

Finding Expression through Photographic Images and Music

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INTRODUCTION

In a modern world where daily images and sounds convey to us what we generally perceive as reality, we must educate ourselves to analyze and interpret what is presented to us. It is one of our jobs as educators to help students develop visual and musical literacy by insisting that they delve deeper into what is immediately apparent on the surface. As our lives are enriched with visual and aural images, it is important that we find the vocabulary to express what we think and what we feel. This curriculum unit is designed to develop visual and aural sensitivity in students through photographic images and music.

Because most of us are visual learners, we often rely on what the mass media and our educational systems show and tell us. Most students accept at face value what is presented to them. In advertising, for example, claims for a product such as a breakfast cereal may be made and reinforced through positive images and pleasant music. Whether or not the cereal is a healthy choice may not be considered by a youthful, uneducated audience.

According to a report by the American Psychological Association (APA), “Research shows that children under the age of eight are unable to critically comprehend televised advertising messages and are prone to accept advertiser messages as truthful, accurate, and unbiased. . . advertising of unhealthy food products to young children contributes to poor nutritional habits that may last a lifetime” (Kunkel and Wilcox 1-2). Advertising and promotion of unhealthy food products play an undeniable part in the current obesity epidemic in this country.

Besides visual literacy, another key element of educating students in a consumer-driven economy is to help them think and talk about the effect music may have on their perception of images and interpretation of events. Ultimately, our goal for students is to develop in them sensitivity to the advertising that they are exposed to every day. This is important because, in addition to persuading children to make certain product choices, advertising may have a more sinister effect when it comes to perception of reality and values. According the Dr. Dale Kunkel:

Beer ads are commonly shown during sports events and seen by millions of children, creating both brand familiarity and more positive attitudes toward drinking in children as young as 9-10 years of age. Another area of sensitive advertising content involves commercials for violent media products such as motion pictures and video games. Such ads contribute to a violent media culture which increase the likelihood of youngsters’ aggressive behavior and de-sensitizes children to real-world violence. (Kunkel and Wilcox 3)

With popular culture in mind, some of the guiding questions we will ask during the course of this unit include:

- Do photographic images *reflect* who we are or try to *shape* who we are?
- Do news broadcasts tell us the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, or is what we see and hear a distortion of the facts?
- Are we learning a broad perspective, or are we learning what someone else would have us believe is reality?
- How do photographic images affect us in our daily impression of the world?
- Does the impact of music and image alter or distort reality?
- How does the editing of images change reality?
- Does it matter?

It is essential that we question our experiences with television, the movies, radio, magazines, the internet, and newspapers. Based on their research studies, the American Psychological Association Task Force made several recommendations which include restricting advertising directed to children under eight years old and modifying adult language in advertising so that it is clearly understood by children. The APA Task Force concludes that more studies need to be done regarding the influence of the internet and the promotion of products in a school setting (Kunkel and Wilcox 3-4). Whether or not these recommendations are implemented, it is imperative that we teach our youth to be discerning and responsible citizens by increasing awareness of the effects the mass media has on our daily lives.

In addition to creating awareness of the effect of advertising through visual and aural messaging, another purpose of this curriculum unit will be to help students appreciate and enjoy photography and music combined as art forms. Although it is difficult to clearly evaluate the impact of this combination, it is nevertheless important to introduce students to various ways that the art forms may be brought together, just as it is essential students experience each fine art discipline separately.

One way to bring good quality photography and music to students is to provide them with several diverse examples based on various topics. The sample lessons including topics such as music and urban nature, technology, symbolic signage, and action/adventure film. By viewing selected historical internet film clips, PowerPoint slide presentations, and appropriate DVDs, students will have an opportunity to develop vocabulary to express their personal feelings about what they experience. By reviewing the basic elements of music and art, such as rhythm, form, and tone color, comparisons will be made and conclusions drawn about how they complement each other.

In order to gain perspective and begin to find meaning in photography, we must also look to the past and seriously consider images of our ancestors, and those photographs that were of value to them. Through the study of early photography and sound recording technology, the history of these inventions will provide students with an historical perspective about so-called “mass media.” Research done by the students will help them think about the following questions: From the discovery of the *camera obscura*, how did photography become what it is today, with the use of digital cameras, cellular picture phones, and the like? How did the invention of photography morph into the daily rituals of news broadcasts, television advertisements, and movies?

