

grey/re(a)d: in response

An exhibition at PlatteForum by Julia Karll and six teachers who investigated the impact of news and media on our lives. Each teacher wrote a lesson plan based on their experience that can be utilized in their classrooms.

Essential Questions

What is truth? What is a lie? How do you know what you know? What is reported? How do statistics impact your daily life? How does media impact your daily life? How does the news make you feel...and what do you do with those feelings? What does art do? Why do artists choose the materials they work with? How can I have hope knowing what I know?

LESSON PLANS

1. Personal prayer flags: An antidote to bad news (Inspired by Tibetan Prayer Flags)

Grade level: 9-12 (adaptable to younger students)

Lesson Designed by: Marcy Mitchell, Bruce Randolph

Essential Questions:

How do you receive news and information?

How does the news make you feel?

How do you personally deal with the bad news you hear?

Do you think you can make a difference? How?

Summary of project: Students will create a series of prayer flags in response to the bad news they are exposed to in the media.

Antidote: 1. A substance that counteracts the effect of poison or toxin
2. Something that will take away or reduce the bad effects of something experienced earlier.

Tibetan prayer flags: Traditionally, prayer flags are used to promote peace, compassion, strength, and wisdom. The flags do not carry prayers to 'gods,' a common misconception, rather the Tibetans believe the prayers and mantras will be blown by the wind to spread the good will and compassion into all pervading space. Therefore, prayer flags are thought to bring benefit to all. By hanging flags in high places the "Wind Horse" will carry the blessings depicted on the flags to all beings. As wind passes over the surface of the flags, which are sensitive to the slightest movement of the wind, the air is purified and sanctified by the Mantras. The prayers of a flag become a permanent part of the universe as the images fade from exposure to the elements. Just as life moves on and is replaced by new life, Tibetans renew their hopes for the world by continually mounting new flags alongside the old. This act symbolizes a welcoming of life changes and an acknowledgment that all beings are part of a greater ongoing cycle. (*wikipedia*)

Materials:

Cheesecloth or other open weave, sheer fabric cut into 6" squares

Printmaking materials; either linoleum, Styrofoam, potatoes, stencils, ink, paint--whatever works for you and your budget

String

Newspapers, magazines etc. for reading

Fabric Dye

Procedures:

1. Discuss the news; where does it come from? How does it make you feel? How do you respond to that? Do you think it relates to or affects you and your life? How? Etc. Show images depicting how some contemporary artists have responded to the same questions.
2. Spend one period allowing students to read newspapers and magazines. Have them choose one article that really has an emotional impact on them.
3. What is the dominant emotion the student feels after reading it? Fear? Anger? Confusion? (If you use sketchbooks, have student cut and paste it into book and write a short response.)
4. Now that they have labeled the ONE main emotion they feel, have students start brainstorming about words that counteract or are the opposite of that word. For example: Hate / Love, Anger/ Joy, Fear/ Security, Hopelessness / Hope etc.
5. Once they have determined the opposite of their word they can begin to brainstorm images that represent the word or emotion they have chosen. For example: Hope might be in the image of a flower blooming etc. Keep it simple, as you will be carving it into a relief print. (This is a perfect lesson for graphic design...you might want to show some images of universal symbols etc. to show students how to keep it simple)
6. At this point, show them an example of a Tibetan prayer flag and discuss its meaning and use.
7. Make flags: Dye fabric, cut blocks, print on fabric squares. Each student should make a number of prints so that they can exchange with others and make their strand of flags to take home. Before taking home, install all students' work somewhere in the school with a short explanation your project. Students can then take them home, hang them outside, and let their prayers drift on the wind...

2. News: a response

Grade Level: 7-12, could be done individually or in dyads/small groups

Subject Area: Visual Arts mostly, but could be a collaboration with Social Studies or Language Arts

Lesson Designed by: Beth Erlander, Florence Crittenton School

Essential Questions:

How does the news make you feel?

How do we know what we know is true?

How does the media impact your daily life?

What is not reported?

What is the significance of the materials?

How were you able to express your emotions through the media you chose?

What message would you like the world to see and hear?

How do artists express certain emotions such as anger and rage, etc.?

How have artists used art to respond to world events?

Summary of Project: the goal of this project is to facilitate critical thinking skills in regards to the news and to pay attention to how the news makes you feel and then create a visual response that expresses this. Students will use at least one kind of news media material such as newspaper, VHS or cassette tape, print outs from the internet, etc., in combination with other arts media to create a 2D or 3D mixed media piece. If done in dyads or small groups the purpose would also be to learn how to communicate effectively with others and work collaboratively towards a similar goal.

Objectives:

Students will read or watch the news daily for one week and collect stories that elicit an emotional response.

Students will gather these articles and collect them in a sketchbook. Next to the article the student will create a visual art response to how the article makes them feel. Based on this collection students will then focus on the following statement, “The news makes me feel _____.” (This could also be a certain topic vs. “the news”).

Students will use at least one kind of news media material such as newspapers, VHS or cassette tape, prints outs from the internet, etc., in combination with other arts media to create a 2D or 3D mixed media piece.

