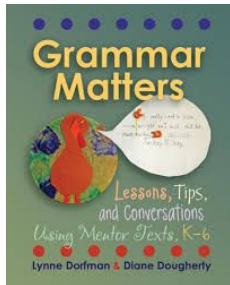


Our Book Club consisted of just two, Lori Richards (Sidney Elementary) and myself, Alisa Russell (Prospect Lake Elementary). We were driven by a shared goal to discover new ways to further develop and strengthen conventions in our students' writing, her grade 3's and my grade 4's and 5's. We were able to meet three times and each time we came excited about a new part of the book and how we were attempting to incorporate the ideas and lessons into our teaching. Lori was able to implement two suggested lessons using wordless books and found them to be extremely successful and effective as she explains below. Inspired by Lori's enthusiasm and success with one of the book's lesson ideas using a wordless storybook, coupled with the Grammar References from Part 1: Narrative Units of Study, I tried a lesson with the mentor text *One Day, The End*, by Rebecca Dotlich. While the story lends itself to a variety of lesson topics, mine was about understanding that good stories require lots of good content. We read the story three times. The first time without sharing the pictures, the second showing pictures but not discussing them and the third time describing and discussing the pictures in detail to demonstrate that a good story needs a lot of content. Finally, choosing strong verbs to retell the story and then creating explanations about the verbs that describe the events of the story in an interesting way. The lesson was quite successful and the writing produced was interesting to read. Another suggestion by the book was to use the books children chose to read during Silent Reading as the platform for seeking examples of compound and complex sentences, sentences that ended in nouns and verbs and tallying how many exclamation points an author used in a chapter. The seek and find tasks proved to be an engaging adventure for the kids and in no time chart paper was full of useful collections of nouns, verbs, adverbs, adjectives, conjunctions and a variety of sentence types that served as reminders and writing igniters.

At our final meeting, we discussed our plans of where we would start with the next ideas of the book and how we would incorporate the ideas with Suzanne Augustine and 6-Traits writing programs. This is a rich resource and we look forward to continuing to incorporating the ideas into my practice and watch our students' writing continue to grow!

Alisa Russell and Lori Richards



Grammar Matters by Lynne Dorfman

Embedding the instruction of grammar in the writing program.

I spent the last 6 months working on narrative writing with my grade 3's, using ideas from "Grammar Matters". We completed 2 large assignments. The first was writing the narrative to accompany the wordless book called Good Dog, Carl. During this time, we examined 2 grammar concepts: when and why we use exclamation marks, and identifying, simple, compound and complex sentences. The students were expected to include exclamation marks in their own work, and they needed to identify different kinds of sentences in their writing. A number of students realized that they generally tended to use only one type of sentence. Both of these lessons helped the students to improve their writing. Some them realized they could join their simple sentences in places to create compound and complex sentences, or they recognized that they needed more variety. Adding exclamation points made their writing more interesting in a variety of ways. It seemed to make the kids explore their "voice" as a writer.

The second task was based on the wordless book called Tuesday, by David Wiesner. The students were encouraged to describe the the setting of the book before they realized what the story was actually about. Parts of the sentence were introduced (nouns, verbs, and adjectives). We discussed strong descriptive verbs and adjectives throughout the task. Additionally, the entire class completed this assignment using the speech to text app Google, Read and Write, which freed them up to think about using descriptive language (no need to worry about writing stamina or spelling). The writing the grade three's produced was far superior to anything my students have produced before at this level and everyone was engaged in these tasks. They also seemed to have a pretty strong understanding of the terms noun, verb and adjective at the end of the assignment.

I have always tried to teach the conventions of writing through writing tasks (paragraph and narrative writing), but these were new ideas for me. This resource changed my teaching practice.

Lori Richards  
Grade 3 teacher  
Sidney Elementary