

“She Puts Clues in Our Head:” Interactive and Independent Writing Instruction in a First Grade Classroom

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The purpose of this study was to examine a first grade teacher's instruction during interactive and independent writing times as she taught and prompted her students how to go about spelling unfamiliar words and employ various writing strategies while they were composing. I used a qualitative approach to data collection and analysis. Results of the study indicated that the teacher's strategic use of an apprenticeship model across two writing contexts allowed her to make explicit for her first graders the processes involved in spelling and writing from one context to another. Educational implications from the study support an apprenticeship model of writing instruction across contexts in classrooms that fits the needs of learners and addresses important curriculum standards in early literacy.

My time in a first grade classroom observing writing instruction has proved some of the most insightful of my career. In the following excerpt from my personal notes, I had just spent the last few months observing writing instruction across contexts and was nearing the end of my study. It is on the last day of my observations that a student sums up the importance of this work so completely to me as I took notes during independent writing time with the students.

(May 22) It was independent writing time. Carrie¹ had finished an interactive writing lesson and the children were scattered about the room engaged in their own independent writing. Carrie was seated at the opposite end of the classroom talking with students about their writing. I was seated on the floor, next to Preston, who often sat alongside me during this time. Preston and I were writing together; he in his journal and I on my legal pad beginning to sketch out what I had learned from this experience. I inquired as to his view for the purpose/goal of interactive writing lessons on my final day in his class.

T: Do you know why Mrs. Smith has everyone write together at the easel? (pointing to the interactive writing tablet)

Preston: I know exactly why. She puts clues in our head. That's why she does writing up here (motioning to the interactive writing easel) before we write in our journals. So that when we do this writing, (pointing to his journal) we remember.

¹ To protect the privacy of minor children, the names of all of the participants and the school name are pseudonyms.

What he said couldn't have been more perfect. I'm certain his teacher would elate in her students' connections she had worked so diligently to cement. Essentially, "What I show you during our writing work together is what good writers do on their own and this is how I want you to try it (Researcher's Note 5.22)."

Young writers must have the knowledge and understanding to employ a host of tools depending on the context and purpose of the piece they are composing. Tools reside in many layers of cultural and historical contexts (Bomer, 2003; Wertsch, 1998) and can be psychological as well as physical. Teaching children to use specific tools for classroom writing situates the tools within a context with an assigned meaning. Teachers must often make the value and practice of the tool use explicit to young children and allow many opportunities for students to put the tool to use during instructional activities.

An apprenticeship model of instruction could offer teachers a way to bridge these realities with early writers. According to Rogoff (1990), an apprenticeship model provides active participation for learners with more experienced others to scaffold participation in a cultural activity. One form of writing instruction that provides this kind of explicit instruction is interactive writing. For several reasons, interactive writing (Pinell & McCarrier, 1994) is an important practice in which to ground this research. First, interactive writing fosters an atmosphere of risk taking and collaboration by supporting student's literacy growth in an authentic context that is meaningful to the members of the class. It is meaningful because students are engaged in co-constructing knowledge within the community of practice in the classroom. In addition, interactive writing allows students to gain independence and competence through repeated exposure to explicit and strategic instruction. The interaction with an expert scaffolds students into the application of tools used for thinking during their own writing tasks.

The purpose of this study was to focus on the instructional approach of interactive writing with first grade students and to investigate how the tools and strategies afforded to students supports their independent writing endeavors. Specifically, I set out to examine and document the following research questions:

1. What spelling and writing strategies does the teacher prompt or teach during interactive writing lessons?
2. How do students appropriate writing strategies from interactive writing instruction in their own independent writings, such as journal writing with guided apprenticeship from the teacher?

Research on Interactive Writing

There are currently five empirical studies on interactive writing (Brotherton & Williams, 2002; Button, Johnson & Furgerson, 1996; Craig, 2006; Roth & Guinee, 2011; Williams & Lundstrom, 2007). Findings from these studies indicate that interactive writing has the potential to offer a student a wide variety of fundamental literacy tools such as concepts of print, writing conventions, and spelling and writing strategies in the context of a meaningful text.

Although studies have explored the importance of explicit instruction and strategy instruction with groups of developing writers, a scarcity exists for studies that examine the instruction during

interactive writing to student appropriation of strategies during independent writing with the classroom teacher. In fact, after a thorough review of the literature, only two have been published in national peer-refereed research journals (Roth & Guinee, 2011; Williams & Lundstrom, 2007). Findings from these studies indicate that interactive writing provides a powerful forum to teach students a wide variety of early literacy skills such as, concepts of print, writing and spelling conventions, and linguistic patterns in the context of a meaningful text. These studies, however, do not provide evidence of what the children learned by documenting responses and behaviors during interactive writing lessons. Furthermore, the studies fail to examine how the strategies taught and learned during interactive writing are appropriated by the students during independent writing activities working with the classroom teacher for support using an apprenticeship model.

