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The Voice in You- A Form of Expression through Writing

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Introduction

The subject English Language Arts, pertaining to “Writing,” is one the weakest subjects at Tsaile Public School. Students who are classified as English Language Learners (ELL) are the main students who have the most difficulty expressing themselves on paper. Most Tsaile Public School students dread the thought of writing because there is so much more to consider than to simply pick up a pencil and write out their ideas and thoughts. What prevents them to feel comfortable with writing is using the format with writing. One must keep in mind, convention, word choice, voice, grammar and organization as one writes. At the same time, other general points that one has to take into consideration when writing are the style, the purpose, the audience, and the flow of writing. But at third grade level, do we have to worry about all those elements when writing? William Zinsser states about writing, “there are all kinds of writers and all kinds of methods, and any method that helps you to say what you want to say is the right method for you.” He adds, “There isn’t any “right” way to do such personal work”.¹ Furthermore, he states that writers should be driven by the compulsion to write, especially to put themselves in the writing through who they truly are. This is perfect for our third grade students at Tsaile Public School!

I have been teaching third grade for three years now and going into my fourth year. The students’ attitude towards writing has been the same for the last three years. Some students would cringe or grunt and a few would lash out, “UGH...I HATE WRITING!” This attitude is encouraged as our school focuses on other subjects: reading and math. I can understand why our focus is there due to the outcome of data or reports from the school’s state assessment out of Arizona Department of Education. Importantly, I do believe that our school district needs to look at ELA Writing subject from a different or new approach. Especially now I have learned these new approaches after participating in Jessica Brantley’s seminar *Reading for Writing: Modeling the Modern Essay* where we intertwine reading and writing together. I learned a lot of techniques and methods through the seminar as well through research that will be applied in the curriculum Unit. Unfortunately, I have students that are promoted every year from second grade who are writing like Kindergarteners who simply can’t spell words or let alone, write a sentence or phrase. “Why?” I questioned myself as we get to activities involving writing. What’s with the attitude towards writing? What is it with writing that students seem to dislike? Writing should be fun and an exciting moment when one gets to tell a story, to share thoughts or emotions! Therefore, I agree with Zinsser as he states that as a teacher, there is more value in the production of writing, which is clarity but also being able to produce good writing through enjoyment, confidence,

intention, and integrity.² Writing as I once understood it is generally another way to convey a story as you would in telling a story orally, only it is written on paper. However, most young kids don't believe that writing is fun or have no enjoyment in writing. They find it challenging and a form of a task rather than for pleasure.

To get a deeper understanding of why students are finding writing difficult, I have asked several students why writing is just not a motivation for them. I got answers such as, "I can't think, I can't write, I can't spell words that I want to use" or "I don't know what to say, I didn't do anything for the weekend so therefore I got nothing to tell."³ As a result, their writing shows their attitude and the struggle they have with writing. Some writings do not come out to a paragraph, or lack details, expression. A lot of students tend to repeat words such as "went" or "and then" in their sentences. One of the common reasons I found why a student would avoid writing is because he or she is not solid creating a sentence structure, or basically follow grammar rules. As a result, students do not see themselves as potential writers when they probably possess abundance of ideas or stories to share. Having to be diagnosed and wear the label as an ELL (English Language Learner) student also does not make it any easier on them too. I, myself am an English language learner. English is my second language. I recall how it was to try to make that writing piece to perfection. My product was completed without understanding what writing truly was. My writing was simple, basically done to avoid an "F" as a grade. Red ink comments written out as "Sentence fragments" was meaningless to me. I could not understand what writing itself really was. There was no motivation for me. Surely, writing should not be used to judge someone's thoughts or idea. Writing should be open, free, without feeling inferior. It should be taught as a form of an expression and should be enjoyed and be engaged as much as talking and communicating to someone, right? Therefore, in making writing come to life with excitement, this unit is intended to understand writing and to bring out the joy of one's writing as it did while participating in the Yale National Initiative Intensive Session under our seminar leader, Jessica Brantley. This unit is intended to go in-depth to explain what writing is from a teacher perspective and to increase students' motivation if not, the love for writing no matter whether if it is fiction or non-fiction. The seminar made the connections between reading and writing to develop creative writers through analyzing craft, and creating personal experience writing through several model essays.

Demographics

School

The unit is being designed for students at Tsaille Public School. Tsaille Public School is located in a rural area of north eastern Arizona. Tsaille Public is one of the schools under the Chinle Unified School District. It is a small school that is located about 30 miles away from the other 6 schools. Tsaille Public School is an elementary school whose enrollment is from preschool to eighth grade. The school's yearly enrollment ranges from 420 to 450 pupils in accordance to our attendance monitor. There *are* other schools outside our public school where students can enroll as well. This is sometimes a concern for the teachers because students who hop between schools are not academically stabled and lack meeting all standards and skills. The ethnicity of the students is primarily Diné people or a descendant of another tribe. The school provides free meals for all students enrolled through a grant that it qualified for. Tsaille Public School is concerned about the writing within the classroom. Currently, writing is taught by teachers for at least thirty minutes a day twice a week at each grade level. So for this reason, it seems like the importance of writing is put on the "back burner" and shows through writing assessments.

