Figure Drawing and Anatomy Assignment by Liana Graham

Content-

Berger, S. (1991) states, “Content consists of ideas, concepts, descriptive information, and facts.” In the lesson following, the content is the same in each group as the students explore drawing techniques and a study of the human figure focusing on hands or feet, or other body parts for more advanced learners as described below. Berger further explains ”If they master a particular unit, they need to be provided with more advanced learning activities, not more of the same activity.” This is demonstrated as the students work towards more complex approaches to the study of human anatomy and are encouraged to pursue their level of interest and ability to their fullest potential.

Process-

Maker's model of differentiated curriculum listed in the suggested reading *Curriculum Differentiation* lists a number of ways to modify process. First, to promote higher levels of thinking - involving cognitive challenge is described in my lesson using Bloom's Taxonomy of Cognitive Processes in parenthesis. Creative thinking is encouraged when considering artists such as Leonardo Da Vinci, who drew anatomical studies of the human long before X-Rays were invented. Students are challenged with open-endedness, variable pacing, and a freedom of choice based on their interests and abilities. No two final products will look the same. Debriefing and Group interactions take place during the class critiques, when students share their opinions, suggestions for improvement, and positive feedback of each other’s work.

Product-

In the article, *Differentiation: Definition and Description for Gifted and Talented*, Dinnocenti (1998) explains, “Products associated with a differentiated approach reflect both the learners' expression and the applied skills of a field of study. These products can be achieved through exposure to learning opportunities developed within the classroom or through the external environment (Passow, 1982) such as agencies, museums, TV, radio, community organizations, and mentorships or apprenticeships.” One of the extensions of this assignment led to an exhibition of the class projects at the Eastern Virginia Medical School. As a result, two of my students were offered paid internships during the summer to study Medical Illustration.

Dinnocenti also discusses Renzulli's Five Dimensions of Differentiation. This includes the three we have covered: content, process, and product. It also includes two more: the environment/classroom, and the teacher. In my drawing room there is a Nature Lab with a collection of insects, plants, shells, rocks, and bones that students may use for observational drawings. The students and parents contribute to this collection as objects/species are found. Students often change locations based on the drawing assignment of the day, usually with a live (clothed) model. Students move around the model with easels or drawing boards to get the perspective they find most appropriate for their challenge areas- portraits (faces), the whole figure (anatomy and proportion), composition, etc. They may also use the model of the human skeleton in the classroom or go to the computer labs for further references. As the teacher, I find myself wrapped up in the learning process and consider myself a life-long learner. Dinnocenti states, “Most importantly, the teacher extends him/herself by becoming part of the learning exploration through direct personal experiences, an opinion or belief that sparks a curiosity or confrontation with knowledge, or by modeling the love of learning as the process unravels.” I share my experiences when I studied Sports Medicine during my early years at JMU, my interest in yoga and tai chi, and how these practices relate to the field of art and figure drawing. As a practicing artist, I am able to relate to the joys and struggles of my students with creative expression, approaching deadlines, the thrill of exhibitions and the disappointment of not being selected for an exhibit. We openly discuss these subjects as a class of fellow artists who all face these challenges. This helps the class stay student-centered as they see me as a learner and an artist, not just the teacher who is out of touch with what they are experiencing.

The following lesson is for my gifted Visual Arts students, grades 9-12. It demonstrates differentiation (Collins, 2016) and student grouping based on ability and interest (Doubet, 2016).

Figure Drawing and Anatomy

Pre-assessment:

1. Students will complete a 30 minute study of 2 hands in their sketchbook, not their own, natural pose.

2. Students will complete a 30 minute study of 2 feet in their sketchbook, not their own, natural pose.

Groupings:

Group 1- Below average- students are struggling with drawing skills and proportion/anatomy

Group 2- Average- students have average drawing skills, have some grasp on proportions/anatomy

Group 3- Above average- advanced drawing skills, accurate proportions and anatomy

Content:

All students will complete a finished portrait of the human figure, focusing on the hands or the feet, using value, mark-making, and good composition.

All works will be critiqued by instructor and peers in class. (evaluation) From CTA- John Strebe describes this as The Defense Mode- “Students discuss, compare, justify and defend their conclusions” in his workshop on Cooperative Learning.

1. Students will receive handouts of the skeleton and fill in the names of the bones. This will be done for homework. (knowledge)

2. Warm ups- blind contour, contour, negative space drawing, gestural drawing (application)

3. Create 4 thumbnail drawings of composition with different uses of negative space (application)

Process and Product for each Grouping:

Group 1- students will select either hands or feet. They will draw from the model, a natural pose with 2 hands or 2 feet. (synthesis) Their final drawing will include:

A finished contour drawing- a portrait of 2 hands or 2 feet

Interesting composition

Break 3 borders

Creative use of negative space

Mark-making in the background

Group 2- same as Group 1, with the following additions/changes

A finished drawing with a range of value to show form, a portrait of 2 hands or 2 feet (synthesis)

Mark-making included in the hands or feet, using a range of mark-making techniques to show value, texture, and contrast. (application)

Group 3- same as Group 2, with the following additions/changes: They may select some other part of the human figure with instructor’s permission. They will draw from the model, a natural pose with 2 hands, 2 feet, or other area of the body. A finished drawing with a range of value to show form, a portrait of 2 hands or 2 feet or other body part. (synthesis)

Additional task- tape a sheet of tracing paper over the portrait. Students will create a skeletal overlay on the tracing paper. Using the worksheets, anatomy books, and skeleton in classroom, students will draw the bones in the figure drawing on the tracing paper as they would appear if the drawing was seen by X-ray. The bones must be drawn with accuracy and fit within the portrait. (application and synthesis)

Students can make this additionally challenging by choosing to draw a portrait of the figure that includes ribs, vertebrae, shoulder or hip joint, or skull. Models must be appropriately draped. Students could use multiple layers of tracing paper to start exploring other body systems such as muscular, cardiovascular, or nervous system. (application and synthesis)

An example of mark making techniques can be viewed here: <http://www.slideshare.net/elemICT/line-drawing-techniques?utm_source=slideshow02&utm_medium=ssemail&utm_campaign=share_slideshow_loggedout>

Rubric:

A finished drawing

emerging- students are struggling with drawing skills and proportion/anatomy

proficient- students demonstrate average drawing skills, have some understanding of proportions/anatomy

advanced- students demonstrate advanced drawing skills, accurate proportions and anatomy

Composition

emerging- Composition is not considered, drawing is center of page floating

proficient- Composition is considered, but not creative

advanced- Interesting composition

Break 3 borders

emerging- Breaks none or 1 border

proficient- Breaks 2 borders

advanced- Breaks 3 or 4 borders

Creative use of negative space

emerging- Negative space is undefined and floating around subject

proficient- Some negative space/shape is made

advanced- Composition is creating interesting shapes of negative space

Mark-making

emerging- Used only in the background

proficient- Used in portrait and background

advanced- Used in portrait, background, and skeletal overlay

Craftsmanship

emerging- work looks dirty, wrinkled, or torn

proficient- work is neat and clean

advanced- work is presentation-ready with matting and wired to hang

References

Berger, S. L. Differentiating Curriculum for Gifted Students. Retrieved from:

<https://canvas.jmu.edu/courses/1428074/files/folder/Module%20Two?preview=69746140>

Collins, G. (June 28, 2016). Content, Process and Product Differentiation workshop. Content Teaching Academy at JMU.

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Dinnocenti, S.T. (1998) Differentiation: Definition and Description for Gifted and Talented. Retrieved from: https://canvas.jmu.edu/courses/1428074/files/folder/Module%20Two?preview=69746147

Doubet, K. (June 27, 2016). Instructional Grouping and Management workshop. Content Teaching Academy at JMU.