Action Research

Writing Fundamentals:
Narrative Writing/Writing Workshop
Schoolwide Action Research

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Schoolwide, Inc. Action Research Project

Abstract and Purpose

This action research project describes the implementation of Schoolwide’s narrative writing author study unit in two first-grade classrooms, as well as the use of the writing workshop instructional model in these settings. The purpose was to determine how students’ writing skills grew and improved. The participants in this action research were two first-grade teachers and forty first-grade students.

The classroom teachers implemented writing workshop four times a week during a six-week period, using one of Schoolwide’s narrative writing units—Mem Fox Author Study. Each day’s workshop consisted of the following components:

- Interactive Read-Aloud or Mini-Lesson;
- Independent writing or practice;
- Conferring with students; and
- Whole-group sharing.

The research design of this study included a pre-unit survey of students’ attitudes about writing, a pre-unit (baseline) and post-unit assessment of students’ narrative writing, and an examination of a final published piece that was written during the Mem Fox Author Study unit. The results of this research yielded positive findings as students’ perceptions of themselves as writers were enhanced, along with the students’ writing scores and understanding of narrative writing. The results of this research show that using Schoolwide’s Mem Fox Author Study unit with consistency and within a workshop framework is an effective way to teach first-grade students about the narrative text type. It also provides teachers with an effective resource to support their Common Core-aligned curriculum.

Statement of Research Topic: Examining the growth and development of first graders’ narrative writing after participating in Schoolwide’s Mem Fox Author Study unit.

Purposes:

- Assess the growth and development of students’ learning related to narrative writing;
- Measure the effectiveness of classroom instruction that follows the workshop model;
- Determine the impact of long-term professional development on the teaching of writing and the use of the workshop model; and
- Analyze the use of a Common Core-aligned resource (Schoolwide’s Mem Fox Author Study unit for first-grade narrative writing) and its impact on student writing.
Why Did We Conduct Action Research?

According to Marcia Rettig-Seitam, “action research is a way for teachers to find solutions to classroom problems.” However, in order to make changes and enhance students’ learning experiences, teachers must also examine and reflect on the instructional models they incorporate and the resources they use to support best practices in literacy instruction.

Schoolwide, Inc. was interested in studying a small cohort of children in order to identify the attitudes that young students have about writing. A key goal was to determine the growth and development of students’ narrative writing after completing one of Schoolwide’s units of study. We also wanted to consider how learning about the instructional model of workshop teaching through our professional development program impacted teachers’ perceptions of themselves as teachers of writing and assess how their comfort and expertise changed as a result of this professional development and use of the narrative writing unit.

Variables That Can Affect Student Learning (Based on the Research of Gregory Bateson):

- Gender, race, and/or ethnicity
- Prior education
- Prior knowledge and experiences
- Health
- Physical disabilities
- Age
- Socioeconomic status
- First language
- Learning styles
- Peer relationships
- Personality
- Interpersonal skills
- Nutrition and sleep
- Special needs
- Intellectual impairments
- Intellectual strengths/multiple intelligences
- Self-concepts
- Behavioral issues
- Motivation to learn
- Level of participation in class
- Reading comprehension and skills
- Language skills
- Family mobility
- Single-parent versus two-parent families
- Social skills
- Values
- Home life
- Student culture
- Afterschool activities
## Timeline of Study

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Action Research Component</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Participants</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Initial Meeting to Provide Description of Action Research Project</td>
<td>May 1, 2014</td>
<td>Pat Pollack, Teacher A, Teacher B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional Development</td>
<td>May 5, 2014</td>
<td>Pat Pollack, Teacher A, Teacher B, Curriculum Coordinator</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unit Start Date</td>
<td>May 6, 2014</td>
<td>Pat Pollack, Teacher A, Teacher B, Students</td>
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<tr>
<td>First Professional Development Check-In/First Set of Data Collection</td>
<td>May 20, 2014</td>
<td>Pat Pollack, Teacher A, Teacher B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Second Professional Development Check-In/Second Set of Data Collection</td>
<td>May 27, 2014</td>
<td>Pat Pollack, Teacher A, Teacher B</td>
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<tr>
<td>Third Professional Development Check-In/Conferring</td>
<td>June 9, 2014</td>
<td>Pat Pollack, Teacher A, Teacher B, Students</td>
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<tr>
<td>Unit End Date</td>
<td>June 16, 2014</td>
<td>Teacher A, Teacher B, Students</td>
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<tr>
<td>Post-Unit Interview</td>
<td>June 20, 2014</td>
<td>Pat Pollack, Teacher A, Teacher B</td>
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School and Demographic Information

Cliffside Park, New Jersey, Community and School Demographic Information:

This action research project took place in a school district located in northeastern Bergen County (Cliffside Park, NJ).

