

INTEGRATING THE ARTS INTO THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNER
CLASSROOM TO IMPROVE LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT AND LANGUAGE
ACQUISITION

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A Project

by

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Abstract
of
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Statement of Problem

This study was set in a rural school with high levels of poverty, migrant families, and immigrants from other countries, with an environment and paradigm that often inhibit the ability of students to successfully engage in the learning situation of a traditional school. The author was the teacher of a self-contained classroom with beginner through advanced English Language Learners that included students in a primary grade, some of whom have been residents of the United States for less than three years. The project involved implementation of a research-supported methodology based on Anchor Works. “First Impressions”, which exposed students to renowned pieces of art and artists. English Language Acquisition and vocabulary development was the author’s initial goal to guide these varying levels of Language Learners in the class to improve their oral fluency, language acquisition and higher level thinking skills through integration of visual arts and of music. By creating authentic experiences from which students could connect and engage, by encouraging stronger language skills through discussion, students in oral and written English. In addition, students developed a sense of success in the English language through music, which allowed them to feel more confident in English language production both in the classroom and in less formal situations.

Conclusions Reached

After providing consistent exposure to visual arts and music over a period of 12 weeks, improvements in the oral fluency and language production were observed in the target students and the class in general. Students were beginning to share what they were thinking and learning and discussions began to take on a new depth. The students in this study, who both had previous coursework in English language development, were still struggling with the production of the language. These students began to develop a stronger application of the language, vocabulary, and the skills necessary to self-correct during both reading and speaking processes. These results have strong implications for implementing art integration in the English language learner classroom as well as in other classes which involve children with special needs.

_____, Committee Chair
Lorie Hammond, Ph.D.

Date

DEDICATION

I would like to dedicate my efforts and hard work to my Mother, Angelina Hernandez-Arias, whom would be so proud of my accomplishments if she were here with me today. My mom is the strongest and smartest person I know. She always encouraged me to work hard and reach for the stars. I know I would not be where I am today if it were not for her. I also need to dedicate this to my son, Isaiah Miguel Gaines, who is my reason. He is the true inspiration for all that I have set out to achieve! This journey could not been possible without the love, help and guidance of Dr. Karen Benson, Dr. Crystal Olson and Dr. Lorie Hammond, who are truly legendary and inspirations! Last, but not least, I want to thank my family and close friends for all your continued support. ¡ Muchisimas Gracias!

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Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

Purpose of the Study

One thing that interests me is how students can learn to cultivate into higher levels of thinking when the learning process is stimulated by the arts. Through the arts, students can be captivated by an authentic experience in the classroom, which then allows them to become engaged authentic learning. Students who have difficulty with language acquisition often have difficulties in reading and writing, as well as with oral language development. However, if anxiety filters are lessened for students through a series of intellectual, culturally relevant experiences, will these students become engaged and interact? By incorporating music and visual arts, students are given the opportunity to think at higher levels based on Bloom's Taxonomy, while being taught vocabulary to be able to discuss what it is they are seeing, hearing and learning. Being a student of migrant farm working parents and a product of bilingual education, language development was something I experienced first hand and has been an interest of mine.

I have developed a study that will monitor the language development of English Language Learners when it is stimulated through various forms of art integration. I incorporated, both visual and performing arts into my standards in ELA curriculum (Houghton Mifflin). At the beginning of the year, I performed a pre test to assess my student's understanding of what art is. (I then chose case studies) This

became the focus during the first trimester. Depending on my class, I chose three advanced English language developing students, one who is intermediate and two that are beginning Language Learners. These levels are based on students' California English Language Development Test (CELDT) assessment scores.

Students who are second language learners, and whom are not literate in their own native language (L1) tend to have a harder time learning to read a language (L2) other than the one they speak. However, through various strategies encompassed in my Language Arts program, such as Specially Designed Academic Instruction in English (SDAIE), Total Physical Response (TPR), music and Anchor Works (visual arts), I exposed and stimulated my student's learning process while helping them become fluent English speakers, readers, writers and thinkers. I used the English Language Development Standards as a guide, which were established in 1999 by the State of California.

Goals and Objectives

My goals were to determine how integrating the arts into the English Language Arts (ELA) program affect language acquisition and literacy, particularly for those who are English language learners. By integrating Visual Arts and Music, students were exposed to higher levels of thinking as well as processing. Through music, students who are second language learners, who lack in academic language and language all together, will be given the opportunity to have music, as a way to build a bridge between their prior knowledge and what is being taught in the classroom.

Through the interaction of music and art appreciation, students have a pleasurable experience in which to become literate, critical thinkers. How do English as a Second Language (ESL) learner respond to English Language Arts (ELA) when the arts are integrated? How does the attitude toward English mastery change when the arts are integrated?

Background Content

The district in which I work is a small community, which caters to several small neighboring towns. The student demographics of the school where I teach are 58.6% Hispanic, less than 1% American Indian, 39.4% Caucasian, less than 1% African American, less than 1% Pilipino, and less than 1 % Asian. Our school's free and reduced lunch count is 64.7% and the district average is 51.6%.

Our district receives the students who live in the Madison Migrant Camp from April 15 to October 15. We have two classes (a K/1 class and a 2nd/3rd-grade class) dedicated to our migrant students. Fourth and fifth grade migrant cycle students are mainstreamed into the regular classrooms. In 2002, we had approximately 80 students during the migrant cycle registered in our school. There are 169 English Learners in our school, including the 80 migrant cycle students (Esparto Elementary School, 2007).

