

Using Origin Stories to Create our Own Narratives

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Introduction

Looking back, I would say I had a very fortunate upbringing. I grew up in suburban neighborhood where the biggest concern was leaving the cat out at night. All of the families on the street got a long; my sister and I could play outside for all hours of the day without a worry. We knew when the street lights came on that was our signal to go in for the night. I lived with both my parents who have been happily married for 35 years. My sister and I were both sent to a private school for elementary school. Where I went to school from third to sixth grade, all of the students all had the same skin tone: white. They had the same luxuries I had growing up: a nice, single-family home in a safe neighborhood. There was always food on the table. Families were able to go on yearly trips to different places.

In particular, I remember in the fourth grade I was in Mrs. Rupert's class. I was in a private Catholic school at the time; I had twenty students in my class, fifty-three in the whole fourth grade. At the time I didn't think anything of it, but of those fifty-three students, all 53 of us were white and followed a Christian belief system. That year in class, I read the book *The Skin I'm In* by Sharon G. Flake. It was the first time I've ever been exposed to world outside of my small, privileged bubble. The main character Maleka was constantly teased about her "dark" skin, how it was too dark, even for a black person. She wanted to adopt a new, tougher attitude to faces her bullies at school so she ended up joining the neighborhood gang. Along with the new friends came new sets of problems for Maleka and the pressures of being in a gang.¹

This story I still remember vividly fifteen years later as it opened my eyes to a different world than I am used to; my mom's stories of working in a public school (she worked at Shue Medill) became real and tangible. I ended up going to Shue Medill for seventh and eighth grade; the make up of the study body was very different than my previous school. There were whites students, but more prominent in the hallways were African American students, Latinos and Hispanics. As time went on, I learned I was attending school with notorious gang members; there were students living in a single-parent home. Some of my classmates claimed they lived in neighborhoods where gunshots at night were frequent. Some of the classmates I met qualified for free/reduce lunch since their parents didn't have the income to provide lunch. All of this was very different than what I was used to but it still didn't truly sink in how truly lucky I actually was. Not until I met my good friend Charles.

Charles was in my mother's eighth grade English and Special Education class at Shue. Charles would opt to stay late after school for extra help and wait for the four o'clock bus to go home on. That way he would get home the same time as his mother, when he felt safe to be in his home. He stated he didn't want to go home by himself since the young gang members would be lurking around causing trouble. He didn't want to get involved with that so he tried to avoid it as much as possible. Charles' neighborhood was similar to what I mentioned before where gun shots were frequent; the neighborhood was run-down and disheveled. It wasn't safe for Charles to go out and play.

One strong memory comes to mind was one Friday afternoon, Charles, our friend Lindsey and myself went to the mall afterschool to hang out and go to a movie. My mom dropped us off thirty minutes before the movie started so that we could go buy candy from the CVS that was still in the mall. The three of us were walking down the aisles looking for the candy section when I noticed we were being watched by the manager of the store. I guess she had nothing else to do since but watch us since we were the only patrons in the store. I saw that she picked up the phone and made a call; I didn't pay any mind. She was probably making a call that was job related. We each found the candy bar we wanted for the movie theater and went to check out. The manager waited on Lindsey and myself first; as Charles' turn came to check out a mall security officer came into the store. He began to question Charles and where he got the money to buy the candy bar. Charles politely defended himself by saying his mother gave him some money for the candy and movie ticket. The officer told Charles he needed to put the candy back and leave the store. I was shocked to see him treated in such a way! He was an honest, paying customer! But Charles did as he was told and we left. I remembering leaving the store dumfounded and confused by what I just saw, enraged at the officer for making such a crazy assumption about my friend, upset and saddened that Charles felt humiliated. When I got home, I told my mom everything; she told me I just had my first lesson in empathy.

Growing up, I would say I was sheltered from the reality of the world. I didn't realize until I was in my teens and seeing how different life was for my African American peer how privileged I truly was. With the book *The Skin I'm In*, it helped me gain and understanding of the world my peers regularly dealt with; now I can see how some of my students deal with similar hardships. *In reading a story*, it taught me how to better empathize with a person and understand their hardships, attempt to understand a person with cultural and religious differences (to think and inquire outside of my little box).

