Taking the “Argh” Out of Writing

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“Ugh…writing again? They’re probably going to make us write a paragraph or something.”
(Student, 2/16/05)

A. Background Information:

It’s 8:30AM and the sounds of excited 4th graders rushing down the hallway fill our ears. They burst into the classroom full of questions, conversations, and laughter. Their energy and enthusiasm continue until they look at the schedule for the day. “Reader’s Workshop! Are they going to make us write again? I hate writing!” The groans continue into social studies and science when we hand out the lined paper for written responses. Even before they read the questions they have to answer, they immediately protest the assignment at the hint of picking up a pencil. As Adrienne noted in her weekly reflective journal in late February,

Many times, I feel as though as soon as I take out any lined paper and show it to my kids, they react in a negative way, no matter what the writing assignment is. Is it the lines on the paper that overwhelm them? Or the writing? I also notice the kids’ reluctance to go back and adjust their writing after editing. I feel that the students do not take pride in or see the importance of their writing. For this reason, they have no motivation to do well. Even an excellent grade does not seem to motivate them to write. Many of the students in my reading group submitted excellent comprehension questions to me last week. They used a lot of great description and detail, and supported their fabulous and creative ideas with evidence from the text. The papers were very impressive! I wrote many compliments on all of the students’ papers. Many of them seemed excited at both their grades and my comments. I thought that this might change how the students’ reacted to when I handed out their comprehension questions this week. However, students did not express excitement at going back to their seats and again, doing very well in their writing. I noticed that one student in particular did not want to write more than the bare minimum. She is a great student, but she makes the process of writing look physically laborious to emphasize her dislike for it, even though she has shown she can do it well! Are my kids frustrated with writing, or with the perceived great effort they must put into it? (Chen Weekly Reflective Journal, 2005, 1).
Their apathy toward writing became a great source of discontentment to us. As we are teachers, college students, and humans, we are reminded of the importance of writing on a daily basis. Writing is one of the most basic forms of communication our society has and it is becoming increasingly important in our technology-dependent society. People are no longer getting together to talk about their ideas. Instead, they write letters, e-mails, and faxes.

Researchers have also addressed student performance levels in writing as a concern, stating that, “The need for improvement in all areas of writing is evident at both state and national levels…only partial mastery of skills and the knowledge needed for solid academic performance in writing is shown, therefore, the average (or typical) American student is not a proficient writer” (Improving Writing Skills in the Elementary Classroom, 2003, 10).

A 1998 study by the National Assessment of Educational Progress, or NAEP, found that 17% of eighth grade public school students scored below basic on a writing exam across the nation (NAEP 1998 Writing Assessment for the State of Alabama, 1999, 15). Scoring at the below basic level means that students do not “show a general understanding of the writing task they have been assigned,” are not “aware of the audience they are expected to address,” do not “provide supporting details,” and do not use accurate “grammar, spelling, punctuation, and capitalization” (NAEP 1998 Writing Assessment for the State of Alabama, 1999, 12). These are basic writing skills that we have been working on in our fourth grade classrooms this year. If most students are like ours and begin to work on these aspects of writing at least by fourth grade, should they not have come close to mastering them and score above basic on writing assessments by eighth?

Overall, the reports researchers give about the quality of our students’ writing are disillusioning. As educators and as members of a writing-dependent society, we know that it is vital for the future success of our students to help them become proficient and willing writers.

Because of our students’ disinterest (and even what we perceived to be hatred) of writing, as well as our knowledge of the importance of writing to our students’ future success, we chose to focus our inquiry project on writing. More specifically, we wanted to find a way to increase our students’ motivation to write and to silence the groans that accompanied our daily writing activities. We noticed that while our students were enthusiastic speakers and artists, once they had to put their ideas and creativity into written form, their enthusiasm vanished immediately. This greatly saddened and frustrated us as teachers. Taking our students’ strengths, or multiple
Howard Gardner, well-known educational researcher and psychologist, believes that all people have different learning styles that influence their abilities, performances, and attitudes toward specific tasks. These learning styles can be divided into eight categories, called intelligences. Through our classroom observations and research of Gardner’s theories, we determined that our students have strengths in the verbal/linguistic, interpersonal, and visual/spatial intelligences. According to Pokey Stanford’s 2003 *Multiple Intelligences in Every Classroom*,

Because of individual differences among students, teachers are best advised to use a broad range of teaching strategies...balancing strategies gives equal opportunity to the individual student who struggles with obtaining information through one intelligence and allows the student to use the strengths he or she possesses for learning (*Intervention in School and Clinic*, 2003, 82).

As educators, we felt that it was important to research and address these intelligences, as they play an important role in motivation and student performance. We considered these intelligences and our students’ strengths within them when planning how we would implement our inquiry question and project in both classrooms.

Our inquiry question evolved over time, from “How does introducing and implementing a variety of pre-writing activities affect our students’ attitudes toward writing?” to “How would implementing writing activities and projects instead of the more traditional comprehension questions affect student motivation to write about what they read?” To investigate our original wondering, we were planning on implementing speaking stations, which would allow our students to orally present and record their ideas as prewriting preparation. We felt this would reduce their initial frustration when presented with writing tasks, and capitalize on their demonstrated strengths in the verbal/linguistic multiple intelligence area. To begin carrying out our initial inquiry project in our classrooms, we needed to assess students’ levels of frustration and general attitudes toward writing. To do this, we created a survey that asked students about their attitudes toward writing, sharing their writing, being creative with their writing, and also about what pre-writing strategies might be helpful in facilitating the writing process. We also included questions regarding how much time students thought they spent writing in and outside
of school (See Appendix A for survey and results). As our students protested anytime they were assigned a writing piece, we expected many of our students to express frustration and negative opinions toward writing in our survey.

The survey was formatted so that the students could select from pre-determined scaled answers. For example, one section of the survey asked students to rate their feelings about specific writing tasks they had already completed in the classroom. The students could choose between 1 (“I loved it”) and 5 (“I hated it”). After collecting the surveys and tallying student responses, we found that the results of our survey showed much of the opposite. Our children expressed many positive attitudes toward writing and very few feelings of frustration on the survey. Thus, after completing our initial data collection, our results reported that our students did not feel the frustration we perceived them to be feeling in the classroom when completing writing tasks.

Our students did report, however, that they did not like writing about the books they read in class. The negative opinions our students expressed on the survey were mainly directed toward our Reader’s Workshop activities. Our classrooms had Reader’s Workshop time for 50-80 minutes a day, four days a week. During this time, the students would read an assigned book and respond to their reading. There were three different achievement based groups in each classroom. The books that the students read corresponded to the current unit of study. As we were involved in that particular book study over four weeks, each book was chunked into four different sections. For each section of the book, the students completed vocabulary activities, answered specific comprehension questions about the book requiring details and supporting evidence from the story, and wrote a journal with prewritten prompts about character, plot, or setting with an emphasis on making connections. These writing activities occurred throughout the week, and repeated in a slightly different variation when a new section of the book began on the first day of Reader’s Workshop each week.

