Puppetry in the Visual Arts Classroom

Thesis

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree Master of Arts in the Graduate School of The Ohio State University

By

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2010

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Abstract

Puppetry is a global communication device that has enabled modern culture to address the moral, ethnic, and educational needs of today's children. Puppets are a multicultural art form as well as an effective teaching tool. The strength of puppetry is the interactive quality between students, teachers, and audiences. Using puppets enables the teacher to cross social, economic, gender, and political barriers. Puppets have been used to teach in ancient history as well as today's educational system.

I am often asked, "Why do you choose to use puppets in your teaching?" My answer to this question is that limited research has been done in the use of puppetry in the classroom including lesson planning through assessment. I am an expert puppeteer. From this expertise, I have developed teaching methods using puppets. In this study, I will demonstrate how puppetry arts can be used in the classroom as well as other educational settings. I will use examples of my own artform in puppetry to develop personal communication skills, collaboration, and self-esteem. It is possible to teach every student in any situation with this fine art called puppetry.

Dedication

This document is dedicated to my Mother, Inez Kirby,

who always believed in me and gave me the encouragement

to complete this program and fulfill my lifelong dream.

Acknowledgements

I would like to gratefully thank my friend, Martha Harrison, without whom this thesis project would not be possible. Her support and encouragement enabled me to have the time to complete this thesis.

I am forever grateful to my wonderful son, Justin Shoults, who has been my fellow puppeteer since he was in his crib. His assistance and support of all of my zany projects throughout the years warms my heart.

I would also like to thank my students whose artistic creations grace these pages. Their dedication to me as their teacher and to their art will carry them through their lives.

Lastly, I owe my deepest gratitude to Dr. Vesta Daniel who was my first contact when I decided to go back to college after a twenty-five year respite. Her encouragement and guidance allowed me to live my dream to teach children art and change lives with my puppets.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Statement of Purpose

The main purpose of this study is to develop, implement and evaluate art education curriculum for visual arts students using puppetry. This statement of purpose includes the following components:

1. To review of my personal lifelong education in the puppetry arts.
2. To develop specific educational objectives based upon the results of my own art teaching experience using ODE Academic Content Standards for the Visual Arts.
3. To create usable educational tools for art teachers to implement puppet-focused curriculum.
4. To develop authentic assessments to measure the impact of the curriculum on the learner.

Research Questions

On the basis of the foregoing review, the research questions identified were:

- How has puppetry been shown to be an effective teaching strategy in the visual arts classroom?
- What are some ways that teachers can introduce puppetry into the visual arts classroom?

Significance of the Study

This study will be my endeavor to document my life's work with the puppetry arts. It will also benefit art teachers who desire to incorporate the puppetry arts into their classrooms. It will increase understanding of the scope of puppetry historically and how it has helped meet the educational needs of children across the globe for many years. And this study will capture and relate the significance of the puppet in reaching every child.

I will show how puppetry can encourage imaginative thinking in students of the arts. Moreover, my sample lessons will provide recommendations on how to design a lesson using puppets, incorporate collaborative student work, and assess the lesson for better understanding of each child. It will serve as a documented case history of one puppeteer, thousands of ideas, and my personal success using puppetry to educate.

Scope and Limitations of Study

This study is a personal narrative that will investigate my life's work with the puppetry arts. Gaining the skills to use puppetry in teaching art education will be the focus of this study**.** Years of study, design, practice, and the incorporation of puppetry into my art education curriculum will be discussed and analyzed. I will also show pertinent data regarding my studies demonstrating the effectiveness of using puppets in childhood education. The only limitation of this study is my constant process of learning, experimenting, designing and practicing new and different creative methods using puppets in the classroom. It will be an ongoing study for the rest of my life.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

The trends in education as seen in the current literature include many instances of teachers using puppets in the classroom. Whether it is the visual arts or another academic classroom, puppets along with other drama, storytelling, or performance techniques are often applied to enhance student learning. My contention that puppetry is an effective communication device to introduce ideas, encourage imagination, and enhance self-esteem in children, is supported in many instances in the current literature. Puppetry used in the classroom merely for entertainment misses many of the basic foundations in using this creative artform; encouraging collaboration, creative problem solving, and inspiring children. Engaging children to create characters and create stories based upon some element of their own life is at the heart of puppetry. Creative thinking is inherently human and can take place in children as young as pre-school when given the opportunity (Honig, 2001). Fourth and fifth grade students working on a study of the Civil War developed historically accurate soldier puppets after much research in the arts classroom (Thomas, 2008). In this way, puppets extend into studies of history, culture, costume, and character. Many articles have been written that include detailed descriptions of puppets used in creative play such as a classroom that developed a news broadcast program, developing animal characters used as

reporters. This was a great opportunity to introduce creative storytelling and script writing to the youngest student (Bixler, 2008). In an Atlanta public school, teachers developed a program for gifted and talented children called *Challenge Program*. This became a traveling team of fifth grade puppeteers working with marionettes performing a character-building puppet show (Louis, 1997). Creative educators have developed many ways to use puppets in their teaching.

Lawrence Sipe writes in his article entitled "Using Picturebooks to Teach Art History" that many different aspects of art can be introduced to children using picturebooks in the classroom. From famous artists of the past through interesting artistic styles, picturebooks can be found that can complement the arts classroom curriculum. Teachers are encouraged to collaborate with professionals such as authors to enhance learning in many areas. Sipe analyzes current children's literature that falls into different conceptual categories including parodies, biographies, and fictional works about famous artists. Several children's picturebooks introduce art museums to children, actively engaging them in a virtual tour of a well-known museum. Coincidentally, I have used many of the same picturebooks that are cited in this article as a basis for creation of my puppet shows (Sipe, 2001).

Many times, puppets are used as a medium toward supporting educational programs. Ben Fisler writes in "Quantifiable Evidence, Reading Pedagogy, and Puppets" that the Clarice Smith Performing Arts Center used puppet performances to support the America Reads Initiative to improve elementary reading skills. He

discusses drama education including puppetry as beneficial toward building a lifelong love of reading in children. While puppet theater encourages cooperative learning, it also develops many areas of learning including creative and technical skills. Fisler relates details of the project "Puppetry for Reading" where children used stories that they read to develop puppet plays. All of the schools that were involved in this project related positive feedback from the participants. Teachers of the students involved in creating the puppet shows all reported improvement in their students reading skills although the students preferred making puppets and performing. The children were intrigued that many plays and movies are created from books and that reading is an important skill (Fisler, 2003).

In a school in Australia, a program was developed about environmental issues using drama pedagogy, puppetry, and role-playing called "Mrs. Blue Gum" (Appleby, 2005). Drama education is another area that tends to use puppetry in many programs. I have found that teachers that use puppetry for such projects generally report positive results in the classroom.

Another area in which puppets are used by teachers in the classroom is introducing solutions to a variety of social issues such as bullying. One school developed a troupe called PIE Company (Puppets in Education), that travels around the country delivering messages about bullies. These teachers feel that they provide a voice for children who are faced with this issue (Michell, 2006). Other teachers attempt "puppet interventions" in classrooms where there are behavior problems and find that using puppets can be successful when used in these situations (Leyser

& Wood, 1980). Yet another example is a study of children ages four to six where they used puppets to respond to anger (Murphy & Eisenberg, 1997). Social interactions such as greeting and conversing was taught to children with visual impairments in one case study using puppets (Gronna, Serna, Kennedy, & Prater, 1999). As the literature is investigated, puppets are the vehicle of choice in many therapeutic situations.

There are many sources that report using puppets to discuss issues that exist in children's lives such as health issues from disability to diabetes. Some puppet projects are designed to stimulate discussion of such issues in creative ways (Asher, 2009). These educational programs are taking place all over the world. One group has focused on Afghanistan children who are facing critical issues of life and death. A group called *No Strings International* is promoting this particular puppet interaction as a help to these children at risk (Perry, 2007).

One area of particular interest to me in developing my personal work with puppets is the development of imagination in children through play. Thomas Turner writes that toys and puppets that are used for children's play are true "hands-on" learning tools (Turner, 2003). His article entitled "Puppets to Put the Whole World in Their Hands" emphasizes the historical and cultural use of puppets throughout the world and their appeal toward social studies education. In another article, "Out of an Old Toy Chest", author Marina Warner discusses the fantasy and imagination that comes with playing with toys. Children are encouraged to write dialogue, make up conversations, and create real characters through play (Warner, 2009). This

emphasis on play in child development is repeated in an article by Linda Pound when she states that it is the responsibility of adults to encourage this important learning in children (Pound, 2009). Social skills can be modeled by teachers of children as young as pre-school through playing. Role-playing and reinforcement are key to this learning. This type of play is encouraged in the Montessori classroom as indicated in an article about young children's imaginative play (Soundy, 2009). Many authors agree that puppets are actually good for children in the learning process, especially children with special needs (Prevenslik, 2005).

In "Crisis in the Kindergarten: Why Children Need to Play in School", the authors respond to the changes in young children's education in the last twenty years. Emphasis that was once placed on carefree play has been replaced with standardized testing and prescriptive lesson planning. The authors challenge these educational mandates being imposed by policies and programs including *No Child Left Behind* and *Reading First*. They recommend a call for action to reverse some of the losses that occur by taking creative play out of the Kindergarten classroom (Miller & Almon, 2009).

In working with older children who are disconnected from school, Mike Rose states "We don't see words like emotion or imagination or, for that matter, identity in our education policy." He contends that good teachers work hard to create moments in a child's education that will capture a child's imagination and make meaning out of their life (Rose, 2009). Child-rearing is up to adults and I believe that it is the adult's responsibility to nurture imagination and creativity in each child.

One parent, in researching her Master's thesis, stayed at home with her two girls and recorded dialogue during sessions of learning to create visual art at home. Robin Adeney found the connection between dialogue and art-making and reports on results seventeen years later (Adeney, 2008).

Although my personal expertise is not in psychology, I have found interest in articles that have been written regarding Puppet Therapy. Russ and Kaugers write in "Emotion in Children's Play and Creative Problem Solving" that they conducted a study of first and second grade students and found that pretend play is critical in developing creativity in children. Their focus was connecting creativity and playing and they suggested further research to make these important connections (Russ & Kaugers, 2001).