Plans for Literature Review

I plan to gathered statistics and information from a variety of experts in the area of language acquisition. I also researched on the topic of Bilingual Education,

something that has in some cases gone extinct. What are the benefits of having teachers who are bilingual teach students who are second language learners.

I researched second language acquisition and incorporated data from Elliot Eisner (1998) *The Kind of Schools We Need*, who argues the point that students can maximize their learning experience if given the opportunity by well educated and trained teachers who have a passion for what it is they do, as experts. I hope to gain meaningful insight from *Schooling and Language Minority Students: A Theoretical Framework* (Leyba, 1994). I will read further research on the practice in foreign and second language in *Principles of Language Learning and Teaching* (Brown, 2000). I'd also like to read more about the social structures of everyday life, to study how they influence language development. In a book by Stephen Boggs (1985) titled, *Speaking Relating and Learning*, I hope to gain insight, which will help me understand my students. I feel it is important as an educator to be conscious of our student's cultural and socioeconomic backgrounds. I will read *The Cross cultural, Language and Academic Development Handbook* written by Lynne T. Díaz-Rico and Kathryn Z. Weed (2005).

Procedure

I will integrate my knowledge of Anchor Works, a training in arts instruction, which I obtained through the California Consultancy for Arts Education (CCAIE) at the Crocker Museum. Every month, I chose an artist and piece of art, which could be integrated with the ELA unit that I will be teaching. Students developed as artists and

learned to appreciate art while developing art vocabulary, which then allowed them to discuss the art piece and the artist. By introducing this to students, many student's second language learners or not, many have no background knowledge on the subject matter. By building a bridge for all learners to be on a leveled playing field, all students were allowed to be less intimidated about the subject. Students learned together and engaged in rigorous discussions while still meeting state content standards as well as the ELD Standards. I also incorporated music in my curriculum through a program called, "Singlish". Singlish is a way to make building language through music fun for all ages through use of contemporary classics and folk songs. "Human Beings learn to listen and to speak before they learn to read and write. There is a natural order of language learning - listening, speaking, reading, writing." (Singlish Enterprises, 2005), Make Music, VAPA Standards, alongside the ELA and ELD Standards.

Context and Audience

The context of the project is teacher research which incorporated staff and student questionnaires. I researched how the arts help develop Literacy for all learners, particularly those who are second language learners. I hope that this work has broadened the understanding of the VAPA standards to staff through collaboration.

My audience was the students at Esparto Elementary School, a rural K-5 school with approximately 250 students. My classroom consisted of 20 third grade students of mixed abilities and socio economic backgrounds. According to the API

Base School Report of 2005, 57% of the students were Latino, and 47% were White. Sixty two percent of students receive free or reduced lunch and 28% were English Language Learners. Thirteen percent of parents responding reported that they have graduated from college or attended graduate school, while 32% did not graduate from high school. EES is the only elementary school in the Esparto School District, which also includes Esparto Middle School (6-8), Esparto High School (9-12) and Madison High School.

Products and/or Outcomes

Through this study, I hoped to create rich rigorous lessons to provide students with authentic experiences that they engaged in and benefit from in the area of literacy. I created lessons, which were culturally relevant and enlightened my students while creating literate students who gained an authentic education. In my classroom, I cultivated a desire for learning while remaining culturally sensitive and conscious.

Timeline

Data was collected in the first six to eight weeks of school from all students, while only second language learners, preferably second language learning students; were identified as case studies. All students were given a pre and posttest to determine their understanding of arts. All students were assessed to determine their level of proficiency in the English Language. I developed a test along the guidelines of an ELD Assessment I used in Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD) to monitor progress through use of ELD Portfolios aligned to the ELA and ELD Standards.

Human Subjects Review

I used all of my students in this research. I focused on several students as case studies who meet the criteria of being second language learners and possibly children of migrant farm working parents. I conducted student surveys and interviews at the beginning of the year to gain insight on their level of understanding of art and their attitude towards literacy. I reviewed California English Language Development Test Scores (CELDT) and California Standards Test (CST) Scores.

Survey to be completed by Students

1. In your own words, what is art?
2. Do you like when you are able to do art in the classroom?
3. How do art activities make you feel?
4. On a scale of 1-5 (1 being least likely and 5 being most often) how often do you wish your teacher last year would have done art?
5. If you had to present something with a partner to the rest of the class, would you prefer?
 - a. to make a poster
 - b. have your partner share
 - c. sing a song
6. Do you like music?
7. Do you know any songs? (In English or another language)
8. Do your parents read with you? (in English or other language)
9. What language is spoken in your home?
10. What is something you want to learn this year?

Staff Survey

1. How many minutes a day are dedicated to English Language Instruction?
2. On a scale on 1-5, how often do you implement the state adopted ELD Program with fidelity.

1 (never) 2 3 4 5 (w/ fidelity)
3. How do you accommodate for your English Language Learners?
4. Is art taught in your class? (If so, how often)
5. Do you have a copy of the VAPA Standards?

Chapter 2

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

What do we know about Language Learning?

In our society, language is the essential, primary means of communication and interaction among human beings. Language serves as the direct link between cognitive process and speech development. Lev Vygotsky (1962) asserted that thought development is determined by language. The author believes that all language begins cognitively and involves a series of repetition which lead to the understanding of sounds and symbols. It develops in a sequential order, to try to come up with a simplified definition of language, we could say language is a fusion of theory and linguistic approach. Language is a systematic means of communicating ideas or feelings by the use of conventionalized signs, sounds, gestures or marks having understood meanings (*Webster's Third New International Dictionary*, 1961, p. 1270).

