



## A Best Project\* Visual Arts

**Project Title: Wisconsin Watershed and Tradition**

**ArtsBridge Campus: Lawrence University**

**Host School: Wilson Elementary School**

**Grade Level: 4<sup>th</sup> grade**

**ArtsBridge Scholar: Sarah Welch**

**ArtsBridge Host Teacher: Ginny Miller and Cathy Johnson**

### **National Standards (Visual Arts) Addressed:**

**Content Standard 1:**

Understanding and applying media, techniques, and processes

**Content Standard 3:**

Choosing and evaluating a range of subject matter, symbols, and ideas

**Content Standard 4:**

Understanding the visual arts in relation to history and cultures

**Content Standard 5:**

Reflecting upon and assessing the characteristics and merits of their work and the work of others

**Content Standard 6:**

Making connections between visual arts and other disciplines



### **Content Area Connections:**

- Language Arts
- Social Studies
- Science

### **Description of the Project:**

ArtsBridge scholar Sarah Welch and her 4<sup>th</sup> grade students explored the cultural arts of Wisconsin history and Native American culture through hands-on-projects, poetry, and painting. Using the Fox River as her inspiration, Welch's project looked at art forms that could be found in nature and also taught students how to use nature to stimulate the creation of art. Students gained an enhanced understanding of waterways and the pattern of connectedness in nature, which occurs in rivers, leaves, veins, and trees. To demonstrate this idea to students, Welch had students produce leaf rubbings which showed students the connectedness of the leaf's vein. She also created a scientific demonstration in which three rivers flowing down one hill flowed into one basin of water. In this demonstration students followed Herman, the rubber duck, on his journey from the Fox River to the Atlantic Ocean. The students also studied poetry composition which they incorporated into their final project. Students listened to songs that described rivers, such as Ray Charles' "Ol' Man River" and Johnny Mercer's "Moon River", and noted words that helped to describe rivers. After listening to the various songs students came up with their own list of descriptive water words that were later used in creating their own poems. After creating their own river through poetry Welch went on to teach them how to show their own river. For one activity students made their own natural paints from JELLO, berries and ash to use for their paintings of rivers, oceans, and lakes. Students also learned about Wisconsin's founding cultures by creating cuisine, games, and toys that were traditional to the cultures. In one project student used cornhusks to create dolls traditional to the Oneida tribe. As a final presentation students submitted their poetry and artwork to the national contest, River of Words, and also displayed them at an art show at Lawrence University.

\* This brief analysis has been compiled by ArtsBridge from project materials submitted by the scholar.  
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