

00:00.71

Gary Gray

Awesome. All right. Welcome to Corridor Conversations, the podcast segment of NCTE's Classroom Corridors, sharing expertise and inspiration from elementary teachers. I'm your host, Gary Gray Jr.

00:12.32

Gary Gray

Today we are talking with two amazing authors and educators. We have Katie Ray and Stella Velva about Wonders Words. And I had the honor of reading this book two today.

00:23.58

Katie

Thank you.

00:27.60

Gary Gray

And before I share anything, I just want to say I absolutely love everything you did to this text, everything. And one of the reasons why, I know I'm talking too much already, it is so different than anything that I've ever seen.

00:44.02

Gary Gray

When it comes to structure in regards to how you laid out the text, I love every second of it. I love the student example. Oh my gosh, I just fell in love with the student examples I've seen I think there was like Kyle, Devin, um Justin, Will. Like, I mean, honestly, I was like, so as soon as I saw the examples, i was like, this is what educators need in their classroom. um And I love the other segments on, um you added a certain section that talked about just like in the classroom and like things you could do. And I thought like you just laid it out so easy for educators.

01:26.84

Gary Gray

I'm so excited to have you.

01:28.89

Stella Villalba

Oh.

01:29.07

Gary Gray

I'm so excited to have you. Before we start, let's have a conversation on like how this happened um and what was that process like for you guys?

01:30.92

Katie
Thank you.

01:43.14

Katie
Well, I guess I'll start quickly. um You know, NCT had asked me off and on through the years a lot to update this book because the writing, say you know, the book is grounded in examples from literature.

01:55.41

Katie
And of course, so most of the original ones are out of print. You can't even get them now.

01:59.40

Gary Gray
Mm-hmm.

02:00.66

Katie
And it just never was the right time for me to do it. I had a lot of other things going on. And so Frankie Sibberson called me last summer and, you know I've been retired now for a few years, actually.

02:13.42

Katie
i retired in the middle of the pandemic, like a lot of people. And um it just, you know, it occurred to me that it might be interesting to revisit it and do it. And I love Frankie, of course.

02:24.71

Katie
And I had all these reasons, though, not to do it. And she had already thought all of them through, including one of them was I'm not in classrooms anymore. Yeah. And, you know, the book, the beauty of the book, I think from start from the original to now was that it was grounded in classroom practice.

02:40.72

Katie
And I said, I don't know how to get around that. I'm not I'm not interested in going back in.

02:43.92

Gary Gray
Mm-hmm.

02:45.45

Katie

And, you know, and so and but she had an answer for that. She had Stella in mind. And so she reached out to Stella. And of course, Stella's in classrooms every single day supporting teachers with this and lots of other work.

03:00.59

Katie

And so um You know, and I was like, I don't know children's literature anymore. I'm not up to date on it.

03:06.95

Gary Gray

who

03:07.13

Katie

Frankie said, well, I know it. I can help you. But in the end, what was beautiful was I actually I did that myself. I dug back into children's literature and really got to know the field, including your beautiful book, Gary, which I don't is in there.

03:20.78

Gary Gray

Hmm. Hmm.

03:22.78

Katie

ah

03:23.21

Stella Villalba

Yeah.

03:23.84

Katie

And so, yeah, the pieces just came together. And then it was just this fabulous opportunity to revisit a book after, um you know, years of continuing to live with the work. You know, I wrote lots of other books that kind of spun out of the original Wondrous Words.

03:43.04

Katie

And so to go back to that grounding and have the opportunity to revise and rethink and, re you know, reorganize in some cases, update everything ah was just, it was an amazing process. And it was lovely to work, you know, alongside Stella and Frankie to be able to talk things through with both of them.

04:04.03

Katie

ah visited up in Columbus, Ohio and got to watch ah Frankie and some of the fabulous teachers she works with in action.

04:04.22

Gary Gray
who

04:07.33

Gary Gray
Wow.

04:12.05

Katie
So was, it was a great process ah from my perspective.

04:15.74

Gary Gray
Wow. Stella, how about you?

04:19.20

Stella Villalba
Oh my goodness. So I love telling this story because ah the first time I read Wondrous Words was 2004. One of my literacy coach is the one that recommended.

04:31.90

Stella Villalba
i was new new teacher in the profession, trying to figure it out, you know, writing workshop and understanding also how to um elevate writing all across the

04:37.17

Gary Gray
Mm-hmm.

04:45.12

Stella Villalba
All across you know languages and ages, i work, you know my my expertise areas is multilingual learners. So i the minute I read ah Wondrous Words, my life as a teacher of writing changed, but also my writing life changed.

