A Moving Experience: The Classroom Activities and Art Camp

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A MOVING EXPERIENCE:

THE CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES AND ART CAMP

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A Moving Experience: The Classroom Activities and Art Camp

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My final creative project began as an effort to incorporate bodily movement into the curriculum of my two-dimensional fine art classes in order to give students more opportunities for success in learning. My idea was to design, plan and execute many activities in order to provide students with a more kinesthetic learning environment. In the beginning, I focused on teaching some of the fundamentals of art using activities that would give the students opportunities to move their bodies. I found myself constantly on the lookout for new ways to incorporate movement in art, which led me to organize a summer art camp for students in our district.

Art camp was the ultimate kinesthetic experience in the fine arts. The act of moving students away from the school and experiencing the outdoors where they could feel the wind on their face and walk to the different sessions was important for the kinesthetic approach. Throughout the planning and the execution of the camp, I paid attention to the kinesthetic needs of the campers including: teambuilding for socialization and a sense of community, lots of opportunities to be up and moving, field trips, having good meals and snacks, and wonderful fine art workshops with hands on learning.

I started this project idealistically thinking that doing it would change the lives of my students. What I didn’t realize was how much it would change mine. I learned that I could be a leader as I strategized, organized, and collaborated. I discovered that I am happy with who I am and how I live my life. I realized that I am not just creative, I am a creator. Not only can I make art, I can make things happen, magical things.
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I am so grateful to all of the teachers, staff and wonderful friends I had the privilege of hanging around for two summers in Montana at the Creative Pulse. They helped me to open my eyes and come to life as an artist and a teacher.

I would like to acknowledge my friend and colleague, Lona Karras, for helping me to see that Art Camp would be the perfect extension of my project and helping me every step of the way to make it happen. I am forever indebted to all of the other teachers in my district who did so much work for Art Camp, especially Mel Ralph, Janimarie Lester and Jeremiah Jackson.

And lastly, I can’t forget to thank my wonderful students who sometimes looked at me like I was crazy, but always tried the activities and supported me with this project in every possible way.
INTRODUCTION

Background

Most people think of fine art as a “hands on class” which lends itself easily to the kinesthetic learner. However, because I teach only two dimensional arts, I found my students were in a very autonomous learning environment with a lot of seat work. I realized that this was cumbersome to students who desired to move around and these students soon became problematic and disruptive to the other students in the classroom.

I began my teaching career at Fremont High School seven years ago. During my first year teaching, I was dubbed the Jewelry teacher and got to teach students how to make fabricated jewelry using sheets of sterling silver, acetylene torches and jewelry saws which are very hands on. I had 6 classes on the block schedule. It is definitely one of the overall favorite classes taught at Fremont High and I had a full schedule of Jewelry. I had five sections of Beginning Jewelry and one section of Advanced Jewelry. By the end of my first year, I was feeling a little bored and felt that while jewelry was fun, I really wanted to teach children how to draw and paint. I also found that a certain type of student seemed to sign up for Jewelry and they were usually students who didn’t really like art, they just wanted to get their fine art credit. When the “Art” teacher in the classroom next to mine decided to retire at the end of my first year, I let him and my administrators know that if at all possible, I would like to teach some two-dimensional art classes the next year.

I was really in for a surprise. The Administration offered me the Art teacher position and added Commercial Art classes which then gave me six different art classes to prepare
for, including a buyout (which meant that every other day, I did not have a preparation period during the day and I was teaching an extra class).

I started the year thinking that now I would have the type of students I dreamed of having in my classes. They would be students who loved to draw and paint and could work on a drawing for hours and hours. They would love to compose and create original, amazing works of art. I did get a few students like that. However, the majority of the students was drawing at a grade school level, couldn’t shade at all and definitely had no concept of mixing colors. I found that I couldn’t give them a long project to work on; they just didn’t seem to have the attention span to stay on task for the entire 90 minute class period.

I tried many different strategies for keeping students engaged and learning. I made sure to have at least two, but usually three different art activities during the class period. I started giving daily work points. I was always on the lookout for new and exciting projects and techniques to do that would get them excited. I worked on being more energetic and happy. I expressed my love of the arts to my students in order to keep them making art and not goofing off and wasting their precious drawing time.

It was hard for me to understand how they could be so wasteful and indolent. I had many students who came to class every day, yet were failing because they were not doing enough work to pass. I couldn’t understand how a person could come every day and not pass my class. Every teacher I talked to seemed to be having the same problem. They called these students the “Me-Generation” describing them as selfish, technology oriented, expecting to be entertained every minute and wanting to know what’s in it for them. I even looked at my own five children and realized that they were in danger of
fitting this label. But because I signed up for this job, I wanted to find a way to get through to these students.

My first year at the Creative Pulse was eye-opening for me. I was plunged into doing activities that I sometimes felt like I was drowning in. Then I started to pay attention to the energy that seemed to be building inside of me. With each of the Intelligences we were exploring, described by Howard Gardener in his book *Frames of Mind*, I discovered something new about myself that I hadn’t realized before. I was becoming enlightened and empowered and I wanted that same energy to be entrusted to my students.

During my second year as a student in the Creative Pulse program, Karen Kaufmann taught a week long course on the kinesthetic intelligence, which was the most intriguing to me, and gave us opportunity after opportunity to explore learning in this way. While learning more about the kinesthetic intelligence in Karen Kaufmann’s class, I was given opportunities to see how I could adapt the way I teach in order to help my students. I especially appreciated her ideas for using this approach in the classroom and found myself thinking of ways that I could be a more kinesthetic teacher. By the end of my second summer, I had decided that I would pursue this for my Final Project.

I began the year by explaining to my students that I would be doing an experiment in movement. I told them that they would be doing some things that might seem a little strange, but that I would try to make it fun for them. I spent a little time (not much) explaining what the kinesthetic intelligence is and why I had chosen to do this project. I told them that my hope was that they would have a good experience and learn some things because of it. And thus began my year with movement.
Project Overview

Description

In this project there were three main categories for using movement with my students that I explored, group work/team building, “Brain Gym” movements and activities using kinesthetic movement to teach art concepts. I used these activities to enhance the art curriculum as well as give the students and myself a renewed energy level and excitement in the fine arts.

I spent hours looking online for creative activities that could be tweaked and used for my project. I went to the library several times looking for resources, I spoke with my colleagues as sounding boards and even used my own teenage children several times to try out my activities or listen to my ideas and give me feedback. I purchased and studied two books that seemed to go along with my project, *Smart Moves* by Carla Hannaford and *Minds in Motion: A Kinesthetic Approach to Teaching Elementary Curriculum* by Susan Gris and Victoria Merecki. I also purchased some new art books looking for inspiration on ways that I could incorporate movement into my art curriculum. I found that most of the ideas for activities would pop into my head as I studied the lesson I was about to teach, sometimes they were ideas that came from discussing my project with someone else, many of them are variations of things we did at Creative Pulse, and a few things were completely someone else’s idea. But, no matter how the ideas were acquired, I tried them and used them.

I started doing movement activities with my classes the first week in September, 2007 and continued until the last day of art camp June 11, 2008. Some of the activities were
meant to help introduce or reinforce concepts and took anywhere from 15 minutes to an hour. Some were longer projects that lasted from several days to three weeks. The “Brain Gym” activities only took a couple of minutes at a time, but were ongoing throughout the course of my project.

**Intent**

By adding movement to my curriculum, I anticipated (and hoped) a few things might happen: I was hoping to see a greater sense of community in my classroom, gain improvement in the state test scores of my Commercial Art classes and have more students working and learning. Basically, I wanted to fill my classroom and my students with new energy and verve.
The Classroom Activities

Over the course of the year, I planned and executed many classroom activities which incorporated kinesthetics in the learning process. I am including directions for the activities, photographs of students doing the activities, narration about the conception of each activity as well as a brief reflection about how each activity went.

Art History Game

“When we look at a painting, listen to a piece of music, read a novel, or watch a movie we are taking in the artist’s composition. The composition is the totality of the work.”

Mike Syob

I came up with the idea for this game while I was doing an assignment for Karen Kaufman’s class The Kinesthetic Intelligence The Body and its Role in Learning at the Creative Pulse. It is a variation of a game that she had our class learn. This is a good activity to help students be able to remember the titles of famous works of art and what the artwork looks like as well as the names of the artist who created it.

In preparation for this activity, I created a slide show of eight very famous works of art that I wanted the students to be able to identify: Pablo Picasso’s Guernica, Mary Cassat’s The Boating Party, Claude Monet’s Haystacks, Caillebotte’s A Rainy Day, Grant Wood’s American Gothic, Edgar Degas’ Concorde, Whistler’s Portrait of a Mother and Van Gogh’s Pyramid of Skulls. I chose carefully to find well known works that would also be fun for this particular activity. I looked for works that could be portrayed as a live sculpture using only three students. I also came up with how the
students would act out the painting. For some of the paintings I made up sound effects to enhance the enjoyment.