Stories—whether in written, visual, or in form of music/songs—are one of the most powerful tools you can use to engage and connect with your audience. The power of a single story goes far beyond simply relaying facts and data and can be a highly effective tool to emotionalize information...to make us more relatable as human beings.

Demographics

Conrad Schools of Science (CSS) is a unique school in the Red Clay School District housing grades from sixth to twelfth. The school is considered a magnet school with a primary focus on mathematics, science and technology. We are required to accept students from all of Red Clay elementary schools as a part of the admission process. Students must live in the Red Clay school district to be considered for admission. The high school courses offered are meant to lead into various pathways: Allied Health, Sports Physical Therapy, Engineering and Biotechnology.² All students now have to apply and interview in order to be accepted into the school. I am currently teaching 6th grade English/Language Arts and Special Education. In the past couple years at CSS the Special-education component was served using the inclusion model. Since I am dual-certified in teaching special –education and middle school English, I would teach a group of regular education students with the special-education population in the same class. The past school year, I have co-taught in in sixth grade English/Language Arts class where I am considered the content teacher while I had another special-education teacher assist on one day while an English Language Learner (ELL) specialist would come in the next day. Going into the 2020-2021 school year, I will continue to teach sixth grade English in an inclusion setting. However, this school year we will be implementing the change that English/Reading and Language Arts/Writing will be split into two separate classes and we will have an Honors Program offered at the sixth grade level. Prior to this school year, Honors English did not begin until seventh grade. I will be the primary teacher that will focus on reading comprehension to the entire sixth grade of one hundred and seventy students.

For this curriculum unit, I will focus on creating activities that will benefit my special education and proficient students as well as generating specific activities that focus on my Honors Reading classes. This means that in each of my classes I have students that are able to fully comprehend high school material and generate connections; on the other hand I have students that are barely able to read at a third grade level in the sixth grade and struggle with comprehension. Since my classes will be an arranged in an inclusion setting, the reading content and lessons will focus on differentiating instruction so that the gifted students as well as the classified special-education students and the ELL students in the class will be able to comprehend the material. This unit has been made to fit a block schedule of 90-minute classes.

Rationale

In our final unit of the school year entitled “What Tales Tell” we focus on analyzing various myths, legends, and origin stories. For instance, students read “Yeh-Shen: The Chinese Cinderella”³ and students are expected to write a literary analysis about the values and qualities of the Chinese culture and compare to other cultures’ versions of Cinderella by identifying the aspects of culture in each text. We read various Greek

myths to learn how the Greeks interpreted the changing of the seasons, where the world originated from and how they infused those tales into their daily lives.

Two particular topics that caught my attention: origin stories and identity. Many of my students are coming to that point of their lives where they struggle with their own personal identity; they are becoming more conscientious of how others perceive them. Also, now that they are older, they are seeing the world in a more mature perspective and things may not be what they seem. They are ultimately trying to find and understand their place in the world. Very similar to the role that origin stories play people as a whole- explaining our existence in this world.

An origin story “is a story that explains how a person became to be who he or she is.” Majority of my students know that origin stories can be found in stories about superheroes. For instance, look at Spiderman:

“Spiderman was a normal teenager named Peter Parker until he got bitten by a radioactive spider and his uncle was murdered. Peter blamed the murder on himself, and this motivated him to fight crime. But origin stories are not just for superheroes. Origin stories are for every character that you want people to relate to.”⁴

With this unit, I want my students to start thinking about who they are and where their identity originates from by thinking of their own personal origin stories. We will first learn of what origin stories by learning through examples. My students are very familiar with superhero stories and Greek mythology and we will use them to get the basic understand of what origin stories are.

