



A Picture is Worth a Thousand Words: Creating Expressive Character Portraits in Art based on the work of Hanoch Piven, Kara Walker, and Cindy Sherman

Curriculum Unit 10.02.03
by Melody S. Gallagher

Introduction

Malcolm S. Forbes once said: "Education's purpose is to replace an empty mind with an open one."

This quotation exemplifies the ultimate aim of my art unit for elementary students. I found it interesting that Forbes chose not to say that education's purpose is to fill a mind (the opposite of an empty mind) but to open one. We can "fill" our minds with rote information acquired from facts or other sources, or we can open our minds to approaching subject matter from a critical stance and draw our own conclusions. Opening the mind to analyzing ideas and to solving problems creatively can allow a student to form critical opinions on various subject matters. The role of the teacher, whether it is of language arts, math, history, science, or as in my case, art, must then be to teach students how to think critically about subject matter, and ultimately, become independent thinkers about the world around them.

The saying "a picture is worth a thousand words" is very fitting for this unit. Being able to discuss and write about one's artwork is an essential task of the contemporary artist and one that young artists should begin to develop. Often times people respond to modern art with: "That's art? I could make that!" Or, "what is that? I don't get it!" Without knowing how to interpret an artist's intended meaning critically, a viewer can often be confused. It is the goal of my unit to teach students the process of art criticism-- how to view, analyze, and respond to artworks critically so that they can begin to develop their skills of interpretation and "open their minds" as independent thinkers.

In creating this unit I found myself being faced with the task of how to approach teaching art criticism and critical thinking skills to my students. It occurred to me that I could relate the process of art criticism to processes taught in other disciplines, specifically, in language arts. Although my students have had little or no exposure to authentic art criticism, they have had to analyze literary works and characters in their language arts classes. Understanding how concepts in language arts relate to those in the visual arts will give students a more holistic view of critical analysis. Within this unit students will be exposed to three contemporary artists who depict characters in very different ways within their artworks. To bridge students' understanding between the literary and visual arts, students will be provided with opportunities to learn how techniques used in the

analysis of characters in literature can be applied to the analysis of characters in artworks.

Objectives and Goals

While conducting research for this seminar I happened upon this quotation by Alphonse Karr that I found fitting: "Every man has three characters that which he exhibits, that which he has, and that which he thinks he has." I would like for students to learn about various ways to develop, view, and interpret themselves and their peers: how we see ourselves (that which he has), how others see us (that which he exhibits), and how we would like to be seen (that which he thinks he has). Student will explore these three types of interpretation through the artwork by Hanoch Piven (who creates character portraits with objects), Kara Walker (who expresses characters in silhouette form), and Cindy Sherman (who transforms herself into a character in her photography work).

As part of the New Haven Art Curriculum, students are asked to answer essential questions as part of each lesson. For this unit they will answer the questions: How does an artist view him or herself? How does he or she express this in his or her artwork? How can an artist interpret what he or she sees in others and express what he or she knows in the creation of an artwork? And how can an artist use him or herself as a model to create an expressive character in his or her artwork.

Throughout the unit, students are forced to think beyond what they simply see before their eyes. Usually, this can pose a significant challenge (for both the students and the teacher). My goal is to guide students gradually by employing character analysis strategies within each lesson, so that students may emerge as critical thinkers of artworks and of character in written work. I view authentically integrating literature and literacy skills into my art lessons as a key component of my curriculum. I feel that this unit will provide students with opportunities to learn how to incorporate character analysis with the process of art criticism. By creating a cross-curricular connection, the ultimate goal of students becoming holistic learners may be achieved.

Who, What and Where I teach

I teach K-4 Art at East Rock Global Studies Magnet School. East Rock is a large K-8 urban magnet school comprised of a diverse population of students. The majority of our students are native to New Haven. About a third of the population, however, are recent immigrants from over 100 countries. East Rock also has a large special education population, which includes a number of hearing impaired students. Because of these factors, students' learning needs and styles vary considerably. I have found, however, that the hearing impaired students and many of the English speakers of other languages (ESOL) are visual learners and benefit from visual learning strategies. Therefore, the art room is a classroom in which they tend to grasp concepts and are engaged in learning.

