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THE REFRACTIVE *POWER* of CREATIVE WRITING

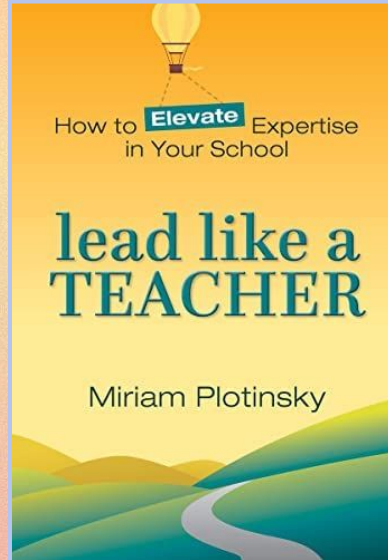
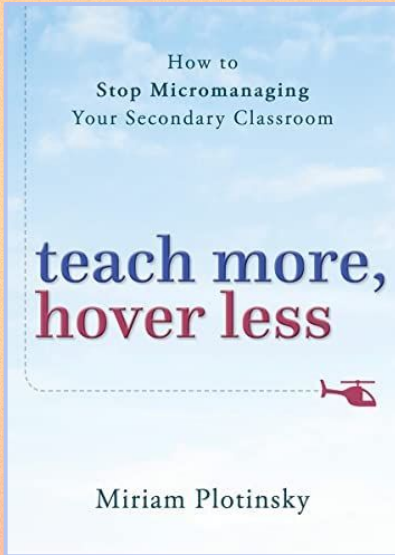
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Bringing Student Ownership of Writing Identity Into the Light

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★ **Miriam Plotinsky**
Author and Instructional Specialist ★



★ **Click on the books to learn more!** ★

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SESSION RESOURCES AND SLIDES

To follow along with today's presentation and access all materials, go to:

<https://miriamplotinsky.com/NCTE>



SESSION AGENDA



01

DEFINING

What is “academic identity?”

02

ACTIVATING

Connecting activators to building student capacity

03

EXPLORING

Resources to consult after the session

04

APPLYING

Practical and immediate application

05

REFLECTING

Taking time to think and determine next steps





ACADEMIC IDENTITY

Defining the Concept





DEFINITION

ACADEMIC IDENTITY:

- ★ **A strong intrinsic sense of value in one's own capacity to make profound contributions to scholarship in classroom settings and beyond.**

“The problem with keeping a sense of rapport or connection separate from academic content is that students make a distinction in their minds between a teacher’s personal interest in them and the teacher’s belief that they can learn.”

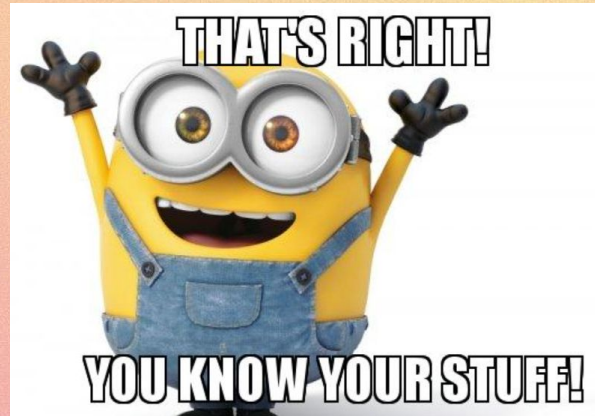
CHAPTER TWO

TEACH MORE, HOVER LESS

EXEMPLIFYING THE APPROACH

ACTIVATOR:

An instructional frame used for the purpose of determining prior knowledge and applying what students know to new content.

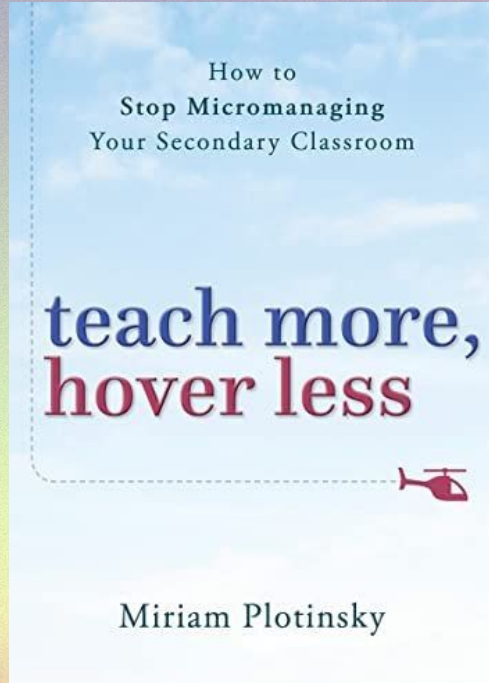


MAKING THE DISTINCTION

How are activators different from warm-ups?



ACTIVATOR



A Picture is Worth...

TOPIC: Gratitude.

Pick an image on your phone, either the camera roll or on the web. Take a few minutes to jot down ideas about what you picked, and why it represents our topic.

Source:
TMHL, Page 33



THE POWER OF THE

POST-IT NOTE

**ON A POST-IT, WRITE 1-2
THOUGHTS TO SUMMARIZE
YOUR IDEAS ABOUT THE TOPIC
OF GRATITUDE.**





INCREASING STUDENT VOICE



PARTNER

Share your activator thoughts with a partner!

WALL

Place your Post-It on the wall. Look at others and put a check mark next to ones that resonate!

TEACHER

Give the Post-It to your teacher, who will select a few to share anonymously at random!

