
Poster Project in "Rollage"

Charles R. French

When we give students the opportunity to use language as a necessary means to a 'real' end, we better approximate the conditions in which language is ordinarily acquired, one always having an authentic communicative goal to which language is subordinated. A class poster project dedicated to a single theme is one means to bring such authenticity into classroom learning.

The idea for such a project occurred to me while browsing through magazines in a dentist's office. On the back inside cover on one I'd picked up was an advertisement for an airline whose pictorial focus was a 'rollage' designed by the Czechoslovakian artist Kolar, the apparent inventor of the technique.

The technique seemed simple enough in its essential aspects for children to apply. Basically, all one needed to do was to integrate strips from two graphic images, alternating one with the other to form a composite picture wherein no information was lost from the originals. The challenge lay in the selection of images whose integration achieved the desired impact when interpreted by an appropriate caption.

I decided to give this as an assignment to all my students between 6th and 12th grade, allowing everyone about a month to do the job. (During this period, the 6th and 7th graders were required to turn in an "experimental" rollage which combined any two images whatsoever—just to make sure they understood the instructions and

were giving some thought to the problem.) The best results from each course were placed on display on our school's bulletin board, where they comprised an evocative exposition underlined in English.

Of course, a significant objective of the project was the prompting of the reading and consultation that went into making meaning of the instructions that appear below (Since then, they have been modified somewhat, and I have no doubt that others can yet improve upon them and share every hope that they will.)

Poster Project Instructions

General Theme: Respect for Nature

General Guidelines:

1. Make a poster to promote respect for our natural environment.
2. Use 'rollage', the multi-image technique developed by the Czechoslovakian artist Kolar.

Specific Instructions:

1. Find two photo or print images to cut and paste into a rollage. It doesn't matter if the images are not the same size.
2. Use a ruler to draw lines on the backside of the images to make strips of equal width. (Strip width for image one may differ from strip width for image two. The aim is to divide each image into the same number of total strips.)

3. Number the strips to help keep them in order after they are cut. (Press lightly with your pen or pencil.)
4. Cut the images into strips.
5. Paste the strips onto a sheet of construction paper, alternating the strips, in order, from each original image. (The construction paper used in this step may be any color you choose. Strip arrangement need not be rectangular.)
6. Paste your rollage onto a sheet of white construction paper, leaving a border 4 cm. wide at the top and sides and 5 cm. wide at the bottom.
7. Type or print a caption in two lines on a piece of white paper 2 cm. wide. (You determine the length.)
8. Center and paste the caption in the space beneath your rollage.
9. Write your name and grade on the back of the poster.
10. Turn your poster in by the due date.

Captions:

You may choose one of the following captions to complete your poster or invent

your own. Make sure your choice fits the meaning you want your rollage to convey.

1. Let's take better care of Mother Earth. She isn't getting any younger.
2. When will we stop mistreating our _____? We don't have forever.
3. All life comes from one common source. Can we harm _____ without harming ourselves?
4. Mankind and _____. We've got a relationship worth preserving.
5. Earth was not created by man. Let's stop acting as if we owned the place.

About the Author

Charles R. French received a B.S. in Special Education in 1975 and an M.A. in Educational Psychology in 1976 from Eastern Michigan University. Between 1977 and 1988, he taught composition to EFL students at Universidad Austral in Valdivia, Chile. Currently, he teaches 5th-12th grade students at the British School in Punta Arenas, Chile.



Sample "Rollage" Poster