



INTRODUCING REVISION

GETTING READY

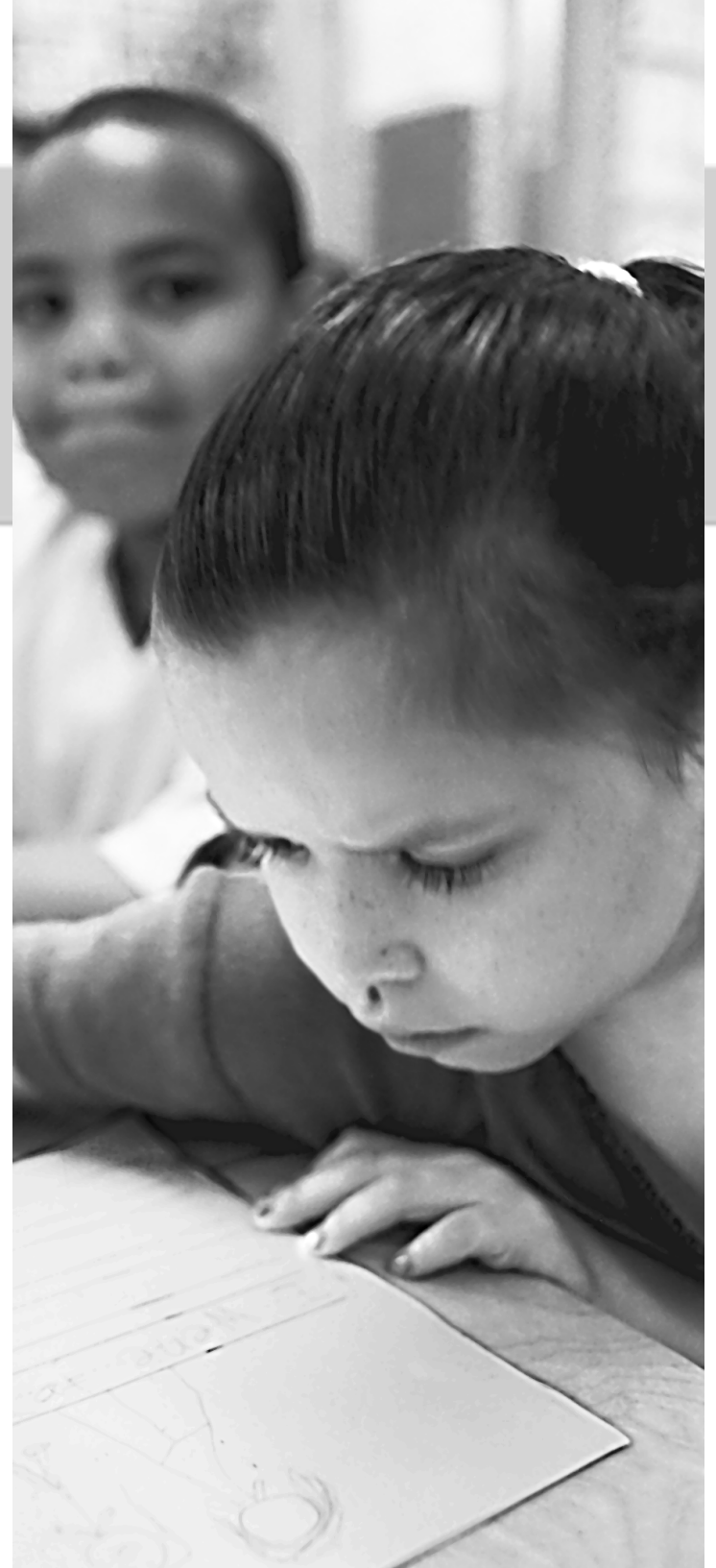
- ▶ Class set of new revision folders (or newly cleaned-out old folders) containing only a duplicated copy of the last story the child published
- ▶ Class set of special revision pens that are a different color
- ▶ Short, shared story (a shared class experience or a story from a previous unit) prewritten on chart paper
- ▶ Two different-colored markers to use during the lesson (one should be the same color as the original writing on the chart paper; the other, to be used for revisions, should be a contrasting color)
- ▶ Writing surface for your chart paper (ideally an easel)
- ▶ Chart paper for creating a class chart titled “Writers Revise”
- ▶ Partnerships—during the minilesson, children should sit beside their long-term partners, perhaps in assigned spots on the rug

THIS UNIT PRESUMES THAT THE CHILDREN *have already drafted a collection of pieces, from which they will spend the next month revising their favorites.* Revision, then, is presented as a complement to good writing. You’ll tell children that because their work will reach readers, it’s important to revise toward their sense of great writing.

