

What Matters the Most through Reading and Writing

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Overview

As a reading teacher with several decades experience, I have developed a passion for creating opportunities for all students to take pleasure in becoming better readers. It is important that I create a literature rich environment that reflects student's culture and various ethnic, racial, and cultural groups. Daroff is a large public K-8 elementary school located in West Philadelphia. The student population is just over nine hundred. Although this is an elementary school, many of our seventh and eighth grade students are high school age appropriate before they reach eighth grade. Ninety percent of our students get free or reduced lunch. Many of our students come from low-income families. Our students live and travel to and from school in a very depressed area of West Philadelphia where there is a high violent crime rate. The school is predominately African American. I service students and may provide some professional development for teachers. I support reading instruction one period a day as well as, teaching intensive reading to small groups, one on one, and facilitating Read 180 intensive instruction program to forty of our fifth and seventh grade students.

My first year at Daroff I taught a seventh grade self-contained class. My students arrived to class with various reading and writing skills that ranged from barely literate to highly proficient. Twenty five percent of the class was already sixteen and by the end of the school year, many of my students were either sixteen or seventeen. I noticed that students were used to completing work sheet activities and not expecting interaction with the teacher. I spent an entire year working on strategies that would get my students to use higher order thinking skills that required them to contribute to the learning experience. This new challenge was not the wide range of learning needs but capturing our students'

interest as well as improving school performance and facilitating authentic instruction, so students feel connected.

In this curriculum unit on What Matters the Most through Reading and Writing, students will read works of literature, and learn something of the social context from which these works come and are valued. They buy into and learn to take responsibility for their education, utilizing reading and writing in a variety of genres. Students learn how to use reading and writing as a vehicle to bring about social change.

Rationale

The range of issues that students bring to the classroom is hardly ever a part of curriculum adaptations. Yet the academic curriculum is the focus to the exclusion of a social curriculum. The most affected are those students of low socioeconomic status. Studies have shown that the larger the gap the less effective the teaching and learning. By middle school, students need a device to capture their interest. When teaching seventh and eighth grade students, we often wondered about what might engage them. In fact, we want to know what they care and fear the most. Reading and writing can help our students explore their convictions. Through reading and writing all our students can reach out in a way that would help them explore issues and ideas that concern and inspire them to act. As teachers, we can work alongside our students to guide them toward creating positive social change.

The literature in this unit will teach students that they can change conditions using their imagination to invent and shape the kind of world they want to live in. The reason for this unit is to teach students the art of taking risk by exposing students to authentic learning activities. The major issue is to keep students engaged and improve their reading achievement. Consequently helping students feel connected with stories about people committed to effecting positive social change. In general, the purpose of this curriculum unit is to motivate students to work directly with the teacher and peers to improve as readers and writers. The process of integrating, scaffolding and direct reading and writing instruction will provide a foundation for students to succeed.

This unit fits into the School District of Philadelphia Core Curriculum because like the Core Curriculum, by the end of this unit the student are exposed to the contributions of various ethnic, racial and cultural groups as they study the life and contributions of various scholars that struggle for racial and social justice. Students will be actively engaged in cooperative learning activities that promote discussion about various texts. Students' self-esteem is strengthened when they see and read about the contributions made by their cultural group.

This unit will permit students to master skills, through literacy practice and maintain valuable connections to influence change in the world. Students will gain knowledge about the relevance of reading and writing as they explore their own principles. It will teach students to collaborate, and support each other as well as shape their writing through sharing of personal narratives and feedback. The unit will guide students' understanding that somebody who is in support of something comes in different forms. Undoubtedly, this unit will expose students with various reading interest to texts that are accessible.

