

Family Literacy Guided Lesson

For My Very Own Room / Mi propio cuartito

NY State Learning Standards

Learning Standard 2 for English Language

Arts:

Students will read and listen to oral and written texts and performances, relate texts and performances to their own lives and develop an understanding of the diverse social, historical, and cultural dimensions the texts and performances represent. As speakers and writers, students will use oral and written language for self-expression and artistic creation.

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About the Book

My Very Own Room /

Mi propio cuartito

Amada Irma Pérez, Author and
Maya Christina Gonzalez, Illustrator

Smiling faces and rich waves of color illustrate Pérez's story of a young Mexican-American girl who dreams of a space that she can call her own. Written in first person and based on her own family history, the author tells how her caring family worked to turn a small storage room into a bedroom just for her. With swirls of magenta paint on the walls, a bed provided by Uncle Pancho, a lamp purchased with Blue Chip stamps and books borrowed from the library, Amada's childhood wish becomes a reality. This bilingual book is an autobiographical story that teaches valuable lessons about the strength of family and the importance of dreams.

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The Language/Literacy Connection

Autobiographies

An autobiography is a story told in the writer's own words about his or her memories, feelings, accomplishments and adventures. The stories can be funny, sad, inspiring or touching. They sometimes stretch over the lifetime of the writer and sometimes, as in *My Very Own Room / Mi propio cuartito*, they concentrate on just a few significant memories. Although often written by people in their adult years, even very young children have personal stories to tell and those stories can be preserved on paper. Writers of all ages and skills can use a little help to get their creative juices flowing. The activities in this lesson are designed to do just that.

Early Childhood Education-Infant/Toddler Level

Handprints

PLS-4 Skills

Auditory

Comprehension

- 44. Understands spatial concepts: under, in back of, next to, in front of

Expressive

Language

- 41. Answers questions logically
- 44. Answers questions about hypothetical events

Before the Visit

Gather Needed Materials

- Tempera paint
- Construction paper
- 1" paint brush
- Shallow pan for cleanup
- Paper towels

Prepare Lesson Props

- As this can be a messy activity, discuss your plans with the parent on the week before. Decide on the best place to carry out the printing and the clothes that the child should wear.

During the Visit

- ♦ With the parent and child sitting together, look at several pictures in the book. Although the story is rather mature for infants and toddlers, the colorful illustrations will attract their attention. Point out pictures that illustrate familiar activities and talk about their relationship to the child. For example, look at the picture of sleeping children (page 2). Ask: *What are these children doing? (Pause.) It looks like they're sleeping. Can you pretend to be asleep?* With your eyes closed, lay your head on your hand and say: *I'm pretending to be asleep. Can you pretend to sleep?* Encourage the parent and child to pantomime sleeping.
- ♦ Say to the parent: *When reading books with (child's name), point out pictures of familiar behaviors. Talk about ways that activities are*

- related to him/her. This will make books more interesting to (child's name), and will help him/her learn how to build a personal relationship with books.*
- ♦ With the parent, look through the book for other illustrations of things familiar to (child's name). Some possibilities are:
 - ♦ Page 13 – *getting a hug from mom,*
 - ♦ Page 22 – *sticking out tongues - even very young infants will copy this behavior,*
 - ♦ Page 20 – *stretching arms way up high especially in games like "So Big,"*
 - ♦ Page 28 – *reading a book.*

First Marks

- ♦ Say to the parent: *This story is an autobiography because the author wrote about something that happened in her life. (Child's name) isn't ready to write an autobiography, but he/she can begin to make marks on paper with crayons, markers or paint. Most children like to begin experimenting with "writing" around 18 to 24 months. Today we are going to use paint to make handprints on construction paper. Although this is more of an art activity than a writing activity, it is a way that young children can tell their own story. After all, nothing is more personal than the prints we make with our hands.*

Directions

- ♦ Brush a light coating of paint onto the palms of the child's hands.
- ♦ Gently press the palm onto construction paper.
- ♦ If it seems like fun, make prints of both hands and feet.
- ♦ Have a shallow pan of warm water and paper towels nearby for cleanup.

Painted Memories

by Patricia Ward

Two little hands,
And two little feet,
Painting memories,
That are oh so sweet.

