Lesson Skill: Identifying author's purpose, organization, and word choice in nonfiction

Strand Reading—nonfiction

SOL   9.5
      10.5
      11.5
      12.5

Materials
Spring 2003 Released Test for End of Course English/Reading
Copies of the attached POW Strategy to Analyze Nonfiction chart

Lesson

Module 1

1. Review basic vocabulary and concepts of informational, nonfiction texts, including purpose (theme), organizational structure (patterns), and word choice (diction).

2. Give students a copy of the attached POW (Purpose, Organization, Word Choice) Strategy to Analyze Nonfiction chart to use during reading activities. Go over the strategy, if necessary, and help students understand the similarity between *theme* in fiction and *purpose* in nonfiction. As students read, have them complete the POW chart.

3. Model using the chart to draw general and specific conclusions from an excerpt from "The Wasteland," found on page 16 of the Spring 2003 Released Test.

4. Allow the students to draw their own conclusions based on their POW chart. For instance, "This selection is mainly about pollution. Al Gore uses the problem-solution organizational pattern to persuade readers to conserve resources."

Module 2

1. Have students apply the POW strategy to another text, "Chief Seattle's letter," found on page 17 of the Spring 2003 Released Test.

2. Have students create a Venn Diagram to compare and contrast "The Wasteland" excerpt with "Chief Seattle's letter."

3. Discuss organizational methods for a compare-contrast essay, for example, point-by-point analysis, or treatment of differences and similarities in separate paragraphs.

Strategies for Differentiation
*   Word Map all Literary Terms
*   Chart Paper – Venn Diagram – Theme and Purpose
*   Groups or pairs

POW (Purpose, Organization, Word Choice)
Strategy to Analyze Nonfiction

What is the purpose? (To inform, to persuade, to define, to entertain, to analyze, etc.)

Question the text:
    Who?
 	
    What?
 	
    Why?
 	
    Where?
 	
    When?
 	
    How?

Organization (Consider page design and format: Where are the main ideas? Where are the supporting details?)
  Main ideas:
 	
    Supporting details:

Word choice (jargon, technical language, content-specific vocabulary)

Consider the features above to complete the following sentences:

1. General conclusion:

   The selection is *mainly* about _____ . .

2. Specific conclusion:

   The author uses _____ in order to
                                     (organizational pattern)

   _____ .
                             (purpose)