

Workshop 4

Teaching the Writing Craft

Video 7: Teaching the Writing Craft

Video 8: Teaching a Specific Writing Strategy

How can you target specific writing skills and strategies in your teaching? In this workshop, you will explore the role of whole-class instruction in the writing workshop and how lessons on particular writing skills can unfold over multiple days.

“Planning whole-class instruction begins with your required curriculum, what you know about writing, and what your students are interested in. Then once you get inside of a study, you’re always looking for what your students need, what you can teach that would help a lot of students based on what you’ve observed.”

—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:

- determine when to use whole-class lessons
- integrate whole-class lessons into the writing workshop structure
- use an inquiry approach to introduce new concepts and explore ideas
- design lessons to increase understanding of writing concepts and skills

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)
- Lesson descriptions and classroom handouts listed in Teachers and Lessons Featured in Workshop 4 (included in the Appendix and available as PDFs on the Web site)
- “Exploring Inquiry as a Teaching Stance in the Writing Workshop” and “Why Cauley Writes Well: A Close Look at What a Difference Good Teaching Can Make,” 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

To prepare for this workshop, you will review the strategies you already use and read two articles about whole-class instruction.

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

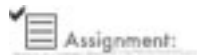
What Do You Do?



Think for a moment about how you remember being taught writing in elementary school. What do you recall about a typical writing lesson? How do you imagine your teacher prepared for the types of lessons you were taught? Now think about your own teaching and answer the following questions, jotting down your answers in your notebook.

- How do you determine which writing skills to teach?
- How do you prepare to teach specific writing skills?
- When do you use whole-class instruction? What kind of an approach do you take?
- What types of resources and materials do you use in your teaching?
- How do you assess students' understanding of your lesson?

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.

Exploring Inquiry as a Teaching Stance in the Writing Workshop

This article examines the benefits of using an inquiry approach to teaching writing, including the use of open pieces in a fifth-grade writing workshop.

Ray, Katie Wood. "Exploring Inquiry as a Teaching Stance in the Writing Workshop." *Language Arts* (National Council of Teachers of English) 83, no. 3 (January 2006): 238–247.

Why Cauley Writes Well: A Close Look at What a Difference Good Teaching Can Make

This article examines the writing of one first grader, Cauley, and reveals how good teaching has helped him become a better writer. It also includes goals and outlines for 11 writing workshop units of study.

Ray, Katie Wood. "Why Cauley Writes Well: A Close Look at What a Difference Good Teaching Can Make." *Language Arts* (National Council of Teachers of English) 82, no. 2 (November 2004): 100–109.

Analyze the Videos

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

"Teaching the Writing Craft" and "Teaching a Specific Writing Strategy" explore the place whole-class lessons have in a writing workshop and the approach teachers take in planning them. They feature commentary from experts on teaching writing at the elementary level, as well as classroom illustrations highlighting the practices of several teachers.

As you watch, look for the following key practices:

- Teachers use whole-class lessons to introduce ideas and strategies relevant to the entire writing community.
- Teachers use inquiry to help students identify elements and strategies in written texts that they can replicate in their own writing.
- Teachers use a variety of models to show the elements of good writing.
- Teachers' lessons are guided by the overall ideas and goals of the unit of study.
- Teachers give students opportunities to talk with one another during whole-class instruction.
- Teachers listen in on student conversations to monitor understanding.
- Teachers urge students to immediately try the strategy being taught.
- Teachers realize that student mastery of writing skills may take several attempts and "re-teachings."
- Teachers record the strategies they have taught on charts, and post the charts to remind students of important strategies to use in their writing.
- During whole-class instruction, teachers think out loud to model and teach writing strategies.

Teachers and Lessons Featured in Workshop 4

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

Video 7: Teaching the Writing Craft

- Lindsay Dibert, Fifth Grade: "Revising Leads"
(Handout: Sample Leads)
- Mark Hansen, Third Grade: "Introduction to Persuasive Writing"
(Handouts: Persuasive Letter Planner graphic organizer; Sample Student Letters)
- Latosha Rowley, Third Grade: "Lessons in a Poetry Unit"

Video 8: Teaching a Specific Writing Skill

- Silvia Edgerton, Fifth Grade: "Teaching a Revision Strategy: Zooming In"
(Handouts: Excerpts Used To Illustrate Zooming In; *Charlotte's Web* graphic organizer)
- Mark Hardy, Third Grade: "Introducing the Writing Workshop"

Analyze the Videos, cont'd.

Guide to Video 7: Teaching the Writing Craft

Use this chart to help identify the pause points in Video 7. Zero your counter at the Annenberg logo at the very beginning of the tape. The entry points below are approximate.

