

Lesson Plan for Teaching Written Expression
The Extended Metaphor
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SOL Area and Numbers: Narrative writing with emphasis on written expression: 9.6, 10.7, 11.7, and 12.7

Primary Objective(s)

- The student will focus on written expression: extended metaphor.
- The student will study autobiographical composition.
- The student will study Sandra Cisneros's application of the extended metaphor in her writing.
- The student will match Cisneros's style of writing to his/her own style of writing.

Materials

- Copy of *The House on Mango Street* by Sandra Cisneros. From this book, I use "Four Skinny Trees," which is on page 74, but there are several excellent examples from which to choose.
- Personal photographs that display a specific memory in each student's life (preferably between the ages of two and eleven). I brought and showed them a picture of a four-year-old me as I jumped over my mother's silver candlestick.
- Writing journals

Focus and Review

- The focus of this lesson is on inserting voice through the application of the extended metaphor.
- Students need to review the elements of style in written expression.

Activities/Procedures

- Before Writing
 - About one week before doing this assignment, ask students to bring in a photograph of themselves when they were between the ages of two and thirteen. I brought and showed them a picture of a four-year-old me as I jumped over my mother's silver candlestick. The picture should display a strong memory of a special/unusual/sad/funny time in the person's life. Continue to remind students to bring a photograph.
 - On the day of the assignment, write this quotation from "Four Skinny Trees" (74) by Sandra Cisneros on the board: "They are the only ones who understand me. I am the only one who understands them." Have students discuss what type of person would make this statement. Then have them predict to whom *they* refers.
 - Have students access the Internet in order to find out more about the person—Sandra Cisneros—who made this statement. Discuss what they discovered that would match what they think this introduction on page 74 is saying. Here are two sites:
http://www.english.uius.edu/maps/poets/a_f/cisneros/cisneros.htm
<http://www.lasmujeres.com/sandracisneros/cisnerosbio.shtml>
- During Writing
 - Read "Four Skinny Trees" out loud to the students. Afterwards, discuss

their reactions to the description. Were they surprised that Cisneros compares herself to skinny trees? How effective is her comparison?

- Students tend to write a first draft and then revise by simply checking to see if their punctuation and spelling are correct. They find true revision befuddling because they lack a strategy that adds a unique zing. Teaching them how to effectively insert an extended metaphor into their written expression will prove to be quite beneficial. Direct the students' attention to Cisneros's comparison to trees. Tell students that this is an extended metaphor. Cisneros took a tree and used its characteristics to more effectively describe herself. She did not stop using the comparison in the third sentence; she extended how she is similar to these four skinny trees throughout the description. At the end, every reader knows that Cisneros, like these trees, will never give up. She will continue to grow and learn.
- Now have students bring out their snapshots. In their journals, have them describe every detail they see and remember. For the first draft, they want to include the 5 Ws + H: who, what, where, when, why and how.
- Have students meet with their writing partners, show them the photograph, and read the description about the event they have just recalled. The partners are to listen and to think about an object that could be extended.
- Partners discuss the possibilities, settle on one object each, and revise their first drafts to include the extended metaphor.
- After Writing
 - Have partners edit each other's narrative. If further revision is needed, then allow time for that to occur.
 - Have students write their final drafts. If time allows, have students read their extended metaphors to everyone in their writing group.
 - Create a bulletin board to display the finished samples and photographs.

Assessment: Personal narratives are scored using Domain Scoring.

Composing: 30 points

Written Expression: 50

Usage/Mechanics: 20 points