

Assessing Characteristics of Meaningful Learning

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Lesson Plan Name: Exploring Cultures through Folktales

Lesson Plan Grade Levels: K-5

Lesson Plan URL: <https://www.intel.com/content/dam/www/public/us/en/zip/exploring-cultures-through-folktales-hi.pdf>

Lesson Plan Description:

“Exploring Cultures through Folktales” is two-lesson unit aimed at analyzing how folktales, as well as the stories we tell personally, reflect the culture that they come from. Elementary-aged students explore stories that they are familiar with, in this case *Little Red Riding Hood*, and ultimately leverage their new understanding of the cultural effects on narration to develop their own digital version of the folktale to share with others.

Students first activate their own background knowledge through a discussion on the fundamentals (characters, plot, etc.) of *Little Red Riding Hood*. They also have opportunities to take ownership of the learning by discussing what versions of the story that they have heard personally. Following this, students compare three versions of the folktale from different cultures and collect data via a digital Venn diagram tool. With this data in hand, students then research the cultures that the folktale came from, trying to find ways in which that culture’s heritage is evident in the narrative and characters.

Students then pivot to creating their own re-telling of the folktale, personalizing the locations and characters to fit their own lives and surroundings. Within small groups, students then create a digital presentation of their story using animation tools/programs, such as Wideo, and then record voice-overs for the characters. Lastly, they upload their final product to Youtube, so that students and families can view and comment.

Assessment is informal throughout the work in the unit, but culminates in a summative project, which is graded using a rubric.

Categorical ratings:

Assessing Active Learning

Factor	Rating high-medium-low	Evidence Supporting Rating
Learner interaction with real-world objects	High	Throughout the unit, students directly interact with real-world objects. They explore and analyze three distinct cultural products in the form of different stories. Moreover, they are tasked with collecting

		photos and characters from their own neighborhoods in the creation of their digital folktales.
Observation and reflection	High	The students' exploration of other cultures (and their effects on a narrative) through the study of the three versions of <i>Little Red Riding Hood</i> display high levels of critical observation. Active and purposeful reflection is particularly clear as students are required to reflect on how the folktale would take place in their own neighborhood, before bringing that vision to life in their projects.
Learner interactions	High	Students interact with both traditional (text) and newer media (digital video/images) narratives, and they explore both of these at a deep and critical level through textual analysis (of the three versions of the tale) and in creating their digital folktale. In the folktale, they manipulate and create their own work.
Tool use	Medium/High	Using Wideo or iMovie, students tool use is nearly unlimited in creating their stories. The unit plan also suggests drafting characters on paper and scanning them into their digital stories for added customization. However, students can also stick to simpler processes if they choose, hence the "medium" co-rating.

Assessing Constructive Learning

Factor	Rating high-medium-low	Evidence Supporting Rating
Dissonance/Puzzling	Medium	<p>While structured discussion and questioning is utilized at the beginning of the unit (ex: what happens in the folktale? Who are the characters?), the playing field opens on the second day of the unit as students create their own digital stories. There is a jarring amount of freedom for students to think through their own narrative issues and find solutions.</p> <p>Though the second half of the unit</p>

		provides this space, the first half lacks it. Instead of spending time with the review of <i>Little Red Riding Hood</i> , teachers could allow students to jump right into the different versions of the story and allow them to riddle out the reason behind the differences.
Constructing mental models and making meaning	Medium	<p>Important here is the students' opportunity to visualize and plan for their digital re-telling of the folktale. This involves leveraging newly acquired understandings/meanings and mental models to storyboard for their project.</p> <p>The final project is already strong in its current form, but it might help to allow some students to create a totally new version based on a newly researched culture.</p>

