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Action Research Paper-Draft

Getting To Know You: Teacher Collaboration and Pedagogy

Standing in the main office of my school, I sorted through a thick stack of mail that had overflowed my box. As I shuffled through book catalogs and advertisements for programs that promised to boost students reading scores, I shook my head and laughed to myself. Having taught English Language Arts for five years to students who struggled with reading and writing, I knew that no brightly colored packaged product could provide a cure-all solution to their literacy problems.

It had been a week of long days--meeting with teachers, gathering resources, planning and teaching lessons – but even longer nights where I questioned my effectiveness as a literacy coach. I wondered if the work I was doing was helping teachers, and as a proxy, having an impact on our students' literacy. Just as I was about to flip my time card and leave for the day, Mr. Charles, a 7th grade English teacher who I'd been working with since the summer walked in the office beaming. He was happy and that was a great sign at 3:30 pm for a new teacher. "I got through two lessons today – a double period," he said smiling. A young, witty musician who recently moved from Rhode Island to become a teacher, Mr. Charles taught a seventh grade class which posed

instructional challenges that even veteran teachers might find daunting. Many of his students performed below standards on the New York State 6th grade English Language Arts exam, were failing major subject classes and frequently faced suspension due to behavior problems. Mr. Charles had many days of frustration, sadness and too many cigarettes because lessons didn't work out and students were just plain disrespectful. But when I saw Mr. Charles smiling, it was like that ray of light that shines at the end of the tunnel as you lean over the subway platform. With an air of confidence that I hadn't seen before, he explained that his students were listening and engaged in the lesson and they had completed their work. On that day in February, I realized that collaboration was making a difference for teachers and their students.

Research Question

How can collaboration between a literacy coach and a new teacher impact pedagogy? When veteran literacy teachers and new teachers work together to design, implement and assess a unit of study, how does this work influence their teaching?

Rationale

I am a literacy coach in a small secondary school in Williamsburg, Brooklyn of approximately 800 students. This New York neighborhood, bordering Bedford-Stuyvesant to the east and Greenpoint to the west, is home to Hasidic Jews, Dominican, Puerto Rican and African-American ethnic enclaves and the student body population reflects this diversity. A little more than 50% of the students are boys.

I began teaching seventh grade reading/writing workshop in our school three years ago and the following year, I taught eighth grade English Language Arts (ELA). Although I had several years of experience with balanced literacy and the workshop

model, the school had only begun teaching this curriculum in 2003. At present, the balanced literacy curriculum has only taken hold in a few classrooms.

The Balanced Literacy approach emphasizes developing the reading and writing abilities of elementary and secondary students. The components of this instructional model include:

- explicit teaching of strategies and habits of strong readers and writers
- conferences with the teacher to support the application of these strategies and assessment of progress
- time each period for independent reading of books that students choose from extensive classroom libraries
- time each period for independent writing using the writing process
- activities like book clubs, genre studies and writing celebrations

There are ten ELA positions within my school and, at the onset of the school year, four new ELA teachers were hired. None had more than three months teaching experience and no experience with the balanced literacy model. Two of those teachers attended a regionally sponsored week-long workshop on balanced literacy and teaching reading/writing that I facilitated. The remaining teachers included 4 veteran teachers and two teaching fellows. One veteran teacher's experience with balanced literacy remains unclear; three implemented reading/writing workshop in their classrooms. The two teaching fellows had experience with and the balanced literacy curriculum and supported it in their classrooms.

My role as the literacy coach in this school is to develop and support the effective practice of balanced literacy with these ten ELA teachers. My duties include modeling

lessons, providing feedback, conducting planning and assessment meetings and assisting teachers in daily instructional activities. Given the range of experience and core knowledge about balanced literacy among the group of teachers, differentiating support for them during meetings and conferences is essential to meeting their individual needs.

