5-1-2010

BE MUCH: Teaching the Principles of Design

Lois J. Chattin

Department of Art, Boise State University
BE MUCH
Teaching the Principles of Design

Lois Chattin
6/1/2010
TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

Need for the Project

Purpose of the Project

Design of the Project

CHAPTER TWO

History of the Development of the Principles of Design

Literature Review

CHAPTER THREE

Conclusion and Recommendations

Bibliography

APPENDIX

BE MUCH: Teaching the Principles of Design: Lesson Plans
CHAPTER ONE

Introduction
Need for the Project
Purpose of the Project
Design of the Project
INTRODUCTION

What constitutes a piece of artwork? Is it the subject matter, the idea, the meaning, or the way in which it is made that realizes its success? Or is it the mere fact that human beings created it with purpose? If two pieces of artwork address the same subject, can one be considered better or more compelling than the other? Is there even such a thing as “good art” as opposed to “poor art”, or is that a debate that can only be answered within a culture or time period? Can one really judge the value of art, or is the process of making art just the instinctive urge of mankind to make expressive marks? These questions have been the topic of debate for centuries, and will continue as a catalyst for discussion among artist for a long time to come. But, as a middle school art teacher, I must address the question asked by my students: “Ms. Chattin, is my art good?”

The middle school student ranges in age from eleven to fourteen. This is a time of dramatic changes in the brain which brings an increased ability of the student to create more mature art. It is the age when the brain transforms from concrete thinking to abstract thinking and the young artist is no longer content to make expressive marks, but to arrange those marks in ways that bring meaning, beauty, and fun. Middle school students want their artwork to “look right” and they are highly critical of their performance. Those students who are more talented in either artistic ability and/or vision are respected and envied by their peers and will excel in their artistic endeavors if motivated to do so. However, public middle school art classes must create an atmosphere success for all students. I believe that the process of successful art making, art which the student can be proud of, should be available to all students, not just to those are talented. The knowledge
and use of the principles of design is a starting point where students can successfully participate in personal art production. But it is only a starting point, not the goal of art education. It is a knowledge base which will help students make design decisions for the purpose of expressing and communicating personal feelings, ideas and concepts.

Part of my job as an art educator is to direct my students in the basic understanding of the fundamentals of art in order that their finished product is not only self expressive, but satisfying to their eye. To accomplish this job I must teach the principles of design: concepts and terms that are often difficult for the middle school student to grasp. This thesis/project will address one of many ways to teach the principles of design, offering practical lesson plans which emphasize each one individually. The goal being: to ground students in knowledge about design so they may effectively communicate their artistic visions.
NEED FOR THE PROJECT

There has been much debate in recent years as to whether or not there is a need to teach the elements and principles of design in beginning level art classes. Is it set in stone that the principles of design should be taught as common knowledge which every art student should know? Or are they just an invention of the last 100 years in the western part of the world? Can there even be a consensus as to what the principles are and what to name them? Do the principles merely represent an outdated way of thinking about art called “formalism”? Or are they still valid today as foundational knowledge for creating successful artwork? I will briefly address this debate and explain why I believe it is still important to include the principles of design in art instruction at the middle school level, even designing a curriculum around those principles.

The pedagogy of foundational art knowledge arose during the era of Modernism (late 19th century to mid 20th century) which promoted the idea of universal truths and absolutes. Art students were trained in the knowledge and use of the elements and principles of design as fundamental to all of art, as well as studying/copying historical artwork (mainly western/European) as models of true aesthetics. Those who studied aesthetics and wrote influential books about what was considered acceptable art searched for criteria and standards that would guide emerging artists. Clive Bell, in his classic book, Art (Bell, 1958), appraised the value of art by whether or not it had what he termed “significant form” (Bell, 1949). In his book, Pure Design, Denman Ross postulated scientific design theories that would “raise contemporary art to a higher standard of technique” (Stankiewicz, 1988, p. 88). Johannes Itten of the German Bauhaus, Moholy-Nagy of the New Bauhaus in Chicago, and American art educator, Arthur Welsey
Dow, were the first to begin categorizing and listing the elements and principles of design as a means to systematize the teaching of design.

Postmodern thought is challenging the premise that there are fundamental principles that cross all cultures and time periods and instead, advocating for a more thoughtful and free expression of art making that addresses concepts important in each cultural context. Kevin Tavin (2007), associate professor at Ohio State University, speaks for many postmodern art educators when he says that “much of what is taught under the rubric of foundations is outdated and blind to contemporary practices.” (p. 15) The study of the fundamentals, such as the principles of design, he claims is laden with cultural judgment and social presuppositions. The discussion of aesthetics becomes an elitist discussion of beauty, reminiscent of the philosophy of Kant, and should be left out of art education. Replacing it would be a “language of representation” (Tavin, 2007, p. 43) which addresses conceptual imagery and culturally relevant issues.

“The inappropriateness of the practice is evident, since many forms of 20th Century artwork such as conceptual art, feminist art, cooperative art, site art and environmental works, performance art, simulations, appropriated art, and art mediated by visual technology—including computer graphics, video art, and animation—do not subsume well to formalist theory, and the specifics of context often make consideration of elements and principles irrelevant.” (Johnson, 1995, p. 58)

Others propose art education to be a discourse about the human subconscious (i.e. desire, pleasure, rage, etc.) (Walker, Daiello, Hathaway, & Rhoades, 2006). Replacing the principles of design, Olivia Gude (2004) has formulated eight “Postmodern
Principles: appropriation; recontextualization; hybridity; gazing; representin’; layering; juxtaposition; and interaction of text and image. Instead of doing art exercises and making pretty little pictures that are aesthetically pleasing (according to who knows who), students are encouraged to think critically about big ideas and the role of the artist as an agent of social change within a subculture. Postmodern art education guides the student into making conceptual inquiries rather than producing designs, conducting investigative research rather than learning merely vocabulary and technical skills. Postmodernists claim that even the new media and art forms such as the computer, video, installation art, and performance art no longer lend themselves to the vocabulary of the principles of design. Describing these forms through the vocabulary of the elements and principles of design is not adequate. More is needed to inspire young artists to produce impassioned works of art.

I wholeheartedly agree that the purpose of art education is not to generate “cookie cutter” artists who create works of art that are acceptable only under the rules of the current or past art standards. Thoughtful inquiry and experimentation in many different media and art forms which leads to new visual and conceptual insights is the goal. However, to neglect the teaching of the principles of design seems to throw the proverbial baby out with the bath water. As with any field of study, new knowledge is built on the knowledge of the past, and knowledge gained in the past is adjusted to the new findings in that field. The progress in art education which modernism gave us (the language of aesthetics) should be sifted through and evaluated, not thrown away entirely. In defense of a grammar of design, Bob Lloyd (1997) writes: “Modernism gave us a language of vision and a grammar of design with an essential life of its own based upon things intelligible in
themselves, that is, guiding principles without which we have very little sense of
direction.” (1997, p.17) He complains that without these guidelines, student artwork can
become “unbridled desires to be novel and noteworthy. . . grotesque assemblage. . . fanciful
and on a low level of abstraction. . . missing the organic nature of form.” (Lloyd, 1997,
p.18) John A. Michael (1998) goes one step further and names it “creative anarchy” (p.6).
This is very strong language to advocate for art instruction in the fundamental principles.
A postmodern approach to creating art has brought a depth of thought to contemporary art,
but without a background in knowing how to organize lines or shapes or colors, the
message may get lost to the viewer. Perhaps a more moderate way of viewing the
instruction of the principles of design is as Mia Johnson (1995) describes it: as “finger
jello: loose, pliable” (p. 58).

One of the purposes for studying art history and art from other cultures is to be
inspired by what has been accomplished in the past so as to make personally and socially
relevant art. The use of the principles of design, whether they are intuitively or
purposefully used, is a common thread in artwork from ancient history on. To understand
why certain principles are visually compelling to the human eye and to learn how to
manipulate the principles for the purpose of visual communication would only enhance the
effectiveness of the students’ artwork, not confine or stifle it.

Paul Duncum (2007), in advocating for keeping the discussion of aesthetics open,
argues that because aesthetics have to do with human sensory experience “it is through
aesthetics that ideology works,” (p. 49) that it has “profound instrumental value in helping
to deliver ideology.” (p. 49). A solid foundation in the knowledge and use of the
fundamental principles of design enable an artist to successfully convey an idea or concept.
Randal Lavender (2003) disagrees with the postmodern suggestion that the principles of visual organization are unimportant. He sees these aesthetic fundamentals as necessary in making a piece of artwork “aesthetically convincing” (p. 43). Bob Lloyd’s (1997) assessment of a purely postmodern approach to art making are stronger. “Postmodernism has given us permission to do ‘our own thing’. It has suggested that there is no wrong in art. How can there be when there are no theories to contradict, such as modernism imposed? Postmodernism has created a tyranny of capriciousness.” (p.17) Although, I would not go as far as to say that the lack of teaching the principles of design creates artistic “tyranny”, I would propose that a student of art, especially a young middle level student, can greatly benefit from knowing how the use of the principles can enhance his/her art.

“I have always found education to be largely a matter of a clear understanding of basic premises. A student who understands clearly the basic factors of his discipline, be he involved in art, science, music, or mathematics, not only can, but almost invariably will build his own personal perceptions and interpretations. However, these basic factors must be completely understood in order to fully explore the upper echelons, of understanding and interpretation.” (Wilson, R., 1966, intro. vii).

The purpose of writing a curriculum around the principles of design is not only to add aesthetic vocabulary to the knowledge base of students, but to give the beginning artist an understanding of the basic tools with which to effectively communicate an idea or concept. The study and practice of the principles of design in art production allows a student of art the freedom of self-expression in many different media and artistic styles, as well as adding the discipline of composition. A thorough understanding of the principles
of design will enhance artistic ability, not stifle it. It will guide artistic vision, not confine it.

The principles of design are merely guidelines, observed in compelling artwork over the centuries and categorized by educators of art, to help the budding artist solve artistic problems. With this project, I endeavor to create a concise and practical curriculum to teach the principles of design for the purpose of paving a path that will lead to freedom of artistic expressions. It will make the principles easily remembered by students, purposefully applied to original student artwork, and produce an enduring understanding of the concepts. The goal is not to lay down fundamental knowledge for knowledge sake but to give young art students, whether they naturally grasp the concepts or not, the compositional tools that will enhance their ability to communicate in the visual arts.
PURPOSE OF THE PROJECT

Robert Wilson (1966), in his book *Visual Experience*, defines quality design as an “attempt to express a whole, a complete and unified statement (out of) complex relationships.” (p. 4) These complex relationships are the interactions of what has come to be known as the elements and principles of design. In my experience, many middle school art students have difficulty grasping these relationships and incorporating them into their artwork. In establishing the components of an art curriculum for the middle school level, one of the first key elements, I believe, is the teaching for understanding of the principles of design. To show how the principles have been used throughout the history of art making and how they can help the middle school art student express an idea visually, is the purpose of teaching the principles of design.

The intent of this curriculum guide is to aid the instructor in the teaching of the principles of design through art production. The purpose of the project is threefold: 1) to present the terminology of the principles of design in a format easily remembered; 2) to produce understanding of the foundational concepts of design through art production; and 3) to bring an awareness of how other artists have used the principles of design successfully.

Middle school art students have a genuine desire to create art which they can be proud of: artwork that is both pleasing to the eye and personally meaningful. A student of art can begin accomplish that desire by having a thorough understanding of art fundamentals as well as skills in various media. The elements of art are the artistic tools one uses (such as lines, shapes, color, etc.) to create a piece of artwork. The principles of
design are guidelines, or the working rules, to govern how an artist organizes the elements of art to make satisfying and expressive compositions. Just because lines are drawn on a sheet of paper does not mean they are aesthetically rewarding. It is how the principles of design are applied to those elements that create a piece of artwork whose meaning and intent are understood by the viewer. Marjorie Bevlin (1994, p. 125) uses a culinary analogy naming the elements of art as the ingredients, and the principles of design as the recipe. Just as a writer cannot effectively communicate an idea without the tools of spelling, grammar and paragraph structure, an artist is hard pressed to create a successful piece of artwork which communicates a message without the understanding of the visual language of the elements and principles of design.

As an art educator in the public schools, I have wrestled with trying to teach the fundamental principles of design to middle school students in an understandable manner. The school district in which I work has adopted a very loose art curriculum that centers around the basic elements and principles of design. The individual art projects or processes of teaching those concepts are left up to each art educator. I can remember, that as a beginning teacher, this left me with much freedom to teach as I pleased, but brought with it much frustration in having to scramble to find lessons that would meet the district curriculum guide as well as having success in the classroom. There are many lesson plans that center around each of the elements of art, but few that focus strictly on the principles. Researching the art texts that are on the market today, I found very little I could use in my classroom that excited both the teacher and the student, especially when presenting the principles of design.

The pedagogy surrounding a principled centered curriculum is not without
shortcomings. Many different labels have been given to the principles of design. Art educators and art texts are in agreement as to what the elements of art are: line, shape, form, value, color, texture, and space. However, there is much disagreement in identifying the principles of design. Some authors identify only five principles (Dow, 1920, p.3), while others have identified up to one hundred (Lidwell, Holden, Butler, 2003). Many of the concepts are the same from author to author, but the terminology and organization of the principles are inconsistent. It can be difficult for the art teacher to try to present these concepts to the middle school student in an understandable manner when even the textbooks on the subject do not agree about what they are and how they are used.

