

Nonfiction Writing

Intentional, Connected, and Engaging

Linda Hoyt • Tony Stead



DEDICATED TO TEACHERS



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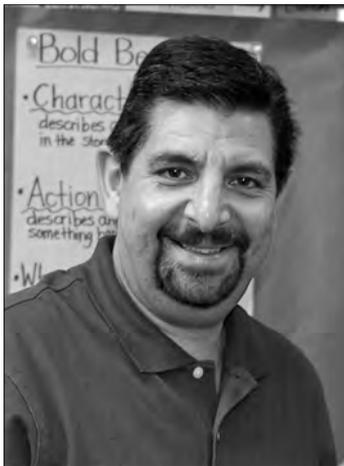
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Dear Viewer,

One week in autumn, we moved into E.P. Rayzor Elementary in Denton, Texas, with a production crew from Bill Miller studios and our trusted colleague, Teresa Therriault, to showcase the work that kindergarten, first, and second graders were doing with nonfiction writing. And what a week it was! Under the leadership of Principal Dr. Happy Carrico, the Rayzor staff undertook the monumental task of preparing for our visit and for incorporating our teaching, our cameras, and our audio equipment into their school day. With the support of Dr. Carrico, Cecilia Holt, and Marcia Kellum—plus the talented Noemi Uribe and Melissa Leonard whom you'll see on these DVDs—the entire staff at Rayzor brilliantly demonstrated the power of inquiry-based learning and nonfiction writing. The learning environments inspired even the youngest nonfiction writers and served as a powerful inspiration to us as well. We think you will agree as you see the students of E.P. Rayzor in action in this video.



*The DVDs in this series demonstrate two important systems for supporting nonfiction writing. Disc 1, *Writing Across the Curriculum*, focuses on brief, cross-curricular writing experiences that build writing fluency and academic content with a variety of text types. You will see a collection of powerful small-group, whole-class, and one-to-one minilessons that could slip into your teaching day at any point: a cross-section diagram for science, ideas for note taking, a list poem to summarize learning in social studies or math, or a craft lesson to enhance a young writer's expression or presentation in any curriculum area. Organized into three sections, "Writers as Researchers," "Nonfiction Writing Across the Curriculum," and "Craft and Conventions in Nonfiction Writing," each of the video segments you see in Disc 1 will*

tempt you with creative ways to embed researching, thinking, and nonfiction writing across your entire curriculum.

Disc 2, Guiding Extended Writing Units, focuses on in-depth, interactive writing projects that model the writing process over time and guide students to construct collaborative and independent texts. This disc provides a start-to-finish look at a first and second grade combination class at work on a long-term project, creating an expository report. In this extended writing unit, report writing—a language arts goal—dovetails with a science unit on the study of animals. Beginning with an in-depth explanation of the R.A.N. (reading and analyzing nonfiction) chart, a tool for helping young writers organize and evaluate information, the video continues with modeling the creation of a class project and ultimately to guiding students' individual reports. The disc ends with a brief retrospective of a kindergarten persuasive text unit, showing us that even five-year-old emerging writers can be guided to express compelling arguments in pictures and words.

We organized this Viewer's Guide to help you preview and select the scenes that support your curricular focus points and organizational routines. The "Focus" section provides insight into the learning targets for each segment. Use it while you watch to prompt thinking about what you are seeing. The discussion questions in "Reflect" point to ways in which you and your colleagues might apply what you have viewed to your own strategies for scaffolding nonfiction writing. All together, Nonfiction Writing can launch fruitful staff conversations about ways to enhance the teaching of nonfiction writing in your school.

As you watch the scenes in this resource, we invite you to identify nonfiction writing strategies that you can use to increase writing volume, elevate craft, and build a sense of wonder about the world for your kindergarten, first, or second grade writers.

We hope you enjoy these DVDs and celebrate with us the wonderful world of nonfiction writing!

Linda Hoyt and Tony Stead

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Disc 1

Writing Across the Curriculum

Disc 1 provides an array of strong teaching models that support young writers as they research and write using a wide variety of text types to reflect their learning in math, science, social studies, and language arts. Its capstone is a craft and conventions section focused on lifting the quality of our youngest students' writing—helping them reach for craft as well as content.

Writers as Researchers

Research is the backbone of nonfiction writing. To be successful as they create nonfiction texts, young learners begin with immersion in the content—actively observing, questioning, wondering, and identifying important facts. Powerful visuals and real-life experiences provide diverse opportunities to collect facts and gather the academic vocabulary that enables young writers to describe and label their understandings.

