

Melissa Williams
Broad
English 297
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Final Draft

An Exploration through Creative Writing

Introduction and Rationale:

This unit is devoted to the incorporation of drama, fiction, and poetry into the curriculum aimed at junior high school students. As a result of these lesson plans, my students will be given the opportunity to enact with texts in ways that they never have before. To begin, the students will be working with Mark Twain's novel, The Adventures of Tom Sawyer. Although they will have read the novel by the time the unit is introduced, they will not have explored the many ways in which the novel can be used. For instance, the students will be asked to write internal monologues for a character in the novel. In addition, the students will transform one scene in the novel into a play that will be performed in front of the class.

After utilizing The Adventures of Tom Sawyer, the students will then be given the opportunity to write their own pieces of short fiction. After observing the characteristics of short stories and brainstorming for a topic, the students will then compose a short story. The final lessons in the unit will involve the genre of poetry. In my opinion, one of the most effective methods in teaching poetry to young students is demonstrate poetry's similarity to musical lyrics. Thus, I have designed lessons that allow students to compare their favorite song lyrics to poetry.

Throughout the unit, there is an emphasis on the importance of revision. For example, there are days spent having the students provide peer revision for each other. In

addition to manually revising their papers, students will also be given the opportunity to utilize computers as a means of familiarizing them with the benefits of current technology.

The reason I have chosen to create a unit devoted to three areas of creative writing mainly stems from the fact that students are often not given the chance to deeply experiment with other methods and genres of writing. These lessons will expand students' imaginations and writing capabilities, since all will challenge them to write in ways they may never have even tried.

In many ways, the goal of almost any teacher of writing is to not only sharpen the skills of their students, but also to have their students develop a love for writing. In my opinion, these lesson plans are inventive and fun. If students are only provided with formal writing opportunities, such as essays and term papers, they will most likely dread the act of writing. However, if given alternate ways to explore and hone their writing skills, students may develop more of an appreciation for the art of composing.

Day One

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| Topic: | Creative Writing |
| Time of Lesson: | 50 minutes |
| Learning Goals: | Illinois Standards: 2.A.5b "Evaluate relationships between and among character, plot, setting, theme, conflict and resolution and their influence on the effectiveness of a literary piece." |
| Preparation: | Students should have completed and be familiar with various aspects of <u>The Adventures of Tom Sawyer</u> , including the important characters present in the novel. |

Materials: Students will need to bring their copies of the book with them to class.

Activities:

1. Introduce the author's use of characterization to the students (5 min.)
2. Ask students to pick a character and scene from the novel in which the characters have increased emotions, such as when Tom and Becky are trapped in the cave. (5-10 min.)
3. Explain internal dialogues and tell students to create an internal monologue for only one of the characters in the scene that they have picked. Allow students the rest of the class period to work on their internal dialogues (35-40 min.)

Homework: Have the students bring the first draft of their monologues to class the next day for peer revision and workshopping.

Evaluation: Since the students will not have completed their monologues by the end of class, I will merely have to monitor them working. In addition, I will keep them on task and answer their questions.

Day Two

Topic: Creative Writing – Peer Editing and Workshop

Time: 50 minutes

Orientation: This lesson will incorporate the internal dialogues created the day before in class.

Learning Goals: **Illinois Standards: 3.B.4c** “Students will participate in peer-editing workshops.”

Materials: Students should bring their novels to class.

Preparation: Students should have the first drafts of their internal monologues completed and prepared for peer editing.

Activities:

1. Ask students to take out their first drafts. Number the students off into workshopping groups. Ask any questions concerning the homework (5-10 min.)
2. Give students a brief introduction to peer editing and revising, including instructions on what to look for in their peer's paper and the type of suggestions that they should be giving to their peers. For instance, peer revisors should be making sure that the internal dialogue that they are reading is descriptive enough (10 min.)
3. Give students the rest of the hour to revise each other's dialogues and make suggestions (30-40 min.)

Homework: Ask students to complete a revised and final draft. Ask that it be brought to class the next day.

Evaluation: The students will be monitored in order to assure that they are staying on task and completing the steps of peer revising. The students' internal dialogues will be evaluated according to a rubric created for this particular assignment. Basically, students will be graded based on their adherence to the accuracy and detail of their chosen characters.

Day Three

Topic: Creative Writing – Drama

Time: 50 minutes

Orientation: In correlation to their previous assignment, students will again be asked to experiment with the text of Tom Sawyer in a new way.

Learning Goals: **Illinois Standards: 1. B.5b** “Analyze the defining characteristics and structures of a variety of complex literary genres and describe how genre affects the meaning and function of the texts.”

