

Informational Writing Minilesson:

Revising a "How to" Piece

Shannon, First Grade

Teacher speaking to whole class:

"Writers, Christian. Yesterday, we were working on how we have to help a reader be prepared and ready by giving them a list of what?"

Whole class speaking:

"Stuff"

Teacher speaking to whole class:

"...Stuff, a list of materials that they'll need in order to do it, right? In order to be able to go through the steps, Alina, and do what you're trying to teach them. Well today, I've got something else that is very important for you to know in order for your reader to learn as much as they can from what you're trying to teach them. Sometimes writers need a reader to be a good listener to help them point out places that may not make sense or a place in the writing where it's missing some important information. Ok, so I was wondering if you could be my readers and help me by listening up to my piece that I started yesterday and you help me decide if there is something that maybe doesn't make sense or something I may have left out that I really need to have in my piece so somebody will know exactly what to do. Are you ready? Can you help me some? Daniel, can I have your eyes and ears? Ok, this is my piece I started yesterday on how to paint fingernails and I had started yesterday with the things that I needed. Cotton balls, polish, polish remover. And then I went through and I planned yesterday. But yesterday I also sat down and wrote my - did my sketches and then wrote my words to tell what to do. So, now I need you to be my readers and listen carefully to see if there's something I missed or left out or even something that just doesn't even need to be in there. I might not have even put something correct in there that I really need. Ok, ready? 'First rub a cotton ball with polish remover on it across your nail to take old polish off. Next choose a polish color you want to use. Next, brush the polish on nails then twist the top back on the polish to close it and put it away. Last, let it dry. When you put it on you will like it. One time I got five new colors.' So what did you think? I want you to turn and talk real quick and talk to your partner about anything that you notice that maybe did not make sense or something I might have left out?"

Teacher speaking with pair of students:

"Sit with Johan because Stuart is absent so you can partner up. So, is there anything in there that didn't make sense?"

Student speaking:

"No."

Teacher speaking with pair of students:

“Everything sounded good to you? Everything sounded good? What do you think Cameron?”

[Student inaudible, suggesting to add a warning to the writing]

Teacher speaking with pair of students:

“So you think maybe there is a part that I need to add a warning with. Ok?”

[Student inaudible, agreeing with another student’s suggestion]

Teacher speaking with pair of students:

“So you would have a thumb up for great minds think alike, right? Ok, alright, what were you thinking?”

[Student inaudible]

“Which - What that last part? When I said ‘You’ll put it on and you’ll like it. One time I got five new colors.’ or at the beginning? Ok, when I said rub a cotton ball with polish remover on it across your nail to take polish off. So I need to be a little bit more specific?”

Teacher speaking to individual student and whole class:

“Ok, writers, my turn. I got some good feedback from just the people who were kind of close to me but I know others have some good ideas and good recommendations for me also. Ok? Let’s see Cameron what did you tell me a minute ago?”

[Student inaudible, suggesting to add a warning to the writing]

“She said, when I was kneeling in and listening in on her and Cameron talking about it, she said ‘I think there’s a place where you could put a warning’. So you think maybe I should put a warning on which step?”

Student speaking:

“Where you’re brushing”

Teacher speaking to individual student and whole class:

“Where I’m brushing the polish on my nails, right? So would you agree?”

Whole class speaking:

“Yes”

Teacher speaking to whole class:

“Caleb and Johan were listening in a little bit and heard her say that and they say that ‘we were thinking the same things’. They would have had a thumb up because great minds think alike. And I think you’re probably right there

Cameron because if someone doesn't know how to paint nails that might that be important. That's an important piece of information."

Student speaking:

"They might just brush quick and get it on their finger"

Teacher speaking to individual student and whole class:

"Isn't that the whole reason we put tips and warning a little bit of extra information to help them know how to do it even better or something to be careful of. So I might can go and put a warning there about to be careful where to put the polish and do it carefully and slowly. Ok Joseph, what were you thinking?"

Student speaking:

"I was thinking don't say 'put' say 'squeeze'."

Teacher speaking to individual student and whole class:

"Oh, hm. Ok. Where would I put that? In which step are you thinking of?"

Student speaking:

"When it says 'put the nail polish remover on the cotton ball'."

Teacher speaking to individual student and whole class:

"Ok, here I'll read it again, 'First rub a cotton ball with polish remover on it across your nail to take old polish off. Was that specific? Did I give a precise word? What was my precise word that I gave?"

Whole class speaking:

"Rub"

Teacher speaking to individual student and whole class:

"Rub. So, I did give a precise word there. Yay for me, because I had to use my precise word. Right? Ok, what are you thinking though that I might need to change or add?"

Student speaking:

"Don't say, like, 'put on it'."

Teacher speaking to individual student and whole class:

"In this first step? But I didn't say 'put it on it', did it?"

Student speaking:

"I'm not sure"

Teacher speaking to individual student and whole class:

"Do you want me to read it again? First rub a cotton ball with polish remover on it across your nail to take polish off. Ok so I need to be a little bit more specific with 'on it' with 'polish remover on the cotton ball across your nail'. Ok, I can see what he means. Sometimes Johnny, I have to be very specific I can't assume that someone knows how to do it. I have to lay it out step by step exactly what to do. That's right. Cameron also made a point to me on this part. 'You'll put it on and you'll like it. One time I got five new colors.' Is that part really important for you to know how to paint your nails?"

Whole class speaking:

"No."

Teacher speaking to whole class:

"Not really, Opps. I kind of was thinking more along the lines of my small moments, wasn't I? So I really don't need that in there, do I? But thank goodness you helped me realize that because that's an example of sometimes as a writer we get so busy writing and thinking so many things and we don't realize that we put things down there that we don't actually need. Sometimes they are not important, you know, so when I do that, you know what, this is how I'm going to edit that. I'm just going to mark it out. I didn't need it. I didn't need that part at all in order for you to learn how to paint your nails, did I? Ok, alright, but you know what I am going to do? And I appreciate your help so much. The next time I read over this in just a little bit I'm going to read over it again and really, really think about your suggestions that you gave me and what I maybe I need to even add especially with the tips and warnings so that my reader knows exactly what to do. Thank you for being a good reader and listening to my piece to help me decide maybe something I need to add or something I need to take away."