

Informational Writing Minilesson:

Adding Close Ups

Shannon, First Grade

Teacher speaking to whole class:

“Writers, yesterday we had been working on how writers can look at a text, we got an idea from one of the texts, and how they can give a fact that adds a detail to help their reader really understand that fact a little bit better, by using a...does anyone remember...a com...”

Whole class speaking:

“Comparison”

Teacher speaking to whole class:

“A Comparison. And some of you tried that yesterday. Ok? Today I’m going to teach you another way that writers can add a detail to a drawing. Ok, look at this, I want you to take a look. Do you remember this book we read the other day about animal feet?”

Whole class speaking:

“Yes”

Teacher speaking to whole class:

“Ok, do you remember what we noticed what the author did?”

Student speaking:

“Zoomed in”

Teacher speaking to whole class:

“They zoomed in. That’s right, they zoomed in on that part of the animal, which this book is all about, their feet. So they zoomed in on each animal’s feet to really give us a close up look at how they use their feet and, especially like on the bird, we noticed because from this angle we really couldn’t tell how they used their feet. But when they zoomed in, we could really see how their claws wrapped around the branch, right? Let me show you this one that I found. Sharks. Look what the author did on this page. What do we always think of first when we think of a shark by the way?”

Whole class speaking:

“Teeth”

Teacher speaking to whole class:

“Their teeth. First thing we always think of about a shark. Well, that’s an important part of a shark that they’re known for. So look what the author did. ‘Different sharks have different teeth. Their teeth are perfect for what they eat. Long, spikey teeth are for catching. Flat teeth are for grinding. Serrated, which means they have little bumpy edges, teeth are for ripping’. Wasn’t that so smart of what the author did there? Because when I just look at a picture of this shark here, I can see his teeth a little bit, can’t I? But look how much more detail I see in a zoomed in picture of their teeth. Do you see the difference?”

[Students nodding yes]

Teacher speaking to whole class:

“Ok, so I was thinking with my piece about the jellyfish, I had finished my information on this page, I made my comparison, and then my next page is the diagram. So I drew my diagram of a jellyfish. This part is called the bell. These are the tentacles and the mouth is up underneath here. But you know what? I’m thinking maybe I can zoom in on a part that’s important. Their mouth is important and can you really see their mouth from this angle?”

Whole class speaking:

“No”

Teacher speaking to whole class:

“I’m just pointing to it, aren’t I? Maybe I can do that in my piece and I know that when I look at our text here, all they to zoom in was they just put a big picture in a little box. Ok, when you look through something and you zoom in, it gets....”

Whole class speaking:

“Bigger”

Teacher speaking to whole class:

“Bigger doesn’t it? When we use our magnifying glass in the science station it helps us see small things larger. So, I’m going to try that. So, I think I’m going to – here’s the mouth - I’m thinking I’m going to put the zoomed in picture near that part so that the reader will know what it is. I’m going to draw myself a little box and their mouth is basically like this little hole, but it’s got kind of curvy edges. And there’s really not a whole lot to it because jelly fish are clear and they really don’t have a whole lot of parts to them, but I can also kind of point to that, and let my reader know. Here’s the mouth under here. You can’t see it, but that’s an important part to it. Alright, so what I do as a writer when I’m on my diagram page, to show the important parts, I can think to myself, ‘is there an important part’? Is there an important part on my animal that maybe looks one way from right here, but when I zoom in closer I can show my reader a lot more detail. I want you to think about that too. Think for a second about your topic, about your animal that you’re doing. Kind of visualize your diagram, some of the parts that you would label on it, and think to yourself: ‘is there an important part there?’. There may not be, but there might be a part on there that’s important. I want you to quietly get your piece out, turn to your diagram page, and when you have your diagram page - turn to the diagram

page - and then turn and talk with your neighbor quietly about a part that you think is important and might - that you might be able to zoom in and show the reader a little bit of detail on."

Teacher speaking to individual student:

"What is yours?"

Student speaking:

"Whales"

Teacher speaking to individual student:

"Whales. I wonder is there a part on a whale?"

[Student speaking inaudible, discussing whales]

Teacher speaking to individual student:

"So, do you think maybe you could zoom in on that and show them maybe the shape of it?"

[Student speaking inaudible, discussing whales]

Teacher speaking to individual student:

"What's that called? It starts with a 'b'. I know what you're talking about. You're exactly right. From a regular - if I was just looking at a picture, they may not be able to tell but if I zoom in and show a close up picture to it, it would show more detail. What is a part that you might be thinking of?"

[Student speaking inaudible, discussing horses]

Teacher speaking to individual student:

"But then I think when I just stand back and look at a horse do they look about the same as when I zoom in and get closer to them? They kind of do, don't they? Maybe you can think about the horse's teeth and see some of those up close and how they might look?"

Student speaking:

"I saw that in my book"

Teacher speaking to individual student:

"Ok, you did see it in one of your books?"

Teacher speaking to whole class:

“Alright, my turn. Ok, writers. Before you share some examples with me of what you’re thinking, remember does every book that we read about something, do we have a zoomed in picture on every topic and every animal or something?”

Whole class speaking:

“No”

Teacher speaking to whole class:

“No. Sometimes a zoomed in picture helps us but sometimes you may not have a part that you want to zoom in on. It’s ok. But did anybody feel like they had a part on their animal that maybe looks different from here but shows me more detail when I zoom in on it like with the teeth? Christian.”

Student speaking:

“The whale’s tail”

Teacher speaking to individual student and whole class:

“Ok. What kind of detail would I see if they zoomed in?”

Student speaking:

“The whales have a mark on their tails.”

Teacher speaking to whole class:

“I remember learning about that, how every whale’s tail has different markings on it. So, far back in the ocean I just think it has some white stuff on its tail, but if I zoom in on that tail in notice ‘it has some definite designs on its tail.’ OK. I want us to have time to write. And we’re going to come back and share in a little bit. So writers, off you go.”