Unit 2: Building Blocks of the Narrative- Show Don't Tell

Content Area: **Language Arts Literacy**
Course(s): **Creative Writing 2**
Time Period: **February**
Length: **5 blocks**
Status: **Published**

Enduring Understandings

Using descriptive detail which engages the senses, active verbs and dialogue to build characters and move the action of the plot is essential to showing, not telling, the reader what a story is about.

"Showing," or allowing the reader to discover what a story is about (theme) on their own, as they read or as a character discovers as well, is a very satisfying experience for both the reader and the writer.

Explicitly spelling out, or "telling" the reader what is going on in a story, such as the motivation of the characters, their feelings and attitudes, or even the results of events, leads to a loss of interest for the reader.

Comparing the film to text version of a storyyields understanding of the mind of the storyteller.

By identifying details filmmakers and writers include in their productions, students get a glimpse into the mind of the artist.

Essential Questions

How can a writer use descriptive detail, active verbs and dialogue to build characters and convey plot action?

Why is using descriptive detail, active verbs and dialogue to build characters and convey plot action essential to showing?

What is showing, not telling?

Why is it important to allow the reader to discover character motivation and theme on their own?

Why does "telling" or explaining key elements of a story take the wind out of a narrative?

Content

Student generated material

Instructional handout

Skills

Use descriptive detail which engages the senses, active verbs and realistic dialogue to build characters and convey theme in writing exercise.

Recognize the effective use of detail, active verbs and dialogue in short stories.

Provide feedback on peer partner's work and in class-wide discussion.

Organize ideas according to tenets of effective narrative structure.

Resources

The Little Mermaid by Hans Christian Andersen

Student generated material

The Train From Rhodesia by Nadine Gordimer

Standards

NJSLSA.W3. Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, well-chosen details, and well-structured event sequences.

NJSLSA.W4. Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.

NJSLSA.W5. Develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach.

NJSLSA.W10. Write routinely over extended time frames (time for research, reflection, and revision) and shorter time frames (a single sitting or a day or two) for a range of tasks, purposes, and audiences.

W.11-12.3. Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, well-chosen details, and well-structured event sequences.

b. Use narrative techniques, such as dialogue, pacing, description, reflection, and multiple plot lines, to develop experiences, events, and/or characters.

c. Use a variety of techniques to sequence events so that they build on one another to create a coherent whole and build toward a particular tone and outcome (e.g., a sense of mystery, suspense, growth, or resolution).

LA.W.11-12.3	Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, well-chosen details, and well-structured event sequences.
LA.W.11-12.3.B	Use narrative techniques, such as dialogue, pacing, description, reflection, and multiple plot lines, to develop experiences, events, and/or characters.
LA.W.11-12.3.C	Use a variety of techniques to sequence events so that they build on one another to create a coherent whole and build toward a particular tone and outcome (e.g., a sense of mystery, suspense, growth, or resolution).
LA.W.11-12.4	Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience. (Grade-specific expectations for writing types are defined in standards 1–3 above.)
LA.W.11-12.5	Develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, trying a new approach, or consulting a style manual (such as MLA or APA Style), focusing on addressing what is most significant for a specific purpose and audience.
LA.W.11-12.10	Write routinely over extended time frames (time for research, reflection, and revision) and shorter time frames (a single sitting or a day or two) for a range of tasks, purposes.