Writing With a Purpose: Investigating Authentic Writing Experiences.

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Context

Miss Chace’s Third and Fourth Grade

The dynamic of my third and fourth grade multi-age classroom presents interesting opportunities and challenges for instruction. In my classroom, there are twenty-two students; ten are third graders and twelve are fourth graders. Ten of these students are boys, and twelve are girls. In addition, twenty-one students are Caucasian and one student is Asian. All of my students speak English as their primary language.

Although my classroom lacks diversity in cultural ethnicity and racial backgrounds, it has a varied range of ability levels and social roles. Specifically, three students receive speech therapy, three students receive language arts enrichment, and two students receive counseling services. The students who receive language arts enrichment perform above grade level in reading and writing, and at grade level in mathematics, social studies, and science. In addition, one student is diagnosed with Attention Deficit Disorder. This student performs at grade level in mathematics, social studies and science, and below grade level in reading and writing. Of course, there are also large differences in abilities, expectations, and prior knowledge between grade levels. Due to this, differentiation is a main component in instructing both third and fourth graders in their different standards and end of the year benchmarks.

The multi-age classroom naturally leads students to discover and adopt unique social roles. Generally, the fourth graders take on a teacher-like role when third graders or struggling students don’t understand a concept. Also, there are two girl leaders in the classroom and one boy leader. These students are hardworking and respectful towards adults and serve as a role model for other students. However, the social relationships in our classroom are somewhat static; students rarely choose to socialize during free-time or class activities with friends outside their close friend group. This presents issues during partner and group activities when working with a variety of students is beneficial.

The broad range of ability levels and social roles in my multi-age classroom presents significant opportunities and challenges specific to writing instruction. There are opportunities for third graders to learn more advanced writing skills and fourth graders to review critical writing skills. However, it also presents challenges for assessment and writing activities because the benchmarks for both grades are different.

Miss Wintemberg’s Second Grade
There are 19 students in the second grade class at Easterly Parkway Elementary, consisting of eight girls and eleven boys. This school is located in downtown State College, Pennsylvania, and home to The Pennsylvania State University.

There is one boy with autism who is held to the same academic expectations as the other students in the class. This student has more behavior goals than academic goals, and receives assistance from his paraprofessional. Other than this student, there are no significant behavioral issues in the class. The students demonstrate a relative maturity for second graders and work well independently. For the most part, the students follow directions well and have a good work ethic.

Easterly Parkway as a whole has an ethnically diverse population, and my class illustrates this diversity well. There is one English language learner whose primary language is Korean. He understands short commands in English; however, he does not speak English readily or fluently. He reads at a second grade level and goes to an English as a second language classroom for language arts instruction.

With respect to academic levels, the students all perform at or above grade level in all subject areas. There are no Title I students, and there is only one child who receives additional support with her reading fluency. There are 6 students who receive additional math enrichment and three students who receive language arts enrichment. Other than these three students, the rest of the class is performing well in writing. It seems that the students participate in off task behaviors more often during writer’s workshop than other academic subjects.

**Main Wondering**

As the school year progressed we both noticed similarities with our students perceived attitudes and observable behaviors during writing. In comparison to other subjects, our students did not seem as interested or engaged during this time. Students often demonstrated off-task behaviors during independent writing. These similarities concerned us as writing is such an important life skill. We were worried if our students were not engaged or interested, they would not develop to their full potential in writing. We value authenticity in all learning experiences and believe it has the potential to motivate students,
therefore we sought to discover its effects in writing. Our classroom experiences and our personal interest in writing led us to our main wondering:

*How can you incorporate authentic writing activities into a second, third, and fourth grade classroom to enhance student motivation?*

Through this inquiry we aimed to motivate students to write through meaningful writing experiences. We hope to learn the effects that authentic writing activities have on students’ motivation and on-task behavior. We intend to discover positive student behavior due to the implementation of these activities. We hope this inquiry will help us become better writing teachers and help our students strive to write with greater motivation and desire.

To understand what our inquiry study is about, one must first understand our definition of “authentic” writing. We define authentic learning experiences as those that are meaningful to students’ lives, purposeful, and when applicable, created for an audience. Authentic writing should be exciting to students, should involve student choice and should be highly connected to their world (Lunsford, 2012).

**Sub Wonderings**

- What are some examples of authentic writing activities?
- How does authentic writing activities affect students’ on task behavior?
- How do authentic writing activities influence students’ attitudes and feelings towards writing?
- How do authentic writing activities affect the quality of student work?

**Data Collection**

Throughout the inquiry process, we used a variety of data collection methods in order to reliably find answers to our wonderings. We collected baseline data from student surveys, as well as systematic and anecdotal observations. We gathered information on authentic writing tasks from teacher interviews. After the selection and implementation of a writing activity (explain more) in each class, we continued to
collect systematic and anecdotal observations to find the effects, if any, on students’ behaviors and feelings.

**Student Surveys**

Our first set of baseline data was our student surveys. Before the implementation of an authentic writing activity, we surveyed our students about their attitudes and feelings toward writing. The student survey included questions that asked the students about their favorite and least favorite aspects of writing, what they would like to do in writer’s workshop and how much they enjoy writing. We used the answers to these surveys to choose the writing tasks for each classroom. Miss Wintemberg surveyed and collected eighteen paper surveys, Miss Chace surveyed and collected twenty-two online surveys through Google Documents.

**Authentic Writing Projects**

Miss Wintemberg implemented a writing project that involved students choosing a topic that they are an expert on or are interested in and used a variety of genres to create writings on their topic. They have been displaying their edited writing on their “Interest Area” which is a cardboard tri-fold. Their interest areas will be displayed at a class “Expert Fair.” Parents and other students will be invited to this fair to learn about the students’ topics.

The writing task in Miss Chace’s class was writing, editing, publishing a book, then sharing it at an “Author's Tea” for friends and family. The theme for the book is about a student’s perfect day. The idea for this book was based on the children’s book, “Alexander and the Horrible, Terrible, No Good, Very Bad Day” by Judith Viorist. This idea was chosen because Miss Chace did a similar publishing project in her fifth grade class during elementary school and she enjoyed it very much. The book was introduced as a read aloud.

**Systematic Observations**

We collected systematic observations on students’ on-task behavior before and during the implementation of the writing projects above. These observations helped us see if there was a change in on task behavior over the course of our implementation of the writing activities. At intervals during
writing time, either our mentors or ourselves observed the students and wrote a check next to the students’ names if they were on task and an O next to the students name if they were off task. We defined on-task as writing, brainstorming, appears to be thinking about their writing or editing. We defined off-task as talking, out of seat, doodling or other off task behaviors.

Anecdotal Observations

We also took anecdotal observations during writing lessons throughout this inquiry. These anecdotal notes consisted mostly of comments students made about writing. For each observation, we recorded the activity, setting, description of observation, followed by our inferences about each. We took these observations before the implementation of our authentic writing task and during the implementation to compare students attitudes, feelings and motivation towards writing.

Teacher Interviews

We used GarageBand to record interviews with three teachers in order to help us answer our first sub question, “What are some examples of authentic writing activities?” We were interested in what authentic writing tasks experienced teachers have used and how successful they’ve been to help us know what activities might work well in our classrooms. In addition, we also were interested in discovering other suggestions they had for motivating students to write. During these interviews, we asked similar questions in order to analyze the interviews for commonalities.