Dine Cultural Environment

Tsaile is a small community. An estimated number of 1,200 people reside in Tsaile. It is located at the base of Chuska Mountain. It is unique because of its beauty and how it is partially located in the forest where tall pine trees grow and meet the open rocky land towards Chinle. On the weekends, families often go fishing at a nearby lake or generally stay home. The nearest big town or city is about 75 miles. A convenient food store and gas station is depended on for necessities. Off to the east of the store, a community college, known as Dine College, is considered the main college campus throughout the reservation.

The Dine people in the surrounding area live by the traditional values and beliefs of the Dine culture. Some of the children are engaged in learning their own Dine language and practicing the culture of Dine involving tending to livestock, especially sheep, hunting, fishing, and family events. Others stay home and basically watch movies and spend their time on the internet or video games. The older generation practice ceremonies to maintain harmony in their household. They often gather for ceremonial purposes or casual get together, for trips or social activities and events in the community. The younger generation are not home. Grandparents often take care of their children. The young parents have to work or live off the reservation to provide for their families. Some live out in the cities or town and do not come home as often as they should. But the people in Tsaile seem to know each other very well. Extended families live nearby or cluster by each other to support one another. When it comes to writing, it is not a part of the culture. Parents also do not reinforce any kinds of writing at home. Although we have some Native American writers as well as artists that are well known such as Sherman Alexie, Laura Tohe, Sherwin Bitsue, Orlando White, Nancy Bo Flood, Luci Topahonso to name a few. There is not a passionate culture environment for writing as it should be. Some students are basically on their phones or watching television as in the western civilization society. Tsaile is fortunate at this point to have, Orlando White (poet) working at the local Dine College.

Content

Background

What is writing and how did it all begin? Writing began many of thousands of years ago. Writing was expressed through primitive pictograph or pictures on rocks, clay or wood. This was a form of communication to others who interpret it as a message. In the Native American society, language itself was not written, but by messages that are considered archives through music and chants of the ancestors. The music and chants carried messages, just as a bible would. These chants are achieves of communication of the holy people that tell of way life in a beauty way. Holy people are considered like gods or spirits. According to a traditionalist medicine man or sometimes known as shaman if you will, Lorenzo Max elaborates on how the Dine Culture is sustaining on written messages in the songs or chants. "No one writes it down, but it is there, the language, the message to our people, that is how it is carried on. You don't see in on YouTube or printed in text about how people communicated with each other or to each other in order to learn about life." [1] He further speaks about how students don't have the right language now when they speak or communicate. He clarifies that when one speaks, they need to think before they speak. In the educational setting writing today has a different meaning for teachers. The writing style has greatly changed and has its own purpose. Through this purpose, writing varies in style. It also depends on who the audience is as well. I view writing from a different perspective then I used to. I am guilty that I was one of those teachers that taught the surface of writing

without going in depth and the rationale behind developing a true writer. There are so much content to learn about writing if we want to be effective and develop writers.

Types of Genre

There are different types of genre for writing. The main four types of writing are: expository, persuasive, narrative and descriptive. Each type serves its own purpose and style. Writing is a form of communication from a person to person, just as we speak orally. Each of the writing genres has different style or format. For example, in narrative writing, a student can write a personal story of him or herself. A person can write an about an adventure, a mystery, and so on. As for Expository writing, a student can write about their environment in relations to animals, plants, space, and human body that will be informative to the audience. Each type of writing is useful and every student should learn to write and practice with a different purpose.

Misconception of Writing

As we learn to read, we are also learning to write. They should go hand in hand to support each other. Students that enter as early as preschool go through different stages or phases of writing. According to the Six Traits Writing program, which most schools such as our district implement and rely on when it comes to writing, at an early age writing begins with pictures to scribbling, then on to use of letters after the phonics and phonological awareness has developed. At third grade, students are beginning to communicate through writing. Students should be writing as a means of communication. At this stage, most teachers at our school district used the student's writing to measure how much students gained from what they've read. Then they'd write a paragraph or summary to answer a question stated by the teacher or prompt after a reading a literary text or non-fiction for comprehension. Basically, writing is used as a tool to assess for comprehension. Writing is used to get into the students' thoughts and understanding. That is great, but is that enough? As I have stated back in my introduction, writing is form of speech that one would just need to write on paper what he or she said orally as if telling a story. Although this may be true, I myself had an awaking of how "writing" should be taught. Some of us teachers are trained to teach writing in an ineffective way. Writing should be taught where students express themselves even if it means that it will take awhile. So long as students express themselves through writing. Their writing maybe good, but it should get better to finally its best. Or some teachers, maybe are trained to teach writing to get students to write words down, but don't understand the meaning behind writing. This is partially the reason teachers are finding it difficult for students to write. If students are not able to comprehend what they read, when they are struggling with reading to begin with, they will surely struggle with writing. In addition, students are not motivated to write what they don't understand. It makes sense that they would struggle. So how do we teach reading and writing? That is because reading has a lot to do with writing. As the old saying, the more you read, the more you can write.

