

Inside Writing Communities, Grades 3-5

Workshop 5 Reading Like A Writer

**Narration written by
Mary Duncan, Ph.D.**

FINAL DRAFT

RUNDOWN SHEET

Program Duration: 28:25

	MASTER IN	DURATION
ANNENBERG MEDIA LOGO	01:00:00	00:15
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CLASSROOM FOOTAGE Lindsay Dibert	01:03:59	02:40
NARRATION #4	01:06:39	00:30
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INTERVIEW Isoke Nia	01:15:08	00:48
CLASSROOM FOOTAGE Latosha Rowley	01:15:56	04:16
INTERVIEW Latosha Rowley	01:20:12	01:29
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INTERVIEW Isoke Nia	01:22:32	00:26
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Series Open/ Title 5	Inside Writing Communities, Grades 3-5 Theme	00:28	00:51
Isoke Nia	ISOKE: I say to teachers that you should be able to first read like a reader. That means take it in and enjoy it and love it yourself, which is why things exist to read. And then read like a writer; look into a text and notice things, be able to see them. And then read like a teacher of writing; be able to look into a text, see and notice things that you think you can teach or that your students—you think these students need to learn.	00:29	01:20
B-Roll	NARRATOR: When teachers learn to read like writers and like teachers of writing, it transforms their instruction. They surround their students with a rich variety of texts and genres—picture books, essays, editorials, feature articles. They teach their students how to analyze authentic examples of writing craft. And they create classroom communities where published authors become friends and mentors and where every student can find something he wants to read and apply to his own writing. This workshop takes you to three elementary classrooms where teachers AND their students read like writers. You'll see teaching strategies that help young authors observe and study the techniques published writers use to communicate. You'll watch as students are introduced to shared literary models. And you'll learn about practices that help students decide who and what to emulate as they develop their own writing style and craft. It all starts with a text.	01:01	02:21
Isoke Nia	ISOKE: We try to teach the kids to create their style by learning the styles of other		

	writers and taking on—not imitating, so much, the exact structure or even the topic of another writer, but to take on those craft moves that they think they can do and that they think will enhance their writing.	00:26	02:47
B-Roll	NARRATOR: Fifth-grade teacher Lindsay Dibert has embraced the reading-based approach to writing that Isoke recommends. Six years into her teaching career, she’s already accumulated a large collection of books and other texts for her classroom. And she’s helped create a bridge between reading and writing for herself and her students.	00:20	03:07
Lindsay Dibert, Danville Elementary, Danville, New Hampshire	LINDSAY: Every day, reading and writing connect in my classroom, in some shape or form. Whether it’s formally under the title of reading or formally under the title of writing, my students are learning how to read like writers and write what they like to read.	00:15	03:22
B-Roll	NARRATOR: In their classroom in Danville, New Hampshire, Lindsay’s fifth-graders have been writing personal narratives. Today, the focus is leads, and Lindsay is relying on familiar children’s books to model the strategies published writers use to introduce their stories. Lindsay has prepared a handout with opening paragraphs from works by Roald Dahl, Ted Hughes, Cynthia Rylant, and other authors. She begins with a whole class activity--reading the leads out loud and asking students to discuss the strategies the writers have used to draw their audience into their stories.	00:37	03:59
Lindsay Dibert, Danville Elementary, Danville, New Hampshire	LINDSAY: Let’s read a few more. And as I’m reading, I’d like you to think about what’s effective, what works. Here is James Henry Trotter when he was about four years old. Up until this time, he had had a happy life, living peacefully with his mother and father in a beautiful house beside the sea. There were		

always plenty of other children for him to play with. And there was the sandy beach for him to run about on and the ocean to paddle in. It was the perfect life for a small boy. Then, one day, James' mother and father went to London to do some shopping and there, and there a terrible thing happened. Both of them got eaten up, in full daylight mind you, and on a crowded street by an enormous angry rhinoceros who had escaped from the London Zoo. That was from James and the Giant Peach.

Once upon a time there was a bat, a little light brown bat, the color of coffee with cream in it. He looked like a furry mouse with wings. What's catching your attention about those? What were some of the things the authors did? Josh?

JOSH: Like with the one where it said, um, the, on the, the one where the kid's parents got eaten I would really want to read that book because I want to see what happened to him later.

LINDSAY: Yeah. Devin?

DEVIN: They're being descriptive like on the one that says the, a light, a little light brown bat the color of coffee with cream in it, like they're describing what color it is.

