

# **Exploring the use of Similes and Metaphors**

## **An Author Study with Patricia Polacco**

Designed by Shelly Gudmunsen for 3rd grade students

Top-of-the-Mitt Writing Project

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*“Reading and writing float on a sea of talk.” James Britton*

### **My demonstration is meant to support my contentions that:**

1. Third graders must become intimate with authors through author study and exposure to multiple mentor texts. From these texts, authors share their expertise with young writers. Teacher selected author study empowers kids to become experts.
2. Through the use of sophisticated picture books, important topics such as race, war, and death are brought to the surface in a safe way. Because we trust the authors we love, we can face these tough issues together as a class with bravery and compassion.
3. As a teacher, is it my job to help students envision rich language in their own writing. By wearing both Readers’ Caps and Writers’ Caps, children can begin to analyze texts to understand and name elements of craft they can try. By studying craft, we demystify writing.
4. My classroom is a safe, inclusive community where young writers can take risks and share their journey through the use of writing invitations versus writing assignments. Choice is paramount in an effective lesson, and in a differentiated classroom.
5. I believe reading aloud to my students is essential every day. Children need to hear rich, sophisticated, literary language so that it may become their own. They also deserve to hear text read aloud purely for enjoyment.
6. It is important to anchor student learning through the use of anchor charts, so that students can see their knowledge grow over time, and access that learning regularly.

7. I commit to writing in front of my students to demonstrate that writing can be messy, indecisive, meandering, and full of decision-making. I want to show students that it is okay to make mistakes. By modeling the writing process for students, I show them that I am a growing author trying out craft, as well.

### **Lesson Sequence:**

- Welcome and introduce the primary and secondary focus for today.
  - Primary focus: Use similes and metaphors to describe
  - Secondary focus: Notice the craft of Patricia Polacco
  - Tell students that they will have two special partnerships today: elbow partners and sticker partners (on their nameplates).
- Invite students to do a quick write list of special people in their lives and remind students that we are going to share our lists. Share your list with your elbow partner and indicate the top two people you may wish to write about later today. As a whole group, share one person from each list, different from what has already been said; students can pass if they wish. Record this list on our anchor chart. (5 minutes)
- Segue to Patricia Polacco, as an author we love so much who writes about special people from her life. Read from her autobiography Still Firetalking. With students in sticker partners, pass out two Polacco books to each pair and instruct them to do a picture walk and skim over the text to discover who the special person is in each book, and write it on the sticky note on the back of the book. Remind them to read the leads. A second sticky note will draw their attention to a particular page where they will notice craft, like similes and metaphors. Do a whole group share of the findings. Add simile and metaphor to our craft chart and add some of the special people to special people anchor chart. (15 minutes)
- Next, students will gather around for a Read Aloud of Chicken Sunday. They will be invited to notice craft on a sticky note while I read. Throughout the reading, I will lift out things like the Band-Aid tin,

Mr. Kodinski's holocaust number on his wrist, and the way Polacco slows down the ending of the story. After reading, I will invite students to share what they noticed, and add it to our anchor "The Noticings of Patricia Polacco." (15 minutes)

- Back at our seats, I will distribute the first two-page spread from the book. With yellow and orange markers, we will highlight the two similes on this page. Discuss the common idioms and vernacular of the text. Discuss the illustrations. (10 minutes)
- Next will be a quick game of "I Have ... Who Has?" First, with elbow partners, identify if your cards have metaphors or similes and discuss why. Play the game, enjoy! (10 minutes)
- Back in our seats, students will be drawn back to their original special person list and be invited to craft one juicy simile or metaphor. Remind them of Quick as a Cricket and Hailstones and Halibut Bones as texts we've studied previously. After a couple of minutes, they will share with their elbow partners again. Invite a few students to share with the whole class. (5 minutes)
- Pass out Writing Invitations for today. Review our expectations that everyone write, stay quiet in their chosen spot (floor, chair, etc.), and that my job will be to conference with students before Author's Chair. (10 minutes)
  - Invitations:
    - Choose one special person from your life and write a colorful description of that person. Will you try to weave in a simile or metaphor today? If you wish, you can draw a picture of the person to accompany your writing.
    - Write a poem that brings your special person to life. Simile and metaphor really lend themselves to poetry! Remember to be intentional about where you break each line, so that you are calling attention to the places you wish your reader to notice.

- Would you like to start a picture book like Patricia Polacco? If so, choose a special person, and think of a memory that could become a story. I have blank books for you to use. Please work on the text first, like Patricia Polacco does.
  - Patricia, Stewart, and Winston were accused of doing something they did not do. Have you ever experienced something like that? Maybe you want to write about it today.
  - Patricia Polacco wrote Still Firetalking, an autobiography. She focused on herself as a writer, and included other tidbits about her life from when she was born to the birth of her first grandchild. Maybe you would like to start the autobiography of YOU today.
  - Perhaps you are intrigued by similes and metaphors. Could you start a collection of super similes and magnificent metaphors in your writer's notebook?
- I will model my choice and bit of writing for the class, followed by writing time, hopefully 20 minutes at least. Finally, we will gather at the Author's Chair and share /celebrate our writing.

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