

Editor's Letter

Last November, my students had the chance to meet Frida Kahlo and Diego Rivera—in person! Well, not the original ones, but in the form of student actors in a procession and presentation to mark the Mexican Days of the Dead/Los Dias de los Muertos, which is the most popular celebration of the year in Mexico, and a commemoration that honors the memory of loved ones who have died.

My school has a bilingual program of eight classes, kindergarten through third grade, and we are encouraged by our district to incorporate and honor the cultural heritage of all of our students. Our Days of the Dead program features students from our second- and third-grade bilingual classes, as well as other students from the third grade.

Some students have speaking parts; some dance and some sing (we even had a mariachi band), but the focus of our event is to honor the memory of Frida Kahlo and Diego Rivera. I don't think my students will ever forget this experience. I definitely remember singing "I'm a little teacup" onstage in the first grade!

As an elementary art teacher, I strongly believe that elementary art programs provide the artistic and aesthetic foundations our students will carry with them throughout their lives. In *Education in a Multicultural World*, Ernest Boyer proposed that there are eight universal cultural concepts shared by people throughout the world. One of these is that all of us have the capacity to anticipate the future. Isn't that a primary reason that we art teachers do what we do? We anticipate the futures of our students and teach to that purpose. We know that few of our students will become artists when they are adults, but we can think about and prepare for what we want our students to know and do in relation to the arts as adults. I know I want my students to develop curious and creative minds, to respect cultural diversities, and to experience, thoughtfully consider, and appreciate the arts.

How do you anticipate the future? What do you want your students to know and do? Please share your thoughts with *SchoolArts* by sending an e-mail to nwalkup@verizon.net.

Natalia explaining the importance of special toys for the Mexican Days of the Dead.



Nancy with "Frida Kahlo" (Alma) and "Diego Rivera" (Bryan) at a presentation for the Mexican Days of the Dead.



Nancy Walkup