

LEIGH-ANNE KEHLER, STORYTELLER OSAC SCHOOL TOUR – SPRING 2019 PERFORMANCE DESCRIPTIONS and STUDY GUIDES



AROUND THE WORLD AND BACK AGAIN Grades K-6

Detailed Performance Description

Every time we listen to cultural stories we learn more about how we are connected. Experiences of joy, celebration, fear, strength and bravery ignite our sense of humanity and our oneness. The performance might focus on a particular cultural connection such as Japan, Eastern Europe, South East Asia, Mexico, Russia, or West Africa, all places that the storyteller has travelled to or perhaps a school might choose a certain social goal such as heroism, kindness, empathy etc. so that through the stories we learn how every person on this planet we call home, is trying to achieve similar goals. It's important that the last story told is from the storyteller's memory of her childhood on a prairie farm. This final story brings the performance to a full circle by reminding the listeners that although it is wondrous to travel far and away, our memories make up our life story. When we honor what we remember by sharing it with others, we leave our legacy for the next listener.

Study Guide

Before the performance

Think and Learn Creatively

Begin with the question what is a storyteller?

Perhaps the class will do a little research into the traditional role of the storyteller in ancient times. How the storyteller was a teacher who guided listeners through tales that had been passed down from one generation to the next.

Next, this artist is also a theatre artist. How do you believe she will be slightly different than a traditional storyteller? How will she use her body, her voice, her face?

Think and Learn Contextually

As you listen to and enjoy the stories be sure to ask yourself what you are learning along the way. What is this story really about? Every story needs a seed of truth, a lesson that it will grow from. Only stories with strong meanings will survive through time like the stories you will hear today.

After the performance

Understand, Value, and Care for Others

If one of the stories is connected to a Social Studies cultural group that you are currently studying, what did you learn about the values of that culture you didn't know before? Perhaps you might have a discussion with the students about cultural values and try to determine which value /lesson the story was trying to give to the audience. If the stories were not entirely connected to Social Studies such as Ancient Egypt a journey across Canada or Mexico, then choose your favourite story from the performance and try to determine which cultural value it was teaching.

Explore and Interpret the World Through Various Literacies

How did the storyteller use her voice to go back and forth between a narrator and a character? What is the difference between narrative voice and character voice? Let's practice switching back and forth.

The giant woke up, scratched his belly, stretched his arms to the sky and exclaimed, "I'm going to eat a mountain today!"

Try it both with a big, deep character voice and a small, squeaky character voice.

Sometimes when the voice doesn't match the character, the story becomes very funny. It also teaches us that characters, like people, aren't always what/who they appear to be. We need to listen to them before we judge them.

When you were listening to the stories, did your brain remember the words or the images/pictures that the storyteller created with her words? Think of the game she played when she re-told one story without words, using only her body, why do you think she did this during her performance? What is the connection between storytelling and "working out" or building the muscle that is your imagination?

"When I hear a story, my imagination squishes the words into paint and paints pictures on my memory." (Grade 2 student after listening to the artist.)
What do you think this statement means?

Express Understanding and Communicate Meaning Using Various Literacies

Each student in your class could have a chance to show one picture from the story, allowing the image to drip down from their memory and into their body, just as Leigh-Anne did during the show don't tell portion of the performance.

The other students can be the narrative voice for the picture so they will tell about what they are seeing. This need not be done in sequence, often I say, "If we all remember just one moment in a story, soon the entire story is remembered."

Engage in communitarian thinking and dialogue Take social action

How will your favourite story from the performance, change the way you interact with each other?

How it will help you build a stronger community together?

WE ARE ONE, The Story Web Knits Us Together

-This performance is designed for K-12 schools, and is flexible for every grade level

This performance takes the audience to the many locations around the world that have been experienced first hand by the teller. Along with the folktales, Leigh-Anne will share accounts of cultural exchange and personal life lessons learned along the way. For example, don't choose the oldest elephant in the caravan while sojourning through a Thai jungle. Also don't turn your back on a Japanese audience and be sure to slurp your noodles at the mayor's house. While the personal stories reflect on differences, they also celebrate the necessity of empathy, which we must foster for each other if we're to begin sharing our similarities. The lessons in the folklore are global. Students in many schools have been surprised to find that story patterns from Western world fairytales are found throughout Asian, South American and Eastern European lore. We are unique however our basic human need for love, protection and community brings us together.

Study Guide

Before the performance

Understand Value and Care for Others

Ask and discuss the following questions.

What is culture?

What is a cultural tale?

What is a society?

How do you believe cultural tales might influence the way a society works together?

Construct Knowledge Related to Various Literacies

What is a hero?

What's the difference between heroism in a folktale or cultural tale and a super hero?

What is a storyteller?

How do you think a storyteller might be classified as an artist?