By keeping journals, students will be able to record their feelings and impressions of images and music. When viewing photographs, the following questions will serve as invaluable talking points: What media images have been saved? What images became both evocative and inspiring? What does the visual evidence suggest about the past? How does the music created suggest the expression of a person, place, feeling, or event?

For example, when learning historical perspective about an event, we must ask ourselves what images of the event have taught us. When photos are studied with the music and combined with narratives of a particular era, we begin to create in our minds a kaleidoscopic view of life during that time. For example, by viewing twentieth century photographs from *LIFE: Our Century in Pictures*, students will begin to discuss popular culture and world events.

Examples of music written in response to events like the Vietnam War will augment understanding of people's feelings at the time. By singing a song like "Where Have All the Flowers Gone?" students will be introduced to music depicting public sentiment during that war. To further allow students to experience the image-music relationship, we will discuss the war in Iraq and create songs about it. As the Iraqi War threatens to become a civil war, we can also relate to it with images from our own Civil War.

We see on television the effects of war and can also see the effects of images and music of the Civil War. Because the Civil War had such a significant impact, composer Aaron Copland much later wrote music about President Abraham Lincoln and his role in history. When we view Mathew Brady's "before the war and after the war" photographs of Lincoln and listen to Copland's "Lincoln Portrait," we will begin to understand the issues Lincoln faced. We can appreciate his strong character and honor his courageous decisions by seeing how much he had aged during those few short years he was in office.

Aaron Copland's response to history and the significance of an event like the American Civil War many years later is just one example of the way that images of events can inspire music. Popular folk songs from that era also serve to document the American Experience. As Mathew Brady's images clarify death, destruction, and the terrible cost to both sides, the combined emotional power of photographic art and music gives us a greater sense of how the event impacted our collective psyches. In short, it is essential that our students understand how photography and music play an important part in history.

In addition to studying media from different historical eras, students will have an empowering opportunity to create their own "truths" by producing photographic images and composing original music based on personal experience. In the process of selecting personal photographs, composing music to compliment the photos, and creating a PowerPoint slide presentation, students will take with them a product that represents concepts learned in the course of the curriculum unit. Developing an eye and ear for what best exemplifies their personal experience will enable students to understand how art may be used as an expressive tool. Learning how to create their own visual and aural artwork for others to experience will help students understand how their message may or may not have a lasting impact.

ACADEMIC SETTING AND CURRICULUM UNIT OBJECTIVES

As an elementary and middle school music teacher of gifted and talented, deaf, and multiply impaired students at a 2004 National Blue Ribbon School, I must constantly search for new ways to challenge the young minds of my pupils and bring together a richly diverse school population. At the T.H. Rogers School in Houston, Texas, our pre-school through twelfth grade student population of 750-plus students includes Asian, Latino, Native-American, African-American, and European-American children.

This curriculum unit will allow various classes to work together and create presentations to be shared with the school community, including parents. One objective of the unit will be to open a dialog about the images and music we are immersed in every day. Another objective will be to build awareness of how the visual and the musical compliment each other. In order to create a culturally meaningful music curriculum, I collaborate with other classroom teachers and look for ways to bring depth and complexity to my students through music and the arts.

During the course of this curriculum unit, the fifth-eighth grade gifted and talented students will collaborate with fifth-eighth grade deaf students to develop a project utilizing digital technology. Each student will photograph objects, themes, or scenes that they “like” and “dislike” in a collection of digital photos taken around the school. Those students who have cameras at home will be able to expand the project, involving their family in the process.

With the help of an interpreter during one or two class sessions, students will discuss why they chose the particular subjects of their photographs. By sharing their “likes” and dislikes,” students will begin to collaborate based on certain common themes. Once the conversation has started, students will form small groups and be able to create music that represents their feelings about the subjects. We will discuss basic elements such as loud and soft, slow or fast, long or short, structure or form, balance, contour of melody, and rhythm. Students will elaborate with dance movements to express their ideas.

To evaluate understanding of the concepts taught, the gifted and talented students will either write a melodic theme on music staff paper or develop their own short musical composition with the *Sibelius* music software program, based on their photographs. The deaf students will describe the photographs they take with American Sign Language (ASL). Both groups of students will find gestures or dance movements that visually describe the feelings of “like” and “dislike.”