Finally, literature relating to current trends in puppetry find that puppet theater around the world is growing at an extraordinary rate. Part of this growth can be attributed to modern technology (Badenhorst & Axmann, 2002). Contemporary television, stage, and film have all tapped into the magic of the puppet. Two particular puppeteers, Jim Henson, creator of the Muppets, and Peter Schumnn of Bread & Puppet Theater have both contributed greately to this resurgance of puppetry in America. While their styles are very different, their affect on the popularity of the puppet is unmatched. The article discusses emerging puppet culture and the worldwide influence of this art. From Broadway's *Lion King*, to the Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade, to the dinosaurs appearing in *Jurassic Park*, puppets are all around us (Kaplin, 1999). Worldwide, the Muppets have made an

impact in at least 150 different countries. A recent article in the New York Times relates a story of a Palestinian version of Sesame Street called “Shara’s Simsim”. This has become a remarkable, highly appreciated educational program for the children of Ramallah as they watch this program with delight. Live performances by the stars of “Shara’s Simsim” are packed with hundreds of young students (Shapiro, 2009).

In “Puppets and Performing Objects in the Twentieth Century”, John Bell writes a brief history of puppetry’s roots, mentioning Paul Klee and his collection of hand puppets that he created for his son Felix, a lesson plan on Klee to follow, and Alexander Calder whose *Wire Circus* is the theme of one of my own favorite second-grade visual arts units.

Generally, there has been much written about using puppets in diverse settings to educate both children and adults. Much of the literature cited in this thesis exemplifies puppetry as an excellent method of education and leaves the door open for much more experimentation and research.

Chapter 3: Methodology

When beginning my study of *Puppetry in the Visual Arts Classroom*, I needed to choose a methodology that would allow me to weave together many of my personal life stories to form a basis for my pedagogical approach to teaching art in the classroom. I am a puppeteer and storyteller. This is an important facet of myself that I felt needed to be exposed in my study. Using my life experiences, I wanted to justify my strong conviction to introduce puppetry to students in every grade. I wanted to establish an honest rationale for using puppets with children. Moen states in *Reflections on the Narrative Research Approach*:

> As we make our way through life, we have continuous experiences and dialogic interactions both with our surrounding world and with ourselves (Moen, 2006).

Moen goes on to illustrate how one can structure all of these collected experiences into a story (Moen, 2006). Personal narrative is a story based on a constructivist format meaning knowledge that can be generated from experience. This research method validates the experience of the researcher as the object of study, in this case, my life story. This personal narrative describes the series of pertinent events in my life beginning with the advent of puppets used in early television programming. My goal was to produce an original study that reflected my lifetime involvement with the art of puppetry and how it can be used in the visual art classroom.

How is the personal narrative useful? This methodology can provide a framework to develop a series of stories that focus on clearer understanding of the purpose of the narrative (Richmond, 2002). My desire was to write a memorable, useful work embedded with personal elements. I felt the importance of introducing myself personally to the reader to convey my message. I took the opportunity to write using first-person voice. First-person narrative requires candor and much creativity to engage the reader. Storytelling can be more interesting than formal, impersonal reporting. Personal narrative uses storytelling methods that are an integral element of puppetry itself. It seemed the perfect method for giving of myself, evoking honesty, and sharing stories to create deep connections to the reader.

> Thus, storytelling as a way of recounting and creating order out of experience starts in childhood and continues through all stages of our lives (Moen, 2006).

From a personal aspect, writing a personal narrative put me closer in touch with myself, who I am, where I came from, and who I have become as a researcher and art teacher. This research method enabled me to establish my own authority according to my experience in using puppets in many aspects of teaching. Writing this personal narrative helped me to understand my history in detail and how it has shaped me as a teacher, developed my imagination, and given me the impetus to pass knowledge on to others. This methodology is compatible with my self-reflection, introspective and autobiographical narrative. My methods included personal observations in the classroom, analysis of a large collection of anecdotal

material, original lesson plans, photographs, journals, programs, and scripts (Moen, 2006). Included were discussions with my brother, analysis of current literature on puppet practices in classrooms and the public sector, and research into current puppet therapy practices.

In my literature review, I researched pedagogy using puppets in historical and cultural contexts. As I reviewed the literature of other educators and professionals which used puppet pedagogy in the classroom and the public sector, I discovered that, while there is much current literature written about puppetry, I have become the expert in the field through my years of experience.

One technique that I used was constructing my story using dated pictures, researching my history of puppet collecting using family photos, and recalling memories with my older brother, Larry. While creating a time-line of my personal experiences with puppetry, I found continuity beyond what I could have imagined. It all began to weave together in a well-ordered series of events in my life that led to my career using puppets. Upon developing this comprehensive time-line, I found the links to the development of this deep-seeded interest that became my life work.

I looked back into my personal roots, to the child who grew and became not only a professional puppeteer, but also an engaged art teacher with a penchant for puppets. The outcome of this personal narrative is a comprehensive story and resultant methods of imparting the knowledge to art educators.

Chapter 4: The Beginnings of My Study

Puppetry arts have been a major part of my life. From early childhood, through my teenage years and into adulthood, puppets have provided me with a foundation for my creativity, identity formation, and social development. Puppetry has allowed me to view myself from the inside out, exercise my imagination and create life-stories through play. I believe that teaching by using puppetry opens up many of these same opportunities for students. Puppetry is an extraordinary tool for education that spans all areas of development and learning in children of all ages. I contend that through my intensive study of puppetry throughout my lifetime, I have demonstrated that puppets are a valuable teaching tool that can encourage children's imagination in the visual arts classroom. As stated by one of the most famous puppeteers of all time, Jim Henson:

> I feel that almost everyone maintains a childlike quality throughout their adulthood. One of the nice things about the puppet form is that it has the ability to communicate with this childlike side of the audience. The personalities of the Muppet characters are really quite innocent and everyone, in some way or another, seems to be able to relate to this innocence (Henson, 2005).

Puppets can best be described as portable, constructed objects that depict characters or represent metaphors and are manipulated by puppeteers such as myself. Puppetry is a major art form seen often in American culture today. It is an

integral component of the education and entertainment of children as witnessed in modern children's television programming. Through my lifetime of study, I have learned that puppetry is widely recognized as an essential teaching tool throughout the world. Through it's visual language, puppets can meet the cultural and educational needs of children in all stages of education. At the same time, puppets are an effective way to exercise the imagination in our children. Puppetry has the magical power to communicate. Puppetry can accomplish this with mysticism, humor, and innocence while keeping audiences spellbound. As stated by Bil Baird, master puppeteer of our time,

> A puppet is an inanimate figure that is made to move by human effort before an audience. It is the sum of these qualities that uniquely defines the puppet. Nothing else quite satisfies the definition (Baird, 1965).

The creation of a puppet begins in the imagination of its creator. The artist has a vision of something within him or herself or some aspect of a character that needs to become 'real'. Or, the puppet can represent something intangible like movement, wind, or rain. The artist must decide the visual form that the puppet must take and usually the sound that will accompany the character be it music, voice, or sound effect. This inspiration is the seed from which a puppet is given life using movement and communication, visually or verbally. The puppeteer, or human manipulating the puppet, turns this inanimate object into a visual being. The puppeteer animates the object that gives it life. Animate can be defined as "to give soul or breath to . . . " from the Latin word *anima*. Puppets can use language as a verbal or non-verbal communication. Some puppets can actually "speak" which

separates them from other art forms. They can convey characters with unique personalities, emulating human behavior. They are not really human so they have the capacity of crossing social, economic, gender, ethnic, and political barriers. Puppets can teach us about ourselves. Puppets can serve as intermediaries between themselves and people. Using puppets is sometimes a safe alternative to talking to people. The art of puppetry has a language of it's own. Puppets communicate through movement, patterns, intensity, body language, music, tempo, visual aspect, and action. Puppets can move in ways that humans cannot. They can perform extreme exaggerations or distortions in their movements. However, clearly it is the puppeteer that is interacting with the audience, not the puppet. The puppet can take on some characteristics of that human puppeteer or not. The puppeteer is veiled with the freedom of anonymity. To an audience, all eyes are on the puppet that is speaking, not the puppeteer.

In working with many children in the visual arts classroom, I have found that puppetry allows children to express creative ideas and imaginative feelings with freedom. Using puppets can put a child in touch with their creative self. Pretend play is a child's natural medium of self-expression. Using puppets in the classroom encourages suspension of reality in many children and movement toward fantasy. Fantasy and make-believe are significant areas where a child's imagination can be challenged. Jim Henson said:

> As children, we all live in a world of imagination, of fantasy, and for some of us that world of make-believe continues into adulthood. Certainly I've lived my whole life through my imagination. But the world of imagination

> is there for all of us – a sense of play, of pretending, of wonder. It's there with us as we live (Henson, 2005).

Imagination can help fill gaps in a child's reality. It can help a child with problem solving, organization of ideas, role-playing, social growth, and making choices. When creating fantasy with puppets, the time period can be past, present, or future. Proximity can be close to home, far away, or some fantasy place. Puppets can appear as humans, animals, fantasy creatures, or inanimate objects. We only have our experiences to draw upon when we create fantasy. We can't envision what we don't know or have not experienced. Puppetry in the arts classroom builds experiences in the child through literature, storytelling, and performance. This helps to develop the experiential child. One experience that I love to share with my students is a time on a bus in Paris. Four puppeteers boarded my bus and pulled a string draped with a small curtain across the aisle. They attached the string to two poles from which people were balancing themselves. The puppeteers proceeded to act out a story using hand puppets and taped music for an audience of interested riders. Upon completion, they quickly took their bows and headed for the door, collecting spare change from the delighted viewers. Puppetry can happen anywhere, any time, expected or not. That is true spontaneity.

Conversations where the child uses a puppet on his or her hand can reflect a child's thinking and experience. It is a safe channel of communication because, from the child's point of view, the puppet is doing the talking, not the child. Puppetry always involves a spectator in one form or another. It can be an audience,

classmates, teacher, or therapist. It is the imagination of the spectators that give the puppet life. Puppets can sing, dance, fly, joke, and act totally irrational without worry. Because puppets are illusory in nature, to argue with a puppet makes a spectator look silly. So, usually, the audience accepts puppet chat. A discourse analysis of how we communicate through language by using puppets would be an interesting study and would fall under the category of puppet therapy.

I attended a seminar led by Judith O'Hare at a Puppeteers of America Conference, *Puppet Rampage*, in Minneapolis in 2007. She is the Education Consultant and Chair of the Puppetry in Education and Therapy Committee for PofA. Her book, *Puppetry in Education and Therapy*, is a compilation of essays by educators, therapists, and puppeteers. They discuss different aspects of using puppetry to meet core curriculum standards, in therapeutic situations, and to study multiple intelligences. It is a wonderful resource guide for anyone interested in using puppetry in the classroom. She writes:

> Not all puppets are for little children; middle school and high school students can find ways to communicate through an inanimate object, and some the tedium of education can be eased through an artistic and expressive use of puppets (Bernier & O'Hare, 2005).

Exercising the imagination of children in the visual arts classroom begins with the integration of puppets into the art curriculum. I have included many examples of art lessons that I have written that incorporate puppets into aesthetics, art criticism, art history, and art production. Most importantly, puppets can be a medium expressing a visual metaphor for an idea, concept, emotion or character.

