A black and white illustration of several children playing jump rope. The children are wearing various winter clothes like coats, hats, and boots. They are arranged in a circle, with some holding the rope and others jumping. The rope is depicted as a continuous line with loops.

# How to Align Literacy Instruction, Assessment, and Standards

*And Achieve Results You NEVER Dreamed Possible*

A black and white illustration of several children playing jump rope, similar to the one above. The children are wearing various winter clothes like coats, hats, and boots. They are arranged in a circle, with some holding the rope and others jumping. The rope is depicted as a continuous line with loops.

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Foreword by Yvonne S. Freeman

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# *Take My Hand*

## Coaching for Experience

### **Looking Closely at Coaching**

- Consider how you learn. Have you ever worked with a coach to change your instruction?
- Consider meeting with a colleague and coaching one another.
- Consider the types of conversations you usually have with colleagues. Are the conversations powerful?
- Consider reflecting on your practice. What student work have you kept from the past? How does the work inform you of your growth as a teacher?

I know what an orange grove looks like from above, where the leaves touch the sky. The view is very different from when you are standing on the ground. When the oranges are in bloom, their heavy fragrance surrounding you like a blanket, your senses drown. I know exactly how breathtaking the view is, because I saw it from the rooftop of friend's shed when I was ten.

After sitting on the roof, feeling the breeze and the warm scent of orange blossoms wrap around me, I learned something else, a feeling less pleasant. I learned how it feels to be frozen with fear. I panicked; I was not able to get off the roof. My friend scurried down, jumping the small gap between the roof and the ladder without a problem, but when I neared the edge of that roof, fear clung to my hands. I was not able to swing my feet down onto the rungs. I could not move close to the edge. The feeling of helplessness spread through me, beginning in my stomach and radiating up my chest until I couldn't see straight. My friend tried hard to coax me down. She stood on the ground and called up. She told me I could do it, I could slide onto the ladder, but I didn't believe her. Then her mother climbed up and said, "Take me by the hand."

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## Coach and Be Coached

The best ways to improve your practice are to plan, set goals, and reflect with a coach. A coach is someone who is willing to lend you a hand and tell you the truth. That may not always be what you want to hear, but what you *need* to hear. A coach is open, honest, upfront, and pushes you to excel. It is not a good idea to choose your best friend as a coach; sometimes the friendship stifles the needed open, honest communication. I encourage you to choose someone at your school site you can work with—someone you trust enough to share your teaching and the results of your instruction.

At Lee Richmond School (LRS) we have a community of coaching. The literacy coach and learning director spend their whole day in the classrooms modeling, watching, listening, observing, and reflecting. Many of the teachers at LRS also coach one another. Sometimes they do this through formal meetings and observations that they have set up in advance. One teacher might ask to be released to visit another classroom to watch a colleague teach something in her field of expertise. Later the teachers might meet and discuss what happened in the lesson. Teachers also visit classrooms of other teachers in the district.

I visited the classroom of a teacher in another school in my district. Patty is a third-grade teacher, and she runs an outstanding writing workshop. I visited the room with my colleague and coach, Jan, who is Patty's learning director. I wanted to learn how Patty confers with her students to help them become better writers. Patty's students use details in extremely effective ways in their writing. I loved my visit to Patty's class. I learned from watching her. I watched carefully how she approaches a child, what she says to them, and how her walls reflect their learning. The interesting part of watching someone else teach is that you learn, and you learn even more when you know what to look for. I was looking for the essence of what she did when conferring with students so that I could take it with me to improve my own conferring skills. I learned by watching how a teacher in a school different from mine conferred with her students. I listened to what she said, and I read her student's writing. I noticed how the children decided to put details in their stories, and why they made their choices. What is important about this is that while I was learning by watching Patty, my coach, Jan, was also prodding my learning. She sat down beside me and asked, "So what do you notice?"

"Patty is really specific about beautiful language. She uses a lot of mentor text, pulling out words, phrases, and ideas of how authors say things in interesting ways. I also notice that she uses the students' writing as mentor text also," I replied.

"So," Jan questioned, "How do you think it is different from what you've done in your work at LRS?"

"Well," I thought for a moment, hesitating because it was a hard question. "I think I haven't shown how to use mentor text effectively. This work

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reminds me of Katie Wood Ray's book, *Wondrous Words: Writers and Writing in the Elementary Classroom* [1999]. I think Katie talked about how to create lessons for students to notice words and add specific words to their writing. I think I need to read her book again and try this line of mentoring in my conferring."

Jan didn't let me off the hook. She followed up with me a few weeks later to see if I indeed had tried to use mentor text more effectively. I had, and I also had experimented with using mentor text to teach effective dialogue use. I was pleased with my results. I felt more in control of my teaching because I had something to reflect upon, an ideal, an image, and a way of knowing.

## **Coaching Every Day**

Day in and day out I do a lot of coaching. I believe that coaching falls in different areas: demonstration, inquiry, and instruction.

### ***Demonstration and Reflection***

Jan and I had a conversation one day about some student writing from Patty's classroom that Jan showed me. I noticed that Patty's students consistently used beautiful descriptive language in their writing. I asked Jan to help me improve my teaching so that I could improve my instruction and share my insights with my teachers. Jan suggested that I visit Patty's room so that Patty could demonstrate. While I was in Patty's room and when we debriefed, Jan asked me questions that made me think. She forced me to reflect on what I saw and what it meant to me in relation to my own work in writing workshop.

I too have demonstrated lessons for teachers who request to see something specific. Christy was unsure of how to begin nonfiction with students who were reading at about the early fluency level. She wanted the children to feel as confident in reading nonfiction as they did with easier fiction books. During our conversation, Christy indicated that she wanted to see me teach a guided reading lesson using a nonfiction book. We arranged a day, and I taught her group. Since I was Christy's coach, while providing the demonstration lesson I stopped instruction from time to time to talk with Christy about what I was doing in the lesson, and what she noticed or thought. When I was done with the lesson, I sent the children to read in pairs, and Christy and I met immediately to reflect on how well the lesson went and what she felt was new knowledge for her about her reading instruction.

### ***Inquiry and Reflection***

Inquiry is another way of coaching. Inquiry usually begins when one of my teachers drops by my office or catches me in the hall and says, "I've been thinking about trying something new, and I need you to tell me what you

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think about my structure [or lesson]. I am not thrilled with how things are going." A coaching session focused on inquiry opens when the teacher poses questions about her lessons. Andrea is a fourth-grade teacher at LRS, and one day she and I were looking at her student work from a book inquiry. On this day, she brought her reading response journals to my office and we spread them out.

"I see that your kids are kind of all over the board with their thoughts on this book," I said.

"Yeah, I am frustrated because I feel like I am being specific in the minilesson about what they should do, but look . . . the entries don't look any different than they did two months ago when I was reading a very different type of book." Andrea pointed to a few student entries.

"What was the other book?"

"*Island of the Blue Dolphins* [O'Dell, 1960]."

"I think there are a lot of similarities in the theme of the book *Riding Freedom* [Ryan, 1998]. I really think there are similarities in the character traits between Karana in *Island of the Blue Dolphins* and Charlotte in *Riding Freedom*."

"Well," Andrea hesitates, "That is true, but I have focused differently. During *Island of the Blue Dolphins*, they had to respond in groups first and write their response together on a chart; now I have them working independently in the response journal. I thought they could get it, because with *Island of the Blue Dolphins*, I guided the thinking and structure for them to practice and get the hang of analyzing the author's intent and how that relates to the characters' actions."

"If you feel strongly that you modeled that enough with the *Island of the Blue Dolphins* read-aloud, then that is probably not the problem." I pause to scan the student reading response journals. "What else do you notice about your kids while they are reflecting independently?"

"They can say what they know—they stop and share out loud. That part is great; they never used to be able to do that. But when they write, their ideas are cut off, there is so much less writing than what is in their discussion." Andrea pointed to one student's writing to show how shallow the response was.

"I see what you mean. Let's pinpoint that; maybe you need to show them how to do more extensive jotting in a few minilessons?" I asked.

"Yeah, maybe they just need to see it more, discuss how to do the writing, not what the book is about at this point. It is more of a structural problem. They just don't know how to write about their thinking," Andrea said.

"I think you are onto something."

