

Putting the Arts in Language Arts

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Introduction

Before I began reading and learning about arts integration in my seminar I thought that arts integration meant singing a song that reinforced phonics skills or simply acting out vocabulary words. However, I have since learned that singing phonics songs and acting out vocabulary words are simply arts enhancement and not integration. In the article *Why Arts Integration Improves Long-Term Retention of Content* the authors define arts integration as “the use of the arts as a teaching methodology throughout the curriculum.”ⁱ In seminar we learned that arts integration is when the students are being taught about the art itself as well as the content being taught. We practiced using music, movement, drama and puppetry to enhance and integrate art into various different subject areas.

This seminar taught me a lot about art integration and about art in general. I thought that having students put on a play and act out a story was the only way to have them use drama in language arts. I am now educated in the various ways students can act out scenes from stories. In seminar, I learned how to use pantomime, tableaux, narrative pantomime and puppetry to act out scenes from stories. Throughout the seminars I enjoyed learning about all the various art forms, but I was particularly interested in drama.

According to Mike Flemming, “There is increasing emphasis on understanding and cognitive content in all the arts. On that basis it is not unreasonable to assume that the arts contribute to the development of the mind.”ⁱⁱ I agree with this theory that the arts and arts integration is powerful in increasing student success in all subject areas. I think that integrating drama into first grade language arts will really help my students to improve their comprehension skills.

I am going to integrate drama into a first grade language arts unit where my students will study two books, *The Three Little Pigs* by James Marshall and *The True Story of the Three Little Pigs* by Jon Scieszka. In my unit I will teach first grade language arts standards as well as drama. Students will learn and work with vocabulary words, identify the different story elements, compare and contrast the two texts, and write an opinion piece. According to Rebecca Hendrix, “Research supports the wealth of benefits and particularly the academic gain to students and schools who are supported in the arts.”ⁱⁱⁱ I will use drama, in the form of tableaux as a strategy enhance the above objectives.

Before students can be expected to use drama they must first learn about the art of drama. The students will eventually be expected to use drama to enhance their understanding of the two pieces of literature. I think that integrating art into language arts is a great way to increase student interest and really enhance student understanding of different texts and language arts skills.

Demographics

Red Clay Consolidated School District is located in New Castle County, Delaware. Red Clay consists of 28 schools in both urban and suburban settings. Red Clay has over 16,000 students. Of those students, 27% are African American, 4% are Asian, 20% are Hispanic, and 49% are White. Red Clay provides almost 15% of students with Special Education, and 10% of students with English Language support. In addition, 41% of students come from low income families.

Highlands Elementary is a small, urban school in the City of Wilmington. We service on average about 320 students in grades K-5. Minority populations make up 86% of our student body, and 81% of our students come from families with a low socio-economic status. I am a first grade teacher with a class size that varies between 18-24 students.

First Grade Language Arts

My unit is a Language Arts unit that will focus mainly on reading comprehension skills. *The Three Little Pigs* and *The True Story of the Three Little Pigs* used to teach various language arts skills. I will begin the study of each story by doing a close reading. Close reading is when the teacher reads the story aloud to the class as a whole group, stopping frequently to have students make predictions, share 'I wonders', and ask and answer questions about the characters, setting and plot, and identify and discuss key vocabulary.

Close reading reinforces first grade reading and comprehension skills. In my unit I will begin by doing a close reading because I think it is an effective way to get students thinking about the characters and the plot. The close reading activities will set the foundation for the drama part of the unit.

After participating in interactive read alouds, students will independently complete graphic organizers about the plot of each story. They will be expected to use their knowledge of the important events in the story and draw and write about the key events in the beginning, middle and end of each story. The students will further work with the plot of the story when they tableaux different scenes from the stories.

Students will use the text as well as the illustrations to discuss the different characters, their traits, feelings and actions throughout the close reading of each story. The students will also complete different graphic organizers and a Venn diagram where they identify

different character traits, and compare and contrast characters. Further, students will learn the lesson of the story through their study of the characters.

After the students have studied both stories, they will be expected to write an opinion piece. They will state which version of the story they believe to be the truth. Were the pigs' deaths an accident or did the wolf intentionally go to each house to find the pigs and eat them for dinner? The students will have to provide details from each story and reasons to support their opinion.

Drama Integration

Drama will be integrated into this unit after each story has been read and studied. The students should be knowledgeable about the plot and sequence of each story before being introduced to tableaux.

