



Spring 2008 ▪ Year 2

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

**Teaching artists**

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

**Participating teachers**

Beth Kline, 4th grade  
Jason Johnson, 4th grade  
Oneka Milner, 4th grade  
Ryakkia Johnson, 5th grade  
Denise Moore, 5th grade  
Kenneth Oxley, Art Specialist  
Philip Romeo, Music Specialist

**I. Project**

**Project Description**

Teaching artists from Philadelphia Young Playwrights and The Clay Studio, in collaboration with the 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> grade Bryant School teachers, will develop and implement experiential playwriting and ceramic arts projects that will enhance students' understanding of three targeted reading skills as well as develop students' general understanding of playwriting and ceramic arts. The 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> grade students will create monologues, scenes, and ceramic artwork in unique but complimentary playwriting and ceramics projects as means to help them to: 1) strengthen their understanding and application of the three targeted reading skills; and 2) develop their knowledge of the basic elements of both playwriting and visual arts with a ceramics focus. At each grade level, the project will culminate in a classroom celebration in which the student artists will display and perform the original artwork they have created for an invited audience. The classroom teachers, who will collaborate with the teaching artists, will acquire arts strategies and pedagogies that they can then infuse into their own reading instruction using the arts as teaching and learning tools to promote reading literacy.

**Project Goals**

The Bryant School's 3 fourth grade classes and 2 fifth grade classes and their respective classroom teachers will collaborate with theater artist Dwight Wilkins (Philadelphia Young Playwrights) and ceramic artist Deb Williams (The Clay Studio) in arts-integrated classroom-based projects that will strengthen the students' grasp of three specific reading skills and their literacy skills in general. The targeted literacy skills were selected by the teachers at both grade levels from the School District's 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> Grade Core Literacy Curriculum's Content/Performance Descriptors (Reading). They are: 1) Summarize Major Themes, Ideas or Procedures of Text; 2) Use of Literary Devices (alliteration, simile, personification, and

metaphor); and 3) Differences in Comparison and Contrast. Each teaching artist will engage the students in a hands-on creation of original art (monologues, scenes, functional, and sculptural ceramics etc.), which will focus on enhancing the students' understanding of these reading skills. These three reading skills are ones that students currently struggle with grasping and mastering. Importantly, the students will apply each of these reading skills in their creation of original art work, and thus *learn by doing*.

The unique but complimentary playwriting and ceramic arts projects will culminate at both grade levels in the students' sharing of their work with each other and invited guests (parents, other classmates, etc). The student artists will create and host "mini-festivals" in their respective classrooms. Students will exhibit their ceramics work, drawings, and written narratives. The students will display their dramatic writing, and, as possible in each class, some students will perform their own or others' monologues and/or scenes. The students will make decisions (and explain those decision) about which monologues and scenes from their repertoire of playwriting they would like to share. The students will further apply and hone the three targeted reading skills (and other key literacy skills) by writing and sharing narratives to accompany their featured art work, by creating playbills for their monologues, creating exploratory work in clay manipulation and drawing, etc. Students will also have the opportunity to continue to exhibit/perform their work through exhibition opportunities at The Clay Studio. It is also anticipated that the students' individually written monologues will be submitted to the Young Playwrights '08 Playwriting Festival.

Through their hands-on engagement with playwriting and the ceramic arts, students will strengthen their understanding of the three following targeted reading skills:

- Summarize Major Themes, Ideas or Procedures of Text
- Use of Literary Devices (*alliteration, simile, personification, and metaphor*)
- Differences in Comparison and Contrast

In addition, students will strengthen their:

- Writing and revising skills
- Critical thinking skills
- Basic knowledge and understanding of the key elements of playwriting
- Visualization skills
- Basic knowledge and understanding of the key principles of ceramic art
- Collaboration skills
- Research skills and Design skills

Through the students' participation in play and art-making, which both value the student's voice, it is hoped that students' attitudes towards self and school improve.

## **Project Theme**

### **Content and Activities**

Philadelphia Young Playwright Teaching Artist

Theater Artist Dwight Wilkins, in collaboration with the classroom teachers, will direct and support the students through the playwriting process over the 12 workshops for the 5<sup>th</sup> grade class and the 6 workshops for the 4<sup>th</sup> grade classes. Broadly, Dwight will design and conduct playwriting activities in which the students in each class will write and revise original monologues and scenes as means to enable the students to practice and hone the three targeted literacy skills. Through these diverse playwriting activities, the students will explore and apply the basic elements of playwriting such as conflict and character. Dwight will work in

collaboration with the teachers both in the workshops and in between, guiding and supporting the teachers' facilitation of the students' continued writing and revising. Dwight will help the students to "produce" a culminating mini-festival in which the students showcase their monologues and scenes, and as possible perform them.

