

“Writing Center,” or “Writing, Drawing, Talking Center”: Does It Matter?

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Abstract

This article provides case data that illustrate the potential of the emergent writing/drawing context for supporting oral language, content knowledge, and reasoning in preschoolers. The adult-child talk surrounding the samples provided are discussed in relation to the child’s prior experiences and knowledge, and circumstances in the classroom that affect a teacher’s time allocation. A current trend in using preschool writing centers in U.S. classrooms to focus quite narrowly on supporting literacy skills development is discussed in light of oral language and content development needs. The benefits of thinking broadly about a drawing/writing/talking center to meet some of these oral language and content knowledge needs are explored. Some practical ideas for supporting this broader use of the writing center, and ideas for research on teacher-child talk in a drawing/writing/talking center context, are suggested.

Keywords : achievement gap, early literacy skills, emergent writing and drawing, oral language and content knowledge development

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Helping all children learn to read and write at the Proficient level is a challenge for U.S. educators. For example, only 34 percent of fourth graders performed at or above the Proficient level on the 2011 national reading assessment (National Center for Education Statistics, 2011), and significant differences were found among racial/ethnic groups and between children from higher-income families compared to those with lower-incomes. The same general patterns were evident on the eighth grade reading assessment and the 2011 writing assessment of eighth and twelfth graders (National Center for Education Statistics, 2012). This situation is of considerable concern because Proficient level achievement is necessary for completing challenging grade level work in middle and high schools, and for success in a college or university afterward.

Especially troubling is the declining reading achievement found in many lower income and language minority children, beginning in fourth grade, even though they could decode words well and read fluently in the primary grades. This slide is often caused by inadequacies in oral language skill and content knowledge, in relation to the comprehension demands of textbooks (Cain & Oakhill, 2006; Chall, 2003; Crosson & Lesaux, 2010; Snow & Biancarosa, 2003). In the primary grades, children have little difficulty comprehending a text after decoding its words because beginning reading materials are greatly simplified. After this learning-to-read phase, however, children's reading comprehension suffers when oral language and content knowledge are not robust (NELP, 2008; Storch & Whitehurst, 2002). In other words, literacy skills are necessary, but not sufficient, for comprehending challenging reading material and for higher-level composing.

The achievement levels of older students are highly correlated with their oral language and literacy skill levels at preschool and kindergarten ages (e.g., Hart & Risley, 1995; Heath, 1986; Neuman, 2006; Purcell-Gates, 1996). Because it takes years to build oral vocabulary and content knowledge, and because demands for vocabulary and content knowledge increase with each successive grade, a weak start is difficult to overcome. It is not surprising, then, that many federal and state initiatives focus on providing good language and literacy instruction during early childhood, before a child enters elementary school.

Efforts to improve preschool instruction include (1) increasing the complexity of storybooks and the number of informational books read aloud (e.g., Pollard-Durodola, Gonzalez, Simmons, Davis, Simmons, & Nava-Walichowski, 2011; Schickedanz & Collins,

2013); (2) increasing the use of inferential comments and questions to help children learn to think about and interpret narrative and other kinds of text (see Schickedanz & Collins, 2013); (3) and a greater use of content-rich curricula to support vocabulary knowledge at levels deeper than simple labels (Neuman, Newman, & Dwyer, 2011; Ouellette, 2006; Strickland & Riley-Ayers, 2007). Talking with children is also stressed (Dickinson, McCabe, & Essex, 2006; Dickinson & Porche, 2011; Dickinson & Tabors, 2001; Hart & Risley, 1995; Storch & Whitehurst, 2002), and contexts typically recommended for doing this include book reading and block play (Dickinson, 2001); toy play (Tabors, Beals, & Weizman, 2001); adult guided activities (Tabors, Roach, & Snow, 2001); snack and mealtimes (Beals, 2001; Cote, 2001); and free play (Dickinson, 2001).

