

A Picture is Worth a Thousand Words

José Ramón Prieto
Memorial Elementary

INTRODUCTION

Every time something needs to be written, an image comes to our minds. The best written description of this image in paper is going to let us know how good of a writer anybody could be. Images that have been the in the world since the beginning of time are a main source of communication throughout history. Only graphic images have been able to tell history for centuries, and it will continue doing the same for centuries to come.

Photography and painted art have always interested me a great deal, so much so that my first degree in college is an Associates Degree in Arts, and my second one is a degree in architecture. I have always loved to draw. I have always liked the opportunity to express myself with graphics. I consider myself a graphic person. The image was created and designed first in my mind, and then it was put on paper. The heart of the project was getting bigger, and once it entered the stage of construction, the original idea was now a reality.

I see the writing process in the same way. The first steps are always in the minds of the students. I remembered in my primary years, every time we came back from a vacation, the first assignment was to write a composition about the vacation. At that precise moment tons of images from all the instances of the vacation came to my mind. I wanted to say so much. I wanted to describe not just how blue the water from the beach was, but what a wonderful feeling the smell of the breeze carried every afternoon. Unfortunately, I always heard myself and other students say, "I don't know WHAT to write." I discovered later in life that the truth was "I don't know HOW to write what I want to say."

It was fun to draw the picture at the end of the story, illustrate the composition as a complement of the adventure. This creation was more accurate than the drawings because it was so clear. The colors, the feelings, the flavors and smells were all there again. I am thinking now, that the assignment was presented backwards. It makes so much sense now that if I were looking at the picture, it would be so much easier to describe it. In the same way I think that the picture was already there, in my mind, and it was hard to draw it with words.

THE SIX TRAITS

Fourth graders, as well as seventh and eleventh graders in the state of Texas, need to learn how to put the images from their minds into words. They have to take the TAKS test in writing. It is a requirement for the state to do this. Many guidelines are to be followed and many features are tested. Six different traits are evaluated on the writing test. The level of development ranges from 1 to 5, and these six traits shown in the composition will determine the grade of the student. According to Cochiti Elementary School, the Six Trait Resources are:

Ideas or content: Ideas are what the writer has to say, a message. The ideas should be fresh and original.

Organization: This trait addresses the structure of a piece of writing including the thread of central meaning and the patterns that hold the piece together. Regardless of the type or purpose of writing, a well-thought out order of ideas should be apparent. The structure should suit the topic, with a consciously planned opening and closing, each paragraph specific to one central idea, and transitions that tie the details together...

Word choice: Word Choice is where the writer creates a mental picture for the reader by using words that are specific and accurate. The writer uses strong action verbs whenever possible to give the writing energy. The adjectives are as descriptive as possible...

Conventions: Writing Conventions include spelling, punctuation, capitalization, grammar, and paragraphing. The writer should use conventions to enhance the readability of the paper. Spelling should be correct on all words. Punctuation should be smooth and guide the reader through the paper. Capitalization should be used correctly. Paragraphing should reinforce organization. The writer may manipulate conventions for effect...

Voice: Voice is the personality of the writer coming through on the page. It is what gives the writing a sense of flavor, a uniqueness, and give the reader the feeling that the writer is talking directly to her/him...the reader will get a sense that someone real is there on the page, whether the reader knows the writer or not...

Sentence Fluency: Sentence fluency means creating a sense of rhythm with the sentences and a flow that the reader finds enjoyable to easy to follow along. Good sentence fluency stands out when a piece of writing is read aloud... (Einhorn and Chavez)

Emphasis on the teaching of these six traits needs to be made in order for the class to be successful. A composition with a minimum level of development of 2 will consider the student able to write in the new language, again, at a minimum level.

In a bilingual class like mine the writing needs to be done in English almost 100% of the time. Only a few exceptions allow students to take the exam in their native language, and very few are exempt. We also need to remember that if the students came from a third grade bilingual class, their primary instruction has been done in Spanish, and the testing is also done in Spanish. In a traditional bilingual program there is not transition. Students are submerged into the new language. The only foundation in the new language comes from the ESL instruction during the day, but sometimes it is not even there. We may assume that is going to be a very weak base from to build. Other bilingual program models provide more exposure to the new language, for example, the transitional bilingual program and, of course, the dual language program, which promotes a total immersion into the new language.

In my years of teaching in 4th grade, it has been very hard, especially at the beginning of each school year, to motivate my students about writing. Only for the last two years have I been able to do a better job in the motivation of my students to write. I believe the main cause for this success is that we have been writing about fun topics. When a fun topic or theme is introduced, students are anxious to write. The main reason is that they have a very good idea what to write about. This becomes fun because it is comfortable and familiar so lots of images come to mind. You would hear them asking, "May we make this up; can we invent it?" My answer is always, "Yes, of course."

LITERARY ELEMENTS

Within the unit it is important after the concepts of forms of speech are taught and/or refreshed to tell the students how to use them in a story. The function of each one of the words as a form of speech also becomes an important piece of the puzzle once they are put into the story.

The emphasis of the unit is to obtain the most possible and accurate information from an image and put this description in writing. The image itself tells a story. A story is formed by literary elements. The “basic” literary elements that we need to teach at elementary level are the following:

- **Characters:** People, animals, or things that take part in the story’s action.
- **Plot:** the order of events in the story.
- **Problem:** conflict within a story
- **Solution:** solution of the story’s main conflict.
- **Point of View:** how the writer tells the story
- **Setting:** time and place where the story is taken place.

Each of these elements can be extracted from a simple physical image once it is recognized. The importance of each one of them in any given story depends on the writer. For this reason the writer needs to describe with accuracy the elements to be emphasized. All elements need to be present in the story, so it becomes a complete story.

We need to teach the students, then, the importance of the literary elements and how to put them together with the plan and then assemble the story that is taking place. Again, going back to the forms of speech and their concepts, and going even further and putting them in the right place of the story, as a literary element, will guarantee a successful piece of writing.

