**Realistic Fiction Planning Booklets Possibility**

*From A Curricular Plan for the Writing Workshop, Grade 1, 2011 – 2012 by Lucy Calkins, 2011, p. 32*

One way [students] might [plan their stories] is by creating mini-booklets where they quickly sketch each part of the story. These mini-booklets need to be very informal and feel like a little book – no photocopied storyboards please! You can simply show children how to take a sheet of paper and fold it into half, then fold that half into half. There will now be four squares on this page, and you can suggest that each child takes half a minute to sketch – very quickly – how the story might go, with each page representing one part of the story. So the story about the boy winning a soccer goal could start on page one, with a stick-figure boy kicking the ball into the goal – no words are necessary. The writer would then need to figure out what occupies the next three pages. Is the boy treated like a hero by his teammates – and if so, how, exactly? Then what happens on page three? Does he teach a little kid how to play soccer and watch while that kid makes a goal? Or does the story end differently – with the boy becoming arrogant and being kicked off the team?

The point of this mini-booklet is that they take all of three minutes to sketch a story, from start to finish, so this means a child can sketch a couple of versions for how the story might go, storytelling each (touching the page and saying aloud the exact words the writer might write). Imagine this work as the first five to ten minutes of your writing workshop. The important thing is that writers benefit from trying a story one way and then another way, deciding how the story should go. In essence they are revising before they are even writing a single word. While kids are planning, they can also imagine the problems or trouble that their characters get into – and those problems may be very familiar to the writer! Starting with familiar problems, and fictionalizing possible solutions, makes for terrific writing. It lets young writers use what they know effectively and imagine how to solve the everyday troubles that they face. Students will also recognize from their experience reading realistic fiction stories that the character always faces a problem. Once the writer has a plan for the story, he or she can shift to sketching pictures across the pages of a full-sized booklet, or if writers want to do so, into immediately writing his or her story. Writers who have chosen this mini-booklet option, may choose to elaborate their sketches further in their full-sized booklets by including speech bubbles, thought bubbles, labels, and setting details in their booklets to help them have more to say when they sit down to write. Some students may feel that the sketches they have done were substantial enough and they are ready to start writing their story right away.