As teachers we are asked to address the unique and individual needs of our school and student population. Although a student body that includes individuals from over 100 countries makes for a diverse population, many students are unaware of the cultural differences that exist between them. More importantly, they are often unaware of the similarities that they may share. A key component of this unit is to provide students with the opportunity to explore how they see themselves and how others see them in writing as preparatory work for the creation of three distinct character portraits. Through the first two activities, students will be able to develop their skills of critical analysis of art as well as character analysis, which will prepare them for their final assignment of creating a fictitious character. This sequence will not only develop students' skills over time but also allow them to look more closely at the views that they may have of themselves and of others.

I am a fairly new teacher in New Haven. I began teaching part time a little over four years ago. After teaching for a few months, my supervisor asked me to join a team with five other teachers to assist in writing the new art curriculum for New Haven. Our district was just beginning the process of redesigning all curriculums within each discipline area. After lengthy discussions and debates, it was decided that the framework of the curriculum was to be based on the elements of art and principles of design. The elements of art are: line, shape, color, texture, value, and space. Each grade level would complete a unit based upon each element of art within a given timeframe of the school year. The principles of design would be worked into each unit and vary within each unit according to the individual teacher's approach.

In addition to the elements and principles of art, the curriculum also called for teachers to implement art history and art criticism within each unit of study. As part of each lesson students are asked to answer an "essential question" for the lesson. These are based upon the concepts being taught within each lesson. The overall design of the curriculum's framework would allow for all students to be learning similar concepts at the same time, while allowing teachers the freedom to create their own lessons based on the concepts to be taught. This design is very helpful within New Haven's district as many students change schools from year to year or within a given school year. Approaching the curriculum design in this way would allow for all students to "pick up" where they left off and give continuity to student learning throughout the district.

Rationale

In addition to writing the new curriculum, the New Haven School System has developed three Power Standards for the Visual Arts: Creating Art, Connecting Art (to other disciplines), and Responding to Art. For the purpose of this unit I am striving to integrate literacy components into my art lessons. Not only does this integration fulfill the "Connecting Art" Power Standard but it also allows for students to grasp objectives on a more holistic level by learning how concepts relate between language arts and visual arts. In particular, this unit will incorporate skills and concepts that fall within the fourth grade CMT strand for language arts, as many of our students struggle with these tests.

Our school system has asked all teachers to test out the objectives and concepts presented to determine if any changes are needed. To address this district need, I began to think about concepts that my students have trouble understanding. Students seem to have had little or no prior exposure to authentic art criticism. They tend to struggle with this both during oral and in written responses to art. Therefore, this unit is designed to allow for students to develop their ability to respond to artwork in a critical manner.

My aim in teaching this unit will be to have students recognize the connection between artistic and literary processes by increasing their skills in reading, interpreting, and making judgments that are based on their critical analysis of an artwork while learning how techniques of interpretation of characters in literary works correspond with the process of art criticism.

Strategies

The Process of Art Criticism

Within each lesson, students will learn how to use the process of art criticism to interpret artworks. The process of art criticism involves four steps: description, analysis, interpretation, and judgment. I find that students are always eager to give their interpretations of artworks. They sometimes struggle, however, with backing their interpretations with information based on their analysis of an artwork. The purpose of this process is to guide students gradually in formulating a critical opinion. The process for art criticism will first be used with students as an oral response when introducing them to the artists as well as an assessment form in analyzing their own artwork in written responses.

Description

The first step in art criticism is to describe what you see. This can be harder than it seems. Sometimes students jump to giving their opinions of what is happening in the artwork, which is not the intent of this step. The description of the artwork should be limited to describing the depicted characters in terms of what they look like and the media used to create the artwork. A good way to approach this with students is to ask them to describe the work as if they were describing it to a blind person who cannot see the visual elements of what they are looking at.

Analysis

The second step of art criticism involves an analysis of the artwork. It is during this step that the particular art elements and principles of design, as they apply to the artwork, are discussed. The elements of art are: line, shape, color, form, texture, and space. The principles of design are: repetition, emphasis, contrast, balance, and unity. In describing this step to students, I tell them that this is the step that they will use the most "vocabulary" words. During this step they are describing the artwork and the composition in formal terms. I will ask students: "What art elements or principles of design did the artist use in creating his or her artwork?"

Interpretation

Students will then interpret what the artist is trying to say about the characters in their artwork. It is here that they will provide an opinion that is based on their description and analysis of the artwork. I will ask the question: "Based on the medium that was used and how the character was depicted, what do you think the artist is trying to say about these characters?"