Mary R. Harmon and Marilyn J. Wilson assert that we often speak of language as a system and its various components as subsystems consisting of phonology, morphology, syntax semantics and pragmatics. Krashen (Schütz, 2007) and Vygotsky (1962) both assert that when analyzing language as the base of all systematic and universal applications, we must also look at the disciplines of linguistics. First, let us focus on phonetics and what that is. Phonetics or phonics is the sound associated with a symbol. For example, knowing that the unit f makes the /f/ heard in *fear*, but that same sound can also be produced by the digraph; /ph/. In many cultures, the basis of

all language and speech is compiled by organizing symbols to form morphemes, words, which then formulate structured phrases. This is how the use of language is developed at its earliest stages. In this sense, Krashen argues that learning does not require memorization of rules or grammar, language is simply what is heard over and over and then repeated. This is how language learning begins and then the understanding of rules, syntax and meaning can then take place.

Studies have shown that language is learned through experiences and social interaction with others. The author would have to agree that language begins its development in children before they ever set foot in a classroom. As children, we repeat what we hear in our natural environment, from those who are involved in raising us, parents, grandparents and siblings. Our interactions with those who are closest to us create the most influential determinant of how and what language we develop. There is a 'natural order' in which learning occurs. Stephen Krashen (Schütz, 2007), renowned expert in the field of linguistics, language development and acquisition, argues that language acquisition happens in a predictable manner. Language is first learned by mimicking what is heard, with no real understanding of what is being said. Language at this early stage of development happens through repetition of sounds and words without understanding of rules or grammatical implication.

How children acquire language is an area which theorists have studied. What kind of environment and instruction does one need to successfully become fluent in a

second language? Krashen states a person that first learns his/her native language (L1) in a natural way, through exposure to language from those most influential people in his/her environment, and thus language is learned unconsciously (Schütz, 2007). This is what is called “acquired learning”. The other type of language acquisition is called a “learned system”. This is a process in which language is learned along with proper syntax, rules and regulations. Krashen believes that second language learners are able to acquire a second language successfully when their affective filters are lowered, there are less variables which cause anxiety, and there is significant comprehensible input by a knowledgeable agent (i.e. teacher or parent) which bridges the gap from prior knowledge to new information. According to Krashen (1987):

The Affective Filter Hypothesis captures the relationship between affective variables and the process of second language acquisition by positing that acquirers vary with respect to the strength or level of their Affective Filters. Those whose attitudes are not optimal for second language acquisition will not only tend to seek less input, but they will also have a high or strong Affective Filter - even if they understand the message, the input will not reach that part of the brain responsible for language acquisition, or the language acquisition device. (p. 31, as cited in Mason, n.d.)

When a child has high self-image, plus comprehensible input, and is motivated to learn, acquiring language is often successful. In addition, if acquiring language can be

successful, how can we as educators foster a safe environment for language acquisition to take place?

Cultivating Authentic Learning Experiences

In his book of personal essays, *The Kind of Schools We Need*, Elliot W. Eisner (1998) argues that

the need to develop a conception of both the arts and education that addresses the intimate relationship between them and the need to alter, politically if necessary, the constraints upon school programs imposed from above by testing programs and admission practices are tasks that have yet to be completed. (p. 56)

Eisner argues that schools today need to set higher standards in an education which is preparing critical thinkers to be cognitively aware and to contribute to society, and to have a greater understanding of “the contributions the arts make-when well taught- to the educational development of the young” (Eisner, 1998, p. 56).

Research shows that students who are exposed to the arts are exposed to rigorous, yet stimulating curricula that can not only assist the learning process but also vastly inform students about a broad variety of topics. Eisner also argues that:

All children come into the world with a variety of capacities that through the course of their childhood, they have opportunities to develop. The home, for example, affords opportunities for children to listen to stories and, at times, to

learn to read. Social settings give them opportunities to learn how to relate to others. (Eisner, 1988, p. 57)

When the arts become an integral part of teaching, especially in the content areas such as History, Social Sciences and Language Arts, students are then exposed to a different way of learning critical information and become more adept at retaining the material. The aim of education is to focus on the academic success of students. When the curriculum is eclectic, students will have more ways to relate to the curriculum and be successful. Through creative ways of making learning comprehensible to all learners, native English speakers or second language learners, the learning playing field is leveled so that students can engage in meaningful discussions and share in the authentic experiences of learning. Goldberg (2004) states that while “good pedagogical practice keeps open all venues for students, it is especially important to do so with second language learners who have the additional burden of expressing themselves in a new language” (Goldberg p. 9). Often times, students tend to get frustrated for a lack of vocabulary when having to express themselves orally, but if asked to express themselves through art, students have many experiences to share. In an arts integrated curriculum, students are not only learning to memorize facts and use rote memory, they are being cultivated into creative and critical thinkers, and are becoming problem solvers who will be able to benefit from an optimal, unique experience.

By adding cultural contexts afforded by related artistic disciplines (aesthetics, art criticism, and art history) to the study of art, art education can help personalize and reinforce the entire educational process, thereby making it significantly more relevant to learners (Dunn, 2011). When students have something that is exciting to them and intrigues their ability to inquire more about a theme, painting, song or story, then learning now takes on new meaning. By integrating culturally relevant paintings, for example, *La Familia* by Carmen Lomas Garza, when teaching literature used to celebrate traditions, students not only acquire new vocabulary in language arts, but are also learning about visual arts. “Visual arts are a wonderful place to do ELD (English Language Development). By choosing artwork that is representational, that actually contains a story, students are easily motivated” (Goldberg, 2004, p. 37). In studying arts, students can then share how art is personally relevant to them, make connections to their own lives and experiences, and incorporate it in oral discussions or in writing.

