Healing Words

Drawing from Within

Originally a Citigroup Mentor Grant by

Melinda Fedorko, NBCT

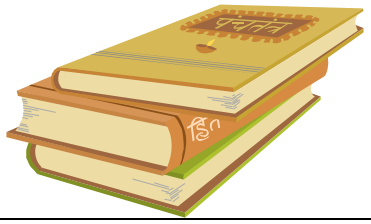
Carolina Diaz-Avila

Email: fedorkom@dadeschools.net
I & B Peskoe Elementary
29035 SW 144 Avenue
Homestead, FL 33033
Mail Code: 4391
School Telephone: (305)242-8340
School Fax: (305) 242-8351

For information concerning IMPACT II opportunities, Adapter and Disseminator grants, please contact:

The Education Fund
305-892-5099, Ext. 18
e-mail: Lvalle@educationfund.org
web site: www.educationfund.org

Table of Contents



Goals & Objectives 3

Standards.....4

Course Overview.....5

Course Outline.....6

Lesson Plans.....8

Resources 13

Adapter Application....25

Goals and Objectives

Objective:

1. Students will increase their interest in creative writing & reading by writing and illustrating a book.

2. Students will increase self esteem, problem solving skills and empathy by completing their book and sharing it with others.

3. Students will use multiple strategies throughout the length of the project that will improve their writing quality in preparation for the Fourth Grade FCAT writing test.

4. Students will demonstrate good craftsmanship and improve their ability to express themselves visually by creating appropriate drawings to illustrate their stories.

STANDARDS

LANGUAGE ARTS:

Vocabulary Development:
LA.4.1.6.1- Use new vocabulary that is introduced and taught directly
LA.4.1.6.8- Use knowledge of antonyms, synonyms, homophones to determine meaning of words
LA.4.2.6.10- Determine meaning of words and alternate word choices by using a dictionary, thesaurus and digital tools
Literary Analysis:
LA.4.2.1.4- Identify an author's theme and explain how the author developed the theme
Writing Process
LA.4.3.2.1- Use a pre-writing plan to focus on the main idea with development of supporting details that show understanding of opinions
LA.4.3.3.3- Create precision and interest by expressing ideas through varied language techniques (imagery, simile, metaphor, sensory language)
LA.4.4.1.1- Write narratives based on real or imagined ideas, events that include character, setting, plot, and logical sequence of events
LA.3.3.5.3- Share the writing with the intended audience

VISUAL ARTS:

VA.A.1.2.2-Demonstrates good craftsmanship to create art
VA.C.1.2.2- Understands how artist have used visual language and symbols through time

Course Overview

Students sometimes have multiple concerns that distract them from focusing on their academics.

Common issues for children of elementary age:

- low self esteem
- fear of failure
- coping with parents' divorce
- sibling rivalry
- death of a pet or grandparent
- bullying

Additionally, teachers find that some students are resistant to creative writing or reading books other than required reading. This project addresses both of these topics, as well as teaching students empathy and increasing self worth.

Students wrote and illustrated a book which addresses a problem the student has experienced at home or at school. Through the use of metaphors, the writers explore their feelings about the problem and develop strategies for resolution.

The books are bound, either professionally or by the students. There are two "Author's Day" as the final activity. Initially, students read their completed books to their peers in the classroom. This can be a difficult experience as they reveal personal issues to their fellow students. After each author is finished they received positive feedback and empathetic support for the story and their handling of the problem.

They then practice reading their book aloud several times- becoming more clear, comfortable and expressive in their delivery. Invitations were sent to administrators and families for a more formal setting in the media center. Students dressed in professional attire and read their books while their illustrations were projected on the screen. A reception was held afterwards in the classroom where refreshments were served and guests could mingle with the authors.

Course Outline

Children of elementary age have multiple issues that may interfere with their ability to focus on their academics. These range from low self esteem, coping with parents' divorce, sibling rivalry, death of a pet, bullying and much more. Additionally, teachers find that some students are resistant to creative writing and reading books other than required reading. This project addresses both of these topics, as well as teaching students empathy and increasing self worth.

Students will write and illustrate a book which addresses a problem the student has experienced at home or at school. Through the use of metaphors, the writer will explore their feelings about the problem and develop strategies for resolution. Past titles of student books are, "The Beaver and the Wave" (the beaver makes new friends in order to cope with a destructive wave) and "The Flower that Couldn't Get Along with Other Flowers". These books will be laminated and spiral bound. After practicing reading their books to their peers, we will have an "Author's Day" and the parents will be invited to hear their child's book. There will be a reception with light snacks for students, parents and administration.