Directions:

Explain to the students that they will be playing a game which will help them to learn the names of several famous works of art and their artists. Show slides or photographs of famous works of art to the students. Give the students a brief history of the artwork and the artist while you are showing each slide. Show the students the actions they will be doing to act out each painting. Enlist the help of a couple of students to help demonstrate. For instance: to portray the painting Guernica the student on the right leans outward and uses his fingers to make horns on his head, the student in the middle is the bomb, throws his/her arms in the air and yells “BOOM” and the student on the left throws up both arms and screams. After demonstrating all of the paintings - take the students somewhere that the entire class will be able to form a large circle. (I had to take my students outside, which they loved!) The teacher stands in the middle, points to one student, states the name of a painting and the artist then proceeds to count to ten. As the teacher is counting, the students on each side of the student being pointed at must quickly come together and act out the painting, including sound effects. It is a good idea to practice all of the pictures with the group a few times prior to counting, just until the students get the hang of it. Then, after you count to ten, if any of the students are portraying the painting incorrectly - that student is out. It is possible for only one person in the threesome to be right. Play the game until there are only 6 or seven students left. At the end of the game, quiz the students about the paintings. You will be surprised how well they remember all of the information - even weeks later.
With this activity, I found that the students were a bit inhibited at first, especially when they had to cry like the baby in Mary Cassat’s *The Boating Party* or bark like the dog in Degas’ *Concorde*. But in every class, there were always one or two students who would really ham it up and that would get the rest of the class warmed up. I also think it helped that I was willing to play too. It was so great to see them really laughing and having a good time while they were learning (Figures 1 & 2).
Line Relay Races

“A line is a dot that went for a walk.”

Paul Klee

When I was trying to think of ways to incorporate movement into my art curriculum, I looked at the current way I taught different art elements and principles. I usually had students take notes in their art sketch books; the notes consisted of certain art terms and their definitions as well as a little mini drawing which would help to convey the meaning in a visual way. This activity was a direct result of taking one of my current sketchbook assignments and turning it into relay races. I still had them do the sketchbook assignment, and I let this activity act as a way to reinforce the lesson.

In preparation of the relay races, I made six sets of papers with the different types of line written in large text. I also gathered about 60 leaves from my scrub oak trees (they have an interesting outside shape). I taught the students about the various types of line and how using more than one type of line in a drawing will make it less boring.

Directions

Divide the students into groups of 4 or 5 students. Using golf tees, have one student from each team place the five pieces of paper into the grass as markers in a line about 10 – 15 feet apart. I had them place the first so that they could read it on the way down and the last two so they could read them on the way back. The student then places the leaf on the one on the end, where they turn around. There needs to be a separate row for each group. Have one team line up in front of each row of papers. Demonstrate how to go through the relay race.
Five different types of line
- Wavy line- student will walk in a wavy line to the next marker
- Thick line- student will make themselves as wide as they can by holding out their arms and spreading their legs while walking to the next marker
- Contour of leaf- students will pick up the leaf and hold it in front of them; they will look at the leaf and then walk the contour of the leaf to the next marker.
- Thin line- students will make themselves as narrow as they can by turning sideways and holding out their arms while walking to the next marker
- Implied line- Students will take two steps then hop, two steps then hop, etc, to the final marker

(I think it would be fun to think of other types of lines too: dashed, zigzag, scribble etc.)

As soon as one student finishes, the next student will begin. Each person in each group will go through the relay course one at a time. Have each student go twice.

After doing this activity, have the students do contour line drawings of the leaves in ink. Remind the students to use the various types of line in their drawings to make it more interesting.

Directly after doing the relay races (before we did the contour line drawings), I had the students in one of my classes write a couple of sentences explaining what they thought about learning in this way. Here are their comments:

*note- I left their spelling and punctuation the way it was written by the student.

“It will be very beneficial; for things that hiten your pulse get stuck in your head better”
Rachel

“I learned about contour and implied lines.”
Shelby

“I liked doing the activity because I learned the vocab words, it was stupid but it was better than memorizing them.”
Shae
I thought that this was a real unique way to learn different styles of lines. I did feel like an idiot doing this but now I will never forget those 5 line types. Sometimes you need to do something outrageous to learn a concept in school. I thought it was good.”
Matt

“I think this was helpful, because now when we have to draw a contour line, we will remember stumbling around outside. And the lines will stick in our heads. But it was too hot outside.”
Karly

“I learned about all the kinds of lines and yes it was a good thing cause it helped me memorize the lines better.”
Dillan

“I learned the different types of lines. I will easily remember them now.”
Rayce

“By Dang that activity it reminded me of the lines so I wouldn’t forget them and ya.”
Chad

“I learned what a contour and implied line. It was fun. I like laughing and I sure laughed a lot!”
Savannah

“Today I learned about the wavy line, thick line, contour line, thin line and implied line. I didn’t learn that much from the activity.”
Kip

“I thought that exercise was the most bangin thing I’ve ever done. I learned about 4 types of lines. I was cool.”
Dan

“I didn’t get to learn anything from the activity mainly because I didn’t get to participate much.” (he had just had surgery on his leg)
Taylor

“I think you had the idea, but use the names of the lines instead of “fat” or “jumping” because that’s all I’ll remember.
Christopher

“Yeah, I thought it was helpful. I’m very much a kinesthetic learner so doing activities help me remember it more.”
Jessica
“I thought it helped remember the lines a little better and it was kind of fun at the same
time.”
Freddy

“It was OK. It was too hot outside but it helped me learn.”
Maci

“I think I learned better about the lines doing the activity better than I would have just
getting the words. I thought it was pretty fun and a new way to learn stuff, so it was
cool.”
Eric

“I learned that I slightly dislike lines now.”
Mike

“I thought it was a good thing to do if we were two years old! I don’t think it helped.”
Colton

“I learned what a wavy line, thick line, contour line, thin line and implied line.”
Daniel

“I learned nothing from that it was something you would do in 1st grade and its even
stupid then.”
Braxton

“I learned something today. The lines are easier to learn when you act like one.”
Luis

I had my three drawing classes do this activity. Going into it, I was worried that it
would seem too much like elementary school, but decided to risk it. Personally, I got a
rush of adrenaline each time I would take a new class out to play. It was really well
organized and only took about fifteen minutes. Even though a few of the students acted
like they thought it was dumb, many of the students actually started to get competitive
and they were encouraging their team mates to hurry which inevitably led to everyone
participating (Figures 3 & 4). I did have one boy who couldn’t run because he had just
had surgery on his leg so I had him act as a sort of referee. I could tell he would have
loved to be out there running with the class and felt bad for him. That was one thing I
hadn’t taken into consideration that I will need to address in the future. I loved reading their comments and decided that being a little juvenile and silly is okay if it helps the learning process.

Figure 3

Figure 4
Symmetrical Yarn Drawings

“There’s no symmetry in nature. One eye is never exactly the same as the other, there’s always a difference. We all have a more or less crooked nose and an irregular mouth”

Edouard Manet

For the past few years, I have been having my students do an activity in which they draw a line down the center of a piece of drawing paper and then they create a design on the left side of the page. After they create the design, they look at it to create a mirror image of it on the other side of the paper. I have found this to be a very good activity to help students learn how to use their right brain. This activity takes very good observation and concentration skills. It is always interesting to see how many students can do this with ease while some students get frustrated and shut down. They seem to be able to copy the design but can’t make it a mirror image, which makes it appear as two designs side by side rather than facing each other.

As I was preparing to teach this unit, the idea for yarn drawings came to me. It is a very short activity, but worked quite well as an introduction to this unit.

Preparation

Prior to doing this activity, explain to the students what symmetrical balance is. You may want to show some examples of works from Art History that have symmetrical balance. You will need to cut equal lengths of yarn, of various colors, enough for each student in the class to have a small ball. You need to have an even number of each color of the balls of yarn.

Directions

Pass out the balls of yarn to the students and have them find a partner who has the same
color of yarn. I made sure to pass out the colors two at a time in order to make sure each student would have a partner. If there was an extra student, then I got to play too! Then demonstrate how to “draw” a line with the yarn on the floor (sidewalks work great too). One student will first draw a design using their entire ball of yarn (Figure 7). The student’s partner will then create a symmetrical drawing by repeating the drawing in mirror image on the right side of the design (Figure 8). Be sure to go around and help make sure students are doing it correctly. After everyone has finished their design, have them switch places and create a new design.

Art Project - Students create a mirror image abstract design and paint it.

This short activity only took about 15 minutes for the students to complete. I had students all through the halls outside my class. We used lines in the tile to represent the middle and went from there. I found that on this large scale it was easy to identify those students who were going to need a little extra help understanding the concept. It seemed to me that getting them out of their seat and doing this with their entire body was a good way to learn it. I had one student who got really excited about it and said “This is so much fun! I think I’m going to do this at my next family party!” Of course there were a few students who held back a little and didn’t give their best effort, but everyone in the classes participated. I had all the students in the class walk through the halls and look at the designs before we picked them up and went back to class. I enjoyed hearing their comments about how intricate some students were able to make their designs (Figures 5, 6 & 9). I think this project helped the students to do well in this unit, it didn’t take long to do or prepare for and I am certain that I will use it again.
Value Scale with Hair Color

“I will love the light for it shows me the way, yet I will endure the darkness because it shows me the stars.”