LINDSAY: And that got your attention? Excellent. Dale?

DALE: In every one they mention the characters.

LINDSAY: Mentioning about the characters. Great.

LINDSAY: You have lots of sample leads here—of leads that start with a question. That's one type of lead. You have leads that speak to the reader—you need to know this if

	<p>you started lying. Description. How to start off with a setting, or describing the little bat that you had mentioned. And a question, like Lori seemed to like quite a bit from <u>The Iron Giant</u>. What I would like you to do in your groups is I'd like you to pick out your top three most effective leads out of this list. What makes it a good lead? Why do you like it so much? In a group you're going to need to come up with three leads that your group thinks are the best.</p> <p>STUDENTS: <u>Chasing Vermeer</u>, <u>The Iron Giant</u></p>	02:40	06:39
B-Roll	<p>NARRATOR: As the students discuss the leads and analyze their strengths, they are engaged and focused. This small-group activity reinforces and deepens what the students have already learned about how the leads work. The activity also helps them begin to think about their own writing preferences and needs, preparing them for the individual work that will follow.</p> <p>We rejoin the class as a representative from each group explains which leads they have chosen and why.</p>	00:30	07:09
Lindsay Dibert, Danville Elementary, Danville, New Hampshire	<p>LINDSAY: Lori, what did your group decide on?</p> <p>LORI: Well, we decided to do <u>James and the Giant Peach</u> because we thought it was like really cool how they, the parents, they got eaten up by a rhinoc- by an angry rhinoceros and I wanted to read on because it sounded like, I wanted to know what happened to the boy, who um, what his like new parents or something was. And we did <u>The Iron Man</u> too and we liked the questions, like I said. And <u>Project Mulberry</u> like Josh said, we were wondering why they become friends over a vegetable.</p> <p>LINDSAY: So a lot of the same things we're</p>		

	<p>enjoying, we want to know more about. We've got to hook the reader in and it sounds like some of these leads must have been good enough to do that. Representative here?</p> <p>GABRIELLE: Okay. We did <u>The Bat Poet</u> because we liked the part when it said; there was a little light brown bat, the color of, of coffee with cream in it. And, um, I also liked he looked like a furry mouse with wings. And I thought that was very descriptive and it got a picture in my mind on what the bat looked like. So.</p> <p>LINDSAY: Okay what were the other two that you had, that your group chose?</p> <p>GABRIELLE: We did <u>James and the Giant Peach</u>, um, and <u>The Iron Man</u>. We liked <u>The Iron Man</u> because whenever it said, how far had he walked? Nobody knows. Where had he come from? Nobody knows. How is he made? Nobody knows.</p> <p>LINDSAY: It's that repetition don't you think?</p> <p>LINDSAY: So it sounds to me like some of the qualities of a good leads are any lead that can make you wonder about something—something that questions, like the questions in <u>The Iron Giant</u>. Or just some odd facts of sorts as in, what one was it, the Roald Dahl book, <u>James and the Giant Peach</u>. What else makes an effective lead that you've learned? Lori?</p> <p>LORI: It could be questions.</p> <p>LINDSAY: The questions worked for you. The setting works for you. The description worked for you and Devin. That's great.</p>	02:21	09:32
B-Roll	<p>NARRATOR: The next step for Lindsay's fifth-graders is individual work. Using examples from the handout or opening paragraphs from other books as models, the</p>		

	<p>students start experimenting with new leads for their stories. As the students write, Lindsay moves around the room, stopping to ask questions and confer with children about their choices.</p> <p>In these conferences, Lindsay is careful to show respect for her students' decision making as she directs their attention back to the model leads.</p>	00:31	10:03
Lindsay Dibert, Danville Elementary, Danville, New Hampshire	<p>LINDSAY: What leads did you like in here?</p> <p>STUDENT: Well, this one.</p> <p>LINDSAY: <u>Chasing Vermeer</u>?</p> <p>STUDENT: And <u>Louis the Fish</u> and <u>The Iron Man</u>.</p> <p>LINDSAY: All right.</p> <p>STUDENT: But I can't really think of a question.</p> <p>LINDSAY: Of a question.</p> <p>STUDENT: I thought a different lead could be were you ever afraid of the dark when you were young?</p> <p>LINDSAY: That sounds like a good start. It's similar to what, But I'll Be Back Again, if you are a child; she's speaking to the reader. There's no reason you couldn't try that one and speak to the reader with your question. Would you be willing to give with your question? Would you be willing to give that a shot?</p> <p>STUDENT: Okay.</p> <p>LINDSAY: Okay and maybe that'll lead you to something different. Perhaps something similar to questions about <u>The Iron Man</u>.</p>		