Can Art in Schools Help Language Learning and Critical Thinking?

In Meryll Goldberg’s book, *Teaching English Language Learners Through the Arts* (2004), she states that in addition to introducing students to the arts themselves, the arts have the power to serve as a teaching strategy for various content across the curriculum (p. 97). For example, art can be used to teach vocabulary in the area of science when teaching the water cycle, a child can illustrate the different stages or in social studies, a child can reenact a scene of our American History in a dramatic scene

or through song. Students are still being exposed to academic vocabulary and are incorporating it through the different content areas while having the goal is literacy.

Eisner argues that we all encode and decode through multiple illiteracies; paradigmatic (science), narrative (prose and poetry) and visual and performing arts. With these in mind, all have subjective qualities that require experiences which students need to encounter (Eisner, 1998, p. 1). Eisner along with Goldberg (2004) would then agree with Dewey's (1934) idea that aesthetic experience using multiple literacies equals valuing and evaluating. In such experiences, literacy is broader than language. Symbols and language are not solely the medium used to drive instruction. They are augmented by experiences that teachers provide for students. When the instruction is authentic, that is, full of experience, students gain more rich content, make better connections, and subject matter becomes more relevant. In addition, social interaction is a key element in language and social construction. Experiential learning naturally creates opportunities for social interaction, hence language use.

Chapter 3

METHODOLOGIES IN PRACTICE

Slowing Down the Process: Taking Time to Look Closer

As a teacher researcher, I wanted to see how effectively I could teach language development and writing through the arts while activating higher levels of thinking. I wanted to study if integrating visual arts would be an effective way for English Language Learners to be engaged in learning and could create the catalyst necessary for my students to become efficient writers. In 2007, 60% of my students are second language learners while the other 40% are Native English speakers. Of the 60% of my students who are second language learners, 30% scored below basic and far below basic, on the State's Standards Test, and only 40 % were proficient or advanced. I knew that a majority of my students were reading below grade level and teaching reading and writing in a rigorous, standards based manner would be a challenge. I wanted to cultivate critical thinkers and problem solvers, but I felt that my class still needed plenty of scaffolding and background knowledge in order for my students to be successful at the tasks I wanted to present in this study.

Throughout this study, I wanted to take a creative approach to stimulate learning while evening out the playing field for my English Language Learners. I wanted simultaneously to challenge and develop vocabulary for my Native Speakers. My goal was to integrate art instruction, appreciation and criticism as much as possible, while simultaneously enabling students to create art. Having had training in

Anchor Works, through California Consultancy in Art Education (CCAЕ) at the Crocker Art Museum, I believed I would be placing into action all that I had learned. I would be attempting to cultivate critical thinkers with innovative ways to develop vocabulary and Language Acquisition, meanwhile exposing my students to a wide variety of artists and art work, and presenting them with a greater global appreciation for art.

I teach in a community whose student population is comprised of 47% White and 57% Latino students; 64% of our population qualifies for free or reduced lunch, which indicates the socioeconomic status. I wanted to begin the year by bringing in a piece of artwork that would not only trigger conversations, but be culturally relevant to the majority of my students. For my research, I would give a pre and post assessment, using results, which is my district adopted tool of monitoring. Teaching in the Capay Valley, where the majority of the community members means of living is farming a wide variety of seasonal crops, and a small percentage being migrant farmworkers, I thought it would be perfect to begin with an introduction to Simon Silva's art piece, "*Orgullo*". Simon Silva, a Mexican American painter who was raised in the California's, Central Valley also by migrant farmworking parents, was our first Artist of the Month.

Case Study #1 - Art and the Individual Artist

I wanted to teach my students about the beauty in the Mexican American culture and of hard work. These paralleled many of my students' own lives. The first

lesson was to introduce my students to Anchor Works' from the CCAE approach. I began by explaining that "First Impressions" is a way of slowing down the observation process and taking the time to slow the looking down. I began with a culturally relevant piece of work, to engage children's prior knowledge and create meaningful conversations among the children. Students were sitting in cooperative groups and had an opportunity to view the artwork, which was placed in front of the class. All students also had a blank form labeled "First Impressions". Students were to discuss in their groups what they saw in the painting, and if they noticed any patterns. Students had already had prior knowledge on the use of warm and cool colors and had a previous lesson on the color wheel as scaffolding to this lesson. Students also had to decipher what the artist's purpose may have been, as well as try to internalize how this painting made them feel. Students were engaged and excited to share. Many of them were using the "academic" language acquired in previous lessons. For example, several mentioned use of line and shapes. Authentic experiences were being created. For example, many students discussed how this painting reminded them of their mom or dad, working in the Capay Valley. There was a sense of validity and significance.

After students were given a few minutes to discuss and share, they were then given a lesson on the artist and the significance of the piece "Orgullo". Students were informed about Simon Silva's childhood, how he was one of 12 siblings born to migrant farmworking parents. Teaching about Silva became an instrumental factor in teaching the importance of Hispanic Heritage month, which allowed students to be

exposed to a wide variety of influential Latino Leaders of the past and present, and their contributions to American culture and History. Students got the sense that Simon Silva was not just a painter who was no longer alive, and we were studying due to American History, but he was an actual artist, creating art in today's day and age. Students were able to be enthused about how someone could create art about their own life and childhood, especially a childhood like their own.

