**Close Reading Lesson One – Introduction to Close Reading -- OVERVIEW LESSON IDEA**

From Falling In Love With Close Reading – by Christopher Lehman and Kate Roberts

*In this lesson, the intention is to guide students’ thinking about characters through the ritual of close reading. This could be the first close reading lesson in your class, and so you need to spend a moment to introduce the ritual first.*

1. **Teacher – Introduction**

Across your years of schooling and even so far this year, you have thought a lot about the characters and people in the texts you are reading and the kind of people they represent, the things they do, how they interact, and so on. Today, I want to teach you a new sort of reading ritual that can build upon the great work you are already doing.

1. **Take a moment and think about rituals you see in your life and in the lives around you**. There are big ones, like how weddings tend to go in your culture. There are smaller ones, like your own ‘getting ready for school’ ritual each morning. All rituals involve steps in a process and the feelings you bring to them. A graduation ritual typically involves a speech, students marching up to get their diplomas, and then families snapping pictures. It also involves having a joyful yet serious feeling; people dress up and treat it as a big life step. I want to take you through this new, close reading ritual and show you how it can be another way of reading that you can draw on.
2. **Explain that there three steps to close reading.** These steps include:
   1. Decide what to carefully look for.
   2. Find what these things have in common, like pattern.
   3. Step back and see what new understanding this gives you about the text.
3. **Why do we need to read a text closely?**
   1. To help us think more deeply about our characters
   2. To help us gather details about the characters and reflect on what the evidence reveals.
   3. To help our thinking become precise, sophisticated and interesting.
4. **Applying close reading.**
   1. Give students a passage to read that includes at least one character.
   2. Read the passage aloud to students, as they follow along.
   3. After reading, ask students to write down some of their thinking about the character.
      * As students write their notes, look over their shoulders and choose one or two examples to share with the class. Try to look for general patterns across your class, such as noting that everyone is writing very brief ideas. Also know that at the end, you will revise the idea – so don’t pick a very complex example, or you may be left with little to revise.
   4. The notes should be very general…Molly likes to sing. After reviewing several examples with the class, the idea of a LENS should be introduced.
5. **LENS**
   1. Using a lens will help the reader better understand the character. It involves choosing specifically what to look for when reading about a character.
   2. An example of a lens would be, “What does she do in this passage?”
   3. Having a lens helps us decide what evidence to pull out of the text.
   4. Students will listen as the teacher reads the passage a second time.
   5. The details students write during/after this reading should be much more detailed than their first list.
6. **Look for Patterns**
   1. Like laying breadcrumbs down in the forest, writers with create patterns in their text to follow.
   2. Students will look at their evidence gathered from the text and determine a pattern or groupings.
   3. Students should reread their list (teacher can reread a model) and see if there is evidence that fits together. For example, similar kinds of actions or similar effect or emotion.
   4. Students can draw a shape around or color code each pattern they find in the teacher model. Students can then move into pairs and discuss what patterns they found and why they think they are patterns.
   5. Discuss as a group what patterns were found.
7. **Developing a New Understanding of the Text**
   1. It is essential that students develop ideas about the text, not just collect details. Stress “What I want you to remember most is that anything you do while reading is only worth it if it helps you think more about your reading. Use your work to have new ideas.” Compare old list of details about the character to the new details.
   2. Use the newest list to gain a new understanding of the character. Think about what kind of person the character is or what his/her motivation is or why he/she does what he/she does.
   3. Use a prompt such as, “My thinking about Molly has changed because…” Then add, “I think this because the author wrote…” OR “The reason why Molly likes to \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ is because\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_”

MORE EXAMPLES –

The reason why the character \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ is because \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

It seems like this character tends to \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

My thinking about this character has changed because \_\_\_\_\_\_.

These characters are really different because \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

One issue I am noticing in this book is \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

I think the author is trying to teach me \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

I think this because the author wrote \_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

Teaching students to gather evidence in order to form ideas gives them the tools to interact more deeply with the texts they read. This is not searching for one “right” answer, instead this is supporting students in listening to the words of the author as carefully as you would words of a close friend.