With K-2 learners, research may also take the form of observation as they notice changing weather patterns, examine the intricate webbing spun by a spider, and study the veins in a leaf. Or learners' information may come from media—photographs and visuals, books, online sources, and the like. To help children transfer understandings from research to writing, it is essential to explicitly show them how to gather data, make notes, create labeled diagrams, and record facts from their research. With research as the backbone of nonfiction writing, what young children see, know, and wonder will come to life as they discover information and construct nonfiction texts.

As you view the scenes in “Writers as Researchers,” be sure to notice how observation and vocabulary are scaffolded through experience, how facts and important ideas are recorded in notes and sketches, and how whole-class, small-group, and individual experiences work together to lift writer-researchers as they craft nonfiction texts.

Research Stations

Focus

Research stations are an excellent way of getting students to be actively engaged in accessing information. They provide a dynamic and interactive experience that stimulates questions, offers opportunities for writer-researchers to locate information from a variety of sources, and engages children in recording their data. Research stations also allow the teacher to disperse the resources across several areas of a classroom so that small groups can productively engage with a variety of media tools.

If your classroom is smaller than those you see on the DVD—don't worry. You can still utilize research stations by making them portable. Place resources in tubs that teams can take to their tables or use on the floor while engaging in a "station."

Reflect

- Identify the characteristics that you think would be evident in an effective research station.
- Generate a list of research stations that you think would most benefit your students.

R.A.N. Strategy

Focus

This segment offers a brief preview of the R.A.N. (reading and analyzing nonfiction) strategy that is treated in depth on Disc 2, Guiding Extended Writing Units. Helping writers select the most important information and organize it in ways that support understanding, retention, and construction of text—challenges for even sophisticated writers—can begin with the very youngest children. Look for the ways Tony engages writer-researchers in thinking about and sharing information. Consider the role of the R.A.N. chart in helping them organize their thoughts.

Reflect

- How might the R.A.N. strategy help your writers organize their thoughts before writing? In what ways could you adapt it to your curriculum?

Sketch to Stretch

Focus

Sketch to Stretch stimulates visualization while providing opportunities for writers to collect facts and data using a combination of sketches, labels, and notes. While this strategy is helpful for all learners, it is particularly effective with students who are learning English as an additional language or for those who find research challenging.

As you watch the clip, be sure to notice how Linda models the use of a pen or a single color so the emphasis is on information rather than on art. And, take special note when writers are given time to talk to each other about their sketches and the labels they selected. This provides an opportunity for them to utilize the academic vocabulary from their research and rehearse the language that will flow into their writing. With Sketch to Stretch writers never need to copy facts from a book.

Reflect

- Share examples of how Sketch to Stretch could be used to help your students during nonfiction read-alouds, small-group instruction, partner and individual research, and drafting.
- Create a poster showing the steps to use in applying Sketch to Stretch.

Alphaboxes

Focus

The Alphabox strategy targets the academic vocabulary that is essential to high-quality nonfiction writing. In this segment, writers determine importance by identifying the best words that are used to describe or explain and then insert them into the Alphabox. The Alphabox then provides a rich cache of words from which writers can draw and results in nonfiction writing that sizzles with great vocabulary and content.

Reflect

- Describe how Alphaboxes could be used to support your writers as they observe, research, question, and write nonfiction selections.
- Analyze the possible impact that use of Alphaboxes might have on readers' and writers' vocabulary development.

Key Word Strategy

Focus

To utilize the Key Word Strategy, writers reflect on pictures and/or a reading selection and then identify a small number of words that are central to the meaning. Because children only select a few words, the Key Word Strategy requires them to extract key academic vocabulary and to focus on main ideas. Once a few key words have been identified, writers can arrange them in different ways and orally generate sentences before committing them to writing. The result is that writers can close their resources and generate sentences that are completely their own—anchored by their key words.

In this segment, Teresa’s think-aloud shows kindergartners how to decide on and use key words.

Reflect

- Describe how you would apply the Key Word Strategy in science, social studies, math, or in independent reading of nonfiction selections.
- Consider how key words could be elevated to inferences by identifying descriptors that are not in the text. (Example: The text says, “The frog lives on land or in the water.” A key word that is an inference would be: *amphibian*.)