This thesis/project, BEMUCH, will combine the different terms used for the principles of design into six terms. These six terms will cover the basic concepts of the many different principles named by art educators and authors of design texts. Art project lesson plans, concentrating on each of the design principles, will allow students to experiment with each. The intent of this curriculum will be that students will be come to an enduring understanding of the principles of design through experiential application of the principles in their own art making.
DESIGN OF THE PROJECT

This project, BE MUCH: Teaching the Principles of Design, is designed to organize the principles in such a way that the terminology and practice of the principles of design are easily understood by student and easily accessible to teacher. The curriculum guide will be divided into six sections, one for each of the concepts represented by the acronym BE MUCH (balance, emphasis, movement, unity, contrast, and harmony). Each section will attempt to define one principle and present art production lesson plans which facilitate the understanding and use of that particular art principle. These lesson plans will be piloted in the classroom and examples of student artwork will be generated.

By distilling the more than one hundred terms used in describing the principles of design by various artists to the six represented in this acronym, the concepts are simplified to be more easily understood by the middle school art student. Each of the six concepts will be examined as to their definition, purpose, and application. The teacher will be able to help students understand that to help them to make their artwork “be much” they will incorporate one or more of the principles of design in their compositions.

Recognizing and describing the use of the elements and principles of design in a piece of artwork is one aspect of examining famous artwork. With each of the six principles address in this curriculum guide there will be suggested artists, current and historical, whose use of that particular principle is especially obvious. Students will be able to see how a master artist uses each principle of design successfully.

To middle school students, art production is by far the preferred method of learning about art. They are to the point in their development where they want their artwork to
“look good”, which involves not only knowing about, but using the principles of design. Learning about art principles can be a confusing and tedious chore to the middle school mind if taught apart from art production. Lesson plans for art production will be the bulk of this curriculum guide. Each project will emphasize one of the principles of design, allowing the student practical exploration of that principle.

The target audience for this project is beginning middle school art teachers, as well as seasoned art instructors looking for new ideas, who need a concise and practical curriculum to teach the fundamental art concepts to their students. Teachers will be able to choose lessons that fit in with their adopted curriculum while stressing the basic concepts of the principles of design which will help their students’ artwork to BE MUCH.
CHAPTER TWO

History of the Development of the Principles of Design

Literature Review
Design and composition in artwork is simply the arrangement of the visual elements in a space. The guidelines by which they are arranged are called the principles of design. Not until the last century have there been lists that categorize the principles of design using the vocabulary that is taught in art classes and included in this project. Yet, the concepts have been used since the beginning of art-making by human beings. “The same basic elements have been configured in similar ways throughout time and across cultures, regardless of media.” (Aimone, 2004, p.10) How the elements are arranged to be pleasing to the eye and/or to evoke certain emotional responses is common cross culturally. Whether this is a feature of the cerebral cortex of the human brain, part of human DNA, or intrinsic to the spiritual nature of man, it is a part of the human experience. These principles have been recognized and called by different names throughout art history and have either been adhered to strictly, used instinctively, or defied rebelliously for the sake of creating beauty, bringing meaning, and communicating visually.

Ancient artworks show the application of design principles, but there is no record of any attempt to codify those concepts. The first cave paintings and fertility goddesses were probably not constructed with the principles of design in mind. An intuitive sense of form was combined with the function and purpose of the piece and the available materials. The movement of the Lascaux cave paintings is similar to the rock paintings in the cave shelters of Bhimbetaka of ancient India, making them exciting to look at even for the modern viewer. The repetition of shapes and forms in the Venus of Willendorf and the goddess Lakshimi, and the contrast of the textured details help to make the goddess
visually appealing and interesting.

The Egyptians were the first major civilization to apply visual rules to the design elements to bring meaning. A rigid code of signs and symbols brought meaning to lines and shapes which eventually developed into written language. The use of symmetrical balance enhanced a feeling of strength, stability and power to edifices, large and small. Exaggerated features brought emphasis to symbolic figures, attracting and holding the viewers' attention.
However, according to James Elkins (2001) it wasn’t until around 400 B.C. that there is any record of visual design being taught. Technical books on painting, sculpture and music, which indicate the presence of art schools, date back to ancient Greece. The Greeks were concerned with order, reason, harmony and the ideal and these values are reflected in their artwork. The principle of proportion was defined and developed at length by the Greeks. Proportion is the way the elements relate to each other in a space and is related to balance. The Golden Section (later called the Divine Proportion during the Renaissance) was an aesthetic mathematical idea originating with the Greeks. It attempted to calculate which shapes are most appealing to the human eye. A rectangle (golden rectangle) was most pleasing to the eye if it had a certain ratio of height to width: a ratio of 1.618:1. The figure below is an example of that proportion.
The Greeks based many of their architectural structures on this ratio, including the Parthenon, as well as ideal anatomical proportions of the human body. This proportion is also used by later artists to compose their paintings in the most aesthetically pleasing way including Leonardo da Vinci, Seurat, and Mondrian, among others. The desire of the Greeks to categorize and control what appears pleasing to the eye is perhaps the beginning of the formal study of the principles of design which is used in art instruction today.
During the middle ages, art schools were established separate from the universities (which stressed logic and dialectic or argument) and were considered inferior in content to the university study. Art schools were merely workshops wherein the student worked with a master. However, there is evidence that rules of design were studied and taught. Medieval Celtic art is an example of an adherence to principles of design: curvilinear movement; connections and interweaving of lines; symmetry; and repetition. The Book of Kells of the early 8th century, containing the gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John, is an elaborately illustrated manuscript in which this method of embellishment is seen.
As the Renaissance emerged so did the status of art schools and the organization of art concepts. In rebellion to the medieval universities, informal art academies began to form in which new artistic discoveries were discussed and practiced. Leonardo da Vinci is said to have formed one of these early academies. Linear perspective was discovered and developed which opened up a whole new way to approach composition. Paintings began to be organized rather than casual. Geometric forms gave structural unity. Perspective lines created focal points. The Florentine Academy of Design, the first public art academy of the time, was originally established to produce a sepulcher for poor artists, but evolved into an art school with a definite curriculum and focus. The concepts of good design were organized and taught. Studies in mathematics, perspective, proportion, harmony, geometry, anatomy and drawing from life, both of animate and inanimate objects, brought the disciplines of the art academies to the level of the university.

![Image](image.jpg)

**Figure 10 Ghirlandaio**

The Baroque period (late 1500s to the late 1700s) continued the organized and stable compositions of the Renaissance, adding the components of motion and emotion to their paintings. Rembrandt, Vermeer, and others used contrasting darks and lights to move the viewers’ eye, creating movement, rhythm and contrast.
Neo-Classicism followed with a return to the order and logic of Greece and Rome as well as classical subject matter. This period, the 17th and 18th centuries, also saw the rise of large, well organized academies such as the French Academy in 1655, the Royal Academy of Painting and Sculpture in 1656, and the Royal Academy of Arts in London in 1768. These academies emphasized theoretical instruction and a formulistic way of criticism eventually becoming stilted, rigid and exclusive.

The rules that governed the creation of socially accepted art became stifling, causing the reaction of the Romantic and Impressionistic movements of the mid-19th century. The rebellion to the formalistic thinking of the academies was a cry for freedom and individualism in art expression. Behind the rejection of art academics was the belief that art cannot be taught, only the scientific application of techniques (i.e. paint and brushes) could be taught. Freedom was all important, and this idea sparked an onslaught of artistic movements in the 19th and 20th centuries (Impressionism, Fauvism, Cubism, Futurism, Surrealism, Abstract Expressionism, just to name a few), each developing in reaction to each other.
It is interesting that during this time of the many “isms”, a time when convention was challenged and artistic freedom exalted, the only rules for art making were the intuitive senses of beauty embodied in the principles of design. Bevlin (1994) describes this process in her book, *Design Through Discovery*:

“Starting with a blank sheet of paper, the designer places a line, a shape, color and other elements to create a design. The designer does not, however, *place* principles. The principles evolve as the design develops, and the designer *achieves* them by the choices made in the process.“ (p. 125)

Arthur Wesley Dow (1857-1922) is attributed with the first widespread teaching of the elements and principles of design in art education. Greatly influenced by both Japanese art and the British arts and crafts movement, he became dissatisfied with the traditional way of teaching art in his time. He saw art instruction as a means of “gathering knowledge of facts but acquiring little power to use them” (Dow, 1920, p. 5). His book, *Composition*, released in 1899, was an effort to define and categorize an underlying structure of art that crossed cultural and time period differences. Naming three elements and five principles, he saw a universal application of these principles no matter the media:
painting, pottery, design, printmaking, or photography. He believed the understanding and use of the principles of design by art students would increase their awareness of art and give them the power to control it.

Art schools arose which more systematically identified, classified, and taught the principles of design. The Bauhaus of the early 20th century was one of these schools. The Vorkurs (meaning “initial” or “preliminary” course) at the Bauhaus is still used as a model for basic design courses in architectural and design schools today. With an objective of unifying art, craft and technology, the 1st year at the Bauhaus included training in line control, textures, value, rhythm, unity, color, contrast, balance, movement -- both two and three dimensionally. The history of art was not taught because artwork was to be designed according to principles rather than precedent.

Figure 13 Bauhaus Chair Breuer

The two American schools of thought that were predominant in public school art instruction in the 1920s and 1930s echo the struggle between the structure of the academies and the freedom of the “isms”. The Progressive Theory of John Dewey stressed the importance of a child’s creative self-expression. This was in direct conflict with the Industrial mindset of Horace Mann which viewed art as a vehicle to develop marketable skills and develop a sense of taste and beauty. The Industrialists believed that art ability was acquired by cohesive steps that could be taught and learned. Lessons were organized
sequentially and governed by the principles of harmony, variety, rhythm and balance -- the laws of design. Progressivists believed that art ability unfolded within a child when given an environment of freedom. No formal instruction was needed, only materials made readily available. This pedagogy gave rise to the practices of art education in which the student only experienced art processes. Little or no formal training, art history, or aesthetics were taught. Eisner (1972) believes that each of these views lack what the other has. Both are necessary in the instruction of art. Both were correct in their time; both are needed today. As with all swings of the pendulum, there was another reaction to these methodologies which attempted to bring more balance to the educational process of teaching art.

In the mid to late 20th century, the norm in public school art education became the ideas of Disciplined Based Arts Education (DBAE). This system of instruction stresses a fourfold discipline of art instruction: Aesthetics; art history; art criticism; and art production. Aesthetics addresses how artistic beauty is defined to the individual and community. Art history discovers what aesthetic factors have influenced art at different times and cultures of the past. Art criticism discusses how aesthetics are judged. And art production explores the standards, knowledge and skills of making art. Standards, both nationally and locally, of the art education associations, have adopted these four areas of study as essential elements to a quality art curriculum.

The principles of design have their presence in each of these four aspects of learning about art. An understanding of the principles helps to define the aesthetic. An emphasis of one or more of the principles helps to define the artistic movements in history. Art criticism depends on the principles as an aspect of judgment. Although the DBAE
movement in art education has waned in recent years, public school art instruction today still includes a study of the elements and principles of design. Every art text available on the market today includes a chapter devoted to the principles of design as foundational to all other art making. Believing there are fundamental aspects to the teaching of art is a modernist way of thinking in which universal truths govern aesthetics. The DBAE philosophy attempted to harness those fundamentals into a systematic pedagogy which was balanced and thorough, yet leave room for self-expression and imagination. However, as with each art education movement, flaws are discovered and the practice of the ideology is distorted. New ideas arise about the correct way to teach the intangible aspects of art.

Postmodernism in the 21st century, which questions the idea of absolutes or universal truths, is reacting to the restrictions of formalistic solutions in the creation of art. Instead of dwelling on art history, skills acquisition, and foundational principles, postmodern thought in art education seeks to dispel the presuppositions and expectations of the study of aesthetics and release the art student to visually explore concepts such as Metamorphosis, Social Memory, Chance, Self, etc. There is shift away from teaching the fundamentals, the elements and principles of design, and a shift toward the development of technical practice and conceptual thinking. However, even in the pedagogy of postmodern art instruction, the principles of design are utilized intuitively as the language to convey these concepts. Olivia Gude (2004) describes the postmodern artistic practices as “the fusion of a visual form and a conceptual art making strategy” (p. 9).

The evolution of art education is ongoing. Each new train of thought will correct and enhance the former. Throughout the history of making art, the principles of design have been an underlying current, whether they are acknowledged and named or not.
The response of the human emotions to different art elements (i.e. color, shapes or lines) differ from culture to culture. However, how those elements are arranged seems to connect the cultures. Symmetrical balance, for example, brings a feeling of stability or power cross culturally. Emphasized in different ways and given different titles, the principles of design have been an essential component, throughout history, in the creation of art that appeals to and draws the attention of the human eye.
LITERATURE REVIEW

Definition of Terms

A discussion of the principles of design among most art educators will reveal that they are considered an important aspect of art education. They are an effective way to talk about visual literacy and evaluate artwork. However, the same discussion will reveal little consensus as to how those design basics are labeled and defined. The privilege of autonomy that most art teachers have in the classroom, which allows us to teach what and how we see fit, also gives rise to an inconsistency in terminology concerning the principles of design. In my research of literature dating from 1947 to present, I found more than 20 different terms describing the design fundamentals. Mia Johnson (1995) claims to have discovered over 100 different names given to the principles of design used by artists. If artists and art educators cannot agree on what they are and what they do, how can we expect art students to understand the basic concepts which make up a well designed composition?

