

Eastern Illinois
Writing Project

2008-2010

Activity Anthology

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Connie Almy: Writing Process: Emphasis on Revision

1. Content

The activity introduces narrative writing in a junior high resource room. I present the writing process as a thinking activity that requires constant self-monitoring,

2. Objective and Rationale:

After completing the activity, students will demonstrate understanding of the process by completing a narrative essay.

The complete writing process is considered a best practice in an effective writing program according to Zemelman, Daniels, and Hyde.

Illinois State Learning Standards, goal three is “Write to communicate for a variety of purposes.” In the middle school, students should be able to “Write compositions that contain complete sentences and effective paragraphs using English conventions 3.A.3., “Produce documents that convey a clear understanding and interpretation of ideas and information and display focus, organization, elaboration and coherence 3.B.3a, “Compose narrative, informative and persuasive writings for a specified audience.” 3.C.3a

The writing process encompasses all these aspects of state goal three.

3. Materials:

For the activity, participants will need handouts provided, paper and pencil or pen. A whiteboard or Smart Board will be used for presentation.

4. Procedures:

- After a review of the writing process and a think-aloud of the prewrite, participants will produce their own opening paragraph, closing paragraph, and cluster for body paragraphs.
- After review of handouts with close examination of Smiley-Face Tricks: magic three, figurative language, specific details for effect, repetition for effect, expanded moment, humor, hyphenated modifier, and full-circle ending.
- Participants will make of rough draft of the body paragraphs.

- Participants will go through revision check list and number in their rough draft where all the elements are located.
- Participants will read their essay to one partner and ask if there is anything that is confusing or not explained clearly, then make revisions.
- Participants will listen to their paragraphs when someone else reads them to make sure their essays sound the way they meant them.
- Students will edit for spelling by reading backwards, and then check punctuation and capitals. Next they will check overall appearance, especially checking that paragraphs are indented.
- Students will make a final copy.

5. Closure:

Discussion of the use of Smiley-Face Tricks in the essays and sharing some that were written.

6. Evaluation:

Evaluation is based on completion of steps in the writing process and inclusion of all elements in the revised essays.

7. Extension:

Students will write two or three more narrative essays followed by selection of the best for more revising and editing prior to publishing.

8. References

Ellis, John

Illinois Learning Standards. Springfield, IL: Illinois State Board of Education, 1997. P.8-9.

Ledbetter, Mary. Writing on Demand: Increasing Your Students' Success When Writing to Prompts on Writing Assessments (Grades 6-12). Bellevue, WA: Bureau of Education and Research, 2009.

Zemelman, S., Daniels, H., and Hyde, A., Best Practice: New Standards for Teaching and Learning in America's Schools (2nd ed.). Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 1998.

Robin Augsburg: Teaching Descriptive Writing with Cookies, Crazies, and CSIs

Overview

These activities were designed to get students to begin practicing descriptive writing for inclusion in both fiction and non-fiction pieces.

Context

These activities can be used as a lead-in to a larger piece of persuasive writing. I have found that student writers often have the ideas in their heads, but they forget to put them down on paper, particularly when it comes to details in their persuasive arguments. These activities are designed to get students to focus more on adding description and details to their writing.

Learning Goals

- Students will use precise language to write distinct descriptions of similar objects.
- Students will collaborate to complete a finished project.
- Students will use descriptive language to persuade.

State Goals

- 3.B.4a – Produce documents that exhibit a range of writing techniques appropriate to purpose and audience, with clarity of focus, logic of organization, appropriate elaboration and support and overall coherence
- 4.A.4a – Apply listening skills as individuals and members of a group in a variety of settings (e.g., lectures, discussions, conversations, team projects, presentations, interviews).
- 4.A.4b – Apply listening skills in practical settings (e.g., classroom note taking, interpersonal conflict situations, giving and receiving directions, evaluating persuasive messages).

Materials

- Cookies! Two different kinds
- Students need paper and writing utensils
- Book passage of your choice with descriptive language removed and original
- Slips of paper
- Basket/container for slips of paper
- Smartboard to display book passage and writing prompt (or other piece of suitable technology)

Activities/Procedures

1. Students will receive two cookies, one of each kind. They will be asked to write two separate paragraphs. Each paragraph should describe a cookie with as much detail as possible.
2. Students will pick their favorite cookie and find a student with the same favorite. In pairs, the students will write a persuasive piece explaining why their cookie is the better cookie.
3. Share paragraphs as a whole group while compiling a list of stand-out descriptive words or phrases.
4. Pull up book passage (in my case I used part of the first three pages from Janet Evanovich's *Lean Mean Thirteen*) and pass out copies for students. Have students fill in the blanks.
5. Once most of the class has finished filling in the blanks on their own sheets, have them raise their hands to offer suggestions for the copy on the Smartboard. When finished, read their created passage out loud. Then display and read the original passage.
6. For the next activity, students will get three slips of paper. They will be told to write one noun on each slip and place it in the basket. When all slips are collected, the basket will be passed back around and students will draw three slips of paper.
7. Place prompt up on Smartboard and allow students time to write.
8. If there is time, have students get into groups of four and share their writings and discuss their results.
9. Share a few writings with the whole class.

Evaluation

Since this activity is designed as a lead-in to a larger writing project, students will only be evaluated on their completion of this activity.

Extension

While I have this listed as part of a larger persuasive writing assignment, these activities would also work really well in a creative writing unit. The CSI activity could also get extended and turned into a mock trial scenario.

Resources

The cookie exercise and the book passage exercise came from this site:

<http://writing.colostate.edu/guides/teaching/detail/printformat.cfm?printformat=yes>

I also have to give credit to Aaron Sitze at Oregon High School. He was one of my cooperating teachers during student teaching, and he was the one that gave me the beginning idea for my CSI activity.

A crime occurred in Coleman Hall six months ago. You were a CSI assigned to the case. The three slips of paper in your hand are the pieces of evidence that you collected. They are sufficient to solve the case, but that isn't enough. You are about to be called on the witness stand, and you need to be able to PROVE your case to the jury by explaining your evidence. In order to do that, you need to write with as much detail as possible: what the crime was, who did it, and how it was done. Don't forget to use your evidence.

Remember to give as much detail as possible! If you go into court and say that Miss Augsburg is guilty of stealing Myrtle the Turtle because of this shoe, this crayon, and this strawberry, your case will be thrown out of court because you haven't explained your evidence!

Good luck!

The door to the bonds office opened, and Lula stuck her head out. “Are you gonna sit there all day, or what?” she yelled at me.

Lula is a black woman with a Rubenesque body and a Vegas wardrobe that’s four sizes too small. She is a former ‘ho, currently working as a file clerk for the office and a wheelman for me...when the mood strikes. Today she was wearing big fake-fur Sasquatch boots, and her ass was packed into poison-green spandex pants. Her pink sweat-shirt had *Love Goddess* spelled out in sequins across her boobs.

My wardrobe runs a lot more casual than Lula’s. I was wearing jeans and a long-sleeved knit shirt from the Gap. My feet were stuffed into knock-off Ugg boots, and I was bundled into a big quilted jacket. I have naturally curly brown hair that looks okay when I wear it shoulder length. When it’s short, the best you can say is that it has energy. I’d swiped on some extra mascara today, hoping to boost my bravado. I had a favor to perform that I suspected was going to come back to haunt me. I grabbed my bag, wrenched the driver’s side door open, and angled myself out of the car.

[paragraph omitted]

Connie Rosolli looked around her computer at me when I walked into the office. Connie is Vinnie’s office manager and his first line of defense against the stream of pissed-off bondees, bookies, hookers, various bill collectors, and stiffed smut peddlers hoping to reach Vinnie’s inner sanctum. Connie was a couple years older than me, a couple pounds heavier, a couple inches shorter, a couple cups bigger, and had hair a couple inches higher than mine. Connie was pretty in a kick-ass, central Jersey, third-generation Italian kind of way.

***Lean Mean Thirteen* by Janet Evanovich, p 1-3**

The door to the bonds office opened, and Lula stuck her head out. “Are you gonna sit there all day, or what?” she yelled at me.

Lula is a _____ woman with a _____ body and a _____ wardrobe that’s _____ . She is a former ‘ho, currently working as a file clerk for the office and a wheelman for me...when the mood strikes. Today she was wearing big _____ boots, and her ass was packed into _____ pants. Her _____ sweat-shirt had _____ spelled out in _____ across her _____ .

My wardrobe runs a lot more casual than Lula’s. I was wearing jeans and a _____ shirt from _____. My feet were stuffed into _____ boots, and I was bundled into a _____ jacket. I have _____ hair that looks okay when I wear it _____. When it’s _____, the best you can say is that it has _____. I’d swiped on some extra mascara today, hoping to boost my bravado. I had a favor to perform that I suspected was going to come back to haunt me. I grabbed my bag, wrenched the driver’s side door open, and angled myself out of the car.

[paragraph omitted]

Connie Rosolli looked around her computer at me when I walked into the office. Connie is Vinnie’s office manager and his first line of defense against the stream of _____, _____, _____, _____, and _____ hoping to reach Vinnie’s inner sanctum. Connie was _____ than me, _____, _____, _____, and had _____ than mine. Connie was pretty in a _____, _____, _____ kind of way.

Cathy Ball - Show Me Don't Tell Me

Overview:

This activity is designed to help students understand what type of elements need to be included in narrative writing to help them better describe events in their writing. This mini lesson is an anchor/shared experience for all students. When I tell students to remember Mrs. Potato Head's angry eyes- They remember the "showing" part of a narrative.

Objectives:

Mark Twain once wrote, "Don't tell me she was mad, bring the old bat kicking and screaming into the room". This activity helps provide the tools a student needs to more accurately describe events in a narrative rather than just tell them.

Materials:

- Mrs. Potato Head commercial <http://de.truveo.com/2009-super-bowl-commercials-bridgestone-mr-potato/id/3628162908>
- Pictures of various facial expressions
- Handout on which to record what each emotion looks like, feels like, the dialogue and a "thought shot".
- 4 colored pencils/crayons

Activity:

1. Introduce the idea to students that there are many ways someone can tell how a character is feeling.
2. Show the video clip- emphasize the "angry eyes" because that is an anchor point for their writing.
3. Show the pictures of the facial expressions. On the handout, anger is done as an example- review the example. Then either individually or pairs or groups, have students fill out the other blanks for different emotions. When completed I have students share for each emotion. This handout becomes a reference for them to use in their writing and can be added to when students come across good examples in their reading.

4. The next step is to see the technique in practice. Students are given an example telling sentence- make sure the sentence you use has a clearly defined emotion. Then let them see how it can be improved using the different elements (looks like, feels like dialogue and thought shot). The different areas are color coded to help students see that each part of the emotion is being used.
5. Students can then pair up or work in groups to brainstorm events that they felt particularly strong about. For example: being grounded, making the team, first day of school, opening their lunchbox after it had been left in their locker over break, homework assignments, losing a pet). Not all group members have to write about the same event, but brainstorming will help them come up with a bigger pool of ideas.

Assessment:

Since the assignment is to write only 3-4 sentences, students shouldn't feel overwhelmed with having to worry about length, and should focus on the task of showing the emotion. This is an in class assignment worth 10 points. Two points for incorporating each showing emotion element and 2 points for overall good conventions: capitals, periods and spelling.- because I just can't let it go.

Extensions:

- This activity is a small part of our narrative writing unit. See attached graphic organizer.
- This can be done teacher led whole group with pre emerging writers. An expression is shown and the teacher writes. This helps young writers to begin to understand how to describe emotion as well as name it.
- Having this activity make a reading connection, I have a "Brilliantly Written" wall. When students find a sentence, phrase, metaphor or some other figurative language that expresses good emotion they are encouraged to write it on the wall.
- Magazine or newspaper articles can be cut out and put on the wall also.

Angel Baumann - Around the World

1. Overview:

Around The World, what I knew and what I know now.

2. Rationale: (subject area, concept, and target audience):

This activity will help students work on a paper that will include their personal experience combined with research. After a brainstorming activity, they will choose a country or state of their choice and research it. Then they will write a 1-2 page paper about what makes this country a great place to visit. Students will have to review the proper way of citing, so the reader knows what information is new to the writer.

It can be adapted for any subject area (for math focusing on financial institutions and currency, for art, paying more attention to museums or art styles, for science looking into different habitat, and climate, etc).

3. Learning Objectives:

Through this exercise, students will become more aware of the different lifestyles, cultures, and activities in different countries. Students will have the opportunity to appreciate differences and similarities between their own culture and that of Spanish speaking countries. By enhancing their understanding, students will be able to have an open mind and acceptance about other people, even those that are part of their own culture.

4. Materials:

Handout

Access to library

Access to Internet (at home or/and at school)

Family members

Pictures from childhood or a vacation trip

A computer and an LCD projector in the classroom, for presentation day.

5. Activities/Procedures:

Complete the handouts

- a. Fill in the blanks to the best of your abilities. If you do not have information just continue to the next column or row.
- b. Select one country or state where you would like to go. It can be the one you know more about, or the one you do not know anything about.
- c. Go to computer lab and find information that you did not know about this country or state.
- d. Find 1 picture of the country's (state) map, 1 picture with the flag, and 3 pictures that will help your audience capture the uniqueness of this place.

Complete a paragraph based on your handout and research:

- a. Use the name of the country as part of your title.
- b. Try to use the handout as a guideline.
- c. Describe the place, location, people, food, traditions, holidays, etc.
- d. Personal experiences (when, where, why were you there, with whom, etc)
- e. What do you like about this place?
- f. What are three things that are important about this place?
- g. Write about anything you think it will be important for someone to know before going to this place.

6. Evaluation: Work on handout and writing activity.

-Work on handout to the best of your knowledge –Stay on task-

-Behave respectfully as you walk to the computer lab, and as you work at the computer.

-Use Internet in a proper manner –Stay on task-

-Write 1-2 paragraph paper.

-If possible, Include 3 pictures (1-map, 1-flag,1 –food, places, holiday, etc-)

7. Extension:

- Students could write another paper “A Day in....” using the information they gathered. They could write a paper pretending that they have spent a day at this country with their families or by themselves (depending on their age). Or if they have been at this place, what would they do differently, and why?
- Students could create a project using the information from their first paper. They can choose from a Power Point presentation, a newsletter on Word, or a brochure, created on Publisher. To ensure that everyone will be able to work on this assignment, students who have worked with these programs will pair with those who are not familiar with them before starting this project.
- Students can create post-cards, writing two or three things that they learned about this country/state and send it to a family member.

Sources:

Schrader, Drew. “Beyond ‘What I Did on Vacation’: Exploring the Genre of Travel Writing”. 18 Jul. 2008 <www.readwritethink.org>

Library of Congress. “Teaching with Primary Sources: Portals to the world.” Library of Congress Website. 17 Jul. 2008 <<http://www.loc.gov/rr/international/portals.html>>

Kid Info. “The Web's Best Homework and Student, Teacher/ Parent Reference Resource.” 19 Jul. 2008 <<http://www.kidinfo.com/Powerpoints.htm>>

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If you would have the time, the money, the right companion, and the best health; where would you like to go? (Now or ten years from now) It can be one of the places you listed above. _____

Why? _____

Country or State's name: _____

You can use the following items as a guide to write your 1-2 paragraphs. Include at least 10 of these items, but try to include, if possible, one thing that would make a perfect place to visit.

1. Capital	
2. Language	
3. Geography (boundaries)	
4. Population	
5. Climate	
6. Flag colors	
7. Currency	
8. Exchange Rate	
9. Type of government	
10. Food	

11. Priorities What seems to be important to people?	
12. Work schedule	
13. Landmarks	
14. Special holiday	
15. Other	

These are great websites to help you...