	<p>STUDENT: Um, I'm working on this but I want to change this to fall.</p> <p>LINDSAY: So it was in the fall?</p> <p>STUDENT: I'm probably going to add like it was mid fall so it could, and maybe I might add the day to it so,</p> <p>LINDSAY: Okay. And why are you choosing this lead by Cynthia Rylant?</p> <p>STUDENT: Because I like this one and I like the book too.</p> <p>LINDSAY: You like the book too?</p> <p>STUDENT: Yeah I read it.</p> <p>LINDSAY: She's a great author isn't she? And I think she does an excellent job at telling the reader you know what time of year it is, but she goes about it in a way, and I think we talked about before, in a way that's; she doesn't just come right and tell you. She describes it for you. She makes it more interesting.</p>	01:40	11:43
B-Roll	<p>NARRATOR: After their individual writing time is over, Lindsay's students come together for one more whole class meeting—in this case, to share their new leads. Here's the payoff for today's classroom work. The students understand the craft lessons inherent in the examples Lindsay has offered them. And now they've applied those lessons to their own writing.</p>	00:24	12:07
Lindsay Dibert, Danville Elementary, Danville, New Hampshire	<p>LINDSAY: Steffan, would you like to share something and maybe tell us why you like it?</p> <p>STEFFAN: Well, I like doing leads because like it's basically pretty much starting off beginning your own story like Michael said. And, um, I think that this lead sounds a lot better than my old lead because my old lead</p>		

	<p>was like, when I was younger I couldn't kick. And like that's it. But these are more interesting, like if a reader just read the first paragraph in my old version they would probably just put the book down. But with this they would probably like read a little bit more.</p> <p>LINDSAY: So could you share us—share with us?</p> <p>STEFFAN: Okay. Why couldn't I kick a soccer ball far? I don't know. Why did I use my toe? I don't know. How long will it be before I know how to kick? I don't know, yet.</p> <p>LINDSAY: Excellent. Very nicely done. I'm really impressed. Gabrielle, how about your leads? What worked for you?</p> <p>GABRIELLE: The one, the <u>Louis the Fish</u> by Arthur Yorinks worked for me because I tried doing this short sentence and it, it ended up being way better than my first one. So it says, Gabrielle Can you get Shadow? He escaped again. Okay, Mom. Suddenly there was a flash of white, black and big black bushy, furry tail.</p> <p>LINDSAY: Nicely done. Very nice. And why do you like that one better than the lead you originally had in your story?</p> <p>GABRIELLE: Because I didn't really describe like what, what Shadow looked like. I just said, I just chased him up into my house. But this one gives more description on how he looked because in the rest of my story I didn't tell the reader what he looked like.</p> <p>LINDSAY: That's kind of important isn't it?</p> <p>GABRIELLE: Yeah.</p> <p>LINDSAY: Yeah, for visualizing what you're, and if I understand correctly, Fluffy is a pretty big part of your story.</p>		
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02:03

14:10

<p>Lindsay Dibert, Danville Elementary, Danville, New Hampshire</p>	<p>LINDSAY: There’s such an amazing crossover between what we do in reading and what we do in writing. I find it does the students a disservice to have the two disconnect. So we use a lot of the same terminology in both subject areas to show that they are connected, and, in order to do one well you need to practice the other and vice versa.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">00:23</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">14:33</p>
<p>B-Roll</p>	<p>NARRATOR: Our second stop is a third-grade classroom in Indianapolis, where another teacher, Latosha Rowley, is doing a unit on poetry.</p> <p>To help her students learn to write poems, Latosha has immersed them in the genre. She’s placed books and Xeroxed copies of poems in baskets at the center of their work tables. She’s guiding them in an exploration of the elements of poetry. And she’s encouraging them to experiment with subjects and techniques.</p> <p>Today, Latosha is using another strategy with her fledgling poets—the touchstone text.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">00:35</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">15:08</p>
<p>Isoke Nia</p>	<p>ISOKE: A touchstone text is a text chosen by an instructor or teacher or the leader of the group as a teaching tool. The teacher, his or herself, has read and fallen in love with this text first. I think love of the text guides everything. And then read—and inside that text, was able to see, like, a zillion things that they could teach this particular group of students.</p> <p>It’s a text that, when they choose it, they aren’t really concerned if the students love it or not. They love it. They’re not really concerned if it’s an independent read for each student in their class because the students aren’t ever really going to be inside the text by themselves.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">00:48</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">15:56</p>