The students will be guided through the writing process using FCAT strategies and compose a well written narrative. They will follow the writing process: brainstorming, planning, prewriting, editing, revising and publishing. With the assistance of the teacher, the students will be able to develop positive solutions for their problems in the stories. They will learn that other people have similar issues and gain the ability to empathize with their peers.

Back-up Data

Narrative therapy, the telling of one's story has benefits for both the teller and recipient. Hilda Glazer (1998) worked with grieving children and in her study stated that narrative therapy "can help the student express emotion and process grief" and "artwork can aid in the expression". In 2003 she stated that "It is therapeutic to tell one's story; the individual is able to verbalize events and feelings. Bibliotherapy dates back to the 1930's and was especially used after WWII to help recuperation. It challenges students to use higher-order thinking skills. Rizza (1997) states that bibliotherapy "begins a discussion process by giving the child someone or something to identify with, to reiterate that there is hope and a way out of a situation, and that others have felt the way you do."

Continued Back-up Data

Bruno Bettelheim, Ph.D. wrote the book *"The Uses of Enchantment: The Meaning and Importance of Fairy Tales"* in 1975. He states, "The most important and also the most difficult task in raising a child today is helping him to find meaning in life. Many growth experiences are needed to achieve this. Unfortunately too many parents want their children's mind to function as their own do-as if mature understanding of ourselves and the world and our ideas …did not have to develop as slowly as our bodies and minds." He goes on to say, "The child must learn step by step to understand himself better; with this he becomes more able to understand others, and eventually can relate to them in ways which are mutually satisfying and meaningful." Regarding the use of fairy tales he states, "For a story to truly hold the child's attention, it must entertain him and arouse his curiosity. But to enrich his life, it must stimulate his imagination; help him develop his intellect and to clarify his emotions; be attuned to his anxieties and aspirations; give full recognition to his difficulties, while at the same time suggesting solutions to the problems that perturb him."

In other words, children do not view the world and cannot solve problems as little adults. If we minimize the issue (Ex. teasing) and tell them what to do without acknowledging and validating their feelings little will be gained. But if they learn to express themselves, clarify their emotions and develop their own strategies for dealing with problems it will be much more meaningful.

Lesson Plans

Suggested Materials:
-Books & stories to read to students (examples in this packet)
-Drawing paper of good quality (9" x 12"), folded in half
-Writing paper
-Drawing materials: pencil, colored pencils, fine tip markers
-Binding materials (can be professional or handmade by students)
- Ex. Arnold Grammers Accordion Fold Zig Zag Book Class Set of 12 books or cardboard (tag board is fine)
-Elmer's glue, tape, glue gun (low temperature) and glue sticks
-Construction paper or donated wallpaper book from paint store
-"Author's Day" (concluding activity): Refreshments such as sandwiches, cake and juice (optional)

Activities: (including steps)

Preparation: Buy or gather all supplies and reading material before starting activity. Books written for children on common topics (anxiety, loneliness, bullies, divorce, sibling rivalry, death of a pet, self esteem) are available in libraries or bookstores. They can also be purchased on line. ***"Shelley, the Hyperactive Turtle"*** by Deborah Moss and Carol Schwartz and ***"Dinosaurs Divorce"*** **by Marc Brown** is another one for elementary age students. My favorite is ***"Once upon a time…Therapeutic Stories to Heal Abused Children"*** **by Nancy Davis, Ph.D.** It is a group of short stories she wrote specifically for her clients. I have included a few of her stories in the Resource section of the packet.

Week 1: Read several stories to students with different themes. Discuss the sequence and how the main character in the story solved the problem. Include how they think the person felt and how their past behavior either made the problem worse or allowed the problem continue. Have them describe how the other characters reacted to the person in the story. Discuss strategies for how the person overcame obstacles and resolved the issue.

Week 2: Depending on the grade level, review the writing process using FCAT strategies and how to compose a well written narrative. Emphasize to students that in this story they will use metaphors as a means to creatively express inner thoughts and feelings. Listing possible main characters (toy soldier, flower, giraffe, car, princess) and the characters that help teach them the life lesson (gardener, wise owl, friend).Review the importance of how adjectives and details bring the story to life. Encourage the use of college words and humor. Point out common grammatical errors.