Free play (i.e., choice time) is an especially challenging context for teacher-child extended talk (Dickinson, McCabe, & Clark-Chiarelli, 2004; Dickinson & Porche, 2011). For example, in one study, extended talk occurred in only 12% of the time intervals sampled, and, remarkably, even teachers who used the most extended talk focused on a topic only 14% of the time in ways that would deepen a child's understanding (Dickinson et al, 2004). In a second study of choice time (Dickinson, 2001; Dickinson & Tabors, 2001), children interacted with a teacher only 17% of the time. Moreover, an analysis showed that teachers' vocabulary included very few "rare" words. Instead, teachers used words that children heard frequently everyday and already understood. The researchers commented that the absence of more sophisticated vocabulary in teacher talk was not due to a lack of opportunities, but to the teachers' failure to exploit situations at hand (Dickinson et al., 2006, p. 20).

These observations raise a question about which contexts are most fruitful for extended conversations during choice time, when children are on the move, busy interacting with one another and manipulating various materials, and engaged in pretending. Interestingly, the writing center is rarely mentioned specifically as a good free play context for supporting oral language and content knowledge development. Indeed, it is extremely difficult to find research that has studied the effects on children's oral language and content knowledge development of adult engagement with children at the preschool writing center.

This neglect is somewhat surprising, given the rather common knowledge among preschool teachers that preschoolers often draw pictures to represent personal past experiences or fictional tales, and are usually happy to tell someone about them. Indeed, a large body of

research documents the development of young children's orally expressed personal and fictional narratives (Benson, 1993; Botvin & Suttan-Smith, 1977; Uccelli, Hemphill, Pan, & Snow, 2006), the benefits of adult mediation (i.e., co-construction) on these oral language skills (Fivush, 1991; Haden, Haine, & Fivush, 1997; Peterson, Jesso, & McCabe, 1999; Uccelli et al., 2006), and the relationship between early narrative skill and later reading comprehension and composing (Cain & Oakhill, 2007; Griffin, Hemphill, Camp, & Wolf, 2004; Reese, 1995; Roth, Speece, Cooper, & De La Paz, 1996).

This article provides case data that illustrates the potential of the emergent writing/drawing context for supporting oral language, content knowledge, and reasoning in preschoolers. In a discussion of the samples, I suggest that adult-child conversations about children's writing and drawing, even when brief, might still be quite significant in supporting children's oral language and content knowledge learning, if the entire web of events within which drawings oftentimes are situated is considered. After presenting the samples, I discuss a concerning trend of using preschool writing centers more and more narrowly, to support primarily literacy skills learning, not oral language and content knowledge development. I suggest some practical solutions, as well as ideas for research that would help shed light on the value of using a preschool writing center broadly for supporting both literacy and language-related learning.

Illustrative Samples

Four preschool children, ages 40 to 64 months, created the nine samples presented at home (three samples from one child) or in a preschool classroom (six samples from three children and two classrooms). Except for the first three, samples were created in an area of a classroom designated as a "writing center" or a "writing/drawing center." The kitchen table in the home setting, however, actually functioned as a designated writing/drawing area, given that toys and books were stored and used in other areas of the house.

Four samples contain drawing only; three contain both drawing and writing; and two contain only writing. All items were selected from the author's collection of several hundred samples. The nine items selected illustrate a range of situations in which adults have

opportunities to communicate with preschoolers about their drawing and writing. For each sample, information is provided about adult-child interactions and additional related experiences, either before or after the episode. In four of the examples (first three and seventh), I interacted with the child; in the other five, the adult interacting was a preschool teacher.

Example One: A Little Girl, A Path, and A Snake

A 3-year-old girl drew this picture and told a fictional narrative (Figure 1 and Table 1). As I mediated, she revised elements in response to comments and questions. Although only one sample is provided here, this child told fictional narratives about many pictures that she drew around this time, and she often added details in response to questions and comments.