Og Mandino

In my experience as an art teacher, I have found that the element of art “Value” seems to be one of the most difficult concepts for students to understand. Yes they know the vocabulary definition: the lightness or darkness of a color, but they struggle with being able to add different values to their works of art. For the most part, students are able to draw well; especially when you teach them how to see. They will spend hours making a very beautiful and intricately detailed drawing and then ruin it by adding a little bit of pencil then blending it with their fingers. The resulting work ends up having no contrast because it is all one value.

I usually start to teach this concept by having the students create a “value scale” in their sketchbook. I demonstrate how to draw it using a projector and visualizer, a device which allows me to demonstrate drawing techniques in full color and motion, and having the students follow along. I was trying to come up with a way to have students show their understanding of this concept in a more kinesthetic way and spoke about it with my friend and colleague, Jennifer Sorenson, who works in my district and is also a committee member for my Masters Degree Final Project. The following activity was her idea, but I used it.

Directions:

Divide the class into groups of 8-10 students. Then have them line up in order by the “value” of their hair color. One end being the lightest hair color and the other being the
darkest. Have them do it completely without talking. They can only use gestures.

Unfortunately, my camera was in the shop for repairs when I taught this unit, so I wasn’t able to get any photographs. I thought they did quite well though. It only took a few minutes to do. The class actually did it the class period after I taught the value scale. I told the students to study their notes, as they walked into the room, because we were going to take a test on value. After taking roll, I arranged the students into the groups and then had them do the activity. I enjoyed watching their relieved faces after they found out that this activity was the test. The groups who had the hardest time were the groups who had more people with a similar hair color. All of the groups were able to pass the “test.”
Geometric and Organic Shapes Game

“I paint with shapes.”

Alexander Calder

I used this game to introduce students to the element of art “Shape” and the concept of using shape as a starting point in a drawing. By looking for the basic shapes of objects students will better be able to get proportions drawn correctly. Dorothy Morrison, one of my instructors at Creative Pulse, had us do a very similar activity. I just added the shapes.

Directions

Talk to students about how a line that encloses an area creates a shape. Explain that shapes are two dimensional and go over the following vocabulary.

- Two basic shape categories- Organic and Geometric
- Geometric – circle, square, rectangle, oval, triangle, etc.
- Organic- freeform, usually rounded edges

Show the students an example of how you can break down a complex image into these basic shapes, which will make it easier to get proportions drawn correctly. I used a photograph of a dog and broke it down, by making the head an oval, the ears triangles, the neck a rectangle, the body an oval, etc. After going over the shapes with the students, explain the rules of the game:

All students will go outside (unless you have a large indoor area) and stand together in a group. You will say a number and then a shape. All of the students will quickly have to form a group with the stated number of students and then create the said shape (Figures 10 & 11). For instance- Teacher says- “5 triangle” the students will need to quickly
form groups of 5 students and figure out a way to make a triangle using the bodies of all of the students in the group. All students who are not in a group of the correct size will be out. Keep going until you are down to three players. The last call will have to be two and you will have two winners.

Back in the classroom, all of the students were given a magazine picture to break down into basic shapes in their sketchbooks.

The students seemed to immensely enjoy themselves during this activity. Honestly, I don’t actually know how much it helped them to understand the concept of using basic shapes as a way to break down objects and work on getting proportions correct. They seemed to grasp the concept pretty well. But it was great fun watching them try to figure out how to make a square with seven students or an octagon with three students. They were doing a little problem solving, a little socializing and the exercise certainly helped them to be more alert and ready for learning.
Color Wheel Game

“Color is the keyboard, the eyes are the harmonies, the soul is the piano with many strings. The artist is the hand that plays, touching one key or another, to cause vibrations in the soul.”

Wassily Kandinsky

I always spend a great deal of time in each class trying to help the students to understand color theory. It is a part of each class core curriculum and is a required concept that all students are expected to know. Over the years, I have tried to work on teaching color in a different way in each of the different classes, partially because I always have the same students who will take several of my classes and partially to alleviate my own boredom. It also seems to help with cheating. I thought of this game as a new way to teach color to my painting classes. It uses group work as well as kinesthetics. Prior to doing this activity, I taught color theory using a power point presentation that explains all the basics of a color wheel, color wheel terms and color scheme vocabulary.

Preparation:

Divide 9” x 12” drawing paper into piles of 12 sheets of paper (one set for each student group). Put out paper plates, water containers, large brushes or sponge brushes and bottles of tempera paint (Red, Yellow and Blue only). Put out golf tees (for outside playing) or masking tape (for inside playing). Write a list of about 25 actions and have them ready for the game.

Sample actions:

- Stand on the primary colors.
- Stand on only the colors that can make the color green.
- Stand on an analogous color scheme
- Stand on the two colors you can mix to make brown.

Place the students in groups of three or four students and have them paint all of the twelve color wheel colors by putting a different color on each of the twelve sheets of paper. They will mix the colors on the paper plates and then paint the whole sheet of paper one color (Figure 12). Try to have them paint in a thin layer to hasten drying time.

**Figure 12**

- Directions:
  
  Take all of the students to a large open area, either outside or inside in a large room or hall, have them bring their painted pages. It is a good idea to let each group use a small color wheel for help with setting up. The students will set up the color wheel correctly on the ground or floor (Figures 13, 14 & 15). If outside-secure them to the ground with golf tees, or if inside- secure edges with masking tape. Go around and check to make sure all of the color wheels are set up in the correct order. After all the color wheels are set up, then you can begin. Explain to the students that you will tell them something to do and all of the students in each group will proceed to do the action. For instance: If there are
four people in the group, but the answer only uses two colors, there will be two people standing on each color. If you get through all of the actions you can repeat them. You can play for elimination, or add a time limit.

In my opinion, this was one of the most successful activities as far as really helping students to learn concepts. It was also one of the more complex activities that I came up with. Including the power point presentation it took two full class periods to complete and it was time well spent. The students seemed to enjoy working in groups to create a giant color wheel. The students who caught on quickly helped the other students in the
group. After this activity, I had one class write a few sentences explaining how they felt about learning color theory in this way. Here are their words:

“It made art fun and easy to understand”
Jared

“I don’t think it would help. It was fun though.”
David

“I learned in a group so I can have other people mind. Yes, I liked to move to learn the colors.”
Amanda

“It was fun. It made me think about where the colors are and remembering what colors mixed make what colors and all the color schemes.”
Marina

“I think that it will help me remember the color wheel and the names of everything.”
Amber

“I liked it. I think I learn better when I play games like that. I liked that we had groups because you learn stuff from the other people. It helped me remember with the colors are and what order their in on the color wheel. I think that’s the best way to learn things.”
Ashlee

“I think that activity would have gone a lot better if I knew those vocabulary words. I found it really confusing working in a group and I would have learned the words better by just studying them and writing them down.”
Callista

“Helped me remember what certain colors were. It was interesting and better than taking notes. I thought it was fun to do it like that.”
Skylar

“I think it went well. It was easier to learn because we had to move around. Also it was fun because in groups and its always easier in groups. Painting the colors helped us too.”
Matt

“I learned a lot more with the game, because it was different than just talking or looking at a picture of a color wheel. We actually got to get out and do it. The next time I need to remember what analogous or complimentary means, I will just remember the game.”
Aly
“It helped me learn a little more about the color wheel. Moving helps a lot. It’s a good technique.”
Jeff

“I thought it was fun painting the colors on the paper as a group. It helped me know the people in my group better. I thought it refreshed my memory about the color wheel.”
Wyman

“I learned that the warm colors are like “light” colors and that cool colors are colors such as blue, purple, etc. Red, yellow, and blue are the primary colors.”
Jessica

I think that this helped me with colors and what to mix to get the colors you are looking for. This will help a lot of people learn the color wheel and the colors in it. The color wheel is a main thing in Art. This was a good thing to understand the wheel and the colors in it.”
Jake

“I think that being in this I did better and learned better.”
Cody

“It helped me remember what was taught earlier. I’ll probably remember it a lot longer.”
Danielle

“I thought the activity was okay. I learn better on my own with this kind of stuff. But it was fun.”
Nichole

“I think that doing this activity was a good idea. It helps learn and can help a little more to play the games to learn.”
Shawnee
Types of Balance Body Sculpture

“What I dream of is an art of balance, of purity and serenity devoid of troubling or depressing subject matter.”

Henri Matisse

This was a quick and easy activity. In fact, the truth is, I thought of it about five minutes before class started so obviously it didn’t take much preparation. I was just starting the lesson on types of balance and was pulling out the sketchbook assignment, when the idea to have their bodies create the different types of balance hit me. I’m sure the inspiration was a direct result of reading the book Minds in Motion: A Kinesthetic Approach to Teaching Elementary Curriculum. This book, which is co-written by Susan Griss and Victoria Merecki, outlines various kinesthetic activities that can be used to teach any topic. It had photographs of students using movement in order to portray symmetry. Although it was written for younger children, it inspired me to come up with ways to teach concepts using the student’s bodies as a medium.

