

ABSTRACT

Despite the well established empirical importance of both process writing and peer-and-self assessment they have not been extensively implemented in Ireland (NCCA, 2005). A possible explanation for this is that teachers often find assessment of process writing difficult, with limited assessment methodologies employed since the introduction of the Revised Curriculum (DES/NCCA, 1999).

This ten week action research focused on developing pupils' abilities to write fiction while engaging in peer-and-self assessment. Twenty-five fourth class pupils received explicit teaching of writing crafts with instruction in peer-and-self assessment over the course of the study. Mini-lessons were used to focus on and develop key concepts. The teacher-researcher served as a model allowing pupils to observe the use of new learning content. Learning and instruction were recursive in nature, and the learning content of mini-lessons was frequently revised during the study. Specific learning targets and success criteria were introduced to pupils in the form of an evaluative checklist. The pupils were aged approximately ten years and came from culturally diverse backgrounds.

Observations, interviews, and pupil writing samples were used to collect data. Pupils participated in focus group interviews while one teacher observed two lessons and participated in interviews. Data were compiled, transcribed, coded and categorised as themes and subthemes emerged.

Four main themes emerged from the data as significant in facilitating peer-and-self assessment in process writing: feedback to/from peers, pupil self-reflection, feedback from teacher, and engagement. Aspects of that were found to improve including word usage, lead sentences, character descriptions, and titles. This study identified areas for further research.