

Narrative Writing as a Springboard for Informational and Argument Writing: Teen Violence

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Contentions

Prior to this lesson: Students will have had experience with narrative writing and reflection pieces. This is a unit that would take place over time, not in a single day. In addition to the lessons you will see today, students will be taught how to develop narrative, informational, and argumentative writing skills. We would also be reading the novel *Give a Boy a Gun as an accompaniment*.

My demonstration is meant to suggest and support my contentions that:

1. The narrative can be used as a springboard into other styles of writing, such as expository writing and argumentative writing. Students can use personal reflections and experiences to shape other forms of writing, having the ability to use personal experience as a foundation to build other writing pieces.
2. Various forms of writing can be taught in a cohesive unit and build on each other, allowing for the writing to grow with deeper complexity.
3. True audience and purpose can positively affect the outcome of student writing to provide a higher interest level and true attempts.
4. Student learning is supported and fostered by moving from the concrete to the abstract or from the experiential to logical argumentation.

Questions:

Through my teaching demonstration, I hope to prompt discussion on the following questions:

- Can narrative and academic writing coexist in the same unit? Does this combination improve students' writing ability by having a familiar tool to build from? Or would the coexistence cause confusion through the combination of writing styles instead of separating the units?
- What role *should* narrative play in the middle school ELA curriculum?
- What messages are students receiving when narrative writing is either limited or excluded from the curriculum? How can we counteract other teachers' or administrators' ideas that narrative writing is "too childish" in terms of advancing towards the high school curriculum?

- Can we, within the boundaries of the Common Core, show students that writing in the classroom can translate into action that can better our schools, our community, and our nation?
- What other topics would be good to consider for this type of unit?

The Approach/Process

Students will use narrative writing as a tool for other forms of writing.

1. Sticky notes/prior knowledge activity: Brainstorm what we think of when we hear “teen violence”.
2. Students will listen to an excerpt from [Give a Boy a Gun](#).
3. Reflection narrative on your personal experience with teen violence.
 - a. Student prompt: *Everyone has some experience with teen violence. Reflect on your experiences with teen violence; perhaps you were the aggressor, the victim, or the witness. Write to someone you trust or for yourself, and share one of your experiences with teen violence.*
 - b. [Miss Slack's Personal Reflection](#)
 - c. Individual writing time
 - d. Share with partner
 - e. Whole group share (timed -- sorry!)
4. Persuasive Writing Activity: Teen violence facts + groups
 - a. Students will receive a fact about teen violence while whole class discusses persuasive writing
 - b. Whole class: Watch digital story about teen violence (PSA)
 - i. [Stop Teen Violence: A Digital Story](#)
 - c. Whole class: Brainstorm and choose audience and media: [Media and Audience Ideas for Persuasive Writing](#)
 - d. Move into groups based on animal on the back of your card. Share your facts and discuss with group *how* to persuade people to make a change! *What are some steps you can take? What different kinds of language can be used to persuade others?*
 - e. [MMAPS](#) - outline your persuasive writing (*If your group finishes early, please begin writing your persuasive piece*)
 - f. Briefly share your groups' plan as a whole class
5. Discuss difference between persuasive and informational writing; what's essential?
 - a. Emotional responses are a good start, but what's next? Facts v. emotion discussion.
 - b. Techniques for persuasion v. informative text
6. Informational Writing
 - a. Background on how to structure informational text
 - b. [Teen Violence Sources](#)

- c. Informative letter student prompt: *Several university students are preparing to enter the doors of middle schools as teachers this coming August. Think about what these soon-to-be-teachers need to know about teen violence when working in middle schools. Write an informational letter or essay to a soon-to-be student teacher giving them a “heads up” concerning teen violence.*
 - d. [Miss Slack’s Example Letter](#)
 - e. Individual writing time
 - f. Share with partner
7. Discussion: So how do we combine the facts and the emotion: strategies for argumentative writing. Description of the next step I would take in my unit plan:.
- a. [Persuasive writing v. argument writing](#)
 - b. *Argumentative action writing (we do not have time to write this in my demo, but this would be the next step in my unit)*
 - c. *Logical argumentation letter student prompt: Teen violence is getting out of control at our school and other middle schools in the country. How will teen violence impact individuals, our school, and our community? What solutions do you have? Now write to convince an audience in our community that it is time to take a stand against teen violence and steps we should take. Remember to include **facts** in your letter along with the opposing side. Your job is to offer your audience another perspective to consider on a debatable topic, in this case, teen violence.*

Standards

ARGUMENTATIVE ANCHOR

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.8.1a Introduce claim(s), acknowledge the claim(s) from alternate or opposing claims, and organize the reasons and evidence logically.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.8.1b Support claim(s) with logical reasoning and relevant evidence, using accurate, credible sources and demonstrating an understanding of the topic or text.

INFORMATIVE ANCHOR

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.8.2a Introduce a topic clearly, previewing what is to follow; organize ideas, concepts, and information into broader categories; include formatting (e.g., headings), graphics (e.g., charts, tables), and multimedia when useful to aiding comprehension.

NARRATIVE ANCHOR

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.8.3a Engage and orient the reader by establishing a context and point of view and introducing a narrator and/or characters; organize an event sequence that unfolds naturally and logically.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.8.3d Use precise words and phrases, relevant descriptive details, and sensory language to capture the action and convey experiences and events.

SPEAKING AND LISTENING ANCHOR

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.8.1c Pose questions that connect the ideas of several speakers and respond to others’ questions and comments with relevant evidence, observations, and ideas.

Bibliography/Related Reading

Strasser, Todd. *Give a Boy a Gun*. New York, Simon & Schuster: 1999. Print.

"6 Traits of Writing: Argumentative v. Persuasive Writing." *Smenkens Education*. Smenkens Education Solutions, Inc. 2013. Web. 28 June 2013.

"Youth Violence Statistics." Where Peace Lives.org. Where Peace Lives. 2013. Web. 29 June 2013.

"Data and Statistics: School Violence." cdc.gov. Center for Disease Control and Prevention. 22 Feb. 2013. Web. 29 June 2013.

Radcliffe, Barbara J. "*Narrative as a Springboard for Expository and Persuasive Writing*." *Voices from the Middle* 19.3 (2012): 18-24. Web.

Samples

I do not have any samples as I have not taught this lesson before and would be thinking of including it for next year.