

## 2010 “Museum” Overview:

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4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> Grade Discovery

“The Museum” was a two year study of Ancient Civilizations and New World Cultures. This year my fourth grade students researched several different ancient civilizations: Mesopotamia, Egypt, Africa, Greece, Rome, China, India and the Middle Ages. My second year, fifth grade, students completed their fourth grade Ancient Civilization Museum in 2009, and this year studied New World Cultures as they connected to the concepts learned from their ancient studies. In step with the National Social Studies Standards, I chose four main themes to guide the fourth grade students’ research for each civilization: where the civilization was, how far back it dated, the writing of that culture and the religion of that culture. Other aspects were also learned about the various cultures, like their transportation, laws, trade, entertainment, food, and other various topics that the children found interesting. The fifth graders used their research from year one to justify the topic selection among New World Cultures, connecting the impact the ancient world has had on modern day societies. For instance, one group of students who researched Medieval Punishment and constructed a pillory last year, decided to research modern crime and punishment this year as they constructed and researched the history of the electric chair and Alcatraz. In addition to the artifact research and production for the Museum, my fifth graders also developed and implemented a Museum Gift Shoppe, where over 400 artifacts were produced for the students in our school to purchase. As well, both the fourth and fifth graders produced three music videos to the tunes of “Walk Like an Egyptian” by the Bangles, “King Tut” by Steve Martin, and “Good Riddance” by Green Day. As the Museum Tours commenced, the groups were able to peruse through our Gift Shoppe as they viewed our music videos! Quite a spectacular finale to conclude year two of the “Museum!”

The premise of this unit was to create a real live museum complete with artifacts *and research* for the school and the community to view. Many MDE Outcomes and Process Skills were introduced, reinforced and mastered as a result of this two year unit of study, and the students mastered an extensive 11 step process as they created and researched *each* artifact. The final product was a replica of actual artifacts and a “circa card,” or fact card, which gave pertinent facts related to the artifact.

Each artifact began by using materials such as cardboard, newspaper, and tape. Once the artifact’s structure or body was sturdy, the students used a clear, epoxy papier mache and butcher paper to put on the finishing touches. No paint, markers, crayons, or colored pencils were used for the fine details. *Every* detail was made using scraps of butcher paper that was dipped in the mache and molded over the base structure. The students followed the creative problem solving steps to design and create their artifacts; there were no directions! As a result, students were on a self-paced, goal setting schedule. Rubrics were consistently used to monitor and assess the artifact construction process. Each student made an average of 4 artifacts, some made as many as 9 or 10! The students had to plan their work and work their plan, soon discovering that what is in the mind’s eye is not always how it turns out! At each artifact work session each student wrote in

his or her “Artifact Work Log” which detailed the artifact’s progress complete with drawings using metric units of measure. Examples of artifacts spanned from a workable, life-sized guillotine and spinning wheel to true-to-form shoes from Medieval Times!

In addition to the Artifact Work Log, students worked through the *writing process* to produce a “circa card” for *each* artifact. A circa card is a fact card telling the main idea and information about the artifact. In order to produce the final circa card, the students had to learn *how* to research, take notes, cite work, and write rough drafts. Once the rough draft was complete the students worked through the steps of the writing process: self editing and revising, buddy editing and revising, and teacher editing and revising. Once the draft went through the editing and revising process three times, the student published the final work. All published drafts were typed using the same format and were mounted onto black construction paper. It was very important that each circa card, and we had between 80 and 90 of these, be uniform just like in a real museum, so as not to distract from the actual artifact itself. It was the student’s responsibility to update his or her work log and complete a circa card for each artifact. Rubrics were used at each class session to aid in monitoring both types of writing processes.

The ultimate goal was for the kids to organize the artifacts into “separate rooms,” and act as docents giving guided tours. The kids organized and ran a minimum of five tours each day for five days. Each tour lasted approximately 30 minutes, and students had to “adjust” each guided tour based on their audience, a process which we practiced for over a month prior to opening of the Museum. Students learned how to give extemporaneous, impromptu speeches to a variety of audiences. Many, many parents and community members saw our Museum, perused through our Gift Shoppe and viewed our music videos. We thank everyone who participated in one of these tours and appreciate all the support we received! It was a wonderful learning experience for me and my youngsters!

## **Steps to Artifact Construction and Research:**

There are a myriad of skills and steps involved in creating and researching each artifact:

Research: books, websites, magazines

Process Skill 5.4 Historical Research: The student will use research steps in analyzing and synthesizing information from history.

Process Skill 5.1 Research Skill Development: The student will propose and conduct a research report by: identifying a research topic, developing questions relating to the topic, identify resources, collecting and organizing data, presenting the findings, and evaluate the presentation.

Process Skill: 10.1 Small/Large Group Dynamics: The student will work collaboratively and effectively as a member of a team in small and large group settings.

Note Taking: learning how to summarize **not to plagiarize**, and learning how to assess the readability of a source.

Process Skill: 2.1 Questioning Techniques: The student will be able to use good questioning techniques to ask appropriate questions based on the level of thinking desired. They will assess and make adjustments to questions and evaluate that the appropriate level.