#### The Clay Studio Teaching Artist

Ceramics Teaching Artist, Deb Williams, in collaboration with the 5 classroom teachers, will direct and support students through the visual art making process over the 12 workshops for the 5th grade class and the 6 workshops for the 4th grade classes. Deb will design and conduct visual art workshops using a multidisciplinary approach of drawing, writing, and ceramics to enable the students to explore and hone the three targeted literacy skills. Using this artistic process, Deb will lead students through material exploration, specific vocabulary, and physical/chemical processes that inherently lead to the exploration of simile, metaphor, comparison and contrast. Deb will work in collaboration with the classroom teacher to facilitate pre and post-workshop writing, sketching, project ideation, and guided written reflections. Deb will also help students create work for culminating mini-festival where each student will create an installation of drawing, writings, and ceramic work that showcase their individual process and aesthetic.

#### Classroom Teachers

Each teacher will help students to apply and hone the three targeted reading skills through their creation of art works—monologues, scenes, and ceramic arts, as well in their other literacy instruction and class work. Classroom teachers will prepare, engage, and support students throughout the in-class creative processes of art-making—the playwriting and visual art processes. Both in the workshops and in-between, the teachers will, in collaboration with Teaching Artists, promote and facilitate the students' continued writing, revising, and reflection. The teachers will work in partnership with Deb and Dwight to help the students to "produce" a culminating mini-festival in which the students showcase their visual art, monologues, and scenes, and as possible, perform them.

#### Art Specialist

The Art Specialist will also focus on these three targeted literacy skills in his art classes with these 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> graders. He will also reinforce the basic principles and elements of playwriting, drawing, and ceramics. The Art Specialist will help the students to produce their culminating mini-festival. For example, the Art Specialist might help the students to make playbills, invitations, or flyers.

#### Music Specialist

The Music Specialist will also focus on these three targeted literacy skills in his music classes with these 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> graders. He will also reinforce the basic principles and elements of playwriting, drawing, and ceramic arts as they apply to music-making. In addition, the Music Specialist will collaborate on the culminating mini-festival.

#### Arts Bridges Partners

*Clay Studio: Outreach Coordinator Harriet Hoover* will support the teachers and teaching artist team (Debbie Williams, Linda Fernandez, and Accra Zuberi) as the project unfolds in each classroom, administratively and pedagogically. She will also work closely with Philadelphia Young Playwrights to ensure that the project runs smoothly, addresses project goals, etc.

*Philadelphia Young Playwrights: Education Director Amy Hodgdon* will support the teachers and teaching artist Dwight Wilkins as the project unfolds in each classroom, administratively and pedagogically. Hodgdon will collaborate with the teachers and the teaching artist to ensure that the three targeted reading skills are effectively and meaningfully addressed in the students' engagement with the playwriting process. She and Wilkins will also collaborate with The Clay Studio's Outreach Coordinator and their teaching artist team, to ensure that the project runs smoothly, addresses project goals, etc.

## **Standards Addressed**

### **Literacy**

#### Reading

- Identify, understand the meaning of and use correctly key vocabulary from various subject areas.
- Demonstrate after reading understanding and interpretation. (Summarize, clarify, make assertions, extend ideas).
- Produce work in at least one literary genre that follows the conventions of that genre.
- Read and understand works of literature (play)
- Compare the use of literary elements within and among texts including characters, setting, plot, theme and point of view.
- Analyze drama as informational source, entertainment, persuasion or transmitter of culture.
- Read and respond to nonfiction and fiction including drama.

#### Writing

- Write plays (Description, dialogue, conflict, etc.)
- Write multi-paragraph information pieces (Visual Arts)
- Write with controlled and /or subtle organization
- Write with a sharp, distinct focus, identifying topic, purpose and audience
- Write using well-developed content appropriate for the topic
- Write with an understanding of stylistic components
- Revise writing to improve organizations, etc.
- Edit writing using the conventions of language
- Locate information using appropriate sources and strategies

#### Arts and Humanities

- Know and use the elements and principles of playwriting to create a play and visual art work.
- Recognize, know and use, and demonstrate the elements and principles of playwriting and ceramic arts to produce, review and revise an original work of art.
- Know and use fundamental vocabulary in the arts: ceramics, drawing, playwriting
- Know and demonstrate how visual art and playwriting can communicate experiences, stories or emotions
- Use and maintain materials, equipment and tools safely (Ceramic Art).
- Describe and use knowledge of a specific style 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 to further knowledge and understanding in the humanities
- Classify works in the arts by forms in which they are found (ceramics, painting, graphic design)

- Understand how historical events and culture impacts forms, techniques and purposes of works in the arts
- Identify, explain and analyze traditions as they relate to works in the visual arts
- Experiment with traditional and contemporary technologies to create and display visual art and playwriting
- Identify critical processes in the examination of plays and ceramic art (compare and contrast, analyze, interpret, Form and Test hypotheses, and Evaluate/Form judgments)
- Explain choices made regarding media, technique, form, subject matter and themes that communicate the artists' philosophy within a work in the arts and humanities

### **Project Outcomes (Student works created)**

In collaboration with the two teaching artists, and the Bryant teachers, students will author several original monologues and scenes, and create multiple pieces of original ceramic art. The students will share their work in a culminating student-driven “showcase” in their respective classrooms in which the student themselves will create displays or performances, accompanied by self-authored oral and written descriptions/introductions. The students will be invited to submit their monologues to Young Playwrights’ annual Playwriting Festival.