Objectives

- Students will develop and define their own understanding of social justice through self-awareness and reflection about events in their own lives
- Students will read, write, research, and present their own interests and causes
- Students will think about their own experiences with injustice and considered ways they could have acted differently in order to prevent or alter an unnecessary outcome
- Students will read and analyze children's books that all included characters committed to activism work
- Students will use organizational structure to comprehend information
- Students will use context clues to understand vocabulary
- Students will use basic facts and ideas to participate in a writing workshop to write and revise their own children's stories about experiences as victims, witnesses, or perpetrators of injustice
- Students will write about difficult personal experiences with unjust behavior to understand how individuals' past actions could have been altered to lead to more outcomes that are positive.
- Students will participate in a written dialogue between two student populations that represent a cross section of an urban community in Philadelphia.
- Students will share personal narratives and written feedback.
- Students will shift their writing voices, edit, and revise as they exchange revision questions and feedback.
- Students will recognize and think about alternate possibilities to the kinds of injustices they experienced in their daily lives.
- Students will write and share pieces to see, name, and understand what happened in a past event.
- Students will understand organizational structures in order to determine important information when reading nonfiction
- Students will summarize and condense written information and communicate the meaning in a visual form
- Students will read assigned text as well as text that they choose independently

- Students will connect their reading to their background knowledge, create sensory images, draw inferences, synthesize ideas and solve problems

Strategies

The broad-spectrum of this curriculum unit involves an understanding that reading instruction should go beyond teaching reading. Therefore, teachers will provide Reading Workshop three days a week and Writing Workshop twice weekly using text that match students' highest instructional level. Students will spend a large amount of time with actual text reading at their independent level. The lessons will be teacher directed instruction in comprehension strategies, with several opportunities for peer collaborate learning.

The strategies used to implement this unit will expose students to a variety of stories about people committed to positive social change. It will create opportunities for students to explore individual interests and allow many perspectives to enter the classroom discussion. Direct explicit comprehension instruction such as Questioning the Author will help students understand sophisticated text. Teachers will model, demonstrate and facilitate group discussion about an author's ideas and encourage student-to-student and student-to-teacher interactions. The teacher initiates a series of queries, students respond, and the teacher evaluates their responses to text.

Queries help students gain entrance to a text. They encourage students to consider an author's ideas and to respond to one another's interpretations of those ideas. (P. 36) It allows students to access texts beyond their independent reading level. Queries lift the lid off the text, exposing ideas so students can discover them for themselves. (P. 41) This strategy will enable students to ponder the motives of the character and look at the bigger picture such as where the character is and how he/she got there. Students will understand the character well enough to construct an image. The strategies students are taught go beyond "teaching" books.

In support of the above strategy, students will use Question Answer Relationship created by Taffy Raphael. They will completely use the texts to answer the questions. Students will answer three types of questions, text explicit, text implicit and script implicit. Question Answer Relationship will help address the issue of comprehension. Consequently, teachers can plan literacy activities that will create a higher standard of students thinking and swing students' to generating their own questions.

Reading/Writing Workshop

Reading and writing workshops draw on student's assigned reading and provide scaffolding for writing articles about what they have learned. Teachers model reading or writing strategies in mini lessons throughout the week. Students will actively engage in cooperative learning activities that promote discussion about their text selection. The lessons help teach vocabulary development strategies and comprehension through direct instruction. Students will make the most of problem solving strategies to monitor comprehension using context clues to derive meaning from unfamiliar words. Students will be further assisted in reaching the standards by making connections in their reading to background knowledge, ask questions, draw inferences, determine what is important synthesizing ideas.

They will be encouraged to consider and discuss the author's choice of literary elements in text. The teacher provides opportunities for students to identify and use graphic features in a variety of ways. They will utilize mini lessons that use words specific to reading, learning, discussing topics of culture, and heritage that have significance to students.

I strongly feel the idea of a Readers/Writers Workshop will help students identify and discuss elements of literature. For instance learning about the subject, forming an opinion, presenting a viewpoint, providing support for arguments, elaborating arguments effectively, and addressing counter-arguments. Teachers using this unit can build background knowledge and give students a personal connection using additional text.

Activities

Beginning with reading and analyzing children's books that include characters committed to social change. Students get familiar with children's books as a genre. The general types of assignments will represent a series of activities ranging in level of difficulty. The materials and activities will engage students as they learn and participate as representative of change.