Cliffside Park Education Statistics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Education Level</th>
<th>Population</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Less Than 9th Grade</td>
<td>1,786</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9th–12th Grade</td>
<td>719</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High School Graduate</td>
<td>4,587</td>
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<tr>
<td>Some College (No Diploma)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Associate’s Degree</td>
<td>804</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bachelor’s Degree</td>
<td>4,939</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graduate or Professional School Degree</td>
<td>2,608</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Cliffside Park Community Household Income Distribution:

Household income distribution represents the distribution of Cliffside Park income brackets at the household level. Overall, the median household income for Cliffside Park is $77,463, which is 10% lower than that of Bergen County ($85,763). Income data for Cliffside Park is sourced from the US Census Bureau, 2014.

The Cliffside Park School District (CPSD) is a K–12 district of 2,846 students located in Bergen County, New Jersey. The district is comprised of four elementary schools, one middle school that shares a building with an elementary school, and one high school. CPSD is implementing the 21st Century Community Learning Centers Grant to assist students with overcoming obstacles to academic success related to poverty, limited English, and emotional challenges. Currently, some CPSD schools have over 70% of students living in poverty, and 60% of students districtwide speak a language other than English at home. Literacy issues are impacting student performance in both the Language Arts Literacy and Math sections of the New Jersey Assessment of Skills and Knowledge (NJ ASK). Additionally, the district’s graduation rate dropped to just 79% in recent years due to the effects of the economic crisis on local families.
There are a total of 5 school buildings in this district:

- 3 schools for grades K–6;
- 1 school for grades K–8; and
- 1 high school.

**Average Class Sizes for Grades K–6:**

- 25 students per class for grades K–2; and
- 27 students per class for grades 3–6.

For this project, two first-grade classes from one elementary school (School #4) participated in our analysis of narrative writing. The student population in this school is 500. The total population of these two classes is 40 students (19 in Class A and 21 in Class B).

*For the purpose of this study, we will refer to these classes as Class A and Class B.*
Methods of Data Collection and Description of Study

Data Collection:

Students completed:

- A survey addressing their attitudes about writing before the unit began;
- A narrative writing pre-unit (baseline) and post-unit prompt; and
- A published piece of narrative writing (scored using a CCSS-aligned narrative writing rubric).

The teachers of Class A and Class B participated in interviews with the Schoolwide staff developer, Pat Pollack, to share reflections about themselves as writing teachers.

Description of Study:

Students in two first-grade classes participated in a narrative unit studying the writing of Mem Fox. Mem Fox is one of Australia’s best-known children’s authors. Known for publishing over thirty picture books, Fox considers writing to be her second love. Teaching parents and educators how they can promote a love of literacy is her primary passion.

During this six-week study, students were first exposed to six Interactive Read-Aloud Lessons. During these lessons, they had opportunities to notice rhythm, rhyme, and repetition as their teachers highlighted their uses in a variety of texts. Students also encountered lively, interesting uses of words and sentence fluency while appreciating the messages that are woven into Fox’s books. Learning about narrative writing through the lens of a mentor author allowed students to appreciate the forms and structures of texts, along with the multiple purposes that writers consider and convey. Themes such as a mother’s love, loneliness, family relationships, curiosity, and diversity were among the many things the two first-grade teachers wove into their class discussions.

