

CLASSROOM CONNECTIONS PROGRAM OVERVIEW

Classroom Connections is a multi-session, bilingual school partnership program designed to link the thematic content of El Museo's exhibitions with social studies, English, math, science, and art, using the New York State Learning Standards and the Blueprint for Teaching and Learning in the Arts as guidelines for the creation of lesson plans. The Classroom Connections program offers students and teachers a unique opportunity—to explore the rich diversity of Latin American and Caribbean art and culture while working with a practicing artist, both in the classroom and at the Museum. El Museo works in partnership with school educators and administrators to design a unique program unit that meets the specific needs of each classroom. The program includes curriculum-planning sessions, multiple visits to the classroom by a museum educator, art-making workshops, visits to the Museum, and culminates with the exhibition of the final student art project.

The program engages students at all grade levels (K-12) in observation, discussion, and shared art-making experiences facilitated by museum educators. As a result, students develop visual literacy, critical thinking, and communication skills. Teachers and administrators also benefit from the presentation offered on El Museo's history, collections, and strategies for looking and discussing art in the classroom, as well as the collaborative curriculum development process. Throughout the program, museum educators, museum staff, and classroom teachers work closely to develop ways of integrating works of art and art-making into classroom curricula.

Often designed around a specific exhibition, Classroom Connections provides the flexibility to explore a given topic or theme in depth and in ways that are often more student-directed as the interests and needs of the students become apparent over the course of the project. Throughout the program, the museum educator nurtures students' creativity, communication and problem-solving skills through the students' participation in object-based discussions and art-making activities, both on-site at the school and in the Museum. Students are challenged to create individual and communal works of art using a variety of materials and techniques. The project often culminates with an event—such as an art exhibition reception or student presentation—that brings together the students, teachers, parents, and Museum staff to celebrate the students' achievements.

PROGRAM COMPONENTS

Museum Educator Involvement

After an initial conversation with teachers and administrators at the school to assess their needs and interests, the program coordinator will select an experienced museum educator for the project. Throughout the program, students benefit from working with a practicing artist. An artist's respect for process, experience with a variety of media, and knowledge of art terms and movements, challenges students to go beyond their comfort zone, to explore new media and forms of representation, and to express themselves freely. The museum educator serves as a mentor for both teachers and students alike, encouraging new teaching strategies, project ideas, and meaningful learning experiences for all participants.

Curriculum Development: A Collaborative Process

The success of Classroom Connections depends in part on the collaboration of the classroom teacher and El Museo's educators. To ensure a successful collaboration, all educators involved meet at least three times during the course of the program. A comprehensive thematic unit is designed using the New York State Learning Standards and the NYC Blueprint for Teaching and Learning in the Arts as guidelines. This collaborative process establishes an open dialogue between El Museo's representatives and the school educators and ensures an adherence to best practices.

Museum and Classroom Visits

During the first session, the museum educator visits the classroom to introduce the Museum, its collections and exhibitions, as well as the themes to be explored during the multi-session program. This first visit may include a slide presentation, a writing exercise, or hands-on activity. Early in the program, a visit to El Museo is scheduled to view the current exhibition with the museum educator. Through discussion, open-ended questions, and writing or sketching activities in the galleries, students are encouraged to explore the works of art in-depth. Following the guided tour, students and teachers

participate in a hands-on workshop in the Museum's youth art studio. Next, the museum educator spends the remaining sessions in the classroom, working with the students on an individual or collaborative art project inspired by the selected themes and content of the exhibition. Students develop visual literacy, communication, and problem-solving skills as they master various techniques and media, new vocabulary, and participate in team-building exercises. The creation of their own works of art provides students with opportunities for personal success and accomplishment, often a challenge for low-performing students in other subject areas. Through the art-making process, students connect with their own cultural heritage and personal histories as they explore the richness and diversity of Latino and Latin American art.

Culminating Event

After the project's completion, the museum educator, students and teachers organize a culminating event or student presentation, often taking the form of a student exhibition of the participant's artwork and a reception at the school site. To prepare for the exhibition, students learn about the steps involved in exhibition design and installation. Invitations are sent to parents, school staff and other classroom educators and students. Participating students are filled with pride as they admire their accomplishments over the course of the project.

Parental Involvement and the School Community

The final student exhibition and reception also has a positive impact on the schools and parents. The entire student body, teachers, parents and friends are invited to the final event to celebrate the students' achievements. Student artwork exhibited in school halls also fosters a sense of community, creating a more aesthetic environment that raises awareness for children, parents, and school staff, of arts programming available in New York City while reinforcing the role of museums as community resources for children and adults. The Museum also strives to extend the impact of its relationship with the school by inviting parents and students to the array of community festivals hosted at El Museo yearlong.

Teacher/Parent Presentation

Included as part of the program, a PowerPoint presentation and follow-up discussion is held on-site at the school for the teaching staff and administrators or as a family component for parents and students. During this presentation participants are introduced to El Museo's collections and exhibitions as a significant cultural resource for classroom studies across subject areas and an engaging family activity.

School Requirements and Qualification for Participation:

- Maximum of 30 students per unit
- Receptive administration and staff

FEE OUTLINE: (Each unit includes multiple 1 hour classroom teaching sessions, at least 1 museum visit, a teacher/parent presentation, resource materials and art supplies)

20 Session Unit	\$5,000.00
16 Session Unit	\$4,000.00
8 Session Unit	\$2,000.00
4 Session Unit	\$1,000.00
1 Single Visit Workshop	\$250

Professional Development

Workshops for teachers and administrators can also be included within the program for an additional fee for half day and full day sessions. Workshop topics are tailored to the specific needs and interests of the school. These offerings will be conducted onsite at El Museo del Barrio and will utilize the museums galleries and art studio. The workshops may include in-gallery discussions and activities focused on teaching strategies and curriculum development, as well as hands-on art and writing projects. Further, teachers are oriented to many available resources and materials related to Latin American and Latino culture.

For information on Classroom Connections and Professional Development Programs contact:

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