Week 3-6: Beginning the writing process: brainstorming, planning, pre-writing, editing, revising, and the final product. Each student has to make a list of problems they have encountered or are experiencing now. Those that are able to work independently begin an outline of the story. The teacher meets with each

student individually, and through a series of prompts (my suggestions are in Resource section), the student dictates the beginnings of a story. I find the story flows more freely if I do the initially writing as they dictate. For example, if the problem is loneliness, questions may include: What would be an animal that you could choose to feel alone? (Ex. lion, sheep, fish, robin, etc) What could you name him? (Leo the Lion). Then I would start the story, "One day there was a lonely lion named Leo. He felt……" and the student would begin to take over the story. I would give suggestions to the student only when necessary. The next class would have all students begin writing, using more descriptive words (Leo was a sturdy, golden colored lion…) and more dialogue, transition words, similes, etc. There are several drafts made before the story is finished.

Weeks 7-10 Once the story is complete, they break it down in sections to be different pages and use Word Processors to write the story. Then the student decides which parts to illustrate. Generally the stories have 5-6 pictures and a cover picture. I prefer to use colored pencil as the markers smudge after time. Some students that are uncomfortable with their drawing ability may want to copy a picture off the internet, trace it and then make changes so that it is uniquely their own. A dedication page can be added. Depending on the age of the student, they can type up the story, add illustrations and assemble the pages. The older the child, the more they can participate in the binding process.

Next to last week: Review with the class concepts of empathy and positive feedback. This is an essential aspect of this project. Students who share their problems must feel the support of the rest of the class. Have students read their stories to a trusted peer several times. Explain that this is a dress rehearsal for sharing their stories in class.

Last week: Two formats of "Author's Day"-

1. Before each student reads their book, I write their name on the board and the title of their book. Each student then reads their books in front of the class. The class may ask questions, make comments (if they relate to the theme) or give positive feedback to the author. I provide light refreshments for the students at this event.

2. A more formal but gratifying event following the classroom activity is to create an invitation and distribute to administration, reading coach, and families. I scan the illustrations and create a power point presentation. Student's dress in professional attire (dress shirts and ties for boys, dresses for girls) and an Author's Day is held in the Media Center. The student's were thrilled to participate in this event. All but one of the parents came, a very high attendance rate for my class. One mother told me she had to cancel an MRI because her child was so insistent she attend. Another student's grandmother was able to get him a scholarship at a summer camp based on his book.

Accommodations (ESE/ESOL): There are no special accommodations necessary for Varying Exceptionalities (VE) or Emotional and Behavioral Disabilities (E/BD) students. The teacher needs to decide upon the amount of time per session. This activity was specifically designed for E/BD students. I found that the students had days where there was low frustration tolerance and I would stop early. It was better to slow down and break it down in workable steps then to have them rush through or destroy the product. If necessary, a "half-way there" party (ice cream treats, popcorn) would re-energize the class. ESOL students or those with visual or physical handicaps may need more assistance from a teacher or other students.

Reflection: I have used this activity for many years with students from Ages 6 to 18. This is a long but rewarding effort for both the teacher and the class. There is so much excitement when they see a finished product that it helps me to "push" the students out of their comfort zone and have them stretch themselves to write a book they will be proud of. The other aspect of this project is the development of problem solving and social skills. Children learn they are not the only one experiencing their specific problems. They learn it is their responsibility to recognize the issue, build coping skills and implement strategies to solve the problem. Finally, acquiring the ability to empathize (putting yourself in another's shoes) is an important developmental skill. Helping students to support instead of belittle each other in difficult times is part of the maturation process.

Extension (How lesson plan can be used with older/younger/ larger groups).
I do not change the complexity of the book, even with older students (5th grade to high school). The aim is: to make a child's book, for the student to have a successful writing experience, improve their problem solving skills and to complete the project. Some students may want to replicate professional books that they have read and have overly high expectations of their book. They almost always get frustrated and want to give up the project. I stress the importance of enjoying the creative process. With larger groups, I recommend teachers might consider having students work on "draft" illustrations if they cannot work independently while the teacher is working with other students. They may also want to have worksheets with related activities. Whenever possible, I have students work in pairs or small groups to support and encourage each other.