Andrea was onto something, and she solved her own problem just by looking at student work and talking through the lesson—what she remembered her students doing, saying, thinking, and writing during the lesson. We delved into her students' actions, compared her ideas with their writing, and she developed a plan to move ahead.

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## ***Instruction and Reflection***

Often as a coach I am instructing. The focus of my instruction is not the children, but the adults. I am learning, and the teacher is learning. Together we discover ways to best handle problems areas with instruction. We also learn together how to change our ways. When I coach through instruction, I also plan professional development, schedule a book talk on a professional text I have read recently, or perhaps film myself and others teaching. Overall, I share my knowledge, and I expect others to do the same. We need to be involved in teaching one another. We need to focus on changing our instructional practices by incorporating best practices and letting go of instruction that doesn't teach the whole child.

One thing that's hard to admit as adults is that we like to do things the way we've always done them. Old ways are comforting. New ideas, new methods of teaching can be threatening, mostly because we may not feel we have the expertise to pull off the lesson well. That is one reason teaching from worksheets and following directions in a basal is more comforting initially. We don't have to think. But in the long run, children don't learn critical divergent thinking skills from filling in blanks; they also don't all learn to read that way. This is critical for those of us in California to realize. Currently, the state has adopted only two reading programs for use in K-6 schools, and both of those programs use large numbers of worksheets and convergent thinking activities to teach literacy. But this approach doesn't help our children grow into literate adults who think critically.

### *Reflect on Real Events to Improve Instruction*

During a recent construction period at the school, I felt like I was caught in a really bad episode of *Trading Spaces* (a home-improvement show on cable). The school administration building had been built in 1953. Our school had grown to the point that the tiny administration building, staff lounge, and workroom no longer served our purpose. That fall we were to have a gorgeous new building housing our library, offices, workroom, and staff lounge. The problem was that school was opening in two weeks and the work wasn't even close to being completed!

While stepping around the construction site one day, I wandered over to check out the commotion in the middle of the sidewalk near the new building. For three days the staff had been working without any water, and we were promised water soon. However, I discovered that the water wouldn't be coming back on as quickly as we had hoped. The water main, which was in the "off" position, had been cemented over. It was smack dab in the middle of our brand-new eight-foot-wide sidewalk.

This situation felt so awful, it was funny. The next morning I saw the foreman for the project. He began to tell me that the water had been turned back on the night before. I pointed to the very large chunk of concrete missing in our new sidewalk and said, "This is why we don't teach by using worksheets at this school." (I am not sure that he was

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interested in our curriculum; however, to me, the analogy made perfect sense.)

“What?” he queried.

“Worksheets—I bet that whoever made that particular mistake grew up with worksheets. He was just checking off a box on his list; he never thought, there is a valve there, is that a problem? He just kept going, not thinking or questioning what would make *sense!*” I exclaimed.

The foreman nodded and laughed, “Oh, you bet! Did you see the lack of thinking on the new air-conditioner unit for your older building?”

“No . . . should I have noticed?”

“Didn’t you see the rigged-up copper tubing coming down, right where your kids line up after recess?”

“Yes, but I thought it was temporary.”

“No, that was put in by another person just checking off the box. His directions said to put the condensation tube down the building, but they didn’t say where. He made the worst possible choice he could have. Maybe he had worksheets in school too!”

Standing in the middle of a construction site, two weeks before school started, I received my inspiration for purpose. Everyone needs renewed purpose from time to time, especially when others around you do the same old thing, in the same old ways. This foreman said to me, “I need more critical thinkers.” Well, I walked back into my makeshift office and began planning the professional development to support our new learning during the new school year. At the top I wrote *Critical thinkers*. Then I wrote, *We have to begin with ourselves*. I began my focus for the instruction of the adults in our learning community.

## Reflect on Your Practice

*How to Align Literacy Instruction, Assessment, and Standards and Achieve Results You Never Dreamed Possible* is designed so that I can coach you from the sidelines. Hopefully, reading each chapter will be a critical thinking activity. I encourage you to

- think
- discuss
- ponder
- question

the ideas you will find throughout the book. The remainder of this chapter will help you gather evidence of your successes and think about setting goals that the book can help you plan.

But just as I learn from coaching and being coached, you need do this thinking, discussing, pondering, and questioning in collaborative relationships. You will grow professionally, and you may even find that with the support of a colleague, you are able to change your instructional practices.

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These relationships begin with conversations that focus on your own critical thinking as well as on how to develop literacy and critical thinking in all children.

### ***Conversations***

During any of the coaching models I have described, it is important that we focus on having a dialogue. Dialogue is different from talking. Dialogue is listening and reflection. Coaching conversations should be more listening than speaking. What are you telling me about your students and your instruction? It takes courage to have real conversations with one another—we have to be willing to let down our defenses, share our instruction with one another, and share our ideas about how to improve. These are not always comfortable subjects to talk about. It takes courage to say things as a coach that we don't normally say to one another. As teachers, we get so used to giving each other positive, unspecific encouragement, or no encouragement at all, that we don't know how to hold a dialogue with a colleague about our instruction.

Coaching and being coached can be an incredibly rewarding experience. When I am open to the ideas suggested to me by my coach, or when I am able to understand what a teacher is telling me they need help with, I gain more from the experience. Margaret Wheatley (2002) has written a beautiful and sensitive book called *Turning to One Another: Simple Conversations to Restore Hope to the Future*. When I open this book I feel calm, and I find nuggets of wisdom to increase the effectiveness of my coaching experiences. In this book she writes about courage. She believes that if we return to dialogue, to listening, we can solve many problems we face in isolation. Some of the points that she makes in her book I type and place in my school planner. I remind myself of these ideals over and over when I am entering into coaching conversations with a colleague:

- Ask what's possible, not what's wrong. Keep asking.
- Be intrigued by the differences you hear.
- Trust that meaningful conversations can change your world.
- Expect the conversations to be messy at times.
- Don't be afraid to be open.

When we coach we need to think for ourselves. Coaching doesn't mean running your ideas over a colleague. Coaching means pushing, prodding, and relentlessly making your colleague reflect on his teaching practice. Then, once your colleague comes to an understanding of need, it means dropping a few ideas for improvement. This is intimidating for all involved. The person being coached has to remain open to hear what the person coaching is saying, and the coach has to remain open to hear what the individual needs, thinks, fears, and loves. This also means being there for the person you are coaching. Standing at the bottom of the ladder and yelling encouraging words is one way of being involved, but stepping up the

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ladder and saying “Take me by the hand” is a thousand times more productive for both people. The times that I have been coached hard are the experiences from which I have learned the most.

## **Develop a Personal Portfolio**

We all need reassurance. Mine is in a large brown cardboard box. Inside the box are my treasures. These items from school tell me about the power of learning at LRS. The pieces in my box are reminders of where I have been professionally and where I want to go. The box is really full, and the items inside range from pictures, letters, and test scores to students’ writing pieces, running records, lesson plans, and teacher planning notes to favorite articles and excerpts from books that help me teach. The pieces are in the box because they remind me of the palette of learning at Lee Richmond. This collection reflects my abilities as a principal and a teacher.

