sample chapter 9

The pages of this Sample Chapter may have slight variations in final published form.
9

Scaffolding

Literacy

Learning
That night after we ate, Moe Moe Bay came back to the table with a worn old Bible. She was so happy. My heart ached at the thought of tellin’ her we’d be leavin’ soon.

“Master Aylee showed him how paper talks. Show him, Pink,” she said. He took out a pair of spectacles from his pocket and opened the Bible to the Psalms of David and started to read. His voice was steady and had such wonder. Just hearin’ them words made pictures come into my head.

“I surely do wish I could read,” I announced to them without thinkin’. When Pink saw I was ashamed, he took my hand. “I’ll teach you, Say, some one day. I’ll teach you.”

*Pink and Say* (Polacco, 1994)

Pink and Say never got a chance to finish that reading lesson. You can read to find out what happens in Patricia Polacco’s moving story of two young Union soldiers, a black slave from Georgia and a white farm boy from Ohio who deserts the Army and is deeply ashamed of it. But “some one day,” in your classroom, you’ll be teaching children to read and write. Supporting them as they read and write will be one of the most important things you do, because it enables them to find a comfortable spot with print, figure out how it “is supposed to go” (Calkins, 2001, p. 164), and gain the confidence that breeds success as readers and writers.

What is reading like for you? Think about that in the Personal Reflection.
Are your answers to the first two questions negative? If so, look around you. If you are sitting in a room of teachers, inservice or preservice, about half of the people sitting around you will feel the same way (Applegate & Applegate, 2004; Gray & Troy, 1986). Many teachers do not value reading (Searls, 1985). There are many reasons, but your experiences as a child in school probably have much to do with this. Applegate and Applegate tell us that, based on a survey of preservice teachers, “It was clear that significant numbers of respondents were affected, either positively or negatively, by the instruction they received during their early school years” (2004, p. 560). Yet your feelings about literacy spill over in the classroom; Morrison, Jacobs, and Swinyard (1999) found that there is a positive relationship between teachers who read a lot and their use of effective literacy practices. Dreher says, “In short, teachers who are engaged readers are motivated to read, are both strategic and knowledgeable readers, and are socially interactive about what they read. These qualities show up in their classroom interactions and help create students who are, in turn, engaged readers” (2002–2003, p. 338).

Your experiences with reading might not have always been positive ones, even if you enjoy reading as an adult. The classroom is where young readers learn the technicalities of literacy. But sometimes, these technicalities seem to take over, and everyone involved—teachers as well as students—lose sight of what literacy is all about. You might have experienced this yourself. But literacy is about a connection to others, an awakening of a world that would never otherwise be known. Reading and writing in the classroom do not have to be joyless. Regardless of what you have experienced in the past, you can support your readers without suffocating them. You can provide an environment that invites experimentation, trial and error, inquiry, and prediction, without risk or fear of failure. You can provide the right amount of instructional support and expectations for independence, without killing your students’ enthusiasm for the written word.

It is necessarily true that reading and writing in the classroom are different from reading and writing anywhere else. When your students read a book before going to bed or when they plop down on the couch with a magazine on a Saturday afternoon, they are reading casually. When they write a note to a friend or send instant messages on the computer, they are writing casually. These are very different experiences from the kinds of literacy tasks they do in the classroom. There, they interact with others while they read, talk to the teacher about what they’ve understood, and respond to the author’s words in a variety of ways. The books they read at school may be slightly more difficult than the ones they would choose to read on their own. Likewise, they talk with each other about ideas for writing and ways to revise their work, as well as experiment with many forms of writing. The most important difference between casual literacy experiences and the ones they have in the classroom is you. You are the one who supports them as they learn new
strategies and skills, guide them as their literacy abilities grow, and provide them
with a classroom environment for optimal learning without fear of failure.

How can you do this?

Think about Vygotsky’s zone of proximal development (1978), which you
learned about in Chapter 2. You may recall that this is an educational environment
that provides optimal learning, and is the kind of learning environment in which the
teacher gives his students just the right amount of challenge. Tasks are not too hard,
nor are they too easy. The teacher supports learning by offering scaffolds (Graves &
Graves, 2003; Wood, Bruner & Ross, 1976). Scaffolded instruction helps students
accomplish more than they would be able to do on their own. Scaffolds can be any in-
structional tool or technique that you use to enable your students’ literacy efforts.
Your interventions provide students with the amount of support they need to
comprehend text or to create text for others to read. Figure 9.1 on page 284 shows
the kinds of activities that you can use to scaffold your students before, during, and
after their reading and writing.

Prereading and prewriting activities prepare students for the literacy tasks
that they have to do. Brainstorming ideas and activating background knowledge
are important strategies, as are motivating students to read or write. When read-
ing, you may find it necessary to help students make predictions or build anticipa-
tion. Sometimes, you need to provide experiences for your students so that they
will have the necessary prior knowledge to read a selection or to write about a
topic. You may need to teach mini-lessons that show students how to accomplish a
reading task such as selecting an appropriate book to read or a writing task such as
determining an audience. Other strategies for activating background knowledge
and preparing to read and write are described in Chapter 11.

During reading and writing, you can offer support in a myriad of ways. Readers
may need you to stop and discuss parts of the story or selection with them,
clarify misconceptions, check comprehension, confirm predictions, or help with
decoding difficult words. You may need to read all or part of the text to them, and
ask them to follow along whenever possible. During writing, you can scaffold your
students’ efforts by teaching mini-lessons on the mechanics of writing; talking to
students as they write and refine their writing; providing spelling help such as
word walls or personal word banks; and allowing students to work collaboratively
with others to create books, reports, or messages. Chapter 12 shows many strate-
gies that support students as they read and write.

After reading is finished, your students can respond to the text with retellings,
discussions, or artistic expressions, among many other response activities (shown
in Chapter 13). They can respond by writing in journals, letters to the author, or
stories written in the same pattern. Students also like the opportunity to share with
each other either books they’ve read or pieces that they’ve written.

This is the kind of environment you need for your students. You want them to be
able to read and write on their own, but in order for them to do this, you need to sup-
port them. When the book is too difficult for them to read alone, you can read it with
them, talking about it with them as you read. This type of support will enable their
understanding of the book, and provide them with skills they will need for the next
book they attempt. When they are unsure of what to write or how to write it, you can
share the pen with them, helping them formulate ideas and spelling words that others
can read. These supports will enable them to write a message and lay a foundation for
the next message they attempt to write. All of this, and more, is part of providing the
zone of proximal development for literacy learning.
### Ways to Scaffold Your Students' Reading and Writing

#### Before Reading
- Activate background knowledge.
- Talk with students about predictions and inferences.
- Set purposes for reading.
- Talk about the author’s purpose for writing.
- Preview the text together.
- Provide real-life experiences.
- Read aloud to students so they know how it is supposed to sound.

#### Before Writing
- Activate background knowledge.
- Help students determine audience and purpose.
- Help students list ideas for writing.
- Talk about authors’ styles and use of words.
- Make lists of words and phrases that students can use in writing.
- Keep a word wall in the classroom.
- Provide real-life experiences.

#### During Reading
- Use stop points throughout the book, which are places to stop, discuss predictions, and monitor comprehension.
- Give students printed reading guides, which have questions to answer or reminders of things to look for as they read.
- Decode hard words for them by reading the book aloud as the students follow along.

#### During Writing
- Read and reread drafts with the students.
- Allow students to discuss drafts with their peers.
- Hold conferences with students as they write drafts, to determine areas of need.
- Provide help with spelling and grammar as needed.
- Share the pen and write as students dictate.
- Provide models, patterns, and frames for writing, based on quality children’s literature.

#### After Reading
- Talk with students about the book, reflecting upon it and reacting to it.
- Invite students to share responses with others.
- Ask students to retell all the elements and events of the story or all the important ideas of nonfiction.
- Ask students to summarize only the most essential story elements or main ideas.

#### After Writing
- Talk with students about what they’ve written, reflecting upon it and reacting to it.
- Give students authentic opportunities to publish writing for others.

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Supporting students as they read and write is important. However, letting go is even more important. Scaffolding supports, but it also enables independence. “Scaffolding,” as defined in *The Literacy Dictionary* (Harris & Hodges, 1995), is “the gradual withdrawal of adult (e.g., teacher) support, as through instruction, modeling, questioning, feedback, etc., for a child’s performance across successive engagements, thus transferring more and more autonomy to the child” (p. 226). This “gradual release of responsibility,” originally explained by Campione, is “a progression in which students gradually assume increased responsibility for their learning from the teacher” (cited in Graves & Graves, 2003 p. 45).

Thus, as your students get older, more mature, and more capable of reading and writing, you can allow them to do more on their own. However, the difficulty
of the text they need to read plays a role in this progression, too. For example, if you are teaching first graders, they may start the school year dependent upon you for decoding words, even in the very simplest and most predictable text, such as *I Went Walking* by Sue Williams (1989). This book contains just one sentence per page with pictures that give the reader clues about what happens on the next page. But as the weeks go on, they will be able to read this book on their own, as well as many similar books. Thus, you can decrease your support with books like these, but offer support with slightly more difficult ones such as *Arthur’s Reading Race* (Brown, 1996), which has limited vocabulary but is not as predictable. This type of recursive support continues throughout the elementary grades and middle school. The amount of support you give them depends on the texts your students need to read, the amount of background knowledge they have about the topics they are reading and writing, their reading and writing abilities, and their motivation to tackle the literacy tasks before them. As any of these variables change, your level of support may need to change, as well (Fountas & Pinnell, 1996; Graves & Graves, 2003).

Take a look at Figure 9.2. Literacy instruction is represented as a triangle. The triangle itself represents the amount of teacher intervention needed for teaching reading. As you can see, the base of the triangle is its widest part, which represents the greatest amount of support offered to the students as they read and write. These methods of instruction are the ones in which you do most of the decoding or writing for your students. The amount of support decreases at each higher level of
the triangle, showing strategies that allow for more student-initiated efforts. The top, which is the smallest portion of the triangle, represents the least amount of support by the teacher. In these methods, the students read or write on their own.

Now let’s look closer at supporting your students’ literacy efforts, including discussion of reading and writing frameworks.

**Ways to Scaffold Reading**

To provide scaffolds for your students as they learn to read, you will need to do two important things: (1) Find reading materials that are appropriate for your students, and (2) determine the amount of scaffolding they need. Read on to find out ways to do both of these things.

**Matching Readers to Text**

In order to choose reading materials that would be best for your readers, you’ll need to know your readers as well as the text you want them to read. Assessing your readers’ abilities can take place in a variety of ways; you learned about running records and miscue analysis in Chapter 4. These valuable tools give you an idea of how well your students can process print, and help you determine how easy or hard their texts ought to be.

You may also remember from Chapter 4 that there are a variety of ways to determine the reading level of a book. Many children’s books have been labeled by the publisher with approximate grade levels. If the reading level of a book is not identified, you can determine an approximate grade level using the Fry Readability formula (mentioned in Chapter 4), which mathematically determines the grade level of text based on number of sentences and number of syllables in one hundred words of text (Fry, 1977, 2002). This formula is easy to use for a rough estimate of the difficulty of the text. There are additional formulas that objectively and consistently assign grade levels to thousands of books, such as the New Dale-Chall Readability Formula (Chall & Dale, 1995), and the Lexile Framework (Stenner, 1996). However, as with anything that is easy to do, these formulae may be too simplistic, because they do not account for student interests or background experiences, and because they lack specific gradations for books for the very youngest readers.

As mentioned in Chapter 4, Fountas and Pinnell (1999, 2001) provide lists of thousands of books, along with reading levels for each. They determined levels with an extensive list of criteria that take into consideration many aspects of books that readability formulas do not, such as complexity of ideas, perspective, and organization of the text. Moreover, leveling “usually provides finer gradations at the primary levels” (Fry, 2002, p. 291). You can look for books on these lists, as well as other lists that you can find online. Related web sites are listed in Chapter 4, but you can find additional ones by typing “leveled books” in your favorite search engine.

Moreover, you might want to determine the readability of your readers’ text on your own, and try leveling them. Whether you are trying to select books, or you
are evaluating the ones provided for you in the basal series, it’s a good idea to know how to determine text difficulty. Graves and Graves (2003) suggest several considerations, including your students’ background knowledge and interests, as well as the author’s quality of writing and ability to hold interest. Allington (2001) explains how to level books on your own, by first choosing some benchmark books. These are books that have already been established as representing grade levels. You can use the leveled booklists in the work of Fountas and Pinnell (1999, 2001) to help establish benchmark books, or use selections in the basal textbook adopted by your school district. Compare the books that you want to level with the benchmark books by considering vocabulary, pictures, size of print, predictability, and familiarity of topic. It is best to do this leveling process in a group, involving all teachers in the school. This approach allows for continuity across grade levels, and capitalizes on the collective wisdom of the faculty.

You may also recall that there are three levels of reading—independent, instructional, and frustrational—introduced in Chapter 4. Review them and see how they can help you scaffold your students’ reading.

**Instructional Supports for Reading**

Depending upon the amount of scaffolding that you need to provide, the text can be read in one of the following ways:

1. The students read silently and independently, from text of their own choosing. The teacher assesses and monitors their progress or participates in discussions after they read. This method offers the least amount of support (Anderson, 2000; Atwell, 1998; Daniels, 2002; Harste, Short & Burke, 1995; McCracken & McCracken, 1972; Cunningham, Hall & Defee, 1991, 1998).

2. The students read the text silently, in a small group setting called guided reading. Texts are matched to the readers’ abilities, and the students and teacher interact with each other while reading (Fountas & Pinnell, 1996; Cunningham, Hall & Defee, 1991, 1998). This offers scaffolding in that the text is chosen and the teacher supports students while they read silently.