<http://www.loc.gov/rr/international/portals.html>

<http://www.infoplease.com/countries.html>

<http://www.theodora.com/wfb/>

http://www.studentsoftheworld.info/menu_infopays.html

<http://www.geographic.org/countries/countries.html>

Keri Buscher - Duck! Rabbit!

Title I Reading

Overview: The demonstration for today is a persuasive writing lesson. It will help students become familiar with the persuasive writing process and how to write a persuasive paper. This book can be used for any grade level.

Learning Objectives:

1. Students will construct complete sentences which demonstrate appropriate capitalization and punctuation. (State Goal 3.A.1)
2. Students will demonstrate the correct spelling of appropriate, high-frequently words. (State Goal 3.A.1)
3. Students will write a one paragraph paper that is focused on the topic given. (State Goal 3.B.1b)
4. Students will demonstrate organization of thoughts in the paragraph. (State 3.B.1b)

Rationale:

1. The research has led many educators to agree that integrating reading and writing has multiple benefits for development of literacy. (Gavelek, Raphael, Biondo, Wang, 2000)
2. Arrange for meaningful-to-students reasons to write. (Whitaker)
3. Reading affects writing and writing affects reading. (Brummit-Yale)
4. One of the most effective ways to help children build specific writing skills is to show and discuss with them models that successfully demonstrate the skill. (Brummit-Yale)

Materials:

1. Book: Duck! Rabbit! By Amy Krouse Rosenthal & Tom Lichtenheld
2. Story Writing paper
3. Writing utensils
4. Chart paper (for teacher)
5. Markers (for teacher)
6. Poster labeled "Duck" and "Rabbit"

Activities/Procedures:

1. Present the book to the class. Ask for ideas of what the book will be about. (Predicting)
2. List ideas on chart paper.
3. Discuss with the students that at the end of the story they will be writing a persuasive paragraph about the story.
 - a. A paragraph should have at least 4 sentences. (Beginning sentence (Opinion), Middle sentence (Support), Middle sentence (Support), Ending sentence (closing))
4. Read the book to the students. (I would only read it half way.-Before the carrot.)
5. Do not ask the students any questions throughout the story.
6. Tell the students they must convince you that the animal is either a rabbit or a duck. They must choose a side.
7. Once you have finished reading, share with the students your paragraph.
 - a. I think that it is a rabbit. Rabbits have very long ears. Their ears flop in the air when they hop. It is a rabbit.
 - b. I think that it is a duck. There is no nose for it to be a rabbit. Ducks have a long beak just like the pictures. It must be a duck!
8. Have students draw their picture of a duck or rabbit.
9. Have the students write their own paragraphs.
10. Have volunteers share their paragraphs with the class.
11. Hang students papers under a poster labeled Duck or Rabbit.
12. Finish reading the story.
13. Ask for a show of hands who still believes it is a duck, or rabbit.

Assessment:

1. Collect students' paragraphs and check to see if they have the 4 sentence paragraph.

Extensions:

1. Have students take the other side and write a paragraph.
2. Have students give more than one supporting detail.
3. Use other Visual Puzzles to write persuasive papers. (see attached)
4. Chart their findings using a picture graph, bar graph, tally marks, etc...
5. Have students write a book about the last page in the story.
 - a. Students would use two unseen characters to write a story arguing if this is an anteater or a brachiosaurus.
6. Students may write about the two unseen characters in the story. This could be used to teach characterization.

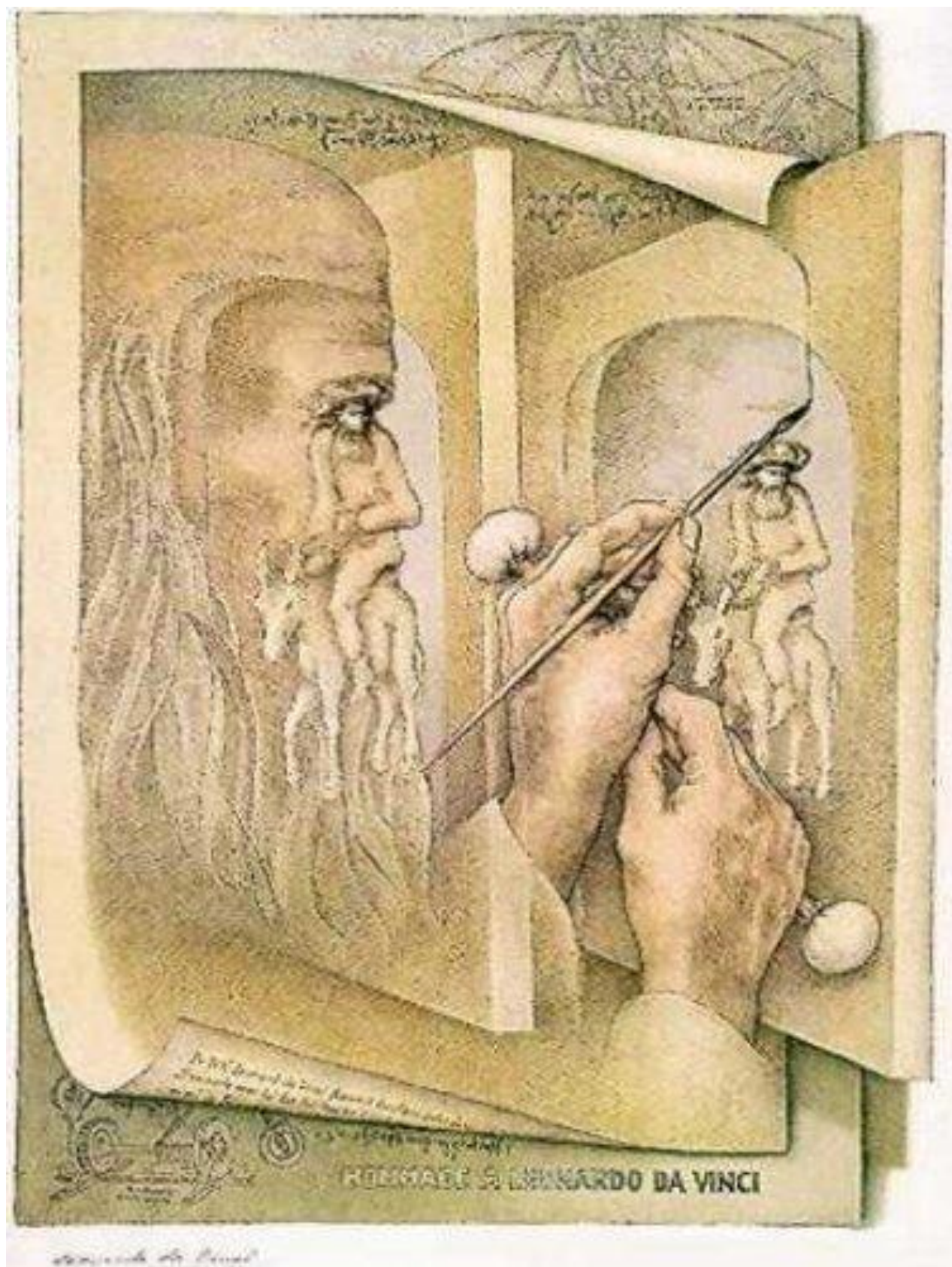
Resources:

Duck! Rabbit! By Amy Krouse Rosenthal and Tome Lichtenheld, 2009

<http://puzzles.about.com/od/opticalillusions/ig/OpticalIllusions/WomanWitch.htm>

http://www.mindfake.com/illusion_25.html

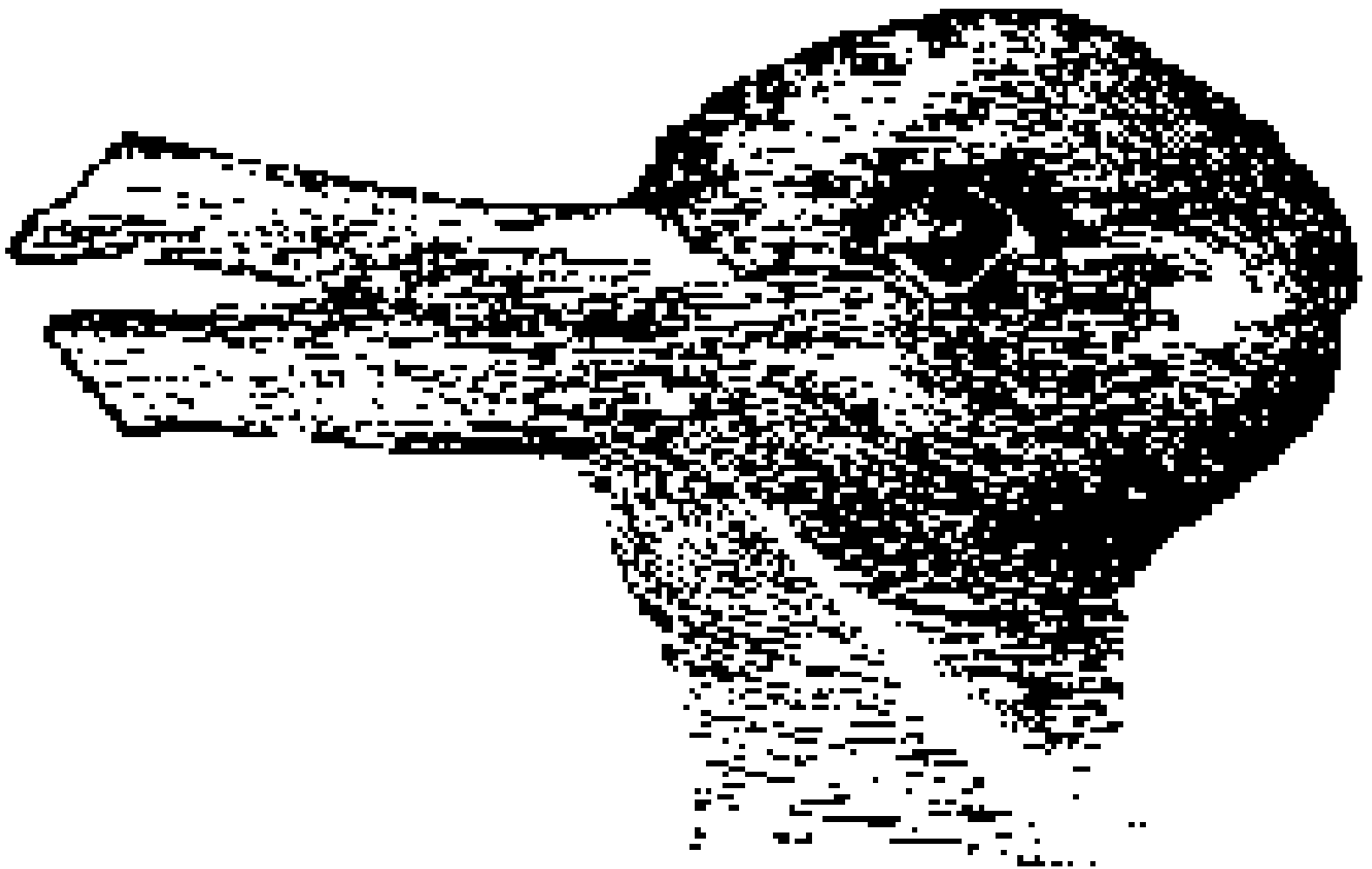


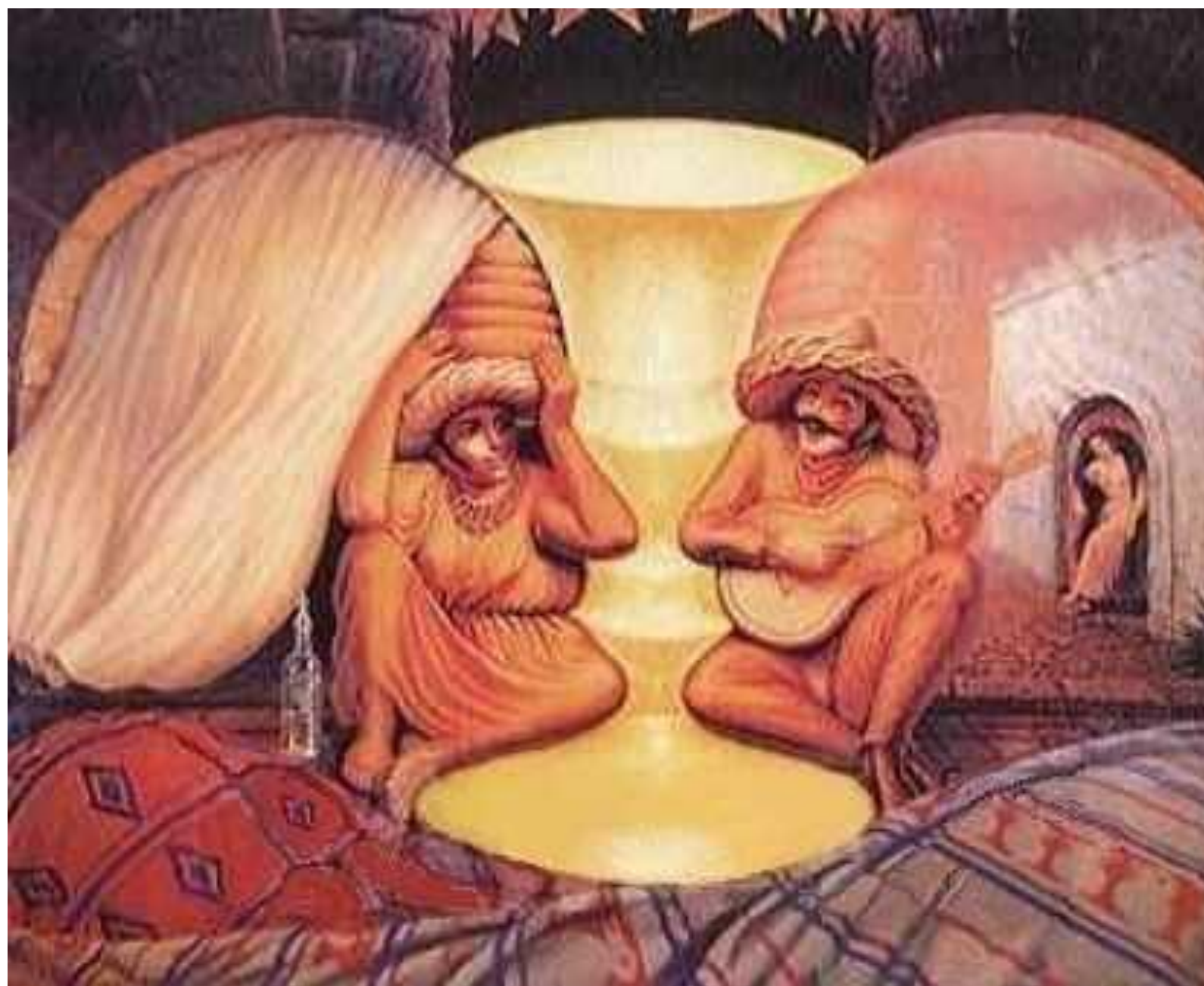


REINASCIMENTO E LEONARDO DA VINCI



Handwritten text in a medieval script, likely Latin, located in the bottom right corner of the illustration. The text is arranged in several lines and appears to be a caption or a short passage related to the scene depicted.





Al Church - Creating Culture

Overview:

Students will identify aspects of their own culture, Identify culture in writing, and create a fictional culture.

Rationale:

Students rarely visit other cultures. At most, a few affluent students may have had opportunities to travel, or there may have been contact with foreign exchange students. Students may not even realize elements of their own culture. Students can learn to recognize elements of their own culture and to identify elements of culture in literature. The focus of this lesson is for students to express culture in writing. The writing can be fictional or biographical. Students will understand that culture is a web of significance which we have spun. (Geertz 5).