- Preparation:** The students will be asked to turn in the final drafts of their internal dialogues.
- Materials:** Students will be asked to bring their novels to class.
- Activities:**
1. Provide a brief introduction to the characteristics of playwriting and performing (10 min.)
 2. Divide the class into groups of three or four (2-5 min.)
 3. Ask the students to pick a scene from the novel that they would like to script into a play. Explain to students that they will have to script all of the dialogue for the scene they pick and also create a role for a narrator that would be used to explain the action in the scene. Give students the rest of the time to work in their groups, explaining that they would be given class time the next day to finalize their scenes (35-40 min.)

Homework: Ask the students to decide which roles each group member will play. In addition, the students must try and conclude how long their dialogues will be. They will be told that the dialogues must be between five and ten minutes long.

Evaluation: Students will be monitored to see that they are following the assignment and working effectively in their groups. Perhaps the students could even be asked to record a brief log of the work that they accomplish in their groups.

Day Four

Topic: Creative Writing – Editing and Revising

Time: 50 minutes

Orientation: In addition to the peer editing techniques that they have already learned, the students will also learn how to use computers to finalize a composition.

Learning Goals: **Learning Standard 3.B.4b:** “Produce, edit, revise and format work for submission and/or publication (e.g., manuscript form, appropriate citation of sources) using contemporary technology.”

Preparation: Students should bring one or more copies of the rough draft of their scene performance dialogues.

Materials: No materials are needed.

Activities:

1. Take the students down to the computer lab. Give them specific instructions specifying concerning how their scene performances should be typed and presented. (10 min.)
2. Divide the students into their groups and tell them to type their scenes into a final draft. Instruct them to print out one final draft for each group member, as that will be their “script” for when they perform the dialogues the next day in class. (30 min.)
3. Give students any extra time to work on the performance of their scenes (10 min.)

Homework: The students must be ready to turn in the final draft of their dialogues and be prepared to perform their scene the next day in class.

Evaluation: The students will be monitored based on their effectiveness with the technology and with how well they stay on task and work effectively with their group members.

Day Five

Topic: Creative Writing – Drama Performance

Time: 50 minutes

Orientation: Using the dialogues that they have been working on the past few days in class, students will actually perform their scenes in front of the class.

- Learning Goals:** **Illinois Standards: 2.A.5b** “Evaluate relationships between and among character, plot, setting, theme, conflict and resolution and their influence on the effectiveness of a literary piece.”
- Preparation:** Students will be asked to bring a final draft of their scene performance dialogues to turn in as a written assignment.
- Materials:** No materials are needed.
- Activities:**
1. Ask each group of students to perform their scene performances for the class. (30 min.)
 2. Ask students to give verbal feedback on each scene performance, providing positive comments and constructive criticism. (10 min.)
 3. Ask students to assess their own group’s performance, giving every member in their group a grade except themselves. (10 min.)
- Homework:** The students will be given no homework.
- Evaluation:** The students’ scene performance dialogues will be graded based on its accuracy and completeness. Also, the performances will be marked down if they fail to be within the set time limits. Finally, a composite score will be given based on the student’s evaluation of their group members (the highest and lowest score will be dropped).

Day Six

- Topic:** Creative Writing – Short Fiction
- Time:** 50 minutes
- Orientation:** After exploring other methods of creative writing, the students will now discover the world of short fiction.

- Learning Goals:** **Illinois Standards: 1. B.5b** “Analyze the defining characteristics and structures of a variety of complex literary genres and describe how genre affects the meaning and function of the texts.”
- Preparation:** The students have been given no homework assignment from the previous class.
- Materials:** The students should bring their literature textbooks to class.
- Activities:**
1. Introduce the genre of short fiction to the students, providing general characteristics. Ask the students to look at examples from their literature texts, noticing the characteristics just discussed. (10-15 min.)
 2. Explain to the students that they are going to write their own pieces of short fiction. Involve the students in brainstorming activities. Give some prompts to the students if they become noticeably frustrated with the open-ended nature of their topics. (15-20 min.)
 3. Give students some specifications concerning the length and elements that should be present in their short stories. Provide the rest of the class to work on their first drafts. (20-30 min.)
- Homework:** Students will be asked to complete a rough draft to bring to the next class.
- Evaluation:** The students would simply be monitored for their class participation and their diligence in working on their rough drafts.

Day Seven

- Topic:** Creative Writing – Revision of Short Fiction
- Time:** 50 minutes
- Orientation:** Similar to the peer revision that accompanied their internal monologues, the students will be involved in the revision process.

