

# Silencing the Whispers: Experiential Learning as a Strategy to Empower Pre -Service Teachers and Elementary Writers

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## **A**uthor Biograph

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The PDS site-based literacy course I teach focuses on writing pedagogy. Many of the students report that they once loved to write as young children but lost their joy of writing as they progressed through school because it felt more like a meaningless chore than a meaningful, powerful experience. Because I want to lead my students into the teaching profession possessing a passion for writing and a confidence in themselves as teachers of writing, I designed an approach to writing instruction that I hoped would boost their confidence both as writers and as teachers of writing as well as provide students with a way to connect with writing through high



magazine that featured a brief biography of a Small Teacher, football-related riddles, an advertisement page for sports-themed bandanas, and a narrative about how a young boy finds his confidence by scoring the winning touchdown for his team. Another group wrote small moment stories based on personal experiences, and the Tall Teachers used mentor texts, graphic organizers, and modeling to help their Small Teachers zoom in and capture the sensory details and concrete language to create mind movies for their readers. Still another group designed a graphic novel that focused on using visuals and text to share the fictional adventures kids experience when they explore an amusement park.

#### Impact of WIN Writing Time

During WIN Writing Time, I have observed growth in both Tall and Small Teachers who come to see that writing can be a powerful, meaningful, and enjoyable form of communication and expression. Each week, when my students enter the classroom to meet with their Small Teachers, they are welcomed with bright

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