

Engaging Students to Create a Mural Inspired by a Museum Visit: A Creative Approach to Teach Textiles

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Creative Approach: This project was designed to inspire students to use resources outside of the classroom to enhance their learning about textiles with a more creative approach. According to Tuffy, J. (2011) the student and teacher have to be fully immersed in an experience to make it meaningful. Furthermore, she goes on to say by using museum resources information can be presented in a way provided to engage the students. The result of this trip was for the students to create a mural on canvas that depicted knowledge of Textiles and Design using the Sheila Hicks fiber exhibit as a source of inspiration. The purpose of the study was to include field visits to heighten the student learning process and to involve them in an enriching experience beyond the classroom.

Objective: The key objectives were:

- a. To create a project inspired by the “Sheila Hicks “Exhibit at the Textile Museum of Canada (TMC).
- b. To provide students an opportunity to do an in- depth study of the artist’s work
- c. To reinforce concepts of fiber, yarns and fabrics and choosing appropriate textile material and found objects for the project
- d. To provide students a platform to showcase their creative side through a Mural.
- e. To develop interpersonal skills necessary to do a group project

Methodology:

The research design used for this project was descriptive design by adapting a survey method. The Questionnaire method was used as a source of data collection. Sampling design had college students from ages 18 – 40+ as a primary source of data. The Unit of analysis were students of Fabric Science. The sample size was 58 students and sampling technique used was nonrandom convenient sampling. The tool of data collection was a structured questionnaire using a Likert scale.

Implementation of Project: The visit to the TMC was planned during the middle of the semester once students had a preliminary knowledge of Fabric Science. Students created groups of three for the assignment on the Mural Project. The project was conducted in four stages. Stage 1: Teaching of Fabric science, Stage 2: Field visit to TMC, Stage 3: Creation of a Mural on canvas Stage 4: Feedback and Data Analysis

Description of Effectiveness of the Approach: Majority of the respondents strongly agreed (63.8%) that the field trip was a great way of learning about Fabric Science. 81.1% of respondents had a response range of somewhat agree to strongly agree that the TMC visit had reinforced the concept of Textiles learnt in the class. In fact, 53.4% of students strongly agreed

this project had broadened their horizon to learn beyond the classroom. Moreover, 58.6% students strongly agreed and opined that they were excited to create the project and 62.1% were strongly inspired by the exhibits. In addition to this 53.4% of respondents strongly felt that working in groups helped them create new friendships. Figure 1, exhibits few student mural projects.



Figure 1. Student Work : 3D Mural inspired by Museum visit.

Discussion of Outcomes: Hands on approach: The project had evolved from an inspiration of the artist's work. Students were motivated by the artist's use of textile fibers and found objects to create their own work of art. This was a great way to approach textiles in a non-traditional yet creative style. **Reinforcing theoretical concepts:** Sheila Hicks uses variety of yarns and fibers to demonstrate her art. She also uses other forms of textiles and found objects in her work. For the projects, students had to use their textile knowledge to identify suitable textile materials and other found objects to create their mural. An example being fabric was draped onto a mask, this supported knowledge of properties of certain textiles. Therefore, this project assisted students to learn by highlighting theoretical concepts they had acquired in the classroom. **Group Learning Activity:** Group activity is an effective strategy of learning .The project was created as a group task. Students had to work together as a team. A concept was developed and illustrated, the materials were sourced and the idea was realized. **Knowledge gained on an international artist:** This project gave the students global knowledge on an international artist. Students studied her work in detail with special focus on understanding what the rationale behind the creations were. Students observed her detailed use of colors, her numerous creative techniques using textile materials and found objects incorporated in her artwork. **Communication, Co-operation and Collaboration:** This project increased student interaction, creating a camaraderie between peers. They learnt to work in partnership and collaborated with each other. The museum visit is also an opportunity for students to explore resources relevant to their area of study thus creating a collaboration between an educational and a cultural institution. Another outcome is that students have a chance to socialize with the museum community, their peers and faculty.

The outcome of this creative approach was positive and therefore can be implemented and applied for other courses related to Textiles and Fashion.

References

Tuffy, J.(2011).The Learning Trip:Using the Museum Field Trip Experience a Teaching Resource to Enhance Curriculum and Student Engagement. Retrieved from <http://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED517713.pdf>