

Finding the Writer Within

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Introduction

Imagine that you enter into a class full of fourth grade students in the midst of a writing session. You stand in the back observing the tiny bodies that are looming over each surface. In that moment you become aware that at each table there is a unique writer with his or her own story to be told. Without any motive your attention is drawn to a cluster of three students. The first student seems to be writing with ease. There seems to be a natural rhythm between the pencil and paper. The second writer has a grip on the pencil. As if at any moment the fragile pencil could shatter. Then there is the third student. Her pencil is detached from her hand completely and she is looking around as if she has completed the writing task. You are taken aback when you observe her untouched paper; just then the student turns to look at you and she shrugs her shoulders.

For me, my class is filled with many students who shrug their shoulders. Sometimes I hear, “I don’t know what to write,” or “I don’t like writing.” Yet after time I discover that there are language barriers or lack of practice in written expression that have become obstacles. Needles to say, my audience of writers is a bit different from the norm. I teach in a public magnet school that is part of a large urban school district with nearly 134,000 students in 176 schools. My school has a culturally diverse student population that consists of 57.5% Hispanic, 13.2% African American, 18.5% White, and 10.7% Other. Thirty percent of the student population are speakers of a first language that is not English and are identified as Limited English Proficient. Sixty and nine tenth percent qualify for free and reduced priced school meals. Because my school is a language immersion school by the time they leave the school they are bi-lingual and bi-literate in both Spanish and English. Due to this unique exposure the students are able to make connections globally. They have two heritages that provided them with a plethora of personal experiences. This two-way immersion program is one in which students from two different language backgrounds receive academic instruction in two "target" languages (English/Spanish). My school is equipped with a computer lab so that all students have access to current technology. The students are able to conduct individual research on all aspects writing and literacy. I also have a Smart Board in my classroom that enables me to display a variety of images during the course of my daily instruction. In addition, our state mandates that all students write across the curriculum; therefore, I frequently take my students to the computer lab to type descriptions of their own hand written samples. These writing activities not only satisfy state requirements, but also lead to exposure to a complex writing curriculum.

My unit, *Finding the Writer Within*, will take my bilingual fourth grade students on a four week journey in writing. It is my hope that the combination of daybooks, the study of various genres in writing, global thinking, and self-reflection will help them bloom into the writers that lie beneath their fears, anxieties and obstacles.

Rationale

“We breathe, in and out... You see, we are live people students can see doing what they are trying to do... we need to be alive in the room with our students as we write. Our students need to see what we are hoping for in them, and no other writer can do that for them because we are the only ones breathing in the room with them.” – Katie Ray Woods (1)

As a teacher there have been times I have felt that my breaths are gasps, because I am unable to inhale the true aspect of the “art of writing”. There are days when it feels as if my pencil is bogged down with standards and expectations of what an author must “exhibit” at the age of nine that I forget that my primary task is to develop the growth of each individual writer in the classroom. How does that growth happen? Through “formulated” writing? By expecting that every child is a “cookie cutter” author? I can honestly say that I have taught writing as if it were a math algorithm, but that style of teaching has in turn stunted the growth of many writers in my classroom. Sadly, they have begun to see writing as “another assignment” to be completed, rather than an avenue in which they are safe to express their feelings, views, and opinions creatively. Within the unit there are various genres in writing activities and literature that will expose students to creative expression, which in turn, will challenge each pupil to examine, share, defend, and transform the way they think. Using this unit will empower each writer to creatively compose words to share with others in a way that his or her personality, voice, can be heard. If this succeeds, a connection to the words will be made and ownership will take place. They will no longer see writing as something that is done, but as a reflection of who they are as a person, as a writer.

“I know that my experience as a reader and a writer directly form so much of my instruction in writing workshops, and I have had the privilege to watch so many other anchor their teaching of writing in their own experiences.” Katie Ray Woods (1)

Do my students have a connection with their writing? Do they understand that the words they compose are connected to every part of their being? Do they understand that their story is one that should be shared, heard, and valued? How did I come to make a connection to writing? I wish I were able to define a particular moment in my education when writing became a freedom of expression rather than a task to complete. But I must admit the process evolved slowly and independently. Writing became “real” when I began to use it as an avenue in which I felt free to express myself. It was what I needed to do in order to “empty my soul” all the while rejuvenating my spirit. It was, and is, my connection to myself. With the implementation of this unit I can facilitate activities that will help each unique writer become connected with their words so that they can be rejuvenated. To see how maybe then they will begin to connect to their writing and fall in love with the words that they pen.

