

Date: Week of August 23rd- August 27th 2010 and September 21st 2010

Starring: Students of Grade 3B, Ms. Sandra and Frau Jenny Menke

Setting: Classroom 3B of Berlin Metropolitan School

Team Building and the Building of the Classroom

In August 2010, Class 3B embarked on a new adventure- the building of the class community. As this was the beginning of a new year and a new third grade classroom, the class had the exciting opportunity of being the first students to ever learn in this room. This was their opportunity to learn together as a new team in a brand new classroom. The classroom and the spirit of the room was their's to create.



Pictures left and right:

Students become familiar with their new classroom and classmates by playing a game where they move freely around the room and listen for each other's name.



Picture left:

Georg and Sachi show **enthusiasm** for their fellow peers by tapping their feet on the floor. Their **enthusiasm** creates a feeling of energy in the classroom.

Team Building and the Building of the Classroom: The Painting of the Murals

Inspired by the works of Diego Rivera, Ms. Sandra gave a brief introduction to the class of the famous Mexican artist who painted murals in various parts of the world, particularly in Mexico City. The students then set about to paint murals in their own classroom. By painting their own murals, students demonstrated **responsibility** and ownership of their classroom.



Students **co-operatively** and **independently** worked to paint their murals.

Team Building and the Building of the Classroom: The Painting of the Murals

Students used a variety of materials to paint the murals including their fingers, their palms, sponges, paint brushes and by rolling the stick of the paint brushes along the mural to create some interesting effects.



Team Building and the Building of the Classroom: The Painting of the Murals



Team Building and the Building of the Classroom: The Painting of the Murals



Team Building and the Building of the Classroom: Working with Our School Community

Ms. Jennifer Gattin, EAL Teacher of the primary school, demonstrated a **caring** attitude when she volunteered to come in and help with the building of the classroom. She was an integral part in the painting of the murals. Ms. Sandra and Frau Menke worked collaboratively on the mural painting project. Frau Menke demonstrated her artistic skills and **creativity** by inspiring the students to use a variety of materials and by creating different shades of colour on the walls.



Ms. Jennifer Gattin helps Jasper and Elijah by mixing paint on their hands to create a new shade of blue.



Frau Menke demonstrates her artistic skills and paints the mural by the Reading Corner.

Team Building and the Building of the Classroom: The Artists Admire Their Work



Students demonstrate pride in their work and demonstrate **appreciation** for art.

Top Left: After completing her contribution to the mural, Emma uses the paintbrushes as orchestra sticks and sings her own song.

Top Right: Bada poses with her creation.

Bottom Centre: Marina admires the collaboration between herself, Frau Menke, and Sophie.

Team Building and the Building of the Classroom: The Artists Share Their Work with the BMS Community



Students share their work with their parents and teachers.

Top Left: Tamino shows his father the painting he has created with Lena

Top Right: Marc shares his creation with Frau Menke, his German teacher.

Bottom Center: The Art Teacher pays a visit to the classroom and the children proudly show their work.

Team Building and the Building of the Classroom: Reflecting on the Painting of the Murals

Upon finishing the mural, Ms. Jennifer Gattin led the Class 3B into a **reflection** of their work. In order to promote **appreciation and respect** for the **creativity** of others, Ms. Gattin specifically asked the class to name their favourite part of the mural that was done by someone else. This led to an interesting discussion and the development of a **caring** community in Class 3B. The reflection also provided an opportunity for the students to recognize each other's talents as well as to learn to accept compliments from other people.

Ms. Gattin: What was your favourite part done by a friend?

Louise: The flower that Sophie did because I think it's so pretty.

Ms. Gattin: And you? Yes?

Ivo: I think this is cool. The green thing in the middle.

Ms. Gattin: Who else had a favourite part that a friend did?

Emma: This.

Ms. Gattin: Can you describe it?

Emma: It's red. It looks like a monster.

