would respond to a short book with no words. I will point out to the attendees that the process used with the children was the same as what they did first thing this morning. (2 min)

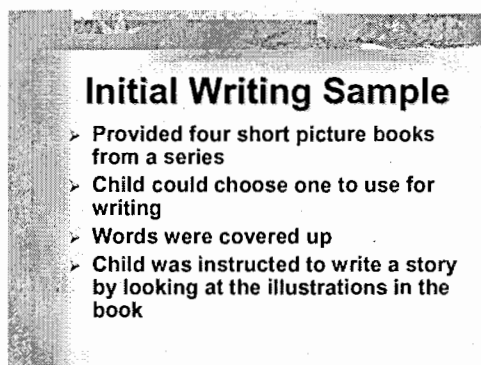


Figure 2.11

- I will show a few examples of initial writing samples written by the students (Figures 2.12 – 2.14). I will ask the attendees to compare the children's stories to the ones they wrote earlier. "What are some of the similarities or differences that you notice in how you interpreted the illustrations compared to how the children interpreted the illustrations?" This comparison will be done on an individual basis as the student writing samples are displayed on the screen. (4 min)

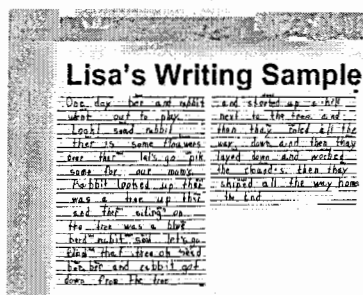


Figure 2.12

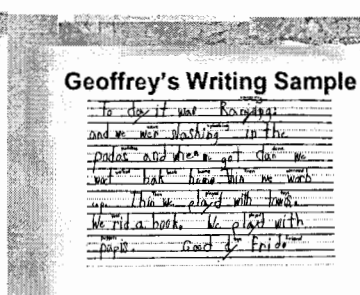


Figure 2.13

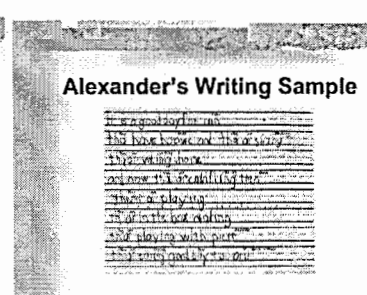


Figure 2.14

- I will proceed with a brief description of how I conducted small group work with the children after the initial assessment was completed. I will use the PowerPoint slide below (Figure 2.15) as an outline for this description. (2 min)

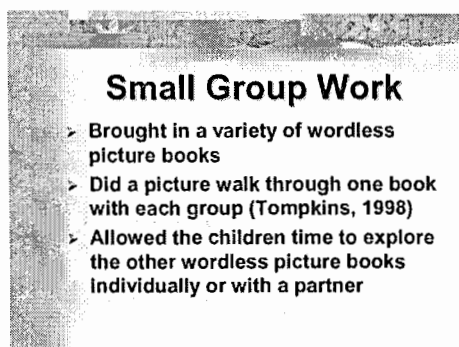


Figure 2.15

- I will further illustrate one aspect of the small group work by modeling a picture walk with the large group using *Alligator's Toothache* (DeGroat, 1977), which is the same book that was used with the children. I will go through this wordless picture book, page by page, and have the group help me tell the story. I will use the same kinds of questions that I used with the children such as:
 - "What do you notice in this illustration?"
 - "What's happening here?"
 - "Look at his/her face – How do you think s/he is feeling right now?"
 - "What do you think might happen next?" (15 min)

- After we have walked through one wordless picture book together, I will allow time for the group to look through other wordless picture books that I have brought in. Most of the books will be the same ones I provided for the children (see References). I will tell the attendees that they may look through the books individually or in small groups. I will encourage them to think about some of the possible benefits/drawbacks of using these books with first graders for writing purposes. (10 min)
- As we are preparing for a lunch break, I will also encourage the attendees to look through the books during their lunch break if they choose to do so. I will end this session by telling them that we will begin with a discussion about the possible benefits/drawbacks of using the wordless picture books for writing when we come back from lunch.
- Total time = 1 hour, 15 min – 40 min group participation, 35 min slides/video (not more than 20 min of a talking head at one time)
- LUNCH (1 hour)

Overview of Session 3	
Time	Activity
5 – 10 minutes (optional) 10 minutes	Continued exploration of wordless picture books (optional) Large group discussion – benefits/drawbacks of using wordless picture books, presenter records
5 minutes	Presenter talks using PowerPoint – brief description of problem encountered during study concerning length of wordless picture books and how problem was solved
10 minutes	Show wordless picture book created for the study Briefly revisit supporting literature Have attendees write story from book as pages are displayed on PowerPoint
5 minutes	Individual volunteers read story as pages are displayed on PowerPoint
15 minutes	Presenter talks using PowerPoint – show examples of student work and how children responded to the intervention, present supporting literature
5 minutes	Presenter talks using PowerPoint – overall findings
Total time = 50 – 60 minutes	25 – 35 minutes of group participation, 25 minutes of slides/writing samples
15 minutes	BREAK

Table 3.1

Rationale for Session 3

Session 3 focuses on the results of my intervention and is intended to show the attendees how the strategy of using wordless picture books was successful, particularly for a low student. I will begin by allowing more time for them to look through the wordless picture books if they need or desire to do so. I want to ensure that the attendees feel familiar enough with the structure of these books. We will then continue with a discussion of the possible benefits and drawbacks of using wordless picture books as a writing prompt. I will ask the attendees to share their ideas on this so that I can find out if they reached the same conclusions that I did when I was conducting the study (i.e., the books were too long). This will lead into the next set of slides where I talk about my further reflections on how my interventions were working with the children and how I reached a roadblock. This will help the attendees to see that this was not a completely smooth process, as research often is not, and how important it is to be reflective in order to think about what to do next.

I will talk about what I concluded about the length of the wordless picture books I was using in connection with how successful the initial writing sample turned out. I will then show the book that I created and I will talk about how I structured the story depicted in the illustrations very specifically, with support given from the literature for how it was structured. This will again show how my process was both reflective, in that I had to modify my original plan from using wordless picture books from the library to making my own, as well as grounded in the literature, in that I was careful to include a beginning, middle, and end and a character, setting, problem and resolution (Figure 3.3).

Once I have shown the book I created and briefly talked about how I made it, I will have the attendees write a story from the pictures as the children did. I will ask a few volunteers to read their stories for the large group. The purpose of this is to set the stage for the children's writing that I will show next. I want the attendees to think about how they interpreted the illustrations so that when they see the children's' writing, it will be clear how these pictures can be interpreted differently and can elicit a variety of vocabulary.

I will remind the attendees about their previous reflections on their top and bottom students, which is why this writing was posted in the room, so that we can refer back to it now. I will show examples of children's writing from my wordless picture book that illustrates the range that existed in this class between top and bottom students. As I show the drafts of Lisa's and Alexander's stories, I want the attendees to be thinking back to the writing that they posted earlier about their top and bottom students to get them thinking about how their students might respond to using a book such as the one I created, while looking at real examples of writing by a top and bottom student. I will talk about two patterns of writing that emerged that mirrored a description from Shirley Brice Heath's book, *Ways with Words* (1983), to show how I did not arbitrarily interpret the children's writing.

I will give particular attention to Alexander's writing to show the remarkable growth he made and how he overcame many of his difficulties with proper support, as I had to adjust how I worked with him to meet his needs. This proper support will be illustrated further by mentioning Vygotsky's idea of the "zone of proximal development" (Figure 3.23) and I will discuss my overall findings of using a wordless picture book in a

modified format (i.e., wordless picture book that I created versus wordless picture book from the library). This will be done to give some closure to the discussion of theory and *my* practice and lead us into the application portion of the day, which will begin in Session 4.

