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Statement of Purpose

Many children view pumpkins as a symbol of autumn. Pumpkins are seen everywhere during October. Many children will observe them at home and carve Jack-o-Lanterns. Pumpkins are also present at the store, visible during a car ride, and they are usually decorating the school hallways. Contextualized teaching and learning emphasizes connecting content to learners’ experiences, engaging the students in active learning, encouraging personal meaning, and enabling students to direct their own learning in some cases (Chiarelott, 2006).

Educators must reach all their learners by building their lesson plans on Howard Gardner’s Multiple Intelligences Theory. Teachers need to reach the intrapersonal, spatial, kinesthetic, interpersonal, linguistic, logical, and musical learners. “The most significant modification we can make to meet diverse needs is to reduce the use of circle time and replace it by incorporating and using well-planned learning stations” (Hine, 2008).

The purpose of this early childhood unit on pumpkins is to reach all learners using Howard Gardner’s Multiple Intelligences Theory. Each activity used with pumpkins is correlated with the Ohio Academic Content Standards and the activities make learning relevant for the child.

This Kindergarten unit allows children to recognize how everyone may have different traditions using the pumpkin. Pumpkins can be used in a variety of ways and children will be exposed to some of these throughout the lessons. Children are also working on their citizenship rights and responsibilities as they are participating and cooperating in classroom learning centers (Ohio Department of Education, 2003, p.109).

Math is integrated in this unit as students are estimating and measuring pumpkin seeds, as well as using shapes on Jack-o-Lanterns. Pumpkins will be weighed, as well as measured in circumference and height. Students are required to “compare and order objects of different lengths, areas, weights, and capacities; and use relative terms, such as longer, shorter, bigger, smaller, heavier, lighter, more and less” (Ohio Department of Education, 2003, p. 115).

Science is integrated in this unit as students are studying the pumpkin during the different seasons and they are observing the life cycle of the pumpkin. Children are also discovering that stories sometimes give plants and animals characteristics they really do not have. During learning centers, students are also investigating “variations that exist among individuals of the same kind of plant or animal” (Ohio Department of Education, 2003, p. 99).

Language Arts is integrated in the unit because students are reading pumpkin books, journaling, and using communication skills to sing and chant poems. Through these activities, children are enhancing fluency, expression, vocabulary and writing skills.

This unit focuses on the Ohio Academic Content Standards. Students need to meet these indicators and using pumpkins makes learning more meaningful for them compared to using textbooks.

This unit provides a gateway for Mathematics, Language Arts, Science, and Social Studies to be intertwined so students can meet their state indicators through a meaningful learning experience. This unit reaches the multiple intelligences of the students, it is connected to learners’ experiences and it engages the students in active learning.

**References**

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