

Utilizing Mentor Texts in Informational Writing Instruction

in an Elementary Classroom

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Abstract

This paper explores utilizing mentor texts as an approach to informational writing instruction in an elementary classroom. The approach suggests that by exploring quality texts, students have an exemplar to serve as a model throughout their own expository writing process. In addition to exposing children to new knowledge through the reading of these texts, they are also exposed to text features, a variety of formats, and organization. Students are taught to emulate techniques for creating different kinds of informational text, demonstrating knowledge of informational writing as outlined in the Common Core State Standards. Mentor texts can serve in areas of both traditional non-fiction, and that of creative and playful language and structures. This paper concludes with the argument that exposing students to mentor texts throughout informational writing instruction benefits them in ways that not only improves their writing, but engages them through texts of various cultures and the integration of other content areas.

Keywords: mentor text, literacy, elementary education, instruction, informational writing

Utilizing Mentor Texts in Informational Writing Instruction in Elementary Classrooms

Throughout my graduate studies, I have been particularly interested in improving the writing instruction and student achievement in informational writing in my classroom. My main interest in utilizing mentor texts in informational writing lies in my own ambition to improve the engagement and success of my students as writers. Although I have taught for six years, I struggle to engage my students in writing. Many present information through facts and details through writing essays, but pieces lack the creative elements of writing, especially in non-fiction pieces.

The focus of my writing instruction has been around organization with an introduction, three body paragraphs, and a conclusion. Additionally, I spend a lot of time teaching basic transition words such as first, then, next, and last; part of the organization. When student work is finished, it has excellent organization and information they have learned, but many of their pieces are not engaging, nor do I think they actually enjoy composing it. It merely becomes a checklist. However, when we are reading our books and articles for new learning, students are completely engaged, asking questions, making connections, and discussing with one another. My goal is that students show an equal interest in the composition of their text. I want their writing to showcase their own voice, excellent word choice, differentiated sentences, playful language, various formats, and points of view that express who they are as a writer. When they share their writing with one another, I want students to be just as engaged as they are when I read them a non-fiction picture book.

Furthermore, the term informational text is so broad in definition that I struggle to really focus in on what it is I want my students to learn. When I teach informational writing, I do not

break it down into subcategories such as organization, playful language, formats, and voice. Understanding the subcategories might help my instruction hone in on specific elements that support specific structures.

The solution I will be discussing is one that provides students with exemplar texts to emulate as they work through the writing process. By teaching specific aspects of writing with examples from the books they love to hear, students may gain a better understanding of how to include these aspects in their writing as well. In our teaching of anything, students are served best through modeling of what it is we want them to do. This holds true for writing as well. In addition to modeling my own writing for students, the mentor texts serve as a model during instruction that show students what, for example, voice, playful language, and organization, look like in books they love to read. Furthermore, during their reading, they naturally become detectives looking for these traits in other texts as well.

Dollins (2016) connects close reading strategies to that of close writing in stating, “Close reading can assist students in creating their own nonfiction texts that provide detailed information about a topic and can demonstrate how to use a unique and engaging style of writing” (p. 49). By providing these models for students and working together to close read them, students have a deeper understanding of the text’s elements and how to recreate them with their own ideas and information.

This paper aims to share a review of the research literature, and how I have used the research to restructure my writing instruction and assessment. I will begin by defining informational writing as well as other terms used for this particular mode. Next, I will explain how mentor texts can be used to teach informational writing, and why utilizing mentor texts is a significantly successful approach to improving the writing of elementary-aged children.

Additionally, I will offer what research says about best practice in informational writing instruction. Before concluding, I will present tools to assess student writing.

Informational Text Definition and Instructional Implications

Informational text is a complex mode that encompasses many subcategories. Whereas lots of texts can contain information, Duke (2000) defines informational text as “text written with the primary purpose of conveying information about the natural and social world (typically from someone presumed to be more knowledgeable on the subject to someone presumed to be less so) and having particular text features to accomplish this purpose” (p. 205). Although this definition of informational text excludes genres such as biographies, autobiographies, and procedural texts, it provides us with the purpose of informational texts. In her more recent research though, Duke, Caughlin, Juzwik, and Martin, (2012) break informational text into particular genres such as narrative, expository, procedural, persuasive, and dramatic. Maloch and Bomer (2013) tell us “when we lump all nonfiction together and treat the very different texts as if they aren’t different at all, we’re likely to confuse our students. Understanding these differences as teachers, then, is a first step toward planning appropriate instructional experiences for our students” (p. 207). And so, for the purpose of this paper and my instructional goals, I will focus on the latter definition of Duke et al. (2012).

