Sample group work assessment task 4

Online assessment task: Scenario Responses

This assignment is designed with a particular aim of achieving outcomes 1, 2 and 4 as articulated above.

Students will be required to discuss (in groups) their response to one of six real scenarios based on their understanding of a related key reading and additional supporting readings. The discussion will require evidence of completion of the readings, understanding real classroom contexts, and a justified stance to the question posed. The discussion should continue until a resolution to the scenario is reached. A print-out of the group discussion and final resolution should be handed in for marking.

This assignment should reflect the 6 hour component of the unit that is not face to face. It should also reflect an ongoing discussion and interaction, and not isolated posts. Although it is likely that group members will receive a similar result for this task, individual contributions will be considered carefully.

Although WebCT is available for the group discussions, groups are more than welcome to select another form of electronic means to conduct the discussion. This may take the form of an email list you set up, or a group blog (blogger.com hosts free blogs), or a discussion forum (invision.com hosts free forums).

SCENARIO 1
In Kamler’s chapter, she presents the text written by a child titled, "Girls into Concreate [sic]" as an example of genre pedagogy 'gone wrong'.

There have been huge debates about the so called 'genre approach' to writing, with criticisms levelled at it such as: it’s formulaic, narrow in focus, and not taught within a meaningful context. Local politicians are getting involved in the debate, and your school has been asked to make a press statement explaining why you are continuing to teach this when it is just so wrong. They cite the "Girls into Concreate" example as evidence against genre pedagogy. What will you write in your response? Will you alter anything about your approach?

Associated Reading:

Additional Reading:

Chapter 8

SCENARIO 2
In chapter 1 of Makin and Jones-Diaz' text, they discuss the concept of language as a social semiotic system, and claim that these social semiotic systems work together to construct the cultural and social realities in which we live.

You're teaching a Grade 5 class and the children are mad about Harry Potter. You decide to use their enthusiasm for the books to motivate the children to write some fan fiction, in which they can create their own versions of the next episode in the series. One day after school, the principal calls you in to say that three parents from your classroom have signed a petition which seeks to outlaw the use of Harry Potter and any literacy events related to Harry Potter in the classroom. The principal asks your advice. How will you defend your decision to use Harry Potter? Will you change your writing program?

Associated Reading:

Additional Reading:

SCENARIO 3
In Knobel's article, she makes a number of key points about critical literacy and teaching practice.

It is the beginning of a new school year and you're team teaching with a new colleague. She insists that every year she gets the children to write a project about Japan. She excitedly brings out her kit of souvenirs from her visits to Japan and says she'll make a huge display about the topic covering the classroom walls. She has a number of books about Japan, and a beautiful silk kimono to show the children. How will you ensure that the literacy experiences for the children reflect a critical approach to teaching whilst still maintaining your colleague's enthusiasm and developing a positive working relationship with her? Will the children still produce a project on Japan?

Associated Reading:

Additional Reading:

SCENARIO 4
You've just been to the National Literacy Conference and you've come back to your classroom full of some terrific new ideas about the use of Manga comics (the g-rated ones of course!) in your literacy program. You've thought of a great way to get children reading, writing, illustrating and making connections to other cultures through the use of
manga. You think your Grade 6 class will be challenged by exploring the blended genre of a graphic novel, and you've devised a program that reflects critical literacy practices. However, the AP in charge of looking over your term program is unimpressed and has written on your program, "these comics don't reflect the teaching of school sanctioned text types, please see me". What will you say in defense of your teaching when you see the AP? Will you teach literacy through manga comics?

Associated Reading:

Additional Reading:

SCENARIO 5
Rothery discusses the importance of joint construction as a necessary part of the writing pedagogy cycle.

In your grade 2 class you regularly work with the whole class doing joint constructions. You've done a joint construction of a recount, you've done a joint construction of a narrative, in term 2 you did joint constructions of an explanation and a report. It's Monday morning and you've decided to do a joint construction of an exposition, since that genre is the next one on your list to cover. You greet the children with a smile and say "this morning we'll be doing a joint construction of an exposition". You're immediately greeted back with a chorus of moans and hear one child say "Oh no, not joint constructions again". Why might the child have said this? How could you change your program to ensure the children are enthused and excited about writing?

Associated Reading:

Additional Reading:

SCENARIO 6
Barrat-Pugh provides an overview of the roles of a literacy user with respect to teaching young children writing.

You have a Kindergarten class. Although much of your program is concentrated on helping the children with their code-breaker role, you've tried to maintain a balance so that they develop all of the roles of a writer and literacy user. In order to help children
with their text analyst role you decide to do some drama using the fairy tale 'Goldilocks' as a starting point. The children have a great deal of fun taking on different roles, and understanding different viewpoints from the perspective of different characters. At one stage, you get them to write a letter in role as Goldilocks apologising to the three bears. You’re feeling very pleased with yourself, until you’re describing your lesson to two visiting Literacy consultants, and they tell you that not only was your lesson not about teaching them their text analyst role, but that it was culturally biased given that your class consisted of 70% non-English speaking background children. They also tell you that the 'so called four roles of a literacy user' don't reflect current thinking about how children of today engage with and make meaning from texts. You feel mortified. Were the visiting consultants correct? Would you modify the lesson in any way in the future?

Associated Reading:

Additional Reading:


Due: June 3, 2005
Weighting: 25%
Length: This discussion needs to include approximately 1000 words per person. Whilst we do not wish to be overly prescriptive for this assignment, we expect a thorough and ongoing engagement in all issues relevant to the topic over the course of the 12 weeks, and envisage each person will make 8 - 10 contributions throughout the semester.