“By third grade and fourth grade, students have a greater need to make their writing work for others. They will listen to the comments and suggestions offered by peers and, with encouragement and support, incorporate these responses into their writing.” - Portalupi, JoAnn, and Ralph J. Fletcher (2)

Within the unit there will be moments in which the student will be afforded time to do just that, share. Sharing will occur not only with peers, but with the teacher as well. The teacher will share by implementing modeling sessions, or think alouds, as they write. In addition, the students will be given time in class to complete short narratives on various topics in their day books. After the allotted time they will pair up with a peer and share their thoughts. In order for writers to feel the power of their words in their lives they must have the opportunity to see how their composition affects other writers' thoughts and feelings. This will be completed by having a time in which work is shared and valued, so there will be a time to complement each other's work.

Not only will this unit encourage peer evaluation and support, but self reflection as well. Reflecting does not come naturally. We as teachers have been programmed to reflect after every lesson. How could that content have been delivered more effectively? What did the student gain from the lesson? The outcome of such questioning is an improved lesson that can be implemented. So is it surprising to think that maybe we need to program our writers to reflect on their own writing. We need to guide our students to think about their thinking. There will be questions throughout the unit. These questions will encourage the writer to explain how the piece of writing, stirred emotion, or how the writers changed their styles of writing, or how writers gave them a different perspective. In addition it will allow each student to examine if they made a connection with the mentor text or their composed piece. The outcome of this reflection, from varied writing genres, will allow each student the opportunity to understand their authorship and gain confidence.

Objectives

“When your students write they are drawing on the cultural experiences that they have had in their lives.” (Pahl/Rowsell) (3)

These objectives will help writers in a class to draw on their experiences in order to bring a living connection into the words that they pen on their paper.

Identify with young adult authors by reading their biographies...*How are they like you? What struggles did they endure as a writer? How did their writing change your way of thinking?*

Develop a fictional narrative...*How did you create the setting and characters? How do you connect with the characters? What did you enjoy/dislike most about this piece?*

Examine and create a brief research paper on their culture...*How did you enjoy collecting information? How do you think your writing presented the information to others? How did this change you as a writer? How could this information change your community?*

Record daily in a daybook...*How did recording your thoughts help you understand yourself better? What page really makes you feel unique? Which page changed how you see yourself?*

Examine and create a brief research paper...*what did you like best about this type of writing? How would the information change how other people think? What part of the writing was hard for you?*

Create a poem...*How did you express yourself? What is something you had to overcome to complete this piece of writing? How do you have a better understanding of yourself after this piece was completed.*

Examine a song writing... *How did this change you as a writer? What is your message in the lyrics? How has your culture influenced the words you used?*

Create a personal narrative... *What made you chose this story? How did it change you as a writer to retell a personal story? What did you have to give up in order to share this piece with your teacher or friend?*

Strategies:

Finding the Writer Within is a writing unit that was created for fourth grade students. It will draw upon students keeping a daily journal, reading children's literature selected around the theme of cultural awareness, and exploring their ideas about their own and other cultures. It is important to understand that as the unit progresses students will be the exposed to a substantial relevant amount of reading assignments, and activities will be used to help students see how writers write and how connections are made with text. In addition, this unit will cover various genres in writing, such as poems, personal narratives, imaginative narratives, biographies, and research documents that will align with the fourth grade standards course of study for the state of North Carolina.

Finding the Writer Within should be presented in a semester. Each writing session will be 45 minutes and include a time in which the teacher can provide guidance through a mini-lesson. After completing the writing process the writers will be allowed an opportunity to pair up with another writer and share what suggestions and complements they have about the writing.

Graphic Organizers

At times writers have a hard time knowing where to start or which ideas he would like to focus upon. That is where graphic organizers will come in and equip the writer with a tool that would enable him to organize their thoughts onto paper. This will help the writer building a solid platform for his topic. Once they record their thoughts they are able to reference the information throughout their writing process. Within this unit we utilize the tree map, the circle map, circle map, and sequence map. (4)

Day Book Entries

This is vital part of the unit. It has been a pleasure to afford each writer time to “warm up” and become comfortable with writing words that express their thought and emotions. I began each day with a topic that would extract a view and feeling from the writer. For example, I would place a picture on the smart board or show a clip from a movie that would challenge the writer to examine their point of view. Then in turn, they would record their thoughts in the day book. This can be challenging at first, but after modeling and practice they will become at ease with the day book. At our school we have traveling day books. The writer is able to take their day book and record their thoughts about a particular art piece or comment on an opera or themes that they are examining in music. This day book is a place where the writer can feel “safe” because they are not be afraid of the teacher correcting their grammar or judging their comments.