3. The teacher uses shared reading, in which the teacher reads the text aloud while students follow along, looking at the print and decoding as much as possible (Harste, Short & Burke, 1988; Holdaway, 1979; Tierney & Readence, 2005). This method scaffolds the reading of students who cannot decode many of the words in the text, but are beginning to read simple or predictable texts.

4. The teacher reads the text orally to the students while they listen, called a read-aloud (Smith, 2000; Trelease, 2001). This provides complete support in that it eliminates the demands of decoding.

Scaffolding your students’ reading requires that you match your teaching strategies to your students’ needs as well as to the reading materials that they use. If your students read, understand, and enjoy a book that is relatively easy for them, there is little need for your intervention. On the other hand, suppose that your students are immature readers and are not yet capable of decoding most words on their own. You need to help by decoding for them and allowing them to
This teacher offers instructional support to a group of students as they read and interact with each other.

join in where possible. Your support is crucial to their success and confidence in their ability to read. So, deciding on the amount of support you will provide, along with choosing the appropriate level of text, is the essence of scaffolding your students’ reading experiences.

Choosing the method that you use to scaffold a reading lesson depends on the difficulty of the book, the objective you want to meet, and the abilities of your students. The triangle of scaffolds shown in Figure 9.2 provides a guideline for making these decisions. This framework of reading scaffolds includes ways to provide support based on the work of several researchers, who have introduced us to frameworks such as Four Blocks (Cunningham, Hall & Defee, 1991, 1998); Guided Reading (Fountas & Pinnell, 1996); Reading Recovery (Clay, 1979); the Reading Workshop (Atwell, 1998); Scaffolded Reading Experiences (Graves & Graves, 2003); Students Achieving Independent Learning, or SAIL (Bergman, 1992); and Success for All (Slavin, Madden, Dolan, Wasik, Ross & Smith, 1994). Starting at the top of the triangular model shown in Figure 9.2, we’ll look at each of the ways that you can scaffold reading.

**Independent Reading**

Children need to be able to read alone. They need time to enjoy, reflect, learn, ponder, and relax with a book. If we are to help our students “author richly literate lives for themselves” (Calkins, 2001, p. 8), it makes sense to give them daily opportunities to read. This simple direction is a fundamental need in the teaching of reading; if we want children to appreciate the value of reading, we must give them time to experience this activity in the classroom (Atwell, 1998; Calkins, 2001; Krashen, 1993).

Many teachers over the years have done just that, implementing programs with names such as DEAR, for Drop Everything and Read, or SSR, for Sustained
Silent Reading. Essentially, the students are asked to read silently and independently in books that they choose, for a few minutes every day (Anderson, 2000). The idea is for the teacher to read silently during this time as well, for the purpose of modeling good reading behavior (McCracken & McCracken, 1972).

However, the National Reading Panel (2000a) has cast some doubt on this practice. This group of reading researchers was asked by the U.S. Congress to conduct an extensive review of educational research, in the interest of finding evidence of best practices that lead to reading achievement. The NRP, in examining the topic of independent reading, reported that many correlational studies do show that children who read a lot also have better reading scores on tests. Yet, the NRP also warns that correlational research does not necessarily indicate a cause or reason, for students’ improvement. Thus, readers who do lots of independent silent reading may indeed be better readers, but the amount of time spent reading may not be the cause of their higher achievement. Thus, only experimental research was included in the report of the National Reading Panel.

In its report, the NRP reviewed 14 experimental studies in which researchers tried to determine the effects of “independent silent reading with minimal guidance or feedback” (2000a, p. 12). They concluded that this type of treatment did not produce improvements in reading comprehension, vocabulary, or fluency. While educators disagree with the amount of emphasis that the National Reading Panel placed on experimental research (Allington, 2001), the fact remains that its report has been influential in changing educational policy throughout the country. This conclusion has led others to debate the value of such practices, and even to state, “we can no longer recommend such a procedure until research has revealed the conditions under which encouraging more reading in the classroom might produce gains in reading achievement” (Armbruster & Osborn, 2002, p. 5).

Part of the problem with the programs studied in this report may be the lack of teacher participation in them. “Minimal guidance or feedback” implies a hands-off approach, in which students are to read on their own, with little intervention from the teacher. Perhaps these programs were not structured enough to realize their full potential.

In this book, independent silent reading means a period of time in your school day when your students are reading books that they have selected, while you are intensely involved. Remember that your classroom may be the only place your students get a chance to read by themselves. Waiting for researchers to draw conclusions from experimental research may be depriving these students of the thing they need most—time to read books. Routman says:

> The growth of the Internet, cable television, entertaining computer programs, and increasingly adultlike movies for children all contribute to the acceleration of childhood and the demand for ultra-sophisticated stories. If books are to continue as the lifeline for future generations, we teachers must provide the uninterrupted time and quality resources that foster the motivation to read. . . . As school may well be the last place where books are valued and promoted, we teachers must do everything we can to keep the magic and beauty of books alive for our students. (2000, p. 62)

> Children need time to read real books; they need to develop their confidence as readers who can select their books on their own; and they need to learn how to maintain their own pace with silent reading. Researchers have found that the amount of time reading literature contributes to reading achievement
Creating a Quality Classroom Library

Classroom libraries that are used by students and contribute to the quality of reading instruction have the following qualities:

- Boundaries or partitions set the library apart from the rest of the classroom.
- Comfortable seating is available, including chairs, pillows, and carpet.
- The library area is big enough for about five children to sit.
- Open shelves are available for books to be displayed with the front cover showing.
- There are at least eight books per child. (The minimum number of books should be one per child.)
- Books are organized by categories for ease of access.
- Posters, puppets, flannel boards, taped readings, and student-written reviews are part of the library displays.
- The library area is labeled and has a name. For example, in one teacher’s classroom in an inner-city area in which more than 98% of the students were Latino/Hispanic, the library was labeled “Teirra de Fantasía/Fantasy Land.”

Figure 9.3 Quality classroom libraries.

Others give students special boxes or bags in which to keep books that are “just right” for them to read independently (Routman, 2000).

- Your students need to know how to select books. One simple and popular way is to use their fingers, with the “Five Finger Rule.” Students read any page in the book, and count the number of words they do not know, starting with their pinky finger. At each unknown word, they put one finger down. If, at the end of the page, the thumb is still up, the words in the book are not too hard. Allington (2001) suggests that this strategy be modified to the “Three Finger Rule,” so that your students are reading the books that are most comfortable for them. You also need to model, by thinking out loud, the process of choosing a book. Students, especially those who are reluctant to read on their own, need to know how to find the right book for the right occasion (Duffy, 2003).

- Your classroom needs to provide an atmosphere conducive to quiet, private reading. Independent readers need quiet spots in the room to relax with a book, and they need an atmosphere that is free of discord. While it is not necessary to make your classroom as quiet as a tomb, it is counterproductive to expect children to read silently when the room is full of distractions and extraneous noise. Thus, establish rules for this period of time so that your students know what is expected of them and so that they respect this time as an important part of the day (Calkins, 2001; Routman, 2000).

- You need to be involved. As your students read, move around and read with them. Ask students to sit with you as you read, or ask students to share their book with you. You can use this time for kidwatching; for modeling; or for private, quiet reading conferences (Cunningham, Hall & Defee, 1991, 1998).

- Students’ independent readings need to be recognized as important. You can group students who have read similar books and have them share their responses with others in a workshop-type format (Atwell, 1998). The Reading Workshop method is discussed later in this chapter.

Guided Reading

As you look at the next step down the triangle in the literacy instruction framework shown in Figure 9.2, you’ll see guided reading. This method provides many more scaffolds than independent reading. **Guided reading** is a method of teaching reading to small groups of children who read from text that is chosen by the teacher and is at their instructional level. In the framework of guided reading as defined by Fountas and Pinnell, students are placed in homogeneous small groups, so that the teacher can provide scaffolds for students “who use similar reading processes and are able to read similar levels of text with support” (1996, p. 1). On the other hand, Cunningham, Hall, and Defee (1991, 1998) included a component of guided reading in their popular Four Blocks reading program, in which students work in mixed-ability small groups. By working with students in small groups, providing appropriate reading material, and staying close by as they read, you provide a scaffold for your students who are capable of decoding.

In guided reading, your job is to choose a selection that all students in the group will read, and that is on their instructional reading level, which means that they can recognize at least 90% of the words in the book. You also need to select the students who will be in each group, and be flexible enough to regroup whenever necessary. After introducing the selection to the students and setting purposes
Modifying Instruction for ELL

Using Cognates in Guided Reading with Middle School English Language Learners

GRADE LEVEL: 5 AND HIGHER

Objective
Students will read and respond to text that contains many English/Spanish cognates.

Preparation
- Write a paragraph or dialogue that includes several English/Spanish cognates, which are words that look similar in both of these languages and have the same meaning. For example, “comenzar” and “commence” are cognates. Write a second narrative, using English words that are synonyms for the cognates, but are not visibly similar in Spanish, such as “begin” for “commence.” You can find several web sites for English/Spanish cognates through your favorite search engine.
- Find short book passages that contain cognates. Type them, along with a corresponding passage that contains an English synonym for the cognate. For example, if the sentence reads, “That night, the ocean was tranquil,” rewrite it like this: “That night, the ocean was calm.”
- Divide students into mixed-ability small groups.

Materials
- Copies of the teacher-created cognate narratives printed on paper, one copy on overhead transparency, or MS PowerPoint presentation
- Highlighting markers

Introduction: Before Guided Reading
1. To the whole class, explain the term “cognate,” which is a word that looks like and means the same thing in two languages. Show students a list of these in English and Spanish, such as “elect-elegir,” “signify-significar,” and “occupied-ocupado.” Discuss the meanings of these words.

During Guided Reading
2. Put students in small groups or with partners. Distribute copies of the sample narrative provided at the end of this section, and highlighters. Explain that this is a paragraph about Mara, who is having a party. Ask students to read the narrative silently, highlight any words that look similar to Spanish words, and use context to think about what they mean.

After Guided Reading
3. After reading, write the cognates on the board and talk about their meanings. Show pictures and objects or use body movements to explain as needed.
4. Show the text on the screen and reread, while students follow along. Point to the words as you read, so students can see and hear the words.

Modifications for ELL are printed in color.
5. Distribute the second narrative, with synonyms for the cognates. Have students read it silently.
6. After reading, compare the two texts. Point out the non-cognates in the second text, and show how they have similar meanings to cognates. For example, point out the word “begin,” which was used instead of “commence.” Write these words on the board. You can also make word cards to add to the word wall, or ask students to write words in their reading logs or personal dictionaries.

After Reading

7. Ask students to retell the story or write a summary of the narrative.
8. In another lesson, show students a book passage that contains cognates. Repeat the procedure with this passage.

Getting Ready for the Party (with English cognates)
Mara opened the door and pulled her best friend, Tiana, into the apartment. “Come on in! My party will commence at 6:00 tonight,” said Mara. “But we will need the entire morning to get ready.”
“T’ll help you,” said Tiana, who was an amicable girl. “Let’s decorate the patio first!”
The girls decorated with giant balloons, flowers, and candles. The effect was very elegant. They even put a palm tree on the patio.
“Fabulous!” Mara said later. “Now I’m ready for the party. I hope everyone will dance!”

Getting Ready for the Party (with English synonyms for cognates)
Mara opened the door and pulled her best friend, Tiana, into the apartment. “Come on in! My party will begin at 6:00 tonight,” said Mara. “But we will need the whole morning to get ready.”
“T’ll help you,” said Tiana, who was a friendly girl. “Let’s decorate the patio first!”
The girls decorated with very big balloons, flowers, and candles. The way it looked was very pretty. They even put a palm tree on the patio.
“Great!” Mara said later. “Now I’m ready for the party. I hope everyone will dance!”

The cognates and synonyms in this passage are:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>English Cognate</th>
<th>Spanish Cognate</th>
<th>English Synonym Replacing Cognate in Second Story</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>apartment</td>
<td>el apartamento</td>
<td>(no replacement needed)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>commence</td>
<td>comenzar</td>
<td>begin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>entire</td>
<td>entero</td>
<td>whole</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>amicable</td>
<td>amigable</td>
<td>friendly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>decorate</td>
<td>decorar</td>
<td>(no replacement needed)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>patio</td>
<td>el patio</td>
<td>(no replacement needed)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>giant</td>
<td>gigante</td>
<td>very big</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>effect</td>
<td>el efecto</td>
<td>way it looked</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>elegant</td>
<td>elegante</td>
<td>pretty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>palm</td>
<td>la palma</td>
<td>palm tree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>fabulous</td>
<td>fabuloso</td>
<td>great</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dance</td>
<td>danzar</td>
<td>(no replacement needed)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
for reading, invite the students to read silently and independently. Fountas and Pinnell explain, “The reading is usually soft or silent, but all members of the group are operating independently as readers at the same time. This is not ‘round robin’ reading, in which children take turns reading aloud. In guided reading each child has the opportunity to solve problems while reading extended text and attending to meaning” (1996, pp. 8–9).

While students read, you may need to assist them, or listen in as they read. You can watch what the students are doing as they read, and make notes. Depending on the length of the selection, you can either finish reading it together with the group or send the students back to their desks to finish. After reading, talk with students about what they’ve read, or assign a response activity. Sometimes you might want to have them reread the book to practice fluency strategies. Guided reading instruction should be short; Routman (2000) describes reading group instruction that lasts no more than 12 minutes. Typically, you might have three groups to meet on a daily basis. The procedure for guided reading is shown in Figure 9.4.

Shared Reading

You can offer even more scaffolding with shared reading. Shared reading is a method of supporting students’ reading by decoding the words for them while they look at the print and read along (Harste, Short & Burke, 1988; Holdaway, 1979; Tierney & Readence, 2005). Holdaway introduced this strategy more than 25 years ago, modeling it after the kinds of things that parents do and say while reading aloud to their children at home. Teachers still find it a useful way to support children who are just beginning to decode.

