

Arts Infusion: Multi-Lesson Projects

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Reading & Drama:

Small groups of Mr. Kim's third grade students are sitting around tables, engrossed in discussions about the book they just finished reading. While normally it is difficult to keep all of the students engaged in literature discussions, this time it is different. This time, students have been asked to plan and perform a three-minute play based on the story they read. The assignment generates enthusiasm among the students not only for the final play, but for all of the activities leading up to the play. In the first activity, each group writes a list of words that describe the main characters and a summary of the story. Next, each group divides its story up into a beginning, middle and end – Acts I, II and III. And finally, the arts specialist coaches each group of students in the dramatic presentation of their play. This project helps Mr. Kim engage students in the learning process and provides him a way to assess students' understanding of a book.

Science, Reading & Sculpture

In first grade, Ms. Jenkins' students are busy creating animal mobiles with clay and paint. They are currently studying an Open Court Reading unit on mothers and baby animals. Today each student is shaping and painting two clay sculptures, one of a mother animal of their choice and another smaller sculpture of the baby animal. Intent on making their animals realistic, they study pictures from the Open Court Reading text, books and websites as models. Each student then presents his or her mother and baby animals to the class and discusses the features and coloring he or she chose. Ms. Jenkins shows the class how to critique the works by modeling and encourages her students to do the same. On a subsequent day, as part of a FOSS science unit on balance and motion, Ms. Jenkins shows the students how to tie each of their two sculptures to either end of a wooden chopstick with string. Then she leads a class discussion on balance as she shows them how to hang and balance their mobiles from one of the pieces of strings she has previously hung from the ceiling. This project helps Ms. Jenkins engage students in the learning process and provides her a way to assess students' understanding of a concept.

We prepare our students for college through a rigorous arts-infused program.