

**Karen Gaudette – Bradford Elementary School
Kindergarten – Sixth Grade**

Travels with Trees

Essential Questions: How can a person identify different tree varieties? This question permeates all seven grades; however the following are the essential questions being addressed in each grade.

Kindergarten – How do leaf shapes and colors vary between different types of trees?

First - Why do leaves change colors? How do leaves change colors? What do trees look like in autumn?

Second – How can you identify palmate, parallel, and pinnate veins in leaves? How is paper made from trees?

Third –How does bark color, texture and “pattern” differ amongst tree varieties?

Fourth – When looking at a branch or twig, how can you identify whether it is “alternate” or “opposite”?

Fifth – When creating a naturalistic illustration of a tree, what details are necessary to make it accurately identifiable? For example: How does a Red Maple differ from Sugar Maple?

Sixth – When creating a stylized illustration of a tree, what details are necessary to make it accurately identifiable? For example: How does a River Birch differ from a Silver Birch?

Vermont Art GEs:

A:10 – Students show skill development when creating art by...

PK-K- Handling art tools and materials

PK-K - Using elements of 2D and 3D design

1st/2nd - Using elements of 2D and 3D design

3rd/4th - Demonstrating techniques and process in 2D work

3rd.4th - Using various art tools and materials for specific purposes

3rd/4th – Using elements of 2D and 3D design

5th/6th – Using drawing techniques

5th/6th – Using various art tools and materials for specific purposes

5th/6th - Purposefully applying elements of 2D and 3D design

A:12 – Students show understanding of visual arts CONCEPTS and VOCABULARY by...

- PK-K – Recognizing and using basic elements and principles
- PK-K – Recognizing different media
- 1st/2nd – Identifying and using basic elements and principles of design
- 3rd/4th – Identifying and utilizing elements and principles of design
- 5th/6th – Describing and combining elements and principles of design
- 5th/6th – Explaining and using different media, genre and techniques with appropriate vocabulary

A:15 – Students critique and revise art by...

- PK- K – Making affirming statements
- 1st/2nd – Making affirming statements
- 1st/2nd – Asking questions about your own work
- 3rd/4th – Making affirming statements with specific evidence
- 3rd/4th – Suggesting changes/ Discerning and responding to those suggestions
- 5th /6th – Making affirming statements with specific evidence
- 5th/6th – Suggesting changes/Discerning and responding to those suggestions

A:16 – Students make connections between/among the arts and disciplines outside the arts by...

- PK-K – Communicating ideas, concepts, feelings from other disciplines
- 1st/2nd – Communicating ideas, concepts, feeling from other disciplines
- 3rd/4th – Demonstrate the relationship of similar elements
- 5th/6th – Demonstrating ways in which the basic principles and subject matter are applicable

A:19 – Students approach artistic problem solving with an open mind and creative thinking by...

- 1st/2nd – Responding to teacher suggested solutions
- 3rd/4th – Generating and trying out a variety of strategies/techniques to address challenges
- 5th/6th – Identifying challenges inherent in the work
- 5th/6th – Generating a variety of strategies/techniques to address those challenges

A:20 - Students develop effective, personal work habits

A:21 – Students demonstrate appropriate interactions by...

- K- 6th – Participating in individual and/or group work willingly and appropriately

Vermont Science Inquiry GEs:

Scientific Questioning
Representing Data and Analysis
Explain Data
Applying Results

Length of Unit: This unit occurs over the 2009/2010 school year. It is broken into thirds that relate directly to Susan Sawyer's visits. In the autumn, Susan visited K-2nd and worked with them outside identifying trees located on school grounds. In mid-winter, she will return to work with 3rd and 4th grades again outside. In the spring, she will visit for a final time and work with 5th and 6th grades. Following each visit, the children will spend anywhere from one to 6 class periods working on art projects related to the specific topics addressed by Susan during her visit/presentation. Class periods are 1 hour in length except for kindergarten and these classes are 30 minutes in length. Art projects will vary in media as well as 2D and 3D formats.

