

**Title of Session:** WriteTalk - Sharing Best Practices in Writing

**Moderator:** Sandra Shattuck

**Title of File:** 20061214writetalk

**Date:** December 14, 2006

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](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](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](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](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](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/pantheon/graphicnovels/spiegelman.html](http://www.randomhouse.com/pantheon/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](mailto:sdshattuck@gmail.com)

**SandraS:** Take care!