



Developing Independent Learners

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Viewing
Guide

A Reading/Writing
Workshop Approach



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Apprenticeship in Literacy (Dorn, French, Jones 1998), *Organizing for Literacy* (Dorn 1999), *Results That Last* (Dorn and Soffos 2003), *Scaffolding Young Writers* (Dorn and Soffos 2001), and *Shaping Literate Minds* (Dorn and Soffos 2001) are available at www.stenhouse.com.

Using Videotapes in Workshop Settings

Using videotapes in workshop settings presents special challenges. Most of our viewing experience, such as watching television, is passive, and it can be difficult to get participants to be more active (and reactive!) as they view instructional videotapes. Facilitators can use a few simple strategies to prepare participants for a much more active role in looking at and discussing *Developing Independent Learners*:

1. *Check out equipment and sound in advance.* After you begin running any segment, walk to the back of the room and listen. The goal is to have the sound as low as possible, but still loud enough so that participants in the back can hear.
2. *Have participants keep notes as they view each segment.* Any note-taking format can be effective if you link the notes to specific goals you have for viewing the tapes.
3. *Ask questions before viewing to help participants focus on specific aspects of the classroom.* If you don't ask a focus question before viewing you're likely to get awkward silence when you try to begin discussion later. Consider writing a guiding question on a whiteboard or chart paper and posting it next to the video player so that participants are reminded of the guiding question throughout their viewing.

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About the Schools in This Video Series

The first school, Boone Park Elementary, is located in the North Little Rock School District in Arkansas. The school has a poverty rate of 97 percent based on free and reduced lunch. The school has been recognized for its improvements in student achievement. Boone Park Elementary is in its fourth year of implementing the Arkansas Comprehensive Literacy Model in kindergarten through fourth grade. The second school, Ida Burns Elementary, is located in the Conway School District in Arkansas. The school has high mobility and a poverty level of approximately 60 percent based on free and reduced lunch. The school has won state and national awards for its reading program, and it has been recognized for student achievement on state benchmark exams.

Introduction

When children read a lot, they become better readers. These experiences build a foundation for lifelong reading. In reading workshop classrooms children read for pleasure and book discussions become a natural part of their literate lives. As children become better readers, a similar improvement occurs in writing. In writing workshop classrooms, children learn to record ideas and write for a purpose. They understand the writing process, and they strive to find the right words to communicate the precise message. This two-part video series provides details for implementing a workshop approach in the elementary grades.

In Tape 1, *Exploring Literature in Third Grade*, Donnie Skinner and third-grade students demonstrate how literature is used to promote deeper comprehension during reading and writing events. The tape is divided into two segments that illustrate the relationship between the reading and writing processes. The first part of the tape demonstrates the components of writers' workshop, including a mini-lesson for crafting a good lead, independent practice, and writing conferences. The second part of the tape illustrates the components of reading workshop, including a mini-lesson for teaching a visualization strategy, independent practice, reading conferences, and a literature discussion group. In Tape 2, *Conducting Research in First Grade*, Vicki Altland and her first graders demonstrate how to carry out research projects during a content workshop.

Initial Viewing

We recommend several viewings of each tape, with each viewing leading to a deeper understanding of a workshop approach. The initial viewing will provide a holistic framework for in-depth discussion of the individual components. Viewers should focus on the main idea, represented in the following theory:

Reading and writing are reciprocal processes. A workshop approach emphasizes the overlapping and complimentary strategies of the reading and writing processes.

Under the main idea, we can observe how a successful workshop format is grounded in a language-based philosophy that includes four important principles for scaffolding students' learning. We encourage teachers to use these principles as a framework for observing and analyzing teaching and learning interactions. These four principles are:

- guided demonstrations and think-aloud;
- guided practice with teacher assistance;
- independent practice with teacher and peer conferences;
- language interactions that promote deeper comprehension.

These four principles are embedded within the organizational framework of a workshop approach, which includes:

- a mini-lesson;
- independent/group work with peer/teacher conferences;
- group sharing.

During reading workshop, students also participate in a literature discussion group.