Figure 1. “A Little Girl, a Path, and a Snake”

This child had used writing and drawing materials frequently, starting at one year of age in her highchair. By 2 years, she commonly used these materials on the kitchen table. She also had a history of shared book reading with her mother and other familiar adults. Additionally, she had taken multiple trips (e.g., farms, a zoo, orchards, beaches, vegetable gardens). Thus, her knowledge of some animals was not surprising, nor was her understanding of people’s fears about snakes, or the difference between “real” and “pretend.” She also demonstrated considerable skill in creating a narrative (e.g., characters, setting, problem, and solution), although she probably would not have developed a story this fully without mediation.

Table 1. "A Girl, A Path, and A Snake"

Child: (Pushes drawing across the table for me to see.)

Adult: Oh, tell me about your drawing.

Child: This is a little girl and she's walking around and around on this path (points to stick-like figure and then to curved lines around it—the path). And she's not going over here (points to the short horizontal line on left side of paper) because there's... a... snake! (Said with great emphasis and a facial expression expressing alarm.)

Adult: Oh, my. Are you sure that's a snake and not just a little branch or twig that fell from a tree?

Child: It's not a twig; it's a snake!

Adult: Oh, dear. Well, that's kind of a big problem, isn't it?

Child: I know! She can walk over here (points to "snake") and KICK it! ("Kick" was uttered with force, as she moved her arm in a quick gesture from the paper to beyond it, to represent either a kicking motion or the snake in flight after having been kicked.)

Adult: Well, I don't know...some snakes are pretty fast in striking—lifting their heads up to bite you if they think you might hurt them. If I were that little girl, I think I might think twice about doing that.

Child: (Gazed at adult with expression showing some concern, then looked away, as if thinking.) I know! She can climb a tree!

Adult: Oh, instead of walking around more, she can climb a tree for fun. I see. But...., you know, I think some snakes can climb trees. So, I'm not sure that would solve the little girl's problem. (Said in worried tone while displaying a worried facial expression.)

Child: I know! A nice bear can come along and climb the tree and eat the snake.

Adult: Well, bears sure can climb trees, and I guess they can eat snakes, too, so that would get rid of the snake. But.... now I'm thinking that maybe the little girl wouldn't be very safe in a tree with a bear. They have sharp claws and teeth.... (worried voice tone).

Child: But this is a nice bear. It has really soft fur and you can pet it. It's very soft and nice.

Adult: Oh, yes, bears have fur that is soft and nice, but I would still be concerned about their sharp teeth and claws. I'm a little worried about the little girl. I don't know... (voice and facial expression indicating worry).

Child: Oh, you don't have to worry (sympathetic tone). This is all just pretend. It's pretend, so you don't have to worry (facial expression now a smile).

Adult: Oh, I see. This is not a real life story. It's just pretend. You're right. Bears in stories can be any way you want them—very nice bears that let you pet them. I think that's a wonderful story! Thanks for telling me about it.

Child: Here, you can take it home. It's for you (hands paper to me).

Adult: Are you sure? I think your Mommy would like to hear your story.

Child: You can take it. It's for you. Put it in your bag.

Adult: (Places drawing in canvas bag.)

Example Two: A Spider, Its Web with BIIIG Flies

The same little girl created this drawing on the same day. She was familiar with spiders from having observed some with her mother (spiders lived in webs in front of their house). Their talk included discussion about the fates of insects caught in the webs (i.e., the spiders ate them).



Figure 2. “Spider, and Spider Web with BIIIG Flies in It”

Table 2. “A Spider” and “A Spider Web with Flies”

Child: “This is for you. Don’t be scared.”

Adult: Oh, why would I be scared?

Child: Because it’s a spider!

Adult: Oh... I didn’t realize that. I thought it might be a nice little beetle because it has six legs—“1, 2, 3.. 4, 5, 6” (pointed to them to count)—and spiders have eight—two more. But I know now that it **is** a spider because you told me it was. I do think its face looks a lot like a spider, and you also put hair on its head. Some spiders are sort of hairy. I don’t think insects have as much hair, maybe none at all.

Child: (Takes drawing back; quickly adds one leg to each side.)

Adult: Oh, now your spider has eight legs!

