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*For my true-blue crew: Peter, Rosalyn, and Quinn
And for my parents, Ann and Dan*

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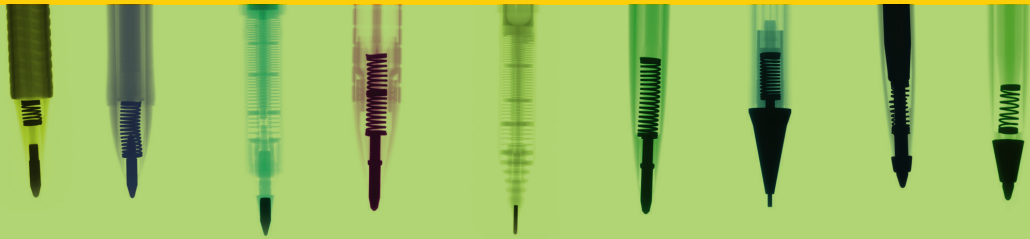
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FOREWORD

Guilty as charged. I can recall numerous times when I asked a student, “Are you ready to publish your writing?” I swiftly sent them off to rewrite, type, or illustrate their work. That writing was then retired to a class bulletin board, or even worse—my desk. Done. That was the end of that piece. It now belonged to me. Lee Heffernan has shown me the error of my ways.

Lee’s book speaks to the idea of student empowerment, accountability, meaningful writing, revision, and publishing. Her work essentially shows us how to move students from *fake* writing (writing that is just for the teacher) to writing that has purpose and passion. Lee manages to marry process and product in a way that will inevitably set a new standard for writing instruction for teachers everywhere. Her work breaks ground with tenets that shift our writing instructional norms and inspires students.

Lee introduces her students to a three-tiered small press publishing model. Students learn about the authentic goals of publishing: fostering relationships, connecting to readers, and revising to improve text. But she doesn’t just stop there. The class creates a student press by deciding the type of writing that they want to do, designing the logo, and, as important, delving into the roles of both editors and writers.

She suggests that students identify and study some of their favorite books, examining who the publishers are and learning the recursive process of writing and revision. Revision and ownership are at the heart of writing and Heffernan makes that clear and exciting! What *actually* happens when professional editors and writers work? What is the role of authentic revision? In this book, Heffernan brings the notion of *authentic* purposes for writing by putting students in the role of author.

At the heart of her model are collaboration and revision. Students learn to collaborate and work together to offer one another feedback. Lee gets students to understand the actual value of multiple revisions. After working with fellow student–authors, students learn how to prepare their writing for submission to the classroom press.

Student-created small presses? Student investment in revision? The moment I dove into this book, I was in awe. Heffernan has created a model for writing instruction that is transformative in how students can view their work as professional and authentic.

As I read Lee’s book, page by page, like a favorite novel, I found it hard to tear myself away. It is impossible to read this book and not get chills up your spine about the possibilities for building writers who not only love their craft, but understand the role of professional editors and writers. With every page turn, I wanted to know more, see more, and soak in each student sample. The student enthusiasm jumps off the page and you can feel the excitement and ownership of the classroom presses that are featured in this book. Students begin to see themselves just like professional writers—with a genuine purpose. That repositioning of writing is amazing and powerful. This model has transformed the way I think of student ownership, revision, and publication. Lee Heffernan takes something as intriguing and exciting as authentic writing and makes it fun to implement for students and teachers.

—Rozlyn Linder

INTRODUCTION

One Sunday morning, I was relishing some time with coffee and the newspaper when I came across an article that took my mind straight into my classroom. The article was about one of my favorite authors, Roald Dahl, and his work with his editors. Dahl had a reputation among editors for being difficult when it came to revising his texts. Just that week I had worked with quite a few young writers who I might describe as a wee bit difficult when it came to revising. I thought about my inability to help students who didn't want to make changes to their texts. I also reflected on my concern about students who simply jotted down the first revision that came to mind so they could move on to the next step in their writing process.

The article about Dahl piqued my interest. It surprised me to hear that his editors requested changes to his manuscripts. I wondered, "How much revision would Roald Dahl really need to have to do? He's Roald Dahl!" It turns out this famous author actually had to do a great deal of revising before his books were published and he had guidance and support with his revisions from several editors over the course of his career.

