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Lesson Title: Reader’s Theatre: Understanding heritage
School: Garland Elementary School
Grade level: 6th-8th

**LESSON JUSTIFICATION**

*Who are your students?* I will be working with a group of twelve students. Three (beginner) are at an English reading level of 1.6-2.0, three (intermediate) are at a level 2.5-4.6, and three (advanced) are at levels 5-6.0. Four are from Malaysia and speak Malay, and one of them also speaks Burmese. Five speak Arabic and are from different countries: Sudan, Israel, Syria, and Jordan. The other three are from Palestine.

*What are you teaching?* This arts-integrated lesson uses the Reader’s Theatre model to support English Language Learner’s (ELL) development of reading fluently, with emotion and appropriate pauses. This is a challenge for students in ESL because they often read for pronunciation only and cannot focus on comprehension. The non-threatening classroom environment of only ELL students allows students the space and time to focus on pronunciation and comprehension, emotive delivery, and then a low-stakes performance at the end. This lesson will be carried out over several days. Usually, Reader’s Theatre is a quick arts-integrated activity, but there is a lot of pre-teaching and scaffolding that needs to be done to make sure students at all English acquisition levels feel prepared to perform, in terms of pronunciation, comprehension, and delivery.

*Big Idea/Conceptual Theme: How does this lesson connect with and build on previous/subsequent lesson(s)?* The majority of the students need the most support with reading comprehension, especially the beginner to intermediate students who have only been in the country for 1.5 to 3 years. We regularly pull students aside to work one-one or two-one on pronunciation and comprehension throughout the week, so this reader’s theatre format will incorporate elements of those lessons, but with a more fun outcome and engaging format. We try out best to make the one-one lessons not feel punitive, but students don’t always enjoy them very much because they want to be with their peers during the whole class.

**Content Objective:**
*Beginner:* Students will be able to match vocabulary words to illustrations of the words.
*Intermediate:* Students will be able to produce complete sentences with main ideas and details about the story.
*Advanced:* Students will be able to write their own narrative about what they are proud of in their heritage.

**Language Objective:**
*Beginner:* Students will be able to orally read short phrases with mostly target-like to target-like pronunciation.
*Intermediate:* Students will be able to orally read singular sentences of Montsho’s parts with expression and accuracy.
*Advanced:* Students will be able to orally read multiple sentences of Grandpa’s parts with expression and accuracy.
WIDA Standards: 
*English Language Development Standard 2: The Language of Language Arts*

**Rationale:** Why do students need to know this content? 
This lesson addresses reading comprehension, writing skills, and developing fluent and expressive oratory skills, which students need more practice with. This lesson also teaches students about the importance of being proud of their heritage. They all come from different countries, and I believe that since we do not have the capacity to support their native language development in school (no bilingual program for all of their languages), the least we can do is support their cultural pride.

**Teaching format:** What teaching format are you using and why? (whole group, small group, pairs, individual, etc.) Instruction will be in small groups according to reading level, and then whole group for the rehearsals and final performance.

**Modifications and Adaptations for various proficiency levels:** What will level 1 learners do in comparison to level 3? 
Students at levels 1-2 will read the short sentences highlighted in their scripts. If there is a level 1 student that is in the entering stage (recent arrival), they will read aloud with another student that is in the beginning stage. They will also read the lines of the Chorus in unison. There are currently enough lines for three beginner students, who can be paired with entering students. For their writing activity, they will complete a vocabulary-matching activity.

Intermediate students, levels 3-4, will read the lines of Montsho. There are currently enough lines for three Montsho characters. All of them participate in Act 1, and then take turns in Acts 2-4. For their writing activity, they will respond to questions about the content of the story using complete sentences.

Advanced students, levels 5-6, will read the lines of Grandpa. There are currently enough lines for three Grandpa characters. Each one takes turns participating by act. For their writing activity, students will be able to write their own narrative about what they are proud of in their heritage.