Directions

After giving a lesson on the principle of art “Balance”, explain to the students that they will be working in groups to create sculptures with their bodies as the medium. They will be creating a different sculpture for the following three types of balance:

- Radial- elements in a work of art radiate around a central point in a composition.
- Symmetrical- elements on each side of a central axis are identical and mirrored
- Asymmetrical- elements on each side of a central axis are different but well balanced.

Divide students into groups of five or six. Direct them to a space where they will be able to work together to plan their body sculptures. Give them ten minutes to come up with their ideas- while they are doing this you will need to walk around and help the groups
who are struggling. After every group has had a chance to get their ideas, meet together in a central area where the students will have room to show each other their sculptures. Have each group go in front of the rest of the class and show off their sculptures. It is fun to have the group do a sculpture and let the class try to guess which type of balance it is depicting.

I used the activity in two different classes, and it definitely went better with the second class. As a lead in to the activity, I had the students take notes and spent time teaching them with vocabulary notes and pictures prior to doing this. In my first class I had them choose only one of the types of balance to do and create only one group body sculpture which was sort of a mistake because all of the students chose to do symmetrical (it’s the easiest). So, in the next class, I had each group do all the types of balance which made it more difficult and they had to spend more time trying to figure out how to make it work. That seemed to go better and I think they learned more than the first class.

Some of the students were a little shy about it and didn’t really get creative with it. I think they were a little uncomfortable about the possibility of touching each other. The most interesting thing to me about this activity was that the students who loved it and really got into it were the students who were hard to get on task when we were doing seat work. I loved seeing how they would show leadership skills in these activities, whereas in normal settings they were “problem children.” Sadly, I only had a couple of photos turn out (Figures 16 & 17). I am really sad that I didn’t get the one with my group of boys who stacked themselves high, arms and legs teetering precariously.
One thing I will do differently the next time we do this is to get everyone sitting down as the audience, before they start showing their sculptures. When we did it, students were sitting all around and I think it would be better to have a “stage” and have all the students facing the front of the stage.
Critiquing Artwork

When I judge art, I take my painting and put it next to a God made object like a tree or flower. If it clashes, it is not art.

Paul Cezanne

One of the things I came to understand through my readings about the kinesthetic learner is that they seem to work better in groups. I believe that there are a couple of reasons for this: the kinesthetic learner enjoys being social and moving around and is more successful utilizing these talents in a small group setting than in a large group.

I saw an opportunity to utilize groups with doing art critiques. Most of the time when we would have a class critique, we put all of the artwork up and look at it and talk about what is good and what could be improved. Which usually means that “I” the teacher does all of the talking. For some reason the students are intimidated by this formal setting and are not inclined to say anything. I have tried many things to get them to open up from giving them prompts to having them do critique worksheets prior to the critique session. My AP art class is the class that we have the most critiques in because they are trying to put together a portfolio for submission to the AP collegeboard in order to receive college credit. At the beginning of the year I decided to divide the students in my AP class into small groups and have them do their first few critiques this way in order to get the students to discuss the artwork.

Directions:

Divide the students into groups of four or five students and send them to a certain part of the room with their group (bring their artwork with them). Then, have the students from one group pass all of their artwork to the group on the right, making sure that each group has artwork to critique which is not their own. Give them a list of things to discuss about
the artwork depending on the assignment, for example:

- What are the things about this work of art that are successful?
- Does this work of art lead you to an emotional response? If so, what is your response?
- Do you think this work is portfolio quality? Why or why not?
- What would you say is the style of the artwork?

Make sure they have someone taking notes because they will be sharing their answers with the class. After all of the students have critiqued all of the works of art, have the groups tell the class what they decided about each work of art they discussed.

Group critiques worked very well. As I walked around the room while they were discussing the artwork, the students were much more focused and all of the students were making comments and truly looking at the artwork they were critiquing (Figure 18). After we did group critiques a couple of times, I was able to do the rest of the critiquing as a class because the students knew what types of things they should be discussing and had been successful in a smaller setting, making the transition to the whole class setting easier.
Art History Group Mural Project

*History is a relentless master. It has no present, only the past rushing into the future. To try to hold fast is to be swept aside.*

*John F. Kennedy*

I wanted to try having students work on a long and meaningful project in small learning groups. I needed to incorporate art history into the painting class curriculum and thought of having the students research an artist and do a copy of one of their works mural size. Because my painting class was a semester class, I was able to do this project in the fall with one class and then in the winter with two classes.

**Preparation:**

Make a list of 10 famous painters from art history that you want the students to learn about. Write the names of the artists, repeating each name three or four times (depending on how many students you want to have in each group). Make sure there are only enough names for one per student in the class. Cut apart the artists’ names and place them in a bowl. Get out bottles of tempera paint in all colors and many various sized brushes. Cut pieces of Butcher paper (approximately 4’ x 6’). Get out masking tape. Make an assignment sheet with project requirements to give to the students.

**Directions:**

Have the students draw one of the artists’ names from the bowl. Write the name of the artist they selected by the student’s name on the grading sheet, be sure to assign absent students to a group using the leftover artist names. Give the students one of the following prepared assignment handouts and explain the requirements to the students.
Group Art History Project Assignment Sheet

Directions - You will be assigned to a group and your group will be given an artist to learn about. Your group will research its artist’s history, create a poster about the artist, make a copy of one of his/her most famous works by painting a group mural, then do an oral report about the artist (as a group).

Requirements -

Research - Your poster and oral presentation must show good research – Include the following information:
1. Where was the artist born, raised, studying art, etc.
2. What was his/her family life like?
3. What was going on in the world during his/her life that influenced his/her art?
4. What period or style of art does his/her artwork most represent?
5. What is something unusual about the artist?
6. Do you like his/her artwork? Why or why not?
7. Research two of his/her most famous paintings and explain why the artist painted it the way he/she did.

Poster or PowerPoint - This should include the above information - in your own writing and vocabulary, not printed from the internet and glued on or pasted in (if PowerPoint).
PowerPoint/Poster requirements:
1. Neat and pleasing layout
2. Include all researched information
3. Name of Artist
4. Style or Period of Art
5. Two – Four examples of their work (printed from computer)

Oral Report - All students in group take part in delivering the oral report.
1. Teach the class about the artist.
2. Time limit 5-10 minutes
3. Interesting Presentation

Mural - As a group you will select one of your artist’s most famous works and re-create it, on a LARGE scale. You will be painting with tempera (poster paints) on a large piece of butcher paper. Each person in the group must participate in the entire process. (you will lose work points for the day, plus a lower grade on the mural if you miss class)

Assign an area in the room for each group to meet and send all of the students to meet with their groups. After they have found a spot, tell the students to get one of the cut pieces of butcher paper, some tape, go into the hall and tape their paper to a spot on the wall. Then give them time to work on the project with freedom to make decisions about how to proceed as a group.
The first time we did this project, the students had to do the painting, but I did the research for them. I handed them a few pages with different paintings on them and a little write-up about each artist. The students then selected one of the paintings and began to create the painting. I had also put five students in each group (Figure 19). The paintings turned out very nice and were easily identifiable as being a copy of the artist’s original painting. It seemed that in each group there were students who were good at drawing, good at mixing colors and good at making the brush strokes. I saw them helping each other, watching and then trying it themselves. It was wonderful that they were able to be in such close proximity to each other and working cooperatively towards a common goal (Figure 22). I had absolutely no students who weren’t participating. They were all having fun (Figures 23 & 25). The paintings took about two and a half weeks to complete and then we spent part of one day going around to the various murals and each group would tell what they had learned about their artist. The interesting thing about this project to me is that I taught absolutely no technique. All I did as a teacher was provide the supplies and the project and then walk around and visit with students and offer guidance where needed. As a result of this, I began to build relationships with each of the students early in the semester.

After having time to reflect on this project, I revised a few things and gave the project to my two new painting classes the next semester. I made the groups a little smaller so that they would all be able to paint at the same time. I fine tuned the requirements and clarified the report on the artist. I gave the students a choice to either create a poster or a power point presentation about the artist. Also, I did not do the research for the students. That was something they had to do on their own in their groups. It was amazing watching
the paintings emerging through the halls of the school. Many teachers would comment about how beautiful the paintings were and how talented the students were. Students from other classes would mull around and talk about the paintings. Often, I would see a student bringing their friends to see the paintings during lunch or after school. They were very proud of their work. I found this gratifying because the paintings were being completed by my beginning painting classes (Figures 20, 21 & 24).

One benefit of this project that I never anticipated was the plethora of power point presentations that I now have in my files. When I think about how much time it would have taken me to create all of those things, I lose my breath. The students found all the images, did all the research and then created the entire power point presentation. Besides it was much more interesting having a different teacher every 2 or 3 minutes. When the groups were doing their presentations no-one had their head down. Every student listened with respect and interest. It was easy to tell that the students were eager to share what they had learned about their artist. They especially loved sharing something unusual about the artist. Now these power points are ready to use any time I might need to present some information about any of those artists.