Session 3

- I will begin this session by giving the attendees an opportunity to choose what they would like to do next before I continue with my PowerPoint slides. I will ask the group if they need a little more time to look over the wordless picture books. If more time is needed, I will allow 5-10 min. If no more time is needed, I will go on with the large group discussion of the possible benefits/drawbacks of using wordless picture books for writing. I will create two columns on large chart paper, one for “Benefits” and one for “Drawbacks.” As we discuss these, I will record the various ideas shared accordingly on the large chart paper. (15-20 min – more time with wordless picture books followed by large group discussion, or 10 min – large group discussion only)
- After discussing the possible benefits/drawbacks of using wordless picture books for writing, I will share the benefits I observed when using these books with the students, followed by my roadblock (one major drawback) of these wordless picture books (Figure 3.1). (2 min)

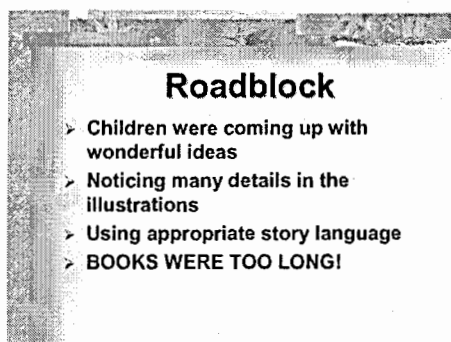


Figure 3.1

- I will continue with my PowerPoint slides and talk about how I reflected on classroom observations of the students as well as how the students responded to the initial writing sample, and describe the type of wordless picture book that I

needed for these students (Figure 3.2). I will talk about how I went back to the library to do a more refined search for wordless picture books, but was unsuccessful in finding short wordless picture books with only 4-6 pages. I will then describe my solution to this problem (Figure 3.3) based on how well the books for the initial writing sample had worked (not very many pages, simple storyline present). (3 min)

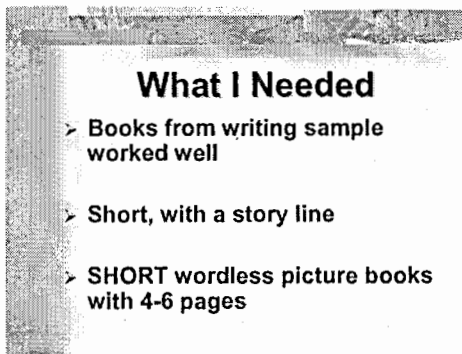


Figure 3.2

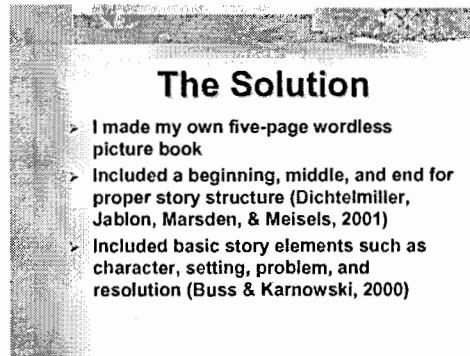


Figure 3.3

- I will briefly describe the process I used for making this wordless picture book (used basic paint program that comes with Windows™ and drew the pictures freehand on the computer). I will show my book on PowerPoint (Figures 3.4 – 3.8) and talk about how I specifically incorporated a simple story line into only five pages and that I made sure to include a basic story structure (beginning, middle, and end) as well as the four basic story elements (character, setting, problem, and resolution). I will briefly revisit the idea of scaffolding here to link my creation of this story to a specific purpose of providing a support or framework for all of the important aspects of a fictional story so that these would emerge naturally in the children's writing as they interpret the illustrations. After going through all five slides once, I will go back to "Page 1" (Figure 3.4) and

have each attendee write a story from the pictures as I display them on the screen one at a time. (10 min)

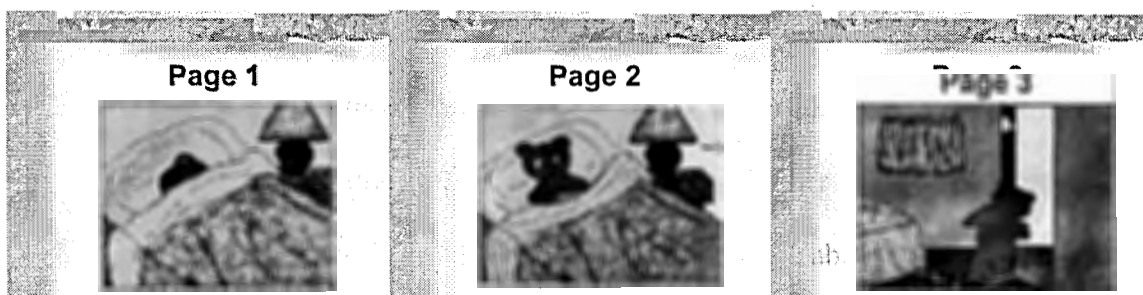


Figure 3.4

Figure 3.5

Figure 3.6



Figure 3.7

Figure 3.8

- I will have a few of the attendees read their stories to the group as I show the illustrations for each page. (5 min)
- I will talk about two patterns in the children's writing from my wordless picture book that mirrors a description found in Shirley Brice Heath's book, *Ways with Words* (1983) (Figure 3.9). (1 min)

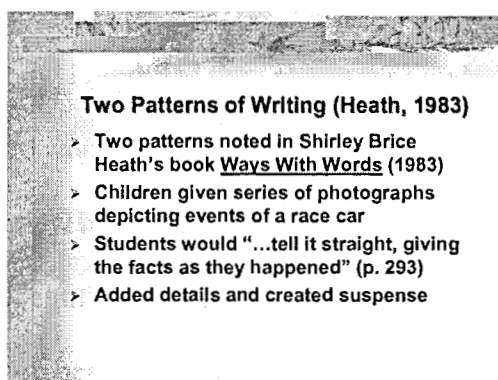


Figure 3.9

- I will remind the attendees of an earlier activity when I asked them to think of their top and bottom students in writing and answer three questions. I will link that activity to this current discussion by pointing out that the two students I will be highlighting represent those two categories. I will talk about Lisa's story (top student), show her first draft (Figure 3.10), talk about her writing style (Figure 3.11), and show her final draft (Figure 3.12). I will talk about how I was really struck by her incorporation of dialogue, some of her word choices ("suddenly," "crept," and how she wrote the words "scary" and "monster" with squiggly lines to evoke the emotion in those two words), and the amount of writing that she did. (4 min)

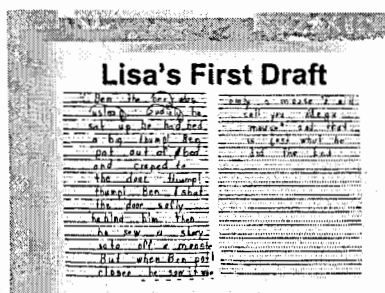


Figure 3.10

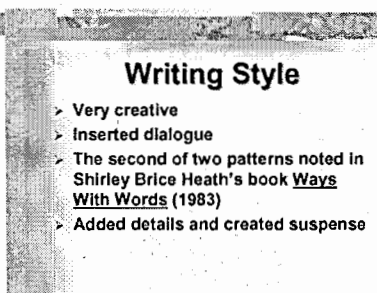


Figure 3.11

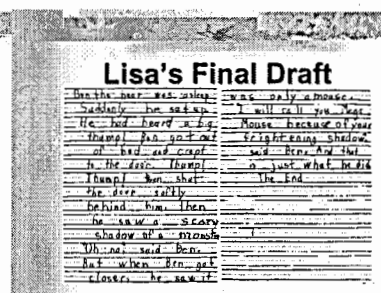


Figure 3.12

- I will highlight Alexander's story (bottom student) to show a comparison between these two students. I will talk about his writing style (Figure 3.13) and show his first draft (Figure 3.14). Next, I will describe the struggles he experienced and how I modified the process for him by having him dictate the story to me so that he would not limit himself by trying to finish quickly (Figure 3.15). Then I will show his second draft (Figure 3.16) and briefly describe the process used for identifying misspelled words that was consistent with the process used by his teacher. (Figure 3.17). I will show his final draft to show the remarkable

improvement that he made (Figure 3.18), show his first and final draft side by side to illustrate how he was able to overcome his usual desire to finish quickly as well as show how much more he wrote (Figure 3.19), show the artwork he made for the end pages of his finished book (Figure 3.20), and conclude with a photograph and Geoffrey and Alexander together holding their published books to show how proud Alexander was of his accomplishment (Figure 3.21). (10 min)

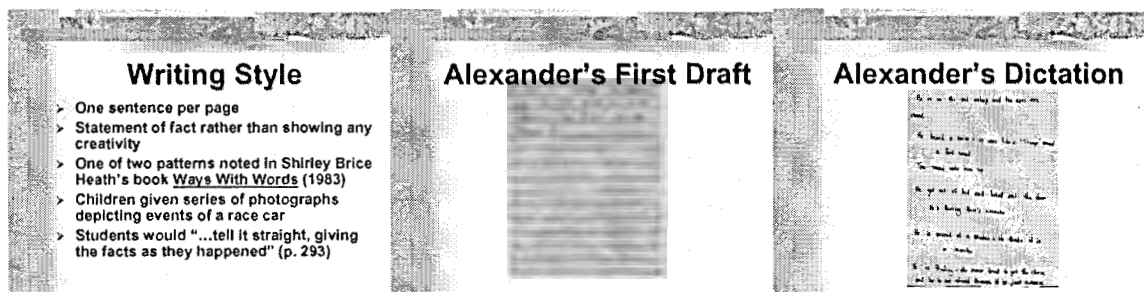


Figure 3.13

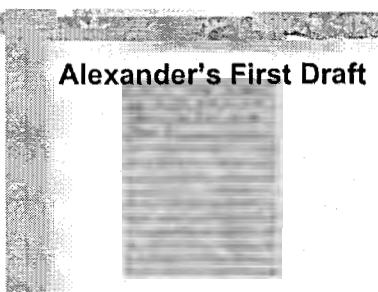


Figure 3.14

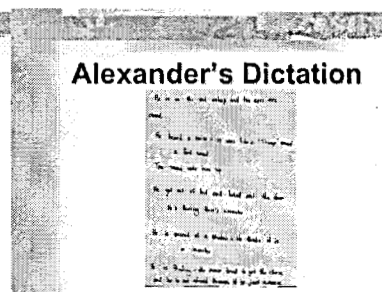


Figure 3.15

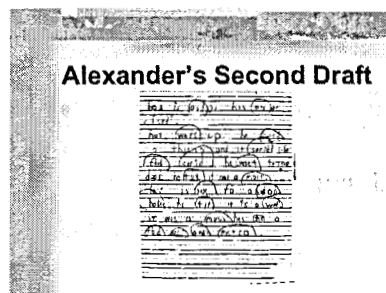


Figure 3.16

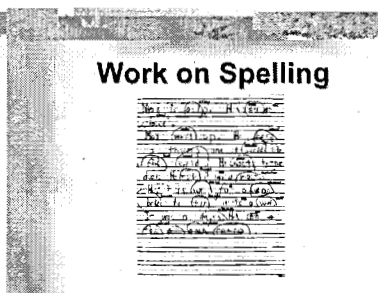


Figure 3.17

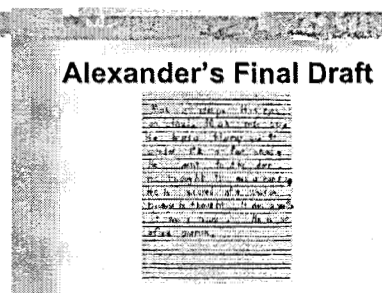


Figure 3.18

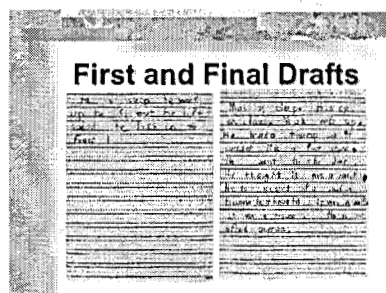


Figure 3.19

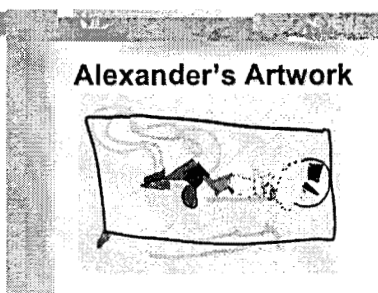


Figure 3.20

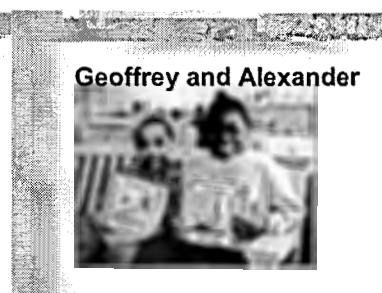


Figure 3.21

- I will conclude this session with a brief discussion of my overall findings from using a wordless picture book as a writing prompt for fictional stories to justify the use of this approach (Figure 3.22). I will tie this to the literature by citing Vygotsky's definition of the zone of proximal development and talk about how this applies to the use of my wordless picture book as a support for writing fiction (Figure 3.23). I will discuss what I found when comparing the children's stories and how my wordless picture book served its purpose (Figure 3.24). (5 min)

Overall Findings	Zone of Proximal Development	Quality of the Stories
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Successful strategy as an adult intervention ➤ Did not choose to write fiction independently after intervention ➤ Writing fiction appears to be within the children's "zone of proximal development" (Vygotsky, 1934/1987) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Determined by the "...difference between the child's actual level of development and the level of performance that he achieves in collaboration with the adult..." (Vygotsky, 1934/1987, p. 209) ➤ Children were able to write fictional stories with a support for the structure of the story and adult assistance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Each followed a logical progression of events ➤ Clear beginning, middle, and end ➤ Described a character's experiences to a point of conclusion ➤ Some similarities, but each brought some unique element to the writing

Figure 3.22

Figure 3.23

Figure 3.24

- I will inform the group that we will take a break early so they can have more time to work on creating their own wordless picture books and that I will briefly introduce a software program that will give them a tool for doing this.
- Total time = 50-60 min – 25-35 min of group participation, 25 min slides/writing samples (not more than 15 min of a talking head at one time)
- BREAK (15 min)

Overview of Session 4	
Time	Activity
5 minutes	Introduction – inform attendees that they will be learning how to use KidPix Deluxe 3 and the rationale for this use of time
20 minutes	Presenter demonstrates KidPix as attendees follow along and copy the procedures on their computers
65 minutes	Attendees practice/experiment with various drawing tools in KidPix Presenter walks around and offers support as needed
5 minutes	Presenter talks revisiting major points from the day
5 minutes	Individual volunteers – presenter will ask a few attendees to show what they have created in KidPix
5 minutes	Written evaluation – attendees will be asked to fill out an evaluation form about the workshop
Total time = 1 hour, 45 minutes	75 minutes of group participation, 30 minutes of computer demonstration/wrap up with key points
	END OF WORKSHOP

Table 4.1

Rationale for Session 4

Session 4 is the application portion of this workshop. As I stated previously, I want to do more than just talk about theory and my experiences, but go a step further to ensure that the attendees leave the workshop with a way that they can reasonably apply what they have learned and actually be able to create their own wordless picture books to use with their students. I will demonstrate how to use KidPix Deluxe 3 because it is a program intended to be used by children, so it is very user-friendly. I will spend about 20 minutes demonstrating how to use the various tools in KidPix while having the attendees follow along with me, so that they can learn what is possible with KidPix as well as how to actually use the program. I will specifically demonstrate how to create a backdrop and insert characters into the scenery because this is the easiest way to create simple illustrations for a story. I will remind them to make sure they think about proper story elements (Buss & Karnowski, 2000) and structure (Dichtelmiller, Jablon, Marsden, & Meisels, 2001) when creating their illustrations. Once this demonstration is complete, I will devote the remainder of the session to individual work and exploration of the program. I will walk around and make myself available to answer any questions.

