



Write On! Express and Enjoy Yourself

Curriculum Unit 86.04.15

by Ruth W. Wilson

INTRODUCTION

Writing meets a number of goals, some related to school, others related to life survival skills. In school writing helps students use the information they have learned, for it reinforces skills in reading and other areas of the curriculum (discussion, composition, test-taking). In life, or on the job, these students will need writing skills to perform their jobs: to inform, communicate, and evaluate. Yet for my remedial student, both areas of writing skills seem vastly out of reach. Most do not use writing in the school at all, most do not see themselves ever as candidates for jobs which would require such skills.

THE REMEDIAL STUDENT AND HIS PROBLEMS

One major issue facing educators today is the consistent low scores of the inner-city Blacks, the Hispanic, and the poor rural or urban White children known as low achievers. These low achievers have problems making the learning environment meaningful so that they can understand and do grade level work. Furthermore, because of this meaninglessness of the learning situation, they usually exhibit behavioral problems.

It has been noted that 25% of the population in the greater American society belong to the low-socio-economic class. Such a situation brings about serious handicaps for one child in four in the public school system. These students have difficulty because of: 1) a lack of motivation to success in school; 2) an inability to set goals and high level of aspiration; 3) a lack of desire to stay in school longer with children from a higher social class, and 4) an inability to work at the level of college preparatory courses.

Those students who are culturally and linguistically divergent, such as Black or Hispanic, meet very little success in school on a daily basis. Many students lack motivation and selfconfidence, and school is the last place they want to be. In order for these students to meet with some educational success it is necessary to group them. There are pros and cons to grouping students; however, we feel in New Haven that grouping is the best possible way that we can help elevate the low achiever so that he or she can get the help needed. On the con side of grouping students, Arthur Combs, *In Myths of Education* states that: "grouping students tends to isolate students from their fellow classmates, no matter how good the intention behind the method, it does more harm than good when seen from a broader perspective. This is also true of students segregated or left

out because of scholarship as well as the lack of scholarship.” (Combs P. 220). I do not believe such separation involves isolation; rather it helps them learn on their level as a group, instead of competing or struggling in the classroom out of their depth.

The student is tested and correct placement is determined. The criteria for remedial grouping is to check the percentile rank of the student’s Iowa Test of Basic Skills score which is given every Spring. The students, mainly Black and Hispanic with a smattering of Caucasian, usually score very low on comprehension, word usage, and vocabulary skills. Unfortunately, many of the Hispanic students have trouble in this category. Like the rest, they are not dull students but only students who don’t see the need for learning new vocabulary, hence, the cycle of remediation. Poor vocabulary, poor word usage, and poor comprehension produce low scores; consequently, the student becomes a candidate for Chapter One.

The Chapter One Remedial Program is a Federally Funded Program which monitors each student’s progress semi-annually. Teachers must keep adequate records of lessons taught and be accountable for all records pertaining to the student’s academic growth. In my reading classes, I try to make the lessons challenging and interesting. Despite their innate eagerness of youth, I am aware that there is a sense of failure and uselessness that some students may feel. Some have convinced themselves that school work is not meaningful to them and have given up. Therefore, my challenge is to make them aware that learning is enjoyable and has meaning. It is imperative that the teacher link into those things that will make the students valuable and feel like opening up to learning. Occasionally a student will put all the pieces together and need only one or two years of remedial reading. When this happens, it really makes a teacher feel a job was well done!

PROCESS-ORIENTED APPROACH TO WRITING

THE PROBLEM OF EXPRESSION

One way to open the door to their existing abilities and potential for growth is through a process-oriented approach to writing (rather than through a goal-oriented, product approach). Writing can be a way of linking into these rather negatively or positively; for it can either: a) make these students feel like what they have to say is valuable, or b) make them feel unskilled and incompetent because their writing skills are no good. My approach to writing will be to make the students want to improve by making them feel that what they have to say is valuable.

In my reading classes, I sense an eagerness to learn and grow intellectually; as their teacher I have the choice either to link into that eagerness or to push the students into something they can’t handle. In writing, this difference would be apparent. I can either teach them writing skills in a series of manageable steps, or ask them to write a lengthy informative essay. The former would make them feel capable and hopeful; the latter would make them give up.