<p>Latosha Rowley, Cold Spring Elementary, Indianapolis, Indiana</p>	<p>LATOSHA: The poem I wanted to share with you is one that I really, really love. And it's called, and you'll see it in your basket of things because this will be a poem we'll spend time with, it's called "Mother to Son".</p> <p>Well, son, I'll tell you: Life for me ain't been no crystal stair. It's had tacks in it, and splinters, and boards torn up, and places with no carpet on the floor—Bare. But all the time I've been a-climbin' on, and reachin' landin's, and turnin' corners, and sometimes goin' in the dark where there ain't been no light. So, boy, don't you turn back. Don't you set down on the steps. 'Cause you finds it's kinder hard. Don't you fall now— For I've still goin', honey, I've still climbin', and life for me ain't been no crystal stair.</p> <p>And that's by our Langston Hughes. And you're going to have a chance to look at this. One thing I want us to notice—at the very beginning he used some things to help us flow into the poem. There's lots of punctuation, lots. Well comma, son comma, I'll and we know that's a contraction, right, which means I will, I'll, tell you. Now I put this in red. What are these things called? Do you remember? Anybody remember those things? Let me ask Jayla.</p> <p>JAYLA: The things that come right after, like, come right after the sentence, a little sentence you're telling somebody.</p> <p>LATOSHA: Okay, so it kind of put a break there, didn't it? Okay. Do we remember what it's called? It has a special name. Donna? No, don't remember? You just know what it does? Ty?</p> <p>TY: A colon!</p> <p>LATOSHA: A colon! Thank you. And as someone shared with us, the colon, it kind of gives us a break and then we go into the rest</p>		
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of the sentence. So, we're going to look at another poem because right now I'm just kind of sharing a few little poems with us so we can hear them and then we'll have a chance to look at them. But that's something important that poets use in poetry. Another poet is a female, and you probably saw her name on the chart before we flipped it over. This whole book is poetry by Nikki Grimes. And this is going to be one of the books we're going to spend some time with to look at a lot of her poems. This is one that I want to share with you that is one of my favorites, which I have a lot of favorites. I love poetry. Now, what's Ms. Rowley's favorite color?

STUDENTS: Purple!

LATOSHA: Ah, so, so it's something about purple isn't it? Because it's my favorite. Purple.

Once you've met my friend Danitra, you can spot her miles away. She's the only girl around here who wears purple everyday. Whether summer's almost over or spring rains are pouring down, if you see a girl in purple, it must be Danitra Brown. Purple socks and jeans and sneakers, purple ribbons for her hair. Purple shirts and slacks and sweaters, even purple underwear!

STUDENTS: OOOH!

LATOSHA: Purple dresses, shorts and sandals, purple coat and purple gloves

(Dissolve and sting.)

LATOSHA: There was a line in the poem that also used some of those markings that we just saw in another poem. So we need to look at this one more closely. There's just no mistake about it: and what is this thing called?

STUDENTS: Colon.

	<p>LATOSHA: Colon. Purple's what Danitra loves! And then how do we end it?</p> <p>STUDENTS: With an exclamation</p> <p>LATOSHA: What is that thing?</p> <p>STUDENTS: An exclamation point.</p> <p>LATOSHA: An exclamation point! So there's probably some excitement in that isn't it?</p>	04:16	20:12
Latosha Rowley	<p>LATOSHA: I believe that the touchstone text builds the community. For one, we are having a piece that we're sharing. This will be a piece that we can all refer to, that we can all connect our writing to, and we can—you know, as we're talking about our piece, we'll say, "Well, I did something like Langston Hughes," or "I did something like Nikki Grimes." And, since those are our two people we're going to focus on, it helps everyone in the whole classroom be able to focus on that same piece of work.</p> <p>A lot of times, when I pick a text for our genre study, I try to see what kinds of things are in that text that you can teach from. And, today, I just picked one little thing that happened to be in both texts. And that gave them a chance to see a punctuation mark that they weren't aware of. So, now, as they look in other pieces of poetry, they're going to see that punctuation mark, because a lot of poets use it. You just try to see a piece that has a lot of teachable items.</p> <p>And I picked two different texts because I wanted to have one for my females and one for my males. And, that way, they can understand that a poet can be either male or female. So I, you know, I tried to pick two things that we want to take a look at throughout the study. And, that way, at the end of the study, these pieces they'll know, almost by heart, because they'll be so used to</p>		

