

**Art and Society:
Bringing Expression into the Classroom to Tell a Story and the Connection through Life
Experience to Produce a Work of Art**

Joe Hannon
Holland Middle School

INTRODUCTION

Bringing expression into the classroom will help my students to tell a story and the connection through life experience to produce a work of art. Art is self-expression of any given concept. Artistic elements are inclusive of all aspects of life, community, and spirit. It is my goal to take everyday scenarios and show students how the artistic elements that these opportunities present are evidence of expression from life experience to tell a story.

Self-awareness and community spirit are the two goals of this unit. Students need to realize that they are not the sum of their environment. Self-esteem and community pride are proven indicators of future success. As a middle school teacher, I recognize that my students are constantly in search of that something or someone that makes them believe that they are somebody, and that they matter. They need to understand that just because they come from a certain place, it does not mean that their life will stop there. The future is theirs for the asking, and artistic talent and development can be the vehicles that take them there.

The main lesson that will be taught on the theme “Bringing Expression into the Classroom to Tell a Story and the Connection through Life Experience to Produce a Work of Art.” My instructional approach will be to teach students how to identify or replicate living experiences or create artistic impressions of their daily environments. Additionally, learning experiences will be made available through visiting neighborhoods, museums, parks, and other public places throughout the city as investigational tools for art appreciation. By the end of this unit, it is my hope that students will be able to make artistic judgments, evaluate the elements of learning through life experience and show some type of expression or emotion to create masterpieces of artwork to exhibit, display, or sell.

I will show my students how to learn from critics’ comments such as R. G. Collingwood (1889 – 1943) argued that making art comes, in a sense, before having a feeling. To express the feeling in art is part of understanding the feeling. He explained, “Until a man has expressed his emotion, he does not yet know what emotion it is. The act of expressing it is therefore an exploration of his own emotions. He is trying to find out what these emotions are” (Quoted in Freeland 161). When viewers follow the artist’s efforts, we recreate the process of self-discovery, so we too become artist.

UNIT BACKGROUND

Leo Tolstoy, the famous Russian novelist (1828–1910) states, “Art is an expression of emotions and ideas expressed” (Quoted in Freeland 155). Tolstoy’s art is a form of speech, movement, feeling, appearance and communication. Art is present and felt in everyday life by using pictures, music and freedom of speech. He advocates his views of art in his famous essay “What Is Art?” Tolstoy believes an artist’s chief job is to express and communicate emotions to an audience. He also stated that for a person to evoke a feeling within one must have experienced

one, by the means of movement, lines, colors, sounds or forms in order to transmit the same (Freeland 156-161). Where a person might experience similar moods or expressions, which is the activity use for Art Creation to create a masterpiece.

Other media, which can be used to create a feeling, is pencil, paint, photography, sculptor and music in order to form expression through experience.

Dr. Cynthia Freeland, a Professor of Philosophy at the University of Houston, has argued that the expression theory works well for certain artists who used expressionism to express feelings and stated several artists that used abstract expression, such as Velazquez, Picasso, Van Gogh and Bacon just to mention a few.

Using several artists to show how I plan to tie my topic in “Bring Expression into the Classroom to Tell a Story and the Connection through Life Experience to Produce a Work of Art.” I will give examples of how some artists used life experience to produce their art. I will start with Francis Bacon who painted people who look tortured and despairing. According to Dr. Freeland, Bacon’s figures are distorted and their mouths screaming-observers said Bacon made humans look like slabs of meat.

Because Francis Bacon had a horrendous relationship with his father who whipped him and kicked him out of his home as a child for being a homosexual, it was stated that some of his horrifying imagery may reflect his experience in removing corpse out of bombed-out buildings in London during World War II, which may have been the cause of his bombed out life such as: alcoholism, gambling, and S&M sexual escapades.

I can truthfully say that laughter, screaming, sadness and anger is a sign of one showing emotion through life experience in Francis Bacon’s artwork. He used his life story and history to created masterpieces of art that I will use similar ideas to get my students to be more expressive and creative in my lesson plans.

