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The wetlands project

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THE WETLANDS PROJECT

A Creative Project Report

Presented to

The Faculty of the Department of Interdisciplinary Studies

San Jose State University

In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Master of Arts

by

Renee Ruth Saulnier

August 2006

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ABSTRACT

THE WETLANDS PROJECT

by Renee R. Saulnier

The Wetlands Project is a training model for teachers to develop skills using the arts to help teach another subject area. The project includes a resource guide for teachers regarding local organizations, print resources, and website information. The students involved in this project had the opportunity to broaden their learning experiences in the curriculum and acquire knowledge and skills in both art and science.

The students were encouraged to become researchers, observers, and independent learners in the classroom. The students were able to discuss, reflect, and give feedback on their work. These discussions encouraged them to become independent, where they could take control of the objectives for the lesson and reflect on their work. Above all, the students were excited to be part of this experience.

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I. Introduction

Figure 1. Don Edwards San Francisco Bay Wetlands.
(Photographed by author, 2004).

Art education can provide us with opportunities to explore, question, and reflect on ourselves and the world around us. These opportunities are what most of us value and encourage in educational settings for students. The path of this project began with these connections.

The Wetlands Project was developed, implemented, and documented in order to create a third grade wetlands curriculum using the arts to support the teaching of this subject. There is some documentation and evidence from researchers, teachers, and art educators that supports the approach and work of this project. Eliot Eisner is one of the leading researchers for art education and believes, “Work in the arts is not only a way of creating performances and products; it is a way of creating our lives by expanding our consciousness, shaping our dispositions, satisfying our quest for meaning, establishing contact with others, and sharing a culture” (Eisner, 3). This statement demonstrates how the arts can impact our lives on many levels.

The arts also provide students with opportunities for expression, technical skills, and cultural enrichment. Yet, in some cases children do not get an opportunity to experience the arts. These cases are due to various factors in educational settings where there is often a lack of funding or support for the arts. Today, many art educators are working in schools to mentor teachers and provide opportunities for students to explore the arts through various means.

Art educators use different approaches when teaching the arts in schools. For the purposes of this project, I would like to present two common and distinct views of the

arts and education: The first holds that the arts have intrinsic value and deserve their own place in the curriculum.

“...art education should give pride of place to what is distinctive about the arts. Art education should not get sidetracked or attempt to justify its primary educational mission by focusing its efforts on outcomes that other fields can claim to serve equally well. Nor should art educators make research claims about the effects of art education on, say, academic forms of performance for which there is little or weak research evidence” (Eisner, 42).

The second holds that as well as having intrinsic value, the arts also have utilitarian value, helpful in reaching other subject areas.

“Children can use the arts to conceptualize about other knowledge areas, when they select scientific, technological, historical, mathematical, religious, or geographical themes to be the main focus or illustrative content of their creative work. Their understanding of the subject matter comes through, and is expressed by, the process of the arts and the planning, teaching and learning is based on the teaching integrated arts exemplar, with an added proviso that examines the appropriateness of the subject matter to lend itself to artistic perception” (Bloomfield, 108).

In both views, the arts are highly valued in educational contexts. However, most art educators feel the arts should be taught as a single entity, whereas others, often generalists see how the arts integrated in other subject areas can be used to assist in teaching those subject areas. Schools that support the arts as a single subject provide students with exposure to various focus areas in the arts and many times in a sequential format. Art can be taught as a core subject in the curriculum. However, if there are no arts being offered by schools, it is often left to the teacher to include them in the classroom. Many teachers are overwhelmed with responsibilities and lack the skills and resources to supplement or teach the arts in their classrooms, either as a single subject area or integrated in other parts of the curriculum. In these cases, art educators can

provide services for teachers to learn the necessary training and skills needed to further their arts education development.

“It is my experience that when students are enabled to utilize the arts as a teaching and learning mechanism (learning with and learning through), they are in a better position to appreciate and understand the arts as subject matter themselves. My student poets are interested in reading the work of poets. My math students who use paintings to study geometry are more likely to appreciate artworks outside of math class. The children who have used movement to depict the story of the Raven are more likely to be drawn into the ballet’s performance of “Swan Lake” and appreciate it. Thus, broadening the classroom to encompass the arts on various levels also engenders and appreciation and understanding of the arts as a source of knowledge in and of itself” (Goldberg, 175).

