

The Picture Book Project – Illustrating Words and Writing Pictures

Liz Racignol, Mancelona Public Schools

A 3-week Unit Designed for Students in a High School Advanced Art 2 Level Class

The Demonstration

This lesson demonstration is meant to support my contentions that:

- All students can write and draw – this will be accomplished by sharing diverse examples of mentor texts and allowing students to produce work in a safe, stress-free environment.
- Writing and drawing take time – trust the process.
- Mentor texts can help guide and inspire students work.
- By having students explore different genres of writing and various mediums of Art, students can make artistic and purposeful choices for what they will use to create their own book.
- Teacher modeling is essential for student success – it helps drive away fear.
- Art is a vocabulary-rich subject area and it is important for student to be exposed to the artistic language. Teachers are intentional about teaching vocabulary.
- Choice of subject and topic. Choice of materials/mediums – each medium creates a different outcome as does being able to choose your subject and topic.
- Students will be more invested when given a choice.
- Being able to have time to envision their writing and illustrations is essential to student success.

The Step-by-Step Lesson Development:

(Writing and illustrating invitations are woven into the steps.)

- This lesson is intended as a 3-week unit where students will explore in depth different mediums, styles of writing and illustrating and the breakdown of what it really means to write and illustrate a children's book. The unit will start with an introduction to illustration. What does it mean to be an illustrator? We will skype with two different illustrators as well as have local artist/illustrators visit the classroom.
- We also will discuss the importance of writing. What is the purpose of writing? Students will have a choice of whether to represent their writing and illustrating in a digital format or in a paper book format. Time will be given for experimenting with illustrating another student's writing.
- Then students will have the opportunity to experience the challenge of illustrating but also the true creative process. We will also invite some elementary students to our classroom to share their favorite children's books as well as help with feedback on our stories.

The Step-by-Step Lesson Development continued:

- By the end of week 1, students will be given a rubric to follow for their final project. This will specifically demonstrate the criteria required in terms that explain the standards covered as well as the points needed to receive full credit. We will also take time to share our thoughts, illustrations, writing, success, happy mistakes and what we learn along the way. There is much to be said for immediate feedback from your peers -there is no better resource.
- (Plenty of mentor texts will be provided for students for the entirety of the unit.)
- Introduction: (25 minutes) – Students are greeted and we will start with me sharing some of my favorite children’s book authors and illustrators as examples.
- Students will be given time to share a favorite children’s book and why it is their favorite after we explore the examples.
- Students will be given 10 minutes to look through a children’s book of their choice with a partner. They will write down their noticings about the writing and illustrating on the provided form. When time is up, student will be invited to share some of their noticings on the board at the front of the class.
- Each student will then be given a puzzle piece of an illustration. They must find their matching partner piece. We will then participate in an activity where student will write a detailed sentence on a piece of paper and switch papers with their puzzle partner and then each student will have a chance to illustrate the words on the paper.
- The introduction will conclude with an invitation to write and illustrate. I will briefly discuss the elements of a children’s book and provide students with resources before they explore the realm of creating their own storybook.
- Work time: 45 minutes –
- A planning page for writing and drawing will be provided for thumbnail sketches and practice writing.
- Give students the “Tips for Writing a Children’s Picture Storybook” from ReadWriteThink.
- Students will be provided with a “book” of drawing paper that they will use to create their own story and illustrations. This can be used now or saved for later.
- Students will be provided with a box of art materials as well as watercolor paints to share with their table partner.
- Books will be provided with different art techniques as well to use as a resource for working in different mediums.
- Conclusion: (20 minutes) Students will be invited to share their projects – maybe one or two pages in a quick whip-around so that each student has the time and opportunity to share.

Bibliography

- Brett, Jan *The Easter Egg* Scholastic 2010
- Bryant, Jen *A Splash of Red: The Life and Art of Horace Pippin* Random House, Inc. 2013
- Carle, Eric *Artist to artist: 23 Major Illustrators Talk to Children about Their Art* Philomel Books 2007
- Salisbury, Martin *Illustrating Children's Books: Creating Pictures for Publication* Quarto Publishing 2004
- Tan, Shaun *The Bird King: an artist's notebook* Scholastic 2010
- Yolen, Jane *Owl Moon* Philomel Books 1987

Possible Lesson Extensions and Adaptations:

- Share your finished books with preschool/elementary students.
- Submit books for publication.
- Create an exhibit for the community at school or the local library.
- Extend the lesson to cross-curricular projects in creative non-fiction with science or social studies.
- Have one age group create text, the other age group illustrate, or vice versa
- Turn art work into digital stories with a student narrative voiceover
- Interview parents/grandparents/elders to gather stories to illustrate

Affect Demonstrated Throughout the Lesson and Described by Your Students:

- We enjoyed your easy going style and inviting voice; you approached us as capable artists
- Calm and conversational voice kept us engaged and optimistic
- Personal and professional stance affected our own demeanor
- Created classroom culture that invited and encouraged creativity and risk taking
- Thank you for letting us play with crayons and other awesome art supplies.
- We loved being immersed in all those fabulous picture books that conjured up warm memories and opened up new worlds for our own creating
- Thank you for sharing your own artwork and creative process with us.

Best Practices Modeled in the Lesson:

- You shared your own art.
- You created and composed alongside your students.
- You allowed the choice of topics, mediums, and mentor texts.
- You shared a model from the real world of illustration by having us illustrate someone else's work.
- You allowed us to work collaboratively.
- Provided selection of multiple mediums for purpose

Best Practices Modeled in the Lesson continued:

- You immersed us in so many rich mentor texts and possibilities.
- You created a reassuring environment where we felt safe to take risks.
- You shared professional resources along with mentor texts.
- You provided a library of professional reference books.
- You provided extraordinary materials and supplies for us to choose from.
- You provided multiple opportunities for us to share our work.
- Provided selection of multiple mediums for purpose
- Appropriate balance of teacher-led, student-centered activities
- Full variety of work groups (whole group through individual)
- Craft as process/ multiple steps

National Standards of the Visual Arts Embedded in the Lesson:

- Standard 2.2
Effectively develop and apply critical thinking strategies through the art making process.
- Standard 2.3
Effectively collaborate, communicate and work with others to create new ideas.
- Standard 2.4
Independently initiate new ideas employing inventiveness and innovation.
- Standard 3.3
Critically observe, describe, and analyze visual characteristics within works of art.
- Standard 5.1
Effectively recognize and describe personal, family and community connections with artworks.
- Standard 5.5
Effectively analyze and describe ways in which the principles and subject matter of other disciplines taught in school and interrelated with the visual arts.