

TEACHER RESOURCE CENTERS – A TREASURE CHEST OF TEACHING IDEAS

by Susan Gallo

Curator of Art & Technology at The Cummer Museum of Art & Gardens

Knowing that more than eighty percent of people are primarily visual learners, teachers search for just the right poster, artifact, object or illustration to make a lesson come alive for their students. They know that if their students can study, touch and examine artifacts, whether originals or reproductions, they will gain additional levels of understanding and meaning from lessons being taught.

While many teachers purchase resources for hands-on activities, the reality is that no teacher can hope to amass all of the objects necessary to teach every class and every subject encountered. The answer? Museum Teacher Resource Centers - lending libraries for teachers that are housed in museum education departments containing reproductions of paintings, prints, sculptures and artifacts from different cultures and periods of history.

In Jacksonville, The Cummer Museum of Art & Gardens has recently become the home of the Duval County School System's Dorothy C. Rowlett Visual Education Center (VEC). Located in Art Connections, the Center is filled with materials that can be borrowed without cost by teachers or volunteers in Duval County public or private schools. From ancient Egyptian relief sculpture to 20th Century Pop Art posters, the Center offers exciting visuals for teachers and students.

Many museums have teacher resource centers where local teachers can select materials in person. Some museums, like the National Gallery of Art (www.nga.gov) and the Smithsonian museums (www.si.edu), have taken this concept to the next level by lending materials through the mail to any teacher in any location. The National Gallery's website contains a database of materials and formats available – slides, videodiscs, videotapes, PDFs, and closed-caption videos – as well as an order form for teachers to download. Other museums like The Getty Center (www.getty.edu/artsednet) and The Minneapolis Institute of Art and Walker Art Center (www.artconnected.org) offer image libraries for teachers through their websites.

This year as you plan your units and lessons, consider including a visit to your local Teacher Resource Center or access a museum website via the Internet. It's a fast, easy and rewarding way to increase your teaching tools, enrich your teaching experience, and enhance your students' learning.

“...if their students can study, touch and examine artifacts, whether originals or reproductions, they will gain additional levels of understanding and meaning from lessons being taught.”



CRITICAL VIEWING

This lesson plan can be used by a teacher in a classroom or in a museum.

It is important to encourage critical viewing as an initial introduction to any work of art, whether looking at an original in a museum or a reproduction in a classroom. The following questions relate the Feldman approach to a reproduction of Abraham Rattner's *Seated Figure in Costume* (1948) from the Cummer collection.

Look at the image and describe it.

- Ask: What do you see in this painting?
What colors and shapes can you identify?
Do you see a figure?*

Analyze the way the parts of the painting work together.

- Ask: What colors do you notice first?
How does the artist draw your attention to the figure on the right?*

Interpret what the painting is about and the mood achieved by the artist.

- Ask: What is this person doing?
Does this scene look like a photograph?
Why do you think an artist would change the form of an object by breaking it apart into shapes and colors?
What do you think the most important part of this painting is, the subject of the figure, or the shapes, lines and colors?*

- Ask: Do you enjoy looking at this painting?
Why or why not?
Does a painting have to be realistic to be a good or interesting work of art?*



THE FELDMAN APPROACH

Edmund Burke Feldman (*Becoming Human Through Art*, 1970) identified four distinct steps in viewing a work of art:

Description: Students name what they see in the work of art.

Analysis: Students find the elements of art: line, shape, color, composition, and texture.

These steps encourage thorough examination, slow the tendency to jump to conclusion, and build skills in observation.

Interpretation: Identifying what they see and feel, students describe how objects and art elements convey meaning and ideas.

Judgment: Students decide if the work of art has the power to satisfy or please many viewers over time. Young children may only be able to share why they personally like or dislike a particular work.

Credits:

Page 2: (detail) Abraham Rattner, American, 1895-1978, *Seated Figure in Costume*, 20th century, Oil on masonite, Museum purchase with funds provided by Mae Schultz Fund, AP1991.10.1

Page 4: (detail) Juan Antonio Benlliure Gil, Valencia, 1860-1930, *Lady in White*, 1897, Oil on canvas, Museo Nacional de San Carlos, Mexico City

ARTS FOR ALL

By Hope McMath

Director of Education at The Cummer Museum of Art & Gardens

There is an abundance of resources specifically designed for educating students with special needs. Although the institutions mentioned here are specific to the Northeast Florida region, similar resources can be found in almost any community.

