Elementary Art and Writing

Mary A. Beningo

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ELEMENTARY ART AND WRITING

by

Mary A. Beningo

A thesis submitted to the Graduate College
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of Masters of Arts
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The problem that I researched in today’s art education world is how to correlate elementary art curricula with writing curricula. To investigate this issue I field tested a curriculum module that reflects the contemporary issues of writing in art education. The curriculum module under investigation has been designed to correlate my 5th grade fine arts curriculum with the homeroom teacher’s 5th grade language arts curriculum.

During this study I worked with 56 fifth grade students and incorporated four writing projects into their fine arts curriculum: a Character Exploration project, a Blackout poetry project, a surrealistic textured paper collage project, and a Picture Writing with famous artworks assignment.

I found that students demonstrated a high level of ownership in their work. It was interesting to see students describe their work through creative writing. Students thought creatively while producing their artwork, as well as through their writing pieces.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I want to thank my co-chair instructor Dr. Christina Chin for guiding me with my research and helping me put everything together. I want to thank Dr. William Charland for introducing me to different ways teachers can implement writing into the classroom with a course related to recent topics in art education. It was in this course that I realized what I wanted to focus on for my thesis research. I have always enjoyed creative writing myself as a child, so combining the arts with writing was a fun research topic for me. I also want to acknowledge my husband for putting up with my late night paper writing and being a supportive shoulder on which to lean. My family, too, has always been there for me and have supported my interest in the arts every step of the way. Last but not least, I want to thank the 5th grade students who I get to teach every week and who participated in this study. These fifth graders are a fun and creative bunch that can always put a smile on my face! I have enjoyed seeing the excitement in their faces after finishing an art piece and hearing them talk about their work - sometimes standing in line just to share their next detail or thought.

Mary A. Beningo
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RESEARCH PROBLEM

The purpose of this study is to find different ways to correlate the fine arts curriculum from the Corunna Public Schools district (which is based on that of Michigan State Standards and Benchmarks, along with National Standards and Benchmarks) with that of the current 5th grade language arts curriculum and English and Language arts Common Core (with a major focus on the writing portion). Our district, as well as many other districts across the nation, has focused on implementing reading and writing activities into every subject that is taught in school. The district has given us a direction but left the real work up to the teachers to work reading and writing into their current curriculum. When I initially started researching the topic of art and writing, I found a few different ideas on how to go forward. However, most of the ideas were for the secondary level of education (for example see Gilmore, 1999 and Ehrenworth, 2003). There appears to be a large opportunity to share with other elementary art educators different ideas on how to incorporate writing into their classroom, and this study serves to provide resources and guidance in this direction.

During this study I worked with 56 fifth grade students and incorporated four writing projects into their fine arts curriculum: a Character Exploration project where students would create a character and eventually become that character in a play, a Black-out poetry project where students created a piece of poetry out of words from a printed piece of literature, a surrealistic textured paper collage project where students created a collage using textures papers and then wrote a descriptive writing piece about their art piece, and a Picture Writing with famous artworks assignment where students received a print of a famous artwork and had to create a story about the art piece. I looked for areas
in the curriculums that would make the most sense to combine between the Corunna Public Schools 5th grade Fine Arts curriculum, the Corunna 5th grade Language Arts curriculum and the English and Language Arts Common Core for 5th grade. Since the fine arts main focus is to have students think creatively, it made sense to give them creative freedom in their writing assignments as well. Specific standards and benchmarks are discussed in the Description of Research section
LITERATURE REVIEW

From different writing and art programs to various lesson plans, there are many different suggestions on how to combine the arts with writing. I began to see a pattern with the elementary programs having students create books during a form of writer’s workshop. These workshops relied heavily on either observing or producing a piece of artwork before the writer’s workshop took place. I will discuss the different methods suggested for combining art and writing curriculums, as well as other important topics that arose in the literature in relationship to this idea.

Beth Olshansky’s Image-Making and Picture Writing Models

While searching for books and articles related to the topic of art and writing, one authors name kept appearing over and over again: Beth Olshansky. Beth Olshansky is the director of the Center for the Advancement of Art-Based Literacy at the University of New Hampshire. She developed two art-based literacy models and manages a nationwide teacher-training program to teach these models. She wrote The Power of Pictures: Creating Pathways to Literacy Through Art (2008b), and a variety of articles that I found useful and relevant to this thesis topic. I found many of her writings useful because she focuses on elementary students ranging from Kindergarten through sixth grade. What really caught my eye is that her approach to writing and art education excites and motivates students who would normally struggle with reading and writing activities.

Beth Olshansky focuses on the visual learner who is often forgotten when it comes to writing. Children understand the meaning of pictures long before they learn how to read and understand words (Olshansky, 2008b, p. 15). She states, “While
teachers of very young children encourage their emergent writers to draw to help them put their ideas down on paper, this practice is often discouraged as soon as students acquire the ability to write” (p. 15). Pictures are part of a natural language for all children, especially those who are visual or experiential learners, developing writers and ELL (English Language Learners) students (Olshansky, 2008b, p. 16). If we want to reach these students and help them be the best they can be, we must teach to their strengths – not steer away from them. Olshansky offers teaching models that combine literacy and the visual arts, to help the struggling students unlock their true potential.

Her book (2008b) outlines her visual art literacy methods, called Image-Making and Picture Writing, which is part of an Artists/Writers workshop program for students. According to her book, students have the most success when they first create a piece of art and then observe their artwork closely to come up with a descriptive writing piece. The actual program is set-up for students to create a book that connects their designs and illustrations with their own writing. The project is successful but very time consuming. Olshansky makes it clear that students did not complete their books just during their art class, but with their regular classroom teacher as well. What follows is a description Olshansky’s program where every student creates a complete book during their Artists/Writers workshop.

The first step in introducing the Artists/Writers workshop is to introduce a picture book to the students. They are introduced to the key elements of a story through an illustrated picture book study. Students observe many illustrated books that display various artistic techniques throughout. “Using quality picture books as mentor texts, students learn from the masters as they become immersed in creating their own quality
picture books,” says Olshansky (2008b). “They study in depth the writer’s and illustrator’s craft as well as how the languages of pictures and words work together to tell a story” (p. 30). Students start to think of words in a different way and understand that the words in the book can make the pictures come to life. As they prepare to create their own books, students learn how to see like an artist and read like a writer, (Olshansky, 2008b, p. 46). Olshansky talks about introducing a book with all the words covered up at first – even the title. The students carefully try to describe what is happening in the story just by observing the images in the book. Once they observe the entire book, the teacher reads the words of the story. Students see how the words help fill in missing pieces that cannot always be seen, like background information, locating the story in a specific time or place, enhancing the mood, drawing the reader’s eye to a certain part of the picture, introducing other senses such as sound, smell or touch and telling the reader how to interpret the picture (Olshansky, 2008b, p. 48). Students see that words move a reader past what can be seen.

Next comes the modeling session where the teacher models the art-making process and writing process. During this process, the teacher and class create a piece of art and a piece of writing together as students receive explicit instruction and an example before working independently. For example, the teacher could create a textured paper with the class modeling the bubble paint technique. The paint used for this technique is mixed with water and soap, and the teacher would use a straw to blow bubbles into the paint until the bubbles grow taller than the lid of the container. Next the teacher would place the paper on top of the bubbles to create the bubble paper technique. The bubbles transfer onto the paper to create various circle formations. The teacher would then reveal
the paper to the students and would have them verbally describe the paper as a class.
What does it look like? What could it be used for in their own story books? Olshansky suggests modeling will give the students confidence to try the process on their own, and verbally describing a painted paper is an excellent prelude to writing a descriptive piece.

The third step is the work session for students and that is where the magic happens. Before students attempt to do their writing piece, they create the art for their idea. A third grade student said, “I always make my pictures first because then I can get looks at them to help me with my describing words. If I wrote my words first, I wouldn’t be able to see my describing words in my pictures” (Olshansky, 2008b, p. 55). The materials that are used matter in the process of creating. The richer the art materials used directly relates to the result of visual representations from the students. For example, if students used plain construction paper without any painting techniques applied to them, the visual image may turn out flat with less appeal. If, however, students get to apply different colors and techniques to the construction paper, there will be a lot more to look at and describe. If the images are rich in detail, the writing becomes rich with description and detail as well.

There are two different techniques Olshansky (2008b) suggests for students to use when creating their art for the Artists/Writers workshop program. One technique that has been successful is crayon resist watercolor paintings – it is a good way to start a teacher with the Image-Making process because it is an easy-to-manage classroom art technique. All that is required for this technique is paper, crayons and watercolor paint. The other technique is more extensive and time consuming, where students create their art pieces through collages made from hand-painted papers. Students first create the painted papers
by making different textures with paint using various painting techniques. Techniques she describes include marbleizing, splatter painting, straw painting, and printing with plastic wrap, bubbles and sponges. Olshansky (2008b) says to encourage students to look at the painted papers first to imagine some kind of scene or story that fits with what they see. “I soon found that students engagement in the paper-texturing process led to a sense of ownership and pride not only over the colorful and varied papers they created but also the stories that grew out of these hand-painted papers” (p. 60). The students then create a portfolio of their papers and observe what they created. “Your stories are hidden inside your textured papers. It is your job as author-illustrators to discover these stories” (Olshansky, 1994, p. 49). The children are encouraged to follow their own creative process to create their stories from their papers. Students can cut, bend or tear their painted paper to create a collage that depicts their story.

Once students are finished with their art piece, they are given many opportunities to talk about their art with their peers and teacher. “The images they create give them something to look at and something tangible to talk about and write about” (Olshansky, 2008b, p. 73). The talks help students to really observe and see what is going on in their work. “Because it is a lot easier to tell about their pictures than to write about them, oral rehearsal provides an important and very natural bridge between the pictures and written words” (Olshansky, 2008b, p. 74). It is important to ask carefully crafted questions when students are orally rehearsing their art pieces. *What is happening in your picture? What kind of day does it look like? If you were in your picture, what do you think it would smell like? Feel like?* It may help them think of something they hadn’t thought of previously, and it can help them in their writing process.
The final step is for students to put their conversations down onto paper using rich, descriptive words to make their story come alive. This is the second method that Olshansky developed, called Picture Writing. "Description is, in effect, word painting" (Olshansky, 2008b, p. 20). If a student has something to look at and envision it is easier for them to come up with words to go along with the story. It is hard for some students to imagine a picture in their head and write about it. If they have a hard copy of their own art piece in front of them it is easier for them to write and use descriptive language. They also take more ownership and pride in their work because they are describing something they have created. Spelling does not matter at this point. If students are using very descriptive words which are normally out of their reading level range, they are encouraged to sound out the word as best as they can. Spelling is corrected by the teacher in the final stage of printing out the stories. When the stories are finished, students learn how to read aloud the more challenging words they used. "Eager to read their very own handcrafted published pieces out loud to their friends and family, students are highly motivated to tackle sounding out these challenging words" (Olshansky, 2008b, p. 59). They feel motivated to do so because it is their own work. Teachers see so much dedication and motivation that students will read their books over and over again. They even love reading other students work and learning the words in their book.

The ability to transfer meaning from one sign system to another, in this case from pictures to words, is called transmediation. According to Olshansky (2008a), "Transmediation deepens the students’ thinking and increases their generative and reflective abilities" (p. 11). She believes this is one of the reasons why the Artists/Writers workshop creates such a vibrant learning experience for the students, and
why the program is so effective. This visual approach to literacy learning engages struggling readers and unenthusiastic writers. The language of pictures is the first language of all children, no matter where they live.

At the end of her book, Olshansky (2008b) reveals through studies that the Picture Writing and Image-Making methods have helped drastically improve writing scores with students involved. One such study involved 555 first and second grade students across three different states. The study was designed by Dr. Susan Frankel of RMC Research Inc. to determine the impact of uniting the two art-based literacy models (Picture Writing and Image-Making) on student writing and the use of art for connecting ideas. The study was conducted over the course of one school year, and teachers involved in the study were asked to follow Olshansky’s methods of Picture Writing and Image-Making. Art and writing samples were collected in September, at the end of January and at the end of May. The samples were scored by a team of trained independent raters. Olshansky has two groups of students that she compares: the “treatment” group of students that are involved in the Image-Making and Picture Writing program, and the “comparison” group of students that were not involved in the program. For the text only study, the treatment and comparison group showed the same overall minimal writing ability (1.34) in September, on a scale from 0-6. When they were assessed again in January after participating in 5 months of the Picture Writing program (where they write about their finished artwork), the treatment groups score significantly raised to 4.8 (almost fully developed) while the average score for the comparison group rose to 2.03, which is considered to be still minimal. After 3 months of the Image-Making process (creating the art that students would write about afterwards), in May the average score of the treatment
group continued to climb to 5.04, which is fully developed. The highest score possible is a 6, which is classified as extraordinary. The average score of the comparison group increased to 2.22, which is slightly above minimal. There were many more studies and results that mirrored the results from this study. Trainin, Andrzejczak, Poldberg’s study (2006), which was a teacher tested research project that involved Olshansky’s Picture Writing method, corroborated Olshansky’s findings. In the conclusion of their research study, the authors’ state:

The results of this study point very clearly to an achievement benefit to creating art before engaging in the writing process. As we hypothesized, using an explicit creative process linking art and literacy strengthens claims made by previous researchers… Students were able to use the art making process… to organize their thinking and work through ideas before committing them to text. (p. 11)

After viewing the results from these studies, it was clear that Olshansky’s methods worked – and worked well.

**Drawing the Line: Creative Writing Through the Visual and Performing Arts**

Barry Gilmore (1999) wrote a book that is geared toward secondary level teaching. His book was the only one I found that discussed the other areas of the arts. He finds these subjects are related through the process of creating. “Art is always an ongoing series of revisions… whether you’re talking about a story, song, dance, play, or painting, it’s important that the artist have more than one chance to get it ‘right’” (Gilmore, 1999, p. 4). He suggests that we encourage students to value the process of creating as much as the ends result. When working on these subjects it is important to give students the time to figure things out. There is not just one correct answer, so how
to solve the problem of the project is up to the student. This must be valued as students are choosing their path and finding solutions to a problem that others may not have thought of – a very important skill students need to learn and practice in the 21st learning community.

