

Lesson 3: CAPTURING CHILDREN'S THOUGHTS

TIME: 20-25 minutes

PURPOSE: to encourage the children to use
the power of their imaginations

Materials

flip chart
markers

boom box
tapes of soft music

Suggested Books and Poems

- Alarcón, Francisco X. *From the Belly Button of the Moon / Del ombigo de la luna*. San Francisco: Children's Book Press, 1998.
- Herrera, Juan Felipe. *Laughing Out Loud I Fly: Poems in English and Spanish*. New York: Joanna Cotler Books, 1998.
- Hughes, Langston. *The Dream Keeper and Other Poems*. New York: Knopf Books for Young Readers, 1996.
- Lee, Dennis. *Garbage Delight*. Toronto: MacMillan Press, 1977.
- Scheer, Julian. *Rain Makes Applesauce*. New York: Holiday House, 1964.
- Silverstein, Shel. *Where the Sidewalk Ends*. New York: HarperCollins Children's Books, 1974.
- . *Falling Up*. New York: HarperCollins Children's Books, 1996.

The Dream Keeper

by Langston Hughes

Bring me all of your dreams,

You dreamers,
Bring me all of your
Heart melodies
That I may wrap them
In a blue cloud-cloth
Away from the too-rough fingers
Of the world.

Bath Song

by Dennis Lee

A biscuit, basket, a bath in a hat,
An elephant stuck in a tub:
Seize her, and squeeze her, and see if she's fat,
And give her a rub-a-dub-dub.

A biscuit, a basket, a bath in a hat,
An elephant stuck in a spoon:
Seize her and squeeze her, and see if she's fat,
And give her a ride to the moon.

The Secret Song

by Dennis Lee

I've got a secret
Song I sing
That's secret and special
As anything.

It's sort of a magical
Whispery fizz,

But I'm never quite sure
What the tune part is—

So I jump ahead
From the stop at the start
To squeak at the very
Ending part

Which is actually more
Of a whistling and dinning,
And everyone thinks
That it's still the beginning.

And I'm never quite sure
How the words of it go,
But I just leave them out
And they don't even show.

And it always works,
And nobody knows
How my magical, secret
Sing-song goes.

Baldomero, My Cockatoo, Cleans His Suit

by Juan Felipe Herrera

Baldomero, my cockatoo, cleans his suit
yesterday & today, it is all the same, he doesn't look back
he concentrates, on string beans, almonds,
the tidal wave inside a lettuce leaf, a snow pea
is a museum in the morning, he doesn't worry
about California or my birthday, he works hard
with his wings, he gazes miles across the wire cage
his mind is infinite, his magic mind is his yellow suit.

Baldomero, mi cacatúa, lava su traje

by Juan Felipe Herrera

Baldomero, mi cacatúa, lava su traje
ayer y hoy, todo es igual, no mira hacia atrás
se concentra, en habichuelas, almendras,
la ola colosal adentro de una hoja de lechuga, un chícharo
es un museo en la mañana, no se preocupa
de California or de mis cumpleaños, trabaja duro
con sus alitas, divisa millas a través de su jaula de alambre
su mente es infinita, su mente maravilla es su traje amarillo.

Imagining

by Shel Silverstein

You're only just imagining
A mouse is in your hair.
You've got to stop imagining
That mice are everywhere.
I think you're just imagining
To give yourself a scare,
But trust me dear, I wouldn't lie:
There is no mouse up there.

What to Do

1. Begin the lesson by asking the children what "imagination" means.
2. Ask the kids to find their own creative space by making a bubble around themselves with their arms.
3. Ask the children to close their eyes and to imagine different colors, sounds, textures, smells, etc. You may want to write a list which may include such prompts as "blue," "rain drops," "onions," "sandy," or "slimy" in advance.

4. Play some soft music in the background if you wish.
5. Ask the kids to glue their feet to the ground. (Make an ordeal of inspecting each child to ensure feet are properly glued. They like this.)
6. Ask the children to sway in one spot like a tree in the wind until the music stops. Each time you stop the music, ask the children to pull a new object from the sky, such as a head of lettuce or a big sun. The possibilities are endless: a star, a UFO, the kitchen sink, a running shoe, an imaginary friend.
7. Encourage the kids to describe their objects after they have pulled them from the sky. For example: What does your big sun look like? Feel like? Record their answers.
8. Encourage the kids to close up their bubble for the day and return to the circle. Read a few poems.
9. Begin a conversation about what “imagination” means with questions like these:
 - What do we use our imaginations for? Do we like our imaginations? Why? Why not?
 - If you were a butterfly and could fly anywhere in the world, where would you fly?
 - If you could build a spaceship, what would you build it with?
 - How many bumblebees can you fit between your knees?
 - What does grass smell like after it rains?
 - If you could bring all of your imaginary friends a new planet, what would you call your planet? What does it look like? Who’s there?
10. Record the children’s responses on the flip chart and begin to make a poem using their thoughts. For example, “I can fit 100 bees / between my knees / I’ve got wasps between my sheets / Ever seen a beet with feet?”
11. Make copies of the new poems to put in the children’s chapbooks so they can take them home to share with their families. (See *Lesson 5: My Very Own Chapbook of Poems.*)