

Linda Cox
Bay Crest and Morgan Woods Elementary Schools, Hillsborough
County
2022 NIE Teacher of the Year Grand Prize Winner



Linda teaches art at Bay Crest and Morgan Woods Elementary Schools in Hillsborough County.

Linda was chosen as 2022 NIE Teacher of the Year Grand Prize Winner for her ongoing use of the *Tampa Bay Times* and NIE resources to promote literacy, civic awareness and character development through art.

Linda has used the Tampa Bay Times as a resource since 2015.

Nearly every section of the Times has offered either content or ideas to enhance Linda's instructional strategy. However, she most often uses the Floridian, TBT Weekend and comic sections.

When a specific artist is featured in the newspaper, she often incorporates excerpts of the article into her lessons; while feature articles in Floridian or TBT Weekend spark

ideas for future lessons and projects.

Linda often uses the comics to engage students through art. Selected strips help her to illustrate the value of different illustrative styles. The resulting discussions encourage students to realize how their specific artistic talents are equally valid. They then create their own illustrations based on what was discussed. Students also read the comics aloud as part of this discussion, reinforcing the reading skills they learn elsewhere as part of their overall educational experience.

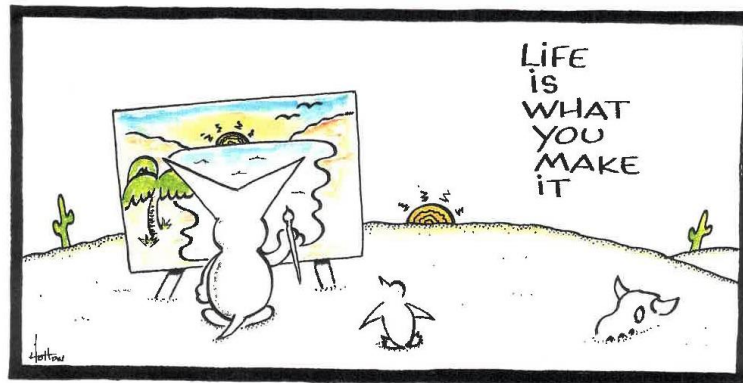
For example, a Tampa Bay Times cartoon titled "Life is What You Make It" prompted a classroom discussion that centered on how students could make the world a better place, and inspired them to create original artwork around that theme.

One of Linda's teaching goals is to regularly point out that students can build an artistic career if they are sufficiently dedicated and passionate about developing their skills. Linda notes that this goal is easier to achieve by using material from the *Times* to discuss possible careers, not only in fine art, but also in advertising, illustration, cartooning, graphic design, architecture and other creative occupations.

Linda also focuses on character education in the context of her art curriculum. She regularly selects newspaper articles that illustrate the strength of the human spirit to use in class. Discussing these articles helps to build empathy and compassion while incorporating the connection to art.

Linda notes, "I believe that students need to read the paper at an early age so they can develop lifelong skills in critical thinking along with a passion for knowledge. The Times effectively augments my ability to teach relevant and engaging lessons."

In 2019, Linda received an Honorable Mention in the NIE Teacher of the Year contest.



Mrs. Cox!
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JOURNEY!

Dianna Hill
2017



