



ACTIVITY 1

Writing from the body: My diary/Mi diario

Purpose: A transformative education begins with being able to tell and write one's own story. For children to write their own stories, they need to have both a sense of story and support in identifying and developing their knowledge of the culture, language, and identity present. When the teacher creates connections between students' experience and culture and the classroom environment, students begin to integrate their stories as part of a transformative educational experience.

In this activity, students look for places in the story that are connected to the body: hair being blown by wind, tired feet, a hand that caresses a forehead. Students use these connections with the body to retell the story. Then, they use the same process to tell a story of their own.

In the TLC professional development program for teachers, this activity was taught as a model lesson, which teachers then evaluated for its effectiveness using the SIOP checklist. The steps pertaining to the activity's use with teachers are placed in parentheses.

Objectives

- Students connect writing to kinesthetic experience.
- Students tell their own stories of a significant event or journey.

Materials

- Large roll of butcher paper.
- Plenty of colored markers.
- My diary from here to there/Mi diario de aquí hasta allá* by Amada Irma Pérez.
In addition to a copy of the book, we suggest copying the book for participants to refer to while doing the activity – one copy per 2 or 3 participants may be sufficient.

Steps

1. (In advance: Facilitators prepare a SIOP Lesson Plan for this lesson using the lesson plan form from *Making Content Comprehensible*. Practice constructing content and language objectives.)

2. *Set-up:* Cut sections of butcher paper big enough for each participant to outline their entire body. Outline one body and tape the outline on the wall toward the front of the room.
 3. Prior to reading the story aloud, the facilitator asks participants to listen for instances in the story that are related to parts of the body. Participants may follow along with the reading using the copies prepared in advance.
 4. After reading the story, ask participants to identify parts of the story that connect Amada or one of the other characters to a body part, and to write the sentence on the corresponding part of the body outline on the wall. Allow five or ten minutes for participants to write their sentences on the wall.
 5. Review the story as it is told through the body and the sentences on the butcher paper.
 6. Participants now outline each other on pieces of butcher paper. While they are working, the facilitator asks them to think of an important journey from their childhoods, or even to write about how their family came to this country. Then, students write sentences on their body outlines that correspond to body parts and tell their own stories. Allow 10 to 15 minutes or more for this part of the exercise.
 7. Each participant reads his or her sentences and briefly summarizes the story.
 8. If time allows, students draft a personal essay using as a framework the sentences they have already written.
 9. (Teachers reflect upon the model lesson using the SIOP checklist. Debrief as a whole group, going through the SIOP checklist. What were the language objectives? What were the content objectives?)
 10. (Distribute copies of the lesson plan that was prepared in advance. What modifications should the facilitator make next time? To what extent was it a successful lesson? What other modifications could be made for English learners? This activity should lead immediately into the next activity, lesson planning.)
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