Students will participate in a children's book workshop. The workshops introduce issues that help make a connection. Students independently read using questions to guide their reading. After reading, activities develop students' initial responses as they make connections with others texts. They talk about the author's purpose to develop a deeper understanding of many social issues. The purpose of this workshop is to expose them to many issues that interest social change.

As part of the writing workshop students write and revise their own children's stories about experiences as victims, witnesses, or perpetrators of justice. This project will lead to a written dialogue between students to show support and shape their writing and thinking. It will help students transfer their writing voices, edit, and revise. Students begin to read, write and create projects. They recognize and think about alternative possibilities to prejudice. In essence, students will use self-awareness and reflection to define their understanding of social justice in events in their lives. These activities and assignments will help give students a personal connection.

Overall students will read, write, research, and present their interests and causes. They will learn that working for social change entail personal experiences and ideas to influence others. This workshop will have students think about their own experiences with injustice and consider ways to do something differently. Students are encouraged to write, create or answer questions, story map, and participate in reciprocal teaching to demonstrate personal understanding and interpretations of text. Teachers can use quick reflections as a way of checking in with students to monitor their progress and thinking surrounding their project. This informal assessment completed in the last minutes of the class entail things students learned, their thinking, or things they need to do next.

Lesson Plan 1 (three days)

Objectives

- Students will read and analyze children's books that all included characters committed to activism work
- Students will use organizational structure to comprehend information
- Students will use context clues to understand vocabulary
- Students will participate in close readings of the texts and use questions to think about some of the key concepts and ideas
- Students will look at differences and similarities between children's literature and the books students read for pleasure as young adults.
- Students will understand organizational structures in order to determine important information when reading nonfiction
- Students will summarize and condense written information and communicate the meaning in a visual form

Strategy: Questioning the Author (QtA), Engage with text, Connect to previously read stories, Evaluate the story

Procedure: Reading Workshop – students spend 20 to 30 minutes independently reading books that they choose themselves and respond to books through writing in reading logs and conferences with teachers and classmates. Teachers can write back and

forth with students, with the idea that students write more if the teacher responds. Teachers can model and support students' responses in their responses.

- Use a read aloud to differentiate among student contributions; focus contributions toward building an understanding of text ideas.
- Determine the major understandings students should develop from a text and anticipate problems that they may encounter.
- Segment the text by deciding where to stop reading and initiate discussion.
- Articulate initiating Queries and potential follow-up Queries that will help students develop understandings of the text ideas.
- Use double-entry journals

Put the author at center stage as a way of signaling to students that the text is neither fixed nor perfect, and that we as teachers do not have all the answers to questions of meaning. Let the students know that the author is a more interesting source of answers. If we question the author, readers can uncover major understandings during discussion. Help students think about audience, voice, illustration, and purpose within texts.

- Introduce the text set to the class (Handout 1.1)
- Distribute initiating Queries to launch discussion, anticipate how students may respond, and develop potential follow-up Queries to help and move the discussion forward. (Handout 1.2)
- Sharing – last 15 minutes of reading workshop, the class gathers to discuss books they have finished reading.
- Teaching minilessons 10 to 20 teaching brief lessons on reading workshop procedures and reading strategies and skills
- Topics drawn from students needs, comments and procedures that students need to know how to do for reading workshop

Materials: Memoirs, Biographies Handout 1.1, Queries Handout 1.2

Read Aloud - *Julius Lester, Rachel Isadora, Helen Bannerman, Sam and the Tigers*. 2000

Strategies: Book Talks, Cubing – help students think more deeply about the main ideas presented

Handout 1.1

Memoirs, Biographies, and Stories of Social Change (Singer 2006)

Adler; D. 1993a. *A Picture Book of Frederick Douglass*. Illus. by S. Byrd. New York: Holiday House. (A biography of the man who, after escaping slavery, became an orator, writer, and leader in the abolitionist movement in the nineteenth century.)

Adler; D. 1993b. *A Picture Book of Rosa Parks*. Illus. by R. Casilla. New York: Holiday House. (A biography of the Alabama black woman whose refusal to give up her seat on a bus helped establish the civil rights movement.)