For example, in any given image from a poster or from our mind, the writer at the beginning of the story wants to emphasize the characters more than the setting. First, the students should find the descriptive elements for the character, physically and emotionally. They can make a word list and with the list use complete sentences to give an accurate description of the character. Similar steps could follow as well for the setting, problem, or solution of the story. The more complete and accurate the description of the literary element in the stories, the more complete and accurate the visualization of the story will be in the reader’s mind.

UNIT BACKGROUND

The main objective of the unit is not necessarily to learn what to write but how to write it. In the writing process, as soon as a topic is mentioned, a bundle of images come to our minds. I repeat, images. To draw or reproduce these images graphically is very easy. To draw/reproduce these images in writing is the hard part. This is the main objective of my unit—to teach a method for reading images whether they exist on paper or in our minds.

To create in words what the mind is seeing or creating becomes a delicate work for any native speaker. The vocabulary, forms of speech, and the rest of the literacy devices need to be present in order for the writer to draw in detail whatever the image looks like. Non-native speakers of the English language have an even harder job to do because they are in the process of learning a new language.

To read the moment in an image is like a challenge to me. To capture the moment with a camera or a brush is even more challenging.

Stephen Krashen mentioned the fact that in order for the learning to occur, the topic must be both fun and interesting. By teaching the students to describe in detail an image that they’re seeing, we will be able to teach them how to describe the images that they are producing in their brains in any given moment. It is important to create a direct link between the creation of the image and its reproduction in writing. The linking is accomplished with the use of literacy devices and forms of speech. In other words, these are the rules of the game.

While learning a new language, images are our best way to communicate before we can even say and understand a word. So we are eliminating the frustration or communication barrier, and

engaging the students in the fun activity of looking at pictures. A picture is worth a thousand words. We are breaking the ice. To help the students discover, read, and write these thousand words is the objective of the unit.

The teaching of the unit should start at the beginning of the new school year. This will give us the opportunity to spend more time if necessary and to extend the instruction as needed. It is important to assess and diagnose the students' previous knowledge before we start teaching the unit. It is necessary to understand their level of comprehension in order to establish a starting point and a goal. If they are in a bilingual environment, it is also necessary to assess the level of proficiency and understanding of the new language. All students are going to be different at different levels, so their very basic concept definition is suggested. The continuous progress of the students will then be monitored at class or individual levels. Throughout the school year students are exposed to millions of images from books from any given subject. Even when the text becomes confusing for the student, or unknown for that matter, the images, many times, will give the student a better understanding of the subject. If the comprehension level of these pictures is high, the students will be more comfortable, first talking and then writing about them. Any image is full of information. Having a strong foundation in Language Arts will carry the students through the path of school as a whole. Not to mention the fact that in an everyday situation, the children will be prepared to observe and critique with more details any given situation. They will be, again, more confident and comfortable.

Cross Curriculum

The correlation of the unit with the other core subjects can be done in a very easy way. The understanding of the subject from images, especially for the students with limited English proficiency, will make it easier to develop comprehension skills. The method of teaching how to read an image and how to extract the thousand words from it will enhance the development of academic skills for the students in most subjects. All school districts through the country have a very similar curriculum in all grades. Sometimes the sequence of the curriculum varies. At the end, the objectives to be taught are the same.

Fun and interesting subjects should be taught to the students to obtain academic progress from them. Pictures are always fun because they tell the whole story at once. Even when the language barrier is present, the ice is broken because the images said so much. The physical image speaks its own language but the interpretation that takes place in each individual mind tells its own story. It is called "Voice." According to the six traits mentioned before, we need to hear this voice. It needs to speak to the readers loudly and clearly—loud enough to make the readers keep an interest in the story and clear enough to understand it.

IMAGE DESCRIPTION

Reading the Image

At the beginning of the unit students are going to be exposed to a series of images for their description and understanding. A free speech type of class is suggested. They will brainstorm and later discuss what is going on in the image. It is advisable to use age appropriate images for the different grades. Forms of speech will then begin to be introduced in the lessons, emphasizing and advising the students to look for them in any situation. For example, a lesson on nouns and/or adjectives may show green grass, a big sky, and a beautiful dress. From there they will identify the details pertaining to the specific literacy device.

Vocabulary can be introduced by creating a word wall, or the students can write the new or also know vocabulary in their journals. An image can be introduced from a video and be frozen at any given time. While the image is frozen, the word list can be made extracting the vocabulary exclusively from the given image. If the image shown is a picture or maybe a poster, the students

can accomplish the same activity. Once we get a list of the forms of speech, the acquired vocabulary can be written in the appropriated list. Now the word has a meaning as well as a function.

For example with the image to the right (*Figure 1*), a class about adjectives can be introduced. Then a list of adjectives can be copied on the board or word wall for the students to use, or they can make their own list, which could be even better. Example: Adjectives that describe sizes; thin, long, small, big. Adjectives that describe color: green, brown, dark, and tan. Adjectives that describe texture: rough, smooth.



(*Figure 1* by J. Prieto)

Following the curriculum, the other forms of speech can also be introduced in a proper sequence. Let's think about nouns in *Figure 1*. A list of nouns could be easily obtained from this image: mom, dad, boy, shoes, bottle, clothes, grass, trees, etc. If we take into consideration that two forms of speech had already been introduced, then a more complex writing can be produced: a noun + adjective = small boy, brown shirt, green grass.

The same or different images can be used which will enhance the objective in question. For example, if the teacher is talking about settings, then images that enhance the landscapes will be appropriate to use. Perhaps images which enhances the settings more than the characters may be shown. Again, depending on the grade level, appropriate images should be used. Once the image is analyzed, then the students have to write about it. Depending on the time of the year and, of course, in the students' level, a better development of writing should be assessed. As the teaching of the unit progresses, each objective should be taught and assessed. All the forms of speech one by one are going to be taught and assessed. The goal at the end is to put all of them together and create a piece of writing.

