



Storytelling Arts NJEA Workshop Series

Storytelling to the Standards

November 5, 2009 1:00pm - 4:00pm

Room 319

Presented by: Julie Della Torre and Paula Davidoff

HANDOUTS:

Thematic Unit: Winter Solstice

Part One: Connecting content areas to one story

(Here are ideas for connecting content area to one story, "Raven Steals the Light." The Winter Solstice theme threads throughout (in bold) but, as you can see, there are other possibilities for connections to content area curriculum.)

Story - "Raven Steals the Light" from *Raven Steals the Light* by Bill Reid and Robert Bringhurst, Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1984 (pp. 17 - 24)

Language Arts / Literacy

1. Trickster tales
 - a. Other Raven stories
 - b. Trickster stories from other cultures (connection to S.S.)
2. Character study
 - a. character traits of trickster / of Raven
 - b. studies of other characters in the story (old man, daughter)
3. **Setting - Dark nights of the north**
 - a. **text to text connection - settings of other solstice stories, other creation myths**
 - b. personal connection - personal experiences help listener to visualize settings
4. Connection to writing

Science

1. Creation myths / Pourquoi stories
 - a. How do scientists attempt to explain natural phenomenon?
 - b. Why do people create stories to explain natural phenomenon?
2. **Winter Solstice**

- a. **Astronomy – why is there variation in the lengths of days and nights?**
- b. **Seasons**
- c. **History of science – how have scientists’ explanations of astronomy changed?**
- d. **Stone Henge and other ancient sites that reflect ancient people’s knowledge of the earth’s movement with relation to the sun**

Social Studies

1. **Native American Culture**
 - a. **Northwestern tribes: social customs, occupations, life style (houses, food), art**
 - b. **Geography – how does it influence life and customs? how does it influence stories?**
2. **Solstice stories / creation myths – how do other cultures describe the creation of light?**
3. **Winter Holidays – how do other cultures in the northern hemisphere celebrate the winter holidays? How do these celebrations relate to the solar phenomena?**

Mathematics - Charting and Graphing

1. **hours of daylight/darkness between winter solstice and vernal equinox**
2. **track paths of planets (e.g. Venus – morning star and evening star – connect back to story)**

Fine Arts

1. **Music**
 - a. **Listen to solstice/winter themed music as a writing prompt**
 - b. **Create music to accompany solstice stories**
2. **Visual Arts**
 - a. **Create drawings or sculptures to illustrate story**
 - b. **Solstice paintings**
3. **Theater and Dance**
 - a. **Write a script of the story for story theater or readers’ theater**
 - b. **Students perform scenes from the story**
 - c. **Create dances based on character sketches**

Lesson Plan – Language Arts Literacy

Creating a character sketch based on inferences from a text

Objectives:

1. **Students will recognize that some of the information in stories is implied rather than explicitly stated by the text.**

2. Students will use their prior experiences with texts and with the world to help them understand the characters in a story.

Materials: Story, “Raven Steals the Light”, display for collecting student ideas, paper, pencils.

Organization: This lesson should be stretched over two or three days during part of the Language Arts block. Begin with whole group instruction. After initial modeling, character interviews can be done in small groups. Writing is independent; as students write, teacher conferences one-on-one or takes a small group for guided instruction. Interviews can be done in whole or small groups. Student follow-up “think alouds” can be written or spoken.

Activities:

1. Teacher introduces and presents the story. After telling, ask, “what do you wonder about this story?” Collect questions. Let students discuss their ideas about possible answers.
2. Teacher initiates the idea (if it hasn’t already come up in the discussion) that the characters, themselves, could answer some of the questions. This focuses the lesson on character traits.
3. Select a character from the story. Encourage the students to list everything they know about the character. (These lists can be generated in small groups, by “turn and talk”, or in the whole group with the teacher as scribe.)*
4. Once the list has been generated, discuss which items on the list were explicitly stated in the story and which were inferred by the readers (listeners). Stress: inference must be based in text. Divide lists into ‘facts’ and ‘inferences’.
5. Students create a written description of the character based on the material in the lists. This sketch should include information about the character’s history and personality based on inferences from the text. (If students have never written a character description, teacher should model and assign students to use the entire listing/writing process to compose a sketch of another character.)*
6. Character interviews – using the ideas in their writing, students take turns being interviewed as one of the characters in the story. Begin this activity by having the teacher model the process and then tell students how she came up with answers to questions based on both her writing and her previous experiences of stories and life.*

* represent suggested times to stop the exercise for the day

Accountability/Evaluation: Quality of student writing – does it depend on inferential thinking? Oral presentations following interviews: what did students discover about their character, how did it relate to the text, to their experiences outside the story?

Lesson plan – Social Studies
Light and Fire Myths in Different Cultures

Objectives:

1. Students will read folktales from several cultures that describe the bringing of fire or light.
2. Students will recognize that there are similarities and differences in these stories. They will discuss how the geographical and social situations of the culture of origin might account for the details in the stories.
3. Students will create oral presentations to illustrate what they have learned.

Materials:

1. Books and folktale anthologies that contain light and fire myths
2. Websites where students can find variants of these myths
3. Notebooks, writing implements, poster board, markers, and other art supplies to create visual aids to oral presentations
4. Technology to use as an aid to oral presentations.

Organization: Whole group instruction for introduction to the project. Small groups or partners for research, creating, and presenting individual projects. Throughout the completion of this project, which will take two or three weeks, students should meet as a whole group to discuss their findings and critique developing projects.

