

Art Integration Paper

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Abstract

The fourth grade English Language Arts Curriculum focuses on literary elements. The students learn about character traits, setting, and plot. These elements are used to create stories and build comprehension skills. For this assignment, The Lorax, by Dr. Seuss will be used throughout the lesson. The students will reread parts of The Lorax and work together to write a script. The Lorax contains many literary elements while showing children the importance of protecting the environment from those who abuse and profit from its resources. These lessons will be part of an integrated unit that will bridge literacy, science and the arts. The goal is to create a cohesive unit that will enable students to find meaning and make connections between content areas.

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Art Form

The art forms I will incorporate in this unit are script writing and readers' theater. Children will experience the challenges of writing a script. They will use their knowledge of literary elements to sequence the plot from The Lorax by Dr. Seuss. Groups will be instructed to read The Lorax.

After reading The Lorax, each group will use graphic organizers to interpret and write dialogue for the pages assigned. The students will practice and develop their writing skills. Once each group has completed their script, they will begin to rehearse their parts. Listening to their writing is critical to ensure the dialogue is understandable and clear to the audience. It affords the team an opportunity to edit their sentences and improve their dialogue. Performing the script will help the children tell a story, speak clearly, and give voice to the imaginary characters of Dr. Seuss. These activities will strengthen the understanding of plot and enable children to identify the story's theme.

Lesson Enhancement

A multisensory approach appeals to an array of different learning styles. Students have an opportunity to interpret a story and work with their peers to find meaning. When combining script writing with readers' theater students become engaged and collaborate. The class is excited to perform and proud of their presentations.

The art form of script writing is an excellent tool to help students find meaning within a passage, story, or article. It encourages creativity and exploration while building comprehension skills. As students write more, they increase their vocabulary and become better storytellers. Most importantly, writing provides a way for children to express their thoughts and communicate

with others. Students are much more enthusiastic and excited to write a script than an essay. When they enjoy writing it becomes a valuable tool for expression.

Readers' theater is also a wonderful activity for students. The class is enthusiastic about reading when they know they are going to perform for an audience. They perform in groups and practice using their voice to depict characters from texts, bringing the characters alive. Reader's theater motivates reluctant readers and English Language Learners to practice reading out loud. It also gives the confident students a chance to model reading aloud for their classmates. When the students know that readers' theater is involved, there is excitement in the room. Every child listens carefully to the instructions and prepares to have fun portraying their characters.

Integrating Art

Since beginning the course "The Arts in STEM: Advancing Meaningful Integration," I have incorporated the arts throughout my lessons. Instead of writing about a science concept for the New York State Science Test, the students made "Peek a Boo" posters. Each child chose a topic to research and built themselves into the presentation. Every student found a creative way to share what they learned. It was apparent the class enjoyed teaching one another and using a different format to share information.

Seeing their excitement about the posters, we began a Song Writing Challenge. The class was studying the American Revolution. Teams wrote song parody to convince their peers to be either patriots or loyalist. The lyrics they wrote and how they performed were terrific. Seeing the positive results of incorporating the arts, convinced me to decrease direct teaching and support the students as independent learners.

Visual Presentation

The rationale for using scriptwriting and readers' theater is to give students a reason to write and read closely. Students have a difficult time socializing and communicating with one another. They are too involved with playing games on their technology do not have much face to face interaction. Young people need an opportunity to work together and express themselves. Therefore, script writing and readers' theater are two art forms that accomplish this task. These activities can be used to interpret historical texts, mathematical concepts, and science standards.

For example, my class read the poem *Paul Revere's Ride*, by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow. In teams of two, they instructed to write a script for the event. When the dialogue was complete, the students edited their work and practiced performing. This activity enabled the students to interpret and write dialogues for a significant historical event.

When teaching predator-prey relationships, the students read passages and short non-fiction books on animal adaptations. In groups, they were assigned a script writing activity to add dialogue that interpreted the animal's thoughts and qualities. As students write about what they read, they must reread and reflect for understanding. Therefore, adding an art element to all curriculum areas builds skills and increases interest.

Interdisciplinary Context

As a result of the new standards and frameworks introduced to educators, there is a driving need to find curriculum connections. Scriptwriting developed from personal experiences, literature, history, and science. Educators can identify content to support classroom script writing and dramatizations. Adding script writing and reader's theater can enhance all subjects and provide new exciting learning opportunities for students. With effort, the classroom can become a vibrant learning experience for both students and teachers.

References

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