Expression is a form of speech, movement, feelings, appearance, communication, art, color, music, freedom of speech, and much more. Being involved in learning to create art implies developing abilities to represent and interpret feelings and thoughts, and to create personal responses to experience; these are the skills of expression. Such skills include abilities to produce illusions of space, volume and movement, while utilizing linear and aerial perspective, gesture and animation techniques. These types of abilities relate to primary mental aptitudes associated with spatial visualization and perceptual speed and accuracy. There may not be any overall theory of expression to cover all the different uses of expression. Nevertheless, through expression a person comes to understand emotion, because it is individualization. Therefore, as long as freedom of expression and information is maintained, different views should be expressed and respected.

The basic condition for freedom of expression and information is that it extends to different viewpoints; otherwise, expression is merely an imposition of ideas and exercise. An expressed feeling is communicated to someone who understands the expression. Thus, a person who expresses an emotion treats himself and another in the same way. Sometimes artists use their works to express ideas about their issues and social problems. Expressionism affects the trajectory of social interactions, with a component of emotions. Therefore, one might say that there is a link between facial expression and emotion; however, facial expression is used for measuring people’s emotions. A facial expression does not always imply what a person’s true feelings are. What appears on a person’s face does not necessarily reveal how a person feels inside.

Another medium for expression is color. Color is an element of art that is derived primarily from reflected light. Color has three distinct properties or traits. These are hue, value and

intensity. The artist uses color to direct the viewer's eye to the center of the composition. Color creates a particular mood, contrast, and shape. A warm or cool color scheme will be used to add harmony and express a particular mood or feeling.

Expressionism is a style of art that emphasized the expression of innermost feelings. Like the Fauves, the Expressionists ignored realism. To make their emotions felt, they frequently distorted and exaggerated shapes and colors. The Fauves were not interested in creating realistic pictures. Their goal, rather, was to express feelings through sharply contrasting colors. Fauvism is a style of art in which artists use intense, often wild color combinations in their paintings. Every color is said to have a specific emotional effect on each individual. It's also a style of art in which the intention is not to reproduce a subject accurately, but instead to portray it in such a way as to express the inner state of the artist. Abstract Expressionism was an art movement that took place in the United States starting from 1960s. Abstract Expressionism is a form of art in which the artist expresses himself with form and color. For the most part, Abstract Expressionism attracted the public with its simple methods and spontaneous appearance. Some of the Expressionist Artists are Max Weber, Kelly Moore, Franz Marc, and James Enson.

MY BACKGROUND

Now that I am older and wiser, I realize that art has been a part of me and in my life since the beginning of my lifetime. I remember when I was younger, about four or five years old, I used to go to work with my mother who was doing day work at the time, which is another name for cleaning up wealthier people's homes. Sometimes I would stop playing with the toys that were available and watch her clean the house, make the beds and vacuum the floor until everything was picture perfect. Many times I would recall in my mind a before and an after scene. After we got home, my mother would clean our house and fix dinner by mixing several spices, vegetables and one meat to make a balanced meal for the family. Sometimes she would re-arrange leftovers by adding other things and ingredients to come up with a very different taste and dish. My brother and sisters were much older than I, so when I started school, I had no one my age to play with when I came home and on the weekends. Many times, I would stay in my room alone and repair old toys that were given to me by those people that hired my mother to clean up their homes. When I got tired of making repairs on broken toys, I would try to draw them using the reconstructed ones as models with different backgrounds to tell a complete story, not realizing I was creating artistic talent or trade to amuse myself as a sign of expression to tell others the way I saw things and how I felt about certain things.

When I got in the third grade, my teacher selected my good friend and me to draw a poster of a very large horse for the library display. We did a very good job on it although it took several hours of our working on it over at each other's houses after school. As a result, every time the school needed a poster or banner, my friend and I would do them. Many times, we would get some fruit, candy or some extra credit for doing a superb job. At that time, I realized that art was not a bad trade to have as a profession, which caused me to concentrate even more in order to better my skills to convey the way I saw things and reality. When I turned twelve years old, my father passed, and being the only child at home, I had to step up to become the man of the house: to help my mother with the everyday chores around the house such as cutting the yard, digging and cleaning the flower beds, painting inside and out of the house, taking out the trash, and picking up the same trash when a dog would knock it over. There were many times when I would say to myself, "I would love to be drawing or painting instead of doing this type of work." I did not realize that I was being mentally and physically programmed while growing up to become an artist and teacher, where I might have many stories to tell and share with others. The life subjects are unlimited.