Scope:

This lesson may be best completed after exposure to writings from other cultures. However, I will use this after students have become familiar with writing with characterization after a unit about Archetypes. Carol S Pearson's book, Awakening the Archetypes Within, is an excellent source for this. This lesson can use planned sources such as fairy tales, nursery rhymes, previous writing, or other familiar texts.

Materials: Writing materials: Paper and Pen. Brust excerpt.

Activity:

1. Begin by briefly writing about an incident. The incident can be a common occurrence that has meaning to you or an extraordinary situation. Give 10 Minutes.
2. Write and answer this Question: What is Culture? Or What Makes up Culture?
3. Items may include food, religion, holidays, traditions, etc.
4. Identify culture in student's brief writing.
5. Review handout from Jhereg and discuss any culture in this excerpt.
6. Students should rewrite the incident previously written. The rewrite should change so that the incident is set in a different culture. The culture can be fictional culture, a historical culture, a future culture, science fiction, fantasy, etc.

Assessment:

This is a “Stage” in a future project in which students will write a larger fiction/non-fiction. Inclusion of culture can be assessed during that assignment. For this, participation and appropriate completion of final revision can be assessed.

Extension:

This can be used as a building toward a greater work of writing. The activity can relate to studies of literature and other cultures. This is a good correlation to literature of any non-American writings.

Sources:

Brust, Steven. *The Book of Jherag*. New York: Ace, 1983. Print.

Card, Orson Scott. *How To Write Science Fiction and Fantasy*. Cincinnati: Writer's Digest Books, 1990. Print.

Geertz, Clifford. *Interpretation of Cultures*. New York: Basic Books, 1973. Print.

Pearson, Carol. *Awakening the Heroes Within: Twelve Archetypes to Help us Find Ourselves and Transform Our World*. New York: Harper Collins, 1991. Print.

From Jhereg by Steven Brust

There is a similarity, if I may be permitted an excursion into tenuous metaphor, between the feel of a chilly breeze and the feel of a knife's blade, as either is laid across the back of the neck. I can call up memories of both, if I work at it. The chilly breeze is invariably going to be the more pleasant memory. For instance...

I was eleven years old, and clearing tables in my father's restaurant. It was a quiet evening, with only a couple of tables occupied. A group had just left, and I was walking over to the table they'd used.

The table in the corner was a deuce. One male, one female. Both Dragaeran, of course. For some reason, humans rarely came into our place; perhaps because we were human too, and they didn't want the stigma, or something. My father himself always avoided doing business with other "Easterners."

There were three at the table along the far wall. All of them were male, and Dragaeran. I noted that there was no tip at the table I was clearing, and heard a gasp from behind me.

I turned as one member of the threesome let his head fall into his plate of lyorn leg with red peppers. My father had let me make the sauce for it that time, and, crazily, my first thought was to wonder if I'd built it wrong.

The other two stood up smoothly, seemingly not the least bit worried about their friend. They began moving toward the door, and I realized that they were planning to leave without paying. I looked for my father, but he was in back.

I glanced once more at the table, wondering whether I should try to help the fellow who was choking, or intercept the two who were trying to walk out on their bill.

Then I saw the blood.

The hilt of a dagger was protruding from the throat of the fellow whose face was lying in his plate. It slowly dawned on me what had happened, and I decided that, no, I wasn't going to ask the two gentlemen who were leaving for money.

They didn't run, or even hurry. They walked quickly and quietly past me toward the door. I didn't move. I don't think I was even breathing. I remember suddenly becoming very much aware of my own heartbeat.

One set of footsteps stopped, directly behind me. I remained frozen, while in my mind, I cried out to Verra, the Demon Goddess.

At that moment, something cold and hard touched the back of my neck. I was too frozen to flinch. I would have closed my eyes if I could have. Instead, I stared straight ahead. I wasn't consciously aware of it at the time, but the Dragaeran girl was looking at me, and she started to rise then. I noticed her when her companion reached out a hand to stop her, which she brushed off.

Then I heard a soft, almost silky voice in my ear. "You didn't see a thing," it said. "Got that?" If I had had as much experience then as I do now, I would have known that I was in no real danger--if he'd had any intention of killing me he would have done so already. But I didn't, and so I shook. I felt I should nod, but couldn't manage. The Dragaeran girl was almost up to us now, and I imagine the guy behind me noticed her, because the blade was gone suddenly and I heard retreating footsteps.

...

When the Phoenix guards arrived some time later, I was in back, and I heard my father telling them that, no, no one had seen what had happened, we'd all been in back. But I never forgot the feel of a knife blade, as it is laid across the back of the neck. (4)

Kathy Decker - Using Point-of-View To Evoke Empathy From an Audience

Grade Level/Subject:

Junior/English

Objectives:

As a result of this lesson, students will be able to define empathy, sympathy, and point-of-view. They will be able to compare and contrast empathy and sympathy, and will be able to create a piece of writing with the purpose of evoking empathy for someone or something. They will also be more aware of how different people see different situations, hopefully making them more empathetic citizens.

Standards:

Illinois State Writing Goals:

3.A.5, 3.B.4c, 3.C.5a, 3.C.5b

Illinois State Reading Goals:

1.B.5c, 1.C.5b, 1.C.5d 1.C.5e

Procedure:

1. As a bell ringer activity, have students write five status updates that reflect the way they feel today. The only restriction is that only one of the updates can begin with the verb, "is". Discuss with students the goal of status updates. Why do we do it? What kind of feedback are we looking for?
2. Discuss what students already know about the terms necessary to be successful in the lesson. After discussion, give official definitions of point-of-view, empathy, and sympathy. Discuss the similarities and differences of empathy and sympathy. (Use Venn Diagram for lower ability level.)
3. Divide class into small groups of four or five. Give each group of students a subject or event. (A basketball game, a trip to the doctor's office, flying on an airplane, going to the zoo, a day in court.)
4. Have students brainstorm the different points-of-view from which the subject can be seen. (offensive player, defensive player, referee, fan, coach, parent, kid on the bench, the ball, the basket)

5. Each group member then chooses one point-of-view from which to write. Students will then write a short narrative about their subject from their chosen point-of-view, doing their best to evoke empathy from their audience. (or ten status updates?)
6. After writing, students will share their pieces with their group members.
7. Group members will vote for whom they feel the most empathetic after hearing all examples.
8. The chosen essay from each group will then be shared with the class. The class will then vote on one overall winner.

Guided Practice:

Teacher will walk around the room while students are composing to answer questions/check to make sure students are “getting it.”

Closure:

Students will be reminded to think about situations they face from different people’s perspectives. The importance of trying to understand where others are coming from will be stressed.

Extension Activities:

- Use current events to help students better understand what motivates people from different cultures to act.
- Write a recipe for empathy.
- Draw the feeling of empathy.
- Create a chart or graph recording times students feel empathetic.
- Journal about a time when you wish someone would have been empathetic to your situation.
- Rewrite a familiar children’s story from another character’s point-of-view.
- Make students write from the antagonist’s point-of-view from a particular piece of literature.

Sources:

<http://www.buzzle.com/articles/empathy-vs-sympathy.html>

<http://www.isbe.state.il.us/ils/ela/pdf/goal1.pdf>

<http://www.lessonplanspage.com/SSOTerrorism-UnderstandingEmpathy57.htm>

Renee Felkamp - Teaching Pre-Writing Skills to Young Children

Rationale: Developing literacy skills at a young age will assist in the writing process as students advance through the grades.

Objectives:

- To connect writing to reading
- To learn to write in more than a single format
- To incorporate cross curricular activities into a lesson
-

Procedure:

Grabbing Their Attention:

The attention grabber in this lesson is “The Cool Bear Hunt” by Dr. Jean. This song introduces the concept of dwellings as well as allowing for physical movement before a period of sitting.

The Lesson:

Following the song introduction, a small discussion should be held to allow the children to identify various dwellings which could be a habitat for living things. After the reading of the book, A House is a House for Me, the discussion should be continued to include dwellings for inanimate objects. (Note: If the discussion dwindles, have the children look around the room while you make suggestions such as a crayon box is a house for ___?).

Follow Up Mini Groups:

Mini Group 1:

Scrabble Junior: This scrabble game is designed for young children to learn word making skills. It is also a game which can be diversified, as on one side of the game board words are made by matching letters, while the other side of the board allows for words to be made in the usual manner.

Materials: Junior Scrabble Game

Mini Group 2:

Lincoln's House: This activity allows the children some creativity while learning about Lincoln's dwelling. It also presents some history as we talk about how it was not unusual to live in a log cabin during the 1800s and how those homes were much different from the log cabins of today. Our writing skill for this part will be our heading, Lincoln's Home.

Materials: Construction paper, scissors, glue, crayons, craft sticks, and one penny

Mini Group 3:

Shining Pennies: Blending science into other activities utilizes our school time to a greater advantage as well as teaching us to write in a different format.

Materials: Pennies, baggies, pop, salt, toothpaste, white vinegar, ketchup, paper towels, containers, and worksheet.

Procedure: Soak a penny a few minutes in white vinegar (add salt to the vinegar if the pennies have a lot of oxidation) or pop. Try rubbing a little catsup or toothpaste on a penny, wiping it off with a paper towel. Choose the penny that is the shiniest for your Lincoln house. Fill out the discovery worksheet.

Mini Group 4:

Independent Writing: Following the format of the story, the children will write and illustrate five pages describing an object and its dwelling.

Materials: One booklet, crayons, and pencils

Conclusion:

Each child will share one page of their house book.

Adaptations for Higher Grade Levels:

Look up the word dwelling in a Thesaurus. Write down the synonyms given. In your reading, find the word house or dwelling and replace it with a synonym you found. Does it change the meaning of the sentence?

In a small group, choose one animate or inanimate object. What would the object's usual habitat be? Come up with another habitat that would suit the object and explain why this would be the ultimate dwelling.

Construct, draw, or find pictures of the dwelling you would find most comfortable. Explain why this particular dwelling would suit you. What are the advantages and disadvantages of the dwelling?

Read A House Is a House for Me. Come up with at least five original ideas to fit into the sentence, A ___ is a house for a ____.

Mini Group 1 Directions

Choose the board side with blank squares or those with letters. Draw seven tiles. Choose someone to go first. If you are using the side with letters, have the person going first play two letter tiles. Continue around the circle playing two tiles and drawing two tiles. If you can play only one tile, exchange one tile for one in the pool. If you can play no tiles, exchange two tiles for two in the pool. The person completing the word as you go around the circle collects the scoring chip. Play until time is up or all words are covered.

If you chose the side with no words, the first player will play two or more letters to make a word. As play continues, each person will play one or more letters to form new letters. Draw a new tile for each tile played. The game ends when all the tiles have been drawn and no new words can be made.

Mini Group 2 Directions

On your sheet of paper, draw some background. Construct Lincoln's house using eight craft sticks glued on top of one another. Select a square of construction paper and cut a roof a door and a window. If you have shined your penny, you may glue Lincoln's head in the window; otherwise it will be glued at the end of the period.

Mini Group 3 Directions

Choose three different methods to shine three different pennies. On your discovery sheet, write the three methods you chose. Put a happy face by the method that worked the best. Put a sad face by the method that did not work well. Compare your results with your friends. Later we will graph everyone's results to discover the best method for shining pennies.

Mini Group 4 Directiions

Sound out a word to fill in the blanks on each of your five sheets of paper to describe a house and the object or living thing that lives there. For example, a box is a house for a Kleenex. After you have filled in the blanks, make an illustration that goes with your words.

Kelly Hardiek - Awesome Adjectives and Detailed Descriptions!

Overview:

Students will practice using descriptive words and phrases in their writing while avoiding “boring” words.

Rationale:

Middle school students often try to use “boring” words (good, bad, small, big, awesome, etc.) in their writing; they don’t always know what “be more specific” means or how to even do this. The activities in this lesson are designed to help students break free of dull and weak descriptions and to help them practice using several ways to describe certain experiences. This lesson is to be used in a 6th grade language arts class.

Scope:

This lesson should be used very early in the year to help students develop the habit of using strong descriptions in their writing; it will also train students to avoid using “boring” words in writing. This lesson also works well in a grammar review of adjectives and how they are used.

Materials:

5 random objects of choice; model car, matchbox car, song “Surfin’ Bird,” cd player, paper, pencils, whiteboard

Activity:

1. Ask students to close their eyes and picture “a house in the country” and discuss some of the differences between the houses they visualized. Then, ask them to picture “a white mansion in southern Alabama.” Continue to add details to the house picture until every student sees almost the same picture. Talk about the importance of detail in writing.
2. Have students get out a piece of paper and pencil for the next exercise. The teacher will hold up an object, and the students will have 30 seconds to come up with as many descriptions as possible.
3. More than likely, a student will describe something as “big” or “small.” At this point, pull out a model car and discuss the size of the object. Then, use a matchbox car to compare sizes. The model car can no longer be described as “small.”
4. Continue to pull out random objects and give students 30 seconds to come up with descriptions for each object.

5. The last object students will be asked to describe is a song. Challenge: Can you come up with 20 adjectives/descriptions for the song before it is over? (Explain that students can describe anything about the song: lyrics, beat, melody, voice, etc.) Please do not use opinion in descriptions.
6. At the end of the song, discuss some of the descriptions given about the song.
7. Assessment: Students will be asked to create a music review for the song. They must use at least 10 adjectives/strong descriptions in their review. Here is where students can tie in their opinion to the song. They may describe all aspects and explain why they did or did not enjoy listening to the song. They cannot use any words on the “boring” list.

Extension:

- K – 4: This lesson can be used as an introduction to adjectives and describing words.
- High school: Find 5 pictures or paintings that are fairly similar and post them in front of class. Ask students to describe only one of the paintings without labeling which picture they chose. Read the descriptions aloud and have the class determine which picture was being described by the author. During the music portion of the lesson, add a twist to the assessment. At the top of their papers, students must write “LIKE” or “DISLIKE,” giving their opinion about the song. Then, they must write a review expressing the opposite (For example, if a student liked the song, he must write his review with the opinion that he did not like the song).

Tina Hausmann - Writing with Your Senses

Overview:

Introducing the sense of smell to my students' writing.

Rationale:

During the seventh grade I teach my students how to add detail, personality, and individuality to their writing. One element of this is by adding sensory details into the students' events. By doing this, their writing will not only paint a picture for the reader, but also submerge the reader into the event itself. I will do a series of activities that include the five senses to demonstrate how easy and important it is for them to be present in the students' narratives.

Learning Objectives:

Once the students complete a series of activities dealing with the five senses, they will show their understanding by including sensory detail in their narrative essays.

Materials for Sense of Smell Activity:

- A. • 4-6 small paper bags (so students cannot see what they are smelling)
- B. • 4-6 items that have different and distinct smells (vanilla, coffee, alcohol, strawberries, suntan lotion, baby powder/oil, moth balls, soap, bug spray...)
- C. • Student handout with same number of squares as smells
- D. • Pen/pencil

Activity/Procedure:

This is an activity that you will do once your students have already learned the basic elements of a narrative (exposition, characters, plot, rising/falling actions, climax, resolution).

1. As a class you will discuss the five senses and why they are important (tell us what things are dangerous, pleasant, good, bad, when we should be alert, help us learn, etc...)
2. Discuss why the senses are important to include in narratives (help create a much more complete picture of the event being written about)
3. Read a passage with sensory detail and without and discuss which is better and why.
4. Handout student response worksheets
5. Explain that you will be passing around a paper bag with an item in it. The student is to take one or two deep breaths, smelling the item then pass the bag to the next student.
6. Quickly write down the first image or memory that pops into your head in the corresponding numbered box. This should be brief.
7. Continue the previous step for each of the different items in the bags.
8. Once all the items have been passed around the class, discuss what some of the images or memories were for the different smells.
9. As an assignment, each student must choose one of the images or memories and write a 5-8 sentence paragraph about it including as many of the other four senses as possible. Students also need to include other smells that may also be present.
10. The next day in class the students will first read their initial brief statement about the image or memory and then share their paragraph.
11. Students will discuss the differences between the two works.