Writing is not getting your thoughts on paper to preserve it, as it was at the beginning of time when writing first began. Today writing is no longer a mnemonic device to retain information. Writing is an epistemological function to help understand a person's thought. David Olsen defines writing more than just writing your thoughts. He mentions that, "Writing not only helps us remember what was thought and said but also to invite us to see what was thought and said in a new way. It is cliché to say that there is more to writing than the ABC's and more to literacy than the ability to decode words and sentences." [2] Writing in a new perspective for me has changed at this point. Of course, writing simply is transcribing what one wants to share or thoughts. The new writing approach for this unit is to "do" the work. Writing takes work! Through revising, rethinking, one finds the right words to exactly what one's is trying to convey. It takes more than one time to write, but several times after each visit. Editing, revising your writing until you convey what you want to say.

Similar to music, you practice and practice until it sounds like what you want it to sound like or what you want your audience to hear. So in essence, it takes work, it takes creativity, style and having the audience in mind. Writing then becomes a work to get the deeper thought or expression of the writer, the author. So each time a student writes a story, they now have to think about what is it exactly they are trying to say about themselves in their events or experiences. What message is implied? What other words can be used to express better so the audience can feel and experience the emotions they felt? The focus is to get the audience to understand you as a writer and draw into your emotions.

Most schools utilize and are familiar with the most common writing process. There are five steps or stages of the writing process. They are important processes that are implemented during writing time even during the state assessment. We, as English teachers teaching writing, are interested in the “process” rather than the “product.” But writing should not be just about process. It is vital that we understand the rationale behind the writing process. Most teachers that teach writing have been trained to teach the process straightforward. It would go something like this, teachers selects a writing prompt for the students to write upon. Then teachers direct students to come up with ideas and make connection with the topic and plot on a web or outline. After students list or outline their thoughts pertaining to a topic or prompt, they then write a rough draft. The idea here is to get the thoughts down using the web or outline. Next, students are instructed to revise their writing, using a dictionary or thesaurus to aid editing. Once editing and revising is completed, which usually takes thirty minutes, students are then asked to rewrite their work as a final draft. The final draft is then turned in as a completed writing assignment. They went through the writing process, like clothes in a wash cycle. Great, that is writing right? Unfortunately, no it is not what writing is. Students then are graded based on how well they are able to understand the writing process with a product that may not be as great as it should be. They move on to the next grade level and teachers are bashing kids on why they aren’t writing essays like they should. Teachers to begin with are setting up students to write with no meaning. So what does this mean?

The purpose of writing has been misinterpreted and misunderstood by some teachers. The purpose is not to have students follow the steps or process and write out what they composed focusing on the steps or process. That is a misunderstanding of writing and is misguided by the teachers. Students are learning the process and steps without analyzing their thoughts. Teachers, in fact, should use the process to focus on the language. What does this mean? It means that teachers need to allow students to focus on the process of discovering the language, discovering what the writers are feeling. They need to focus on using language by deciding what words to use to clarify what they know in life. The writing should dignify what they know or discover in their writing. For example, students should focus on the unfinished work. The teacher should focus on writing that was never developed well by the students. As teachers of third graders, we would often find writing papers that are unfinished marked as “incomplete” top of the page. Donald Murray asserts that students should not write to just simply go through the writing process. He states that there needs to be more. He states, “This is not a question of correct or incorrect, of etiquette or custom. This is a matter of far higher importance. The writer, as he writes, is making ethical decisions. He doesn’t test he words by a rule book, but by life. He uses the language to reveal the truth to himself so that he can tell it to others. It is an exciting, eventful, evolving process.” [3]

