

Performance and Presentation Skills for Teachers: Integrating the Arts into Education Classes

By Tracy Wyant and Susan Bender

Description of Session:

Come and hear about a model service-learning project where Education majors taking the course EDU 150: Performance and Presentation Skills for Teachers embarked on an exciting journey with second grade students at the World of Inquiry School in the Rochester, NY City School District. The college students collaborated with second graders to co-author children's books and create performances that address curriculum standards. The project culminated into a celebration of literacy at an Author's Tea where the college students and second graders brought their books to life through performances of their stories for kindergarten classes, their families, and the community. The World of Inquiry students became true authors as their books were printed and donated to local schools and child care centers.

Course: EDU 150 Performance and Presentation Skills for Teachers:

Teachers must communicate effectively in order to achieve their goal of student learning and success. This course uses the performing arts as a point of reference and enables participants to develop materials and present them effectively in a variety of teaching situations. Learning styles, oral presentation, body language, the use of props, proxemics and room arrangement, and audio visuals will be the skills developed through this course. These skills will be compared to those used in a variety of performing arts venues so that appropriate stage techniques can be integrated into student teaching/presentations assignments. Fulfills the requirements for a Humanities course. Three class hours. (SUNY-A) 3 Credits.

Learning Outcomes of the course that the service project address:

1. Identify and apply varied learning styles to structuring a lesson appropriate for the audience.
2. Identify and apply arts integration techniques to lesson and curriculum development.
3. Research topics to create and present organized and effective lessons related to classroom presentation.
4. Identify, develop and implement a variety of presentation techniques for varied teaching situations to create a personal presentation style.
5. Demonstrate effective use of time, materials, and proxemics appropriate to lesson/presentation objectives.
6. Demonstrate techniques promoting positive classroom environments.

Partner: World of Inquiry School: School #58

School 58-World of Inquiry School serves Kindergarten through 7th grade students from the City of Rochester, which is part of Monroe County. This school is eligible for participation in

State & Federal Title I Programs. School 58-World of Inquiry School operates as an Expeditionary Learning School, providing academically and socially focused instruction on particular themes. Some or all students enrolled in this school participate in free or reduced lunch programs.

Presentation Outline

- Introduction/survey of attendees' knowledge base of service-learning (10 minutes)
- Presentation of project (30 minutes)
 - Course:** EDU 150 course: Performance and Presentation Skills for Teachers
 - Partner:** Word of Inquiry School: School #58
 - Community need:** Rochester poverty rates
4th grade English Language Arts Exam performance rates
- Reflection: Authors' Tea on the Genesee
 - Books created- will have on hand to show participants
 - Performances- at least 1 performance will be shown
- Question/answers (15 minutes)
- Evaluation (5 minutes)

*****Participants will receive**

- Student, Faculty, and Community partner manuals
- Student Time logs
- MCC Student reflection book
- Assessment tools
 - Surveys (Community, Student, Faculty)
 - Grading rubrics

Motivations/Foundations:

Children Living in Poverty in Monroe County

What does this measure?

The number of children under 18 living below the federally defined poverty line, expressed as a percentage of all children under 18. Poverty thresholds vary by family composition and year. In 2007, the threshold for a three-person family with one child was \$16,689. For a five-person family with four children, it was \$24,366.

Why is this important?

Children raised in impoverished environments are at higher risk for a wide variety of health and social problems, **including poor performance in school**. The challenges they face in childhood

can diminish their chances for successful adult lives.

How is our region performing?

Child poverty is concentrated in the City of Rochester, where 41% of children were living in poverty in 2006. NY State children in poverty level is 20%.

Poverty rates in our region were highest among Hispanic and black children, along with children whose race was reported as "other". <http://actrochester.org/Indicator/Default.aspx?id=2&indicator=2>

Student Performance on Grade 4 English Language Arts in Monroe County

What does this measure?

The percent of students tested who scored at level 3 or above—meeting or exceeding the state standard—on the state Grade 4 English Language Arts exam. The test is scored by placing a student's performance in one of four levels.

Why is this important?

Early reading skills are critical to a successful school experience and a productive work life.

How is our region performing?

Slightly more than half of fourth-graders in the Rochester School District passed the test in 2008, a 5-point increase from 2007.

Low-income students passed at lower rates in 2007, the latest year for which data were available. Just over half of low-income students in our region passed, compared to 82% of other students.

The disparities were similar among racial and ethnic groups in Monroe County, with about half of black and Hispanic students passing, compared to 82% of white, 84% of Asian and 75% of American Indian students. <http://actrochester.org/Indicator/Default.aspx?id=5&indicator=54>

What is to be achieved at the session:

Participants will learn how to...

- Create a literacy service project that incorporates the Arts

- Create a sustainable partnership with public school faculty and administrators

- Create critical reflection exercises/assignments for a literacy project

Other information

Status of project: This project has become an instant best practice and will be in two sections of EDU 150 in the Fall 2010 semester. School #58 will continue to be the partner for the Fall term. Other partnerships may develop.

Grant: Due to the instant success of the project, an internal grant was submitted that would ensure the project's sustainability. In the event the project is not funded, it will continue in a smaller scale without donations to area child care centers.

Narrative Project Description:

The goal of the proposed project is offer EDU students the opportunity to create quality learning materials for our community to promote literacy in children in the Rochester City Schools, Daycare Centers in the Rochester area, and Rochester Tutoring Sites. Availability of a color copier and book binder will make the projects and services we supply while connecting to our community sustainable.

In the EDU department, we offer our students Service Learning opportunities in every course we teach. Within each Service Learning course is the opportunity to become engaged with our community specifically with daycare centers, tutoring centers, elementary schools, middle schools, and high schools. All students involved with a Service Project will have the opportunity to create quality materials when they are working at their sites. Literacy kits that have durable and colorful materials, tutoring tools that entice students, unit plans with colorful handouts, are all exciting examples of how this color copier can be utilized by all EDU students.

One example of how these materials will be utilized to enhance our commitment to community engagement is through a project in EDU 150 (Performance and Presentation Skills for Teachers) where students embarked on an exciting journey with second grade students at the World of Inquiry School (#58) in the Rochester City School District. MCC students collaborated with second graders to co-author children's books and created performances that addressed New York State curriculum standards. This Service Learning project culminated in a celebration of literacy at an Author's Tea where MCC students and second graders shared their books with kindergarten and first grade classes, their families, and community as they made their creations come to life through drama.

MCC students are gained valuable skills as they integrated the arts into Science and English Language Arts curriculum with these children. The World of Inquiry students and MCC students had the opportunity to engage in becoming true authors as 200 books were printed and donated to local schools and daycare centers.

This semester, copies of the books co-authored by MCC students and the second graders at The World of Inquiry School were printed by Xerox and finished by MCC's Print Shop as a donation. In the past, students have provided up to three copies of their books to be donated to the daycare centers they perform at. This typically costs our students at

least \$25-\$35. This can be a financial hurdle for students. With the ability to copy and bind books in our department, we can sustain projects like this.