Judgment

The last step in art criticism is to make a judgment. I explain to students that making a judgment is like being a critic of the artwork. A critic- whether it is a literary critic, film critic, or an art critic- is someone whose opinion on a topic we most want to hear. The job of the art critic is to judge an artwork in a critical manner, that is to say, to base their judgments on the critical analysis and interpretations of artworks. In order for students to make a critical judgment they must answer the question: "Based on how you interpret what the artist was trying to say and how they said it (through the description and analysis you gave) do you think the artist was successful?"

The Process of Character Analysis

During the second part of the process for each lesson, each student will begin to develop a character to be depicted in his or her artwork. I will have students complete a written character analysis sheet to guide them in the development of their characters. Although characters may be analyzed in many ways, for the purpose of this unit character analysis will focus on four attributes: physical, intellectual, emotional, and social. These attributes and the use of them in teaching character development will vary based on the particular lesson.

Physical

Students will be asked to describe the physical attributes of their character. This step is similar to the "describe" step of art criticism. They are only to describe what they see. Some questions for students to consider are: Is your character male or female? What does the character look like? How old is the character? What is he or she wearing?

Intellectual

Students should consider what their character is thinking and why. Sometimes an artist will add clues in a work of art to help the viewer infer what the character may be thinking about or what type of person he or she is. Students should begin to consider how they will add "clues" and what props they may include.

Emotional

Students will also infer how the character is feeling. This step of inference is similar to the interpretation step of art criticism. Students should answer the question, "How does the character feel about what they are thinking?" Students should begin to think about facial expressions and other nonverbal clues that help tell a viewer how the character feels. Students should consider: What "face" is the character making? How does the body pose help tell you how the character is feeling?

Social

Another aspect of character analysis is to consider how the character would socially interact with others. Students should consider if their character is mean, sneaky, shy, popular, or any other social attributes that the character may display.

The Artists

There are three artists that I will incorporate into the unit. Each lesson will focus on the work of one artist while developing students' ability to analyze art. The artists I chose to include are all contemporary artists. I enjoy using contemporary artists as examples because they create art for today's viewer in response to the world in which we live. We, as teachers, hear a lot about "relating concepts to the students' world". By using contemporary artists, teachers allow for students to respond to art that is a reflection of our society and world as a whole. The artists I chose to focus the three lessons on are: Hanoch Piven, Kara Walker, and Cindy Sherman. These three artists act as a strategy in teaching about creating and analyzing characters because they all depict characters in their artworks. The lessons will include having students create a self-portrait (assemblage collage lesson), a portrait of a peer (silhouette lesson), and a character portrait (photography lesson). These lessons will expose students to three distinct different ways to approach character development in their artworks.

Hanoch Piven is a contemporary children's book author and illustrator that I will use as the basis for a lesson on creating a self-portrait for the first lesson. He an international artist (like many of my students), who originates from Israel, went to college in New York City, and now resides in Barcelona, Spain. He also incorporates literacy techniques (similes and metaphors) in his creation of his assemblage character portraits. Piven has a unique style of creating character portraits. Instead of simply drawing a character he creates an assemblage collage that is made with objects that help describe the character itself. In one of his books, he uses the technique of creating simile sentences to describe the character. I will use this strategy to guide students to learn how similes can be used as a basis for describing their own characters. I will use three of his books, all which incorporate characters created through assemblage collage for this lesson.

Kara Walker and her silhouette paper cutouts will be the basis for the second lesson. Kara Walker is a young African-American artist who is able to evoke an emotional response through her highly expressive artwork. Interestingly, though, she uses just one color, black, and with this simplistic design strategy she is able to depict distinct characters in her highly graphic artwork. In addition, her work is often based on literature and references historical accounts. Students will learn how graphic artists today have employed the silhouette technique to describe characters, as in the now famous ipod ads. They will also be read children's books that use silhouette illustration to describe the characters in the books. In this lesson, students will interview one another to gather "historical information" from a classmate and write character descriptions. They will work in pairs to create life-size silhouette cutouts that depict a classmate's character through body movement and gesture.