Subsequent Viewings

These viewings should focus on analysis and reflection of individual segments. To guide the discussions, we have included prompts to focus attention on important interactions and specific activities to apply learning to the classroom. We recommend that teachers keep a reflection log for all video analysis. A journal or composition book works well for documenting observations. We have found the following format to be very helpful for promoting deeper analysis:

Example of a Reflection Log

Lesson Component: _____ Date of Analysis: _____
 Prompts That Guide Analysis: _____

Observations	Analysis

Subsequent viewings can include different prompts, for example, prompts that focus viewers' attention on the reading and writing environment.



Tape 1:

Exploring Literature in Third Grade

This tape is divided into two parts. In the first part, Donnie demonstrates how a writing workshop is implemented, including mini-lesson, independent practice, and peer and teacher conferences.

Part 1: Writing Workshop

Segment 1: Mini-Lesson

Materials Needed *Scaffolding Young Writers: A Writers' Workshop Approach* by Linda J. Dorn and Carla Soffos

Figure 1: Mini-Lesson Framework

Figure 2: Donnie's Writing Mini-Lesson

In Chapter 4 of *Scaffolding Young Writers*, we present a format for organizing and planning a writing mini-lesson. This reproducible form (Figure 1) can also be used during teacher study groups to guide observation and analysis of mini-lessons.

Observing and Reflecting What is the goal of the mini-lesson?
 What do students need to know to learn from the mini-lesson?
 How does Donnie use literature to teach the strategy?
 How does Donnie engage students in the learning process?
 Discuss how Donnie used the Mini-Lesson Framework for planning and assessing her own mini-lesson (Figure 2).

Activities for Further Discussion Collect literature books with a variety of leads.
 Use Figure 1, Mini-Lesson Framework, for planning additional mini-lessons on good leads.

Segment 2: Writing Conferences

Materials Needed *Scaffolding Young Writers: A Writers' Workshop Approach* by Linda J. Dorn and Carla Soffos

Observing and Reflecting What does the student understand about the writing process?
 Why does the teacher choose this particular teaching point? Could the teacher have selected another focus for the conference?

Activities for Further Discussion Collect some writing samples and discuss how you can use the prompts from *Scaffolding Young Writers*, page 62. Here are a few to get you started:

- Show me where you are in your writing.
- What can I do to help you?
- Where are you having difficulty?
- What can you do to help yourself?
- I don't understand this part. Can you explain it to me?
- Can you think of another way to say this?
- I really like this part. Tell me more about it.

Part 2: Reading Workshop

Segment 3: Mini-Lesson

Materials Needed Figure 1: Mini-Lesson Framework
 Figure 3: Donnie's Reading Mini-lesson

Mini-lessons are clear and explicit demonstrations that focus on particular comprehension strategies. We have included a blank Mini-Lesson Framework (Figure 1) for participants to use as they observe and analyze the mini-lesson on the visualization strategy.

Observing and Reflecting What is the goal of the mini-lesson?
 What do students need to know to learn from the mini-lesson?
 How does Donnie use literature to teach the strategy?
 How does Donnie engage students in the learning process?
 Discuss how Donnie used the Mini-Lesson Framework for planning and assessing her reading mini-lesson (Figure 3).

- Activities for Further Discussion** Discuss how reading and writing mini-lessons share reciprocal goals. Collect literature books that could be used to model a particular comprehension strategy. Use Figure 1, Mini-Lesson Framework, for planning strategy-based mini-lessons.

Segment 4: Reading Conferences

During peer conferences, students discuss the text with each other. As students read independently, the teacher conducts conferences to clarify and extend their understanding. During the writing conference, the teacher provides tailored support based on the needs of the student.

- Observing and Reflecting** What does the student understand about the writing process? Why does the teacher choose this particular teaching point? Could the teacher have selected another focus for the conference?

- Activities for Further Discussion** Examine reading records for evidence of students' strengths and needs. Consider some of the prompts from the following categories that might be used to promote deeper understanding: responding to the story, comprehending the story, word-solving strategies, and maintaining reading fluency.

Segment 5: Literature Discussion Group

- Materials Needed** Figure 4: Analysis and Observation Guide
Figure 5: Literature Discussion Group Checklist

During literature discussion groups, the students apply a flexible range of comprehension strategies that are guided by their desire to deepen their understanding of the author's message.

