teaching writers *to* REFLECT

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Strategies for a More Thoughtful Writing Workshop

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For the young writers who give us so much to think and talk about.
Everything in this book we have learned from you.

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Foreword

Years ago I was conferring with a first grader named Lucas. It was January, and he was making a nonfiction book about eagles. He was illustrating a page where he'd written, "Eagles have sensitive eyes," and as we talked about how he knew this interesting fact, he asked me, "Do you know what I want to be when I grow up?"

"What?" I asked.

"A firefighter and an illustrator," he said.

"Really?"

He explained. "Yes, because it's a helpful job, and if I'm at home working on a book, I can just quit on it, and go to the fire, and when I get back home my book will still be there waiting on me. You can use all the time you want."

He knew this to be true, as he'd been working on his eagles book for many days and still had lots he wanted to do.

I've never forgotten this exchange. Of course the fact that I caught it on tape allows me to revisit it whenever I want, where I see a much younger version of both myself and the little boy with the wide smile and fabulous mullet ("All business in the front, all party in the back," he once told me) who's all grown up now.

And no, in case you're wondering, I don't know if his life plan worked out that way or not. But it was a good plan, wasn't it? I like helpful jobs. And illustrators.

What struck me that morning, and strikes me still, is how Lucas *knew* himself in that way. At the ripe old age of six, he'd had enough experience making books to understand the temporal nature of work that unfolds over time. He'd had enough experience to know that he was just the kind of person who could stay with a project, direct his own actions, and realize his intentions. He felt comfortable and confident enough in his work to imagine a future that included him doing it every day. It's what he wanted *to be*.

Well, actually, it was one of the things he wanted to be.

But think about how much puzzling through it must have taken for Lucas to figure out how he could manage his two dream jobs at the same time. Clearly, this young writer and illustrator was not just going through the motions; he was deeply reflective about his work.

I'm not at all surprised that I thought of Lucas when it came time to introduce you to *Teaching Writers to Reflect*. In so many ways, he represents precisely the vision Anne, Colleen, and Deana say they have for their students: "that their writing experiences be layered with rich reflection, so that as they write, they not only produce specific products, but they develop as writers who know *for themselves* what they are doing and why." In their classrooms, they pursue this vision with a laser sharp focus on the role that reflection plays in the construction of identity. They know that if children are to become agentive writers who can wield power with a pen or a keyboard, reflection will be key to that becoming.

Some children, no doubt, are just naturally reflective. I don't doubt that much of Lucas' thoughtfulness about his work was just part of who he is. But all children—and adults for that matter—can be taught to be more reflective. This teaching begins with building in time and expectation for reflection. It begins with simple questions: *What kind of writing do you most like to do? What's challenging for you about writing?* It begins with modeling, with children watching adults who stop in the middle of things to wonder aloud about something that's occurred.

What I learned from working with Anne, Colleen, and Deana on this book (I was privileged to be their editor), however, is that there is so much more we can do to teach children how to reflect, but we have to take this work on with intention. We can't leave it to chance. The frame they use for this teaching—remember, describe, act—is very intentional, it positions reflection at the center of writing workshop, and it represents a powerful habit of mind that can serve children across the day and throughout their lives, not just when they are writing.

I have been teaching in, researching through, and writing about workshops for many, many years now, and I truly believe that this piece of the work, the reflection piece, is what's missing in so many classrooms. And it's not missing because of anyone's willfulness or deliberate rejection of it. We're just busy. It's tough to get everything in as it is, so going through the motions helps us get wherever it is we're trying to go.

But in the lovely, authentic voices of Colleen's and Deana's second and third graders, I was reminded again and again throughout the book of how enormously valuable it is for children to stop, reflect, and think about who they are at one precious moment in time. Like their student Jim who said, "I wrote a book called "Sharks" and really like to write comic books, but I worry about Swiss cheese, spiders, and holes." When I read this I thought, "You know, Jim doesn't get this moment back. He will only be this writer with these joys and these worries once in his life. How lucky he is to have teachers who gave him time to stop and think about who he is in this moment."

Reflection gives us that. It gives us the chance to, as Lucy Calkins has said, hold our lives in our hands and declare them treasures. But it does so much more, of course (not that there needs to be anything more), and in this book the authors show us how students become *better writers* when they learn how to learn from their own experiences. Anne, Colleen, and Deana also show us how they become better teachers when they stop long enough to listen and learn from their students.

I love this little gem of a book. I believe it's got important work to do in the world. I love the fireflies on the cover. I know that if you are holding this book in your hands, you've caught the light of it and you can use it to brighten your path forward in this work.

No need to hurry.

As a little sage once taught me, you can use all the time you want.

—Katie Wood Ray

chapter

TWO

Writers Remember

Early in our work in learning how to help students build strong identities as writers, we came to the end of a unit and were preparing for a publication celebration. Students had started several personal narratives, using a range of strategies for invention we had taught in minilessons. They each had selected one narrative to take to completion, and they had engaged in several days of revising, including getting a partner's feedback, adding detail to their drafts, thinking about organization, and adding dialogue. As they were editing, making final copies, and illustrating finished pieces for inclusion in a class book, we decided to have our students reflect on the process. While we had used reflection here and there along the way, this was one of the first times we had set aside deliberate carpet time for it and planned for a whole-group reflective conversation.

"What are some of the things we worked on in writing workshop that helped you get your draft to this point?" we asked the class.

Nothing. Our usually boisterous students sat silently, picking at their shoelaces.

But, we are experienced teachers with good wait time, so we waited. Still nothing. Finally, a few hands went up from those good little participants who always raised their hands and tried hard to do what we were asking.

"I made my story better."

"I fixed the things that were wrong in my story."

"My partner helped me make my story better."

What was happening? These were not the reflective responses we'd expected from this smart, engaged group of second- and third-grade writers. We had expected detailed accounts of decisions made along the way to a final draft: endings written and then discarded, paragraphs reordered, helpful encounters with a partner's clarifying questions. Instead, we just got "I made it better."

We were stumped, and (if we're honest) maybe a little disappointed with our students. As we debriefed, we wondered: "Was this over their heads? They can reflect on things they've read; why not on their writing? Have they even been with us through all these weeks of workshop?"

We realized that when we asked about a specific classroom activity or a specific strategy we had taught, our students could talk easily about it; it was the open-ended invitation to draw from multiple experiences over a long period of time that they struggled with. It wasn't exactly that they couldn't reflect; it was that they couldn't necessarily *remember* what we had been doing in order to reflect upon it. After all, these were second and third graders: they didn't necessarily know what day of the week it was, and they got this morning confused with last week. Or, they could remember things we had done in class when prompted a bit, but the memories weren't necessarily organized in their minds in ways that they could surface and scroll through themselves.