The curriculum guide I have created for this project has taken the many different terms used to describe those concepts which create good design and distilled them into six all inclusive terms: balance; emphasis; movement; unity; contrast; harmony. No doubt there will be argument among artists and art educators about the choice of these labels, but the resulting acronym, BE MUCH, is a mnemonic device to help middle school art students remember the principles. The definitions I have given to these terms attempt to include the concepts described by most of the other terms used by other authors. The following is an overview of how other authors view the principles of design and a justification of my
choice of terminology and definitions.

**BALANCE**

Balance is perhaps the only principle of design that is universally agreed upon. From the time we learn how to walk, balance is an ideal toward which humans work. Nature seeks balance, so does the human psyche. Belvin (1994) says balance is a necessity in art. Imbalance brings a discomfort and agitation that artists either resolve or take advantage of. Balance, in artwork, is the placement of the elements so that no one part of the design overpowers any other part or seems visually heavier. Aimone (2004) describes visual balance as the arrangement of elements to bring equilibrium. Several kinds of balance, with many different names, were mentioned in the literature I reviewed: symmetrical, asymmetrical, horizontal, vertical, radial, formal, informal, approximate symmetry, modified symmetry, precarious balance, combinations of space and proportion. For this curriculum guide I will include three of the most commonly used categories of balance: formal, informal, and radial.

Formal balance is symmetrical. The design is mirrored from side to side or top to bottom. If the design is cut down the middle it is the same (or nearly the same) on both sides. Formal balance can create the feeling of solidity and stability in a piece of artwork. It can add a feeling of quiet dignity and peace. It is very predictable. Lacking tension, it can also lack intrigue and invite boredom. Modified symmetry or approximate symmetry is a slight variation on either side of the design adding enough tension to satisfy while keeping its solidity. For the purpose of this project, approximate symmetry will be included in formal balance. Examples of formal balance are very often seen in
architecture to bring the impression of stability and strength. The Taj mahol of India is the beautiful epitome of formal balance.

![Figure 14 Taj Mahal](image)

**Figure 14 Taj Mahal**

Informal balance is defined as asymmetrical balance. Both sides of the composition are different without upsetting equilibrium. No one side is visually heavier than the other. If the artwork is divided down the middle, both sides are different, but neither overpowers the other. Two unlike areas are made to seem to have equal weight. The effect of informal balance is to evoke a mood full of tension and vigor. The structure of the composition is more dynamic and interesting than formal balance. This kind of balance is a little more difficult to produce in artwork in that both sides must be evaluated as to the visual weight of elements. Dark values tend to look heavier than light values. Large shapes look heavier than small shapes. Detail tends to look heavier than simplicity. The artist must constantly judge the weight of each part of the composition instead of just mirroring the two sides of a design with formal balance. Andrew Wyeth’s *Christina's World* demonstrates informal balance. The one larger, lighter shape of the woman is
balanced by the two darker shapes of the buildings in the distance. Even the direction the
woman is looking shifts the weight to the right which balances the weight of the larger
subject.

![Figure 15 Andrew Wyeth](image)

Radial balance is circular in nature. The composition is positioned around a central point
and radiates from the center. It holds equilibrium from all sides no matter which way the
design is turned. The effect radial balance creates in an art piece is the creation of visual
energy. Rose windows, such as the famous stained glass window of the Durham
cathedral, are an example of this kind of balance.
The concept which I label emphasis is also agreed upon as a principle of design by most teachers of art fundamentals. Once again, there are many different terms applied to this concept: focal point, focal emphasis, dominance, and center of interest. Emphasis refers to the area of a composition to which the eye is immediately attracted. Robert Wilson (1966), author of the art text *Visual Design* describes emphasis as the principle which “creates a contact point of identity between design and beholder.” (p. 83). It is the part of the design which stands out, attracting the attention of the viewer. Mittler and Ragans (1992) explain that emphasis helps the artist control what the viewer looks at first and how long the viewer will spend looking at each part of the design. It calls attention to a theme or idea the artist is attempting to portray. The way emphasis is created in a work of art is to create an area of high contrast, create an “area that breaks the unity with the greatest variety.” (Aimone, 2004, p. 15) An area of emphasis is traditionally placed just
off center in the composition, but can be placed anywhere in the design. The effect emphasis has on art is to grab the viewers attention, making him stop and want to look. Then the other principles are employed by the artist to lead the viewer’s eye through the rest of the piece. The cherry of Claus Oldenburg’s *Spoon and Cherry* located in Minneapolis catches the viewers’ attention because of its bright color, high position and different shape. The shape of the spoon then leads the viewers’ eye to wander around the entire sculpture.

![Figure 17 Claes Oldenburg Spoonbridge](image)

**MOVEMENT**

Movement refers to the path the eye follows through a design. Once an area of emphasis has caught the attention of the viewer, the artist arranges the elements (such as line, shape or color) to move the viewers eye over the entire composition. This principle is also agreed upon by nearly all artists as an important feature of any piece of artwork. A few authors (Wachowick 1993; Kainz 1947; Ragans 1988) prefer to use the terms rhythm
or repetition instead of movement to describe this principles, but each author includes the
word, movement, in their definitions.

The degree to which movement is used varies from piece to piece. It can be a
dominant component bringing a “vicarious sense of motion. . .making the eye muscles of
the audience move.” (Wilson, 1966, p.5) Or, it may be subdominant, subtly leading the
viewers’ eye. It can be created through the use of repetition and rhythm which gives a
kinesthetic feeling to an art piece. It may also be created by connecting the elements (such
as value or shape) to create a path through the work of art. Another way to create
movement is through the subject matter itself. An action scene suggests the idea of a
moment of action caught in time. The effective use of movement, however, is not just an
action freeze, but the arrangement of the elements to lead the viewer through that action so
not one part is overlooked.

Paul Jenkins is a master at manipulating movement. He pours, scrapes and slides
the paint across his canvases to create a tremendous amount of movement. The eye of the
viewer wanders back and forth across the painting, staying engaged and interested.

Figure 18 Paul Jenkins Wind

Creating an action scenario is the forte of artist George Bellows. His chronicling of the
boxing world has fascinated onlookers since the beginning of the 20th century. Not only
does he paint boxers in motion, but he uses close proximity of the values and shapes in the arms and legs to move the eye around the painting.

Figure 19 Paul Bellows

UNITY

Unity is considered the goal of any piece of artwork. It is the result of the effective use of all the other principles of design. Some authors do not include unity as a principle for this very reason. They use other terms, such as attractions, closure or combinations, to describe ways in which to produce unity. However, most sources I have researched include unity as a separate principle with specific methods with which to create it.

Unity as defined by Ragans and Rhoades (1992) is “the arrangement of the elements and principles with media to create a feeling of completeness or wholeness.” (p.11) Unity is achieved when underlying shapes, colors or other elements are connected and related together. Mittler and Ragans (1992) call it the “unseen glue” (p 94) that joins separate parts of a design to make them look like they belong together. Unity brings the feeling that the art piece in complete. Nothing in the artwork should be added or taken away. It is finished and brings a feeling of satisfaction.

One way this sense of completeness is accomplished is through proximity. They
eye want to make sense of what it is seeing, so an artist will take the elements, lines, shapes, colors, etc., and place them close together, overlap them or otherwise connect them to create the look of relatedness. Several different elements will appear to be one cohesive whole. Another method to create unity is the use of repetition or similar elements in a composition. The eye will blend the similar elements and pull them together harmoniously. However, repetition alone does not necessarily bring unity. The similar elements must be connected in some way. Ragans (1988) also suggests that the use of simplicity, or limiting variation, will evoke the sense of unity.

Rembrandts’ *The Anatomy Lesson of Dr. Tulp* places the repetition of shapes (the heads of the medical students) close together so as to form one group. The overlap of the bodies ties the composition together. Similar colors in those shapes also help to unify the painting.

![Figure 20 Rembrandt](image)

**CONTRAST**

The many terms that have been used to describe the concept of contrast include: variety, variation, opposition, discord, and dissonance. But, they all refer to the principles of design which sets together different elements in a piece of artwork: dark next to light;
bright next to dull; smooth next to rough; thick next to thin; geometric next to organic.

The result of the use of contrast is that it heightens visual appeal. It is interesting.

Contrast keeps the viewer engaged by adding a variety of elements to the design. Contrast may be slight, with minor variations, or stark, providing surprise with the unexpected.

Emerson (1953) names this principle opposition, and states that it “is needed to give vigor to the design.” (p 104). It creates excitement because it “appeals to our pleasure in a struggle” (p 103). The lights and darks used by Edward Hopper is his signature mark on the canvas. With the high contrast of values he is able to take an ordinarily boring subject and make it intriguing and emotional.

Figure 21  Edward Hopper

HARMONY

Of all the principles of design, the definition of harmony seems to be the most elusive. The term, harmony, is listed in three of the art texts I researched (Understanding art, 1992; Exploring art, 1992; Visual experience, 1966), but the term itself is not included in many of the lists of principles of those who teach and write about design. The concept,
however, is mentioned by all and described using the words pattern, repetition, rhythm, consistency, commonalities, and similarities. Harmony, as I define it, is the use of repetition of similar elements in a composition and is used to create pattern, rhythm, consistency, commonality and similarity. In much of the literature on the principles of design harmony is combined with the principle of unity. Harmony is used to help create unity, but the use of repeated elements is only one component of bringing unity to a piece of artwork.

The purpose of harmony is to bring a satisfying feeling to artwork. Ragans and Rhoades (1992) defines harmony as the “blending (of) elements to create a more calm and restful appearance” (p 10). Mittler (1992) also uses the descriptive words, pleasing and soothing, to describe the affect of harmony. The viewer’s eye recognizes similar elements, which helps to bring the soothing feeling, and pulls them together which helps to bring the satisfaction of unity. The repetition of circles and colors in the painting, Coffeecake, by Janet Fish helps to bring this kind of feeling.
The principles of contrast and harmony are always paired together. They need each other. Although contrast makes a piece of artwork interesting and exciting, the combination of too many different elements can bring the feeling of chaos. Likewise, too much harmony, or repetition, is monotonous and boring. Contrast and harmony are interdependent and the use of both help to bring a sense of balance. Emerson (1953) describes the two concepts as a complex series of opposing and assisting forces. They are the yin and yang, if you please, of the principles of design. Although Bevlin (1994) uses the terms variety and unity where I choose to use contrast and harmony, he describes the interaction of the two principles as a dependent partnership.

“Unity and variety are intertwined since they rely upon one another to provide a balanced composition. Variety provides interest in a work through contrast and structure and by building variations on a theme or motif. Unity blends the
elements of design into a harmonious whole, often by employing repetition. The blending of variety and unity frequently involves transitions of two opposing forces or elements by means of subtle modifications.” (p 139).

In reality, all of the principles of design rely on one another to create a successful piece of artwork. Whether used consciously or intuitively, an artist incorporates several, if not all, of the principles of design in his/her artwork. Contrast brings interest and can create an area of emphasis. Movement and harmony help to bring unity. The interaction of contrast and harmony help to establish balance and unity. The effective or ineffective use of the principles of design creates an unspoken appeal or repulsion for the viewer.

Writing in the *Journal of Art & Design*, Frances Corner says “it is impossible to look at a work of art without being aware of its formal properties and the technical skills that the artist has used in their manipulation. The development in the understanding of these elements is central to the development of individual artistic practice. This is because how a work of art is made i.e. the materials, the decision-making and the marks all signify meaning within the embodiment that is the work of art.” As artists use these principles to their advantage, they are able to convey more effectively the message they want to send. The study and use of the principles of design can help students of art “be much” better at communicating their ideas visually.
CHAPTER THREE

Summary

Recommendations

References
The goal of art education in the public schools is to allow the process of art-making accessible to and enriching for all students, not just the artistically talented ones. To meet this goal the art teacher must wrestle with the concepts of what makes a successful piece of artwork, how to guide the production of art, and how to assess the success of student artwork. Teaching the principles of design throughout the art curriculum offers a starting point where students with limited art exposure or talent may find their wings as artists, and those who are gifted may soar.

The “principles of design” is a relatively recent term used to describe concepts applied in artwork since ancient times. Although expressed with different symbols and with different media, there are some commonalities in artwork that appeal to the human eye cross-culturally: the use of circular designs; the use of repetition and contrast; and the use of symmetrical balance, to name a few. It wasn’t until the turn of the 20th century that these principles were named and utilized in art education. The categorization of these concepts provided a systematic way to teach art in the public schools to both the non-art student and the artistically inclined. These concepts became known as the fundamentals of art and were adopted by art educators as foundational knowledge for the creation of compelling art for a good part of the 20th century.

