

I Am the Voice...

Global Expressions of Literacy

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Where Art Stages Literacy & Builds Strong Character

I Am The Voice...Global Expressions of Literacy ©

Option II 2012

Mission: To empower our students and our community to build literacy skills and strong character through exploring firsthand accounts of social justice issues and using the creativity of

This Document includes artifacts of an ongoing collaborative literacy & character education project that was executed by a group of teacher at the Ralph G. Reed Middle School during the 2011-2012 school-years in collaboration with Dr. Esther Fusco, Hofstra University. The project has been an ongoing activity as a service to the Reed School as a whole. Each year the project's founder seeks the collective input of other educators in the building to take part in supporting literacy in their classrooms and in after-school programs. It is the intention of the founder and the collaborating teachers to further use this project to assist with addressing issues of bullying, strengthening literacy skills and building the tenets of strong character and leadership in the students at the Reed Middle School and the community at large.

the cultural arts, performance art, poetic expression, fine arts and technology to link the abstract concepts to concrete products. Participants will find their authentic voice and form a view of a global society that will impact social change.

Purpose:

The goal of this research project is to determine if through a systematic intervention program, if we can empower students in a high needs school district. Central Islip is located approximately 40 miles east of New York City in Suffolk County and has approximately 35,000 residents.

The team has chosen a diverse cross-section of heterogeneous male and female students whose academic skills range from a remedial track to an honors track.

The “I Am the Voice” after-school activity will serve as a resource to existing clubs. Each session will use the arts and literacy as a vehicle to assist students in developing skills that will connect them to real world experiences and build a foundation to prepare students to start thinking about post-secondary paths and opportunities. Students will have biweekly after school sessions that involve the writing process, researching data, creating artistic projects, and integrating technology into literacy and numeracy activities. Students will interact with selected role models who will share with them their view of society. The purpose of these sessions is for student to create their own individual views of a global society while building their academic skills.

The project will be interdisciplinary in nature and address the core learning standards while simultaneously providing a rich learning environment to better prepare students to demonstrate their mastery of specific standards on future assessment. The activities are designed to serve as a bridge between the school and the community. The curriculum activities will focus on improving academic skills and character education. Students will interface with positive adult role models who are successful in their different fields. Along with the community members, high school graduates who are attending(ed) colleges/ universities will work collaboratively with the students. In all cases, students will have the opportunity to discover the view of each of these successful adults.

Students will be administered, at the beginning and the end of the project, an interest survey regarding their attitude to determine what influences their academic achievement. Throughout the project, students will maintain a reflective journal from which the faculty will guide them in selecting written or visual products to share with the other students and the community. These products will demonstrate students’ learning that has taken place from this program. Students’ written and artistic projects will be graded on a constructed rubric. Students will submit an initial project which will be graded and then a final one. The purpose will be to demonstrate their growth from the interactions with the adult role models. Students work projects will be submitted to the Central Islip Board of Education and Hofstra University. The team will work on a journal article/conference proposal to share the results of project.

PROCEDURE:

Program Objectives:

To develop an after-school enrichment activity based on literacy and numeracy curricula for both high-achieving and low achieving students by collaborating with accomplished Artists, Community Leaders, Public Officials and the Educator partnership. The team will create and facilitate custom-made lesson plans integrating several art forms in engaging and relevant lessons.

Students will engage in a series of activities and interactions with adults to build their understanding of what successful adults do.

Students will consider who influences their lives and how many of these people have a college education.

Student Pre-Survey:	Students self-assessment
Number of Sessions:	20 Sessions
Workshop Panel:	40 – 50 Reed Middle School students will interact and complete interdisciplinary projects with Professional Poets, Authors, Community Leaders, Project Teachers, High School Students, and College Students.
I Am the Voice Presentation:	Multi-generational Poetry presentation of Students/Professionals/&Community Leaders
Post student Survey:	Same as Pre-Survey taken after the program.
Learning Continuum:	Students create graphs illustrating their literacy growth.