The Writing Process

In this unit, our focus is taking the writing process to a more meaningful level for the students. The main purpose with this writing approach is to have the students understand that writing is important. As before, I focused on the product of a written paper without a thought into what the writer actual wants me to know. Students need to understand that writing will take work. They have to develop that habit and mindset to

become writers. The third grade students will use the three level of writing process or stages for this unit as according to Donald Murray. I believe his ideas are important to start off the writing unit. Basically, we want to focus on the importance of the process to get students to write their thoughts and allowing them to find their own way to write. This will also motivate students to find writing as tool to express as they write. The more they practice, the better writers they will become. It is important to remember that this is the process that will need practice. It will require teachers to practice and not rob students of learning to develop the process of writing the truth in their own language students are rob of their thoughts, they begin to depend on the teachers to do the thinking and the writing. Through this process, they are given the opportunity to develop themselves as writers, think like writers, and become great writers. The stages of the writing process are as follows; prewriting, writing, and rewriting. This writing process is a process that will get students to focus on their writing. I generally like the idea of Daniel Murphy's process to get students to write.

Prewriting stage: The writer focuses on a subject that he or she will write about. The writer will also choose an audience and write in any form he or she chooses to. This is simply where the students can take notes, outline, use a graphic organizer such as webbing, research, or basically just write. This part of the stage allows students to independently think.

Writing stage: The writer begins to write as if he is producing a final draft. This stage allows the reader to see how much or how little he knows about the subject. The writing is basically rough, unfinished and the writer is still searching.

Rewriting stage: The writer will consider the subject, form an audience to be a little clearer. The writing will begin to shape clarity, purpose, and meaning. The writer will be researching, rethinking, redesigning, and of course rewriting his or her work. The writer will consider editing, look at each sentences, line by line, making clarity for him or herself. Did he or she choose the right words to say or convey what he is getting across to its audience? This is probably the most satisfying process to becoming a great writer.

The rationale behind the process is to get students' thoughts and what is truly expressed in their writing. The writing is all the students' creativity and clarification based on what they wrote. Most importantly, students are learning and discovering writing skills through the process, especially the stage of revision. Murray adds if teachers are rushing students or tell them what to say or write in their story, then teachers are cheating the students of discovery what is considered writing. He advises teachers to do the following as students are exploring and developing their writing. [4]

Teachers should:

- Be quiet and listen to students as they respond in their writing.
- Teachers become the reader.
- Be patient, and wait, wait and wait.
- Not help students in the prewriting stage, let the students begin to write their ideas. If teachers begin for the students, then they will not learn the largest part of the writing process which is to express their ideas, thoughts, and voice.
- Respect students for the search for truth in which students will surely be engaged.
- Listen carefully to the words students have chosen because those words are what reveals the truth, which may reveal a voice. We must respect the students for their truth and their voice as they choose to in their writing.
- Understand their roles as coaches, encouragers, developers, creators of the students' environment to write.

Implications of Writing

During the writing process there are some implications about writing that Murray mentioned. He stressed that these are what teachers need to consider as well during the writing process. Teachers need to teach the process at the beginning before anything else. At third grade, students are beginning to develop their writing. They use writing to express and tell what they know. So in order to ensure that teachers develop creative writers, these implications need to be considered by the teachers or coach. Below are implications for teaching the writing process, not the product.

The implications are that students will:

- Examine their own revolving writing or of their classmates. Students decide on their own choice. It forces them to look at word by word while developing their writing.
- Select own subjects or title. It is the responsibility of the students to own and explore their own writing with their own language and uncover the meaning they are trying to convey.
- To develop their writing with their own language. As students come to your classroom, they have their own language developed to use prior to coming to your classroom. Once students are given the opportunity and space, they will embark on serious search for their own text. Even if it means that it will take a while. Some may take a couple of days to begin writing their thoughts in a complete sentences.
- Be encouraged to attempt any form of writing so long as they discover the power of communication as to what he or she trying to say
- To write with creativity and function on a subject in a way that an audience understands what the writer is conveying.
- Do not worry so much about mechanics so his or her language to convey the meaning is not obscured. That should come last. If students worry about the mechanics, it obscures the meaning of what they truly wants to say.
- Be provided a place, perhaps a quiet area in the classroom to think and provide a time to write.
- Be graded on what he or she has produced. More rewarding than grade, publication in the classroom.
- Be supported by teachers. Teachers need to understand that some students will write slower, others may write fast. Either way they have to find their own way to tell the truth, writing to what they really want to convey in their own language.
- Write as an experiment. This sometimes means under no rules, no absolutes, just alternatives to express themselves, to be able to write from their own voice and be heard.

Personal Writing/Personal Narrative

What is a personal narrative essay? A personal narrative essay is a story you choose to share with readers, for it communicates your understanding of yourself, others, and or society issues political. As people, we remember stories, so our personal narrative essay is a way we can transform an ordinary experience into meaningful commentary that is applicable to a broad audience. What questions can I consider to help me convey my story effectively? A personal narrative essay uses the components of a story: introduction, plot, characters, setting, and conflict if any. It also uses the components of argument, thesis, and conclusion. In a personal narrative essay, we tell our readers a story to make a larger argument. Focusing the readers' attention on significant, detailed scenes, we develop our argument persuasively through effective storytelling.

