

An Inquiry Approach to Writing: A Non-fiction Case Study

PRESENTED BY DEBBIE LAMBETH AND
CAITLIN LASH

REACH FOR THE STARS
AUGUST 1ST AND 2ND 2011

What does Writer's Workshop look like in your classroom?

- Please take a moment and write down your thoughts to this question on a post-it note.

Writing as a Process of Inquiry

The in between of the beginning and ending points for the study, the process of inquiry is usually much more recursive than it is linear as the class moves in and our around reading, noticing, talking, charting insights, and planning drafts. (p.112)

Study Driven: A Framework for Planning Units of Study in the Writing Workshop
by Katie Wood Ray

An Inquiry Writer's Workshop

Whole Group (Mini-lesson and Share time)	Independent writing time
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Engaging in discussions related in inquiry• Listening to a teacher-directed lesson or read aloud• Listening and responding as other students share their thinking about their work	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Researching• Reading to support their writing• Developing ideas in Writer's Notebooks• Working in collaborative ways with other students• Drafting

How does Inquiry Workshop compare to Traditional Writer's Workshop?

- Take a moment and discuss this question with someone sitting next to you.

Unit of Study Framework

- Gathering Texts
- Setting the stage
- Immersion
- Close Study
- Writing Under the Influence

Writer's Workshop Framework

- Brainstorming
- Idea Development
- Pick a topic/ Plan subjects
- Prewrite
- Organize
- Draft
- Revise
- Edit
- Peer Feedback
- Publish

How do these frameworks fit together?

Unit of Study Structure	Steps in the Writing Process
Gathering Texts	
Setting the Stage	
Immersion	Brainstorming
	Idea Development
	Pick a topic/ Plan subjects
Close Study	Prewrite
	Organize
	Draft
	Revising
Writing Under the Influence	Editing
	Peer Feedback
	Publishing

Classroom Implications: Why use an inquiry approach to writing?

- Students need a clear vision of what their final product in writing will be before they begin writing.
 - To achieve this, they need to discover features of writing.
 - Teachers act as a guide, helping students form an understanding of the genre of writing they will be studying.

What does this look like in a classroom...

• Gathering Mentor Texts

- Find books that match the structure of the writing that will provide a clear vision of the genre for students
- Enough of examples to represent a range of what the writing looks like in the real world
- High interest
- Readability

Setting the Stage

• Create a definition of the genre

- What is a non-fiction text?
 - Students look at texts for 10 minutes to “notice”
 - Come together as a class to discuss ideas
 - A definition emerges

• Set the expectations for the study

- Introduce folders
 - Goal for writing

Immersion

• Looking at mentor texts to identify text features

- On loose leaf, students list text features they found while looking through a variety of non-fiction texts
- Guide students to answering the question:
 - How do the text features help the reader?

Immersion

- **Guiding Question: What types of subjects do non-fiction writer's write about?**
 - Students look at mentor texts and list subjects they notice
 - Students tally subjects they consistently notice in mentor texts
 - As a class, share subjects students found
 - Students discover most common topics to research for their writing

Choose a Topic

- **For a research study, it is important that students have a variety of resources to refer to.**
 - Check your mentor texts, and gather more if needed.
 - Identify websites students can use to further their research on the internet.

Close Study

- **Research begins**
 - Teacher models how to identify and paraphrase/list information onto note cards
 - Students begin to research and place cards in their foldable

Close Study

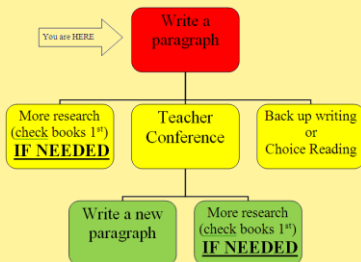
- Take time to reflect with students: What was easy today and what was a challenge?
 - Use student feedback to shape the direction for the unit of study

It's time for WRITING!

- How do students know if they are ready to draft?
 - Students choose a subject and pulled all their note cards out.
 - Students rehearse verbally their paragraphs to see if they need more information on their cards.
 - After practicing paragraphs, students begin **writing** paragraphs.

Self-Regulated Writers

- After reflecting with students, we came up with this...



How conferencing shifted our teaching...

- Collect informal notes
- Identify areas to revisit
 - Form small groups if needed
- Ask students the question: **What have you read that is like what you are trying to write?**
 - Revisit mentor texts

Revision

- All subject areas have a paragraph
- Gain prior knowledge about revision and identify a purpose for revising
- Teacher models
- Students revise their paragraphs
- Provide time for students to share their revisions

Editing

- Revisit mentor texts to discover types of punctuation non-fiction writer's use.

Types of punctuation	Why did the author use this punctuation?
Commas	List things

- Students edited their paragraphs
- Provide time for students to share their revisions

Plan Books

- To ensure students have a *clear vision* for publishing, create a plan book.

Taking it back to the classroom...

- What is one thing you learned today?
- What is one thing that supported you as a teacher of writing today?
- What is one thing that you plan to take back to your classroom?