05:00.70

Gary Gray
you

05:03.76

Stella Villalba
Because once you, and like Katie proposes in Wondrous Words, once you develop this habit of mind of reading like a writer, you completely

change the way you see the world for your students, for yourself, as a student, as a learner, as an educator, as a coach.

05:15.75

Gary Gray

Hmm.

05:24.28

Stella Villalba

um I have the chance to meet Katie for the first time at NCTE in Chicago. and I believe it's 2012, and i have I tell people I'm a scholar of Katie Wuzray's work.

05:32.40

Gary Gray

Hmm.

05:34.98

Katie

Thank you.

05:38.22

Gary Gray

Hmm.

05:39.78

Stella Villalba

I've been studying it for a long time because I've always enjoyed writing. Writing is the way.

05:45.32

Gary Gray

Mm-hmm. Mm-hmm.

05:46.14

Stella Villalba

I have processed life. Writing is the way that as an immigrant, I make sense of the world.

05:48.38

Gary Gray

Mm-hmm.

05:52.63

Stella Villalba

um Katie's work added so much richness to my life. And to do this with students across languages, I serve students from 93 different languages and know that there is no boundaries for this work.

05:58.00

Gary Gray
to

06:07.49
Katie
I'm sorry.

06:09.51
Stella Villalba
i am I am, it's an honor. It's an honor.

06:13.64
Gary Gray
Mm-hmm.

06:14.45
Stella Villalba
And it's been such a joy that, you know, all these years later, i get to do this work all over again in a classroom.

06:15.03
Gary Gray
who

06:24.18
Stella Villalba
I, I, spend time in Katie's Papage and Jessica Ardelia's classroom and toward the end in Lauren Scott's classroom as well.

06:34.87
Stella Villalba
And to be able as a teacher leader to also lift other teachers so that they can be introduced to Katie's work. And now, you know, it's a whole generation that gets to enjoy this work again.

06:48.50
Gary Gray
who I love that. And we can, we we can love on Katie. We're going to do that. We can do that.

06:55.93
Stella Villalba
is the right thing to three

06:56.44
Katie
Well, thank you.

06:56.45
Gary Gray

We could do that.

06:57.85

Katie

like love. Mm-hmm.

06:58.77

Gary Gray

but We could do that. We could do that.

07:00.46

Stella Villalba

It's the right thing to do.

07:00.55

Gary Gray

And Katie, I, the but question I have for you is one of the parts I loved right away. i mean, you did it throughout. And as a writer, I just love storytelling and there's so much storytelling in the book.

07:13.22

Gary Gray

through like experience. And like, you don't, I don't remember many and I haven't read a ton of educational books recently, but like the ones that grabbed me are the ones that have personal stories that connect right away. And you guys do that throughout the entire thing.

07:28.11

Gary Gray

Okay. One of the questions I was thinking about you, there's it like the beautiful opening part where you are grappling with the idea of like, do I, you talked about this earlier, like, do I want to do this? And how do I do this when I wrote this book so long ago?

07:43.34

Gary Gray

um Tell me a little bit more about like that mindset and like what got you there, like entirely like because that's a ah tall task because that book in itself has a legacy, it's influenced and now you're trying to like create something, you know, that is, you know, kind of like it's big brother or big sister, right?

08:05.97

Gary Gray

um

08:06.24

Katie

Yeah.

08:06.64

Gary Gray

but Possibly come with some pressure. So how did you get to that point?

08:11.65

Katie

Well, I mean, I'll say two things about that. One is that the idea is just still so relevant. um

08:21.54

Gary Gray

Hmm.

08:22.02

Katie

It's so, you know, I was walking the at this ah two or three days ago and I was listening to the Ezra Klein show and he was interviewing Chris Hayes and they were talking about, you

08:22.62

Stella Villalba

Thank

08:35.05

Katie

Zoran Mamdani's rise to winning the mayoral primary in New York City and how he used social media so effectively and something called vertical video, which i had to figure out what that meant, but his use of vertical video and, you know, why is it that other politicians aren't able to do this as it's the way he was and just to come out of nowhere?

08:58.95

Katie

And Chris Hayes said,

08:59.77

Gary Gray

Mm-hmm. Mm-hmm.

09:02.79

Katie

You have to be consuming. I think you have to be consuming to be producing. And ah meaning, you know, but that's that's the generation that Mondani ah has has come up in, right? He's a consumer of that kind of media. And so he is, and other people, and if you're not a consumer, you can't be a very good producer of it, right?

