The Olden Days
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Technology has evolved over a period of time which has made our lives easier. Today, children have a false perception of the impact that technology has on their lives. Children should be aware of the struggles individuals had to undergo to obtain shelter, clothing, and food for their families in the 1800’s. This project will give my grade 2 students an insight on how life was in the olden days.

First I will introduce the book *A Pioneer Story* by Barbara Greenwood to my students. This book is a story about the Robertson’s, a pioneer family living in Canada. The book contains short stories about the Robertson’s life and adventures. It stories illustrate the true life of the pioneers; from a day at school to hunting. The book also has many activities to do with students. There are many illustrations of the olden days showing the things the pioneers made, had, traded and hunted. For example, clothing, candles for light, a fireplace for warmth, and making maple sugar and syrup. Each week, I will read two of these short stories to the students. I will have activities to do with the students after each story. These activities will allow the students to experience what it was like to live in the olden days.

In my classroom, I will model an old one room school house. This ‘school house’ will include wooden desks, chalk and slate boards, a dunce cap and a stool in the corner of the room, candles and lanterns for light (these will be fake candles), and a fireplace (will have a heater representing a fireplace). The lights will never be turned on; we will just have the light from the candles and the heat from the fireplace so the children can get a sense of an actual school in this
time period. Students will be given costumes to wear when they enter the classroom each day. These costumes will be custom made “olden day outfits” to fit each child.

Field trips will be arranged for the students to gain more knowledge and experience. Children will spend a day on a farm helping the farmer with his chores. On the farm, students will learn to milk cows, harvest, feed the animals, wash clothes with a washboard, garden, and bring in firewood. Another field trip will be to a Sugar Maple Farm. Students will learn about tapping trees and making maple syrup.

During this time period of the ‘olden days’, children will still be expected to learn other subjects in school. They will continue to be in character during class time and school will be continuing as normal. Projects and experiments will be constructed on this time period, such as making butter, weaving paper, growing plants, raising chicks in the classroom, and reflective writing assignments.

This olden days unit is interdisciplinary. There will be outcomes achieved for science, social studies, visual arts, language arts, music, health, and physical education. By the end of the unit, children will have a better understanding of the different time periods, how technology has evolved making our lives easier over time, and how people learned to survive.

The unit will last approximately four months. This will ensure that the children will get the most out of this arts infusion project. We will conclude the unit with a production performed by the students for family, friends, and the community. The play will include certain aspects the students have learned throughout this informative unit.
Arts Infusion – Starting Point

Discuss with students, from the beginning of the year, what the arts infusion project will consist of. Ask questions to students and create discussions. Some questions may be as follows:

- What do you think people looked like in the ‘olden days’?
- What do you think the homes looked like?
- What do you think the school looked like?
- What kind of jobs do you think there were in the ‘olden days’?

Students need to be involved to make the project more meaningful. Fundraising may need to take place in order to make the arts infusion project activities that much more memorable.

Before Christmas break, the students’ measurements will be taken so their costumes will be ready for February 28, 2011. Volunteers in the community will make the pioneer costumes for each individual student to wear when they are in class. Students will leave their costumes at school and will put them on when they are in the classroom. When the weather starts to warm up, they will not be required to wear them. The first few weeks of the project are crucial that they wear their costumes so they can get the full effect of being a child in the ‘olden days’. Students can take their costumes off when going to recess, lunch, or another class, such as gym and music. Classes will continue as normal, with some exceptions. The curriculum outcomes for this grade level will still be achieved; the students are just learning under different circumstances.

When the children return to school from Christmas break, they will assist the teacher in finding and picking out materials to decorate the classroom. The classroom will be decorated as a pioneer one room school house. Once the materials are collected, students will help the teacher set up the classroom a week before the main project begins.
Below are the activities that will be completed for the arts infusion project.