Next, students were asked to re-create the piece "Orgullo" by drawing from the knowledge they had gained after the lesson on the artist and the piece itself. Students were so enthused and excited to jump in and interpret the piece, the discussions taking place at each table were powerful. Many students were sharing and speaking in Spanish. I decided to put on some background music so that students could really enjoy the experience and be inspired. As a culmination to the "Artist of the Month" lesson, I wanted to surprise my students by inviting the artist to come to our school. I was able to have Simon Silva (the artist) make a visit to our school and speak to our student body. Students not only learned to appreciate and critique art, but had a unique experience by meeting the artist and being able to shake his hand and ask him questions. Simon Silva had agreed to speak to our student body, and visited our class to see the students' creations and interpretations of his piece "Orgullo". He was also able to speak to the families at the Migrant Camp, with a dinner reception on his last night in our community. This compelling experience began the process of cultivating

creative thinkers while integrating the arts to reach a final goal of language acquisition and development for all learners.



Figure 1. Simon Silva Speaking to Class.

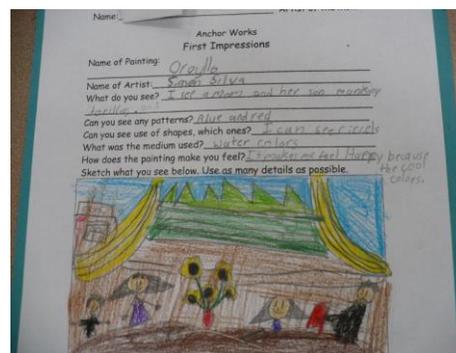
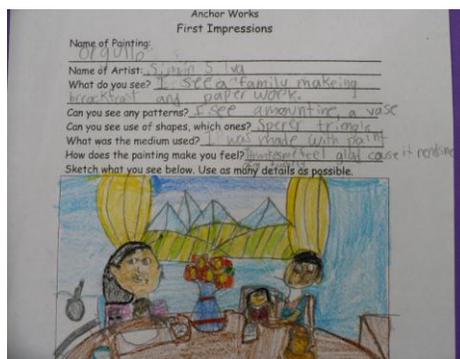


Figure 2. Students' Interpretations of Silva's Piece "Orgullo".

Case Study #2 - Community Art and Public Artwork

The next art lesson's objective was to integrate murals into the English Language Arts unit of "Celebrating Traditions". The history of murals and indigenous writing found in caves in the Southwest connected with the elements taught in the Houghton Mifflin curriculum which was the adopted language arts series for our district. I wanted to introduce the idea that in various cultures around the world, the use of symbols can be seen as universal. We studied the Adinkra Cloths of Ghana, made by the Ashanti people, and learned how each symbol was intricately placed to help tell a story, and how the use of color was also a significant factor in story telling in the West African culture. Students found similarities in the use of symbols in West African culture to those of the indigenous people of the South West.

After students were taught about symbols and symbolism, the next step was to try to understand the meaning behind murals and their symbolism. Students learned about murals and how many have been around for over 30,000 years dating back to the days of Mesopotamia, to the Maya and the Egyptians. I wanted students to have a firm understanding that art is anything you create and share with others. I then introduced students to muralists Diego Rivera and Jose Clemente Orozco, and they were excited to see their work. I was able to share with my students that the previous summer, I had the opportunity to teach in Mexico and also to study some renowned murals. I was also quite fortunate to experience many of them first hand, while in Guadalajara, Mexico, and shared with them through a slide show. The objective of this

lesson was to have students understand the concept that not all art hangs in a gallery or museum, Art is also created to be enjoyed by the public and can be created by many.

For this lesson, students created their own mural while using only symbols that were introduced for this activity. Students were introduced to the medium of oil pastels, and were to choose one color at a time. In order for this activity to be a success, there were direct instructions given, many which were multiple step (significant for second language learners). I gave explicit instructions as to how the mural would be created as a community. A large piece of butcher paper was then attached to 10 connecting tables in my classroom, and all 20 students gathered around the tables, at their own individual space. Once children were gathered around the tables, and the oil pastels were placed in the center of the tables, each child had to reference the symbols that were introduced during the beginning of the lesson, which were also posted on the board.

Students were to choose one symbol and one color, and for the specific time allotted, they were to duplicate that symbol in that specific color in only their space. Meanwhile, I was very specific in explaining to students that music would be playing while they worked on the task, and absolutely no talking would be allowed for the duration of their creative process. When the music stopped, students were instructed to place their pastel down and stop until further instructions were given. At the point of the music being stopped, I then instructed students to take one step to the right, which moved every child over one space. They then had to choose another symbol to create

in someone else's space, with a different color. Students seemed to catch on quickly. They were eager to see what the final product would be. We continued this activity for approximately 15 minutes and the rotations continued. However the mural would not be completed in one day. It took the class approximately three days to complete the final product, which also incorporated words which students were able to choose that had personal relevancy to how the mural making process made them feel. Through this activity, students were learning to understand a sense of community.



Figure 3. Students Working on Mural.

The mural created the sense of community, ownership, appreciation, and working together necessary to make a final product. The mural hung in our classroom for over a week and we invited other classes to come in and see our artwork, since it

was created to be shared with the public. Students then wrote about the mural making process.



Figure 4. Students Continue Working on Mural.

Students were engaged in a community activity when creating our class mural. They were then paired up by mixed abilities. The objective of this second lesson was to take a piece of the mural that stood out to them and cut it out. Together with their partner, they were now going to write a story inspired by the mural piece they had chosen. In this activity, students had to be creative, work collaboratively and most importantly, write. As I circulated through the room, I was truly surprised by what I heard. Students' creativity and energy was high.



Figure 5. Students Observing their Mural.

