

*4<sup>th</sup> Grade*

*Effects of Free  
Writing*

*By: Miss De Roos*

# Action Research Questions:

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- Will free writing in journals improve students' motivation for writing?
- Will journal writing on a regular basis improve students' writing?

*“The first and most basic step to improved writing is free writing. Free writing means simply that for ten (10) minutes you write without stopping. The idea isn't to produce a polished (or even "good") piece of writing, but to simply get in the habit of writing without censoring and editing.”*

*-Elbow*



# Step 1: Their own Journals



# Step 2: Free-write

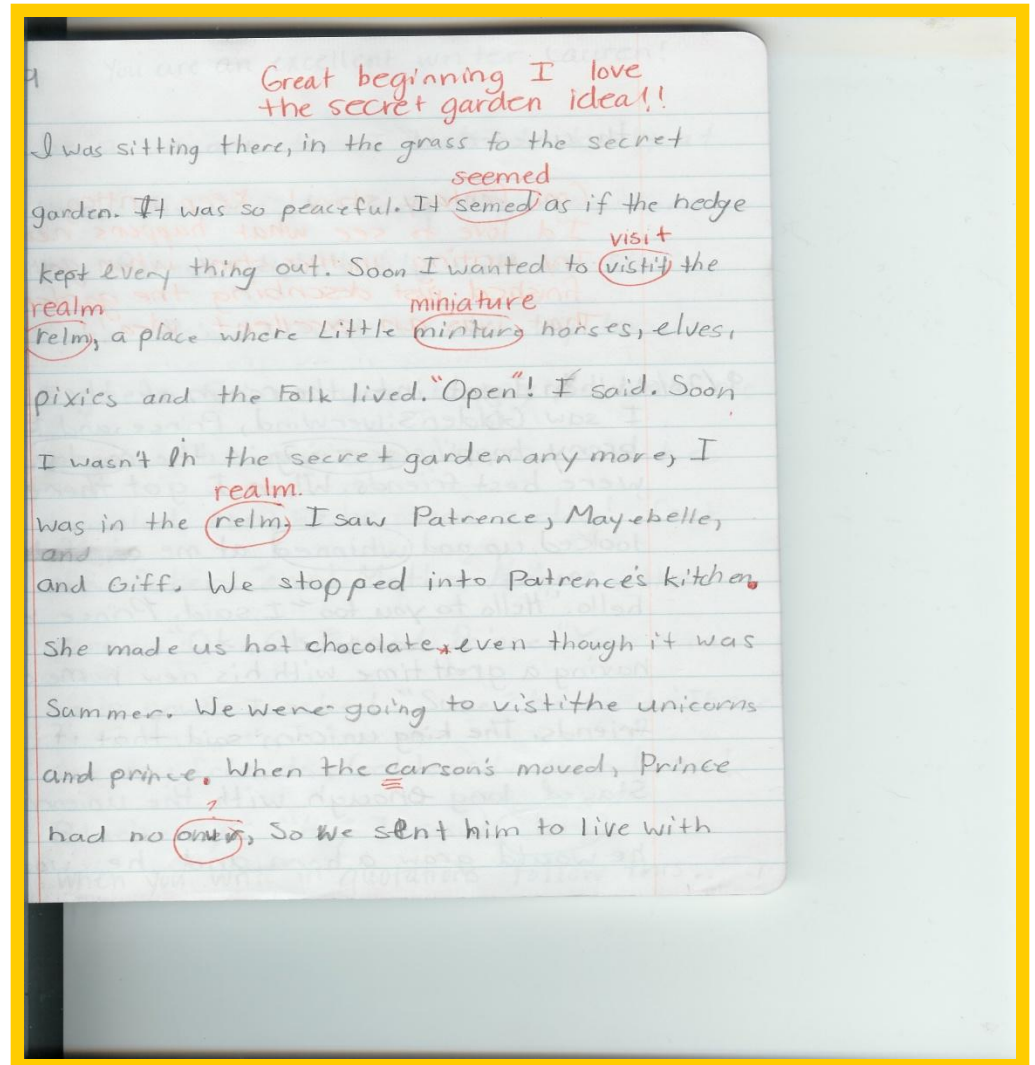
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- o *“Expressive writing, specifically free writing, if taught correctly can foster critical thinking skills in students.”*
  - o *Free writing fosters uninhibited thought, because students know that they are not going to be “graded” on their responses to a particular topic.”*
  - o *“They also realize that there are no “rules” per se to worry about, such as style, grammar, specific organization...”*
- Kemp*

# Step 3: Feedback

- Positive reinforcement about their writing, ideas, suggestions, etc.
- Circle words to put into their index card dictionaries. In the beginning I correctly spelled them out. But after I modeled using a dictionary, the students' wrote the correct spelling.