The study reported in this paper goes further than those that currently exist in important ways. First, this study investigates the instructional connections between two writing contexts, using interactive writing as the primary instructional tool. The previous studies are limited in that they do not explore how the teacher uses interactive writing strategies in the journal writing context to further support writers' needs. For example, Button et al. (1996) used interactive writing followed by journal writing but did not document the teacher's instructional role in that context. Although Williams and Lundstrom (2007) did examine instruction across varying contexts, the teacher did not continue instruction during journal writing. Furthermore, Roth and Guinee (2011) did examine how students' independent writing improved when taking part in interactive writing instruction, but they did not document the teacher's instructional role during independent writing. The study presented in this paper will build on previous findings and provide implications of the potential for interactive writing instruction as a catalyst for continued support of students' writing endeavors during independent writing through an apprenticeship model in both writing contexts.

Interpretive Framework

Rogoff (1990) contends that the cognitive development in the social context must focus on sub goals to make problem solving manageable. "Interactions in the zone of proximal development are the crucible of development *and* culture, in that they allow children to participate in activities that would be impossible for them alone, using cultural tools that themselves must be adapted to the specific practical activities at hand..." (Rogoff, 1990, p. 16). Rogoff builds on the idea of teaching and scaffolding practices in the zone of proximal development through shared problem solving and apprenticeship.

Apprenticing Shared Problem Solving

Literacy from a sociocognitive perspective views the interactions within a context of culture and social relationships as essential for the acquisition of tools, concepts and practices related to literacy tasks. A cognitive *apprenticeship* emphasizes explicit demonstrations with activities that guide children's understanding of literacy to a higher level. Rogoff (1990) contends that a child's cognitive growth is "embedded" in the context of people, tools and practices (p. 8). The context of people, tools, and practices are the "mediating influence" (Dorn, French & Jones, 1998) that enables a child to put them to use. Rogoff has identified key components to an apprenticeship model of learning that I embraced in this study.

Apprenticeship provides the lens of this study to examine the teacher's instructional roles in supporting the literacy practices of the students. *Guided participation* (Rogoff, 1990) is one element of an apprenticeship model. The concept of guided participation places the collaboration between experienced others and novices during culturally valued activities at the forefront of working with children. The guidance that children receive during their participation in an activity can be implicit or explicit learning conversations or situations in which the expert makes the connection between the "known and the new" (Rogoff, 1990, p. 65) visible to the learner.

Oftentimes the guidance that children need to solve a problem requires that the expert break the task into more manageable parts, or sub goals. Structuring the participation and responsibility during such activities, guides learners to assume an increased role for the task over time. During this kind of *shared problem solving* (Rogoff, 1990), the learner is active and supported by those within the culture that are more experienced. Members of a community of practice share an understanding of the language, practice and tools used within a given activity. It is through shared problem solving between a novice and an expert that a shared understanding, or *intersubjectivity* (Rogoff, 1990), forms and extends a learner's thinking to a new activity. The tandem use of writing practices presented in this study have the potential to offer an apprenticeship model of the way young writers extend their use of tools from one activity to another.

Interactive writing. Interactive writing (Pinnell & McCarrier, 1994) is similar to shared writing (McKenzie, 1985) in that the teacher and students collaboratively decide on a message and work through the writing process together; however, in interactive writing the student "shares the pen" with the teacher. The teacher will generally solicit a sentence from students based on a reading, conversation, or prior class experience. Deciding the exact point at which the students serve as scribe is a responsive teaching decision that offers a scaffold to the students related to their concepts of print (Brotherton & Williams, 2002; Button et al., 1996; Pinnell, 2001). The pattern of exchange is directed by the teacher, who makes responsive and strategic decisions about which literacy concepts to highlight, principles of writing to address and which spelling strategies to scaffold the young writers into using (see Figure 1). The teacher serves as an audience member and a guide, carefully choosing the direction of the conversation for instructional effectiveness.



Figure 1. Interactive writing area in Carrie's classroom.

Methods

Design, Site, and Participants

The qualitative design of the study was essential in responding to the research questions because it allowed me to observe students interacting in the social contexts of their classroom during writing instruction with their teacher. The first criterion for a site was that the teacher would have interactive writing established as the writing instruction in the classroom. The second criterion for a site was that the teacher was teaching the interactive writing lessons as outlined by Pinnell and McCarrier (1994). Carrie proved to be such a teacher. She has a master's degree in the field of literacy with over 20 years of teaching experience. She also teaches undergraduate early literacy classes at a local university.

Carrie teaches in a rural community outside a large, mid-western city. Deer Crossing Elementary School serves approximately 600 students. The school population is predominately white, middle to lower class. Carrie had 19 students in her classroom at the time of the study; 11 boys and 8 girls. The students ranged in age from 6 to 7 years old and varied in writing levels from emergent to within-word stages (Bear, Invernizzi, Templeton, & Johnson, 2007). Once I received IRB approval (# 07-12-13-06E), I met with the school principal and Carrie to discuss the research proposal. The school principal had the authority to grant permission for the research within the building and then forwarded the information to the district office. Given the age of the children participants, parental consent and child assent was obtained prior to any data collection. Once consent was received for the children, I began data collection twice a week from February through May.