The outcomes

- Students will be able to show progress on the New York State Learning Outcomes Assessment tests.
- Students will be able to identify and demonstrate the connections between the Arts, English, History, Math, Social Studies, Foreign Language, and Technology.
- Students will articulate their goals for the future, including the potential for a college education
- Students will have a body of written work ready for publication.
- Students will participate in an inter-generational multi-media Poetry Presentation
- Students will understand where they fit in a global society, how they got there and where they're going.
- Students will continue to read and write for pleasure.
- Students will learn how to integrate technology in their written work to enhance their voice and effectively communicate their opinions.
- Students will learn how to work with a team of their peers for a common purpose
- Students will have higher self-esteem and resiliency
- Students will create a program newsletter
- Students will be able to use numeracy skills to track their individual progress

Main Activities

❖ Self-Esteem & Team Building:

- Students will participate in select lessons from the “Why Try?” Social-Emotional Program; a simple, hands-on curriculum which helps youth overcome their challenges and improves learning outcomes in the areas of truancy, behavior, and academics. “Why Try” teaches critical social and emotional principles to youth using a series of visual analogies which teach a specific principle, such as resisting peer-pressure, or that decisions have consequences. The visual components are then reinforced by music and physical activities. The major learning styles—visual, auditory, and body-kinesthetic—are all addressed.

❖ Council for Unity:

- Students will read and interpret the “The Dragon Slayer” myth which uses the dragon and its’ symbolism to represent the feelings and fears that must be overcome/slain, in order for students to discover their aspirations, progress along their own learning continuum and realize their potential. After having read the dragon slayer students will write poems illustrating how the myth affects family, unity, self-esteem and empowerment.
- ❖ **Literary Circle Book Discussions:**
 - Students will explore and sequence stories that contain elements of bullying and through the use of role-playing and tableaux, create scenes that will be photographed and transferred into PowerPoint/or videotaped for presentation.
- ❖ **Reflective Journal Entries:**
 - Students will keep a journal and make biweekly entries in order to record their feelings and to record their reactions to the information being presented to them by the workshop facilitators. These entries will serve as inspiration for the creative writing workshop as well as demonstrate the amelioration of each student’s writing skills.
- ❖ **Performing Arts Writing Workshop:**
 - Performance Poetry: Students will investigate the use of poetry as a tool for self-expression and social comment.
 - My Portrait: Students will use writing from different points of view to create self descriptions incorporating similes, metaphor and onomatopoeia.
- ❖ **“Rock the Mic” Talent Jam:**
 - Once a month students will perform their edited poetry, spoken word pieces for an audience of their peers to perfect their public speaking. Students will also use the feedback given at this venue to make improvements. In April, students will become part of a multi-media community poetry presentation.
- ❖ **Digital Photography to Enhance Written Work :**
 - The students will choose one of the software’s newsletter templates to create a cohort newsletter. Using the digital camera, students take pictures to provide illustrations for the newsletter articles. The software will guide students step-by-step through the creative process of writing and integrating their photos into the newsletter template. The final result will be a newsletter written by the students archiving their journey through literacy and self- expression.
 - Students will identify and describe a challenging situation and make scenarios of possible future changes to the community through the creation of digital visualizations of their "What if?" scenarios.
- ❖ **Numeracy Activities:**
 - Students will solve real life application problems by utilizing mathematical concepts to demonstrate and to enhance their understanding of art and geographic principles. Analyze the ambiguous language in some word problems to isolate key words that then channel them to the appropriate math concept to utilize. (Completed in Smart board)

Program Results

Thirty students participated in the “I Am the Voice Global Literacy” program and were administered a pretest. The pretest results indicate that most student participants did not feel particularly knowledgeable about the writing process and social justice issues.

After a full academic year in the program the same thirty students ranked their experience as highly useful and feel much more knowledgeable about the writing process and social justice issues. In a community presentation students indicated that the program empowered them to become active members of their community and inspired them to read and write for pleasure.

Personnel involved:

Dr. Esther Fusco	Hofstra University Professor/Professional Development
Yvette Brideau:	7-12 Foreign Language Teacher/ Coordinator
Josephine Mc Fadzean	7-12 Math Teacher
Annette Ferrara:	7-12 Social Studies Teacher
Debbie Cavanagh:	7-12 Math Teacher
Michael Coniker	7-12 Art Teacher/Co-Coordinator