

Reading & Writing Workshop

an NCTE 2014 Take Away



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Story as the Landscape of Knowing, the theme for NCTE's 104th Annual Convention, unified the 3½ days of presentations. More than that – teachers were reminded of the importance of story in our own classrooms – our stories and the stories of our students. Reading and Writing Workshop is an excellent venue for using our stories to build knowledge, develop writing and reading skills, and make meaning of text, as well as, our life experiences.

“In the education of our children, we must remember their stories and work to invite and encourage them . . . it is how they remember their past and shape their future.”

~ Linda Rief

“What we want are kids who are curious, who dive into a text and can't begin to think of coming up for air until they know what happens... We want them inside the text, noticing everything, questioning everything, weighing everything they are reading against their lives, the lives of others, and the world around them.”

~ Kylene Beers & Robert E. Probst

“... their writing gives adolescents a canvas on which to capture and consider their lives so far—a place to inhabit their childhoods again, measure themselves against who they used to be, and reflect on the changes they find . . . This reflective writing is useful to them as human beings. It is a reason for adolescents to write.”

~ Nancie Atwell

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Further Along with Reading and Writing Workshop

For most of my teaching career, I have been drawn toward a workshop approach. I've included elements like choice, writing as process, mentor texts, modeling writing, and writer's notebooks. After listening to teachers, Linda Rief and Kylene Beers, I searched for their new books, *Read Write Teach* and *Notice & Note*. There I also found Nancie Atwell's third edition of *In the Middle*. Over Winter Break I alternated between skimming and close reading. My goal was to create a framework of independent study and habit - in order to make time for one-on-one conferencing. Included in this packet are handouts I adapted to help me and my students learn this workshop approach. These handouts are from 2014/2015. *I will spend time this summer adapting them again for 2015/2016.*

Writing Workshop: Weekly Assignment and Homework

Used with 8th-grade English and Pre-AP

BFP = Book for Pleasure (8th grade goal - to read 30 books)

MPV = My Personal Vocabulary

Reading Workshop: Weekly Assignment and Homework

Used with 7th-grade Reading (7th grade goal - to read 25 books)

Weekly Word Study: Spelling

You can find larger print instructions for this and the Partner Test by googling "Independent Word Study and Partner Test Nancie Atwell."

My Personal Vocabulary (MPV) in Chart Form

My examples adapted to chart form - for students who prefer that structure.

Expectations for Keeping a Literacy Notebook (Reading Notebook)

Until last year, I called it a Writer's Notebook. To accommodate both grades and our return to traditional English and Reading classes, we changed the names. Here I had been using Rief's ideas and pages, without fully knowing how they were part of her workshop approach. My transition was made easier by having these pages already in place.

Writing Conference Sheet

I had used Janis Cramer's approach to writing groups. Rief's approach is similar, but just as easily used by partners and the teacher. I found this approach both encouraging and empowering for student writers.

Editing Check List

This is an idea I will be working on next school year. Once students have edited their own work, I am to edit completely - then choose one writing or grammar trait/skill to teach. They add that skill to their personal editing list.

Student Writing Record

Atwell designed this for finished writing folders, kept in the classroom. I used it with all their writing in a process-folio this past year.

Email me if you would like electronic versions of anything listed above. ☺