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Introduction

In 2003, I published *Daily Grammar Practice*, a series of books presenting a new method for teaching grammar to students in first grade through college. The process of writing, editing, publishing, and marketing *Daily Grammar Practice* was an incredible learning experience. Realizing that such an opportunity would be beneficial to my students as well, I started thinking about how to duplicate the experience for them.

In the summer of 2004, I decided to have my gifted sophomores write a survival guide for high school freshmen. In March of 2005, 63 sophomores and I published *High School 101: Freshman Survival Guide* (hereafter referred to as *HS 101*), and the experience was even more amazing than I had anticipated. The book attracted extensive national media coverage, and within two months we were printing a larger run and selling the book on Amazon.com. My students and I were invited to present our project at state and national conferences, and many other teachers became excited about producing similar books in their own classrooms.

Finally, teachers began asking for a manual, a step-by-step guide for creating their own classroom publications. Other books on classroom publishing are available—I read most of them before I embarked on this project—but this one is especially user friendly. I give you specific contacts, tips on managing your project, and a sample project schedule. Essentially this book will walk you through the whole process from conception to creation to culmination. Also, because you're a teacher rather than a printer, I avoid the really technical language and stick with layman's terms.

If you find classroom publishing to be especially interesting and want a more in-depth look at any of the topics I address here, I recommend *Classroom Publishing: A Practical Guide to Enhancing Student Learning* by Laurie King and Dennis Stovall (Blue Heron, 1992). Although longer and more theoretical than this book, *Classroom Publishing* provides detailed information about the publishing process and references many different examples of classroom publishing projects.

Benefits

The benefits of a classroom publishing project could fill volumes, but you don't have time to read that much if you want to get started on your own project. Here is a list of the benefits my students experienced throughout the course of our cross-curricular project:

1. Students met all of the writing, speaking, and media literacy standards of our curriculum.
2. Students gained a new understanding of and appreciation of books.
3. Students engaged in all major writing types: persuasive, expository, narrative, and descriptive.
4. Students wrote for authentic audiences.
5. Students learned about plagiarism and copyright laws.
6. Students gained extensive experience with revision.
7. Students edited their work to perfection.
8. Students experienced real-world application of skills.
9. Students practiced public speaking.
10. Students learned to use technology.
11. Students learned about visual literacy, layout, and design.
12. Students designed and created a website.
13. Students learned about how a book is published.
14. Students bound their own paperback and hardcover editions of the book.
15. Students learned about marketing and created their own advertisements, brochures, and flyers.
16. Students engaged in extensive research and applied research practices.
17. Students used their own experiences to help other students.
18. Students learned valuable lessons about teamwork.
19. Students learned about and practiced controlling voice and tone.
20. Students displayed altruism in their decision to donate proceeds to a young boy undergoing bone marrow transplants.
21. Students worked with community members to accomplish tasks such as printing, binding, selling, and planning book signings.
22. Students remained excited about the project and never once asked if they would get a grade for it.
23. Students saw a real purpose for their writing.
24. Students experienced first-hand the power and xx of the media.
25. Parents shared in the enthusiasm and helped in many areas of the project.

I am also including some comments from my students because I think they capture more fully the impact of the project:

- “This is the first opportunity I’ve had to shine in a subject I’ve always had a passion for.”
- “This project challenged me in ways I didn’t know anything could do.”

- “This project greatly improved my editing and proofreading skills.”
- “Writing this book made me understand writing more and showed me proper grammar. I know now what authors have to go through, and I have more respect for them.”
- “I learned a lot while not thinking I was learning.”
- “The book project taught me how to work with others. It also taught me how many times you need to revise an essay to make it perfect.”
- “It was cool to put our essays toward something instead of just writing for a grade.”
- “I learned a lot from the real-life applications of this project.”
- “Not only did I have fun doing it, but I also learned a lot of things that I probably would not have learned in a regular English class.”
- “This experience has helped me learn so many things. By writing this book, learning has been fun this year, and it was good to complete the goal and see a finished task as cool as this one!”
- “This project forced me to take a critical look at my writing and gave me the tools I needed to improve it.”
- “I learned how to buckle down and work hard for a major goal. We all have a special bond now. This is a memory none of us will forget.”
- “The book project was amazing. I love hands-on projects, and never have I learned so much from one.”
- “Writing the book increased my interest in English and made the class more fun.”
- “The project gave us a great opportunity to work as a team!”
- “I learned many life skills that will come in handy.”
- “The book project taught us all time management, perseverance, teamwork, and organizational skills. It was a great experience, and I’ll never forget it!”
- “I got to do things I probably would never have been able to do otherwise.”
- “I never knew how much work went into books. I was glad to have had that once-in-a-lifetime experience.”