

THEMATIC UNIT:
TELLING YOUR FAMILY STORY

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Rationale: The students will utilize multiple intelligences and autobiographical history to develop and tell a family story, to better recognize how our important personal moments are a part of the larger human experience.

Target Age: Grade 4 Special Learning Support

Project: Making a “story quilt”.

IEP Objectives:

- Use appropriate vocabulary to ask and answer who, what, when, where, why and how questions.
- Retell a story by recalling sequence (beginning, middle, end) and details.
- Generate sentences using regular past tense verbs (verb+ed) and irregular past tense verbs.
- Demonstrate the vocabulary to offer compliments and criticism appropriately in the classroom.
- Establish, maintain, and change a conversational topic appropriately.

Unit Goals:

- To have each student develop or recognize a “moment” or “snapshot” from their own family history.
- To use children’s literature and art to examine the family stories of others, with special focus on the African American experience.
- To combine storytelling, autobiography, visual expression and quilt making into one art form.
- To use group interaction to brainstorm ideas, provide editing support, and give positive feedback on finished projects.
- To understand the roles of the speaker and the listener.

Materials:

- Books listed in bibliography
- Samples of author’s/artist’s work
- For each student:
 - 1 paper “quilt” base measuring 18” x 24” or piece of 100% cotton fabric hemmed to measure 18” x 24”
 - 24 patchwork fabric squares 3 1/2” x 3 1/2”
 - Alpha Smart for publishing text
 - Markers, crayons, pens
 - Fabric or wallpaper remnants

- Tacky glue, glue stick or white glue (White glue can be slightly thinned with water and applied to entire fabric or wallpaper piece with a paintbrush.)

LESSON ONE: FINDING YOUR STORY

Introductory Activities (Motivate):

- Read and discuss Tar Beach, by Faith Ringgold.
- Discuss Ringgold biography and read quotes by Ringgold from Scholastic Art magazine.
- Show reproductions of Ringgold's story quilts and discuss what elements go into a story quilt.

Developmental Activities:

- Each student will verbalize some ideas for a family story. Ideas can come from life-changing events such as a birth, marriage, moving to a new home, starting school for the first time, going to a new school, or meeting and making a best friend. Ideas can also come from family activities such as a picnic, a party, a place the family likes to be together, a vacation or trip, a family sporting event. Stories from your larger community family, such as coming from another country, or an event or holiday based on your faith, may serve as inspiration for your story.
- Each student will share his/her ideas with the whole class.
- Speech teacher will record all possible ideas on board.
- Each student will select a topic for their story quilt.

Closing Activity:

- Each student will be asked to think about details and visual images that they may want to include in their story quilt and to bring these ideas to the next session.

LESSON TWO: WRITING YOUR STORY

Introductory Activities (Motivate):

- Present “Wh” words (who, what, when, where, why and how).
- Discuss how each student, in writing their story, should answer the “Wh” questions to share their information.
- Play the Question Game. Each student takes a turn being the leader. The student is given a card with a picture that only he can see. Each member of the class is given a turn to ask a “Wh” question to gain information in order to identify the picture. The first student to identify the item becomes the leader for the next picture.

Developmental Activities:

- Using their selected idea, each student will answer some or all of the “Wh” questions to write the first draft of a paragraph describing their family story.
- Students will proofread their paragraphs.
- Students will conference with a teacher or instructional aid for editing.

Technology Extension:

- Students will keyboard their stories onto their Alpha Smarts and then conference with teacher or instructional aid for final edit and publishing.

Closing Activity:

- Ask students to read their story to a partner (fellow student or staff member) and think about what visual images come to mind when they hear their story aloud.

LESSON THREE: VISUALIZING YOUR STORY

Introductory Activities (Motivate):

- Read and discuss Under the Quilt of Night, by Deborah Hopkinson, illustrated by James E. Ransome.
- Mention the importance of quilts as an American art form and communication tool as well as a practical household possession.