Data Analysis

Analysis of Surveys

Miss Wintemberg’s Analysis:

I categorized the data in the surveys by question. For the first question, I asked students to circle always, sometimes or never after the statement “I like writing,...”. I recorded how many students circled each response. I then turned this information into a bar graph to have a visual representation of the data. My last question asked students to circle writing activities they would like to do in writer’s workshop. I also turned this information into a bar graph with the five options. The other questions were open ended and asked the students what they liked and disliked about writing. I placed these responses in a table.
There was an area where students could record anything else they would like to do in writer’s workshop. I also included these responses in another column in this table.

**Miss Chace’s Analysis:**

I analyzed my student surveys before implementation of the authentic writing task by creating a spreadsheet on GoogleDocs with the responses to the eight questions each of my students answered. The questions included multiple choice, yes or no, and short answer. The yes or no and multiple choice questions included, “How often do you enjoy writing?”, “Do you enjoy writing in school?” and “Which of the following activities sounds interesting to you?”. The short answer questions included, “What do you like about writing?”, and “What do you dislike about writing?”. Next, I created graphs and tables for each multiple choice and yes or no question. I also used the short answer and multiple choice question to help me decide what authentic writing task would be a good implementation for my students.

**Analysis of Systematic Observations**

We put all of our systematic observations into a Microsoft Excel document. Included was each day that data was taken. We found the average time each student was on-task before and after the implementation of the writing activity. We then found the average time the class as a whole was on-task before and after the writing activity was introduced. We made another column to denote whether on-task behavior for each student increased. If the students’ average time on-task after the implementation was more than the students’ average before the implementation, we put a Y next to their name. If it wasn’t then we placed an N next to their name.

**Analysis of Anecdotal Observations**

We analyzed our anecdotal observations by typing them into one Microsoft Word document and looking for any changes in on-task behavior, attitudes, or motivation towards writing from before the implementation to during the implementation. We organized our observations by date, starting with before the implementation and ending with during the implementation. Next, we looked for any patterns in the observations that suggested changes in on-task behavior, attitudes, or motivation towards writing.

**Analysis of Teacher Interviews**
We analyzed our interviews by creating a table divided into four columns based on our subquestions and one column for other ideas and suggestions. Then we listened to the interviews and categorized their responses into the appropriate columns. Next we color coded the teacher’s responses in order to find similarities among them. Some similarities include their definition of authentic writing, some similar writing activities, and their attitudes towards the incorporation of authenticity into writing tasks.

**Explanation of Findings: Claims and Evidence:**

After careful analysis of our data, we discovered common themes. We found that authentic writing activities had a positive impact on students’ on-task behavior during writing. In addition, we discovered that when students are engaged with authentic writing activities, they have more positive feelings and attitudes towards writing. Lastly, we learned about several examples of authentic writing tasks that could be implemented in elementary classrooms.

**CLAIM A: Authentic writing activities increase on-task behavior during independent writing time.**

The systematic observations in both classes provide the evidence for the increase in on-task behavior. In Miss Wintemberg’s class, before the implementation of Interest Areas, students were on task 66% of the time. During the implementation, students were on task 78% of the time. (See Appendix C) In Miss Chace’s class, students were on task 89% before the introduction of the publishing project. During the implementation, students were on task 91% of the time. (See Appendix C).

In addition, anecdotal notes provide evidence for this claim. Prior to the implementation of the writing activities, several students were observed participating in off-task behaviors. Miss Chace observed a student putting their head down for 3 minutes, and another student constantly sharpening their pencil. Miss Wintemberg observed a student doodling on the side of their writing paper and another student talking to their peers about something that did not pertain to what he was writing about. During the implementation of the writing activities the anecdotal observations were as follows. The paraprofessional in Miss Wintemberg’s class commented on the students’ on-task behavior: She said that students “were focused and working the whole time” during Interest Area Workshop. Miss Chace’s supervisor, Kristen
Dewitt, commented during a writing lesson that: “Most students were engaged and on-task. Some were whispering about ideas and some were writing instead of following along”. (See Appendix D)

Information from the interviews also strengthens this claim. Brian Peters explained that “Anytime you can make a learning activity authentic, or attach authentic qualities, you will increase student engagement”. Colleen Sheehan agrees with this idea. In her interview she stated that “[Authentic writing activities] are the best way to engage students in the writing process”. (See Appendix F)

CLAIM B: Authentic writing activities increase students’ positive feelings and attitudes towards writing.

Before the implementation of our authentic writing activities, we observed that some students struggled to find topics to write about, made negative comments about writing, and had a hard time focusing during writing. After the implementation, we found that the writing activities in both classrooms had positive impacts on students feelings and attitudes towards writing. As our anecdotal notes show (Appendix D), there was an increase of positive student comments towards writing in both classrooms. One of the most drastic changes in Miss Chace’s classroom came from a third grade girl. Prior to the implementation, when asked about what she likes about writing she said, “That’s easy, nothing.” After implementation, she exclaimed, “I can’t wait to write my own book!” Before implementation, a student in Miss Wintemberg’s class exclaimed “Three minutes left” during writer’s workshop as I am inferring she did not want to write anymore. After implementation, she was absent for a few days and I was informing her that we have been working on our Interest Areas and she said, “Yes! I love writing about horses!”.

Information from our student surveys (Appendix E) also supports our conclusion that these writing activities had a positive influence on students’ feelings and attitudes towards writing. Before the implementation, 82% of Ms. Chace’s students said they enjoyed writing in school and after 86% said they enjoyed it. In Miss Wintembergs class, 22% of students always enjoy writing, 72% of students sometimes like writing, and 5% of students never like writing. Additionally, several students made negative comments about writing. After the implementation, 31% of the students always like writing, 69% of the
students sometimes like writing and no students never like writing. In addition several students made
positive comments about Interest Area Workshop. 7 students said it was their favorite part of writer’s
workshop and every student said they enjoyed Interest Area Workshop. (See Appendix E)

The responses from all three of our teacher interviews also agree with our claim that authentic
writing activities improve students attitudes towards writing. We found it interesting that all three
interviewees also commented on how authentic writing is necessary to motivate students to write. Mrs.
Sheehan stated, “I find it [incorporating authentic writing activities] very necessary to motivate my first
g graders to write and to keep them excited about writing.” (Sheehan, 2012). Similarly, Susan Lunsford
explained, “It’s [authentic writing] the only way to do it. Using literature and authentic writing as a point
of reference makes writing more meaningful and makes students empowered to write.” (Lunsford, 2012)
Also, Brian Peters commented, “I definitely believe there is increased motivation.” (See Appendix F).

We also found several sources that support this claim that authentic writing has positive effects
on students attitudes and feelings towards writing. Rebecca Lipstein and K. Ann Renniger commented on
the importance of students’ interest for writing. They explain, “Interest for writing affects the ways that
students approach writing and the results they achieve. Research on writing and motivation indicates
students who have an interest for writing are more likely to set effective goals, make use of helpful
strategies, and seek feedback. In short, an interest for writing is associated with behaviors that teachers
most value in student writers.” (79).

