

An Exploration of Beauty through the Eyes of Young Children

Teri Brooks

The child has
a hundred languages
(and a hundred hundred hundred more)
but they steal ninety-nine.

The school and the culture
separate the head from the body.

They tell the child:
to think without hands
to do without head
to listen and not to speak
to understand without joy
to love and to marvel
only at Easter and Christmas.

They tell the child:
to discover the world already there
and of the hundred
they steal ninety-nine.

Excerpt from the poem, "*No way. The hundred is there.*"

By Loris Malaguzzi

Overview

As I observe my K/1 students and their many interactions with their peers and the world around them, I wonder about the influence that the school and other environments have on their ideas/opinions in so many areas. I especially wonder how we influence their ideas about themselves. They come through the doors of our classrooms with excitement, enthusiasm, and, more often than not, the self-confidence that comes from the love and encouragement showered on young children from their parents and other family members. Sadly, for some of our students this enthusiasm begins to fade as they experience difficulties in the school setting.

How can we help our children develop a strong sense of self that can withstand the negative experiences that they may encounter during their school careers? Can we influence their feelings and opinions in a positive way? How can we help them understand that we all have similarities as well as differences? Can we lead them to an understanding/belief that these differences should be valued and celebrated because they make us unique?

Because of the emphasis our culture places on “beauty”, I am especially curious about how a child forms his/her opinions about “beauty”. Are we born with natural inclinations leading us to our own definitions of “beauty” or do these definitions develop because of peer and cultural experiences? How do we as teachers influence these opinions? Do the classroom environments we create and the experiences we provide (both inside our classrooms and beyond) cement and/or change each child’s ideas about beauty? What is beautiful about our world around us? How do we celebrate beauty? What does it mean to BE beautiful?

How does cultural behavior affect the feelings that minority children develop about their physical appearance? The “Doll Studies” conducted by sociologists Kenneth and Mamie Clark between 1939 and 1940 found that black children often preferred to play with white dolls over black; that, asked to fill in a human figure with the color of their own skin, they frequently chose a lighter shade than was accurate; and that the children gave the color “white” attributes such as good and pretty, but “black” was qualified as bad and ugly. They viewed the results as evidence that the children had internalized racism caused by discrimination against and stigmatized by segregation.¹

In 2006 filmmaker Kiri Davis recreated the doll study and found the same results as did the Clarks. However, a study conducted by “Good Morning America” found that their results differed vastly from those of the original experiment. They gathered 19 black children, ranging in age from 5 to 9 years old, in Norfolk, Va. Results – 88 percent of the children happily identified with the dark-skinned doll, 42 percent wanted to play with the black doll compared with 32 percent for the white doll. When asked “Which doll is nice and which is not, the majority chose black or both and 32 percent chose the white doll. The “GMA” study asked an additional question – “Which doll is prettier?”

Most of the boys said there was no difference however, 47 percent of the girls said that the white doll was prettier.ⁱⁱ

What do these results say about society's influence on young children? Is it possible to change negative self-concepts to positive ones? Are our young girls more sensitive to stereotypes about beauty than our young boys? How can educators have a positive impact in the early years?

I believe "it takes a village" to raise children. Now, more than ever, this is true because the majority of mothers now work outside of the home. Young children spend most of their day in a daycare, preschool, or elementary school setting. The adults who care for and work with children are responsible for providing positive, nurturing, safe, and stimulating environments. What can educators do to ensure that we are positive influences in the lives of our students? How can we help our students develop positive self esteems? My search for answers to these questions led me to the Reggio Emilia approach to early childhood education.

The Reggio Emilia early childhood program began after World War II in Reggio Emilia, Italy when the Italian government gave each town money to use as they pleased to restore the sense of community lost during the war. Parents declared their desire for schools where children were taken seriously and where even the youngest could acquire the skills and values of collaboration and critical thinking necessary to a free and democratic societyⁱⁱⁱ The town came together to build a school, *Scuola del popolo*, School of the People.

The Reggio Emilia approach is based on the principles of respect, responsibility, and community. It reflects a theoretical kinship with John Dewey, Jean Piaget, Vygotsky, and Jerome Bruner. Teachers, considered co-learners and collaborators with the child, plan activities and lessons based on the child's interests. The natural development of children, as well as the close relationships that they share with their environment, is at the center of its philosophy. Teachers enhance student learning by asking questions to further understanding. The importance of the environment, considered the child's "third teacher", lies in the belief that children can best create meaning and make sense of their world through environments that support open-ended, creative response to explorations.

