

The Beginning of Writing: Being a Writer in Grades K-2

Categories: Teaching Tips, Being a Writer, Implementation

Early writing develops on a foundation of oral language, drawing, and phonics instruction. As students become familiar with concepts of print, they begin to understand that marks on a page communicate meaning. They start to draw pictures, write symbols, and eventually form letters and sentences to tell their stories.

Uniquely designed for grades K-2 to support our youngest writers, the Being a Writer program honors that developmental process.

We've created a few activities that will help you explore your Being a Writer materials with an eye toward those developmental shifts in instruction across your own grade level and across grades. You might engage in these activities independently, with a partner, or in grade-level or cross-gradelevel teams.

ACTIVITY 1: Early Instruction in Basic Conventions of Writing

Step 1

Go to your Being a Writer Teacher's Manual and locate "The Beginning of Writing (K-2)" section of the Introduction starting on page xxii.

Step 2

Review the two formats of instruction: Guided Writing Practice and Shared Writing. Consider how these two types of writing will support your students as writers.

ACTIVITY 2: Stages of Early Writing Development, K-1

Step 1

Go to your Being a Writer Assessment Resource Book and locate the "Stages of Early Writing Development" chart in the Introduction.

Step 2

As you review each stage, think about your students as writers and consider where each student might fall within these stages of development.

Step 3

Grade K, go to the Individual Writing Assessment for your current unit of instruction and notice how the stages are used within this end-of-unit assessment.

Grade 1, go to the Individual Writing Assessment for Units 2-3 and notice how the stages are used within this end-of-unit assessment.

ACTIVITY 3: Cross-grade Comparison, K-2

This is one activity we highly recommend! It is a powerful way to see the unique development of writing instruction for beginning

writers.

Step 1

Prepare to engage in a cross-grade level comparison to see how the instruction builds from grade to grade by selecting a unit from the beginning, middle, and end of the year from your own grade level.

Step 2

Review and jot down what you notice about the instruction in the identified units. Be prepared to share your observations with your cross-grade level team.

Step 3

Get into cross-grade level teams that include at least one teacher from K, 1st, and 2nd grades.

Step 4

Discuss your observations across the beginning, middle and end of the school year units noting the differences and build of instruction. Consider the implications to teaching and developing your students as writers within and across grade levels.

Share with us what you have learned!

****WARNING****You might want to stop reading until after you have done the activities outlined above.

Here are some of the things we learned as we engaged in looking at the instructional build across grades K-2:

- There is a focus on building motivation and stamina for writing
- Students write about many different topics with frequent sharing
- There is a focus on development of early writing skills through shared writing experiences and guided writing practice including:
 - Directionality
 - Writing sentences
 - Using invented spelling
 - Incorporating high-frequency words
 - Capitalization
 - Punctuation
- There is a focus on learning how to generate ideas for writing.
- Students are provided with lots of choice.
- There is a focus on telling stories through words and pictures (especially in K).
- Students are introduced to writing in a specific genre.
- Students learn to reread writing and add more.
- Students learn to appreciate other people's writing and giving feedback.