- Observing and Reflecting** Use Figure 4, Analysis and Observation Guide, to analyze the literature discussion group. How do students prepare for the literature discussion group? How do students engage in the literature discussion group?

- Activities for Further Discussion** Make a transparency of the Literature Discussion Group Checklist (Figure 5) and share this with your students. Explain that they will observe a video of a literature discussion group. Show the videotape of Donnie and her third graders. After the lesson, place the transparency of the Literature Discussion Group Checklist on an overhead projector and guide your students in a self-reflective analysis of the group.



Tape 2:

Conducting Research in First Grade

In this tape, we'll show you how a content workshop is used to support first graders in conducting research. The content workshop includes the three components of a workshop approach: mini-lesson, independent/ group work with

peer/teacher conferences, and group sharing. This video is divided into four phases that are adjusted according to the teacher's observation of student needs. Each phase can last from a few days to a week or longer. The phases are:

Phase 1: Preparing for Research Project. Building background knowledge and assigning research teams.

Phase 2: Conducting the Research. Conducting research projects and recording information on a research web.

Phase 3: Organizing the Information. Organizing findings and filling in missing information.

Phase 4: Writing Process. Using the writing process to prepare a report for publication.

Within these phases, the teacher provides a predictable structure to make this complex learning more manageable for students. The teacher uses a ten-step process for conducting research:

1. Choose research topic.
2. Gather resources.
3. Record information on research webs.
4. Transfer findings from the web onto cards.
5. File information in research categories.
6. Check categories for missed information and search for additional facts.
7. Number cards within categories for organizing written report.
8. Write first draft.
9. Revise and edit report.
10. Publish and share results.

Phase 1: Preparing for Research Project

Segment 1: Mini-Lesson

Observing and Reflecting How does Vicki create opportunities for building the students' background knowledge?

Discuss why Vicki placed the students in tentative research teams. How might you initially group your students when starting a research project?

Activities for Further Discussion Create a list of important content that you must include in your grade-level curriculum.

Discuss how a content workshop can be implemented in your classroom.

How can you design mini-lessons that emphasize strategies for problem solving in content areas? Discuss the importance of inquiry-based learning for building and extending content knowledge.

Segment 2: Research Teams/Teacher Conferences

Materials Needed Figure 6: Conducting Research on Space Book List

Observing and Reflecting Look around Vicki's room and record evidence of student learning. Describe the collaborative atmosphere of the classroom. How does Vicki use a group conference to support her students?

Activities for Further Discussion Determine the materials you will need to begin a research study in your own classroom. Make a list of the materials you already have. How will you locate additional materials? Use Vicki's book list as a resource (Figure 6). Discuss how you will support children with learning disabilities or reading difficulties.

Segment 3: Share Time

Observing and Reflecting Discuss how Share Time provides a dual purpose: 1) promoting a collaborative environment, and 2) assessing children's progress. Vicki informs the students that they might have new research partners tomorrow. What will determine this regrouping process? What will she do about students who have selected a topic, but do not have adequate resources to conduct the research?

Activities for Further Discussion How can you document students' learning in the content areas? Begin an assessment log that will allow you to capture evidence of students' learning. Work with colleagues to create a curriculum grid and rubric to support learning competencies in the content areas.

Phase 2: Conducting the Research

Segment 1: Mini-Lesson

Materials Needed Figure 1: Mini-Lesson Framework

Observing and Reflecting Discuss the explicit nature of Vicki's mini-lesson on a table of contents and index. How does Vicki guide her students to use a research web for conducting their own research?

Activities for Further Discussion Use Figure 1, Mini-Lesson Framework, to design other mini-lessons demonstrating how to conduct research.

Segment 2: Research Teams/Teacher Conferences

Observing and Reflecting Observe the two girls working together on *Stars*. How do they support each other in reading the book? Observe the group of girls using Big Books to research their topics. How does Vicki promote collaboration and teamwork? Record specific examples.

Activities for Further Discussion Notice that the girls on the floor have changed their original topic from gravity to an investigation of the planets. Why do you think this might have

happened? How can the teacher support students in selecting appropriate topics with adequate research material?

