

TEACHER'S NAME: Marcine Linder

SCHOOL:

GRADE: 9

DATES:

TIME: four 50-minute periods

TITLE OF LESSON: Using line and shape to express and communicate character

RELATIONSHIP TO THE UNIT: The “bones” of visual communication (line and shape): This lesson introduces the art elements of art and shape and how they are used in popular culture media to visually identify and differentiate good and evil characters. Students create their own original cartoon characters using these concepts and write a brief paragraph describing each character.

RELATIONSHIP TO LIFE

Students at this age are immersed in all facets of popular culture including cartoons and animated images. This activity will make connections between the images they see on television, the internet, film, etc. and how the images have been designed to elicit specific emotional/psychological effects on the viewer. Ideally it will lead them to question and wonder why certain characters were designed they way they are.

This lesson is designed to help students who struggle with writing to create their own visual that they can use to write about character. At this age, many students are intimidated by drawing because they feel pressure to draw realistically and are very self-critical. This exercise makes drawing more accessible by requiring students to use only simple shapes and lines to create imaginative creatures whose manifestation is open-ended. By using their skills in visual perception, students will be able express themselves and improve their ability to share their thoughts and emotions using written text, enhancing their ability to communicate and connect with others.

I. PROBLEM/ACTIVITY

Strategically the expressive qualities of using line and shape only (no value or color) students will create their own original cartoon characters: one good and one evil.

II. GOALS (quoted from the Ontario Curriculum documents for grade nine art)

Students will

Know:

- how to apply the elements and principles of design to their own art,
- how to use critical analysis to examine expression in student and professional artworks;

Understand:

- understand the elements and principles of design as expressive components in their personal and creative works (Ontario grade nine

Be able to:

- apply the elements and principles of design as expressive components in their personal creative works.
- demonstrate an understanding of how the aptitudes and experience required for art careers are applicable in other fields.
- demonstrate the ability to create representational, abstract, and non-objective artworks that convey ideas or concepts (e.g., warmth, conflict).

III. OBJECTIVES

- Understand the function of line and shape as both a design and expressive element in art
- Use the most basic building blocks of art: line and shape to express a character's personality original cartoon characters
- Express themselves visually (their interests, aesthetic taste, humor, etc.) through their cartoon character
- Express their ideas in writing based on the drawings they created

IV. INSTRUCTIONAL CONCEPTS

Quotes:

- "When 'David' was asked to write a description of himself, he replied 'Drawing is the way I talk'" (Lokerson & Joynes, p. 95)
- "Like print-based literacy, as students learn to read art media and create meaning using its techniques and tools, they become enculturated in the symbol systems operating within art". (Albers, 1997, p. 342).
- "Cross-cultural studies by anthropologists, for example, highlight the diversity of learning literacies (Handerhan, 1993, p. 246)
- "When abstract ideas are expressed visually, the strategies we use to think abstractly become more understandable" (Barton, Sawyer, & Swanson, 2007, p. 127)

Formal Concepts:

- Line can be used to add expressive as well as decorative details
- Shape can be used to form the contours of a cartoon character's body and face as well as express his/her personality

Artistic Behaviors:

- Introducing children to art develops their visual awareness and provides a springboard for personal image-making.
- Previsualization helps students develop imagination and conceptual thinking
- Experimentation helps children to develop creative problem solving skills, divergent thinking skills, self expression, and self reflection leading to self evaluation

V. RESOURCES AND MATERIALS

Resources

- Power Puff Girls character images: Powerpuff Girls, the Professor, Mojo Jojo, Him
- Star Wars Character images: R2D2, C3P0, Darth Vader
- *Enchanted* poster (2007 Walt Disney Film)

Materials

- laptop or desktop computer and LCD projector (ideal) OR overhead projector and transparencies with Power Puff Girls character images, Star Wars character images, and 2007 Walt Disney *Enchanted* poster photocopied onto them
- hand-outs with photocopies of all the characters and the movie poster
- glue sticks (to glue the hand-outs into their sketchbooks)
- sketchbooks (students are responsible for bringing these to class), have loose sheets of plain white 8.5"x11"paper on hand for those who forget
- pencils (students are responsible for bringing these to class), have extras on hand for those who may forget
- fine tip markers (class set)

VI. MOTIVATION

Soft, comforting music is playing when the students enter the room. They are asked to sit down quietly and reflect on their day. How are they feeling? Happy? Anxious? Excited? Bored? etc. As they are reflecting and the music is playing they are asked to draw a picture (can be an abstract design or a representational image) that represents how they are feeling. At the bottom of the drawing, they are to write a few words describing the emotion they have just represented in their drawing.

VII. QUESTIONS

Topic Questions

Line is the basic building block and starting point of drawing What are the different types of lines? (*straight, curved, zigzag, bold, fine, dotted, etc.*)

Do different types of lines (straight vs. curved vs. zigzag/diagonal) communicate different emotions?

At what point does a line become a shape? (e.g. how thick does it have to be? Do lines only become shapes when they enclose them as a contour?)

Association Questions

Are there lines that exist in nature? What other objects in the room create lines?