For the final lesson, students will learn how to create a fictitious character. They will build upon what they have learned in the two previous lessons about depicting and analyzing characters to create characters that are based upon themselves and that also incorporate imaginary characteristics. They will study and learn about the artworks by Cindy Sherman. Cindy Sherman is a contemporary artist whose photography explores the clichés of our society, dealing with gender, race, and social class. Although she uses herself as the model, her works are not self-portraits but rather visual character studies. Her work has evolved over time from creating narrative fragments to more straightforward images of created characters. From analyzing the work of Sherman, students will create written character studies to be used as the basis for a character in a photography lesson.

The Process

Because the process of responding to art is similar in the steps to analyze literature, I will utilize the analysis of characters to bridge students' learning across curriculums. Throughout each lesson, I will employ various strategies to guide students gradually in the process of developing, creating, revising, and analyzing artworks.

Each lesson will begin with an introduction of the artist. Students will be introduced to the artist by viewing a selection of his or her artwork and will be engaged in a whole class critique that will be guided by my questions. The purpose of the critique is to allow students to develop their oral skills of analysis and interpretation. This process will help guide them in developing their own judgments that are based on the critical analysis of the artworks. To focus students on critical analysis, it is important that the guided questions are based on art criticism and the analysis of the characters depicted in the artworks. Although the discussion will be guided by my questions, students should be allowed to express themselves openly during this step. Because of this, there are no "wrong answers" during the discussion. It is important to note that this step can take up an entire class session. To keep students on topic, I will guide students to focus only on elements in the artworks that they will employ in their own creations.

After I have introduced the artist and his or her work, students will write responses to written guided questions that will focus them on developing the characters that they wish to depict in their own artwork. It is during this activity that I will employ literary techniques that apply to analyzing characters.

After students have developed an idea for a character to represent in their artwork, I will introduce and demonstrate how to use the particular medium to be used in the lesson. In the first lesson, students will be introduced to Hanoeh Piven's techniques of creating a portrait collage using objects. For the second lesson, students will be introduced to how to create a silhouette from cut paper. In the last lesson, students will be introduced to photography techniques and learn how technical aspects can aid in the depiction of the characters in their artworks.

Students will then be provided with time to experiment with the media and practice the techniques I have demonstrated. In this step they will use their written work as reference as they begin to experiment with creating their artwork. They will focus on creating their character using the art techniques in such a way that viewers (their classmates) would be able to interpret their character in the ways that the artist (the student) intended.

During this process, students will be provided with opportunities to revise their work. A key component of the revision activities are for students to be able to view their own works in progress and the work of their classmates in a critical manner to determine if they have visually expressed their characters in a successful manner. They will engage in peer critiques to determine if the written descriptions of their characters match the peer interpretations of their visual work.

Before they begin the final revisions to their work, students will have one-on-one teacher meetings to discuss their work and any possible revisions that may be necessary.

After their individual teacher meetings they will be provided with class time to complete their work.

As closure to each lesson, students will complete written responses that require them to use the four steps of art criticism to critically describe, analyze, and interpret their characters and artworks to determine if they were successful in the project.

General Assessment Strategies

To assess students' knowledge during these lessons I will utilize various assessment strategies throughout the unit. During the introduction to each lesson, I will engage students in verbal response sessions. I will assess their understanding of the artist I have introduced, the elements that the lesson is focusing on, and their ability to critically analyze the depicted characters. This first form of assessment is critical and will allow me to assess if I will need to spend more time explaining concepts or allow more time for discussion. It is important not to move to the next step until students have a clear understanding of what they are looking at and to be focused on during the making of their own artwork. While they work, I will check in with students individually to assess their understanding of the concepts for the day. Some students jump right into working without thinking about why they are making their art. I will ask students what they are trying to say about their character? And how are they trying to say it? How are they using the mediums chosen to help show who their characters are? Students will also be assessed on their written work. After they develop a written description of their character for their artwork, I will provide them with written feedback and engage them in one-on-one teacher meetings to help develop their ability to express their character in their artwork. During these meetings I am looking for students to be able to discuss the reasons why they depicted their characters in the

way that they choose. The intent of these assessment strategies is for students gradually to develop and refine their skills within each lesson.