Balance literacy constitutes the core instructional model in the school and is consistent with requirements that the New York City Department of Education (NYCDOE) has set to address student achievement on the New York State English Language Arts. The department's website states, "Through its comprehensive reform program, Children First, NYCDOE is pursuing the spirit, as well as the letter, of No Child Left Behind. The reforms are reaching into all aspects of our school system to improve the quality of education at every one of the City's more than 1300 schools. Through changes in school curriculum ... the NYCDOE is working to raise the achievement of all students." In 2005, approximately 69% of the students our school scored below the standard on the ELA state exam. By supporting the teachers to implement this core program in literacy, achievement should begin to improve as students engage in reading/writing workshop and become stronger readers and writers.

Around November this year, I realized that my struggle was communicating the value of this literacy curriculum to the teachers. I began to notice that just explaining a lesson didn't guarantee that it was taught by the teacher in a classroom. I recognized that the curricular calendar - the document which provides a monthly outline of lessons, activities and projects - sat unused in cabinets. I found that students were not progressing through the writing cycle and publishing each month.

What, I wondered, was I doing wrong? Am I talking *at* the teachers instead of working *with* teachers? With this question in mind, I chose to focus as a case study on the work that Mr. Charles and I did in planning, teaching and assessing a realistic fiction unit.

Literature Review

In considering the aforementioned reflection, I realized that my wonderings about my work as literacy coach could be informed by a review of related literature. In her book, *States and Districts Send Literacy Coaches to the Rescue*, Kathleen Manzo (2005) discusses the recent practice of helping teachers apply the research on literacy in their classrooms with guidance and support from on-site staff developers. By helping new and veteran teachers craft lessons, develop strategies, choose material and look at student work, Manzo reports that literacy coaches are “working with adults to support growth, develop trust and provide a context in which job-embedded professional development can take place”(p. 1).

Manzo describes how different models of professional development with coaches are leading to the design of professional standards by the International Reading Association. For example, some coaches work on following a closely structured curriculum in schools with teachers with limited experience in teaching reading. In this pilot program in a Boston district, coaches work with a school-based study team during an eight-week cycle during which “The teams read professional articles on the topic, discuss their findings, prepare lessons for the coach to demonstrate, discuss and tweak the lesson, and then try it out themselves”(p. 3).

Taken as a whole, these models of collaboration were employed to meet the professional needs of the teachers within their respective districts. This concept of

assessing an individual's needs and providing the necessary support to enable that person to perform a new task reflects a Vygotskian approach to learning. Vygotsky's (1978) theory of development maintains that learning originates in the social relationship between people. His research led him to conclude that, "All the higher functions originate as actual relationships between individuals" (p. 57). For example, Vygotsky contends that children arrive to the point where they can work independently because, at some time, they received help from another person. McNamee (1979) describes this as a transition to independent functioning and describes the process as follows: "In order for there to be a transition from being guided by another to being guided by one's own means, the one doing the guiding must allow the child to take over responsibility in carrying out the task when he/she is ready to do so," (p. 65). Questioning and encouragement by the teacher coupled with reflection and struggle on the child's part gradually lead to independent functioning over time. By working with learners at that point where they can benefit from support – what Vygotsky called the zone of proximal development -- development can actually be affected.

In what ways might this study on child development connect to adult learning and more specifically – teacher learning? The 2004 report to Governor Mike Easley on the North Carolina Teacher Working Conditions Survey suggests that Vygotskyian theories applied in literacy coaching correlate with significant learning gains among in-service teachers when they have time for collaboration around instruction. Those educators who reported having sufficient time within the school day to engage in learning also gave professional development a higher rating and had a more favorable view of working conditions as a whole. The data also revealed that teachers' perceptions of the value of

professional development and the conditions of its implementation were excellent predictors of student achievement: “Survey results for professional development were a significant predictor of Annual Yearly Progress status for North Carolina schools. For every one point increase on the survey, schools are four times more likely to achieve AYP.” Based on this report, one can conclude that professional development of teachers is an important factor in their students’ academic success.

