



Curriculum Units by Fellows of the Yale-New Haven Teachers Institute
2012 Volume I: Understanding History and Society through Visual Art, 1776 to 1914

The Stories Artwork Tells: Opening Doorways Into Creativity

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Introduction

Over the course of my teaching career, I have stumbled upon a key to unlocking doorways into a child's creativity through art and yet am only beginning to understand how to present this key in a way so that each child will take ownership of it and use it to discover what abounding imaginings lay dormant in their developing minds. From the very first interactions I have had with students in primary grades, story-telling and art have so naturally presented themselves as wonderful tools to evoke a child's curiosity and creative spirit.

At the Valley School in Bangalore, India, I offered students an 'art and literacy' course in which I gained invaluable experience both in working with students of a different culture and in delving deeper into my own creative instincts. I realized that a very good way to inspire children to discover their own creativity was through exposure to the artistic expressions of people who had dared to expose their innermost selves in their work.

Today, in my third grade classroom at Davis Street Arts & Academics Interdistrict Magnet School, the heterogeneous group of children ranging in age from 8-10 are no different from those children I taught in India, in terms of their affinity to art, whether creating it or observing and discussing it. Although I have designed this unit with my third graders in mind, I am confident that it could easily be adapted for use by teachers in other primary and intermediate grades as well.

In the recent past, I attended a wonderful seminar at the Yale Center for British Art, where I learned about a literacy-through-the-arts program, called 'Doorways to Writing.' This program invites students to write with elaborate detail about what they have experienced once a variety of 'doorways' into their own imaginings have been opened by way of the five senses. One such doorway is called the "Copy Doorway", in which students pick one post-card-sized replica painting, which piques their interest and return to their seats to replicate it in their journals. As they copy the painting they are encouraged to allow their imaginations to run wild so that when it comes time to write, they can attempt to express in written form what they have been inspired to think about, whether it be a narrative, memory, poem, etc. While this exercise is both enjoyable and stimulating for the children, I noted that there was still a missing link in my instruction. I felt that I had not yet done enough to raise students' awareness of the historical influences at work in each piece of artwork nor

given them enough of a foundation in the different elements of a painting as a means of appreciating the art on a much deeper level.

My goal is to utilize the stories that artwork tells to inspire students to write their own pieces with greater elaboration and creative freedom. Therefore, my curriculum unit is designed to guide my students more gradually and sensitively into the complex world of art in order to better equip them to make insightful discoveries of their own. My curriculum unit will be interdisciplinary in scope, incorporating history, reading, writing, oral language and art. My students will work in both small- and large-group settings on the activities included in this unit. The unit lessons will be implemented 4-5 times a week, for a period of 40-60 minutes over a 4-month period. I plan to divide my curriculum-unit into five sections, in each of which I will employ the use of artwork in an effort to engage them and enhance their learning. The sections are:

Section 1: Teaching the Elements of Art

Section 2: Understanding British and American History through Art

Section 3: Inferential Thinking: Giving Figures in Art a Voice

Section 4: Exploring Landscape in Art through the Senses

Section 5: Allowing Stories to Unfold from Artwork

Section 6: Coming Full Circle: From Masterpiece to Masterpiece

Content Objectives

To gain an understanding of art, both authentic and reproduced, through an understanding of its elements.

To expand one's vocabulary and knowledge base when articulating observations about art.

To develop historical thinking skills, including chronological thinking and recognizing change over time.

To view the past as real rather than as some vague meaningless abstraction.

To build insights into one's own life to be able to see how the past actually illuminates the present.

To experience the difference between viewing authentic pieces of artwork in museums versus replicated images.

To strengthen inferential thinking by way of interpreting the figures in art through a combination of one's prior knowledge and contextual clues.

To utilize the five senses as a means describe images with greater elaboration and creativity, both in oral and written form.

To create a narrative, inspired by an authentic piece of art and brought to life through the literary devices of

dialogue, thought-shot, snapshots and gestures.

To create one's own artwork to illustrate the story begotten by the authentic piece of artwork.

Teaching Strategies

To learn about the elements of art through observations of art as well as interactive lessons wherein students explore art media and techniques.

To differentiate between the experience of looking at authentic art through visits to the Yale Center for British Art and Yale Art Gallery versus classroom studies of digitally replicated images.

To understand how history connects the present to the past through timelines, maps, historical paintings and graphic organizers.

To analyze the images in the paintings by way of comparing and contrasting the characteristics of the historical figures and landscapes depicted to the present day norms.

To develop inferential thinking through the use of charts, graphic organizers and artwork.

To explore the five senses both experientially through "Doorways to Writing" as well as abstractly when observing and describing a piece of art.

To learn how to make a narrative come to life through writing activities and exposure to literature and artwork wherein in the literary devices of dialogue, thought-shots, snapshots and gestures are exemplified.

Section 1: Teaching the Elements of Art

The first phase of my curriculum unit is designed to enhance students' understanding of how to look at art from a more technically informed standpoint. In order for students to observe, analyze, interpret and/or relate to art, it is necessary to arm them with an understanding of how the artist constructed the images as well as the vocabulary they need to articulate their observations. We will begin our study by considering the question, What is art? After writing down my learners' ideas, I will guide them to the understanding that "art is...painting, drawing, pasting, sculpting. It's sewing and building, coloring and folding. It is expressing and observing. Art is getting something that is inside you to the outside" as expressed in *How to Teach Art to Children* by Joy Evans and Tanya Skelton (Evans, page1).