I am aware that success in school depends upon different variables in a student’s life: motivation, aspiration, values rooted in socioeconomic background, and the attitudes and language expressed at home about the value of education. Lacking any positive sense of these things, the student is usually present in body only during school time. In order to link into their eagerness, I must create first the proper learning environment out of the above factors, for a student’s ability and readiness to learn are affected by his treatment in the

learning environment. Students need to feel a welcome part of a “warm” classroom, to know that their cultural background is valued, to perceive themselves as good people, and to dare to try new tasks with the expectation of success. A process-oriented approach to writing can help establish these conditions, because it only presents one manageable skill at a time, and does not move to another skill until the students have mastered the first.

Using a humanistic attitude and accentuating the positive in teaching, I can make the classroom come alive and make a difference in affecting the student’s work and self-concept. Students who feel good about themselves and good about school will be able to take the steps to meet the challenges of writing or any learning; this attitude can then be transferred to the world outside the school as well.

With the remedial student, writing can be seen as a strategy first and a goal within itself second. Approached correctly, writing can become a way to make them aware of the potential in themselves and their ability to achieve it.

THE PROBLEM OF EXPRESSION

With the advent of intelligence tests in the 1920’s many studies demonstrated that these students lacked intelligence when compared with middle-class children. Test showed that as these students progressed through the grades, they fell farther and farther behind their counterparts. Tests comparing performance of urban and rural children gave the advantage to the wealth of knowledge, experience, and sophistication of the middle-class White, English-speaking child. Unfortunately, those who were from urban areas who lacked adequate skills were most likely to fall into the low socio-economic classes and lack of enrichment and experience that would make school learning meaningful. Most important, culture differences would be recognized as having a major effect on life values of the student and on what is expected of him or her in school.

On the last rung of the educational ladder in school are the Black and Hispanic students who have a “writing phobia.” Some students respond orally to reading questions with much confidence and without much difficulty. It is the written expression portion which brings about the lack of self-confidence in this group. Many students have the confidence to know they can read and give short answers to questions; however, many of them seldom undertake the challenge of longer and more complicated sentences. My students not only have problems expressing their thoughts in writing; they also appear, either consciously or unconsciously, not to incorporate skills they already know, such as sentence structure, punctuation, and good basic grammar. Many do not see or care about the invisible thread weaving reading and writing together. Too many seem oblivious to the learning situation and leave learned skills in their respective classrooms. They compartmentalize their learning, and, for example, don’t see how social studies relates in writing. My task, as their teacher, is to enlighten the students and re-inforce the skills which are to be utilized daily in all class work.

The Chapter One Remedial Reading Course teaches the student at a slower pace than the student in the conventional reading class. We teach phonics, word attack skills, inference, sequential order, main idea, and comprehension, to name a few skills. In my class, I use *Moving Forward* as my text. It is an eighth grade text written on a sixth grade level. This level enables the students to deal with a high interest low-vocabulary type reading. All the skills which are on the Iowa Test of Basic Skills are covered in our reading series.

PROCEDURE

This unit will consist of three parts. The three activities are all designed to open the students up to the possibilities of language and writing. Part one involves free expression in journal writing through introduction of brainstorming or clustering. Because the students have a limited ability to express themselves in writing, I will use clustering just to get them comfortable with thinking of words as being written, not spoken. One problem is that the Hispanic and Black students have a problem with language in general. The Hispanic student is not comfortable conversing in English and will revert to Spanish whenever possible. By doing free expression in writing, more new words will be used to augment their limited vocabulary, and they will need to use less Spanish in the classroom. Part two involves the reading poems of two authors, Maya Angelou and Julia Alvarez, who have written about everyday life experiences which are relevant to the students. Part three of the unit, the students will view particular pictures and answer specific questions about them. This lesson is to stimulate language usage effect, inference, mood, and imaginative interpretation. Also, in part three, we will read a short selection titled "The Wild-Boy of Aveyron" and have students

The intent of this unit is to make writings so valuable to the students that they will want to express themselves with some kind of writing daily. The unit will be used during the second marking period when the students have settled down and are into "my routine" of teaching and expectations. The teacher may extend the time limit of this unit if he or she so desires.