Informational text is often categorized as nonfiction, expository, or explanatory text. The structure in which they are organized can help us distinguish particular formats such as persuasive or narrative. For example, texts such as *The Magic School Bus* and *I Am...* series draw upon narrative qualities to present information to readers. Therefore, when we define informational text for our students, it is important that we have specific learning outcomes and objectives in mind for what it is we are wanting them to achieve within their writing. Teachers

can then use their objectives to carefully select a mentor text that provides examples for what it is they want students to achieve.

The Common Core Standards (CCSS, National Governors Association Center for Best Practices & Council of Chief State School Officers, 2010) definition of informational text differs from that of researchers. Informational text is stated as a broad term that encompasses various subject areas. The Standards state that informational text “includes biographies and autobiographies; books about history, social studies, science, and the arts; technical texts, including directions, forms, and information displayed in graphs, charts, or maps; and digital sources on a range of topics” (p. 31). Many states have their own adaptation of the CCSS that encompass their own definition. For example, in the Arizona College and Career Ready Standards the informational writing standard states that students can, “Write informative/explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas and information clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization, and analysis of content” (p. 3). As the standard progresses through the grades, it includes only elements of cited details, organization, and formatting (graphics, headings, etc.).

In explaining the tangled web of definitions and explanations of our standards, Maloch and Bomer (2013) remind us, “Perhaps the lesson to carry away is not a definitive final word on what texts are in or out, but rather an understanding that students can be engaged in an interesting and perpetually uncompleted inquiry process into the different types of text that exist in the world” (p. 209). The complexity of defining informational text reminds us of the importance of bringing mentor texts into the classroom. These texts serve as exemplars for students as we dissect each element the texts encompass. In order for students to have an

adequate understanding of the elements of writing, we must focus in on a specific category within informational text, using models to showcase quality composition.

Research and Practices

Informational writing is the mode of writing we encounter most often in our post-secondary education and adult and career lives. Therefore, it is essential that students leave our classrooms with the skills needed to be college and career ready. A survey given by The National Commission on Writing (2004) found:

Close to 70 percent of responding corporations report that two-thirds or more of their salaried employees have some responsibility for writing, either explicit or implicit, in their position descriptions. With the exception of mining and transportation/utilities, large majorities of salaried employees in all industries are expected to write. Writing is almost a universal professional skill required in service industries as well as finance, insurance, and real estate (FIRE). It is also widely required in construction and manufacturing.

Among hourly (i.e., nonprofessional) employees, the expectations for writing are not as high. Even among hourly employees, however, between one-fifth and one-third of employees have some writing responsibilities in fast-growing sectors such as services, FIRE, and construction. (p. 7)

Teaching our students adequate writing skills is not only an important part of district and state requirements, but it is a skill that will be needed throughout the rest of their lives into their careers. Therefore, it is of utmost importance that we spark an engagement in our young writers and ensure they are truly college and/or career ready. To do so, we must become familiar with the aspects of informational writing by providing our students with rich, meaningful, exemplary texts to solidify their understanding. In reviewing the research presented in six studies in grades

four through twelve, Graham, Gillespie, and McKeown (2013) found that when students were exposed to mentor texts through writing instruction, they had a better understanding of their objective and their writing significantly improved. Having models of these skills amplifies our students' capabilities in producing their own compositions that are meaningful and engaging to readers.