Remembering Connects Us to Identity

As adults, when we engage in an activity that we own as part of our identity—like running, quilting, or gardening, for instance—we remember important experiences we've had as a runner, a quilter, or a gardener over time. For example, Anne sings in a choir. When she's in that role, she draws in part on her memories and the lessons she's learned from the many, many previous times she has sung with a choir, from the bit parts she had in elementary school musicals, to the time she blew a big audition in high school, to the solo she sang on Christmas Eve in a sanctuary lit by flickering candlelight. These are more than nice memories for the photo album; they are tools Anne can and does draw upon for singing now. That bad audition, along with the time Anne has thought about it and talked about it in the years since, is right with her in the present every time she takes calming breaths to steady her nerves before singing. The memory of that Christmas Eve emboldens Anne to try newer and more

challenging solos that she might otherwise shy away from: "Well, this is hard, but when I did that other scary Christmas solo it felt amazing afterward, and having memorized my piece really helped me feel secure. I think I'll try again."

The same is true with writing. As an adult writer, you probably remember many writing experiences you've had, and those memories inform your current writing. You remember how, when you finally learned in your last year of college to start papers right away instead of the night before they were due, you realized that "I write best under pressure" wasn't exactly true for you—it was that you had been using pressure to force yourself to write at all. Now you draw on that discovery to schedule writing time when you know a deadline approaches.

You remember all the times you've accidentally hit Send on an email, only to notice a typo just as you've heard the "whoosh" of that message going right to someone whose opinion you cared about, and you draw on that memory to proofread something carefully when you know it's really important.

You remember when someone showed you a helpful organizing strategy for a piece of writing, and now you sometimes use it—but not just anytime. You use it when the writing situation you're facing reminds you of a situation where the strategy was helpful.

Remembering the decisions you made as a writer, and the outcomes those decisions produced, is a prerequisite for getting better at making those decisions in the future. And over time you learn to say, "I'm a writer who needs to plan ahead," or "I'm a writer who works well from an outline," or "I'm a writer who needs to talk it out before writing," or "I'm a writer who can miss a lot of typos if I'm not careful." Note that all of those statements start with "I'm a writer who . . . ," an agentive claim of identity that is key to getting better and growing stronger.

If our students couldn't remember what they had been doing with their writing, or if they couldn't put their memories together into a kind of story about how they had handled a piece of writing, then how could they say they were writers? How could they tap the strength that would come from knowing themselves in that particular way? We could call them *writers* all day long, but it would be nothing more than a cute label if they had no memories in which to ground their identities.

Over time we've come to understand that we need to scaffold remembering as part of a process of reflection. Our students need clear and reliable memories of their writing experiences to think about, talk about, learn from, and draw upon each time they write. They need writing experiences that are truly theirs so they can eventually say, "I'm a writer who . . . ," and have those words mean something.

Teaching Remembering

When we say we teach students to *remember*, we mean we support students as they recall and retell—with specificity—what happened in their writing practice. We find it helpful to have students focus on three specific kinds of remembering:

1. Remembering *what* was taught and *what* they did in their writing
2. Remembering *how* they did it and the results
3. Remembering *why* they did it

With this framework in mind, we plan engagements that help students learn to remember their actions so reflection becomes possible. Next, we consider the purpose of each kind of remembering, and then we share some of the most powerful engagements we've developed to support our students in remembering.

REMEMBERING *WHAT*

In order to reflect, students need to recall both the writing experiences they shared and those they experienced as individuals. That seems obvious enough, but writers need support to remember specifics: What did we (the teachers) teach in minilessons and conferences—and how many times did we teach it? What anchor charts did the class make and use? What did the students do? What strategies did they use? What decisions and choices did they make? What texts did they refer to as models? What did the class talk about during share times? In other words, at a basic level, *what happened?*

Since our ultimate goal is for students to build strong identities as writers through reflection, remembering experiences is really important. In his book *Choice Words* (2004), Peter Johnston describes how the stories we position students to tell about themselves have consequences for their academic identities. When we ask a student a question like "What did you do today as a writer?" we create a space in which it is presumed that (a) the student is a writer, a real one; (b) the student is *doing* things, actively, when writing; and (c) the writer is doing these things with intention, usually to make the piece of writing better. As Johnston explains, these assumptions "[make] it hard for the student to reject either the identity or the action. . . . The student is gently nudged—well, all right, pushed—to rehearse a narrative with herself as the writer/protagonist" (26).

Our teaching needs to position students not just as authors of the texts they write but also as authors of stories of their own processes and development as writers. To develop strong identities, students need to be able to tell stories about themselves *as writers* where they are the main characters—the protagonists—who make the decisions and take the actions that lead to the production of a written text. As they learn to tell these stories with specific, chronological detail, the practices we suggest become more than just things to do because a teacher has asked for it; they become possible additions to students' own repertoires of practice.

REMEMBERING *HOW*

If remembering *what* they did helps students tell stories about themselves as writers, remembering *how* they did things adds important detail to those stories. Most of remembering *how* is procedural knowledge: What were the steps? What materials were used? How did it turn out? And, perhaps most importantly, what would you have to do in order to do it again? For example, if Jack remembered that he made a new lead for his narrative (that's the *what*), then remembering *how* would involve recalling that a teacher modeled writing three kinds of leads, that he looked in picture books to see more examples, that he experimented with a few, and that a partner helped him choose which one seemed most effective to her as a reader.

REMEMBERING *WHY*

Finally, students need to remember *why* they did what they did as writers. What was the context or situation that led the writer to make this decision or take this action? For example, let's say Marianna is practicing writing dialogue for characters in her narrative. Why? Did she get feedback that her story was boring? Did she think it might offer insight into the characters? Was she attending closely to a minilesson about dialogue? Did she get the idea from a book she was reading? *Why?*

When we say remembering *why*, we are really referring to the whole array of conditional and contextual knowledge that surrounds a writing experience and impacts decision making: What was happening? What was important at the time? What audience was involved? What teachers or partners played a role? Asking someone why they did something presumes that they had reasons, *good* reasons. It presumes intention. And then it's on the students to think about what their intentions were in a particular moment.

REMEMBERING THAT DECISION-MAKING MATTERS

We're mindful that asking questions about *what*, *how*, and *why* is really most powerful only when students are making the decisions about what they do. For many students, this kind of decision making is rare. Too often, the presumption in school is that students do things simply because they are told to, for no purpose other than that they are at school, and "at school we do school."