In an effort to make this concept more meaningful, I will begin by increasing student awareness of the elements of art by way of introducing the concepts of line, shape, color, value, texture, form and space through a series of questions that will help them to look at a reproduction of artwork by Russian twentieth-century abstract painter, Wassily Kandinsky and name the things they think contribute to its overall impression. After facilitating meaningful discourse around each element, I will provide my students with

opportunities to experience the art elements in their own lives by doing select art activities, over the course of several days, which will give them first-hand knowledge about how such elements are created and used in art. The interactive lesson sequence would be as follows:

Day 1: Learning about Line: As a whole class discussion, ask students to look around and name the lines they observe as the teacher begins to introduce terms like *diagonal, vertical and horizontal* as ways to describe the lines in space. Using the graphic organizer featured in the afore mentioned book (Evans, page9)., have students draw one of each type of line in the appropriate box. From there, students can draw another line, parallel to the original line and experiment with shading various of the parallel lines to explore the various thickness and thinness lines can take and the designs they form. Next, students can discuss the different types of lines that can be created by changing a straight line into one that bends and curves by way of folding a white sheet of paper into eight rectangles, wherein they create different types of lines (zigzag, wavy, looped, curly, scalloped) in each box. (See Lesson Plan 1)

Similar lessons can be found in the afore mentioned book, *How to Teach Art to Children* , so for the purposes of being concise (something elementary teachers are not always known for), I will simply list the themes of each lesson and some of the key terms I will introduce.

Day 2: Learning about Shape through the contrast between *positive and negative shapes* .

Day 3: Learning about Color through the introduction to and exploration of *primary colors, secondary colors, tertiary colors, the color wheel, wavelengths* , gradations of color, cool colors and warm colors.

Day 4: Learning about Value by differentiating between grays, black and white *hues, bright tones, muted tones and shading*

Day 5: Learning about Texture through crayon rubbing, creating texture with paint and discovering the multi-media within collage.

Day 6: Learning about Form by experiencing the distinct attributes of 2-D versus 3-D shapes through the media of clay and origami.

Day 7: Learning about Space through *overlapping* paper cutouts and applications of size to gain perspective.

On Day 8, the Kandinsky painting can be revisited in order for students to have a new, well informed experience of describing the elements and can now appreciate them as coming together to give life to the entire piece.

Section 2: Understanding British and American History through Art

The second phase of my curriculum unit will be designed to prepare a historical foundation for my students to be grounded in before viewing authentic artwork from the permanent collections of the Yale Center for British Art and the Yale Art Gallery in New Haven. Through the use of replicated images of artwork from the period of the mid 1700s to the early 1900s from Britain and America, I will begin to introduce to my students to the world these paintings came from and the key historical developments of this day and age.

The introduction will begin with a student-generated discussion of observations, questions and connections they have about a particular piece of artwork entitled, *African Hospitality* by George Morland. I will ask questions like:

What do you notice in this image?

What does this figure remind you of? Why?

How do the colors in this painting make you feel? Why?

What are you wondering about this image?

What do you think the painter may have been trying to show us? Why?

Once the children have made a personal connection to the images and/or had their curiosity piqued, I will provide relevant historical information about the time period in which select paintings were created through the use of a power-point presentation. The presentation will include world maps, several paintings and prints from the period, photographs, and a timeline to help foster an interest in this period in history as well as its connection to the present. The events I will focus on will carry the themes of how gender, race and class were affected by the turbulent times of war and discord among nations both vying for power and recognition.

The time line will include such events as:

1770s The War of American Independence and the onset of the Industrial Revolution

1780s The United States of America is recognized by Britain

The Slave trade ships 100,000 slaves to North America each year, following a triangular trade path from Europe (especially Britain and France) to Africa, to America and back to Europe. Anti-slavery attitudes grow.

1790s In America, the cotton engine or "cotton gin" was patented, and slavery in the South began its comeback.

1800s The labor practices during The Industrial Revolution make life hellish for common people, especially women and children, who are the cheapest workers.

1830s The Act of Slavery laws are abolished and the child labor laws protect children to a greater degree and provide children under 13 with schooling.

1860s The American Civil War made evident the split between the popular anti-slavery views between those who aligned themselves with the Union versus the Confederacy.

1870s The inventions of the telephone, phonograph and incandescent light bulb.

1890s The invention of the railroad and the Jim Crow laws in America.

Section 3: Inferential Thinking: Giving Figures in Art a Voice

This phase of my curriculum unit will attempt to bring together the experience of looking at authentic pieces of artwork in the museum with the prior knowledge the students have now attained through sections 1 and 2. I will first introduce students to the purpose and means to make inferences, both in text as well as through illustrations and paintings. With the use of a graphic organizer I will explain to students how readers and observers make inferences or figure things out which are not directly stated in text by way of activating one's prior knowledge and being a 'good detective' when noticing important context clues. In this way, a character's emotions, thoughts and personality can be discovered or interpreted through inferential thinking.

