

My goal in creating this assignment was to improve the author research presentation that was currently part of my children's literature class. These presentations, which were supposed to be interesting/creative, generally followed this pattern: a handout from a website, a reading of same handout as we looked at it on the elmo and maybe a brief overview of some of the author's books. In general the presentations were boring and seemed to be last minute affairs. I wanted to encourage students to read more of the author's books on their own time, to actually have searched out and read critical commentary about the author and his/her work, and to have put in a creative component. The multi-genre research paper suggested a way in which I could push students beyond the surface of their author assignment.

To produce the project students had to research and then synthesize the material into a creative response. At least one response had to reflect each of the following: biographical information about the author, critical commentary about the author, and the author's work. I wanted students to explore all three areas because when I in the role of teacher present a book to a class I have researched all of these areas. This was a way of having students engage in teacherly research. I also wanted students writing more than they had previously. Finally I wanted them doing writing other than academic writing which is the one form they have already practiced more than the others. I thought these alternative genres might also give my students ideas of assignments they might give to their students. Last but not least I thought writing in different genres might be fun for students.

At this point we are mid-project. Students are doing the multi-genre research paper in pairs which means four distinct genres per student, (eight total). The paper opens with a jointly written introduction and concludes with endnotes and bibliography in MLA style. There will be an endnote for each genre discussing the writer's reasons for choosing the genre, the research that inspired it, what he/she was trying to show and the writer's comments on his/her success.

The logistics of the work have been as follows: I reviewed the assignment with students and gave them a sample. Students signed up for the author of choice – a children's author, mainly ones we have read in class, although students could choose others. Students used one of the three weekly journal entries for notetaking which could include notes and commentary on research. Students also could use journals for first drafts. Students conferenced with me about the status of the project discussing sources, the author's works and genre ideas. Students also each brought in one genre to share with class peer groups for feedback. I provided feedback ideas/questions. (Students did more sharing than "revising").

The conferences have shown most of the students have started their work and will have multiple types of sources. They also seem interested in showing their knowledge a variety of genres. The genres may be less writing then "craftsy". But I look forward seeing what students endnotes show me about the experience.

Beyond the actual multi-genre research paper which students will turn in they will also give a presentation to the class. The presentation will include the typical handout, brief biographical overview, a summary of the author's work, some critical commentary, and finally the presenters will share two genres with endnotes to the class. Students have a checklist to follow for that which will be turned into a rubric.

Author Presentation for Children's Lit.

Check List:

- _____ You give us a biographical overview of the author.
- _____ You tell us about the books the author has written, their topics or subjects, their genres, their intended audiences.
- _____ You briefly share critical commentary about the author.
- _____ You present two of your pieces, representing two different genres and the endnotes for each.
- _____ You distribute a one page summary of the basic information.
- _____ You list resources (print and internet) about the author.
- _____ You know your material.
- _____ You obviously make an effort to present the material to us in a way that captures our interest/attention.

Rubric for Author Presentation: Author name: _____

Presenter names: _____

0=not present; 1=inadequate; 2=adequate; 3=very good 4=excellent

- _____ The biographical overview gives me a sense of this writer as a person.
- _____ I now know something about the types/plots of books this author has written.
- _____ I have a sense of this writer's strengths/weaknesses or the controversy surrounding this writer.
- _____ The first piece is interesting/creative. The rationale behind it demonstrates thought and research.
- _____ The second piece is interesting/creative. The rationale behind it demonstrates thought and research.
- _____ The handout is a useful overview of the author/his works.
- _____ The handout lists resources (print and internet) about the author.
- _____ The presenters know their material.
- _____ The presenters make an effort to present the material in a way that captures my attention.
- _____ The presenters have a sense of their audience.

_____ total (40 point max.)

Evaluator name: _____ Comments:

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