

## Imagining Your Fascination in Writing!

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*Writing is a music that is not played for the ears, but for the eyes. When an orchestra plays, it speaks an emotional language to the soul through the medium of a rhythm and sound. Writing is similar to music because every word is only an instrument used to affect the tones and rhythms of any and every genre of writing.*

~ Allan Campbell

### THE READING/WRITING CONNECTION

Teaching for many years in a large urban school district such as Houston Independent School District has had profound challenges and rewards. My teaching experiences have given me opportunities to develop writing skills with students in grades one through five. Good writing has remarkable abilities. It transports the reader to places he has not been and allows him to envision places and things he could only dream about. It involves the emotions and insights, strong feelings of love, hate, and even revenge. It expands the mind and fills it with knowledge and a desire to know more. Myth and fantasy allow us to go beyond what is physically passable and imagine super human feats of strength and agility. Poetry reaches deep into the soul and brings forth emotions and feelings we did not know we have. The ability of a writer to manipulate the English language so that it transports, involves, and expands is one of the greatest talents a writer can possess.

I have always envisioned a classroom where writing propels my students to higher heights. I fully expect my students to allow their innate creativity to spill over into their writing and allow it to become the hook that they ensnare the attention of others. Will it translate into test scores? Certainly! Will it open doors of opportunity for students? Absolutely!

I have also been given opportunities to give writing workshops and strategies for teachers and staff members. One of my favorite workshops was entitled “Mastering the Magic of Good Writing.” The objective of this workshop was to focus on developing ideas and organizing information. Through this workshop I was able to get students to pay special attention to how they say what they want to say on paper. The pedagogical impact of this workshop focused on developing the topic, as well as writing, revising, and crafting their writing. After my class and I read *James and the Giant Peach*, I found the students stronger in listening, speaking, and reading skills. However, there were some weaknesses in their writing skills.

I gave them a writing prompt entitled “My Imaginary Trip to Peachland.” I noticed students having great difficulties in spelling, knowing when a sentence should end and begin, taking risks, transferring their thoughts to paper, and writing repetitiously. Students who did not have the confidence to write nor respond to excerpts of writing were even at greater risk, as much as those not being able to stick to the topic. When I would attempt to read their writing piece, I could not

make sense of it. From that point on, I realized the need to read to my students every day and make them write literature responses.

Research says reading aloud sparks memories so that every child will come to realize that they have stories to tell and important ideas to write about. This early work builds inspiration for writing by cultivating an environment in which the student learn to value their own stories, memories, and experiences as sources for writing (Davis and Hill 2003). I found that students were really eager to write when I asked them to write from a personal experience of theirs. I wrote this prompt on the board: "Write about an experience about a time when you had to live with someone else while your parents were away on a trip." Although every other line would repeat itself, they were writing without asking me, "Is this what you want?" or "Is this right?" Even my fourth grade student who was receiving special services on third grade reading level was writing to her heart's content. My real fascination with writing came when I began to teach fourth grade. There was no end to the many valuable ways I could spend time and effort helping my students develop into skilled writers.

Last year in my classroom of twenty-three students, most of them were classified as non-writers or beginning writers. Many of them experienced great difficulties in reading fluently and comprehending written text. When I observed this many students being off level in writing, I told myself I would expeditiously and creatively enhance the reading and writing connection. According to Donald Graves we read what has been written and we write in other to share our ideas and thoughts. After all, "Writing is the making of reading" (1994).

Comments on prior writing experiences of my fourth graders have been statements such as "I don't like writing" or "I don't know what to write." One student once stated, "I've never gone anywhere, so how can I write? Writing is only for people who have gone somewhere." My belief is that teachers should read daily to students to bring diverse experiences to them as well as to embrace the love of reading and to make the reading and writing connections. Teachers should reveal to students that reading will take them on an imaginary journey to many places.

