

Creative Writing Coffeehouse and Literary Magazine (Pirate's Pen)

This project was incredibly valuable to my students. First of all, it motivated them to write effectively with audience in mind, because their works were published in our magazine and were read by them at the Coffeehouse. Secondly, it gave the entire school a chance to submit writing for the magazine. My students selected, edited, and laid out the magazine. All of the work that led up to both the "Pirate's Pen" and Coffeehouse were wonderful teaching and learning experiences for the students.

Curriculum/State Standard

This project met all of North Carolina's Language Arts goals and curriculum standards.

Overview

The students in my creative writing class produced a school-wide literary magazine called the "Pirate's Pen." They also each selected a work that they had written during the semester to polish and read, along with an introduction, at our Coffeehouse. The students came up with a theme for the Coffeehouse (Jungle of Diversity), created a backdrop for the stage, made posters and invitations to publicize the event throughout the school and community, arranged for coffee and refreshments at the event, and entertained the audience that night with their works.

Objectives

- The students will demonstrate knowledge in varying types of writing for various purposes and audiences.
- The students will demonstrate knowledge in editing and layout design.
- The students will practice speaking in front of a group and sharing their work.
- By doing so, the students will demonstrate further knowledge of the importance of audience to what we create.

Continued on the back...

9-12

GRADE LEVEL



ARTS



LANGUAGE



MATH

Misc

MISCELLANEOUS



SCIENCE



HISTORY



SOCIAL STUDIES

6+

WEEKS

\$1000

TOTAL BUDGET



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"Pirate's Pen" project continued...

Materials

Computer to layout the magazine; art supplies for the backdrop, invitations, and posters; stage; microphone; plants to decorate; spotlights; food and coffee; live or recorded music

Readiness Activity

n/a

Strategies/Activities

Step one: Begin advertising and collecting work from the student body to be submitted to the "Pirate's Pen" Also, continue working with students on poetry, short stories, and creative nonfiction.

Step two: Select works from the student body to be included in the "Pirate's Pen."

Step three: Edit and layout the works for the "Pirate's Pen."

Step four: Have students pick one piece that they have written this semester to include in the magazine and to read at the Coffeehouse.

Step five: Work with students to edit/revise their selected piece.

Step six: Have students write an introduction to their work, giving any background information the audience might need about the motivation and inspiration for the piece.

Step seven: Tell students to decide on a theme and a backdrop for the coffeehouse and "Pirate's Pen."

Step eight: Create the backdrop; create and distribute invitations and posters. (I made up committees within the class for this as well as food and coffee.)

Step nine: Take the magazine to the printer so that it is ready for distribution at the coffeehouse.

Step ten: Create an order of speakers for coffeehouse and have each student write an introduction for the next student.

Step eleven: Set up and rehearse for coffeehouse.

Step twelve: Complete coffeehouse.

Step thirteen: Do self/peer/teacher evaluations of Coffeehouse and debrief as a class how things went.

Culminating Activity

The Coffeehouse was the culminating activity. We spent our class time setting up the cafeteria for the event. We set up a portable stage, podium, and microphone. We decorated with our backdrop and plants. We set up rows of benches in a semi-circle for the audience. We also had a food and drinks table with candles and a table by the door with the programs and candles. People began to arrive around 6pm. They ate and mingled while my students greeted them. My students were wearing black tee shirts with the "Pirate's Pen" logo on the front and the following Sylvia Path quote on the back: "Nothing stinks like a pile of unpublished writing." At 6:30, I welcomed everyone, described the class, and got the speakers started. Each student got up to read his or her introduction and poem, excerpt from a short story, or excerpt from a creative nonfiction piece, then introduced the next student. We had an intermission half way through. At the end, I thanked everyone for coming, and my students distributed the "Pirate's Pen" magazine, which had the pieces that they had read in their entirety and other works from other students in the school.

Evaluation

The students were evaluated by peers, themselves, and me on the writings they used for the Coffeehouse and "Pirate's Pen." I used a rubric to assess their writing, depending on the genre. The day after the Coffeehouse, the students evaluated their individual performances at the Coffeehouse. They reflected on their volume, speed, tone, and the audience's reaction to their work.