



Spring 2009 ▪ Year 3

**Bryant Elementary School  
&  
Philadelphia Young Playwrights & The Clay Studio**

**Arts Partners**

*Philadelphia Young Playwrights*  
Amy Hodgdon, Education Director  
*The Clay Studio*  
Annette Monnier

**Teaching artists**

Dwight Wilkins, Playwright  
Debbie Williams, Ceramic Teaching Artist  
Ceramic Teaching Assistant  
Linda Fernandez, Ceramic Teaching Assistant

**Participating teachers**

Beth Kline, 4th grade  
Oneka Milner, 4th grade  
Anne Marie Kozakowski, 4th grade  
Ryakkia Johnson, 5th grade  
Denise Moore, 5th grade  
Kimberly Walker, 5th grade  
Elizabeth Whatley, Ph.D., 6th grade  
Jason Johnson, 6th grade  
Kenneth Oxley, Art Specialist  
Philip Romeo, Music Specialist

***Project***

Claymobile, Philadelphia Young Playwrights, and the 4<sup>th</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> grade Bryant teachers collaboratively developed and implemented experiential playwriting and ceramic arts projects that strengthened students' grasp of three targeted reading skills. The three reading skills were:

- Identify and explain main ideas and relevant supporting details from text.
- Identify, interpret, compare and/or describe connections between texts.
- Make inferences or draw conclusion based on information from text.

The students created original ceramic art work and both monologues and scenes as a means to help students strengthen their understanding and application of: 1) the three targeted reading skills; and 2) other critical literacy skills, such as writing and revising; as well as 3) additional critical skills including collaboration and critical thinking. Importantly, the students applied each of these reading skills in their creation of original art work, and thus *learned by doing*.

Claymobile utilized the conventions of clay sculpture to illustrate the main themes in a text read by the students in class. Claymobile Teaching Artist Deborah Williams designed a curriculum that illustrated and enforced the lessons taught by classroom teachers; many sculptures were characters or objects taken directly from school texts or relied on student's conclusions about the meaning of those texts. Students analyzed artworks resulting in their being able to compare and contrast a variety of styles used in the clay medium.

With the guidance of Philadelphia Young Playwrights Teaching Artist Dwight Wilkins, the students wrote and revised a series of monologues and scenes (and in one fourth grade, a group-authored play) as means to enhance their understanding and application of the three targeted reading skills. In guiding students through the process of playwriting, the teaching artist focused on the students' development and application of the three critical literacy skills. Playwriting lessons were designed to strengthen the students' ability to identify and apply main ideas (character wants and conflicts) and relevant supporting details. The following *Theater skills*, which the students utilized in their dramatic writing, connected to and supported the identified literacy objectives described above.

### ***Project Learning Goals/Standards***

Through playwriting activities, students' learning goals were:

- Know and use the elements and principles of playwriting to create a play.
- Recognize, know and use, and demonstrate the elements and principles of playwriting to produce, review and revise an original work of art.
- Know and use fundamental playwriting vocabulary
- Know and demonstrate how playwriting can communicate experiences, stories or emotions.
- Analyze a work from its historical and cultural perspective.

Through clay activities, students' learning goals were:

- Have an enhanced knowledge of contemporary science and art.
- Have an enhanced knowledge of the environment and community around them and how their actions (cause and effect) relate to the world.
- Gain a basic knowledge of the ceramics arts and the finer points of 3-D design.
- Deepen their basic knowledge of the ceramic arts and the finer points of 3-D design. (5th and 6th grades)
- Gain some knowledge of the cultural community in Philadelphia

Students also had the opportunity to:

- Apply and strengthen their critical thinking skills
- Apply and strengthen their collaboration skills

### ***Project Theme***

The overall theme of *Preserving the Planet* united the student artists' investigations of specific topics in each grade. This theme, identified by the teachers, spoke to topics concurrently explored in the literacy curriculum at each grade level. The individual topics:

- Animal rights, 4<sup>th</sup> Grade
- Water cycle and ecology, 5<sup>th</sup> grade
- Solar system, and environmental issues such as pollution, 6<sup>th</sup> Grade