Early Childhood Education-Preschool and School Age Levels

Wish Room

PLS-4 Skills

Auditory Comprehension

44. Understands spatial concepts: under, in back of, next to, in front of

Expressive Language

41. Answers questions logically
44. Answers questions about hypothetical events

Before the Visit

Gather Needed Materials

- ♦ Magazine pictures of bedroom furniture, toys, linens, etc., some backed with cardboard
- ♦ Glue
- ♦ Pencil
- ♦ Ruler
- ♦ Newsprint
- ♦ Lid from a shoebox or box of similar size

Prepare Lesson Props

- ♦ Prepare a schematic of your Wish Room to use as a model.
- ♦ Glue pictures of basic bedroom furnishings onto cardboard and trim around the edges.

During the Visit

- ♦ With the parent and child sitting together read *My Very Own Room / Mi propio cuartito* by Amada Irma Pérez. If the parent and child are readers, ask them to share in the reading. Talk about the story and ask questions that help the child relate the story to his/her own life. Say: *This story is an autobiography. It's a story that the author wrote about something that happened to her when she was nine years old. Do you remember what it was?* (Pause for a response) Say: *She wished for her own room and her family helped make her wish come true.*

Design a Wish Room

Preschooler

- ♦ Give the shoebox lid and pictures of basic bedroom furnishings to the child, i.e., bed, dresser, chair, toy box.
- ♦ Say: *Pretend that this is your very own room. How will you arrange the furniture?* Give the child time to play with

this paper "dollhouse" room. Talk with the child as he/she arranges and rearranges the furniture. Say things like: *That's an interesting arrangement. Why did you put the bed (chair, dresser, etc.) in that spot?* Can the child think through his/her ideas and give an explanation?

- ♦ Ask: *What else do you want for your Wish Room?* Give the child the magazine pictures. As he/she selects additional pictures, help the parent glue them to cardboard backings.

School Age

- ♦ Say: *If you could have any room you wanted, what would that room be like? How big would it be? What would its shape be? What things would you put in it?*
- ♦ Draw a scaled sketch of the dimensions the child states. The scale does not have to be exact but it should be in proportion to the child's wish.

- ♦ Say: *Where do you think the door should be? Will there be any windows?* Let the child draw in the door and windows.

- ♦ Say: *What furniture and other things would you like in your room? You probably need a bed. What else would you like? Let's make a list.* After listing the child's wished for items, say: *Look through the magazine pictures to find pictures of the things on your list. If you can't find a picture, you can draw one and cut it out.*

- ♦ Say: *Put the furniture and other things on the sketch of your Wish Room. Move it around until you have everything just right. Then glue everything in place. Tape your list of furniture wishes on the edge of your sketch. If you think of something else you want, add it to your list.*
- ♦ Say: *This is like an autobiography. It's your story about something that you wish.*

Parenting Education Activity

I Remember When: A Family's History

Family histories are the combined life stories of its members. In a sense, a family's history is the compilation of the autobiographies of parents, grandparents, aunts, uncles, cousins, brothers and sisters. *I remember when . . .* is the beginning of many intriguing, interesting and sometimes tragic tales. They are stories often told by word of mouth and sometimes written down.

Why Tell Stories

Say: *Telling family stories is an enjoyable way to teach children about language and literacy, and about your family's history. Sharing memories leads to talking which helps build language and communication skills. Telling stories about the family teaches children the art of storytelling – which supports reading, and helps them learn about themselves.*

Provide a Structure for Stories

An Opening Sentence

Say: *Provide a structure for your children to recall their memories and to join in the conversation. One kind of story structure is an opening sentence like "I remember a time when . . ." What opening sentences do you think would be good story starters for your children? Make a list of the parent's suggestions. If he/she has a difficult time getting started, offer an idea such as:*

- ◆ The best pet I ever had was . . .
- ◆ I really laughed when . . .
- ◆ The thing I remember best about the first time (family educator) came to our house is . . .

