

Daniel Woods
EDCI 5724
Praxis project
Fall 2005

The act of naming is equivalent to the act of creation--N. Scott Momaday

To name ... such is the originary violence of language, which consists in inscribing within a difference, in classifying, in suspending the vocative absolute. To think the unique within the system, to inscribe it there, such is the gesture of the arche-writing: arche-violence, loss of the proper, of absolute proximity, of self-presence-- Jacques Derrida

Unit title

What's in a Noun? 9th grade English: Exploring Language through the Power of Naming/Nouning¹.

Introduction

My overall goal is to reinvent chapter 17.1 *Nouns*, of Prentice Hall's *Writing and Grammar: Communication in Action*, so that my students will be able learn to use nouns and noun forms to write more effective sentences and create more descriptive writing in a way that is both personal and meaningful to the student. Students will even re-name themselves by choosing their "class name," that is, a name they will be referred to as in class. Students will also engage in a dramatic activity in which they must act out "defined" traits of their new "chosen" name. This is the first of two steps in which the ultimate goal is to create a personal narrative: "when people are motivated to recount an experience, they all become effective narrators- able to shape the telling to fit an interpretation of the events" (Kutz & Roskelly). To accompany this process I have chosen Sherman Alexie's novel, *The Lone Ranger and Tonto Fistfight in Heaven*, because it not only offers excellent examples of narrative writing, but also gives examples of names and naming that will most likely be outside of my students' realm of familiarity.

I have reinvented this chapter to help students understand the descriptive power of nouns. As Kutz and Roskelly note, it is "...through the words used to reconstruct them, ... people demonstrate what they believe events mean and why they're significant". People often think only of adjectives and the like as being descriptive, but I want my students to see that a noun carries far more descriptive depth than any adjective. Within this context the student will gain an understanding of the power of naming, not just naming a person, but also, places, things, and ideas. Naming creates meaning and conventions, and conventions can lead to exclusions of those who do not conform to the conventions, therefore students will benefit from understanding the depth and breadth of those conventions. I believe that mastery of a convention can create

¹ Nouning would be the act of naming anything that is a person, place, thing, or idea. Deciding to call a dog a dog, or a rose a rose.

freedom from that convention. In reinventing this chapter I have followed Kutz and Roskelly's "Principals of Reinvention" from their text: *An Unquiet Pedagogy* (318-319). My unit is organized in the following manner:

1. Textbook Critique

For this critique I have chosen the very latest edition of the Prentice Hall text. This copy is only three-years-old and as such is exemplary of what textbook writers and publishers view as the most current needs that can be addressed by their product. As a side note, I compared this edition with the previous edition and noticed little if any difference other than the pictures that accompany the text. This fact serves as an excellent example of the static nature of grammar instruction that we are all working against.

2. Literacy Statement

To facilitate an understanding of my reasoning for reinventing grammar in the way that I have, I included a statement of my understanding of what student literacy is, and how to achieve that vision.

3. Student Profiles

The profiles included are intended to give a representation of the students for whom this unit was designed.

4. Unit Map

The unit map is intended to serve as an overview of the lesson plans that make up this unit.

5. Lesson Plans

The lesson plans were deigned to address the nature and needs of the students that were profiled.

Kutz and Roskelly's Principles of Reinvention

1. *Adding* connections to the outside world through newspapers, TV, movies; drawing on students' home cultures.
2. *"Problematizing"* situations and concepts--questioning, posing problems, holding something up for examination and inquiry.
3. *Redefining* so that student texts become literature, expository writing becomes creative, public discourse becomes personal.
4. *Sequencing* to be responsive to student inquiry, to the questions that get raised and the things that get discovered in classes, and to events going on in the world outside school.
5. *Formalizing* by making explicit the method and process as well as the content of all the study we engage in the classroom.
6. *Combining* one element of the curriculum with another.
7. *Revising* by re-seeing the old.

Kutz and Roskelly's Principles of Reinvention were at the heart of my project

We all now work and speak, and communicate in playing language after the invention of the Indian. So we are "postindian": a postmodern language game about who we are after the invention of the Indian by Columbus—Gerald Vizenor

Labels are all around us: he's gay; she's African-Asian-American, Indian, he's fat, and so on and so forth. My ultimate goal with this unit is to open the students' minds to the reality that naming (of all things, not just people) is an incredibly powerful and limiting act. The Native American people have been victim to as much of, if not more, denaming (devaluing the native culture of a people), categorizing, minimizing, and recreating then any people in recent history. I wanted to open students up to literature by Native Americans, about Native Americans, in an effort to redefine the way students "view" Native Americans.

I have designed this unit to "problematize" the traditional view of naming/labeling our world. All too often a colonizing power "deinvents" a culture in order to establish a view that supports their own dominant power structure. By studying a Native American author who spends considerable effort in addressing these practices, the students will be able to examine the inherent power in naming, or renaming and move toward reinventing their own worlds. Renaming in a meaningful way (meaningful to the one doing the renaming) is a first step in reading and writing one's own world.