**CLAIM C: There are a variety of authentic writing activities to implement in the elementary
classroom.**

The majority of the support for this claim is based on the teacher interviews. Brian Peters offered
several suggestions for authentic writing activities in elementary grades. Pen pals, especially when the
students know their pen pal, writing contest such as the Stone Soup Magazine, sharing with another class,
having writing celebrations with students’ knowledge that their work will be shared and family message
journals are among some of the suggestions. In addition, creating signs for the classroom or for the school
is a way that students can write for an authentic purpose. An “out of order sign” or a “please clean up your mess” sign are examples of this. Other options include writing thank you notes to classroom visitors and writing book reviews on bookmarks and putting them in classroom books (Peters, 2012).

Colleen Sheehan provided additional suggestions. She explained that writing can be meaningful when there is an audience involved. For example, as Brian Peters mentioned, Colleen’s students’ share their work with the Kindergarteners. Also, including the students’ books into the classroom library for other students to read is another way to motivate students and make writing more purposeful. Having an author’s tea is another way to provide a larger audience for sharing students’ writing. Colleen invites families to this afternoon event where students share their poetry with their parents (Sheehan, 2012).

In addition, Susan Lunsford provided us with several authentic writing activities. She suggested using the students’ favorite authors as mentors. This strategy is an authentic way to teach writing in meaningful ways to the students. Sharing writing automatically makes the experience more authentic as they are writing for a real audience (Lunsford, 2012). (See Appendix F)

**Reflections and Future Practice**

**Miss Wintemberg’s Reflection:**

There is a lot I have learned from this Inquiry about writing and students engagement with writing; however, there are still things I am reflecting on for future practice. First off, it is apparent authentic activities in writing increase on-task behavior and increase positive feelings; therefore, I am wondering if authentic activities in other subjects would have the same affect on students. If so, I am then inquiring on how could I make instruction and independent practice in all content areas more authentic to the students.

In addition, I am wondering if activities that were once authentic, become less meaningful throughout the year. For example, would sharing writing with classmates become less motivating after doing it so often after independent writing time.
Lastly, I am wondering how to teach students to write in authentic ways all the time. I feel like it is difficult to make all writing experiences authentic when new forms of writing are introduced. For example, I wanted students to write a persuasive writing piece for their interest areas; however, I had to first teach them how to write persuasive essays before they wrote one for their display boards. The days that the students were not writing specifically for their display boards, their on-task behavior decreased. The class’s overall average on-task behavior for after the implementation would have been much greater if the days when the students were practicing writing persuasive essays were not included.

**Miss Chace’s Reflection:**

Implementing this writing project in my classroom has led me to future wonderings about writing instruction. I plan to continue to make writing projects authentic to increase student on-task behavior, motivation, and interest towards writing. In addition, I want to make the entire writing process authentic. I am wondering if the writing process would be more meaningful to students if there was more sharing, peer conferencing, and teacher conferencing. Specifically, I wonder if focused sharing periods at the end of each writing period and student selected peer and teacher conferencing times would influence the quality and style of student writing.

I am also interested in the effects that playing music during writing time would have on students’ on-task behavior. During a classroom discussion on the question, “What motivates you to write?” 20 out of my 22 students said they would be interested in playing music during writing. I am wondering if music would actually help them concentrate more, or if it would distract some students.

I am also wondering if connecting children’s literature during writing lessons would affect students quality of writing. In our interview with Susan Lunsford, she explained how she strongly believes that using authors as a model for writing makes students empowered to write. She stated, “Using books as a point of reference for writing makes writing more meaningful and without a doubt allows students to grow in ability and confidence.” (Lunsford). In the future, I want to use authors and specific books my students enjoy as a model for writing.
This inquiry also led me to wonder about student choice during writing. During my student interviews, all five of the students I interviewed expressed their desire to choose their writing topic. In the future, I would like to increase the amount of student choice during writing.

**Appendices**

**Appendix A: Inquiry Brief**

**Context:**

This inquiry project is being conducted in the State College Area School District.

Easterly Parkway Elementary is one of the schools that this inquiry project will include. This school is located in downtown State College. State College is located in Centre County, Pennsylvania, and home to The Pennsylvania State University.

**Easterly Parkway Elementary**

There are 19 students in the second grade class at Easterly Parkway Elementary, consisting of eight girls and eleven boys. There is one boy with autism who is held to the same academic expectations as the other students in the class. This student has more behavior goals than academic goals, and receives assistance from his paraprofessional. Other than this student, there are no significant behavior issues in the class.

Easterly Parkway as a whole has an ethnically diverse population, and my class illustrates this diversity well. There is one English language learner whose primary language is Korean. He understands short commands in English; however, he does not speak English readily or fluently. He reads at a second grade level and goes to an English as a second language classroom for language arts instruction. With respect to academic levels, the students all perform at or above grade level in all subject areas. There are no Title I students, and there is only one child who receives additional support with her reading fluency. There are 6 students who receive additional math enrichment on Mondays. This class is
performing well in writing, although it seems that the students participate in off task behaviors more often
during writers workshop than other academic subjects.

**Ferguson Township Elementary**

Ferguson Township Elementary is another school that this inquiry project will include. There are twenty-
two students in the third and fourth grade classroom at Ferguson Township Elementary. This school is located in Pine Grove Mills, Pennsylvania, which is ten minutes from downtown State College. Out of this class, ten are third graders and twelve are fourth graders. There are nine boys and thirteen girls in the class. Twenty-one students are Caucasian, and one student is Asian. One student is diagnosed with attention deficient disorder. This student is strong academically, however he exhibits disruptive behavioral problems when he does not take his medication, which often disrupts his ability to focus during instructional time.

The majority of these students perform at grade level in all academic areas. Although none of the students qualify for Title I or special education services, there are a few students who receive supplemental instruction outside of the classroom for other reasons. Specifically, three students receive speech therapy, three students receive language arts enrichment, and two students receive counseling services. The three students who receive language arts enrichment perform above grade level in reading and writing, and at grade level in mathematics, science, and social studies.

The majority of students perform at grade level and are in the emergent or bridging stage of writing. The class as a whole performs well in writing, however there are a few students who have difficulty completing writing tasks in a timely manner and a handful of students who exhibit off task behaviors during writing.

**Rationale:**

Our main wondering is “How can you incorporate authentic writing activities into a second, third, and fourth grade classroom to enhance student motivation?” This question connects to the students in our classes as it seems they demonstrate more off task behavior during writing than other subjects. We
discovered our inquiry question by combining our interest in writing and classroom experiences. The idea originated from conversations about the desire to make all learning experiences authentic. We pinpointed writing as our focus after discovering we both had an interest in writing instruction. Classroom experiences that also contributed to this inquiry question were students’ excitement about a classroom newspaper in a second grade classroom, publishing books in a first grade class, and creating and sharing poetry in a third and fourth grade classroom. We wanted to explore other authentic writing activities that we could incorporate in these classrooms.

At the heart of our inquiry topic is the desire to continue to motivate students to write. We also feel that authenticity is an important component in the instruction of all subjects. We also feel that by providing authentic writing activities, it is our hope that our students will show improved engagement and motivation towards writing. We expect to find that our students will demonstrate more on task behavior during the implemented writing activities.

Several resources have influenced our thinking about our inquiry topic so far. According to Lipstein and Renniger, research shows that motivation towards a subject increases the quality of the product of student work (Lipstein, Renniger, 2007, p. 79). In addition, Lipstein and Renniger also suggested that a way to increase motivation is by providing meaningful and authentic academic tasks (Lipstein, Renniger, 2007, p. 85). In addition, our mentors have modeled authentic experiences in their classrooms that have inspired us to continue searching for ways to provide more meaningful instruction.

