“Show vs. Tell”
Lesson Plan

• **Purpose/Rationale:** Students need to understand how through showing events in their writing verses telling an event can really change the way a story is read. Through adding details and elaborating on what they already have written, can be accomplished.

• **Standards/Benchmarks:**
  - S.CN.04.01: Express ideas using more complex ideas
  - W.PR.04.05: Edit and proofread their writing using appropriate resources.

• **Objectives:** Students will be able to recognize in another student’s writing where vivid details can be added to change the way the writing is viewed. They will then be able to recognize in their own writing ways to enhance their piece through elaborating on certain details. Students should truly show the reader what is occurring in their piece.

• **Materials:**
  - *Night Noises* by Mem Fox
  - Class chart of showing sentences
  - Worksheet on changing a “telling” sentence into a “showing” sentence.
  - Example of editing process that students will complete with a partner.

• **Management:** If students do not have experience with peer editing, they may edit their own piece. It is important, however, that they understand the purpose of asking questions about details to show students how they can be extended. Assign students with someone who will work well with him/her and be considerate when peer editing. Have the student write down the questions they would ask to elaborate a detail then give it and paragraph back- but including a nice comment!

• **Hook:** Write a sentence on the board that is bland and boring. Ask the class if they can think of any questions to ask me that could get me to elaborate on my detail. If they can’t or are having trouble thinking of a question, provide them with one example. Engage the students with a creative sentence that they could relate to.

• **Direct Instruction:**
  - Once the students are engaged in the Hook- read aloud *Night Noises* by Mem Fox. Throughout the book pause and ask questions to the students during different points:
1. Once the description of Lily is described pose the question: *What does this tell us about Lily Laceby?* Once the students provide different examples ask the students: *Does the author tell us Lily Laceby is old or show us she is old?*
2. Explain to the students that good authors SHOW us things instead of TELLING us. Ask them: *Why do you think they do this?*
3. After the line: “Wind and rain rattled at the windows and trees banged against the roof”, ask the students: *What is going on here?* Continue with questions such as *How do you know?* as the students provide answers to the questions.
4. Continue this same strategy throughout the rest of the book. Ask questions until it is clear that the majority of the students understand what the purpose of “showing vs. telling” can do for a book.

- After the read aloud is completed, have the students get out their adventure writing.
- Have them exchange their writing with a classmate (pre-assigned partner).
- Explain to the students that they will be revising for detail. It will be important to keep in mind that this is a rough draft and continuous attention to writing is important.
  - Tell the students to:
    1. Read your piece to your partner
    2. Have your partner ask you three questions that the piece did not answer
    3. Revise your piece by adding details, using the questions to guide you. Write revisions in red pencil so you can see how many details you added.

**Wrap-up:**

- Once the students are complete with the revising process, make sure each comes to check that they have added some detail to their paragraphs. They must have been checked for understanding before the period is over. If time is an issue, make sure that walking around the room and charting understanding is completed.
- If time is allowed, have the students share with the class ways that they added detail to their writing. Discuss how this shows the reader, instead of telling the reader what occurs in their adventure.
- Have the students continue to workshop their writing and get assistance whenever necessary. This is a lesson that students need to be reminded of daily. Prepare a sentence that is dull and have them add detail to it (the following day) in order to see if they grasp the idea.
- Assessment: Through individual checks, make sure it is understood what “showing vs. telling” can do for a piece of writing. The following day, prepare a dull sentence that the students will add detail to, elaborating on the idea. Check for understanding.