The relationship between teacher effectiveness and student achievement is also the focus of Kane and Rockoff’s (2006) study, *What Does Certification Tell Us About Teacher Effectiveness: Evidence from New York City*. Using the racial/ethnic background, education and placement information of certified teachers and alternatively certified teachers in New York City, Kane and Rockoff compare teacher effectiveness as determined by students’ scores on the City’s standardized Math and English Language Arts tests. Because the control group of students assigned to alternatively certified teachers underperformed certified teachers’ students by only .01 standard deviations during that school year, Kane and Rockoff concluded that, “neither certification status nor easily observable academic traits ... seem to be associated with teacher effectiveness,” (p. 43). Kane and Rockoff’s definition of effectiveness carries implications for the teaching of literacy in New York City. When effective teaching is defined by the standardized test scores earned by a given teacher’s students, other aspects of pedagogy are marginalized.

Wray and Medwell (2001) offer other criteria for measuring effective teaching. They focused on effective teachers who were identified through recommendations from an advisory staff, the results from a survey on literacy knowledge, teaching strategies,

and reading test results. They found similar practices and classroom characteristics among teachers who were identified as effective. Specifically, these teachers:

- have knowledge of curriculum requirements
- connect beliefs about reading and writing to teaching
- synthesize small skills within the larger context of reading and writing
- have the ability to evaluate and diagnose children's reading and writing
- pace lessons briskly and continuously refocus students on the task
- conclude lessons by reviewing
- teach whole lessons, guided lessons and conduct one-on-one conferences

Furthermore their classrooms:

- emphasize childrens' knowledge of reading and writing
- present meaning of reading and writing
- value talk

Based on these findings, Wray and Medwell make several recommendations regarding professional development in literacy. They suggest that effective literacy teachers collaborate with other teachers on long-term projects and engage in long term professional development that focuses on literacy. Wray and Medwell conclude that, "the experience of being an English coordinator makes a significant contribution to teachers' development as literacy teachers" (p. 10). In other words, the role of a literacy coach has a positive impact on both the teacher leader and his/her colleagues and on student achievement.

The Study

This case study on teacher collaboration its relationship to student achievement focused on my work as a literacy coach with Mr. Charles - a first year, seventh grade teacher. It was conducted over the five weeks of a realistic fiction writing unit. In conducting this study, I used the following four sources of information: teacher interviews, planning notes, classroom observations, student work.

Teacher Interview

I conducted 2 informal interviews with Mr. Charles about his teaching so that I could get a sense of what motivated Mr. Charles to become an English teacher. By sharing our personal stories of teaching with one another, I sought to build a collegial relationship with Mr. Charles as a foundation for our working together. During the first interview, we discussed his background, education and experience. My questions included:

- Where are you from?
- Where did you go to school?
- Why did you start teaching?
- How did you start working at this school?

Mr. Cohen explained that he was from Rhode Island and I shared that was born and raised in California. He started teaching after a short career in the corporate sector and, like me, didn't have a background in education.

A month later, Mr. Charles reminded me of a conversation we had when he visited my classroom during his interview in the year prior. He said, "I came to your room and your students were hanging out... Not hanging out, but they were working. A few of them were laying on your couch reading and some others were working on a

project. You said to me, ‘It’s not normally like this. They’re usually by the book – but it’s almost graduation. They’re a little excited.’” This statement is just one of several comments that sparked an impromptu conversation about pedagogy, literacy, classroom management and collaboration between Mr. Charles and me. I’d completely forgotten about his visit to my classroom and I thought to myself, “It’s almost the end of the year – a tough year. And he’s reflecting on an experience at this school before he was even hired.” I was surprised that he recalled that day, and his comment reminded me of the influence that one small conversation can yield.

The second interview occurred after Mr. Charles and I created a plan to re-establish reading and writing workshop in his classroom. Because the teaching was continuously interrupted by several off-task students, Mr. Charles taught a series of lessons (discussed in the next session) that reminded students of their roles and his expectations during writing workshop. During the interview, I asked him to reflect on how things were going now that he re-launched workshop. He stated: “It’s so much better ...knowing and understanding how I want to be. I didn’t know how I wanted to be. I thought I could have a joking relationship. But then I realized that’s utter insanity.”