Beginning with a simple story, characters can be developed that are able to tell the story, teach moral lessons, or teach history, math, and other academic discipline. A puppet on a child's hand can inspire a story from a child that leads to knowing the child better. It is a safe extension of the child's own storytelling ability. I have used the method of half-story telling where a teacher-generated story is begun using puppets and stopped at the point of conflict. Then, children create the ending. Using this method stimulates the imagination of the children as they participate in completing the story as well as teaching problem solving techniques. Puppets can sometime express information about the child that the child cannot express verbally. For this reason, many child psychologists in clinical settings use puppets for therapy.

The performance aspect of puppetry is one of the greatest benefits that I have observed in children in the arts classroom. It is self-gratifying for most people to perform before an audience, especially when one can be hidden from view. It is a great opportunity for a shy or timid child to project through the puppet. Even the aggressive child can resolve conflicts through puppet interaction. Puppets can be used to address difficult classroom issues such as bullying or questions of life and death. In an article written by Susan Linn, Ed.D. and William R. Beardslee, M.D., they discuss their collaboration as a psychologist and a child psychiatrist in developing a series of videos addressing difficult issues with children including violence, death, and illness. They worked with puppet designers and created a group of animal puppets as characters as they are safer than human puppets that may be identified

with race or ethnicity in delicate situations. A recent project entitled *Different and the Same: Helping Children Identify and Prevent Prejudice*, they used these animal characters to help facilitate discussions between teachers and students about diversity, prejudice, and racism. The authors concluded:

> When artists create tools to facilitate the emotional and social development of children responsibility moves beyond the aesthetic to the emotional well-being of their audience. In order to create these programs ethically, we believe it is necessary to collaborate with experienced practitioners in children's mental health or education (Linn & Beardslee, 1995).

This is a valid statement and any attempts to use puppets in therapeutic situations should always be directed by qualified therapists or clinicians.

All elements of traditional theater are used in puppetry: design, sculpting, painting, writing skills, set design, props, sound, lights, technology, and music. This can initiate curriculum using a vast array of mediums from the visual and performing arts.

Emerging technology is another area that can be incorporated into a puppet-based curriculum, using computer access to design sound, lighting cues, and music. VoIP or "voice over Internet Protocol" enables a teacher to turn an Internet connection into a videophone so puppet shows can be shared across town or across the globe. I have designed puppet programs that my students can share via Skype to art students in other countries.

I must mention here my "Puppet Abuse Law". This is a concept that I have used with children throughout my career as puppeteer and teacher. If anyone using

puppets is observed making a puppet commit a violent act such as hitting or biting, the puppet will be taken away indefinitely. This time-tested discipline allows for more enjoyment for the puppeteers as well as the puppets. This also teaches respect while using puppets. Puppets are delicate, usually hand-made objects, that can be damaged from misuse. I always introduce this law to new puppeteers and have never had a problem with a student that understands the responsibility that comes with using puppets.

The puppetry arts have a rich history, used in religious and educational settings beginning in ancient times, from the Far East to western culture, and influencing our modern forms of puppetry throughout the world. Bil Baird said:

> The urge to make puppets is nothing new. People have been creating them for thousands of years. And why? What is the fascination of puppetry? It is a part of man's ancient urge to recreate life that results in this many-layered art. More diverse than painting, sculpture, dance, song, or story, puppetry has something of all of them. It is also a means of communication, an extension of human expression" (Baird, 1965).

In Baird's book, *The Art of the Puppet*, he explores the history of the art, from the ancients to the developing art of modern puppetry.

Some of the earliest recorded puppeteers in history were the *dalang* from Indonesia. Examining the ancient history of puppets demonstrates the art as a form of cultural exchange. The history of traditional puppetry in Indonesia, for example, begins with the Wayang Kulit shadow puppets telling stories based on the beliefs that ancestors' spirits return to the earth at night. Performances can last from dawn until dusk, often seven hours long. My studies show that this art form has been an

integral part in educating Indonesian society for centuries. The Wayang Kulit shadow puppets were used to tell stories convincing audiences that these were their ancestors brought back to life. The carved wooden puppets represent mythical and spiritual stories from that culture. The Wayang Kancil shadow puppets were used exclusively for the education of children. They were a cultural medium for social and moral teachings using animal themes. They related to timeless issues such as the protection of the environment. The important messages told to children using these puppets are universal, spanning centuries and continents.

Chapter 5: Growing Up and Learning Life Lessons from Puppets

I have enjoyed the puppetry arts my entire life. Over the span of my lifetime, I have explored and perfected many different areas of expertise using these wonderful tools of communication. Puppetry is my art form, my entertainment, my passion, and now my career as an art educator. I have a story to tell of creativity, identity formation and social development in my own life and the lives of many others that I have touched with my art. Puppetry has allowed me to exercise my imagination and create life stories through play.

Puppetry is an extraordinary educational instrument that can span all areas of development and learning in children from literacy to social skills. I want to make my lifetime of knowledge available to all educators who have a passion to teach children using these extraordinary and unforgettable methods.

So often, creativity and candor is stifled in children through guided arts curriculum in the school systems today. Creative play must be encouraged in children in a day of video games, cable TV, computers, and purchased entertainment. Pablo Picasso once said, “All children are artists. The problem is how to remain an artist once he grows up.” It is the responsibility of every parent, educator, and caregiver to nurture the innate artistic creativity and imagination in a child. It is crucial for the child to enter later life as an inspired, imaginative, and

creative adult. In a speech to the TED Conference (Technology, Entertainment, and Design) in February 2006, Sir Ken Robinson, internationally renowned expert in the field of creativity and innovation in education and business, suggests that our educational system is killing creativity. He states "Creativity is as important as literacy in education" (Robinson, 2006). He says that in many countries, the educational systems have a hierarchy of importance with math and science followed by writing and language, then finally, art and music. He suggests that art needs a higher place in this educational hierarchy. Thus the creative child may not have a true choice of their future profession because of a random education system. He relates a story about a teacher asking one of her six year old drawing students "What are you drawing?" The little girl said, "A picture of God". The teacher responded, "But nobody knows what God looks like?" and the little girl said, "They will in a minute". That assured confidence in the creativity of a child should be encouraged, nurtured, and never dismissed.

Now, allow me to give you a glimpse into the making of a puppeteer and how this development of a lifetime now drives me to teach important life lessons to adults and children of all ages. As I look back at my life, I recognize two recurrent themes in the work that I have done – creativity and imagination. I am now an art teacher, realizing that I have become the expert in the field of puppetry through years of work, play, and performance.

Life in the 1950's was much like a television sit-com. We lived in a small Gunnison house in Bexley, Ohio. As a young child, I was very fortunate to have a

parental support system that encouraged me to use imaginary play every day. My Father, an elementary school principal, always provided me with resources to follow my creative sparks. I had my own school desk, blackboard and worktable in our basement and played school before I started Kindergarten. I had all of the construction paper, crayons, chalk, and finger paint that a child could ask for. I led a fulfilled artistic life for a child. My Mother stayed at home to keep the house and make sure that I always had a playmate. She entertained me with stories, baking lessons, music, and make-believe from my earliest remembrances.



Figure 1. First stage received Christmas, 1959

Television was not a big part of life in the 50's. I recall the neighbors down the street who were the first people on our block to own a color TV. We all trooped down and watched "Queen for a Day" in color. What a treat. When I was three years old the first great influence of my life occurred - the first airing of "Captain Kangaroo in the Treasure House". I started watching Bob Keeshan, alias “Captain Kangaroo”, on television beginning with his first show in October 1955. It was his gentle teaching style, the consistency of his television performances, and the wide educational content presented to small children that kept me watching this program for the next 30 years. This program first introduced me to the art of

puppetry. Bunny Rabbit and Mr. Moose were among my first exposures to imaginative characters that took on human personalities. In fact, I was so enamored by Bunny Rabbit's character and antics that my mother took me to Lazarus 6th floor toy department in downtown Columbus to purchase this puppet for me. It was the beginning of a lifetime of serious puppet collecting, playwriting, choreography and performing. Also, in those early years, I learned to sew using my Mother's tiny toy Singer sewing machine and began making my own original characters and costumes. This was followed by puppet shows created, written, cast, choreographed, and performed at the age of six for audiences of neighborhood children.

In the book, *Good Morning Captain*, an intimate look at the five decade-long career of Bob Keeshan, he is quoted saying:

> The finest teacher is an entertainer. Some teachers find that a demeaning concept, but to teach is to pass on knowledge, and being a scholar is not enough. A teacher must engage the mind of the student for knowledge to pass from one to another. If that is best done with a tap dance or a funny hat, so be it (Keeshan, 1996).

I agree with his point. In my experience, children are much more likely to pay close attention, grasp concepts, and respond to me when I relate teachable information in a verbal, visual, and entertaining way. I often use stories from my childhood adventures to relate directly to the children and their sense of humor. The books that I use in my art classroom are often the same books that I heard for the first time read by the Captain. These include *Mike Mulligan and his Steamshovel* (Burton, 1939), *Stone Soup* (Brown M. , 1947), *Millions of Cats* (Gag, 1928), *The Story About Ping* (Flack, 1933), and *Make Way for Ducklings* (McCloskey, 1941). Keeshan said:

> To this day, people tell me and write to me saying how influenced they were by the books read on the show – some saying that they have become teachers or professors as a result (Keeshan, 1996).

I believe this is true of my own career. Early television programming for children changed the face of education. The stories, the music, and the puppets encouraged me toward this exciting genre. I continue to emulate the kind, gentle nature of the Captain to capture the genuine interest of my art students. He said:

> We made the Treasure House a magical place where anything seemed possible and safe (Keeshan, 1996).

I believe that one key to teaching children is finding a place to learn that is fun and safe.

Another great influence in my life of puppetry was a young lady who emerged on the television scene in 1960. A ventriloquist, puppeteer, storyteller, magician, and children's television host, Shari Lewis quickly became my idol. She performed with "Lambchop", her famous wooly sheep puppet. She performed arts and crafts for children. I soon owned her book *Shari Lewis, Fun with the Kids*. It is now a well-worn keepsake with nearly every page carefully examined and each and every craft in the book attempted. I enjoyed many puppet projects from "Spunky Monkey Puppets" made with an old pair of gloves and "Cuppet Puppet" made from an extra paper cup and a napkin (Lewis, 1960). This was the beginning of my developing crafts and making puppets from recycled objects. This practice will be addressed later in this study.

