

Exemplary Planning Commentary: Visual Arts

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1a. Central focus of the segment

The central focus is as follows: students demonstrate and articulate line, shape/form, and symmetry while constructing an original 3D Tiki Lantern using the clay coiling method. The purpose of this central focus is to help students understand principles of visual art such as line, symmetry, shape/form, learn the hand building method called coiling, and how to attach clay and carve designs into their project. In addition to learning about the production and basic art principles, students also learn about the historical and cultural background of the Tiki.

1b. Linking skills, knowledge, and context

By this point in the semester, my students already have had some experience with the production of ceramic objects. Before this project, they have created a pinch pot bowl and a pinch pot vase. They already have a basic knowledge of vocabulary within ceramic art. New areas that will be addressed with this project, are the definition and process of coiling, how to use the 4 S's (score, slip, smush, smooth), how to apply additive clay features, how to subtract clay by scratching, and cutting through the body of clay. Finally students will continue to work on articulating verbally, through writing, and executing their artistic choices.

With this project, students will also continue their investigation about form and structure. When learning how to create a Tiki, students are going to once again be asked to create a specific form. With the first project, students were asked to make a half sphere; the second was an oblong sphere with a neck. The Tiki lantern is going to be an open cylindrical container formed entirely out of coils. Therefore within the Tiki project students will continue to learn about manipulating the form and structure of a three dimension object.

The next aspect of this assignment will help to further their understanding of art context and help demonstrate their personal perspective. Unlike the first two assignments, Tiki's have a historical and cultural context from which they stem. As a part of the introduction into this project, I introduce the impact of the Tiki on Polynesian and Hawaiian culture, and what the Tiki represented. After this brief introduction, I give a list about what defines a traditional Tiki; exaggerated features, fierce expressions, and highly decorated forms. Students take this information and then draw how they want their completed project to look. In addition to incorporating traditional aspects of the Tiki, I also ask students to make their design unique and personal to themselves. By asking students to do this, they learn how to design from their own personal perspective and each Tiki looks unique and not like any other.

1c. Explaining how lessons build and link to other skills

Throughout every project and the unit as a whole, I am careful to scaffold new and old information so students feel confident with concepts and techniques. An area I feel like I excel in is deepening student learning. For example, in the Lesson 1 demonstration I describe the scoring technique as texturizing or creating Velcro teeth so the clay can grip itself. By relating this to something that they are familiar with (Velcro), they can create a connection and understood the production aspect of the project. Another area that I show deepening of student understanding in personal perspective was also in Lesson 1. For the exit slip, I asked students to list an example of a symmetrical form found in their daily life.

This already gets students thinking about art related things outside the classroom and then deepens their thinking by asking students to explain how they know it is symmetrical.

1d. Opportunities to express learning targets (Washington State only).

I give students opportunities to express their understanding of the learning targets throughout the whole course of a project. In my lesson plans, these can be seen in the form of exits slips, fist to five assessments, and quizzes. Another area I show this in is the informal instructional periods throughout the class. These informal instructional periods usually occur when a student has a question and is confused about how to resolve an issue. To help students better understand the importance of the specific learning targets, I ask students to verbally articulate the problem. They specifically will focus on the production of a clay piece using vocabulary and their understanding of the learning target. For example, when a student is stuck I ask them to hypothesize ways resolving their issue. Most of the time students will reply by saying how ugly their project is and how they need my help to remedy it. I have discovered that by asking them to articulate their problem students will say something like “my lines aren’t very clean and it’s making the design look messy” or “the form of my Tiki is getting too wide”. This shows their ability to apply specific goals, and decide if they are being successfully met with their project. Another way that I encourage students to express their understanding of the learning targets is by letting them interpret the assignment and add their personal perspective. In Lesson 1, I introduce the Tiki lanterns and give the students a historical and cultural context to the Tiki. Taking this new knowledge and knowing what the project is requiring, students will often change the piece to something that is unique and personal but still meets requirements. For example, last semester one of the students created a tiger Tiki, another made the emblem for her college choice. By stressing the importance of making their Tiki personal, each project looks unique from one another and students take more pride in their work.