An example of a personal experience or personal narrative writing that a teacher or even students can refer to is an essay from The Norton Reader, 14th edition.[5] There are many wonderful personal experiences with different forms of genre written in the book. It varies in style, topics, and social or political issues. It is an

anthology of essays written well from well-known authors such as Mya Angelou, E.B White, Langston Hughes and many more. It is must have collection of essays to read and encourages one to write a personal narrative. I enjoyed the many essays that we have read together from this textbook. In our seminar, we read an assigned essay, then as a group, we had discussion on the author's perspective, issues and thoughts focusing on the sentences, words, and expressions. One essay that I truly enjoyed that also could be reference as a sample for teachers is *On Dumpster Diving*, by Lars Eighner. This essay is written based on the personal experience of Lars Eighner with dumpster diving for trash. The author wrote of his experience with being homeless and finds food in trash bins, or explains how to find food and to eat it safely. He elaborates how it feels to be poor and surviving by doing whatever it takes, while some people may live in wealth. Although those that can afford food still end up trashing what they'd now consider trash, it becomes a value or goods for him. He compares type of foods, or cans to wealth. Lars's personal experience can be seen as a social issues. His message can be interpreted as finding happiness even if you are poor. The struggle is real but the perception of goods is perceived differently by individuals. Lars Eighner's essay support the old saying, "Another man's trash is another man's treasure." As we discussed the essay, we focused on perception, analyzed each word or sentences, word choices and discuss what helped the author expressed well to make it a powerful essay.

Students should understand that writing is just more that putting your thoughts on paper; they should actually write by putting their feelings and experiences with well thought out words. Each day, students can practice to get their writing to be the best. Students can better their writing by revisiting, editing to looking for a meaningful writing or essay to capture the audience. One way to make it better is to use words that express with more details than other words used. Using various words to explain or illustrate the writers' feelings will bring out the expression in a writing. I have also learned of different connotation of writing experiences. I never really paid attention to exactly writing directly about oneself as memoir, or personal experience, autobiography. At third grade, I'd tell the students write your experience or about yourself. I believe to know the connotations of personal writing gives a direction of what one's writing must consist of. When writing a personal narrative, there are some differences. Here is a list of the types of writing experiences or expression to convey to an audience that teachers should be familiar as shared in our writing seminar.[6] Writing could be categorized into different connotations of writing even when it relates to oneself in a personal story.

Different Connotations of Writing Experiences

1. Memoir- a French word meaning "memory". A writing or essay based on someone's memory of an event that occurred in his or her life. The memory is factual and holds dear to the heart.
2. Autobiography- an essay or text that is written of someone's life.
3. Personal Experiences- a writing or essay on someone's personal experience that could be inspirational or enlightening.
4. Personal Narrative-a personal writing usually also written as 1st person writing that expresses one's life.
5. Personal Essay- an essay that carries the reader through the writer's experiences or important events.

6 Traits Writing

Tsaile Public School has been utilizing a writing program that has been implemented by teachers' prior to today. The writing program is called *6 plus 1 traits to Writing* by Ruth Culham.[7]These six traits are also important components of writing. The six traits of writing have 6 key characteristics that define quality writing plus one. Plus one is the *presentation* that has been added not too long ago. It is not necessarily the 'meat' of the writing, but the considered as a part of convention as well. These traits are important and should be

taught in addition as students develop their writing skills. The traits are:

- Ideas- The focus on the main message of the writer
- Organization—how the writing piece is structured or the components of the writing.
- Voice—what is personal tone or mood of the writer?
- Word Choice—the vocabulary use or selected by a writer to help the writer convey the message in a more meaningful way.
- Sentence Fluency—the rhythm of how the sentences flow.
- Conventions—the mechanical usage of grammar and rules.
- Presentation—the presentation of the final product.

Ideas

The ideas are the main content of the piece with all the supporting details that enrich the theme or message. The ideas are strong when the message provides clarity. The writer chooses details that are interesting, important, and informative and could be something that he or she already knows or possibly a new learning.

Organization

Organization is the internal structure of a piece of writing, the pattern and sequence. Connections are strong. It closes with a sense of resolution, bringing things to a satisfying closure, answering important questions while still leaving the reader something to think about. When organization is strong, the writing begins meaningfully and creates in the writer a sense of anticipation and engagement.

Voice

Voice is felt by the reader through the author's words, such as a real person speaking with his or her heart and soul. The writer is seen as real, caring, and very expressive.

