

You Have Power! Give It a Voice.

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Summary

“We have become not a melting pot but a beautiful mosaic. Different people, different beliefs, different yearnings, different hopes, different dreams.” Jimmy Carter

This unit, which will be titled, “You Have Power! Give It a Voice” works to establish a connection between students who have immigrated to the United States and students who were born here with a medical condition and/or physical differences. It will focus on their journeys, both actual and emotional, as well as, their day-to-day experiences both positive and negative highlighting language, communication skills and coping strategies.

Inspiration for this unit was taken from two sources. The first is the novel, *Save Me a Seat*, written by Sarah Weeks and Gita Varadarajan. In this novel, two boys provide distinct perspectives on “fitting in”; one boy is an immigrant from India, the other boy is American born and raised with special needs surrounding an auditory processing disorder. Both boys struggle separately (and together) with the assumptions made about them by their peers and other people in and out of their community based upon prejudice, stereotypes, or plain and simple, fear or ignorance. This is the unit’s anchor text and the foundation for the lessons and the culminating activity.

In addition to the ideas of assumptions; the concepts of prejudice, stereotypes, biases, culture, language and identity will all be explored throughout this unit by taking a closer look at these notions and the plethora of feelings they generate for our children. This brings us to the second source of inspiration for this unit which is the social and emotional learning involved with our ELL and differently abled students. While working through this unit, they will be exposed to various characters possessing powerful personal traits including: courage, determination, intelligence, creativity and kindness.

Read-aloud books showcasing characters of similar ages and their navigation of similar experiences to those of our students will be the foundation for the lessons within the unit. Some of the books that will be used to spotlight the people and personalities consist of: *The Day Saida Arrived* by Susana Gomez Redondo, *My Two Blankets*, by Irena Kobald and Freya Blackwood, *The Paper Boat* by Thao Lam, *The Matchbox Diary* by Paul Fleischman and *A Journey Toward Hope* by Coert Voorhees and Victor J. Hinojosa. Lessons will attempt to draw connections between text and self, as well as text and the world. Activities will be designed first with accessibility in mind and second to encourage expression of feelings and student voice.

Curriculum units and lessons that are written for the student with “typical” needs do not allow our ELL students or our students with special needs to learn from them without significant adaptations and modifications. It becomes the job of the general education, ELL or special education teachers to make these changes and, despite their best efforts, it is almost impossible to do it without jeopardizing the integrity of the content and the impact for the students in the class; it is a tall order and not feasible with the constraints of time and money. Students who have moved to this country and have needs related to language development, as well as, social and emotional needs have a right to a unit and lessons designed with them in mind; something that does not have to be adapted or modified from its original version. They need a unit that will afford them the experience and the opportunity to unpack their own unique experiences and give them a voice to express themselves in a way that is comfortable for them. And that brings us to the heart of this unit...a voice for all students.

Since language is often an area that is developing for our ELL learners, these are the students who do not feel comfortable expressing themselves and/or participating in class discussions and activities. This is also an area that is often challenging to students with special needs, particularly those diagnosed with Autism or conditions like cerebral palsy that have motor involvement and utilize AAC (Augmentative and Alternative Communication) devices. The lessons in this unit, therefore, will be crafted with art activities to respond to the literature and to express their thoughts and feelings. It will be a vehicle for students with obstacles to language and its use to tell their own personal story. It will afford them an opportunity to share their journey with others. Some of these activities will utilize painting, tiling, drawing, sculpting, performance art, music and movement. The culminating activity of the unit will be a collaborative, sensory installation with opportunities for students to communicate aspects of their journey with their classmates, friends, teachers, families and the community.

The five, unit lessons, including the culminating activity or sensory installation, will attempt to answer the following “Essential Questions”:

- Does communication need to be verbal? Does it require words to be effective?
- Are talking and communicating synonymous? Are they interchangeable?
- What are alternative forms of communication?
- How is art used to “talk to” or communicate with people?

Key Words

Language, communication, culture, identity, ability, disability, assumptions, prejudice, journey, immigrant

