

# Workshop 2

## Reasons for Writing

### Video 3: Reasons for Writing

### Video 4: Fostering Choice and Independence

In this workshop, you will explore practices that motivate students to write and help them develop into independent writers. These effective practices include allowing students to make their own choices about their writing, helping them keep a writer's notebook in which to record their thoughts and draw inspiration, and providing opportunities for students to write for authentic audiences.

“I’ve seen children transformed when they had a clear sense of audience and purpose and when they were preparing their writing for an occasion where they can imagine the writing is read.”

—Katie Wood Ray, consultant and author or co-author of five books on teaching writing, including *The Writing Workshop: Working Through the Hard Parts (And They’re All Hard Parts)*

### Learning Goals

In this workshop, you will explore how to:

- encourage students to choose topics based on their interests and knowledge
- help students learn to write for authentic audiences
- create an environment that nurtures the voices of all students
- allow students to choose the mode of writing that fits the ideas they want to express
- help students discover the power of writing to communicate ideas and influence others

### Materials Needed

- Examine the Literature Response Chart (included at the end of this chapter and available as a PDF on the *Inside Writing Communities* Web site at [www.learner.org/channel/workshops/elemwriting](http://www.learner.org/channel/workshops/elemwriting))
- Lesson descriptions and classroom handouts listed in the section Teachers and Lessons Featured in Workshop 2 (included in the Appendix and available as PDFs on the Web site)
- “The Writer’s Notebook” and “Multiple Cultures, Multiple Literacies,” articles available as PDFs on the Web site
- Key Practices To Observe (included in the section Analyze the Videos and available as a PDF on the Web site)
- Journal or notebook

**Facilitators:** You may want to have several copies of the two articles available for participants without Internet access, as well as copies of Key Practices To Observe, Examine the Literature Response Chart, and the lesson descriptions and classroom handouts.

# Prepare for the Workshop

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To prepare for this workshop, you will review the strategies you already use and read two articles about supporting students in authentic and personally meaningful writing.

**Facilitators:** Have participants complete these activities before arriving for the workshop.

## What Do You Do?



Recall a time when you had to write about a topic in which you had little or no interest (perhaps a paper for a college course). Jot down some details about this experience.

Next, recall a writing experience that motivated you to share your ideas. Jot down some details about that writing task.

Now compare and contrast these experiences:

- How did it feel to go through these two different writing processes?
- What did you do with each piece when it was finished?
- Did you share each piece of writing with someone other than the person who originally gave you the assignment (e.g., teacher, supervisor)?
- What implications do you see for student writers after comparing and contrasting these experiences?

## Examine the Literature



To complete this activity, use the Examine the Literature Response Chart found at the end of this chapter.

Read each article listed below, recording your ideas on the chart during and after reading. When you have finished, save your chart to submit as an assignment.

You can download PDFs of these articles on the *Inside Writing Communities, Grades 3–5* Web site at [www.learner.org/channel/workshops/elemwriting](http://www.learner.org/channel/workshops/elemwriting).

### The Writer's Notebook

This article explores the potential of the writer's notebook and how students can use their writer's notebook for multiple purposes.

Fletcher, Ralph. "The Writer's Notebook." *School Talk* 6, No. 4. (July 2001): Urbana, IL: National Council of Teachers of English.

### Multiple Cultures, Multiple Literacies

This article examines the positive impact students from different cultures have on a writing community and how teachers can build on the strengths of students who speak different languages.

Koshewa, Allen. "Multiple Cultures, Multiple Literacies." *Primary Voices K–6* (National Council of Teachers of English) 9, no. 4 (April 2001): 27–33.

# Analyze the Videos

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**Facilitators:** When the workshop begins, you may want to spend a few minutes discussing the group's responses to What Do You Do? and the readings. You also may want to direct the participants' attention to the Key Practices listed below.

## Key Practices To Observe

"Reasons for Writing" and "Fostering Choice and Independence" explore strategies that help students develop into independent, motivated writers. The videos feature commentary from experts on teaching writing, as well as classroom illustrations highlighting the practices of several teachers.

As you watch, look for the following key practices:

- Teachers acknowledge and respect the family, language, and cultural backgrounds of their students.
- Teachers expose students to the power of writing and help them see how their own writing can be powerful.
- Teachers model ways to transform tiny moments of experience into writing.
- Teachers encourage students to "live like writers" by practicing rituals and routines, using a writer's notebook, and observing their world closely.
- Teachers enable students to imagine their writing being read by a real audience.
- Teachers allow students the freedom to choose topics that have personal meaning.

