Lesson Plan: The Story of My Name

What's in a name?

According to an article published through Yale's Poorvu Center for Teaching and Learning, using a student's preferred name can build classroom community, help students feel more satisfied and engaged in their learning, and increase their accountability to the educator. It has also been shown to encourage students to seek out help if needed because of an increased level of comfortability (Yale Poorvu for Teaching and Learning, 2021).

Grade Level (Multi-leveled):
This lesson can be adapted to fit grades 4th-6th

Subject and Topic:
Reading/Writing/Speaking
The Story of My Name and Building a Classroom Community

Materials Needed:
One read-aloud book from booklist
Story of My Name Worksheet (1/student)
Pencil (1/student)
Name Card-cardstock folded in half (1/student)
Markers (1 set/group/pod)

Content Standards:

4th Grade Students will be able to:
4.W.2 Write informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas and information clearly.

4.SL.1 Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on topics and texts, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly.

5th Grade Students will be able to:
5.W.2 Write informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas and information clearly.

5.SL.1 Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grade 5 topics and texts, building on others’ ideas and expressing their own clearly.

6th Grade Students will be able to:
6.W.2 Write informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas, concepts, and information through the selection, organization, and analysis of relevant content.

6.SL.1d Review the key ideas expressed and demonstrate understanding of multiple perspectives through reflection and paraphrasing (O.D.O.D, n.d.)
Lesson Plan: The Story of My Name cont.

Procedure (45-55 minutes):

Hook (8-10 minutes): Choose a book to read aloud from the https://catalog.jcls.org/MyAccount/MyList/16869 booklist about names. Grade level is specified in "Notes".

Background Knowledge Needed: While reading, have them think about what name they prefer to be called.

Step 1 (10 minutes): Pass out the "Story of My Name" worksheet. This will be used to take notes, so have them keep it. Give students 10 minutes to brainstorm answers to the following questions listed on the worksheet:
1) What is your preferred name and how do you pronounce it?
2) What is the meaning or story behind it?
3) What does your name mean to you? Are there any feelings or emotions attached to it?

Step 2 (10-15 minutes): Once they have finished brainstorming answers to the questions, they will keep their worksheet to fill out notes during the pair an share portion of the lesson, but they can show their completed work to you to receive a piece of cardstock. They will fold it in half to create a name tent, writing their name and decorating it with markers/pens/whatever is available to them. They can choose decorative markers while getting the cardstock, or you can choose to leave sets at table groups. Allow 10-15 minutes to decorate their name cards with their preferred name.

Pair and Share (10-12 minutes): Once completed with their name card, have students pair up either in groups of 2-4, to share their name, how it is pronounced, and why it is important to them. They can use their brainstormed answers to the prompts to help them answer. As each person shares, have them take notes on the "Story of Their Name" section of the worksheet (backside). Allow each student 2-3 minutes to share before moving to the next partner.

Extension (5-10 minutes): Once everyone has shared within their group, ask for volunteers to introduce one of their group members to the class. This can also be used as an exit ticket to the next activity if you would like each student to introduce the person next to them.

References

Yale Poorvu Center for Teaching and Learning (n.d.). Learning Student Names and Pronouns. Managing the Classroom. Retrieved August 14, 2023, from https://poorvucenter.yale.edu/LearningStudentNames%3A-%text=Use%20of%20student%20names%20has%20been%20shown%20to,Murdoch%20et%20al%202018%2C%20O%E2%80%99Brien%20et%20al%202014%29.
My preferred name is: ____________________________.

It's pronounced: ____________________________.

What is the meaning or story behind your name?

What does your name mean to you? Are there any feelings or emotions attached to it?
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Mi nombre preferencia es: ____________________________.

Es pronunciada/o: ____________________________

¿Que es el significado de tu nombre? ¿Cuál es el significado o la historia detrás de tu nombre?

¿Qué significa tu nombre para ti? ¿Hay algún sentimiento o emoción asociado a ella?