As you'll see in the strategies we offer next, we do care that students remember the "doing school" part of what we taught and what they did as a class. But just as important, if not more so, are students' memories about specific things they *chose* to try and how those experiments went. We want to know the following:

- Whom did you go to for feedback, and what (and how helpful) was the feedback?
- When a teacher offered choices about how to begin a story, which one did you pick, and with what outcome?
- What process did you go through to move from ideas and starts of drafts to a story idea you were willing to carry forward through revision?
- Where did you take a risk?

Questions like these position students to own and tell their stories about what they do as writers, which, in turn, makes them intentional and powerful authors of their identities as writers. Students can learn not only from their own remembering (and the examination of those memories, which comes after) but from the remembering work of others. When they share stories and compare notes, they add to their internal list of possibilities for next time, and they get a sense of the many right ways to do a thing. But this benefit is possible only when the stories are truly the students' own and are as varied as the many different decisions individual writers inevitably make.

Strategies for Remembering

How do you remember important things that have happened? What strategies do you use to make sure you can access your memories when you need them? We know there are many ways people help themselves remember, but we also know we probably use some of the same strategies you do: we take and keep photos, make notes for next time, write in journals, and talk with people when important things happen. These are the same basic strategies we teach our students to use again and

again throughout the year to help them remember and then reflect on their experiences in writing workshop. Through these shared strategies, students develop habits they can use independently for more effective individual reflection.

In the sections that follow, we highlight four of the most important remembering strategies we use: (1) the time line; (2) the notebook flip; (3) the table of contents; and (4) photo or video elicitation. For each strategy, we offer a snapshot of how it works with our students, and then we step back and think through why we do it, what it makes possible, and how you might adapt the strategy to use with students in your own context.

TIME LINE

The time line strategy is useful for helping students remember their shared experiences along a sequence of instruction. For example, if we took the whole class through three different experiments with organizing a piece of writing, and then we wanted them to reflect on the decisions they ultimately made about organizing their own pieces, then we would need to help them remember what the three experiments were before much else could happen.

Snapshot of the Time Line in Action

We gather the class on the carpet and tape a long, horizontal sheet of butcher paper to the board. We will be referring to the time line later, so we want a paper copy that we can keep on the wall. We draw a horizontal line across the paper, representing linear time (though we don't say anything explicit about that to start). We set the scene for the class quite simply: "Along the way to these narratives we're finishing, we've done a lot of things as a class. What are some of the things we've done?"

Students begin to raise hands, and when we see hands from about half the class, we start to take input.

"We drew those lands," one child offers.

"Those maps!" clarifies another. And we write "territory maps" on our time line, leaving some space before and after for other things we taught.

"We're doing our illustrations," someone adds, and we write that to the far right of our line. We just started to add illustrations the day before, and only those students with a fairly solid written draft are adding them at this point.

Another student struggles to add his recollection: "There was that day . . . you screamed . . . pajama day . . ."

Friends jump in: "You dropped the book! We wrote about it!"

They are referring to an exercise in vivid diction. One day, Anne entered the classroom reading a book and bumped into someone on her way, knocking over a tin of blocks. She looked up in surprise as the blocks clattered onto the floor. That's when she saw that the students were in pajamas. "What!?" Anne cried. "Why didn't anybody tell me it was pajama day?" She threw her book to the side in disgust and hurried out of the room in a huff. Before the kids could talk about what they had just seen, Colleen and Deana directed them *not* to talk about it, but to write about it. After they did, they compared what they had written to see the broad range of word choices available for describing any one scene.

We write this memory on the time line as "vivid language." Using our own teaching vocabulary and not the students' words is a deliberate choice; we think it's important to help students know and use precise terms to describe what they do as writers. (We will dig into this in detail in the next chapter.)

Continuing the time line, one by one, students recall and we record in rough chronological order the other strategies we have taught over the past few weeks: finding a good spot to work in, choosing a piece of writing to develop further, using a storyteller voice, crafting leads.

Before long, our time line is full (See Figure 2.1 for examples of time lines for other genres.). Students begin to comment on it without prompting:

"We've done a lot!"

"I forgot we had done some of those."

"It takes a lot to finish a piece of writing."

We leave the time line up on the wall until we have published our narratives in a class book and read-around. We're not just here to write narratives (or informational books, or letters, or essays); we are here to become writers. This time line is evidence; it's like a trail of bread crumbs tracing our journey.

Unpacking the Time Line Strategy

One reason we engage students in making the time line is simply to mirror back to them—and honor and celebrate—all of the hard work that went into the completion of a finished piece of writing. One experience many students have in school is that once they've finally mastered something difficult, they look up from their work to find that others in the class have now moved far ahead. It's like a bike ride Anne remembers having with a partner who was more fit than her. At the top of a big hill, this friend would kindly wait for Anne to reach the top too, but then he would immediately resume riding as Anne came up the crest. He was not only in better shape