Are there shapes that exist in nature? What other objects in the room create shapes?

Can you think of examples of lines in nature that are scary? innocent?
boring? strong? other?

Can you think of examples of shapes in nature that are scary? innocent?
boring? strong? other

Visualization Questions

(LCD projector images are shown, hand-outs distributed and one glue stick for each table so students can glue hand-outs into their sketchbooks)

Cartoonists and character designers use line and shape as the basic building blocks of their drawings. (Show Powerpuff Girls, Star Wars, and Disney artworks on the screen and direct the students to the images on their hand-outs as well).

Which characters in these images are good? How do you know? (describe the lines and shapes they are made up of).

Which characters in these images are evil? How do you know? (describe the lines and shapes they are made up of).

Why do you think circles and curved lines seem to denote innocent/good characters and diagonal/zigzag/pointed lines and shapes seem to denote evil characters?

Transition

Now that we have seen some common examples, Look at the drawing you just created to reflect your mood. Do the lines and shapes in it correspond to what we have discovered in the cartoon/popular culture images we have just examined?

VIII. PROCEDURES

Day 1

Demonstration (5 minutes)

Teacher demonstrates how a good character and an evil character can be created using basic shapes (circles, squares, triangles and filled in with different kinds of line). Students are told they will have to come up with names for their characters and write short paragraphs describing each of them at the end of the lesson. They are encouraged to start thinking about the answers to these questions as they draw.

Accommodations

A frame by frame visual representation of each step the instructions (with large, bold numbers beside each step) is posted at the front of the room. Short, succinct written instructions are below each step. Students will be encouraged to follow the demonstration by copying what the teacher has

done (or something similar) into their notebooks to get a feel of what happens in each step.

Students with accommodations will also be given a checklist that has smaller copy of each of the illustrated steps and descriptions (with a checkbox next to each step). They are to glue this into their sketchbooks. Students will be asked to check off each step as they complete it, and write down the date and time it was completed so they can keep track of their progress.

A listening station with an audio file stored on an MP3 player with headphones of the spoken directions will also be available for audio-based learners to listen to as they look at the illustrated, succinct, numbered instructions if they get confused.

Students are reminded that they can each earn up to three tokens (toward the weekly prizes for good behavior, participation, and co-operation) by doing the following each day:

1. Being on-time and prepared with all necessary materials
2. Staying on task and not distracting others from working
3. Being co-operative

Bonus tokens may be awarded for

- Showing a positive leadership role in class by helping others who may be struggling but who the teacher has not yet had a chance to help

Work Period

Students will brainstorm three ideas for a good character and three ideas for an evil character and draw them as thumbnail sketches in their notebooks. Teacher circulates around the classroom to give individual support and feedback on their work.

Closure (3-5 minutes)

Students are called up/volunteer to share their experiences creating their characters and their rough sketches with the class

Day 2

Instructions (3-5 minutes)

The teacher will explain to students that today they will be choosing their best thumbnail sketches of their good and evil characters and developing them into polished line and shape based drawings (no value or color yet... this will follow in subsequent lessons in this unit)

Work Period (Days 2-3)

Students work until five minutes before the end of the class period. When they have completed their pencil drawings, students go over them with

black fine-tip markers, and mount and display their completed drawings and written descriptions.

Teacher circulates to give feedback and support to the students

Closure (10-15 minutes)

Students write short paragraphs describing the characters they have created: What are their names? Which one is good? Which one is evil? What kinds of things do they like? Hate? What are each of their goals? Dreams? etc.

IX. EVALUATION

To be completed during Day 4. The class is will engage in a “gallery walk” around the room to examine each other’s work. Students will comment on the work of their peers and discuss the relationships between the drawings and the descriptions of the characters in the drawings. Following the gallery walk, each student will write a 1 – 2 paragraph reflection/journal entry about the experience of creating these drawings and looking at the drawings of their peers.

Students are evaluated on how well they were able create visuals and written descriptions that communicated character. They will also be evaluated on the overall use of line and shape to create an aesthetically strong drawing.

Students who used checklists to mark their progress will also receive reward tokens for completing them and turning them in.

X. REFERENCES

Articles

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Handerman, E. C. (1993). Literacy, aesthetic education, and problem solving. *Theory into Practice*, Volume 32, Number 4, 244-251.

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Reilly, M.A. (2008). Finding the rights words: art conversations and poetry. *Language Arts* Vol. 86 No. 2. pp 99-107

Image Sources

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Powerpuff girls: the Professor:

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Powerpuff girls: Mojo Jojo:

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Powerpuff girls: Him: <http://www.vectorjunky.com/gallery/c/creep012-Powerpuff-Girls.jpg>

Star Wars: C3PO:

http://www.starwars.com/community/event/museum/img/20070115_1_bg.jpg

Star Wars: Darth Vader:

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Star Wars: R2D2: [http://www.product-reviews.net/wp-](http://www.product-reviews.net/wp-content/userimages/2007/06/nikkos-r2-d2-projector-1.jpg)

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Walt Disney: Enchanted Poster:

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