The big book, which is an enlarged version of a piece of children’s literature, is an important part of this strategy when teaching very young children. It enables everyone to see the words as the teacher reads the book aloud and the children follow along. Books with predictable text or lots of rhyming words are most helpful, because the teacher can invite the students to read these portions of the text aloud. Sometimes, the teacher specifies the words that she wants them to read aloud; other times, she lets them chime in whenever they can. Most of the time, the predictable refrains are the ones that the children can quickly remember and read. Eventually, after several rereadings of the text, the students know the entire text and can read it, either with the teacher’s help or without.

Once the text is read, the teacher uses it to teach new words, language skills, and reading strategies. If there are little book versions of the text, students can read the story independently after the shared reading has provided enough support for doing so. The procedure for shared reading is summarized in Figure 9.5.

When should you use shared reading? When you want to offer lots of scaffolding along with expectations for independence, shared reading is appropriate. The shared reading strategy is designed to give support to beginning or immature readers. Decoding demands are minimal, because you are reading aloud most of the text, and because the book used is predictable or has repetitive text. Students will probably begin to chime in quite easily on the predictable parts of the text, and continuing to offer repeated readings will eventually lead to recognition of words and help young readers to gain confidence. Shared reading allows inexperienced readers to begin to feel as if they are “really reading.”
1. Form groups of 3 to 6 children. If you are working with first graders or struggling readers, Fountas and Pinnell (1996) recommend grouping them homogeneously, with students of like abilities working together. Older and more experienced readers can work in mixed-ability groups. Cunningham, Hall, and Defee (1991, 1998) recommend using guided reading with mixed-ability groups; however, they do say that first grade readers may need to be more homogeneously grouped.

2. Select a book or other text that is at an appropriate instructional level for all students in the group. They should be able to recognize at least 90% of the words in the text.

3. Prepare the students to read by building background knowledge related to the theme of the book. Look at selected pictures or concrete objects and invite predictions. Keep a list of predictions for checking later. Direct students to a purpose for reading, such as, “Read to find out why...” or “Read to see whether your predictions come true.” Strategies you can use before reading are described in Chapter 11.

4. Direct students to read the text silently. If you are working with very young readers who are just beginning to decode, they might need to hear themselves as they read, so “silent reading” may be “soft reading” or “whisper reading.” Decide what you will do as students read. Depending on the text, there are several options, listed as follows. Chapter 12 will give you additional ideas for strategies to use while students are reading.
   a. Stop points—Choose one or two stop points in the selection. Make sure these stop points are at important episodes in the story or, if it is nonfiction, after an important idea. As the students read silently, ask them to give you an agreed-upon “silent signal” for letting you know when they have reached the stop point. When everyone reaches this cut-off point, discuss what was read so far in relation to the predictions made.
   b. Kidwatching—As the students read, make note of their behaviors. Watch carefully for the ways that they monitor themselves, or the words that give them difficulty. Look for behavior that indicates that they do not understand, or that they are not really paying attention to the page. Look for potential problems such as these:
      - Text is too difficult.
      - Pictures or graphics are too distracting.
      - Students are not attempting to figure out unknown words.
      - Students are reading too quickly.
      - Students are not really reading; they glide their fingers along the print without decoding the words.
      - Students are not interested in the text.
   c. Self-monitoring—Ask students to keep a spiral-bound notebook handy, to use as a reading journal. They should date each page of the journal and write the title of the book before reading. As they read, they should copy down words that give them trouble. They should mark page numbers, too. They should cross out words that they want to figure out later on. Another way to do this is to use sticky notes to mark the words. Be sure that students know that if they are not marking many difficult words, they can serve as “expert word readers” to help other students.
   d. Responses—When you set a purpose for reading, ask a question that students need to answer after they read. They can write the answer in a sentence or phrase in their reading journals. Other response opportunities are described in Chapter 13.
   e. Questions—Check for meaning with one or two questions that require students to think about the author’s implications.
   f. Discussion—Talk about the story and how it relates to their own experiences.

5. At the end of the small-group time, give an assignment for students to read at their seats. Depending on the group and the length of the text, you can ask students to finish reading the selection, or ask them to choose another book to read.

6. You might want students to reread the story orally; choose an appropriate strategy from Chapter 14. Choose oral reading activities carefully; not all selections need to be read orally.

Figure 9.4 Guided reading procedures for small groups.
Shared reading should be attempted only if everyone can see the print. The purpose of the big book is to allow all the students to see the words and hear the correspondence between the spoken word and its printed equivalent. It is helpful to have young children sit near you on the floor, not at their desks. This setup enables everyone to see the print of the big book, which is so important. Moreover, it is important to make sure your students see the words as they are spoken; use your hand or pointer to point to the words.

If you are teaching very young children, you will need to add big books to your classroom library. A word of caution is necessary. Not all big books are of high quality, nor are they all appropriate for shared reading! Remember that the purpose of shared reading is for everyone to be able to see the text and begin to feel successful at reading the text. Your big books must have highly visible words and

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**Shared Reading with Big Books**

1. Select a big book that is appropriate for the theme or topic that you wish to emphasize. It should be predictable, or the vocabulary should be simple enough to present few decoding problems for your group.

2. Prepare the students to read by building background knowledge related to the theme of the book. Encourage predictions and write them down for all to see. Explain how the reading will be done together, by pointing out predictable words or phrases that the children will read along with you.

3. Read the book aloud, using your finger or a pointer to point to the words. The first time you read the book, read it aloud, in its entirety, by yourself. During subsequent readings, pause when you come to the words or phrases that you want the children to read aloud. Some teachers use a hand movement or other signal that invites the children to chime in.

4. Once the book has been read, use the text to teach skills and strategies. Suggestions are:
   - On each page, cover up an important word with a sticky note. When rereading, ask students to guess the covered word. Write the students’ predictions on the sticky note. Then reveal the first letter and ask them to adjust the prediction.
   - Make word cards for each of the words in a predictable sentence. Give each student a set of the cards and ask students to construct the sentence as it was written in the book.
   - Talk about punctuation on the page. Read the story as if there were no punctuation marks and ask students to tell what is wrong.
   - As you read aloud, intentionally make errors. For example, say “pow” instead of “cow.” Ask students to catch your errors and point to the letters that give them the clues.

5. Make the little book versions of the text available for independent reading.

6. Make taped readings of the book and put the tape in the library or listening center.
should also consist of text that is predictable or rhyming. Figure 9.6 shows a list of criteria for purchasing big books. Some favorite big books for shared reading include:

- *The Very Hungry Caterpillar* (Carle, 1981)
- *The Surprise Garden* (Hall, 2000)
- “*Not Now!* Said the Cow” (Oppenheim, 1994)
- *Mouse Mess* (Riley, 1999)
- *Horse and Toad: A Folktale from Haiti* (Wolkstein, 1993)

Once you have read and reread the text several times, and its content and words are quite familiar to your students, you can use it to present mini-lessons. You can teach new words by making word cards, and then asking your students to put words together into sentences, categorize the words, and put words on the word wall. You can teach language skills, such as punctuation marks and sentence order. You can teach reading strategies by using mental models to show how you would find main ideas, identify story elements, or make inferences. Shared reading gives you the opportunity to teach the same kinds of lessons to non-decoders that you would to accomplished decoders.

If you have older readers who struggle with the demands of decoding, and you want all of your students to experience the same book, you can use shared reading to scaffold their needs (Routman, 2000). Give everyone a copy of the book, and read aloud as they read silently with you, pausing occasionally and asking them to supply a word or phrase you know they can handle.

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**Criteria for Selecting Big Books That You Can Use in Shared Reading**

1. Print in the book should be clear and large enough to be visible to the entire group when they are sitting around you on the floor. Ideally, the print should be large enough to place a small sticky note or window marker over a word.
2. The pictures and text should be true to the original version of the book.
3. Text should be predictable or rhyming, so that the advantages of shared reading can be realized. Children should be able to begin “reading” the book quickly.
4. Print and pictures should match; the action taking place according to the print should be the same as the action depicted by the illustrations.
5. Busy-ness should be minimal. Print and illustrations should be clear, free of extraneous details, and designed so that position of text on the page is in a predictable place at each turn of the page.
6. The amount of printed text on each page should be no more than a sentence or two.
7. Little book versions are usually offered by publishers; these should be made available after reading the big book.

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*Figure 9.6 Criteria for selecting high-quality big books.*
Shared reading can also be done with a single child and the teacher or other adult. This type of reading looks much like the type of interaction that takes place when a parent reads aloud to a child before bed at night. Read aloud, pointing to print as you read, while the child follows along. Invite the child to join in, reading orally, in as many places as possible in the text. A parent volunteer or a student helper from an older grade can help out in this capacity, too.

Reading Aloud to Students

Almost all of the most pleasurable classroom experiences that I have had involve reading aloud to my students. Choosing a good book—one that is too difficult for most of them to tackle on their own—and sharing it in the way that books are meant to be enjoyed is the greatest gift you can give your students. One of the most important things you can do in your classroom is to read aloud to your students daily (Adams, 1990; Anderson, Hiebert, Scott & Wilkinson, 1985), and talk to them about what you’ve read (Beck & McKeown, 2001). By reading aloud to them and interacting with them about the book, you teach them so many important things, including these:

1. When you are engaged in reading, the words come alive. You give words expression and ignite their power to create mental images and thoughts.
2. The language of books is different from the language that we speak. The vocabulary is more elaborate, the structure of sentences is more sophisticated. Descriptions are more detailed and dialogue is more exact.
3. Authors write for the purpose of conveying meaning.

When your students are involved in the tasks of decoding, especially if they are inexperienced or struggling readers, or if they are also learning to speak English while they are learning to read, they cannot fully appreciate these facets of books. Thus, reading to all of your students is important, so that they are exposed to these important understandings and use of language (Bus, 2002).

What kind of reader are you? Being a teacher of reading means that you will need to read—a lot. You will need to be familiar with children’s books; if you are not already, begin adding them to your list of readings. Vow to read at least one or two picture books or chapters, silently, daily. If reading aloud to others is bothersome to you, begin practicing now. Read aloud to yourself, and then read aloud to someone close to you—preferably a child. Then practice reading aloud to groups. You can also listen to audiotapes of books, so that you hear a model of expressive reading.

A rule of thumb to remember is this: Always read silently first what you have chosen to read aloud. This step allows you to practice the pronunciation of unusual proper nouns; additionally, it allows you to discover the content of the book. Some books are best suited for silent, private reading, due to the sensitivity of their topic. Moreover, you may not be comfortable reading some books aloud. You’ll need to decide for yourself before you have an audience.

A good resource for reading aloud is Trelease’s *The Read Aloud Handbook* (2001). It offers suggestions for improving your own oral reading ability, boosting your confidence, and choosing good books. Additionally, several guidelines for reading aloud are listed in Figure 9.7.
1. Select books that are of a difficulty above the reading level of your audience. At the same time, remember that children must be developmentally ready to listen to the content in the book. Do not choose a book that has a theme that is too mature for the audience.

2. Select books that will be of interest to the students. If necessary, provide background information. This step is especially necessary for biographies and historical fiction.

3. Communicate the mood of the book. Use facial expressions, adjust your timing, change your voice pitch, and move your body the way the book feels. Be dramatic.

4. If you are reading a longer book, select the parts of the book that you will be reading in one sitting. Make sure you select a place in the story that fosters excitement and makes the students want to hear more the next time you read. (Most picture books can be read in one sitting.)

5. When reading picture books, hold the book to your side with one hand. Make sure everyone can see the pictures. Do not read the book upside-down in your lap. If you can, move your finger or hand along the print. (Don’t do this if it causes you to obstruct the view of the pictures.)

6. Prepare for all of your read-alouds. Never read a book to children that you have not already read yourself. This is necessary for your own practice, but also because you may find that the book is inappropriate for your audience. While you are reading to them, it is too late to find out.

7. Allow time for discussion about the book, but don’t force questions upon the students. Often they need time to reflect upon what they have experienced with the book. Do not follow every read-aloud with a lot of comprehension questions. Instead, if they are responsive, begin a discussion about the motives of the character, similar experiences the students may have had, or the interesting setting that was introduced. Remember that discussions are not always necessary to appreciate a book.

8. Always make the book available to the students to read on their own.

When should you read aloud to your students? Daily, of course; however, there are specific situations for when reading aloud enhances reading instruction. Hoffman, Roser, and Battle (1993) contend that merely reading aloud for a few minutes a day is not enough; teachers need to read at least 20 minutes per day; interact with students in lively, thought-provoking discussions; and offer a variety of experiences connected to the reading.

You might want to select a book that introduces your students to an author, a theme, an idea, or a particular writing style. If they do not recognize 90% of its vocabulary, eliminate the demands of decoding from them and read it to them. Reading aloud to them alleviates the need to match their decoding ability with the difficulty level of the book. Therefore, you can select books that are above their
reading level, so that you are immersing them in new vocabulary and language structure within a meaningful context (Horowitz & Freeman, 1995). All students benefit from read-alouds. Strickland explains the importance of reading aloud to African American, at-risk children, to “help strengthen their vocabulary and concept development and broaden their background knowledge” (2002a, p. 329).

Sometimes, it is necessary to scaffold your students’ understanding by completely removing the demands of decoding, even though you hadn’t planned it that way. For example, on occasion, I have watched my undergraduate students prepare lessons in which they chose the book, wrote a plan for guided reading, and carefully facilitated the understanding of their students, only to have the lesson teeter on the brink of disaster because they overestimated the reading ability of the children. It happens, even to experienced teachers! In situations like this, when teachers quickly decide to read the selection to the students rather than insist on independent decoding, many of the objectives of the lesson can be met. Graves and Graves (2003) emphasize the importance of reflective teaching, in which you make decisions like this on the spot, so that the needs of your students are met.

