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Paideia Seminar Lesson Plan

Text: "Ivory-Billed Woodpecker" by John James Audubon

Grade/Subject: HS / Art, Science

Ideas, Values: Diversity, Extinction vs. Existence, Human vs. Nature, Species

Date of Origin: 1/12/2016

Pre-Seminar Content

Launch Activity:

Distribute note cards (one per student) with the names of extinct species on them. Ask students to research the extinct species and record basic facts about them, including the forces that led to their extinction. Discuss as a class the role (if any) that human beings played in the extinction of various species.

Inspectional Read:

Display the print of the Ivory-Billed Woodpecker (at its original size if possible: 26 ½" x 39 ½") for at least one week prior to the seminar. Ask students to sketch various segments of the painting as time permits.

Background Information:

Share as appropriate in the week prior to the seminar: John James Audubon (1785-1851) was the illegitimate son of a French plantation owner in Haiti, who was raised in France and sent to America when he was 18. A gifted artist, he dedicated his life (sacrificing family and financial stability) to create his classic *Birds of America*. Long noted for the startlingly life-like quality of his painting, his birds are invariably represented as life-sized and in the middle of dramatic action, not in a more traditional, studio pose.

Discuss with students just prior to the seminar: The Ivory-Billed Woodpecker has been considered extremely rare (well beyond "endangered") and probably extinct for decades. The last confirmed sighting was during the 1940s in Louisiana. In May of 2005, a group of

ornithologists from Cornell University made a startling public announcement that a small colony of Ivory-Bills had been confirmed in the wilds of Arkansas, in effect that the bird had returned from the dead. This announcement precipitated a flood of publicity and led to some debate over what it means to preserve a natural species. Unfortunately, despite ongoing efforts, no further sightings of the Arkansas colony have been confirmed, and the Ivory-Bill is once again thought to be extinct.

Vocabulary:

Share and discuss with students the following definitions from the Endangered Species Act:

- *Extinct species: A species that no longer exists, or a species currently believed to be extinct.*
- *Endangered species: An animal or plant species in danger of extinction throughout all or a significant portion of its range.*
- *Threatened species: An animal or plant species likely to become endangered within the foreseeable future throughout all or a significant portion of its range.*

Analytical Read:

Distribute individual (smaller) color copies of the painting to the participants. Divide the class up into three groups and assign one of the individual birds in the painting to each of the groups. Have the students work in pairs to use tracing paper to trace and then color their individual bird. Then have the pairs research the Ivory-Bill and its habits so that they can add notes to their sketches (about gender, habitat, etc.).

Pre-Seminar Process:

- ✓ **Define and State the purpose for the seminar.**

“A Paideia seminar is a collaborative, intellectual dialogue about a text, facilitated with open ended questions.

“The main purpose of seminar is to arrive at a fuller understanding of the textual ideas and values, of ourselves, and of each other.

- ✓ **Describe the responsibilities of facilitator and participants.**

“I am primarily responsible for asking challenging, open-ended questions, and I will take a variety of notes to keep up with the talk turns and flow of ideas. I will help move the discussion along in a productive direction by asking follow-up questions based on my notes. “I am asking you to think, listen and speak candidly about your thoughts, reactions and ideas. You can help each other do this by using each other’s names.

“You do not need to raise your hands in order to speak, rather, the discussion is collaborative in that you try to stay focused on the main speaker and wait your turn to talk.

“You should try to both agree and disagree in a courteous, thoughtful manner. For example, you might say, ‘I disagree with Joanna because...,’ focusing on the ideas involved not the individuals.

✓ **Have participants set a Personal Goal.**

“Now, please reflect on how you normally participate in a discussion as a group. What goal can you set for yourself that will help the flow and meaning of the seminar? “Please consider the list of personal participation goals – either on the Speaking and Listening Checklist or on the board.”

- ✓ To speak at least three times
- ✓ To refer to the text
- ✓ To ask a question
- ✓ To speak out of uncertainty
- ✓ To build on others’ comments

“Is there one that is relevant for you? Please choose one goal from the list or that you feel is best and commit to achieving it during the discussion we are about to have... write down (or circle) your personal goal.”

✓ **Agree on a Group Goal.**

For this seminar, I will suggest our group goal (select display for all to see).