2a. Summary of students’ prior knowledge

Since Ceramics One is an entry level class, there are always a broad spectrum of learners. Most of the students that are taking Ceramics One are experiencing clay for the first time. Consequently, I know that students will need to walk through each step thoroughly. At the beginning of the semester, a district pre-assessment for ceramics was given to each student in my class. I know that students are experiencing clay and ceramics for the first time because the average score was five out of twenty correct. The content of this pre-assessment was entirely based on vocabulary that dealt with tools, methods, and materials. In the beginning of the Tiki project, I had students take a quiz to assess their understanding about content for this assignment. I tested them on vocabulary, techniques, and understanding of basic cause and effect with clay. These scores showed an exponential increase in correct answers and averaged a nine out of ten. This reinforces that students have learned some of the ceramic or clay building basics. Now students are using vocabulary daily and using it correctly. At the beginning of the semester, I let students have a period where they could make a free project. All of the projects were cracked and misshapen because they did not understand how to manipulate clay effectively or the need for water when working with clay. Now students are creating pieces that are smooth, cohesive, and not cracking. They also understand basic caretaking skills when working with the clay such as storing it, adding water, and attaching clay to itself. I know that they understand how to create a pinch pot bowl, pinch pot vase, and demonstrate a variety of principles of art in a three-dimensional form. This is evident by the success in previous projects that incorporated these areas. The purpose of the Tiki project is building upon student’s knowledge of the clay hand-building method. Until this point, students have only demonstrated how to create ceramic vessels by pinching, some rudimentary joining techniques, and basic design through carving. In this project, they learn the method of coiling, how to add clay as a design, how to better use the 4 S’s (score, slip, smush, smooth), and further their knowledge about principles of art in regards to symmetry, line, shape, and form.

2b. Summary of student assets

Throughout the course of the semester, I have learned a lot about my students. I have learned about their home life, their religious views, and interests, all of which impact the way that I create lesson plans. This is due to the fact that I am a safe, open and attentive teacher which encourages students to share if they so desire. I know that some of my students go home to multi-million dollar mansions and others go home to trailers. I know that one of my students cannot make anything with a face because it is against her religion. I know the majority of my students are interested in

taking my ceramics class. Since ceramics is a fine arts elective, the majority of students willingly signed up for this class. I also am aware that some students picked this class because they thought it would be easy. While this may be true in comparison to other content areas, my class requires a different kind of work. I know the students look forward to coming to class and being able to relax, but they still need to demonstrate their knowledge, skills, and work ethic through their creations. In addition to being interested in ceramics, students have also shared with me their extracurricular passions. Many of my students play sports and incorporate their passion for the game into their art. Many others are interested in new movies (they love Frozen), teen books (Hunger Games, Fault in our Stars, Divergent), and social media websites such as Instagram, Twitter, and Snapchat. I have noticed that as a teacher, students really enjoy sharing their lives with me often this occurs in class or when I attend extracurricular activities. While some of my students tend to overshare and tell me about their weekend escapades, others have shared parts of themselves that they hide from their peers. For example, despite their happy appearance students have shared what they really are feeling on the inside. I recently had a student tell me about the death of her relatives, another who told me about her troubled childhood, and another who told me she found her friend injured after an attempt at suicide. Hearing things like this reminds me that even though they are in high school, many of them have experienced things that many adults cannot begin to imagine. However, not everything students tell me is always so heavy. Many times students love sharing funny videos they saw or something silly one of their friends did. Having these conversations with students fills me in on what is happening in their world and helps me tailor my teaching to better reach my students as individuals.