An Object

Say: *Another way to provide a structure is to tell stories about an object. Let's try that. Place a painting or other art project of the child's on the workspace. Say: This is a painting that (child's name) did on one of my first visits to your house. I remember the day that he/she made this painting. It was the first time that I used finger paint in someone's house and I was worried about the mess that it might make. What do you remember about the day we did this painting? Listen to the parent's remembrance. Invite the children to share their memories about the painting.*

A Catchphrase

Say: *A catchphrase is a word or phrase that is repeated again and again in the story. This kind of structure provides the easiest way for children, especially very young children, to join in the story. However, it requires some thinking on your part. Here is a sample story that I made up to show you how it works. It is a story about a cat that I once owned. The catchphrase in my story is "That cat could really run!" After I tell some of the story I'll stop. Each time I stop you say, "That cat could really run!"*

I once owned a cat named Amber. (Stop.) She was a beautiful three-colored cat. (Stop.) She was as fierce as a tiger and as fast as a cheetah. (Stop.) Most of the time she was a very good cat, but she had one trick I did not like. (Stop.) She liked to hide my clothespins. (Stop.) At first I didn't know why my clothespins were disappearing. Then one day I saw her jump into my laundry basket and run off with a clothespin in her mouth. (Stop.) I tried to catch her, but . . . (Stop.)

Note to family educators: Use the above story, or make up one of your own.

Interactive Literacy Between Parents and Their Children

Family Artifact Album

Many families have photo albums that give a pictorial history of the family. A Family Artifact Album is like a photo album, but rather than photographs it has collections of artifacts and stories that are important to each family member.

Create A Family Artifact Album with Your Family

- ◆ Begin with a loose-leaf notebook.
- ◆ Give each family member his or her own chapter.
- ◆ Use heavy paper to create dividing pages between the chapters.
- ◆ Ask family members to decorate the dividing page for their chapter. They could include their name, a photograph, or artwork they created.
- ◆ Add pages in each chapter that tell the story of that family member. Include some things that are the same in each chapter such as handprints or footprints. Add some items that are unique to the individual, like the title of the person's favorite book. Include artifacts that represent the person's special interests - perhaps a lock of hair cut from a favorite doll, the label from a favorite brand of cereal, a feather from a collection of bird feathers, etc.
- ◆ Include a few autobiographical stories written by the individual. Very young writers can prepare a page of "scribble" to include in his/her chapter. A parent or older sibling may wish to make a note of the child's story using a more standard writing. If older family members are not writers, they can dictate their stories to be written by someone with more writing skill.

My Family

by Patricia Ward

*In my family
It's mother and dad
And brothers and me,
And good old dog
Shaggily!*

*And though we're
different
As different can be
We live together
Quite happily.*

Family Cheer

- ◆ Make up a family cheer. Here are some examples.

*We're all proud to be members of the
(family name) family!
(Family name), (family name), that's our
name. Each so different still all the same.
In the (family name) family, it's one for all
and all for one.*

- ◆ Use fabric paint to print your family cheer onto tee shirts.

Adult Literacy - ABE Level

Family Coat of Arms

In the Middle Ages, noble families in Europe painted symbols on their armor and shields so they could identify their allies on the battlefield. Some symbols were very simple and others were very detailed. Their symbols included emblems that reflected the family's origins, traits and accomplishments.

A Coat of Arms for Your Family

Design your own coat of arms. On a sheet of paper draw the outline of a shield. Divide the shield into 4 parts. In each part draw a symbol that reflects something about you or your family. For example, if you like to grow plants, you might draw a flower or vegetable in one part of the shield. If your family likes to travel, draw a truck or car or a road. *What could you draw to show that your family is known to be kind or friendly?*

Symbols and Their Meanings

Some colors and symbols had recognized meanings in ancient coats of arms. Here are some examples.

Colors

Gold	Generosity
Silver	Peace and sincerity
Red	Brave, strong, just
Blue	Truth and loyalty
Green	Hope, joy and love
Black	Perseverance

Symbols

Bear	Strength, cunning
Castle	Safety
Hand	Sincerity, faith, judgment
Oak tree	Great age and strength
Red rose	Grace and beauty
Lion	Courage
Goose	Resourcefulness

What does it mean to you?

What symbols and colors did you use in your coat of arms?

Write a sentence about the meaning of each symbol and color in your coat of arms.

Adult Literacy - GED Level

Write a Résumé

Are you looking for a job? Then writing a résumé is an important first step. Résumés are not exactly autobiographies. They are not intended to tell your complete life story. Their purpose is to summarize just the information about yourself that will entice a prospective employer to ask you to come for an interview. Even if the job you're applying for doesn't require a résumé, writing down your skills and experience will help you focus on the qualities you have to offer to an employer.

