

Enhancing Literacy Through Non-Verbal Communication

This arts-based project increased students' skills and abilities in non-verbal communication and enhanced communication in visual literacy. The project's value is best viewed through the opportunities afforded by real world experiences in the community.

Curriculum/State Standard

This project meets the New Mexico Educational Standards in gifted, language arts, science, social studies, math, and arts education

Overview

In this project, students worked as thinkers for understanding communication through a variety of channels such as media, murals, inventions, folk art museum, and construction engineers of recycled art in collaboration with the clients and artists-in-residence at Very Special Arts New Mexico.

Objectives

- The students will develop their skills in non-verbal communication through media education, community service learning, and museum education.
- The students will develop higher level critical thinking skills and creative approaches to problem solving through participation in projects focused on media education, museum education, and community service learning.

- The students will learn non-verbal strategies to communicate with individuals whose disabilities impact verbal literacy through collaboration with Very Special Arts New Mexico agency on the construction of recycled public art.
- The students will gain experience in transforming reality into fantasy by creating cow murals modeled on the Kansas City Cow Project.
- The students will understand the arts as the international language of cross-cultural communication.

Materials

Bus transportation in order for students to participate in community activities; recycled materials, construction supplies, and art materials; film and film processing; texts, videos, slides on dramatic arts, masks, and recycled art objects are also needed; the text, Creativity and Collaborative Learning by J. Thousand, R. Villa, and A. Nevis is the authoritative guide to making these projects successful.

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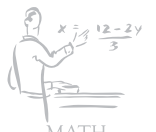
GRADE LEVEL



ARTS



LANGUAGE



MATH

Misc

MISCELLANEOUS



SCIENCE



HISTORY



SOCIAL STUDIES

9

MONTHS

\$1000

TOTAL BUDGET



THIS WINNING LESSON PLAN WAS SUBMITTED BY:

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“Enhancing Literacy” project continued...

Readiness Activity

- Students in grades 4 and 5 received instruction in basic drawing and painting techniques through a range of mini projects.
- Students also received direct instruction of skills necessary to participate in successful cooperative group learning activities
- Students gained insight into museum exhibition by on-site visit of the museum educator.
- Students reviewed slides of 2 and 3 dimensional art works

Strategies/Activities

This project requires extensive planning with community agency, parents, bus transportation, museum curator, school administration, classroom teachers of students involved in the project prior to the onset of the project. The 15-20 4th and 5th graders who participated in this project were selected from other teachers' classes, based on their needs and interest in the arts.

This project is not made up of a sequential delineation of activities. Rather, projects overlapped and often occurred simultaneously. Within that frame the following describes the order of work.

Slides of the Kansas City Public Arts Cow Project were shown to the students. Each student studied the form and design of a cow. The outline was then traced onto a large drawing board and students applied their original designs to the cow.

At the same time, students worked on visual autobiographies (emphasis on photographs, drawings, rather than words) that were presented on drawing boards. Both these projects were evaluated at a student performance/parent night where both proj-

ects were on display in the hallway of the administration building. These projects concluded at winter break.

Students then began to work on group cooperative learning skills through Reader's Theatre (poetry readings performed by groups of students), and through a community service learning project with Very Special Arts New Mexico (an agency for individuals with disabilities) that focused on the design and construction of a sculpture from recycled materials. The former project was made meaningful by the emphasis on performance-based outcome in which students performed before a live audience at the school's art and literacy fair. The latter project was 8 weeks in construction and culminated with a sculpture of three persons installed on the grounds of the school's campus.

During this period, students also received a site visit from a museum educator. Information about the museum's exhibit was disseminated from the museum kit prior to the field trip to the museum. At the museum, students participated in a project on paper engineering.

The final project occurred simultaneously with the last few visits to the Very Special Arts Studio. Students created original poetry about themselves and then created a mask of 22"x 28" poster board using found objects, beads, buttons, crepe paper, tissue paper, fabric paint to resemble the image created by their poetry. This was presented to parent audiences in the assembly of the school.

Culminating Activity

The two culminating activities were an evening performance for parents, siblings, administration of Reader's Theatre and The Dramatic Voice behind the Mask at the school's Annual Art and Literacy Fair, a school wide celebration of students' progress in literacy development through the arts. A root-beer float party for the VSA workers at the installation of the sculpture on the school grounds was attended by parents and school staff.

Evaluation

Each mini project included a rubric for students to self evaluate their performance/product. Teacher observations, student interviews, and presentations were used to evaluate students' performances. Further, photographs were used to document and give eye-witness account to the production of work.