Main Wondering:
How can you incorporate authentic writing activities into a second, third and fourth grade classroom to enhance student motivation?

Sub Questions:
• What are some examples of authentic writing activities?
• What are indicators that students are motivated or engaged to write?
• How do authentic writing activities affect students’ on task behavior?

• How do authentic writing activities influence students attitudes and feelings towards writing?

Timeline:

Week of February 6, 2012
Survey all students about attitudes towards writing
Decide what 3 teachers to interview, set up meeting and create questions for interview
Read sources for annotated bibliography
Get PSU library books for annotated bibliography
Make annotated bibliography
Begin collecting baseline data for on task behavior during writing
Start writing inquiry brief

Week of February 13, 2012
Inquiry brief and annotated bib drafts due to PDA
Both interview Brian Peters, Susan Lunsford, Colleen Sheehan
Kristen interview Ethan and Ruriko. Alicia interview Megan and Patrick
Continue collecting baseline data for on task behavior
Decide what authentic writing activities we’ll implement
Create our own interest area and get supplies

Week of February 20, 2012
Introduce interest areas and personal narrative
Continue collecting data for on task behavior during writing
Have students brainstorm interest topics and select one topic by Wednesday

Week of February 27, 2012
Have students bring in objects for interest area
Start writing
Continue collecting data for on task behavior during writing
2/29 revised annotated bibliography and brief due

Week of March 5, 2012
Week of spring break
Analyze and compare on task behavior charts

Week of March 12, 2012
Continue collecting data for on task behavior during writing
Continue working on interest areas
Continue working on stories

Week of March 19, 2012
Finish collecting data
Conduct interviews with same students
Give students a survey about attitudes towards books and interest areas
Analyze data and start writing rough draft
Send books to print shop

Week of March 26, 2012
Analyze data and continue working on inquiry draft

Week of April 2, 2012
4/7 Analyze data and continue working and revising inquiry draft

**Data Collection:**

**Observations:**

• Throughout the process, we will make systematic observations to calculate student engagement. We will record students’ on task behavior every several minutes during writing activities.

• We will also make systematic observations to record students’ on task behavior in writing mini-lessons or sharing. These include: looking at the teacher or student talking, participating in discussions by raising their hand or sharing.

• We will take anecdotal notes on students’ dialogue and actions during writing activities.

**Surveys:**

• We will give students surveys in the beginning of the inquiry to learn about their feelings and attitudes towards writing.

• We will give students a second survey after starting the implemented writing activities to learn about their feelings and attitudes about the projects and their current feelings towards writing.

**Interviews:**

• At the beginning of our inquiry, after we conduct the surveys with the class, we will each interview two students to further our understandings of their attitudes and feelings about writing.

• We will choose one student who seems to enjoy writing and one student who seems to dislike writing.

• Near the end of our inquiry, we will interview the same two students to further our understanding about their attitudes and feelings about the writing activities we implemented in our class.
We will interview Brian Peters, Susan Lunsford, Colleen Sheehan about examples of writing activities, how the activities align with the standards in the different grades, and their opinions on how authentic writing experiences affect student motivation.

Student Work:

• We will collect writing samples from a few students in each class before the implementation of our writing activities.
• We will collect writing samples after the students’ completed the different writing activities.
• We will assume that the more thorough the writing, the more motivated the students are to write. Examples include: creative, descriptive, length, and quality.

Annotated Bibliography

1. Brian Peters: Director of Curriculum (K-8)


   We interviewed Brian Peters to learn more about how different learning experiences can fit into the curriculum in State College Area School District and how they align with the standards in place in specific grades. We also asked him his opinion about the importance of authentic learning experiences. In addition, we asked him if he has witnessed any specific authentic writing experiences that have been successful while he was in the schools. Also, we asked if he had any additional suggestions for research or sources within the district.

2. Susan Lunsford: Literature Based Mini Lessons to Teach Writing

   (S. Lunsford, personal communication, date number, 2012).
We interviewed Susan Lunsford because she could provide us with an insight into children’s writing from various perspectives. During her career, she has served as a classroom teacher, an RTI instructor, a Penn State University faculty member, and has written several teacher’s instructional books about literature based lessons and writing activities. Specifically, we asked her questions about what type of authentic writing activities she has used that students have enjoyed and her feelings towards incorporating authentic writing into the curriculum.

3. Colleen Sheehan: First grade teacher, Grays Woods Elementary School
(C. Sheehan, personal communication, Date number, 2012).
We interviewed Colleen Sheehan, a first grade teacher at Grays Woods Elementary school because she has 20 years experience working in both a kindergarten and first grade classroom. During her career, she has had sufficient experience with working with young children and motivating them to write. Specifically, we asked her questions about the types of authentic writing activities that she has used with her students, and how they were successful. We also asked her questions about other ways she has been able to motivate her young students to write.

4. Family Message Journal Book:

This book provides us with an example of an authentic writing activity that could be used across grade levels. This book gives reasoning to family message journals: using families as an authentic audience for their writing. Not only does family message journals provide students opportunities for writing, but also the children can learn about their own writing and if it is comprehensible to others therefore learning about content, style, spelling, and other mechanics through feedback from their parents. This source will support sub questions 1 and 2.
5. Writing and Motivation


This book offers us recent information produced in 2007 about a variety of studies done relating to student’s motivation to write. The book includes thorough information about theoretical reasons why students are motivated to write, empirical studies about the relationship between motivation and writing, and interventional studies aimed at improving motivation to write. Specifically, this book will serve as a guide to understanding the relationship between motivation and writing. In addition, it will provide us with a basis of knowledge relating to how interesting topics influence motivation and how creating a community of writers influences motivation.

6. Writing - Teachers and Children at Work


This source provides information about ways to teach writing in different grade levels. This book also provides authentic writing activities for this range of ages. Graves also provides ideas for publishing different writing pieces. This will help us with our sub-questions 1 and 2. Graves support student choice in writing and this will be helpful in providing support for the “interest areas project. It explains how children are able to pick their own topic with guidance from the teacher.


This is a policy research brief produced by the National Council of Teachers of English. In this article, it discusses what writing should look like in the classroom today. It discusses the common myths about school-based writing and offers a true “reality” of what writing should look like in our changing
world. It explains that writing should be used for multiple purposes and to address different audiences. It rejects the common myths about school-based writing and proposes that writing should be holistic, authentic and varied. We will use this article in our research to define what holistic and authentic writing is and to support our belief that authentic writing experiences will help students achieve success in their lives.

8. Interest for Writing: How Teachers Can Make a Difference


This article, written by an English professor and a high school English teacher provides relevant information describing how teachers can help foster an interest in writing for their students. It describes in detail how having an interest in writing influences the approach towards writing, and benefits the end result. It also provides a very interesting description about four stages of writing interest and what students in these four stages look like. After this description, it explains how teachers can make a difference in student’s interest in writing by providing a balance between writing skills that are taught, and considering students feelings. It goes into detail about how interest can become a part of the writing process by peer conferencing and other editing and writing strategies. Specifically, we will use this in our inquiry to provide information about the stages of interest our students might be in, and how we might improve their interests in writing.

