

## **Teaching Middle School Writers: Teaching Take-Aways from “Mentor Text Lesson”**

### **Tips For Dynamic Mentor Text Lessons**

*Interactive, dynamic mentor text lessons require thoughtful planning that invites the students to do the lion’s share of the thinking after you’ve modeled and fielded questions. Below are some tips for each part of a mentor text lesson.*

#### **Introduction**

- Decide on the focus of the lesson (show, don’t tell; strong verbs and specific nouns; uses of dialogue, flashback; foreshadowing, etc.)
- Select a mentor text, one that students have already read and enjoyed as a class.
- Decide on what you will model for students in a think aloud. Keep this short and save the bulk of the work for groups.
- Recap what you and students have already done with the mentor text.
- Have students read aloud or you read aloud
- Present your brief think aloud on what you notice in the piece in regard to your lesson focus (show, don’t tell, use of dialogue, etc)
- Explain what you expect groups to do.
- Write these guidelines on large chart paper.

#### **Group Work**

- Organize students into heterogeneous groups of four to five.
- Give out materials students will need: a copy of the mentor text, journals, pencils.
- Explain what you want groups to discuss and understand. Point to the guidelines on chart paper so students can refer to them.
- Ask students to reread the mentor text.

- Have group members discuss the text and find examples of the lesson's focus.
- Circulate and listen to groups' conversations. Pose questions to keep the conversations moving forward.
- Provide positive feedback that honors students' thinking.

### **Share Ideas**

- Call everyone's attention so you come together as a whole class. Invite group members to share their findings.
- Record what students share on the chart.
- Celebrate their thinking
- Wrap-up the lesson with what they learned and what you've noticed.

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