I will reinforce this through texts like, *Brave Irene* by William Steig and *Mr. Lincoln's Way* and *Pink and Say* by Patricia Polacco, wherein students will use their prior knowledge along with clues from the illustrations and story context to make inferences regarding theme, character traits and author's message. Students will be given a graphic organizer wherein they write their inference in the center of a magnifying glass. However, they will be required to state the clues they found in the text as well as the prior knowledge they used to come to this conclusion about the character. The graphic organizer is set up so that they see the context clues and prior knowledge pieces as addends in an equation and the sum being the inference itself. Students will practice this with a variety of texts within the context of whole class, small group and individual readings so as to reinforce its usage across genres.

Once students have a handle on how to make inferences within text, we will move to a discussion of how to make inferences about a replicated piece of art from a section of our time period of study. We will begin by looking at a reproduction of *The Spring Head of Roaring River*, 1775 by George Robertson. Students will work with a partner to discuss their inferences. Similar to the exercise with text, students will be aided with a graphic organizer, which will require them to write down not only their inferences but, more importantly, the prior knowledge that led them to this conclusion as well as the visual cue in the painting which drew their attention. The graphic organizer might look something like this

Visuals Clues/Observation +	Prior Knowledge	= Inference

In this way, students will be required to explain their thinking and support their claim with evidence. We will come together whole class to share the inferences partners discussed as a way to bring a broader sharing of ideas.

Over the course of a few weeks, I will show images, which reflect the historical time period as a means of giving students further exposure to the art, which was created in Britain and America between the mid 1700s and the early 1900s. In this way students will build upon their prior knowledge base by way of making connections and inferences about the artwork of this time as seen through their modern day perspective.

Some images I will show on my ENO Board may include:

Am I Not a Man and Brother , emblem of the Society for Effecting the Abolition of the Slave Trade, 1787-90.

Description of a Slave Ship , 1789, unknown engraver for Plymouth Committee of the Society for Effecting the Abolition of the Slave Trade., Beinecke Library

A Picturesque Tour of the Islands of Jamaica , by James Hakewill, Yale Center for British Art

Attack of the Rebels on Montpelier Old Works Estate in the Parish of S. James , the Property of Lord Seaford , 1833, lithograph with watercolor by Adolphe Duperly. Yale Center for British Art

The Slave Ship , 1840 by JMW Turner, Boston University of Fine Arts

The Power of Music , 1847 by William Sidney Mount, Cleveland Museum of Art

Negro Life at the South , 1859 by Eastman Johnson, New York Historical Society

Prisoners from the Front , 1866 by Winslow Homer, The Metropolitan Museum of Art

A Pastoral Visit , 1881 by Richard Brooke, Corcoran Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.)

Banjo Lesson , 1893 by Henry Ossawa Tanner, Hampton University Museum, Hampton, VA.

Bible Quilt , 1895 by Harriet Powers, Smithsonian Institution in Washington, D.C.

The Gulf Stream , 1899 by Winslow Homer, The Metropolitan Museum of Art

A Ride for Liberty—The Fugitive Slaves , 1860 by Eastman Johnson, Brooklyn Museum

Prior to embarking on our first visit to the Yale Center for British Art, I will discuss with students how looking at an authentic piece of art may give them an entirely new experience of art and invite them to share how the experience differs from our routine experience of looking at a digital replica. Upon our arrival to the museum, we will go directly to the *Five Senses* series by Phillip Mercier from 1689 or 1691-1760, wherein the artist has depicted figures engaging in activities, which highlight a particular sense. The conversational pieces are very telling of the time in which they were painted and therefore lend themselves well to telling the story of British history we have already touched upon.

The following are the series of *Five Senses* paintings by Philip Mercier, 1689 or 1691-1760, Franco-German, active in Britain (from 1716), Oil on Canvas, YCBA:



The Sense of Hearing



The Sense of Taste



The Sense of Smell



The Sense of Sight



The Sense of Touch

I will put students into groups of four or five and engage them in the assignment of simply observing the painting for three to five minutes first and then writing down their observations, both inferential and technically informed in nature onto a graphic organizer. Students will rotate through each of the five paintings, spending 10-15 minutes in front of each painting. Once students have viewed all five paintings, I will instruct them to choose one or two characters from any of the paintings and give them a voice by way of creating a monologue for one character or a dialogue between two characters.

While focusing on these characters, my students will be called upon to suggest what these characters may be thinking, feeling and gesturing about. In this way, students will hone their skills in writing 'thought-shots', 'dialogue' and 'gestures'—all of which are crucial elements of narrative, which I have tried to introduce in the past through literature alone. In his book, *Ways of Seeing*, John Berger himself says, "No other relic or text from the past can offer such a direct testimony about the world which surrounded other people at other times. In this respect, images are more precise and richer than literature." (Berger, page10).

When we return to the classroom, students will have an opportunity to share their monologues and/or dialogues with the whole class as a way to allow peers to learn from each other's attempts at thinking inferentially and creatively. As students share, they will be asked to explain briefly what led them to create such monologues and dialogues for their characters in an effort to get students to identify the historical influences, gestural cues, facial expressions and subtleties which they picked up on and utilized.