Brief Reports

These short reports took us two to three days to complete. At our school we have access to a computer lab each week. We would dedicate that lab time to researching a topic or a person. The final product would be a brief report of two paragraphs. As they developed their writing I felt that it was important to have each writer create a title, sub-headings, and a bibliography section. In order for the research to be effected we found that we needed to organize our information. Therefore, we used a color code system to record relevant information. Each site was designated a color. I found that exposing writers to this genre of writing allowed students to experience how other authors wrote expository writing genres. They were challenged to take information and present it in a way that would catch a reader’s interest. Within the unit we created brief biography, research paper on a specific, and a book talk presentations.

Centers

Being able to implement centers will be enriching for every writer. Not only do they enjoy the small group atmosphere, but they also enjoy the ability to move around the room and tackling various task. I found that implementing this strategy would take us up to two days. Before commencing the centers I had to explain to my writers the concept of narratives. I gave them example of narrative that we read every day, letters, our Time for Kids, and emailing! (5) After the understood the concept of narratives I would assign at least four to five writers to a group. After reading the directions at each center their goal was to complete the task within 15-20 minutes. Each group had the opportunity to rotated to four centers and either practice a specific writing skill or examine a writing genre.

Questionnaire

For this unit I created a series of questions. I felt that this strategy was important to implement because it forced each writer to be aware of their prior knowledge or experience with writing genres. I wanted to get a glimpse of their perspectives. It also allowed me an opportunity to see the motivation that lied within the writer in regard to the genre that we would study. Not only was it helpful for me as their teacher, but it was also a tool for the writers in my classroom. It made the writer aware of how they felt or what they thought about a particular genre of writing. Before we began a writing piece I gave a brief overview of the genre, then handed out my teacher-created survey. After we completed the project I would distribute a second survey. The second survey was focused on how the experience changed their view about the writing genre or how they have grown as a writer because of the exposure.

Good Writers Wanted

With this strategy I wanted each writer in my class to examine another author's work. Students were asked to choose a piece of literature that they really enjoyed. Then they used a circle map to list attributes that made the book interesting for them as the reader. Once they completed that task they were then given time to research the author's journey in writing the literature. For the product, each writer will create an article that displays facts of their elected author, the type of genre, and the elements that they would like to implement in their own writing.

Writer's Trail

As I used this strategy I began to realize it was very helpful in practicing brainstorming skills, which is why I call it the *Writer Trail*. To begin the exercise I would read aloud a mentor text or a phrase that I wrote in my day book. Then I would distribute a variety of colored index (white/pink/green) cards. Before the writer picked up their pencil I would focus on a particular element and reread it to the class. The element could be anything I wanted to expose the writer to: descriptive words or actions, similes, alteration, or metaphors, etc. Then I would start to ask questions that would enable the writer to brainstorm personal elements for a future story or reflect on the author's work that was read aloud. Below you will see an example

Here is an entry that I wrote in my day book:

I will always remember the day I said goodbye to my best friend. It is not hard to think back to the tear that fell down my face. I realized that my heart was being broken. Through my tear-filled eyes I could see her hair that was as bright as the suns fall deeper into the tunnel. I knew at that moment that my best friend and I would never see each other again!

White index card:

What descriptive words did the writer use to help us see her friend or feel her emotion?

Pink index card:

Have you ever felt that way? Have you ever had to leave a friend? Which words would you use to describe your friend? Your emotion?

Green index card:

Which genre of writing would you like to write using these phrases? Can you give an example of another author who used words to describe sadness or brokenness or lose of friendship?

By the end of the exercise I would have the writer share what they recorded with a peer. In turn the peer will record questions that they had as a reader and comments of encouragement. Then I would tell them to store the index cards in their day book, so that we can refer back to them in writing for future compositions.

