Paideia Seminar Lesson Plan

Text:
“The Emperor’s New Clothes” by Hans Christian Andersen

Grade/Subject
Upper ES / Social Studies

Ideas, Values:
Communication, Monarchy, Sense, Truth, Wisdom

Pre-Seminar Content

Launch Activity:
Have participants break into groups: assign each group one of the following ideas/values: communication, truth, and wisdom. Each group should discuss why they think this particular idea or value is important in society and their lives, and identify a character (either from a story or from our society) who embodies that idea. Each group should offer a brief summary of its discussion to the entire class.

Inspectional Read:
Distribute the text and ask participants to anticipate what they expect this reading to be like. Note genre, structure, etc. Discuss what a fairy tale is. Ask participants to number each paragraph (1-35) in the left-hand margin for easy reference. Read the text once aloud, while students make lists of any unfamiliar words or phrases.
Background Information:

Share the following as appropriate: Hans Christian Andersen (1805-1875) was a Danish author. Although a prolific writer of plays, travelogues, novels, and poems, Andersen is best remembered for his fairy tales. Andersen's popularity is not limited to children; his stories, called eventyr in Danish, or fairy-tales in English, express themes that transcend age and nationality. Some of his most famous fairy tales include "The Little Mermaid", "The Snow Queen", "The Ugly Duckling", "The Nightingale", "The Emperor's New Clothes" and many more.

Vocabulary:

Have participants share their lists or identify the unknown vocabulary and phrases. The words and phrases should be added to a list on the board. (Be sure to include the following: swindlers, weavers, luxurious, approbation, retinue, condescend, mantle, canopy.) Working together as a class, use context clues to create a list of defined terms/phrases to be used during the Analytical Reading, Seminar Discussion, and Writing Process. Practice the pronunciation of unfamiliar words. Discuss the unfamiliar vocabulary until all participants are comfortable with their meaning.

Analytical Read:

Story Board: Divide the class into groups of 3-5 and assign each group a scene from the story to illustrate on a large piece of flip-chart or poster paper. Have each group first create a preliminary sketch of the scene to share with the class. Groups should share by having one member of the team read that section of the story aloud followed by the display and explanation of the sketch.

Pre-Seminar Process

Define and state purpose for Paideia Seminar.

Describe the responsibilities of facilitator and participants.
Seminar Questions

Opening (Identify main ideas from the text.):

- Who do you think is the most important character in this story? (round-robin response)
- Why? (spontaneous discussion)

Core (Analyze textual details.):

- At the beginning of the story, is the Emperor a good ruler or a bad ruler? Based on the story, how do you know?
- The Emperor’s ministers are the first to “see” the invisible clothes. Why don’t they tell the Emperor that he is being swindled?
- Why do you think the author of the tale has a child be the one who tells everyone else that the Emperor has on no clothes?
- Why do you think the Emperor continued to pay the swindlers even though he couldn’t see his new clothes or any cloth being spun?
- At the end of the story the Emperor suspects that he really is wearing no clothes. Should he punish the swindlers or should he thank them? Why?

Closing (Personalize and apply the ideas.):

- If we were going to produce a class play based on “The Emperor’s New Clothes,” which part would you be best suited to play? Why?
Ask participants to revisit their initial work (from the Launch Activity), adding to their thoughts on why communication, truth, and wisdom are important in the lives of the characters in the story.

Why do the characters in “The Emperor’s New Clothes” act the way they do? After reading and discussing “The Emperor’s New Clothes” by Hans Christian Andersen, write a full paragraph in which you explain why one of the characters in the tale acts the way that he or she does. Give several examples from the tale to support your discussion. (Informational or Explanatory/Explain)

(LDC Task#: 7)

Invite participants to talk in pairs for two minutes to share thoughts about what the writing task is asking.
Structure the Writing:

Allot a few minutes for all to write down a list of details they want to include in their paragraphs. Draft an outline for their writing and refine their thinking.

