

Student Writing: How do We Evaluate

English 1



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Setting the Scene:

Writing Development in the Primary Years

http://www.petaa.edu.au/imis_prod/w/Teaching_Resources/Project_40/w/Teaching_Resources/P40/Project_40.aspx#Writing

Part 3: Writing development as a necessary dimension of language and literacy education

Emeritus Professor of Language and Literacy Education Frances Christie reflects on writing in Primary English language education over the last 40 years.



Let's listen to Frances Christie describe dimensions of writing development (11-35 – 15-50 min) See accompanying article on 'Writing Development' .

Recap: writing genres

- We write for social purposes
- We organise this writing into text types with agreed rules, called genres
- Such genres include (but can blend and move beyond) procedural, informative, narrative, persuasive, report, review, reflect
- Text forms can include letters, reports, text messages, poem, short stories

Recap: the genre cycle

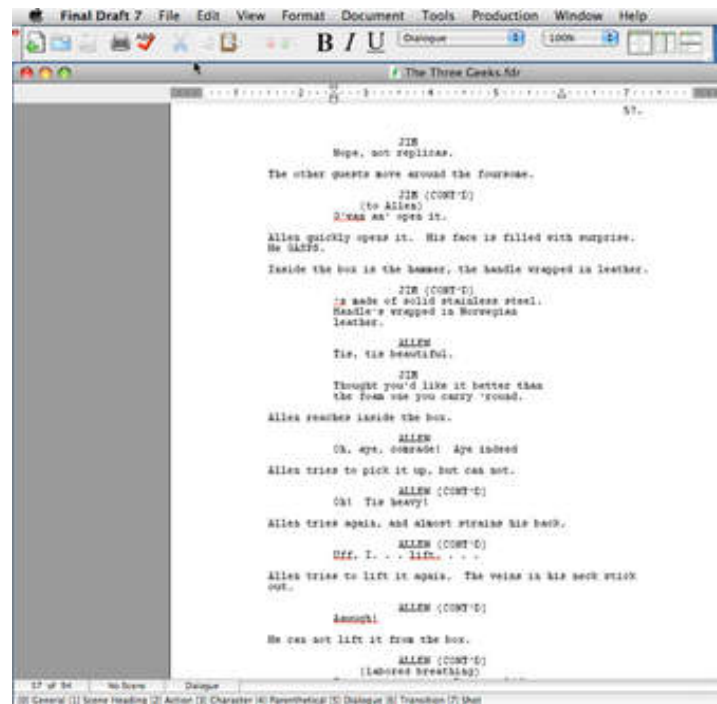
- We build the field: brainstorming, providing stimulus, cognitive organisers, information gathering, modelling examples etc.
- We provide supported reading
- We teach the genre
- We construct texts together (joint construction of texts, pointing out features of texts)
- We then ask writers to construct their own texts independently

The Writing Process

- The writing process involves **time** and **choices**, as well as **timely scaffolding**
- Effective writing is **a process**, not usually a moment of inspiration.
- It involves **brainstorming, selecting and organising, drafting, conferencing, redrafting, editing and proofreading**. All these processes should be part of your writing class.

Draft Writing

Find the story you drafted earlier in the unit



Share your draft with a peer and discuss:

What needs to happen for that draft to develop into a stronger piece of narrative writing?

- Is the purpose of the writing clear?
- Is there an orientation, complication and resolution?
- Does it hook the reader in and satisfying ending?
- How could the writer select better words and phrases?
- Is punctuation/paragraphing/spelling correct?

Considerations for Assessing Primary School Students

It is important to consider assessment in relationship to pedagogy and student outcomes.

Let's consider assessment **for**, **of** and **as** learning and how the use of the teaching and learning cycle and model of language supports this relationship

Assessing for, of & as learning

1. Assessment for learning is formative, as it involves using evidence to inform teaching during the teaching and learning cycle.
2. Assessment of learning is summative as it takes place at key points such as at the end of a unit.
3. Assessment as learning occurs when students are involved in self and peer assessment and reflect on their own learning.

Activity: Let's Consider a Scenario

Read Example 2 – Processes of Writing to Entertain

Excerpt taken from Joanne Rossbridge (2017). Focusing on assessment and the teaching and learning cycle through whole school professional learning. In Fehring, Heather (Eds.) Assessment into practice. Understanding assessment practice to improve students' literacy learning. PETAA, pp.45-55.