Developmental Activities:

- Students will choose an artistic medium to create a visual image to complement their story: paints, markers, collage or combination.
- On an appropriate size piece of paper, students will prepare “canvas” by gluing 3 ½” x 3 ½” patchwork squares around the edge to form a “frame”.
- Students will cut published text from their Alpha Smart into appropriate size and shape.
- Students will glue text onto the quilt.
- Students will create visual image to compliment the printed story using their chosen materials.

Closing Activity:

- Each student will write a title for their quilt.
- Each student will develop a focus question for their quilt presentation – in order to focus their listeners into visualizing about the topic and engaging the listeners’ prior knowledge about the subject.

LESSON FOUR: SHARING YOUR STORY

Introductory Activities (Motivate):

- Review the importance of the “Wh” questions.
- Review the role of the speaker and the listener.
- State the role of the quilt as a communication tool.

Developmental Activities:

- Each student will show his/her story quilt to the class.
- The student will give the title of the quilt.
- The student will ask the focus question to the listeners.
- The quilt will be placed on the easel.
- The listeners will be directed to think about the title, the focus question, and to look at the story in the art work.
- The listeners will ask (approximately 3) “Wh” questions to gain information.
- The speaker will present his quilt by either reading or telling the story.
- The speaker will then answer any additional questions.
- After each presentation, two or three students from the class should be given the opportunity to comment on what they liked best about that story quilt.
- At the conclusion of the presentation, the student will verbalize about what talents they discovered in themselves or what they enjoyed while doing this project.

Closing Activity:

- Summarize that by making a story quilt, each student developed a communication tool, using speaking, writing, art work, and asking and answering questions. Refer back to children’s literature used.

Evaluation Options:

Rubric scoring for language element:

_____ wrote paragraph _____ wrote with help _____ dictated

4 – Student developed an idea from their own family history into an engaging descriptive paragraph utilizing current language arts skills.

3 – Student developed an idea into a descriptive paragraph with some prompting.

2 – Student developed an idea into a paragraph with major editorial assistance.

1 – Student was unable to develop paragraph without one-to-one assistance.

Rubric scoring for visual element:

4 – Student followed through carefully on concept and showed originality, creativity and initiation in completing project.

3 – Student coordinated story and visual image and worked on independent tasks with minimal prompting.

2 – Student had some difficulty coordinating story to image and needed prompts to complete tasks.

1 – Story and visual element were not coordinated. Work was incomplete.

Rubric scoring for presentation of story quilt 1 – 4 points:

_____ Using appropriate volume and making eye-contact with the audience, student presented story and described visual image with enthusiasm.

_____ Student gave title and focus question to listeners.

_____ As speaker, student answered “Wh” questions appropriately.

_____ As listener, student asked appropriate and thoughtful “Wh” questions.

Participation rubric 1 – 4 points:

_____ Attentive to literature and art presentations.

_____ Participated in group brainstorming sessions.

_____ Handled materials appropriately.

_____ Showed respect for other’s presentations.

USE OF MULTIPLE INTELLIGENCES

Linguistic:

- Develop story concept
- Write concise descriptive paragraph
- Edit work
- Keyboard on Alpha Smart
- Ask meaningful questions
- Answer questions appropriately

Visual/Spatial:

- Develop a visual image that supports story
- Use a variety of artistic medium and materials to create visual image

Interpersonal:

- Use appropriate public speaking skills
- Develop rapport with others while speaking about something of importance to self
- Show enthusiasm and interest in a group setting

Intrapersonal:

- Self-reflection to develop personal family story
- Reflection and recognition of self as part of larger human experience
- Recognition of own talents

Mathematical/Logical:

- Physically layout and arrange a project that integrates multiple elements
- Measure and space elements

Bodily/Kinesthetic:

- Fine motor skills to keyboard story on Alpha Smart

BIBLIOGRAPHY

“Faith Ringgold”, Scholastic Art magazine, Vol. 24 No. 6, April/May 1994.

Tar Beach, Faith Ringgold, Crown Publishers, New York, 1991.

Under the Quilt of Night, Deborah Hopkins, illustrated by James E. Ransome, Atheneum Books, New York, 2002.