Minnesota Writing Project
--- Demonstration Lesson ---

Title of lesson: Watermelon Stories to Seed Stories
Suggested grade/age: First grade, but can be adapted for any grade
Approximate time needed to complete lesson: 30-45 minutes, depending on age

Learning objective(s) and significance of lesson:
Student Expectations
Students will come into this lesson with a basic knowledge of what writing is. However we will not have narrowed our focus of our stories too deliberately yet.
Students will learn about how to focus their stories from a watermelon story to a seed story. This meaning they will/may go from a large story and will narrow it down to a seed story, which is a story just about one part of their watermelon story.

Best Practices
*Modeling writing for the kids & sharing my own writing
*Using model texts and reading aloud to show examples of what real authors do
*Routines we have in our classroom like "Knee to knee, Eye to eye;" "Eyes and knees back to me;" and transitions
*Pacing-students know that we begin our writing time with a 10-15 minute mini-lesson, have writing time for about 15 minutes, then close our lesson with some sort of sharing
*Active Participation-students actively write throughout the lesson
*Conferencing one-on-one with kids throughout the writing time
*Scaffolding through the lesson from previous lessons

Brief summary/outline of lesson:
This lesson falls late fall/early winter for me in my classroom. Students have been writing since the beginning of school-probably since the first or second day of school. This is the beginning of an intense unit where students begin to focus their stories much more than we have done previously in the year.

Lesson Outline:

- Have a discussion with your kids about what things they like to write about. What small moments do they enjoy writing about? What or who do they have stories about? Give them a few minutes to write/think/talk to their neighbor about these topics. Have a few students share what their ideas are about.
- Choose a read aloud you know that is about one particular moment. It could be an entire book or you could read a portion of a book. I have used *Snowy Day* by Ezra Jack Keats, *Owl Moon* by Jane Yolen and *Up North at the Cabin* by Marsha Wilson Chall. All of these books demonstrate focusing on small moments (either page by page or as a whole). Angela Johnson and Cynthia Rylant are also excellent authors for illustrating small moments. I do a pair/share with the class so they can talk to their neighbor about the book first, and then we have a whole class discussion to talk about what they noticed about the book.
- Go into examples of watermelon topics verses seed topics (see power point). I usually write these with the kids using a SMARTboard. This will differ depending on the grade level you teach.
- Show your list of seed ideas for your writing. I have a Tiny Topics notebook (Seed Stories, Small Moments, Little Stories, etc) I share with the kids. I have the topics listed for them to see. Then they all get their own Tiny Topic notebooks to use for the remainder of the year. I give them time to write

in them on their own, allowing for a little discussion amongst each other as some ideas usually spark other ideas

- After they have had some time to write their topic ideas, I usually nudge them to begin writing a story (if they haven't already).
- After writing time we close the workshop with a share "into the circle." We circle up and I ask for volunteers to share their writing. For this lesson, I usually ask them to share some of their tiny topic ideas or seed story ideas too.

This is an ongoing lesson I revisit often throughout the middle months of the year. First graders need redirection often through their writing process and love to write about huge watermelon stories. I hope you find this lesson useful for whatever you are teaching!

Related Resources:
This lesson is based off of Lucy Calkins' *Units of Study for Primary Writing: A Yearlong Curriculum (K-2).* This is a year-long, scripted (if you choose to use it) writing "curriculum" that can help guide you through your writing workshop.

Mentor Texts (by): Angela Johnson, Cynthia Rylant, Ezra Jack Keats, *Owl Moon* by Jane Yolen, *Up North at the Cabin* by Marsha Wilson Chall and any other books or authors that illustrate how a small moment should be written

I use a SMARTboard in my classroom. I model my writing right there with my kids up front on the floor. They are seeing me write almost every day. Sometimes I have my writing finished already if time is going to be an issue. The same could be done with a Powerpoint if you desire.

Possible extensions or adaptations for different purposes/student needs:
Differentiation: When modeling what a small moment story is and writing with the kids, you could group your higher writers together to come up with their own small moment story on their own while you are doing the large group instruction.
Using non-fiction text for modeling: The same lesson could be done with non-fiction in modeling it with various topics. For example, if a student is writing an animal report about lions, they could focus in on how the lion hunts prey. You could model by reading one part of non-fiction text. The possibilities are unending when it comes to how you can use it for fiction or non-fiction writing.

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