	<p>hearing them and seeing them and, you know, just kind of discovering what's there.</p>	01:29	21:41
B-Roll	<p>NARRATOR: In another urban classroom—this time in Phoenix, Arizona—veteran teacher Silvia Edgerton has set up a dynamic workshop where her fifth-graders are learning to think and write independently.</p> <p>This independence extends to their reading. Through multiple lessons and examples, Silvia has taught the students how to read like writers—how to recognize and analyze the strategies authors use in their published work. Moreover, she's encouraged them to analyze texts on their own and then apply what they've observed to their writing.</p> <p>When Silvia confers with students about their writing questions and dilemmas, she sometimes recommends books that might provide relevant models of writing craft. But more importantly, her students know how to choose their own "mentor texts" to help them draft and revise their work.</p>	00:51	22:32
Isoke Nia	<p>ISOKE: A mentor text is chosen by the students. It is what a mentor is in the world. It is chosen by an individual student to use to help them create a text. It has to be an independent read. The student has to be able to read it and has to have read it and loved it. And all of the things that I say about the touchstone now apply to the mentor text.</p>	00:26	22:58
Silvia Edgerton, Herrera Magnet School of Fine Arts, Phoenix, Arizona	<p>SILVIA: The last time we talked, Luis, we talked about how in your writing piece you seemed to have a story within a story and then, and then you have a thing with time where it's like 5-minutes later and 30-minutes later. And so you, I asked you to go back and look at some of the books that we've read and some of the books that you're reading to see how authors do the time and the story within a story, and tell me what you've found.</p>		

LUIS: On this one I used, this one is telling a story within a story and I found that when Hortencia is telling Esperanza about the raft

SILVIA: Uh-huh. And what did you notice that Pam Munoz Ryan did?

LUIS: She just like, if they were remembering she used like a long time ago

SILVIA: Okay, did you mark it anywhere in there?

LUIS: No.

SILVIA: No. So she just went, she just said, what did she do? She just said, I remember and then she told the story. Did she do anything different with the way the words were written?

LUIS: Yeah, she, can you see that they are straight and bolded and on the other ones she did them slanted. She slanted them a little bit.

SILVIA: So the slanted was a story within a story?

Dissolve

SILVIA: Then what did you decide about the time?

LUIS: Um, Twilight Comes Twice uses what's happening at the time.

SILVIA: Okay, so would you show me what you mean by that?

LUIS: Like right here it says in the summer dusk hisses on the sprinklers. It flushes out millions of mosquitoes and armies of bats to eat them. So like when that's happening, the water's flashing, the mosquitoes and the bats are coming.

	<p>SILVIA: Okay, how would that help you with your writing piece though?</p> <p>LUIS: Like for the options, I used part of this</p> <p>SILVIA: Okay, tell me, go ahead</p> <p>LUIS: On the options, number one, I erased it because it had too much information because she sees it differently.</p> <p>SILVIA: Okay.</p> <p>LUIS: And when the moon has traveled around half of the earth, she says that she looks like a quarter and then the moon ends on a quarter</p> <p>SILVIA: Oh, okay.</p> <p>LUIS: So she says that was too much information. Then when we look at this one, and it says, early in the morning before sunrise, and she says the morning are A.M. and if it's three o'clock it would be early in the morning, so I said, early in the morning, before sunrise.</p> <p>SILVIA: And how is that related to what you read in Ralph Fletcher's?</p> <p>LUIS: Just like, um, time telling, telling time without saying exactly with numbers</p>	02:48	25:46
Silvia Edgerton, Herrera Magnet School of Fine Arts, Phoenix, Arizona	<p>SILVIA: And I think that students can learn so much from published pieces than what I can actually do. I mean, today, when I had the conference with Luis, the—when he first went out a couple—or last week to look at some of the books, I noticed some of the books he had that he was looking at, and I was surprised that he brought <u>Twilight Comes Twice</u> back with him. And he found the excerpt that he felt served his purpose, and it did.</p> <p>And then, the same thing with <u>Esperanza</u></p>		

	<p><u>Rising</u>; I didn't expect him to bring <u>Esperanza Rising</u>, and I didn't even remember. And so there's—now I have as many teachers in the classroom as I have books, along with the students that are in the classroom.</p> <p>So—and once one student understands how to use the mentor authors, then it just goes from student to student. And, you know, we have hundreds of teachers in the classrooms besides myself.</p>	00:55	26:41
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