

Picture the Story: Visual and Oral Storytelling to Promote Literacy and Tolerance and Celebrate Diversity

Storytelling - based arts projects combine oral literature, visual arts, performing arts, music and craft, to create individual and group artworks and performances. A collaborative and inclusive approach in the design and implementation of a school residency/project ensures that the integrity of the artistic concept is adhered to, and that the specific outcomes required by the school are met. Whether it is making books, didgeridoos or textile sculptures, staging an art exhibition or a family concert, storytelling based arts projects employ oral storytelling as the foundation for all related arts and performance activities. The storytelling sessions in and of themselves build trust and foster communication skills in addition to addressing various social and academic outcomes. They simultaneously act as a scaffold for the attendant artmaking activities.

An example of the storytelling - based arts project process follows:

*Identify a project focus and medium through discussion between school and artists. Decision - Friendship is the focus and Bookmaking is the medium.

*Programming: dates, number of days, timetabling and project outcome. Decision -. 5 days for 16 class size storytelling sessions, 12 artmaking workshops finishing with an exhibition and community performance.

*Oral storytelling - Artists research and present age appropriate and culturally diverse folktales and myths exploring friendship. Choose particular tales suitable for artmaking focus for younger students and class discussion for older students on the qualities of friendship.

*Art making: Class size workshops - Class Scrolls (Grades 1 and 2), Concertina Friendship Books (Grades 3 and 4), Kamishabai style Friendship books (Grade 5), Large manga style paintings (Grades 6-9).

*Outcomes: Group projects for younger students, individual projects for older students, school community exhibition and performance.

*Followup: Provide teachers with additional ideas notes for class work.

10 Reasons to invite Artists to your school

1. Artists are a living resource for teachers, students and the school community.
2. Artists express a cultural world-view through their work.
3. Artists present an alternative path to meeting learning outcomes.
4. Artists work with people of all ages, abilities and cultures.
5. Artists recognize the importance of the collaborative process in artmaking.
6. Artists acknowledge the need to produce tangible and satisfying outcomes.
7. Artists integrate different artistic and learning mediums in their work.
8. Artists teach the values of co-operation and tolerance in artmaking.
9. Artists tailor projects to suit the school community they are working with.
10. Artists believe that ART SAVES LIVES!