



Curriculum Units by Fellows of the Yale-New Haven Teachers Institute
2005 Volume I: Stories around the World in Film and Literature

Using Oral Traditions to Improve Verbal and Listening Skills

Curriculum Unit 05.01.06
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Introduction

There are approximately 50 students who are blind or visually impaired enrolled in the New Haven Public School system. The development of superior oral and listening skills is essential to the academic progress of these students. However, for at least some students with impaired vision, acquiring and improving these skills presents considerable problems.

In my role as Teacher of the Blind and Visually Impaired, it is my responsibility to provide students with interesting and meaningful lessons and activities to overcome such difficulties. Examining oral traditions is one approach to developing quality oral and listening skills necessary for success.

This curriculum unit was developed to assist students who are blind or visually impaired in their efforts to improve oral and listening skills. This curriculum unit will attempt to help them understand the importance of words and how words are used to convey information and to influence society. Students will learn to appreciate stories, understand how they are constructed, and understand the role they played in African and African American culture.

This curriculum unit will provide students with opportunities to learn about oral traditions by studying storytelling in West African countries whose cultures are primarily oral. They also will study the role oral traditions played in aiding African Americans during their long history of enslavement.

Listening Skills

Listening is the primary learning mode for blind students and a strong supportive medium for visually impaired students. Since visually handicapped individuals rely greatly on auditory information they must become skillful listeners. Listening is their link to their immediate environment and the world beyond.

However, listening is a complicated skill and takes time and practice to develop. A skillful listener must be able to organize information and associate it with previous and subsequent learning. Individuals who are visually handicapped must learn to listen carefully whether they are attending a lecture or talking with an instructor. They must remember detailed information heard on an audiotape textbook. They must be able to

recall and organize the information obtained from talking software that allows them to access a document on their computer or surf the Internet. To a much greater extent than their sighted peers, students with visual difficulties depend on their auditory capabilities to understand and organize their world.

Auditory processing and listening skills are essential for academic progress and cognitive development of visually impaired students. Students must be able to remember what they heard including facts, figures, and details. In addition, they must be able to organize the material to write or speak about what they heard in a meaningful way.

Listening provides an efficient method of gaining information. Unless the words are remembered, processed and associated with what the individual already knows, the perception may be inaccurate, distorted, or totally without meaning. Therefore, there is a need for developing and improving listening skills.

Oral Skills

Learning to organize thoughts and verbally express them are other essential skills for individuals with visual impairments. This is a skill that will allow them to request information needed or convey information effectively to others.

Students know that communication between individuals is critical. The exercises and experiences they encounter in this unit will provide them with a new understanding and appreciation of the spoken word and will help them improve their speaking and storytelling skills.

Population

This curriculum will be taught to students who are visually impaired or blind but also should be of interest to their sighted peers. The students I teach have a variety of visual disorders. There are a number of different causes of visual impairments resulting in a wide variety of visual problems. Children can be born blind or become blind as a result of an accident, illness, or eye condition. Some individuals are totally blind while others may see light, shadows, and colors and yet have no useful vision. Students have a variety of eye disorders including: cataracts, glaucoma, ROP, macular degeneration, detached retinas, ocular albinism, etc. Depending on the eye condition, they may see images that appear blurry, distorted, or incomplete.

Unless students have other major handicapping conditions, they are mainstreamed into regular education classrooms and work along with their sighted peers with the assistance of adapted materials that vary depending on their visual functioning. Some use a cane to travel but others have little difficulty traveling. Students use various adaptations in order to access information such as Braille, large print, audiotapes, computers with talking software and telescopic devices for viewing in the distance.

The Curriculum

This curriculum will allow students to practice listening, memorizing, organizing materials, researching and giving oral presentations. All of these areas present problems for my students. The curriculum will assist my students in evaluating stories in an organized fashion. These skills will help them to understand how stories are constructed. Students will be introduced to stories that will help them to explore their world and the world of others both past and present. They will learn that written or spoken words are extremely important and that communication between individuals is critical. All the exercises and experiences will provide them with a new understanding and appreciation of the spoken and written word and will help them improve their reading and

listening skills.

This curriculum will assist students in exploring what oral traditions tell us

about different cultures by examining African and African American cultures through their stories, tales, myths and oral histories. This curriculum will explore the role stories and storytelling play in expressing the traditions and values of these cultures.

Learning Objectives

The curriculum will attempt to:

1. investigate oral traditions
2. learn about oral storytelling in West Africa
3. learn the role oral tradition played in African American history
4. analyze how non-literate stories work
5. improve listening and speaking skills
6. learn how stories are constructed
7. improve storytelling skills
8. examine the use of spirituals in the Underground Railroad
9. gain experience learning from oral tradition

Strategy

I hope to examine some of the following issues concerning oral traditions:

1. How can the visually impaired community, who depend so much on oral information, learn to improve listening skills by studying oral traditions?
2. What lessons can be learned from storytellers about how to improve speaking skills?
3. How can students improve their memory for detailed information by studying the techniques of African storytellers?

Examining oral traditions may be one way to interest students in improving their verbal and listening skills. I selected studying their oral traditions of Africa to provide my students with a different culture from the own. Learning about a different culture will make the lessons more interesting and provide them with an opportunity to compare their own literate culture with African oral cultures.

I feel that my students, as a visually impaired population who rely heavily on the use of oral information, will relate to cultures that obtain process and use oral information.

I want my students to understand that we are all surrounded by language and stories. Visually impaired and

blind use stories to put the world together and gain meaning about their world.

Individuals who are blind or visually impaired depend on verbal descriptions of the world and events around them. They need to connect those descriptions with the other senses that help them to organize their world. Listening provides the most efficient way to organize information and associate it with previous and subsequent learning.

Methodology

The following topics will be covered:

Week 1: Oral Traditions

1. Understand the importance of oral traditions
2. Gain understanding of oral presentations
3. Learn how oral cultures pass on information
4. Explore the role stories and storytelling play in expressing the traditions and values of cultures.

Week 2: Analyzing Oral Stories

1. Explore what oral traditions tell us about different cultures by examining the African cultures through their stories, tales, myths and oral histories.
2. Learn how words are used and how they are presented.
3. Learn how stories help individuals learn the details of about their history, laws, and customs
4. Learn how to analyze stories by examining characters, events, themes and plots while investigating the similarities and differences among cultures and times

Week 3: African Storytelling and Storytellers

1. How do stories work in African cultures?
2. What is the function of proverbs, fables, stories that deal with historical, social and entertainment themes?
3. Explore the role of Griots
4. The skill of the storyteller will be analyzed in order to understand how they influence or teach their audience.

Week 4: African American Oral Traditions

1. The Role of Oral Tradition in African American Culture
2. Folktales, Spirituals,

Week 5: Praise Poems

I. Study of Praise Poems

2. Creating and performing a Praise Poem

Week 6: Improving Storytelling and Listening Skills

What we learned from oral traditions that will assist us in being better speakers and listeners

Part I: Oral Traditions

Oral traditions, throughout the ages, have provided societies with a means of conveying

and preserving their history, values, rituals, traditions, spiritual practices, genealogy and other important collective knowledge and experience. Oral Traditions helped societies make sense of the world and were used to teach children and adults about the important aspects of their culture. In addition, storytelling provided entertainment, developed the imagination, taught important lessons about everyday life, and passed on this information to the younger generation.

Oral traditions were important in all societies, but for some societies they became the preferred means for conveying this information to the community for various reasons. Storytelling developed in oral cultures because it was easier to remember information as a series of events instead of as a set of facts . Without libraries or archives it was the responsibility of the oral historians to keep records and orally pass on the information to the younger generations.

Oral traditions are highly structured and the storyline is repeated over generations with only small details changing. On the other hand, because they are oral texts, they are not static or unchanging. Therefore, the oral text may evolve somewhat with time, place, regional style, performer and audiences in order to keep the ideas relevant. Also, the narrative may slowly change as the values and conditions of the society change. And additional scenes or descriptions may be added to improve the story or make it more meaningful.

The Art of Storytelling and Storytellers

Storytelling is an art. The storyteller's tools are words assisted by gestures, singing, facial expressions, body movements and acting to make their stories more memorable and interesting and to express moods and feelings. The storyteller begins the presentation slowly, building up the tension and emotion, until he reaches a dramatic climax. They perform epics that are sometimes hours or even days long that relate the history and genealogy, battles and political uprisings of a community.

