

Public Art in Context: St Mark's Community Education Center

Mike Oliver and Chiara Eisner

This project was funded by a First
Literacy Lab grant



The selected class for the course: a mix of ethnicities and ages

- Haitian
- Chinese
- Vietnamese
- Cuban
- Ages 18-70+
- Intermediate English learners



Teachers

- Mike Oliver, Executive Director of program
- Chiara Eisner, curriculum designer and lead teacher
- Johnny Santiago, co-teacher

Goals of the class

- Improve speaking confidence
- Improve confidence in self-navigating around Boston
- Improve civic efficacy
- Improve knowledge of public art - what is art? What is public art?
What are the kinds of public art (murals, statues, etc)
- Use public art as a medium for the goals above

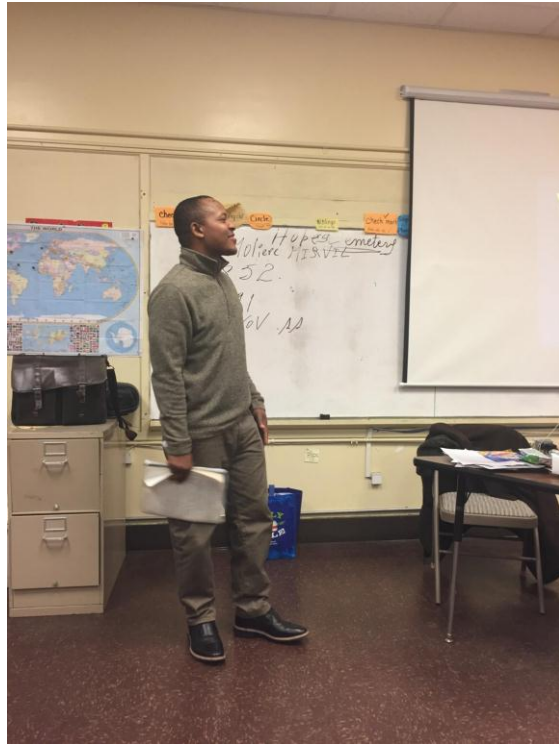
How did we meet those goals?

- Weekly readings about public art, drawn from newspapers and adapted lightly for a lower English level than the general public
- Reading comprehension quizzes every day about the materials
- Each student planned one oral presentation for the class about one piece of art they selected in the city to observe in person and research on their own
- Class presentations about public art and how to find it in Boston
- Class discussions about art in the students' home countries

We took a field trip in the middle of the class to the Boston Common, and followed the public art walking tour.

We looked at many of the public art pieces we had studied in class already!

One or two students were scheduled to make their oral presentations during every class.



How we used our grant from First Literacy

- Payment/salary to Chiara, lead teacher, for hours taught
- Purchased art supplies for the students, for them to use when visiting the public art project in Boston they selected for their presentation
- Originally told students that we would reimburse their Uber fees to visit the public art in Boston - in an effort to motivate students to explore parts of Boston outside their own neighborhood and to improve independence in navigating the city

- Chiara gave the class tutorials on how to download and use Uber, and told the students how to take screenshots of their final receipts on the app so that she could reimburse them for their trips
- But, none of the students took advantage of this
- Chiara later found out that they thought that Chiara would be reimbursing them for the amount with her own money, so none of them used Uber and instead chose public art close to them or used public transportation

But the funds were not wasted - we used that money for a fun field trip!

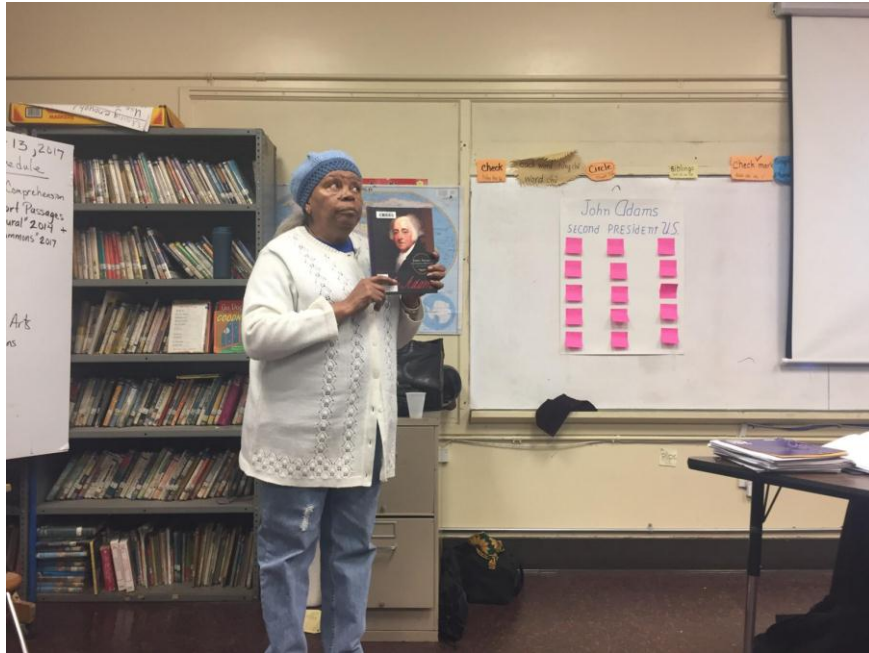
We went to the Boston Museum of Fine Arts - paid for the class to get their in UberX and back to the school as well after the trip was over



One student was very proud to find Vietnamese art in the museum - and shared information about it with Chiara and the class



Another found a statue of John Adams - who she had presented about in class for her public art oral presentation (she found a statue of him in South Boston)



The site can be accessed here:
<https://tinyurl.com/ybo68c9l>

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Chiara Eisner [Follow](#)

Advocate. Artist. Argentine-American. Only A words need apply.

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Public Art as Context: A curriculum taught and developed at St Marks Community Education Program in Dorchester that uses Boston's public art as a context to encourage civic efficacy, city exploration, and improved English speaking and reading skills amongst adult immigrants.

This class was made possible by a generous grant from [First Literacy](#).

Welcome to the live class page for the *Public Art as Context* course

Class materials and photos from this course are published here so that current students can catch up on lessons in the event that they miss class. Fellow educators who stumble on this page, please feel free to copy and implement any reading comprehension materials or elements of curriculum design!

However, out of respect for the students, I ask that you not use images of them without permission.

To help students follow along with the class readings if they were absent, and to collect all the information, links, and readings for students to refer to if needed after class, Chiara created a website using medium.com.

The curriculum is public, so any teachers wanting to look at it or use it can access the site too. But please remember to NOT distribute photos of the students in your materials.

Thank you!

If you would like to contact Chiara with any questions or comments, you can email her at

eisnerchiara@gmail.com