The selection of images to be presented to the students could be infinite. At the beginning of the year, perhaps, a selection of well-know pictures/images can be used. Images from global or local famous artist can be presented for the analysis. Even family pictures can be used in order to promote some type of school-family relationship. Also, the writing could be done with family members. All of the students' writing needs to come from the description of the images. It is important to emphasize at this stage, for the main purpose of the unit, that the whole descriptive information needs to come from the picture. Of course, creativity is also allowed as each individual progress. This creativity is starting to show up when the connection between the actual image and the mind of student is established.

Describing the Image

The student is beginning to read the images from its own mind and put them in an established context. Each word used by the students has a function. For example: the adjective describes the noun; the adverb modifies the verb. The path is moving in the right direction because the connection between the student's creativity and relationship from a source is being established. The connection has rules and an order to follow. The writing then becomes successful.

There will be a point during the unit, where a series of related images are going to be presented to the students for their own interpretation. For example, a comic strip from the newspaper, with no dialog on it would allow us to do this activity. They will work in groups and arrange them in the order they consider correct. An open-ended question in search of an open and very creative answer is presented. There is always a right answer, never a wrong one. With this type of assessment, which is explained in detail later on the unit, connection of the images within context and the creativity of the students will be assessed. Of course, whatever the forms of speech or/and literacy devices that the class is working on are also assessed.

After the appropriate forms of speech have been introduced through the year, a more complete assessment for the students is presented. So far, each part of the speech is a piece from a puzzle called sentences. The objective of the game is to put them all together and create an image in writing. The following assessment will then take place:



(Figure 2, by J. Prieto)

A more complex image is presented to the students (Figure 2). Once more, depending on the grade level images are recommended. At the beginning the picture is totally covered with white paper or with sticky notes. Each student is asked to uncover a piece of paper. At this point only a section of the image is uncovered for everybody to see. Students are asked to name and write as a list every form of speech that they can see in the uncovered section of the image using the Forms of Speech worksheet.

After the students complete the list in the chart a second activity is suggested. Taking the parts of speech from the list, sentences can be written. A recommended number of sentences to be written can be between 5 and 10 sentences. As the year progresses, more complex sentences can be attempted. Again, the pieces of the puzzle are put together, and everything is starting to make sense. At this point the students are creating a description of

the initial image in writing. As a final extension of the initial activity, the students are asked to take five of the original sentences and make them into a poem. Any modifications to the original sentences are allowed in order for the students to be more creative. Its interpretation of the visual image is becoming a conceptual image as they put the description in writing.

READING FROM THE MIND

The main/final objective of the unit is to read from the images of the mind. The unit becomes a method of extraction of information from images. We started with graphic images, so we then can extract a thousand words from it. The final goal is to train the students to find the words and the correct forms of speech to describe an image. Mainly an image that came from their mind will be the important one, once the given topic is mentioned. Through the continuing reading of images and extraction of information from them, we train the students to describe almost any situation that comes to their minds. We train them to find and describe the setting or context of the graphics. We train them to find and describe the physical traits of the characters as well as the feelings presented in the pictures. We train to find the way to describe or to create the story of the pictures in writing.

For the bilingual students of in classroom, we need to start with the creation of a more extensive vocabulary, one that could allows us later on to expand and write from it. The vocabulary may come from prior knowledge that later will be expanded as the year progresses and more exposure to the new language is given. We can even start with a simple translation from the native language into English. The creation of simple but complete sentences in the native

language can then be translated to English. With the use of images the task of transition between the two languages becomes easier.

In my initial essay I mentioned the idea of creating confidence and high self-esteem for the students. This can be very frustrating because of the new language in a bilingual classroom setting. Although with the use of images and showing them how to read the pictures, a greater sense of confidence and self-esteem can be accomplished.

A written poem in the native language will be presented. After the poem is read, it is up to the students to do their own translation into the new language. A translation of the poem can also be presented to the students to compare it with their own translations of the poem. Let's read for instance the following excerpt from a poem by Federico Garcia Lorca, first in Spanish:

Romance de la Luna, Luna

Huye luna, luna, luna.
Si vinieran los gitanos,
harían con tu corazón
collares y anillos blancos.
Niño, déjame que baile.
Cuando vengan los gitanos,
te encontrarán sobre el yunque
con los ojillos cerrados.
Huye luna, luna, luna,
que ya siento sus caballos.
Niño, déjame, no pises
mi blancor almidonado.

Translation of the same piece in English,

Run away, moon, moon, moon.
If the gypsies find us,
they would cut out your heart
to make necklaces, silvery rings.
Child, let me dance.
When the gypsies come,
they will find you on the anvil
with your tiny eyes shut tight.
"Run away, moon, moon, moon.
I can hear their horses."
"Child, let me be, don't tread
on my shiny, starched white."

At the beginning and depending on the students own English level, words in their native language could be used. Work from poets like Federico Garcia Lorca (above) and Cesar Vallejo can be used. After the translation is done by each student, then a translation in English is presented and compared to theirs. With the creation of simple sentences, like I mentioned before, the students should be able to create their own translation. The correct grouping of these sentences then becomes paragraphs, which later on will make a story. The story should give us a good idea of the student's interpretation of the written piece. Creativity will start to show up at this stage. It may be necessary to guide and to follow these baby's steps to ensure success and eliminate the frustration with the non-native English speakers.

We all started school learning with picture books. The fun part of this it is that it's easy to see what's going on, without reading much, or nothing at all in some cases. So, every child is visual at the beginning. We need to look for images, especially at the beginning of the school year that helps create a story. This part of the unit can easily be adapted to the lower grades. The writing needs to be stimulated at every level. The development of the unit will then keep going in depth depending on the child's level. Also if the definition of parts of speech and literary devices are well introduced at the lower grades, its developmental progress becomes more understandable at the higher grades. The follow up in the teaching of the unit among different level teachers is recommended. In a departmentalized school it will be an easier task for teachers that teach the same students in different levels as they progress.

The method of learning how to read an image whether it is a physical image or a product of the imagination is the final goal of the unit. At the beginning of the unit, images will be presented to the students, but at the end these images are going to be created by the students themselves.

