

Minnesota Writing Project

--- Demonstration Lesson Template ---

Title of lesson: Paint Chip Poetry

Suggested grade/age: Adaptable for Any

Approximate time needed to complete lesson: 1 day to discuss poetry and word choice, 1 day to begin writing and share, 1 day for workshopping with writing group, and complete polished poem on own: Usually 1 - 1.5 weeks total.

Learning objective(s) and significance of lesson:

(Why is this lesson important in the development of your students' skills or knowledge? What do you want students to learn or be able to do? What "best practice" does this lesson incorporate?)

I want my students to think about being intentional in their word choice when doing any writing. By looking at and discussing mentor texts, they first recognize "good" words and discuss what the writer did with those words to have an effect on them as a reader. Then, they "play" with their paint chip words to help them realize that writers must be intentional and creative when choosing their words and that different words have different effects.

Brief summary/outline of lesson:

(What steps do you take to implement this lesson in your classroom? Where is this lesson located in the school year or unit—beginning, middle, end? Does this lesson scaffold or build to a culminating assessment or demonstration of learning?)

First, students read mentor texts, in the form of other paint chip poems. They highlight any words or phrases that catch their attention and then brainstorm why they chose those particular words. Once they have done this, they share with a partner what they think and then we brainstorm as a class all of the jobs that words have in writing. The list will be long and varied.

Students then will begin their own word work, or play rather, by selecting 3 different paint chips and incorporating these words into a poem of their own. They can change the form/tense of the word, make it a name, or take it apart from other parts of the word. We use this poem prompt to initiate our writing groups each year and practice using the workshop model, so this lesson comes fairly close to the beginning of the year.

Related Resources:

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

Model/mentor texts, highlighters, paint chips (several) from a paint department, notecards for exit slips. Students could possibly share their final products on a classroom wiki or online discussion forum to include a technology element.

Possible extensions or adaptations for different purposes/student needs:

I think it would be fun to try and have students create digital poem out of their paint chip poems if they were interested. Also, they could write stories rather than poems. Another possible idea would be to rotate paint chip words and use them more frequently for a daily prompt where every student has the same words and then comparing the different ways they can be used. Also, I think a vocabulary element could possibly be included, especially for primary or junior high grades- some of the paint chip words can be quite complex!

For additional information, contact:

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