The Wetlands Project was created for a teacher who has an interest in using the arts to help teach another subject area. The classroom teacher supported this approach and had little experience or skills to bring the arts into her classroom. The teacher was interested in using the arts to support the wetlands curriculum.

We met six months before the project to share goals and discuss our interests. The goals of this project were based upon both the science and the art standards of California listed in the lesson plans. It was decided that the purpose of this project was for the students to gain a spatial understanding and a hands-on experience to explore the salt marsh area of the Don Edwards San Francisco Bay Wetlands. The project took place before the students went on a field trip to the Don Edwards San Francisco Bay Wetlands. It was also decided that I would photograph and create slides of the wetlands area for the students to identify with the habitats and geography of the land.

We were able to collaborate and decide upon a period of ten weeks for the project. The classes were one hour each week. The teacher and I were able to meet once again

before the classes began to review the goals, lesson plans, and resource guide for the Wetlands Project.

The project took place in a third grade classroom at Wind Mill Springs Elementary School in San Jose, California. Twenty students participated in the project. The students had had little or no exposure to techniques such as collage, sculpture, or creating murals.

The students were encouraged to create connections between the arts and science. The arts were used to explore the geography of the land, spatial contexts, forms and functions of the habitats and wildlife. They were able to apply their knowledge and express their ideas by creating maps, bird habitats, and miniature murals.

This project gave the students an opportunity to become researchers, observers, and independent learners. My hope was that this approach would broaden their learning experience, peak their imagination, bring excitement about learning, offer a modality of visual learning, encourage connections between the environment and the arts, and allow the students to feel confident in expressing their voices.

There were various tools used to document this project. A chart was used to log observations made during each project over the ten weeks (Appendix A). This chart was used as a reflection tool during the weekly meetings with the teacher. These meetings were focused on discussing the experiences of the children, reflecting on their skills, observing where they were with the project, and discussing the plans for the following class. It was also a time for the teacher and I to discuss our goals and observations of the project.

Discussions with the students took place at the beginning of each week and provided another opportunity to make observations. These times allowed the teacher and I to scaffold the students' learning, state the objectives for their work and use questioning techniques. The questions provoked reflective answers and allowed us to observe their knowledge gained, and then gauge where to lead them with the project. This dialog continued as they worked on their projects. The discussions engaged the students on a deeper level and encouraged them to become researchers who questioned and reflected on their ideas.

The students were able to reflect further on their work at the end of each project. There were gallery walks that took place where the students could observe each others artworks, give feedback based on the goals and objectives, and reflect on their own work. The goals of these reflections were for the students to address the standards, and make connections between the arts and science. This was an opportunity for students to develop a language and vocabulary for the arts and science.

The last class was an art exhibit for parents and other students in the school to come and view the artworks. There was also time for students to view the pieces and respond to them. This time period was guided, but we felt it was critical to allow the students to respond freely to their work and for us to observe their responses. This time also allowed us to focus on their ability to communicate their knowledge of the wetlands based on their spatial and hands-on experiences and to interpret their overall experience with the projects.

The classroom teacher and I met for an hour after the art exhibit to discuss the development of the project, complications, reflections, and what parts of the project she would like to use in her curriculum the following year. I asked her to discuss and write about her reflections and overall experiences of the project (Appendix B).

II. Curriculum

Figure 2.0 Don Edwards San Francisco Bay Wetlands.
(Photographed by author, 2004).

Project 1: COLLAGE MAPS

Figure 3.0 Open Bay collage, photographed by author, 2006.

Time Frame: weeks 1-3

Overview

Students will learn the techniques and skills of collage and create a mixed media map based upon their knowledge of the geography, habitats, and the wildlife of the wetlands.

Science Objectives

History Social Science: To identify the wetlands habitat including where the Don Edwards location is, how it is located in reference to the uplands and the open bay, and to identify the wildlife and plants that live in these areas.

Life Science: 3b. To identify the necessities of life in the wetlands habitat, including food, water, shelter, and space.

Visual Art Objectives

Artistic Perception: The students will be able to describe and analyze, using the vocabulary of art, the elements line, shape, and texture, when discussing the various objects found in the environment.