Storytellers relayed this information using a variety of formats such as narratives, folk tales, proverbs, riddles, and myths to educate and entertain the community. In addition, skilled storytellers or wordsmiths used songs, dances, poetry, praise-songs and dramas along with gestures and facial expressions; masks and costumes; and other devices to enhance their presentations.

For many cultures, storytelling was an important communal event. The communities sat together and listened, responded and were entertained with accounts of past deeds, beliefs, taboos, myths and tribal histories .

The storyteller also played an important part in how the stories were presented. The storyteller's interests and creativity provided opportunities for improvisation. Gifted or well-known storytellers often repeated the story with the same words and same expressions in each performance as they traveled or met other storytellers they added to their repertoire. They may, at times, also have added new material to an old story to make it more interesting or meaningful to the times and audiences.

Characteristics of Oral Traditions

Oral stories utilize the following:

1. repetition of phrases to emphasize points or themes
2. interaction with the audience
3. strong rhythm and meter
4. music, costume, and props
5. idiomatic expressions
6. strong imagery
7. techniques such as onomatopoeia (creating sounds that imitate sounds found in nature)

Oral tradition gives a great deal of emphasis to the rhythm and repetition of the language. In fact, repetition and rhythm are two of the most important, interrelated characteristics of oral storytelling. Storytellers often repeat words, phrases, refrains, sounds, whole lines and even stanzas. The storyteller pays close attention to the beat and how the words sound. This use of repetition is a tool used to make points and draws attention to situations and events and to emphasize the segments of the story that are important.

In addition, repetition creates a rhythm and meter to the text that grows and becomes stronger with use. At the same time, the use of repetition assists the audience in remembering the chorus and allows them to join in with the storyteller. Also, the use of short phrases makes the stories easier to understand and easier to recall from memory. In turn, familiarity with the stories and audience involvement helps individuals feel they belong to the community.

Oral Traditions of Africa

There is a rich tradition throughout Africa of oral storytelling. The transmission of tradition in West Africa relied principally on oral tradition and performance rather than on written texts. However, writing was not absent in Africa culture . Written history had been around in Arabic for centuries. In the twelfth century, Islam began to spread in West Africa. At the same time Arabic language was used to record religious writings. Later Arabic was also used to translate secular information including oral traditions including written texts. However, the

majority of people did not read or write Arabic.

During the colonial era in the late 1800's African history was written in European languages when colonists brought the French, English and Dutch languages to Africa. However, this recorded history was also from a European point of view and the majority of people did not read or write these languages. These written texts did not replace the role and respect of the powerful storytellers of the region. Societies in the Sahel and Savanna regions of West Africa continued to record their history, in their own languages in the form of oral epics and the oral tradition continued to be the primary source of information for people in West Africa.

Storytellers of Africa

African culture has many traditional ceremonies, ritual dramas, riddles, proverbs, customs, taboos, and games important to their community. Oral tradition is the major technique to preserve these traditions and to ensure and strengthen cultural identity. Storytellers were the individuals assigned with the important task of guaranteeing that this information was presented faithfully to the community.

Griots (pronounced "greeoh") are storytellers and oral historians who are descendents of an ancient occupational caste. In some tribes, griots are part of a separate social group that cannot marry outside their caste. Originally they were court musicians that sang at naming ceremonies, weddings, and religious gatherings. They evolved into advisors to nobility and messengers to the community. Griots sing songs of praise for their leaders and recount the great deeds of ancestors and the history of the society. Griots are rewarded for their serve to individuals and the community. Their fee varies and ranges from a few coins or a blanket to more substantial payments depending on the audience and the skill and popularity of the storyteller.

In West Africa griots have been practicing their craft for hundreds of years. Griots are

described as "the all-seeing, all-knowing eyes of society." There is a spiritual and ethical dimension to their performances and it is believed that special forces are released through the spoken or musical part of their performance. For instance, the Mande people of West Africa believe they call on the power and primal energies of creation and destruction.

Griots are masters not only of words but also of music. They are often talented and well-trained singers and musicians that accompany themselves using a variety of instruments. The kora, a 21-stringed instrument with two rows of strings on a long neck and body that sounds similar to a flamenco guitar, is one such instrument.

Female Storytellers - Griottes

Female storytellers are known as griottes . Griottes traditionally sing at ceremonies, celebrations, and special occasions. When a woman is to be married, griottes sing to her to prepare her for her new life. West African women sing about a women's role in the society and their relationships with husbands and in-laws.

Griottes also use songs to express their independence and self-reliance or to give comfort, encouragement, and empowerment to other women. The *saabi* is a long poetic narrative form sung by West African women to reveal the nature of relationships between men and women.

Training of Storytellers

Griots are accomplished storytellers and troubadours who must master verbal, musical and memory skills after undergoing an extensive training process that includes years of specialized training. Griots are the keepers of the secrets and history of entire villages over hundreds of years. It is their job to learn each detail of genealogies and histories and pass these facts on to younger generations. Griots must have good memories because they must be able to recite or sing long passages that convey the entire history of families including births, deaths, and weddings.

Training of griots begins at an early age. Their parents, who are griots, are their first teachers. Older children move on to griot schools and later must complete an apprenticeship with a master griot. West Africa is a patriarchal society but both boys and girls can become griots. However, obligations to the family are more pressing for girls so they are not often able to travel and study as easily as boys.

Their Role In Modern Times

Griots continue to play an important role in modern West African societies. However, the griots position in African society has changed in modern times as society evolved. These performers are still in great demand to conduct ceremonies and parties in West Africa, and around the world. But, today they also are popular singers who reinterpret traditional songs and perform on television and radio and record CDs. Griots are often the narrators in African film and explain or comment on the action or set the stage for the tale being told.

Despite the changes in their duties, they continue to be respected members of the West African culture and provide a strong link to the past. They continue to be the historians, genealogists, advisers to nobility, entertainers, messengers, and praise singers in communities. And they continue to be both feared and respected for their wisdom and talent with words as they can sing praises but can also sing the doom of an individual.

Part II: Techniques of African Storytelling

Call and Response Form

African storytelling is often a participatory experience where the storyteller and audience interact with each other while the story is being told. The storyteller often repeats important phrases or ideas. A "Call and Response Form" is utilized in which the storyteller or caller "raises the song" while a chorus of community members responds or agrees. During performances the audience often interrupts to provide criticism or suggestions. This form is used throughout Africa.

"Call-and-response" is a feature of storytelling during which the audience repeatedly responds on cue with its line and repeats the same line throughout the performance. The storyteller or poet recites a line and the audience answers with a set retort. In doing so, a pattern develops in which the storyteller and audience alternate responses. This call and response style also allows members of the community to express their hopes and sadness and sorrows and joy.

Today this practice continues and is similar to many African-American worship services as seen in the response of "amen" or by repeating the key points made by the minister during the preaching of the sermon.

The Praise Song

An important component of African oral tradition is the praise song. A praise song is a spoken poem about a person that is chanted to a drum beat or performed as a song. Each line contains a "praise name" or a colorful description of some aspect of the person.

Part III: African American Culture through Oral Tradition

African American literary life is rooted in West African oral traditions. A rich and diverse culture existed even under slavery. Enslaved Africans brought their cultures, languages and customs with them from their homelands. Slaveholders tried to suppress their African heritage and prevent them from being educated. In an effort to control them and prevent them from rebelling or escaping, slaveholders restricted slaves from speaking their languages and learning to read and write. However, slaves were inventive in their attempts maintain their heritage and storytelling aided in this effort.

Storytelling became a means of empowerment for slaves and allowed them to:

1. preserve and transmit their culture
2. provide entertainment
3. offer some relief from the slavery.
4. encouraged slave solidarity
5. engage in an activity that slaveholders could not entirely control
6. teach children fundamentals of survival
7. instill a strong sense of morality, culture, and tradition
8. voice uncertainties and frustrations
9. offer a message of integration and stability
10. provide a means for transmitting information to runaway slaves

Africans forced into slavery found themselves in unknown lands far from their families, communities and traditions. As slaves they were not allowed to use their native languages for speaking or singing. However, as they worked in the fields they sang work songs and field hollers to pass the time and in their churches they sang spirituals.

