

Title of Session: Arts and Literacy - Festivals of Light

Moderator: BJ Berquist

Title of File: 20071203artslitlights

Date: December 12, 2007

Room: ArtsSites Group

BJB2: welcome, Rachel and Sadie!

SadieW: thank you!

RachelAE: Thanks

BJB2: please tell me where you are located and what you teach or hope to teach

SadieW: I'm from Houston, TX and hope to teach Pre-K

RachelAE: Virginia. Graduate student at University of Mary Washington. Currently teaching 5th grade in my sixth year of teaching.

BJB2: cool. Then my topic tonight should work for both of you...

SadieW: great

RachelAE smiles

BJB2: I decided to focus on the theme Festivals of Light

BJB2: and I'm hoping that you both will be able to add a great deal to the few resources that I've come up with

BJB2: what comes to mind with the topic Festivals of Light, Sadie and Rachel?

RachelAE: Christmas.

SadieW: I guess, mostly the holidays

BJB2: what holidays, Sadie?

RachelAE: and New Years

SadieW: Christmas, Hanukkah

BJB2: Kwanzaa? Winter Solstice?

SadieW: maybe, but I have a limited knowledge of those as of yet :)

BJB2: why do you think there are so many holidays at this time of year?

BJB2: good answer, Sadie ;-)

SadieW: well, I'm not entirely sure

RachelAE: So every culture is represented?

DavidW just recently learned about Dwali - Hindu festival of light

SadieW: Wow, I had no idea

BJB2 nods to David. And St. Lucia Day and St. Nicholas Day

BJB2: let's start with a research paper for you to get some background info

BJB2: <http://www.clarkfoundation.org/astro-utah/vondel/solsticewin.html>

BJB2: one of the links off that paper gives a little more background info. Let me know when you're ready

RachelAE: yes - I never realized Dec. was considered the darkest period of time.

BJB2: here's the other url <http://www.clarkfoundation.org/astro-utah/vondel/FestivalsOfLight.html>

RigobertoB joined the room.

BJB2: welcome, Rigoberto

RigobertoB: thanks

BJB2: we're discussing Festivals of Light and the reason so many festivals take place at this time of year

RigobertoB: Like laser shows

BJB2: any comments, Rachel or Sadie?

BJB2: David or Jeff?

BJB2: Rigoberto?

RigobertoB: not yet

RachelAE: Wow, makes sense about all the lights - not just religious - it was inherently darker.

BJB2 nods to Rachel.

SadieW: It is so fascinating to know how these things originate

JeffC: here's what they do here in Portland:

<http://www.oregonzoo.org/Events/ZooLights/index.htm>

BJB2: the reason this topic attracted my attention was a video that was posted to the Annenberg site. If you are not a member of this site, sign up...it's free

BJB2: thanks, Jeff

BJB2: <http://www.learner.org/redirect/december/ss15.html>

RachelAE: Neat!

SadieW: Cute

RigobertoB: Its more like a physical science thing

BJB2: as a member you can watch the video...shows you how to integrate many cultures into the lesson and how to integrate math, social studies and art into the lesson

BJB2: the solstice is physical science, Rogoberto, but the stories are wonderfully human

SadieW: That's great

RigobertoB: I like the way it integrates subjects

BJB2: the video also demonstrates stations for the various disciplines

RachelAE: A great way to introduce diversity

BJB2 nods to Rachel

RigobertoB: yes

BJB2: many native American stories related to the solstice

RachelAE: which is perfect for 5th graders since we study Native Americans.

SadieW: Can't wait to watch

BJB2: I also did a search in Amazon to come up with some additional books that might work with the lesson

BJB2: Celebrations of Light by Nancy Luenn

BJB2: <http://snipurl.com/nancyluenn>

BJB2: The Winter Solstice by Ellen Jackson

BJB2: <http://snipurl.com/jacksonsolstice>

BJB2: I'm dying to order this one: A Winter Solstice Singing Ritual

BJB2: <http://snipurl.com/wintersolsticesongs>

SadieW: Awesome, I love incorporating music :)

BJB2: the customer review was great: We used this wonderful ritual in our circle - we did the readings and meditations, and played the CD and sang along to the songs we knew - and it was great! The ritual was deep and dark and would be good for a church or a community gathering, as it IS Pagan, but it's not overtly so. The songs were really well chosen ones - and ranged from a 4-part chorus piece to simple rounds and some fun sing-alongs. We're definitely do it next Solstice, and we're thinking about putting it on on a larger scale! There's about 30 pages of notes in the back that will help on producing it. You can't go wrong with this one!

RigobertoB: I think the winter solstice is a awesome natural phenomenon that relates to the mystical ways of native Americans.

BJB2: when you read the articles I posted at the beginning, you will see that most cultures are effected by the solstice, Rigoberto

BJB2: I did order this book The Return of the Light: 12 Tales from around the world for the Winter Solstice

BJB2: <http://snipurl.com/returnoflight>

RigobertoB: yeah

SadieW: The illustration looks beautiful

BJB2 . o O (I always do a happy dance on the first day of winter because it means the days will start getting longer :-))

RachelAE: I always do it because of possible snow days...