Today, we'll go with Door #2!



QUESTION

**How can this activator build
academic identity?**



ARTICLES FOR FURTHER EXPLORATION

STUDENT ENGAGEMENT

★ Empowering Students to Develop an Academic Identity

High school teachers can move beyond forging personal connections with students to ensuring that they feel validated as learners.

OPINION | TEACHING & LEARNING

The Incredible Benefits of Letting Students Drive Their Own Learning

By Miriam Plotinsky Oct 3, 2019

Questions for Reflection:

What about these approaches works with your current practice? What is one slight change or “tweak” that could be implemented quickly?

What actions might take longer and require more complex, adaptive processes? What is just one change you might prioritize?

When partnering with adult learners, what are some ways to either communicate the importance of these strategies or to lead in a more learner-centered way?



**APPLYING
IDEAS TO
PRACTICE**

THE MYTH OF THE “BAD WRITER”

The Myth	The Reality
I'm a terrible writer. Nothing ever turns out the way I want it to.	You have so many valuable ideas to share.
I never learned grammar, so none of my thoughts make sense.	Grammar is just one aspect of writing, and we can learn more about how to improve.
I tried to write this, but it didn't work. I'm just going to throw it out.	The execution might not have been ideal, but this is a great concept. Keep trying!
Sorry, this is just a draft. I know it isn't any good.	There are many things about this draft that work. Let's look at what we can adjust.
My vocabulary is all wrong. I don't know enough big words.	Big words can interfere with your voice. Keeping it simple is actually better.
Nobody will like this. I don't want to show it to anyone.	Let's think about why you are worried about this and look at what is good first.

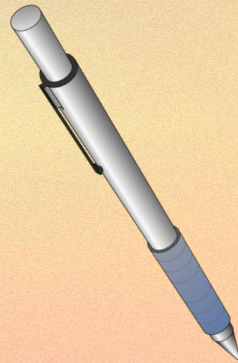
COMMON MISCONCEPTIONS ABOUT CREATIVE WRITING

- ❑ Narrative fiction is the main focus of all CW classes.
- ❑ Kids have to like sharing their work to benefit from creative writing.
- ❑ Being a creative writer requires natural talent or affinity.
- ❑ The creative writing world is vicious and competitive.
- ❑ If you don't "get" poetry, you won't like creative writing.
- ❑ Creative writing kids are sensitive or "emo."
- ❑ Being a writer means being published.



THE HIGHEST TRUTH OF CREATIVE WRITING

**All students who write are writers.
Full stop.**



HOW DO WE CHANGE THE NARRATIVE?

Think of a time when you were younger and began to believe that something was too hard for you. It could be school-related or personal.

Brainstorm thoughts about what happened, using the questions below as a guide to your thoughts. Feel free to jot down thoughts or keywords.

- What triggered your thinking about the challenge of the task? What exactly happened? Who said what?
- What were your feelings at first? How did they change as time passed?
- Were there consequences or an impact because of your thinking that way?
- How might you confront and question the beliefs you have about your ability with this challenge?


Reflect upon your thoughts above in connection with other challenges you face.

Is your inner voice correct about what you can or cannot do? If so, why? If not, what can you do to change the way you see your own abilities? Finally, what actions might be needed to try a new approach?



REFLECT

How might this exercise be implemented in a safe way?
Turn and talk!



ANOTHER STRATEGY

“The Magic Box”

Write a 2-3 sentence story idea on the provided slip of paper. Include a main character, setting and conflict.

Put your slip of paper into the provide “magic” box (or bag, or bucket, etc.)

Draw another person’s story idea at random and write the introduction only (1-2 paragraphs).

Place your introduction back into the box!



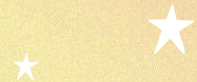
OPTIONS FOR SHARING



1. **Students can pull out paragraphs at random to hear and “popcorn” the next one to the story writer that was selected**
2. **Students could select a story from the box, read it quietly, and opt to share aloud (or not)**
3. **The teacher could ask for volunteers who want to hear how their story idea turned out**
4. **The stories could be placed on desks and shared via gallery walk**
5. **...other ideas?**



THE GOAL: STUDENTS SHARE A COLLABORATIVE WRITING EXPERIENCE IN A SAFE ZONE!



PLANNING FOR ACADEMIC IDENTITY



LOVE, LOVE NOT

Share one thing about the learning you enjoyed.

Now, share something that did not go as well.

Requests or suggestions for tomorrow?



APPLICATION TO CORE ELA CLASSES



HOW DOES THIS METHOD SUPPORT MORE TRADITIONAL ELA INSTRUCTION?

1. No matter the specific content, research shows that students who write more become better writers.
2. Building confidence with one type of writing leads to an added sense of capacity in others.
3. Students who are successful in a task that is cognitively rigorous will extend their skills to other content areas and challenges.





SUMMARIZER & NEXT STEPS

Past Me, Present Me

PAST ME, PRESENT ME



STRATEGY

Past Me, Present Me

DESCRIPTION

Near the end of class, students are instructed to take a sheet of paper and fold it in half (both horizontal and vertical folds work). On one side, they write down a perception they had about the day's learning before instruction, which represents "Past Me." On the other side, they write down what they now understand or know, which represents "Present Me."



WHAT DOES THIS SUMMARIZER REINFORCE?

NEXT STEPS FOR PRACTICE

1. Take a moment to brainstorm **ONE** takeaway for immediate practice, either with students or with coaching adult learners.
2. Share your thought with the group!



THANKS!

Stay in touch!

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ALTERNATIVE RESOURCES

