Add Comments from Experience to a Procedural Text

1. Focus

Explain How Writers Add Comments from Experience to a Procedural Text

Say: When I write a procedural text, I tell my readers how to do something in step-by-step order. The purpose of my directions is to explain each step clearly. I want my readers to know exactly what to do. I also want them to know that I understand exactly what it feels like to do each step (and in most cases I will have tried the procedure myself anyway). This can also give readers confidence that the procedure will work. For these reasons, I add a few extra comments to some of my directions. Today I’m going to show you an example of this type of comment in a procedural text. We’ll also discuss how you can add this kind of comment to your own procedural text.

Model How Writers Add Comments from Experience to a Procedural Text

Display the modeling text on chart paper or using the interactive whiteboard resources. Ask students to listen for phrases that sound as though they come from the writer’s experience. Read the text aloud.

| Step 1: Get the water at the right temperature—not too hot and not too cold. |
| Step 3: Put shampoo on the dog. Rub it gently all over the dog’s fur. Be careful not to get any in your dog’s eyes! |

Modeling Text

Reread step 1. Say: In step 1, the writer tells me to “get the water at the right temperature.” This isn’t very specific. However, when I read the added comment “not too hot and not too cold,” I can imagine the writer putting a hand under the faucet to feel the temperature until it is comfortable—not too hot and not too cold. This helps me to imagine doing the same thing myself. So this extra comment helps me understand how to do this step of the procedure. I trust that the procedure will work a little more because it sounds as though the writer has tried it.

Reread step 3. Say: In step 3, the writer tells me to put shampoo on my dog and rub it all over the dog’s fur. Then the writer adds a tip that makes it sound like she has done this before: “Be careful not to get any in your dog’s eyes!” This tip helps me think ahead about what might happen if I’m not careful where I rub the shampoo. It sounds as though the writer might’ve gotten shampoo in a dog’s eyes before! The comment helps me to avoid mistakes when I get ready to do this step myself.

Objectives

In this mini-lesson, students will:

• Learn about adding comments to a procedural text that sound as though they come from experience.
• Learn how and why authors include this type of comment in a procedural text.
• Discuss how to apply this strategy to their independent writing.

Preparation

Materials Needed

• Chart paper and markers
• Interactive whiteboard resources

Advanced Preparation

If you will not be using the interactive whiteboard resources, copy the modeling and practice texts onto chart paper prior to the mini-lesson. If necessary, copy the sentence frame from “Strategies to Support ELs” on chart paper.
2. Rehearse

Practice Adding Comments as Though from Experience

Write the practice text on chart paper or use the interactive whiteboard resources.

Step 4: Rinse off the shampoo.
Step 6: Wrap the dog in the towel.

Practice Text

Ask students to work with a partner to add comments as though from experience to steps 4 and 6. Even if students have never owned a dog, ask them to imagine what it would be like to do the steps so they can offer extra tips for their readers to easily complete the procedure. If necessary, ask what might go wrong in rinsing the shampoo or getting the dog wrapped in a towel—what might they tell readers to avoid? Students should write down their sentences and be prepared to read them to the class.

Share Practice Sentences

Bring students together and invite pairs to read aloud their sentences and explain how their added comments make it sound as though they understand from experience how to do each step. Record sample student sentences and post these as models for students to use as they write their own procedural texts.

3. Independent Writing and Conferring

Say: A procedural text tells how to do something in step-by-step order. Remember that you can make it easier for readers to follow directions and reassure them that the process will go smoothly by adding a few extra tips that sound as though they come from experience. These tips will give your readers confidence in the procedure and help them avoid mistakes.

Encourage students to apply their understanding of these extra comments during independent writing time. During student conferences, reinforce students’ use of this and other strategies using the prompts on your conferring flip chart.

4. Share

Bring the class together. Invite volunteers to read aloud a section of their procedural texts in which they added a tip based on their experience.

Strategies to Support ELs

Beginning
Meet with beginning ELs one on one while other students work with partners. Encourage them to describe how to wash a dog—or something else, such as a car or even dishes in a sink—in any way they can. Expand on their ideas with simple sentences that you write on chart paper.

Intermediate
Pair ELs with more fluent English speakers during the partner activity. Write the following sentence frame on chart paper and model how students can use it to add a comment to step 4, step 6, or to both of these steps from the practice text:

Make sure that ______.

Advanced
Pair ELs with fluent English speakers during partner practice.

All Levels
If you have students whose first language is Spanish, share these English/Spanish cognates: comments/los comentarios; experience/la experiencia; procedural/de procedimiento.