With the assistance of a computer technology specialist, students will then together create a PowerPoint presentation and add their original music to complement the visual presentation. Students will explain how the music represents the main idea of their visual component of the production. The discussion will include essential elements of art such as form, style, rhythm, and design. Students will share their work with the multiply impaired students in other classes as an inclusion activity.

IMAGE AS INSPIRATION FOR MUSIC

Because one purpose of this curriculum unit is to develop an awareness of the effects of photography and music, a wide variety of primary source materials will be used to broaden understanding. What do I want my students to see and hear in these primary source materials? I want them to find details that are clues to comprehensive understanding of cultural history. They will use still photos and film clips as prompts for journal writing and musical composition. In addition, viewing photography as “fine art” will help students understand design components in art and music. Students will review line, balance, form, color, movement, rhythm, and symmetry in fine art photography, then compare and contrast these elements with musical concepts.

I have inherited some primary source materials, including daguerreotypes, ambrotypes, a stereoscope and stereo cards, and family portraits and postcard photos from the late 19th century. I have an Eastman Kodak fiftieth anniversary 1930 brownie box camera, plenty of black and white photos, “colorized” images, and numerous vintage postcards, Civil War sheet music, and music magazines, as well as my own collection of digital photographs from trips to New York City and Vienna, Austria. I intend to share these images with my students. We will study visual images and then create our own music. We will also listen to music and produce our own visual images with a digital camera. In our efforts, we will begin to understand how images and music work together to impress us.

In this curriculum unit, my students will also learn about silent film, whose images were supported with live music in the theatres. We will view *The Great Train Robbery* clips from the *American Memory*, Library of Congress website. The film is divided into three parts, and each clip is available for download.

Once students have watched the motion picture images, three groups of students will be challenged to create “sound tracks” to match the action in each video film clip. These “sound

tracks” will be developed using classroom rhythm instruments, a digital keyboard with various settings, and any other musical instruments that may be available. For variety and interest, students may also use *found objects* to make sounds. Examples of *found objects* would be soda pop bottles, oatmeal boxes, rice in a covered can, pot lids, and any other everyday object that makes an interesting sound.

After experimenting with sounds, each group of students will collaborate and compose sounds that compliment or enhance the action in *The Great Train Robbery*. Students will focus on the length of the film segment, the emotional impact of the action that they view, and the form that develops in their musical composition. A tape recorder will be used to set the music permanently and to play the “sound tracks” while we view the film clips.

After sharing efforts with each other, we will discuss the following guiding questions: How was music used to emphasize the action in the film? How did music express the emotions being portrayed in silence? Can different music change the image concept? In addition to this activity, students can also tell about current films and their musical expression. We will select films rated for general audiences to analyze and discuss.

Another topic for students to research will be the early synchronization of sight and sound invented by Thomas Alva Edison. Based on his invention of the phonograph and the kinoscope, students will compare and contrast early technology with that of the digital technology available today (“History of Edison Motion Pictures”). Research will be done to learn about the rudimentary beginnings of sound and visual recordings from the Library of Congress *American Memory* series (“The Marriage of Sight and Sound”). We will view film clips from that website and write about Edison’s innovations.

A more contemporary example of film and music together that the teacher might view would be the film entitled *Koyaanisqatsi: Life Out of Balance*. Composer Philip Glass demonstrates how music brings deeper meaning to the film as the viewer is immersed in the medium. *Koyaanisqatsi: Life Out of Balance* addresses the issue of how the modern world and the development of urban technology have upset the balance between man and nature. This 1980s film, reissued in 2002 by MGM, effectively uses images and music to convey the fast, repetitive frenzy of activity in our urban centers (Reggio). In the course of this curriculum unit, we will develop our own study of modern lifestyles as we view images and listen to music on television. We will discuss how advertisements promote products.

My previous Houston Teachers Institute curriculum unit entitled “Understanding the Wild Things Next Door: The Nature of Houston and The Music of Our Natural Surroundings” will supplement the work that we do in this unit. As a result of the work done for the above music and nature unit, I have developed a PowerPoint slide presentation with photos of urban nature accompanied by my original music compositions. This will demonstrate one way students might put together a final project of photographs and music (Harasim 2003). Another example for students to examine will be PowerPoint slide shows I developed based on my trip to Vienna, Austria in 2005. We will focus on *Vienna: Then and Now*, *The Musician’s Toolbox*, and *Keyboard Instruments*. Each slide projection has been synchronized with the music of Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (Harasim *Trip to Vienna* 2005).

