

Taking Time for the Arts (A sample lesson from the seminar)

✚ **Materials:** Children's book: *Mississippi* by Diane Siebert

✚ **Objectives:**

- To create a choral reading from a children's book
- To develop the art form of dramatic reading
- To correlate with a study of rivers
- To enjoy the rhythm of poetry

✚ **Procedures:**

- Have fun spelling and saying the word **Mississippi** in many different formats and ask the students what they know about this grand old river. Write the facts they say on a piece of chart paper and tell them they are about to hear what Diane Siebert learned about this great river and how she put her knowledge in the form of poetry. Her poem is an entire book long!
- Read the first page. Write it on a piece of chart paper and practice saying this with various expressions using loud and soft sounds, high and low sounds, rhythmic river sounds. Have the boys read the first two lines, the girls read the next two and the entire class read the last line. What other ways could make this sound powerful? Could we add sound effects? Could we sing it? Has anyone heard of the song "Ol Man River?" Could we listen to that and learn more about this river?
- Since this poem is so **rich** with facts and rhythm, you might do a few pages each day and add to the facts sheet as you glean new ideas from the book. Have students try reading the stanzas in small groups paying close attention to the punctuation marks and not stopping if there is no punctuation mark.
- Practice this poem many times. Assign parts, Have students read (or memorize) stanzas and present as a choral reading to the school body or parents.
- Integrate this book with your social studies. Extend it to the study of other important rivers in the USA, the world. Do research on other rivers. Could students create a poetic version of their river research like Siebert did?