2.0 Creative Expression: Students will create two dimensional maps using collage and mixed media.

2.3 Creative Expression: Students will make sketches of the various landscapes found in the uplands, wetlands, and open bay.

Week 1: Researching the Wetlands

Figure 3.1 Wetlands display chart, photographed by author, 2005.

Materials

Glue sticks, glue, scissors, paper, pencils

4 large sheets of paper

Photographs of wetlands habitats, wildlife, and maps displayed on a board

Slides of the wetlands, habitats, and wildlife

Examples of collage maps

Introduction

View slide presentation of the wetlands habitat (includes open bay, wetlands, uplands, and habitats found in the salt marsh). Discuss the definition of diversity. Describe the various types of geography and wildlife found in each environment. Discuss the elements lines, shapes, and textures that can be observed in these photographs. Identify and sketch these examples found in the slides. View maps of this area and discuss where the habitat is located and what other areas are nearby. Discuss the idea of symbols and how they are used in maps. Discuss how the elements lines, shapes, and textures can be used as symbols. Next, begin making a chart that lists and identifies the various elements found in each area of the salt marsh (the open bay, the salt marsh, the slough, and the uplands). Introduce, discuss, and display examples of collage. Display examples of collage maps and introduce the project.

Week 2: Sketches

Figure 3.2 Salt Marsh sketch, photographed by author, 2005.

Materials

Paper, pencils, erasers, scissors

Various images of the wetlands (including books for reference)

Various images of maps

Examples of collage maps

4 Large sheets of paper

Introduction

Divide students into four groups (uplands, salt marsh, slough, and the open bay) and have them review images of these areas. Each group should make a list of the elements found in their environment (for example, the uplands have hills, trees, grass, animals, etc).

Discuss and review how maps are used as a tool to describe the geography of an area, using symbols, lines, shapes, and textures. Show an example of the collage maps.

Activity One

1. Pass out large sheets of paper for each group to sketch the outline of their area.
2. Each student cuts out images that symbolize the elements found in their environment (These include examples of lines, shapes, and textures).

Week 3: Collage

Figure 4.0 Textured papers, photographed by author, 2005.

Materials

4 foam boards (poster board size)

Mixed media (wall paper, textured papers, colored sand, natural materials, etc)

Various cut out images (images with various textures, colors, and shapes)

Introduction

Discuss working as a group and encourage the students to assign roles (for example, one student should collect papers, two students work on the outline, and two students work on cutting, arranging, and pasting). Show a collage map example and demonstrate the techniques of collage. Discuss mixed media alternatives such as sand, natural materials, etc.

Activity One: Collages Continued

1. Allow students to choose their materials.
2. Students use scissors and glue to cut and paste their collage pieces.
4. Students add mixed media to fill in their pieces.

Conclusion

The students gather and discuss the elements of art used to symbolize the elements found in nature. The students can also discuss interdependence, how their maps exemplify an ecosystem, and how they depend on one another.

Week 3: Collage

Figure 4.1 Outline for uplands collage, photographed by author, 2005.

Figure 4.2 Collage with textured papers, photographed by author, 2005.

Figure 4.3 Final uplands collage piece, photographed by author, 2005.

Project 2: Bird Habitats

Figure 5.0 Clay birds and habitat models, photographed by author, 2005.

Time Frame: weeks 4-5

Overview

Students will research the physical adaptations, forms and functions, and the habitats of wetlands birds. Students will also create their own model habitat and bird out of clay and mixed media.

Visual Art Objectives

Creative Expression: Students will create a three dimensional model of a wildlife habitat found in the wetlands, using clay and mixed media.

Science Objectives

Life Science: Adaptations in physical structure or behavior may improve an organism's chance for survival.

3a. Students know plants and animals have structures that serve different functions in growth, survival, and reproduction.

Week 4: Bird Sculptures

Figure 5.1 Clay bird sculpture and habitat, photographed by author, 2005.

Materials

Clay (blue, white, terracotta, grey, green)

Plastic lids (yogurt, ice cream, etc.)

Clay tools (forks, toothpicks, plastic knives, etc.)

Mixed media (fake plants, tiny buttons, natural materials, pipe cleaners, etc.)