Word Choice

Word choice provides rich, colorful, precise language that engages and enlightens the reader with powerful selection of words. It is very descriptive where it enhances the story for clarity. Usage of words choice provides deep vivid images for who is reading the author's story or essay.

Sentence Fluency

Sentence fluency is the flow of the sentence or language. The sentences could be written using rhythm or patterns. Sentences will vary in length, beginnings, structure, and style. The sentences are well crafted that the reader reads the story with ease.

Conventions

The conventions are where the writer looks at the mechanical correctness of the piece and includes focuses on the five elements: spelling, punctuation, capitalization, grammar usage, and paragraphing.

Presentation (Plus 1)

Presentation is both visual and textual elements. The writer presents his or her message on paper. Is the writing polished? It must follow the guidelines of presentation. According to 6 traits, they include: Balance of

white space with visuals and text, graphics, neatness, handwriting, font selection, borders, and overall appearance.[8]

Reading and Writing

The unit will focus on mainly on composing ideas, word choice and voice for this unit. As students begin to write, another method that will get students to learn to write is to teach it with reading. The text can be literary or informational text. Zinsler argues that basically students need to write using both type of text. He continues to argue that writing is simply a non-fiction because everyone's experiences are real, which makes sense to say that non-fiction texts can be used to write in expressing experiences. I have decided for practice to use several Native American books. So I am addressing personal narrative stories that provides relevancy to student's culture. It is both written with the culture of the Dine perspective and the modern society in mind. One book is called *Navajos wear Nikes, A Reservation Life* by Jim Kristofic. I choose this book because the students can relate to the character who is a boy who moved with his mother to the reservation. It is written from a first person perspective and uses some rich higher level words for students to replicate they begin to write about themselves. The other book that I chose to use as an anchor to write personal narrative or experiences is *Racing the Sun* by Paul Pitts. Both texts provides positive modeling and relevant. I know the students will be very interested in the stories. The motivation and comprehension of the text will be more positive and enrich because of how they can relate to the characters. Students will participate by analyzing each sentence or phrase. The unit will involve students to collaborate as they discuss their personal story orally in pairs or with a partners. After each paragraph or chapter reading, a transition to writing will be strongly encouraged. The motive behind the writing activity or workshop is to analyze why a writer uses such terminology and uses words, punctuation marks, and the sentence structure to convey his or her story. Through their writing, the outcome for each writer is to become better in expressing their feelings through use of strong, rich vocabulary words that expresses whom they truly are as if one has a candid camera and take a vivid picture of the author.

Teaching Strategies

Researched Based Strategies

Each teaching strategies used during the lesson is important to the lesson. Teachers have to use these strategies effectively and with fidelity. It will definitely take practice and practice for students to become successful in using these strategies independently. That is the goal of the students to become independent thinkers and writers.

Graphic Organizers

Students will be writing a lot with collaboration. The first part of the writing activity involves building vocabulary. Students will use specific graphic organizers to build their vocabulary skills. As a part of the writing process, students will be writing and emblem the words they heard in a text to create personal narrative. The teacher will be reading during shared reading to introduce vocabulary. This process is to have students learn that words they hear or read can become a part of their vocabulary development to use in their writing. The graphic organizers to help build vocabulary words and helps define their meaning are: Four corners, Cornell notes, and ABC List.

Cooperative Learning

Cooperative learning through the Kegan model or structure has been proven to be effective where students are accountable for self and others in learning academically and socially.[9] It provides a positive safe environment for students to become successful. Therefore, students will be involved in activities that involve students to group in whole group, small group and partners. Students will be giving many opportunities to talk to one another. Teachers will mostly be the facilitator during these times. It is important for students to interact and do the talking so the words learned will be internalized. Such activity involving cooperative learning are: Think, Pair, Share, and

Gradual Release Model (I do, We do, You do Model)

This model is considered a gradual release from modeling to independent practice. This strategy has been proven to be effective when delivering a lesson.

I Do is a phase where the teacher tells and shows (model) what students need to do and how they do things. This phase is important especially for students who are visual learners. It is the effective and efficient learning process for students to grasp what they should do and be able to do.

We do is next phase of the learning process. This is also an important phase where the teacher is involved with the students by doing things together. The teacher is a support and guides the students to ensure that he learning of the objectives is taking place.

You do is the last phase where the students will work independently and demonstrate the work they are assigned without the teacher's help. This phase helps the teacher check for understanding and see if there needs to be a re-teaching.

The teacher will demonstrate modeling by reading passages, excerpts or chapter book. During teacher reading, teacher will model reading fluency, use of context clues, and basically to try to make sense of a phrase in a passage. In addition, to model how to identify unfamiliar words and to learn them and begin to understand the meaning of words so that students can start using variety of words.