09:28.50

Katie

the language of it, the grammar of it, that they were talking about all that sort of thing. And I was like, you know, that's it. that's real That's what Wondrous Words is about. You have to be a consumer. You have to be a reader to be a writer.

09:41.25

Katie

You have to be a consumer to be a producer, no matter what kind of media it is. And so once you understand that, The question of what does what can that look like as classroom practice, right? And back in the day when I wrote that book, it was mainly a just about reading to write. But today it's about any kind of compositional practice ah compositional media, right?

10:06.28

Katie

That you have to first be a consumer before you can be a producer.

10:06.50

Gary Gray

Mm-hmm.

10:11.18

Katie

And you have to see yourself as a producer too. I want to do this too. And so I think it's just partly that the idea was, is still just so true.

10:15.05

Gary Gray

Yes.

10:19.55

Katie

And it's as old as when muddy taught buddy, how did you like that line? Yeah.

10:24.18

Gary Gray

but as

10:25.06

Stella Villalba

Okay.

10:25.86

Gary Gray

yes

10:27.24

Katie

Every now and then a line like that just comes out, right? But, you know, again, my husband and i were at that Muddy Waters, ah not Muddy Waters, Buddy Guy concert last summer, and he was telling this story about listening to that Muddy Waters LP over and over again to learn how to ah how to play.

10:43.57

Katie

And I was like, that's it, right?

10:44.31

Gary Gray

Yeah. Hmm.

10:45.34

Katie

So it's as old as that and as new as Zoran Mamdani. um And it's still so true.

10:50.11

Gary Gray

yeah

10:52.21

Katie

So there was that, but there was also... You have to understand, I spent seven years of the last seven years of my career as an editor.

11:02.02

Gary Gray

e

11:02.57

Katie

I walked away from writing and consulting and teaching and I became an editor and I worked with other people in their books and I learned so much about writing.

11:14.42

Katie

I became, you know, myself and and to have then the opportunity to go back and revisit, um,

11:17.16

Stella Villalba

Oh, nice.

11:22.58

Katie

a book that I wrote with that new sensibility about writing that garnered from editing and also writing other books. I think you get better when you write through the years was just such a privilege, right?

11:34.71

Gary Gray

Mm-hmm.

11:34.98

Katie

To it like, to to go back and have that opportunity to to revise something that, you know, what was a but kind of a beloved book to start with.

11:34.85

Gary Gray

Mm-hmm. Mm-hmm.

11:43.37

Gary Gray

the

11:43.55

Katie

But like, how could I really make this better? And it's interesting that you mentioned the storytelling part, because in the tradition that I wrote that book back in the day that we, you know, that I mean, my idols were, you know, Lucy Calkins, Nancy Atwell, those kind of books.

12:00.22

Katie

And that's what you did. You story, you learned through narrative. And, you know, in my in my graduate school work, I studied qualitative research where you learn through story.

12:11.23

Katie

You know, that's that it's a narrative ah view of the world.

12:11.39

Gary Gray

Yes. Yes.

12:16.50

Katie

But you you I think through the years I learned you you also have to really make sure that in a book like this, that the narrative does the

work it needs to do. It has to help the reader understand something important about what you're doing.

12:25.45
Stella Villalba
Thank you.

12:25.58
Gary Gray
you

12:29.75
Katie
And every story has to matter. And it has to be tight.

12:32.37
Gary Gray
who

12:33.42
Katie
You know, you can't tell a long story because it's not a story book.

12:35.47
Gary Gray
yes

12:36.82
Katie
This is a book to help people with their practice and their thinking.

12:36.90
Gary Gray
yeah

12:39.82
Katie
So. to be able to revisit through that lens, like what are the stories in here that really matter? And, you know, I'm, I use the term origin stories for some of the ones that I really wanted to hold on in the book about kids, because they were stories that stayed with me for such a long time, you know, and kept informing my work.

12:56.50
Stella Villalba
Oh, nice.

13:00.81
Katie
And that's why they're still there. um, so Yeah, and you know, when I

start thinking about how old those kids are now, we're in that original, and it's so funny.

13:09.07

Gary Gray

Mm-hmm.

13:11.87

Katie

And Kyle, you mentioned Kyle, this is lovely. You know, no one can figure out whatever happened. I think that back when we original did the original Wondrous Words, the reason we didn't put Kyle's actual writing in there was because it was probably very approximated, and it was very, um you know, messy, like a second grade little boy would write, right?

13:19.55

Gary Gray

Hmm.

13:33.49

Gary Gray

Hmm. Hmm.