The Outcomes of This Unit of Study Consisted of the Following Goals:

Students would:

- Listen to and discuss a collection of Fox’s books as readers and writers;
- Recognize how Fox considers her readers when she writes with emotion, uses rhyme and repetition, and conveys a message;
- Name and record some common features in Fox’s books, such as heartfelt writing, rhythm, repetition, and character development;
- Understand the purposes behind the narratives that Fox writes;
• Describe people, places, memories, and events in detail through writing, drawing, and speaking;
• Write narratives in which they recount a sequence of events and use temporal words to signal order;
• Try to use Fox’s strategy of answering who, what, when, and where questions to begin their narratives;
• Show as well as tell characters’ feelings and actions by describing what is happening;
• Use Fox’s techniques to give their stories a sense of closure;
• Revise the language and word choices of their stories for effect and rhythm;
• Use an editing checklist to check for spelling, punctuation, and capitalization; and
• Publish a narrative text using Fox as their mentor author.

The Mentor Texts That Were Used:

• Where Is the Green Sheep?
• Zoo-Looking
• Whoever You Are
• Wilfrid Gordon McDonald Partridge
• Harriet, You’ll Drive Me Wild!
• Koala Lou
• Night Noises
• Sleepy Bears
• Sophie
• Tough Boris

Instruction:

Students experienced Mini-Lesson instruction that connected to the stages of the writing process. For the purpose of this study, the following are the academic terms that were used for each stage:

• Immersion (Students read, discussed, and learned from the mentor author and texts.)
• Generating Ideas (Students wrote often and for a variety of reasons.)
• Selecting (Students identified a subject that mattered to them and was relevant to their purpose and intention.)
• Drafting (Students planned, envisioned, and organized their texts.)
• Revising (Students reread their pieces to ensure they fit the genre and purpose and analyzed word choices, use of details, sentence fluency, and emotion to determine audience engagement.)
• Editing (Students used checklists and conversations with peers to analyze their use of conventions and the clarity of their writing.)
• Publishing (Students prepared their pieces for an audience of readers.)
The teachers presented six Interactive Read-Aloud Lessons and twelve Mini-Lessons that took students through the aforementioned stages of the writing process. Throughout these lessons, students actively participated in listening, speaking, writing, reading, researching, reflecting, and thinking tasks—always focusing on the purposes for narrative writing, their audience, and how to best reflect their thoughts, feelings, and ideas using a narrative structure.

**These Lessons Focused On:**

- Getting to know the mentor author;
- Using sensory details;
- Creating strong characters in narrative writing;
- Using dialogue and action in narrative writing;
- Considering the possibilities of rhythm, rhyme, and repetition;
- Including big ideas and messages;
- Selecting stories that leave lasting impressions;
- Thinking about beginnings and endings;
- Considering the importance of the “middle”;
- Thinking about word choice and sentence fluency;
- Using an editing checklist; and
- Creating thoughtful titles.

**Other Instructional Considerations:**

- What was Fox’s inspiration?
- How do illustrations help tell stories?
- How do stories help create images in readers’ minds?
- What text structures were used? A chronological structure? Snapshots?
- What narrative techniques were used?
- How do the characters’ actions influence the story?
- What are the similarities and differences among the mentor texts?
- How can students replicate some of the techniques they learned from Fox in their own writing?
- What kinds of details did Fox include to represent the characters’ thoughts, actions, and emotions?
- How can open-ended questions prompt thinking and reflection?
Results & Discussion
Writing is a way to think about my world and what I observe, experience, and feel. Writing should be shared with others. Writing is something I only do in school. A Writer's Notebook or Folder is a very important tool for a writer to have. There are many topics I can write about. Writing is a process, and it takes time and hard work. I have a favorite book or mentor text I love to read. Writing is a way to communicate my ideas and knowledge. I enjoy writing. I am a writer.

Statements

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Attitudes About Writing: Survey Class A (Pre-Unit)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of Student Responses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statements</th>
<th>Number of Student Responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I am a writer</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I enjoy writing</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing is a way to communicate my ideas and knowledge</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing is something I only do in school</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing is a process, and it takes time and hard work</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have a favorite book or mentor text I love to read</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statements</th>
<th>Number of Student Responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing is something I only do in school</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing is a process, and it takes time and hard work</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have a favorite book or mentor text I love to read</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
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</table>

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<tbody>
<tr>
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<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
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</table>
Class A: Comparison of Qualities of Writing for Pre-Unit (Baseline) and Post-Unit Narrative Prompts: *Purpose and Meaning*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Purpose and Meaning</th>
<th>Pre-Unit (Baseline) Prompt</th>
<th>Post-Unit Prompt</th>
<th>Percentage Change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Score of 4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>4</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>Increased from 21% to 58%</td>
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<td>15</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>Decreased from 79% to 42%</td>
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<td>Score of 1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Discussion:** As a result of participating in a six-week narrative unit of study, the percentage of students who received a proficient score of 3 on a narrative prompt increased by 37% in the area of Purpose and Meaning.