- Learning Goals:** **Illinois Standards: 3.B.4c** “Students will participate in peer-editing workshops.”
- Preparation:** Students should bring the first draft of their short fiction stories.
- Materials:** No materials are needed.
- Activities:**
1. Divide students into groups of two. Explain to students that they will be spending the class period revising their partner’s short fiction stories. Pass out a sheet that will ask the students to focus on and answer the following questions pertaining to their partner’s short story:
 1. What elements of the story did you find amusing or entertaining?
 2. Were there areas that seemed unclear?
 3. What did you like best?
 4. What would you change?
- Have the students complete the worksheets and revise any other aspect of their partner’s paper (30-40 min.)
2. Allow students to spend the rest of the time revising their rough drafts (10 min.)
- Homework:** Ask students to bring the final draft of their short stories to class the next day.
- Evaluation:** The students’ interaction with the peers would be monitored. One specific area that would be observed would be whether or not effective feedback was being provided. The final drafts of their projects would be graded based on if the students met the specified requirements well and if the stories were descriptive.

Day Eight

- Topic:** Creative Writing – Poetry
- Time:** 50 minutes
- Orientation:** After exploring the genres of drama and short fiction, the students will now explore the world of poetry.

- Learning Goals:** **Illinois Standards: 1. B.5b** “Analyze the defining characteristics and structures of a variety of complex literary genres and describe how genre affects the meaning and function of the texts.”
- Preparation:** The students will hand in the final draft of their short fiction stories.
- Materials:** Have students bring their literature books to class.
- Activities:**
1. Discuss the presence of poetry in the world with students. Provide examples from advertisements, magazines, etc. (5-10 min.)
 2. Provide a brief overview of the basic conventions of poetry (such as metaphors, similies, etc.) (5 min.)
 3. Explain the main purposes of and major themes of poetry. Have students examine some of the poems present in their literature books (20 min.)
 4. Discuss the similarities between musical lyrics and poetry, providing some song lyrics for comparison (15 min.)
- Homework:** Ask the students to find and copy the lyrics of one of their favorites songs, bringing both that and a recording of that song to class the next day for the students to hear.
- Evaluation:** The students’ participation in the discussion will be monitored. One option could be providing students with a crossword or worksheet that would re-familiarize them with the traditional aspects of poetry. This could be collected and graded.

Day Nine

- Topic:** Creative Writing – Poetry and Music
- Time:** 50 minutes

- Orientation:** Bridging on the discussion held the day before in class, students will be able to see and hear the similarities between poetry and music.
- Learning Goals:** **Illinois Standards: 1. B.5b** “Analyze the defining characteristics and structures of a variety of complex literary genres and describe how genre affects the meaning and function of the texts.”
- Preparation:** Students will be asked to bring the lyrics and recording of a song that they have chosen.
- Materials:** A copy of song lyrics and a sound recording.
- Activities:**
1. Ask some students to volunteer to share the lyrics and recording of their favorite songs (20 min.)
 2. Discuss how the lyrics and music are similar. (5-10 min.)
 3. Give students several examples of different types of poetry. Explain that they will be composing their own piece of poetry. (5-10 min.)
 4. Give the students the rest of the time to work on the first drafts of their poem (10-20 min.)
- Homework:** Ask students to bring the first draft of their poem to class the next day.
- Evaluation:** Students would be evaluated on their preparation for class. For example, points would be rewarded to students that not only chose a song to bring to class, but also considered that particular song in relation to poetry.

Day Ten

- Topic:** Creative Writing – Poetry
- Time:** 50 minutes

- Orientation:** Based on the various discussions of poetry held in class, students will be asked to revise and finalize their final piece of poetry.
- Learning Goals:** **Illinois Standards: 1. B.5b** “Analyze the defining characteristics and structures of a variety of complex literary genres and describe how genre affects the meaning and function of the texts.”
- Preparation:** Students should bring a rough draft of their poem to class.
- Materials:** No materials needed.
- Activities:**
1. Divide students into revision groups of three or four. Ask the members of the groups to exchange the rough drafts of their poems. Ask the students to revise any grammatical or spelling errors. Tell students to identify any similies, metaphors, and themes present in the poem. (30 min.)
 2. Give students the rest of the time to revise their poems. Ask students to volunteer to read their final drafts to the class if extra time is allotted. (20 min.)
- Homework:** Ask students to finalize and type their poems, bringing a final copy to the next class.
- Evaluation:** The students would simply be graded based on their adherence to one of the specific poetry form that they chose to use (ex. free verse, etc.). “Perfect” poetry would not be expected nor required. A student would simply have to display that they put time and effort into their poem.