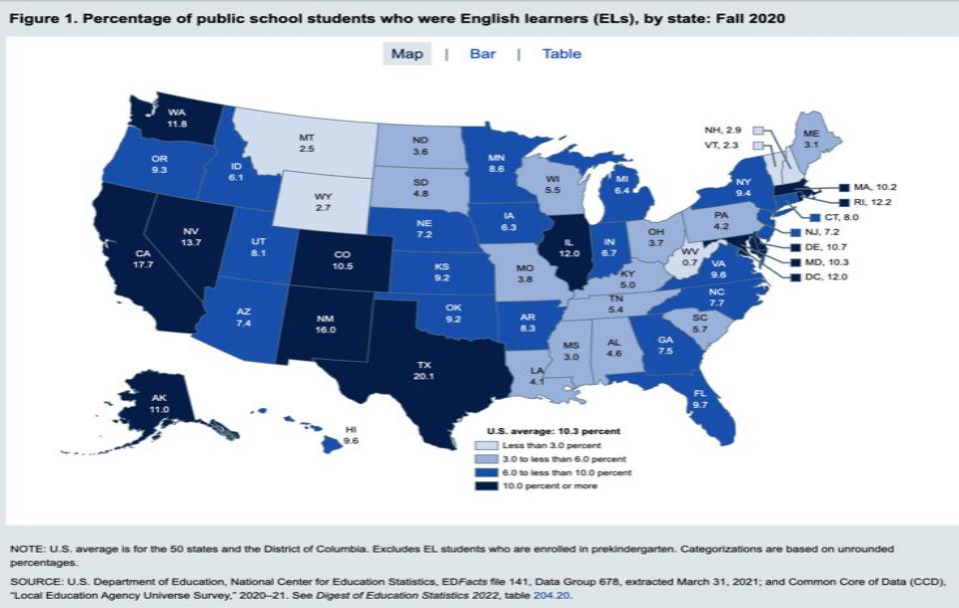
Unit Content

According to Oxford Languages, language is defined as “the principal method of human communication, consisting of words used in a structured and conventional way and conveyed by speech, writing, or gesture.” However, this widely accepted definition is both limiting and restrictive to any individual who struggles with speech or the spoken word. This unit attempts to challenge this repressive view of language with the purpose of providing alternate languages and ultimately ways to communicate to any human being with any ability from anywhere around the world. Consider the student(s) in the classroom that are unable to “speak” in the traditional way due to a medical condition; or consider the student(s) who are speaking something other than English in an environment where all words are not their own. How do these children learn? Possibly more important than that question is this one, how do they communicate with their teachers, their peers...their friends?

From The National Institute on Deafness and Other Communication Disorders, the data indicates a “developmental language disorder (also called specific language impairment) has a prevalence of 7% or approximately 1 in 14 children” in the United States with “approximately 2% of children with a language disorder also (having) an existing medical condition (e.g., autism, intellectual disability)”. These numbers highlight the potential challenges around language for children or students in this country. Combine those numbers with the number of children learning the English language, which was 5.0 million in 2020 according to the National Center for Education Statistics and you have a significant, diverse group of people facing a common problem. (See Figure 1. Percentage of Public School Students Who Were English Learners (Els), by State: Fall 2020, on p. 4). It is for these children that a unit like, You Have Power! Give It a Voice, is necessary to affect change and aggravate growth in areas not often focused on by traditional and antiquated curriculum and educational pedagogy.

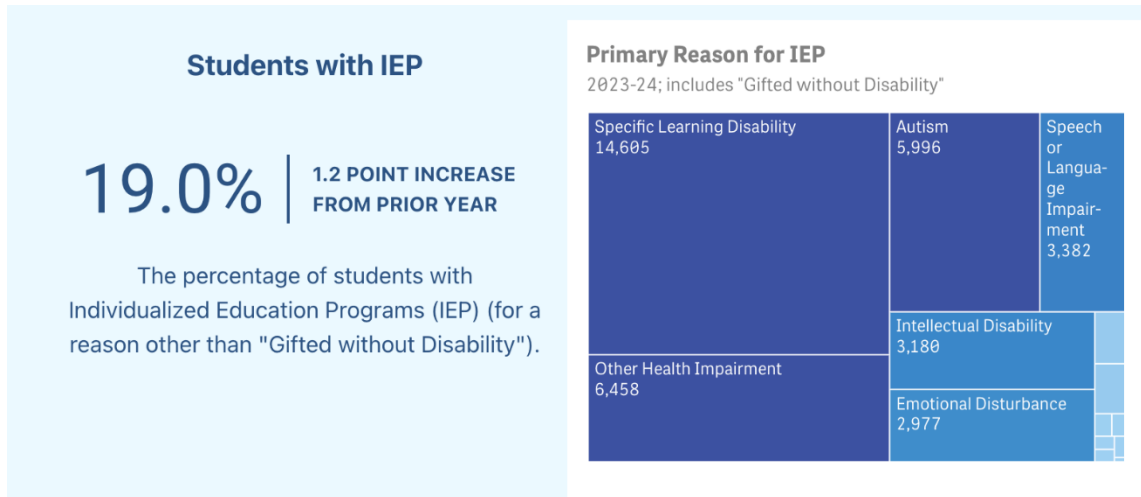
You Have Power! Give It a Voice, is designed to look at alternative forms of language and communication, specifically the arts, and offer lessons created with a variety of access points highlighting the use of multiple intelligences. “Researchers contend that the arts are ideally suited to deep and inclusive learning experiences as they can access a range of intelligences and learning styles.” (Uduak & Williams-Akpan, 2020). Rooted in this quote and backed by many who have commented on the use of art as a means of expression, if not specifically communication, this unit offers students from diverse backgrounds with noted difficulties in the arena of verbal communication or speaking an opportunity to tell their stories to a wide audience in ways more appropriate than the spoken or the written word.

