

MINNESOTA WRITING PROJECT DEMONSTRATION LESSON TEMPLATE

Title: Synectics – creative metaphors technique

Grade appropriate: K-college level

Approximate length of time to complete lesson: may want to spread over several days if all steps in the sequence are covered

Objective (s) to be covered:

1. Students will create new ways of thinking about old things, thus providing them with a fresh perspective (to be used to problem solve, write creatively, etc.)
2. Students may use a modified approach to make unfamiliar material familiar (after teacher provides brief introductory materials, for example)

Specific standards addressed:

Using analogies to create fresh metaphors.

*Note: parts of this exercise can be omitted, depending on grade level and ability of the students.

Brief summary/outline:

This could be placed anywhere in a unit when the teacher wants students to consider a new perspective.

1. Write the idea, concept, or word on the board (ex. “childhood”) and have students brainstorm all the words associated with it.
2. List as many words as possible with all students contributing from their lists.
3. Choose one of the more unusual objects on the list and have them brainstorm words associated with it (ex. “forts” or “cotton candy”), telling them not to connect directly with childhood
4. Next they “become” the object – cotton candy for example – and describe what it would feel like to *be* cotton candy. Help them avoid what cotton candy feels like to a human (sticky, like spun silk), but rather stretch students to personify it – “I get dizzy when I’m spun around in the cylinder.”
5. Using the list from step 3 and the associations in step 4, try to make a compressed conflict (ex. “restrained freedom” – it really depends every time on their lists – no way to predict the true outcome of this exercise)
6. Try to come up with a real-life issue, object, etc. that reflects this compressed conflict (“zoo animals” for restrained freedom maybe)
7. Students move back to the original “childhood” idea and perhaps attempt to look at childhood from the perspective of zoo animals – other parts of the steps could be used for creative jumping off points. Everyone does not have to use only one analogy for creative comparisons – endless possibilities.

Resources:

Taken from the book: Joyce, Bruce and Marsha Weil. Models of Teaching 5th ed.
Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 1996.

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