Data Collection

Observations. I observed 18 interactive writing lessons and independent writing sessions taking notes on the interaction between teacher and students. The observations were documented using hand-written field notes (Bogdan & Biklen, 1982). In addition, I videotaped two lessons from interactive writing through independent writing sessions.

Artifacts. I documented artifacts from the classroom that the students used during their writing. I documented these artifacts through photographs as a *cultural inventory* (Bogdan & Biklen, 1982) of the classroom. The artifacts that I documented in this inventory are significant because they were essential parts of Carrie's instruction. She referred to them continually over the course of the interactive writing lessons and independent writing sessions. These tools were cultural and physical artifacts of the classroom that the teacher used during her instruction in both writing contexts and thus important data to collect. Such artifacts included the following: word wall, writing topic list, alphabet chart, manuscript chart, student name chart and the interactive writing chart.

Data Analysis

Borrowing protocol from constant comparative methods (Strauss & Corbin, 1990), I used a qualitative approach to data analysis. I conducted phrase-by-phrase analysis of the data. The unit

of analysis was Carrie's teaching, modeling or prompting of spelling/writing strategies across the two instructional contexts. As I began to list each code on the "Strategies Taught" page, conceptual categories or themes began to emerge (Appendix A) Borrowing coding techniques from Brotherton and Williams' (2002) study on interactive writing, I organized the categories (underlined), subcategories and related codes. Through the analysis, I added and/or collapsed codes and categories as necessary reflecting the axial coding techniques of Strauss and Corbin (1990). "Modeling," "prompting," and "explicit teaching" were among the categories that emerged in both interactive writing lessons and independent writing sessions.

During the final phase of analysis, I distinguished between explicit teaching, prompting and modeling in very different ways. Even though they are all a form of instruction, distinguishing between them gave me a frame of reference for the instructional moves during both writing context. For example, when Carrie introduced a new concept or made an explicit statement (e.g., "Blends are consonants with no vowels"), I documented it as explicit teaching. Modeling is closely related but involves a demonstration for the students. For example, Carrie would say, "Listen to me say it slowly" and then she would model saying the word under construction slowly for the children. Prompting generally involved a concept or strategy that the students had been exposed to and was usually given in the form of open ended questions (e.g. "What do you hear next?") or guiding statements (e.g., "Use a word you know") that prompted students to make a connection from the "known to the new" (Rogoff, 1990; p. 72).

Findings

Findings from this study indicate that Carrie was able to guide her students through the composition of text using several strategies in both writing contexts. After my analysis, I found that Carrie explicitly taught, prompted or modeled 9 concepts or strategies related to spelling and writing during interactive writing lessons, and she also prompted each of those concepts or strategies during independent writing, with specificity to each writer and text.

Coding Writing Instruction Across Contexts

The data tree (Appendix B) lists the codes, subcategories and categories that surfaced from my analysis of Carrie's instruction during interactive writing. Likewise, during independent writing, Carrie's instruction with her students continued and the codes, subcategories and categories documented from analysis of that data are very similar (Appendix C).

I also defined each category (i.e., underlined in Appendices B and C) during my second round of analysis to help distinguish between the concepts, tools and strategies Carrie was using during instruction. A list of each category and a brief explanation of how I defined them are included below:

1. Concepts about print – space, directionality, return sweep, writing conventions, text Features
2. Orthography- patterns and/or principles related to English language and spelling
3. Letter sounds relationships- phoneme/grapheme relationships
4. Listening Strategies – auditory cues such as, "what do you hear/listen for sounds/ listen for parts"

5. Saying Strategies – verbal/auditory cues such as, “say the word slowly/ say the word”
6. Visual Strategies – visual cues such as, “does it look right/ watch me say it”
7. Use what you know Strategies – cues from prior knowledge or experiences such as, “think of/use another word you know”
8. Use a resource- artifacts located in the classroom such as word walls, charts, books etc.
9. Writing development – cues on form and function of composition such as, various genres/ idea development/sequencing

The findings presented in this paper provide evidence of what specific strategies Carrie used with her students and how she guided them to put the tools to use through an apprenticeship model.

Interactive Writing

The first major finding of the study addresses my first research question pertaining to the literacy strategies and tools Carrie offered her students during interactive writing. Results from the analysis of interactive writing lessons demonstrate that Carrie taught, modeled or prompted the use of 9 strategies during the construction of the written text using an apprenticeship model.

Listening and saying strategies. The strategy Carrie prompted most was the “Listening Strategy.” There were 44 instances of Carrie prompting a student to use Listening strategies such as; “Listen for the first/beginning sound”, “What do you hear next?”; “Do you hear anything you already know?” The second most frequently prompted strategies were those categorized as “Saying Strategies.” The connection between verbal and auditory cues makes it understandable that these two strategies were most prevalent during Carrie’s lessons. Carrie modeled a “Saying Strategy” 27 times by saying a word slowly as a student was writing. The following example from field note data demonstrates the use of both strategies on March 14:

Preston is trying the word *fast*.
 He writes the *f*, and pauses.
 C: “What do you hear next?”
 Preston adds an *a*.
 Carrie says the word slowly, “*f/a/s/t/, /st/*”.
 He adds the *st*, spelling the word correctly.

