Bringing the Joy Factor to the Writing Block

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Workshop Goals

• Describe and implement strategies for adding joy to writing instruction
Warm Up: Mingle Interviews

- **Goal:** Get to know your colleagues as writers

- **Process:** Take turns asking and recording interview questions until it’s time to switch partners
JOY
Joy Tip #1

Don’t assign, *teach*!
It’s writing time! Write whatever you feel like.

It’s writing time! Today your task is to write a 5 paragraph essay arguing why tigers should not be kept as pets.

It’s writing time! We are in our unit on argument writing. Today you will learn how writers make our reasons persuasive, then you will continue working on your draft.

It’s writing time! Today we will write a thesis statement.
Joy Tip #1: Don’t assign, teach!

• Give students clear, step-by-step guidance
• Model with a demonstration piece
• Let students briefly practice before independently working
• Provide elements of choice
• Make sure students know how to keep writing & are in control of their writing process
Joy Tip #1 in action...

- Think of moments this summer when you felt a strong emotion (joy, pride, disappointment, excitement, frustration)
- Jot down those moments
- Pick one moment that you remember *really* vividly
- Try writing it as a story – start right in the action
Joy Tip #1 in action...

• When I watched my youngest do a flip off a diving board
• When my oldest son ran the one-mile race

“Go, Andy, go!” I shouted as I watched him take off at the starting line. He sprinted, and I wondered if he’d make it to the corner without getting a cramp. “Pace yourself,” I called to his back.
Joy Tip #2

Double down on partnerships
Joy Tip #2: Double down on partnerships

- Give partners language (& tools!) for giving feedback
- Teach partners that storytelling is essential to writing
Joy Tip #2: Double down on partnerships

Partners Can Say...

- I love that story idea because...
- I’m wondering what will happen next...
- I’m curious about...
- I can’t wait to read that!
- It’s so great the way you...

Storytelling Strength

- Look at the story idea you’re writing in your notebook
- Tell it to your partner in your best storyteller voice
  - Intonation
  - Hand gestures
- Switch!
Breathe new life into mentor texts
Joy Tip #3: Breathe new life into mentor texts

• Find fantastic books & authors
• Study texts, asking:
  – What do I like about this?
  – Why do I like it?
  – What does the author do with her/his writing here?
  – How can I try it in my writing?
Joy Tip #3: Breathe new life into mentor texts

Book Tasting

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Joy Tip #3: Breathe new life into mentor texts

Shoes to *strut* in. Shoes to *run* in.

Because Charmaine’s strutting hard enough to shame a rooster.

And her legs are just raring to run.

“These shoes are like Wilma’s,” she says. “My daddy went uptown to get ‘em.”

I stare at the concrete. I don’t have a shoe-buying daddy. My sneakers have holes in the soles and laces that never thought to glimmer.
Joy Tip #4

Small tools bring big energy
Joy Tip #4

Revision glasses
Joy Tip #4
Joy Tip #5

Celebrate good times...
Joy Tip #5: Cel-e-brate good times...

Source: https://twowritingteachers.org/2015/09/09/planning-ahead-for-publishing/
Joy Tip #5: Cel-e-brate good times...

• Put celebrations on the classroom calendar well in advance
• Gather an authentic audience
• Celebrate everyone’s work
• Keep it simple!
Joy Tip #5: Cel-e-brate good times...

- Symphony share
- Gallery walk
- Placemats
- Campfire
- Popcorn & a “movie”
Joy Tip #6

Push yourself to go from “teacher of writing” to “writer”
Joy Tip #6: Writing teacher to writer

• What can you read?
• What can you write?
• When do you feel success as a writer?
• What would make you love teaching it more?
Joy Tips in Review

#1 Don’t assign, teach
#2 Double down on partnerships
#3 Breathe new life into mentor texts
#4 Small tools bring big energy
#5 Cel-e-brate good times...
#6 Push yourself to be a writer