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South High School

Student Population - Predominantly African American (9th grade)

Unifying Theme - Folktales (African American, Chinese, Japanese and Korean)

Ohio State Standards:

1. Analyze how issues may be viewed differently by various cultural groups.
2. Identify the perspectives of diverse cultures when analyzing issues.
3. Explain how the character and meaning of a place reflect a society's economics, politics, social values, and culture.
4. Ohio English Language Arts standards for reading, writing, and speaking.

GRADE ADAPTATION:

The use of folktales as a medium for teaching can be used for any grade level from the elementary to the secondary level; there are suggestions for application to either level later in the unit.

Folktales on both of these levels can be used as a tool for teaching history or values. For example, the use of puppetry is an exciting way to teach a folktale on the elementary level and is exciting on the secondary level where students can design puppets and dramatize folktales they have either read or that they have been told or that they have written.

PURPOSE:

Folktales are stories that give people a means for sharing their culture, history and values. This unit will use the folktales of the African American, Japanese, Chinese and Korean cultures not only as a way of generating interest and pride in the black experience, but to help students gain a greater understanding of asian cultures.

The black experience is rich, and the oral tradition of storytelling helps communicate this wealth. Studying folklore helps us to reach across time and space to arrive at an understanding of ourselves and of our ancestors that would not be found in history books. Instead of being dry, boring and impersonal it is more often uplifting poignant pieces of culture that make discovering our past more meaningful.

Many stories have been told and retold to suit the occasion. In all cultures, whenever the need arises, folktales are used to teach moral lessons, explain the existence and the endurance of men and women, and to fulfill a need for answers to questions which are unanswerable.

There are several purposes for this unit, one is to find a link or similarities between African folktales and Asian folktales as well as the Asian experience. If a link between cultures can be discovered, it will provide a means for generating pride and positive attitudes in African American students and will assist in generating interest in east asian cultures. The African link to the black American folktale will be an example of how a culture has survived time and distance. The second purpose of this unit is to research "living history and folktales." These living histories will be the most difficult but inevitably the priceless "gems" of the unit.

In most cultures several books of folktales and folklore exist and a common theme of collecting the tales appears to run true throughout them.

RATIONALE:

It is generally assumed that black folktales originated in Africa, and since the history of the black American originated in Africa it is probably not far from the truth. However, there are some folklorists who believe that the stories are European in origin.

It is the contention of this unit that there is a link between Africa and Afro-Americans which is not clearly defined; however, it does exist. The method for determining the connection between Africa and America is in particular types of stories. The story, or theme for a story used for this unit will be the mermaid story.

In Dorson's book, *American Negro Folktales*, the use of mermaids in folktales is seen as showing a European influence upon Black folktales. The mermaid tales he used showed the mermaid as being an underwater witch, and as previously stated definitely European, whose use in Black folktales came as a result of slaves being exposed to the tales by their masters.

For the purposes of disputing this theory an interesting event occurred when the "living histories" were collected. An eleven year old Nigerian girl, Jenny Onubu consented to being interviewed for this unit and proceeded to "tell" me stories from Nigeria. Many of Jenny's tales were very bloody; however, there were some interesting ideas in her tales. For example, she tells two stories about mermaids. Jenny's stories might also be accused of being influenced by other factors, therefore another source of observing the African influence on the Black folktale looking for the African mermaid stories is the story of Akim the Mermaid found in the book of Nigerian folktales *Auta the Great and Other Nigerian Folk Stories*.

Jenny's story needed to be transcribed because of the difficulty of understanding her accent. For that reason Jenny's story and several of the other stories collected for this unit will be transcribed for purposes of better understanding the stories and also so that they can be better utilized for the classroom.

The oral tradition for the Black American has its roots in Africa where history is orally recorded. Oral history is an important aspect of black history particularly since black folktales, have an important place in the history of Black Americans:

"A few things in the lives of slaves belonged to them in a more intimate and personal way; these were things which illustrated peculiarly well the blending of African traditions with new experiences in America. For instance, folklore was important to them . . . Some of it preserved legends of their own past; some explained natural phenomena or described a world of the spirits; and some told with symbolism the story of the endless warfare between black and white men."

