

Science Writing Strengthens Concept Development

As this study began my focus was to successfully integrate writing into the science curriculum. I knew that changes would have to be made to the curriculum as it was. I would need to make sure students understood the scientific meanings of key vocabulary. This step is an essential scaffold to the science report. Without strong vocabulary students would not sound like emerging scientist articulating their understanding of a concept. I was seeing this vocabulary as a tool for students to write articulate science reports. The writing process provides students ample opportunity to revisit words and meanings. Discussion in the conferencing step gave students a place to clarify words and steps in the process of a science investigation. The reading and editing of reports also provided more practice using these scientific concepts therefore strengthening students grasp of the material

My students began to develop the understanding that science was about learning technical terms to discuss things they may already be familiar with. This understanding developed as they discussed and wrote about investigations we completed. One student stated in the post interview questionnaire that “vocabulary helped me the most because I needed to remember the meaning to help me do the science”. Another student stated “I discovered from reading my words I knew more science”. When answering the question what did you discovered about your learning from reading your reports, students often stated I discovered I learned a lot of science. What that meant in further investigation was that they realized they knew many more words.