To launch this unit, ask your children if they are proud of the writing they just published in the previous unit. After they respond with a resounding “Yes!” you’ll deliver this surprising message: “What writers do when we really like what we’ve written is we revise.” Your goal for today will be to convey a clear assumption that your children, like real writers, will surely want to revise, and that you will teach them strategies for doing this.

You need to prepare yourself to present revision as an opportunity and a privilege. Act as if you couldn’t imagine anyone not welcoming the chance to revise. Then find ways to seal the deal. The purple pens, described in the minilesson, are one such enticement.

In this session, you’ll show children how you reread and revise a story you’ve written, and you’ll solicit children’s suggestions for how you could add more details to that story.





THE MINILESSON

Connection

Celebrate the children's publications from the previous unit and tell children that when writers really love their writing, they revise that writing.

"Writers, I need to begin today by asking you a question. Are you all proud of the personal narratives you wrote during our last study?" Pat knew she was safe asking this question, and her children did nod vigorously and with great conviction. "Good. The reason I'm asking is that today I want to teach you what writers do when we look at our work and say, 'I like what I wrote.' When we like our writing, writers revise. We look back and we think, 'How can I make this *even better*?' From now until winter holiday, we're going to look back on the great writing we've already done, and we're going to revise that writing. And I will show you how real writers revise."

Teaching

Tell the children that today they'll revise the work they published just a few days earlier. Show them the new tools they'll use to support this work.

"I have duplicated your final publications from last time, and they are in your new revision folders, in the left, to-be-revised pocket." Pat showed them one. "You'll see that in your toolboxes, I have added cans full of purple revision pens. There are enough for all of us."

Demonstrate how you begin to revise, accentuating the techniques you want your students to use: rereading, envisioning one's subject, and asking, "How could I make this better?"

"Let me show you how to revise." Pat took hold of a purple marker, explaining as she did that their revision pens were purple too, the color of kings and queens. "First, I reread, and as I do this, I am thinking, 'This story is going to go in the library. Hundreds of people will read it. Is there *anything* I could add to make it *even better*?' Shifting from the role of teacher to that of writer, Pat turned to a



At this point the children's heads are spinning. Can Pat mean they are going to revise the pieces that are already proudly circulating the room as finished texts? How can she be speaking with such warmth and joy about that? Pat carries on as if she is oblivious that everyone isn't 100% on board yet.

By asking children to mess up duplicated copies instead of the original drafts, Pat and I know we'll ease some of their reservations. We also know we have some wooing to do and that the special pens will go a long way! Even the new revision folders help woo children toward this work. But it is our absolute conviction that, of course, children want to revise and that makes the biggest difference.

By thinking aloud as she flips through the chart paper, Pat publicly takes on the role of writer, opening up the top of her head to let the children see the wheels of thought turning. The thoughts she has are those she hopes her children will have. She thinks aloud to emphasize that revision is purposeful and that we revise toward publication.

narrative she'd written during the previous unit. Turning the pages of her story, she muttered, "Hmm, let's see, I gotta picture this as a book in the library. "

Pat reread the story on the chart paper.

It was morning meeting.
Everyone heard a noise coming from the couch.
Patrick jumped up.
There was a mouse.

Samantha raised her hand. "I remember that. It was morning meeting, and we found the mouse in our classroom!"

"That's right, Samantha," Pat said, her eyes still on the piece, in this way signaling she didn't want a whole lot of commentary now. Pat took her purple marker. "Hmm, let's see. How can I make this story even better?"

When you revise, name the replicable strategy you use. Remind writers that they can use this strategy (in this case, adding on) often.

"I could add 'under the cushion' to the end of the piece." Pat did this with the purple revision marker. "Writers do this a lot, we add more words so readers can picture what happened."

"Okay, now let me reread it again."

