

Paper and Pencil Revision Techniques from Jennifer Jacobson Grades 1-3

In her book *No More I'm Done: Fostering Independent Writers in the Primary Grades* (2010), Jacobson discusses conferencing protocols for young writers and suggests helping young writers carry out the following techniques (one at a time) for revision.

Spider Legs

Audience: young writers

Purpose: to add and organize details at the same time

1. Using another sheet of paper the same size as her draft, a young writer writes the new detail to be added.
2. Then the student cuts out the strip of detail on the new sheet and finds the place closest to the text on the draft page where the new detail is to be inserted.
3. Last, she tapes it there, on the left side of the original draft page, where it sticks out like "spider legs."

Asterisks

Audience: young writers

Purpose: to add and organize details

1. The young writer locates the first place of the draft where a new detail is to be added.
2. At this place the writer inserts a numbered asterisk mark (*), beginning with the number 1 (*1).
3. If he has more details to add, he continues with the asterisk and the next number (*2), and so forth.
4. Next, on another sheet of paper he lists each numbered asterisk, adds the detail for the number, and then goes on to each succeeding numbered asterisk, adding appropriate new details.
5. When he shares his piece aloud, he uses both sheets to incorporate the details at the specific place marked.
6. If you want a final revision for publication, ask a volunteer helper to retype the piece as one, not the young writer. This act of rewriting is too much physical labor. We want the young writer to concentrate on the cognitive tasks of idea, etc.

Surgery

Audience: young writers

Purpose: reorganize major ideas in the draft and/or add more space to write additional details for elaboration

1. Usually needed for “listing” of details (“I like to play football after school. Then I have a snack, and play with my Lincoln logs before dinner.”), ask students to cut up each major idea and paste to the top of a new sheet of paper.
2. Next, suggest that the young student has the bones of the piece and now needs to add meat to each bone on the page to fill out the whole picture.

This handout is a summary of ideas published in *No More I'm Done: Fostering Independent Writers in the Primary Grades*, Jennifer Jacobson, Stenhouse Publishers, Portland: ME. 2010