

### **John Walsh Elementary School**

Over the last two years at Walsh, IAAA has effected change at our school in several ways. Through IAAA, our teachers had the opportunity to actively reflect on how the integration of the fine arts impacts the teaching and learning process in their classrooms. These insights would not have materialized with out the support of IAAA. As an experienced school with arts integration, this has caused us to take a fresh new look at how we address the standards not only in the fine arts, but also across the core areas. It excited our teachers to take risks by integrating the fine arts into areas like science and mathematics. It has helped solidify our new CMSI science curriculum by creating and extending entry into the curriculum. The end result has been deeper learning and student engagement in both science and mathematics. We have seen an excitement evolve because of IAAA that we are confident will continue to impact both how our students view the world and how our teachers see their roles in shape learning, long after the structural support of IAAA is gone.



#### **1. Overview**

Under a War Torn Sky.  
Interdisciplinary-Unit integrating the fine arts with the study of the history of World War

Henry Forester is a 19 year old fighter pilot who is shot down in France during World War II as told in the novel "Under a War Torn Sky" by L. M. Elliot, and the eighth grade students at Walsh School in Pilsen care about Henry. Last fall, the students selected events from the novel to create a

multi-arts stage production using drama, music and the visual arts that would tell the story of a young man's courage and resourcefulness behind enemy lines as well as the many other young people who helped him. Under the direction of professional artists from Pros Arts Studio, in partnership with the classroom teachers, the students adapted the story for a stage production, discovering their own connections to the teen characters, and acquiring skills in the three art forms. They also learned to work cooperatively as a performing ensemble: all students participated in the play either as actors, musicians or stage crew. This unit also represented the culmination of the students' long-term arts learning at Walsh School, which they shared in the presentation of the play with their families, friends and former students.

#### **2. Big Ideas and Inquiry Questions**

This does not apply to this IAAE project.

#### **3. Academic Content Area Objectives**

This unit met the following state goals for language arts and social Studies:

**2.B.3b** Compare and contrast common literary themes across various societies and eras.

**2.B.3c** Analyze how characters in literature deal with conflict, solve problems and relate to real life situations.

**4.B.3d** Use verbal and non verbal communication strategies to maintain communications and to resolve conflict.

**16.B.3d** Describe ways in which the U.S. developed as a world political power.

**16.A.3b** Make inferences about historical events and eras using historical maps and other historical sources.



#### **4. Arts Content Area Objectives**

Theater/Drama students learned to adapt a text in the writing of a play. Using improvisation students learned to develop character and plot and to interject themselves into the characters they portrayed. Students learned to use their voices and bodies to effectively communicate to an audience. Students learned stage directions and how they are used for blocking and cues. Students learned to work as a theater ensemble.

Music Students learned the elements of percussion such as developing an ear for timing and tempo. Starting with practice drills employing a call and response approach to percussion students learned how to use percussion within the setting of the play. Students also learned a variety of rhythmic patterns and used them in the play in a variety of ways. Students used bucket drum, bells, West African and conga drums among other instruments to simulate war time sounds such as machine gun fire, explosions as well as

everyday sounds such as knocking on doors. Students also developed musical pieces that were then performed as interludes in the play.

Visual Arts Students learned to translate ideas and initial sketches into large scale sets and props. Students learned about color and how to create a palette to unify elements of the set. Students learned basic block printing techniques. Students researched artists and art produced before and during WW II; and incorporated stylistic elements from the period into the sets. Students analyzed propaganda art used during WWI and applied their

understanding of its visual elements in the representation of current events in their block prints.

### **5. Social and Higher Order Thinking Objectives**

1 Students learned to work cooperatively assuming roles and responsibilities within their fine arts teams and when working as cast and crew members during rehearsals and in the presentations of the play.

2 Students integrated primary source materials that included texts and interviews into their adaptation of the novel *Under A War Torn Sky*.

3 Students shared their learning with a wider audience through designing and creating bulletin boards that presented the unit's main ideas, activities, and goals in a public information format.