**Making Content Comprehensible:** How will you make the lesson content comprehensible to the various proficiency levels demonstrated by your students? (ie. Manipulatives, visuals, realia, demonstrations, modeling, etc.) 
I will read the story to students first as a whole group, and then to each reading group individually to model pronunciation and emotive delivery. We will also use a lot of visuals for vocabulary and some realia for words like drum, mask, dark.

**Building/Activating Background:** What do you know about your students’ everyday experiences, cultural and language backgrounds, and interests as they relate to this lesson? 
My students come from six different countries, practice a variety of religions, speak different languages, and a majority of them arrived here as refugees displaced from their homelands. They all express excitement when given the opportunity to speak about their home country or cultural practices once they gain the English skills to communicate them. When given the opportunity, they also speak very bluntly about the racism and violence they have experienced. I think this story will help address some of the anti-blackness and general prejudice that has been part of their experiences all over the world, and encourage them to continue to learn about their culture through the resources available to them, like family, books, the internet, even though they are not there anymore.
Assessment: How will you know that your objectives have been achieved? What assessment tool(s) will you use to measure both content and language objectives?
Beginner students will focus mostly on vocabulary identification and target-like pronunciation of the short sentences in their script. To assess this I will have students complete vocabulary matching worksheets each day, for each section (Act 1, 2, and 3) of the story. The language objective will be evaluated based on the final oral delivery of their lines in the performance.

Intermediate students will have their comprehension assessed based on their daily responses to the worksheet of comprehension questions from Act 1, 2, and 3. The language objective will be evaluated based on the final oral delivery of their lines in the performance.

Advanced students’ comprehension and ability to extend beyond the text will be assessed based on their final responses to the three writing prompts they are given after each act. The language objective will be evaluated based on the final oral delivery of their lines in the performance.

ACADEMIC LANGUAGE

Language function (ex. compare/contrast, sequence, hypothesize, etc.):
Theatre, performance, actor/actress/acting, act, emotion, script

Vocabulary to be pre-taught:
Act 1 Vocabulary: Heritage, dark, black widow spider, hide, poison, ashamed, bush, witches, folks, crooked

Act 2 Vocabulary: Ancestors, drum, proud

Act 3 Vocabulary: Masks, pyramid, sun dial, water clock

How will academic and content vocabulary be taught? (ie. demonstrated, modeled, visuals, manipulatives, etc.)
Academic vocabulary will be exemplified using a brief video of students performing a play. We will discuss the different parts of the play. This will model the idea of theatre, what a performance is, who the actors are, and what it sounds like to say something with emotion. I will also model emotive reading when I read the story to the students.

Vocabulary from the different acts will be pre-taught before reading each act. We will use visual images to learn words like dark, black widow spider, poison, bush, witches, folks, etc. We will use realia to learn words like drum, masks, crooked. I will also demonstrate the meaning of words like hide, ashamed, proud, with the help of intermediate and advanced students using TPR.

Modalities Addressed:
Students will show what they are learning by reading, listening, speaking and listening.

Troubleshooting: What is your plan B if academic language is not understood?
I anticipate that words like heritage and ancestors will be hardest to understand. If this is the case, I will ask a student about where they are from, what language they speak there, what food they eat, and other aspects of their cultural heritage, list them on the board, and explain that this information is part of their heritage. I will do the same with ancestors. I will draw a family tree and show that the people who have passed away, including grandparents, great grandparents, great-great grandparents are ancestors. For other words, I will use pictures online and videos to help explain them more.
MATERIALS

What materials and supplementary materials are needed to make content comprehensible?
- Modified scripts for beginner, intermediate, and advanced students
- Worksheets for intermediate students
- Writing prompts for advanced students
- Vocabulary sheets for each part of the story
- Ideally, an African drummer that could come in and teach the students some beats on djembes that we can incorporate into the performance.