There are five important features to the Reggio Emilia approach: an interpretation of teachers as researchers, curriculum as long-term projects, the role of symbolic languages in child development and advocacy, the role of the environment, and an interpretation of parents as partners in the educational enterprise.^{iv} This unit will focus on the role of symbolic languages in child development (the arts) as well as the role of the environment.

"No way. The hundred is there." was written by Loris Malaguzzi who is known as the father of the Reggio Emilia approach to education. Malaguzzi had a vision of childhood as a time filled with unrealized potential. He was outspoken in his belief that traditional

programs failed to recognize and support children's social and intellectual competencies. In a Reggio classroom, teachers work alongside the children as learners and researchers. Many of the "investigations began with a question from a child ("How do animals know who they belong to?") as well as questions teachers present to the class ("How can we make a windmill?"). As these hypotheses are proposed, the teacher creates an environment where children can engage in explorations designed to answer these (and other) questions. As children proceed in an investigation they are encouraged to depict their understanding through one of many (one hundred) symbolic languages, including drawing, sculpture, dramatic play, writing, etc.

The work of the children is always valued and celebrated with displays and other ways to share completed work. Attention to ambience and the importance of *bella figura* (putting one's best self forward) is perhaps the most obvious and provocative feature of classrooms in Reggio Emilia.

Demographics

I teach K/1 multiage in an upper-middle class school located in a small college town. My students come from middle to upper-middle class families. Many of my students are "well-traveled" and have had many enriching experiences – travels, lessons, cultural events, camps, etc. as well as supportive family environments. The preschools they attended are child-centered and follow developmentally appropriate curriculums.

Many of our students begin kindergarten performing at average to above average levels and quickly master the state requirements for Kindergarten students. Because the needs of our students are quite different from average five-year-olds, it is necessary to provide a challenging and advanced curriculum in order to meet these needs.

Classroom space

Providing a beautiful, stimulating environment is an important factor in my teaching. Because my students and I spend the majority of each day in our classroom, I want the classroom environment to feel safe, warm, and homelike. Our classroom contains many cozy reading areas lit by lamps, copies of famous artwork are hung at "kid's eyelevel" around the room, a "zebra print" coach and a pillow-filled claw foot tub painted with colorful flowers provide other areas for independent or partner reading and writing. A refrigerator box painted to look like a castle is tucked away in the corner and serves as another cozy spot for work or dramatic play. The "Discovery Center" contains "found" or handmade items brought in by the children for their peers to enjoy and investigate. This area also contains the class pets – a tarantula, hamster, and a pair of finches. Student artwork adorns the walls inside of our classroom and spills over into the hallway.

An environment that fosters independence is an important part of any successful early-childhood classroom. Accessibility to materials, as well as having a choice on which

materials to use and how to use them, tells students that their thoughts, opinions, and ideas matter and are valued. When we give children close-ended, “cookie cutter” activities to complete we tell them that there is only one correct way and that the teacher is the *only* expert in the room.

I believe that surrounding my students with beauty helps them appreciate and value our “home away from home”. This belief about the importance of the classroom environment is one of the reasons that led me to my study of the Reggio Emilia approach. Also, an environment that is “shared” with the students contributes to the sense of community I try to create for my students. I believe that when we treat our students as thinkers, artists, scientists, learners, they will respond and engage at a higher level than when treated as passive learners.

Rationale

Many early childhood classrooms have adopted a structured, skills-based, test-driven curriculum where children are increasingly pressured to “conform” and think “inside the box”. Paint easels have been replaced by skill focused dittos, sandboxes and blocks have disappeared because of the lack of time to discover and explore, and early childhood classes have become eerily silent. We have traded language experience activities with closed-ended, single answer activities. Traditionally kindergarten has been thought to be a place for play. There is a new view, gaining popularity, that of bringing down the first grade curriculum into kindergarten and doing away with imaginative play^v.

