

The Art Speaks for Itself



Tricia Fuglestad

Very often I'm approached in my early elementary art classes by a student asking, "Is it okay if I add a speech bubble to my artwork?" It is empowering to tell stories with images but not every piece is improved by adding a speech bubble.

Since I don't want my young artists to feel stifled, I offer a few other options such as written artist's statements or an opportunity to share stories orally in class. This compromise has been working well; my students' art isn't cluttered with speech bubbles full of misspelled words and their desire to connect a story to the artwork is satisfied.

This past spring I offered a new option to a group of second graders for telling their stories through their artwork: I had them literally speak through their art in a class movie-making project.

The Voice of the Lorax

During the month of March I introduced my students to my favorite earth-friendly character, The Lorax, by Dr. Seuss. We watched the animated video and discussed the Lorax's earth-friendly messages as students drew their own illustrations. Finished images were then given a voice (and lips) by each student so he or she could speak out for the environment in our class movie. Here is how it worked: