



LITERARY ARTS PROJECT: Making the Dead Speak

-a creative non fiction project based on Nellie McClung: Voice for the Voiceless

Following an introductory meeting with the entire school to allow the children time to think about living history and how to write about the past in a **first person, active voice, (creative non-fiction)** the artist would work with each class in turn to form collective narratives based on their social studies curriculum.

Over the course of the first week the artist would introduce different element of fiction to each class, all of which would inform and expand the **narrative**. If the subject were the fur trade, for instance, the children would learn about **plot** by considering the obstacles voyagers might face in their quest for beaver belts. Each obstacle would be plotted and written in **dramatic scenes** that would include **tension** and the release of tension, the **dramatic arch of fiction**. A beginning, middle and end of a story would have to be decided upon and whether or not the story would be plot or character driven.

Looking at **characterization** the children would have to consider who the main characters are, how they look, what their personalities are, and how they differ from each other. Histories would have to be created around each character to make them physiologically true. Students would have to consider **credibility**, and believability, essential elements in keeping a narrative engaging. **Dialogue** writing would come into play as well as **perspective**, the age old “from whose eyes do we look.” Students would have to consider the thought processes inside each character and a discussion on **point of view** is inevitable.

The discussion on **setting** will involve the children doing some research and much will be done on **sensory and descriptive writing**. Having the landscape mirror the plot will help children to understand how and setting informs both character and plot and how it enriches an historical narration.

Each class will write a **short story** based on what they are learning about the past. The artist will facilitate the collective writing experience, which will be cumulative. Students will have time to break the story down into active scenes, so that the narration takes the form of scene, synopsis, scene, and synopsis.

Following the creative process and the actual writing, the stories will be gathered by the artist who will look for ways to weave them together into an anthology. The **editing process** will start in the second week when students are asked to write creative material that will act as bridges between the individual stories. A look at **revision** and the process of finding **theme, metaphor** and **symbol** in the work will be under discussion in the classrooms.



After revisions are complete, and the material put onto a disc, the **anthology** will ultimately be printed or copied and each child will be able to obtain a copy of the book. There will be a **book launch** and **readings** at the launch from the anthology by author representatives elected by the class or teacher.