In January I was assigned a student teacher from Weber State University, I got the students started on the project and then he and I worked with the students together until it was finished. One day while the students were working on the murals, my student teacher’s advisor, Kay Stephenson, came to observe. She was highly impressed and told me that she thought this was a wonderful project. I wholeheartedly agree and know that I will continue with this project or variations of it for many years to come.
Miscellaneous Small Group Learning

“I find that it’s nice to work with somebody and spin off on someone else’s feelings. You get a little jaded by yourself.”

Herb Alpert

Throughout the course of the year I found myself looking for more and more opportunities to incorporate group learning into my lesson plans. In my Commercial Art classes, I had students teach the unit on color in which each group had to come up with a learning activity or game for the entire class. They also taught the unit on typography by creating posters of assigned concepts and then presenting them to the class (Figures 26 & 28). I also had them form group bands for their CD cover project. I put them in groups and then let them decide what type of music they were going to represent and gave them time to plan how they wanted to represent their band in a photo shoot. The next couple of class times were spent with me being photographer instead of teacher; some students brought in their guitars (Figures 27 & 29), most of the students dressed up, one girl brought in the bells she played. We had a riot taking photographs. In my Advisory classes (a class that only meets once a week to discuss life skills) I used groups almost every week. I put them in groups to discuss the topics, and then let them explain their thoughts to the class. I also had them make posters and hang them in the hall.

I think I started to gravitate towards group work because I was having a tremendous amount of success with it. The students loved the chance to be social and seemed to really enjoy taking their turns teaching. They made handouts, quizzes, worksheets and games. One student even brought in prizes of candy for the winners. I began to notice things about students that I had never noticed before. I saw talents and attributes such as public speaking, poster layout skills, leadership attributes, mediation, creativity and
caring in students that I never would have guessed were capable of those skills.
Brain Gym

Iron rusts from disuse; stagnant water loses its purity and in cold weather becomes frozen; even so does inaction sap the vigor of the mind.

Leonardo Da Vinci

I was first introduced to Brain Gym during Karen Kaufmann’s class “The Kinesthetic Intelligence: The Body and it’s Role in Learning” during the summer of 2007. Karen had us read a section from the book “Smart Moves: Why Learning is not all in Your Head” by Carla Hannaford. We read the section about Brain Gym and then learned some of the Brain Gym movements in our Creative Pulse groups. Reading about Brain Gym and doing the movements left me very intrigued. I was particularly interested in the story of the teenage boy who could barely read and started doing the simple movements after his mother went to a seminar about it. It was impressive how much he improved in his learning and was later able to obtain a college degree in biology. I was so intrigued and excited by this that I e-mailed my school principle, Jeff Meyer, and offered to do a short presentation on Brain Gym in one of our faculty meetings. Right now in the schools there is a very strong emphasis placed on standardized test scores and I saw “Brain Gym” as a new way to help students be able to do better on tests because the movements were designed to help with things such as: listening skills, reading concentration, and feeling awake and alert.

Mr. Meyer was very congenial and gave me the opportunity to do a half hour presentation on Brain Gym in the October, 2007 faculty meeting. I created a PowerPoint presentation about the reasons for doing Brain Gym and what some of the outcomes could be and then led the whole faculty in doing about ten different Brain Gym movements. I have to admit, I was extremely nervous. My school is very large
(approximately 1800 students and about 80 teachers) so I was definitely putting myself out there to be teaching these movements to all of the teachers and administrators. But it was actually an awesome experience. Everyone participated! I felt like the conductor of a huge symphony keeping all of the instruments in rhythm with each other as I guided everyone through the movements. The hardest part was that I had to stand on a chair so everyone could see me and I was shaking so bad that a couple of times I thought I was going to lose my balance and fall off. After the presentation, about half of the teachers and all of the administrators e-mailed me to ask where they could get more information about Brain Gym. This let me know that the presentation had made an impact on them. Unfortunately, I don’t know how many of the teachers actually followed through and did anything with it.

As for myself and my own classes, I did have success with Brain Gym. I started teaching the movements to my classes in September. I would have them do a few Brain Gym movements a day at the beginning of class and sometimes if we got done with our daily activities a little early, I would have the students do a couple more at the end of class. I taught the students the movements as well as what each movement was supposed to help with. For instance I would say something like:

“Hook-ups are meant to equally stimulate your right and left hemispheres of your brain. They are especially helpful if you are stressed out or angry about something. They will help you to calm down and see things more clearly and reasonably. So the next time you get in a fight with your boyfriend, do a couple of these to calm down before you say or do something you will regret later. Hook-ups are also really good to do right before you take a big test, just go hide in the bathroom stall and do them for a couple of minutes before and you’ll be much more relaxed and ready for the test.”

I always tried to give them a reason for learning the actions that would be pertinent to
things that teenagers are dealing with. I found it really helped to keep them interested. I also told them that I wasn’t positive if doing these movements would change anything at all for them, but I couldn’t think of one thing that it could harm, in other words- Why Brain Gym? Why not?

For the most part the students were receptive to this. I would see a few smirks and hear a few giggles, but so what. I decided that it was worth me looking like a crazy woman with crazy ideas. Then I realized that the students weren’t even laughing at me, they were more concerned with how they looked. I could also tell that most of the students paid really close attention and were actually quite interested in Brain Gym. I learned that teachers aren’t the only ones who are looking for something to help these students do better. The students themselves want to find a way to do well in school. The students who are misbehaving are usually doing so because they haven’t been successful at the class work. It is less embarrassing to be a social butterfly who needs to quit talking than a student who just can’t understand the concept.

One of the more identifiable successes I had was in my Commercial Art classes. The students in these classes have a state test that they have to take. It is a comprehensive exam which covers the entire curriculum taught for the semester. The state average pass rate is approximately 35% of the students passed with a substantial score of 80% or higher. The state doesn’t count a score of less than 80% as passing. The pass rate of my students up through the past school year was approximately 43%. This year, after doing Brain Gym movements and a more kinesthetic curriculum in my three Commercial Art classes, the pass rate went up to 54%. I was pretty happy about that and so was my CTE (Career Technology Education) director.
Art Camp

The Idea

"An idea is point of departure and no more. As soon as you elaborate it, it becomes transformed by thought."

Pablo Picasso

This year in our department we got a new teacher, Lona Karras. It just so happens that Lona and I actually had art classes together at Weber State and have been friends ever since. At the first of the year, she attended a new teacher meeting. In the meeting, Dave Jenkins (Environmental Center Director) spoke about the District’s Environmental Center which is a huge lodge in the mountains. The sole purpose of this center is a place for students to come together away from the mundane classroom and really experience nature. As he talked about the different opportunities available, Lona raised her hand and asked “Is there an art camp?” to which he replied “No, but that is an excellent idea!”

Because Lona and I live only a few blocks away from each other we carpooled together to school it was convenient to have many conversations about the possibility of putting on an art camp. I was really excited about it, but thought that it might be better to do it next year, after I got done working on my Master’s Degree. Being the persuasive person that she is, she convinced me that an art camp could be the best opportunity for teaching art kinesthetically that I could find. At that point I realized that my project was growing. It was interesting that I didn’t find this idea, it found me.

The Planning

Because of my district position as the “Secondary Fine Arts Facilitator” I was able to have Dave Jenkins (the director of the Environmental Center) as a presenter at the
meeting I was in charge of, for all the Junior High and High School art teachers in our district. At the meeting Dave spoke to the teachers about the possibility of putting on an art camp and tried to get them excited about it. I then scheduled a meeting with Kathleen Nye (Weber District Fine Arts Coordinator) at the district office. I found out that the camp had to be self sustaining. Which meant that I would be in charge of coming up with a budget, purchasing and ordering, sending out registration information, collecting money, and planning all of the activities and food.

I realized that I needed help. I sent out e-mails to all of the secondary art teachers trying to find out who would like to be involved and help. Three teachers from my school were willing from day one: Lona Karras, Janimarie Lester and myself. I found out that we needed to have at least two female advisors and two male advisors who could stay overnight. I talked Mel Ralph a high school art teacher and Jeremiah Jackson a junior high school teacher into coming. This team of people ended up being my lifesavers and I could not have pulled this together without all of their help.

In early April, we had a meeting in which we discussed the budget needs. The camp offered the option for us to pay their full time cook to cook for us. However, because it was our first year doing this we didn’t know if we would get enough students to come to pay her salary. So Jeremiah and Lona volunteered to do all of the food. Lona even went and got a food handler’s permit in order to do this. I couldn’t believe how well the meeting went. Everyone came to the table with some wonderful workshop ideas and was willing to help in any way they could. We divided the responsibilities amongst ourselves and got started. I created an agenda and budget sheet based on what was planned in our first meeting (Figure 30).
In order to sell the idea to the students but make it professional, educational and legitimate for their parent’s sense of security. Lona had the idea to come up with a logo (Figure 31). She told me what she was thinking and then I designed it using Adobe Illustrator.