Citing Work: Bibliography! Bibliography! Bibliography! It was very important for the students to master this process and learn to appreciate the purpose of a bibliography and learn to appreciate why “we cite our work.” The note taking process is not complete without citing one’s research. This was a concept that was “drilled” home!

Process Skill 5.2 Interdisciplinary Connections: The student will apply interdisciplinary skills developed in the regular classroom in completing given or selected tasks.

Process Skill 5.4 Historical Research: The student will use research steps in analyzing and synthesizing information from history.

Writing and Revising Artifact Work Plans: At each class session the students had to revise their plans.

Process Skill 7.5 Time Management: The student will demonstrate time-management skills by setting goals for completion of projects and meeting deadlines.

Process Skill 7.9 Initiative: The student will demonstrate initiative in a variety of situations.

Process Skill 7.11 Team Work: The student will demonstrate ability to work cooperatively as a member of a team.

Process Skill 10.2 Intra-personal Skills/Self-Directed Learning/Autonomous Learning: The student will analyze individual interests, strengths and weaknesses, time management and organization skills, to set goals, plan and monitor self-directed or autonomous learning.

Process Skill 10.2.4 Goal Setting: The student will demonstrate understanding of setting goals.

Process Skill 10.2.5 Organization Skills: The student will demonstrate the ability to organize tasks, evaluate and set priorities for task completion.

Process Skill 10.2.7 Visualization: The student will identify visual thinking components in a systematic way. They will visualize alternative techniques for arriving at solutions.

Artifact Construction: A very difficult process, because what is in our “mind’s eye” is not always how it turns out. The students discovered this and used problem solving steps to “Make It Work!”

Process Skill 1.4 Creative Thinking: The student will demonstrate the concepts of fluency, flexibility, originality, elaboration, curiosity, risk-taking, complexity, and imagination by working individually or in small groups with other using group dynamics.

Process Skill 1.4.1 Fluency: The student will use fluency to generate a large quantity of ideas, products, or plans

Process Skill 1.4.2 Flexibility: The student will use flexibility to take a variety of possibilities or realms of thought or ideas.

Process Skill 1.4.3 Originality: The student will use originality to generate unusual/unique response of clever ideas.

Process Skill 1.4.4 Elaboration: The student will use elaboration to embellish upon an idea.

Process Skill 1.8.3 Participation –Application: The student will design and create artwork using a variety of mediums.

Process Skill 7.9 Initiative: The student will discuss and demonstrate initiative in a variety of situations.

Process Skill 7.11 Team Work: The student will demonstrate ability to work cooperatively as a member of a team.

Process Skill 10.2 Intra-personal Skills/Self-Directed Learning/Autonomous Learning: The student will analyze individual interests, strengths and weaknesses, time management and organization skills, to set goals, plan and monitor self-directed or autonomous learning.

Process Skill: 10.2.6 Risk Taking: The student will demonstrate the willingness to expose oneself to failure, take guesses, function under conditions devoid of structure, and defend one's own ideas.

Writing Process: Students used their notes to write their Circa Cards... **IN THEIR OWN WORDS, not plagiarized.**

Self Editing and Revising

Buddy Editing and Revising

Teacher Editing and Revising

Process Skill 4.2 Writing Skills: The student will be able to effectively communicate through writing using the writing process (prewriting, drafting, revising, proofreading/editing, and publishing of a variety of products).

Process Skill 5.2 Interdisciplinary Connections: The student will apply interdisciplinary skills developed in the regular classroom in completing given or selected tasks.

Publishing Circa Cards: There is a very specific way that these cards were to be mounted.

One may notice that each card has a half inch parameter. Believe it or not, this was one of the hardest technical skills to master!

Process Skill 10.5 Use of Technology: The student will use various modes of technology as tools in projects to accomplish the goal of being a self-directed learner.

Last, but not least, producing the end product for all to see!

Process Skill 7.5 Time Management: the student will demonstrate time-management skills by setting goals for completion of projects and meeting deadlines.

Process Skill 7.8 Perseverance: The student will demonstrate ability to persevere by completing chosen or given tasks.

Process Skill 7.10 Responsibility: The student will demonstrate responsibility in a variety of situations.

Process Skill 7.11 Team Work: The student will demonstrate ability to work cooperatively as a member of a team.

Process Skill 10.1 Small/Large Group Dynamics: The student will work collaboratively and effectively as a member of a team in small and large group settings.

Process Skill 10.1.1 Listening Skills: The student will listen attentively and respond appropriately to improve conversation skills, increase knowledge, demonstrate debating techniques, and problem solving skills.

Process Skill 10.2.5 Organization Skills: The student will demonstrate ability to organize tasks, evaluate and set priorities for task completion.

Process Skill 10.2.7 Visualization: The student will identify visual thinking components in a systematic way. They will visualize alternative techniques for arriving at solution.

Process Skill 10.2.9 Self Discipline: The student will demonstrate self discipline in a variety of situations.