I will have everyone stop working about 15 minutes before the session is over to revisit the main points from the day to bring closure to the day's events and make sure to remind the attendees of the main purposes of this workshop. I will ask a few volunteers to show what they created in KidPix so that the attendees can see the potential for variety in using this program. To ensure that I have done my job in this workshop, I will ask them to complete an evaluation form covering the day's events so that I can get feedback on whether or not the main objectives for this workshop were accomplished.

Session 4 (This last portion of the day will be spent in a computer lab.)

- Before introducing KidPix Deluxe 3, an art program that can be used by both children and adults, I will say, “I recognize that not everyone feels that they have the artistic ability or the time to invest in creating a book by drawing freehand on the computer. I have selected a drawing program that is easy to use and not expensive to buy. When I taught three-year-olds, they learned how to use this program without much help from me. I am going to show you some basic functions of this program to get you started, and then allow you the rest of the time to try it out and make your own books.” I will emphasize that the main goal of this portion of the day is to think about what their students need to help them write stories and/or write more words than they might normally. I will remind the attendees that it is important to incorporate basic story elements (characters, setting, problem, resolution) and structure (beginning, middle, end) and to keep it short and simple. (5 min)
- I will demonstrate (w/the use of a projector) how to get started in KidPix by double-clicking the icon on the computer desktop (Figure 4.1) and then signing in, as shown below (Figure 4.2).

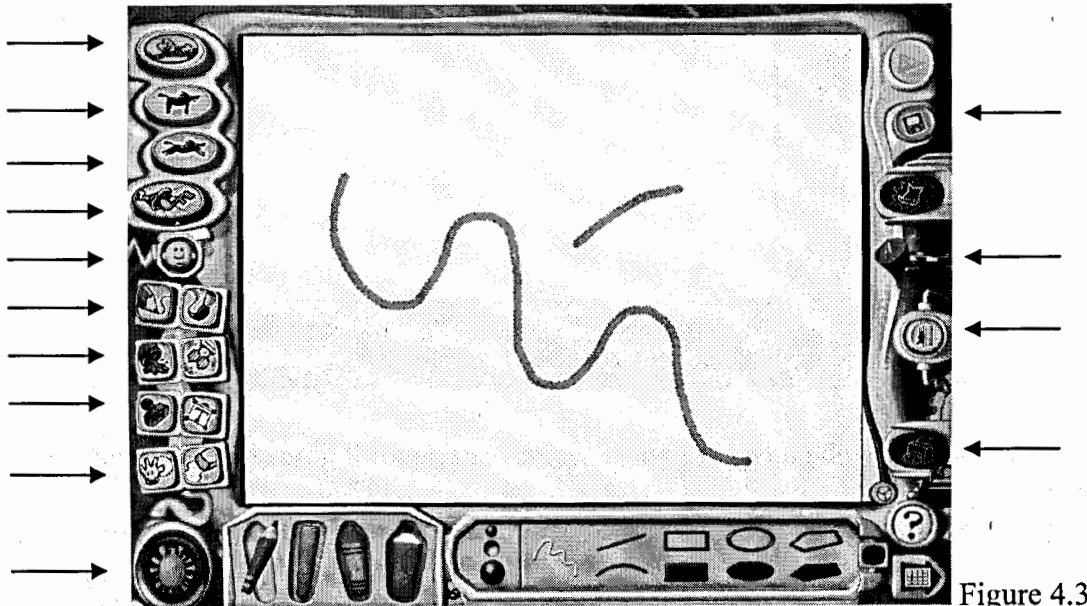


Figure 4.1



Figure 4.2

- Once they have opened the program, I will begin to demonstrate how to use the various drawing tools. I will use the mouse to point to each main button (see arrows pointing to the buttons in Figure 4.3) and click on the buttons to demonstrate what they do. I will ask the attendees to follow along and do exactly what I am doing so that they can not only see the various tool options, but can learn how to use them at the same time. (20 min)



- I will show the attendees how to navigate through all the choices for each main function using the up and down arrows (Figure 4.4) and have them do each step as I demonstrate it. I will repeat this process for each main function so that the attendees can see all the different tools they can use to create the wordless picture book pages.



Figure 4.4

- I will specifically demonstrate how to create a backdrop and insert characters into the scenery and have the attendees follow along with me, repeating each step as I demonstrate it. I will take them back to the scenery button (see button circled below in Figure 4.5) and click it.

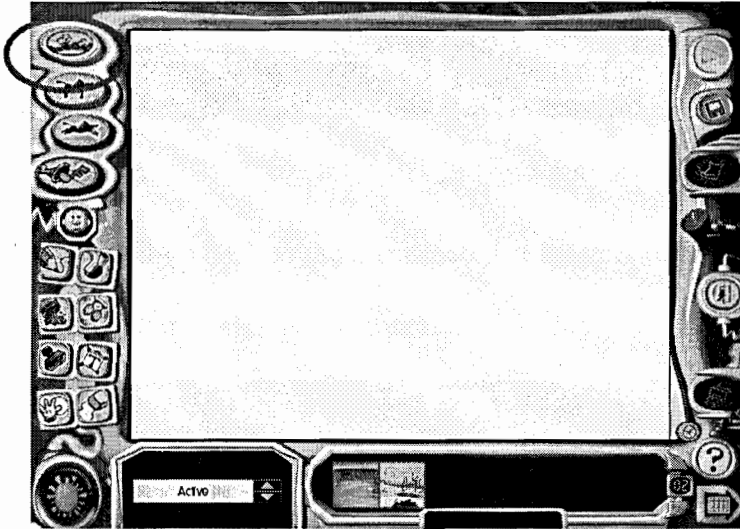


Figure 4.5

- Next, we will scroll through the choices using the up and down arrows (see dark circle on right in Figure 4.6) and choose an underwater backdrop (see white circle on left in Figure 4.6).

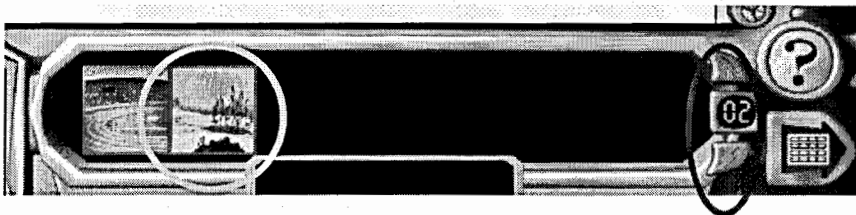


Figure 4.6

- We will click and hold the underwater backdrop image, drag it onto the large white screen (Figure 4.7), and release the mouse button (Figure 4.8).

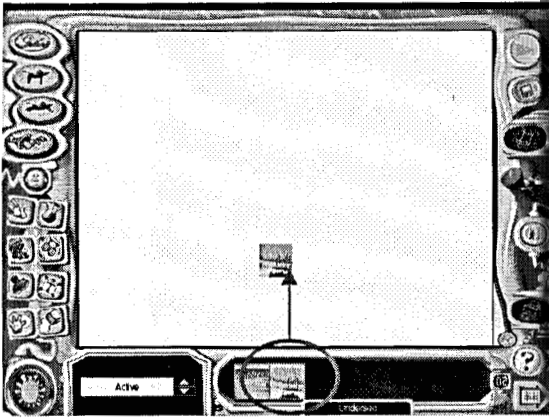


Figure 4.7



Figure 4.8

- Then, we will go back to the unanimated characters button (see circle in Figure 4.9) and click it to change the function.



