



Spring 2008

Julia de Burgos School
&
COSACOSA art at large, Inc.

Teaching artists

Ed Shockley, Playwright
Samori Coles, Music/media artist

Participating Teachers

Mirtha Castro, 4th grade
Kathleen Kearney, 4th grade
Jessica Streeper, 4th grade
Josephine Bae, 5th grade
Kelly Cernic, 5th grade
Lee Fountain, 5th grade
Jay Fluellen, Music specialist
Jane Fontaine, Art specialist
Maria Burgos, Principal

I. Project

Project Description

Fourth and fifth grade students at the Julia de Burgos School will collaborate with playwright Ed Shockley and musician/recording artist Samori Coles to create a CD of original songs and spoken word pieces portraying creative ways in which to overcome obstacles and to strive for success. The project will improve students' basic literacy skills by making connections between selected literary and musical concepts. Through interdisciplinary, cross-referential learning experiences, students will deepen their understanding of the organizing principles and expressive qualities of both forms, and how they can be used to convey meaning through a variety of media and technology.

Project Goals

Goals include:

- 1) Improve students' academic performance in reading.
- 2) Increase and enrich students' vocabulary and understanding of imagery.
- 3) Deepen students' understanding of relationships among various types of writing and music.
- 4) Enhance students' creativity and higher order thinking.
- 5) Enhance students' leadership and teamwork skills.
- 6) Improve students' attitudes towards self and school, fostering pro-social behavior.

Project Theme

In the 4th grade, the theme *Overcoming Obstacles* builds directly upon stories in the Creative Thinking section of the grade level reader. Students will read, research, write and perform about ways in which to think creatively, to discover their own innate inner strengths, and to better meet changes and challenges in their lives. In the 5th grade, the topic of *Striving for Success* uses concepts from the units, *A Changing Planet and Express Yourself*. Students will

read, research, write, and perform about ways in which to define and express their dreams and aspirations, to build on their life experiences to achieve their goals and to find creative ways in which improve their environment.

Content and Activities

Students will create a CD of original songs and spoken word pieces portraying creative ways in which to overcome obstacles and to strive for success. Recorded works will focus on whole class-created collaborative poems, in which each student contributes at least one line or image to the piece. Some individual readings and/or songs may also be recorded. Also created will be an accompanying booklet of poetry for each grade illustrated by students' photographs of their lives and neighborhood.

Using multiple artistic disciplines, the project will explore ideas vital to addressing both individual challenges and community needs. Mr. Shockley and Mr. Coles, along with Julia de Burgos School teachers and COSACOSA staff, will spend over five months engaging students in dialogues about personal meaning, community values, and the qualities of leadership. Presentations on the history and forms of poetry and story-telling (e.g., oral, visual, musical) will engage students in the artistic process. Hands-on applications with keyboarding and percussive instrumentation will engender a whole-body learning experience. Computer-based audio recording and photographic instruction will introduce applications to emerging technologies.

Classroom visits by community leaders will enable participants to explore the project themes in an intergenerational context. Field trips to the National Liberty Museum (4th grade) and the National Constitution Center (5th grade) will reinforce and broaden the project context. A live performance of songs and spoken word pieces for younger students will conclude the project.

Connections to Literacy

Connections to literacy will be centered on a Word Bank developed by project staff. Key literacy concepts connected to both language arts and music will be described in writing, image and sound to reinforce their definitions. Literacy concepts will also be emphasized in music class curriculum and choir selections (e.g., the song *Peace Like a River* as an example of simile).

Connections to Other Curricular Disciplines

Connections to other curricular disciplines will occur through the use and application of new media technologies. Cross-disciplinary concepts (e.g., rhythm, meter, and timing) will be strengthened in computer-based classroom recording activities. Applied learning standards will be met using artistic techniques and technology to access information, process ideas, and communicate results as students uncover and create connections between themselves, their school, and the larger community.

Pennsylvania Standards/Learning Objectives

Literacy

1) 1.1C Use knowledge of phonics, syllabifications, prefixes, suffixes, the dictionary or context clues to decode and understand new words during reading. Use these words accurately in writing and speaking.

- To use context to determine word meaning
- To use word structure to determine and clarify meaning
- To use decoding strategies to read unfamiliar words

2) 1.1D Identify the basic ideas and facts in text using strategies (e.g., prior knowledge, illustrations and headings) and information from other sources to make predictions about text.

- To identify and restate the main idea of a selection
- To understand that making and confirming predictions can help a reader understand and enjoy text

3) 1.1G Demonstrate after reading understanding and interpretation of both fiction and nonfiction text.

- To retell the original text in a condensed form, highlighting the major events or ideas
- To draw inferences, conclusions, or generalizations about text and support them with textual evidence and prior knowledge

4) 1.2.A Read and understand essential content of informational texts and documents in all academic areas.

- To identify the author's purpose and viewpoint
- To distinguish facts, supported inferences, and opinions in text.

5) 1.2B Use and understand a variety of media and evaluate the quality of material produced.

- To evaluate and make valid judgments about fiction and nonfiction
- To understand the meaning of and apply key vocabulary across multiple disciplines

6) 1.2C Produce work in at least one literary genre that follows the conventions of the genre.

- To use figurative language effectively in poetry
- To use well-organized, coherent writing to convey an idea

7) 1.3B Compare the use of literary elements within and among texts including characters, setting, plot, theme and point of view.

- To identify and understand the elements of character, setting and theme in written works
- To use knowledge of the situation, setting, character's traits, motivations and feeling to determine causes for that character's actions.

8) 1.3C Describe how the author uses literary devices to convey meaning with sound techniques (e.g., rhyme, rhythm, meter, alliteration) and figurative language (e.g., personification, simile, metaphor, hyperbole).

- To understand organizational structure of text
- To identify figurative language and sound devices in writing

9) 1.3D Identify and respond to the effects of sound and structure in poetry (e.g., alliterations, rhyme, verse form).

- To identify and use basic letter and syllable patterns
- To identify and use a variety of simple poetic forms

Music

1) 9.1C Recognize and use fundamental vocabulary within the art form.

- To identify in various musical contexts meter, tempo, dynamics, timbre, texture and tonality
- To create variations of familiar works by changing the elements listed above

2) 9.3A Identify critical processes in the examination of works in the arts including compare and contrast, analyze, interpret, forming and testing hypotheses, and evaluating/forming judgments.

- To compare performances analytically and non-verbally

- To improvise new musical endings to unfamiliar works, then comparing them to the originals
- To engage in cooperative learning and critiques of peer compositions

3) 9.1B Recognize, know, use and demonstrate a variety of appropriate arts elements and principles to produce, review, and revise works of art.

- To identify and analyze music performances by style, blend, balance, musicianship, and artistic expression
- To create and perform rhythmic variations of both existing and created song texts and poems

4) 9.3L Identify, explain and analyze common themes, forms and techniques from works in the arts.

- To critically assess music performances which reflect a wide diversity of people, styles, and times
- To identify instrumentation and explain its relationship to expression in musical works