

WRITING WORKSHOP

OPENING DAY MINI-LESSON

Nancie Atwell, In the Middle, chapter 4

“Our students will write-if we let them” Don Murray

“Everyone has a story to tell.” Harold Rosen

Purpose: “Getting the juices flowing”. Get everyone started writing on a topic of his/her own choosing.

Mini-Lesson: A brief meeting that establishes the rules for the workshop and models the writing process.

- Share personal knowledge of writing.
- Put teacher and students on the same level as writers.
- Create a communal frame of reference.

Topic Search Activity: To help turn the writers’ wheels. It’s the longest mini-lesson of the year. establish foundation of expectations for the year.

- “You’ll need some paper and something to write with, it doesn’t matter what kind”
- Teacher shares the models personal, current stories in a free-flow fashion.
- The stories modeled are “pretty mundane topics” that attempt to “make sense of their ordinary, everyday worlds.”
- After story, students “sit quietly and think” about moments, emotions, occurrences, stories they know.
- Think quietly for 3 minutes and jot down notes (use-note-pad).
- Now turn to a partner and discuss ALL your ideas for 3 minutes/switch partners.
- Teacher leads whole group discussion: “What are some of your stories?”
“my kids will begin to see how writing is idiosyncratic”
“I’m acknowledging the role conferences with other writers will play all year long- In trying out ideas, sharing pieces in progress, and listening and responding to other’s writing.” Nancie Atwell, pg 82

Workshop Rules:

- “No erasing” save that record of your thinking and how it’s changed, if you can change your idea/thought just draw a line through it.
- “Write on one side of paper only”, to leave an opportunity to cut and paste.
- “Save everything “
- “Date and label everything” (Draft #1. Notes.)
- Library voice when conferencing/HANDS
- Take PRIDE in your work.

***How Atwell Starts:**

- Sit down at empty student desk
- Write for 10 minutes, just write, and don't look up at students
- Take this seriously as to model: "I mean business and get busy writing".
- After 10 minutes, grab clipboard, rove among students
- If a student is not yet writing, go to him/her first for topic conference.

Group Share: 7 or 8 minutes before end of class, create circle on carpeted area, front of class, pass out folders with "the 3 sheets" in them.

- "This is your daily working folder"
- "I said writers save everything. This is where you'll save it."
- Share meetings are "a vehicle for helping children become good writing teachers".
- Model: good ways of listening and responding to writers.
- Purpose: closure to workshop and find out what other writers are up to.
- Everyone shares their topics/ideas, and then teacher sums up what ALL students shared.
- "Group share is how our writing workshops will always end.
- "We'll all meet every day to listen and respond to each others' "writing."
- Rules: circle, sit and put your paper face down if you're not sharing.
- Look at and listen to the writer who's sharing.
- Usually one or two writers take advantage of group share.
- Put your writing in your folders, and I'll see you tomorrow.

"Who says kids can't write the first week of school?"

Mary Ellen Giacobbe