

Minnesota Writing Project

Demonstration Lesson Template

Title of lesson: Multi-genre Writing: The Writing Portfolio Assignment

Suggested grade/age: pre-service teachers (can be adapted to all audiences)

Approximate time needed to complete lesson: 50 minutes

Learning objective(s) and significance of lesson: To think about the wide variety of options for exploring a topic. To experience how the genre of writing shapes the perspective from which, or the lens through which, a writer presents a topic. To practice writing for different purposes and audiences, and meeting expectations appropriate to a variety of genres. To take a risk and play with a genre that the writer might not have explored previously. To help students get to know and appreciate each other as writers and to gain experience peer conferencing. To prepare for a later multi-genre research paper.

Brief summary/outline of lesson:

The project as a whole: Writing Portfolio Project:

After brainstorming ideas and doing some invention activities, students are to choose a topic that they would enjoy exploring. Once students have chosen their topic, they will write about that topic in four genres of writing. Students will choose two of their pieces to revise and turn into polished pieces of writing. (One of these revised pieces should be at least 500 words long.) For the pieces students choose to revise, they will engage in a peer conference/revision process.

At the end of the project, students will collect their work in a portfolio and write an introduction for their work that will discuss reasons for choosing the topic and the particular genres in which they have chosen to write. They will also give their reasons for selecting the particular pieces they chose to revise and reflect upon the experience of the project.

On the day the portfolio is due students share their introduction and a polished piece with the group. (This project lasts for several weeks; some work is done in-class and some is done as homework.)

The teaching demonstration: Once students have chosen their topics and done pre-writing we talk about possible genres and how students might address the same topic in different genres.

1) At this point we look at a list of possible genres and focus on a few that might be of particular interest to students.**2)** In small groups students will analyze two genres to generate lists regarding their **purpose (s)**, **intended audience(s)**, and expected **format**, and **content**. **3)** Students will share their lists with the larger group – lists might be added to by the group.**4)** Students then will have writing time to begin a first draft.**5)** Because of time constraints today, students will also start a second draft in a different genre. **6)** Students will share one of their genres in the small group and briefly talk about how changing genres might have changed the way they presented or even saw their topic.

Related Resources:

Mack, N. (2002). The ins, outs and in-between of multi-genre writing. *English Journal*. (Nov.) 91-98.

Moulton, M.R. (1999). The multi-genre paper: Increasing interest motivation, and functionality in Research. *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy*. 42(7), 528-539.

Romano, T. (2000). *Blending genre, alternate style*. Portsmouth: Boynton/Cook.

_____. (1987). *Writing with passion: Life stories, multiple genres*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

Possible extensions or adaptations for different purposes/student needs:

The multi-genre assignment also works for research papers on a subject of student interest or on an author.

For additional information, contact: jacqueline.arnold@mnsu.edu

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