My goal for this unit is that students will reinvent not only the grammar and language that we encounter in this unit, but consequently their own perceptions of the world around them. This unit is designed to start students on the self-affirming process of reading and writing her/his world. While each student's completion of the assignments is important, what is most important is that they do it in a way that is meaningful to them; not to me, not to the other students, but to themselves. To help with this process sequencing was a major component of my unit plan. I built in many opportunities to discover and discuss the often "radical" ideas encountered. Students may not be comfortable renaming their world, they may have a fear of change, or they may be intolerant of the changes proposed by others. All of these and more will be addressed throughout the unit. Of course, by its very nature, this unit will not always offer concrete solutions, but continued opportunities for discussion and discovery.

With any lesson, especially one with nontraditional assertions such as this one, it is very important that formalizing occur. I have designed this unit and its activities to be not only easily understood, but confidence building in the process. Each lesson is built upon the previous lesson and thus the previous success of the students.

I have never understood the concept of teaching reading and writing exclusive of each other. In my opinion, reading makes one a better writer, as writing makes one a better reader. I have designed this unit to combine reading and writing,

discussion and revision, all as integral parts to a greater whole. Revising as a principal of reinvention is at the center of my project. It is only through re-seeing the old that we can write the new, that is write our world.

Five Reinvention Questions

Who/what controls learning?

My initial response would be to say, “the government controls learning,” and it does in fact control much of the education system. From teacher hiring, curriculum creating, policy instituting, and so on, it would appear that the government has complete control of learning. However, this is not the case. The government has great influence on learning, as does society, family, and peers. But, the ultimate control for learning comes from within the learner. Whether it be a 2nd grader working on “spelling,” an 8th grader beginning Algebra, a Doctoral Student researching freshwater clams, or a fifty-year-old learning to read; learning is controlled by the learner. Of course teachers, family, government, all of us, have a say in the hows, whats, and whys, of learning, the control lies with the learner. The learner decides what and when s/he will learn. The learners decide whether s/he will go through the motions of learning in order to fulfill a requirement, or if they will take the subject matter and integrate it into a part of their very being; the learner taking ownership of the learned you might say.

How is knowledge made? What counts as knowledge?

Personal experience translated into personal meaning is knowledge. It is my belief that anything that allows a person to function in the world is knowledge. From the most basic knowledge: fire is both helpful and harmful and the realization of the difference is knowledge. Additionally, knowledge can range to the very specific, such as understand the meaning and usage of the formula $E=mc^2$. Some knowledge is desired: learning how to build a birdhouse per se, while other forms of knowledge are imposed, such as: touching fire is bad.

What is the sequence of learning?

Learning begins with a need. As infants we need to eat, so we learn how to effectively communicate that need and have others feed us. From this most basic human need to the “need” to explore space, all learning begins with a need, a desire, an interest. Next is the exploration of how to address/solve said need. Lastly, there must be a transfer from the need, to the exploration, to the solution, in which the learning makes personal meaning of the “skill” and consequently “owns” the skill/understanding.

What role is played by the social and cultural context of the learner?

The social and cultural context of the learner is central to any learning. Since all learning comes from a connection between the learner and the learned, the personal context that a learner brings to the process defines the manner in which the learner understand the learned. For example, one would not (hopefully) try to

instruct Spanish-only speaking students as to how to perform CPR using the Russian language.

What is the relationship between the world and the school/classroom?

The world and the classroom are related in every conceivable way. After all, the classroom was created to fill a “need” for students to be able to relate to his/her world. The classroom is an encapsulation of the world in which the students live in as such that encapsulation can come in the form of social class judgment. Too often students enter a classroom only to be tracked into a certain future because of some perceived lack of ability due to their socioeconomic background. Classrooms are not job interviews, classrooms should not place value on what students know before they enter the classroom, but by how much they have learned after they have left it.

Literacy Statement

Literacy is the ability to communicate and understand communication within one’s world, that is, literacy is an individual’s ability to function within their given environment. All too often literacy is defined within the narrow margins of what has been labeled normal without consideration to the context from which learners enter the classroom. The reality is that this “normal” is not a definition based on inclusion and appreciation of the culture and social background of students, just whether or not they fit what society (in one way or another) deems desirable. Day after day students are labeled as reading on, above, or below, grade level, with no explanation as to what is grade level, and why/how “it” is considered the norm. Where is the consideration for personal developmental level? From whence came the magical definition that by grade four, first month, little Johnny should be able to read such and such?

