



Mark Sheridan Math and Science Academy

MURDER THEY WROTE - Integration of Mystery Stories and Video

Grade: 5th

Teacher:

John Nieciak

Artist(s):

Deb Diehl, Street Level Youth Media

Academic Content and Learning Skills:

Language Arts (Genre Writing)

Arts Content:

Video - Media Arts

Overview

Students worked in cooperative groups to view, read, write, and shoot mystery stories and videos.

Research and Inquiry

What is the narrative structure of the mystery genre?

A Variety of Hands-on Ways of Representing New Knowledge

Students had to investigate the mystery genre both as readers and writers of text and as viewers and creators of video.

Connecting Hands-on Activities to Applied Analytical Thinking

Students had to abstract and apply the "rules" of the genre.

Field Research From Sources Outside the School Building

Television show "Murder She Wrote" was used as one of the source documents.

Classroom Goals Addressed by Project

When beginning this project, it was important for the teacher and artist to set classroom goals that would be addressed directly by the topic. The three goals that this unit addressed were:

1. Writing for an audience
2. Peer editing
3. Cooperative learning

Using these three goals, students at Mark Sheridan successfully integrated the subject areas and art forms of video and language arts.

State Goals Addressed by Project

The following state goals were addressed by this project:

3-C-1

Write to communicate for a variety of purposes

4-A-3

Listen and speak effectively in a variety of situations. Asking questions, providing feedback to a speaker, summarize, paraphrase, listen attentively to improve comprehension.

4-B-1

Present oral reports using language and vocabulary appropriate to message and audience.

State Art Goal for Visual Arts 6

Through creating and performing, understand how works of art are produced.

What Resources were used?

- Episode of "Murder She Wrote"
- Mystery Novels
- Posterboard and Markers
- Storyboards (12 shots)
- Video Camara
- Film

Key Words/Vocabulary that are most important to this unit

- Video
- Cooperation
- Group Work
- Mystery
- Story Board
- Suspense
- Special Events

Brief Step-by-Step daily/weekly lesson plan for this unit

1. View mystery on video ("Murder She Wrote")
2. Brainstorm components of a mystery
3. Review story structure (e.g. exposition, rising action, climax, resolution)
4. Write mystery stories
5. Form small groups to select one story to present as a video.
6. Rewrite with scripts
7. Create a 12 shot video sketch out on storyboard with special effects
8. Shoot film
9. Read mysteries
10. Write another story/or improve first story.

Assessments Used for this project

A. For integrated project, assessment included a self-evaluation component, with a

special focus on the narrative skills measured by the IGAP (a state-wide Illinois standardized test of basic skills)

B. Chicago Public Schools Listening/Speaking Assessment:

For subject area/art forms, assessment involved a Pre/Post test of vocabulary and concepts.

Comments/Reflections from Teachers, Artists, Students, Parents

Comments from Teachers:

“Students were motivated to learn.”

“Planning time for teacher and artist is imperative.”

“Drama skills could be focused on here, too.”

“Cooperative learning techniques need to be applied.”

Comments from Artists:

“Assessment is important/meaningful and real.”

“Creating rubrics in student language helped.”

“Ideally, the students would do all the editing.”

“Audio special effects and music are required.”

Comments from Students:

“It is fun and rewarding to see your video work.”

“It takes more shots to do a movie.”

“It worked because everyone did what they said they would do.”

Comments from Parents:

“My son shoots all our family scenes with our video camera now.”

“He knows a lot about mysteries.”