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Handout I

“Using Creative Writing Techniques to Inspire, Transform and Energize a Classroom and Student Learning”

Creative Writing Workshops can be conducted in any classroom to make students look at a topic, an issue or a significant historical or contemporary figure in a different way. Use these workshops in an English language class, or a poetry, history, science, sociology, anthropology and math (Yuck!) class to Inspire, Transform and Energize your classes. The purpose is to engage students in way that helps them connect, learn and remember your lesson(s).

30 CREATIVE WRITING WORKSHOPS / TECHNIQUES

1. Senses Workshop (Ask them to describe a memory from sight, sound, taste, touch, scent - Ruth Forman workshop; Para Los Ninos Center on Skid Row)
<http://scotts.members.sonic.net/albany/apages/prompt/senses.html>
<http://www.brighthub.com/education/early-childhood/articles/50307.aspx>
2. Landscape Workshop (and Bath, England; Wordsworth's Tintern Abbey)
<http://www.guardian.co.uk/books/2008/may/30/poetry.hayfestival2008>
<http://cabadov.wordpress.com/2010/11/26/love-my-daughters-writing-mind-a-landscape-poem>
3. Sonnet Workshop (Playa del Rey High School)
<http://www.mandysutter.com/writing-sonnets/>
4. Ekphrasis or Ekphrastic Workshop (limitless variations) -
<http://homepage.mac.com/mseffie/assignments/paintings&poems/titlepage.html>
5. Surrealists Workshop (Dali/Kahlo/Apollinaire)
http://blogs.warwick.ac.uk/zoebrigley/entry/surrealist_workshops_at_1/
6. Political Workshop - <http://www.textetc.com/workshop/wc-political-poem-1.html>
<http://taylormali.com/index.cfm?webid=16>
7. Homage Workshop -
http://beck.library.emory.edu/BelfastGroup/browse.php?id=heaney1_10163
8. Heritage Workshop -
<http://www.priestlands-heritage.org.uk/schools/secondary/english/poetryworkshop.pdf>
9. Scaffolding Workshop -
http://www.lastingimpressionsbooks.com/catalog/product.asp?product_id=5287
<http://au.answers.yahoo.com/question/index?qid=20080720084229AAHRrI6>
10. Psycho Automatism/Stream-of-Consciousness Workshop – Ginsberg's Howl (probably not appropriate for middle schoolers!)
http://www.democraticunderground.com/discuss/duboard.php?az=view_all&address=105x

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11. Love Poems Workshop - Shakespeare, Khalil Gibran, or any love poet from any country
12. Voice of Another Person/or Persona Workshop - Writing from someone else’s perspective
13. Inanimate Object (or Story of the Shoe/Grape/Homework) Workshop
14. Write all Over the Page Workshop
15. Rap Poem Workshop
16. Spoken Word Workshop
17. Sestina Workshop
18. Haiku Workshop
19. Current Event Workshop
20. Popular Culture Workshop
21. Cell Phone Poem Workshop
22. Found Poem Workshop
23. Magnetic Poetry Kit Workshop
<http://www.amazon.com/Magnetic-Poetry-Kit-Original/dp/1890560014> (Many varieties)
24. Newspaper Workshop
25. Backyard Workshop
26. High School Sweetheart (or Biggest Challenge) Workshop
27. Stations Workshop (Setting up 5 stations with an object. They have to write either a line or a stanza about each object or whatever is at the station)
28. e.e. cummings workshop - <http://www.poetryfoundation.org/poetrymagazine/poem/179622>
29. Group Poem Workshop (Start with a sentence per person in the classroom, narrow it down to four words, then two, then one per person. Teaches brevity of language and editing. Teaches rhythm and cadence.)
30. Litany Workshop (Bob Kaufman poems)
31. BONUS: Assign students a workshop to teach! Give them guidelines and expectations and maybe a length for the poem to be produced. They love it and you’d be surprised what they come up with to teach the lesson.
32. BONUS: High School Student Summer Poetry Workshops -
<http://www.simons-rock.edu/young-writers>
33. BONUS: poems from Malaysia poems -
<http://www.poetrysoup.com/poems/nationality/malaysian>