Classroom teachers were able to integrate the artistic work together into the students' study of science. Both student artists' application of the three targeted reading skills and their exploration of the topics within the *Presenting the Planet* theme (the environment and animal rights) supported the students' science study. The student playwrights undertook some scientific research in order to better write their monologues, which dramatized issues relating to the environment and animal rights. Students, then, were able to enhance their scientific understanding of the particular topics explored within the *Preserving the Planet* theme. This enhanced understanding, along with their strengthening of the three targeted readings skills,

helped the students to better read and comprehend scientific materials. Students involved in ceramic studies were prompted by teachers to respond to their sculptures, which functioned as illustrations or served as conclusions for a specific text read in class.

### ***Student Work Created***

Playwright Wilkins guided the students through diverse activities to help them find an idea (main idea) for their monologues and scenes (and the play). Wilkins provided the students with revision feedback, but, as importantly, the student playwrights themselves provided their fellow classmates with revision feedback and suggestions. Multiple revisions were welcomed and encouraged. The students publicly shared their dramatic writing in the culminating sharing session; thus, the students wrote for an authentic purpose. Every workshop was student-centered, with a rich mixture of individual and group activities, as well as writing and theater based activities.

Each student maintained an artist's notebook (as playwrights and as ceramic artists). As playwrights, students reflected on his or her writing (drafts, etc.), while as ceramists, students responded to their sculptural work. Students created original ceramic works that identified and reinforced their literacy goals as well as explored grade level topics. Each student also used the notebook as a professional artist would to record ideas, reflect, imagine, etc. Students applied and honed the three reading skills as well in the maintenance of this notebook.

Students created 3-6 ceramic sculptures and shared their work with their school during a final share session. Student playwrights wrote a series of monologues and scenes, choosing two to revise more than once and to share in the culminating sharing session. Oneka Milner's fourth grade class group-authored a play, which included multiple drafts. At each grade level, the project culminated in a classroom celebration in which the student artists shared the work they had created. Students exhibited their ceramics projects, displayed their dramatic writing, and performed their own or others' monologues and scenes. The students further applied and honed the three targeted reading skills (and other key literacy skills) by writing narratives to accompany their featured art work and by creating playbills for their dramatic writing.

### ***Project Assessment and Evaluation***

The assessment plan included multiple tools, including:

- Students' individually authored monologues and scenes (and their revisions), and the students' group authored play and its drafts (revisions).
- Students' completed ceramic art work
- Students' artist notebooks (self reflection, assessment, drawings, revisions, art-making process, etc.)
- Students' oral revision feedback provided to their fellow playwrights
- Students' written and/or oral introductions to their shared art work in the culminating sharing session.
- Young Playwrights end of project survey (written response)
- Claymobile pre and post project surveys (student written response)
- Photographic Documentation
- Students' written response to PAEP/School District evaluations
- School District of Philadelphia testing tools

Measurable Outcomes:

#### ***Playwriting***

1. Students strengthened their ability to *Identify and explain main ideas and relevant supporting details from text* through writing and revising their original dramatic writing.

Indicators include: 1) the students' own assessment and reflection of themselves as playwrights (artist notebooks and survey); 2) the students' own drafts and revisions, as well as their oral provision of revision feedback to their classmates; 3) District testing tools; 4) the students' dramatic writing; 5) PAEP/School District Evaluations.