They are going to be in their minds for nobody else to see. Each student should be able to present it in writing for everybody to see it or to imagine it.

In the work of Joe Wenderoth, “Letters to Wendy’s,” the author presents a series of letters written in the suggestion forms at the restaurant. These letters present a wonderful series of “mementos” to be imagined or picture in our minds. Of course, many of these letters are not elementary grade appropriate, but it does give us a good and easy way to get our students into the writing process. Few of these letters can be read to the students with the main purpose of stimulate their imagination, trying to follow the author’s words, and imagining the situation. Every elementary student has been in a fast food restaurant. The assignment can be to write a letter or a story about what happened the last time they went to an establishment. Write about the setting, the food, the people or characters in the restaurant, or write about each one of them individually. The students may write about the sequence of events that took place during this time in the restaurant. This also can be simplified by giving the students a more familiar setting like the school cafeteria, the library, the meeting place before school or the recess area. Then, they can talk about what is going on in detail. It can start like a series of short day by day sequences of events, and it may only be the description of one important event during the time on the specific location. All these moments can then be grouped into a story or a series of poems, like Frank O’Hara’s “Lunch Poems.” In this book the author describes his experiences during his lunch hour. An excerpt from the book:

Personal Poem

Now when I walk around at lunchtime
I have only two charms in my pocket
an old Roman coin Mike Kanemitsu gave me
and a bolt-head that broke off a packing case
when I was in Madrid the others never
brought me too much luck though they did
but now I’m happy for a time and interested (32)

Following the reading of these poems by O’Hara, students are then asked to create their own recollection of adventures during lunchtime or any other specific time of the day. Of course, during this time, like I mentioned before, the school curriculum needs to be taught and followed. In any specific location one form of speech can be assessed. For example, if the students are talking about a fast food restaurant, they can talk about the people on that particular day. Students may describe the characters physically and emotionally. Two different lists can be made to separate the physical and emotional traits of the characters. For example, students can give a description of the workers or the clients who were there at that precise moment. Or maybe a description of these characters feelings, manners, and reactions. A physical description of the setting can be done taking into consideration decorations or motives at the store. A whole group of lessons can be derived from this particular assessment.

As we approach the end of the year or better yet the date for the writing test, images will be more conceptual than physical. The physical part of the image is going to be its description in writing. Most of the images are coming from the students’ minds once a topic or prompt is given. Reading passages from books with a lot of imagery are recommended, so we can train the students’ mind to interpret images. For example, students can study *The House on Mango Street* by Sandra Cisneros. This is an excellent collection of short stories full of descriptive narrative—a desirable final product. An excerpt from the book in the story titled “Meme Ortiz” says:

“... Meme has a dog with gray eyes, a sheep dog with two names, one in English and one in Spanish. The dog is big like a man dressed in a dog suit, and run the same way its owner does, clumsy and wild and with the limps flopping all over the place like untied shoes.” (21)

Also, in her book *Caramelo o Puro Cuento*, Sandra Cisneros uses an excellent and easy to follow imagery, easy for the students to think and interpret. By training the students to do their own interpretation of the reading, with no physical images, they'll be able to write about it, too, whenever the creation of their own stories is required. In this excerpt questions can be asked about the size of the dog, or how the students imagine the owner, or by the description given by the author. This training can be done by asking the students to write a list of the different forms of speech as they listen or as they read the story. In collaboration with the reading teacher, or teachers from other subjects, other passages that would improve the students' performance and vocabulary as well as the skills required for the subjects may be used.

CONCLUSION

The purpose of the unit as established in the beginning is to create a methodology that will help our students to read from images. We want to make an emphasis that the writing process should start as early as possible; the unit has been designed so it can be adapted to various levels of elementary school mainly, but middle school and even high school students will all eager to learn from this.

When children begin to learn at school, they are mainly using big books with many colorful pictures and drawings that are used as manipulatives and teachers' aids to get the process of teaching the language across. Letters, syllables, words are formed with the help of images for the different subjects. Stories are starting to form from a simple image and no words. "A Picture is Worth a Thousand Words" is the title of the unit. To obtain in writing these thousand words is the main goal.

The teaching of writing is a complicated and very interesting process. It needs to start at an early age, and it is like putting a puzzle together. The final product of the puzzle is the stories written by the students. The methodology taught by the unit is a deconstructive writing process. A whole story can be and is contained in an image. With the help of the instructor, the image has to be broken apart into its original pieces. After the original pieces are separated, then we will use the writing process to put it back together. This time we are not creating a physical image but a conceptual representation, a written reflection, a product of the student's ability to find the descriptive elements from the original image, and also the discovery and utilization of the forms of speech.

The six traits that are the heart of the Language Arts curriculum need to be taught while in the process, in order for the story to make any sense, in order for the teacher to assess the students by using the rubric. Ideas, voice, conventions, organization, sentence fluency, and word choice are important parts of the puzzle to be put together.

The next and last step in the method is to read from the images created in our minds. We need to teach the students that the most amazing images are going to come from their imagination. Teach them that the most wonderful stories are created in their minds first. Once these wonderful stories are in their minds, we need to take them out of there. Of course, speaking will be the faster way, and perhaps the most accurate way, but if we do it in writing, it will make them everlasting. Once a topic is given, the student should be able to plan, follow, and execute the story following its ideas.

LESSON PLANS

Lesson One

Having the help of previous years, and previous lessons as well, the student should have the knowledge and should know the concept of the various forms of speech. However, this lesson can be taught in detail for each one of these forms, especially if the concepts are taught for the first time. At the end of the unit or after all the concepts of forms of speech are taught, a more complete and comprehensive lesson should be taught, which include recognition of all the forms and their uses in the written language.