Because of society’s obsession with beauty, I worry about my students when they leave the protected elementary school environment. The self-concepts and attitudes children develop in these early school years are crucial to their ability to make good decisions later on. How they feel about themselves – their looks, reading abilities, math abilities, social skills, etc. - is crucial to their success. Learning to accept and celebrate their own uniqueness, as well as the uniqueness of others, can make an immense difference in whether or not they experience success at the middle/high school level (and later as well).

The purpose of this unit is to – provide children opportunities to reflect, discuss, connect, and define their beliefs about beauty, provide children opportunities to listen to the opinions of others while learning to respect differing opinions, connect the disciplines bringing the arts back into the primary classroom, honor what we know to be best practices for young children, and help children accept and appreciate their own uniqueness as well as the uniqueness of others,

The messages given to our students by the media and the peer pressures they face can cause undue pressure to conform and “fit in”. The group discussions will provide opportunities for the students to develop the skills required to have meaningful dialogues

with each other. I hope this unit will provide experiences that will help students develop positive self-concepts.

Some of the strategies I will use are differentiated groupings (whole group, small group, partner grouping, independent work, one-on-one), read aloud/discussion, “hands-on” follow-up activities (collectors, murals, art, book-making, writing), research of resources to share, “Think, Pair, Share”, Venn Diagram, KWL charts, and “I wonder...” boards, dramatic play/musical presentations, a photo project, slide shows, photography, and interactive whiteboard lessons. Guest speakers and field trips with follow-ups will also be included.

Because my students are from literate environments they have positive relationships with books and gravitate to them whenever possible. Using picture books is a natural springboard to many of the lessons. This unit will take approximately 4 to 6 weeks to complete with additional activities/routines that continue throughout the year. My goal for my students is to help them understand that beauty exists and is expressed in many forms. I want them to appreciate the beauty that surrounds us and to “find their voice” and be able to express their thoughts about beauty. I hope they will develop an appreciation for their own beauty and uniqueness as well as an appreciation for those who differ from what some would consider to be the “norm”.

Activities

This exploration of beauty will focus on **four** different “kinds” of beauty – **beauty found in nature, beauty “created” by man, physical beauty, and inner beauty**. The main lessons in this unit may take up to four weeks for completion, however, much of the unit is designed to continue throughout the year by way of classroom design, routines, and the read aloud books listed in the bibliography.

Introduction

Lesson 1 What is Beauty?

Start a discussion with your class by asking, “What is beauty?” Lead the discussion into the following areas – people (appearances and actions), environment, man-made objects/structures/the arts. Discuss the differing answers and why it is important to accept all opinions.

-As a follow-up to the discussion have each student draw or paint a picture of something he/she thinks is beautiful. Label each piece of artwork with each student’s name and a title for the piece (chosen by the student).

-Have the children sort their work into two categories: natural or man-made.

- Display these creations in the class “Art Gallery”.

Beauty Found in Nature

Lesson 2 Taking a “Beauty Walk”

Record responses to the question “What is beautiful?” on a collector labeled with the following headings: Beauty found in the Environment/animals, Beauty *created* by People, and Beauty found in People. Add to this collector throughout the unit as the students make new connections to the concept of beauty. Make sure that this chart is available and accessible to the children so that they are able to add responses without adult help/supervision (responsibility and ownership for learning).

- Using digital cameras, have the children take a **“Beauty Walk”** to snap photos of things they consider beautiful. Have them record their findings and reasons for their choices in their journals. Display the photographs with captions listing each child’s reason(s) for his/her choice. Some of the things that the children choose to photograph may seem obvious but when asked to explain the reason(s) for their choices their answers may surprise you. For example, one of my students took a close-up photo of a basketball which appeared to speak to his love of sports but when asked to explain his choice he said, “I liked the way the sun was shining on the ball.” Another photo of a beautiful blue sky was taken because “I liked the way there weren’t any clouds in the sky.”

Lesson 3 “What a Wonderful World”

Play Louis Armstrong’s song “What a Wonderful World”. At the beginning of the song, the lyrics celebrate the physical beauty of the world - “I see trees of green, Red roses too... I see skies of blue, and clouds of white... and towards the end of the song it celebrates the beauty of people and how they treat each other. Discuss the lyrics of the song focusing on one line at a time. Ask the children to share their thoughts, experiences, and opinions about what the song is saying to us about the beauty we see in our “wonderful world”. Give each child one of the lines from the song and have him/her paint an illustration for the line. When dry, label the paintings with lines from the song. You can then:

- Create a slideshow using photos of the painting to accompany the song.
- Place the paintings in the class “art gallery”.
- Bind the paintings together to make a class big book.

