NAEA 2017
Re-Thinking Art Curricula Design

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8th Grade Visual Arts Teacher
NYC LAB Middle School
Where is the NYC LAB Middle School?

Location

Chelsea, NYC:

• Located on the west side of Manhattan (~14th to 30th streets)

• Contains over 200 art galleries, The Highline, Chelsea Market, and many diverse restaurants and retail stores

• Combination of upper, middle, and lower class with high rise luxury condos sometimes situated across the street from housing projects (due to gentrification)
Who is the NYC LAB Middle School?

School Profile
- Entrance into 6th grade consists of an admissions exam with one part math, one part ELA, and one part collaborative exercise
- District 2 children only admitted
- 47% Asian, 2% Black, 7% Hispanic, 34% White
- 2/6 classes per grade are ICT
- 28% Free Lunch, 15% SPED, 1% ELL
- 92% score 3 or 4 on Math State Exam
- 87% score 3 or 4 on ELA state exam
- NYS Regents level and Advanced NYS Regents level Math and Science courses offered in 8th grade
- Visual Arts classes offered 3 periods a week (8th gr)
- Trimester schedule

Student Profile
- Motivated by grades and push themselves to succeed academically
- Families are supportive and foster academic growth
- SPED students range from physically disabled to cognitive disabilities, such as ADHD, anxiety, executive functioning, and Autism spectrum
How does my curriculum fit in with NYC LAB?

**Curriculum**
Missing puzzle piece in teaching to the “rigorously academic” LAB student by providing an opportunity to learn universal themes through the creative process and in the format of a “unit packet” given to students at start of study.

**Pedagogy**
Use art as a vehicle to become more self-reflective and critical thinkers, be able to articulate and discuss different perspectives, and build self-confidence through a variety of creative processes.

**Supportive Administration**
Trusts and gives freedom to be creative in regards of subject matter and materials, collaborations within staff and/or community arts organizations all of which promote revision and re-visiting of curriculum each year – keeps it fresh!
Art Curriculum Overview

Unit 1: Artist As Observer
Artist Focus: Stuart Davis
How much information can we obtain through our observations?
How can we use drawing as a communication tool for expressing our observations?
How do artists use abstraction as a form of communicating their perspective?

Unit 2: Artist As Experimenter
Artist Focus: Carmen Herrera
How can we use abstraction as a means to connecting to our environment?
How can creative restrictions affect our artmaking?
How can we use printmaking to push the boundaries of experimentation with a simplified composition?

Unit 3: Artist As Critic
Artist Focus: Henry Taylor and Aliza Nisenbaum
How has the role of the artist voice evolved throughout history?
How does the creative process offer the exploration of identity and intrinsic connection to others?
How can traditional artmaking lend itself to creating a contemporary interpretation of our identity and place in the world?
Unit of Study Breakdown

Deep dive into a particular theme:

• Start with final goal in mind and add layers/scaffolding of learning moving backwards
• 1 main artist as a focus and (sometimes) 1-2 additional artists working within similar theme studied as a supplement. For example, “Artist As Observer”.
• 1-3 materials for exploration

Assessment: Self, Peer, Teacher

• Self-reflection (in the form of written responses throughout different stages of creative process)
• Peer reviews (in-progress and final critiques)
• Project rubric (teacher directed with project guidelines)

Literacy and Cross Curricula Connection

• Analyzing, Interpreting, observing, writing and discussing artwork; use as a primary source to learn about historical, social, artistic context of artwork/artist
• Focus on creative process
Unit Packet: A Template for Learning

• Provides a framework model for student learning before starting unit of study
• Gives students awareness and accountability of learning that will take place
• Allows for revision as you work through unit
Unit 1: Artist As Observer
Artist Focus: Stuart Davis
Part A: Building Observational Skills

Learning to “see” through a variety of different techniques

• Assessing how much information we retain when looking at an image
• Drawing from memory
• Categorizing information in objective or subjective terms
• Seeing with all of our senses
Part A: Building Observational Skills (cont.)