Shari Lewis was an entertainer that encouraged imagination in children in

every lesson, song, and joke that she shared. I watched her graceful style, quick wit, and creative genius in the inexhaustible range of crafts and puppetry skills that she taught. It was at the age of 12 that I began writing comedy routines for my homemade puppets to perform ala Shari. I had developed a love of storytelling and was excited to engage my imagination with special effects and voice characterizations for each puppet. I quickly learned the importance of publicity in developing an audience for my original puppet shows. Having the advantage of a typewriter and mimeograph machine in my basement, I designed and cut stencils for programs for my first authentic puppet performance. It was well attended by the children in the neighborhood and, of course, my biggest fans, my parents. All went well as I recited the script while manipulating all of the puppets myself. I had even constructed a fire-breathing dragon with a fish-tank hose running up his body into his mouth and a puff of talcum powder filling the stage with "smoke" to everyone's delight. Especially mine! The lure of show business was in my grasp at the age of 12.



Fig. 2. Shari Lewis and Lambchop

One of the most famous and influential puppeteers the world has known is Jim Henson. He was the creator of the Muppets and developed the Children's Television Network that housed the Sesame Street programming. One of the finest collections of memorable quotations from Jim Henson and several of the Muppet

puppets is a little book called It's Not Easy Being Green. Regarding the title, Henson's daughter Cheryl writes in the forward:

> We chose to use it as the title of this book because it's lyrics capture not only the feelings of Kermit the Frog but a universal message that resonates with people the world over, a message that it's okay to be different, to embrace what makes you special, and to be proud of it (Henson, 2005).

This sentiment remains one of the most important lessons taught by Henson's puppets. The Henson puppets are pioneers in meeting cultural and educational needs of children around the world. Sesame Street, while being an American original, is broadcast in at least 120 countries. It is the longest continuously running television show in the world.

My son grew up watching the Muppets on television. I was quite interested in the format of the program and have used many of these methods in my own classroom. As an adult, I had to opportunity to study puppet manipulation at the Center for Puppetry Arts in Atlanta, Georgia. From this experience, I branched out and started a puppet troupe at my church called "M&M Puppets". During the ten years that I led this troupe, it grew from three members to over forty. We performed many times and competed with other puppet troupes in a tri-state area, winning best performance awards for



Figure 3. Backstage with M&M Puppets

many of our original puppet shows. We traveled to churches all over Ohio, training groups how to start their own puppet troupe including making puppets, recruiting puppeteers, to technical information on staging and performance. The troupe became therapy for several of the adult members who shared that puppetry was helping them through some difficult times in their lives from dealing with cancer, raising a disabled child, to living with loneliness and heartache. The puppet troupe met weekly and became a reliable foundation for many people's lives, an emotional outlet for children, a refuge for friends to meet, a place for family involvement, and perhaps most importantly, an outreach into the community.

I have first-hand experience with puppets connecting affluent children to children living in a homeless shelter in downtown Columbus, Ohio as we took our troupe to Faith Mission to perform and train. My puppeteers graciously worked inside the stage beside children who had very little. Together, they were *all* great puppeteers. I have taught shadow puppetry to lower school children with Down's syndrome, making characters from paper plates and craft sticks to the delight of these young puppeteers. They loved it so much that it was nearly impossible to get them out of the stage. I have entertained six hundred terminally ill children at a Mardi-Gras celebration for Special Wish. The giant dancing puppet that I used will be illustrated later in this study. I have performed at a Children's Hospital for children that were wheeled down to the lobby in their beds wearing masks and I.V.s. I used a puppet performance to comfort second-graders attending the funeral of a neighborhood child, tragically run down on his new scooter at the age of seven right

behind my house. These connections have deep personal meaning to me and for the many people in my life that have been touched by my personal mission to keep puppetry alive. It is for these reasons that I have entered the world of art education where I can use this extraordinary educational strategy while incorporating my love of puppets into my vocation.

Chapter 6: Creating Puppets

The art of creating puppets by recycling, found objects, characterizations, motor skills, and artistic technique is endless. The writing and storytelling aspect of puppetry gives it meaning. Staging and performance depends upon collaboration, cooperation, and skill building.

There are many different kinds of puppets that can be easily developed and used in an educational setting. Some of these include finger puppets, hand or glove puppets, object puppets, marionette or string puppets, rod puppets, stick puppets, and shadow puppets.

Finger puppets are small, simple puppets manipulated with a single finger. Typically, they have no moving parts and consist of a paper or fabric tube-like structure that covers the finger. It is easily made and manipulated by small children to tell stories or develop characters. One example is the Paul Klee Kitty Puppet described later in this study.

Hand or glove puppets are usually controlled by one hand that fits inside of the puppet. There are different methods of manipulation including positioning the index finger in the head and using the thumb and middle fingers to move the arms. Another way is developing a moving mouth puppet where the hand is inserted into the mouth to make the puppet “talk”.

Object puppets can be created with everyday, found objects. The character is developed through the use of voice, sound and movement, suggesting to the audience what personality the object has taken on. This is a good use of recycled items that are readily available. A lesson describing puppets made from tennis ball tubes is forthcoming.

Marionettes are puppets that are controlled from the top with strings attached to different areas of the puppet. These strings are attached to a control stick. Manipulating these puppets takes control and practice.

The Muppets are hand and rod puppets. One hand moves the mouth and the other hand controls rods attached to the puppets hands. It takes some coordination and practice but the movements can result in very lifelike actions of the character. Rod puppets can also have a stick inserted into the head and the arms can be manipulated with rods.

Shadow puppets are perhaps one of the simplest, least complex puppets that can easily be made and controlled by the youngest child. Cutouts of characters that are backlit behind a screen create the illusion. They are manipulated by sticks or rods attached to the puppet.



Figure 4. Caterpillar rod puppet by student



Figure 5. Gold Guy rod-arm puppet by student



Figure 6. Jester rod-arm puppet by student



Figure 7. Penguin stick puppet by student



Figure 8. Girl marionette by student



Figure 9. Egyptian Jackal rod-arm puppet by student



Figure 10. Sock Puppets by 2nd graders



Figure 11. Jack Pumpkin rod-arm puppet by student



Figure 12. Recycled Rag Cat puppet by Lynne Kirby

Chapter 7: Stages

Part of creating a comprehensive puppet experience is the performance. To perform, you need some type of performance space or stage. My first puppet stage was built by my Father and can be seen in Figure 2. It was made in 1959 of thin plywood, decorated with trim and painted a beautiful blue. My favorite part was the red curtain on a real curtain rod that I could open and close. That stage has endured the test of time. I still use the same stage, "Lynne's Theater", in my classroom today, fifty years later.

A stage can be as simple as a spring-rod in a doorway with a curtain thrown over the top. A large cardboard box can be turned into a wonderful shadow theater. One puppeteer, Betsy Brown, age 75, wrote an article in the *Puppetry Journal*, published by the Puppeteers of America. Her lifelong interest in puppets led her to work professionally and design a number of innovative stages. She writes in her article, "A Good Age to be a Puppeteer":

> This – this art of the puppet was what I wanted to do the rest of my life. Now, I could create my own complete world of theatre. I could build my own stage and sets, even the actors. The scripts, the dances, the music would be my choice (Brown, 1994).

Ms. Brown includes in her article many illustrations of a wide variety of stages that she has designed and constructed.

> I'd like to share with you some of my favorite stages – the stages of a serendipity sort of life that has been blessed and made joyous by the Art of the Puppet (Brown, 1994).

I will discuss stages for shadow puppets later in this study. My favorite unusual stage was designed for an Elizabethan festival. I built a curtained box that fit over my shoulders, a castle in the center with a drawbridge that allowed me to see out the front, and hooks inside that held six rubber-headed puppets that were used to tell the story of the *Princess and the Dragon*. This was a portable puppet stage that allowed me to walk around the festival and entertain spontaneously. The children were particularly interested in viewing this mobile stage. It was a wonder how the puppets performed all by themselves with no visible puppeteer.



Figure 13. Castle Walk About Stage

Chapter 8: Puppets in the Classroom

Personal Identity

One of my earliest experiences teaching in the art classroom was a lesson about personal identity. I introduced the lesson to the excited classroom of fifth grade artists and we talked about how we learn to describe our own, personal uniqueness and what makes us special. On the white board, I demonstrated making a list of many of the things that makes us different and unique. Students were encouraged to talk to parents, grandparents, siblings, and neighbors about their heritage, family background, national origin, personality, talent, likes, dislikes, and experiences.

I use many children's books in the arts classroom. One book that illustrates identity and the sense of community for the children is *A Street Called Home* by artist Amenah Brenda Lynn Robinson. This book tells the story about the people who made up the community where she lived while growing up. She examines the people in her community and tells how they were special to her.

Another book that I like to read in a lesson about identity is Stone Soup by Marcia Brown based on an old fairy tale. This book illustrates individual importance and cooperation within a community as some soldiers enter a town bearing nothing but an empty pot. As they begin to make soup with nothing but a stone, the curious

villagers begin adding their meager ingredients to “improve” the soup, ending up with a pot full of wholesome, delicious soup that they all could share.

Stories are a springboard for not only puppet characters, but also how the characters work together for greater learning. Here I will share my lesson plan for Identity Stick Puppets, a simple method to teach a huge life lesson.



Figure 14. Identity stick puppets by 5th graders

LESSON PLAN

Lynne Kirby

Lesson Title: **IDENTITY STICK PUPPETS**
Grade Level of Lesson: Fifth Grade
Length of Class Period: 42 minutes, 1 day/week
Number of Students: 2 classes of 16 students each

Description of the essential educational content:
This lesson focuses on the completion of a stick puppet that reflects each child's uniqueness based on their ethnic group, heritage, place of birth, favorite things and/or family. The puppet will ultimately be used in a community puppet show.

Ohio Visual Art Standards met by this unit:
Creative Expression and Communication
Benchmark A: Apply knowledge of materials, tools, media, techniques and processes to communicate subject matter, themes or ideas in a variety of visual forms.
2. Explore different approaches to creating art (e.g., by artist, style or historical period).

Benchmark B: Create two- and three-dimensional original artwork that demonstrates personal visual expression and communication.
3. Identify and communicate sources of ideas (e.g., personal experience, interests, nature or common objects) for their artworks.

Benchmark E: Identify and explain reasons to support artistic decisions in the creation of artwork.
6. Identify reasons for personal, artistic decisions.

Lesson Description:
Performance-Based Objectives:

1. Student will use family interview, Internet, and library for research to identify things about themselves that makes them unique. They will list things about themselves that make them a unique person.
2. Student will identify three things to add to their puppet character that will represent their identity; button, fabric, picture, toy, etc.
3. Student will observe and respond to the artwork of Yinka Shonibare, "Alien Family: Mum, Dad and the Kids", Willie Birch, "Sister", and Julie Taymor, "Lion King, The Broadway Musical Puppets".
4. Student will define community, and explain how their individual identities come together to form a complete community.
5. Student will produce a stick puppet that visually reflects their personal identity.
6. Student will participate in a community puppet show with their classmates representing the community of their art class.