When we focus on photography as art images, the mood and emotional quality of each piece of art will be considered. We will discuss music of the American West like Grofe’s “Grand Canyon Suite,” and study the nature photos of Ansel Adams (Alinder and Szarkowski).

A comparison will be made with more recent photos as well. In the January 2006 issue of *National Geographic* magazine, photographer Michael Nichols demonstrates a unique perspective of the Grand Canyon using the latest technology (Morell and Nichols 36-55).

Students will describe what makes the musical examples match what they experience when looking at the expansiveness of the photographers' work. The discussion might also include ecology and natural conservation issues that were important in Ansel Adams' lifetime as well as during our own lifetimes.

As an example of "theme," we will look at Walker Evans photographs grouped in the book called *Signs*. How can we compare the visual representation with the aural representation? To answer this question, we will compare the Evans photos with the musical themes written by James Newton Howard for the popular movie *Signs*. Audio clips of this music are available online or the entire soundtrack may be purchased (Howard *Signs*). After listening to the music, we will discuss how the composer created sound representation of action, concept, and theme. For example, what makes the music "scary?" What is it about the unknown that creates tension? How can symbols guide our understanding of art and music?

How might students convey "signs" in their musical compositions? Practical issues such as musical symbols can be brought into the lesson as well. What can landmarks tell us about the time in which they are created? What are some landmarks in music listening? The "landmarks" we will discuss elements such as dynamics and form. Two of the guiding questions will be: What "landmarks" does the composer use in *Signs* to help accentuate the action in the movie? Are some "signs" universal?

In addition to studying photography, we will expand our definition of image by examining one of artist Paul Klee's paintings entitled *The Twittering Machine* (Klee). This work was one of several that inspired composer Gunther Schuller's music "Seven Studies on Themes of Paul Klee." (Schuller *Orchestral Works*, *GM Recordings.com*) Information about the life and work of Paul Klee will be introduced. Klee was both a visual artist and a musician, so his unique perspective will be germane to the lesson (Pioch).

Gunther Schuller's view of modern music in our culture and the negative influence of mass media on the arts will help students think about how mass media can negatively influence their own world views. In his book *Musings: the Musical Worlds of Gunther Schuller*, he urges "mobilization to combat the extent of the commercial interests that have caused the arts to have little or no place in the lives of most Americans. He blames the home environment, schools, and above all television and radio" (Dickinson). Students will research the life and works of Schuller. One of the best sources for biographical information is *Grove Music Online* (Tucker).

Another body of imagery work that inspired Schuller was the environmental photography of artist Alice Weston, who has been an influential photographer and promoter of the arts in Cincinnati, Ohio (Cincinnati Arts Council). "*An Arc Ascending* [1996] sonically reflects upon the different seasonal aspects brought about by the path of the sun in its seemingly ascending arc. Three seasons are represented (summer, winter and spring) with as many ascending musical 'arcs,' using a palette of register, orchestral color and rhythmic intensity, culminating in a climactic clash of brightly iridescent harmonies" (Schuller *GM Recordings.com*).

Another detailed explanation of his published work is given by the composer in the G. Shirmer, Inc. music catalog:

A melody or a given chord or musical idea cannot describe anything concrete; it can at best evoke a mood, an emotion, a feeling, but even then it is likely to evoke quite different moods and feelings with different listeners. That is, of course, the great beauty and power of music: that it can express everything, precisely because it cannot express or represent anything specific... My work, 'An Arc Ascending,' falls more into the Debussy/Ravel category, a representation in tones not so much of the actual pictorial content of Alice Weston's remarkable photographs of solstice, equinox, and the

historically related ancient native earthworks and mounds, but rather musical reflections on the different seasonal aspects. (Schuller *An Arc Ascending*)

This catalog listing gives the orchestration required, the duration of the piece, and availability of the score for performance. A review of a performance of “An Arc Ascending” in the *Cincinnati Enquirer* by Janelle Gelfand describes the relationship of the music to the photographs: “Mr. Schuller’s “An Arc Ascending” is composed in the atmospheric style of Debussy and Ravel tone poems...It’s shape, in three sections representing the photographs, was easy for the listener to grasp” (Schuller *An Arc Ascending*).