4 Students compared political propaganda from World War II to contemporary media information and analyzed the ways in which media shapes attitudes about events, ideas and products.

### **6. Key Words and Vocabulary**

#### **Academic Content Areas**

Foreshadowing, compare, contrast, propaganda, aggression, fascism, Nazi, totalitarian, Axis Powers, World War II, appeasement, blitzkrieg, Four Freedoms, Lend-Lease, Atlantic Charter,ataan Death March, internment camp, Nisei, rationing, D-Day, summit conference, Battle of Midway, island-hopping, genocide, Holocaust, GI Bill of Rights,

#### **Fine Arts**

Drama: ensemble, script, scene, character, improvisation, dialogue, monologue, projection, props, set, center stage, down stage, upstage, cue, blocking technical rehearsal and dress rehearsal. Music: percussion, rhythm, tempo, call and response, sound effects, musical accompaniment, composition, and score. Visual Arts: Scale, palette, complimentary colors, contrast, prime, gesso, Cubism, Expressionism, graphic arts, propaganda, relief print, block print, print block, positive space, negative space, contrast, proof, burnish, brayer, press.

### **7. Time Frame**

**August – September Planning:** School Administrators, teachers, Pros Arts Studio staff and artists met to determine the unit's objectives, create a time line, develop curriculum and address logistical concerns.

**September – October Introduction:** Classroom teachers introduced the unit to students in Social Studies and Language Arts classes.

**October – December --Arts Integration:** Students worked in drama, music, and visual arts teams with artists from Pros Arts Studio in 1 1/2 hour sessions that met three times a week for a total of 18 sessions. Students continued the related Social Studies and Language Arts curriculum. Arts learning was integrated into classroom activities through classroom discussions, team reports, and journaling.

**December --Technical and Dress Rehearsals:** Student teams came together to work

as an ensemble. Students learned to use stage directions and to coordinate cues.

**Public Presentation:** Students presented three stage performances of *Under A War Torn Sky* to Walsh students, faculty, administrators, families, friends and community member on December 6th 2004.

**January – February 2005 Unit Expansion:** In an eight session visual arts unit on propaganda and the graphic arts, Pros Arts Studio artist, Ricardo Compean collaborated with classroom teacher, Brenda Fonseca to investigate ways to create relevancy in the study of historic events through the visual arts. Seventh grade students in the 7/8 grade split classroom worked with Eighth grade students to create block prints inspired by their learning in this unit.

**Spring 2005** Walsh School and Pros Arts Studio continue to explore venues for an exhibit of the units' art work.

## **8 Sequence of Learning Activities**

- 1 Students read Chapter 29 "The Rise of Dictators and World War II" in their Social Studies textbook, *America Past and Promise*.
- 2 Students read the novel *Under A War Torn Sky* by L. M. Eliot and began journaling; responding to read alouds and other related classroom activities.
- 3 Students interviewed World War II veterans to learn more about the war through personal accounts
- 5 Students determined the events in the novel to dramatize in the play.
- 6 Students met the artists from Pros Arts Studio and attended sample lessons in each of the art forms. Students chose one of the art teams to work in during the unit.
- 7 Students learned basic elements of the art form they selected.
- 8 Students developed initial ideas in improvisations in the theater and music teams and in sketches in the visual arts team.
- 9 The drama team developed scripts and scenes. The music team created musical scores. The art team made sets and props. Team members reported on these activities in classroom discussions.
- 10 Students created bulletin boards to share their learning with the school.
- 11 The teams came together during the technical and dress rehearsals. Students finalized blocking, cues, costumes and other production elements. The art team worked as the stage crew.
- 12 Three performances of *Under A War Torn Sky* took place in December 2004 which included an evening community performance.
- 13 Students met with the artists to reflect upon and evaluate the unit
- 14 Classroom teachers reviewed the unit, and the social studies curriculum related to WWII and propaganda. The teaching artist introduced graphic arts to students in a power point presentation during which students analyzed and compared examples of World War II propaganda with graphic imagery related to current events and product advertising. In subsequent sessions the teaching artist demonstrated basic concepts and techniques used in block printing. Students developed their initial sketch to meet the requirements of print blocks, cut their print blocks, made proofs and refined their blocks for their final prints.