2c. Conditions and development of students affecting instruction

Throughout all of my class periods I have a variety of students that suffer from psychological or physical problems. In total, I have two students that are severely mentally disabled, three that are moderately to mildly mentally disabled, five that are physically disabled, three English language learners, and eleven students with individualized education plans. For each of these students, I have provided accommodations and sometimes modifications to my lessons. For example, many of the severely disabled students have problems with their fine motor skills which are necessary for many aspects of ceramics. Knowing this, I modified the lesson so that they were allowed to make a six inch Tiki body rather than nine inches. By shortening the height, these students were able to build something with help from their tutors that looked really well done. I did a similar thing for another student who suffers from juvenile inflammation. He frequently is missing school because of surgeries and procedures. Even when he is in attendance, it is not guaranteed that his hands will be able to do what is required for ceramics. Since he has missed so much school and he is not able to execute projects, he petitioned and is now excused from doing one of the projects. In addition to physical handicaps, there are also several students that suffer from psychological conditions. The two most prominent conditions are severe depression and Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD). The students that have severe depression often miss school because they cannot physically get out of bed to come to class. Knowing this, I always am sure to have copies of information covered which are available to them upon their return. I also make myself available to these students before and after school so they have the option of catching up on assignments. For students with ADD, I try to have a classroom that is quiet and not distracting during key points of instruction. Knowing that some of my students struggle with being focused, I realized that the Tiki will be one of the more frustrating projects. Coiling is a method that requires patience, and most of my students suffering from ADD don't have this. The Tiki project takes almost a week of class time to simply build the main form and at this point the project doesn't look very attractive. Students get frustrated if the assignment takes time and doesn't look perfect instantly. Knowing this, students may try to quickly construct their projects and end up ruining their piece. In order to prevent this from happening, I emphasized patience on this project and often told students they needed to stop and wait to build up their piece again. While they were waiting, as a way of keeping students distracted, I had them work on smoothing the inside and outside of their Tiki form. This worked twofold. Not only did it stop students from continuing to build up the height, but it also improved the appearance of the project.

2d. Dispositions toward learning visual arts

I know that I have a wide range of students that are different in their ability to persist and learn about visual arts, and their belief in their own personal success. From loafers to the gifted, each student has a different kind of hope in themselves and a drive to learn. All of my students have the capability to learn visual arts. However even those that appear to be capable of doing this, lack the persistence to accomplish that goal. There can be many contributing factors for this such as a social factor, poor self-esteem, or lack of experience. The majority of my students are diligent in

creating works of visual art, and truly believe that they can and will accomplish their goals. Some of my students are simply in the class to pass it and receive credit. These individuals usually don't put in the effort to really learn anything or demonstrate their understanding of visual arts. In this sense my class is divided; all want to pass but only some believe they have the ability to. As a teacher, I want all my students to believe in the success of their visual art projects. If those who don't believe in themselves learn it, persistence to succeed will follow. I think that many coming into the class have low confidence, especially if they have limited experience with the subject. It is because of this that my students may have a low expectation of how well they will learn visual arts. Especially when it is a piece of art, people tend to be extremely critical of their work and assume they will fail. I think that a certain amount of self-criticism is beneficial, but it is important to not let it overcome you. Despite the fact that students think they don't have a high chance of successful learning, they still show an extremely powerful energy in applying aspects of art to their projects. I attribute this to the fact that students want to succeed. As the class continues and students begin to apply visual arts information to their projects and critiques, they begin to have confidence. With visual arts comes the opportunity to present a different kind of learning for students; one which that does not have a definitive answer. With visual arts, students get messy both physically and mentally. There is not one specific way to achieve an effect, and experimenting and trying things are encouraged not penalized. Not having an exact answer for every project or situation is frightening for some students. They feel comfortable in the predictable and panic if something unexpected happens. My goal is that through my teaching I will be able to soften the rigidity of their mental processing and instill fluidity.

3a. Selecting learning activities based on prior knowledge and other assets

To become an excellent teacher, it is important to understand your students so you can teach to their strengths. I have a diverse set of learners in my classes, I am careful to structure my lessons in a way that will motivate students. Listed previously I have mentioned several students that needed accommodations or modifications to assignments. I knew that I would have to accommodate or provide specific resources for students with physical disabilities, and I knew I would have to change my instruction to better reach English Language Learners (ELL). These were the two biggest areas that guided my adaptation of tasks and materials. According to Classroom Management That Works by Robert J. Marzano, he comments that students respond well to teachers being aware of them as people and events that impact their lives. By being aware of events in student's lives both in and outside of the classroom, I can positively impact behavior towards myself, and learning. Being aware of this, I wanted to make sure that my students know that I am aware of them and care for their needs. I make a point to accommodate or modify when the student needs it, but we always start by acknowledging potential issues and then discussing options. It is this reason that I was guided to adapting aspects according to a specific student needs.

