



Curriculum Units by Fellows of the National Initiative

2008 Volume IV: Bridges: The Art and Science for Creating Community Connections

Building Bridges Over Turbulent Middle School Waters

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This curriculum unit examines the role of art in bridging the gap between school and community by using local bridges as a metaphor, and as actual structures of importance throughout neighborhoods. The curriculum will help students understand the diverse nature of the community where they live. The work to replace and repair several of these bridges caused great changes in the traffic patterns in the surrounding neighborhoods. Road closures lasted as long as a year. The importance of timely completion of these projects became very clear to members of the community as walking and driving times lengthened and new traffic routes had to be established.

As students look at the problems which arise when reconstruction starts, they will also study the rather lengthy planning process the community must go through before any of the actual bridge work begins. They will learn that the process is very complex and is filled with controversy, particularly for art work on any of these bridges. Students will examine the reasoning behind the upkeep of bridges of historical interest. Architects, engineers, and city planners can help with these explanations, and we will enlist the help of City of Santa Fe Public Works staff and representatives from the various trades involved in creating these structures.

Additionally students will use the local crossing as inspiration to create prints in the classrooms. Students will be introduced to several printmaking processes, and will create and display their finished works throughout the school.

(Developed for Art, grade 8; recommended for Art and Social Studies, Middle and High School grades)

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