

Storytelling Arts with Morgan and Roman: I AM the Flag, Urandangie QLD 2017

Thank you to Julie Woodhouse, the Community Development Officer of Boullia Shire Council for securing funding for our visit to Urandangie State School. Unfortunately there was Sorry Business at the time and therefore many students were absent. We worked with the Principal, Lewis Parker, to present a storytelling-based arts project that could also be replicated with the guidance of the teachers and students who participated, when full attendance resumed. In effect the youngest students would be teaching the older students what they had learnt.

As all the students were Aboriginal we also wanted to offer them stories from different cultures throughout the world so they had a framework for understanding their own storytelling culture in a global context.

As the school does not have music in its curriculum we also wanted to provide a positive experience for the students and demonstrated that with the CD resource we supplied, students could sing, sign, act out or play percussion along with the songs. Through modelling to teachers the enjoyment that students experience through storytelling, music, drama and art, we hope that they will be inspired to incorporate these mediums for cultural expression into their teaching.

We were thrilled to stay with Pam at the Dangie Pub and join in with her informal after school music sessions with the kids. Our experience working with the teachers was a positive one, as they were enthusiastic participants in the arts programme.

Overview

3 days travel and 2 days presentations. Included were storytelling, music and art concerts and workshops. Visual storytelling mediums from different cultures were explored: A Kamishibai book and origami from Japan, Matryoshka dolls from Russia, Guatemalan Worry dolls, Tangrams from China, topsy-turvy dolls Africa. Musical stories and songs using an mbira, ocarina, ukelele, jaw harp and percussion were performed and children were encouraged to participate. Australian Sign Language was demonstrated for many songs and children and children and teachers were shown how to work with the CD resource. The Art component featured children creating their own '*Identity Flags*'- textile artworks to represent themselves. They explored semiotics and the symbolism of flags and discussed their daily lives and aspirations and how their identity could be artistically depicted as a flag.



The Matryoshka dolls are both an interactive story puzzle and cultural symbol. Students learn about sequencing, size and form playing with them.



Dance, gesture and Auslan are taught in the Emu and Wombat song with everyone mimicking the actions.



Dramatic play promoting tolerance and unity in acting out the German folktale of the Four Butterflies.



Students design their flags on paper, choosing colours to reflect their preferences.



The Aboriginal story of Tiddalik the greedy frog told with a balloon and the active participation of students.



Emziah chose to paint his name with his favourite colours as his identity.



Thai chose many different colours and in the centre drew the words “yum yum” about his favourite food, cheese.



Tikara painted a butterfly and her favourite colours to represent what she likes to eat, coloured icy poles.



Oonah is pointing out the car with Christine driving, as he goes with his friends to the Georgina River with a yabby net in place to catch yabbies.



Isaac is talking about his friend and himself. He has a killer boomerang and his favourite food is a hot dog.

Travel and Accommodation:

We flew from Brisbane to Mount Isa Monday 22nd May 2017 on the milk run - 9 hours, and stayed the night in Mt Isa. Next day we hired a car and drove to Urandangie - 3 hours. We worked Tuesday afternoon through to lunchtime Thursday when we drove from Urandangie to Mount Isa. Thirty minutes out of Urandangie we got a flat tyre. Changed it then stayed the night at Mt Isa and flew from Mount Isa to Brisbane Friday 26th May 2017. We stayed the three nights in Urandangie at the Pub.

Resources given to Urandangie School and Library include:

15 CDs *The Koala went Cooee* (47 minutes, 24 Australian animal songs with notes) suitable for preschool and early primary.

2 board books for young children.

2 books *Romancing the Stories in my Life* for adults.

TEACHER PACKS include *Tell Me: Storytelling as a Global Language* - a book of 50 folktales and activities, *Talkabout; raps and rhymes to promoting speech and language development in children*, *Rhyme-a-saurus* and *Feast* (stories and rhymes).

We would be happy to return to this community at a future date to present further concerts and workshops.

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