Anaya, R. 2000. *Elegy on the Death of Cesar Chavez*. Illus. by G. Enriquez. El Paso, TX: Cinco Puntos Press. (A poem eulogizing the Mexican American labor activist Cesar Chavez and his work helping organize migrant farm workers.)

Anzaldua, G. 1993. *Friends from the Other Side*. San Francisco: Children's Book Press. (A story about responses to Mexican "Illegals" by Chicanos already living in the U.S.)

Bridges, R. 1999 *Through My Eyes*. New York: Scholastic Press. (A true story of a girl's experience with desegregation as a first grader in a formerly all-white school.)

Cary, L. 2005. *Free! Great Escapes from Slavery on the Underground Railroad*. New City Community Press. (Stories about American freedom)

Cooper, F. 1996. *Mandela: From the Life of the South African Statesman*. New York: Puffin/Penguin. (Nelson Mandela is admired and respected the world over. Now, for the first time in picture book form, children can experience the story of how this son of a village tribal chief who came to be the revered political leader he is today. This stunning biography introduces readers to a multifaceted Mandela--from schoolboy to father to rebel to leader. Full color.)

Corgi, L. 1997. *Where Fireflies Dance*. Illus. by M. Reisberg. San Francisco: Children's Book Press. (A bilingual tale showing how each person, like the revolutionary Juan Sebastian, has a destiny to follow.)

Cronon, D. 2000. *Click, Clack, Moo: Cows That Type*. Illus. by B. Lewin. New York: Simon & Schuster. (Disgruntled farm animals become activists.)

Demi. 2001. *Gandhi*. New York: Margaret McElderry. (known by his followers as Mahatma -- or great soul -- was born in India in 1869 and grew up to become one of the

most influential and well-respected political and social leaders the world has ever known.)

Feelings, T. 1995. *The Middle Passage: White Ships Black Cargo*. New York: Dial. (The Middle Passage is the name given to one of the most tragic ordeals in history: the cruel and terrifying journey of enslaved Africans across the Atlantic Ocean. In this seminal work, master artist Tom Feelings tells the complete story of this horrific diaspora in sixty-four extraordinary narrative paintings. Achingly real, they draw us into the lives of the millions of African men, women, and children who were savagely torn from their beautiful homelands, crowded into disease-ridden "death ships," and transported under nightmarish conditions to the so-called New World. An introduction by noted historian Dr. John Henrik Clarke traces the roots of the Atlantic slave trade and gives a vivid summary of its four centuries of brutality. *The Middle Passage* reaches us on a visceral level. No one can experience it and remain unmoved. But while we absorb the horror of these images, we also can find some hope in them. They are a tribute to the survival of the human spirit, and the humanity won by the survivors of the Middle Passage belongs to us all.)

Fitzpatrick, M., and G. Whitedeer. 1998. *The Long March: A Famine Gift for Ireland*. Hillsboro, OR: Beyond Words Publishing. (In 1847, an impoverished group of Choctaw Indians collected \$170 from their meager resources for the relief of Ireland's Potato Famine. "The Long March" is the story of Choona, a young Choctaw who must make his own decision about whether to answer the Irish people's plea for help. Illustrations.)

Fleischman, P. 1997. *Seedfolks*. New York: HarperCollins. (Thirteen stories telling of individuals transforming a vacant lot into a community garden.)

Greenfield, E. 1972. *Honey, I Love and other love poems*. New York: Harper Collins. (Sixteen poems tell of love and the simple joys of everyday life, seen through the eyes of a child: playing with a friend, skipping rope, riding on a train-or keeping Mama company until Daddy gets back.)

Hesse, K. 2004. *The Cats in Krasinski Square*. Illus. by W. Watson. New York: Scholastic Press. (The story of a young girl and a group of abandoned cats who struggle to survive during World War II and become resistance fighters working to save those trapped behind ghetto walls.)

Hopkinson, D. 2002 *Under the Quilt of Night*. Illus. by J. E. Ransome. New York: Simon & Schuster: (A story about the Underground Railroad.)