Who are these students? These students include individuals who learned a language, other than the popular or commercial language of the country or province where



they reside, first. Also, students with any type of cognitive or physical needs that impact language such as Autism, Cerebral Palsy, Apraxia, etc.... Both groups are often unable to express themselves, their thoughts and feelings, due to this barrier of language. For a student who is considered an immigrant, this challenge is often over-looked or addressed by immersing the student into the spoken language of the new country. “This program, also known as *sink or swim*, did not include any special way to help non-English-speaking students understand their teachers’ explanations (Díaz-Rico and Weed, 2002). As a result, ELLs fell academically behind their peers who spoke English, and many of them chose to leave school, thus contributing to a substantial increase in the number of school dropouts (dropouts) (Rothstein, 1998).” (Calvo, 2003). Other programs are available and supports exist too for the ELL students. Eventually, they will learn the spoken and the written language of the people in their new home. But what happens to them in the meantime; how do they make friends? How do they express their feelings? How do they ask for help? Possibly most important of all, how do they tell their story?

Students known as immigrants are not the only ones that need a different and non-traditional way to talk to people. Students with a host of special needs also require alternative ways to get their thoughts from their minds to the intended audience. In the School District of Philadelphia alone, there are approximately 17, 740 students with an Individualized Education Plan receiving specially designed instruction due to a cognitive, physical or combined disability. That is just about 19% or 1/5 of the student population of that district. (See table below and linked [here](#) for additional information regarding the statistics cited above.). Now, while many of these students’ disability does not involve spoken language, or even written language for that matter, that still leaves a very large



group who deserves another way to speak to us other than with their lips, tongue and mouth. Art can be one of these other ways.

“Art, in its various forms, has long been recognized as a means of personal expression and a potent form of communication.” (Transatlantic Translations Group, 2003). Drawing, painting, sculpting or photography are means to self-expression and communication between the author or in this case the artist and their audience. Artwork allows for a visual representation of a thought or a feeling; pieces of art can share ideas and opinions. One picture, as the saying goes, is worth a thousand words. (F.Barnard, 1921). This unit seeks to allow an otherwise non-verbal student or one who is currently struggling with spoken or written word to talk, to speak, to communicate with everyone and anyone around them. “Each stroke of paint, note in a melody, and movement in a dance communicates a message that anyone can understand, interpret, and feel, regardless of their cultural background or mother tongue.” (Transatlantic Translations Group, 2003)

Within this unit, lessons will focus on language and self-expression with art as the vehicle. Mediums including fabric (for making blankets or quilts), pencil, pen, and markers for drawing and varied materials for sculpting will be utilized. As a culminating activity or event, students will have an opportunity to create an art installation incorporating pieces made by them throughout the unit. Each installation will be student-centered and unique with the common thread of art as language. The installations will be built by the students and viewed by the remainder of the school community and the students’ families and friends.

Outlined below is a scope and sequence for this curriculum unit, as well as, the “Big Idea” and “Essential Questions” for it. Illustrated here are the content, specific lessons, materials, and books to be used during implementation of the unit by an educator.

Lesson	Objectives	Text(s)	Additional Materials
#1	<p>1.Students will be able to identify with the main character(s) in the story in order to establish a connection between the character(s) and themselves. (Text to Self Connection)</p> <p>2.Students will be able to create a picture for a word or words from the story in order to illustrate that language is not only spoken but it is also represented and experienced.</p>	<p><u>The Day Saida Arrived</u> By: Susana Gomez Redondo</p>	<p>Art Paper (white, thick)</p> <p>Pencils</p> <p>Colored pencils, pens, markers and crayons</p> <p>Chart Paper</p>
#2	<p>1.Students will be able to identify the differences between two environments (countries) used as settings in the story in order to describe the feelings of the main character. Text to self connections will be made, specifically regarding feelings experienced when in a new place.</p> <p>2.Students will be able to recognize the qualities of a friend in order to explain the relationship between the two main characters in the story.</p> <p>3.Students will be able to relate to the idea of an object bringing comfort and providing security to someone, especially in a new or unfamiliar situation in order to respond to the themes of belonging and friendship that are central to the story.</p> <p>4.Students will be able to create a quilt or a blanket using traditional and non-traditional media including fabric squares, felt, needle and thread and hot glue in order to represent their response to the story.</p>	<p><u>My Two Blankets</u> By: Irena Kobald and Freya Blackwood</p>	<p>Chart paper</p> <p>Markers</p> <p>Images (pictures) of different places (countries, cities, etc...)</p> <p>Felt or Fabric squares</p> <p>Adornments i.e., buttons, sequins, ribbons, lace, etc...</p> <p>Glue gun/Glue Sticks</p>
#3	<p>Students will be able to identify alternative ways to tell a story in order to share their own life</p>	<p>Wordless books and stories including:</p>	<p>Video: "Behind the Book, The Paper Boat"</p>