ASSESSMENT:
Assessment for this lesson is the formative method. Target goals are clearly stated in the attached rubric that will be distributed to the class ahead of time.

VOCABULARY:

Identity – The set of behavioral or personal characteristics by which an individual is recognizable as a member of a group. *(dictionary.com)*
Unique – Existing as the only one or as the sole example. *(dictionary.com)*
Individual – A single human being, as distinguished from a group. *(dictionary.com)*
Community – A social group of any size whose members reside in a specific locality, share government, and often have a common cultural and historical heritage. *(dictionary.com)*
Relationship – An emotional or other connection between people: the relationship between teachers and students*. (dictionary.com)*
Inclusion – *The lesson will be planned so that everyone in the class is represented by their puppet, regardless of heritage, background or ability. The point of the lesson is that everyone is vital to the whole.*

TEACHER PREPARATION:
Post works of art reproductions on the wall for student perusal.
Put art supplies on supply table:
Paint stir sticks, one for each student.
Red bins with art supplies – pencils, scissors, glue stick, rulers
Fabric scrap bin
Tempera paints and brushes, water buckets
Yarn and doll hair bin

<u>DAY ONE</u>
1) Seat class on the rug. Ask the following essential questions such as:
   a) What makes people unique?
   b) What kind of symbols could represent my family heritage, my favorite things, or anything else that makes me unique?
   c) What objects can I choose to represent me?
   d) Who am I in relationship to other people? (son, daughter, student, friend, etc.)
2) Introduce puppetry to students. Show teacher samples of finished stick puppets and demonstrate manipulation.
3) Ask students if they have ever had a puppet. Have they every played with a puppet? Explain.
4) Students will examine art reproductions. Discussion about artworks. What kind of individuals do these puppets represent?
5) Ask the question: *How can you use objects, colors, textures, symbols, and techniques to represent your identity?*
6) Closure – Remind student to bring in three items that can be used on their puppet that might represent them. Be sure everything is put away and the room is neat and clean. Remember to push in chairs as you line up by table.

DAY TWO

1) Students will go to the supply table and pick up a paint stir stick. Students will then find their seat and write their name on the back of their stir stick.
2) Vocabulary words will be discussed and recited.
3) Teacher will discuss the life-based concepts discussed last week.
   a) Everyone is unique.
   b) Communities are built on many unique individuals.
   c) An individual's identity can be based on their relationship with others.
7) Review: Ask the question: *How can you use objects, colors, textures, symbols, and techniques to represent your identity?*
4) After a demonstration on using the tempera paints on the stir sticks, students can begin laying out their puppets, attaching hair, clothing, items from home.
5) When everyone is finished working on their puppet for the day, table monitor will gather brushes and take to the sink to wash, and place in brush jar, bristles up, for drying.
6) Students will wash their hands while teacher gathers paints, buckets and extra materials from the table.
7) Closure – Be sure everything is put away and the room is neat and clean. Remember to push in chairs as you line up by table.

DAY THREE

1. Supplies on supply table – Glue Sticks, Scissors, Pencils, and puppets from last week.
2. Students will put finishing touches on puppets.
3. Discussion questions: How do these puppets represent each individual of our class? How is our class a community?
1. Closure – Be sure everything is put away and the room is neat and clean. Put all scraps of paper in the recycling container. Remember to push in chairs as you line up by table.

FOLLOW-UP PROJECT

Students can use their identity stick puppets and create a skit about their art class community within the school. They can write about events and how their relationships work together to design projects, solve problems, face issues, or deal with other students. Puppets can be used to represent these students in a performance for the school.

EVALUATION RUBRIC
IDENTITY STICK PUPPETS - GRADE 5

CRITERIA	4	3	2	1	0
Follows Directions	Exceeds expectations. Went beyond what was expected.	Follows directions but did nothing beyond.	Follows directions but little personal involvement	Did not completely follow directions.	Did not follow directions.
Completion	Turned in work on time.	Turned in work on time but incomplete.	Turned in work late.	Turned in work late but showed little interest.	Did not turn in work.
Craftsmanship	Demonstrates use of materials in a creative and knowledgeable manner with attention to technique and neatness.	Uses materials well and does neat work with some knowledge of technique.	Uses some materials well but is not concerned with neatness.	Does not use materials well and turns in work that is not neat.	Does not use any materials well.
Meaning	Strong effort in choices of materials and symbols, creating meaningful artwork.	Shows some effort to use meaningful symbols in their choices for creating artwork.	Shows little effort to show meaning in choice of symbols.	Shows no effort toward meaningful artwork.	Does not complete project.
Class Participation	Always participates in class discussions and expresses original ideas clearly.	Usually participates in class discussions and expresses ideas.	Occasionally participates in class discussions.	Never participates in class discussions.	Never participates at all.

Teaching Art History Using Finger Puppets

In college, I studied the art of Paul Klee and decided to use this artist's work as a basis for an art history lesson for Kindergarten students. It was a fun and innovative way to introduce puppets into the arts classroom.

The lesson began with a story about Klee. This led to a study of watercolor technique as the students prepared the paper that they used to construct their finger puppet. The class examined the expressive medium of watercolor in color theory and technique. Children enjoyed working with watercolor because it is an unpredictable medium that is full of surprises. Brushing wet paint on to wet paper leads to color mixing and patterns created by the moving water. Using the colorful paper, the students created a finger puppet in the style of Paul Klee while learning about the artist, his life, his puppetry, and the joy he found in his artwork.

Students delighted in looking at reproductions of Klee's work especially the painting called *Cat and Bird*. This subject matter led the students to create their finger puppets that looked much like Klee's cat.



Figure 15. Cat finger puppets by Kindergarten students

LESSON PLAN

Lynne Kirby

Lesson Title: **PAUL KLEE, ARTIST AND PUPPETEER**

Grade Level of Lesson: Kindergarten
Length of Class Period: 42 minutes, 1 day/week
Number of Students: 28

Description of the essential educational content:
This lesson will focus on the students' ability to construct a finger puppet in the style of Paul Klee, puppeteer. Student will increase skill level in painting using watercolors, tracing patterns, cutting with scissors, and folding and gluing paper. The student will create a character using the finger puppet and will practice puppet manipulation.

Ohio Visual Art Standards met by this unit:
Historical, Cultural and Social Contexts
Benchmark C: Identify and describe the different purposes people have for creating works of art.
Kindergarten
3. Recognize that people create works of art and art objects for different purposes.

Creative Expression and Communication
Benchmark A: Demonstrate knowledge of visual art materials, tools, techniques and processes by using them expressively and skillfully.
Kindergarten
1. Explore and experiment with a variety of art materials and tools for self-expression.
2. Identify and name materials used in visual art.

Valuing the Arts/Aesthetic Reflection
Benchmark A: Apply basic reasoning skills to understand why works of art are made and valued.
Kindergarten
1. Reflect on and ask questions about why people make art.

Lesson Description:
Performance-Based Objectives:

7. Student will examine the work of artist and puppeteer Paul Klee.
8. Student will identify colors used in the work of Paul Klee.
9. Students will relate personal stories of puppets they have played with at home or in school.
10. Student will produce watercolor designs on watercolor paper using the proper wet-on-wet technique.
11. Students will trace using patterns and cut out pieces to construct a finger puppet in the style of Paul Klee.

ASSESSMENT:
Assessment for this lesson is attached. Children are expected to participate in classroom discussion and work individually to create their puppet project.

VOCABULARY:
Watercolor – Any paint that uses water for cleaning, thinning and mixing. *(Artlex, 2009)*
Paint Brush – A tool used to apply paints and inks to a surface, consisting of hairs, or bristles held in place by a ferrule attached to a handle. *(Artlex, 2009)*

TEACHER PREPARATION:

Watercolor paper cut into sheets 5" x 8", 1 per student
Water buckets for each table to clean brushes while painting
Spray bottles placed on the table
Smocks
Flat drying surface so that paint cannot run
Limited selection of liquid watercolor in small containers - two coordinating colors per table
Appointed students to collect and wash brushes
Brush storage container where brushes can be placed bristles up
Prepare supplies in red bins including pencils, glue sticks, scissors, and erasers
Lay out visuals of Paul Klee paintings, Paul Klee storybook, Puppet Book

DAY ONE

1. Introduce puppetry to students. Show teacher samples of finished puppet and demonstrate manipulation.
2. Ask students if they have ever had a puppet. Have they every played with a puppet? Explain.
3. Students will hear a story about Paul Klee. Students will see visuals and hear about how Klee not only was a painter, but he also was a puppet maker.
4. Ask questions such as:
    a. What kinds of things did Paul Klee choose to paint?
    b. What kind of colors did Paul Klee use in his artwork?
    c. Why would Paul Klee make puppets?
    d. What kinds of characters did Paul Klee make into puppets?
5. Closure – Be sure everything is put away and the room is neat and clean. Remember to push in chairs as you line up by table.

DAY TWO

2. Students will go to the supply table and pick up a sheet of watercolor paper and a paintbrush. Students will then find their seat and write their name on the back of their watercolor paper with pencil.
3. Teacher will discuss the paintbrush – the bristles, the ferrule, and the handle. Demonstrate how to dip the brush in water, then in paint, then apply to wet paper to create designs.
4. Teacher will also demonstrate how the brush is used and how bristles can be damaged by misuse. Students are responsible for using their brush properly.
5. Teacher will demonstrate spraying the paper with the water bottle to moisten the paper. Then, using the provided watercolor brush, dipping tiny bits of paint and apply to the paper to create soft, colorful designs.
6. When the paper is covered with paint, the student will walk it to the drying rack and carefully place it face up so it can dry.
7. When everyone is finished painting, table monitor will gather brushes and take to the sink to wash, and place in brush jar, bristles up, for drying.

8. Students will wash their hands while teacher gathers paints, buckets and spray bottles from the table.
9. Closure – Be sure everything is put away and the room is neat and clean. Remember to push in chairs as you line up by table.

DAY THREE

4. Supplies on supply table – Glue Sticks, Scissors, Pencils, Painted paper from last week
5. Students will pick up a glue stick, pair of scissors, and their own sheet of painted paper from last week.
6. Teacher will demonstrate tracing patterns on painted paper. When designs are traced, the pattern pieces will be cut out with scissors.
7. Teacher will distribute sets of patterns to each table.
8. Students will trace pattern pieces on their paper and cut out with scissors.
9. Teacher will show class how the pieces go together using glue stick. Tape will be provided for areas that are having a hard time sticking.
10. When puppet is complete, markers may be used to draw on paws, facial features, and other designs as desired.
11. Discussion questions: How are these puppets like the puppets of Paul Klee?
10. Closure – Be sure everything is put away and the room is neat and clean. Put all scraps of paper are put in the recycling container. Remember to push in chairs as you line up by table.