Steps to Writing a Résumé

1. Determine the type of job you want.
What kind of job are you looking for? Be specific!

2. Identify your skills.
Make a list of your skills. What can you do that will make you a good candidate for the job you want? Why should the employer hire you?

3. Outline your experience.
What other jobs have you had and when did you hold them? What schools did you attend? What classes have you taken to improve your skills? What licenses or certifications do you have? Have you been in the military?

4. Write a draft.
Give yourself enough time to do a good job. You may need several days. Start with a draft, or maybe two or three.

5. Write the final résumé.
Be sure that you include your name, address and telephone number and the best parts of your drafts in your final résumé.

Some tips

- ◆ Type or keyboard your résumé on white or ivory paper.
- ◆ Present your information in short, easy to read paragraphs.
- ◆ Check for typos, misspellings and grammatical mistakes.
- ◆ Don't use slang and trendy words.
- ◆ Don't lie or misrepresent yourself.

Adult Literacy - ELL Lesson

Words That Describe Me

An autobiography is a description of one's self: appearance, thoughts, accomplishments, goals, etc. Teach words and word phrases that will give English language learners English vocabulary to describe their own physical characteristics. Use as many of the vocabulary words in the lesson as is appropriate for the level of competence of the student. One category may be sufficient for beginning students. More advanced students may be ready to learn all three categories – eyes, hair and skin.

Introduce Vocabulary

Vocabulary

Eyes

Blue Brown
Hazel

Hair

Black Curly
Brown Straight
Red Long
Blonde Short

Skin

Light Dark

Phrases

My _____ is _____
My _____ are _____
Her _____ is _____
His _____ is _____
Her _____ are _____
His _____ are _____

Lesson Props

- ◆ Magazine pictures of men and women who have a range of skin tones, eye colors, and hair types.

- ◆ Introduce the vocabulary *eyes, hair,* and *skin*. Place one picture of a person that clearly shows *eyes* and *hair* on the workspace. Point to the eyes in the picture. Say: *These are eyes*. Point to your

eyes. Say: *These are my eyes*. Point to the learner's eyes. Say: *These are my eyes*. Point again to the eyes in the picture. Say: *What are these? These are eyes*. Gesture for the learner to repeat: *These are eyes*. Point to your eyes and say: *These are my eyes*. Gesture for the learner to point to his/

her eyes and repeat: *These are my eyes*.

- ◆ Point to the hair in the picture. Say: *This is hair*. Run your fingers through your hair and say: *This is my hair*. Point to the learner's hair and say: *What is this? This is my hair*. Gesture for the learner to touch his/her hair and repeat:

This is my hair.

- ◆ Rub your hands over your face, neck, hands, arms and any other exposed skin. Say: *This is my skin*. Say: *What is this? This is my skin*. Gesture to the learner to repeat: *This is my skin*.

Expand the Lesson

- ◆ Introduce the descriptive vocabulary. Place three pictures on the workspace – one each to illustrate brown, blue and hazel eyes. Point to one of the pictures. Say: *His (her) eyes are brown (blue, hazel)*. *What color are his (her) eyes?* Gesture to the learner to answer: *His (her) eyes are brown (blue, hazel)*. Repeat procedure with other pictures using the appropriate pronoun (his or her) and the

appropriate eye color (brown, blue, hazel). Point to your eyes and say: *My eyes are blue (brown, hazel)*. *What color are your eyes?* Gesture for the learner to point to his/her eyes and answer: *My eyes are brown (blue, hazel)*.

- ◆ Repeat procedure for words that describe hair (brown, black, red, blond, curly, straight, long, short) and skin color (dark, light).

Practice

- ◆ Repeat steps as necessary to achieve mastery.
- ◆ Point to the learner's hair. Ask: *Is your hair long and curly?* Gesture to the learner to answer: *Yes, my hair is long and curly*. Or, *No, my hair is short and curly (long and straight, etc.)*.
- ◆ Continue the practice asking questions about the learner's hair, eyes, and skin.
- ◆ Point to a picture and ask: *Is his (her) hair short and red?* Gesture to the learner to answer: *Yes, his (her) hair is short and red*. Or, *No, his (her) hair is long and black (brown, blond)*.