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Lesson Concept Design

Art and design is indispensable to humankind and a part of our every day life. Everything that we can physically see is a design in one way or another and this idea is fundamental to understanding how objects, buildings and even roads come about. I feel like this is an important side of art and design that many students should be learning very early on in their education as it can broaden their understanding of art and design and leave them limitless in their creations. In today's modern society it is important for students to understand that art and design is not just the oil painting in a frame on the wall but it is the whisk in the kitchen you use to make pancakes, the shoes upon your feet, the shirt on your back and the home that you live in. It is important to start raising questions about the differences between Art, design and even craft early on so that students can begin to distinguish all of the visual information they receive during their daily lives.

The lesson I wish to teach would best be absorbed in a studio challenge; a lesson plan that involves thinking, problem solving, design and invention. The studio is to be called Think Tank and I've been inspired by my own Think Tank teacher Bob Logan in devising this lesson plan. He is a man that pushed us to think outside the box and design things

that matter- to us, society and the earth. I would like to pass on some of the things I have learned from him and adapt what I've learned into a creative, fun and challenging activity for the students. The purpose of this challenge is to illuminate the connections between design, every day life and consumption. My aim is to encourage students to view objects as a design, to analyze them, recognize their flaws, discuss ways in which they can be improved, brainstorm ways in which design can be an intervention, how to problem solve and invent new, creative and original designs.

Art and design come together in the architecture of the AGO building itself. Before taking students to the studio I will bring them through a short tour of the Gallery space allowing them to begin speculating over how design is incorporated into our every day lives and I can begin the discussion on how design can be an intervention. I will point out that everything from the chairs we see to pathway we walk is a carefully planned out design. The sculptural staircase in the Walker Court (Figure 1), by Frank Gehry, gives an ordinary every day stair case a new meaning and purpose; a walk through the Galleria Italia will even further exemplify



FIGURE 1

where art and design meet to unify a space and the objects within it. Before heading into the studio, this would be a perfect opportunity to allow students to wander the gallery, to ask questions and point out what designs they see and let them begin to think about how design creates or changes a space or situation.

Take a chair for example(Figure 2):

This ordinary chair is functional and meant to be sat on. As ordinary as it is this chair is still a design, not an art piece but it is an object that was imagine, designed then produced.



FIGURE 2

Design by Kerstin Schulz

Pencil Chair (Figure 3)

It is also a design but now it is a chair that in not functional. It is not meant to be sat on and would most likely severely injure the user. The meaning and purpose of a chair is now changed.



FIGURE 3

Perhaps if this were put in a public space it would say something about health in America; a away of implying that people should sit less and be more active.

Because I would be asking the students to consider real life spaces and current social and environmental issues I have geared my lesson concept design towards students that are in grade seven and above. I don't feel that younger elementary students would be able to properly understand what is being asked of them however I still feel it is an important topic that can be educated to allow them to begin thinking of art and design as an influence in their own lives. Because my focus age would have a higher comprehension of this activity and a longer attention span, it would be appropriate to lengthen their stay in the studio and allow them a longer duration to work. During my internship at the AGO I felt that studio time was very short and didn't allot enough time for students to properly develop their ideas. For an activity as complex and intellectually demanding as this I would plan for this activity to span out through an entire day; discussions, tours and work time will not be rushed and it will allow students to fully develop their thoughts and ideas without feeling the pressure of having to complete a task on time. There are multiple steps that a design must undergo before a final product is complete and it is beneficial to allow the students the time to fully go through the full designing process; a process that would be both educational, challenging and fun. My aim is to leave a lasting impression and for students to leave feeling like they have actually accomplished something in their day of work and have learned something that they can now consider after leaving the AGO.

I want students to feel that their ideas are potentially limitless and I will provide them with the materials in order to articulate these ideas and designs. Students will have the

option to work in pencil or ink and create drafts, written plans and finished drawings, or in addition to drawings they can express their ideas three dimensionally. I will provide students with all the essentials for creating drafts and prototypes; pencils, pens, paper, paints, cardboard, glue, tape, pipe cleaner, magazines and other media, and other miscellaneous materials such as buttons, polystyrene, string, yarn, straws, popsicle sticks etc.

Through this activity students will push their imagination and think beyond gallery art as the only function for art and design in society. They will brainstorm ideas and identify ongoing problems throughout the world or spaces they can change in some way with new designs. They will enhance their problem solving skills in both creating an invention and utilizing the recycled materials at hand and feel accomplished in knowing they have created something original and important. Overall, through my lesson concept design, I want to use art and design as a tool for engaging students outside of the classroom, breaching borders and limitations of their presumptions of art and problem solving in real life situations and issues. I want students to recognize the influences of art in their own lives and to consider how art and design has shaped the world we live in and give them the beginning tools for imagining creative solutions for a world that is in constant change and adaptation.