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TEACHING BOYS MORE EFFECTIVELY IN THE ART CLASSROOM:

A PERSONAL INVESTIGATION

by

JESSICA NICULA

Under the Direction of Melanie Davenport

ABSTRACT

In this thesis, I reflect upon an art educator's experience teaching boys and developing an art curriculum with a boy focused framework. Two comprehensive units on monsters are included along with research on teaching boys and choice based practices in the art classroom. I also reflect on the creative process of lesson planning with the needs of male learners in mind.

INDEX WORDS: Art education, Male learners, Choice based art education, Monsters

TEACHING BOYS MORE EFFECTIVELY IN THE ART CLASSROOM

A PERSONAL INVESTIGATION

by

JESSICA NICULA

A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of

Master of Art Education

in the College of Arts and Sciences

Georgia State University

2011

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Jessica Nicula

2011

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by

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Office of Graduate Studies

College of Arts and Sciences

Georgia State University

August 2011

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## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION

#### Need For The Study

In school boys earn 70 percent of D's and F's (Mulrine, 2001). They comprise sixty-six percent of learning disabled students (Mulrine, 2001). In ninety percent of drug and alcohol violations boys are the offenders and are two times as likely as girls to be held back in grade school. By 2007, universities projected to enroll 9.2 million women to 6.9 million men (Mulrine, 2001). More startling is that most girls who attend a four year college will eventually earn a degree, while sadly most boys will not (Sax, 2007). I am concerned about this, because in my situation, I teach about as many girls as boys, but *nearly all* the behavior problems come from male students; it is a baffling puzzle. Why do educators so often observe boys disengaged and disruptive, but rarely address the underlying causes? Why are underachieving and badly behaved boys accepted as the norm? At my school, the staff of roughly sixty teachers and I experience similar challenges with male learners. Of course, I speak in generalizations; not all boys are disinterested at school, but seemingly, a substantial number are.

I remember a student who literally almost bowled me over. He could have quite easily been mistaken for a frog as he leaped with amphibian like accuracy across the classroom nearly taking me down. Another student, one of my most talented artists, comes into class with a posse of other boys. Before we begin or even say a word--as if carefully planned -- they sit in unison with their elbows propped, heads hung low, and a nearly convincing look of disenchantment smeared on their faces. Another male child I teach was retained after his first year of kindergarten. Ever since then he seems less playful, innocent, and childlike. He is increasingly

angry and disrespectful towards adults in the building. Another of my male students is a lower level learner. For him it is a challenge to follow directions or involve himself for a substantial amount of time with a structured learning activity. He is easily amused and frequently distracted with other students' mischief. Another male student is very hyperactive. His excessively active behaviors including dancing like Michael Jackson, talking incessantly, off key singing, inappropriate rapping, touching, and distracting other students cause significant loss of instructional learning time. Another boy misbehaves frequently causing many unpleasant disruptions. He relishes attention and shows indifference to consequences, both negative and positive. Sax (2007) explains similar cases:

Justin is significantly less likely than his sister Emily to go to college, less likely to do well at college, and less likely to graduate from college. This is not an issue of race or class. We're talking about brothers and sisters from the same family. They have the same parents, the same resources. (p. 9)

Thinking alike, the teaching staff at our school, with clever initiation from the counselors and administration, went looking for answers to these types of predicaments. We read and reflected on the book *The Minds of Boys* by Michael Gurian (2007). It was a prescription of sorts for our ailments: restless, disruptive, and ambivalent boys. As an elementary teacher, a mother of a lively three year old boy, and spouse to a self-proclaimed principal's office regular, the book spoke to me. Though I feel this book by Gurian barely scratches the surface of a resolution, for me *The Minds of Boys* opened up an expanse of ideas and personally meaningful concerns about our society and current school system. What can I do as an art teacher in the classroom to better serve male learners? How does this affect our society as a whole? How can I

help bring awareness to this issue? How can I provide opportunities for effective and meaningful, learning experiences for my own son?

### **Purpose Of The Study**

Many agree that schools are not effectively serving all students to their maximum potential. Students, especially boys, suffer from a factory like school system (Mulrine, 2001). They are grouped by age, as if their “manufacture date” is the key feature they have in common (RSA, 2010). Scientists have discovered more than 100 true biological distinctions that make boys more physical, impulsive, and emotionally vulnerable compared to girls (Single-gender classrooms, 2005). University of Pennsylvania’s Brain Behavior Laboratory found interesting contrasts in brain structure -- “anatomical disparities that make it harder for boys to process information and even read faces but easier for them to excel at gross motor skills and visualize in three dimensions” (Mulrine, p.3, 2001). Standardized tests, teacher-oriented instruction, and irrelevant curriculum contribute to boys ambivalence and disillusion. Male learners are often bored at school, and elsewhere they are enticed with a highly technological world full of interactive technology, glaring screens, audio, music, and lights (Sax, 2007). Physician and psychologist Leonard Sax poignantly told a newspaper that schools need to cater to boys’ needs, rather than medicating them (Single-gender classrooms, 2005). How are our children supposed to know, learn, and experience real world applications within current educational structures and practices?

I see first hand how female students are more easily adaptive to a “sit and get” way of learning, the most predominant mode of learning in our schools. Girls often tend to be much more extrinsically motivated than boys (Sax, 2007). Girls aspire and achieve to please their

family members and teachers. Boys on the other hand, typically do not foster the same locus of motivation (Sax, 2007). Their engagement is typically intrinsic. They need something that sparks their own imagination, grasps their attention, and awakens their senses. Many times these sensuous, captivating moments are rare finds in the current, public coeducational classroom. Keep in mind the direct contrast of by-gone apprenticeships when boys were regularly faced with dangerous circumstances, great responsibility, and challenging physical tasks. Boys by nature are equally as capable of success as girls. They just develop, think, and learn differently than girls (Sax, 2007). We have failed to nurture them in a meaningfully *boy* way. All of these thoughts and concerns have focused my attention towards creating an art curriculum that interests, engages, and challenges male learners.

By focusing on the needs of male learners, I do not believe female learners will be negatively affected. Rather, I predict quite the opposite; I believe that female learners will gain a greater breadth of learning experiences to which they are already suitable. Furthermore, if boys are actively engaged girls may benefit from less distractions and increased learning time. Furthermore, I believe that our society and culture as a whole will receive a benefit from an increased number of fulfilled, happy, healthy, and productive citizens.

My philosophy about education comes from a constructivist view. I do not believe that knowledge or learning is handed down by an omniscient teacher, but rather is unearthed by the learner, along his or her journey. Over time, experiences and new ideas add layers of meaning, connection, and understanding. Teachers act as facilitators along the way. Art education has the unique privilege of encompassing a multi-verse, so to speak, of histories, topics, truths, materials, disciplines, and resources.

## Key Terms

**Choice based art education (CBAE)** - regards students as artists and offers students real choices for responding to their own ideas and interests through artmaking, supports multiple modes of learning and teaching, provides resources and opportunities to construct knowledge and meaning through the process of artmaking (Douglas, Crowe, Jaquith, & Brannigan, 2002).

**Teaching for artistic behavior (TAB)** - pedagogy founded on educators facilitating authentic choices for students and honoring their ideas for artmaking (Douglas & Jaquith, 2009).

## Methodology

I developed these lessons to work as a part of a choice based art curriculum. Why choice based? Choice based art education puts students in the drivers seat when it comes to their learning. This is a mighty motivational and engagement tool. Children are told so many things they must do-what time to wake up, what to wear, what they are eating for breakfast, for lunch, for dinner, what to watch, when to speak, who to play with. It is exciting and liberating for them to be in control of making the choices for a change! Some skeptics of choice based art education argue that it is not disciplined enough and is too play oriented. My argument is that play is children's work. Now is the time for them to try, learn, and do. We want them playing, pretending, taking risks, and learning from their mistakes now, not so much when they are forty-two. For these reasons, my research pointed me towards choice based art education for boys.

