

# The Architecture of Effective Minilessons

The most effective minilessons tend to follow a simple structure, that is, while the *content* of the minilesson changes from day to day, the *architecture* of minilessons remains the same.

**Connection:** Minilessons begin with a connection. The teacher tells students the following: the strategy that they will be learning, the purpose of the strategy, how the lesson fits with the work the class has been doing and how the strategy will fit into the students lives as readers/writers.

**Teaching:** The teacher teaches students a strategy to use often when they are reading/writing. (The teacher selects minilesson teaching points based on ongoing assessment, professional text suggestions, as well as the unit of study.) During the teaching portion of the minilesson, the teacher models and names out the steps of the strategy, thereby making the process visible to students.

**Active Engagement:** The teacher gives students the opportunity to try what they have just seen demonstrated during the active engagement. The active engagement phase often has students practicing the strategy on a familiar text the class has read or written together before the minilesson. Typically, students practice the strategy with a partner, usually referred to as a "turn and talk partner".

**Link:** The teacher ends the minilesson by linking it to the ongoing work of the day's workshop. The goal is eventually for all students to transfer the work of the minilesson to their independent reading/writing, thereby making it part of their ongoing repertoire of reading/writing skills and strategies.