The lesson provided an opportunity for the shy students, who rarely shared because of intimidation or lack of vocabulary, to be engaged while working with a partner. Students worked together and had to agree on a title as well as the story's plot. Students were also able to recreate a new piece of art with the mural piece they had chosen. Students were very engaged and I saw different levels of cognitive development taking place. The activity was rigorous. Once stories had been written, they were placed along with the new “artwork” and other stories on a new class mural. The new mural now took on new meaning. Not only was it a community project which everyone took ownership of, but it had metamorphised into a new piece of “community” art which integrated literacy and all the steps of the writing process.



Figure 6. Students Write about their Mural Making Experience.

As a reflection, students had to then write about the mural making experience and how the process made them feel. Students responses were instrumental to helping me design more art integrated lessons to trigger creativity and rigorous lessons across the curriculum.

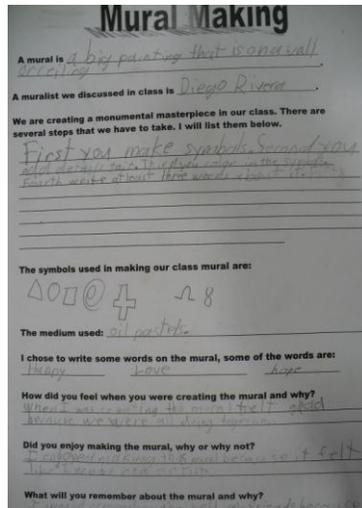
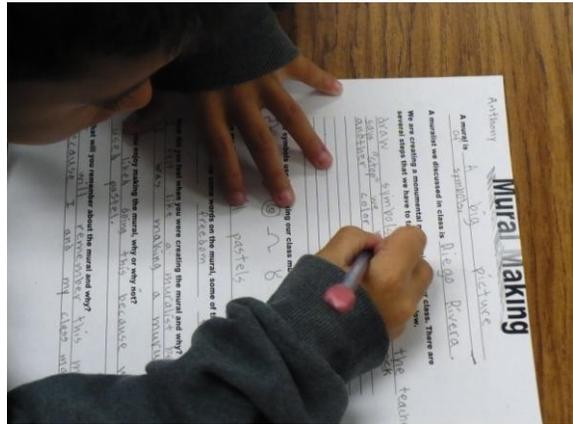
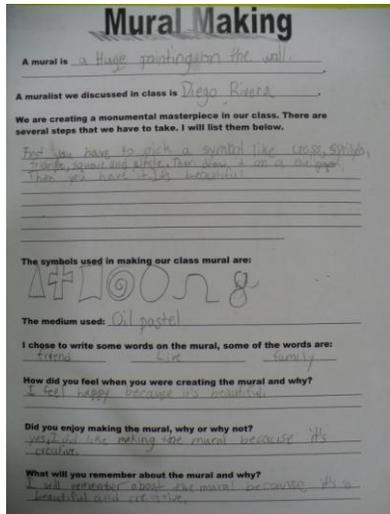


Figure 7. Students' Writing about Mural Making.

Case Study # 3 - Texture and Descriptive Writing

Texture is something which seemed a bit more complex to teach my students, in order for them have a meaningful understanding of what it is. Students kept art journals, where they kept key vocabulary, which became a useful tool. Students would

be introduced to specific elements of art and then be expected to use the new concept in a hands on, authentic experience. In the texture lesson, I wanted students to understand that sometimes an artist can make his artwork appear almost three dimensional and have the ability to have parts of his/her paintings appear more robust.

For this activity I wanted students to create an image which they would then paint with tempura paints. First students had to sketch out their image on a regular piece of construction paper. Next, they were all given small cups of rice. I asked students to glue rice onto their image in places where they wanted to give their painting texture, possibly in areas that they wanted to emphasise. Students had so much fun gluing rice, grain by grain, to their artwork. The next day, students were given the opportunity to paint their textured portraits with tempura paints. The areas which had rice were a bit more difficult to paint over but the final products were amazing. Students had so much to share about the art project and their final products. The final piece to this art activity was to then write a creative story about the piece that they had created through the use of texture. Students were not graded on their writing, since the objective was to have students understand what the concept of texture was.

Students artwork and stories are as follows: *The Lost Whale, The Arguing Trees of Hawaii, The Lost Bike, The Boat, The Sad Cactus and The Garden.*



Figure 8. The Lost Whale (intermediate ELD)

The lost whale was a baby. The baby was a boy whale and a baby boy was not a baby unemor he was a man the man whale was lone and one day he fawd food and the food was fake



Figure 9. The Arguing Trees of Hawaii.

Once there was an island and in tha island two palm trees. They were fighting about who is going to grow more leaves first. They argued all day and night it was night when leaves grew on the left one. When it was done the right tree was first he wanted the most leaves. The cloud told him he was to selfish. The tree was more and more

furious the right tree woke up and he said What did I miss? The other tree just ignored the other one. That tree had a deficit of leaves.



Figure 10. The Lost Bike.

That bike was a kid bike but that kid lost his bike and he left the bike in the grass of the park. Then a kid come to the park and that kid see the bike in the grass and he want to take it to his house but his dad and mom they don't want that bike so that kid left the bike in the grass. But one day the kid that lost his bike went to the park to see if his bike was there. The the kid was looking around the park but the kid look in the grass and he found his bike and at the end the kid was happy.



Figure 11. The Boat.

The boat that takes you on a vacation on the sea. A boat that is on the sea that people can travel and could sleep and eat and sometimes you could go fishing and what you catch you go to the kitchen and cook it and you could swim in the pool when you feel like with your friends on vacation.



Figure 12. The Sad Cactus.