Section 4: Exploring Landscape in Art through the Senses

In phase four of my curriculum unit, lessons will be designed to evoke the use of the five senses to bring greater elaboration and detail to my students' descriptions, both orally and in written form. Since my students are deeply rooted in the practices of "Doorways to Writing", the following is an attempt at describing the exercise, which is a part of my students' daily routine.

Through 'Doorways', each of the senses is put to use as a way to tap into the various learning modalities of each, individual child. There are several "sensory doorways" to "open", which are meant to provide a spring-board for students to engage in some form of inspired drawn and then written expression. Firstly, it is important to note that there are a total of six bins, each containing objects, which tap into a different sensory approach to learning. For example, a child is invited to choose one object from the 'Touch Doorway' bin, in order to feel and manipulate it. Upon doing so, he/she is instructed to draw whatever comes to mind, be it a memory, connection, the object itself, etc. After a certain amount of time, the child is then encouraged to write about what he/she has just drawn.

A child may also choose from the 'Smell Doorway' bin, in which are placed several different scents, in the form of candles, oils, incense, etc. Upon sniffing a few of the scents, whatever memory comes to mind, the student is to draw and then write about.

Similarly, the 'Observation Doorway', invites visual learners to observe an object (like a lace doily, carved wooden box or peacock feather), draw what they observe and then write about it in the form of a detailed description, personal connection or story.

The 'Sound Doorway' invites auditory learners to listen to classical or jazz music and, like the famous artist, Kandinsky, become inspired to draw abstract shapes or depict memories evoked by the music, and then write about their creations.

The 'Copy Doorway' invites students to choose from a variety of post-card sized painting replicas and, whichever one holds their interest; they copy on their own journal page. When it comes time to write, students are invited to jump into the painting and describe what they experience, be it a story, a sensory description or connection to a real-life experience.

Finally, there remains a 'Title Doorway', from which students pull out a title of a famous painting. From the title, they are encouraged to draw what they think the painting would look like and then write about what they chose to draw. Students are then shown the actual painting, from which to compare their point of view to that of the original painter's. In this way, students are shown how unique and varied are people's perspectives, sources of inspiration and artful expressions.

It is important to note that I very gradually released each of these doorways to my class, making sure to instruct and expose them to each doorway, one at a time. Once each doorway had been modeled, discussed and practiced, students were given free reign to utilize whichever doorway tended to offer them greater inspiration. In so doing, this sensory approach to learning helped give my students a better awareness of their own way or ways of learning thereby helping them to capitalize on their strengths and learning modalities.

With this program in place, along with our recent field trip to the Yale Center for British Art, wherein my students focused on a series of painting, which centered around the five senses, I felt that my students are now ready to utilize their senses in a more abstract way. For our next museum visit, therefore, our focus will be on two landscape paintings by Richard Wilson entitled, *View near Wynnstay*, *The Seat of Sir Watkin Williams-Wynn*, and *Dinas Bran from Llangollen*, 1770-71. These works present landscapes with a great deal of character, about which students will be able to write 'snap-shots' and wherein students can imagine themselves as part of the scene.

The idea is that after having had the experience of giving voice to existing characters in a painting, students will themselves be able to take form and identity within a visual landscape and thereby describe their surroundings in great detail, making sound use of their sensory experiences in such an imagined place. In order to capture the image which the artist has created on canvas, students will make use of their five senses to describe the dreamy setting, which may in turn, inspire the setting for their own narratives to unfold. Students will be divided into two groups, allowing for ample time and space to view each painting. Students will be assisted through the following prompts, which appear on a graphic organizer:

What can you hear? Is it soft or loud? Can you compare it to anything you have heard before? Is it pleasant or aversive?

What can you smell? Can you describe the smell by comparing it to something else you have smelled before? Is it an inviting smell or an offensive smell?

How does this place feel as you extend your hand out to touch your surroundings? Describe the textures around you.

What can you see around you? When you look up what do you observe? Is something moving or staying still? What can you notice when you look off into the distance? What can you see when you look very closely?

Are you able to taste anything? Is the taste sweet, salty, bitter or sour? What does the taste remind you of?

How does this place make you feel? How do the colors affect your mood? Would you like to spend more time in this place? What emotions are you experiencing as you explore this terrain?

When students arrive back at the classroom, they will be instructed to write an elaborate paragraph describing the setting of either of the paintings they observed by using the notes they took on the graphic organizer. Students will be reminded to include thought-shots to express what they are thinking. Once

students have completed their paragraph they will read it aloud to a partner who will be instructed to close his or her eyes and imagine what the reader describes. The listener will then provide feedback to the reader about whether or not they were able to imagine a "snapshot" of the scene from the description they were read. In this way, students will practice active listening skills as well as benefit from sharing and receiving feedback from their peers regarding their ability to describe something with sufficient detail and elaboration.

