



Prairie Lands Writing Project
Eder Hall 201
Missouri Western State University
St. Joseph, MO 64507

Phone: (816) 271-4315 Fax: (816) 271-4166 Web: missouriwestern.edu/plwp Email: writingproject@missouriwestern.edu

Content Area Learning: Teaching in an Online World

Revising is NOT Rocket Science!

Terri McAvoy

Saturday, October 4, 2008

**Instructional Coach
Neely Elementary School
terri.mcavoy@sjds.k12.mo.us
816-364-4713**

Revising

To be quite frank, revising is a part of the process students least enjoy, so... it is up to teachers to show them fun and doable strategies for revision. Many students assume an I've-done-it-and-now-I'm-done-with-it attitude toward their writing. We, as teachers, need to get them to think of revising as a way to enhance an already good piece of writing, rather than thinking of it as a way to fix a bad piece of writing.

Ralph Fletcher, in *Writing Workshop: The Essential Guide*, suggests that we not force students to revise, but show them the following alternatives to consider when revising their writing:

- ❖ Change the beginning
- ❖ Change the ending
- ❖ Add a section (layering)
- ❖ Delete a part (pruning)
- ❖ Change the order (resequencing)
- ❖ Change the genre
- ❖ Change the point of view
- ❖ Change the tone
- ❖ Change the tense
- ❖ Slow down the hot spot
- ❖ Focus on one part
- ❖ Break a large piece into chunks or chapters

As you suggest ideas and model revision strategies during Mini-lessons, writing conferences, and share time, keep these things in mind:

- Don't expect them to revise everything.
- Make sure they understand the difference between revision and editing.
- Link revision with what you teach about craft.
- Model how a particular revision enhanced your own writing.
- Be patient. Try not to get frustrated if you don't see as much revision as you'd like.

~ Information summarized from *Writing Workshop: The Essential Guide*
Ralph Fletcher and JoAnn Portalupi

Revising for Sensory Detail

Mini-Lesson Ideas

Objective: The learner will revise written work using words and phrases, which will “show” rather than just “tell” about the writing. (W1A, Standard CA1, 4, 1.8, 2.1, 2.2) (W2A, Standard CA1, 1.6, 2.2) (W2D, Standard CA1, 1.6, 2.2)

Materials: Chart paper, five senses template, read aloud texts (*No Star Nights*, *Three Names*, and *Hello Ocean*) or other texts with great sensory detail which you love to read to your students.

Time Needed: The teacher will need five fifteen minute mini-lessons and the students will then need writing workshop time to practice the strategies.

Day One: Read aloud *No Star Nights* by Anna Eagan Smucker. Pause after reading descriptive passages and think aloud about how this helps you experience what author is describing. As you send students off to work on their own writing ask them to notice how other authors use sensory detail to describe places about which they are writing.

Day Two: Read aloud *Three Names* by Patricia MacLachlan. Ask students to listen for very descriptive places in the story. Pause occasionally and ask them to stop and jot in their writer’s notebook any particular words or phrases which stood out in their minds as sensory detail. Send them off to write independently, telling them it’s okay to try some descriptive words or phrases in their own writing if it fits.

Day Three: Read aloud *Hello Ocean* by Pam Munoz Ryan. Following the reading, ask students if they noticed how the author structured her book. (Usually one or two in the group can tell that it has been structured around the five senses.) Ask students to point out the best power lines for sensory detail. Add these to a Power Lines anchor chart if desired. Send students off to try some sensory detail in their own writing if it fits.

Day Four: Recall the story *Hello Ocean*, which was read during the previous mini-lesson. Review the five senses. Hand out a graphic organizer of the five senses. ask students to return to their writing workshop independent writing area and find a story in their writer’s notebook in which they feel they were very descriptive in their writing. Instruct them to find all the sensory details and tally each detail according to which of the senses it represents. (Most will find that they rely heavily on sight or visual description.)

Day Five: Ask students to bring their five senses graphic organizers to the mini-lesson area. Ask them what they noticed in their own writing. Send them off to write independently, challenging them to see if they can add more variety of sensory detail in their own writing as they select a piece to process.

~ Terri McAvoy, Prairie Lands Writing Project

Name: _____

Date: _____

Seed: _____

Sensory Words to Help My Reader/Listener

What I See

What I Hear

What I Smell

What I Feel