- Joosse, B. 2002. *Stars in the Darkness*. Illus. by G. Christie. San Francisco: Chronicle. (Story of resisting gang life.)
- Khan, R. 1998. *The Roses in My Carpets*. Illus. by R. Himler. New York: Holiday House. (An Afghani boy helps his family as a carpet weaver.)
- Knight, M., and A. O'Brien. 1996. *Talking Walls: The Stories Continue*. Garkiner; ME: Tilbury House. (An exploration of cultures and inspiring acts.)
- Kudlinski, K. 1989. *Rachel Carson: Pioneer of Ecology*. New York: Puffin/Penguin (A biography of the scientist and writer whose book "Silent Spring" warned of the dangers of pesticides and launched a popular movement to control their use.)
- Kurusa. 1995. *The Streets Are Free*. Illus. by M. Doppert. New York: Annick Press. (Story of self-reliance and work to build a community playground.)
- McGovern, A. 1997 *La senora de la caja de carton*. Illus. by M. Backer: New York: Turtle Books. (Story about homelessness and reaching out.)
- Pico, F. 1991. *The Red Comb*. Illus. by M.A. Ordez. Ri Piedras, PR: Ediciones Huracon. (How villagers help runaway slaves start a new life.)
- Pinkney, A. 2000. *Let It Shine: Stories of Black Women Freedom Fighters*. Illus. by S. Alcorn. New York: Harcourt. (Discover the meaning of pride, struggle, and equality in this extraordinary collection about African-American female freedom fighters. All ten women featured worked hard to battle the evils of racism and knock down any and all obstacles. Their achievements paved the way for future activists and changed the world around them. From Harriet Tubman to Josephine Baker to Rosa Parks, these women are amazing.)
- Polacco, P. 2000. *The Butterfly*. New York: Philomel Books. (Two friends experience prejudice during World War II)
- Polacco, P. 2001. *The Keeping Quilt*. New York: Aladdin Paperbacks. (A homemade quilt ties together the lives of four generations of an immigrant Jewish family, remaining a symbol of their enduring love and faith.)
- Polacco, P. 1994. *Pink and Say*. New York: Philomel Books. (Civil War story passed from great-grandfather to grandmother, to son, and finally to the author-artist herself, Patricia Polacco once again celebrates the shared humanity of the peoples of this world.)

Ransom, C. 1993. *Listening to Crickets: A Story About Rachel Carson*. Illus. by S. O. Haas. New York: Scholastic. (Examines the life of the marine biologist and science writer whose book "Silent Spring" changed the way we look at pesticides.)

Skarmeta, A. 2000. *The Composition*. Illus. by A. Ruano. Buffalo, NY: Greenwood. (A child's perspective living in a repressive society.)

Steptoe, J. 1997. *Creativity*. New York: Houghton Mifflin. (John Steptoe's engaging text sets a perfect rhythm against E. B. Lewis's fluid watercolor palette in a story that celebrates an uncommon friendship and recognizes the rich connections of ethnic history.)

Winter, J. 2004. *The Librarian of Basra: A True Story from Iraq*. San Diego: Harcourt. (This moving true story about a real librarian's brave struggle to save her war-stricken community's priceless collection of books is a powerful reminder that the love of literature and the passion for knowledge know no boundaries.)

Children's Book Workshop (Handout 1.2)

Read at least two children's books. In this workshop, all the books share a common theme of social action. Each of these stories has a character working toward change. After you have sampled a few tools, choose one that you are drawn to and answer the following questions.

Book Title and Author

1. How has the author started things off for us?
2. How do things look for the character? What is this all about? What kind of life is the character having? What is the author doing here by giving us this information?
3. Where is the turning point in the characters experiences? Quote it below. **NOTE:** The turning point is the place where the character chooses to work toward change.
4. Who or what acted as an ally or support for this character? How did the character find or receive support?

5. What do you think about the way the author has finished this story? How do you think this ending fits in with the events in the story?
6. What are differences and similarities between the books you often read for pleasure and children's literature?