	<p>experiences in a non-traditional format, like a wordless story.</p> <p>Students will be able to derive meaning from images in order to utilize pictures and other graphics to convey a message about themselves to their readers.</p> <p>Students will explore a variety of graphics including photographs, paintings, drawings and clipart in order to create the story of their journey with minimal to no words.</p>	<p><u>The Snowman</u> by Raymond Briggs, <u>Bluebird</u> by Bob Staake, <u>Journey</u> by Aaron Becker and <u>Found</u> by Jeff Newman</p> <p><u>The Paper Boat</u> by Thao Lam</p>	<p>Post It Notes (colored)</p> <p>Chart Paper</p> <p>Copies (enlarged) of the pages of the book (<i>The Paper Boat</i>)</p> <p>Pencils, markers, colored pencils</p> <p>Paper</p>
#4	<p>Students will be able to respond to literature through art (sculpture or collage) in order to identify the main ideas and key details from a text.</p> <p>Students will use works of art like sculpture or collage in order to tell their own stories (narratives) of moments of significance in their lives.</p> <p>Students will be able to work with a variety of media including wire, plastic, clay, textiles, etc... in order to create a piece that communicates an important life event(s) to the intended audience.</p>	<p><u>The Matchbox Diary</u> by Paul Fleischman</p>	<p>Video: “The Matchbox Diary”</p> <p>Video: “Kindergarten: Introduction to Sculpture”</p> <p>Video: “Kids Create: Found Object Collage”</p> <p>Sample sculptures, collages of pictures and objects</p> <p>Varied materials (to use in sculpture or collage) including: wire, plastic, clay, textiles, etc...</p> <p>Glue</p> <p>Paint</p> <p>Buttons, ribbons, sequins and other objects and embellishments</p>

Big Idea: “Where words may fail, art thrives.”

*Art as an alternative means of communication is an arena that begs further exploration and houses a number of unique benefits for anyone affected by challenges with traditional spoken or written language.

Essential Questions:

1. Are talking and communicating synonymous with each other?
2. Does communication have to be verbal to be effective?
3. What are examples of alternative forms of communication?

Teaching Strategies

For this unit, You Have Power! Give It a Voice, the fine arts will be used as a strategy for responding to literature and as a form of self-expression. “Children’s literature can be used by teachers as instructional materials to meet a variety of educational goals and objectives. Using children’s literature that includes multiple modes of communication offers more opportunities to invite students to respond using arts-based forms, such as visual art, drama, music, and dance.” (Lumen Learning). Included in this global strategy of art to explain literature are the categories of drama, music and movement, photography and the finer arts of drawing, painting and sculpting. Each of these offers a unique and hands-on approach to teaching, learning and evaluating content.

Looking more closely at the types of art mentioned above, drama or acting is probably one of the most challenging for students due to the vulnerability involved in performing in front of others, especially your peers. However, if the initial shyness and fear of judgement can be overcome, students can be engaged and quite successful using this strategy to learn content and respond to it with their own ideas and opinions. One form of drama or dramatic inquiry to be used is known as “Mantle of the Expert”. This technique sets a scene and casts the students as the actors of it. For example, establishing the classroom as a factory or studio where each student is an artist who has been tasked with creating a quilt that tells a person’s (their own or someone else’s) story using fabric, textiles and embellishments; this pushes the students to be involved in the activity of making a quilt but also requires them to study the process and to seek meaning in the work.

Music and movement (or dance) are another area of art that provides a strategy to be used with students to foster connections between them and their learning. Music can be used as a tool for rote memorization and problem-solving or it can be used to capture students’ interest and inspire them. In this unit, music could be utilized during the reading/viewing of The Paper Boat by Thao Lam. During the video presentation of this book, music is integral in conveying not only the idea or message of the story, but also and arguably more importantly the emotion of it. Allowing students to listen to a wide variety of music and select a piece or pieces to accompany their own graphic novel (strip) that they will be working on adds another layer to the project. It also enhances their storytelling ability without relying on spoken or written words to do it.

Photography is perhaps one of the easiest strategies to incorporate into our classrooms and packs a pretty big punch when it comes to communicating without words. In this day and age, you would be hard pressed to find many students who did not own or at least have access to an electronic device like a cell phone or iPad to take pictures. Also, these same students are inundated with visual imagery through television, movies and social media where every day they “read” these images like the pages of a book. So, why not then have them speak and write with these same images. “The brain processes visuals 60,000 times faster than text, and visuals can help students improve learning by up to 400%.” (Lucidspark, 2024). So, using pictures can not only generate engagement but also enhance instruction and increase performance.

