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READ WRITE and TALK

A Practice to Enhance Comprehension

S T U D Y G U I D E

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The books *Nonfiction Matters* (Harvey 1998), *Strategies That Work* (Harvey and Goudvis 2000), and videotapes *Strategy Instruction in Action* (Harvey and Goudvis 2001), *Think Nonfiction!* (Harvey and Goudvis 2003), and *Strategic Thinking* (Harvey and Goudvis 2004) are all available at www.stenhouse.com.

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Introduction

Reading is a social act. We all love to talk about what we read, sharing the latest novel with a friend, reacting to an outrageous editorial with a colleague or exploring a picture book with a child. Kids are no different—when they have opportunities to think, talk, and write about their reading, they explode with thoughts, questions, and ideas. Active readers listen to the voice in their head when they read, merge their thinking with the information and take their thinking public by talking and sharing. The Read, Write, and Talk practice provides a framework for active literacy that sets kids up to read, respond and expand understanding.

A recent study compared the amount of reading and writing kids did in high-achieving and average-achieving classrooms. Kids in classrooms linked to average achievement read and wrote for about 20 to 30 minutes per day. In classrooms that were linked to high student achievement, kids read and wrote for upwards of 150 minutes a day. (Allington and Johnston 2002). According to Allington, “Extensive reading is critical to the development of reading proficiency.” (Allington 2002). We need to find practical ways to increase the amount of time kids spend reading and writing in school. Read, Write, and Talk is one way of doing this.

Read, Write, and Talk is not a stand-alone lesson, but rather an ongoing practice that provides a structure for in-school reading in all curricular areas. Once students have learned this process, they can apply it across the curriculum throughout the year, with science and social studies reading, literature study, and even with textbooks. Read, Write, and Talk is an authentic process that replicates what “real” readers do, and supports and encourages kids to ask more questions, ponder information and better understand what they read.

On this tape, Stephanie Harvey and Anne Goudvis have joined Steve Ollanik and Melanie Pappageorge in their fifth-grade reading workshop at Columbine Elementary in Boulder, Colorado. Kids at Columbine come from many cultures and speak a variety of languages. Children who are not native English speakers have received English language instruction during their years at Columbine and teachers are committed to differentiating instruction to better meet the learning needs of all kids.

The fifth-grade classroom is a stimulating place where kids spend time reading, writing, talking, listening, and investigating interesting topics. They grapple with issues, information, and ideas that provoke thinking and spur lively conversation. They have been taught to use comprehension strategies such as questioning, inferring, and determining importance to understand what they read. In this tape, we see Steph and these fifth-graders sharing thinking and constructing meaning as they engage in the Read, Write, and Talk practice. As the lesson unfolds and they share their learning, thinking evolves and comprehension deepens.

Tape Summary

The tape begins with Melanie, Steve, Anne, and Steph talking briefly about the Read, Write, and Talk lesson. Steph uses the gradual release of responsibility framework to launch Read, Write, and Talk with the students. She incorporates modeling and guided practice into the lesson and then gives kids a chance to practice independently and share their learning. She begins by lifting a *Time for Kids* article about TV viewing onto the overhead projector and modeling and recording her thinking. As she thinks aloud, she shares her inner conversation, including her connections, questions, and reactions, and jots them on the text.

After modeling her thinking, she invites the kids to talk to each other and write down their thinking in the guided practice portion of the lesson. When they finish reading and responding to the article, they share out informally. Next, Steph gives them a choice of three articles to read and respond to independently. After they choose one and read it on their own, they find someone who has read the same article and discuss it. The lesson concludes with a whole-group sharing session to talk about their learning as well as commenting on the Read, Write, and Talk process itself. The tape culmi-

nates with a conversation between Steph, Anne, Steve, and Melanie that focuses on how the kids responded to the practice and where to go next with Read, Write, and Talk.

Viewing Guidelines

- As you watch the tape, stop at each segment and talk about what strikes you. The considerations below may help as you delve into the teaching and learning on this tape.
- Note the teaching language used by Steph as well as the kids' language throughout the process. Listen to the language they use with Steph as well as the language they use with each other.
- Follow Steph's instructional moves and watch the kids' learning through the lesson.