Next, I want to start forming a more personal connection to by learning about our own historical origin stories. By this point, sixth graders have not been exposed to the “text book” version of the origin story of the United States where it discusses how Europeans colonized/settled the colonies. However, I feel as if this perspective of our origin story as a whole is valuable to learn in order to fully understand the perspective of the indigenous people and their perspective of ‘our’ origin story. I want for students to learn origin stories of the original people to have lived here in the United States, particularly in Delaware. By hearing/reading some of the identity stories of the Lenape and other indigenous groups, we can discuss how these groups of people have faced struggles and yet continue to persevere and use their past to help shape who they are moving forward. This will hopefully encourage them to share about their personal struggles. I want my students and myself to learn the origins of the Lenape people and how their culture has helped shape the identity of Delaware. Going a step further, I would love for my students to write their own personal origin stories that shape their current identity.

With this unit, the Enduring Understandings are that students will understand that: What myths and origin stories, these stories roles in shaping people’s identity, and our past experiences influence our identity today.

The major Essential Questions this unit will address: What are myths and origin stories? What is identity? How does my past and family influence how I feel about myself and shape my identity? Can I write an origin narrative about my developing identity?

Defining Story, Origin Stories, and how these can impact Identity.

To begin our quest in understanding origin stories, we first need to define what a story is. According to the dictionary a *story* is “an account of imaginary or real people and events told for entertainment,” or “an account of past events in someone’s life or the evolution of something.”⁵ Stories can come in all sorts of forms from written word, passed from person to person as an oral account, in film, works of art, or in the shape of a song/music. However, as an English teacher and a lover of stories, stories are so *much more* than that. Liz Neely—director of The Story Collider—describes perfectly in he interview with NPR the power stories have: "We all know this delicious feeling of being swept into a story world... You forget about your surroundings," she says, "and you're entirely immersed." ⁶

What happens in our brain as we are listening to stories is even more amazing. Neely goes on to explain in the interview that “On functional MRI scans, many different areas of the brain light up when someone is listening to a narrative— not only the networks involved in language processing, but other neural circuits, too. One study of listeners found that the brain networks that process emotions arising from sounds — along with areas involved in movement — were activated, especially during the emotional parts of the story.” Neely goes on to further discuss the research of Dr. Uri Hasson, a professor of psychology and neuroscience at Princeton University. He and his research team found that when studying two people—one told a story while the other listened—they found that the greater the listener's comprehension was and the more closely the brain wave patterns mirrored those of the storyteller. Essentially, as you hear a story unfold, your brain waves actually start to synchronize with those of the storyteller. ⁷

When we read, brain networks are involved in deciphering/imagining another person's motives, what drives other people — which feeds into our predictions — helps us see a situation from different perspectives. “It can even shift our core beliefs, Neely says, when we "come back out of the story world into regular life." Ultimately, stories have a major impact our identities as a person. But what is identity?

Defining Identity and Impact Stories Can Have in Shaping Our Identity

Before we discuss how students can be impacted by stories, we first need to discuss what identity is and how people create their own personal identity. According to theorist Erik Erikson *identity* can be defined as “our sense of self”⁸ and it is within adolescence (our teens into 20’s) we develop our sense of self. Erikson said that each stage of life goes through it’s own “psychosocial task” or went up against a crisis that needs a resolution.⁹ For adolescences, that task is to synthesize the past, present and future possibilities into clearer sense of self. Erikson states that “Adolescents will wonder “Who am I as an individual? What do I want to do with my life? What values should I live by? What do I believe in?” as a part of the quest *search for identity*.¹⁰

To help refine their sense of identity, it is common for adolescents to try out different roles or ‘selves’ in different situations. For example, you adults may act out one self at home while with their family, have another ‘self’ while with friends, and a third ‘self’ while at school or on online/social media. Eventually, the many forms of our ‘selves’ will unify into consistent and comfortable sense of who one is or our *identity*.