Planning Notes

Prior to beginning the realistic fiction story unit, Mr. Charles and I met to plan the unit. During the first meeting, we decided the goals of the unit of study:

- a) to establish the routines of writing workshop including:
 - i. coming to the meeting place for the mini-lesson
 - ii. listening during the demonstration/modeling of writing

- iii. turning & talking when prompted
 - iv. taking notes & asking questions
 - v. completing the day's task independently
 - vi. discussing your writing with Mr. Charles & sharing with other students
- b) for students to write a short story that reflected the main character's growth over time

At our planning meetings, we talked about the students' behavior and examined their writers' notebooks to assess their writing skills. In looking at their notebooks, we noticed that many students were not using the lessons to improve their drafts. Therefore, we planned a unit that would provide them with opportunities to do writing in class everyday and we would hold them accountable for their notebooks. I discussed scaffolding the writing with Mr. Charles and using his own story to demonstrate for students how a writer moves step-by-step through the writing process. Mr. Charles then wrote a humorous piece of short fiction about a kid who "borrows" his neighbor's for a joyride (see Appendix A). This provided a first-hand experience with writing a story that better prepared Mr. Charles to teach this genre.

Using knowledge about scaffolding writing, Davis and Hill's (2003) The No-Nonsense Guide to Teaching Writing, Mr. Charles' mentor draft, and his knowledge of his students' writing abilities, we collaborated to plan the unit (see Appendix B). We talked about how to demonstrate the writing process in small steps and, using the beginning, middle and end of his own story, to show the students how to write each of their own scenes.

During the unit, we met to discuss the lessons and looked at the students' progress in writing their short stories. Although we had created an overview of the unit, we made adjustments to specific lessons and designed new lessons to address the needs of the students based on what we saw in their writing. For example, when we noticed that students did not really understand how to move from looking at a collection of their ideas to writing a first draft, we consulted my professional library for instructional books that address this problem. Using Ralph Fletcher's, Craft Lessons, we designed a lesson that specifically demonstrated how a free-write becomes a first draft. (see Appendix B)

Observation Notes

During 4 separate periods throughout the unit, I visited Mr. Charles' classroom to watch lessons on each stage of the writing process. I observed lessons on pre-writing, drafting, revising and editing. I also helped out by passing out notebooks, sharpening pencils, retrieving books from the bookroom and conferencing with students about their writing (see Appendix C). I took notes about the parts of his lesson that corresponded with the teacher's role in writer's workshop (see Figure 1). Thus, the components that I observed and noted during my visits were consistent with the sub-categories listed in the "routines for writing workshop" section.

Figure 1: Notes on Introductory Realistic Fiction lesson

Date	Lesson Plan	Demonstration	Guided Practice	Task	Conference
4/7/07	<p>The long-term goal of this lesson was to re-establish workshop routines. Mr. Charles expected that the students listen (and not talk) during explicit teaching, sharing with each other during guided practice and get on task during independent work. The teaching point was “Readers listen to be able to retell a fiction story.”</p>	<p>Mr. Charles read aloud Eve Bunting’s, “A Day’s Work” as an example of realistic fiction story to get students ready to write their own stories. It was about a boy and his grandfather who work as day laborers. He sat in front of the classroom where students were gathered in the meeting place. As he read, I reminded students who were began to talk or doodle to listen and pay attention. Mr. Charles made light of misbehavior & encouraged students who were following directions.</p>	<p>The students turned to each other and talked about how the story was realistic. I heard comments like: “The little boy had to work too.” “They were poor.” “They made a mistake and their boss got angry.” Mr. Charles listened in also and had a prepared list on chart paper of the ways this story was realistic.</p>	<p>Mr. Charles verbally directed the students to “read their books and take notes on how it’s realistic.” The students returned to their desk and several of them took out their books and started reading. Others started talking.</p>	<p>Mr. Charles went to each table of students and encouraged them to stay on task and re-explained the assignment. He also provided prompts and made sure students had a book to read. The students were taking notes on their books for the most part, but they did not necessarily write about the realism of their novels. Some students were also reading non-fiction.</p>