It was morning meeting.
Everyone heard a noise coming from the couch.
Patrick jumped up.
There was a mouse **under the cushion.**
It was tiny.

Pat makes sure the story is very brief and simple. This isn't the time or place to dazzle children with an amazing sample of writing. Remember, your bare-bones narrative will be revised over the next few days, becoming much longer and richer. You can illustrate the benefits of revision best if the story begins as a very simple one and if it is a story that has potential to hold children's interest over time.

Pat acknowledges Samantha's comment and quickly moves on. This is not a time for retelling the event. When Pat asks, "How can I make this story even better?" she is directing this question not to the class but to herself. She is musing aloud, not soliciting them to join in a collaborative revision experience.

When you do a bit of revision, try to name the replicable strategy you have used. In this instance, Pat doesn't name what she did by saying, "I added where the mouse went," because adding "where the mouse went" is not what is replicable. That is, writers won't very often add a mouse's location to their pieces! Instead Pat says, "I added more words so readers can picture exactly what happened," which is something all writers do.

Pat makes the revisions in different-color ink so they stand out from the original text. She will use this same color to make revisions on this shared story throughout the unit.

“You see, when we revise, we take our work very seriously and we think, ‘How can I make my best work even better?’ I remember what happened exactly and then I reread and think, ‘What could I add?’”

Active Engagement

Ask the children to join you in thinking about how you can continue to revise your story.

“Would you work with your partner and think about what else we could add to make our story even better? I’ll reread it again, and then you should turn and talk to your partner about your ideas for revision.”

As the partners talked about their ideas for revision, Pat listened in to what they said.

Annabelle: “She should say that Samantha jumped on the table.”

Marley: “And she should tell about how we said, ‘Mouse,’ and she didn’t believe us. She’s gotta say she thought we were joking.”

Jake: “Yeah. She thought it was a toy mouse.”

Reconvene the class, and repeat something you heard a child say to her partner. Show children how you can revise based on the overheard suggestions. Then elicit another suggestion (or two) for revision.

“I heard lots of suggestions. Annabelle said we could add that Samantha jumped up on the table, which I think we *definitely* should do. I’ll add it right here in the illustration.” Pat quickly added a sketch of Samantha on the table with a speech bubble saying, “Eeek!” “Writers do that, we revise by adding details into our stories.”

Pat and I know that adding on is the easiest form of revision, so this is where we choose to begin. We also know that when the children revise, most of them will add on to the ends of their pieces. Although this work doesn’t look that different from any other day’s writing workshop when children resume work on pieces and add to them, it didn’t bother us that this first form of revision isn’t anything too complicated. We deliberately want to make it easy for these children to all feel as if they are insiders in the club of people who revise. We raise the bar later, as the unit continues.

Pat is wise first to give children instructions and then to reread the text. This helps focus their talk.

If we plan to ask children to generate content for a piece of writing, it helps if the writing is about a shared experience, so that everyone is able to make a contribution.

Pat deliberately revises the illustration rather than the written text as a way to honor a form of revision that is especially accessible to her most struggling writers. She, of course, expects that throughout the unit, everyone will revise the words in their texts as well as the illustrations. Early in the unit, however, she wants to make it respectable to revise one’s illustrations, so every child will feel entirely welcome in this new unit. This is a fine place to begin.

“What other ideas did you have? Jake? All eyes on Jake.”

Jake: “You should say that you thought it was a toy until you went to pick it up and you screamed.”

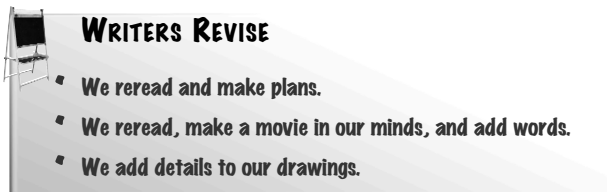
Show children how you add their suggested revisions. Name the specific tools you use (carats, inserts) to add on to your draft.

“Good idea. This is what writers do. We reread and think, ‘Where should I add that? Okay, let me reread and see where it goes.’” Pat reread the story. “I’ll add that right here.” Pat pointed to the place in the text and used a carat to mark where to insert the additions. Then she reread the whole thing again.