Another variation with less emphasis on the emotional component is to have students choose an endangered species, or animal of Florida and research them. The students learn more about an animal, their habitat, eating habits, whether they live alone, in pairs or groups, etc. They can then create a story as if <u>they</u> are that animal.

Resources

For professional binding:

Nationwide Learning, Inc., PO Box 19244, Topeka, KS 66619-0244

- This company was very supportive and answered any questions or concerns I had. They put the student's photograph on the cover, and included a dedication page. They also can make as many copies of a book as you want-some families ordered additional copies for grandparents. There are probably many other ways developed in the past five years to make a professionally bound book.

For student binding:

NASCO Catalog: 801 Janesville Avenue, Ft. Atkinson, WI 53538
www.enasco.com, 1-800-558-9595

-Zigzag Books, ID # 9727084, $13.75 for a set of twelve
Instructions are included in the package.

Other material options are available at your school site. You can simply laminate each page and make a cover out of tag board, ½"-1" ring binder, or just staple the right hand side.

Books to inspire interest:

"Shelley, the Hyperactive Turtle" by Deborah Moss and Carol Schwartz
"Dinosaurs Divorce" by Marc Brown
"Once upon a time…Therapeutic Stories to Heal Abused Children" by Nancy Davis, Ph.D. I

Suggested questions to assist student as they dictate story:

What are some of the problems that you have had or are having now? *I then give age appropriate examples.* **Are you left out of activities in P.E.? Do you get in trouble for talking too much? Were you ever afraid of the dark? Lost?**

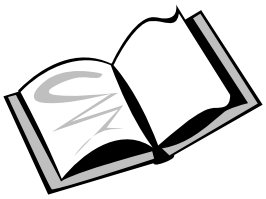
Let's come up with an animal or object that could be you in the story. Remember the story of the tiger or the flower? Do you think an owl, a fish or a train would be good? *I give them time to come up with one, then continue to encourage them by giving a few more examples.*

What would be a good name for the characters? Do you have any favorite names? *I don't like to have them use their own names, family names or even classmates. I might make up unusual names just to get them thinking. If they can't come up with anything at this point, it's o.k. I'll try later on as the story develops.*

At this time I say, "We have to begin the story. How about once upon a time or one day, or a long time ago, or It was a rainy Tuesday afternoon when…"

If they get stuck after the first two sentences I might say, **"Let's mention the problem early in the story" or "What would happen next?" or "How did the duck feel when no one would play with him?"**

After the first couple of paragraphs the wonderful creative process begins to unfold. I don't correct grammar or make changes unless they try to end the story too soon. If they do try to rush to an ending, I might make a twist in the story such as **"the duck thought he had learned to stop talking in class after the teacher told him to be quiet, but then a strange thing happened…."**



This story is by Nancy Davis, Ph.D from "Once upon a time….therapeutic stories to heal abused children", 1990, published by Psychological Associates of Oxford Hill. I have used this for foster children, but because the metaphors are so simple and most students have at some point experienced feelings of not being appreciated, they enjoy the story.

The Flower in the Sidewalk

Once upon a time a flower seed blew in the wind, and, as things would have it, the seed landed on a sidewalk. The wind blew more and the little seed fell between the cracks of the sidewalk into the earth. Then the rain came and the little seed started to grow. It grew very well until its tip reached the top of the sidewalk, but whenever the little flower tried to grow taller, someone would stomp on it. When this happened a part of the little flower would break off, or its top would be crushed. The little plant tried and tried to grow leaves and a flower, but each time it got a good start, someone would step on it or ride a bike over it or crush it in some way. Finally the little plant just gave up trying to grow any taller. It just concentrated on surviving and staying the same, and that was hard because it had vey little sunlight or food.

One day a gardener came along and looked down at the little plant. "Why, you're not in the right place," she remarked. "You belong where you can grow and thrive." The gardener went home and returned with a shovel and pail. She dug up the little plant, making sure to get all of the root system. She took t home to her garden planted it outside in the rich earth, and then carefully put water and fertilizer all around its roots.

"Now you are in the right place, Little Plant," she said. "You are free to grow and develop as nature intended you to do. And since you have taken so much effort to survive, you shall grow to be the most beautiful flower in the whole garden."