Evaluation:

A completion grade of 10 points will be taken. Students' paragraphs must be 5-8 quality sentences long and contain the sense of smell along with the other four senses. The end product will be evaluated with a rubric for their narrative essay.

Extensions:

For all ages

- a. • Continue doing the above activity with items in bags in which the students feel. Students then

pick their favorite and write a paragraph about the image or memory including the other five senses.
- b. • Record a variety of sounds or find a website with sound effects and play them for the students. Students then pick their favorite and write a paragraph about what caused the sound while incorporating the five senses.
- c. • Have students only write about what an object looks like and see if other students can guess

the item. They are not allowed to use any of the other senses. You could then have them describe the item using all five senses so the students can see the difference.
- d. • Have students do adjective word wall posters for different tastes: sweet, sour, salty, cold, hot,

spicy. Then have them write about their favorite or least favorite food using some of the adjectives while including the other senses.

Sources: (Helpful sites to use for extensions)

<http://www.a1freesoundeffects.com/>

<http://www.pacd.com/sounds/index.html>

Writing With Your Senses

In order to create an image for your reader, you must include details about your five senses. The reader needs to not only see what is going on, but they need to hear, taste, touch, and smell the surroundings as well. This activity is going to focus on the sense of smell. I will pass around several numbered bags that contain different smells. Your job is to briefly write down the first memory or image that pops into your head as soon as you smell each item.

#1	#2
#3	#4
#5	#6

--	--

Complete the graphic organizer on the five senses. Once the organizer is completed, write your paragraph about the image/event you chose. Try to include three to five of the senses in your writing.

Example of writing with and without sensory detail

This afternoon we went swimming.

See: blue pool, patio furniture, towels, fireplace, water bottles, pool toys

Taste: salt, water

Hear: giggles, splashes, music, birds, mower

Touch: hot, cool, wet, relaxed

Smell: suntan lotion, grass, plastic

Although the sun was beginning to set, its heat still scorched the cement causing our feet to burn as we dashed on tiptoes to the cool rescue of the crystal blue water. The kids both giggled with delight as they cannon balled into the pool creating waves of refreshing water to splash onto hot pavement. I unfolded a towel and placed it on the edge of the pool preventing the hot cement or metal frame of the pool from blistering me. I could have settled onto the shaded comfort of the pillow soft sofa or chairs surrounding the oasis, but wanted to dangle my feet in the water. The lingering smell of suntan lotion was occasionally replaced by the fragrance of fresh cut grass as my neighbor's mower interrupted the soft conversations of the birds beginning to settle for the night in the surrounding shrubs and trees. As the kids splashed and played, a few drops of water settled on my lips. The saltiness made me reach for my bottle of ice cold water that was covered in perspiration from the outside heat. As I let out a sigh and watched the kids play, I could feel the previous stresses of the day dissipate into relaxation.

Christy Hild – Nicenet



PART ONE: In the Classroom

Overview: Today's demonstration is a process lesson; it will provide learners another forum for sharing writing. It focuses on a tool that enhances written communication: www.nicenet.org. This resource can be used in any context which requires written thought, interaction, or revision.

What is Nicenet?

An online, interactive class, www.nicenet.org allows teachers to create safe online collaboration experiences. When you sign up as a teacher, you can create various classes. Each class gets a secure code, called a Class Key. This key must be used by any person trying to sign up to join the class. Once enrolled, they can browse a variety of topics and forums, including: Link Sharing, Document Uploads, and Conferencing Topics.

How have I used Nicenet? Some ideas for implementation:

- 1) Response to literature → Post questions to which students are able to respond and read others' responses. When teaching 8th grade writers in an urban school, I partnered with Okaw Valley's 8th grade language arts teacher. Our students read the same book, responded to the same questions, read others' responses, and then asked more questions of each other. (We could do this with our language arts classes.)
- 2) For persuasive writing → Post a controversial quote and have students respond pro or con, providing support. Teach them how to anticipate counter-arguments in their writing by responding to peers who believe differently.
- 3) For staff sounding boards → Our union in a Cincinnati-area school district used Nicenet to securely communicate with each other about pertinent issues and also to share resources.
- 4) For peer revision groups → Students post pieces of writing they've created in Word, (or they can create them on the spot) and peers respond with general reactions and suggestions for improvement. (All the peer revision resources we have used thus far would work here.)

- 5) For cross-curricular projects → Get your team involved, middle school teachers! During a thematic unit on ____, post relevant web resources and have the other teachers post writing assignments geared toward their content areas.
- 6) For prompted writing → Use Nicenet to help teach the differences of timed writing. Post a prompt and give students the amount of time they get on standardized tests. The next day, have them re-read their piece and write a reflection on how they would do things differently, what was hard? Easy? etc.
- 7) For Book Study Groups → Hard to meet with colleagues to discuss professional reading? Post assignments, prompts, and share instructional ideas here. You can even scan pieces of student writing and ask fellow teachers to respond with instructional implications.
- 8) For Writing Groups → Set a deadline for group members to post pieces – every other Friday, for example. At that time, all members will log on to the site and respond with suggestions for improvement.
- 9) OTHER?

Learning Objectives:

- 1) Students will demonstrate understanding of how to formulate written responses for a variety of purposes;
- 2) Students will write in required genres;
- 3) Students will write for specified audiences; and
- 4) Students will use technology to enhance communication.

Rationale:

PART ONE: Students

- 1) Satisfies adolescent students' need for socialized learning (Graham, et. al, 4).
- 2) "Students can pass drafts among each other for comment via a shared drive..." (Narin, 29) Even easier without a drive. Use Nicenet. ☺
- 3) "The whole process [technology] encourages revision," (Narin, 29).
- 4) "In the end, their writing can be available to audiences of one to many millions," (Narin, 30).
- 5) "Research has shown the positive effects of word processing (e.g., Goldberg, Russel, & Cook, 2003; Russell & Plati, 2001), spell-check (e.g., MacArthur, Graham, Hayes, & De La Paz, 1996), speech recognition (E.g., Quinlan, 2004), and multimedia software (e.g., Daiute & Morse, 1994) on different stages of the writing process." (Karchmer-Klein, 224).
- 6) According to the same resources, those studies showed effectiveness for all levels of writers.

PART TWO: Teachers

- 1) “To unlock the potential of these new tools [available technology], teachers need opportunities and professional development in using technology first for their own purposes: writing and communicating, planning lessons, evaluating student work, and researching and developing curricula,” (Narin, 69).

Materials:

- 1) Computers with Internet Access
- 2) Computers with Microsoft Word: I like students to craft responses in Word before posting on Nicenet. This avoids the inevitable & dramatic, “I lost everything!” Plus, they still have a document to revise without copying and pasting it from Nicenet.

PART TWO: In the Lab

Activities/Procedures:

- 1) If this is your first introduction to Nicenet, take care of basic setup. You can give a small handout with procedures, or to save paper, put it on the board. I also tell students once they are logged on, they may explore the site until everyone is ready. They may not post anything until I've given that directive.
 - a. Go to www.nicenet.org
 - b. On the upper right hand side of the screen, Click on Students: Join a Class
 - c. Enter Class Key: G6K348W88
 - d. Create a User Name & Password
 - e. Decide if you want your students to have an email linked. For this class (EIWP), please enter your email.
 - f. Enter First Name & Last Name
 - g. If your user name is taken, try another
 - h. Click on Finish Registration
- 2) Once everyone is logged on, give a guided tour. For this class, we will do this together.
- 3) Introduce your assignment.
 - a. For our class it is: *Click on the conferencing section of our page. Find the assignment called ROSE Quote. Comment on the following quote by Mike Rose: "Error marks the place where education begins."*
 - b. *You have fifteen minutes for this writing.* (For my classes, I have them compose in Microsoft Word, copy and paste. In this lab, though, feel free to type in the fields.)
 - i. NOTE: *If you finish early, evaluate your writing: Is it what you wanted to say? Where can you substitute for better word choice?*
 - ii. *POST*
 - iii. *Then you are free to explore the site!*
 - c. *Call time. Now, you will have 25 minutes to read two peer responses and comment specifically on your reaction to their writing. Remember to write your responses thoughtfully, with as much care as you put into your piece.*

The following questions may guide you if you are stuck:

 - i. *Discuss the writer's content (IDEAS) through the lens of the following prompts:*
 1. *What new ideas had you not considered?*
 2. *Do you agree? Disagree? Why?*
 3. *How is your perspective different?*
 - ii. *Comment on the writer's style (Word choice, syntactic variety, voice) through the lens of the following prompts:*

1. *What phrasing or terms are unique to this writer?*
 2. *Where could you most clearly understand his or her thoughts?*
 3. *Where were you confused?*
 4. *Are there any general parts that could be clarified or enhanced?*
- d. Call time. *Finally, I would like you to revisit your piece and consider your peer feedback.*
 - e. *In your journal (or wherever you are keeping EIWP notes), answer the following. You have five minutes.*
 - i. *What would you change about your piece if you could? (Typically, the peer feedback would be applied in the Word Document.)*
 - ii. *What do you like about this forum? Dislike?*
 - iii. *How might you use it in your classroom*
 - f. *Discuss.*
- 4) *Now it's time to create your own Nicenet page. Things to consider:*
- a. *Who will you include? Students only? Would you like a separate page for parents? (Open House lesson!)*
 - b. *What topics would you want to include? Make a list of the units you teach.*
 - c. *Under Conferencing, create a topic that coincides with your first unit. Ask a relevant, thought-provoking question, or assign a response to text.*
 - d. *Under Link-Sharing, copy and paste a web resource that matches your first unit of study.*

Evaluation:

- 1) If you want a formal evaluation:
 - a. Have students print their two feedback pieces, OR
 - b. Ask students to print their original thought and then their revised response to see changes
- 2) If you want more informal:
 - a. Log onto the cite later and do a “quick check” for a completion grade
 - b. Award discussion & participation points

Extension:

- 1) Give students time for posting links related to current unit.
- 2) Read a picture book and have students respond.
- 3) Create a site that includes parents: We did a parent-student book club in Ohio, and everyone responded to the same questions. Certain books can act as a catalyst for an important dialogue.
- 4) Give extra credit for students who post book reviews. (Links to authors' pages are popular!)
- 5) Allow EIWP Participants time to post in various Conferencing Topics (Demo Add-Ons, Stars & Wishes, Links you Love...) or upload Teaching Materials & Handouts to DOCUMENTS section.

Janet Kracht - Flash Films

After reading specific literature section, students will create a timed computer presentation to relate their personal connection to identified themes/vocabulary.

Examples of Novels – Pictures of Hollis Woods, Outsiders, Speak, etc.

Examples of Vocabulary – Family, Abandonment, Friendship, Honesty, Happiness, Responsibility, Loneliness ...

Process –

1. Completion of assigned reading
2. Class discussion and reflection on terms
3. Introduce project requirements and directions
4. Presentation of projects

Procedure to complete presentation

*Before beginning create a new folder within a folder and title, all parts must be saved in the same folder for music to work

1. Create a PowerPoint slides for:
 - a. Title
 - b. Intro thought
 - c. 1 slide for each work
 - d. Closing slide
2. Each line of slide should be separate.
3. Add picture representative of word on slide (selected from internet or personal photos) as background – each slide should have a different background.
4. Timed animation for each slide.
5. Appropriate slide transition – read each slide to determine appropriate transition.

6. Add music.
7. Watch and make adjustments as needed.
8. Present

Materials

A computer with PowerPoint, Internet and access to music sites.

Evaluation

- *Checklist for project elements

- *Comment on personal and literary links and reflections

- *Composition elements

Other Uses – Feedback

Heather Lindenmeyer - Making Your Writing (and Your Readers) Smile through Voice

Overview/Rationale:

This activity is completed near the beginning of the narrative unit in my College Preparatory Writing course, which is designed for juniors and seniors who are attending four-year universities. It is designed to equip students with tools to incorporate voice, make their writing unique and appeal to the given audience. The tricks I will teach are called smiley-face tricks, and they got their name from the smiley faces teachers would draw on students' papers to praise them for using voice. Although these tricks are implemented in the narrative writing unit, they are applicable to many different writing genres.

So often my students think writing for college means using flowery, gigantic vocabulary words and writing in an almost robotic manner. The smiley-face tricks are go-to tools they can utilize to make their writing come alive. The tricks eliminate the robotic feel in their writing and seem to be easy to understand and duplicate for the students.

Objectives:

By the end of this lesson, students will learn three types of smiley-face tricks, will write examples of their own in class, and will incorporate them into a narrative paragraph. Eventually, students will learn all eight tricks and will be required to use them in future writing assessments.

Materials:

For students: smiley-face tricks handout; writing utensil; paper/journal; highlighter

For teachers: pictures of given writing topics (projected on a Smartboard or other projecting venue); projector; smiley-face tricks handout; smiley-face stickers (optional); timer (optional)

Activities/Procedures:

1. Instruct students to take out paper and a writing utensil. (Withstand groans.)
2. Project a picture onto the Smartboard. Make sure the object in the picture is simple and one with which students will be familiar.
3. Ask the students to describe the object in one to two sentences, using as many specific details as they can.
4. Repeat steps 2 and 3 two more times so students write about three different objects.
5. Introduce the concept of and rationale for the use of smiley-face tricks.

6. Choose one to three smiley-face tricks to teach in a given class period. With younger students, you may want to choose one. I have found my junior/senior level students can handle about two or three in a 45-minute class period. There are eight in all, and I am choosing to teach the magic three (#1 on the handout), figurative language (#2), and the hyphenated modifier (#7).
7. Read the examples given on the handouts with the students. Choose students to read the examples aloud and discuss with students WHY the examples work.
8. Have students try to write one “magic three” about each of the three objects. Ask for volunteers to share, and give each student who shares a smiley-face sticker to encourage others to share their writing. Also, have students type their examples on the board.
9. Repeat step 9, only have students write one example of each figurative language type (simile, metaphor, hyperbole, personification). They can use any of the three objects on which they previously wrote.
10. Repeat step 9, only have students write one hyphenated modifier for each object. Stress to students that they do not need to put a hyphen between the last word of the modifier and the noun it is modifying.
11. Now that students have learned all types of smiley-face tricks you have covered, put them to use!
12. Give students a choice of three to five topics. Project them on the Smartboard. Instruct students that you will be giving them 10-15 minutes to write a paragraph on one of the topics. You may give them guidelines (at least one example of the three smiley face tricks previously learned), or if it is a really competitive class, offer extra credit (or another prize) to the student who can incorporate the greatest number of smiley-face tricks in his/her paragraph. Of course, these tricks are more effective when used sparingly, but I have found that when you are introducing them, the more they can use, the better. Then they will buy into using them.
13. Ask students to highlight and label their smiley-face tricks in their paragraph (M3 = magic three; FL = figurative language – also label type; HM = hyphenated modifier).
14. Ask students to share their writing, either with the entire class or in a group setting. Give smiley-face stickers to volunteers.

Evaluation/Assessments:

1. Give students smiley-face tricks quizzes as they learn new tricks. Grade how you see fit, but I have chosen to grade on a 3-point scale (1: student attempted but the example does not follow correct format; 2: format is correct but example is awkward/still needs improvement; 3: great example that is effective and follows correct form). Students get one class period to complete quizzes, thus enforcing a “writing-on-demand” mindset that will prepare them for the ACT writing prompt or in-class essay exam writing in college or even other middle school/high school courses.

2. Require the students to find, highlight, and label smiley-face tricks in a classmate's piece of writing.
3. Require the students to use at least one example of each smiley-face trick in their future writing pieces and require them to highlight and label them.
4. When you read your students' writing, draw the smiley faces next to the tricks they use.
5. Create a smiley-face bulletin board in your classroom and have students type up their smiley-face tricks to place on the board. Offer them extra credit for EXCEPTIONAL use of smiley-face tricks.