UNIT OBJECTIVES EXAMPLE

Going back and reviewing some of my autobiography, I will show how some of those events helped me draw and paint memorable things to create a complete scene to show emotion and feelings.

1. During the time when I was four or five years old, going to work with my mother, I was able to learn how to put neatness and arrangement into my work to make the project picture perfect and how to give a background to set the mood.
2. I will show my students how art comes in many forms and media. Art is not just drawing with a pencil.
3. Art is an arrangement of elements or designs used to create feelings or emotion and this can occur in different fields such as cooking, landscaping, cutting hair, painting and even taking out the trash (the arrangement or design where it wouldn't be knocked over).
4. The passing of my father enabled me to reflect on sadness when I feel the need to express depression in facial expression or a similar situation.

Because art is the self-expression of any given concept, the theme that I plan to teach in this curriculum unit is “Bringing Expression into the Classroom from Life Experience and the Connection to Create Better Art.” This expressionism of art will show how artistic elements are inclusive in all aspects of life, community, and spirit. It is my goal to take scenarios from everyday life to show students how the artistic elements that these opportunities presented are evidence of everyday living using expression and past experiences. Students will create stories that will express their feelings through some form of art to create better artwork. They will learn how to identify, replicate, and create artistic impressions of their daily environments by using expression in an art form. They will do this regardless of what art media they choose to express themselves and their surroundings. It might be pencil, chalk, paint, photography, etc.

Background About My School

Holland Middle School is located in the southeast part of town at 1600 Gelhorn in the northeast of the Port of Houston (the Houston Ship Channel). The north-boundary is Highway 610, the west boundary Highway 59, the south boundary is Highway Interstate 10, and the east boundary Interstate 45.

There are several major industries in the area, and there are several fast food restaurants, cleaners and launderers, beauty and barbershops, churches, banks, grocery stores, convenient stores, and auto parts and repair shops. Holland is housed in a one-floor building. It has a full-size library, seven science labs equipped with one computer each, a full size band room, full sized choir and music room, a smart lab, an art room, a multipurpose room, a five-hundred seat cafeteria, and a gymnasium.

During the 2004-2005 school year, Holland Middle School provided educational services for 900 sixth, seventh, and eighth graders. 74% percent of the students were Hispanic, 25% were African American, and less than 1% were other ethnicities. Seventy-six percent of the students participated in the free/reduced lunch program, 18.4% were enrolled in special education classes, and 6.4% were enrolled in Limited English Program. The average attendance rate was 94.3%. Twenty-nine percent of the faculty has earned Master's Degrees. Forty-one percent of the faculty has eleven years or more of educational experience. The school has a dean of instruction, assistant principals, a magnet coordinator, and a Title I coordinator.

In my classroom at Holland Middle School, students will discuss the basic elements of expressionism in art and create original projects using expression to tell about their everyday living and experiences. Students will learn how to put feelings in their artistic works to express

themselves. I will use printed and visual media to show students how to define and depict emotions from their role in society in order to express their environment and feelings, to create works of art. In the expressionism lessons, students will learn about the “Life Manifested through Art” concept, and I hope that it is an electrifying lesson.

My instructional approach includes, but is not limited to, having students bring items from home and interpreting various types of music for listening and visualization techniques. Some more specific goals are the following:

1. Students will learn how to identify, replicate and create artistic impressions of their daily environments.
2. Students will be asked to tell a story of their inner life at home by drawing a self -portrait representing or telling something about the way they feel about their environment.
3. Additional learning experiences will become available by visiting museums, parks and other public places. This will serve as an investigational tool for art appreciation and communication to tell a story on the expression of their feelings.
4. Students will draw their neighbors and families in action to show something about themselves.
5. Students will do self portraits with certain facial expressions where they can relate to expressionism.
6. Students will have lectures and slides presentation on the artwork of great artist such as Vincent Van Gogh, Leo Tolstoy, Max Weber, Kelly Moore, Franz Marc, and James Enson.