A Double-Entry Observation Form (see Figure 1) may be helpful for jotting down what you notice, as well as questions you may want to bring up during discussion.

SEGMENT 1

Setting the Stage: Engage the Kids

03:02

Considerations

- *When we launch a comprehension lesson, we need to spend a few moments engaging the kids, setting the stage so that they are ready to settle in for the modeling portion. We might build some background knowledge during this time, explain a new idea, refer back to previous teaching and learning, or just share our enthusiasm for the topic to fire kids up. Think about how you might use this setting the stage time before you begin modeling.*
- Talk is essential. There's no better way to understand what we are learning than to talk about it. Before Steph models her thinking, she

explains the inner conversation that readers have as they read and then has the kids turn to each other and talk about their own inner conversation. This is the first of many times that Steph will have the kids turn and talk during the lesson. In this way, all kids, not only the most vocal ones, will have a chance to construct meaning. Try arranging the kids in ways that they can easily share their thinking with one another. Then encourage them to turn and talk during future mini-lessons.

- Student-to-student talk is greatly underrepresented in schools. An added benefit of turning and talking is that it gives kids an opportunity to rehearse what they might want to say in front of the whole group. This is especially helpful for English language learners, as rehearsal can build their confidence about speaking up. Think about providing opportunities for kids to rehearse their thinking by talking to each other before asking them to share out in front of the whole group.
- Text matters! Read, Write, and Talk is one of the most important practices we model for kids, because it provides a framework for responding to many different kinds of text and topics throughout the year. When we launch the practice, we search for compelling text that is likely to engage the kids and nudge them to talk. Steph chose the *Time for Kids* article on TV viewing because she believed that it would spur lively conversation since the kids could all relate to it. When you launch RWT, search for short, accessible articles that are easily read and are rife with interesting information that kids can relate to and talk about.

As kids develop proficiency with Read, Write, and Talk, you can introduce increasingly complex text, but practice first in accessible text so kids can get a handle on the process. We need to fill the room with interesting short text articles. Comb newspapers and magazines for sources of short text for reading in your classroom. Talk with your school librarian about ordering some magazines for the school. *Time for Kids*, *National Geographic Explorer* and *Scholastic News* are all great sources of short, interesting, accessible text.

SEGMENT 2

Modeling: Make Thinking Visible**7:57***Considerations*

- When modeling instruction by thinking aloud and reasoning through the text, we want kids to be seated close up to us so we can see their expressions, hear their voices and respond easily to their comments. Clipboards, which act as portable desks, are a necessary piece of equipment for classrooms that promote real-world reading, writing, and talking. Try modeling instruction when the kids are up close to you with clipboards and see how it works.
- Notice how Steph talks explicitly about her own thinking as she reads and leaves tracks of her thinking—how she reacts to new information, makes connections, asks questions, reflects on her background knowledge and then labels what she is doing (i.e., “I have a connection here...”). Think about how modeling and labeling thinking can help kids become better readers and thinkers. The next time you model your thinking, try to remember to label what you are doing. Or ask the kids to watch you and then have them share what they noticed you doing and saying as you modeled your thinking.
- Notice how Steph engages the kids, incorporates their comments into her lesson, and uses their comments to guide the discussion. Consider how you might engage the kids in this type of guided discussion.

SEGMENT 3

Guided Practice: Respond in Writing**13:47***Considerations*

- After Steph models her thinking, she invites kids to join her in the process. She asks them to continue to read the text, turn to each other and talk and jot down their thinking. As they do this, Steph moves around among the kids to listen to them and engage them in conversation. Try touching base with your students, listening to their thoughts and chiming in as needed.
- Throughout the tape as Steph responds to kids' comments and questions, she restates and elaborates on their thinking. Notice when and how she does this. One example of this occurs when Steph asks the kids why they should write down their thinking. When Ursula answers so articulately, Steph calls attention to her statement and restates and elaborates upon what Ursula says so that the kids won't miss her contribution.
- At the conclusion of the guided practice portion, Steph asks the kids to write down three things:
 - Something they learned that they think is important to remember (content response).
 - How talking to a partner helped them better understand the article.
 - Any lingering questions they still have (optional) .