As our students reacted most negatively to these writing activities, specifically the traditional comprehension questions, we decided to form a new inquiry question to address our students’ attitudes: “How would implementing writing activities and projects, instead of the more traditional comprehension questions, affect student motivation to write about what they read?” We felt that exploring this question would allow our students to complete activities that they might enjoy and relieve our frustration with our reluctant writers. To investigate our second
wondering, we focused on our students’ visual/spatial strengths as artists to increase their intrinsic motivation for completing writing tasks. Within this inquiry focus, we had several sub-wonderings, such as the following:

- Will the results of our inquiry project be different between the classrooms?
- Does adding an artistic component to a writing assignment make the writing aspect more enjoyable for students, or are students simply more willing to tolerate writing for the opportunity to be artistic?
- Is this idea of combining art with writing to improve motivation class-specific, or can this approach apply to other 4th grade classes in general?
- Are there some students that will hate writing, no matter what you do as a teacher?
- Do our children have different motivations than other 4th graders, or are there overarching motivations that affect all children at this grade level?

B. Inquiry Plan:

To explore our overall inquiry question, we incorporated our data collection into our daily classroom routine. As part of our Reader’s Workshop activities, we assigned book projects as a final assignment to be completed by each student, regardless of the book group to which they were assigned. The students were given the opportunity to choose their own book project from three ideas provided. Not only were they given the freedom to choose the book project, they were also given the freedom to write about whatever they wanted to within the book project guidelines. They also had the opportunity to enhance their writing with artwork. We observed student reactions carefully, and took anecdotal notes as students responded to and chose their book projects. We then combined our observations with those of others in the room to determine the students’ feelings in regard to the book projects.

Each classroom reacted differently. Classroom A expressed excitement and “oohhed and aahhed” during the introduction of the projects. No student reacted negatively to the project in any way. Classroom B was excited that they were able to choose their project, but in order to make their decision, they wanted to know which project had the least amount of writing (See Appendix H for anecdotal notes). We designed each project to have equal amounts of writing. However, each project presented the writing in a different manner. For this reason, students perceived the amount of writing to vary among book projects.
The three projects we designed were a character journal, a character scrapbook, and a plot pie (See Appendices G and I for expectations and student work). For the character journal, the students were expected to write three entries about events in the book from the character’s perspective. They also had to design a cover for the journal. For the character scrapbook, students chose five to six artifacts from the character’s life and wrote about the significance of each artifact to the book. Each artifact needed to be drawn or created and added to the pages in the scrapbook. For the plot pie, the students were to summarize the book by choosing the six main events in the book they read. They were then to write about each main event and create a matching illustration of the event discussed. Each scene, described both in written and drawing form, made up one of the pie pieces; thus, the plot pie had six total slices.

After the students chose their project, we had them complete a free-response survey asking them why they selected it (See Appendices B, C, and F for chosen book projects and survey results). We then collected the surveys and tallied student responses to look for any trends across the classes. In both classes, the majority of students chose the pie plot. In Classroom A, the scrapbook and journals were equally popular. In Classroom B, the scrapbook was the second most chosen after the pie plot with the journals being selected least often. Main reasons students gave for choosing their project in both classrooms were that “It looked cool;” “It looked like fun;” “It had the least amount of writing;” “It looked the easiest;” the student had either made one before or knew someone (brother/sister) who made one; or the student thought it would be fun to become the character from the book.

While the students worked on completing their projects in class, we made several observations. The students seemed to enjoy working on the projects in both classrooms. The students worked faster and wrote more clearly in both classrooms on the Reader’s Workshop Book Projects than on the traditional comprehension questions. They also communicated their ideas and shared their writing with other members of the class as well as their teachers. In Classroom B, students included many details in their rough drafts, which was unusual for this class. Prior to this experience, students struggled to include details in their writing. Both classrooms of students asked to use their free time to work on their projects.

After students completed their book projects, we gave them a free-response survey. The survey asked the students 3 main questions: “What did you enjoy the most about the book project?”, “What did you dislike the most about the book project?”, and “Are you proud of your
work?”. We collected the surveys and wrote down the main likes, dislikes and reasons for each. We then tallied student responses to see how common the themes were within each classroom and across both classrooms (See Appendix D for survey and results).

Out of the 33 students in both classrooms who participated in the post-book project survey, 20 stated that the part of the book project they enjoyed the most was the artwork. Free choice was the second most common answer. Other less common responses provided were “It was fun” and “I enjoyed the writing.” From this post-survey, we were interested in further investigating how student choice and the addition of artwork to writing influenced student motivation (See Appendices E and F for survey and results).

Several weeks after students completed their book projects, we had them revisit their feelings toward writing in a survey. The final survey asked students to choose from predetermined scaled responses, as well as answer free-response questions that asked students about how incorporating art and student choice into Reader’s Workshop influenced their writing and feelings toward writing. We then collected the surveys and tallied the results. We also noted common themes across the free-response questions and recorded how many students shared similar feelings.

One student sentiment we immediately noticed in this survey that we had heard echoed in previous surveys was that the students preferred having a choice in their writing. In fact, all of our students unanimously reported that they preferred having a choice in what they wrote. Although the students did not negatively rate the traditional comprehension assignments where they had little to no choice, responding “I enjoyed it” or “It was okay”, they were not united in their opinions of “I love it” on these assignments as they were on the Reader’s Workshop Book Project or on the Reading Journals, on which they also had a greater level of choice. We realized at this point that it was possible that the amount of student control, not the amount of writing that they were reporting, was causing our students to rate these assignments on a different level.

Students also responded positively to the addition of artwork to their book project, an aspect that was lacking in the other traditional comprehension activities. 13 of the 33 students said that adding artwork to their project increased the amount of writing they did, citing reasons such as “I wanted my writing to match my pictures” or “I had included things in my drawings that I had not included in my paragraph yet.” 27 out of the 33 students said that doing the
artwork made the writing more enjoyable. After looking at these survey results, we realized that art, in addition to student choice, was a motivating factor in student writing.

On that same survey, we asked students if they would be interested in creating their own pourquoi tale, which we had been analyzing in our study of Africa. A pourquoi tale is a story that explains why something is the way it is. Its main theme is focused on natural phenomena, and includes a lesson or moral at the end. We were interested in seeing how the students would respond to this question as the assignment was introduced as being purely written, not artistic (except for the creativity that went into the writing), and as a longer writing piece. The overwhelming majority of students said they were interested in writing their own. Students were unaware that we already planned on having them create their own pourquoi tale in the future. We saw the students’ future experiences with the pourquoi writing assignment as a final opportunity to further question our evolving hypothesis that students were not frustrated by the amount of writing on the assignments they were receiving, but were instead unmotivated by the lack of control they were given.