Research Conferences (Key Word Strategy and Extracting Information)

Focus

Individual conferences with writer-researchers provide teachers with an opportunity to clarify content understandings and to lift nonfiction writers to higher levels of proficiency. These conferences are important for all writers but are especially important for writers who need additional support.

In the first conference, you see Teresa reteaching the Key Word Strategy to lift Samantha’s proficiency with the tool. Notice how Samantha reads, records key words on sticky notes, rearranges key vocabulary, and then writes, using her key words as prompts.

In the second conference, notice how Teresa uses the research conference to show Emilio how to select important ideas that he can incorporate into writing. Because young writers often struggle to identify details from pictures and print, research conferences can help nonfiction writers to increase volume and add detail.

Reflect

- Identify the characteristics of a research conference. How is this kind of conference different from one focused on revision or editing?
- Define the criteria for a research conference versus a conference focused on getting a writer started on a new topic, a conference focused on the text type such as procedure, or a conference designed to help a writer improve a trait such as word choice.

Nonfiction Writing Across the Curriculum

Research suggests that writing should be a natural part of every time segment of the learning day. When learners write as a natural extension of their learning, academic vocabulary is more easily retained in long-term memory and content retention is elevated. As adults we know that we write to remember, write to think, and write to reflect. Young children need to view writing across the curriculum as a gift they give themselves that will enhance and support their own learning. With this in mind, we advocate that at least five minutes of every subject area should be savored as an opportunity to use writing as a tool for reflecting on and responding to learning.

The writing done in these cross-curricular moments can take the form of letters, notes, lists, summaries, labeled diagrams, and so on. So writing in subject areas also becomes a rich opportunity to broaden the base of nonfiction text types students utilize as writers. We call these bursts of intensive writing Power Writes because they power up writers as thinkers and language users, and they naturally build writing fluency.

As you watch the following clips, be sure to notice that each Power Write begins with modeled writing in which the teacher shows writers exactly what to do and thinks aloud as the writing is constructed. The goal is to show rather than tell so that young writers are empowered to pick up their pencils and immediately emulate the writing behaviors they have just observed.

List Poem to Summarize

Focus

List poems are quick, strategic, and powerful as they help students focus on precise word choices to reflect their learning. The goal is to challenge writers to think of vivid sensory words and phrases and then present them in a list format. With this simple structure, young writers experience a rigorous content review while learning that their writing can sizzle with sensory imaging, specific understandings, and artistry.

Note: This lesson begins with an Alphabox that was created in an earlier lesson. The role of the Alphabox is to springboard writers as they select the specific vocabulary needed for the list poem.

Reflect

- Analyze the benefits of list poems in solidifying content understanding and improving vocabulary.
- Identify specific examples of when you could use list poems across different areas of the curriculum.

Math Story Problem

Focus

When we set up situations that marry mathematical thinking with student-generated story problems, nonfiction writing and content form a powerful partnership. In this clip, you see Tony modeling how to convert a mathematical equation to narrative. This sets a stage in which writers must analyze both the problem and the text structure and then generate written text. With writing and math problem-solving as partners, mathematical relationships are better understood while meaningful nonfiction writing takes its place in yet another dimension of the curriculum.

Reflect

- Describe how you might apply writing to a particular area of your mathematics curriculum.
- Differentiate the types of nonfiction writing (descriptions, explanations, procedures, responses, and so on) that might be best suited to mathematics.

Labeled Diagram

Focus

Labeled diagrams are visual texts that support understanding through a sketch or drawing combined with carefully selected labels. Labels are linked to specifics in the diagram with a line or an arrow. As always, our first step is to model for students, showing them how to create one. It is extremely important that writers understand that their drawings must represent facts that are clearly supported by a text, by their observations, or by some other reliable source. In this clip, watch the way Linda directs a writer to use the text to justify the inclusion of a fact he inserted into the diagram. As always, modeling is the heart of the instruction and is followed closely by students creating their own labeled drawings.

Reflect

- Consider the lessons you are planning to teach next week. Which of them might lend itself to use of a labeled diagram? What would you ask students to create after your model?
- What ways can you think of that labeled diagrams might support learning?

Cross-Section Diagram

Focus

Cross-section diagrams are tools that nonfiction writers use to help a reader envision the interior workings of animals, plants, volcanoes, and so on. In this clip, you see that the teacher begins by cutting common items like fruits and vegetables in half. This hands-on activity not only captures kids' attention, it also hones their observation skills. The graphic nature of the cross-section diagram supports visualization, and clarifies information learned from inferences and descriptions. As you coach writers, help them learn that cross sections show the interior view of something and are accompanied by labels and captions.

