



Spring 2007

**Farrell School
&
Philadelphia Museum of Art & Philadelphia
Young Playwrights**

Teaching artists

Sandra Gilliard-Davis, Playwright

Ben Volta, Visual artist

Participating teachers

Jeanette Payne, 4th grade

Joyce Ruthen, 4th grade

Sharon Hoelzle, 4th grade

Mark Leporati, Music specialist

Roz Burton, Art specialist

Arlene Zafran, Literacy specialist

Valerie Finney, 4th grade coordinator

Marie McCarthy, Principal

I. Project

Project Description

Theater Artist Sandi Davis (Philadelphia Young Playwrights) and Visual Artist Ben Volta (Philadelphia Museum of Art), in collaboration with the three Farrell School Teachers, will guide and support the fourth graders' experiential exploration of "work" through playwriting and visual art. Through their creative responses to this theme of work--writing plays and creating original art works--the students will investigate the Social Studies Curriculum in which the fourth graders examine: "Pennsylvania's change from farming to a manufacturing economy."

With the theater artist, the students will explore **work** through the lens of *Child Labor* (children working). Each class of fourth graders will write and revise a group-authored play. In their plays, modern day Philadelphia youngsters will encounter their 19th century counterparts whose work in factories, mills and mines was essential to Pennsylvania's (Philadelphia's) industrial economy. Using the elements of playwriting (character, conflict, dialogue, etc.) students will come to a greater understanding of the valuable contributions made by young laborers to both past and modern day Philadelphia.

The visual artist will work with students to design and create visual representations of key modes of work that define [Pennsylvania] industrialization: collectivism, collaboration and individual contributions through the medium of printing. Beginning with the natural resource of oil, students will learn the process of turning oil into paint and ink. Then, they will explore the different ways artists use paint (splatters, lines, abstraction) and how important ink was in printing and the dissemination of information and knowledge.

Further through playwriting and art-making, students will gain a greater awareness of the often hard and grim social and economic realities of 19th century industrialized work, especially that performed by young children. Through both art forms, the student playwrights and artists will

discover and propose solutions to these realities (long hours, harsh working conditions, etc.), or use their art to raise others' awareness of these unjust and often dangerous realities which accompanied this economic progress.

The student playwrights and artists then—through their creation of original art works—will both apply and strengthen their understanding of the basic elements and principles of both playwriting and visual arts (State Arts Standard). Also, through their engagement in both playwriting and visual arts, the students will examine and demonstrate how both artistic mediums can communicate experiences, stories and emotions (State Arts Standards). Thus, the students will both fulfill and enhance their understanding of these two standards and many of the other standards identified as essential in the State's Standards for Arts and Humanities

The students will present their plays in script-in-hand readings and an exhibit of the artwork they have created around this theme of **work** on June 6 for an invited audience. (Thus, their creation of their plays will be for an authentic purpose.) This day of sharing will be experiential as well—with the students' performing their plays in script-in-hand readings and interacting with their art—creating an installation—for an audience.

The students' investigation of **work** through the processes of playwriting (writing and revising and sharing with an audience) and art-making will help them to strengthen their writing and reading skills, as well as other key skills such as critical thinking and collaboration. This students' hands-on participation in this arts based exploration of **work** through playwriting and art will help them to strengthen the skills identified as essential in the State Standards for Reading, Writing Listening and Speaking, as well as the Literacy Curriculum.

Project Goals

Through their experiential engagement with playwriting and visual arts students will:

- Strengthen their writing and revising skills
- Strengthen their reading skills
- Strengthen their critical thinking skills.
- Stimulate and enhance their creativity
- Strengthen students' basic knowledge and understanding of the key elements of playwriting and visual arts.
- Strengthen students' basic knowledge and understanding of theatre.
- Strengthen students' collaboration skills.
- Improve students' attitudes toward self and school, fostering pro-social behavior.

Student Work Created

The theater artist, in collaboration with the three teachers, will guide and support the students through the playwriting process. Each class will write and revise a group-authored play. These plays, will tell stories of the students' own invention, in which modern day Philadelphia youngsters encounter their 19th century counterparts, whose work in factories, mills and mines was essential to Pennsylvania's (Philadelphia's) industrial economy. She will work together with teachers and the music teacher to guide and support the students' performance of their plays for an invited audience (a script-in-hand reading). (Thus, the students will write and revise for an authentic purpose.)

With the visual artist, students will begin exploring art as a process of design, creation, and reflection. They will learn about the natural resources that are used in making paint, namely oil

and, how oil was also turned into ink for the process of printing. They will discuss how important printing was to education and information. From this, students will design their own personal fonts. They will use these fonts to print relief blocks of their letters and props for the plays. Throughout, students will learn the different working environments of collaboration, collectivism and individual contributions.