Materials

- Images from any basal book or any picture book can be used.
- Student's family pictures—magazine and newspaper pictures can also be used.
- Overhead projector
- Transparencies
- Images from magazines or/and newspaper
- Forms of speech's worksheet
- Paper and pencil

Objective

The main objective for this particular lesson is to teach the children how to recognize, visually, the various forms of speech and to help them extract from an image all these possible and recognizable forms. For lower grades the introduction of the concepts is necessary before the lesson can be taught. In any case a review lesson is recommended. Students will be able to use this knowledge to recognize the forms of speech in a daily life situation.

Activity One

For this activity the instructor will present various images to the students. Posters with images from famous artists can be used as well as family or school images. Depending on the form of speech to be taught, it is recommended to select images that will help the explanation and comprehension of the subject matter. Example: if a lesson on adjectives is to be taught, images with a great deal of colors and textures are recommended. In any case age-appropriate images should be used. Images can also be presented in the overhead with modeling from the teacher in how to extract the information and what to look for in the image. Once the images are presented, the students will list in the worksheet and without any particular order whatever form of speech they are working with in this particular lesson, or they will look for all forms of speech that they can extract from the presented image. This part of the lesson can be done with a partner or in small groups, making sure that every student writes his or her own list. This will allow each group to work with a different image. If each group is working with a different image, each list will pertain only to the particular image. Depending on the students' level, a minimum as well as a maximum amount of words can be established at the beginning of the lesson.

Activity Two

After the lists are completed by the students, they should be read aloud and a general classroom list be made. This list can also be in the form of a word wall or a simple list. The teacher should correct any mistakes made by the students and make sure that the concept is understood and all the words are in the appropriate lists. At this point in the lesson, the students should compare and complete their particular list with the class' list. Once the lists are completed, the students start to create complete sentences using words from the list and in any particular order. The teacher first should model first to the students how to write complete sentences using the words from the class list. If various images are used for various groups, various lists of words are going to be made. Of

course, different sentences are going to be created depending on the image. Again, depending on the students' level, a minimum as well as a maximum can be established for the number of sentences to be written.

Activity Three

At this point in the lesson students are asked to create a paragraph or two using the sentences completed in activity two. The paragraph(s) should be a clear and very much detailed description of the image. Again some modeling is recommended from the teacher at the beginning of the activity. As a variation of this activity, a poem can be written from the sentences previously created, allowing students to add words or phrases to the just created sentences if necessary to create the poem. At this point the actual image becomes a conceptual image in writing.

Evaluation

After the paragraph(s) are completed, students will read their stories and present their images at the same time. All works should be exposed in the classroom for all students to appreciate and compare images and description. In each activity an assessment grade can be given to each student upon its completion. Also an overall grade can be given taking into consideration the written description of the image. If only one form of speech is in question during the lesson, the grade will depend on the comprehension and use for the student of this particular form. For the variation of the activity—the poem—it is important to tell the students that a conceptual image of the visual image has been written. Their own interpretation is being given, much like what is going to happen when the images to be described come from their minds.

Lesson Two

Materials

- Images from different sources, magazines, newspapers, family pictures, etc.
- Transparencies
- Overhead projector
- Paper and pencil, color markers, color pencils

Objectives

The main objective for this lesson is to obtain a very detailed written description of a given image. The students will have a graphic image, which then will be described using only words. The goal is for the students to make such a precise written description so that anybody will be able to draw a very close image by only reading the description.

Activity One

This activity may be done in small groups or only partners. Give each group an image from any source. Mention to the students that only their group members should see the given image and not the members of the other groups. The students will first list all descriptive elements that could be found in the image. After the elements are listed, ask the students to write one or two paragraphs that describe the image as accurately as possible. After the descriptions are done, collect the images and their descriptions from all the groups. This activity can be done in one class period.

Activity Two

Shift the written descriptions of the images to the different groups. Make sure that each group gets a different written description, and not their own. After each group gets a description, ask the students to draw an image from the written explanation as accurately as possible. After the students are finished with their drawings, collect the drawings and the descriptions and pair them with the original image. Share the following with the class: first, the original image; second, the

written description; and last, the image drawn by the other group. This activity should take one or maybe two class periods.

Evaluation

The main goal of the activity is to obtain such a good written description of the given image that another group could draw a very close duplicate of the original image. Of course, a perfect match is almost impossible to obtain, but what we are looking for is that the students are able to describe as accurately as possible what they are seeing in the original image. If the students can come up with an accurate description, the goal is accomplished.

Lesson Three: Images from the Mind

The main goal of the entire unit is to train the students with a method to read and describe the images created in their minds once a topic or prompt is given. The previous lessons will help the teacher to introduce or review the different forms of speech. The image is described in a deconstructive way because all pieces of the puzzle are taken apart in the image. Then these parts of the image are put together again in writing. Also the previous lessons are done with the description of actual images from magazines, newspapers, posters, family pictures, etc. For this particular lesson, the images come from the student's mind.

Materials

- “Personal Poem,” from the book *Lunch Poems* by Frank O’Hara.
- Overhead projector
- Transparencies
- Paper and pencils

Objective

The main objective for these lessons is to train the students into read an image from their minds. At this stage of the unit the students should be able to understand, visualize and extract the descriptive elements from an image created in their mind at a particular moment, situation, depending, of course, in any given prompt. Not necessarily from an actual picture or poster.

Activity One

Read the poem “My Poem” from Frank O’Hara’s book to the students.

Personal Poem

Now when I walk at lunchtime
I have only two charms in my pocket
an old Roman coin Mike Kanemitsu gave me
and a bolt-head that broke off a packing case
when I was in Madrid the others never
brought me to much luck though they did
help keep me in New York against coercion
but now I’m happy for a time and interested

I walk through the luminous humidity
passing the House of Seagram with its wet
and its loungers and the construction to
the left that closed the sidewalk if
I ever get to be a construction worker
I’d like to have a silver hat please.... (32)

Explain to the children that the book is a recollection of poems that author wrote during his lunch hour everyday. Discuss with students what the author is describing in this particular poem. Ask them to visualize the description of the setting, characters, or any other possible detail described in the poem. Even the mood of the author at this particular moment can be discussed. Students can then make their own description of the images from the poem to discuss with the rest of the class. After the discussion, ask the students to write their own description of the image that they visualized while the poem was read to them. This description can be done in a poem or in a prose form and must included a detailed description of their images, written in their own words.