Reflect

- List the elements of this lesson that you think would best help your students to understand and use cross-section diagrams.
- Collect an array of cross-section diagrams that you could show your students and provide as models for their nonfiction writing.

Sticky-Note Book Review

Focus

Sticky-Note Book Reviews provide an authentic audience for persuasive writing—their own classmates. To create Sticky-Note Book Reviews, students rate books they have read on a five point scale. Then they justify their rating. Finally, they place the sticky notes inside the cover of the reviewed book as a way to persuade someone to read the book. Children of all ages love to create these reviews and take great delight in opening a new book to find a persuasive review and decide if they are in agreement or would like to write a review showing a different perspective.

Reflect

- Examine the relationship between a Sticky-Note Book Review and critical analysis of literature.
- Define criteria that could be used to increase the complexity and level of thinking used in a Sticky-Note Book Review. (For example: Write a Sticky-Note Book Review analyzing a book's visuals. Write a Sticky-Note Book Review convincing someone why this book is not the best one on a topic.)

Craft and Conventions in Nonfiction Writing

Nonfiction writing does not need to sound like an encyclopedia! It can be richly constructed with a wide variety of sentence patterns, sizzling word choices, and interesting punctuation. To elevate young writers of nonfiction to the highest possible levels of proficiency, craft elements and rich sentence structures should be highlighted and employed in nonfiction selections just as carefully as we implement them in fiction.

With this in mind, minilessons focused on craft or conventions have a natural place in the nonfiction writing workshop or in science class as writers strive to accurately describe the lumbering gait of an elephant, the explosive force of a volcano, or the swirling action of a supercell storm. With a focus on craft, written descriptions are more precise, offer better support to visualization, and enhance relationships between the setting and the subject.

In this section you see lessons on how to open sentences with -ing words, how to focus on the setting using a sentence opener followed by a comma, and how to honor your reader with appropriate word spacing and word building. While viewing, take time to notice that modeling continues to be the first step as Linda and Teresa show writers exactly what to do and then coach them as they take over the nonfiction writing process.

Beginning Sentences with *-ing* Words

Focus

Sentences that open with *-ing* words immediately draw reader attention to the action. They bring a reader into the setting and establish a sense of connection between the reader, the content, and the author. When young children learn how to recast boring sentences like *Bears can growl* into rich structures that begin with *-ing* words, suddenly they can write: *Growling and roaring, the mother bear protected her cubs.*

Reflect

- Identify the teaching points in the lesson that best enabled these young writers to create complex sentences beginning with *-ing* words.
- Compare a lesson in which writers are told what to do with a lesson in which the emphasis is on modeling and showing.

Focusing on Place

Focus

When writers bring the setting to the forefront, readers are more able to connect to habitat and situations in which the nonfiction writing is set. So, it is important to note that the setting is just as important in nonfiction as it is in fiction. In this lesson, you see how Teresa scaffolds writers with a list of words and phrases that focus on place and then guides them in experimenting with different settings as openers for their sentences. Notice how the students experiment orally before committing their thoughts to writing.

Reflect

- Analyze a basic sentence like, *The tiny caterpillar eats* and identify at least five sentence openers that would focus on place and enhance the sentence.
- Formulate a list of openers that focus on place as a poster that you can use with students.

Inserting an Interrupter

Focus

An interrupter adds information to a sentence, clarifying or restating in a way that offers a reader deeper meaning. Here is a basic sentence without an interrupter: *The bear crawls from his den.* With an interrupter added right after the subject of the sentence, suddenly the sentence is complex and far more engaging to read. *The bear, hungry from his long winter sleep, crawls from his den.* This powerful structure allows writers to clarify and extend meaning using a sentence format that greatly enhances sentence fluency. As you watch this clip, notice how Linda uses a pocket chart and sentence strips so students can manipulate model sentences before they create their own.

Reflect

- Summarize the steps for inserting an interrupter into a sentence.
- Formulate several basic sentences and corresponding interrupters that you could utilize with your students. You may want to consider making the interrupter a different color.