Specific people that are present in our lives can influence identity. Sometimes we develop our sense of self early since we adopt the same values and expectations that our parents have. Others may adopt an identity with of a particular peer group i.e. jock, band geek, etc. that influences our values and expectations. This helps contribute to what Erikson called *social identity* where we shape our sense of self with the group’s values or expectations. *Social identify* also is based on how we differ from the group around us. For example, students who are a minority ethnic group or gay, may shape their identity based on their differences from the ‘norm’¹¹

Story’s Impact on Our Identity

As I was completing my research, I stumbled upon an article by Professor Andrea Breen entitled “How Story Telling Impacts Our Identities”. Prof. Andrea Breen is a professor of Family Relations and Applied Nutrition at the University of Guelph. In the article Professor Breen states that “Storytelling isn’t just a childhood pastime, it continues throughout adulthood as a means of defining ourselves...Identity is constructed through stories,”¹²

Professor Breen continues to state “the stories we tell about ourselves change throughout our lives, reflecting our family background, culture and relationships. New experiences and people in our lives change our stories. Those stories both communicate who we are but also help construct our own understanding of who we are.”¹³ Thus, depending on the story, it can leave an impact upon us as the reader that helps shape our understanding of the world and our place/identity within its walls.

The impact of fictional stories in shaping our identity is very much similar to understanding human history and using the past to shape our understanding. Remember

when I defined stories, one of the definitions of story pertains to the stories created that are fictional; the second deals with telling of nonfiction. *Stories* are also defined as “the account of someone’s life of the evolution of something” which pertains to understanding human history. When we are asked to define ‘history’ it is defined as an “inquiry” or it “represents our attempts to understand and makes sense and meaning of what has happened before us. It is the process of asking questions about the past, grounding these inquiries on evidence. The stories or “the histories” that result, reflect how humans articulate the acquired knowledge.”¹⁴

When we are recollecting an event of the past, our vision of the past is both obscured and enhanced by the individual, cultural, societal and temporal “lenses”¹⁵ that exist between us and what happened in the past. The stories we hear, recollect, and tell each other are shaped by these perspectives, often helping shape our understanding of the world around us and impact on our self-identity. As Professor Joyce states in his book *The First U.S. History Textbooks: Constructing and Disseminating the American Tackle in the Nineteenth Century* states:

“We all tell stories- it is our schema for understanding. Our constructed narratives, in turn, shape the subsequent pursuit and perceptions of knowledge. Our stories, when internalized and believed, thereafter operate as a filter for what one is able to “see” and “understand”.

However, we must remember that stories or “histories” of the past can often be reinterpreted and revised over time as we continue to question the events of the past.¹⁶ We often use the past to shape our identities a “the past itself is not a story; it is the raw material from which we make coherent stories, not all of them are factual.”¹⁷

What are origin stories?

Anthropologists state that origin stories are told everywhere around the world where people are sharing how the universe began and people came into existence. Some origin stories are based on real events and people while others are more imaginative. This is the definition of origin stories that I have come to know and teach in my classroom.

In seminar, we read Richard and Tom Hill’s book *Growing Up Indian* where they discussed a different definition of origin stories. They define these types of “(Origin stories) that teach us what kind of people we hope to become, what kind of contribution we hope to make, what kind of legacy we hope to pass on to our children.”¹⁸

This definition is different than the one I was taught and teach to my students; but seeing this idea being told from a different perspective allows me to gain a better understanding of Indigenous people and the importance of their creation stories. The text discussed Native Americans believed that Creation is on-going and passed down through

generation to generation. Essentially, the people become the creators and are responsible for caring for this world. The Hills shared the creation story of the Iroquoians sharing that people lived beyond the sky since the earth was covered in deep waters. They stated that many cultures origin stories explained the universe as been suspended between the sky and the underworld. It was when a pregnant woman fell the animals placed her on the back of the Great Turtle, master of all animals. Instructing the woman to dance upon the magic earth that fell with her, an island formed upon the turtle's back as she danced. She birthed a daughter and that daughter gave birth to twin boys. One brother was responsible for all of the good things that grew while the other brother was in charge of the earthly evils.¹⁹ When retelling this story to the children of the tribe, they claim humankind "must meditate between the Sky World and the Underworld in order to preserve the well-being of the earth."²⁰ Once again, returning to the new definition of origin stories and stressing that these ideas are passed down to the new caretakers of the world, continuing to share the importance of caring for the earth generation after generation.

