

EJNA Arts & Multimedia Outreach Project – September - December 2010
Bridges to Understanding - Executive Summary



PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Bridges’ mission is to unite and empower youth worldwide, enhance cross-cultural understanding and build global citizenship using digital technology and the art of storytelling. Our programs connect students in Seattle classrooms with their peers around the world via safe discussion forums and through the creation and sharing of digital stories about their lives, communities and global issues. Our goals are for students to build their understanding of global issues and become empowered to act on issues that affect their communities. In 2010, Bridges worked with two teachers at Chief Sealth International High School to incorporate the Bridges digital storytelling curriculum into the blocked Global Leadership and Environmental Science classes. Students created five short digital stories about issues they cared about in their community related to those topics, shared the videos in multiple screenings at their school, and shared what they learned with an elementary class.

TRAINING

Twenty-nine (29) students of Sealth’s Global Leadership-Environmental Science class were trained in the methods of digital storytelling to communicate environmental issues in the community. Students wrote scripts, learned about photography, took photos, learned audio recording techniques, learned image editing and video editing software, and worked in small groups to produce the videos. Many schedule changes and technical issues presented challenges, but we overcame them, and those challenges became part of the learning process.

PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT

We created a shared calendar for the curriculum of the two blocked classes, field experience guides to help guide students’ learning in the field and ensure they collected information and media for their videos, and ultimately the students created five (5) digital stories (short videos) about solid waste, conservation and water quality issues. The digital

story titles are: “Heavy Metal,” “Puget Sound,” “Cell Phones,” “Hazardous Waste” and “Shoe Waste.”

OUTREACH & EDUCATION

Approximately 325 people were educated about the chosen topics, including the class, the volunteers, the audiences at each of three screenings, and the elementary students that the Sealth students visited. This is a diverse audience of youth and their community. Students in the class we worked with are representative of the overall number. They were in grades 9-12, and reported their ethnicities on a form including Mexican, White, African-American, Somali, Native American, and Vietnamese American.

BUDGET

This budget covered planning and curriculum development time for all staff in advance of the project, and staff time for project oversight during the fall (184 hours total). It also provided for equipment and field trip expenses. Volunteers contributed a total of 68 hours, and were key to the project’s success. The total budget, including value for volunteer hours, was \$12,945.04.

COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION & BENEFIT

Our partnership with the school was the key to the project’s success. Two teachers at Chief Sealth International High School, Mr. Noah Zeichner and Ms. Nancy Ruzycski, taught the Global Leadership (social studies) and Environmental Science content which so richly informed the students’ video projects. Community volunteers directly assisted students week to week. Youth developed leadership skills and skills in working together in groups. They had access to things they normally wouldn’t see, had the opportunity to learn about job opportunities available in fields related to their studies, developed positive relationships with each other and the volunteers, and had the empowering experience of communicating what they had learned and why they cared to a real audience of their peers and community members.

LESSONS LEARNED

When partners work together, each bringing their own expertise, you can succeed in delivery a rich program to students. This type of project has a bigger impact on the students and community through a partnership like this, because the learning is so much greater than it would be if Bridges or one of the teachers on their own had tried the same thing. Each piece of the partnership supported the others throughout. The field trip experiences were invaluable for engaging the students and for media collection. Students reported that they appreciated the film festival, an opportunity to share what they had learned with a real audience, as one of the most valuable parts of the project to them.