Section 5: Allowing Stories to Unfold from Art

Once students have become more adept at carefully observing, analyzing, discussing, relating to and appreciating these pieces of art within the museums, during our third visit to the Yale Center for British Art, I will allow students to select one painting from the permanent collection from which they feel inspired to write a narrative. In so doing, they can use what they had written previously along with the knowledge they now have about the historical time period of the painting as a spring-board from which to develop a complete narrative which will include thought-shots, snapshots, gestures and dialogue.

Since we will only have a limited amount of time at the museum, I will make use of a narrative frame, inspired by a workshop I attended of Nancy Boyles, which will guide the children to jot down the basic components of their story as it occurs to them while gazing upon the work of art which inspired it. When we arrive back at school, students will be given the chance to further develop their narratives while the image and experience of the authentic piece of art is still fresh in their minds.

It is important to note that my students are already familiar with the writing diamond and those components of an 'entertaining beginning', 'elaborate middle' and 'extended ending', which make a narrative complete. With the guidance of Nancy Boyles' training, I have taught my students how to use 'gesture', 'dialogue', 'thought-shots' and 'snapshots' as a means of making a story come to life. Boyles advises teachers to bring about an awareness of these very elements in the stories, which children read and enjoy.

Through a gradual release of responsibility by means of a scaffolded story frame, I have led children of various writing abilities to where they are able to craft their own complete Narrative by way of following its simple and logical structure. So too have my students been exposed to a number of narrative prompts, wherein they are required to create a story within the confines of the prompt, (be it interesting and meaningful or not). It is for this reason, that I feel gaining inspiration from a much more artfully liberating source given by these authentic paintings, will greatly appeal to the students' creative spirit.

I will next engage my students in self and peer editing as a means of further developing their awareness of the components of Narrative, which make it come to life. I strongly feel that the self-evaluation process becomes a tool for student growth as students become more comfortable and adept at critiquing their own work. I thereby created a checklist for students to refer to upon completion of their narrative as a means of providing suggestions for what aspects of their story could be improved, most notably in the way of reminding them to make use of "dialogue", thought-shot', 'snapshot' and 'gesture' but also to ensure that the story is fluent, elaborate and organized.

Once students have adequately revised and edited their own narrative, peer editing can ensue. I have created a student-friendly feedback form, which my students can use to offer suggestions, give compliments and

grade each other's writing, in the areas of organization, fluency and elaboration. In this way, the students take seriously their responsibilities to each other and can feel a sense of pride in their ability to share their observations suggestions and opinions.

When it comes time for me to provide meaningful feedback, I make use of a student-friendly rubric, which indicates the criteria they were to include in their story and the degree to which they were successful in incorporating it into their narratives. Students always have an opportunity to revise and edit their story again after receiving my feedback and meeting with me, one on one, to discuss their strengths and areas for improvement. (See Lesson Plan 2)

Section 6: Coming Full Circle: From Masterpiece to Masterpiece

In order to come full circle, once the narratives are complete, I will utilize the text, *Discovering Great Artists, Hands-On Art for Children in the Styles of the Great Masters* by MaryAnnF. Kohl and Kim Solga, to assist students in creating their own 'masterpiece', in a similar style to that of the artist who inspired them, unless of course, students feel it more natural to create the art from a style entirely their own.

Since Thomas Gainsborough was a leading British portrait and landscape painter of his day (1727-1788), I will use ideas from a lesson from *Discovering Great Artists*, entitled "Gainsborough: Portrait on Landscape", as a means to instruct students who would like to mimic his "fancy landscapes", landscapes that are more ideal and imaginary than real. Gainsborough would often include the portraits of people as part of that fancy landscape and so I feel that his style would allow students to depict a dreamy, imagined landscape, a portrait of their characters or both!(See Lesson Plan 3).

I will also take this opportunity to share with the students that the Yale Center for British Art displays several of Gainsborough's artwork and this may encourage them to go on their own to see them in person! One could even offer some sort of extra credit for those who do visit the museums outside of school time as an incentive to venture out with their loved ones and make use of a most valuable resource at their disposal in downtown New Haven.

It is important to note that if some students do not take to this "Gainsborough" style, it can merely be an art project they partake in, but by no means, needs to be their final 'masterpiece'. Other styles, like that of the impressionist, Vincent Van Gogh or abstract painter, Wassily Kandinsky can certainly be found in *Discovering Great Artists* to inspire students of that persuasion to create their artwork.

Once ea style has been discovered and the masterpiece created, I will utilize a lesson from *Discovering Great Artists*, entitled "Gallery Walk", wherein students will be guided through making a personalized cardboard frame for their 'masterpiece'. (Kohl, page122).

Upon completion of the narrative and the artwork, students will showcase their work in a museum style display on the front bulletin board in my classroom and parents will be invited to our publishing party. At this time children will read aloud their stories to the audience and the audience members take turns guessing which piece of artwork compliments the story. Students will also have a chance to share with the audience which piece of artwork from the museum inspired their story to come to life and guided them in creating their own art.

As we get older it may become increasingly harder to stay true to that rare quality that makes us individual, and so it is with a sense of urgency that I seek to provide my students with the opportunity to discover and nurture their creative spirit. I invite you to embrace this initiative as I have and bring to it your own creative flare and sources of artful inspiration.

Lesson Plan 1

Objective: To gain an understanding of the art element of line by way of understanding and observing its many forms and uses as well as to be able to experience the art element of line in ones own life through hands-on, art activities.