Maloch and Bomer (2013) state:

Children write what they read. If they read (and hear) lots and lots of stories, they are better at composing stories. If, on the other hand, they read (and hear) stories, but also information books, procedural texts, and feature articles, they are more likely to learn the conventions of those genres and be able to compose according to those purposes. (p. 206)

Dorfman and Cappelli (2007), define mentor texts as “pieces of literature that we can return to again and again as we help young writers learn how to do what they may not yet be able to do on their own” (pp. 2-3). When venturing into informational writing in my elementary classroom, I began by exposing my students to a variety of informational texts that peek their interests. It is important to distinguish between standard nonfiction and creative nonfiction, noting the differences to students. Dollins (2016) describes the difference as standard nonfiction using generic nouns and pronouns with a focus on academic vocabulary, while creative nonfiction includes narrative elements like dialogue and descriptive language.

As an educator it is important to understand these differences in order to carefully select texts that truly model the craft being taught to students. Creative nonfiction often overplays writing traits, while standard nonfiction focuses mainly on presenting facts (Dollins, 2016). Comparing the two types of texts also provides concrete models to serve as examples to students throughout their composition. The following sections provide a sequence of instructional

activities that explore the teaching of creative informational writing through the use of mentor texts. This type of writing encompasses the Common Core State Standards, as well as specific traits that engage the reader of these pieces.

Instruction: Day 1

Standard: 3.RI.9 Compare and contrast the most important points and key details presented in two texts on the same topic (CCSS, National Governors Association Center for Best Practices & Council of Chief State School Officers, 2010).

To compare and contrast two informational mentor texts I would begin by choosing two texts of the same topic, one of standard nonfiction and the other of creative. For my own classroom instruction, I would first read *Polar Bears* by Gail Gibbons with students gathered at the carpet meeting area. Students would turn and talk with a partner about new information they learned. Next, I would read students the book, *Ice Bear: In the Steps of the Polar Bear* by Nicola Davies. Again, students would turn and talk to discuss with their partner anything new they heard. Next, I would ask students what the author's purpose was for each text. For the first text, they might say to inform the reader about polar bears. The second text has a purpose of entertaining and informing though. This would open our discussion about the author's craft in each text. With this, we would create a Venn-diagram comparing and contrasting how each of the books are written and the information they contain.

Day 2:

Standard: 3.L.3a Choose words and phrases for effect (CCSS, National Governors Association Center for Best Practices & Council of Chief State School Officers, 2010).

Today's instruction would be all about descriptive language. How do we take a fact from standard nonfiction and add word choice and descriptive language to make it creative? I would

begin by explaining to students that as readers, descriptive language engages us and really makes the information come alive. It allows us to visualize what is happening. I would ask students to close their eyes and visualize each sentence as I read it aloud:

Standard nonfiction sentence: Polar bears have blubber and fur to keep them warm.

Creative nonfiction sentence: Polar bears have fat that is four fingers deep to keep them warm in the cold sea. The white layer of fur on top keeps heat from escaping, so nothing can steal its warmth.

Students would turn and talk to one another about which of the sentences best created a picture in their minds, then share whole group what they were able to visualize.

I would have sentences copied and cut out from standard nonfiction for students to use in today's lesson. They would practice in partners by reading their sentence from standard nonfiction and changing it to creative nonfiction by incorporating descriptive language. Students would then share their standard sentence and how they rewrote it creatively with descriptive language. As each pair shared, other students would continue to close their eyes and visualize the descriptive language.

Day 3:

Standard: 3.W.3b Use dialogue and descriptions of actions, thoughts, and feelings to develop experiences and events or show the response of characters to situations (CCSS, National Governors Association Center for Best Practices & Council of Chief State School Officers, 2010).

Now that students have developed an understanding of standard versus creative nonfiction, we would look at how dialogue is used within nonfiction texts as well. I would begin by reading the book *The Truth About Dolphins* by Maxwell Eaton III. After reading, I would ask

students to turn and talk about the voice they heard throughout the story. What did the author do to help us hear different characters, engage us, and make us laugh? Through the discussion I would highlight how the author uses his own voice as well as the voice of characters to give warnings, present facts through joke telling, and create conversations through characters to explain information. Using a standard nonfiction book, I would model for students how to rewrite a sentence using two characters to explain a fact. Afterward, students could work in partners to take a fact from pre-selected standard nonfiction and rewrite it as a conversation between two characters. Students would then perform this conversation for classmates in our whole group setting.

