

## **Lessons from Mentor Personal Narratives**

- Writers often write about a seemingly small episode – yet it has big meaning for the writer.
- Writers often tell the story in such a way that the reader can actually experience it from start to finish. It helps to record exact words a character uses.
- Writers often convey strong feelings and they often show rather than tell about those feelings.
- Writers often include two and sometimes three small moments so that there is a sense that each story has a beginning, a middle, and an end.

## Strategies for Generating Personal Narrative Writing

- Think of a subject (or a person, place or thing) that matters to you, then list small moments you remember. Choose one to sketch and then write the accompanying story.
- Think of first times, last times, or times when you realized something important. Write about one of those moments.
- Carry your writer's notebook with you, paying attention to details and thinking,  
"I could write a true story about this."
- Think of a strong feeling, then list Small Moments stories pertaining to that feeling. Choose one to write about.
- Think of the stories that your family tells and retells. Write about one of those.
- Keep an ongoing list of story ideas in your writer's notebook.

## **Questions to Ask to Find Turning Points**

- First/last time you did something hard to do?
- First/last time you did something you now do every day?
- First/last time with a person, an animal, a place, an activity?
- Time you realized something important about yourself or someone else?
- Time you realized a huge change in your life almost happened?

## **When to Use Paragraphs in Narrative Writing**

- New character comes along
- New event happens; new idea is introduced.
- New setting
- New person speaking
- Time moves forward (or backward) a lot

## **Qualities of Good Personal Narrative Writing**

- Write a little seed story; don't write all about a giant watermelon topic.
- Zoom in so you tell the most important parts of the story.
- Include true, exact details from the movie you have in mind.
- Stay inside your own point of view. This will help you to write with true and exact details.
- Make sure stories tell not just what happens, but also the response to what happens.

## Strategies for Learning from Previous Writing

- Reread old charts and think about strategies that have already worked for us.
- Reread old charts and think about strategies *we have yet to try* that might work.
- Give ourselves self-assignments, writing things we plan to do in our notebooks.
- Look back over old writing, noticing what we did in revision that we might do earlier.
- Look back over old writing, noticing what made our writing strong that we want to remember to do and noticing what got us in trouble that we want to avoid.

<b>Monitoring My Writing Process</b>	<b>First Piece</b>	<b>Next Piece</b>
Gather entries		
Select and develop one seed idea		
Write an entry about what you are really trying to say		
Storytell to rehearse for writing		
Read published writing that resembles what I want to write		
Study published leads. Pay attention to <i>what</i> the author did and <i>how</i> the author did it. Let this influence your own writing.		
Draft leads – try action, dialogue, setting		
Make a timeline		
Choose paper, plan story on pages, copy lead		
Write draft with each part on a separate page		
Reread and revise for clarity		
Draft endings – try using action, dialogue, images, or reminders of the whole		
Revise and edit more now or decide to wait until later, or not to revise		