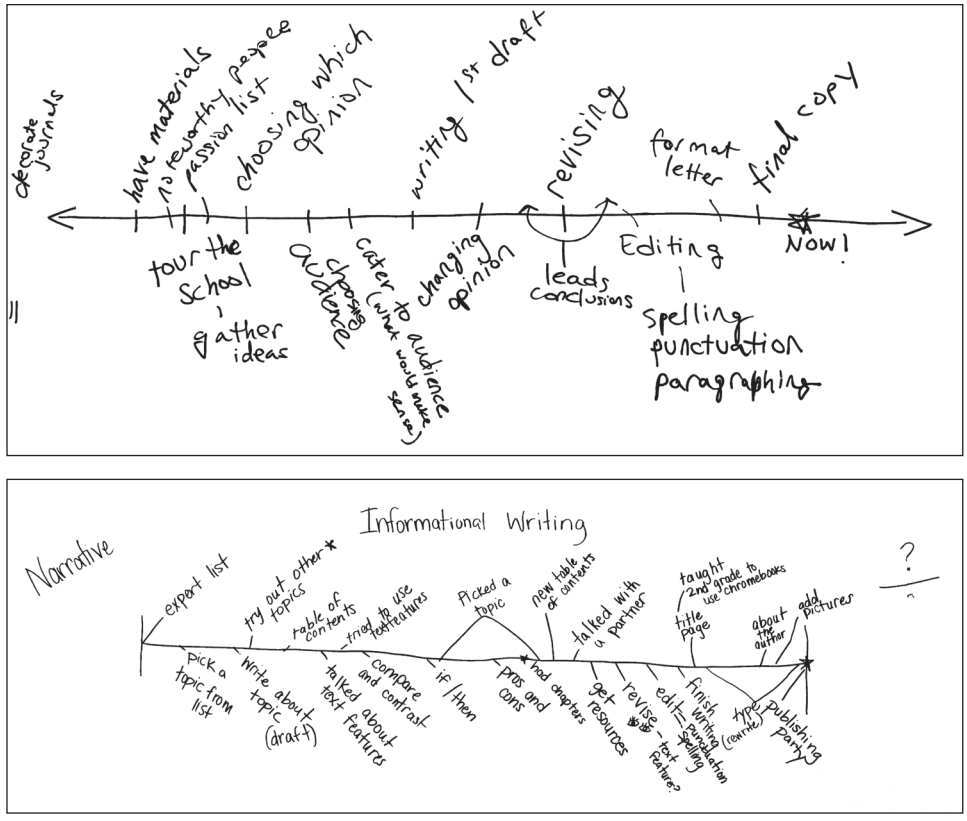

Figure 2.1 Completed Time Lines

but had also had a nice break while waiting for Anne to reach the top; when Anne arrived huffing and puffing, she got no break at all if she was going to avoid falling behind again. This was discouraging! While every writer in the room is climbing different hills at different paces, we think it's important to stop and spend some time together at the top, noticing the different things writers have done to get there.

Second, as the students co-create the time line, it allows them to take ownership of the work they did as writers. In our classroom, while we value opportunities for choice and strive to position students as independently as possible, we do have a district-adopted curriculum resource in place and we do work together through units of study, typically specifying at least in part the genres students will write and when they are due to be finished. In addition to these constraints on student choice, of course, we also teach specific whole-class minilessons as we see the needs of the class developing. This means it's possible, if we're not careful, for students to see the narrative trajectory of our writing workshop as a series of actions the teachers took

instead of as a series of actions they took: "She taught us about leads. She taught us about gathering ideas. She showed us how to punctuate dialogue," and so on. And yes, we *do* do all those things as teachers! Yet we want students' memories of writing—and their subsequent reflection—to be memories of things they did with intention and from which they experienced results.

If students are to own the memories of their work in the study, it's important that *they* recall what happened and organize it all in their memory. We could have easily created a time line over the course of our narrative study by adding a strategy each day we introduced one, but that would have been us doing the work, with us as protagonists in the story of writing development. The time line would have been just another anchor chart used at the end of the unit instead of a useful document for reflection that students made out of their own sense of what they did and why. And indeed, making it themselves helped them become meaningfully engaged with the reflection process. As our second and third graders gazed upon the huge time line plastered across the front of the room, watching it get more and more crowded with things they remembered doing (things they remembered struggling with, liking, finding useful, or even trying and rejecting), their faces lit up, their minds locked in, and hands shot up as students built upon one another's responses.

Once a time line is up in front of the class and most students feel it's complete, we look at it together and talk. We usually start with "What do you notice about this?" With some classes, this is enough! Someone will notice that several of the items on the time line involve partner work. "Great observation," we say, and then we ask, "What's something you learned about writing from a partner this unit? Can you turn and talk to someone near you about that?" Here are some questions you might ask writers about a time line:

- What work did we do that was most helpful to you as a writer?
- What work do you see on this time line that you've done many times before? And what work do you see up here that was new for you this time?
- Where on this time line did you have the most energy?
- Where did you struggle with the work?
- What on this time line are you especially proud of?
- What on this time line do you really want to incorporate into your next major piece of writing?

Questions like these take students from remembering to reflecting more thoroughly on what they have remembered. There's so much more to think about once those memories are all laid out for the writers to see.

invitation *to* REFLECT

Try using a time line to provoke reflection of your own. First, choose some period of time that you want to reflect on. It might be a time line of one of these events, for example:

- your experiences with using a new curriculum resource
- your experiences with a particular student you'd like to understand better
- your journey in a strand of professional development—perhaps National Board certification, the National Writing Project, a master's degree program, or a professional community you've joined
- your school year after switching to a new grade level or school building

Next, spend some time simply making the time line. Stop yourself from trying to make a beautiful drawing or fitting it all elegantly onto your paper. Stay focused on generating ideas.

Once you've got your time line, you can think about it the same way you would ask your students to do. Here are some questions you might ask yourself:

- Are any events repeated or similar to one another? In what way(s)? Is this intentional, or is it that something keeps recurring whether I like it or not?
- What themes emerge here?
- What emotions accompany the events? How are those contributing in positive and negative ways to what is happening? Are there triggers here that stop me from learning or accomplishing my goals? Are there sparks that energize or inspire me—and if so, could I make those happen more often?
- Where on the time line are significant learning events, for me or my students? What led up to those? Are there any common sequences or steps that I could take more deliberately in the future?
- What other people show up on the time line? Who is influencing me? Which of these influences might I nurture and increase? Are there any influences I need to take steps to minimize?

You might think about using this same strategy in your own classroom as a way to wrap up a unit of writing—or work over time in *any* content area. Co-constructed time lines allow students to be proud not just of a finished product but also of all the work they did to get to that product. Time lines emphasize process rather than product and position the finished work as just one of many artifacts of the journey taken to get there.

NOTEBOOK FLIP

Similar to the time line, the notebook flip is about creating a shared list of activities and strategies students have learned and used. But while the time line is a shared experience where we simply think back to remember, with the notebook flip, students ground their remembering in the artifacts they find in their notebooks. Over time, we want student writers to be able to remember and reflect independently—so even though we also do the notebook flip as a shared activity, when students use their own work as a prompt for remembering, they are moving toward more independent reflection.

For the notebook flip, we use the familiar routine and vocabulary of the daily schedule as a scaffold to help students remember their writing processes. To preview the day's schedule each morning, Colleen's class uses a pocket chart featuring cards with ordinal and transition words: "First we have . . . ," "Later we have . . . ," "Subsequently we have . . . ," "After that . . . ," and so on. These words help children order the actions they see they've taken in their notebooks in meaningful ways.

Snapshot of the Notebook Flip in Action

Our students are gathered on the rug with their notebooks in their laps.

"Look in your notebooks. What is one thing you have done as you worked on your writing so far?" We wait for many hands to go up before asking for responses.

"Territory map," a student offers. We write this on a pink card.

"OK, we'll place that here for now. We can move it if we need to," we say and stick it in a pocket.

More card suggestions come.

"We made writing goals."

