

Story Drama

Ericka Stringer, Mackenzie Swim, Amy Edwards

305A Drama: A Medium For Learning 1

Faculty of Education

Professor: Phil Duchene

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Story Drama: What's The Most Beautiful Thing You Know About Horses?

Grade Level: Grade 3

Time Allowance: 60 minutes

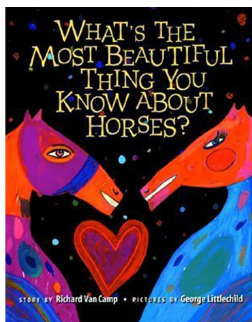
Materials

- paper and pen/pencil
- Book, “What’s The Most Beautiful Thing You Know About Horses?” by Richard Van Camp.

Space

- Multi-purpose room/small gym/drama room.

Abstract -Summary



Author Richard Van Camp is a member of the Dogrib (Tlicho) Nation, an aboriginal tribe in the Northwest Territories. Since his tribe uses dogs instead of horses, Van Camp has always been intrigued by horses. He thinks about what he would ask a horse if he could speak to one, and he wonders if dogs and horses can speak to each other. He then asks his friends, family, and the illustrator “what’s the most beautiful thing you know about horses?”. A variety of answers stem from this question, ranging from wacky to clever. Then at the end of the story he asks the reader “what’s the most beautiful thing you know about you?”.

Why did we choose this story?

We chose this story because it offers an opportunity to reflect on Indigenous identity through family connections. This story also touches on:

- Indigenous education and decolonization
- Connecting to identity, history, culture, family, and tradition
- Significance of storytelling
- Respecting all animals and living creatures

Key Understandings and Questions

Students will be able to think about and discuss, through storytelling, their cultural backgrounds in a respectable manner. Students will also focus on the following questions:

- What is your prior knowledge on Indigenous culture? How has this changed throughout the lesson?
- How does family and cultural history impact personal identity?
- How can we see and share the beauty in all living beings?
- Why is storytelling and talking to knowledgeable others important?
- What can happen when we ignore our history and traditions?
- How do our cultural traditions and values differ from one another?

Drama Activities

1. Milling in Role

5 Minutes

Groupings: Whole class

Strategy: Movement

Administration: None

Focus: Explore different animals

Teacher: Hello class/everyone, before we begin our drama today we are going to start thinking about the different animals that you know. I want everyone to choose an animal. Now we are going to move throughout the classroom as if you were that animal.

- How does that animal walk?
- What does it sound like?
- What makes your animal special and different from everyone else's?

Let class mill in role for approx. 1 minute .

Teacher: Ok, now, I want you to switch roles, who are you know? Mill as a different animal!
Let class continue to mill in role for same approx. time of 1 minute.

Teacher: Alright, excellent I see some (name some animals which students are milling in role).
Now we are going to switch our roles to someone we know or live with. This could be a parent, a guardian, a sibling or good friend.

- What does this person mean to you?
- How do they move? Maybe they are very old and move slowly.
- Why did you choose them?

Let's begin!

Allow class to mill in role for next 2-3 minutes before moving on.

2. Reading the Book

10 minutes

Groupings: Whole class seated in a circle

Strategy: Observation and listening through story reading

Administration: Text of *What's The Most Beautiful Thing You Know About Horses*

Focus: Draw attention to horses

Teacher: You have spent some time thinking about different animals that you may know, now we are going to focus on one specific animal, horses.

Reads the book.

Teacher: This story highlights the beauty of animals & the natural world. You have had some time to think about these ideas so I want you to turn to the person next to you and discuss the following questions:

- How did we like the story? Is there something in particular that stood out to you?
- Is there anything you did not like about the story?
- Does anyone have an idea what they think the significance of the story is? Why did we read it today?
- What is the most beautiful thing about animals to you?
- What is the most beautiful thing about yourself? Remember, beauty doesn't mean just appearance or what we see on the outside.

Give an example of a skill or something that is not a physical appearance which can be considered beautiful. Examples-playing soccer, playing an instrument, drawing, playing video games.

[Pairs discuss]

Teacher: Lets share some of our ideas and feelings with the whole class.

[Students volunteer their thoughts in whole class discussion]

In this discussion, keep focus on the beauty of animals and how the author described this through storytelling.

3. Getting into Role

30 Minutes

Groupings: Small groups of 4

Strategy: Improvisation

Administration: None

Focus: Express thoughts in role

Teacher: Next, we are going to split into groups of four, which I will divide this time, however next class we will choose our own groups. We are going to act out a scene that we create as a group (in your group of four) and also use our improv skills

Improv skills would have been covered and practiced in previous lessons.