Figure 4.9

- We will go back to the up and down arrows (see white circle on right in Figure 4.10) and scroll through until we find the killer whale (see dark circle on left in Figure 4.10).



Figure 4.10

- We will drag and drop the killer whale onto the underwater backdrop by clicking the image in the list and holding down the mouse button, then dragging the image onto the underwater backdrop (Figure 4.11) and releasing the mouse button (Figure 4.12).



Figure 4.11



Figure 4.12

- We will then change the size of the image by clicking and holding the arrows at either the upper left corner of the image or the lower right corner of the image (see circles in Figures 4.13 and 4.14) and moving the mouse toward the image to

make it smaller (Figure 4.13) or away from the image to make it larger (Figure 4.14).



Figure 4.13



Figure 4.14

- Lastly, we will rotate the image by clicking the reversal arrow at the lower left corner of the image (circle in Figure 4.15) to make it upside down or right side up (Figure 4.15), or clicking the arrow at the upper right corner of the image (circle in Figure 4.16) to make it face right or left (Figure 4.16).



Figure 4.15



Figure 4.16

- I will now allow the attendees to begin working individually so they may explore the various tools in KidPix. The rest of the time will be spent on independent work and I will walk around and offer support as needed. (65 min)

- I will close this session by briefly revisiting some of the major points from the day. I will remind the attendees that the purpose of making and using these wordless picture books is to get students to put their ideas down on paper, to encourage growth in students' written and spoken vocabularies, to stretch students to write in a different genre through scaffolding, and how the writing process can be applied to the use of these books. (5 min)
- I will ask a few volunteers to show the large group what they created and ask them how they would use it with their students. (5 min)
- I will obtain feedback about the day from the group through a written evaluation form (See Appendix ?) and ask if they have any comments or questions before we wrap things up. (5 min)
- Total time = 1 hour, 45 min – 75 min group participation, 30 min computer demonstration/wrap up with key points (not more than 25 min of a talking head at one time – this would largely be the computer demonstration)
- END

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APPENDIX A

Creating and Using Wordless Picture Books to Stimulate Fictional Writing in First Grade Students

Kathryn N. Thompson

Overview of Day's Events

- Background information on how project began and supporting literature
- Observations of developing story language
- Walk through interventions done with the children
- Show examples of children's work and overall findings
- Time to review/create wordless picture books

How did it all begin?

- Observing a student teacher...
- Most students were not writing fictional stories. Why?
- The biggest struggle appeared to be getting started with a piece of writing.



Three Questions

- What kind of behaviors does this child exhibit during writing time?
- What kind of writing does the child do?
- What experiences do you think contribute to this child's attitude toward writing?

Alexander

- Very friendly and social child
- Socializing disrupted his work
- Difficult time focusing
- Used many work avoidance strategies
- Sometimes saw him looking off into space with a blank piece of paper in front of him

Alexander's Writing

- Impatient in his writing – wanted to be done quickly
- Wrote personal narratives ("I like...", "I went...", etc.)
- Often wrote no more than one or two sentences without further prompting

Alexander's Experiences

- Supportive family
- Fine motor difficulties played a large role in making him resistant to writing
- Quick turn around in publishing his work was motivating for him to see a finished product and be more willing to write again

School Setting

- Public constructivist school
- Low-income neighborhood
- First year of operation
- Four classrooms: three-year-olds, four-year-olds, kindergarten, 1st grade

Classroom Setting

- Active experimentation and projects that follow children's interests
- Guided reading groups (Fountas & Pinnell, 1996)
- Writing about their activities
- Writer's Workshop



The Writing Process

- Writing is done in drafts
- Written work is reread, revised, edited, and rewritten (Graves, 1983)
- Conventional rules and spelling taught within context of children's writing
- Relieves burden of producing correct work up front
- Does not address difficulty of selecting topics for writing

Writer's Workshop (Calkins, 1994)

- Engage in writing process
- Students allowed to choose their writing topics
- Children at various stages in the writing process at the same time
- Individualized instruction
- Large group writing lessons conducted

Reasonable Expectations

According to the Work Sampling System, 1st graders should be able to:

- Draw on personal experiences to generate ideas for stories
- Hear a story read aloud and use it as a basis for writing a story
- Brainstorm with a friend concerning what to write about
- Write about going to a basketball game, staying focused the topic, and including some details

Reasonable Expectations (cont.)

- Make a web before writing
- Fold a paper into thirds and draw a picture in each third to help themselves clarify their ideas for the beginning, middle, and end of the story

(Dichtelmiller, Jablon, Marsden, & Meisels, 2001, p. 59)



Teaching Practices

- In line with existing literature and research
- Considered best practice by NAEYC for writing instruction (Neuman, Copple, & Bredekamp, 2000)
- Assessment tool supports teaching practices

My Lingering Thoughts...

- Many students seemed to struggle with what to write about, even when writing about their own lives
- Open-endedness of approach to writing instruction can be overwhelming at times
- Encourage students to get their ideas down on paper despite these difficulties
- Each time they go through the writing process, it improves their writing ability (Kostelnik, Soderman, & Whiren, 1999)

The Big Question

How do we get students to translate their ideas into written form, while alleviating some of the burden of topic selection?



What Alexander Needed

- Something to focus his attention on the writing
- A support or springboard for writing topics
- Something that would go beyond a story starter, which only give the students "a beginning sentence that children must finish" (McCarrier, Pinnell, & Fountas, 2000, p. 171)

Preschool "Readers"

- Observed three-year-olds flipping through picture books and "reading"
- Memorized parts of familiar stories and could follow the pictures
- Ability ranges from children labeling pictures with words to doing finger-point reading (Soderman, Gregory, & O'Neill, 1999)

Children's Sense of Story

- Picture reading is a precursor to using illustrations to decode unknown words
- Finger-point reading shows an understanding that the words come from the text and not the pictures
- "Children eventually 'read' books based on picture clues and good memories" (Soderman, Gregory, & O'Neill, 1999)

Where Literacy Begins

"Encouraging young children to tell their own stories and listen to the stories we can tell them and read to them is the most significant contribution we can make to ensuring that they become not just sufficiently literate, but passionately hooked on books and keen to write" (Whitehead, 1999, p. 43).

Early Abilities

- Combine experiences of adults reading to them with looking closely at illustrations in books
- Children talk about what is happening by interpreting what they see
- As they talk, they emulate how stories sound

Bring it Together

Could there be a way to draw wonderful story language and creative ideas from young writers that stems from skills that they possess long before they begin to learn how to write?

Benefits of Picture Books

- Oral communication and shared readings of books fundamentally important to the development of children's sense of story (Roskos, Christie, & Richgels, 2003)
- Learning to read and write stems from these early experiences
- Exercise knowledge of books and support language development with wordless picture books

Wordless Picture Books

- NAEYC and IRA recommend using wordless picture books to allow children to dictate their versions of the stories according to the pictures (Neuman, Copple, & Bredekamp, 2000)
- Draw upon children's knowledge of story language and structure
- Translate this ability to tell stories from looking at picture books into a written story

Scaffolding

(Wood, Bruner, & Ross, 1976)

- Topic selection
- Including a beginning, middle, and end for proper story structure (Dichtelmiller, Jablon, Marsden, & Meisels, 2001)
- Basic story elements such as character, setting, problem, and resolution (Buss & Karnowski, 2000)

Bring it Together

Could there be a way to draw wonderful story language and creative ideas from young writers that stems from skills that they possess long before they begin to learn how to write?