EVALUATION

CONTENT PAGE – PAUL KLEE

The Artist – Paul Klee lived from 1879 – 1940

DETAILS ABOUT THE ARTIST

- He was a German-Swiss painter and graphic artist.
- His work was based on dreams, music and poetry. He loved music.
- His work had a childlike quality. He used simple shapes and lines.
- Liked to use animals in his artwork.
- He liked to use bright colors, appealing to children and adults.
- He painted Cat and Bird in 1924 in oil on canvas.
- He painted in an abstract way.
- His paintings could evoke a mood.
- Klee made puppets for his son Felix. He created more than 50 puppets from bones, brushes, and nutshells. (Zentrum Paul Klee, 2006)



Figure 16. "Cat and Bird" by Paul Klee

ASSESSMENT - K

Name_____

Paul Klee Finger Puppet Assignment
Watercolor Paper

1. My painted paper shows that I know how to use watercolor properly.



2. I finished my finger puppet on time.



3. I did my best work and cleaned up after myself.



4. I used my best listening and attention skills. Circle one or both.



Learning with Recycled Materials

I designed this puppet unit in conjunction with the second grade study of recycling. Joining our school's 'green' program, we used recycled materials to make puppets as unique as the children themselves. The students in my class already possessed the basic knowledge of gluing, cutting with scissors, and craft construction. I introduced puppetry into the classroom and showed many examples of puppets that I have made using plastic containers, scraps of fabric and yarn, wood scraps, bits of foam, fleece, and other throw-away goods. I also have a collection of shells, pinecones, bark, and sticks that I used for these puppets. I created a slide show showing many creative ideas for recycled art projects including sculptures, mobiles from discarded CDs, wall hangings, and collages.

When I introduced creating a puppet character, I began with a discussion of the components of a character. It refers to the general look and style of the puppet, their personality, expression, and emotional makeup. Puppet character design is limitless. The students began by making a series of sketches of an imaginary character they would like to create. It could be human, animal, or alien. The character could be realistic or fantastic. It was up to the child to create a complete character. The student could use symbolism to create the puppet's demeanor, emotion, and personality. The puppet could be happy, sad, a dancer, an artist, or a puppy dog. Creating the expression on the face of the puppet can give clues to the puppet character.

Most supplies were free for this project. Students were anxious to start

creating their special puppet characters using the pile of recyclables that I laid out on the supply table. I used discarded tennis ball containers that our athletic department saved for me. I also had parents and teachers save plastic bottle caps, fabric scraps, and magazines. With glue, tape, and staples, the students created wonderful puppets.



Figure 17. Recycled tennis ball tube puppets by 2nd graders



Figure 18. Recycled tennis ball tube puppets by 2nd graders

The Aesthetics of Movement and Music: Scarf Puppets

I have seen the Broadway version of *Lion King* on stage five times. Each time, I glean more and more ideas about using puppetry and movement in the arts classroom to encourage students to understand that visual art goes far beyond the palette and canvas. I have studied the work of Julie Taymor, director and creator of the puppets used in the Lion King. She states:

> Audiences relish the artifice behind theater. When we see a person manipulating an inanimate object like a puppet and making it come alive, the duality moves us. Watching puppetry at its best, the audience experiences the art from several perspectives at once. Hidden special effects can lack humanity but when the human spirit visibly animates an object, we experience a wondrous, almost life-giving connection. We become engaged by both the method of storytelling and by the story itself (Blumenthal & Taymor, 1999).

This is true of many of the puppets that I make for the sake of the aesthetic. While the puppet is a work of art, the connection between the puppeteer, the puppet, the music, the movement, and the resultant statement of human spirit are combined to create the art. This type of puppetry also addresses the intelligence described as kinesthetic. Based on the theory of multiple intelligences proposed by Gardner in 1983, I believe that it is beneficial to give visual arts students an opportunity to use their physical abilities. Puppetry and movement are both gestural and work together to communicate. In an article in the New York Times regarding the infusion of puppetry into the world of theatre, the author states:

> Dance is an art of controlled movement, and so is puppetry. The two fields have become increasingly intimate. Yet, while dance pushes the body to its limits, puppetry can explore what lies beyond those limits (Solomon, 2000).

In 1995, I attended the International Puppet Festival presented by Puppeteers of America in Troy, Michigan. There I had the pleasure of watching a world-renowned puppeteer perform, Albrecht Roser. I introduced myself to him backstage and had the unique opportunity to look closely at his puppets and manipulation techniques. One of the most beautiful and creative puppet performances was his famous scarf puppet, a simple puppet made from a silk scarf, a ball, some wire, and a couple of sticks. It was incredible to watch how he made these simple puppets come to life with the grace and beauty of a ballet dancer.

I studied these puppets carefully and created a method of making and teaching a similar puppet to a group of twenty-five ladies at a woman's retreat. The making of the puppets is simple, and the creative manipulation is what gives these puppets life. I also taught this method to one of my education classes at The Ohio State University called *Mind and Body Go To School*. The class focused on kinesthetic learning that can take place in any classroom. My assignment was to teach a technique to the education students that could be used in a classroom someday. It was a successful project. Following is the handout that I made to teach how to construct these puppets in a clear, simple manner. I furnished the silk-like fabric cut into 36" squares and 3" Styrofoam balls. The students had a great time making puppets and recognized the value of using these puppets in the lower school



Fig. 19. Scarf puppet by Lynne Kirby

classroom. The movement to music with these puppets brought a kinesthetic learning aspect to this lesson.

Music selection is critical to this project. The feeling the puppet conveys is reflected in the music selection. I chose a solo piano piece that had a slow tempo to give the puppeteers the opportunity to experiment with movement such as walking, dancing, and flying. This is a project that people are anxious to take home and try again and again.

When using this lesson in the lower school classroom, I begin by showing modern dance videos to introduce movement to music.

Further lesson plans could include silk painting on plain white silk squares. This would bring the element of fabric design into the puppet making. Using fluorescent paints and dyes on the silk could turn these puppets into a blacklight performance which could be a very effective use of these graceful, ethereal puppets.

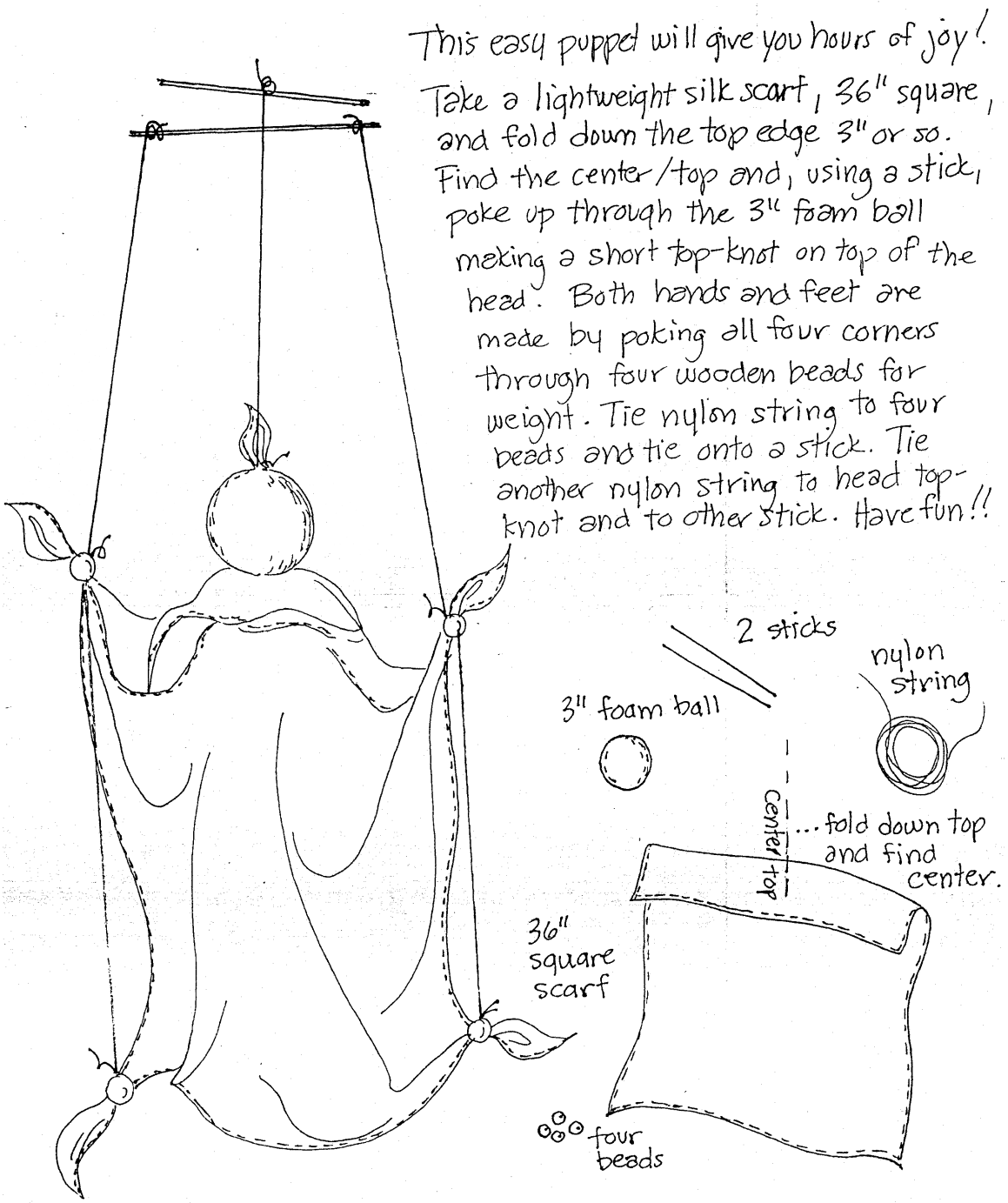


Figure 20. Instruction sheet for scarf puppet

Stories About Scars

Several years ago, I was asked to teach a session for some Columbus Public School teachers at a continuing education seminar at the Wexner Center at The Ohio State University under the direction of the education department. I collaborated with other presenters and the lesson plan that we created has been used in many of my classrooms since that time.

First, the teachers worked in small groups and developed a story about a scar, meaning a physical scar on an individual's body. Questions were raised and a discussion was encouraged as to how the scar was made, when did it happen, how did it happen, who was there, why did it happen, and so forth.

This was a good opportunity to tell about the history of shadow puppetry and how this form of puppetry is an important element in world history of education.

Then, the teachers were put to task creating a storyboard about their scar. From this storyboard, simple cutout shadow puppets were created with jointed extremities. Props were made and attached to sticks, and the story was told to the audience of fellow teachers.