Student Work

At the end of the writing unit, I collected samples of student work. Based on Mr. Charles’ recommendation, I chose 3 students who represented three academic levels: below standard, standard setting and above standard. He identified Student A as below standard, Student B as standard setting and Student C as above standard. With 1 sample of work from each, I examined (see Figure 2) the following criteria:

- how the writing reflects the teaching points taught during in the unit
- how the writing shows an understanding of the genre

- how the writing demonstrates control of writing conventions

I measured each criterion of the realistic fiction stories on a scale of 1-4: 1-below standard, 2-approaching the standard, 3-standard setting and 4-above standard (see Figure 2). I then calculated an average score for each student.

Figure 2: Rubric & Scores for Realistic Fiction Short Stories

Criteria	Student A “Alston Powers”	Student B “Think Before your Respond”	Student C “Terrorist Attack”
Reflects teaching points	2	3	3
Shows understanding of genre	1	3	2
Demonstrates control of conventions	2	3	3
Total	1.67	3	2.66

Student A’s story, “Alston Powers” did not meet the criteria for standard setting work because the writing did not reflect an understanding of the genre. Student B’s, “Terrorist Attack” could be categorized as approaching the standards although her story showed an emerging perception of realistic fiction. Because Student C’s story “Think Before You Respond” exemplified the standard in all three sections, the writing was described as equivalent to Level 3 work (see Appendix D).

Analysis

Collaboration

My data suggests that collaborating works when teachers take the time to get to know each other as people. Beyond the initial interview, our meetings began with small talk about the weekend, our hobbies and our lives. Getting to know that Mr. Charles liked to play the guitar and that he had a knack for telling a good joke, enabled my colleague and I to interact socially while we worked on essential issues like teaching strategies and student assessment. This foundation also made it possible to be a critical friend to Mr. Charles – I could provide honest feedback about a lesson and offer some suggestions on improvement without being perceived as the resident “literacy expert.”

I also learned that collaboration involved valuing each person’s experience and individuality. Working with Mr. Charles helped me recognize that teachers need time and space to manage their classroom environment and keep up with paperwork. Even though we may have needed to talk curricula during our meetings, some days it was more helpful for me to sweep the floor, straighten up the library or file papers. I realized that I couldn’t always be focused on content or strategies and as a coach, I had to help my teachers where they needed me.

Our collaboration also stimulated reflection about teaching and coaching. Many times, Mr. Charles would make these insightful comments about a lesson or a strategy that demonstrated he’d been contemplating his craft and considering his professional growth throughout the year. Insightfully, he commented, “Better planning is gonna yield better teaching.” At the same time, in working together, I learned to frame my feedback

in ways that were tactful and optimistic. This made for a positive relationship that was characterized by open conversation about pedagogy, curriculum and student work.

On student work

The data also suggested that clear and concise teaching led to better student writing. Looking closely at each component of a lesson and assessing the students' writing in their notebooks on that day supported planning meetings that focused on refining the following lessons. Thus, the discussions were centered on finding writing strategies, drafting mentor texts, creating teaching points and designing lesson plans that sought to improve the quality of the students' writing as they moved through the process.

One obstacle to looking at student achievement was not having a basis for comparison to measure the students' progress across writing units in relation to collaborative planning. For example, it would have been beneficial to compare the teaching and learning during students' personal narratives in September to the short stories unit.

Nonetheless, one major finding was revealed when I juxtaposed our post-lesson planning meetings notes with the students' writing: when we met to talk and plan right after a lesson, the subsequent lesson better addressed the students' needs and they got more writing done. For example, after the introductory lesson of the realistic fiction unit, we discussed the fact that the students weren't clear as to what they were expected to do. Many of them were talking instead of working while others asked a lot of questions about the assignment. Therefore, I encouraged Mr. Charles to write out the tasks on chart paper as well as verbally explain the assignments before the students began independent work. As a result, during the following lessons in which the students had to write their first

drafts, revise and edit their stories, the students had more volume of writing because they spent more time actually putting pen to paper.

