



Drama and African American Folktales: Addressing the Social Needs of My Students

Guide for Curriculum Unit 93.03.04
by Toni Cates

In my curriculum unit, I will combine elements of theater with the traditional academic subjects that I teach in my fifth grade classroom at Vincent E. Mauro School. I have objectives for my students that include learning about drama along with their other traditional subjects, while exploring the use of African American folktales for performing pieces. Also, the social needs of my students will be addressed. Something exciting happens when children prepare for a classroom production. In the past, my students' interest in learning, confidence while speaking, and interpretation of their heritage has increased as the result of a good performance piece.

I will give the reader some idea of how to use theater games, dance, scene study, improvisation, acting lessons, rehearsal, and folktales during their reading, language arts, social studies or history periods. Because I have been teaching drama for years in the Connecticut area, my work has enabled me to take a boring reading lesson and turn it into a joyous drama experience for my students. Consequently, the objectives are mastered for that particular lesson, along with the students' ability to work well with others. The students I work with in my classroom usually exhibit a wide range of learning abilities and social skills. My unit will have a direct impact on the needs of the individual student. In previous years, I have discovered that drama has played a valuable role in solving specific problems in the student's class work.

This has been a typical question of mine at the beginning of school in September: "Do you want to put on a play?" That is all that is needed to spark the interests of a classroom full of willing learners.

(Recommended for Language Arts and Reading, Grade 5)

Key Words

Latin America Music

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