Activity Two

This particular activity requires an assignment outside the classroom. Ask students to pay special attention to everything that happens around them during their next lunch period. If possible they may list events, characters, setting, or any particular detail that they consider important during this period of time. Discuss orally some events or details from the list once the students are back in the classroom. After the discussion ask the students to plan and write their own version of *Lunch Poems*. The story can be done as prose or as a poem if they prefer. Whatever form of writing they chose must include a very detailed description of the whole event, characters and details. The students will read their stories aloud, allowing the rest of the class to have their own visualization of their stories. After each story is read a brief discussion can be done as the one in the previous activity. Emphasis in the author's mood should be made so students may start to recognize expressions of feelings from the authors, their own interpretation or conceptual image of the whole event.

Activity Three

This activity is intended to be done in a bilingual class preferably. Read the poem "Romance de la Luna, Luna" from Federico Garcia Lorca (Worksheet 1). Any other poem in Spanish will also work. Make sure the poem has been written in Spanish originally and also has been translated into English. Before reading the English translations to the students, ask them to do their own translations from Spanish to English. Read them aloud for the other students to hear, compare, and discuss. After the discussion with the students' interpretation has been done, read the English translation of the original poem to the students. Read and compare the original English translation of the poem to the students' translations. The goal of the activity is to teach the students the fact that each individual will have a different interpretation of the image created in their minds from a reading passage, even when everybody is reading the same poem.

Evaluation

Through the different activities of the lessons, grades can be assigned to the different stages. The oral discussion and interpretation in the first activity can have a grade. The planning stage or listing of details of the second activity could also derive a grade. Of course, the final product of the students will carry the most weight for the overall grade. At the end of both activities, a complete book of poems with the recollection of all students' stories or poems can be made to present and share to other classes. Emphasis on the presence of the students' mood in their writing is desired. This particular lesson could be taught in two or three period's time.

Lesson Four

The following lesson is also oriented to stimulate the students' mind and help then construct their own conceptual images. These images are the product of their own minds or could be a visualization or interpretation from a reading passage, book or article.

Materials

- Copy of the book *The House in Mango Street*, by Sandra Cisneros
- Overhead Projector
- Transparencies
- Paper and pencil

Objectives

The main objective for this lesson is to read from the images of the mind. The creation of the image is taking place while a text is reading to the students. In any case the mind is train to recognize the descriptive elements presented in the visualized image, which will allow the students to create their own interpretation of the event in writing. Remember that when a writing prompt is giving a torrent of ideas rush to the students' minds. The whole process of selecting the right ideas to write about or even the order in which these ideas are going to be presented requires some planning. If the planning is appropriate, the final product will be appropriate. To plan this order is also an objective for the lesson.

Activity One

Read the chapter titled "Hairs" from the book *The House in Mango Street* by Sandra Cisneros (6). Ask students to pay especial attention to the descriptive elements used in the passage. Notice how the author uses only a physical characteristic, the hair, to describe some of the characters. Ask the students, as the author describes all characters' hair, to visualize it and to give their own description. In this chapter the author also uses the description of the mother's hair using the senses, in this case, smell, to emphasize the loving relationship between the narrator and her mother. We all have five senses. Make students aware that writers many times use descriptive elements to help reader visualize a much better image of their context in the book. To accomplish this almost perfect visualization the writers plays with the readers' senses. Give examples from the book, such as "*is the smell (smell) when she makes room for you on her side of the bed still warm (touch) with her skin, and you sleep near her, the rain outside falling and Papa snoring (hearing)*" (6).

To end the activity, ask the students to pick a particular physical characteristic (hands, feet, eyes, hair, face) and describe in two or three paragraphs some friends or family members. Please adapt the numbers of paragraphs according to the students' level. Tell students to use descriptive elements in which the reader will recognize because the use of the senses.

Activity Two

Read the chapter titled "Meme Ortiz" from the book *The House in Mango Street* by Sandra Cisneros (21). In this chapter Cisneros wisely presents a very detailed description of a setting as well as the characters (21). Students should note the imagery. As the author describes Meme's dog, she actually is describing Meme as well. Mainly physical traits are presented, detailed enough to visualize an image in the mind. As the chapter is being read to the students, ask them to write any word or detail that implies any type of description, in other words, details that help them have a better visual image of the passage. Notice also and help the students recognize the fact that the setting is also described in this chapter. The goal of the activity is to tell the students to pick a setting from a giving prompt and describe it physically. For example, "Talk about the first time you went to the store by yourself." After the setting is described, then pick an appropriate character and introduce him or her into the mentioned setting. The product will be a very descriptive short story. At the end of the unit, a complete paper may be written using all the strategies presented.

Evaluation

Two types of evaluations can be accomplished after this lesson is completed. One, the grade for activities one and two, and a second one which could be a complete paper written by the students. The prompt is given by the teacher or can be picked by the students with the instructor's help. If the students at the end of the unit are able to write a complete paper in which the use of imagery and descriptive elements are clearly used, the goal has been accomplished. The good use of sentence fluency and voice as well as conventions should also be accomplished.

Worksheet 1

“Romance de la Luna, Luna”

La luna vino a la fragua
con su polisión de nardos.
El niño la mira, mira.
El niño la está mirando. En el aire
conmovido
mueve la luna sus brazos
y enseña, lúbrica y pura,
sus senos de duro estaño.

Huye luna, luna, luna.
Si vinieran los gitanos,
harían con tu corazón
collares y anillos blancos.

Niño, déjame que baile.
Cuando vengan los gitanos,
te encontrarán sobre el yunque
con los ojillos cerrados.

Huye luna, luna, luna,
que ya siento sus caballos.

Niño, déjame, no pises
mi blancor almidonado.

