



VIDEO

5:31 min

[Full Details and Transcript](#)



Looking at Books With a Writer's Eye

Fall Creek Elementary School, North Carolina
April 2012

Topic TEACHING ELEMENTARY SCHOOL STUDENTS TO BE EFFECTIVE WRITERS

Practice WRITING PROCESS

- Highlights**
- » Mentor texts help students look at a book through a writer's eye.
 - » Teachers can choose texts based on writing strategies that students need to learn.
 - » Teachers can first read the mentor text aloud, have a discussion about the text and its features, model the strategy being taught, and then have students practice on their own.

About the Site Fall Creek Elementary School
East Bend, North Carolina

Demographics


- » 86% White
- » 11% Hispanic
- » 2% Black
- » 1% Other
- » 48% Free or Reduced-Price Lunch

Teachers at Fall Creek Elementary use a Writer’s Workshop model to ensure students are fluent writers who are comfortable putting their ideas on paper. Every day, students write and celebrate their writing through the following practices:

- » Mentor texts used to illustrate the features of good writing;
- » Explicit instruction in writing strategies and independent use of the writing process;
- » Uninterrupted daily writing time;
- » Feedback received through peer sharing and teacher conferencing;
- » Self-selected topics and materials; and
- » Regular celebrations of published pieces.


Full Transcript




Brittany Ravestein:  **00:04** My name is Brittany Ravestein. I teach third grade at Fall Creek Elementary in East Bend, North Carolina.


Mentor texts are books, any book that you use to incorporate writing. It’s kind of looking at a book through a writer’s eyes. You pretend that you put yourself in the author’s position of writing. After taking observation in their writer’s notebooks, I can kind of compile what the whole group might be lacking and then figure out a book to go along with it that can model that strategy.

Sometimes I use my own stories and I share them with the students. And I also use other students’ and other classes’ books or poems that they have written. I use read-alouds with the mentor text.

Ravestein (reading text to class)  **00:53** “Even though I was here first and then conquered by men in big ships who name me, I’ve been crossed and probed, charted, studied, and dirtied. I am the Atlantic Ocean.”


Ravestein  **01:07** After I read the mentor text to the students, I have a discussion about the mentor text. I ask them prompting questions

about what they have noticed inside the book, to look at it through that writer's eye. I have the students have their discussion about what the features are, and then I usually model what I am trying to teach with the mentor text. Like, for instance, today we were doing the iPoetry. I read a book called *Atlantic*, and it was an iPoem. And then we started the prewriting stage because we're going to write an iPoem together.

Ravestein (to class)  01:42 Take 30 seconds to discuss with someone sitting next to you about what you noticed in this iPoem.


Student 1 She's the author. The ocean—it's her. She's the one that's putting herself in the story.

Ravestein She's writing from the perspective of the Atlantic Ocean.


Ravestein  02:00 In using mentor texts to convey good writing, we look at the different traits that the author has put in there; we look at what verbs that they have used; we look at similes, alliteration, different features that that author used. If we come across something in a book and notice it, we will talk about it through the writing and we will talk about why they wrote that and what kind of genre it is and what specific features of that genre were in that book to make it that genre.

Ravestein (to class) Did anybody notice anything with, maybe, the words that were on the pages?

Student 2 The words didn't rhyme but it was still a poem. Most poems rhyme— but even though the words didn't rhyme in that one, it was still a poem.

Ravestein  02:48 The prewriting activity that we did today, we had a graphic organizer, whole group, and I wrote that we had been researching the moon. And the moon was at the top so they knew that they were writing it from the perspective of the moon.

Ravestein (to class) We're going to write our own iPoem with the moon, but right now we're going to get all of our thoughts down and do our prewriting stage.

Ravestein  03:12 And then we were just coming up with ideas and thoughts of words to use in our poem—how the moon felt, what it worried about, how it acted, what it saw, and different things to get their ideas about the moon, and what the moon might be like—to write from the perspective of the moon.


Ravestein (to class) Now, think about how the moon might act. Think about what we know, what we've researched. If you need help, you can whisper something to your neighbor to get an idea. What do you think, Samuel? How does the moon act?

Samuel Dizzy.

Ravestein Why would you say “dizzy”?


Samuel 'Cause it goes around the earth...

Ravestein And then next to “dizzy,” I'm going to put “circles the earth” so we kind of know why the moon's dizzy.

Ravestein  04:05 And then I had them break off into their Writer's Workshop.


Ravestein (to class) We're going to go ahead and start our Writer's Workshop so you guys have some time to write.

During Writer's Workshop time, I will conference and work with students and I will prompt them to use and to look back at different books that we have read.

Ravestein  04:25 During Writer's Workshop today, while I was walking around, I saw students try writing iPoems. This is something that's new to them and they didn't know the format before, and they were trying to write an iPoem. I had to prompt them with the prewriting stage to help

them get the iPoem, but they knew that they were writing from that perspective.

Ravestein Pick a topic that you might want to write from then
(to student) write some words—stuff that you know about that.
That way it will help us with our actual writing.

Ravestein  **04:58** I think mentor texts allow students to look at books with a writer's eye. They help guide them through their writing process. They realize that it doesn't take just one day to get a published piece. It takes more than that and it's going to help them realize the whole process of writing.

This project has been funded at least in part with Federal funds from the U.S. Department of Education under contract number ED-PEP-11-C-0068. The content of this publication does not necessarily reflect the views or policies of the U.S. Department of Education nor does mention of trade names, commercial products, or organizations imply endorsement by the U.S. Government.