Ms. Gattin: Who did the monster?

Jasper raises his hand and smiles.

Jasper: I liked the outside. The outside Elijah did. He did the golden.

Sachi: I liked the flower down there that Sophie did.

Louise: I liked the guy with the red big nose.

Ms. Gattin: Anyone else?

Phillip: The glasses down there.

Ms. Gattin: Who did the glasses?

All: Nina!!!

Emma: Those (points to the glasses) and there I put a happy face.



Team Building and the Building of the Classroom: The Making of the Banner

Now that the murals had been painted and the walls began to reflect the creativity of the students, Ms. Sandra suggested the idea of creating a classroom banner. The idea behind the classroom banner is for it to be a physical and visual representation of the the strong team spirit inherent in the classroom. It is also meant to inspire feelings of happiness once a student, teacher or guest enters the room. The goal is that anyone who enters the classroom will feel comfortable and will “catch” the fun, energetic and positive spirit of the class. Frau Menke and Ms. Sandra collaborate on ways to inspire the students to create a banner that reflects their own true spirit.

Ms. Sandra: Today we will be working on a classroom banner. What is a banner? Does anyone have any ideas?

Students seem unclear and are not responding.

Frau Menke: I know there are banners on the computer like a commercial.

Frau Menke then leads the students to discuss the topic of a “banner” in German.

Ms. Sandra: We will be making a classroom banner. A banner is like a big flag and it represents our classroom, how we feel about being in grade 3 and how we feel about being in 3B.

Students then do a Think/Pair/Share to brainstorm their ideas on what they would like to place on the classroom banner.

Bottom: Frau Menke leads the class through an understanding of the meaning of a banner.



Team Building and the Building of the Classroom: Brainstorming Ideas for the Banner

After doing a Think/Pair/Share with a classmate, students are then asked to regroup as a class to share their ideas.

Ms. Sandra: What are some of your ideas about what you want to banner to reflect?

Sophie: I feel grade 3 good.

Ms. Sandra: Why?

Sophie: Because we do other things.

Jasper: Not good because the classes are mixed.

Ms. Sandra: Okay that is important too. Maybe what we could do then is use the banner to put fun things on it so that when we walk in the classroom it can make us feel happy. So that everytime you walk into the classroom you will feel happy.

Ms. Sandra: What are some other ideas that you came up with?

Emma raises her hand.

Ms. Sandra: Emma?

Emma: Photos.

Ms. Sandra: Okay photos! We could put photos on the banner.

Jasper: Maybe everybody could make a handprint.

Sachi: We could make a picture, altogether make one big picture.

The discussion seems to demonstrate the change that is beginning to evolve in the classroom. Students who initially were focussed on how upset they felt about the grade 3 classes being mixed have now demonstrated an enthusiasm to create a banner that is worked on collaboratively.

Ms. Sandra: Okay what is one thing that we could do, or a few things we could do that could represent your classroom and how you feel about your class?

Students think and reply that they are unsure. Frau Menke raises her hand with a suggestion that leads the class into an interesting direction. Her idea demonstrated her role as a collaborator and not just a teacher in the banner making project.

Frau Menke: Maybe we can think about something how you feel like on one hand you feel happy, scared and excited- like a jungle.

Team Building and the Building of the Classroom: Brainstorming Ideas for the Banner

Ms. Sandra: Wow! That is a great idea Frau Menke. I really like that one. How do you all feel about that?

The students nod their heads and smile.

Louise: Maybe a jungle and the trees of the leaves are the handprints!

Ms.Sandra: Cool! The leaves on the trees are the handprints of the students and teachers in the class.

Elijah: Then in brown you can make everyone a face how you feel what's holding the leaves.

Ivo: He means the branches.

Students are beginning to demonstrate more enthusiasm and excitement for the classroom banner project and seem to be feeling more comfortable sharing their ideas with their classmates and new teachers.