## Teachers and Lessons Featured in Workshop 2

Descriptions of the featured lessons, along with related handouts, are included in the Appendix.

### Video 3: Reasons for Writing

- Sheryl Block, Fourth Grade
- Silvia Edgerton, Fifth Grade
- Mark Hansen, Third Grade: "Introduction to Persuasive Writing"  
(Handouts: Persuasive Letter Planner graphic organizer; Sample Student Letters)
- Latosha Rowley, Third Grade
- Christine Sanchez, Third Grade

### Video 4: Fostering Choice and Independence

- Silvia Edgerton, Fifth Grade
- Mark Hardy, Third Grade: "Introducing the Writing Workshop"

# Analyze the Videos, cont'd.

## Guide to Video 3: Reasons for Writing

Use this chart to help identify the pause points in Video 3. Zero your counter at the Annenberg logo at the very beginning of the tape. The entry points are approximate.

<b>Segment 1</b> (0:00-12:02)	<b>Introduction</b> (beginning at 00:45)	
	<b>In the Classroom</b> (beginning at 03:09) Student sharing his writer's notebook	Silvia Edgerton
	<b>Interview</b> (beginning at 04:19) Honoring students' backgrounds	Ralph Cordova
	<b>In the Classroom</b> (beginning at 05:01) Integrating Navajo culture and language	Christine Sanchez
	<b>In the Classroom</b> (beginning at 05:45) Using dual languages	Silvia Edgerton
	<b>In the Classroom</b> (beginning at 07:03) Using writer's notebooks for inspiration	Latosha Rowley
	<b>Interview</b> (beginning at 07:28) Choosing topics from writer's notebooks	Isoke Nia
	<b>Interview</b> (beginning at 10:07) Using notebooks outside of school	Katie Wood Ray
	<b>Interview</b> (beginning at 10:53) Two students talking about their writer's notebooks	
<b>Segment 2</b> (12:02-18:27)	<b>In the Classroom</b> (beginning at 12:02) Morning ritual with writer's notebooks	Christine Sanchez
	<b>In the Classroom</b> (beginning at 15:26) Taking students into the community	Mark Hansen
<b>Segment 3</b> (18:27-end)	<b>In the Classroom</b> (beginning at 18:27) Students sharing their writing topics	Latosha Rowley
	<b>Interview</b> (beginning at 18:42) Student choice within genre studies	Katie Wood Ray
	<b>In the Classroom</b> (beginning at 21:07) Supporting choice and ownership	Sheryl Block
	<b>Interview</b> (beginning at 23:52) Promoting decision-making	Katie Wood Ray
	<b>In the Classroom</b> (beginning at 24:19) Importance of authentic audiences	Silvia Edgerton

# Analyze the Videos, cont'd.

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## Video 3: Reasons for Writing

Watch the 30-minute video “Reasons for Writing.” If you prefer to watch the video in segments, you can stop it at the times suggested below or use the detailed Video Guide outline on the previous page to help you determine other places to stop for discussion. The Video Guide is also available as a PDF at [www.learner.org/channel/workshops/elemwriting](http://www.learner.org/channel/workshops/elemwriting).

Answer the questions that accompany each segment below, jotting down your responses in a notebook or using them as discussion starters.



### **Valuing Student Experiences** (approximate times: 00:50-12:00)

The experts and teachers featured in this segment realize that students' lives are a rich source of inspiration. When children know that their families and cultures are respected and that they can freely explore their interests and passions, they find reasons to write in their own experience. (Stop after the segment featuring Latosha Rowley's class.)

- Christine Sanchez honors her students' heritage by beginning the writing workshop with a Navajo greeting. Silvia Edgerton shows respect for her fifth graders' culture and language through her positive responses to their purposeful use of Spanish within their English writing. Could these or similar practices be adapted for your classroom? What are some other ways to honor your students' cultural backgrounds?
- By having her students create “heart maps,” Latosha encourages them to begin thinking about what matters to them. What other strategies might help students identify their interests and passions?

### **Modeling a “Writerly Life”** (approximate times: 12:00-18:25)

In this segment, Christine Sanchez demonstrates for her students how to get ideas from other writers and record them in their writer's notebooks. Mark Hansen takes his students out into the community to make observations that could lead to writing topics. (Stop after the segment featuring Mark's class.)