What did Dahl's editors know that I didn't know? Why was it so difficult to get my students to make even minor revisions? Where Dahl's editors were asking for passage rewrites and chapter deletions, I was asking about small changes, an added detail here or a bit of dialogue there. Though Dahl and his editors sometimes argued about revisions, his books were revised extensively as Dahl and his editors passed his manuscripts back and forth over long periods of time. The description of Dahl's involvement with his editors made me wonder, *How could I engage my students more effectively in a process of revision? How could I become more of a partner to them as we worked to publish their writing?*

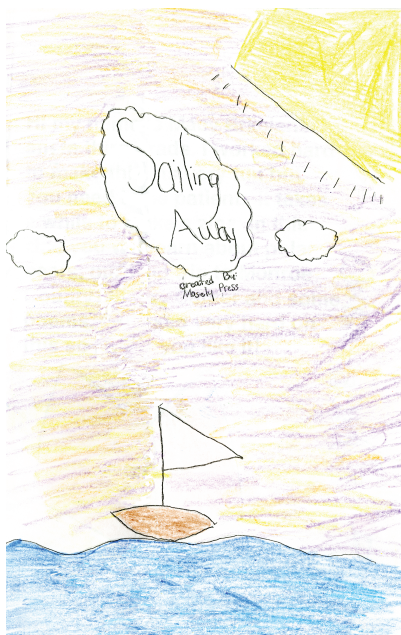
My Years as a “Fellow Writer” in the Writing Workshop

I began my teaching career thoroughly committed to writing process pedagogy. Like any teacher, my goal was to help students become better writers, as they developed their ideas and eventually published their drafts. Process writing allowed students in my classrooms to make creative choices. Personal interests were the foundation of their topic selections and students felt they were in charge of their publications. Process writing also brought an authenticity to the writing curriculum. A first draft was no longer considered a final copy, simply handed in to the teacher to be graded and returned. It now represented a student’s attempt to document and explore thoughts and questions about the world. Writing workshop was and is a favorite time of day for me and for my students: a social, productive time, with students writing, sharing their pieces, conferring together, and illustrating final copies.

Writing process research encouraged teachers to become writers along with their students. I took up this role with gusto, using my own writing products and processes to model and demonstrate elements of drafting, revising, and editing. I joined a writer’s group, read a plethora of professional books about teaching writing,

attended professional conferences, and filled up one notebook after another. As a fellow writer, I was careful to respect student control of their texts during writing conferences.

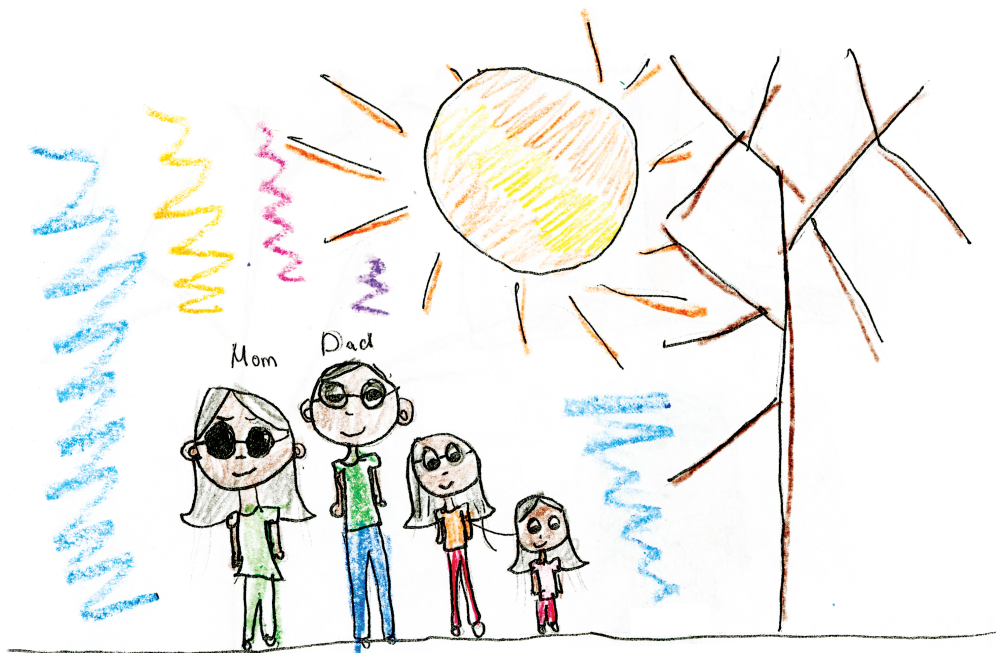
Teacher friends who did not consider themselves to be writers often expressed insecurity about their proficiency as writing teachers. Many times colleagues would say, “You like to write, Lee. I don’t. That’s why you can teach writing and I can’t.” Although being a fellow writer in the workshop felt comfortable to me, this identity could also be problematic as I tried to spend time on my writing and keep up with the demands of classroom teaching. Lucy Calkins acknowledged the difficulty of performing the dual roles of teacher and writer in a conference presentation when she jokingly told the



story of a teacher who shares the same draft year after year with students, acting as if she wrote it the night before. Everyone in attendance could relate to this story. I had taken such practical shortcuts myself.

