

Voices from the Land:

Integrating Language and Landscape, Art and Culture



The *Voices from the Land (Voices)* project is an exploration and celebration of oral and written language... of science, art, performance... and the human imagination. *Voices* projects can be done with people of all ages and abilities... in any landscape... using any language.



Students creating art from autumn leaves in a stream.

Research reveals there is an ancient and intimate connection between language and landscape, a connection found in cultures around the world. Within each person, there is a gifted orator, artist, and performer. *Voices* projects are a way for people to develop these inherent gifts.

Voices projects begin as teams (3-4 persons per team) explore a local area. A nearby park, forest, meadow, stream or community garden provides the natural materials and inspiration for a *Voices* project. Teams can be comprised of same or mixed-age groups. Each team selects a part of the site that appeals to them. They gather natural materials to work with: leaves, sticks, ice, clippings, soil, mud, stone, sand, pine cones, acorns, etc. As teams create art from nature's

materials, they use color, shape, light, pattern and the landscape itself to reveal simple miracles of everyday life... and the fragile relationship between people, nature and time. Teams also use digital technologies to document their art.

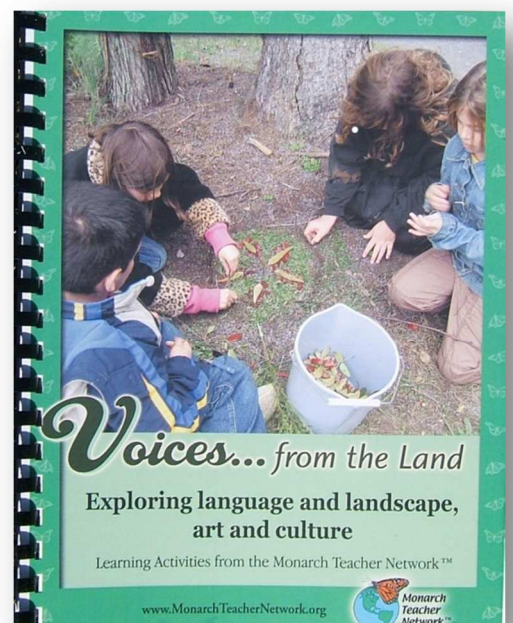
Returning indoors, teams use oral and written language strategies to create poetry. They develop and execute strategies for sharing their *Voices* project through performance art. Teams can collaborate to layout, design and publish full-color, high-quality books of their art and poetry and/or full-color posters that showcase their work. Multiple languages are sometimes featured in the books or posters.

In the *Voices* process, people:

1. Explore and engage in a local landscape
2. Create and photograph art from natural materials
3. Use poetry to give "voice" to their art and the landscape.
4. Use dramatic arts to share their art and poetry.
5. Use technology to design books or posters.

***Voices from the Land* projects have been implemented with people of all ages...** in preschool through college classrooms... with students of average, gifted or special needs... in the U.S., Canada, Mexico, Turkey, Spain, Italy, Poland and New Zealand. **In 2018, *Voices* was recognized by the Virginia Master Naturalists as Project of the Year for its effectiveness.**

Along with two days of instruction and experiential learning, participants receive a written guide (shown here) that has a wide variety of examples and supporting instructional activities.



"Filled with practical ideas... presented by a team that inspired, transformed and honored our intentions."

"I was inspired and reminded how important it is to foster the voice and gifts of each individual."

"An amazing experience that broadened my perspective... all of us are artists, poets, performers..."

"A respectful, engaging learning experience. I feel lucky to have been to this special place... a sacred place."

"I can't wait to get back to the classroom... I loved how Voices ties into the arts and nature."



Exploring the site – Voices students

Learning outcomes of the Voices process:

- Generate writing and develop communication skills across the curriculum
- Communicate, collaborate and negotiate as a member of a creative team
- Express thoughts, ideas and experiences through written and oral language and performance
- Embed language and natural science in everyday experiences
- Use internet-based applications to document, lay-out, design and publish products
- Draw inspiration from... and appreciation of... the landscape of a local community.

Some Voices partners: Geraldine R. Dodge Foundation [NJ], October Hill Foundation [CT], William Paterson University [NJ], West Texas A&M University, Bergen Community College [NJ], Ivy Creek Natural Area & Boys/Girls Clubs [Charlottesville, VA], Education Service Center #16 [TX], The Walden Woods Project [MA], Early Childhood Education Council of Manitoba, Bluewater District School Board [ON], Little Lions Waldorf School [ON], Emiliano Zapata Salazar School, Chiapas [Mexico], The Nature Conservancy of Canada, Forsythe National Wildlife Refuge [NJ], Heartland AEA [IA], Springmill Learning Center [OH], Community Nursery School [MA], Niabe Zoo [IL], Scarsdale School District [NY].

For more information contact the Friends of NJSOC - info@friendsofnjsoc.org

September 30 & October 1, 2022

9:00 AM - 3 PM

\$99

**New Jersey School of Conservation
1 Wapalanne Road
Sandyston, NJ**

Examples of Voices Books

