
tise, I was observing, but more important, I was thinking. Paying attention to my thinking led me to the writing. So often in a writing workshop, the writing comes first and then students are asked to illustrate the writing. When drawing comes first, drawing is a springboard to writing.

Teaching drawing as a form of thinking is necessary when connecting art to writing. Just as doing a “think-aloud” shows students what a proficient reader does as she reads (Harvey & Goudvis, 2000), holding up my sketch journal shows students how I think as I make a picture. I show a page where I once drew a memory of a favorite place I frequented when I was younger. The pond on a nearby college campus was the center of the picture, but my thinking went to the edge of the campus and across the road. I demonstrate how using sticky notes as I draw can help make my thinking permanent. I can return to those notes to bring back the images and thinking when I am ready to write. I teach the expectation that drawing in a writing workshop must be a form of thinking that propels the writing process.

From authors, illustrators, and scientists we learn how writing and drawing interact in powerful ways. In a conversation with his daughter, I learned that author and illustrator Hardy Gramatky used writing to inform his drawing of *Little Toot*. He kept a notebook in which he had pages and pages of writing. He often wrote a memory of when he was sad in order to find the way Little Toot should look when he was sad. For this author, writing was a form of thinking about his pictures. Thomas Edison kept thousands of journals during his lifetime. They were filled with pages of writing and sketches about his thinking and inventions. He used both drawing and writing to figure things out and to solve problems. When writing and drawing are used in a recursive way in the writing workshop, more doorways to thinking are opened.

Drawing Helps Us Hold onto the Image

A picture is a tangible image for a writer. In *Crafting a Life*, Donald Murray says that all writers write from images, either on paper or in their minds (1996). When drawing is part of the process of writing, the picture becomes the tangible image, and the author can use it to see her thinking, write the details and descriptions, and revise both thinking and writing (Ernst, 1997). I once drew a sandbox where I played as a child. Drawing it gave me time to think about the landscape of my backyard, paths to other play places, and my mom’s response to the sand sculptures that I made. Even though my crayons didn’t draw all the details, my mind seemed to find them as I spent time on the image. Drawing gave me a tangible image and helped me find the details that I had long forgotten.

Pictures hold meanings and give information. When we draw them ourselves, as I did with my sandbox, we gain access to these layers of meanings. But we can also read pictures others have drawn or painted or photographed and open all kinds of new possibilities for our thinking. We can teach children to read pictures to help them find ideas for writing and to make connections, just as they do with literature. When we do this, we are also teaching them that their pictures in a writers workshop must have meaning. We can fill our workshops with picture books—fiction and nonfiction—photographs, postcards of art reproductions—what I call art cards—and student drawings, and then teach children how to read those as texts.

Drawing or copying a picture from a picture book, a photograph, or an art card is an explicit way to teach children to search for meaning in a picture. I often do this in my sketch journal. When I do, I don’t really want to make an exact copy of the illustrator’s picture. Drawing helps me have a physical contact with the picture,

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and that helps me “read” it, think, get ideas, and then write. For example, in a drawing that I copied from a picture book, I focused on the close-up of a man wearing a big yellow straw hat. As I immersed myself in the copying, I immersed myself in memories of growing up and summer vacations.

Daniel, a fourth grader, had a similar experience. As he copied from a picture book, he remarked, “It looks so familiar.” He explained that he had no specific memory in his mind, but that there was something about the picture that made him feel as if he had been there. When Daniel began to write, he discovered a memory of a time at camp and an incredible sunset that

he experienced. Writers need time to find the details of memory, and reading pictures slows us down enough to do that.

Proficient readers also see pictures as they read written text. These pictures that appear in the mind’s eye of a reader can also be searched out for thinking that leads to writing. When I draw the image that comes to me as I read “The Blue Door” by Pat Mora, it leads me to write about connections to long-ago friends, kindergarten experiences, and taking risks in my work. The poem was the doorway and the drawing was the bridge to my thinking and writing. Donald Murray writes, “We write what we see . . . the relationship of seeing and telling, drawing and writing, is intimate, essential” (1994, p. vii). Pictures are tangible and important pieces of literacy that can lead students to see and hold onto the images in their minds.