Policy Implications

My study suggests that collaboration between a literacy coach and a new teacher has more impact on pedagogy when the partners build a collegial relationship while focusing on improving pedagogy. The partnership can be a nexus for sharing about lesson planning, instructional strategies and assessment that leads to better confidence, organization and teaching. This study calls for the following policy changes:

- In the classroom, coaches should provide basic, hands-on support with organizing materials, management, displaying student work and improving the environment.
- At the school level, literacy coaches and teachers should have increased time for collaboration during the school day. Often, just as hearty discussions, reviews of professional resources and complex plans were underway, the bell rings and meetings are abruptly closed. Scheduling preparatory periods before lunch periods can provide a buffer for teachers interested in meeting beyond the period or engaging in a working lunch. In addition, emergency coverages and student disciplinary meetings interfere with regularly scheduled planning sessions. Because consistency is integral to creating an effective cycle of modeling, planning, observation, feedback and assessment of student work, this time should be frequent and predictable.
- Regional pre-service workshops on reading and writing instruction should be offered to new English Language Arts teachers prior to the start of the school year.

Weekend, winter and summer institutes should be provided for on-going professional development in literacy instruction.

- Regional professional development for literacy coaches should include a focus on how to build relationships, team teaching, collaborative planning and constructive feedback.

Appendix A

Mr. Charles' short story

The bell on the old clock rang eight times. Ricky turned off the start of the start of "The Cosby Show" and looked at Vincent.

"Are we going to that party or what?" he said.

"That party is all the way across town, and it's icy and twenty degrees outside," Vincent replied.

"We could take my dad's Pinto," smiled Ricky.

Vincent thought about his best friend's suggestion. As fun as it sounded, he knew it was probably a bad idea. After all, they were only 14.

Even though Vincent knew this was a bad idea, he was with Ricky, in the old pinto. As they turned onto Overbrook avenue, Vincent felt like he was losing control of the car.

"Vincent, be careful," said Ricky. Suddenly, the Pinto took a sharp turn and ended up on the Roberts' lawn, nearly touching the house. The smoking car was hissing like an angry snake. Ricky and Vincent were frozen with fear, until Vincent jumped out of the car and ran down the street. Once he was far enough away, he turned around to see Ricky moving the car, and Mr. Roberts on his front steps in his underwear yelling. Mr. Robert's bald head was bright red with anger, and his confused face looked twisted up in the moonlight.

"Ricky what are we going to tell dad?" screamed Vincent.

“Absolutely nothing, he will never know,” said Ricky.

The two boys went to bed that night, both a little nervous although neither one would have admitted to it. The next morning, Vincent was awoken by the smell of blueberry muffins coming from his friend’s kitchen. As Ricky and Vincent strolled into the kitchen, their thoughts went back to last night. Ricky’s dad was standing by the sink with his arms folded and his eyes squinted up.

“You guys really screwed up this time!” he yelled.

There was no use lying, they were busted. That morning the blueberry muffins were not as delicious as they usually were. Ricky and Vincent would have to work everyday that summer for Ricky’s dad to pay for the damages to the Pinto and the Roberts’ lawn. They ended up mowing lawns, painting sheds and trimmings hedges. They even cleaned the garage – twice! They had no money for their hard work, but they did learn a valuable lesson. They learned that people must take responsibility for their actions, and never drive a beat-up Pinto on an icy night. Especially when you don’t know how to drive.

Appendix B: Planning Notes

Teacher: Mr. _____
Unit: Realistic Fiction

Assignment: Short Story 2-3 pages
Focus: Character's growth over time
Text should have:

1. Conflicts/Situation
2. Setting – Scenes
3. Dialogue

Unit Plan

Week 1 (2-3 days)

Immersion in short stories

- reading aloud/discussing a few short stories to identify elements of fiction
- looking at how several authors use these elements to tell a story
 - a) plot
 - b) character
 - c) setting
 - d) conflicts

Writing journal entries (to support homework assignment)

1. What happened today: entries on the events of the day
2. Observing people: entries on people we see
3. Thinking about stories: entries on stories we wish would happen