13:35.61

Katie

Um, and so we probably just, cause in the original one or swords, they were just tight. It was type 10 and I'm guessing that's why.

13:41.38

Gary Gray

e

13:42.42

Katie

And of course no one knows where the originals are now. So I got my eight year old. now I have an eight year old nephew to actually write out Kyle's pieces.

13:50.54

Gary Gray

Wow.

13:51.12

Katie

Cause I wanted them to be in a, you know, an eight year old little boy's handwriting.

13:51.99

Gary Gray

Wow.

13:54.92

Katie

And, uh, But that story, you know, of Kyle and Justin in that opening chapter, they just, those were stories that fed a lifetime of work for me. And they, you know, they deserve to stay.

14:07.14

Katie

And of course, Stella was able to bring some, you know, just yesterday, wonderful news stories to the book. So anyway, that's a long answer to your question, but...

14:13.68

Gary Gray

Mm-hmm.

14:16.72

Gary Gray

No, it it is a great answer because I think One of the things I love is that like with the storytelling part, like for me at least, it was like just enough to get me hooked to want to know more.

14:28.19

Katie

Yeah.

14:29.43

Gary Gray

Like it didn't go on and on and it was punchy.

14:29.66

Katie

yeah

14:31.59

Gary Gray

It was very punchy and I and i love that. I think the other parts that I loved, you talk a lot about like because it is a book for teachers, like you had so many elements. I love the section that it said in the classroom.

14:43.64

Gary Gray

This is like right away. It's like, okay, like now it's go time. Like get your pencil out, get your highlighter out. Like now these are the things I can apply right away. Stella, the question I have for you is like, what does it mean truly? and obviously this is what like the core of the book is like truly to read like a writer.

15:00.62

Gary Gray

And like, how can we help students move beyond like surface level, you know, just intentionality and personal craft decisions? Like, what does that really mean to you?

15:12.05

Stella Villalba

So one of the things that I'm loving about this conversation already is how we're bringing students' names into the room, into this space, right?

15:15.34

Katie

Thank you.

15:21.01

Gary Gray

I love

15:22.54

Stella Villalba

Honoring them, honoring their brilliance, um elevating them. And I am going to bring Will into this space right now for that question.

15:31.13

Gary Gray

Will.

15:33.29

Stella Villalba

Because we sad i we ask i ask Will asked Will,

15:33.54

Gary Gray

i love well

15:38.28

Stella Villalba

he's very um he has a YouTube channel ah and he is very comfortable with the camera. And so at the end of the year, i said, before the end of the year, I said, Will, you know, ah in preparation for the next year's group,

15:49.43

Katie

Thank you.

15:57.76

Stella Villalba

If you were to tell them about writing workshop, um what would you tell them? And he said, and he talks to the camera and he said, you guys. you're gonna read lot of books about different authors and they're gonna be great and they're gonna inspire you. And inspire you is a word that we use intentionally a lot.

16:22.68

Stella Villalba

You're gonna notice, you're gonna be inspired by them.

16:22.76

Gary Gray

Mm-hmm.

16:24.40

Katie

Thanks.

16:26.02

Stella Villalba

But then he said it in his nine-year-old way, but you gotta give it your own twist.

16:26.32

Gary Gray

Mm-hmm.

16:33.74

Stella Villalba

And I was like, well, You just brought it home. It's so beautiful, you know, to for a nine-year-old to be able to find the way to explain how he internalized this idea being like a writer.

16:48.36

Gary Gray

Mm-hmm.

16:50.58

Stella Villalba

Like he's able to read a book, a text, a digital image, you know, and being able to say, This is what the writer did.

17:02.32

Stella Villalba

How is this inspiring me to think about how do I want to do this? ah Talked a lot about who we are as writers, who we are as readers and who we are as human beings.

17:16.29

Stella Villalba
So this identity work.

17:16.91
Gary Gray
the

17:18.13
Stella Villalba
comes a lot into this decision making. Because who you are, i am ah um
a a Latine and immigrant, and I'm rooted in storytelling.

17:21.41
Gary Gray
Mm-hmm.

17:26.34
Katie
Thank you.

17:30.53
Stella Villalba
So storytelling is part of how I move through the world. So that is
actually how i how I move, how I speak, how I explain things.

17:41.48
Stella Villalba
um For other students, it may be like, I'm very used to talking to
people in camera, and this is how I do, and this is how I compose. um
And I'm going to study some digital mentor text on how people do this.

17:51.65
Gary Gray
Mm-hmm.

17:56.79
Stella Villalba
And like Will said, give it in my own twist.