Materials: crayons or colored pencils, ruler, graphic organizer on pg. 9 of *How to Teach Art to Children* by Joy Evans (reproduced for each student), white construction paper 9" x 12".

Procedure:

Part 1

1. Ask students to look around the room and name examples of lines that they observe.
2. Introduce the words, *diagonal*, *vertical*, and *horizontal* as ways of describing lines in space. As you explain, show some sort of visual, like a poster which might say:
Lines have names that describe their place in space. They may be diagonal, vertical, or horizontal. Lines may be thick or thin, solid or broken. When two lines are the same distance apart for their entire length, they are parallel. (Evans, page8).
3. Classify classroom examples of each type of line observed earlier.
4. In the event that you do not have access to the afore mentioned resource, the graphic organizer I will refer to looks something like this:

LINES	
Lines have names that describe their place in space.	
Diagonal	
Vertical	
Horizontal	

5. Have students draw one line of each type in the appropriate area on the graphic organizer. You may want to model this with a larger version on the board. You also may want each type of line to be color coded so that the diagonal line is one color, the vertical is another color and the horizontal a third color.
6. Have students return to each box and draw another line parallel to each of the original lines.
7. Ask students to shade in the area between the two parallel lines. They will have created a thick line out of the two thin lines.
8. Have students add broken lines in each area.
9. Students complete their designs by adding more lines to follow the pattern they have created.

Part 2

10. Discuss the different types of lines that can be created by changing a straight line into one that bends or curves: *zigzag, wavy, looped, curly, scalloped*, etc.
11. Have students fold their white construction paper into eight equal rectangles.
12. Invite them to create a different type of line in each box. Labeling each type may be a good practice of differentiating between them.

13.Students can complete these designs by adding more lines of each type and by adding color.

Lesson Plan 2

Objective: To write narrative stories, inspired by the artwork viewed at the museum, which are organized, creative, elaborate and fluent.

Materials: Access to authentic landscape paintings from the Yale Center for British Art (or any other museum), writing prompt frame, revising and editing checklist, student friendly writing rubric.

Procedure:

- 1.During a museum visit, allow students to choose a piece of landscape art, which interests them and sets the stage for a narrative story they will be writing.
- 2.Provide ample time (20-60 mins.) for students to observe the painting by way of taking note of what they observe, either in the form of words or pictures.
- 3.Upon returning to the classroom, provide students with the following story planning frame for their adventure narrative.

<p>Where I will go: _____</p> <p>The first thing I will do: _____</p> <p>_____.</p> <p>The next thing I will do: _____</p> <p>_____.</p> <p>The third thing I will do: _____</p> <p>_____.</p>
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4.Remind students that the painting they chose at the museum should give them ideas about where their story will take place and therefore, what might occur in such a place. The teacher might model this by using *Tahitian War Galleys in Matavai Bay, Tahiti* by William Hodges, 1744-1797, wherein the author might choose to set their narrative in Tahiti or some imagined

tropical island and the activities might include exploring the island, meeting one of the natives and finally building a ship to sail back home.

5.Explain to students that the story plan is merely a map to guide them as they create their story and can always be changed throughout the unfolding of the story.

6.Once students have constructed a plan, in order to provide a structure to their stories, give them a story frame similar to this one, inspired by Nancy Boyles:

Title: _____

Set the stage for your entertaining beginning:

And that is how my adventure began.

First, _____

Next, _____

Then, _____

Finally, my adventure came to an end. _____

I thought to myself, “ _____
_____”

7.It is important to note that the template I use includes images above each of the sections, which remind students to include snap-shots, thought-shots, gestures and dialogue by way of clip-art graphics. The template would also extend to two to three pages in order to provide ample

room to include all of these elements within each section and allow for smooth transitions throughout the story. Students are certainly free to replace the transition words provided with more interesting words like *suddenly, in the blink of an eye, eventually*, etc.

8. In addition to this sentence framework, I provide students with this check-list which they can use once they finish their first draft of the story as a way to revise and edit their work for content and to ensure that they have made their story entertaining and elaborate.

<p style="text-align: center;"><u>"Making My Story Come Alive!" Checklist</u></p> <p>When setting my stage, I included at least 1 or more:</p> <p>_____ thought-shot _____ snap-shot _____ dialogue _____ gesture</p> <p>In my "First" section, I included at least 1 or more:</p> <p>_____ thought-shot _____ snap-shot _____ dialogue _____ gesture</p> <p>In my "Next" section, I included at least 1 or more:</p> <p>_____ thought-shot _____ snap-shot _____ dialogue _____ gesture</p> <p>In my "Then" section, I included at least 1 or more:</p> <p>_____ thought-shot _____ snap-shot _____ dialogue _____ gesture</p> <p>In my "Finally" section, I included at least 1 or more of these:</p> <p>_____ thought-shot _____ snap-shot _____ dialogue _____ gesture</p> <p>The part of my story, which is the most entertaining is _____ because _____.</p> <p>The part which still needs more elaboration is _____ because _____.</p>

9. After allowing students to edit their own narratives, pair students up to peer-edit and score each other's narratives. At this time, a student friendly rubric can be passed to each student as a way for them to not only critique their partner, but more importantly, to become aware of the components which they will be graded on by the teacher. Encourage partners not only to provide critique but also suggestions for improving in the key areas of elaboration, fluency and/or organization.

