

Readers' and Writers' Notebooks

Research has clearly shown that writing and reading are reciprocal processes. While strength in neither automatically transfers into strength in the other, readers can be taught to read like a writer and transfer the resultant understandings and skills into their practice as writers. The same is true in reverse – writers' understandings and skills can improve reading comprehension with instruction. With this understanding that "teaching writing not only improves how well students write...[but] also enhances students' ability to read a text accurately, fluently, and with comprehension" (Graham & Herbert), the district requires the use of Reader's and Writer's notebooks by each student in all English Language Arts classroom.

Reader's and Writer's Notebooks are student-created, teacher-facilitated learning tools. Both should include a Table of Contents and pagination to support ease of use by students. Entries should be considered formal assessment by classroom teachers and be used as data points for determining individual and small group instruction.

To better support students' literacy growth, the district recommends that each ELA teacher maintain her or his own reader's and writer's notebooks.

Reader's Notebook Defined

"Reading is the inhale and writing is the exhale." Donalyn Miller as cited in Oh

A reader's notebook is a tool in which students capture information about and document their reading. It should contain pages on which students log the texts they have read; track progress toward reading goals; list books they would like to read; define reading strategies and reading-related literary terms; respond to texts; record vocabulary learned from texts; and take notes on reading mini-lessons.

Writer's Notebook Defined

"If a painter needs an easel to play with painting, and a basketball player needs a gym to play with the basketball, then it reasons that writers – especially developing writers – need a place to play with writing." Kelly Gallagher

A writer's notebook is a tool in which students capture information about and develop ideas for writing. It should contain pages on which students develop writing topics from which to write; define and experiment with attempting different writing strategies and writing-related literary terms; track terms with which they have spelling difficulties; take notes on writing mini-lessons; and, of course, capture their daily writing.

References

Gallagher, K. (2006). *Teaching adolescent writers*. Portland, ME: Stenhouse.

Graham, S., and Herbert, M.A. (2010). *Writing to read: Evidence for how writing can improve reading. A Carnegie Time to Act Report*. Washington, DC: Alliance for Excellent Education.

Oh, P. (2008, January). *The 'Book Whisperer' Answers Questions about Teaching Reading*. National Writing Project Resources. Retrieved September 10, 2013 from <http://www.nwp.org/cs/public/print/resource/2507>