When it comes to choice in the art classroom, there can be minimal choice. For example, if students are copying a teacher's still life sample exactly to the color of the bowl and types of fruits, then there is minimal choice. If students are told the material, but choose the subject matter, then there is moderate choice. Vice-versa, if they are told the subject like a seascape, but

they can use whatever media they like, then that is also moderate choice. Maximum choice, or full choice based programs, allow students still with established parameters to choose their subject matter and their media.

For this curriculum, I imagined being on the continuum of choice somewhere between moderate choice and full choice. This is because of the overarching, big idea in the lessons, monsters. I am setting them up to think about a certain realm of imagination. Therefore, they are being loosely guided, so I would not consider this full choice. However, students are ultimately in control of their choice of media and subject matter. Their subject matter can be interpreted as loosely or literally as students choose.

Why monsters? Research led me to choose monsters because as resources recommended for boys, they are transitive, imaginary, dangerous, mystical, and universal. They can be whatever a student wants them to be. Monsters are found in cultures all over the globe and especially in popular culture. Almost everyone has heard about the myths of monsters from around the world Bigfoot, Sasquatch, Yeti, El Chupacabra, and the Loch Ness Monster. Before the recent releases of popular children's movies like Pixar's *Monsters, Inc.* and Dreamworks Animation *Monsters Vs. Aliens*, there were monsters on Sesame Street and the Muppets. Monsters can be found on children's apparel, bedding, and toys. Modern television shows like *Yo-Gabba-Gabba* feature friendly monsters. Monsters are everywhere, and kids like them, especially boys.

The boy-focused, choice-based curriculum development process was auto-ethnographical research. I reflected on personal teaching experiences in the classroom, documented

observations, and made connections to current research in education and more specifically art education. Observations, and reflections were compiled into a daily visual-verbal journal.

Two units were developed, one for second and one for third grade. These materials include visual resources and instructional guides to help prompt students' creative learning experiences.

Questions guiding the research included: How do I as a mother of a son and a teacher of boys, feel about developing a curriculum aimed at their specific needs? What, if any, differences do I presume in their engagement or motivation, and how might that affect my disposition when working with them? If I deliberately attempt to design curriculum specific to boys' needs, how would I find it is easier as a teacher to engage and motivate male learners?

The scope of the research was one art teacher's experiences at an elementary school reflecting on her personal experience of teaching boys in the art classroom in the last quarter of the school year. Extraneous circumstances included interrupted instruction time due to field trips and awards programs, students' and my own stressors-not limited to health, mood, hunger, and sleepiness. Delimitations included the geographic area of Smyrna, GA, ages of students seven to eight years, a coeducational public school setting, a wide range of socioeconomic status' from very low (homeless) to middle-high, and a variety of ethnic backgrounds. This research is not intended to be generalized, but rather for insights about my own teaching of male learners.

## CHAPTER TWO

### REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Sax (2007) states, “American education, today more than ever” is marked by an alarming “lack of understanding of, and respect for” experiential knowledge or experiential learning (p. 29). A key principle of all European pedagogy is a balance between the two different types of knowledge (Sax, 2007). Language effectively represents the cultural and educational distinction. In European languages, including French, Spanish, and German, there are two distinct words for knowledge, one for experiential knowledge as in knowing a person and one for book learning, subject matter (Sax, 2007). In relation, Rita Irwin (2004) explains that *a/r/tography* stems from Aristotle’s three dominions of knowledge: *theoria* (knowing), *praxis* (doing), and *poesis* (making).

| English                      | French    | Spanish | German |
|------------------------------|-----------|---------|--------|
| To know a person<br>or place | connaitre | conocer | kennen |
| To know about<br>something   | savoir    | saber   | wissen |

Research shows children benefit immensely from a deeply interactive sensory environment which allows children to develop properly physiologically (Sax, 2007). Sax (2007) reports, “Many of those boys who are being prescribed drugs may not need drugs. What they need first, is a curriculum that is developmentally appropriate; and second, teachers who know how to teach boys” (p. 35).



Hawley and Reichert (2010) report successful lessons for boys share certain key elements including movement, activity, collaboration, competition, production, technology, presentation, peril, and spontaneity. Hawley and Reichert (2010) give several examples: a teacher knows his students' enjoyment of sports provides the analogy of a rugby tackle with a completed chemical reaction, then guides the students in a physical exercise modeling the behavior of molecules, a teacher surprises students by advocating for two oddballs in a piece of literature with universal human concerns, "nature, worth, social place", and a teacher pushes students' comfort through imagery and manipulation of physical surroundings to portray the brutality of the African slave trade. Their research supports, "... boys on their feet and moving about, working individually, in pairs, and in teams to solve problems, create products, compose presentations to their classmates who are held accountable for the material presented" (Hawley & Reichert, 2010, p. 2). Lessons should be physically demanding, unconventional, and memorable. Another important component can be described as transitive; for example, active learning is moving. It can translate, transform, transport, transcend, etc. (Hawley & Reichert, 2010).

Hawley and Reichert (2010) endorse students creating products to affirm their knowledge and learning. Products that are especially enticing to male students include, "the allure of propulsion, movement, speed, trajectory, things that go"(Hawley & Reichert, p. 18). Utilitarian and interactive products are also alluring to boys, as well as products to be displayed to a novel audience. Games greatly support retention of learned concepts (Hawley & Reichert, 2010).

Kosky and Raegan (2008) explain teachers have the opportunity to validate each student's innate ability to learn by breaking away from teacher-centered instruction and trusting students to learn more independently with choice based art education. Andrews (2005) states

students having in-put and choice become more responsible, energetic, and enthusiastic. Another benefit that Andrews (2005), shares is increased awareness of their own learning styles and potentials. Giving students choices makes them active learners, not passive (Andrews, 2005).

Eisner (2001) brings up the important educational trend of pluralism, meaning there is a variety of ways people interact and perceive the world. Choice-based art education reinforces divergent thinking and pluralism. Additionally, meaning for students is always an important factor to incorporate into art making. “When students have a voice and a degree of choice, and when they are asked to consider how their learning should progress, they are likely to understand the importance of the learning process” (Daniels & Bizar, cited in Milbrandt, Felts, & Richards, 2004, p.20). Lowenfeld (1949) warns that students should not haphazardly be given free reign over materials, but should rather be introduced to materials that are appropriate for their developmental needs. Hoover cited (1949) in Lowenfeld (1949), agrees by stating it is the duty of the “teacher to know and introduce appropriate material at a time when the child is most ready to use it in relationship to his growth and free art expression” (p. 3).

Douglas and Jaquith (2009) state choice based art education allows students and teachers to appreciate honest learning experiences and intrinsic motivation. Students work with their personal interests, aptitude, and speed. Children are continuously occupied in genuine, self-directed problem solving (Douglas & Jaquith, 2009). Choice based art education also fosters a sense of community and collaboration. Students share ideas and observe techniques by modeling after their peers (Douglas & Jaquith, 2009).

Hawley & Reichert (2010) report boys are captivated by things with the allure of danger. Often times in CBAE, students are entrusted with unfamiliar materials and tools they might not

otherwise be allowed to use, metal, cutting tools, hot glue guns, etc. By the same token, open inquiry with unpredicted outcomes and no right or wrong answer energizes male learners (Hawley & Reichert, 2010). Encouraging personal viewpoint is the essence of CBAE.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT**

#### **Overview**

In the curriculum I developed, the overarching ideas were choice based art education and fantasy. The units included art history, aesthetics, production, and criticism components. I expect these will lead to in-depth investigation about imagination, creativity, and adventure; therefore, opening up a larger expanse of ideas about students' perception of imagination, fear, danger, monsters, power, empathy, etc. These transitive topics are all permissible, because of their documented ability to elicit the attention of boys (Hawley & Reichert, 2010).

