



Transactional Writing: Argument

LEVEL 1i 1ii **1iii** 2 3 4 5

Stay Up Late

THE LEARNING CONTEXT

Over three days the teacher introduced argument or persuasive writing, drawing on her childhood experience of wanting badly to do something which her parents disagreed with. As a class and then in small groups, the students brainstormed and listed things they really wished they could do. They each chose one thing from their lists and discussed their reasons for wanting to experience it.

In pairs, the students discussed why their parents disagreed with them. To focus discussion further, the teacher asked them to consider two questions: How can you get mum or dad to change their mind? What could you say to them to convince them?

They discussed the possibilities and impossibilities of having their own way. The teacher roved about during the discussion sessions, encouraging students to elaborate.

Choosing the topic of “Wearing Skates Inside”, the teacher then provided an argument model using a shared writing approach.

After that, the students wrote their drafts. The teacher roved about during the drafting process, asking questions and conferencing with individuals. The students shared their writing and were asked to re-read for meaning, focusing on adding more detail for their readers.

The students were also expected to proofread for spelling and punctuation before the teacher prepared the writing for publishing.

Teacher-student conversations

Before the draft:

- Teacher: What usually happens just before Mum puts out your light?
- Ryan: Um, Mum closes the curtains and she turns off the TV.
- Teacher: You’ve got a television in your room? Gee, you’re lucky. How much TV are you allowed to watch when you’re in bed?
- Ryan: Only two programmes.
- Teacher: That’s quite a lot. Do you think you’d be able to make a promise to Mum in your writing that you could do all these things by yourself? You’ve got to make it sound really convincing.

INTEGRATING READING AND WRITING

Reading programmes provide opportunities for students to read a range of texts while reading for enjoyment and information. During guided and shared reading the teacher can help students identify meaning, relating it to their experience and knowledge, and explore the choices made by writers, such as choice of vocabulary.

Ryan’s teacher should consider his current interest, and capacity to persuade someone of a point of view when selecting texts for guided and shared reading. Inferential thinking and reasoning could be promoted by exploring opinions with him in reading discussions.

WHERE TO NEXT?

To move Ryan towards the next learning step, the teacher might encourage him to focus on:

- Sentences
- developing compound sentences
 - varying sentence beginnings.
- Spelling
- exploring vowel sounds.

These skills will be developed by the teacher in a rich language environment where reading and writing are supported by discussion. Explicit teaching of skills will occur in modelled and shared writing sessions and during conferencing.

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: Ryan argues his point thoroughly on a matter that is obviously important to him. He attempts to convey an opinion, and expands his idea with as many reasons as he can think of. This is his draft, with the teacher's response prior to publication.

Student's first draft

Deeper features

Ideas

Expresses ideas, shows some reasoning.

Sentences

Uses simple sentences.

Attempts compound sentences.

Vocabulary

Uses mainly high-frequency words and some topic-related words.

I wish I was aloud to stay up late. I will proms to put my sawf to bed. And shout my cotins. I will tone off my litght swich. I will tone off the t.v.. I will woch two t.v. programs and then all go to bed.

[I wish I was allowed to stay up late. I will promise to put myself to bed and shut my curtains. I will turn off my light switch. I will turn off the T.V. I will watch two T.V. programmes and then I'll go to bed.]

Surface features

Grammar

Writes a simple sentence correctly.

Punctuation

Uses capital letters and full stops with support.

Spelling

Spells most high-frequency words correctly.

Records dominant sounds in order.



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Student's first draft

30.8.01

I wish I was
^{allowed}
aloud to stay
 up late. I will
^{promise}
promis to put
 my ^{self} sawf to bed.
 And ^{shut} shout my
^{curtains} cot ins. I will ^{turn} tone
 off my ^{light} litght
^{switch} swich. I will ^{turn} tone
 off the t.v.. I will
^{watch} woch two t.v. programs
 and then ^{I'll} all goto
 bed.