

Lesson 1.7 – List-to-detail Freewrite

“It is important for the writer of a narrative essay to be able to capture the attention of the audience. An important factor in this genre of writing is the incorporation of the 5 senses in the narration. We can significantly affect the reader if they touch, see, smell, taste and hear our experiences as authentically as possible.

“...the frame of focus I provide gives them a way in that they might not discover on their own – and produce the kind of novelty that improvisation exercises create in acting classes. One of my standards...is a time expansion exercise. Students need to select an experience that didn’t last more than five or six minutes, but that they remember in absolute detail” (82).

- Thomas Newkirk, Holding on to Good Ideas in Times of Bad Ones

Rationale: This essay uses Thomas Newkirk’s idea in Holding on to Good Ideas in Times of Bad Ones, that “We can significantly affect the reader if they touch, see, smell, taste and hear out experiences as authentically as possible” (82). For their narrative essay, it is imperative that each student include a sensory element to their writing; this will demonstrate Readiness Criteria 2.C.: “Use of relevant illustration, explanation, anecdote, etc. to elaborate and convey meaning.”

Goal: Students will compose a text which demonstrates the ability to use illustration and sensory awareness in narration.

Objectives: Students will be able to

1. Create a simple list, a one-paragraph description of one point on that list, and a revision of that paragraph which utilized each of the five senses.
2. Associate the activity with MI theory, as a logical/mathematic strengthening lesson.

Assessment:

1. The freewrite activity will all be written in the students’ journals, which will be turned in to the instructor for journal credit. For full points, all students must complete the activity.
2. In addition, the students will identify for the instructor which Intelligence is strengthened by this activity.

Preparation: Write out freewrite question on the board.

Process/Procedures:

1. Begin class with a simple freewrite: “Make a numbered list of everything you did during the past hour, beginning exactly 60 minutes ago. Be detailed.” (10 min)
2. Next, ask the students to take one of their numbered events that they just wrote down, and write in detail about that specific moment. (10 min)
3. Next, ask the students to rewrite their last entry with sensory descriptions, such as taste, smell, feel, color, texture, sound, weight, time, etc. (10 min)
4. As a class, ask for volunteers to share their final paragraph, reading the single event first. Allow time for 4 or 5 people to share, then discuss the list-to-detail sequence as a class. Relate this to the narrative essay.

Materials: none

Modifications/accommodations: none