As a language arts teacher my goal is to teach literacy in a way that values written, oral, and reading ability, within the context of students’ lives by understanding that a national dialect (that of say network news anchors who conform to the ideology that the Midwestern dialect is the most representative of Americans) exists and how to navigate through that dialect. Of course, I realize that there is far more to one’s literacy than functioning within that generalized, vanilla, prestige dialect. To truly survive and even thrive in a more immediate location, people must be literate in many styles, and dialects. Imagine the diverse dialectic styles of say, Rural Appalachia, South Central Los Angeles, Western Pennsylvania, Eastern North Carolina, Chicago etc. as well as the deeper meanings of “No Trespassing” signs or gang tags. As dialects and mores change, so does the meaning of literacy and with it should come the approach of the Language Arts Teachers.

I have always wanted my students to become literate in what I consider the most important and functional way, the literacy of the informed. Of course, this is not to say that they need to be informed in the same way I consider myself to be informed, that would not be teaching them, but rather indoctrinating them.

My point being that while I want to teach them to be informed members of society, my goal is not to create little clones of me.

When I say informed, my goal is that they are able to not only read the word and their world, but to interpret it. I want to teach them to read the word behind, below, between the lines; to not only read the word, but also to understand that there is intent attached to that word. While it would be nice if I could help foster a desire for those students to work to help others, help society etc. realistically that is not possible, nor fair, I do not have the right to do so. I do not have the right to tell students how to read and write their worlds, only that they are capable of doing such. Of course I feel as though I understand the world, have a general idea of how I believe it should be, but I have no right to impose those beliefs on others.

I want to help develop students who are free thinkers that are able to deconstruct a text, an ad, a speech and make informed decisions in life. I want them to be able to respond in a way that is logical and effective within their own context. I realize that that these views will not only be different than my own at times, but that they may be completely opposite. I do not want to create clones, but to teach students to understand what they are reading, being told, being sold, and to respond in a logical informed way. Ultimately my definition of student literacy will be different according to each student. The student's already contain their definitions; they just need the confidence to develop them.

Textbook Critique

Writing and Grammar: Communication in Action Ruby Level, Published by Prentice Hall.

When viewed in the traditional sense of grammar instruction this book is a fine example of the drill for skill method. With over nine hundred pages of material broken down into three distinct and seemingly unrelated sections: the first being Writing (300 pages), the second is: Grammar, Usage, and Mechanics (400 pages), and finally Academic and Workplace Skills (200 pages). I say unrelated because there is a very regimented linear process apparent in this text, with little to no reference to the other sections. Rather than combine the three sections into one integrated section, the authors choose an unrelated approach to instruction in which they “teach” one skill, then another, then another. Realistically speaking, nobody learns to write a paper, then learns the parts of speech for that paper, and then learns the context of which the paper was to be written in. From page 1 to page 900, there is little if any cross-referencing from one section to another. The authors are really working from a business model with a top down structure. Having the opportunity to review the six other books in this collection (grades 7-12) I quickly noticed the same exact pattern in each book, chapter-by-chapter same topic different examples, a cookie cutter approach to language acquisition.

I find the lack of interconnectedness to be quite problematic. Students do not live in a vacuum, and teachers should not teach them as if they do. The authors, and

subsequently their text, promote what I view as a mathematical form of literacy, as if it can be broken down and understood by understanding the usage rules. The activities offered by the authors are of the most rote style, drill, memorization, and the like, while never crossing over to other sections, as if they have no correlation. The “Workplace” section offers exercises such as “studying words systematically,” in which the authors recommend using flashcards and tape recorders. For grammar acquisition, the authors offer exercise after exercise, such as: “list the nouns & pronouns in each sentence,” “identify the conjunction...”, and “write sentences with different functions,” an example of which is “write a declarative sentence about a city.” The most disturbing of which is a “grammar in literature” example on page 368. The authors instruct the student to: “find five common nouns, and at least one pronoun other than a reflective pronoun”(373). That specific example is one long sentence (54 words) from John Smith’s *The General History of Virginia*. Not only do I doubt the effectiveness of this exercise, but also the fact that students won’t even learn anything about the general history of Virginia.

Another disturbing fact is the lack of cultural diversity in the book. This textbook, as is often the case in our society, is geared toward the language and usage of the dominant culture: White Anglo Saxon Protestants and portrays “their” language as the “ideal” which becomes quickly apparent when considering the authors choice of works to represent “various cultures;” the first of which is the Greek myth of *Orpheus*. While the legend of Orpheus is worthy of study, it is not what I would consider as a first choice in “hooking” students into a multicultural unit. Despite the fact that there is an attempt (very limited) at using minority writing as examples of what is “correct,” it is always through a privileged white lens. If “they” write the way they are “supposed” (usage, form, topics) to, it is considered good writing. There are pictures of Toni Morrison, but none of her words, Sandra Cisneros, but none of her words, even a child in a wheelchair, but none of his words. The words that are offered are from authors like John Smith, Thomas Jefferson, and Abraham Lincoln. All fine men, and worthy of study, but hardly representative of the multicultural classroom of today.