When we finish reading, we ask kids to respond in a variety of ways. When launching RWT, we like to have them comment on both the content of the article and the process they used to read it, which is why Steph asks them to write down one content response and one process response. Beyond that it is always a good idea to give kids the option of writing down any lingering questions. Their questions give us a window into their understanding.

- Consider creating an anchor chart headed *How Talking Helps Us Understand* and record their process responses on the chart as a visual reminder. As you continue with Read, Write, and Talk, and kids internalize the practice, feel free to eliminate the process question. But keep the anchor chart visible and available for additional process responses that kids might discover as they engage in more student-to-student talk.
- As we continue with Read, Write, and Talk, we vary the final responses. We might ask kids to write down the big ideas, the most interesting information, important new learning, their connections, their inferences, etc. You can choose what you want kids to focus on depending on the content of the lesson. The sky is the limit!
- Launching Read, Write, and Talk is likely to involve modeling the practice on several occasions, not just this one time. We listen to what kids say and look carefully at their written work to assess their progress and guide our future instruction. The next time we engage in Read, Write, and Talk with short text nonfiction articles, we will likely model our thinking again but for a shorter period of time before moving into guided practice. As we expand the Read, Write, and Talk practice into other genres and forms, we model our thinking in those additional contexts as well, with textbooks, content area reading, poetry, etc. Following the gradual release framework, we model our thinking, then guide kids as they practice, and ultimately release them to try this on their own. The goal is always to move our students towards independence.

SEGMENT 4

Wrapping Up: Share Thinking

19:41

Considerations

- During this informal sharing piece, Steph asks kids to share out two

types of responses, those related to content as well as those related to the process. She wants all of the kids to hear a variety of responses to both of these requests.

- Steph also asks them to share any remaining questions. But before they share, she models a lingering question of her own. She wants to emphasize how good readers often have lingering questions when they finish reading so that they will think about their own questions. Notice that she does not require kids to come up with a question, but only to write one down if they are genuinely wondering about something.

SEGMENT 5

Independent Practice: Choose Text and Respond 23:01

Considerations

- The independent practice portion of Read, Write, and Talk begins after the informal sharing. If you have a literacy block of 90 minutes or more, you can continue with this portion immediately following the previous segment. If you have a shorter literacy block, you might consider stopping before the independent practice piece and pick up the following day with independent practice. It works either way, which ever best fits your schedule.
- For the independent practice portion of the reading workshop, Steph brings in three articles on different reading levels and different topics. Kids need to be reading text they can and want to read. Steph does mini book talks on each of the articles in an effort to fire the kids up about one of them. Kids can generally find one article that appeals to them out of three. Find a variety of articles beforehand that will appeal to the range of interests and levels in your room and then describe the text enthusiastically to hook them on one of the pieces. The *Time for*

Kids website is a terrific source of short text. You can go to <http://www.timeforkids.com/TFK/magazines> and click on archives to download any article that has ever been published by *Time for Kids*.

- Once kids have chosen an article, they read it on their own and then find someone to discuss it with after they finish reading. If kids are able to read the article independently, we encourage them to do so. This is one authentic way to help kids increase the amount of reading they do every day. If we anticipate that some kids will have trouble reading the article, we pair them up for support.
- Notice the high level of engagement as the kids talk. As Steph confers with small groups, the others continue to read and talk to each other about their article. Consider how and why the rest of the class stays engaged in the topic while Steph is conferring with small groups.