Tableaux

Before students will actually be expected to use tableaux to further their understanding of *The Three Little Pigs* and *The True Story of the Three Little Pigs* they will need to understand what exactly tableaux is. Tableaux, by definition, is a group of motionless figures representing a scene from a story. I will teach my students some basic rules and procedures to effectively perform tableaux.

Once students have a clear understanding of tableaux, they will be expected to work together to perform a tableaux of different scenes in the two stories used in this unit. Using tableaux to show scenes of each story will require students to extend their thinking about character, setting and plot. They will really have to think about what is going on in the story to decide what the most important scenes are, how the characters are feeling in those scenes, and which pieces of the setting are most important. They will also be able to use their kinesthetic knowledge, which is important for most learners.

Classroom Activities

Lesson 1

Lesson Overview

In this lesson students will begin to explore the text, *The Three Little Pigs*. Students will participate in a close reading of the story and then complete a graphic organizer to determine the beginning, middle and end of the story.

Essential Question: What is *The Three Little Pigs* about? What happens in the story?

Materials: The Three Little Pigs by James Marshall, The Three Little Pigs graphic organizer

Activity: The Three Little Pigs will be read aloud to class. It will be an interactive read aloud as students will be called on to answer the below close reading questions.

Close Reading Questions:

The Three Little Pigs

Cover Page

- Look at the picture on the title page. I can tell by looking at the picture what genre this story is going to be. Is this story a fiction or non-fiction story? Is this story realism or fantasy? How do you know?

Pages 1-2

- The author tells us that “an old sow sent her three little pigs out into the world to seek their fortune”. Who is the old sow? How does she feel?
- What does the word fortune mean? A fortune is something that will happen to someone in the future. It can also mean that someone has a lot of material objects or money.
- Use the illustration to figure out how the three little pigs are feeling right now as they leave their mom.

Pages 3-4

- The first little pig decides to buy straw and build his house out of it. Do you think this is a good idea? Why or why not? Turn and talk with your partner.
- Why do you think the first little pig wants to use straw for his house even after the man tells him it’s not a good idea?

Pages 5-6

- The author refers to the wolf as lean. What does lean mean? Lean is a describing word that means someone who is not fat.
- The author doesn’t tell why the wolf is knocking on the pig’s door but we can infer the reason. Why is the wolf knocking on pig’s door?

Pages 7-8

- The book says that the wolf was annoyed. What does it mean to be annoyed? Annoyed is when someone or something is getting on your nerves and upsetting you.
- How do you think the first little pig is feeling when the wolf begins to huff and puff?
- Why did the first little pig’s house fall down?
- The wolf gobbled up the little pig. What does gobble mean? Gobble means to swallow or eat really fast.

Pages 9-10

- The second little pig decides he wants to build his house out of straw. Do you think this is a good idea? Why or why not?

- Why do you think the second little pig wants to use straw even after the man tells him to think twice about it.

Pages 11-12

- Look at the picture on page 12. How do you think the pig feels?
- The author says that “the wolf happened by”. What does this mean?

Pages 13-14

- Why do you think the wolf was able to blow down the house of straw?

Pages 15-16

- Do you think building a house out of bricks is a good idea? Why or why not?
- The man in the story tells the pig “These bricks will make a fine, sturdy, house”. What does sturdy mean? Sturdy means strong.
- What can we infer about the third little pig by knowing that he took his time to build his house?

Pages 17-18

- The wolf is loitering about. What does loitering mean? Loitering means to stay in an area for no good reason.

Pages 19-20

- Why do you think the wolf is unable to blow down the third little pig’s house?
- The wolf says he’ll try another approach. What do you think the wolf is going to do next?
- Why do you think the pig tells the wolf he is much too busy to go pick turnips?

Pages 21-22

- Why do you think the pig got up at 5 and hurried to get to the turnip field?
- How does the wolf feel when he finds out the pig went without him?
- It says the pig dashed back home. What does dashed mean? Dashed means to move with sudden speed.

Page 23-24

- Why does the wolf throw an apple as far as he could for the wolf to taste? Was this a good idea?

Pages 25-26

- What is the wolf so scared of?

Pages 27-30

- How does the pig feel when he catches the wolf and cooks him?
- Describe the third little pig.

After reading the story and having students answer the close reading questions, students will be asked to go back to their seats and complete the graphic organizer. Students will have to think about the key point of the plot, the character and setting to effectively complete the graphic organizer.