9. The Art of Teaching Writing: Caulkins:


This book supports the idea that when writing is personal, it means the most to us. Also, Calkins explains that we care to write when we write about people or things that interest us. This provides support for our interest area project. “When we help children know that their lives matter, we are teaching writing”: This is a quote we found to be interesting from this book. We think this statement relates to the interest area as
well as something they find interesting reflects on themselves and if we show the students that their interest matters, we will be teaching writing. This book explains the importance of publishing which will help support different writing experiences that we find. This book also explains methods for teaching writing and exploring different genres which will help fulfil our wondering about how authentic writing experiences could be linked to standards.

10. A Recipe for Motivating Creative Writers.


This article offers terrific ideas about how to motivate first and second grade writers. It stresses the idea that motivating students to write should be an ongoing process in the classroom. It also discusses the importance of creating enthusiasm towards writing. It suggests that students can become enthusiastic towards writing by being exposed to meaningful writing that the teacher has done including personal journals, personal stories, handwritten notes, fun invitations, and a variety of other authentic writing examples. It continues to explain that once this enthusiasm is sparked, it’s the teachers job to keep that motivation alive by providing a variety of activities. Specifically, we will use this in our inquiry to help create enthusiasm in our classrooms, and by modeling our authentic writing activities off the sample writing activities this article discusses.

Appendix B: References
### Appendix C: Systematic Observations

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Appendix D: Anecdotal Observations

Miss Wintemberg’s Observations

Before Implementation

Date: February 9, 2012  
Setting: Writer’s Workshop  
Activity: Writing a Fiction Story  
Observation: Ethan: 6 minutes into writer’s workshop “I’m done”  
Inference: He does not want to write anymore.

Date: February 10, 2012  
Setting: Classroom, 12:00  
Activity: Writer’s Workshop  
Observation: Kitana: “Three minutes left!”  
Inference: She does not want to write anymore. She wants writer’s workshop to be over.

Date: February 21, 2012  
Setting: Classroom  
Activity: Writer’s Workshop  
Observation: TD was talking to A about cat’s cradle and TO was doodling on the bottom of her paper.  
Inference: These students did not want to write at this time.

Date: March 21, 2012  
Setting: Classroom, 11:45  
Activity: Writing Fiction Stories  
Observation: Tania: “How many minutes until were done?”  
Inference: Tania wants writer’s workshop to be done. She does not like writing.

Date: March 21, 2012  
Setting: Classroom, 12:10  
Activity: Writer’s Workshop  
Observation: Madeline: “When do we get to share ‘cause its almost done our fiction unit and I have a really good beginning.”  
Inference: People like writing for an audience/for a reason: therefore, they like to share their writing.

After Implementation

Date: March 19, 2012  
Setting: Classroom, 11:45  
Activity: Writing Facts  
Observation: Kitana (she was gone for a few days and I was going to catch her up on what we have been doing) Me: “We have been working on our interest area’s the past couple days and writing facts about our topics” Kitana: “Yes! I love writing about horses.”  
Inference: She is excited to write because it is on a topic of her choice.

Date: March 21, 2012  
Setting: Math, 9:20  
Activity: Math worksheet
Observation: Briana- “Are we doing our Interest Area’s today?” I said yes and she said “yes I love interest area workshop, It’s so fun.“
Inference: She likes interest area workshop, she likes writing about her topic

Date: March 21, 2012
Setting: Faculty room, 12:20
Activity: Lunch
Observation: Donna (Greg’s Para) told me that Greg has 17 facts written down and he is starting to type. (the third day of writing facts) I asked her if he usually likes to write or motivated to write and she said no. She said that she thinks he likes his topic.
Inference:

Date: March 22, 2012
Setting: Classroom, 8:50
Activity: Morning Book Look
Observation: Briana: “What are we doing in interest area workshop today” Me: We are going to be finishing up our facts and putting stuff on our boards” Briana: “Yes!” (She then went over to Phebe and Madeline as they were unpacking and told them what we were going to be doing) Madeline said “Yay!”
Inference: Madeline and Briana like Interest Area Workshop

Date: March 23, 2012
Setting: Classroom, 2:30
Activity: Interest Area Workshop
Observation: Rita told Jill and I that she noticed that the students were all focused and working the whole time
Inference: The students were engaged during this interest area workshop. They enjoy working on their interest areas.

Miss Chace’s Anecdotal Observations:

Before Implementation:

Date: February 6, 2012
Setting: Writing
Activity: Writing
Observation: Matt was continuously sharpening his pencil, putting his head down, and saying he did not know what to write. He only wrote a few sentences during the entire forty minutes of writing.
Inference: He was having difficulty figuring out what to write. He was procrastinating and playing with other materials and was not on task.

Date: February 7, 2012
Setting: Writing
Activity: Attitudes towards writing survey
Observation: Sophie: “What if I don’t dislike anything about writing?”
Inference: She enjoys writing very much.

Date: February 7, 2012
Setting: Writing
Activity: Attitudes towards writing survey
Observation: Mikayla, “I don’t not like anything about writing.”
Inference: She enjoys writing very much.

Date: February 13, 2012  
Setting: Classroom  
Activity: Student Interview (Ali)  
Observation: Before I interviewed Ali, I told her I wanted to know what she likes and dislikes about writing and she said, “That’s easy because I don’t like anything about writing.”  
Inference: She really dislikes writing. There is nothing that she enjoys about it.

Date: February 17, 2012  
Setting: Writing  
Activity: Writing mini lesson on alliterations  
Observation: Joe finished writing his two examples of tongue twister then said, “I finished, what should I do?” I told him, “Do another tongue twister.” He said, “Yes!”  
Inference: He enjoys writing and playing with his words when making alliterations. He also finishes his writing faster than other students.

**After Implementation:**

Date: February 23, 2012  
Setting: Writing  
Activity: Explaining directions before read aloud  
Observation: I announced, “We’re going to have a read aloud then start our writing.” Garrett says, “Oh man!”  
Inference: He does not enjoy writing or he does not enjoy reading. Most likely, he does not want to write.

Date: February 23, 2012  
Setting: Writing  
Activity: Writing Idea Web  
Observation: I announced that students would be working with partners. Joe and Issac both exclaimed, “Yes!”  
Inference: These boys both enjoy working with partners during writing and sharing ideas of writing. They might possible find it helpful to work with a partner during the planning process of writing.

Date: February 23, 2012  
Setting: Writing  
Activity: Writing Idea Web  
Observation: After the students had been working for ten minutes on their idea web, Colleen explained, “My arm hurts from writing so much.”  
Inference: She wrote a lot. She had several ideas on her paper. She had a lot of ideas to write about for her perfect day story.

Date: February 23, 2012  
Setting: Classroom  
Activity: Transitioning back from recess  
Observation: Brady walks in from recess (on a day they are not switching for Social Studies and Science) and the first thing he says is, “Can we do the writing thing?” I said, “No, I’m sorry we have laptops today.”
Inference: Brady is really enjoying the writing project. He usually does not enjoy writing that much, however because he is requesting to write he must be enjoying writing his story so far.

Date: February 24, 2012
Setting: Writing
Activity: Writing Outline
Observation: While working on his outline Brady asked, “What if we have more than four settings?” I told him that he could have more than four settings.
Inference: He is not having troubling thinking about what to write about like he sometimes does. This outline might be helping him organize his thoughts or he might be able to think of more ideas because of his topic he chose.