SEGMENT 6

Whole-Group Share

28:41

Considerations

- During the whole-group share, Steph has kids sit in a circle so the focus is on each other rather than on the teacher. She invites them to jot down the most interesting aspect of their conversation. This is another response option for kids after they have read and shared their thinking with each other during independent practice. It is useful and supportive to have kids write a synthesizing statement about their conversation and the lesson before they begin to share.
- During the mini-lesson, the kids were bunched up in front of the teacher for the purpose of instruction. During the whole-group share, the circle format encourages kids to use eye contact and discuss the article with each other. (rather than focusing solely on the teacher.)

We model polite, respectful language and eye contact for sharing since it nudges kids to listen to and focus on each other. Kids in this classroom have been taught previously to look each other in the eye when they invite someone to share and to use polite language. Example:

Josh: Burt, would you like to share your thinking?

Burt: Yes, thank you.

When kids speak to each other in this manner, a culture of respect grows in the room and kids are much more likely to listen to and learn from one another.

SEGMENT 7

A Conversation with Colleagues

31:47

Considerations

- Steph, Anne, Melanie, and Steve debrief the lesson, go over kids' work and talk about how to expand the Read, Write, and Talk practice. Consider some of the issues they bring up for your own discussion
 - Choice of Text—Steve discusses the importance of choosing text that really grabs the kids when launching Read, Write, and Talk. Think about choice of text in relation to your own classroom practice. Where can you find articles such as these? Consider formalizing a process with other teachers to search for and share interesting texts for Read, Write, and Talk.
 - Content Area Reading—Melanie talks about applying the Read, Write, and Talk practice to content area reading. She mentions how helpful this can be in science, social studies and mathematics reading. She describes Read, Write, and Talk as “a perfect way to engage the kids every day in content area reading”. If kids read actively in the content areas, they have a better shot at understanding what they read. Consider using the RWT practice

across the content areas. For instance, if you are studying space, you might select three short articles on space, have them choose one, read and respond to it, and talk to someone who read the same piece. After they have finished reading, writing, and talking, invite kids to share what they learned with the rest of the class. In this way, all kids will hear information from each article and learn from each other. Try this with history topics, science content, and even math. When we implement Read, Write, and Talk across the day, kids read and learn more about the topic of study.

- **Textbook Reading**—Steve and Melanie both consider how Read, Write, and Talk can support textbook reading. So often kids are asked to read textbooks in isolation, reading straight through and answering the end-of-chapter questions without stopping to think about and process the information. Steve suggests that of all genres, textbooks with their high level of difficulty require students to read actively, stopping to think and talk about the information to comprehend it. Consider having students use the Read, Write, and Talk practice when reading and learning from their textbooks. You might invite kids to read their textbooks in pairs or small groups, stopping, talking and writing about the information as they go.
- **Monitoring Comprehension**—Anne notes that Steph's instruction emphasized monitoring comprehension, teaching kids to listen to the voice in their heads and follow their inner conversation to understand what they read. This lesson focused on general thinking when reading, rather than a specific strategy. Once we have taught readers to pay attention to their inner conversation as they read, we find that they are better able to notice their connections, questions, inferences, and other important comprehension strategies that lead to understanding. We believe that before we teach individual comprehension strategies, kids benefit from learning and understanding the larger notion of following the inner conversation and monitoring comprehension.
- **Reviewing Kids' Work**—Steve, Melanie, Anne, and Steph bring

kids' work from the lesson to the table to review it and think about it. In this case, they look at Laurie's comments about how talking to a partner helped her understand. She wrote that when she and her partners put their individual ideas together, they came up with a big idea. (See Figure 4) Such a terrific insight! We invite you to get together with colleagues to share and review kids work so that you can learn more about how instruction supports understanding and learning.

Beyond the Tape: Read, Write, and Talk—What's Next

In this tape, we see kids engaging in the world of issues and ideas, talking about what matters to them, and writing down their thinking so they won't forget it. Our kids are capable of this and much more. Once we have launched Read, Write, and Talk with compelling short nonfiction articles, we can apply it in a wide range of genres, from textbook and content area reading to poetry and short story reading. Try to offer kids some choice when engaging them in Read, Write, and Talk. And keep the text relatively short and accessible so they can get through it without much difficulty. We can give kids three poems, three textbook excerpts, three historic articles, three short stories, three essays, etc.