We decided to make this camp an opportunity for students who are really interested in art.
to be treated special. We wanted to send them the invitation to camp as an honor (Figure 32). With that in mind, I created the registration packet. I spent time looking on the internet at other camp registration materials and then made the forms to fit our needs and type of camp. Lona, Janimarie and I sent out about 60 letters to students in our classes. We gave about 10 packets to each teacher in our District at the District Art Show awards ceremony and asked them to give them to their students. I also e-mailed the letters to each teacher so that if they needed more they could print them and give them out. The day the first student brought in their completed registration and paid for camp, I was so excited! I went to Lona’s classroom and told her and we both cheered. After that the registrations trickled in. In the end we had 35 students from several schools.

The Preparation

“Create like a god, command like a king, work like a slave.”
Constantin Brancusi

My life was a little crazy during the fourth quarter of school. I had a record number of students who were completing their AP (Advanced Placement) Studio Art Portfolios for submission to the AP College Board. This is always a very time consuming endeavor made even more so by the increased numbers. We had the District Art Show and the School Shows to do. I secured an art show for myself and a group of other artists at the Gallery at the Union Station in Ogden and have been trying to work on some new paintings. I had a student win first in State in Advertising Design and won a place for her and me at Nationals in Kansas City, Missouri, so I was preparing for that. I had a student teacher, which tends to be a lot of work. I am also this year’s President of the CTE
Commercial Art Teachers and I had to plan the entire three day conference (which was only five days after Art Camp). Then on top of everything else, I was told to remove everything from my classroom by the end of the year because they were having me and another teacher switch classrooms. So, when I saw the above quote by Brancusi, I couldn’t resist adding it to my paper. This quote epitomizes my life during the past three months.

Because of the craziness going on up until the last day of school, I didn’t even start actually putting stuff together for Art Camp until school was out. And then, I had to work on compiling this paper as well. Most of the final planning and preparation was done over the internet and the phone. Some of the e-mails I would send were like the ranting of a complete lunatic. I even signed one of them “your lunatic friend, Michelle”. I started to think I was crazy for saying yes to art camp this year. What was I thinking? Trying to get ready for a three day camp- where I would be responsible for keeping 35 kids happy and out of trouble 24 hours a day was totally insane! I think being so busy up until the end of school must have kept me from having time to worry about it, because as soon as school was out, the worries came at me from everywhere. What if I forgot to bring something? What if we didn’t have enough food? What if I ordered the bus for the wrong day? (I did call to check on this). What if I wasn’t bringing the right stuff for the impromptu campfire skits? What if someone didn’t get their information packet? What if? What if? What if?

I spent one entire day shopping and running errands for Art Camp with Lona. I was able to get some art supplies donated to give to students as prizes in a drawing so we went to pick them up. We also went to several art supply stores and a party supply store
looking for things to use in our skits and activities. We bought a set of bandanas of the same color and pattern for each group in order to have a team identity. We finished the day at Wal-Mart buying a lot of odds and ends for activities and things.

I hunted and gathered and packed and then loaded the car. Several times, I had to go to the school to hunt through my things in storage to find something that I needed for Art camp. I put together art kits for each student with a sketchbook, set of watercolor paints, erasers, pencils and ruler. I created a design for the t-shirts and printed them on t-shirt transfer paper, so the students would have a shirt with the camp logo. I printed labels to go on folders for each of the students and advisor, typed a final agenda and inserted it in the folder. I created Art Camp certificates and printed them. Then, I started the e-mails all over again. “I took care of this … How are things going on your end? Do you need help with anything?” It was very busy. But so exciting too!

I was so lucky to have the support of the other teachers in this endeavor. Lona and Jeremiah planned all of the menus and snacks for the entire three days and went shopping together to purchase all of the food. Lona spent the entire day prior to camp preparing Lasagna so that all we would have to do on the first night is put it in the oven. Janimarie bought all of the materials needed for making the t-shirts and spent a day trying the procedure to make sure it would be successful. Mel took care of going through his music collection and bringing a good variety of music for us to listen to. Jeremiah ordered some of the supplies. Everyone scavenged around finding items to bring for their team skits. We all made sure to think of, find or purchase and pack all of the art supplies that we would need for the activities we were individually responsible for. Each of us filled our cars to their fullest capacity with things to make this camp thrive.
Lona’s and my husband even got in on the fun and started looking for things that we could use. My husband purchased some beautiful bronze art medals that I could use as awards and he found a box full of round discs of various colors that I could use in the relay races. Lona’s husband searched around his industrial paint store and found a couple of boxes full of paint brushes that he donated to the cause.

The most beneficial part of the preparation for me was the enthusiasm that was brimming as the date of camp was nearing. We would call each other on the phone and listen to ideas or solve little problems, but mostly just talk about how fun it was going to be and how wonderful it would be for the students. I think the excitement we had as we planned art camp was one of the main reasons it was successful. The anticipation kept us always on the lookout for things that could improve it and helped keep our creativity going throughout the entire camp.

**Kinesthetic Activities**

“The art of living is more like wrestling than dancing.”

*Marcus Aurelius*

Although the camp had plenty of traditional Fine Art things going on such as figure drawing, portrait drawing and plein air painting, the entire three days of Art Camp were also filled with kinesthetic activities. While I was in charge of making the camp happen, I was not responsible for coming up with every idea, thank goodness!

Janimarie Lester planned a t-shirt making session in which the students used leaves, sticks and rocks to create a design on the shirt and then sprayed them with bleach to lighten areas on their dark colored t-shirts they turned out so beautiful. She also designed the session where they worked in their teams to create “Andrew Goldsworthy style”
nature sculptures on the hiking trail behind the lodge. Prior to watching the movie *Rivers and Tides*, a documentary style movie about Andrew Goldsworthy and Environmental Artist/Photographer, she put in a meditation video and had everyone lying on their backs on the floor to physically prepare our bodies and be able to watch the long, slow moving, movie. Lona planned an activity called “S’more Sculptures” where each team would use graham crackers, chocolate bars and melted marshmallows to create a sculpture. Mel-planned a late night hike including making drawings with white prismacolor colored pencils on black paper. Jeremiah was in charge of having them create friendship bracelets and doing chain drawings in which they each started a drawing and passed it along until it had been completely around the entire group. Each team and advisor was responsible for coming up with a skit for the campfire program. Therefore these art campers were immersed in movement.

As for myself, I did have things to plan too. One of the things that I was responsible for at Art Camp was team building activities. I had to plan the orientation and getting to know you session at the beginning of the camp. In discussing how this would go, we had a couple of objectives: Because we had students from several different schools in the district, we wanted students to immediately start having a good time and get to know each other. I brainstormed about activities for about a month, trying to think of something that would work. I searched on the internet for teambuilding activities, reflected on some of my own past girls camp experiences and just started making lists of ideas. We had a meeting about a week before camp at the Environmental Center. We sat on the floor and randomly divided the students into groups, so luckily that part was completed before camp.
We started the camp orientation by giving the students a few brief camp rules and explained how things would be happening throughout their three days with us and then gave them some time to meet with their group and their advisor. I created folders (with a camp agenda inside) of a different color for each group. I placed the folders and the bandanas for the teams in various places around the room then told the groups which color they were and where to meet. We had one advisor for each group with 7 students in each group. The objective was to introduce each other in the groups first, come up with a team name (based on an artist or period of art) and then come up with a team cheer. Then each group would introduce themselves to the rest of the campers and do their cheer. I felt this would help to give the teams an identity which could carry on throughout the entire three days and it seemed to work quite well, the groups had fun creating their cheers and performing them. They immediately found a sense of community and had a sense of belonging. After each team introduced themselves by doing their team cheer, we went outside and did the following relay race.

The idea for this activity was thought of a week before camp, I was at a point when I really needed to solidify my plan of action to make sure I would be prepared with all the supplies necessary to pull it off. I was sitting at the kitchen table with three of my daughters and I asked them for their input. I told them a couple of my ideas and they just rolled their eyes. “That won’t work mom” said my almost 16 year old daughter and thus began the creation of Life as an Artist Relay Races. After a few more ideas bashing back and forth, my 21 year old daughter Lana came up with this very original and fun relay race. Which seemed to me as the perfect opening game for our first ever art camp. How appropriate that we would be playing a game about the life of an artist (albeit a humorous
version) at a camp of aspiring artists.

In putting together the artist attire for this activity, My husband found some really large blue lab coats for $1.00 each, I bought the noses and glasses at a party goods store and found most of the other items fairly easily. But I couldn’t find the berets anywhere. I really wanted to have a bunch of Rembrandts running around and couldn’t see how baseball hats would have the same effect. I looked online and found several places to purchase them, however, I was out of time and they were too expensive for our camp budget. I found a pattern on the internet and decided they didn’t look too hard to make. So, I headed to the store, found some fabric on a clearance rack and made the berets myself for about $6.00. I got them finished just in time, the day before camp.

Life as an Artist Relay Race

Preparation

Gather five sets of artist attire including: artist smocks or aprons, berets, glasses with moustache, stools and easels, plain drawing paper, permanent marker, string or rope, play money and clothes pins or paperclips. Set up the relay race in the following order:

1st - Box with Artist attire  
2nd - Folding table and chair, paper and permanent marker,  
3rd - chair with clothes pins or paper clips.  
4th - a clothes line to hang the artwork from and  
5th - a person with wads of play money (the buyer of fine art masterpieces).

