

Reaching Disengaged Writers

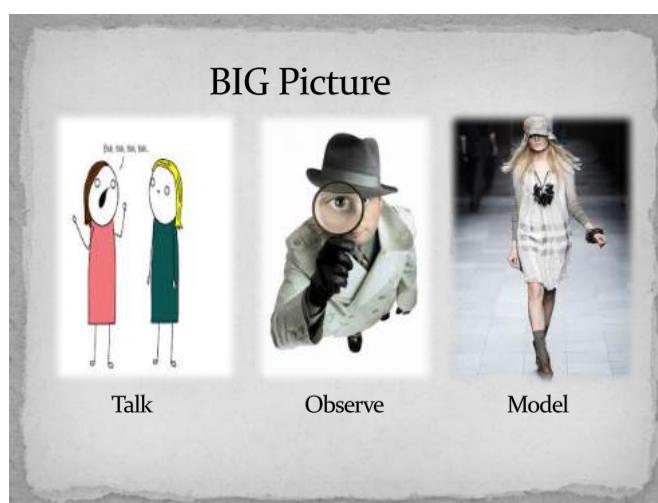
Sydney Story Factory
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Kids are disengaged for lots of reasons, most of which you won't know about. As they arrive for the workshop:

- Be interested and present
- Observe – body language, eye contact, physical space, yawning...
- Get to know them a little
- Tell them about yourself briefly, and a bit about how the workshop goes
- Be honest

BIG PICTURE IDEAS





Talk – always have a pencil in your hand, take notes you can use as a plan for writing.





Observe – look and listen
- What are they saying?
- What are they doing?

Model
Kids learn from mentors and through imitation.

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ask detail-generating questions What happened next? What if...? Can you explain that? What does that feel like? - Offer your related ideas and thoughts I don't know much about that, but I do know about.. - Cite mentors (authors, other kids you've worked with, you brother...) - Compliment – be honest - Spin a story as a spontaneous thought - Ask if they are OK – be honest | <p>What does that tell you about their engagement?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Look for that moment when they switch on - Pay attention to what they are doing during instruction time – “I saw you laugh when John said...” | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Write alongside them - Think aloud as you do it - Ask for their input and thoughts on what you do - Work through the writing process, show planning or revising (for example) - Model great storytelling as a basis for writing - Don't worry about spelling, just get ideas down - Be excited to revise - Take risks – no danger here in changing ideas later or trying several story lines |
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SPECIFIC STRATEGIES

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| <p>Be Partners</p>  | <p>Create a Writing Partnership</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Share ideas – “Let's talk about it first” - Think aloud - Write alongside each other - Ask them for help - Pay compliments - Embellish their ideas, see the power in your own storytelling - If they look uneasy, ask them if they would like to write together or each write a story |
| <p>Create Tasks</p>  | <p>Task Setting</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Break up a task into smaller, bite-sized pieces... - Ask them to help you with your writing - Get them to manage materials - Create a contract where you both have to fulfill certain things - Or a contract for them and they can choose the order in which they complete them (bored or higher level kids) |

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| <p>Find a Mentor</p>  | <p>Mentor</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A favourite author - Their favourite author - A strategy from a book/s - Find one within the room - Other kids you have worked with - Talk to them as authors - Yourself, another volunteer... |
| <p>Provide Options</p>  | <p>Present more options</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Spend more time planning – have a number of story ideas to work from - Collect many short blips of thinking, each several sentences long, and use these to work from (and keep some for later) - Make a deal – vary the task for them - Back to the honest thing – if you don't like this workshop, what would you like to write about? What movies/books/shows do you like? |
| <p>Set a Challenge!</p>  | <p>Set a Challenge</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - For you and them - Time or product based - Compete as partners - Can you talk about your ideas for 2 minutes with no break? - How much can you write in 2 minutes? - Can you describe your character without using your eyes? - Can you use your senses to describe the setting? - How many lines can you write in 5 minutes? |
| <p>Revise...Experiment!</p>  | <p>Revise = Make Even Better</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Revise. Don't correct. Don't rewrite. - Avoid starting a new page. - It's a good thing! - All writers do it. - It's an act of experimentation. - Incorporate another idea, add dialogue, create suspense, try a different ending, change one significant factor... - Stretch out that small moment. |