As museums are limited in how many, if any, objects in their collections can be touched, sculpture reproductions housed in resource centers like the Duval County Visual Education Center can be used as teaching tools for students with visual impairments. Additionally, each state's public library system houses *Art History Through Touch and Sound*. This multi-sensory guide, composed of audiotapes and tactile line drawings, explains the masterpieces of world art to the blind and visually impaired.

For teachers and therapists working with students with profound physical disabilities, *Arts for All*, a series of adaptive art making tools created by Dwayne Szot, allow students with limited mobility to create large scale painted murals and prints. Since few schools can afford to purchase a full set of the wheelchair-attachable tools,

the Cummer loans *Arts for All* materials to schools to use in their own facilities. The only prerequisite for borrowing the materials is that a teacher or therapist from the interested school attends a training to glean all of the information necessary to create a meaningful and successful experience for their students.

Although not specific to the arts, Florida Diagnostic and Learning Resources System/Crown (FDLRS/Crown) provides support to educators and parents in the Northeast Florida Region and is one of nineteen associate centers that serve the entire state. FDLRS (www.educationcentral.org/FDLRS) provides a wide array of services including Child Find, human resource development opportunities and a library of materials to assist anyone involved in educating students with special needs. FDLRS loans materials ranging from computer software and assistive devices to curriculum books, including many of those created by VSA Arts.

Whether you are teaching art lessons or simply trying to expand the number of tools in your toolbox, investigate your community resources. With little or no charge attached to these services, they are the ideal way to bring the arts into the classroom regardless of your budget or expertise.





EXHIBITIONS

European Masterworks from the San Carlos National Museum of Art, Mexico City
October 24 - December 29, 2002

Festival of Joy
November 29, 2002 - January 5, 2003

Modern Masters: Corot to Kandinsky
January 30 - March 15, 2003

TEACHER IN-SERVICES INFORMATION

Infusing Art into the Curriculum
Friday, September 13, 2002 • 8:30 AM - 3:30 PM

Start with the Arts: Art and Early Childhood
Friday, October 11, 2002 • 12:30 PM - 3:30 PM

Introducing the Old Masters into the Curriculum
Tuesday, October 29, 2002 • 8:30 AM - 3:30 PM

Bringing the Modern Masters into Your Classroom
Thursday, January 30, 2003 • 8:30 AM - 3:30 PM

VSA Arts Teacher Training -Enhancing the ESE Classroom with Art
Friday, March 14, 2003 • 12:30 PM - 3:30 PM

Integrating the Arts into the Curriculum
The museum also offers individual schools or educational groups a half day or full day in-service entitled Integrating the Arts into the Curriculum. This workshop can be tailored to your needs. Call for more details.

TEACHER RESOURCES

Visit these websites to find good art ideas and teacher lesson plans:

- www.metmuseum.org Metropolitan Museum of Art *Timeline of Art History*; Directory of Artist Biographies; Daily artwork highlighted.
- www.lacma.org Los Angeles County Museum of Art Extensive variety of resource packets/curricula available by mail (\$10 each; \$7 each for orders of five or more). Order form available on the website.
- www.vmf.state.va.us Virginia Museum of Fine Arts Schools in Virginia may become educational partners and borrow resource materials.
- www.ringling.org John and Mable Ringling Museum of Art Image gallery available to teachers.

Educator Open House
Tuesday, September 24, 2002
5:30 PM - 7:30 PM

Join area educators in an evening of information and fun. Learn about programs available at the Cummer and other cultural institutions in the area. Enjoy hands-on art activities and exchange ideas and lessons with teachers in all subject areas. Interdisciplinary tours of the collection and gardens will be offered by museum staff. Bring your ideas, questions, and calendars and leave with information and a bag of educational tools to help you in the new school year. Light refreshments will be served.

The Educator Open House is free, but we ask you to RSVP to 355-0630.

Learn more about exciting events at the Cummer by visiting our website at www.cummer.org. To book a tour, please call *Art Connections* at 355-0630.