"We worked with a partner."

"We wrote whatever stories we wanted."

"I made a new story from my school map."

Some are shared actions, things we asked all students to try; others are decisions that individual writers have made on their own. We value both, but our main focus in this notebook flip is to highlight the progression of all the things we have done together. Along the way, we remark, "Yes, many of us tried that," or "Yes, we had a whole-class lesson on that." We write each response on a pink card and place it, with students' help, into a pocket; we shift other cards around as students decide upon the order. Figure 2.2 shows the result.

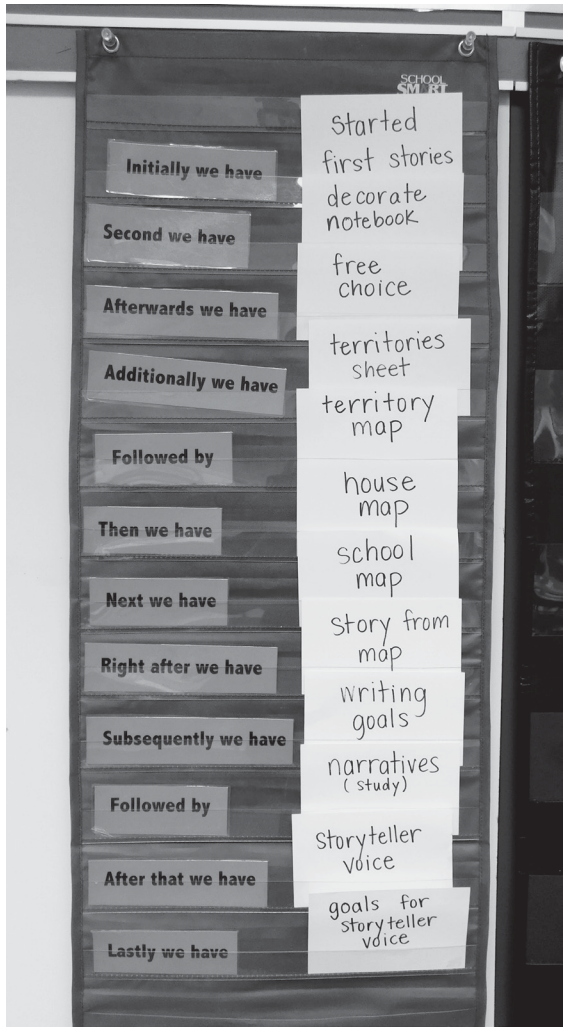

Figure 2.2 Completed Notebook Flip

Unpacking the Notebook Flip

When we teach students to remember, ordering events is important. No, it's not terribly important that students be able to recall an entire calendar of instruction. We wouldn't expect them to remember in a music class that they learned quarter notes on September 5, half notes on September 12, whole notes on September 19, *piano* and *forte* on September 26, and crescendos on October 3. But we would want students to know they learned to read some notes and the names and values of those notes. We would want them to realize that they know some dynamics—and to have the word *dynamics*. And we would want them to know how they moved from shorter notes to longer ones, or from single words for soft and loud to the more complex notion of crescendos—notes or phrases that increase in volume—after that.

The key is, we want students not only to remember individual things they learned but also to have a sense of how they fit together, how they form a progression. It's not simply that things happened in an order: "First this; then that." It's that events led to one another and are connected to cumulative ends: "I did this, then that, and so I decided to do that." Or "I noticed this, so I did this, and then that helped me see that." Way leads on to way in developing a piece of writing, so when we help students look back, recall, and order events, we are also helping them to see the links between those events.

When writers can see that they have engaged in a meaningful arc of connected experiences leading to both a written product *and* some expertise, they can carry that expertise forward beyond that product. Students realize through reflection that writers go through a process and that as they do work, they gain knowledge and resources in a cumulative way. The more they try, the more they have and can use going forward. Naming experiences and ordering them make students aware of that arc and the relationships (not only chronological but more substantive relationships) of the experiences along the way.

Because remembering is prompted by students actually looking at an artifact of their practice, actions that only *some* students have taken make their way onto the notebook flip board. Other students see those actions and, we hope, acknowledge them as possible paths they might have taken but didn't. This is why the negotiations about the order of the cards and what labels might go on the pockets are so important (and thus why we do this together instead of individually). For some students, it's that sharing with a partner led to revising a story's lead. For other students, it's that sharing with a partner led to a new idea for a story or that revising a lead led the writer to seek out a partner for further feedback. Because we have a

single pocket chart for the class, we can moderate the discussion about where things might go, and while we do eventually choose just one pocket in which to place each card, we do it in a way that shows the placement is just one of many possibilities: "I'm going to stick this one here for now because it seems to fit for a lot of people, but everyone has a different experience," we say.

Another important aspect of the notebook flip is that students come to view the notebook as an important record of practice and as a useful tool worth their attention. As an adult, it would probably be natural that if you wanted to remember how you did something, you'd look back at your notes. But for a student writer having his or her own notebook for the very first time, that's a new process. Up until second grade, most students probably haven't had record-keeping systems of their own or had any responsibility for maintaining folders of their work—a teacher has taken care of all that. Now, our students have both a writing notebook and a writing binder. The writing notebook is a composition book students have decorated that contains all kinds of idea gathering and drafting. Many of our students have not learned to reliably write the date, and they may not even start pieces of writing on the next available page, so the notebook may or may not be chronologically arranged.

When students sit on the rug and search their notebooks for moves they can have us write on the cards, they are learning that their notebooks contain evidence of their practice. When they notice differences between their notebooks and those of other students, they are also coming to *own* their notebooks as unique artifacts of their own writing processes, rather than simply as administrative structures set up by teachers (structures that they spend a *lot* of school time interacting with).

The notebook flip is a strategy you might use with any unit of study—in any content area—where you are asking students to collect information, gather artifacts, or keep notebooks. For example, when we finish a unit of study in science, we ask our students to look back over their science notebooks and notice their learning, and then we base classroom conversations on what students find as they search. When we want to make students' work visible or help them connect the links in their learning, we work together and use this strategy to name and order what they have done.

Once the notebook flip chart is there, you have something concrete to talk about for broader reflection. Try questions like these:

- What do you notice about this? (We know this question is vague, but we like to start here. Students try so hard to anticipate what we are looking for; a very open question like this can be generative of students' ideas that we hadn't even considered.)

