



RAISE PRACTICUM EXEMPLAR ACTIVITY TEMPLATE

Name: April Zay
Affiliate Organization: Young Audiences of NJ and Eastern PA
Art Discipline: Visual Arts

Title of Activity: Teacher Engagement
Exemplar Focus: Teacher/Paraprofessional Engagement
RAISE Connections: ☒ Social-Emotional Learning ☐ Healing-Centered Education ☐ Culturally Responsive-Sustaining Pedagogy
RAISE Principles: ☒ Community Grounding & Routines ☒ Creative Choice & Voice ☐ Emotional & Somatic Engagement ☐ Interpersonal Belonging & Relationships ☐ Reflection & Radical Imagination
Summary: I created a short residency video demonstrating strategies for engaging classroom teachers and paraprofessionals as active participants during an artist residency. The presentation highlighted a three-step approach: inviting adults to participate, positioning them as learners alongside students, and preparing them to support student learning throughout the activity.
Rationale: I would use this approach during a residency when a classroom teacher (Not necessarily an art teacher) and/or paraprofessionals are present but not actively engaged, like sitting at their desk. It is especially effective when introducing new skills or materials, supporting diverse learners, and building a classroom culture where all participants—students and adults alike—should be engaged in the creative process.

Goals:

Teachers and paraprofessionals will actively participate in the learning experience, gaining familiarity with the artistic process and strategies being taught. Students will benefit from increased support, engagement, and a classroom culture that values collaboration, creativity, and lifelong learning. Teachers and paraprofessionals may be able to repeat some of the lessons with future students.

Materials and Supplies Needed:

None

Outline:

1. **Invite participation:**
“I’d love for you to join us and try the activity alongside the students.”
2. **Normalize adult learning:**
“Today, the teachers (acknowledged by name) are learning with us too, so we are all artists creating together.”
3. **Introduce each step clearly:**
“First we will _____. Then we will _____.”
4. **Prepare adults to support students:**
“As students begin working, you can help by asking questions, encouraging problem-solving, and reminding them of the next step.”
5. **Model supportive prompts:**
“What do you notice?”
“Can anyone guess the next step?”
“Were you able to successfully complete the step (even with a little support)?”
6. **Encourage shared reflection:**
“What did you learn by making alongside the students?”
“How did adult participation help support the class?”

Any Additional Comments:

The concept of teacher engagement is less about a specific activity and more about creating a classroom culture where teachers feel welcome, included, and valued as partners in the learning process. By intentionally using language that invites classroom teachers and paraprofessionals to participate as learners, we foster collaboration, curiosity, and shared ownership of student learning. This strategy can be adapted and implemented across a wide variety of workshops, residencies, and educational settings.