To conclude our data collection, we interviewed students one on one within our classrooms after students were partially through the pourquoi writing process. We asked the students: “Are you enjoying writing your pourquoi tale?” “Has writing your pourquoi been difficult so far?” “Have you enjoyed creating your own topic and storyline?” and finally “Are you looking forward to illustrating your pourquoi tale?” From previous data collection results, we anticipated that our students would enjoy writing their pourquoi tales, because they incorporated student choice into the creative process.

From our interview responses, our anticipations were verified. Students from classrooms A and B reported almost unanimously that they were enjoying writing their pourquoi stories and that student choice was extremely important and exciting to them. They also stated that they were enjoying having the opportunity to choose what they could write about because it made it their “own.” When asked if they would like to incorporate art to their stories thorough illustrations, the students again almost unanimously and enthusiastically responded “Yes!” In Classroom A, students said “Yes!” because they felt the illustrations would help explain their writing, better conveying their characters and storyline for increased reading comprehension. In Classroom B, students said “Yes!” because they said they enjoyed drawing.
C. Claims, Evidence, and Supporting Research

Claim 1: Student choice increases intrinsic motivation in students when given writing tasks.

Our Findings

We provided an opportunity for students to select between three projects. These projects assigned the same amount of writing but incorporated the writing in different ways and included different amounts of artwork. Students considered these elements heavily when making their decisions. Many chose their projects based on how much fun they would have completing it, as well as on how well the projects inspired initial ideas.

Through anecdotal notes and observation of students during book project times, we noticed an increase in student intrinsic motivation. One way that students showed this was through taking ownership of their work. One student in Classroom B stated that “I liked being able to choose my project because I could pick the one that I could do my best on. That way I could make it my own.”

During the final interviews, all students across both classrooms mentioned they enjoyed writing their pourquoi tales because they chose the topic and were excited to completely create their own story. In Classroom A, one student stated, “Yes, because you can use your own sparks and creativity.” Other students said, “You can be totally on your own” “Your story will be completely different from everyone else’s.” “You can control how the story goes.” Across both rooms, the majority of students said they liked having the freedom of writing about whatever they wanted.

Supporting Research

In *Building Classroom Discipline*, C.M. Charles discusses Marvin Marshall’s Discipline through Raising Responsibility. In this theory, one tactic that Marshall advises teachers to use in order to increase internal motivation in students is to emphasize the power of choice. Charles explains Marshall’s thinking by stating:

The power of choice-response thinking gives students control and responsibility rather than consigning them as victims of life events. Regardless of age, everyone likes to feel they have control over their life. When we are encouraged to make choices, we sense that control… By providing two, three, or even four alternative activities and letting
students choose among them, you increase their opportunity to select something that
appeals to them (Building Classroom Discipline, 2005, 102-103).

Similarly, James Levin and James F. Nolan discuss increasing student motivation through
addressing student interest, student needs, novelty, and variety in their book Principles of
Classroom Management. Levin and Nolan say that by addressing student interest, student needs,
and designing a variety of novel activities, teachers can increase student motivation. As
teachers, if we plan a variety of activities that incorporate many student interests and needs and
allow students to choose from these options, we address student interests and needs, thereby

Claim 2: Traditional comprehension questions may not appeal to students as they typically lack opportunities for student choice.

Our Findings

The traditional comprehension questions we asked our students during our Reader’s Workshop time were pre-written questions that asked students about setting, character, and plot. Students had no choice in which questions they could answer or in the format of their responses. Students had to answer all questions in full-sentence format on lined paper. The other traditional comprehension activities we did in our classrooms also did not allow for student choice of questions or response format.

The non-traditional writing projects and reading journals, with an emphasis on student comprehension of reading and connections, did allow students to have a choice in what questions they answered and also in the format of how they presented their ideas.

When we asked students to rank these assignments on a scale of “I loved it” to “I hated it” on the final survey, the majority of students ranked the non-traditional writing projects and reading journals higher than the other assignments that asked traditional comprehension questions. Only 2 students from both classes responded, “I loved it” to the traditional comprehension questions that lacked student choice. For the reading journals and Reader’s Workshop Book Project assignments, which allowed for greater student choice, that number increased to 8 students for the reading journals and 10 students for the Reader’s Workshop Book Projects.
We also noted in our classrooms that students verbally expressed positive feelings about student choice, and also assumed more responsibility for their work because they had chosen their assignment. As Katie wrote in her journal:

Many students pointed out they liked being able to choose the project. One thing about this was when a student would come complain to me about the project, I was able to say you chose the project. This would lead to a smile and a student who went back to work. By choosing their projects, students were given options. Overall, I feel to encourage writing students should have the option to pick. Most students agreed in their surveys (Gregson Weekly Reflective Journal, 2005, 1).

During the final interview, all students from Classrooms A and B reported that they liked having the opportunity to choose what they could write about and how they could write about it for their pourquoi assignment. They specifically stated that they liked having ownership of the story and the direction it took, that student choice allowed everyone to write about their own ideas, and that they enjoyed simply having creative freedom.

Supporting Research

Aside from the findings of Levin and Nolan, Charles, and Marshall, student choice has been found to have many positive affects on student motivation by other numerous researchers. The National Education Association website recently published an article by Forrest Stone entitled Student Motivation. Within this article, Stone discusses theories of motivation and then gives pragmatic suggestions to classroom teachers for implementing these theories. Stone comments on the connection between motivation and attribution theory, stating:

The idea here is that it makes a difference -- a big difference -- whether a student tends to attribute his or her academic success or failure to his or her own efforts, on the one hand, or to factors outside the student's control, on the other (National Education Association, 2005).

By giving students control over their learning activities, students’ successes are attributed to their own efforts and abilities. Academic success is seen as something the student controls, not something that is given (or not given) to the student by outside forces. By utilizing attribution theory in the classroom, Stone says that students will have an increased intrinsic motivation to perform well in the classroom. In the suggestion section, he says to “Group students by interest, topic, and/or student choice rather than by age, ability as measured by test
scores, etc.” Stone also advises that teachers “Give students opportunities for self-scheduling, self-regulation, and decision-making.” In this way, student motivation and accountability will increase in the classroom.

Carol Hammond, too, discusses the importance of student choice in *The Six C's of Motivation/Project-Based Learning*. The 6 C’s are Choice, Challenge, Control, Collaboration, Construction of Meaning, and Consequences. Choice and control are two of the C’s that go hand in hand. Hammond says that choice consists of student-centered learning in which the child determines the topic and end product of his or her work. Control is student “choice of subject matter studied” and also “the degree of the challenge (difficult) implemented.” Throughout our inquiry, as in Hammond’s, we found the first C, Choice, to be highly self-motivating for our student learners (*The Six C's of Motivation/Project-Based Learning*, 2002).

