



Try a Summer Swap Shop!

Gloria Andrews, Cynthia Andrews, and Rebecca Martin

Every art teacher, new or experienced, loves to expand his or her repertoire of great lessons. What better way to

share ideas than hearing directly from colleagues

before a new school year begins? Yet, many teacher in-service days are planned to meet district criteria and

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administrative needs. Time is scarce, even for “accountable” talk, or conversation that is objective-directed between teachers for the purpose of learning from one another’s successes.

Yet inspiration is ignited and excitement grows to return to the artroom and adapt lessons to share and prepare for a new year ahead.

Swap Shop

In 2000, Gloria Andrews, the head of fine arts at Aledo High School, invited all level area art teachers to attend a “swap shop.” During a swap shop, everyone brings copies of a favorite lesson for the group, and time is allotted for presenting examples and explaining the lesson. This very popular event has continued for the past seven years and has developed a loyal following, becoming a fixed event on the annual calendar



Preparing a Summer Swap Shop

1. Plan ahead! It is helpful to book a central location at least three months in advance if you plan an August event. Local schools or museums make great settings for an event. Coordinate with your state or local art education group, if possible.
2. Clarify your objectives, agenda, and needs of the group with the institution, and allow for the sponsor's needs to be expressed as you collaborate on planning.
3. Design an attractive handout to distribute before the school year is over. Invite all art educators in your area.
4. Have presenters provide a handout or disk for each participant.
5. Prepare snacks and drinks, if allowed.

At the Event

1. Have a sign-in sheet and greeter.
2. Announce agenda, timeline, and lunch options.
3. Take turns to present and pass out lesson plans.
4. Allow time for questions and answers.
5. Discuss how the lesson can be adapted to various levels.
6. Complete any other activities for the day.

for Art Educators of North Central Texas (AENCT).

In summer 2007, the high school was being painted, so artist Cynthia Andrews found an alternate location at the Sid Richardson Museum, located in downtown Fort Worth. The newly renovated education

classroom was a perfect fit. After outlining the objectives of the group to director of education outreach, Rebecca Martin, a date was secured and plans began. A flyer was distributed to generate interest.

A new event was added to the agenda when Roberta Atkins, a

wonderful docent, discussed the premiere collection of nineteenth-century American art and explained the museum's grade level approach to meaningful field trips. In addition, the museum provided folders of relevant information and a free poster for each teacher. This blend of lesson exchange and museum tour proved meaningful for everyone and reached an audience that included public, private, and parochial schools.

This is a simple and easy way to acquire new information and to share lessons as a refresher between conventions. It also provides an opportunity for those who are unable to travel, and allows newcomers a place for mentorship. As a traditional event, teachers return and refer to lessons from previous years, relating how their students travel in new direction with a project, embellishing and adding dimensions in the kaleidoscope of creative learning. ☺

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