

Writing for an Authentic Audience

Presentation by Kasey Short

Brainstorm: List a few writing assignments that you assign to your students.

Who is an "Authentic Audience"?

Anyone that a student is writing for other than their teacher for the purpose of a grade.

Writing to achieve a goal not a grade.

- Can provide intrinsic motivation for students.
- Reinforces that writing style should depend on the audience.
- Provides a practical reason to revise and edit written work.
- Allows students to share their ideas with others.

Key Ideas:

- Audience can be anyone
- Revision
- Variety of formats (podcast, movie, cartoon, e-mail, etc.)
- Consider audience when deciding format
- Write from ones own point of view
- Share writing with intended audience, life lesson if they respond

Getting Started:

1. Begin with the learning goal. Is it content, writing style or both?
2. Consider how that type of writing is used in the real world. Why do authors write fiction? Why do historians, mathematicians, scientist, artist, etc. write in the real world and who is their audience?
3. Choose a topic that is both interesting to the students and has a real world application.
4. Provide mentor text for students to read before beginning their assignment. How will they use the text to impact their writing?

Restructured Assignment Examples

1. Research paper changed to a letter to someone in the community, government, organization, etc.
2. Classic novel rewritten as a children's story changed to a classic novel rewritten as a digital book to share with lower school students.
3. Explain how to (math problem, experiment, etc.) changed to creating directions for the next class.
4. Reflection about current event changed to letter to the editor.
5. Essay about what makes a good leader changed to a presentation to their peers about what leadership qualities they should look for when voting for student council representatives.

How can you restructure some current writing assignments so that they are written for an authentic audience?

Consider assignments that may require the following:

- Informing Others
- Instructions
- Sharing opinions
- Persuading
- Scripts
- Sharing ideas

Write a note or e-mail to a colleague that explains some of the benefits of writing for an authentic audience and an idea you came up with to implement it in your curriculum.

How was writing a note to a colleague different than if you were asked to write a reflection about the session?

What were the benefits? Were there any challenges?

Questions?

Contact Information

Kasey.Short@charlottecountryday.org