The Process

- Students selected based on previous writing samples
- Took an initial writing sample
- Worked with small groups introducing wordless picture books
- Worked one-on-one with each student during the writing phase
- Children presented their stories to the class

Initial Writing Sample

- Provided four short picture books from a series
- Child could choose one to use for writing
- Words were covered up
- Child was instructed to write a story by looking at the illustrations in the book

Lisa's Writing Sample

One day bear and rabbit went out to play. Look! said rabbit, there is some flowers over there. Let's go pick some for our moms. Rabbit looked up there was a tree up there and then sitting on the tree was a blue bird. Rabbit said let's go play that tree oh said bear and rabbit got down from the tree and started up a hill next to the tree and then they rode all the way down and then they layed down and watched the clouds. then they shipped all the way home the end.

Geoffrey's Writing Sample

To day it was Raining and we were playing in the park and when we got home we had some food we were up. Then we played with toys. We rid a book. We played with paper. Good night friends.

Alexander's Writing Sample

It's a good day for me
 The have know not the a story
 I have writing here
 and now the a good thing the
 there or play ing
 in of the box reading
 the playing with picar
 the some good boy to our

Small Group Work

- Brought in a variety of wordless picture books
- Did a picture walk through one book with each group (Tompkins, 1998)
- Allowed the children time to explore the other wordless picture books individually or with a partner

Roadblock

- Children were coming up with wonderful ideas
- Noticing many details in the illustrations
- Using appropriate story language
- BOOKS WERE TOO LONG!

What I Needed

- Books from writing sample worked well
- Short, with a story line
- SHORT wordless picture books with 4-6 pages

The Solution

- I made my own five-page wordless picture book
- Included a beginning, middle, and end for proper story structure (Dichtelmiller, Jablon, Marsden, & Meisels, 2001)
- Included basic story elements such as character, setting, problem, and resolution (Buss & Karnowski, 2000)

Page 1



Page 2



Page 3



Page 4



Page 5



Two Patterns of Writing (Heath, 1983)

- Two patterns noted in Shirley Brice Heath's book Ways With Words (1983)
- Children given series of photographs depicting events of a race car
- Students would "...tell it straight, giving the facts as they happened" (p. 293)
- Added details and created suspense

Lisa's First Draft

Ben the boy who
 (saw) (saw) he
 sat up he had had
 a big thump! Ben
 got out of bed
 and crept to
 the door thump!
 thump! Ben (saw)
 the door sally
 behind him then
 he saw a story
 sat off a mouse!
 But when Ben got
 closer he saw it was
 only a mouse it will
 tell you the go
 mouse and that
 is just what he
 did the end

Writing Style

- Very creative
- Inserted dialogue
- The second of two patterns noted in Shirley Brice Heath's book Ways With Words (1983)
- Added details and created suspense

Lisa's Final Draft

Ben the bear was asleep.
Suddenly he sat up.
He had heard a big
thump! Ben got out
of bed and crept
to the door. Thump!
Thump! Ben shut
the door softly
behind him. Then
he saw a scary
shadow of a monster.
"Oh no," said Ben.
But when Ben got
closer, he saw it
was only a mouse.
I will call you Mega
Mouse because of your
frightening shadow.
said Ben. And that
is just what he did.
The end.

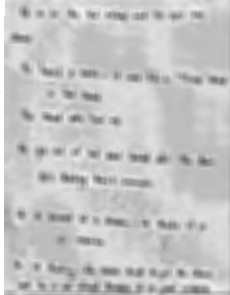
Writing Style

- One sentence per page
- Statement of fact rather than showing any creativity
- One of two patterns noted in Shirley Brice Heath's book Ways With Words (1983)
- Children given series of photographs depicting events of a race car
- Students would "...tell it straight, giving the facts as they happened" (p. 293)

Alexander's First Draft



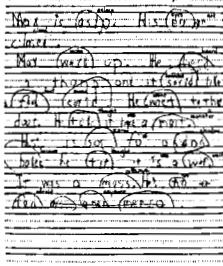
Alexander's Dictation



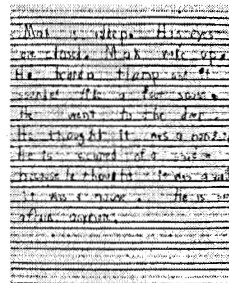
Alexander's Second Draft

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Suddenly he sat up.
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of bed and crept
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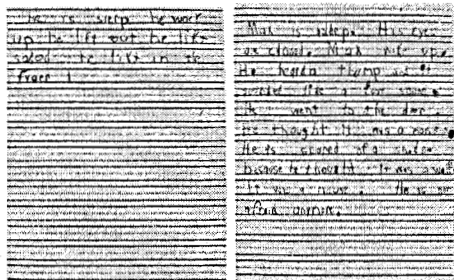
Work on Spelling



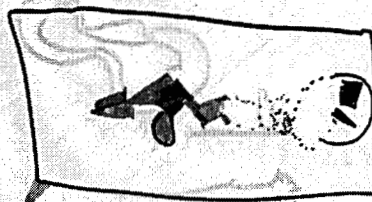
Alexander's Final Draft



First and Final Drafts



Alexander's Artwork



Geoffrey and Alexander



Overall Findings

- **Successful strategy as an adult intervention**
- **Did not choose to write fiction independently after intervention**
- **Writing fiction appears to be within the children's "zone of proximal development" (Vygotsky, 1934/1987)**

Zone of Proximal Development

- Determined by the "...difference between the child's actual level of development and the level of performance that he achieves in collaboration with the adult..." (Vygotsky, 1934/1987, p. 209)
- Children were able to write fictional stories with a support for the structure of the story and adult assistance

Quality of the Stories

- Each followed a logical progression of events
- Clear beginning, middle, and end
- Described a character's experiences to a point of conclusion
- Some similarities, but each brought some unique element to the writing

APPENDIX B

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- Writing about their activities
- Writer's Workshop



The Writing Process

- Writing is done in drafts
- Written work is reread, revised, edited, and rewritten (Graves, 1983)
- Conventional rules and spelling taught within context of children's writing
- Relieves burden of producing correct work up front
- Does not address difficulty of selecting topics for writing

Writer's Workshop (Calkins, 1994)

- Engage in writing process
- Students allowed to choose their writing topics
- Children at various stages in the writing process at the same time
- Individualized instruction
- Large group writing lessons conducted

Reasonable Expectations

According to the Work Sampling System, 1st graders should be able to:

- Draw on personal experiences to generate ideas for stories
- Hear a story read aloud and use it as a basis for writing a story
- Brainstorm with a friend concerning what to write about
- Write about going to a basketball game, staying focused the topic, and including some details

Reasonable Expectations (cont.)

- Make a web before writing
- Fold a paper into thirds and draw a picture in each third to help themselves clarify their ideas for the beginning, middle, and end of the story

(Dichtelmiller, Jablon, Marsden, & Meisels, 2001, p. 59)



Teaching Practices

- In line with existing literature and research
- Considered best practice by NAEYC for writing instruction (Neuman, Copple, & Bredekamp, 2000)
- Assessment tool supports teaching practices

My Lingering Thoughts...

- Many students seemed to struggle with what to write about, even when writing about their own lives
- Open-endedness of approach to writing instruction can be overwhelming at times
- Encourage students to get their ideas down on paper despite these difficulties
- Each time they go through the writing process, it improves their writing ability (Kostelnik, Soderman, & Whiren, 1999)

The Big Question

How do we get students to translate their ideas into written form, while alleviating some of the burden of topic selection?