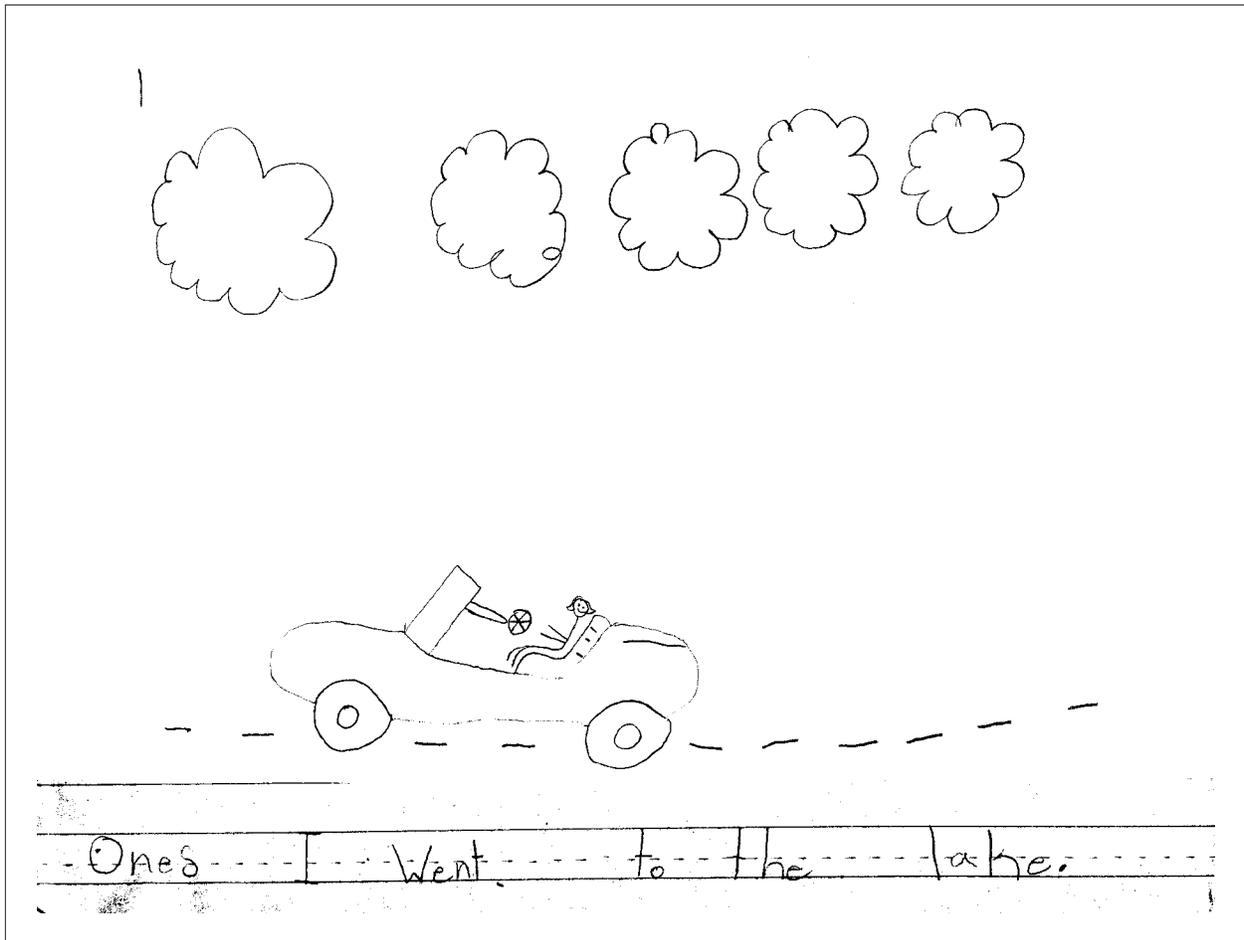
It is important to have a collection of items that reflect the abilities of your students and of yourself as a teacher. Many items I keep as part of my school portfolio, and I use them to explain our successes to the superintendent, parents, public, and board members. I also have the items that direct my thinking and show me where we are as a learning community. At a conference, I can lay down pictures of classrooms, student writing, and reading scores to show visitors and evaluators how well our children are learning.

### ***My Reassurance Box***

Let me show you inside my reassurance box.

I have three pieces of first-grade writing from the 2002–2003 school year. These pieces are important to me because they are from a group of students that left kindergarten writing, and writing well, for the first time. This is significant because our instruction in kindergarten changed; we stopped teaching with worksheets and writing forms and began with writing workshop. First, I have Leighton’s piece of writing (see Figures 1 and 2). I purchased this book from Leighton, a first-grade student in Shana’s room, with a gift certificate from Barnes and Noble. She was very excited to make her first “sale” as a published author. I treasure this work from Leighton because she worked hard to be able to control beginning, middle, and end effectively in her writing. She especially worked to learn how to use reflection in her writing to end her narrative. She submitted this story to the Lee Richmond School Author’s Faire, and at the event participants and visitors were invited to write comments on the inside front covers of the books. Leighton wrote, “I have a gret story.” I thought she had written a great story too. It is in my reassurance box because it reminds me that when Shana, Leighton’s teacher, provided precise instruction and created a beautiful, nurturing, literate classroom to support writing, Leighton learned. I am also reminded of the coaching relationships at the school.

**FIGURE 1** Page One from Leighton's Book



Kristina, the literacy coach, coached Shana. Originally written with invented spelling, this sample is translated.

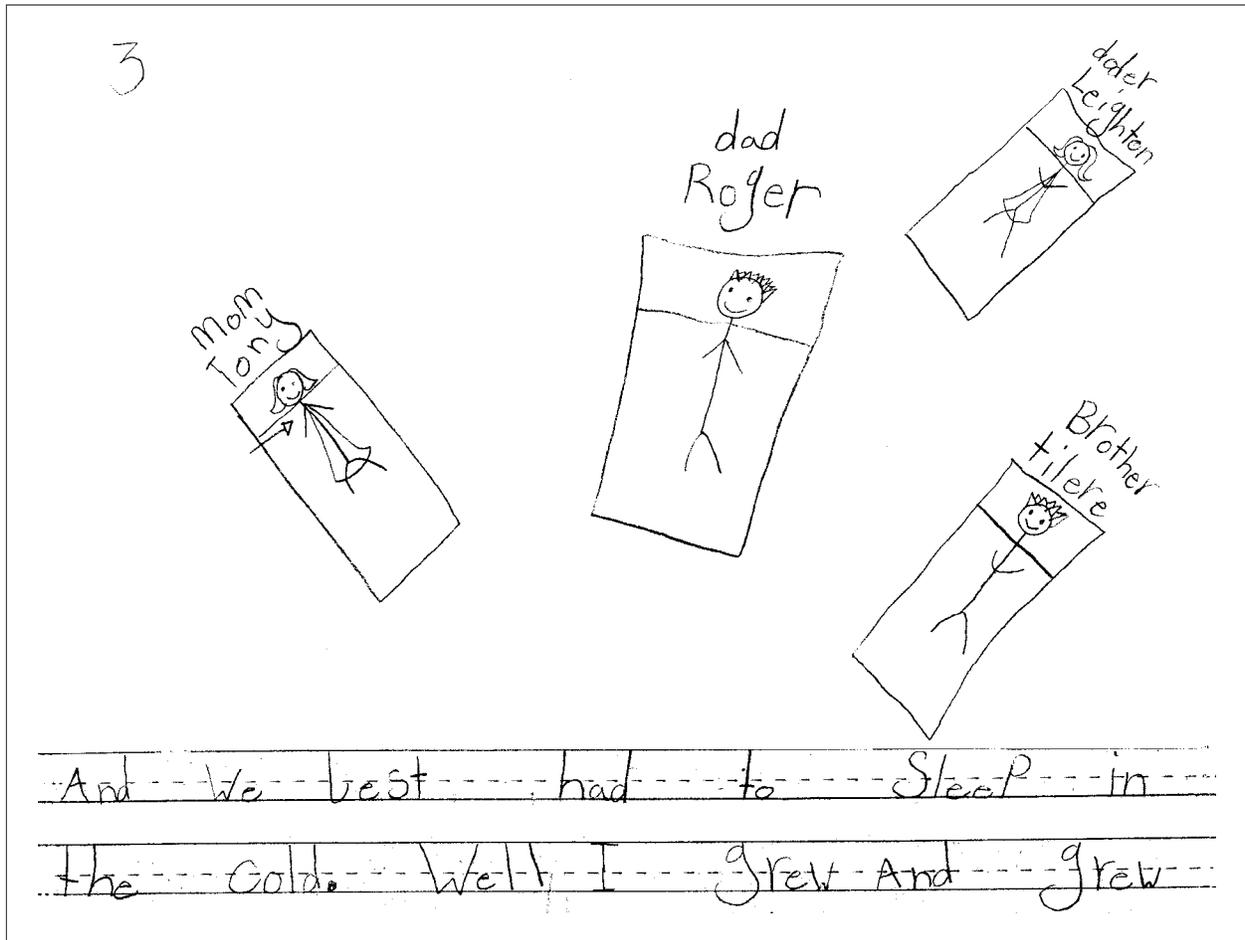
***When We First Went to The Lake***

*Leighton Napier*

*Once I went to the lake. And I remembered that there was no gas in the jeep. So I told my mom, "Get gas first." But my mom and dad said, "Oh it's going to be all right." But a couple of days later my jeep broke down. And we just had to sleep in the cold. Well, I growed and growed. A couple of days later a policeman came and checked on people. All of a sudden the police man saw us and said, "What are you doing out here all by yourselves?" "We broke down," said my dad. "I can help you get home." We said, "All right." We went home and drew pictures of how beautiful it was. I will always remember that day.*