Once kids have gotten the hang of this, we encourage them to read actively when they are dealing with dense, less considerate text as well. Much of school reading is hard for kids to comprehend. Reading, writing, and talking through tough text will support kids to better understand it when they encounter it. Kids need to read, write, and talk about content in every form and genre.

We apply Read, Write, and Talk across the curriculum with different topics and at different grade levels. All kids, no matter what their grade, need to increase the time they spend reading, writing, talking, listening, and investigating in school. We advocate adopting this practice across all grade levels. In grades 3-12, most kids can read the text on their own as long as we provide a range of text at different levels from which they can choose. And the only thing that inhibits younger kids from engaging in Read, Write, and Talk is their reading level. So for less-developed readers, we can read to them

and then have them turn and talk to each other about their thinking, perhaps marking the text or a post-it with a code, an L for learn, a Q for question and so forth. Read, Write, and Talk is about thinking. All kids need opportunities to think. Kids' thinking soars when they read, write, and talk!

Kids' Work Samples

We have included several samples of kids' work from the texts you saw on this video. We've included samples of what they wrote on the article (Figures 2, 6, and 7) as well as a variety of responses they created on the reverse side of the article (Figures 3, 4, 5, and 8). We have also included a sample of student work from a Read, Write, and Talk poetry lesson (Figure 9) to give you an idea of how it might look in another genre. Reading and thinking about kids' work is the best way to assess their progress and inform future teaching and learning.

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- "Too Many Tests". 2002. *Time for Kids* vol 7, no. 14.

Fig. 1: Double-Entry Observation Form

Segment	Observation	Questions/Comments
Engage the Kids		
Make Thinking Visible		
Guided Practice; Respond in Writing		
Wrapping Up: Share Thinking		
Independent Practice: Choose Text and Respond		
Whole-Group Share		
A Conversation with Colleagues		

Fig. 2: RWT Response to TV Watching (Nan)

