

# The Power of Writer's Workshop

AUTHENTIC WRITING | REAL AUDIENCE | PURPOSE

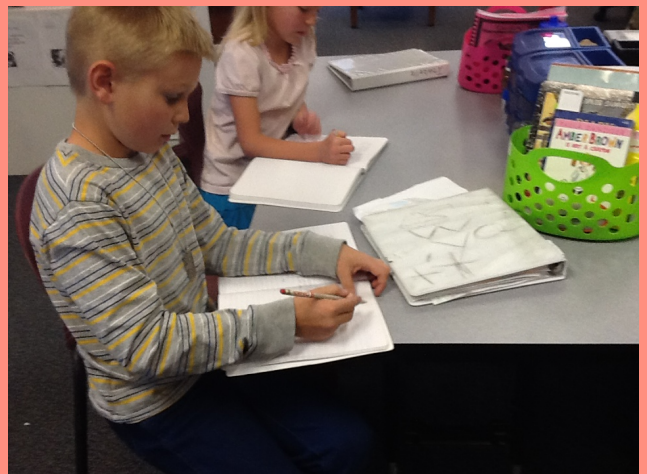


**My name is Cherie Reid and I teach a combined classroom of 2nd and 3rd graders. Every year one of my favorite subjects to teach is Writer's Workshop. It is so fun to see 2nd and 3rd graders get excited about writing, and to actually watch them become little writers.**

**Last year our district implemented a phonics-based literacy program that was very time consuming. I became very frustrated because I felt like my students didn't have the quality writing time that they needed. I also noticed that although my students were learning their 72 phonograms these new skills weren't carrying over into their writing. I knew that I had to figure out a way to help my students implement the new phonic instruction without it taking away from their authentic writing time.**

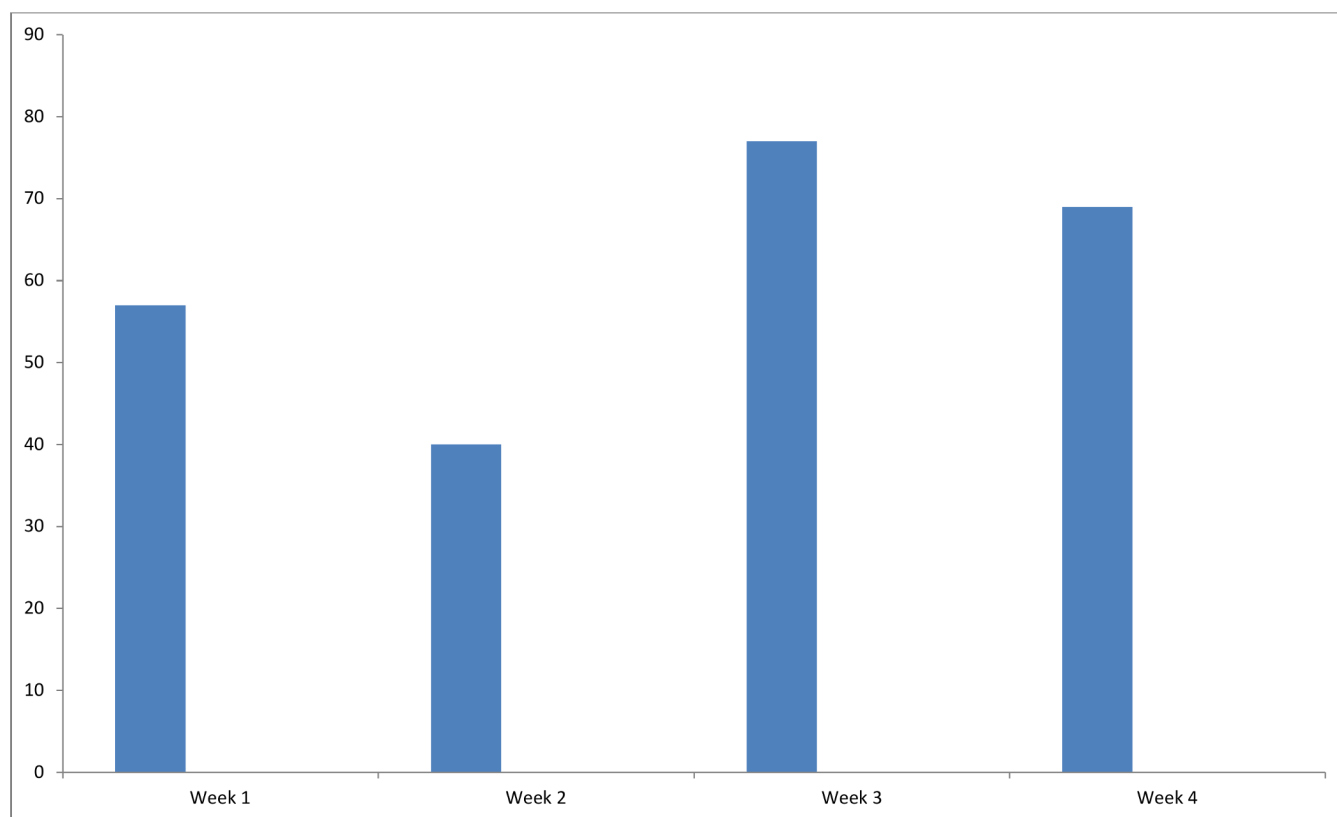
**This year as part of my TIC class (Teacher Inquiry Community) I decided that I was going to collect research on what happens as I align the new phonics instruction with my writer's workshop curriculum. I was hopeful that this would give my students more time to write, and I would see their phonics instruction carry over into their real writing.**

