

Candy Memoirs: Writing is Sweet!

Jane Garver, Charlevoix Elementary School

The Demonstration

This lesson demonstration is meant to support my contentions that:

- Everyone can write and everyone has a story.
- Kids need to have opportunities to read about a wide variety of experiences and cultures.
- "Since it is so likely that children will meet cruel enemies, let them at least have heard of brave knights and heroic courage." -C.S. Lewis
- Students learn about writing through studying mentor texts.
- Memoir helps students become more insightful about themselves.
- Literature has the power to transform and inform lives.
- Student choice is imperative.
- By working collaboratively, students will improve their writing and the writing of their peers.
- Teacher modeling is a must. Students need to see a trusted adult writing, and struggling with writing.
- Movement is important to learning.

The Step-by-Step Lesson Development:

- Greet students as they enter, handing them treats wrapped in newspaper, with specific instructions not to open them.
- Quick Write 1: What's in the package?
- Elbow Partners share their writing and then report out for the class.
- Teacher provides background about Roald Dahl- share books. Include: writers write from real life.
- First reading: ("The Great Mouse Plot" excerpt from *Boy* by Roald Dahl), teacher reads aloud, alerting students that they will be invited to finish the story.
- Quick Write 2: Students are invited to finish the story and describe what happened with the mouse.
- Students share their mouse stories in a whip around.
- Invite students to unwrap their newspaper bundles.
- Student with the Golden Ticket will hand out Scratch n Sniff Candy Pencils to the class. Students find a new partner by matching pencils.
- Second reading: work with your partner and notice craft: Rich Language, Literary Devices, Punctuation, Sentence Structure. Students share on sticky notes and add them to the class posters.
- Debrief the noticings: how can we use these in our own writing?
- Divide into groups. Create Mrs. Pratchett cluster maps of imagery noticings and share. (Students draw and label a picture of Mrs. Pratchett.)

The Step-by-Step Lesson Development continued:

- Debrief craft noticings and how we might use them in our own writing.
- Hand out writing invitations and do some teacher think-aloud brainstorming.
- Students discuss possible writing topics with an elbow partner, jotting down ideas. Invite students to write for 20 minutes.
- Invite students to share their writing.
- Give students a copy of the Great Mouse Plot in comic strip form as they leave.

Writing Invitations:

- Write about a “candy memory” that you have- good or bad.
- Write about something really disgusting that happened to you.
- Write about a time someone was particularly mean. (Maybe it was you!)
- Write about a time you did something you later regretted.
- Write about a time you were willing to put up with something bad to get to something good.

Bibliography:

- Atwell, Nancie. *Systems to Transform Your Classroom and School*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 2014.
- Culham, Ruth. *The Writing Thief*. Newark, DE: International Reading Association, 2014.
- Dahl, Roald. *Boy: Tales of Childhood*. New York: Farrar, Strauss and Giroux, 1984.
- Mangan, Lucy. *Inside Charlie’s Chocolate Factory*. New York: Puffin Books, 2014.

Possible Lesson Extensions and Adaptations:

- Candy Memoirs
- Author study of Roald Dahl
- Create character sketches (real or imagined)
- Interview an adult about a childhood memory
- Field trip to a candy factory

Affect Demonstrated Throughout the Lesson and Described by Your Students:

- We enjoyed your soft spoken voice
- You were calm and collected
- The sensory input helped to motivate the writing process
- We appreciated how you encouraged and expected generous and kind behavior
- Your quiet enthusiasm drew us into the lesson
- Your calm, inviting demeanor makes students feel included
- You worked with us rather than talking at us

Best Practices Modeled in the Lesson:

- Basket of newspaper-wrapped gifts piqued our interest
- Expressive, dramatic oral reading of the excerpt
- Good pacing and lesson order flowed well
- Students never felt rushed, yet you nudged us to finish
- Individual-pair/share-small group sharing
- Writing invitations were varied and diverse so everyone could come up with something to write about
- The use of classic-British text, familiar to all, but using the author's memoir to broaden their familiarity and increase student vocabulary
- Taught grammar as craft within the context of the texts
- Used artifacts & anchor charts from previous classes to use as models
- Walked around and affirmed students as they were working
- Integrated reading and writing seamlessly (close reading, grammar, writing)
- Use of close reading strategy and character sketch activity
- Activated students' prior knowledge
- Anchor charts for review (simile)
- Provided personal background on the author
- Used a cliff hanger text that kept students motivated and engaged
- Visual aids with examples
- Multiple reading purposes
- Drawing the character utilizing the text for support
- Connecting the gift of beans to the story (newspaper and candy)

Common Core State Standards Embedded in the Lesson:

- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.5.1
Quote accurately from a text when explaining what the text says explicitly and when drawing inferences from the text.
- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.5.3.B
Use narrative techniques, such as dialogue, description, and pacing, to develop experiences and events or show the responses of characters to situations.
- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.5.5
Demonstrate understanding of figurative language, word relationships, and nuances in word meanings.
- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.5.5.A
Interpret figurative language, including similes and metaphors, in context.
- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.5.4
Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development and organization are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience. (Grade-specific expectations for writing types are defined in standards 1-3 above.)

Common Core State Standards Embedded in the Lesson continued:

- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.5.10
Write routinely over extended time frames (time for research, reflection, and revision) and shorter time frames (a single sitting or a day or two) for a range of discipline-specific tasks, purposes, and audiences.
- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.5.1.A
Come to discussions prepared, having read or studied required material; explicitly draw on that preparation and other information known about the topic to explore ideas under discussion.
- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.5.1.C
Pose and respond to specific questions by making comments that contribute to the discussion and elaborate on the remarks of others.
- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.5.3.B
Compare and contrast the varieties of English (e.g., *dialects*, *registers*) used in stories, dramas, or poems.
- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.5.2
Determine two or more main ideas of a text and explain how they are supported by key details;
- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.5.4
Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative language such as metaphors and similes.
- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.5.6
Describe how a narrator's or speaker's point of view influences how events are described.