Drawing Helps Us Re-see Writing

I return to the drafts of thought and the sketches in my journal whenever I write. The drawings hold onto my thinking just as the writing holds onto the images and ideas. Quick sketches of my first sighting of bears in Alaska bring back the energy I felt as people crowded to the window of the bus. The image of the roots of a tree in New Hampshire—and the writing I did around it—give me a place to start to craft a poem (see Figure 3). The pictures and words are the tangle of my thinking and, together, they allow me to re-see or re-experience that thinking before I move to drafting.

Once the drafting process has begun, picture making and art continue to be essential tools in the revision process. Georgia Heard writes that “the true meaning of the word *revision* is this: to see again” (1995, p. 121). Pictures can help us see our writing and then make changes. During revision there is a recursive, almost playful movement between changing a picture and

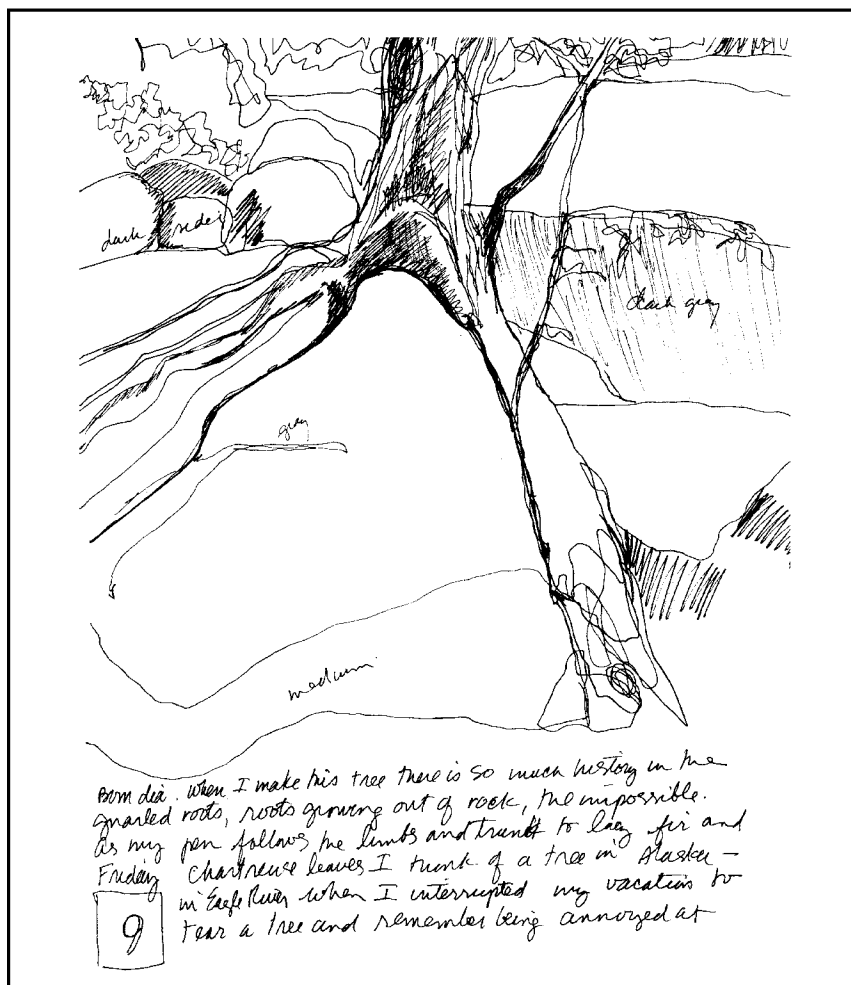


Figure 3. The thinking surrounding this entry led to a poem.