Assessing Intentional Learning

Factor	Rating high-medium-low	Evidence Supporting Rating
Goal directedness	Medium/High	<p>Assuming learning objectives are visible to students from the onset, it is very clear that they will ultimately be developing their own digital versions of a folktale. Moreover, every activity is goal-oriented in teaching them a skill that facilitates this end-goal.</p> <p>This could be made clearer to the students if the teacher shares the project outline with them earlier, perhaps following the introductory discussion on the components of the folktale.</p>
Setting own goals	Low/Medium	<p>While the goals are effective, the teacher has set nearly all of them in advance. As stands, students only have the opportunity to set their own smaller goals in the storyboarding process for their projects.</p> <p>Too much freedom for student selection takes away from the effective scaffolding already in the unit, but allowing the</p>

		students more selection with the cultures they research might be empowering. It would also be helpful to have students give reasoning for the research by creating their own list of objectives that they need to accomplish to be able to have success in their final project.
Regulating own learning	Medium	<p>Once more, the beginning of the unit funnels students into lanes, which require the teacher to aid students in their learning, while the second half is almost entirely student-regulated.</p> <p>Again, students might benefit from more stake in articulating their own goals in the first stages of the unit.</p>
Learning how to learn	Medium	Students are presented with a process for learning the required background knowledge by researching other versions of <i>Little Red Riding Hood</i> , but this could be strengthened by allowing more student voice in the planning process. Lead them with questions, like: What could we do to find out more?
Articulation of goals as focus of activity	High	Though student input is lacking, the goals themselves are made clear from the onset. The end-goal of creating a digital folktale is clear to the students, as well as the reasons/goals behind each step of the unit.
Technology use in support of learning goals	High	This unit would not be the same without technology. It fundamentally changes what is learned and how this happens. Students conduct research using their own devices, build Venn diagrams using an online app, and create videos, which utilize a wide span of animation and development tools.

Assessing Authentic Learning

Factor	Rating high-medium-low	Evidence Supporting Rating
Complexity	High	Given that this unit is geared towards elementary students, it sets considerably high, yet totally-achievable, expectations

		in place. Furthermore, these goals and expectations require students to employ contextually-relevant strategies of thinking that explore real human topics, as well as what makes our cultures what/how they are. Students actively work with real-world context, which expands outside of the curriculum of the English classroom.
Higher-order thinking	High	Examining the three processes of Bloom's higher order thinking, all are present. Students <i>analyze</i> the products of other cultures, <i>evaluate</i> how their own culture affects storytelling, and <i>create</i> their own digital story.
Recognizing problems	Low	Problems are not explicitly stated or thematized in this unit. There is no real-world problem that requires solving, as students are tasked with creating something purely exploratory. However, that does not mean problems do not or cannot play a role. Problems will arise in the digital design process and in the narrative itself. Teachers could allow student groups the time to brainstorm what problems they might face, and then share these as a class, while determining a toolkit of solutions.
"Right answers"	High	There are almost no yes/no-questions in the brainstorming or research activities in the first half of the unit. All questioning is designed to develop cognitive connections with open-ended responses. Though these responses can be guided, all answers are beneficial to the learning process. Particularly when students develop their own digital stories, there are myriad approaches.

Assessing Collaborative Learning

Factor	Rating high-medium-low	Evidence Supporting Rating
Interaction among learners	High	Following the current structure of the unit, almost all activities are collaborative and communal. There are multiple

		<p>discussion-based activities that ultimately prepare students for a group project.</p> <p>In fact, the structure is so team-based, it would be difficult for a student who was absent to catch up and still get the full effect of the lessons.</p>
Interaction with people outside of school	Medium	<p>The project requires students to explore their own neighborhoods to gather photos, or to draw these. It also allots class time to create the digital project.</p> <p>It might be beneficial to allow more time for the project, and task students with meeting up to gather real photos, or even video, of their communities to use in the stories.</p>
Social negotiation	High	<p>As the digital folktale project is open-ended and collaborative, students must work together to identify the key elements, plan for the story and video, and implement strategies to effectively create their own narrative. Every step of the process requires group negotiation of plans, problems, and solutions.</p>
Acceptance and distribution of roles and responsibility	High	<p>To successfully create their digital folktales, students must accomplish a considerable amount of work in a relatively small amount of time. To make this work, students must decide who will do what. Jobs include: drawing, finding background images, editing, storyboarding, and performing voice-overs.</p>