Again, the authors seem to believe that there is only on correct way to say what needs to be said. There is no credence to creativity even to the point of defining voice and style as “the way a writer presents himself” yes, the authors said “himself.” At the root of this problem is the obvious push toward Virginia SOL’s. The book reads like an SOL workbook. In fact, the final section of the book is titled “test taking skills,” in which the authors offer practice and suggestions for passing standardized tests. The entire text is gauged toward this final section, thus revealing the authors intent: preparing students to pass standardized tests.

Of course, there are good examples in the book for the type of writing that the authors deem worthy, and their examples of the “writing process” are useful and varied while not being too restrictive. But as a whole they are few and far between.

All in all I would consider this text to be average within the genre. It is safe and predictable and everything traditional grammarians look for in a text. Being that it is a brand new text it only helps to affirm my belief that we are in desperate need of a grammatical revolution. If I had to use this book I would use it as a handbook for reinventing specific sections to address student needs.

Student Profiles

Student #1 is an African American female 17 years old and a senior in high school. Student 1 lives with her unwed mother and half brother in an apartment complex. She will be the first in her direct family to graduate high school and may even attend community college. Student 1 has many friends in the same socioeconomic background and “parties” on the weekends. She drinks alcohol and smokes marijuana on occasion. While she has never been a “top” student, she has had some academic success when her family is in a relatively calm state, which is rare.

Student #2 is a Caucasian male age 15 in the eighth grade. This is his second time in the eighth grade and he has had limited if any academic success. He lives with his mother, sister, and stepfather in a trailer park in the country. He is more interested in working on cars than working on books and views school as a social gathering. He is polite to teachers and has friends though he is quick tempered at times. He reads below grade level and writes in incomplete sentences if asked to express his opinion. He is not “slow” or spec-ed, just not motivated (as are many students his age) and lacking in some of the prior knowledge that helps many succeed in school.

Student #3 is a Caucasian female 18 years old and a senior in high school. Student 3 is a very imaginative writer, that is, she is a very good writer with poor mechanical control. She works 30 hours a week and is engaged to a 20 year old. She is desperate to become pregnant and has faked being so, many times. She is the oldest of five children and still lives at home. She has a lock on her bedroom door and a mini fridge in her room to keep “her” food, though her brothers still find their way in to steal from her. She has steadily gained weight for the last three years and is now overweight to the point of missing out on some things she used to enjoy (hiking, biking). While she could succeed at a community college and eventually a four-year university, she will not attend either after graduation, as she wants to begin her family.

Student #4 is a white male 17 years old in 9th grade. He has had gang “affiliations” is expecting a child in a few months and lives with his father who came back into his life after his mother died two years ago. He is very bright and

a good writer, but not overly interested in school. He lives in a trailer with his father who is an alcoholic on disability. The student often talks about his best friend who is now in prison, and refers to his hometown in the context of Eastside/Westside. He drinks and uses drugs and has been suspended from school for using drugs in school. The girl he is expecting a child with is fifteen and they are no longer dating. He works at a fast food restaurant 30+ hours a week and spends his money on shoes and sports jerseys. He is a likeable young man, polite and surprisingly well spoken, though he often drifts off topic and doesn't complete his thoughts. He has had limited academic success.

What's in a Noun? A Unit Map for the Reinvention of Prentice Hall *Writing and Grammar*, Chapter 17, Parts of Speech –Nouns 364-370. A unit for 9th grade English: Exploring Language through the Power of Naming/Nouning.

Day 1- what is a noun?

Hook-What's in a name? We will review act 2, scene 2 of *Romeo and Juliet* and discuss Juliet's speech- students will view a clip of Claire Danes' rendition of the speech.

1. The Class Will read aloud and discuss chapter 6 of *Freakonomics*.
2. Engage students in a discussion about what a noun is, and then discuss all the nouns within the classroom, discussing concrete, abstract, collective, and proper, nouns.
3. TCW- begin re-defining noun in student terms. Using their own words and encapsulating their understanding.
4. Discussing the act of labeling/naming something, that is, creating a noun? The class will brainstorm more examples like that. (This will be student run, students at the board etc.)
5. TSW read *The Lone Ranger and Tonto Fistfight in Heaven* and discuss the possible meanings of the story title.

For homework students will interview family members about her/his name, the hows, whys etc. of how she/he got her/his name. And report back to the class tomorrow.