Segment 3: Share Time

- Observing and Reflecting** What are some common characteristics of Share Time? What is the teacher's role? What is the student's role?
What have the students learned in this particular example?

Phase 3: Organizing the Information

Segment 1: Mini-Lesson

- Observing and Reflecting** What is the purpose of this mini-lesson?
What do the students need to know in order to learn from this lesson?
How does Vicki scaffold the students to learn this process?
- Activities for Further Discussion** Identify common categories for a content investigation. For example, what are common categories for an animal unit?
Go back to the earlier example of the gravity team. Would this topic fit into the preestablished categories for space? How do you determine specific categories? What if a topic of investigation does not fit into the specific categories?

Segment 2: Research Teams/Teacher Conferences

- Observing and Reflecting** Notice that Morgan has used an Internet article to help with her research on Uranus. She has highlighted specific information and recorded these facts on her research cards. Observe how Vicki prompts Morgan to think about writing her report based on her knowledge of Uranus, rather than copying the facts from the research card. Discuss this interaction between the teacher and student.
- Activities for Further Discussion** Design a mini-lesson that illustrates how to summarize factual information. Demonstrate how to record key words that capture a concept using the writer's own words to express the message.

Segment 3: Share Time

- Observing and Reflecting** Observe how Vicki uses Share Time to assess where the students are in their research report. How does she use this group time to help Simone with her research topic? How does Vicki react to Chandler's inaccurate comment about the size of the earth? Discuss the group dynamics of Share Time, including specific examples of how language is used to support and extend student learning.

Phase 4: Writing Process

In a content workshop, the writing process is used to help students prepare their reports for publication. During writing workshop, the teacher provides explicit mini-lessons on how to revise and edit writing.

Observing and Reflecting Observe how the students celebrate their research projects through group sharing. How does this experience promote inquiry-based learning?

Activities for Further Discussion Discuss how you can incorporate the writing process into your content workshop.

Segment Titles and Cueing Information

Tape 1: Exploring Literature in Third Grade (27:36)

00:00–01:53 Introduction (01:53)

Part 1: 01:54–11:50 Writing Workshop (09:56)

01:54–07:05 Mini-Lesson (05:11)

07:06–08:20 Peer Conference/Independent Writing (01:14)

08:21–11:50 Teacher Conference (03:29)

Part 2: 11:51–27:36 Reading Workshop (15:45)

11:51–18:30 Mini-Lesson (06:39)

18:31–19:12 Peer Conference/Independent Reading (00:41)

19:13–21:45 Teacher Conference (02:32)

21:46–27:36 Literature Discussion Group (05:50)

Tape 2: Conducting Research in First Grade (32:16)

00:00–03:55 Introduction (03:55)

03:56–11:00 *Phase 1:* Preparing for Research Project (07:04)

03:56–06:34 Mini-Lesson (02:38)

06:35–09:20 Research Teams/Teacher Conferences (02:45)

09:21–11:00 Share Time (01:39)

11:01–20:48 *Phase 2:* Conducting the Research (09:47)

11:01–18:00 Mini-Lesson (06:59)

18:01–19:53 Research Teams/Teacher Conferences (01:52)

19:54–20:48 Share Time (00:54)

20:49–29:53 *Phase 3:* Organizing the Information (09:04)

20:49–24:01 Mini-Lesson (03:12)

24:02–28:22 Research Teams/Teacher Conferences (04:20)

28:23–29:53 Share Time (01:30)

29:54–32:16 *Phase 4:* Writing Process (02:22)

29:54–32:16 Sharing Published Work (02:22)

Figure 1: Mini-Lesson Framework

<p>Type of Mini-Lesson: _____ Date: _____</p> <p>Goal of Mini-Lesson:</p> <p>Materials Needed:</p> <p>Introduce the Lesson:</p> <p>Guide and Apply the Process:</p> <p>Assess the Lesson:</p>
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Figure 2: Donnie's Writing Mini-Lesson

Mini-Lesson Framework Donnie

Type of Mini-Lesson: Writing - Good Leads Date: 5-2-03

Goal of Mini-Lesson:
- Develop a better understanding of how authors create good leads

Materials Needed:
- "Good Leads Chart"
- Thundercake by: Patricia Polacco

Introduce the Lesson:
- Review "Good Leads Chart" (Activate background knowledge)
- Read the lead from Thundercake

Guide and Apply the Process:
- Guide the children in the process of identifying and analyzing the kind of lead Polacco uses in this text.
- Guide and lead the children in the process of how Polacco uses "precise" vocabulary to create the lead and how a lead pulls the reader into the text.