Classroom Activities and Lessons

For the purpose of this unit, I plan to teach these lessons to fourth grade students to expose them to three different artists and media representing character. By teaching the lessons in a sequential order, students can experience a variety of models for depicting character in artworks. These lessons, however, may be used individually or with slight modifications, with higher grades through the high school level. Each lesson should take a minimum of six sessions: one day for introduction, one day for developing a character, two days for creating their artwork, one day for revisions, and one day for closure. Pacing may vary if individual classes need more time on a particular concept or step within the process.

Lesson Plan #1: Hanoch Piven and how we see ourselves

For the first lesson, I will introduce Hanoch Piven and his artwork by reading students the book: *My Dog is as Smelly as Dirty Socks*. In this book a little girl draws a picture of her father on a piece of notebook paper. It is drawn with pen and looks like a stick figure. The type of drawing is an example of a typical young child's depiction of a person. The little girl goes on to say that you cannot tell who her Dad really is in her picture and begins to describe him with similes and objects. When you turn the page there is a new portrait of her dad in which all of the facial features are made up of the objects she used to describe her Dad. In the book, we see her mother, brother, baby sibling, and dog's character traits all described with objects. At the end of the book she describes her own character traits and creates her own self-portrait. It is interesting to note that when describing her family members she lists only a few characteristics; however, when she describes herself she lists three pages of ways to describe herself! I will discuss with students how we know ourselves very well, much better than we know anyone else, and that when describing one's self one can list many characteristics. I have read this book to students before and they love this story. They remain completely engaged, laugh throughout the reading, and are able to apply the concepts immediately.

After reading them this book I will assess students' knowledge of how to show character traits in artwork by using objects and creating simile sentences. I will write a variety of character traits on post-it notes and set up a table with objects. Students will gather around the table and pick a character trait that can be described with an object. As they place the post-it note next to the object, students will be instructed to say, "I am as... (insert character trait on post-it) as... (insert object). An example would be: "I am as curious as a detective and the object would be a magnifying glass." Or, "I am as sneaky as a snake and the object would be a toy snake."

The next step in guiding students is to have them use the four steps of art criticism to analyze the characters in Hanoch Piven's artwork. For this portion of the lesson, I will color copy pages from his book *What Athletes are Made Of* and have students write written responses in small groups to analyze the characters. In this book, Piven depicts famous athletes with objects. Each page has information about the athlete that students will read to interpret why he chose the objects that he did to create the portraits. On the bottom of each page there is a bit of information that gives "clues" as to why particular objects are used. I will tell students that they are "art detectives" and must read the clues carefully to figure out why Piven chose particular objects. For instance, Piven chose to use an orange golf ball for the nose of one athlete who is from Sweden and

played golf in the snow. The "clue" at the bottom of the page tells the reader that she used an orange ball so that she could find it in the snow.

Students will then begin to develop their ideas for their own characters. I will provide students with a self-portrait character sheet to guide them in this process. They will create simile sentences using character traits and objects to express who they are. They will begin to answer the essential question: How does an artist view him or herself and how do they express this in an artwork? I will have a variety of objects for students to use for their artwork and students will also have the option of bringing in their own objects from home. To keep the objects small enough to fit into their composition, I will provide students with a small bag to bring in their objects that they wrote about and to use in their artwork.

After students have filled out their character sheet and gathered their objects, I will demonstrate how to experiment with creating their portrait. As students independently work, I will discuss with students individually if their objects relate to their character traits, and if they want to use all of their objects or change any to depict their character traits in their artwork in such a way that a viewer would be able to interpret why he or she used the objects. They will be provided with time to revise their work based on peer evaluations and one-on-one teacher meetings.

As students complete their portraits they will photograph their work. This basic introduction to photography will allow me to assess their familiarity with taking photographs. This is important, as the third lesson will incorporate photography and photography techniques.

Students will then write a written description of their self-portrait. I will tell students that we will be making our own class book *What East Rock Students Are Made Of*, based on Hanoch Piven's book *What Athletes Are Made Of*. This written piece will be used in conjunction with the portrait they created for the book. Students will use their character sheet as the basis for writing in paragraph form the description of themselves.

Last, students will be given color copy examples of Piven's character portraits from his book *Faces*. They will use the four steps of art criticism to compare and contrast their own artwork with the work of Piven. This will allow me to assess their ability to compare their own work critically to the work of a famous artist.

Lesson Plan #2: Kara Walker and how others see us

For the second lesson students will learn about Kara Walker, the history of silhouette portraiture, and create a silhouette portrait. In this lesson they will be creating an artwork of a peer that expresses their character only using body gestures while developing their written ability to respond to artworks.