Schedule for February – June 2011

Weekend - February 26 – February 27, 2011

- Teacher finishes the transformation to a one room school house.
- Have costumes out for students to put on when they arrive the morning of February 28.

Week of February 28 – March 4, 2011

- Students arrive – put costumes on and explore the ‘new’ classroom.
- Introduce students to the Robertson’s and read the first story “Signs of Spring.”

Week of March 7 – March 11, 2011

- Read the story “Maple Sugaring” to the students.
- This is the ideal time to visit a place where Maple Syrup is made. Prepare a field trip to a place nearby. Ex: Maplewood Maple Syrup & Christmas Tree Farm (Lunenburg County), Sugar Moon Farm (Earltown – near Truro and Northumberland Shore), or Munro’s Mountain Maple (Annapolis Valley). *See activity sheets.
- Activity: A Sappy Story *See activity sheets.

Week of March 14 – March 18, 2011

- Read the story “School Days” to students.
- Have a spelling bee at the end of the week with words associated with the pioneers. *See activity sheets.
- Read the story “Baby Animals” to students.
- Have children assist in preparation for the baby chicks coming to live in the classroom. Introduce baby chicks to the students and have a lesson on caring for the chicks. *See activity sheets.

Week of March 21 – March 25, 2011

- Read the story “Finding a Honey Tree” to students.
- Talk about honey and how it was one of the few sweeteners available in the woods. Discuss the use of honey and some remedies. Have a ‘taste tester’ day, trying these different sweet treats and remedies. *See activity sheets.
• Read “Granny’s Story” to students.
• Grow plants in the classroom. Observe and record the plants. *See activity sheets.

Week of March 28 – April 1, 2011

• Read the story “Milking” to students.
• Field trip to a farm nearby. Ex: Folly River Farms Ltd (Debert), Belland Farms Limited (Middle Musquodoboit), Sunni Knoll Farm (Shubenacadie), or Blue Barn Farms (Hammonds Plains). *See activity sheets.
• ‘Day on a Farm’ writing assignment. *See activity sheets.
• ‘Make Your Own Butter’ Activity. *See activity sheets.

Week of April 4 – April 8, 2011

• Read the story “Sheep Shearing” to students.
• Weaving Activity. *See activity sheets.
• Read the story “The Pedlar’s Visit” to students.
• Have someone come in to the class dressed up as a pedlar. Students will have to decide if they want to trade their ‘item’ for the pedlar’s goods. *See activity sheets.
• Activity – Make a pioneer water carrier. *See book.

Week of April 11 – April 15, 2011

• Read the story “Fishing” to students.
• Nature Walk *See activity sheets.
• Read the story “Harvesting the Crops” to students.
• Discuss the different types of harvesting in the olden days and the technology that has developed to make harvesting easier today.

Week of April 18 – April 22, 2011

• Read the story “A Visit to the General Store” to students.
• Activity – Students will write a letter with homemade ink. *See activity sheets.
• Activity – Signed and Sealed *See activity sheets.
• Read the story “Building the New House” to students.
• Have students create their own plans for building a new house in the olden days. *See activity sheets.
• Activity – Rollers, Levers, Runners, and Ramps *See activity sheets.

Week of April 25 – April 29, 2011

• Read the story “The Cornhusking Bee” to students.
• Activity – Have students answer questions about the story. *See activity sheets.
• Bring in dried fruit for the students to taste.
• Read the story “Shadow Stories” to students.
• Activity – Making Shadow Shapes *See book.
• Activity – Making Shadow Puppets *See book.

**Week of May 2 – May 6, 2011**

• Read the story “Lost in the Woods” to students.
• Talk about safety in the woods and discuss some tricks to help play it safe.
• Read the story “Moving Day” to students.
• Start to discuss the ‘Olden Days Play’ the student’s will perform. *See activity sheets.

**May 9 – June 24, 2011**

• Play preparation

**Week of June 27 – July 1, 2011**

• Play performances
Resources