Week 1-2 (3-4 days)

Pre-Writing

1. Looking back at journal entries for stories from our lives that we can fictionalize
 - Writing about fictionalized entries
 - a) thinking about what someone else might do
 - b) exaggerated truth
 - c) endings that are better than what really happened
 - writing imagined entries about people we see
 - writing entries about stories we wish existed (not always happily ever after)
2. Defining the genre of realistic fiction
 - see attached information

DRAFT AS OF 3/15/06

Notes from 4/5/06 Meeting
Teacher: Mr. _____
Unit: Realistic Fiction
Focus: Drafting & Revising

Short-term goal:

A) Students revise their stories for dialogue

Drafting

Day 1 – Writers put together a first draft

Task:

1. Find your plotline in your notebook
2. Re-read your first scene
3. Go to new page and indent
4. Write scene #1 as paragraph #1, scene #2 as paragraph #2 etc.

*Do not label paragraphs

*Skip lines to make revision easier

Revision

Day 2 – Writers add details to make their writing come alive

Possible details:

-Dialogue

-Weather

-Clothes on characters

-Sounds

Day 3 – Writers use dialogue to let characters speak to know each other

Day 4 – Writers use dialogue or internal thoughts to show what the character is thinking or feeling.

Notes from 4/11/06

Teacher: Mr. _____

Unit: Realistic Fiction

Focus: Revision

Teaching Point:

Writers add details to make their writing come alive

Connection

Details include info about:

- a) weather
- b) dialogue
- c) what people are wearing
- d) sounds

Demonstration:

- Sample of his revised story about two kids who “borrow” a parent’s car.
- Exemplified several places where adding detail made the story more compelling
- Specific places in the story with revision were marked with a number

Guided Practice:

- Mr. Cohen asked students to jot down what he did to revise the story in their notebooks as he read aloud the piece
- Mr. Cohen also had the students turn and share their list after he finished reading the piece. Therefore, students had the opportunity to add to their lists.

Connection:

- Mr. Cohen summarized the different ways that a writer can revise their stories and directed the students to verify their list.
- The students completed their notes, although many students had created their own lists during the demo and/or guided practice.

Independent Work:

1. Re-read first draft
2. Decide where to add details
3. Writing or if finished, read novel

- Mr. Cohen walked around the room, monitored students working, encouraged them to stay on task and answer questions.
- Most (19/23) of the students were on task and developing their stories. The four students who forgot to do their drafts were reading their novels.

Share

Students shared at different intervals during writing.

Intervisitation Notes

Date: 3/22/06

Visiting Teacher: Mr. _____

Host Teacher: Mr. _____

Class: ____ and inclusion class

Unit: Realistic Fiction

Teaching Point:

Writers recognize that stories have conflicts and resolutions.

Mentor text: A Day's Work by Eve Bunting

9:00 – 9:05

Beginning of period

-Students must be transitioned to a meeting place and settle down

9:05

-All students (except two) in the meeting place and silent

-Mr. _____ gave 1 minute for students to jot down teaching point

9:07

Connection:

-Mr. _____ prefaced the lesson with a connection about the work on realistic fiction that they've been doing

“We've been reading stories in order to get ready to write our own stories”

-Mr. _____ directed the students to listen for the conflict or problem in the story he was going to read aloud.

“Listen to notice the conflict or problem”

9:08

Demonstration:

-Mr. _____ started reading the story immediately after the connection.

-Despite interruptions, Mr. _____ diffused distracting students and kept distracting students on task reminding them of their responsibility to listen (see chart in class)

9:10

Active Engagement:

-Student stopped and talked about what they think so far

9:20

-Mr. _____ finished reading the story

9:20-9:24

-Students turned and talked about the conflict and how it was resolved

9:27

-Students copied down definition of conflict and resolution

9:28

-Mr. _____ gave the assignment:

Write at least 2 paragraphs about a conflict that you have had. What was the resolution?

Explain.

9:29-9:42

Independent Work

-All students (except one) were on task, in their seats and writing about conflicts/resolutions.