Child: Turn it over.

Adult: (Turns paper over.) Mmmmm... tell me about this drawing.

Child: It’s the spider’s web and it has some BIIIG flies in it (points to mass of red scribble in middle).

Adult: Oh, poor flies. They are going to be lunch now...

Child: Poor flies. Okay, put it in your bag. (Reaches for a new piece of paper.)

Adult: Okay, I’ll do that. Thanks.

I used the word *insects*, which she had heard before in discussions about ladybugs and bees, observed in vegetable gardens, and when adults explained the need for insect repellent to protect against mosquitoes. She was interested in whether various bugs would bite her, what they ate (e.g., ladybugs ate aphids on tomato plants), and where they lived. At the time of this drawing, she did not have any informational books about insects. Thus, the fact that insects have six legs had probably not been discussed. She revised her drawing quickly, once information was provided about the number of legs spiders have.

This child received several books about spiders, insects, and other bugs for Christmas, about a month after creating this drawing. We have shared these books many, many times since, as has her mother. In the book context, we talk not only about spiders (e.g., their habitats, their babies, how they are helpful), but also about many other bugs pictured (e.g., dragonflies, butterflies, stick insects, mosquitoes, bees, wasps, armored beetles).

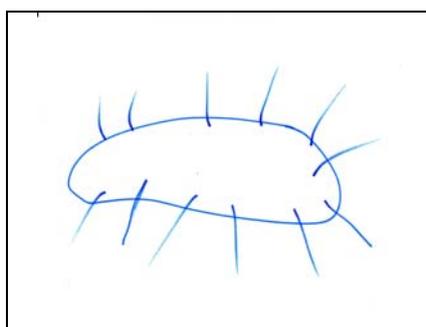


Figure 3. "Another Kind of Insect"

Example Three: Another Kind of Insect

This drawing was completed immediately after the spider and web episode. Our interaction (Table 3) involved a clarification of a main feature of insects, a tentative identification of the bug she had drawn, and a statement about using a book to verify it.

The child's familiarity with bugs resembling this one might have come from having seen one in her home. (I did not ask.) Our interaction was quite brief, because I knew too little about centipedes to pursue the topic, at the time. I was serious about finding a book and knew I could return to the drawing later while sharing it.

Table 3. “Another Kind of Insect”

Child: It’s another kind of insect.

Adult: Mmmm.... Well, insects only have 6 legs, and this bug has a lot more.

Child: What is it?

Adult: I’m not sure. It has “1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12” legs, so it’s not a spider. It looks like a centipede, but they have even more legs, I think.

Child: How many?

Adult: As many as 100, I think, sometimes fewer. I’d need to look in a book.

Child: It can be a centipede.

Adult: Okay, we’ll call this bug a centipede. I think it looks like one.

Child: Put it in your bag.

Example Four: Sailboat Trip

An older 4-year-old girl created this drawing near the end of the morning at her half-day preschool. When asked (Table 4), she told a personal narrative and then gave the drawing to her teacher. The teacher did not pursue further conversation because other children at the table wanted to share their writing and drawings or needed help with their writing. Additionally, parents arriving to pick up their children often stopped to speak to this teacher.



Figure 4. “A Sailboat Trip”

Examples Five and Six: House on Fire and Building Plan

An older 4-year-old boy created this drawing, and wrote EXIT and his name. Not knowing that the child would add a picture to the paper after writing EXIT and calling the word to her

Table 4. "A Sailboat Trip"

Adult: Oh, tell me about your picture."

Child: One day, we went on a sailboat and it was cloudy and rained. We had to go back to the dock. Then, we sailed out again."

Adult: That's a great story. I'm glad it stopped raining so that you could go sailing."

attention, the teacher quickly asked permission to copy the paper (Table 5). (Teachers in this school maintained portfolios of children's work for use in assessment.) This initial response by the teacher seemed to prompt the child to give permission for copying the paper, immediately after he had labeled the drawing and demonstrated the path for exiting the burning house.



