



Toy Story

*Janna Steffan, Ruby Rodrigues, Jami Saville, 2nd Grade
High Tech Elementary, Chula Vista*

In the Toy Story project, second graders explored the essential question, “What is the magic of toys?” To investigate this idea deeply, our students visited a local preschool and became buddies with these young children. They surveyed their new friends to learn about the types of toys they like, their favorite colors, favorite characters and so much more. After finding trends in the data collected, the students used this information to design the perfect toy for their preschool buddy. After many drafts, critiques, revisions and prototypes the students took their designs to MakerPlace (a DIY workshop in San Diego) in order to professionally create the toys. Students also studied story elements by reading a variety of stories that have a toy as the main character. They incorporated the elements they learned into a story about the toy they created for the preschooler. And then they learned the writing process in order to publish their story in a board book for their buddies. Finally, our second graders returned to the preschool to give both the toy and the book to the preschoolers.

Teacher Reflections

When designing this project, it was important for us to have a product that was minds on, hands on, and hearts on. Since every second grader loves toys we thought that would be the perfect fit. This project felt like a great blend of allowing the students to have choice and be creative while learning many essential math, reading, and writing skills. Throughout the project, we wondered if our students would be upset to give away a toy and story they had worked so hard on but we were pleasantly surprised at their eagerness to give a gift to another child. We felt like the authentic audience in the project was also another driving force in its success.

Student Reflections

“The magic of toys is they can come to life. They encourage kids. They’re adventurous. They help kids imagine.” —Joshua

“The magic of toys is that they have feelings too. They can talk!” —Zuri

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