-Mr. _____ actively moved around the room, talked around with each table for about 2 minutes and kept the students on task.

-Many students were discussing their writing towards the end of this time.

9:42

Share

-One student read aloud their piece and several others volunteered to read next time.

Appendix C:
Conferring Notes

Writing Workshop Realistic Fiction

TEACHER-STUDENT CONFERENCE FORM

Student Name: ___Student A_____ Class _____

Date: 4/3/06

Conference/Compliment:

Student A confused about what to do next. Has beginning, middle, and end to story

Lesson/Strategy Taught:

-talked about what a scene has

-wrote sample of scene

-asked him what he saw in my scene a) surroundings b) what happened c) your thinking

Follow Up:

Date: 4/10/06

Conference/Compliment:

-did not have homework

-missing scenes

-reminded him of the conference we had about scenes

Lesson/Strategy Taught:

-finished scene #2

-writing scene #3

Follow Up:

Needs 4,5,6

Appendix D:
Student's Short Stories

Terrorist Attack

On the morning of September 11, 2001, it was sunny and beautiful outside. It was a morning that people thought would lead to a nice and peaceful day. Nobody knew what kind of surprises that day had for them...

Unique woke up and looked out the window. It was sunny, with no clouds in sight. She was very happy. Only three months for her birthday to come. She was going to turn eight. Unique quickly got dressed, put her long brown hair into a ponytail, and went to the kitchen. She got a bottle of water and her book-bag. She left for school at 7:40 am...

She got to her school in three minutes. "Unique!" her friends were calling her. They went inside the school and waited on the breakfast line. As soon as they finished, they hurried to class.

"Shut up ladies and gentlemen!" yelled out the teacher, Ms. Nehok. "You're having your first test today: said Ms. Nehok in a lower voice.

Unique felt a tap on her shoulder. "I lost the answers for the test," whispered her friend Jocylen. "I'll let you copy," whispered Unique. Unique felt sorry for Jocylen, because, she had written all of the answers for the test on a paper.

A few minutes later Unique was doing all she could not to laugh. Maricarmen, Jocylen's identical twin sister was making funny faces, making paper balls and passing around the news that there was going to be a paper ball fight. Next thing you know, the whole class is throwing balls, not paper balls, but hand balls.

"What is going on in here?!" Everybody got quiet when they heard that voice.

Apparently, Mr. Joe Adams, the security guard was called by Ms. Nehok. "I asked, what is going on in here?!" Nobody answered. They all knew not to mess with Joe Adams. The only person that can talk to him straight in the face was his granddaughter, who was sitting behind Unique.

About ten minutes later it was quiet and everybody was taking the test. The security guard had yelled at them and made them pick the mess up. Unique was on the last question which was easy but she didn't feel like answering it yet. She was thinking about what she wanted for her birthday.

Unique was about to stand up when a lady appeared at the door. "Unique Martinzen has to report to the main office with all of her belongings," she said in a boring voice. "It's Unique Martinez not Martizen." Said Unique. "Whatever, just come."

Unique and the lady walked down the stairs and through many different hallways. When they finally got to the main office, Unique saw her mother. Unique's mother signed a book and started walking out the door. Unique followed her.

Unique and her mother walked towards her sister's school. Her sister's name was Yesenia. When Unique saw Yesenia, she asked her if she knew what happened. "Of course I know!" said Yesenia. "What happened?!" said Unique

Yesenia stayed silent for a few minutes. "You know the twin towers?" she asked finally. "Of course I know them," answered Unique. "Well... two airplanes crashed into them." She said slowly. "What?!" yelled Unique. They both stood quiet. Unique just couldn't believe it.

The next day Eerised, one of Unique's other friends, asked her something that surprised her a lot. "Did you know that Luis's father died in the Twin Towers?" asked Eerised. "No, what was Luis's father doing there in the first place?" "He's a police officers! Well... he was," answered Eerised. Later on when Ms. Nehok had started the class, something good happened. Luis's father wasn't dead after all. Unique realized that although bad things happen in life, miracles can also happen...

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