Another example of first-grade writing is Marc's piece (Figure 3). Marc wrote a narrative about an experience his mother had. He also learned to

FIGURE 2 Page Three from Leighton's Book



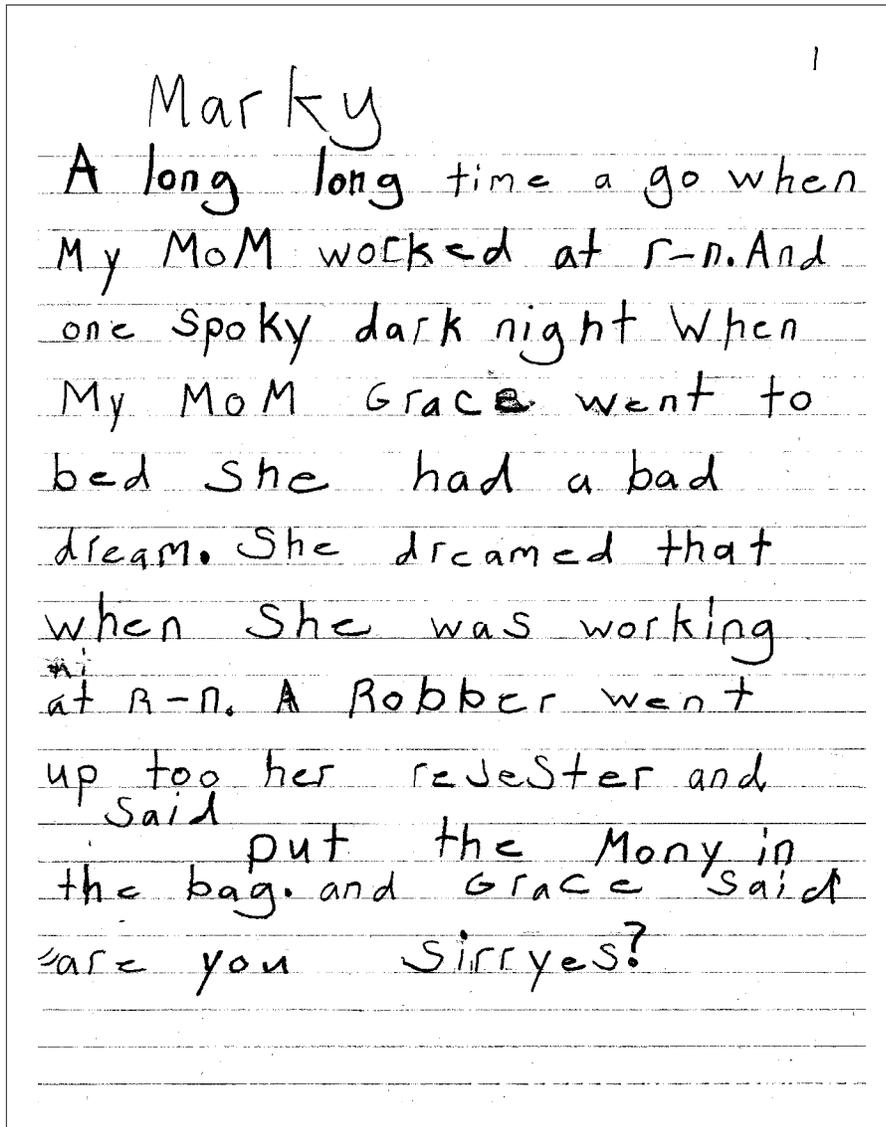
control beginning, middle, and end effectively. Notice how he uses dialogue, like Leighton, to add specificity to the story. Marc also uses literary language. He begins with *a long, long time ago, when . . .* and sound words like *crackle, creak, crackle*.

**3-31-2003 Marc Aguirre**

*A long long time ago when my mom worked at R-N and one spooky dark night when my mom, Grace, went to bed, she had a bad dream. [Shana had shown the children how authors use the strategy of leisurely beginnings. This looks like Marc's attempt at a leisurely beginning.] She dreamed that when she was working at R-N a robber went up to her register and told her to put the money in the bag and Grace said, "Are you serious?" then he held up the gun and said, "Does it look serious?"*

*Then she put the money in the bag. And the next morning when she wok up, she drove herself to work. And then . . .*

FIGURE 3 Marc's Piece as He Wrote It



BUST the door broke open and a robber went up and said, "Put the money in the bag." And he held the gun to my mom Grace. If he shoots it will go, bang, bang. Then she said, "Ok, Ok." And after he left she thought why is it just like my dream? She wondered. And when she told me that story, I told her, "Why didn't you call the cops?" And she said that she was shaking with fear. When she was biting her nails with fearness [Marc told Shana that fearness is being really, really frightened], They went creak, crackle, creak, crackle. Then she told me that she wanted to forget that scary, scary day but she just couldn't. and she said to herself repeating, "I will never forget that day, I will never forget that day." I'll never know if . . . she really did. The end.

FIGURE 3 (continued)

2

Then he held up the gun  
and said  
? dose it look  
sirryes. Then she put the  
mony in the bag.  
And the NEXT morning  
When she walk up  
she drove her self  
too work. And then...  
**BUST** the door broke  
open. And a rober went  
up and said. put the  
mony in the bag. And he  
held the gun  
up to my Mom's face. if he  
sotes it will go BangBang

FIGURE 3 (continued)

3

Then She said "ok-ok."  
And After he left She  
thought why is it  
Just like My dream?  
She wondered. And when  
She told Me that Story  
I told her "Why didn't  
you just call the  
Cops?" and She said  
that She was Shaking  
with fear. when She  
was Biting her nails  
with fearens,

FIGURE 3 (continued)