- What differences do you notice between your notebook process and a neighbor's? What explains those differences?
- What was most helpful?
- What did you try that was not so helpful? Is there a different way of doing it that might have been *more* helpful?
- How is this similar to or different from other notebook flips? (if you're doing the notebook flip for the second or third time with a class)

A NOTE ON NOTEBOOKS

We used to use single composition notebooks for writing that lasted all year. Students decorated them at the beginning of the year with personal mementos, and notebooks included idea-generating pieces such as heart maps and neighborhood maps that students would refer back to all year. Our students felt real ownership of these notebooks, but in a lot of ways, they were just not the best tool for them as writers.

For one thing, the lines in the notebooks were too small for most of our writers. And then there was the problem of organization. Some students were more organized and used the notebooks sequentially, but with many others, writing was happening all over the notebook and it wasn't in chronological order. Some students seemed to open randomly to the middle to start new entries, and they would often lose track of this writing somewhere within the thick notebook. And when notebooks would mysteriously get lost, as they sometimes do, a whole year's worth of work would be lost too.

There is always a balance to be struck between keeping things organized and keeping student work, not organization, at the center of attention. As we reflected on this challenge, we decided to shift to using thin notebooks that we change with each new unit of study or when a notebook is filled, whichever comes first. These come in a range of line styles and widths, so that we can support students in successful handwriting (which also makes navigating the notebook easier). They're thin, so even when students start new entries on random middle pages, they are able to find them easily. And when students begin a new notebook, we store the old one, which is helpful to us in our own and our students' assessment of their growth over time (see Chapter 5 for more on this).

NOTEBOOK TABLE OF CONTENTS

As students get better at remembering, first from shared oral reflection (time line) and then from the collaborative mining of individual experiences and artifacts (notebook flip), we can move from whole-class strategies for remembering to more individualized strategies. One way is to have students analyze their notebooks in more depth: what steps have brought them to where they are now? Yet as we mentioned, for our students, the notebook itself can be hard to navigate.

Without a whole lot of scaffolding from us, students may just open to any page and start writing—which is fine if all they need is a piece of paper. But it becomes difficult later on when they can't find what they've written or have pages of a multiple-page stoyy in different places scattered throughout the notebook. We have them mark important things, such as the piece of writing they plan to return to for the next day, with stickies, yet if too many days go by, they may not remember what those stickies indicate, even if they are labeled. Their notebook pages are usually not dated, though we've tried with varying amounts of success to instill this as a habit at different times. Handouts and writing paper we hand to kids, such as primary paper, comic paper, or paper for illustrating, may or may not find their way into binders, and the tabs in those binders may or may not be meaningful to kids.

The bottom line is, what good is a notebook if you can't find things in it? In order for children to better utilize their notebooks as a tool for remembering, we scaffold their organization using a table-of-contents strategy that helps them put things in order as they revisit past work.

Snapshot of the Table of Contents in Action

After students have been working in notebooks for a while, we hand out a sheet like the one in Figure 2.3. Students use this to make a rough table of contents for their notebook, or perhaps just for some section of the notebook that we have marked off for them, such as from the beginning of a unit of study. Beginning at the beginning, they identify chunks or chapters of notebook content, briefly note what that content is on the left side of the chart, and then give a page number in the right-hand column.

In cases where numbering the pages is just too difficult, another way is to use different-colored tape flags or stickies to mark off each chunk and then put color codes into the "Page" column. In our experiences, though, sticky notes aren't durable enough to withstand second- and third-grade treatment for long, so while we may do color codes for particular students who need it, with the class as a whole we aim

toward page numbering. There is a hope, too, that down the road page numbering might become a habit—and, for Bullet Journal enthusiasts, so might the notion of a running table of contents (see http://bulletjournal.com/ for more on Bullet Journals, a notebook-keeping strategy popular among many of the adults we know).

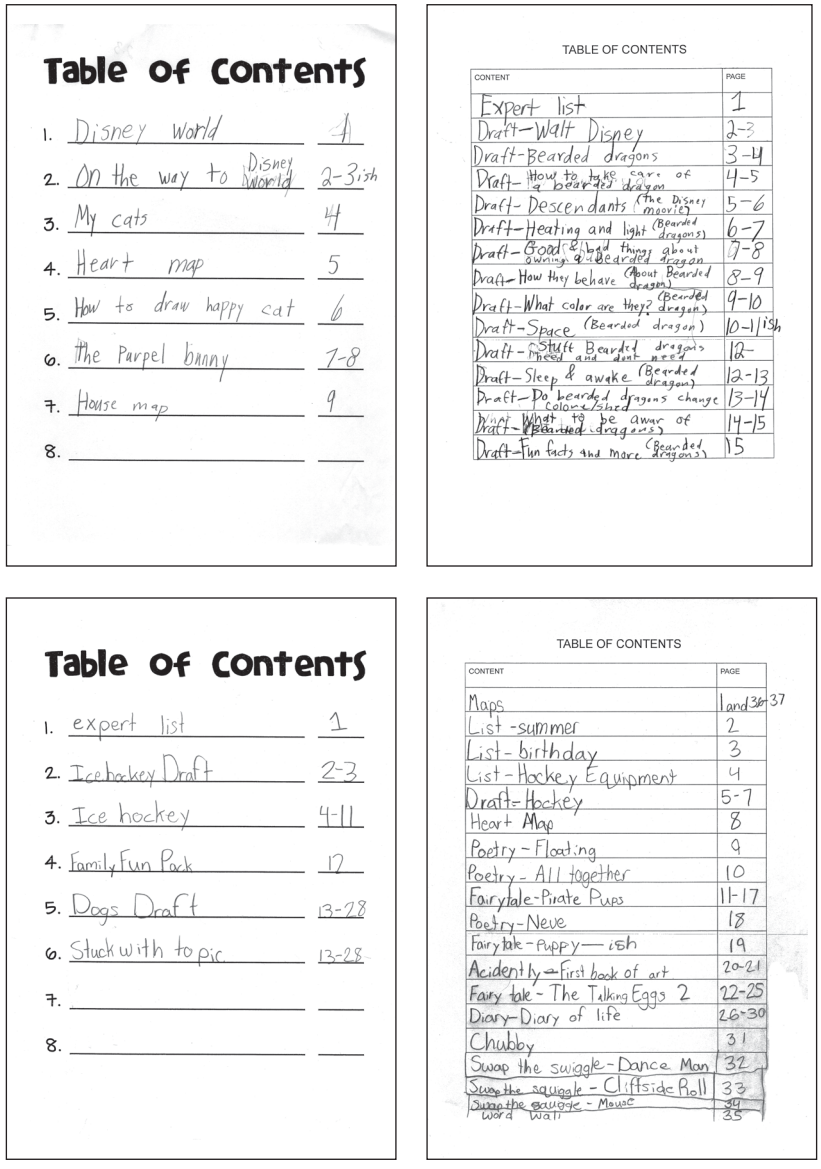

Table of Contents

1. Disney world 1
2. On the way to Disney World 2-3ish
3. My cats 4
4. Heart map 5
5. How to draw happy cat 6
6. The Purpel bunny 7-8
7. House map 9
8. _____ _____