Last but certainly not least in the world of art as a teaching strategy is the field known as the fine arts including drawing, painting and sculpting to name a few. All three of these along with other media that affords opportunities for creativity of thought and expression are an inventive and effective tool to respond to literature, particularly to make text to self connections with it and to “talk” about its themes. These fine arts also provide students with a means other than words to tell stories and to share ideas. They allow otherwise shy, quiet, non-verbal or not traditionally verbal students to participate in class discussions, to answer questions and to share their thoughts and opinions. With a single drawing or painting, a student can talk with another student about a story like My Two Blankets by Kobald and Blackwood and its theme of immigration, feelings of fear and loneliness and the experience of making friends. One painting for a student who struggles with oral language can articulate so much and lend itself to significant growth and progress not only in the lesson or the content being presented but also in their daily life.

Unit Title:

“You Have Power! Give It a Voice”

Grade Level:

Elementary (K-5)

Lesson Title: “I Understand!”**Objectives (Write 2-5 objectives stating expected learner outcomes.):**

1. Students will be able to identify with the main character(s) in the story in order to establish a connection between the character(s) and themselves. (Text to Self Connection)
2. Students will be able to create a picture for a word or words from the story in order to illustrate that language is not only spoken but it is also represented and experienced.

Materials/Resources Needed:

1. The Day Saida Arrived By: Susana Gomez Redondo
2. Art Paper (white, thick)
3. Pencils
4. Colored pencils, pens, markers and crayons
5. Chart Paper

Anticipatory Set (List specific statements or activities you will use to focus students on the lesson for the day.):

To begin the lesson, the teacher will display a sheet of chart paper. He or she will divide the class into teams and play *Pictionary*. One member from a team will draw (or the teacher or another staff member can draw for them) or choose a shape(s) from a box to depict a word provided to them by the teacher. The remaining members of the team will have a specified amount of time to guess what word or words is being illustrated by the image(s). For each correct guess, the team will receive a single point. The team that reaches five points first will win!

Objective/Purpose (For the student's benefit, explain what students will be able to do by the end of the lesson and why these objectives are important to accomplish.):

By the end of this lesson, students will be able to describe the characteristics of the main character(s) in order to make a connection between them and themselves. These connections will afford students the opportunity to explore the similarities between themselves and others, specifically between themselves and immigrant children struggling with fitting in to a strange and different world. They cannot rely on words to communicate and are forced to adapt and change in order to grow. This need to change the way we communicate will be further developed by the students using pictures to replace words. For example, to complete the associated activity, a student might choose the word “home”; he or she will not be able to say the word or write it using letters. He or she will need to draw the word and share it with a peer to communicate with them their idea of “home” or in other words, what “home” means to them.

Input (What information is essential for the student to know before

beginning and how will this skill be communicated to students?): Several key concepts and new or unfamiliar vocabulary need to be introduced to students prior to or at the outset of this lesson. A

Vocabulary or Word Wall should be created using large index cards and associated picture cues for the following words:

1. Immigrant
2. Culture
3. Journey
4. Language
5. Communication

*Also, the idea of communication as not only verbal, but also non-verbal as well as the notion of art being a method of communicating needs to be discussed as a class. This idea should be further teased out to include the use of AAC devices and sign language as other acceptable and effective ways to communicate with others. An anchor chart titled “Ways to Communicate” should be generated during the class discussion and displayed in the classroom for the duration of this unit as a reference.

Model (If you will be demonstrating the skill or competence, how will this be done?):

To demonstrate the concept of language being something other than verbal, the teacher will select a word from the story and illustrate it for the students. He/She will select a media of their choice i.e., pencil, charcoal, paint, clay, etc.... to communicate with the students. An example is included [here](#). If time permits, creating the artistic representation of the word in front of the class is best.

Check for Understanding (Identify strategies to be used to determine if students have learned the objectives.):

Once all of the students have had an opportunity to complete a word as a drawing, painting, sculpture, each will be asked to “say” it to the class by holding it up or displaying it and having their peers respond to it. If students are not comfortable presenting their work, the teacher can share it for them with the class. Also, various ways to respond to the shared work should be offered to the students.