**I collected data for 4 weeks and the results were encouraging.**



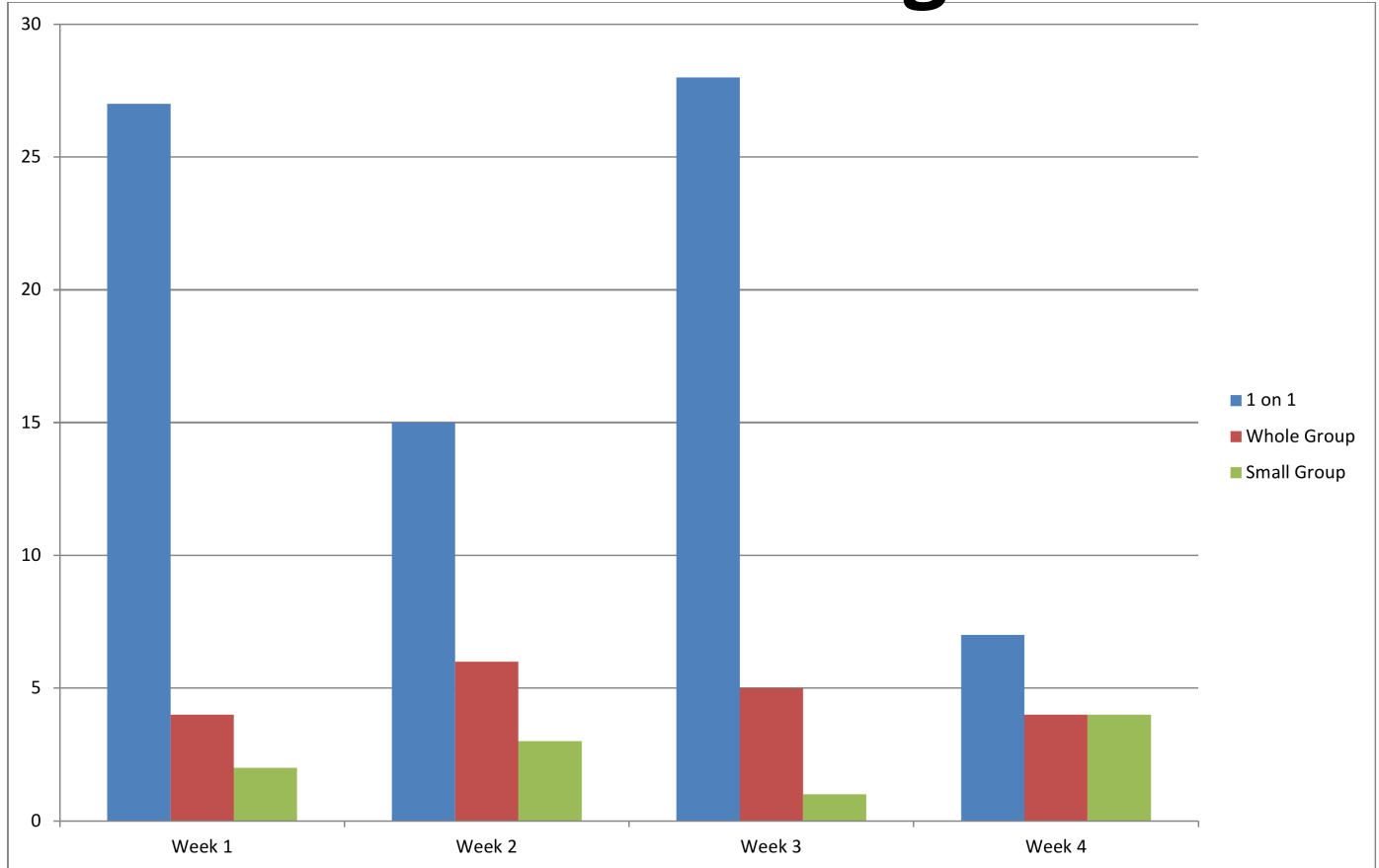
# HOW OFTEN DO I HAVE AN OPPORTUNITY TO TEACHER PHONICS DURING MY REGULAR WRITER'S WORKSHOP?

