Are Folktales More Than a Story?

**Intro:**

For our curriculum project we are aiming to improve students’ comprehension and appreciation of folktales while also understanding other cultures through folktales. We want students to learn about their own background and heritage and we want them to learn about their classmate’s background and heritage also.

**Content:**

Our Curriculum Project is focused on a third grade class at Expeditionary Learning Academy at Moylan School (ELAMS). This lesson incorporates Connecticut’s Common Core English-Reading Standards: Foundational Skills and Reading Standards for Literature. It also integrates the Moylan Theory of Action stating, “ENGAGE all students in meaningful, differentiated ways that match their needs and meet their interests” (ELAMS). That is what the objective of this lesson is. We want students from all different backgrounds to explore their heritage and share it with the class. The Curriculum Project that we created will take place during one period, for 50 minutes, everyday, for a week.

**Objectives:**

The main objective of this curriculum project is to have the students understand that the morals discussed in folktales reflect cultural meaning. Capitalizing on the culture diversity of Hartford students, it is important to learn about different cultures and ethnic backgrounds. We want the children to learn about their own family background and apply it to the learning that is done in
This is also how we want to incorporate multicultural education into the third grade classroom.

1. Students will learn elements of a folktale
   1. The moral of the story, the main characters and the contributions of them
   2. Students will identify cultural differences reflected in folktales
   3. Students will learn how to work cooperatively within a group
   4. Students will read for a purpose to evaluate the story and their lives
   5. Students will create and write their own folktale based on family history

**Activities:**

The teacher will start out on Monday by teaching the students what a folktale is, the components of a folktale, and the significance of a folktale. On Tuesday the students will read a folktale chosen by the teacher, matching the student’s comprehension level and amount of pages. Following this, on Wednesday, the students will analyze this folktale and apply it to Monday’s lesson. Thursday is the day when the students come in with their stories and will fill out a worksheet based on the family member they chose. Also, if one of the student’s family member is able to come in and talk, they will do this on Thursday. Then on the last day, Friday, the students will write their own folktale based on what they learned about the person they chose.

**Day One:**

On Monday, during the period in which the class discusses the subject of literature, the teacher will introduce the topic of folktales. The teacher will begin the lesson with a web, created to explain what folktales are and the significance of them (Resource). The web includes the following information; folktales are a fictional story that comes from a specific country or culture, folktales reflect the beliefs of people and teaches a moral lesson, folktales include a lesson that
explains something about the natural world, folktales have characters that can be people or animals, heroes or villains, and folktales have problems that then present a solution or happy ending. Since it would be hard for third graders to grasp these concepts without examples, the teacher will read a few short folktales to the class. Furthermore, they will discuss what culture is and what means within a folktale. In most folktales, the moral usually reflects cultural meaning. The students will then work in groups, by counting off, and then reconvene as a class to identify the cultures that were discussed within the short folktales the teacher just read to them. Afterwards, the teacher will then give the students their homework assignment for the week. Even though the assignment will be due on Thursday, the teacher will give it to them on Monday for flexibility. The assignment asks the students to interview an immediate or extended family member on either their life story, or a story that has been passed down for generations. Also, we would like the students to ask the person they picked if they would like to come and speak to the class on the second to last day of this project, which is Thursday. For guidance the students will discuss and come up with ten questions as a class to ask the family member. The teacher should be there to help the students when needed, but to not give them questions. We want the students to ask their family member questions that interest them and questions that they want to hear the answers to.

**Day Two:**

Tuesday is assigned for reading *The Drum: A Folktale from India*. We chose this folktale because of its length of thirty-two pages, it corresponds with the right grade level, third grade, and reading level, and the plot. *The Drum: A Folktale from India* is about a poor boy wanting a drums, but cannot afford them, so he goes on a journey and meets many people along the way. “He learns to make his own magic in the world” (Amazon). When the students are sitting in their desks, the teacher will create groups consisting of three to four children by counting off around the classroom.
Once the students are in their groups, the teacher will pass out the books to each group. Each student, in the groups, will take a turn reading a few pages each. The teacher will reconvene the class every ten minutes to discuss what has been happening in the book, including any themes that have been brought up or anything they found surprising. Also, the teacher is reconvening them after ten minutes to see where they are at in *The Drum: A Folktale from India*. They will just discuss as a class, and not write anything down. In this time period, the students should have finished reading the book and be prepared to examine the text the next day.