Segment 1 (0:00-19:01)	Interview (beginning at 00:51) The role of whole-class lessons in writing instruction Jack Wilde
	Introduction (beginning at 01:55)
	In the Classroom (beginning at 02:54) Using an inquiry approach to introduce persuasive writing Mark Hansen
	In the Classroom (beginning at 10:47) Teaching a whole-class lesson on poetry Latosha Rowley
Segment 2 (19:01-end)	In the Classroom (beginning at 19:01) Integrating whole-class instruction into a lesson on effective leads Lindsay Dibert

Video 7: Teaching the Writing Craft

Watch the 30-minute video “Teaching the Writing Craft.” 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 above 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.

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



Exploring Genres With Whole-Class Lessons (approximate times: 00:50-19:00)

In the first segment, Mark Hansen and Latosha Rowley use whole-class lessons to begin immersing their third graders in new genres. Mark relies on an inquiry approach to help his students analyze the elements of persuasive letters, while Latosha provides a framework her students can use to categorize the poems they read and write. (Stop after Latosha’s segment.)

- What are the advantages of presenting a sample piece of student writing on the overhead, as Mark does? What other ways could you and your students share and analyze writing samples?
- What evidence do you see that Latosha’s students have absorbed her lesson about “feeling” and “seeing” poems? How do you think the lesson will help them read and write poetry in the future?
- What strategies do you use to encourage all students to participate in whole-group discussions?

Analyze the Videos, cont'd.

Learning About Leads Through Whole-Class Instruction (approximate times: 19:00-end of video)

In the final segment, fifth-grade teacher Lindsay Dibert uses whole-class instruction to help her students write new leads for their personal narratives. (Play to the end of the video.)

- Summarize the sequence of activities you observe in Lindsay's lesson on leads.
- According to Jack Wilde, whole-class instruction allows students to learn from one another's responses. How does Lindsay organize her lesson to maximize this experience?
- Think about your own writing instruction. During a typical class period, how many different activities are your students engaged in?

Video 8: Teaching a Specific Writing Strategy

Watch the 30-minute video "Teaching a Specific Writing Strategy." Apply what you have learned in "Teaching the Writing Craft" 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.



Silvia Edgerton's Class (00:30-13:00)

In this segment, Silvia Edgerton introduces her students to a new revision strategy in a lesson that spans multiple days.

- What is the benefit of allowing students to talk through a strategy together before trying it independently?
- List the various ways Silvia presents the idea of "zooming in" to her students. What are the advantages of using this approach to teach a new writing strategy?

Mark Hardy's Class (13:00-end of video)

In this segment, Mark Hardy introduces his students to the writing habits they will learn to adopt in his classroom.

- Mark uses a "fishbowl" approach to model the strategy he wants his students to employ as they talk with their partners about their writing work. How is this an effective way to teach a new strategy?
- Mark uses charts as visual cues to help students remember important information about the strategies he is teaching. What role do these charts play in nurturing independence in Mark's students?

Extend Your Learning

Examine Your Practice

Punctuation is one of the writing skills often taught in whole-class lessons. Read the following quotation, consider your own students, and answer the questions below.

“Something I think is really big—believe it or not—is punctuation, and not in the way we learned about punctuation when we were in school. To me, punctuation is so much the heart of getting the writing down on the page and getting it to read the way you want it to sound. And there’s so much potential for experimenting with punctuation, with sentence structure, that brings sounds and voice to writing.”

—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 does Katie mean when she talks about the difference between the way most adults, including teachers, were taught punctuation and the way she proposes?
- Think of a lesson in punctuation you already do with your students. What changes, if any, would you make to your lesson to help your students use punctuation to boost the impact of their writing on the reader?

Try an Activity

Analyzing a Writing Mini-Lesson Interactive:

Go to the *Inside Writing Communities, Grades 3–5* Web site at www.learner.org/channel/workshops/elemwriting

This activity provides an opportunity for you to focus on specific elements of a mini-lesson. Three video clips feature veteran teacher Sheryl Block and her fourth-grade students in a mini-lesson on adding detail to narrative writing. You will consider the purpose and effectiveness of each part of the lesson and compare your observations with those of another teacher.

Put It Into Practice

The videos, activities, and readings in this workshop illustrate how whole-class instruction can be balanced with other learning activities in the writing workshop and some of the strategies or approaches well suited to teaching the whole class. Now apply what you have learned to refine a lesson for whole-class instruction.

Refine a Lesson Assignment:

Think of a lesson that you have recently used to teach a writing skill. Use the strategies you have learned in this workshop to modify your lesson.