3b. Selecting learning activities for the whole-class and individuals

In an article called Teaching English Language Learners: What Research Does – and Does Not – Say written by Claude Goldenberg, I discovered some ways to overcome the language barrier between myself and Ezequiel. According to Goldenberg, by teaching a student to read in their first language and then hearing the same information in their second language there is a positive influence on their performance. It is this reason that I provide Ezequiel with Spanish and English translations. This may end up making more work for me, but at least I can help to encourage his learning and using English in the classroom. This article also encouraged simplifying the English terms to account for the lack of understanding. Examples of this can be seen in my handouts and also the modifications I made to the pop quiz. Another area that can show an adaptation with learning tasks and materials are with students that have developmental conditions. As mentioned in 2C, several of my students were not physically able to control their body to create a project as extensive as their peers. One way that I accommodated was to make the project shorter by three inches. The shorter it is, the more structurally sound it will be and the easier it will be to construct. This was done primarily to help my students with cerebral palsy and juvenile arthritis. The student with cerebral palsy does not have enough muscle control to successfully create a nine inch Tiki. By shortening it, she was able to still participate and create her own project with peer assistance and it ended up looking very well constructed. The student with juvenile arthritis also received this accommodation because she was not physically able to roll out coils with her hands. To help her build the project, we shortened it and provided her with coils that she could attach together to create her design.

3c. Resources for getting help on learning targets (Washington state only)

Students will identify resources to support their progress goals by being told about them by the teacher. At the beginning of every project, I like to give my students several previewing tasks. According to Robert J. Marzano in *The Art and Science of Teaching*, previewing is a tool that is very beneficial to students that do not have a lot of experience in what is being presented. I know that most of my students have little to no experience with ceramics, so I start slowly with the previewing. I begin by asking students to look at previous projects. This helps them begin to think about how they will create their project. Next, I give the students a description of the project. This provides students with the knowledge of how to construct a piece. Finally, I demonstrate how to do the project. This is the area where students will really be introduced to many of their resources. I demonstrate with the tools and materials which I want students to use on the project. While demonstrating, I state the name of the tool and explain the purpose of each item so students can better understand how to implement their resource. For times when I will need to modify or accommodate assignments, I am careful to talk to effected students about exactly which resources they have access to. For example for those who are physically handicapped or severely mentally handicapped, I explain how their project will be different from their peers. For example, during other projects, specific students have access to tools that other students do not simply because their physical impairments do not allow their body to work in the same way. Other students identify resources because I will set them out for students to use. During each project, I put away tools that are not relevant to the project. In addition to not having these tools in plain sight, I also review with students during the demonstration portion what tools or resources are provided and should be used.

3d. Anticipating misconceptions

My content focus has many aspects that can be confusing to students especially if this is a new experience. Several errors that students tend to make on this project are usually fairly obvious because this is a three-dimensional object. One such error is students building their piece up too quickly and having it slump down. Since I did not have much experience with coiled ceramic forms, I turned to *The Complete Potter's Companion* by Tony Birks. He suggested that when coil pots collapse, support it from the outside and wait for it to become leather hard. Another obvious one is when the circumference of the piece gets too large. To help illustrate this for the students I remind them that with every action there is an equal and opposite reaction. If a student pushes out on the inside of their Tiki the circumference will become larger. I address this by showing students how to fix this and then describing what they can do to prevent the error from happening again. Another frequent mistake that students make is maintaining the proper moisture consistency in their projects. Often students will wet their piece too much and it will melt on them; other students don't keep their project wet enough and it becomes dry and brittle. This is something that I will struggle with until about half way through the semester when students have finally had enough experience to best understand the moisture of the clay. Some ways that I help to prevent this before this point in the semester is through experience. I will show students how to use their senses to determine the amount of moisture in the clay. For example, leather hard clay is a dark grey color that is cool to the touch and is slightly flexible but maintains its shape.