**Day Three:**

Wednesday will be designated for analysis. The students will break into their groups of three or four again and then the teacher will hand out individual worksheets for completion (Resources). After the previous day of reading and discussing, the children will be ready to fill this in. The worksheet is aimed to show the students comprehension of *The Drum: A Folktale from India*. They will first have to identify and describe the main character(s) in the folktale. Afterwards, the students will work together by discussion to comprehend the moral of the story. Lastly, the children will recognize the challenges the main character(s) faced, and what he/she did to overcome these challenges. Once the worksheet is completed they will hand it in to the teacher, and she will remind about their homework assignment that is due the next day.

**Day Four:**

On Thursday, the students will have come to class prepared with the information their family member told them whether it was their individual family story or a story passed down in the family. If a student does not complete their homework assignment and comes to class with no material, the teacher will assign another classmate’s story to that child. The teacher will have brought a world map to the classroom. Every student will mark on the map where their story takes
place. It will be a great visual for the students to see the diversity within the classroom. The teacher will keep this map up in the classroom. With the remaining time left, the teacher will hand out another worksheet aimed to help the students develop their own folktale (Resources). This worksheet will include questions breaking down the story. The questions are “Who are the character(s) in your story?, Where and when does your story take place?, What happens in your story? What are the problems that occur? and How does the story end? Is there a happy ending?” When the students are finished filling it out, they will hand these worksheets in. The teacher will check them over that night to make sure the students are on the right track for Friday. Also, during the last twenty minutes of class, if any family member volunteered to come and talk to the class this is when they would come. If there are more than two family members coming in, they will just go around to the student’s desks and talk to a group of them. We want all the students to learn about their classmate’s background and heritage.

**Day Five:**

The last day, Friday, is assigned for writing. The students will come in and sit in their individual seats. Instead of analyzing a book, the students will be creating their own folktale based on their family story. To guide them, they will have another worksheet to fill out (Resources). This worksheet has the students drawing a picture of their family member and themselves together, and then writing a folktale that includes the following writing criteria. Their folktales will include the main character(s), a moral of the story, the challenge(s) the character(s) face, and how the character(s) overcome the challenge(s). The students will also need to follow the guidelines that the teacher created. The guidelines suggest the students need a topic sentence, supporting sentences and a concluding sentence in their own folktale. By the end of the week, the students will have
learned, identified, comprehended, analyzed, and then applied these skills to create their own personalized folktales reflecting Bloom’s Taxonomy (Bloom’s).

**Evaluation:**

At the beginning of the week, the teacher will have created two rubrics for the students to use as a guideline throughout the week (Resources). The students will be evaluated at the end of the week based on the criteria listed on the rubrics. We are choosing to emphasize participation as the children are in third grade, but will focus on writing also. The teacher’s expectations include attitude, class preparation, class involvement, teamwork, respect, and cooperative learning. They will be graded out of five. In order to get a five for ‘attitude’, students must be positive, interested, and willing to participate. A five for ‘class participation’ has the students completing their assignments on time, and bring proper materials to class. A five in ‘class involvement’ means the students in actively participating in the class discussions while also listening attentively to others, and filling out their respective worksheets. For a student to get a five for ‘teamwork’ he/she must work well with their reading group members, and stay on task. In order to get a five for ‘respect’ a student must be respectful and considerate of their peer’s ideas, stories, and cultures. Lastly, a five for ‘cooperative learning’ means a student used their time productively both in their group and individually. As for the writing rubric, the students will be graded out of four. The rubric is a general way of grading third grade writing in any lesson that is presented to the class. The students will be graded on their topic sentence, supporting details, punctuation, and capitalization (Resources). In order to get a four for a ‘topic sentence’ the student should state the main idea of their folktale in an interesting way and it should hook the reader, in this case, the teacher. A four for the ‘supporting details’ would have to include four or more supporting sentences that relate to the topic they are writing about. For a student to get four for ‘punctuation’ they would have to have
the correct punctuation in each sentence. Lastly, to get a four for ‘capitalization’ would mean that all sentences begin with a capital letter and all proper nouns (the name of their family member or any other person they write about) would be capitalized as well. These expectations make sure the students are constantly engaged in a meaningful way reflecting ELAMS Theory of Action stated in our content section. At the end of this week, the teacher will have effectively completed the five objectives stated at the beginning of the paper through the daily lesson plans.

**Resources:**

- The folktales that the teacher will read to the class on the first day
  - Students will not get a copies of them
- 7 copies of the Folktale Book – *The Drum: A Folktale from India*
  - Length
  - Grade level and reading level
  - Plot
- Worksheets
  - Monday’s ‘Web’
  - Wednesday’s ‘The Drum Reading’
  - Thursday’s ‘Developing Folktale’
  - Friday’s ‘Writing Folktale’
- Rubrics
  - Participation Rubric
  - Writing Rubric
- World Map
- Tacks for marking the map
• Pencils with erasers

References:


