

Stacey Shubitz  
CELEBRATING THE POWER OF MENTOR TEXTS

Lifelong writers write well when they:

- ▶ Communicate *meaning*
- ▶ Use *genre* knowledge
- ▶ *Structure* their writing
- ▶ Write with *detail*
- ▶ Give their writing *voice*
- ▶ Use *conventions*

(Anderson, 2005, 58)

Six Steps to Help You Mine Picture Books for Craft Moves to Teach to Students

- ▶ Read a book for pleasure first.
- ▶ Read like a writer.
- ▶ Look for craft moves.
- ▶ Reread the book.
- ▶ Sort through notes.
- ▶ Plan your teaching.

(Shubitz, 2016, 8-11)

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Picture books are powerful resources at any grade level.

▶ Picture books are:

- ▶ Short
- ▶ Visual
- ▶ Engaging
- ▶ Community Builders
- ▶ Anchors

▶ Picture books also:

- ▶ Provide high-level opportunities for inference and interpretation.
- ▶ Spark empathy.
- ▶ Ignite creativity.

(Shubitz, 2016, 14)

Immersing Students in Mentor Texts

- ▶ Whole-class Reading and Discussion (~20 minutes)
- ▶ Partner Work (~20 minutes)
- ▶ Independent Writing Time (~10 minutes)
- ▶ Share Session (~10 minutes)

(Shubitz, 2016, 20-22)

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Four Types of Minilessons

- ▶ **Demonstration:** The teacher shows students how to use a strategy to improve their writing in a step-by-step manner.
- ▶ **Guided Practice:** The teacher coaches the students through the strategy using lean prompts.
- ▶ **Explanation and Example:** The teacher provides students with an example of the strategy and provides an explanation with how to carry out that strategy in their own writing.
- ▶ **Inquiry:** The teacher invites students to study with him, which enables students to discover something new, name what they're noticing, and transfer it to their own writing.

(Calkins, 2013)

Applying the Four Types of Teaching to Using Mentor Texts

- ▶ **Demonstration:** Teachers show students how to try out a craft move in a step-by-step manner.
- ▶ **Guided Practice:** Teachers coach students using lean prompts as they try out a craft move on their own.
- ▶ **Explanation and Example:** Teachers show students an example of a craft move an author made and provide an explanation of how to make that move.
- ▶ **Inquiry:** Teachers invite students to study a text with them, which enables students to discover the craft, name what they noticed, and transfer it to their own writing.

(Shubitz, 2016, 38)

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One way we might mine this book for craft moves is...

- ▶ Talk about a part of the text in a step-by-step way.
- ▶ Point out the writerly choices the author made and why you think the author chose to write in a particular way.
- ▶ Name the move the writer made in language students will understand.
  - ▶ Use a sentence, not a buzz word or jargon.

(Calkins, 2008, TCRWP July Writing Institute)

Another way you might approach this text as you prepare to teach with it is...

- ▶ Read like a writer:
  1. *Notice* something about the craft of the text.
  2. *Talk* about it and *make a theory* about why a writer might use this craft.
  3. Give the craft a *name*.
  4. Think of *other* texts you know. Have you seen this craft before?
  5. Try and *envision* using this craft in your own writing.

(Ray, 1999, 120)

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Crafting Clear Teaching Points: THE WHAT + THE HOW + THE WHY

- ▶ **THE WHAT:** Whatever it is you want students to be able to do by the end of your teaching.
- ▶ **THE HOW:** A procedure (e.g., three steps) for how students will perform that skill.
  - ▶ You're creating a strategy to teach the skill by breaking it down into a series of steps.
- ▶ **THE WHY:** An explanation of the reason the strategy is important.
  - ▶ This helps kids understand why they might want to do this work as writers.
- ▶ Here's an example of a teaching point that reflects both the skill and its purpose to young writers:
  - ▶ Writers create paragraphs in stories by making a new paragraph where there is a change in setting -- the subway arrives, the sun sets, a week goes by. Paragraphs help readers get a visual heads-up about the changes or shifts coming in the text, and they help them to be ready to experience something new.

(Roberts and Beattie Roberts, 2016, 28-32)

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RESOURCES:

Anderson, Carl. 2005. *Assessing Writers*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

Calkins, Lucy. 2013. *A Guide to the Common Core Writing Workshop: Intermediate Grades*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

Ray, Katie Wood. 1999. *Wondrous Words: Writers and Writing in the Elementary Classroom*. Urbana, IL: NCTE.

Roberts, Kate, and Maggie Beattie Roberts. 2016. *DIY Literacy: Teaching Tools for Differentiation, Rigor, and Independence*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

Shubitz, Stacey. 2016. *Craft Moves: Lesson Sets for Teaching Writing with Mentor Texts*. Portland, ME: Stenhouse.