Reading aloud reinforces the social aspects of literacy. If you read a book to your students, everyone in the room now has a common bond with the book, its author, and its ideas. This experience can be very useful for writing language experience materials and holding discussions. There are times when a book is simply too good to pass up and you have only one copy. Reading aloud to your students allows you to share it with them quickly. Even if you do not read the entire book to them, you can introduce the book with a few passages that are laden with expression, whetting their appetite for reading the book on their own. Routman (2000) recommends doing this for older readers, especially reluctant readers, who might need to be convinced of the value of spending their time reading. An excellent source for read-aloud selections for your older students is Trelease’s Read All about It! Great Read-Aloud Stories, Poems, and Newspaper Pieces for Preteens and Teens (1993).

Ways to Scaffold Writing

As an undergraduate in college, I took an English course in creative writing, and during a conference with my professor, he asked me to tell him how many books I read in a year. I stumbled a bit at the answer, but I thought maybe 25 or 30 books would be about right. My professor, who was also a published author, then informed me that he read more than 500 books a year. I have always loved to read, but was, and still am, amazed at his tenacity with the printed word. His point? If you want to be a writer, you need to be a reader.

Likewise, teachers of reading are also teachers of writing. Tracey and Morrow, in a discussion of their observations of two exemplary classrooms, state: “The most striking feature of these teachers’ instruction was the degree to which they integrated their language arts literacy program. . . . An area in which this integration was very apparent was in linking reading and writing. . . . Teachers’ writing assignments were based on what the students had read and were designed to create thoughtful,
Ways to Scaffold Writing

high-level processing of texts. Thus much reading comprehension was fostered through the relating of reading and writing assignments” (2002, p. 228).

Writers and readers have a common bond—the printed page. Writers want to be heard; that is the purpose of their writing. Readers seek information or enjoyment; that is the purpose of their reading. Thus, neither process is solitary. Literacy is a social endeavor, and teachers who recognize this teach reading and writing processes simultaneously (Atwell, 1998; Graves, 2003).

Because writing skills are so crucial in today’s world, it needs to be a vital part of your literacy instruction and curriculum. When children view themselves as writers, they have greater appreciation for the written word. They begin to truly transact with the text, because they begin to think like authors as they read, and to think like readers as they write (Graves, 2003; Lancia, 1997).

Just as you scaffold your students’ reading, you can support their writing efforts with scaffolds as well. This is quite different from merely making writing assignments and grading them. Instead, you can do these things:

1. Give students time to write independently, for authentic purposes and audiences (Calkins, 1994). While you provide the environment for ease of writing, you offer the least amount of instructional support in this method.
2. Expose students to excellent literature so they see what good writing looks like. Invite students to use writers’ patterns, styles, and devices in their own writings (Lancia, 1997). This technique provides a scaffold, because students are not entirely independent as they compose.
3. Support emerging writers’ efforts by taking dictations in the language experience approach (Allen & Allen, 1967) or “sharing the pen” in interactive writing (Button, Johnson & Furgerson, 1996; Wiley, 1999). These methods offer much scaffolding, because you transcribe their words into print and guide them to the realization that print consists of thoughts and spoken words written down.
4. Show students how writing is done by demonstrating it and thinking aloud as you write, called “writing aloud” (Routman, 2000). This offers the most amount of scaffolding, as you model the writing yourself.

Looking back at Figure 9.2 on page 285, you can see that these types of teaching methods support students as they write, and offer increasing amounts of scaffolding, with the most support being offered with writing aloud, and the least offered with students’ independent writing. Let’s start at the top again, and examine each method of scaffolding writing separately.

Independent Writing

At the top of the scaffold triangle is independent writing. Using the writing process approach, students write formally and informally, for authentic purposes and real audiences. Your support consists of strategies and activities that will enable your students to write on their own, without sharing the pen or using frames. You will need to hold individual conferences, during which the student shares his writing with you, and you give feedback, suggestions for revisions and editing, and materials for publishing.
When writing for the purpose of sharing with others, there are five stages that
writers usually use: (1) rehearsal, (2) drafting, (3) revising, (4) editing, and (5)
publishing (Calkins, 1994; Graves, 2003). It is important to note the recursive nature
of these stages. They are listed here in sequential order because it makes sense to
explain them in that manner. However, most writers do not write in a linear fash-
ion, starting with an idea and moving it toward publication in a step-by-step man-
ner. Most writers are far messier than that! Drafting, revising, and editing can
occur simultaneously as the author uses print on the page to think about ideas, try
them out in a variety of ways, and rethink them again.

On the next few pages are some ways to facilitate the writing process. The
strategies and activities are suggestions for helping your students stick with a piece
of writing from beginning to end, and for providing the type of environment
needed to cultivate writers. You will see additional strategies in Chapter 13, in-
cluding how to use written literature responses in the classroom.

Rehearsal
In the rehearsal phase, students prepare to write and think of topics for their writ-
ing. It is often the most difficult stage of writing, because many times children do
not know what to write about. Choosing topics is an argumentative issue; many
researchers in writing advocate allowing children to choose their own topics
(Calkins, 1994; Clark, 1987; Graves, 1994; Spandel, 2001), while teachers know
how difficult and time-consuming this can be. Cramer (2001) advocates an ap-
proach in which teachers make some topic suggestions, while giving students the
option to choose their own topics if they prefer to do so. Another approach is to
give students a broad topic, such as the Revolutionary War. Within such a topic,
students can choose to write about causes of the war, influential people during the
war, life in colonial times, and so on.

Give your students folders in which they can keep lists of possible topics, com-
position drafts, spelling lists, and other useful documents needed as they write.
The folders should be easily accessible to the students and used on a daily basis.
Students will need a huge bank of ideas for writing. You can ask them to brain-
storm for just a few minutes daily, giving them ideas such as: “Write your favorite
names to use as characters,” “Write some mood words,” “Write some favorite
quotes from books,” or “Observe things in nature and describe them.” One good
way to present the ideas is to have one per day displayed. As students enter the
classroom, or at the start of their writing session time, they can jot down the idea
in their folders. Once students have written these, they can keep them and use
them in stories and expository pieces.

A good writer keenly observes the world around him. But young writers lack the
experiences and observations that adult writers have. Help sharpen your students’
powers of observation by giving them activities that require them to pay attention to
detail. Some suggestions, which can be used in mini-lessons, include the following:

- Introduce lots of nonfiction books to students as springboards for ideas.
  Many students will never become fiction writers, but they will use nonfiction
  writing throughout their lives. Provide plenty of good nonfiction models for
  them to know (Spandel, 2001).
- Give each student a piece of fruit or vegetable, such as a potato, an orange, or
  a carrot. Ask them to look at it carefully, smell it, touch it, and get to know it
well. Then, ask them to write about their fruit or vegetable, describing it in detail. After they finish writing, collect the pieces of produce, making sure to mix them up well. Spread them on a table, and ask students to find their own again (Solley, 2000).

- Ask students to watch a hamster or turtle for several minutes, and then write down what they see. Pay attention to details that are not obvious (Spandel, 2001).
- Divide the class into small groups. Ask each group to create a character. Describe the character in a paragraph, making sure to include all the details that make this character “visible.” Give the paragraph to another group and have them draw a picture of the character (Solley, 2000). The same idea can be used for settings.
- Ask students to write “how-to” instructions on something they know and love. This gives them a starting place and adds confidence. They can begin with a simple list, then add to this to create a draft. Jean Roach, a middle school teacher in Pennsylvania encountered a seventh grader who refused to write (J. Roach, personal communication, 2005). The boy crossed his hands on his chest and steadfastly refused to pick up a pencil, saying, “I can’t write. I don’t have anything to write about.” Roach sat next to him and suggested that they put that pencil away for a while. She asked, “What do you know how to do real well?” He insisted he knew nothing that was worth writing about. Roach continued to chat with him, forgetting about the impending need to put something on paper. She asked him if there was something he thought he might be able to do that she couldn’t do. Suddenly, he brightened and said, “I know how to change a tire. I learned how last week.” Roach told him that was a skill she had never learned, and asked him to write its procedure for her so that she would be able to follow his directions. During the next several days he produced a manual of step-by-step directions on changing a tire!

**Drafting**

Getting the words on paper—or drafting—can be the hardest part of writing. Facing a blank page, as any writer knows, is a daunting, humbling task. Your students need to know that this is hard for everyone. Sugarcoating it and telling them otherwise is simply not fair. Writing is hard work, and students deserve to know it.

Additionally, children often have difficulty with the idea that a draft is a temporary thing. Many times, young writers think that once they put words on paper, they are finished. They are unwilling to revisit their work and change it. Often, they write in a strict linear fashion, starting at the beginning and plodding through to the end. But mature writers know that drafting requires writing bits and pieces here and there in the manuscript, and revisiting sections of the work over and over again. Many children do not have the patience or the endurance to do this without help.

You can provide them with drafting support. First, you might need to make drafting visible for them by thinking out aloud. Use the overhead projector or computer screen to show them, using a mental model, the thought processes that you use as you put words to paper. It is important that your students see your attempts at authorship, because it will show your students that you care about their efforts, and also because it will establish your credibility as a writer and a teacher of writing.

Second, give them some drafting strategies that might help them get their words on paper. Not all strategies will work for everyone, because all writers are
different. Thus, you’ll want to expose your students to as many strategies as possible. Some ideas are listed here:

- Encourage your students to write several possibilities for the beginning of their draft. Using their topic idea, students write three or four possible sentences for the opening of their paper. This helps to get them over the “blank page” hurdle, because now they have several possibilities from which to begin (Spandel, 2001).

- Encourage your students to experiment with different types of leads, such as quotes from literature, flashbacks, questions, and biographical accounts. Model this experimentation by showing them on the overhead projector how you think of several ways to begin a draft that you are writing.

- Tell students to write words, phrases, or complete sentences down the left side of the page. Using a word processor makes this easy, but it can be done manually. Once the student has listed everything possible, he or she should go back to the top of the list and begin putting ideas together. Sometimes, phrases become whole sentences, and sentences can join together to become paragraphs. Anything can be arranged as needed.

- Cramer suggests that writers can “start in the middle and work inside-out” (2001, p. 90). This strategy allows the writer to start with what he or she knows best. This type of drafting works best if your students are composing at the keyboard, rather than writing longhand on paper. However, if your students don’t have access to the computer, you can encourage inside-out writing by giving students small index cards or strips of paper on which to write their sentences. These can be manipulated and rearranged in any order, then taped to a larger piece of paper.

Revising

While researchers define the term revision in many ways, I like the one offered by Cramer, who says, “Any change in a written text constitutes revision, whether it be large or small, form or substance, minor or major. Hence, editing and proofreading are revision of a specific sort, occurring and reoccurring at unpredictable times during writing, according to the habits of a given writer” (2001, p. 104).

Thus, when writers make changes in their drafts, they are revising. It is sometimes difficult for students to understand this phase without putting the revision process in a step-by-step list of procedures. Some teachers teach their students to follow the stages of writing in a strict sequential manner, such as drafting first, then revising for content, then editing for vocabulary choices, and finally proofreading. While this approach puts the writing process into what appears to be a manageable framework, it is not the way most writers write. Many writers revise and edit simultaneously. Others continually proofread, taking care of mistakes as they go along, so they can avoid a big clean-up when they finish. Revision, editing, and proofreading can happen in any order, in a circular fashion. Cramer (2001) offers further definition with an outline of the “Three Faces of Revision”:

- **Revising**—The goal of revising is to improve content. The writer asks, “What do I have to say?”

- **Editing**—The goal of editing is to refine language. The writer asks, “What is the best way for me to say it?”

- **Proofreading**—The goal of proofreading is to make final corrections. The writer asks, “What needs to be corrected?”
Another problem with revising is that teachers are often unrealistic about expectations for revising. Routman (2000) describes revising as having two extremes. Sometimes, teachers expect students to revise everything they write, which is not the way of real writers. She suggests that students and teachers need to talk more about purposes for writing. Authentic purposes lead to a concern for the finished product. Many times, students just don’t care whether their paper hangs on the bulletin board. Thus, there is no incentive to put effort into the real work of revising.

The other problem with revising is that teachers sometimes accept poor work. It is important to encourage young writers, but at the same time, make sure to keep your expectations appropriately high. Students need to know that, while writing is hard work, you will not accept half-hearted attempts at shoddy work. Drafts need to be “friendly,” in that they must be legible. Perfect handwriting and spelling are not necessary, but it is necessary to be able to read and understand your students’ drafts. Avoid calling a draft the “sloppy copy,” which is a commonly used term in classrooms, because such a title may mislead them. Wherever developmentally appropriate, insist on conventional spelling in drafts that are ready to be read by others, using a “No Excuses” list of words (Routman, 2000, p. 185b). This is a list of words that you can distribute early in the school year, and it contains all the words that your students should know how to spell at this point in their academic career. All of those words should be spelled correctly, even on rough drafts. Many teachers apply this rule to the word wall; any word on the wall should be spelled conventionally. These expectations will help you avoid the problem of trying to decipher what your students’ drafts say; additionally, it will help students as they help each other with revising. Thus, while your first priority should always be the content of the children’s written work, it is important that students know that you and their peers need to be able to read their papers. Meet with your students individually on a regular basis and talk about their drafts. Use this time to teach mini-lessons and discuss problems with their work.

**Publishing**

When students publish their work, they accomplish the goal to which authors aspire, which is to share their words with other people. Not all pieces of writing should be published. There are many reasons to write that do not require publishing, such as journal writing, retelling, summarizing, and writing notes for learning. However, when your students write for genuine audiences for real reasons, they have reason to publish their work. This is much more purposeful than writing for the teacher alone.