Standards Addressed

Arts and Humanities

- 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 and visual arts to produce, review and revise an original work of art.
- Know and use fundamental vocabulary in the art: painting, print-making and playwriting
- Know and demonstrate how visual art and playwriting can communicate experiences, stories or emotions
- Use and maintain materials, equipment and tools safely.
- Describe and use knowledge of a specific style (font design) through exhibition of a unique work
- Identify the function and benefits of rehearsal, practice sessions, reflection and revision
- Learn about and apply traditional and contemporary technologies (in font design) to further knowledge and understanding in the humanities
- Understand how historical events and culture impacts forms, techniques and purposes of works in the arts
- Know and apply appropriate vocabulary used between social studies and the arts and humanities
- Identify, explain and analyze traditions (in font-design) as they relate to works in the arts

History

- Learn about conflict and cooperation among organizations: how labor has changed in Pennsylvania
- Identify and explain how continuity and change have influenced Pennsylvania history, in terms of labor and resources

Language Arts

- Use knowledge of phonics, syllabication, prefixes, suffixes and the dictionary or context clues to decode and understand new words during reading. Use these words accurately in writing and speaking.
- Demonstrate after reading understanding and interpretation of text
- Use established criteria to design and develop a play for a target audience.
- Produce work in at least one literary genre that follows the conventions of the genre: playwriting
- Read and respond to nonfiction and fiction
- Revise writing to improve organization, and word choice; check the logic, order of ideas and precision of vocabulary.
- Edit writing using the conventions of language
- Listen to others
- Listen to a selection of literature
- Contribute to discussions
- Participate in small and large group discussions and presentations
- Describe how the author uses literary devices to convey meaning
- Analyze drama as information source, entertainment, persuasion, or transmitter of culture

- Compare the use of literary elements within and among texts including characters, setting, plot, theme and point of view.
- Write poems, plays and multimedia stories (utilize dialogue, etc.).
- Write with a sharp, distinct focus, identifying topic, task and audience.
- Write using well-developed content appropriate for the topic.
- Write with controlled and/or subtle organization.
- Speak using skills appropriate to formal speech situations.
- Locate information using appropriate sources and strategies.

II. Roles of Partners

Classroom Teachers: will support the theme of **work** through the visual art lens of “From Puddles to Print” in the science, social studies, and language arts curricula through discussion and activities. The classroom teachers will similarly support the theme of **work** through the playwriting lens of “Child Labor.” The teachers will work in partnership with teaching artist Sandi Davis, guiding and supporting the student through the playwriting process both in the workshops and in-between them. The teachers, with input from both artists, will design and conduct reading, writing and research activities that will deepen the students’ investigation of **work** (relevant to the Social Studies and Literacy Curriculums, and their creation of both the plays and art works). The three teachers and the theatre teaching artist will work together to help the students share their plays in script-in-hand readings on 6/6.

Art Teacher: will support the theme through the development of students’ sketchbooks.

Music Teacher: will enhance the theme by helping the students in each class to share their plays (script-in-hand) with an audience on 6/6. He will also help the students to learn and perform work songs.

Theatre Teaching Artist: will guide and support the students through the playwriting process over the 12 workshops, in collaboration with the 3 teachers. Sandi will design and conduct playwriting activities in which each teacher’s students will create, write and revise a group-authored play in response to the theme of **work**. Sandi will work in partnership with each teacher in the classroom workshops, a then provide each teacher with playwriting activities with which to help the students advance their writing in-between the workshops. Sandi will also help the teachers to devise reading writing and research activities that will enhance the students’ investigation of **work** (relevant to the Social Studies and Literacy Curriculums, and their creation of both the plays and art works). The three teachers and the teaching artist will work together to help the students share their plays in script-in-hand readings on 6/6.

Visual Teaching Artist: will explore the theme of “From Puddles to Print” with students by sequencing the process of creating a painting and following the process of printing from font creation to printing a literary work.

All this will be done with the collaboration, support and agreement with everyone on the team to work towards creating the students’ final sharing of their plays with installation art works.

III. Project Timeline

February, 2007	Planning/coordination meetings among project artists, school administration, the Education Directors of Young Playwrights and Philadelphia Art Museum
April	Visual Artist: Introduction to abstract art and “puddles”
Early May	Visual Artist: Introduction to typography and the idea of using text in visual art. Creating individual typefaces

Late May	Design reflection and revision.
April-June	Theatre Artist: Guides and supports the students through the playwriting process; students write original group authored plays.
April – June	Six 1.5 hour Professional Development after school meetings among Cohort Team
June	PRINT!
June	Rehearse for 6/6: script-in-hand readings-
June 6 th	Sharing of the three plays (Script-in-hand readings) and exhibition of art-work

IV. Project Assessment and Evaluation

The assessment and evaluation plan will include multiple tools:

- Students' group-authored plays
- Individual student playwrights' notebook/process portfolio
- Written response to Young Playwrights evaluations
- Benchmark Tests

Measurable Outcomes:

- 1) Students will strengthen their writing and reading skills through writing and revising their own plays. Indicators include: 1) the students' own assessment and reflection; 2) the students' revision; 3) Benchmark Tests and other District testing tools; 4) the students plays.
- 2) Students will assume ownership of their own creative process and ability over the 12 workshops. Indicators include: 1) workshop attendance; 2) the degree of engagement in the playwriting activities and the art-making activities; 3) their contributions to the creation of the group-authored play 4) the students' own assessment and reflection; 5) evaluations.
- 3) Students will be able to identify the elements of play. Indicators include: 1) application of these elements in the writing and revising of the group-authored play; 2) the students' own assessment and reflection; 3) evaluations.
- 4) Students will enhance their interactive skills. Indicators include: 1) ways in which students work together to write their group play; 2) the ways in which the students work together to prepare for and perform their plays for an audience.
- 5) Students will increase their self-esteem or self-confidence. Indicators include: 1) the students' own assessment and reflection; 2) evaluations.

The Cohort Team, as well as the student themselves, will track these achievements/changes.