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The Many Pieces of “Alligator Pie”

Arts Infusion Curriculum Unit

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# Unit Overview

This Arts Infusion unit will introduce students to the concepts and types of poetry, specifically relating to a Canadian poet, Dennis Lee. Students will be required to participate individually, as well as in groups to study and understand concepts and ideas of poetry, specific poems, and authors, along with the different arts infused themes and activities. Students will explore the ideas of poetry vs. prose, poetic types, poets, etc.

The general focus of this Arts Infusion unit will be to allow students to become immersed in the arts with a poetic influence. Many of the activities and themes are relating to the dramatic arts, visual arts, music and dance. Not only will students be immersed in an arts infusion plan, however, they will be learning through the process with a cross-curricular focus.

Throughout this unit, there will be an ongoing assessment tool. Students will be required to create and use an Arts Journal, which will take the form of words, pictures, etc to create an entry. Students will be aware that class participation during lessons, art activities, and group work will also be used as an assessment tool.

# Time Line of Unit

The length of time required to cover this unit is approximately four (4) to six (6) weeks, which will include 5 periods per week at 60 minutes each. Not only will this unit take parts of the Language Arts periods, but also several lessons will take place in Math, Social Studies and Art periods.

Although this unit is comprised of 13 lessons, most of them will take more than 1 period of Language Arts. This would mean that, although it may not be noted, extra time might be needed before moving on to the next lesson. In addition, lessons have been planned to be done in a specific order, however, please complete lessons in any order that makes sense to your students.

# Infusion Planning Model

# Lessons

## Lesson 1 - Introduction

* In this introductory lesson, students will be introduced to the concept of poetry by discussing as a class what they think poetry is, samples of poetry, visual brainstorms, etc. The use of a KWL chart can be used to document what students already know about poetry and the types of ways poetry can be done.
* Students will also begin to create their Arts Journal by using a plain journal and creating an artistic look by use of journaling techniques. This journal will serve as an on-going assessment tool for the length of the unit.
* Upon completion of the Arts Journal, students will be asked to write a reflection of what they hope to learn about poetry. This entry will be used along with the notes on the KWL chart to assess what needs to be adjusted in the poetry unit.

Materials:

* Chart Paper
* Markers
* Plain Journals (one/student)
* Coloured Paper, Art Supplies

Objectives:

* Students will be introduced to the concept of poetry and brainstorm what ‘poetry’ is to them and what they already know about it.

## Lesson 2 – Introduction of Dennis Lee

* Over the next few classes, have students explore and discuss the poems provided from the poems of Dennis Lee. Through exploration, have students document and identify characteristics and themes through the poems by Dennis Lee.
* Along with documenting the characteristics, have students listen to different examples of prose vs. poetry and different styles of poetry and prose. These examples could be different Dennis Lee poems, other styles of poetry, prose, rap poems, rap prose, etc.
* Once students have a grasp on what different types of poetry there is and the parts of poetry, have them create their own version of a Dennis Lee poem. This could be a nonsense poem, funny words, etc. but be sure to have student use forms similar to those of poems by Dennis Lee.
* Have students present their poems in a creative fashion, poster, images, etc. and have them read them to the class.
* Students will write an entry into their Arts Journals. This entry can be done by images, words, stories, reflection, even re-writing their poem into their journal with images.

Materials:

* Poems and Publications by Dennis Lee
* Poems and Publications by other authors/poets
(Try <http://www.poetryteachers.com/poetclass/poetclass.html>)
* Class Handout on Characteristics/Examples (See Appendix)
* Arts Journals

Objectives:

* Students will learn the differences between poetry and prose.
* Students will identify characteristics of poetry and styles and themes of poems by Dennis Lee.
* Students will create and present their own version of a Dennis Lee poem.