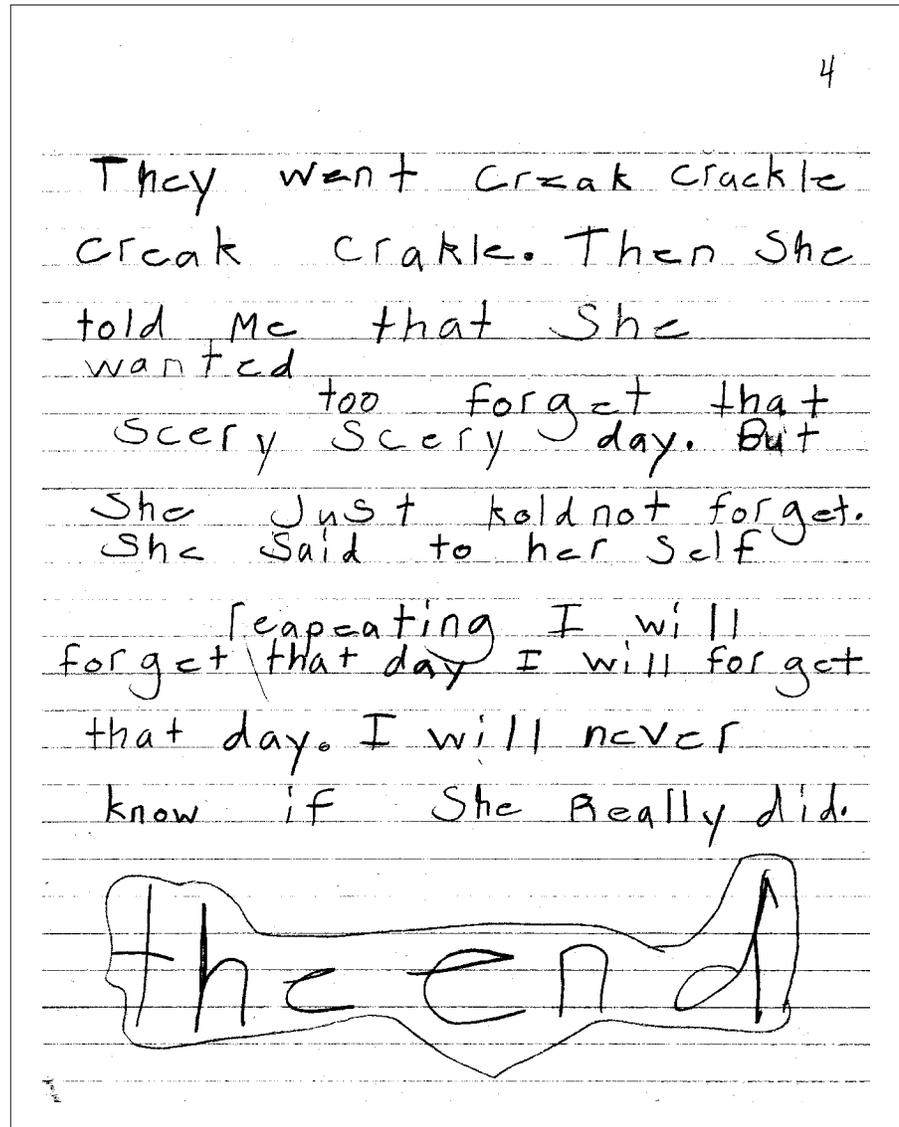
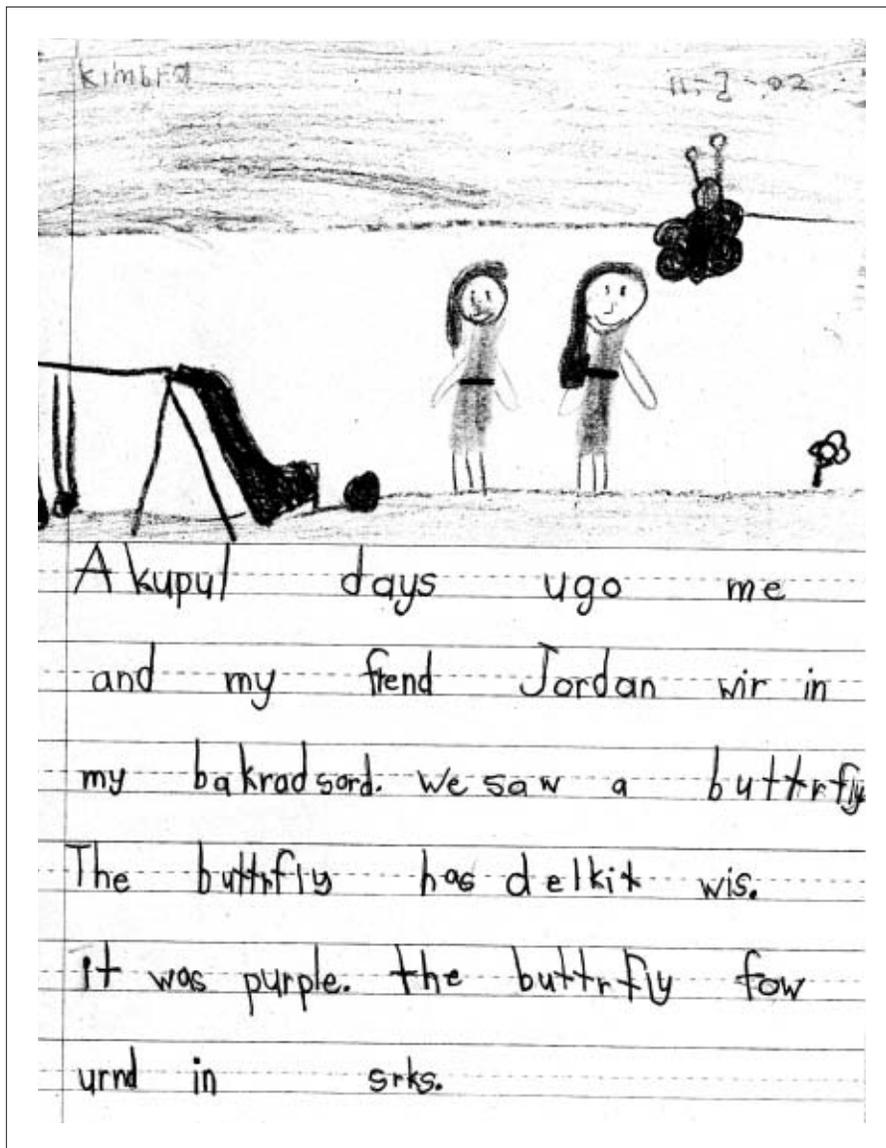


FIGURE 4 Kimbra's Writing



The third example of first-grade writing is Kimbra Juarez's piece about butterflies (see Figure 4). Kimbra wrote this piece in November. Kim, the learning director, coached her teacher, Sonia, on how to teach the children to add specificity to their pieces. You can see the development of specificity in this writing sample.



FIGURE 4 (continued)

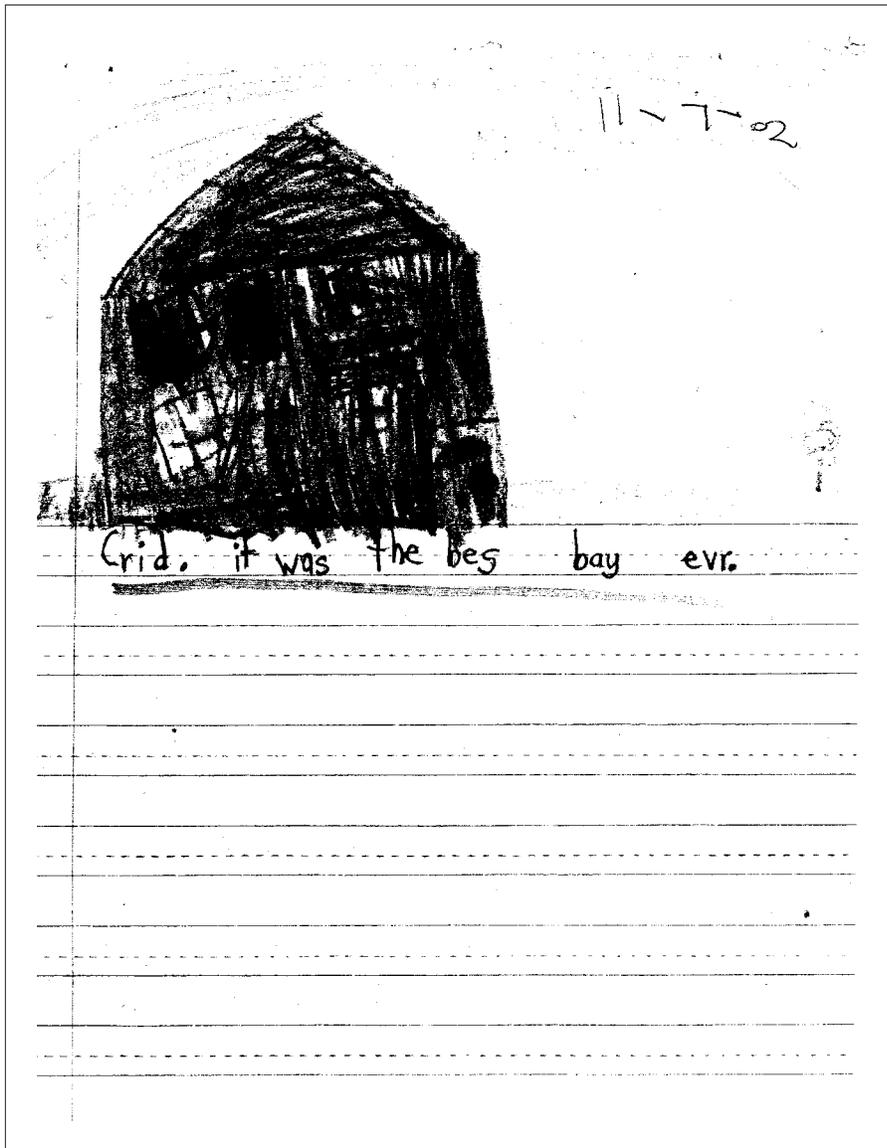


FIGURE 5 Jacob's Reflection Sheet

Jacob Kipp  
3<sup>rd</sup> - Mayo

# Read On!!!

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Jacob M. Kipp 4-11-02  
Jacob Kipp #3

I read 19,500 pages

My favorite book: Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire  
Author: J.K. Rowling 750 Pages

Tell about yourself as a reader:

I like reading fiction things  
of sorts. I love Harry Potter  
the best technique for reading  
is chunk and start at  
by reading little books then  
bigger and bigger. Then  
before you know it you'll  
be reading encyclopedias  
or possibly books that you  
didn't know exist. I think you  
know what I mean. I read  
this many pages by little  
books and then big books

SO Read.