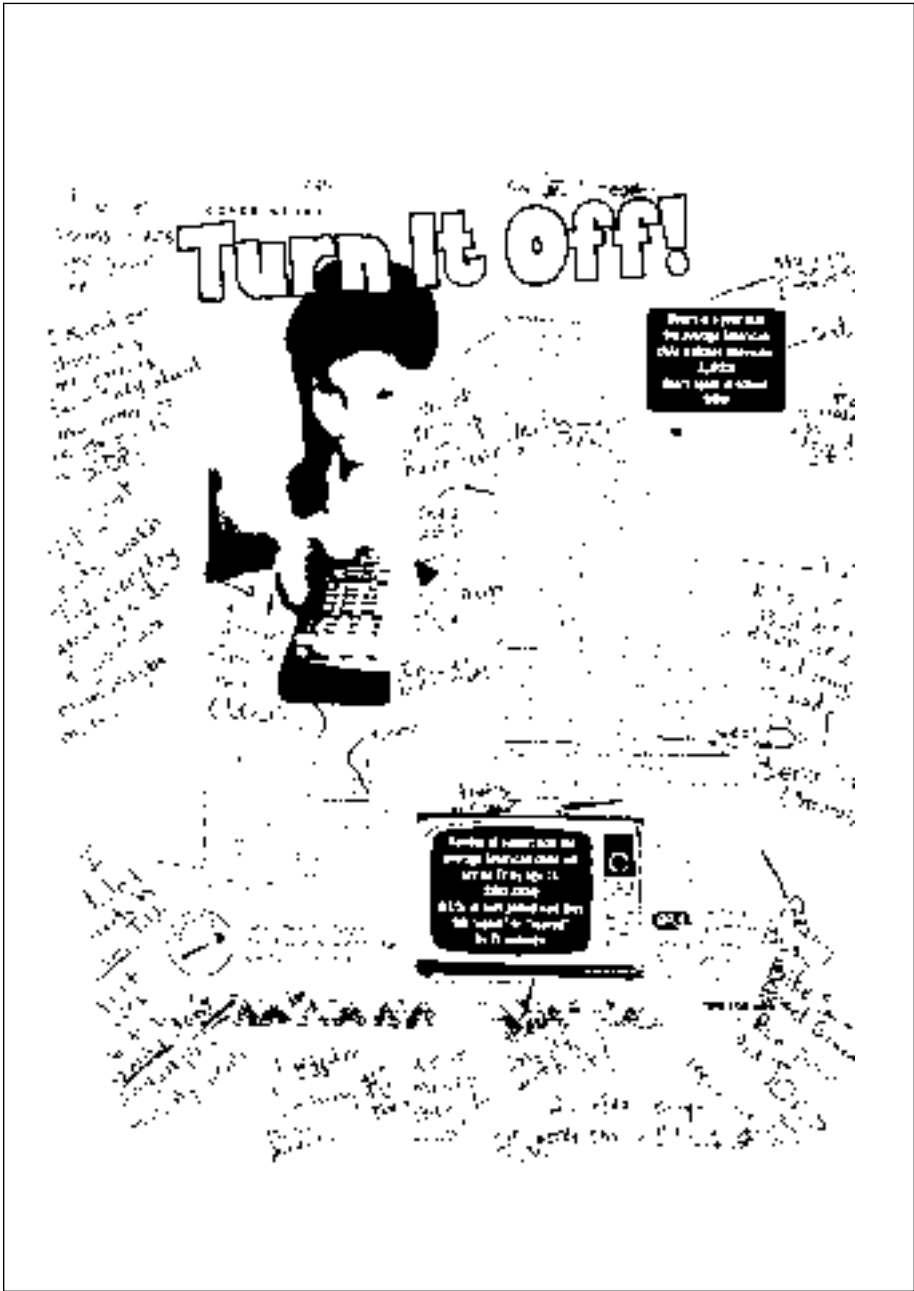


Fig. 4: C



Fig. 3: Content, Process and Lingering Question Response (Nan)

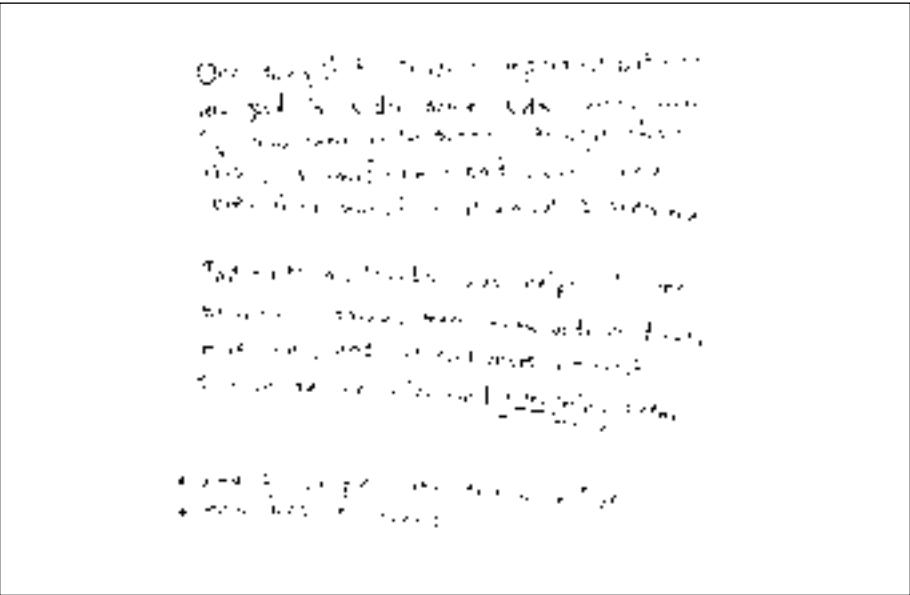


Fig. 4: Content and Process Response (Laurie)