2. Students strengthened their ability to *Identify, interpret, compare and/or describe connections between texts* through writing and revising their original dramatic writing. Indicators include: 1) the students' own assessment and reflection of themselves as playwrights (artist notebooks and survey); 2) the students' own drafts and revisions, 3) School District testing tools; 4) the students' dramatic writing; 5) PAEP/School District Evaluations.
3. Students strengthened their ability to *Make inferences or draw conclusion based on information from text* through writing and revising their original dramatic writing. Indicators include: 1) the students' own assessment and reflection of themselves as playwrights (artist notebooks and survey); 2) the students' drafts and revisions as well as their provision of revision feedback to their classmates; 3) School District testing tools; 4) the students' dramatic writing.
4. Students strengthened their writing skills. Indicators include: 1) the students' own assessment and reflection of themselves as playwrights (artist notebooks and survey); 2) the students' drafts and revisions; as well as their oral provision of revision feedback to their classmates; 3) School District testing tools; 4) the students' dramatic writing; 5) PAEP/School District Evaluations.
5. Students gained a basic knowledge and understanding of the key elements of playwriting (4<sup>th</sup> grade). Indicators include; 1) the students application of these elements in the writing and revising of their dramatic writing; 2) the students' drafts and revisions as well as their provision of revision feedback to their classmates; 3) the students' monologues and scenes (and the play); 4) the students' own assessment and reflection of themselves as playwrights (artist notebooks and survey); 5) students individual advice to other playwrights about the key elements of playwriting and revising (Survey); 6) PAEP/School District evaluations.
6. Students deepened their basic knowledge and understanding of the key elements of playwriting (5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> grades). Indicators include; 1) application of these elements in the writing and revising of their dramatic writing; 2) the students' monologues and scenes; 3) the students' own assessment and reflection of themselves as playwrights (artist notebooks and survey); 4) the students individual advice to other playwrights about the key elements of playwriting and revising (survey); 5) PAEP/School District evaluations.
7. Students strengthened their critical thinking skills. Indicators include: 1) the students' drafts of their dramatic writing—and the revisions they make; 2) the students' own assessment and reflection of themselves as playwrights (artist notebooks and survey); 3) students' provision of revision feedback to their classmates; 4) students individual advice to other playwrights about the key elements of playwriting and revising (survey); 5) PAEP/School District evaluations.
8. Students enhanced their collaboration skills. Indicators include: 1) ways in which students deepen their ability to provide and share revision feedback with each other; 2) ways in which Milner's students deepen their ability work together to co-author their group written play; 3) ways in which the students work to "produce" their culminating sharing session.

9. Students increased their self-esteem or self-confidence as writers and as students. Indicators include: 1) the students' own assessment and reflection of themselves as playwrights (artist notebooks and survey); 2) PAEP/School District Evaluations.

#### *Visual Art (Ceramics)*

1. Students strengthened their ability to *Summarize Major Themes, Ideas or Procedures of Text* by using student written work to create scenes and objects from clay. Indicators included: 1) Students' own assessment and reflection of their own and others' translation of written work to visual work; 2) Teaching Artist and Classroom Teachers' assessment and reflection on student creative work; 3) Students' portfolio work and writing sample; 4) School District testing tools; 5) PAEP/School District Evaluations.
2. Students strengthened their ability to recognize and state *Differences in Comparison and Contrast* through the exploration, observation, and manipulation of clay. Indicators included: 1) Students' ability to compare and contrast the physical properties of wet, bone dry, and fired ceramic work in classroom discussion and response writing; 2) Students' ability to compare and contrast ceramics within a cultural and historic context; 3) Students' drafts and revisions; 3) School District testing tools; 4) PAEP/School District Evaluations.
3. Students strengthened their ability to *Make inferences or draw conclusions based on information from text* through creating ceramic sculpture that exemplified these conclusions (i.e. given a set of parameters about conditions on a planet students must create a life-form that can live on that planet). Indicators included: 1) Individual student sculpture that is unlike those of the student's peers; 2) Teaching Artist and Classroom Teachers' assessment and reflection on student creative work; 3) The students' portfolio work and writing sample; 4) School District testing tools; 5) PAEP/School District Evaluations.
- 4) Students learned ceramic specific vocabulary and processes. Indicators included: 1) Students' own assessment 2) Teaching artist and classroom teacher assessment, 3) Student writing samples, 4) Claymobile classroom evaluations.
- 5) Students were able to identify the principles and element of visual art. Indicators included: 1) Students' application of principles of art in creating relief tiles and ceramic objects, 2) The students' own assessment and reflection; 3) Claymobile classroom evaluations, 4) PAEP/School District Evaluations.
- 6) Students increased their confidence and self-esteem as writers and visual artists. Indicators included: 1) Students' own assessment and reflection, 2) PAEP/School District Evaluations.
- 7) Students increased their knowledge and appreciation of ceramic arts and learning in general. Indicators included: 1) Students' own assessment and reflection, 2) Student attendance.