Day 2- common & proper nouns

1. Bridge- Discuss the act of labeling/naming something, that is, creating a noun. If I name a dog "ran" have I not just made a verb a noun? The class will brainstorm more examples like that (this will be student run, students at the board etc.).
2. We will review "The Name Game," "The Power of a Name," "What's in a Name...?". As a class we will then go to the computer lab and research their name origin (meaning) and choose two celebrities with the same name (first name) then create two Venn diagrams, one that shows the trait comparisons between you and the two celebs, and the second to compare the "traits" from the "definition. They will then share their findings with the class.
3. Mini-lesson on sentence expanding using appositives and appositive phrases
4. TSW write a descriptive paragraph using appositives to describe redefine their name.

Day 6- wrap up

- The power of the noun, choose your name. Students will choose a "class name" (a name by which they will be referred to in class) defining origin uses etc. and explain why this "class name" is representative of them as they view themselves.
- Students will engage in a dramatic exercise in which they "act out" 5-7 character traits associated with their chosen name (a sort of charades). This can be done alone or in pairs. The rest of the class will engage in the game with a prize (candy or something) for the one who names the most traits.
- Review of "nouns" and completion of the student redefinition of noun.
- Exit slip question: what is a noun?

Day 3- abstract nouns

- Looking at abstract nouns TCW discuss what is love?
- TSW read- *The Trial of Thomas Builds the Fire*
- In groups students will choose a section of the story (one or two "important" paragraphs) and rewrite it.
- Students will share their creation with the class.
- I will collect copies.

Day 4- collective nouns

- Discuss "collective nouns"
- TCW discuss –what is an Indian? (The goal is to realize the issues inherent in labeling)
- In groups the students will "define"- white person?
- Groups will share their definition of "white person"
- In groups students will read and recreate a section of *Family Portrait* (the story will be divided evenly among the groups of 2-3)
- Students will share their recreations
- I will collect their creations

Day 5- concrete nouns

- In groups students will read and reinvent *Crazy Horse Dreams*
- TCW read *A Good Story*.
- As a class, students will recreate *A Good Story*. On an overhead we will change all of the collective nouns in the story, deciding as a group what to call Indians and Whites. The students will identify the concrete nouns in groups (underlining, to allow smoother identification) and then as a group they will recreate it.
- I will have a student volunteer to take notes of the activity.
- Homework-consider what you would name yourself if the opportunity arose. This is not meant to be a choice based on popularity, but on "definition." Write a short description.

Lesson Plans

Unit Introduction: What's in a Noun?

Unit Title: What's in a Noun? 9th grade English: Exploring Language through the Power of Naming/Nouning.

Context:

List C: Semantics- language stereotypes/dialects (as adapted from Weaver pg. 228)

Students will understand that a noun is a label that carries a connotation and that the act of naming/nouning such as: "this animal shall be called dog," is a powerful act. Understanding how word choice and word meaning can be considered both positive and/or negative depending on context and audience.

Plan Number: 1 of 6

Objective Students will be introduced to the unit and begin to acquire an understanding of nouns and their power as descriptors/labels in writing.

SWBAT:

- Identify nouns in their various forms
- Use nouns and noun forms to create specific meanings and images in their writing
- Identify the characteristics that distinguish literary forms.
- Use literary terms in describing and analyzing selections.
- Explain the relationship between the author's style and literary effect.
- Explain the influence of historical context on the form, style, and point of view of a written work.

SOL's:

9.3 The student will read and analyze a variety of literature.

9.6 The student will develop narrative, expository, and informational writings to inform, explain, analyze, or entertain.

Material/Technology Resources Required:

- Television
- DVD player

Time: One 90-minute class

Procedure/Steps (in order):

Hook- (5 min) what's in a noun/name? We will review act 2, scene 2 of *Romeo and Juliet* and discuss Juliet's speech- students will view a clip of Claire Danes'

rendition of the speech and then view the scene of Kunta Kinte being whipped until he says his “name.”

(5 min)

The class will be introduced to the unit, learning that this is the first step in creating a personal narrative. We will read several short stories from Sherman Alexie’s *The Lone Ranger and Tonto Fistfight in Heaven* that are excellent examples of personal narratives as well as being an introduction to Native American Literature.

(30 min)

- The class will read aloud chapter 6 of *Freakonomics*.
- Discuss chapter 6 of *Freakonomics* (synthesis and analysis level questions.)
 - a. What assumptions have you made about people’s names in your lifetime?
 - b. (Formulate a solution) How can we change the practice of judging people by their name?

(15 min)

- Engage students in a discussion about what a noun is, and then discuss all the nouns within the classroom (desk, TV, student, Justin), discussing concrete, abstract, collective, and proper, nouns. This will be a brief overview.
- TCW- begin re-defining “noun” in student terms, that is, using their own words and encapsulating their understanding. Ex- “Bob is a noun, a proper noun in fact, he loves the abstract concept of romance,” ... to be built upon each day. I don’t want to give a specific example to the students; I want them to create it, with the final product being their own definition of “noun”. The end result will be a student-generated definition of a noun that will be meaningful and useful to them.