### **Project Assessment and Evaluation**

The assessment and evaluation plan will include multiple tools including:

- Students’ individually authored monologues and scenes (and their revisions)
- Students’ completed ceramic art work
- Students’ artist notebooks (self reflection, assessment, drawings, revisions, etc. )
- Students’ oral and written revision feedback to their fellow playwrights
- Students’ written and/or oral introductions to their shared art work in the culminating mini-festival
- Post project assessment
- Students’ written response to School District evaluations
- School District Portfolios
- Benchmark Tests
- Two Focus Group Interviews conducted by the two arts-organizations. One with the 4th graders and one with the 5<sup>th</sup> graders—students culled from all classes.

### **Measurable Outcomes:**

#### **Playwriting**

- 1) Students will strengthen their ability to *Summarize Major Themes, Ideas or Procedures of Text* through writing and revising their original monologues and scenes. Indicators include: 1) the students’ own assessment and reflection of themselves as playwrights; 2) the students’ own drafts and revisions, as well as their provision of revision feedback to their classmates; 3) the students’ dramatic writing; 4) Benchmark Tests and other District testing tools; 5) School District Evaluations; 6) Focus Group Interviews
- 2) Students will strengthen their ability to *Use Literary Devices (alliteration, simile, personification, and metaphor)* through writing and revising their monologues and scenes. Indicators include: 1) the students’ own assessment and reflection of themselves as playwrights; 2) the students’ own drafts and revisions, 3) the students’ dramatic writing; 4) Benchmark Tests and other District testing tools; 5) School District Evaluations; 6) Focus Group Interviews.
- 3) Students will strengthen their ability to recognize and state *Differences in Comparison and Contrast*. Indicators include: 1) the students’ own assessment and reflection of themselves as playwrights; 2) the students’ drafts and revisions as well as their provision of revision feedback to their classmates; 3) Benchmark Tests and other District testing

- tools; 4) the students' dramatic writing; 5) School District Evaluations; 6) Focus Group Interviews.
- 4) Students will strengthen their writing skills by writing and revising their own monologues and scenes. Indicators include: 1) the students' own assessment and reflection of themselves as playwrights; 2) the students' drafts and revisions; as well as their provision of revision feedback to their classmates; 3) Benchmark Tests and other District testing tools; 4) the students' dramatic writing; 5) Focus Group Interviews.
  - 5) Students will assume ownership of their own creative process throughout the 12 and 6 workshops for the 5th and 4th grades respectively. Indicators include: 1) the degree of engagement in the playwriting process; 2) the students' drafts and revisions 3) the students' own assessment and reflection of themselves as playwrights; 4) School District evaluations; 5) Focus Group Interviews.
  - 5) Students will be able to identify and apply the elements of a play. Indicators include; 1) the students application of these elements in the writing and revising of their dramatic writing; 2) the students' monologues and scenes; 3) the students' own assessment; 4) School District evaluations; 5) Focus Group Interviews
  - 6) Students will enhance their collaboration and cooperation skills. Indicators include: 1) ways in which students provide and share revision feedback with each other; 2) ways in which the students work to "produce" their culminating mini-festival.
  - 7) Students will increase their self-esteem or self-confidence as writers. Indicators include: 1) the students' own assessment and reflection of themselves as playwrights; 2) School District evaluations; 3) Focus Group Interviews.

### **Visual Art (Ceramics)**

- 1) Students will strengthen their ability to *Summarize Major Themes, Ideas or Procedures of Text* by using student written work to create scenes and objects from clay. Indicators include 1) Students' own assessment and reflection of the 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) the students' portfolio work and writing sample; 4) Benchmark Tests and other District testing tools; 5) School District Evaluations.
- 2) Students will strengthen their ability to *Use Literary Devices* (simile, metaphor, alliteration, and personification) through the discussion of the principles and elements of ceramic arts and through the conceptualization and creation of their own ceramic work, Indicators include: 1) Students' ability to identify, generate, and employ literary devices in classroom discussion; 2) Students' ability to translate and visualize literary devices in drawing and ceramic hand building; 3) Students' response writing to creative exercises; 4) Students' revision of artist writing sample; 5) Benchmark Tests and other District testing tools; 6) School District Evaluations
- 3) Students will strengthen their ability to recognize and state *Differences in Comparison and Contrast* through the exploration, observation, and manipulation of clay, Indicators include: 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) Benchmark Tests and other District testing tools; 4) School District Evaluations.
- 4) Students will learn ceramic specific vocabulary and processes, Indicators include: 1) Students' own assessment 2) Teaching artist and classroom teacher assessment, 3) Student writing samples, 4) Claymobile classroom evaluations.
- 5) Students will be able to identify the principles and element of visual art, Indicators include: 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) School District Evaluations.
- 6) Students will increase their confidence and self-esteem as writers and visual artists, Indicators include; 1) Students' own assessment and reflection, 2) Student participation in Focus Group Interview, 3) School District Evaluations.
  - 7) Students will increase their knowledge and appreciation of ceramic arts, and learning in general, Indicators include; 1) Students' own assessment and reflection, 2) Student attendance, 3) Student participation in Focus Group Interview.