

Title of Session: WriteTalk - Sharing Best Practices in Writing

Moderator: Sandra Shattuck

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Room: WriteTalk Group

SandraS: shall we start, BJ?

FredK wants to contribute a supplementary site

BjB nods to Sandy

FredK: for tonight

SandraS: What do you have, Fred?

FredK: <http://www.its.caltech.edu/~atomic/snowcrystals/>

SandraS: I think we can do without intros and without the NWP spiel..

DavidWe: Nice snow flakes

SandraS: let's take a look at Fred's site

DavidWe LOVES the NWP spiel

SandraS: Wow...gorgeous snowflakes.

SandraS: I think snowflake.com was one of the web resources listed on the lesson plan....but I didn't get a chance to see it.

FredK: This is from CalTech

SandraS: Fred, do you want introductions, or are you comfortable enough just diving in?

FredK: I'm ok without them

SandraS: excellent! so let's dig into multi-genre stuff

FredK: I have your ReadWriteThink up also

SandraS: great, Fred...that's where we can start.

SandraS: if you didn't have a chance to check out the lesson plan, go ahead and look at the site for about 5 minutes and then come on back

SandraS: http://www.readwritethink.org/lessons/lesson_view.asp?id=774

FredK: "Please help me with "multigenre"

SandraS: Fred, that's exactly where we're going to start.

SandraS: Let's see if everybody's back and ready to rock 'n roll.

SandraS: ok, let's start with our own sense of multigenre

SandraS: what do we think it means?

FredK: covers many generations?

DavidWe: What does "genre" mean?

BjB: fables, folktales

SandraS: ok, "genre" which is French, translates to "type"

SandraS: nods to BJ

DavidWe: . o O (fiction, non-fiction...writing styles....)

SandraS: so, exact translation = many types

SandraS: the word "genre" also gets used as an adjective, as in "genre fiction"

FredK: of what?

SandraS: and that just means the highly published fiction like mystery, romance, science fiction, western

DavidWe: mystery, science fiction...

SandraS: those are considered "genre" fiction

SandraS: ok, so we've got this lesson plan that takes a multigenre book at its core

SandraS: has anyone seen the book? [Snowflake Bentley]

DavidWe: nope

FredK: no

SandraS: I ran to the library this afternoon and it really is a good example of multigenre

FredK: the description is interesting

SandraS: let's see if I can explain

SandraS: it is a really good book

SandraS: the main section of the page has the woodcut by the artist Mary Azarian

SandraS: she's the reason for the caldecott prize

DavidWe: cool

SandraS: her website is gorgeous, by the way...

DavidWe: Recent Caldecott winner?

SandraS: so there's a picture that goes along with the story

SandraS: then there's a bordered frame to the left or right of the page

SandraS: and the font is smaller

SandraS: and it offers facts of Bentley's life

SandraS: he's the subject of the book

SandraS: a fascinating person

SandraS: who first photographed snowflakes

BjB: I'm familiar with the book

BjB: . o O (also have the video that goes with it)

SandraS: oh, cool..

SandraS: yes, I noticed there's now a video

BjB: forgot about that...should show that in school next week

SandraS: BJ, how would you explain the book as multigenre?

BjB: historical? science?

SandraS: yeah...so the frames to the side contain what might be considered dry facts

SandraS: while the text on the bottom is a biographical story

SandraS: feels more like a story

BjB nods

SandraS: so there are two very different types of writing on the same page

SandraS: and the writing is connected through the illustration

SandraS: it's a little disconcerting reading it

SandraS: at least for me

DavidWe: why?

SandraS: dunno

DavidWe . o O (nicely expressed!)

SandraS: I like stories too much

DavidWe smiles

SandraS: so I don't really like the dry factual stuff

BjB: Bentley had a sad end...don't remember if that is in the book

SandraS: yes, it is

SandraS: he walked 6 miles through a blizzard, contracted pneumonia, and died two weeks later

SandraS: part of me thinks he appreciated dying that way

SandraS: after all the years he spent photographing snowflakes

BjB nods. People thought he was a nut case

SandraS: he was so passionate about what he did

BjB: and didn't take his photographs seriously

SandraS: I guess some would misconstrue that passion as insanity

DavidWe: He was from Vermont

SandraS: yes, that's unfortunate...his photos are gorgeous!

