

## Vacas en busca de pasto

### *El poder de escoger en un ciclo de escritura*

TODOS LOS BIMESTRES, los estudiantes de quinto hasta octavo grado hacen un ciclo de escritura. Buscan ideas y temas, escriben borradores, corrigen estudios de sus compañeros de clase y finalmente se reúnen con la maestra para una revisión y edición final. Dos bimestres por año, los estudiantes escriben en formas determinadas, sobre temas definidos, para mejorar sus destrezas en áreas específicas. Los otros dos bimestres, sin embargo, escriben de cualquier manera, sobre cualquier tema, que ellos escogen. Un trabajo que han hecho mis estudiantes de quinto y sexto grado éste primer semestre nos muestra como la selección se produce en un ciclo de escritura muy aplicado.

En setiembre, un alambre fue roto entre la propiedad de la escuela y la de un finquero vecino. Sus vacas entraban a la cancha y dejaban su estiércol lo que ocasionaba problemas para jugar. Los niños estaban frustrados. Impulsado por la situación, Rafita Vargas empezó a escribir una obra sobre éste tema. Con su combinación de ingenio y humor, desarrolló una obra sobre un ganado vacuno de México que estaba buscando pasto más verde. Después de muchas peripecias, las vacas llegaron finalmente a la Escuela de los Amigos de

Monteverde dónde vivieron una vida muy feliz.

Cuando Rafi leyó su obra a sus compañeros de clase, todos optaron por llevarla a escena en el próximo *coffee house* de la escuela. Los estudiantes escogieron títeres (muñecas) de sombras para realizar la presentación. Con las muñecas, crearon un guión, y eligieron actores, manipuladores de muñecas y un equipo de efectos especiales que hizo los ruidos de las vacas, las tormentas, la caída de los árboles, etcétera. La clase de quinto y sexto presentó la obra delante del resto de la escuela y la comunidad de Monteverde. Como dijo Isabel Sander, una compañera de la clase de Rafi, «Fue muy entretenida y divertida!»

*Tricia Wagner*



EVERY QUARTER students in grades five to eight go through the writing cycle. They brainstorm ideas, research themes, write rough drafts, edit their peers' papers, and then meet individually with a teacher for final revising and editing. Two quarters a year, students write in a specific genre, about certain themes, in order to improve their skills in specified areas. For the other two quarters, though, they write in any genre, and about any topic, they choose. A project my fifth- and sixth-graders did this fall shows how choice yields a deeply engaged writing cycle.

In September, a fence was broken between the school property and the land of a local farmer. His cows wandered onto school grounds, and left dung in the corridors and on the *cancha*. This was especially frustrating for students playing out back. One of these students, Rafita Vargas, was moved by the situation and began to write a play on the theme. With his own blend of wit and humor, he developed a piece about a group of cows from Mexico traveling in search of greener grass. After many trials and tribulations, they eventually arrived at the Monteverde Friends School to live out their happy existence.

When Rafi shared his writing with his peers, they unanimously decided to present his play at the school's next coffee house. The students chose shadow puppets as the medium of presentation. They cut out the puppets, created a script, and chose actors, puppeteers and a special effects crew that made the sounds of the cows, the storms, the falling trees, etc. The fifth- and sixth-grade class performed their show for the rest of the school and the Monteverde community at large. As Rafi's classmate Isabel Sander said, "It was very entertaining!"

*Tricia Wagner*

► **Student teachers** ► *In February, students in grades five and six took the opportunity to turn the tables and become teachers when they visited the three–four classroom. Both classes are studying human anatomy, so the fifth- and sixth-graders went to share their expertise and knowledge of this topic with their younger colleagues. The older students, working in small groups, created and led lessons about the human skeleton. These lessons featured games, activities, worksheets, and assessment. The third- and fourth-graders enjoyed their teachers for the day! "It was fun," says Mau, a sixth-grader. "They were good students." The two classes plan to meet again in the coming weeks so that the older students will have another opportunity to practice their skills as science teachers. Perhaps some day soon, the third- and fourth-graders will go to teach their older colleagues something they don't know!*

Rebekah Lopata

Decisiones tomadas sin pensar  
mis ojos se abren, pero no ven  
mis manos tocan, pero no sienten  
estoy solo, perdido.

— Walker Sales  
noveno grado