Figure 5. "EXIT and House on Fire"

But this is not the whole story. The teacher already knew that this child's grandfather's house had burned a few days earlier. Although the teacher did not write this conversation down, the child no doubt related the event as a personal narrative, and the teacher probably asked questions to elicit more details. It is also very likely that the parent who brought the child to school on this day added details to the child's story. Moreover, the teacher had led a whole group discussion about fire alarms, fire extinguishers, smoke detectors, fire drills, and the importance of knowing how to exit a building with the whole group of preschoolers soon after she learned about the fire at this child's grandfather's.

The day after creating the house fire drawing, this child visited the writing center to draw again (Figure 6). When finished, he took the drawing to the block area, placed it on the floor,

Table 5. "EXIT and House on Fire"

Day One

Child: (Wrote EXIT on paper at the writing/drawing center during Center Time.)

Child: Look! I wrote Exit. (Said to teacher at the table.)

Adult: Oh I see that. May I copy it? (Teacher often made copies of children's work for their portfolios for use assessment.)

Child: No! I'm not done. (Added the drawing; looked up at teacher) It's a house on fire. (Traced through the burning house with a finger to show how someone would exit, and then wrote his name.)

Adult: Oh, I see now what you wanted to do.

Child: Now, you can make a copy. (Accompanied teacher to copy machine, and then put original in cubby to take home.)

and began building a structure. When the teacher stopped by, he explained, "I'm following these directions to make my building." The child's father built all kinds of birds' houses, and used various plans to guide him. It is also possible that the child saw building plans associated with the rebuilding of his grandfather's house.

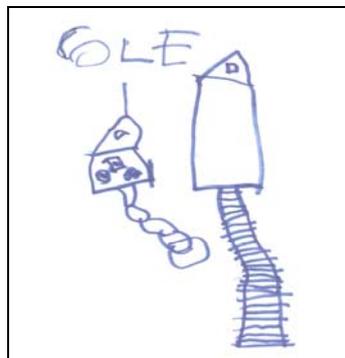


Figure 6. "Building Plan"

Example Seven: Phone Call to Grandma

A 5-year-old girl created this sample. My interactions with her (Table 7) were fairly extended, given my misunderstanding of her intentions and her need to clarify. It is interesting

to consider why she wrote something instead of simply telling me about the phone call. Perhaps she proceeded in this way because it was customary at the writing/drawing table for children to initiate interactions with a teacher by showing something they had drawn or written. With four other children at the table, this child might have thought her approach was the best for getting my attention. Additionally, by the end of the school year when this episode occurred (i.e., May), this child used invented spellings quite well to write words and enjoyed asking an adult to read what she had written.

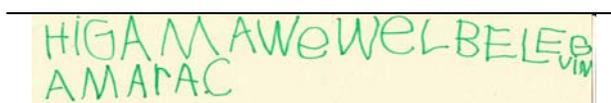


Figure 7. "Phone Call to Grandma"

Table 7. "Phone Call to Grandma"

Child: (Wrote message by herself, before showing it.)

Adult: Do you want me to read it, or do you want to read it to me?

Child: You read it.

Adult: "Hi, Grandma. We will...." I don't know for sure what the rest of it says.

Child: (Underlining words as she reads the message.) "Hi Grandma We will be leaving America."

Adult: Oh, of course. I know you are leaving for Korea soon. I'll see if I can find an envelope in the supply closet. You can ask your Mom for your grandmother's address, and for some stamps. I don't know how many it takes for a letter to Korea. You need more stamps to send a letter to a different country.

Child: I'm not going to mail it.

Adult: You aren't? I think your grandma would like to get it and know you are coming home soon.

Child: But she already knows. We called her last night. It's for you.

Adult: You wrote this for me?

Child: Yes.

Adult: Oh, I see. It's about your phone call last night. You wrote what you said to Grandma to tell me about it.

Child: Yes!

Adult: Well, thank-you. I'm glad to know that you talked to Grandma and told her you will see her soon. When you get back home to Korea, you could write letters to your preschool friends, and we could write back to you.

