**Student Stories**

English Language Arts, Social Studies, Kindergarten

By Amanda Slade

**Rationale**

Kindergarten students can typically generate more ideas orally than they are able to record in a written or drawn form. A lot can be learned about the structure of story by orally sharing personal stories with others.

This lesson is designed to take place after a foundation in understanding about the structure and uniqueness of family is already in place. It assumes that this lesson is not the first time students have been asked to tell stories orally.

The environment for learning contributes to this lesson. By using natural materials and provocations for story telling students are more connected to the outside environment and sense of place. Materials can be used in an outdoor setting or outdoor materials can be brought inside.

By sharing these stories, individuals gain an increased sense of belonging and self-expression. Children build, play and make their stories come alive with objects that represent characters and events. Imagination is emphasized; a pinecone represents mom or a twig is a little brother.

This lesson emphasizes the First Peoples Principles of Learning that state, ‘learning is embedded in memory, history and story’. Students develop a rich understanding of story over time by sharing their personal experiences. Within their stories, ideas about about family and personal identity are represented and explored.

By sharing experiences through story with others, students learn more about themselves, their community of learners, and elements of a story.

A sense of belonging and understanding of others is fostered through self-expression. Building belonging and acceptance fosters a safe learning environment where students open themselves up to further learning.

The Kindergartener’s development is supported through the playful nature of telling and re-telling of personal stories, and the use of objects from nature. Through personal perspectives and familiarity of materials students develop a more complex understanding of self and family through symbolic play.

**The Learning Experience**

Let the students know we are sharing stories about our families. Students listen to a personal story modelled by an Elder who is invited to share, or by the teacher. Using the materials provided, the story teller manipulates the materials to represent the characters, events and setting of the story. The story can be simple but it should be personal and involve family. The students observe the materials being manipulated as part of the oral story telling. The story teller expresses why the story is important to them.

Ask the students to think of a story that they carry with them about their own family. Remind them that the story can be as simple as getting ready for bedtime, going to soccer practice, or visiting relatives. It can be about a tradition or celebration such as a birthday. Get students to close their eyes and think about a story that involves family. Get them to think about what happens in their story and where the story takes place. Was it an exciting, happy, or sad time?

Discuss the materials available to tell their story. These materials could be collected natural materials provided by the teacher or those the students find on the forest floor. Ask students to give a “thumbs up” when they have an idea for a story they could tell about their family.

Have students practice creating a story on their own, then telling and retelling it to others.

Regroup as a class and ask if anyone feels ready to share their story with the others. As a group, ask the students to generate ideas about the characteristics of a storyteller, and those of the listeners. Record these ideas as an anchor chart that will be revisited over time.

When students feel ready to share their story, have them partner with another student to tell the story. If students need more time developing their story they return to practice.

**Potential guiding questions:**

* Why might our stories all be different?
* Are there some things that will be the same?
* Why is it important to share our stories?

**Big Ideas** – What students will understand:

**Social Studies:**

* Stories and traditions about ourselves and our families reflect who we are and where we are from.

**English Language Arts:**

* Everyone has a unique story to share.

**Curricular Competencies** – What students will do:

**English Language Arts:**

* Explore oral storytelling processes
* Create stories and other text to deepen awareness of self, family and community

**Social Studies:**

* Explain the significance of personal or local events, objects, people or places

**Content** – What students will know:

**English Language Arts:**

* Structure of story
* Oral Language strategies

**Social Studies:**

* Personal and family history and traditions
* Ways in which individuals and families differ and are the same

**Core Competencies**

* **Positive Personal and Cultural Identity** – Relationships and Cultural Context
* **Communication** – Explain/Recount and reflect on experiences and accomplishments

**Possible Evaluation:**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Emerging** | **Developing** | **Independently Applying** |
| Student can begin to share a story from memory and will orally communicate it to himself or others.  Story may vary in characters, setting or events each time it is told.  Student uses some nature materials to manipulate to represent the story. | Student is able to share a personal story of his family from memory orally with others.  Over time, the story shows some consistency, however characters and events can sometimes vary.  With some prompting the student is able to say why the story shared is unique or important to him. | Student is able to consistently share an oral story of his family using materials from nature.  The story demonstrates characters, events and setting to be fairly consistent over time.  The student is able to express why this story is unique or important to him. |

**Additional Tips for Teachers**

* Take an audio recording of the child story telling over time.
* Filming the child will help create an artifact as evidence that learning develops over time and as a documentation script or portfolio piece can be created as a result.
* Foster the Kindergarteners natural willingness and interest in story telling.
* Encourage and coach students to add detail as they share their personal stories with you.