Gilmore (1999) suggests many different lesson and unit ideas in the book, all of which seemed to be geared towards the secondary level, but he also discusses different steps teachers should take when teaching writing with the other arts. Although most of the unit plans did not seem to be as useful for this project (besides one unit that related directly to a project which I will discuss next), his process in teaching writing to art students was helpful for someone like me who is a visual arts teacher and not experienced with teaching writing techniques to students. The first step is introducing the assignment to students where the teacher must seem excited to even try it themselves to keep students engaged. Gilmore says suggesting topics for writing prompts “will help students relate to the activities and themes they embody to their own lives, and to convert those ideas into words,” (Gilmore, 1999, p. 7). After introducing the assignment, the teacher should show an example of a poem or story to help students get started. The next step is a fast-writing method where the goal is to get words and ideas down on paper without worrying about whether the writing is good or not. After they complete their fast-writing, the students then read what they wrote and circle or underline words or ideas they want to keep and explore. Gilmore suggests doing the fast-writing session as a group so that everyone is trying to write their ideas at the same time. After the fast-write it is time for a revision where students work the writing into a more polished piece. This step can require many different series of revisions and the extent of the revisions is up to the student. A peer
evaluation group follows with students giving suggestions and comments on the writing. The final step is presenting their writing with their art and then starting all over again. The art piece can be created before or after the writing piece, depending on what the instructor chooses to be best for the lesson.

Out of all the projects Gilmore (1999) discusses in his book, the one I found most intriguing was the unit on the development of a character. My fifth graders started working on their character project at the beginning of the school year, and it was an extensive project that took about 4 to 5 months to complete. The students worked on the project during their fine arts time, which included one 45 minute session and one 30 minute session per week. Students created their own character from their imagination through various writing exercises and narratives. They then had to take on the role of their character by acting in a class play. “Like writers, actors try to create fiction by changing themselves. Every character, whether invented by a writer or an actor, comes from that real person’s experience and observations” (Gilmore, 1999, p. 86). The task of creating a new character may be a daunting one, but students already have many “characters” in mind that that they see every day. Writers and actors have similar methods in developing characters – through observation, imagination, a sense of humor, a talent for imitation and (most importantly) their own experience and memories are useful for understanding the experiences of others. Once students pick a character, Gilmore suggests the students dive in and find out more about their character. What is their job? Where do they live? What does their hair look like? What do they fear? What’s their favorite animal? “The specific elements aren’t nearly as important as the quality of the ideas; details and traits that develop the character’s originality are what make for fresh
description” (Gilmore, 1999, p. 88). I feel the concept of character development is a great way to include writing into a drama curriculum.

**In Pictures and In Words: Teaching the Qualities of Good Writing Through Illustration Study**

Katie Wood Ray (2010) describes the process of teaching into illustration, which means teaching students to observe illustrations and helping them describe what they see. “When teaching from this stance, children are encouraged to linger longer with illustrations, to use color and other media to make meaning, and to expand what the words say by intentionally composing the illustrations” (Wood Ray, 2010, p. 15). Instead of gearing away from the illustrations when students learn how to write, her stance is set on the idea that images can help the writing process and should be included as students continue to further their writing skills. Studying different illustrators and figuring out why they make the decisions they do to communicate their ideas is a key focus in this method.

A study of illustrations in writing workshops almost immediately raises the level of thinking and decision making children engage in as they make books, so I believe illustration study is a must on a primary curriculum calendar. And because children grow so much in the study regardless of their developmental capabilities with word making, the earlier in the year the study comes, the better. With two or three weeks of nonstop thinking about the decisions illustrators make, the entire year is transformed as children learn to notice illustrations in every book they encounter across all other studies. (Wood Ray, 2010, p. 78)

The framework she uses to plan her unit of study starts with gathering a stack of illustrated texts that have worthy examples of what she wants the class to study, then
making sure students know what they are studying and expecting them to write under that topic. Next, the teacher would immerse the class in reading and talking about the illustrated texts and discuss what they notice about how the illustrations work with the written text. Students then study the illustrations and text closely and record what they find. Finally, the students would create and write using the ideas and methods they learned about through the study.

After Ray (2010) describes the process in which to study illustrations from texts, she goes on further and explains fifty different illustration techniques and the quality of good writing they suggest. Example of techniques include the characters point of view when drawing the picture, using details as an element of surprise, using expression and gestures in characters, using scenes to show movement through different places, etc. A teacher could really craft one lesson on each technique, so it depends on how extensive he or she would like to get with the lessons and techniques. By focusing on these different techniques, not only is it helping students think of all the ways an illustrator conveys an idea, but these techniques also transfer into the writing world. From my understanding, if a student studies an illustration where the artist depicts a character using a surprised expression, they then might think about different expressions their characters can have in their own stories. From drawing their own expression of their character, they then write about the expression with their text. I see how Wood Ray values the study of illustrations as much as she does.

**Looking to Write: Students Writing Through the Visual Arts**

Instead of explaining a general process for how to combine art and writing, Mary Ehrenworth (2003) gives different planned out lessons that give step-by-step directions
on how to implement these lessons to benefit students’ writing and art. The workshops tend to be geared more towards secondary students, but can be simplified to meet elementary students’ needs. Her first chapter entitled “Poetic Understanding: Imagining Picasso” is about forming links between portraiture and poetry. Ehrenworth suggests that the way to write a poem about a painting is to first look at the painting for a very long time. After sustained looking, have discussions about the painting – not just as a whole group but in small groups as well. Then have students “forge a link between visual and poetic language” (Ehrenworth, 2003, p. 23). In other words, the students need to connect the meaning of the artwork to the words written about it. In an article entitled, “Literacy and the Aesthetic Experience: Engaging Children with the Visual Arts in the Teaching of Writing,” Ehrenworth states, “Some children become confident poets before they become confident in other genres; sometimes they can articulate what they see in a visual image more than they can say what they see in a written text” (Ehrenworth, 2003, p. 44) This reinforces Olshansky’s (2008b) point that pictures are the first form of language for children. The author also suggests reading famous poems that are about artwork to get students interested. She says that poems and paintings have the ability to open up a student’s mind and move it to another imaginary place. The reproduction of the artwork that is displayed should be large enough for all to see or be given out to individual students. Ehrenworth conducted the workshop with middle school students by looking at works by Picasso and relating his paintings to tragedies that occurred on September 11th, 2001, in the U.S.A. During the time of the workshop, the events were more current so students had some kind of emotional attachment to the subject. For an
elementary classroom, I would pick a more subtle topic that is more geared towards events that are current with that particular group of students.

Ehrenworth (2003) gives helpful methods on how students can write about the painting they are viewing. First, ask about how the artist portrays the image in the painting. In response, students would write down words or phrases that they think of when they look at the painting. Then, students describe the various elements of art – I would suggest limiting the elements to 3 or 4 at the elementary level. Finally, ask students what they think the artist was trying to say with the art piece. Ehrenworth suggests that teachers should indicate to students that there is no wrong answer so that they feel safe to explore their ideas. After answering these questions, students move onto a free writing and drafting stage where they can start exploring with their words and connection building. Next, students revise their work into a final writing piece so that students can display their work and name their piece.

Other Literary Resources

In the article “Scent Memories: Crossing the Curriculum with Writing and Painting” by high school teacher Stephen Galvin (1997), he describes a project in which he integrates writing and painting curriculums. Students are asked to create an art piece about a smell from their memory. Each student then had to create a “recipe” for that smell and include it in the art piece with all the directions. Finally, students wrote a story about that scent and inscribed it in the background of the art piece. His initial goal in creating the project was to help the students have an aesthetic experience (an artistic experience in which your senses are operating at their peak) but as the years have
progressed his lesson has extended into creating a writing piece as well. Students really enjoy the project and it has become a successful discussion piece for the school.

In the article “Ask, Reflect, Text: Illustrating Story Plans with Art” Michael Dunn (2011) describes the ART strategy (Ask, Reflect, and Text) to help students become better writers. The first step in the ART strategy process for a visual story plan includes Graham and Harris’ WWW, W=2, H=2 cue questions to help students improve their narrative writing (Dunn, 2011, p. 377). The cue questions include: “Who is in the story? Where does the story take place? When does the story take place? What do characters do? What do the other characters do? How does the story end? How do the characters feel?” (Dunn, 2011, p. 377). Students ask themselves these questions to help them think of what they would like to include in their writing piece. After asking these questions, step two is for students to reflect on their answers as they illustrate their ideas. Step three is then to have the students use their visual story plan to generate words and sentences for their story text. A quote from the research of this article states:

Putting ideas into the form of graphic representations allows the children to understand that their actions can communicate. This is an extraordinary discovery for young children because it helps them to realize that in order to communicate, there is a tool (graphic representations) to communicate much simpler than words.” (Dunn, 2011, p. 377)

**Common Threads**

It seems that the more articles and journals I researched, the more commonalities I found between them. Creating art helps students become better writers. Looking at art before writing is very beneficial and leads to a more descriptive writing piece.
Combining art activities with writing activities engages students and makes them think more creatively. And this is what my thesis is all about.
METHODOLOGY

The problem that I researched in today’s art education world is how to correlate elementary art curricula with writing curricula. To investigate this issue I field tested a curriculum module that reflects the contemporary issues of writing in art education. There were 56 fifth grade students in the two classes that I included in the study. At the beginning of the year the fifth grade classes had 60 students overall, but four students had moved before finishing any of the projects. Of the 56 fifth grade students there were 48 fifth grade students that granted student assent for the use of their work in the study. Students in my classroom still had to complete the work but participating in the study for the purpose of this thesis was optional. Students who granted student assent signed a student assent form (Appendix Y). Student works and written reflections (produced during the normal course of their participation in projects for the curriculum module under investigation) were collected, documented and reviewed for analysis. Also included are rubrics that were used to assess the different projects (Appendices N, T and W). The data collected from this field study is supplemented with related background research collected from the previously referenced published resources. By researching the different books and articles included in the literature review section, I had a better idea about which lessons would be successful for student learning.

Based on this research, I designed different lessons that cater to my fine arts classroom curriculum and time allotment. These lessons provide curriculum development guidance to other elementary educators.

I introduced four different projects that students worked on during this curriculum module. The first project was the “Character Exploration” project where students created
a character with his/her own personality and physical characteristics, created a cartoon
version of their character and wrote narratives about their character’s life, goals,
aspirations and important events in their life, etc. After characters were developed, we
created a play as a class that included all of the characters and the students performed it
for an audience as a finale of the project. The “Character Exploration” project is the
main subject of my thesis and focuses on all areas of the fine arts.

The second project was the “Black-Out Poetry” project and I initially heard about
this project while taking a course about recent topics in art education. I introduced the
students to what black-out poetry was and we did a test run together with a sample
article. Students helped find words they wanted to keep in the article for their poem, and
then we blacked out the rest of the words that were not needed. Each student then created
their own example with a current article as practice. After the practice round, I then gave
students a choice of using newspaper articles, magazine articles or pages from books to
use for their final piece. Students went through the same process where they kept words
they wanted for their poem in the writing piece, then blacked out the rest of the words to
come up with a new piece of writing. Then, students had to find imagery or create
imagery by using magazines, scrap paper and “How to Draw” books. To finish off their
piece, students added paint to add interest.

The third project was found when reviewing different books and articles that
related to elementary art and writing. Beth Olshansky developed a program called
“Image-Making” that I felt would work perfectly for this project. Olshansky’s program
entails the following steps. Students’ first look at picture books and then discuss how the
images relate to the text. After reviewing the picture books, students create their own
books (in my class they focused on one art page due to time constraints) using two different art techniques. One technique is watercolor crayon resist paintings. The other consists of painting different pieces of paper using various painting techniques and then creating a paper collage using those papers by cutting and tearing. In both artist techniques, students create the artwork first and then talk about their art with peers and their teacher. After they’ve had discussions, they then translate those words onto paper for the text portion of their books. Students in my class focused on surrealism when working on this project to correlate with the visual arts curriculum. They used their painted papers to cut out their surrealistic designs.

The fourth and final project of this study is Picture Writing with famous artworks. Students had a chance to choose between a variety of famous artworks to use as their inspiration for their own writing piece. Evidence from my research indicated that looking at a piece or art (whether it be the students own or someone else’s) is a powerful way of helping the student become a more descriptive writer. The student has a visual image to look at and observe for the writing piece.

This curriculum model will help to fulfill the writing and visual art integration stipulation instituted by my school district. In the next section I’ve included standards and benchmarks that are utilized from the Corunna fine arts curriculum, Corunna 5th grade language arts curriculum as well as the English and language arts Common Core for each of the four projects discussed. Evidence that these standards and benchmarks were employed is explained in the next section.
DESCRIPTION OF RESEARCH

Character Exploration Project

The first project students worked on in relation to this study was the Character Exploration project they had started in the beginning of the year. Students invented their own character and portrayed that character in a play performed for family and friends.

Whereas Gilmore (1999) suggests in his lesson for students to observe everyday people and make characters from what they see, I felt it was important to let the kids have a little more creative freedom at the elementary level. As long as the student was interested and motivated to develop their character, their choices for what makes up that character were limitless. This was an extensive and time consuming project that took place over a period of 5 months.

To introduce the project to students, I created a PowerPoint (Appendix Z) that gave a brief overview of the entire project. I felt an introduction to the character program was appropriate so that students understood the project was going to be developed over a long period of time and would take some work. To first create their character, students had to complete a packet of different writing and art prompts (Appendices A – G). Some of the ideas for the packet came from a project that I had completed in my own 7th grade language arts class. I had to create my own character for the project and used some of the same writing narratives and prompts to help develop my own character. I loved working on the project and held onto all my work throughout the years. I wanted my students to take the same kind of pride and ownership in their work, so I decided to center the 5th grade project on the character development idea. Like I said, some of the writing prompts came from my own 7th grade project, but I changed the design and look of the
pages. Other writing prompts I found were from free graphic organizer websites. The various writing and art prompts in the packet that helped students develop their character include:

1. Profile: Creating a Fictional Character (Appendix A) - The students completed a profile sheet that helped develop physical and personality traits about their character. The profile sheet was how students first developed their character into someone more detailed.

