

Emily Pennacchio  
2274314  
INTR 3B05  
ART & DESIGN EDUCATION LAB  
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**Lesson Concept Design:**  
**Poster Design and Print Exchange**

“Engage them in visual culture, which they’re experts in and consumers of; they just don’t experience being makers of it. I’m trying to turn that around, making stuff with your own hands, making your own culture.”

– Craig Morrison, OASIS Skateboard Factory

## Lesson Concept Design: Poster Design and Print Exchange

Combining my personal teaching philosophy with my interest and knowledge of the arts and printmaking, my lesson design is naturally studio centered, with a hands on, experiential learning agenda. As a printmaker, concerned with the opportunity for multiples and demystified by the sacred original, it is this democratic obtainability of fine art that I want to suggest through a studio experience. Printmaking is a form of art making that appeals to community and social concerns, promoting equality and advocating for social change through the distribution of information via the printed multiple.

Students will be introduced to the process of screen printing, which uses a stencil to recreate an image, while allowing for modifications in colour and composition. The lesson will be appropriate for Grade 8+ students, demanding a certain level of control and application. Over the span of a single 3-hour class, students will be exposed to an introduction of printmaking, and it's role in the art world, as well as the technical steps that must be followed, though with the possibility for modification, to achieve a print. With my guidance and instruction, students will have the opportunity to create a stencil, and print on to a supplied surface in an edition equal to the amount of students in the program. After each student has completed their edition, I will lead an exchange, allowing for them to take home a suite of prints created by their classmates. This exchange will demonstrate the opportunity for sharing information, ideas, and visual culture with

our peers, while aiming to inspire thought on print's contemporary uses outside of the classroom, studio, and gallery.

We will question what is considered art, by looking at examples of the various uses of screen printing in the art world, commercially and beyond. Drawing on Susan Tallman's *The Contemporary Print*, which discusses the vitality of print and reproduction in today's art world, I will lead the class with discussion supported by a short reading. Using screen printing, I will focus on printmaking and its role within the arts, while hinting at its "will to expose or manipulate the social and economic contexts of art..." (Tallman, 11). Then, moving away from theory, I will provide visual examples of the printed multiple in the form of a poster. Outlining the broad range of uses and design possibilities, I will challenge student's to create a poster for a charity event or public service announcement. Instigating creative thought through examples, student's will then be given an allotted amount of time to design there image, text, or combination of the two, in preparation for stencil making. Approximately one hour will be given to complete these components, leaving two hours for the demo, printing and exchange.

The demonstration portion of the program will be brief, focusing only on the basic steps of paper stencil making, set up, printing, and clean up. I will go over a list of materials, as well as their uses, explaining the proper angle at which to use a squeegee, how to mix ink in order to achieve a certain colour or transparency, and so on. Allowing questions to be asked at this time, I will also allow for suggestions, while making some, as to how the process can be modified or adjusted to create a varied edition, or something drastically different. Experimentation is encouraged

and is quite simple in screen printing, as any undesirable results can be washed away, leaving the stencil to be re-used.

Exploring on my own interests, the opportunities facilitated by the screen printing process, and the practice of a print exchange, this particular lesson design challenges the original work of art, providing an alternative, more accessible form of art making, distribution, and exposure. Through this project I hope to stimulate thoughts on the impact of art making and its potential for activism. Why do we make art, and how does it impact those around us? Also, why is printmaking important for its ability to reach a larger audience? The opportunity for self-expression and problem solving through art making, as well as individual growth through experiential activities is vital to the development of contemporary thinking and criticism in regards to community and social issues. The connection between printmaking and social advocacy is undeniable, as it provides an outlet for the distribution of ideas and critical thought, free from the censorship of mainstream media outlets. With a focus on art making and its connection to community, students will realize their ability to creatively facilitate change while developing cognitive process.

“The curriculum is not to emphasize content, but process. Teaching is not to impart, but to help students learn to inquire” (The Educational Imagination, 62). Students will be observed for their participation in questioning contemporary art making, and its possibilities outside of a gallery space. While the technical aspects of screen printing are important to the development of their posters, more important is the students inquiry in to social, cultural and community based issues.

Arming students with the tools to develop critical thought and self-expression through art and arts education, this program strives to inspire personal reflection in relationship to community, activism and culture. Using open-ended activities advocated by art educators such as Peter London and John Dewey, employs the community and student-based approach to arts education. This poster-making program encourages self-exploration, and communication with peers, while students create an original work of art indicative of their own personal interests.

Using Craig Morrison's OASIS Skateboard Factory curriculum as an exemplary model, my own program, the Poster Design and Print Exchange, facilitates a hands-on learning experience, acting as a catalyst for learning, and equipping students with an experiential understanding of critical thinking and activism through art making. Also, my lesson design employs Albert S. Dukacz and Patrick Babin and their conceptual framework of Social Reconstruction, in which they write, "In this view, the purpose of the curriculum is to orient children to the social issues of the day – for example, multiculturalism, unemployment, pollution, sexism, coping with change, and consumer rights" (Babin & Dukacz).

This strong connection to community, activism, and social change, parallels the spirit of printmaking, and its egalitarian strength. Demystifying the original and sacred masterpiece made only for a museum or wealthy art collector, printmaking and its opportunity for grand multiples, serves to bring art to a larger audience. As a young artist, severely attached to my paintings and associating sizeable value to them, I was immediately attracted to the opportunity for reproduction offered by printmaking. I was also attracted to the idea that I could sell my prints at a

significantly lower cost than my previous paintings, with the potential to then sell several, reaching more buyers and viewers. However, this contrastingly capitalist view can also be operated and exploited in support of the advocator, protestor, and civil affairs.

My intentions with this lesson design are to contribute to art education by introducing contemporary art and views with a focus on the students as catalysts for change and exploration. Using the printed multiple and print exchange, students will accomplish the creation of an original work of art, as well as the satisfaction of sharing their work with others, while also receiving that of their peers. Gaining knowledge of printmaking and its vast uses, the various applications of art making, and the potential for the distribution of ideas, this program aims to inspire further thought on the application of the arts. A perhaps untraditional lesson design, I wish to encourage students to inquire about personal art making methods and concepts. Through my own personal experiences in art education, I feel as if curriculum is typically traditional, with little focus on contemporary artists and ideas. It was not until attending university at OCADU, that I experienced contemporary art education, and it is my intention to now offer an alternative view.

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