Students will be introduced to silhouette illustrations by being read the book, *The Shape of Me*, by Dr. Seuss. I will discuss with students the history of silhouettes as well as the use of them as illustrations for literary works, and in contemporary advertisements such as the ipod ad. After this brief introduction, I will introduce Kara Walker and her artwork. It is important to note that not all of Walker's artwork is appropriate for young students. I will carefully select portions of her artworks and particular depicted characters for the purpose of this lesson. As a whole class I will have students use the four steps of art criticism to analyze her artwork. Students will be asked to focus on the characters and through describing them and analyzing the artwork, make attempts to interpret what Kara Walker was trying to say about the characters.

Students will then work in groups of two and complete historical background worksheets about one another. These worksheets will focus students on gathering information about a classmate's character. My students live

in many different neighborhoods within the district and many are new arrivals from different countries or first generation citizens of the U.S. The worksheets will focus students on learning more about each other with the hope that they will also realize that they are all very similar in many senses. Some questions would include: Where are you from? What is it like there? Who do you live with? What is your favorite food? What do you like to do for fun? What do you want to be when you grow up? What are you scared of? What do you love more than anything else in the world? What is your favorite thing in your house? Where do you like to go in your neighborhood? What do you like to do for fun? Do you play sports, what kinds?

These worksheets provide a good opportunity to create a Venn diagram on the board. Students can then see how similar or different they actually are, what they have in common and what makes them stand out as individuals.

After completing the worksheets, students will work with their partner in creating a silhouette that can describe them through body gestures and movements. They will be given time to revise their work, have one-on-one teacher meetings, and peer critiques of their work.

For closure students will display all of their work and engage in a whole class critique. They will use the four steps of art criticism to make judgments about their peers' work. They will be asked if they are able to identify which classmates are depicted in the artworks and to describe the parts of the artwork that act as "clues" to the subject's character.

Lesson Plan #3: Cindy Sherman and how we would like to be seen

For this lesson, students will be creating character photos. They will learn how to write a description of a character and then how to express their character with the use of objects, props, body gestures and facial expression in a photograph.

To bridge the second and third lessons I will first discuss with students how silhouettes were used before photography was invented. I will introduce students to the work of Cindy Sherman and discuss how she transforms herself into a character in her photographs. As a whole class we will discuss her use of props and costume and how they help the artist transform herself into a character and help the viewer interpret what they see. Students will view some of Sherman's untitled film stills series, which can be found in the book *Cindy Sherman: The Complete Untitled Film Stills* and some of her transformative work from her book *Cindy Sherman: A Play of Selves*.

I will then discuss with students the various ways of developing a character. We will look at examples of comic book characters that transform themselves such as Superman, the Hulk, Spiderman, and Wonder Woman. I will also discuss other characters from fiction that students may want to transform themselves into and discuss examples of costumes, props, and facial expressions that may help the viewer interpret these characters. Students will be asked to focus on the question: If I were to be anybody, who would I like to be? Another way to approach this is by asking students what they would like to be when they grow up.

To develop his or her own character, each student will write a description of his or her character based on the character analysis techniques discussed above. For the purpose of this unit, and to bridge visual arts and literacy, students will pick a character from fiction or a historical character that they have read about previously. Students will describe their characters physically, intellectually, emotionally, and socially by writing a dialogue between their characters and themselves.

I will then meet with students individually to discuss how they want to portray their characters and what attributes are most important. I will discuss with them the importance of posture, pose, gesture, facial expression, costume, makeup, lighting, and props.

I will then introduce photography as a medium. Students will learn about camera angles and lighting and how it can change the mood of the photograph. They will experiment with taking photographs and practice the facial expressions and body gestures that they want to use in their compositions.

Students will then bring in their costumes and props and take a series of photographs. In each photograph the character's posture, pose, expression, costume, and props should be slightly different. Different poses, expressions, costumes, and props will yield different effects. Students will be allowed time to experiment with creating the desired effect and visual character description in their photograph.

Students will then analyze their photographs to determine which one describes their character best. They will have peer critiques and one-on-one teacher meeting to discuss the interpretations that the viewer has of their artwork.

Last, students will use the four steps of art criticism to compare their work to the work of Cindy Sherman.