4a. Identifying the language function

The word that I think best fits the language function for this learning segment is "describe". Throughout all of ceramics, students are asked to use academic language and practice articulating or describing aspects of the project. The Tiki lantern assignment is the same. To begin the project students observe assignments from previous semesters and describe what they think looks good or what could be improved. Students learn to describe and then understand what makes a project successful. They also are learning to be critical thinkers about art and learning to engage in critiquing art. In turn, students are then asked to interpret how well they are completing the required task. This can be seen throughout my lesson plans but especially during the mid-project critique (see part B below).

4b. Learning activities enabling practice with the language function

In lesson 3, I have students stop their projects and critique each other. This task requires students to understand the grading criteria or requirements, and then analyze and describe how these are being applied to their project. In order to successfully accomplish this part of the learning segment, students have to know how to describe and articulate what looks successful and what could be improved. An example of this can be seen in my second video clip. By having

students understand using all the same vocabulary discourse can be easily achieved with their peers and teacher. This is especially useful for me when I am performing informal individual instruction. When students have a problem with their project, I need them to accurately describe what they are trying to accomplish and why it isn't working. By having students describe their projects, they can deepen their learning through correct use of vocabulary. In addition to oral demonstrations of knowledge, I ask my students to provide written examples. In my classroom, I have something called an interactive journal for each student. This is a place for students to keep observation notes, draw rough drafts, and explain projects. For the observation notes, students are asked to describe aspects of a project that they thought worked well or fell short. This is an opportunity for them to practice writing vocabulary correctly. Another part of these interactive journals is the communication between me and students. I have journal checks after each project and I can go through and correct any mistakes with improper use of vocabulary.

4c. Additional language demands

For the language function and learning task listed above, it is very important that students understand vocabulary so they can effectively communicate through discourse with their peers. At the beginning of the semester, I spent a whole day reviewing vocabulary terms. My students all hated doing this, but it was important. If students aren't aware of the vocabulary used in a ceramics class, it is difficult to efficiently and effectively communicate. The vocabulary was almost entirely new to them so I started by introducing all of it and using it in the classroom through examples and explanations. For example, there are several degrees of moisture the clay goes through during construction. In order to be successful, it is important to be able to recognize them, describe them, and accurately use vocabulary pertaining to these stages. In the Tiki project, we really wanted to emphasize the term "leather hard". Since the vocabulary was new to some, students struggled with using terms correctly. Daily exposure to academic language is important. Throughout my instruction, I frequently ask students questions involving vocabulary and request them to participate in academic discourse with me. This kind of questioning can be used with a variety of students who have different skill levels. For example I can ask students to explain why one tool would be better than another, or what tool would be used to create a specific effect. I have used this kind of questioning with my highest achieving students and also my lowest.

4d. Supporting language use

In order to best support students with their use of academic language, I find it works well to regularly monitor their learning. This can be seen extensively throughout my lesson plans. For example, in Lesson 1 during the observation students are asked to look at Tiki lanterns from previous classes and determine if they were successful in showing symmetry, line, shape, and form. By having visual example in front of the students, they are able to better understand what a correct and incorrect project looked like. At the beginning of the project, students are introduced to pertinent vocabulary. As the project continues their learning is reinforced through correct examples of using vocabulary, practice incorporating these in classroom discourse, and on also in written assessments. The way that we practice this is by asking students to explain what their goal is and their action plan. Examples of times allotted for this can be seen in Lessons 4 and 5 throughout the model activity and demonstration sections. For individual students, such as Enrique (pseudonym), who require more instructional support with language I have several other tools I use. For example, Enrique is provided with an iPad to help with translation. However, many of the words that are translated from English to Spanish don't make sense. To better support him, I have picked other words that roughly have the same meaning to their English counterparts. One example of this was the term coil. The dictionary recognized this as a noun rather than a verb. To clarify, I told Ezequiel the process for creating the Tiki used ropes of clay that were placed upon each other.

