

 VIDEO
5:45 min

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Writing Buddies Using the Writing Process

Fall Creek Elementary School, North Carolina
April 2012

Topic TEACHING ELEMENTARY SCHOOL STUDENTS TO BE EFFECTIVE WRITERS

Practice WRITING PROCESS

- Highlights**
- » Writing Buddies is a time for students to use each other as sounding boards during brainstorming and revising.
 - » Students sit together and the author reads the piece; the author then hands the text over to the Writing Buddy to make suggestions.
 - » Teachers model the types of questions students can ask each other to improve their writing.

About the Site Fall Creek Elementary School
East Bend, North Carolina

Demographics


- » 86% White
- » 11% Hispanic
- » 2% Black
- » 1% Other
- » 48% Free or Reduced-Price Lunch


Teachers at Fall Creek Elementary use a Writer’s Workshop model to ensure students are fluent writers who are comfortable putting their ideas on paper. Every day, students write and celebrate their writing through the following practices:


- » Mentor texts used to illustrate the features of good writing;
- » Explicit instruction in writing strategies and independent use of the writing process;
- » Uninterrupted daily writing time;
- » Feedback received through peer sharing and teacher conferencing;
- » Self-selected topics and materials; and
- » Regular celebrations of published pieces.


Full Transcript




Ginger Mason:  **00:04** My name is Ginger Mason. I teach first grade here at Fall Creek School in Yadkin County, North Carolina.


Jon Holleman:  **00:09** My name is Jon Holleman. I teach sixth-grade language arts and social studies at Fall Creek Elementary School in Yadkin County, North Carolina.

Mason  **00:16** In first grade, Writing Buddies is the time for students to use each other as sounding boards. They will meet at the beginning of the writing process during their brainstorming and prewriting phase. And what I like for them to do is just tell their story out loud before they ever start writing it, just to use as a sounding board because I feel like if they can think it and say it, it makes it a little bit easier for them to write it.

Student 1 (to other student)  **00:41** My mom’s sister, she had a dog named Merlin, and it was a boy. It was my dog’s father. And he was probably 19.

Mason  **00:56** And also they will use it to revise. They use Writing Buddies during their revision and editing phase of the writing process. Then

they'll meet again and read their story out loud to each other, and at this time they are listening. And there are certain questions that I have hung up in the room, good conversation questions, and they're listening for places that they can help each other make their story better.

Student 2  01:21 You need to change that because I don't know what it even means.

Student 3 I need to cut it out?

Student 4 You could say, "Pepperoni and cheese is my favorite."


Student 5 But my only favorite is cheese.

Student 4 Then write that.

Student 5 But I did write it: "My favorite type of pizza is cheese pizza."

Student 4 Oh, that's good. It's pretty good!

Student 5 Thanks. Now I'm going to write the final chapter...

Holleman  01:49 Writing Buddies in the lower grades, but Writing Partners in the sixth grade, is a time that we allow them to talk to each other to get an initial feel of their ideas and of the writing; they have a sounding board. Writing Partners will generally sit together. Sometimes it's face to face, sometimes it's side by side. The person who wrote the piece will read the piece. After they read the piece, then they will hand the text over to the Writing Partner so that they can have the text in front of them so that they can not only listen to the text but then they can also read the text.

Student 6  02:26 Just make one sentence...

Student 7 (nods)

Student 6 Then over here, what do you see whenever the ground, like, splits open? Do you see, like, a little red fire...I don't know, whatever you see. And then...


Student 7 And then a new sentence. What the degrees would be when it was so hot.


Student 8 (reading) “Boom! Thunder—it echoes loud like a 42-gun salute. Then lightning slams down, strikes on a tree, and explodes.”

Student 9 I love this line right here, “Rain slashes down,” that is very good. That’s a good description.


Student 8 (reading) “Lightning strikes here, very loud...baseball mitt.”


Student 9 Comma, comma, baseball mitt.

Mason  **03:16** In first grade, you have to do a lot of modeling at the beginning of the year. This whole writing process is new to them. So at the beginning of the year, I introduce Writing Buddies. I’m their writing buddy, and they are my writing buddy. And I will purposely make mistakes in my story so that we can go through and ask these kinds of questions that I want to see in their conversations as writing buddies. How can they help me make my story better? How can they edit my story and help me do things? And I kind of get them having those conversations with me, and then gradually I take it away so I’m not the one guiding it; they are guiding. They are coming up with the questions to ask each other.

Holleman  **03:58** At every step of the writing process, Writing Partners will look a little different. So in the *collecting/generating* stage, their writing buddy, the writing partner, will say, “You know, I really think you should write about this particular story. I think that would make an excellent story.” During another stage, called *rehearsal*, where they try out different ways of telling the story, then the writing partners will come to each other and they will say, “I have tried this way. Is there another way that I can try?” Or, “I have tried this. What do you

think if I would try this?” And then the writing partner is responsible for telling their partner if they think it’s a good attempt or if they think they’re on the right track.

Student 10 (to other student)  **04:40** I think you should get more—something else that you’ve seen in the forest. Because all you describe is, like...you don’t describe the background. You don’t describe the trees. What kind are they? Is it sunny or cloudy? You don’t describe if the air’s fresh or it’s kind of hot and sticky.

Holleman  **05:00** I really enjoy the Writer’s Workshop model, which includes Writing Partners. It allows the children more opportunity to talk to each other; it allows them more opportunity to get their ideas out into the air. It is freeing, for us as teachers, where they take that responsibility as teachers, as little teachers throughout the room. They talk to each other and they say, “Oh, you could try this, or you could try that.” They all want to be heard, and under the former way of doing things, it was very difficult for all of them to get their ideas heard, their opinions heard. This is a way that they can be heard with each other.

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