2. Look at the image of Édouard Manet’s *A Bar at The Folies-Bergère* (1882) individually for 30 seconds. Then choose 1-2 people at your table to discuss the artwork and describe what you see by completing the chart below and writing your responses in the right hand column (6-7 min).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>WHO</th>
<th>Identify main and background figures, estimate number of total people</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Barmaid, background men, large crowd</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>At least 100 people</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SOUND</th>
<th>What would this scene sound like? Provide examples</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Loud, lots of talking by people</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SMELL</th>
<th>What smells would be present in this scene? Provide examples</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Alcohol and liquor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Fresh smell of big room</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Large, open</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FEEL</th>
<th>What would it feel like to be in this scene? Provide examples</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Crowded and uncomfortable, too many people</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PERSPECTIVE #1: Barmaid (woman behind the bar)</th>
<th>Describe her experience</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>She’s lonely and tired. Being the barmaid means she isn’t actually participating in party/event. People only come up to her to get drinks and not for actual talk. There are many drunkards and it’s very late at night.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Part B: Drawing to Communicate
Our Observations

- Focus on contour line and value to depict our observations
- Material exploration with nib pen and ink and charcoal / Self-Assessment
- Mini-Project: Still Life
Part B: Drawing to Communicate
Our Observations (cont.)
Part C: Showing Perspective through Abstraction

- Use visuals from contextual (art movement, social and historical events) evidence as a gateway to learning how it all connects
- Study drawing series: moving toward abstraction
- Final Study Drawing/Peer Review
- Final-Project: Abstract Painting and Artist Reflection
Part C: Showing Perspective through Abstraction (cont.)
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Part C: Showing Perspective through Abstraction (cont.)

1. **Describe** your work objectively and subjectively. Include at least 3 examples found in your artwork to support your ideas.

My work contains bright and cheerful colors that are actually used in contrast to each other kinda punctuating a feeling of well-defined shapes. Though the thunderbolt shaped shape extends from the flower shape to the red lines below, it’s very clear to tell all of them apart. The painting isn’t what could be defined as calming as a whole as the painting progresses further to the right, the lines become sharper and darker. To the left, cheerful, soothing colors of light pink, dark pink, orange, yellow, and light purple are used as well as thin, smooth lines; in contrast, to the right the lines are sharp and jagged with pale colors topping dark ones as well as disordered lines creating a feeling of disarray. The whole background is pink with various hints of purple around the bottom left and top right creating a very “girly” feeling that is accompanied by the hearts and stars. Another key shape that is used is a square, with most of them being one solid, bold color. Excluded from this pattern, are the orange, yellowed striped and bordered squares atop of curved yet “wonky” lines.

2. **Evaluate** your creative process from the abstraction series to peer reviews and finally to translating your final study drawing into a painting. Was there any moment that stood out the most as being an important step to achieving the final project? Do you think there was a step that could have been skipped over? Make sure to support your answer with 3 examples from your experience.

I gained a much better perspective of abstract art as I went through this “creative process” It was legitimately fun to work with and try to almost force myself to make the idea I pictured with a limited range to work with. From the start of everything, I could not fathom why someone would limit themselves for art; isn’t art about creativity and clear expression after all? But in the end, this was almost like an activity that helps to get you into thinking more creatively and along the lines of other people. The greatest part in the abstraction series was the switchover, Zoe P. added to my art piece with very similar viewpoints of the music we had listened to in mind. I had been trying to figure out how to make it more jumping and “wild”. Zoe added only a few pieces of extra paper, but they
Part C: Showing Perspective through Abstraction (cont.)

Artist Name: Jessica Young
Interviewer Name: Emily Wong

Final Critique Form
Directions: Interview your artist/partner about his or her creative process and specifically identify the important (or interesting) features of his or her work. Use the following prompts to guide your interview.

Question #1: Evaluate your experience making your still life drawing and your final painting.
Response: It was really fun making both of the artworks, especially the painting bc I got to be more creative instead of just drawing a still object. With the still life drawing, I learned how to shade better and use other different materials better. In the painting, I wanted to make the colors bright and colorful yet create a different mood on either side of the painting.

Question #2: Which artwork is more successful? Why?
Response: I personally liked my still-life drawing better, but I think my painting was the most successful because I managed to incorporate a lot more detail than in my still life drawing. My painting was simplified, but there was a lot more in it than the still life, which felt a bit plain and unbalanced.

Question #3: Describe how you can apply or transfer similar processes used to make these two artworks in the next unit when abstraction will be explored even further.
Response: I think planning the whole drawing was important because it helped me focus on certain elements of the artwork and I was able to change elements I didn’t like before I finalized it. I also took shapes from the still life because it really helped
Contact Information

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