# OF TIMES PHONICS INSTRUCTION WAS GIVEN DURING WRITER'S WORKSHOP

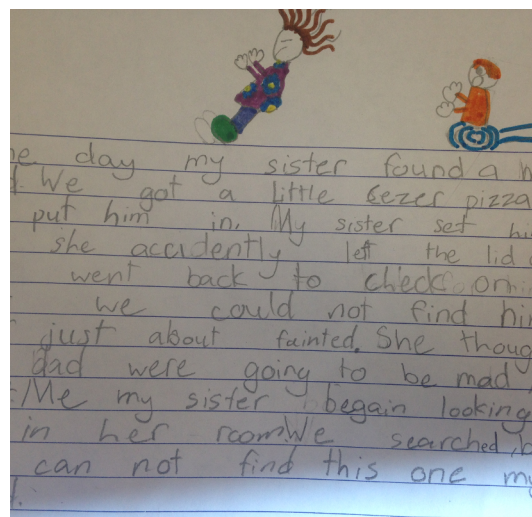
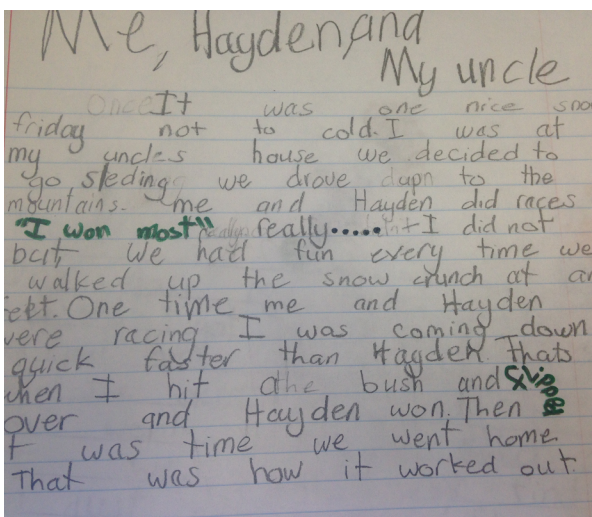


**The information on this graph represents the number of times that I had the opportunity to teach a phonics principle or even when one of the students mentioned a phonics rule that we've learned. For instance, if while walking around the room I notice that one student had misspelled the word "ledge". I might in passing say, "Did you know that ledge uses 3 letter "dge?" This is one of the cues that is taught in our explicated phonics instruction. Another example, might be if a students asks me, "What "ew" or "ui" is used in fruit? " A question like this during our writer's workshop block would get a tally mark. As you can see during our 60 minute writer's workshop block it was easy to get over 10 tally marks each day. I think that this graph really represents how easy it is to implement phonics instruction while students are actually writing. It also seems to make sense that students would be more likely to use these skills if they are working on them during this time.**

# Phonics Instruction During Writer's WS



**This information was gathered during a 4 week period. The blue column shows when I had an opportunity to teach phonic instruction during my individual conferencing with students. The red column represents my whole group phonic instruction. Then the green column is when I would have three to four students come together for a quick mini-lesson on needed explicit instruction.**



Here are 2 writing samples from a boy in my class. The first one was written at the end of March, and the other was written at the end of my 4 week study. I realize that this study was only done for one month, but after a month of concentrated mini-lessons I can see some definite improvements in all of my students' writing.

# **AUTHENTIC WRITING VS WRITING IN ISOLATION**

**I think that the picture of my students holding a piece of writing that makes them feel proud demonstrates the power of authentic writing in the classroom. You can see the joy in their faces as they proudly hold their writing up for the whole world to see. Now maybe we should contrast this with if I would have asked my student to write 2 sentences using the homophones hear, here. Do you think they would still be holding up their paper with as much enthusiasm???**

**Last year as our district implemented our new phonics based literacy program I threw out writer's workshop because I just couldn't figure out how to fit everything into my day. My students didn't look forward to writing like they had in the past, and as a matter of fact they dreaded writing time. During writing time last year we learned most of our concepts in isolation. For example, one thing we might do during writing time is to compose 4 types of sentences using unfamiliar vocabulary words. When doing this type of writing students would try to complete the task as quickly as they could so they could move onto something more exciting.**

**At the beginning of this year, I decided that my students needed some quality writing time and that I had to figure out a way to make everything fit. The first thing I did was set aside an hour everyday for writer's workshop. My students were excited about writing again and so was I. I stuck in little mini-lessons for my writing objectives that corresponded with our new phonics program. It worked! I also would conference with students reminding them of concepts that they needed to apply to their writing.**

**As this year is coming to a close the old expression comes to mind, "I can have my cake and eat it too!!" I now know how to make my writer's workshop more meaningful and to give my students the tools they need to be successful writers!**

**My students holding something  
that they've written this year that  
makes them feel like a  
"real writer"**



**To make our writing ever more authentic we have been having a monthly "Writer's Celebration". Each month we invite parents and community members into our classrooms to give students feedback on their writing. My students love reading their stories to the adults. The adults then autograph their celebration paper and give them some positive feedback.**