The artistic process employed is choice based art education (CBAE) or teaching for artistic behavior. Though discussions and investigations are centered on the ideas of fantasy and make believe, students would have full choice in art subject matter, materials, and processes. This encourages students to become authentic, functioning artists by taking control of their learning and making important decisions about their art. CBAE benefits all students, especially males ones, because of its capability to engage, validate, and differentiate for them.

I found this out first hand before ever even writing a thesis proposal. A peer recommended I read the Douglas and Jaquith (2009) book, *Engaging learners through artmaking: choice-based art education in the classroom*. I found it very informative and inspiring. Therefore I took the time, to set up and organize many different student sufficient studios in my classroom, drawing, painting, printmaking, collage, sculpture, clay, and fiber arts. I also set up an artist research center full of magazines, books, and other resources. Each class was acquainted with each studio. Each grade received the number of studio choices of their grade

number plus two (e.g., kindergarten-two studios, third-five studios, etc.) Students were responsible for set up and clean up of their own materials. Our experiences were wonderful. I had more time to spend individually with students and students were more invested in their work than ever. Behavior was at its all time best. For all of these reasons and more, I decided to continue with the success of choice based art education and simply add the boy focused frame.

The visual verbal journal I created informed both my research and pedagogy. Each individual component from the researching, to the writing, and the journaling served to support the other components, thus creating a stronger, more balanced whole. The intention and purposefulness of creating the visual verbal journal stimulated my thought process regarding research topics. It became a best practice of sorts, supporting the way I teach. My writing improved, because of the multitude of ideas I gained through the journaling and researching.

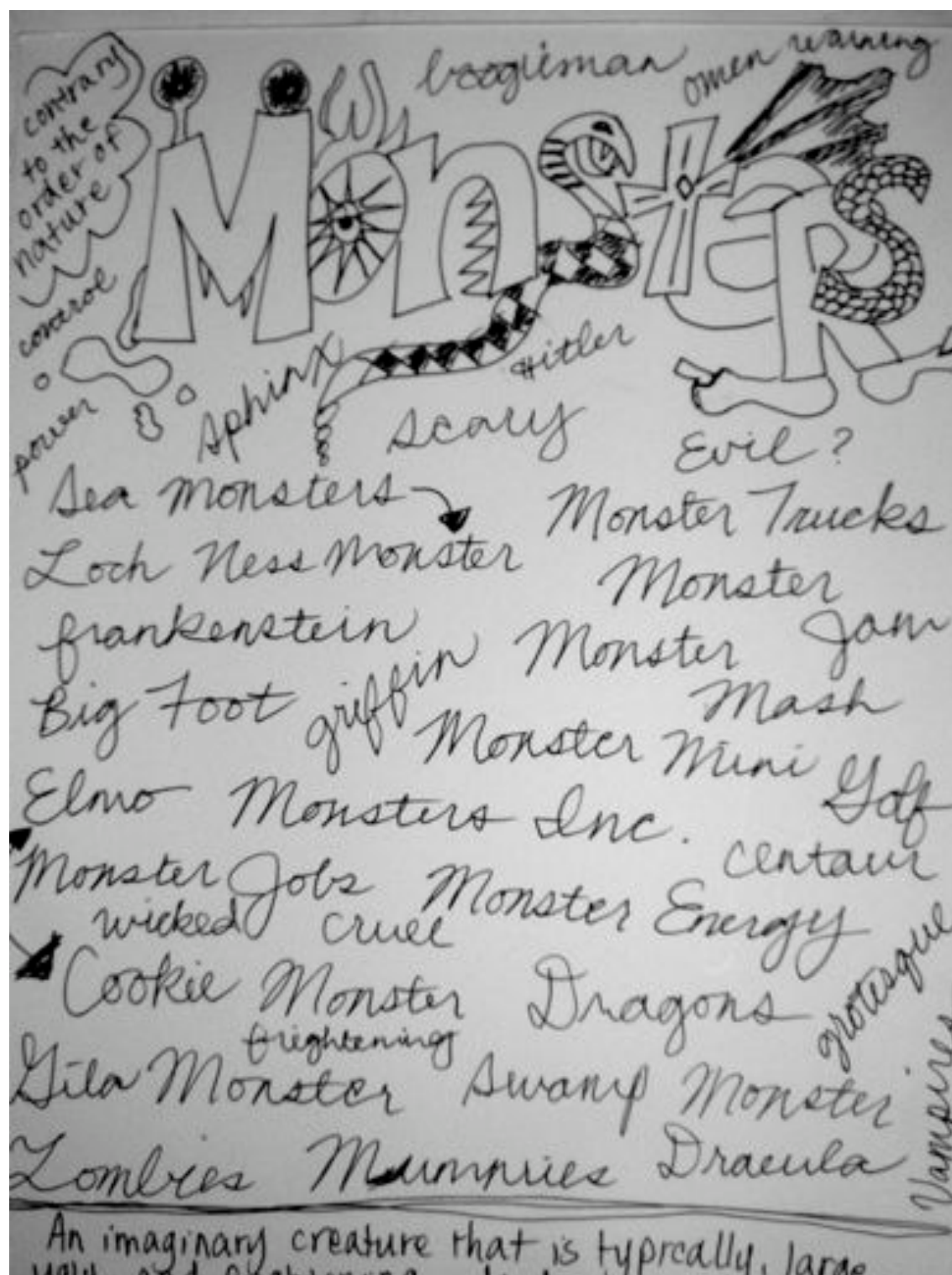


Figure 1. "Untitled" by Jessica Nicula, Visual verbal journal entry, Ink on paper, 9" by 12,"

## SECOND GRADE MONSTER UNIT

Lesson 1 Day1 Aesthetics of Ugly Second Grade Lesson Designed by Jessica Nicula

### **Standards: VA2CU.2**

Views and discusses selected artworks.

- a. Names subject and theme.
- b. Theorizes and suggests how culture and environment provide inspiration for creating artworks.
- c. Recognizes media and technique.

**Lesson Theme:** The theme of this lesson is about the idea and value of the ugly (“so ugly it’s cute!”) in visual culture.

**Objectives:** Students will view and discuss selected art and design containing monsters from visual culture. (Comprehension) Students will name the subject and theme. (Knowledge)  
Students will theorize and suggest how culture and environment provide inspiration for creating the artworks. (Synthesis) Students will recognize media and technique. (Knowledge)

### **Resources:**

“Key Concepts: A Guide to Aesthetics, Criticism and the Arts in Education” by Trevor Pateman

<http://www.jamescohan.com/artists/trenton-doyle-hancock/selected-works/>

<http://www.pbs.org/art21/artists/hancock/>



Figure 2. "*Meddler*" by Trenton Doyle Hancock, Mixed media on paper, 23" by 19.5," 2008