The little plant was very scared. It had been in the same place for so long that it was afraid to take a chance on being different. The gardener saw the little plant's fear, and spoke again to the plant. "Fear should be noticed, but not obeyed when it keeps you from growing," she counseled the little plant. "To be all that you can be, you must find the strength within yourself to open up to the sun. Only then will you be able to see yourself in a true light."

The little plant was still afraid, but decided to take a chance, and found the power deep within to open itself to the light. Soon a leaf popped out and a blossom appeared, followed by another and another. As this happened, the plant could feel itself become stronger and braver. Soon the plant was covered with big, beautiful flowers. The gardener told all her friends about the new, magnificent plant in her garden. Before long, many people visited the garden to admire the flowers on this special plant. And as the plant heard each visitor comment its beauty, it realized just how much it had grown. For the healthy plant had come to understand that to grow to your full potential, you must trust and open yourself up to the sun.

This is an abbreviated version of a story is by Nancy Davis, Ph.D from "Once upon a time....therapeutic stories to heal abused children", 1990, published by Psychological Associates of Oxford Hill. The theme is how your anger can isolate you from others.

The Tiger in the Cage

Once upon a time there was a very sleek tiger that lived caged in a zoo. Now this tiger was in a very small cage because all of the zoo officials were afraid of her. They were afraid because this tiger was constantly angry. She would roar and scratch and try to attack, so people stayed more and more away from the tiger. The animal trainers wanted to make friends with the tiger, but each time they got close, even if they were offering her food, the tiger roared and charged them. Soon no one came near the tiger at all because they were afraid of her anger.

Now what the tiger acted like and what was going on inside her were two very different things. The tier was actually very, very sad. She didn't like the small, tight cage and she didn't like being away from the jungle with no other tigers around. She found the cage boring and lonely. All of these things made the tiger feel like there was a big, dark hole in her chest. But rather than let the world see her sadness, she showed anger. So, life for the tiger got more and more difficult and she acted more and more angry. The zookeeper decided to put the tiger's cage in a back area where no one would ever view her. The tiger became more and more lonely.

One day the zookeeper hired a new caretaker- a woman who was an expert at understanding animals. The woman watched the tiger carefully as she roared and clawed at the cage. Then the tiger turned her back on the caretaker and pretended to sleep, refusing to eat food that the caretaker offered her. But the caretaker saw through the tiger's anger and she knew what lay under this anger. The caretaker began to talk to the tiger on a regular basis, letting her know that she recognized her sadness and that she would help her. Although the tiger put up quite a show of rage, she began to understand that this caretaker would indeed help her get rid of the sadness, and she found herself listening and learning.

As time passed a change came over the tiger, and the day came when she was put in the open jungle area of the zoo with the other big cats. At first she had a little trouble making friends with the other animals, but the special caretaker worked with her until she was a welcome ember of the group. All the other caretakers were amazed at the changes in the tiger, and predicted that before long she would become her old, miserable self again. But the caretaker knew differently, because she knew she had helped the tiger. The tiger soon found that the hole in her chest was healed.

After that, every time the tiger saw the caretaker she purred. It was the loudest purr everyone at the zoo had ever remembered hearing.

Student Stories

The Beaver and The Wave

Once upon a time there was an athletic young beaver. He was trying to build a dam to make a comfy home. But a massive wave came and destroyed his home. The wave was very powerful and it was very clever. It also liked to play tricks with the Beaver.

One day the wave was playing with his wave friends. They were helping people surf and ride their boats.

The beaver was feeling gloomy. He had no one to play with and no home. The wave had destroyed his home.

But, there were a lot of beavers that wanted to be his friend. He didn't know this. He thought everyone was afraid of him, because sometimes he was mean. They thought he was angry because he had no home.

Finally the beaver tried one more time to build another home. He was very persistent. The new friends offered to help him.

He said, "Yes". They helped him build his dam.

The wave did not come for a while to destroy the beaver's dam because it is too busy helping the people surf and to do flips.

But one day the wave came back and tried to destroy it again. But he couldn't because the beaver and his friends built it too strong. They had worked together as a team to create an indestructible home!

So the Beaver had a new home, new friends and he lived happily ever after.

Two Friends

Once upon a time there was a monkey and a tiger. The monkey's name was Bob and the tiger's name was Marlos.

Marlos and Bob got along well. There was one problem. They would be playing ball together and all of a sudden Marlos would get frustrated because he did not like it when Bob hogs the ball.

Marlos couldn't wait patiently. He grabbed the ball and played by himself. He would then feel happy. But Bob would be sad.