Students who initially scored a 2 on their prompt prior to participating in the narrative unit of study decreased by 37% on their post-unit prompt in the area of Purpose and Meaning.

There were no students who received scores of 4 or 1 on the pre-unit or post-unit prompt in the area of Purpose and Meaning.
Class A: Comparison of Qualities of Writing for Pre-Unit (Baseline) and Post-Unit Narrative Prompts: *Structure and Organization*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Structure and Organization</th>
<th>Pre-Unit (Baseline) Prompt</th>
<th>Post-Unit Prompt</th>
<th>Percentage Change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Score of 4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Score of 3</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>Increased from 32% to 63%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Score of 2</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>Decreased from 68% to 37%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Score of 1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Discussion:** As a result of participating in a six-week narrative unit of study, the percentage of students who received a proficient score of 3 on a narrative prompt increased by 31% in the area of Structure and Organization.

Students who initially scored a 2 on their prompt prior to participating in the narrative unit of study decreased by 31% on their post-unit prompt in the area of Structure and Organization.

There were no students who received scores of 4 or 1 on the pre-unit or post-unit prompt in the area of Structure and Organization.
Class A: Comparison of Qualities of Writing for Pre-Unit (Baseline) and Post-Unit Narrative Prompts: *Craft and Style*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Craft and Style</th>
<th>Pre-Unit (Baseline) Prompt</th>
<th>Post-Unit Prompt</th>
<th>Percentage Change</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Score of 4</td>
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<td>0</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Score of 3</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>Increased from 37% to 63%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Score of 2</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>Decreased from 63% to 37%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Score of 1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Discussion:** As a result of participating in a six-week narrative unit of study, the percentage of students who received a proficient score of 3 on a narrative prompt increased by 26% in the area of Craft and Style.

Students who initially scored a 2 on their prompt prior to participating in the narrative unit of study decreased by 26% on their post-unit prompt in the area of Craft and Style.

There were no students who received scores of 4 or 1 on the pre-unit or post-unit prompt in the area of Craft and Style.
Class A: Comparison of Qualities of Writing for Pre-Unit (Baseline) and Post-Unit Narrative Prompts: **Conventions**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Conventions</th>
<th>Pre-Unit (Baseline) Prompt</th>
<th>Post-Unit Prompt</th>
<th>Percentage Change</th>
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<tr>
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<td>9</td>
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<td>Score of 2</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>6</td>
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<td>Score of 1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Remained the same</td>
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**Discussion:** As a result of participating in a six-week narrative unit of study, the percentage of students who received a proficient score of 3 on a narrative prompt increased by 16% in the area of Conventions.

Students who initially scored a 2 on their prompt prior to participating in the narrative unit of study decreased by 16% on their post-unit prompt in the area of Conventions.

The one student who received a 1 on Conventions remained the same pre-unit and post-unit.

There were no students who received a score of 4 on the pre-unit or post-unit prompt in the area of Conventions.
Class B: Comparison of Qualities of Writing for Pre-Unit (Baseline) and Post-Unit Narrative Prompts: Purpose and Meaning

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Purpose and Meaning</th>
<th>Pre-Unit (Baseline) Prompt</th>
<th>Post-Unit Prompt</th>
<th>Percentage Change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Score of 4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Score of 3</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>Increased from 29% to 62%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Score of 2</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>Decreased from 71% to 38%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Score of 1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Discussion:** As a result of participating in a six-week narrative unit of study, the percentage of students who received a proficient score of 3 on a narrative prompt increased by 33% in the area of Purpose and Meaning.

Students who initially scored a 2 on their prompt prior to participating in the narrative unit of study decreased by 33% on their post-unit prompt in the area of Purpose and Meaning.

There were no students who received scores of 4 or 1 on the pre-unit or post-unit prompt in the area of Purpose and Meaning.
Class B: Comparison of Qualities of Writing for Pre-Unit (Baseline) and Post-Unit Narrative Prompts: *Structure and Organization*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Structure and Organization</th>
<th>Pre-Unit (Baseline) Prompt</th>
<th>Post-Unit Prompt</th>
<th>Percentage Change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Score of 4</td>
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<td>0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Score of 3</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>Increased from 33% to 62%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Score of 2</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>Decreased from 67% to 38%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Score of 1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Discussion:** As a result of participating in a six-week narrative unit of study, the percentage of students who received a proficient score of 3 on a narrative prompt increased by 29% in the area of Structure and Organization.

Students who initially scored a 2 on their prompt prior to participating in the narrative unit of study decreased by 29% on their post-unit prompt in the area of Structure and Organization.

There were no students who received scores of 4 or 1 on the pre-unit or post-unit prompt in the area of Structure and Organization.
Class B: Comparison of Qualities of Writing for Pre-Unit (Baseline) and Post-Unit Narrative Prompts: *Craft and Style*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Craft and Style</th>
<th>Pre-Unit (Baseline) Prompt</th>
<th>Post-Unit Prompt</th>
<th>Percentage Change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Score of 4</td>
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<td>0</td>
<td>Increased from 43% to 67%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Score of 3</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>Decreased from 57% to 33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Score of 2</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Score of 1</td>
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<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Discussion:** As a result of participating in a six-week narrative unit of study, the percentage of students who received a proficient score of 3 on a narrative prompt increased by 24% in the area of Craft and Style.

Students who initially scored a 2 on their prompt prior to participating in the narrative unit of study decreased by 24% on their post-unit prompt in the area of Craft and Style.

There were no students who received scores of 4 or 1 on the pre-unit or post-unit prompt in the area of Craft and Style.
Class B: Comparison of Qualities of Writing for Pre-Unit (Baseline) and Post-Unit Narrative Prompts: *Conventions*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Conventions</th>
<th>Pre-Unit (Baseline) Prompt</th>
<th>Post-Unit Prompt</th>
<th>Percentage Change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Score of 4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Score of 3</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>Increased from 52% to 71%</td>
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<td>Score of 2</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Decreased from 43% to 29%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Score of 1</td>
<td>1</td>
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<td>Decreased from 5% to 0%</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Discussion:** As a result of participating in a six-week narrative unit of study, the percentage of students who received a proficient score of 3 on a narrative prompt increased by 19% in the area of Conventions.

Students who initially scored a 2 on their prompt prior to participating in the narrative unit of study decreased by 14% on their post-unit prompt in the area of Conventions.

The one student who received a score of 1 on the pre-unit prompt improved, so no students received a score of 1 on the post-unit prompt in the area of Conventions.

There were no students who received a score of 4 on the pre-unit or post-unit prompt in the area of Conventions.
Published Pieces:

Class A: Narrative Unit Published Pieces as Scored by Using a CCSS-Aligned 4-Point Rubric

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quality of Writing</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>1</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Purpose and Meaning</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
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<tr>
<td>Structure and Organization</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>0</td>
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<tr>
<td>Craft and Style</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0</td>
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<tr>
<td>Conventions</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
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<tr>
<td>Overall Score</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Class B: Narrative Unit Published Pieces as Scored by Using a CCSS-Aligned 4-Point Rubric

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Quality of Writing</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>1</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Purpose and Meaning</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Craft and Style</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conventions</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall Score</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
During the six-week unit of study, the two teachers, the curriculum coordinator, and the Schoolwide staff developer noticed many changes in the student participants. In addition to the percentage increases on the narrative prompts from an overall score of 2 to an overall score of 3, students’ perceptions of themselves as narrative writers also changed, as demonstrated through conversations during the publishing celebration.

Teaching narrative writing by using a beloved author enriched this experience because of student engagement and an investment in wanting to emulate Fox’s style. Because this unit of study includes Interactive Read-Aloud Lessons during immersion, students actively engaged in the conversations and shared their thoughts, ideas, and observations. Teachers also demonstrated a heightened awareness of student engagement. As a result, they were thinking aloud and sharing their own thoughts and ideas more. Following this research, both teachers shared that they felt their awareness of “reading like a writer” and their effective modeling of this practice improved over the course of the unit. In addition, they commented that they were more aware of the standards presented in the Common Core, especially in the Narrative Text Type section.

