

Minnesota Writing Project

--- Demonstration Lesson Template ---

Title of lesson: Student Choice and Photo Essays

Suggested grade/age: High School

Approximate time needed to complete lesson:

This comes at the end of reading a book (ideally chosen by students). This process may take 3-5 days.

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?)

Students will explore themes present in a choice text through journaling, discussion, and the creation of a photo essay. This lesson incorporates the writing process and using technology to explore symbolic visual representations of theme. The students' choice in book allows for a variety of reading levels and fosters intrinsic motivation. The individual journaling and small-group discussions scaffolds the writing process. The photo essay offers students who excel visually the chance to showcase their abilities.

9.4.10.10 By the end of grade 9 & 10, read and comprehend literature and other texts including stories, dramas, and poems independently and proficiently.

a. Self-select texts for personal enjoyment, interest, and academic tasks.

9.7.2.2 Write informative/explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas, concepts, and information clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization, and analysis of content.

a. Introduce a topic; organize complex ideas, concepts, and information to make important connections and distinctions

d. Use precise language to manage the complexity of the topic.

f. Provide a concluding statement or section that follows from and supports the information or explanation presented (e.g., articulating implications or the significance of the topic).

9.9.8.8 As an individual or in collaboration, create a multimedia work, a remix of original work and the work of others, or a piece of digital communication for a specific purpose (e.g., to interpret or respond to a piece of literature, to represent thematic similarities between two literary works.)

b. Publish the work and share with an audience.

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?)

- 1) Share with a partner and discuss: What happened in your book? What is the message of the book?

- 2) In your Writer's Notebook, respond to the following prompts: What are the big ideas brought up in your book? What does your book say about these big ideas? What do you think about the big ideas?
- 3) Share your written responses with your partner and add to them as you can. In conversation with your partner discuss what you wrote using the following prompts as a guide: What does your partner find interesting about your ideas? What does this remind you both of from your own lives? What images come to mind when discussing this? Think both literally and figuratively.
- 4) In your Writer's Notebook, create a 3x3 that begins to narrow down your thoughts to one theme. A 3x3 follows these restrictions:
 - a. 3 lines, 3 words each
 - b. Only content words (nothing small like it, is, a, she, he, the, etc.)
 - c. Try to make the sentences sound as natural and complete as possible
 - d. Try not to summarize
 - e. Example for *Romeo and Juliet*:
Lovers' families fight.
Ignorance causes death.
Death reconciles hate.
- 5) Write the 3x3 in a word document or online format such as a blog. Create a photo essay from images online or in print that explores the ideas in your 3x3. A photo essay is:
 - a. A series of images meant to tell a story or evoke emotions (doesn't need to be linear or narrative in structure)
 - b. Ranges from just photos to photos with captions or small notes to full text explanations
- 6) Title the photo essay with a question that gets the reader to think about the big ideas you've been exploring. For example (from *Romeo and Juliet*), Does love divide people?
- 7) Go on a gallery walk and record questions from other photo essays that you find especially interesting and relating to your book (though not necessarily to your 3x3).
- 8) Finally, return to your Writer's Notebook and respond to one of the questions you wrote down.

Related Resources:

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

- 1) See MWP wiki for additional uploaded resources.
- 2) Do an internet search for photo essay examples
- 3) Photographer Wing Young Huie's website (specifically his University Ave series) is a cool example of work that could be seen as or developed into a photo essay.
<http://photos.wingyounghuie.com>

Possible extensions or adaptations for different purposes/student needs:

- 1) Loosen requirements for the 3x3 for EL students, perhaps to just 9 words that describe the book or ideas.
- 2) Have small groups of students read the same book and work on this together
- 3) Use the questions developed as a starting point for a Socratic Seminar or essay topic.