Wetlands bird references (books, images, slides)

Introduction

View slides and photographs of wetlands birds. Discuss their physical features (beaks, feet, etc.). Discuss animal adaptations and how these play an importance in their survival, growth, and reproduction in the wetlands. Discuss how the habitats (open bay, slough, salt marsh, and uplands) influence these adaptations. Chart these birds and their physical structures and habitats. Discuss three dimensional art and sculptures. Discuss how space and form influence sculpture. Discuss ways in which habitats can be designed and built. Demonstrate how to shape and sculpt birds. Discuss and demonstrate methods of pinching and creating texture. Demonstrate how the feet can be shaped with pipe-cleaners and poked into the clay.

Activity One

1. Students choose a bird found in the wetlands habitat and make a list of their bird's life necessities, adaptations, and elements needed for food, shelter, and survival.
2. Students sculpt a bird that demonstrates the physical features (beaks, feet, feathers) and use tools to create the texture of the bird's feathers.
3. Shape pipe cleaners to create the feet of the bird and insert them into the clay.

Week 5: Bird Habitats

Figure 5.2 Clay bird sculpture and habitat, photographed by author, 2005

Introduction

Review the habitats for each bird and how their physical structures help their survival. Discuss the habitats and how each bird uses elements in their environment for their survival. Demonstrate the process of making a habitat model.

Activity One:

1. Pass out plastic lids, have the students use these as the base for the habitat, and layer them with colored clay that will symbolize water or land.
2. Students choose various materials found in their bird's habitat to build a miniature habitat model.
3. Allow time to build their habitats and encourage them to push their materials into the clay base.

Conclusion

Have the students reflect on the interdependence of the animals and their environment. Document their reflections. Discuss the artworks using the vocabulary of art.

Project 3: Representational and Non-representational Art

Figure 6.0 Don Edwards San Francisco Bay Wetlands, photographed by author, 2004.

Time Frame: Weeks 6-9

Overview

Students will create sketchbooks that contain representational sketches of the wetlands and the environment. Students will create miniature murals based on preservation issues. Students will create abstract rubbings.

Visual Art Objectives

Creative Expression: Students will create sketchbooks that contain various sketches of the wetlands environment, a miniature mural, and abstract rubbings.

Artistic Perception: Distinguish and describe representational, abstract, and non-representational works of art.

Aesthetic Valuing: Compare and contrast selected works of art and describe them using appropriate vocabulary of art.

Connections: Describe how artists have influenced other peoples' lives.

Science Objectives

Life Science: 3c. Students know living things cause changes in the environment in which they live: some of these changes are detrimental to the organism or other organisms, and some are beneficial.

Week 6: Representational Art

Figure 6.1 Uplands mural sketch, photographed by author, 2005.

Materials

Paper

Pencils

Slides of murals, sketches, and wildlife muralists

Display Chart of wetlands information

Introduction

Introduce sketchbooks and why artists use them. Discuss various types and what contents to put in them. Discuss the meaning of representational art. View various types of slides which introduce artists that create art based on the natural environment. Show various examples of muralists over time. Discuss these using the vocabulary of art and introduce the idea of using art as a means of awareness and communication. Discuss how muralists have changed over time and their focus on bringing aesthetic appreciation and communication of thoughts or ideas to the community. Discuss how we could use our own painting as a means of awareness for the wetlands. Discuss how this form of expression in art can help change the environment.

Activity one

1. Pass out white sketch paper and pencils.
2. Ask the students to choose an area of wetlands and an issue related to environmental conservation for their piece.
3. Begin sketching various things in this environment, using photographs as a reference.

Week 7-8: Murals

Figure 6.2 Uplands mural, photographed by author, 2005.

Materials

Tempera paints

Brushes

File folders

Pencils

Various wetlands images

Introduction

Review wetlands preservation issues and how we can use our art to bring awareness.

Review muralists and the process of creating a mural. Discuss the students' ideas and demonstrate techniques to paint these pieces.

Activity One

1. Pass out pencils, the students' sketches, and file folders.
2. Draw the final sketch onto the file folder.
3. Encourage the students to make their drawings simple so they will be able to paint.

Activity Two

1. Pass out paints and brushes.
2. Allow time for the students to paint their pieces.

Conclusion

Discuss representational and non-representational artworks. Discuss how our miniature murals fit into this definition. Reflect on the mural pieces and how art can communicate our voices, educate, and bring awareness to others.

