

“Writing Lessons According To the 6 Traits of Writing” July 2007

Lesson Template

Lesson Title: Heart Mapping (taken from Nancie Atwell’s *Lessons That Change Writers*)

Trait: Ideas

Grade Level: Six

Content Area: Writing

MA Framework: Composition

Strand/Standard: 19: *Students will write with a clear focus, coherent organization, and sufficient detail.*

Specifically, 19.15: *Write poems using poetic techniques, figurative language, and graphic elements*

Teacher: Tina Bloom, Douglas School

Instructional Content/Strategy/Strategies: *Describe the content/strategy learned and used.*

Instruction Content: writing

Strategy: graphic organizer

Instructional Objectives: *Include content, process or skills, goals . . .*

Students will create a list of topic ideas that can be used for poetry writing throughout the free-verse poetry unit.

Description: *Include how you proceeded with the lesson. What did you do?*

1. Discuss the concept of creating a list of topic ideas for poems. Remind students that they have much experience in previous years with creating topic ideas for writing.
2. Using an overhead, model a “typical” topic list that is ineffective and very general (seasons, snowflakes, soccer games, animals, summer vacation, etc.).
3. Write on the board “Look in your heart” and discuss its’ meaning as it relates to poetry writing. Ask students for feedback.
4. Tie in the idea of poetry as the one genre that’s really made for feelings and the senses. The genre helps us name and know and say what we care about.
5. Using an overhead, model a “map of the contents of my heart” that was created at home. (Note: overhead of Atwell’s student heart map reproducible may be used as an alternative). The heart map should contact **specific** memories, people, places, comforts, etc. Review and discuss the contents of the heart map.
6. Distribute the handout *Questions to Help Mine Your Heart* which contains questions that students should think about when creating their own heart map.

7. Have kids begin the heart map exercise in class for about 20-25 minutes. Assign for homework to finish the heart map. Instruct students to fill the heart with as much personal meaning as possible. Students should spend at least 20 more minutes at home working on their heart map.
8. Ask for questions or comments.

Resource Materials: *Include book chapter pages, handouts, graphic organizers*

1. Overhead of teacher's heart map or student model contained in Atwell materials.
2. Handout on *Questions to Help Mine Your Heart* for distribution.
3. Four model poems: "Emerald Memories", "Table Tennis", "Obituary for a Dutch Doll", and "Sour Patch Kids."

Assessment/Follow-up: *List the method(s) you'll use to assess student learning.*

1. During the next writing workshop lesson, have students gather in groups of three, with pencils and their heart map, and take turns teaching one another about what they listed in their map. This allows for students to develop new ideas and learn from sharing with others. They can certainly record more items for their heart map if a peer comments triggers an idea for them. Circulate to listen, enjoy the ideas, and keep students on task.
2. Reconvene the mini-lesson and ask "What's something that stayed in your heart that surprised you?" for a whole group discussion.
3. Choose two of the four poems written by Atwell's students and model, using an overhead, for discussion.
4. Assign students to choose one of the ideas and write a first draft of a poem for homework. Stress the importance of choosing one topic that they are excited to write about, because ideas that "stir" the writer always lead to the best poems.

Reflection: *How was this content/strategy useful or successful? What changes would you make, if any? Why did you select this content/strategy for this lesson? Was this an effective content/learning strategy? How will this content/strategy lead to increased achievement in your classroom?*

Free-verse poetry is our first unit of the school year. I have used this lesson twice with my students. Modeling the heart map idea using a map that I have created personalizes the activity and helps my students get to know me. It is a simple yet very effective activity, and I've found that students refer back to the heart map even after we have finished the unit. The most challenging part is giving the students enough time to reflect and complete the heart map. Some students ask "How many things should I list?" and it may be difficult for them to sit and develop ideas. Sometimes having students share specific examples with the entire class helps other students to focus on their own ideas during the writing session.

Note: attachments will be forwarded.