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CONTENT	PAGE
Expert list	1
Draft-Walt Disney	2-3
Draft-Bearded dragons	3-4
Draft- How to take care of a bearded dragon	4-5
Draft- Descendants (The Disney moovie)	5-6
Draft-Heating and light (Bearded dragons)	6-7
Draft-Good & bad things about owning a bearded dragon	7-8
Draft-How they behave (About Bearded dragon)	8-9
Draft-What color are they? (Bearded dragon)	9-10
Draft-Space (Bearded dragon)	10-11ish
Draft-Stuff Bearded dragons need and dont need	12-
Draft-Sleep & awake (Bearded dragon)	12-13
Draft-Do bearded dragons change colors/shed	13-14
Draft-What to be awar of (Bearded dragons)	14-15
Draft-Fun facts and more (Bearded dragons)	15

Table of Contents

1. expert list 1
2. Icehockey Draft 2-3
3. Ice hockey 4-11
4. Family Fun Pack 12
5. Dogs Draft 13-28
6. Stuck with topic 13-28
7. _____ _____
8. _____ _____

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CONTENT	PAGE
Maps	1 and 36-37
List -summer	2
List- birthday	3
List-Hockey Equipment	4
Draft-Hockey	5-7
Heart Map	8
Poetry - Floating	9
Poetry - All together	10
Fairytale-Pirate Pups	11-17
Poetry-Neve	18
Fairy tale - Puppy — ish	19
Acidently - first book of art	20-21
Fairy tale - The Talking Eggs 2	22-25
Diary-Diary of life	26-30
Chubby	31
Swap the swiggle - Dance Man	32
Swap the squiggle - Cliffside Roll	33
Swap the squiggle - Mouse word Wall	34 35

Figure 2.3 Notebook Table-of-Contents Sheet and Completed Examples

Unpacking the Table of Contents

This strategy helps students understand their work in thematic terms, and our use of the word *chunk* to describe what might go in a table of contents is deliberate. Chunks of writing in a notebook are defined by students, and their boundaries are meaningful and visible to students. Simply going day by day would obscure how writers can and do work on single tasks over periods of time longer than a day or on more than one task in a day—goals we have for many of our student writers as their texts get longer and their investment deepens. Likewise, while a lesson-by-lesson way of identifying contents might make sense to us, the ones who plan and teach the lessons, we have to admit that not every lesson we teach reflects a great milestone in a student's piece of writing. Some of our minilessons just don't play into every writer's piece in a big way at that particular time. Other times multiple minilessons arrange themselves into a single chunk in the life of a writer and a piece of writing. So, for example, one student might list "look at house map" and "talk to Naomi" as two separate events, while another student might list those together in a chunk she names "getting ideas." When we see a move like that, we see that this student is thinking deeply about her process, seeing how different actions worked together to create an arc of experiences as she developed her text.

Deciding for themselves where the boundaries are for particular steps in their writing process means claiming that they have engaged in a process, period. It means thinking about what the important steps in the process have been and giving those steps names in the left-hand column. It means remembering all of the work that went into the development of a piece of writing.

The chunking that students do in a table of contents is an important new move in how they remember their work on a piece of writing. The time line helps students learn to identify events in a shared writing process and arrange them in sequence. The notebook flip teaches students to identify events in shared and individual writing processes and link them connectively. The table of contents adds the categorizing or grouping of linked events. By grouping events in their writing process, students don't just come to remember single, disparate actions in a writing process but also see them as *kinds* of actions (categorizing) and amalgamate them into episodes or chapters in the story of their work on a piece of writing.

Once your students have a table of contents, you might want to use that as a starter for a conversation—as a whole group, with a small group, or even with an individual student in a conference. Here are some questions you and your writers could use to learn from their tables of contents. These require some abstract thinking, so you'll need to judge what will fit your own class most appropriately.

- In which chunk or chapter of work did you have to work the hardest? What was tough about it? How did you handle it?
- Are there chunks or chapters here that turned out not to make it into your final draft? Why not? And what did you learn from doing that work, even if it didn't make it into the published writing?
- Which of these chunks or chapters are specific to narrative writing [or whatever genre the writer has been working in]? Which would probably be there for *any* genre of writing?
- Let's find some books in the classroom that have a table of contents. See how some of these have just a list of chapters, but others have Part 1, Part 2, and so on, with a few chapters grouped under each part? What would your Part 1, Part 2, and Part 3 be? Which chapters could you group together under a shared main idea?