Days 4-5:

Standard: 3.W.2a Introduce a topic and group related information together; include illustrations when useful to aiding comprehension (CCSS, National Governors Association Center for Best Practices & Council of Chief State School Officers, 2010).

Over the course of these next mini lessons, I would read a selected mentor text, modeling for students the way the author created a lead (see figure 1), explained characteristics and events of the specific topic, summarized, and concluded the writing (Dollins, 2016). While reading each lead of the story, we would work whole group to categorize it as a question, interesting fact, single word, or imagine this. As students begin to grasp these concepts one at a time, they would then be challenged to identify these elements within the texts through guided practice in their own self-selected nonfiction texts. As students identify leads, characteristics, and events, they would mark them with sticky notes to share at the following mini lesson.

Creating a Lead

Question: What is the greatest hunter on land?

Interesting Fact: It is as fast as a snowmobile and can swim for hundreds of miles with no rest.

Single Word: Icebear

Imagine This: An enormous, white bear, made for our frozen world treks across the tundra.

Figure 1: Examples of Creating a Lead

Days 6-8:

Standard: 3.W.7 Conduct short research projects that build knowledge about a topic (CCSS, National Governors Association Center for Best Practices & Council of Chief State School Officers, 2010).

We would begin these lessons with the whole class together at the front of the classroom, reviewing the elements of leads, characteristics, and events. On their own, students would work through self-selected texts to identify these elements on the topic of their choosing. For example, a student researching pandas would read two to three texts on panda bears and fill in a graphic organizer of their research. As students read their texts, they would identify the lead, the topic, description of their topic, events of the topic, and a summary. By working through several exemplar texts informing readers of various topics such as animals, places, and events students will gain adequate practice in recognizing these components in an informational text.

Day 9:

Standard: 3.W.2a Introduce a topic and group related information together; include illustrations when useful to aiding comprehension (CCSS, National Governors Association Center for Best Practices & Council of Chief State School Officers, 2010).

Students are now ready to begin drafting their creative nonfiction text. I would begin this lesson with the class, again, altogether up front, and model how to look back at my notes and mentor texts to identify the different ways that authors hook the reader. I would review the leads we had learned and then model my own lead for my topic under the document camera for students see. Students would use our anchor chart to select their type of lead, then work to hook their reader by using one of the four leads we previously learned.

Dorfman and Cappelli (2007) define mentor texts as “pieces of literature that we can return to again and again as we help young writers learn how to do what they may not yet be able to do on their own” (p. 2). These texts need to be readily available in the classroom for students to return to as they begin drafting.

As students draft independently, I would engage in individual conferences to support students with specific aspects of their writing. Allowing students to see features in the books that interest them will increase understanding as well as motivation to make changes discussed in their conference.

Days 10-11:

Standard: 3.W.3b Use dialogue and descriptions of actions, thoughts, and feelings to develop experiences and events or show the response of characters to situations (CCSS, National Governors Association Center for Best Practices & Council of Chief State School Officers, 2010).

During these next two days we would continue adding onto our drafts, including the information we had learned on our topics by referring to our notes. I would model two body paragraphs under the document camera for students, so they have even more examples of what it is I am asking them to do with their writing. In my example, I would include and explicitly teach

dialogue of the author's voice descriptive language. The first body paragraph would focus on the characteristics of my topic, while the second would be events of my topic. After each mini lesson, students would then continue their own drafts, working through these two paragraphs. Again, as students draft independently, I would be able to work with small groups, supporting them at this step in their writing.

Day 12:

Standard: CCSS 3.W.1d Provide a concluding statement or section (CCSS, National Governors Association Center for Best Practices & Council of Chief State School Officers, 2010).

We would now be ready to conclude our writing. Again, we would look back at our mentor texts and notes discussing how authors tied up their stories. I would ask students to share the conclusions from one of the texts with a partner, then we'd share out to the entire group. We would create an anchor chart of four ways to conclude a writing (see figure 2). As I explained each way, I would also show examples of these conclusions in the mentor texts we had read. As we did with introductions, students would work in pairs to categorize the conclusion of their mentor texts. Last, I would model a concluding paragraph of my own writing, focusing students' attention on how we end a text leaving our reader feeling satisfied. Students would then work to complete the conclusion on their own compositions.

