

Teaching and Learning in Reader's Workshop

Students engage with their learning across content areas through Workshop as an instructional approach. In Reader's Workshop, students are actively engaged in literacy, view themselves as readers, set goals for their learning, and reflect upon their own literacy growth. Explicit instruction is given to the class through a mini-lesson which is directly tied to the current curricular unit of study. Teachers model for students how to engage in deep, critical thinking utilizing many instructional methods. Students witness firsthand what interactive engagement with text looks like and sounds like. Research indicates that for students to internalize this learning, they must experience it in a variety of ways. In Reader's Workshop, students practice the instruction independently as they read, by constructing an in-depth and cohesive written response to text, and by meeting with a small group of peers for targeted instruction based on the students' individual needs. In these Guided Reading groups, the teacher meets with several students who are working on similar instructional goals. Teachers confer with readers consistently in order to individually coach, instruct, and set goals with the readers in the class on an individual basis. This entire practice allows the teacher to differentiate to a high degree. At the conclusion of the workshop time, the teacher "rounds up" all of the students to discuss and debrief on the work they have done as readers that day. Students share insights, reflections, and comments about what they have learned about the text and about themselves as readers.

At home, readers should engage in the act of reading every day within self-selected texts that are of high interest to the reader. Students should always be reading within a book that they can understand to a high degree. Parents should build in discussions about reading into their everyday routines in order to reinforce the concept of a reading life.

Teaching and Learning in Writer's Workshop

Creating a parallel connection between reading and writing is critical for students to develop an understanding of the relationship between the two, but more importantly, to view themselves as readers and writers. In Writer's Workshop, students are actively engaged in process writing across genre in alignment with Reader's Workshop units of study. The primary purpose of Writer's Workshop is for students to view themselves as writers and to view the world as writers do. Students set goals for their learning and reflect upon their own growth. Explicit instruction is given to the class through a mini-lesson which is directly tied to the current curricular unit of study. Teachers model a wide range of writing strategies through the use of mentor texts, writer's notebooks, and examples of student writing. These strategies represent aspects of writing craft that students will use as lifelong writers. Students witness firsthand how writers engage with every aspect of the writing process, from mining their experience and interest for ideas all

the way through revising, editing, and publishing. At the culmination of a writing unit, students reflect upon their growth as writers, and set goals for future learning.

Research indicates that for students to internalize their learning, they must experience it in a variety of ways. In Writer's Workshop, students practice the focus of the mini-lesson independently in their writer's notebook, in a working draft, or a combination of the two. They make purposeful decisions about their own writing as they choose how to develop and refine their writing piece. Teachers and students confer daily in order to individually coach, instruct, and set goals with the writers in the class on an individual basis. This entire practice allows the teacher to differentiate to a high degree. At the conclusion of the workshop time, the teacher "rounds up" all of the students to discuss and debrief on the work they have done as writers that day. Students share insights, reflections, and comments about their learning as writers.

At home, writers should continue to explore their writing life through their writer's notebooks and through discussing important life experiences, questions, and reactions with parents and siblings on a daily basis. These conversations provide fertile ground for writers to draw upon their own lives when writing in any genre. It is the experiences of the every day that are held as a treasure to writers.

For More Information

The implementation of the workshop model is grounded in many years of research and ongoing best practice models. For further information, please see the following resources:

Teacher's College Reading and Writing Project

<http://readingandwritingproject.com/>

International Reading Association

<http://www.reading.org>

Resources by Nancie Atwell on Middle School Readers and Writers Workshop:

In the Middle: <http://www.heinemann.com/products/0374.aspx>

The Reading Zone: http://www.amazon.com/The-Reading-Zone-Passionate-Habitual/dp/0439926440/ref=sr_1_1?ie=UTF8&qid=1334066584&sr=8-1

Lessons That Change Writers: <http://www.heinemann.com/products/E01290.aspx>

Watch Nancie Atwell Articulate Her Views on Workshop Instruction:

http://www.heinemann.com/shared/player.aspx?id=AtwellRebuttal&path=rtmp://heinpublishing.flashsvc.vitalstreamcdn.com/heinpublishing_vitalstream_com/definst/videos/atwell

Resources by Lucy Calkins on Primary and Intermediate Reader's and Writer's Workshop:

The Art of Teaching Writing: <http://www.heinemann.com/products/08817.aspx>

The Art of Teaching Reading: http://www.amazon.com/Teaching-Reading-Lucy-McCormick-Calkins/dp/0321080599/ref=sr_1_1?ie=UTF8&qid=1334066870&sr=8-1

Research on the Reading-Writing Genre Link:

<http://www.tc.edu/rwp/articles/Writing/RRQ-Writing-Reading-Genre-Purcell-Gates.pdf>

Article on Small Group Reading Instruction in Primary Grades:

<http://www.tc.edu/rwp/articles/Small%20Group%20Instruction%20--%20GR%20or%20Strat%20Lesson/RRQ-Small%20Group-Partner%20Work-McIntyre.pdf>