Directions

Divide the students into 5 groups. Explain the relay race to the students. They will begin by running to the box and dressing in the artist attire. After they are completely dressed up they will hop to the folding table and pick up a piece of paper and marker sit
in the stool and proceed to draw a self portrait (must have face with eyes, eyebrows, nose, mouth and hair). Then they will “show their work” by running to the chair and grabbing a clothes pin and hanging their artwork on the clothesline (we used the volleyball net). Then they will run to the “buyer” and get paid for their art. Finally they will run back to the empty box and remove the artist costume. As soon as one student finishes, the next student will begin. Each person in each group will through the relay course one at a time. When the entire team has gone through the relay race the team must yell their team’s cheer. The first team to get everyone through the relay race and yell the cheer is the winner.

The relay race was a good way to get the students to have a good time and warm up to each other. They had a chance to see each other looking funny and get a little crazy themselves (Figures 32 & 33). It also gave the groups a chance to work towards a common goal and cheer each other on. I think this helped alleviate some of the
inhibitions they might have been having, especially students who hadn’t come with a friend. I got my wish and had these adorable Rembrandts running around. I gave each person on the winning team one of the bronze artist medals that my husband had purchased and they wore them the entire day.

After the relay races, the camp sessions began. Each of the sessions was geared to give students the chance to feel like a real artist. The first activity was the t-shirt making session. The students went and found nature objects to place as a design onto a dark colored t-shirt. Then they sprayed them with a solution of half bleach/half water, let them dry for a few minutes, and then rinsed them thoroughly with water (Figure 34). When we finished making the t-shirts, Janimarie taught the students about Nature Journaling and then had the students go out into the trails, find a spot and make sketches and journal entries in the artist sketchbooks we had given them (Figure 35).

 Throughout the duration of the camp students were given freedoms they didn’t experience in the classroom and many kinesthetic opportunities for learning. The students loved all of the opportunities to be outside soaking in the sun and sometimes a
little rain. They loved the freedom to go to the class, take a nap, or continue working on a project that they were enjoying.

While the students were sketching, Mel set up for a session of portrait drawing. He and I had brought all of our classroom drawing boards, but couldn’t fit the easels so we had the students use the back of a chair in front of them to lean the easel on. It seemed to work quite well. He taught them proportions of the face as well as a few tricks of the trade.

The skits were a blast. Each of the advisors brought a couple of boxes full of various items and then each group had to come up with a skit to perform. At first the students in my group were quiet and a little wary. I think they just wanted me to tell them what to do. Then I pulled out the costumes and had them start figuring out what they wanted to wear. After that the ideas started flowing, it was interesting to see how putting on a coconut bra and Hawaiian print skirt could get the brainstorming started. We performed a teacher skit/dance. We bought necklace glow sticks and taped them to our bodies with clear packaging tape to form stick figures, turned out all of the lights and danced to some techno style music (Figure 36). I have to admit, I haven’t laughed so hard in years.

Figure 36
They appreciated the music; all day long, we played music from New Age to Rap. I learned that I really like Techno music. On the first night after the skits, they asked us if they could have a dance with glow sticks. Mel and I stayed up with them until almost 1:00 a.m. letting them jump around and swing their glow sticks in the dark. I even did a little jumping around myself. We put some glow sticks together like a rope and they did the limbo for almost an hour. It was an incredible experience. I loved seeing how much fun they were having and I was having fun too. Everyone loved getting their bodies moving.

They treasured being creative and loved making things. They had opportunities to try things they had never tried before. Some of the students had never painted before, but they sat and painted. Others had never worked with clay, but they made sculptures and pots. A few of the students spent time in the kitchen with Lona learning to cook things like scones for Navaho tacos and peach cobbler.

Figure 37

Mel and I organized a figure drawing session with live models and had the students
sitting in a circle with drawing boards honing up their seeing and drawing skills (Figure 37). We listened to New Age music and crossed over completely into our right brains. We started out doing quick gestural drawings and worked up to doing some longer poses. Many of the students had some nice quality drawings by the time this session was over.

We took the students on a mid-night hike on a moonlit gravel road. We didn’t bring any flashlights but we all had a necklace glow stick. We had to walk carefully and watch our footing but once we arrived at a nice clearing, we could see the stars more brightly and a soft glow from the moon gave us just enough light to see the trees and mountains silhouetted against the sky. We used black mat board and a white prismacolor colored pencil and drew the landscape in the dark.

We had a visiting artist DeeAnn Lester, Janimarie’s mother, come and demonstrate

Figure 38 Figure 39

plein air oil painting. We took a short hike up one of the trails to a little grove of trees where she had set up her painting (Figures 38 & 39). It was so beautiful outside with all of the students nestled in the grass near the trees (Figure 40). After her demonstration,
the students stayed and made thumbnail sketches (mini compositions) in their sketchbooks so that they could come back after lunch and start their own paintings (Figure 41).

Mel and I took the students back after lunch and set up for plein air painting. The weather had drastically changed so we sat on the hill next to the trees and painted while thunderous clouds loomed overhead and little sprinkles of rain were splattering our noses (Figure 42). We were able to paint for an hour or so before it started pouring.

Jeremiah introduced a group project in which the students could each write a line in a
story and illustrate it. He talked to the students about illustration and the purpose of it, showed them some beautifully illustrated books and then passed around a notebook for each student to write a small part of one story. Some of the students illustrated the part of the story that they wrote with pen and ink on illustration board.

Lona thought of the teambuilding activity in which each team was given ingredients for making s’mores (graham crackers, marshmallows and chocolate bars), a large board (as a base) and some bamboo skewers to make a s’more sculpture. We gathered around the campfire, melting marshmallows and getting really messy as our teams worked together on their creations. Each team’s camaraderie was quite evident during this activity which was held on the second night. Students started creating as soon as they were given the ingredients and it was definitely an all hands on deck approach (Figures 43 & 44).

One very successful project was making artist trading cards which are miniature works
of art the size of a playing card, they are meant to be a way for artists to trade art with other artists. We set up two tables with various items, pieces of mat board cut to size, tape, glue, scissors, ribbon, wire, magazines and all sorts of things that we could use to make little works of art. I showed them a PowerPoint that I had created with a little history about trading cards and told them that they could make as many or as few cards as they wanted and there would be a trading session after the art show on the last day of camp. From the point of the project’s introduction, at any moment in time, students (and teachers) could be found making trading cards. This activity proved to be a real icebreaker. There were always students mulling around the supply table looking for treasures to use on their cards (Figure 45). Some of the students loved their cards so much that they couldn’t trade them, but many made cards for the sole purpose of trading and worked diligently to get enough completed that they could do some serious trading.

Figure 45
On the last day, Jeremiah started the day by teaching a session on making friendship bracelets with string and beads. He demonstrated several different types of knots to the students and then let them choose their string and beads and get started. Almost all of the students created at least one bracelet and they wore them the rest of the day (Figure 46).

![Image of students making bracelets](image)

This was also the day that Janimarie had planned for students to create environmental sculptures (as a follow up activity to watching the Andrew Goldsworthy documentary, *Rivers and Tides*), however in the morning it was very cold and it had started to snow. Undaunted, she told the students to get out their jackets and other warm clothing and get ready to have an experience. She had the students work near to the lodge on a trail so that they could come in frequently if they got too cold. Many students decided not to participate because of the weather and chose instead to stay inside and work on art for the show. There were however about 12 students who braved the weather and forged ahead. They were given the choice to work in groups or on their own to create their sculpture and they were also invited to write a poem about their experience working with the environment and attach it to the sculpture.
When the students were finished everyone was invited to tour the sculpture trail and listen to each artist read their poem. Miraculously the weather had changed in the midst of the students working and the sun was poking through the clouds. We all walked along the trail, stopping at each sculpture along the way. The students read their beautiful poems as we enjoyed being outside and soaking in all the beautiful sculptures they had made. I was amazed by their sensitivity to the land and their thought filled words that were full of environmental imagery (Figures 47-51).
After that we had to rush around cleaning up all the mess feverishly created by a room full of artists, and it was a huge mess! We had 45 minutes to clean up and set up the art show before dinner because parents would be arriving right after dinner. I had brought up about 25 table top easels but we had so much art that we had to put it everywhere. Some students were still frantically working to complete their masterpieces for the show up until the parents started to show up. A few minutes before 6:00 a few parents had arrived and we were still vacuuming so we just told them to walk around and enjoy the show while we finished up a few things.

By 6:15 we had a huge room full of people. It was standing room only. We welcomed everyone and thanked them for letting their children come and be a part of the art camp experience. I had created a slideshow of the students from photographs I had taken during camp and we showed it to everyone. It was fun hearing the students telling their parents “That was when we…..” or “our skit was the best…” or “you should have seen…..” and “look, I made that.”

