

“Writing Lessons According To the 6 Traits of Writing”

July 2007

Lesson Title: The Showing Hand

Trait: Word Choice

Grade Level: Primary

Content Area: Writing

MA Framework: English Language Arts Curriculum: Composition

Strand/Standard: *Learning Standard 21.1- Revising:* After writing or dictating a composition, identify words and phrases that could be added to make the thought clearer, more logical, or more expressive.

Teacher: *Karen Sonner, Merriam School, Grades 1&2*

Instructional Content: Writing

Strategy/Strategies: Using the five senses (sight, hearing, tasting, smelling and touching) to support word choice and descriptive writing.

Instructional Objectives:

Students will create a memorable image containing words that can be referenced during idea generation, drafting and revision.

Resource Materials:

- *Lesson adapted from: **6+1 Traits of Writing: The Complete Guide for the Primary Grades** by Ruth Culham, page 195*
- *Overhead projector, chart paper, or white board*
- *Marker for teacher*
- *Two pieces of drawing paper for each student*
- *Pencils*
- *One piece of writing paper for each student*
- *A list of nouns on chart paper*

Description:

1. *Explain to students that they are going to focus on word choice and how the right words in writing allow the reader to create an image in their head. Words can “show and not tell.”*
2. *Begin by modeling for students. Lay your hand on an overhead projector, chart paper, or white board and trace out each finger of your hand.*
3. *Have students, using paper and pencils at their seats, trace their own hands. As students are tracing, remind students that they should do a careful job of tracing and detailing.*
4. *While students trace their hands, talk about the importance of showing versus telling “Show me! Don’t tell me!” Give some examples: “The green goo hit the wall with a loud splat.”*
5. *Tell students that each finger digit and the thumb represent one of the five senses. Good writers often appeal to all of the senses in order to create*

- an image in the readers mind. Remind them of the five senses: seeing, hearing, tasting, smelling, and touching.*
- 6. Draw an eye on the thumb and discuss again the importance of visual description. "When you read the word 'car' what do you see?" Ask the students to give you words that appeal to their sense of sight when describing the "car". (i.e. red, small, round, sleek, curvy) Remind them that these words could include color, shape, and size.*
 - 7. Write some of the words on the model thumb that were shared. Stress that it is good to flood the thumb with words that could be used in writing and revising.*
 - 8. Continue to working your way through the five senses, drawing a cartoon symbol onto each digit. Each digit should sprout an ear, nose, arms, or a tongue. Discuss which sense each symbol represents.*
 - 9. Return to each digit individually to elaborate and elicit powerful descriptive words for "car" and the correlated sense.*
 - 10. Flood each digit with the words.*
 - 11. After the digits are filled, model writing a sentence about the car using some of the descriptive words on the "Showing Hand." Ask students if they were able to create an image in their head from the words used. This would be "Showing and not telling."*
 - 12. After filling the modeled "Showing Hand," have students draw the cartoon symbols on their own "Showing Hand."*
 - 13. Ask students to pick one of the nouns from the chart paper list and to fill in their "Showing Hand" with descriptive words for their chosen noun.*
 - 14. When students have completed filling in the digits of their "Showing Hand," have them write one sentence about their noun. Remind them the importance of "showing and not telling."*
 - 15. Once all sentences are written, have students exchange the sentences with another classmate. Each student can then draw the image they "saw" from the words.*

Assessment:

- The writer combines descriptive nouns with generic nouns.*
- The writer has filled in the digits of their hand with appropriate types of descriptive words.*
- The writer tries out new words.*
- The writer uses descriptive words correctly and with creativity.*
- The writer "stretches" by using different types of words.*
- The writer's sentences create a clear picture in the reader's mind.*

Reflection:

I have done the lesson once in second grade and it was very successful. Students loved the visual reminder of the hand for using the five senses in their writing. They also learned to use the hand to generate word banks they could keep in the front of their writing folders.

I would like to introduce this lesson in the beginning of learning about "word choice" and "showing, not telling" so that students have an immediate tool to use in their writing.