Recycled Poems
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Grade Level: 2nd-3rd grades

Time Frame: 30 minutes

Objective: Students will explore a fresh way to revisit and revise a past poem. This lesson plan aims to encourage students to revise beyond minor tweaks and to take bold steps towards dramatic re-writes.

Prior Knowledge and Skills: Grade level reading and comprehension

Required Materials: paper, pencil, and a collaborative or individual poem students have written in the recent past

Sequence of Activities:

1. Welcome and Introduction

This lesson plan was created amidst the COVID-19 pandemic and is designed for an online learning experience, hence the brevity (30 minutes is a good amount of time for a Zoom session before we all lose our minds and turn into Zoombies).

I like to begin lessons with a warm hello and sharing of something relevant to the overall theme of the lesson plan. For example, I might share that, as a writer, it's important to me that I try my very best and practice excellence. This means that I like to return to poems and stories later and see if I can change something in order to make it shine a little more. Like polishing a gem. A story is never "perfect", so I'm not really trying to make it perfect. Instead, I'm trying to find ways to make my writing more interesting, more imaginative, or clearer for the reader. Sometimes I need to change characters or places or big ideas, and other times I need to change words and punctuation.

If the teacher has a sample to share here, this can be really helpful in demonstrating, in a practical way, what revision might look like. For example, if you are an artist, you could show the children a sketch and a final drawing, pointing out how things were adjusted to bring it to the final form.

2. Recycling Words – Writing Activity

This activity can be done using a collaborative poem the class has already written and/or using individual poems. If time allows, the teacher could walk students through the exercise collectively using a collaborative poem and then give them time to do it on their own with their personal poems.

1. Screenshare the collaborative poem and ask students to pick one word from every line. Record those words in the chat box or write them down.

2. Screenshare the list of words and call on students to make a new sentence that incorporates each word. Each new sentence is its own line in the poem. The first few sentences may set the theme and tone of the rest of the poem. Encourage subsequent lines to connect to or be related to the first lines in some way.

Recycling words in this way can bring to life an entirely new poem or, if students choose to write on the same topic as the original poem, may open doors for writing about that subject in a fresh way, using the recycled words as a sort of tether.

EXAMPLE:

Original poem:

What? What kinda animals are those!
My mom wants a snake with patterns of black and it would be really protective over us if we were in danger and sense when we're in danger
I want a monkey that wears diapers and my clothes
I want a wolf dog that can walk like a person and sleeps on a bed like a person, too
A butterfly spider – all colorful but the wings are blue and it has colorful webs

Recycled poem:

Black
Black like the dark night
Black monkey fur, rough and stinky
My dog is black and white, furry soft
Colors so bright, it hurts my eyes

The recycled words are *black*, *monkey*, *dog*, and *color* (from *colorful*)

4. Reflection Sharing

Ask students if they prefer their first or second version of the poem. What is it that they like about that version?

Call on students to read their poems aloud. Students can show their appreciation for each other's words with silent jazz hands after each poem.