Assess the Lesson:
- Interactions during the lesson
- Teacher/Student conferences
- Share Time

Figure 3: Donnie's Reading Mini-Lesson

Mini-Lesson Framework *Donnie*

Type of Mini-Lesson: Reading Date: 5-14-03

Goal of Mini-Lesson: - Develop an understanding and importance of using the "visualization" strategy when reading

Materials Needed:

- Comprehension Strategies Chart.
- New Moon by: Patricia Polacco

Introduce the Lesson:

- Review previous learned comprehension strategies
- Read an excerpt from New Moon (pg.)

Guide and Apply the Process:

- Model my visualization process and how Polacco carefully selected precise vocabulary to help me to visualize the scene
- Read an excerpt and provide the children with an opportunity to visualize (let them use language to describe what they visualize).

Assess the Lesson:

- Interactions during the lesson
- Teacher/Student conferences
- Small group Literature Discussion groups
- Reflection Log
- Share time

Figure 4: Analysis and Observation Guide

Questions to Guide Analysis	Evidence of Observations
Are the students prepared for the group discussion by bringing text, flagged passages, and logs?	
Do the logs contain thoughtful entries that result from the flagged passages?	
Do the flagged passages represent a range of comprehension strategies?	
Does the discussion among the group represent a range of comprehension strategies?	
Do the students carefully listen to each member while they are talking?	
Do the students wait for a group member to finish talking before responding?	
Do the students provide evidence from the text that supports their thoughts and ideas?	
Do the students participate in the discussion by sharing their flagged passages and their log entries?	
Do the students stay on task and stick to the topic of discussion?	
Do the students enjoy and learn from the discussion?	

Figure 5: Literature Discussion Group Checklist

Preparation for Discussion Group

___ Book passages are flagged for sharing.

___ Log contains thoughtful entries.

Reflection of Group Discussion

___ Listened carefully to each member when they were talking.

___ Waited for a group member to finish talking before responding.

___ Provided evidence for the group that supported my ideas and comments.

___ Participated in the discussion by sharing my log entries and flagged passages.

___ Stayed on task and stuck to the topic of the discussion.

___ Enjoyed and learned from the discussion.

Figure 6: Conducting Research on Space Book List

Saturn	Seymore Simon (Series)
<i>My Place in Space</i>	Seymore Simon
<i>The Earth and Sky</i>	Seymore Simon
<i>The Space Activity Book</i>	Church, Ellen Booth
Eclipse	Branley, Franklyn, M. (Series)
<i>What Makes Day and Night</i>	Branley, Franklyn, M.
<i>Neptune</i>	Branley, Franklyn M.
<i>Uranus</i>	Branley, Franklyn, M.
<i>The Sun Is Always Shining Somewhere</i>	Fowler, Allan
<i>Where Does the Moon Go?</i>	Rosen, Sidney
<i>Saturn</i>	Kerrod, Robin
<i>Saturn</i>	Murray, Peter
<i>Stargazers</i>	Gibbons, Gail
<i>The Planets</i>	Gibbons, Gail
<i>Spacebusters</i>	Wilkinson, Phillip
<i>The Planets</i>	Iverson, Sandra
Our Solar System	Graham, Ian (Series)
Mercury	Kipp, Steven L. (Series)
Venus	Fradin, Dennis (Space Series)
<i>The Sun</i>	Rigby Publication
<i>Sun, Stars & Planets</i>	Stacy, Tom
Our Star: The Sun	Barron's Educational Series
<i>The Sun</i>	George, Michael (The Child's World)
Stars	Troll (Now I Know Series)
<i>Solar System</i>	<i>Kids Discover Magazine</i>
Mars	Sparrow, Giles (Series)