Genre Discussions

Before each writing session the teacher should choose an appropriate mentor text or section from the mentor text that demonstrates the targeted genre that the student will compose later during their writing time. Listed below are genres that will be discussed or practiced in this unit. (6)

Personal Letter

Inner Monologue Representing Internal Conflicts

Personal Essay or Philosophical Questions

Poetry

Song Lyrics

Short Imaginative Story

Biographical Summary

Personal Narratives

Here are some genres that you might want to discuss or add to the unit.

Speech or Debate

Historical Times Context Essay

Autobiographical Essay

After reading the mentor text the teacher and class will discuss how the author formatted his/her thoughts for the reader. We will then examine which genre we feel was represented by the composition. The book discussion will also be used to make students aware any connection they are able to make with the author's words. We will, as a group, also talk about elements that we really thought were valuable to us as writer. Throughout the book discussions we will create a list, within our day books, of the attributes that we would like to implement in our own writing. Listed below are some literary genres that we will use as mentors throughout the unit.

Esperanza Rising/Lemon Tree / Pennies from Heaven/ Sign of the Beaver/Poem/ Kung Fu Panda Quotes/ Fig Pudding/My Rotten Redheaded Brother/Song and Dance!/ Dear Mrs. LaRue/ A Song For Mama/Mouse on the Motorcycle/Lunch Money

Classroom Activities

Day Book Entries:

Genre: Various

This is vital part of the unit. At the beginning of the year I took a block of writing time to introduce the concept of a daybook. As I shared my daybook with my writers I made sure to point out the table of context, title on each entry, numbered pages, and dated pages. They were very excited about the process and could not wait to format their own daybook. As the weeks progressed I would use the Smart Board to create slides in which I presented a topic to the writers. I used these prompts in order to guide writers' thinking before they begin recording in their daybook. Below is an example of a quote that I posted to get the writers started.

“Yesterday is history, tomorrow is a mystery. But today is a gift. That is why it is called a present” --Chinese Proverb from Kung Fu Panda. (7)

After a series of entries we, the writer and teacher, would exchange thoughts. On the back of their daybook we have a “mailbox”, which is an envelope that the teacher has taped on the back. In this mailbox the writer writes letters to the teacher indicating a page they would like for the teacher to read. Once the teacher reads the letter and the page, she or he will write a compliment on an idea or strategy of writing that was done well. It is here that the students will be able to

complete reflections on how they feel about the writing task and genre. This will become their safe haven where they will not be judged on the grammar or features of their paragraphs. It will be a location that they are able to ‘free write’ and “warm up”. As the teacher monitors they should stop to guide the writers to think deeper by asking questions that are relevant to their entry.

Reflecting Questionnaire

Genre: Philosophical Questions

Self Reflection: This survey will be implemented after the teacher has introduced a new genre and students have published their personal work. The questions on the survey are listed below.

How did you feel about this genre before you created you own writing?

How has your thoughts changed?

What did you like about this type of writing?

What connection did you make as you wrote?

Why would you like to share this idea with some else?

What does this writing reflect about you?

After writers completed their reflection they wrote notes in their daybook on strategies that they can use next time to improve their writing. The questions can be altered as to the teacher’s discretion or class progress.

Peer Reflection: This was completed by a peer after writers published their personal work. I had my writer record the reflection on a sticky notepad. The questions on the survey are listed below.

What was one thing that you liked most about this writing?

What is something that you like to take back to your writing?

What was one thing that confused you as the reader?

After the notes are returned to the writer they would tape it into their daybook. Throughout the unit I would ask the writer to look back at the peer reflection. I would have them ask themselves if they remembered to include those elements in their writing. After the exchange I had each writer write a note to place in their mailbox to me explaining one comment that they thought was very helpful and how they were going to implement that into their writing.

Song Writers Café

Genre: Inner Monologue and Song Lyrics

Prior to this activity I had to introduce the concept of inner monologues. Once the writer gained understanding of this genre I incorporated the lyrics from the song _____. (8) After we examined the words we discussed the metaphoric or emotional phrases involved. Then I instructed the writer to write a brief monologue from the point of view from the song writer. I made to guide them to focus on the struggle that he had to overcome or the feeling that was expressed in the song. It was also stated that they were they were to include one phrase from the lyric that moved them the most. Once each student completed their written monologue they prepared their presentation. The cumulative elements required that I transform the class into a coffee shop (lighting/music/arrangement of tables). I assigned writers within groups of five, in which they will present their created monologue to the group in the café. (For those writers that were unable to memorize their piece I allowed them to write it on an index card.)