Clustering is one of the activities I will use to open the students up to a better enjoyment of writing skills with language. With the students using clustering or brainstorming, it will be a way for them to think and talk about their topics. They will collect information and ideas usually more than they will finally use, and then pick, choose, and organize what they want to say. Knowing my students, I can visualize them enjoying themselves once they learn to do this method. The students can relate to things they know best because it is something that belongs to them. The optimum would be to have the class take pen in hand and do the unit for the complete four marking periods; however, this is not feasible because I am an enrichment teacher and must follow certain guide lines at specific times, such as preparing students for test taking skills, which takes up much time.

The journals will be a separate notebook for self-expression and composing. For want of a better name, journals could be called "My Idea Book" or whatever fits the student's fancy. Hopefully, in time, we will develop the art of sharing with the group. Of course, this will be entirely optional. The setting of specific goals and attaining those goals will help the students achieve some degree of confidence. With this new confidence, I could conceive of peer editing if the class so desires. I am aware that I must have all types of "good" materials in my classroom if I am to initiate this unit to turn the students on! During the teaching of this unit, teacher and student will be cognizant of spelling, grammar, punctuation, and paragraph formation. The student's writing paper for the journals will be blank sheets of unlined paper. The rationale for using this type of paper is to give my students a feeling of freedom . . . to write as much or as little as they deem necessary, without attention to or worry about containment and orderliness.

JOURNAL WRITING

OBJECTIVES

1. To recognize the relationship between ordinary speech and writing (talking on paper); 2) To become interested in writing one's thoughts, and 3) To apply the basic punctuation rules learned in English classes to daily work.

To start the unit I will introduce the term "talking on paper." Teacher will explain that this lesson will be the putting down of the spoken word. Encourage the students to choose a popular word such as "rapping" and then write what he or she thinks "rapping" means to them. Next give the same assignment, only now introduce the method of clustering or brainstorming. Have students cluster and from the clustering choose words and write a short paragraph on "rapping." Students can now share their work and see their own ideas as individual ones. This activity will enable them to take pride in their original thoughts and in their ability to convey them.

Clustering is the art of free flowing ideas and letting oneself "just go with the flow." Clustering or brainstorming will be introduced in all lessons as a way of helping students get in touch with their creative thoughts. Some subjects for clustering/brainstorming activities could be: An experience that taught you something important; What do you feel is the biggest problem in the neighborhood?; What would you like to change at school?; The proudest moment in your life; Describe a person who is your best friend; Some mistakes I'll never make again; A trip I hope to make some day; What is the biggest problem in our school? These are just a few suggestions that the students may use.

Here are a few examples of clustering done with some remedial seventh graders who dislike writing using the conventional method of trying to organize their thoughts and then put them down logically on the page for the first time.

(figure available in print form)

One short paragraph that evolved around the word lunch is:

Lunchtime in the afternoon after morning school work, I eat *hotdog* , drink milk and eat a red apple at that time. The food *have* a lot of fat in it. I like to eat pizza too because it *have* cheese and the cheese tastes very good.
(written by a remedial seventh grader from Vietnam)

You will notice the underlined words show problems of subject and verb agreement, which doesn't exist in his language. Therefore an ongoing lesson on subject-verb agreement could be incorporated into this writing lesson.

(figure available in print form)

I like Hero Sandwiches with bologna, ham, cheese and mustard with mayonnaise to eat every night. And I won't stop eating them until I fall out. I like to have cookouts so I can eat hamburgers, hotdogs, and steaks. I like to share the food with others, but I like the biggest piece for myself! I like to pig out. (written by a remedial student who is quite vocal but has difficulty expressing himself on paper).

One young lady wrote a poem:

Time to eat a fruit or meaty lunch bananas or apples-yummy, yum. Let's go. I'm starving 'n need some food. Let's go eat at MacDonalds or get some chicken. Right now-make it fast! I love lunch-let's dig in!

(figure available in print form)

We'll pizza is delicious way to get filled up. You know what? My mother can tell when I've been eating pizza because when I get home I'm always messy. Whenever pizza is mentioned I get very hungry. I like sausage pizza the best of all. (written by a Learning Center student who was mainstreamed to Remedial Reading. The student is of Haitian background).

The words lunch and pizza were specifically chosen because these two terms are in the realm of the class's experience. Truthfully speaking, when the class began to go with the flow, ideas began to crystallize and they were eager to put their thoughts down on paper. Certain students still lacked the confidence to share their work but others were only happy to let others know they dared to try something new! These were major, prideful accomplishments for students who had given up on writing skills long ago.