The friendship was ending. You can't take a friend's things and not share.

But Marlos didn't care at first. He liked having the ball to play with. After a while Marlos was a little sad, and so he made a deal.

He said to Bob, "We will each have the ball for one minute." So they each played with the ball for one minute. But that wasn't much fun.

When Bob was playing ball by himself, he thought that it wasn't much fun either. So Bob made a deal. "We'll play wit the ball together. And I won't hog the ball anymore."
So they played together and it was fun. Marlos was so hay he forgot about his frustration.

He learned that sometimes he had to wait and by sharing he had a better time.

The Hyper Butterfly

Once upon a time there lived a pink-colored precious butterfly that was hyperactive. She always ate candy which made her very hyper. She thought the candy did not make her hyper.

When she was hyper in class, the other student butterflies felt like they were not learning because Crystal, the hyper butterfly always flew around and distracted the other butterflies that were learning.

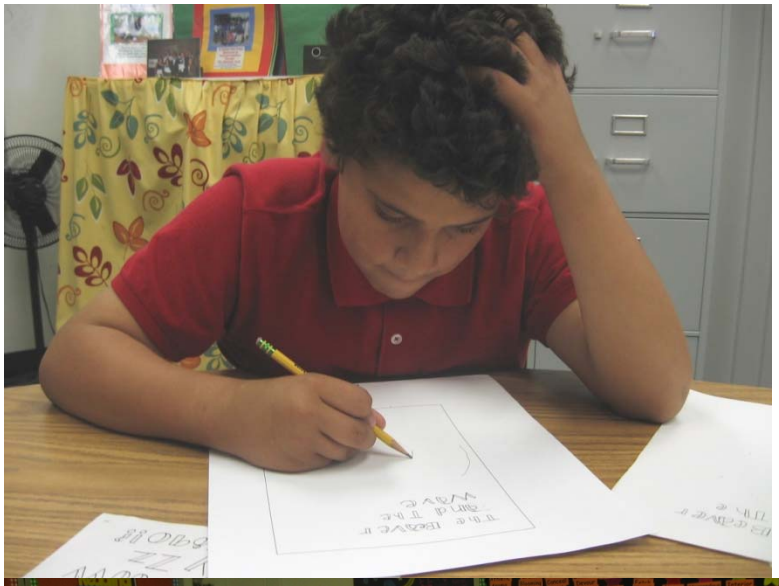
Crystal knew she was smart and didn't think that all her flying around was a problem. But her teachers and the other students knew it was a BIG problem.

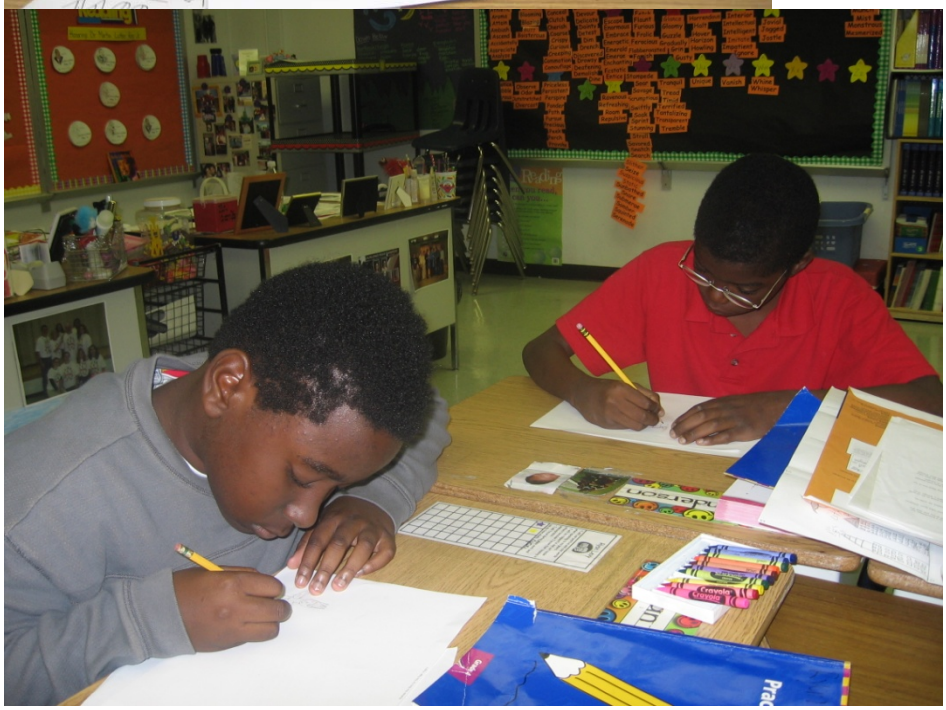
So she started to go to the art therapist named Mrs. Monarch. Although she had the same pattern, she was larger than Crystal. Mrs. Monarch taught her to breathe in and out, to relax with music and to paint to help her calm herself down. She learned how to control her frustration with a thermometer.