Even though I identified as a writer, I gradually got the sense that my being a writer was not having a profound impact on student writing. Over the years, I found myself reading stacks of same old same old kind of writing. Students took their texts through a writing process, from idea to final copy, but many tended to write repetitively on recycled topics that weren't new to them. My enthusiasm for writing time flagged a bit after years of reading the same types of stories over and over again—stories about baseball games, family pets, sleepovers. I groaned when students told me they wanted to write fiction because I struggled to maintain interest in these retellings of favorite video games or popular television shows.

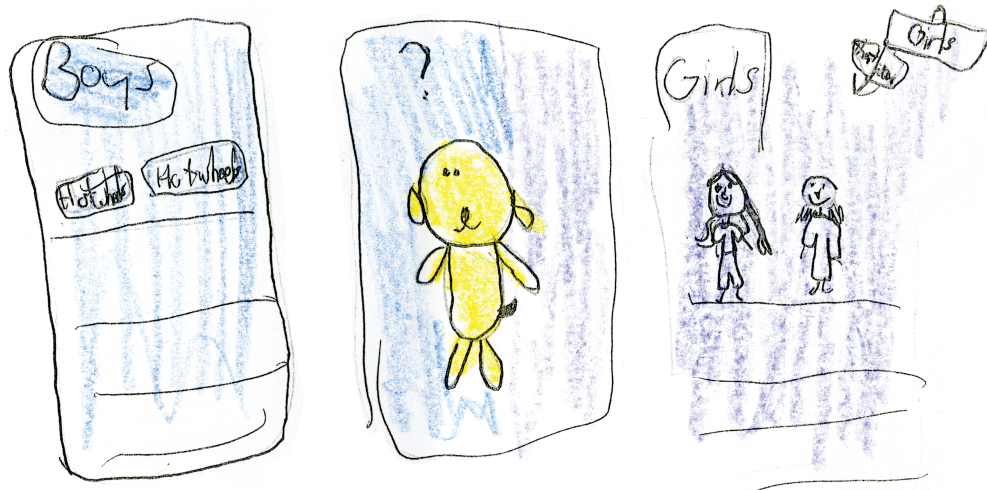
In our writing conferences, we rarely discussed significant revision possibilities even though I knew revision was essential to the writing process. As a fellow writer, I hesitated to make suggestions that would change the direction of their pieces. Students picked up on my hesitance and registered ambivalence about making changes to their texts. I could not seem to strike a balance between honoring their independence as fellow writers and assisting with the hard work of rewriting



and revising. I was not able to communicate the importance of revision, no matter how I tried via minilessons, conferences, and demonstrations. Students often ended up publishing final drafts that were only slightly different from their original rough drafts.

Lack of substantive revision is not a problem specific to my classroom, but is common in many schools. Haar and Horning find “student writers are more likely to stick to surface correction and small changes” when it comes to revising, even at the secondary level (2006, 4). Although process writing teachers know the importance of revision, we’re not always sure about *how* to help students rewrite. We’re told to ask questions in our conferences, but what should we do when our questions don’t seem to lead students to revise their texts? Is it OK to make suggestions? If so, should we be direct with our suggestions? How direct? What if the writer doesn’t care for our ideas? Should we push our point if we believe the text needs improvements, or should we respect student ownership of text and leave well enough alone?

My hesitation in the revision process stood in stark contrast to the ways editors work with published authors. When I found the article about Roald Dahl, I sensed that there was something to author and editor work that could be helpful for me as a writing teacher. I talked about the article with Judith Williams, our school’s media specialist, who shared with me a biography of Tomie dePaola (Elleman 1999). The biography showed samples of how dePaola and a range of people at



his publishing house work on revisions. I used photographs from Elleman's book to show students examples of what extensive revision could look like. I was intrigued by the description of dePaola's relationship with his longtime editor. Margaret Frith had a hand in the creation of dePaola's books, not on a mere conventions level, but on a conceptual level as well. Although I, like many people, had always imagined *proofreader* when I heard the word *editor*, dePaola's editor worked intensively with him to revise, often making contributions that changed a story's direction. Frith and dePaola's work together involved intense negotiation around the substance of his manuscripts, which at times meant winning or losing arguments about content, resulting in unpleasant tensions as well as satisfying resolutions. Their work together spanned over three decades.

