

Connecting Reading and Writing Genres

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Purpose

- Plan Units of Study
- Develop lessons that teach students how to read a genre and how to write in the genre
- Use Guided Reading and Real Aloud texts to develop mental models for books students can create on their own



Units of Study

- A unit of study is a series of whole class, teacher-led:
 - conversations,
 - demonstrations, and
 - inquiry on a focused topic.
- A unit of study may be as short as one week or as long as five or six weeks.



adapted from *The Writer's Workshop: Working Through the Hard Parts (And They're All Hard Parts)*, Ray, 2001

Types of Units of Study

Process Studies

- Getting and growing ideas for writing
- Using a notebook as a tool to make writing better
- Revision
- Editing

Product Studies

- Genre Study
- How to read like writers
- Finding mentor authors for our writing
- How writers structure texts in powerful ways

The Writer's Workshop: Working Through the Hard Parts (And They're All Hard Parts), Ray, 2001



Selecting Units of Study

- State or district curriculum guidelines
- Students' past experience as writers
- Students' current needs as writers
- Our passions as teachers

The Writer's Workshop: Working Through the Hard Parts (And They're All Hard Parts), Ray, 2001



Goals for Units of Study

- Student produced pieces of writing that are written under the influence of the study
- Students should be very articulate about the *process* studied and how it influenced their writing OR
- In a *product* study students should be able to show actual excerpts from their finished pieces of writing that show the influence of the study

The Writer's Workshop: Working Through the Hard Parts (And They're All Hard Parts), Ray, 2001



Instructional Frame for Writing Inquiry

- Gather Texts Gather examples of books that are representative of the study
- Set the Stage Tell students what they are studying and what they are expected to do/complete as a result of the study
- Immersion Teacher and students spend time reading and getting to know the texts they'll study
- Close Study Class charts what they noticed about how a few of the texts are written
- Write Under the Influence Students and teacher finish pieces of writing that show the influence of the study

Exploring Inquiry as Teaching Stance in the Writing Workshop, Ray
Language Arts; Jan, 2006; 83; 3; page 238



Gather Texts

- The teacher and students gather examples of the study and/or the kind of writing students will do
 - Picture books
 - Collections
 - Magazines
 - Newspapers
 - Internet



Finding Curriculum in Well-Written Texts

- The approach to the writing
- How the text is structured
- Ways with language and genre
- How illustrations work with the text

What You Know By Heart: How to Develop Curriculum for Your Writing Workshop, Ray, 2002



Set the Stage

- When finished with their piece written under the influence of the study students should be able to describe:
 - the vision for their piece
 - what they did to develop their idea before writing (e.g., notebook)
 - what they have read that is like what they are writing
 - how their writing was influenced by the study
 - their process for drafting and revising; editing

adapted from *The Writer's Workshop: Working Through the Hard Parts (And They're All Hard Parts)*, Ray, 2001



Immersion

- Read like Readers
 - Focus on comprehension and enjoyment
 - Guided Reading selections
 - Self-Selected Read alouds
 - Self-Selected Reading selections
 - Lots of reading!!!



Close Study

- Read like Writers
- Teacher and students chart noticings of some of the texts read during the study
 - Notice something about the craft of the text
 - Talk about it; make a theory as to why a writer might use this craft
 - Give the craft a name; name how it is used in the text
 - Think of other texts you know that use this craft
 - Envision crafting your own writing this way



Writing Under the Influence

- Teacher and students use what they “noticed” to help them craft text
 - Word choice
 - Punctuation
 - Text structure
 - Repetition
 - Genre structure



Selecting the Study

Genre : What have you read that is like what you're trying to write?

- Practical How-To
- Informative How-To
- Feature Article Based on Interviews
- Topical Writing
- News Reporting
- Memoir
- Biographical Sketch
- Historical Narrative
- Slice of Life
- Commentary
- Photo Essay
- Reviews
- Topical Poetry
- ABC Books

If you can stack it you can study it.



from forthcoming book, Ray, 2006

Context of Lessons

- 24 day Summer School; 2 hour daily communication arts block
- Genre Studies
- Alternate fiction/non-fiction writing
 - Grade 2: All About...
 - Grade 3: Slice of Life
 - Grade 4 & 5: Autobiography
 - Grade 6 & 7: Short Memoir
 - Grade 8: Writer's Notebook; Photo Essays


