



**Ethan Allen School
&
Philadelphia Museum of Art & Voices of a Different Dream**

Arts Partners

Philadelphia Museum of Art
Ah-Young Kim, Museum Educator

Teaching Artists

Marie Elcin, Visual artist
Susan Windle & Ellen Mason, poets

Participating Teachers

Linda Cardonick, 4th grade
Malcolm Simkallay, 4th grade
Erika Leach, 4th grade
Rhoda Laptiste, 5th grade
Melissa Canuso, 5th grade
Ron Berger, 5th grade
Kathleen Kremis, 5th grade
Eugene Inniss-Griffith, 6th grade
Bonnie Wilson, 6th grade
Kathleen Taylor-Sauermelch, 6th grade
Kathy Edger, Art specialist
Sharon Reich, Music specialist

Project

Philadelphia Museum of Art, Visions of a Different Dream, and the 4th, 5th, and 6th grade Ethan Allen teachers collaboratively developed and implemented art and poetry projects that strengthened students' understanding in the three targeted literacy skills of:

- Compare and contrast
- Vocabulary building
- Figurative language

Students explored ways that poetry can be used to express, enhance, and transform self and community. This included building a strong vocabulary, using poetic tools (literacy devices) for effective communication, comparing concepts of strength in literacy texts, discovering our own strengths through writing, building strong relationships through mutual listening and creative collaboration. Working with the visual artist students in each grade produced 3 projects exploring drawing, print, and textile techniques. The projects involved planning and execution through group collaboration and targeted the literacy skills as well through art skill development.

Project Learning Goals/ Standards

The students applied each of the targeted literacy skills in their creation of original art work to learn by doing. The learning goals and standards for these projects were:

- Identify and use figurative language
- Build vocabulary
- Compare and contrast elements within and between texts
- Strengthen students' sense of being individuals within community
- Build skills in oral presentation
- Gain knowledge of and practice with the poetic line as fundamental to poetry
- Learn how to understand a poem by listening carefully to the words
- Build capacity for writing by increasing comfort level with the writing process
- Introduce collaborative writing

The over-arching goals for all grades were to build students' enthusiasm for language through the experience of poetry and visual art and to grow their capacity to use language artfully as a tool to explore their own lives and communicate what is important to them.

Project Theme

The overall theme of the project for 4th, 5th, and 6th grades was "Strength." Working within this theme of "Strength," chosen by the teachers and artists, the poets defined their mission as "Finding Our Strength through Words" and the visual artist made a connection to this by using the theme of personal strength and the strength of words and images.

Students worked created

All of the students in 4th, 5th, and 6th grades were engaged and inspired by studying poetry as an impetus to generate student writing. Everyone worked on learning the basics of how a poem was constructed (lines, stanzas, imagery and other literary devices). "Word Towers" were created by each student to help keep track of new words the students used in their own writing.

The fourth grades began by searching for words of objects, emotions, and art elements found within reproductions of works of art from the museum collections. The students then alphabetized and used these words to create an alliterative sentence, which they illustrated. They continued with their found words and created lists of synonyms and antonyms. They explored ideas of opposites in art and textiles (color, direction, textures, etc) and transposed their synonym/antonym lists to fabric strips to be woven together in a class weaving. After a compare/contrast activity on the topic of strength and protection using images of medieval armor and a Japanese Fireman's Kimono, the students wrote out words of self-protection onto strips of paper to be rolled into a bead. Their final project was to create a bound book with their illustration on the cover, their protective bead on the binding, and their poetry work within. Students were encouraged to find strength in words, by expanding their vocabulary, learning to be more observant of details in art and the world around them, and recognizing their accomplishments in literacy and visual arts.

The fifth grades also launched their vocabulary building by discovering words in art reproductions. Their word lists were expanded to include synonyms and antonyms. They

explored opposites in art (complementary colors, contrasting values, foreground/background, differences in texture and pattern) and created high contrast word art, using transposed lists of synonyms and antonyms to create pattern over the words. Their individual word art blocks were then assembled into a "strip quilt." Continuing with the theme of quilts, students compared and contrasted African-American and Amish quilts and learned about quilt structure, construction, and personal expression. Students then created a "quilt" fabric collage to use as the cover of a journal for their completed poetry. Again, students were encouraged to find strength in words, to be empowered by their expanded ability to communicate verbally and visually, and to feel pride in themselves and their community.

The sixth graders started off with an exercise in communicating and drawing. After reviewing art vocabulary, students took turns describing a painting or drawing from reproductions for their partner to draw. Afterwards, students assessed their facility in listening and communicating. They then compared and contrasted work by Frida Kahlo to see how artists express their opinions and ideas about themselves and their environment. They discussed positives and negatives about their community and wrote out their ideas on paper strips that were woven into a map of Philadelphia to be used as a background for their class portrait. Since text was used in the class portrait background, the students compared and contrasted the use of text in both Asian and contemporary American artwork. Students developed a personally expressive font for their names for a banner which would include a self-portrait profile, their names, and their name poetry completed with the poet partners. The final project continued with the themes of text in art, personal expression, and finding inspiration in contemporary and historical artwork. Students reviewed the poetry they'd written and discovered correlations between poetry and visual images (rhythm, focal point, description) in order to create a poetry scroll book with color, pattern, and imagery to complement their written words. Throughout the residency, students were encouraged to understand themselves and their ways of communicating verbally and visually to make them stronger members of a community.

Project Assessment & Evaluation

In addition to School District and PAEP methods of evaluation, assessment tools included:

- On-going monitoring of and assistance with students' work as it was created
- On-going sharing of student work in each class
- Review of student folders
- Student oral presentations of work in culminating assembly
- Review of completed student poetry, mounted, and hung
- Continuing conversations with teachers before and after class
- Teacher evaluation forms
- Student collaborative review written exercise (to be collected and reviewed)
- Final student poem

Measurable Outcomes

Literary Art

- In every grade, most of the students gained significant confidence to share their new vocabulary.
- Overall, student writing become stronger by demonstrating an increased amount of writing, more details, expanded vocabulary and creativity.
- Correct use of figurative language expanded.

- Students developed a repertoire of poetic devices to use in the creation of their own poems.
- Students demonstrated an increased ability to express themselves on paper and orally. A safe climate was created in each classroom to encourage that expression.

Visual Art

- Students expanded their vocabulary, learned to be more observant of details in art and the world around them, and recognized their accomplishments in both literary and visual art.
- Students increased their confidence as artists and learn to talk and ask questions about art.
- They improved their ability to use elements and principles of art to make a statement.
- They were able to identify between similar and different characteristics among works in the arts.
- Students were empowered by their expanded ability to communicate verbally and visually, and to feel pride in themselves and their community.
- Students learned to understand themselves and their ways of communicating verbally and visually to make them stronger members of a community.