## Lesson 3 – Recent Events

* As a continuation of the previous lessons, where students were to write their own versions of a Dennis Lee poem. Have student peruse the Newspaper (which will have been previously looked through for appropriateness) and choose a recent event/theme to create another “Dennis Lee” poem.
* While perusing the Newspaper, the class can have discussions of recent events, relevance, important, opinions, etc.
* These poems, as a class will be collaborated into a Class Newspaper by the help of the teacher and will be published for the school to read. Because these poems are being published as a class, they will need to be a product of the Writers Workshop, with editing and review, etc.
* Students will write, draw, etc. an entry in their Arts Journals.

Materials:

* Local Newspapers
* Computer/ Microsoft Office
* Arts Journals

Objectives:

* Students will gain insight into current events as a class and gain a better understanding of their importance.
* Students will work on their writing, editing, and review skills.
* Students will work on publishing a class work for the school.

Cross-Curricular Connections:

* Social Studies

## Lesson 4 – Beats and Rhythm!

* During several periods of Math, have the class; look at the beats and rhythms of the poems by Dennis Lee. Have the students tap out the beats; find the long beats, the short beats, sounds, etc.
* Along with beats and rhythms of the poems, students can also look for patterns in the poems and their beats. Finding the patterns in the poems, students can create patterns and use these patterns for studies in other patterns of math.
* Students will write, draw, etc. an entry in their Arts Journals.

Materials:

* Poems by Dennis Lee
* Class Handout – Beats. Rhythms, and Patterns (See Appendix)
* Arts Journals

Objectives:

* Students will learn about beats and rhythms in poetry.
* Students will identify beats and rhythms in the poems by Dennis Lee.
* Students will learn about patterns in poetry.
* Students will work with different patterns and incorporate them into other math lessons through the unit.

Cross-Curricular Connections:

* Mathematics

## Lesson 5 – Rap Poems

* Since students will have had several lessons in beats, rhythm and patterns in poetry, as a class, we will now explore the concept of “Rap Poems”.
* As a class, discuss and explore the concept of a “Rap Poem”; what is it, what is it like, characteristics, examples, etc. Read and discuss several “Rap Poems” and discuss what the students notice about them.
* Have students pick a poem written by Dennis Lee and create a “Rap Poem” from the interpretation they got from the poem. This could be ideas, feelings, a storyline, etc. This may take several lessons to complete as students may make changes, edits, practice, and publish their “Rap Poems”.
* Once students have finished their “Rap Poems”, they will have an ‘Open Mic’ type presentation in class to rap their poems to their classmates.
* Students will write, draw, etc. an entry in their Arts Journals.

Materials:

* Samples of “Rap Poems”
* Notes from Math lessons on Beats, Rhythms, and Patterns
* Arts Journals

Objectives:

* Students will use creativity to use another form of writing to express ideas.
* Students will create a fun and open class experience.

Cross-Curricular Connections:

* Mathematics

## Lesson 6 – Songs and Music

* Students will take lyrics of songs that they are interested in and take an idea or theme from the song and describe how Dennis Lee could use them as the theme for a poem.
* Students will then create the poem that they suggested that Dennis Lee could make from the themes they found in the song.
* Students will write, draw, etc. an entry in their Arts Journals.

Materials:

* Song Lyrics
* Music
* Arts Journals

Objectives:

* Students will think critically about what ideas are present in songs and entertainment and how they can be incorporated into other forms.

## Lesson 7 - Research Dennis Lee

* Students will do a mini research project on Dennis Lee. Through this mini research project, students will find out about his past, his poems and his future. In addition, students will research one of his published works of poetry and include the findings into their research.
* The research will be presented to the class and the format of the presentation will be something similar to the following: anything OTHER THAN a poster, PowerPoint, Word Document.
* Students will write, draw, etc. an entry in their Arts Journals.

Materials:

* Computer Lab
* Dennis Lee’s Published Works
* Arts Journals

Objectives:

* Students will gain valuable research skills.
* Students will create a representation of their learnings in a different context other than written report.

## Lesson 8 – Dramatic Performances!

* As a class, divide students into groups of five (5) (depending on size of class, etc.) and have students pick several different Dennis Lee poems.
* Students, in their groups, will then write and perform a short skit incorporating the different Dennis Lee poems that they chose.
* Time may be given to help with props, etc. if you so choose to do so.
* Other options would be to videotape the groups performing their skits and show them to their classmates as a movie period.
* Students will write, draw, etc. an entry in their Arts Journals.