# Step 4: Resources

## EXAMPLES:

### Checklist for Publishing

- ❑ My composition has a beginning, middle, and an end.
- ❑ My ideas are developed in a logical way
- ❑ I have used transitional words
- ❑ I have addressed the topic
- ❑ I have included important and specific details
- ❑ I have used a variety of sentence types
- ❑ I have used descriptive words
- ❑ My writing is neat and easy to read
- ❑ I have corrected spelling and other kinds of errors

### Writing Prompt Bags:

#### Story: Missing!

- ❑ The person in this picture has just arrived in a big city. There are lights on in all the buildings, but there are no people anywhere. The city is deserted! Where did everyone go? Write a story about what happened and how the character solves this mystery.



# Research:

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- *“Journaling is an excellent outlet for young students.” (Song)*
- *“It builds on self esteem and minimizes school anxiety.” (Strausbaugh)*
- *“Teaching elementary school students to journal encourages them to learn to express themselves creatively and helps reinforce basic English skills.” (Song)*

# Research continued:

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- *“Journal writing is an incredibly flexible instructional tool, useful across the entire curriculum.”*
- *“A lack of oral communication occurs in the classroom during discussions, because of low self-esteem, fear of rejection, anxiety, shyness, reticence and peer pressure.”*
- *“Journaling helps to motivate and give confidence to students’.”*

# Assessment: Writing Samples

write up stair

I go up stair and  
find a box of money  
it is like 100,000,000,  
000,000,000, Dollars you

and do many places like  
any monkey

Cars like a mustang

and I found a mustang  
upstairs.

I would like to go to Italy because

I would like to see the old historic  
houses. Because I can see the old stuff

in the houses chairs, table, and more  
things in the houses.

I would like to go Italy so I can eat  
good pizza. I like pepperoni on my pizza

I will go to all of the pizza stores  
in Italy.

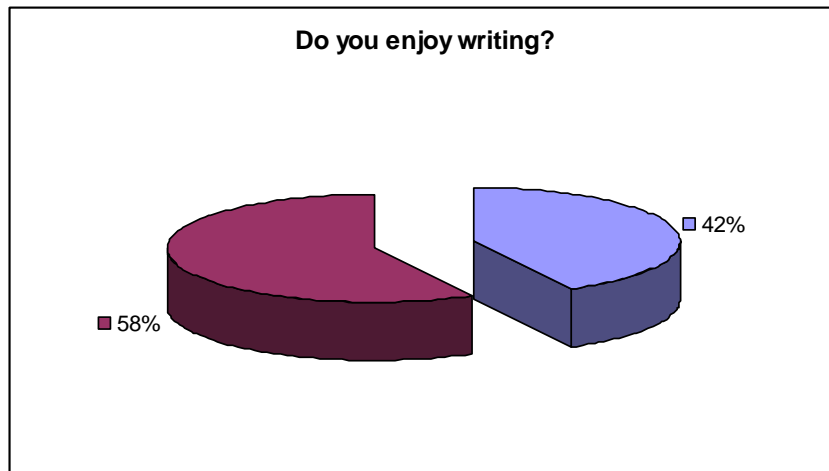
I would also like to go to Italy to see  
the gondola on the river. I would like  
ride on it. I would like to have fun on  
the gondola to ride to IL.

# Assessment: Pretest/Posttest

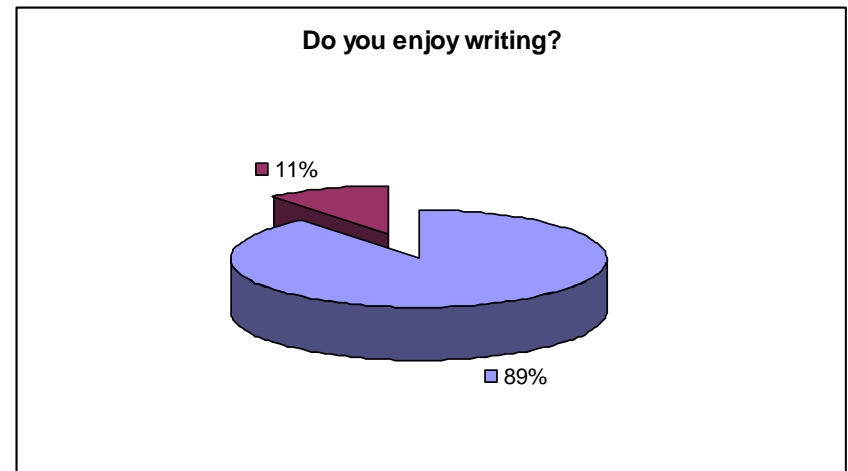
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## Do you enjoy writing?