2. Character Cover Page (Appendix B) - Students had to draw their character for the cover page of their packet using traits from their profile sheet to help them draw different details. Students were also given a “cartooning packet” with different illustrations of facial features and body features to help with the drawing process. Students were required to create a background for their character that helped show who their character was. Students then used colored pencils to finish their cover page.

3. Dreams narrative (Appendix C) – Students had to fill out their character’s dreams and aspirations.

4. News Flash creative story (Appendix D) – Students had to pretend their character was in the news for some kind of event and they had to create a story and drawing that went along with that idea. This was the only writing piece in the packet that I required a rough draft where they had to edit and revise their own writing. They then wrote their final draft on their News Flash page.
5. Memories drawings (Appendix E) – Students had to draw their character’s favorite memories including a favorite pet, a special friend, their most prized possession and a memory of their choice.

6. Bio poem (Appendix F) – A bio poem is a poem you write about yourself, but students had to write the bio poem as if they were their character. The bio poem includes the characters fears, family, what they like and feel, where they live and adjectives that describe them.

7. Character Comparison (Appendix G) – Students had to use a Venn diagram to compare and contrast themselves with their own character.

8. Town map (Appendix H) – Students had to design and draw their character’s town using an aerial map design as their focus.

By completing all of the art and writing prompts in the packet, students had a better feel for who their character was. This was important for the next portion of the project because they were going to portray their character in a play that would be performed for their families at the end of January. Each character in the class would be involved and the plays would have to be clear for the audience.

Each class worked as a group in order to figure out a way that all characters would be included in plays that would make sense for the audience. To start this process, we looked at how a play script is set up like a regular story. We already knew who our characters were, but we had to figure out the other elements of our play including: a setting, an activity, a problem and a solution. I had written down a list of the different characters as well as their jobs and key elements about each one. We looked over all the characters in the class as a group and then brainstormed different ideas for the rest of our
play elements (see Appendix I). I asked for ideas from students as to where the setting would take place and wrote down the many ideas students delivered. The same process happened as we went through the activities that could take place, the problems that could arise from those characters and activities, and solutions that would be possible as well. I made sure to call on all students during this process so that everyone had input. By the end of class period, there were many different ideas from all students in class. I took those ideas and tried to figure out ways to fit all the characters in with a plot that would make sense for all. This was a very daunting and time consuming task, to which I ended up dividing each class into two groups since there were so many ideas to work with. I typed up the basis of the scripts and went through them with each class. I left blank spots for the students to give more of their input in the final plays. For example, I let the students share ideas on the name of a hair salon, the town mascot, a kind of sandwich a particular character was eating, etc. After they had shared their ideas, we did a class vote for each blank option. I finished writing the scripts with their input and printed out two copies for each student – one copy for school practice and another copy so they could practice at home. I did not have students write their own scripts by themselves due to time constraints. Students were already taught a script writing lesson in fourth grade, so I felt having the students write their scripts for this project would not have been an effective use of their time.

Students received their play scripts at the beginning of November, leaving them about 8 or 9 weeks to work on portraying their characters, learning their lines and stage directions, coming up with props for their part, creating backgrounds with various art materials and coming up with their own costume that reflected their character. During
our 45 minute class periods, I would work with one play group while they practiced their play, and the other group would work on finishing their Character packets. Students who had finished their packets were able to watch the groups perform and critique the group by using constructive criticism. During our 30 minute class period’s students were learning songs that I selected with the theme of characters. Songs they sang included a Latin number entitled “Valentine Vendor” about a man who sells Valentines, a song by the Beatles entitled “When I’m Sixty-Four” about how the singer envisions himself being when he is older, and “The Candy Man” song from Charlie and the Chocolate Factory about the man who sells candy. The songs were to be performed along with the plays at their final performance.

On the night of the program, students came to the show dressed as their character. Their Character packets were placed on tables in the hallway outside of the gym so their families could see all the hard work and effort that went into developing these characters. Each of the four groups performed their plays for the audience and sang their character songs. Students then took their Character packets home at the end of the night so they could show their parents all the hard work they put into the project. At that point, I made sure to have every single packet graded and ready to go home.

As this project was completed in a time period of 5 months, it was a very extensive and intricate project that covered a wide variety of curriculum standards and benchmarks through the Corunna Public Schools fine arts and language arts curriculums for 5th graders, as well as English and Language Arts Common Core Standards and benchmarks. The Corunna fine arts curriculum was developed by our own fine arts team members. When we created the curriculum we looked at national standards and
Michigan standards for each subject area of the arts. We then combined these curriculums and made it more specific in some areas while deciding on what benchmarks would be appropriate per grade level due to time constraints. The reason I included both the past 5th grade language arts curriculum as well as the Common Core is because the Corunna 5th grade language arts curriculum is more specific and is what the teachers were currently going by. The Common Core is what they are striving towards so I knew that it would be important to look towards for the future. The various curriculum standards and benchmarks included in this project are as follows:

**Corunna 5th grade Fine Arts.**

- Drama: Students will be introduced to breaking down a dramatic story into characters, setting, plot, problem and solution.
- Drama: Students will explore morphing other art forms into an original dramatic piece.
- Drama: Students will explore creating simple scenery, costumes, sound and props for the dramatic process.
- Drama: Students will be introduced to critiquing strategies in a respectful and constructive manner.
- Music: Students will explore observing and identifying cross-curricular connections within the fifth grade curriculum.
- Visual Art: Students will be introduced to the concept of cartooning in art.
- Visual Art: Students will explore how to communicate their ideas through art.
- Visual Art: Students will explore making connections between visual arts and other disciplines.

**Corunna 5th grade Language Arts.**

- Writer’s Workshop: Learn through mini-lessons which address specific writing conventions and processes.
- Writer’s Workshop: Write at their own pace and at their own level.
- Writer’s Workshop: Write a variety of genres, including personal narratives, poetry, and informational text.
- Writer’s Workshop: Use pre-writing strategies (brainstorming), drafting, revising, and editing for narrative and informational writing.
- Writer’s Workshop: Write a cohesive narrative piece, such as myth, legend, fantasy, or adventure, developing character, setting, and plot (*as a group*).
- Writer’s Workshop: Write an informational comparative piece.
- Writer’s Workshop: Produce and present a research project.
- Writer’s Workshop: Apply a variety of pre-writing strategies in order to generate, sequence, and structure ideas.
- Speaking: Deliver presentations.
- Speaking: Use common grammatical structures while exploring and using language to communicate effectively with a variety of different audiences.

**Common Core English/Language Arts.**

- CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.5.2: Write informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas and information clearly.
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.5.2a: Introduce a topic clearly, provide a general observation and focus, and group related information logically; include formatting (e.g., headings), illustrations, and multimedia when useful to aiding comprehension.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.5.3a: Orient the reader by establishing a situation and introducing a narrator and/or characters; organize an event sequence that unfolds naturally. (as a group)

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.5.3e: Provide a conclusion that follows from the narrated experiences or events. (as a group)

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.5.4: Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development and organization are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.5.10: Write routinely over extended time frames (time for research, reflection, and revision) and shorter time frames (a single sitting or a day or two) for a range of discipline-specific tasks, purposes, and audiences.

**Black-out Poetry Collage**

The Black-out poetry collage idea came from a class I took two years ago called ‘Recent Topics in Art Education’. The focus of the class was combining art with writing - which is where I decided I wanted to study this idea further through an elementary art viewpoint. The Black-out poetry collage seemed like an interesting idea that would be adaptable to my 5th grade fine arts classroom.
Black-out poetry is where the student takes a finished writing piece – whether it comes from a newspaper, book, or magazine – and creates a poem out of the words that are already in the original writing piece. The words that the student wants to keep for their poem are left unchanged, while the words that the student does not want to keep are crossed out, or blacked-out. By blacking out words that are not wanted, a new piece of writing is formed that brings forth a new meaning. When the poem is finished, the student makes their poem visually appealing by adding different images that help explain the poem.

When I started teaching the lesson I first explained what black-out poetry was and showed a few examples of it through a PowerPoint presentation (Appendix L). We then made our own black-out poem from a current news article that I had printed off the internet from a news website. I made a copy of the article on a transparency so I could display it on the overhead for the class. We read through the article looking for key words that we could use in our own poem. I told the students to keep in mind not to just pick random words – the poem should have a flow to it that makes it clear and understandable. I asked for student volunteers to give suggestions on what words we should keep in the article for our poem. I circled the suggested word with an overhead marker and would read the poem out loud each time I circled a word to make sure the poem was sounding clear. By circling the words it was like we were brainstorming, editing and revising our poem. We would not black-out any words, or create our final draft, until our poem was coherent. Once we finished our poem, I crossed out the words we did not use for our poem with the marker. I asked for suggestions on what images would help support our poem. I reiterated that the image or images had to communicate
the same message as the words. I gave students a sample article to practice on first and they created their own poems using the same process. When circling the words they wanted to keep, they had to use a pencil so that mistakes could be undone. When a student thought they were ready for their final draft, they carefully used a marker to black-out the words they didn’t want to keep for their poem. We completed the practice poem in one 45 class minute period. The next class period they could choose an article from a newspaper, book (I bought 4 books from Goodwill that I ripped the pages out of beforehand) or magazine article to start their final black-out poem project.

Each student had an option to cut out magazine images, draw their own images with an option of using ‘How to Draw’ books (books that show students how to draw various things step by step), or paint different patterns or designs onto their art piece to make it more visually appealing. Mirroring the suggestions of Gilmore (1999), the images that the student picked were supposed to be symbolic of events or things from their poem. “Literature and art are full of symbols. Sometimes they suggest a very specific meaning or event, but most of the time symbols are physical objects that denote large, abstract ideas” (Gilmore, p. 43). Gilmore continues on to talk about how students should avoid clichés, but since I am working with elementary students it was important for me to let them choose their own symbols without restrictions. What may be a cliché to a secondary student might be a new idea to an elementary student. For example, some of the student’s poems were about love, and the images they chose included hearts, couples and the color red. If these students were at the secondary level I would ask them to dig deeper and try to find other meanings in their words, but for an elementary student the “cliché” images were appropriate for their age.
Students had to continuously check in with me as they worked on the project, and I had to give the final okay in order for it to be turned in. After everyone was finished, students completed a Black-out poetry reflection page (Appendix M) where they had to describe their art piece, how their writing matched their visual art and their general feelings about how they completed the project. The project took 6 weeks to complete in all, with a 45 minute session each week.

The various curriculum standards and benchmarks included in this project are as follows:

**Corunna 5th grade Fine Arts.**

- Visual Arts: Students will be introduced to the concept of using symbolism in art.
- Visual Arts: Students will explore how to communicate their ideas through art.
- Visual Arts: Students will continue to explore making connections between visual arts and other disciplines.

**Corunna 5th grade Language Arts.**

- Writer’s Workshop: Learn through mini-lessons which address specific writing conventions and processes.
- Writer’s Workshop: Write at their own pace and at their own level.
- Writer’s Workshop: Write a variety of genres, including personal narratives, poetry, and informational text.
- Writer’s Workshop: Use pre-writing strategies (brainstorming), drafting, revising, and editing for narrative and informational writing.
• Writer’s Workshop: Apply a variety of pre-writing strategies in order to generate, sequence, and structure ideas.

**Common Core English/Language Arts.**

• CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.5.2: Write informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas and information clearly.

• CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.5.2a: Introduce a topic clearly, provide a general observation and focus, and group related information logically; include formatting (e.g., headings), illustrations, and multimedia when useful to aiding comprehension.

• CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.5.4: Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development and organization are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.

• CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.5.5: With guidance and support from peers and adults, develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach.

• CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.5.10: Write routinely over extended time frames (time for research, reflection, and revision) and shorter time frames (a single sitting or a day or two) for a range of discipline-specific tasks, purposes, and audiences.

**Surrealism “Image-Making” Painted Papers Collage**

The third project that students worked on was a surrealism “Image-Making” painted papers collage. I have a lesson that focuses on surrealism that I do with my 5th graders every year and I thought it would be the perfect lesson to incorporate Olshansky’s
(2008b) method of an Artists/Writers workshop with her “Image-making” process. I first showed students a PowerPoint about Salvador Dali and surrealism (Appendix P) that helped explain that surrealism is a type of art style that is dreamlike and strange. The PowerPoint also shows different works by Salvador Dali appropriate for the elementary level that we observed and critiqued as a group. At the end of the PowerPoint I discussed how the students would be creating their own surrealist art piece by morphing together a living object with a non-living object. The students had to have elements of each included in their final morphed creature. A background was required that showed a place that new morphed creature would live. The student also had to give their new morphed creature a name by combining the two words of their original objects. There were examples at the end of the PowerPoint to make this idea clearer for the students. One such example was as an elephant (living thing) morphed together with a tuba (non-living thing) that becomes a tubaphant, or an elephuba. The tubaphant has an elephant body but the trunk is transformed into the bell of a tuba. The background shows the tubaphant in a habitat that an elephant would be but there are plants shaped like horns, clouds shaped like music notes, antelope with harps as antlers, etc. After discussing the idea of the project and showing examples, the process of creation was then described. Students were first going to sketch their own ideas in their sketchbooks, but they would not be drawing their final piece. They were going to make a collage to create the morphed creature using painted textured papers.

Before allowing students to create the painted textured papers, I showed them a Textured Paper Collages PowerPoint (Appendix Q) so they had a better idea of what the collages would look like. I left two 45 minute class periods open for students to be able
to create the painted texture papers. I explained to the class that these textured papers were going to be the papers they cut and rip from to make everything in their morphed creature design. For example, if their living creature was a turtle they would want to make one of their papers have a turtle shell pattern on it so they can cut from it to create their morphed creature. Or if their creature would be flying in the air, they would want to make one of their papers have a cloud pattern that they can utilize for their project. I demonstrated three different paper painting techniques.

The first paper painting technique I showed to students was a watercolor crayon resist painting. This was not a new process for most, but I hadn’t taught a lesson on watercolor crayons resists to any class below second grade so I thought it would be a good refresher. In order to create a watercolor crayon resist, the student must first draw a design using crayon on their paper. After the crayon design is finished, the student can then paint overtop with watercolor paint. The crayon will resist the paint and stay true to its color due to the wax in the crayon.