Word Spacing

Focus

In this lesson, you see how an ongoing list of conventions that have been addressed in previous minilessons supports writers as they create nonfiction drafts. It is important to notice that this group has been gathered because spacing has been a challenge for them, so more modeling of how to insert spaces between words is an important intervention to assure their continued growth with nonfiction writing. Frequent review of the conventions students know—with the regular addition of new ones to challenge and enrich writing expression—will keep students' nonfiction writing fresh, alive, and reader-friendly.

Reflect

- Identify the benefits of keeping visual lists of conventions where writers can easily see them while they are drafting.
- Imagine your students in six months. What conventions would you want them to be sure to control in everyday writing?

Word Building

Focus

As with all nonfiction writing, an intriguing topic provides the perfect context for stretching words and crafting text. Stretching words helps emergent learners to realize that the same phonetic principles apply in nonfiction writing as in other forms of print in their learning lives. In the beginning stages, spelling accuracy is secondary to helping writers move along using the sounds they know so they can focus on meaning. While word walls and alphabet strips are certainly helpful tools, a Picture-Alphabet card helps emergent writers identify specific letters that link to the sounds they hear when stretching words. In this lesson, notice how Teresa models how to stretch words out, listen for the sounds, and use the Picture-Alphabet card as a scaffold for sound-symbol linking.

Reflect

- Identify tools that help your writers independently construct words and focus on messages rather than waiting for you to come and spell words as they are drafting.
- Assess the potential of a Picture-Alphabet card in helping your nonfiction writers work independently while crafting nonfiction texts.

Disc 2

Guiding Extended Writing Units

Disc 2 follows a grade one-two combined classroom through an extended writing unit on frogs, beginning with a class report and culminating in individual reports. It ends with a brief recap of a kindergarten unit on persuasive writing.

Class Report

Report writing is an important skill that students need to develop as they progress through their schooling. In order to successfully master this writing form, students require multiple demonstrations in whole-class, small-group, and individual settings and ample time for research. The teaching demonstrations focus on the traits of good report writing—the structure and various text features that constitute a good report—and are tailored to the needs of the class. The research opportunities encourage students to inquire, question, discuss, and gather facts in a supportive and collaborative environment. Good teaching and supported learning lead to successful report writing.

In this section we look at Noemi’s grade one and two students as they research to construct a class report on frogs. In constructing the class report, Noemi’s students use a class R.A.N. chart and research stations as a means of collecting, organizing, and questioning information gathered. Throughout the research process the teacher provides demonstrations based on the needs of the students. The students then publish and share their report. The sharing of the class report is pivotal as it gives the students the opportunity to reflect on the traits of good report writing. This in turn provides them with the scaffolds necessary to independently write their own reports on topics of interest.

Using the R.A.N. Chart

The first section of the Class Report video is devoted to presenting a strategy for reading and analyzing nonfiction, or the R.A.N. Writers use this excellent tool when researching a specific topic to help organize their thinking before writing for either class or individual projects. The chart is used throughout the research project to record and categorize information on the go. Researchers collect information and organize their ideas on the R.A.N. chart to make their thinking visible. The R.A.N. helps writers in two critical ways: first, to be aware of and critically examine their thinking, and second, to organize their research information in preparation for writing.

Recording Prior Knowledge: What we think we know

Focus

It is important to acknowledge that even the youngest students may possess background knowledge on a given topic. In this segment you watch Noemi's students as they discuss their prior knowledge of frogs. Here you see Tony using the R.A.N. chart as a means to record students' thinking on frogs. Notice the way that Tony models how to record information onto a sticky note and place it in the correct category, guiding students to do so themselves.

Reflect

- Why do you think Tony has limited the students to only recording their favorite or best fact?
- What could you do if your students had little or no background knowledge on a topic?
- How do the symbols next to both the headings and the categories help the students?

Using the R.A.N. Chart

Confirming Prior Knowledge: Yes, we were right

Focus

In this segment, the importance of factual accuracy is conveyed as each researcher is given the responsibility for confirming his or her own prior knowledge through research. Look for the way Tony shows students how to move the sticky note from one column to the next.

Reflect

- What are some ways you could encourage students to provide evidence in confirming their facts?
- Notice how Tony used the word “some” in his background knowledge that makes his fact more likely to be confirmed. What are some other clarifying words you could get students to use to ensure that their background knowledge has a greater chance of being confirmed?

Recording New Facts: New learning

Focus

Having students research to locate new information is an important component of writing a class report. Here you see Tony demonstrate where to put new learning onto the class R.A.N. chart. Notice how Tony reminds the students to think about their prior thinking when researching.