Walking in Their Shoes

Genre: Poetry

Walking in Their Shoes is an activity I used in the unit that allowed writers to write about any person in the history of North Carolina. In our Social Study curriculum we study the Native American and the pioneers of North Carolina, so I integrated this writing activity within the social study lessons. As their teacher, I required each writer to compose a rhyming poem that explained the point of view and emotion of a selected person in North Carolina's history. Within their poem they were required to state the title of their poem, the period of time, and a brief historical importance. and choose a figure (character) within a series of events. They will then compose a poem expressing their emotion on the selected action.

Writing Centers

Genre: Personal Story

Being able to implement centers will be enriching to the students. Not only do the students enjoy the small group atmosphere, but they also enjoy the ability to move around the room and tackling various task. Using this tool will allow the students to practice their own style of writing in various genres. There was an overall theme to the center (short personal narratives). At centers one and two I placed the following mentor text: Mrs. LeRue and My Rotten Redheaded Brother. At these centers the writers were asked to read the short story and record descriptive words or events that they found inspiring or interesting. Meanwhile at center three I had writers focus on brainstorming using the circle map. They needed to brainstorm two topics. 1. People or things that annoy them. 2. Habits their parents corrected continually. In center four writers were

presented the following topic: Write about a time someone was annoying you or write about a time an adult corrected you for a habit you thought was acceptable. Their task was to pick one topic and write a brief personal narrative in their daybook.

Good Authors Needed- Interactive Posters

Genre: Biographical Summary

In order to ensure that writing was done across the curriculum this activity took place during our literacy time. Within this time I had to group my writers into two groups. One group read "Lunch Money" by Andrew Clements. The other group read "Mouse on the Motorcycle" by Beverly Cleary. I conducted a book talk prior to reading in order to build knowledge of the literary content. I commenced the book talk by presenting two teacher created *glogsters* pages that introduced characters, risk, authors, and possible consequences that we would be exposed to while reading. (10) I made sure to encourage the students to read their novel with a *writer's eye*.

After we completed the books we examined the writing skills that we admired. The discussion was followed by viewing internet links of biographies from Cleary and Clements.(9) With these internet links my writers were able to see how other writers are inspired and gave it gave them clarification of how an author begins to write.

As a cumulative project, each writer recorded their answered to the questions below in their daybook.

When did the author begin to write?

What struggle did the author endure?

Who or what inspired the author's writing?

What writing skill would you replicate and practice in your own writing?

What do you think makes the author a good writer?

Following the questions we used a Venn diagram in order to find similarities or different within our writing journey. To wrap it up we completed the project by creating a brief biography of the authors using an interactive poster labeled Good Authors Needed on *glogster*. (10)

Writer's Trail

Genre: Imaginative Narrative

Within the unit there will be multiple literature that I will use for mentoring text, but in this case I will use "Cricket in Time Square". For this activity I distributed various colored index cards to each writer. After reading a section of the mentor text I asked the students to write down elements that they heard (setting/character/actions). On the second set of cards I asked them to make a connection with one of the characters. Finally on the third colored index card I asked them to create a short narrative piece of writing in which they insert themselves as the cricket playing a classical piece (or pop culture song) in the subway. Once the activity was completed I had students pair up with a peer and share their ideas. During their discussions they were asked to talk about how they think the character or author would feel if they read their alteration of the story.

Pen Pals

Genre: Letter

We are fortunate enough to team up with a group of students from California. It is always a delight to see the excitement writers share at the beginning of the year when we begin to correspond. This is an activity that will be introduced within the unit, but continued throughout the year. During the course of the year we will compose various letters to our pen pals explaining the content that we are learning in North Carolina as well as exchanging personal information. Before we begin to write we will discuss the importance of narratives within letters. I will make it a point to inform the student that their pen pal does not want a list of attributes, but a glimpse into their story, their lives. Therefore, for the first three writing sessions the writer will be exposed to how to bring a personal narrative to life through descriptive words and slow motion replays of actions.

My True Colors

Genre: Research and Imaginative Narrative

"My True Colors" is a research project that will spotlight the culture (s) that represents the individual writer. Each writer will be required to do a brief investigation of their country's national flag. Within their investigation, if possible, they must uncover the various colors that are in the flag, the meaning of the colors, an important event in the country's history, and the date the country adopted the flag. Once they have collected relevant information they must compose an imaginative story from the point of view of the flag interjecting the facts that they obtained. In order to help the writer along I will record the following prompt on the board:

Imagine that you're the national flag of your country waving high in the air. All of a sudden you are brought down from your pole and placed in a dark drawer. Write about your experience and what you would do to escape.