During the brief writing lesson, my students really had a good feeling about what they had accomplished. There were smiles on their faces instead of the usual frowns. The smiles came from using imaginative words which came into their heads and then just jotting them down. Also, there was not the least bit of pressure put on them to do the written work the conventional way.

When I institute this unit next year, I shall use the same strategy that I used with my class this year. I tried clustering with this group just to see if it would work and I was pleased with the results. So I know it works! This type of loosely-structured brainstorming is great because there are no right or wrong answers. With very little pressure on the student, this makes for a lot of enjoyment, and students can open up and take off!

The above lesson is to be done in the student's journal where students will have free access to them during remedial reading time. It really will be difficult to do an adequate job unless the teacher is willing to acknowledge that whatever is not covered in one class period will be continued in the next class meeting. Also Holistic Scoring will be used for grading. The scoring will be a bit lenient for the assignments since the students lack self-confidence, and they need a positive approach to have the courage to continue. Therefore, it is in the student's best interest to score Holistically. This type of scoring will consist of a 4-Excellent, 3—Very Good, 2-potentially Good, 1More Effort Needed, 0-Special Category. With these categories, the first introduction to writing can be used as a diagnostic device to see the range of the classroom.

POETRY

OBJECTIVES

1. To see how writers put their feelings into language; 2) To identify words of emotion and imagery; and 3) To see their experience as an important base for language use and writing skills.

Phase two of the unit will deal with the introduction of poetry written by two specific people: Maya Angelou and Julia Alvarez, Black and Hispanic respectively. Ms. Alvarez and Ms. Angelou were chosen because their poetry depicts the common ordinary work-a-day world that the students exists in and the injustices that minorities endure. One poem in particular, Bump d'bump, shows the stamina and resiliency of minorities who keep bouncing back despite the system. The poems of Ms. Angelou include: "Bump d'bump," "Woman's Work," "On Aging," "No Loser, No Weeper." First, I will ask the students to read the following five verses of "Bump d 'bump," reprinted here by permission of the author:

Play me a game like Blind Man's dance
And blind my eyes with ignorance
Bump d'bump, bump d'bump.
Tell my life with a liquor sign
Or cooking spoon from the five and dime
And Junkie reel in two/four time
Bump d'bump, bump d bump.
Call me a name from an ugly south
Like liver lips and scratch mouth
Bump d'bump, bump d'bump.
I'll play possum and close my eyes
To your greater sins and lesser lies
That way I share my nations prize
Bump d'bump, bump d'bump.
I may be last in the welfare line
Below the rim where the sun don't shine
But getting up stays on my mind
Bum-p d'bump, bump d'bump.

The lesson planned around this poem could be entitled “Thinking About What You’ve Read.” The purpose of this lesson is to enable my Hispanic and Black students to be more aware of what’s going on in their lives and to be able to express their feelings about these experiences. Before they begin to move from the discussion stage, I will ask them to think about and discuss the following groups of questions. These questions then lead right into the writing activity.

1. Have you experienced anything like this?
What are these experiences about?
Can you give them a name?
2. Once you’ve experienced prejudice, what keeps you going?
How do you initially feel?
What do you do when you feel like this?
3. Depending on who you are, is there an uplifting or downbeat mood to the poem?
Who is doing the talking?
How do you know?
4. If you wanted to write about your own experiences, which ones would you use?
What words would you use to create these experiences?
What images would take these experiences strong to the reader?

With the last set of questions, the class will do a joint clustering activity based on one experience or image of the class’s choosing. Then each student will cluster one of his own experiences independently. After that, I will ask them to write a short, but detailed, poem about the experience chosen.

The remainder of the lesson will entail some class discussion about poetic appreciation—after they have written their own poems, so as not to freeze up their expression. I will ask them to discuss the mood, tone, and imagery of the poem. Then I will have the class write a short paragraph telling why they liked or disliked the poem. This written exercise will begin with the following sentence. They are to fill in the blanks with words of their own choosing, and then elaborate on this position sentence.

I did/did not like the ____ in the poem because The blank could be filled in with such choices as: the refrain, the sadness, the happiness, the prejudicial names, the depressing mood, or whatever. Such an exercise will give them a very directed method of writing a brief exposition. Thus, an expository paragraph

should be manageable, and they will not become so frustrated by trying to write one.

