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CIED 4213.001

September 24,2014

Japanese Woodblock Printing

*A Sick Day for Amos McGee,* Philip C. Stead, Erin E. Stead

In the book, the illustrations were done in woodblock printing. The lesson plan is an outline to do a version of woodblock printing with students to connect with the book’s illustrations.

**Title of Lesson Plan:** Japanese Woodblock Printing

**Goal or Objective of the Lesson:** The goal of the lesson is to provide students an opportunity to learn about the art of other cultures in conjunction with making the art themselves.

**Grade Level:** This lesson will be written for 2nd grade students. However, it could be adapted to align with multiple grade levels.

**Alignment with the appropriate Art PASS Standards:**

Standard 1: Language of Visual Art - The student will identify visual art terms (e.g., collage, design, original, portrait, paint, subject).

1. Use appropriate art vocabulary.
2. Name and describe elements of art; line, color, form, shape, texture, value and space.
3. Name and describe the principles of design; rhythm, balance, contrast, movement, center of interest (emphasis) and repetition.
4. Use the elements of art and principals of design to communicate ideas.

Standard 2: Visual Art History and Culture - The student will recognize the development of visual art from an historical and cultural perspective.

1. Understand art reflects the culture of its origin. (&)
2. Identify connections between characteristics of visual art and other art disciplines.
3. Identify specific works of art produced by artists in different cultures, times and places. (&)

**Materials Required for the Lesson:**

* Styrofoam meat trays; pre-cut into rectangles and squares
* Acrylic paint in a variety of colors
* Small foam roller brushes
* Scissors
* 9” x 12” construction paper; variety pack
* 1.0 M black ink pens
* Paper plates
* Paper towels

**Resources:**

* Website over the history of Japanese Woodblock Printing with examples; <http://www.artelino.com/articles/japanese-woodblock-prints.asp>
* Historical Japanese music to play while students work on their art: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1N0EX6jZsfA>

**Art Vocabulary of the Lesson:**

* Japanese Woodblock Printing – Ancient Japanese art technique in which blocks of wood are carved to create the image, then inked over and applied to paper to transfer the image.
* Color – a) primary -3 colors from which all others are created, b) secondary – made by mixing equal parts of 2 primary colors, c) warm colors, d) cool colors, e) intensity – brightness or darkness
* Line – a) shows direction, b) creates rhythm/movement within an artwork, c) has several qualities (thick, thin, straight, curved, zigzag)
* Shape – has height and width, is 2-dimensional, 2 types (organic and freeform)
* Space – a) positive space – area within the object, b) negative space – area around the object,

**Procedure:**

**A: ENGAGEMENT:**

The lesson will begin with a small lesson on the history of woodblock printing. Examples of traditional Japanese woodblock printing will be shown for students to analyze what is different about woodblock printing from other art forms. The class will then engage in a read –aloud of *A Sick Day for Amos McGee*. Before the read-aloud, explain to the students that the illustrations in the book were done using the same woodblock printing we looked at previously. Have students speak out any similarities they see between the traditional examples and the illustrations. After completing the read-aloud move to the art project.

**B: EXPLORATION:**

1. Begin the art project by having the students come and select 4 sizes of Styrofoam shapes, scissors, ink pen, a roller brush, paper plate, a paper towel, several sheets of construction paper, and one color of paint. Have students identify whether they selected a primary or secondary color as well as if the color is warm or cool. Make sure students selected colors of construction paper that the color paint they choose will show up on.
2. Demonstrate for the students how to use the tip of the ink pen to etch their design into the Styrofoam. Then, give students time to create their own designs into their Styrofoam shapes. Encourage them to fill up much of the space on their shape. Explain the difference between positive and negative space. Have them identify the positive and negative space in their own designs. Also, use this time to discuss line and shape.
3. Once students have created their designs, help them to pour the color of paint they selected onto their paper plate. Demonstrate how to coat the roller brush in paint. Once they have done so, demonstrate how to roll the paint onto the design side of their Styrofoam shape. Make sure students do not press hard onto the stamp to fill the crevasses they created. These will be the white portions of the design.
4. Once the students have rolled the paint onto the stamp, have students turn the stamp over and press it onto the construction paper. Have them apply even pressure on all areas of the stamp to smooth the entire shape.
5. Have students remove their stamp very carefully. The design of their print will show up on the construction paper.
6. Repeat for each shape and design the students created.

**C: EXTENSION/APPLICATION:**

At the close of the project, have students throw away their used stamps, paper plates, and paper towels. Have them return all other supplies to one unified area in the classroom. Discuss with the class how their prints are similar and different from those traditional examples and the illustrations in *A Sick Day for Amos McGee*. Designate an area on one classroom wall for students to display their favorite print out of the four prints they made. Also, on a separate sheet of construction paper have students write what they learned about woodblock printing to be displayed next to their print.

**D: DIFFERENTIATION:**

Any student on an IEP or who needs special differentiation for this lesson will work with a partner to complete the assignment.

**E: ASSESSMENT/EVALUATION:**

Students will answer questions in the closure section of the lesson. Students should provide thoughtful comparisons between their art, and the examples shown. This will instill a sense of confidence in the students in their artwork. The student’s artwork should display examples of line, space, and shape, as those were the concepts covered in the lesson. If a student’s piece does not display this, it will show the concept needs to be covered again in another lesson. The concepts students cover in their construction paper responses will also gauge learning. If the response is shallow with little to no connection between the traditional Japanese printing, the illustrations, and their own pieces, the student needs further guidance on the topics covered.

Art project was adapted from one found on <http://thecraftyclassroom.com/CraftJapanWoodblockPrinting.html> .