The tales of Brer Rabbit, Brer Bear and Brer Fox give to the reader a means of understanding how the black man coped under the oppressive "peculiar institution." When students study Black history, they have difficulties relating to how black people survived spiritually under the system of slavery. Folktales can provide them with a means of observing how people who are oppressed survive. It also gives them a positive sense of pride in the mechanics of survival. Folktales help students overcome a sense of helplessness and anger that is a side effect of racism in America. Folk stories provide a model for understanding those values that a people live with and also reflect the social values, the society, the politics, and the culture of the people.

Education is a discipline whose worth and objectives are, at times, ambiguous. Folktales have an interesting way of dealing with this. One of the folktales found in Zora Neale Hurston's *Mules and Men*, is that of a farmer whose child has recently returned from school. The child has come back to the farm and the father wants him to write a letter, in the process of writing this letter the father tells the son that he wants him to write a particular sound that the father makes when he wants his horse to go. The sound cannot be written by the boy who in turn tells the father that he cannot duplicate a particular sound. At that time, the father questions his son as to what the boy has learned in school if he cannot spell the word he wants.⁶ This story helps the reader look into the values of education.

A story collected for this unit implies a similar assumption and amazement about education. An old woman wanted one of her children to write a letter:

"Tell Dr. Teal that I has his money and I goin' to pay him his money. Mattie—tell 'im that I doin' fine and the chirren doin' fine, an we gots no complains. Now Mattie, you write his name on de paper.

"Mama, how do you spell Dr. Teal?"

"Lord God, Mattie, you don' hav to spell 'im, jus write 'im on de paper.

ACTIVITIES:

In order to assist the student in this anthropological search they will adhere to the following procedures.

1. They will read folktales included in the book by Julius Lester, *Black Folktales*.
2. They will read comparative tales that deal with the same story or with a similar theme.

3. They will design questions from the stories that will help them in their own search for folktales. For example, when they read "The High John" tales in *Black Folktales* they will then read another "High John" tale either from Zora Neale Hurston's *Mules and Men* or from Richard Dorson's *American Negro Folktales*.

The primary text for this unit is *Black Folktales* by Julius Lester. This particular book was chosen because of its simplicity, availability and its style. All of these factors make this book accessible to the student. *Black Folktales* is organized with particular regard to origins, human relationships, love, heroes and people. Within these themes there are several other books of folktales and folktales themselves which deal with these themes.

In the Origins section Lester gives four tales "How God Made Butterflies," "Why Apes Look Like People," "Why Men Have to Work," and "How the Snake Got Its Rattles." These tales can be compared with other tales from other places which share a similar theme. Lester's tale of "Why Men Have to Work" can be read with Hurston's "Why the Black Woman Works So Hard."

In Lester's tale, men work so hard because long ago everything was given to man. If he was hungry he only needed to reach up and there was a piece of sky for him to eat. When the sky became tired of this it moved out of the man's reach so that he had to work to eat.

Hurston's tale says that a black woman was ordered by her master to collect a box that had been placed by God in the middle of the road for thousands of years, and when she opened the box, the only thing she found inside was hard work and that is why she works so hard today.

Explanations providing reasons for men and women working is also the kind of tale a student should be able to collect on his/her own. The question that the student could ask in a student questionnaire would be, "Why do people work?" The question could also be asked, "Do you know a story about why people work or how they work?" In this way they might come up with an interesting tale to be used in class.

The next tale on the origins of men and women in the Lester book explains why men and women look like they do. Lester's book compares man's appearance to that of an ape. Hurston's comparable tale explains, "Why Negroes are black."⁹

Finding correlations between *Black Folktales* and tales by other folklorists will be an important activity for the class. In this case, students may ask the question, "Why do black people look like they do?" They will perhaps come up with a folksy explanation from family or friends which they can collect.