Knowing the audience affects the quality of their work. Young authors, especially emerging writers, often have difficulty writing for an audience. Their concern for getting words down on paper precludes any thought of the people who may be reading their words. Often, they write only for themselves, forgetting that others will need to understand their message. An authentic audience helps your students to focus their writing. Ask them to mentally picture the people who will read their paper and imagine talking to them. This practice often helps them develop a sense of audience as they write.

Some of the types of pieces that your students can publish include a big book created on their own or a bilingual book worked on with a classmate. These writings give meaning to the writing that your students do, because they are designed to be read by other people, for authentic reasons. Appendix B includes a list of student publishing projects.
Shared Writing

The next level of scaffolded writing is shared writing. There are various forms of shared writing, each of which give the students more control over writing. Shared writing includes lessons in which the teacher offers support, shares the pen, models writing, and provides patterns and frames from which to write. Read on to find out about these methods.

Interactive Writing

Chapter 6 introduced interactive writing. It is an excellent way to support students as they move from invented to conventional spellings. To use the strategy, you and your students negotiate a message to write. Give volunteers the pen to write one word at a time, stretching out their sounds and spelling them conventionally. When there are words that are too difficult for the students, you can write them for the students, showing them how you figure out the spelling of these words. Button, Johnson, and Furgerson describe this approach, and explain, “Through questioning and direct instruction, the teacher focuses the children’s attention on the conventions of print such as spaces between words, left-to-right and top-to-bottom directionality, capital letters, and punctuation” (1996, p. 447).

Robin Teets, who teaches in Virginia, uses interactive writing with students who are learning to speak English. She gives the students as much chance as possible to use the pen to write morning messages, simple responses to stories from children’s literature, or facts learned from information books. Because many words need to be stretched out so the child who has the pen could figure out which letters
to write, one sentence written interactively could take several minutes. This produced problems with getting the rest of the children in the group to pay attention, which she solved with whiteboards and socks. Each student got a whiteboard and a sock to put on the non-writing hand. As the interactive message was being composed, all the students in the group copied the message on the whiteboard, using the sock to erase mistakes as needed.

**Literary Borrowing**

Lancia describes an approach that provides a model for writing using quality children’s literature. He writes, “As any novice learns by imitating a role model, children learn about writing by interacting with professional writers. . . . Additionally, children rely upon their past experiences with literature as springboards for ideas” (1997, p. 471). As a second grade teacher, Lancia collected his students’ writings during the school year and categorized them according to the ways in which they borrowed ideas from children’s literature. He found that his students borrowed:

- Entire plots for retellings
- Characters for use in new situations or continuations of the original story
- Stylistic devices such as descriptive language, patterns, and humor
- Genre elements in which several books of the same type were used as models
- Information from nonfiction

Lancia’s students seemed to find literature a natural starting point for writing their own pieces, and many times did not realize that they had borrowed ideas from another author. Lancia hypothesized that they had internalized their reading so deeply that writing like their favorite author was unavoidable. He suggests that literary borrowing should be encouraged, because of the model it provides for good writing.

Borrowing can begin as early as kindergarten, when the teacher reads aloud predictable books, and then asks students to write a sentence that fits the same pattern. For example, *I Went Walking* by Sue Williams (1989) can be used, like this:

The teacher writes: I went walking. What did I see?

The student writes: I saw a rooster looking at me.

Each child in the class can write a page to be added to a class book.

Later, as children grow more sophisticated in their writing and become more familiar with authors’ styles, characters, and plots, they begin to borrow on their own. Lancia does not consider this to be plagiarism, as it suggests a mentor-type relationship between the author of a book and the child reader/writer. In fact, it is a way to help students develop their own writing styles as they become more confident writers.

**Frames and Reminders Checklists**

Another way to scaffold writing is to provide students with frames and reminders checklists. This technique scaffolds their writing so that they see the way words need to be structured in a report, retelling, summary, or other efferent type of
writing. You'll find several frames in Toolkit for Teachers of Literacy (Nettles, 2006) and one sample in Appendix B. To use frames, model the writing first by writing aloud. Then show students a frame that matches the writing you did and ask students to follow it when they write the first report. You may find that students need this scaffold for another report or two. Some teachers prefer for the students to use the frame, and then recopy or type the report on plain paper so that the frame no longer is visible. When they are ready to compose a report without a frame, give them a list of reminders that will help them remember all of the parts of the paper to include. See an example in Figure 9.8 of a Writer’s Reminders Checklist created from a report frame. Notice that it also reminds the writer to indent. You can scaffold your writers as much or as little as you want, using the reminders checklist.

Language Experience Approach

The language experience approach (Stauffer, 1975; Allen & Allen, 1967), described in Chapters 6 and 8, is accomplished by providing an experience for your students, and then asking them to talk about it. They dictate a narrative, which you record for them. This activity gives them the chance to compose without the demands of physically writing the words on the page.

Over the years, there has been some debate over whether teachers should change students’ dictations if the words and syntax do not reflect Standard English. If a student says, “I ain’t seen nobody in the room,” should the teacher write that on a chart? If dictation is done privately, and its purpose is for the student to see the connection between spoken and written words, you will need to record what he has said. To do otherwise means that he will not be able to read back what he has written.

However, if the dictation is being done in a group, and the purpose is to write a narrative about a group experience, you can negotiate the written words with the students. Using the example, you can say, “I’ll write, ‘I haven’t seen anyone in the room.’ How’s that?” This change does not compromise the meaning of your students’ words; it merely provides a model for writing in Standard English. The resulting narratives are wonderful sources of reading material for students who are learning English as a second language (Temple, Ogle, Crawford & Freppon, 2005).

The language experience approach is an excellent way to use technology as model writing. Nancy Steider, who teaches first grade in Pennsylvania, asks her students to gather around her as she sits at the computer. While they dictate and negotiate sentences, she types. When revisions are suggested or words need to be changed, she verbalizes how she does that, by saying things like, “Ok, let’s change the word ‘said,’ to ‘asked.’ I’ll just use the backspace key to go back over those letters and change them. Watch what I do.” Using the word processor allows you to quickly make copies for everyone in the group, and to share their writing via e-mail and web sites.

Writing Aloud

The most support you can offer to your writers is to model it for them. Writing aloud is a strategy in which you show the students how you write (Routman, 2000; Calkins, 2001). Recall the strategy of mental modeling from Chapter 2, which is a powerful
Changing Scaffolds: Moving from a Frame to a Checklist

The following frame can be used with a book that compares one topic or concept to another. After students use it to write a report, let them be more independent by using a Writer’s Reminders Checklist.

**Figure 9.8** Writer’s Reminders Checklist, based on a report frame.

Title: ____________________________

The author of this book compares ________________ to ________________.

They are alike in two ways. First, ____________________________________________.

Second, ____________________________________________.

They are different in two ways. First, ____________________________________________.

Second, ____________________________________________.

In conclusion, ____________________________________________.

---

**Writer’s Reminders: A Report that Tells about Comparisons**

If the author of your book compared two things, you can write a report that tells about it. Use this checklist:

- I told my reader the two things that are being compared.
- I told my reader the number of ways they are alike.
- I wrote a sentence that tells the first way they are alike.
- I wrote a sentence that tells the second way they are alike.
- I told my reader the number of ways they are different.
- I wrote a sentence that tells the first way they are different.
- I wrote a sentence that tells the second way they are different.
- I wrote a sentence that wraps up my report.

Read your paper and see how you like it. Make any needed changes.

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strategy involving explicit instruction (Duffy, Roehler & Herrmann, 1998). The teacher thinks out loud, verbalizing her mental processes as she completes a task. In writing aloud, the teacher tells the students her thoughts about composing a message, explicitly showing them the phases of writing. You can use the computer screen, an overhead projector, a piece of chart paper, or the chalkboard to write down your
thoughts as you compose out loud. It is important not to overplan this; you want students to see how you get ideas and put them together to create a message.

Before the students write, you can write aloud to show them the recursive nature of the writing process. Use the computer screen and think out loud as you show them how you add, delete, substitute, and rearrange your words when you write. If they are working without a computer, show them editorial symbols such as the caret to show where they wish to insert new words in their drafts. Model for them how to cross out words rather than erase when deleting or substituting. Finally, show them how to cut and paste and draw arrows as they revise.

You can also show students how to stop and read what they’ve already written. Model this by writing two or three sentences on the overhead projector or on the computer screen, thinking aloud as you write. Then stop and reread what you’ve written so far. Sometimes, rereading makes errors and misconceptions very clear. Other times, rereading helps the writer feel better about what she’s written so far.

You can make all of these strategies apparent by writing aloud, and your students can benefit from these lessons without the demands of generating ideas on their own . . . yet. Writing aloud can take place with any age group; middle school students who are seasoned writers can learn from these mini-lessons, as can first graders who are just beginning to find their writing voices.

Workshop Approaches

So far in this chapter, I’ve shown some teaching methods that teachers use to provide instructional scaffolds for students as they learn to read and write. Here, I want to discuss ways to use some of those methods in organizational structures called workshops. Recall from Chapter 1 the transactional theory (Rosenblatt, 1938, 1978), which states that readers respond to what they have read. Responding can take many forms, from the personal and covert act of thoughtful reflection about an author’s words, to the public and overt acts of writing, dramatizing, or talking about the book to others. Workshop approaches are literature-based methods of helping students read and write in social settings about works of fiction and nonfiction. Workshops are based on the idea that readers get the most out of what they read when they respond to, transact with, and write about literature with and for other people. The next section of this chapter describes literature circles, reading workshop, and writing workshop.

Literature Circles

When you read a great book, what do you do? Most adult readers who are excited about a book want to share it with others. They make recommendations, talk about how the book relates to their lives, exchange paperback copies of books, and compare books to movies. Enthusiastic readers who have read the same book share a common bond and excitedly talk about how this book affected them. Compare that kind of response to the way many children are required to respond to books in the classroom. Book reports, practice pages, and coloring sheets
Workshop Approaches

quickly take away the enthusiasm young readers feel when they read a good book. Soon, desire to read shuts down and getting students excited about reading is a problem for their teachers.

One way to encourage your students to read more and to become more involved as readers is to implement literature circles (Daniels, 2002; Harste, Short & Burke, 1995), a method of teaching literature that puts the teacher in the back seat as the students assume more responsibility for their reading. They choose the book they want to read, read it independently, and afterwards meet with other students who have chosen the same book. During these meetings, students respond to their reading through discussion. The teacher participates, not in the traditional sense of evaluating the students, but as a facilitator and a reader who is interested in responding as well (Eeds & Peterson, 1991).

To implement literature circles, planning and preparation are very important. You will need several sets of books with multiple copies. These book sets need to be at appropriate reading levels for your students, and need to be of high interest to them. Books can be fiction or nonfiction, and they can reflect a theme, an author, or a genre. Create five or six sets of texts, and then introduce each of them to the whole class. To do this, talk about the book set, telling just enough about it to pique curiosity.

Once you’ve introduced the book set, give students the opportunity to choose the book they want to read. Many teachers ask students to pick their top two choices, so that numbers in groups are manageable. Some teachers ask students to sign up for a particular interest, topic, or genre, such as mysteries, books about sports, or funny stories. Students who choose the same book form a circle; depending on the number of titles available, they form three or four literature circles.

Students in the groups read their books and then meet to discuss their responses. You can provide a list of questions to help generate discussion. Students ask questions of each other and participate in response activities. Questions that reflect story elements and that can start discussion include asking about the character (Why did the main character act in this manner?), the setting (Tell how the setting in this story reminds you of a place or time in real life.), events (Tell what you were thinking when happened.), or the resolution (How would you have solved the problem differently?). Nonfiction questions might explore the author’s point or might ask what readers have learned that they did not know before. You can guide, observe, and encourage active engagement through discussion. After reading, the students choose a new book and join another group. See Figure 9.9 on page 312 for the procedure for literature circles.

When the students meet, there are a variety of ways that they can conduct their groups. Daniels (2002) suggests the use of roles, in which everyone in the group has a job to do, such as to summarize the selection read so far, illustrate the character or events, or investigate some outside information about the book. When students join the literature circle, the teacher gives them roles and assignment sheets that reflect those roles. Role assignments work best with students higher than second grade. See Figure 9.10 on page 313 for a list of possible roles, adapted from Daniels’s work.

Another way to conduct the group is for everyone to generate questions. This procedure might be difficult for your students, if they are not accustomed to asking the questions, and they might feel awkward at first. A good way to help is to model the act of question generating for them by thinking out loud. Question
1. Collect multiple copies of interesting, high-quality books (fiction or nonfiction) that are written for the reading level of your students.

2. You might want to create sets of books that relate to themes you are teaching in social studies or science. Or you can highlight a genre, such as historical fiction or animal fantasies.

3. Introduce each book with a book talk, a brief talk that tells the students a summary of the book, giving them just enough information to entice them to read it.

4. Ask students to sign up for the book that they want to read. Some teachers ask students to sign up for a topic, such as historical fiction, and the book title changes weekly.

5. After receiving his or her book, each student reads it, either during independent reading time or at home.

6. Once everyone in the group is finished reading, the group meets to discuss it.

7. You can give students assigned roles, like the ones shown in Figure 9.10, or you can ask them to generate questions for each other. Some teachers like to make suggestions for questions that reflect story elements.

8. If you have parents or paraprofessionals who can help guide your literature circles, enlist their help. One first grade teacher, Nancy Steider, asks four parents to commit to meeting twice a month with a literature circle. She provides a brief training session, a packet of response questions and ideas, and a copy of the book. She meets with a group, too, which keeps the groups small and provides plenty of models for first graders.

9. As you meet with literature circles, encourage student participation and keep teacher intervention to a minimum. Make sure students know the following guidelines:
   - You must read the whole book before meeting with the group.
   - You do not need to raise your hand to speak.
   - Always look at the members of the group when talking.
   - Always listen when someone is speaking.
   - Make sure to do your assigned role before you come to the group.
   - Show respect for what other people have to say.