This example provides evidence of how Carrie worked with the student to structure the task into smaller, more manageable parts (“What do you hear next?”). Preston is using strategies that he knows as Carrie says the word slowly to model “Listening Strategies.” Carrie has structured the spelling of the word through shared problem solving and implicit cues (Rogoff, 1990) by structuring the spelling of the word and modeling how writers think through the spelling of a word.

There were 18 instances of Carrie teaching or prompting the students to use a “Saying Strategy” such as “say it slowly in your head”, “say the word” and “sound it out”. The following example from February 19 demonstrates how Carrie used prompting of a saying strategy to begin solving the spelling of the word *protects*. Carrie not only guides students to use “say it slowly”, but also

prompts concepts of print, specifically that of space (e.g. “Will it fit here?”) and Listening Strategies such as; “How many parts do you hear?” and “What vowels do you hear?”

C: *protect*. That is a big word. We’ll have to say it slowly. /pro/tect/. Will it fit here? (pointing to the end of the sentence strip)

Students: No.

C: /Pro/tect/. Say it slowly. How many parts do you hear?

The children clap the word.

Students: Two.

C: What vowels do you hear?

Students: *o*.

C: Another?

Students: *e*.

Once again, the students are active in the shared problem solving (Rogoff, 1990) of the spelling of the word under construction. Carrie has broken the task into manageable sub goals by breaking the word down by syllables. Rogoff contends that this type of cognitive development builds on the intellectual tools from other people. Additionally, she is building on what they know (“Concepts of Space” and “Listening Strategies”) to solve the unknown, or new, word *protect*, which scaffolds the students to connect the known to the new.

Use a resource. Using a resource in the classroom was another tool that Carrie offered her students to use during construction of a text. In all, there were 39 instances of Carrie prompting tools such as; name chart, manuscript chart, word wall, calendar, books etc. during interactive writing to mediate the spelling of an unknown word. During the following example from April 10, Carrie and the students are working on the spelling of the word *hockey*.

C: *Hockey. Hockey*.(repeating the word) Say it slowly to yourself in your head.

She pauses for a few seconds.

C: How does it start, Mary?

Mary comes up and writes h-o.

Aaron: I hear a word in hockey.

C: This is the tricky part , hockey /ck/. Look at Ma/ck/enna’s name. (referring to the name chart) What letters say /ck/ in hockey? Rachel, would you like to try. Look at Mackenna’s name.

Rachel adds a c.

C: Just a c?

Then Rachel then adds a k.

C: /ho/ck/ē. It ends like Bail/ey/. It ends just like your name.(pointing to Bailey) Come up and write the end.

Bailey comes up and writes an e-y on the end of the word.

C: Let’s read it again.

Carrie used explicit (“Look at McKenna’s name”) cues to prompt the student to use a tool in the room for the spelling of a word. She strategically made sub goals for the spelling of this word using something the students are comfortable with, their names and the names of classmates from a chart displayed in the classroom. Carrie also used word lists for specific times of the year

and units of study as illustrated in Figure 2. The students used charts, such as this, to spell words during independent writing. This guided participation is essential in an apprenticeship model because it allows the students to see how the steps involved fit together for the overall goal of the activity. She is careful to guide Mary, Rachel, and Bailey through each part of the word as they participate in the lesson. Once again, the interaction with an expert proves necessary to provide practice with skills and access to information necessary for participation (Rogoff, 1990).

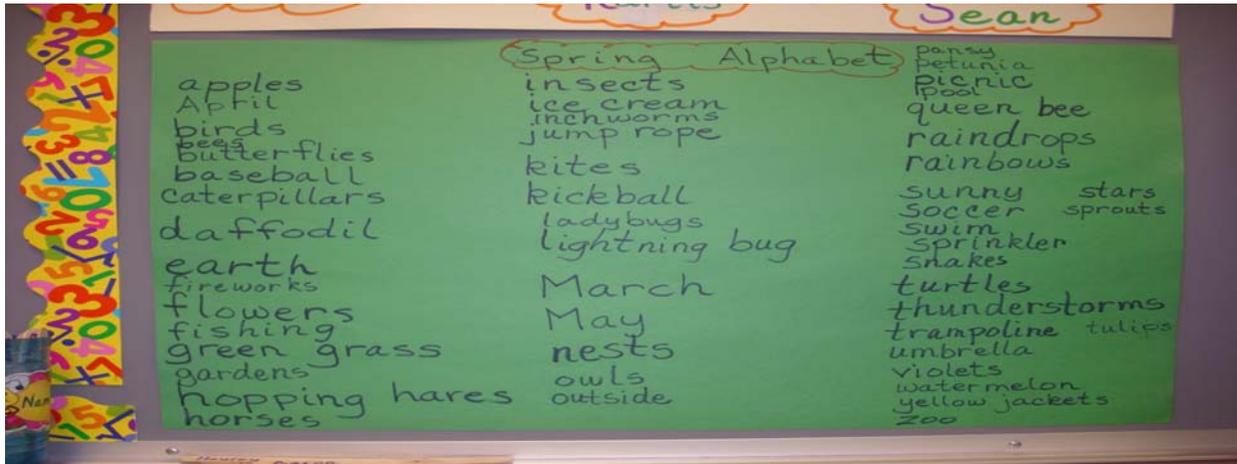


Figure 2. Cultural inventory spring alphabet artifact. Words listed such as these words changed frequently. The word lists were updated to include high frequency words for a specific time of year or unit of study. The students used tools, such as word lists, during their independent writing.

