Philadelphia Stories: African Transitions from West Africa to Philadelphia as a Means to

Stephanie Wicks
Roxborough High School

Abstract:

Children love to hear stories and tell stories. However by the time they reach high school, the idea of story time sounds juvenile to students and teachers alike. Yet, storytelling is directly related to history and one way we learn history. As a high school history teacher I am always looking for ways to reach my students and encourage a love of history and learning. In this curriculum unit I have created a means for students to learn content through oral history. It is my hope that this form of information gathering will help students to bridge the gap between something they do on a daily basis in telling stories to each other and how they perceive what we learn in the classroom from textbooks and other sources. Students will learn how to use primary sources, how to create an oral history project and about African immigrants in Philadelphia.

It is my objective for students to learn how to use historiography, ethnography and historical research methods to create an oral history project which will culminate in the production of a triptych or a Smartboard or PowerPoint presentation. This unit will consist of four lessons which will be taught in approximately four, fifty minute class periods. They will not be taught consecutively although they will be sequential. Although this unit will be used primarily in an African American History class, it can also be used in an English classroom. The lessons will utilize Pennsylvania’s academic standards for History and Reading, Writing, Speaking and Listening which are listed in the appendix.