It was morning meeting.
Everyone heard a noise coming from the couch.
Patrick jumped up. We thought it was a toy mouse. And then Pat started to pick it up.
We screamed because it was a real mouse!
We saw there was a mouse under the cushion. ^
It was tiny.

Summarize the revision strategies you’ve taught and add them to a “Writers Revise” chart.

“So you all have given me great ideas for revising this writing. Let’s put our strategies onto a chart.”



Link

Ask the children to reread their published stories and to think about what they could add to improve their stories.

“So today we’ll begin our new unit by doing what real writers do. In your folders, you’ll each find a duplicated copy of your published piece. We need to take these stories very seriously, because they will be read by lots of people. Right now while we are on the rug, reread your stories carefully, like we reread

Pat reminds the class that Jake is speaking to all of them, not just her, and that listeners should look at the speaker.

Pat turned Jake’s comment into a teaching opportunity by showing children that writers reread to locate the exact places where they’d make additions. While adding the carat, Pat could have also said to herself, “I’ll use a carat and insert that information here. Writers use carats.” It isn’t unusual for us to mutter a bit of commentary to accompany our demonstrations.

Other children have suggestions for how to revise the mouse story, but Pat doesn’t take the time to hear from more than one or two. The point of this lesson is not to add a lot to the mouse story, but to show children how to revise by rereading and adding more information.

Pat uses the chart paper entitled “Writers Revise” and quickly adds these items to it. She doesn’t solicit the students’ ideas as much as remind them of what she did in the demonstration by saying things like, “First we reread the piece. Remember? We should put that on the chart.” This is not a quiz of lesson content, it’s a summation led by Pat.

our mouse story. As you do so, think about how you could revise it. Remember what happened on the day you describe and ask, 'How could I revise? What could I add?' Get started doing that now."

After a few minutes, ask the children if they are ready to revise. Send off those who are, and keep the small group that needs more support on the rug.

"If you have an idea for how you could revise your writing, give me a thumbs-up. Okay, off you go then. You can use our new purple revision pens to do your revisions. If you're not sure how to revise, stay on the rug."

Ask members of the small group that remains on the rug to help each other think of what to revise.

"Will you two work together, and you two? Read your pieces to each other. Listeners, your job will be to listen. If anything confuses you, ask more about it. Or just say, 'Can you tell me more?' Then after the writer tells you more, say, 'You should add that!' Get started while I watch."

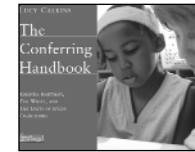
It is easy to get into the habit of repeating a personalized version of the minilesson to four or five children who never seem to listen to whole-group instruction. We can end up enabling dependency if we allow ourselves to spend the workshop repeating the minilesson to four or five individuals. In this instance, Pat creates a transitional structure. She keeps the kids who believe they need more help in a small group, but she offers relatively little help to the members of that group.



TIME TO CONFER

Today you'll find yourself conducting one particular kind of conference over and over. "What are you working on today?" you'll ask. Chances are, a fair number of your children will say, "I'm done." I might concur with the child. "I love that feeling, don't you?" I might say. "You get to sit back for a moment." But *then* I would continue on, saying something to the effect of, "Then, after a little rest, I do what writers across the world do. I reread and think again." It's important to demonstrate and provide guided practice so I'd soon say, "I'll show you." Soon I'll have helped the child reread his or her piece and, with prompting, tell about the aspect of the subject that will benefit from added detail. Once the child speaks well about the subject, for even just a minute, I quickly turn the oral commentary into revision suggestions. "You've got to add that! Write it right here," I say, and I may launch the child by dictating one of his or her own sentences back. See the conferences cited at right.

Be on the lookout for a child who revises well. Bring the first and revised versions of that child's work to the After-the-Workshop Share session. Also, for tomorrow's minilesson, you'll want an example of a child who wanted to add internally into his or her draft and who, therefore (with your help, presumably), stapled an extra strip of paper off the edge of his or her draft. Today, you'll probably want to conduct a conference in which a child does that work. You may deliberately do this with a child who'd benefit from being made famous.



