



CRAFT IN AMERICA

REPRESENTING COMMUNITY EDUCATION GUIDE

Activity

Explain to students that they will be creating a representation of themselves that will eventually be part of a large group work: They will create representations of themselves. They will work together to create a map on a hallway wall of their school and its surrounding neighborhoods, and then place their avatars on that background.

Show images of Roberto Lugo's large community art pieces (the large vessels in the neighborhood parks, and the murals) as examples of community art projects, noting how the colors and patterns make them stand out. Hand out and explain Worksheet 2: Playing with Patterns.

For Part 1 of the worksheet, allow students time to sketch a self-portrait featuring their interests, followed by an imaginary map of their various community connections. As you circulate and see their ideas, encourage students to compare their drawings with each other, looking for similarities and differences in what they portrayed. They will complete Part 2 of the worksheet after some demonstrations.

Share some self-portrait ideas with the class, letting them know that these need not be limited to an image of their face, but can be varied: Their name in stylized lettering, a cartoon image, a shape (such as a star shape or a tee shirt shape) filled with symbols and patterns. Let students know that collage, in addition to drawing, is another option for their work.

Note: Demonstrations can occur at different times, allowing students to practice with one technique before moving on and demonstrating the next one.

Demonstration: Creating a grid

Note: You can use graph paper in different scales, or draw several kinds of grids and copy them for student use. However, creating at least one of their own grids is a valuable skill for students to practice and aids in their visualization of space and placement.

Have a student next to you, following your instructions to make their own grid so that students can watch a peer. Use a ruler and an 8 ½ by 11-inch sheet of paper. From one edge of the paper demonstrate making a tick mark at every inch across the paper. Move the ruler to about the middle of the paper and repeat making the marks at every inch. (On this size paper you will have an extra ½" widthwise.) Then use the ruler to connect the tick marks on the first line with those made on the second line, creating lines from one edge of the paper to the opposite edge. Turn the paper one quarter turn and repeat the process to create a grid of squares. After students practice making grids, gather them for the next demonstration: creating a pattern.

Demonstration: Creating a pattern

Demonstrate using the grid to create patterns that vary by counting sequences (every other space, every two spaces, etc.) Using a ready-made copy, demonstrate choosing a symbol and copy it in every square, then in every other square, every three squares, etc. Allow time for students to explore and play with making their own patterns. After this demonstration, students can return to Worksheet 2 and complete part 2.

Demonstration: Lettering

There is a good chance your students have some lettering skills in their areas of preference, whether graffiti style, blackletter, bubble letters, or other. Encourage them to share a

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demonstration with their classmates. Also identify the available stencils they can use, and have a student demonstrate using these.

Demonstration: A five-pointed star

While exploring motifs and patterns, gather students again to create a shape using a compass, a protractor, and a ruler. Show them how to draw a circle on paper with a compass, demonstrating the use of a cardboard layer to protect the table. (Making the star takes patience, but once students practice they can create all sorts of other shapes by dividing the 360-degree circumference using different numbers.) Point out the center of the circle—the mark left by the compass. Match the center point of the protractor's straight edge to the center of the circle. Dividing the 360-degree circumference of the circle by 5 (for a five-pointed star) results in 72 degrees. Using the protractor, make a tiny mark every 72 degrees around the edge of the circle, making five marks. Using a ruler, connect each mark to the two marks across the circle. A star will form. Change the star's size by measuring out from the center of the circle through the point of each ray, by a larger or smaller measurement. Reconnect the points to complete the new size.

Self-Portraits

Now that students have seen the demonstrations, made sketches, and thought about ideas, have students create their self-portraits.

The final group project

Working together, students first create a background map of the school, including bird's eye views of classrooms, cafeteria, gym, and other favorite locations. Situate the school in a background of the surrounding neighborhood, to which they can add cars, bikes, favorite pathways and detailed highlights of other features important to them. They decide where to place their portraits. Refer back to Roberto Lugo's work to remind them how color and pattern can add to the complexity and beauty of the work, and perhaps invite more positive attention. Can they use juxtaposition anywhere to add interest or meaning?

Also inspired by Roberto Lugo, students may decide to invite others within the school to an art session, wherein students demonstrate to others how to create a self-portrait to be added to the work.

Share ideas with students and see where they take it, allowing for their own choices. To invite others into the production, including staff, your students may want to design a template and cut-out figures (for example, a chibi-style human-gingerbread shape) for participants who can then fill them in with designs and color. Leave the artwork up long enough for others to enjoy it. Take time to discuss and appreciate the work.

Reflection

Ask students:

- Is there anything you would change?
- Did people stop and examine the work?
- Did they show interest or ask questions?
- What effect if any did the artwork have on the school community?

Highlight the students' ability to work with each other, and their contributions to the project's success.



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Assessment

Through discussions with the student, examining their worksheets, and witnessing their participation and production of the final project it should be evident that the student:

- Experimented with juxtaposing images to create new meaning
- Researched symbols and patterns from different times, places for possible use in the artwork
- Helped to build a community art work that represents connections within their school and neighborhood