The next paper painting technique I showed to students was a bubble painting technique (see Appendix R, figure 29). In order to create this technique I mixed dish soap with tempera paint and water in a cup. I made four different colors to give students more options. I blew bubbles into the soap and paint mixture until the bubbles reached above the cup. I then placed the paper on top of the bubbles, flattening them to the paper as they popped. When I lifted the paper, there were many circles that had printed from the bubbles. I also showed how students could blow bubbles with their straws in the soapy paint mixture and then blow onto their papers to get a dripping circle texture.
The final painting paper technique was the textured tools painting (see Appendix Q, figures 28 and 30). I have a couple of buckets of different rollers, sponges, stamps, and funky tools that create different textures and designs. For this technique, I simply showed them how they could create patterns using these tools with different colors of tempera paint. I made sure to tell students to clean off their tool every time they wanted to dip it into a different color of paint. I also showed them examples of what some of the various tools could do on paper.

After giving a demonstration on each technique, I let students get to work. I encouraged students to make 4 or 5 different painted papers. I had different painting technique stations set up in the room, and I also had a table where students could just paint with tempera and a paintbrush if they needed to do something in particular for their design that the other techniques wouldn’t allow for. This was also where they could make a splatter painting (see Appendix Q, figure 31). While students worked, I was filling up paint trays and making sure everyone was on task. I encouraged students to fill up their page even if they didn’t think they needed the whole thing. I let students choose from a variety of colored construction papers to use the techniques on. Once a student had finished one of their papers, they put it on the drying rack and were encouraged to make more.

The next class period after creating the painted texture papers, students sorted through the stack of papers to find their own creations. I reminded them about the surrealism morphing creature project we had talked about before and explained that they would be using these painted papers to create their morphed creature, background and other details in their art piece. Since students had plenty of paper choices to choose from,
I explained that any papers they did not want to use or were finished using would go in the ‘community bucket’. This was a bucket of papers that any student could take papers from. I sat out glue and scissors for students as they began creating their morphed creatures. If students needed paint for small details, I allowed for that at the end of the process.

After students had finished their ‘Image-making’ piece, I gave them a Surrealism writing prompt page (see Appendix S) to help them describe their creature and its surroundings. I encouraged students to really observe their art piece, the textures in their work, the colors and the shapes. I told them to imagine using their five senses as if they were in their art piece and describe what they were feeling in the writing. I told them to tell the reader more about their creature and what it was all about. The writing prompt page was supposed to be used as a brainstorming page to write down all their ideas. The students were then to edit and revise their writing piece and write their final draft on a separate sheet of paper. I then handed out a grading rubric to students so that they could grade themselves on their own piece of work, and also so they could make sure they had what they needed included in their final art and writing piece.

This project was time consuming, taking about 6 to 7 weeks to complete, with one 45 minute session per week. The original project suggested by Olshansky (2008b) would involve students making various art pieces, forming them into a book and then writing a much larger writing piece that helped tell a story. Due to time constraints this was not feasible, but the adjustments made still allowed for student success. The unit included the following standards and benchmarks:
Corunna 5th grade Fine Arts.

- Visual Art: Students will be introduced to the concept of pattern in art work.
- Visual Art: Students will be introduced to the concept of taking objects out of context and placing them in unfamiliar context (surrealism).
- Visual Art: Students will explore making connections between visual arts and other disciplines.
- Visual Art: Students will explore how to analyze personal and other works of art.

Corunna 5th grade Language Arts.

- Writer’s Workshop: Write at their own pace and at their own level.
- Writer’s Workshop: Learn through mini-lessons which address specific writing conventions and processes.
- Writer’s Workshop: Write a variety of genres, including personal narratives, poetry, and informational text.
- Writer’s Workshop: Revise drafts to improve sequence and flow of ideas.
- Writer’s Workshop: Write a cohesive narrative piece, such as myth, legend, fantasy, or adventure, developing character, setting, and plot.

Common Core English/Language Arts.

- CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.5.2: Write informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas and information clearly.
- CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.5.2a: Introduce a topic clearly, provide a general observation and focus, and group related information logically; include
formatting (e.g., headings), illustrations, and multimedia when useful to aiding comprehension.

- CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.5.2b: Develop the topic with facts, definitions, concrete details, quotations, or other information and examples related to the topic.

- CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.5.3: Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, descriptive details, and clear event sequences.

- CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.5.3d: Use concrete words and phrases and sensory details to convey experiences and events precisely.

- CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.5.10: Write routinely over extended time frames (time for research, reflection, and revision) and shorter time frames (a single sitting or a day or two) for a range of discipline-specific tasks, purposes, and audiences.

**Picture Writing with Famous Artworks**

The final project included in the study was the Picture writing with famous artworks, which was based on simplified lessons by Ehrenworth (2003). Ehrenworth values the use of famous artwork and poetry to help students create stories. Instead of using both artwork and poetry, I chose just to use the famous artwork so that students could create their own ideas from the famous artwork. I felt that if I would have given them a painting and a poem, they would have been trying to figure out why the poem fit with the artwork. I felt this would be difficult for the students and would take more class sessions than we had. Instead they focused on a piece of artwork so that they could
create their own story from personal experiences. Students were each given a print of a famous art piece and were to create a story, narrative or poem about the art piece. I wanted students to feel comfortable with their own choice of writing style because the students had only one class session to work on the writing piece, not leaving much time for editing. I picked an artwork from the pile and gave them an example of an imaginative story to help steer them in a good direction. I made sure to let them know that there was no wrong answer. I wanted them to be able to connect to the art piece in a personal way so that it was easier for them to write about the piece.

I chose 32 famous art pieces from various artists and styles and printed a copy of each along with the title and artist listed below the piece (see list of art pieces used in Appendix V). After going over the lesson, I passed the art pieces out to students at random. I gave them the option of switching with others, sharing an art piece with another or getting a different art piece from the left over pile that was on my desk. I told students that their art piece should speak to them and be interesting. I wanted them to make sure that they could connect to the art piece in a personal way so that it was easier for them to write about the piece. I made sure to let them know that there is no wrong answer. This lesson was taught at the end of the year, and due to time constraints I only allowed for one class period to write their stories. Ideally I would’ve liked to have about 3 class periods so there would be time for editing, revising and sharing with others.

The project incorporates the following standards and benchmarks from previously noted curriculums:

Corunna 5th grade Fine Arts.

- Visual Art: Students will be introduced to several artists and artist styles.
- Visual Art: Students will explore making connections between visual arts and other disciplines.
- Visual Art: Students will explore how to analyze personal and other works of art.

**Corunna 5th grade Language Arts.**
- Writer’s Workshop: write at their own pace and at their own level.
- Writer’s Workshop: write a variety of genres, including personal narratives, poetry, and informational text.
- Writer’s Workshop: write a cohesive narrative piece, such as myth, legend, fantasy, or adventure, developing character, setting, and plot.

**Common Core English/Language Arts.**
- CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.5.3: Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, descriptive details, and clear event sequences.
FINDINGS

Character Exploration Project

When I initially introduced students to the project (Appendix Z) I could tell students were a bit confused and flustered. I wasn’t very surprised because I was throwing a lot of information at them all at once but made it as clear as possible. I was asked many questions and answered them to my best ability. Thankfully things changed when I handed out the character profile sheets (Appendix A). Students started to get excited about their characters and the entire process. When choosing different traits for their characters, I saw a pattern with students choosing either a realistic character somewhat like themselves or a character that was completely different from themselves with interesting quirks. Student R created an eccentric character named Joseph Star Labof, who was an older artist from France (Appendix A, figures 1 and 2). Student R describes the character by circling different trait options, like shiny hair, thin nose, straight teeth, stylish clothes, etc. The student fills in the blanks for other options, like hazel eye color, the weight of the character at 102 pounds, etc. The final questions answered at the bottom state that Joseph Star Labof is a painter and he wants to help solve world hunger and help the homeless. From filling out the profile sheet, student R has a good understanding of who their character is. Student LL created a character named Sydney Lynn May who is a 17 year old hair stylist (Appendix A, figures 3 and 4). The student selected Sydney to have been from South America, have smooth and thick hair, light blue eyes, thin and straight nose, and clean clothes. Sydney also loves dogs, art, school and shopping. I feel students had fun filling out the profile, and it helped them with their next challenge. According to the Character Exploration Reflections (Appendix
K), eight students decided that the profile was their favorite because they could choose everything about their character. A handful of students said that if they could change anything about the project, they would’ve changed something about their character on the profile page, with most saying the character’s name or job.

After creating the character profile, students had to draw their character to use as a cover page for their packet. I also gave them a cartooning packet to help them with this task. Student K created Bobby Prince Charles III (Appendix B, figure 5) who was an evil genius. The background is bright red with lightning bolts to help visualize Bobby’s personality. Student P created a lion tamer named Jimmy Sanders (Appendix B, figure 6) who is funny and girl crazy. The cage and animal in the background helps describe Jimmy’s job. David Willam (Appendix B, figure 7) is a pro skateboarder created by student QQ, and is riding his skateboard on the cover page. Sydney Lynn May (Appendix B, figure 8) created by student LL is shown from the earlier profile page example. Student MM created a three headed character named Boomaxsoon (Appendix B, figure 9), and struggled with creating a background. Joseph Star Labof (Appendix B, figure 10) made by student R is shown painting in Paris, also shown in the previous profile example. Student V created a friendly witch character named Purple Giggly Flowerstone (Appendix B, figure 11). The are pleasant things in the background, like flowers and houses. Student L created a doctor named John Right (Appendix B, figure 12). The doctor is jumping on a trampoline because he was described as being athletic and fun. Students did a nice job drawing their characters, but sometimes it was a challenge to get students to finish a background – especially one that fit their character.

Students colored their character in with colored pencils, but from looking at the majority
of the creations, I feel I could’ve talked more about blending with colored pencils and making sure they fill in an entire space slowly. Some students took their time drawing the cover page but rushed when it took time to color it in. Although I thought they could use some help with the coloring, 26 students said that their favorite drawing to work on was the character cover page based on the Character Exploration Reflection (Appendix K). Reasons students chose it was because they liked drawing people, they took the most time on it, they could imagine the most, and they liked their characters outfit and hair. A few students said they would’ve colored the background more or worked harder on their drawing.

The next page in the packet was the Dreams page where students had to fill out their characters dreams and aspirations. Student QQ filled in the page about the skateboarding character David Willam (Appendix C, figure 13). When reading through, it is apparent the student is interested in skateboarding as he knows the name of the famous skateboarder Rob Dyrdek. When asked what his character always wanted to do, he says jump the Grand Canyon with a rocket skateboard. The student is imaginative and sticks with his characters role. In another example, student LL writes about the character Sydney Lynn May (Appendix C, figure 14). This student says that someday the character would wish to own a big and fancy five star salon, and beings that the character is a hair stylist this dream would be realistic. Students finished the Dreams page quickly and had imaginative ideas that fit with their characters. Only three students found it to be their favorite writing piece.

The News Flash writing piece was an opportunity for students to create any kind of story about their character that would be in the news. This was the only writing piece
from the character packet from which I required students to have a rough draft. After they edited and revised their rough draft, they had to write the final copy on the News Flash page, as well as draw a picture that went along with it. Student Q wrote about a football player named Ricky Sanders (Appendix D, figure 15). The story he created says:

This strange teen known as the amazing football player Ricky Sanders disrupted a dance party at the White House. The teen is 20. This is October 17th, 2012. We have asked this teen many questions why he did it. He said the football team he plays on won. The Philadelphia Eagles won the Super Bowl. So he then told us he was happy. So I flew to the White House and then joined the dance party. Til’ further notice, this is Boston News or BBN.

The story is inventive and the student sticks with their character. Although it could’ve used a bit more editing, the student does make the writing piece sound like a news story.

Student N writes about their character Jake Sanders (Appendix D, figure 16), a bear tamer at the Detroit zoo.

Breaking news from the Detroit zoo – Lion tamer Jimmy Sanders and bear tamer Jake Sanders let out 8 year old Willy (the bear) and four year old Osker (the lion). Lion and bear both attacked elderly Fred Dixon. Now recovering Fred Dixon is in the hospital with one broken arm and a couple cuts. The lion and bear are both in their cages at the Detroit zoo. Both zookeepers almost got fired, but since that was usually happened to them, they didn’t. Now that was the breaking news!

There are still a few revisions that could have been made, but the student wrote a clear story about animals escaping, injuring an elderly man, then getting recaptured. Based on the Character Exploration Reflection (Appendix K), a total of 17 students chose News
Flash as their favorite writing piece from the packet. Students said it allowed them to be more creative than the others, they liked writing news stories, and they thought it was fun. One student said it was their favorite drawing piece from the packet. If there is one thing I would do different with this page, it would be that I help them edit and revise their writing pieces rather than let them do it themselves.

Next students completed the Memories page (Appendix E) and they had a chance to draw some of their character’s favorite memories. Student D had to draw about their character Purpella Mwassy (Appendix E, figure 17), a student who loves to paint and the color purple. The student drew a dog for the character’s favorite pet, a picture of the character next to a friend, her most prized possession was a cleaning award and her favorite memory was one of her boyfriend. Based on what we know about the character from the profile sheet, the Memories page doesn’t match up as well as it should. However, the student did take their time to draw and color the page. Only six students decided that the Memories page was their favorite art piece from the packet.

For the Bio poem, students had to pretend like they were like their character to fill it out. Student OO wrote the poem about their character Emily Hollister (Appendix F, figure 18). Emily is a lover of shoes, clothes and her parents. She fears losing money, that she can’t shop and bears. She would love to see 1 Direction, no school and more money. From the Bio poem this character sounds like a typical teenager. Student PP writes their poem about their character Rose Korling (Appendix F, figure 19), who loves to clean. The four adjectives used to describe Rose are funny, sweet, loving and helpful. She feels loved, cared for and good for herself. She’d like to see happier lives, more homes and food. From the student’s Bio poem, you can tell their character is a kind
humanitarian. This writing prompt gave students many chances to show their creative side, as well as a chance to further the development of their character. Only four students claimed that the Bio poem was their favorite writing piece of the packet.

