

Connections to ReadWriteThink Lessons

Snapshots: Write Like You Talk, Traci Gardner

See Gardner's lesson plan "Twenty Years Later: Responding to Gwendolyn Brooks's 'We Real Cool'" at http://www.readwritethink.org/lessons/lesson_view.asp?id=1030.

Honoring Dialect and Culture: Pathways to Student Success on High-Stakes Writing Assessments, Michelle Crotteau

Crotteau discusses the conflicts that can arise between Standard English and the dialects used at home. The lesson plan "Exploring Language and Identity: Amy Tan's 'Mother Tongue' and Beyond" addresses that same dilemma. In the essay "Mother Tongue," Tan explains that she "began to write stories using all the Englishes I grew up with." How these "different Englishes" or even a language other than English contributes to identity is a crucial issue for adolescents. In this lesson, students explore fiction and nonfiction texts and write literacy narratives as a part of their exploration of issues of language and identity. http://www.readwritethink.org/lessons/lesson_view.asp?id=910

Persuasive Writing and the Student-Run Symposium, James C. Mayer

Mayer describes how he uses a student-run symposium in connection with a persuasive writing assignment. The lesson plan "Communicating on Local Issues: Exploring Audience in Persuasive Letter Writing" asks students to identify and research a local issue that concerns them, using Internet and print sources. They then argue a position on this issue in letters to two different audiences, addressing their purpose and considering the needs of the audience in each letter. Students work with peer groups as they draft and revise their letters before sending them to their intended readers. http://www.readwritethink.org/lessons/lesson_view.asp?id=945

The Zine Project: Innovation or Oxymoron?, Tobi Jacobi

Jacobi discusses how zines can be used in and out of the classroom to motivate students and celebrate their accomplishments. Increasingly, students' out-of-school literacies are coming into the classroom, expanding our definitions of literacy. The lesson plan "Defining Literacy in a Digital World" asks students to identify the many texts that they read and compose—including books and magazines, television shows, movies, audio broadcasts, hypertexts, and animations. Students begin to recognize the multiple literacy demands in contemporary society and create a working definition of literacy that they refine and explore further as the school term continues. http://www.readwritethink.org/lessons/lesson_view.asp?id=915

Making Research Matter, Lesley Roessing

Roessing invites students to create a You Are There book, putting themselves into a place or situation. The lesson plan "Spend a Day in My Shoes: Exploring the Role of Perspective in Narrative" examines the line from *To Kill a Mockingbird*, "You never really understand a person until you consider things from his point of view . . . until you climb into his skin and walk around in it." This advice becomes more literal in this writing activity where students are invited to imagine spending a day in someone else's shoes. http://www.readwritethink.org/lessons/lesson_view.asp?id=265

A Practical Guide to Political Action: Grassroots and English Teaching, Leslie David Burns

Burns encourages teachers to take action in the political realm. Why not invite students to do the same thing? The lesson plan "Persuading an Audience: Writing Effective Letters to the Editor" invites students to write a persuasive letter to the editor of a newspaper, focusing on a current local or national issue and requesting a specific action or response. The lesson includes an exploration of the genre, a review of persuasive writing structure and letter format, and an emphasis on multidraft writing. http://www.readwritethink.org/lessons/lesson_view.asp?id=929

Why I Won't Be Using Rubrics to Respond to Students' Writing, Maja Wilson

Wilson emphasizes the importance of personal, real, and authentic feedback. The lesson plan "Draft Letters: Improving Student Writing through Critical Thinking" asks students to think critically about their writing on a specific assignment before submitting their work to a reader. Students write reflective letters to the teacher, identifying their thoughts on the piece that the teacher is about to read. This strategy helps guide the feedback that the writer receives. http://www.readwritethink.org/lessons/lesson_view.asp?id=902

How Movies Work for Secondary School Students with Special Needs, Joseph Coencas

Coencas shares his successes with using film in the classroom and explains several approaches and examples. The lesson plan "Exploring Satire with *Shrek*" demonstrates how a film can be used in the classroom to teach literary elements and genres, specifically the satirical techniques of exaggeration, incongruity, reversal, and parody. Students brainstorm fairy tale characteristics, identify the satirical techniques used to present them in the movie, then create satirical versions of fairy tales. http://www.readwritethink.org/lessons/lesson_view.asp?id=810

I'll Have Mine Annotated, Please: Helping Students Make Connections with Texts, Matthew D. Brown

Brown reminds us that the best way to comprehend texts is to make personal connections to what we are reading. The lesson plan "Weaving the Threads: Integrating Poetry Annotation and Web Technology" engages students in meaningful research using poetry as a focal point. Students identify words and phrases in a poem by a Native American, and in the process they learn about Native American culture and history. Students create a Web site using the poem as a "launching" space that takes readers into various explanations of words and phrases. While poetry is the genre explored here, this strategy can be used with any text. http://www.readwritethink.org/lessons/lesson_view.asp?id=36

Learning to Write: Technology for Students with Disabilities in Secondary Inclusive Classrooms, Patricia M. Barbetta and Linda Spears-Bunton
Barbetta and Spears-Bunton discuss the benefits of using technology with struggling students in the English language arts classroom. The ReadWriteThink site offers numerous graphic organizers that can be used throughout the writing process: story maps, persuasion maps, Venn diagrams, and so on. To see the interactive student materials, visit the ReadWriteThink Student Materials index. http://www.readwritethink.org/student_mat/index.asp

ReadWriteThink (<http://www.readwritethink.org>) is a nonprofit MarcoPolo Web site maintained by the International Reading Association (IRA) and the National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE), with support from the Verizon Foundation. We provide to classroom teachers free lesson plans, interactive student materials, and Web resources linked to ELA standards.

Links to these lesson plans can be found on EJ on the Web at <http://www.englishjournal.colostate.edu>.