



## OREGON SMALL SCHOOLS INITIATIVE

### ARTS INTEGRATION PROJECT SUMMARY

#### PROJECT AT-A-GLANCE

Project: Poetry video

School: Woodburn Arts and Communications Academy (WACA)

Classes: Language arts (1 class of 20 students—freshmen)

IB Spanish (1 class of 15 students—mixed grades)

IB Art (1 class of 15 students—seniors)

Product: 3- to 5-minute video emphasizing the students' creative interpretation of the poetry material

#### PROJECT OVERVIEW

The Poetry Video project was a cross-curricular collaboration of three subject areas—language arts, Spanish and art. The teachers—Mindy Brooks, Mateo Courtney and Catherine Johnstone—identified poetry as a theme common to the goals of their different classes. Working with Steve Kuever, a videographer and teaching artist with [ArtsWork in Education](#), the teachers used video as a means for students to creatively explore and demonstrate the meaning of poetry using visual communication.

*"I think students struggle to understand the relevance of language arts. With poetry the students will read a poem, recite it for the class and maybe take a test. This project showed them that poetry and language are all about the power of communication. By challenging them to represent the meaning of a poem visually, it showed them that communication is more than just written or verbal. They learned they have to be mindful of how a message is created, and how what they choose to say or show has an real impact."*

—Mindy Brooks

Although the specific approaches taken by each teacher varied slightly, all three followed the same basic process:

- Students were shown exemplars from previous video poetry projects to give them a sense of the variety of approaches they could take and the level of expectation of quality for the final product.
- Students worked in self-selected small groups to research poets for consideration for the project.
- The groups presented the results of their findings and went through a negotiated process of deciding which poets and which poems would be represented in the videos.
- Final poems were selected and groups were adjusted based on compatibility and/or aesthetic interests.
- Student groups brainstormed a visual approach and created storyboards.
- Students shot video, gathered other necessary visuals, produced artifacts, selected music, and recorded voice-over of the poem.
- Students edited the final piece in preparation for its presentation at the school's public Art Night.

Throughout the process the three classroom teachers used discussion and reflection activities to challenge the students to analyze the meaning and craft of the poems they had selected. Mr. Kuever provided ongoing instruction in basic video production and focused on how to use visual and audio cues, pace and composition to effectively communicate a message. The process pressed students to learn a completely new set of skills and to articulate their ideas in new ways.

*"The final presentation of the videos at Art Night put the students under real-world stress. But like when making a diamond, you have to put something under pressure to get beautiful results. And that's how it was for the students."*

—Mateo Courtney

## **PROJECT GOALS**

The goals of the project were to:

- Deepen students' understanding of different poets and poetry styles
- Encourage deep analysis of poetic forms and meaning
- Develop skills in creatively representing ideas
- Foster group collaboration skills
- Develop management skills to ensure on-time completion of a successful product
- Learn the basics of visual communication
- Learn the basics of the video production process
- Persist in the refinement of work to reflect professional standards of production and performance