Practice Data Set: Kindergarten Writing

Grade Level: Kindergarten

Content Area: Writing

Critical Question: How does writer’s workshop support young children’s emergent writing abilities?

Context Information
Jill was a student teacher in a full day kindergarten. She was hesitant about using writer’s workshop with kindergarten children. However, her mentor teacher was enthusiastic about the workshop and encouraged Jill to find out for herself how the workshop approach supported emergent writers. Jill’s class of 26 kindergarten-aged children included an equal number of boys and girls. About one-third of the children were learning English as another language. Close to 38 percent of the children attending the school qualify for free or reduced lunch programs. The data set featured here was collected during the fourth month of school.

Data Set Components
1. A short note-taking/note-making observation completed by Jill during the workshop
2. Anecdotal notes taken during a writing conference between Jill and three children
3. Artifacts: Samples of children’s writing

Instructions

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Read through each of the three data set components and answer the questions under the heading “Considering the Data” that follow each one.
A Short Note-Taking/Note-Making Observation
Completed by Jill During the Workshop

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Note-taking</th>
<th>Note-making</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Student asks neighbor &quot;How do you spell 'babysitter'?&quot;</td>
<td>These two students are usually very distracted by surrounding activity during writer's workshop and rarely complete a story. It was amazing to see them both so engaged in trying to spell and sound out a word together. Even though the word was spelled incorrectly, the fact that they attempted is a step forward for both of these students. I also very much liked how they responded to their tablemate with a positive response. It immediately deflated the potentially explosive situation. Is writer's workshop also helping with team building?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neighbor replies, &quot;W-E-K&quot;</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student writes dictated letters</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Teacher Aide addresses neighbor: “Have you written any words yet?”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neighbor replies “I'm helping her write her words.”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Another student at the table comments “B. doesn’t know her letters.”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neighbor: “That’s ok, I'm helping her.”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tablemate: “Oh yeah, what’s a ‘b’ look like?”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The student and her neighbor go back to work and do not respond to the tablemate.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher’s aide is working with a student. The student picks up a previously started story and begins</td>
<td>Even though this student is hesitant to read his own writing at first, the aide does a great job of encouraging</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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to read. He looks at the aide and says: "What does this say?" She responds: "What *does* it say?" He responds: "I went to the birthday party." Aide: "Good! What would you like to add?"

| him to believe in himself that he can read his own writing. I loved the big grin that spread over his face as he read to her and she praised him for it. This helps him achieve the goal of “Believing I am a writer, and taking risks with my writing” which appears on his goal sheet in his folder. Yet another step taken towards being a great writer!! |
Considering the data

- Analyze the above information: What insight does the above observation using note-taking/note-making provide in response to the original critical question, “How does writer’s workshop support young children’s emergent writing abilities?”

- What kinds of additional observations would you suggest Jill make to further her understanding of how writer’s workshop supports young writers?
Anecdotal Notes Taken During a Writing Conference between Jill and Three Children

Teacher: What is your story about?
Child 1: I like to write about me and my friend Lilly, and people in my family.
Child 2: I love writer’s workshop; it’s fun.
Teacher: What makes it so much fun?
Child 3: You get to do words.
Child 1: Yeah, you get to write stories and draw pictures.
Child 2: It helps us to write and read.
Child 3: I like writer’s workshop all the time to write words.

Considering the data
- Refer back to Jill’s critical question, *How does writer’s workshop support young children’s emergent writing abilities?* How does this collected conversation provide insight in responding to Jill’s critical question?
- How does this data support/enhance/raise additional questions when combined with the note-taking/note-making observation above?
- What additional information might be useful in considering these two pieces of data?

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3     Artifacts: Samples of Children’s Writing
These artifacts represent work completed by the three children featured in the writing conference documented in data set component 2.

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we are finding the buried treasure
Considering the data

Emergent Writer:
- picture only;
- picture and “string of letters”;
- picture and label.

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Early Writer:
- picture and sentence with temporary and/or conventional spelling;
- one topic with a few supporting sentences;
- beginning use of punctuation.

Jill also used an extended rubric from Carr (1999) to assess fluency (p. 227):
  Language and word choice:
  - How much does the writer write?
  - Is it sufficient for the topic choice and genre?
  - Does the writer use “good words”: is it language that captures the reader?

- Use the above frameworks analyze the writing done by the children. Is each child an “emergent” writer or an “early” writer? How would you characterize language and word choice
- Return to Jill’s critical question, How does writer’s workshop support young children’s emergent writing abilities? Synthesize the data from the entire set in the space provided by writing one to two synthesis statements.
- Finally, deconstruct your synthesis:
  - What assumptions have you made about the data?
  - What additional data would you suggest Jill needs?
  - In what other ways might literature from distant colleagues contribute to Jill’s analysis?

Reference

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