The Great Migration Mural
Primary Content Area: Fine Arts

Introduction
For this service learning project the teacher used Jacob Lawrence’s series of 67 painted images that documented the reasons why African Americans migrated North during the Great Migration. This compelling narrative provided inspiration for students to share either personal or family stories about moving. They also looked at Chagall’s “I and the Village” that represented a dreamlike recollection of memories of what was held dear and important. This imagery was relied upon to help develop the composition and determine focal points for each student story.

Project Goals
- Understand the reasons, purpose, and connections behind historical and personal reasons for migration.
- Understand urban and cultural issues that drive migration.
- Develop personal narrative as inspiration for imagery
- Create a mural that documents personal narrative.

Procedure/Sequence
1. View PowerPoint of Jacob Lawrence’s “Great Migration” Series. Discuss the narrative.
2. Assign writing project about what it meant to have to move from one place to another. Include memories of what was important in the home of origin. Share ideas of what compelled the move, what hopes and reasons and dreams inspired relocation. Encourage the use of “word pictures” that help the reader see sights, sounds, smells, rooms, streets, people, what they wore, their hairstyles, details!
3. Interpret “I and the Village” by Marc Chagall. What do you see first? Next? What is most important? What is your eye drawn to next? How do you get a sense of time, place, and people? What story is Chagall telling us with his choice of images and how he arranged them?
4. Students draw a composition of their own moving experience. Emphasize using size and arrangement to determine focal point, middle ground, and background.
5. Erasing and changing is good!
6. Once drawing is refined and has a clear sense of story, have students ink the drawing.
7. Shrink or Enlarge student drawings as needed to create a grouping of 2-4 drawings. Cut and tape or glue together into a strong composition. Photocopy onto a transparency.
8. Play with the transparencies to get a good sense of all pieces working well together.
9. Project images onto mural medium (a wall, large canvass, bi-fold doors that have been gessoed.) Students trace with pencil.
10. Determine painting and clean up protocols prior to starting work to make expectations clear.
12. Have students type their stories to document the inspiration behind the images. Keep in binder.
13. Celebrate.

Community Resources/Websites
http://www.whitney.org/jacoblawrence/art/migration_series.html
Family and Elders: Invite a Community Elder to visit the class to give students an opportunity to practice interviewing people about their moving story. Alternatives to interviewing family: Organize a field trip to a Senior Center and have students interview a resident about moving to Chicago.

Chicago Public Art Group: [http://cpag.net/home/](http://cpag.net/home/)

Addendum

This project addresses the following Common Core Standards and Social Emotional Standards:

CC.K-12.W.R.10 Range of Writing: Write routinely over extended time frames (time for research, reflection, and revision) and shorter time frames (a single sitting or a day or two) for a range of tasks, purposes, and audiences.

CC.K-12.SL.1 Comprehension and Collaboration: Prepare for and participate effectively in a range of conversations and collaborations with diverse partners, building on others’ ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.

Goal 2: Use social-awareness and interpersonal skills to establish and maintain positive relationships.
A: Recognize the feelings and perspectives of others
4b. Use conversation skills to understand others’ feelings and perspectives
C: Use communication and social skills to interact effectively with others.

Goal 3: Demonstrate decision-making skills and responsible behaviors in personal, school, and community contexts.
C. Contribute to the well-being of one’s school and community
4b. Plan, implement, and evaluate one’s participation in a group effort to contribute to one’s local community.

Duration

Story: Create a rubric that determines criteria for story. Instead of points, allow 4, 3, and 2 hours for levels of proficiency and participation.
Mural: Timesheets OR Rubric with hours for points.

Cross Curricular Connections

- Writing
- American History
- Art