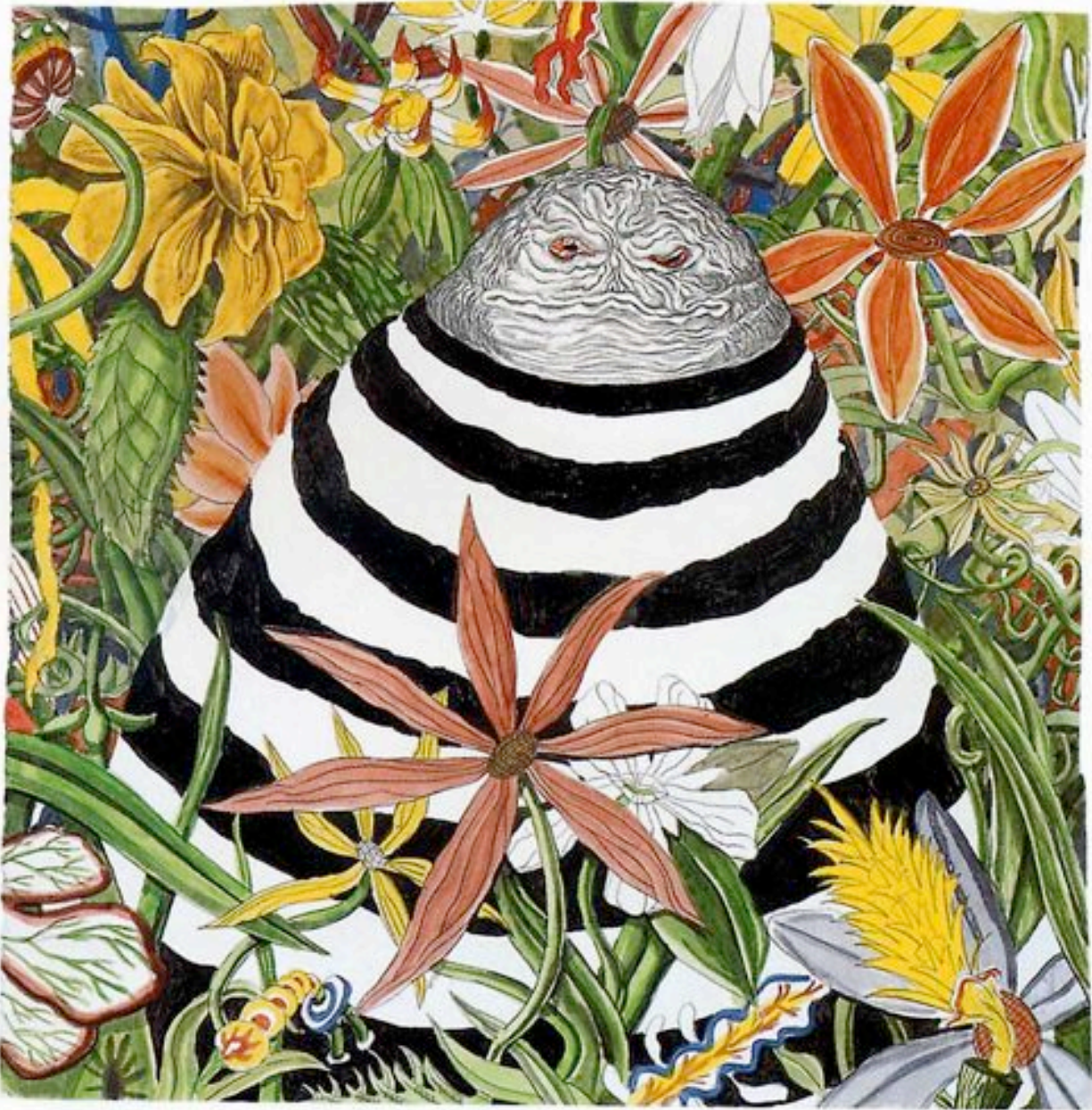


Figure 3. "*Esther*", by Trenton Doyle Hancock, Graphite and mixed media on paper, 11.25" by 10.75" 2005



Figure 4. "*Sesom and Painter's Duet*" by Visual artist Trenton Doyle Hancock, Production still from Ballet Austin's *Cult of Color: Call to Color*, A Collaboration by choreographer and Ballet Austin, artistic director Stephen Mills, and composer Graham Reynolds





Figure 5. “*Vegan’s Scene*” by visual artist, Trenton Doyle Hancock Figure, Production still from Ballet Austin's *Cult of Color: Call to Color*, A collaboration by choreographer and Ballet Austin, artistic director Stephen Mills, and composer Graham Reynolds.

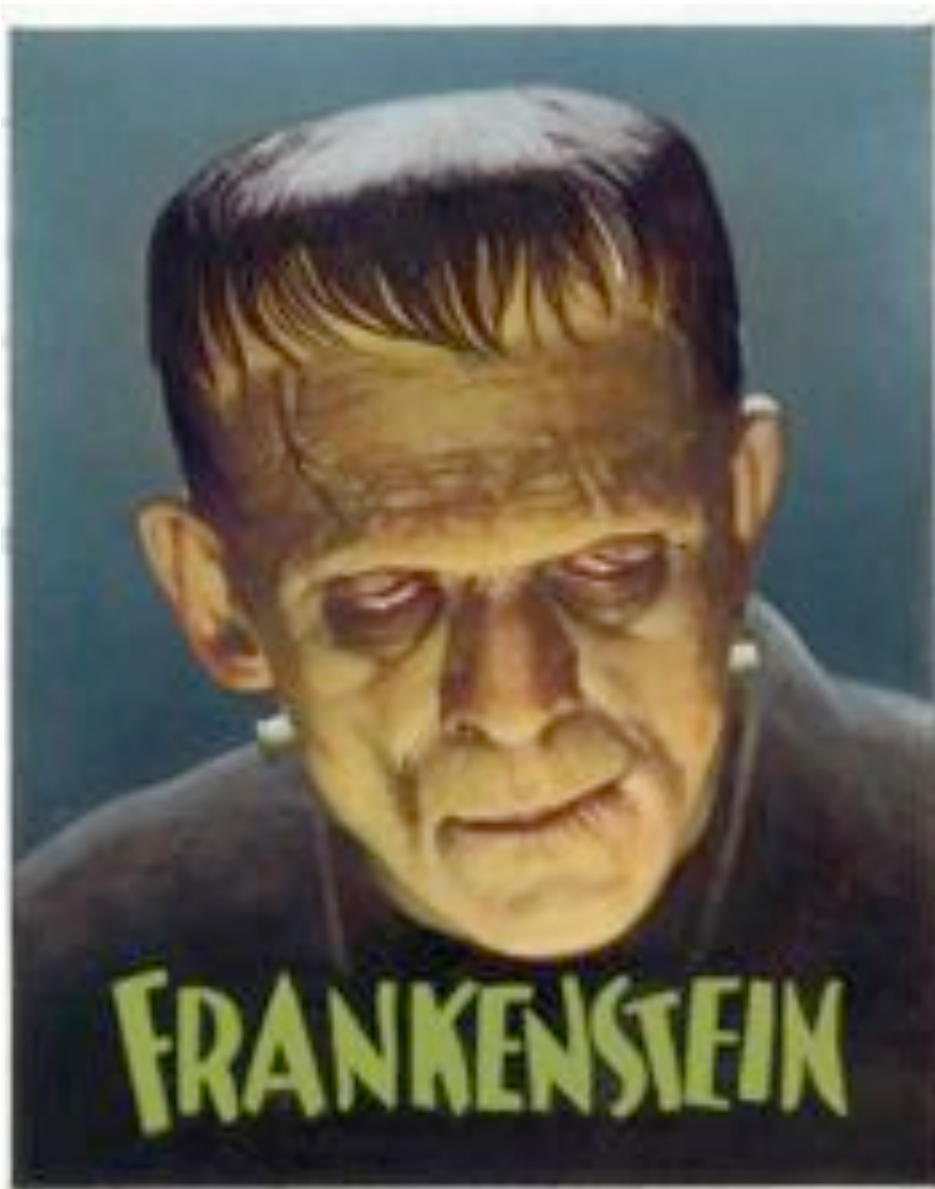


Figure 6. “*Boris Karloff in Frankenstein*” by artist Thomas Blackshear II, Watercolor on paper, Art director Derry Noyes, First day of issue: September 30, 1997, (postage stamp: “*Classic Movie Monsters Series*”), Boris Karloff buried behind makeup in his most famous role.