Week 9: Non-Representational Art

Figure 6.3 Abstract rubbing, photographed by author, 2005.

Materials

Oil pastels

Watercolors, brushes

Thick white art paper

Variety of natural materials to represent things found in the wetlands environment (grass, flowers, straw, shells, rocks, sand, pine needles, etc.)

Slides of various mixed media abstract art inspired by nature

Introduction

Show various examples of abstract art that are inspired by nature. Discuss how abstract art is non-representational and can symbolize or be inspired by objects found in nature. Discuss how art can be made for aesthetic appreciation and how this could influence the audience. Discuss various things that can be used as symbols for things found in the wetlands. Demonstrate the technique of a watercolor resist and a rubbing.

Activity One

1. Students choose five elements of the environment to symbolize (trees, grass, animals, etc.), and choose the natural objects to symbolize them.
2. The students compose and create a rubbing of these, using crayons.
3. The students use a water color wash to create a resist technique.
4. Students may repeat this process for a second print.

Conclusion

In what ways can artists influence the wetlands environment? What kinds of things can change the environment and how do these affect the diversity of life found in the wetlands? Reflect on and discuss the pieces using the vocabulary of art. Compare and contrast the differences of representational and non-representational artworks.

Project 4: Art Show and Reflections

Time Frame: Week 10

Overview

Students will present their pieces in an art exhibit for parents, students, and teachers. Students will reflect on their artworks.

Visual Art Objectives

Aesthetic Valuing: Students will discuss and reflect on their own artworks.

Materials

All art projects

Black construction paper 8x11

Glue sticks, pins

Introduction

Discuss what an art show is and what our roles are as artists. Discuss the roles of the audience and how we can talk about our art.

Activity One

1. Pass out black paper and glue sticks for the students to mount their abstract pieces.
2. Ask the students to help set up the space for the art show and pin up their art.
3. Allow an opportunity for students to talk about and reflect on their artworks.
4. Invite the parents to interact with the students as they talk about their pieces.

Conclusion

Discuss and reflect on ways that they can help others communicate the issues related to environmental education. Discuss how art can be used to communicate these ideas. Discuss the importance of documentation, reflection, and observation in art and science.

Dance Curriculum Extension (not implemented in this project)

Time Frame: Weeks 4-5 (precedes bird habitats)

Overview

Students will develop skills and knowledge associated with the vocabulary of dance.

Students will create a dance inspired by the wetlands birds and use the elements of dance.

Dance Objectives

Artistic Perception: Students perceive and respond, using the elements of dance. They demonstrate movement skills, process sensory information, and describe movement using the vocabulary of dance.

Creative Expression: Students apply choreographic principles, processes, and skills to create and communicate meaning through the improvisation, composition, and performance of the dance.

Aesthetic Valuing: Explain the function of dance in ceremonial and social events in Native American cultures.

Connections: Students explain relationships between dance elements and other subjects (science and art).

Science Objectives

Life Science: 3a. Students know plants and animals have structures that serve different functions in growth, survival, and reproduction.

3d. Students know when the environment changes some plants and animals survive and reproduce, others die or move to new locations.

Week 4: The Elements of Dance

Materials

Photographs of various elements in the wetlands environment that relate to the life cycles of plants and animals and how the environment changes over time

Dance props: instruments, pieces of material, ribbons, background music

Camera to document the students' work

Paper

Pencils

Documentation on Linda Yamane (music, and art pieces)

Introduction

Review slides and discuss the life cycles of various birds found in the wetlands environment. Discuss how the environment has an effect on this process. View pictures and reflect on how Native Americans used the animals and the environment as inspiration to create ceremonial dances. Discuss various types of dances and the movements using the vocabulary of dance. Discuss the work and research of Linda Yamane and how she has created sounds and music related to her Native American roots.

Activity one

1. Introduce locomotor skills (walking, skipping, hopping, leaping, and galloping).
Use creative movements such as wiggly, backwards, slow motion, high, low, twisting, etc.
2. Play a freeze dance game that involves students making shapes described by sensory words. (For example, create a shape that feels bumpy, slippery, smooth, pointy, scaly, long, sticky, etc).

