

Non Genre Specific Units: A Cycle of Writing

The CSISD Writing Units of Study now include If...Then...Units of Non Genre Specific Writing Instruction. The purpose of these units is to provide an opportunity for students to live as writers, cycling through a writing process, selecting their own topics, and making decisions as writers to support self-selected publication. A cycle of writing helps us teach as a process what remains the same for all writers throughout the year and also those things that change when working within specific genre studies. Within these open ended If...Then...Units, teachers choose writing instruction that is specifically tailored to the writers in their classrooms.

Consider each Non Genre Specific Unit as a menu of possibilities, selecting only the teaching points that meet the needs of your students. You may use your assessment data, observations, and other information to decide on a plan that is tailored to the needs of your class.

These teaching points may be used as whole-group mini lessons, mid-workshop teach points, or to support conferences and small-group work. You need not use every teaching point. Also, you may use the teaching points you have selected in any order and at any time throughout the year, according to need.

If...Then...Units

A Cycle of Writing

● Key Understandings of a Writing Process ●

Writers need stretches of time where they are in control of the decisions they make as writers regarding materials, strategies, and process to sustain their work.

Writers need multiple opportunities to practice reading for craft. Through craft study, writers practice responding, describing, and speculating on the writing.

Publication makes the writing process meaningful. It drives and motivates the writer to continue creating texts as authors in the world. Reflection after publication helps the writer think about their unique process and growth as a writer.

The most productive time for talk is throughout the process as the writing is emerging. After the draft is the least productive time to talk about the writing. Writers need many opportunities to talk with partners, small groups, and the teacher.

Even in genre studies, writers learn to use their notebook as a workbench to revisit and use previous entries. In this way, writers discover that topics in their notebook are never used up. Writers study the craft of a genre by noticing and emulating what the writer is doing. The teacher may select a few touchstone texts for the class, but the writer self selects mentor texts to study.

Writers thrive in a workshop where there are routines that promote inquiry, work time supported by the teacher, writing process as a cycle, and students as decision makers.