Extension Activities:

1. Cooperate with an English teacher who works with students in younger grades. Require the older students to teach smiley-face tricks to younger students. These tricks are designed for students in grades 6-12. Grade the older students based on their mastery of the tricks they teach.
2. Point out smiley-face tricks in the literature you read in your classroom.
3. For a book report assignment, have students find a number of smiley-face tricks in their books, write them out (with page numbers), and identify what type of smiley-face trick each is.
4. For younger students, find the smiley-face tricks in literature and discuss WHY this example is an exceptional use of voice.

Works Cited

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Writing Assessments – Resource Handbook. Bellevue, WA: Bureau of Education and Research.

Vicki Martinez - Mental Snapshots

Vicki Martinez – ajm416@hotmail.com

Eastern Illinois Writing Project

July 24, 2008

- 1. OVERVIEW-** Turn on the television in your mind, take a snapshot, and be vivid.
- 2. RATIONALE-** Based on the 6 +1 Writing Traits, this activity will encourage students to increase their word choice. It will enable them to be more detailed and precise in expressing their ideas.



- 3. LEARNING OBJECTIVE-** The students will practice selecting words carefully to express complete thoughts using their childhood memories to paint a written picture for the reader.

4. MATERIALS: For this activity the following materials will be needed:

- | | |
|------------------------------------|------------------------|
| -paper | -writing paper, pencil |
| -markers, colored pencils, crayons | -childhood memories |
| -stamps, stamp pad | -brain |
| -scissors | -access to internet |

5. ACTIVITIES/PROCEDURES:

Memories/Selecting Word Choice

1. Teacher states, “Your memory is uncharted territory and like scrap bookers, it is your job to chart it on a big piece of blank paper.” Tell students to close their eyes and imagine a place/time that is/was very special to them.

**Explain that our brain is like a television. “If you close your eyes and remember, you can almost see that movie playing.

2. While eyes are closed the students will be instructed to “turn on the television”



in your brain. State to the class that you would like for them to....

- See their favorite time in their life that they may have had with a family member, friend, or animal. Notice the lands, buildings, people-everything. What colors do you see? What do you see on that television in your mind? Now while remembering that short television show,

-Tell students to pause their TV and get your camera and take a picture of your favorite part of the show. Remember all the details in that picture. Think about your 5 senses, smell, touch, sight, hear, and taste. Remember what made this time special.

1. Hand out construction paper. Share the childhood memory that you envisioned on your TV. Now take out your camera and take a snapshot of that memory.

2. On this construction paper, draw this memory. Remember all the little details that will help describe this memory. Think about the senses you were using at that time. After you have drawn this picture/memory, go back and write down words to describe what was happening at this time. Remember to think back to the television picture and make your words vivid. Get with a partner, and a thesaurus let them help you find words that help visualize your mental picture.

3. Students will go to computer lab with their pictures and write about their memory. Remind the students to remember the vivid words used in their description.

6. EVALUATION:

Students will be evaluated on participation, staying on task, and behavior inside classroom and computer lab.

7. EXTENSION:

1. After paragraph is written, partner with someone new, read story aloud and have the new partner draw the picture based on the detailed description.
2. This would work across the curriculum. Teachers could have students turn their visual TV's on in multiple curricular areas. (Ex: Science – take a Nature Walk. Have students put on blindfolds, and use their other senses to describe what is happening.)
3. Students can try and imagine what life would be like of a person and write an autobiography of that person's life.

8. SOURCES

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Writing Fix Home of interactive writing prompts. 2008. The Writing Traits: Word
Choice. < http://writingfix.com/6_traits/word_choice.htm>

Lane, Barry, "Discover Writing with Barry Lane. Lesson Plan Archives: Mining
Memory." July – August 1999. < [http://www.discover-](http://www.discover-writing.com/aug99.html) [writing.com/aug99.html](http://www.discover-writing.com/aug99.html) >

Library of Congress. The Library of Congress: "American Life Histories:
manuscripts from the Federal Writers' Project, 1936-1940. <
<http://memory.loc.gov> >



Monica Moreschi - Using Voice in Nursery Rhymes

1. **Overview:** Using nursery rhymes to show voice in the first person format
2. **Rational:** This activity will be used to teach students about using voice in their writing. It will also touch on writing in 1st and 3rd person. Students 4th grade on through high school could benefit from the use of this activity.
3. **Learning Objective:** After completing this activity students will demonstrate the use of voice in their own writing.
4. **Materials:** the following materials will be needed for this activity.
 - Various nursery rhymes (2copies of each)
 - Writing utensils
 - Computers

5. Activities/Procedures

- a. The teacher will begin by asking if the class knows about 1st person and 3rd person in writing. The class will have a discussion of 1st and 3rd person and list examples of pronouns we use for each (I, me, he, she...).
- b. The teacher will read sentences to the students. As a class they will decide if the sentence is in 1st or 3rd person.
- c. After the difference between 1st and 3rd person is established, the teacher will then discuss voice. She will ask if students know what having voice in a paper means. She will ask if the students can name different emotions they may hear in a piece of writing (angry, sad, and happy).
- d. After discussing voice, the teacher will randomly pass out examples of various well known nursery rhymes. There will be two copies of each rhyme. Students will be paired up by the nursery rhyme they receive.
- e. In their groups students will read the nursery rhyme and brainstorm a list of characters in the rhyme. They may add characters that are relevant to the story but are not mentioned.
- f. Once the list has been constructed, students will read their poem and the list they have made. They will do this to get feedback from other students on any over looked characters. Students will then pick one

character from their list and write a story about what is going on in the nursery rhyme. The story should be written as if they are that character, in first person. They may use any style of voice they choose.

g. Students will then go to the computer lab where they will type their story.

h. Students will be asked to volunteer to read their story while the class tries to decide what kind of voice is being used.

6. **Evaluation:** Students will be evaluated by their participation in activities.

Papers will also be assessed for the correct use of first person, the use of voice and of grammatical errors.

7. **Extension:** An extension activity to this activity could be to have students now read nursery rhymes or fairy tales from other countries to include multiculturalism. The students could compare and contrast rhymes from the U.S. to one from another country.

8. Sources:

Henry, A., "Speaking up and Speaking Out: Examining "Voice" in a Reading and Writing Program." Journal of Literacy Research 30. 2 (1998): 233-252.

Moffet, J., Active Voice: A Writing Program across the Curriculum. New Jersey: Boynton. Cook Publishers, 1981.

Margo Riker - Kindergarten Literacy Centers

ACTIVITY

Lesson Objectives: To provide exploration and hands-on learning for students to practice, reinforce, and master kindergarten literacy skills. This particular lesson will focus on the literacy centers that I've implemented to enhance literacy growth throughout the kindergarten school year. This is just a small sampling of center activities as my kindergarten students participate in 4-25 centers a week.

Rationale: Kindergarten students love to socialize and play with their classmates. At this young age, it is difficult to maintain a kindergartener's attention for a long length of time. In my classroom, center work is between 7-15 minutes long. This shortened time period helps the student remain on task and complete the assignment. Learning centers can be individualized, completed with a partner, or be group focused. Centers help to provide differentiated instruction and include various activities to foster the different learning styles. Students are excited to participate in the activities because many of them consider the tasks as play and not work. Center work not only helps a child master a particular literacy skill but also integrates other literacy skills and subject areas.

☺Learning Center 1:

The students will make and decorate pom poms. The students will then play, dance, and cheer to the song "Who Let the Letters Out." During this activity the students will chant the alphabet letter sounds.

Rationale: This activity reinforces letter sounds, gross motor skills and rhythm. Movement and music help the students stay focused and active.

Supplies: Small brown or white paper bags, markers, masking tape, music, and a CD player

Directions for the activity:

1. Supply each student with 2 paper bags to make pom poms.
2. Ask the students to decorate both sides of the paper bags with markers.
3. Instruct the students to tear several ½ inch strips from the open end of the bag to the fold.

4. Roll the bottom section of the bag into a handle and wrap each handle with a long piece of masking tape.
5. Separate the torn sections to make the bag look more like a pom pom.
6. Put the music in the CD player and hit play.
7. Dance, sing, and move to the music reinforcing the letter sounds.

Writing Extensions for Center 1

K-2 Create an ISAT cheer

3-5 Cheer spelling words

6-8 Use as characters in a narrative

9-12 Teach or rewrite the school song

☺Learning Center 2:

The students will explore and create structures with various math manipulatives.

Rationale: This activity will improve the students' fine motor skills thus improving their handwriting.

Supplies: Legos, stackers, connecting cubes, and any other manipulative that the students can practice connecting, and breaking apart

Directions for the activity:

1. The teacher will place the manipulatives in the center of the table.
2. The students will be instructed to play with the items and create structures.
3. All manipulatives should be broken down and put back in the appropriate containers at the end of the center.

Writing Extensions for Center 2: (As charted by fellows and coaches during this demonstration activity)

K-2 Build a structure and tell a story about it.

3-5 Create an invention and tell its purpose.

Build a building and tell about the people inside.

6-8 Create step by step instructions to build your design.

Instruct the students to use complete sentences.

9-12 Colors of Lego represent parts of speech.

Create a sentence with proper structure.

Write a story to include all figures or items built.

☺Learning Center 3:

The students will practice forming the alphabet letters with Play-Doh.

Rationale: This is a fun alternative for students to learn and recognize the alphabet.

Supplies: Play-Doh of various colors and laminated alphabet worksheets

Directions for the activity:

1. Instruct the students to select a Play-Doh color and letter worksheet.
2. Students should roll the dough into a long cord shape.
3. Starting at the black dot on the letter, the student should trace the letter with the dough.
4. Students should complete both uppercase and lowercase letters.
5. Although it doesn't matter which letter the students begin with, they should be encouraged to form as many letters as possible.

Writing Extensions for Center 3: (As charted by fellows and coaches during this demonstration activity)

K-2 Roll the dough into letters to create students first name, using uppercase and lowercase when appropriate.

3-5 Create a character and write a story about it.

Illustrate vocabulary, rhyming and nonsense words.

6-8 Write about a childhood memory after playing with the Play-Doh.

9-12 Write a poem that reveals their associations with the specific letter and include their sensory and tactile experiences working with the dough.

Prewriting= Play with the dough to recall memories through smells, and tactile experiences.

Assessment of Literary Elements: Create a concrete representation of character conflict, theme, etc.

☺ **Learning Center 4:**

The students will retell nursery rhymes using felt boards and story manipulatives.

Rationale: This activity encourages story sequencing and individual creative voice.

Supplies: Teacher made felt boards, and velcro backed nursery rhyme cut-outs

Directions for the activity:

1. Supply each student with a felt board.
2. Place cut-outs in the middle of the center table.
3. Pair students with different abilities together.
4. Encourage students to take turns retelling the story to their assigned partners.

Writing Extensions for Center 4: (As charted by fellows and coaches during this demonstration activity)

K-2 One person can be the narrator and retell the story while the other group members act it out.

3-5 Combine characters from other stories to create a new story.

Draw out of the bag: character, plot, setting, and write a new story.

6-8 Create writing sequels- For example, telling the story from the spider's point of view or what injuries did Jack and Jill receive?

9-12 Characterization- Insert characters from literature into the nursery rhymes.

Make the nursery rhymes contemporary.

☺ **Learning Center 5:**

The students will practice identifying beginning, middle, and ending letter sounds in words.

Rationale: After learning individual letter sounds, the students need to practice blending the sounds together to create simple words.

Supplies: Laminated picture worksheets with Elkonin boxes and plastic alphabet letters

Directions for the activity:

1. Place worksheets and letters in the middle of the center table.
2. Instruct the students to select a worksheet and identify the picture.
3. After identifying the picture, the student should listen for the beginning sound and place the appropriate letter in the first box.
4. Repeat step 3 for the middle and ending sounds as well.
5. Ask students to check each others work.
6. Continue the activity using different worksheets as time will allow.

Writing Extensions for Center 5: (As charted by fellows and coaches during this demonstration activity)

K-2 The students will stand beside each other in a row of three and slightly bump each other shoulders to physically blend the letter sounds starting with beginning, middle, and ending sounds. The group will say the word together.

3-5 Partner work: One partner takes a letter from the word and you create a new word, or one partner makes a word and the other partner defines the word.

Spell spelling words

6-8 Draw a letter and work with alliteration skills.

9-12 Put prefixes, roots, suffixes in a box. Put the meanings of the words on cards.

Have students find combination of roots, prefixes, suffixes that make a word that means the word on the cards.

Make a secret word! Share words with the group and form a story.

Resources:

<http://drjean.org/>

Loggerhead Sea Turtle

Personal Narrative Lesson

Overview

After learning about the loggerhead sea turtle, students will construct a personal narrative. Sensory activities will be used to stimulate students' thinking and feeling for more descriptive writing. Students will create personal narratives from the sea turtles point of view that tells about their journey from egg to adulthood using correct writing skills.

Rationale

By listening to the plight of the loggerhead, thinking about the conflicts many turtles face, and drawing on students different intelligences, students will be able to build background knowledge to create better developed narratives.

To achieve my goals of writing as a tool for learning and as a means of enjoyment, I selected activities that would help them be aware of the subject matter.

These activities will provide students with experiences they can draw upon during the writing phase. There are opportunities to feel, think, and act like a sea turtle.

Learning Objective

The instructional objective for the narrative writing is to create a personal narrative from the view point of a sea turtle for an audience of peers. The students' motivation for writing is to entertain, while including factual information from their research on sea turtles. The piece is to include the literary techniques of 1st person narration, elaboration (details and synonyms), and dialogue, as well as the literary elements of characters, setting, plot, and conflict. The writing will help students know and apply science concepts that explain how living things function, adapt and change. Furthermore, it will demonstrate students' knowledge of how living things interact with each other and their environment. The assignments will help students develop their thinking and writing skills. Through the written assignments, the children will understand what is meant by author's purpose and audience.

Materials

Visual aid of a turtle

The book: *Into The Sea* by Brenda Z. Guiberson

Loggerhead Turtle passage

Ocean sounds CD

Maze worksheet

Narrative story frame worksheet

Synonym word file folder

Student writing materials

Writing rubric

Background

The teacher will provide this information in a persuasive story telling format.

- There are seven species of sea turtles in the world: loggerhead, green, Kemp's ridley, olive ridley, Australian flatback, Hawksbill, and leatherback.
- All sea turtles are listed as endangered or threatened except the Australian flatback.
- Sea turtles have adapted to life in a marine environment and have evolved flippers instead of legs.
- Sea turtles have large flat paddle like limbs that make them fast swimmers in the ocean, but very slow and clumsy on land.
- Unlike land turtles, sea turtle cannot hide in their shells
- They eat jellyfish, sponges, crabs, fish, and/or plants depending on the species.
- Length can range from about 2-8 feet and weight can range from 100-1800 pounds.
- Some species can live up to 70 years.
- Sea turtles lay about 100 eggs in deep holes they have dug in the sand.
- The eggs hatch in about 2 months.

- The hatchlings dig their way out and head instinctively to the water.
- There are many enemies for the sea turtle. The young turtles are prey to birds, crabs, and fish. The adult turtles have two enemies sharks and humans.