The character comparison Venn diagram is where students had to compare and contrast themselves with their character. Student PP does this with their character Rose Korling (Appendix G, figure 20). A few of the comparisons show that the two are alike in that they are funny, sweet, nice, tall, love to explore, are not married and are smart. They are different in their feelings on sports, hunting, painting and being social. For student OO, the character Emily Hollister (Appendix G, figure 21) has similarities in that they’re both nice, pretty, funny, have parents, have a twin, live in a house and go to school. They are different from each other through their wealth, intelligence, families, the size of their house and their feelings about school. Students had many choices with this assignment, like the previous pages. Just two students said that the character comparison was their favorite writing piece, saying that they liked seeing the differences between themselves and their character.

The final assignment for the packet was the aerial town map. Students had to draw a map of the town their character lived in making sure to label different key elements of the town. Student Y created a map of a town called Rich Ville (Appendix H, figure 22) that shows a school, clock tower, the character’s house, a pond, other houses and a market. The student used bright colors and labeled the streets to complete the map. Student SS created a town called Funky Town (Appendix H, figure 23). Included on the map is a park, zoo, the character’s house and The Krusty Krab with Spongebob Squarepants. Although I feel the student could have colored more to make the map look
more finished, it’s still a creative town. When reviewing the Character Exploration Reflections (Appendix K) a total of ten students liked creating the town map the best. Students said that they like making maps, they could create their dream town, they like to travel and they spent a lot of time on it. I felt students did a great job with the map and there was a wide variety of maps produced.

When brainstorming for the plays, I had students share ideas and I wrote them on a transparency sheet on an overhead so the whole class could see. When students were sharing ideas they were very excited to give their input, and were very good about connecting the settings with the problems and solutions. After students shared their ideas, I circled the ideas I felt would work together when creating the plays (see Appendix I). I then wrote the final plays for each group using their suggested ideas. One of the four plays created was called “The Cursed Prom” (Appendix J) and came straight from the ideas written during the brainstorming session. Each student played their own character in the play. I made copies of the plays and we read through them as a class. Students seemed to be excited about their parts and were eager to get started. When practicing the plays, I let students decide their own stage directions and encouraged students to stay in character. Each group worked on play backdrops for their particular play. They also worked as a team to figure out any props that would be needed, bringing in things from home that would be useful.

On the day of the performance, we had a rehearsal in the gym so students would get some practice using the microphones and changing scenery on the stage. Since our school district does not have an auditorium, a portable stage was purchased to aid with performances. It travels from building to building, so it’s necessary for students to
practice using it correctly. Rehearsal was during the school day, but the actual performance was set for 6:00 pm so that friends and family could come and watch. Students showed up in their characters’ costumes that they created and performed their plays. I had a copy of each script and helped feed lines when necessary. I was pleasantly surprised that I only had to help out on 3 different occasions. The students were prepared and really got into character.

In the Character Exploration Reflections (Appendix K), a total of 45 students out of the 47 students surveyed said they enjoyed performing their characters part in the play. The majority of students that enjoyed performing liked their lines and turning into someone else. Only two students did not enjoy performing. One of those students said they messed up and should have practiced more, while the other thought they didn’t have enough lines in the play. When asked if the students would like to be their character in real life, 32 students answered yes they would like to be their character, while 15 decided no.

At the end of the reflection, I asked each student if they thought they were a good writer. Out of the 47 students, only 37 students said they thought they were. They said they felt this way because either they got good grades on writing assignments in their regular classroom, their teacher told them they were good at it, they are creative thinkers or that they work hard at it. I had 10 students say they were not good writers, with reasons that they were sloppy, it’s hard for them to think of things, or they just don’t like it. I asked students if they felt like they were better creative writers after they had completed the Character Exploration project. Of the 47 students, there were 39 that thought they were better creative writers. Some of the reasons they thought this were
because they enjoyed working on the project so they worked harder, it helped them create more ideas for fictional stories, they could use their imagination, it inspired them to create more characters, they had to think outside the box, it gave them more to write about, it gave them more experience and they had a fun time making it. There were 5 students who didn’t think the project helped them become better creative writers. Some of the reasons were because they think that they are sloppy writers, they don’t like creative writing, they already thought they were good creative writers before the project and they didn’t think there was that much creative writing involved. The remaining 3 students felt indifferent.

Black-Out Poetry Project

Students seemed to be engaged in the process of making the black-out poetry and were eager to share their created poems. They giggled and smiled as their new stories unfolded from their original writing piece. Student MM’s art piece (Appendix O, figure 24) shows a drawn octopus in the top left corner, painted sound waves in the top right corner, the word quiet written on the left and a scuba diver in the bottom right corner. Here is the poem that goes along with the image:

Buster, ask bad octopuses to be quiet

Shouting octopus scared Bob

The student is implying that the scuba diver is named Bob, and he is scared because the octopus is shouting at him. Although the story is a bit silly, the idea is clear and the idea of the poem is represented with great images and art details.

In a different example, student HH’s art piece (Appendix O, figure 25) also includes excellent imagery to support the writing. The art piece has a golden background
with images of beautiful things from nature placed around the border. There are images of flowers, designs from nature and the student painted an apple to better represent the poem. The poem says:

Golden apples that grew in the garden
If any of them would bring a great price
Exists any longer
The golden apple fruit

Although a little fragmented, the writing helps the reader understand more about the images placed around the art piece. The reader can discern that the apple is not ordinary and comes from a magical world, and the students art details help show this. When asked to describe their poem, the student said it was about the magic of the golden apples that regain your health. The student was successful in showing this idea.

Student G’s art piece (Appendix O, figure 26) shows images of earth’s natural disasters and warns the viewer with the word ‘terror’ planted in the middle of the piece. The artist used dark colors to help further the idea of danger in the piece. The poem says:

Rain, survival, fire, more wood, storm
Tomorrow is another day
He got excited for nothing
Lightning, raining, earthquake
He was hungry

When asked what their black-out poetry was about, the student said it was about someone who is stranded and is trying to survive. The student was successful in having their poem match their imagery, as well as portray the meaning quite clearly.
In the final example, student Q's art piece (Appendix O, figure 27) shows images of warriors from many years ago as well as Medusa painted at the top of the piece. There is a painted design over top of the blacked out words. The writing piece reads:

A stranger in a cloak was in gymnastic exercises
He felt brave
I heard names of Perseus
He might give the stranger the head of Medusa

This story and images definitely work together in this piece, and the writing is very smooth and coherent.

Although most students were excited about their own poems, I did find many of them challenging to read. Since their writing pieces could come only from limited resources, creating a poem that was understandable was a challenge for the students. Many of the student poems that were difficult to read were challenging because there was a lack of flow to the reading. Some students just circled random words, even though I emphasized to the students they should read the poem to themselves as they choose words to include.

Another limitation that came with the project was the books I had picked to be used for their writing pieces. Most students chose to use the book pages as their writing piece. One of the books was for younger readers and included a story about a fox. Therefore, most of the students who chose a page from this book had a poem about a fox so there wasn’t much variation. The pages in this book were shiny and when students tried to black out words for their poem, the marker would rub off and smear. The other
three books were more varied with topic options, but if I would do this project again I would not include the fox book in the choices.

The artwork was a challenge for some students in that if they didn’t understand their own writing piece they had a hard time thinking of symbolic images that would be compatible. Most students focused on a few key words in their poem and found interesting images to go along with it. To grade the projects, I used a rubric (Appendix N) that valued a clear writing piece that told a story, cleanliness of the artistic elements as well as aiding the art piece, and positive use of class time. Overall, I feel I was more pleased with the artistic elements of the final pieces rather than the actual writing. I do feel students learned about black-out poetry and enjoyed creating their projects, but I feel more practice on the writing element of this project would have been beneficial and students would have produced better pieces.

In regards to student reflections for the project (Appendix M), the majority of students liked their poems more than their imagery. Students also thought the project was interesting because they had not tried a black-out poem before. Student FF said “I thought it was cool trying to make a poem out of a page in a book.” As I said earlier, a few students did think they could’ve done better with writing there poem. Student RR said, “I would get a different poem and make it make sense.” On the same idea student K said, “If I could change something about my project, I would pick a different poem because the one I had was confusing.” Students seemed to enjoy the process of making the project. Student R said “My favorite part about the black-out poetry was making the words my own.” Student O said, “My favorite part about the project was finding pictures, because there were many interesting photos.” In looking over student
reflections, I would definitely consider doing this project again – as long as I spent more time on showing students how to make their poems a bit clearer. A helpful way to strengthen the writing pieces would be to review sentence structures, and elements such as noun, verbs and transitions.

**Surrealism “Image-Making” Painted Papers Collage**

Students were very engaged when discussing the work by Salvador Dali, and it was a great way to introduce the art style of surrealism. After we discussed the process of creation, students were eager to start sketching their ideas in their sketchbook. Some students did struggle with the concept of morphing a living thing with a non-living thing, or wanted to use objects that did not have a constant shape. For instance, I had a student ask me if they could morph a cloud with a tree. Although a cloud is non-living, the shape of a cloud is not specific. Therefore I had to alter my explanation of the project for a few students, saying they had to use an object that was made by nature mixed with an object that was manmade. The idea was to mix something organic with something that wasn’t so, to get a stranger result. I told the students that if their morphed creature wasn’t weird, they weren’t doing their job.

When working on the painted papers, I had to make sure all of my supplies were set up ahead of time. It was a bit chaotic at times since students were all working at any station they chose and were constantly moving around the room. The fine arts classroom is not very big, so I advised students to make sure they were aware of their surroundings and to squeeze in where they could fit during the process of creation. One thing I failed to mention to students was to write their name on their papers before they started to paint. We had a few issues with students misplacing their papers, but the majority of students
found their papers just fine. The ‘community bucket’ turned out to be a great asset to the classroom because many students didn’t have all the different textures and colors they needed for their project. The painted papers turned out better than I thought they would and it inspired me to try the idea with my younger classes. Students were proud of their different textured pieces. I also felt students were very engaged from the beginning, and they were very proud of their own work. Once the project was over, leftover paper was placed in the scrap paper bucket for all classes and grade levels to use for various projects. The younger students loved the “fancy paper”.

When creating their final morphed creature piece, I did not have set dimensions on how big the piece would have to be. This led to a variation of size and shape of completed pieces, which I really enjoyed. Some students had forgotten about what they had planned in their sketchbooks, and created a completely new design which was fine. Many students had forgotten to add details in their background to make the environment for their creature be more believable, so I had to do a lot of re-teaching of the requirements of the project. This also could be due to the fact that we worked on the project for a period of 6 to 7 weeks, just 45 minutes per week. Once I reminded students of the requirements, they would work more on their pieces. I was very pleased with the results of the ‘Image-making’ part of the project.

Students were given a surrealism writing prompt (Appendix S) to help them write about their morphed creature. The paper was supposed to be used as a brainstorming page, where students would edit and revise their work. They would then write their final copy on a separate sheet of paper. I would do a quick look over before students wrote their final copy to make sure they were including enough detail. It would have been
more beneficial to sit down and take more time with each student on their writing piece, but that was very difficult to do in a 45 minute period. Due to the lack of time, I feel some of the writings could have been revised better by students. It felt as though students knew this was art class and did not think they had to edit their writing like they would in their regular classroom. However, when comparing the surrealism writings to the blackout poetry poems, I feel the writings for the surrealism project were much stronger.

The first example from student Q (Appendix U, figure 32) shows a car (non-living object) mixed with an alligator (living). The writing piece says:

Alar is the name of my creature. I used an alligator and a car to make an Alar.

It looks like a body of a car with a face and tail of an alligator.

It tastes like cod fish. It feels like slime. It sounds like a running engine.

It’s green and gold and the skin is scaly, bumpy, wet and slimy.

It’s driving on a track through the forest and swamp.

The living and non-living things are clear, and have successfully been morphed together. The writing piece is descriptive and helps the viewer understand what they are seeing. The only thing I feel the student could’ve worked on more is making sure they used more painted paper, because there are a couple pieces they used that are plain construction paper without any texture.

The next example is from student N (Appendix U, figure 33) and the morphed creature is Elvis Presley mixed with the moon, therefore named Elvoon Moonly. The writing piece describes the creature in this matter:

My project is of a moon and Elvis Presley. The living thing in my project is Elvis Presley and the non-living thing is a moon. The moon is the head and it has a face
Elvis Presley is the body and the hair looks like Elvis Presley’s hair, too. Elvoon Moonly feels bumpy and like skin. It smells like cologne and cheese. It looks like a moon head and a body in a tuxedo. It sounds like music. The top of the background is the universe with the moon on it. The bottom of my background is a stage that the body is standing on with an audience behind it.

That is what Elvoon Moonly is.

I thought the overall look of the art piece was very appealing. The student did a great job with the mixture of textured painted papers. The writing piece makes it even more interesting and describes the creature well.

Another example shows a fish morphed with a hot dog, created by student TT (Appendix U, figure 34):

I see a fish and a hot dog. The name is Fishdog. I see black, purple, green, pink, white, blue, gold and a little dot of yellow. It has a pink, blue and white sky. I smell fish, hot dogs and relish.

Although the description is short, it helps clarify what the creature is about. The student lists all of the colors but does not classify where the colors belong. The art piece is impressive, but the writing is lacking depth.

Next shown is a combination of a pencil and a flower by student R (Appendix U, figure 35). The student named the creation Number Two Flower:

In my painting, the living thing is a flower and the non-living thing is a pencil. I put them together and got a flower pencil. The name of this piece is Number Two Flower. It looks like a flower with a pencil attached to it. It smells like things outside. It feels like a pencil and sounds like lead touching paper. The
background is a sky, almost erased grass and colorful clouds. There are gold specks in the grass. The sky has purple and yellow in it. In the clouds there is purple, yellow and blue. Some textures I used were lines, bubble paintings and bubble textures.

The student was very creative in creating a background that fits with the object. Since the creature is a flower and pencil combined, part of the grass on the bottom of the page has been erased by the pencil.

A different example from student P (Appendix U, figure 36) shows a fish morphed with a spike, to which the name of the new creature is called a spish:

The Spish is a mix between a spike and a fish. They are very dangerous and evil minded. They lie in the orange, black and white sea where the ocean reflects the bright orange and blue sky. They’re mostly found in the Outback. They smell like metal, freshly hardened. They also have a fishy smell to go with it. It makes a gross smell - which when you are around a spish you know it from the smell.