Use what you know strategy. By utilizing prompting the majority of the time as instructional approach to writing instruction, Carrie guided the students to use what they knew to build on the problem at hand. Carrie was guiding them to extend their understanding and assume an increased amount of responsibility for the writing task. The following excerpt is illustrative of how she would guide her students to problem solve:

- Denise: *On Tuesday I went to theskating party...*
 C: *skating*, Denise? It can be tricky. Listen to the beginning sound of *skating* /sk/, /sk/.
 Denise writes s-c on the paper.
 C: Why are you looking at me? Does it look right to you? What letter looks wrong?
 Denise: c
 C: What letter would fix it?
 Denise: k.
 C tapes over the c.
 Denise writes s-k-e
 C: Listen to what is next.../ā/.
 She tapes over the e.
 C: /t/
 Denise writes a-t.
 C: Listen for what is next. /sk/a/t/ing/, /ing/. We all know /ing/.
 Denise adds *ing* to the word, spelling it correctly on the chart paper.

The previous examples of data demonstrates how Carrie used an apprenticeship model during interactive writing instruction to make the problem solving of writing related processes more manageable by creating sub goals for her students using tools from instruction. Rogoff (1990) asserts that such ‘joint participation’ in the problem solving of a task aligns children to the goal of an activity and focuses their attention on the steps required to solve the task (p. 93). The scaffolding that Carrie gave her students, through prompting in their zone of proximal development, allowed them to participate in the writing activity as a whole process through guided participation. Carrie was apprenticing Denise in her zone of proximal development (Vygotsky, 1978). The novice writer is actively involved with an expert, who is guiding her to complete with assistance what she is not yet capable of on her own.

Independent Writing

The second major finding of the study is from independent writing instruction and the ways in which Carrie prompted, modeled or taught strategies and concepts to guide writers in their individual construction of text using an apprenticeship model. Independent writing looked different on any given day. The children would sometimes work on their own or sit in groups or pairs, but each child completed their own piece (see Figure 3).

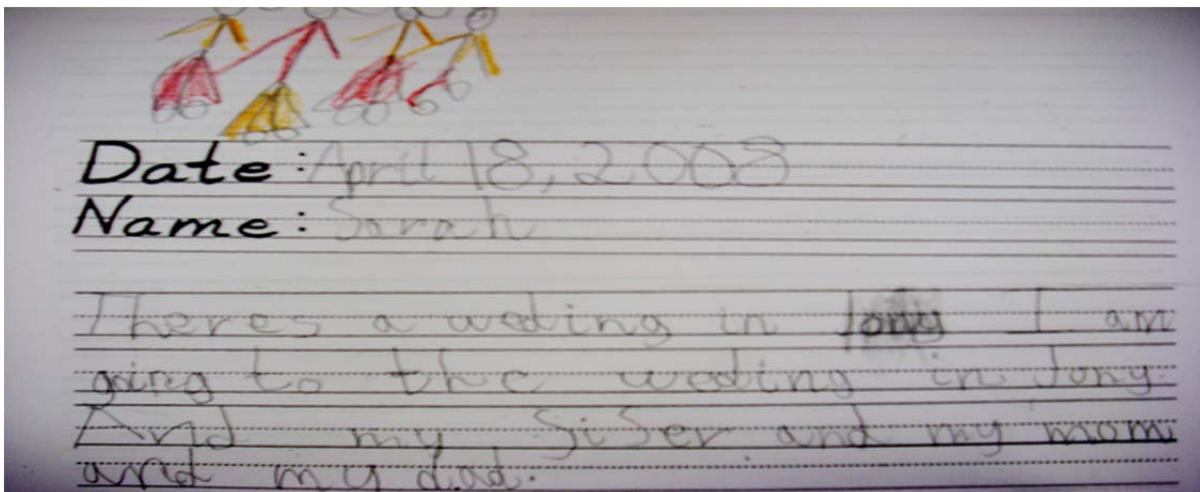


Figure 3. Example of student independent writing. “There’s a wedding in June. I am going to the wedding in June. And my sister and my mom. And my dad.”

Analysis of the conversations and interactions from independent writing time, which immediately followed interactive writing instruction, provide evidence that Carrie continued to guide her students using scaffolding and apprenticeship of strategies and tools they could use in their own writing. Carrie was available to her students during this time, seated among them or next to them on the floor. She used independent writing time as a way to prompt her students to remember strategies from the interactive writing lesson taught earlier that day, or another strategy that she had previously discussed with them. In that way connecting the “know to the new” (Rogoff, 1990, p. 65) became a primary focus of Carrie’s instruction during independent writing. In fact, each of the 9 concepts or strategies used in interactive writing is also documented in independent writing sessions.

