THE MAGIC OF METAPHORS

Nature. Think about it. There is really no better metaphor for a gifted or advanced student. As a matter of fact, this really should be offered to all students. This utilizes their critical thinking skills, creative thinking, and prior experiences in their own backyard. The metaphoric method of learning employs metaphors and analogies. It is the simple art of comparisons.

Gifted and more advanced students should be introduced to exploring nature using analogies. There are three main types of nature analogies: direct, personal, and conflict. Each still uses comparisons but they are between things which are seldom compared. There are no right or wrong answers, but there may be unique ones and this is the kind of thinking you want to foster. Your answers should tell how you, and you alone, feel based on your own prior knowledge and cultural beliefs.

Think back to Carole’s argument of war. In our culture we tend to use the more violent comparison or interpretation. Those in the Far East would probably refer to argument not as war, but as dance. Let the dance begin. What about the dance of the politicians? Do they dance around or side step?

Students need the opportunity to compose written metaphors as a way of bringing to the surface the student's awareness of their inner lives, reinforcing the validity of emotional insights. This is a valuable therapeutic purpose as it allows the student to reveal his/her thoughts in a non-threatening manner and raises the level of problem solving and academic understanding to a deeper level.

With these comparisons students are dealing with a higher sense of abstract thinking.

**Direct Analogy:**

- Which is softer? A whisper or a flower? Why?
- Which is louder? Thunder or Anger? Why?
- Which is deeper? A well or loneliness? Why?
- What color is pain? Why do you think so?
- Which is rougher? Yellow or purple? Why?

The key is the explanation.

**Personal Analogy:**

In this case the student becomes the comparison.

Let's be a cloud! Where are you? Where are you going? Finally, ask, "How are you like that cloud?"
**Transferred Personal Analogy:**
The comparison begins with the student and then moves to an object.

What do you need to survive? Most students will probably answer with water, food, shelter. Transfer the idea to something in nature. Does a flower need the same thing to survive? Move to a conclusion. Can we be compared to flowers?

**Compressed Conflict Analogy:**

This is a two- word description of an object. The key is that the words seem to be opposites or contradict each other.

An example of using it with nature:

- Spider's web (aesthetic beauty / death)
- Flowering weed
- Venus fly-trap

Now we are ready for the big challenge!

Try using nature for the metaphor in explaining broad concepts.

Examples:

- Snowflakes and Diversity
- Ant Society and Human Society
- Seasons and Human Life Cycles

Try creative metaphoric conversations with your students.