*Before Journaling*



*After Journaling*

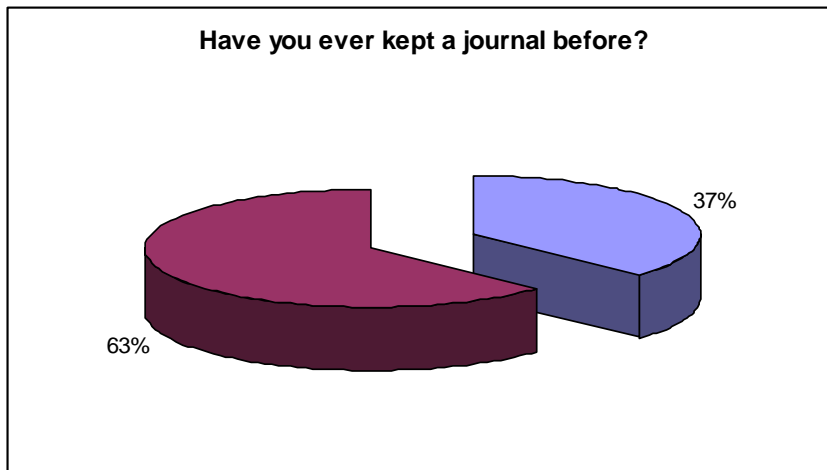


# Assessment: Pretest/Posttest

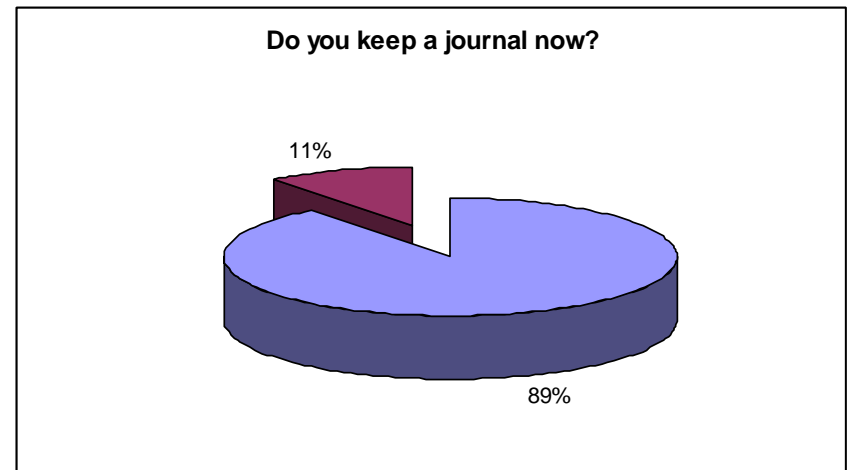
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## Do you keep a journal?

*Before Journaling*



*After Journaling*



# Cloudy with a Chance Rewrites

## Yummy Yum Day!

By Taylor Jelley

One day it was a bright sunny, Mom and I were inside getting ready for the first day of spring. We cleaned and cooked for about 1 hour. My mom said, "Let's see what is on TV..." She picked up the remote and "BOOM!" It started to pour steak and scrambled eggs for about ten minutes. Then to complete everyone's breakfast it was drizzling orange juice for eight minutes. I thought I should change out of my p.j.'s and put on blue shorts and a white tank top.

Around 12:25, I was in my room waiting for lunch to fall from the sky. Five minutes later it was starting to get colder the clouds were turning gray and then, 'BOOM!' It was raining turkey and cheese subs with a side of Doritos. To finish of a good lunch, it down poured 7 up right into my cup not one drop on me. My friend that lived right next door named Erica asked if I wanted to go for a walk around our block. I turned to my mom she said 'be back by 5:30!'

Erica and I talked for a bit at her house then went for a walk around 4:40 we got back to her house around 4:55. I went home as quickly as a mouse would run! It was exactly 5:30 when I got home; everyone was outside waiting for about thirty minutes. Nothing happened! Then out of

- Prompt came from mystery prompt bags
- Publish stories
- Idea was the classes brainstorm
- Shows an impact on student learning

# Impact on Student Learning

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- *The overall posttest results and classroom vibe from journaling*
- *Example: metaphors/similes*
- *Example: confidence*
- *Specific students made large strides in writing*



# Works Cited

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