Saying strategies, use what you know and use a resource. One example of how Carrie prompted the students to use strategies across writing contexts was from February 21. The students were sitting in various places around the room. Carrie took a seat to the side, and within a few minutes, students begin forming a line to share and discuss their writing with her.

Chris: How do you spell, *this*?

C: Think about it. Think of a word you know.

Chris: t-h.?

C: Say it slowly. Is there a word on the word wall that will help you?

Chris: /*th*/is/

C: Say it again.

Chris: /*th*/i/s/.

C: You said /*th*/. T-h. Now what letter makes the /i/ sound like igloo, ink, icky?

Chris: i?

C: Right. Now /s/ sound, like your last name.

Chris: s?

C: Now spell *this*.

Chris: t-h-i-s.

Carrie gives Chris a ‘high five’ and he goes back to his seat.

Carrie is prompting Chris to think of a word he knows (“Use what you know”) and to say the word slowly (“Saying Strategies”). She then offers the word wall as a tool that might help him with the spelling (“Use a Resource”) and continues prompting him to say it again (“Saying Strategies”). When Carrie hears him say t-h, she immediately prompts for the next sound and offers words with similar sounds (“Letter Sound Relationship”). Then, to finalize the spelling she prompts Chris to use his own name (“Use what you know”) for the final sound in the word. The tools Carrie is prompting Chris to use are strategies or physical tools in the classroom (e.g. word wall) that she has previously used in instruction. In this example, Chris is an active learner working with an expert to take more of a role in problem solving, thus an apprenticeship model continues during independent writing tasks (Rogoff, 1990). Carrie is prompting Chris to use the tools that he knows to help him with the spelling of a word that is challenging for him.

The careful structuring of statements and questions that Carrie uses allows Chris to take a more active and responsible role in his own work. Furthermore, the statements and questions she is using to guide Chris represent the idea of intersubjectivity (Rogoff, 1990), a shared understanding between members of a community. The language Carrie is using is practically identical to the language during interactive writing instruction. This bridges the use of tools and strategies from one activity and situation to another. Carrie’s continued scaffolding of students’ writing efforts solidifies for the students how one writer can put tools to use in another context.

Use a resource-interactive writing tablet. Carrie prompted the use of the interactive writing tablet as a tool (“Use a resource”) more than any other. The following example illustrates how Carrie prompts Denise to check her letter formation against the formation on the interactive writing tablet from the earlier lesson:

C: (to Denise as she looks at her writing) Say this word slowly. Look up there (pointing to the IW tablet from lesson). Do you remember what we said about the capital J? And, I have written down in my notes that we decided you have been putting a bunch of capital letters. Your goal was to watch for that. Remember?

C then points to examples in Denise's writing where she has correctly capitalized and not.

At numerous times throughout the study the use of the interactive writing page, itself, as a tool to mediate independent writing time manifested itself in important ways. Carrie prompted the use of the interactive writing tablet from interactive writing lessons as a tool for independent writing 12 times over the course of the 18 lessons. Carrie prompted reference to the interactive writing tablet more than any other tool. She would draw a student's attention to the interactive writing page and highlight or prompt a student to use strategies from the lesson that day, or from a previous lesson again making the connection between the known and the new explicit for the students. For instance, after one student read her writing to Carrie she prompted, "Remember when we wrote *going*? (points to IW chart) The word *singing* ends the same way." The student went to the interactive writing chart, looked at the word *going*, and then corrected the spelling of the end of the word *singing* in her journal.

In a study conducted by Bomer (2003), external devices or tools (e.g., text, pictures, procedures, and discourses) served as a way to move from one concept to another, forming a higher level of conceptual understanding. The meaning assigned to the tool enables the students to organize inner thoughts and allows for what Bomer (2003) refers to as "pivots" (p. 227) that move thinking from one context to another. These changes in thinking, which encompass a broader conceptual frame, offer evidence that students have internalized the concept and tool use beyond a single context. The interactive writing tablet, as illustrated in Figure 4, enabled the students to use writing/spelling strategies from a routine activity from one context to another. The students' writing was with other reading material, used to share with peers, and served as a reference for important ideas/words during literacy events.



Figure 4. Use of the interactive writing page during independent writing. The students used spellings from the interactive writing lesson, such as this, to spell words in their journals.

The interactive writing charts were an important tool for reading and writing in this classroom. In fact, the students would often revisit the interactive writing tablet for the spelling of words on

their own. There are 9 instances from the 18 lessons observed of the students going up to copy a word that they wanted to include in their own writing from that lesson, or flipping the chart paper back to find a word(s) from another day that they needed.

Jimmy approaches Carrie with question.

Jimmy: How do you spell *tomorrow*?

C: Where could you find it?

He goes up to the IW (interactive writing) paper, flips the paper back to the IW lesson and copies the word *tomorrow* from the page.

Susan comes up and flips the page back to the previous writing topics page. She copies the word *puppies* from the paper.

Carrie continues to circulate among the writers and talk to children about their writing goals.

