Heather Severson: A Collaborative Approach to Teaching Writing

Arizona Commission on the Arts Teaching Artist Roster Application

Describe how you collaborate with teachers or staff in the design and delivery of arts-based learning experiences.

As an educator with several years of experience in various contexts, I understand the importance of flexibility and collaboration in education. My workshops are designed to meet students where they are, in terms of skill, motivation and experience. I would welcome opportunities to consult with teachers before delivering workshops to make sure that I can help them address current challenges, topics of study, individual student needs, and the like.

Bearing in mind the guiding principles of the Arizona Art Standards (Create, Relate, Evaluate), I can work with teachers to provide opportunities for students to "create artworks to communicate ideas, meanings, and/or purposes; analyze and interpret contextual ideas, meanings and purposes of art from diverse cultures and time periods; and draw thoughtful conclusions about the significance of art." While my workshops fall into the area of Literary Arts, my approach is multi-disciplinary. Participants incorporate several specific standards in the Visual Arts, and even Dance and Theater, as we engage in our creative writing endeavors.

In collaborating with teachers for in-school workshops or residencies, I can tie workshop outcomes to specific Common Core Standards in English Language Arts, particularly in Writing, for each grade level. While I can address writing and reading standards on the more granular level of grade level and specific standards, I keep in mind the Common Core English Language Arts Anchor Standards for Writing, as listed below:

Text Types and Purposes
- CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.W.1 Write arguments to support claims in an analysis of substantive topics or texts using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence.
- CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.W.2 Write informative/explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas and information clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization, and analysis of content.
- CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.W.3 Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, well-chosen details and well-structured event sequences.

Production and Distribution of Writing
- CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.W.4 Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.
- CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.W.5 Develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach.
- CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.W.6 Use technology, including the Internet, to produce and publish writing and to interact and collaborate with others.

Research to Build and Present Knowledge
- CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.W.7 Conduct short as well as more sustained research projects based on focused questions, demonstrating understanding of the subject under investigation.
- CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.W.8 Gather relevant information from multiple print and digital sources, assess the credibility and accuracy of each source, and integrate the information while avoiding plagiarism.
- CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.W.9 Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.

Range of Writing
- CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.W.10 Write routinely over extended time frames (time for research, reflection, and revision) and shorter time frames (a single sitting or a day or two) for a range of tasks, purposes, and audiences.