

DONES, JODY

LESSON OBJECTIVE(S):

- Students will be able to analyze works of art through guided questioning and interpretation of visual clues within an artwork.
- Students will be able to document personal memories through illustrations that provide visual clues.

MATERIALS:

1. Mary Cassatt, *The Boating Party*, 1893-1894 (14A)
2. Dorothea Lange, *Migrant Mother*, 1936 (18B)
3. Thomas Hart Benton, *The Sources of Country Music*, 1975 (18A)

PROCEDURES:

1. Select a creative student to sit in the “hot seat” at the front of the room in order to participate in the classroom activity.
2. Select one of the artworks listed above (*Migrant Mother* is used as an example below) and place it next to the student sitting in the hot seat.
3. Instruct the class to carefully look at this photograph, many seeing it for the first time. They were all given a small slip of paper to write down one question they would ask the mother in the photo if she were here today. Allow about five minutes for this portion of the assignment.
4. Once everyone is finished, inform the class (including the “hot seat” person) that the girl in the hot seat will be “the mother” in the picture.
5. Open the floor up for questions. In my classroom, many wanted to know how old she was or when she had her last shower. Some asked about her children while a handful of 7th graders asked how she felt; was she sad, in pain, or depressed? The student in the “hot seat” will answer questions from the perspective of the mother.
6. Once the questions ended, I commended the class for looking deeper in to the picture and not just taking it for face value. I followed up with telling them that many times we (as art critics) have questions because the artist has purposefully omitted details and other times we have questions because we are uncertain about the lives of the subject. I continued to tell them that as artists, we have the power to tell a story and make it as complete as possible, so that when people view our art pieces, they have few questions.
7. During the next class period, each student was instructed to write a personal journal about a recent memory.

8. Once their journal was complete they were to illustrate that memory.
9. After the illustration was finished, each student was paired up for a one-on-one hot seat session. They were told to take into account all of the questions their partner asked them and incorporate details from their illustration to answer the questions.

Assessment:

- Each student's work was evaluated individually on process, content and effort: How well did they utilize the elements of art into the assignment? Were they a productive member of their team? Did the content in their illustration provide enough information for viewers without reading the accompanying journal? Is this the best work this student is capable of producing?