"Our" origin story of us a national group can be found within History Textbooks and is quite different from the Indigenous peoples' perspective. Beginning at a young age, we can read the 'beginning of America' with the explorers coming to the "New Land". "American history textbooks have represented the most accessible and enduring repository for America's grand narrative...they were among the more widely read and disseminated sources of knowledge about the shared past available to Americans before the Civil War."²¹ It is here within the pages of our school textbooks that at a young age we develop our 'identity' regarding the understanding and values as members of a national group in learning how we were establish and founded as a country. "Within these works resides our narrative that depicts how we see ourselves and how we want to be seen. It is nothing less that our creation story-a narrative that explains our origins, migrations, and makeup."²²

Most often, the origin story we hear in the history textbooks of the origins of America is the one the Colonists coming to America or the "New World" as a part of the *Doctrine of Destiny* where European nations and settlers could 'claim' the lands they discovered...not taking into account that in the Indigenous people who lived on that land for hundreds of years prior to Europeans setting foot on the soil.

In reality, the Europeans that traveled to the "New World" were *settlers*, or someone who lived on another person's land. They didn't take into account that "native peoples have created town sites, farms, monumental earthworks, networks of roads, devised a government,"²³ But with the *Doctrine of Destiny*, the mindset European colonizers was that the Christians felt their god assured them that whatever land they saw was theirs to use and occupy.²⁴ This is what their god wanted and they believed he had given them permission to take control of the domain and use its resources.

Our own American origin story has been a mythic, almost tribal recount of events that celebrates our triumphs, reconciles our defeats and rationalizes our shortcomings. “And as all tribal myths, our origin story has been continually retold and reinterpreted in light of the needs of the present. But the essence of the essence and message of the narrative endures- we are the chosen; we are *The People*.”²⁵ I mean, the Pope even gave permission from the Church stating it was the Colonizers duty to take that land in the name of God...

On the contrary, Roxanne Dunbar-Ortiz continues to discuss in her book *Indigenous Peoples' History of the United States*, that is what the Colonizers did: they took advantage of the Indigenous people to teach them survival techniques:

“They learned to grow plants Indigenous peoples had domesticated, such as corn, squash, and tobacco. They relied on the local Indigenous people to help them find the necessities such as water and medicinal herbs.”²⁶

Eventually take the land and resources away from the indigenous people since it was seen as no longer their property:

“The colonizers stole farmland that was already cultivated. They took control of their deer parks they had cleared and maintained by Indigenous communities. They traveled on overland and water routes the Indigenous people made, and ultimately, used those routes to move their armies in wars against the Indigenous nations.”²⁷

“Our origins story was placed within our early school textbooks and continues to reside there...it ultimately incited and continues to incite passionate debate.” Meaning, the textbook version of our origin story may not be as ‘grand’ as we wish based on whose perspective of the narrative you are reading.

Creating Origin Stories to Shape Our Identity

When discussing identity, my students are in the prime age group where they are just beginning to discover their identity, inquire about events and people, try different personas in different groups and settings. So when we are focusing on creating origin stories, I want my students to consider these questions: *Why do we compose and pass on stories? What shape and form can they take? How do we preserve these stories?*

We will also refer to and use the definition that Tom and Richard Hill used in *Growing Up Indian* where they describe origin stories as follows: “Origin stories teach us what kind of people we hope to become, what kind of contribution we hope to make, what kind of legacy we hope to pass on to our children.”²⁸

Use of Objects and Songs to Create Origin Stories

To begin our creation process, I will have students complete a similar activity we completed in seminar. For our first seminar, my professor Barry Joyce had each person bring an object to class that represented them as an individual and we each had to share the meaning of our object. For instance, I brought one of my DVD sets of the TV show *Friends* to class; this is hands-down my favorite show. I also watch a couple episodes to help me unwind after a long day, to release tension and anxiety accumulated throughout the school year since watching the episodes make me laugh and bring me such joy throughout my life. Another person in our seminar brought a pair of shoes and she explained how she has so many pairs, some of the same shoes but in different colors and how she enjoys matching them to her outfit each day for school. She enjoys being creative and using the shoes as an extension of her personality. My students will do this activity as well where they bring an object in that has a special meaning for them and share why that object is special/what it represents.