Assessment

The completion of the graphic organizer and student participation during the close reading read aloud will be used to assess student understanding and comprehension of the story.

Lesson 2

Lesson Overview

In this lesson students will learn how to perform a tableau. Students will work together to create scenes from *The Three Little Pigs*.

Essential Question: How do you effectively perform tableaux?

Activity: To start this lesson, students will be asked to recall the characters, setting and plot of *The Three Little Pigs*. I will then introduce them to the idea of using drama to reenact the story. I will model and teach students what tableau is and how to effectively perform tableaux. I will simplify tableau for my first graders by creating a few simple rules.

1. Tableaux are silent.
2. Tableaux are completely still.
3. When doing tableaux we use our bodies to model a certain character from a story or an object found in the setting of the story.
4. You must remember that your face should reflect the feeling of the character or the object you are acting as.

I will explain each rule, one at a time. After I explain a rule we will practice as a class. First, I will explain rule one and then we will all practice being silent for 30 seconds. I will set a timer on the smart board so students will have an understanding of about how long our tableaux will last. Then, I will explain rule two. I will have the students freeze silently in any position they choose for 30 seconds. This may have to be practiced more than once. Then, I will explain and model rule three extensively, as I believe that is the most important aspect of tableau for first graders. I will do a tableau of sad person crying and then we will have a class discussion about how I used my body. I want the students to understand that it is important that their bodies must really demonstrate the character or object they are portraying. I will then allow the students to choose a book character of their choice for me to do a tableau of. We will discuss what I should do with my body, and what my face should look like. This will start the discussion of rule four. I will demonstrate different facial expressions to show students how your face really affects the effectiveness of a tableau. After each rule has been explained and modeled, I will have them practice tableaux by giving them different situations to act out. I will use the following situations to have students model tableaux; an angry person yelling at someone else, a person reading a book, a lion roaring, and a student taking a difficult test. As

students are performing these, we will discuss what they are doing well and how they could improve it, referencing the rules as we go. After the students understand how to do a tableau of a human or an animal, I will explain that you can do tableaux of objects as well. I will show them a tableau of a house and then have volunteers to do a tableau of a table, a chair and a bridge.

After students seem to understand basic tableaux and have practiced and watched individual tableaux, I will have students work in groups of four to create a tableau, still unrelated to the story. I will assign the groups specific objects and people to perform in their tableaux.

1. The Zoo - One student will be the zoo keeper, one student will be a visitor looking at the animals and two students will be animals of their choice.
2. The Circus - One student will be a lion tamer, one student will be the lion and the other two students will work together to make the hoop.
3. Recess - One student will be a teacher, one student will be a piece of recess equipment (swing, jungle gym, monkey bars, etc.), and two students will be students playing.
4. A Family at Home - One student will be the mom, one student will be the dad, one student will be an object (TV, kitchen table, etc.), and one student will be a child.
5. A Restaurant - One student will be the server, one student will be the table, and two students will be the customers.

Having students perform tableaux in groups of four as specific people and objects will help teach them how important it is that the shapes they create to represent people and objects relate to one another to create a scene that is meaningful and understandable. It will also help students understand the amount of teamwork and collaboration that is required for tableaux before I actually begin using tableaux to further their understanding of each story.

Once students are comfortable with and seem to really understand tableaux, I will split them into groups of four. I will assign each group a scene from the story as well as each student a specific role. The students will then work together to create their tableau. I will circulate while students are discussing and help them if they seem to need it. Each group will then come to the front of the class and perform their tableau. The rest of the class will be called on to guess which scene from the story they are performing. After students accurately identify each scene that was performed, we will work together to put the performed scenes in sequential order.

Assessment

I will use Lynette Overby's Arts Integration Rubric to assess student understanding of tableau.

Lesson 3

Lesson Overview

In this lesson students will begin to explore the text, *The True Story of The 3 Little Pigs!*. Students will participate in a close reading of the story and then complete a graphic organizer to determine the beginning, middle and end of the story.

Essential Question: What is *The True Story of the Three Little Pigs* about? What happens in the story?

Materials: *The True Story of The 3 Little Pigs!* By Jon Scieszka, *The True Story of The 3 Little Pigs!* graphic organizer

Activity: *The True Story of the 3 Little Pigs!* will be read aloud to class. It will be an interactive read aloud as students will be called on to answer the below close reading questions.

Close Reading Questions:

The True Story of the 3 Little Pigs

Cover Page

- As I look at the cover of this story I see a newspaper article. I wonder who is going to be telling this story. What is something you are wondering?

Pages 1-2

- We just found out who is telling this story. Who is it? What is his name?

Pages 3-4

- The wolf says that the whole Big Bad Wolfe this is all wrong. What do you think he means by that?
- Make a prediction. What do you think is going to happen in his version of the story?

Pages 7-8

- The wolf says that the little pig wasn't too bright. What does he mean by that? Why does he think that?

Pages 13-14

- Why does the wolf say he ate the first little pig?

Pages 15-16

- The wolf says the second little pig was a little smarter. Why does he think that?

Pages 19-20

- Why does the wolf say he ate the second little pig?

- Why does the wolf say the third little pig was the brains of the family? Do you agree with him?

Pages 21-22

- Describe how the wolf feels in the beginning of the story and how he feels now, at the end of the story?
- Do you believe the wolf's story?

After reading the story and having students answer the close reading questions, students will be asked to go back to their seats and complete the graphic organizer. Students will have to think about the key point of the plot, the character and setting to effectively complete the graphic organizer.

Assessment

The completion of the graphic organizer and student participation during the close reading read aloud will be used to assess student understanding and comprehension of the story.

Lesson 4

In this lesson students will learn how to perform a tableau. Students will work together to create scenes from *The True Story of The 3 Little Pigs!*.

Essential Question: How do you effectively perform tableaux?

Activity: To start this lesson, students will be asked to recall the characters, setting and plot of *The True Story of The 3 Little Pigs!*. I will then ask students to recall and list the four rules of tableaux. Then, I will perform several tableaux of objects in the classroom and have students guess which object I am performing. Next, I will call on students to perform tableaux of various animals, objects and story characters. This will provide students with extra practice and activate discussion about tableaux.

I will again split the class into groups of four. I will assign each group a scene from the story as well as each student a specific role. The students will then work together to create their tableau. I will circulate while students are discussing and help them if they seem to need it. Each group will then come to the front of the class and perform their tableau. The rest of the class will be called on to guess which scene from the story they are performing. After students accurately identify each scene that was performed, we will work together to put the performed scenes in sequential order.

Assessment

I will use a rubric to assess student understanding of tableau and their comprehension of *The True Story of The 3 Little Pigs!*.

Lesson 5

Lesson Overview

Students will compare and contrast the two stories, *The Three Little Pigs* and *The True Story of the 3 Little Pigs*

Essential Question: How are the two stories alike and how are they different?

Activity

I will review the first grade comprehension skill, compare and contrast, with the class. I will tell the students that good readers compare and contrast various aspects of stories. Readers can compare and contrast different characters, the different settings throughout the story and different parts of the plot. I will then explain that you can even compare and contrast different stories. I will use the stories *Miss Nelson Is Missing* and *Miss Nelson Is Back* to demonstrate how to compare and contrast two stories by completing a class Venn Diagram on the SmartBoard. Students will then be asked to complete a Venn Diagram about how the two stories are alike and how they are different.

Assessment

I will use the Venn Diagrams to assess student understanding of the comprehension skill, compare and contrast, and their comprehension and understanding of the two stories.

Appendix A- Implementing Common Core State Standards

My unit is based on the skills first graders are expected to learn according to the Common Core State Standards.

Reading Literature Standards

CC.1.RL.1 Ask and answer questions about key details in a text.

CC.1.RL.7 Use illustrations and details in a story to describe its characters, settings or events.

The above standards will be addressed during the close read of each story.

CC.1.RL.2 Retell stories, including key details, and demonstrate understanding of their central message or lesson.

CC.1.RL.3 Describe characters, settings, and major events in a story, using key details.

CC.1.RL.9 Compare and contrast the adventures and experiences of characters in stories.

The three above standards will be addressed through student completion of graphic organizers, class and peer discussion, and drama.

Writing Standards

CC.1.W.1 Write opinion pieces in which they introduce the topic or name the book they are writing about, state an opinion, supply a reason for the opinion, and provide some sense of closure.

The above writing standard will be applied at the end of the unit when students write their opinion piece stating their opinion on who is telling the truth, the wolf or the pigs.

National Standards for Theater

Standard 2: Uses acting skills.

Tableaux will require my students to use acting skills. In tableaux students will have to act as characters in a particular scene from the stories.

