

DAILY LESSON PLAN

Teacher's Name:

Class/Period: Tenth Grade English

Unit: Writing: Showing, Not Telling – applied to the writing of college application personal statements

Date: 10/15/2008

Context: The students will have already written one first draft of a college personal statement. The question prompt they answered was: “Describe a significant moment or event in your life and how it changed you.” The students will have been instructed to bring one paragraph – a paragraph that describes a significant moment - from this first draft with them for today’s lesson.

Agenda: 1) Focus Lesson: I will teach the class how to re-write a “Telling” sentence into a “Showing” sentence. 2) Guided Lesson: The students and I will compare and contrast a “Telling” draft of a letter to a revised “Showing” draft of the same letter. 3) Collaborative Lesson: Class groups of four to five students each will work together to rewrite a “Telling” draft of an introductory essay paragraph (provided by me) into a “Showing” introductory essay paragraph. 4) I will assign an Independent Lesson.

California Content Standards: Writing Applications (Genres and their characteristics) 2.1: Using the writing strategies of grades nine and ten outlined in Writing Standard 1.0, students write biographical or autobiographical narratives or short stories. 2.1 – C: Describe with concrete sensory details the sights, sounds, and smells of a scene and the specific actions, movements, gestures, and feelings of the characters; use interior monologue to depict the characters’ feelings.

Objectives: When asked to re-write the first drafts of their college application essays, SWBAT write more emotionally effective personal statements through naming their essays’ characters; employing specific action verbs; applying sensory, specific, concrete details; and by using adjectives and facts through the essays. In other words, students will learn how to *Write to Show* rather than *Write to tell*.

Materials Needed: 1) Each student will bring one paragraph – one that describes a significant moment - from an early draft of a college application essay he or she has already written; 2) Overhead/PowerPoint displays of a) the three columned graph with the appropriate texts and b) the different “Showing” concepts and their definitions; 3) Handouts (for all students) listing the “Showing” concepts, their definitions and an example of a “Telling” sentence being transformed into a “Showing” sentence; 4) Handouts of the opening “Telling” paragraph that the student groups will re-write into a “Showing” paragraph. 5) Copies of one handout with a list of “Show” adjectives.

Activities:

Time	Teacher Procedures	Student Responsibilities
15 minutes	<u>Focus Lesson:</u> 1) On the board, I will write one	1) Students will offer suggestions on names, verbs, details, adjectives and facts that can be used to change the “Telling” sentence on the board to a “Showing”

<p>sentence that is an example of Writing as Telling: <i>The lady was pushing her cart forward and I could hear its wheels making an irritating noise on the floor.</i></p> <p>2) I will then display (Overhead Projector/PowerPoint) the names and definitions of concepts my students can apply to change the “Telling” sentence into a “Showing” sentence. The concepts will be: <i>a) Providing the Person’s name; b) Specific Action Verbs; c) Sensory, Specific Concrete Details; d) Adjectives and e) Facts.</i> I will then identify the places in the sentence where a character’s name can be added; where a sensory concrete detail can be added; where more specific action verbs, adjectives and facts can be added.</p> <p>3) I will ask the students to offer examples that will help change the sentence into a “Showing” sentence. I will write the new “Showing” sentence on the board. I will write their suggestions on the board and write a new “Showing” sentence as a result of their suggestions.</p> <p>4) I will give the students handouts (Handout One) listing the concepts and their definitions. The sheet will also show an alternative “Showing” sentence I created from the same “Telling sentence.” I’ll display my “Showing”</p>	<p>sentence.</p>
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	<p>sentence next to the “Showing” sentence the class and I have just created, so the class can compare and contrast the two examples.</p>	
15 minutes	<p><u>Guided Lesson:</u></p> <p>1) On the overhead/PowerPoint projector, I will display a three columned graph on the board. The left column will contain a “Telling” version of a simple two paragraph letter written by a soldier in Iraq to his mother (I will create this example). The middle column will be blank. The right column will contain a “Showing” version of the same letter – the actual letter the soldier wrote to his mother. I will also provide handouts containing both examples of the letter (Handout Two).</p> <p>2) I will instruct the students to compare and contrast the two versions of the letter and identify all the “Show” concepts that appear in the “Showing” version of the letter.</p> <p>3) I will write the “Show” tools (identified by the students) in the middle column and highlight the same “tools” as they appear in the second version of the letter, in the third column.</p> <p>4) I will lead the class in a discussion where the students offer me their ideas on how the identified “Show” elements made the second version of the letter a more emotionally effective piece of writing.</p>	<p>1) Students will read the letter samples on the board.</p> <p>2) Students will compare both versions of the letter and identify all the “Show” concepts that appear in the “Showing” version.</p> <p>3) Students will raise hands and tell me the “Show” concepts that they have identified in the second version of the letter.</p> <p>4) Students will raise hands and offer their ideas on how the “Show” concepts they have identified have made the second version of the letter a more emotionally effective piece of writing.</p>