In seminar on April 27, 2020, we were assigned a reading called “Legacy of the Basket” by Richard W. Hill. The article shares the significance of basket weaving and the importance of the object to the Native American Culture, in particular to the Northern Californian Indian tribe. The teacher, Ms. Matt, went through the process with students at the University of Oregon on how to make the basket; the first step was to learn the songs to sing “as to not insult the plants when the materials are picked”²⁹. Next, they picked materials needed and students were taught new songs to sing as they softened the grass in their mouth before they start the weaving process. As Mrs. Matt states in the reading “A basket is a song made visible”.

Use of Place to Tell Stories

In seminar, we had a guest speaker named David Coker. He is the chief of the local Lenape Tribe in Delaware. In speaking to us, he discussed the importance of place in their culture and their struggle to regain the land that rightfully belongs to his people before they were colonized in the early 1600’s. He also stressed the importance place has to the Native American culture and that as a group of people living on the land we need to take care of and appreciate it for what it provides: thriving life.

We watched a documentary entitled “Growing Native: Turtle Island” where many tribes in the Great Lakes believed that the existence of our world was created on the back of a turtle shell. They too recognized how ‘place’ and our earth plays a role in living a successful life: “Our ancestors considered the water that flows through the Earth’s lakes and streams to be like the blood that nourishes our bodies.”³⁰ The video goes on to stress how taking care of these special places since it nourishes what we need to survive. For instance, Edith Leoso of the Bad River Chippewa wants to see the water and land preserved so that they can protect their special objects that are created: wild rice.³¹ This

tribe has come to see this land as a beautiful, scared place that “promotes life and love and a higher power taking care of us.”³²

I want my students to think of a place that is special to them and think of the impact of visiting this place has had upon them and their existence. Similar to another video seen in seminar, my students are going to come up with a visual presentation of that place, explaining the history of that particular place and the value it has to them through the use of photos and oral story telling.

Use of a Strong Rooted Memory to Create a Story using Photographs, Art, and Oral Story Telling

On her blog, Shannon Emmerson shares tips on writing your own version of an origin story. First and foremost, Emmerson recommends you need to “Tell the Truth” and “Answer Tough Questions”:

“Your stories provide evidence of your character. Your stories illustrate what you say you’re all about. Give the authority and responsibility to ask tough questions and record responses, and give yourself the authority and responsibility to answer truthfully, and vulnerably. In other words, if you’re looking for an authentic, interesting story, give yourself permission to go there. You’ll be rewarded.”³³

She also recommends in order to create a powerful story you need to “Know Your Audience” prior to writing/creating your personal origin story.

“A fundamental part of our story process is the identification of audience. Why? Because good storytelling, by definition, requires the participation of an emotionally engaged audience. And if you want to tell the right story, in the right way, to emotionally connect with that audience, you’d better know who you’re talking to.”

An example of a powerful story told that was emotionally stimulating for their captive audience was in a documentary we saw in class entitled “Wounded Knee”. The documentary is highlighting the times of Native American culture were they were being obliterated as a people and culture by being forced from the federal government to comply to their rules and give up their cultural traditions. Spanning from the 1870’s to the 1960’s, Indian children were forced from their homes and off the reservations away from their loved ones and those who spoke their language to learn how to not be Indian. This was an order mandated by the Federal Government. These children were taken from their homes and placed at boarding schools; at these boarding schools, they were being remade into white kids.³⁴ Throughout the rest of the clip, we hear oral accounts of Native Americans sharing their experiences while living at the boarding school. Along with the

oral testimony, it illustrates their experiences using an animated drawing/sketch that a student would create on lined notebook paper.³⁵

Combining the oral, first-hand account with the illustration/art truly highlights the impact this event had on those individuals that were sent to the boarding schools and it creates an emotional impact in the reader. I want my students to follow this model to share a powerful rooted memory that has had an impact and shaped their life. Students will be expected to complete an oral and artistic component with this assignment.