Beauty Created by “Man”

Lesson 4 Studying Famous Artists and How They “Create” Beauty

-Introduce students to famous works of art using a Power Point or interactive whiteboard. The Promethean Planet website has many “flipcharts lessons” available for use in teaching about the following artists and their most well known pieces – Van Gogh, Matisse, Picasso, Chagall, Seurat, and Keith Haring. (There are many websites that sell poster prints of these famous artists). These artists have very different styles and the portraits painted by a few of them are quite childlike. Explore how they use color, balance, symmetry, etc.

Follow up each artist study with an art activity based on the artist’s most well known piece of work. For example, Van Gogh’s many self portrait and Keith Haring’s murals are “nonthreatening” pieces of art and easy for the children to relate to. Hang the completed art pieces in the class “Art Museum” along with a copy of the original work (if possible) as well as a bio of the featured artist.

-As an additional activity, have the children write descriptions and critiques about the artists and their works explaining their opinions about the pieces.

-Take students on a field trip to a local museum. Preview exhibits to ensure appropriateness for young children. While previewing, create a “Scavenger Hunt” for the students to complete by choosing pieces to focus on during the class visit. These pieces can support a central theme such as “paintings of people” or simple themes that connect to primary concepts “shapes”, “colors”, “faces”, “animals”, “plants”, etc. Students can also compare, contrast, and categorize the works and artists featured at the museum with the works and artists studied in the classroom. Questions such as “Why did the artist choose to paint/sculpt/draw

Lesson 5 Creating Beauty by “Reusing” Trash

A study of the paintings and sculptures of Jean Tingley can be followed up by creating many recycled art projects. Tingley used cardboard cut from boxes to paint plans for his many sculptures. He paint his designs with colorful acrylic paint and wrote about the sculpture plans on these painted plans. The Bechtler Family, recognizing the beauty in these paintings, framed many of these pieces that are presently hanging in the Bechtler Museum of Modern Art. To create these colorful paintings you will first need to solicit boxes from parents or the school staff (copier paper boxes are ideal). Cut the cardboard boxes apart so that the children can paint on the inside part of the box. Next, ask parents and/or the art teacher for “almost empty” bottles of acrylic paint (the ones that are usually thrown away). After showing the children several paintings done by Tingley, have the children paint shapes and other designs on the recycled cardboard. When the paintings dry, provide black felt-tip markers for the children to use and instruct them to” write words to describe yourself (“nice”, “smart”, “athletic”, “giving”) around the edges of your painting”. The

After studying Tingley and other sculptors, have the children create “recycled sculptures” from items found in the classroom recycling bin. Give the children masking tape, string, fasteners, florist wire etc. and allow them to experiment with attaching the recycled items together. You may want to give the children a central theme – “animals”, “people”, “buildings”, etc. as a guide. After construction of the base, use recycled newspaper and Paper Mache to add strength and definition to the structures. Paint with leftover paints when dry.

Ask for donations of “old, framed paintings”. Using painter’s tape or masking tape, cover the edges of the frames. Ask parents to donate leftover paint from their home remodeling projects and have the children paint over the old paintings to create a background for their new paintings. When dry, use bright colors of acrylic paint to create beautiful “recycled paintings”.

Share photos of a variety of quilts. Make a class ”Scrap Quilt” using donated scraps of fabric and craft glue. Provide each child with a square of muslin (cut from an old sheet) and pre-cut fabric of various sizes, shapes, and colors. Instruct the children to create themselves, families, homes, and/or pets with the scrap pieces.

Use gallon-sized milk jugs, staplers, and flexible plastic pipes or strips to make an “igloo”. This igloo can be used for partner reading, writing, and or independent work. It also makes a great area for the listening or music center.

Make musical instruments from items in the recycling bin, old toys, office supplies, or items found in nature. Use these instruments to accompany the song “What a Wonderful World”.

Use recycled items to make ornaments for a “green” Christmas tree.

Provide food and items for nest building throughout the year by decorating a tree for the birds hanging scraps of string and yarn (nests) and empty tissue rolls covered in lard and bird seed (food).

