

School Arts

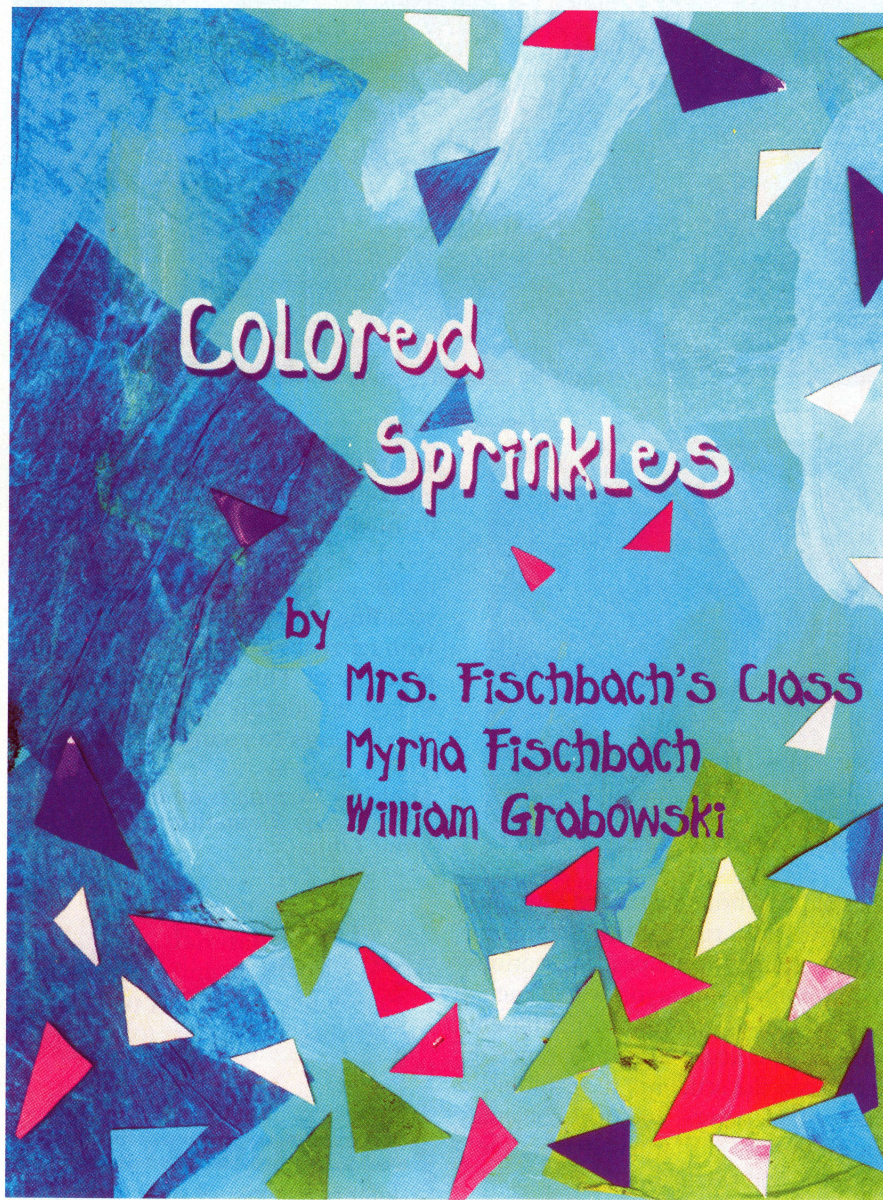
Inspiring Creativity in Teaching
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DAVIS

Prints & Patterns

Colored Sprinkles

William Grabowski with Myrna Fischbach



The passions that children feel help to shape their evolving personalities.

Acknowledging those feelings and nurturing their growth and expression are crucial tasks for us as educators. Creative expression via the arts is the most direct tool that children can use to bring those feelings and passions out for all to see. It is also a great help when children can see their work together and in relation to their peers.

Toward this end, the idea of a book of poems written by children developed—nothing new in that—but it took a unique turn when it quickly became a collaborative effort between teachers for second grade art and technology. We wanted to show the students how various disciplines interweave naturally to complement each other. The objective was to produce a class poetry book, bound and in color. Color was chosen by the class as the theme of their poems.

Poems

Second-grade teacher Myrna Fischbach began the process:

"Initially, I read some of my favorite poems and encouraged my students to bring in poems that both related to their interests and were very meaningful to them. Their enthusiasm for poetry heightened as they read their poems and listened to readings by their peers. Inspired by this process, they became aware of various structures and patterns found in poetry. They discovered figurative language as we began to talk about metaphors and similes. Students developed a heightened



awareness of how words can convey images of color and shape. Color became a thread that linked many classroom activities—literature, science, social studies, and math.

A box of crayons was tossed on a table to spark a selection and begin the brainstorming of poetic ideas. Students were asked to “curriculum web” several words or phrases which evoked feelings and impressions. From this point the poems evolved into wonderful gems.”

Artwork

In art class, each student was asked to create a subjective painting/collage using variations of their chosen color. We spoke about color mixing to achieve tints and shades. Using tempera paint, each student created an 8 1/2 x 11" (22 x 28 cm) mixed-media piece from paint and colored tissue, inspired by or reflective of their poem with no recognizable subject matter—free exploration of color was the goal. Each piece was scanned and saved in bitmap form.

This enabled us to import the scans into any desktop publishing program. The computer teacher was invaluable in helping the children open their scanned work and type their poem into the body of the painting. Typing and editing their work took a few sessions. We printed the books in various classrooms and bound them with a binding machine we have in our library.

As a partial assessment, we had students write their thoughts and reflections of the entire process. We compiled samples of these feelings on a closing page.

Some logistical problems arose. Monitoring the printing process was necessary for jamming and ink problems. Our beautiful scans were a nightmare in terms of using up ink cartridges. Setting aside some discretionary funding beforehand for ink and paper, or securing professional printing through the community should be considered.

A special energy and excitement filled the classroom as each student was presented with a copy of “Colored Sprinkles”—their poetry book. The excitement doubled, and their faces filled with pride as they raced through the book to find their unique work of art. Our library received a special copy, signed by all the students, which will take its place alongside other poetry books.

William Grabowski is an elementary art specialist and Myrna Fischbach is a second-grade teacher at Center Street Elementary School in Williston Park, New York. Frank DeCelie, a computer lab teacher, advised on the project.

NATIONAL STANDARD

Students use different media, techniques, and processes to communicate ideas, experiences, and stories.