**Claim 3: Incorporating artwork into written assignments increases student motivation.**

*Our Findings*

We observed our students to have an increased level of enjoyment of writing through their emotional reactions to the projects, their statements during interviews, and on surveys. Students were eager to work on their projects in their free time throughout the day, separate from Language Arts time. Through anecdotal notes, students also were noted to verbally express excitement in both classrooms while working on the project activities. On the post Reader’s Workshop Book Project Survey, we asked the students what their favorite part of the project was; 22 students stated that the drawing was their favorite part. On the final survey, 27 students said that they enjoyed the writing more with the addition of artwork to the book projects.

*Supporting Research*

As previously stated in the background information section, in order to differentiate learning, a teacher must utilize the multiple intelligences of his or her students. One of Howard Gardner’s Eight Intelligences, the visual/spatial intelligence, includes being artistically or creatively inclined. As many of our students have the visual/spatial intelligence, we chose to incorporate it into our inquiry design. Therefore, students had the opportunity to include artwork into their writing assignment. We found that students were very highly motivated by this; the majority of students thought that the art was the best part of the assignment. By addressing our
students’ intelligences, we met their learning needs. By meeting their learning needs, we were able to increase student-motivation, as stated before according to Levin and Nolan.

Abraham Maslow established the theory of the Hierarchy of Needs, which also addresses the artistic inclinations of humans. His theory states that human beings are motivated by unsatisfied needs, and that they are naturally motivated to work to satisfy these needs. One of the needs is the Self-Actualization need. This need calls for fulfilling the self by seeking knowledge and aesthetic experiences. As we incorporated art, an aesthetic experience required in Maslow’s Self-Actualization Level of the Hierarchy of Needs, our students were motivated to express themselves creatively in our projects, according to Maslow (Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs, 1997).

Lastly, adding art work to our projects was effective in increasing student motivation because it is one of the basic needs of students. According to Judy P. Pollak, in A Workshop Approach to Reading and Writing: Why Does It Work for Middle Level Learners?, fun is one basic need of students (Reading Improvement, 1994, 145). As our students perceive art to be fun and like drawing, it was motivating for our students to include art in their Reader’s Workshop projects.

Claim 4: Adding artwork to writing helps some students express their ideas more clearly and also gives them more ideas for writing.

Our Findings

Students expressed a variety of opinions when asked if adding artwork to the project made the writing easier. Students were divided almost equally in answering this question on the final survey. Some sentiments that students expressed were:

“Yes, because the picture I wanted to draw was not in my paragraph yet.”

“Yes, because it gave me more ideas to write about.”

“Yes, it did. It made me want to explain my art.”

“Yes, because it helped explain what you wrote.”

The students that did feel adding artwork made writing easier said it was because writing and art have a reciprocal relationship. Students who said the artwork did not make writing easier said it was because it took more time and energy. The students who said that it did not make the writing easier focused on simply the writing and did not mention artwork, whereas the students
who said that it did make the writing easier addressed both writing and art in their responses. Perhaps because these students do not see a connection between writing and art, adding art did not facilitate the writing because they view them as separate and unrelated entities.

During the final interviews, students in both classrooms expressed interest in illustrating their pourquoi tales for reasons similar to those given before. All students in Classroom A cited connections between art and writing; they all wanted to add pictures to give the reader a better mental picture of their plot and characters. In Classroom B, most students wanted to include artwork because they enjoy drawing, however, some students did say it helped them picture the story in their head and would help the reader fully understand their plot and characters. Overall, the majority of the students across both classrooms wanted to include illustrations to enhance the written portion of their pourquoi tales.

**Supporting Research**

In a study by Margaret Bailey, students used art during their brainstorming, webbing, drafting, editing, and publishing process. Bailey found that the students used art in the form of clipart to serve as “icons to represent the structure and development” of their main story themes (Eyes on the Future, 1995, 139). She found that her visual learners often relied on the artwork to mentally organize their story plot, and then completed the writing later. She also noted that students used a visual sequencing of story scenes to recall the story. Like us, Bailey noted that students thought the project involving both writing and art was “‘fun’ or ‘cool’” and that students wanted to work on their projects at other times during the day not formally devoted to writing (Eyes on the Future, 1995, 142-143). In both our inquiry and Bailey’s, the students used art not as an aside to writing, but as a powerful tool to help motivate it, facilitate it, and make it more complete.

**D. Future Implications and Further Wonderings**

**Future Implications**

This inquiry project has showed us the importance of integrating student choice and differentiated instruction into classroom activities. Student choice leads to an increase in intrinsic motivation and fewer moans and groans about student work. Addressing student strengths and interests (in our students’ case, art) can also be an additional intrinsic motivator. As future classroom teachers, we know the importance of helping students to become
independently motivated to work on tasks such as writing. By allowing our students to take responsibility for their own learning and express themselves through the product of their learning, students can have more valuable learning experiences. We believe that providing student choice in classroom activities can have a positive impact on student motivation at any grade level in all subject areas.

Further Wonderings

Our inquiry has addressed several of our wonderings. It has also created new wonderings for us to explore in our future instructional endeavors. These wonderings are as follows:

• Are there some students who will simply never enjoy writing?
• Are our classes’ feelings about writing typical compared to other 4th grade classes?
• What other types of activities can be incorporated into writing to address the other multiple intelligences?
• Can students have too much choice in their educational experiences?
• What role does the teacher play in a student-centered writing curriculum?
• How can we make sure standards are addressed if we allow higher levels of student choice in the classroom?

Exploring these questions in the future will allow us to more fully understand our students’ motivations, the decisions they make as learners, and our role as teachers who have to meet student needs and address student interests in order to be effective in the classroom and meet state and national standards. By incorporating our current findings into our classrooms, as well as future formal and informal inquiry findings in our future classrooms, we will help our students become successful individuals in society, and allow us the opportunity to reflect on and improve our practices as teachers.
References


Appendix A: Initial Survey and Results

NAME:

4th Grade Writing Survey

Please read all directions completely before completing each section. Take your time and really think about your answers! Please answer honestly! You will not be graded on this!

Part 1: Please rank your feelings and responses to the following questions on a scale of 1-5.

1 is “I love it.” 3 is “It’s ok.” 5 is “I hate it.”

- Writing in my Monday Journal.
- Writing stories on my own.
- Telling stories to other people.
- Making up stories in my head.
- Writing about the books I read in class.
- Sharing my writing with my teachers.
- Sharing my writing with my classmates.
- Sharing my writing with my family.
- Writing paragraphs.
- Writing letters.
- Writing stories.
- Writing for school assignments.
- Writing in general.

1 2 3 4 5

1 2 3 4 5

1 2 3 4 5

1 2 3 4 5

1 2 3 4 5

1 2 3 4 5

1 2 3 4 5

1 2 3 4 5

1 2 3 4 5

1 2 3 4 5
Part 2: Please list the following writing activities in order from favorite to least favorite. Write 5-6 words as to why you chose this one.

Shoe Story Ben Franklin Charm Bracelet/Postage Stamp
Hershey Letter Friendly Letter PA State Quarter Monday Journals
Reading Journals

1._________________________________________________________________

2._________________________________________________________________

3._________________________________________________________________

4._________________________________________________________________

5._________________________________________________________________

6._________________________________________________________________

7._________________________________________________________________

Part 3: Please circle “never”, “sometimes”, or always” as your answer to the following questions.

*How often do you:*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Never</th>
<th>Sometimes</th>
<th>Always</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Write in your free time</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Write outside of school</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Write for fun</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feel frustrated when writing</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don’t know what to write about</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feel like you need more information before writing</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Part 4: Please circle “Not at all” “Maybe” or “Definitely” for each answer.

Would you be interested in:
- Researching before writing? Not at all Maybe Definitely
- Talking with another person before writing? Not at all Maybe Definitely
- Talking with a group of people before writing? Not at all Maybe Definitely
- Drawing before writing? Not at all Maybe Definitely
- Listening to a story about what you will be writing about before writing? Not at all Maybe Definitely

Part 5: Please respond to the following questions on a piece of tablet paper.

1. What kind of setting do you think you do your best writing in?
2. What is your favorite part about writing?
3. What is your least favorite part about writing?
* Each number represents a specific student in either Classroom A or B throughout all surveys. Total number of students may vary by survey due to attendance and omission of questions.*

Initial Survey Results

Part 1:
Writing Monday Journals:
N/A: 2A
1: 9A, 5A, 16A, 12B
2: 8A, 4A, 18A, 7A, 6A, 17A, 1A, 1B, 16B, 5B
4: 6B, 14A, 11A, 17B, 4B
5:

Writing stories on my own:
1: 2A, 7A, 17A, 16A, 8B, 5B, 1B, 12B, 7B, 10B
2: 10A, 18A, 9A, 5A, 4B, 15B
4: 16B, 6B, 2B
5: 11A, 3B

Telling stories to other people:
N/A: 16A
1: 2A, 9A, 14A, 6A, 16B, 14B
3: 18A, 6B, 3B, 12B, 17B, 10B
4: 10A, 11A, 1A, 1B, 4B, 9B
5: 15B

Making up stories in my head:
1: 10A, 2A, 18A, 9A, 16A, 1A, 5B, 3B, 12B, 9B
2: 4A, 15A, 6A, 17A, 11B, 7B, 10B
4: 16B, 14B, 15B, 2B
5: 8B, 6B, 17B

Writing about books I read in class:
1: 8A, 16A, 8B
2: 2A, 11A, 12B, 14B, 9B
3: 10A, 4A, 9A, 7A, 6A, 17A, 1A, 5B, 17B, 4B, 7B, 10B, 15B, 2B
5:

Sharing My Writing with My Teachers:
1: 2A, 5A, 16B, 8B, 1B, 12B
4: 11A
5:

Sharing my writing with my classmates:
1: 8A, 10A, 16B, 1B, 12B, 14B
2: 4A, 2A, 18A, 6A, 17A, 5A, 1A
5: 7A, 15B

Sharing my writing with my family:
N/A: 6A
3: 8A, 4A, 7A, 1A, 16B, 13B, 6B, 3B, 17B, 10B
4: 3B
5: 2B

Writing paragraphs:
1: 2A, 1A, 8B, 1B
4: 10A, 15A, 11A, 13B, 6B, 3B
5: 14A, 16B, 15B, 9B

Writing letters:
N/A: 14A
1: 4A, 2A, 9A, 3A, 16B, 11B, 8B, 1B
2: 10A, 18A, 6A, 17A, 16A, 5B, 4B, 10B, 14B, 2B
4: 11A, 1A, 6B, 17B, 9B
5: 8A

Writing stories:
1: 10A, 4A, 2A, 9A, 7A, 17A, 11B, 8B, 5B, 1B, 12B, 4B, 7B, 15B
2: 6A, 1A, 3A, 10B, 14B
3: 8A, 18A, 16A, 13B, 17B
4: 15A, 5A, 16B, 6B, 3B, 2B, 9B
5: 14A, 11A

Writing for school assignments:
1: 10A, 16A
3: 18A, 15A, 5A, 8B, 5B, 7B, 10B, 2B
4: 7A, 16B, 13B, 1B, 6B, 3B, 17B, 9B
5: 8A
Writing in general:
2: 9A, 17A, 3A, 11B, 5B, 1B, 2B
4: 11A, 6B
5: 15B, 9B

Part 3:
Write in your free time:
A: 2A, 12B

Write outside of school:
N: 10A, 3A
A: 12B

Write for fun:
N: 8A, 18A, 16A, 11A, 1A, 3A, 3B,
A: 2A, 16B, 8B, 12B, 7B,

Feel frustrated when writing:
N: 8A, 4A, 2A, 16A, 11B, 8B, 5B, 4B, 7B, 10B, 14B
A: 14A, 11A, 9B

Don’t know what to write about:
N/A: 16B
N: 16A, 1A, 11B, 8B, 5B, 12B
A: 18A, 14A, 13B, 1B, 3B, 10B, 9B

Feel like you need more information before writing:
N: 8A, 4A, 11A, 3A, 11B, 8B, 5B, 12B, 7B, 15B
A: 15A, 1A
Part 4:
Research before writing:
N: 12B, 15B
D: 8A, 2A, 18A, 9A, 11A, 9B, 8B

Talking with another person:
N: 4A, 8B, 5B, 12B, 4B, 7B,
D: 10A, 2A, 15A, 16B, 1B, 3B

Talking with a group of people:
D: 8A, 7A

Drawing before writing:
N/A: 1A
D: 2A, 7A, 6A, 3A, 13B, 3B, 12B

Listening to story:
N: 3A, 5B, 7B
M: 8A, 5A, 10A, 4A, 17A, 2A, 9A, 7A, 15A
Appendix B: Book Project Selection List

Pie Plot

1A 1B
2A 2B
3A 3B
4A 4B
5A 5B
6A 6B
7A 7B
8A 8B
9A 9B
10A 10B

Character Scrapbook

11A 11B
12A 12B
13A 13B
14A 14B
15B

Character Journal

15A 16B
16A 17B
17A
18A
Appendix C: Pre-Reader’s Book Project Survey and Results

Name:__________________________________

Project:__________________________________

Why did you choose the project you did?