LESSON AND INSTRUCTIONAL STRATEGIES: WRITE WHAT YOU WILL DO AND SAY

Sheltered Instruction Strategies to be incorporated: Reader’s theatre, realia, visuals, TPR, partners, modeling

Introduction of Lesson:

Build/Activate background: Can anyone remind me how many countries students are from in this class (six)? That is a lot of countries for only 12 students! You all come from different parts of the world that not many people know about. I have never been to any of those countries, but I love learning about them from you. Many of you have also told me about how people were mean to you because of your dark skin or where your family is from. How did it make you feel when those things were said about you?

Introduce content/topic: Well, today we are going to read a story about a boy named Montsho who feels bad because he learns that people think being Black is bad. His grandfather (Can someone tell me what a grandfather is? *Mom or dad’s father*) teaches him about his heritage and helps him learn to be proud of being Black and his African ancestors. I will talk more about what “ancestors” means a little later. We are going to do things differently with this story. We are going to become *actors.* We will each have a part of the story to read and after we practice reading it a lot, we will *perform* the story together.

Introduce language objectives: We are each going to read part of the story out-loud with emotion.

Lesson Sequence and strategies used (include opportunities for students to interact and practice new content):

**DAY 1**

1. Build/Activate Background: See directions above.
2. Share the objectives with the students: Write the objectives on the board for students to see and hear.
3. Pre-teach vocabulary: First, pre-teach language function vocabulary. Ask students is they have ever been to the theatre to watch a play. If yes, ask for more details. In any case, play the short video of the play and have students watch it for a couple minutes. Stop and explain what the different elements are: they are in a theatre, the students are the actors, they are speaking their lines, the whole thing is a performance, etc. Explain that this is kind of what we will do with the story about Montsho. We will perform the story after practicing it a lot. Everyone will get a script (a copy of the story with the parts they say) to practice. Check for understanding by asking student(s) to explain what the different language function words are.
4. Show students the book we will read and hand out Act 1’s vocabulary list. Pull up projection of vocab on the screen. Review vocabulary words as indicated above in “How will academic and content vocabulary be taught?”
5. Do a group reading of the story. First, the teacher will read ACT 1 and then students will break into their groups and read it together and practice their lines. Draw students’ attention to the emotion the teacher uses to read different parts. Circulate the room to support students.

6. Have students complete their respective worksheets/writing prompts for Act 1. Take home if necessary.

**DAY 2**

1. Recap what was read the day before briefly and check for retention of understanding of theatre, performance, script, actors.
2. Pre-teach vocabulary for Act 2 following directions from How will Academic and Content Vocabulary be taught?
3. Teacher reads Act 1 and Act 2 out-loud to the class, drawing their attention to where different emotions come through in the reading.
4. Students break up into their groups to re-read and practice their lines for Act 2. Emphasize appropriate language objectives for beginner, intermediate, and advance students.
5. Do a run through of Acts 1 & 2 together as a class.
6. Students work on their respective worksheets during the last 10-15 minutes of class time. Take home if necessary.

**DAY 3**

1. Recap what was read the day before briefly and check for retention of vocabulary. Collect worksheets if they were taken home.
2. Pre-teach vocabulary for Act 3 How will Academic and Content Vocabulary be taught?
3. Teacher reads Act 1, Act 2, and Act 3 out-loud to the class, drawing their attention to where different emotions come through in the reading.
4. Students break up into their groups to re-read and practice their lines for Act 3. Emphasize appropriate language objectives for beginner, intermediate, and advance students.
5. Do a run through of Acts 1, 2, 3 together as a class.
6. Students work on their respective worksheets during the last 10-15 minutes of class time. Take home if necessary.

**Day 4**

1. Recap what was read the day before briefly and check for retention of vocabulary. Collect worksheets if they were taken home.
2. Pre-teach vocabulary for Act 3 How will Academic and Content Vocabulary be taught?
3. Teacher reads Act 1, Act 2, Act 3, and Act 4 out-loud to the class, drawing their attention to where different emotions come through in the reading.
4. Students break up into their groups to re-read and practice their lines for Act 4. Emphasize appropriate language objectives for beginner, intermediate, and advance students.
5. Do a run through of Acts 1, 2, 3, and 4 together as a class.
6. Students work on their respective worksheets during the last 10-15 minutes of class time. Take home if necessary.