What Alexander Needed

- Something to focus his attention on the writing
- A support or springboard for writing topics
- Something that would go beyond a story starter, which only give the students "a beginning sentence that children must finish" (McCarrier, Pinnell, & Fountas, 2000, p. 171)

Preschool "Readers"

- Observed three-year-olds flipping through picture books and "reading"
- Memorized parts of familiar stories and could follow the pictures
- Ability ranges from children labeling pictures with words to doing finger-point reading (Soderman, Gregory, & O'Neill, 1999)

Children's Sense of Story

- Picture reading is a precursor to using illustrations to decode unknown words
- Finger-point reading shows an understanding that the words come from the text and not the pictures
- "Children eventually 'read' books based on picture clues and good memories" (Soderman, Gregory, & O'Neill, 1999)

Where Literacy Begins

"Encouraging young children to tell their own stories and listen to the stories we can tell them and read to them is the most significant contribution we can make to ensuring that they become not just sufficiently literate, but passionately hooked on books and keen to write" (Whitehead, 1999, p. 43).

Early Abilities

- Combine experiences of adults reading to them with looking closely at illustrations in books
- Children talk about what is happening by interpreting what they see
- As they talk, they emulate how stories sound

Bring it Together

Could there be a way to draw wonderful story language and creative ideas from young writers that stems from skills that they possess long before they begin to learn how to write?

Benefits of Picture Books

- Oral communication and shared readings of books fundamentally important to the development of children's sense of story (Roskos, Christie, & Richgels, 2003)
- Learning to read and write stems from these early experiences
- Exercise knowledge of books and support language development with wordless picture books

Wordless Picture Books

- NAEYC and IRA recommend using wordless picture books to allow children to dictate their versions of the stories according to the pictures (Neuman, Copple, & Bredekamp, 2000)
- Draw upon children's knowledge of story language and structure
- Translate this ability to tell stories from looking at picture books into a written story

Scaffolding

(Wood, Bruner, & Ross, 1976)

- Topic selection
- Including a beginning, middle, and end for proper story structure (Dichtelmiller, Jablon, Marsden, & Meisels, 2001)
- Basic story elements such as character, setting, problem, and resolution (Buss & Karnowski, 2000)

Bring it Together

Could there be a way to draw wonderful story language and creative ideas from young writers that stems from skills that they possess long before they begin to learn how to write?

The Process

- Students selected based on previous writing samples
- Took an initial writing sample
- Worked with small groups introducing wordless picture books
- Worked one-on-one with each student during the writing phase
- Children presented their stories to the class

Initial Writing Sample

- Provided four short picture books from a series
- Child could choose one to use for writing
- Words were covered up
- Child was instructed to write a story by looking at the illustrations in the book

Lisa's Writing Sample

One day her and rabbit
went out to play
look! said rabbit
ther is some flowers
over ther let's go pick
some for our moms
Rabbit looked up ther
was a tree up ther
and ther sitting on
the tree was a blue
bird rabbit said lets go
play that tree oh seed
her her and rabbit got
down from the tree

and started up a hill
next to the tree and
then they rided all the
way down and then they
layed down and rocked
the clouds. then they
shipped all the way home
the end

Geoffrey's Writing Sample

To day it was Raining
and we wer slashing in the
pools and when we got dan we
wet bak home then we wub
up. Then we played with toys.
We rid a back. We playd with
papis. Good d' friends

Alexander's Writing Sample

It is a good day for rain
the horse brown not the a spring
the wing horse
and now the a crawling the
there or playing
the or in the box riding
the playing with piece
the or some good boy run on

Small Group Work

- Brought in a variety of wordless picture books
- Did a picture walk through one book with each group (Tompkins, 1998)
- Allowed the children time to explore the other wordless picture books individually or with a partner

Roadblock

- Children were coming up with wonderful ideas
- Noticing many details in the illustrations
- Using appropriate story language
- BOOKS WERE TOO LONG!

What I Needed

- Books from writing sample worked well
- Short, with a story line
- **SHORT** wordless picture books with 4-6 pages

The Solution

- I made my own five-page wordless picture book
- Included a beginning, middle, and end for proper story structure (Dichtelmiller, Jablon, Marsden, & Meisels, 2001)
- Included basic story elements such as character, setting, problem, and resolution (Buss & Karnowski, 2000)

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Page 3



Page 4



Page 5



Two Patterns of Writing (Heath, 1983)

- Two patterns noted in Shirley Brice Heath's book Ways With Words (1983)
- Children given series of photographs depicting events of a race car
- Students would "...tell it straight, giving the facts as they happened" (p. 293)
- Added details and created suspense

Lisa's First Draft

Ben the boy was
sitting. So when he
sat up he had had
a big thump! Ben
got out of bed
and crept to
the door thump!
thump! Ben (shut
the door sally
behind him then
he saw a story
sally and a mouse.
But when Ben got
closer he saw it was

only a mouse. "I will
call you Mega-
mouse" and that
is just what he
did. The End

Writing Style

- Very creative
- Inserted dialogue
- The second of two patterns noted in Shirley Brice Heath's book Ways With Words (1983)
- Added details and created suspense

Lisa's Final Draft

Ben the bear was asleep.	was only a mouse.
Suddenly he sat up.	I will call you Mega
He had heard a big	Mouse because of your
thump! Ben got out	frightening shadow.
of bed and crept	said Ben. And that
to the door. Thump!	is just what he did
Thump! Ben shut	The End
the door softly	
behind him. Then	
he saw a scary	
shadow of a monster.	
Oh no! said Ben.	
But when Ben got	
closer, he saw it	

Writing Style

- One sentence per page
- Statement of fact rather than showing any creativity
- One of two patterns noted in Shirley Brice Heath's book Ways With Words (1983)
- Children given series of photographs depicting events of a race car
- Students would "...tell it straight, giving the facts as they happened" (p. 293)

Alexander's First Draft

he was very
 up to the point he had
 seen he had in the
 frame.

Alexander's Dictation

He was very
 up to the point he had
 seen he had in the
 frame.

Alexander's Second Draft

he was very
 up to the point he had
 seen he had in the
 frame.

Work on Spelling

Max is sleep. His eyes
are closed. Max woke up.
He heard a thump as it
sounded like a foot coming
down. He went to the door.
He thought it was a mouse.
He is scared of a snake.
Because he thought it was a snake.
It was a mouse. He is no
afraid anymore.

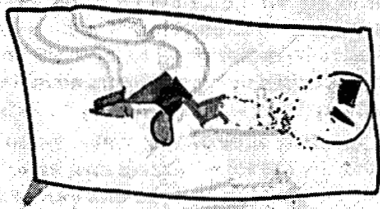
Alexander's Final Draft

Max is sleep. His eyes
are closed. Max woke up.
He heard a thump as it
sounded like a foot coming
down. He went to the door.
He thought it was a mouse.
He is scared of a snake.
Because he thought it was a snake.
It was a mouse. He is no
afraid anymore.

First and Final Drafts

Max is sleep. His eyes are closed. Max woke up. He heard a thump as it sounded like a foot coming down. He went to the door. He thought it was a mouse. He is scared of a snake. Because he thought it was a snake. It was a mouse. He is no afraid anymore.	Max is sleep. His eyes are closed. Max woke up. He heard a thump as it sounded like a foot coming down. He went to the door. He thought it was a mouse. He is scared of a snake. Because he thought it was a snake. It was a mouse. He is no afraid anymore.
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Alexander's Artwork



Geoffrey and Alexander



Overall Findings

- Successful strategy as an adult intervention
- Did not choose to write fiction independently after intervention
- Writing fiction appears to be within the children's "zone of proximal development" (Vygotsky, 1934/1987)

Zone of Proximal Development

- Determined by the "...difference between the child's actual level of development and the level of performance that he achieves in collaboration with the adult..." (Vygotsky, 1934/1987, p. 209)
- Children were able to write fictional stories with a support for the structure of the story and adult assistance

Quality of the Stories

- Each followed a logical progression of events
- Clear beginning, middle, and end
- Described a character's experiences to a point of conclusion
- Some similarities, but each brought some unique element to the writing

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APPENDIX C

- **How to get started in KidPix:** double-click the KidPix Deluxe 3 icon on the computer desktop (Figure 4.1) and then sign in by typing your name and clicking “GO”, as shown below (Figure 4.2).