Visualization

Students will look at photos or images and discuss or list key details form pictures or clips from a video. From each photos are clips, they will write a phrase or sentence about the images and the details. On the other hand, students can create a picture or images that have details. These images will be used to have students explain, tell or write for clarity. They will use words in text and images suggested by their own minds while reading sentences of a text. This helps students to see images without having to struggle and is helpful, especially for younger elementary students. Visual aids also help students see the picture much more clearly so they have a better comprehension of the story.

Technology in the classroom

Use of Eno board (like a smart board) will be used to show other passages or images of a text. An Eno board is an interactive board that allows students and teachers to engage in the lesson. Use of Eno board will make learning visual for students. The documentary camera will be an additional tool to use when showing students how to complete graphic organizers. During the reading of passages or displaying images, there will discussion of the characters' traits, point of view of the author, and identify words or phrased used to provide

clarity.

Vocabulary Development

Vocabulary building is important when reading a text. Students often come across words that they have never heard of or unfamiliar. During the reading of text, students and teacher with the gradual release model and graphic organizer will learn new words by learning the meaning first, then stem other words that can be similar or opposite. This will increase the students' knowledge and comprehension of an unknown word. This strategy will provide students to use other words to explain, tell or be more descriptive with words choices.

Vocabulary words from excerpts of *Navajos wear Nike* for students to learn and emblem in their writing. This process can be done with any books that are relevant.

Pg. 46- 47 Paragraph 5	pg. 111 Paragraph 1-5
rattled	jarred
processed (discussion on suffixes)	puzzled
clinging	proper
spooned	caregiving
molded	forays
splashed	isolation
snapped	hosted
gnawing	adapt

Guided Reading/Shared Reading

The third grade class at Tsaille Public School is not all at grade level. The teacher is able to read excerpts selected, or a chapter book during shared reading to reinforce reading and pick up on vocabulary. In addition, comprehending the meaning of the word, phrase, or text. This is to help students use reading strategies and become better readers without the frustration of reading. This strategy is where I will be reading for the students and modeling for them. Anchor charts will be used while reading to help with developing vocabulary and comprehension of a text.

Activities

The unit is comprised into 3 weeks with 3 days of writing activities a week. The first week is to introduce the writing process: teacher will talk about happens during prewriting, writing, and rewriting stages. It is also good to talk about the rationale of these stages. The second week is the introductory of vocabulary development and how to introduce and discuss words and phrases from a text selection. This is also a time to teach students about how to analyze words and sentences as they write. This stage would be considered as a prewriting stage by writing thoughts down pertaining to words learned. The third week is to use all three writing process to enhance on students vocabulary development as well as writing with expression and voice. Student will replica their writing using the words learned from the excerpt.

Week 1

Teacher will introduce the writing process that the students will be expected to use as a process in developing their personal narrative. Do not expect a well developed personal narrative until at the end of the unit. These writing activities will be for practice. This is a beginning process to help students develop clarity, use of expression and build vocabulary skills so students learn to write better. Each of the process is explained by teacher modeling on a chart.

Prewriting stage is a form of ideas written out freely without so much thought into the organization, convention, or other traits. All these elements will come into their writing process in different stages of writing. Teacher will modeled by using a graphic organizer about an event such as weekend trip to the lake. First, teacher begins with a graphic organizer such as webbing, ABC list or just a list to help jot ideas about a trip to the local lake. Through the ABC list, words can be developed alphabetically relevant to the trip. This gives the writer an idea of how much word he or she knows.

The next stage is the *writing* stage, as teacher is modeling writing, the audience is kept in mind. The writing can be written in a paragraph or longer. This is a form of rough draft. Teacher will model by writing sentences or paragraphs based on the webbing or ABC list generated. Teacher writes several sentences about the trip to the lake.

The final stage is the *rewriting stage*. At this stage, the teacher now models rewriting stage by rereading the story written about "A trip to the Lake." The writer will go into depth about their writing by asking themselves questions such as "Who will understand? What does my reader need to know about my trip?" It would be best to go over 5 W's questions to be able to help with keeping the audience in mind. At this stage, students need to understand and analyze whether the topic they will be writing about needs to be researched by gathering more details. Teacher should modeled by asking questions to self and see how to provide more clarity. The idea is make sure students understand the writing process by knowing the audience, and the characters or narrators traits, being expressive and finding other words to elaborate to provide more clarity. At this stage, the writer needs to understand that in order to provide clarity, and to convey the author's message or story, the writer must look at every words and sentences in their own writing to see if it helps. Other activities such as SNAP or word choice can be used by the teacher to make connection with the audience. SNAP is basically a teaching moment to teach a concept or a vocabulary so students can build vocabulary. Teacher will model through the processes using the passage or story written. In addition, teacher should also explain the types of writing or genre, specifically narrative. In this activity, teacher will explain or introduce what a personal narrative writing is, what an expression is, and what using your voice in your writing is?