Students will research how art can be an emotional response to world events.

Students will write an artist’s statement.

Materials/Resources: Access to all forms of the news--newspapers, VHS tape, internet, etc., sketchbook, paint, oil and chalk pastels, markers, glue, scissors, tape, glue gun, paper, fabric and various other items to create a mixed media piece.

3. Two Walls and a Floor

Grades 7-12

Subject area: Visual Arts

Lesson Designed by: Theresa Clowes, Colorado Academy

Essential Questions:

- How do you know what we know?
- How do we know what we know is true?
- How does the news make you feel?
- How are our personal lives impacted by media daily?
- How does it influence our choices?

Summary of project:

In this workshop, students will spend a week collecting newspaper articles that somehow affect them. They will be writing or drawing responses to these stories in their sketchbooks. They will then create an architectural space (two walls and a floor) juxtaposing their life and their response to one news article. Students will research websites, videos, and books, in search of content for their environment. After many days brain-storming and sketching, the students will begin building. Form core or cardboard boxes can be used to create their initial walls and floor and then utilized an endless array of materials to fill their spaces with objects that portray their response to their choice of news story.

Skills

Information & Technology

Global research, Creative writing, Response drawing, Multi media collage, Creative problem solving building small-scale models.

Assessment

Final self-assessment writing. Final group critique.

Resources

These are examples from a similar project where students juxtaposed their life with that of a contemporary artist.

Michael Zimmerman (7th grade) and James Turrell

Michael was inspired by Turrell's quote, "I want to create an atmosphere that can be consciously plumbed with seeing." He was drawn to Turrell's work because it "speaks to the viewer without words, impacting the eye, body, and mind with a spiritual experience." Michael created a spiritual space by using calming light and personal drawings. The viewer engaged the piece by looking into the central sculpture, where mirrors create an optical illusion of light. This was inspired by Turrell's "Roden Crater".



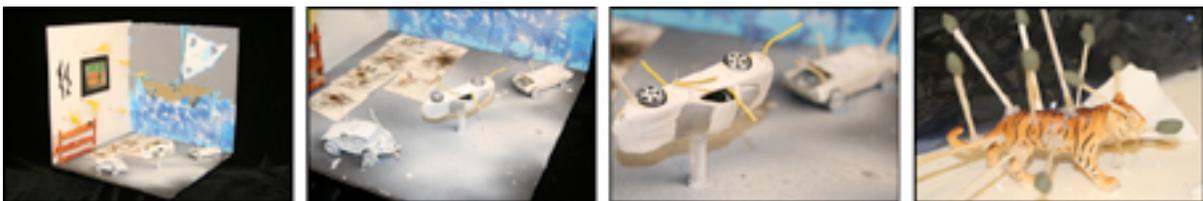
Angelo Carlo (8th grade) and Anne Hamilton

Angelo was drawn to Hamilton's repetitive patterning found throughout her installations and performances. He is a quiet student and found her work to be meditative, a frame of mind he seeks in his own life. Angelo transformed each wall of his space using the idea of repetition. One wall, consisting of cut wire, created an outstanding visual texture. The other was wallpapered with hand painted red tiles. One could imagine sitting in this space contemplating the meaning of these two mediums, with their pleasant look but opposing feelings.



Anthony Monzon (8th grade) and Cai Guo-Qiang

Anthony likes the power found in exploding things. He was immediately drawn to Cai Guo-Qiang's signature "explosion" events. In a time when bombs and explosions are common household words, Anthony was awe struck by this unique technique. Whoever thought explosion could be used as an art form? There are endless themes in Guo-Qiang's work, similar to Anthony's continuously growing mind. Anthony's space was a mini re-creation Guo-Qiang's work.



4. News Puzzle

Grades 6-12

Subject areas Visual Art/Language

Essential Questions

What is truth?

How does the media impact your daily life?

How do you know what you know?

What is the difference between news and media?

What is a lie?

How do you feel about the state of the world?

How do you read the world around you?

Summary of project

Students will create an individual puzzle piece based on their response to the news and media.

The pieces will be assembled into a whole upon completion of the project

Procedures

- Teacher should cut out puzzle pieces from cardstock, poster-board or other heavy paper. If you number the back of each piece it will be much easier to assemble later.
- Students will read newspaper articles and start to cut out articles that they find compelling. Discuss to the degree that you feel is important. Focus on the essential questions.
- Students will write a word or a short poem expressing how they feel about the articles they have read.
- Pass out puzzle pieces.
- Students now have the freedom to design their piece as they wish using the newspaper article(s) they chose, watercolor, or any other media you would like to include. The word or poem they wrote will be included on their piece. When complete, outline each piece with VHS or audio tape, yarn, or thread.
- Assemble the puzzle and display

5. Expressing Statistics

Lesson Designed by: Laura Zoromski, Clear Lake Middle School

Grade level: middle school

Essential questions:

How do people manipulate information in the news?

How do statistics fuel our opinions? Our worldview? Our community outlook?

