

Revise? This Isn't My Final Draft?

Motivational Co-author Chris Tebbetts

My students need to have author Chris Tebbetts visit our school so can speak to them about the need for revision in their work. They also need class sets of books that are co-authored by Chris Tebbetts so they can discuss these books when he visits.

My Students

As a teacher in a middle school where students rarely see the need to revise any essays or even work that they have completed, a visit from an author who frequently co-writes novels would motivate my students to revisit an initial piece of writing.

My middle school is located in a suburb of a medium sized city where students are encouraged to read and write on a daily basis.

While they have attended other author visit presentations, knowing that this author has ties to our area, as well as to big name authors and television hosts, another aspect that has not been previously addressed will be added.

Chris Tebbetts will be able to share his experiences as he has received an outline from Jeff Probst of Survivor or novelist James Patterson, to have them questioned and changed, will point out the fact that revision makes the written word and its message even stronger.

In this day and age of instant gratification and immediate access to having thoughts become public, the art of writing and revising in order to get a point across as concisely and clearly as possible seems to have been lost. This presentation will help resolve this.

My Project

Middle school students operate on the "one and done" principle. They believe that once they write something, anything, it cannot be changed, nor should it need to be. If students read books co-authored by Chris Tebbetts and Jeff Probst or James Patterson, they will build background knowledge of his writing style.

This project will provide students with class sets of books co-authored by Chris Tebbetts.

Most importantly, this project will help cover the cost to have Mr. Tebbetts visit our school for a presentation. When he visits to talk with students in a school-wide assembly, the students will have a frame of reference as he discusses the revision process. He will share how working with another person, he often needs to revise his words to make his message stronger and clearer.

By donating to our project, you will not only help to improve and increase student reading and writing, you will ultimately help to increase their academic achievement. After his presentation, students will return to their English and Language Arts classes refreshed and motivated to have their voice heard and that by taking the time to revise and edit their initial emotionally driven words, they can create a stronger and more effective message.

[Mrs. Locke](#) posted an update and shared photos

Dear Dor-Wood Optimist Club,

Thank you so very much for contributing to my project on Donors Choose. It was an amazing experience for both students and teachers.

Beginning the weeks before Chris Tebbetts arriving at Van Buren Middle School, all students, from sixth grade all the way up to eighth grade, experienced the books of Chris Tebbetts. Many students explored his website, learning nuggets of information about him before even laying eyes on him. Other students were intrigued by the idea that the host of the television show Survivor actually co-wrote a book about kids surviving in the jungle while still others commiserated with the main character Rafe, of the Middle School Years books. Every student at school somehow came into contact with Chris Tebbetts and his work before he even set foot in the school.

From the time that Chris Tebbetts entered Van Buren Middle School, the air was electric. The day started with a meet and greet with the teachers in the building. Chris greeted teachers warmly and with excitement as they shared ways in which students had interacted with his writing. The day then continued as students filed into the auditorium, peeking at this "real life author" who was born and raised practically next door in Yellow Springs, Ohio. As Chris shared his writing process with the students, stopping periodically to ask for input from the audience, the students were captivated. For a middle school, the week before spring break, that is saying something. As the adults in the room braced themselves, Chris asked for questions from the crowd. The students asked thought provoking questions, peppered with a few silly ones, but overall, questions that reflected their sincere and genuine interest in him and his books.

As students filed out of the auditorium, the best was yet to come. The highlight of the day was the writer's workshop that occurred after the assembly. Students who had either expressed interest to their English teacher or were hand picked by that teacher, gathered in the library for a small group writing session with Mr. Tebbetts. Students chose a random picture and then did a "quick write" about it to get warmed up. Under Mr. Tebbetts direction, they moved from creating characters to setting a scene to figuring the problem their character would face. Starting with this skeleton, students then revisited the initial character description to revise and introduce that character by "showing, not telling," in an effort to grab their reader's attention. Students worked diligently and independently then shared with the group what they came up with. It was awesome to see sixth graders working alongside eighth graders, commenting positively and cheering each other on.

The lasting impression that the Chris Tebbetts' visit had on the students in my school, not just the

ones in the writer's workshop, but all, is that a piece of writing can begin anywhere and can lead you, the writer, anywhere. Just because a "quick write" doesn't go to "final copy" initially, does not mean that it cannot be revisited later to become the basis of another story.

With gratitude,
Mrs. Locke