10. Encourage groups to share with each other.
Workshop Approaches

Table 9.10 Literature circle roles.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Role</th>
<th>What the Student Does</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Summarizer</td>
<td>Writes a summary of the selection and begins the discussion by reading it to the group.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quotes Finder</td>
<td>Finds favorite quotes or passages and reads them to the group, explaining why he or she chose them.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Word Wizard</td>
<td>Looks for important or difficult words in the selection, and looks them up. During the discussion, he or she shares the words with the group. (The teacher can make suggestions for one or two words and ask the Word Wizard to find two or three more.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Investigator</td>
<td>Searches for information about the author, book, theme, or topic. An Internet search or reference books can be used. The investigator makes copies of the information and shares it with the group.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Connector</td>
<td>Helps the literature circle members tie this book to their lives. The Connector looks for events in the school or the surrounding community that connect with events in the book.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Illustrator</td>
<td>Illustrates a character, an event, a prediction, or theme, and shares the picture with the group for discussion.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Daniels, 2002.

generating is difficult for many children; you may need to model this a few times. The following lesson is one example of question generating.

**Mrs. Worthy’s Lesson**

In the following example, read the words of Mrs. Worthy, who is showing her third graders how to generate their own questions after reading *So Far from the Sea* (Bunting, 1998). This book is about Laura Iwasaki, a young Japanese American girl, whose family visits the Manzanar Relocation Camp in California for the last time before they move to Massachusetts. They go there to remember Laura’s grandfather, who died after he was held prisoner there during World War II. He was one of thousands of Japanese Americans held in concentration camps after Japan bombed the United States at Pearl Harbor. Mrs. Worthy models:

“Ok, I’ve read *So Far from the Sea*, and all of the students in my group have read it, too, and now I need to ask my group a question. Now, I could ask a question like this: ‘What are some of the things that people left at the Manzanar Relocation Camp?’ And probably, someone will be able to give me the right answer, because they can see the picture of the origami birds and some coins. But I want to ask a question that makes everyone think a little bit more than that. I want the
kids in my group to think about how this book makes them feel. I know that when I read it, I couldn’t believe that we actually had concentration camps in this country. It made me sad to think that Americans were put in prison just because they were from Japanese families, but it also made me think about the way many American people felt back then. They were angry that Japan had attacked Pearl Harbor. I know how I felt on September 11. I was angry and confused, too. OK, so, let me ask a question that will make my group talk about that. Here is my question: ‘What makes you mad when you read this story?’ I think that would be a good one because it’ll get my group talking.”

Literature circles work for beginning readers, too. First and second grade students benefit from the relaxed, informal exchanges that take place when they meet with their groups. Nancy Steider, who teaches in Pennsylvania, organizes her literature circles a bit differently for her first graders. She selects the group members based on abilities, and recruits parent volunteers to manage each group. Steider gives the volunteers several choices of book titles that she has judged to be appropriate for their group. When the parent volunteers meet with their students, they decide on the books they want to read, and hold lively discussions during and after reading.

Carmen Martinez-Roldán and Julia López-Roberston describe their work with first grade bilingual children in literature circles:

Our purpose in the circles was not to teach the students how to read the book, but to facilitate meaningful discussions about books. We held a transactional perspective of the reading process, but did not follow a specific model or guide for leading the discussions. Instead, we encouraged the children to listen to one another, not to raise their hands but to talk when they were prepared, and to respond to or ask questions of the other members of the group. Our questions invited the children to share what they thought of the book. We also shared what we thought of the stories, prompted sometimes by the students’ questions or invitations, as when one of them said to Julia [one of the authors] during the fourth discussion, “It’s your time to talk.” (1999/2000, p. 273)

Reading Workshop

One of the greatest paradoxes in reading education is that teachers spend lots of time teaching reading in school, yet school is one of the places where kids never have a chance to read. Reading instruction often consists of lots of activity and talk about reading, and very little actual reading. Nancie Atwell recognized this problem in her book about teaching reading to middle school students, In the Middle: Writing, Reading, and Learning with Adolescents (1998). Her work is considered the primary source for information on the reading workshop. The reading workshop is a method of teaching reading with literature; using this approach, the teacher sets aside time for independent reading of quality children’s books, along with opportunities for students to respond to their reading through journals and conferences with the teacher. Additionally, the teacher teaches brief mini-lessons on reading strategies based on students’ needs as evidenced in their reading
journals and conferences. Students read independently and choose their own books from an extensive classroom library. A list of the elements of reading workshop is shown in Figure 9.11.

Bryan (1999) explains how he developed a reading workshop for his kindergarten classroom by gradually implementing procedures and mini-lessons during DEAR (Drop Everything and Read) time. He provided gallon-sized plastic “shopping bags” and showed students how to “shop” for two books—one that was familiar and that he had already read to the class, and another that was a new book of their choice. Additionally, Bryan gradually added the mini-lessons to the DEAR time, during which he taught alphabet skills as well as strategies such as predicting.

A key component of the reading workshop at any grade level is the mini-lesson, which is a teacher-directed lesson, about 10 minutes long, in which the teacher uses explicit instruction to teach strategies, skills, or concepts that readers need for successful reading. This mini-lesson makes reading workshop different from a period of sustained silent reading, because of the element of teacher involvement. You may recall that the National Reading Panel (2000a) did not recommend independent reading programs like SSR or DEAR, because of the lack of teacher guidance. The reading workshop, with its teacher read-aloud and mini-lesson, alleviates that concern. Explicit instruction is described in detail in Chapter 10, where you will see explanations and models of essential reading strategies.

Writing Workshop

Based on the relationship between reading and writing, Atwell also introduced the idea of the writing workshop (1998). The concept of the writing workshop approach is much the same as the reading workshop. You would provide
uninterrupted, quiet time for the students to write, and have individual writing conferences with each student every two or three days. Students keep ongoing writing projects in a folder and follow the writing process as they complete them. Just as in reading workshop, the mini-lesson is a key element in writing workshop; it is a brief lesson on one of the strategies that students need while they are writing. You can plan mini-lessons to follow the writing process. Figure 9.12 shows several essential strategies that you might want to teach in mini-lessons. In addition to Atwell’s *In the Middle* book (1998) on writing workshop, these three resources offer excellent ideas for teaching writing:

*The Art of Teaching Writing* (Calkins, 1994)  
*Creative Power: The Nature and Nurture of Children’s Writing* (Cramer, 2001)  
*Creating Writers Through 6-Trait Writing Assessment and Instruction* (Spandel, 2001)

At the end of writing workshop, students share their written pieces with each other. Some teachers call this the author’s chair. Whoever sits in the author’s chair has the opportunity to read his or her writing to the rest of the class. This is a celebratory time, in which students applaud each other’s efforts at the difficult task of writing. Additionally, you may want to have your students try sharing their work electronically. They can write book reviews for Amazon.com, and publish stories and other pieces in a variety of places. Figure 9.13 lists some web sites that are useful for young authors; in addition, you can find many by typing “publishing children’s writing” in your favorite search engine.

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**Strategies for Writing Mini-Lessons**

Model and explain these strategies:

**Rehearsal**  
- How to select a topic for writing  
- How to use past experiences as a framework for writing  
- How to find an audience for the written piece  

**Drafting**  
- How to keep writing when the page is blank  
- How to write, revise, and edit recursively  
- How to string phrases or sentences  
- How to select colorful and meaningful vocabulary  

**Revision**  
- How to help classmates revise their work  
- How to move blocks of writing around  

**Editing**  
- How to use the word wall for spelling help  
- How to determine if a sentence is complete  
- How to use editing marks such as carets and word substitutions

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*Figure 9.12* Mini-lesson topics for writing workshop.
Managing the Scaffolds: A Daily Plan

One of the hardest things to do when running a classroom is to get everything done! There is never enough time to teach all the things you want to teach, to let the children say all that they want to say, and to read as much as you’ll want them to read. Managing time is also one of the skills that new teachers find the most frustrating, because this is not something you can easily learn in a university classroom. Experienced teachers who have been juggling their classrooms along with the clock have devised some ways to maximize efficiency and learning, and we’ll look at some of those methods.

Places for Children to Publish on the World Wide Web

Stone Soup
www.stonesoup.com/main2/writing.html Stone Soup is a magazine for young writers. This web site allows children to publish their stories online.

Scriptito’s Place
members.aol.com/vangarnews/scriptito.html This is a writing resource center hosted by Vangar Publishers. Students from ages 7 to 15 can publish here.

Kid Pub
www.kidpub.org/kidpub/ One of the oldest web sites for children’s writing; this one has been around since 1995. A large database of children’s stories written by children. Teachers can set up a separate page to post the work of their class. The address for more information on this is schools@kidpub.com. There is a small fee for membership, which allows for unlimited story posting. As of 2005, there are more than 42,000 stories in the database.

Aaron Shephard’s Young Author’s Page
www.aaronshep.com/youngauthor/index.html Children’s author Aaron Shephard has set up this web site, which offers information for children who want to publish their writing.

MidLink Magazine
longwood.cs.ucf.edu/~MidLink/ This is an online magazine for children ages 8 to 18, which offers links to schools who want to participate in collaborative web projects, as well as web quests on a variety of subjects.
Additionally, several reading researchers have developed and tested programs for organizing and teaching literacy, especially for struggling readers. These programs are well organized and well structured, and are supported by experimental research or scientifically based ideas (Tierney & Readence, 2005). Four Blocks (Cunningham, Hall & Defee, 1991, 1998); Guided Reading (Fountas & Pinnell, 1996); Reading Recovery (Clay, 1979); Reading Workshop (Atwell, 1998); Scaffolded Reading Experiences (Graves & Graves, 2003); Students Achieving Independent Learning, or SAIL (Bergman, 1992); and Success for All (Slavin, Madden, Dolan, Waski, Ross & Smith, 1994) are programs that offer teachers and students ways to include all of the components of scaffolded reading and writing described in this chapter. Suggestions for managing your literacy instruction include ideas or elements from the research that backs these programs.

A daily routine for teaching reading and writing can be helpful. There are many ways to approach it; the main goal is to focus on putting books and writing utensils in your students’ hands as much as possible, in as many ways as possible. In Figure 9.14, you will see elements of a daily routine. There are many ways to accomplish some of the components; for example, there are many ways to offer independent reading. Thus, options are listed where appropriate.

The following sections cover these elements of a daily plan: (1) class meeting and read-alouds, (2) journal writing, (3) independent reading, (4) group reading, and (5) independent writing. Notice that there are several options for management of independent reading, group reading, and independent writing.

You can arrange these elements in any fashion that suits your needs. Other than the class meeting, which should occur first, the sequence of these elements is not important—do whatever works for you. The important thing to remember is that your students need each of these elements in order for reading and writing to come together, and they need them in large blocks of time and on a daily basis. As you read about each of these parts of a plan, notice that if you include all of the elements in your day, you’ve included “the whole, the parts, and the heart” of teaching literacy.

Managing the Class Meeting

Begin the day together. No matter what grade level you teach, gathering the students together at the beginning of the day helps to instill a sense of community, togetherness, and social connectivity that is so important in teaching reading. Many teachers use this time to talk with the class about plans for the day, and to help students organize their daily goals. They talk about the things they will do and read, and put these plans in writing, in a space on the board for all to see. Other teachers use this time to read aloud to their students, tying the book into a theme or important idea they want to convey. If you teach in a middle school or an elementary school with several classes per day, hold a brief meeting at the beginning of each of your sessions.

Calkins tells of teachers and students using this time to talk about reading—and to really listen to each other. She describes how one teacher, named Kathy, makes this a daily habit that starts the first day of school. Kathy has asked her students to bring in favorite books to share during the morning minutes:

These books may not have been Kathy’s idea of great children’s literature, but they did come into the room layered with life stories. Josh, holding up his cross-section book of
Elements of a Daily Plan for Literacy Instruction

Class Meeting and Read-Aloud
Reserve about 20 minutes of the day for this step, and include all of your students. This is a good time to talk about books and reading. Also spend some time reading aloud to them, which is one of the ways to scaffold their reading and provide a common bond for all students in the class (Calkins, 2001).

Journal Writing
Give your students 15 to 20 minutes to write in journals privately. Use the journals as a way to respond personally to text and to practice writing skills. This requires little scaffolding, but is valuable for developing confidence in writing. Invented spellings give you a window to their knowledge about letters and sounds (Clark, 1988; Ehri & McCormick, 2004; Eldredge, 1999).

Independent Reading
Students of all ages and all backgrounds need time to read independently (Allington, 2001). This activity requires the least amount of scaffold, but provides the most meaningful practice. Use this 20 to 30 minute block of time to allow students to read books of their own choosing.

Ways to organize independent reading:
- **Uninterrupted Sustained Silent Reading (USSR) or Drop Everything and Read (DEAR)**—Children silently read books of their own choice, uninterrupted. The teacher reads as well, to provide a model (Anderson, 2000; McCracken & McCracken, 1972). No other teacher intervention is required; however, the National Reading Panel (2000a) did not support the use of sustained silent reading without teacher intervention or involvement other than just reading.
- **Self-selected reading and conferencing**—Students read books of their own choosing while the teacher moves around the room and holds conferences with five students per day (Cunningham, Hall & Defee, 1991, 1998).
- **Reading workshop**—Students read books of their own choosing and hold a conference with the teacher about their reading. The teacher begins each session with a mini-lesson on reading strategies (Atwell, 1998).
- **Literature circles**—Students read books that they have chosen from a selection of books gathered by the teacher. They form small, flexible groups to discuss their responses after reading. Each student can take a role, such as Summarizer or Illustrator, shown in Figure 9.10. The teacher guides without leading the discussion (Daniels, 2002; Harste, Short & Burke, 1995).