(30 min)

TSW read *The Lone Ranger and Tonto Fistfight in Heaven* and discuss the possible meanings of the story title.

- Questions: Why would TLR and Tonto want to fistfight?
- Why would this occur in Heaven?
- What stereotypes is Alexie working in and against?
- What might Alexie’s goal be for writing in this way?

(5min)

Wrap up- inform students of their assignment.

- For homework students will interview family members about her/his name, the hows, whys etc. of how she/he got her/his name. And report back to the class tomorrow. Should ask and note at least two responses.

Evaluation:

Students will be evaluated on their input into class discussion and participation.

Accommodations: any accommodations according to 504's and IEP's will be honored.

Appendix of Material Needed:

- ✓ 10 copies of Juliet's speech
- ✓ DVD of 1996 version of *Romeo and Juliet*
- ✓ DVD of *Roots*
- ✓ 10 copies of the story *The Lone Ranger and Tonto Fistfight in Heaven*

Common and Proper Nouns: Lesson 2

Unit Title: What's in a Noun? 9th grade English: Exploring Language through the Power of Naming/Nouning.

Context: revealing students' assumptions about names and realizing the power of names and naming in their own writing.

Language Concept: List A: names/naming

Plan Number: 2 of 6

Objective: TSW

- Use the internet to gain information
- Present that information to the class
- Gain an understanding into the "importance" of a name

SOL's:

9.3 The student will read and analyze a variety of literature.

9.4 The student will develop narrative, expository, and informational writings to inform, explain, analyze, or entertain.

9.9 The student will use print, electronic databases, and online resources to access information.

Material/Technology Resources Required:

- Internet access
- Overhead projector
- Transparency pre-printed with Venn diagrams

Time: One 90-minute class

Procedure/Steps (in order):

(5min)

- Bridge- Share a few homework stories.
 - Give book definition of common and proper nouns.

- Discuss the act of labeling/naming something, in a way, creating a noun. Ex. If I name a dog “ran” have I not just made a verb a noun?
- So, what’s in a name?

(10 min)

We will review “The Name Game,” “The Power of a Name,” “What’s in a Name...?” handouts in preparation for our own name search activity.

(40 min)

As a class we will then go to the computer lab and research their name origin (meaning) and choose two celebrities with the same name (first name) then create two Venn diagrams, one that shows the trait comparisons between the student and the celebs, and the second to compare the “traits” from the “definition.”

(30 min) 10 students 3min each

Students will present their findings to the class using an overhead projector and transparency with empty Venn diagrams.

(5 min)

- Wrap-up: create next section of student noun definition.
- Inform students of their homework – interview 5 people as to the definition of love

Evaluation:

Students will be evaluated on their input into class discussion and participation.

Accommodations: any accommodations according to 504’s and IEP’s will be honored.

Appendix of Material Needed:

- ✓ 10 copies of “The Name Game”
- ✓ 10 copies of “The Power of a Name”
- ✓ 10 copies of “What’s in a Name...”
- ✓ 10 copies of homework description

Abstract Nouns: Lesson 3

Plan Number: 3 of 6

Unit Title- What’s in a noun? 9th grade English: Exploring Language through the Power of Naming/nouncing.

Context:

List A- Words: word choice. Students will expand their knowledge of nouns and the different usages available to writers to create and expand meaning.

Objective TSW-

- Be able to identify abstract nouns
- Use verbal and nonverbal techniques for presentation.
- Generate, gather, and organize ideas for writing.
- Use specific vocabulary and information.

SOL's:

9.2 The student will make planned oral presentations.

9.3 The student will read and analyze a variety of literature.

9.6 The student will develop narrative, expository, and informational writings to inform, explain, analyze, or entertain.

Material/Technology Resources Required:

- 10 copies of *The Trial of Thomas Builds the Fire*

Time: One 90-minute class

Procedure/Steps (in order):**(5min) Bridge**

Give “book” definition of abstract nouns. Discuss the students’ definitions of love. The goal is to begin the understanding of abstract nouns in a context that all students are familiar with. Additionally, it will allow us discuss the nature of abstract nouns and the cultural and social meanings writers can convey with them.

(40 min)

As a class we will read and discuss- *The Trial of Thomas Builds the Fire*. With this particular group of students the best way to assure that they read the story, is to read it as a group. This also helps with discussion, as they are more likely to question as we read as opposed to reflecting back when finished. Additionally, and most importantly it helps build the students’ confidence in their own reading. I don’t “make” anyone read out loud, but I do offer a lot of encouragement and foster a very supportive atmosphere.

(30 min)

In groups (2-3) students will choose a section of the story (one or two “important” paragraphs) and rewrite it by identifying and then changing all of the abstract nouns and making any other grammatical changes necessary as a result of that change, love to hate etc. This is intended to allow the students to experiment with abstract nouns in a format (professional writing) that removes the fear of judgment. Students will act as timekeeper, facilitator, and presenters.

