Being a Writer Educator Spotlight: Lindsay Young, North Branch, MI

Categories: Educator Spotlight, Writing

In this spotlight, we highlight Lindsay Young, third grade language arts teacher at North Branch Elementary School, Michigan. Lindsay has been implementing Being a Writer for two years and expresses her appreciation for the curriculum’s strong correlation between reading and writing. Learn more about her experience watching her students’ learning and engagement in writing grow with the Being a Writer program.

Tell us a little about yourself, your school/district, and the students that you serve.

My name is Lindsay Young and I am a third grade language arts teacher. This is my eighth year of teaching. I teach at North Branch Elementary School in North Branch, MI. I am currently serving 78 students and will loop up with my current students to fourth grade.

What is the most rewarding part of being an educator for you?

The most rewarding part of being an educator is working with students. Fostering and igniting students’ passion for reading and writing is such a rewarding experience. The immense joy I feel when I see and hear my students’ enthusiasm about books they are reading and the stories they are writing is indescribable. I am extremely grateful to have the opportunity to be a small part of their journey in literacy.

How long have you been implementing Being a Writer? Tell us a little about your implementation.

I have been implementing Being a Writer for two years. I am able to implement Being a Writer into my schedule on a daily basis. The way I have implemented Being a Writer is by teaching the lessons three days a week and implementing IDW (Independent Writing Time) two days a week.

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What do you appreciate about Being a Writer?

There are many benefits to using Being a Writer. First and foremost the curriculum is based on research and best practice. Additionally, Collaborative Classroom partnered with the National Writing Project to assist in developing the program.

When implementing Being a Writer, I appreciate that the lessons integrate best practice as a daily routine. For example, the curriculum has a strong correlation between reading and writing. In almost every writing lesson a mentor text is used to teach a part of the
writing process. I wholeheartedly believe reading is the inhale and writing is the exhale and you cannot teach one without the other. Furthermore, students are writing every day, which builds their stamina in writing. For passion and ability in writing to develop and grow, students need to be given the opportunity to write on a regular basis.

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What have you noticed about your students’ learning and engagement?

During my experience teaching Being a Writer, I have noticed that my students’ learning and engagement in writing has grown immensely. During class, when we move into writing, their excitement to begin writing and share their writing with others is very evident. I feel the reasoning for this is that writing is a daily practice and part of our routine. In addition to this, by giving students the opportunity to write and practice concepts learned within their personal writing, I have found that students are maintaining and applying their knowledge with more automaticity. Even the amount of time students devote to writing in school and outside of school has increased. Many students are choosing to write in their free time or at home and then asking me to read over their stories and provide feedback. This truly shows that students are learning and engaged with writing.

How has Being a Writer affected or changed your own teaching and learning?

Being a Writer has most definitely changed my own teaching and learning when it comes to writing. As teachers, we are constantly researching, planning, and trying to implement writing in the most effective way. The most difficult part for me was putting it all together to meet the needs of my students and schedule. Being a Writer has helped me integrate research and best practice within my writing instruction. In addition to this, it has helped with my understanding of what best practices to focus on and integrate as a daily routine.

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What advice or insights would you share with an educator who is new to Being a Writer?

Being a Writer is a great resource and provides you with structure, routines, and lessons that are all research-based, which I truly appreciate. But, no resource is perfect with regards to meeting the needs of your students or schedule. A benefit of Being a Writer is that it allows for flexibility based on the way the units and lessons are structured. Some aspects of Being a Writer I have added or modified: adding digital notebooks and community projects and modifying mentor texts. Don't be afraid to add or modify to make Being a Writer best meet the needs of your students.