18:00.56
Gary Gray
Mm-hmm.

18:00.83
Stella Villalba
And think that's what moved from, yes, we start with imitating because
it's okay to start there. Absolutely. But then it transformed.

18:10.89
Gary Gray

Mm-hmm.

18:12.45

Stella Villalba

It evolves from that to this is me. So this is how I'm going to do it.

18:21.16

Gary Gray

I love that section so much because I'm most recently back into grade two, teaching second grade and, you know, they love to draw, right? And just to see, don't know if I've seen this Will's story written in a book to show teachers like, it's okay that they start in this place that doesn't have words.

18:44.67

Gary Gray

Like to look at a drawing and to like see like that is still storytelling.

18:50.49

Stella Villalba

Yeah.

18:50.39

Gary Gray

Like, you know, we hear it and people, I think teachers genuinely know it, but sometimes we get afraid when we see it's a drawing. And like, we see that students are still in this drawing phase and it's not, it's not something to be scared of. Like that is a great start. It's an amazing start.

19:05.77

Gary Gray

And I love seeing that in a book because I have had so many students that just love to draw. And like, I think when they see that teachers are leaning into that and still allowing that and talking to them about how that is a type of like you know storytelling it changes their whole mindset of like what writing is right so i really loved just listening to his story and hearing his story because i think it's going to resonate with so many teachers in the classroom and it's so like now as well it's so now um i i've yeah

19:38.47

Stella Villalba

And if I can add, Carrie, like there is a spread in Wondricks' words where um Will is leading the class into his thinking process.

19:52.76

Stella Villalba

And what Wondricks' words is saying, right?

19:52.77
Gary Gray
who

19:56.61
Gary Gray
he

19:56.81
Stella Villalba
It's like habits of mind. How are you coming to the work, the decisions that you make as a writer?

20:01.87
Gary Gray
who

20:03.83
Stella Villalba
he says to the class, Guys, don't spend too much time like like making like perfect little drawings. Like this is your draft.

20:15.97
Stella Villalba
You want to save that for later. And Will says it. And you know, there is power when Will says it.

20:21.07
Gary Gray
I love that.

20:25.34
Katie
Mm

20:26.96
Gary Gray
That and that's the other section that I literally have written down and i love the idea of the concept around like when they are sharing like am I reading aloud i have it written here to really like to rehearse to celebrate am I reading it for revising like I love i love that concept so much because think sometimes students believe it just has to be like to celebrate or a finished piece

20:43.12
Katie
here

20:51.54

Gary Gray

But I could be just looking for advice. I could just be looking for a tip or how can I make this better? And that's what they can lean in on. And they don't have they don't have to have any type of shame or feelings around that in a community that's safe in the classroom. So I loved that section as well.

21:09.76

Gary Gray

um Katie, one of the things that I want to talk to you about as well is just the idea of like, mentor texts. You guys talk a lot about mentor texts and how to help students honor those.

21:22.54

Gary Gray

you tell me a little bit about your journey with mentor texts, why it's important? I think the question here I have is like, how can we use mentor texts to both honor students' voices and stretch their understanding of what writing can be? um What do you think about that question and like, what are some of the things you guys talked about in Wonders Worlds about mentor texts?

21:44.77

Katie

I think, I mean, I think one of the keys is, and you see this across the book and and particularly in chapter seven and eight, which are resource chapters.

21:55.60

Katie

um but But pretty much anywhere that I'm talking about, about some craft move. I always show you multiple examples.

22:07.91

Katie

Right. And that is what's so key. It's not it's not like one example. It's not like i I'm going to read this book and write a book like it. I think the key to teaching craft is multiple examples of, of very different writers and very different kinds of texts doing the exact same thing.

22:27.72

Katie

You know, like your, your beautiful book, Gary has, has um sort of a ah vignette, ah a repeat repetition that create, connects a series of vignettes, right?

22:37.56

Gary Gray

Yes, of course.

22:38.43

Katie

Such a lovely way. Now, you know, you're not the only person who's ever done that, right? Yeah.

22:42.77

Gary Gray

yes of course but

22:45.69

Katie

Matter of fact, original wondrous words, you know, so much about Cynthia Ryland. Of course, her beautiful book, When I Was Young in the Mountains, um was that kind of text. and ah And so many others and speeches, you know, the the very famous ah Dr. Martin Luther King speech, i Have a Dream. That was a portion of the speech that used a repeating phrase to connect a series of powerful vignettes.

23:10.89

Katie

This is so key with mentor text is that you are showing kids multiple examples of ah very different kinds of writers doing really exactly the same kind of thing, which is why, you know, that that part, I think I've ah moved.