Child: Or, I could call.

Adult: That might not work very well, because we are not on the same time as Korea. We are at preschool in the morning, and I think it's nighttime in Korea. And when it's daytime in Korea, it's nighttime here, and we aren't at preschool.

But if you write to us, we'll write back to you.

Child: Okay.

Accounting for Variation in Adult-Child Talk Across The Samples

The amount of adult-child conversation varied considerably across the seven samples, and even among the first three, which were created by the same child and shared with the same adult. I have explained why talking was fairly extensive with sample 1, and somewhat limited for samples 2 and 3, and also how later discussions took place during the sharing of books about insects, spiders, and other bugs. The talk about the house fire drawing (Figure 5) was also quite limited, which makes perfectly good sense when one considers its timing in relation to related discussions about fires (e.g., grandfather’s house), and about fire-related tools and safety (e.g., whole class discussion).

The sailboat trip drawing was also very short, due to demands on the teacher’s time from other children and parents. This situation is ideal for following up at the writing/drawing center on another day. For example, the teacher could prepare blank books (i.e., several pages stapled together inside a construction paper cover), and then, perhaps during a morning meeting when choice time materials and activities are discussed, she might show the new blank books and comment that children could use them to draw or write about an experience. “For example,” the teacher might say, “Nancy (pseudonym) told me yesterday about a sailboat trip she took last summer, and how a rainstorm almost spoiled it. I’d like to know more about Nancy’s trip— where she was sailing, who went on the trip with her, what she did while waiting for the rain to stop, and why they didn’t just continue to sail in the rain. Nancy, you could draw a picture on each page to tell all about your trip, if you’d like to, and then I could write down what you tell me, if you’d like.”

Following up in this way invites a child to tell more about an experience than was relayed previously when time was short. It also provides a physical scaffold (i.e., multiple pages in book form) to assist a child in recalling multiple events, which can be explained verbally later. The whole group setting informs other children about one use for blank books, which might also spark their interest in telling about an experience, through drawings first and then orally, as the teacher asks about the drawings. Of course, some children might place scribble writing on each page, without drawing at all. If they do, they can “read” their book to a teacher, if interested, although some children, especially very young 3-year-olds, are sometimes interested in making a book, physically, but not in composing anything to go with the scribble marks.

“Writing” Center or “Drawing, Talking, Writing” Center?

Although some of the samples used demonstrated how drawings created at the writing center can serve as a useful context for engaging children in extended conversations, it is also common for some children not only to draw and talk in the ways these samples illustrated, but also to write extensively in a variety of ways. For example, on the same day that samples 1, 2 and 3 were drawn, this child also wrote her name and mine, asking what letters were in my name, and how to write them. I segmented each sound in my first name before dictating the letter needed to write it. The child also did pretend “homework,” for which she produced many short wavy lines on a piece of paper. When asked how she knew about homework, she named a friend (third grader) who does her homework after school each day.

The child who drew the house on fire also sometimes wrote strings of alphabet letters, which he explained verbally to his teacher (grocery list in Figure 8), when she asked. One day, he also created scribble writing to accompany a drawing, which was inspired by a book the teacher had read to the children. After he “read” the message to her (Figure 9), the teacher then rewrote the message using conventional writing. I do not know whether the teacher talked with the child about the drawing and the book that inspired it (*Bringing the Rain to Kapiti Plain*, by Aardema, 1981), or whether the child watched as she wrote down the message and perhaps segmented the first sounds of some words and named the letters used to write them. The point, though, is that children create items at a writing center that provide opportunities for teachers to support literacy skills *and* oral language, content knowledge, and reasoning, when a teacher encourages a broad range of activity at the center.

