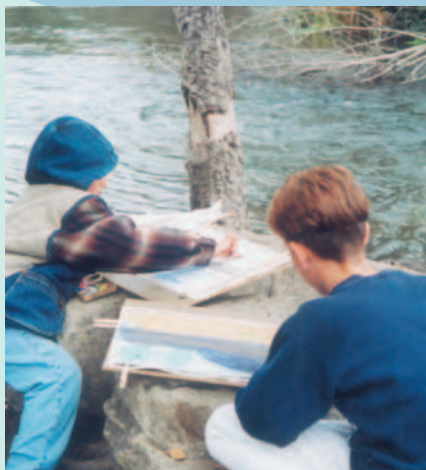


Flowing with Rivers

Heather Anderson



Students draw with pastels while observing the patterns of the river.



Students draw with pastels from observations of the river.



Student work, pastels.

The student artwork shown here are from the lesson on page 40 in the September issue of *SchoolArts* magazine. The questions and exercises listed here are extensions to the Considering Environmental Concerns:

- What river is closest to you?
- List five plants and five animals you would see in this nearby riparian habitat.
- Write a paragraph about the changes in a riparian area through the seasons: color, climate, mood, and vegetation.
- Most rivers have been "abused." Find out how this river has been abused.
- Identify and locate five major rivers of the world (not in the U.S.) on individual maps (Congo, Ganges, Nile, Niger, Volga, Rhine, Seine, Loire, Po, Thames, Yellow, Danube, Amazon, Yangtze, Mekong).
- Locate five American rivers on a large classroom map.

(Colorado, Mississippi, Missouri, Columbia, Ohio, Hudson, Rio Grande, Yukon, Yellowstone.)

- Draw the important rivers on your state map. Identify their use. (Industrial, commercial, recreational)
- Divide the class in half. One group will write about the geological history of a riparian area near you, the

other half about the history of the riparian area beginning with Native Americans.

- List how rivers are important to humankind. (Water source, habitat, recreation, intact ecosystem, irrigation, transportation, and beauty).



Student work, pastels.



Student work, pastels.



Student work, pastels.

Awareness

- What color is the river? (Generally not blue)
- Describe the reflections. How do they change with light, time of day, seasons, current?
- Write a paragraph about a riparian area, its location near you, its wildlife and plant life.
- Have students list the problems of rivers on the board: urban development, industrial growth, groundwater overdraft, dams, destruction of habitat (vandalism, cutting trees, hunting), litter, pollution (toxic, trash, temperature), channelization. Explore solutions to these problems.
- Divide class into seven groups and have each study and report on one of these problems.

Activism

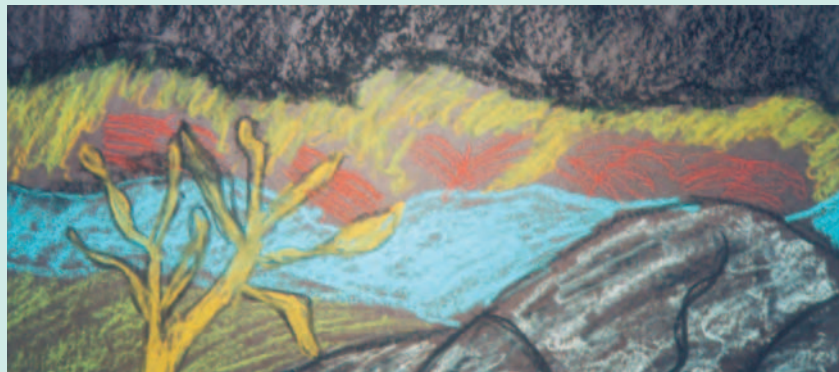
Gather information from local environmental groups like Sierra Club, Audubon Society, State Parks, state Department of Fish and Game, state Nature Conservancy, American Rivers. (Many associations have national, state, and local groups.) When not possible to arrange a field trip, show overheads or photographs of a riparian area to discuss a river's history, ecology, abuse, and protection.



Student work, pastels.



Student work, pastels.



Student work, pastels.

Ideas to Explore

- On field trip, have students take photos of the river (with donated disposable cameras), each focusing on different subjects (the river, vegetation, habitat, vandalism).
- In class, make a storyboard or collage with these images, enlarging photos to 8 x 11" (20 x 28 cm) on color copy machines.
- Extra-curricular: Observe, sketch, photograph, swim, fish, and canoe the river with your family. Take a bag for picking up litter at the river.
- Discover an organization (see above) working to protect the river and learn what they are doing. Join an environmental group. Volunteer time. Attend a meeting as an assignment.
- Stage a class write-in to a state or national representative to point out why a certain riparian area may need protection. 🌀

Heather Anderson is a retired art teacher, formerly with Fresno City College in Fresno, California.