Once there was a sad cactus his name is Junior. He was sad because he didn't get water. Days passed and still no water. Then one day one camel came and Junior asked,

“Do you have water?” Camel said, “Sorry I don’t have water.” Then days and days passed and still no water. Then one day a bunny passed hopping and Junior said, “Wait a moment do you have any water?” Bunny said, “Sorry I don’t have any water.” 5 years passed and still no water. Junior almost started to cry when he heard a noise it was rain and he was happy.



Figure 13. The Garden.

The garden is a wonderful place for people, animals, and plants. There were tulips and small bamboo, but one day a beautiful flower was growing it was purple and blue it grew right between the tulip and a small bamboo. The people of the town were amazed by it, they could not find its name in the flower books. It was a new species (species) of flower. Nobody had seen a flower like that. One day a little girl named Lela came to the park and saw the flower and named the flower butterfly flower because butterflies always came to it. The town's people agreed to the name.

Case Study #4 - Classification in Science with Art Integration

For this activity, students had a strong sense of understanding of lines, texture, color, and value in the area of Art. In the area of math, students were just completing a unit on geometrical figures, both solids and planes. As an extended lesson in both math and art, also crossed into the area of science.

Students had been learning about classifications and how certain items or people are classified into certain groups and subgroups. We had completed several oral discussions in the class and classified students by height, by gender and by hair color. Now students were to classify specific animals by drawing them onto a triangular prism. Each child had to illustrate a picture of an animal in their category and use lines to fill in the empty or negative space. One student chose to categorize animals which live in the sea, he drew a fish, a crab, shark and a jellyfish. Students then had to describe what animals they drew and tell me how they classified them.



Figure 14. Student Drawing and Describing Animals in the Sea.

Here, one of my students is listing what animals he drew on his triangular prism. He noted that he drew animals that live in the sea. 1. a shark 2. a crab 3. a fish and 4. a jelly fish.

Chapter 4

DISCOVERIES AND REFLECTIONS

Throughout the entire process of teacher research, my teaching pedagogy has become very refined. I believe that teaching with more explicit objectives not only benefitted my students' understanding, but allowed them to have more fun, while interacting with one another and being engaged in their learning. Initially, I knew my goal was to integrate art into the district adopted curriculum in the content area of English Language Arts, but I found myself integrating art into the other core content areas whenever possible.

At the beginning of the year, having looked at my student data and test scores, I knew this year would be a challenging one, with 12 English Language Learners and eight native English speakers. The CST and STAR scores in English Language Arts, for my grade level as a whole, showed that 6% had tested Advanced, 17% had tested Proficient, 38% Basic, 23% Below Basic and 17% Far Below Basic I was eager to begin my art integrated lessons. After informally assessing students, I found that 25% of my students felt art was something that you created to express yourself, while 50% of the class was not quite sure what art was. For the most part, students had never been instructed in art or had the opportunity to create art, but did associate it to coloring or painting, and the majority felt it would be something fun. This data was all I needed to inspire my teaching applications.

In the beginning of the year, I assessed my students in the areas of Silent Comprehension, Spelling, Oral Text Passage Reading for Accuracy and Rate as well as Phonemic Awareness using our District Adopted Results Test, also associated with California Reading and Literacy Project which is a way of supporting teachers' professional development (<http://csmp.ucop.edu/crlp/index.php>). The initial assessments were quite telling of my class, and it was this data that would help drive my instruction, and form heterogenous groups for English Language Development, as well as homogenous groups for Reading. This data would also help me pin point which students I would be focussing on for my case studies. Of my 20 students, 30% were at benchmark while the other 70% were below in Silent Comprehension, while 45% met benchmark in the area of Spelling. In the area of Oral Text used to measure Accuracy, 60% of my students were reading, but it was evident they were not understanding what they were reading due to lack of vocabulary and or reading comprehension skills. Lastly, only three of my students knew all the phonemes and graphemes to meet benchmarks for this time of the year. I would use this assessment at the end of my research to compare data.

Initially, it was very difficult to get my students to share their thoughts and think aloud when asked about topics or trying to access prior knowledge. It was almost painful to see that students of this age would be afraid to share or speak out loud. This inspired me to bring in "Singlish", an ESL program which teaches language through singing and movement. I believed that through singing, my students wouldn't really

feel as if I was “teaching” them Language Arts driven lessons. On the contrary, we started the year with the *Star Spangle Banner* and I pulled vocabulary words from the song for meaning and taught a synonym lesson in the first two weeks of school. Through music, my students seemed to open up and became engaged in learning, while my second language learners didn’t feel intimidated. As soon as my students were hooked, I knew the year had many possibilities.

I can say that as my students learned to open up and work collaboratively, I too was learning about my teaching style and how to be more flexible in meeting objectives. I had to really take a step back and remind myself that this study was about the journey and getting my students to think. I wanted to create authentic experiences for my students to show them that learning can be fun and stimulating, while leaving a life long lasting impression. I believe I did that with my first case study, in bringing a real artist to school, after focussing on and studying his work. Simon Silva left such an impression on my students that they rose to the occasion whenever art was included in following lessons. My students were eager to share, not just with each other, but with friends out on in yard and in reading groups and with other students about what was happening in our room. Teachers would sometimes comment about the “fun things” they had been hearing that were taking place in Room 37. I took this as a compliment about the many things that had been going right.

In our second case study, I felt it was a success because students were grouped by mixed abilities and managed to superceed any expectations I had of them. They

took on the roles of artists, authors and teachers. Students worked towards a common goal and many worked to reach a level of high standards that was not placed on them by me, but one they placed on each other. My students began to strive for excellence and demanded it from one another. This truly was inspiring to see, as my students were not only enjoying the learning process, but were being cultivated into accountable learners who had put more time into thinking about their final product. It was at this point, that I saw much growth from many of my students.

