



Success is the sum of small efforts, repeated day in and day out.

— R. Collier

The combination of home improvement shows and Pinterest can be dangerous. After two years of looking at stacked stone fireplaces, my husband and I decided it was time to replace our brick hearth. I already had a picture of the finished product in my head—a beautiful stone fireplace boasting a rough hewn wood mantle, surrounded by white built-in bookcases. Although I knew the project was going to take longer than an hour-long episode of *Fixer Upper*, I was planning on the project taking 3-weeks tops!

I quickly learned that the project required many details I had never considered. Building the cabinets required careful measurements, caulk and lots and lots of sanding. There was more to redoing the fireplace than simply removing and replacing the old brick. The wall needed to be covered with heavy paper and metal mesh before any of the new stone could be placed. The term “project creep” entered into our conversations, as it seemed silly to install a new fireplace without painting the walls and ceiling, along with replacing the carpet! There were many steps required prior to completing the finished project!

Too often, we as teachers fall into the same trap of wanting students to complete a finished product without considering the steps they will need to complete in order for it to be a success. Wanting our students to demonstrate their learning, we often want to bypass teaching the steps required to complete the task. Any successful learning takes time, practice, revision, and patience. The daily efforts we put forth with our students results in success for all!

Let's Publish Our Writing!

Google Slides

This google tool allows students to publish their writing in an engaging manner. Students love to add images and animations which help bring their writing to life. Students of all ages find extra motivation to revise and edit their work when they know it will be published for others to read.

Book Creator bookcreator.com

This publishing tool has a variety of uses. Students can publish their writing, add images, record their voice and publish their masterpiece as an e-book!

Book Nook

Reading aloud is a favorite part of every school day. The following are new book titles our students love.



Heart of a Samurai by Margi Preus

The 2011 Newberry Honor Winner tells the story of Manjiro, a 14 year old Japanese boy who, along with his friends, is shipwrecked on an island. Rescued by an American whaling ship, Manjiro discovers that his home country is closed to all westerners and he cannot return home. Befriended by the ship's captain, Manjiro begins to learn English and the ways of the Western World. The novel follows Manjiro as he travels across America. Through-out all his experiences, however, his longing to return to his home in Japan never wavers.

www.amazon.com/Heart-Samurai-Margi-Preus/dp/1419702009/ref=sr_1_1?ie=UTF8&qid=1518134337&sr=8-1&keywords=heart+of+a+samurai

The Very, Very, Very Long Dog by Julia Patton

Bartleby is a very long dachshund who makes his home in a bookstore. Each day his friends take him out for a walk through town. Due to his extreme length, Bartleby tends to unknowingly destroy things with his backend. This book tells a story of friendship and accepting one another, quirks and all. The book can also be used for lessons in vocabulary, as Ms. Patton employs vivid language through-out the book.

www.amazon.com/Very-Long-Dog/dp/1492654450

Bea Garcia My Life in Pictures by Deborah Zemke

Bea Garcia describes her life in both words and sketches in this delightful book for young readers. Through sketches, Bea uses her Book of Life to record what is happening in her daily life. When her best friend Yvonne moves to Australia, Bea believes her life could not get any worse. She quickly discovers that it can when Bert, also known as The Monster, moves in next door. This book is a perfect choice for young readers who are ready for their first chapter book.

https://www.amazon.com/My-Life-Pictures-Bea-Garcia-ebook/dp/B00ZQH2UDC/ref=sr_1_1?ie=UTF8&qid=1518401917&sr=8-1&keywords=bea+garcia+my+life+in+pictures

Fixer Uppers

Bad habits are easier to abandon today than tomorrow.

As we find ourselves in second semester, it may be time to review and reinforce good habits with your students. The following are some common teacher concerns.

"We have worked on this all year, but my students still forget to use correct punctuation and capitalization."

An effective way to reinforce proper punctuation and capitalization is through the use of colored pencils. After students have completed a writing piece, they must go over every punctuation mark with a red colored pencil, whether they have included that mark or not. After completing punctuation, they repeat the process for capitalization using a green colored pencil. Students do **not** need to rewrite their piece, but tracing the punctuation and capitalization slows them down to notice their errors.

Additionally, students need to correct **all** work that does not contain correct punctuation and capitalization. This includes both written and typed work. The first few minutes of the day is a good time to provide students the fix-up time they need to practice this important convention skill.

"My students do not write their big ideas in complete sentences."

