



Curriculum Units by Fellows of the Yale-New Haven Teachers Institute
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Visually Speaking: Using Visual Journaling to Build Elaboration Skills in Writing

Guide for Curriculum Unit 09.01.03
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Worn out, overused verbs and adjectives fill students' writing. This unit is designed to develop elaboration skills through the use of visual journaling which combines images and text. For many students who have a dread of writing, visual journals can increase the flow of words by providing images. The visual journal is a creation of observations and reflections designed to increase awareness of details in order to build better elaboration skills. Research has shown that strong visual-verbal connections develop better thinking skills, expand vocabulary and improve the quality of writing with elaboration. This unit addresses the needs of all learners with the opportunity for differentiated instruction. The unit promises to be highly motivating to all students, especially those who struggle with writing. It allows students and teachers to move beyond standardized test instruction. Although the unit was created with middle-school students in mind, the unit can be adapted for any grade level. It can be implemented as weekly or monthly supplemental lessons to the language arts curriculum or as a unit autonomously.

(Developed for Language Arts, grade 7; recommended for Language Arts, grades 5-12)

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