These concepts are not written in stone, however. Art educators don’t even agree on the language used to describe them or even how many there are. The concepts involved in the principles of design are more fluid and their use must be only guiding principles, not heavy-handed rules. But, to learn the principles of what attracts the human eye helps to give the student of art a starting point to make good decisions when expressing
an idea visually.

“Understanding the ‘rules’ of composition sets you free. It doesn’t obligate you to use all of them all of the time. Knowing them well, you’ll know when you can safely ignore them. You’ll use the rules not merely to prevent or solve problems, but also to have fun thumbing your nose at them.” (Schulzke, 2006, p.11)

The art curriculum based on the principles of design presented in this project allows the art educator to emphasize each principle through art production. The student will understand, through the practical application of that principle, its use and advantage in creating original artwork.
RECOMMENDATIONS

- The teaching of the BE MUCH curriculum must be enhanced with encouragement from the teacher to help each student find his or her personal artistic voice. To follow rules of design alone will not create artists with vision. The principles of design are tools, not rules, which help an artist effectively communicate ideas and concepts.

- Once each principle of design is understood by the student, educators will want to expose students to examples of “breaking the rule” for the purpose of getting a point across.

- The use of this project is not intended to be sequential. The lesson plans may be taught in any order and still effectively teach the principles.

- Art educators are free to add to the curriculum personal lesson plans that would fit in each category of the BE MUCH acronym.
BIBLIOGRAPHY


APPENDIX

BE MUCH: Teaching the Principles of Design
WHAT IS IT?  Balance is the principle of design which
arranges the elements so that no one part of a
work is visually “heavier” than any other part.

WHAT DOES IT DO?  Balance creates the feeling that the
elements have been arranged well. It
brings a sense of stability to a work of art.

HOW IS IT ACHIEVED?  There are three basic ways to
balance a piece of artwork:

  ♦ FORMAL BALANCE (symmetrical balance)
  ♦ INFORMAL BALANCE (asymmetrical balance)
  ♦ RADIAL BALANCE (circular balance)

Other related art terms: Proportion
FORMAL BALANCE: (symmetrical balance) is created by arranging the elements identically on both sides of the composition. It is a mirror image, or near mirror image, from one side to the other. It gives the greatest feeling of stability, strength and dignity to a piece of artwork.
TIME: 1 – 1½ hours  

TITLE: “INK BLOT DRAWINGS”

OBJECTIVE: Student will complete an original formally balanced drawing which has been inspired by an ink blot.

PRIMARY DESIGN PRINCIPLE: Formal Balance

DESIGN ELEMENTS USED:
- Shape
- Line

VOCABULARY:
- Formal balance -- symmetrical; a design principle in which both sides of a design are the same or nearly the same; mirror image.
- Rorschach Test

MATERIALS:
- White copy paper 8 ½” x 5 ½”
- White drawing paper 9” x 12”
- Black ink or black tempera paint
- Colored pencils, markers, etc.
- Colored construction paper

FEATURED ARTIST: Salvador Dali: Biblia Sacra collection

PRIOR KNOWLEDGE OR SKILLS: none

MOTIVATIONAL STRATEGY:
- Show students photos of clouds and ask them if they can see any images in them.
- Discuss with students the idea that humans want to make sense out of the world, so they may see images in random shapes.
- Introduce Rorschach Ink Blot Tests. Explain briefly the theory behind the psychological test.
- Show students a few of the Rorschach ink blots and have students say what images they are reminded of by looking at them.
- Show examples of ink blot drawings
- Demonstrate making an ink blot.

PROCESS:
1. Students create their own ink blot:
   - fold a piece of paper in half to find the mid line;
   - at the mid line apply a few marks of black ink or black tempera paint using a dropper or paint brush;
   - Refold paper in half, trapping the ink inside the paper and spread the ink/paint around with the fingers.
• open the paper to reveal a symmetrical design

2. Students draw thumbnail sketches of images that their ink blots remind them of.

3. Students draw a final drawing which is symmetrically balanced on drawing paper using pencil, colored pencil or marker to finish the drawing.

4. Students display both the ink blot and final drawing by mounting them on colored construction paper.

5. Show students reproductions of Salvador Dali’s Biblia Sacra collection. Discuss the process of the making of these watercolors. Compare the likenesses and differences of the process the students used to make their ink blot drawings and that of Dali.

CRITICAL THINKING:
• Why do you think our eyes will see images in designs that have no recognizable images?
• Why do people want to make sense of the world? Does everything have to make sense?

ASSESSMENT:
• Did the student create a symmetrically balance drawing inspired by an ink blot?

STANDARD:
• 6-8.VA.3.1.3 Apply elements and principles in work that effectively communicates an idea.

ADAPTATIONS:
• Students may draw/color directly on the ink blot to create their artwork.
Between 1963 and 1964 Salvador Dali created a series of 105 watercolor paintings, illustrating the major themes of the Bible, which look more like splashes of paint than the very detailed surreal paintings he was known for. He was commissioned by his friend Dr. Giuseppe Albaretto to create these paintings for the purpose of illustrating custom made Bibles. Dr. Albaretto, a very devout Catholic and great supporter of Dali, was hoping that in the process of reading the Bible to create the paintings, Dali would come back to God and the Catholic Church. These paintings were made into lithographs and bound, together with the text of the Bible, in richly tooled leather. There were 1800 sets of these Bibles made, 99 of which were signed by Dali.

To make these paintings, Dali loaded an arquebus (a type of antique gun) with ink pellets and then fired these at blank sheets of paper. This process was called “bulletism” by Dali. The designs that resulted were then made into illustrations of biblical themes using pen and ink.
INFORMAL BALANCE (asymmetrical balance) is created by arranging the elements unevenly on both sides of the composition. The two halves of the design do not look alike, but visually still “weigh” the same. This produces a sense of excitement and interest. It causees a more casual visual effect.

To create informal balance is a more complicated task for the artist because he/she must arrange unlike objects, lines, shapes, colors, etc. around the composition while maintaining a sense of balance.

Things that appear heavier are: darker, brighter, larger, more complicated

Things that appear lighter are: lighter values, duller, smaller, more simple
TIME: 4-5 hours

TITLE: “Torn Paper Still-Life”

OBJECTIVE: Students will create an asymmetrically balanced still-life drawing using torn manila paper, drawing paper and pencil.

PRIMARY DESIGN PRINCIPLE: Informal Balance/Unity

DESIGN ELEMENTS USED: line; shape; value

VOCABULARY:
- Informal balance: asymmetrical; the design principle in which both sides of a design are not the same but equally balanced visually
- Unity: the principle of design which brings a completeness and wholeness to a design
- Value: light and dark
- Contour lines: drawing of the edges (both inside and outside edges) of an object
- Still-life: a grouping of inanimate objects for the purpose of drawing

MATERIALS:
- White drawing paper 12”x 18”
- Manila paper torn in large sections (about 4”x 6”)
- glue
- pencil
- still-life set-up

FEATURED ARTIST: M.C. Escher (Drawing Hands, Reptiles)

PRIOR KNOWLEDGE OR SKILLS:
- Some drawing experience contour lines and shading
- Knowledge of value scales

MOTIVATIONAL STRATEGY:
- Show students copies of M. C. Escher’s “Drawing Hands” and “Reptiles”
- Discuss with students how Escher, by using values, can turn a two-dimensional contour line drawing into forms that look three-dimensional.
- Discuss how Escher creates illusions to distort reality.
- Explain to students that this assignment will be a still-life drawing that will look both two-dimensional and three-dimensional by the use of shading and values. The artwork will look fragmented because only certain areas of the still life will look like 3-D reality. Suggest an application to life experience.
- Show examples of finished artwork to students.
PROCESS: Students will have previously accomplished a study in value scales and shading of basic forms in pencil. Some contour line drawing will also have been previously practiced.

1. Students will tear a 9”x 12” piece of manila paper into three or four large pieces, making sure all the edges are torn.

2. Students glue the torn manila paper to a 12”x 18” piece of white drawing paper. The pieces should be placed in an informally balanced fashion with spaces in between each piece, keeping the manila paper away from the edges of the white drawing paper.

3. When the glue is dry, students draw a contour line drawing in pencil from a still-life set up onto the drawing paper, covering both the manila and white paper. The composition should be balanced asymmetrically, fill the page, and include at least three overlapping objects which cover portions of both the white and manila paper.

4. Using a wide range of values in pencil, shade the still-life composition only in the areas that cover the manila paper, leaving the areas on the white drawing paper as mere contour lines.

5. Outline in Sharpie the contour lines on the white paper only.

CRITICAL THINKING:
- Have you ever had an “ah ha!” moment? Have you ever seen something more clearly than you did maybe a year ago? Explain your experience.
- Why do two different people see the same thing very differently sometimes?
- Do you ever feel like you don’t see the “whole picture”?

ASSESSMENT:
- Did the student create an informally balanced contour line drawing of a still life?
- Did the student accurately shade the areas drawn on the manila paper?

STANDARDS:
- 9-12.VA.3.1.4 Present convincing or accurately rendered subjects that demonstrate refined observational skills.
- 9-12.VA.3.1.1 Select and apply media, techniques, and processes effectively and with artistic intention.

ADAPTATIONS:
- Students draw only a contour line drawing of the still life, then color with colored pencil the areas covered by the torn manila paper.
- Set out a variety of drawing objects. Students rotate around room, drawing one object at a time, arranging them on paper into a still life drawing with informal balance.
Mauritus Cornelius Escher, commonly known as M. C. Escher, was born in The Netherlands in 1898. Often sick as a child, he was placed in a special school when he was seven and failed the second grade. All throughout his formal education is school he did not get good grades. However, he excelled at drawing and decided to go into an art career. He traveled through Italy and Spain, lived for two years in Switzerland, but settled back in The Netherlands where he spent the rest of his life creating the many works of art he is famous for.

Although Escher was not good in math in school, he understood math concepts and used them in his artwork. He studied mathematics with famous mathematicians in order to incorporate these concepts in his art. Mathematicians and scientists are especially drawn to Escher’s artwork because of their precision and mathematical designs. He became famous and even an asteroid was named in his honor, “4444 Escher”.

He especially liked to trick the eye by creating impossible images on paper – images that looked real, but could never happen in real life. He would combine two and three dimensional images in the same drawing causing them to look like they were coming to life. “Reptiles” and “Drawing Hands” are examples of this. After a long, successful career, Escher died in 1972 at the age of 73.
RADIAL BALANCE is created by repeating similar elements around a central point. This produces a sense of motion and excitement.
TIME: 7 – 8 hour                                  TITLE: “Ojo de Dios”

OBJECTIVE: Students will create a large “ojo de dios” (god’s eye) using yarn woven around dowel rods.

PRIMARY DESIGN PRINCIPLE: Radial Balance

DESIGN ELEMENTS USED: color, line, shape, texture

VOCABULARY:
- Ojo de dios – god’s eye – a spiritual symbol originating with the Huichol tribe of Mexico representing the power of seeing and understanding unseen things.
- Warp – stationary part of weaving which is woven around (the sticks of this project)
- Weft – yarn which is wrapped around the warp
- Front wrap – yarn which wraps over the stick and around the back
- Back wrap – yarn which wraps under the stick and around the front
- Wing wrap – yarn which wraps around two opposite sticks
- Eye – the center of the weaving
- Skein – a bundle of yarn
- Armature – the frame on which the yarn is wrapped

MATERIALS:
- 5/16 inch by 48 inch dowel rods – two per student
- Small hand saws
- 24” templates – tag board divided into 8 triangular sections
- 4” circles of poster board
- Yarn in various colors
- Hot glue gun and glue sticks
- Popsicle sticks

FEATURED ARTIST: Art of the Huichol Indians in the Sierra Madre Mountains of Mexico.

PRIOR KNOWLEDGE OR SKILLS: none

MOTIVATIONAL STRATEGY:
1. Ask students, “Have you ever felt like you were being watched? What emotions does that evoke? What if I asked, “Have you ever felt watched over? What emotions do you sense?”
2. Show examples of finished Ojo de Dios, if available.
3. Discuss the history of the “god’s eye”, which originated in the native Mexican Huichol culture.

PROCESS:
1. Teacher explains the basics of weaving: warp and weft. For this project, the sticks of the “Ojo de dios” are the warp, and the yarn is the weft.
2. Teacher demonstrates the three weaving techniques of the “Ojo de dios”:
3. Students practice these techniques on small frames of 2 popsicle sticks which are crossed and glued together.
4. Each student is given two 3/8”x 36” dowel rods. Using a small hacksaw, students cut one dowel rod in half (18 inches) and the other dowel rod in quarters (9 inches).
5. Finding the center of each of the 18” dowel rods, a small notch is cut as wide as the dowel rod. Cross the two 18” sections on the template at 90 degrees. A 3” circle of poster board is placed under the intersection of the dowel rods. Align the 9” dowel rods in between longer dowel rods at 45 degrees.
6. Hot glue all the sections of dowel rods at the point of intersection to each other and the 3” circle of poster board. Allow to cool before removing from the template.
7. While students are waiting their turn to make the dowel rod frame, they may rolls balls of yarn of the colors they have chosen for their weaving.
8. Students begin weaving using all three weaving techniques and a variety of colors of yarn. Weave the yarn outward from the center until about 4 inches of the dowel rods remain uncovered.
9. When finished weaving, students decorate the 3” center poster board using markers, beads, sequins, etc.
10. Paint the tips of the dowel rods to finish.