Week 2

Teacher will use the text *Navajos wear Nikes* to provide examples of a personal narrative. This activity will be during Read Aloud. Read Aloud is a time when teacher gets to read fluently with expression to the students. Teacher will read excerpts from the text.

Excerpt Pg. 46- 47 Paragraph 5 Day 1 Week 2

Teacher will discuss the words using SNAP and or graphic organizer to write words learned. Each time the words are read aloud, teacher and students can discuss the meaning of each words. Teacher will also talk about the sentences and phrases. Teacher and students will analyze sentences and words. A discussion by modeling and collaboratively on how it is used in context to convey the narrator's point of view. Teacher can

also use graphic organizers such as *four corners* to develop the vocabulary skills and comprehension. Students and teacher will work in groups or partners to learn the meaning of words and sentences. For third grade students, it is best to review consistently. Teacher can further draw images to reinforce comprehension of each word or sentences, especially for students of English language learners.

Day 2 Week 2

Teacher and students will work in groups to develop sentences using the words learned. Teacher is still modeling but implementing the gradual release mode. Prior to writing, reviewing the meaning of the words will reinforce once again building vocabulary words. This part of the activity can be done individually if students master the meaning of each words. Based on experiences and prior knowledge, students should independently develop sentences. The sentences does not have to be written in a story yet. This activity is to reinforce the meaning of words. Before they get there, during this activity, teacher will model writing a sentence using the words. Students and teachers can create sentences. Most importantly, definition should be displayed of each word learned as a visual aid in support of retaining words learned.

Day 3 Week 2

Teacher will write a story or passage with the words learned. Teacher will need to model word choice, creating meaningful sentences to provide clarity, and follow the writing process.

Week 3

Teacher will read another excerpt on pg. 111 Paragraph 1-5 from Navajos were Nike. Students will follow week 2 steps and eventually create a short passage using the words learned. During the writing, remind students of the process and questions to keep in mind to provide clarity and expression.

Final writing

Students will follow the writing process that they followed and create a personal narrative about a prompt of their choices. Teachers may give three prompts but the goal is to have students be independent by allowing them to write what gives them the motivation. If you should give them a writing prompt, give several of them and provide students to choose. This gives the students the freedom and motivation to write. As students write, some may not finish the first day, or second day, or possible first week. I know this how some of our third grade writers begin. It is important to revisit the same writing to enhance and give the students the chance to convey their point of view of their personal experience. Students will soon learn to own their own writing and voice what they want to share. Through their writing, you as a teacher will begin to hear your student's voice as they write their personal narrative. Once this is accomplished, your students are well on their way to becoming great writers and they will continue to find other words to substitute to express themselves with more clarity. As a part of extension, our class will invite a local author, Orlando White, to be a special guest to reinforce writing. Orlando White is a professor at a local community college who has published stories through poems. He will be a great motivation as he reads some the students writing.

Appendices

State Standards

Reading

Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, distinguishing literal from nonliteral language.

Distinguish one's own point of view from that of the narrator or those of the characters.

Describe characters in a story (e.g., their traits, motivations, or feelings) and explain how their actions contribute to the sequence of events.

Writing

Students will be able to write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, descriptive details, and clear event sequences.

1. Establish a situation and introduce a narrator and/or characters; organize an event sequence that unfolds naturally.
2. Use dialogue and descriptions of actions, thoughts, and feelings to develop experiences and events or show the response of characters to situations.
3. Use temporal words and phrases to signal event order.
4. Provide a sense of closure.

Language

Students will determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words and phrases based on grade 3 reading and content, choosing flexibly from a range of strategies.

1. Determine the meaning of the new word formed when a known affix is added to a known word (e.g., agreeable/disagreeable, comfortable/uncomfortable, care/careless, heat/preheat).
2. Use a known root word as a clue to the meaning of an unknown word with the same root (e.g., company, companion).
3. Use sentence-level context as a clue to the meaning of a word or phrases.
4. Use glossaries or beginning dictionaries, both print and digital, to determine or clarify the precise meaning of key words and phrases.

Demonstrate understanding of word relationships and nuances in word meanings.

1. Distinguish the literal and nonliteral meanings of words and phrases in context (e.g., take steps).
2. Identify real-life connections between words and their uses (e.g., describe people who are friendly or helpful).
3. Distinguish shades of meaning among related words that describe states of mind or degrees of certainty (e.g., knew, believed, suspected, heard, and wondered).

Acquire and use accurately grade-appropriate conversational, general academic, and domain-specific words

and phrases, including those that signal spatial and temporal relationships (e.g. After dinner that night, we went looking for them).

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