

Writing Throughout the Curriculum Cycle

In Exploring How Texts Work*, Derewianka describes the curriculum cycle, which includes four stages:

1. Building the Field
2. Modeling the Text Type
3. Joint Construction
4. Independent Writing

Stage 1: Building the field: this gives the children time to gather information about what they will be writing. Activities are listening, speaking, reading, information gathering, note taking, field trips. This stage ties in perfectly with Units of Inquiry. The students are already familiar with the Unit, the concepts, and the vocabulary

Stage 2: Modeling the text type: this gives the students the chance to become familiar with the purpose, overall structure, and linguistic features of the text type they are going to write.

Stage 3: Joint Construction: The teacher and students write a text together, considering both the content and the language

Stage 4: Independent Writing: students write on their own.

*Exploring How Texts Work © Beverly Derewianka
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Using the Curriculum Cycle Model in Practice

Stage 1: Building the field

1. Introduce the persuasive text type to the students. Class discussion.
 - Discuss the words persuasive, persuade, convince, argument.
 - What do they know?
 - Have they ever written a persuasive piece before? When? Why?
 - Why would someone want or need to write a persuasive piece?
 - If they had to write a persuasive piece, what would they write about? Why?

2. Give students *examples of the same persuasive piece* and ask them to rank them from best to worst. They can work in pairs and must justify their reasons. Class discussion.
3. Give students *another example of a persuasive piece* (for example: a letter to a magazine editor, trying to convince the editor to change the content of the magazine). Read and discuss the reasons. Class discussion.

Stage 2: Modeling the Text Type

1. Explicitly teach the features of the persuasive text type. Create a *display* in the classroom which contains the following information:

Purpose: To present a logical argument from a particular point of view

Structure: Thesis: A statement on the general position (what you are concerned about)

Arguments: At least two major arguments with supporting evidence for each argument

Conclusion: Restate your position or point of view

Language Features: Present tense (unless past or future are necessary)

General Nouns ("the people", "human beings")

Emotive words

Connective words to link the arguments

2. Use *an example from Stage 1* (for example: the magazine letter) and have students identify the features of the persuasive text. Students *can highlight in different colors* and debrief as a class.
3. In pairs students do a **text reconstruction** of another persuasive piece. The students receive the text in paragraphs, and they must put it back together.
4. Use a **dictogloss** to give another example of a persuasive piece.

Stage 3: Joint Construction

1. As a class re-read an example of a persuasive piece (for example: the magazine letter).
2. Have students stand up and go to two different sides of the room based on if they are persuaded or not persuaded.
3. Split the class into these two groups. This is a perfect time to collaborate with your ESL specialist, Learning Support specialist, or Classroom Assistant because each teacher can take a group of children and work with them.
4. In pairs, ask students *to list reasons* why they feel the way they do. Debrief as a whole group-*list all the reasons they feel the way they do on a graphic organizer*.
5. *Together, construct the text*. The teacher can prompt with questions such as:
 - *What do we need to start with?*
 - *Is that the best way to say it?*
 - *Can anyone think of a better word than that?*
 - *Can you remember what the other persuasive pieces looked like?*

- It's important to note that the teacher must act as a guide at this stage. The ideas must come from the children, but the teacher has a responsibility to point out grammatical or linguistic errors, and explicitly teach. The point is that the language is in context and not isolated.
6. Come back together as a large group and share writing. This is a great chance for the children to compare what the others wrote.

Stage 4: Independent Writing

1. Divide students into *small groups*. *Have a selection of graphic organizers*. Allow each group to choose a statement (for example: We want longer recess. We want less homework. We want to sit where we want in class. We want to argue for no school uniform.)
2. *In groups, children complete the graphic organizer of their choice* for their statement.
3. The teacher(s) need to provide assistance to the students as they complete the graphic organizers. This is a good time to conference with different groups of students.
4. *Share the graphic organizers in the class*.
5. Students choose the statement that they feel most strongly about and *write a persuasive piece, using a scaffold*. (This can be done in pairs or individually).
6. The teacher(s) conference with individual students or pairs.
If the piece is to be published, the teacher must remind the students to follow the steps in the writing process.