Inside & Outside Self-Portrait

Intermediate Lesson Plan

This lesson plan references the Arts Education 7 and 8 curricula, but can be adapted for earlier intermediate students. The student examples were created by Grades 3 and 4 students at General Brock Elementary School.

Submitted by Nick Fabin
Teacher Candidate, UBC
The Sketchbook Project
(Community Field Experience)

OVERVIEW

In this short three lesson unit, students will make connections between personal appearance and the part of the identity we cannot see. Students will be encouraged to explore ways of revealing or celebrating their identity in a mixed media, self-portrait project. In this project, students will have the opportunity to trace photographs of themselves on tracing paper with pencil, and they will be using observational skills and knowledge of shading to add value to the portrait. On an 8.5x11 mixed media paper, they will be creating imagery (with coloured pencil) that connects to their sense of self and identity. Students will be encouraged to integrate the following elements into their drawings:

- Creative growth requires patience, readiness to take risks, and willingness to try new approaches. (Arts Ed 8)
- Through art making, one’s sense of identity and community continually evolves. (Arts Ed 7)

Favourite foods, favourite places, interests (sports, hobbies, activities), visual culture (Movies, books, comics, video games you like), cultural background, a superhero version of yourself, a version of yourself as a grown-up, family members, pets, memories, and wishes.

It is recommended that the teacher emphasize that the drawings underneath the face should be light and sparse and the drawing surrounding it can be darker, more colourful and denser. After students have drawn their background elements, they will cut out the silhouette of their tracing paper portrait, and this will be pasted on the background. The semi-transparent quality of the tracing paper will reveal drawings underneath. This project explores the interplay between the outside and inside identities.

Big Ideas
What they will understand.

Creative growth requires patience, readiness to take risks, and willingness to try new approaches. (Arts Ed 8)

Through art making, one’s sense of identity and community continually evolves. (Arts Ed 7)
PRE-CLASS PREPARATION

The teacher will need to make the following preparations prior to the class(es)
A fully realized example version
Take photos of each student (or use class photos on MyEd)
Print out 8.5”x11” black & white photos of the students

PROCESS

Lesson 1

- The Hook: “A typical self-portrait shows the outside you. This layered approach to the self-portrait explores the outside you and the inside you. We will start with drawing yourself using a photo reference.”
- Hand out photos of students and tracing paper
- Do a quick demo on tracing key features like face outline, eyes, nose and mouth.
- Demonstrate removing the tracing paper from the photo and adding value and shading to the portrait.
- Clean up.

Lesson 2

- The Hook: “Now we will create a drawing that represents the inside you. We will explore our own identities by thinking about the following options for the subject matter: Favourite foods, favourite places, interests (sports, hobbies, activities), visual culture (Movies, books, comics, video games you like), cultural background, a superhero version of yourself, a version of yourself as a grown-up, family members, pets, memories, and wishes.
- Hand out 8.5x11 mixed media paper and coloured pencils
- “Keep in mind that you should do lighter drawings in the area behind the face of the portrait--or leave it blank-- and darker/more colourful drawings outside of the portrait.”
- Clean up

Lesson 3

- The Hook: “This is the last day we will be working on these drawings, so do your best to fill up the page, and we will paste the portrait on top.”
- Students continue working on background drawing. Teacher walks around the room making sure everyone is on the same page and helps develop ideas and refine drawings.
- The last step students need to do is cut out their tracing paper self-portrait and hand back both the self-portrait and the mixed media page of drawing. Because spray matte medium has fumes and it is tricky to work with,

MATERIALS AND TECHNOLOGIES

Tracing paper, pencils, erasers, coloured pencils, 8.5”x11” mixed media paper, matte medium (e.g., Liquitex brush-on matted medium, Krylon Matte Finish Spray Varnish)
it is recommended that the teacher pastes the portraits to the paper.

- Clean up

**ASSESSMENT/EVALUATION**

The teacher will walk around the room making sure everyone is understanding and participating in the lesson. The teacher will keep an eye on the parts that need to remain light/sparse (underneath the portrait) and what parts can be dark/colourful and dense.

The teacher should promote “active listening” and stimulate discussion about artistic choices and rendering techniques. Check in periodically by asking questions about the objectives.

Students will have an opportunity to share with each other in an informal discussion and gallery walk. Another option is to break off into pairs and ask students to describe and share the elements of their portraits. They could talk about the differences and similarities between the two portraits. They could also do a critiquing exercise: two stars and a wish (two compliments and one piece of constructive criticism).

**OPTIONS**

Teach students about facial proportions, and have them draw self-portraits rather than trace their features, or use tablets to photograph self-portraits and then make some digital enhancements using an app such as Adobe Photoshop Express.

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**FIRST PEOPLE’S PRINCIPLES OF LEARNING**

- Learning involves recognizing the consequences of one’s actions.
- Learning involves patience and time
- Learning requires exploration of one’s identity

InsideOut Self-Portrait by Issian.

InsideOut Self-Portrait by Mia.
Curricular Competencies
What they will be able to do.

- Explore relationships between identity, place, culture, society, and belonging through the arts
- Take creative risks to express, feelings, ideas, and experiences through the arts
- Interpret and communicate ideas using symbols and elements to express meaning through the arts

Concepts and Content
What they will know.

- Processes, materials, movements, technologies, tools, strategies, and techniques to support creative works (students will explore how to work with tracing paper, pencil, mixed media paper, coloured pencils and matte medium to create a mixed media work)
- Symbolism and metaphor to explore ideas and perspective (students will explore how to translate ideas and concepts into drawings and images)

ADAPTATIONS/MODIFICATIONS

- Suggest peer pair work for ELLS and other students that want to work with along side a partner.
- Keep written instructions of the activity on the chalkboard for everyone to read at any point.
- Suggest that students skip the “adding value” part of the traced portrait and focus on the line work. Suggest that the student leave the section underneath blank in order to prioritize the other sections of the background.