Activities:

1. Teacher introduces the project by telling “Sun Man” (or another myth about how the sun came into the sky). Students discuss the differences between the it and the Raven story and speculate about why different cultures might have different explanations for natural phenomena.
2. Teacher introduces students to the collection of books and materials. Students must read and take notes on (a teacher designated minimum of) stories from different cultures.
3. Each student group identifies two stories to compare and contrast for their project. (At this point, the teacher may want to assign older or more capable students to read other types of folktales from the cultures represented by their anchor stories.)
4. Students research the cultures in which their stories originated: geography, climate, customs.
5. Students begin developing ideas for their projects. Teachers conference with groups to direct students and teach minilessons on research and sociology.
6. Students meet in whole group and in small groups to discuss their findings, describe their processes, and critique each other’s work.
7. Students present final projects.

Accountability/Evaluation: Notes on stories and other research, variety of sources used in research, critical thinking about project as assessed in teacher/student conferences and in whole group discussions about process, Final presentations - clarity of oral presentation and how well it was supplemented by visuals

Part Two: Connecting Stories to Content Areas

(These lists, of course, could go on and on. This part will give you an idea of the rich array of tales you can use to connect content areas using folktales in a thematic unit.)

Language Arts -

Light Stories

1. Raven Steals the Light
2. Grandmother Spider Steals the Sun (Cohn, A.L., 1993)
3. Why Robin's Breast is Red (Hamilton, M. & Weiss, M., 1990)
4. The Theft of Fire (Cole, 1982)
5. Rainbow Crow (Van Laan, N., 1989, pub. Alfred A. Knopf, Inc.)
6. Why Sun and Moon Live in the Sky (Lester, J. (1989)
7. Sun Man (Simms, L., 1988. in *Joining In*, ed. T. Miller, Yellow Moon Press)
8. Why Mosquitoes Buzz in People's Ears (Aardema, V., 1975, pub. Scholastic Press)
9. Prometheus Steals Fire (Hamilton, E., 1969)

Winter Stories

1. Why Evergreens Keep Their Leaves in Winter
(<http://www.rickwalton.com/folktale/bryant63.htm>)
2. The Snow Maiden (http://clover.slavic.pitt.edu/tales/snow_maiden.html)
3. The Twelve Months (Cole, 1982)
4. The Juniper Tree (Grimm; Cole, 1982)

Science - Seasonal Changes

1. The Great Bear Hunt (http://www.drlamay.com/hunting_the_great_bear.htm)
2. The Death of Adonis (Hamilton, 1969)
3. Demeter and Persephone (Hamilton, 1969)

Social Studies - Winter Holidays

1. The Legend of St. Nicholas (Cole, 1982)
2. Baldur and the Mistletoe (<http://www.sacred-texts.com/neu/ice/coo/coo24.htm>)
3. The Story of the Maccabees (<http://www.jewfaq.org/holiday7.htm>)

Bibliography

- Cohn, A.L., (ed.), 1993, *From Sea to Shining Sea: A Treasury of American Folklore and Folk Songs*, New York: Scholastic
- Cole, J. (ed.), 1982, *Best-Loved Folktales of the World*, New York: Random House
- Hamilton, E., 1969, *Mythology, Timeless Tales of Gods and Heroes*, Penguin Publishers
- Hamilton, M. & Weiss, M., (1990), *Children Tell Stories: A Teaching Guide*, Katonah, NY: Richard C. Owens
- Hamilton, V., 1988, *The People Could Fly: American Black Tales*, Alfred A. Knopf
- Hamilton, V., 1988, *In The Beginning: Creation Stories From Around the World*, Orlando, FL: Harcourt
- Lester, J., 1989, *How Many Spots Does a Leopard Have And Other Tales*, New York: Scholastic
- Miller, T. (ed.), 1988, *Joining In, An Anthology of Audience Participation Stories and How to Tell Them*, Cambridge, MA: Yellow Moon Press
- Yolen, J., 1986, *Favorite Folktales from Around the World*, New York: Pantheon

Websites and Search Engines for folktales and myths

- Surlalune - <http://www.surlalunefairytales.com/index.html>
- Sacred Texts - <http://www.sacred-texts.com/index.htm>
- Folktexts - <http://www.pitt.edu/~dash/folktexts.html>

Sources for stories told in the workshop:

- “The Three Dolls” interpreted by David Novak, from *Ready-to-Tell Tales*, ed. David Holt and Bill Mooney, August House, 1994, (pp. 12 - 15).
- “Crab” from *The Heavenly Zoo: Legends and Tales of the Stars* by Alison Lurie and Monika Beisner, Sunburst Books, 1996.
- “Apollo and Hyacinth” from *Mythology, Timeless Tales of Gods and Heroes*, by Edith Hamilton, Penguin Publishers, 1969, (pp. 92 - 93), or *Bullfinch’s Mythology: Stories of Gods and Heroes*, <http://www.bartleby.com/181/084.html>
- “Like Meat Loves Salt” from *Grandfather Tales*, by Richard Chase, Houghton Mifflin, 1948, 1976. (pp. 110 - 114).
- “Amarterasu Omikami” from *The Storyteller’s Goddess*, by Carolyn M. Edwards, Harper Collins, 1991, (pp. 12 - 15).
- “Raven Steals the Light” from *Raven Steals the Light* by Bill Reid and Robert Bringhurst, Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1984 (pp. 17 - 24).