

Assignment 2: Teaching Unit

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EDCI 302-A01: Literacy and Language in the Elementary or Middle School

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Lesson # 1: Identifying Writing Territories

Curriculum Connections:

Big Ideas: Stories and other texts help us learn about ourselves, our families, and our communities.

Curricular Competencies: Use sources of information and prior knowledge to make meaning.

Elaborations: Oral language strategies: focusing on the speaker, asking questions to clarify, listening for specifics, expressing opinions, speaking with expression, staying on topic, taking turns, connecting with the audience.

Content: Strategies and processes: oral language strategies

Content:

Grade level: 3

Prior knowledge needed: knowledge on self (likes/dislikes).

Materials:

Mentor text: A Fine Fine School by Sharon Creech

Description: The text covers topics on school, weekend plans, and student emotions. It focuses on students as they are forced to come to school on the weekends and spend all of their time studying. Through this, the students were able to discover what they liked and disliked.

Rationale: This mentor text can be used to help students explore their own writing territories.

The story will allow students to think about and discuss school experiences and/or out of school

experiences that are important to them. Students will also be able to explain the reasoning behind the significance of their experiences.

Hook:

Introduce the mentor text: *A Fine Fine School* by Sharon Creech to students. Ask students to think about and discuss what are some “big ideas” that were mentioned in the story (e.g. school experience, weekend activities, holiday plans). Write down every territory that comes up on the board to prepare for the heart map making later in this lesson.

Purpose:

Sometimes it might be hard to think of something to write about, but there is a vault with all of your memories stored, sitting at the bottom of your mind. Today we will try to open that vault and I will show you how by creating a heart map. A heart map is a way to remember the things you did and the memories you have, so that every one of you will have something to write about.

Brainstorm:

Ask students to think about the big ideas and stories in their minds. They can start by thinking about their own experiences based on the territories on the board (territories from the mentor text which discussed earlier in the lesson).

Model:

Furthermore, teachers can demonstrate how to create a heart map during class (recommended, because students will be able to observe the teacher's thinking process) or have it created ahead of class. When teachers are demonstrating, they may start with the territories from the mentor text: school experience, things to do on weekends, and how to spend summer time. After that, teachers can add any broad territory to the heart map such as: food, family, sports, weather... While demonstrating, ask students if there is anything they want to add to the heart map. Use some students' ideas to complete the demonstration of the heart map and show it to the class. Always encourage students to ask any questions.

Guided Writing:

Ask students to develop their heart maps, give them the option to use territories from the mentor text to start with, or they can come up with their own. It is totally up to students of how the map is formatted (drawing, words, sentences), they can also include as many territories as they like.

Here are some examples of questions that teachers may ask to help guide students' thinking:

- Do you have a pet?
- What did you go to last summer?
- Who is in your family?
- What is your favourite food?
- Do you have any plans this weekend?
- What do you enjoy or not enjoy doing in school?

Independent Activity:

When students are finished, ask them to share their heart maps with a partner and add more territories on their own if anything comes to their minds during peer sharing. Encourage students to explain their heart maps and territories to the class if they feel comfortable to do so (limited class time might only allow one or two students to present). After that, ask students to consider what are some small stories based on one thing on their heart maps that they want to expand on. Share that story with a partner.

Reflection:

After students shared their stories, ask them to put away their notebooks and consider how creating a heart map can help them think of what they want to write about? Question as following can also be used to guide students' reflection:

- What did you feel as you were writing down more and more territories?
- Is there any connection between your territories?
- Do you have a story on ____ ? (territories from the mentor text).
- Are there any new ideas you have after you shared your heart maps with your partner or listened to what they have?
- Do you have a small story you want to write about?

Lesson #2: Moving from a Territory to a Specific Topic

Curriculum Connections :

Big Ideas: Language and story can be a source of creativity and joy.

Curricular Competencies: Engage actively as listeners, viewers, and readers as appropriate to identify self, identity, and community.

Elaborations: Offering relevant ideas, asking questions to find out and clarify other's views, sharing opinions supported by reasons.

Content: Language features, structures, and conventions.

Content:

Grade level: 3

Prior knowledge needed: be able to come up with some territories by using a heart map.

Materials:

Mentor text: Not Norman: A Goldfish Story by Kelly Bennett

Description: The text follows a young boy after he receives an unwanted goldfish as a pet.

Despite initially finding Norman, the goldfish, boring, the young boy grows to love his pet.

Rationale: This mentor text can be used to help students narrow a topic from one that is broad to one that is more detailed. As the mentor text focuses on expanding the single topic of having a pet, students will be able to mimic this and expand a topic of their choosing. Students will be able to pick a topic that they are able to fully develop into a full piece of writing.

Hook:

Read *Not Norman: A Goldfish Story* which focuses on one territory, pet. It is a topic that lots of students can relate to. This mentor text also expands one territory into many smaller stories, and that is what we are trying to accomplish in this lesson.

Purpose:

We have created our heart maps from the previous class, and today we will move from one of the territories you have to a specific topic by using a strategy called an inverted triangle. It is a tool we can use to narrow down our topics step by step, and finally result in one thing we want to write about. However, you must decide which territory you want to write on, and then we may follow the process by going down the triangle and determine what will be the final topic.

Brainstorm:

Draw an inverted triangle on the boards and introduce it as an upside down pyramid. Have each student come up with one territory that they want to write about, put that topic on the top level of the inverted triangle, and then think of something smaller and put it down on the level below, continue this process until there is a specific topic that is detailed enough to write on (normally there will be three or four levels of an inverted triangle, the model of an inverted triangle may vary depends on the age group or students' experiences with writing).

