LESSON 4 — CULMINATING EXPERIENCE: INSTALL IT YOURSELF!

In this lesson students use what they have learned about Chihuly's process for creating large sculptures and installations to plan a temporary installation in their own school.

Photo courtesy of Deborah Bovard, Clinton Young Elementary School, 2006

Fourth-grade students at Clinton Young Elementary School in Indianapolis worked as a team to create and install this sculpture in their school.

INDIANA'S ACADEMIC STANDARDS

Visual Arts

Standard 8: Production: 3.8.1, 3.8.2, 4.8.1, 4.8.2, 5.8.1, 5.8.2

Standard 11: Careers and Community: 3.11.1, 4.11.2, 5.11.2

Standard 12: Careers and Community: 3.12.1, 4.12.1, 5.12.1, 5.12.3

Language Arts

Standard 7: Listening and Speaking: 3.7.5, 3.7.7, 4.7.8, 4.7.5, 4.7.8, 4.7.9, 5.7.4, 5.7.5, 5.7.6

Science

Standard 6: Common Themes — Models and Scale: 3.6.3, 4.6.3

OBJECTIVES

Lesson 4 will enable students to:

- examine examples of Chihuly installations of sculptures
- identify the roles that different Chihuly team members play in the process of planning and carrying out an installation
- consider why it is important for community members to become involved
- examine their own school setting in detail to determine where and how a sculpture or exhibition of sculptures could be installed
- determine which members of the school staff would need to be involved
- work in teams to plan a temporary installation in the school setting
- speculate about the impact of the installation on the selected space and the larger school environment

FOCUS QUESTIONS

Use these questions to help students focus on key ideas in this experience:

- How does Dale Chihuly plan an installation?
- Why is teamwork important in this process?
- What are the roles of different members of the team?
- Why is it important for people in the local community to become involved?
- What impact does an installation have on the surrounding community?
- Could you create a temporary installation of a sculpture or sculptures in your school?
- Who would you need to talk to and work with to accomplish this?
- What impact would the installation have on everyday life in your school? What problems could develop?
- What benefits would the installation have for the school and people in the school community?
- How would the installation change the space around it? How would the characteristics of the space affect the installation?
- How would people react to the installation? What kind of experiences would it provide for viewers?

YOU WILL NEED VISUAL AIDS

- Videos or Web-based images of Chihuly installations such as "Chihuly Over Venice" and *Chihuly in the Light of Jerusalem 2000.*
- Images of Chihuly team members carrying out different roles and working with community people

TIME

Approximately two class periods

HOT WORDS

- benefits
- environment
- installation
- interact
- officials
- permanent
- scale
- setting
- space
- temporary

PROCEDURES

- Show students videos or Web site pages documenting Chihuly installations in different settings. Explain that many of Chihuly's installations are designed to be **temporary**. Ask students: How is experiencing a temporary exhibit different from visiting one that is **permanent**?
- Ask students to consider how the **environment** or **setting**, the place where the installation is located, is important. Explain that Chihuly designs and places his works so that they **interact** with a specific environment. The environment enhances the installation and, at the same time, helps us to experience the environment in a new way.
- Have students speculate about the various steps that must be taken to create and install works of art like this and the kinds of jobs involved. Use the chalkboard or a flip chart to record students' thoughts.
- Help students think of steps that might not have occurred to them, such as getting permission from local **officials**, arranging for Chihuly team members to travel to the site and have places to stay, employing local people to help with some jobs, carrying out construction work, filming and documenting the process, contacting local newspapers and television stations, and working with local officials to manage traffic caused by large numbers of people visiting the exhibit.

Chihuly Studio

Dale Chihuly poses with members of his glassblowing team. Each team member has an important role to play in the process of creating a glass sculpture and planning an installation.

CHIHULY TEAM

Chihuly directs a diverse team of people with a wide range of talents. There is the **glassblowing team** that follows Chihuly's specifications in creating a piece. This includes the head gaffer, color experts and technicians. There are also expert **packers** and **shippers** who pack glass pieces and ship them to a location safely. The **mock-up and installation team** includes architects, lighting designers and builders who evaluate a space, construct the metal armatures that support a sculpture and put the glass pieces into place. Members of the **media team** are experts in photography, video, the Internet, book publishing and public relations. They use their special skills to communicate with the public about Chihuly and his work.

- Point out to students that it is not possible for one person to do this. It takes a team working in cooperation with local people. In addition to the glassblowing team, Chihuly works with a large group of people who carry out a number of different jobs.
- Ask students to speculate about the different jobs team members have. Use background information on the **Chihuly Team** to help them identify roles and responsibilities.

- Show students images of Chihuly team members working with local people. Ask students: Why is the involvement of local people important in planning and building an installation?
- Help students to understand that local people are needed to do certain jobs, such as direct traffic and keep the area clean. Officials such as the mayor, city council, police and other safety officers also have to give their approval.
- Ask students why local officials would have to be involved. Would a large installation have an impact on everyday life in the community? How? What problems might be involved? What **benefits** would the installation have for the community?
- Tell students that they will have the opportunity to plan a temporary installation in their own school. Divide the class into teams of four.
- Explain to students that they can select one of the sculptures previously created for the classroom as model. Before they make any decisions, however, they should become familiar with **spaces** in the school that might be settings for artworks.
- Show school maps to students and help them locate familiar places in the school on the map. Introduce them to areas that may be new to them, including outdoor spaces.
- Take students on a walking tour of the school to visit potential sites for a sculpture. Have students use their maps to find specific locations and take notes on what they discover.
- In their notes, students should try to answer the following questions about each space:
  - Is the space the right size for an installation?
  - What kind of installation would be interesting this space? Why? How could it be created and built?
  - What kind of light is available in this space? How will the light affect the installation during the day and at night?
  - Will people be able to visit the installation if you place it in this space?
  - Would there be any safety problems with having an installation at this site? How could you resolve these problems?
  - Who would be affected by an installation in this space? Whose permission would be needed to build an installation in this site?
  - Would this be a good setting for an installation? Why or why not?
  - How would this installation change the way you experience the surrounding environment?
  - What might you name your installation? Why?
- Have teams meet and use the maps and notes to begin planning their installation, including selection of site and type of sculpture, obtaining interviews to collect more information, carrying out calculations to increase the **scale** of the sculpture, developing plans for creating, constructing and maintaining the sculpture and plans for informing and involving people in the school community.
- When plans are complete, teams should prepare and deliver a presentation using visual aids to explain why an installation of this type would be important for the school community.

LESSON 4 — ASSESSMENT
ASSIGNMENT: INSTALL IT YOURSELF!

Now that you have created a Chihuly-style sculpture, it's time to think about making a big impression! Select one of the sculptures as a model for a larger temporary installation in your school building or on the school grounds. Work with a team to develop a practical plan for the installation and prepare a presentation for other people in your school. Your plan and presentation should answer the following questions:

Provide this scenario to students:

1. What kind of an installation would you like to create?
   - What might you name it?
   - What forms and colors will you use?
   - What materials will you select?
   - How large will it be? How does it compare in size to your model?
   - What math and science skills will you need to use to create a large sculpture?
   - How will it be constructed? How long will it be in place?
   - What will be the roles of each member of your team?
2. What space have you selected? Why is it a good place for the installation?
   - How will the installation look in the space? How will it make the space more interesting?
   - Who will be able to see the installation?
   - What kind of impact will it have on viewers? How will it make them feel?
3. Whose permission and cooperation do you need to create the installation?
   - Will people who work in the school be affected by the installation? (For example, will janitors need to clean the space? Will the installation make this difficult?)
   - Have you interviewed people in the school to get information?
   - Whose permission will be needed?
   - Will you need funding (money) for materials? Where will it come from?
4. What kinds of problems do you think you might have? How are you planning to resolve these problems?
5. How would this installation benefit your school community?