Assessments of learning: Since these lessons occur over a period of art class periods, we will review the information before continuing with the next step in the art process. This is true for all grades with the exception of kindergarten. (Their project takes one class period.) Because the long-term goal of this project is to occur over the 7 years a child is at Bradford Elementary School, true assessment will happen over this extended period of time. Each year the student will acquire new knowledge and thus build upon prior experiences/ knowledge. The final sixth grade art lesson is a true assessment of the previous 6 years of learning. Sixth graders will need to call upon information from the other tree projects in order to full fill the expectations for this final project. Also, in each lesson, I will assess the final artwork produced upon the basis of how well it full fills the guidelines for that specific lesson. For example: I have been assessing the first graders torn paper branch and leaf collages. I am assessing where the leaves were placed on the paper. Also, some students glued the branch onto the paper at random and this would not be accurate. Branches on a maple tree do not grow upward vertically; they grow outward, horizontally.

Activities:

The following are the art activities that occur following Susan Sawyer's visit.

Kindergarten – Read Lois Ehlert's book, Leaf Man. The illustrations in this book were created by assembling various leaves into collaged characters. Children were given a variety of leaves with which to work. Each child created a collage using these leaves.

First Grade – Read the book Why Do Leaves Change Color? by Betsy Maestro. After reading the book, we looked at various leaves and branches that we gathered outside. (These items are on the ground so we are not altering the environment.) We then created paste paper in browns, greys, reds, yellows and oranges. (This relates to their classroom study of Eric Carle who makes his own paste paper.) Next paper is torn and assembled onto a blue paper to resemble the shape and contour of a tree branch. Colorful paper is torn and assembled to mimic the appearance of maple leaves both attached to the branch and blowing in the wind.

Second Grade – Children were introduced to pinnate, parallel and palmate leaf veins. They were given a pile of leaves to sort according to these three categories. Afterwards, we took sample leaves from all three types and create leaf prints on paper. Next, students watched a children’s video about making paper from trees. (I can no longer locate the video on line!) The following class, students reviewed the process of trees to paper and made their own paper from recycled paper. They added herbs, plants, and flowers from the school garden.

Third Grade – Students will watch excerpts from the video *Rivers and Tides*. This video is about the artist Andy Goldsworthy who creates site-specific “land art”. The students will then team up in small groups and go outside to build land art of their own focusing primarily on trees for their supplies. Installations will be photographed for recording purposes.

Fourth Grade – Students will create Japanese tea bowls. The bowls will be decorated with branches that represent either the Japanese Weeping Cherry tree or the White Pine tree on the school property. Students will need to accurately represent whether the branches are alternate or opposite. We will have “Tea with a Tree’ once the project is completed. Students will toast the tree as they drink green tea and eat sweet red bean cakes.

Fifth Grade – With the help of Jim McCracken, students will learn about zone 4 trees. Each child will choose one tree to study and illustrate. The final illustrations will be entered in the Arbor Day Tree Competition. We will look at examples of tree illustrations throughout the history of art.

Sixth Grade – This project is a variation on the previous lesson. Instead of creating naturalistic tree illustrations, students will be asked to create stylized representations of specific trees. First, we will study a variety of artists from Van Gogh to Burchfield who created images of trees in their art. Also, students will be assigned a tree to study. The students will need to identify 1 -3 visual attributes distinct to that particular tree. The art that they produce, while stylized in nature, must contain elements of the true tree so that it is still identifiable.

All art created by students will be contained in individual digital portfolios. The process for organizing these has begun. Artwork is being photographed as soon as it is completed.

Supporting Resources:

Hands on Nature, Leaf Man, Why Do Leaves Change Color?, Trees to Paper, *Rivers and Tides* video, Susan Sawyer artist/scientist, Jim McCracken educator/naturalist, various images from the web

(I am certain that I will discover more books, videos and images that could be added to the above list as time goes on.)