Teacher: Each group will designate a ‘main character,’ a ‘narrator/orchestrator’ and then two supporting characters. As a group, come up with your own scene, using the book as a scaffold. As a group, what do you think the most beautiful thing about horses is? You don’t have to choose horses either! You can choose another, different animal...what is the most beautiful thing about that animal? You will then act out a scene between the main character and two people they know, asking the question as in the book “What is the most beautiful thing you know about [chosen animal or horses]?” Although the answer will remain the same, other dialogue such as why that is the most beautiful thing, can be improved in front of the class when presenting.

This has the students performing an already practiced act and also allows them to use improv. Allow students 10 minutes to practice scenes and improv.

[Groups practice their scenes]

Teacher: Now we will have a look at what each group has created. Is there any group that would like to go first? I will be cutting your performances/improvs at 1 minute (subject to class size) so that everyone has a turn to present.

Have each group present their scene and improv in front of the class. Allow 15 minutes for performances depending on class size.

[Groups present their improv]

4. Individual Reflection

10 Minutes

Groupings: Individual

Strategy: Writing in role

Administration: Paper and pencils for everyone

Focus: Express thoughts and opinions connecting to the story

Teacher: You have now heard so many different answers to the question “what’s the most beautiful thing you know about horses?”. As I hand out paper and pencils I want you to put yourself in the book and imagine what you would say if you were asked that same question. Feel free to let the words flow out on the paper without worrying about punctuation or spelling.

Hand out paper and pencils for students to write on. Allow approximately 10 minutes for this activity.

5. Bringing it All Together

5 Minutes

Groupings: Whole class seated in a circle

Strategy: Reflection

Administration: None

Focus: New understandings

Teacher: This is a very important story that we worked with today. We began to notice the importance of living creatures in our world. Furthermore, some of us may even begin to notice beauty in each of us and how beauty is not only about what is outside but what’s on the inside.

- Can someone tell me something that is beautiful that is not a physical characteristic?
- What other things around us make the world a beautiful place?

Note This may spark quite the discussion and may take more time than you anticipated/was initially planned out. Students may have deeper, more meaningful questions after class activities and discussions, be prepared for these in the coming classes.*

Extension

Curriculum Connections to Social Studies

- Big Ideas: Learning about indigenous peoples nurtures multicultural awareness and respect for diversity.
- Big Ideas: Indigenous knowledge is passed down through oral history, traditions, and collective memory.

Curriculum Connections to Art

- Big Ideas: The arts connect our experiences to the experiences of others.
- Curricular Competency: Explore identity, place, culture, and belonging through arts experiences.

Curriculum Connection to out of classroom experiences

- Personal and cultural identity: fulfills a student's need for belonging and healthy sense of oneself.
- Social awareness and responsibility: understanding and appreciating connections and diversity between people.
- Communication: understand the world around them through sharing ideas.
- Collaboration: supportive interactions.

Assessment

A self assessment sheet is attached for students to complete individually in the last five minutes of class. For a teacher assessment of the students, see below.

Student Name: _____ Class Date: _____ Activity: _____										
Student overall class participation/engagement										
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
Poor			Could improve					Fantastic		
Student participation in groups and performance										
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
Poor			Could improve					Fantastic		
Comprehension of text:										
<input type="checkbox"/> Yes										
<input type="checkbox"/> No										
<input type="checkbox"/> Partially/room for improvement										

Notes: _____										

References

- British Columbia Ministry of Education, (nd). *Arts education K-9*.
<https://curriculum.gov.bc.ca/curriculum/english-language-arts>
- Van Camp, R. (1998) *What's the most beautiful thing you know about horses?* Children's Book Press.
- Swartz, L. (2002) *Dramathemes: Classroom literacy that will execute, surprise, and stimulate learning*. 4th Edition. Pembroke Publishers.

Self Assessment: Group Improv Work-What's the most beautiful thing you know about horses?

Name: _____ **Date:** _____

1. On a scale of 1-10, how much did you enjoy the activity we did in class today?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Not so much

It was alright

A lot !

2. Did you contribute to the group activity? How so?

3. Did you feel frustrated at all during the activity? If so, why?

4. Did you find that working in a group helped build ideas for choosing the most beautiful thing about horses?

5. What were some things you think your group did well?

6. What were some things you think your group could have improved?

7. Was there a performance from another group you really enjoyed? Why?