**Day 5**

1. Complete one final, brief rehearsal.
2. African drum instructor comes to class to teach students about the djembe and teaches them to play. Ideally, we would have a few drums for the students to try out as well.
3. Students carry out their final performance and teacher video records it for them. The drum instructor plays the drum in the background during Acts 3 and 4. Applause at the end!!
4. If time is left, students can hang out with the drum instructor and practice drumming with them.
**CLOSURE**

*How do you plan on reviewing content concepts/vocabulary and concluding the lesson?*

On the following Monday we will watch the video of the performance and have students reflect on their experience. We will have a broader question & response session, followed by a discussion of how reading Montsho’s story has made them feel? Were they always proud of their heritage? Do they talk to their families about their ancestors?

Question and response will include a vocabulary recap, showing the picture and asking students to identify the picture based off the vocabulary words. Students will also be asked, what was the main idea of this story?

**SELF-ASSESSMENT/REFLECTION**

*(Complete after teaching event)*

*I was not able to deliver this lesson.*

Questions to address:
- What went well/didn’t go well?
- How did students do in the lesson? Were the objectives achieved? Use student work samples as evidence.
- If objectives weren’t achieved for all students, what would you differently next time for specific individuals or as a whole group?
- Describe next steps for instruction to impact student learning.

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**Book:** *Grandpa, Is Everything Black Bad?* By Sandy Lynne Holman

**Approximate Grade Level:** 6-8

*Each group of students (Beginner, intermediate, and Advanced) should be given a modified script with the lines that they will read highlighted.*

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**Grandpa, Is Everything Black Bad? - Script**

**Act 1**

**Beginner: Grandpa, is everything black bad?**

Montsho 1: It’s *dark*, black, and scary in my bedroom at night. So I hide under the covers when Dad turns out the light.
Montsho 2: I like watching TV, but sometimes I’m sad because most white things are good and most black things are bad.

Montsho 3: People wear the color black when somebody dies. They look very sad and have tears in their eyes.

**Beginner: Grandpa, is everything black bad?**

Montsho 1: Grandma says hide in a bush when a black cat walks by because they bring bad luck to those that they eye.

Montsho 2: Aunt Barbara says my skin is darker than most others. She calls me the black sheep of the family because I look different from my brothers.

Montsho 3: I saw a fire burning in the forest one day. It made the trees turn black and the animals run away.

**Beginner: Grandpa, is everything black bad?**

Montsho 1: I think witches are scary flying their brooms in crooked hats. They always look ugly and they always wear black.

Montsho 2: I like hitting baseballs with my friends, Ronnie and Tye. One day our ball hit Jasmine’s face and she got a black eye.

Montsho 3: Black widow spiders are dangerous and quick. They have poison in their bites that can make people sick.

Montsho 1: “Tell me Grandpa, is everything black bad? I’m black. So does that make me bad too?”

Grandpa 1: “Hmmm. I reckon I can understand the way you feel, Montsho. Grandpy never did stop to think about all the things in this world that are the color black that seem bad. Maybe that’s why so many children are ashamed of their beautiful dark skin. You younguns thing all dark things must be no good.”

Montsho 1: “So it’s true, huh, Grandpa? Everything black is bad.”

Grandpa 1: “Now, you just wait a minute little man. You ain’t bad and neither is the color black. You just get that kinda thinkin’ out of your head. It’s folks who decide what colors mean to them. Why, I love the color black and think it’s one of the most beautiful colors in the world.”

Montsho 1: “You do, Grandpa?”

Grandpa 1: “Yep! I do, little man. Almost as much as you love your Grandma’s gumbo soup.”

Grandpa 1: “You see, Montsho? It ain’t the color of someone’s skin that makes them good or bad. It’s what’s inside their heart that counts. The more love you give from your heart, the better you are as a person, no matter what people say or do. You understand?”

Montsho 1: - Nods head –

Grandpa 1: “You also have something else inside you that is very important.”