SandraS: the collection in Buffalo is a great resource

SandraS: so, on some levels, picture books are already multigenre texts

SandraS: since they combine pictures with text...

SandraS: and the lesson plan focuses on written genres but it doesn't focus on mixing the visual or aural, for instance

DavidWe: Bentley also photographed all forms of ice and natural water formations including clouds and fog. He was the first American to record raindrop sizes and was one of the first cloud physicists.

SandraS: very cool...

SandraS: he loved photographing the invisible parts of nature, I think

DavidWe: early photographic studies

SandraS: I have to say that the "make-a-snowflake" site, which is the first web resource listed, was tons of fun...

FredK: How to at CalTech too

SandraS: ok, so onward... Fred, do you have more input or questions about the term "multigenre"?

SandraS: oh, cool...will have to check that site out more carefully

FredK: I like Thoreau

FredK: He is in the same area too

DavidWe smiles

DavidWe . o O (Concord, Massachusetts)

SandraS: the illustrator has woodcuts of Thoreau quotes on her website

FredK: "How full of the creative genius is the air in which these are generated!

FredK: I should hardly admire more if real stars fell

FredK: and lodged on my coat."

FredK: --Henry David Thoreau, 1856 [1]

SandraS: very lovely

SandraS: let me step back a wee bit and just say that I was very impressed with Lisa's lesson plan

SandraS: the ReadWriteThink website is a fantastic resource, and I wanted to be sure folks knew about it

SandraS: and although the website is for language arts teachers, I think other subject area teachers could get lots out of it

FredK: for sure

SandraS: and the Snowflake Bentley book can point to so many areas...

SandraS: history, science, photography, art, storytelling

SandraS: so...multigenre text...why bother?

FredK: The student has choices

SandraS: ah, yes

SandraS: can you explain what you mean a bit more, Fred?

BjB: also multiple intelligences. We were just discussing that in the Classroom Assessment discussion

SandraS nods to BJ

SandraS: that's another thing I love about choices...

FredK: Unless a specific track is assigned, the student has many choices

SandraS: so a student who enjoys kinesthetic learning might make up a snowflake dance...

SandraS: or someone who is an aural learner might find snowflake songs

FredK: right

FredK: and someone with a scientific bent might photograph

SandraS: exactly

SandraS: as I read the book, I noticed how much I appreciated all the genres

SandraS: the dry facts still informed me...and I wanted to investigate some things more

SandraS: the story line hooked my interest and emotions

SandraS: the drawings kept me looking

SandraS: I think multigenre texts might help students understand the nature of each genre more fully

SandraS: just by the near juxtaposition of the genres...

SandraS: any thoughts?

FredK: Maybe our interlibrary loans can find the book for me

SandraS: if you're near a public library, there's probably a copy

FredK: How do the genre change places

SandraS: not sure I understand your question, Fred

FredK: or did I get the wrong meaning for juxtaposition

SandraS: ah...ok, so they don't change places but just exist side by side

SandraS: so for instance, what the students do in the lesson plan

SandraS: is to actually create a multigenre text

SandraS: you can download the template

SandraS: there's a space for a picture

SandraS: then there are spaces for three kinds of text

SandraS: and the writer (composer) can choose what kind of text

SandraS: one of the handouts list genre types and there is a whole page!

SandraS: recipe, newspaper ad, will, brochure....

SandraS: so the writer chooses a topic on snow to write about

SandraS: then the writer chooses three different types of writing to address that topic

SandraS: and there's a picture

SandraS: and the whole thing goes on one page

SandraS: there's also a self-assessment sheet you can download

SandraS: I would be interested to find out what students learn from this assignment

SandraS: any more thoughts on the _Snowflake Bentley_ lesson plans?

