



Post Fellowship Reporting - Project Summary

Report Title: Maui and Merida - Art in Action **Name:** Linda Michele Morgan
Other Team Members:
Program: Oakland Program
Trip Dates: 11/30/-0001 - 11/30/-0001 **Location Visited:** Hawaii and Mexico
Post Fellowship Reporting Template: PFR Template 02

Project Summary: "Make big plans, but change your plans as time changes."--Marchant

My original proposal was to attend two workshops, one in Sacramento, California, and the other in New York City. Both workshops explored various aspects of Musical Theater, including how to direct a successful performance, how to stage a play on a limited budget, and how to use drama for literacy development. However, my plans changed when I found out that BOTH workshops had been canceled.

In my search for a replacement activity, I found two professional development workshops that, while not specifically focused on all things Musical Theater, promised to explore the integration of the arts in education, in the areas of "drama" and "music" (as well as visual arts and dance) which seemed fairly similar to my general interest in musical theater. The first workshop was held in Maui, Hawaii, at the Maui Arts & Cultural Center. The second workshop was in Merida, Mexico, at Habla. Entitled "Creative Connections" and "Into the Labyrinth," respectively, both workshops proved to be dynamic explorations of arts practices in education, stimulating my desire to teach more creatively and affirming the value and importance of many of the practices that I had already started implementing in my classroom. Individuals involved in education facilitated both workshops: professors, teachers, visual artists, musicians who collaborate with classroom teachers, and district administrators in the area of arts integration in education. Not only did I get practical, hands-on strategies and activities that I could integrate into my classroom, but I learned the theories underlying the growing movement for arts integration, methods of assessing student understanding through arts practices, and ways to document student learning.

As the emphasis on high test scores intensifies in public education, students are becoming bereft of their capacity for creativity. The workshops I attended provided me with tools to inspire students, especially students of color, to take back their personal power, the power to negotiate, connect, and make sense of their environment. It taught me ways to allow students to construct their own meaning out of the curriculum and transform the classroom dialogue into a more student-centered model of exploration, inquiry, and discovery.

Career Impact: In both workshops, I was the only African-American person participating. A common theme in my life, I felt initially uncomfortable and out of place in both spaces, retreating to the comfort of my cell phone where I could contact friends and family back home. Even among fellow educators, I felt that my perspective was unlike the others, having grown up in a state of poverty - both emotionally and socioeconomically - and having held this inner belief that I was at a deficit, unlearned, and ignorant. After a few days and many rituals, activities, group projects, and personal testimonies passed, I realized that I shared a common bond with the participants: the desire to educate our youth in a way that touches the whole child, which allows a child to bring in his/her own experiences as valid narratives, and to express themselves in ways beyond pencil and paper, in a language of their creation. And I realized that that child was also me, that I had something important to contribute and that I was valid and integral, had purpose, and place. These workshops allowed me to tap into my inner child and see the beauty of my own being as I wish for all children to see in themselves.

Classroom/Community Impact: My school has always emphasized the arts, but usually as a "prep" class in which the students attend to allow teachers planning time. This fellowship has empowered me to transform my actual classroom and instructional practices into one where the arts are central and integrated into the existing curriculum. I believe the experiences from the summer helped to bolster my skill set in the area of arts integration. My fellowship experiences emphasized the importance of collaborative groups which foster teamwork, cooperation and communication. My classroom has already become a richer, more holistic community of learners and explorers. Whether organizing a performance piece, developing a puppet show, or planning an instantaneous tableau, each student has a part to play which shifts over time, and their team is dependent upon them to fulfill their duty. This model has increased the engagement of all students, promoted creativity and self-expression, encouraged problem solving and accountability, and allowed for active involvement in the learning process.

Open Response: My fellowship has given me the courage to continue with the framework that I had already began establishing in my classroom, one where performance is central, self-expression vital, and collaboration and accountability factor largely in each

students' daily activities. The goal is to have students work collaboratively to present small production pieces. Students will use the existing curricular narratives and expository texts and choose a format to exhibit as an assessment of their comprehension and content knowledge. These pieces may be live-action performances, musical pieces, puppet shows, collages, tableaux, comic strips. The idea is to engage with the materials in a more creative context, merging the individual and the collective, the private and the public, thoughts, feelings, action. I will also teach students to document their presentations through video and photographs. Students will showcase their products or productions to select classes. I feel this to be preferred way to encourage and promote the integration of the arts school-wide rather than through an in-service. The hope is that the performances will inspire others to want to learn to integrate these methods.

Quote: "Our lives are works of art."

Photos:



"Go fish, go!" Character analysis through tableau, Maui



"A school of fish" Plot analysis through tableau, Maui



"Women's Suffrage Movement" Historical interpretation through tableau, Maui



"George Washington" Historical analysis through portraiture, Maui



Preparing for culminating performance, an interpretation of a poem, Mexico



Culminating Performance, "Unnamed", Mexico



Using viewfinder to delineate space, creating "I Am" poem, Mexico



Collaborating to present a poem, re: language and identity, Mexico