Reflect

- How will the use of a different colored sticky note for this category assist the students’ thinking?
- Why is it important to demonstrate using key words when recording new information?
- Why does Tony ask the children to record only their best or favorite fact onto the class R.A.N. chart?

Using the R.A.N. Chart

Correcting Misconceptions: We don't think this anymore

Focus

In addition to finding information to confirm their prior knowledge, students also need to notice researched information that contradicts any information they thought was a fact. In this segment, Tony demonstrates where to place this information on the class R.A.N. chart. Watch for the way Tony makes recognizing that his background knowledge was incorrect into something positive.

Reflect

- Why is it important for students to articulate why they have changed their thinking?
- What would you do if a child didn't recognize a misconception they had on a given topic?
- What are some further ways you could help students understand the concept of misconceptions?

Raising Questions: Wonderings

Focus

One way to assure learners' engagement with information and ideas is to teach them to wonder about them. Learning doesn't stop with gathering, recording, and evaluating facts. True learning requires making facts part of ongoing understanding of and curiosity about a topic. Pay particular attention to the way Tony demonstrates how to use key words to raise specific wonderings. Notice how he first models how to raise a wondering and then gives students an opportunity to raise their own wonderings.

Reflect

- What additional demonstration and learning experiences could you provide your children to help them raise wonderings?
- How could you assist students if some of their wonderings are not answered when they research?

Working at Research Stations

Research stations are an excellent way of getting students to be actively engaged in locating information. They are a dynamic and interactive way for students to search, question, and locate information from a variety of sources. In addition, research stations are a particularly effective means of organizing the resources you have gathered for classroom research. Not only do research stations provide specific locations for specific topics, but also they allow you to disperse resources across several areas of your classroom to provide spaces in which writers can productively engage with a variety of media tools to collaborate, share information, and learn together.

Focus

In this segment, Noemi's students are given an opportunity to actively research to confirm prior thinking, locate new facts, identify misconceptions, and raise wonderings about frogs. You see Tony show the students the various stations and you watch students become active and inquiring researchers.

Reflect

- What are the advantages of setting up a task management board similar to the one shown in the clip?
- What management strategies would need to be in place to ensure that research stations run smoothly?
- What could you do to make sure there are adequate resources available for students when they go to research stations?

Providing Scaffolds

Focused teaching enriches children’s understandings of how to effectively write a report. Teaching demonstrations during whole-group instruction focus on key skills and elements of report writing such as purpose, ideas/research, organization/text features, language/style and conventions and presentation. Follow-up small-group and individual sessions reinforce, reteach, or extend these understandings.

In the next sections, we watch three teachers provide three different types of scaffolds: whole-class support, small-group support, and individual support. Supporting students in these ways ensures that the needs of all students in the class are being met. The use of pre-assessments together with ongoing monitoring sheets and individual rubrics will help identify these needs.

Whole-Class Minilesson

Focus

In this next segment, Noemi’s class discusses the ingredients of a great report in preparation for writing their own reports. Through their examination of a mentor text, students are able to identify the key features they want in their class report—and, at a later stage, in their own reports. Watch for the way Tony encourages the students to discover these ingredients rather than simply explaining what they are.

Reflect

- Apart from this demonstration, what are some other important minilessons that a teacher would need to provide to help students write an effective report?
- Why is it important to chart the students’ responses?

Providing Scaffolds

Small-Group Lesson

Focus

Here you see Linda provide some of Noemi's students with a small group lesson on using conventions. These students have been brought together because of a common need to learn how to use spaces between words when recording information. Look for the way Linda encourages the students to identify why leaving spaces is so important, and then demonstrates how she leaves spaces when she writes.

Reflect

- What strategies does Linda use to assist the students leave spaces?
- How might this lesson look different if the students still struggled with using spaces correctly?
- How would you best identify the needs of your students so that you can provide focused small group instruction?

Conferencing

Focus

In this clip Tony is working with Adam on adding details to his report on turtles. Adam has struggled with this strategy so Tony has decided to give Adam an extra layer of support through one on one instruction. Notice how Tony gets Adam to use a web organizer to expand his thinking.

Reflect

- Why is it important to keep these conferences brief?
- What would the next steps be if Adam still struggled with this strategy?
- Is it necessary to conference with all students individually?
- What kind of monitoring procedures would help you identify the individual needs of your students?