Activity two

1. Have the students reflect and think of ways that these movements could describe the life cycle of a bird found in the wetlands environment.
2. Document the students' responses and make a list of these.
3. Discuss and choose one bird found in the environment and have the students document how they could express movement to identify with the life cycle and adaptations found with this wetlands bird.
4. Gather the students in groups of five, have them choose and demonstrate three movements that are inspired by this bird.

Week 5: Composing a Dance inspired by a Wetlands Bird

Materials

Images of the wetlands bird chosen for the dance

Dance Props

Pencils, paper

Introduction

Introduce the idea of transition and composition of a dance. Discuss ways to interpret the movements and provide flow to the piece. Review the features and life cycle of the bird and reflect on words to describe the life cycle process.

Activity One

1. Divide the students in groups of five and assign at least three words documented from their reflection.
2. Allow the students time to discuss and create movements that are inspired by these words.
3. Each group can perform these for the rest of the class.
4. Discuss how these can be put together to complete the piece (use dance props).
5. Practice the whole piece as a group.

Conclusion

Reflect on how the bird's life cycle was communicated through movements using the vocabulary of dance. Discuss the connections between the environment and the influence of the life cycle of the bird.

III. Resource Guide

Figure 7.0 Don Edwards San Francisco Bay Wetlands.
(Photographed by author, 2004).

Websites

www.teachingarts.org

This website has access to many arts education links, including the California Arts Standards for Visual and Performing Arts. It is also a place to contact other educators affiliated with the arts. Other resources include model arts schools, assessment and evaluation information, professional development opportunities, and local arts organizations. This is a good place to start a search for links to the arts.

[The California Department of Education www.cde.ca.gov](http://www.cde.ca.gov)

The California Department of Education is the main link to look up the Visual and Performing Arts Framework and Standards. This website offers free downloads to the standards to build your arts curriculum and also reference to other disciplines.

[The Kennedy Arts Center www.artsedge.kennedy-center.org](http://www.artsedge.kennedy-center.org)

This website offers standards based lessons, interactive classroom resources, articles, arts links, and artist links. This website was easy to search and has a broad range of curriculum resources for the classroom.

[The Dick Blick Store www.dickblick.com](http://www.dickblick.com)

This website offers reasonable art supplies to order online. There are also links to lesson plans and arts links.

[The Cultural Initiatives of Silicon Valley www.ci-sv.org](http://www.ci-sv.org)

The Cultural Initiatives of Silicon Valley provides a creative education program that offers links to professional development, a local calendar of events, arts education lectures, arts education links, grant information, local arts providers, and schools involved in the program.

[The California Arts Project www.csmf.ucop.edu/tcap/](http://www.csmf.ucop.edu/tcap/)

The California Arts Project website offers local professional development opportunities, arts news, California conferences, summer Institutes and trainings, resource links, standards links, and listings of local arts educators. This website is a great personal resource to create local contacts and educational links.

The California Arts Council www.cac.ca.gov

The California Arts Council provides newsletters, updates, job listings, news archives, online library, resources, links, arts education programs, state standards, and state funding resources. This is a great link for educators to become a member and get monthly newsletters through emails.

The National Art Education Association www.naea.com

The National Art Education Association offers a membership and monthly news updates, yearly conventions, publications, and links to special programs. This is a great way to get connected with national updates and links to arts education.

The Getty Museum www.getty.edu/artsednet/

This website offers educators to pick up many lessons and curriculum materials, browse the collections art gallery, talk with other educators, find arts education links, and look into changing theme related exhibits and materials. This website has many resources under arts and ecology. This is a great link to interconnect art with other disciplines.

www.arts.envirolink.org

This website offers arts and environmental essays and resource links. This website offers a variety of guests who support the arts and the environment. They provide great resources to finding artists who use nature as their voice.

Luna Kids Dance Organization www.lunakidsdance.com

This local organization provides professional development seminars on dance and curriculum integration for teachers. There are links to books, and local contacts who can connect you with resources.

www.danceducationweb.org

This website offers an extensive range of resources for dance education. There are curriculum resources, website links, organization links, research, documentation, advocacy, assessment tools, and standards based resources.

Books

Art Education

Bloomfield, Anne, and John Childs. Teaching Integrated Arts in the Primary School. London: David Fulton Publishers Ltd, 2000.

