

Interactive Writing

Basic Procedure

PLEASE NOTE: It is critical that teachers know what each student understands about letters, sounds and concepts of print prior to using this technique. The teacher uses this information to help select the level of participation each student will take during the session.

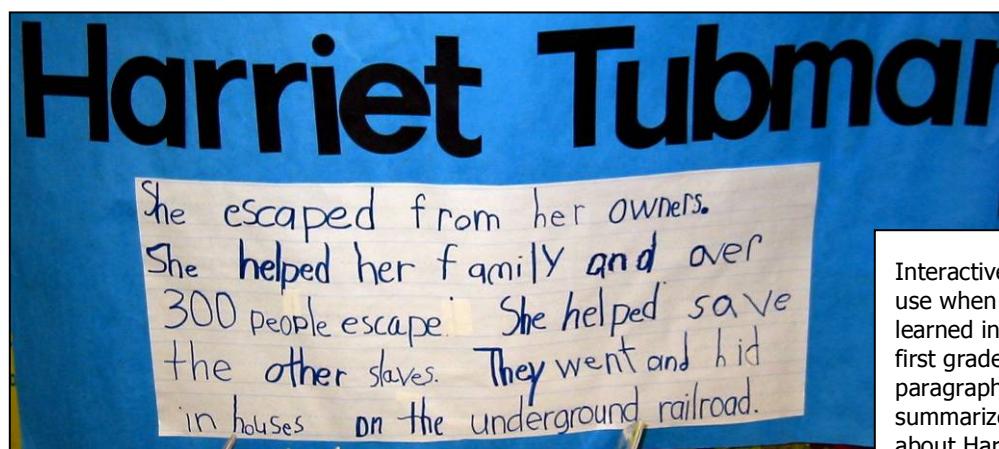
1. The teacher and children compose a short text. The subject may include the retelling of a familiar story, a classroom experience, a list for a recipe, labels for a science project, etc.
2. Once the message is decided upon, the teacher helps the children remember what will be written by repeating it with the children several times. Next, count how many words will be written in the message.
3. The teacher and children write the message word by word on a piece of chart paper. The teacher guides the children through the concepts about print as necessary throughout by reminding them of conventions such as where to start on the page, what to do at the end of a line, spaces between words etc. The teacher invites students to write words or letters within the text as they are able. Children may practice on a practice sheet before adding their bit to the chart. A letter chart, name chart, word wall, and teacher modelling on a chalkboard or "magnadoodle" provide additional supports where needed.
4. Words that are not known by the group are said slowly several times in order to be analysed for the sounds and predict letters that may appear in the word. Children may supply some or all of the letters. The teacher provides those not given by the children. During the process of constructing a word, the teacher reminds children of what they already know about words that may help them figure out a new word.
5. As each word is written the whole text is reread from the beginning in order that the children will know which word is to be written next.
6. It is important that the product of the interactive writing session be readable by the children. Post-it correction tape may be used to fix up any errors in letter formation or placement as the text is completed.
7. The resulting text is posted where all students may reread it independently throughout the day. Children will also refer to this text as a resource for their own independent writing.



2



3



Interactive writing is an ideal tool to use when reviewing new information learned in the content areas. This first grade class has written a paragraph together which summarizes what they have learned about Harriet Tubman.

Name: _____

My Sentences for the week of _____

Winter is a cold season.

In winter see rain and cloudy
skies.

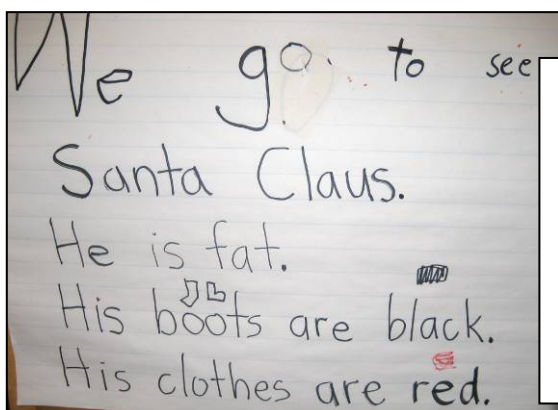
In winter we can play in puddles.

We need to wear warm clothes
in winter.

Interactive Writing



Interactive writing can play a dual role when it is used to not only teach students how it works, but the writing itself is teaching the grade level standards as well as reminding students about reading strategies and skills.



This kindergarten teacher has used a combination of shared and interactive writing to show students how to write about seeing Santa Claus at a school assembly. The first four words of the first sentence have been written by the students in class because they are sight words the students already know. The rest of the text was provided orally by the students and written down by the teacher so that the students could read it back to themselves. The graphics for boots, black, and red were added to the chart as anchor points to help these emerging readers "read" this extended text on their

Assessment Considerations:

1. Teachers may observe the ability of individual children to contribute sounds and words to the text as an assessment during the lesson. During small group interactive writing sessions different colored pens are given to each student and the text is signed by the students at the end of the session. This provides a record of what was contributed by each student.
2. In order to involve all children in the experience, it is important that the teacher is aware of the individual abilities of the students. The teacher is then able to invite children to contribute successfully.

Further Reading:

Button, Johnson, and Furgerson (1996) "Interactive writing in a primary classroom." *The Reading Teacher*, 49 (6). 446-494.

Dorne, et al. (1998) *Apprenticeship in Literacy*. pp.58-64. Stenhouse.

Fountas and Pinnell (2001) *Interactive Writing*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

— (1996) *Guided Reading: Good First Teaching for All Children*. pp. 23-38, 164, 170, 182. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

Swartz, S. et al. (2002) *Interactive Writing and Interactive Editing*. Carlsbad, CA: Dominic Press.