

From Creative Process to Curriculum Connections

A virtual handout for the March 22, 2014 event held at the Eric Carle Museum of Picture Book Art.

Realistic Fiction: Windows, Mirrors, and Mentor Texts Handout

Realistic Fiction: Windows, Mirrors, and Mentor Texts
“From Creative Process to Curriculum Connections”
Eric Carle Museum of Picture Book Art
March 22, 2014

Teaching Ideas by
Grace Enriquez, Ed.D.

SUNNY SWEET

Is So **NOT** Sorry



Jennifer Ann Mann

Sunny Sweet is So Not Sorry!

Written by Jennifer Ann Mann

Published by Bloomsbury Children's Books in 2013

ISBN# 978-1599909776

- **Sibling Rivalry** - Tales of sibling rivalry are a familiar trope in children's books, from *Beezus and Ramona* to *Fudge and Peter*. The *Sunny Sweet* series carries on this tradition, but with its own unique twist. With the help of your students and school or local librarians, gather a variety of picture books and chapter books that depict sibling rivalries. Share these books with your class as read-alouds, in literature circles, or for independent reading. Have them take notes and discuss the different kinds of sibling relationships, reasons for the so-called rivalry, and evidence of their real underlying feelings for each other. Then, invite them to write personal narratives about a time when they might have experienced any feelings of rivalry with a sibling, relative, or friend.
- **Examples of Bravery** - In order to undo the damage that Sunny has done on the very first page of the book, Masha does a very brave thing. Yet there are several other examples of bravery peppered throughout the chapters, particularly since the majority of the action takes place in a hospital. Have students identify and chart these examples of bravery, comparing and contrasting the situations, people, and stakes involved. Invite students to share stories of their own moments of bravery, and to write persuasive and reflective essays about what it means to be brave, drawing upon both their own values and experiences and those of others.
- **Strengthening Voice** - Voice is one of the most difficult writing traits for students to grasp and for teachers to teach. Voice is the trait that allows readers to develop a full sense of who is speaking the words on the page, whether it is a narrator, fictionalized character, or the author himself/herself. Jennifer Ann Mann does a great job of illustrating exactly what voice is, as we read and hear Masha's own thoughts and dialogue. What words or phrases does she choose to help readers "hear" Masha's distinct voice as Sunny's tormented older sister? How does she view and describe the same things differently from how other characters do, such as her

mother or one of the hospital nurses? To further demonstrate the quality of voice, do a reader's theater activity with excerpts from the novel so students can really hear what Jennifer Ann Mann is doing in her writing. Then, have students experiment with voice by perhaps writing about the same topic in different voices.

- **Precise Descriptions** - Much of the humor and spirit of the story comes from the precise descriptions in the text. How would the book or Masha's feelings about Sunny read if they were written with more conventional words? For example, Masha thinks, "If only they could all see her crispy little black heart like I could, no one would be smiling." Select a similar excerpt that uses particularly precise language. Replace the verbs with ones more frequently used (or perhaps overused) by your students, and read the excerpt aloud. Next, read the original language. How does it change the impact of the text? Have students take a piece of writing that they are already working on, highlight key words, and have them help one another brainstorm more interesting, precise, and descriptive choices.

<http://march22ndhandout.blogspot.com/p/panel-one-handout-realistic-fiction.html>