Object Stories: Oral Storytelling

Portland Art Museum Education
Middle School Curriculum

I. Outcomes: Students tell stories about their own objects with description and personal meaning.

   a. Indicators: Prompts for describing own object with detail.

      Prompts: Be sure to describe what your object looks like. People who hear your story will not have ever seen it so be sure to paint them a picture with your words.

   b. Indicators: Prompts for supporting story and developing meaning.

      i. Students tell about the relationship between own object and self: time, place, or people.

      Prompts: Don’t forget to explain how you got your object. Whether you got it from someone or with someone, and when and where this was.

      ii. Students identify the meaning associated with the object.

      Prompts: Explain why your object is important to you!

II. Big Idea: Objects of all kinds carry personal and cultural stories across time and place.

III. Materials:

   • Rhythm sticks

IV. Lesson:

   a. Opener:

      i. Introduce the activity. You can see model stories at
         teachers.objectstories.org/studentstories
      ii. Go over behavior expectations and agenda for session.
      iii. Describe what the recording experience will be like.

   B. Procedure:

      i. Model Storytelling

         a. Tell a story that demonstrates horrible story telling technique. The model storyteller should do an especially bad job with pacing, volume, pronunciation, and tone. (It should be so obviously bad it is funny.)
Recommendation: a familiar story like *Little Red Riding Hood*.

ii. **Brainstorming**: Ask student what advice they would give the storyteller to work on for next time. Write student responses on a white board, or poster paper so everyone can see the list. Make sure to list: pacing, volume, pronunciation and tone.

iii. **Pair Practice**: Partner the students. One person will tell their story to their partner keeping in mind pacing, volume, tone and pronunciation. Ask students to begin (45 sec time to tell story). Give cue to stop after 45 sec, it is all right if they have not finished and ask the listening partner to rate them—Thumbs up, down, middle— for each:
   1. Pacing? Too fast or slow= thumbs down.
   2. Volume? Too quiet or too loud= thumbs down.
   3. Pronunciation? Could you understand their speech. Rate with thumbs
   4. Tone?

Ask partners to switch roles and repeat the exercise with a different time allotment.

- Partners turn. Repeat exercise. 45 sec time to tell story. Thumbs up, down, middle.

iv. **Form Focus Circles**: The number of students depends on class size but each should have an adult facilitator. For groups and hand out *evaluation forms*. Go over evaluation directions with the class and instruct students they will practice telling their story and listening and giving feedback to their classmates. The adult facilitators will tell their “Object Story” first and model good storytelling technique. Facilitators will also encourage helpful comments from peers and provide their own constructive critiques. Facilitators also want to keep track of time—students have 2 mins to tell their stories.

C. **Closer**: Each student goes over their evaluation forms and shares with their small group what they will practice before coming to record in the booth.

V. **Common Core Standards**: 6.W.3- Write Narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, relevant descriptive details, and well-structured event sequences (see Downloads for this activity.).
   a. Engage and orient the reader by establishing a context and introducing a narrator and/or characters; organize an event sequence that unfolds naturally and logically.
   b. Use precise words and phrases, relevant descriptive details, and sensory language to convey experiences and events.