First Draft:

Challenge all to draft their explanation paragraphs defined by their outlines. Refer to the text for examples in order to illustrate key points.

Collaborative Revision:

Have participants work in pairs to read their first drafts aloud to each other with emphasis on reader as creator and editor. 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 or four and this time take turns reading each other’s second drafts slowly and silently, marking spelling or grammar errors they find, with a limit of 5 per paragraph. (Have dictionaries and grammar handbooks available for reference.) Take this opportunity to clarify/reteach any specific grammar strategies you have identified your students may need, emphasizing the purpose of narratives and this specific writing task. Give time for full revisions and editing, resulting in a third and final draft.

Publish:

Publish the final copies of the resulting paragraphs by displaying them with the class story board (from the Analytical Read), mounting the various paragraphs at the appropriate points illustrated in the visual story.

This Paideia Lesson Plan was created by:

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"The Emperor’s New Clothes"

Hans Christian Andersen

Many years ago there was an Emperor so exceedingly fond of new clothes that he spent all his money on being well dressed. He cared nothing about reviewing his soldiers, going to the theatre, or going for a ride in his carriage, except to show off his new clothes. He had a coat for every hour of the day, and instead of saying, as one might, about any other ruler, "The King's in council," here they always said. "The Emperor's in his dressing room."

In the great city where he lived, life was always gay. Every day many strangers came to town, and among them one day came two swindlers. They let it be known they were weavers, and they said they could weave the most magnificent fabrics imaginable. Not only were their colors and patterns uncommonly fine, but clothes made of this cloth had a wonderful way of becoming invisible to anyone who was unfit for his office, or who was unusually stupid.

"Those would be just the clothes for me," thought the Emperor. "If I wore them I would be able to discover which men in my empire are unfit for their posts. And I could tell the wise men from the fools. Yes, I certainly must get some of the stuff woven for me right away." He paid the two swindlers a large sum of money to start work at once.

They set up two looms and pretended to weave, though there was nothing on the looms. All the finest silk and the purest old thread which they demanded went into their traveling bags, while they worked the empty looms far into the night.

"I'd like to know how those weavers are getting on with the cloth," the Emperor thought, but he felt slightly uncomfortable when he remembered that those who were unfit for their position would not be able to see the fabric. It couldn't have been that he doubted himself, yet he thought he'd rather send someone else to see how things were going. The whole town knew about the cloth's peculiar power, and all were impatient to find out how stupid their neighbors were.

"I'll send my honest old minister to the weavers," the Emperor decided. "He'll be the best one to tell me how the material looks, for he's a sensible man and no one does his duty better."

So the honest old minister went to the room where the two swindlers sat working away at their empty looms.

"Heaven help me," he thought as his eyes flew wide open, "I can't see anything at all". But he did not say so.
Both the swindlers begged him to be so kind as to come near to approve the excellent pattern, the beautiful colors. They pointed to the empty looms, and the poor old minister stared as hard as he dared. He couldn't see anything, because there was nothing to see. "Heaven have mercy," he thought. "Can it be that I'm a fool? I'd have never guessed it, and not a soul must know. Am I unfit to be the minister? It would never do to let on that I can't see the cloth."

"Don't hesitate to tell us what you think of it," said one of the weavers.

"Oh, it's beautiful - it's enchanting." The old minister peered through his spectacles. "Such a pattern, what colors!" I'll be sure to tell the Emperor how delighted I am with it."

"We're pleased to hear that," the swindlers said. They proceeded to name all the colors and to explain the intricate pattern. The old minister paid the closest attention, so that he could tell it all to the Emperor. And so he did.

The swindlers at once asked for more money, more silk and gold thread, to get on with the weaving. But it all went into their pockets. Not a thread went into the looms, though they worked at their weaving as hard as ever.

The Emperor presently sent another trustworthy official to see how the work progressed and how soon it would be ready. The same thing happened to him that had happened to the minister. He looked and he looked, but as there was nothing to see in the looms he couldn't see anything.

