Studying Author’s Craft to Support Growing Writers

Presented by: Angela Eastman

Author’s craft is defined as any purposeful and meaningful technique an author uses to capture the reader’s attention (Ehmann and Gayer, pg. 4). By explicitly teaching students to notice and discuss author’s craft when reading, authors become mentors for student writing. Teachers can encourage students to implement the same craft features in their writing during writer’s workshop. This article summarizes how to implement the study of author’s craft in writer’s workshop through a read aloud, mini-lesson, modeling, independent/guided writing, and debriefing.

**Benefits:**
- Connecting Reading and Writing
- Increased student interest and motivation
- Authentic discussions about texts and features
  - For example:
    - “I like the way this author chose to...
    - “I think _____ chose to use a repeating line to tell show the reader that those words are the most important”
- Students making connections between texts and authors
- Strong community of readers and writers

**Example of Procedure:**
- **Read Aloud:** Don’t Let the Pigeon Drive the Bus.
  Introduce the read aloud. “We are going to read this book with the purpose to think like a writer. What did this writer, Mo Willems, do to make this story interesting to the reader? What features do you notice? Be thinking as we read, and we will make a list when we are finished reading.
- **Discussion:** What did you notice? Discuss craft features that Mo Willems used in his writing. Ask students, “Why do you think he chose to do that?” Chart responses on an anchor chart, “Writers Can”. This anchor chart encompasses all features that students notice in a variety of author studies.
- **Modeling:** Ask students: “How can you use this feature in your own writing? Listen and discuss student ideas. Demonstrate a way to integrate the craft feature in a piece of writing.
- **Practice:** Encourage students to implement the focused strategy in a piece of their own writing. Support students as needed during the independent writing.
- **Sharing:** After independent writing, encourage students to share out the way they used the strategy in their writing. Encourage students to talk about each others writing, including how the craft feature made their writing better. Students who did not use the strategy can ask their peers to collaborate and
share ideas. The student can model adding their ideas at the end of the class, or as the mini-lesson for the next workshop time.

REFERENCES


Writers Can