Date: February 24, 2012
Setting: Classroom
Activity: After writing, while transitioning to lunch
Observation: Before putting his things away to get into the lunch line Joe came up to me eagerly and said, “I’m so excited to write my story. I have so much to say about my awesome day!”
Inference: He is excited and very motivated to write this story. He has many ideas to include in his story and he cannot wait to write more.

Date: February 29, 2012
Setting: Writing
Activity: Writing Rough Draft
Observation: Before we begun writing that day, Ali came up to me and asked, “Can we share as a class?” She is usually one who does not enjoy sharing.
Inference: She is satisfied with the writing that she has so far and wants to share it with the class. She might feel that her story is very good because she wants to share it with others.

Date: February 9, 2012
Setting: Writing
Activity: After Writing
Observation: After we finished writing for the day, Ali came up to me excitedly and said, “Look how much I’ve written today!” She wrote about half a page. Then, she motioned to the top and said, “This is where I started, and this is where I finished!”
Inference: Ali is not having trouble figuring out to write (like she usually does). She is able to write her ideas about her story freely. She is also excited about being able to write so much about this story. Seeing her length of her story is rewarding for her.

Date: March 1, 2012
Setting: Writing
Activity: Writing Rough Draft
Observation: During writing Colleen exclaimed, “I’m done my whole story!”
Inference: She was excited about finishing her whole story.

Date: March 1, 2012
Setting: Whole class discussion
Activity: What excites you to write? discussion
Observation: During our discussion Megan commented about sharing writing. She said, “I’d rather share with one person because I don’t really like sharing with the whole class because you get nervous that other people will judge you. I know no one would really say anything in our class, but I still don’t really like it.”

Inference: She doesn’t enjoy sharing her writing with the whole class in fear of being judged by other students. Other students most likely share this same belief and that is why they don’t like sharing their writing with the whole class. Partner or small group sharing might be a good idea in our classroom.

Date: March 1, 2012
Setting: Whole class discussion
Activity: What excites you to write? discussion
Observation: During our discussion, Cole shared what he enjoys writing about. He said, “I like being able to write when I can get anything I want.”

Inference: He likes to write funny stories where anything is possible. He enjoys having freedom in his writing.

Date: March 1, 2012
Setting: Whole class discussion
Activity: What excites you to write? discussion
Observation: After I asked, “What are some things that make you excited to write this story?” Issac said, “I like that we get to publish it.” This comment was followed by agreement from various other students.

Inference: He enjoys being able to publish books to share with others. Other students also like being able to publish a story.

Date: March 1, 2012
Setting: Whole class discussion
Activity: What excites you to write? discussion
Observation: After I asked, “Do you think you would like music while you write?” Every hand went up in the classroom except for Matt and Patrick. Several students said, “Oh yea!”.

Inference: Almost all of my students think they would enjoy listening to music while they write. Although this is not part of my inquiry, it was interesting to learn that so many students were interested in the idea.

Date: March 2, 2012
Setting: Writing
Activity: Writing Rough Draft
Observation: At the end of writing, Matt said, “I wrote five pages so far!” (He usually struggles with his length in writing).

Inference: He is able to write his ideas for this story freely and is not having trouble thinking of ideas to write about. He is also impressed with the length of pages that he has been able to write, he might think that the more writing, the better the writing.

Date: March 2, 2012
Setting: Writing
Activity: Writing rough draft
Observation: After writing Megan said, “I wrote one and a half pages so far!”

Inference: She is not having trouble thinking about what to write for her story. He is able to write her ideas freely. She also might think that the more writing, the better the writing.

Date: March 8, 2012
Setting: Writing
Activity: Verb mini lesson
Observation: Before the lesson Joe asked Sue (my mentor) if they were working on their stories today and she said no. He said, "We’re not writing our stories today? Oh man, I’m so into my story!"
Inference: He is very excited about writing his story and was upset that he wasn’t going to be working on it that day.

Date: March 12, 2012
Setting: Writing
Activity: Writing rough draft
Observation: I had been away the previous week and Ali came up to me and said, "I couldn’t write last week, but it was really fun because I could write my other story."
Inference: She is enjoying writing a lot more than before. She was excited to write not only about her story, but on other writing projects that she had not accomplished.

Date: March 12, 2012
Setting: Writing
Activity: Writing rough draft
Observation: After Marc had finished his rough draft he asked, "What should I do now?" I said, "You can write free poetry now." He said, "Yes!"
Inference: He enjoys writing poetry.

Date: March 19, 2012
Setting: Reading
Activity: Read to self
Observation: During the last 5 minutes of reading Tate said, "The schedule says it’s time for writing." I said, "We still have reading for 5 minutes." He said, "Oh man, I want to write."
Inference: He really enjoys writing and looks forward to it during the day.

Appendix E: Student Surveys

*Miss Wintemberg’s Survey Responses Pre-implementation*
My Favorite Thing About Writing: | Is there anything you dislike about writing? | Are there other things you would like to do in writer’s workshop?
--- | --- | ---
I can write about a story that is like me and choose it up and I can write about something that happened to me and do what I want with it | Sometimes I have to write about something that actually happened to me and not something made up | Write about anything I want
I don’t have a favorite thing about writing. | I don’t have something about writing I don’t like. | no
It makes my hand not hurt anymore | no because we are always doing something in writing | no, I am fine with everything
Using its time for other things | That I have to do it because it makes my arm weak | no
You can write stuff about your life | It hurts my fingers | yes I would like to write poems like Jack Prelutsky
Writing non-fiction stories | writing fiction stories |
writing my fancy own story | nothing | writing more fiction stories
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>My Favorite Thing About Writing:</th>
<th>Is there anything you dislike about writing?</th>
<th>Are there other things you would like to do in writer’s workshop?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>writing big storys</td>
<td>It is hard to thinking up ideas</td>
<td>write big storys</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I don’t think I have a favorite thing about writing</td>
<td>I don’t think I have a thing I dislike about writing</td>
<td>I dont think so</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>editing myself and making pridicsons of my own stories (if its fiction)</td>
<td>having to be told what to write and having to be writing and having to right fiction stories</td>
<td>write non-fiction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>fchin storys</td>
<td>yes of course its not fun</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>writing non fiction stories because it takes honestie and real life support to god</td>
<td>nothing except boring writing stuff like only writing and no pictures because I like to draw its my favorite thing to do.</td>
<td>yes have lots and lots of fun in writers workshop because I like writers workshop</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>reading my story</td>
<td>yes I don’t like writing long story</td>
<td>wright a monster story</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>doing surveys</td>
<td>sometimes it gets a little boring</td>
<td>type up our stories instead of write them.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>writing ficshon stories</td>
<td>not noing what to do</td>
<td>no thank you</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>stories</td>
<td>arm tired</td>
<td>poems</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I usually get sucked in to it and it’s kind of fun</td>
<td>sometimes when I don’t know what to write</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Miss Wintemberg’s Survey Responses Post-implementation

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Always</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sometimes</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>never</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Post: I like writing....

