

Arts Infusion: Single Lesson Activities

Single-Lesson Activities

Math & Painting:

Ms. Oakley's Kindergarteners, dressed in their "painters' smocks," stand in front of large sheets of butcher paper posted throughout the room and use their fingers to paint compositions of colored numbers. They have just completed a Saxon math lesson on the numbers 1 through 10. Ms. Oakley has teamed up with the arts specialist to use art to reinforce both the concept of the numbers and the skill of writing them. After modeling the lesson, they instruct students to paint one "1", two "2's", three "3's", etc. on the butcher paper, allowing students to choose the color, size and placement of each number. As the students work on their own number compositions, both the teacher and arts specialist circulate among the students to offer feedback and assistance. Once all of the compositions have been finished, the teacher, arts specialist and students discuss the correctness of the numerals and the aesthetics of each composition. This lesson is an example of how arts infusion can be used to better engage students.

Reading & Music:

Kindergarteners in Mr. Marshall's class are learning that words are made up of syllables. After the Open Court Reading lesson on syllables, Mr. Marshall passes out the tambourines and maracas that the music teacher has been using to teach the students rhythm in music class. Then, as Mr. Marshall calls out single and multiple syllable words, students repeat the syllables in those words using their instruments. We hear "pan-cakes" and then, in concert, two maracas shakes and two tambourine beats. "Beautiful" – three maraca shakes and three tambourine beats. Mr. Marshall talks about how syllables create the rhythm of language and he demonstrates this by singing common children's songs and having his students repeat the syllables with their instruments. Students are fully engaged in the instrumentation and singing while learning English in the process. The lesson also provides Mr. Marshall an alternative way to assess student understanding.

Social Studies & Pottery

The third graders in Mr. Garcia's are going to learn about the Indian holiday Diwali. To activate student interest in this important holiday, Mr. Garcia and the arts specialist have planned a lesson in which students will make *diyas*, the small lamps traditionally used to celebrate Diwali. While Mr. Garcia leads a class discussion about the meaning of Diwali, the arts specialist passes out paint, paintbrushes and simple clay lanterns that he has prepared in advance. Students are then instructed to decorate their lanterns with images that express any of the themes of Diwali – triumph of good over evil, gratitude, love, etc. Once all of the lamps have been decorated, each student presents his or her lamp to the class, explaining his or her artistic choices, and the rest of the class offers feedback. Finally, the class celebrates Diwali by lighting small candles in each of the lamps.

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