

What I Didn't Say Puppet Project

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Performing Arts

7th Grade

High Tech Middle Mesa



This blacklight neon puppet show went far beyond what you'd expect on Sesame Street. The core theme of the project revolved around a profound question: "Is there a moment in your life when you wished you had spoken up?" This question gave birth to some truly impactful and transformative stories.

For instance, some students shared experiences of being insulted in hurtful ways, such as one being called an ape, another being labeled as a "dog eater," and yet another being told to "go back where they came from." To illustrate my own story, I created a puppet based on an incident at a Padres game. In this tale, my father boldly confronted a man who was riling up a crowd by making derogatory comments about a stalled car, using offensive language like, "It probably belongs to a [derogatory term for Mexican]."

The project began on an equitable and engaging note, and the students quickly grasped its significance. Their stories were set against the backdrop of a lunch table, with conversations initially revolving around small talk. However, it all led up to a pivotal blacklight moment, what we referred to as the "bottom of the iceberg" or subtext. When the characters finally advocated for themselves, a dramatic glass-shattering noise filled the room, and blacklights illuminated the neon-painted puppets and the entire space. The transformation was nothing short of sensational, appealing to both the visual and auditory senses.

Teacher Reflection

The transformative testimonials were jaw dropping. The sizzle was sensational. The building aspect of this project was easy to manage. The students were productive and engaged while they made their puppets. The launch was what I feel set the tone. It laid down the minimum expectation. It showed the students what the end goal was.

—Fernando Vega

Student Reflection

The stories from the project they really had a lot about people's lives as some of the stories are about racism. Making the puppets was fun because you just got to make it in your own image however, you wanted. Exhibition looked like a very scary room and the walls lit up in neon

—Anthony G



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