

Masks Exhibit at Roberson

Lorrie Hulbert and Karen Molenko

Dale Ketcham Roberson 772-0660 dalek6@juno.com

As stated in the initial proposal, our outcomes were to include:

The action plan was for the group to meet 3 or 4 times during the Spring of 2007 at Roberson to plan for the educational programming around the Fall 2007 exhibit on Masks. We met a total of 3 times during February, March and April to gain familiarity with the content of the planned exhibit, to design the nature of the lessons which students will experience when they visit the exhibit, to suggest plans for both pre- and post-visit activities that will help to link the exhibit visit to classroom work at school, and to recommend specific learning strategies that will capitalize on the chance to examine the actual works of mask-makers from around the globe.

The action plan was implemented by holding one planning session to set targets for ourselves, another meeting to recommend a structure for what are called "rotations" at Roberson (these are the separate 40-minute "classes" that students move through while at the Museum), another meeting to see color slides of a selection of the masks that will be exhibited and to hear from Roberson's Director of Education some of the background of the masks and the plans for curating the exhibit. Notes were maintained at each meeting, and a full set of lessons will be designed over the summer by Roberson staff, based on the recommendations derived from these planning and study sessions. During the Fall of 2007, as the Masks exhibit is installed and used with classes, further refinements in the programming can be made, particularly as we attempt to understand better how students go about the learning process in a multi-sensory setting. It is during this time frame that it would be ideal to offer a Teacher Center class on our findings on-site at Roberson.

Teachers engaged in this study group project have come to see that:

- well-planned use of a community resource as an extension of the classroom can provide an unmatched learning experience for kids
- artwork can be the springboard for a very complete inter-disciplinary approach to a topic

Students should be able to:

- experience a “hands-on” opportunity for learning through a visit to the Roberson exhibit on Masks
- gain a comprehensive sense of learning from the arts, sciences and history as a result of the programming designed around the Masks artifacts

The goals have been met in that the teachers involved in the study group were able to see the benefit of the extended classroom notion embedded in this project. We have been excited by the innovative directions for learning embodied in this planned experience, the interdisciplinary potential, the unique nature of this particular exhibit, and the power of this particular community resource in stretching the boundaries of student learning. Of course, the actual evidence of our study and work awaits the arrival and usage of the Masks exhibit later this year.

The study group process works especially well in order to structure opportunities for collaborating with a community resource; otherwise, this is a difficult arrangement to secure. It worked for us in the sense of setting a schedule for planning, having access to Roberson Museum and its education staff, and for working with professionals from several schools, across grade levels and subject specializations...not your everyday planning and study opportunity in a normal school setting.

No recommendations for improvement come to mind. This is a great opportunity for professional growth, and all of us hope the study group grant program continues to be made available.