Following these Interactive Read-Aloud Lessons, students often requested to look through the unit mentor texts during independent reading time. Students also wrote about their experiences while reading Fox’s books and often mimicked her style of writing in their daily writing journals.

The classroom environments changed as the students and teachers researched Fox to learn as much about her as possible. The unit provides background information about Fox’s passions, and students were eager to share what they learned about her each time the staff developer visited. Additionally, during conferences students actively made connections between their own story ideas and Fox’s.

Through the collected data (the “Attitudes About Writing” survey, pre-unit and post-unit prompts, and published pieces) and the anecdotal recordings and shared conversations among the participants, it was noted that students not only improved in their ability to write narratives but that their awareness of narrative techniques was reflected during other parts of the instructional day (e.g., reading). It was also noted that students seemed eager to write with more frequency, and the additional entries they completed and placed in their Writing Folders reflected the techniques that were modeled through Fox’s literature.

An additional piece of informal data was noted through the students’ illustrations. The details, use of white space, and picture-word matches were found to be exemplary as students eagerly shared their storytelling through print and illustrations. (See appendices.)
Appendices
crocodiles
Go to the beach
In a hot sunny day in the zoo a hungry crocodile family were chewing gigantic fish. Alley is a kind, brave but sometimes shy crocodile. She loves her family.
That scary night the police were too tired to even open their eyes.

So the crocodile family chomped and chomped and broke the glass and escaped.
Alley's family went to the gate and compel, chomped at the gate but their teeth were not strong enough so Alley said, "Let's go through the hole in the gate."
Once they got to the other side Alley got another idea.

"Let's pretend we are in a car and our feet are the wheels. They raced until their was traffic."
Alley did not see the police behind her family. When Alley heard screaming, she looked behind her family and saw the police and said "Cut the traffic!!!"
When they were first they saw a beach and they dashed to the beach and they relaxed in the cool sand and water. They had fun all day.
Student Survey

1. I am a writer.

2. I enjoy writing.

3. Writing is a way to communicate my ideas and knowledge.

4. Writing is a way to think and reflect about my world – what I observe, experience and feel.

5. Writing should be shared with others.

6. Writing is something I only do in school.

7. A Writers’ Notebook or Writing Folder is a very important tool for a writer to have.

8. There are many topics I can write about.

9. Writing is a process; it takes time and hard work.

10. I have a favorite book or mentor text I love to read.
We all enjoy spending time with our family and friends. Think about a special day with your family or with friends. Write a story about this special day. Be sure to narrate an event or series of events; using details that describe the experience.

A special day I had was my birthday.

I woke up at my hotel and my mom, dad and little brother woke up too. They sang happy birthday to me and I felt big. We put our cloths and jumped on the car and went to a restaurant and ate cereal pancakes and egg. I drank orange juice. I loved my birthday.
It was a hot day and I was so excited because it was Father’s Day. I dressed up ready to go to church. When church was over, the kids went outside. The pastor took a goal outside. The kids played soccer for 2 hours. I went home to see the world cup. I love the world cup.
Fancy the Dolphin
Written and Illustrated

By: ___________________
Once upon a time there is a dolphin name Fancy.
Fancy’s was so sweet. Fancy’s mom say she have go to school.
Fancy didn’t know she was going...
Fancy's mom said her school starts tomorrow.
The next day Fancy's started the school and her teacher name is Mrs. Rupert. Fancy started to feel like she liked her school.
The next day there are 3 mean girls came to the classroom. The 3 mean girls always say mean words to Fancy.
Fancy gets so sad that she told her mom. The next day Fancy went to school. Fancy told her teacher. Her teacher told the 3 mean...
grils to stop saying mean words to the class. Fancy went home. Fancy told her mom that the 3 mean girls are stoping...
saying mean words.

The End
1. I am a writer.

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9. Writing is a process; it takes time and hard work.