Physical Beauty

Lesson 6 “What a Beautiful Child” - Rewriting a Song

This lesson is a wonderful way to start an exploration about “physical beauty”. Focusing on physical attributes, work together with your students to rewrite the song “What a Wonderful World”. You may want to use the following song written by my class as a guide. Make a template with parts of the song left blank and help the students add words to complete the lines. Collaborate with the music teacher to record the children singing the song. This makes a beautiful slide show when combined with photos of the class.

“What a Beautiful Child”

words by

Brooks, K/1 Multiage Class

I see eyes of blue, green ones too,

Eyes of brown, on me and you.

And I think to myself, "What a beautiful child."

I see skin of brown, skin of white,

so many shades, some dark, some light.

And I think to myself, "What a beautiful child."

The different kinds of children, like the clouds in the sky,

Are all shapes and sizes, some small and some so high.

I see friends holding hands saying, "What should we do?"

They're really saying, "I think you're cool too!"

I see children in chairs, children on bikes,

Some like to run, some prefer hikes.

And I think to myself, "What a beautiful child!"

Yes, I think to myself, "What a beautiful child!"

This lesson also serves as a springboard for writing other song lyrics using familiar tunes – “piggyback songs”. Adding an electronic keyboard and headphones to your classroom provides experiences that many children never have the opportunity to enjoy. This also tells your students that you value ALL sides of their creativity. I am fortunate to have a piano outside my classroom door and the children have a “music” share (children take turns sharing songs they have learned or “made up” ☺) before we leave each day.

Lesson 7 “You Are So Beautiful”

After reading the book “Land of Many Colors”, show the children several objects that represent different skin colors – cinnamon, vanilla, coffee, cream, peanut butter, vanilla, chocolate, cinnamon cookies, peaches, kiwi, etc. Have the children compare their skin color to the various examples and choose one item that best represents his/her skin color.

After the read aloud and skin comparison activity, have the class make **self portraits**. The children will again compare their skin color but this time they will match it to

“multicultural paper” (selection of paper representing skin colors) or crayons. Help students trace and cut out a large oval or circular shape to make faces for the self portraits. Give the children scrap paper to use for the necks/shoulders, hair, facial features, etc. Display the self portraits with title “You Are So Beautiful”.

-As an additional follow-up, have children complete a “Yummy Math” graphing activity. Have students choose either a honey or cinnamon graham cracker to represent the color of their skin. Each child then uses a circle cut from skin-colored paper (matching the color of two graham cracker choices) to make a face to represent him/herself. The students then place their faces on the graph to represent their choices. (And of course they eat their graham crackers at the end of the graphing activity –hence, “Yummy Math”).

-Have the children “partner- write” stories about two friends who look different and like different things. These stories could be bound into a class book, made into plays, or made into a puppet show.

Inner Beauty

Lesson 8 Celebrating the Beauty of Being Unique

This book study of characters who are different and unique supports the following unit objectives of connecting the disciplines, providing opportunities for the children to reflect and discuss beliefs, and helping them accept and appreciate their own uniqueness as well as the uniqueness of others.

The student bibliography located at the end of this unit contains many books about characters – real and make-believe – who have difficulty fitting in because they are different than their peers. These books serve as a springboard for discussions of how we are alike/different in so many areas – physical, feelings, talents, opinions, etc. For example, in the book Harriet Dancing by Ruth Symes, the main character is shunned by the butterflies she so admires. Her attempts to “dance like them” is quickly criticized. This book is a wonderful discussion starter with young children. What child hasn’t had a painful encounter with a group of peers that “denies” them entrance into an activity? The readings/discussions can be followed up with written and/or artistic responses. You may also want to start a chart or compile a book titled “Characters Who Have Trouble Fitting In”. These stories are great for reference when future “problems” arise. “What would _____ do?” is a helpful problem solving start to a solution.

Lesson 9 Allowing Our Inner Beauty to Shine

Participating in community service projects throughout the year is one of the best examples for showing inner beauty. Let the parents of your students know that you will lead your class in several service projects throughout the year (many of them may have resources they can donate and/or help to provide). After sharing information with your

students about community needs, help them brainstorm ways they can help others. Some projects/fundraisers my class has participated in are:

- *collecting canned food ALL year (not just during November). Challenge students to bring one can each week. One of my former students brought a can each DAY and placed it in the food collection box as part of his Unpacking routine each morning.

- *adopting a sea turtle or other animal

- *collecting dog and cat food for the animal shelters,

- *collecting coats, blankets, hats, scarves, and gloves for the homeless,

- *donating suitcases for families who live in shelters (many of them keep their clothes in plastic bags,

- *collecting books for families that are victims of natural disasters,

- *collecting money to:

 - buy a goat, chicken, etc. for a family in Africa,

 - buy mosquito nets,

 - send to charities,

- *collecting items to fill shoeboxes for “Operation Christmas Child”. In honor of my October birthday, my students fill shoeboxes for the Franklin Graham charity. This year they choose favorite items to fill twelve boxes.

- *selling paintings, craft items, photos to give the money to medical research,

- *making birdhouses and/or feeders to place around the school or throughout the community,

- *delivering flowers, crafts, and/or singing songs etc. to school staff (throughout the year), and

- *visiting nursing homes to deliver gifts and/or sing songs.

Helping others and treating everyone with respect shows true inner beauty. There are many community agencies to partner with.

Unit Culmination

Lesson 10 “Beautiful Graffiti” wall

Have the children choose one of the following quotes to reproduce using his/her favorite art medium – paint, collage, pastels, etc. Display the finished quotes on a wall titled “Beautiful Graffiti”.

“I’ve never seen a smiling face that was not beautiful.” Author Unknown

“Beauty is not in the face; beauty is a light in the heart.” Kahil Gibran

“Everything has beauty, but not everyone sees it” Confucius

“Beauty?...To me it is a word without sense because I do not know where its meaning comes from nor where it leads to.” Pablo Picasso

“There are flowers everywhere, for those who bother to look.” Henri Matisse

“It is not only fine feathers that make fine birds.” Aesop

“The best and most beautiful thing in life cannot be seen, not touched, but are felt in the heart.” Helen Keller

“The future belongs to those who believe in the beauty of their dreams.” Eleanor Roosevelt

“A thing of beauty is a joy forever” John Keats

“Truth, and goodness, and beauty are but different faces of the same all.” Ralph Waldo Emerson

“Those who look for beauty, find it”. Author Unknown

“The pursuit of truth and beauty is a sphere of activity in which we are permitted to remain children all our lives.” Albert Einstein

“Those who contemplate the beauty of the earth find reserves of strength that will endure as long as life lasts.” Rachel Carson

“Some people, no matter how old they get, never lose their beauty – they merely move it from their faces into their hearts.” Martin Buxbaum

“Though we travel the world over to find the beautiful, we must carry it with us or we will not find it.” Ralph Waldo Emerson

Or, have the children come up with their own quotes about beauty, paint them on large sheets of paper, and cut around the words.

You may also want to have a “gallery crawl” and invite parents or other classes to see the “Art Museum” you have created with your students on this journey to find beauty.

Notes:

- (i) Wikipedia “Segregation Ruled Unequal, and Therefore Unconstitutional”, Psychology Matters, American Psychological Association. Undated. Accessed 29 march 2010
- (ii) Ahuja, Gitika, What a Doll Tells Us About Race, A.B.C. News, 4/1/09
- (iii) New, Rebecca S. Reggio E New, Rebecca S. Reggio Emilia As Cultural Activity Theory in Practice, 46(1), 5-13
- (iv) New, Rebecca S. Reggio E New, Rebecca S. Reggio Emilia As Cultural Activity Theory in Practice, 46(1), 5-13
- (v) Bhattacharyya, Ranu, The Castle in the Classroom, Story as a Springboard for Early Literacy. 2010, 15

Resources:

Bibliography - Teachers

Bhattacharyya, Ranu. *The castle in the classroom: story as a springboard for early literacy*. Portland, Me.: Stenhouse Publishers, 2010.

The author of this book is a seasoned teacher at international schools. She provides many child centered for creating an environment where children are free to think, learn, and create "outside the box".

Kohl, MaryAnn F., Jean Potter, and Rebecca Slyke. *Storybook art: hands-on art for children in the styles of 100 great picture book illustrators*. Bellingham, WA: Bright Ring Pub., 2003.

This book centers around popular children's picture books and their illustrators. A brief synopsis of each book, information and quotes from the illustrator, as well as creative art activities make this a valuable resource for a literature and art centered classroom.

