

Finding Your Voice

Length:	30 minutes
School:	FAIR School (Fine Arts Interdisciplinary Resource School)
Location:	Crystal, Minn.
Grade:	8
Teachers:	Rachael Hoffman-Dachelet, Visual Art Cathryn Peterson, Language Arts Robert Prater, Social Studies Stephanie Johnson, Dance Melissa Brunkan, Music Adam Hegg, Theatre
Description:	Students explore ideas of conflict and protest through original artwork.

About This Program

The arts teachers at the FAIR School decided to undertake an interdisciplinary unit with their eighth-grade students, using the idea of protest as the basis for original work in all of the art forms. Artworks around this idea tied in with themes of social justice that the students were studying in their World Cultures class. In all of the art forms, students were encouraged to explore how artists can use their work to make statements about issues that are important to them.

In World Cultures class, we see students looking at unfamiliar art works and analyzing them for artistic, historical, and social implications. In visual art class, we see students working on charcoal drawings dealing with slavery, the Holocaust, and self-identity. The visual art teacher discusses how the theme of protest fits in with her curriculum and the interests of eighth-graders.

In the dance studio, students work on a piece they have created about child abuse. In music, students critique an original composition by a pianist and two dancers, about starvation and eating disorders. In theatre, students rehearse the play *I Never Saw Another Butterfly*, which takes place in a concentration camp. All of the arts teachers comment on the benefits of the interdisciplinary approach in their classrooms, and woven throughout are reactions to the unit from the eighth-graders.

Arts and Non-Arts Standards Addressed in This Program

Standards listed refer to the McREL Compendium of Standards and Benchmarks, a synthesis of national standards in each of the disciplines, found at www.mcrel.org.

Dance

Standard 3: Understands dance as a way to create and communicate meaning

Music

Standard 7: Understands the relationship between music and history and culture

Theatre

Standard 5: Understands how informal and formal theatre, film, television, and electronic media productions create and communicate meaning

Visual Arts

Standard 3: Knows a range of subject matter, symbols, and potential ideas in the visual arts

Language Arts

Standard 9: Uses viewing skills and strategies to understand and interpret visual media

Behavioral Studies

Standard 4: Understands conflict, cooperation, and interdependence among individuals, groups, and institutions

Viewing Suggestions

Who Should Watch This Program

Teachers—“Finding Your Voice” will interest teachers in all disciplines who want their students to understand how artistic expression can be linked to strong moral and political commitments.

Administrators and professional development providers—This program highlights specific techniques that arts teachers can use to help students develop depth and dimension in their artworks.

Before You Watch

Respond to the following questions.

- What is “voice” in art, in literature, in politics, in history? Does the idea of “voice” appear in your own subject area? How?
- How, in your classroom or your community, do you create an environment in which the expression of individual voice is nurtured and encouraged?
- How might the arts enrich a study about voice and protest?

Watch the Program

As you watch, notice how the arts are used to help students understand abstract ideas such as voice, conflict, and protest. Write down ways that the different art forms influence and shape ideas.

Reflect on the Program

- How did the arts help students understand the notions of conflict, protest, and voice?
- Did the arts help students express themselves, or come to deeper understandings, in ways they might not have been able to do otherwise? How?
- Some students find it difficult to express their ideas and emotions through the arts. How is this challenge addressed in the program? How might you handle this issue in your classroom?
- What prior understandings about art and personal expression do you think the students in this program might have had that allowed them to be successful in this unit?

Additional Resources

Consult some of these resources for more information.

Books

Bowell, Pamela, & Heap, Brian S. *Planning Process Drama*. London: David Fulton Publisher, 2001. ISBN: 1853467197

Neelands, Jonathan, & Goode, Tony. *Structuring Drama Work* (2nd edition). Cambridge, Mass.: Cambridge University Press, 2000. ISBN: 0521787297

O'Neill, Cecily. *Drama Worlds: A Framework for Process Drama*. Portsmouth, N.H.: Heinemann, 1995. ISBN: 0435086715

Perkins, David. *The Intelligent Eye: Learning To Think by Looking at Art*. New York: J. Paul Getty Museum Publications, 1994. ISBN: 089236274X

Raspanti, Celeste *I Never Saw Another Butterfly*. Woodstock, IL: Dramatic Publishing Co., 1971. ISBN: 0871292769

Southeast Center for Education in the Arts. (1998). "On Being a Prisoner: Drama Explorations in Confinement." In *Transcendent Voices: The Work of Artists in Isolation*. The University of Tennessee at Chattanooga.

Southeast Center for Education in the Arts. (1998). "Messiaen: Quartet for the End of Time." In *Transcendent Voices: The Work of Artists in Isolation*. The University of Tennessee at Chattanooga.

Southeast Center for Education in the Arts. (1998). "Confinement in the U.S.: One Artist's Experience—Minidoka No. 3 (Diary)." In *Transcendent Voices: The Work of Artists in Isolation*. The University of Tennessee at Chattanooga.

Volavkova, Hana. *I Never Saw Another Butterfly*. New York: Schocken Books, 1994. ISBN: 0805210156

Audio Recordings

Reagon, Bernice Johnson (Compiler). (1994). *Wade in the Water: African-American Sacred Music Traditions* [CDs and educator's guide]. Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Folkways Recordings. ASIN: B000001DJE

Various Artists. *Sing for Freedom: The Story of the Civil Rights Movement through its Songs*. (1992). Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Folkways Recordings. ASIN: B000001DHL

Web Sites

American Memory: Historical Collections for the National Digital Library: A gateway to rich primary source materials relating to the history and culture of the United States
<http://memory.loc.gov/>

United States Holocaust Memorial Museum: America's national institution for the documentation, study, and interpretation of Holocaust history
<http://www.ushmm.org/>

The Center for Holocaust and Genocide Studies—University of Minnesota: Direct access and referrals to materials such as slides, film, video, and audiotapes for use in Holocaust and genocide education
<http://www.chgs.umn.edu/index.html>

Additional Resources, cont'd.

Read • Write • Think—The Peace Journey: Using Process Drama in the Classroom: A unit using process drama, a powerful and motivating teaching tool that engages students in writing for imaginative and functional purposes

http://www.readwritethink.org/lessons/lesson_view.asp?id=269

Samuel Bak - The Pucker Gallery: Information about the artist and his work

http://www.puckergallery.com/samuel_bak.html

Notes