My portfolio (or reassurance box) also has breadth. I have reflection sheets that two students wrote in 2002 about our Read On Richmond! campaign. During this campaign, the whole school focused on reading a lot and reading often. Jacob wrote about how he feels about his writing. I have Jacob's reflection in my box because I hear my voice in his writing. Many times at schoolwide assemblies, during recess, in the lunch line, and when I am visiting classrooms I am telling the children why they should read. Figure 5 is Jacob's reflection on why reading is important.

FIGURE 6 Crystal's Reflection Sheet

The Teddy Bear Book.



Crystal Rodriguez  
2<sup>nd</sup> - Tabers

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Crystal Rodriguez

I read 656 books

My favorite book: The Teddy Bear Collection  
Author: Nicola Baxter

Tell about yourself as a reader:

Me and Mommy go to the Hanford  
Library almost every week.  
I checkout 8 or 10 books. When I  
come home I like to sit on my  
favorite sofa. I like to read about  
fairies, unicorns and funny ones.  
My Mommy some times reads  
me - Little House On the Praire  
by Laura Ingalls Wilder.  
I like to read, because every  
story has a new adventure.  
And because it's FUN!

### Translation

*I like reading fiction things of sorts. I love Harry Potter the best. The best techniques for reading is chunking and start at reading little books, then bigger and bigger books. Then before you know it you'll be reading encyclopedias or possibly books that you didn't know existed. I think you know what I mean. I read this many pages by little books and then big books. SO READ.*

I also have Crystal's reflection sheet (Figure 6) in my remembrance box. When I read her work, I think of Crystal snuggled up with her mom reading. Crystal's mom works as a yard supervisor at our school. She nurtures the children just the way she does Crystal's reading abilities. I kept this

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**FIGURE 7** Sienna Reading in Sonya Johnson's Library



**FIGURE 8** Sonya Johnson's Library



FIGURE 9 Passion Heart from Amanda's Classroom



piece because when I read it I think of the wonderful literature experiences we need to provide our children in our classrooms daily.

In my box I also have a picture album. While many of the pictures are of proud children showing off their work, most are pictures of the walls in LRS classrooms. I usually take pictures to remind us how important our environments are. Environments set the tone of learning, support the children's understanding, and when designed well, bring us peace and

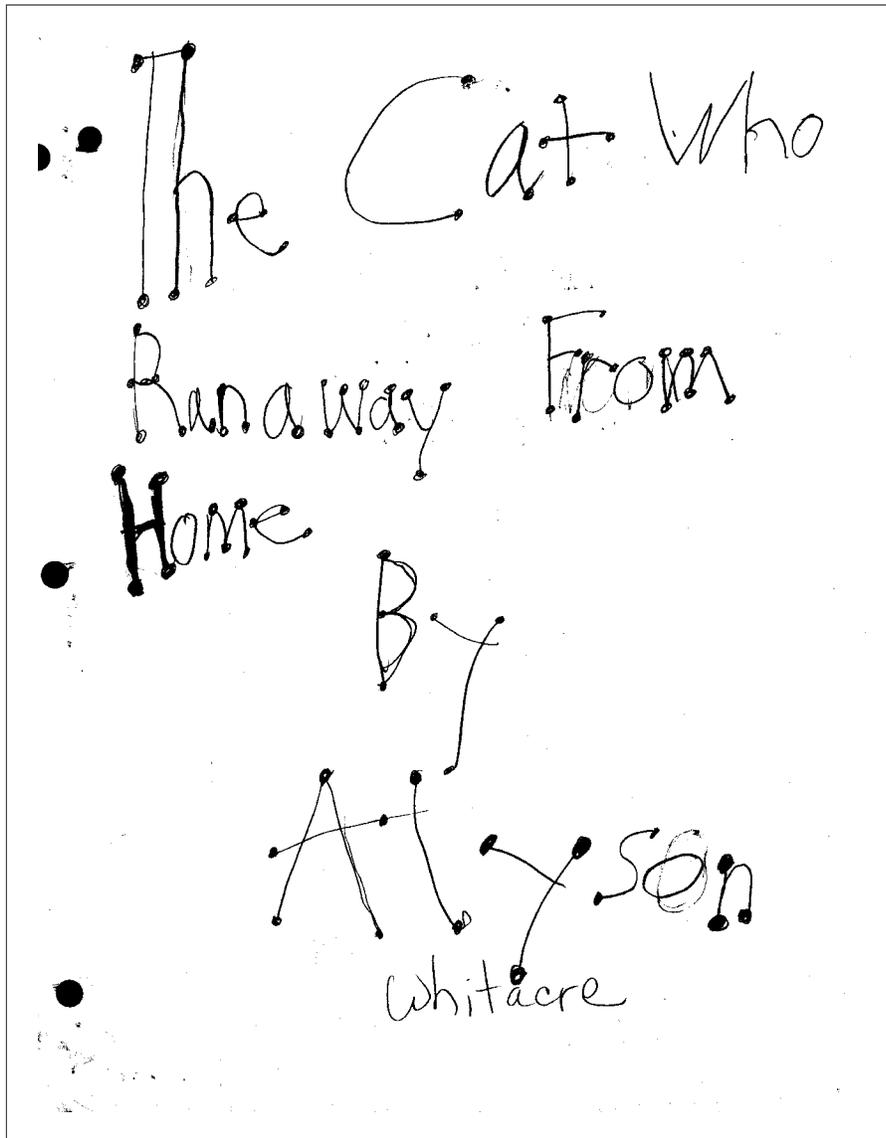
**FIGURE 10** Cherie and Anissa in a Classroom Library



**FIGURE 11** Jayden Reading Her Piece at a Writer's Celebration



FIGURE 12 Alyson's Piece

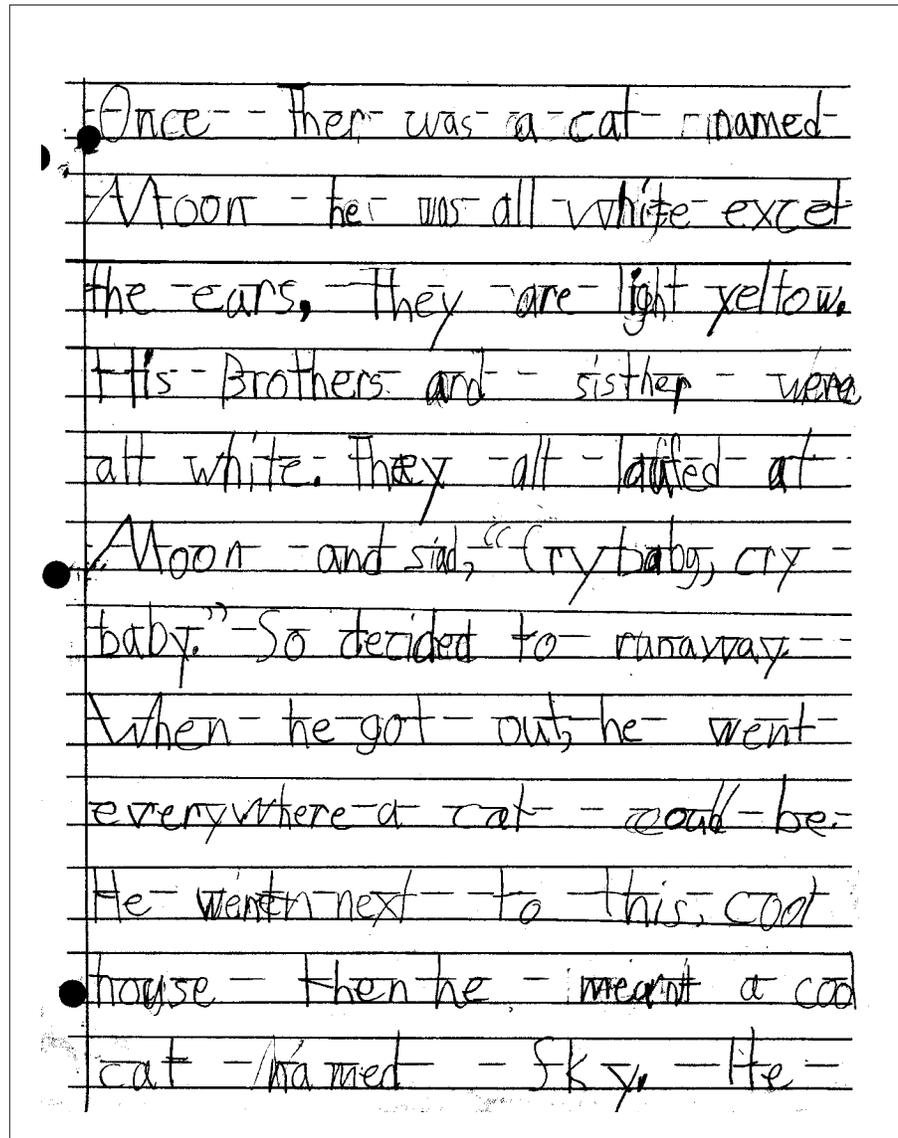


motivation. How we arrange our rooms, create spaces for children to read and write, and display student work impacts the rigor and quality of learning.

