IDEAS FOR A SUCCESSFUL “AUTHOR’S CHAIR”

Preparing:
* Set clear norms for classroom behavior and expectations before you start. Ex: During Author’s Chair all pens/pencils are down, heads are up off desks, etc.
* Pre-select student to read – ask student ahead of time – you may choose someone who has demonstrated a skill from the day’s writing lesson well.
* Keep track of who has been in the author’s chair – you may want to make this visible to the students as well.
* Teach students how to read their work loudly, slowly, and clearly. You may want to let readers practice before reading to the class.
* Model how to be in the author’s chair for students
* Encourage students to read their own work
* Optional – having a microphone is fun and can work well

Facilitating:
* You may focus the class before they listen to the reader: tell them what to pay attention to in the piece.
* The audience can listen carefully and give a silent thumbs up when they hear a particular skill that the class is studying at that time. Ex: metaphor or simile, transition words or other vocabulary, etc.
* After students have listened to the piece, you can guide their responses with sentence starters Ex: “When you described ____________ I felt…” Or “I thought it was interesting when…”
* Give students a menu of ways to respond to the writing: Ex: personal connection, academic connection, compliment, etc.
* As students are making comments about the piece they just listened to, write them down on the board or on a piece of paper. Read these back to the author/class.
* When the reader has finished sharing the writing, and listening to the comments of the group, invite him/her to share how it felt to share and to listen to the comments afterwards.

Results:
* The sense of community is reinforced
* Writers know that others value what they have to say
* Writers have an opportunity to hear their own work
* Students know what everyone else is writing
* Students practice active listening
* Students hear new words
* Writers build confidence through the comments afterwards
* Writers see how the techniques they hear used and complimented might apply to their own writing
* Writers find mistakes when they hear themselves and their manuscripts
* Teachers find brief, on the spot opportunities for on the spot lessons
* A foundation has been laid for the transition to peer conferencing