

Idea Hearts: Getting To The Heart Of It

The Writing For Pleasure Centre – Ross Young

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Principle(s) in focus:

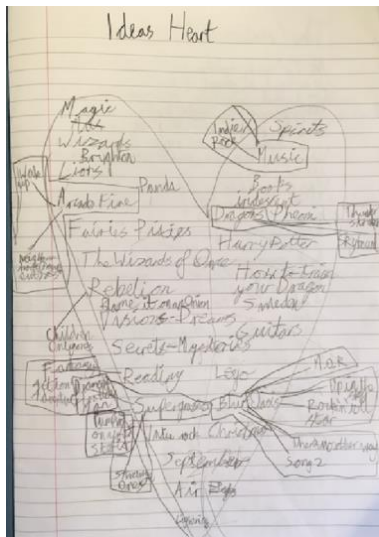
1. Building a community of writers
2. Personal writing projects
3. Every child a writer

Having read Georgia Heard's (1998) *Awakening the heart*, I wanted to give children an idea generation strategy they could always use when we had personal writing project time and so I taught them how to create *Idea Hearts*.

Aims:

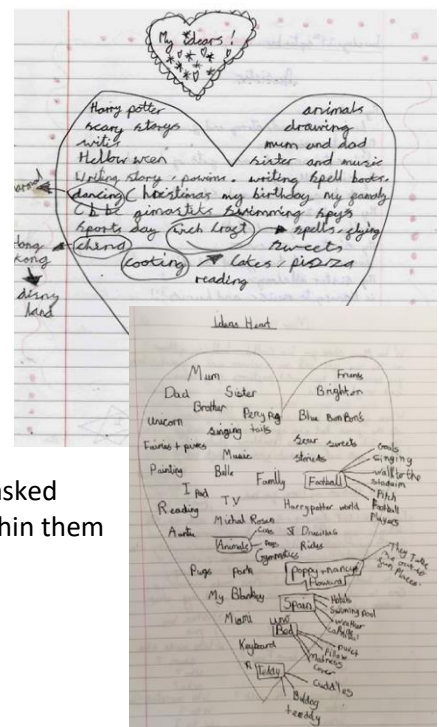
My aim was to give children an idea generation strategy that would enable them to have more agency and to take ownership over their personal writing projects. I also wanted them to realise that their lives, passions, knowledge, thoughts - essentially their identities - can be a treasure trove for potential writing projects. A consequence being that children would feel a greater sense of self-efficacy because they would be writing from a position of strength and expertise. Finally, I wanted the children to have a self-regulation strategy they could always rely on when they were writing independently in the future.

Description:



As part of introducing their personal writing project books at the beginning of the year, I taught this mini-lesson on using *Idea Hearts*. I modelled with the children how you can write a raft of personal topics inside the heart - your loves, likes, people, places, games, food, hobbies, interests, books and films. I explained that this is a rich resource that can be added to at any time. I made sure to make and share my own heart too.

You can see from the pictures that, once children had written down large topics, I asked them to 'crack them open' and search within them for more specific ideas.



Impact:

Creating a community of writers – children began to be inspired by each other's hearts. It was heart-warming to see ideas bouncing around the classroom. **Every child a writer** – all children were able to see that they had things within their lives that they would like to share and talk about through writing. **Personal writing projects** – this short and simple mini-lesson was able to provide children with enough material to last many months.

Reflection:

I hope to continue supplying children with idea generation techniques and strategies. It was powerful to see that when giving a concrete technique, one that writers use in their daily writing lives, that the children felt more confident, capable and like genuine writers during personal writing time.

References:

- Heard, G., (1998) *Awakening the heart* USA: Heinemann