This student was successful at making an art piece with various textured painted papers, which helped the student make their writing piece very descriptive.

The final example for the project I’ve included is from student MM (Appendix U, figure 37) which is a helicopter mixed with a turtle. The student named it a helaturtle:

My creature is a turtle mixed with a helicopter and is called a helaturtle.

The turtle is a helicopter so it’s a flying turtle. It is fishy, tacky and hard.

The helaturtle is flying over a lake with the majestic sun behind it.

The water is calm and the turtle flies around looking for food.

The wind blows and the grass flutters in the wind.
The student successfully morphed a living and non-living thing, gave it a creative name, described it with descriptive writing and it is as if you can feel the wind blowing in the picture.

I was pleased with the art pieces as well as the descriptive writing pieces that went along with them. It was nice to hang art pieces out in the hall with students own written interpretations on display as well. People stopped and took the time to read about the artwork, and I feel students had a better understanding of their own projects after writing about them.

**Picture Writing with Famous Artworks**

The final project originally was planned to take 2 or 3 class sessions, but due to snow days and unexpected 5th grade field trips the lesson was cut short. I had to adapt the lesson into a one day assignment, but it seemed to work just fine that way. I told students not to worry so much about punctuation or correct spelling, but instead to focus on being creative with the words. Students seemed to enjoy making up their own stories and it worked well as an assignment to complete at the end of the school year. I did not get a chance to give out student reflections for this project due to time constraints.

Student I wrote about Pablo Picasso’s painting entitled ‘Three Musicians’ (see Appendix X, figure 38). The student’s story is as follows:

One day, three friends decided to create a machine that combined their favorite things. When they were all done, the machine looked crazy. They loved it, but they wanted their things back. They couldn’t get them to separate so they created an unseparator machine. Then their problems were solved.
The student felt Picasso’s piece looked like a machine and put characters into the story. Even though the title discusses musicians, student I decided to create a different idea separated from music. Student I also used an invented word for the unseparator machine. I was pleased to see a silly and fun interpretation of Picasso’s work.

Student PP wrote a story about M.C. Escher’s print ‘Butterflies’ (see Appendix X, figure 39).

All black and white and they can fly, yes! It’s butterflies. High and low, side to side, up and down they go. Their wings spread out like tiny blankets. They float and flutter, all shapes and sizes, and they form as if they were a puzzle piece. Their wings have textures of all sorts of designs as they franticly flutter into the sky. They make the sky less shy and more cheerful views are shown. Every day they take a new journey to a new place, but as they continue their journey they go through danger. They get caught by the stringy net and they try to call for help. They say, “Help! They got me! Now they’re going to shock me!”

Student PP used a lot of descriptive words and implied that the print had movement. They turned the butterflies into characters, and a story develops towards the end that leads them towards danger. I felt this was a very inventive writing piece.

Student OO wrote a story about the sculpture called ‘Spoonbridge and a Cherry’ by Claes Oldenburg and Coosje Van Bruggen (Appendix X, figure 40).

There were two little kids who were playing near the pond when they saw a bridge that looked like a spoon. The kids started to climb the spoonbridge and all of a sudden they heard a loud BOOM!! They looked up and saw a giant with a bowl of ice cream. He looked very hungry and the kids thought that they were
going to be chocolate chips for his ice cream, but instead he picked up the
spoonbridge and said, “Now I have something to eat my ice cream with! Yum
yum… but now I need some chocolate chips.” The kids said, “Please don’t eat us
Mr. Giant!” Then the giant said, “I wasn’t going to eat you, I was talking about
the trunks of the trees!”

Although the story gets a bit confusing at the end about tree trunks being chocolate
sprinkles, the story itself was very creative. It was interesting to think of giants using the
big spoon and cherry, so I was pleased with student OO’s interpretation.

Student AA wrote about the painting ‘Nighthawks’ by Edward Hopper (Appendix
X, figure 41).

There are three people buying drinks and they’re talking about the Tigers game,
12-12. Tigers are playing Pittsburg. Cabrera is up. He hits one in the far left…
Home run! It’s over, the Tiger’s won. The man is pulling money out to reward
the guy in blue.

Even though the story was short and strayed from the actual image, student AA did make
it their own and connected with the painting by what he imagined the characters were
discussing. This particular student struggled with all previous writing assignments, but I
was pleased with his effort with this piece.

Student X wrote about “The Starry Night” by Vincent van Gogh (Appendix X,
figure 42.)

It was the worst storm ever. It made the sky dark blue and you could see the
wind. You could feel the wind soar on your face. The lightning hit buildings and
causen fires. The rain was like acid and it wasn’t putting out the fire. It was
hitting our faces so hard and it was going through the umbrellas. The streets were flooded and trees were snapped in half.

Student X is also someone that struggles with writing activities, but I noticed while working on this project he was able to concentrate better than usual. I was impressed with his description and it was interesting to envision ‘The Starry Night’ as a natural disaster.

Student B wrote about the Spiral Jetty, an environmental art piece that was created by Robert Smithson (Appendix X, figure 43).

One day there was a mountain and he was the commander of the seashells. Tourists wanted to see the water up close and walk on it, so what the mountain did was this. He called all of the seashells to make a path for the very excited tourists. So what the shells did was they made the path like the shape of a swirl. They made it so thick so the tourists could not fall. Everyone was happy.

Student B has done a great job at creating characters out of thin air, with a story that follows suit. Once again I was impressed with the students’ creativity.

Of all the projects I was most pleased with the writings from the Picture Writing assignment, even though we only spent one 45 minute class period working on it. I felt students were very creative with their stories and it was fun to read all the different ideas they came from them. I realize that there wasn’t enough time to edit and revise their papers properly, but overall their writings were much more detailed and creative than previous writings. Since there were so many famous artwork options, I could expand upon this lesson by having them write about 2 or 3 separate art pieces to give them more practice. I could also uses the Ask, Reflect, Text (ART) strategy described by Dunn.
(2011) to get a more solid form of writing from all the students. It would also be
beneficial to give students more time to produce their writing. I did have a few students
that had a hard time creating a story, but most students had no problem with the
assignment.
ANALYSIS

When looking back at the research and my findings, I realized that the most helpful and age appropriate literature was that from Olshansky (2008b). I used her methods in the surrealism textured painted collage and they proved to be a success in the project. I think it had to do with what Olshansky suggests, that looking at an image first and then writing about it produces much more descriptive writing. I followed her Artists/Writers workshop process step by step, and even though it was a time consuming unit, I was very pleased with the end results of student work. The writing pieces were very descriptive and I felt the project challenged students to be better observers in their art as well as writing.

I was introduced to the painted paper technique through Olshansky’s (2008b) writing as well, and was very pleased with the varied painted paper creations. As Olshansky mentioned:

I was immediately impressed by the benefit of having students create their own hand-painted papers rather than using ready-made materials. Students were instantly drawn into the process by their natural curiosity and fascination with the varied effects that can be created by applying paint to paper using very simple art techniques. (Olshansky, 2008b, p. 60)

I found that students were indeed engaged in the paper making process, and they had a sense of ownership and pride when working on the collage. Students were fascinated by the different patterns and imagery produced from the different painted paper techniques, and the level of detail included on these papers made it easier to visualize words for their
writing pieces. I am excited and eager to try these art techniques with my younger students.

I found Gilmore (2009) and Ehrenworth’s (2003) lesson ideas fascinating as well, but they were geared towards secondary students. Their lessons focused on current world events and topics that were too deep for children that are at the elementary level. For example, the topic of the September 11th, 2001 events in the U.S.A, and certain poems and writing pieces were way above the vocabulary level of elementary. For an elementary classroom, I would pick more subtle topics that were more geared towards events that are current with the younger group of students. I used Gilmore’s ideas on creating a character for the Character Exploration project, and his ideas on symbolism were useful for the Black-out poetry project. I did, however, have to edit each lesson to make them more age appropriate for my group of students. Ehrenworth had some interesting lessons as well, and I used her ideas for the Picture writing with famous artworks project. I included famous artworks in the project, but not the poetry that Ehrenworth suggested. I felt that students would have difficult time writing about an art piece and a written piece all at once, especially when the poems Ehrenworth had chosen were clearly for secondary students. Besides, I wanted them to be more focused on the famous artworks so that they could visualize their words before they started to write them.

Unfortunately I did not get a chance to practice Wood Ray’s (2010) ideas of studying different writers and illustrators before having students create, but her ideas are definitely something I’d like to try with my younger students. Learning from professional story tellers keeps the students engaged and interested. I read a lot of stories
to students who are in kindergarten and first grade, and I think they would enjoy doing an illustrative book study on different illustrators from their favorite books. As Wood Ray said before, “A study of illustrations in writing workshop almost immediately raises the level of thinking and decision making children engage in as they make books” (p. 78).
CONCLUSIONS

The purpose of my study was to strengthen the 5th grade fine arts curriculum by incorporating writing into projects. In doing so, I wanted to learn new ways to incorporate writing into the visual arts by researching through an elementary level perspective. It became quite clear in the research and findings in this study that there was a positive outcome to being able to create art before starting the writing process.

According to the study by Trainin, Andrzejczak and Poldberg (2006):

Visual-art creation enhances the writing process. Students who made visual representations as a means of invention during writing were found to have used more time for elaboration of their ideas, to have generated more vivid descriptions of characters and setting, and to have used more precise vocabulary than comparison students, who experienced only written invention exercises. (p. 6)

This visual approach to literacy learning engages struggling readers and unenthusiastic writers. Throughout working on the four projects, I had high levels of participation, excitement and student ownership from each class. It was clear that in the surrealism painted paper project and the picture writing project, students were very descriptive with their writing. I firmly believe this is because they had something to look at to help them visualize their words before they wrote their piece. Students were also motivated and involved in the Character Exploration project and black-out poetry because they had so many options in deciding key factors. They could make the project their own, which helped them take more ownership in their writing.

For future study, it would be interesting to see if students writing skills improved in their regular classroom. Our school implemented a new reading and writing program
this year, so it would have been difficult to see if improving writing scores was a direct result of either the art and writing curriculum module or the students regular classroom reading and writing program. For the first trial of this integrated writing and art-making curriculum module, I did not have a control group because I wanted all students to benefit from the projects in the study. Future iterations may include an experimental design inclusive of a control group. It would be beneficial to share the information with regular classroom teachers as well as other visual art teachers to let them know how powerful visual elements can be to help improve and develop a writer’s capabilities. The art and writing curriculum module can be used as a model from which other elementary art teachers and classroom teachers can draw from and modify. The hope is that all students would become better creative thinkers and have fun while doing so.
REFERENCES


Olshansky, B. (1994). Students write magnificent stories through collage with an innovative program called image-making. Instructor, 48-49.


APPENDICES

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B. Character cover page examples
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A. Profile: Creating a fictional character page and examples

PROFILE: Creating a Fictional Character

When you create a fictional character, try to think of that person’s life and personality. To develop your character, use the chart below to begin their profile. You don’t have to use every detail for your character; the chart simply provides a starting point for building your character.

Check off those details that apply to your character. Fill in the blanks with your own details or answers in complete sentences.

Character’s Full Name ________________________________________________________

Date of Birth ______________________________________________________________

Address _________________________________________________________________

Age _____ Male _____ Female _____

Nationality/Heritage: Where are they from?

________________________________________________________

Hair color ______________________________________________________________

Texture (circle):
Curly Light Shiny Straight Bald Thin
Thick
Other: _______________________

Character Expression (circle):
Pouty Blank Tense Scowling Relaxed Sweet
Impatient Serious Smiling Laughing Angry Sly
Other: _______________________


Skin
Color: _______________________________________
Texture (circle):
Rough  Wrinkled  Dry  Smooth  Greasy
Other: _______________________

Eyes
Color: _________________________________________
Glasses? _______

Teeth (circle):
Pearly  Jagged  Straight  Braces  Missing teeth

Nose (circle):
Long  Bumpy  Flat  Thin  Straight  Hooked
Big
Other: _______________________

Body Shape (circle):
Thin  Light  Muscular  Round  Bony
Other: _______________________
Height_________________  Weight____________________________

Clothing:
Clean  Dirty  Weird  Stylish
Other: _______________________

What is your characters’ job?

If your character had 3 wishes, what would they be?

What are your characters main interests or hobbies?

What else do you know about your character?
PROFILE: Creating a Fictional Character

When you create a fictional character, try to think of that person's life and personality. To develop your character, use the chart below to begin their profile. You don’t have to use every detail for your character; the chart simply provides a starting point for building your character.

Check off those details that apply to your character. Fill in the blanks with your own details or answers in complete sentences.

Character’s Full Name: Joseph Star Labof
Date of Birth: 9/9/15
Address: 4583 Ringly Street

Age: 17  Male: yes  Female: ___

Nationality/Heritage: Where are they from? France

Hair color: blonde
Texture (circle):
Curly  Light  Shiny  Straight  Bald  Thin  Thick
Other:

Character Expression (circle):
Pouty: Blank  Tense  Scowling  Relaxed  Sweet  Silly
Impatient: Serious  Smiling  Laughing  Angry  Sly
Other:

Skin
Color:
Texture (circle):
Rough  Wrinkled  Dry  Smooth  Greasy
Other:

Figure 1
Eyes: hazel
Color: 
Glasses?: 
Teeth (circle): 
Pearly        Jagged        Straight        Braces        Missing teeth
Nose (circle): 
Long        Bumpy        Flat          Thin          Straight        Hooked        Big
Other: 
Body Shape (circle): 
Thin        Light        Muscular        Round        Bony
Other: 
Height: 5'10"  Weight: 102
Clothing: 
Clean        Dirty        Weird        Stylish
Other: 

What is your characters' job?  Painter

If your character had 3 wishes, what would they be?  
1. To be a famous artist
2. To never hunger
3. To end world hunger

What are your characters main interests or hobbies?  Art

What else do you know about your character?  He is a great dancer

Figure 2
PROFILE: Creating a Fictional Character

When you create a fictional character, try to think of that person's life and personality. To develop your character, use the chart below to begin their profile. You don't have to use every detail for your character; the chart simply provides a starting point for building your character.

