

FEEDING CREATIVITY

STUDENTS IN THE MUSEUMS MAGNET PROGRAM LAUNCHED THEIR FIRST EXHIBIT, INSPIRED BY VISITS TO AREA ART INSTALLATIONS. THE EXHIBIT WILL BE UP UNTIL MARCH.

BY FANNY OLMO

Special to The Miami Herald

Students from Shenandoah Middle School learn more than academics in the classroom; they create art with their hands.

From interactive, foreign-language world maps to a mathematically based self portrait, students at Shenandoah Middle, located at 1950 SW 19th St., are learning to portray math, science, history, social studies and writing as art.

In the process, 11- through 14-year-old students are discovering that academics and arts go hand in hand and that even math can be looked at from an artistic point of view.

Four years ago, the school received a grant from the federal government to implement the Museums Magnet program, which allows it to work with Miami-Dade's museums and cultural institutions to create multidisciplinary educational experiences for students, parents and teachers.

"Our concept was to use object-based learning," said program director Rey Azcuy during a phone interview. "The museum becomes a classroom."

Students tour different museums to observe works of art and then create the same concepts in the classroom.

But it was not until December that students were finally able to make their work public. Using the only space available, an old shop room, students created their own museum to display their works of art. The exhibit is available for viewing during school hours until March 28.

"We thought we needed an exhibition space, and we had a room we no longer used," said school principal Lourdes Delgado. The school's cafeteria used to house the exhibit, but now it sits in a 30-by-100-



PHOTOS BY CHRIS CUTRO/FOR THE MIAMI HERALD

ART OF EDUCATION: Students Matens Tuon, 14, left, and Danavir Sarria, 14, wander through the 'Wonderland of Mathematics' installation, which helps kids learn math and was put together by students of the Museums Magnet program at Shenandoah Middle School.

'This has opened their minds...'

— FRANK VENTURA,
drama teacher at Shenandoah Middle

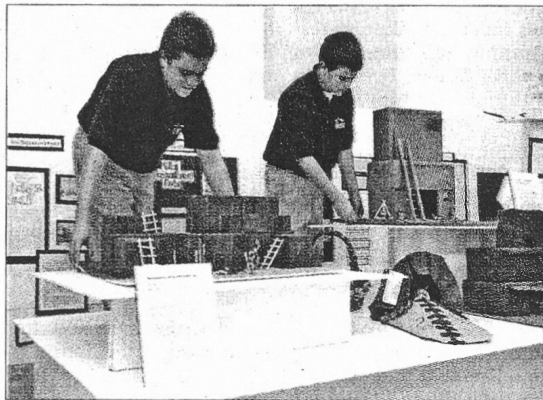
foot room. Its creators could not be more excited.

"It is making students career-minded," said lead teacher and museum facilitator Rosemarie Wolfson. "Now they are thinking outside the box."

Sixth-grader Rolando Treto, 12, stood by an installation titled *Ode to Janet Cardiff and George Bures Miller* as he explained how he and his class, along with their teacher, put it all together.

"We went to the Miami Art Museum and saw this exposition that used sound and smell," he said.

The three-dimensional installation is based on a



SCULPTURES: Pedro Penate, 14, left, and Diego Dominguez, 14, straighten their piece on Native American tribes.

female immigrant from Greece. It not only uses all five senses, but also displays a realistic setting of an old room with a chair and a desk where letters were written, and a cassette player with

actual audio.

Another exposition shows pictures of three female students glued to wallpaper, portraying different messages about unity and the "I" within one's self. An ecology side

shows pictures of a dirty bay-side in Miami.

Students and their teacher interviewed people about the importance of keeping this place clean.

"We are learning to help our community," said Teresita Gonzalez, 13, one of the students involved in this exhibition.

For drama and television production teacher Frank Ventura, helping students create art is fun.

"This has opened their minds to life and other things," said Ventura, who has been teaching for 24 years.

His goal, he says, is to teach students that learning is an ongoing process.

"They are still learning, and I am still learning," he said. "We are all in this together."

For more information, please call 305-856-8282.