Activities/Procedures

1. Explain that all turtles are not the same. Explain there are 4 types of turtles: tortoises, aquatic, land and sea turtles. Present Murtle the Turtle to the class. Encourage visual observations. Make inferences about his life. Then ask students what they know about sea turtles. Correct misconceptions and give students background information from above in storytelling format. Appeal to the students (Interpersonal Intelligences) by explaining the plight of the sea turtle (turtle products, changing beaches, hunters, beach buggies, pollution, and fishing nets). **15 Minutes**
2. Students will read in pairs the short story *Into the Sea*. Afterward students will write in their journals describing their feelings (Intrapersonal Intelligence) or they may choose to write about the steps they would take to help the endangered sea turtle. Students that finish early may work on the turtle maze worksheet and/or draw a picture of the sea turtle (Visual Intelligence). Allow time for students to share their writings in small groups. **20 Minutes**
3. When all students have had time to complete their writing/sharing, the class will listen to ocean sound bytes and move like a sea turtle (Bodily Kinesthetic). **5 Minutes**
4. Have students read aloud the personal narrative from the Loggerhead turtle point of view in *A Tale of Two Turtles*. Identify story elements of character, setting, conflict, and resolution. **5 Minutes**
5. Give students the Sea Turtle Story Frame and ask them to complete the graphic aid to help them organize their thoughts for their own personal narrative. **10 Minutes**
6. Then ask students to construct a personal narrative from the point of a sea turtle (Verbal-Linguistic). Pass out the writing prompt, grading rubric, and synonym file folders. **10 Minutes**

Evaluation/Assessments

- Does the writing help students recognize audience and author's purpose?
- Does the story entertain?
- Does the piece include literary techniques: 1st person narration, elaboration (details and synonyms), and dialogue, as well as the literary elements of characters, setting, plot, and conflict?
- Is the writing organized sequentially?
- Does the writing address the writing prompt?
- Did the student follow the rubric?

Extensions

- Consider adaptation that would help the sea turtle survive by drawing adaptations for the sea turtle (Such as: talons like an eagle to gather food, teeth like a tiger to defend himself).
- Research 2 types of turtles and write a compare/contrast expository.
- Split class into 2 groups "for and against" sea turtle conservation for discussion. Then have students write persuasive paragraphs that defend their point of views.
- Write letters to the editor persuading beach visitors to make the beaches safer sea turtle hatchlings.

Sources

Strategies for Writers Zaner Bloser, Inc. 2008 writing conventions

<http://www.okaloosa.k12.fl.us/bluewater/seaturtle/graph.htm> lesson ideas

<http://octopus.gma.org/turtles/tale2.html> narrative

<http://www.tourdeturtles.megotta.com/TurtlePlayer.aspx> animated movements

Loggerhead turtle

I'm a loggerhead sea turtle. I'm one of the lucky ones.

I hatched with [120 brothers and sisters](#) on a warm June night a few years ago. I may be the only one still alive. We all hatched together from a nest our mother dug in the sand high up on a beach in Florida. At least we all got to hatch, nearly two months after our mother had left us there. Some nests get raided by poachers or raccoons or dogs. Even ants attack turtle nests.

I remember our race to the sea. We had already hatched a couple of nights before. We used this little hard knob on our heads to crack the [shell](#), an egg tooth. Mine fell off long ago. We were hiding under the sand until all of a sudden some of us started to dig for the surface. The excitement was contagious! Soon we were all squirming and wiggling our way out of the nest.

We were drawn to the light on the horizon, instinctively knowing that that was the direction to safety. But some of my brothers and sisters saw the lights of the hotels behind us and scrambled up the beach into the dunes. I shudder to think of what happened to them when the sun rose the next day.

I was too busy to worry about them at the time. Crabs, raccoons, and sea birds attacked from all sides. Some of my family fell into tire tracks on the beach. The ditches held them until the predators found them. I scuttled down the gentle slope to the sea as fast as my flippers would push me. Water! It was my only thought, my only chance.

A wave caught me and snatched me away from the sharp beak of a herring gull. I dove as deep as I could. I swam under a school of mackerel waiting for us just offshore. How did they know we were coming? I swam and swam. I only came to the surface for a quick breath and then I'd dive again, knowing my protection lay in the dark shadows of the sea.

My front [flippers](#) helped me glide through the water. My rear flippers steered my course. My shell is trim and streamlined, so it doesn't slow me down when I swim. I only regret that it's too small to let me pull my head and flippers inside it as I hear land turtles can. But the sea buoys me up, so I can grow much larger than any pond turtle can. I might reach 300 pounds some day.

That time is a long way away. I'm still young. I've found [refuge](#) in the deep blue Sargasso Sea, far out in the Atlantic Ocean. I live among the sargassum weed. Sometimes a small Portuguese man-of-war passes by, its beautiful blue sail pushed before the wind. It's such a tasty jellyfish, I hardly mind the welts its stingers leave all over my head. It makes a welcome change from eating seaweed.

Someday I hope to grow up and return to the beach where I was born to start my own family. Maybe I'll be the one in a thousand who makes it. Come look me up in about 25 years and see.

Sea Turtle Graphic Organizer

The Dangers The Sea Turtle Has As An Egg

Danger

Who Helped

How the Turtle Escaped

The Dangers The Sea Turtle Has As A Hatchling

Danger

Who Helped

How the Turtle Escaped

The Dangers The Sea Turtle Has As An Adult

Danger

Who Helped

How the Turtle Escaped

Sea Turtle Story Frame

Rising Actions/Plot

Problem 1:

Problem 2:

Resolution

Beginning

Lead

Josh Robison – Revision Techniques

Overview: Students will practice an assortment of revision techniques designed to increase their skills as both writer and editor.

Rationale: Writing is an organic process and thus never truly finished. Almost all writing can be improved through revision. Students need to practice that philosophy in order to grow as both writer and learner, and they need specific skills pertaining to the practice of quality revision.

Learning Goals: As a result of this lesson, students will learn to see revision as a crucial element of the writing process, and they will demonstrate revision techniques suitable for individualized editing, peer editing, and teacher enhanced revision.

Materials: Students will need access to writing utensils, paper, and computers. The instructor will provide handouts and grouping tools.

Activities:

1. The instructor will ask students to visualize their hometown for a few moments.
2. Students will make a list of 8-12 “Selling Points” about their town with the assumption that someone wishes to purchase their entire hometown on E-Bay.
3. Once the list is finished, students will retrieve a packet of flower seeds from the instructor to serve as both a visual aid and a grouping strategy.
4. Students will log onto their computer and get into their “Flower Groups.”
5. Students will read examples of real estate advertisements, then create their own advertisement for their hometown.
6. Once complete, students will begin to revise their writing sample, beginning with individualized editing.

“Seat Techniques Checklist”

Have you read your writing aloud?

Have you read your writing sentence by sentence, backwards?

Have you edited your writing for spelling errors?

Have you edited your writing for punctuation errors?

Do all your sentences contain appropriate subject/verb agreement?

Are all verbs in the appropriate tense?

Have you implemented at least eight “selling points” for your hometown?

Does your advertisement contain contact information?

“Feet Techniques”

Students will move from writer to peer editor and read each advertisement in their group.

Students will comment on each advertisement in three ways:

1. An exclamatory sentence, in green bold, telling the writer what was liked the most about their advertisement.
2. An interrogative sentence, in blue italics, asking the writer a question about their advertisement.
3. A declarative/imperative sentence, in green, offering the writer a specific suggestion.

Student will return to their writing and read the peer editing responses, then walk away from the piece in order to look at it fresh at a later time.

Upon returning, students will re-read both their advertisement and the responses, then revise their advertisement again.

“Meet Techniques”

Students will meet with their “Teacher/Student.”

Students will move from writer to teacher, and again make comments on their “student’s” advertisement.

Students will return to their advertisement on the computer and revise again based on their “teacher’s” suggestions.

Printed, final copies will be turned into the instructor, who will publish the pieces in a Real Estate Brochure.

Assessment: Students will be assessed based on their involvement with each revision technique.

Extension: The class will discuss additional revision techniques for possible use in later demonstrations/lessons.

Sources:

Writing Project Fellows

“Pruning Too Early: The Thorny Issue of Grading Student Writing.” Stephanie Wilder*

“Revising Revision: How My Students Transformed Writer’s Workshops.” Jan Matsuoka*

Both essays can be found in Breakthroughs: Classroom Discoveries About Teaching Writing published by the National Writing Project, 2002

Lee Roll – Who Am I? *Create A New Adjective to Describe Yourself*

Rationale (subject area, concept, and target audience): This is an effective writing activity to use close to the beginning of the school year but after students have some knowledge of one another. The immediate audience of the essay is the instructor and the writer's classmates, but the essay could also be adapted as a response to composition requirements on college admission and/or housing applications. It is targeted for secondary English students, but could be modified for elementary, middle school, and college students.

Learning Objective: After students complete these activities, they will have a better understanding of themselves and their classmates. Students will have practice in using dictionaries and thesauruses; writing essays; using parts of speech; understanding denotation and connotation; and using concrete detail.

Time Required: one or two periods in the classroom followed by one or two periods in the computer lab.

Materials/Procedures:

“Bumper stickers”: construction paper or card stock cut into strips

Markers, colored pencils, crayons, etc.

Thesauruses and dictionaries

Paper and pencils or pens

Copies of “The Jabberwocky” by Lewis Carroll (available at www.poets.org)

Copies of Student Models 1 and 2

Computer

What to Do:

Part 1: Make a personal bumper sticker

Each student makes a “Who I Am” list of at least “a baker’s dozen” of values, activities, hobbies, ideas, and favorite things (foods, environments, songs, movies, etc.) that he/she considers important.

Students design and create a bumper sticker in which the letters of their name or their initials are constructed with drawings of the words included on the “Who I Am” list. Leave space on the bumper sticker to add the new adjective created in Part 2 as a predicate adjective.

Part 2: Create a new adjective to describe yourself with a little help from your friends

Students choose or are placed in groups of four or five. Talk about individual bumper stickers, elaborating with information, anecdotes, etc. Ask questions.

Group task: Make a list of at least five as-perfect-as-possible adjectives for each member of the group. Choose words that describe personality and physical traits. (Use positive words please!)

One way to make a list that is especially interesting to students is to provide them with Chinese birth year/personality trait charts available at no charge from the Center for Chinese Studies at the University of Michigan (1080 S. University, Ste. 3668, Ann Arbor, MI 48109-1106; phone: 734.764.6308; fax: 734. 764.5540). Students find their birth year (Year of the Dragon, 1988; Year of the Snake, 1989, etc.), read and discuss the personality traits associated with the year, then choose the five most appropriate words from the chart to describe each student.

Using dictionaries, group members research both familiar and unfamiliar words to verify that the definitions fit the person; then, using thesauruses, look up each of the chosen words to see if a synonym could be more fitting than the word they selected originally. (Students need to remember that “for the writer, there are no synonyms, only perfect words.” Also they need to remember that the thesaurus is both their best friend and their worst enemy—they need to know denotations and connotations of every word.)

Read “The Jabberwocky” by Lewis Carroll. Find the made-up adjectives and discuss common suffixes of adjectives.

Each group member uses his/her list of five to create a made-up “Jabberwocky-style” adjective from some of the syllables of the adjectives selected by the group. The new word

should “sound” like the person. *Example:* quiet, contemplative, wholesome, bookish, charitable = charquitoomish

Part 3: Write an essay

ASSIGNMENT:

Some college applications and scholarships and many first semester Composition assignments present students with the prompt, “Tell us about yourself.”

After reading the student model, write an essay that tells about who you are by defining your made-up word. Use activities, hobbies, values, ideas, and favorite things symbolized on your bumper sticker as your support detail.

Concrete sensory details are necessary. For example, in the student model, Jessica writes that she is “hard to understand,” but that phrase doesn’t say enough; it is not concrete or sensory. By adding support details about clothing, driving, and eating, she offers specific images that paint a picture for the reader.

Use your made-up adjective as other parts of speech, attending to likely prefixes and suffixes. Notice how Jessica changed the suffixes of her adjective, *sipcof*, to make it into an adverb, *sipcofly*; a noun, *sicofer*; a verb, *sipcofin*.

Your essay should be about _____ words. Put the computer word count at the end of your paper.

Your paper is DUE _____

Make your essay great! Make it sing YOU!

STUDENT MODEL: essay by Jessica Baker, junior at Oakland High School

Sipcof by Jessica Baker

Sipcof. I am a person who is quite *sipcofing*. The type of person who walks ever so *sipcofly* down the hallway into the classroom. A true *sipcofer*.

That would be me. Jessica Baker. The creator and almighty inventor of the word *sipcof*. Why create a word you might ask. When I open the dictionary, I see all kinds of nouns, verbs, and adjectives, but none are for me. Coquettish? Yes, but not just that. Fiery? Yes, but there's so much more! Gossipy? I say more like stating the facts. *Sipcof*.

"Ah, I see! The *sip* from gossipy, the *co* from coquettish and the *f* from fiery! The combination of coquette, fiery, and gossipy! Genius!" No. Not at all. A *sipcofer* is not just a flirty, determined chatterbox ... It's me!

I am the type of girl who will watch a football game with my face painted half blue and half orange, guzzle a soda, and out-burp every guy in the room. I am the type of girl who can show up at the high school prom in a \$400 gown, nails done, hair in place, eyelashes painted, four-inch heels, ready to dazzle my classmates. I am the type of girl who will pig out on pizza and pop one day, and eat nothing but whole grain rice and herbal green tea the next. I will buy you a present for Halloween and St. Patrick's Day, but totally forget your birthday and Christmas.

Sound like a *sipcof*? Do you understand who a *sipcof* is? A *sipcof* is hard to understand. She would give anything to be married, but turn every prospect away. Spend hours doing her hair and makeup, only to end up wearing sweatpants. Speed like crazy, but turn-signal exactly 100 feet from the stop sign before pausing the vehicle for exactly 3.5 seconds. Drive with her knee, but turn with the hand-over-hand technique. The type who would order a triple whopper, biggie fries, and a large chocolate dip cone, with a *diet* coke.

A *sipcof* is not indecisive; she's just hard to process. What is she thinking? What is she going to wear to school today? What will she say next? Why is she doing the chicken dance in the middle of Wal*Mart?

Sipcofs are crazy. They do things on a whim, but things always, almost, turn out just right. I think today I will try out for cheerleading. And tomorrow, I will join the Future Farmers of America. I think today seems like a good day to sleep outside on the cold soft dirt. And tomorrow I think I will stay in a fancy Hilton Hotel suite. Why not carry my Louis Vuitton purse to my after-school job at McDonalds? And maybe today I will dye my hair platinum blonde, and pass the ACT with a 36. A *sipcof* is all about breaking stereotypes.

So you want to be a *sipcof*? You can try and try, but *sipcofs* are born, not made. If you think you would like to become a *sipcof*, I'd advise not trying. Make up your own word. Be your own person. Live your life how you want to, not necessarily how you think you should. Keep on *sipcofin'* on!

Evaluation

Rubric: WORD CHOICE (*Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory*)

5 *Words convey the intended message in a precise, interesting, and natural way. The words are powerful and engaging.*

- A. Words are **specific** and **accurate**. It is easy to understand just what the writer means.
- B. **Striking words and phrases** often catch the reader's eye and linger in the reader's mind.
- C. Language and phrasing are **natural, effective,** and **appropriate** for the audience.
- D. **Lively verbs** add energy while **specific nouns** and **modifiers** add depth.
- E. Choices in language **enhance** the **meaning** and **clarify** understanding.
- F. **Precision** is obvious. The writer has taken care to put just the right word or phrase in just the right place.

3 *The language is functional, even if it lacks much energy. It is easy to figure out the writer's meaning on a general level.*

- A. Words are **adequate and correct in the general in a general sense**, and they support the meaning by not getting the way.
- B. Familiar **words and phrases communicate** but rarely capture the reader's imagination.
- C. **Attempts at colorful language** show a willingness to stretch and grow but sometimes reach beyond the audience (thesaurus overload!)
- D. Despite a **few successes**, the writing is marked by **passive verbs, everyday nouns,** and **mundane modifiers**.
- E. The words and phrases are **functional** with only **one or two fine moments**.
- F. The words may be **refined in a couple of places**, but the language looks more like **the first thing that popped into the writer's mind**.

