



WHEN GOOD THEORY MEETS BEST PRACTICE

IEW's Featured Teacher: *Mrs. Jackie Hammond*

Mrs. Hammond's kindergarten students achieve excellent results with the use of IEW's structured program for writing.

Meet Mrs. Jackie Hammond, M.A.Ed., our IEW Teacher of the Year! She received her Bachelor of Arts in Elementary Education from Governors State University and her Master of Arts in Education as a Reading Specialist from Olivet Nazarene University. She has taught twelve years.

Our pre-writing activities (Phase 1) train students to listen and speak about poetry with narrative and expository structures. This develops the habit of internal dialog, which is needed for reading and writing. During Phase 2 the teacher models how the conversations about poems turn into questions and answers about prose texts so that students can practice retelling stories and information with their own words. Students use copy work to add the written word to the process. In Phase 3, the teacher models how to bring all these practices together, and the students are able work independently. In kindergarten students spend most of their year in Phases 1 and 2 but do reach Phase 3. The first grade works through all three phases equally. Second grade visits Phase 1 but spend most of their year in Phases 2 and 3.

Occasionally we hear primary teachers ask, "When do the students start real writing?" Mrs. Hammond didn't ask that question. In fact, she shared that our practical program allowed her to implement the theories she learned while earning her masters in ways she had not been able to do before. Because we didn't need to persuade her that our listening and speaking activities are foundational skills for writing, she knew that all three phases are real writing activities appropriate for the primary grades.

Jackie Hammond
is a kindergarten teacher
in Elementary School District 53
in Bourbonnais, IL.

1

What surprised you the most about our approach to teaching writing skills at the primary level?

I was surprised by the reading/writing connection. Not only do my students have the confidence to put their ideas into a well-written format, their reading and comprehension skills improved. “Soared” would be a better word. Using the pictures to make meaning became automatic with my students because my students rewrote the sentence and illustrated the sentence every day. I noticed last year there were fewer problems in the area of comprehension than in the previous ten years of teaching, and this year my students are doing in October what I normally don’t see until January.

How did our writing strategies reinforce your reading instruction?

Creating the key word outline reinforced comprehension and went hand in hand with my reading instruction. In fact, in kindergarten we take the MAPS test. This test gets harder as the student answers correctly. However, once a student reaches the second grade level, the test does not read the student the story or questions anymore. One of my students, whose comprehension was at a second grade level but who could not read at a second grade level, was getting frustrated with the test and did not know what to do. I suggested that she try to make a key word outline in her mind and pick out the important information from the story. She did and received the highest grade on MAPS in my class!

2

What benefits did you see after asking comprehension, grammar/mechanics, and vocabulary questions about a poem every week?

Experiencing poems each week gave the students practice in perceiving and producing spoken and written symbols. The narrative poems allowed the students to organize data into sequences, into events, into experiences that progress from a beginning, to a middle, to an end—and hold together cohesively as a story. Exposure to the narrative and informative poems helped the students “put things together.” The students listened to the poems, and we discussed them, which helped the students to develop a sense of the poem.

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– Mrs. Jackie Hammond

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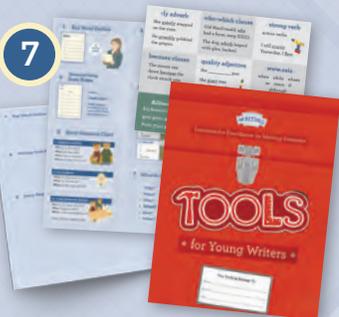
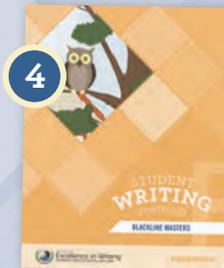
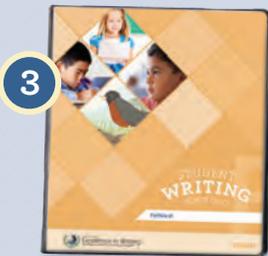
Mrs. Hammond uses poetry and books to connect reading to writing. Displayed in the background is the poem of the week, *The Owl*. For more details about classroom flipcharts, supplements, and other IEW products referred to in this story, please see the sidebars on pages 3 and 5.



View legend on page 3.

CURRICULAR MATERIALS

- 1) Teaching Writing: Structure and Style DVDs and Seminar Workbook
- 2) Classroom Supplement and Lesson Plans Level P
- 3) Student Writing Portfolio Binder
- 4) Student Writing Portfolio Printed Pads Level P
- 5) Printing with Letter Stories Classroom Cards Level P
- 6) Classroom Flip Chart Level P
- 7) Tools for Young Writers



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Is taking the time to save some student work in the student portfolio worth the effort?

I believe it is worth it. The students loved going back and looking at their earlier work and seeing how far they have come from the beginning of the year. I would often look through their portfolios with them, and we would talk about their improvements. I use it the same way with the parents.



4

What habits did the students develop that you know will help them in first grade?

Before using this writing series, my students struggled with being able to pick out the important information in a paragraph and putting it in their *own* words. However, after practicing with my students over and over for weeks, it became second nature for my students to be able to read a paragraph and put the information in their own words. By the end of the school year, my students could illustrate a sentence. They could pick out key information from a paragraph and put that information in their own words, and they could develop and write about an idea.

5



Was letter formation explained through stories helpful?

The stories gave learning the strokes context and meaning, which definitely helped create consistent practice. They provided the emotional tie that children need to willingly tackle the discipline required. In all the years I have taught kindergarten, I have never seen such beautiful handwriting, consistent letter formation, proper mechanics, and detailed student illustrations. The classroom cards and individual game cards are effective reminders because they help the students by visually connecting the story, the stroke, and the printed letter.

Mrs. Hammond uses visual reminders of stories and activities to help the students recall what they have learned. These Printing with Letter Stories Classroom Cards remind the students how each letter is formed. For more details about IEW primary grade products referred to in this story, please see the sidebars on pages 3 and 5.



6



Did displaying a poem all week help the students memorize the poems?

Yes. With repeated readings, defining unknown words, and discussing the internal “story” in the poem, the students were able to memorize a large majority of the poems. But displaying it all day did more than help with memorizing. We would discuss the poems in circle time with the poster from the flip chart set. Then I would move the poster to its designated place on the wall with all the markings on it. These kindergarten students would stand around the poem and continue the discussion on their own!

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“ I love having a program that is age-appropriate and easy to follow!”
 – Mrs. Jackie Hammond



TRAINING

- Primary Writing with Structure and Style Day 1 and Day 2
- Demonstration and Coaching Day
- Observation and Coaching Day
- Teaching Writing: Structure and Style, Second Edition (Seminar Workbook & Premium Subscription)



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How did your students respond to grammar and vocabulary being taught through reading and writing?

Teaching grammar and vocabulary can and should be a full body experience at this age. You understand that. They are also always taught in context. The children learn how to understand sentence structure and word choice where they make the most sense.

With the visual reminders and references like the Tools for Young Writers and the student-generated word walls, the students internalize the rules and process naturally.

By the end of the year, how were the students performing compared to previous years?

In previous years, we did not have a structured program for writing. I regularly had to refer multiple students for additional tutoring in reading and writing over the summer. Even though I was inexperienced in implementing IEW in my classroom, my students achieved excellent results. They were able to communicate what they wanted to say in an organized manner—in kindergarten! Only one student was referred for summer tutoring, and he entered my class late in the year. Oh, the places we can go as I gain experience. I love having a program that is age-appropriate and easy to follow!