

Sing That Story: Building Language Arts Skills Through Basic Songwriting

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Target Audience and Scope

Grades 3-6

Maximum number of Classes: 4 per day

Number of Sessions/Days: 1-5

Time Length of Session: 50 minutes

Preferred Timeline: daily

Program/Residency Overview

A. Program/Residency Components

This program can include the following components:

- * Planning Meeting with Participating Teachers
- * Classroom sessions
- * Artist Performance
- * Culminating Event to Share Student Learning
- * Residency Evaluation with Teachers

B. Description

Translating familiar stories into simple songs provides a fun and creative way to improve reading and writing skills. Students will enjoy creating their own original songs by identifying, paraphrasing, and distilling main ideas into a verse/chorus format. Join songwriter and teaching artist Marianne Payette Carter as she guides students in this fun and powerful way to focus thought.

C. Rationale

Identifying text structure, sequence, problem/solution, and main idea are commonly missed reading indicators for Kansas's students in grades 3-6*. This residency focuses on improving these skills by introducing simple songwriting as a vehicle for improving reading comprehension and refining creative writing skills. In addition, it's performance aspect help build personal confidence and collaboration skills.

*As reported in the 2008 preliminary data from the Kansas State Educational Assessments.

D. Results

As a result of participating in this residency, students will...

- know:
- * the basic elements of songwriting
 - * the structural components of a story
 - * a procedure for songwriting
 - * a process for identifying the main ideas of a story
- be able to:
- * paraphrase the main ideas of a story
 - * revise and refine paraphrase into original verse/ chorus lyrics
 - * apply basic rhythm and meter concepts
 - * perform their song in groups
- appreciate:
- * their own creative ability
 - * the importance of original and focused thought in writing
 - * the value of working together
 - * the fun of songwriting

E. Teacher's Role During Residency

- * Observe
- * Document residency activities (photos, recordings, or written descriptions)
- * Prepare students for selected stories
- * Provide follow-up time for activities

F. Logistical Factors

- * Open floor space
- * Nametags

Overview of Classroom Sessions

Part I. Pre-Program/Residency preparation:

Students should be familiar with 5 simple stories selected by teacher and artist

Part II. Classroom Sessions

Session #1

Artist will:

- Preview the residency: Explain what will take place during the sessions.
- Demonstrate a song based on a familiar story
- Teach this song to students
- Lead skill-building activity: “What’s Missing”(exercise: improving editing skills)
- Introduce the elements of songwriting
- Lead skill-building activity: “The Mental Microscope” (kinesthetic exercise: noticing detail)
- Describe the next session

Teacher’s role before next session: repeat activities

Session #2

Artist will:

- Lead group reflection and skill-building activities at a more advanced level
- Introduce the structural elements of a story
- Lead skill-building activity: “Hey, What’s the Big Idea” (kinesthetic exercise: identifying the main idea)
- Lead skill-building activity: “Classroom Idol” (performance etiquette and technique: being an audience)
- Describe next session

Teacher’s role before next session: repeat activities

Session #3

Artist will:

- Lead group reflection and skill-building activities at a more advanced level
- Introduce the concept of the evocative word
- Lead skill-building activity: “Super size your word”(language enrichment activity)
- Lead skill-building activity: “What did you say?”(paraphrase activity)
- Lead skill-building activity: “Classroom Idol” (performance etiquette and technique: breathing)
- Describe next session

Teacher’s role before next session: repeat activities

Session #4

Artist will:

- Lead group reflection and skill-building activities at a more advanced level
- Introduce the concepts of rhyme, rhythm, and meter
- Lead skill-building activity: “The Plain Brown Rapper” (rhythm exercise)
- Lead skill-building activity: “Big Stack of Pancakes” (verse and chorus activity)
- Lead skill-building activity: “Classroom Idol” (performance etiquette and technique: moving)
- Describe next session

Teacher’s role before next session: repeat activities

Session #5

Artist will:

- Review skills
- Rehearse performances
- Share performance
- Discuss performance outcome with students and teacher

Part III. Residency Evaluation with Teachers