Standard 3: Designs and produces informal and formal productions.

The students are going to be working in small groups to create and perform their tableaux and scenes. They will have to decide which characters they will be, how the character is feeling and how they should relay that feeling. They will also have to think about the setting and how they can relay the setting in their tableaux. Students will also be in charge of deciding how they will work together to relay what is going on in their particular scene.

Appendix B- Student Worksheets and Rubrics

The Three Little Pigs Graphic Organizer

The Three Little Pigs

Directions: Summarize the story. Draw and write about what happened in the beginning, middle and end of the story.

Beginning

Middle

End

The True Story of The 3 Little Pigs! Graphic Organizer

The True Story of the 3 Little Pigs!

Directions: Summarize the story. Draw and write about what happened in the beginning, middle and end of the story.

Beginning

Middle

End

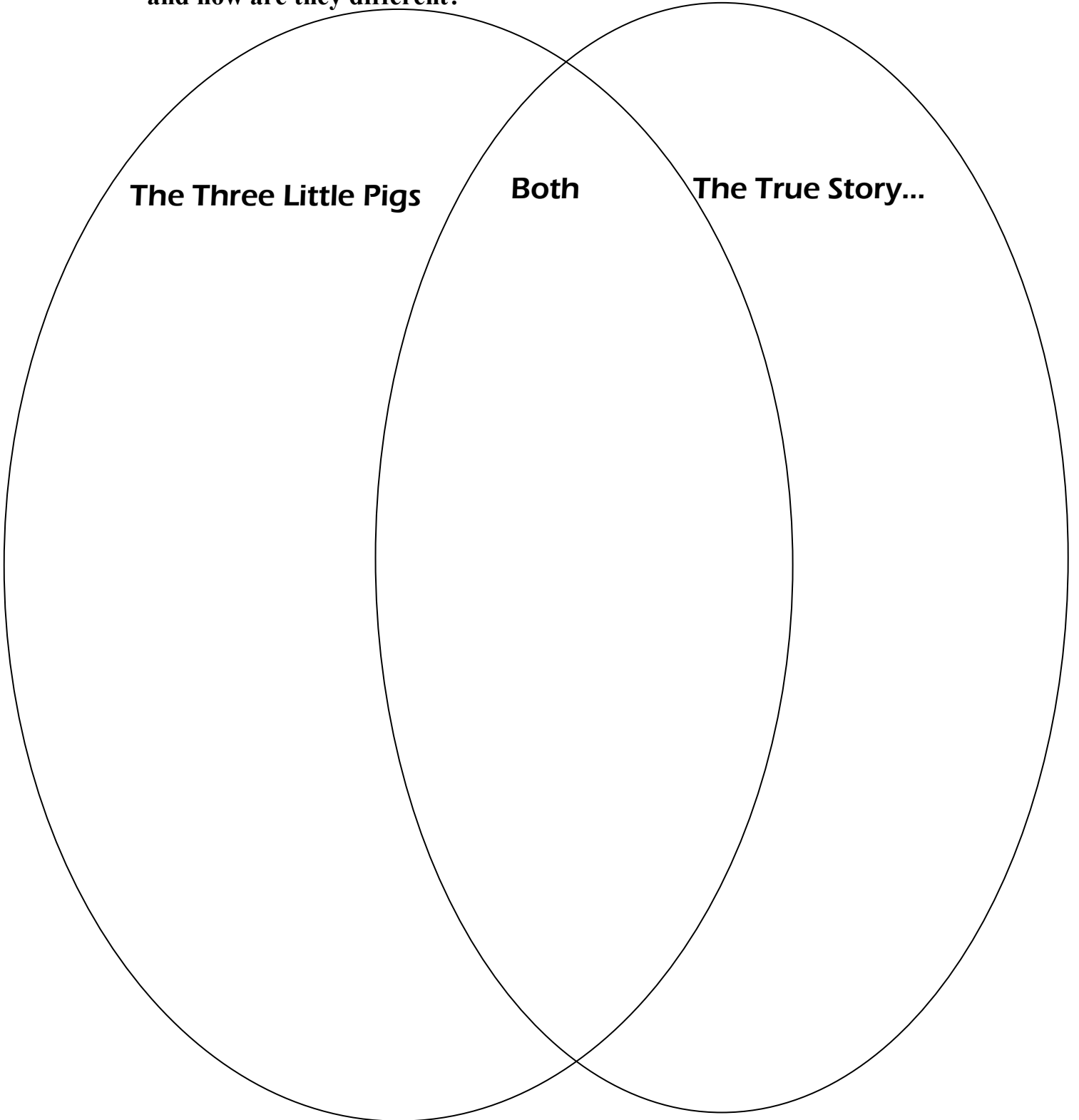
Venn Diagram

Directions: Compare and contrast the two stories. How are they alike and how are they different?