Concluding Your Writing

Circle: In the same way you started

Moral/Lesson: Explaining what was learned

Wish or Hope: State what you hope for in the future

Question: Leave your readers with a question

Figure 2: Ways to Conclude Writing

Day 13:

Standard: CCSS 3.W.5 With guidance and support from peers and adults, develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, and editing (CCSS, National Governors Association Center for Best Practices & Council of Chief State School Officers, 2010).

Now that the drafts have been completed, students would begin working through the revising process using the acronym ARMS (adding, removing, moving, substituting). I would create an anchor chart (see figure 3) with students for revising before working through the acronym to revise my own writing. Students would then turn to their own drafts working through one paragraph at a time to revise using ARMS.

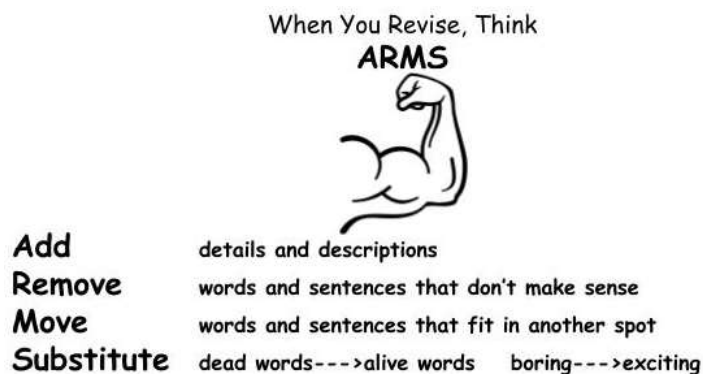


Figure 3: ARMS Anchor Chart

Assessing Informational Writing

We have now examined what informational text is and how to implement mentor texts into writing instruction. However, one of the most challenging aspects for me is the assessment of writing. While much of writing is based around creativity, traits, and developmental levels, what does it look like to determine if students are learning? Writing has so many components that can be assessed, such as the standards outlined by Common Core and specific writing traits. Focusing on an overview of the structure of informational writing, the following rubric from Ruth Culham's (2014) writing rubrics provides students with a framework of what their writing

should entail in terms of information. It is important to note that when we assess student writing, we need a clear objective of what it is we are looking for. This rubric (see figure 4) addresses only the *information* provided within the composition.

Just Starting: 1-2	On My Way: 3-4	I've Got It: 5-6
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● I don't know much about my topic at all. ● I don't provide much information and didn't check my facts. ● My reader will wonder what I am writing about. ● Yikes! I need to rethink my topic. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● I gave an overview of my topic. ● My information is pretty ordinary and maybe inaccurate. I better do a fact check. ● I don't think I've answered my reader's questions. ● I tried to stay focused on my topic, but wandered here and there. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● I've covered my topic well, using specific details and facts. ● My information is both accurate and fascinating. ● I've answered questions of the reader. ● I stayed focused on my topic and developed it.

Figure 4: Student Checklist: Culham's (2014) Mode Guide for Students

To utilize the rubric, students highlight each statement that is represented in their writing. They then use the rubric to make changes to their writing and for further instruction during student conferences. This step can be taken through peer conferencing as well. While this rubric is simple, it allows for students to focus only on the information that is present in their writing. Furthermore, teachers can assess other elements that were focused on through mini lessons such as the lead or conclusions.

Culham (2014) also provides a rubric for teachers (see figure 5) to assess informational writing through the same process. Teachers highlight statements that are represented in student writing. It is important to note the student's writing may hit elements of emerging and strong. Students are scored where *most* of their writing fits on the rubric. Focusing in on each element though, allows teachers to really target student needs for future instruction.

