

Lesson: Introducing Abstraction

Assignment 2-- Micro Teaching Grade 5 (may be modified and applied to any grade)

Rational:

At this age many children are preoccupied with trying to depict objects and their environment as realistically as possible, this exercise is a good way of exposing children to the idea that not all good art must be “picture perfect”. Many students feel overwhelmed when they first see an abstract work of art, in turn thinking that they are not capable of creating such works. This exercise allows children to attempt abstract design with some guidance so that they will develop confidence in dealing with such imagery.

Abstract or non-objective art primarily focuses on principles of design thus this lesson is a way to explore such areas and develop students understanding of them. In addition, this is a good exercise to demonstrate that gesture and contour drawings as well as sketches are valuable resources for developing more complex art6 works and are of great importance in the artistic process.

This lesson would best be used as part of a unit that studies such concepts as composition, unity, emphasis etc.. It could also be used as a way of beginning a unit that focuses on different aspects and forms of abstraction of abstraction .

Objectives:

To introduce students to creating abstract, non-objective art.

- The students will develop and expand their skills in drawing and composition.
- The students will identify and understand the difference between realistic and non-objective (abstract) images.
- The students will review the basic principles of design (unity, balance, composition, and emphasis) and apply them when creating their final image.
- The students will develop a previously completed blind contour drawing into a non-objective design by modifying, emphasizing and enlarging an area of the original image.

Previous Lesson:

- Blind Contour lesson
- Students should be familiar with principles of design and composition

Vocabulary

Abstract or non- objective art - a work or style that focuses on design. Shapes and forms are often simplified. non objective art has no recognizable subject matter.

Realism - a style of art that shows objects or scenes as they might look in everyday life.

Emphasis - design principle. Some visual elements are given more importance or exaggerated to attract and keep the viewers attention.

Composition - the arrangement of different elements in an art work such as line, color, space. Should have balance and unity.

Materials:

Each student will need:

- A previously completed blind contour from the students art folder
- white drawing paper
- scissors
- drawing pencils
- ruler
- construction paper (preferably black but optional)
- tape
- black ink pen (for final copy of design)
- colored crayons (could also use paints if desired)

In order to enlarge and modify image students or teacher should also have access to :

- Light table (can also use window to retrace image)
- a photocopier to enlarge image for student (this is faster)
- may also use a overhead or opaque projector to enlarge image.

Introduction:

1. With class review various qualities of lines.
2. Discuss as a class the term abstraction and what it means. Have examples of both abstract, non- objective art works and realistic works for students to view and ask students to distinguish between the two.
3. Explain the importance of composition in abstract design. Have students look at various abstract works and comment on the successfulness of their compositions.

In the Studio:

1. Explain to the students that they will be using a blind contour drawing as the basis for developing an abstract design.
2. Explain and demonstrate(briefly) each step of the assignment making sure there are no questions before beginning.
3. Have students select a blind contour they feel is interesting from their folders.
4. Students should then using a ruler, or compass construct a viewfinder in the shape they desire (square, rectangle, circle, triangle) from the black construction paper.
5. Once finished have students place the view finder in different location on their drawing looking for the area and arrangement that has the most interesting composition. *Be sure to tell them to try out numerous options before deciding on a final image!*
6. Once they are happy with an area have them secure the view finder in place with a small amount of tape.
7. Students can then trace this image on a new piece of drawing paper in order to begin modifications.
8. Instruct students that when modifying they must not stray from their original too much. They can however, reverse the image, enlarge it, change line qualities, outline or contour lines or shapes within the design. They may also make small changes to composition by adding or subtracting specific shapes or lines but the final image must be derived and developed from the original image!
9. Once students have made the desired alterations and modifications remembering to focus on principles such as composition, unity, and emphasis, have them trace their final image in black pen onto a clean piece of paper. **(remember to remind students that they are evaluated on their presentation of their final work. Is paper crumpled and torn? Is it centered on page?)**
10. Students may color their final work before displaying.

Evaluation:

1. Have students reflect in their journal on the assignment. Ask them to tell what they liked about the assignment and if they were happy with their final piece. Ask students to note one important thing they felt they learned from this project. review entries.

Evaluation: (cont'd)

2. Have students display their work and as a class discuss them. Have them identify qualities in each piece that they like and they feel art successful. Explain that this type of discussion will help them see what they have learned as well as learning from the feed back from other students.
3. Have students organize each step of their project (from original drawing, any traced copies, enlargements, various copies with modifications into a portfolio that demonstrates the process and number of steps they went through in order to end up with their final work. Have them include their reflection.

Nest Lesson Stemming From this one: (follow up activity)

1. - in a following lesson these designs could be used to explore the effects of warm and cool colors.
 - students could be given 2 copies of their final drawing (before colored) and be instructed to complete one in cool colors and the other in warm colors.
 - students could then explore how warm and cool colors create different moods.
2. Introduce students to the abstract styles of several different artists like: Margo Hoff, Piet Mondrain, Jackson Pollock and Henri Matisse. After viewing and discussing examples of each, have them create their own more complicated abstract design compositions using geometric as well as organic lines and shapes and unlimited color choices. Provide a variety of mediums and different kinds of paper and have students apply what they have learned about composition and the principles of design from previous lessons. Encourage students to not have any specific references for this design.

Lesson extensions across the curriculum:

Language arts: Compare the process of selecting, rearranging and changing visual elements in order to create an interesting art work with the process of arranging, selecting, and changing words to create an interesting story or poem.

Language Arts: Have students write a poem or story about the original object of their blind contour drawing. make sure that the object is only described and not named and display story and art work together and see if viewers can guess what the object was.

Technology: Students could use computer programs such paint shop pro photo shop to make the modifications to their original image by scanning it into the computer.

Lesson extensions across the curriculum: (cont'd)

Drama: Have the students work in small groups. Ask them to secretly choose one of their images and as a group come up with a set of sounds that they feel seems to go with the picture. Have them present their sounds and find out if the class can match the sounds to the right picture. Students can also be asked to improvise a movement of dance that they feel goes with the picture and the class could be asked to match it.

References

Borgeson, Bet. The Colored Pencil. New York: Watson-Guption Publications, 1983.

Focuses on a number of techniques using colored pencils. Lists steps to specific techniques such as linear, tonal, impressed line and burnishing. Often materials are limited in art classrooms but this book explores ways of adding numerous color finishes to drawings using the commonly used pencil crayon. Due to limited time and materials many of these techniques can be used in students' finished viewfinder designs. Aspects such as value and texture are also discussed in this book along with step-by-step instructions on how to achieve such effects.

Enstice, Wayne, and Melody Peters. Drawing: Space, Form, and Expression. New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 1996.

An innovative volume that addresses a wide range of the fundamental aspects of drawing. Included is useful information in using both blind contour and gesture drawings as a means of expression and a basis for design. In addition, this volume contains vital information on the importance of elements such as emphasis and contrast in one's drawings. I like that it included a chapter on how color can be an essential element contributing to a drawing's success. This is a useful book to help explain the concepts that are addressed in the previous micro teach.

Wilson, Marjorie, and Brent Wilson. Teaching Children to Draw; A Guide For Teachers and Parents. New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 1982.

A practical guide that shows teachers how they can stimulate children to produce imaginative drawings. This book looks at why children's drawings look the way they do and relates this to stages in the child's development. It is a useful guide to inform teachers in what to expect from children of different ages. Also includes numerous suggestions on how to engage children in conversations about their drawing. Included are many helpful ideas in using themes and myths along with drawing which was useful when trying to integrate this lesson across the curriculum.