CRITICAL THINKING:
- How important is it to feel safe and protected?

ASSESSMENT:
- Did the student create a radially balanced ojo de dios using dowel rods and yarn?
- Does the artwork display good craftsmanship.

STANDARD:
- 9-12.VA.1.1.2 Outline the history and function of a particular visual art form. (971.01.b4)
- 9-12.VA.2.1.4 Identify iconography in an artist’s work or a body of work and analyze the meaning.
• 9-12.VA.3.1.1 Select and apply media, techniques, and processes effectively and with artistic intention.

ADAPTATIONS:
• A smaller version of the “Ojo de dios” may be made using only one 36” dowel rod, cutting it into two 9” lengths and four 4 1/2” lengths.
• Add tassels to the end of the dowel rods.
• Weave beads or sticks into the weft of the weaving.

NOTES:
• Small notches may be made the length of the dowel rods to keep the yarn from slipping.
• No more than five colors, and repetition of colors is recommended.
• Create a template of 18”x 18” posterboard to aid in placing the dowel rods in the right position during gluing. Draw lines across the center point of each side and from each corner to the middle. Student will place the dowel rods on each line before gluing in place.
Ojo de Dios
“God’s Eye” of the Huichol

Ojo de dios are traditionally made by the Huichol (translated “happy people”) of Mexico. When a Huichol woman has a baby, the father makes an ojo de dios in the center of a large cross of sticks and drives the cross into the dirt floor of the hut. For each of the first five years of the child’s life he will add another eye, or layer of weaving, to the cross. Eight out of every ten children of the Huichol region do not live to be five years old. The ojo de dios is used as a good luck charm to secure health, happiness, and long life for their children. The cross of the ojo represents the four legendary directions: earth; fire, water, and air.

Both North and South American Native peoples have traditional crafts that resemble the ojo de dios or “god’s eye”. It is a circular weaving around crossed sticks with a central eye. The lore of the symbol is that the father god made the world by wrapping a dream around an illusion and held it together by his breath.

Today, the custom of hanging one of these beautiful weavings continues and is thought of as a good luck charm to bring protection and blessing to households.
**WHAT IS IT?** Emphasis is the principle of design which uses the elements to create a center of interest, or focal point. It is what the viewer looks at first.

**WHAT DOES IT DO?** It makes you want to look at it. An area of emphasis calls attention to main objects or subjects of a work of art. It catches the attention of the viewer.

**HOW IS IT ACHIEVED?** Emphasis is achieved through:

- **Contrast:** Creating one area that is different from all the rest attracts attention to that area.
- **Isolation:** Having an object stand alone will cause it to stand out from the rest.
- **Location:** Things that are close to the center will more naturally be looked at first.
TIME: 3-4 hours   TITLE: “TEDDY BEAR TEXTURE DRAWING”

OBJECTIVE: Students will create a still-life drawing of teddy bears which demonstrates the principle of unity through placing shapes close together, overlapping shapes and repetition of shapes and patterns.

PRIMARY DESIGN PRINCIPLE: Emphasis

DESIGN ELEMENTS USED: line, shape, texture

VOCABULARY:
- simulated texture
- pattern
- still-life
- Emphasis

MATERIALS:
- 12”x 18” white drawing paper
- Pencils
- Black fine tip markers
- Florescent highlighters
- A variety of teddy bears set up as a still-life

FEATURED ARTIST: Keith Haring

PRIOR KNOWLEDGE OR SKILLS: familiarity with line drawing

MOTIVATIONAL STRATEGY:
- Discuss with students the various textural patterns around them.
- Students may acquire rubbings of various textures in the classroom (optional).
- Discuss with students how small patterns of lines and shapes can simulate, or fake, a feeling of texture.
- Show examples of textural patterns.
- Discuss the principle of Unity. By connecting shapes, overlapping shapes, and repeating lines and shapes many different elements become one whole.
- Show examples of the artwork of Keith Haring. Discuss his use of and line, patterns and texture.
PROCESS:
1. Students divide a piece of paper into 12 sections. In each section a different textural pattern is to be drawn. This will be an idea bank for completion of the project.

2. Given a 12”x 18” piece of drawing paper, students draw in pencil from a still-life of teddy bears. Students draw a line drawing of a grouping of at least 5 teddy bears which overlap or connect to form a unified still life. (Teddy bears are a less intimidating subject matter if the students are new to still-life drawing because the basic shape of each part of a teddy bear is the circle. Demonstrate the identification and drawing of circles to make teddy bears before students attempt to draw.)

3. Students fill each section of each teddy bear with a simulated textural pattern. Be sure to change textural patterns each time a line is crossed into a new shape. Use Sharpie, or fine tip black marker for this stage of the project.

4. Color in one part of the drawing with florescent highlighter to create an area of Emphasis.

CRITICAL THINKING:
- If you wanted to catch someone’s attention, what do you do?
- If you wanted to make someone look at you, without making a sound, what would you do?
- Why do you think we like to be paid attention to?

ASSESSMENT:
- Did the students draw a grouping of teddy bears, filling each shape with simulated textures, and bring emphasis to one area of the drawing by coloring with a florescent highlighter.

STANDARDS:
- 6-8.VA.3.1.4 Produce art that demonstrates refined observation skills from life.
• 6-8.VA.3.1.3 Apply elements (line, shape, form, texture, color, and space) and principles (repetition, variety, rhythm, proportion, movement, balance, emphasis) in work that effectively communicates an idea.
• 6-8.VA.3.3.1 Utilize different media, techniques, and processes in the visual arts.

ADAPTATIONS:
• Instead of using textural designs to fill the circular shapes of the teddy bear drawing, a lesson on color could be used, filling each shape, except one, with a monochromatic color scheme. The remaining shape would be colored in the complimentary color.
• To add to the difficulty of filling the shapes with textural designs, do not outline the shapes with marker. Fill each shape, up to the edges, with textural patterns leaving off an outline.

NOTES:
• When drawing the teddy bear still-life, make sure students fill the page with the composition. Drawing too small will make it difficult to fill each shape with textural drawing.
• Keep the grouping of teddy bears off the bottom edge of the paper. Many students will want to treat the bottom edge of the paper as the table top. Discourage this, as this makes it look bottom heavy.
Keith Haring (1958-1990)

Born in 1958 in Pennsylvania, Keith Haring developed a love for drawing at a very early age, learning cartooning skills from his father and copying illustrations from Dr. Seuss and Walt Disney. He developed his art interest and at the age of only 20 years old, he had his first solo art show. Not liking the commercial art world, he became involved with a vibrant new art scene in New York City which encouraged the independence of the artist.

Keith Haring’s self-expression took the form of simple images based on bold line drawings. He discovered a very public place to create his images – unused advertising panels covered with black paper in the New York subway station. For five years he created hundred of drawings in white chalk on these panels, sometimes creating as many as forty “graffiti drawings” a day. The people who used the subway system came to recognize and love these drawings.

Between 1980 and 1989, Haring devoted himself to public art which often made social comments about not only current affairs, but issues that all people deal with, such as love, birth, death, and war. He created vibrant, but simple, line drawings that communicated a big message. Keith Haring died of AIDS in 1990, at only 30 years of age, but his artwork lives on, speaking as loud as ever.
TIME: 5-7 hours  TITLE: “Perspectives of Superheroes”

OBJECTIVE:  Students will:
  • Create a one point perspective drawing of a city from the viewpoint of above the city.
  • Create a drawing of a superhero among the buildings of the city as an area of Emphasis.

PRIMARY DESIGN PRINCIPLE:  Emphasis

DESIGN ELEMENTS USED:  line, shape, color, space

VOCABULARY:
  • Horizon line
  • Vanishing point
  • One point perspective
  • Foreshortening
  • Cityscape
  • Watercolor graded wash
  • Emphasis

MATERIALS:
  • White drawing paper
  • Rulers
  • Pencils
  • Water color paints
  • Small paint brushes

FEATURED ARTISTS:  Jerry Siegel and Joe Shuster, creators of Superman

PRIOR KNOWLEDGE OR SKILLS:
  • One point perspective drawing.  Students should practice drawing 3 dimensional boxes in one point perspective before beginning this project.

MOTIVATIONAL STRATEGY:
  1. Ask students who their favorite superhero is and why?  Allow for discussion.
  2. Introduce students to the art of Jerry Siegel and Joe Shuster, the creators of Superman.
  3. Show a short clip of a Superman movie.
  4. Ask students what their reaction would be if they saw a person dressed like a superhero in a crowd.  Explain that an area of Emphasis in a piece of artwork, an area that draws the attention, would be like that.
5. Show examples of finished artwork if available. Explain that the students are to draw a city from the top, looking down from above, with a superhero as the area of Emphasis.

PROCESS:
1. Divide the class into groups of 2 to 4 students. This assignment will be completed as a group project.
2. Students find the center of a 24”x 36” piece of drawing paper to establish a vanishing point. (Smaller groups of 2 could use 18”x 24” paper).
3. Draw several large squares or rectangles around the outside edge of the paper, keeping the lines vertical and horizontal. (These will be the tops of the buildings.)
4. Using a ruler, line up each corner of the square or rectangle with the vanishing point and draw a line toward the vanishing point. Finish the bottom of the building with horizontal and vertical lines.
5. Embellish the buildings with windows, doors, and signs using correct one point perspective.
6. Draw parallel lines around the buildings to indicate city streets.
7. Provide books or copies of superhero characters for students to look at. Find copies in which the superheroes are drawn using foreshortening to make them look like they are coming toward the viewer.
8. Students practice drawing foreshortened superheroes.
9. The superhero drawing is added to the cityscape.
10. Teacher demonstrates how to paint a graded wash using watercolor paints. A light graded wash in watercolor paints is applied to the buildings using cool colors. The closer the buildings are to the vanishing point, the more saturated the watercolor wash. This will allow the painting more 3 dimensional depth and simulate shadows toward the streets of the city.
11. The superhero is then painted in bright colors to contrast with the surroundings and create an area of Emphasis.

CRITICAL THINKING:
• Why do you think humans are fascinated by heroes?
• What are the characteristics of a hero?
• Who are the heroes in your life?

ASSESSMENT:
• Did each student or group create a one-point perspective drawing of a city with a superhero as the area of Emphasis?
• Was one-point perspective drawn correctly (all lines are vertical, horizontal, or going to the vanishing point)?
STANDARDS:
• 6-8.VA.2.2.1 Investigate the various purposes art plays in society today.
• 6-8.VA.3.1.3 Apply elements (line, shape, form, texture, color, and space) and principles (repetition, variety, rhythm, proportion, movement, balance, emphasis) in work that effectively communicates an idea.
• 6-8.VA.3.1.4 Produce art that demonstrates refined observation skills from life.

ADAPTATIONS:
• Further embellish the drawings with trees, bushes, parking lots, etc.
• Draw from the viewpoint of a street corner using two-point perspective. No foreshortening of the superhero would be necessary.

NOTES:
• This project works well individually as well as in a group. Individual projects would use smaller paper.
• Cooperation in the group to accomplish the tasks will need to monitored for the middle school age. Make sure all students have a chance to participate.
Jerry and Joe (both born in 1914) grew up as friends in Cleveland, Ohio, sharing a love for comic strips, science fiction, and movies. During high school they self-published a science fiction fanzine called *Science Fiction* in which they published the first version of *Superman* – a villain with super powers. It would take many refinements of the character of Superman, and one sleepless summer night, before the *Superman* that we know today would appear. Everyone has heard of *Superman*, the man of steel who flies faster than a speeding bullet. But, few know that the creators of the famous comic hero are Jerome (Jerry) Siegel and Joseph (Joe) Shuster. Together they came up with the idea, look, and story line of *Superman*, but were not given proper credit to having created him until just recently.

In 1934, Siegel and Shuster began the hard task of trying to find a publisher for the comic strip. They were rejected time and time again. Finally, after four years, in 1938 *Detective Comics* decided to publish a comic strip story of *Superman*. Siegel and Shuster were paid only $130 for the 13 page story and the rights to the character. After only a year, *Superman* became a best seller and earned his own comic book. Even though Siegel and Shuster were hired by *Detective Comics* to produce stories for the comic book, they were paid only workman wages, while *Detective Comics* earned millions because they had the rights to the character. Siegel and Shuster sued the company and lost not only the law suit, but their jobs and recognition as creators of the *Superman* character. It was not until after their deaths, in the 1990s, that *Detective Comics*, once again started to give the two artists credit for the creation of one of the most beloved and long lived superhero characters.
WHAT IS IT? Movement is the principle of design which uses the elements to lead the viewer’s eye through the artwork.

WHAT DOES IT DO? Movement creates the look and feeling of action and guides the eye around the page.

HOW IS IT ACHIEVED? Movement is achieved by:

- Arranging the elements so that they direct the eye in and around the artwork. One powerful way to do that is to create rhythm. Rhythm occurs when an element is repeated in either a regular, alternating, or progressive manner.
- Another way to create movement is to record an action, or freeze a moment in time.