Gallas, Karen. The Languages of Learning. New York: Teachers College Press, 1994.

Goldberg, Merryl. Arts and Learning. San Francisco: Addison Wesley Longman Inc, 2001.

Dance Education

Adams, Carolyn, and Julie A. Strandberg. Dancing Through the Curriculum: A Handbook for K-12 Teachers, Parents, and Dance Educators. Providence, Rhode Island: JayEss Press, 1997.

Gilbert, Anne Green. Creative Dance for All Ages. Reston, Virginia: National Dance Association, 1992.

Joyce, Mary. First Steps in Teaching Creative Dance, 3rd Edition. California: Mayfield Publishing Company, 1994.

Reedy, Patricia. Body, Mind, & Spirit in Action. Berkeley, California: Luna Kids Dance, 2003.

Environmental Arts Education

Cajete, Gregory. Igniting the Sparkle. Skyand, North Carolina: Kivaki Press, 1999.

Local Organizations

East Bay Depot

San Pablo Ave. Oakland, CA

A warehouse filled with art supplies donated by local businesses.

Luna Kids Dance

Berkeley, CA 510-644-3629

An organization that provides children's dance education classes and teacher's professional development seminars.

Bay Cap

San Jose, CA 408-924-4383

A California arts organization devoted to bringing awareness and professional development to teachers based on the California Arts Standards.

San Jose Cultural Initiatives

San Jose, CA 408-283-7000

Offers grants, arts educational programs in schools, grants, and professional development lectures.

Raft

San Jose, CA 408-451-1420

Resource Area for Teachers provides interactive classroom materials donated by local businesses. Membership required.

IV. Observations and Reflections

Figure 8.0 Don Edwards San Francisco Bay Wetlands.
(Photographed by author, 2004).

The last component of this project is a written reflection of my experiences. It was written to document observations of the project, the students, and the teacher. This was used to reflect on how this project could be developed further into the following years' curriculum.

The Wetlands Project used the arts as a medium for the students to connect with the science curriculum and learn about the wetlands environment on an experiential level. Overall, the students, the classroom teacher, and I were dedicated and enthusiastic about the work that took place over the ten weeks. The students took a field trip at the end of the ten weeks to apply their knowledge on-site at the Don Edwards Salt Marsh and were able to express their ideas and relate to the environment on a much deeper level. For example, the classroom teacher discussed with me how they were able to name the wildlife and habitats of the wetlands without assistance. Other teachers on the field trip were asking how they knew so much of the information and were surprised at how much they understood compared to their own students. This example demonstrates how their enthusiasm for the projects, their spatial experiences of the wetlands, and their reflections deepened their knowledge of the wetlands environment.

The students involved in this project were making connections between the arts and science through their discussions and their reflections. There is often a disconnection in subject areas taught in classrooms and students are not able to make connections across the curriculum. The arts for the purposes of this project provided a visual tool for the students to grasp the geography, habitats, and wildlife of the wetlands. It would have been an ideal situation to visit the Don Edwards San Francisco Bay Wetlands with the

students prior to this project and relate this experience to the curriculum. However, the photographs, slides, and discussions provided our experiences with the wetlands.

Our weekly discussions were a critical tool in gauging their awareness of the arts and science based on the California standards. These standards were used to encourage the students to make connections between both subjects. The students were given skills in both areas and encouraged to become researchers, observers, and independent learners in the classroom.

These skills and abilities to become researchers, observers, and independent learners are of great value to an educational setting. It was greatly rewarding to see the outcomes of using the arts to help teach science. The students were able to research the material and information of the wetlands before using it in the arts. They were also encouraged to become observers of their work and the work of their peers. They reflected on their work and gave feedback to their peers. These discussions encouraged them to become independent learners in the classroom where they could take control of the objectives for the lesson and reflect on their work.

The students worked in groups and had the opportunity to develop a community that respected others and express their voices. The teacher and I observed on many occasions how the students were building social skills that many of them lacked in the classroom. They were able to discuss their work, initiate ideas, and reflect on the work of their peers.

Complications with this project were mostly related to time constraints. The teacher and I were able to meet and reflect at the end of The Wetlands Project. We decided that in the future, this project would have been more tangible with a total of two projects over

a ten-week period. This would have allowed us to focus on two mediums and given us more time to engage in the projects.

