



## **Reading Self-Portraits:**

*guide curriculum, make meaning, show literacy understanding*

Presented by Lauren McCann B.Ed., M.A., Ph.D.

### **Quick Over View:**

Duration of Study: September – June (academic year)

Students: total of 26 boys and girls ages five to six

Demographic: upper middle class private school

Task: “Draw yourself reading”: Reading-self-portraits were completed bi-monthly and used to start conversation and guide lessons about reading. The students spoke about their illustrations and these narratives were recorded.

Data: A total of 5 drawings and their accompanying narratives were collected from each child. These images were analyzed according to a created chart based on the completed drawings, the narratives and past methods of drawing analysis. Please see Appendix “A” for an example.

Purpose: to obtain the child’s perspective on literacy, start meaningful conversations about reading from the point of view of the student, teach standard 3 from the International Reading Association in a concrete manner, document the progress of each child over the academic year

### **Learner Outcomes Of this Project:**

- Students will develop a positive identity as a reader.
- Students will learn the various facets of reading (who, what, when, where, why) through real-life context.
- Students will start expressing their experiences with books and compare and contrast them with their peers.

### **Steps to Take For Implication:**

1. Explain to the class what a self-portrait is. Show examples.
2. Talk about the reading you do both in and out of class.

3. Talk about who reads, what we read, where we read and why we read.
4. Give each student a blank sheet of paper and drawing tools such as markers, colored pencils or crayons - not paint. Paint will bleed and make marks the child did not intend.
5. Ask the students to draw themselves reading. Have them think about the class discussion.
6. Once completed, use the students' drawings to start conversation about their experiences with reading and literacy.
7. Collect the drawings and store them for a few months.
8. Come back to this activity several months later. Repeat, as before, and discover the change in the students' representations of themselves reading. Discuss these changes.
9. Use the information collected to guide your curriculum choices and to inform you regarding the students' self-perceptions as a readers.

Extensions: Use drawing to illustrate understanding of *any* activity done in class. Eg: Draw yourself playing safely in the yard, sharing with a friend, playing at our math center. Through the act of drawing, the child places himself/herself in the position of power by choosing what he/she wants to draw. The drawing then provides the child with a framework for expressing his or her ideas.



### **Put Research to Practice:**

Consider these questions for yourself to guide your class discussion:

- Why do you read?
  
  
- Do you read for another purpose?
  
  
  
  
- When do you read?
  
  
  
  
- Where do you like reading best?

- What do you enjoy reading?

September	November	February	April	June
Common Reality	Common Reality	Common Reality	Archeological Reality	Dreams/ Imagination
-has read these books both at school and at home	-has read these books both at school and at home	- although she has copied the illustration, her narrative suggests the practice of shared reading	-she wishes to one day read, on her own on her porch	-the dream of wanting to read on a unicorn or -simply wanting to draw a unicorn, but made the drawing about reading to appease the teacher
<b>Literacy Links</b>				
primary image	primary image	primary image	primary image	secondary image
-has shared reading experiences at home	-has interpreted literacy lesson of choosing books "just right for you", and put into practice by illustrating baby sister with a smaller book	- had interpreted reading experience from home, a reading method I taught to parents	- is viewing self now as an independent reader	-reading can be part of fantasy  or -child simply wanted to do what she wanted to do
<b>Themes:</b>  -books drawn -sharing reading -connection to home -reading on own	-books drawn -sharing reading -connection to home -reference to in class lesson -reading on own	-book drawn -shared reading -reference to lesson, yet copied from peer -not reading on own	-book is drawn - only reader, reading independently -reference what she <i>could</i> do.	-book is drawn -only reader reading independently -reference to <i>dream</i>
<b>Drawing's key details:</b>  - all smiling - sun in top corner -image of a person basic	-all smiles -sun in top corner -student book HUGE -little sister book small -image of person growing	-all smiles -sun in top corner -big heart -image of people copied from peer, more details with ears	-all smiles -sun in top corner - simple figure, more developed since September	-not a full smile -sun in top corner -figure most developed, fingers and separate body parts
<b>Lowenfeld:</b> draws what knows- books have words	big book, big= important	copied peer	student now knows one can do this	can't link Lowenfeld with experience
<b>Kellogg (1969)</b>  -H18: humans in groups, Humans with varied torsos  -standard	-relatively completed human image  -standard	-H19: stick man, copied from neighbour  -standard	-relatively completed human image  -above	-relatively completed human image,  -above
<b>Goodnow</b> units=circle, rectangle, on axis, no crossing of units	( <i>more units used</i> ) units=circle, rectangles, asymmetric shapes, no crossing of units	copied peer	( <i>same units used</i> ) units: circle, rectangles, no crossing of units	( <i>same units used, more detail</i> ) units: circles, now also found in fingers and feet, rectangles, squares now used to depict more details of shorts, legs, neck and arms.

## Further Reading and References:

*Article about Reading-Self-Portraits: Early Pilot Project*

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*Unpublished Dissertation:*

- McCann, L. (2014). *Not without joy: a reflective practice journey to encouraging literacy through the arts* (Unpublished dissertation). Concordia University, Montreal Qc. Canada.

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