This conference in *The Conferring Handbook* may be especially helpful today:

- ▶ "This Part Is Confusing to Me"

Also, if you have *Conferring with Primary Writers*, you may want to refer to the following conference:

- ▶ "As a Reader, I'd Love to Hear More About That"





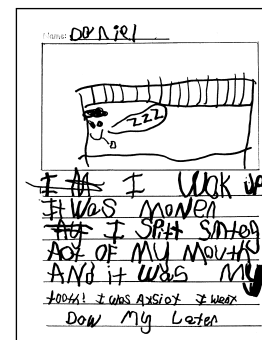
AFTER-THE-WORKSHOP SHARE

Tell the whole class the story of one child who used a revision strategy.

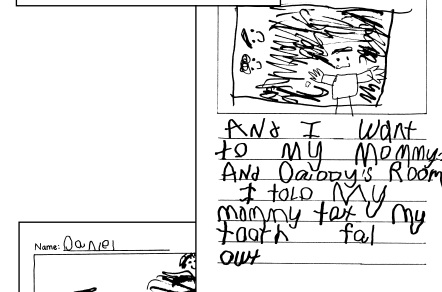
“Writers, may I stop you? Would you bring your revision folders and come to the carpet? I want to show you the smart work Daniel did today. He got a great idea that the rest of us could try. At first he wrote this.” [Fig. I-1]

“Then Daniel thought he could add even more to his story so he added these details.” [Fig. I-2]

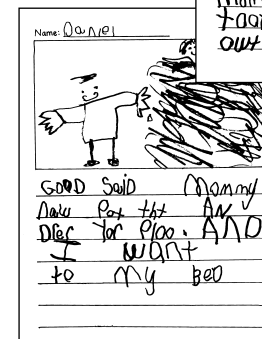
“What revisions! Would each of you show your partner the revisions you made today? The revised sections should be in purple. Read the pieces without the purple parts . . . then with them.”



I woke up. It was morning. I spit something out of my mouth and it was my tooth! I was excited. I went down my ladder.

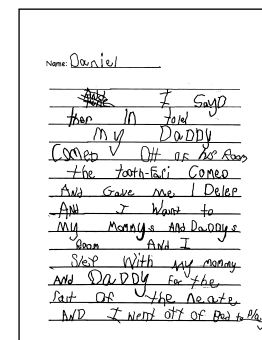


And I went to my mommy's and daddy's room. I told my mommy that my tooth fell out.



“Good,” said Mommy. “Now put that under your pillow.” And I went to my bed.

Fig. I-1 Daniel



I stayed there until my daddy came out of his room. The tooth fairy came and gave me one dollar and I went to my mommy's and daddy's room. And I slept with my mommy and daddy for the rest of the night and I went out of bed to play.

Fig I-2 Daniel



IF CHILDREN NEED MORE TIME

Don't be surprised if some students need more time. You've just begun the unit. Expect that children will merely add on and call that revision, and that a fair percentage of their revisions will make their writing worse, not better. They need the opportunity to role-play their way into being the writers you hope they'll become.

You could look again at a familiar book and imagine with your class the revisions the author may have done with his or her text. For example, you might use *A Chair for My Mother* and say, "I bet when Vera Williams first wrote this book she just said she had a chair and then she probably reread what she'd written and remembered more. Then she probably said, 'Wait a minute, I could tell a lot more details.' So she probably reread her first draft and used revision paper to add details, such as . . ."

Even if your children aren't revising much or well, move on to Sessions II and III, because these sessions address the most predictable issues that are sure to arise.

ASSESSMENT

If you have supplied your children with revision pens that write in some beautiful new color, the revisions children make will stand out. Plan to glance over the work and to notice what they do in the name of revision. Ask the following questions.

- ▶ Do I see evidence that every child revised today?
- ▶ What percentage of the revisions involved adding on to the ends of texts?
- ▶ How many children revised without one-to-one prompting from me?

On this occasion, remember that you are teaching the writer, not the writing. If your writers independently initiate a process of rereading and revising, this represents progress, regardless of whether the resulting products have improved. Tell yourself, as Byrd Baylor says, that you are the one who is “in charge of celebration.” If you work at it, you should be able to find reasons to celebrate. Have your writers reread? Used a carat? Added new paper? Assessed their own work? If they’ve done any of this, they are on a path that deserves your support. Remember how hard it is for any of us to return to and to revise work we’ve completed.