

Engaging Families in Student Writing Video Transcript

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Samhita Basuthakur: Today, I'm excited to share some of my writing samples and culminating projects from my seventh- and eighth-grade classrooms. Of course, I teach my students about each genre of writing and follow all the steps of the writing process with credibility to complete their essays. But, a huge portion of these writing pieces and projects are a result of my students, parents, and their family members working together. For example, when my kiddos wrote their Coming to America stories, some of them were very young when they came over to the United States and could not remember a lot of the details, so they interviewed mom, dad, abuela, abuelo to jog their memory. Others had long, complicated journeys, and they depended on their family's help to fill in all the important details. For their informative essays, students actively approached their family members for help. This was a unit on world holidays, and I had encouraged my students to write about a holiday that represented their culture and heritage. The students spoke to their mom, dad, and other family members to gather information. With their narrative writing pieces, you can see they even credited their mom, dad, entire family in the bibliography section. I'm going to share two examples with you. So here is the one from the narrative piece. I did redact their names, but it says, "This is a true story written by," student's name, "with the help of my beloved father. This story tells a little about my trip to the United States with my loving and crazy family," father's name, mother's name, older brother's name, and younger brother's name. I am also going to share the information writing. This was a student writing about Ramadan, and in the Acknowledgments and Bibliography section, the first one is, "My wonderful mother, Ms." mom's name, "who helped me write this and who gave me a lot of new information. Thanks, Ma." So, you can see that this was truly a product of family collaboration.

Now, we also did a procedural recipe writing unit where the students, um, they started with a family interview. So here is one of the . . . yes. This is the one. This is where the student writes about his family's tamale recipe, which was passed down from his abuela in Guatemala to his dad. And here is another one about a crepe recipe from a French-Canadian family written by one of my students who came in from Canada. Okay. So here is the last step in the process, a fun fact. Every year, we've been doing this since after COVID, I collaborate with two of my ELD colleagues to compile our students' writing

pieces and publish them as a student treasures class book each year. So I just brought a few with me to show you. Here is the narrative book we did one year, and then we have the informative writing book. This is Holidays Around the World, and I shared the Ramadan piece with you. A lot of holidays. They did family interviews, and they wrote these pieces up with their family.

The last one here is the procedural writing with the recipes, the family recipes. Yep, and they wrote a little bit of the history and how the recipe got passed down, and then they wrote out the recipe with the help of their parents and family members, grandparents. So, we get, every year, the students get really, really excited about this and take them back to their families, even some of them in other countries, and they buy the published books. They save their babysitting money to buy this book and send them back home. So you can see how this writing process, which starts in the classroom, is truly, it engages the family and becomes a whole collaboration, the process from beginning to end. Thank you for letting me share.

Voiceover: We would like to thank Samhita Basuthakur and her students for sharing their experiences and stories. We appreciate you uplifting ongoing collaboration and connections between multilingual learners, educators, and families.