- By sharing her thinking aloud, Christine models what writers do. What are some additional strategies that writers might use to find topics? List strategies that you could share with your students.
- To help his students zero in on a community problem, Mark encourages them to jot down their observations while they are out on their walk. How could you provide your students with opportunities to gather more information about these issues?

### **Promoting Student Choice** (approximate times: 18:25-end of video)

In the final segment, the classrooms of Sheryl Block, Latosha Rowley, and Silvia Edgerton illustrate the importance of teaching students how to make choices about and during writing.

- Jot down some of the reasons teachers feel compelled to choose writing topics for their students. For each reason listed, suggest a way of supporting student choice while meeting the instructional need.

# Analyze the Videos, cont'd.

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## Video 4: Fostering Choice and Independence

Watch the 30-minute video “Fostering Choice and Independence.” Apply what you have learned in “Reasons for Writing” as you observe the classroom examples.

Answer the questions that follow each segment, jotting down your answers in your notebook or using them as discussion starters.



### **Mark Hardy’s Class** (approximate times: 00:30-18:00)

On the first two days of school, Mark Hardy introduces his third graders to two important components of the writing workshop: writing for a real audience and writing about what they know and love best.

- How does Mark support his students in their selection of writing topics and forms?
- Based on what you remember from the sharing that takes place at the end of the writing workshop, make a list of writing forms the students chose.
- Some students started and finished their writing pieces in one day, while others took that long just to choose a topic. How does Mark address these differences? What strategies does he use to keep track of each student’s work and progress?

### **Silvia Edgerton’s Class** (approximate times: 18:00-end of video)

Silvia Edgerton begins each writing workshop with a “status of the class,” in which she gathers her fifth graders together to ask them what they plan to do that day.

- What strategies does Silvia use to elicit detailed information from her students?
- What does Silvia do to move students further along in the process?
- What evidence do you see of the students’ independence during the “status of the class” discussion?
- In what ways are you able to see students taking responsibility for their work?

# Extend Your Learning

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## Examine Your Practice

The act of writing is an ongoing process of decision making. Students develop this critical skill when teachers show them how to make choices and then allow them to do it.

Read the following quotation, consider your own students, and answer the questions below.

“Let the child make decisions about writing on his or her own. Choice is not just something we do to be polite or to make writing more fun; learning to make decisions is part of the writing curriculum.”

—Katie Wood Ray

### Guiding Questions Notebook:

Reflect on the quotation from Katie Wood Ray and consider your own students. Then write your answers to the questions below in your notebook. If you are working in a group, share your responses.

- What is your response to the idea that student choice is essential to a writing curriculum?
- Writing expert Lucy Calkins wrote that teachers should “teach the writer, not the writing.” What do you think that means?

## Try an Activity

### Using Your Day To Inspire Writing Interactive:

Go to the *Inside Writing Communities, Grades 3–5* Web site at [www.learner.org/channel/workshops/elemwriting](http://www.learner.org/channel/workshops/elemwriting)

This activity—adapted from Donald Graves’s book *Writing: Teachers and Children at Work*—is designed to help you and your students find inspiration for writing topics and genres from everyday events.

# Put It Into Practice

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The videos, activities, and readings in this workshop illustrate effective practices for helping students generate their own ideas for writing. For example, Latosha Rowley’s “heart maps” allow her students to practice an important part of the “writerly life”—namely, writing about things they love. Now apply what you have learned to help your students generate ideas for writing.

## Teaching the “Writerly Life” Assignment:

Think about the strategies you have learned for generating writing ideas. List three strategies that you could teach your students right away. Be sure to include the following:

- a detailed description of each strategy, including topics and genres that it covers
- how each strategy engages and motivates students to write
- how each strategy helps students learn how to generate ideas for writing topics

When you have finished, save your work to submit as an assignment.

Try out at least one of these strategies in your own writing. Use your work as a model, or re-create your process with your students.

# Reflect on Your Learning

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## What Did You Learn? Assignment:

Summarize what you have learned about reasons to write from the experts’ statements, classroom examples, and the readings and activities in this workshop. Use the questions below to guide your thinking. When you have finished, save your written summary to submit as an assignment.

- Which classroom practices from the videos reflect what you currently do?
- Which practices or ideas are new to you?
- What changes do you plan to make?
- What support and/or resources will you need to implement these ideas?

# Assignments

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If you are taking this workshop for graduate credit, submit the following assignments for Workshop 2: Reasons for Writing:

## **1. Examine the Literature**

Read two articles about teaching strategies that motivate different students to write and complete the Examine the Literature Response Chart.

