Mini-Lesson: Stretching out Small Moments

Objective: Students will better understand how to tell personal stories using details. The students will understand that simple moments in their life are interesting and will understand the steps needed to stretch their small moments.

Materials:
- Large tablet paper or white board
- Markers
- Writer’s notebooks

1. The teacher says, “So I’ve been thinking about the small moments that we’ve been working on. I wanted to show you a way to help you stretch out your ideas into a story. Several of you asked me yesterday what it means to stretch a small moment out. So today, I thought we’d take a moment to really figure that out together.”

2. The teacher uses the white board or a large writing tablet to take notes. The teacher will list the steps to this strategy while he/she says, “So when I write my small moment, I start by saying what exactly that small moment is.”

3. The teacher uses a personal example from their life to work through and model as an example.

4. The teacher says, “Once I’ve written down my moment, I draw a picture or write phrases to describe my moment. This is what I mean by stretching it out. I think about what that memory looked like, sounded like, smelled like, and then I write down as many details as I can remember.”

5. The teacher then shares some personal examples to model this strategy.

6. The teacher says, “Then I take the information I have and answer the seven important questions that I know my story should answer:
   - Who is my story about?
   - What happened? What happened next…?
   - Where did it happen?
   - When did this happen?
   - Why do I want to write about this?
   - What is important for my readers to know?

7. The teacher briefly works through these questions with his/her personal example.

8. The teacher says, “Now look at that! I started with this small moment, and now I have all of this information about this one small piece of my life! Now that I have this information, my next step is to take all of my details and decide how to piece them together to write my story. Today as we write, I want you to consider using this strategy to help you stretch out your small moment. I will leave this chart on the board to help remind you of what steps we took in case you’d like to take a second look.”

9. The teacher directs the writer’s to the desks to retrieve the writer’s notebooks.