For the final presentation each writer will have the opportunity to paint their faces with the colors of their country and recite their brief imaginative piece. During this activity I will read aloud "Lemon Tree" as the mentor text. This novel is based on a Mexican-American young adult searching her heritage and identity.

Week-By-Week Overview

Introduction to Unit: The Writer Within

Genre discussion/ introduce and create the daybook/ discuss the importance of writing across the curriculum

Narratives

Introduce the concept of a narrative/ personal narrative: writing centers/ imaginative narrative: writer's trail/ Survey/Daybook Entries

Poetry and Letters

Discuss why we write poetry/ Walking in Their Shoes/ Discuss how to format a formal letter/ Pen pals/ Song Writers Café/Survey/Daybook entries

Research

Good Authors Needed- Interactive Posters/Daybook entries/My True Colors Recommended Mentor List

Esperanza Rising	Lemon Tree	Pennies from Heaven
Sign of the Beaver	Fig Pudding	My Rotten Redheaded Brother
Song and Dance!	Dear Mrs. LaRue	A Song for Mama
Wednesday Wars	Pinballs	Mouse on a Motorcycle
Lunch Money	Bridge to Terabithia	

Student Materials

Compositions Journals/ Loose paper/ Research Journal/ Index Cards/Computer Lab access

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Portalupi, JoAnn, and Ralph J. Fletcher. *Nonfiction craft lessons: teaching information writing*

K-8. Portland, ME.: Stenhouse Publishers, 2001.

After reading this book I had a better understanding of writing elements that I need to integrate within the narrative pieces of the unit. It also inspired a great idea, that as teachers we have to discuss the importance of certain elements in writing craft. So why not teach that skills the writer? Have writer talk with their peers (questionnaire) about the importance of various genres and how they could reflect that knowledge in their writing pieces. It was also helpful because it supplied a list of mentor text that and target skills that I could use in the future.

Ray, Katie Wood. *What you know by heart: how to develop curriculum for your writing workshop*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 2002.

Reading

This resource forced me to realize that my view of writing impacts how I instruct writing. In addition, it made me ponder how the writing process does not only happen in the class, but throughout the day and through experiences. It is my responsibility to be sensitive to the moments of creativity and record the thoughts as they come using the daybook. Now that I know this important element in writing, I need to encourage my writers to be sensitive to the writeable moment in life. It was a great model of how to develop mini-lessons, utilize a daybook, refine my art of teaching in writing, and how to utilize mentor text within literature.

Gillis, Candida. *Writing outside the lines: developing partnerships for writers*. Portsmouth, NH: Boynton/Cook Publishers, 1997.

This book focuses encouraging teacher to enlarge their appreciation of various audience of writing beyond the teacher by nurturing the relationship between fellow authors. I took the elements from this literature and applied it to the daybook in which the students were able to correspond with me as well as other authors in the classroom. I enjoyed reading this book because he provided student examples of how students are to guide each other writing as well as provide examples of the dialogue of effective revision.

Pahl, Kate, and Jennifer Rowsell. "Children's Text Go To School." *Literacy and education understanding the new literacy studies in the classroom*. London: Paul Chapman, 2005. 48-71. Print.

Within the pages of this piece I became aware of how the social practice of the 21st century affects the writer. The arena of cyberspace is a location in which multi-genre occurs naturally within students. It challenged me to think about how I am going to prepare my writers for literacy in globalization.

Fletcher, Ralph J.. *Boy writers: reclaiming their voices*. Portland, Me.: Stenhouse Publishers ;, 2006.

Have you ever had to tell a young boy in your class, "Well, maybe we don't want to write about our main character killing so many people?" Well I have. I was at a loss on how to have my male writers embrace genre writing, but not stunt their creative, yes even gory, ideas. So after reading this book I was armed a new outlook on how to get my male writers excited about topics in our

daybook as well as increase their interest in genre writing

Calkins, Lucy. *Units of study for primary writing: a yearlong curriculum*. Portsmouth, NH: *Webstites*

This source gets insight to the process of writing and how to conference with my writers as they composed their genre pieces.

Websites

Clements, Andrew . "Andrew Clements." Andrew Clements.