These songs were also a way to tell stories, pass messages or escape plots and broadcast news.

A rich oral tradition helped to ensure that slavery did not reduce the creativity or spirit of the African race. Storytelling, songs and telling riddles were a favorite evening pastime for African slaves. They used storytelling and songs to enlighten, educate, entertain and express themselves while fooling their captors.

Folktales- An African American Oral Tradition

African traditions played a vital role in shaping African-American literature. Folktales and spirituals were the combination of their experiences in America merged with the customs and memories from their homelands. The use of hidden meanings in their stories and songs helped to outwit their slaveholders and encourage their fellow slaves.

Storytellers can protest a situation in which they feel they are victims. Slaves often told stories in which the slave owner was outfoxed by his slaves. Fools often turn out to be wiser than the educated; the poor know more than the rich. This allowed the slaves to protest in a way that is not as dangerous because it is not direct.

Folktales are an essential feature of African American oral tradition. Folktales included tales about legendary heroes, heroic deeds, magic, and witches. The most important subject of African American folktales was the oppression and segregation that African Americans were subjected during slavery.

Folktales are the common property of the community as well as a product of a joint and communal authorship. Stories are modified and enriched, as they are transmitted from one person to another and one generation to another.

Spirituals

African American slaves who were not allowed to practice their traditional African religions often adopted Christianity. However, fearing they would attempt to plan escapes and rebellions, slaveholders did not allow them to gather openly to worship. Instead they had to meet secretly.

Spirituals played an important part in the everyday life of African Americans. Spirituals were influenced by African religious traditions, Christian traditions, and the conditions and experiences of slavery. Spirituals provided hope and comfort to their followers. Spirituals also allowed them to express their feelings of hope and joy events as well as to express their feelings of sorrow and despair. Spirituals assisted in creating a community where they could rejoice and renew their faith in humanity while supporting their fellow slaves.

In some cases, stories and spirituals were used as secret signals to fugitive slaves on the Underground Railroad. In addition, spirituals became a method of conveying information on dangers and escape plans and locations for meeting places. In addition, spirituals provided refuge from their terrible plight and helped them to support fellow slaves.

Part V: New Haven Public School Performance Standards

1. Content Standard: 3.0 - Speaking

Students will develop strategic speaking skills that ensure success in oral communication

2. Performance Standard: 3.1 -Speaking

Students will demonstrate strategic speaking skills before, during and after speaking.

3. Performance Standard: 4.1 -Listening

Students will demonstrate strategic listening skills before, during and after listening.

4. Performance Standard: 6.3- Literary Experiences

Students will participate in a wide variety of literary experiences.

5. Performance Standard: 6.4 -Language

Students will demonstrate understanding of diversity through the study of language, literature and culture.

Lesson I: Creating a Praise Poem

Objective: To create and perform a praise poem

Goals: Students will:

1. research and study the history and use of praise poems
2. read and listen to various praise poems
3. discuss the various components that make up praise poems
4. compose a praise poem that will describe their heritage, unique qualities, and emotions.

African Praise Songs: African names carry the stories of the individual. They describe who you are, where you came from, and what events have been important in your life. You have a "name" so others can "know" you. Praise poems are special chants that are recited to identify your family, your community, your ancestors, your place in society as well as other characteristics and circumstances that are important to you. In a lifetime, a person may acquire many "praise names." Individuals create naming songs to tell their story and recount their lineage by chanting the names of living and dead ancestors in their family or clan.

Resources :

Gift of the Tortoise: A Musical Journey through Southern Africa , Music for Little People-Warner Brothers, 1994, (Track 12, time: 2:15)

Gleason, Judith, ed. *Leaf and Bone: African Praise-Poems*. New York, Penguin, 1994

Method:

Instructions to student: Your poem will include 5 lines. These are examples you may use.

Line 1: Name: (Note: Your name may be sometimes that describes you or makes you stand out as an individual such as height, talent, or any thing that "names" or describes who you.

Your words should give others a clear picture of you. Reveal those aspects that you are comfortable in revealing.)