Discussion

- How did this assessment approach fit with the teaching learning cycle?
- How was the assessment contextualised?
- Consider the roles of assessment of learning, assessment for learning and assessment as learning. Are they important?
- Share with a peer how your writing was assessed at school?

Approaches for assessing writing include:

- Conferencing
- Diagnostic assessment (see Rod Campbell's rubric)
- Observing
- Peer-assessment
- Writing Records (see Pauline Gibbon's example for EAL learners)
- Writing Portfolios
- Student's Self-Evaluation

Use Rod Campbell's rubric to assess this piece of writing

Merimbula

I know Merimbula very well because we go there every year for two weeks. I love it there because you can play golf, tennis, football, basketball, cricket. We go there with our cousins and some of there friends. We usually stay in cabin 15. We have stayed in cabin 15 for 3 years. I want to stay next to my cousins. It takes six hours to get there without stoping. We usually stop twice for an hour or so it takes us eight hours. We leave at 7.00 in the morning. Dad has to wake us up at 5.00 in the morning the two things I hate most are we cant take our dog and I hate the long drive.

THE END

Figure 1

Rubric for writing analysis – Class / Individual

Name				Class:	Date:		
Codes: Y or tick = yes	N = No	? = maybe		N/A = not applicable	Delete items not required		
DIMENSION	Yes	No	?	DIMENSION	Yes	No	?
Evidence of planning				Evidence of editing			
WRITING				3 Sentences			
Relevance to topic				Sentence structure			
Meets purpose				Simple sentences			
Appropriate to audience				Compound sentences			
1 Types of text				Complex sentences			
Features of narrative texts				Subordinate clauses			
Logical sequence/story				Extended noun groups			
Character and setting				Adjectival phrases			
Plot development				Adjectival clauses			
Features of persuasive texts				Prepositional/adverbial phrases			
e.g. Paragraphing				Varies sentence style			
Rhetorical devices				(Uses theme position)			
Features of informative texts				Embedded clauses			
e.g. Paragraphing				6 Cohesion			
Vocabulary choices				Pronoun reference			
2 Paragraphs				Word substitution			
Uses topic sentence				Word sets (lexical sets)			
(Topical theme effective)				Text connectives			
(Textual theme used well)				Logical sequence			
Varies length				Logical organisation			
Elaborates detail				Referent strings are clear			
Examples support topic				(Edits demonstratives)			
Cites expert opinion				4 Punctuation			
(Headings support reader)				Capitals			
7 Vocabulary				End markers (FS ? !)			
Appropriate for topic				Apostrophes of possession			
Wide choice				Apostrophe of omission			
Selective use				Commas			
Precise use for purpose				(Colons and semi-colons)			
Use of technical language				Quotation marks/direct speech			
8 Figurative language				Spelling			
9 Modal language				Minor problems			
10 Evaluative language				Major problems (See spelling analysis sheet)			
Rhetorical devices				11 Conventions			
Rhetorical questions				Subject-verb agreement			
metaphor				Noun-pronoun agreement			
imagery				Uses plurals where possible			
parallelisms				Maintains verb tenses			
modal conditionals				(Manages passive voice)			

Rod
Campbell's
rubric

Small group activity

Note down constructive feedback you would give to the student for example about:

- A way forward for further drafting
- Grammar, punctuation, spelling
- Purpose and audience
- Language choices

Remember not to overwhelm the student – focus on one or two aspects.

Which aspects would you focus on? Why?

You may have a range of reasons that may relate to the student's circumstances.

MERIMBULA

I know Merimbula very well because we go there every year for two weeks. I love it there because you can play golf, tennis, football, basketball, cricket. We go there with our cousins and some of there friends. We usually stay in cabin 15. We have stayed in cabin 15 for 3 years. I want to stay next to my cousins. It takes six hours to get there without stoping. We usually stop twice for an hour or so it takes us eight hours. We leave at 7.00 in the morning. Dad has to wake us up at 5.00 in the morning the two things I hate most are we cant take our dog and I hate the long drive.

THE END

Comment [JF1]: Heading suggests this will be an informative text about a place.

Comment [JF2]: Use of first person – a personal informative text

Comment [JF3]: Evidence for authority of the writer to speak about the subject

Comment [JF4]: Lists reasons for love of this place

Comment [JF5]: Further reasons

Comment [JF6]: Distance facts

Comment [JF7]: Time and distance

Comment [JF8]: Counterbalancing arguments

Comment [JF9]: Signals the end of writing

Conferencing writing

Translating what we learn from careful reading of the writing into constructive feedback **to discuss** with the writer

Could occur with the student during or post writing or as written feedback



Example of written feedback

Merimbula

I know Merimbula very well because we go there every year for two weeks. I love it there because you can play golf, tennis, football, basketball, cricket. We go there with our cousins and some of there friends. We usually stay in cabin 15. We have stayed in cabin 15 for 3 years. I want to stay next to my cousins. It takes six hours to get there without stoping. We usually stop twice for an hour or so it takes us eight hours. We leave at 7.00 in the morning. Dad has to wake us up at 5.00 in the morning the two things I hate most are we cant take our dog and I hate the long drive.

THE END

Well done Sam! You tell me a lot about a place I have never been to and what you love and don't love so much about it. However, what I would like to know more about Merimbula is what it looks like, smells like, what your favourite time of day there is and why. Make me really want to do the long trip with you and experience all the fun you and your cousins have in this place! When you redraft, try expanding your paragraphs and give your reader more details about what makes Merimbula so special. Then read it to your table and see what other students think.

Comment [JF1]: A good, strong opening. You give me confidence that I will learn things about Merimbula from you.

Comment [JF2]: I like your reasons for liking Merimbula – this is called providing evidence for your opinions.

Comment [JF3]: Is this the right 'there'? Why?

Comment [JF4]: You are shifting subject now – start a new paragraph

Comment [JF5]: Another new paragraph

Comment [JF6]: Remember to double the consonant when adding -ing

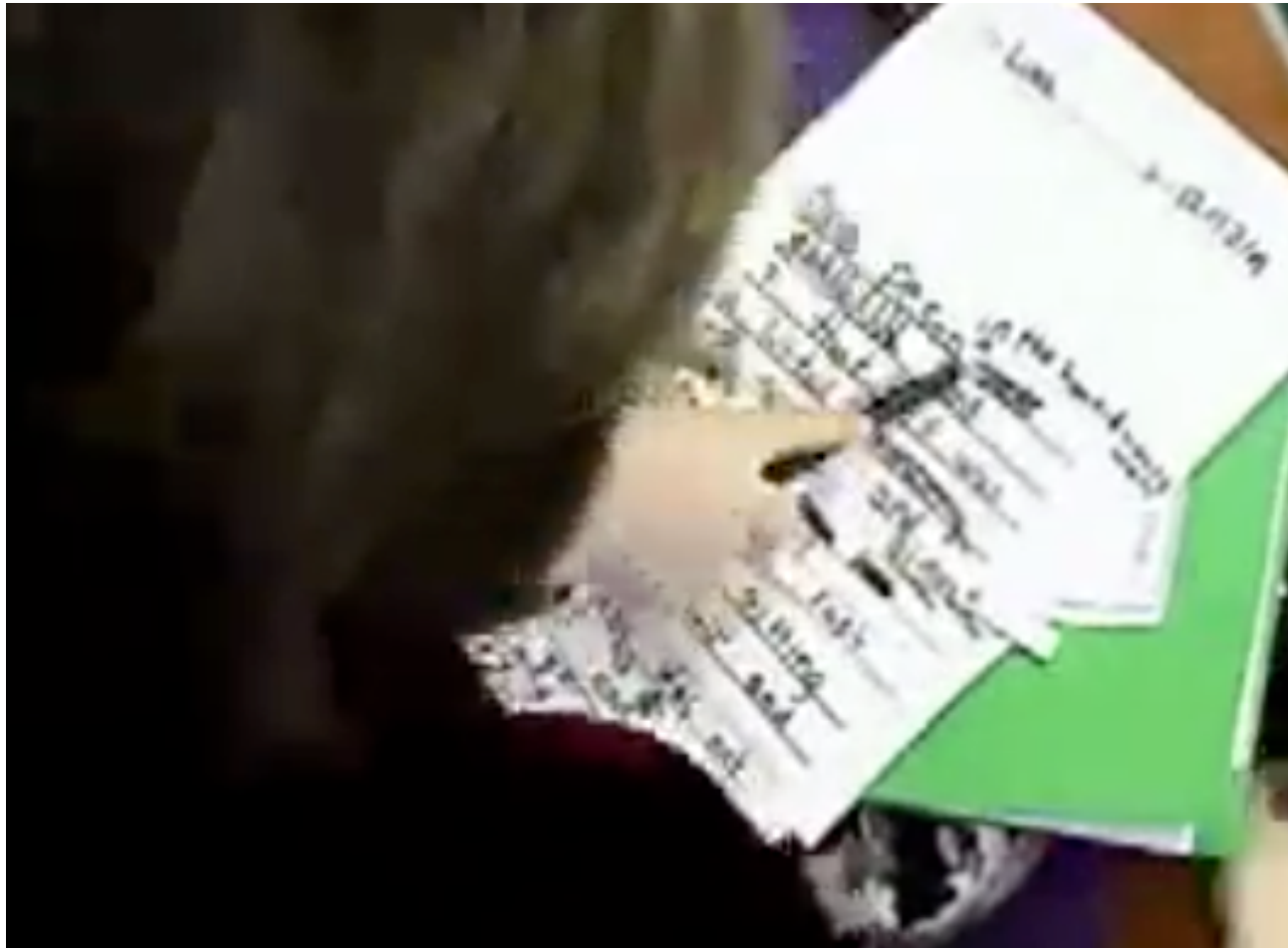
Comment [JF7]: I think this is a new sentence so what do you need to do?

Comment [JF8]: A missing letter here? What's needed?

Comment [JF9]: Could we finish your report in a more interesting way?

Let's Watch this Example of Conferencing

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=y9mb7kL9Oqs>



Scaffolding questions for redrafting might include:

- How would your story change if you were to use first person? Future tense? Start at the end then return to the beginning? Make it mysterious instead of sad?
- Where/when is this set?
- Imagine you are writing this to someone you know – who could that be and how would you then change what you say?

Further scaffolding questions for redrafting might include:

... I'm not sure what you are trying to convince me of here. How can you make your message clearer?

Does your punctuation support what you are saying?
Read this aloud and tell me where you pause etc.

I want to (taste the salty ocean/feel the wind in my hair on the skateboard etc) How can you use words to help me feel your experience with you?

Examples of Proofreading Questions:

Check your annotations to see if you have spelled words correctly.

Have you begun a new paragraph for each time/place/subject shift?

Now that you have had some time to reread, could you express that idea in fewer words? More exciting words?

Group discussion

Evaluate this narrative piece by a Year 3 student. In groups discuss & jot down 1-2 key feedback areas:

- Does it have an orientation, complication & conclusion
- Can students respond to the questions Where, when. How, Why?
- How well has language been used in developing the settings and character?
- Spelling and grammar use
- Punctuation
- You may choose to focus on other areas.

It was dark scary and damp. Lilly was climbing a rope to get diamonds to go to the museum she was so scared. She was nervilly there. Crack she heard something.

"Ahhh" yelled Lilly. Then she heard foot steps it was Milly her best friend. Milly did the same thing as Lilly. "What is wrong?" asked Milly.

"I broke my leg." replied Lilly.

"How did you break your leg?" asked Milly. "I fell" said Lilly. "Come on so Milly kindly let me help you up. Whooosh! Milly heard something. "Come

Role play: Conferencing with the student who wrote the narrative piece



ASSESSMENT

FORMATIVE ASSESSMENT

- Multiple drafts: Ask students to write initial draft in the early stages and to then revise and SAVE each subsequent draft in response to each session (e.g. building further knowledge of the field, organising the text into coherent stages, focus language feature/s) through to independent final draft.)
- Peer feedback about a piece of writing
- Assess writing against a rubric
- Role play conferencing about a student's writing

SUMMATIVE ASSESSMENT

e.g. rubrics

Anne's Reflection

When developing this unit of work, we decided to work at a meta-level. Not only were we teaching about the *Teaching and Learning Cycle* but we were also teaching through the *Teaching and Learning Cycle*.

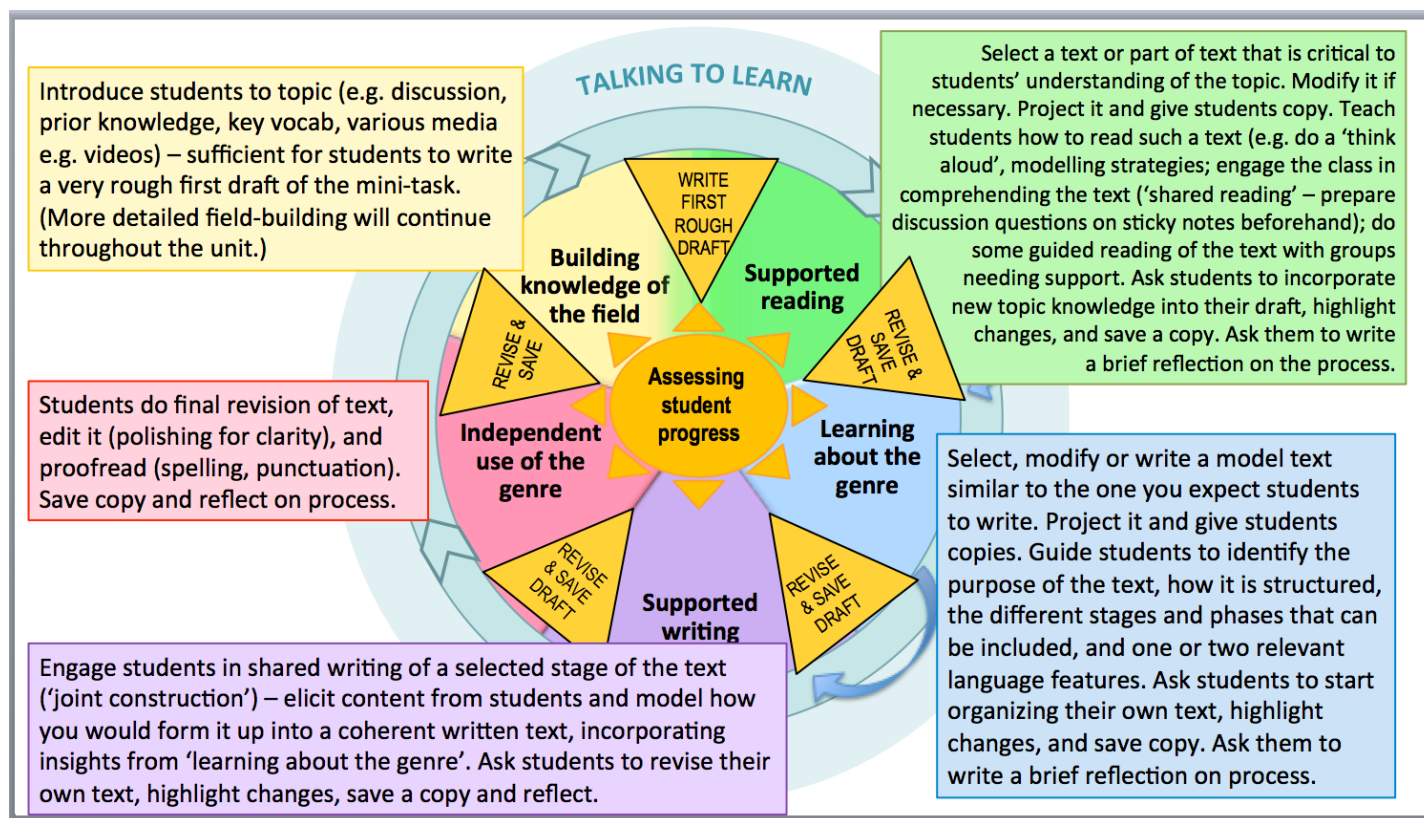
Rubrics were discussed in terms of how to use them and how they would be used to assess the pre-service teacher's work. Rubrics are one way to assess and analyse children's writing (see Wing Jan, 2015 and Campbell, 2017). As tutors, we encouraged pre-service teachers to think about how they could create their own rubrics which engaged with children's learning needs, and were informed by the unit of work being assessed (Scull, 2018).

Attention was given to assessing writing as “a social practice that involves noticing representing and responding to children's literate behaviours, rendering them meaningful for particular purposes and audiences” (Johnston and Costello, 2005, p. 258). Therefore, activities such as self and peer assessment and role-playing conferencing with young students were incorporated into the workshop. The idea was to enhance pre-service teachers “understanding of themselves as learners” (Scull, 2018, p. 168). =

References

- Campbell, R. (2017). Assessing writing for effective teaching. In H. Fehring (Ed.) *Assessment into practice: Understanding assessment practice to improve children's literacy learning* (pp. 89-99). Sydney, Australia: Primary English Teaching Association Australia.
- Johnston, P. & Costello, P. (2005). Principles for literacy assessment. *Reading research Quarterly*. 40(2), 256-425). Los Angeles, CA: SAGE.
- Scull, J. (2018). Assessing writing practices to support young writers. In Mackenzie, N. & Scull, J. (Eds.). *Understanding and supporting young writers from birth to 8*. (165-188). London & New York. Routledge.
- Wing Jan, L. (2015). *Write ways* (4th ed.) South Melbourne, VIC: Oxford University Press.

Group Work Time



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Rossbridge, J. (2017). In H. Fehring (Eds.) *Assessment into practice. Understanding assessment practice to improve students' literacy learning*. PETAA, pp.45-55.