23:10.78

Gary Gray

the

23:18.53

Gary Gray

Yep.

23:23.75

Gary Gray

yeah

23:27.32

Katie

I think it's chapter two now. I don't remember exactly where things are because I move some things around.

23:29.25

Gary Gray

Yep.

23:31.86

Katie

But that writing style is individual, but it's not unique. What makes

you unique is you at one moment in time and your topic.

23:36.25

Gary Gray

Yep.

23:41.62

Katie

And of course, even topics are not unique. Lots of people, you know, write about growing up, but no one can write your story of growing up. Right.

23:49.69

Gary Gray

Mm-hmm.

23:50.14

Katie

What makes writing, you know, it's, it's individual, but it's not unique because other people do the same thing, but to really understand that you have to be seeing the same moves in different places. And this book is, you know, it helps you get a start on that. And of course, once you get started, you see it everywhere.

24:09.27

Katie

Once you change the, it's it's very easy to find your own multiple examples.

24:09.75

Gary Gray

Mm-hmm.

24:13.63

Katie

And that's, you know, one of the things I really love about the book is that I have um like, you know, examples of of a writer and a picture book for kids doing the exact same thing as a writer in the New York Times, you know, and a piece of

24:14.35

Gary Gray

Mm-hmm.

24:28.18

Katie

Times, which are a couple of fabulous New York Times examples in there.

24:29.53

Gary Gray
who

24:30.59
Stella Villalba
Thank you.

24:32.97
Katie
I would love to do a whole book with just, you know, you know adult writers in it, but that that'll be in my next life, I guess.

24:40.27
Gary Gray
I yeah, that is I mean, i love craft so much.

24:40.58
Katie
Yeah.

24:44.65
Gary Gray
I mean, i was ah When I do start writing a piece, I always tell my wife, like, she's an amazing writer. And I always say, like, you can help me with the structure. i'll I'll deal with, like, the craft.

24:56.31
Gary Gray
You help me with the structure. But I think showing multiple evidence about craft gives them permission as well.

25:04.62
Katie
Exactly.

25:04.72
Gary Gray
Sometimes they are so, I hate using the word reluctant, but, like, they just don't know. that like you can take that, what you see and twist it and turn it upside down if you want to and make it your own.

25:16.68
Gary Gray
They just don't hear it enough.

25:17.72
Stella Villalba
Mm-hmm.

25:18.11

Gary Gray

They don't see it enough. So that section I really, really loved again, because it gives teachers permissions to show and you give the examples. you You're like, here you go. Like these are the texts that I recommend that you can use right away.

25:29.46

Katie

Right.

25:31.66

Gary Gray

It's honestly like one of those things where like you can just go to the grocery store and it's like, oh, okay, I can go here, pull the text that I need. this is the lesson that I can think about and you can use it right away.

25:41.84

Gary Gray

So again, and another section that I also loved.

25:43.45

Katie

And I want to say, if I could say one more thing that, you know, but those other questions that you sent us, they're all connected to with mentor text. What's really key and kids' sense of identity, you ask us about identity, this is key.

25:59.55

Katie

For kids to, for them to make this their own, they have to be able to make a lot of decisions themselves as writers.

26:06.81

Stella Villalba

Yes.

26:08.48

Katie

And, you know, this book would

26:08.97

Gary Gray

Mm-hmm.

26:10.01

Katie

in the heyday of writing workshops when we were really trying to just get kids making lots of decisions about their own writing. And so if you want to you want to support a kid's identity as a writer, you ask

them questions about why they decided to do things the way they did them. Because if you think about it in life,

26:30.07

Katie

When we ask someone a question, we ask them a question because we presume they're the kind of person that would have an answer to that question. Like there's certain people ask about restaurants and other people you would never ask about restaurants.

26:38.32

Gary Gray

Mm hmm.

26:43.84

Katie

There certain people you ask about something that noise that your car is making and other people like I probably wouldn't ask Stella about a noise.

26:44.20

Gary Gray

Mm

26:48.44

Stella Villalba

Mm-hmm. Mm-hmm. Mm-hmm.

26:51.43

Gary Gray

hmm.

26:52.37

Katie

I don't really see her as the kind of person who would probably have a great answer to that.

26:52.49

Stella Villalba

ah

26:57.40

Gary Gray

Mm hmm.

26:57.69

Katie

So you take that logic to writing and you ask kids, you know, like, why did you decide to start it this way? This is so interesting. It presumes, I presume that you have an answer to that, right?