Line 2: The meaning of your name

Line 3: Interesting events about your birth

Line 4: Your heritage

Line 5: A personal fact or description of you physically that makes you stand out such as a hair style

Create a "call and response" phrase that will be repeated by the class at the appropriate times in your poem.

You can add music, rhythms, or props.

Example: Anna (name)

Birth with the snow (in January)

Long, long hair (physical feature)

Morning darkness, evening darkness, always, always (blind)

Dancing, dancing (favorite activity)

Lesson II: History as We Saw It

Family stories can connect students to their heritage and be a resource for historical research. By interviewing their family members they can uncover important events in their family and community history. By using carefully worded and questions they can obtain a unique personal insight into the nation's past and learn the impact of that history had on their family and community.

This lesson plan is designed to help students conduct oral history interviews with family members and community members. Using a series of classroom activities, this lesson introduces students to the riches historians can uncover conducting firsthand recollections.

Step 1: choose a topic

Step 2: prepare for a family interview

Step 3: learn how to conduct and record the interview

Step 4: share their family stories in a historical narrative, praise song, epic, poem, songs

Guiding Questions

How has American history touched your family and community? What stories do your family tell that may add to our local or national history? How does their experience help you understand the past?

Learning Objectives

After completing the lessons in this unit, students will be able to:

Analyze examples of oral history

Develop an oral history research topic

Prepare questions to ask during an oral history interview

Conduct an oral history interview using a tape recorder

Provide evidence of the impact historical events have on individuals and families

Preparing to Teach this Lesson

Discuss oral histories and the methods used to conduct them.

1. Discuss what can be learned from family histories
2. Discuss interviewing techniques
3. Provide practice time for interviewing
4. Create meaningful questions for the interview
5. Access websites that offer guidelines and suggestions for conducting interviews

Discuss the ethical and legal considerations associated with any oral history projects.

Use the Oral History Association at Dickinson.edu/organizations/oha/guidelines or similar resources to protect privacy and confidentiality

Consider the following:

Persons interviewed must be informed about the purposes of the project and the potential uses of their interview

Materials needed

Computer with adaptations for visually impaired or blind students:

1. JAWS (a screen reader to navigate website and read text on screen)
2. Zoomtext (software that allows text on screen to be enlarged)
3. Computer with web access
4. Tape Recorder

Websites

The Digital Classroom [www. nara.gov/education/classrm.html](http://www.nara.gov/education/classrm.html)

This activity introduces students to the experience of organizing and conducting an oral history interview recording

1. Divide the class into study groups
2. Find information on the Internet on conducting interviews with family members
3. Identify a topic relevant to experience of interviewee
4. Develop questions for the interview outline the questions they will ask in their interviews.

Remind the students to keep the topic broad enough to allow for a wide-ranging discussion yet focused giving the interview direction.

Examples: What memories do they have of these events? Did they take part in the events or were they observers? What were people talking about at the time? How did the events affect them?

National and Local Topics to Consider:

- 1 The Civil Rights Movement
- 2 The Black-Panther Trial in New Haven
- 3 Watergate
- 4 The Black Power Movement
- 5 Landing on the Moon
- 6 The Women's Movement

Step Two: Background Research

Students should conduct background research on the topic selected to become familiar with the basic facts on the event.

Step Three: Planning Your Questions

Ask open-ended questions such as:

- 1 How did you react to the event and why?
- 2 What were your experience concerning the event?
- 3 What were your feelings about this activity?
- 4 Tell me about...?
- 5 How did people react when...?
- 6 What do you remember about.....?
- 7 Where were you when you heard....?
- 8 When did you realize.....?
- 9 Why?

Step Four: Conducting the Interview

- 1 Students should be familiar with use of tape recorders before the interview and should have a list of general questions and topics that will be covered
- 2 Obtain a signed release from participant

Checklist for interview:

- 3 Have a list of questions in Braille or in a type size and format that is easy to read. Bring a pad of paper and a pen, laptop or Braille notetaker in order to take notes during the interview.
- 4 Label the tape with the date, the full name of the family member you are interviewing, and the topic you plan to explore.
- 5 Before beginning the interview, the student should have the family member sign and date a release form that explains the purpose of your interview and how you plan to use the information you collect. They should also sign the release form at the same time.
- 6 Turn on the tape recorder and state the name of person to be interviewed, date, location of interview, purpose and topic of interview for the record.
- 7 Get a little background information on family member
- 8 Conduct the interview.

