



The TEACHER CENTER of Broome County
Teacher Study Group Grant Award
Summer 2009-2010
FINAL REPORT
DOCUMENT PROCESSES AND OUTCOMES

STUDY GROUP TOPIC: Early Kindergarten Writer's Workshop

List of group members: Virginia Barren, Maureen Barrett, Elizabeth McAndrew, Anthony Montemagno, Renee Pierce, Alissa Vanluvender

The final report must be word-processed and submitted both in print and through e-mail using this form. Contact kharasta@btbooces.org for the electronic version of this form. Include information under each of the following headings.

Describe the initial objectives of the group noting any adjustments that had to be made as time passed.

Our group of five early kindergarten and kindergarten teachers and one reading teacher was interested in the impact of talking and drawing on the early kindergarten writer, and what writing workshop would look like for our youngest writers. We read and discussed the text, *Talking, Drawing, Writing: Lessons for Our Youngest Writers* by Horn and Giacobbe to think about how the authors' work in Boston might apply to our classrooms. Our objectives were to read and discuss the book with attention to how it supported the NYS standards for literacy in the early kindergarten classroom, to compile a list of read-aloud books that would support the writing lessons, and to discuss the drawing lessons and why they were important. We also hoped to develop a plan for further study throughout the upcoming school year. We were not able to examine student work samples, however we will be looking at these during the school year.

Describe the ACTION PLAN that the group followed.

Our action plan was to read assigned sections of the book before the two group meetings, to bring related materials to the meetings, and to participate in discussions of the book and writing workshop.

Describe how the action plan was implemented.

We were able to follow our action plan after a small adjustment of dates to accommodate vacation days. We

scheduled two meetings and all were able to meet as planned.

We read the first four chapters of the book before our first meeting. At the first meeting, we discussed rules for the group based on the Teacher Center handouts. We were able to divide up the responsibilities for gathering some of the background information in preparation for the second meeting. We discussed the assigned *Talking, Drawing, Writing* chapters in some detail, and we agreed to finish reading the book before the second meeting. A few additional reading materials were passed out at the first meeting, with the agreement we would read and be ready to discuss those materials at the second meeting. We designed a lesson planning template that would be shared across the district and as part of our final report.

At our second meeting, we discussed the remainder of *Talking, Drawing, Writing*, and then we were able to browse the children's books at Barnes & Noble using the "Books to Support" form we designed. Using this form made it easy to see which books would better support our lessons, and we began a list of books to use and/or order. Near the end of the second and final meeting, we used the Teacher Center "Ideas for Summarizing a Study Group Meeting" round robin reflection page to guide us toward reflection and to help us create notes for the final report. We found the Teacher Center forms very useful!

Evaluate the impact of the study group effort on teacher/student performance.
How has this study group changed you as a teacher? Do you anticipate that any of your teaching practices will have changed?

Meeting as a group during the summer was instrumental in increasing teacher comfort with writer's workshop and building the group's sense of self. We believe the opportunity to read a text that was age-appropriate for our young writers has set us up for success this year. Members of this study group will be each other's support system. Some of us are apprehensive about teaching students how to draw, but we understand the importance of the drawing lessons, and believe that the increased time spent on story telling and drawing will positively impact our students' growth in literacy.

Following are reflection comments were made as we used the sentence stem summarizing activity from *A Primer on Study Groups* by Patricia Roy.

- λ I learned a ton of helpful ways to teach drawing and make it meaningful for my students, and to connect it to writing and literacy.

- λ I relearned new ways to stretch out words and teach beginning sounds.
- λ Three months from now [October] I want to re-read the book, and put the writing workshop in place.
- λ I don't want to forget how important the picture is! You can pull language from the picture.
- λ The thing that puzzles me is the time line. We have to map it out.
- λ I enjoyed time to sit unhurried and talk to my colleagues. It was so different from meeting during the year and having to “start on Monday.”
- λ Today I accomplished spending quality time with my team, and set a goal of developing Early Kindergarten writing expectations using the NYS ELA standards.
- λ A new example of teaching writing is the *Talking, Drawing, Writing* emphasis on making the children's literature connections, and modeling everything.
- λ What would happen if we mix this with Lucy Calkins and Kidwriting? Can we incorporate the good parts of all the programs?
- λ I appreciate the gift of time, and slowing down the writing for our Early Kindergarten students. This approach is developmentally appropriate.
- λ I wonder if I'll get to be a better drawer, and I wonder what I'll take to Kindergarten for Lucy Calkins? I wonder what classroom aides can do to help during the workshop?
- λ I want to know if reading comprehension will improve? Will this improve student visualization skills? Will it improve our students' ability to make connections to their reading?
- λ I was surprised by how long the students should be able to maintain attention, and the amount of time spent on drawing faces.
- λ I want to use organization and modeling in my classroom because the EK student needs it. I want to use an anecdotal record sheet for each student in my classroom to record notes because this system should help me evaluate the workshop lessons and track student growth.

What evidence do you expect to see of student achievement improving as a result of your participating in this study group?

We will be looking for improved, detailed drawings, and believe these will lead to better writing. We expect to see more student self-confidence during writing time. We also expect to see improved oral language, a particular concern in the EK classroom.

What evidence is there that the objectives of the study group has/has not been met?

Every member of the group read the book and because of this we had rich discussions during our group time.

We have a rough plan for piloting an Early Kindergarten writer's workshop, with a materials list and staff support for the upcoming year.

We developed two forms for teacher use: the Books to Support form, and the lesson plan framework.

We committed to meeting frequently throughout the school year to bring concerns and share successes within the group.

Comment on the value of the study group process? Did it work for you?

We really appreciated the opportunity to work together during the summer without the interruptions and time constraints of a typical school day. We could think about the school year in its entirety, and everyone could come to the study group sessions. Our group respected the varying opinions, and there was time to discuss our differences to build common understandings. We liked the small size of the group, and feel that we were able to accomplish more with just six participants.

How will the study group information be shared?

Our information will be shared at team meetings at school, across the district with other teachers at our grade level, and in this final report to the Teacher Center. The forms we created will be uploaded to [Reading with Ms. McAndrew](#),

<http://nlcourseblogs.com/communities/msmcandrew/archive/2009/07/29/4160.aspx>)

which is a November Learning blog, and other internet sharing sites for teachers.

A final report is due one week after the last meeting or by August 13, 2009, whichever date is first. The report must be typed and double-spaced using the provided form. One copy must be submitted in print and the file must be submitted through e-mail to kharasta@btbooces.org. Return to **THE TEACHER CENTER of Broome County @ WSKG, BOCES #22**.