![Bar chart showing survey responses](chart.png)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Favorite thing in Writer’s Workshop</th>
<th>Least favorite thing to do in writer’s workshop</th>
<th>Enjoying Interest Area Workshop?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Interest area workshop</td>
<td>write non-fiction stories</td>
<td>yes it is super fun!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interest area workshop</td>
<td>persuasive writing</td>
<td>I am enjoying interest area workshop. I like it because you can choose from a lot of stuff and sometimes you get to use the ipad.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Write Stories</td>
<td>plan writing</td>
<td>enjoy write elephants I love elephants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interest area workshop</td>
<td>non-fiction stories</td>
<td>I enjoy interest area workshop because I can get work done easier because I enjoy it</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>drawing pictures and publishing stories and thinking and coming up with things to write about</td>
<td>lots of eyesight</td>
<td>reason #1 fun reason #2 writing stuff about favorite topic reason #3 get to choose topic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>write fictionall stories</td>
<td>think of ideas</td>
<td>#1 fun #2 neat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interest area workshop</td>
<td>write</td>
<td>I like it because of fun activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interest area workshop</td>
<td>write</td>
<td>yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>fiction storys</td>
<td>non-fiction storys</td>
<td>why? because you get to glue and write and get your own board</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>everything</td>
<td>nothing</td>
<td>its so fun! All the stuff we get to do</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>persuasive writing</td>
<td>fiction</td>
<td>Yes! Because all the Big progets and getting what myself wants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I like.....perswasive writing</td>
<td>writing stories</td>
<td>Because I can study brisil or its history</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interest area and corler</td>
<td>nothing :-)</td>
<td>I am injoying inttreest area because we got to do diffrent things</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>yes because I love to write</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Miss Chace’s Survey Reponses Pre-implementation

**How often do you enjoy writing?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Count</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Never</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rarely</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sometimes</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>55%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Often</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Always</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Do you enjoy writing in school?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Answer</th>
<th>Count</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>82%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Timestamp</td>
<td>How often do you enjoy writing?</td>
<td>Do you enjoy writing in school?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2/7/2012 5:47:56</td>
<td>Sometimes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2/7/2012 5:48:24</td>
<td>Sometimes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2/7/2012 5:50:28</td>
<td>Often</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2/7/2012 5:50:46</td>
<td>Sometimes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2/7/2012 5:51:37</td>
<td>Sometimes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Timestamp</td>
<td>How often do you enjoy writing?</td>
<td>Do you enjoy writing in school?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2/7/2012 5:51:54</td>
<td>Sometimes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2/7/2012 5:52:26</td>
<td>Often</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2/7/2012 5:52:53</td>
<td>Sometimes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2/7/2012 5:52:54</td>
<td>Often</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2/7/2012 5:55:10</td>
<td>Always</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Timestamp</td>
<td>How often do you enjoy writing?</td>
<td>Do you enjoy writing in school?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2/7/2012 5:56:22</td>
<td>Rarely</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2/7/2012 5:56:23</td>
<td>Always</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2/7/2012 5:56:48</td>
<td>Sometimes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2/7/2012 6:00:01</td>
<td>Sometimes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Timestamp</td>
<td>How often do you enjoy writing?</td>
<td>Do you enjoy writing in school?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2/7/2012 5:55:15</td>
<td>Sometimes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2/7/2012 5:55:26</td>
<td>Sometimes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2/7/2012 5:55:28</td>
<td>Sometimes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2/7/2012 5:55:33</td>
<td>Always</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Miss Chace’s Survey Responses Post-implementation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Timestamp</th>
<th>How often do you enjoy writing?</th>
<th>Do you enjoy writing in school?</th>
<th>What do you like about writing?</th>
<th>What do you dislike about writing?</th>
<th>Which of the following writing activities sounds interesting to you?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2/7/2012 6:00:41</td>
<td>Sometimes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>That we can usually write what we want to. Also we sometimes express our feelings.</td>
<td>We don’t get to choose topics.</td>
<td>Pen pals with a different classroom, Creating mini magazines about a topic of interest, Creating an informational website about a nonfiction topic of interest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2/7/2012 6:02:54</td>
<td>Often</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>I like writing because everybody is quite and focused.</td>
<td>I don’t like writing in cursive</td>
<td>Pen pals with a different classroom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2/10/2012 13:53:41</td>
<td>Always</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>that its fun and i liek to write stories</td>
<td>i like everything</td>
<td>Pen pals with a different classroom, Creating a classroom newspaper, Creating stories and publishing them</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
How often do you enjoy writing?

- Never: 0 (0%)
- Rarely: 2 (9%)
- Sometimes: 6 (27%)
- Often: 11 (50%)
- Always: 3 (14%)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Timestamp</th>
<th>Do you enjoy writing in school?</th>
<th>How often do you enjoy writing?</th>
<th>Are you enjoying this writing activity?</th>
<th>What do you like about this writing activity?</th>
<th>What do you dislike about this writing activity?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3/29/2012 7:20:05</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Always</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Nothing</td>
<td>I can't write my own things</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3/29/2012 7:21:38</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Often</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>That we get to do our favorite day.</td>
<td>The highlighting.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3/29/2012 7:22:49</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Rarely</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>I like this activity because we get to publish a book.</td>
<td>Editing the story and fixing it.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3/29/2012 7:22:50</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Sometimes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>That we get to publish it.</td>
<td>The layout was kind of hard.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3/29/2012 7:23:02</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Often</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Well I like that you didn't make us write about something specific.</td>
<td>I don't have any complaints.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3/29/2012 7:23:03</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Often</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>I really like it because we get to publish it.</td>
<td>The template was kinda confusing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3/29/2012 7:23:30</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Always</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>I get to make up a perfect day. It is fun to make up my own idea. I can't wait to publish my story. It is so much fun!!!</td>
<td>Lots of people have the same idea. That is it!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3/29/2012 7:23:52</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Often</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>I like that we get to draw and show what we like to do.</td>
<td>I like everything.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3/29/2012 7:24:06</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Often</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>i like it because it is fun and i like making a fun day this is a perfect idea for writing.</td>
<td>i like everything in this writing activity.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3/29/2012 7:24:14</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Sometimes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>I like this writing activity because you can do whatever you want and be whatever you want.</td>
<td>I like everything about this writing activity.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3/29/2012 7:24:19</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Often</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Well we got to make our own book and I think they are going to turn out great.</td>
<td>It's taking a long time to write the whole thing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Timestamp</td>
<td>Do you enjoy writing in school?</td>
<td>How often do you enjoy writing?</td>
<td>Are you enjoying this writing activity?</td>
<td>What do you like about this writing activity?</td>
<td>What do you dislike about this writing activity?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3/29/2012 7:24:25</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Sometimes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>I like getting to do a real book because it is fun and we get to publish it</td>
<td>It takes a lot of work and it like all of it there is nothing i don't like</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3/29/2012 7:24:35</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Sometimes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>I have always wanted to publish a book and get it in a library or something so i am really excited for this writing activity. I can't wait to write about Mikayla and candy!</td>
<td>I don't have anything I don't like.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3/29/2012 7:25:09</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Sometimes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>I like that we can write about anything that has to do with our fabulous day.</td>
<td>I don't like that we have to do a lot of the stuff like doodling on the template. I also think it takes a long time to finish it.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3/29/2012 7:25:20</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Rarely</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>I like the part that we get to publish it</td>
<td>I don't like the part that we have to write about a really good day. I want to be able to do my own topic.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3/29/2012 7:25:48</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Sometimes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>I like being able to publish our own stories.</td>
<td>I don't dislike anything.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3/29/2012 7:26:00</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Often</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>I like doing this activity. I like doing it because I like to write stories. I also like drawing pictures for them, too.</td>
<td>I am having trouble spelling allot of words. But I don't dislike anything.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3/29/2012 7:27:28</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Often</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Appendix F: Teacher Interviews

