**The Writing Workshop**

**Overview**

During Writing Workshop students are given opportunities to write in a variety of genres. The workshop structure allows teachers to meet the needs of their students by differentiating their instruction and gearing instruction based on information gathered throughout the workshop. Workshop helps foster independence and a love of writing.

**Structure of a Workshop**

**Minilesson**

* Connection
* Teach
* Active Engagement
* Link

**Independent Writing and Conferring**

* Confer with 2 or 3 students

• **Mid-Workshop Interruption**

• **Independent Writing and Conferring**

* Confer with 2 or 3 students

• **Share**

**Mini- Lessons**

The mini-lessons for Writing Workshop teach concepts, strategies, and techniques for writing while encouraging students to write in different genres or styles. The 10-15 minute mini-lessons gives teachers the opportunity to give direct instruction to students and model the lessons using authentic literature or teacher's own writing. M*ini-lessons can include*:

* procedures for Writing Workshop
* writing strategies and skills
* literary elements
* literary techniques (i.e. voice, descriptive words, etc.)
* genre studies
* text features

**Mentor Texts**

* Teachers of Writing Workshop usually teach genre studies. Examples are *personal narratives, information writing, persuasive writing,* etc.
* If students are expected to produce writing in these genres, then they need to be immersed with books based on those genres. These texts are known as **touchstone texts** or **mentor texts**.
* Read alouds are a way to use authors as mentors for writing styles and genres.
* Students can see how writers use different styles and literary elements to create pieces of writing.

**Independent Writing**

The majority of Writing Workshop time is devoted to independent writing. During this time, students are prewriting, drafting, revising, editing, and publishing their pieces.

**Writer's Notebooks/Folders:**

Writer's notebooks are a place for students to write notes from mini-lessons and plan their writing. The students’ store their drafts and editing checklist in their writing folders.

**Conferring**

* During independent writing time, the teacher confers with students about their writing. The teacher keeps anecdotal records which include the date of the conference, observations, discussion, and teaching points.
* The purpose of these short conferences is to ask students how their writing is going and to teach them something that makes sense at the time.

**Small Group Work**

During independent writing time, the teacher can gather a group of students to work on writing. Similar to guided reading, the teacher works with a group based on their needs. This is particularly helpful if a group of students is having difficulty with a concept and the teacher wants to avoid repeating the same conference with a number of students.

**Sharing**

Sharing is an extremely important component of the writing workshop. During the share portion, students contribute what they did during their independent writing time, either with the whole group or with a peer. This gives students the opportunity to observe and learn from each other.