The more opportunities I provided for my students to engage orally and interact with one another, the more opportunities they had to use the academic vocabulary that was being taught. I started an activity this year, which I called “Word of the Day” (W.O.D) where I would write a sentence up on the board, while underlining an unfamiliar word. I would ask my students read it every morning and use context clues to decipher the meaning of the unfamiliar word. They were to share with their partners and make predictions about what they believed the word meant, but had to support their conjectures. This activity stimulated the discussions I wanted to have take place, but were more directed by the students themselves. Not only did my students engage, but they were eager to learn new words. The mini lessons lasted all of about 10 minutes, but they were powerful because students learned to use a Dictionary, a Thesaurus and Vocabulary Strategies. I eventually rewrote the sentences on construction paper, and hung them on yarn, almost as if making a necklace. Students who could use the new unfamiliar words in a sentence earned the chance to

wear the “new word” of the day. This created the appetite for knowledge. When students would decipher meanings, we’d also web words we already knew associated with the unfamiliar word, and students felt proud in teaching others on campus the new words we were learning. I saw that in my classroom, we were creating the desire for learning, through integrated lessons which triggered higher levels of thinking.

My students’ growth was coming along steadily but some of my students seemed to trail in their writing applications. I decided that with our third case study I would make sure students had the opportunity to write. In teaching my students about texture, I wanted students to reflect on their own artistic creations. Once they had created a piece, with the objective being, “understanding texture”, I had students write creative stories. I thought some of my students would not be thrilled to write short stories. However, I was quite amazed at what they produced and saw the language development soar as did their attempts at writing. Their stories were not graded, but I did begin to see my students growing in the area of vocabulary, artistic creativity and writing applications.

At the end of my research, I assessed my students again using Results and was a little hesitant to see their scores for fear that all the art integrated lessons would not have been of any help. When looking at my class as a whole, in the area of Silent Comprehension, I had 50% of my students score above or at benchmark, which showed a 20% improvement. In the area of spelling, I had 70% of my students test at benchmark or higher which also showed a growth by 45% of my class. In the area of

Phonemic Awareness, 55% of my students tested above or at benchmark which was a tremendous growth from the original 15%, which shows a growth of 40% improvement. The true measurement and reflection of all of our hardwork, truly showed in their final assessments. Not only had my students scores improved, but their attitudes about learning and inquiry had changed. My students went from quiet and shy pupils to articulate and inquisitive pupils. My students had opened their minds and learned to question, and seek information for themselves. My students now walk around with their “eyes wide open” and take in the world around them. I am proud of their accomplishments and successes and I feel that this experience has changed them for the best. My students are eager to share what they know now with others and have a passion for learning.

I am very proud of my students’ gains in the area of English Language Arts, as well as English Language Development. However, I was quite overwhelmed with the fact that my students had created a caring environment, one in which we fostered a desire and love for learning through art integration and music . The students in my class had a strong understanding that we are all created equally, and we may not all come to school equally prepared. I used the analogy of a race, one where all the runners in a race begin at the same starting block, making the race fair. However, in education, this is not always the case, some of us go to Preschool and Kindergarten, which better prepares us for the race of knowledge, and we come to school ready to add on to our education, while some of us never attended Preschool or Kindergarten or

we immigrate to this country from somewhere else, which puts us a bit behind, and we do not necessarily begin the race at the same place as everyone else. It was through this analogy that my students learned to appreciate one another's difficulties in learning language or any given skill this year. We all had to learn to be patient with one another's learning needs and deficits. I feel that I did accomplish setting the tone for this type of a classroom, one in which students never feared asking a question. I wanted students to realize that I was not the only "teacher" in the class, that they themselves, would become the most influential teachers to their peers. I now look at my students, and I am proud of what I see. I see students who have always wanted to learn and laugh and have fun in the process.

I believe I merely helped create the rigorous challenge my students needed, while supporting the learning process through my bilingual abilities. I always made sure to reference points in my own life, to show them our similarities, and how my parents too were migrant farm workers, who wanted more for me and my siblings. I felt it was equally as important for me to share with my students the fact that hard work does pay off, and an education is a very valuable key to possess. My students grew to respect our similarities and also began to want to go home and share with their parents what was really going on in Room 37. This just proves what I've always believed, that the power lies in the discussion, and through my students planting the seeds in the home. I was sure to have the catalyst necessary for parents to continue to foster the love of learning continued outside the classroom. My students now see the

world through critical lenses and can articulate their own opinions about Art works and musical composers such as Tchaikovsky, Beethoven and Grieg, which to me is a true measure of success.

I came into this study with an open mind and knew that I had to be flexible. I knew that if given the opportunity, I would definitely be able to take a creative approach to teaching my students amazing things. In turn, I believe I gained the most out of this experience. My students taught me to think like a child again and to look at things from different angles. It was truly refreshing to think that after eleven years of teaching, I would be the one to provide all the lessons. I look back now and see that I needed to slow the process down. I know that with state mandated testing and benchmarks that need to be met, there are a lot of pressures on teachers to perform and raise test scores. I managed to focus on the process, and cultivate creative thinkers, and with integrating the arts, I don't feel that my students lost. I strongly believe that through adding the arts to my lessons and introducing my students to a wide variety of content, that they have become well rounded students. I have always felt that it was to our students benefit to expose them to culture, art and challenging lessons. When teaching my students, I always remember what my first administrator told me, "go in there and teach as if your child was sitting in one of the desks". That has always resonated with me, and being a mother now, I know exactly what that means. Teach with the passion and the music you hear in your heart, and share with others the beautiful symphony.

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