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Handout II

CREATIVE WRITING LITERARY DEVICES (<http://literary-devices.com>)

alliteration - the repetition of the initial consonant sound in words
assonance - the repetition of vowel sounds
consonance - the repetition of consonant sounds in the middle or at the end of words
enjambment - when the writer uses line breaks meaningfully and abruptly to either emphasize a point or to create dual meanings
imagery - when the writer or speaker uses their descriptions to access the senses of the reader or listener
repetition - when the writer or speaker knowingly repeats a word or group of words for effect
rhyme - when the end or final sound of two or more words are identical
rhythm - when the arrangement of words creates an audible pattern or beat when read out loud
onomatopoeia - when the words sound like what they mean
idiom - an accepted phrase or expression having a meaning different from the literal
simile - a figure of speech that expresses a resemblance between things of different kinds (usually formed with 'like' or 'as')
metaphor - a comparison between two unlike things
hyperbole - figure of speech that uses exaggeration to express strong emotion, make a point, or evoke humor
personification - representing an abstract quality or idea as a person or creature
meter - a pattern of stressed/unstressed syllables in poetry
end rhyme - rhyme that occurs at the end of two or more lines of poetry
allegory - a story, play, or picture in which characters or settings are used as symbols or abstract ideas
allusion - a reference to something literary, mythological, or historical that the author assumes the reader will recognize
tone - the attitude a writer takes towards a subject, character, or the reader
internal rhyme - rhyme that occurs within a line, rather than at the end
diction - a writer's or speaker's choice of words
oxymoron - an expression in which two words that contradict each other are joined
cacophony - loud, harsh, or disagreeable sounds
free verse - poetic form that does not have a regular meter or rhyme scheme
ballad - a type of poem that is meant to be sung and is both lyric and narrative in nature
colloquial language - informal language; language that is "conversational"
euphemism - an indirect, less offensive way of saying something that is considered unpleasant
elegy - A sad or mournful poem, especially one mourning the dead
irony - a contrast between what is expected and what actually exists or happens
foil - two characters that highlight each other by their differences
foreshadowing - the use of hints and clues to suggest what will happen later in a plot
juxtaposition - placing two elements side by side to present a comparison or contrast
lyric - a short poem of songlike quality
monologue - a speech made by one actor or speaker

“Using Creative Writing Techniques to Inspire, Transform and Energize a Classroom and Student Learning”

ode - a poem usually addressed to a particular person, object or event that has stimulated deep and noble feelings in the poet

paradox - an apparently contradictory statement that actually contains some truth

pun - a play on words, often achieved through the use of words with similar sounds but different meanings

rhetorical question - a question asked for an effect, not actually requiring an answer

symbol - something that stands for or represents something else

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Handout III

Tried and True Writing Workshop Guidelines for any lesson plan: (Not just poetry, fiction or nonfiction classes)

- 1) Give students a model of what you want them to produce (a personification poem, a haiku, a journal entry without using the word “I”, free verse, sestina, metaphysical poem, a short story, or an essay, a biography, etc..)
- 2) Read and discuss model: Isolate techniques such as imagery, word choice, tone, point of view, character development, details, dialogue, format, etc..
- 3) You can verbally discuss/explore the poem’s (or story’s) structure, craft, content, context (social, political, spiritual, cultural) techniques and the poet’s intent.
- 4) You can give them a rubric of what you want them to discuss.
- 5) After the class discussion, assign a 15 minute free write, (timed or not), in which they answer a prompt (which depends upon the kind of poem, or short story or biography you’d like them to write). For example, the prompt could be:
 - a. “What is your first memory?”
 - b. “What is your first memory of your favorite grandparent?”
 - c. “Who is your favorite grandparent and why?”