______________________________________________________________________________

______________________________________________________________________________

______________________________________________________________________________

______________________________________________________________________________

______________________________________________________________________________

______________________________________________________________________________

______________________________________________________________________________
Pre-Reader’s Book Project Survey Results

**Pie Plot:**
Most Interesting: 1A, 2A, 8B

Most Fun: 1A, 3A, 4A, 5A, 6A, 1B, 3B, 4B, 5B, 6B, 7B, 9B

Like writing and drawing: 1A, 1B, 5B, 7B

Like drawing: 3A, 7A, 2B, 3B

Final product looks “cool”: 4A, 8A, 3B

Never done it before: 9A, 5A

Had done it before: 1B, 4B,

Had seen someone who had done it before/done similar things: 10A, 6A

Have things to write about: 9A, 2A, 4B, 5B, 7B, 8B, 10B

Looked easy: 10A, 8A, 2B, 6B, 9B, 10B

Didn’t look easy: 5A

Little writing involved: 3B, 6B

**Character Scrapbook:**
Didn’t want to write much: 11A

Looked easy: 11A


Like scrapbooking: 15B

Get to draw/cut out: 12A, 13A, 14A, 11B, 12B

Looked cool: 11B

Gives freedom: 12B

Required fair amount of writing: 12B

Balanced writing and artwork: 13B
**Character Journal:**
Character in book had journal: 15A, 16B

Would like to have diary/journal: 16A

Have things to write about: 15A, 17A, 18A, 16B, 17B

Could write about interesting things: 17A, 18A, 17B

Wanted to write from character’s perspective: 17B

Had most writing: 18A

Looks easy: 16A

Want to improve my writing: 16A

Looked fun: 16B, 17B

Option of adding illustrations: 17B
Appendix D: Reader’s Workshop Book Project Post Survey and Results

What did you like best about doing the project?

What did you dislike most about doing the project?

After doing your project, do you think you would have liked to do another one of the projects more?

Are you proud of your project? Why or why not?
Reader’s Workshop Book Project Post Survey Results

**12A, 13A, 8B, N/A**

*What did you like best about doing the project?*

Finishing it- 11A  
Writing it- 15A, 17A, 5A, 15B  
Brainstorming ideas- (6A), 16A  
Free choice- 9A, 4A, 1B, (4B), 5B  
Able to pretend- (15A), (17A)  
Writing and drawing- 18A, (1B)  
It was easy- (2B), (3B)  
Enjoyed reading the book- (5B),  
It was fun- (5B), 6B, 7B, 12B  
It was a challenge- (7B)  
It was something different- 13B  
Character’s point of view- 16B, 17B

*What did you dislike most about doing the project?*

It took me a long time to do it- 11A, 1B, 10B  
There was not enough time to do it- 15A, 1A, 12B  
Rewriting rough draft- 18A, 2A, 15B, 16B,  
Writing- 14A, 16A, 3A, 2B, 9B, 13B, (14B), 17B  
Drawing- 14B  
Sharpie-ing- 10A, 8A, 3B, 5B, 11B  
Assembling the project- 17A, 12B  
Not enough choice- 4A, 13B  
Nothing- 6A, 9A, 7A, 5A, 7B  
Narrowing down content- 4B  
Made me think- 6B  
Seemed hard- 14B

*After doing your project, do you think you would have liked to do another one of the projects more?*

Yes- 8A, 16A, 2A, 4A, 4B, 5B, 7B, 12B, 16B, 17B  
(They all looked fun!)  
(Best choice for them)
Are you proud of your project?

No- 11A

Why or why not?

No because…
It took me a long time to finish it- 11A

Yes because…
I worked hard on it- 18A, 10A, 9A, 5A, (3A) 1B, 2B, 4B, 6B, 10B, 14B, 15B 16B, (17B),
It looks good- 14A, (17A), 4A, 3A, (2B), 12B, 13B, 17B
I did it by myself- (14A), 3B
I did my best work- 6A, (2B), 5B
I did a good job- (6A), (9A), (10A), 8A, 15A, 7A, 17A, 1A, 5B, 6B, 7B, 12B
It was fun to do- 16A, (15A), 5A, (5B), 9B, 13B
Appendix E: Final Writing Survey and Results

NAME:__________________________________

Directions: Please answer the following questions honestly.

Part 1: Circle the best answer.

How did you feel writing about the following:

1. Chapter outlines and vocabulary in reading groups
   I loved it.     I enjoyed it.      It was okay.      I didn’t like it.     I hated it.

2. Comprehension questions
   I loved it.     I enjoyed it.      It was okay.      I didn’t like it.     I hated it.

3. Reading journals
   I loved it.     I enjoyed it.      It was okay.      I didn’t like it.     I hated it.

4. Reader’s Workshop book projects
   I loved it.     I enjoyed it.      It was okay.      I didn’t like it.     I hated it.

5. Pourquoi story maps
   I loved it.     I enjoyed it.      It was okay.      I didn’t like it.     I hated it.

6. Kofi postcards
   I loved it.     I enjoyed it.      It was okay.      I didn’t like it.     I hated it.

How hard was it for you to write the following:

1. Chapter outlines and vocabulary in reading groups
   It was easy.    It was ok.    It was hard.    I had a very difficult time.

2. Comprehension questions
   It was easy.    It was ok.    It was hard.    I had a very difficult time.

3. Reading journals
   It was easy.    It was ok.    It was hard.    I had a very difficult time.

4. Reader’s Workshop book projects
   It was easy.    It was ok.    It was hard.    I had a very difficult time.

5. Pourquoi story maps
   It was easy.    It was ok.    It was hard.    I had a very difficult time.

6. Kofi postcard
   It was easy.    It was ok.    It was hard.    I had a very difficult time.
Part 2: Please use complete sentences to answer the following questions. On Other Side

Which of the above projects made you really concentrate on the details of the story? Why?

Did adding art to your writing encourage you to write more or did you spend more time working on the art?

Did the artwork make you enjoy the writing more?

Did the artwork make the writing easier?

Did you enjoy having the opportunity to choose your journal topic and reading workshop book projects?

Would you be interested in writing your own Pourquoi tale after reading the ones in class? Explain what you would like and dislike.
Final Writing Survey Results

How did you feel writing about the following:

1. Chapter Outlines and Vocabulary in Reading Groups.
   I loved it-
   It was okay- 6A, 11A, 12A, 9A, 3A, 18A, 10A, 1B, 2B, 3B, 4B, 5B, 6B, 7B, 9B, 10B, 11B, 12B, 13B
   I didn’t like it-
   I hated it-
   No Answer: 13A

2. Comprehension Questions.
   I loved it- 8B, 14B
   I enjoyed it- 6A, 9A, 16A, 17A, 1A, 10A, 1B, 5B, 7B, 11B, 12B, 17B
   I didn’t like it- 6B
   I hated it-

3. Reading Journals.
   I loved it- 1A, 7A, 16A, 8B, 12B, 15B, 16B, 17B
   I enjoyed it- 6A, 9A, 17A, 18A, 13A, 1B, 4B, 5B, 7B, 11B
   It was okay- 15A, 8A, 11A, 10A, 12A, 3A, 4A, 5A, 2B, 9B, 14B
   I didn’t like it- 3B, 6B, 10B, 13B
   I hated it-

4. Reader’s Workshop Book Projects.
   I loved it- 1A, 6A, 8A, 16A, 10A, 13A, 1B, 12B, 5B, 7B
   It was okay- 12A, 9A, 6B, 10B, 11B, 13B, 15B, 17B
   I didn’t like it- 11A
   I hated it-

5. Pourquoi Story Maps.
   I loved it- 16A, 10A, 1B, 8B, 12B, 14B
   I enjoyed it- 6A, 15A, 8A, 11A, 9A, 1A, 17A, 2B, 5B, 7B, 9B, 10B, 16B
   It was okay- 12A, 7A, 3A, 4A, 5A, 3B, 6B, 11B, 13B, 17B
   I didn’t like it- 4B, 15B
   I hated it-
   Absent/No Answer: 18A, 13A

I loved it- 5A, 6A, 8A, 16A, 17A, 4A, 8B
It was okay- 7A, 1A, 2B, 7B, 9B, 10B, 11B, 13B,
I didn’t like it- 11A, 6B, 14B
I hated it-

How hard was it for you to write the following:
1. Chapter Outlines and Vocabulary in Reading Groups.