For information on how to create passion hearts, see *Awakening the Heart* by Georgia Heard (1999).

I have a piece of second-grade writing to share in this box also. I kept this piece because it is a fairy tale, and in my experiences working with second graders (and third graders too), a fairy tale is a hard genre for them to control. Many times the details are very distracting—the children write too many things the reader doesn't need to know, but not enough details to move the story along without losing the reader. Alyson's piece is an example of a second grader learning to control this genre.

FIGURE 12 (continued)

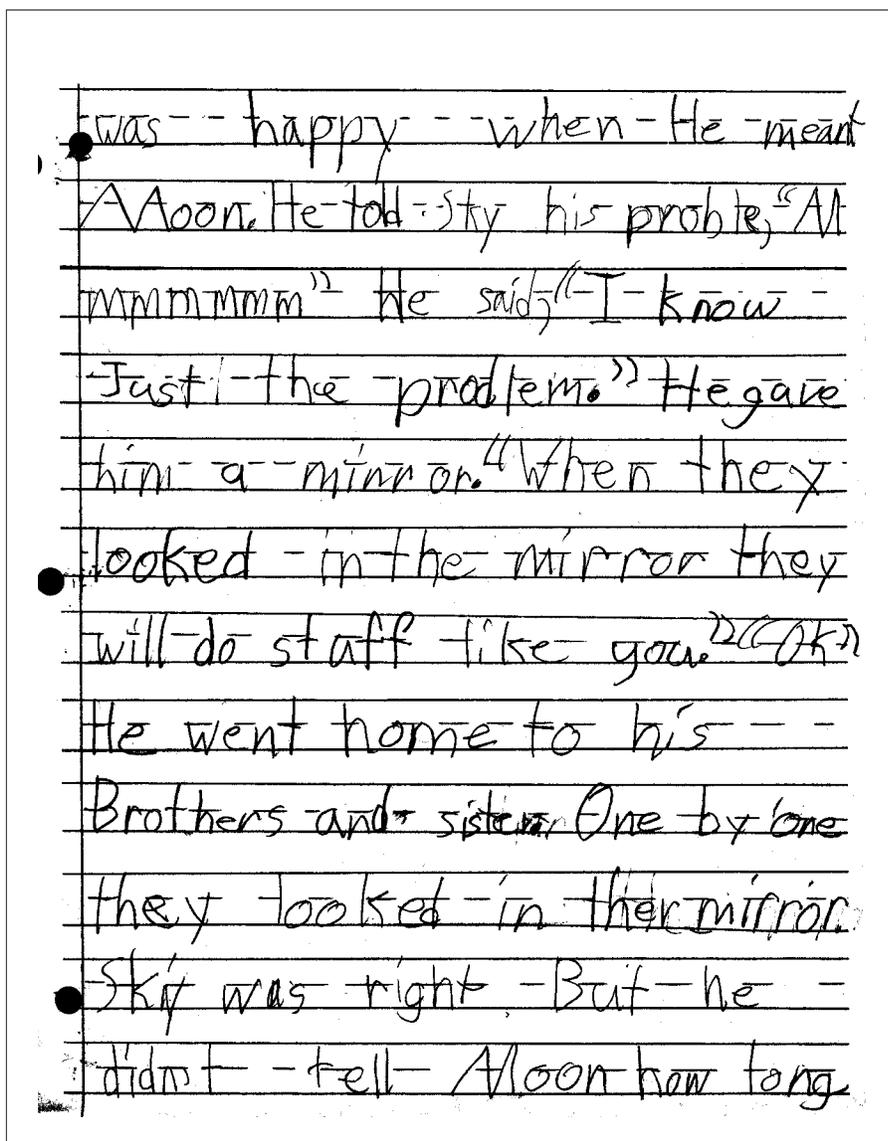


**The Cat Who Ranaway from Home (Translation)**

by Alyson Whitacre

Once there was a cat named Moon. He was all white except the ears, they are light yellow. His brothers and sisters were all white. They all laughed at Moon and said, 'Cry baby, crybaby.'" So Moon decided to runaway. When he got out, he went everywhere a cat could be. He went to the cool house then he met a cat named Sky. He was happy when he met Moon. He told Sky his

FIGURE 12 (continued)



problem, "Mmmmmmm." He said, "I know just the problem." He gave Moon a mirror. "When they looked in the mirror, they will do stuff like you." "OK" He went home to his brothers and sisters. One by one they looked in the mirror. Sky was right, but he didn't tell Moon how long it would work. It worked as long as they looked in the mirror, so they looked in the mirror over and over again.

FIGURE 12 (continued)

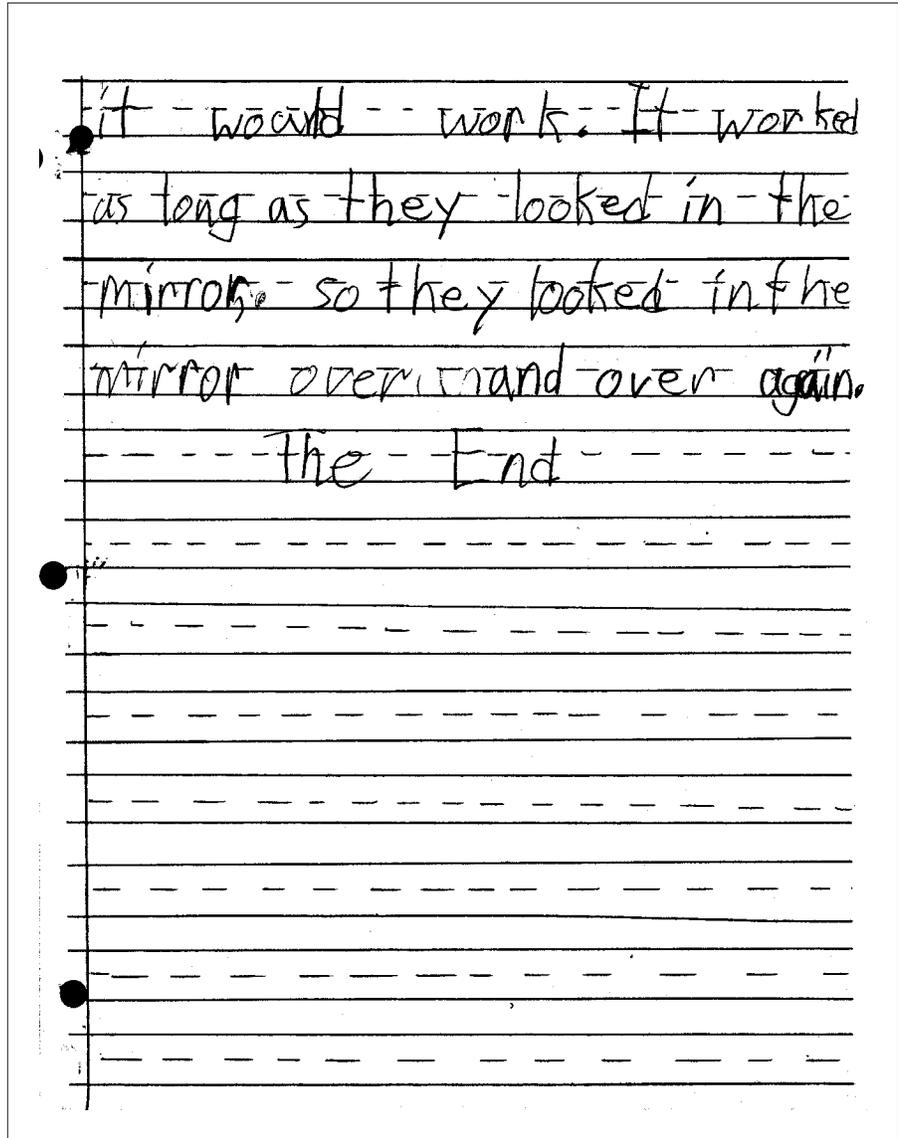


FIGURE 12 (continued)