Figure 7. “*Bigfoot*” by Rick Spears, Pastel on paper, from “*Tales of the Cryptids*” by Kelly Milner Halls, Dimensions and date unknown, Retrieved from <http://www.rickspearsart.com>

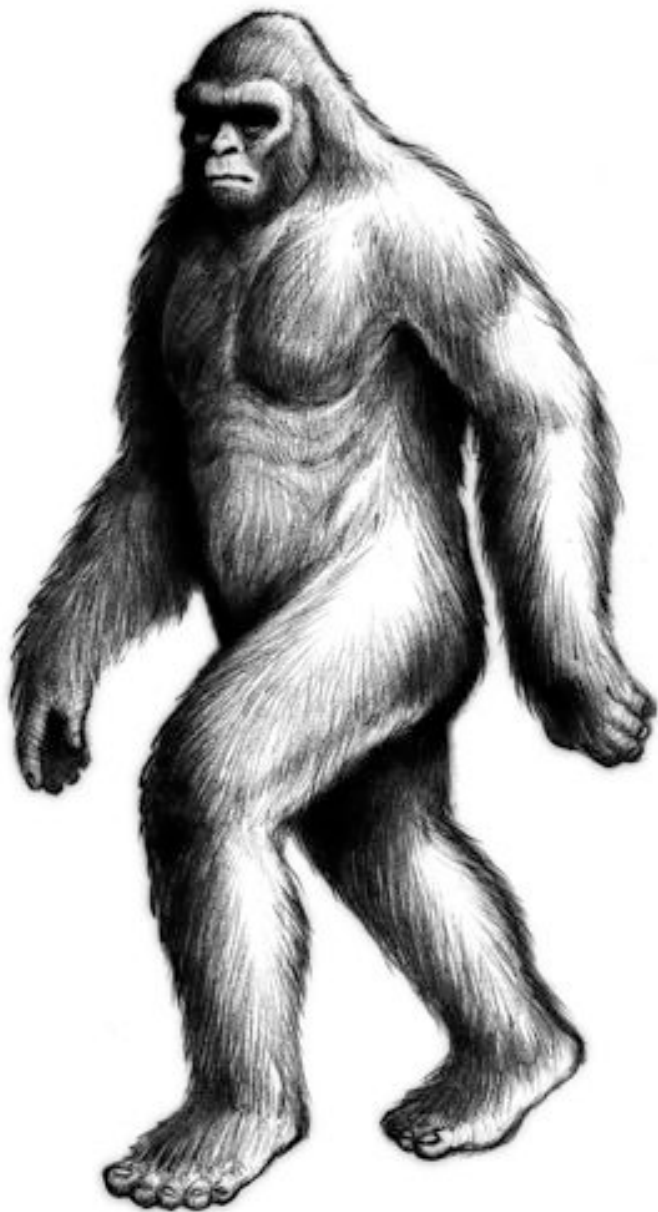



Figure 8, “*Bigfoot Walking*” Figure 7. “*Bigfoot Walking*,” by Rick Spears, Charcoal on paper, from “*Tales of the Cryptids*” by Kelly Milner Halls, Dimensions and date unknown, Retrieved from <http://www.rickspearsart.com>

**Introduction/Motivation:** Show the class and explore video clips on [www.monstersinc.com](http://www.monstersinc.com)

Then, review the vocabulary term aesthetics with students -- Aesthetics is a branch of (philosophy) study that examines emotional reactions and values related to art, culture, and nature.

## Content Paper:

### MONSTER UNIT





### What is a monster?

DAY 1 LESSON 1 - MONSTER AESTHETICS

### What makes a monster?

- Parts - (Create concept map on next slide!)
- Powers -
- Persona -






What makes a monster?


### Our Favorite Monsters

- Movie Monsters -
- Mythical Monsters -
- Scary Monsters -



### Why do people like them?

- Reason 1 -
- Reason 2 -
- Reason 3 -
- Reason 4 -
- Reason 5 -




### Tic - Tac - Know

|            |             |            |
|------------|-------------|------------|
| AESTHETICS | IMAGINATION | PHILOSOPHY |
| MEDIA      | MONSTERS    | THEME      |
| TASTE      | CULTURES    | VALUE      |

### Judging a Monster

DAY 2 LESSON 2: MONSTER CRITICISM

### Choose any monster!



### Feldman 4 Part Model

|  |  |
|--|--|
| In this rectangle, describe the monster you chose!<br>Colors? Lines? Forms?<br>Textures? Patterns? | Interpret it! What might its life and personality like?<br>Give many answers. Does it have any powers?             |
| Judge and name it!<br>Do you like this monster?<br>Why or why not? What would you change?          | Draw it!! Draw the monster you chose to critique in this space. Start with the biggest shape and then add details. |

**Student's Name**

Figure 9. “Second Grade Monster Unit” by Jessica Nicula, 2011, Depiction of slideshow presentation for interactive whiteboard technology



**Instructor's Procedures:**

(For behavior management reasons students in my class would sit in their spots on dots on our art room rug in front of the interactive whiteboard). After the introduction/motivation, present the slideshow on the interactive whiteboard about monsters in visual culture; have students discuss aesthetic value of monsters in popular culture. Compare and contrast different monsters and creatures, even domesticated animals. Encourage individual students that demonstrate positive behaviors to interact with the whiteboard taking notes, highlighting, circling key features, and transitioning slides. Ask relative open ended questions to guide students understandings and use misconceptions to guide further learning. With five to eight minutes left in class complete the assessment instructions listed below.

**Materials and Materials Management:**

Projector, Interactive Whiteboard, Internet, Monster Powerpoint, Rug, 4 x 6" lined notecards, pencils

**Student Procedures:**

1. Please participate in class discussion and activity by sitting quietly on your dot.
2. Please raise your hand if you have a comment or question and be respectful of others when they are speaking.
3. After our class discussion and activity, as individuals complete the Tic-Tac-Know assessment activity.

4. Write your name on your notecard along with three vocabulary terms we used today from the Tic Tac Know chart. They will make a line horizontally, vertically, or diagonally just like the game.
5. Use those three words of your choosing to create three to five sentences that explain and describe the meaning of the words and what you learned from today's lesson.

For example an appropriate student response may be:

(Taste, Cultures, Value) Different cultures around the world have different values or things they appreciate and like. People have all different values and all different tastes. One person may like or value one thing while another person's taste leads them to value something else.

### **Closure/Review:**

Why do you suppose people all around the world and in different cultures other than ours all find monsters like able? Why do you suppose society is interested in seeing them on television or in movies or buying things with monsters on them like t-shirts and lunch boxes? How are we like monsters and how are we different? What do you think sparks peoples' imagination when they create monsters? How do we know that monsters are a part of our imagination or creativity and not in deed real?

### **Assessment Questions:**

Did students view and discuss selected art and design containing monsters from visual culture?

Did students name the subject and theme? Did students theorize and suggest how culture and

environment provide inspiration for creating the artworks? Did students recognize media and technique?

**Assessment Instrument:**

Students will complete the Tic-Tac-Know presented below. Each student will get a 4 x 6" index card and pencil and choose only three vocabulary terms in a row from the lesson to write a descriptive paragraph that explains what they learned.

|            | <b>TIC-TAC-KNOW</b> |            |
|------------|---------------------|------------|
| Aesthetics | Imagination         | Philosophy |
| Media      | Monsters            | Theme      |
| Taste      | Cultures            | Value      |

## SECOND GRADE MONSTER UNIT

Lesson 2 Day 2    Monster Criticism    Second Grade    Designer of Lesson Jessica Nicula

### **Standards:**

#### **VA2MC.2**

Formulates personal responses

- a. Produces multiple interpretations for an object or image.

#### **VA2MC.3**

Selects and uses subject matter, symbols, and ideas to communicate meaning.

- a. Discusses uses of symbols and cultural icons in artwork.
- b. Mentally envisions what cannot be directly observed (e.g., depicting imaginary worlds, fantastic machines, unusual creatures).

**Lesson Theme:** Using monsters from popular culture to make art criticism, interpretation, imagination, and empathy easily accessible for young students.