Emotions play a crucial role in human interaction. Often, these emotions are displayed to others through perhaps the most important nonverbal cues to another’s emotional states: facial expressions. These expressions are “read” by receivers and interpreted to mean that the sender is feeling a specific emotion such as anger, contempt, embarrassment, or happiness.

Since Vincent Van Gogh is one incredible artist who has always shown expression and emotion in his creation, I will create a slide show of his work. The slide show will be used to give the student a certain feel of how to use their personal history to show a work of art.

After the slide show of Vincent Van Gogh’s art work, I will discuss the feelings of happiness, sadness, and surprise and discuss other expressions to create a sense of emotion. We will discuss expression and what type of emotions or feelings they have experienced on a day-by-day basis.

I will have the students to draw lines and circles with the thought of drawing happy, sad, angry, surprise and other figures using them. We will also have another open discussion about the different types of lines such as straight, jagged, curve squiggly, are zigzag, etc. We will combine lines and circles to do self-portraits with expression to reveal a message. (See drawings below.)

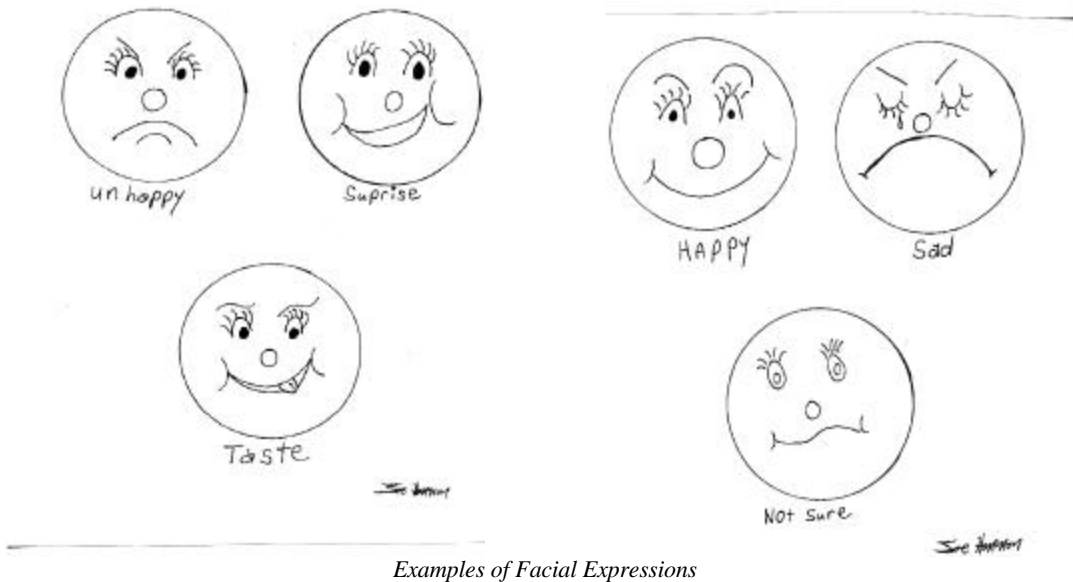
I will select a day to discuss colors (primary and secondary). I will show and tell my students how certain colors make suggestion of different feelings and why.

There are several types of colors that imply different feelings, such as cool, warm, hot and cold colors to enhance a painting to set the mood or tone for a more visual expression.

Once the students get the feeling of using lines circles and colors, they will be encouraged to draw their neighborhood or their home. Then everyone can decide on an emotion or feeling to tell a story. When the students drawings and paintings are completed, I will display them for others to interpret and critique.

SAMPLES OF EMOTIONAL EXPRESSIONS

1. Laughter
2. Surprise
3. Fear
4. Interest
5. Anger
6. Contempt
7. Disgust
8. Overlapping Features
9. Common Confusion



Examples of Facial Expressions

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

This unit is meant to be taught in my classroom to teach General Art to Middle School Students. They are 6th, 7th, and 8th grade students that are mostly 11, 12, 13 and some 14 years old.

