

Singithi Kandage
Professor Pam Patterson
INTR 3B05
April 5th , 2012

ADEL Journal No. 8

This was my last session with Sohelia and also happened to be the best experience as an intern! Much like with the Creativity Challenge with Deidre, the activities were presented truly as challenges. Soheila began a class discussion of what creativity was, positioning “thinking outside of the box” as resourcefulness with few materials as possible.

She was a very accommodating instructor, and encouraged myself and Elisabeth to take on pretty active educator roles. The fairly equally distribution of instruction time among us created a spontaneous team teaching dynamic study which complimented the teambuilding exercises in the class.

Soheila allowed myself and fellow intern Elisabeth to lead the “warm-ups” of Creativity Challenge. This time, I was determined to take on a friendly, but authoritative role, making sure to project my voice in a crowded classroom of twenty-five. Myself and Elisabeth took turns telling each group of four to collect items from the table, to assemble them into an object within a time limit, and timing them accurately. Our first challenge, completing a portrait, went frantically and successfully; I lead each group to present their works to the rest of their class, in an effort to give them a better understanding of material possibilities. Next, Elisabeth completed the “create landscape in 40 seconds” challenge on her own. At the last minute, I decided to take a page out of EO Shannon’s book, and presented the last challenge as “one minute to make an animal, as a group, and in silence”, with the stipulation that if I heard them talking I would take away one of their much-needed objects. This worked beautifully! In asking students what the challenges of the activity were, they responded that while a lack of verbal communication made collaborating difficult, it in fact lead to a greater team bonding experience for some groups.

I felt this was a successful and innovative part of the lesson plan because it not only emphasized creativity through resourcefulness of available materials, but also through being an efficient communicator. This interpretation of creativity continued on into the hand-on creation of small installation which identified an environmental concern. What differentiated this particular session from others was that since markers, pencils and crayons were not available to students, they were forced to make far more planned-out works by using collage and the inert colours of materials such as cardboard, ribbon, and tape instead. The result was some of the most innovatively constructed and elegant artworks I have ever seen from a group. The class was so absorbed with completing their ambitious projects in little over half and hour that Elisabeth, Soheila, and I kept a mostly “hands-off” approach at this stage.

Previous experiences with high school students had always lead me to believe that the peer pressure of their age group made them more inhibited about their creativity. Defying all expectations, this group was so enormously imaginative it left Elisabeth and I awe-stricken. One team of four created used the materials provided, literally scraps that might be found in the garbage, and recontextualized them into a massive scale model of a landfill overflowing into an ocean. The figures of dead sesame street characters floated in the water, a powerful symbol for how carelessness of the environment ultimately harms the youngest and most vulnerable members of society. Elisabeth and I both commented on how the piece was effectively a mock-up for a massive, professional installation. Amazing!