We had the drawing for art supplies then honored each camper with a “Certificate of Creativity” before sending them home. A couple of the students came to the front and asked all of the teachers to come up. Then they told everyone how much they appreciated all of our hard work for putting on this camp and gave us a huge card that all of the student’s had written on and marked with their thumbprint. It was beautiful and I was deeply touched. We all were.
Final Analysis

Outcomes of Movement in the Classroom

In retrospect, there were some interesting things that I discovered because of this project. I think I had originally hoped that by adding kinesthetic learning activities to my curriculum, it would completely solve all of the problems I was having with students especially in my drawing classes. While I did have successes during the movement activities, it didn’t seem to help them in any way to become better at drawing. What I realized was that it helped them to feel better about being in a classroom with students of all talent levels. Because they felt better about things, it gave me more opportunities to work with them and try to help them have more success. The students were less inhibited to try.

While I found myself using movement as a way to enhance my lesson planning, it did not take over. I was still teaching the students the same things. I still used a lot of pictures. I still had them take notes and do sketches. I still had them write reflectively. I still had them doing projects on their own and creating works to enter in school, district and state shows. I could not quit doing those things that were expected of me by my administration and honestly, having students be able to create their own works of art is still a priority of mine. But I did find that adding bodily movement opportunities to my curriculum brought something new. The students seemed to appreciate that I was willing to try something out of the ordinary in order to help everyone learn. Whether it was the activities I planned, the interactions that were happening between the students; or just the act of moving, there was something a bit magical happening in my classroom,
with me and my students.

Probably the most growth occurred within me. I have always been a bit reserved and throughout my life, I have found myself choosing to do things behind the scenes rather than on stage. I would always rather paint the scenery than be the star. I think that was because I could paint the scenery all by myself and if I made a mistake I could fix it before anyone would ever know. I shied away from the spotlight for fear of being embarrassed. Truthfully, I still have no desire to be a star. But, because I put myself in front of my students and acted totally out of character for me, I realized that sometimes it is downright fun to act out of character especially when you get to see the looks on the faces of 35 students wondering “What in the heck is she doing?” I was especially proud of myself for leading my colleagues through a session of brain gym activities (while standing on a chair). I did make some mistakes and I almost fell off the chair, but not one person came up to me afterwards and said, “I can’t believe how bad you messed up!” However, I did have plenty of my colleagues tell me that I did a great job. I think what really happened for me was that I let a part of myself out. The part of me that deep down loves being silly and funny and isn’t inhibited by the part of me that is worried that I might mess up (or that someone might notice my belly jiggle when I wiggle).

As for my students, they were the beneficiaries of this new approach to teaching from me. I started the year with a pretty good sized bang of movement learning activities being shot at them, but as the year moved on and we headed towards getting ready for art shows, those types of activities in the project waned a bit. During this portion of the year, I usually struggle to keep my head above water. Therefore we began to transition from doing the games and activities (which took a lot of preparation on my part) to doing more
things like group critiques and group discussions of a concept. I also used my busyness as an opportunity for small groups of students to prepare and teach the concepts instead of me. I found myself realizing that things I had always taught could be taught by the students. This part of the year was the most enlightening because this is when I understood how important it was for the students to be able to have these opportunities for growth. I found that the students seemed to enjoy the planning, and I enjoyed helping them. I could go from group to group and listen to their concerns and also their ideas. The students were given opportunities to plan how to teach a concept, to create handouts, power point presentations, posters, activities and games.

I found that some students really had a knack for teaching and presenting. One boy that I had taught for over two years showed an amazing knack for leadership, I had never noticed that about him before. It was interesting how changing the way I taught by giving the students more opportunities to work in groups and teach each other was helping me to see their various strengths.

The group work didn’t only open my eyes to the students; it also opened their eyes to each other. In a different instance, I had a student who would come to class, sit in the back and put his head down every day. I tried pulling him into the hall and talking to him several times to find out what was going on. He was failing the class. Then we started the group mural painting project and he was assigned to a group. One of the girls in the group started talking to him and they became friends. He actually worked on the mural. He stayed alert from then on and even talked and laughed. The two of them were both normally very quiet students but because they were placed in a group together, they had to talk to each other about the project. This opportunity to forge a friendship helped this
boy to pass the class with a B. In all of my classes, I found that even after the group project was over, the relationships remained and sometimes it was those relationships that kept students coming to class even when we were working on individual projects.

I also noticed that some students who were very high functioning while doing the group work, still couldn’t make the transition to working on their own and resorted back to misbehaving as soon as the group work was over. I am theorizing that these students are probably the ones who are mostly kinesthetically intelligent which is why they do so well when we learn in movement activities and groups, yet struggle to work on a painting or drawing of their own. While adding kinesthetic approaches did not change these students as much as I had originally anticipated, it did give these students opportunities to have success in my class and often made the difference between a failing grade and a passing grade. This year, I had fewer students failing than I had ever had before and I am certain it is a direct result of adding more kinesthetic approaches to the curriculum.

Doing this project changed my whole outlook on teaching. I became more of a facilitator and found myself watching students teach each other. It has been a wonderful experience for me as I realized that students learn more when they have to teach each other. I got to see a different side of students than I did when they just worked from their seats. Students were able to watch me come out of my own shell as I led the activities for them. It was interesting to help students leave the comfort zone of their desk and see them form relationships with students they otherwise might never have known.

For the most part, students were receptive to this new approach from me and participated well. Of course there were problems along the way, sometimes students
were hesitant to get involved and do the activities. Overall, it was successful and I intend to keep working on being a more Kinesthetic Art teacher.

Outcomes of Movement at Art Camp

Art camp was the final production of my year with movement. The act of having a camp in the mountains in June was a glorious finale to my final creative project. I couldn’t have imagined how successful it would be. I think some of us were worried that it would flop; first of all, we were worried that no-one would sign up. Then after we did get students to sign up, of the 35 students who registered, 8 were boys and the rest were girls. I was worried that the girls would be disappointed by the small number of boys at art camp but I was wrong, the girls never complained about the limited number of boys and the boys loved being the center of attention. For another thing, I was worried that we would forget things and of course we forgot things, but we just figured out something else and it all worked out. I also worried that the parents would think they wasted their money but based on the amount of compliments we had from parents at the art show, the parents were happy. At the end of camp, when none of our worries had come to fruition, we were exhausted and exhilarated.

Many times throughout the three days we were bombarded with students wanting to know if we were going to do art camp again next year and letting us know they were already looking forward to it. I think we might have created a monster. But, it’s the kind of monster everyone would love to find hiding in the closet. We have already scheduled art camp for next year, this time though it is going to be a week long. Although camp
was nearly perfect, we want to add a few things to make it even better. We have decided that we will have some of the students who are graduating come back next year as team leaders. They loved this idea.

The way the camp was set up made it a perfect environment for the kinesthetic intelligence. All of us teachers worked very hard to make sure that the students were comfortable both physically and socially. We made sure to have meals and snacks so that students wouldn’t be hungry. We provided many opportunities for students to work in groups and socialize as well as time to meditate and work on their own. There were always several options available. Students were not required to attend every session. In fact on the second day, about ten students chose to go on a hike to the waterfall (with the director of the Environmental Center, Dave Jenkins) instead of plein air painting. We had a table set up with clay that students could go to and make sculptural things if they felt like it. There was a table with art supplies that students could use to create a work of art of their own choice instead of what was being taught. Students were encouraged to go outside and play volleyball or walk the surrounding trails as desired. And all of the planned sessions had incorporated some sort of kinesthetic opportunities. I think this is why we had so many happy campers. They were always engaged and energized.

Art camp was filled with moment after moment of pure joy. There were so many times when I would step back, look around and see what was happening around us, because of us, and I would marvel at how miraculous it was. We had brought together 35 students from around the district and given them a memory they will be able to carry with them forever. I believe, for every student, it will be a memory of being accepted for who they are, a memory of being included and loved and nurtured, a memory of being
surrounded by the beauty of nature and a memory of a time when they created art with a room full of artists.

This year was the first ever Weber District Art Camp but certainly not the last. I predict that next year, we will have so many students wanting to attend that we won’t have room for all of them.

**Project Assessment Statement**

I had no idea how this project would change my outlook on teaching. I realized that students need opportunities to be social and those opportunities could be created by me. I found that I could let loose and have fun with the students and still be respected as a teacher. I found that adding kinesthetic movement to the curriculum created a more accepting environment in my classroom and aided students in the learning process which led to higher test scores. I believe that these changes in my approach as a teacher made me more approachable as a teacher and helped the students to create a sense of community with each other.

Doing this project changed my life in ways that I wasn’t expecting. I had so many opportunities for personal growth. I realized that I have the ability to lead, whether it is a group full of my colleagues through a session of movement exercises, a classroom full of students in a kinesthetic learning activity or organizing a group of teachers to create a very successful art camp. I learned that in order to make things happen, I could delegate and then watch as things became something I could never have even imagined on my own.
Somewhere in the middle of the year I had the epiphany that I am truly happy with the person I am turning out to be. I realized that I have been living my dream. I love teaching. I love working with students and trying to figure out how to motivate them. I love coming up with activities for them to do and writing curriculum. I loved spending three days with them in the mountains and helping them to discover their own artist selves.

I realized that I am the magician of my own life and the magic I create (with the help of some very talented people) will affect the lives of my family, my colleagues and my students.
References


