

Introducing Image Grammar

Summary

This lesson is intended to introduce students to basic grammatical brush strokes from Harry Noden's book Image Grammar. It gives students a brief overview of each stroke and an opportunity to try it out for themselves. You can present the brush strokes to them all at once (1 class period) or one at a time (5-10 minutes each) over the course of several class periods, depending on the ability and attention span of your students and the time available in class. *Please note that this lesson is intended to be a writing and revision strategy, not a discrete grammar lesson.

Time Frame

1 class periods of 45 minutes each

Group Size

Large Groups

Life Skills

Communication

Materials

Learning journal or scratch paper for students to "sketch" on. Introduction to the 5 Basic Brush Strokes Power Point presentation (attached). Image Grammar "self-quiz" (Excel) (attached).

Background for Teachers

I highly recommend having a copy of Image Grammar by Harry Noden (see bibliography). Having that background will enhance your presentation of the grammatical brush strokes. However, there might be enough information in the Power Point presentation to give you a beginning background. This lesson is intended to be an introduction for students to using Harry Noden's grammatical structures in more sophisticated ways with future practice.

Student Prior Knowledge

It is assumed that students know simple sentence structure (subject/verb(predicate)to build on with these more sophisticated grammatical constructions.

Intended Learning Outcomes

Students will have a basic grammar vocabulary to use in revising (literally re-seeing) their own writing and for noticing how published authors use these same grammatical structures in their own writing.

Instructional Procedures

Notes are provided on the attached Power Point presentation. One possible sequence follows: 1. Introduce the "brush stroke" (e.g., participles, absolutes, etc.). 2. Show the big picture. Have the students brainstorm a simple sentence to go with the picture (e.g., a basic who/what + action). (The goal here is NOT for elaboration.) 3. Show the sample sentence provided in the slide show. 4. Show the "made over" sentence that has incorporated the featured brush stroke. 5. Let the students give it a try with the "I ran to catch the bus" sentence. This can be done alone or in pairs. Remind them of the particular brush stroke they are trying and how to construct it, if need be. Monitor and help them as they give it a go. If desired, have a couple of students share what they came up with. Repeat with

each brush stroke, adapting as needed. At the end, the students should have a collection of brush strokes that they've applied to the "I ran to catch the bus" sample. Have them pick and choose from what they came up, COMBINING a couple of the brush strokes to come up with a revised sentence, more complex and sophisticated than the original.

Strategies for Diverse Learners

Advanced: Have them look through their own writing and see if they've used these brush strokes already, unintentionally. OR Have them look through their writing for places where they could use them. Emerging Writers or LEP: Help them "see" the picture in their mind. Have them look closely at the provided pictures and imagine what they would be feeling or sensing if they were there. Use those sensory impressions as starting points with the brush strokes.

Extensions

As a follow-up, have students look through published text (their current reading or something you've chosen) and try to identify brush strokes used by the author. You could have them highlight (color-code) a copied text or have the students create a "gallery" of great sentences they find that use the brush strokes.

Assessment Plan

*Have students turn in their practice page so you can check for understanding as they've attempted to apply the grammatical structures. Use a simple 3-point scale: 3=they use the grammatical structure correctly and to further the meaning or "picture" of the sentence. 2=they use the grammatical structure correctly, but it may sound awkward or not enhance the image or idea. 1=they still need help forming the grammatical structure itself or the sentence doesn't make sense. OR *Have them write their "final" sentence on a 3x5 card, labeling the brush strokes they used. OR *Have students self-assess: What do they feel like they "get" and what do they feel they need more help or instruction with? OR *Have students quiz themselves using the attached Excel quiz, identifying structures used in sample sentences.

Bibliography

Noden, Harry. Image Grammar: Using Grammatical Structures to Teach Writing. Portsmouth, NH: Boynton/Cook, 1999. ISBN 978-0-86709-466-4 / 0-86709-466-4 / 1999 / 224pp / Paperback (Grade level 6-10)

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