Group Reading
Reserve about 30 to 45 minutes for this time block. Students read text that you have selected at their instructional level. Scaffold their reading by using any variation of shared reading or guided reading that suits the needs of your students.

Ways that you can organize group reading:
- **Shared reading**—Read the text aloud while your students follow along. You can do this with the whole class, a small group, or with individual students (Harste, Short & Burke, 1988; Holdaway, 1979; Tierney & Readence, 2005).
- **Guided reading using the Fountas and Pinnell (1996) model**—This framework uses flexible groups of children grouped by ability. Each group reads its own leveled book chosen by the teacher. The teacher meets with each group daily.
Guided reading in the Four Blocks model (Cunningham Hall, & Defee, 1991, 1998)—This framework is used with mixed-ability groups. The students can meet with the teacher, meet with a self-guided group, read in pairs, or read alone.

Writing
Students can work independently on response projects that involve writing, researching, or creating multimedia pieces. Usually, you will need about 30 to 45 minutes for this type of work. Use the writing process and publish for authentic purposes and audiences. You may need to add 10 to 15 minutes to this time for word study. Work with decoding rimes, word wall activities, making words, and other word-related activities (Cunningham, Hall & Defee, 1991, 1998).

Ways that you can organize writing:

- **Writing workshop**—Begin with a mini-lesson on some aspect of the writing process that students need, such as writing for an audience, word choice, or clarity. Use writing aloud to model strategies by thinking aloud (Calkins, 2001; Routman, 2000). Give students 30 minutes to write independently. Revising and editing comes from peers in groups, as well as during individual conferences with the teacher (Atwell, 1998).

- **Shared writing**—Meet with the whole class or in small groups to write, using language experience charts (Stauffer, 1975; Allen & Allen, 1967), interactive writing messages (Button, Johnson & Furgerson, 1996), literary borrowing (Lancia, 1997), and story or report frames and checklists.

Figure 9.14

Thus, the morning class meeting can be a time for setting the tone for the whole school day—indeed, the whole school year. Talk about reading during this time together. Ask your students to bring a favorite book from home, and then share it by explaining why it is a favorite and how it fits into the home routine. Or discuss things to accomplish during the day. Truly listen, and teach children how to listen to each other by facing and watching each other as they talk. Do not expect to give everyone a chance to share thoughts with the whole group every day; instead of redirecting attention to many children during discussions, focus attention on one child’s talk closely. Let that child make his important point. When you do this consistently and daily, children know that you are listening, and that you expect them to contribute thoughtfully.

Managing Journal Writing
Journals have many purposes; most often, they are places for writing personal reactions to reading, class discussions, interest topics, or everyday observations. The response journal is a type of journal in which students write about anything that they have read. Students of all grade levels, even kindergarten and first grade, can...
Years ago, I taught with a colleague whose wife is deaf. He can hear, and is very fluent in American Sign Language. His wife’s doctor thought that she had a syndrome whose symptoms are deafness and kidney failure and which is nearly always fatal. To find out more about it, the doctors needed to do a kidney biopsy. My colleague did the interpreting for his wife and medical personnel. During the biopsy, the doctor was sweating and his hands were shaking terribly. In frustration, he shouted at my friend, telling him that he needed to tell his wife to be absolutely still or her kidney could be punctured during this procedure. My colleague went white, and collapsed in a pile on the operating room floor. In spite of everything, the biopsy went well and his wife is now healthy. But he later told me of his raw fear when he came to on that operating room floor. He realized that his ability to interpret accurately could be a matter of life and death.

Likewise, Latino/Hispanic children are often called upon to serve as liaisons between their homes, communities, and schools. Their bilingualism, and the monolingualism of their families, requires them to interpret the language and teach it to others. For example, some Latino/Hispanic students must attend parent conferences to interpret for their teachers and parents. Other similar types of tasks abound, such as helping their parents pay bills, teaching younger siblings, and writing letters to relatives in their native country. Jiménez (2001, 2004) states that educators often overlook the abilities that their Latino/Hispanic students possess and use every day. These “multiple literacies” (2001, p. 741) are sophisticated, complex skills, and are essential to the families and communities of Latino/Hispanic students. Such activities can place an emotional burden on the students, because of the reversal of traditional parent–child roles. Moreover, the literacy instruction that they receive in school is often viewed as a threat to their identities, because the curriculum ignores their Spanish-language abilities and their experiences at home. In the report of a study in which he taught and interviewed immigrant Latino/Hispanic students in grades 4 through 6, Jiménez tells us: “Students indicated that literacy learning was a much more appealing activity if viewed as supportive of their Latina/o identity, if it fostered their Spanish-language and literacy development” (2004, p. 235). He recommends that educators support their bilingual Latino/Hispanic students by recognizing their abilities, as well as the burden that these abilities bring to them. Some ways to do this are:

- Call upon the background experiences of your Latino/Hispanic students during literature circles or guided reading. Use cognate vocabulary in mini-lessons.
- Talk with your bilingual students about their unique challenges and advantages.
- Support the preservation of Spanish as their native language. Use bilingual literature, word walls, and interactive writing. Teach students how to write letters to stay in touch with relatives who live in other countries.
- Allow older students to tutor English-speaking students in Spanish, translate stories from English to Spanish for use in the library, or help the school produce documents that can be used with the Spanish-speaking community.

write in daily response journals. You can prompt your students with questions or statements, or simply ask them to react to the literature, without specific prompts. If you choose to use prompts, some good examples are:

- What do you think the main character should do?
- How is this story plot similar to your life?
● What have you learned about this topic by reading this book?
● What would you like to say to the author of this book?
● How would you change this book?
● What would you like to say to the main character of this book?
● Compare this book to the best book you ever read.

Use journals to help your students view writing as a means of personal response. Reserve a 15 to 20 minute block of time for journal writing for everyone, and ask everyone to write independently. Establish a “quiet zone” rule, so this time period can be used to write privately and quietly.

You can read about journal writing in more detail in Chapter 13, where you will learn how to use several types of response journals and see samples of journal writing from children as young as first grade.

Managing Independent Reading

Give your students at least 20 to 30 minutes of independent reading time per day. This means that your students will need to have access to books that are suitable for their reading levels. To facilitate this, each student will need a receptacle, to house books and a number of small items. You can use sturdy bags, magazine storage boxes, or other lightweight containers that can hold these items:

● Enough books to sustain the reader for 20 to 30 minutes; younger children may need up to 10 paperback books
● A reading log to track titles, authors, and dates
● Writing utensils and a wipe-off board
● A bag for carrying books home

Students choose the books to go into their book bags on a regular basis; organize this according to the abilities of your students. Some teachers establish a Monday morning book-choosing time; others ask their students to select books every day or two. Students can choose them from the classroom library or from the school library. You might want to consider letting them bring some from home, too, depending upon your resources.

The portable book bags help to make this period of time manageable—everything needed is within arm’s reach. Establishing a firm “no wandering” rule is easy to do, because your students will have everything they need in their book bags. They will not need to wander around finding another book to read once they’ve finished the first one.

Using these book bags and this independent reading time, according to Calkins (2001), you can also determine a lot about how children read. Children’s ability to choose books that fit their reading abilities, their reading interests, and their persistence in sticking with books once they start them, can all be assessed simply by taking note of what is in their book bags. They should also keep a reading log, in which they record the date and the title and author of the books they read daily.

This is a good time for you to find out more about your students’ reading behaviors. To do this, Cunningham, Hall, and Defee (1998) suggest establishing a routine of having a conference with a few students per day during this time. (If you have 25 students, 5 per day gets the whole class done in a week!) At the beginning
of the school year, model a reading conference for your students. Make sure that they know that they will be expected to do the following:

- Tell the teacher why you chose the book.
- Retell the story.
- Tell what you learned from the author.
- Tell the teacher about your predictions and thoughts so far.
- Tell the teacher what kind of book you are thinking about sharing next week.

To have a conference with your students during the independent reading period, you can either travel around the room and sit with the students, or you can ask them to bring their book bag to you. You can ask them to select a page or two from a book in their box, and to either read aloud for you or read silently. Watch closely and make notations to record oral reading, as you learned to do with running records in Chapter 4. Make brief anecdotal notes as you hold conferences. You can look for these kinds of things:

1. What kinds of books does the student choose? Does he or she need to be nudged to try other genre?
2. What does his or her reading log say about the child's reading? Is the child moving through books at an appropriate pace?
3. Is the child able to choose books that match his or her ability? Does the child need to learn how to select books on his or her own?
4. How does the student read orally? What does the student do with miscues?
5. How does the student read silently? Is the student attending to the print and interpreting the author's message?
6. How does the child retell?
7. How does the child value reading? Do you need to help him or her gain interest by making other book choices?
8. How is his or her fluency? Does he or she need to do some repeated readings to increase speed, expression, and comfort level with oral reading?

This list is meant to show all the possibilities for a reading conference. Naturally, you will not be able to accomplish all of these assessments in a two- or three-minute conversation. To manage this list efficiently, you might want to do the same assessment for each student during that week. For example, the first week, you can decide to focus on your students’ miscues and make notes about self-corrections, use of phonics clues, and use of context to decode unknown words. The second and third weeks, you might want to collect information on retelling.

Another possibility is to let the students’ readings drive you. You may find, for example, that a child has particular difficulty with retellings. Thus, rather than move to a different type of assessment each week, you would stick with retellings for at least one more conference, to see if you can figure out some patterns to the child’s behavior.

Managing Group Reading

Essentially, there are two ways to manage the small groups that you use with guided reading. First, Cunningham, Hall, and DeFoe (1991, 1998), in their Four Blocks literacy framework, advocate mixed-ability groups. Second, Fountas and Pinnell (1996),
in their Guided Reading literacy framework, advocate the use of “dynamic” groups of children with similar reading abilities. Management of these groups will be different, depending on your choice. The following sections describe both.

**Mixed Ability Grouping**

Cunningham, Hall, and Defee (1998) recommend that you group your students heterogeneously, and provide all of them with the same text. Meet with the whole class first, and prepare them for reading by previewing the text, asking for predictions, and talking about the purpose for reading. There are a variety of interesting techniques that you can use, such as the book box or a picture walk, which you will learn more about in Chapter 11. When all of your students are ready to read the selection, assign students to read in one of four ways: (1) with partners, (2) independently, (3) with the teacher, or (4) in a small group without the teacher.

These four ways of reading allow you to meet the needs of students without putting them in homogeneous ability groups. This also allows for “multi-level” teaching (Cunningham, Hall & Defee, 1998, p. 653). Students who need less support can read the selection independently or with partners. Students who need more support can read it with other students in a small group, led either by the teacher or by a peer. Some teachers get help from parents, aides, or reading resource teachers to guide one of the small groups.

To let your students know how they are assigned, make a chart for your classroom, using card pockets and index cards. Write your students’ names, one per card, on the index cards. Then arrange a chart like the one shown in Figure 9.15. You can change the chart as often as you want, or you can vary the format by giving the students a choice, letting them decide how they want to read a selection.

After you have prepared everyone to read the selection, give them a question to answer or something to look for as they read. Then, the students can find their
places and guided reading begins. Students read the selection silently, or, if in partners, softly or in whispers.

In order to successfully use partners during your guided reading times, you will need to plan carefully. For smooth management of behavior and efficient use of time, assign partners yourself, and keep these partnerships constant for two or three weeks, then change them. This is one excellent reason for knowing your students well. Your interest inventories at the beginning of the school year can help you form partnerships early on. As time passes, you will know which pairs work well and which do not. Generally, it is best to avoid putting the top ability students together with the lowest ability students, because the disparity in their abilities is too wide. Likewise, putting two of the lowest ability students in the same partnership should also be avoided, because they have not yet developed the skills to adequately coach and encourage each other. Arrange the seating in the classroom so that partners are located near each other. Additionally, when you gather children with you to sit on the floor, ask partners to sit together so that you can easily facilitate strategies that require them to talk to a partner.

Train your students to work together as pairs. There are several considerations. First, students need to know the purpose for their reading. What is the intended outcome of their partner reading? You need to make this clear to them. You might want them to prepare for choral reading with the class, so they will need to reread parts of a selection orally. Or, you might want them to help each other self-monitor by asking them to read a selection silently for the first time and check up on each other at stop points. Another reason for reading together might be to fill in an advanced organizer or a story map. Whatever the reason, make sure they know why they are reading together.

Second, students need to know how they will read together. Figure 9.16 shows some of these ways. As always, when you expect something new from your students, model the type of behavior you want them to achieve. Role-play some partner reading so that your students can see and hear the activity that you expect.

While their classmates are reading in pairs or with the teacher, some students will be reading alone. This, however, is not the same type of reading that they will do during self-selected reading time. Instead, you will guide them by giving them before-reading activities, and then ask them to read the selection by themselves. Some students prefer this mode of reading; it is important, though, that you do not portray this punitively for those who do not prefer to read alone.

When it is time to read a selection, there will be students who need to be close to you during their reading. The reasons vary. Sometimes you will want to provide additional structure for a small number of students; other times, you might want to listen closely to the responses of certain students as they read. This is also a good time to do some careful kidwatching, as students decode, solve problems, and make predictions. Again, make sure that the students who sit with you to read do not view this as a punishment, and make sure to vary the makeup of the groups, so that your grouping remains flexible.

Guided reading should take place on at least two or three days a week. With younger children, you will assign a reading selection each time they meet. As they get older, it may be necessary to take two days to read one selection. On the days when you do not use guided reading, you can use literature circles or the reading workshop format.
Chapter 9  Scaffolding Literacy Learning

Needs-Based Grouping

Fountas and Pinnell (1996) advocate putting students of like abilities together, in flexible but homogeneous groups. Their rationale is that young, developing readers need intense instruction with guided reading, using leveled texts that match their abilities. These groups meet on three to five days a week, and on other days, students participate in literature circles or reading workshop groups. Thus, they would meet with homogeneous groups only during guided reading time, and would have the opportunity to meet with other groups for other purposes. These groups should be constantly monitored, and based on ongoing assessments, children should be regrouped as necessary.