<p>Exceptional: 6</p> <p>Strong: 5</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Delves into what really matters about the topic. ● Offers an insider’s perspective. ● Provides unexpected or surprising details that go beyond the obvious. ● Is focused, coherent, and well organized. ● Invites the reader to analyze and synthesize details to draw his or her own conclusions. ● Is bursting with fascinating, original facts that are accurate and, when appropriate, linked to a primary source. ● Contains anecdotes that bring the topic to life. ● Anticipates and answers the reader’s questions. ● Stays on point and contains a compelling voice until the end.
<p>Refining: 4</p> <p>Developing: 3</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Provides an overview of the topic and only a few key facts. ● Offers the perspective of an outsider looking in. ● Lacks fresh thinking or surprises. Relies too heavily on common knowledge. Provides mostly mundane, predictable details about the topic. ● Is relatively focused, coherent, and organized. Generally stays on topic. ● Contains focused descriptions, but also fuzzy ones. The writer doesn’t consistently connect the dots. ● Includes facts that are somewhat suspicious and not linked to primary sources. ● Features few, if any, anecdotes that bring the topic to life. ● Does not anticipate the reader’s questions. ● Speaks in a spotty voice- commanding one moment, cautious the next.
<p>Emerging: 2</p> <p>Rudimentary: 1</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Misses the main point completely. The writer’s purpose is not clear. ● Offers a complete outsider’s perspective. ● Contains details that are completely unrelated to the topic. ● Is unfocused, incoherent, and poorly organized. ● Makes sweeping statements. Nothing new is shared. ● Lacks fascinating, original facts. Any facts the piece does contain are seemingly inaccurate or unsupported. ● Contains no anecdotes to bring the topic to life. ● Does not anticipate the reader’s questions. In fact, the piece contains no evidence that the writer has thought about audience at all. ● Requires energy to read from beginning to end.

Figure 5: Teacher Rubric: Culham’s (2014) Mode Guide for Teachers

One important piece of research to note is the idea of moving more toward a student’s sentence structure and ideas, and assess mechanics separately. Casey et al. (2016) state:

Quality writing involves more than simply spelling, writing neatly, and punctuating correctly. Students must be able to articulate ideas clearly by using nouns, verbs, adjectives, and other parts of speech; formulate sentences that make sense; and write sentences that are on the suggested topic. Such skills are particularly important for elementary school students, who are still developing them. If the assessment tool being

used to determine writing ability is focused exclusively on mechanics, students who struggle with generating thoughts or constructing sentences may go unnoticed and not receive the assistance needed in the classroom simply because they are successful with spelling and punctuation. (p. 44)

Additionally, Casey et al. (2016) discuss the importance of mechanics, such as spelling and conventions, as our students progress in writing. However, as we are developing writers, we want to focus on the complexity of their sentences and the information they are providing on specific topics. The selected rubrics created by Culham (2014), target information in the text, word choice, and sentence fluency, supporting this idea.

Donovan and Smolkin (2011) describe an effective way for teachers to categorize student writing and tailor their instruction to build upon the framework. The authors state, “once you have identified a text as falling within a certain category, you can talk with the student about the purpose for writing, think about models the student might be trying to emulate, and then identify a more complex level and the features to which the student’s attention might best be directed” (p. 412). Donovan and Smoklin (2011) developed a visual (see figure 6) to guide teachers through scaffolded instruction.

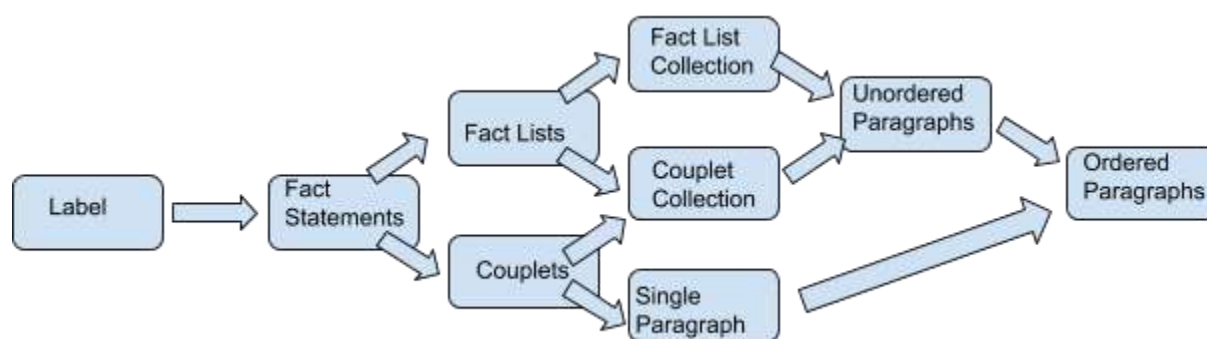


Figure 6: Paths of Support for Informational Writing Development Donovan & Smoklin (2011)