<http://www.andrewclements.com/bio.html> (accessed September 22, 2010).

This website will help the writers have an inside look at how another author, Andrew Clements, develops ideas as well as find inspiration within writing.

Sing Along Songs (Midis and Lyrics), NIEHS Kids' Pages." National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences, National Institutes of Health, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, an official government website for Kids . <http://kids.niehs.nih.gov/music.htm> (accessed September 22, 2010).

This is a great link that I implement during our introduction to lyric or poetic writing. The students were able to read the words as they listened to the song. Then we would create and record our additions to the song in our daybooks. As well discuss figurative language.

Langstraat, Lisa. "Introduction to Multigenre." Welcome to Writing@CSU.

<http://writing.colostate.edu/gallery/multigenre/introduction.htm> (accessed September 23, 2010).

After being exposed to this site I was able to have a better understanding of the importance of exposing my writers to genres within writing. As well as how it can affect the development of the writer within.

BeverlyCleary.com | Ramona Quimby and Classic Beverly Cleary Characters."

BeverlyCleary.com Beverly Cleary Books, Ramona Teaching Resources, Free Kids Games.

<http://www.beverlycleary.com/characters.aspx#Ramona> (accessed September 29, 2010)

This website will help the writers have an inside look at how another author, Andrew Clements, develops ideas as well as find inspiration within writing.

Teacher, City. "Thinking Maps.org." Thinking Maps.org. <http://www.thinkingmaps.org>

(accessed October 28, 2010). Teacher, City. "Thinking Maps.org." Thinking Maps.org.

<http://www.thinkingmaps.org> (accessed October 28, 2010).

This site helped me have a better understanding of the various thinking maps that I can implement in the classroom and in writing. In addition, the information found on this page allows me to implement a tool that will help the writer organize their ideas in their writing piece.

Multigenre Writing." *www.users.muohio.edu*. N.p., n.d. Web. 16 July 2010. **HYPERLINK**

"<http://www.users.muohio.edu/romanots/>" <http://www.users.muohio.edu/romanots/>

After being exposed to this site I was able to have a better understanding of the importance of

exposing my writers to genres within writing. As well as how it can affect the development of the writer within.

Student Resources

"Glogster EDU - 21st century multimedia tool for educators, teachers and students | Text, Images, Music and Video ." *Glogster EDU - 21st century multimedia tool for educators, teachers and students | Text, Images, Music and Video* . N.p., n.d. Web. 28 Nov. 2010. <<http://www.edu.glogster.com>>.

This is a resource students can use to display their work. As well as present their writing or information about a researched topic in an innovative manner.

"Time For Kids | Classroom." *Time For Kids | Classroom*. N.p., n.d. Web. 28 Sept. 2010. <<http://www.timeforkids.com>>.

This site is only helpful if you have a subscription of Times Magazine for the year. We would

discuss the current events and record our feeling or gained knowledge within the daybook.

We

would also use the information, if it was relevant, as a resource for research topics.

Film

Kung Fu Panda (Widescreen Edition). DVD. Directed by John Stevenson. null: DreamWorks Animated, 2008.

I introduced a short segment of this film to the writers as a warm up in our daybooks. I linked the segments to perseverance in character. The students were asked to write a personal narrative of a time they had to preserve.

Shrek Forever After (Single-Disc Edition). DVD. Directed by Mike Mitchell. Hollywood: Paramount Pictures, 2001.

I introduced a short segment of this film to the writers as a warm up activity for our daybooks. I linked the segments to fairy tales in literature. The students were asked to write an imaginative narrative of a meeting a fictional character.

Bridge To Terabithia (Full Screen Edition). DVD. Directed by Gabor Csupo. Hollywood, CA: Walt Disney Video, 2007.

I introduced a short segment of this fill to the writers before we began our warm up in our

daybooks. I linked the segments to friendship. The students were asked to write a personal narrative of moment they enjoyed with a friend.

Mentor List

Genre: Personal Narratives

Integration: Culture/Point Of View/Personal Narratives

Esperanza Rising Ryan, Pam Muñoz. *Esperanza Rising* . New York: Scholastic Press, 2000. This book is about an immigrant family forced to move to America. I used this book to help the reader see the point of view or personal narrative from a character. Not only does it allow me an opportunity to display figurative language, but it is also a great way to allow some of my kids a great connection to their heritage!