Check off those details that apply to your character. Fill in the blanks with your own details or answers in complete sentences.

Character's Full Name: Sydney Lynn May
Date of Birth: October 24, 1995
Address: 1501 Rocky Street
           Owosso, Michigan
Age: 14, Male __, Female 

Nationality/Heritage: Where are they from? South America

Hair color: Light Brown
Texture (circle): Curly Light Shiny Straight Bald Thin Thick
Other: 

Character Expression (circle):
Pouty Blank Tense
Impatient Serious Smiling
Other: 

Skin
Color: American
Texture (circle): Rough Wrinkled Dry Smooth Greasy
Other: 

Figure 3
Eyes: Light Blue
Color: No!
Glasses?:

Teeth (circle):
Pearly
Jaiged
Straight
Braces
Missing teeth

Nose (circle):
Long
Bumpy
Flat
Thin
Straight
Hooked
Big

Body Shape (circle):
Thin
Light
Muscular
Round
Bony

Other:
Height: 5'11.5"
Weight: 108 lbs

Clothing:
Clean
Dirty
Weird
Stylish

Other:

What is your characters' job?

Hair Styalist

If your character had 3 wishes, what would they be?
to get a red car, to have a lot of money, and to get married.

What are your character's main interests or hobbies?
Dogs, Art, School, and SHOPPING

What else do you know about your character?

She's smarter than you think!
B. Character cover page examples

Figure 5

Figure 6

Figure 7

Figure 8
C. Dreams narrative and examples

Fill this out as if you were your character.

My name is

I have always wanted to

Someday, I hope to own

I would give almost anything if

My heroes are

I would like to meet

I wish I could have a date with

My fondest wish is
DREAMS

Fill this out as if you were your character.

My name is David Williams
I have always wanted to jump the grand canyon with a rocket skate board.
Someday, I hope to own the world's best skating ramp for skate boards.
I would give almost anything if I could have a hover skate board.
My heroes are Rod Dyrdek
I would like to meet Rod Dyrdek and Captain Rogers.
I wish I could have a date with I don't know.
My fondest wish is to have the biggest and best skate board.
DREAMS

Fill this out as if you were your character.

My name is Sydney Lynn May

I have always wanted to be a pro at dog sitting!

Someday, I hope to own a big and fancy five-star salon

I would give almost anything if I could meet Selena Gomez

My heroes are Cher, Lloyd and my Dad

I would like to meet Cher, Lloyd and have her sing Want You Back

I wish I could have a date with Jacob Davis

My mom’s neighbor

My fondest wish is to marry a boy named Jacob Davis.
D. News flash story and examples

**News Flash!!**

A news story was written about your character. How old was he/she when it was written? Date the news article. Give it a headline and a “photo.” Remember: who, what, where, when and why!
A news story was written about your character. How old was he/she when it was written? Date the news article. Give it a headline and a “photo.” Remember: who, what, where, when and why!

This Strange teen Known
as the amazing football player
Bicky Sanders disrupted a dance party at the White House. The teen was 20. This is October 17, 2012. We have asked this teen many questions why he did it. He said that the football team he plays on won the Philadelphia Eagles won the Super Bowl. So he then told us that he was happy so I flew to the White House and then joined the dance party. Till further notice

This is Boston News or BBN
News Flash!!

A news story was written about your character. How old was he/she when it was written? Date the news article. Give it a headline and a “photo.” Remember: who, what, where, when, and why?

“Branding News from the Detroit Zoo: Lion tamer Jimmy Sanders and Bear tamer Jake Yet but 8 year old Willy (the Bear) and 4 year old Osker (the Lion) and Bear both attack Elderly Fred Dixon.”

“Now recovering Fred Dixon is in the hospital with a broken arm and a couple cuts.” The Lion and Bear are both in their cages at the Detroit zoo.

Both zoo keepers almost got Fred, but since that was usually happened with them they didn’t. Now that was the branding news!

Figure 16
E. Memories page and example

Memories...

- Draw pictures to show your character’s special memories.

- My favorite pet
- A special friend
- My most prized possession
- (Choose a memory)
Memories...

- Draw pictures to show your character's special memories.

- My favorite pet
- A special friend
- Most prized possession
- First boyfriend (choose a memory)
F. Bio poem and examples

**Bio Poem**

(Your first name)

Is

(Four adjectives that describe you)

Sibling of

(or Son or Daughter of)

Lover of

(Three people or things you love)

Who feels

(Three feelings you have and when they are felt)

Who gives

(Three things you give)

Who fears

(Three fears you have)

Who would like to see

(Three things you would like to see)

Who lives

(The town or a brief description of where you live)

(Your last name)
Bio Poem

Emily
(Your first name)

Is
Pretty, clumsy, rich, and a shoe freak
(Four adjectives that describe you)

Sibling of
Malaya, Autumn
(or Son or Daughter of)

Lover of
Shoes, clothes, and parents
(Three people or things you love)

Who feels:
Happy when shopping, mad when picked on, sad when in school
(Three feelings you have and when they are felt)

Who gives:
Money, shoes, clothes
(Three things you give)

Who fears:
Losing money, can't shop, lasers
(Three fears you have)

Who would like to see:
To go to school, and have money
(Three things you would like to see)

Who lives:
I live in a big, white house
(The town or a brief description of where you live)

Hollister
(Your last name)
Bio Poem

(Your first name)

Is: funny, sweet, loving, and helpful
(Four adjectives that describe you)

Sibling of: a daughter that is in France
(or Son or Daughter of)

Lover of: nature, cleaner, and the homes we have to be safe
(Three people or things you love)

Who feels: loved, cared for, and good for her self
(Three feelings you have and when they are felt)

Who gives: shelter, food, and love
(Three things you give)

Who fears: getting in trouble for not cleaning good.
(Three fears you have)

Who would like to see: happier lives, more homes, and food
(Three things you would like to see)

Who lives: in London, England
(The town or a brief description of where you live)

(Your last name)

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Figure 19
G. Character comparison Venn diagram and examples

My Character and I Comparison

Directions: On the left side, write characteristics for the main character in your story. On the right side, write characteristics for you. In the middle, write the characteristics you and your character share.
My Character and I Comparison
Directions: On the left side, write characteristics for the main character in your story. On the right side, write characteristics for you. In the middle, write the characteristics you and your character share.

Figure 20

My Character and I Comparison
Directions: On the left side, write characteristics for the main character in your story. On the right side, write characteristics for you. In the middle, write the characteristics you and your character share.

Figure 21
H. Town map examples

Figure 22

Figure 23
I. Play brainstorming ideas

Title:
Characters: 2 hair stylists, 7 students, 3 mechanics, 1 truck driver, 2 evil characters, 1 dancer, 1 dentist, 1 doctor, 2 restaurant/ASPCA workers, fashion designer, poor person, helpful cleaner, pro skateboarder, cop, alien exterminator

Setting: park, dance studio, school, Texas, Florida, Dentist office, skate park, jewelry store, grocery store, the dump, Germany, curb, the city, Jamaica, London, a box, bus

Activity: Hawaii, a science fair, hair salon, Chicago chocolate factory, shopping, stealing, working in an office, riding on a bus, getting your hair done, eating, playing video games, meeting One Direction, arresting people, robbing a bank, attacking a beach, going to prom, exterminating aliens, tripping people, serving at Homecoming, learning, swimming, scoring tournament, begging, helping animals in trouble
Problem: dancing mishap, stealing or destroying
hurt in the dentist office, someone's failing at school, late for school, someone's fired, failing science fair, running a stop sign or accident, Great Depression, someone's on fire, hair mishap, sick pets, lasers everywhere! Alien invasion, no more pizza!, someone slipped, webkinz stopped going on the internet.

Solution: Alien exterminator helps, the Dentist fixed the hurt patient, magic potion to help hair mishap, retake science & succeed, bad guys surrender, cops pull over bad guys, someone eats the lasers, extra help at Little Caesars, someone puts out fire w/ hose, aliens give everyone money, teacher helps fallen dancer, fireman helps put out fire, gets a new job.
J. Finished play example

The Cursed Prom

Characters:
Cristal, student who is a dog sitter – student GG
Cece, student who is a dancer – student DD
Jade, student who is a fashion designer – student JJ
Ivy, student who is a fashion designer – student KK
Autumn, triplet, who is a student dancer – student Z
Malaya, triplet, who is a student – student FF
Renesmay, student who is a dancer – student TT
Rouge, student who is a worrier – student SS
Emily, triplet, student who helps others – student OO
Lily, student who loves fashion – student ..
Mr. Richman, rich dentist – student EE
Britney, hair stylist – student Y
Sydney, hair stylist – student LL
Chain Kid Blot, mechanic – student AA
Joe Billy Bob, mechanic – student ..

Scene 1: School hallway

Cristal: I can’t wait for the prom, Cece! I can’t believe it’s only 3 weeks away!

Cece: Me neither, Cristal! It’s going to be so much fun! (girls jump in excitement)

Cristal: Thanks for designing our dresses, Jade and Ivy!

Jade: It was our pleasure. We love fashion!

Ivy: We designed our own dresses, too. It’s our favorite thing to do!

Lily: We’re all going to look so great!

(Autumn, Malaya, Rouge, Renesmay, Emily enter)

Jade: Hi girls, what’s happening?

Autumn: Oh just prom talk! Has everyone made their hair appointment at Britney and Sydney’s hair salon?

Malaya: What’s that place called? I still need to make my appointment.

Autumn: Hair Paradise. They are the BEST.

Rouge: That’s what I hear, but I’m a little nervous about how my hair will turn out. What if it ends up looking like a birds nest?

Renesmay: I doubt that will happen, Rouge.

Rouge: Yeah, you’re probably right, Renesmay. I’m sure things will be fine.

Emily: I made an appointment at the dentist’s office to get my teeth cleaned the day before.

Malaya: Good idea, sis. Maybe I’ll do the same.
Autumn: Me too. What’s this year’s prom theme?

Lily: I heard it was an Underwater theme. It’s gonna be awesome!

(bell rings)

Ivy: Alright guys, we need to get to class. We’ll have to plan everything out later.

Jade: Remember, everyone make your appointments so we look our best for the prom!

Cece: I can’t wait to show off my dance moves! (all exit stage)

Scene 2: Dentist office

Autumn: Three weeks later… (exit stage right)

Dr. Richman: Well young lady, open wide so I can see your pearly whites…

Emily: Okay Dr. Richman. Make sure you shine them up real nice!

Dr. Richman: Sure. I’ll shine them brighter than my Mercedes. Did you see it sitting out in the parking lot?

Emily: Umm… yes.

Dr. Richman: Isn’t she a beaut? Sometimes during my lunch break, I’ll just stare at it from the window.

Emily: Great. Can you look at my teeth now?

Dr. Richman: One second. You know the only thing better than my Mercedes?

Emily: I’m afraid to ask.

Dr. Richman: My beautiful mansion with my driveway made of gold. It’s simply irresistible.

Emily: I bet. Hey Doc…. a little help? (points to teeth)

Dr. Richman: Fine, fine. (works on mouth, making different sounds)

Emily: AHHH!!

Dr. Richman: Here ya go, kid. A nice, juicy lollipop. (hands her a sucker.) That’ll be 5 dollars.

Emily: My mom already paid for the appointment, Dr. Richman.

Dr. Richman: I meant for the lollipop!

Emily: Ughh.. I’m annoyed and in pain. I hope tomorrow things get better!

Dr. Richman: Next!!

Malaya: (sitting in waiting room) I’m outta here!

Autumn: Me too! My teeth are clean enough!

Scene 3: The hair salon

Britney: We’ve got a busy morning ahead of us, Sydney.
Sydney: I know! We have so many appointments for today. It’s going to be a tough one!

Britney: Yeah, but we’re the best. We got this.

Sydney: You’re right, sis. We got this! (high five)

(girls enter)

Britney: Hi ladies! Two of you, have a seat and we’ll get started.

(Rouge and Renesmay sit down in seats, others sit in waiting chairs.)

Sydney: Alright, what kind of style do you want?

Rouge: An updo, please!

Renesmay: Whatever you think will look the best!

Britney: Alright. (rubs hands together)

(Start to work with hair)

Britney: So ladies, tell us what you have planned for the night. (working on hair)

Jade: Well, first of all we’re getting into our fancy dresses for the big night.

Autumn: We’ve all chipped in and rented a limo! The limo will take us to dinner first.

Malaya: We’re eating at this nice restaurant called The Kitty’s Plot. They have the best breadsticks!

Britney: Sounds delish!

Ivy: It sure is! Then we’re off to the prom!

Cece: And tonight I finally get a chance to show off my dance skills!

Emily: (muffled noises)

Sydney: What’s wrong with her?

Jade: She went to the dentist. Apparently he was a little distracted with his Mercedes and he used the wrong tools to clean her teeth.

Sydney: That sounds awful. Poor thing.

Britney: Well girls, you’re done. What do you think?

Rouge: (looks in mirror, shocked) Why is there a fake bird in my hair?

Sydney: You said you wanted an updo, and I thought… what is something UP in the sky? A bird. So, there ya go. An updo!

Rouge: Oh Mylanta. (storms off the stage.)

Britney: What do you think, Renesmay?

Renesmay: (Looks in mirror) AHHHHHHHHHHHHHH!! My hair is purple!! Why did you dye my hair purple?!

Britney: You said I could do whatever I wanted. Purple is the new blonde… trust me.
**Scene 3:** At the Prom, getting ready

**Renesmay:** I can’t go to the prom with purple hair! How embarrassing! *(starts to sob, hands covering face.)*

**Sydney:** I think the look works on you.

**Britney:** Who’s next?

**Lily:** I think we’ll finish our own hair…

**Emily:** *(muffled noises)*

*(girls all leave)*

**Scene 4:** At Jade’s Home, getting ready

**Malaya:** When is the limo supposed to get here? We’re going to be late.

**Lily:** I thought he said 5:30?

**Rouge:** Jeepers! It’s almost 6:00 now!

**Renesmay:** I feel like this Prom is cursed or something. Our hair is a mess, Emily’s mouth is sore, and our limo is late! What else could go wrong?