Modify the prompt question around your lesson. For example, “Who is your favorite scientist?” Or “What do you like most about math (or geography or your favorite singer) and why?” A following prompt question could be, “How would Einstein respond to Global Warming in a poem?”

- 5) Asking questions helps get their creative juices flowing, access memories from their past, or impressions, or details from an event, frees them to use their imagination. Tell them, ‘Don’t think, just write.’
- 6) From the free write, ask them to circle and use the strongest words, language, and vivid colors, or image POUR into a format you provide, i.e., haiku, sonnet, aubade, or a 5 paragraph sentence about the Human Genome project, etc.. Make it fun for them.
- 7) Give them at least 15-30 minutes to write, reorganize their lines and rewrite/revise/edit the poem, short story or short paragraph you want for the assignment.
- 8) Last step - Share the work. Read aloud. You can do this in several ways: Have students read their own work, or you can have someone else read a classmate’s poem aloud. The purpose is to share, listen, comment, encourage, provide critique for making the work stronger, but most importantly make them connect to and remember lesson.

Teachers - Model your behavior! Do the workshop with your students. Write with them. What really impresses students is when YOU do the workshop and read your work aloud. This is REAL engagement! Above all – Have FUN with the workshops and engage your young writers!

“Using Creative Writing Techniques to Inspire, Transform and Energize a Classroom and Student Learning”

Handout IV - Workshop I Example (feel free to modify or change for your purposes)

Crossing into The Poetics of Culture and Heritage: How to Write a Cultural Poem Workshop Taught by Prof. Shonda Buchanan, www.shondabuchanan.com

“Tell me where you’re from and I’ll tell you who you are.” Wallace Stegner, *American Places*

1. Introductions – Our first childhood memories often hold the first moments of parental inheritance, which is also lineage, ancestry or cultural orientation. This can be found in the foods that were cooked in your home and at particular times of the day, week, or during the year for holidays or celebrations. **Culture and heritage** can be found in the rituals or ceremonies your family kept, or in some cases, ignored. Not just holidays but rituals between mother and daughter, between father and son, between siblings. (Give example and discuss). Heritage also exists in the words we say, or slang or language, family sayings, remembrance of a forgotten migration. Strong writing happens in writing about the forgetting or loss of things that impacted your life. My example of this is in my poetry.
2. Senses workshop is an exercise that will help you unearth and uncover the memories hiding and locked in our everyday words, actions and our conversation.
3. For each sense (Taste, Sight, Sound, Touch, Scent), write down five things, words, phrases that REMIND you of the sense. Isolate words, smells, colors and images. Using the sensory words, isolate the texture of your memories, the skin or them. (5 minutes for each sense)
4. Free Flow - Where do you come from?
Using these memories that have arisen from the senses workshop, write for ten-fifteen minutes about your strongest memory or another moment that shows your heritage, (for example a farm, a city bakery, a swimming pool, a favorite food, a baseball game, your holiday).
5. Format - In a 4-6 line per 4-6 stanza poem, using these memories, where you came from. Show your ancestry, your internal and external community, your home. Remember, it doesn’t have to be a physical place. (15 minutes).
6. Do another draft if you need it, or as you write.

Now, let’s read our poems (and if you want, read your sensory words that evoked a certain memory).

“Using Creative Writing Techniques to Inspire, Transform and Energize a Classroom and Student Learning”

Handout V - Cultural Poem (Anatomy of Poem workshop)

Traces for my NC Sampson County Manuels (Excerpted from “*Who’s Afraid of Black Indians?*” by Shonda Buchanan)

Since 1830, every ten years on the Census (DETAIL)

my third great

grandfather disappeared in his skin. (IMAGE)

First Indian, then Mulatto in 1840,

in 1850, he was eventually white. (EPIPHANY)

What were we? (RHETORICAL QUESTION)

My fourth great grandfather

could have left an easier trail to follow. (IMAGE)

One of cornbread, drum songs, splintered wagon wheels.