Colleen Sheehan = Blue  
Brian Peters = purple  
Lunsford = green

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sub #1 Examples of authentic writing activities</th>
<th>Sub #2 Effect on on-task behavior</th>
<th>Sub #3 Effects on students attitudes towards writing</th>
<th>Sub #4 Effects on quality of work</th>
<th>Other</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“We are now working on small moment stories, things that they have experienced.” (20-</td>
<td>“They put more thought into writing (that is authentic). They also take more time to finish it.” (242)</td>
<td>“That was definitely very motivating for them. They were very excited to receive the letters and they were excited to write because there was an audience, someone was responding back to their questions.” (116)</td>
<td>“That really made a difference in their writing” (90).</td>
<td>“My students have been focusing on their drawing, and not writing as much as I would like them to. So, I took away the drawing paper and kept only the lined paper in the writing center. It worked today.” (420)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Writing can be more meaningful when they is an audience involved. There is a purpose for writing.” (25-80)</td>
<td></td>
<td>“First graders really enjoy poetry. They do a cover and illustrate it and are very good at poetry.” (187)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“We published a story and shared it with Kindergarten class.” (50).</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“I think if they have a purpose behind writing it definitely motivates them.” (340)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Third grade class shared with our students and our students shared their writing with them in small groups.” (60)</td>
<td></td>
<td>“If find (incorporating authentic writing into the classroom) is very necessary</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
to motivate my first grade students to write. It’s necessary to keep them excited about writing.” (380)

“We partnered with a six grade class for pen pals.”(80)

“We create superstar books every week for each student.”(140)

“At the end of the year in the Spring we have an authors tea. The parents are invited in the afternoon and can hear their children’s writing which is usually poetry. We laminate the cover and spiral bound it so that it looks nice.”(150)

“If the kids make a book. Whether it’s their own or a class book and put it in the classroom library, that’s another way to motivate. It’s usually destroyed by the end of the year because they just love looking at their own stories. (490)

“Pen pals, especially when the students know who they are writing to as opposed to some stranger (technology can remove the "stranger" part of this, contests, sharing with book buddies, having celebrations with students knowing that their work will be shared, family journals”

“I definitely believe there is increased motivation. Do you work harder if you know that your work will be public or shared with peers? Anytime you can make the learning activity authentic or Assessing using authentic activities: In fact I think that teachers should use this kind of writing when making formative assessments of student work."
attach authentic qualities you will increase student engagement. Students then do not need to ask questions like "when will I use this?" or "why do I need to learn this?" That information is being delivered to them through the experience.”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Details</th>
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<tr>
<td>Have students create signs for the classroom or school.</td>
<td>Students can create an &quot;out of order&quot; sign or &quot;Please clean your mess&quot; sign.</td>
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<tr>
<td>When students go on vacation they can keep a journal and write postcards (including one to their classmates).</td>
<td>Additionally students can take photographs with a disposable camera and then write about each picture in a photo album that provides writing space.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Write letters to thank classroom volunteers or guest speakers.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Write book reviews on bookmarks and put them in classroom books.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Enter writing contests. Check small, local papers for better odds that one of your students will win.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Submit written stories to children's publications. Stone</td>
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**Soup Magazine** welcomes submissions by young people through age 13.

Visit the website at http://www.stonesoup.com

Take advantage of every authentic writing opportunity.

<table>
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<tr>
<th>“Using authors as a model.”</th>
<th>“Best way to engage students in writing process.” (10-19)</th>
<th>“They choose their own topics to write about and get to explore a topic that means something to them.” (10-19)</th>
<th>“Using books as a point of reference for writing makes writing more meaningful and makes students feel empowered to write.” (131-)</th>
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<tr>
<td>“Favorite book boxes. Read aloud and writing connected. Literature in the classroom always connected to writing.” (131-)</td>
<td>“I think it’s the only way to do it (authentic writing activities). For me, it worked because I’m passionate about books and that enthusiasm transfers to the kids. Even reluctant writers felt more comfortable when they had this model in front of them. It takes some confidence building which comes naturally when using authentic literature.”(300-</td>
<td>“Without a doubt they grew in confidence and ability.” (350).</td>
<td>“Went to favorite book boxes classroom deemed together as excellent. Use them to model descriptive language, story leads, and components of a story. Use these as models as what they can do in their writing” (131-</td>
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| | “It absolutely increases engagement.”(300- | | “Using books to model how you can write.” (131- | |
| | | | | |

| | | “Their homework was to come to school with an idea for writing everyday. They weren’t allowed to say, ’I don’t know | | |
What is authentic writing?

- "Writing that is meaningful to the children, writing that is exciting to them and writing that has a purpose behind it." (10-18).
  - It is easier to define experiences that are not authentic: providing writing prompts, doing it for the sole purpose of a grade, audience- teacher, given a topic to write about
  - when students choose what to write about, for a purpose and an audience

(30-37)
- meaningful to children
- they have choice
- they have voice in what they’re writing about
- “writing process is connected to their world”
- 460 –if it’s really authentic you need an editor, you need to have feedback
Appendix G: Student Interviews

Miss Chace’s Student Interview Notes

Ali
Marc
Lindsay
Joe
Samantha

1. What do you like to write about?
- “Poems, they’re easier to write”
- Do you like to write stories? “no they take forever”
- “Acrostic poems. They are easier to write about. I like to write about my dogs sometimes. Sometimes I like to write about special people in my life.”
- “I like to write about what pops into my head.”
- “My favorite is humorous, I like to make people laugh when I write”
- “I just like to write about free choice. I usually write about things that don’t happen. I like poems better.”

2. Is there anything you don’t like writing about?
- “I never know what to write about and when I do know what to write about I’m always the last one”
- “I don’t like to write stories, mysteries or my life.”
- “Sometimes writing poems and mysteries are hard for me.”
- “When we’re not allowed to pick what our book is about. And I don’t like to write mystery.”
- “When we have certain topics like writing prompts.”

3. Do you have a subject that you don’t enjoy as much? Why?
- “Writing. It hurts your hand.”
- “I don’t really like writing that much actually.”

4. Do you like to be told what to write about or would you rather write about your own topic of choice?
- “I would like to pick. I would like to describe something I could see.”
- “I would rather write about my topic of choice. If we get to choose then there are millions of topics to choose from and you could find out one that’s just right for you. And then you could write the best story ever.”
- “I kinda like to write about my own topic.”
- “I like to write about my own topic.”
- “I like to write about whatever I want to write about.”

5. Do you like to share your writing with the class?
- “I would like to share with a partner. I don’t like sharing with the whole class because there’s a lot of eyes on me. I don’t like people watching me. I like hearing ideas from other people.”
- “I like to share poetry sometimes and sometimes I don’t like to share at all. Usually I pass when we share our stories. I like to hear other people’s stories. I would like to share with one other person.”
“I would like more sharing because I might think something’s good but someone else might think it needs editing so they can help me fix those things.”

“I wouldn’t like to share more with the whole class because I feel like I’m not writing well when people are correcting me. I like to hear other ideas but I don’t want to correct them because I don’t like to be corrected.”

“I would like to share with like 1 other person. I don’t like sharing with the whole class but I think it’s helpful hearing other people share.”