The students will be taught the definition of Art Expression and Emotion, so they can get an insight of the knowledge and feel what it takes to create or paint a meaningful picture.

My implementation strategies will be to teach students how to identify, replicate, and create impressions of their daily environment or something outstanding in their past. I will teach my students the different facial expressions, such as how one looks when happy, sad, fearful, surprised, and angry. This will show the mood of someone and how they look.

Then I will teach the students how to tell a story of their inner life at home by telling something about the way they feel about their environment, neighborhood, and families, in order to show something about themselves.

Additional learning experience will become available by visiting museums, parks, and other public places on various field trips. This will serve as an investigational tool for Art Appreciation and Communication to tell a true story. It will help the students to brush up on their writing skills to prepare them for the TEKS Test.

Students will be shown film, tapes, audio and given slide presentations on various great artists and critics, such as Francis Bacon, Vincent Van Gogh, Max Weber, and Leo Tolstoy. This will enable them to visualize how to create a master piece and learn how to use self expression.

LESSON PLANS

Lesson Plan One

Students will develop an art vocabulary using words from an art dictionary. Classes are for forty-five minutes each class period; therefore, I will use Monday and Wednesday for vocabulary day. At this time, we will be using words from an art dictionary. The students will copy the list onto their paper and save for personal reference to understand the terms. They will be able to use the list in class for writing stories and developing pictures. Lists of words that will be used in class are as follows:

Abstract	Aesthetic view	Applied art
Architect	Architecture	Art critic
Artist	Art medium	Art movement
Balance	Belvedere	Bust
Calligraphy	Color	Composition
Contours	Credit line	Cutaway
Element of art	Elevation	Emphasis
Environment		
Fantasy art	Fine art	Font
Form	Fresco	
Gesture drawing	Harmony	Hue
Illumination	Intensity	Juxtapose
Kiln	Landscape	Movement
Nature study	Negative space	Old Stone Age
Painted screen	Pan	Pattern
Perception	Perceive	Photography
Pictogram	Picture Plane	Pigment
Point of view	Portfolio	Portrait
Portraiture	Pottery	Principles of art
Printmaking	Proportion	Public art
Renaissance	Rhythm	Sculpture
Seascape	Self-portrait	Shape
Social protest painting	Solvent	Space
Staged photograph	Still life	Story board
Study	Style	Stylized
Subject	Surrealists	Symbol
Texture	Trait	Tapestry
Unity	Value	Video documentary
Videographer		
Watercolorist		

Materials Needed

Paper pens and a list of definitions

Objective

Students can start with art words and definitions, so when the students begin drawing, they will have a better understanding and more knowledgeable of artwork and how to produce a more expressive piece of art through life experience.

Closure

Have students take a test using their notes after the first six weeks of class meetings. Encourage the students to keep a good notebook for later references of valuable information. This information can be used forever.

Lesson Plan One Continued

Tuesday and Thursday, the students will be instructed to write a story on their family life history. Fridays will be for editing the stories using the previous outlines and reviewing the words and definitions.

Materials Needed

Pen
Pencil
Paper
Folder

Objective

The lesson will start with writing skills, communication and artistic techniques. This will prepare the student for the TAKS test, and the information will be used to start sketching the children's home life for complete scenery.

Closure

Students will be given a tested on the completion of their autobiography essay and the home life sketch.

Lesson Plan Two

Emotions play a crucial role in human interaction. My plan is to incorporate the writing skill with the artistic skill to get the student to create a work of art.

The next daily activity is to review the art terms orally or writing. Then the students will draw some the expressive features such as faces.

Using the expression indicated below:

Laughter	Interest	Disgust
Surprise	Anger	Overlapping features
Fear	Contempt	Common Confusion

Students will draw each feature using a circular figure as the outline. Monday and Wednesday will be word writing. Tuesday and Thursday students will be drawing. On Friday will be review day for all work completed.

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