There was also a dance project that did not fit into our time schedule. I wanted to expose them to visual arts and creative movement. The lesson plans for these were created before the project began and after the first two weeks it was decided that we should focus on one of these disciplines.

Time was also an issue in regards to the reflection discussions. These took place at the end of each project and typically spanned about 15 minutes. This was not enough time for the students to reflect on the artworks. A journal may have been a good supplement for them to write reflections after the projects. Journals could have been used as a tool to guide the students' ideas, discussions, and reflections.

The teacher's participation in the project allowed us to reflect weekly and keep the progression of the projects. Our observations and the students' reflections were a key part in meeting the goals and objectives of this project. The documentation of this project will be used as a guide for the following year's curriculum and as a resource for others who are interested in using the arts to teach another subject area.

APPENDIX A
OBSERVATION CHART

Projects:	Positive outcome:	Complications:	Reflections:
Collage Maps Of the Wetlands Weeks 1-3	The maps provided a medium for the students to develop a deeper understanding for the environment and how life depends on all the areas of the wetlands.	There was a lack of time to reflect on the process of the project.	Students were able to observe and research the geography and wildlife of the wetlands, as well as develop a spatial awareness of the area
	Students were able to visit the wetlands after the project and use their experience with the maps to understand the geography and interdependence of the environment.	Students had difficulty working in groups and finding a consensus as a group during the time allotted for the project.	Students were able to explore the visual elements of lines, shapes, and textures of the environment.
Saltmarsh Bird Sculptures Weeks 4-5	Students were able to connect the importance of the salt marsh to the wetlands birds survival.	There was a lack of connection to how artists can use their art to document species. There could have been more examples of artists work that documented wildlife.	Students were able to create a three dimensional bird and research how their physical adaptations help them to survive in their environment.
Sketchbooks... Weeks 6-9	Students were able to reflect on the importance of the wetlands communicate their ideas and express their voice through their artworks.	The paints used to create a wetlands scene did not allow the students to create clear pictures.	Students were able to discuss and reflect on how artists can bring awareness and educate others through their artworks.
	Students were able to make connections of art, science, and their own personal experiences.	The students had difficulty with the materials and creating clear rubbings in their abstract pieces.	Students were able to create symbolic imagery for elements found in the wetlands imagery.
Art Show and Reflections Week 10	Students were able to see all of their work and see the multiple layers of how the environment is interdependent.	There could have been more discussion of local artists and their impact on the environment over time.	Students were able to gain a sense of empowerment for all of their accomplishments and feel like they could express their own ideas and interpretations.

APPENDIX B
REFLECTION LETTER FROM TEACHER

4/29/2005

Dear Renee,

I would like to thank you for coming into my class to teach art. Both the students and I learned a lot and enjoyed your classes. It has helped me tremendously with a subject that I had no idea on how to incorporate visual art. Thank you for helping the students better understand the wetland material.

I have always had problems with thinking of ideas how to incorporate visual arts with the wetland curriculum that I teach. The students learn and retain a whole lot more when they are able to create something dealing with the subject. You have given me so many ideas that will help me teach the wetlands in future years. I really liked the way you talked about habitat and had the students create the different regions of the wetland habitat. It was really easy for them to understand that in one habitat (wetland) there are different regions (mudflat, slough, upland and open bay). That one concept has been really difficult to explain to the students. In the past it hasn't been as easy for the students to grasp the concept. Having the students create a bird with the nest to put on top of the region they created was another great idea. The rubs that the students completed gave them another perspective on how to look at a simple item, like a shell. They now look at a shell and notice the lines and grooves on it. It reminds them of another element like water or sand.

The students learned so much. When we went on our field trip, I really was amazed on how much they retained. They were able to identify the different regions without difficulty. They were answering all types of questions about habitat, animals and plants. I had other teachers and the parents come up to me and mention how well the students knew the material. I told them it was because of the art teacher. I have never had a class learn and retain as much as this class has.

In observing these lessons, I wouldn't change anything except for time. I think I would have given them more time to work on the projects. All the projects fit so perfectly with each other. They went very well with the subject matter.

I don't think I can ever thank you enough for all you have done. You've given me and the students so much. We all walked away with a head full of knowledge.

Thank you,

(teacher name omitted for confidentiality)

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