It was easy- 10A, 18A, 7B, 8B, 12B, 15B
It was okay- 5A, 3A, 4A, 6A, 15A, 8A, 1A, 11A, 12A, 8A, 7A, 17A, 1B, 3B, 4B, 6B, 9B, 10B, 11B, 13B, 14B, 16B, 17B
It was hard- 16A
I had a very difficult time-

No Answer: 13A, 2B, 5B

2. Comprehension Questions.

It was easy- 15A, 18A, 5B, 10B, 12B, 14B, 16B
It was hard- 1A
I had a very difficult time-

3. Reading Journals.

It was easy- 17A, 6A, 16A, 4A, 10A, 5B, 8B, 15B, 17B
It was hard- 11A, 10B, 16B
I had a very difficult time-

4. Reader’s Workshop Book Projects.

It was easy- 6A, 15A, 8A, 13A, 16A, 10A, 2B, 3B, 4B, 7B, 8B, 9B, 12B
It was okay- 5A, 3A, 17A, 12A, 9A, 7A, 4A, 18A, 1B, 5B, 6B, 10B, 11B, 13B, 15B, 17B
It was hard- 11A, 1A, 14B, 16B
I had a very difficult time-
5. Pourquoi Story Maps.

It was easy- 15A, 8A, 16A, 4A, 10A, 1B, 2B, 5B, 7B, 8B, 9B, 14B  
It was hard- 3A, 1A, 4B  
I had a very difficult time-  
Absent/ No Answer:  18A, 13A


It was easy- 6A, 15A, 8A, 17A, 4A, 9A, 16A, 1B, 3B, 5B, 8B, 9B, 12B, 16B,  
It was okay- 5A, 12A, 7A, 3A, 13A, 10A, 1A, 18A, 2B, 4B, 6B, 7B, 10B, 13B, 14B, 15B, 17B  
It was hard- 11A, 11B  
I had a very difficult time-  

*Which of the above projects made you really concentrate on the details of the story?*

Chapter Outlines and Vocabulary-  
Comprehension Questions- 16A, 11A  
Reading Journals- 1A, 7A, 9A, 8A, 1B, 10B, 12B, 15B, 17B  
Reader’s Workshop Book Projects- 18A, 3A, 15A, 2B, 3B, 5B, 7B, 8B  
Pourquoi Story Maps- 4B, 6B, 9B, 11B, 13B  
Kofi Postcards- 5A, 13A, 17A, 10A, 4A, 12A, 6A, 16B  

N/A- 14B  

Why?  
Made me want to learn more- 5A  
It was fun- 13A, 7A, 8A, 7B  
Had to write from a different person’s perspective- 18A, 15A, 16B  
It was the most detailed to do- 17A, 10A, 16A, 12A, 6A, 1B, 2B, 3B, 4B, 6B, 8B, 9B, 11B, 12B, 13B, 15B  
Time Sequencing- 4A  
Rubric- 1A  
I had to summarize- 3A  
I wanted to do well- 9A, 11A, 5B, 8B, 9B, 17B  
Had to write about something important- 1B  
Improve my Grade- 3B  
Hard- 10B
Did adding art to your writing encourage you to write more or did you spend more time working on the art?

More Writing- 5A, 17A, 10A, 3A, 8A, 6A, 1B, 3B, 5B, 7B, 15B, 16B, 17B
More Art- 16A, 12A, 2B, 11B, 12B
More Writing, but spent more time on art- 13A, 6B, 9B
Equal time spent on both- 18A, 1A, 7A, 15A, 8B, 13B, 14B
Wrote the same amount- 4A, 9A, 11A, 4B, 10B

Did the artwork make you enjoy the writing more?

No- 18A, 4A, 11A, 6B, 10B, 13B

Did the artwork make the writing easier?

Yes- 10A, 1A, 16A, 11A, 8A, 15A, 6A, 2B, 3B, 5B, 6B, 9B, 10B, 14B, 17B

Did you enjoy having the opportunity to choose your journal topic and reader’s workshop book projects?

No-

Would you be interested in writing your own Pourquoi tale after reading the ones in class?

Explain what you would like and dislike.

No- 10A, 16A, 4B, 10B
Both- 4A, 9B

Like-
Adding artwork- 5A
Making a title- 5A
It would be fun- 13A, 7A, 11A, 3B, 6B, 7B, 8B, 9B, 11B, 15B, 16B
I understand them- 17A
Writing stories- 4A, 9A, 1B, 5B, 12B, 14B  
Already have ideas- 1A, 8B, 17B  
Free choice- 13B  

Dislike-  
Good ideas have been taken by other authors- 18A  
Editing- 10A  
Have to write an ending that connects to beginning- 4A  
Effort- 1A  
Don’t like writing- 16A, 9B  
Don’t’ have enough prior knowledge- 3A  
Time- 11A  
Difficulty- 15A, 6A  
Illustrating- 1B  
Have to come up with an idea- 4B, 6B, 10B
Appendix F: Student Survey Results Graphs

Reader's Workshop Book Projects

![Bar graph showing the number of students' opinions on Reader's Workshop Book Projects for Classroom A and Classroom B.]

Post Reader's Workshop Book Project Survey Results

![Bar graph showing the number of students' opinions on various activities: Comprehension Questions, Reading Journals, and Reader's Workshop Book Projects.]