Teachers are sometimes the most creative students when they relax. The stories these teachers told were wildly creative, hilarious, and well received. Talking about scars provided an opening for people to share stories about themselves. Scars can be the result of accidents or surgeries. Scars can come from funny incidents or tragedies. Everyone has a physical scar of some kind. The challenge is to use these

incidents to create a story that can be told using shadow puppetry.

Historically, shadow puppets tell stories about cultural beliefs, morals, and behaviors. Storytelling using shadows can be narrated but it is not necessary. The puppets and the props tell the tale.

I have built a portable shadow stage to use for traveling shows and in the classroom. It consists of a 28" x 18" frame made with 2"x2" lumber. Stretched on the frame is a white translucent fabric that produces crisp shadows when lit from the light the back of the fabric. The puppets are constructed from 6-ply railroad board.



Fig. 21. Shadow puppets from scar stories

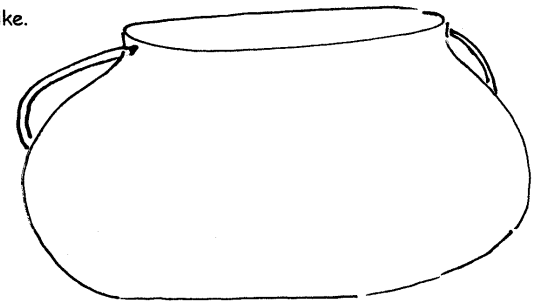
Jointed sections are punched using a 1/8" hole punch and brass paper fasteners. Each part of the puppet that is jointed is equipped with a thin bamboo skewer as a rod (the sharp tip removed beforehand). The puppets can be sketched on newsprint. The general size of the puppets must be dictated ahead of time, as puppets that are too large will not fit in the format of the stage. The audience cannot see puppets that are too small.

After the storyboard is created and approved, the list of puppets can be made. All characters, scenery, props are considered puppets. The number of available puppeteers must be considered as each puppeteer can only manipulate one or two simple puppets at a time. Therefore, if a character is drinking from a cup, the character is one puppet and the cup is another. It takes one puppeteer to

perform this simple task. That is why the construction of the story becomes critical to the performability of a script. Below is the handout that I designed to simplify creating shadow puppet shows with children. It is called “Recipe for Shadow Puppetry”.

RECIPE FOR SHADOW PUPPETRY

The first ingredient: **THE STORY**
Talk about a story, about the parts you like and dislike.
Put some ingredients into the story pot:



Setting: time and place

Characters

Main storyline

Problems and solutions

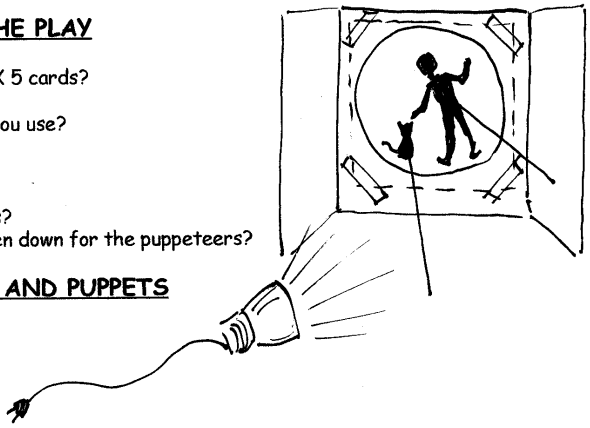
Ending

What makes this story interesting?

What is this story trying to tell us? How can it help us to live a happier and better life?

The next ingredient: **PRODUCING THE PLAY**
Writing the playscript -

Who will write down the script on 3 X 5 cards?
Will there be a single narrator?
How many characters (puppets) will you use?
Who will be the puppeteers?
Do you need any kind of scenery?
What about sound effects?
Who will manage the sound and lights?
Stage directions - will they be written down for the puppeteers?



Finally: **MAKING THE STAGE, SET AND PUPPETS**

Materials:
Cardboard
Craft knife
Piece of strong white paper
Tape
Scissors

Cut off the top and one side of the box. Cut an opening which will be the size and shape of your stage. Cut a screen from the white paper that will completely cover the opening. Tape securely and tightly on the back of the hole. Decorate the theater as you see fit. Secure to the back of a table using weights, clamps or tape. Light from the back using a small clip on spotlight, bare bulb lamp, overhead projector or fluorescent tube light.

Making the puppets:
Design the puppets according to the characters in the play. Remember that the size must be relative to the size of the screen. Carefully cut out the puppet from file folder, poster board or bristol board. Openings in the puppets can add detail using a paper punch or Xacto knife. Color can be added using tissue, cellophane, or markers. To make jointed puppets, there must be an overlap in the two joints. Join with a paper fastener. For control, use bamboo skewers with the tips removed and attach with a scotch tape hinge so that the rods can fold flat for storage.

PRACTICE! PRACTICE! PRACTICE!
Practice holding the puppets very close to the screen while hiding your own shadow. Practice natural movements using the puppets. Remember, the puppets are an extension of the puppeteer. Live through them!!

Figure 22. Recipe for shadow puppetry worksheet

One of my favorite unit plans I wrote while student teaching was a fourth grade class with a circus theme. Using Marc Chagall and Alexander Calder as my artists, the students were introduced to these visual artists that used the theme of circus in many of their famous works. One of the lessons in the unit culminated in an original shadow puppet presentation using the circus theme. After reading several children's books, looking at the history of circus posters, and hearing my personal circus stories about my Grandpa Jenkins and my son, Justin, we had an exhaustive discussion of everyone's circus experiences. Armed with all of this information, students chose a character that they would like to represent artistically for this lesson. They were then given a worksheet and asked to write their thoughts about a circus story. What characters, people or animals would be in this story? How does the story begin? What are the characters doing? How does the story end?

With these reflections in hand, we began to build a collaborative circus story that was ultimately the script for a shadow puppet show. The students were put into small groups to develop their story line. All ideas were welcome and recorded on the white board. Eventually, the story was written with four scenes and six characters per scene. That way, each student could create at least one original character of their own.

I completed my usual detailed demonstration of how to construct a puppet for the class. With shadow puppets, the method is simple, but the detail that is applied can put character, humor, and personality into the puppet. Students

watched intently so that they would know exactly how to put their puppet together in the best possible way when the time came.

Next they sketched their characters. Each student received their assignment and sketched on newsprint. Size of the puppet was determined at this time because there are limitations due to the size of the shadow puppet screen. Upon approval of their sketch, the students began to construct their shadow puppet. They carefully made patterns based upon their sketch for the basic body and any separate moving body parts. The overlapping of parts for inclusion of a brass paper fastener to make the part move were added at this time. Students traced their patterns onto 6-ply railroad board and cut out the pieces. Then, punching the overlapped joints, they added brass paper fasteners to make the parts move. I used bamboo skewers for rods for these puppets. I cut off the sharp points before I distributed them to the students. A stick must be attached to each moving part and one to the base body. The sticks are attached with a hinge of tape so that they can be folded flat for storage. Once the sticks were attached, the manipulation lessons began.



Fig. 23. Circus shadow puppets by 4th graders

Students were shown how to move the puppet on the shadow puppet screen. The puppets were backlit so that their shadows were visible on the front of the

screen. The closer the puppets are held to the screen, the crisper the figures appear to the audience. The students began practicing, using their puppets with an appointed narrator and music. I had typed the story and cut it into sections so the students could narrate the different scenes.

Students practiced during three classes with the narrators and music. Assignments were made for the production team, sound, lights, videographer, puppeteers, and narrators. The emphasis was on working collaboratively, reliably, and cooperatively remembering that practice makes perfect. The students performed this show to the principal, the student body, and parents at their school festival. The final step was for the students to write reviews of this lesson. They all loved it!

Giant Puppets for Huge Impact

Giant puppets are a wonderful way to get children involved in collaborative projects. My first giant puppets were a set of six animals that I designed and made for a stage production entitled "Noah". The puppets consisted of two giraffes, two zebras, and two elephants. When posed with a challenge such as this, outfitting an arc for a major show with a cast of nearly forty, I began with rough sketches of the necessary puppets to be made.

I looked around my workshop for materials that I had on hand and had collected for such projects. In this case, I had plastic, expandable dryer vent that could make believable, proportional elephant trunks. I work a lot with 3/16" foam board. It is a versatile material that can be easily cut, drilled, hot glued, and covered with a myriad of fabrics or papers. In this case, each animal I was about to make consisted of a face about 24" x 30". I made paper patterns for each of the three types of animals and cut the basic shape of the head. I took the foam board, peeled off one side of the paper covering, exposing the foam sandwiched between, and soaked the peeled side with a sponge. After the foam became properly wet, the foam was carefully bent into a curve that



Figure 24. Giant Noah's Arc animal puppets with Lynne Kirby

was temporarily held into position with masking tape (see illustration). When the foam board dried, it held this shape and was then covered by fabric and paper. I used thin fleece fabric for covering the animals. The elephants then had a hole cut in the face to accommodate the dryer vent that was covered with a loose sleeve of grey fleece. It was then inserted into the face and fastened securely with wire and hot glue. The eyes and ears were made from thin craft foam sheets glued with fabric tacky glue. The ears were flexible enough that the puppeteer could make the ears move as well as an arm inside the trunk made the elephant trumpet proudly on stage.

The giraffes needed to be quite tall, so I made the heads in a similar way with the peeled foam board, bent, taped, and dried to form a half cylinder. The horns were made from tubes and rubber balls. The eyes and ears were made from craft foam sheets. In this case, the giraffe's neck was made from a loose piece of fabric that enabled the puppeteers to put one hand inside the giraffe's head to manipulate the mouth so the giraffes could sing. The puppeteers worked in black clothing with hoods made of nylon fabric that they could see



Figure 25. Giant Noah's Arc animal puppets in performance

through. The puppeteers were invisible to the audience.

The zebras were made in the same way as the giraffes. The heads were formed and then covered with flannel fabric that I found in zebra stripes. The necks were created the same way as the giraffes but the mouths were worked using a string attached to the lower jaw enabling the puppeteers to manipulate the zebra puppet using both hands.

The props to house these animals were another challenge. Since the giraffes on the arc were so tall, I constructed a foam board box that housed the puppets and puppeteers that looked like two giant crates from which the giraffe's heads protruded.

The zebras and elephants also appeared in crates on the deck of the arc, eliminating the need for making bodies for these giant puppets.

Part of designing giant puppets for children to construct is to design a simple way to manipulate the puppet. Many times puppets can be so complicated in movement that children are unable to manipulate the puppet. This is quite frustrating not only for the child puppeteer but for seasoned adult puppeteers as well.