Other related art terms: rhythm; continuation
TIME: 3 to 4 hours

Title: “PIPE DREAMS”

OBJECTIVE: Students will create a pencil drawing of pipes using shading and highlighting on toned paper to create the illusion of three dimensional pipes.

PRIMARY DESIGN PRINCIPLE: Movement

DESIGN ELEMENTS: line, shape, form, value

VOCABULARY:
- **Value**: lights and darks
- **Graduated values**: the gradual transition of dark to light to give the appearance of roundedness
- **Highlight**: reflected light or the illusion of reflected light on an object

MATERIALS:
- gray construction paper
- drawing pencils
- white pencils
- colored pencils (optional)

FEATURED ARTIST: George Bellows

PRIOR KNOWLEDGE OR SKILLS: none

MOTIVATIONAL STRATEGY
- Ask students the meaning of the phrase, “pipe dream” (a goal which could probably never happen).
- Share what a pipe dream of yours may be.
- Briefly explain what the project is: students will be creating a pencil drawing of pipes which will look three-dimensional. Show an example of a finished drawing. Explain that even though this project is named “pipe dream”, it is something that they can accomplish through the use of values and pencil control.
- Explain that each student will produce individual pieces of artwork, but theirs will be displayed with the entire class, linking each drawing to the next to create a “plumber’s nightmare.”

PROCESS:

1. Students practice creating graduated values with pencil by completing a value chart and/or shading cylinders.
2. Students draw a series of pipes on gray construction paper using the same size rulers. Draw the pipes the width of the ruler so that all students’ pipes are the same width. Students must draw the pipes to go off the paper on at least three sides. (This will allow each piece of artwork to be connected to the others.
3. Each time the pipes change direction, a fitting will need to be drawn to connect the pipes: elbow; “T”, crosspiece. The fittings need to be drawn slightly wider than the pipe so it appears the pipes are fitting into the joints.
4. Students begin shading the pipes with the light source directly in front of the pipes (as if a flashlight or head light is shining on them). The shadows on the pipes will be on
either outside edge gradually becoming lighter toward the center. Leave the center length of the pipes free of graphite.

5. Students finish shading pipes and fittings.

6. Students draw white highlights on the center of the pipes to simulate a light reflection. Be sure there is no graphite in the center of the pipe or the white pencil will create a gray color.

7. Students add “extras” to their drawings (i.e. spider webs, rats, bugs, drips, leaks, etc., anything that might be found in a basement full of pipes.) These extras may be colored with colored pencil if desired.

8. Students display their artwork. Each student connects their pipe drawing to another student’s artwork on a bulletin board by matching up the pipes going off one or more sides of the paper. This creates a group mural which could be called the “Plummer’s Nightmare.”

CRITICAL THINKING:

- Name some things in this world that have a lot of movement. (wind, streams, dance, running, swings, etc.)
- Why do you think we are attracted to things with movement? What kind of feeling do they give?

ASSESSMENT:

- How well did the student use graduated values to simulate rounded form?
- Did the arrangement of the pipes show movement?
- Did the extras added to the artwork show individual creativity?

STANDARDS:

- 6-8.VA.3.3.1 Utilize different media, techniques, and processes in the visual arts.
- 6-8.VA.3.1.3 Apply elements (line, shape, form, texture, color, and space) and principles (repetition, variety, rhythm, proportion, movement, balance, emphasis) in work that effectively communicates an idea.
- 6-8.VA.3.1.4 Produce art that demonstrates refined observation skills from life.

ADAPTATIONS:

- Students with disabilities may shorten the assignment as needed, having fewer pipes, going off fewer sides of the paper. Pipe fittings may be exempted.
- Students with higher level skills may arrange their pipes to spell out a word.
George Bellows (1882 - 1925)

George Bellows, an American painter in the late 1800s and early 1900s, is best known for his series of paintings of amateur boxing matches in New York City. In them he depicts the hard and crude life of the working class people in New York. He was a part of a group of artists who called themselves the Ashcan School. They were dedicated to painting the reality of everyday life of ordinary people in the city.

Bellows, born August 12, 1882, grew up in Columbus, Ohio and went to college at Ohio State University. He was a good athlete and was encouraged to become a professional baseball player, but his real desire was to be a painter. He left college just before he was to graduate and went to New York City to study art. He became a student of Robert Henri at the New York School of Art. There he developed his style of painting depicting urban scenes of everyday life of working class people. The strong use of light and dark, texture and movement was thought of by some critics to be crude, but it effectively portrayed the rough and grimy lives of the common person in New York City.

It was his strong social conscience that determined the subject matter of his paintings. Bellows work showed the struggle of working men and women, protested political persecution both at home and abroad, made fun of the elite class, and exposed violations of human rights. His signature contribution to art history, though, is his series of paintings portraying boxing matches in New York City. The dark atmosphere highlighted by streaks of light, bringing movement and action, rightly describes the human struggle that goes beyond culture and time.
OBJECTIVE: Students will:

- Create an abstract wire sculpture depicting the movement of wind using wire, nylon stockings, and paint.

PRIMARY DESIGN PRINCIPLE: Movement

DESIGN ELEMENTS USED: form, texture, line, shape

VOCABULARY:

- Movement: the principle of design which leads the eye through the design
- Abstract: the expression of ideas through nonrepresentational means
- Armature: the “skeleton”, or structural strength, of a sculpture

MATERIALS:

- Wire coat hangers
- Pliers for bending wire
- Blocks of wood – 2” x 4” x 4”
- Knee-high nylons
- Drill
- Thinned white glue
- Paint (acrylic, tempera, or spray)
- Sharpies, gel pens, metallic pens, etc.

FEATURED ARTIST: Alexander Calder

PRIOR KNOWLEDGE OR SKILLS: none

MOTIVATIONAL STRATEGY:

- Ask students what they imagine wind to LOOK like. Students will probably suggest images of the effects of wind.
- Use a fan to blow several flexible objects: flag, material, hair, etc.
- Hold a discussion of abstract art, how it often expresses emotions or phenomena which cannot be seen.
- Present the art of Alexander Calder, a sculptor whose artwork dealt mainly with the principle of Movement.
- Explain that this assignment will explore the idea of motion, as in the wind or dance.
- Show examples of finished projects.

PROCESS:

1. Demonstrate the process of creating the structure of the sculpture:
   - Unwind the wire coat hanger.
   - Drill two holes in the wooden block
   - Place both ends of the wire securely in the holes to create the armature.
• Bend the wire to desired form creating movement and balance from all angles.
• Stretch a knee-high nylon over the entire sculpture, including the block of wood.
• Rebend the wire to desired form if necessary to create movement and balance from all angles.

2. Students create their own armature and cover with a knee-high nylon.
3. Students paint thinned white glue over entire sculpture. When dry, this will stiffen the nylon making it easier to paint.

CRITICAL THINKING:
• We can’t see the wind, only its effects on objects and things. What would the wind look like if you could see it?
• Name some other things that we can’t see. What would they look like if we could?

ASSESSMENT:
• Did the student create an abstract wire sculpture depicting movement from all angles?
• Did the students paint the sculpture in a way that added to the movement of the piece?
• Is good craftsmanship evident?

STANDARD:
• 6-8.VA.2.1.1 Identify and respond to characteristics and content of various art forms.
• 6-8.VA.2.1.2 Construct meaning based on elements and principles found in a work of art.
• 6-8.VA.3.1.3 Apply elements (line, shape, form, texture, color, and space) and principles (repetition, variety, rhythm, proportion, movement, balance, emphasis) in work that effectively communicates an idea.
• 6-8.VA.3.1.1 Identify attributes that make a specific art media, technique or process effective in communicating an idea.

ADAPTATIONS:
• Spray or brush the sculptures with one color of paint. (Always use a ventilated area, or outside, for spray paint.)
Alexander Calder (1898-1976)

Alexander Calder, also known as Sandy Calder, was an American sculptor most famous for his invention of the mobile. But, his artwork spanned many art forms, from abstract paintings to wire toys to large abstract sculptures called stabiles. All of his art forms, however, showed his fascination with movement.

From the time he was small, Calder was interested in three dimensional things that move, creating toys that moved out of scraps of metal. When he became a professional artist, he created moving toys and circuses, performing the miniature circus acts at parties and in museums. He loved working with wire and would always carry a spool and a pair of pliers with him to create his artwork on the spot. After a visit to the studio of the famous abstract artist, Piet Mondrian, Calder was inspired to more abstract art. He first started painting again, but quickly went back to kinetic sculpture. After experimenting with abstract shapes that moved with crank and pulleys, the “mobile” was born -- hanging sculptures that move with the air currents in the room. Calder built hundreds of mobiles, from very small to over 70 feet in diameter.

Toward the end of Calders’ career, his artwork became monumental. His large abstract “stabiles” made out of steel were stationary, but still had a feeling of movement to them. A very large stabile located in Grand Rapids, Michigan, is the first public work of art in the United States to be funded with federal money through the National Endowment for the Arts. Even though Sandy Calder grew to be one of the most famous American artists, he never lost the playfulness and experimentation of the days when he was making wire toys and circuses. Perhaps that is why he was so creative.
WHAT IS IT? Unity is the goal of all artwork. It is a combination of the elements and other principles of design to create a sense of wholeness and completeness.

WHAT DOES IT DO? It brings a feeling of wholeness and completeness. It makes the artwork look finished – everything belongs, nothing is lacking. It causes all the elements used in a design to work together as a unit.

HOW IS IT ACHIEVED? Unity is achieved by the effective use of one or more of the following:

- Repetition – repeating similar elements (harmony)
- Simplicity – limiting the variation or contrast
- Proximity – limiting the negative space between shapes
- Overlapping

Other related terms: similarity; proximity; proportion; simplicity; harmony
TIME: 1-½ hours

TITLE: “Pocket Portrait”

OBJECTIVE: Students will create an arrangement of found objects to resemble a human face, photograph the arrangement, and color the copy with colored pencils.

PRIMARY DESIGN PRINCIPLE: Unity

VOCABULARY:
• Portrait
• Unity
• Found object
• Assemblage

MATERIALS:
• 9”x 12” white paper
• Digital camera
• Found objects (from pockets, backpacks, purses of students)
• Printer
• Colored pencils

FEATURED ARTIST: Betye Saar

PRIOR KNOWLEDGE OR SKILLS: none

MOTIVATIONAL STRATEGY:
• Introduce the concept of unity as a principle of design which connects unrelated parts together to make a whole. Ways of doing that include placing shapes close enough together so the eye connects the two shapes; overlapping the shapes; and connecting shapes with lines.
• Show slides or prints of Robert Rauschenberg and Bette Saar and discuss their use of found objects in their artwork.
• Explain art which is made from found objects.

PROCESS:
1. Students empty their pockets, purses, binders, or backpacks of objects: pencils, erasers, key chains, chap stick, gum wrappers, coins, hair pins, etc.
2. Students arrange their objects in a way that resembles a face with eyes, nose, mouth, hair, ears, etc. Do this by: overlapping objects; placing objects close together; or connecting objects with drawn lines.
3. Take a digital picture of the found object arrangement and print off a black and white copy for each student.
4. Color the copy with colored pencils.
5. Discuss with the class how unity was achieved from separate unrelated objects by connecting them in some fashion.

CRITICAL THINKING:
• What do your possessions say about you?
**ASSESSMENT:**
- Did the students create a unified portrait using several found objects?

**STANDARD:**
- 6-8.VA.3.1.3 Apply elements (line, shape, form, texture, color, and space) and principles (repetition, variety, rhythm, proportion, movement, balance, emphasis) in work that effectively communicates an idea.

**ADAPTATIONS:**
- Instead of a portrait, an animal, a landscape or cityscape could be the goal of the found object arrangement.
- A variety of small objects collected by the teacher could be used instead of student possessions.
Betye Saar (1926-)

Betye Saar is an artist who uses found objects, like real canoes and candles, to communicate her feelings about today's world. For more than 40 years she has collected discarded objects, using her imagination to transform these objects into works of art with a definite message. She combines these objects in a unified way to remind the viewer of dreams and fantasies or to sometimes make political statements.

Betye Saar was born and raised in Los Angeles, studied art at Pasadena City College and raised three daughters, one of whom is an artist also. During the 1960s, her art responded to a time of great social change in the U.S. During the civil rights movement of the 60s, she created art that challenged common stereotypes. Being an African American woman herself, she addressed the changing roles of blacks and women in a piece called “Aunt Jemima”. Placed together are four different images of Aunt Jemima: the commercially used image in the background; a menacing doll with a broom and shotgun; a picture of Jemima holding a screaming white baby; and a large fist raised in protest. In one assemblage of found objects Betye Saar has turned a negative stereotype into an image of power.

![Image of Betye Saar's artwork](image_url)
TIME: 4 – 5 hours

TITLE: “Fruity Still Life”

OBJECTIVE: Students will:
• Create a still-life drawing in pastels, producing Unity by overlapping and connecting individual objects.

