

**Audience:** This lesson was used in a multi-grade 4-8 classroom.

**Objective:** Students will become familiar with a variety of 'Pourquoi Tales' and be able to present one particular tale as a group to their peers by means of dramatic play.

**Rationale:** This activity was used for several reasons:

1. First, to help introduce our new unit on folktales and create some excitement about the new theme;
2. Secondly to familiarize the students with a particular type of folktale--the 'Pourquoi Tale' (i.e. Legends) and;
3. Thirdly to encourage the students to leave their comfort zone by presenting a chosen tale dramatically to the class which will help them get a feel for the related rationale of the theme which is storytelling.

**Detailed Description:**

- This activity was initiated during the first week of a new theme on Folktales. Some frontloading activities had been done earlier in the week to activate the students prior knowledge about folktales and the stage had been set to begin a more thorough look at a particular type of folktale that had been discussed—'Pourquoi Tales' (Legends).
- This activity began with a quick review about what a 'Pourquoi Tale' was and discussed the events of the story read during the last class. When discussing each particular event the students were asked 'What would that have looked like?' at which time students were asked to show, using movement, what the event would have looked like while it was taking place.
- The students were then broken into groups with each group having a different tale that they would be responsible for.
- Examples of tales were '*Our Four Seasons*' by Glenda Bird and '*Why the Rooster Crows at Sunrise*' by Lynette Dyer Vuong.

- Students were instructed to read their tale silently to themselves and then taking turns, read the story orally as a group.
- After reading, the students were instructed to break the story down into its main events and share with one another their ideas on how they could put what was read into movement 'What would that have looked like?'
- Co-operatively, the students practiced the main events in sequence deciding amongst the group who would play each part, what would be said and what props they might like to add.
- Students were given the rest of the class period to work on their presentation.
- Presentations were given the following day.

**Assessment:** The students enjoyed this activity very much although it was something new for not only them but for me as well. At the beginning of the theme on Folktales the students were eager to get started as this was a theme that I had not done with my students in the past. Teaching on a Hutterite Colony, it can sometimes be a challenge to keep things fresh due to the fact that if you cover a particular theme one year you can not use it again for many years because the same students are still in the classroom.

I thought it would be more of a challenge to get the students to feel comfortable acting out a tale in front of their peers but was pleasantly pleased with how the activity turned out. It was a great way for the students to take a risk yet have the comfort of being part of a group as opposed to acting out a tale by themselves. Looking back I wish I had introduced this type of dramatization before and in other subjects as the students were quite receptive to it. Perhaps it was my own comfort level that prevented me from doing so, as this storytelling class had opened me up to trying new things.

I have since tried to incorporate more movement into other subject areas such as social studies (playing out the interaction between the early settlers and native peoples) and have received positive feedback from the students. It can be difficult in a multi-grade classroom to keep order when dramatic play is taking place with only one grade or subject group but I am slowly ironing out the wrinkles. Upon reflecting with my students they have told me that they enjoy the physical movement and acting out as it helps them to remember the details more vividly. It has been a great way to introduce my students to storytelling and plan on continuing this practice in the future.