Effects of Student Ownership in Writer's Workshop

ABSTRACT: This study is researching the effects of student ownership during writer's workshop in an urban, Title I school. Students are being observed using the writing process independently and self-assessment strategies such as rubrics, editing checklists and feedback forms. This study hopes to encourage progress of independent writing ability.

As class sizes grow and teacher responsibilities increase, there is less time to monitor individual student progress. I am exploring student ownership in terms of self-assessment and self-monitoring. I am researching the effects of student ownership during writer’s workshop and the specific strategies that enforce student ownership. I hope to see greater gains in writing and prepare my students to advance in this ever-changing educational society.

There are forty-five third grade students I teach in a low performing, Title I school. Three students of different ability levels are being observed for writing growth. A case study of three students is being conducted over three months. Students are using editing checklists, rubrics and feedback forms to draft and publish stories of their choice. Data is being collected through field notes during writer's workshop, video recordings of writing conferences, surveys and writing samples. The surveys are being analyzed quantitatively with graphs and the other data is being analyzed qualitatively to find patterns and themes.

Preliminary results on student ownership indicate that teacher modeling and student ownership go hand in hand. There has to be a gradual release of responsibility, and students need time to practice strategies taught in order to feel comfortable using them independently. Student ownership is different for each student; they can only use the tools and strategies they are ready to use with the knowledge and abilities they possess.

Teachers need explicitly modeling of strategies in order for students to take ownership. This doesn't mean one uniform strategy for every student; the teacher needs to be ready to meet the student where they are developmentally and where growth needs to be gained. Teachers can provide scaffolding and challenge each student to progress to the next level at the same time through student ownership strategies.