Jimmy goes back up to the front chart, flips the page back to the IW sentence and copies *watch* into his journal. He copies it incorrectly (*wach*).

The continued use of the interactive writing chart during independent writing time may have been for two reasons. First, the interactive writing lesson that day may have sparked an idea that an individual child decided to include in his/her own writing. Thus, the reference back to specific words on the chart would be one easy way to fulfill that writing need. Secondly, the prompting by Carrie during independent writing, which included references back to the lesson, may have instigated a powerful view of the interactive writing chart as a tool to help them with spellings. Regardless, the students in this classroom added the writing from the interactive lessons to their bag of tools for their own work. They took responsibility for the use of this classroom tool within their own literacy practices. These data provide us with even more to consider about the power of the interactive text and the potential of tools and strategies to transcend boundaries and serve as a critical tool for student mediation.

Discussion

The previous findings illustrate how an apprenticeship model can be powerful in structuring literacy events that support young writers. The tools and strategies for writing and spelling that the teacher addressed during interactive writing instruction and independent writing are powerful. Additionally, the manner in which Carrie supported her students through apprenticeship gives us many things to consider about what students learn and how teachers adapt instructional practices to the developmental needs of their students.

Student Learning

What is most striking to me during the course of this study is how the apprenticeship model during writing supported students' growing understanding of what "writing" is, in this classroom. Carrie intentionally made these statements to her students, either during whole group instruction, or during individual conferences (Researcher's Note 2.19):

Writing is something we all do.

Writing is something we share with others.

Writing is something we talk about as we work through it; it is collaborative.

*Writing requires skills we know.
Writing problems can be solved through 'trying' it.*

Carrie facilitated student learning by reminding them of tools and strategies at their disposal. The encouragement she offered during independent writing through continued scaffolding seemed to foster a sense of 'capableness' with these young writers that channeled their participation in each student's zone of proximal development. The writers in this classroom talked with Carrie about their choices and mistakes and took ownership of the writing. Rogoff (1990) refers to this level of learning as the careful scaffolding of the activity into manageable goals that prepare learners to take more responsibility in increasingly complex activities. Students are able to 'try it' and construct new meaning from the experience that can later be generalized and internalized to new writing situations. McCarrier et al. (2000) refer to this as the "outer limits" where new learning is able to take place and student gradually participate at higher levels with a more experienced other.

Teaching Implications

Interactive writing is one way to promote literacy competencies in writing using explicit instructional techniques that offer students a variety of tools that they need in writing. Indeed, as it relates to my first research question, interactive writing *is* an effective way to teach, model, or prompt spelling and writing strategies that give early writers the tools they need to be successful. The findings of the study lead me to conclude that interactive writing is one form of early writing instruction that allowed Carrie to be explicit about the processes and strategies during writing that the students could use during independent writing. I recommend that early primary grade teachers use interactive writing as an approach to early writing instruction.

I also recommend that primary-grade teachers make themselves available to support students during their own writing in order to guide them to employ the tools and strategies from interactive writing in their own work. Instruction from interactive writing supported students' independent writings. The teacher's presence, prompting of tool and strategy use, and discourse supported the students in their work of written text. Carrie's writing instruction did not end with the interactive writing lesson. Her time spent among her students during their independent writing was also a strategic move on her part to scaffold her students, yet further, to use the strategies from the previous lesson. Perhaps, what this study contributes most to conversations surrounding writing instruction is that by making herself available, Carrie also became a resource for the students' independent writings. She continued her work with them in this way to guide individuals by prompting strategies, reminding them of techniques and providing questions to them that would encourage them with their written work.

The findings presented in this paper leave us with a great deal to consider about how we present tools within activities to help children organize their thinking and how we might organize our instructional time and availability in the most supportive way for young writers. Clearly, interactive writing is a strong approach for early writing. Interactive writing, using an apprenticeship model across contexts, draws our attention to the active role of children in their learning process. It also provides a structure that allows many opportunities for students to take

part in culturally valued literacy events by guiding them to levels of increased participation, responsibility and problem solving during a variety of writing activities.

Teacher Education

The literacy curriculum can expand or constrain a teacher's view of a child's learning. Crawford's (2004) work addressed such issues in her research that examined the 'deskilling' of teachers in the field. Essentially, when teachers are not afforded the freedom to practice developmentally responsive methods they can develop professional atrophy (p. 206). Teaching begins to be viewed as something to implement, rather than develop. Results from the Crawford study support the fact that a strictly mandated curriculum and textbook series can change a teacher's perceptions and values over time from a view of learning as a constructivist process to that of learning as a linear, systemized methodology. Additional findings from studies (i.e., Fang, Fu and Lamme, 2004; Neilson, Barry and Staab, 2008; Topping & Ferguson, 2005) have shown that professional development for literacy educators is valued and beneficial if it is embedded in the school and classroom context. In fact, these studies call for a change in instructional practices that is appropriate to the developmental needs of the students, not a prescribed curriculum. Such a professional development model for teachers would need to include elements that have been voiced as essential by teachers, (Neilson et. al., 2008 & Topping & Ferguson, 2005) such as a high level of interaction on the part of the teacher. This could be accomplished through the modeling, scaffolding and demonstrations of a mentor teacher or literacy educator skilled in writing instructional practices.

