Who We Are: Brave New Clan – Cultural Expression

COOL AUSTRALIA IS AN EDUCATIONAL NOT-FOR-PROFIT THAT HELPS TEACHERS DESIGN EXCEPTIONAL LEARNING FOR ALL STUDENTS. JUMP ON TO THEIR WEBSITE FOR FREE-TO-ACCESS UNITS OF WORK AND LESSON PLANS THAT INTEGRATE TOPICS SUCH AS SUSTAINABILITY, ETHICS, ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER HISTORIES AND CULTURES, ECONOMICS AND WELLBEING ACROSS SUBJECT AREAS.

ABOUT THE NARRANGUNUWALI PROGRAM
Narrangunuwali: Reconnection in Schools and Early Learning is a Reconciliation Australia program that supports teachers and early learning services in Australia to develop environments that foster a higher level of knowledge and pride in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories, cultures and contributions. Visit www.reconciliation.org.au to join the Narrangunuwali community.

ABOUT WHO WE ARE: BRAVE NEW CLAN
Feather student knowledge and pride in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories, cultures and contributions. Cool Australia has teamed up with Narrangunuwali: Reconciliation in Schools and Early Learning to provide you with teaching resources for a series of short films, Who We Are: Brave New Clan introduces your students to six exceptional young Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people as they navigate life in urban, regional and remote settings. Each film will help students examine the influences of family, kinship, community, country/place, culture, spirituality and language on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. The accompanying lesson plans include curriculum links, teaching tips, fact sheets, assessment ideas and access to five educational videos.

ABOUT THIS LESSON
This lesson focuses on the topic of cultural expression and sharing of knowledge. Through a range of activity-based activities, students will explore how aspects of the film weave knowledge in their own cultural background. Students can then use this knowledge to discuss the importance of storytelling for knowledge transfer and maintenance in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures. Finally, students create their own story that can be shared in a yearning circle.

CURRICULUM LINKS
Cross-curriculum priority: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Histories and Cultures, General capabilities: Interpersonal Understanding, Critical and Creative Thinking, Literacy Skills
English: Years 4, 5 & 6
Humantities and Social Sciences: Years 4, 5 & 6 (View each of the curriculum content descriptors on Cool Australia’s website).

Time Required: 50 minutes

What You’ll Need:
Download from www.coolaustralia.org/activities/brave-new-american-culture-1-cultural-expression-years-4-6-
• Film: ‘Who We Are: Culture’
• Student Worksheet

Teaching Sequence:
20 minutes – Watching Film and Group Discussion
20 minutes – Writing Circle
20 minutes – Story Writing and Sharing
5 minutes – Reflection

Instructions:
Step 1. As a class, watch the ‘Who We Are: Culture’ film. Focus student viewing by asking them to look for references to ‘culture’.

Step 2. Once complete, engage students in a discussion around the following questions:
• How does James refer to the stories in his culture?
• What does this say about the importance of stories in his culture?
• How does Harry describe his experience of knowledge within his culture?
• What does Harry say about the importance of story to his experience of culture?

Through your discussion guide students to thinking about the connections between culture and language, storytelling, and passing down of knowledge.

Step 3. Explain to students that they are now going to form a yearning circle. A yearning circle is a way of sharing stories and engaging in conversations. Invite your class to sit in a circle. Begin by telling the class a story that is shared between generations in your family. It could be a happy memory from your or your parents’ childhoods, or stories that contain information about your family history or experiences of particular family members. Invite students to think of a story that is shared in their own family. Ask students to think about who usually tells the story in their family, who listens, and why the story is important. Ask students if anyone is willing to share a story from their own families. Continue sharing stories around the yearning circle until there are no more volunteers. Once complete, invite students to share their experiences of the yearning circle.

• Why is it a good way of sharing information?
• How does it fit to share information?
• What other sorts of stories would be suitable to a yearning circle?
• Would you like to do it again? Why or why not?

Step 4. Explain to students that many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stories explore some facet of the environment. This is can be weather, geographically, animal behaviour or any other information that is often relayed through other, more scientific means, by many contemporary Western societies. Ask students to research a local animal/plant/place and create a story that gives that animal/plant/place some reason or purpose. The stories should be truthful, but share the information in an entertaining and meaningful narrative. In many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, knowledge comes from and is often based around an oral tradition. Encourage students to think of the story as an oral story rather than to be written down or read. Once students have had time to research and create their stories, invite students to bring their stories and ask each person to share their story with the class.

References:
Write students to complete the thinking routine on the Student Worksheet.

coolaustralia.org
Explore the rest of the ‘Who We Are: Brave New Clan’ unit and resources – www.coolaustralia.org/brave-new-clan
Sign up to Narrangunuwali to continue learning about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories, cultures and contributions year-round – www.reconciliation.org.au/sign-up