Guided Practice (List activities which will be used to guide student practice and provide a time frame for completing this practice.):

1. Students will listen to the story, The Day Saida Arrived written by Susana Gomez Redondo.
2. Before the reading, the teacher will share new vocabulary words with the students; these words will be added to the Vocabulary Word Wall. Picture cues will accompany the words.
3. An anchor chart will be generated by the teacher and the students illustrating the various modes of communication people use daily. (If a student does not select art as a way to communicate with someone, the teacher should add it to the chart as his or her idea.)
4. During the reading of the story, the teacher will ask questions about the story elements including characters, the setting and the plot. He or She will also ask questions involving higher order thinking skills like analysis specifically regarding the ideas of language and communication addressed in the story. (Sample questions are attached here.)
5. After reading (and discussing) the story, ask students to choose a word or words from the story and a media to use to communicate them to their peers.

6. Provide paper, pencils, markers, paint, brushes, clay and other available media to the students. Give them time to work on their pieces.
7. Have students communicate with their peers using their pieces.
8. Display all pieces in a “Word Gallery”.

Closure (What method of review and evaluation will be used to complete the lesson?):

Students will add the “Word Gallery” to their Sensory Installation (culminating project); once the installation is complete the students will lead tours of the other classes within the building through it and offer them an opportunity to experience their journey firsthand and not only through spoken word, but also through alternate expression.

Unit Title:

“You Have Power! Give It a Voice”

Grade Level:

Elementary (K-5)

Lesson Title:

“Where Do I Belong?”

Objectives (Write 2-5 objectives stating expected learner outcomes.):

1. Students will be able to identify the differences between two environments (countries) used as settings in the story in order to describe the feelings of the main character. Text to self connections will be made, specifically regarding feelings experienced when in a new place.
2. Students will be able to recognize the qualities of a friend in order to explain the relationship between the two main characters in the story.
3. Students will be able to relate to the idea of an object bringing comfort and providing security to someone, especially in a new or unfamiliar situation in order to respond to the themes of belonging and friendship that are central to the story.
4. Students will be able to create a quilt or a blanket using traditional and non-traditional media including fabric squares, felt, needle and thread and hot glue in order to represent their response to the story.

Materials/Resources Needed:

1. My Two Blankets by: Irena Kobald and Freya Blackwood
2. Chart paper
3. Markers
4. Images (pictures) of different places (countries, cities, etc...)
5. Felt or Fabric squares
6. Adornments i.e., buttons, sequins, ribbons, lace, etc...
7. Glue gun/Glue Sticks

Anticipatory Set (List specific statements or activities you will use to focus students on the lesson for the day.):

To open this lesson, a video of quilt making will be shown to the students. Then, pictures of various quilts and quilting patterns will be circulated among the students, as well as actual quilts (samples) so that they can explore them and better understand the meaning and memories attached to quilts, blankets, and tapestries.

Objective/Purpose (For the student's benefit, explain what students will be able to do by the end of the lesson and why these objectives are important to accomplish.): By the

end of this lesson, students will be able to compare and contrast different places and appreciate the similarities and differences of the people from those places. They will also be able to identify the feelings and experiences of someone in a new place. Students will recognize the ways that a new person can be made to feel welcome in the unfamiliar environment. Bringing in the feelings and qualities of friendship that they have drawn out from the story and class discussions, the students will be able to create their own quilt or blanket paying special attention to the meaning that a quilt/blanket can hold for not only the maker, but also for the owner.

Input (What information is essential for the student to know before beginning and how will this skill be communicated to students?): Before beginning the lesson, students will need to be familiar with patterns, symbols and other representations of objects and feelings in artwork. They will also need to be familiar with quilt and blanket making and the materials used by the craftsman like needle and thread, fabric, etc....

Model (If you will be demonstrating the skill or competence, how will this be done?): During the lesson, the teacher will demonstrate the process of quilt making by taking several fabric squares and attaching them together. The teacher will add adornments, symbols or establish a pattern; the students will have an opportunity to explore the quilt sample and discuss its possible meaning with each other.

Check for Understanding (Identify strategies to be used to determine if students have learned the objectives.): Students will create a T-Chart and an anchor chart; the T-chart will highlight the characters' traits and their feelings, while the anchor chart will detail the qualities of a good friend and the things that they would do to make someone feel comfortable and welcome in a new place.

Guided Practice (List activities which will be used to guide student practice and provide a time frame for completing this practice.):

1. Watch the video, "[Learn About the History of Quilting and How Quilts are Made](#)".
2. Read [My Two Blankets](#) by Irena Kobald and Freya Blackwood.
3. Create a T-chart of the main characters traits and feelings or internal and external characteristics.
4. Build an anchor chart using the qualities and the behaviors of a good friend.

5. With a partner or in a small group, make a blanket or quilt representing a moment, memory or instance experienced in your "journey" to today; use fabric or felt and various adornments to create a textile with meaning.

Closure (What method of review and evaluation will be used to complete the lesson?):

Student pairs or groups will present their quilt/blanket and explain the meaning of it to the remainder of the class. The quilt/blanket will be graded for both the craftsmanship and the story it tells to its audience. At the end of the unit, as part of the culminating activity, the quilts/blankets will be added to student installations for a much larger group of viewers to experience and appreciate as another part of the students' journeys.