A common error students make is writing their "short and snappy" big idea sentences a little too short and snappy! In fact, they are not sentences at all. If your students are making this error, provide them with additional big idea sentence writing practice. Write a basic plan on any topic, which includes only one big idea. For example:

T = Favorite Food—Ice Cream Students write only the big idea sentence, without adding any of the details. Students should add a transition word to their big idea sentence. Examples might be:

* Many Flavors	-Strawberry
	- Cookie Dough

First, ice cream comes in a variety of flavors.

One reason ice cream is my favorite food is the many flavors I can taste.

The many variety of flavors ice cream comes in makes it my favorite food.

This can be done as a scoot game, with students rotating from station to station and responding to the various prompts you have set out for them to use.

Fixer Uppers—Cont.

Some other plans can include:

T = Thanksgiving Activities

* Play Games	- Monopoly - Cards
* Eat Feast	- Tukey - Pie

T = Why I Love to Read

* Relaxing	-sit in chair - do alone
• New Adventures	- be a pirate - go on journey

T = Most Exciting Sport—Basketball

* Active	-Dribble - Shoot
* Competitive	- Players aggressive

T = Best Pet—Parakeet

* Entertaining	-Sing - Talk
*Easy to care for	- Live in cage -Just need food and water

" My students do not write fluent detail sentences."

At times students' detail sentences may begin to sound all alike, with little fluency. To help break this habit, have students write only a detail sentence. One way to do this is by showing pictures. Choose a picture which contains many details. Ask students what the people in the picture are doing? Where is the picture taking place? How might they be feeling? Together, write 2—3 sentences about the picture answering these questions. For example:



Children play on the equipment at the park. (Big Idea Sentence) Hanging on to the spring loaded seats, youngsters can jump up and down. As they squeal with excitement, the metal playground equipment bounces them up for another ride.

You may repeat this process using the plans above, having students write only a detail sentence or two to support the big ideas.

Poetry Corner—Lyrical Poems

Lyrical poetry is poetry which expresses deep emotion and feelings. A lyrical poem is often told in first person in order to express the emotions of the author and may be musical in nature. Students will enjoy learning the different poem formats that fall under this genre.

"Something Told The Wild Geese" by Rachel Field

This poem describes the author's advice to geese as the weather becomes colder. As students read the poem together, discuss the vivid vocabulary the author used in describing the setting of the poem. This is an excellent poem to read aloud with children, encouraging them to read with fluency and expression.

http://www.yourdaily poem.com/listpoem.jsp?poem_id=522

"Lone Dog" by Irene McLeod

Told from the point of view of the dog, the Lone Dog describes his emotions concerning life on his own. The dog's feelings towards life are divided by stanzas, as he describes life in the wild in stanza 1, life as a pet in stanza 2, and a comparison in the final stanza. Students can identify the vocabulary used by the author to contrast the two lifestyles.

<http://www.bartleby.com/103/164.html>

"Bliss" by Eleanor Farjeon

While the speaker of the poem is not identified, students can infer the speaker is a pet dog. The poem fits the definition of lyrical poetry, as it clearly explains what bliss looks like for the dog. It is interesting to ask students to respond with what is their personal bliss.

<https://beccabliss.wordpress.com/2009/05/08/bliss/>

Reviewing with Scoot

Students love to get up and move. The game of Scoot can be used with almost any content area. The premise is simple.

Choose a content area and questions that focus on that area. Write each question on a separate 3 x 5 card. For example, if you are practicing multiplication facts, each card would contain a multiplication fact without the answer. If you are working with shapes, a sketch of a shape is on the card. It is best if you have one card per student, however, you may always have students work in pairs. Number the cards and lay the cards upside down on desks. Laying the cards out in numerical order is easiest for students.

Students will number a piece of paper with as many cards as you have created. They stand in front of a question card. When you give the signal, students turn over the card and write their answer. On your signal, they move to the next card and repeat the process. You may choose to have students complete all the questions at one sitting, or break this up over a few days.

Some possible Writing Ideas for Scoot:

- Collect sample paint cards from the hardware store. Glue one paint chip to each card. Students will write a simile for each color. For example: The canary was as yellow as a brick of gold.
- After studying idioms, have students write a favorite idiom on a notecard. Students will write down the meaning of the idiom on their answer sheet.
- Write synonyms for overused words. Write a "boring" word on the notecards. Students will write a more interesting synonym for the word on their answer sheet.

We love to talk writing! If we can ever be of service or you'd like to chat, please email us at darlene-and-terry@writenow-rightnow.com

Additional ideas and activities can be found in the *Write Now - Right Now Writing Program*.

To view grade level samples, locate additional newsletters and read blog posts, visit:

<http://www.writenow-rightnow.com>.

The *Write Now—Right Now Writing Program* is now being used in 44 states and four Canadian provinces. How can we be of help to you in your classroom?