Today, in many U.S. preschools, I often see relatively little drawing at a writing center, and also very little writing that conveys complex thoughts about past, future, or imagined experiences. Instead, teachers focus activities and talk on literacy skills. A considerable portion of the emergent writing research has focused on describing the development of young children’s understanding of the writing system, through engagement in writing (e.g., Baghban, 1975; Bissex, 1980; Clay, 1975, 1987; Read, 1975; Schickedanz, 1990); on the effects of adult mediation of children’s word writing on their phonological awareness and understanding of the writing system (e.g., Aram & Levin, 2001, 2011; Ball & Blackman,

1991; Ehri & Wilce, 1987; Ukrainitz, Cooney, Dyer, Kysar, & Harris, 2000); and on finding out which literacy skills best predict spelling (e.g., Puranik, Lonigan, & Kim, 2011).

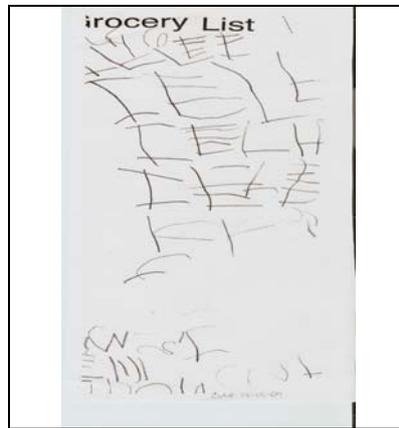


Figure 8. "Grocery List"

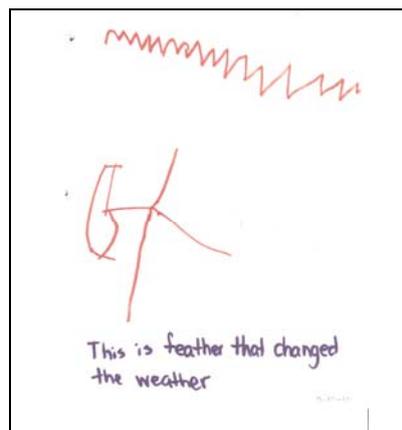


Figure 9. "This Is the Feather"

To be sure, literacy skills are vital for learning to read and spell, and many children do not acquire these sufficiently from home experiences. A narrow literacy skills focus at the writing center, however, squeezes out other experiences that also are vital to the child's later success as a reader and writer. It is possible to provide some literacy skills instruction in a whole group setting, such as when a teacher might ask children to play orally with interesting words

(e.g., mosquito, crash, splash, buzz), and then write these down, segmenting their sounds, and linking these to specific letters, which the teacher names and writes down. Use of a whole group setting, as well as the writing center, for literacy skills support might allow a broadening of uses for the writing center.

Research We Need

Virtually none of the research documenting teacher-child talk during free play has considered teachers' reasons for why an episode is extended or brief. As the data presented in this article suggest, history surrounding an episode and the child's current knowledge affect how an adult proceeds in these situations. Moreover, researchers have not obtained information about what a teacher might have been thinking about future possibilities for either eliciting more information about a past event or providing more information in a shared book or whole group discussion context.

I have observed classrooms where so much emphasis was placed on talking with children during free play, that teachers literally talked too much and not responsively. These situations reminded me of an article titled "Time to talk: The influence of the timing of adult-child talk on children's event memory" (McGuigan & Salmon, 2004), which showed that 3-year-olds' memory of the play event did not benefit much from talk *during* their play, but did from talking *afterward*. Five-year-olds benefited some from talking as they played, but more from talking afterward. Research that looks at related, rather than isolated, teacher-child talk-related events might support more positive effects on teacher behavior.

We need research that looks at teacher-child talking in the writing center from a comprehensive perspective and compares classrooms implementing a comprehensive and integrated curriculum with classrooms where teachers select their own activities but have no integrated curriculum plan. We also need research to determine the benefits of providing at least some literacy skills support in whole group contexts, which would likely allow the broadening of goals for a writing center to include talk that supports oral language, content knowledge, and reasoning.

Lastly, research focusing specifically on contributions of talk about children's drawings to

their content knowledge development, over and above contributions from specific science and social science small group activities and informational books, would be informative. It is possible that children are most attentive to new information and clarifications when adults provide these around topics in which children are interested, and about which they already know something.

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