

Invention Dimension: Authentic Research in the Middle School

**Farragut Middle School
Hastings on Hudson
New York**

Presented by

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- ❖ We have 492 students in grades 5-8.
- ❖ Hastings on Hudson is located in Westchester County. We are a northern suburb of New York City on the bank of the Hudson River.
- ❖ Our staff is diverse: men and women of different ethnicities, races and ages.
- ❖ Our assessment is the New York State Testing Program
 - Grades 5-7: ELA and math
 - Grade 8: ELA, math, science, social studies and world language
- ❖ Twelve percent of our students receive special education services.

Invention Dimension: An interdisciplinary research project for the middle school

- Combines language arts skills and social studies content
- Emphasizes process
- Teaches reading, writing and research skills
- Results in a 3 -5 page written report and a creative project
- Uses "Big Six Research Steps"



The ID Team



We are:

- Social studies teachers
- Language arts teachers
- Special education teachers
- Library/media teacher

We have:

- Pre-project ID team meetings
- Frequent meetings during the project
- Post-project debriefing meeting

First Dimension: Authentic Research Skills

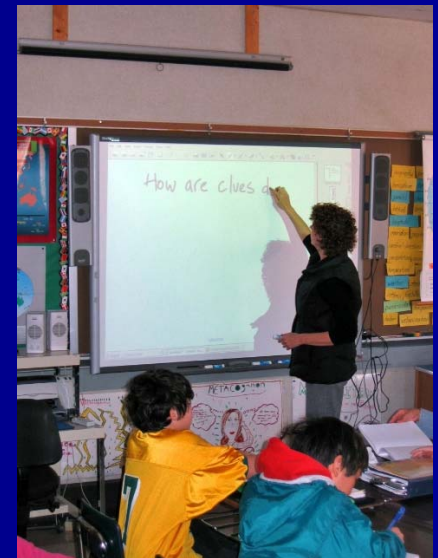
Students

- Use a variety of sources
 - Print encyclopedias
 - Books
 - Magazines
 - Internet
 - Visuals
- Create a modified bibliography: "source sheets"
- Generate essential research questions
- Learn note-taking skills and strategies in both SS and LA
- Collaborate in topic groups

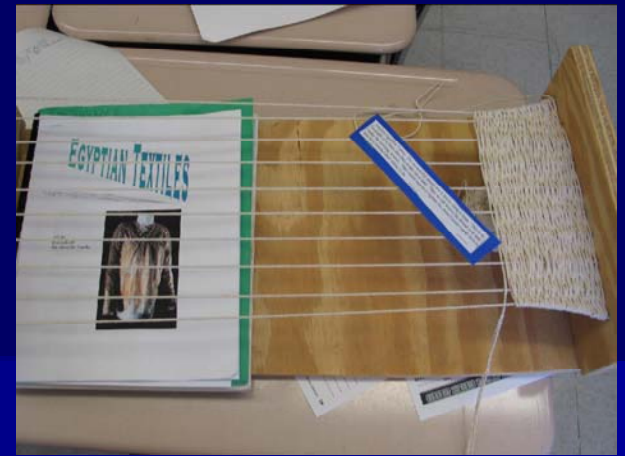
Second Dimension: Outlining and Writing Process

Students

- Learn formal outlining and how to draft the paper (language arts)
- Make inferences about modern connections (social studies)
- Revise and edit in peer partnerships (language arts and social studies)



Third Dimension: Final Product



Students

- Write a 3 to 5 page research paper
- Produce a creative project
 - Model
 - Oral Presentation (PowerPoint presentation)
 - Multi-media: video, website
 - Performance
 - Interactive lesson taught to class
 - Artistic representation
 - Interpretive presentation
- Share in gallery walk



Assessment

- Teachers evaluate each step with a rubric: notes, outline, and final product.
- Special education teachers create a differentiated rubric that is shared with all teachers.
- Students have a chance to make revisions of each step.

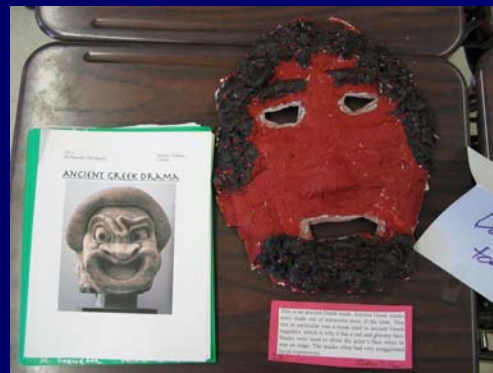


Management Strategies

- Communicate among teachers and with families: email and e-board
- Divide the labor: teacher mentors
- Present skills in LA or SS
- Differentiate according to students' needs
- Provide feedback at multiple assessment points
- Ensure accountability in both classes
- Focus on organization techniques

On-going Challenges

- Time to plan
- Integrating new staff into the team
- Reluctant colleagues
- Student "buzz"
- Differentiation – finding ways for everyone to succeed
- Materials management – finding materials appropriate for 6th graders



What We've Learned

This Project

- Makes research authentic: each student becomes an expert
- Has high expectations: everyone does his/her best, including English language learners and learning challenged students.
- Enables consistency among all team teachers
- Utilizes student mentoring
- Prepares students for research in upper grades and non-fiction writing tasks