DavidWe: lot of science stuff

SandraS: yes, great science applications

FredK: It will take some more research on my part

FredK: I have the page bookmarked

SandraS: well, I thought we could look at all of Lisa Storm Fink's lesson plans.

FredK: Remember CalTech

SandraS: she has a whole page...lots of excellent stuff.

SandraS: thanks, Fred. I've got that site bookmarked, too.

SandraS: So I thought we could visit that page for about 5 minutes. Choose one lesson plan that intrigues you and check it out. Come back and report to the group.

SandraS: How does that sound?

FredK: good, what is the url?

SandraS: here it is Fred...I think it's just you and I doing this!

SandraS:

http://www.readwritethink.org/lessons/author_detail.asp?authorid=24&lessonid=774

FredK: It's loading

SandraS: ok

FredK: done

SandraS: great....just find something that interests you and look at the lesson plan for a bit and come on back here

FredK: The Comics in the classroom looks interesting

SandraS: I agree

FredK: It ties pictures and text together

SandraS: yes...

SandraS: I'm looking at the very last lesson plan

SandraS: which discusses films made from books

FredK: She does it with the genre

SandraS: great point, Fred...I think a lot of this teacher's work deals with crossing genres

SandraS: or what folks seem to be calling "multiple literacies"

FredK: I like pictures as story starters

SandraS: great tool!

FredK: I want the site documented

FredK: http://www.readwritethink.org/lessons/lesson_view.asp?id=188

SandraS: pictures as story starters allow for that choice you were talking about, Fred

BjB: comics are now called graphic novels...

BjB: and can be used for a wide age range of students

FredK: That's what I like

SandraS: yes, that's also a great thing about these lesson plans...

SandraS: even the ones designated for 3-5 I can see adapting for college

FredK: In spite of the age, it fits some of my students

SandraS: same in my case...

SandraS: BJ, I thought of you when I looked at this lesson plan

SandraS: http://www.readwritethink.org/lessons/lesson_view.asp?id=972

SandraS: it's about creating a new book cover for a book

BjB: <http://my.voyager.net/~sraiteri/comicslinks.htm> is worth looking at too

DavidWe: that's cool

SandraS: great art and literature idea

SandraS: thanks for the link, Bj

SandraS: Will check that out

SandraS: ComicLife is a great comics program

DavidWe: Sandra, do you know the book, "Six Million Paper Clips"?

SandraS: no, David

DavidWe: <http://www.amazon.com/Six-Million-Paper-Clips-Holocaust/dp/158013176X>

FredK: Bj, that is a lot of links

DavidWe: Small town in southeastern Tenn. wanting to teach about the Holocaust

SandraS: wow, that looks like a fascinating book

DavidWe: . o O (Whitwell, TN)

DavidWe: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Paper_Clips_Project

DavidWe: more details about the project, the school, the teacher

SandraS: thanks for the link

DavidWe: you're welcome

SandraS: we're just about at the end of the hour

SandraS: any final comments? suggestions?

BjB: www.randomhouse.com/panttheon/graphicnovels/spiegelman.html

DavidWe . o O (Maus)

FredK: The multiple intelligences ?

BjB: wow, that hour went fast!

DavidWe smiles

SandraS: Thanks, BJ, for the link

FredK: Quick too

SandraS: Do you want to focus on that for next time, Fred?

FredK: yues that would be gook

SandraS: excellent...that will give me some homework!

FredK: Yes that would be good

BjB: The next WriteTalk is on January 11

FredK: I plan on being there

SandraS: thanks, BJ

FredK: Thank you Sandra

SandraS: if you have any thoughts in the meantime, please email me or just post to the Write

SandraS: Talk

DavidWe: Thanks, Sandra. Have a great holiday

BjB: thanks, Sandy.

SandraS: discussion board

SandraS: Thanks, all.

SandraS: I enjoyed it!

BjB hugs goodnight

DavidWe hugs Bj

SandraS: I always get a teacherly energizing...

FredK: I got your email

SandraS: Hugs to all

FredK: you too

SandraS: sdshattuck@gmail.com

SandraS: Take care!