As I learned more about editors, I became bolder about interacting with writers during the revision process. My students and I became "textworkers," treating their texts like clay, shaping them to influence readers (Kamler 2001; Heffernan 2004). We were already having rich discussions about important topics in reading workshop and now I wanted writing workshop to also be a time for powerful conversations. I began to look for ways to bring more social purpose to student writing, encouraging students to write on more critical or social themes that mattered to them.

Though I knew that revision could provide opportunities for helping students enact social goals in their writing (Welch 1997), I sometimes worried about my new, more directive, role in revision work. Was I too involved? Was I crossing some kind of line in this work with young writers? I turned to editor literature not to learn about a set procedure for editing but to gather information about multiple ways editors help writers while respecting their authorship.

Focusing on Product, as Well as Process

By focusing on the writing process, I aimed to help writers improve their writing skills. By focusing more on product, editors are freed of this pressure. They don't need to work to help the writer improve their writing skills, to write a better book in the future. Although editors don't attend to writing process, they do revise with writers. Each writing project is unique and changes with each writer and with each book. Editors must home in on product over process because the stakes of the



work are high, particularly for small presses. If they don't sell books, they go out of business. I continue to work on helping students develop their writing processes, but learning more about editors has increased my focus on product because publishing means more to me than it used to.

I wondered why I hadn't learned more about editor–author relationships in all my professional reading and inquiry about writing workshop.

Publishing is usually the goal of process writing, but there's not much written about how teachers can emulate the work of editors. I learned from editor Gerald Gross that the work of the editor is usually invisible to readers and some may even say the work is kept “in the closet” (1993, xvi). Editorial contributions to texts are usually not widely acknowledged because the work of the editor disappears when a text is published. Although the author owns the text before *and after* the publishing process, editor and author share it during the path from manuscript to published book. Writing researcher Timothy Lensmire claims that a focus on individuality and authenticity is present in writing classrooms. Even as we recognize the social nature of reading and writing, we idealize the image of the individual writer as a solitary artist, working alone (2000, 16–17). In *Editors on Editing* (1993), Gross pushes for more openness about the work that editors do with authors:

I would like to propose a revolutionary way of recognizing the midwifery of the editor. Since at least the legendary Maxwell Perkins's time, editors have been expected to be unsung, faceless, nameless technicians assisting the author in the creation of the completed manuscript. Quite often, of course, the author graciously and gratefully acknowledges the efforts of his or her editor in the prefatory pages of the published book. Quite often, though the editor remains unsung. But why does it always have to be that way? More important, why should it be that way? (xvi)

I'm grateful to the many authors and editors who came “out of the closet” to share information and guidelines about their publishing journeys. Editors who have talked and written about the ways they work have provided criteria for my own work as an editor in the classroom publishing house. From a review of literature by and

about editors, I've learned that editors are guided in their work by a sense of responsibility to relationship, text, and readership.

Although there's no one set way that editors work with writers, these three responsibilities, or commitments, are helpful guidelines. If you find yourself wishing that your work with student writers could lead to more intentionality about revising and publishing texts that change during the writing process, improving from one draft to the next, you too may want to reconsider your role in writing workshop. As classroom editors, we keep the following commitments in mind:

- **Relationship:** In the working relationship of the writer and the editor, the writer does not lack agency, but the editor is in a greater position of power and so bears greater responsibility for making the relationship positive and productive. Neither editor nor writer benefits if the relationship sours and does not result in a publication.
- **Text:** An editor's job is to make suggestions that will lead to an improved text. Editors respect that the writer owns the text while expecting that the text is going to change during its journey through the publishing house and into the hands of readers. Editors are committed to the job of making suggestions that lead to improvements in texts.
- **Readership:** Editors keep in mind the world of the reader, and their decisions are inevitably influenced by ideas about future readers of their publications. Before accepting a manuscript, an editor must analyze a text to determine if it fits with the goals of their publishing house. Publishers release a limited number of books every year, so each book is important. Though large publishing firms tend to have lists that are more eclectic, some smaller presses tailor their lists to specific purposes.

These three commitments have helped me in my work with students. When I work with student writers, I take care to keep the writing relationship productive and respectful. I advocate for their texts and work, helping students to enact changes through revision to make the text the best it can be. I keep in mind that these texts are being written for readers who are looking for books that are fresh, original, and creative. Keeping in mind that my students are writing for readers, and not just for themselves, I consider ways to help students match their writing purposes with their intended audience.