Each member of your team should take responsibility for explaining a part of the plan. All members of the team should be prepared to answer questions from your audience. Organize your ideas carefully and use the model sculpture and other visual aids, such as a sketch of the site and the installation, to help convey ideas. Look at your audience, speak clearly and include facts, details, examples and other information to make your ideas clear.

SCORING CRITERIA

This assignment will be evaluated based on each team's ability to

- Understand and apply elements and principles of design in planning an installation
- Work as a team to develop a practical plan for creating an installation in the school setting
- Deliver an oral presentation that uses visual aids to effectively communicate ideas to listeners

SCORING RUBRIC

This rubric will serve as a framework for evaluating each team's ability to design and plan construction of an installation and to communicate that plan to others in an oral presentation.

- **Partial:** The team chooses a sculpture as a model and develops a plan for an installation but does not demonstrate understanding of how the sculptural forms and other design elements of the installation will interact with the selected space. Evidence of teamwork may be lacking in plan development and in presentation and delivery of the plan to an audience. The team may have been unable to anticipate problems and identify possible solutions. The team may fail to take accurate measurements and there may be flaws in the construction phase of the plan that would make the installation impractical to carry out. The team members may fail to engage the audience or provide details, examples or clarifying information. Visual aids are present but may not be used effectively.

- **Essential:** The team chooses a sculpture as a model and develops a plan for an installation. Selection of forms, colors and other design elements indicate that the team has anticipated at least some of the ways that these elements will interact with the light and other aspects of the selected space. The team can explain how they would scale the model up and the construction plan is practical. The plan shows evidence of teamwork although not all problems relating to construction and impact on the school community have been resolved. Team members deliver a well-organized presentation, speak clearly and use visual aids effectively. Questions from the audience may indicate that some problems and needs for information have not been anticipated.
- **Exceptional:** The team chooses a sculpture as a model and develops a plan for an installation. They focus on the impact that the installation will have on viewers and show an exceptional understanding of the interaction of design elements and the selected space. The team can explain how the model would be built to a larger scale to suit the space and has anticipated construction problems. The team has analyzed the impact of the installation on the school community, correctly identifying benefits as well as the need for cooperation and permission from school officials. Team members deliver a well-organized presentation and use speaking skills that engage their audience to a high degree. Visual aids are used effectively to convey ideas. The team uses the presentation and answers to audience questions persuasively to show that they have resolved potential problems and have developed a plan that could be carried out successfully in the school setting.

TEACHER TIPS

Depending on circumstances in your school, it may or may not be possible to construct the installations students plan in the school building or on the grounds. Students can still learn from the planning process and gain an appreciation of the work involved. Share evaluation criteria with students and make sure they know that their plans should focus on ideas that they could actually carry out in the school setting. Keep school staff informed about the project and let them know that teams may want to interview them to learn about their jobs and how an installation would affect their work and the school environment. With approval from school officials, students can prepare a presentation and deliver their plan to an audience outside their own classroom, such as the principal, a faculty or staff committee, parents or students at a different grade level.

MUSEUM LINKS

The best preparation for planning an installation would be to take students on a field trip to **The Children's Museum**, where they can actually experience the **Fireworks of Glass**. This will provide a real-life venue to consider questions related to the interaction of the artwork with the space. Here students can see the results of choices made by Chihuly and his team in designing and constructing the installation. They can also observe viewer reactions and reflect on their own interactions with the sculpture. They can analyze the use of materials and the roles involved in designing, planning and maintaining the installation. Students can see an overview of the installation process for the *Tower* and design their own installation on the museum Web site, www.childrensmuseum.org. They can choose an indoor or outdoor space and determine the size and color for their sculpture. On completion of the installation, animation shows environmental effects and students can evaluate the results.