### **Objectives:**

Students will formulate personal responses and multiple interpretations for a monster of their choosing. (Synthesis) Students will mentally envision and create the imaginary world of the monster through writing. (Synthesis)

**Resources:**

<http://www.princetonol.com/groups/iad/lessons/elem/criticism.htm>

<http://www.princetonol.com/groups/iad/lessons/elem/critassess.htm>

“How to Talk to Children About Art” by FranCoise Barbe-Gal

“Key Concepts: A Guide to Aesthetics, Criticism And the Arts in Education by Trevor Pateman

**Introduction/Motivation:**

Show the class and explore video clips on [www.monstersvsaliens.com](http://www.monstersvsaliens.com) Then, review the vocabulary from the previous lesson with focus on the term aesthetics. Aesthetics is a branch of (philosophy) study that examines emotional reactions and values related to art, culture, and nature. Teach them the new “A” art word that is a friend of aesthetics, art criticism.

**Content Paper:**

*Find Content Paper in Second Grade Monster Unit above in Lesson 1.*

**Instructor’s Procedures:**

(For behavior management reasons students would sit in their spots on dots on our art room rug in front of the interactive whiteboard). After the introduction or motivation, present the section of the slideshow on the interactive whiteboard about the monster critique; explain and discuss with students the ins and outs of critiquing a monster. Ask relative open ended questions to guide students understandings and use misconceptions to guide further learning. Demonstrate completion of an example. Differentiate by allowing students, if they choose, to work in pairs.

Have students begin this portion of the activity with about ten minutes into class with thirty or more remaining.

**Materials and Materials Management:**

Projector, Interactive Whiteboard, Internet, Monster Powerpoint, Rug, Paper, Pencils, Crayons

**Student Procedures:**

1. Please participate in class discussion and activity by sitting quietly on your dot.
2. Please raise your hand if you have a comment or question and be respectful of others when they are speaking.
3. Quietly complete the monster critique as shown in the demonstration individually or in pairs using the Feldman Four Part Model.

**Closure/Review:**

How did you come up with ideas for your monsters life and powers? Why might your description of the same monster differ from another students? How did you make judgements about your monster? Where did those ideas come from? What kinds of things helped you decide what your monster was like and why?

**Assessment Questions:**

Did students formulate personal responses and multiple interpretations for a monster of their choosing? Did students mentally envision and create the imaginary world of the monster through their writing?

**Assessment Instrument:**

| <b>Monster Critique: Feldman Four Part Model Grading Rubric</b> |  |   |  |
|---|--|---|--|
|   | 15 pts earned  | 20 pts earned   | 25 pts earned  |
| Description   | Described 0 to 2 features  | Described 3 to 4 features                                     | Described 5 features or more                                       |
| Interpretation  | Gave 0 to 2 ideas for its life, powers, and personality                | Gave 3 or more ideas for its life, powers, and personality    | Gave 5 or more ideas for its life, powers, and personality         |
| Judgment  | Gave 0 to 2 thoughts, judged named, gave reasons, or changes           | Gave 2 to 3 thoughts, judged, named, gave reasons, or changes | Gave 4 thoughts: judged, named, gave reasons and changes           |
| Drawing   | Did not draw or drawing shows very little effort or is extremely messy | Drawing shows some effort, might be messy, or incomplete      | Drawing shows great effort, craftsmanship, and attention to detail |

### **THIRD GRADE MONSTER UNIT**

Lsn 1 Days 1 & 2      2-D Monster Production      Third Grade      Designer: Jessica Nicula

#### **Standards:**

##### **VA3PR.2**

Understands and applies media, techniques, and processes of two-dimensional art processes (drawing, painting, printmaking, mixed-media) using tools and materials in a safe and appropriate manner to develop skills.

- a. Creates drawings with a variety of media (e.g., pencils, crayons, pastels).
- f. Creates paintings with a variety of media (e.g., tempera, watercolor).

##### **VA3PR.1**

Creates artworks based on personal experience and selected themes.

- a. Creates artwork to express individual ideas, thoughts, and feelings from memory, imagination, and observation.

**Lesson Theme:** Choice-based, 2-D art production with inspiration from monsters and imagination

#### **Objectives:**

Students will create a drawing or other two-dimensional artwork of a unique creature from their imagination with a variety of their choice of media such as pencils, crayons, pastels, collage etc. (Synthesis)



Sample:



Figure 10. "*Clydeclops*" by Jessica Nicula, 2011, Pastel on paper, 9" by 11" Teacher's sample

**Resources:**

*Where the Wild Things Are* by Maurice Sendak

<http://www.princetonol.com/groups/iad/lessons/elem/Patti-monster.htm>

<http://www.crayola.com/lesson-plans/>

[search.cfm?dropdown1=0&dropdown2=0&dropdown3=90&dropdown4=0](http://www.crayola.com/lesson-plans/search.cfm?dropdown1=0&dropdown2=0&dropdown3=90&dropdown4=0)

**Introduction/Motivation: (DAYS ONE AND TWO)**

Show the class and explore video clips on [www.dailymonster.com](http://www.dailymonster.com). Then, review the vocabulary from the previous lesson with focus on the term aesthetics. Aesthetics is a branch of (philosophy) study that examines emotional reactions and values related to art, culture, and nature. Review the other “A” art word that is a friend of aesthetics, art criticism, and its components.

## Content Paper:

### F!N@Lly, make your own unique MONSTER!

Be sure to use your imagination, outline, draw large,  
include monster parts with textures, and colors.



### Now, turn your monster into a friend!

THREE DIMENSIONAL  
MONSTER DOLLS  
AND SCULPTURES



### Method I

Modeling Clay Sculpture



### Method II

Mixed Media Sculpture:  
Collage, Paint, Marker,  
Wood, Plastic, Wire, etc.



### Method III

Fiber Arts: Sewing,  
Stitching, Felt, Fabric, Yarn,  
Buttons, Beads, etc.



Figure 11. “*Third Grade Monster Unit*” by Jessica Nicula, 2011, Depiction of slideshow presentation for interactive whiteboard technology

**Instructor's Procedures:**

DAY ONE: (For behavior management reasons students will sit in their spots on dots on our art room rug in front of the interactive whiteboard) After the introduction or motivation, present the section of the slideshow on the interactive whiteboard about 2-D monster creation; explain and discuss expectations with students. Remind students of what excited them in previous examples during the introduction or motivation. Demonstrate completion of a unique sample for the class. Communicate expectations for the work: effort, excellence, neatness, creativity, and imagination. Provide accommodations for students: adaptations-allow students with special needs to trace monster parts using a light table, access to slant boards, and easy grip pencils, extensions - allow students that finish early to add textures by rubbing or collaging patterns on parts of their monster creature. Facilitate student progress. Begin cleaning up with ten minutes until the end of class. Ask students closure and review questions.

DAY TWO: (For behavior management reasons students will sit in their spots on dots on our art room rug in front of the interactive whiteboard). Repeat the introduction or motivation, you are able to do this because [www.dailymonster.com](http://www.dailymonster.com) changes daily. Remind students of expectations. Share successes and obstacles. Highlight the sample again for the class. Remind them about expectations for the work: effort, excellence, neatness, creativity, and imagination. Provide accommodations for students: adaptations-allow students with special needs to trace monster parts using a light table, access to slant boards, and easy grip pencils, extensions - allow students that finish early to add textures by rubbing or collaging patterns on parts of their monster creature. Facilitate student progress. Begin cleaning up with ten minutes until the end of class. Ask students closure and review questions again.

**Materials and Materials Management:**

Projector, Interactive Whiteboard, Internet, Monster Powerpoint, Rug, Light Table, All Two-Dimensional Studio Materials (pencils, colored pencils, crayons, pastels, erasers, charcoal, paints, brushes, water buckets, collage materials- specialty papers, glue, scissors, magazines, etc.)

My classroom is set up into studios. Students will know expectations before this lesson. They will know where each studio is located, where materials are, and how to clean up.

**Student Procedures: (DAYS ONE AND TWO)**

1. Please participate in class discussion and activity by sitting quietly on your dot.
2. Please raise your hand if you have a comment or question and be respectful of others when they are speaking.
3. As shown in the demonstration, quietly create a drawing or other two-dimensional artwork of a unique creature from your imagination with a variety of your choice of media such as pencils, crayons, pastels, collage, etc.