When students have labeled their writing, we can move her toward fact statements in which they describe facts about their topic. For example, in writing about severe weather, a third-grade student might label a hurricane. We would want to guide students into creating sentences like we have read in our mentor texts that expand the label such as “Hurricanes are a tropical storm.” We can then ask guiding questions such as “What else do you know about hurricanes?” to help students produce fact lists. Donovan and Smolkin (2011) tell us, “Alternatively, we can support the move to a couplet by asking questions such as “Why...” which focus students on providing supporting evidence and including logical connectives” (p. 413). After students are producing couplets, they can be moved toward a couplet collection or single paragraph depending on the needs of the student. If a student is producing a fact list, instruction can be given to increase writing to a fact list collection or couplet collection. These two categories are instructed toward unordered paragraphs, with the end goal of all categories being ordered paragraphs. Donovan and Smolkin (2011) remind teachers of the importance of informational text experience and knowledge of the development of writing (p. 414). By recognizing where students are in their writing development, we are able to assess where they are and help move them through the next stages until they reach a developed, ordered paragraph.

Conclusion

As educators, we must strive to engage our students in authentic learning opportunities. When students are engaged in a task, they are more likely to retain information, take risks in their learning, and achieve learning outcomes (Dollins, 2016). Utilizing mentor texts within writing instruction allows for children to have concrete models of what is expected of them. Our students will write what they are reading. They use these examples to develop their own compositions using the texts they have studied (Maloch & Bomer, 2013).

In addition to this practice, assessing writing through student-friendly rubrics help students to monitor where they are as writers. Additionally, teacher rubrics with various elements help us to recognize our students may be strong in some areas and still refining in others. By carefully deconstructing their work, we can help move them along the path to developing ordered paragraphs and eventually a completed composition.

Nonfiction writing is a skill our students will need to be successful in college and in the workforce, not just an essential skill for district and state testing. By engaging them in authentic, meaningful writing instruction, we are not just teaching them skills, but teaching them to thrive and present information that will inform readers of new learning. Moving from standard nonfiction to creative nonfiction allows our students to explore their creative elements and truly be engaged in the process of teaching others about a topic. Utilizing mentor texts through this process provide exemplary writings for our kids to help push them forward through creative and innovative learning.

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Appendix A

The following appendix is a short list of informational mentor texts that can be utilized when teaching specific skills to students during writing instruction.

Formats and Genres

I Am... by Brad Meltzer

Written as a comic book with dialogue between multiple characters

Pink is for Blobfish by Jess Keating

Cartoon illustrations and vibrant backgrounds

The Magic School Bus series

Written as a narrative with dialogue and a plot

I Wanna Iguana by Karen Kaufman Orloff

Letter format narrative between a mother and son

Playful Language

The Truth about... by Maxwell Eaton III

Series of three books (dolphins, hippos, and bears), describing animals through joke telling, illustrations, and dialogue

Organization

Who Would Win? by Jerry Pallotta

Two animals verse each other in a showdown of who would win in a battle

One Tiny Turtle by Nicola Davies

Shows various fonts that make photos such as waves. It is organized in groups of texts around the illustrations

If Polar Bears Disappeared by Lily Williams

Uses single words in organization around pictures and great use of diagrams

Diary of a Worm by Doreen Cronin

Written through diary entries containing both information about worms and fictional narrative components

Point of View

Creature Features by Steve Jenkins

Animals explain characteristics from their point of view

Under My Hijab by Hena Khan

Narrative from the character's point of view, contains descriptive language

The Girl Who Thought in Pictures: The Story of Dr. Temple Grandin by Julia Mosca

Narrative from Temple Grandin's point of view as an autistic girl

Graphics and Illustrations

Surprising Sharks by Nicola Davies

Cartoon illustrations, speech bubbles, and photographs

Unspoken by Henry Cole

Wordless picture book showing accounts of the Underground Railroad