An Editor's Frame of Mind in the Classroom Press

I have never stopped believing in the importance of a writing workshop approach to teaching writing, but over the years, I have shifted my role in the workshop. Although I still act as a fellow writer when teaching students about finding and developing topics, I now take up the role of classroom press editor when students work on drafts that they want to publish. Our classroom has become a small press where students, with the help of their editor, work to revise manuscripts in substantive ways before they're published. Creating a small press in our classroom involves a shift of perspective. We've always published student work in our writing workshops. With a small press model, students now work with their teacher–editor to reimagine and reshape their drafts more purposefully. This shift in writing workshop brings classroom publishing a step closer to what actually happens when professional writers publish.

Small press publishing takes more time than is perhaps typical for your writing workshop. Substantive revision is more time-consuming for both teacher and student. Because of this, it's important to ease into the model and make it your own. With a classroom press, publishing slows down and students delve more deeply into the writing process, with the help of their editor. As the editor of the classroom press, the teacher decides which pieces are published through the press and which are not. There's no set protocol, and small presses are unique in their creative visions and goals.

Although the basic format of writing workshop remains consistent with a small press model, the teacher's mindset shifts as we experiment with a more interactive approach to revision. During the school year, we will choose which writing projects will be published with the press. Not all writing projects must involve the back-and-forth negotiation between the teacher–editor and the student–author. Teachers can make decisions about which pieces will become classroom press publications and which will continue to be part of the established curricular grade level goals.

In addition to keeping writer's notebooks, students work on independent DIY publications during writing workshop when they're not involved with a classroom project. Students will come to distinguish between the classroom press projects and the more independent, DIY publishing projects they complete using simple book-

making materials available in the classroom. These independent books are posted in the writing center and are student driven. Just as we wouldn't go through our students' writer's notebooks and grade their individual pieces, the DIY books are not assessed with formal grades, but do give us information about our students' writing identities. This independent writing not only helps to build writing stamina and identity but also serves to increase student awareness about self-publishing, which is an avenue that more and more writers are taking advantage of today.

I like to assure students that if they're working on something that's very important to them, but that's not quite in line with the goals of our classroom press, I am happy to read it over and give them feedback. Books that are published by the classroom press, however, will be the product of work that has gone through the back-and-forth editing process. During this process, students revise their drafts several times and for different purposes. No student publishes until their text is the best it can be. As I work with students, I'm helping them revise the conventions, meanings, craft, and purposes of their pieces. If a piece has been published with the press, it's of high quality and student formal evaluations, or grades, will reflect their growth as writers through the revision process. Being an editor for students is a shift in thinking about the teacher's role in the writing workshop and is adaptable to your curricular goals.

With a classroom press model, younger students start acquiring the skills that they will need in the upper grades. The work of authors and their editors provides models for helping students develop their skills as producers and distributors of texts. Throughout this book, I review writing research about revising and publishing student texts. Along the way, I also explore the various ways editors work with authors and share how an editor's frame of mind can be applied to writing workshops in our classrooms. Drawing on literature about writing as well as publishing, I introduce ways that a teacher-as-editor model can help



us shift our ways of thinking about texts. As teacher–editors, we can be more involved with revision and give our students the kind of guidance that resembles what editors do for and with professional writers.

In the following chapters, I explore what I’ve learned about how writing research supports a teacher-as-editor frame of mind in the writing workshop:

- Chapter 1, “Introducing a Small Press Publishing Model to Student Writers”: Before becoming an editor for students, we need to build student knowledge base about the ins and outs of the world of publishing.
- Chapter 2, “Fostering Relationships: Keeping Revision Work Positive and Productive”: As classroom editors, we can use a range of strategies for building trusting relationships with student writers during the tough work of revising.
- Chapter 3, “Improving Texts: Advocating for Student Writing”: An editor reads a text to give the writer substantive feedback. A multipurpose revision template (Four Reads) can help teacher–editors explore and bring new meanings to their texts.
- Chapter 4, “Connecting with Readers: Being Mindful of Purpose and Audience”: Along with authors, editors bring new ideas and stories into the world of readers. This chapter delves into the importance of bringing greater awareness of the impact student texts can have on readers.
- Chapter 5, “Frequently Asked Questions About the Classroom Press”: In this final chapter I review some questions that teachers often bring up when they consider taking up a teacher-as-editor model.

Roald Dahl benefited from the substantive feedback his editors provided. Because of editor suggestions, he deleted chapters and rewrote whole sections of his books. Our students deserve the same kind of attention and care. I want my students to know that as their editor, I’ve got their backs. As we become editors in our classroom publishing houses, we’ll pass manuscripts back and forth as we work with students to publish texts that are the best they can be. Our classroom presses may be small, but together with our students, we can publish creative texts that explore big ideas.