El jinete se acercaba
tocando el tambor del llano.
Dentro de la fragua el niño,
tiene los ojos cerrados.

Por el olivar venían,
bronce y sueño, los gitanos.
Las cabezas levantadas
y los ojos entornados.

Cómo canta la zumaya,
¡ay, cómo canta en el árbol!
Por el cielo va la luna
con un niño de la mano.

Dentro de la fragua lloran,
dando gritos, los gitanos.
El aire la vela, vela.
El aire la está velando.

“Ballad of the Moon, Moon”

The moon came to the forge
in her bustle of spikenard.
The boy stares at her.
The boy is staring hard.
In the feverish air
the moon sways her arms,
showing, lewd and spotless,
her cruel, tin breasts.

*"Run away, moon, moon, moon.
If the gypsies find us,
they would cut out your heart
to make necklaces, silvery rings."*

"Child, let me dance.
When the gypsies come,
they will find you on the anvil
with your tiny eyes shut tight."

*"Run away, moon, moon, moon.
I can hear their horses."*

"Child, let me be, don't tread
on my shiny, starched white."

The rider was galloping closer
beating upon the drum of the plain.
Inside the forge the boy
had his eyes shut tight.

Across the olive grove, bronze
and dreams, the gypsies arrived.
Their heads held high,
their eyes half shut.

Ai, how the night owl sings!
How she sings on the night tree!
The moon goes through the sky
leading a boy by the hand.

In the forge the gypsies
weep and sob aloud.
The breeze is watching, watching.
The breeze keeps watch all night long.

Worksheet 2

Forms of Speech

Article	Nouns	Adjectives	Verbs	Adverbs	Preposition

Sentences: _____

ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY

Works Cited

- Cisneros, Sandra. *Caramelo o Puro Cuento*. New York: Vintage Books, a division of Random. House Inc., 2002.
A series of short stories full of imagery. Excellent to explain and obtain descriptive elements.
- Cisneros, Sandra. *The House in Mango Street*. New York: Vintage Books, a division of Random. House Inc., 1984.
A series of short stories full of imagery. Excellent to explain and obtain descriptive elements.
- Einhorn, Celia and Gina Chavez. *Six Trait Writing for Teachers, Parents, and Students*. Cochiti Elementary School. <<http://www.aps.edu/aps/Cochiti/6traits/>>.
- Garcia Lorca, Federico. "Garcia Lorca's Romance de la luna, luna." *Myth of Arrival. Poetry: A Curious Look at This 21st Century Pleasure*. WordPress.
<<http://www.zacharychartkoff.com/2005/11/11/garcia-lorcas-romance-de-la-luna-luna/>>.
- Krashen, Stephen. "Comprehensible Output." *System* 26: 175-182, 1998, 11 February, 2006.
<<http://www.sdkrashen.com/main.php3>>.
- O'Hara, Frank. *Lunch Poems*. San Francisco: City Lights Publishers, 1964.
- Wentworth, Joseph. "Excerptps from Letters to Wendy's." *The American Poetry Review*. May/June 1999.
<http://www.findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_qa3692/is_199905/ai_n8833653>.
- ### Supplemental Sources
- Anderson, Carl. *How is Going? A Practical Guide to Conferring with Student Writers*. Portsmouth,NH: Heinemann, 2000.
- Bennet, Patrick. *Talking with Texas Writers-Twelve interviews*. College Station:Texas A&M U.P, 1980.
Provides an inside view of the poets about writing and its history.
- Breslin, James E. B. *From Modern to Contemporary American Poetry, 1945- 1965*.Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press.
A recollection of recognized poets and their influence in poetry during this particular time.
- Cobb, Carl. *Lorca's Romancero gitano: A Ballad Translation and Critical Study*. Jackson University Press of Mississippi, 1983.
Originals and translated poems from Garcia Lorca. Good source of poems in both languages, English and Spanish.
- Daniels, Harvey. *Literature Circles. Voice and Choice in the Student-Centered Classroom*. Portland: Stenhouse Publishers, 1994.
How to implement literature circles in the classroom.
- De Saint-Exupery, Antoine. *El Principito*. San Diego: Hartcourt, Inc, 1953.
Trans. Emece editores.
A classic. Full of imagery and moods. Excellent for descriptions and settings.
- Fiderer, Adele. *25 Mini-lessons for Teaching Writing. Quick Lessons that Help Students Become Effective Writers*. New York: Scholastic Inc., 1997.
Lessons for teaching writing, good for upper grades.
- Flood, James, Diane Lapp, Nancy Farnan, and Linda Lungren. *Clues for Better Writing-Book E*. North Billerica, MA: Curriculum Associates Inc., 1992.
A workbook with clues and lessons to improve writing at elementary level.
- . *Clues for Better Writing-Book D*. North Billerica, MA: Curriculum Associates Inc., 1992.
A workbook with clues and lessons to improve writing at elementary level.