27:10.97

Katie

That you're the kind of person who decided to start this piece a certain way, or you decided to write this sentence a particular way.

27:16.74

Gary Gray

Mm-hmm.

27:20.05

Katie

but But you can only do that if kids are getting to actually make those decisions. If we are teaching very formulaic writing, where the answer to the reason I started this way is because this paper told me to start it that way, then

27:26.53

Gary Gray

hey

27:34.99

Gary Gray

Mm-hmm.

27:35.87

Katie

can't do that work. And the same thing with the crafting moves. Kids have to be able to take it back to work that they are they are doing on their own and they decide to use it. You know, I love the work kids try something that we're studying and that everybody tries it and we've all got an example, but that's not nearly as compelling as when I walk out into the room and I see someone just doing something.

27:46.18

Gary Gray

Mm-hmm.

27:58.07

Katie

i'm like, oh my gosh, look at how did it work?

27:59.62

Gary Gray

the the

28:01.82

Katie

You know, where did you learn to do that? How did you decide to do that?

28:03.94
Stella Villalba
Yeah.

28:04.91
Katie
And the question teaches them that you are the kind of person who would have an answer to this.

28:05.23
Gary Gray
the

28:10.88
Gary Gray
And when you teach intentionality to kids like that allows them, it's so, it's so powerful.

28:15.07
Katie
Yeah, it's huge.

28:19.36
Gary Gray
It is, it's your, it literally takes, you know, that role of like the teacher out of the classroom and you're just human.

28:19.60
Katie
Right.

28:26.50
Gary Gray
You're just humans working in a space together.

28:26.81
Katie
Yeah. Right. Right.

28:29.61
Gary Gray
learning and learning.

28:30.72
Katie
Right.

28:30.78
Gary Gray

That's it.

28:31.73

Katie
Right.

28:31.62

Gary Gray
And that's it.

28:32.74

Katie
Right.

28:32.69

Gary Gray
Yeah.

28:33.29

Katie
Mm-hmm.

28:33.61

Gary Gray
So I'm thinking a lot about how you guys talk throughout the book about teacher language. And think it's very connected to what we just talked to Katie about. And, you know, teacher language is so important.

28:45.82

Gary Gray
It's so important how, and and we as teachers, we make mistakes all the time. We're constantly learning, et cetera. In what ways can teacher language during conferences, because we also speak specifically about conferencing in the book as well, and many lessons influence how students see themselves as writers.

28:58.46

Stella Villalba
most

29:03.87

Stella Villalba
Yes. ah So just to even extend the conversation we just had right? Where we just said, you know, how did you decide to do this, right?

29:10.33

Gary Gray
Mm-hmm.

29:15.85

Stella Villalba

That's a powerful language. Now, for any teacher that may be, you know, is listening to this and say, my students will say, i don't know. Know that that is totally their default answer.

29:32.12

Stella Villalba

But here is where teacher languaging indexes something. And when I said, you know, you do know. And I want you to think about this. Let's look at it together.

29:47.43

Stella Villalba

I just empower the student because their default, they're you know, as kids is to be like, I don't know.

29:47.39

Gary Gray

who

29:53.10

Stella Villalba

And it's just a way like avoid ah explaining your choices as a writer.

29:53.29

Gary Gray

of course

30:00.22

Stella Villalba

But this is exactly what Wonders Words is proposing, right? What Katie would write with

30:03.87

Gary Gray

Mm-hmm.

30:04.79

Stella Villalba

The saying is like, we make decisions as writers, and we have to start being intentional about even verbalizing those intentions and those decisions. so One example right there of how, you know, our languaging supporting and lifting writers is by even staying within that moment and saying, you do know the answer.

30:30.85

Stella Villalba

Let's think through this.

30:31.31
Gary Gray
Mm-hmm. Mm-hmm.

30:32.09
Stella Villalba
Let's take a minute to think, you know, what are you thinking?

30:33.09
Gary Gray
Mm-hmm.

30:35.53
Stella Villalba
Walk me through your process. I use that language a lot in conferring just because I want to understand it's beyond the product. It's beyond what they're producing. It's a decision making that you make along the way and what got you here.

30:54.15
Stella Villalba
So one of the languages, and I offer that in Wondrits words, is, you know, walk me through your thinking. You know, tell tell me how you got here.

31:02.10
Gary Gray
Hmm.

31:04.92
Gary Gray
Hmm.

31:05.64
Stella Villalba
What inspired you to make this move? Or like the question that I've also, you know, share, and I share this in studying, driven, is just thinking about like, what have you read that it looks like writing you want to do, right?