Offering pre-service teachers an instructional method of teaching early writing that is interpretive and theoretically grounded during literacy coursework is imperative if we are to begin to cast them into roles where students' needs requires them to be responsive, strategic and responsible decision makers. Interactive writing is just such an instructional approach to offer students tools that are developmentally appropriate. I am not offering interactive writing as the only model of how to best teach early writing. I am, however, arguing for such kinds of writing instruction that go beyond the basal, beyond the curriculum maps and reach into the reality of the students' seated before us. Educating teachers and pre-service teachers about such possibilities available to them is one purpose that I hope this work will serve.

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Appendix A

Initial Coding Tree for Strategies Taught

Print Concepts

- Concepts of space

 - Between words

 - Between letters

- Concept of a word

- Directionality

- Return Sweep

- Writing Conventions

 - Capitalization

 - Beginning of sentence

 - Name of a place, person, or group

 - Holidays

 - Punctuation

 - Period-End of sentence; abbreviations

 - Apostrophe- shows ownership; contraction

 - Comma- slow down

 - Exclamation Point- really excited

 - Question mark- asking something

- Text Features -Table of Contents, Index, Glossary

- List- Title

- Letter-Greeting, body and closing

Appendix B

Coding Tree For Interactive Writing

Print Concepts

- Concepts of space
 - Between words
 - Between letters
- Concept of a word
- Directionality
- Return Sweep
- Writing Conventions
 - Capitalization
 - Beginning of sentence
 - Name of a place, group, or person
 - Holidays
 - Punctuation
 - Period-End of sentence; abbreviations
 - Apostrophe- shows ownership; contraction
 - Comma- slow down
 - Exclamation Point- really excited
 - Question mark- asking something
- Non fiction Text -Table of Contents, Index, Glossary
- List- Title
- Letter-Greeting, body and closing

Orthography

- Orthographic pattern
 - Compound words
- Orthographic principle
 - Silent e (word ending)
 - Vowels in every syllable

Letter Sounds

/ə/ was; again; attack	/ou/ house	/n/ runner	/ou/ out
/p/ pet	/s/ dance	/ch/much	/er/winner
/sh/ shop	/ē/ Quincy	/or/born	
/ō/ shop	/ē/ competition	/fr/from	
/ck/ attack	/th/ Thursday	/ī/ igloo	
/ack/ chunk	/sk/ skating	/ē/ (y) middle of word	
/ī/ mice	/ā/skating	/st/ start	
/sp/ spending	/cl/club	/oo/ school	
/gr/ grandmother	/ū/club;much	/ gh/ laugh	

Appendix B Continued

Listening strategies

Listen for sounds

What do you hear?

What do you hear next?

What vowels do you hear?

Listen for parts

Listen to this word.

How many parts do you hear?

Listen to the first part

Listen for the first sound/beginning sound

Listen to the second part

What is the last sound you hear?

Saying strategies

Say it slowly

Sound it out slowly-Some words you can't sound out

Say the word

Syllable strategy

Re-reading strategies

Reread for fluency and comprehensions

Repeating strategies

Remember text

Visual strategies

Watch me say it

Check it to see if it looks right/Does it look right?

Pointer –tracking during reading aloud

Use what you know strategies

Think of another word you know

Use a word you know

Use part of a word you know- chunks

Name strategy (beginning, middle and ending sounds)

What is the first part? What is the second part?

Use a Resource

Look around the room

Calendar

Word Wall

Color Words

Name Chart

Word List (seasonal words)

Look on book

Trusty dusty tape

Alphabet chart

Letter sounds

Manuscript chart

Letter formation

Appendix B Continued

Writing Development

- Adding details- describing words
- Elaboration- idea development
- Forms/Function of Writing genres

Appendix C

Coding Tree For Independent Writing

Print Concepts

- Spacing between words
 - between letters
- Writing Conventions
 - Punctuation
 - Run on sentences
 - Question mark
 - Capitalization
 - Overuse
- Text Features
 - Look at the headings for clues

Orthography

- Orthographic principle- silent e

Letter sound

- /i/ igloo, icky /m/ grandma
- /gr/ grandma /u/ up

Listening Strategies

- Listen for sounds
- Just write the sounds you hear
- Listen for the last sound you hear
- Listen for 'blend friends' (sh/ch/st/ck)

Saying Strategies

- Say it slowly
 - Say it
- Go all the way through the word
- Rereading strategies
 - Rereading for fluency and comprehension

Visual Strategies

- Does it look right?

Use what you know Strategies

- Think of a word you know
- Take the word apart
- Name Strategy "s, like your last name"
- Word Within
- Chunks

Appendix C Continued

Use a resource

- Look around the room
- Word Wall
- Calendar
- Interactive Writing Tablet
- Dictionary

Writing Development

- What should come next? (Sequencing)
- “Writers read over their work before they read it to someone else.”
- What else could you say? (Idea Development/support)
- “Good writers tell their readers what to pay attention for.”