

Lesson Concept Design

3D Construction – Shape and Space Exploration

Angelina Stoilkova

ADEL INTR 3B05

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As the world of art and its meaning for children is closely related to their life experiences and observations, this class will be based on students’ individual space experiences, likes and imaginations.

Objective:

The objective of this class is students to explore 3D simple shapes through the construction of a structure or environment. My goal is to encourage them explore simple 3D shapes such as cones, cylinders, boxes, pyramids, etc. and make them feel comfortable and confident working with them and the materials these shapes are made of. This art experience should be exploratory, fun and challenging.

Lesson Structure:

Duration:	Age:	Place:
3 Hours	Grade 4-8	AGO and Weston Family Center Studio

Part 1:	Part 2:	Part 3:
Introduction “AGO Walk”	Construction in groups of 3-4	Exploration
30 minutes	90 minutes	60 minutes

Lesson Outcomes:

Observation of an exciting architecturally space (AGO architecture); Built structure/environment that can be abstract or specific; Improved construction skills – joining, gluing, cutting, building, creating patterns and textures; Understanding qualities of space/environment, Understanding scale

Introduction: (30 minutes)

To encourage students’ observation skills and sensitivity to architectural spaces and environments, architecture and sculpture, the class will start with a walk through some of the most exciting AGO spaces, such as the front lobby, a walk up the staircases, a visit to Walker Court, Gallery Italia, some of the exhibition

spaces. We will look at the spaces from different angles (up and down, in and out), and critically discuss what is interesting about them. Asking different questions I will create a discussion around simple and more complex shapes, how they are represented in everything around us, how they can be used to create structures and environments in traditional and more imaginative way, how these shapes affect our response to the environment, what are the paths, materials, textures, light qualities, what do they like or not and why? The discussion should make them more conscious about shape and space qualities and unleash their imagination on thinking about more unusual spaces/environments they would like to create as if they could be built in real. We will discuss how function and sculpture are reflected in these spaces and why and how architectural elements have been added to further reinforce them. (Is an arc have been added to create a passage, to reveal a view, to let light in?)

“AGO Walk”



After this introduction, the class will continue in a studio environment. I will introduce to them the working environment, materials, tools and form groups of 3-4 students.

Materials:

The materials can be smooth or have some textures, but they will be all the same colour (white or cardboard brown). The idea is children not to be distracted by colours or use colour as literal representation of trees, roofs, the ground, etc.). The construction is better to be made on a cardboard base to facilitate moving, rotating, attaching parts and gluing. Building materials can be boxes and other kinds of (corrugated) cardboard – one sided and 2 sided, glue, masking tape, wooden skewers, cardboard tubes in rolls, coffee stirrers, etc.



Masking tape and white glue are materials that are more rarely used by children, and working with them could be a new experience. They are also better for attaching more solidly parts and allow painting (if desired). Additional tools can be punchers and carving tools with which different patterns and textures can be created and are relatively safe for work. Exacto knife can be used from older children or by me while assisting them during the construction process for creating curved shapes, making openings, etc.



Construction: (90 minutes)

The task is to design a structure or a cityscape (amusement park they would like to play in, a school they would want to go to, a house they would like to live in, a street, restaurant, etc.) This is an open-ended exploration where students' structures or spaces can be more abstract or more specific as they prefer. They can combine shapes together or create their own with the available materials. Thus they will discover the properties of the materials and learning mechanics. They will begin to get the idea of gravity and think of connections. They will discover different architectural elements like columns, stairs, doors, windows, walls, etc.

As the construction process goes, I will assist and show them how to make better joining as they are very important for a strong structure and make them get the idea that they want to make something that will hold well together. I will also show them how to fold, curve and cut different materials so that they can create more shapes. We can talk about their communities or the city as a whole and I will encourage them to share their observations on interesting environments – a park where there are things you can climb up or slide down, hide, relax, etc. or interesting paths to places – stairs, tunnels, bridges, etc. This talk can bring memories and

enrich their approach to the construction; they can start dreaming about an ideal space and translate it into their work. The AGO walk experience will have enriched already their understanding of sculptural spaces so that they will be able to think not only about the structure itself, but also about its spacial qualities.

Observing the work: (30 – 60 minutes)

Observing their work is as critical part of the learning process as the construction itself. For this reason I have planned longer time to look at, discuss and experiment with their final constructions. Here students will have an opportunity to see what they've created and learned and how they have achieved it. For me as a teacher this will also be a valuable experience as it will give me opportunity to observe the different outcomes and students' response to the different class phases. As the class comes to an end all the work will be displayed for everyone to be able to go around and look at it. We can rotate their structures/environments and explore them from different angles. We will discuss their individual approaches – combination and repetition of specific shapes, height, width, openings and enclosures, textures, etc.

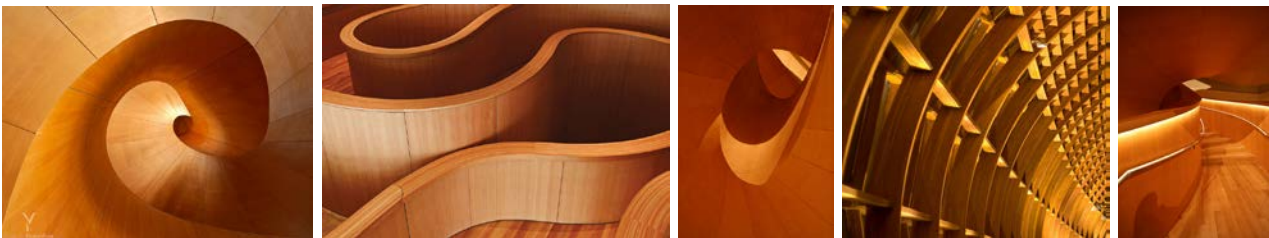


To enrich even more their observation experience I will show them different ways of “studying” their work. One way is to introduce scale. For this purpose I will have different scale architectural models of people, cars and trees, as these help immediately introduce scale and help them see their work “grow” in front of their eyes. Taking pictures of their work from different angles with a small camera will allow them to “visit” and “be” in their structures/environments and give them an idea how one would feel being in/around/up/down/under them. Experimenting with lighting will show them their work in context and how it changes. It will distinguish different spacial qualities and will eliminate the distractions of the studio environment. Seeing views of their

work or parts of it on a computer screen will give them a very realistic sense of space, light, textures, shapes, etc.



This exploration will also make the abstract look more realistic. As all their work will be one colour, or no colour, we can better observe and discuss the different qualities of their structures/environments – light and shadow, openings and enclosures, paths/how you move through this specific place, heights, access, purpose if any, etc.



The pictures above are an example of this exploration part and demonstrate how a close look at architecture can be very exciting. Even a very simple structure will become interesting if explored that way and will give students a great sense of achievement. Every interesting detail can be noticed and appreciated. Observing and sharing students' works is the best learning outcome as they will see many different ways of approaching the same task and get interesting ideas from each other. They will see how different decisions in the construction have brought different qualities and results.



Demonstration of changing scale through human figures in a gallery space.

This lesson gives students a fool cycle learning experience – observation of an existing exciting architecture, practical work experience in construction, improving and adopting new technical skills with different tools and materials, individual and shared exploration of their work through professionally used but accessible and fun methods. Even though some activities in this lesson might be new to the students, they all are based on their individual experience and through that experience, the different lesson concepts are introduced. Working in groups will give students opportunity to connect through their personal experiences and share them, actively discuss their ideas and preferences and create a more complex work.

This learning experience will strengthen the students' already existing intelligence, sensitivity, personal awareness and creativity in many ways and most important it will happen at their own individual level. It will reveal to them the different aspects that comprise the beauty of the built environment. Construction and model exploration from the other hand are methods with great potential for strengthening learning, thinking, observation, expression and self-confidence. I think that each student will be able to relate to every part of the lesson, based on his/her personal life experience and I am confident that each student will be able to produce a work that has personal meaning. This would be the best outcome of the lesson because this is how I see art education – revealing, enriching, empowering, inspiring and very personal.

This lesson is based on my studio-centered teaching approach where the quality of the process has major importance and where students can become more comfortable and confident with art materials, experiment with art techniques and can express freely their personal thoughts and feelings as the most important steps to a successful art education. In this way their art experience would be more exploratory, fun and challenging, sensitive to their individual level and abilities, and one they will easily connect with. This lesson is also based on the gallery and studio sessions I have observed at AGO where the facilitated group discussions successfully reach the already existing students' knowledge. The AGO combination of gallery tour followed by studio work is also a great way to challenge students' minds in a way different from the school setting and give them a real art/space experience. My own student experience at OCAD University has shown me how valuable is the

shared appreciation, observation and discussion of the work and how much we learn from each other. 3D exploration represents an empowering part of art education as an opportunity to strengthen children's understanding, sensitivity and connection to the world they live in, give them confidence for dreaming about it, vision to change and improve it. A world whose future they can shape to better fit them.