Students will listen to their interviews and produce a summary. Transcribe a key part including stories and statements that are especially interesting or revealing and that will bring a moment in the past back to life.

A class discussion will be designed to help them share evidence from their interviews on the impact events had on individual lives and how individuals impacted the events they participated in or witnessed.

1 Compare a family member's recollection of an event with accounts their background research and with other interviews from different families recalling the same event.

2 Investigate how stories are different or the similar.

3 Have students construct their own historical narratives or reports that tell their family member's story in his or her own words with the addition of their background research to fill in details and provide historical context.

4 They should quote accurately from their interview and indicate which parts of the narrative are direct quotations, indirect quotations or their own summary.

5 Students will also share their oral history findings in a class presentation that combines audio clips from their interview or from their research on the topic.

Teacher Reading List

Griots and Griottes: Masters of Words and Music, Hale, Thomas. A., Indiana University Press, Bloomington, Indiana, 1998.

Hale is the authority on African storytellers. This is an informative and useful book providing a well-researched background of African oral tradition.

The African American Storytelling Collection, Volume 2, Bonneville Video, 11/98.

This is a 3 set VHS tape collection of African American Storytelling. It provides useful information and with optical aids can be viewed by visually impaired.

Mutere, Malaika. [African Studies, Howard University.] "Introduction to African History and Cultural Life: An African Historical Framework" and "African Oral Aesthetic." African Odyssey Arts & Education Resources. The Kennedy Center African Odyssey Interactive. <http://artsedge.kennedy-center.org/ao/-guide.html>.

Student Reading List

A Treasury of African-American Folklore: Marlowe & Co. Avalon Publishing Group, NY, 1996.

An extensive collection of powerful oral literature including traditions, recollections, legends, tales, songs, religious beliefs, customs, sayings, and humor from people of African descent.

African American Folktales: Stories from Black Traditions, Abrahams, Roger D., Pantheon, 1999.

African American Griot Tales, Baba Jamal Koram, Storybook Productions, March 2005.

An interesting CD that provides examples of African American Griot Tales.

Nelson Mandela's Favorite African Folktales, Mandela, Nelson, Tafelberg Publishing, Ltd., Capetown, South Africa, 2002.

Nobel Peace laureate, Nelson Mandela, presents a diverse collection of traditional tales told by a variety of storytellers and folklorists. Great illustrations.

The Fire Children: A West African Creation Tale, Maddern, Eric., Dial, 1993.

The retelling of an Akan creation myth of the world and its people.

The People Could Fly: A Collection of African American Folktales, Hamilton, Virginia, Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., 1993.

A wonderful collection of folktales from an African-American perspective that shows the strength of people who use spirituality, magic, and wonder to overcome oppression. A children's book that is approach for teens and adults.

Websites

Oral History Workshop on the Web www.baylor.edu/~Oral_History/

Folklife and Fieldwork: A Layman's Introduction to Field Techniques web.loc.gov/folklife/fieldwk.html

<http://artsedge.kennedy-center.org/aoi/artsedge.html>

The following are interesting fables and folktales from Africa.

Why Crocodile has a Rough Back <http://www.afro.com/children/myths/crocodile/intro.html>

The Jackal and the Leopard

<http://www.afro.com/children/myths/leopard/intro.html>

The Lion and the Hare

<http://www.afro.com/children/myths/lion/intro.html>

The Rabbit, Elephant, and the Whale

<http://www.afro.com/children/myths/rabbit/intro.html>

Tiger and the Big Wind

<http://www.afro.com/children/myths/wind/intro.html>

1. <http://artsedge.kennedy-center.org/aoi/artsedge.html>, June 4, 3005

2. Keepers of History, Lott, Joanna, Penn State University, www.psu.edu, updated 5/8/2002

3. Griots and Griottes, Hale, Thomas A., Indiana University Press, 1998.

4. Cora Agatucci, African Storytelling: Oral Traditions\

(www.cocc.edu/cagatucci/classes/hum211/afrstory.htm 2003, Mar 8)

<https://teachersinstitute.yale.edu>

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