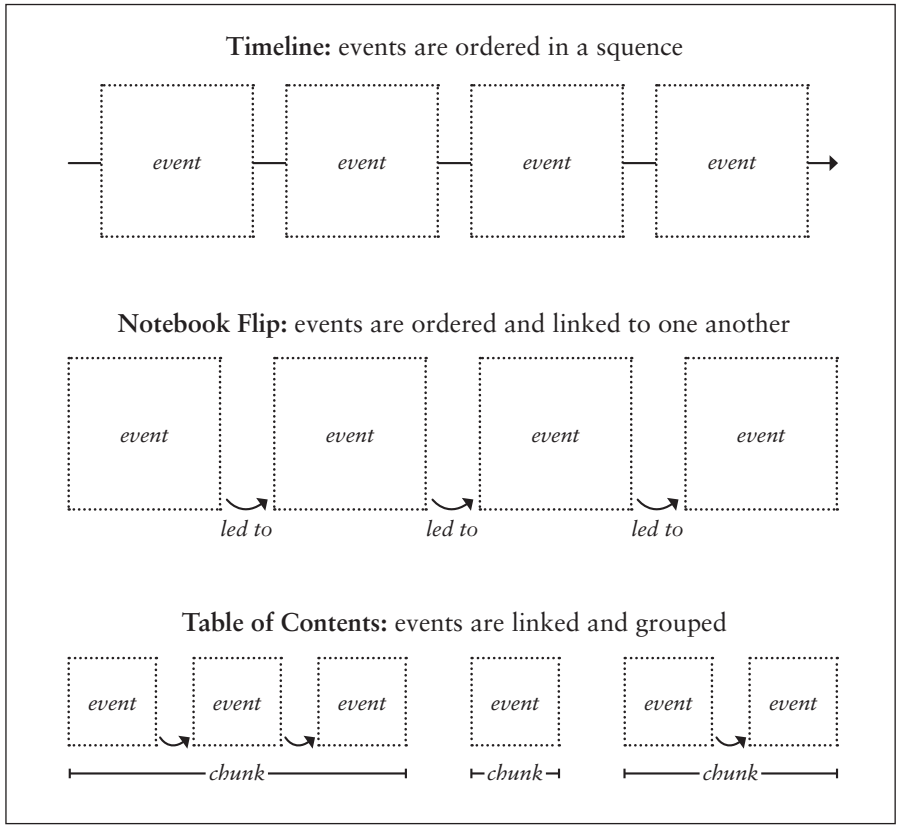

Figure 2.4 Comparison of Strategies for Remembering

As you work with notebook tables of contents, make sure students understand that it's not a table of contents for a finished piece of writing; it's a table of contents for all the work that went into that finished piece. The goal here is to document a process and then think about it, not simply to describe how a product is organized. In talking about this with kids, it might be helpful to refer to those videos on a DVD that chronicle the making of the feature film. What are the different phases that went into the making of their piece of writing?

PHOTO ELICITATION

Finally, we have borrowed the strategy of photo elicitation from our past experiences with teacher inquiry and research. In research, elicitation is the practice of using an artifact to get people remembering and talking. For example, if interviewing a teacher about events in her career, Anne might bring photos of the teacher's former students to help her remember specific people and events of the past. The photos elicit the memories.

Luckily, in classrooms today, photos are incredibly easy to take, edit, organize, project for viewing, and share; they're the perfect tools for remembering and reflection. You can use photos in myriad ways to elicit powerful thinking from your students.

Snapshot of Photo Elicitation in Action

After a minilesson on working well with a partner, students disperse around the room to work with partners on a piece of writing. Moving around the room, Colleen and Deana use their phones to snap photos of pairs of writers at work. They quickly upload the photos to a computer attached to the room's projector. Then, back on the rug after writing, students look at the photos (see Figures 2.5 and 2.6) and talk about what they remember doing.

First, we ask the writers pictured to narrate for their classmates what they are doing in the photo. We find that, aided by the photo, our students can more clearly recall what is happening. Where previously they might have debriefed partner work by saying, "I talked with my partner about my writing," or "My partner helped me with my writing," the photos seem to help them access specific actions and events:

"I'm explaining what I want to write next."

"I'm listening to Robbie tell about how he wants to end the story."

"We are looking at Leticia's house map in her notebook so she can choose something to write about next."

"I'm helping Leticia label her map with another story place."

Figure 2.5 Partners at Work

Figure 2.6 Partners at Work

Next, the whole group reflects on these firsthand rememberings elicited by the photos. All the writers in the room can connect their own partner experiences to those of the students pictured; kids jump in to share how they did something similar or different. Teachers, too, reflect on what we see in the photos that we want students to notice: "I'm struck by how the writers are making eye contact. It signals to me that they are really listening to one another."

Unpacking Photo Elicitation

When you learn to do something new, whether it's knitting, cooking, dancing, raising a baby, or tending a garden, don't you sometimes long just to compare notes with someone else? Just to *see* how they go about it? You can confirm your own sense of things, learn from another person's successes and mistakes, or find out that your way is not the only way—either to try what someone else is doing or to feel more sure about what *you* are doing. It's the same with our student writers. Photo elicitation helps us remember with depth and detail the experiences of brave writers so we can learn from them in powerful ways.

The talk that comes from photo elicitation is a lot like that bonus voice-over track on a DVD where the director talks about what went on behind the scenes as the film is playing. But our second and third graders haven't seen much director commentary, so we find it helpful to prompt them with questions that start simply but can progress as they get more experience:

- What do you see in the photo?
- What is happening in this moment?
- What happened before this moment? What happened after this moment?
- Why is this happening?
- What else could you have done then? And why did you elect not to do it?
- What's left out of the picture that you think we should know about?

Questions like these prompt students to really *look* at the photos and just describe them first. We hope this helps break whatever assumptions students might have about their processes or about what we think their processes *should* be—better to simply notice and learn from what they have *actually* done. Prompted to look closely at the photos and describe what they see, students might notice things they hadn't been aware of when the photos were taken. The more complex questions help student writers place what they're seeing in context, think about what happened

connected to a particular moment, and link specific images of work in progress to their sense of how and why they were doing what they did.

In the snapshot of this strategy, teachers took the photos, but students can also learn a lot from taking photos *themselves*. Just deciding what to picture in the photo provokes important questions: Where can I put the camera that would best show

invitation *to* REFLECT

Have a colleague or any adult pop into your class for a few minutes to take some photos of writing workshop (or take some yourself). Do the same for your colleague. Then, meet and talk about what you notice. The photos will help you remember what happened and prompt you as you describe that to your colleague.

what I am doing as a writer? What moves, what artifacts, what faces, or what words do I need in the frame to capture this decision or moment? In other words, when choosing what to record and how, students are already engaged in a kind of remembering—that is, actively shaping the form of the memories they will have to draw upon. We value this activity as practice in the deliberate manipulation of their own attention. That is, remembering isn't just thinking back and retrieving what you can. Remembering fully involves deciding, when doing something, that it might be worth remembering at all. It means knowing even while writing that "this is something I may want to think more about later." When students place the camera and snap a photo, they are deliberately choosing to remember.

Video, of course, can also be used for photo elicitation. Teachers or students can record each other, cameras can be mounted on tripods, or individual students can wear a GoPro camera while they're working. A single writer might use video to do some private reflecting, but we think video is even more valuable when the whole class looks closely at one writer's process. Just as you might confer with one student in front of the whole class as a teaching strategy—going deep into one case as an example for others—you can play the video and pause to have the student explain what he or she was doing in the footage. Then you can ask questions to draw out the what, how, and why of the student's decision making.

invitation *to* REFLECT

Here are some more ideas about how you might use remembering for your own reflection as a teacher. Think of a teaching incident that you want to better understand. Maybe it's a troublesome interaction with a student or a lesson that didn't work as well as you hoped. Write about it using these prompts:

- Jot or sketch a list or storyboard of key events in the incident.
- List sensory details and words you recall from the incident.
- Describe the context—what else was going on at the time of the incident?
- From what perspective are you remembering? If you take someone else's role for a moment, can you remember anything different?
- What was important to you at the time?