(15 min)

In their groups, students will present their creation to the class: reading aloud and answering any questions. This will be a “comfortable” presentation, in that the students will be able to present from their seats.

Evaluation:

Students will be evaluated on completion of the assigned task, as well as their input into class discussion and participation.

Accommodations: any accommodations according to 504’s and IEP’s will be honored.

Reflection: this section will be completed after lesson is taught

Collective Nouns: Lesson 4

Plan Number: 4 of 6

Unit Title- What’s in a noun? 9th grade English: Exploring Language through the Power of Naming/nouning.

Context:

List B: parts of speech category. Students will continue their reading and understanding of Native American Literature by engaging in sentence rewriting to create meaning of their own.

Objective: TSW

- Identify format, text structure, and main idea.
- Generate, gather, and organize ideas for writing.
- Plan and organize writing to address a specific audience and purpose.
- Write clear, varied sentences.

SOL’s:

9.3 The student will read and analyze a variety of literature.

9.6 The student will develop narrative, expository, and informational writings to inform, explain, analyze, or entertain.

Material/Technology Resources Required:

- Copies of *Family Portrait*
- *Paper and pencils.*

Time: One 90-minute class

Procedure/Steps:

Bridge (5 min)

Continue student noun definition by adding the “abstract” section to the description. Give “book” definition of collective nouns.

(5 min)

The class will discuss and list on the board (student volunteer to write the list) – what is an Indian? Listing the common social traits associated with “Indian.” The goal is to realize the issues (good and bad) inherent in labeling/naming/nouncing.

(5 min)

In groups of 2-3 the students will “define”- white person? Listing the common social traits associated with “white people.” The goal here is to show students that there is no single definition that can encapsulate a group of people. Like Whitman, we can contain multitudes, and as such, the words we choose to define and portray meaning need to reflect that.

(5 min)

Groups will share their definition of “white person,” comparing and contrasting different groups definitions (will have student volunteer to record on board).

(50 min)

In groups students will read and recreate a section of *Family Portrait* by changing the nouns that we have discussed thus far (common, proper, collective and abstract) to change the theme/ meaning of the story. (The story will be divided evenly among the groups of 2-3). They can changed the nouns by placing a line through the existing noun and writing the new noun above the old.

(18 min)

Students will share their re-creations. A volunteer from each group will read their section of the story as the class follows along with the original.

(2 min) wrap up

I will collect their creations and assign them the task of defining (as books do) a concrete noun.

Evaluation:

Students will be evaluated on their input into class discussion and participation in the activities

Accommodations: any accommodations according to 504’s and IEP’s will be honored.

Appendix of Material Needed:

- ✓ 10 copies of *Family Portrait*

✓ Pencil/paper

Reflection: this section will be completed after lesson is taught

Concrete Nouns: Lesson 5

Plan Number: 5 of 6

Unit Title- What's in a noun? 9th grade English: Exploring Language through the Power of Naming/nouning.

Context:

List C-Affective language. Students will gain an understanding of the importance of word choice and variety to create meaning and convey images. Through a lens of Native American Literature, students will expand their visual imagery by renaming/nouning people and objects to express meaning.

Objective TSW-

- Identify concrete nouns
- Use concrete nouns to enhance their writing
- Illustrate main ideas through anecdotes and examples.
- Use literary terms in describing and analyzing selections.
- Explain the relationships between and among elements of literature: characters, plot, setting, tone, point of view, and theme.
- Explain the relationship between the author's style and literary effect.

SOL's:

9.2 The student will make planned oral presentations.

9.3 The student will read and analyze a variety of literature.

Material/Technology Resources Required:

- Copies of *Crazy Horse Dreams*
- Copies of *A Good Story*
- Internet access before next class or access to a book about names (baby name books etc. I have 3 to loan)

Time: One 90-minute class

Procedure/Steps (in order):

(5 min) bridge-

- Discuss/share student researched definitions of "concrete" nouns. Students will discuss and create the "concrete" noun section of the student noun definition, thus completing the student definition/ownership (Freire).

(25 min)

Alone, students will read *Crazy Horse Dreams* and reinvent a paragraph of their choice (I realize this may mean they all pick the shortest paragraph, but I want them to have some freedom in their choosing).

Students can choose any two “noun types” to use in recreating the story.

(10 min)

As a class we will discuss the author’s version of *CHD* and share student recreations (volunteers).

Questions:

A how do the character names Alexie uses create a visual image for you?

B if it was a story about you what names would you use within the same structure? Thomas builds the fire= Ralph eats the cake etc.

(15 min)

As a group we will read: *A Good Story*, underlining any nouns that stand out to the reader as we go (people/place names etc.).

