Devin Eversole

Academic Note

Title: Inviting Writing- Creating pictures using words!

I love having students creating stories using pictures and their imaginations. I have my students read an example of a literary piece to discuss the specific elements that make up a narrative. Then my students and I take a picture from the book, *The Mysteries of Harris Burdick*, and we create this beautiful narrative using the illustration as a source for our writing. I chose this activity because my students are always having difficulty finding what to write about. I have spent valuable classroom time in my past trying to get my students engaged in their topic. During most occasions hearing the response, “I still do not know what to write about!” That is not only frustrating from the teacher’s perspective but from the student’s as well. I started this activity a couple of years ago to focus on my weaker writers and try to help them make the brainstorming a little easier. Research shows that it is definitely worthwhile to spend time in the brainstorming process.

I want everyone to know that I teach sixth and seventh grade reading. I believe that most teachers feel the same that brainstorming for literary writing is the most difficult step for writing narratives. Students lack the idea development and want to quit before getting started. This lesson is done to ease this process for students, show each of them that narratives are only words; the ideas must evolve from the imagination. It has been very successful in my classroom because it targets all ability levels for writing. Even the reluctant writers feel very successful in the classroom. I will ask questions such as: What do you already know about writing short stories? How do you get your ideas for writing? These questions will guide students in the correct direction.

During my demonstration I want to group all of my fellows and talk to them about the power of using descriptive words. Each of the groups will visit five pictures from The Mysteries of Harris Burdick and complete a small quick write about what that illustration sparks for them. The group had time to share their writing with the group to gain some insightful angles. This is also a great time for building a positive, successful climate within the classroom. I have found that students feel less pressure when they share their answers and everyone is enjoying the multitude of ideas. As a class we will read and display *One Lucky Day by George Ella Lyons* for students to see. Students that feel successful at this point find the exercise easier and brainstorming is easier- even for hesitant students. I think it is really powerful for students to see these narratives unfold using both the paper formatted and the illustrations.

One Lucky Girl by George Ellen Lyon

The Revisor’s Toolkit by Barry Lane

Razzle Dazzle Writing by Melissa Fortney

The Mysteries of Harris Burdick by Chris Van Allsburg

All of the above resources were used for my presentation. In all of the years of my teaching experience I have found that in the first days of writing students must feel connected with their topic and the purpose must sing out loud in order for the writer to grow. After all, as educators we are educating the writers rather than the writing piece.

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