

micro lessons in writing

big ideas
for
revising

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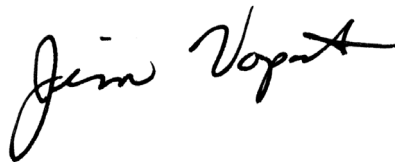
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welcome

We all know as teachers we have a tendency to maximize instruction. Not the beating a horse to death at the front of the classroom kind of maximized instruction; more like “so little time, so much to teach.” That has been one of the attractions of mini lessons: they help dial down the formal front-of-the-classroom instruction while creating more time for students to write. **micro lessons** strives to dial down the volume some more. Here the medium is the message: a minimal book format with minimal text, one micro lesson per page, an invitation for you the teacher to complete the narrative with your students through their writing. Less is more. Often the best ideas are the simplest to explain and adapt to your specific learning situation. Students become better writers by writing, not listening to us talk about writing.

micro lessons that appeal to students in all grade levels across the curriculum. **micro lessons** that support students as writers and promote writing as a process.

Welcome. The next thing you hear will be the sound of writing.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jim Vogt". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

big ideas for revising

Why do students dread revision? Maybe they haven't tried the following ways to turn dread into energy. After all, change is as natural a process as breathing out and breathing in. Here are twenty-five ways to breathe life back into revision. And for the first deep breath, let's revise *revision*. No longer *revision*, but *re-vision*. Re-vision: seeing through different eyes in order to make writing better.

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* *in the text indicates* **micro lesson** *cross reference.*

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new attitude

What writer hasn't recast their writing like a fly fisherman on a slow day only to get a strike near sunset?

Leads. Details. A new attitude. Teach the habit and process of revision through mini lessons (5–10 minutes) that focus on what writers do to make their writing better, and why. Crafting a new lead, new ending, new point of view; rewriting a sentence, transplanting a paragraph, adding opposing evidence or commentary; trying a different genre, reversing chronology, expanding and contracting time. Revision mini lessons can be taken from read alouds, class readings, student writing, professional writer's comments about revision, the ongoing writing process of students in the class. After each mini lesson students need time to apply the mini lesson by revising a draft of their writing with that particular practice or concern in mind. Any draft can be an option. Whether the student eventually decides to keep the revised or original wording isn't that important.

It's the practice and understanding of the mini lesson, seeing it as an option, that matters.

So many casts to land the prize. They may look alike, but they are all subtly different—and then there's the strike that makes it all worthwhile.



conference repertoire

Conferences with a predictable structure, recurrent and modeled by the teacher, are readily adopted and adapted by young writers as they conference with each other.

Process: How's it going? What are you writing about? Was this easy or hard to write? How close are you to being finished? What problems have you encountered? What part do you like best? How does this connect to what you've written before? What will you write next?

Content: What's the writing about? How did you come up with this topic? What's the most important thing you want me to know? Did this topic choose you, or did you choose it? Is there anything you need to add? Some questions I have as I read are . . . What will you write next?

Design: Why does your writing start where it does? Can you describe or map how the sections of your writing relate to each other? Did you consider other ways for presenting your ideas, or did this just write itself? What other shape, form, or genre could the writing take? What will you write next?

You just can't ask it enough. "What will you write next?"