

As a substitute teacher, I rarely get to implement my own lesson plans and experiment with all the little details that make the lesson a success. Recently, I was fortunate enough to serve as a long-term sub for an entire year at the middle-school level. The teacher for whom I was subbing asked me to cover Pablo Picasso with her eighth-grade students. I was eager to pack this lesson with facts, experimentation with materials and, most importantly, a way to inspire and motivate them to learn.

My lesson included historical facts on Picasso and the time period in which he lived. I have found that students understand and can relate more to works of art when they are taught what the world was like during a certain time period and how artists responded to their environment or

“The Three Guitars,” by Colleen. >
 “The Three Fish,” by Karl. <



Playing with Picasso

by Debra Tampono

Cubist-style paintings titled *The Three Musicians* as a means to examine where artists get their ideas. We also used this painting as the basis for the project.

To start, they were instructed to choose three objects that were somehow related to each other and title their work “The Three ...” (based on the subject they chose).

Simple line drawings of their objects were done on 18" x 24" newsprint and then outlined with black marker, including the edge of the paper itself.

Students were encouraged to draw their objects large and to arrange them so there was a balance between negative and positive space. Next they were asked to cut the drawing from one edge of the paper to the other, turning their drawings into a puzzle of three or four sections. The students then rearranged their puzzle-like drawing

into a fragmented version of their original drawing, resembling one of the characteristics of cubism that the students had observed. To prepare for the final copy, an 18" x 24" piece of drawing paper was placed over the fragmented drawing. Next the students traced the whole design, the fragmented objects as well as the outline of the cut edges of the newsprint paper.

Aside from creating a dynamic composition in the Cubist style, the students enhanced their paintings using knowledge they acquired from a previous lesson about the properties of color. I explained and gave examples of how warm colors come forward while cool colors recede. This information was received with much enthusiasm when I had the class view my examples through 3-D glasses.

Now that I had empowered them with some inspiration to create, I developed an easy system that allowed each student the opportunity to be successful in creating a Cubist-style composition, regardless of their drawing abilities.

critical events in their lives. Included in this short biography of Picasso were personal, down-to-earth facts about the artist and his life. I showed the students pictures of his studio, discussed his works and even told them about his pet goat! This introduction proved effective in drawing the students’ attention and their participation in the lesson.

In discussing the development of his artistic career, we focused our attention on cubism and its characteristics. I introduced them to one of his

It was time for the magic to begin! First each student had to decide whether to paint the background warm and the foreground cool, or vice versa. With pencil they lightly marked each enclosed shape “B” for background and “F” for foreground. Using their knowledge of value from a previous project, I instructed the students to paint each enclosed shape with a gradation of cool or warm colors that corresponded to their markings of background or foreground.

I demonstrated the gradation of cool colors by using blue, medium green and then light green oil pastels. Likewise, the gradation of warm colors was created using red, orange and then yellow. The colors were blended, leaving no white areas of the paper exposed. Effort and craftsmanship were stressed as a

means to the most successful works.

The excitement was contagious as each student neared completion and viewed their project through the 3-D glasses. The display of completed works was dazzling and drew the attention of each passerby. Those viewing the students’ work were provided with 3-D glasses so they could experience the push and pull characteristics of warm and cool colors.

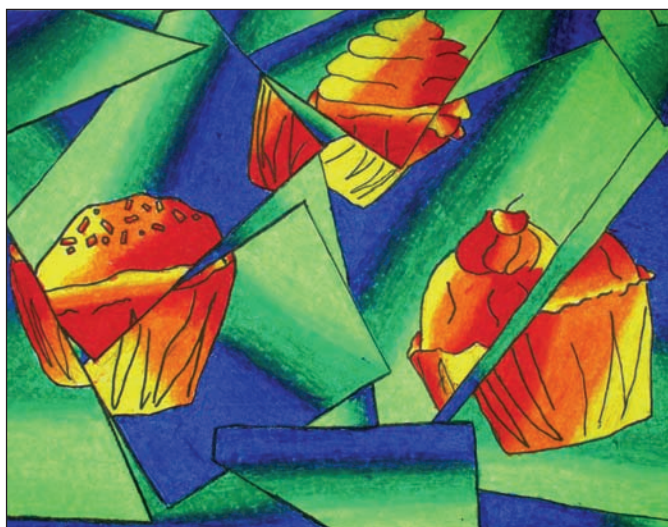
Aside from creating a spectacular work of art that each student took pride in, the students learned a little art history, new skills and an appreciation of the value of art. Later I received one of the greatest rewards as a teacher when two parents described proof to me that their child was learning and applying their knowledge. One parent reported that their child recognized a Picasso paint-

ing in the dentist office and was able to recount certain facts about the work and the artist. This display of knowledge impressed those in the waiting room and was a source of pride for the parent.

Another parent recounted a similar story while on tour at her son’s college. She described her child’s ability to explain to the tour guide the characteristics of color and why certain colors were specifically chosen for certain rooms and locations on the campus, depending on the function and purpose of the area.

Without a doubt, this lesson proved itself a success on many levels and has even been requested by students in other grades. ■

Debra Tampone developed this lesson when she taught at Rondout Valley Middle School in Accord, New York.



“The Three Cupcakes,” by Lacey.



“The Three Top Hats,” by Anthony.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Middle-school students will ...

- learn about the famous 20th-century artist Pablo Picasso.
- learn about the development of Cubism.
- learn how the development of art movements shape the world in which we live.
- learn about warm and cool colors.
- gain knowledge and experience about using a new material.

MATERIALS

- Print of Picasso’s *The Three Musicians*
- Biographical resources about Pablo Picasso
- 18" x 24" newsprint paper
- 18" x 24" drawing paper
- Oil pastels (red, orange, yellow, blue, green, yellow-green)
- 3-D glasses (available online)
- Black permanent markers
- Scissors

“The Three Fruits,” by Amanda. >