Anything to locate their breath on the ravaged air. (SENSORY)

The scent of pokeweed unpicked cotton (SENSORY)

something to wet my finger and

test the wind

of a three hundred and forty-four years’ silence,

all the way

back to North Carolina and Virginia.

A porous golden map of some kind:

deer bone, a horse shoe

that told us how to interpret the dreams we woman had

dreams that scared the mess out of us

when dead people came to call,

when the crystal future

unfolded like a horror movie in our dreary heads.

We knew them, the ghosts folding air-dried sheets,

clipping wooden pins off a clothing line

walking away with a full basket of my grandfather’s

wet, white bones

into mist, into shadow.

We will never find him. (RESOLUTION)

“Using Creative Writing Techniques to Inspire, Transform and Energize a Classroom and Student Learning”

Handout VI - Workshop II Example

Finding and Writing the New Negro Movement Poem Designed by Professor Shonda Buchanan for a History class

Step 1: Before Friday’s class, visit this website,

http://christopherbuck.com/Buck_PDFs/Buck_NewNegro_2010.pdf and read about the

emergence of the New Negro Movement. Who are the important people of the movement and why?

What’s the time period? What impact did this movement have on the country? Also read these two poems

by Claude McKay - <http://historymatters.gmu.edu/d/5130> and by Sonia Sanchez poem -

<http://soniasanchez.net/poems>.

Step 2: Upon entering the Hampton University museum, find a piece of artwork that 1) represents the principles and values of the New Negro Movement and, 2) that speaks to you as a black student trying to make something of him/herself.

Step 3: Now let’s put your feelings into words. Write a reflective paragraph or two about the artwork. Highlight the principles and values of New Negro Movement by choosing two to three elements in the artwork that exemplifies this feelings and your relationship to it.

Step 4: To the best of your ability, turn your paragraph into a poem. Keep some of your sentences, but also weave in the vivid colors of the artwork, the texture, the sounds, and the feelings that the artwork evokes in you, and put those on the page. Use your sensory details. Tell us a story about your own Negro Movement. The poem should be 4-5 lines (which equals one stanza). Do your best! Good luck!

Reference:

<http://www.amazon.com/The-New-Negro-Voices-Renaissance/dp/0684838311>

“Using Creative Writing Techniques to Inspire, Transform and Energize a Classroom and Student Learning”

Handout VII - Haiku Example: 21 syllables, 3 lines = 5 syllables line 1, 7 syllables line 2, 5 syllables line 3

6 haiku (for Elizabeth Catlett in Cuernavaca) by Sonia Sanchez

1.

La Señora
making us remember
flesh and wind

2.

O how you
help us catch
each other's breath

3.

a woman's
arms climbing with
colored dreams

4.

Elizabeth
slides into the pool
hands kissing the water

5.

i pick
up your breath and
remember me

6.

your hands
humming hurricanes
of beauty.

Sonia Sanchez, from her new book Morning Haiku. Boston: Beacon Press, 2010. Please do not distribute this work without permission. You may submit requests to reprint the work of Sonia Sanchez from titles published by Beacon Press through its website.

“Using Creative Writing Techniques to Inspire, Transform and Energize a Classroom and Student Learning”

Handout VIII - Malaysian Poem Example from www.poetrysoup.com/poems/nationality/malaysian

Life for me by Lisa Asmeralda

Life for me
can never be a bed of roses
Even when you blessed
With everything
Anything
You ever wanted
Needed

Life can never be perfect
For there's always
A hole
A missing pieces
Leaves you
Hollow
Never be whole again

Life is unfair
For it
Hurt you
Tear you
Broken you down
May have crippled you
Took your innocence away
Crushed you
Leave you scarred
Body and soul

Yet, life teach you
To survive
Hang on tight
Moving on
Day by day
Make you stronger
Tougher
A survivor
And
Still breathing
Still standing/ Living