Publishing, Sharing, and Reflecting

Enabling children to take their writing to publication gives them a sense of accomplishment and pride. Seeing their research in a polished format demonstrates the fruition of their hard work. It is a time for celebration. When publishing the class report, it is important that all students have in some way contributed to the publication. Sharing and reflecting on their published piece helps students internalize the key features of a report and transfer this knowledge to writing their own reports. The published report is a wonderful resource for students to refer back to when writing their own reports.

Focus

In this segment, Noemi's children share and reflect on their class report on frogs. Watch how Tony gets them to reflect on the features they have used to make their report so wonderful. Look for how engaged the children are when they read back their report in a small group.

Reflect

- What are some other ways the students could publish a report apart from making a big book?
- What are some different ways the students could reflect on their achievements apart from whole class discussions?
- What management strategies would you need to put in place so that all children have a voice when sharing and reflecting?

Individual Reports

Once the class report has been published and shared, it is important for students to incorporate their understandings on report writing into their own writing lives. This gradual release of responsibility now puts the students in the driver's seat with the teacher there to provide support as needed. The children's ability to successfully write their own reports will be a strong indicator of further projects that the teacher will need to provide to solidify and strengthen understandings.

In this section, we look at Noemi's grade one and two students as they research to construct their individual reports on different animals. Writers apply their understandings about report writing from their class project on frogs to their own pieces on an animal of their choice. In constructing their reports, Noemi's students use research notebooks and personal R.A.N. charts to record and organize their findings. They work collaboratively at research stations to collect, organize, and question the information they gather about their particular animals. As with the class report, throughout the research process the teacher provides demonstrations based on the needs of the students. These demonstrations will be in whole-class, small-group, and individual settings. The students then publish and share their reports.

Selecting Topics

Focus

The first step for children in writing their own reports is to select a topic. In this clip, Noemi shows writers the animals they can explore and talks students through the process of making their topic selections. Once the students have circled their preferences from one to four, Noemi gives students one of their first three choices. Look for the way Noemi encourages the students to explain why they want to study a specific animal.

Reflect

- What are the advantages of giving children a topic selection sheet?
- What would you do if none of your students wanted to study a particular animal but you had already gathered resources?

Researching

Focus

As with the class report, students need opportunities to research. Here you see Noemi's students researching the different animals they have selected. Listen for the types of questions Noemi asks the children to help them think deeply about what they are finding. Look for the opportunities the students get to observe, read, discuss, reflect, and write.

Reflect

- How might writer-researchers look in your classroom?
- What management strategies do you think Noemi had put in place to make these research opportunities successful?
- How do you think varied research opportunities would help your students as nonfiction writers?

Writing and Editing

Focus

As with the class project, students need ongoing support as they draft, revise, and edit their own reports. Through whole-class, small-group and individual instruction, the teacher is able to ensure that the needs of each student are being met. This clip looks at the importance of providing ongoing support throughout the writing process.

Reflect

- How do you currently provide support for your students when they independently research and write?
- How could you provide additional support for your students?
- What are some of the challenges of giving tailored instruction to your students and how can you best overcome these challenges?

Publishing, Sharing, and Reflecting

Focus

Giving students an opportunity to publish and share their individual reports makes them feel like real writers. It gives them a sense of achievement. In this section, you see Noemi's children share their reports in pairs.

Reflect

- How do your students currently share their published work?
- What is the advantage of having the students share their reports in pairs rather than in front of the whole class?
- What are some questions you could model to help students effectively share their reports with each other?

Persuasive Texts

Apart from report writing, there are many other text types that students need to know to be confident in writing. Persuasive writing is one such text type. Traditionally persuasive writing has been left until later years, but in order for students to successfully learn to put across their own point of view and to use evidence to support their thinking, they need experiences from the very beginning of their schooling. As with report writing, students require ongoing demonstrations focused on the traits of good persuasive writing in whole-class, small-group, and individual settings. Apart from ongoing instruction, students also require frequent opportunities to share, celebrate, and reflect on their achievement at writing persuasive pieces.

In this section, we look at Melissa’s kindergarten students as they reflect on their class book and discuss the process they went through to complete their class project. We then listen to the children as they reflect on their individual persuasive books. Finally, we watch pairs of students sharing and celebrating their published pieces.

Class Book

Focus

In this clip we see Melissa reflecting with her students on their class book about going to bed early or staying up late. Listen for the language Melissa uses to help her students process the traits of good persuasive writing. Watch for the way she invites particular children to share their thinking.