## **2. Teaching the “Writerly Life”**

Develop teaching tools to help students generate ideas for writing.

## **3. What Did You Learn?**

Write a summary of the ideas and strategies you explored in this workshop.

# Related Resources

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## Web Resources

### Center for Media Literacy

<http://www.medialit.org/>

This Web site helps students understand the influence the media and advertising have on their own lives.

### Exploring Diversity: Themes and Communities

[http://www.cynthialeitichsmith.com/lit\\_resources/diversity/multicultural/communities.html](http://www.cynthialeitichsmith.com/lit_resources/diversity/multicultural/communities.html)

This section of Cynthia Leitich Smith's personal Web page gives access to many Web sites concerned with issues of culture and gender in children's and young adult literature.

### Global Dimension

<http://www.globaldimension.org.uk/>

This Web site provides materials, practical guidance, and support to help teachers incorporate a global perspective into their classes.

### PBS TeacherSource: Arts and Literature

[http://www.pbs.org/teachersource/arts\\_lit.htm](http://www.pbs.org/teachersource/arts_lit.htm)

PBS TeacherSource provides searchable access to the various lesson plans, teaching resources, and student activities on the PBS Web site.

### Publishers' Bindings Online 1815-1930: The Art of Books

<http://bindings.lib.ua.edu/>

This site includes images 5,000 decorative book bindings along with research tools and lesson plans.

### Publishing With Students

<http://www.publishingstudents.com/>

This site gives practical advice to teachers interested in helping students publish their writing.

### SmartWriters.com

<http://www.SmartWriters.com/>

The site features include interviews with children's writers, writing contest links for young writers, classroom resources for teachers and librarians, and a directory of children's authors and illustrators who are available for school visits.

# Related Resources, cont'd.

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## Print Resources

Buckner, Aimee. *Notebook Know-How: Strategies for the Writer's Notebook*. Portland, ME: Stenhouse Publishers, 2005. ISBN: 1571104135

Lessons, tips, and samples of student writing help teachers in grades 3–8 make the most of writer's notebooks without sacrificing time needed for the rest of the literacy curriculum.

Cruz, M. Colleen. *Independent Writing: One Teacher—Thirty-Two Needs, Topics, and Plans*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 2004. ISBN: 0325005400

Cruz offers a variety of methods to get students in grades 3–6 not only writing independently, but also producing work that both reflects their own interests and displays their skills.

Ernst, Karen, and Ruth Shagoury Hubbard, eds. *New Entries: Learning by Writing and Drawing*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 1996. ISBN: 0-435-07204-8

In 13 essays, teachers share the ways they connect writing and visual art in their classrooms and their lives.

Fletcher, Ralph. *Breathing In, Breathing Out: Keeping a Writer's Notebook*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 1996. ISBN: 0435072277

This book, considered by many to be a seminal text on writing, examines how writers use the writer's notebook.

Fletcher, Ralph. *How Writers Work: Finding a Process That Works for You*. New York: HarperTrophy, 2000. ISBN: 038079702X

Geared toward 8- to 12-year-olds, this book examines the processes and strategies used by successful writers.

Hindley Salch, Joanne, and Marianne Marino, co-editors; Ralph Fletcher, guest editor. "Writer's Notebook: A Place to Dream, Wonder, and Explore." *School Talk* (National Council of Teachers of English) 6, no. 4 (July 2001).

This issue of *School Talk* includes articles by multiple authors and looks at the practical ways teachers can help students learn to use and rely on their writer's notebooks.

Madigan, Dan, and Victoria T. Koivu-Rybicki. *The Writing Lives of Children*. Portland, ME: Stenhouse Publishers, 1997. ISBN: 1571100113

This book follows the development of third- and fourth-grade writers in an inner-city school, with a particular emphasis on how the children find meaning through their writing.

Wheeler, Rebecca S., and Rachel Swords. *Code-Switching: Teaching Standard English in Urban Classrooms*. Urbana, IL: National Council of Teachers of English, 2006. ISBN: 0-8141-0702-8.

Focusing on building on the linguistic knowledge that children bring to school, this book advocates "code-switching" to enable students with the language patterns of many African American communities to add another linguistic code—Standard English—to their linguistic toolboxes.

# Workshop 2: Reasons for Writing

## Examine the Literature Response Chart

Title	Big Ideas	Notes and Questions
1. The Writer's Notebook		
2. Multiple Cultures, Multiple Literacies		