

Two-Hour General Workshop Outline:

INTRODUCTION:

- Chuck and Mira open the workshop with a song of their own and introduce themselves as traveling songwriters (troubadours)
- Discuss that there are no set rules to songwriting, but introduce the particular method that will be used in the workshop
- Introduce that all decisions in the workshop will be made collectively using Democratic Practice (i.e. voting, majority rules, democracy)

CHOOSE SONG IDEA OR TOPIC:

- Students are presented with a "blank page" and asked to suggest what they believe to be the first step in the process.
- Students suggest song ideas or topics (this discussion can be spontaneous or shaped by pre-determined criteria e.g. classroom curriculum, school theme)
- Students vote to determine the collective preference

BRAINSTORM:

- The "storm" of ideas! The group is encouraged to fill the board or other writing space by contributing verbally, while Mira takes notes.
- The brainstorm is approached as a meaningful conversation on our topic.

- The brainstorm ranges in focus from concrete ideas, to more figurative thoughts. The five senses are emphasized here, as well as metaphor and other forms of figurative language.
- This is an opportunity to dig deeper into the topic, to ask questions and be ok with not necessarily finding answers. All questions are embraced.

PARTS OF A SONG:

- Brief discussion about structural elements of a song: CHORUS, VERSES, BRIDGE
- Additionally, LYRICS and MELODY
- Discuss how the concepts of MAIN IDEA and SUPPORTING DETAILS apply in constructing a song

WRITING THE CHORUS:

- Students are encouraged to revisit brainstorm and find a potential MAIN IDEA to pursue in the Chorus
- Drawing from ideas in the brainstorm, students work collectively to write LYRICS (focus again on figurative language as well as rhyme scheme)
- Once the lyrics are written, students are asked to simply "sing" the lyrics however they hear them in their minds to create a MELODY (for examples of this see [The Process](#) page)

WRITING THE VERSES:

- Typically, each group will complete two verses using the same approach used in writing the Chorus, this time focusing on SUPPORTING DETAILS.
- Occasionally groups choose to write additional verses, or additional verses are needed to emphasize certain classroom studies (e.g. beginning, middle, end)

BRIDGE (optional):

- Depending on time and particular needs of the song, some groups choose to create a BRIDGE
- Often this section of the song is employed if there is an important idea or creative line that hasn't yet been used in the song

GROUP SING:

- The reveal moment! Students are asked to stand and sing their completed song from beginning to end
- This often includes multiple sing-throughs of the song and sometimes discussions of structure and/or revisions (i.e. to begin with the chorus or verse)
- This is usually when the work crystallizes in a sense of accomplishment and celebration. They realize they are songwriters!

POST WORKSHOP:

- Chuck and Mira record the finished song to send back to the school / classroom.
- Many schools choose to include a final performance / assembly where different groups share their song creations.

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