A block of about 30 to 45 minutes is needed for guided reading, and during that time, you would meet with each group, one at a time. During this time, each group reads a different selection that you have chosen to match the abilities of the students in that group. Fountas and Pinnell list thousands of leveled books in

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ways to Read as Partners</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Back and forth</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The partners agree to read one page at a time, switching back and forth.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Character roles</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The partners decide upon character parts to read, and divide the rest of the page. You might want to help them determine which parts to read.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Keeping track</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The partners take turns “keeping track” of the print for each other. One partner points to the print, while the other reads aloud for one page; then they switch roles for the next page. This is best for younger children who are not yet fluent reading.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>6” whispers together</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The partners read in choral reading fashion, whispering so that only they can hear each other.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Say something</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Each partner reads silently. When they come to a stop point, the partners say something to each other about the selection so far. Prior to reading, be sure to have them mark the stop points, and give them a topic to talk about at the points.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Question the author</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Each partner reads silently. When they come to a stop point, ask them to collaboratively compose a question that they would like to ask the author.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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Figure 9.16  Partner reading.

When meeting with each group, briefly prepare them to read with a strategy that activates background knowledge or asks for predictions. Set a purpose for reading by asking a question or giving the students something to look for as they read. Then, have each student read the selection silently, stopping only to ask for help or to reflect on predictions. During this time, observe their reading behaviors. You can take notes on self-monitoring strategies or vocabulary needs. Depending on the selection, you can give the students a stop point and talk about the events that occurred up to that point. After starting the story and checking on everyone, you can also send them back to their seats to finish the story independently, which helps to keep the group meetings brief.

While you are meeting with one group, it is of course necessary for the rest of the class to work without your guidance. This setup creates the very common problem of how to meaningfully occupy 20 or so students while you teach only five or six of them. You need to be able to teach without interruptions so that everyone stays focused and on task. Independent activities should be, first and foremost, meaningful. You could have your students read independently, read with a partner, listen to taped readings, or work at the computer.

Managing Writing Instruction

Give students plenty of time to write. For grades three and above, students need at least 30 minutes of uninterrupted writing time, and a little less than that for the lower grades. You might want to utilize a writing workshop format, in which you use the first 5 to 10 minutes for a mini-lesson and the remainder of the time for students to write independently.

If you have chosen a theme or topic, and have introduced many books on that subject, you can involve your students in long-term writing and researching projects about the topic. You can help students research and respond to books connected to the topics that they are currently studying in science or social studies. Students can pick specific areas within the theme or topic that you have chosen; for example, if the topic is weather, the students could write about cloud formation, weather reporting, tornadoes, or any other facet of weather that interests them. To guide their selections, you might want to outline some choices for them.

While students write, hold individual conferences about their writing. Guidelines for conferencing are shown in Figure 9.17 on page 328.

To keep a record of your students’ writing, you can use a state of the class chart (Atwell, 1998). This chart lists all the students in your class, the dates, and the current writing stage at which the student is working. An example is shown in Figure 9.18 on page 328.

Additionally, during the writing time of your daily schedule, you might need to plan for lessons in word study. You do not need more than about 15 minutes for word study; these lessons could include activities such as making words, phonics sorts, and a variety of other phonics activities that you can find in Chapter 6. Word study of this type is appropriate for students in second grade or younger. For older students, teach dictionary skills, word analysis skills, and spelling strategies during this time.
1. Ask students to tell you about their piece. If time permits during the conference, ask them to read it to you.
2. Always keep the content of the piece your first priority.
3. Make the conference brief—three or four minutes should suffice.
4. Make suggestions but do not rewrite or take over the piece.
5. Be sure that your comments are sincere. Tell the student what you like about the paper. Then decide on just one area that needs improvement, and ask questions or offer comments for this.
6. Questions that you can ask when correcting difficulties occur are:
   a. What is the most important thing that you are trying to say?
   b. What’s your favorite part? How can you add to that?
   c. I don’t understand this part. Tell me more about this part.
   d. How can you get my attention, as a reader, right away?
   e. What do you want your reader to know or feel at the end of your paper?
   f. What is one thing that you would change about your paper?
   g. Are there some extra words in your writing that you can delete?
   h. What do you think you will do by the next time we talk?
7. Always end the conference with an agreement to accomplish something in the writing.

**Figure 9.17 Guidelines for holding writing conferences.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of Student</th>
<th>Project</th>
<th>Rehearsal</th>
<th>Drafting</th>
<th>Revising</th>
<th>Editing</th>
<th>Publishing</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Michael</td>
<td>Letter to zookeeper</td>
<td>2/6</td>
<td>2/9</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amber</td>
<td>Letter to zookeeper</td>
<td>2/6</td>
<td>2/9</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nakita</td>
<td>Sequel to <em>The True Story of the Three Pigs</em></td>
<td>2/6</td>
<td>2/9</td>
<td>2/11</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Santiago</td>
<td>Report on wolves</td>
<td>2/6, 2/7</td>
<td>2/8</td>
<td>2/11</td>
<td>2/11</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meredith</td>
<td>Report on wolves</td>
<td>2/8</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Whitney</td>
<td>Report on wolves</td>
<td>2/8</td>
<td>2/9, 2/10</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Travis</td>
<td>Alphabet book on mammals</td>
<td>2/6</td>
<td>2/7, 2/9, 2/8</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joe</td>
<td>Biography of Jon Scieszka</td>
<td>2/7</td>
<td>2/7</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Darlene</td>
<td>Sequel to <em>The True Story of the Three Pigs</em></td>
<td>2/6</td>
<td>2/7</td>
<td>2/9</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Figure 9.18 State of the class record for writing.**
Summary: Scaffolding—The Many Ways

Scaffolded instruction facilitates the reading and writing that your students do, and provides an environment for optimal learning. When you scaffold your students’ reading, you make plans for strategies to use before, during, and after their reading. Providing appropriate reading materials for them is crucial to their success; three levels of difficulty apply to a match between the text and the reader: independent, instructional, and frustrational.

Scaffolded reading instruction takes many forms; such instruction, in terms of a framework shown in Figure 9.2 on page 291, illustrates the nature of the teacher’s role while supporting reading. Much support is offered in methods such as read-alouds and shared reading. As students become more capable, the teacher gradually releases responsibility and allows them to be more independent in methods such as guided reading and independent reading.

Likewise, when teaching writing, teachers support their students by modeling their writing, using mental models to explain writing processes. The teacher also supports beginning writers with shared writing methods such as language experience, interactive writing, and literacy borrowing. Teacher support is gradually reduced, as students learn and write independently with the least amount of scaffolding. While writing, students use the same processes that real authors do, so

Ways to Read Together

Shown below is a letter that explains partner reading.

Dear Family,

I will be sending home books each night for your child to read. These books should be “just right” for your child, which means that he or she can read almost all the words on the page with no difficulty.

In our classroom, we read with partners frequently. You can do the same thing at home with your child, with the books that he or she brings home. Shown below are some ways you can “share the page” with your child.

- **Back and forth:** You and your child agree to read one page at a time, switching back and forth.
- **Character roles:** Decide upon character parts to read, and divide the rest of the page.
- **Keeping track:** Take turns “keeping track” of the print for each other. Begin by pointing to the print for your child, while she reads aloud for one page. Then switch roles for the next page.
- **Say something:** Divide the book into sections. Mark each section with a bookmark or sticky note. Together, read the section. (You can read silently or orally.) When you get to the bookmark or sticky note, this is your stop point. Say something to each other about the selection so far.

Try these! I think you’ll enjoy this time reading together.

Sincerely,

Your child’s teacher
teachers guide them through five stages: rehearsal, drafting, revising, editing, and publishing. Students use these stages in a recursive manner, writing and rewriting until they are finished with the product.

Workshop approaches to reading and writing were described in this chapter; they provide alternative frameworks for teaching literacy in child-centered ways.

To manage the time, movement, and behavior of your students as they learn to read and write, this chapter showed you how to organize the day so that you have blocks of time reserved for reading and writing activities. Reserve time each day for: (1) class meeting and read-aloud, (2) journal writing, (3) independent reading, (4) guided reading, and (5) writing.

The types of scaffolded reading are shown in the Reviewing the Big Picture box, along with their corresponding standards and principles.

Technology Resources

- classroom.jc-schools.net/read/index.html This “Road to Reading” web site, sponsored by Jefferson County Schools in Dendridge, Tennessee, has several pages, one of which is called “Guided Reading Blvd.” On this page, there are many links to pages on every facet of guided reading, including charts for group management, partner reading, and more.
- www.teachnet.org/ntol/howto/childlit/manageread.htm “How to Manage Reading Groups” is the article on this web page, which is part of the Teachers Network web site.
- forums.atozteacherstuff.com/showthread.php?threadid=1069 This site provides a forum for chatting with teachers and asking questions about issues such as management, guided reading, grouping, and matching books to readers.
- www.educationworld.com/a_curr/profdev/profdev083.shtml Authored by Cara Bafle, this article on the Education World web site is her explanation of the strategy of shared reading and how it can be adapted for middle school readers.
- home.cc.umanitoba.ca/~fboutin/frame.html This web site is written by Boutin and Chinien of the University of Manitoba. It is an interactive site, in which the student teacher can view web pages that contain several possible classroom scenarios. These scenarios depict problems in classroom management. You can contribute by explaining how you would solve the management dilemma, and then compare your answer to that given by an experienced classroom teacher.
- k6educators.about.com/od/classroommanagement/ This About.com web site offers several links to quality web sites on classroom management. A variety of articles provide much information and practical advice on topics such as classroom jobs, nonverbal ways to manage behavior, and student-centered learning.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scaffolding Instruction</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Conditions for Optimal Use</th>
<th>IRA Standards</th>
<th>INTASC Principles</th>
<th>NAEYC Standards</th>
<th>ACEI/NCATE Standards</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Independent reading</strong></td>
<td>Students read alone books of their own choosing.</td>
<td>The least amount of scaffolding takes place when students read silently. Reading workshop and literature circles utilize extensive independent reading.</td>
<td>1.4, 2.1, 2.2, 3.2, 4.1, 4.2, 4.3, 4.4</td>
<td>3, 4, 5</td>
<td>1, 3, 4b</td>
<td>1, 2.1, 3.1, 3.2, 3.4, 4</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Guided Reading</strong></td>
<td>Read a book silently in small groups, using stop points to discuss predictions and conclusions. Groups are either mixed ability or or needs based</td>
<td>The teacher scaffolds reading instruction by giving leveled reading material. While students read, the teacher observes or interacts with the student.</td>
<td>1.4, 2.1, 2.2, 3.2, 4.1, 4.2, 4.3, 4.4</td>
<td>3, 4, 5</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>1, 2.1, 3.1, 3.2, 3.4, 3.5, 4</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Shared reading</strong></td>
<td>Read a book with a group. If the group consists of young emerging readers, use the big book form of a predictable book. Have students read aloud with you at the predictable parts of the book. If the group consists of older, struggling readers, give everyone a copy of a small book and read aloud while they follow along.</td>
<td>Books are too difficult for students to decode alone. The teacher reads aloud while students follow along.</td>
<td>1.4, 2.1, 2.2, 3.2, 4.1, 4.2, 4.3, 4.4</td>
<td>3, 4, 5</td>
<td>1, 3, 4b</td>
<td>1, 2.1, 3.1, 3.2, 3.4, 3.5, 4</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Reading aloud to students</strong></td>
<td>Read books aloud instead of asking students to read it themselves.</td>
<td>Books are at the frustrational reading level. The teacher reads aloud to provide a common experience and to show good models of reading and writing.</td>
<td>1.4, 2.1, 2.2, 3.2, 4.1, 4.2, 4.3, 4.4</td>
<td>3, 4, 5</td>
<td>1, 3, 4b</td>
<td>1, 2.1, 3.1, 3.2, 3.4, 3.5, 4</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Independent writing</strong></td>
<td>Students use the writing process for formal writing projects. Informal writing is not published; a journal is one type.</td>
<td>Least amount of scaffold for writing instruction, although mini-lessons take place during writing workshop.</td>
<td>2.2, 4.1, 4.3, 4.4</td>
<td>3, 4, 5</td>
<td>1, 3, 4b</td>
<td>1, 2.1, 3.1, 3.2, 3.4, 3.5, 4</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Shared writing</strong></td>
<td>“Share the pen” with interactive writing, literary borrowing, and frames and checklists.</td>
<td>Provides substantial scaffold by helping with spelling, writing patterns from literature, and frames that show how writing should be organized.</td>
<td>2.2, 4.1, 4.3, 4.4</td>
<td>3, 4, 5</td>
<td>1, 3, 4b</td>
<td>1, 2.1, 3.1, 3.2, 3.4, 3.5, 4</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Language experience approach</strong></td>
<td>Provide an experience; ask students to dictate a piece of text about it. Transcribe their words.</td>
<td>Allows students to compose without the demands of writing the words themselves. Shows the connection between oral language and print.</td>
<td>2.2, 4.1, 4.3, 4.4</td>
<td>3, 4, 5</td>
<td>1, 3, 4b</td>
<td>1, 2.1, 3.1, 3.2, 3.4, 3.5, 4</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Write-alouds</strong></td>
<td>Model writing processes by composing while thinking aloud.</td>
<td>The most amount of scaffolding; this method makes processes visible and can be done in mini-lessons.</td>
<td>2.2, 4.1, 4.3</td>
<td>3, 4, 5</td>
<td>1, 3, 4b</td>
<td>1, 2.1, 3.1, 3.2, 3.4, 3.5, 4</td>
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