- Number of Students
- Student Opinions
- Classroom A
- Classroom B
- Comprehension Questions
- Reading Journals
- Reader's Workshop Book Projects
Artwork and Student Choice Results for Post Reader's Workshop Book Project Survey

- Did the artwork make you enjoy the writing more? (Yes: 30, No: 5)
- Did the artwork make the writing easier? (Yes: 20, No: 10)
- Did you enjoy having the opportunity to choose your journal topic and reader's workshop book projects? (Yes: 35, No: 0)
Appendix G: Rubrics for Reader’s Workshop Book Projects

Rubric for Character Scrapbook

_______ 5-6 artifacts included in the scrapbook. (5)
_______ 3 sentences describing each artifact and its importance using evidence from the story. (15 total, 3 pts per artifact)
_______ Artifacts are neatly drawn, sharpied, and colored with 4th grade coloring quality. (5)
_______ Descriptions are edited for punctuation, capitalization and no excuse words. (5)

27-30—A
23-26—B
19-22—C
15-18—D
14-0—F

Name:__________________
Score:__________________
Grade:__________________

Rubric for Character Journal

_______ There are 3 journal entries. (5)
_______ Each entry includes a date, opening, 3 details describing the event, and your reaction as the character to the event. (5)
_______ Paragraph is indented, and includes a topic and conclusion sentence. (5)
_______ Evidence from the story is included in your paragraph. (5)
_______ Journal is edited for punctuation, capitalization, and no excuse words. (5)
_______ Cover of journal is decorated appropriately. (5)

27-30—A
23-26—B
19-22—C
15-18—D
14-0—F

Name:__________________
Score:__________________
Grade:__________________

Rubric for Pie Plot

_______ Pie plot is put together properly and the 6 slices are in the correct order of the plot. (2)
_______ Each slice includes an illustration and description of at least 2 sentences and evidence from the story. (18 total, 3 pts per piece)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Score Range</th>
<th>Grade</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>27-30</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23-26</td>
<td>B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19-22</td>
<td>C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15-18</td>
<td>D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14-0</td>
<td>F</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Illustrations are neatly drawn, sharpied, and colored with 4th grade coloring quality. (5)
- Descriptions are edited for punctuation, capitalization, and no excuse words. (5)
Appendix H: Anecdotal Notes

Student Reactions

Pie plot - oh that's so cool
Wow
boys seemed to like this the most
(most noise for this)

Scrap book - I think it's neat
more quiet

Journal - a few girls made some "oh" excitement noises
boys didn't comment interesting that some signed up there
they were interested in wrinkled cover

They had some questions - can I see the scrap book with the book
I read?
Are we only doing 1 of these?
(felt that they're only doing 1)

One boy - I think I'll just do the journal

Most girls visited pie pbt first
most boys journals first
mixed - scrap book

Some didn't browse all choices - they knew what they want
Appendix I: Reader’s Workshop Activities

Reader’s Workshop Book Projects

Dear Diary,

August 15, 1781

I am glad that Margaret gave me this diary before
I left Gettysburg. No one should live here all that
is special is there. blue. Gettysburg since that I
miss Margaret it has been five months.

I went to the garden eating
since we left. Margaret and I used to sing

September 2, 1781

Dear Diary,

Today was a strange day. Dad didn’t come home
like his normal self. He took forever to say what
the weather was going to be. There was going
to be a storm. Mom said that the storm
wouldn’t be normal. She said to go down and
got corn in the fields because we needed to say
everything. Almost everyone were in the fields
and I had gotten some corn, and the wind and
rain started up the hill. Then I ran and

Margaret

MY Diary

I am glad that

Abe Lincoln

Margaret
Today I finished my tree house. I started cutting into the tree with my ax. It is very hard work to cut into a tree. It also makes a lot of cuts on your hands. I finally figured that it is easier to burn out the inside of the tree than cutting out the inside. I remembered this from a book I read that said that the Native Americans burned out the inside of the trees to make canoes. I then had to make furniture. I made a bed today. My bed fits perfectly in the right side of the tree. This is the day I finished my tree.
Taking the "Argh!" Out of Writing
The Cabin Faced West
George Washington comes to town after it rains. The children get a good time because they have tea parties. When George Washington comes to Ann, she is happy. It is a rainy day. A child named Matt wants a healthier lifestyle.
This Fall a huge storm came to our house and destroyed our garden, including my pea garden. I was doing this because the pea garden was mine too! I planted them to begin with. This is a pea from my pea garden that I saved from the storm. I felt very sad while I was doing this because most of them.
The spider web was important because that's the trap he used to catch the bombardier beetle. The spider web shows that Charlie was a spider and used the spider web in the story. Next when Charlie caught the beetle, he found out the beetle was tied up in a spider web over the sink.
Connections to write about after you read:

1. Choose a part of the story, and tell about the ways that it reminds you of your own life.

2. Does this book remind you of other books you have read? Which ones and how are they alike?

3. Could you relate to a particular character? Who? Did he/she remind you of anyone you know? How?

4. Describe a part of the story that reminds you of people or places you know. Tell specifically how it reminds you of these.

Responses to write about after you read:

1. If you could be any character in the book, who would it be and why?

2. Tell about the problem in this book. How was the problem solved? Can you think of another way it could have been solved?

3. Tell about a specific situation in the story that you found interesting. What would you do differently if you exchanged places with one of the characters?

4. Describe a key situation in this story. What might have happened if this situation had not taken place? How would the story have changed?

5. If this story took place somewhere else or in a different time, how would the story be different?

6. How does the author keep you interested? Does he/she have unusual ways of saying things? Be specific & give examples.
Comprehension Check #3

The Cabin Faced West Chapters #5-7

1. Why did Mr. Scott and the Hamilton men want to give up their farms and move west?
   
   Mr. Scott and the Hamilton men gave up their farms and moved west because they could trade for things they need and they would not have to pay for living there. (and costs cheaper)

2. What changes does Ann notice in Andy after they begin the "lessons" and why do you think these changes occur?
   
   The changes that Ann notices about Andy are that he didn't look up at his feet as much, he walked straighter, he also wasn't always looking for a fight.

3. What time of the year is it in chapter 7? What was strange about the start of the day on page 88? These are signs of an upcoming event—describe.
   
   It was a warm beautiful day. The next day was strange because there were long string of clouds and a wind that wasn't there.

4. What special items did Ann bring to the tea party, and how did her mother react? Why do you think her mother reacted this way?
   
   Ann brought two special items to the tea party. The items she brought are her pink glass, her mother's white plates, and her doll. Sometimes, why about mom's reaction?

5. Mr. Hamilton is very thankful for what was saved after the storm. What did Ann discover about her father's thankfulness, and about her own thankfulness?
   
   Ann discovered that there is much to be thankful for. She also discovered that her father is most thankful that all of them are still there and Hamilton hill is standing.
Bug Boy Questions Chapters 4-6

1. What proof does Charlie have that the Bug-a-View worked?
   Charlie works on the cob webs on his face.

3. What does Charlie mean when he thinks "the possibilities were limitless" at the end of chapter four? When he says "the possibilities are limitless" he means that he can become any bug, any time.

4. Why wouldn't Charlie want to share his Bug-a-View? Charlie didn't want to share the Bug-a-View because somebody could steal it and that could be bad.

5. Explain the sequence of events of what happens when Charlie decides to get back at Raymond. Use at least 4 events.
   When Charlie bugs Ramon here are the events:
   1. Charlie becomes a fly.
   2. Charlie flies around his ears.
   3. Ramon tries to shoot Charlie.

50-51. What about Heidi's appearance and actions make her not seem like a normal "bug scientist"? Heidi is not your average bug scientist! She is dressed like a cow boy and has been boots and her gets things like a kid.