The Three Little Pigs

Both

The True Story...



	0	1	2	3	4
Theme/Content	Students demonstrate no understanding of theme. All memorization and reciting knowledge.	Students demonstrate very little knowledge of the theme. Mostly memorization and reciting knowledge.	Students demonstrate some knowledge of the theme. Mostly memorization and reciting knowledge.	Students are mostly engaged in constructing and demonstrating understanding of the theme. Some memorization and reciting knowledge.	Students are fully engaged in constructing and demonstrating understanding of the theme. Very little memorization or reciting of knowledge.
Art Form	Students do not construct or demonstrate their understanding of the art form.	Students seem unsure of their art form and do not have a complete understanding.	Students seem as if they have an understanding of the art form but have difficulty demonstrating it by themselves.	Students have full understanding of the art form and are engaged in constructing and demonstrating their art form with some assistance.	Students have full understanding of the art form and are engaged in constructing and demonstrating their art form without any assistance.
Creative Process	Students did not create any original work. Engaged in copying work. Students did not share products.	Students created some original work, but mostly engaged in copying.	Students created mostly original work, but engaged in some copying.	Students were engaged in the process of creating original work, but relied heavily on other works.	Students were engaged in the process of creating original work and created all work on their own. Students shared products.
Connection	No connection between the art form and	Small focus on the theme, but no connection,	Some connection between the art form and	Largely focused on connection between the	Clear connection between the art form and

	theme. The theme does not reinforce the art form.	and the theme does not reinforce the art form.	the theme. The theme somewhat reinforces the art form.	art form and theme. The theme somewhat reinforces the art form.	the theme. Theme enhances the art form.
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Hendrix, Rebecca, Charles Eick, and David Shannon. "The Integration of Creative Drama in an Inquiry-Based Elementary Program: The Effect on Student Attitude and Conceptual Learning." *Journal of Science Teacher Education* 23 (2012): 823-846

Rinne, Luke, Emma Gregory, Julia Yarmolinskaya, and Mariale Hardiman. "Why Arts Integration Improves Long-Term Retention of Content." *Mind, Brain, and Education* 5 (2011): 89-94

Notes

ⁱ Luke Rinne, Emma Gregory, Julia Yarmolinskaya, and Mariale Hardiman, "Why Arts Integration Improves Long-Term Retention of Content," *Mind, Brain, And Education* 5:89

ⁱⁱ Mike Flemming, Christine Merrell, and Peter Tymms, "The impact of drama on pupils' language, mathematics, and attitude in two primary school," *Research in Drama Education* 9:181

ⁱⁱⁱ Rebecca Hendrix, Charles Eick, and David Shannon, "The Integration of Creative Drama in an Inquiry-Based Elementary Program: The Effect on Student Attitude and Conceptual Learning," *Journal of Science Teacher Education* 23:826

Curriculum Unit
Title

Putting the Arts in Language Arts

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KEY LEARNING, ENDURING UNDERSTANDING, ETC.

Students will work on mastering first grade reading comprehension skills through the use of two story books and the integration of drama in the form of tableau.

ESSENTIAL QUESTION(S) for the UNIT

What is tableau?

How can a tableau be used to represent the characters, setting and plot of *The Three Little Pigs* and *The True Story of the Three Little Pigs!*?

CONCEPT A

CONCEPT B

CONCEPT C

The Three Little Pigs

Tableaux

The True story of The Three Little Pigs

ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS A

ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS B

ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS C

What is *The Three Little Pigs* about? What happens in the story?

How do you effectively perform a tableau?

What is *The True Story of The Three Little Pigs* about?
What happens in the story?

VOCABULARY A

VOCABULARY B

VOCABULARY C

Lean, sow, fortune, annoyed, gobble, sturdy, loitering, dashed

Tableau(x)

Bright

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION/MATERIAL/TEXT/FILM/RESOURCES

The Three Little Pigs by James Marshall

The True Story of the Three Little Pigs! by Jon Scieszka