	6	5	4	3	2	1	
Elaboration	*I used a lot of specific details to tell about events. *I used many thought shots, snapshots, dialogue and gestures to make my story come to life *I wrote a lot about events *I used words to make the story interesting	*I used mostly specific details *I used thought shots, snapshots, dialogue and gestures to make my story come to life *I used some words to make the story interesting	*I used some specific details *I used some thought shots, snapshots, dialogue and gestures to make my story come to life *I used some interesting words	*I used only a few specific details *I used mostly general details OR *My details look like a list	*I used general details and no specific details *The details I used look like a list *I have not written enough	*I did not include any details *I did not write enough	
	6	5	4	3	2	1	
Organization	*My story has a clear beginning, middle and end *My story has paragraphs for each event with clear transitions *My story is very organized	*My story has a beginning, middle and end *My story has paragraphs and transitions *My story is mostly organized	*My story has a plan, but it is unclear *My story has paragraphs for most events and some transitions	*My story has a plan, but it is unclear *Not all events are in paragraphs *I left out some transitions	*The plan of my paper is not clear *My story may not have transitions that make sense	*My paper is confusing and awkward *The ideas may not fit together *I did not write enough	
	6	5	4	3	2	1	
Fluency	*My story has one clear focus *My story has a lot of transitions, complex sentences, good vocabulary, direct quotes, metaphors and similes	*My story has one clear focus *My story has some transitions, complex sentences, good vocabulary, metaphors or similes	*My story's focus is somewhat clear *My story has some use of transitions, good vocabulary, metaphors and similes	*My story may be awkward or confusing in some parts *My focus is somewhat clear	*My story is awkward or confusing in many parts *My Focus is not clear	*My story is awkward and confusing *My story is difficult to read and understand	
					Total:	Divide by 3=	

10. Collect narratives and grade them using the same student friendly rubric used in the peer-editing phase. Conference with students if and when necessary and always encourage students to make the revisions to earn a higher score!

11. In order to take these narratives to the publishing state for the publishing party described in section 6, it will now be necessary to rewrite the rough drafts over neatly or type them out on computers.

Lesson Plan 3

Objective: To provide children with a hands-on activity which enables them to explore the styles and techniques of one of the world's greatest artists and to encourage children to learn by doing, to become familiar with new ideas.

Materials:

For the Landscape Painting

- * large drawing paper
- * tempera paints, mixed medium/ thin
- * paintbrushes
- * jar of clear water for rinsing
- * newspaper covered work area

For the Portrait Drawings

- * drawing paper
- * marking pens
- * scissors
- * glue

Procedure:

1. Instruct students to begin painting an imaginary landscape from their narrative stories on the large drawing sheet. You may suggest they include: rivers, clouds, rocks, roads, paths, flowers, fields, mountains, etc.
2. Allow the painting to dry.
3. While the painting dries, draw the portrait of one or two characters from their narrative who will fit into the imaginary landscape. Encourage the students to draw their full bodies sitting or standing and holding still in their pose.
4. Cut out the portraits and spread the backs with a little glue. Press the portraits into the landscape and allow them to dry.
5. It is important to note that if some students do not take to this "Gainsborough" style, it can merely be an art project they partake in, but by no means, needs to be their "masterpiece". Other styles like that of the impressionists like Van Gogh or abstract painters like Kandinsky can certainly be brought in to inspire students of that persuasion to create their masterpiece.

Appendix: Implementing District Standards

Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts

CCR Anchor Standards for Reading:

Integration of Knowledge and Ideas: 7. Explain how specific aspects of a text's illustrations contributes to what is conveyed by the words in a story (e.g. create mood, emphasize aspects of a character or setting.)

Key Ideas or Details: 3. Describe the relationship between a series of historical events {...} using language that pertains to time, sequence and cause/effect.

CCR Anchor Standards for Writing:

Text Types and Purposes: 3. Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, descriptive details and clear event sequences.

a. Establish a situation and introduce a narrator and/or characters; organize an event sequence that unfolds naturally.

b. Use dialogue and descriptions of actions, thoughts, and feelings to develop experiences and events or show the response of characters in situations.

Production and Distribution of Writing: 6. With guidance and support from peers and adults, to develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, and editing. Revisiting these writing standards reinforced the importance of students naturally including descriptive conventions in their narrative work and peer and self edit narratives.

CCR Standards for Speaking and Listening:

Comprehension and Collaboration: 1. Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grade 3 topics and texts, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly.

3. Ask and answer questions about information from a speaker, offering appropriate elaboration and detail.

CCR Standards for Language:

Conventions of Standards English : 1. Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English grammar and usage when writing and speaking.

Bibliography

Teacher Resources

Berger, John. *Ways of Seeing* . London, England: British Broadcasting Corporation and Penguin Books Ltd, 1972. John Berger presents a very unique approach to looking at art and can cause one to stop and really think about the messages and influences given by a piece of art ranging from a Renaissance masterpiece to a modern day magazine advertisement.