Model:

Collaborate with students to complete the inverted triangle on the board. One strategy that teachers can use to explain the inverted triangle is to describe the first level is wide and broad

which means it has space to fit bigger topics, as the space narrows down, the topics or event it can fit should narrow down as well. The teacher may use one of the territories from the previous class or uses “pet” territory which was introduced in the mentor text.

Guided Writing:

After decided the territory on the top level (“pet will be the territory for this example), then ask questions to guide students’ thinking:

- What kind of pet do you have at home?
- What kind of pet do you wish to have?

Now, the second level of an inverted triangle should be filled such as: dog, cat, fish, bird...

After that, lead students to the next level by asking more guiding questions:

- What special connection do you have with your pet?
- When was the first time you saw your pet?
- Why do you want that particular animal to become your pet?
- What are some fun things you can do if you have a pet?
- How do you spend time with your pet?

By this point, most students would have a specific topic that they want to write about. If some students are still struggling, then the teacher may ask them more detailed questions and have one-to-one conversation when the class moves on to the independent activity.

Independent Activity:

When students complete their inverted triangles, ask them to share it with a partner and briefly talk about the story that they want to write (this is also the time for helping those students who have not yet complete inverted triangles). After that, give them enough time to write the story individually, and encourage them to ask any question during the writing process.

Reflection:

Ask questions to guide student's reflection:

- What topic did you come up with?
- How did you narrow down a topic from a general territory?
- Which part of today's lesson was the most difficult for you?
- Do you have any suggestions for improving the inverted triangle strategy?

Furthermore, if time permits, the teacher can ask a few students to share their process of moving from a territory to a specific topic if they are comfortable.

Lesson # 3: Peer Conferencing to Enhance Writing Ability

Curriculum Connections:

Big Ideas: Stories can be understood from different perspectives.

Curricular Competencies: Exchange ideas and perspectives to build shared understanding.

Elaborations: Offering ideas related to the problem, asking relevant questions to find out and clarify others' views, sharing opinions supported by reasons.

Content: Strategies and processes: oral language strategies

Context:

Grade level: 3

Prior knowledge needed: previous writing based on last lesson.

Materials:

Mentor Text: *Hey Little Ant* by Phillip and Hannah Hoose

Description: The text follows a boy as he wants to squash an ant he encounters. Both the ant and the boy share their experiences and perspectives, that explains their point of view. The text ends with questioning which leaves the answer and ending up to the opinion of the reader.

Rationale: This mentor text can be used to help students with communication. By following the structure of the story, students can take turns telling their partner about their writing similar to the way the ant and the boy told their stories. Students should feel comfortable sharing their opinions even if they differ from their partner. The mentor text will also teach students to question their partner and their work.

Hook:

Read the mentor text: *Hey Little Ant* by Phillip and Hannah Hoose. Ask students to reflect on the aspects of communication introduced in the text. Communication with other writers, allows for growth in ability and skill.

Purpose:

Some of you may believe that your writing is at a point where it is the best it can be and that there is no more room for improvement. Or, you may believe that your writing is not good enough or become stuck and find difficulties moving your writing forward. The reality is that through working with your peers, as writers, you can advance your abilities and broaden your outlook on writing. Peer conferencing is a great way to invite you to see where your writing went well, where it can improve, and how these improvements can be made.

Brainstorm 1:

Ask students to discuss what an effective and respectful conversation looks and sounds like.

Write these ideas on the board. Ideas might include: not interrupting your partner, expressing opinions politely, giving your partner your full attention, and offering thoughtful responses or questions. Compile the students' ideas to create a list of rules that can be put up on a poster in the class.

Brainstorm 2:

Ask students to discuss writing criteria. Based on grammar, mechanics, and writing style lessons previously taught, what should be included in your current piece of writing? Students may be at

different levels of writing so some students may focus on simpler conventions of writing while others focus on more difficult. Write all ideas on the board, whether they be focused on the simple or difficult aspects of writing. Ideas might include: having punctuation at the end of every sentence, capitalizing the start of each sentence, including transition words to create flow, and sentences are clear ideas supported with details. Compile the students' ideas to create a list for a "Peer Conferencing Checklist" that can be printed onto sheets of paper so that each student has one. During the conference students will highlight two or three points from the checklist that they want their partner to check for while reviewing the piece of writing.

Model:

Choose two points from the checklist that was created. For example, the points having punctuation at the end of the sentence and starting the sentence with capitalization will be focused on. Read a page from the mentor text aloud to the class. Show students how the piece of writing meets or does not meet the expectations of the criteria. Ask students to share what they think the writer did well and what the author might not have done well. Additionally, what strategies can be offered to improve the writing.

Guided Writing:

Ask students to write down phrases they heard being used during the modelling and brainstorm sessions. Once students have noticed how they can communicate their thoughts, ask them to create their own helpful phrases to help with maintaining conversation. Students can then share these phrases in small groups and then in a whole class discussion.

Independent Activity:

Students should now feel more comfortable and prepared to transition to the formal peer conferences. According to writing level, partnerships should be made by the teacher. Students will read their partner's writing, focusing on the criteria made in the checklist. Students should have enough time to reflect and gather their thoughts about their partner's writing. After reflecting students will transition to discussion, using their helpful phrases and keeping respectful conversation in mind. During discussion students will use the star and a wish method to note their partner's successes and weaknesses, as well as how improvements can be made.

Reflection:

Ask students to make changes to their writing based on what was discussed during the conference. Have students re-read their previous writing and compare it to their current piece of writing. Invite students to reflect on this process.

Ask questions to guide reflection:

- How did this process help you enhance your ability as a writer?
- Were there moments of struggle during the discussion where you might have had a different opinion than your partner? How did you overcome this?
- What would you change about this process to better support your growth as a writer?
- What will you do differently for next time?

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