Materials:

* Dennis Lee Poems
* Props, Scenes, etc.
* Video Recorder\*
* Arts Journals

Objectives:

* Students will creatively translate what they have learned through reading the poems by Dennis Lee into skits and a mini story.
* Students will present their skits to their classmates in a creative and interesting fashion.

## Lesson 9 – Neptune’s Young Theatre Group

* Contact Neptune Theatre at the following link <http://www.neptunetheatre.com/content/Featured_Performances>
* Having arranged the play to attend the school (consult administration about funding, planning, etc.) allow students to attend the play.
* Students will write, draw, etc. an entry in their Arts Journals in which they will critically think about the performance that they just viewed.

Materials:

* Neptune Theatre’s *Young Theatre Group*
* Arts Journals

Objectives:

* Students will critically view a form of interpretation and compare that to their own interpretation of Dennis Lee’s poems.

## Lesson 10 – Picking out Emotions

* Using a poem by Dennis Lee, have the students complete a connection activity. This activity incorporates connecting words they hear and what emotions they are hearing.
* Begin by talking with students about what sort of feelings they can think of and what types of lines may represent these feelings (straight – neutral, jagged – angry, wavy – happy, etc.).
* While reading the poem, stanza by stanza, have students draw lines to represent the feelings they are hearing and picking up from the poem. They could also draw lines to represent the feelings they are having.
* When finished, have students color their picture and describe what they were thinking of when they draw the lines they did. How did the lines they drew connect to the poem?
* Students will write, draw, etc. an entry in their Arts Journals.

Materials:

* Dennis Lee Poem
* White Paper
* Arts Journals

Objectives:

* Students will identify and describe feelings and emotions that are emitted from the Dennis Lee poem.

## Lesson 11 – Mix and Match!

* Have students consider one of the first poems that they looked at by Dennis lee.
* Using images, words and drawings, have students create a personal collage in their Arts Journals about their experiences with the poem. This collage will represent their entry for the lesson.

Materials:

* Magazine pictures, etc.
* Glue
* Arts Journals

## Lesson 12 – Murals, Murals, Everywhere!

* Have students create a collective mural about concepts, ideas, themes, pictures, etc. that they have come across in poems by Dennis Lee.
* The mural will be created by using a print technique. This technique is done by taking Styrofoam trays and drawing a shape into the foam with a pencil. By drawing into the foam, you create a dent in the shapes you are drawing. When it comes time to put the ink on the stencil, it creates a stamp. Stamp the students’ stamps over the mural.
* Display the mural in the classroom as a reference to what the students have learned, are learning, and what they can take away from Dennis Lee.
* Students will write, draw, etc. an entry in their Arts Journals.

Materials:

* Large sheet of material (bed sheet)
* Fabric paints/Printing ink
* Styrofoam Trays
* Arts Journals

Objectives:

* Students will reflect and review concepts and ideas that they have learned over the process of this unit on poetry and Dennis Lee.

## Lesson 13 – The Great Dennis Lee!

* As a conclusion to the unit on Dennis Lee and Poetry, have students collaborate and discuss as a class, their favourite activities, ideas they learned about and what the students came away from the unit learning.
* As a final class activity for the unit, have students gather their activity projects and things that they have completed to see the wonderful works of art they have accomplished within the learning unit (Mural, poems, books, journals, etc.)

Materials:

* Unit Projects
* Arts Journals

# Appendix

Name: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

## Poems by Dennis Lee

* What are some characteristics of the poems written by Dennis Lee?

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* What are some of the themes you have notices in the poems written by Dennis Lee?

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* What are some different examples between prose and poetry that were discussed in class?

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## Beats, Rhythms and Patterns

* What are the beats? (Da, Dum, Do, Doo, etc.)
* What are the Rhythms? (Two word rhymes, Flow, etc.)
* What are the Patterns? (Rhyming words, Words in a line, Size of stanza, etc.)
* Create your own beat, rhythm or pattern.