After reading the research from the reading writing connection, I learned that natural literacy development is dependent on the reading and writing experiences of a child. Reading and writing should occur naturally to construct meaning in every day situations (Miller 1982; Wilson 1981). Reading and writing are interdependent processes that are essential to each other and mutually beneficial (Holt & Vacca 1984). As writing improves through daily communicative use, reading is enhanced (Goodman & Goodman 1983). The relationship between reading and writing is based on communication. Both processes should develop as a natural extension of the child's need to communicate (Wilson 1981). In other words, if reading and writing are to be communicative, then the reader needs to read with the sense of the writer, and the writer needs to write with the sense of the reader. The student reader needs to make sense of what the writer is communicating through the text, and the writer needs to make sure that his/her message is clear and understood by the reader. Children need to develop their communicative skills by having the opportunities to read and write (Aulls 1985; Holt and Vacca 1984; Smith 1983).

Research says that young children's phonological development shows that writing does not wait on reading: there is a dynamic relation between the two, indicating that each influences the other in the course of development (Stickland & Cullinan 2002). The reading framework shows shared reading, interactive reading, guided reading and independent reading. Therefore, in the writing framework, we have shared writing, interactive writing, guided writing and independent writing.

There are instructional components in the reading-writing connection. Meaning occurs when readers construct meaning from what they read. Writing provides readers the opportunity to clarify and communicate meaning. Form enhances reading comprehension and facilitates writing

for different purposes. In language good readers think about writers (author), and good writers think about readers (audience). Conventions include knowledge of grammatical structures, spelling, capitalization, and punctuation which all enhance the ability to create and communicate meaning through reading and writing.

Putting all of the instructional components together, we have writing. In writing, teachers must provide a classroom environment that creates respect for reading and writing while providing the framework for constructive instructional strategies.

I remember how I taught reading and writing during my first year of teaching. I taught them in isolation. The students did not make the reading/writing connection that resulted to poor quality of writing. As years went by, I learned that reading and writing should be connected to make learning meaningful. Reading and writing are reciprocal processes. Both are meaning-making process. When students experience reading, it provides a scaffold to support the learning of writing.

### **READING/WRITING STRATEGIES**

In an effort for students to be writers, they must read like writers. When students read, they learn the writing processes. Fletcher states that one reason for this may be the models that they draw upon. These students have also become more fluent readers, and it is not uncommon for them to read novels of two hundred pages or more. This is one of the reasons so many teachers have begun using picture books in upper grade level writing workshops. If you were to strip the illustrations from a book like *Faithful Elephants* (which we wouldn't suggest you actually do), what remains is a text very much the length of the writing your students are asked to do. From this model, students can learn about the size and scope of plot and character development in a way that helps them shape their own stories. Because picture books are short, they are easily rereadable. It is only in the rereading that we begin to notice the nuances of language, the way writers use detail to evolve all our senses, the subtleties of what gets explained and what is implied (Fletcher 1998).

I use picture books for a wide range of reasons. The primary reason is often the sheer pleasure of sharing a good story that is well illustrated with powerful pictures that engage and enthrall the listeners. Picture books – fiction or non-fiction —can enhance the experiences of the listener or reader. They model how stories are structured, demonstrate how writers keep the reader's interest, and show how the pictures can carry some of the story or give additional information. Writers draw on their experiences as readers to help them develop as writers. I usually make this reading/writing connection explicit to children by asking them to create a written piece based directly on a picture book they have just read. The use of models for children's own writing is one of the strategies identified as effective by Hillocks in his meta-analysis on research into writing (Hillocks 1994).

I remember working untiringly with two of my reluctant students. Daniel was a ten year old male from El Salvador whose English was limited and who was repeating fourth grade for the second time. Jamie was a new student who had recently moved to Houston from Chicago. She was a nine year old female who could not read or write proficiently. Both students had not met standards the year before on their TAKS Writing and Reading assessments and on the Stanford 10. I decided to do an individual plan of strategy implementation to help these children improve their reading and writing skills within a nine week learning cycle.

The first strategy I used to help the students was having them take ten minutes each morning to list things they had done the night before. This activity was called "Morning Notes." Each morning that they came to school, the students were told to jot down notes about what their plans were for the day. I did not have to check or mark their papers. This is a non-threatening strategy

for beginning writers. I found the strategy effective because as time passed the students were elaborating their sentence structure. This is one of my favorite strategies.

Using another strategy, instead of prewriting for ten minutes, I extended my prewriting time to fifteen minutes. I prepared a writing activity in the class entitled, "It All Started with An Apple." I gave each student an apple on his or her desk and asked the students to brainstorm all their ideas relating to the apple. They should not lift their pencils until the entire fifteen minutes had elapsed. Clear instructions were given. No questions were entertained during the prewriting time.

I became the observer and looked at each student who was seriously writing their thoughts down. I noticed that the beginning writers were reluctant to write and were probably concerned about their spelling. However, that did not stop them from continually writing. When the time was up, most of them did not want to stop writing.

I read the different writing responses of my students. There were two responses that captured my attention. The first writing response was unbelievable. One of my students related the apple concept to her personal narrative. The apple reminded her of her recently deceased mother who loved red apples. The second response was an apple story. Her story was from an apple's point of view. The apple came from the orchard to the farmer, to the factory, and finally to H-E-B. I could not believe how the students' vivid imagination was stimulated in the activity.

Other strategies and activities that were used with my class were personal writing, journal writing, reading aloud each day for twenty minutes, giving weekly prompts relating to something personal, sharing picture books with students, doing response writing, writing an adaptation to a story, utilizing the comic scripts from the Sunday newspapers, doing an overnight book program, and having students bring in their own diaries. Let me explain the strategies that were most effective in my reading and writing connection classroom.

Personal writing is writing about topics based on personal experiences. It has a setting, characters, events, and a plot. I should never be boring because students can relate to their own stories. My students like to write about their weekends, trips to various places, pets, friends, and favorite video games. These were the most popular topics to my fourth graders.

I use journal writing everyday to develop my students' writing competency, to meet specific goals, or to allow my students time for free writing. I do provide prompts to help my emergent writers develop their writing. One of the strategies that I use for the student journals is checking them to polish students' skills. (Sometimes I do not correct their journals because they are considered free writing.) I noticed my students' progress was building by leaps and bounds. They began using invented spelling and writing incomplete sentences; however, as time went by, the students showed progress in constructing complete sentences, beginning sentences with capital letters, and ending sentences with the appropriate punctuations. The students have gained extreme confidence that they are not afraid to take on any writing that may come their way. That's progress any teacher can be proud of! I credit my students' daily journal writing for their dramatic development.

There are many benefits of read alouds to my students. Read alouds enhance classroom instruction and improve academic achievement. Doing the read aloud in my class, I share the excitement, the suspense, the emotion, and the sheer fun of a new book and its intriguing or its annoying characters. Another benefit of reading aloud to my students is they became very quiet when they listen to good literature, and they can get through an entire book. Reading aloud to students that are below reading level will help them discover reading as an enjoyable meaning-making activity, and they will foster positive attitudes toward reading. Even older students would benefit from teacher read alouds.

Response writing is analyzing or comparing characters, commenting on the author's style, identifying fiction elements, summarizing, and noting ideas that have special personal meaning. *James and the Giant Peach* was a wonderful piece of literature to use for response writing. After reading it, my students were led to write something original in response. For example, after reading the novel, I gave my students the following prompts:

- I learned that ...
- I rate this story ...
- I think that ...
- I felt ...
- When ...

My students and I constructed a web for James, one of the main characters in the novel. Some of them enjoyed comparing James's two aunts, Aunt Sponge and Aunt Spiker. These were their favorite lines: "Behold my heavenly locks! And if I take off both my socks... You'll see my dainty toes." "But don't forget," said Aunt Spiker cried, "How much your tummy shows!" They loved rereading these lines, as well, "I'd capture all the nation's hearts! They'd give me all the leading parts! The stars would all resign!" "I think you'd make," Aunt Spiker said, "a lovely Frankenstein."

One form of creative writing is an adaptation to a story. Sometimes a scene from a book or, less frequently, an entire book will lend itself to an adaptation – a changed or rewritten version of a story. The students may also try to write a play adapted from the novel or story. My students wrote their own stories based on *James and the Giant Peach*, namely "Elena and the Giant Watermelon," "Jennifer and the Giant Strawberry," and "Nancy and the Giant Apple." Their listening skills were sharpened, and their creativity was enhanced by listening to the creative stories of others. They had so much fun! When I saw my students connecting reading and writing, I felt elated because I knew that this was the beginning of their success in years to come. Using these strategies allowed my students to build confidence in their writing. It also helped them to develop a stance toward reading that may not be developed in any other way. It allowed them to focus their thinking and explore their feelings. It helped "write to learn."

Whether reading or writing, words have the power to change my world, if only for the time it takes to get to end of the story. For me, words have always been magical. As I read *Cecil's Story* by George Ella Lyon and *The Stories Julian Tells* by Ann Cameron, I stressed to my students how words weave mystery and enchantment for the reader and the writer. I try to share my passion for words and stories with my students. I stress to students that writing is a form of expression and self-discovery. Davis and Hill state that our goal should be to help children recognized they have stories to tell and to tell them well. Also, we should teach children to pay attention to the world and to recognize it as a place full of ideas for writing (2003).

In my class, students would write to inform, entertain, weave dreams, and reflect. One of my writing activities for *James and the Giant Peach* was to have my students write to inform people about coming to the United States. The other writing prompt was, "What Would Life Be Like If My Parents Were Mean?" The task would range from free share (non-graded) to a one-topic, four-paragraph research paper, and then a story adaptation. My expectations of including vivid, descriptive words and strong sentences were given prior to the writing activity so my students would know what to include and how to compose. In turn, I was never bored with grading their papers! My students used extraordinary adjectives, supernatural sentences, and a vivid imagination in the story line. Some of the adjectives I used during my mini-lesson were fabulous, dainty, radiant, mammoth, colossal and enormous. According to Terri Beaver (1998) if words are purposely selected and are communicated clearly, vividly, and in a distinctly personal way, the writing, when read aloud, will sound like a lively conversation.

Since fourth grade is grade when the students are assessed statewide on their writing skills, this grade level is given greater emphasis in the writing area daily and weekly through the Language Arts Program. The million-dollar question is, “How does the fourth grade conduct a writing workshop that would ensure success for the students?” Well, my colleagues and I worked together as a team to instill success in all of our students. Ms. Kaldecut is one of those inspiring fourth grade teachers. When asked about the aspect of writing, she eagerly responded, “I think giving students an opportunity to write and express themselves is a wonderful footstool for those students who have creative minds and abilities.”

We all believed that writing allowed students to be themselves, thus exemplifying their personalities. We gave students a notebook/portfolio to organize their writings. Daily instructions were given in the areas of writing, and expectations were demonstrated for the students. For writers to grow and flourish, they must be provided an environment in which several things happen. First, writers must be immersed in joyful writing experiences. Second, writers must participate and collaborate in daily writing experiences. Third, writers must make choices. Writing classes should offer unlimited narrative or expository topic choices that allow students to share their latest ideas. Fourth, writers must know that their attempts will be celebrated. Every writer must be seen as having a next step, something to strive for. Fifth, writers (and teachers) must have ample time to write together. Sixth, writers must create for real purposes and real audiences. Finally, writers must give and receive ongoing, non-threatening relevant, specific feedback. The students were given ample opportunity to write and practice.

Sometimes I tell students to stop imagining things. Can we really stop imagining things? Students, along with many adults, commonly think of imagination as “making things up” – especially things of a bizarre or fanciful nature. Making things up is one aspect of imagination, but there are many other aspects as well. It takes imagination to plan wisely, anticipate outcomes, and identify other people’s feelings.

Supporting my students’ use of imagination and facilitating their understanding of the various ways people apply their imaginations promoted the development of divergent, flexible thinking and encouraged more appropriate and adaptive responses to their life’s daily challenges. Students began to realize that thinking in different and creative ways is not only fun but also practical and beneficial. We celebrated creativity for what it was - an act of discovery, not an exercise in topic cloning.

As I work with students, I came to realize that their heads are filled with vivid ideas, yet when they sit down to write, those ideas too often come out mundane and sounding like everyone else’s. Even though students have amazing ideas swirling around in their minds, it is hard for them to recognize those ideas, select those ideas that are worthy topics for writing and get them down so readers can clearly understand the content of the piece. Students think faster than they can write. It is virtually impossible for young writers to compare all the things they want to say at the speed they think of them. So, students will find they can’t write about everything, they have to narrow their ideas down to those that are manageable. Then through elaboration and use of details, they bring their ideas to life.

My students didn’t always write for themselves. Many students played the “writing game” in order to please me. They wrote what they perceived would give them a good grade or to finish and move on to the next task. As my students began to write, they would often ask, “How long does my paper have to be?” and “Is this what you want?” Keep in mind, when students do something different, or just can’t pull it together on an assignment, they have to be honored for the struggle and not the outcome. We, as teachers, need to know when to encourage, when to teach, and when to back off.

At the end of one especially long, tiring school day, I remember saying to my principal that the complexities of teaching are humbling, and I don't always feel I have done justice to the work that's needed. I particularly feel this with children who struggle as writers and readers and can't quite seem to get their hands to execute what their eyes perceive and their minds imagine. It's difficult, but necessary work, to help children make sense of something that doesn't.

Narrative texts, biographies, realistic fiction, and fables are vehicles for exploring and reflecting on the universal theme of imagination. The term *imagination* implies mental activity freed from real-life roles, rules, and conventions. The product of this process is usually highly individualistic, so my students would be given a variety of choices and considerable scope for expression. Learning about the topic "imagination," students will be engaged in discussions about what counts as imaginative and what is involved in using one's imagination. Students will also be engaged in discussions around imagination's more interpretive, individualistic, and functional aspects.

## **THE LITERATURE**

One of the most interesting novels that my students enjoyed was *James and the Giant Peach* by Roald Dahl. In the year 2000, I read this book to my students and discovered how they enjoyed it. I integrated my reading lesson with science, math, and art. The lesson was fun and motivating. The students' reading and writing skills were enhanced. My students were able to relate to the theme of the story. The story was about James, who became an orphan when his parents died. His aunts adopted him. James was unhappy because his aunts mistreated him. He had so many bad things going on in his life. One day an old man gave him some magical crystals. James tripped and the paper bag burst open. The crystals were scattered in all directions including the peach tree. His life changed when he climbed inside the giant peach and met new friends and adventures. The story ended when the Giant Peach landed on the Empire State Building in New York City. James and his friends were welcomed with a big parade. He lived in the pit of the peach in Central Park.

My students read this book with interest and enthusiasm. They looked forward to our shared reading sessions and teacher-led discussions. I like this literature because it contained all the elements of a good short story. The students could relate to the characters in the story. The setting was in England and then America. The plot was simple. James' life was from an unhappy home but ended happily when he and his friends reached their destination in his favorite place. In addition to the language arts curriculum, I brought in social studies when we learned about these two places. Science also was interesting for my class. We did research on the different insects in relation to the characters in the story.

## **UNIT BACKGROUND**

Exploring this unit will give students the opportunity to practice and expand their imaginations as well as use their writing to explore and reflect further on imagination. Students will present their ideas through various means, including written text, oral discussions and debate, charts, lists, drawings, and group-based interactive activities. Students will also be given the opportunity to express themselves effectively through written text, using models of biographical writing.

The aim of this unit is not to give students a scientific understanding of imagination, neither is its purpose simply to inspire wonderment. Rather, its aim is to broaden students' conceptions, so that they will realize that they use their imaginations in all mental activity. Teaching this unit will develop academic skills across the curriculum. Students can view the topic imagination through fine art. They can use the artworks to explore the imagination in images rather than words. In social studies, this unit will help students become aware of life in another culture or

time or become aware of how imagination can lead to a better reality. In science, students can use their imaginations to think of events that might lie in the future. In math, students will be encouraged to use their imagination to approach problems in a new way. Just remember, imagination is something to be cultivated as a power that can accomplish great things.

In order to teach the novel *James and the Giant Peach*, I will use the following ideas to guide my instructions. First, I will introduce the book to acquaint my students with the story. The author and illustrator are part of my opening discussion to brainstorm students' prior knowledge and to motivate students' interests. Second, I will use various activities to highlight the literary elements the students will be asked to observe throughout the reading of the book. Third, I intend to teach vocabulary words in sequential order so that the students will be able to identify the extraordinary words in each chapter. Fourth, I will lead the discussion by preparing questions that relate to their understanding. Sometimes the students will work in groups when the questions are at a level of higher order thinking skills like synthesizing and evaluating. For the story's culminating activity, I will ask the students to write their own version of the story. The students will work in groups and create their own plays based on their stories.

I will also make reproducible worksheets in response to the pages that the students read. The students will use the questions to guide them as they read each chapter and write the answers down for group/class discussions. The number of vocabulary words will increase as the students add the new words to their vocabulary list that they encounter in their reading or discussion.

I plan to incorporate independent and group writing activities. For the independent group activities, the students can write an opening chapter to *James and the Giant Peach* before having read the story. Another activity is writing a story episode from another character's point of view. They can also draw an advertisement. Group activities include conducting an interview, making a mural, and writing factual and fictional accounts of the weather.

Personification is an interesting technique. When reading the story, I can give the human characteristics or qualities to non-humans in the story. The students may recognize these traits in people they know or in characters from another piece of literature. Students can create a chart that details people or characters that have similar traits as the insects and James. Remind the students to be respectful of other's feelings.

The time frame for this lesson will be about four weeks. It will take two chapters a day. I will integrate language arts with science first, math next, then social studies, and finally art. The culminating activity will be a class presentation in the presence of an audience. I can extend this time frame depending on my students' needs in that way I am accommodating all learners.

## CONCLUSION

I designed my curriculum unit to be able to help students appreciate literature and at the same time prepare them for the state TAKS writing assessment. This interdisciplinary unit serves as a structure for addressing several learning objectives from the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills. It will provide opportunities for students to imagine, write creatively, and share their learning with their peers and various audiences.

As I have mentioned above, I consider *James and the Giant Peach* a model of a picture book. I like using picture books as models because the visual perception creates a vivid picture of the characters or setting. *James and the Giant Peach* is a good example of a picture novel because every chapter has an illustration. According to Dorothy Strickland (2002), picture books are valuable tools that focus students' attention on important information and aid their understanding as they read. Picture can make abstract concepts more concrete.



I want to be able to teach my students writing skills not only to pass the required assessment but also to enable them to effectively communicate through writing. I want to expose the students to quality literature and make a difference in the quality of their writing. I hope that the curriculum unit will prepare them to master reading and writing tasks that build knowledge, develop critical thinking skills, and produce original ideas and opinions which will, in turn, guide the development of academic writing skills.

## **LESSONS IN CREATIVITY**

### **Lesson One: It All Started with a Peach**

#### ***Objectives***

Prewriting or brainstorming strategies help students access their existing knowledge about a topic before they begin to write. This activity is based on the technique of free writing in which students set to paper everything that comes into their minds, no matter how loosely connected, for a set period of time. One objective is to free the student from the constriction of structure and to encourage a period of free association of ideas. A second objective is to help students discover the many possible directions in which a topic may be develop.

#### ***Materials***

The students will need pencil, paper, and a fresh peach for each student.

#### ***Procedures***

Give a peach to each student. Instruct them that the peach is their writing topic. They have to write for fifteen minutes about their apple. They may write anything that comes into their heads. Remind the students not to worry about spelling, grammar, or style. The only rule that they keep in mind is to keep writing, not lifting their pencils. Do not entertain questions during the prewriting time. Set your timer for fifteen minutes. The teacher may observe students' actions as they write. Watch the class carefully and take notes.

#### ***Evaluation***

1. Allow the students to read their written work. The outcome here is unpredictable. Some fluent writers will come up with quality work. The others will probably come make a list. The teacher will be deeply impressed by the awesome diversity of the responses of their writing. Give immediate feedback.
2. Assign individual student/group to do research on the origin and uses of a peach or how farmers grow peaches. Write a summary of their research work or demonstrate it using a paper bag (project).
3. Think and compose a story about a peach. Make sure that the students include the elements of the story.
4. Create a rap or a poem (haiku) about a peach.
5. Celebrate the creativity of the work. Display students' work.

### **Lesson Two: Journey to the Homeland**

#### ***Objectives***

The objectives for this lesson are to gain cultural knowledge of England and America, understand that cultural differences exist between the two countries, and gain real life experiences as the students plan their trip to England by using actual airline and hotel information. The students will research important information about England and America.

### ***Materials***

The materials needed are 8.5 X 11 inch white paper, colored tag board, teacher made travel log, passport (teacher made), one small photo of each student, writing pad, and pencils, a paper cutter, a long neck stapler, a computer, an ink pad, rubber stamp, and lamination machine if desired.

### ***Procedures***

Print and make enough copies of the travelogue and passport (form) for each student. Check out library books relating to England and America. Use travel magazines to find airline fares and hotel accommodations in England and in America. You may printout from the Internet the airfares of various airlines and hotels. Provide each student a copy. Procure one identification style photo for each student. Students make their own passport using the photo. The teacher must create a stamp for the “visa.”

### ***Evaluation***

Allow the students to develop their own rubric to assess the writing assignments.

The primary evaluation requires the students to write a composition about their travel from or to England/America. The students can illustrate a famous landmark in England/America and write about it. Create a colorful postcard from their country. Students work in groups to create a poster to promote tourism in the country of their choice. Cut and paste pictures from magazines and create their travel scrapbook. Be able to describe each picture.

## **Lesson Three: The Peach Journaling**

### ***Objectives***

First, the students will explore self-expression through journal writing. Develop an understanding of the use of journals.

### ***Materials***

The students will use the following materials: computers, pencil and paper, previously prepared graphic timelines, construction paper, crayons, and markers.

### ***Procedures***

Explain to the students that the journal is from the Giant Peach’s point of view. Prepare a journal entry using a prompt from the *James and the Giant Peach* graphic timeline. Ask the students to discuss with their partner an event from the story.

### ***Evaluation***

Ask students an event from their timeline and make an interesting story. Be able to write a journal entry describing it. Discuss how the events in the graphic timeline are individualized. Create a class production like a skit or a play or a reader’s theater of the Peach Journal and be able to present it to an audience. Create a timeline and be able to explain each event. Invent another means of transporting James and his friends. Be able to write your story.

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### **Supplemental Sources**

- Angelillo, Janet. *Writing About Reading: From Book Talk to Literary Essays*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 2003.  
This is a book that provides writing teachers with strategies, genres of writing about reading, literary essays and writing assessment.
- Carr, Janine. *A Child Went Forth: Reflective Teaching with Young Readers and Writers*, 1999.  
This book imparts a thorough and realistic portrayal of a teacher's life in an unbiased classroom. It is a book that will inspire teachers.
- Carter, James. *Creating Writers: A Creative Writing Manual for Schools*. New York: Routledge Falmer, 2001.  
This book is designed to help teachers work with young learners on developing their writing skills.
- Lesure, Debbie. *Help Me Learn to Write: Strategies for Teaching Struggling Writers*. Peterborough, NH: Crystal Springs Book, 2002.  
This book conveys practical, easy to implement-tested lessons and activities with relevant research.
- Olson, Janet. *Envisioning Writing: Toward an Integration of Drawing and Writing*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 1992.  
This author describes interesting and helpful classroom strategies to help teachers better understand children who are visual learners.

### **Videos**

- Successful Classrooms: Effective Teaching Strategies for Raising Achievement in Reading and Writing*. VHS. Dir. Linda Fisher. NTSC. 1998.
- Effective Writing Skills*. VHS. NTSC. 2000. (Also available in DVD)
- Readers are Leaders*. Bridgestone Multimedia Group.

### **Websites**

*Highlights' Teacher Net.* <<http://www.teachernet.com>>.

This website gives easy to follow lesson plans for creative writing teachers.

“Lesson Plan Index.” *Read. Write. Think. NCTE. 2006.* <<http://www.readwritethink.org/lessons/index.asp>>.

“Professional Development.” NCTE. 2006. <<http://www.ncte.org/profev/online>>.

*Scholastic.* 2006. <<http://www.teacher.scholastic.com/>>.

This website is highly recommended for teachers to view some interesting lessons in creative writing integrated with reading.

“Tips for Parents from the National Council of Teachers of English: Helping Your Teenager to Write Better.” NCTE. <[http://www.ncte.org/library/files/Parents\\_Students/tips-parents.pdf](http://www.ncte.org/library/files/Parents_Students/tips-parents.pdf)>.

“Tips for Students—So You Want to Be a Better Writer?” NCTE. <[http://www.ncte.org/library/files/Parents\\_Students/tips-students.pdf](http://www.ncte.org/library/files/Parents_Students/tips-students.pdf)>.