

Service Learning Lesson Plan

Project Title: Words Matter

Grade Level: K-8

Duration: 2-3 class

Main Subject Area: ELA

Theme: Social/Emotional

periods

Objective/Description

Students demonstrate age-appropriate comprehension and use of written and spoken language as related to meanings in multiple settings. Using examples of poetry & prose, students examine how meaning in interpersonal communication (oral & written) is affected by vocabulary, context, tone, and setting. Using poems such as “Home” and “Manners” by Eve Merriam, and prose texts such as *Children’s Tea and Etiquette: Brewing Good Manners in Young Minds* by Dorothea Johnson, students chart the use of positive and negative language. They also identify a communication issue in their community, create poems, manners booklets, or skits to raise awareness about the power of words, and present their creations publicly.

Common Core Content Standards

- **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.4** Craft & Structure (Vocabulary) comprehension & tone within stories/poems
- **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.5** Recognize differences between fiction and nonfiction in prose (& poetry) regarding form & function
- **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.K.RI.9** Integration of Knowledge & Ideas: Identify basic similarities & differences between two texts on the same topic.
- **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.2-3** Text Types & Purposes
- **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.5-6v** Production & Distribution of Writing
- **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.7-8** Research to Build & Present Knowledge
- **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL1.1a-c, 3, 4, 5** Comprehension & Collaboration, Presentation of Knowledge and Ideas

Driving Question

How can we change our classroom/community with what we say and how we say it?

Investigation

Research, class instruction, interviewing civic leaders and/or professionals, surveying neighbors or peers

- Read and discuss poetry/prose samples with students.
- With the class, generate multiple meanings for key words.
- Discuss similarities of subject and difference of tone between poetry and prose samples.
- Discuss how writing style, context, and tone influence the meaning and message of words; generate examples with students.
- Discuss personal examples of the power of spoken words.
- Generate ideas about how words are used negatively in class/school and how that could change to bring about a more positive environment.
- Draw a chart and fill in the vocabulary words and common phrases that are used as positive or hurtful (for K-1, create a visual chart with student names listed and space to place words/stickers).



- Agree that students will use their word chart to measure the use of vocabulary/phrases in their classroom or community for a designated timeframe.

Preparation

Collaborative problem solving, planning, and task assignment by & with the students

- See “Planning Tools” at http://servicelearning.childreninc.org/?page_id=527.
- As a class, identify how words may be used differently in particular settings—careful here!—with friends, elders, in school, at sporting events
- Through observation and shared input, have students create found poems and concrete poems using words about civility, kindness, compassion, manners, respect, etc. (younger students can collaborate).
- With the class, identify a communication issue in the community and have students create class poems or songs, manners booklets, or skits to raise awareness about the issue.

Action

Service activities or methods used to address a social issue or community need

- Have older students present poems, skits, or booklets to school and greater community.
- Have K-1 students present class poems, drawings and vocabulary chart to family and perform poems, songs, and reflections publicly for parents and siblings, school/community.

Reflection

Frequent assessment of students’ growing knowledge and developing skills; refer to driving question/objective

- See “Reflection/Evaluation” at http://servicelearning.childreninc.org/?page_id=483.
- In classroom discussion, ask the question “How do my words help or hurt?”
- Help students connect words with their meaning based upon context/tone in oral language. (K-1 use visuals ☺ ☹)
- Ask “how can we make our class or community great by what we say and do?”
- Discuss what has changed about interpersonal communications in the classroom or community (or within students’ families) since the beginning of the project; chart the use of positive vocabulary and tone in classroom interpersonal communications
- After presentations ask,
 - What do we see, hear, and feel in our classroom that shows what we learned?
 - Did we change our community? How?

Demonstration of Knowledge

Assessment of students’ knowledge/skills and project outcomes

- Facilitate a school-wide presentation given by students, including a small group activity where the audience is invited to name ways that they will use words to make the community better for everyone (i.e., “Blue Sky” activity)
<http://learningtogive.org/resources/Blue%20Sky%20Activity%20genOn.pdf>



- Assess whether students recognize the vocabulary generated in the unit and appropriately use that vocabulary in their written (class poetry and manners statements), visual (K-1 only—drawings), and spoken communications.

Community Partners

Includes anyone who offers expertise to the project or who benefits from the project

The adults in their own school community (possibly other students and students' families)

Outcome

Funds or goods generated, direct or indirect service provided, advocacy or education done

Skits, poems, manners booklets

Secondary Subject Areas (All that apply are in bold)

- English, Reading, Language Arts
- World Languages
- Arts
- Mathematics
- Science
- Economics
- Geography
- History
- Government and Civics
- Global Awareness
- Financial, Economic, Business, and Entrepreneurial Literacy
- **Civic Literacy**
- Health Literacy
- Environmental Literacy

21st Century Skills (All that apply are in bold)

- Career Readiness
- **Creativity and Innovation**
- **Communication and Collaboration**
- **Critical Thinking and Problem Solving**
- Physical Education
- Initiative and Self-direction
- Flexibility and Adaptability
- Consumerism
- Information Literacy
- **Media Literacy**
- Technology Literacy
- Productivity and Accountability
- **Leadership and Responsibility**
- **Social and Cross-cultural Skills**