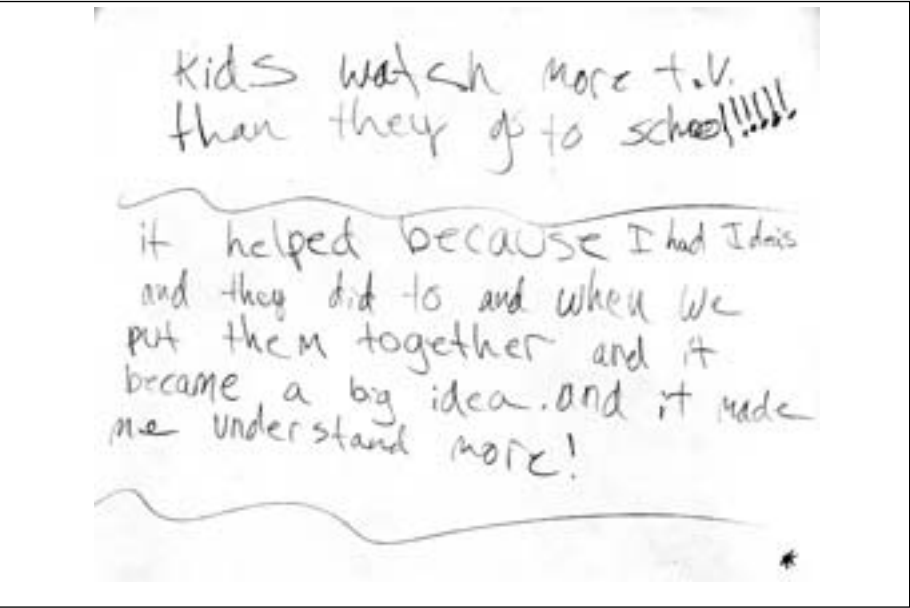


Fig. 5: Artistic Response to the Content and Process (Rahul)

