

Suggested Format for Writing Workshop Mini-Lesson

Sample Mid-Year Kindergarten

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Mini-lessons are direct teaching opportunities in which three children's writings of the day are used as the basis for instruction for the rest of the class. The teacher chooses three child authors each day and based on the children's writing, follows these steps:

1. Focus on Author/Writing

Child author reads his/her writing to the class OR the teacher reads the child's writing to the class.

2. Focus on Meaning/Questioning the author

Teacher calls on 3 children to ask questions about the "story" so that the author has an opportunity to verbally add details. If children have difficulty asking questions, the teacher can model (I have a *what* question – What happened after; I have a *where* question – where was the?) This step is important in developing "fuller" writing – in future writing, teacher can ask child to think about what questions others might ask and encourage the writer to add those details.

3. Focus on Writing

Using a wipe-off board, the teacher chooses 3 teaching points from the focus child's writing and isolates the teaching point from the in-context writing. For example, after Tamika reads her story and the children ask three questions, the teacher might focus the mini-lesson on the following:

- A. "When Tamika needed the word *my*, she wrote it this way *mi*" – teacher demonstrates on white board. "That was wonderful thinking, wonderful kid writing! Here's how it looks in adult writing" (teacher writes *my* on white-board underneath child's writing and praises "Tamika heard the *mmm* sound at the beginning of the word *my*." Then teacher talks about how "it really does sound like *i* at the end of the word but it's really a y...tricky word boys and girls, we just have to remember it that way. Let's put that word on our word wall because you'll need it for lots of your writing. Where should we put it? Yes, under the Mm sign. So when you need *my*, just think about how it begins to help you find the word."

- B. “Look how wonderfully Tamika figured out the word *picking*” (teacher writes *pking* on white board just as Tamika wrote *it* and then writes it correctly underneath, praising the accurate elements). Teacher praises Tamika for looking at the King of *ing* crown to figure out the *ing* part of the word. Then teacher might refer children to the *ing* rhyming family house on which the children have written words that rhyme with *ing* and have the children read those words with her.
- C. “Boys and girls, Tamika always writes such exciting stories but I had a little trouble reading her story because all of the words were pushed together without leaving meatball spaces – remember, we need to leave meatball spaces in between words and just thin spaghetti spaces between the letters in the words. Here’s how Tamika wrote it. Look how much easier it is to read when I write it with spaces.....

Suggestions for selecting mini-lessons:

- ◆ 2 “praises” and 1 “push”
- ◆ Focus should be on elements that will be most appropriate for the children in your class – those teaching points many children are ready for, are most useful, and are developmentally appropriate. Usually 1 high frequency word, 1 high frequency spelling pattern, 1 additional element of writing such as including more letters as children stretch-through words, spacing, etc. Check developmental continuums to see which elements are developmentally appropriate to focus on.

Remember.....

If you choose 3 children each day and do 3 quick-hit mini-lesson’s from each of their writing, that’s 1600 mini-lessons over the school year! Imagine the potential!!!

Changes Over Time in Writing Workshop/Mini-lessons K-Grade 2

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As children develop as writers, the focus of the mini-lesson shifts from a focus on conventions to a focus on the domains (focus/content, organization, style, and advanced conventions and craft of writing (interesting leads, word choice, etc.)

Kindergarten – Late First Grade (emphasis on meaning and conventions)

<u>Writing</u> Illustration/Kid Writing/Adult Underwriting 35 minutes	<u>Mini-Lesson</u> Focus on conventions 10 minutes
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Late First Grade – Second Grade (emphasis on meaning, craft, and conventions)

<u>Mini-Lesson</u> Focus on Craft 5-7 minutes	<u>Writing/Conferencing</u> 30 minutes	<u>Mini-Lesson</u> Focus on Craft and Conventions 7-10 minutes
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