Teaching Strategies

Collaborative and Ability Grouping

Collaborative learning can occur peer-to-peer or in larger groups. Peer learning, or peer instruction, is a type of collaborative learning that involves students working in pairs or small groups to discuss concepts, or find solutions to problems. Students are matched based on interest level, learning style, or by ability level. By grouping based on ability, I use reading Lexile levels (reading levels based on testing and classroom assessments) to match students in groups. Sometimes I will place students that match their same reading level and differentiate instruction based on ability (for instance, students who are low-reading level may get a different question set than my higher reading level students). Other times, I will match students with students that have different Lexile levels to help get lower-achieving students motivated by having a good peer model.

Students will be working together in groups of 2 to 4 to assist each other in the writing process and the peer editing process for the explanation of their objects and the importance of the place they chose. For this activity, students will be matched based on ability level and are matched based on ability pairing weaker students with a stronger peer to allow a stronger peer to assist one who is struggling with the writing process.

Schoology

Schoology is a learning management system that acts as an online classroom. This system allows teachers to create and manage lessons for our academic courses that is geared towards technology advancement.

Red Clay School District is a 1:1 technology school district where each student will have access to their own laptop; the middle school students and older are able to take this technology home with them to use as a tool to assist with their learning process in the classroom and teachers are able to develop online lessons using Schoology. For the purpose of this unit, I will be using Schoology as a way for my classes to discuss the topics at hand in an online discussion forums of essential questions for activities,

journaling, online assignments incorporating the use of Google Docs and Slides, use of media folders for images of art and clips of songs.

Google Docs/Presentations

Google Docs is a free Web-based application in which documents and spreadsheets can be created, edited and stored online. Files can be accessed from any computer with an Internet connection and a full-featured Web browser.

Student Activities

Activity One: Object

Similar to what we completed in seminar, students will be asked to bring an object to class (or a photo of the object if it no longer exists) that has significant value to them and a part of their life. Students will be expected to summarize what the object is to the rest of the class, the history of the object and how it came to their possession, and share its personal value to them.

Activity Two: Place

Students will think of a place that is special to them or has significant meaning throughout or in a moment of time in their lives. Students will use the website “Voice Thread” to create an animate description of this place. This site allows students to collect photos from online or in their own personal media album to create a visual presentation. The site also allows students to narrate the photos they have chosen, creating a visual oral story.

Students will have to describe this particular place in photos/orally, share the history of the place and their history interacting with this particular place along with share the impact this place has had on their lives.

Activity Three: Sharing Rooted Memories through Art

To begin this final activity, we will watch the clip from the “Wounded Knee” Documentary of oral accounts of Native American children that were forced to live and learn at Boarding Schools to be remade into white children. This will give us an example where art is incorporated into telling of an oral story.

Next, students will think of a memory that has had significant impact on them and has shaped their life and values. They will draft their memoir of this event and the impact this event has had. Students will share their story orally using the website Flip Grid where

it video records the students and their response to a prompt given. Settings allow for only the teacher to be the viewer so it keeps a sense of privacy for the student sharing this particular memory.

Finally, students will need to provide an artistic component to this memory. Students are allowed to create a piece of art (drawing, painting, etc) inspired by this memory, create a soundtrack of songs that tie to the memory, provide photographs that add a visual aspect to this memory, write a song or poetry that is inspired by this memory. Students will need to summarize how the art is incorporated into the memory.

Annotated Bibliography

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- Emmerson, Shannon. "Why Origin Stories Matter and How to Tell Yours." Echo Storytelling Agency. August 31, 2018. Accessed October 11, 2020. <https://www.echostories.com/how-to-tell-origin-story/>. This blog shares the importance of writing origin stories
- Flake, Sharon G. *The Skin I'm In*. Los Angeles: Jump at the Sun, 2018. This is a book I read in my fourth grade class that had a major impact on my life.
- Growing Native: Great Lakes Turtle Island*. Directed by Charles Boots Kennedy. Performed by Stacey Thunder. Growing Native: Great Lakes Turtle Island. 2018. Accessed April 27, 2020. We watched this documentary to learn about the value of place according to the Native American Culture. It helped me shape an activity students will be doing on a significant place as a part of my unit
- Hill, Tom, and Richard W. Hill. *Creations Journey: Native American Identity and Belief*. Washington D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press in Association with the National Museum of the American Indian, Smithsonian Institution, 1994. The chapter "Legacy of

Baskets" helped me better understand the significance of objects in the Native American community and helped shaped an activity being used in my classroom.

Joyce, Barry. *The First U.S. History Textbooks: Constructing and Dismantling the American Tale in the Nineteenth Century*. Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2015. This book written by Barry Joyce added some insight to how stories are "histories" of the past that can often be misinterpreted based on who is telling that history

Louie, Ai-Ling. *Collections*. Vol. 1. Orlando, FL: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt Publishing Company, 2015. "Yeh Shen: A Cinderella Story from China" is a short story we read as a part of our curriculum and final unit of study entitled "Tales They Tell"

Myers, David G. *Myers Psychology for the AP Course*. New York, NY: Bedford, Freeman & Worth High School Publishers, 2018. Used this textbook to help define identify in an adolescent and how their identify is shaped according to psychology.

We Shall Remain: America through Native Eyes. Directed by Stanley Nelson. Wounded Knee. 2009. Accessed October 12, 2020. This documentary we watched in seminar shares the experience and accounts of some Native Americans who were forced to live in boarding schools and be "remade" into a white person. We will use a clip of this documentary to show how art can empower a rooted memory of an event and create an enticing reading for their audience.

Appendix A

These are the following Common Core Standards we will be using in this unit. Standards are taken from the CCSS Website³⁶:

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.6.1

Cite textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.6.2

Determine a central idea of a text and how it is conveyed through particular details; provide a summary of the text distinct from personal opinions or judgments.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.6.3

Describe how a particular story's or drama's plot unfolds in a series of episodes as well as how the characters respond or change as the plot moves toward a resolution.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.6.6

Explain how an author develops the point of view of the narrator or speaker in a text.

Appendix B

Below are listed the different types of technology and website that will be used in this unit:

Google Docs, Google Slides, Google Drawing

www.flipgrid.com

www.voicethread.com

Documentary: clip from “ We Will Rise: Wounded Knee”

Notes

¹ Sharon Flake, *The Skin I'm In*, (New York: Jump at the Sun, 1998)

² <https://www.redclayschools.com/conrad>

³ Ai-Ling Louie, “Yeh Shen: A Cinderella Story from China,” 335

⁴ Storyman, “Power of Stories”

⁵ www.dictionary.com

⁶ Liz Neely, “Unleashing the Brainpower of Stories”

⁷ *ibid*

⁸ Myers, *Psychology for the AP Course*, 539

⁹ *ibid*, 539

¹⁰ *ibid*, 540

¹¹ *ibid*, 541

¹² Breen, “How Story Telling Impacts Our Identities”

¹³ *ibid*

¹⁴ “History- a Form of Inquiry” pg. 1

¹⁵ *ibid* pg. 2

¹⁶ Joyce, *The First U.S. History Textbook*, 3

¹⁷ *ibid*, 3

¹⁸ Hill, “Growing Up Indian”, 21

¹⁹ *ibid*, 21-22

²⁰ *ibid*, 22

²¹ *ibid*, 4

²² *ibid*, 4

²³ Dunbar-Ortiz, *An Indigenous Peoples' History of the United States*, 48

²⁴ *ibid*, pg. 49

²⁵ Joyce, pg.4

²⁶ Dunbar-Ortiz, *An Indigenous Peoples' History of the United States*, 49

²⁷ *ibid*, pg. 49

²⁸ Hall, “Growing Up Indian”, 21

²⁹ Hall, “The Legacy of Baskets”

³⁰ Kennedy, “Growing Native: Turtle Island”, 2018

³¹ *idib*

³² *ibid*

³³ Emerson, "How to Tell Origin Stories"

³⁴ Nelson, "We Shall Remain: Wounded Knee", 2009

³⁵ *ibid*

³⁶ "<http://www.corestandards.org/>"