This same lesson strategy can be followed when reading any poem. We will continue by reading the poetry of Julia Alvarez, whose poetry deals with the daily existence of ordinary people. The selection of poems includes: "Homecoming," "How I learned to Sweep," "Washing the Windows," "Dusting," "What Could It Be?" (Xerox copies of these poems are on file at the Institute Library, 53 Wall Street.) Ms. Alvarez's poems are ones of the everyday work world and this is the world in which my students exist. As a follow up exercise, students can write their own experience about some type of work which they have engaged in, or how they feel about certain chores. This type of writing will show the students that what they feel and what they experience are important.

LIFE SITUATIONS

OBJECTIVE

1. To be aware of inference; 2) To use colorful words when describing a character sketch; 3) To be aware of cause and effect (how it makes you feel and the ability to express that feeling); and 4) To be aware of acceptable and unacceptable behavior (as it appears to the students).

Lastly, the class will use the art of observation and view different kinds of photographs . . . people, places and things and write character sketches of their perception of the photos. (The photos are on file at the Institute Library, 53 Wall Street.) We will continue to cluster and write around our discussions of these photographs. We will discuss such questions as: What is the mood of the photograph? What is happiness? What does being old mean? What does being young mean? What does twice a child once an adult mean? At the conclusion of this section, the class will read a short vignette entitled "The Wildboy of Aveyron." This is an excerpt about a young twelve-year-old boy who was captured in a forest in France in the 1700's. The "Wildboy" was brought to France where he attracted much attention by his wild actions. The boy's behavior patterns were totally different from the society that he entered, which was considered refined and polite. (Note: I will also show a photograph of a "wild-boy" found recently in Africa raised by animals. This photograph and others are on file at the Institute Library, 53 Wall Street.)

DESCRIPTION OF PHOTOGRAPHS

HAPPY BIRTHDAY

A small girl of seven or eight is leaning forward in a chair looking down at her birthday cake. She has a pensive look on her face and her chin is resting on her hand as she looks down at the birthday cake. The cake is decorated with seven lighted candles and a hula girl. The child is wearing a paper party cap and the leg of another is seen in the background.

QUESTIONS:

1. What do you see in this picture?
2. Can you describe what you see in words?

*Remember to use your clustering method to help you out! Good luck . . . Buena suerte amigos!

NEW BABY

A young Black couple is resting on a bed with their new baby between them. The couple is smiling but the baby appears to have a slight frown on its face. The small baby, snuggled in the middle, is lovingly caressed by the couple.

QUESTIONS:

1. What is the couple expressing with their actions?
2. Does the couple appear rich or poor? How do you know?
3. What do you think the woman does for a living?
4. What do you think the man does for a living?
5. Does the couple appear to be successful or unsuccessful?

SMILING OR FEELING GOOD

A young middle aged Black woman is leaning forward with her hand resting near her chin and staring straight ahead smiling. A silk scarf decorates her neck and a pair of bangle earrings accent her "Curly Afro." She is posing for a picture or she is looking at herself in the mirror.

QUESTIONS:

1. What is the woman's occupation?
2. What is interesting about her face?
3. Do you think this woman could be a good neighbor?
4. Would you like her for a friend?

* Describe the qualities that make this person, in your opinion, unusual or outstanding.

TALKING OR SINGING

An elderly Black woman in a black wig and glasses is talking or singing to someone or some group. She has a "I know what I'm talking about" look on her face. Her mouth is open as if to make a point. The elderly woman is wearing a dark silk blouse which ties at the side of her neck. She is wearing large white earrings and white necklace to match her ensemble. Her tailored suit shows she is dressed for a special occasion.

QUESTIONS:

1. What is the woman expressing with her face?

2. Could this woman be a grandmother?
3. Could she be a school principal?
4. Would call this woman elderly?
5. What kind of person do you think she is?

PHOTOGRAPH TAKEN FROM THE NEW HAVEN REGISTER, SATURDAY, JULY 5, 1986

This photograph was taken in Africa and shows a young African child in a curled, squatting position with his knees drawn up to his chin. He is looking at something. He has a pensive look on his face while his arms are resting on his legs. There is a bandage over his eye and he is scantily dressed. The boy's clothing is ragged and his arms, legs, and body give the appearance of malnutrition.