"Isn't it a beautiful piece of goods?" the swindlers asked him, as they displayed and described their imaginary pattern.

"I know I'm not stupid," the man thought, "so it must be that I'm unworthy of my good office. That's strange. I mustn't let anyone find it out, though." So he praised the material he did not see. He declared he was delighted with the beautiful colors and the exquisite pattern. To the Emperor he said, "It held me spellbound."

All the town was talking of this splendid cloth, and the Emperor wanted to see it for himself while it was still in the looms. Attended by a band of chosen men, among whom were his two old trusted officials - the ones who had been to the weavers - he set out to see the two swindlers. He found them weaving with might and main, but without a thread in their looms.

"Magnificent," said the two officials already duped. "Just look, Your Majesty, what colors! What a design!" They pointed to the empty looms, each supposing that the others could see the stuff.

"What's this?" thought the Emperor. "I can't see anything. This is terrible!
Am I a fool? Am I unfit to be the Emperor? What a thing to happen to me of all people! Oh! It's very pretty," he said. "It has my highest approval." And he nodded approbation at the empty loom. Nothing could make him say that he couldn't see anything.

His whole retinue stared and stared. One saw no more than another, but they all joined the Emperor in exclaiming, "Oh! It's very pretty," and they advised him to wear clothes made of this wonderful cloth especially for the great procession he was soon to lead. "Magnificent! Excellent! Unsurpassed!" were bandied from mouth to mouth, and everyone did his best to seem well pleased. The Emperor gave each of the swindlers a cross to wear in his buttonhole, and the title of "Sir Weaver."

Before the procession the swindlers sat up all night and burned more than six candles, to show how busy they were finishing the Emperor's new clothes. They pretended to take the cloth off the loom. They made cuts in the air with huge scissors. And at last they said, "Now the Emperor's new clothes are ready for him."

Then the Emperor himself came with his noblest noblemen, and the swindlers each raised an arm as if they were holding something. They said, "These are the trousers, here's the coat, and this is the mantle," naming each garment. "All of them are as light as a spider web. One would almost think he had nothing on, but that's what makes them so fine."

"Exactly," all the noblemen agreed, though they could see nothing, for there was nothing to see.

"If Your Imperial Majesty will condescend to take your clothes off," said the swindlers, "we will help you on with your new ones here in front of the long mirror."

The Emperor undressed, and the swindlers pretended to put his new clothes on him, one garment after another. They took him around the waist and seemed to be fastening something - that was his train - as the Emperor turned round and round before the looking glass.

"How well Your Majesty's new clothes look. Aren't they becoming!" He heard on all sides, "That pattern, so perfect! Those colors, so suitable! It is a magnificent outfit."

Then the minister of public processions announced: "Your Majesty's canopy is waiting outside."

"Well, I'm supposed to be ready," the Emperor said, and turned again for one last look in the mirror. "It is a remarkable fit, isn't it?" He seemed to regard his costume with the greatest interest.
The noblemen who were to carry his train stooped low and reached for the floor as if they were picking up his mantle. Then they pretended to lift and hold it high. They didn't dare admit they had nothing to hold.

So off went the Emperor in procession under his splendid canopy. Everyone in the streets and the windows said, "Oh, how fine are the Emperor's new clothes! Don't they fit him to perfection? And see his long train!" Nobody would confess that he couldn't see anything, for that would prove him either unfit for his position, or a fool. No costume the Emperor had worn before was ever such a complete success.

"But he hasn't got anything on," a little child said.

"Did you ever hear such innocent prattle?" said its father. And one person whispered to another what the child had said, "He hasn't anything on. A child says he hasn't anything on."

"But he hasn't got anything on!" the whole town cried out at last.

The Emperor shivered, for he suspected they were right. But he thought, "This procession has got to go on." So he walked more proudly than ever, as his noblemen held high the train that wasn't there at all.

(A translation of Hans Christian Andersen's "Keiserens nye Klæder" by Jean Hersholt. Info & links )