Wolfe, Pat. *Brain matters: translating research into classroom practice*. Alexandria, Va.: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, 2001.

This book provides scientific support for integrating the arts throughout the curriculum.

Wurm, Julianne. *Working in the Reggio way: a beginner's guide for American teachers*. St. Paul, MN: Redleaf Press, 2005.

This informative book was written by an educator/researcher who spent a year in Italy working in a Reggio school.

Chicago formatting by BibMe.org.

Bibliography – Students and Teachers

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Little Tiger Press, 1998.

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2010.

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Diesen, Deborah, and Dan Hanna. *The pout-pout fish*. New York: Farrar Straus Giroux,
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Rey, H. A.. *Curious George*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1969.

Scotton, Rob. *Splat the cat*. New York: HarperCollins, 2008.

Teckentrup, Britta. *Grumpy cat*. London: Boxer Books ;, 2008.

The story of Ferdinand. New York: Puffin Books, 1987.

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Bibliography – Students and Teachers

The following are children's picture books about the *lives of a few famous artists* and the difficulties they faced.

Anholt, Laurence. *Camille and the sunflowers: a story about Vincent van Gogh*. London: Frances Lincoln, 2003.

Björk, Christina, Claude Monet, and Lena Anderson. *Linnea in Monet's garden*. Stockholm: R. & S. Books ;, 1987.

Brown, Deborah. *Vincent van Gogh's cat*. New York: Scholastic Inc., 2010.

Nichol, Barbara, and Scott Cameron. *Beethoven lives upstairs*. New York: Orchard Books, 1994.

Chicago formatting by BibMe.org.

Materials and Room Environment

You may want to support this “journey” by making changes to your classroom environment. Adding the following items/areas will enhance the focus of this unit:

Full length mirrors and mirrors over the sink or other areas

A section of the classroom or hall labeled: The _____ Gallery

Create an art center in your classroom. Be sure to include a variety of materials to support different mediums:

A well stocked Art center:

Paints – watercolors, tempera, acrylic

Paint brushes of all sizes

Smocks

Modeling clay – Crayola Model Magic air dries and does not crumble or break

Paper of all colors and textures

Scissors – “regular” and “fancy cutting”

Glue sticks and bottled glue

Fabric and sheets of foam paper

Dress-up center and puppet area for role-playing and storytelling

“Comfy” reading areas containing pillows, couches, beanbag chairs, etc. (I have a clawfoot tub filled with pillows and a refrigerator box painted to look like a castle)

Books pertaining to this topic (see bibliography),

Recycling center for art projects

A “Photo Gallery” to display the photos taken by the children on their “Beauty Walk”

Framed photos of each child mounted in a special area labeled with a sign - “You Are So Beautiful...”

Walls to display student work

Copies of famous artwork

Electronic keyboard (with headphones), other musical instruments, and scarves or ribbons for movement/music activities

Appendix

Implementing District Standards

The following are Kindergarten/First Grade standards that will be covered throughout the unit activities:

Common Core writing

W1 – Use a combination of drawing, dictating, and writing to compose opinion pieces in which they tell a reader the topic...

W2 – Use a combination of drawing, dictating, and writing to compose informative/explanatory texts in which they name what they are writing about and supply some information about the topic.

W6 – With guidance and support from adults, explore/use a variety of digital tools to produce and publish writing, including in collaboration with peers.

W8 – With guidance and support from adults, recall information from experiences or gather information from provided resources to answer a question.

NC Social Studies

1.01 Describe how individuals are unique and valued

7.01 Explore different forms of communication

7.023 use computer/technological tools to gather, organize, display data.

ⁱWikipedia “Segregation Ruled Unequal, and Therefore Unconstitutional”, Psychology Matters, American Psychological Association. Undated. Accessed 29 march 2010

ⁱⁱ Ahuja, Gitika, What a Doll Tells Us About Race, A.B.C. News, 4/1/09

ⁱⁱⁱⁱ New, Rebecca S. Reggio E New, Rebecca S. Reggio Emilia As Cultural Activity Theory in Practice, 46(1), 5-13

^{iv} New, Rebecca S. Reggio E New, Rebecca S. Reggio Emilia As Cultural Activity Theory in Practice, 46(1), 5-13

^v Bhattacharyya, Ranu, The Castle in the Classroom Story as Springboard for Early Literacy, 2010, 15-16