

Minnesota Writing Project

--- Demonstration Lesson Template ---

Title of lesson: Silent Conversation

Suggested grade/age: Secondary (9- 12); can be easily adapted to earlier ages

Approximate time needed to complete lesson: At least two class periods; can go up to five or six days

Learning objective(s) and significance of lesson:

This activity is geared towards students that make claims in their writing but do not support their conclusion. Grandiose arguments are made about characters and events but the students have little to no evidence. I emphasize the importance of evidence and explanation of this evidence (analysis) to make a point.

The major objectives of this lesson are as follows: Students think critically about how they come to conclusions about texts; Students are encouraged to make connections between ideas/events; Students are allowed a safe place to voice their ideas

The teacher also is provided more time to silently peek in what all students are thinking and how they are responding to each other.

Brief summary/outline of lesson:

This lesson happens in 9th grade, after we've read a few short stories. The students know typical jargon for fiction including plot graph, protagonist/antagonist, and we've discussed theme before. They have written basic paragraphs for me up until this point that include an emphasis on topic sentence. Now, we'll be moving into adding relevant details to support the topic sentence.

DAY ONE

- 1.) The students will have read the text before this activity. I've chosen "Harrison Bergeron" but you can do this with any text you'd like.
- 2.) I will review theme with them once more. Most likely, we've identified theme before in a short story so they are familiar with the terminology. However, I go over the power point with them in class.
 - This power point includes what a theme is/is not, examples of theme statements, and the process of how to identify a theme.
- 3.) I assign groups and the theme topic/word to each group. The students need to come up with an appropriate theme statement and provide quotes from the text that supports this theme. The group then has the rest of the class to create and decorate their theme poster.

DAY TWO

- 1.) Students get back into their groups and I introduce the “Silent Conversation.” I emphasize participation!
- 2.) Each pod receives color-coded sticky notes (I do this so I can track comments if needed). The students receive 5-7 minutes at each poster to read the poster (and other comments) and to leave their own comments and questions.
- 3.) At the end of the 5-7 minutes, I tell them to go to a new poster.
- 4.) This can go on for the entire hour if you’d like, but I usually leave the last 10 minutes for the students to provide me with feedback about the activity.

Assessment Possibilities:

- Exit slip about theme
- Use this as a brainstorming session for a theme/literary analysis essay
- Continue discussing questioning and its uses
- Have the students “redo” their original poster as they consider the comments/ questions from others

Related Resources:

(What technology, articles, books, or supplies do you recommend?)

Tools needed:

- Poster paper/butcher paper
- Markers
- Post-its (different colors not necessary but helpful classroom management tool)
 - Make sure to get the
- Timer
- Print out instructions OR projector with instructions on it

http://www.austinschools.org/curriculum/la/ms/6th/documents/LA_SilentConversationActivity_Explanation.pdf

This link provides other possibilities for a Silent Conversation in the classroom.

Possible extensions or adaptations for different purposes/student needs:

See link above for other techniques.

Students can be paired together to work together on post-its (works well for ELL students). Some conversation would then be necessary at each poster.

Teachers could also use this technique to host a conversation about student writing by posting anonymous student samples on each poster. This can also be done with student-prepared thesis statements.

For additional information, contact:

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