

UNIT DESIGN

Possible Evidence of Understanding in Students' Writing

COLLECTING

A writer's notebook is a place where writers gather entries that may be used to write finished pieces in the future. When writers know that they'll be publishing in a specific genre, they'll gather entries that will support that kind of writing. For example, when collecting for a "small moment" personal narrative kind of writing, writers understand that they will be collecting entries from:

- Every day events
- Ideas that come from sharing stories with other writers
- Stories in their lives
- Ideas that come from reading personal narrative texts
- Memories
- Important people and places that they don't want to forget
- Thinking about times they realized or learned something
- Strong feelings
- Rereading entries to spark new life stories

CHOOSING AND DEVELOPING A TOPIC FOR PUBLICATION

Once writers have a rich treasure chest of entries in their writer's notebooks, they carefully reread their entries in order to choose a topic that they want to write more about and develop for publication. The kinds of questions they may ask themselves to decide on a topic could be: Which notebook entry is really important to me? Which entry can I say more about? Which entry do I want to spend more time working on for this publication? It's essential for writers to thoughtfully choose topics that they truly care about so that they'll be engaged and motivated to write more about the idea. Writers develop their topics, when writing about small moment personal narratives, from:

- Thinking and writing about why the topic is important to them
- Finding a focus
- Seeing the movie in their mind, asking where the story begins
- Not only writing about what happened in the "story", but their response and internal thoughts about their small moment narrative
- Asking questions to push thinking: What does this writing tell me about myself? What does this writing tell me about the world? Can I dig deeper and find a theme in my writing?
- Layering onto their writing by interviewing someone who was a part of a memory, going to the special place in their writing, looking at photographs and other artifacts to jog memories
- Talking with fellow writers about their ideas and writing from their responses