QUESTIONS:

1. Do you think this boy was really found in the jungle?
2. If so? Who do you think raised him?
3. Does he look healthy?
4. What kind of food do you suppose he ate?
5. How does this child appear to you?
6. Does he seem to be happy or frightened?
7. How do think this child will walk if he was raised by animals?
8. Do you think this photo is a "put on?"
9. If so, then tell why you think so?
10. Have you ever read *THE JUNGLE BOOK* by RUDYARD KIPLING?

This type of questioning will allow the students to use their imagination and take off. If the students have not heard or read the *JUNGLE STORY* by KIPLING, teacher can read excerpts from the book to the class. Also for an added treat class can be treated to the video tape of the story. This would make for a fine treat and excellent culmination to the unit.

Also there will be several writing assignments planned around this story. One will be a photograph about the story which will have blank spaces to be filled in (see lesson plans at the end of the unit). The students will fill in the spaces using vocabulary words previously learned while reading the story. This activity will encourage the students to know and understand the new vocabulary which is presented to them. Then the student will read a short paragraph comparing some action of today with the actions of the "wild-boy" in the story. Does

time really make a difference? Would Victor's behavior be considered acceptable today as compared to the actions of some "heavy metal" rock groups, for example. In order to accomplish this writing, we will use clustering with discussion first. This discussion may shed some light on what is approved or considered appropriate behavior today as opposed to long ago and give the student's a focus for their paragraphs.

This proposed unit will be integrated into my remedial reading program to be used with a seventh or eighth grade class. Hopefully, with other refreshing ideas, the class can enjoy the project.

CONCLUSION

Since this is my first attempt to teach a writing unit, I found Secretary T.H. Bell's ten rules for teaching writing very helpful. The rules will serve as a guide for me in teaching writing skills. They are:

1. Spend time on activities that require real writing rather than short answers and fill-in-the-blank spaces. In primary school, we teach youngsters penmanship, vocabulary, and spelling. While in the middle or high school, only 3% of lesson time is spent on writing assignments of paragraph length or longer. In short, students won't learn to write if they don't spend time writing.
2. Have students spend more time putting their thoughts on paper in a logical, well organized way or use the cluster system. Much time has been spent on the mechanics but not enough on how to organize and write their thoughts coherently.
3. Include research, brainstorming, and clustering as a part of writing assignments. Giving students adequate time to plan and prepare helps them become confident that they have the knowledge about a topic to write about.
4. Many assignments are unrelated to the real world or slightly to the classroom. Therefore, quality assignments are important to the lives of the students and the quality of their writing improves.
5. Stress the importance of drafts to the students with conventional writing (not so in journal writing). By encouraging students to work through drafts, teachers can provide constructive criticism during the writing act or use peers to help in the edit work. There are numerous ways a classroom teacher can accomplish the above objects.
6. Respond to the ideas expressed in a written assignment. Many students believe the teacher is interested only in the punctuation, spelling, etc. This ignores the true function of writing, which is to convey ideas.
7. Allow students to choose their own topics. When students write about something that interests them and are free to select how they are going to express their thoughts, they have more invested the effort, and hopefully try harder.
8. Take advantage of writing skills that students use outside the classroom to help teach in the classroom. For example, listen to the inner-city jargon with its elaborate rhymes; students who aren't able to write well in school can do some fine rapping.
9. Reward students who write clearly and concisely. Let the students know that flowery language and the use of big words is not always good writing.
10. Use writing assignments to help students see that writing can help them in the real world.

Such assignments as writing a letter to the newspaper, developing a resume or filling out a job application, all helps show them that good writing is useful.

With these ten useful ways to improve writing skills incorporated into my teaching philosophy, hopefully, someday my students will be counted among the one-fifth of the nations students who can write a persuasive essay.

SAMPLE LESSON FOR JOURNAL WRITING

CONCEPT : Recognizing the relationship between speech and writing. *OBJECTIVE* : Students will become interested in writing one's thoughts. *MATERIALS* : Individual journals, pens, chalkboard.

ACTIVITY : A student will pass out the journals which the students will put their names on.

PROCEDURE : Teacher will introduce the new project of journal writing. Teacher will tell the students that in order to become better writers they must write. Explain that writing encompasses all forms such as.: writing letters, poetry, bills, newspapers, thank you notes, etc.. Explain that we are going to be doing some creative writing and we are going to be using our imaginations! We are going to say and write things that you never thought you could do. And you will see this come alive as you use your very own journals to put your thoughts in.

