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## **Building a Community of Writers: Implementing Writer's Workshop in a First Grade Classroom**

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# Building a Community of Writers in a First Grade Classroom

Kristen Gattuso · Educational Studies · Illinois Wesleyan University



## Research Questions

- What does writer's workshop look like in the first grade classroom?
- How might the writer's workshop model motivate students to express themselves and stimulate an interest in writing?
- How might explicitly teaching the writing process improve the quality of writing?



## Data Collection

- Field notes, student work samples, photographs, lesson plans

## Methodology

- Writer's workshop was implemented twice a week for 45 minutes each day over the course of three months.
- The framework of the writer's workshop began with a ten-minute mini-lesson that included an interactive read-aloud. About thirty minutes of workshop time followed. The last five minutes were devoted to sharing.

## Findings and Implications

- First graders were capable of both learning the writing process and applying it to improve the quality of their writing.
- Clear and meaningful purpose to writing positively affected students' motivation and quality of work.
- Providing choice and ensuring student success encouraged motivation.
- Planning mini-lessons according to student need was key in improving their quality of writing.
- Students demonstrated independence in writing and applied what they learned in writer's workshop to other content areas.
- Modeling the writing process and a love of writing was imperative to instilling a passion for writing in students at the early elementary level.
- **"I've never seen this kind of writing from my first graders this early on in the year." (my cooperating teacher)**

Acknowledgements I owe a huge thank you to my cooperating teacher, my faculty advisor, and my wonderful students—for taking this journey with me and supporting me along the way