Unit Title: "You Have Power! Give It a Voice."

Grade Level: Elementary (K-5)

Lesson Title: "The Story of My Life"

Objectives (Write 2-5 objectives stating expected learner outcomes.):

1. Students will be able to identify alternative ways to tell a story in order to share their own life experiences in a non-traditional format, like a wordless story.
2. Students will be able to derive meaning from images in order to utilize pictures and other graphics to convey a message about themselves to their readers.
3. Students will explore a variety of graphics including photographs, paintings, drawings and clipart in order to create the story of their journey with minimal to no words.

Materials/Resources Needed:

1. Wordless books and stories including: The Snowman by Raymond Briggs, Bluebird by Bob Staake, Journey by Aaron Becker and Found by Jeff Newman
2. The Paper Boat by Thao Lam
3. Video: "[Behind the Book, The Paper Boat](#)"
4. Post It Notes (colored)
5. Chart Paper
6. Copies (enlarged) of the pages of the book (*The Paper Boat*)
7. Pencils, markers, colored pencils
8. Paper

Anticipatory Set (List specific statements or activities you will use to focus students on the lesson for the day.): At the outset of the lesson, display several wordless books at the front of the classroom. Invite students to explore these books and "read" them to each other. Instruct them to pay close attention to the images, their details including color (if any) used, line and the frame. Encourage them to see the variety of media used to create the images within each of the books.

Objective/Purpose (For the student's benefit, explain what students will be able to do by the end of the lesson and why these objectives are important to accomplish.): The result of this lesson will be the creation of a graphic narrative or strip that recounts a moment or moments in the author's life of particular importance to him or her. Each student will be able to select the media that they feel will best tell their story and use it paying careful attention to the colors, lines and frames used on each page or in each block of the piece. This work will illustrate another way to share one's story without spoken or written word; it is another, unique form of communication with a nod to fine art.

Input (What information is essential for the student to know before

beginning and how will this skill be communicated to students?): Before beginning the lesson, different forms of media should be introduced and/or reviewed with the students including, but not limited to, pencil, pen, marker, paint and film (photography). Also, explanation of colors and the emotions they evoke along with the use of line and the frame in a graphic work are necessary for the students to be able to understand a wordless story and to create one of their own.

Model (If you will be demonstrating the skill or competence, how will this be done?):

For this lesson (activity), the teacher should engage in the activity along with their students. They will select a moment or moments from their life that impacted their journey and capture it in graphic form using one of the available media. For example, the teacher could choose to illustrate their first day as a teacher in a classroom. They can choose colors that communicate feelings of excitement, joy, anxiety and possibly fear. They can also decide on a page with specific frames. The teacher will share their graphic narrative or strip with the class; they will ask and answer questions about their technique and the meaning within their images.

Check for Understanding (Identify strategies to be used to determine if students have learned the objectives.):

Use chart paper to generate a list of non-traditional ways to communicate. From this list, select pictures or images and produce a narrower set of means to form these pictures; techniques could include drawing, painting, photography and graphic design.

Guided Practice (List activities which will be used to guide student practice and provide a time frame for completing this practice.):

1. Read (Watch) [The Paper Boat](#) by Thao Lam.
2. Post pages from the book on the wall of the classroom; use Post-It notes to assign words (feelings) to the story.
3. Make a paper boat.
4. Create a graphic narrative (comic strip) of a significant moment(s) in their lives or their journeys.

Closure (What method of review and evaluation will be used to complete the lesson?):

Students will share their stories with each other; they will ask and answer questions about their method of creation, as well as the meaning of their work.

Unit Title: “You Have Power! Give It a Voice.”

Grade Level: Elementary (K-5)

Lesson Title: “My Story: A Visual Representation”

Objectives (Write 2-5 objectives stating expected learner outcomes.):

1. Students will be able to respond to literature through art (sculpture or collage) in order to identify the main ideas and key details from a text.
2. Students will use works of art like sculpture or collage in order to tell their own stories (narratives) of moments of significance in their lives.
3. Students will be able to work with a variety of media including wire, plastic, clay, textiles, etc...in order to create a piece that communicates an important life event(s) to the intended audience.

Materials/Resources Needed:

1. The Matchbox Diary by Paul Fleischman
2. Video: [“The Matchbox Diary”](#)
3. Video: [“Kindergarten: Introduction to Sculpture”](#)
4. Video: [“Kids Create: Found Object Collage”](#)
5. Sample sculptures, collages of pictures and objects
6. Varied materials (to use in sculpture or collage) including: wire, plastic, clay, textiles, etc...
7. Glue
8. Paint
9. Buttons, ribbons, sequins and other objects and embellishments

Anticipatory Set (List specific statements or activities you will use to focus students on the lesson for the day.): To grab the students’ attention at the beginning of this lesson, display a traditional diary and a cigar box filled with objects. As a class, discuss how each of these two very different things could tell the same story, one with words and one without words.