Predict how she will use her voice, her face and her movement to create the world of the story.

Do you predict it will be more or less exciting than a movie?

This particular storyteller is also an actor and a filmmaker. How do you think this will affect her performance?

Think and Learn Creatively

As you listen to the stories, try to create images in your mind. The storyteller will provide the words however the audience is in charge of the illustrations.

Storytelling is much like writing. This storyteller describes her performances as "writing on the air." What do you think that means?

So she will be writing on the air with the words that she speaks and the audience is in charge of the illustrations. This will be an experience that we create together.

How is this different than going to a movie? How is it similar?

After the performance

Developing Independence and Interdependence

Were you engaged? If so when were you most engaged?

How did the stories challenge you personally to be a better person?

How did the stories challenge you to have more empathy and to be more respectful of cultural differences?

How did the stories challenge you to appreciate similarities between people?
If your life is a story, how might you make change personally in order to ensure that you are the heroine/hero?

Think and Learn Contextually and Critically Take Social Action

How as a classroom community could you use the stories to create necessary changes, to become a healthier more positive community?

Tell just one part of any story that you remember. If you feel you're able, paint the illustration with your body as Leigh-Anne did when she told an entire story without words.

How is our imagination engaged with the words during the storytelling?

Express Understanding and Communicate Meaning through Various Literacies

Try to track an entire story through the action as pictures, in the way the artist has shown us. Create a series of 8-10 actions that would represent the entire story. This can be done as a class or in smaller groups. Show the actions without speaking. Now you can play through them again, this time adding in a narrator. You might also want to keep track of the story with storyboards, adding in speech bubbles for dialogue.

Finally, try playing with changing your narrative voice to a character voice whenever a character is speaking. Try doing this as you re-tell one of the stories you've heard today. Keep in mind that "the story is what the storyteller tells." You can't really make a mistake with this, as long as you respect the seed of truth or the deeper meaning/lesson that has rooted the story and kept it alive for a very long time.

Engage in Communitarian Thinking and Dialogue

Do any of you feel you might take the storytelling staff? Remember this is an ancient art form that is struggling in modern times. The world is searching for the next generation of storytellers. If you chose to be a storyteller, would you be most interested in

- a. Traditional Folklore
- b. Sharing personal stories
- c. Sharing the stories that have happened to others

How are all of these types of stories similar?

How are they different?

How would you tell your stories? Would it be in a traditional style? Would it be in theatre? Would it be in film? Would it be in a dance? Would you tell through poetry? How are all of these forms united under the art form of storytelling?

THE WORLD NEXT DOOR Junior/Senior High and Adult audience

We are not so different from each other as our appearances might indicate. There are patterns and rhythms in cultural stories that suggest we are neighbours, even if we are continents apart. The storyteller will take you on a journey to many places she's visited through the traditional tales of the communities. Love and conflict, heroes and villains have been a part of us for as long as stories have walked the Earth. Come along on a journey you'll not soon forget.

Study Guide

Before the performance

Think and Learn Contextually

Do you feel storytelling is an appropriate art form for high school presentations?

What are you expecting?

How will the storyteller engage the audience?

Construct Knowledge Related to Various Literacies

The stories are from cultures around the world. These are traditional stories, folktales, fairytales and legends. Do you believe they are still relevant?

If "yes" how so?

If "no" why not?

Understand Value and Care for Others

What is culture? How do you believe these stories will represent culture and build cultural understanding?

Understand Value and Care for Oneself

Think back to your childhood, what are some of the stories that have stuck with you?

Did these stories come from someone telling them to you, reading them to you, or from a movie or TV show?

Try to be open to this experience. You will be experiencing an ancient art form, one that links to all other art forms. Every great artist is trying to tell a story, in one-way or another.

After the performance

Engage in Communitarian Thinking and Dialogue

Now that you've seen the teller, as a class discuss the relevancy of the art of storytelling and the sharing of traditional folklore.

How would you say your perspective on the art form and the stories has changed from before to after the performance?

Understand, Value and Care for Others

Express Understanding and Communicate Meaning Using Various Literacies

How has hearing the stories changed your attitudes to the cultural differences you might sense in the world around you?

Did the storyteller show us that the similarities in traditional story patterns suggest we are connected by our similar human experiences?

Describe some of these similar human experiences. You might use phrases such as, fight or flight, gaining wisdom and understanding, needing love, first romantic encounters, feeling hungry, feeling alone etc. (Please feel free to add to the list of "titles" for the human experience.

The storyteller said, "The human experience is the reason for all stories." What do you think she meant when she said this?

Leigh-Anne believes that if each listener recalls just one moment in a story, then the whole story will be remembered. Try to go around the class so that each student is able to share one memory of what they heard. If someone is willing, they may re-tell one of the stories.