PRIMARY DESIGN PRINCIPLE: Unity

DESIGN ELEMENTS USED: shape, form, value, color

VOCABULARY:
• Unity – the design principle which brings completeness to a composition.
• Still-life – a grouping of inanimate objects
• Value – the lightness or darkness of a color
• Highlight – an area of an object which reflects light
• Shading – an area of shadow on and around an object
• Tooth – the roughness or smoothness of paper
• Cool colors – blues, greens, violets
• Complimentary colors – opposite colors on the color wheel

MATERIALS:
• 10”x 16” colored pastel paper (or black construction paper)
• Pastels
• 12”x 18” colored construction paper
• Spray fixer (or spray hair spray)

FEATURED ARTIST: Paul Cezanne

PRIOR KNOWLEDGE OR SKILLS:
• Color wheel
• Some experience with shading spheres and cylinders

MOTIVATIONAL STRATEGY:
1. Have students practice shading spheres and cylinders. Demonstrate choosing a light source; seeing shadows and highlights; drawing shadows and highlights.
2. Practice shading with color (using cool or complimentary colors) with pastels on practice paper. Students will familiarize themselves with the feel and handling of pastels.
4. Set up a still-life using fruit and bottles.

PROCESS:
1. Present to the students a still-life of fruit and bottles. Most students will express that they can’t draw something that complicated. Assure students that drawing fruit is just like drawing spheres and cylinders. Students to not have to draw all
that they see in the arrangement, but must choose at least 5 pieces of fruit and one bottle.

2. Students sketch composition on black construction paper or colored pastel paper using a light colored pastel. These lines will be covered with color. Do not use pencil, as erasing pencil lines will damage the tooth of the paper.

3. Fill each shape with color, leaving transparent glass bottles with no color for now.

4. Shade each shape with cool or complimentary colors, using black sparsely in the shadows. Students blend the pastel to produce a gradual change in value, creating a look of roundness.

5. Fill the shapes of the glass bottles with just a light dusting of color. The color of the paper should be able to be seen through the pastel.

6. Highlight each shape with white pastel.

7. Mount the drawing on colored construction paper.

8. Spray the drawing with a fixer.

CRITICAL THINKING:
- Why is it important to feel connected to other people?
- Who or what are the things in your life you feel most connected to?

ASSESSMENT:
- Did the student create a still-life drawing from the arrangement of fruit in class?
- Did the student connect or overlap the still-life objects to create a sense of Unity?
- Did the student shade and highlight each piece of the still-life?
- Did the student demonstrate good craftsmanship?

STANDARD:
- 6-8.VA.3.3.1 Utilize different media, techniques, and processes in the visual arts.
- 6-8.VA.3.1.2 Demonstrate safe and proper use, care, and storage of media, materials, and equipment.
- 6-8.VA.3.1.4 Produce art that demonstrates refined observation skills from life.
- 6-8.VA.2.1.2 Construct meaning based on elements and principles found in a work of art.

ADAPTATIONS:
- Students choose as few as three or as many as 12 pieces of fruit to draw according to ability and desire.
- Use oil pastels instead of chalk pastels.

Notes:
- Instruct students in the proper care and cleanup of pastels.
- Do not blow the pastel across the paper as streaks will show.
- Use a paper towel or scrap paper to cover finished areas of the drawing while working on another area to avoid smearing.
- Be careful not to drop pastels on the floor. They will be difficult to clean up if they are crushed underfoot.
Paul Cezanne (1839-1907)

Paul Cezanne, a French artist in the 1800s, started out his life loving to look at things and draw. He took drawing lessons from the time he was 10 years old and continued to draw and paint until just a few days before his death. His decision to become an artist, even though his father thought he should become a lawyer, was free from financial worries due to the fact that his father was a wealthy banker.

Even though Cezanne did not have to worry about money, he was not lazy. He studied other artists, especially the Impressionists, and experimented with different styles until he came up with his own way of creating art. In turn, later artists studied his style and developed a new style of art called Cubism. His unique artistic style became the bridge between Impressionism, the newest style in the 19th century, and Cubism of the early 20th century. In his paintings he tried to simplify all of the objects he saw into basic forms and colors. His goal was not to make his paintings look exactly a photograph, but to let the paint express the true essence of the object. To do this, he spent much time observing the world, then painting the basic forms he saw in layers of colors using small brush strokes.

Cezanne’s life was dedicated to art. Toward the end of his life he spent most of his time alone, painting the shapes and colors that so fascinated him. He died of pneumonia in 1906.
WHAT IS IT?  Contrast is the principle of design which uses a variety of different elements in a design. Another work that could be used is “variation”.

WHAT DOES IT DO?  It makes it interesting!  Contrast gives artwork a lively quality.  It makes you want to look at it.

HOW IS IT ACHIEVED?  Contrast is achieved by combining elements that differ in the same composition:

- Light with dark
- Large with small
- Rough with smooth
- Bright with dull
- Geometric with organic
- Straight with curved
- Natural with manufactured
- Shallowness with depth

Other related art terms:  variety; variation
TIME: 3-4 days

TITLE: “SURREAL SELF-PORTRAIT”

OBJECTIVE: Students will create a surreal self-portrait by drawing dream-like images inside a drawing of their profile using black marker on white paper.

PRIMARY DESIGN PRINCIPLE: Contrast

DESIGN ELEMENTS USED: Line; shape

VOCABULARY:
- Surrealism
- Line quality
- Profile
- Contrast

MATERIALS:
- 12”x 18” white drawing paper
- Black markers; Sharpies of various widths
- Spotlight

FEATURED ARTISTS: Frida Kahlo

PRIOR KNOWLEDGE OR SKILLS: none

MOTIVATIONAL STRATEGY:
- Discuss surrealism. It is the art of dreams and the subconscious. Images and symbols appear over and over in each of the surreal artists’ work. These symbols have meaning (conscious or subconscious) to the artist and reveal the inner psyche. Surrealism was strongly influenced by the psychology of Freud and Jung. It is sometimes called the art of dreams.
- Discuss the life and surreal self-portraits of Frida Kahlo

PROCESS:
1. Students brainstorm on paper (or in their sketchbook) images that would represent aspects about their lives. No words are allowed to be used unless those words are part of a symbol.
2. Using a spotlight to cast a shadow, pairs of students take turns drawing each others’ face profile on white drawing paper. The profile should cover more than half of the paper.
3. Students draw their personal images inside the profile, using a variety of sizes of images and overlapping the images. These drawings should not be pictorial, but a conglomerate of images, both large and small, filling the entire inside of the profile.
4. Outside the profile, students draw large textural patterns of lines and/or shapes to contrast with inside the profile.
5. Students outline the profile line with a wide tip marker.
6. Students outline the drawings with Sharpie marker using good line quality – thick and thin lines to show variety and contrast.
CRITICAL THINKING:

- What is important in your life? How would you represent those things in a symbol?
- What symbols or images represent your life as you now know it?
- Have you ever had reoccurring dreams that have common images? What are they? What do you think they might represent?

ASSESSMENT:

- Did the students create a surreal self-portrait using personal symbols and images drawn inside a profile of their face?
- Did the student show variety and contrast with line quality, images, and textural pattern?
- Did the student show good craftsmanship?

STANDARD:

- 6-8.VA.1.2.2 Communicate ways in which integrated art forms create meaning.
- 6-8.VA.2.1.4 Identify symbols, themes and iconography commonly used in selected diverse cultures.
- 6-8.VA.3.2.3 Create an original artwork that illustrates the influence of a specific artist or artistic style.

ADAPTATIONS:

- Words, in place of images, could be used inside the profile outline, to describe the individual student.
- A collage of magazine pictures, which represent the individual student, could be used instead of drawings to fill the inside of the profile outline.
Frida Kahlo (1907 – 1954)

Frida Kahlo is one of the most well loved Mexican artists of the 20th century. She is known for her many surreal self-portraits depicting the pain and suffering in her life. The thing she valued most in her life was honesty and her paintings show the reality of her feelings about her experiences.

When Frida Kahlo was six, she became ill with polio. At age 18 she was involved in a terrible trolley accident which left her in a body cast for three months, in bed for a year, and in pain for the rest of her life. During this time she took up painting. Her father gave her is oil paints and her mother made a special easel so she could paint in bed. She painted mostly self portraits because she was often alone and she knew herself the best. She painted in the style of surrealism because it was the best means of communicating the reality of her life. These portraits reveal the colorful vitality, as well as the pain and sorrow, of her world that many people can relate to.

During her lifetime her art was overshadowed by her husband’s art, Diego Rivera, a famous mural painter of Mexico. It wasn’t until after her death that her paintings were given recognition as important reflections of Mexican artistry.
TITLE: “What a Relief!
Sculpture”

OBJECTIVE: Students will:
• Create a bas relief sculpture using aluminum foil, cardboard and white glue.
• Explore the principle of Contrast through the use of texture and value.

PRIMARY DESIGN PRINCIPLE: Contrast

DESIGN ELEMENTS USED: line, texture, value

VOCABULARY:
• Bas Relief: low relief; a flat, one-sided sculpture in which the images stand out from the background less than one half their real thickness.
• Texture: the surface quality of an object
• Simulated texture: lines and patterns that give the feeling of texture
• Contrast: using different elements together in one design; variety; variation

MATERIALS:
• Cardboard: sizes approximately 12”x 12” or larger
• Poster board: same size as cardboard
• White glue
• Heavy duty aluminum foil
• Black tempera paint

FEATURED ARTIST: Ghiberti: Gates of Paradise

PRIOR KNOWLEDGE OR SKILLS:
1. Experience with simulated textures: close patterns of lines and shapes
   a. Tight textures – small lines and shapes close together
   b. Loose textures – lines and shapes spread further apart

MOTIVATIONAL STRATEGY:
1. Define relief sculpture.
2. Show pictures or examples of relief sculpture:
   a. High relief – Mt. Rushmore
   b. Low relief (bas relief) – coins
   c. Hollow relief – hieroglyphs on Egyptian pyramids
3. Show students pictures of Ghiberti’s “Gates of Paradise” and discuss the artwork.
4. Show examples of finished artwork of Foil Relief Sculptures, if available.

PROCESS:
1. Glue a 12”x 12” (or larger) piece of poster board to a piece of cardboard of the same size. The cardboard is for the strength of the sculpture, the poster board is to create a smooth surface. Let dry overnight.
2. On a piece of paper of the same size as the cardboard, students are to draw a simple line drawing of an object or creature of their choice. It is important to keep this drawing simple.

3. Outline this drawing with a wide tip marker. This will reveal whether the drawing is too detailed or not. If the wide marker lines are touching each other, the drawing needs to be simplified.

4. Transfer this drawing to the cardboard.

5. Place a thick glue line, using white glue, over the lines of the drawing. The glue should be approximately ¼" thick and stand out from the cardboard. Allow the glue to dry overnight. The cardboard must be placed on a level surface or the glue will run while drying.

6. While the glue is drying, students are to practice simulated textures in each of the shapes in their drawings. Tight textures will appear to be darker in the finished relief, and loose textures will appear to be lighter. (Normally, it is recommended to use tight textures for the positive space and loose textures for the negative space. However, reversing that is very effective also.) Use a variety of simulated textures, both tight and loose. The contrasting textures are what will make this piece of artwork interesting.

7. When the glue is dry, cover the cardboard with a sheet of heavy duty aluminum foil, wrapping it over the edges and taping it onto the back of the cardboard.

8. Rub the aluminum foil with the fingers until the dried glue line appears.

9. With a dull pencil or stick, trace either side of the glue line to “hug” the aluminum foil around the glue line.

10. With a dull pencil or craft stick students start filling in the shapes between the glue lines with the simulated textures they have chosen from their drawing. Simulated texture, both tight and loose, should cover the entire piece. Be careful not the tear the foil.

11. When satisfied with the drawn texture, apply a thin coat of black tempera paint over the entire piece, then wipe off quickly with paper towels. The paint will stick in the drawn texture and wipe off of the foil. Use circular motions when wiping off the paint to avoid streaks. If the paint dries before all of the paint is wiped off, used dampened paper towel to finish. This paint application will give the foil an antiqued look.

12. Use dampened cotton swabs to polish the glue line causing it to shine brighter than the rest of the relief sculpture. This will create more contrast in the art work.

13. Glue a piece of paper or poster board to the back of the relief sculpture to hide the taped foil.

CRITICAL THINKING:

- What makes you bored?
- Why is it important to have new experiences in your life?
- How does contrast in art make it interesting? How is that like life?
- What are some contrasting things in your life that make it interesting?
ASSESSMENT:
- Did the student create a bas relief sculpture with contrast, using cardboard, glue and foil?
- Did the student use a variety of simulated textures, both tight and loose, to create contrast and interest?
- Is the piece well made?

STANDARDS:
- 6-8.VA.2.1.2 Construct meaning based on elements and principles found in a work of art.
- 6-8.VA.3.1.3 Apply elements (line, shape, form, texture, color, and space) and principles (repetition, variety, rhythm, proportion, movement, balance, emphasis) in work that effectively communicates an idea.

ADAPTATIONS:
- A variety of simple contour drawings suitable for glue line application may be made available for students who have difficulty drawing.

