



Illinois Wesleyan University
Digital Commons @ IWU

John Wesley Powell Student Research
Conference

2011, 22nd Annual JWP Conference

Apr 9th, 9:00 AM - 10:00 AM

What Works in Writing

Margaret Byrne
Illinois Wesleyan University

Robin Leavitt, Faculty Advisor
Illinois Wesleyan University

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.iwu.edu/jwprc>



Part of the [Education Commons](#)

Byrne, Margaret and Leavitt, Faculty Advisor, Robin, "What Works in Writing" (2011). *John Wesley Powell Student Research Conference*. 8.

<https://digitalcommons.iwu.edu/jwprc/2011/ESposters/8>

This Event is protected by copyright and/or related rights. It has been brought to you by Digital Commons @ IWU with permission from the rights-holder(s). You are free to use this material in any way that is permitted by the copyright and related rights legislation that applies to your use. For other uses you need to obtain permission from the rights-holder(s) directly, unless additional rights are indicated by a Creative Commons license in the record and/ or on the work itself. This material has been accepted for inclusion by faculty at Illinois Wesleyan University. For more information, please contact digitalcommons@iwu.edu.

©Copyright is owned by the author of this document.

What Works with Writing?

Maggie Byrne

Educational Studies Department

mbyrne1@iwu.edu



Methodology

I developed a four-week workshop plan involving three large-scale writing projects with a relevant mini-lesson, and three smaller experiences.

Data was drawn from:

- Personal Reflections
- Lesson Plans
- Student Work
- Transcripts from Writing Conferences



Research Questions

- 1.What does a supportive, process-based writing program look like?
- 2.What techniques and practices can I use to motivate and engage students in writing?

Goals

- Differentiate writing experiences to support students at ALL levels
- Balance grammar instruction with writing workshop model
- Provide consistent time for writing



W
o
r
k
s
h
o
p

Participants

- 26 fourth grade students
 - 14 boys and 12 girls
 - Ages 9 and 10
- Mostly middle-class, white
- 1 gifted in Language Arts
- 5 identified for reading/writing support

Setting

- Self-contained 4th grade class
- K-5 Elementary School of 713
 - Residential neighborhood
 - Mid-sized Midwestern city

Results

Evaluating the successes and shortcomings of my experience, I found:

- Student-Teacher writing conferences provide opportunity to tailor assignment to needs of individual students.
- Graphic organizers help struggling writers begin the process.
- Public and personal celebration make students excited about writing.
- Students take personal responsibility for quality writing when they are allow to choose a topic in which they are invested.
- Mini-lessons should focus more on process than grammar in early stages to develop workshop mindset.
- Low-stress, ungraded assignments build positive attitude toward writing while still practicing writing skills.
- Given choice, students often use writing to deal with personal trails.
- When the teacher is excited about writing, the students will be, too!