Lesson Plan 2 (two days)

Objectives

- Students will write a list of the times in their lives when they either experienced or witnessed acts of injustice
- they will choose one that feels like a story relevant, and interesting
- Students will write about difficult personal experiences with unjust behavior to understand how individuals' past actions could have been altered to lead to more outcomes that are positive.
- Students will participate in a written dialogue between two student populations that represent a cross section of an urban community in Philadelphia.
- Students will share personal narratives and written feedback.
- Students will shift their writing voices, edit, and revise as they exchange revision questions and feedback.
- Students will recognize and think about alternate possibilities to the kinds of injustices they experienced in their daily lives.
- Students will write and share pieces to see, name, and understand what happened in a past event.

Procedure: Writing Workshop – implement the writing process. Students write on topics that they care about the most and they assume ownership of their writing and learning. Teacher is serving as a facilitator and guide. The classroom becomes a community of writers who write and share their writing. The teacher conferences with students briefly and the classroom atmosphere is free enough that student's converse quietly with each other. Students meet together for writing groups. The writing workshop is 60 to 90 minutes each day. Students are involved in three components writing, sharing, and minilessons.

- Students spend 30 to 45 minutes or longer working independently on writing projects.

- Students begin with writing a list of the times in their lives when they either experienced or witnessed acts of injustice.
- Students will choose from their list and work at their own pace on writing projects something they care about the most and is clear in their memory
- The last 10 or 15 minutes of writing workshop class gather to share. Students listen for details and writing strategies in each other's pieces that they might want to imitate.
- Discuss voice and similarities
- Teaching minilessons on writing workshop procedures and writing strategies and skills, organizing ideas, proofreading, and using quotation marks in marking dialogue
- Students written reflection at the end of the class (quick and rough writing opportunities for students to check in with you regarding their stories)
- Partner with another grade to give students feedback
- Have students write letters to your students about the elements of an engaging story based on their own experiences as readers and writers
- Students will participate in a written dialogue between two student populations that represent a cross section of an urban community in Philadelphia.

Writing Prompt

Write about a time in your life when you witnessed, participated in, or experienced an act of injustice. Describe what happened. Where were you? Include dialogue, internal thoughts, and vivid details. After you describe what happened, provide some insight into why this injustice occurred. If you could press rewind on your life and revisit this experience, what could you do differently to create a positive change? (Singer 2006)

Strategies: Gather ideas, organize ideas, draft, minilesson on dialogue, writing process, audience, writing from a list, lesson on dialogue

Materials: writing folders, notebooks, prompt, Handout 1.3, stories, essays, news clips, and interviews, basic rules of punctuation and grammar

Stories of Injustice (Handout 1.3)

Directions: In this assignment, you will work to write, revise, and polish a narrative essay about a time in your life when you witnessed, participated in, or experienced an act of injustice. Here are some ways that you can approach this topic: (Singer 2006)

1. Write about a time when you were the object of discrimination or injustice.
2. Write about a time when you witnessed an act of discrimination or injustice.
3. Write about a time when you were involved in treating someone else unjustly.
4. Write about a time when you were involved in treating someone the object of injustice.

Audience: Grade students, your peers, and your teacher

Purpose: To share life experience with others in order to inform and teach about issues of justice.

Your paper must include the following literary elements:

1. an introduction
2. dialogue
3. setting description
4. character description
5. resolution (if there was one) and what you learned from this experience
6. conclusion –this can be reflection looking back at this event with fresh eyes

Lesson Plan 3

Objective:

- Students will use basic facts and ideas to participate in a writing workshop to write and revise their own children's stories about experiences as victims, witnesses, or the person behind injustice
- Students will share personal narratives and written feedback.
- Students will shift their writing voices, edit, and revise as they exchange revision questions and feedback.