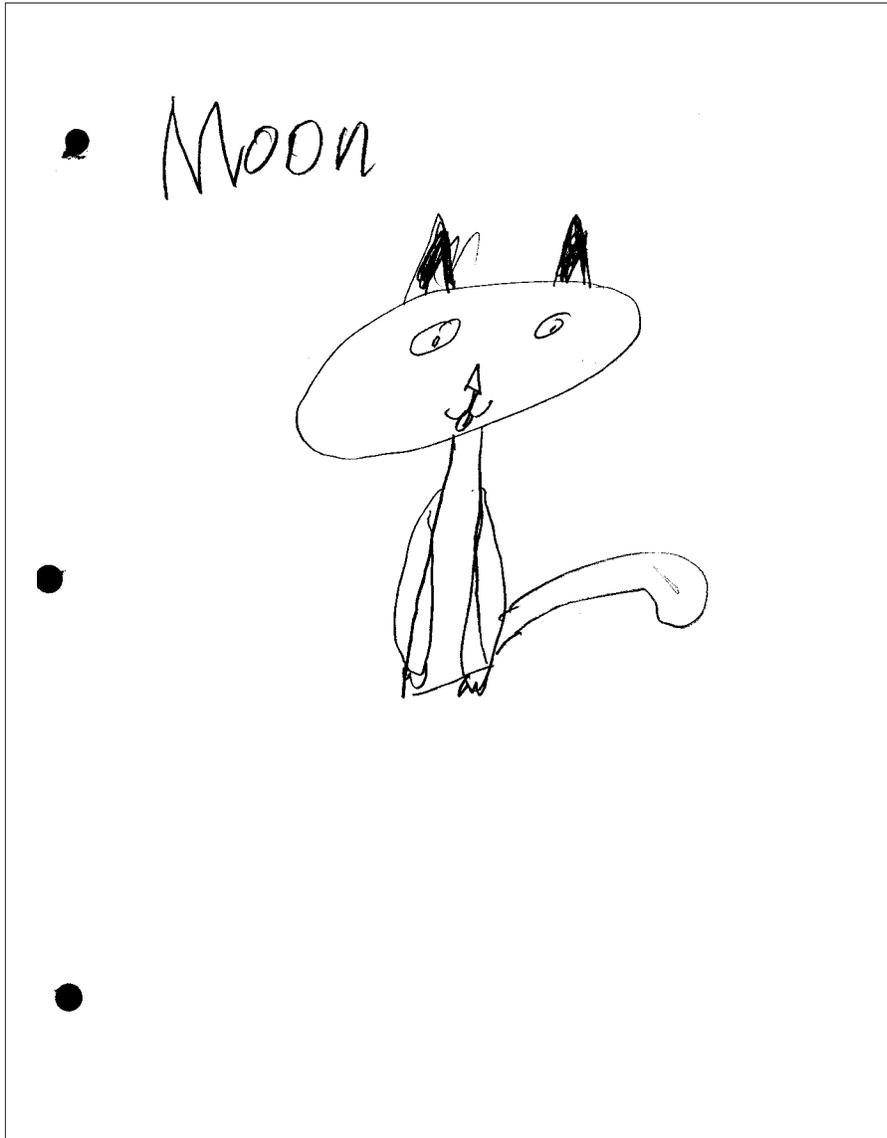


FIGURE 13 Goal Sheet—Lopez

**Next Step**  
**PERSONAL GOAL**

Lee Richmond School

Teacher Lopez Date 5/28/03

**Goal**  
My instructional focus for 2002-2003 was:  
Improving my Reading Workshop Instruction

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I feel that I have accomplished...

- Developing a routine for a longer amount of time.
- Improving reading stamina in my students (power reading)
- Developed many successful units of study that tied into my Writing W/S, Skills, and Book Inquiry units.

What evidence do you have of your growth in student work, instructional planning or classroom environment?

- My students are able to sustain reading for longer periods of time.
- They are able to identify & locate story elements, respond to literature independently, and have great conversations (guided) on books we are reading.

This is what I feel I still need to support to work on for 2003-2004:

- \* I feel that I struggle in getting my kids motivated & passionate about school, reading & writing specifically. I want to teach in a way that makes my students want to be here. I want to find topics that they are excited about & incorporate that into my units of study in RW & WW.
- \* I still struggle with managing my reading groups - especially the higher ones... keeping up with several chapters/books.

In this box I also include reflection sheets from my teachers (Figures 13 and 14). These reflection sheets remind me of the effectiveness of my instruction during professional development. The sheets also help the learning community at LRS plan for staff development. Almost all professional development occurs at staff meetings. We read professional texts at meetings, watch instructional videos (some professionally purchased, others made at the school), share student work, and share lesson plans, structures, or techniques that work well.

FIGURE 14 Goal sheet—Samaniego

**Next Step**  
**PERSONAL GOAL**

Lee Richmond School

Teacher L. Samaniego Date 6/12/03

**Goal**

My instructional focus for 2002-2003 was:

To focus on our new Readers Workshop goal of developing stamina and the new structure of the workshop.

I feel that I have accomplished... My class throughout the year got better and better at reading for longer periods of time. I worked deeper on different areas for the students to work on when rdg (i.e.: conflict, character, themes)

What evidence do you have of your growth in student work, instructional planning or classroom environment? Walking in my room and seeing the kids reading and jotting. Our walls and their reading booklets show our minilessons and the students work. Growth can be seen comparing quality of work from beginning of year up until now.

This is what I feel I still need to support to work on for 2003-2004: As far as this goal - I could use more support to get the kids deeper into the things we worked on this year - more help in the next step.

Areas I want to focus on as well next year:

- Where to go w/ higher readers (developing stronger book clubs for them to participate in)
- Writing - getting students to write more + better quality of writing (Narrative work)

Notice the specificity the teachers have written into their reflections. On these sheets they stated their overall learning goal for the year—what they had decided in September they wanted to improve. This team worked together (they are fourth- and fifth-grade teachers) and requested coaching more than once during the year, from various coaches. They also read professional texts to support their learning and discussed these texts together, coaching and instructing one another. This incredible group of teachers was able to grow because they could admit what they continued to struggle with, and how they felt unsure. This is not a negative, *this is a strength!* Figure 15 is a blank goal planning sheet for your use.

**FIGURE 15** Blank Goal Sheet

**Next Step  
PERSONAL GOAL**

Teacher \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

**Goal**  
My instructional focus for the school year was:

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

I feel that I have accomplished...

I have evidence of my growth in student work, instructional planning, or classroom environment:

I feel I still need support in the following area for next year:

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I have shared a few of the pieces that portray the learning in my reassurance box. I encourage you to develop a portfolio that will support your reading, writing, and language workshops. It is important to include:

- student writing from the reading and writing workshop
- pictures of the classroom learning boards
- reading scores—your in-class assessments, such as running records, are most informative
- student reflection sheets
- reading inventories
- lesson plans—specifically showing new ways you are teaching
- your personal goals and reflection sheets

## Are You Ready?

When I was ten, paralyzed with fear on top of a roof, five little words got me down safely. During so many significant moments in my life, learning moments when I was stuck and paralyzed with fear, I was able to move forward again when someone who cared for me personally and professionally pushed me to excel. We can provide this for one another; the process will bring energy to our own classrooms and to the learning community within which we work. Coach, be coached, and collect evidence of your learning, of the changes in your classroom environment, and of your children's learning. I know these challenges are not easy. I have often read in books speaking of instructional reform that we continually change the structures in our schools, but not the instruction, because no one knows how to teach the adults. Well, through the collaborative relationships I have with the teachers at LRS, I have learned a few things. This chapter is an invitation to take my hand; in my book *How to Align Literacy Instruction, Standards, and Assessment and Achieve Results You Never Dreamed Possible*, I will show you what we learned.

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