



Making Objects Human

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Poetry Center Elementary School Poet-in-Residence 2010

Grade Level: 4th-5th

Time Frame: 1 hour

Learning Objectives:

- Students will have a chance to take everyday objects and recreate meaning for those objects through personification.
- Students will be introduced to the idea of incorporating multiple languages into a piece of writing.

Prior Skills and Knowledge: None required

Sequence of Activities:

I. Introduction: 20 minutes

- Read the poem “Bailar” to students. Generate a list of unusual things the students notice about the poem, in both English and Spanish. Go over some of the Spanish lines so that all students are aware of the unusual traits the poem is addressing.
- Introduce the idea of personification. (When an object has traits or begins to behave as if a person would.)
- Discuss the various forms of personification in the poem.
“The camino morning sits down.”
“El mundo tiembla”
“The sunshine peeks under the leaves”
“The camino morning sighs.”

II. Writing Activity: 30 minutes

- Ask students to divide their paper into three columns. In the first column have them write down a list of ten objects (explain that these objects are nouns) that they see every day. Here are ten examples:

Tooth brush
Hairbrush
Comb
Sink
Cereal
Desk
Pencil
Paper
Bed
Light

Then in the second column ask them to come up with several verbs. (Give the definition if needed)

Sit
Run
Walk
Lie
Stand
Skip
Dance
Spin
Twirl
Step

In the last column have them come up with adverbs. (Give definition)

Quietly
Quickly
Softly
Lonely
Slowly
Carefully
Accidentally
Easily
Brightly
Kindly

- Write a collaborative poem on the board together. Have them chose an object from the first category and then an object from each of the other categories. The object can do whatever it wants and they can use any of the words from the other two columns, but the object needs to take on human characteristics. By the end of the poem we should really believe that the desk is walking around and talking to people.
- You could demonstrate this by drawing arrows from one thing in one column to another thing in the next, this way students will have a way to visually follow along. Construct your line based on what they've picked out. Start them out with the first line and then see if they can continue the lines. Below are some first lines you can use:
 - 1) The desk twirls easily in the middle of the classroom.
 - 2) The bed steps carefully over the sleeping people.
 - 3) The toothbrush walks softly over my big teeth.
- After the collaborative poem, have students chose one object that they will write about in all of their lines. Have students write at least ten lines or sentences.
- You can give them the columns that are attached to this lesson plan to work from as well. It might be helpful for them to have it in front of them so they can draw their own arrows and see the combinations on a piece of paper.
- Once students are done writing their poems or paragraphs have them draw their objects.

III. CLOSING: 10 minutes

- Share student work with the class.

Required Resources:

“BAILAR” by Carmen Tafolla

Translations for specific lines:

Mientras baila mi alma en cool suneos descansos de ti.

(While my soul is dancing cool relaxing dreams of you)

El mundo tiembla y renace por sus ojos

(The world shivers and is reborn through its eyes)

Y tu, tan lejos que resfrians las casa,

(And you, so far that it cools the house)

Tan cerquita que te toco adentro de mis dedos

(So close that I can touch you inside of my finger)

En vuelos de musica nocturna, juntos, locos, libres

(In flights of night music together, insane, free)

Bailo, abrasandote adentro de la almohada.

(I dance hugging you inside the pillow)

Gana. Que pesado estar aqui sola sin ti!

(To win/To want. How hard to be here alone without you.)

Object	Verb	Adverb
Tooth brush	Sit	Quietly
Hairbrush	Run	Quickly
Comb	Walk	Softly
Sink	Lie	Lonely
Cereal	Stand	Slowly
Desk	Skip	Carefully
Pencil	Dance	Accidentally
Paper	Spin	Easily
Bed	Twirl	Brightly
Light	Step	Kindly

Student Samples

Toothbrush

The toothbrush is tickling himself on Mt. Lemmon
The toothbrush sang quickly to the cavities
The toothbrush saw a toilet singing Old McDonald
The toothbrush heard an eagle flying in the desert
The toothbrush was talking Chinese in France
The toothbrush slowly screamed when he saw the toothpaste going on him
The toothbrush bailó el merengue en la noche loquito
The toothbrush dijo buenas noches to la luz
The toothbrush ganó todo los juegos
The toothbrush abrió los ojos en la mañana y dijo buenos días to the mirror
The toothbrush and the floss skipped juntos afuera locos en la mañana

Alexia Espinoza 4th grade

The Pencil and Desk

The pencil took me to Mars and danced the salsa
El lápiz me llevó a Mars y bailó la salsa
I sit on the desk and while the pencil was dancing the desk took me to the moon
Me senté en la mesa y cuando el lápiz estaba bailando la mesa me llevó a la luna

Nahomy Assmar 4th grade

Bed

My bed turns red it dances and twirls
As it walks brightly into the light it acts like a little girl
It accidentally told me a lie and it felt guilty when I found out
As it told me softly I am tired
I put it to sleep and walked away quietly
One minute later I came back and again the bed twirled brightly

Alex Saiz 4th grade