Literacy: It All Connects

First Draft and Share
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All students at KDES and MSSD use a writers' workshop process to help improve their writing. Let's take a look at a typical workshop as an in-depth example.

Every student writes for at least one hour every day during our writers' workshop. The workshop schedule is as follows:

- 10:00 to 10:15: Mini-Lesson (the teacher teaches skills and strategies to the students)
- 10:15 to 10:45: Writing (students work on stories while adults give feedback, conferencing with students)
- 10:45 to 11:00: Share (students give feedback to each other)

During the workshop, the students write about topics that are especially interesting to them. We encourage them to write stories about people, places or things that are of personal importance to them. For example, Elijah wrote about his favorite cat. Sean wrote about his grandfather who died. Rachel wrote about playing in the park. And Travis wrote about his friends.

When students are stuck and can't think of any stories to write about, we offer suggestions or encourage them to try other kinds of writing.

and **Share with Class:**

**Charleen**

During the writers' workshop, Charleen decided to write a story about a guinea pig. This particular guinea pig is a favorite pet in the grades 3/4/5 team, and Charleen thought it would be a perfect subject for her story. When she finished her first draft, Charleen shared the story with the class. Sharing takes place during the last fifteen minutes of the writing time (although students can share with other students or staff any time during the writing process).

When Charleen shared her story about the guinea pig she also showed a picture that she drew of the pet. Ross and other students liked both the story and the pictures.
After reading her story to the class, Charleen asked the class for feedback. One student, for example, asked, "What kind of food does the guinea pig eat?" Judy wrote down the questions while Charleen answered, telling the students that the guinea pig eats carrots, grass, corn, celery, and so on.

When the class finished the inquiry, Judy gave the list of questions to Charleen. During the next writing workshop, Charleen will write up the answers to the questions.
Tony

Tony spent a few days writing a story about his brother who is in the army. The story was five pages long (page one is shown below). Tony then shared the story with the class in order to get their feedback.

(Tony asked for questions from the class. After he fielded a few, he asked for more, and more. It was clear Tony wanted feedback. Mahalia offered to write down the questions for Tony. Such voluntary efforts are an added benefit of the workshop process—students in the class like Mahalia taking the initiative to help out their fellow writers!

Tony then took the list of questions (as shown below) from Mahalia, and used them for guidance when he revised his story.
Sharing Guidelines should be available for all the writers to see.

Questions and Answers:

Q: Does the child:
- look down and sign the story word-by-word, or
- give the story to other students to look and then ask questions, or
- look at a paragraph, then look up and sign part of it, then look at next part, then look up and sign some more?

A: We encourage the students to look at a part of his or her story first, then look up and sign only that part. If the child looks down and sign word-by-word, the other students do not understand the story. If the child gives the paper to other students, the students sometimes focus on single words or mistakes, and never focus on the story's ideas. That is why we promote reading the first draft of the story "aloud".

Q: Does it take more than one day to complete the first draft of a story?

A: It depends on the child. For example, Esther has been working on a book. She may need to spend several days writing one chapter because her work is more detailed. With other children, the stories are
often finished in one day. Still other children may finish a story in 15 minutes. When that happens, the teacher(s) will ask more questions about the story, or ask the child to start work on another story.
The Laurent Clerc National Deaf Education Center is comprised of two federally mandated demonstration schools for students from birth through age 21 who are deaf. Located on the campus of Gallaudet University, these schools work in collaboration with a national network of exemplary programs and professionals to identify, research, develop, evaluate, and disseminate innovative curricula, materials, educational strategies, and technologies for students who are deaf or hard of hearing. The Clerc Center also provides training and technical assistance to families and programs throughout the United States, and serves as a model individualized educational program, working in close partnership with its students and their families.

Working for Deaf and Hard of Hearing Children Throughout the United States