

Arts Assessment For Learning

VISUAL ARTS — 4TH GRADE

REFLECTION: SELF PORTRAITS

Without judgment, describe what you did:

- Established baseline self-portraits. Students determined which feature of the portrait they most wanted to improve upon
- Presented “half portraits” representing a variety of styles. Students self selected a reproduction and drew the other half in the same style (Increase observation of variety of lines, creation of texture, recognition of what is important in a portrait)
- Presented students with reproductions of facial features to copy and improve their targeted feature
- Presented collagraph plate examples for students to investigate (worksheet)
- Modeled creating a collagraph plate of the targeted feature
- Created PowerPoint “how to” of entire printing process for access on smart board
- Developed a printing routine to follow for independence in printing
- Formed groups to print collaboratively to create full portrait prints. Expression and viewpoint could be altered depending upon the placement of the plates for printing
- Reviewed viewpoint and expression and how both affect the shape of the face
- Modeled contour drawing self portrait (parts to whole and finding spatial relationships between features)
- Modeled drawing, cutting, and arranging printed portrait on a new paper
- Introduced first exit slip questions
- Modeled collage techniques
- Provided variety of papers to create individual collages
- Allowed four classes for completion of collage. Second exit slip questions
- Video interview comparisons of drawn portraits (assessment “portraits on demand”)
- Prepare for year-end painting unit and last drawn self-portrait assessment

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What went well?

- Using India ink went very well in making them rather fearless and resourceful (can't be erased and is very permanent) Scaffolding of ink techniques worked very well
- Being persistent with the criteria was beneficial not only to the outcomes, but to language, habits, and growing expectations
- Painting began much stronger having started with the "unsuccessful" ink
- Once I got used to video interview, the process became more manageable
- The realization that many did not quite transfer the observational work from the masters to their own portraits took me back at first, but then realized one of the biggest missteps they were making was in the shape of the head itself.
- Students were engaged with the materials and seemed comfortable with moving through the mediums exploring the portrait. They are accumulating many portraits with different expressions and viewpoints and can speak about them.

What was so-so?

- Time is such a factor. The other classes got a bit more painting under their belts before starting the culminating piece. I feel like I had too many stops. It's always hard for me to discern a good point where a quick peer assessment or turn and talk will impact the most people positively
- Struggles with technology seem to be a way of life
- Venn diagram responses a bit rushed and not as well understood by students
- Although identifying a goal was a good thing, concentrated practice on just that one feature was shortchanged and made obvious when recently revisited

What was the most challenging part of trying this?

- Maintaining my focus and not straying from the medium or techniques when I was tempted to do so was definitely high on the list. If I wanted to stay true to my action plan, I couldn't really start introducing alternative drawing techniques or exercises because those drawings did not fall into the master drawings and paintings I wanted students learning from. With that, re-evaluating my calendar goals to reach "the end" before it was in fact the end, was a bit overwhelming. I really would have liked for them to have a solid painting in before moving to the culminating project. A little over half the year was spent on this alone (excluding schedule interruptions...17 weeks total with one fire drill). I thought it would flip

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from master work to self-portrait much quicker, but looking at the work, I feel the time needed to be spent observing and capturing things that do not move (the reproductions).

What was the impact of this strategy on student learning? (specific examples)

- Whole page compositions are now the norm
- Persistence with imagery in the face of “mistakes”. Images worked and reworked. Attempts were not thrown out
- Stamina for many increased where they were actively engaged with materials and not just dawdling.
- Breaking out of the typical self-portrait stare
- It was helpful to know which question spoke to whom. It really helped to easily see where they were in the process...what they understood of the process and the vocabulary. The wording of my questions makes sense to me, but may be interpreted differently by some students. In either case, I get information. For example, Ying and Alejandro both chose the question, “What expression did you create in your portrait? How can we tell?” Neither understood the word “expression” based on their answers. We sat and talked about their characters, and then there was an understanding.

What new insights or understandings are forming as a result of this experience? (share with group)

- Working with this action plan has allowed me to see results I was not counting on. The perseverance and stamina development were not a stated objective, but were directly linked to the work
- Students’ use of paint and India ink are commendable
- Paying much more attention to the goal (a big deal in the beginning) needed to be revisited since their journal drawings clearly reflect that. I know exactly what I will do to change that next year!
- Although I thought using Master portraits was a good step in introducing them to art history and artistic styles that they could emulate, finding some children to use in the mix would be an appropriate addition
- Using photos of students showing expression and finding the key lines created by making that expression will be a tool to use next year as well

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- I will create a larger bank of questions as well as a few generic that could apply to any situation. Eventually I would love students to be asking these questions of themselves while they are working. There was also the importance of using a self-portrait drawing as an assessment after each unit to check on the progress made in understanding viewpoint and expression.

How do the results of your action plan inform your inquiry question?

- Working with this action plan has allowed me to see results I was not counting on. The perseverance and stamina development were not a stated objective, but were directly linked to the work.
- The exit slips were used a few times to great success since they were very motivating to answer them. Answers provided did allow me to see where my instruction needed to be more specific, or who I needed to check in with next class. They were easy enough to read at the end of class and plan for the next week. Next, I would like to figure out how to create them with greater ease, and to store them.

Documentation to bring (student work, photos, writing, teacher journal, etc.):

- Before and after shots with peer assessment shows they understood the criteria in giving next steps and compliments, and understood the concept and medium
- Video suggests they see the improvement in their own work
- Most of the written responses are clear and understood