Chertok, Bobbi, Goody Hishfeld and Marilyn Rosh. *Meet the Masterpieces, Strategies, Activities and Posters to Explore Great Works of Art* . New York, NY: Scholastic Professional Books Inc, 1992. In the event that the teacher would like to branch out to different time periods and genres of art, this book explores eight masterpieces by artists of various cultures by way of interdisciplinary activities, biographical information on the artists, as well as strategies for the teacher on how to "read" the paintings on full color, fold-out posters.

Clarkin, Maura. *National Gallery of Art Activity Book, 25 Adventures with Art* . New York, NY: Harry N. Abrams, Inc. Publishers, 1994. This resource provides color reproductions of works of art, activities which help children understand more about art, history and daily life in the past, puzzles and questions and art project ideas to engage the children in making a meaningful connection to the art.

Deeds, Daphne Anderson. *Artists on Art, Observations by Yale faculty on selections from the Yale University Art Gallery* . Yale University Art Gallery, 1999. Prior to visiting the Yale University Art Gallery with the class, the teacher may want to preview this book to get a sense for what art might pertain to their unit of study.

Eisman, Stephen. *Nineteenth-Century Art: A Critical History* . New York, NY: Thames and Hudson, 1994. A thorough volume which addresses the pertinent themes of race, society, class and gender which heavily influenced and therefore can be observed within the art of the Nineteenth-Century and can further inform the teacher in his or her implementation of this curriculum unit.

Evans, Joy and Tanya Skelton. *How to Teach Art to Children*. Monterey, CA: Evan-Moor Corp., 2001. An excellent teacher resource which includes lessons which teach the seven art elements and provides 96 hands-on art projects which immerse the students in meaningful interactions with each element.

Howarth, Eva. *Crash Course in Art* . New York, NY: Barnes & Noble, Inc., 1994. A book which does exactly what it claims in the way of providing a concise but thorough survey of European Art through ten centuries of painting and can be a resource the teacher refers to in the event of questions posed by students who wish to gain a deeper understanding of art history.

Kohl, MaryAnn and Kim Solga. *Discovering Great Artists, Hands-On Art for Children in the Styles of the Great Masters* . Bellingham, WA: Bright Ring Publishing, Inc., 1996. This teacher resource provides fun art activities for children to explore in the styles and techniques of the great masters all the way from the Renaissance to the present. I referred to this book in Section 6 wherein Thomas Gainsborough's style of depicting portraits within landscape art can be explored.

Miller, Angela et al, 'Forging a New Nation', *Encounters: Art, History and Cultural Identity* . Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall, 2008, (pages 133-148; 163-170). A great resource to give teachers background knowledge about the American Revolution and line in the United States during the time period of 1776-1861 from which to determine the events to include in their history lessons for elementary lessons.

Miller, Angela et al. 'Representing War' and 'Post-War Challenges', *Encounters: Art, History and Cultural Identity* . Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall, 2008, (pages 266-300). Another great teacher resource which gives a historical background for the Civil War and addresses the issues of race and how it was represented through art in America during the time period of 1861-1914.

William, Vaughan, 'Arcadias' from William Vaughan, *British Painting: The Golden Age* . Thames and Hudson, 1999. (pages 205-223). A selection, which will give the teacher an understanding of what Nature came to represent in Britain during the time period between 1776-1815 and which will better inform the teacher when exposing the children to Richard Wilson's artwork at the Yale Center for British Art described in Section 4.

Wright, Michael. *An Introduction to Mixed Media* . New York, NY: DK Publishing, Inc., 1995. This resource will provide teachers with an introduction into the various media they might explore in their classroom as a way to inspire and excite the children about painting, print-making, etc. The book provides easy-to-follow projects, which show step-by-step models of how each type of media can be used to create the finished product.

Student Resources

Cressy, Judith. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, *Can You Find It?* New York, NY: Harry N. Abrams, Inc., Publishers, 2002. This "I-Spy" type book encourages children to be more observant and look closely at artwork by way of assigning them objects and images to find within the painting.

Knapp, Ruthie and Janice Lehmborg. *Museum Guides for Kids, American Art* . Worcester, MA: Davis Publications, Inc., 1998. This museum guide provides students with fun facts about this genre of painting, clarifies important vocabulary, details interesting facts about American artists between the 17th -20th centuries and provides extension activities for higher-level students who might need the extra challenge.

Polacco, Patricia. *Pink and Say* . New York, NY: Babushka Publishing, 1994. This children's book is a great way to bring history to life through the very moving tale of the relationship that develops between two boys of different skin color during the tumultuous time of the Civil War. This book also lends itself well to making character inferences about the remarkable characters of Pinkus or "Pink", Sheldon or "Say" and Moe Moe Bay.

Steig, William. *Brave Irene* . The United States of America: Sunburst Books/ Farrar, Straus and Giroux (BYR), 1988. An excellent children's book which lends itself well to making character inferences about the main character, Irene.

Websites

"Famous Paintings, Art Appreciation Lessons for Kids", 2002 <http://gardenofpraise.com/art.htm>

<https://teachersinstitute.yale.edu>

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