## **9. Assessment**

The performance of the unit and the audience's response was used for the initial assessment. Students wrote evaluations of the unit that described their experiences and identified areas of learning. Additional assessment methods included correlating student evaluations of the unit with their individual unit portfolios, reviewing journal entries and interviewing students.

## **10. Resources**

### **Text Sources**

America Past and Promise, Chapter 29 "The Rise of Dictators and World War II"

Time D-Day 24 Hours That Saved the World by Editors of Time Magazine  
Under A War Torn Sky by L. M. Elliot

Maps, posters, and military uniforms were displayed in the classroom to provide visual support

Human Resources:

Interviews with World War II veterans

## **11. Describe the involvement of Parents and Community Members**

While creating the proposal, one of our Local School Council parents served on both the writing and implementation teams for IAAA. Also, parents have assisted in the classrooms as well as benefited from joint students and parent workshops integrating the fine arts and science on Saturdays. These workshops were a direct result of our efforts to improve our fine arts programs. Finally, parents and the community were invited to our 8th grade performance and enjoyed all of the hard work on the part of the students, teachers and artists.

## **12. Materials Used in the Art-integrated Unit**

Percussions instruments included Conga drums, African drums and bucket drums. Period costumes included military uniforms and civilian clothing. Acrylic paints and set building materials included wood, chicken wire, paper mache print making supplies and equipment. Students used texts as source for factual and visual information. Video tapes of rehearsals and performances provided opportunities for students to gain insight into their learning.

## **13. State Goals Addressed**

### **Fine Arts**

25 A Understand and demonstrate knowledge of the sensory elements, organizational principles and expressive qualities of the arts.

26 A Understand and demonstrated knowledge of processes, traditional tools and modern technologies used in the arts,

26 B Apply skills and knowledge necessary to create and perform in one or more of the arts

27 B Understand and demonstrate knowledge of how the arts shape and reflect history, society and everyday life.

Language Arts And Social Studies

2.B.3b Compare and contrast common literary themes across various societies

and eras.

2.B.3c Analyze how characters in literature deal with conflict, solve problems and relate to real life situations.

4.B.3d Use verbal and non- verbal communication strategies to maintain communications and to resolve conflict.

16.B.3d Describe ways in which the U.S. developed as a world political power.

16.A.3b Make inferences about historical events and eras using historical maps and other historical sources

**14. Quotes and Comment in response to this unit form some of the following:**

· Teacher(s) “ I felt it (the play) was an excellent way to help my students express their feelings and knowledge. They had the opportunity to learn a new art form, as well as cooperating in groups. I was able to see my students in a different environment displaying skills that I don’t see regularly.” - Brenda Fonseca



“ I have to change the way I present material to my class because students learn differently. They learn by acting, by drawing and by listening. The way they express themselves is also different. They (the students) will remember the play because it was in their own words , music and props” – Walter Casimiro

· Artist(s) “ Joey offers an excellent example of the residency’s impact. He is one of those ‘difficult students’ in the SLD program. There was a concern about his ability to carry a role that others would depend on. He proved them wrong when he shone as the father of the main character – he was prepared, learned his lines, and was on time with his cues. He took pride in his role and in the production everyone saw this ‘difficult student’ in a new light.” – Jean Parisi

· Student(s) “This was our last play at the school and was longer comparing it with the previous ones. During the experience we had fun doing it but what makes the difference compared to others was that in this one we put a lot of effort.”

· Principal "This was a great opportunity for the students to connect the fine arts with history, math and science. It brought to life for our students, an important era of our collective history. Our students will remember this experience for a long time" – Stephen Flisk