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TE 846 – Final Project

Theory: This lesson is based in using visual imagery to support literacy and to reinforce comprehension

Lesson: Standards (South Carolina – Visual Arts – Level I):

- VAH1-1.3 Communicate ideas through the effective use of a variety of materials, techniques, and processes in works of visual art.
- VAH1-3.2 Analyze and describe the relationships among subject matter, symbols, and themes in communicating intended meaning in his or her own artworks and in those of others.
- VAH1-4.4 Demonstrate visual literacy by deconstructing images in a variety of contexts.
- VAH1-5.2 Make complex, descriptive, interpretative, and evaluative judgments about his or her own artworks and those of others.
- VAH1-6.2 Compare and contrast concepts, issues, and themes in the visual arts and other subjects in the school curriculum.

Subject: Art Education

Title: Reading the World: Visual Literacy in the Classroom

Objectives: The students will analyze an image and study the visual elements, historical context of its creation, and background the artist. The students will then examine the newspaper for current events, pictures, and headlines that best coincide with the selected imagery. In conclusion the students will then construct a brief report detailing their findings and create an original piece of artwork expressing the students' deduced understanding of the initial artwork.

Procedure: (unit lesson broken down to vague timeline)

- The teacher must first explain critical literacy and the skills necessary for understanding images and their implied meanings.
- To assist in this process use the methodology outlined by Green (2004) **. This involves examining the following:
 - Image Context = where is this image found? Does the image take one different meaning if it was located in a magazine or museum? Do you have to be a member of this culture to fully understand the connotations between something secular or sacred?
 - World Context = when was it made? What was happening in the world at the time of this arts creation and how might this factor into someone's interpretation?

- Image Creator = who made it? What does the artist have to do with the image? Was it made by a faceless person at an advertising agency or a prominent artist with a political agenda?
- Image Content & Form = what is pictured? Who or what is the subject matter? If it is a person what race, gender, age? It is also important to consider the elements and principles of design and how the arrangement might factor on the meaning.
- The Viewer = you? Who are you and what does this image effect you in your culture? Who was this art intended to be viewed by?
- Once an understanding has been gained for how to critically observe an image the student will select an image and break it down for its implied, and if present, unintended meaning.
- Adequate research must then be completed to understand the historical context and biographical history of the art and its artist.
 - Notes should be recorded as they will be used to compose a brief paper documenting the students' findings.
- Once a complete understanding has been the students will review the newspapers and magazines in order to locate an example from contemporary culture that illustrates the main message gained from the initial imagery
 - Limit to print media so that the student has some restrictions on the amount of visuals reviewed as to not feel overwhelmed
- The student, now having an original image and an image from contemporary culture to reference, will create an original artwork of their own.
 - This will express the original theme and be the student visual interpretation.
- In conclusion the student will produce a brief paper
 - Outlining the historical context, analysis, and background information pertaining to the original image
 - Explaining the secondary image and how it relates to the first
 - How their artwork displays the theme from the above and perform a self analysis pertaining to the visual elements used in their arts creation

Materials: (General list of supplies) A variety of magazines featuring popular celebrities, animals, cars, pop culture icons, etc., tracing paper, masking tape, X-acto knives, sheets of scrap paper, drawing paper, acrylic paint, pencils, permanent markers, visual aids, construction paper of assorted colors, glue, scissors, tape, practice paper, a chalk board, sink, soap, and towels.

Accommodations for ELL: Teacher will provide level appropriate source material for a selection of prearranged images to aid in comprehension. In place of the written paper the student may choose to compose a photo story or audio presentation.

Reflection: Lesson was presented to my Visual Arts: Foundations class of 28 students. After breaking past the initial, “why are we reading? This is art class!” complaint the students began to look through a collection of *Smithsonian*, *National Geographic*, *Sports Illustrated*, *Time Magazine*, and *YM* that were donated from the school library. While identifying an interesting image was the easy part developing the research was more difficult than I had intended. My class is composed of 9th through 12th graders and that age difference becomes apparent when the student is required to draw conclusions and do research. Within previous posts I have discussed the complications of teaching a wide age group with varying dedication and prerequisite knowledge. A Freshman in their first semester of high school is less prepared for a complex research assignment than a Senior who has already had 11 previous school years of experience and been exposed to this form of learning before.

Self-evaluation: I found this project to be a welcome change of pace from the direction that my class normally takes. Previously I would provide a lecture on an artist or artistic movement, the students would find an image that they would use for their own artwork and the only writing that they would take part in would be a reflection prior to a class critique. This lesson allowed the student to take a more comprehensive approach to the content and connect the image to its place in history and contemporary culture. I foresee attempting this lesson again next semester. Having the whole semester to build it into the curriculum I feel I would be better prepared to prep the whole class, at every age level, for this assignment. There is a need to break the procedure up into visual literacy, research techniques, and reading texts for applicable information. Making this a whole semester project would allow for more revisions and a more complete analysis of the image and its relation to the student.