Arts Integration Through Experiential Reflection
George Mason University
Course Instructor: John Ceschini
3 graduate credits
Important Course Dates:
March 17, 2012 – Orientation and Enrollment
March 31 through April 7, 2012 – A Sicilian Art and Cultural Experience
May 4, 2012 – Classroom Curriculum Integration Project due

This is a two-part course that challenges you to integrate your travel experiences into your classroom. The goals for the course are as follows:

- Become aware of your own artistry, creativity, and cooperative skills during the travel portion of the course.
- Deepen your understanding of children’s multiple learning modes by making art along side artists who employ a variety of art modes.
- Gain competency in “teaching through the arts” by experiencing the arts within the context of the land and culture of Sicily.
- Challenge your own stereotypes of European culture, peoples and art through critical dialogue with Italian artists and teachers.
- Develop new ways of integrating art-making into your classroom curriculum.

Part One: Travel Through Sicily

From March 31 through April 7, 2012, you will be a member of a cohort of teachers traveling to Sicily to gain on-site experience related to art-making, creativity, and classroom arts integration. Your week long venture will begin in Catania and explore the eastern part of the island with visits to Syracuse, Ragusa, and Mt. Etna before ending in the Arabian-Norman city of Paleramo. This travel will enable you to work with other teachers in your cohort as you experience the land and culture of Italy. You will have hands-on arts experiences in the following art modalities: the art of cheese, olive oil and wine making; ceramics, soap making, and mosaics. You will travel to museums to learn about papyrus and puppetry, and visit ancient ruins to study the ruins of ancient cultures. Working directly with Italian maestro artists, you will be making art throughout the week. Reflection, journaling, small and large group critical dialogue and exhibition of your work will lead to new understandings of how your own creativity can be integrated into your classroom.

Documenting your process of interacting with artists, teachers, and the physical environments of the Italian culture will be critical to your understanding of ways in which arts integrate within local cultures. Reflection and documentation of your daily field trips to a variety of local arts environments, and your own art-making will provide you with the data that you will need to integrate the travel experience into your classroom curricula.
Because your documentation will be very important as a source of memory and inspiration for you once you return to your classroom, you are required to make entries using at least five of the following documentation formats:

- Journal
- Photography
- Sketching
- Rubbings
- Found materials (ephemera), gathered materials

**Part Two: Experiential Integration with Curriculum:**

Your approach to integrating the arts into your students' classroom experiences is based on a set of assumptions you hold about how children learn, how teachers teach, what counts as knowledge, and what role education and the arts play within society and within your life. During this part of the course you will use your travel experiences to integrate the arts into your classroom curriculum based on what you learned during your time in Italy. You will be guided by the various documents that you have accumulated during the travel section of the course. This documentation will include, but not be limited to, class notes, your journal (written and illustrated), photography, artefacts, and other materials as a source of data and inspiration as you integrate art forms within your own classroom.

Course Assignment: Postmarked May 4, 2012

Develop and implement an art-based lesson within your own classroom based on something that you experienced during your time in Italy.

Then create a PowerPoint presentation or a 7 to 10 page paper with photo illustrations that demonstrates the lesson. Within the presentation you are expected to reveal how your travel experiences have affected your approach to your own teaching. For example, you can talk about how your classroom lesson was inspired by your travels by reflecting upon:

- Which part of the travel experience meant the most to you?
- What person or persons made you think differently about your teaching?
- What art experience resulted in your thinking of some new ways of integrating arts into your own classroom?

Send your assignment with a self-addressed stamped envelope of the appropriate size to:

John Ceschini, Executive Director
Arts Education in Maryland Schools Alliance
175 W. Ostend St. Suite A-3
Baltimore, MD 21230
Course Evaluation Criteria:

15% Travel Documentation

55% Course Assignment

30% Contribution to the class community:
- Non-judgmental respect for other’s opinions and beliefs,
- Risk-taking (willingness to do something or think something that you have never done or thought before),
- Cooperating with others,
- Enabling others to feel safe,
- Relating the course content to your classroom curriculum,
- Connecting dissimilar ideas,
- Empathizing; understanding other’s ideas and feeling by putting yourself in their shoes,
- Listening for how others respond to what you tell them,
- Producing and displaying of your art work.

Required Reading:


Suggested Readings:

Books on Sicily:


Books on the Arts:


Worcester, MA: Davis Publications, Inc.