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,
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—gave 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...
the changing nature of the writing. Writers step back, look, and look again at the work they are trying to improve. As I reworked the sketch of the tree with gnarled roots from New Hampshire, my choice of material, collage, led me to think of the layered history that going to New Hampshire holds for me. That physical process of reworking the picture led me back to the writing alongside it. I pulled words and phrases from the original writing to work toward a poem entitled “Rooted” that showed my layered thinking (see Figure 4).

We often teach students to use picture making in this same way as a tool for revision. We ask students to select a piece of writing they would like to revise. Next, we ask them to make a picture of what the writing represents or what they want to achieve in it. The next step is to change the writing to more closely match the thinking that went into the making of the image. Joanne Hindley sometimes asks her students to do a picture in several different materials, adding a written reflection each time on how the material changes the mood or feeling of the writing.

Jillian, a fourth grader, selected to revise a piece in her journal that was a memory of a family vacation in Cape Cod. The picture connected to it was of a partial sun and rainbow. She began to revise, focusing on the moment in her vacation when she saw a double rainbow. Her picture changed to reflect that focus, the sky becoming the center, and she added herself, watching. She held onto a fence that crossed the lower part of the page. Reworking the picture gave her a focus and an entry into making the moment clearer and her feelings more apparent. “The thick, misty air carried the heavy double rainbow across the sky. It stretched as far as I could see. I could make out the strokes that followed through the rainbow.” Her drawing guided her into capturing the image in words.

**Drawing Is a Doorway to Writing**

Remember Allison, writing and drawing with such confidence in kindergarten? Her confidence came from knowing she found meaning in her picture, that she had a story to tell, and that her picture was a springboard to the words. As adults, many of us lose that confidence and grow up thinking that a picture has to be right or that drawing and art belong only to those with talent. Tom Newkirk writes, “Art is not a special talent doled out to the gifted few—it is a democratic birthright.”

As the teachers of children like Allison, we have worked to regain our confidence as artists because we believe in its power, and we know we must be able to demonstrate this to our students. All of the authors for this issue of *Primary Voices*—Elizabeth, Dawn, Darcy, Peter, and I—believe that our personal sketch journals are essential for our writing and our teaching. Our individual collections of drawings, artifacts, and writing are used in our teaching as we hold up the ways that art and language can connect. Our experiences

![Figure 4. A product of linking art and writing](image-url)