Closure for the Unit

An important part of every unit is the closure of the unit. The closure for this unit will allow for me, as the teacher, to review important points of character development, analysis, and depiction in artworks with students. It will also allow for students to see the continuity between each lesson's objectives.

I will ask each student to pick one of his or her artworks from the unit to use in a final display. Students should be able to provide an argument for why they are choosing the artwork as their best work. Displaying student's art gives each child a sense of pride in his or her work and I feel is important to do as part of every unit.

At the close of the unit, students will have a better understanding of how an artist can develop his or her ideas for depicting characters in artworks. They will understand that an artist can use a variety of techniques and media to create his or her artwork. Because of the ways in which this unit uses both literary and artistic analysis techniques, students will have, hopefully, become young critical thinkers of art, literature, and ultimately, the world around them.

Annotated Bibliography

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A collection of essays on the artist, Cindy Sherman.

Ewald, Wendy. I wanna take me a picture: Teaching Photography and writing to children. Boston: Beacon Press, 2002.

A guide to Ewald's techniques in teaching literacy through photography.

Galassi, Peter. *Cindy Sherman: The Complete Untitled Film Stills*. New York: Museum of Modern Art, 2003.

This is the complete work for the series of untitled film stills that Sherman created. It is a great visual resource.

Sherman, Cindy. *Cindy Sherman: A Play of Selves*. Hatje Contz, 2007.

In this collection, Sherman transforms herself into many characters. It is a great visual resource.

HYPERLINK <http://www.pbs.org/art21/artists/cindy-sherman/>

Art:21 is a PBS series on contemporary artists. This website and hyperlink offers information on Cindy Sherman, video clips, lesson ideas, and images for both teachers and students.

For Kara Walker Lesson

Brust, Beth Wagner. *The Amazing Paper Cuttings of Hans Christian Anderson*. New York: Ticknor and Fields Books for Young Readers, 1994.

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A great study of student interpretations of silhouette illustrations from picture books.

Walker, Kara. *After the Deluge*. New York: Rizzoli International Publications Inc., 2007.

A visual essay in cut out silhouette collages in response to the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina by the artist Kara Walker.

Seuss, Dr. *The shape of me and other stuff, Dr. Seuss's surprising Word Book*. Random House Books for Young Readers, 1997.

In this book, the silhouettes have words associated with them in the text provided.

HYPERLINK <http://www.pbs.org/art21/artists/walker/index.html>

Art:21 is a PBS series on contemporary artists. This hyperlink offers information on Kara Walker, video clips, lesson ideas, and images for both teachers and students.

HYPERLINK <http://learn.walkerart.org/karawalker/Main/HomePage>

A teacher and student companion to the Walker Art Center's exhibition "Kara Walker: My Complement, My Enemy, My Oppressor, My Love". This site has a great biography, information on Walker's technique, her work, and a list of related resources.

For Hanoch Piven Lesson

Piven, Hanoch. *Faces: 78 Portraits from Madonna to the Pope*. Pomegranate, 2002.

A book of Hanoch Piven's collaged portraits of famous people.

Piven, Hanoch. My Dog is as Smelly as Dirty Socks. New York: Schwartz and Wade Books, 2007.

A picture book written and illustrated by Hanoch Piven that uses similes to describe the characters.

Piven, Hanoch. What Athletes are Made Of. Ginee Seo Books, 2006.

A picture book written and illustrated by Hanoch Piven that depicts famous athletes and uses objects that relate to the character of the athlete in the portraits.

HYPERLINK <http://www.pivenworld.com/>

This is Hanoch Piven's website. It offers great images and a link to his blog that is useful for showing examples of other student work from other schools.

Implementing District Standards

There are three Power Standards for the Visual Arts for the New Haven Public School System. They are: Creating Art, Connecting Art, and Responding to Art.

Creating Art

This Power Standard is met within each lesson. Students will create art in all three lessons. They will have opportunities to develop, experiment, create, and revise their work.

Connecting Art

This Power Standard is met within each lesson. Each lesson has a component that connects the process of art analysis with the analysis of characters in literary works. Students will also be read to, and have writing components within the unit.

Responding to Art

A main component of this unit is for students to respond to art by using the steps of art criticism. This Power Standard is met within each lesson. Students will be able to develop their skill in critical response both orally and in writing.

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