Introduce the term "clustering" by putting a sample word on the chalkboard such as "rapping". Now draw a circle around that word (as shown in the process section of unit). Now just let the students tell you whatever words that comes to their minds . . . first impressions are the best.

(figure available in print form)

Next, from the sample on the board, students copy it into their journals (this is the cluster). Now the students can choose all words or only a few words and write a short paragraph on "rapping."

SAMPLE LESSON : POETRY

CONCEPT : Understanding how writers put their feelings into language.

OBJECTIVE : Students will understand and identify words of emotion, imagery and mood.

MATERIALS : Individual journals, pens, selected poem xeroxed and passed out to students.

ACTIVITY : Class will read the selected xeroxed poem silently then orally together. After reading the poem, the class will look for words of emotion, words that paint pictures, and words which convey the mood of the poem.

TEACHER DISCUSSION : Understanding what you read is the art of being able to interpret what you think the author is trying to say in a particular selection. Look for certain key words such as: liver lips, welfare line, bump d'bump, for your clues.

PROCEDURE : Class is to read the poem "Bump d'bump" silently. After reading the selection silently, class will read each verse orally. Together, teacher and class, will discuss each verse and determine what meanings are hidden in the words. Next, in the journals students are to choose one stanza that is particularly meaningful to them and paraphrase it, or if the student feels he or she can imitate the verse and write something of their own, that would be great!

SAMPLE LESSON I

PROCEDURE : Questions written on the chalkboard to be answered in your journals. Think about what you are reading and then answer the questions. (Note: The following lessons are a continuation of the above lesson and can be done at teacher's discretion.)

1. In verse five, lines one through four: How does this phrase make you feel . . . happy or does it bother you? Whatever it is, write what you feel and think.

HELPFUL HINT TO STUDENT : If you are having trouble, why not try clustering and just let your imagination take over. It's fun so why not try it you may like it!

SAMPLE LESSON II

PROCEDURE : Read poem "Washing Windows" by Julia Alvarez. Next choose one verse and paraphrase its meaning in your journals. Remember: Your work doesn't have to be like your neighbors so dare to be different! After you have completed the above assignment, think about an experience you've had in some type of work, and cluster that experience. Your experience can be funny, sad, or not enjoyable and can even be painful.

NOTE : Materials that may be used with these plans are available on file in the Institute Library, 53 Wall Street.

SAMPLE LESSON: LIFE SITUATIONS (VIGNETTE)

CONCEPT: Learning, understanding and using new words in context.

OBJECTIVE: Students will understand and comprehend new words presented in vignette. Students will become knowledgeable of different behavior patterns.

MATERIALS: Xeroxed copies of short vignette, pens, journals, words to be defined on chalkboard, and chalk.

PROCEDURE: Teacher will explain to class that they will be reading something different today. Teacher will present new vocabulary from the chalkboard and use each word in context. Then pass out the short xeroxed copy of vignette to be read silently, then orally. After reading selection, teacher will ask specific comprehension questions such as:

1. What is a soft gutteral?
2. Who can make one?
3. What does tendency to trot and gallop mean?
4. What does obstinate mean?
5. Have you ever been obstinate? When?
6. Mechanical grasping means ____.
7. What year do you think the boy was found?
8. Do you think this really happened?

These questions can lead to a lively discussion about behavior, manners, and the dignity of man.

VOCABULARY WORDS FOR CHALKBOARD

gutteral	indifferent	tendency
insensitive	mechanical	obstinate
escaped	incapable	rodent
	expressionless	

WORKSHEET

His eyes were unsteady, *expressionless*, wandering from one thing to another. His hearing was *insensitive* to sounds like music and loud noises. A soft guttural sound *escaped* him when he used his voice. He was *indifferent* to color and to the smell of filth in his bed. His touch was the *mechanical* grasping of objects and he had a *tendency* to trot and gallop . . . (and) had an *obstinate* habit of smelling everything given to him. He chewed like a *rodent* and he was *incapable* of attention and spent his time rocking backwards and forwards like animals in a zoo.

SAMPLE LESSON: LIFE SITUATIONS (VIGNETTE)

CONCEPT : Learning new words in context using vocabulary skills.

