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As a grade six teacher, as well as a previous grade 3 teacher, I have the responsibility of teaching story writing to my students. I believe the JoAnne Moore *Writing with Results* program is an exceptional method for students to achieve this skill. One of the biggest problems students have when writing stories is creating effective plots and resolutions. Their stories tend to be “flat” and run on with little action, events or conflict. Secondly, I have found that students who come from homes where books and reading have not been a significant part of their upbringing tend to have limited vocabulary. This influences the child’s ability to write effectively.

With JoAnne Moore’s writing program, students are taught plot patterns used by authors and have the chance to read everyday books that illustrate these plot patterns. These young writers are then able to model their stories after successful authors. This enables them to write effective plots and the resolutions to conflicts. When students have the basis of their stories set up for them, they can focus on vocabulary, sentence structure and conventions.

JoAnne’s writing program includes word webs and verb vocabulary lists for various settings and character emotions. Students who have had limited access to books in their homes find these vocabulary pages are an enormous benefit. Those who have struggled with writing and have little confidence in their own abilities now have the opportunity to choose effective vocabulary and apply it to the basic plot structure given to them. I have experienced some of my traditionally weaker students grow into confident writers. They realize they can create strong stories.

This program is a truly effective way to teach students to become writers. Their voices can be heard in their writings and their self confidence grows along with their ability to write. To illustrate, I have attached a story written by a grade six student. Both the student and parents have given permission to share it with you.

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AB

Tommy Tinker's Crazy Christmas

By: Jessie

Grade 6 Student: Stuck Story Plot Pattern

Glittering snowflakes danced a twirling and whirling ballet in the frosty wind. Softly the wind whispered and nipped at Tommy Tinker, the tiniest elfs, red nose. Merrily Santa cheered, "Alright! There is only one more stop and it is just over the CN Tower!"

Tommy could hardly believe it because the night had seemed to pass so quickly. "Hang on, Tommy! It's very windy at the top." Santa hollered.

However, Tommy was far too excited about his first Christmas as Santa's Chief Elf to pay much attention. Joyously, as they neared the top of the CN Tower, Tommy leaned over the edge of the sleigh and gazed down at Toronto, peacefully slumbering.

In a twinkle an enormous gust of icy wind blasted Tommy off the sleigh. "HELP ME!" screeched Tommy, who was as white as the fluffy snow.

Just as Tommy was about to fall perilously to the hard, snow covered ground below he felt his scarf catch on something. Quickly Tommy looked up and spied that his scarf was snagged on the point on the top of the CN Tower, but the scarf was beginning to unravel because it could hardly hold even the smallest elf's weight.

"Rudolph, fly down and rescue Tommy!" shouted Santa.
"Okay, Santa," Rudolph yelled back. Hurrying, Rudolph soared down to the point on the top of the CN Tower. All of a sudden another powerful wind shoved Rudolph back up to the sleigh.

“What are we going to do now?” muttered Santa nervously.

“I have an idea!” called Blitzen, “Let’s tie a rope around Tommy and pull him up!”

“Great idea, Blitzen!” cheered Santa brightly.

Swiftly Santa whirled around and peeked in the extra storage. Anxiously Santa searched throughout the storage but the rope was nowhere to be found. Angrily Santa slapped his hand on his forehead. He had used the rope to repair Mrs. Claus’s weather vane and never replaced it. “So much for that plan,” Santa contemplated to himself.

Instantly the most magnificent idea hit Santa as he looked back at the toy sack in thought. Loudly Santa boomed, “We will use the Giant Slinky to make a ladder and then Tommy can climb up!”

Happily all of the fuzzy reindeer cheered at the fantastic thought. Out of the toy sack the giant slinky was pulled. Over the edge of the sleigh Santa heaved the slinky down to Tommy. “Hurry, Tommy! We still have 1 house left and the sun is beginning to rise.” Santa invoked.

Scrambling, Tommy yanked off his scarf and scampered up the slinky-ladder. “Hooray!” everyone cried.

The pale-pink early morning sunlight streaked across the sky as Tommy, Santa and all the reindeer sailed off home toward the North Pole, Mrs. Claus, and some steamy hot cocoa.