(30 min)

As a class, students will discuss *A Good Story*. Students will then debate whether *A Good Story*, really is a good story, and why or why not, using specific references to word choice/imagery. Students will discuss specific noun choices made by the author (Native American names etc.) and what effect those choices have on the story.

(5 min)

- Collect the students’ work
- Homework-consider what you would name yourself if the opportunity arose. This is not meant to be a choice based strictly on popularity, but on the traits associated with the name. Write a short description of how and why the name fits you. I will join them in this process.

Evaluation:

Students will be evaluated on their input into class discussion and participation in the activity.

Accommodations: any accommodations according to 504’s and IEP’s will be honored.

Appendix of Material Needed:

- ✓ Baby name books
- ✓ 10 copies of *The Name Game*
- ✓ 10 copies of *The Power of a Name*

Reflection: this section will be completed after lesson is taught

What is, in a Noun?: Lesson 6

Plan Number: 6 of 6

Unit Title- What's in a noun? 9th grade English: Exploring Language through the Power of Naming/nouning.

Context:

List C- a usage concept. Students will be able to grasp the importance of people and place names in their writing. I want them to learn to paint with their words (Nodin), using appositives and appositive phrases to create depth of imagery, rather than just listing adjectives.

Objective TSW

- Use appositives and appositive phrases to improve their writing.
- Use verbal and nonverbal techniques for presentation.
- Generate, gather, and organize ideas for writing.
- Plan and organize writing to address a specific audience and purpose.
- Communicate clearly the purpose of the writing.
- Narrow the focus of a search.
- Scan and select resources.
- Distinguish between reliable and questionable Internet sources and apply responsible use of technology.

SOL's:

9.1 The student will plan, present, and critique dramatic readings of literary selections.

9.6 The student will develop narrative, expository, and informational writings to inform, explain, analyze, or entertain.

9.9 The student will use print, electronic databases, and online resources to access information.

Material/Technology Resources Required:

- Internet access
- Baby name books
- Paper/pencil
- Handout of charades

Time: One 90-minute class

Procedure/Steps (in order):

Bridge (5 min)

Share the story of Picabo (peek-a-boo) Street whose parents allowed her to choose her own name (story attached).

(30 min)

The power of the noun, choose your name. Students will choose a “class name” (a name by which they will be referred to in class) defining origin uses etc. and explain why this “class name” is representative of them as they view themselves. We will go to the computer lab to allow student to research. Students will need to keep their name secret for another exercise.

(30 min total- 5 min to rehearse, 25 min to present)

Students will engage in a dramatic exercise in which they “act out” 5-7 character traits associated with their chosen name (a sort of charades). This can be done alone or in pairs. The rest of the class will engage in the game with a prize (candy or something) for the one who names the most traits. My goal is to get students looking at other ways to represent an image or idea. As with the Nolan piece, I want students to begin painting with their words, not just saying. With apologies to Sergeant Friday, I want students to write as a work of art vs. a police report. “More than just the facts ma’m, give us some imagery too.”

(10 min)

Mini-lesson on sentence expanding using appositives and appositive phrases from: Killgallon *Sentence Composing 11*, Chapter 3 “Sentence Composing with Appositive Phrases.” Practice 12 pages 37-38 & Practice 12 page 57

(10 min)

TSW write a descriptive paragraph using appositives to describe redefine their new name and how show how it fits them (in their eyes). This draft will create the “definition” of their name, empowering the student to “write their world” (Freire). Will need copy of the accepted definition of their name. Content will be the focus here.

(5 min) wrap-up

- I will collect the students’ drafts.
- The class will review “nouns” and complete (polishing) of the student redefinition of noun.
- Exit slip question: what is a noun?

Evaluation:

Students will be evaluated on their input into class discussion and participation in the activities.

Accommodations: any accommodations according to 504’s and IEP’s will be honored.

Appendix of Material Needed:

- ✓ 10 copies Picabo Street’s name story (see below)

How Picabo Street Got Her Name (taken verbatim from the [Salt Lake 2002](#) site)

"Name game Street's parents, Stubby and Dee, decided to let their daughter choose her own name when she was old enough, so for the first two years of her life she was known simply as "Little Girl." At the time, the Street family lived in Triumph, Idaho. South of Triumph is a town called Picabo. Stubby became interested in the town when the family first moved to Triumph in 1967 and started to read about the Picabo Indian tribe. When Street was 2, her mother took her to get a U.S. passport for a trip to Mexico. When Dee tried to write down "Little Girl" as Street's first name, the passport agent told her that wouldn't work and that the Streets had two weeks to name their daughter. During those two weeks, Street and her dad were playing the childhood game "peekaboo," causing Stubby to remember the town. They named her Picabo, which translated into English means "shining waters." At age 4, Street's parents gave her the option of changing her name, but she decided to keep it. "

Reflection: this section will be completed after lesson is taught