Seminar Questions:

✓ **Opening (Identify main ideas from the text):**

- ❖ What is the most striking detail in this painting? (round-robin response)
- ❖ What does that detail reveal about the Ivory-Billed Woodpecker? (spontaneous discussion)

✓ **Core (Analyze textual details):**

- ❖ How are the three individual birds portrayed here alike and different?
- ❖ Why do you think Audubon included three birds in this portrait?
- ❖ What do you think the birds in this painting are doing? How do you know?
- ❖ What is the relationship between the birds themselves and the environment you see them portrayed in here?

- ❖ What does it say about human beings that so many people were so moved by the recent news that Ivory-Bill might not be extinct?
 - ✓ **Closing (Personalize and apply the ideas):**
 - ❖ Do you think that human beings as a single species of mammal are worth more, worth less, or worth the same as a single species of bird? Why?
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Post-Seminar Process:

“Thank you for your focused and thoughtful participation in our seminar”.

- ✓ **Have participants do a written self-assessment of their personal goal.**

“As part of the post-seminar process, I would first like to ask you to take a few minutes to reflect on your relative success in meeting the personal process goal you set prior to beginning the discussion. Please review the goal you set for yourself and reflect in writing to what extent you met the goal. In addition, note why you think you performed as you did”. (Pause for reflection.)

- ✓ **Do a group assessment of the social and intellectual goals of the seminar.**

“Now I would like us to talk together about how we did in relation to the group goal we set for ourselves (insert your group goal). On a scale of one to five, five being perfect, how would you say we did? Why?” (Pause for discussion.)

“Now, would someone be willing to (volunteer) to share your personal self-assessment and reflection?”

- ✓ **Note reminders for the next seminar.**

Post Seminar Content:

- ✓ **Transition to Writing:**

Share the following definition by adding to the list of definitions from the pre-seminar *Vocabulary* stage that are displayed on the (interactive) whiteboard:

Species diversity is a measure of the diversity within an ecological community that incorporates both species richness (the number of species in a community) and the evenness of species' abundances. *Species diversity* is one component of the concept of biodiversity. (source: www.eoearth.org/view/article/156211/)

Have students take notes on everything they said, heard, and thought during the seminar that relates to the question of *species diversity*.

✓ **Writing Task:**

To what extent are human beings as a species responsible for maintaining species diversity on the earth? After reading and discussing Audubon's painting of the Ivory-Billed Woodpecker, write an essay in which you discuss species diversity and evaluate human responsibility for maintaining it. Support your position with reference to the painting.

✓ **Brainstorm:**

Display the writing task and then have students talk in pairs for two minutes to share thoughts about what the writing task is asking and how they might respond. Discuss for clarity with the entire class.

✓ **Structure the Writing:**

Ask students to design an outline for this multi-paragraph essay based on the task. Encourage them to consider carefully our discussion during the seminar in writing their argument.

✓ **First Draft:**

Challenge all to draft their arguments by writing the paragraphs defined by their outlines. Refer to the Audubon painting to illustrate their argument with a specific example.

✓ **Collaborative Revision:**

Have participants work in pairs to read their first drafts aloud to each other with emphasis on reader as creator and editor. (Stress that each paper must state a clear argument--with a definitive claim--and support that position with evidence from the text.) Listener says back one point heard clearly and asks one question for clarification. Switch roles. Give time for full revisions resulting in a second draft.

✓ **Edit:**

Once the second draft is complete, have participants work in groups of three-four and this time take turns reading each other's second drafts slowly and silently, marking any spelling or grammar errors they find. (Have dictionaries and grammar handbooks available for reference.) Take this opportunity to clarify/reteach any specific grammar strategies you have identified your students needing. Give time for full revisions resulting in a third and final draft.

✓ **Publish:**

Display the final copies of the student essays along with a full-scale copy of a print of the painting, either in your classroom or in the hallway outside your classroom. Invite other science classes to examine the display and discuss with your students. In addition, create several collections of the essays: one to keep for your classroom library (to be used as model compositions for future classes) and one to mail the National Audubon Society.

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***Text is attached if open sourced.**

***Text is cited if it needs to be procured.**

https://www.learner.org/courses/envsci/visual/visual.php?shortname=ivory_billed