10. I have a favorite book or mentor text I love to read.
Once I went to the water park and we had a fun day. Next, my family bought some tickets for the water park. Then we put on our swimsuits and went in the water. We had a great time!
We all enjoy spending time with our family and friends. Think about a special day with your family or with friends. Write a story about this special day. Be sure to narrate an event or series of events, using details that describe the experience.

One day me and my mom make a cake. First we have to get 4 eggs. Then we crack it. Then we put it in a big pot. Then we put in the oven. Then we wait 60 minutes.
My Birthday
Written and Illustrated
By: ____________________
It was a lovely morning for my birthday. I invited all of my friends. I invited Kelsey, Anna, Olivia, Alexis, and Catherine. But Catherine didn't come to my birthday.
I really hoped for her to come to my birthday. But then Catherine did come, and we had a chocolate cake. We played
We played family. I opened a lot of Lalaloopsy presents. The Lalaloopsys were fun. I even got a pitcher from my dad.
My birthday was a wonderful day.
Student Survey

Name: ___________________________ Date: 5/7/14

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WRITING FUNDAMENTALS
Student Survey

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SCHOOLWIDE

Name: ________________________________ Date: 5/17/14

Strongly Agree | Agree | Disagree

Strongly Agree | Agree | Disagree

Strongly Agree | Agree | Disagree

Strongly Agree | Agree | Disagree

Strongly Agree | Agree | Disagree

Strongly Agree | Agree | Disagree

Strongly Agree | Agree | Disagree

Strongly Agree | Agree | Disagree

Strongly Agree | Agree | Disagree

Strongly Agree | Agree | Disagree
We all enjoy spending time with our family and friends. Think about a special day with your family or with friends. Write a story about this special day. Be sure to narrate an event or series of events; using details that describe the experience.

A special day is when me, my friend and my family! We had so much fun we even went on the slide. I had so much fun playing with my friend Alexis.
It was a beautiful day. I went to the park with my friend Alexis. It was so much fun. Alexis even brought chalk and we drew on the sidewalk. I had a lot of fun!
My Birthday
A Sleepover with Kayla
Written and Illustrated
By: __________________
Ding Dong. I rang Kayla’s door bell. I was excited. I did a cartwheel. Then Liv, K.K., and Danny came. We played cops and robbers.
We put binkies in our mouths.
We ate warm plain pizza.
We played cards. We had a sleep over. We watched how to train a dragon.
I was glad because I liked the movie.
Then we went to tap and jazz class.

It was a busy sleep over but I
had fun. Kayla is a great friend!
Student Survey

Name: ____________________________ Date: 5/7/14

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10. I have a favorite book or mentor text I love to read.

WRITING FUNDAMENTALS
We all enjoy spending time with our family and friends. Think about a special day with your family or with friends. Write a story about this special day. Be sure to narrate an event or series of events; using details that describe the experience.

We went to David Bridal and Nordstrom. We finally found the perfect dress. It was sweet and with big poms I’m very happy to be a flower girl.

The bell rang. Jill kept the horn. Me and my mom got in the car.
We all enjoy spending time with our family and friends. Think about a special day with your family or with friends. Write a story about this special day. Be sure to narrate an event or series of events; using details that describe the experience.

My special day is when I went to the carnival with my family. We went on...
T.V.
A spooky night
Written and Illustrated
By: ________________________
Alexis, Naomi and Aaron raced out of school. They couldn't wait to start trick or treating. First they jumped into their spooky costumes. Next we had fun trick or treating.
Then they spotted a spacy white ghost following them. They were so scared! Then Naomi tripped and the ghost was standing over her and the ghost took off its costume and it was
Skyler from school. We all took hot and walked home.
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We all enjoy spending time with our family and friends. Think about a special day with your family or with friends. Write a story about this special day. Be sure to narrate an event or series of events; using details that describe the experience.

With my toys I like to play with my toys and then I watched TV. That was fun. Then I played with my dog. He is cute and he is fun. I love my dog.
We all enjoy spending time with our family and friends. Think about a special day with your family or with friends. Write a story about this special day. Be sure to narrate an event or series of events; using details that describe the experience.

We met my friend.

We met out of school.

We played our

fourth game kitty.

We eat Breakfast.

We lunch and Dinner.

We ate chocolate cake. It was a

fun play date.
When me and my friends go trick or treating, we saw something falling up.