The Role of Art in a Special Education Class

Roberta G. Henry

ED7685: Painted and Printed Textiles for the Classroom

University of the Arts

March 29, 2009
Currently within my high school special education independent living class I have the opportunity to incorporate art within a curriculum unit on recycling within the home. My class consists of seven special education adults whose disabilities range from autism, cerebral palsy, emotional difficulty as well as physical limitations of the upper and lower extremities. Within my classroom, the occupational and physical therapist works with the students within my lesson plans. For this reason I have chosen to concentrate on the creation of recycled grocery bags as fine and gross motor skills will be incorporated within the art and sewing portion of this unit.

Although integration is the word of the 2009 curriculum, art has not always been given purposeful placement as an integrated study within many high school classrooms. This plan is designed to include developmentally meaningful art activities as they relate to the New Jersey Art Curriculum Standards within the independent living curriculum.

Prior to this the art portion of this unit, students would have read as a class two books listed below to give them a background on how the average person can reduce, reuse and recycle materials. Students would have been led on a supervised tour to the wood shop to collect wood end scraps as well as metal washers and nails. In addition, a parent letter would have been sent home to encourage the students to save and bring to class several different types of plastic lids for use during the stamping portion of this project.
Activity Plan

Level: Special education students ages 15-19

Title: Introduction to fabric arts via the creation of a cloth grocery bag within the reduce, reuse or recycle unit.

Brief History and Background of Unit: Every year the average American uses 363 plastic grocery bags. Add in another 500 plastic bags from other store visits and the individual consumer use of plastic bags annually is close to 1000 bags per person. Plastic bags end up clogging landfills and eventually break down into tiny toxic bits of materials. Reusable bags make an environmental difference. Prior to this unit students will have read:

*Recycle* by Rhonda Lucas Donald

*Green House: Eco Friendly Disposal and Recycling at Home* by Norm Cramption

Goal: The high school students will observe through demonstrated effort how materials can be reused in the creation of an ecology bag, which can be used to tote groceries and reduce the number of plastic bags used.

Objectives:
1. The students will read as a group *Recycle* and *Green House: Eco Friendly Disposal and Recycling at Home*.
2. The students will locate and save plastic lids and wood scraps for the stamp creation portion of this unit.
3. The students will use fine motor skills and dye fabric for eco bags.
4. The students will be exposed to printmaking vocabulary: block print, monoprint, relief print, intaglio print, and symmetry.

Materials:

Directions:
1. Students will dye fabric in either of two color baths voted upon as a class. Students will need to wet, dip and stir fabric during dying process. They will be responsible for rinsing and squeezing fabric to eliminate extra dye and hang to dry. (MX fiber reactive dyes) Follow Vat Dyeing directions distributed in class.
2. Students will hand wash fabric in Synthropol.
3. Students will create their own stamp pattern using stamp-carving material. Students will use fine motor skills while carving and this activity will be done on the day that we have the occupational therapist within the classroom. This will be an excellent observation and therapy session for our OT.
4. Students will practice inking stamps and recycled bottle caps on paper.
5. Students will randomly place stamps on fabric.
6. When fabric is dry, students will heat set fabric using the iron and ironing board. This is a skill students have previously been taught.
7. Students will cut out the bag using the pattern provided by the instructor.
8. Students will follow the directions on Attachment 1, which are in larger type of visual impairment.
9. Students will write a sentence about their work on a daily basis as an integrated art/writing unit. (Attachment 2)
Attachment 1

Ecology Bag

Check off the steps that you have completed.

_____ Sew the seams of the bag.

_____ Sew a second row of stitching around the bag.

_____ Use the pinking shears and trim the seam.

_____ Cut the handles.

_____ Press under the edge on the handle.

_____ Stitch around the top of the bag to secure handles.
Ecology Bag Journal

Name ___________________________________________

Write one sentence about the work you completed in class today.

Monday

_________________________________________________________________________

_________________________________________________________________________

_________________________________________________________________________

Tuesday

_________________________________________________________________________

_________________________________________________________________________

_________________________________________________________________________

Wednesday

_________________________________________________________________________

_________________________________________________________________________
Thursday

Friday