*(screams come from off stage)*

**Autumn:** What now?

*(Cece and Cristal enter)*

**Cristal:** It’s awful! This dress doesn’t fit!

**Cece:** How am I supposed to dance if my dress is 5 sizes too big? I’ll trip all over myself! *(dances and slips)*

**Jade:** You mean you don’t like your dress?

**Cece:** Like it? LOOK AT ME!

**Ivy:** I think you look great!

**Cristal:** Did you put this together with hot glue???

**Ivy:** Maybe.

**Cristal:** I’m no fashion designer, but even I know that’s ridiculous.

**Jade:** Oh you’re overreacting. It’s not that bad.

**Cece:** Not that bad?

*(Joe and Chain Kid knock on door)*

**Jade:** Hello?

**Chain Kid:** Did you girls order a limo for the evening?

**Autumn:** Finally! Where have you been? You’re almost 30 minutes late!

**Joe:** Well ya see, we are the mechanics and we’ve been working on the limo’s engine.
Chain Kid: We’re sorry to tell you that the engine is shot.

Renesmay: Cursed, I tell you! Cursed!

Emily: (muffled sounds).

Autumn: Is there anything you can do to fix it, or are we out of luck?

Malaya: I’d say we ran out of luck a while ago.

Chain Kid: There’s not a whole lot we can do.

Joe: Would you like to borrow our company bicycle?

Lily: Umm… no.

Chain Kid: Sorry about the trouble, ladies.

Joe: Have a fun night. I like the bird in your hair.

Rouge: Are you kidding me?

(Joe and Chain Kid leave)

Malaya: Well girls, it looks like we’re walking.

(storm sounds)

Lily: What’s that?

Renesmay: Rain, of course! We’re going to be walking in the rain to our prom. Cursed!

Autumn: You know what? Let’s forget about all this and go and have a good time. Who cares if we’re drenched, our dresses don’t fit and our hair is all crazy. At least we have each other, and I think that’s pretty good!

Malaya: Autumn’s right. I don’t want to be depressed all night. I want to remember this night as the best night with my friends. Who’s with me?

Cristal: I am!

Jade: Me too!

Lily: Count me in!

Emily: (Muffled sounds)

Renesmay: Okay, maybe we just got a string of bad luck. But it ends here! I’m in too!

Cece: My dress may be a bit big but I’m not gonna let it stop me from dancing the night away!

Autumn: Me too.

Rouge: Alright girls. To the prom!!

(Mr. Richman pulls up and beeps horn.)

Mr. Richman: You girls need a ride? I brought my Mercedes!

(girls shrug shoulder, get into the car and drive off.) THE END
K. Character exploration reflection

Name: ______________________

**Character Exploration Reflection**

Describe your character and background. Why does your background fit with your character?

Would you like to be your character in real life?

What was your favorite drawing you made for the Character project? Why?

Did you enjoy your part in the play for the program? Why or why not?

If you could do this project again, what would you do differently? Why?

What was your favorite writing piece you made for the project? Why?

Do you think you’re a good writer? Why or why not?

Do you think this project helped you be a more creative writer? Why or why not?
L. Black-out poetry introduction  PowerPoint

**BLACK - OUT POETRY**

**WHAT IS BLACK - OUT POETRY?**

- A piece of poetry that comes from a different writing piece.
- You select words from the writing piece to make your own poem.
- You black-out the words you don't want to include in your poem.

**EXAMPLES**
**HOW DO YOU MAKE A PIECE OF BLACK-OUT POETRY?**

- Take a page from a newspaper, magazine or book.
- Lightly circle words you want to keep for your poem.
- Create or find some images to go with the poem.
- Plan overall design of piece.
- Black out words you don't want.
- Add images to piece.

**TODAY...**

- We will practice making our own black-out poem with a website article.
- You will circle the words you want to keep for your poem.
- If you have time, you will black-out words you don't want.

**NEXT WEEK...**

- You will get an original piece of writing from either a book, magazine or newspaper. This will be your FINAL piece.
- You will circle the words you want to keep for your poem, create images or find some that represent your poem, and you will black-out words you don't want to use.
- We will work on the final project for 3-5 class periods.
M. Black-out poetry reflection

Name: ______________________

**Black- Out Poetry Reflection**

Describe what your black-out poetry is about.

Do you think your images match up with your poem?

What was your favorite part about the black-out poetry project?

If you could do this project again, what would you do differently? Why?

How do you feel about the overall piece and how it came together?
N. Black-out poetry grading rubric

Black – out Poetry Project Grade

Writing piece
  Clear 5 points
  Tells a story 5 points

Art piece
  Relates to poem 5 points
  Cleanliness 5 points

Use of class time 5 points

Total 25 points
O. Black-out poetry examples
P. Salvador Dali and surrealism PowerPoint

**SURREALISM**
and Salvador Dali

**WHAT IS SURREALISM?**
- A style of art
- Looks like a dream
- Not supposed to make sense
- Strange or absurd

**THE PERSISTENCE OF MEMORY, 1931**

![Image of The Persistence of Memory](image)

![Image of another surrealist painting](image)
YOUR OWN SURREALISM PROJECT

- You will be combining a living object with a non-living object. (Examples: a telephone with a flower, a pair of scissors with a kangaroo, a roll of tape with a cow's tail)
- Draw one object first, then add qualities of the other object
- Give your new creation a background that would fit with it's character
- After you combine the two objects, you'll give it a name by combining the two words. (Examples: teleflower, scissorsaroo, tapeye)
- Finally, you will create your project using painted paper techniques and making a collage with it.

REQUIREMENTS

- You must create 2 sketches in your sketchbooks of different combination ideas
- Present to Mrs. Beningo both ideas, with a favorite in mind
- Start creating your painted papers
- Cut different shapes and objects out of your painted paper
- Create a collage that represents your surrealism object and background
- Write about your art piece

PAPER COLLAGES

EXAMPLE: TUBAPHANT OR ELEPHUBA

EXAMPLE
Q. Textured paper collages PowerPoint
Surrealistic Morphing

Process:

- Create your background first!!! Sky, ground, anything far away, etc. Make it look INTERESTING and fit with your CREATURE!
- Once the background is finished, DRAW your creature on top of your background first.
- Finally, find pieces that will fit inside of your creature drawing. Once again, make it look interesting!!
R. Texture paper examples

Figure 28

Figure 29

Figure 30

Figure 31
S. Surrealism writing piece prompt

**SURREALISM WRITING PIECE**

Use this page as a brainstorming page to write down your ideas. Describe your project. What living thing did you use? What non-living thing? How are they combined? What is your creature's name? Using your 5 senses, describe what your new creature looks, smells, tastes, feels and sounds like. Describe the setting/background. Describe the colors. Really LOOK at your art piece to describe it. **Add descriptive adjectives.** For example, instead of saying "Blue Ocean," describe the actual colors you see in the ocean. "The bubbling aquamarine ocean sways back and forth against the windy purple sky." Use more descriptive words such as aquamarine or indigo to describe the shade. Describe what the ocean is doing, like "the aquamarine ocean swirled and swayed against the bright pink sky." Use the front and back of this paper to edit your paragraph. Once you’re done editing your ideas, create a final descriptive paragraph on a separate sheet of paper.
### Surrealism Creature Project Grade

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<td>Texture papers</td>
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<td>Combined creatures</td>
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<tr>
<td>Background</td>
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<td>Cleanliness</td>
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<td>Writing piece</td>
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T. Surrealism project grading rubric
U. Surrealism paper collage project examples

Figure 32

Figure 33

Figure 34
V. List of famous artworks for picture writing project

1. “The Night Café” by Vincent van Gogh
2. “The Scream” by Edvard Munch
3. “Starry Night” by Vincent van Gogh
4. “American Gothic” by Grant Wood
5. “Napoleon Crossing the Alps” by Jacques-Louis David
6. “The Tree of Life” by Gustav Klimt
7. “Swinging” by Wassily Kandinsky
8. “Me and my Village” by Marc Chagall
9. “Circus” by Marc Chagall
10. “Self-portrait” by Leonardo da Vinci
11. “The Dessert Harmony in Red” by Henri Matisse
12. “Collioure Landscape” by Henri Matisse
13. “The Three Musicians” by Pablo Picasso
14. “Femme en Pleurs” by Pablo Picasso
15. “La Toilette” by Mary Cassatt
17. “Jack in the Pulpit No. 6” by Georgia O’Keeffe
18. “Blue and Green Music” by Georgia O’Keeffe
19. “Boat glass sculptures” by Dale Chihuly
20. “Glass sculpture ceiling” by Dale Chihuly
22. “A Sunday Afternoon on the Island of La Grande Jatte” by Georges Seurat
23. “Relativity” by M.C. Escher
24. “Butterflies” by M.C. Escher
25. “Spiral Jetty” by Robert Smithson
26. “Spoonbridge and a Cherry” by Claes Oldenburg and Coosje Van Bruggen
27. “Water Lilies” by Claude Monet
28. “Haystacks” by Claude Monet
29. “Nighthawks” by Edward Hopper
30. “Ballet Dancers” by Edgar Degas
31. “Thanksgiving” by Norman Rockwell
32. “Boy and Girl gazing at the Moon” by Norman Rockwell
W. Picture writing with famous artworks rubric

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<td><strong>Use of class time</strong></td>
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<td>10 points</td>
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X. Picture writing famous artwork examples

Figure 38  www.pablopicasso.org

Figure 39  www.herakleidon-art.gr  Figure 40  oldenburgvanbruggen.com
Y. Student assent form

Western Michigan University
Art Education

Principal Investigator: Dr. Christina Chin
Student Investigator: Mary Beningo
Title of Study: Elementary Art and Writing

You have been invited to be a part of a research project titled "Elementary Art and Writing." This project will serve as Mrs. Beningo's thesis for the requirements of her Master of Arts degree at WMU. This form will explain why we want to conduct this research project and will go over all of the time commitments, the procedures used in the study, and the risks and benefits of participating in this research project. Please read this form carefully and completely and please ask any questions if you need help with understanding anything.

What are we trying to find out in this study?
We want to find out ways to include more writing in fine arts so that students will become stronger artists and writers. We will be creating different projects in fine arts that will combine the arts with writing.

Who can participate in this study?
All fifth grade students can participate in this study.

Where will this study take place?
This study will take place in the fine arts room at Louise Peacock Elementary.

What is the time commitment for participating in this study?
This study will take place during your normal fine arts class time. The study will take place from the end of February to the end of the school year on June 6th, 2013.

What will you be asked to do if you choose to participate in this study?
You will already be creating different projects in fine arts that combine fine arts with writing. We are writing a report about what we find out from the study. If you would like to be part of the study, your projects could be used as examples and be published in the study. We won’t use your name in the report.

What information is being measured during the study?
There will be no information that is measured during this study.

What are the risks of participating in this study and how will these risks be minimized?
There are no risks to you if you choose to be part of this study.
What are the benefits of participating in this study?
There are no benefits to you if you choose to be part of this study. However, the research from the study might benefit others someday.

Are there any costs associated with participating in this study?
There are no costs to you if you choose to be part of this study.

Is there any compensation for participating in this study?
There is no compensation for being part of this study.

Who will have access to the information collected during this study?
The people that will have access to the information collected include Mrs. Beningo, Dr. Christina Chin, and Western Michigan University. Your name will not be used anywhere in the study.

What if you want to stop participating in this study?
You don’t have to be in this study. If you decide not to be in the study nothing bad will happen. If you say no to being a part of this study your artwork and projects cannot be used in the final report. If you say “yes” now, but you want to stop later, that’s okay too. No one will be mad at you, or punish you if you want to stop. All you have to do is tell us you want to stop.

If you have any questions or concerns about this study, you may talk to Mrs. Beningo. You may also contact Dr. Christina Chin (269-387-2436), Human Subjects Institutional Review Board (387-8293), or the Vice President for Research (387-8298) if questions or problems arise during the course of the study.

This consent document has been approved for use for one year by the Human Subjects Institutional Review Board (HSIRB) as indicated by the stamped date and signature of the board chair in the upper right corner. Do not participate in this study if the stamped date is older than one year.

I have read this informed consent form. The risks and benefits have been explained to me. I agree to take part in this study.

Please Print Your Name

Participant’s signature ____________________ Date ____________________
Z. Character program introduction PowerPoint

**WHAT?**
- You’ll be creating a character from your own mind – designing a personality, characteristics of what they look like, etc.
- You will be writing short narratives describing this character.
- The program will highlight your creative character!

**HOW?**
- You will dress up as your character at the program.
- We will be writing a class play together involving all your characters!
- We will be singing a few musical selections about specific characters. Example: The Candy Man, etc.

**WHO?**
- All 5th grade classes will be participating in the program.
- Who your character is, well that is totally up to you!!
**WHEN?**
- Working on the project for the next four months
- After you have clearly developed your characters through profile traits and narratives, we will start writing our play and practicing parts
- We'll be practicing musical selections, also
- Performance is near the end of January

**WHY?**
- To be creative!
- To help with writing skills!
- To have FUN!!

**WHERE?**
- You'll be working on the project in Fine Arts
- You could be writing about your character in your class
- Your performance will be here at LP
Date: February 5, 2013

To: Christina Chin, Principal Investigator  
    Mary Beningo, Student Investigator for Thesis

From: Amy Naugle, Ph.D., Chair

Re: HSIRB Project Number 13-01-28

This letter will serve as confirmation that your research project titled “Elementary Art and Writing” has been approved under the exempt category of review by the Human Subjects Institutional Review Board. The conditions and duration of this approval are specified in the Policies of Western Michigan University. You may now begin to implement the research as described in the application.

Please note: This research may only be conducted exactly in the form it was approved. You must seek specific board approval for any changes in this project (e.g., you must request a post approval change to enroll subjects beyond the number stated in your application under “Number of subjects you want to complete the study”). Failure to obtain approval for changes will result in a protocol deviation. In addition, if there are any unanticipated adverse reactions or unanticipated events associated with the conduct of this research, you should immediately suspend the project and contact the Chair of the HSIRB for consultation.

Reapproval of the project is required if it extends beyond the termination date stated below.

The Board wishes you success in the pursuit of your research goals.

Approval Termination: February 5, 2014