

Minnesota Writing Project

--- Demonstration Lesson ---

Title of lesson: Fiction Pre-writing: Thinking on your feet

Suggested grade/age: 7th grade

Approximate time needed to complete lesson: 1-2 class periods

Learning objective(s) and significance of lesson: This lesson uses active learning strategies to build a fiction story from character descriptions on slips of paper, chosen randomly, to creating character development, a conflict, and plot.

Brief summary/outline of lesson:

Use Arts Literacy strategies to go from 6 slips of paper describing a character to a more developed character with a conflict and story ending

Character Buckets

Select 6 slip describing a character

Shakedown/ Human Atom

Find first name & valued object- say our loud: “___’s ___ is very important to her”

Back to Back/ Stare-down

Explain why this object is important to this character

Human Atom/ Back to Back

Tell about a problem related to the character’s job/dream/etc.

Human Atom/ Back to Back/ Mirroring

Start from the beginning and tell about story plot & how this story will end

Thank your partners each time you move on

Begin a draft or plot line for a fictional short story. Write for ten minutes, including all the elements of your partner work. Share and listen for elements of your ideas.

Related Resources:

www.artslit.org

Acting, Learning and Change by Jan Mandel and Jennifer Wolf

Artist residencies in my classroom with spoken word artist Frank Sentwali and actor T Mychael Rambo

Possible extensions or adaptations for different purposes/student needs:

- Use characters from stories we have read, write character traits on slips of paper and mix them up to create ‘mash-ups’ to write for students’ own stories.
- Make the actions of mirroring connect to your character’s important object.
- Use this in creating fairy tales, include one character box as the ‘moral’ of the story
- use for nonfiction writing
- use voicethread at the end of this to record what they have created so far
- simplify for younger grades: maybe only three things about a character

For additional information, contact:

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