20 minutes	<p><u>Collaborative Lesson:</u></p> <p>1) I will divide the class into groups of four or five students.</p> <p>2) I will provide each group with one paragraph of a first (“Telling”) draft of an actual college application essay (Handout Three).</p> <p>3) I will instruct the groups to work together to revise their assigned paragraph into a “Showing” paragraph.</p> <p>4) I will provide, for each student, a handout with a list of “Show” adjectives to consider using.</p> <p>5) Each group’s “Showing” paragraph will be read out loud to the class.</p>	<p>1) In groups of four or five, the students will work together to re-write the “Telling” introductory paragraph into a “Showing” introductory paragraph.</p> <p>2) One student from each group will read the group’s “Showing” paragraph out loud to the rest of the class.</p>
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Homework: Independent Lesson: Each student’s homework assignment will be to re-write the introductory paragraph of his/her college application essay (which they will have brought for the lesson) into a “Showing” paragraph.

Assessment or Evaluation (My Rubric) of the Independent Lesson:

1. Used effectively the conventions of written English – spelling, usage, sentence structure, capitalization, punctuation. **5 points**
2. Establishes an appropriate point of view that will be maintained throughout the paper. **5 points**
3. Shows precise sensory language use, employing at least three of the following tools –
a) Providing the Person’s name; b) Specific Action Verbs; c) Sensory, Specific Concrete Details; d) Adjectives and e) Facts. **5 points**
4. Establishes a consistent voice and tone appropriate for the topic, purpose and audience. **5 points**
5. Establishes and keeps a clear style of writing so that all action can be easily followed. **5 points**

Lesson Plan Commentary/Reflection:

The greatest challenge I’ve had in designing this lesson is creating a Focus Lesson. Using only lecture and demonstration without allowing the students to collaborate is not something I have very much experience with. Since this is not in my history, creating a lesson for this assignment – which I had not had the chance to practice in the field before – was daunting because it could only be hypothetical.

Questions I have still not answered regarding a Focus Lesson are: how much information is too much information to teach in a 15 minute window of time? Also: what is the line between a focus lesson and a guided lesson? I decided that I wanted student participation in my Focus Lesson mostly out of concern that my lecturing would lose my students' interest. Is my Focus lesson a "true" Focus Lesson?

This also reminds me that of a gift I have that is also a weakness. Once I understand the lesson to be taught, I get many ideas on how to make the lesson engaging. Choosing only two or three ideas (out of seven or eight) is a challenge I haven't mastered yet, because I feel that I often choose four or five of those ideas, because I regard them as equally effective. I felt that challenge in designing this lesson and I predict that this assignment will contain more than can be taught in a one-hour session.

Finally, I know that this lesson would be a part of a two to three week long unit on writing college application personal statements. Where this lesson would be placed in the unit is still an open question. Before this lesson, I would have needed to teach essay structure, effective writing within a page limit and figuring out the best answer to the question prompt, which in this case would be "Describe an event that happened in your and how it changed you." To allow time for the students to understand this new way of writing and producing a solid first draft – should this lesson be reserved for near the end of week two – such as day seven or eight? Is three weeks too long for this unit?

At any rate, most of my rubric for this lesson is based on concepts I will have had to successfully teach them prior to this lesson.

Show, Don't Tell

• TELLING

- Hi Mom,
- I'm sitting in my tent right now. There are a lot of tents here and it's windy. Some of the guys have coughing fits from all the dust the wind blows up. It also gets very hot during the day and very cold at night. We're waiting here until we march north to Tikrit.
- I'm sharing my tent with a grandfather from Delaware named Ed. He moves slowly sometimes, but he's a real fighter in this war.

“SHOWING TOOLS”

“**SEARING HEAT**” - Adjective, sensory detail

“**QUIT GRINDING AGAINST YOURS SKIN**” – Sensory, concrete details.

“**BONE RATTLING COUGHS FROM DUST FINER THAN POWERED SUGAR**” – Sensory, concrete details

“**ATTACKING THE LUNGS**” – Verb

“**SEVEN HUNDRED OTHER TENTS; FIFTEEN THOUSAND SOLDIERS**” – Statistics, Facts.

“**THERE'S ED, A FIFTY-EIGHT YEAR OLD GRANDFATHER FROM DELAWARE**” – Facts, Statistics.

• SHOWING

- The worst thing here is not the *searing heat* or the *cold nights*. It's the waiting. *Waiting for the wind to quit blowing and the sand to quit grinding against your skin*. Waiting for a moment of privacy in a tent packed *with seven hundred other tents*, in a base packed with *fifteen thousand soldiers, all looking for a clean place to go to the bathroom*. Waiting for *the bone-rattling coughs from dust finer than powdered sugar to stop attacking the lungs*. Waiting for the generals to order the battalion to move north, *toward Tikrit, where others – Iraqis – are also waiting: waiting for us...*
- A quick look around my tent will show you who is fighting this war. *There's Ed, a fifty-eight-year-old grandfather from Delaware*. He never complains about his age, and but his body does, *in aches and creaks and in the slowness of his movements on late nights and cold mornings*.