Reflect

- Apart from the topic of bedtime, what other topics would be suitable for kindergarten students to explore?
- How does this clip challenge the notion that persuasive writing is too difficult for kindergarten students?

Individual Books

Focus

Here we see Melissa's children reflecting on their individual persuasive writing projects and then sharing these in pairs. Notice that Melissa is down on the carpet at the level of the children as they are sharing and reflecting. Listen for the ways Melissa encourages her students to give reasons for their stances. Watch how she supports them as they share in pairs.

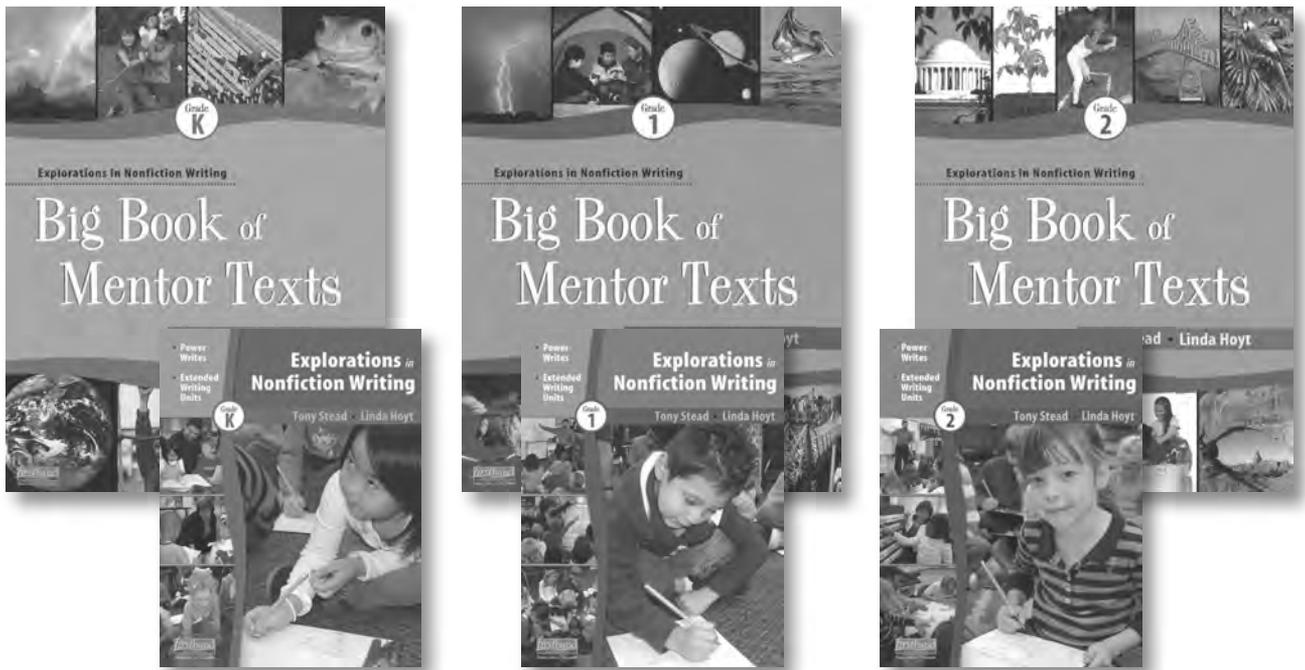
Reflect

- In what ways could you explore persuasive writing in your classroom?
- What are some key demonstrations that you would need to provide for your students to help them understand how to write a persuasive piece?

More Nonfiction Writing Resources from Linda Hoyt and Tony Stead

“Nonfiction texts govern as much as 90% of the reading and writing done by literate adults and comprise more than 70% of standardized assessments. For our children to succeed in school and beyond they need to know how to plan, compose, revise, edit, and publish a range of nonfiction texts.”

—TONY STEAD & LINDA HOYT



Explorations in Nonfiction Writing GRADES K, 1, AND 2

In *Explorations in Nonfiction Writing*, Tony Stead and Linda Hoyt offer teachers and students alike scaffolds for moving forward with nonfiction writing, using writing as a natural way to wonder, learn, and think about topics that excite them. The series includes opportunities for students to explore a variety of real-world nonfiction texts and to work collaboratively to create their own informational texts. Each level of *Explorations in Nonfiction Writing* includes a teacher's guide, a book of lessons, and a Big Book of Mentor Texts.



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