**Closure/Review:**

What challenges did you face in creating your monster? How could you show texture when creating your monster? How could you show scale or size when creating your monster? For what reason did you choose certain media or materials?

**Assessment Questions:**

Did students create a drawing or two-dimensional artwork of a unique creature from their imagination with a variety of their choice of media such as pencils, crayons, pastels, etc?

## **THIRD GRADE MONSTER UNIT**

Lesson 2 Days 3 &4    3D Monster Production    Third Grade    Designer: Jessica Nicula

### **Standards:**

#### **VA2PR.2**

Understands and applies media, techniques, and processes of two-dimensional art processes (drawing, painting, printmaking, mixed-media) using tools and materials in a safe and appropriate manner to develop skills.

g. Develops craft techniques (e.g., collage, stitchery, weaving).

#### **VA2PR.3**

Understands and applies media, techniques, and processes of three-dimensional works of art (ceramics, sculpture, crafts, and mixed-media) using tools and materials in a safe and appropriate manner to develop skills.

b. Creates sculpture using a variety of materials and methods (e.g., papier-mache, paper sculpture, assemblage, found objects).

#### **VA2PR.1**

Creates artworks based on personal experience and selected themes.

a. Creates artwork to express individual ideas, thoughts, and feelings from memory, imagination, and observation.

c. Combines materials in new and inventive ways to make a finished work of art.

**Lesson Theme:** Choice-based 3-D art production with inspiration from monsters and imagination

**Objectives:**

Students will understand and apply three-dimensional media techniques and processes by using a variety of methods (individually or in pairs), to design and construct a monster or creature from their imaginations with the media of their choice: plasticine clay, found sculpture materials, or fiber arts (Synthesis).

**Sample:**



Figure 12. "*Thunder Dan*" (front view) a collaboration by Jessica Nicula, Stephanie Olson, and Christian Nicula, 2011, 16" by 5" by 12" Mixed media fiber arts, Teacher's sample





Figure 13. "*Thunder Dan*" (back) a collaboration by Jessica Nicula, Stephanie Olson, and Christian Nicula, 2011, 16" by 5" by 12" Mixed media fiber arts, Teacher's sample



Figure 14. *"Toothy Ruthie"* (front) a collaboration by Jessica Nicula, Stephanie Olson, and Christian Nicula, 2011, Plasticine, 3" by 3" by 2.5" Teacher's sample



Figure 15. "*Toothy Ruthie*" (front) a collaboration by Jessica Nicula, Stephanie Olson, and Christian Nicula, 2011, Plasticine, 3" by 3" by 2.5" Teacher's sample



**Resources:**

*Papertoy Monsters: Make Your Very Own Amazing Papertoys!* by Brian Castleforte

*Papier-Mache Monsters: Turn Trinkets and Trash into Magnificent Monstrosities* by Dan Reeder

**Introduction/Motivation:**

Show the class and explore video clips on [www.monstersvsaliens.com](http://www.monstersvsaliens.com) Then, review the vocabulary from the previous lesson with focus on the term aesthetics. Aesthetics is a branch of (philosophy) study that examines emotional reactions and values related to art, culture, and nature. Review the new “A” art word that is a friend of aesthetics, art criticism and its components.

**Content Paper:**

Please see above Depiction of Powerpoint Slides

**Instructor’s Procedures:**

DAY THREE: (For behavior management reasons students will sit in their spots on dots on our art room rug in front of the interactive whiteboard) After the introduction or motivation, present the section of the slideshow on the interactive whiteboard about the 3-D monster production; explain and discuss with students the relationship between the 2-D work and 3-D work -- that 3-D artists often create 2-D sketches, drawings, and plans for their work. Ask relative open ended questions to guide students understandings and use misconceptions to guide further learning. Demonstrate completion of a sample. Communicate expectations for the products: durability, attention to detail, time management, effort, and neatness. Help differentiate by allowing students to choose the materials they are most interested in and comfortable with. If they choose,

allow them to work in pairs. Have students begin this portion of the activity with about ten minutes into the class. Facilitate student progress.

DAY FOUR: (For behavior management reasons students will sit in their spots on dots on our art room rug in front of the interactive whiteboard) Highlight the sample, and remind the class about expectations for their products: durability, attention to detail, time management, effort, and neatness. Ask for questions and concerns. Share successes and obstacles. Help differentiate by allowing students to choose the materials they are most interested in and comfortable with. If they choose, allow them to work in pairs. Have students begin this portion of the activity with about five minutes into the class. Facilitate student progress. Clean up, and then close and review with ten minutes until the end of class.

### **Materials and Materials Management:**

Projector, Interactive Whiteboard, Internet, Monster Powerpoint, Rug, All three dimensional studio materials (found objects-toilet paper rolls, tape, glue, wood pieces, wire, pipe cleaners, plastic pieces, lids, and tops, popsicles sticks, toothpicks, etc., fiber arts-fabric, pipe cleaners, ribbons, yarns, buttons, beads, embroidery floss, etc., plasticine clay-various colors of clay, clay working tools, plastic utensils, cookie cutters, etc.

My classroom is set up into studios. Students will know expectations before this lesson. They will know where each studio is located, where materials are, and how to clean up.

### **Student Procedures:**

1. Please participate in class discussion and activity by sitting quietly on your dot.

2. Please raise your hand if you have a comment or question and be respectful of others when they are speaking.

3. Individually or in pairs, apply with understanding three-dimensional media, techniques, and processes using a variety of methods to design and create a monster or creature from your imagination (Synthesis)

**Closure/Review:**

What challenges did you face in creating your monster? How could you show texture in creating your monster? What challenges did you face in creating your monster to be durable or last? For what reason did you choose certain media or materials? What media, processes, or techniques do you still need help with understanding?

**Assessment Questions:**

Did students individually or in pairs, apply with understanding three-dimensional media, techniques, and processes using a variety of methods to design and create a monster or creature from their imagination?

**Assessment Instrument:**

| <b>Monster Production Grading Rubric</b> |  |  |  |
|--|--|--|--|
|  | 15 pts earned  | 20 pts earned  | 25 pts earned  |
| 2-D Creativity and Imagination           | Monster overtly appears to be a replication, not unique            | Some features of monster may be generic, resembling another  | Work shows ingenuity and refreshingly unique elements                |
| 2-D Quality and Craftsmanship            | Below average work. Little effort. Poor quality and craftsmanship. | Good work. Somewhat neat, May be slightly messy.             | Great attention to detail. Excellent, neat, and clean work.          |
| 3-D Time Management and Effort           | Mostly off task, not using time wisely. Little effort.             | Good effort. Mostly on task, using time wisely.              | Excellent effort. Great time management.                             |
| 3-D Quality and Craftsmanship            | Below average work. Little effort. Not constructed to last.        | Good work. Somewhat built to last. May be slightly unstable. | Great attention to detail. Excellent, sturdy neat, and durable work. |

**THIRD GRADE MONSTER UNIT**

Lesson 3 Day 5      Collaborative Critique      Third Grade      Designer: Jessica Nicula

**Standards:**

**VA2AR.1** Discusses his or her artwork and the artwork of others.

- a. Demonstrates a respect for art forms and art objects.
- b. Identifies the difference between photographs, paintings, drawings, and sculptures.
- c. Uses art terminology with emphasis on the elements of art: line, shape, form, color, space, and texture.
- d. Differentiates horizontal, vertical, and diagonal lines.
- e. Uses art terminology with emphasis on the principles of design: contrast, rhythm/movement, and pattern/repetition.
- f. Recognizes that lines can show rhythm and movement.
- g. Demonstrates that shape or form can have balance, (e.g., symmetrical, asymmetrical).
- h. Identifies geometric and non-geometric shapes and forms in artwork.
- i. Describes colors as warm or cool.
- j. Identifies value as the lightness or darkness of a color.
- k. Distinguishes between 2-D shapes and 3-D forms.
- l. Explains how space is either positive or negative.



