

Rachael Rack
Lesson Plan
"The Whistle"

Objective:

I would like for students to connect Eudora Welty's experience as a photographer (a creator of visual images) to her role as a writer (a creator of word images). As readers, students are constantly creating images of the text inside their minds, and this lesson plan has students transfer those images in the form of their own illustrations of the text.

Steps:

- 1) Day 1: Start reading "The Whistle" together in class, and assign any unfinished reading for homework.
- 2) Day 2: Begin class by handing out and reading Welty's description of the relationship between photography and literature from *One Time, One Place*:

I learned quickly enough when to click the shutter, but what I was becoming aware of more slowly was a story-writer's truth: the thing to wait on, to reach there in time for is the moment in which people reveal themselves. You have to be ready, in yourself; you have to know the moment when you see it. The human face and the human body are eloquent in themselves and stubborn and wayward, and a snapshot is a moment's glimpse (as a story may be a long look, a growing contemplation) into what never stops moving, never ceases to express for itself something of our common feeling. Every feeling waits upon a gesture (7-8).

- 3) Discuss this passage with students, and have them highlight parts of the paragraph that show what Welty thinks about creating images (both photographic images and word images).
- 4) Have students take out their copies of "The Whistle," and have them get into groups of three. Each group should find one passage from "The Whistle" that creates a strong word-image. The passage might be a whole paragraph, or it might be three or four sentences. Where can we strongly visualize a character because of the descriptions that Welty uses? Where does Welty "click the shutter" for us?
- 5) Pass out crayons and paper, and have students draw the image that comes into their mind from the passage that they have highlighted. Give them about 20 minutes, and encourage them to use as many details as they can from their passage. Also encourage them to try to evoke any emotions from the text in their picture. They should also write the passage from their story on the back of their paper.
- 6) Hang the pictures up on the wall. Maybe students will create pictures of Sara or Jason, the tomato plants (before or after Jason and Sara cover them), the fire, the furniture burning, etc.
- 7) Hand out post-it notes. Have students walk around the room and stop in front of each picture. They should write one word that the picture evokes in them and stick the post-it note on the picture.
- 8) Have groups read their passage and present their picture. When they talk about the words that their images provoked in their classmates, perhaps some themes of the story will emerge.