Mini-Lesson: Introducing the POW Writing Strategy

Strategy: POW (Pick my idea, Organize my notes, Write and say more) **Grade Level:** Middle School (adaptable for 6th-8th) **Time Allotment:** 20-25 minutes **Objective:** Students will be able to identify and understand the three steps of the POW planning strategy for writing. **Materials:**

- Whiteboard or projector
- Markers/pens
- POW anchor chart (or just write POW steps on the board)
- Simple graphic organizer template (e.g., a main idea bubble with lines for details, or a simple list/web organizer)

Lesson Plan Steps for a New Teacher:

1. Hook & Connect: Why Plan? (2 minutes)

- **Teacher Says:** "Good morning, writers! Today, we're going to talk about something super important that good writers do *before* they even start writing. Think about building a house. Would a builder just start hammering nails without a plan?"
- **Student Response (Expected):** "No!" "They need blueprints!"
- **Teacher Says:** "Exactly! A builder needs a blueprint. And guess what? Writers need a blueprint too! It's called planning. Planning helps us make sure our writing is clear, organized, and includes all our best ideas. Today, we're going to learn a simple but powerful planning strategy called **POW**."

2. Introduce POW: The Mnemonic (3 minutes)

- **Teacher Action:** Write "POW" vertically on the board.
- **Teacher Says:** "POW is an acronym, which means each letter stands for a step. It's easy to remember, like a superhero's punch!
  - **P** stands for **Pick my idea.** (Write next to P)
  - **O** stands for **Organize my notes.** (Write next to O)
  - **W** stands for **Write and say more.** (Write next to W)
- **Teacher Says:** "POW helps us get our thoughts ready *before* we write, so our writing is strong and clear. We're going to learn each step today."

3. Model "P": Pick my idea (5 minutes)

- **Teacher Action:** Point to the "P" on the board.

- **Teacher Says:** "The first step is 'P' – Pick my idea. This is where you brainstorm and decide what you want to write about. Let's say I need to write about 'My Favorite Hobby.' I'm going to think aloud as I pick my idea."
- **Teacher Think-Aloud (Model Brainstorming):** "Okay, 'My Favorite Hobby.' I like reading, playing basketball, and drawing. Which one do I know the most about? I read a lot, so I have many thoughts about reading. Yes, I'll pick 'Reading' as my idea. Now, what are some things I know or want to say about reading?" (Jot down ideas on the board as you say them: *relaxing, learn new things, escape into stories, different genres like fantasy/sci-fi, good for imagination*).
- **Teacher Says:** "See how I just brainstormed a bunch of things about my chosen idea? That's 'Pick my idea' in action."
- **Student Action:** Briefly ask students to think of *their* favorite hobby for a moment.

4. Model "O": Organize my notes (5 minutes)

- **Teacher Action:** Point to the "O" on the board.
- **Teacher Says:** "Now for 'O' – Organize my notes. This is like making a mini-map for your writing. It helps you decide what order your ideas will go in. I'm going to use a simple graphic organizer to organize the notes I just picked about 'Reading'."
- **Teacher Action:** Draw a simple web or list organizer on the board (e.g., a circle for "Reading" with lines branching out for main points, and smaller lines for details).
- **Teacher Think-Aloud (Model Organizing):** "Okay, I have 'Reading' in the middle. What's the first thing I want to tell my reader about reading? Maybe that it's relaxing. So I'll put 'Relaxing' here. What details make it relaxing? *Quiet time, cozy chair.* Next, maybe I'll talk about learning. So, 'Learn new things' here. Details? *History, science, different cultures.* And finally, 'Escape into stories.' Details? *Imagination, adventure.*" (Fill in the graphic organizer visibly).
- **Teacher Says:** "Now I have my ideas organized. This helps me know what to write first, next, and last, so my writing isn't messy."

5. Model "W": Write and say more (5 minutes)

- **Teacher Action:** Point to the "W" on the board.
- **Teacher Says:** "Finally, 'W' – Write and say more. This is where we actually start writing, but we remember to 'say more' by adding details and explanations from our organized notes. I'll write a few sentences using my organizer."
- **Teacher Think-Aloud (Model Writing & Elaborating):** "My first idea was 'Reading is relaxing.' So I'll start with, 'Reading is my favorite hobby because it is incredibly relaxing.' (Write sentence). Now, how can I 'say more' about that? Oh, my notes say 'quiet time, cozy chair.' So I'll add, 'I love finding a quiet corner and settling into a cozy chair with a good book.' (Write sentence). Next, my notes say 'learn new things.' So, 'Beyond relaxation, reading also helps me learn new things.' (Write sentence). And I can 'say more' by adding, 'I've learned so much about history, science, and different cultures just by reading.'" (Write sentence).

- **Teacher Says:** "Notice how I didn't just write 'Reading is relaxing.' I 'said more' by adding details from my notes. That makes my writing much more interesting!"

6. Quick Check for Understanding & Next Steps (2 minutes)

- **Teacher Says:** "So, what are the three steps of POW?" (Call on a few students to recall P, O, W).
- **Teacher Says:** "Great job! Today, we just introduced POW. Next time, we'll do some guided practice where *you* get to try out each step with a partner. Remember, planning is like a blueprint for your writing. POW helps you build that blueprint!"
- **Teacher Action:** Distribute the simple graphic organizer template for the next day's guided practice.

Tips for the New Teacher:

- **Keep it Brief:** Stick to the time limits. This is an introduction, not mastery.
- **Exaggerate Think-Alouds:** Make your thinking process very obvious. Students need to hear what goes on inside a writer's head.
- **Positive Reinforcement:** Praise students for participating and recalling the steps.
- **Don't Fix Errors Yet:** During this introduction, focus solely on the POW process, not spelling or grammar.
- **Relatable Topic:** Choose a modeling topic that resonates with middle schoolers.