Procedure:

- Discuss how children's stories need to be short to keep the reader's attention
- Emphasize how editing writing is a skill that all writers need to know in order to match their writing to specific tasks, publications, and audiences
- Use cutting and pasting to give students an opportunity to practice editing
- Provide students with a text and ask students to work in pairs to find pieces from these stories that could be cut without losing the main message
- Provided an editing questionnaire to help students think about their main idea, the tone of the piece, and sections they wanted to cut or revisit (**Handout 1.4**)
- Peer review when students share writing, receive feedback about successful aspects of the piece and ways to revise
- Teach a quick lesson on peer review strategies to help writers ask their readers for what they need in feedback groups (**Handout 1.5**)

Strategies: look for key words that move the story forward, minilesson editing workshop,

Materials: Handouts 1.4, 1.5 Peer review, editing questionnaire, copies of a short story from one of the children's picture books selection

Revision Questions (Handout 1.4)

1. What do you as the author want your readers to learn? What is one main point you hope he or she will walk away with?
2. Identify your main point, what information and details connect this point?

3. Have a partner read your story discuss and identify any gaps. How do you as the author let your reader know that something has changed? How have you worked it out for your reader?

Peer Review Guide (Handout 1.5)

Writing Groups

Read drafts aloud

- Read rough drafts to the group.
- Stand back and evaluate your writing objectively.
- Learn how to work together.
- Think about compliments and suggestions they will make after the reading.
 1. What do you want to know more about?
 2. Is there a part I should throw away?
 3. What details can I add?
 4. What is the best part of my writing?
 5. Are there some words I need to change?

Lesson Plan 4

Objective:

Students will summarize and condense written information and communicate the meaning in a visual form.

Procedure:

Languages Experience Approach (LEA) provides an experience as the stimulus for the writing. Use the children's books that students have already read. Discuss the experience to generate words, begin with an open-ended question. Students talk about their experiences, they clarify and organize ideas, use more specific vocabulary to create

pictures, and extend their understanding. Students add illustrations to connect their writing.

Strategies: Language Experience, Illustration Workshop, Open-Mind Portraits, illustration reflections

Material: 8.5 x 11 inch paper, Handout 1.6

Handout 1.6

Illustration Reflection

List reasons how your illustrations tell your story.

Does your illustration make a statement? How?

Works Cited

Beck, L. I., McKeown, G. M. 2006. *Improving Comprehension with Questioning the Author*. New York: Scholastic (Beck and McKeown assert that we begin by helping young readers make sense of a text as they encounter it for the first time. Their approach, *Questioning the Author*, harnesses the power of during-reading scaffolding to support comprehension.)

Buckner, A. 2005. *Notebook Know-How: strategies for the Writer's Notebook*. New York: Stenhouse Publishers (A writer's notebook is an essential springboard for the pieces that will later be crafted in writer's workshop. It is here that students brainstorm topics, play with leads and endings, tweak a new revision strategy, or test out a genre for the first time.)

Singer, J. 2006. *Stirring Up Justice: Writing & Reading to Change the World*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann (*Stirring Up Justice* takes you through Singer's language arts workshops to reveal the many possibilities for improving critical awareness and to prove what a potent and lasting effect social activism can have on students.)

Tompkins, G. E. 2001. *Literacy for the 21st Century*. New Jersey: Prentice-Hall Inc. (This comprehensive text presents several sound approaches to literacy instruction and guides teachers toward best practice in teaching skills as well as and strategies.)

Appendix

Pennsylvania State Standard

Learning to Read Independently

1.1 B.

Identify and use common organizational structures and graphic features to comprehend information.

1.1 C.

Use knowledge of root words as well as context clues and glossaries to understand specialized vocabulary in the content areas, during reading. Use these words accurately speaking and writing.

1.1 D.

Identify basic facts and main ideas in text using specific strategies (e.g., recall genre characteristics, set a purpose for reading, generate essential questions as aids to comprehension and clarity understanding through rereading and discussion).

1.1 G.

Demonstrate after reading understanding and interpretation of both fiction and nonfiction text.

1.1 H.

Demonstrate fluency and comprehension in reading.

Reading, Analyzing and Interpreting Literature

1.3 B.

Analyze the use of literary elements by an author including characterization, setting, plot, theme, point of view, tone and style.

1.3 C.

Analyze the effect of various literary devices.

Types of Writing

1.4 A.

Write short stories, poems, and plays.

Quality of Writing

1.5 D.

Write with awareness to the stylistic aspects of composition

Speaking and Listening

1.6 A.

Listen to others.