



Transactional Writing: Argument

LEVEL 1i 1ii 1iii 2 3 4 5

Going to School

THE LEARNING CONTEXT

The teacher wanted to extend her students' writing from simple accounts to other forms, and to demonstrate the different purposes of writing. This focus lasted for two weeks.

During this time the students discussed things at school that "aren't fair", giving their reasons and generating possible solutions. They also considered how they could let their principal know about their problems and what they could say about them.

After further discussion the teacher modelled a letter to the principal about a problem with the sports equipment, stating her case with reasons, and offering a solution.

Students then drafted their own letters about things they thought should be rectified. They shared the letters, and helped to draw up a chart with some simple guidelines for persuasive writing, including:

- Tell what the problem is.
- Say why you think it isn't fair.
- Say what you can do about it.

Following these first attempts the teacher used literature to develop their ability to express opinions and give reasons. She asked them: "What would you say to Goldilocks to persuade her not to go into the bears' house?"

The teacher and the students then read "Our Teacher, Miss Pool" (Ready to Read) together.

In pairs, the students discussed how they would like to come to school and what they would say to their parents to persuade them. They shared their responses with the class, and the teacher did some informal role plays with students.

The students wrote their drafts while the teacher walked around, conferencing with individuals. After they had shared their work it was edited, and published by the teacher.

Teacher-student conversations

While giving feedback:

Teacher: Who are you writing this for?

Greer: Mum.

Teacher: Why would you like to go by scooter?

Greer: So I can feel the wind.

Teacher: Why don't you add that to your piece?

Teacher: Could you have used a full stop?

Greer: Yes.

Teacher: Show me where.

Teacher: Did you follow all the steps from our chart?

Let's go and check it together.

INTEGRATING READING AND WRITING

Reading programmes provide many opportunities for students to read a range of texts that demonstrate different purposes for writing. Texts also provide correct models of writing. Interaction during guided and shared reading sessions can give opportunities for students to identify the common conventions of writing such as vocabulary and grammar, which affect understanding.

Greer's teacher should consider her current interests and capacity to persuade someone of a point of view, when selecting texts for guided and shared reading. Inferential thinking could be promoted by exploring opinions with Greer in reading discussions.

WHERE TO NEXT?

To move Greer towards the next learning step, the teacher might help her to focus on:

Sentences

- writing a simple sentence correctly.

Punctuation

- extending understanding and use of punctuation (capital letters and full stops) for sentences.

Spelling

- extending spelling knowledge of high-frequency words (Spellwrite lists 1-2).

These skills will be developed in the context of a rich language environment where reading and writing are supported by discussion. Explicit teaching can occur in modelled and shared writing sessions and during conferencing. It can also occur as the teacher gives Greer detailed feedback.



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CURRICULUM LINKS

English in the New Zealand Curriculum

Level 1: Writing Functions

Transactional Writing: Students should write instructions and recount events in authentic contexts.

Levels 1 and 2: Reading and Writing Processes

Exploring Language: Students should explore choices made by writers, and identify and use the common conventions of writing and organisation of text which affect understanding.

Thinking Critically: Students should identify and express meanings in written texts, drawing on personal background, knowledge and experience.

English in the New Zealand Curriculum, pages 35-36

REFERENCE

Ministry of Education. (1994). *English in the New Zealand Curriculum*. Wellington: Learning Media.



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WHAT THE WORK SHOWS: Greer is able to make and substantiate a personal statement and opinion as a response to a story. She can relate her situation to a fictional context.

Student's first draft

Deeper features

Ideas

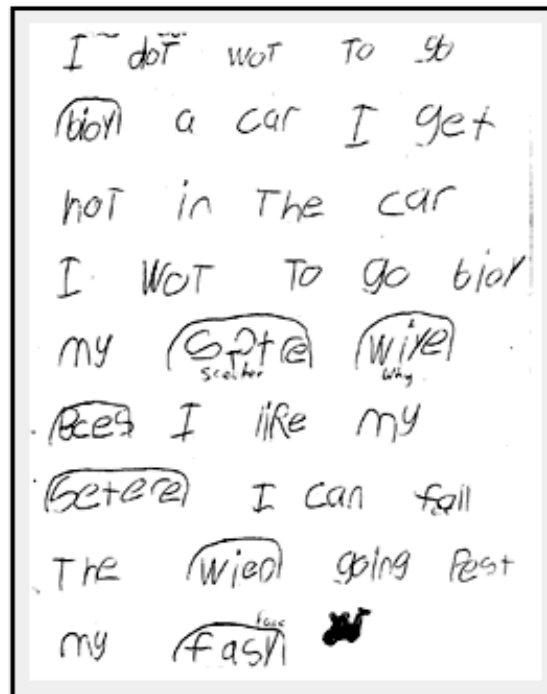
Demonstrates some reasoning in ideas.

Sentences

Uses simple sentences.

Vocabulary

Attempts to use some content and high-frequency words.



I dot wot to go bioy a car I get hot in the car I
 wot to go bioy my stctre wiye Bces I like my
 setere I can foll the wied going pest my fasy

[I don't want to go by a car. I get hot in the
 car. I want to go by my scooter. Why?
 Because I like my scooter. I can feel the wind
 going past my face.]

Surface features

Spelling

Spells some high-frequency words correctly.

Identifies initial letter sounds.

Identifies dominant sounds in words and records some accurately.

Layout

Leaves spaces between words.

Strong sense of directionality.



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Student's first draft

I dot wot to go
 (bio) a car I get
 hot in the car
 I wot to go bio
 my (S)te (W)ie
 scooter why
 (bes) I like my
 (sete) I can fall
 The (wied) going best
 my (fash) 