5a. Assessing student learning

The assessments created for this project are tailored specifically to monitor student's progress of learning and understanding in this assignment. The first assessment I perform is one where I ask my students to draw a rough draft of their intended Tiki design. This gives students a chance to visualize what they want the form of their project will be before they have begun physically creating it. This gives me an idea of their understanding of the project requirements, which in this case are line, symmetry, shape, and form. On the back of this paper, I asked students to fill out an exit slip. Students were asked to give an example of something in their daily life that had symmetry and then explain how they knew it was symmetrical. This is deepening student knowledge because it forces them to think outside of the classroom

about examples that show principles of art. This helps students to think about what symmetry is and also gives me an idea of how well they understand this concept. In addition to drawing and filling out exit slips, I also perform several fist to five assessments throughout this learning segment (these can be seen in lesson plans 1, 2, 4, and 5). These informal assessments direct students to do a self-evaluation on how well they understand something, and also provides me with an idea of how well the instruction went and who needs help. The fist to five assessments can be applied to many kinds of assessment. One that I use is whether or not students feel their form was successful. Another is if they understand how to produce a coil properly. These fist to five assessments can be applied to everything from regular check in's to checking for understanding with terms.

5b. Adapting lessons

One thing that I want to emphasize in my classroom is equity rather than equality. Students with disabilities often require more time or access to more resources than their gifted peers. Because of this, when I am creating assessments I plan that some students may require more of an explanation, a structured grading process, and one on one instruction. One example of this is can be seen in the grading rubric. I know that Enrique needs to have straight forward questions rather than abstract thinking. To help accommodate for this, I created a rubric in his native language and simplified it. When comparing the English grade rubric to the Spanish one, there are still the same areas being graded, but they are asked very differently (see attached in Task 3 – Part D). The one in English is set up with a 3, 2, 1, 0 scale with explanations for each category. The one in Spanish give the example of what a perfect score would be but then asks questions to help facilitate critical thinking about specific aspects for the project. The translation of the original rubric was complicated and did not make much sense. By creating rubric that asks questions rather than tells examples, Enrique can better understand what he is being graded on.

5c. Student reflection (Washington state only)

Throughout the lesson plan I elicit student responses through a series of tasks. Some of the more informal methods can be seen as exit slips and fist to five assessments. Some of the more formal methods used are mid-project critiques, pop-quizzes, and interactive journals. I have a variety of mediums used to elicit a response because I think it is important that students practice articulating orally and through writing. Many of the oral responses that are elicited are during individual instruction. As seen in several of my video clips, students must first describe what they are trying to accomplish and hypothesize ways to do this before help is given. This is an important part to my teaching because it requires the students to be aware of the goal and it also informs me of how well my instruction is formatted.

5d. Strategies to promote student self-assessment (Washington state only)

Throughout the learning segment, students are given a series of prompts to help them monitor how well they are learning or completing a task. To begin with, students are always made aware of how much time they will have on a project. Throughout the course of the assignment students are reminded of the schedule, and they are able to self-regulate and determine what they need to do to finish the assignment in time. Another way that students are able to monitor their own learning process is threw informal assessments provided by the teacher. In several of the lesson plans (see attached in Task 1), students are asked to define specific parts of the project like symmetry, line, shape and form. By being asked these questions, students are able to evaluate themselves on how well they really understand the goal. The way the learning segment is structured provides students with frequent checks of their understanding. In the first lesson, students draw their Tiki design and they check off to make sure they understand the five facial characteristics required. In lesson two, students receive a pop quiz that asks them a series of questions relevant to the project. If students don't receive full points on a certain area, they are able to ask peers or the teacher questions or reread notes in their interactive journals. In the third lesson plan, students are asked again to check their success in achieving the central focus. Students look at their projects and also their peers critically and describe if they have met that target yet, if it was successful, and how it could be improved.