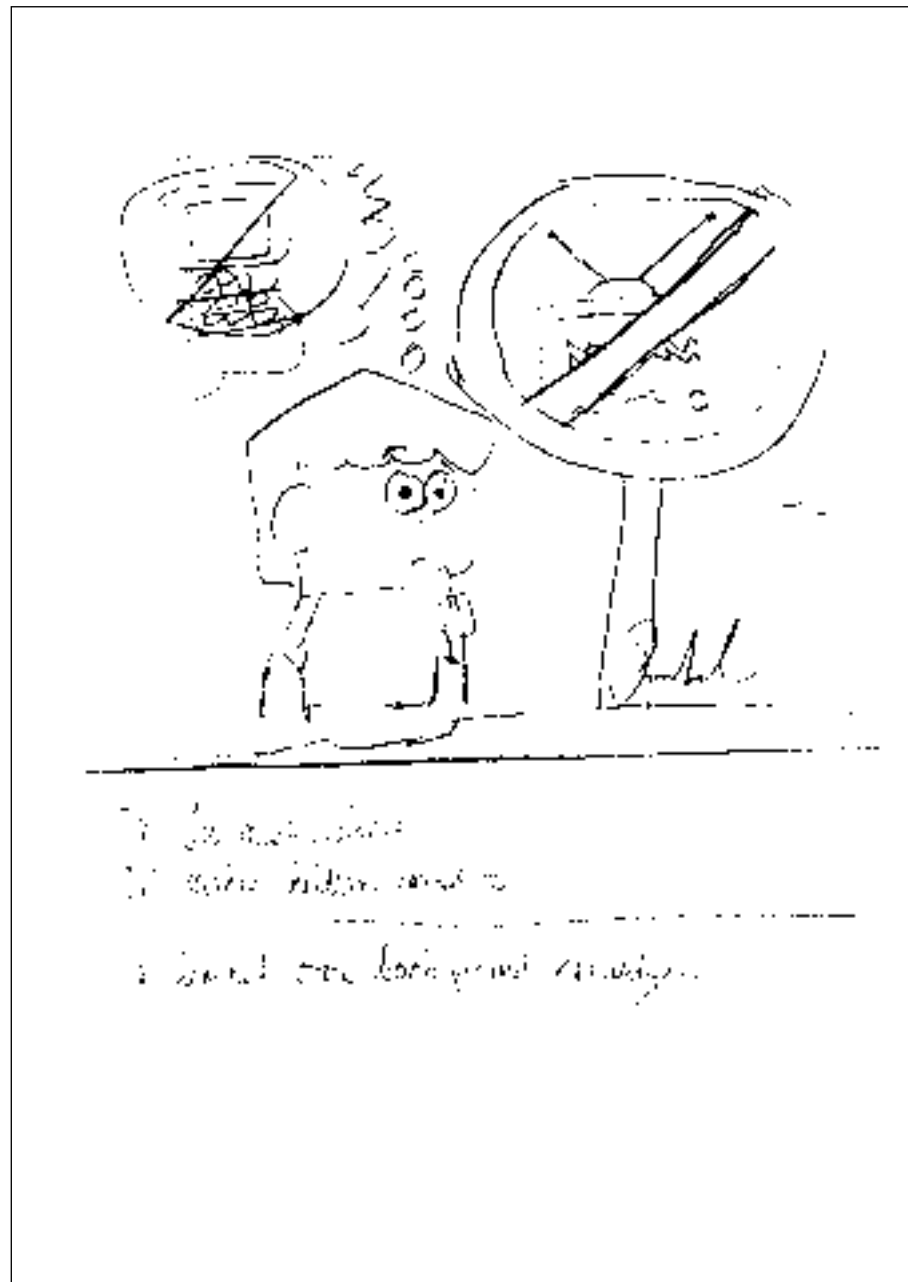


Fig. 6: Independent RWT Response to Testing Article



Fig. 7: Independent RWT Response to Tiger Article

COVER STORY
In Russia, former hunters now help protect the big cats.

TIGERS ROAR BACK

One hundred thousand tigers roamed Asia in 1900. By 1994, that number had dropped to 7,000. Experts warned that the big cats would be extinct by 2000. The world took the warning seriously. Working to save the cats has become a way of life in many Asian countries. Last month, tiger experts gathered in Washington, D.C., to hear a new report from the Save the Tiger Fund. The good news: Tiger populations have stopped shrinking.

The tiger survives today thanks to hard work and public support," says John Seidensticker, the head of Save the Tiger. In southeastern Russia, 350 to 400 Siberian tigers survive. That's almost a miracle. From 1990 to 1993, illegal hunters killed one-third of all Siberian tigers. Now a program turns former hunters to help protect the cats. At the region's Tiger Day festivals, kids dress in stripes and whiskers to celebrate their pride in helping the cats survive.

In India, tigers share their habitat with humans. A program is helping some Indians find homes outside tiger habitats. Volunteers lead the project. Conservationist Ullas Karanth says local people are the key to saving tigers. "Their commitment," he says, "can't be bought with money."

DID YOU KNOW?
Tigers, the world's biggest cats, are the same pattern of stripes, found only in Asia. ONLY in Asia? That's cool! I thought they were in Africa too.
Tiger cubs weigh two to three pounds at birth and are born blind.
Tigers live 10 to 15 years in the wild. Not too long.
Tiger stripes are like human fingerprints. No two tigers have the same pattern.
Tigers can leap up to 30 feet. Wow, they jump higher than I do on a trampoline.

TIME FOR KIDS

Wow! How sad.
I'm glad the former hunters started saving the tigers.
Share with tigers!
Great idea!
home tigers!
Bengal tigers, like this mom and cub, can also be white. Cute.
What steps have helped save tigers? What else can be done to protect them? I can't believe people killed the tigers. Did they just do it for the fun of it?

Map of Tiger Populations:

- Siberian tigers: 250 - 350
- Bengal tigers: 1,200 - 1,500
- South China tigers: 25 - 30
- Indochinese tigers: 1,300 - 1,500
- Burmese tigers: 400 - 500
- Indus tigers: 100 - 150

Regions: Russia, China, India, Southeast Asia, Pacific Ocean, Indian Ocean.

Fig. 8: A

Fig. 8: A Longer Response to the Testing Article (Ursula)