First, ask yourself if the concept or strategy you plan to teach is a good fit for the whole class or if it would be better taught in conferences or with small groups of students. Once you have decided on a lesson appropriate for whole-class instruction, redesign the lesson to include strategies you have learned or seen illustrated in this workshop. When you have finished, save your written work to submit as an assignment.

Reflect on Your Learning

What Did You Learn? Assignment:

Summarize what you have learned about designing writing lessons for whole-class instruction 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 two videos reflect what you currently?
- Which practices or ideas are new to you?
- What changes, if any, do you plan to make?
- What support and/or resources will you need to implement these ideas?

Assignments

If you are taking this workshop for graduate credit, submit the following assignments for Workshop 4: Teaching the Writing Craft:

1. Examine the Literature

Read two articles about whole-class instruction and complete the Examine the Literature Response Chart.

2. Refine a Lesson

Modify a lesson based on the whole-class instruction strategies you have learned in this workshop.

3. What Did You Learn?

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

Related Resources

Web Resources

A to Z Teacher Stuff

<http://atozteacherstuff.com/>

A to Z Teacher Stuff provides teachers with free lesson plans, thematic units, and other resources.

The Poetry Forge

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

The Poetry Forge offers teacher tools such as poetry generators, lesson plans, and discussion groups for teachers attempting to implement these activities.

PoetryTeachers.com

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

The site provides ideas for poetry lessons, contests, and activities.

SmartWriters.com

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

Educators and students can make use of several SmartWriters.com features, including 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.

Web English Teacher

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

Web English Teacher presents the best of K-12 English/Language Arts teaching resources: lesson plans, WebQuests, videos, biography, e-texts, criticism, jokes, puzzles, professional development, and classroom activities.

Related Resources, cont'd.

WriteNet: Teachers and Writers Collaborative Virtual Poetry Workshop

<http://www.twc.org/forums/virtualpoetrywrkshp.html>

Teachers can use or adapt writing exercises for their own students and learn how to critique student poetry by reading responses on the forum page.

Print Resources

Bomer, Katherine. *Writing a Life: Teaching Memoir To Sharpen Insight, Shape Meaning—and Triumph Over Tests*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 2005. ISBN: 0-325-00646-6

This book includes classroom-tested strategies for tapping the memoir's power, including ways to help students generate ideas to write about, elaborate on, and make meaning from their memories, and help them learn craft from published memoirs.

Collom, Jack, and Sheryl Noethe. *Poetry Everywhere: Teaching Poetry Writing in School and in the Community*. New York: Teachers & Writers Collaborative, 2000. ISBN: 0915924986

This book features 60 writing exercises and 450 sample poems by students, teachers, and published writers, including poems in Spanish and translated poems.

Fiderer, Adele. *25 Mini-Lessons for Teaching Writing (Grades 3-6)*. New York: Scholastic, 1999. ISBN: 059020940X

This book presents 25 quick lessons on subjects such as choosing and focusing topics, crafting openings and endings, using details, showing characters' feelings, etc. It includes sample student work to use as models.

Graves, Donald, and Penny Kittle. *Inside Writing: How To Teach the Details of the Craft*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 2005.

This book demonstrates the power of an apprenticeship approach to writing instruction, even if teachers don't consider themselves writers.

Harvey, Stephanie. *Nonfiction Matters: Reading, Writing, and Research in Grades 3-8*. Portland, ME: Stenhouse Publishers, 1998. ISBN: 1571100725

This resource explores how students can write authentic nonfiction that is interesting, visual, and full of voice.

Jamison Rog, Lori, and Paul Kropp. *The Write Genre: Classroom Activities and Mini-Lessons That Promote Writing With Clarity, Style, and Brilliance*. Portland, ME: Stenhouse Publishers, 2004.

Written by an educator and a popular novelist, this book presents a balanced approach to teaching 3-9 writing workshops.

Jorgenson, Karen. *The Whole Story: Crafting Fiction in the Upper Elementary Grades*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 2001. ISBN: 0-325-00292-4

This practical and innovative resource helps teachers guide young writers to refine their fiction through improved characterization and description.

Robb, Laura. *Nonfiction Writing: From the Inside Out*. New York: Teaching Resources (Scholastic), 2004. ISBN: 0439513685

This resource includes nonfiction writing lessons based on conversations with professional writers.

Workshop 4: Teaching the Writing Craft

Examine the Literature Response Chart

Title	Big Ideas	Notes and Questions
1. Exploring Inquiry as a Teaching Stance in the Writing Workshop		
2. Why Cauley Writes Well: A Close Look at What a Difference Good Teaching Can Make		

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