31:20.79
Gary Gray
Yeah. Yeah.

31:24.19
Stella Villalba
And one little tip and that I may give to teachers

31:24.38
Gary Gray

yeah

31:28.91

Stella Villalba

Because I do think language, you know, we only get stronger in our own crafting of language. is The computer is, our laptop is a very, you know, it's a tool that we use every day as teachers.

31:46.14

Stella Villalba

Almost everyone has their personal laptop, their school laptop. we're opening up every day, i will write myself a sticky k note and put it in the corner of my laptop and say, this is a language that I as a teacher want to be able to own it because I know moves and it helps kids.

31:55.76

Gary Gray

Mm-hmm. Mm-hmm.

32:07.72

Stella Villalba

And I will write out that language. um just until it becomes mine, until I can internalize it. So if I may give that advice, it's ah it's a very small move and you can pick up language that we're suggesting in Wondricks words and say, you know, this is a language I want to try with my student.

32:29.86

Stella Villalba

Write it down on a note and eventually it becomes yours.

32:30.08

Gary Gray

the

32:34.37

Katie

Thank you.

32:34.43

Gary Gray

I love that. i love that so much. And it gives me goosebumps because I can like, I mean, I saw pictures of you in the classroom, but but I could feel the way that you teach in the classroom just by you talking. And I think it's so it it's so powerful when a teacher can sit in, they're like, they don't feel uncomfortable anymore with the student not having the answer.

32:54.68

Gary Gray

Right. I think that is so powerful. It's so powerful to be able to sit as a teacher and maybe that student doesn't know.

32:57.24

Stella Villalba

See

33:01.43

Gary Gray

And you can walk away feeling OK that they don't know yet. But the book in itself helps so much with like helping the kid understand why they made that choice, whether it's through a mentor text.

33:14.96

Gary Gray

whether it's through all the specific examples, a friend that has done it in the classroom, a book that they've been reading, like you're already trying to set all of these things up so they have some understanding around why they're doing these things.

33:27.26

Stella Villalba

Yeah.

33:27.24

Gary Gray

It's just allowing them to get there on their own first. And again, the book really does such a wonderful job of that. it really, really does. i want I have one more question. I haven't but written this down, but what is one of the, what's one thing that you love about each other during this process.

33:49.71

Katie

i first cause I was just thinking about when Stella was talking.

33:49.92

Gary Gray

What's.

33:54.97

Katie

I loved watching her in classrooms. um Kids just shine when she talks to them.

34:02.43

Gary Gray

e

34:04.00

Katie

They just glow. And um she just has such a lovely way ah with with children, of bringing out that you know just their thoughtfulness, helping them believe in their own thoughtfulness, their own intentionality, as you said.

34:22.96

Katie

it's it's It's really magical. And I know that technically she's there to teach teachers, but um for teachers to be able to watch her work with children was just just amazing. she's She's the real and kids just glow in her presence.

34:39.67

Gary Gray

Not surprised.

34:43.30

Stella Villalba

Katie, Katie, Katie, Katie. you Your words just make me emotional just listening to them because I've said this during our process.

34:54.41

Stella Villalba

I love and respect Katie so much. She, to me, and I say this in every conversation that I have, and people know this, I'm very intentional ah in the ways that I occupy space.

34:58.65

Katie

No.

35:09.72

Stella Villalba

And I say, I am a scholar of Katie Woodwright's work. Her work has changed me as a teacher of writing and I am who I am and I continue to become because of the foundation that she has laid for me.

35:25.03

Katie

no

35:25.16

Stella Villalba

So Katie, I have said this to you, and I will say it again and again and again in all the spaces that I get to enter. You have helped me, and you continue to help me become the person, the writer, and the teacher of writing that I am.

35:42.89

Gary Gray

Wow, wow, wow. i I want to thank both of you for this conversation and just like creating such a beautiful text that I think truly should be on the shelves of all teachers.

35:58.65

Gary Gray

um I think it is truly something that I think they will be able to pick up and read continuously throughout their career. And I hope it's something that's passed through classrooms, through libraries,

36:11.19

Gary Gray

forever. I mean, honestly, and not just saying this, I loved it. And i just appreciate you guys so much for our conversation today. So thank you.

36:20.57

Katie

Thank you, Gary. Thanks for having me.

36:22.14

Stella Villalba

Thank you, Gary.

36:22.29

Gary Gray

Thank you.

36:23.52

Stella Villalba

Thank you.

36:24.22

Katie

12-hour time difference.

36:25.62

Gary Gray

That you that was so, I'm like, I'm going to press stop.