Figure 4.1



Figure 4.2

- Once you have opened the program, you will see a screen that looks like Figure 4.3. The arrows indicate the various tool options.

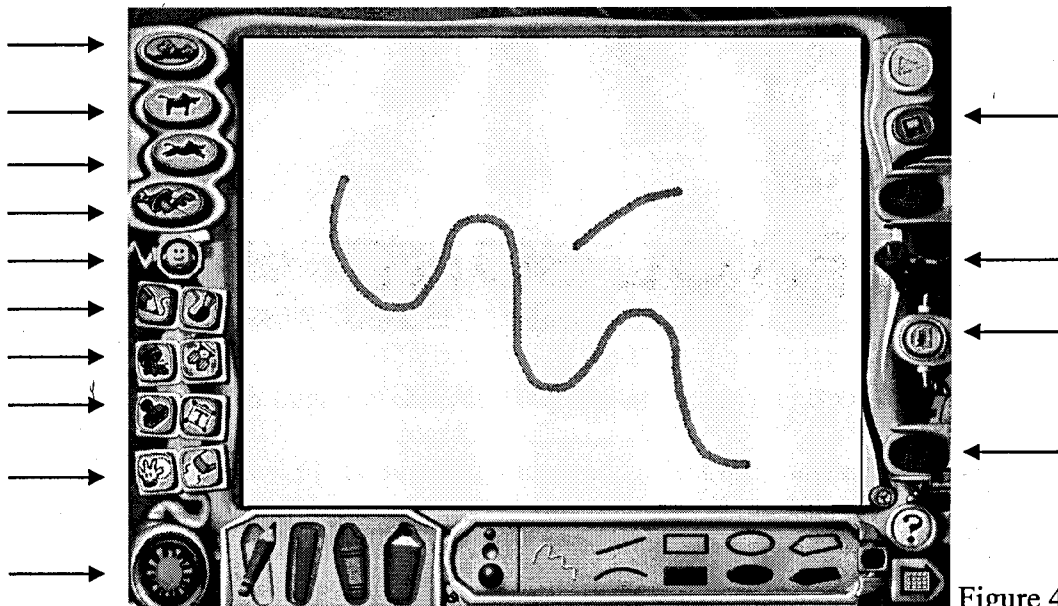


Figure 4.3

- **How to navigate through all the choices for each main function:** use the up and down arrows (Figure 4.4) to see all the different options that can be used to create the wordless picture book pages.

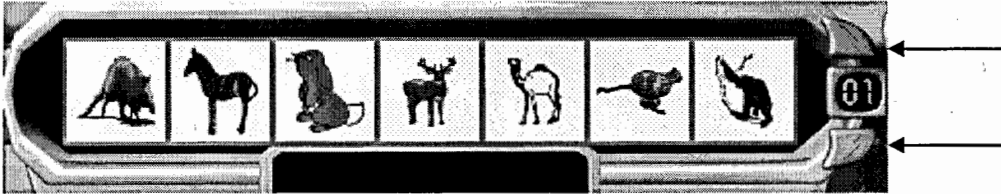


Figure 4.4

- **How to create a backdrop and insert characters into scenery:** locate the scenery button (see button circled below in Figure 4.5) and click it.

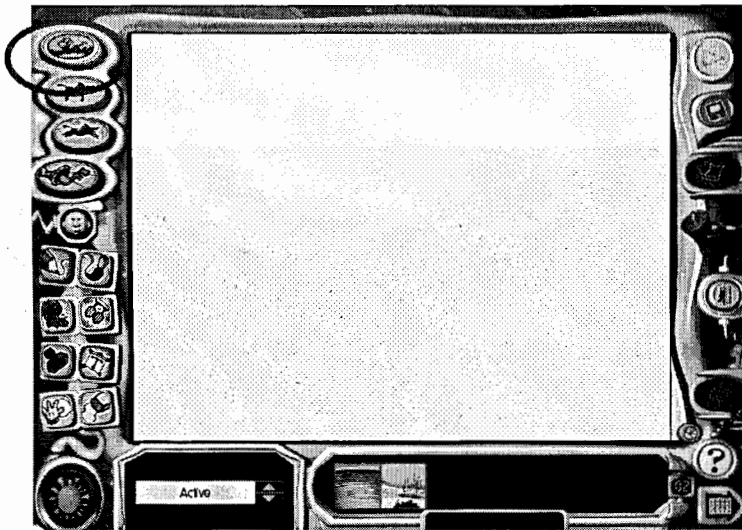


Figure 4.5

- Next, scroll through the choices using the up and down arrows (see dark circle on right in Figure 4.6). To practice, locate and select the underwater backdrop (see white circle on left in Figure 4.6).

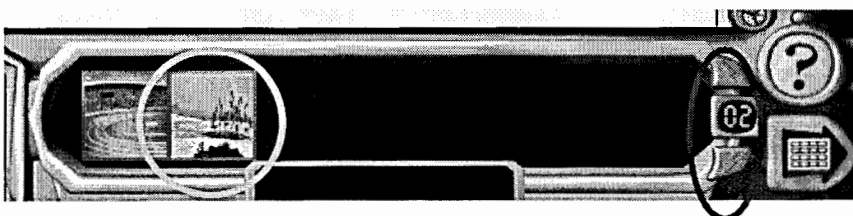


Figure 4.6

- Click and hold the underwater backdrop image, drag it onto the large white screen (Figure 4.7), and release the mouse button (Figure 4.8).

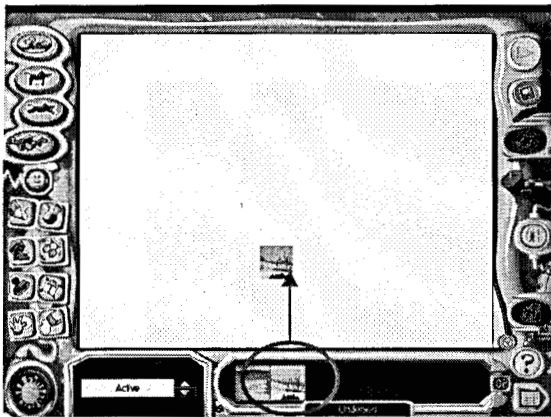


Figure 4.7



Figure 4.8

- Go back to the unanimated characters button (see circle in Figure 4.9) and click it to change the function.



Figure 4.9

- Go back to the up and down arrows (see white circle on right in Figure 4.10) and scroll through until you find the killer whale (see dark circle on left in Figure 4.10).



Figure 4.10

- Drag and drop the killer whale onto the underwater backdrop by clicking the image in the list and holding down the mouse button, then dragging the image onto the underwater backdrop (Figure 4.11) and releasing the mouse button (Figure 4.12).



Figure 4.11



Figure 4.12

- You can change the size of the image by clicking and holding the arrows at either the upper left corner of the image or the lower right corner of the image (see circles in Figures 4.13 and 4.14) and moving the mouse toward the image to make it smaller (Figure 4.13) or away from the image to make it larger (Figure 4.14).



Figure 4.13



Figure 4.14

- Lastly, rotate the image by clicking the reversal arrow at the lower left corner of the image (circle in Figure 4.15) to make it upside down or right side up (Figure 4.15), or clicking the arrow at the upper right corner of the image (circle in Figure 4.16) to make it face right or left (Figure 4.16).



Figure 4.15



Figure 4.16

APPENDIX D

Workshop Evaluation

1. What did you find helpful about this workshop?
2. What changes could be made to improve the workshop or make it more helpful?
3. Do you feel that you can go back to your classroom and apply the things you learned?
4. Was the computer demonstration useful/helpful? Why or why not?
5. Was enough time provided for reflection and participation?
6. Do you have any additional comments or suggestions?

Thank you for your time and feedback!