

Invitation to write

Concrete to Abstract (Jane Hirschfield, 2010)

Step 1: Have two columns.

Step 2: In column one, list 10 concrete objects (eg. leaf, orchestra, pearl, peach, window).

Step 3. In column two, list 10 abstract things (eg. time, joy, wonder, Spring, sorrow).

Step 4. Now, between each word in column one and column two, write 'of' (eg. pearl of wonder).

This activity:

- Draws on student capital (no specialist knowledge required)
- Is a stimulus for creative writing and affords productive and enjoyable play with language
- Develops understanding of literal, abstract, metaphorical and symbolic language
- Extends vocabulary
- Can be used in response to texts: character, setting, mood. For example: list 10 (or 5) concrete things in Chapter 2. Now list 10 (or 5) abstract things in Chapter 2. Or, list 5 concrete objects you associate with a character and 5 abstract things.
- Is an effective pre-writing strategy for narrative
- Allows for shared writing
- Is quick activity just for fun or to jump-start a more sustained piece.

Example

List 10 concrete objects or things and 10 abstract, conceptual things

Concrete	Abstract
Rock	Time
Bracelet	Maternal love
Snow	Sorrow
Pearl	Joy
Leaf	Excitement
Peach	Wonder
Paper	Curiosity
Window	Hesitation
Lamp	Courage
Orchestra	Spring