Becoming Naomi León, Pam Muñoz. *Becoming Naomi León* . New York: Scholastic Press, 2004. I used this book to help the reader see the point of view or personal narrative from a character. In addition it allows me an opportunity to display figurative language at its best!

Penny from Heaven Ryan Holm, Jennifer L.. *Penny from Heaven* . New York: Random House Children's Books, 2006. This book is about an Italian American girl growing up. I used this book to help the reader see the point of view or personal narrative from a character. In addition it allows me an opportunity to display figurative language at its best!

Bridge to Terabithia Paterson, Katherine, and Donna Diamond. *Bridge to Terabithia* . New York: Crowell, 1977. I used this book to help the reader see the point of view or personal narrative from a character. In addition it allows me an opportunity to display figurative language at its best!

Sign of the Beaver Speare, Elizabeth George. *The sign of the Beaver* . S.l.: s.n., 2009. I used this book to help the reader see the point of view or personal narrative from a character. In addition it allows me an opportunity to display figurative language at its best!

Wednesday Wars Schmidt, Gary D.. *The Wednesday Wars* . New York: Clarion Books, 2007. I used this book to help the reader see the point of view or personal narrative from a character. In addition it allows me an opportunity to display figurative language at its best!

Pinballs Byars, Betsy Cromer. *The Pinballs* . New York: Harper & Row, 1977. I used this book to help the reader see the point of view or personal narrative from a character. In addition it allows me an opportunity to display figurative language at its best!

Genre: Letter

Integrate voice

Dear Mrs. LaRue Teague, Mark. *Dear Mrs. LaRue: letters from obedience school*. New York: Scholastic Press, 2002. This text was helpful because it helped my students see the format of

formal letters with
the integration of comical plot.

Genre: Imaginative/Research

Mouse on a Motorcycle Cleary, Beverly, and William Roberts. *The Mouse & the Motorcycle* . Old Greenwich, CT: Listening Library, 1995. I used this as a mentor text because it allowed writers to connect words from Beverly

Cleary and the author study we are completing during the unit.

Lunch Money Clements, Andrew, and Brian Selznick. *Lunch Money* . New York: Simon & Schuster Books for Young Readers, 2005. I used this as a mentor text because it allowed writers to connect words from Andrew Clements and the author study we are completing during the unit.

Various Genres

Fig Pudding Fletcher, Ralph J.. *Fig Pudding* . New York: Clarion Books, 1995. Using these books allowed me an opportunity to display figurative language at its best! As well as inspire the writers in the classroom to write! These books are also great jump starts for the writers to search for element of the stories to write a song.

My Rotten Redheaded Brother Polacco, Patricia. *My Rotten Redheaded Older Brother* . New York: Simon & Schuster Books for Young Readers, 1994 Using these books allowed me an opportunity to display figurative language at its

best! As well as inspire the writers in the classroom to write! These books are also great jump starts for the writers to search for element of the stories to write a song.

Song and Dance! *Song and Dance man by Karen Ackerman, illustrated by Stephen Gammell: book guide..* New York, NY: Scholastic Inc. , 1996. Using these books allowed me an opportunity to display figurative language at its

best! As well as inspire the writers in the classroom to write! These books are also great jump starts for the writers to search for element of the stories to write a song.

Notes

Katie Ray Woods- Ray, Katie Wood. *What you know by heart: how to develop curriculum for your writing workshop*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 2002. Page 5

Non-Fiction Craft Lessons- Portalupi, JoAnn, and Ralph J. Fletcher. *Nonfiction craft lessons: teaching information writing K-8*. Portland, ME.: Stenhouse Publishers, 2001 page 46
Pahl/Rowsell

4. Graphic Organizers- Teacher, City. "Thinking Maps.org." Thinking Maps.org.

<http://www.thinkingmaps.org>

5. Time for Kids-<http://www.timeforkids.com>

6. Multigenres- Langstraat, Lisa. "Introduction to Multigenre." Welcome to Writing@CSU.

<http://writing.colostate.edu/gallery/multigenre/introduction.htm>

7. Kung Fu Panda- *Kung Fu Panda, animation (2008)*

8. Lyrics- <http://kids.niehs.nih.gov/music.htm>

9. Author Biographies- HYPERLINK "<http://www.andrewclements.com/bio.html>"

<http://www.andrewclements.com/bio.html> and

<http://www.beverlycleary.com/characters.aspx#Ramona>

10. Glogster- <http://www.edu.glogster.com>