So she went back to class and used Mrs. Monarch's skills. Throughout the day, Crystal behaved very well. The other butterfly students loved how Crystal became less distracted, and Crystal loved the way they treated her.

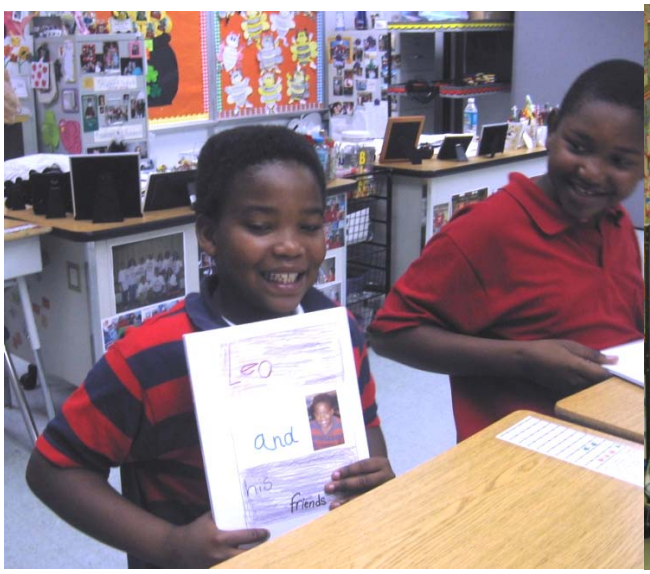
The End ?!

Photographs of Healing Words: Drawing from Within





Working on illustrations for the cover

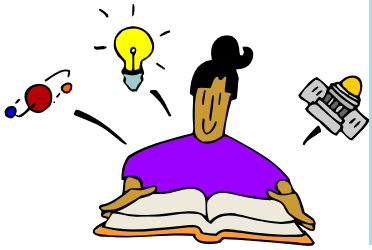
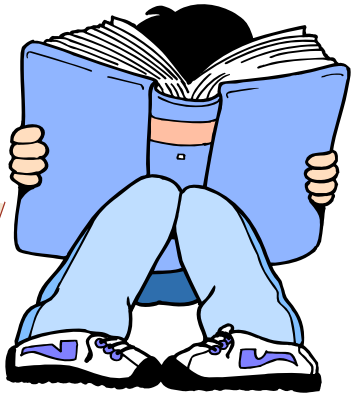
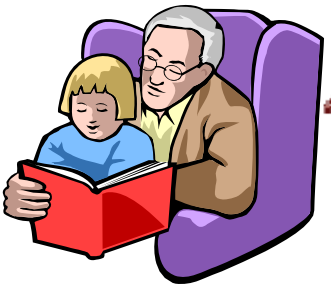
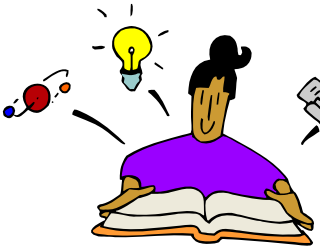
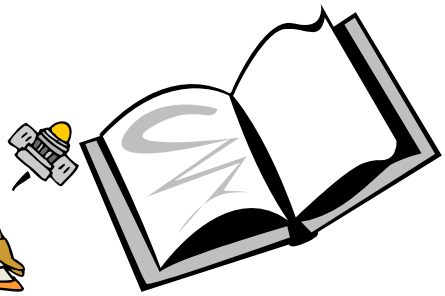


First Day Seeing the Finished Book

Classroom Author's
Day Presentation

Author's Day in Media Center
Student reading to families with his artwork
on screen behind him

Picture with students and families after “formal” Author’s Day Event

Students with Finished Books

CLIP ART FOR YOUR PROJECT