Title of lesson:
Thriving with Poetry: Giving Students Tools to Think, Talk, and Write about Poems

Suggested grade/age: Grades 3-5 (ideas can be modified for grades 1-12)

Approximate time needed to complete lesson: Using two poems, this lesson can be taught in approximately one week. Using more than two poems is recommended, but it will require more time.

Learning objective(s) and significance of lesson:
The goal of the lesson is to help students think like poets by giving them time and tools to think, discuss, and write about poems. It incorporates best practices including critical thinking, visual and auditory learning, scaffolds, gradual release, “I can” statements, and standards alignment.

Students will:
• Demonstrate an understanding of narrative poems by talking and writing about them
• Explore what the poet is doing and how the poet is doing it
• Learn how to site text evidence effectively when talking and writing about poems

Brief summary/outline of lesson:
Students will read with an awareness that poems have been written on purpose, with intent. Students will have opportunities to closely read and discuss narrative poems from the poet's perspective. In order to think like a poet, students will learn to speculate with the assistance of taught text citation phrases and poetry vocabulary. Discussions will scaffold their writing about poems, which will support their comprehension. To lift the level of writing and enrich comprehension, students will have opportunities to consider what the poet is doing and how the poet is doing it. Students will also engage in determining what is good writing about poetry through sharing and discussion of student-produced writing samples.

The lesson takes place in the middle of the school year. It assumes, depending on grade level, that students have a background knowledge regarding author's purpose, point of view, and grade-appropriate literary elements/figurative language. This lesson is an excellent way to prepare students for a poetry-writing unit.

Related Resources:
Pathways to the Common Core Accelerating Achievement Calkins, Ehrenworth, and Lehman
Study Driven: A Framework for Planning Units of Study in the Writing Workshop by Katie Wood Ray
High interest, thought-provoking poems with various purposes (print, audio, digital...mix it up)
Anchor charts (i.e. author's purpose, author's point of view, figurative language, sentence frames)
Student supplies: writing notebook/paper, pen/pencil.

Possible extensions or adaptations for different purposes/student needs:
After students demonstrate proficiency, you may provide choice of poems as you gradually release the learning responsibilities and transition from facilitator to observer. You can also incorporate arts literacy and give students opportunities to chorally read and/or perform the poems.

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