- m. Identifies symmetrical (formal) and radial balance in artwork and in nature.
- n. Distinguishes between the textures of materials, such as fabrics, yarn, paper, clay, and found objects.
- o. Recognizes that texture can be visual and or tactile.
- p. Describes how repeated colors, lines, shapes, forms, or textures can make a pattern in an artwork.

**VA2AR.2** Uses a variety of approaches to understand and critique works of art.

- a. Describes his or her artwork, revealing subject, story, and intention.
- b. Discusses and compares his or her definition of art with that of others.
- c. Compares and contrasts artworks based on subject, theme, and or elements.
- d. Expresses preference for one of two or three artworks.

**Lesson Theme:** An Empathetic Critique (*Adapted Soft Smart Technique*).

**Objectives:** Students will use a variety of approaches to understand and critique works of art.

(Analysis & Evaluation)

**Resources:**

<http://www.bartelart.com/arted/critique08.html>

**Introduction/Motivation:**

Figure 16. “*Monkey Lisa*” Unknown artist and date, Digital media

**Introduction/Motivation** (continued): Show students the image of the Mona Lisa parody on the slideshow. Use this image in a fun and entertaining way to demonstrate expectations for their co-critiques.

**Content Paper:** Please see Powerpoint Slide Images

**Instructor's Procedures:** After introduction or motivation, use your the split screen option in the Smartboard software to show this slide and the activity template simultaneously. Direct students towards an empathetic critique. See information below:

*“Empathetic critique is the search to discover what has happened in the work. Since much of what happens in any creative endeavor is intuitive, capricious, and unintended; we naturally expect the unexpected and unintended to make significant contributions and make new insights possible. The empathetic critique finds ways to allow the creator of the work to discover what has been noticed by others. The maker gets credit for the potential value of their own unintended outcomes (mistakes). The maker is made to feel empowered by self-awareness. The artist constructs new knowledge based on discoveries brought to light based on considerate questioning. The art studio class becomes a community of learning.”*

Excerpt from Empathetic Critique: Using empathetic critique to foster the culture of collaborative discovery in studio art classes by Marvin Bartel, 2011

Demonstrate completion of an empathetic critique (a co-critique) using motivation above.

**Materials and Materials Management:**

Projector, Interactive Whiteboard, Internet, Powerpoint Slideshow, Pencils, Artwork, and  
Activity Templates

**Student Procedures:**

# Co-Critique

Your Name \_\_\_\_\_ Class Code \_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_

**Please read each direction very carefully before answering. If you do not know the definition of a word, you may use your textbook to look it up in the index in the back of the book.**

About Your Partners Artwork:

Your Partner's Name \_\_\_\_\_

1. Circle the best answer: This is a    photograph    painting    drawing    sculpture.

CIRCLE each specific element present in the artwork & describe HOW it is used:

2.Line: Horizontal, Vertical, Diagonal \_\_\_\_\_

3.Shape: Geometric, Organic \_\_\_\_\_

4.Form: Symmetrical, Asymmetrical \_\_\_\_\_

5.Color: Warm, Cool \_\_\_\_\_

6.Space: Positive, Negative \_\_\_\_\_

7.Texture: Visual, Tactile \_\_\_\_\_

Tell me how the artist used design principles:

8.Contrast \_\_\_\_\_

9.Rhythm or Movement \_\_\_\_\_

10.Pattern or Repetition \_\_\_\_\_

11. What is the subject or story of this artwork? \_\_\_\_\_

12. What is YOUR definition of art? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

13. Compare: How is your art like your partners? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

14. Contrast: How is it different? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

15. Do you prefer your artwork or your partners? Why or why not? (NO dissing, but be honest!) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

When you finish you may draw anything you would like from sight or direct observation. Draw what you are looking at below or on the back of each sheet. You will not get additional paper so use your time and paper wisely and don't forget to add details!

**Closure/Review:** With ten to fifteen minutes left in class, review student responses. Discuss and use students' misconceptions to guide knowledge. Paper clip the partners' artworks and critiques together, and submit them to teacher.

**Assessment Questions:** How did looking at someone else's artwork give you new ideas or understanding about your own work? How does it make you feel when you know someone is closely observing your work? How can we talk about someone else's work without hurting their feelings? Why is it important to closely observe all the details of an artwork? Why is it important to talk about and share our work with others?

**Assessment Instrument:** In this case, the student activity serves as the assessment.

## **CHAPTER FOUR REFLECTION**

### **Reflections on Creative and Critical Processes as a Curriculum Developer**

The work of curriculum development is most definitely a creative process. It is as conceptual and critical of a process as creating a work of art. A multitude of decisions have to be made when creating a single lesson and even more when creating a comprehensive unit.

Through out the development of this curriculum, I began to understand patterns in my own meta-cognitive processes. I noticed I benefit from long periods of time for development. Day after day I am able to make more connections, revisions, and extensions of ideas not initially planned. I found that I draw inspiration any where and any time. I quite literally do not ever quit thinking about a lesson. It is always in the back of my mind. Something might trigger a connection, and there I am again thinking about how I can improve the lesson or illustrate something more effectively for students.

I realize that my strongest educational value is that education is a direct path to success. I believe that every student has the ability to learn and learning can help them do anything they would like to do. Therefore, education is invaluable. It is something that can never be taken away or lost. It becomes a part of your existence as an improved person.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### Implications

Again, this research is not intended to be generalized, but rather to further insights about my own teaching of male learners. Some teachers may be able to draw comparisons to teaching in their own setting. I believe that teaching boys effectively in the art classroom is also beneficial for female students. With engaged and active boys, girls will experience less interruptions in class and a greater range of learning experiences to which they are adaptive. The whole of the learning community will benefit from a positive, collaborative, student centered learning environment.

Questions guiding the research included: How do I as a mother of a son and a teacher of boys, feel about developing a curriculum aimed at their specific needs? What, if any, differences do I presume in male students' engagement or motivation, and how might that affect my disposition when working with them? If I deliberately attempt to design curriculum specific to boys' needs, how would I find it is easier as a teacher to engage and motivate male learners?

As a mother of a son and a teacher of boys, after this research I feel much more certain that curriculum development should be aimed specifically at students' varying individual needs. In my county there is expectation for curriculum to be designed with the end in mind, the end being the standard or what is to be learned. Starting with the intended learning outcome during lesson design is helpful, but more so if you also focus on how your students learn. This research helped me remember the important differences in how students learn, whether they are gender



differences, multiple intelligences, or special needs. We as educators should help students use their strengths and talents to meet learning goals.

I expect this process will help me further engage and help motivate male students' in art. This research introduced me to new strategies and ideas, especially the idea of transitive elements in learning. My disposition as a teacher of boys will be more patient and understanding. I hope to spend less time policing them when they misbehave and more time focusing on their needs to keep them on task, motivated, and engaged.

### **Recommendations**

There is an ample amount of research both educational and scientific on the male brain and how boys learn differently than girls. If any of this sparked your interest, I recommend looking into education for male learners, student centered education, and choice based art education. Universal concepts like community, conflict, ecology or environmental concerns, family, cultural influences, gender, globalization, heroes, identity, nature, place, time, popular culture relationships, stereotypes, symbolism, power, and visual culture open up the appeal for boys in the art classroom. It is easy to forget this when standards focus on the elements of art and principles of design. Luckily in my area, we have improved standards with a framework geared towards a more critical approach to art education. It is also important to remember the importance of the delivery of the content in order to keep things fresh and exciting. Try to incorporate transitive elements, surprises, kinesthetic learning, friendly competition, collaboration, and student centered projects. Remember like Picasso's famous quote, children are born artists. It is keeping them that way that is the challenge.

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