Montsho 1: “I do?”

Grandpa 1: “Yep, you do, little man. You have a Heritage; a very, very proud heritage.”
Montsho 1: “Heritage? What’s heritage mean grandpa?”

Act 2

Grandpa 2: “A heritage is our past. It’s where we come from. It’s the traditions and the things that are important to us and our family who lived long before us. Our heritage is African, Montsho.”

Montsho 2: “African! I’m not African, I don’t live in Africa!”

Grandpa 2: “No but our ancestors did live in Africa a long time ago, and the spirit of Africa is within us no matter where we live. Africa is also where a lot of important things happened that helped people from all over the world. Even today, you and I still have African blood in our bodies. That’s why we look like the black Africans who still live there.”

Montsho 2: “So, why does everyone call me black, then? Why don’t they call me African?”

Grandpa 2: “Hmmm… I don’t know Montsho. Black folks have been called so many different names over time that maybe people aren’t sure what we should be called anymore.” Some folks say we should be called one thing and some day we should be called another. All Grampy knows is that us grown-up folk got to be careful what we let our younguns be called. Especially if it makes them feel bad. We also have to teach you about your heritage.”

Montsho 2: “What do you like people to call you Grandpa?”

Grandpa 2: “That’s simple, little man. They can start by calling me by the name my mama gave me when I was born… Rufus.”

Montsho 2: “I didn’t know your name was Rufus.”

Grandpa 2: “That’s because to you I’m just plain old Grandpa.”

Montsho 2: “If someone calls you black, do you feel bad Grandpa?”

Grandpa 2: “No, Montsho, I don’t. You see, when I was a youngun just like you, my grandfather taught me about our African heritage and our history. He gave me a special bamboo drum and as he played it, told me stories from our past. Those stories made me feel mighty proud of my African heritage and the dark color of my skin.”

Montsho 2: “Could you play the drum for me now, Grandpa? Could you please?”

Act 3

Teacher Narrator: The old man looked into Montsho’s big black eyes and smiled. He took Montsho by the hand into a special room in the back of the house. The room was beautiful with colors of black, gold, purple, red, and green. Beautiful African scenes were painted on the walls and masks and pots were lying on the floor. It looked like an African kingdom with a straw hut inside. Within the hut was a large, red, bamboo drum. It looked magical. Montsho’s Grandpa sat him on the floor and began to slowly beat the drum with his large, old hands.

Grandpa 3: “Close your eyes, little man. Feel the love you have in your heart as I play. Listen and you will see pictures in your head as the drum tells you a story about our heritage and history.”

All Beginners: “Boom, boom, boom”
“Boom, boom, boom” (maybe beating real drums)

Grandpa 3: “Africa is beautiful and so are its native people with their beautiful, dark black skin. Her lands have great animals like lions, giraffes, and elephants. African is where our ancestor’s lives begin.”

“Africa’s land is naturally rich, with lots of diamonds and gold. With deserts and rain forests throughout her regions Africa is beautiful to behold.”

Beginner: “Be proud of your heritage”

Grandpa 3: “Africans built the mighty pyramids and used some of the earliest tools. They developed writing, mathematics, astronomy, and religion. Even the Greeks came to study at their schools.”

Beginner: “Be proud of your heritage”

Grandpa 3: “The Nile river; the longest in the world, was home to the earliest farms. There were queens and kings in African lands. Africans made medicines to keep people from harm. Africans made calendars a long time ago that today would still be right. They had clocks like the sun dial they used in the day and the water clock they used at night.”

Beginner: “Be proud of your heritage”

Grandpa 3: “Africans had writing the Greeks called “hieroglyphics,” which used pictures in place of words. Africans were proud and made important contributions that have helped people all over the world.”

Chorus: “Be proud of your dark skin”

Grandpa 3: “It represents a proud people and black is truly a beautiful color. It was passed down to you by Africans who lived before and your heritage is like no other. Mostly be proud of the love in your heart and all you have within. It’s the love that you share with people around you that matters the most in the end.”

Montsho 3: “Be proud of your black skin and the love you have within, and remember your heritage is African.”

Act 4

Montsho 3: “That was beautiful, Grandpa! I saw pictures in my head. I saw Africa. Please can we play the drum again? I want to know more about our past and our African Heritage. I want to hear the drum talk again.”

Grandpa 1: “That’s enough for today, little man. Grandpy’s old bones need to rest. Besides, it is very important for you to remember what you learned today.”

Montsho 1: “Don’t worry grandpa. I won’t forget what the drum said, ever!”

Grandpa 1: “Now, that’s the kinda talkin’ Grandpy likes to hear from his little man. Makes an old man like me feel real good.”

Beginner: “Be proud of your heritage”

Beginner: “Be proud of your dark skin”

The End
Instructional Materials:

**Beginner Writing Language Objective:** Students will be able to match vocabulary words to illustrations of the words.

**Beginner Writing Activity:** This activity will be accompanied by an illustrated vocabulary list that students will review as the teacher pre-teaches the vocabulary. It would be broken up over several class periods as we read the four different acts.

### Act 1 Vocabulary Word Bank

**Directions:** Write-in the word that matches the picture. Every word is used one time.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dark</th>
<th>Hide</th>
<th>Bush</th>
<th>Witches</th>
<th>Crooked</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Black widow spider</td>
<td>Poison</td>
<td>Ashamed</td>
<td>Folks</td>
<td>Heritage</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Act 2 Vocabulary Word Bank

Directions: Write-in the word that matches the picture. Every word is used one time.

| Ancestors | Drum | Proud |
Act 3 Vocabulary Word Bank

Directions: Write-in the word that matches the picture. Every word is used one time.

<p>| | | | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Masks</td>
<td>Pyramid</td>
<td>Sun dial</td>
<td>Water clock</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Masks
Pyramid
Sun dial
Water clock
Intermediate Writing Language Objective: Students will be able to produce short paragraphs with main ideas and details about the story.

Directions: Answer each question using complete sentences. Use your Reader’s Theatre script to help you.

Act 1

1. Montsho asks his Grandpa two questions in Act 1. What questions does he ask his grandpa?

2. Grandpa says that many young people feel ashamed of their dark skin. Why does Grandpa say young people feel this way?

3. Grandpa says “it ain’t the color of someone’s skin that makes them good or bad.” What does Grandpa say is more important than skin color?
Act 2

**Directions:** Answer each question using complete sentences. Use your Reader’s Theatre script to help you.

1. Grandpa tells Montsho about their African heritage. What is a heritage?

2. Grandpa plays an instrument in the story. What is it and who did he get it from?
Act 3

Directions: Answer each question using complete sentences. Use your Reader’s Theatre script to help you.

1. What are some of the things in Montsho’s African heritage he learns about? Name at least three.

2. Complete the sentences with the help of your script.

“Africa is where our _________________ lives begin.”

“It represents a ___________ people and black is truly a __________________ color.”

“Be proud of your ____________.” (one word)
Act 4

**Directions:** Answer each question using complete sentences. Use your Reader’s Theatre script to help you.

1. This story had many different parts, but they all taught us about one main idea. What was the main idea of this story?
Advanced Writing Objective: Students will be able to write their own narrative about what they are proud of in their heritage.

Directions: Every day you will write one paragraph for your narrative about your heritage. The writing prompts for each day are listed below:

Act 1, Day 1: Where are you or your family from? Tell me about where you are from, for example, what is the weather, food, or music like?

Act 2, Day 2: Has anyone ever tried to make you feel bad because of where you are from? If so, what did you do about it? If not, what are some ways you see this happening to other people?

Act 3, Day 3: What are some ways that your family teaches you about your heritage and traditions? For example, do they tell your stories, sing songs to you, take you on trips back to their home country? What are you most proud of in your heritage?

Act 4, Day 4: Take some time to read over your three paragraphs and make corrections. If you finish early, you can ask the teacher to get paired with another student that needs help with their writing activity.