I know this to be true from my own experience. I designed a giant, full-body puppet of a popular Latino singer. I was invited to perform with my puppet troupe, M&M Puppets, for a foundation that grants special wishes for a group of 600 terminally ill children. I chose an upbeat song to perform, "Livin' La Vida Loca", (translated to "living the crazy life"). This puppet was constructed of foam

swimming pool noodles for arms, dryer vent tubes for legs, and a custom-made costume of brightly colored, glittery fabrics. The twelve-foot puppet was constructed on a scuba-backpack frame holding a 6’ piece of 3/4" PVC plumbing



Figure 26. Giant dancing puppet by Lynne Kirby

pipe. The head was made from a stuffed ball outfitted with a painted plastic mask and straw hat. Another piece of pipe was wired across the top forming shoulders. The pool noodles made up the arms and were jointed with soft wire. Stuffed gloves were attached to the ends of the noodles forming hands. Two long rods were attached to the hands, manipulated by myself. The body was formed from foam rubber and wrapped around the PVC pipe that served as a spine. The puppet sat on my head and the long pant legs covered the dryer-vents stuffed with jointed foam

noodle legs. The feet were attached to my feet so when I moved my foot or bent my leg, the puppet did the same. When I moved a rod into the air, the puppet reached upward toward the sky. The puppets dance moves followed my own.

The recorded song played for four minutes. I danced with the giant puppet the entire song. It might as well have been an hour. But, the show must go on. I completed the performance to an uproarious crowd! Kids on oxygen, kids in wheelchairs, kids with unbelievable disabilities, singing and dancing while hundreds of parents stood with tears streaming down their faces. Was it a tough show? Not at all!

I was fortunate to work with an architect friend on a giant puppet that resembled our pastor so that he could "preach" at one of our major puppet performances with M&M Puppets. We constructed the head with cardboard, foam rubber, and contact cement. We covered it with fleece fabric, fur, and appropriate giant glasses. The arms were engineered using sticks, hinges, and rods for manipulation. The whole thing was mounted on a plastic flowerpot worn upside-down on the head of the puppeteer. The most fantastic surprise for the audience was when "Pastor Ed" came out from behind the foamcore pulpit and danced right up the aisle. This giant puppet received a standing ovation and the work was well worth the effort.



Figure 27. Pastor Ed puppet mechanics



Figure 28. Paster Ed puppet in performance

Using giant shadow puppets is an easy, economical way to get big impact in a puppet show or in the classroom. Images can be projected using an overhead projector onto lightweight cardboard to an appropriate giant size. The cardboard

can be cut out, hinged in the traditional shadow puppet manner, and manipulated using yardsticks attached to the back. Color can be added easily using color cellophane attached to the back of the puppets. Manipulation methods are the same as traditional shadow puppets except, due to the size, two puppeteers are often needed to keep the puppet pressed against the giant screen. I have used muslin stretched on simple frames made from 2" x 2" lumber, securely fastened at the corners using metal brackets for strength. Another advantage to these puppets is the capability of raising the line of sight above an audience for easy viewing. Here you see animals marching into Noah's Arc and in the next figure, a performance of the Nativity in the background of a holiday sing-along.



Figure 29. Giant shadow puppets in performance



Figure 30. Giant Nativity shadow puppets in performance

Chapter 9: Technology and Puppetry

Taking the opportunity to use emerging technology in the classroom is a major consideration when I design puppet curriculum. In 1977, I started my own graphic design business that thrived for nearly twenty-five years. My firm, Studio A, Inc., saw the changeover from phototypesetting, waxing, paste-ups, and pen and ink illustration to the exclusive use of the Macintosh computer for design. Graphics could now be done on a single computer more quickly, efficiently and economically than ever before. With the onset of the Macintosh, technology has changed the face of not only business but also education around the world and using it in the classroom is critical to introduce this complex science to students.

While technology and the arts seem to be an unlikely match, using technology daily in my design studio opened up a new world to me as I pursued my avocation of puppetry. For example, creating original music for puppet shows not only allows the composer to create the proper sound needed to tell a story or portray characterizations, but the music is original, therefore, no worries about copyrights or licenses. I use GarageBand for music composition on my Mac. Using recorded loops from a huge selection of instruments, beats, moods, and genres from urban through jazz, world music through classical, background music for any venue can be easily recorded. Sound effects can also be pre-recorded, adding to the

interest of a puppet show. Using the Mac for making music and sound effects such as dogs barking or alien ships landing, easily makes professional soundtracks for the simplest to the most complex puppet show. GarageBand can also record spoken narration and dialogue. This can be layered with music and sound effects creating a complete, high quality, pre-recorded puppet program.

Another way to use technology in the arts classroom is for student self-assessment. For some of my lessons, students are asked to record a one to two-minute spoken reflection about their experience with their puppet project. These assessments are quite valuable as the students can use their puppets alongside of themselves to thoughtfully assess their personal experience from designing their character, working with a group, to whether they feel successful in their venture as puppeteer. Students can create podcasts using many of the skills taught through puppet manipulation and voice characterization and this gives me an authentic guide to evaluate and assess a student in their own words.

Video-conferencing is another way to utilize technology in the puppet curriculum. I have recorded puppet shows and puppet construction demonstrations in the classroom. Through research, a classroom in another part of the country or the world can be located and a puppet show can be shared through the use of Skype, convenient videoconferencing software that gives great opportunity for global communication. I even use Skype within my own school campus to reach other classrooms through live links. Students are quite interested in producing these collaborative puppet projects captured in video. It is also a way to digitally archive

these projects for future use.

I have found that using this modern technology in the classroom extends the learning found in the visual arts classroom. Student interest and motivation using emerging technology are unmatched. At the same time, it extends the learning in our own classroom to the world classroom. Technology is an effective tool used in the creation of puppet projects.

Chapter 10: Professional Affiliation

While there are many local, state, and regional puppet organizations for novice and professional puppeteers, I want to mention the organization that has provided education, resources, training, and ideas for puppeteers since 1937 – Puppeteers of America. It was at the PofA bi-annual conferences that I discovered the possibilities of extending my love of puppets into a career option. I also discovered that there are many other people in the world that love this art as much as myself. The conference brings puppeteers from all over the world together to perform, share information, and provide workshops and conversations, bringing the world of puppetry closer together. They produce a quarterly journal, The Puppetry Journal that is a treasure of information. They sponsor a puppetry store where puppets, scripts, videos, books, and ideas can be found. Members include professional puppeteers, designers, builders, teachers, therapists, and anyone interested in puppets. Being a member of Puppeteers of America makes me a part of this diverse community. Contact information follows.

Puppeteers of America
www.puppeteers.org

Chapter 11: Conclusion and Recommendations for Future Research

Through a lifetime of study in puppetry, I have concluded that puppetry, when used in the visual arts classroom, has many remarkable advantages for students. I feel it is important that every student has the opportunity to discover this art. It is an art that has sustained through thousands of years of history. It is essential to the world that we hold tightly to our cultural arts such as puppetry. This sentiment is expressed in this quotation by Harry Belafonte regarding Jim Henson:

> Unless you have had the experience of sitting in a village in war-ravaged Guatemala, or a humble box-like room of the wretched South African township of Alexandra, or in a dust-covered hovel on a Native American reservation, or in the tin shacks that house the thousands who live desperate lives in East Kingston, Jamaica, or the teeming favilas of Rio de Janeiro, or in an overcrowded, below-poverty level dwelling in a ghetto in New York, Chicago, or Detroit, among people who's lives are dominated by their bitter struggle for existence and some bit of dignity, unless you've seen from these places the looks on the faces of small children as they watch Sesame Street or the Muppets, you'll never understand what Jim and his colleagues have done for children all over the world, children who have never smiled, nor dared to dream, had it not been for Jim Henson. (Finch, 1993)

The main purpose of this study is to develop, implement, and assess the value of visual art education curriculum for students using puppetry.

First of all, this study was my attempt to document my lifelong study of puppetry. I have shared my beginning inspirations from children's television programming. My goal was to put my experiences into a perspective, showing a

progression of acquiring knowledge, holding fast to it, and building a life and career around disseminating this information to others. Using puppets in many facets of my own self-discovery has been my impetus for continuing my study, trying new things, and venturing into the role of art teacher to share my findings with my art students.

In doing so, this study first investigated the cultural significance of puppetry and the history of the art. I have shown the importance of puppetry in the religious and moral education in ancient cultures. Puppetry has played an important role in developing cultural identity.

In sharing my life story of developing this love of the art of puppetry, I have shared valuable information with the potential to trigger innovation and inspire art educators to create intelligent, significant, and memorable curricula for today's students. The lessons that I have shared consider inclusion of every student. It is the responsibility of every teacher, parent, and guardian to nurture the innate creativity and imagination in children. I have shared tools that can be used to encourage students to investigate their inner thoughts, imagination, creativity, and look at their life experiences as important inspirations for their art.

I will continue to experiment with puppets for the rest of my life. In the future, I would like to hold workshops that could provide insightful, valuable information toward creation of interdisciplinary lessons to include the arts. I believe this study just touches on the possibilities of puppetry for the future in education.

Some recommendations for further study may be building curricula including puppetry by developing puppet troupes in the schools or in the public sector. The building of a troupe has proven to be a positive way to create a community of puppeteers that can share, depend upon each other, and create new and exciting ways of self-expression.

Another possibility is community outreach through puppet performance. Collaborating with drama studies would prove a valuable connection and incorporate performing arts with puppetry studies. There is so much to be learned about cooperation, planning, coordination of resources including technology, and development of a comprehensive performance using this art.

Research on effective assessment when using a performance aspect in the visual arts classroom would be valuable. While I use video assessment, rubrics, and authentic assessment in my visual arts classroom, the value and reliability of these types of assessment to chart actual learning would be valuable to teachers seeking to use puppets in the classroom.

Another research study could involve taking lessons using puppets into the global community. There are several websites currently that encourage communication through blogging or video conferencing to deliver educational material worldwide. Linking up with students in other classrooms across the globe, comparing puppetry projects, performing for each other, sharing concepts and ideas is such a valuable resource for the future of education. UNICEF is continually developing worldwide programs using puppets for disseminating information about

social issues to people (UNICEF, McIntyre, P., 1996). What a great opportunity for students to partake in this progressive technology.

My school begins language lessons for early elementary students including Spanish and Chinese. Through technology, there is a wonderful opportunity to build informative and fun language curriculum by linking up with students in other-language speaking countries. Sharing language by communicating with puppets could provide another foundation for further research reaching into our global community.

To continue to examine ways to value the art of puppetry across the globe is the future of this artform in educational curriculum.

To puppet is to teach.

Teaching with puppets taps creative potential in every learner.

My goal is to keep puppetry alive.

- Lynne Kirby -

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