OBJECTIVE : Students will understand, comprehend, and use new words presented in story.

MATERIALS : Xeroxed copies of short vignette, pens, journals, and words to be defined.

ACTIVITIES : The teacher will review the new vocabulary words with the class. The 10 words will be written on the chalkboard for the class to copy in their journals.

PROCEDURE : Teacher explains to class that they are to look up each new vocabulary word and write its definition in their journals.

NEW VOCABULARY WORDS

guttural	indifferent	tendency
insensitive	mechanical	obstinate
escaped	incapable	rodent
	expressionless	

Then students are to do the hand-out. The directions are printed on the hand-out.

WORKSHEET

DIRECTIONS : Students are to read the short paragraph below and put the correct words into the numbered spaces. You will know where they belong because you will have looked them up, right!

The Wild-boy of Aveyron

His eyes were unsteady, 1. _____, wandering from one thing to another. His hearing was 2. _____ to sounds like music and loud noises. A soft 3. _____ sound 4. _____ him when he used his voice. He was 5. _____ to color and to the smell of filth in his bed. His touch was the _____ grasping of objects and he had a 7. _____ to trot and gallop . . . (and)

had an 8. ____ habit of smelling everything given to him. He chewed like a 9. ____ and he was 10. ____ of attention and spent his time rocking backwards and forwards like animals in a zoo.

SAMPLE LESSON: LIFE SITUATIONS (PARAPHRASING)

CONCEPT : Understanding the paraphrasing of a short vignette. **OBJECTIVE** : Student will understand the term “paraphrasing”. **MATERIALS** : Chalkboard, journals, pens

ACTIVITY : The teacher will introduce the term “paraphrasing,” which will be written on the board. The class is to copy the definition from the board.

DEFINITION : Paraphrasing means turning someone else’s words into your own words without changing the meaning of what you have read.

PROCEDURE : In the list below you are given some details of the “wild-boy’s” description. Copy each phrase into your journal leaving space as I have on the board, then put your paraphrasing under the letters a,b,c, and so on. Remember to use your own words.

- a. his eyes were unsteady and expressionless
- b. his eyes could not distinguish many objects
- c. his hearing was insensitive to the loudest sounds
- d. he was indifferent to sweet smells and bad odors
- e. he chewed like a rodent
- f. he was incapable of attention
- g. he has an obstinate habit of smelling everything

Student Reading List

Alvarez, Julia. *Homecoming*. New York: Grove Press, Inc., 1984. A group of poems by an Hispanic author who writes about the everyday experiences of Hispanic people. Many of her poems deal with the workpeople and their experiences in the world of work.

Angelou, Maya. *Maya Angelou: Poems* . New York: Random House, 1985. A group of poems by a Black-American author which are enlightening to the mind and soul. Her poems deal with the “ups and downs,” the sorrows and the joys of being Black.

Bibliography

Combs, Arthur. *Myths In Education* . Boston: Allyn and Bacon, Inc., 1979.

This book deals with the understanding of youths, revising and improving instructional needs of a changing world. This is an interesting book and different book!

Elbow, Peter. *Writing With Power* . New York: Oxford University Press, 1981.

This book shows how to write clearly and correctly by getting power over yourself and over the writing process; knowing what you are doing as you write.

Gersten, Leon and Arthur Traiger. *Solutions to Your Writing Problems* . Barron's Educational Series, Inc., 1980.

This presents the various kinds of writing, the stages of writing, and special skills for developing style, structure, and clarity.

Koch, Kenneth. *Wishes, Lies and Dreams* . New York: Harper and Row, Publishers, 1970.

A book of interesting poetry done by grade school children. It tells about the methods he used to motivate inner-city and of the results which came about.

Shaughnessy Mina P. *Errors and Expectations* . New York: Oxford Press, 1977.

Deals with the process of language learning . . . responds to the critical needs of students handicapped in the skills of written expression, handwriting, punctuation, syntax, etc.

Weinstein, Gerald and Mario Fantini. *Toward Humanistic Education* . New York: Praeger Publishers, 1970.

Unlocks the secret of motivating the child to involve himself in the learning proces whatever his or her age, socio-economic level, or cultural background.

Zinsser, William. *On Writing Well* . New York: Harper Row, Publishers, 1980.

An instructive book that makes the point that there is no subject which can't be made accessible if the writer care about humanity and likes to write.

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