

Learning about the Community Experience: Building Literacy in the Elementary Classroom through the Pedagogical Strategy of Storytelling 2014-2015

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In this unit, scholars will bring Native American myths and legends to life through storytelling and play. Scholars will begin the unit by building their background knowledge of Native American history and culture along with oral tradition from the Native American culture. Students will read the novel The Sign of the Beaver to learn about the Native American culture and their sense of community. They will use mentor texts to compare and contrast, one of which is a Native American Cinderella story. In the Native American culture, many believed stories would be lost because they were not being documented. Writing in early Native American culture was obsolete since storytelling was how stories were shared. There was a push to get these stories documented so they would not be lost forever. This curriculum unit will give strategies, including storytelling, which builds literacy. Using storytelling in the classroom also helps with literacy development and ultimately with helping to address any literacy deficiencies in the classroom. "That's what storytellers do. We restore order with imagination. We instill hope again and again," stated Tom Hanks as Walt Disney. The activities scholars will participate in throughout this novel will serve as activating strategies and get them excited about the research they will embark upon on Native American history. Scholars will use their expressive side by participating in writing and storytelling activities to show the true essence of the myth and or legend they are performing. Scholars will also make connections to their own communities and the Native American community. Throughout the readings and mentor texts scholars will work with throughout this unit, they will identify the author's signposts* which include the following: *Words of the Wiser, Again and Again, Tough Questions, Contrasts and Contradictions, AHA! Moments, and Memory Moments*. By identifying these sign posts, scholars will have a deeper understanding of the text, the characters, and the central message of each story, myth, and legend they are reading.