Elijah: How about everyone has their own tree and the tree has their own handprint?

Elijah uses his fingers and states that he was proud he was able to make gold and silver with his hands while working on the murals. And so the classroom banner project begins. Students who were once unclear about the definition of a banner and what they wanted to place on it have now demonstrated an ability to brainstorm collaborative ways they could create one that accurately represents their feelings. The class begins to create their banner.



Left: Students use a variety of bright colours to create the banner.

Right: Sachi decides she would like to use her own water colour paints and paint brush.



Team Building and the Building of the Classroom: The Making of the Banner



Top left: Emma proudly places her name and the name “3B” on the classroom banner.

Top right: Lena grabs a sponge, mixes three colours together to create a wild pattern. She then paints the name “3B” onto the banner.

Below left: Students work and demonstrate **co-operation** by working together on their classroom banner.

Team Building and the Building of the Classroom: The Creation of the Banner



Team Building and the Building of the Classroom: The Making of the Banner

Students place their finishing touches on the banner. Each student placed their handprint on the banner to symbolize their contribution to the class project.



Picture top left:
Sophie and Lena paint their hands.



Picture top right:
Sachi and Lena place their mark on the banner.



Team Building and the Building of the Classroom: The Making of the Banner

Hand prints are placed on various parts of the banner by the students including on the top of tree trunks in the 'jungle'. Inspired by the idea of one of the students, the handprints on the tree trunks are to represent the leaves of the trees.



Team Building and the Building of the Classroom: Reflecting on the Banner

Now that everyone has left their mark on the classroom banner, students share their thoughts with the class about how they feel it had affected the room. The banner was hung from the ceiling on September 21st 2010.



Ms . Sandra:Can you tell me about the banner what you think about the banner? When you first walked in what did you think?

Louise: I thought it was very nice. It really was like teamwork. It was a little bit umm.. like not everybody said.

Elijah: I found it was impressing how some things could draw.

Ms. Sandra: What do you think?

Phillipp: I think the trees look beautiful.

Emma: I found it a little bit sad because now this side now like Georg, I, and Ivo can't see the banner. (Emma, Ivo and Georg sit behind the banner)

Ms. Sandra: Okay so you know what would be a good idea is if we put something on there. What would you like to put on there?

Team Building and the Building of the Classroom: Reflecting on the Banner

Sophie: This class picture maybe...

Sophie grabs a photo of the class with the banner that was earlier used for an I See/I Think/I Wonder activity.

Ms. Sandra: The class photo? Hey! That's a sweet idea. We could put some photos on there. What else could be we put on there?

Emma: We could put photos on there and then also paint on it.

Ms. Sandra: Okay photos on there. That's a good idea.

Marina: Or use it as display.

Ms. Sandra: Or use it as display. That's a good idea. Anybody else what can you tell me about the banner when you walk in?

Kaan: I thought it falls down.

Ms. Sandra: Right! You said it looks like it may fall down because it's not tight. Anyone else?

Sophie raises her hand.

Sophie: I think that maybe when we come in the class and we can be a little more happier because we will see how maybe school are going to be today and maybe you will feel good.

Ms. Sandra: Interesting. Sophie said when you come to school you may think you will have a good day.

Sachi: This morning I felt surprised me because it was not there the day before yesterday.

Through the discussion, students have demonstrated a great sense of pride in their work and their enthusiasm in having it displayed in the classroom was very evident.

In addition, an interesting shift has happened to Class 3B since the initial discussion in August when students demonstrated their unhappiness about the classes being mixed. This shift was most poignantly articulated by Class 3B student Sophie Ruhl. On September 21st, she mentioned to Ms. Sandra that "there is a change. The friends at break are different. We have different friends at break." To further understand what Sophie was trying to say, Ms. Sandra asked her: "You mean people are playing with people that they didn't play with last year?" "Yup." Sophie nods. "**We are happy to play with our friends from our own classes now.**"