1 The writer demonstrates a limited vocabulary or has not searched for words to convey specific meaning.

- A. Words are so **nonspecific** and **distracting** that only a **very limited meaning** comes through.
- B. Problems with language **leave the reader wondering**. Many of the **words just don't work** in this piece.
- C. Audience has not been considered. **Language is used incorrectly** making the message secondary to the misfires with the words.
- D. **Limited vocabulary** and/or **misused parts of speech** seriously impair understanding.
- E. Words and phrases are so **unimaginative** and **lifeless** that they detract from the meaning.
- F. **Jargon** or **clichés** distract or mislead. **Redundancy** may distract the reader.

Extension: Use the essay as one of a series of vignettes, similar to those in *A House on Mango Street* by Sandra Cisneros (New York: Vintage, 1991)..

See Dixon, Chris Jennings. *Lesson Plans for Teaching Writing*. Urbana: NCTE, 2007.

Lesson 5: "Using Specific Details in Narration"

Lesson 42: Lists websites for students to access to find their learning style

Sources:

Goldberg, Natalie. *Writing Down the Bones*. Boston: Shambhala, 1986.

Kristin Runyon - Text Reformulation

Overview: Students will demonstrate their comprehension of a text by reformulating, or rewriting, the text into a different format. This demonstration lesson

Rationale: According to Lesley Roessing, “it is important for [students] to return to a text [when finished] and interact with it to become skilled and reflective readers” (108). Text reformulation is a synthesis activity that requires students to “transform the text into a different format” (109). Text reformulation requires rereading and results in increased comprehension and utilization of inference and questioning techniques (109). Without realizing it, students are finding the main idea and making inferences of their independent texts automatically, while also analyzing and evaluating the newly created texts (Beers 162). Students are also more likely to complete a project and more successful when they are allowed to select their own project formats (Roessing 110).

Scope: These two activities will be taught on separate days early in the school year during a week of lessons on various text reformulations. The FUN Story and Found Poem are two of approximately five text reformulations that I will present to the students; the students will then choose from this catalog of text reformulations throughout the school year to either demonstrate their comprehension and analysis of independent reading or to synthesize various readings within a literary unit and to demonstrate comprehension of a literary period.

Learning Goals: 1B Stage H.5, 3B Stage H.5, 3B Stage J.3

Preparation and Materials

- Photocopy Micro Fiction short stories to use as sample readings; number the lines to use for citations
- Students need to provide a pen and paper.
- Teacher needs to provide a format for recording class-created responses.

Activities:

1. Define text reformulation and explain the purpose:

To students: Text reformulation is changing the form of a text from the way it was written—as a short story, poem, novel, chapter, movie—and rewriting it into a different form. A short story can be rewritten as a poem, but it can also be rewritten into a newspaper front page, a scrapbook, or a structured story. If you can rewrite a text into a new format by including the main details, omitting lesser ones, making connections to other

texts, and focusing on a theme or lesson, then you will have used not only comprehension skills, but also inference skills, editing and revision skills, and synthesis skills.

2. Have students read the Micro Fiction short story “This Is How I Remember It” by Betsy Kemper. When everyone is finished, explain the FUN story format. Model reformulating/rewriting the Micro Fiction story into a FUN format. After creating the first two or three pairs, elicit student-created lines. When the FUN story is finished, have students brainstorm themes appropriate for the original story; choose one and write it in FUN format as the first or final line of the story.

Discuss with the class the pros and cons of writing/identifying the theme before and after writing the FUN story.

Have the students read a second Micro Fiction short story and reformulate it in to a FUN story individually or in small groups.

- **FUN Story—Fortunately/Unfortunately Story**
 - **Retell the story in pairs of lines. The lines should be “Fortunately, . . . ; unfortunately. . .” OR “Unfortunately, . . . ; fortunately, . . .”**
 - **Reformat the original story into chronological order and create cause and effect pairs using the FUN format.**
 - **The teacher may set a minimum number of pairs for the reformulation (for example, 10 pairs = 9 plot pairs plus the theme pair). You may require a certain number written with “fortunately” first or “unfortunately” first.**

3. After creating the FUN story, introduce the Found Poem format. Model reformulating/rewriting the same story into a Found Poem. After creating the first two or three lines, elicit student-found lines. Emphasize citing the found lines. Be sure to model the revising and editing process. Students seem to struggle with selecting and combining only phrases. I suggest choosing writing the first stanza or two with quoted sentences, then going back and editing the selected sentences into phrases and arranging the phrases poetically.

When the Found Poem is finished, have students look for a line or phrase in the story that represents the theme used in the FUN story. If a line cannot be found, then the students need to brainstorm a poetic line to represent the theme.

Have the students read a third Micro Fiction short story and reformulate it in to a Found Poem individually or in small groups. I would choose a third story so that the text is unfamiliar to the students, which allows them to practice creating the poem after a cold read.

- **Found Poem**
 - **Retell the story by finding lines in the original text that convey the main details (characters and events) and theme. You will reorganize these lines, and add a few of your own if needed, into poem format. This format will rely on imagery and phrases rather than sentences. It does not need to rhyme or follow a rhythm.**
 - **At the end of each line of poetry, you will need to cite the page (or line) number from the text.**
 - **Handout a copy of “Found Poem Instructions” from ReadWriteThink. The teacher may modify these instructions as needed.**
 -

Assignment: No assignment results directly from this activity. The purpose of the lesson is to teach two of the five+ activities in my Text Reformulation catalog. Students will then one activity from the catalog to complete future assignments, such as independent readings and synthesizing a literary unit.

Assessment: In the past, I have set a minimum number of lines required for a grade (10 pairs for a FUN Story and 20 lines with 15 of them found for the Found Poem). The grades were based on having the minimum number of lines AND recounting the story accurately.

Adaptations and Differentiation for Text Reformulations:

1. Instead of the “Fortunately. . . ; unfortunately,” format, students could use
 - When. . . , then
 - If. . . , then. . . , so
 - Somebody Wanted But So (Beers 144-149)

You don’t have to teach each format, but you should discuss with the class how to choose from the different formats.

2. Instead of the Found Poem, students could use one of three biography poem formats (What I Lost, I Am, Bio-Poem) or a Shrink Poem format.

3. For students requiring more structure, use a graphic organizer such as a timeline, a plot map, or episode notes. (Jim Burke’s book Tools for Thought: Graphic Organizers for Your Classroom is an excellent resource!) Again emphasize that the student should not be including every detail but, instead, needs to choose the main events. You could assign a maximum number of events to be included (because I have had a student create a 10-foot long timeline). Also, create a place on the graphic organizer for the student to write the theme.

4. Other options for text reformulations:

- Children's picture book
 - Scrapbook
 - Mind mapping (Daniels 60-66)
 - Newspaper front page (Daniels 174-181)
5. Text reformulations are not limited to literature; students can prove their understanding of a chapter in a content-area textbook: a FUN Story about the Civil War; a Found poem about photosynthesis.

Resources:

Beers, Kylene. *When Kids Can't Read—What Teachers Can Do: A Guide for Teachers 6-12*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 2003. Print.

Burke, Jim. *Tools for Thought: Graphic Organizers for Your Classroom*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 2002. Print.

Daniels, Harvey, Steven Zemelman, and Nancy Steinke. *Content-Area Writing: Every Teacher's Guide*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 2007. Print.

"Empowering Readers." *CTAP Region 4*. California Department of Education. 28 October 2008. Web. 5 May 2010. <<http://www.ctap4.net/projects/information-literacy/51-information-literacy/93-empowering-readers.html>>

"Found Poem Instructions." *ReadWriteThink*. IRA/NCTE. 2009. Web. 22 June 2010. <<http://www.readwritethink.net/files/resources/printouts/foundpoem.pdf>>

Micro Fiction: An Anthology of Really Short Stories. Ed. Jerome Stern. New York: W. W. Norton, 1996. Print.

Roessing, Lesley. *The Write to Read: Response Journals that Increase Comprehension*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin, 2009. Print.

Screenplays for You. <http://sfy.ru/>

“Strategy Spotlight: Text Reformulation.” *Living Literacy* I.8. Newberry High School.

March 2007. Web. 5 May 2010. <[http://www.newberry.k12.sc.us/nbhs/literacypage/ Newsletter%20I,%208.pdf](http://www.newberry.k12.sc.us/nbhs/literacypage/Newsletter%20I,%208.pdf)>

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“This is How I Remember It” Found Poem

Created by EIWP SI 2010

Red berries

Joey popping

Mags licking and chewing

I don't

Smiles look bloody

Moms

Panic

Mine doesn't

Screams

Shakes

“Oh-oh-oh”

Yanked around the house

Medicine thick and purple

Bathroom

Vomit everywhere

Joey in the toilet

Red

Mags in the sink

Red

Me in the tub

Yellow

Corn muffins from lunch

Turn to my mother a for touch

I told you

This will teach you anyway

“This is How I Remember It” FUN Story

Created by EIWP SI 2010

Fortunately, the narrator ate corn muffins for lunch; unfortunately, his friends ate the red berries.

Unfortunately, the berries made their lips blood red; fortunately, the berries looked like Ju-Ju Bees.

Fortunately, the narrator didn't eat the berries; unfortunately, his mother didn't believe him.

Unfortunately, the mothers believe that the berries are poisonous; fortunately, the mothers saw the kids eating the berries.

Fortunately, the one of the mothers has syrup of Ipecac; unfortunately, all three children have to drink it. Fortunately, the medicine gets the poison out of their systems; unfortunately, the bathroom is covered in vomit.

Fortunately, Joey and Mags vomit the red poisonous berries; unfortunately, the narrator vomits his yellow corn muffins from lunch.

Fortunately, Joey and Mags are comforted by their mothers; unfortunately, the narrator's mom smokes a cigarette and says, “This will teach you a lesson.”

Unfortunately, life isn't always fair; fortunately, those are hard lessons we actually learn from.

Examples of ACE Writing

ACE Writing Assignment

- You will be given rubric to use as a guide, but you also need to attach it to your paragraph.
- Topics for the ACE paragraph are:
 - How the story exemplifies the literary period
 - How the story exemplifies one of the themes of American literature (American Dream/American Nightmare, Freedom, Frontier, Individuality, Journey [quester, place to go, reason to go, challenges, life lesson] Moral Struggle, Past vs. Present, Rebellion vs. Conformity, Rite of Passage/Initiation, Search for Identity)
 - Identify a theme other than one of the ten themes of Am. Lit.
 - Explain the significance of the title

By RD:

“Bernice Bobs Her Hair” best exemplifies the American Nightmare theme. “She’s absolutely hopeless! [. . .] Oh, I know what you’re going to say! So many people have told you how pretty and sweet she is, and how she can cook! What of it? She has a bum time. Men don’t like her.” This is when Bernice overhears Marjorie talking to Mrs. Harvey about how boring Bernice is. “[T]he barber swung her round to face the mirror, and she flinched at the full extent of the damage that had been wrought [. . .]. It was ugly as sin—she had known it would be ugly as sin.” This is when Bernice’s hair cut goes wrong, causing her to lose her new popularity. “Bending over she found one of the braids of Marjorie’s hair, flowed it u with her hand to the point nearest the head, and then holding it a little slack so that the sleeper would feel no pull, she reached down with the shears and severed it.” This is when Bernice gets her revenge on Marjorie, and Marjorie gets the nightmare of losing some of her beautiful hair. “Bernice Bobs Her Hair” reminds me of the book Revenge. In the book Revenge, Ashley gets a new stepsister who takes all her popularity. So Ashley gets her revenge by starting bad rumors about her stepsister, which forces her new father to file a divorce with her mother. Thus, Ashley’s stepsister and stepfather leave town. Bernice and Marjorie connect with to the real world because they show how cruel and jealous girls can be.

By BC:

“Bernice Bobs Her Hair best exemplifies the Search for Identity literary theme. Bernice goes to visit her cousin, Marjorie, and her visit doesn’t go as expected. Marjorie is a popular girl who isn’t afraid to speak her mind, while Bernice is more of a quiet, laid back type of person. Their personalities begin to clash when Bernice overhears Marjorie talking about how she just doesn’t know how to act socially. “She has a bum time. Men don’t like her” (5). Bernice confronts her cousin about this, and they agree that Marjorie will try to get her friends to like Bernice. “If you’ll tell me why your friends aren’t—aren’t interested in me, I’ll see if I can do what you want me to” (9). This is when Bernice tries to start searching for her identity. She does everything Marjorie tells her to do in order to gain friends and be liked. Marjorie requested many

changes for Bernice. “I was considering whether we hadn’t bob your hair” (11). Bernice ponders this radical change and decides to go through with it in order to attract attention and to try to define who she is. This story relates to the series of books called The Clique because in both stories there are teenagers trying to become popular and at the same time be their own persons. “Bernice Bobs Her Hair” also ties into Modernism because there doesn’t always have to be a happy ending. These stories are real-life happenings that could occur. In this story, Bernice goes through many tribulations in a hope to find out who she is.

By LF:

I think the story “Bernice Bobs Her Hair” is an example of the literary theme search for identity. Bernice struggles to make a place for herself in a new town, and it comes down to her taking tips from her popular cousin Marjorie. Marjorie starts by telling her how to act, she says, “The more parts of yourself you can afford to forget the more charm you have.” She tells her men notice even a young woman’s eyebrows and hers are “black and lustrous” and need to be taken care of. The girls go as far as making a rumor that Bernice plans to bob her hair to gain her popularity. Bernice goes to a dance, and asks a popular boy, “Do you believe in bobbed hair?” so that the table she’s sitting at will give her attention. I think this book connects to the movie Clueless when an outcast is made popular by two rich girls for fun and ends up becoming more popular than them. The story also connects to the movie Cruel Intentions when an innocent girl is changed promiscuous by another girl in her new town.

Runyon's Scoring Rubric for an ACE Response

	4 points	3 points	2 points	1 point
A	Restatement of the question with all parts answered and all answered correctly or accurately.	Restatement of the question with all parts answered. Answers are mostly correct or accurate.	Restatement of the question with all parts answered, but answers are partially correct or accurate.	Restatement of the question with some parts answered but answers are partially correct or accurate.
Answer the Question			OR Restatement of the question with some parts answered, but the parts answered are mostly correct or accurate.	
C	At least 3 appropriate or strong examples from the text are cited correctly.	Two (2) appropriate or strong examples from the text are cited correctly.	At least 2 appropriate examples from the text are included, but are cited loosely or inaccurately.	Only 1 appropriate example from the text is cited.
Cite Evidence				

E Expand	At least 2 connections (text to text or text to world) are clearly related and connected.	One (1) connection (text to text or text to world) is clearly related and connected.	At least 2 connections are clearly related and connected, but all are personal (text to self) connections.	Only 1 personal connection is clearly related or connected. OR
		Only 1 connection may be included, or other connections are personal (text to self).	At least 2 connections are made, but they are not clearly connected.	

Rachel Stuart - "Using Dialogue to Improve Writing"

1. OVERVIEW: Using Dialogue to Improve Writing

2. RATIONALE: This activity is meant to encourage students to use different strategies in their writing, specifically incorporating dialogue when telling a story. Students ranging from elementary through college could benefit from this experience. This activity allows students to think outside the box while incorporating the use of dialogue.

3. LEARNING OBJECTIVE: After completing this activity, students will demonstrate the ability to use dialogue in their writing.

4. MATERIALS: For this activity the following materials will be needed:

**The Mystery of Harris Burdick* written by Chris VanAllsburg

* Paper

* Writing Utensils

* Use of chalkboard or whiteboard

* List of dialogue rules

5. ACTIVITIES/PROCEDURES:

A. The teacher will begin by asking what dialogue is. The teacher will call on students in the classroom to explain dialogue, adding any missing information as needed. The teacher will also ask what benefits using dialogue could have on students' writing. The teacher will lead the class in a discussion, adding relevant material when needed.