NOTES:
- Small tears in the foil will be hidden with the application of the black paint.
- If there are large tears in the foil during the texture drawing process, new foil may need to be applied.
- Different colors of paint may be used for different effects.
- Do not rub with much pressure when wiping off the paint. This will flatten the foil causing the textural drawings to not be able to hold the paint.
- After the paint application, the piece may be reworked – adding more simulated textures where needed for contrast.
Lorenzo Ghiberti: The Gates of Paradise  
(1401-1422)

Ghiberti, best known for his glittering bronze relief sculptures called “The Gates of Paradise”, was one of the most famous and inspiring artists of the Renaissance. Born in 1378, he lived to be 77 years old, making beautiful gold and bronze sculptures up until just before he died.

In 1401, the people of Florence decided that their baptistery, The Baptistery of St. John, need doors that would honor their devotion to their religion. A contest was held that many of the best artists in Florence entered. Ghiberti was chosen to create a set of 28 panels of relief sculpture in bronze which depicted stories from the New Testament of the Bible. It took him more than 20 years to complete these panels. He had many other artists work with him in his workshop, including the sculptor, Donatello.

After he finished the 28 panels, he was asked to do another 10 panels that would be for the east side of the Baptistery. It took him another 24 years to complete these, finishing them only 3 years before he died. These last panels were even more realistic than the earlier ones and the public was awed when they were unveiled in 1452. The polished bronze looked like gold and the details were perfect.

Ghiberti’s doors had taken a lifetime to complete, but are a monument to the greatness of this artist.
WHAT IS IT? Harmony is the principle of design which accents the similarities of elements in a piece of artwork. It is the blending of elements in a pleasing way.

WHAT DOES IT DO? Harmony helps to create a calm, restful appearance. It makes artwork pleasing to look at. It gives artwork a “good feeling.” It helps to create unity in a design.

HOW IS IT ACHIEVED? Harmony is achieved through the repetition of similar elements in a piece of artwork.

Other related art terms: repetition; similarity; pattern; rhythm
TIME: 4-5 hours    TITLE: “KALEIDOSCOPE NAME DESIGN”

OBJECTIVE: Students will use a typographical design to create a repeating colored pattern, demonstrating the principle of Harmony

PRIMARY DESIGN PRINCIPLE: Harmony

DESIGN ELEMENTS USED: Line, Shape, Color

VOCABULARY:
- Harmony: the principle of design which brings a pleasing feeling to a piece of artwork through the use of repetition.
- Repetition: repeating of an element
- Motif: the singular element in a pattern
- Pattern: a repeated motif
- Kaleidoscope: an instrument which reflects an endless variety of patterns.

MATERIALS:
- 9”x 9” squares of drawing paper
- 4 ½”x 4 ½” squares of paper
- Pencils
- Markers and/or colored pencils
- 12”x 12” colored construction paper in a variety of colors
- White glue

FEATURED ARTWORK: Gothic Rose windows

PRIOR KNOWLEDGE OR SKILLS: none

MOTIVATIONAL STRATEGY:
1. Ask students to define harmony.
2. Play one audio recording of discordant, off-key music and one of harmonious music. Explore with the students the feelings that each piece of music gives the listener. Harmony brings a pleasing feeling, disharmony brings an uncomfortable feeling. Explain how in the visual arts, visual harmony also brings a pleasing feeling to a piece of artwork. Harmony is accomplished by using similar elements, or repetition of elements.
3. Show examples of patterns with a repeating motif. Define the words “motif” and “pattern”.
4. Bring in and/or explain how a kaleidoscope works. With mirrors, the objects at the end of a kaleidoscope are reflected to make endless patterns of color. Explain that the student will create a motif using their name, then repeat that motif to create a “mirrored” pattern.
PROCESS:
1. Fold a piece of 4 ½” x 4 ½” paper diagonally to create two triangles. Students draw their names (initials, nickname, or shortened name) in block letters, filling the entire triangle. Use the other triangle to make variations of their name. (Students may use the back of the paper if needed.) This is the student’s motif.
2. Fold the 9” x 9” paper into 8 equal triangles (fold side-to-side both directions and corner-to-corner both directions).
3. Transfer the chosen motif into one of the triangles of the 9” x 9” folded paper using pencil. Press firmly on the pencil to leave heavy graphite lines.
4. Fold the design inward to the next triangle and rub (or trace) with a hard, smooth object (i.e. the end of a marker or Sharpie) to transfer the motif to the next segment of the paper. The transferred design will be upside down and backwards from the first motif.
5. Trace over the transferred design with pencil to apply more graphite.
6. Repeat steps 4 and 5 until all triangles are filled with the motif to create a circular pattern.
7. When finished creating the pattern, trace over entire design once more with pencil.
8. Transfer the entire design to an unfolded piece of paper by taping the design face down on the paper and rubbing.
9. Color the design with markers and/or colored pencils. Color as a pattern (i.e. if the first letter of the name motif is one color, all the other first letters are the same color.) This will bring more harmony to the design.
10. Mount the “name design” on 12” x 12” colored construction paper using white glue. The color of the background paper should harmonize with the pattern (i.e. use a color for the background paper that has already been used in the pattern.)

CRITICAL THINKING:
- Do you have routines in your life? What are some of them? Why are routines helpful?
- Repetition creates harmony. How can this concept be applied to other areas of life?

ASSESSMENT:
- Did the student create a motif using their name?
- Did the student successfully transfer their motif to create a mirrored pattern?
- Did the student demonstrate an understanding of the principle of harmony by using repetition of line, shape and color?

STANDARDS:
- 6-8.VA.2.1.2 Construct meaning based on elements and principles found in a work of art.
- 6-8.VA.3.1.3 Apply elements (line, shape, form, texture, color, and space) and principles (repetition, variety, rhythm, proportion, movement, balance, emphasis) in work that effectively communicates an idea.
ADAPTATIONS:
- Templates of block or shaped letters may be used to help students create their motif.
- Motifs of any shapes or designs may be used instead of the students’ name.
- Draw the motif in only one of the triangles of the 9”x 9” paper. Refold the paper and cut around the motif as one would a snowflake. Thin paper will need to be used with this method.
- Paper may be cut in a circle instead of keeping it a square.

NOTES:
1. Use thick block letters or shaped letters instead of thin ones. This makes the transfer of the design easier.
2. Mechanical pencils do not work as well as wooden pencils. The graphite lines are not wide enough or dark enough to be transferred easily by the rubbing method.
3. Carbon paper, instead of pencil graphite, may be used to transfer the motif and pattern.
4. Outlining the design in Sharpie will help to avoid lighter water base markers from mixing with the darker water base markers.
5. Be sure students replace the lids of the markers tightly to prevent the markers from drying out.
Rose Windows of the Gothic Era

The term “rose window” was coined in the 17th century and refers to stained glass windows with a circular design. Rose windows are usually placed in the archways of cathedrals which wasn’t possible until the Gothic style of architecture was developed. The weight of the building was transferred from the walls to the vaults and buttresses of the building, allowing for the placement of large windows in the walls. The height of the development of the rose window occurred during the middle of the 13th century and spread throughout Europe. However, the French are considered to have constructed the finest of the rose windows.

Although circular in design, the rose window does not look much like a rose. The images in Gothic rose windows are religious, portraying the life of Christ, the apostles, and prophets. The phrase “rose window” may actually be a misinterpretation of the French word, roué, which means “wheel”, not “rose”.

There are many beautiful examples in the world of rose windows. The window in the cathedral of Notre Dame in Paris, France is one of the most well known rose windows.
TIME: 5-6 days

TITLE: “Plaster Masks”

OBJECTIVE: Students will:
- Create an original mask out of plaster which is painted in a way that illustrates the principle of Harmony.

PRIMARY DESIGN PRINCIPLE: Harmony

DESIGN ELEMENTS USED: form, color, shape, line

VOCABULARY:
- Harmony – the use of similar elements in a design; a repetition of design elements.
- Plastercraft – a loosely woven fabric with plaster pressed into it

MATERIALS:
- Plastercraft: a loosely woven cloth impregnated with plaster
- Mask molds – one per student
- Cardboard
- White glue
- Paint
- Brushes of various sizes
- Water cups for plaster

FEATURED ARTIST: Robert Arneson

PRIOR KNOWLEDGE OR SKILLS: none

MOTIVATIONAL STRATEGY:
1. Bring in a show students a few Halloween masks.
2. Allow a student to put on a mask and see what behaviors appear (usually a more kinesthetic or demonstrative student works best for this).
3. Ask the class what changes they noticed in the behavior of the student.
4. Repeat with another students and mask, if desired.
5. Discuss with students what purpose masks have served in society and cultures: acting out believes or stories; making visible the invisible (religious rituals); allowing a person to either hide or become a different personality; etc.
6. Show pictures of Robert Arneson’s sculptural heads with masks. Talk about the meaning of Arneson’s sculptures.
7. Ask students what their thoughts are on the kind of masks people wear today, both literally and figuratively.
8. Show examples of the plaster masks the students will be making (if available)

PROCESS:
1. Show students the material they will be working with: Plastercraft and plastic mask molds. Talk about the care and cleanup of plaster.
2. Demonstrate the mask making process:
a. Wipe out the plastic mold (if dirty) with a wet paper towel. Do not wash in the sink so no plaster will go down the drain.
b. Spread out newspaper on the table for easier clean up.
c. Cut strips of Plastercraft: 1”x 6” and 1”x 3”
d. Dip each strip of Plastercraft in a container of water. The plaster will become very soft and smooth. Wipe off extra water drips over the water container.
e. Place the plaster strips on the mask mold, overlapping each strip as you place them. (If placed on the inside of the mold, the mask will have a smooth surface when removed from the mold. If placed on the outside, the mask will have a rough texture.) Smooth the strips with your fingers to fill in all the “holes” with plaster, making sure the strips are touching the plastic mold.

3. Students lay out newspaper, get cups of water and cut their plaster strips. Make sure students have an adequate pile of plaster strips before starting to apply the strips to the mask using water.
4. Students apply one layer of plaster strips.
5. Students apply two more layers of plaster. A total of three layers are necessary for the adequate strength of the mask. The plaster need not dry between layers. If plaster is applied on the outside of the mold, additional plaster may be added to create extra facial features (etc. eyebrows, mustaches, horns, longer noses, etc.)
6. When hardened, students remove the mask from the mold. If applied on the inside, holes may show up on the outside of the mask due to not smoothing the plaster properly. These may be repaired by adding tiny bits of plaster.
7. Glue the mask to a cardboard background. This aids in displaying the mask. Allow the glue to dry overnight before painting. If the cardboard is painted before the glue is dry, warping of the cardboard will occur.
8. While the glue is drying, students plan the design and colors for painting their mask.
9. Students paint the mask to harmonize with the cardboard background: repeat lines, shapes, or colors that are used to paint the mask onto the cardboard background.
10. Optional: add beads, feathers, sequins, etc. to embellish the mask.

CRITICAL THINKING:
• Why do people act differently when wearing a mask?
• What are the positives of wearing a mask, both literally and figuratively?
• What are the negatives of wearing masks, both literally and figuratively?
• How does using harmony in the painted design add to the overall affect of the mask?
• Paint your mask to show some emotion or feeling you have that you do not normally let other people see.

ASSESSMENT: Did the students design and create a mask, using Plastercraft and
paint, which illustrates the principle of harmony?

STANDARD:
- 6-8.VA.1.1.4 Analyze the visual arts of different cultures and time periods and compare to one’s own culture.
- 6-8.VA.1.1.4 Analyze the visual arts of different cultures and time periods and compare to one’s own culture.
- 6-8.VA.3.1.2 Demonstrate safe and proper use, care, and storage of media, materials, and equipment.
- 6-8.VA.3.1.2 Demonstrate safe and proper use, care, and storage of media, materials, and equipment.

ADAPTATIONS:
- Students may apply Plastercraft to the outside of the mask mold.

NOTES:
- Never allow plaster to go down a drain. Supply a bucket to dump the plaster water into at the end of each period. Allow the plaster to settle, and then dump the water outside in a grassy area. Let the plaster dry in the bucket and throw out in the trash.
- Wipe off hands with a dry paper towel before washing them in the sink.
- The scissors used for cutting the plaster strips will accumulate plaster. To clean them, wipe them off with wet paper towels.
Robert Arneson (1930-1992)

As a child, Robert Arneson was encouraged by his father to draw. He became very good early in life and even drew cartoons for a newspaper in his home town in California. After going to art school, he became head of the ceramics department for the University of California at Davis.

Arneson rejected the idea that clay is only for usable pottery and decorative items. He took clay a step further and made clay sculptures with a message. In the 1960’s he and other artists in California, turned away from creating functional pottery and used clay to make controversial statements starting a new movement called “Funk Art.” Arneson was considered the father of the ceramic “Funk Art” movement.

Famous for his many self-portraits in clay, Robert Arneson would sculpt himself in many configurations, often with humor and whimsy. But, even though his artwork would bring a chuckle from the viewers, they had a more serious message to tell. By using his own face in his artwork, he was able to express human emotions and a concern with society that many could identify with. He struggled with cancer for 18 years which was reflected in many of his clay portraits. He was an anti-war activist and expressed those beliefs in his art. Robert Arneson also produced clay portraits of other famous artists, creating humorous commentaries on their art and personalities. Using the human face, both his own and others’, he would make people think about difficult topics.
CHAPTER THREE

Summary and Recommendations
SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS