

ArtsSmarts Saskatchewan



Project Documentation My Voice, My Story

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Ministry of
Education



Project Information

Project : MyVoice, My Story

A) Project Dates: Feb 25 - 29, 2008

School: Spiritwood High School & Hartley Clark

Teacher(s): Shannon MacFarlane & Craig Nesland

Grades: Grade 5/6, and Grade 7 to 12

B) June 16 - 20, 2008

School: Cutknife Elementary & High School

Teachers: Karley Hollman & Allison Tarasoff

Grades: 5 and 7

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Project Information

Brief description of your project:: Film in the community

Brief description of your artist:s: Gabriel Yahyahkeekoot and Shane Bellegarde - very professional young artists, filmmakers, and actors

Community partners: Community Arts Council and parents

Reflection

Why have you chosen to participate in an ArtsSmarts project?

We met Gabriel and Shane through an earlier Artist program and we really wanted to work with them again in another project. We wanted to get a film club started here and felt it was a good way to get things in place. We knew we could involve students at risk, who are creative but not very engaged in school, and could stimulate more interest while building their skills. We wanted students to have a chance to tell a story that was important to them.

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General Research Question

What is your general research question?

- 1) Student voice
- 2) mentorship
- 3) lasting impact

Reflection

Why/How did you choose that question? How to engage different kinds of students - what do they have to say? Students can feel empowerment through using their voice, it is an authentic expression. Wanted the project to carry on, with students able to teach one another, and they can take the skills into other classes or subjects. Other teachers have also used the students to teach in their class. We wanted to create an interest for a film club, with the hope it will transfer to other classes. We could see possible career influences and choices for further study at university or SIAST. Students want to carry on with film in their personal life as well.

Would you now like to revise or refine that question? No, it was suitable

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Curriculum Connections

What are the curriculum expectations that your project addresses for:

- arts education? The role of the artist in the community is addressed. How we can express ideas in other media. Working cooperatively, listening other people's ideas and contributing their own ideas. Students learned elements of film (light, sound, design), discuss genre and style.
- other subject areas? Identity and culture, individual in society, roots of society - tied to theme of acceptance (social studies). ELA themes of Search for the self, Conflicts, Issues and Choices.

Reflection

How do these curriculum expectations relate to your general research question (and specific questions if you have some)?

Our theme of Acceptance fits nicely into the curriculum topics and allows for student voice.

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How do you plan to document your project, and at what stages?

Photos pre-worshop, with artists, journal writing pre, during, after. Gabe and Shane made a “making of” video of process.

What information do you need to answer your general research question (and specific questions, if you have them)?

Teacher and parent feedback, student responses, artist comments, general impressions

How will you gather that information? What methods or tools will you use? photographs, video, journal writing, interviews,

How will you keep track of your documentary material so you can reflect on it later?

Arts ed wiki for the division to share with everyone

Who will be responsible for this? Arts Ed consultant Who will help? The cooperating teachers

Mid-Project Reflection

- How is your project documentation going?

Wed. Feb 27 - projects were well underway, capturing footage, starting to download video, begin editing. They all agreed the artists needed to spend more time with high school kids for the in depth work being done. Groups formed, ideas sketched out in rough story boards, lots of work around the theme, most of the footage in the community is done. Excitement is pretty high right now, bonding with the kids and artists and between the kids is also high (even with mixed age groups).

So far, what is your documentation telling you about your general question (and specific questions if you have them)? Mixed groups working well, artist mentoring excellent “just in time” learning as the need arises; students are confident and comfortable with speaking their mind - artists trust and encouragement - mostly from teacher observation and student journals.

Mid-Project Reflection

What student learning can you see evolving as the project progresses?

Filmmaking technique and skill, very detailed information through exploration with the media, editing skills, “persistence”, seeing through the artists eyes and using the language, collaborative process fully engaged, problem solving.

Reflect on Your Findings

How did you reflect on your project? With whom?

Shannon, Crai, Allison, Karley and Sherron worked together, talked with artists, interview students, parents, school community council, administrator, other teachers. Most were informal talks - very positive feedback, lots of inquiries to school after the project, people were impressed and want to do more. They are very interested in bringing back the artists.

When you examine your documentary material, what does it tell you about what the students learned during the course of the project?

We see evidence of: song writing, animation, writing, creating films, story telling, pictures of their life, see films differently, thinking about the process, all want to do it again.

In the package folder we have included photos and writings/comments from the students.

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Students prepare

- Trust building exercises



The school prepares

- Excitement builds



- Meeting the artists



Students collaborate

- Teaching one another



Storyboard

- Sharing stories and planning



Students persevere

- On location, in the snow



Film Premiere

- Sharing with others



Mentorship

- Building relationships with artists



Reflect on Your Findings

When you examine your documentary material, what does it tell you about your general research question? Specific questions, if you have them?

Students have a great capacity to teach one another. When engaged and stimulated they are capable of great concentration and focus. When challenged and given the skills and support needed they can rise to even greater heights than expected. They felt empowered to give opinions without fear of teacher judgment about appropriateness of material - though all were sensitive to the fact we are in a school and sharing with young audiences. The benefits of working with an artist is powerful for students - but also for the teacher as they provided with the opportunity to observe, learn and experience working with the students, and being a part of the collaboration as opposed to leading the process - they were allowed to be in it. The level of collaboration was awesome - everyone enjoyed seeing it unfold, it was so strong and evident to all. There were no discipline issues as all were committed to the project.

Tell Your Story

Before

How do you plan to tell your story to others, such as parents, community, etc.?

Film Festival, bulletin board, school newsletter, community newspaper, presentation to school community council, art ed division wiki, Poster session at the STF PD day.

After

What response did you get when you told your story to others?

Many interested in the process of making films and in the ArtsSmart grant. Appreciated the Film Festival and want copies of the DVD. Teacher comments “amazing final product”, well made, terrific interactions in the hallways, visibly engaged and having fun but not in a disruptive way. Teachers liked to see how new groups were happening - those who would not normally interact. Crossed all boundaries - race, age and gender.

Lyndon Tootosis who came to bring greetings was also very positive

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Final Reflections

Do you consider this project to be successful? Please explain.

Yes! We want to do it again and the students want to do it again.

What surprises did you encounter (good or bad) in your project? How did you handle the surprises?

Technology was a huge barrier at different times. Things didn't work as expected with the program for editing. We were surprised at how well everyone dealt with it - they persisted, problem solved, stayed late in to the night and refused to give up. That was amazing. We have seen teachers open up their assessments and allow for greater creativity in student work ie: using film in ELA.

If you were to participate in ArtsSmarts again, is there anything you would change the next time? Perhaps start with three days and then 3 weeks later have a week to follow up. With the extra time we could have solved technical glitches. The next time we might not pick a theme, but let the students select their own theme to see what they come up with.

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What additional questions were raised that you would like to explore in the future? What might be the indicators of student success? How can we monitor or document student thought processes throughout a project - or have student be aware and responsible for journaling through the process, or self assessing at different points. How can students be made aware of the significance of their contribution in a collaboration? And the value of team work, valuing different perspectives and a common goal?

How well did the project cover the curriculum expectations? Very well

Describe any other learning that occurred.

Students observing how the artists attacked problems and encouraged students to problem solve. Persistence. Positive thinking as a skill. Determination. Relationships may have been helped by the fact that the artists were also of First Nations ancestry - they were excellent role models. It was also good for the community to see this positive models. Our non aboriginal students don't always have an opportunity to work with professional artists, let alone those of First nation. We feel it may have broken down some stereotypes even if it wasn't addressed directly or as a part of our theme.

Financial Report

We have submitted a financial report in the package folder.

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