B. The teacher will show a sentence on the board and ask the students what should be completed in order to make this sentence exhibit the correct use of dialogue. The students can come up to the board and add commas, quotation marks, capital letters, etc.

C. After reviewing the rules of dialogue, the teacher will introduce the book *The Mystery of Harris Burdick*, giving background information on the book. This information is located within the front cover of the book.

D. After peaking the students' interest, the teacher will show the students pictures from the _____ book. The students will be asked to choose a picture and create a story about that picture _____ while incorporating some form of dialogue.

E. After approximately 25-30 minutes, the students will work with a partner to share their stories and mark each other's lines of dialogue.

F. Volunteers will share their creative writing with the class, or students will nominate others' writings to be shared.

7. **EVALUATION:** Students will be assessed for the completion of the activity as well as using their class time wisely. Stories could also be collected and graded for having dialogue incorporated and then for the correct use of dialogue.

8. EXTENSION: An extension for this project could be that the students use this story as a first draft and meet with peer editing groups to improve the quality of writing. All of the class stories could be published into a book titled something like, *The Real Stories from Harris Burdick* or *Mattoon Middle School's Real Stories of Harris Burdick*.

9. SOURCES:

A. *Collaborating to Write Dialogue* from <http://www.nwp.org> by Janis Cramer.

B. *Comma Sense: A Fun-damental Guide to Punctuation* by Richard Lederer and John Shore.

Name: _____

Language Arts: Writing Dialogue

Directions:

Choose a picture(s) from the book *The Mysteries of Harris Burdick*, and write a dialogue about what is happening in the picture. Remember that a dialogue is a conversation between two or more characters. You must have three characters with at least five lines of dialogue each (you will have 15 – 20 lines total). Each line of dialogue must be correctly punctuated. Follow the rules below.

DIALOGUE PUNCTUATION RULES:

1. Use quotation marks to enclose a direct quotation – a person’s exact words!!!

INCORRECT: My mother said that, “I should come home right after school today.”

CORRECT: My mother said, “Come home right after school today, sweetie.”

2. A direct quotation begins with a capital letter.

“Homework should be done at home,” I heard her mutter.

3. When a quoted sentence is divided into two parts by expressions such as *he said, she replied, etc.*, the second part begins with a lowercase letter (unless some other rule requires a capital letter, such as a proper name).

“Get on the bus,” she yelled, “before it pulls away!”

“Have you,” she asked, “been working this summer?”

“Can you understand,” he questioned, “Raymond’s mode of thinking?”

4. If the second part of a broken quotation is a new sentence, it begins with a capital letter.

“Drive carefully,” he cautioned. “Speed is the cause of most accidents.”

5. A direct quotation is set off from the rest of the sentence by a comma.

Maggie exclaimed, “Life is like a box of chocolates.”

6. Commas and periods are ALWAYS placed INSIDE the closing quotation marks.

“Sit down,” the teacher said.

The teacher stated, “Don’t cause any trouble while I’m gone.”

7. Question marks and exclamation points are placed INSIDE the closing quotation mark if they belong with the quotation.

“Are the players ready?” asked the referee.

“It’s impossible to see the road!” she exclaimed frantically.

8. When you write dialogue, **begin a new paragraph each time the speaker changes.**

“Have you heard the news about the new speed limit?” Sue asked as she looked at the newspaper.

“Is it true that it has been raised by ten miles an hour?” replied Jamie.

“I heard that it goes into effect December 16, 2007. People are so excited,” added Frederick. He pointed to something in the newspaper and asked, “Will you be sixteen by then, Sue?”

Sue grinned and shouted, “Yes, finally!”

“Me, too,” Frederick smiled back and turned to nudge Jamie who wouldn’t turn sixteen until the next summer.

Stephanie Gobczynski Uebinger - Lists of 10: Beginning Classroom Writing Demonstration

ACTIVITY

1. Overview

The activity is meant to help engage students in writing about what they know. This will, hopefully, serve to engage students in all types of writing: narrative, journaling, research, expository, and descriptive. By compiling lists of things they enjoy, students will avoid complaining by saying, “But what do I write about?!” or “I don’t know about anything!” while in the classroom. This activity gives them a place to write down topics and keep those topics in the classroom.

Students will be given specific prompts focusing on different ideas to write about. For example, students could write about:

- A. Favorite Movies
- B. Favorite Places
- C. Favorite Technology
- D. Favorite Television Shows
- E. Favorite Books
- F. Favorite Activities/ Hobbies
- G. Favorite Teams/Sports/ Athletes
- H. Favorite Foods
- I. Favorite Restaurants
- J. Favorite Stores to Shop In

2. Context

Lists of 10 is a lesson I plan to utilize at the beginning of the research paper. It gives kids a jumping off point to write about something they enjoy. Most of the time, I set up the research project as an essay about a “Modern Marvel.” That way, almost anything can become a research topic. Most kids get so afraid of the research aspect that they forget that they can be experts on topics as well.

3. Learning Goals

This lesson is designed to help students enhance their writing skills in descriptive, creative, and research writing. At the end of this lesson, students should be able to:

- A. generate lists to write about for future writing assignments
- B. be actively involved in the writing process
- C. turn the lists into potential essays for classroom or personal use

Illinois State Goals:

3. Use correct grammar, spelling, punctuation, capitalization and structure.

3.A.4 Use standard English to edit documents for clarity, subject/verb agreement, adverb and adjective agreement and verb tense; proofread for spelling, capitalization and punctuation; and ensure that documents are formatted in final form for submission and/or publication.

3. B. Compose well-organized and coherent writing for specific purposes and audiences.

3.B.4a Produce documents that exhibit a range of writing techniques appropriate to purpose and audience, with clarity of focus, logic of organization, appropriate elaboration and support and overall coherence.

4. A. Listen effectively in formal and informal situations.

4.A.4a Apply listening skills as individuals and members of a group in a variety of settings (e.g., lectures, discussions, conversations, team projects, presentations, interviews).

4.A.4b Apply listening skills in practical settings (e.g., classroom note taking, interpersonal conflict situations, giving and receiving directions, evaluating persuasive messages).

4. Materials

Materials used:

- * pen or pencil
- * paper
- * white board for teacher to model activity (optional)

5. Activities/Procedures

- A. Students will be given a topic to write about at their desks for an increment of time (usually 1 -2 minutes).
- B. Students then pair up with another student (sometimes by row, t-shirt color, first letter of first name, etc.) to share their lists with one another (Sometimes, they want to sit and talk in their seats, but it is better to keep them up and moving)
- C. Stealing ideas and topics from one another is allowed. If someone has something written that interests another student, he or she is allowed to borrow it.
- D. Students will share their ideas for an increment of time (usually around 1 minute).
- E. The teacher counts down from five so that every student is at his or her desk by the time the teacher gets to zero.
- F. The process starts over again.

- G. By the time the activity is over, students have a myriad of topics at their disposal
H. These topics can become formal or informal writing topics for the rest of the year.

6. Evaluation

Students will keep the paper(s) they write on in the classroom in a portfolio for easy access during the school year. Teacher will monitor student work around the classroom as the activity is going on.

7. Extension

As previously stated, students can turn these lists into more formal writing. Any types of writing can be included. There are many types of writing: narrative, expository, creative, research, descriptive, etc. It is up to the teacher to decide how to implement these writing responses in a specific classroom.

Other ideas:

* help isolate topic ideas

* computer research time

* library resource time

8. Resources

You can consult these resources to help with other classroom writing ideas.

Teaching the Classics in the Inclusive Classroom: Reader Response Activities to Engage All Learners by Katherine S. McKnight and Bradley P. Berlage M.A.T.

Teaching Writing in the Inclusive Classroom: Strategies and Skills for All Students by Roger Passman Ed.D. and Katherine S. McKnight

The Second City Guide to Improv in the Classroom: Using Improvisation to Teach Skills and Boost Learning (Jossey-Bass Teacher) by Katherine S. McKnight and Mary Scruggs

Dannette Williamson - From Real Books to Facebook

Overview:

Why fight the social networking sites your students would rather be on at home instead of doing the homework you assigned? Why not use them to your advantage? Bring the technology of the 21st century right into your classroom!

Rationale:

This assignment is used to assess a student's comprehension of a particular character from a novel or short story.

Learning Objectives:

- Students will further their understanding of characters by looking at them from a different angle.
- Students will be able to evaluate character relationships.
- Students will use available technology to produce a multimedia work.

Materials:

- Computers with access to Microsoft Publisher 2007
- Facebook Template
- Interactive White Board or Printer

Procedure:

1. Students will first need to save a blank copy of the template in their own document folder.
2. Once the document is saved, have the students find pictures of the character(s) they are creating the page for. (I always tell my students to copy and paste the URL of the website in which they found the pictures to a blank Word document, and hand it in separately). They will need to look for a profile picture, a photo album cover picture, and pictures of other characters to include in certain sections. Students need to save the pictures in their document folder as well. If students cannot find actual pictures of the characters, they need to look for pictures that would represent the character, and the character's personality.
3. Before students get started, go over in class how to set the font to Lucinda Sans Unicode, and start with an 8 or 9 point font, because it most resembles the font found on Facebook.

4. Remind them to make sure they have the correct words and links are blue like a hyperlink. Students must fill out every section of the page. Remind them that they are filling out the page based on facts they learned about the character throughout the novel/story. Students need to be as detailed and creative as possible.
5. Time allotted will vary depending on how you choose to approach the assignment. I usually give my students 2 class days to work on 2 Facebook pages.
6. When pages are complete, students can print them out, or present them to the rest of the class on an interactive whiteboard.

Extensions:

This lesson does not just have to be used for a character in a novel or short story. It can be used to assess student knowledge about an important person in particular field, or an important person.

For example:

- For Math: Students could create a Facebook page for an important person in the mathematics field.
- For Science: Students could create a Facebook page for a famous scientist.
- For Art: Students could create a Facebook page for an artist that has most influenced them.
- For Social Studies/History: Students could create a Facebook page for an important person in history such as a president, an inventor, an author, an influential person, etc.

Resources:

The web is filled with many sites about how Facebook and other social networking sites can enhance learning in your classroom. For more information, check out some of these websites.

This is the website that inspired me to use this activity in my classroom:

<http://historytech.wordpress.com/2010/02/05/tip-of-the-week-creating-a-blank-facebook-template/>

More about Facebook in the classroom:

<http://historytech.wordpress.com/2009/07/27/abe-lincoln-facebook-twitter-and-teaching-history/>

This website contains information about actually using Facebook in your classroom:

<http://org.elon.edu/catl/conference/documents/FacebookEducation.pdf>

Alison Yantis - Teaching the Ideas Trait Using Picture Books

Overview:

Students will begin learning about the Ideas trait and selecting a topic using David Wisniewski's *The Secret Knowledge of Grown-Ups*.

Rationale:

I begin with this lesson and follow most of Ruth Culham's *6 + 1 Traits of Writing: The Complete Guide Grades 3-6*. The first lesson focuses on selecting a topic for the Ideas trait by writing about everyday rules in an imaginative and unexpected way using David Wisniewski's *The Secret Knowledge of Grown-Ups*.

Materials:

The Secret Knowledge of Grown-Ups by David Wisniewski's

Paper

Pencil

Activity/Procedure:

1. Begin by brainstorming rules grown-ups have that the students must follow at home and at school. List them on the board for all students to see.
2. Allow the students to moan and groan as they discuss the real reasons Their parents, school officials, and even teachers want them to behave certain ways.
3. Announce that those reasons are not the whole truth; there are far more sinister reasons for these rules that grown-ups try to keep from you. However, the truth will be revealed in the book you are about to read.
4. Read the book aloud with passion and voice, pausing to show the pictures.
5. At the end of the book it says that hundreds of grown-up rules still remain. Challenge students to come up with their own "top-secret truth" to a rule following the format of the book. They may use a rule that was put up on the board or they may think of one on their own.
6. :Once students have finished, invite them to share their story with the class.

Evaluation:

A participation grade is given as well as a completion grade. Format must follow the book and explanation needs to tell a detailed story.

Extensions:

1. Have students type and print their stories and attach them to poster board. Decorate with pictures that depict the explanation.
2. For older grades: Instead of a rule, use an idiom. Talk about where the idiom originated and what it really means. Have the students create their own explanation behind the saying.

Sources:

Culham, Ruth. *6 + 1 Traits of Writing: The Complete Guide Grades 3-6*.

Jennifer Young - WTT (What the THESIS)

Overview:

Explain to students what a thesis does in any piece of writing to help not only prepare their readers of what is to be discussed but also to prepare themselves for what their “game plan” is for the writing. Students will then demonstrate how to write an effective thesis by rewriting vague statements.

Rationale:

Even though students are taught “main points of a paragraph”, many times they have trouble translating those ideas into “Thesis Statements.” All boils down to this, students have trouble understanding the idea of a thesis statement as well as actually formulating a thesis statement for any piece of writing. Throughout this lesson, students will be introduced to the idea of why thesis statements are needed, given the definition of a thesis, shown the lack of power using vague statements, shown the power of precise statements and given the chance to revise vague statements to demonstrate their understanding. As Adam Jortner states in “The Thesis Statement”, “An ideal thesis is not only a guide for the reader, it’s a guide for the writer.” (par.2) Students should be able to take away from the lesson that this one sentence will help them create a thought driven piece that readers will be able to follow.

Scope:

Going in to the 2010-2011 school year, I will be teaching an entire semester of writing at the junior level. I plan to use this lesson early on in the fall semester for students to fully understand what will be required of them for any writing that they will complete in the 2010-2011 school year.

Materials:

- Enough copies of “Vague Thesis statements” for classroom.
- Students provide pen or pencil
- Assigned groups of two or three (depending on the class)

Activity:

1. Begin lesson by asking if any student in the room knows what the word “Thesis” is or means.
2. Explain that today we will be learning about thesis statements and why they are important.
3. Students will be required to take notes from the PowerPoint presentation because they will use this information throughout the semester as well as in the assessment to follow.
4. Begin presentation.
5. Throughout the lesson, students will be asked to volunteer to read from the slides to be more active during the learning process.
6. After reaching the 7th slide, students will be split into groups of 2-3 to revise 10 thesis statements (15-20 minutes). This will be a time for students to ask any questions they have encounter and to see if they grasp the concept of thesis statements.
7. When students are complete with their revisions, as a class we will go through each sentence to see what groups have developed.
8. We will then return to the presentation to finish discussion of thesis statements (things to do and not to do).
9. Students will then return to their revised thesis statements and revise those statements again to follow the rules that have been added.

Extensions:

1. These same statements (choosing 3-4) can be used to guide students outlining process for a piece of writing.
2. These statements (3-4) can be used to help guide students through research online, (journal articles, websites, and newspapers) or as a guide for how to phrase or word actual searching.
3. These statements can be used to write a short paragraph to identify the importance of the precise wording.
4. These statements can be used as journaling to provoke thoughts about future topics.

Resources:

Colorado State University. “Thesis Statements.” 2010. 21 July 2010.

<http://writing.colostate.edu/comp/rst/resource5.cfm> (website)

Jortner, Adam. “The Thesis Statement.” *Literary Cavalcade* 55.6 (Mar 2003): 34. (Print)

Vague Thesis Statements

Directions: Below, there are 10 vague thesis statements. From the rules that you have learned, you need to revise each of these statements to be more precise. Reference your “Why so Serious” and “Make a Splash” note sections for any assistance.

1. My recent trip to St. Louis was really bad.
2. The movie *Twilight* seemed ridiculous.
3. You should treat people the same and not do things that favor one group over another.
4. The four children in my family have completely different personalities.
5. Child abuse is a terrible problem in our country.

6. My opinion is that the federal government should devote more money to solar energy research.

7. The parking permit system at this high school should be completely revised.

8. The cafeteria food is so bad that dogs wouldn't even eat it.

9. Growing a garden will save families money.

10. Queen is the best band that has ever been formed.