Objective/Purpose (For the student's benefit, explain what students will be able to do by the end of the lesson and why these objectives are important to accomplish.): By the end of this lesson, students will be able to respond to literature in a way(s) that does not involve spoken or written words. Along this vein, students will create their own “diary” or artwork that tells the story of their life (one or more events in it). This diary can be a sculpture or a collage; the principles of both will be explored before students begin creating and they will rely on that knowledge when working on their pieces.

Input (What information is essential for the student to know before beginning and how will this skill be communicated to students?): Students will be introduced to the concept of a diary and the purpose it serves (traditionally). They will also be exposed to the fine arts of sculpture and collage and the key elements of both.

Model (If you will be demonstrating the skill or competence, how will this be done?): A sample of both a sculpture and a collage representing an important part of the teacher’s life or journey will be displayed from the outset of the lesson for the students to explore and enjoy.

Check for Understanding (Identify strategies to be used to determine if students have learned the objectives.): All pieces, sculptures and collages, will be displayed in the students' installations and they will be shared with family, friends and the school community. The student artists will use their preferred method of communication to converse about their pieces and their meanings with anyone interested in them.

Guided Practice (List activities which will be used to guide student practice and provide a time frame for completing this practice.):

1. Read (Watch) The Matchbox Diary.
2. Discuss the story; identify the main idea and key details.
3. Watch the videos on both sculpture and collage making linked in the materials section of the lesson.
4. Provide students with the necessary materials to create either a sculpture or a collage "diary" of an important event(s) in their lives.
5. Share students' creations within the classroom.
6. Add the pieces of art to the students' installations.

Closure (What method of review and evaluation will be used to complete the lesson?): Presentation of the works of art and class discussion around technique and meaning will be used to review what was learned in the lesson and evaluate student understanding and/or mastery of the objectives.

Resources

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www.researchgate.net/publication/359199408_AN_OVERVIEW_OF_THE_ARTS_AS_A_LANGUAGE_OF_COMMUNICATION_EXPRESSION_AND_EXPERIENCE_A_DISCOURSE. Accessed May 2024.

Appendix

1.3 Reading Literature Students read and respond to works of literature—with emphasis on comprehension, vocabulary acquisition, and making connections among ideas and between texts with focus on textual evidence.

1.5 Speaking and Listening Students present appropriately in formal speaking situations, listen critically, and respond intelligently as individuals or in group discussions.

9.3.2.F1 Use critical processes (e.g., compare, contrast) to examine works of art.

9.1.M.1.J1 Use a variety of technologies for producing or performing works of art.

9.1.V.1.A1 Know and use basic elements of visual arts.

9.1.V.1.B1 Create works of art and identify art materials, techniques, and processes.

9.1.V.2.B1 Create works of art inspired by the styles and materials of other artists.

9.1.V.1.E1 Use imagination and creativity to express self through visual arts.

9.1.3.A Know and use the elements and principles of each art form to create works in the arts and humanities.

Elements

- Dance: • energy/force • space • time
- Music: • duration • intensity • pitch • timbre
- Theatre: • scenario • script/text • set design
- Visual Arts: • color • form/shape • line • space • texture • value

Principles

- Dance: • choreography • form • genre • improvisation • style • technique
- Music: • composition • form • genre • harmony • rhythm • texture
- Theatre: • balance • collaboration • discipline • emphasis • focus • intention • movement • rhythm • style • voice
- Visual Arts: • balance • contrast • emphasis/focal point • movement/rhythm • proportion/scale • repetition • unity/harmony

READ ALOUD | My Two Blankets Story For Children:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DdEG3s8s9Yw>

Learn About the History of Quilting and How Quilts Are Made | Pottery Barn Kids:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=01jcp_p2KxQ

[Diane Loves 2 Quilt](#)

[Character Traits vs Feelings](#)

The Paper Boat [Activity Sheet](#)

Found. - a wordless picture book: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7sfb63gf5W0>

BLUEBIRD: The Animated Movie – 2020:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qXiR-Tu8IQs>

JOURNEY by Aaron Becker: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DRsmuveKWuk>

The Paper Boat by Thao Lam: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=w8m3sNRtcXA>

The Matchbox Diary (Read Aloud):
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=t_kYZDfi-T0

Behind the Book | The Paper Boat:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1GoNDFkma0k>

Kids Create: Found Object Collage:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IHbRsAhGCo0>

Kindergarten: Introduction to Sculpture:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4D25zfjOjwE>



Ex. Lesson #1 – “House or Home”