- García Lorca, Federico. *Romancero Gitano*. Ed. Derek Harris. London: Grant & Cutler Ltd, 1991.
A collection of Garcia Lorca's best poems. Beautiful poetry to read to students, especially at higher grades.
- . *Selected Verse: A Bilingual Edition*. Ed. Christopher Maurer. New York: Farrar Strauss Giroux, 1994.
Selected work from Garcia Lorca.
- Hirsch, Edward. *How to Read Poem...and Fall in Love with Poetry*. New York: Harcourt Brace and Company, 1999.
Guide to start to read poetry. How to get motivation to read poetry.
- Kinzie, Marie. *A Poet's Guide to Poetry*. Chicago: Chicago Press, 1999.
- Koch, Kenneth. *Rose Where Did You Get That Red? Teaching Great Poetry to Children*. New York: Random House, 1973.
Examples of Koch's work in public schools.
- Koch, Kenneth. *Wishes, Lies and Dreams: Teaching Children to Write Poetry*. New York: HarperCollins, 1999.
- Le Patner, Michelle, Farid Matu, and Rosemary Ruthven. *Nonfiction Writing Prompts for Science, Write to Know Series. Upper Elementary*. Englewood, Colorado: Advance Learning Centers, Inc., 2005.
A collection of ideas, prompts, and lessons to motivate students to write about science.
- Let's Write--A Writing Workshop*. New York: Scholastic Inc., 1993.
A series of mini-lessons in a workshop format.
- Mariconda, Barbara. *Step-by-Step Strategies for Teaching Expository Writing*. New York: Scholastic Inc., 2001.
Worksheets and lessons for teaching writing.
- Marzano, Robert J., Debra J. Pickering, and Jane E. Pollock. *Classroom Instruction that Works*. Alexandria VA: ASCD Publishers, 2001.
Strategies for classroom management.
- Monzon, Julio. *Luna, Luna Creative Writing Ideas from Spanish, Latin American, and Latino Literature*. New York: Teachers and Writing Collaborative, 1997.
- Oliver, Mary. *A Poetry Handbook*. San Diego: Harcourt Brace & Company, 1994.
An interesting source for teachers to introduce children to poetry.
- Peacock, Molly, Elise Posner, and Neil Neches. *Poetry in Motion. 120 Poems from the Subways and Buses*. New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 1996.
Daily situations poetry. Very easy to read with good description elements. Appropriate for elementary students.
- Peacock, Molly. *How to Read a Poem... and Start a Poetry Circle*. New York: Riverhead Books, 1999.
A very romantic way of find love while reading poetry. Excellent source to study about promote poetry reading for students.
- Pockell, Leslie. *The 100 Best Poems of All Times*. New York: Warmer Book Inc., 2001.
Excellent source for poetry classics. 100 poems to choose from.
- Posner, Elise and Brett Fletcher Louer. *Poetry in Motion from Coast to Coast. 120 Poems from the Subways and Buses*. New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 2002.
- Rotkow, Debbie. "Two or Three Things I Know for Sure About Helping Students Write the Stories of Their Lives." *The Quarterly* -Vol.25 No. 4 (2003): 35-39.
An excellent article with examples of work done in Elementary school, in how to get kids involve in writing poetry, by talking about everyday situations.

- Ruthven, Rosemary. *Nonfiction Writing Prompts for Math, Write to Know Series. Upper Elementary*: Englewood, Colorado. Advance Learning Press, a division of Advance Learning Centers, Inc. 2005. A collection of ideas, prompts, and lessons to motivate students to write about math. Academic writing.
- Sánchez, Pacheco Trinidad. *Federico García Lorca 46 Poemas*. Barcelona: Plaza & Janes Editores S.A., 1999. A collection of Poems from Lorca. Excellent source of Hispanic poetry.
- Schafer, Lola M. *Writing Lessons for the Overhead Grades 5 and Up*. New York: Scholastic Professional Books, 2003. 20 transparencies and mini lessons to teach the six traits.
- Slagle, Patricia A. "Getting Real: Authenticity in Writing Prompts." *The Quarterly*. (Summer 1997): 20-23.
- Spandel, Vicky. *Books, Lessons, Ideas for Teaching the Six Traits*. Wilmington, MA: Great Source Education Group, 2001. Lessons and ideas to work while teaching the six traits of writing.
- Walling, Donovan R. *Teaching Writing to Visual, Auditory, and Kinesthetic Learners*. Bloomington, IN: Phi Delta Kappa International, Corwin Press, 02-17-2006.
- Wilhelm, Jeffrey D. *Improving Comprehension with Think-Aloud Strategies*. New York: Scholastic Professional Books, 2001. Tips to improve student participation in class.
- The World of Nature in the Works of Federico García Lorca*. Ed. Joseph W. Zdenek. Winthrop: Winthrop, 1980. Interpretation of Garcia Lorca's work in relationship with nature. How Garcia Lorca interprets nature is his work.

Internet

- Jancola, Linda. 6-TraitsWriting.04/1999. June 4,2006. <<http://www.kent.k12.wa.us/staff/LindaJancola/6Trait/6-trait.html>>
- Kennedy, Eileen. "Writing in Home Dialects: Choosing a Written Discourse in a Teacher Education Class". *The Quarterly Spring 2003*. NWP Publications. June 12, 2006. <<http://www.writingproject.org/pub/nwpr/quarterly/2003no2/kennedy.html>>.
- Krater, Joan. Jane Zeni. Nancy Devlin Cason. "Mirror Images: Teaching Writing in Black and White." *Teaching English as a Second or Foreign Language*. 1999. Tesl-Ej. May 30, 2006. <<http://www-writing.berkeley.edu/TESL-EJ/ej05/r2.html>>. Research project to improve writing skills in low achievement students.
- Lambert, Bernadette. "You and Me and a Book Makes Three: Students Write Collaborative Book Reviews with Adult Reading Budd." *The Quarterly Summer 1999*. NWP Publications. June 12, 2006. <<http://www.writingproject.org/pub/nwpr/quarterly/1999no3/lambert.html>>.
- Literary Elements. *Read. Write. Think*. NCTE. June 6, 2006. <<http://www.readwritethink.org/materials/litelementswww.readwritethink.org/materials/lit-elements>>. A very good interactive site that provides graphic organizers. Easy step-by-step instructions to learn about literary elements.
- Pellino, Karen. "Effective Strategies for Teaching English Language Learners." The Web Portal For Educators. *TeAchnology.com*. June 12, 2006. <<http://www.teach-nology.com>>.
- Rich Electronic Archive for Language Instruction Anywhere. *The Realia Project*. March 6, 2006. <<http://www.realiaproject.org/index.html>>. The Realia Project publishes faculty-reviewed media for the teaching and study of modern languages and cultures.
- 6+1 Trait® *Writing-Lesson Plans*. Northwest regional Education Laboratory. <<http://www.nwrel.org/assessment/lessonplans>>.

Turner, Jack. "Using Poetry in Teaching Writing." 1991. Wesley College. June 14, 2006.
<<http://www.pagerealm.com/jackturner/poetry.htm>>.
Good reference to Koch's works in schools.