BJB2: good point, Sadie

RachelAE smiles

RachelAE: the happy dance that is. :)

BJB2: I've given you some resources...now let's see how they relate to arts and literacy...even without viewing the Annenberg video

SadieW: ok

BJB2: anyone have ELL or ESL students?

SadieW: Yes, definitely

RachelAE: no, had them in the past.

RigobertoB: yeah

SadieW: We have many :)

RigobertoB: ESl

BJB2: art is the universal language....and picture books are an especially good way to communicate http://www.everythingsl.net/lessons/light_festivals.php

RigobertoB: yeah art is communication

BJB2: Kwanzaa is a wonderful opportunity to teach about values

RigobertoB: wow different X-mas traditions

BJB2: <http://www.officialkwanzaawebsite.org/index.shtml>

BJB2 nods to Berto...another good point.

SadieW: I'm excited to learn about Kwanzaa

BJB2: Berto brings up the point that we can celebrate the same holiday in different ways

BJB2: Sadie, the principles of Kwanzaa are universal

BJB2 . o O (or they should be!)

RigobertoB: spreading the goodness of human beings

BJB2: yep

SadieW: Yes, I agree :)

SadieW: Things are even celebrated differently within one culture.

BJB2 nods to Sadie. Does that mean that one way is wrong?

RigobertoB: in my culture we use the piñata

SadieW: Oh, of course not!

BJB2 . o O (good lesson in solving math problems...different doesn't mean wrong)

SadieW: Precisely.

RigobertoB: like getting the right answer a different way

BJB2: or in drawing...although you don't have that problem as much in elementary

BJB2 smiles...exactly!

RachelAE: Being different is good, my struggle is helping my students understand that - they get hung up on one way.

BJB2: I don't think that is generic to just your students, Rachel ;-)

RachelAE smiles

RigobertoB: yeah frustration kicks in, but I try to come up with other ways for them to understand

BJB2: can you give us some examples, Berto?

RigobertoB: yeah

RigobertoB: like trying to multiply the traditional way

RigobertoB: some of my students can't do it so I teach them like finding a pattern

BJB2: what grade do you teach, Berto?

RigobertoB: I'm in elementary

BJB2 nods...thanks

RigobertoB: I'm the migrant instructor so I work all levels

BJB2: patterns are another wonderful connection to art and math

BJB2 . o O (and art and literacy)

RigobertoB: it's very challenging sometimes

BJB2 smiles and wonders if Rachel and Sadie ever feel that way?

BJB2 . o O (I think it comes with the territory, Berto ;-)

SadieW: Yes, definitely

RigobertoB: yeah it does so I usually try to think outside the box

RigobertoB: try to connect with the student

BJB2: good strategy

RachelAE: oh, yeah...math is my other frustration. :)

RigobertoB: algebra right

BJB2: I've done these arts and literacy discussions on math

BJB2: you might want to check the archives at www.tappedin.org/transcripts

RachelAE: not for 5th grade - getting them to understand multiplication. But anyway, arts and literacy ;)

SadieW: Oooh, thank you!

BJB2: so, let's see if we can make a connection with math for the topic of Festivals of Lights

BJB2: calendar?

SadieW smiles

BJB2: weeks, days, months?

BJB2: how many days from the solstice to your birthday?

SadieW: Ahh

RachelAE: got it. :)

BJB2: what else? Berto, any ideas?

JeffC: figure out the number of lights in a light show, then how many watts, then how much electricity it takes to light, and how much it costs to light the light show for an hour.

RigobertoB: how about

BJB2: oh, cool, Jeff

RigobertoB: the combination of colors

RachelAE: Jeff - nice idea. Create your own display and how many lights needed etc.

SadieW: Wow, advanced :)

RigobertoB: are they primary to secondary colors

RachelAE: How often will the lights flicker - timer

JeffC: or use the light shows that are out there... figure out how to figure out how many lights are in Zoolights in Oregon, etc.

BJB2 nods to Berto

RigobertoB: do they flicker in intervals of min, sec

BJB2 grins..or do they light in a pattern?

RigobertoB: exactly and try to make a design or picture

BJB2: you could graph the patterns

RachelAE: wow!

RigobertoB: I saw a show like that in Niagara falls

BJB2: any other suggestions, questions, comments?

RigobertoB: light shows can be very creative

RachelAE: Its amazing how something that begins so simple can be expanded into other curriculum areas.

SadieW: No, but I've enjoyed the ideas

BJB2: lots of things can be creative, Berto...but you have to be able to communicate the ideas to the children...

BJB2: and then encourage their creativity

SadieW: That's a challenge for sure

RigobertoB: yes and children have very creative minds

BJB2 agrees...so do effective teachers!

RigobertoB: they can interpret things differently than adults

RigobertoB: yes

BJB2: our time is about up.

RachelAE: Thanks! Very enjoyable!

BJB2: Thank you very much for joining this discussion. I hope you found it useful

BJB2 . o O (and inspiring)

RigobertoB: yeah I got to see good websites and opinions

SadieW: Thank you for presenting this intriguing topic! I'm going to begin my own search for more information.

RigobertoB: I'll do the same

BJB2 smiles...perfect, Sadie!

BJB2: great, Berto.

RigobertoB: thanks bj for this

RachelAE: Thanks!

BJB2 waves bye and heads for Cyber 3

RigobertoB: you all have a wonderful holiday and new year