How do statistics effect what is reported?

Areas of Interaction connection:

Approaches to learning (skills)

- a. Converting fractions, decimals and percents
- b. Proportions and ratios
- c. Research techniques
- d. Problem solving strategies (content)

Homo Faber (man/woman as a creator):

- a. Students will create visual representations of statistics.

- b. Students will incorporate meaningful materials and mathematical representations into their art piece.

Content questions:

What are statistics?

How do we represent statistics?

How can statistics be represented non-mathematically?

How do Julia Karll and Chris Jordan use media to express their feelings about the world?

Intercultural Awareness:

Statistics are used worldwide.

All forms of Media, to make information more accessible, use statistics.

Interdisciplinary areas:

Language A: Writing a persuasive essay supporting their personal view of the media/news.

Humanities: Investigating statistics on a chosen social issue.

Science: Explore how Internet, TV, satellite, cell phones and radio were invented and the scientific properties that make them possible.

Materials:

Recycled materials; newspaper, videos, audiotapes, etc.

Art supplies, determined by individual students need.

Computer lab and Internet.

Colorado Standards:

Standard 3

Students use data collection and analysis, statistics, and probability in problem-solving situations and communicate the reasoning used in solving these problems.

Aims and Objectives:

Develop a positive attitude toward the continued learning of mathematics.

Appreciate the international dimensions of mathematics and its varied cultural and historical perspectives.

Develop the ability to communicate mathematics with appropriate symbols and language.

Introduction:

Day 1: How do people manipulate information in the news? How do statistics fuel our opinions? Our worldview? Our community outlook

- Students will reflect on each of these questions in their interactive notebook for five minutes. (Epistemic)
- Students will then share ideas with their fellow classmates, in a pair/share protocol. (Epistemic)
- As a whole group we will discuss student opinions and establish a list of possible answers. (Epistemic/Inquiry)

Introduce the Assignment:

- Each student will research how statistics are used in the news.
- After researching many different possibilities, students will choose a specific issue, news itself, environment, gas prices etc.
- Groups will read and analyze their statistics and create a way of presenting them visually to the class. (Content/problem solving)

- The statistics and method of creating their visual representation and reason for using specific media will be part of their presentation. (Problem solving)

Day 2, 3, & 4:

- Students will use the next three-days to work on their project.
- Discuss how statistics may need to be altered visually to achieve an accurate representation.
- Research statistics.
- Investigate different media used in art.
- Use of problem solving strategies.
- Group work.

Day 5:

- Student present artwork. Have students participate in a Gallery Walk. (*Content/problem solving*)
- Peer evaluations. (*Epistemic*)
- Student's self-reflections. (*Epistemic*)

Assessment:

- Students will be assessed on their representation of statistics visually.
- Students will also be assessed on their understanding of statistics based on their presentation and their reflections in their interactive notebook. (Content/Epistemic)

Julia Karll www.platteforum.org

Chris Jordan www.chrisjordan.com

www.flashfilm.com/us/people/photographer/pp0003chrisjordan.html

www.orionmagazine.org/index.php/articles/article/70/

<http://teesserae.blogspot.com/2007/09/photographic-artist-chris-jordan.html>

Extension: Use the book “Lying with Statistics” to explore how the media manipulates information to support personal beliefs. Have students express visually how this manipulation makes them feel.

6. Media Book

Grades 6-8

Subject: Areas: Social Studies, Visual Art

Lesson Designed by: Noelle Jung, Blessed Sacrament School

Essential Questions:

How do you receive information relating to news and current events?

How do you feel after learning this information?

Summary of project: Students will create a small mixed-media book using newspaper articles and VHS video tape to express their reactions to the news they read.

Activities:

Session One:

Introduction to artist Julia Karll. View Platte Forum's Grey/Re(a)d exhibit either in person or online. Discuss the subject matter of the show and how the materials used related to the overall concept.

Assign HW – Collect newspaper articles that you find important. Articles may be from any newspaper, any section, any theme, but they must be considered current events. Decide which parts of the articles are most important to you.

Session Two

Glue your articles to cardstock paper in a visually stimulating way. Parts of articles should run off the page. It's not necessary to contain the entire article, but make sure the section you find important is visible. On a second sheet of card stock, draw a pair of eyeglasses in the same area as your article's important section.

Session Three:

Design a collage or drawing on the eyeglass page that relates to your article. Cut out the eyeglasses to form a type of window. Place the article behind the eyeglass window so the important section is visible. You may alter your article with watercolor to enhance the meaning of your work.

Session Four:

Continue this process of article and window until you have a desired amount of pages for a book. Glue videotape to the front and back of one side of each page (the side which will be closest to the spine) to create a tab.

Session Five:

Sew all the pages together by stitching the videotape tabs with book binding thread to create your book.

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WE BELIEVE

Through the creative process, PlatteForum gives hope and direction to underserved youth who collaborate with master artists from around the world. This experience transforms the lives of the youth, the artists and the community.

youth. artists. community
Transform lives through art.