

Whimsical Writers in Kindergarten

I. Overview

Hello! Allow me to introduce myself... I'm Grace! Or as my students call me, Ms. Cecilio (*Su-see-lyo*). I currently am teaching a Transitional Kindergarten/Kindergarten combination class. With the new Common Core standards, the expectation in Kindergarten has truly risen to new heights. Students are expected to fluently read, add, subtract, and write multiple sentences at the age of 5. Not quite what you and I did in Kindergarten.

So the big question is, how can I effectively reach these little wiggle monsters and engage them in reading and learning how to write a paragraph? Through MUSIC, of course! One of my favorite integrations of *music* is in our daily writing, and here's how I do just that...

II. Common Core Standards Addressed

- **W.K.1** Use a combination of drawing, dictating, and writing to compose opinion pieces in which they tell a reader the topic or the name of the book they are writing about and state an opinion or preference about the topic or book.
- **W.K.2** Use a combination of drawing, dictating, and writing to compose informative/explanatory texts in which they name what they are writing about and supply some information about the topic.
- **W.K.3** Use a combination of drawing, dictating, and writing to narrate a single event or several loosely linked events, tell about the events in the order in which they occurred, and provide a reaction to what happened.
- **L.K.2** Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English capitalization, punctuation, and spelling when writing.
 - a. Capitalize the first word in a sentence and the pronoun I.
 - b. Recognize and name end punctuation.
 - c. Write a letter or letters for most consonant and short-vowel sounds (phonemes).
 - d. Spell simple words phonetically, drawing on the knowledge of sound-letter relationships.
- **RF.K.3** Know and apply grade-level phonics and word analysis skills in decoding words both in isolation and in text.
 - a. Demonstrate basic knowledge of one-to-one letter-sound correspondences by producing the primary sounds or many of the most frequent sounds for each consonant.
 - c. Read common high-frequency words by sight (e.g., the, of, to, you, she, my, is, are, do, does).

III. Curriculum Design Outline

This curriculum is designed to be implemented in several stages throughout the year. Pacing plan is a *suggested* timeline and can be altered according to students' needs. Pacing also reflects an August–June school year.

<p>Stage 1: Letters & Sounds (August – June; 9 months)</p>	<p>This is a daily routine introduced at the Beginning of the Year. Using music and dance movements to introduce and continuously practice the alphabet letters and sounds is an excellent way to help students remember this abstract concept.</p> <p>I use the same song in our daily morning routine, where my students perform a dance movement to represent each letter. In order to provide some variety and excitement, I will occasionally play other fun letter–sound videos to help solidify their grasp of the letters and their sounds.</p> <p>This is very important to begin the year and establish routines with these songs. Students will understand what is expected of them and will quickly learn the building blocks of reading.</p> <p>Some of my favorites: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zd8agfCf71s https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=36IBDpTRVNE https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pyKdUpJQBTY https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zNmhts4un3c</p>
<p>Stage 2: Sight Words/High Frequency Words (August – June; 9 months)</p>	<p>For any beginning reader, learning “sight words” or “high frequency words” is extremely important. These are the words that are difficult to “sound out” and need to be read quickly. This is the perfect opportunity to incorporate music!</p> <p>Students learn songs that help them recognize and spell these words. As we move to writing sentences, my students use these songs to spell each word.</p> <p>Although there are many different resources for this purpose, my absolute favorites are <i>Heidi Songs</i>. Here are some examples: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=W5n85SyaXOM https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xZsORjBDGzc</p> <p>There are songs for words for high frequency words up to 2nd grade, in addition to number and color words.</p> <p>Note: My kids <u>love</u> the little dance that goes with each song. That cannot be excluded from their singing. 😊</p>
<p>Stage 3: Sentence Structure</p>	<p>Now that students have learned the relationship between letters and the sounds they make and an array of high frequency words,</p>

<p>(November – June; 7 months) NOTE: Start date is flexible dependent on the readiness of students.</p>	<p>it's time to put it together in a sentence.</p> <p>Grammar and sentence structure can be overwhelming and difficult to remember. Starting with a capital letter, spaces, punctuation at the end, etc. can be overwhelming to a little writer. This is why I suggest easing the pressure with song.</p> <p>https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0Wrv_ZviMEc</p> <p>This song is a good introduction to the structure. With plenty of modeling and guided writing, students will begin to understand the parts of a sentence. Soon students will be able to write on their own.</p> <p>Begin with sentence frames in which students can fill in the blank with their knowledge of sight words and phonics. (Ex: I like to go to _____. or We learn _____ at school.)</p> <p>Then students can move into constructing their own sentences. Beginning with orally sharing their sentence to a partner, teacher, and whole class, students are able to dictate a complete sentence before going to paper. This makes the transition easier, as students tend to write how they speak. Teacher should consistently model and help students practice speaking in complete sentences. Allow students time to independently write a sentence to a given prompt. This can be derived from the current unit or theme. (Ex: What animal do you want as a pet? How can you help your community?)</p> <p>NOTE: Remind students to use their sight word songs and letter sounds throughout their writing. These songs should still be part of your daily routine.</p>
<p>Stage 4: Expanding Sentence Structure & Grammar (January – June; 6 months)</p>	<p>Now that students are more comfortable with writing a complete sentence, it is time to introduce various sentence structures such as different punctuation.</p> <p>https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=m-QM6Q9LBW8</p> <p>As students improve their writing, introduce how to “expand” a sentence with adjectives or <i>describing words</i>. Model this in front of the class. Teacher can take an example sentence and find words to add and expand the sentence. Students can benefit from shared writing in whole group or small group mini lessons.</p> <p>https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5hIqdPrH-k https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3JZi2oDvPs4 https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rrSY1dSvdio</p>

<p>Stage 5: Building a Paragraph & Transition Words (April – June; 3 months)</p>	<p>Telling a story or sequencing directions is what I have found to be the easiest transition to paragraph writing for these little writers.</p> <p>Prior to this, the class has been orally retelling stories using Transition Words (<i>first, next, then, last</i>) in complete sentences. At this point they are familiar with how transition words help tell a story. I use this song to help them remember the order. <i>(Unfortunately, this is not a recorded song so please use your imagination.)</i></p> <p>♪ Good writers! (Good writers!) Tell their story (Tell their story) In the order (In the order) That it happened (That it happened) First, Next, Then, Last (First, Next, Then, Last) ♪</p> <p>Students can create “books” to begin their paragraph writing. Students will write one sentence on each page, illustrating each step of their story or direction. Eventually, the book format can be removed and students will understand that this group of sentences create a paragraph.</p>
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IV. Conclusion

And there you have it! My curriculum design for implementing music for your primary writers. Music is such an important element for many students. It accesses a part of their brain that improves memory and understanding of concepts across the curriculum. I have definitely seen the difference in my classroom.

Thank you! ☺