The tale, "Keep on Steppin'" which is found in *Black Folktales* is just about the same tale as "Remember Youse A Nigger," which is found in the Hurston book.¹⁰ There is a great moral lesson to be learned. The lesson and the example are very clear. The kind of tale might prompt a student to make inquiries about tales which deal with strong people who continue on in spite of the adversities they encounter. The question might be posed, "Tell me something about a strong person?"

Using this very simple form of survey allows the student to acquire some expertise at asking questions, it also provides them with a general idea of what they are looking for before they begin.

This method of research for students was developed after several attempts to collect folktales. The method is quite simple because students will undoubtedly meet some difficulty in getting the tales if they don't make sure that they are looking for specific things. Even though they might discover something quite different from what they expected to find.

Folktales can be educational as well as enlightening and exciting way for students/teachers to learn and grow.

This unit contains an audio tape of several black folktales that were shared by several people from the New Haven area, a Nigerian eleven year old girl, and several other folktales. These folktales can be used in conjunction with teaching this unit. A few tales have been transcribed so that they can be understood when the tapes are used.

1. Listen to the tape on Mermaids as told by Jenny Onuba.
2. Read the transcript of Jenny's Mermaid tale.
3. Read the tale on mermaids from the Dorson book.

4. Read the tale on "Akim the Mermaid," from Auta the Giant Killer.

Notes The tales have been transcribed for two reasons. The first reason is to assist the listener in understanding what is being said on the tape. All of the tales are told in a "voice" that adds the flavor of the culture and should not be changed for academic purposes, but simply understood. "Voice" is an important element of the folktales because it lends itself to the colloquialisms and tone of a specific area. (Because of the "voice" used on the tape some of the words needed to be explained (but not changed) on the tape.)

The second reason for transcribing the tape is so that when they are used in the classroom the teacher may find new methods along with the methods suggested in this unit for teaching folktales.

Worksheet

1. Name of folktales:
2. Source of the tale (primary source or secondary source). Describes:
3. Theme (Is there a moral or what idea does the tale deal with?):
4. Compare the three folktales required to be read. (Remember to use the name of the tale, its source and theme.):

Lesson II - Objectives To find a practical use for the folktales to be studied.

1. Make a simple puppet or junk puppet.
2. Read the folktale.
3. Rewrite the folktale using dialogue.
4. Use the puppets to dramatize the dialogue.

Lesson III

1. Students are to prepare a list of questions that can be used in a search for folktales (family and friends would be the source).
2. Sample questions" a. Who did you look up to when you were my age?
b. Did you have a favorite person who told you stories?
c. What kind of stories did they tell you?

d. Do you remember one of those stories?

These questions should be prepared as a group project after they have read and listened to several folktales.

Lesson IV

Objectives Understand that folktales have themes and ideas that change as time passes and as they are told and retold.

Activities

1. Listen to one of the tales on the tape.
2. Each student is to retell the story changing one idea as it is told around the room. This exercise should be recorded as each student retells the story.

Or

1. One student is told the folktale separate from the group. The tale is then whispered by each student to another student. When the last student hears the tale it is to be told out loud. This is an excellent way of helping students to understand how tales change from person to person.

Lesson V

Objectives The purpose of this lesson is to understand what "voice" is. This should be used in conjunction with the audio tape.

Activities

1. Begin discussing the places that students were born or where their parents were born. List these places on the blackboard.
2. Talk about accents that different people from different places have. For instance, people from Japan say some words differently from people in China. Use a word like car (cah), or far (fah). Give more examples, perhaps of a person who is from Brooklyn (again give examples of what some words might sound like). Other places or accents that can be mentioned would be California—Valley girls, Jamaican, or the South.
3. Stress that you can tell where people come from by the way they speak and the words they use—give examples: sub (sandwich), Connecticut; hoagie (sandwich), Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, etc.
4. Ask students for words that are used in one place that have a different meaning in another place.
5. Begin discussing the places that students are from and where their parents are from. Do the people in that place speak differently from the people in this place? Define what “voice” is.
6. Describe the “voice” used in the tape.
7. Listen to the tape—choose any tale.
8. Give students transcripts of the tape after they have listened to it first. Do each tale individually.

Transcripts

Cassette recorded by Jenny Onobu, of Nigeria. (Ages almost eleven years old. Language (native): Idoma). Recorded at the Educational Institute for Learning and Research, 65 East 96th Street, New York, New York, June 2 and 6, 1983.

Jenny: In Nigeria one man is my daddy's friend. That man went to that place in the river. I always go there too. But one day the lady, the man, I'm sorry I say the lady. The man saw a mermaid coming out. The man saw the mermaid and then, but the man is (soldier ? . . .) and the man took the (?) . . . off the mermaid.

In one part of Nigeria called Makodi. I been to there two times. They make food, call that food AKLA (ochra?). This food, the time and one day the mermaid saw the ladies making this food. Another time and the mermaid come out of the river and dress herself like a lady who is making . . . saw Akla . . . they cut. And they say this lady, you know how to make this food very well. And the people think is a human, but is mermaid.

And one day, one man come out and one man just come out from the car and says “I want to buy this Akla.” And the mermaid say, “Is finished.” And the man started fighting with the mermaid and the man . . . (saw in the lady's dress??). “This lady is not a lady—is a mermaid.” And if the time . . . they throw the mermaid in the river. And the man who beat the mermaid is sleeping and the mermaid come to the man's bed, take the knife and cut the man's neck. And the lady, (the man's wife) come and start shouting. And the people think the lady kill the husband and they kill the lady back. End of mermaid story.

I want to tell you another one.

One time I went to swim with my friend Viki and my friend Esta and my sister's daughter Ada. We went to there to wash our clothes and swim. And I'm washing my clothes and my clothes started running away. But I'm asking my friends . . . the clothes I'm washing. My friend say she don't worry. But look at the clothes. I'm trying to cry and my friend say, “Look the clothes is running away.” I say, “But who trade(?) there? She don't know. My friend hold my leg. I look. I look and haven't see anyone. But I look inside and I see the real mermaid f . . . (?). I started shouting after the mermaid disappeared.

Cassette recorded by Margaret Staggars, on June 30th, 1983. Mrs. Staggars was born and raised in Plantersville, South Carolina, and recorded stories here that she remembers from her childhood. (The remainder of Margaret Staggars' transcript can be obtained, by request, from the Yale—New Haven Teacher's Institute office.)

Margret?

Yes Mam.

Is that you gal?

Yes Mam.

Come here momen (moment). You goin' to the village?

Yes Mam.

I want to send wid (with) you for sumpin' (something). I want sumpin' from that village so bad. I been a wish and wish that someone come by hyeah (here) goin' to the village. Come heah (here) momen! Get me a nickle wud (worth) of sausage, and a nickle wud of cheese. Get me a bun. And a let me see, what else I wanna (want to) send for. I think I want a bottle of dope (soda), and a ain' anudder (another) nickle in dey (there) ane (any)? Get me a piece of cheese and you take dat udder (other) nickle. Oh, thank you God, thank you Jesus.

That you gal? Oh gal, I too glad to see you dis mornin'.

Sister Margret home?

Yes Mam.

What you do de (there) now?

I leave her makin' some bread crust.

Oh, I mean to call Sister Margret yesterday cause I had a message for her and I forgot all about that woman dis mornin! Oh, I got to get over dere (there) and talk to that woman dis mornin!

Hey Julia. How you dis mornin' gal?

Oh, I ain't coin' too good Sarah. I had this headache on top of me that bothered me so bad.

Oh, my God hav mercy I ain' doin' too good myself, but I yah (here). I de yah (be here). You know I thank God for this thing today cause I de yah. Cause I could a been gon (gone) you know. Too much a people a wait for dis day but dey gon. Too much a people a wisht they had been here today but de(they) gon. But you hav to thank God. You ain got nothin' but a head on you to bother you. God, I got too much a ache and pain sometime I don't know where to put myself.

Eva dere?

Yes, Sarah, Eva in yah (here).

Oh God, come here Eva. Gal, I too glad to see you dis mornin'. I want you to write a letter fo me.

Alright, mam, I'll be right out wid my paper and my pencil.

Eva, I wan you to write a letter for to Doctor Teal for me dis mownin'. You tell Doctor Teal I say I'm comin' down dere and I'm gonna bring dat money. And tell Doctor Teal I say I woulda been don dey (down there) but I just didin' had the money. Tell Doctor Teal he don' hav ta worry bout me cause soon as I get dat money I'm gonna put dat money in him hand.

How do you spell Doctor Teal?

Oh God, Eva—you ain hav to spell 'im just put 'im on dat paper.

Hey Sister Mary, how you dis mawnin' (morning) gal?

I ain' feel too good dis mawnin'. Clara been sick all night. I been up all las night.

Oh, das too bad Sister Mary. Clara sick and you ain had nothin' to giv Clara?

Yeah, Sister Lena, I giv Clara everthing I coulda find to give Clara. But Clara jus didin' feel good las night and de gal wooden (wouldn't) say nothin'. I ain know what wrong wid de gal, but it be too sick las night.

So how Floy come along Sister Lena?

Well, Floy de dere (be here), Floy de dere. Still in dere. I don' know you know. Dem chillun (children) don' talk to

you no more you know? Dey jus a sit dere, but I know Flora ain' feel good. Cause when Flora don eat I know Floy ain' feel good. You see Floy got dat head on top a him and dat head be botherin' him all de time. You know? An I don't know what it is but de doctor say it sumpin' dey can't do no good wid, you know. But I try to giv Floy everythin' I can to give Floy to try to help Floy to feel better. But Floy dis a sit dere.

Materials:

Black folktales
tapes
transcripts
Art supplies for puppets

Japanese Lesson Plans

In this lesson plan students learn about Japanese culture through folk literature, create a kamishibai (paper play), and put on a puppet show.

The objectives if this lesson plan are:

To discover some aspects of Japanese culture through folk literature
To recognize that some themes of folktales are universal
To reinforce sequencing skills through kamishibai, a storytelling prop
To give the students the opportunity to dramatize a folktale through puppetry

Famous Person: Yushiko Uchida

Background:

Yushiko Uchida (oo-chee-da) was born into a family of two girls November 24, 1921 in Alameda, California. Yushiko and Keiko, her older sister, had a great childhood. Yushiko's parents grew up in Japan and moved to Alameda, California before their children were born. When Yushiko was at a young age the family moved to Berkeley, California where she grew up. Yushiko's father was a businessman, and Yushiko's mother loved reading books and poetry. They both were very patient and caring people. Their small family lived in a 3 bedroom house which was rare for a Japanese family living in California.

When Yushiko was 10 years old she begged her mom for a puppy. Five months later Brownie came into their home. Yushiko loved Brownie and recorded everything he did in a journal. Brownie was only ten months old when he got struck by a moving vehicle. They rushed him to the vet, but they couldn't save him. This devastated Yushiko. She realized that in her journal she had recorded all about Brownie's short life, and this made her feel more calm. At this time Yushiko found out what writing was all about, and from this time on having a journal and writing down experiences would be a constant part of Yushiko's life.

When Yushiko was younger and playing with her friends she didn't realize she looked different. Yushiko was born in America, said the Pledge of Allegiance, and loved her country as much as anyone, but soon found out there was a difference between herself and others. She found out her name sounded different and was hard for people, particularly teachers, to pronounce. As she grew up she saw fewer and fewer doors opening because of her Japanese appearance. Her parents had taught Yushiko loyalty, self-discipline, love, and respect for others, and Yushiko honored these Japanese values.

When Yushiko began the 7th grade she attended a white dominated school. Yushiko was exceptionally nervous about going to a school where she would be looked at and possibly treated as someone who didn't belong with the other students. Day after day she would go to school and act unnoticed until one day Yushiko quietly sat down next to an American classmate who turned and asked her why she never talked to anyone. Yushiko was surprised and soon made all sorts of close friends that she kept for many years. At the end of high school Yushiko saw her friends moving in different directions that didn't involve Yushiko. This made Yushiko more intent about moving on from high school, so she worked extra hard to graduate in two and one-half years. She became a 16 year old freshman at the University of California. Yushiko found her place and finally felt included. Her journal was full of many great experiences with her new friends and studying at the university. Finally, Yushiko was a senior and ready to graduate. She was happier than she had ever been, but her happiness came to a sudden halt. On Sunday December 7, 1941 Japan bombed Pearl Harbor. Soon after this tragic bombing occurred the U.S. found every Japanese man who held leadership in the community and arrested them. They

took Yushiko's father with the misconception that he was involved with the bombing. They were holding him in an Immigration Detention Quarters located in San Francisco. Yushiko, Keiko, and their mother were alone. The U.S. government only allowed them \$100.00 a month to live on, they confiscated all their keys, and they had to observe an 8:00 PM curfew. All radios, cameras, binoculars, and firearms were taken, and Yushiko's family was given the number 13453 by which they would be known. Yushiko, an American citizen, never quite understood how their own country could turn against them so quickly. It seemed, because of their background, they were no longer American citizens, but still Yushiko took her final tests and graduated from the university.

It wasn't too long until all Japanese were given evacuation orders. Yushiko and her family had to leave many things behind not knowing if they would ever come back. Their move was to a local racetrack where the stalls were made into living quarters. The stalls had hay everywhere, there were only three cots to sleep on, no privacy from their neighbors, public restrooms, and the dinner line was miles long only to get barely anything. Life had suddenly changed for Yushiko. After a few weeks of living in a stall things started to look up. One day she got word that her father would be rejoining them shortly, and a few days later he was reunited with them. There were also many professionals who were stationed in the camp and soon a school was formed. Yushiko became an elementary school teacher to the young children in the camp. There was not much in supplies, but school gave the children and Yushiko security. A short time after, her family was relocated to another concentration camp in Topaz located in Central Utah.

This camp was different than the stalls Yushiko was used to. It was a one-mile square area surrounded by a barbed wire fence and had a guard tower at every corner. In the center was a mess hall, a latrine-washroom with no seats, and a laundry barrack with no water. In Topaz the temperature would get to freezing or below at night, and during the day hit record highs. Often during the day dust storms would arise.

It was fortunate that schools were also formed in Topaz and Yushiko again had the opportunity to teach second grade in the elementary school. However, the school had no tables or chairs, no insulation, there was a hole in the roof, and no source of heat. Sometimes the classrooms got so cold they had to send the students home until the heat was fixed. At this time Yushiko learned important skills and much of her time was spent writing in her journal.

After a year Yushiko was given the opportunity to become free. Both Yushiko and Keiko were encouraged by their parents to get on with their lives. Many papers had to be filled out and they had to get clearance from the U.S. Government.

Finally, in the spring Yushiko and Keiko received the notice they were free. Yushiko had been accepted to the graduate courses in the Education Department at Smith's College in Brooklyn, New York, and plans were made to stay with an old friend. Keiko also would be going to school in the same area so Yushiko's life long friend and sister would not be separated.

As they drove off Yushiko remembered watching her parents become little specks until they weren't seen. This was hard for Yushiko because they had been so much apart of her life, but she was excited about what the new future would bring.

Yushiko graduated from Smith's College and became a teacher for a few years. She started her life as an author and focused her work toward the younger generation. Yushiko realized that more Japanese was planted in her than she thought. She wrote many Japanese folktale and other stories to help Americans understand more about Japanese culture and to give the Japanese a sense of continuity and knowledge of their own remarkable history. In her own words this is what Yushiko wanted,

"I hope the young people who read these books will dare to have big dreams. I also hope they will learn to see Japanese Americans not in the usual stereotypic way, but as fellow human beings. For although it is important for each of us to cherish our own special heritage, I believe, above everything else, we must all celebrate our common humanity." (Uchida, p.132,1991)

Materials:

- *The Bracelet by Yushiko Uchida
- *4 poster boards
- *readers theaters

Objectives:

1. Students will be able to describe what Japanese culture is like.
2. Students will be able to identify how the Japanese culture influenced Yushiko Uchida's life.
3. Students will be able to identify why freedom is important to them.
4. The students will read different types of folk tales and be able to develop a folktale of their own.
5. The students will perform reader's theater to the folk tales Yushiko Uchida has published.
6. The students will identify ways they can celebrate common humanity by finding out where their family's roots come from.

Activities:

1. Literature. Start out by reading *The Bracelet* (Uchida, Yushiko, [1993]. *The Bracelet*. New York, NY: Philomel Books). This is a story of Yushiko's life, but through different characters. It tells of when she and her family were taken to the concentration camp. It portrays her feelings of leaving, arriving at the camp, family, and her friends. It's an excellent story to begin discussing Japanese culture and Yushiko's life.

2. Essential Questions:

After reading the book conduct a guided discussion asking questions such as:

How would you feel if their freedom was taken away?

What are some things we can do because we are free?

Why is freedom important to us?

What does freedom mean to you as a student going to school?

3. Carousel Brainstorm. To begin talking about Japanese culture conduct a pre-assessment by hanging four blank poster papers in four different sections of the room with the following titles on them: clothing, food, industry, and values. Break up the students into four groups and have them take a few minutes at each paper and write down all they know about the Japanese culture. (This will lead to the next activity, the guided discussion.)

4 Essential Questions:

When they have completed activity 3 keep them in their same groups and have a guided discussion.

What are some differences between Japan and the U.S.?

How it would be like to be American living in Japan?

How do you think Yushiko felt looking like a foreigner, but living in America?

How do you think the values that she was taught helped her during her life?

Summarize by asking students how the Japanese culture influenced Yushiko Uchida's life.

5. Reader's Theater. Yushiko told and retold many folktales. Discuss what a folktale is. Divide the students up into three groups to perform for the class a folktale Yushiko wrote. (Four reader's theaters are provided in the appendix.) Discuss with the class the similarities of the three folk tales performed. Name some African American folktales they know of and tell them to create a folktale in their journals.

6. Guest Speaker. Invite a Japanese-American or someone who is from a different country into your classroom to talk about living in America and having different roots. Have the speaker talk about how he/she is treated and how it makes the speaker feel.

Discuss diversity among all the students in the classroom (what makes each person unique, characteristics, talents, likes, dislikes, etc.). Teach each student that we all have different attributes that make up our class and all these differences are what makes us special.

7. Ask the students to go home and find out their own family's background. Invite them to share with the class members something that would explain their family's heritage. This may include a heirloom that has been in the family, a story of an old family member, an experience that has happened to them or someone in their family, etc. The sharing can take place in front of the class or in small groups. Provide a section in the room (a table, wall, etc) to display what the children have brought in. Discuss ways common humanity is shown by the different types of backgrounds.

Assessment:

1-2. Homework, events the students have written down that show their freedom.

3-4. Papers in the four sections of the rooms and their guided discussion.

5. Performing the reader's theater and writing their own folktale in their journals.
6. Informal assessment of guest speaker through discussion.
7. The students will share, in a group or with the whole class, and display what they have learned about their family's.

Korean Folktale Lesson Plans

Objectives:

1. Read about and discuss popular adages, folktales and proverbs from Korean culture.
2. Identify common characteristics between Korean and American folktales and proverbs
3. Illustrate common characteristics between Korean and American adages, folktales and proverbs.
4. Have students write their own creative African American versions of ideas taken from Korean folktales.

Materials:

Korean folktales.
Paper, pens, pencils

Background: Since folktales tell us a lot about values, beliefs and culture, Koreans have used many colorful descriptions and terms to refer to their own culture. For example, they call their country a "prawn whose back has been damaged in battles between whales." They also call their homeland "The Land of the Morning Calm (Freshness) and as "The Hermit Kingdom." Throughout Korea's long unique history, several folktales have come up that deal with values and truths unique to their culture. A comparison of these values to African American values, as well as Chinese and Japanese values, will help students better appreciate similarities and common bonds with people from a seemingly different background.

Activities

1. Verbally share a well-known Korean proverb, such as "Fight Heat with Heat."
2. Display this short, our word proverb on an overhead transparency, the blackboard or give each student a copy.
3. Have students write their own translation of what they think this old proverb means.
4. Share the true meaning with students which is that Koreans eat a bubbling hot soup, that is believed to be an effective panacea to protect against physical weakness during the hottest season of the year. Compare this explanation with that of the student's translations.
5. Continue sharing folktales and proverbs from various sources while sharing the universal meaning.
6. Students can create drawings illustrating their interpretations of Korean folktales.
7. Have students write their own imaginative folktale or proverb based on common African American concepts and Korean concepts.

Assessment

Students can be assessed based on the quality of their written and art work. Grammar, punctuation and spelling along with creative expression can also be assessed.

Chinese Folktale Lesson Plans

Write Your Own Folk or Fairy Tale

In this activity, students write their own folk or fairy tale.

Materials

assorted folk and fairy tales

6 Chinese folktales (students should research these for themselves)

planning papers or graphic organizers

white drawing paper

charts

chart paper

markers, pens, pencils

Procedure

Students should download six Chinese folktales. In groups they can discuss the moral or lesson to be learned in each tale. Discuss and chart the differences between folk (the traditional beliefs, practices, lessons, legends and tales of a culture or of a people passed down orally through stories) and fairy (a fanciful and imaginary story about people, fairies, animals or things who have magical powers) tales. Teachers can copy and distribute the story writing planning papers or graphic organizers. Explain to students that they will draft their own folk or fairy tale. Have them refer to the class chart to be sure to include the elements of the kind of tale they are writing.

Follow Up, Extensions and Modifications

When students finish the first draft of their writing, assign partners to peer edit or check for errors. Give the student checkers specific things to edit for such as: check for capitals, periods, commas, complete sentences and correct spelling. Have younger students retell a famous folk or fairy tale in their own words. Have the students do illustrations, stand up characters or dioramas for their tale. Turn the tales into a book or big book. Some students may wish to tape their tale. Their tape and an illustration can be put in the listening center. Give students instruction in using the tape player and with reading with expression or older "reading buddies" could help the student with the taping. Students can make a list of the folk and fairy tales they have read. Some students can make a chart or Venn diagram of the characteristics of folk and fairy tales. The 6 Chinese stories selected for this lesson are billed as folk tales but some contain magic and fairies. This discovery by the students should lead to an interesting discussion and perhaps a working definition by the class of what constitutes folk and fairy tales. The teacher or competent reader can read selected stories and have others guess if they are folk or fairy tales. Read folk and fairy tales from different cultures and compare them. Make puppets characters from the tales and put the tale on as a puppet show. Older students can choose a folk tale and rewrite it and update it to the present day. An example of this might be Cinderella arriving at the ball in a stretch limousine instead of the pumpkin coach, or Jack flying to the Giant's home in a helicopter or spaceship instead of climbing the bean stalk.

Name _____ Date _____

Choose the setting or make up one of your own.

The story takes place in:

the forest
the jungle
the ocean
the mountains
a cave
an island
a castle

Protagonists/characters can be any of the following:

a girl
a boy
a mother
a father
brothers
sisters

witch
giant
monster
king
an animal

The problem can be one of the following or they can make up one of their own:

the witch casts a spell
the monster guards a treasure
the king is kidnapped
the girl finds a magic stone
the boy discovers a wishing well

What happens first in your story? (Introduction)

What happens next?

How does it end?

Is there a lesson or moral to your story? Does a character learn something useful?

Now use your notes to begin your story draft on lined paper. Some good beginnings to choose from are:

Once upon a time...
A long, long time ago...
Deep, deep in the forest...
There once lived...
High up in the castle tower...

Choose a title for your story and write it here.

Students can then use "voice to present their folktales to the class.

Culminating Activity

Working in groups of 4 or 5 students should produce a word and pictorial chart illustrating the differences and similarities of all four cultures presented (African American, Chinese, Japanese and Korean. Together they should write and produce a folktale in the form of a skit. Each group will present their skit to the class. Rubrics should be used to assess the visual, the written product and the skits of each group