BRIEF OVERVIEW OF PHOTOGRAPHY FOR THE TEACHER

When discussing aspects of images, the teacher will want to know some background information about the history of photography to share with the students. Making a comparison of how images have been made in the past and during our own life times will open up the students to their own technical experimentation with the camera as well as increase interest in the process of photography. It may inspire invention of new ways to capture images.

Our gifted students at T.H. Rogers will be able to apply this knowledge to their work on our school yearbook and in our media lab. In general, it is important to at least know about some of the techniques used by photographers to capture our attention. A brief discussion of how images were made will enhance the students' technological understanding, just as understanding music history and theory will help students put their compositional work into a contextual perspective.

The physics of the *camera obscura* were well established before the advent of what we might term “modern photography.” Long before Daguerre and others inserted a light sensitive plate into a box and saved the image, an upside down and reversed image of the world was reflected by allowing light to enter a pinhole into a box or a room and reflect onto the opposite side. The artist’s *camera obscura* provided inspiration for the development of the camera. These instruments assisted the artist in viewing a particular image as he worked. A detailed explanation with illustrations and models can be found on the website *The Magic Mirror of Life: An Appreciation of the Camera Obscura* (Wilgus).

According to Robert Leggat in his *History of Photography*, “there are two distinct scientific processes that combine to make photography possible...the first of these processes was optical. The camera obscura (dark room) had been in existence for at least four hundred years...the second process was chemical” (Leggat).

In 1827, Nicéphore Niépce successfully produced a picture using a material that hardened when it was exposed to light. Working with Louis Daguerre, they experimented until Niépce’s death four years later. Daguerre continued the work and by 1839, he had learned how to create an image on a mirrored copper plate with an exposure time of half an hour and make it permanent by bathing it in a salt solution. This process was named the *Daguerreotype* (Leggat).

To produce a daguerreotype, a highly polished silvered copper plate is exposed to iodine vapour, leaving a thin coating of light sensitive silver iodide on it. After exposure, the plate is placed over heated mercury, the vapour from which combines with the silver particles to create an image. Sodium thiosulphate fixes the image. The finished daguerreotype has to be framed behind glass with the edges sealed to prevent oxidation of the silver. The image in a daguerreotype is laterally inverted as in a mirror. (Cross)

The next process invented was the *Calotype*, produced by William Henry Fox Talbot. This method was advantageous because the positive image could be produced on paper and duplicated indefinitely. By 1848, the *albumen* process had been perfected, but the drawback to this method was that it was very slow. By 1851, Frederick Scott Archer introduced the *Wet Collodion* process,

cutting down the exposure time to a few seconds. A drawback to this process was that a lot of equipment had to be used at the photography sight (Leggat).

Archer also invented the *Ambrotype* during this time. This required similar equipment, but the image was produced on plain glass.

In the mid-1850s, the ambrotype process was invented. A glass negative was made positive by coating its back with black lacquer. Although they lacked the tonal range and brilliance of the daguerreotype, the ambrotype had one great advantage: they were less expensive. Thousands of these images were taken in the Civil War. Ambrotype did have one disadvantage: the glass was fragile and often broke, destroying the image. (Cowan)

By 1871, Dr. Richard Maddox introduced *Gelatin* as a means for recording images, which led to the *Dry-Plate* process. Now photography could become accessible to greater numbers of people. *Stereoscopic Photography* became especially popular during the Victorian era, with stereo cards of numerous subjects, but had made its initial debut almost immediately after beginning experiments in photography. Later in the nineteenth century, George Eastman took the lead, introducing flexible film and the box camera by 1888 (Leggat).

In February 1900, George Eastman introduced the first “Brownie” camera, with the intention of popularizing photography for the masses. As with other box cameras, the Brownie camera operates under these basic principles:

A shutter in the front of the camera is opened allowing light to pass through the lens. This light is reflected from the object being photographed. As the light passes through the lens, it forms an image of the object...this image is inverted. The lens projects the inverted image onto light-sensitive film at the back of the box. (Lutz)

By the fiftieth anniversary year of the Eastman Kodak Company in 1930, the huge success of the Brownie camera allowed George Eastman to offer a giveaway program to children in the United States and Canada. A special edition of the Rainbow Hawk-Eye No. 2 camera was given to 550,000 children whose twelfth birthday happened to fall in the 1930 anniversary year. This camera had a special gold seal on the side and gold-colored metalwork. (“Eastman Kodak Anniversary Kodak Camera Giveaway, 1930”)

As still photography was well on its way to impacting popular culture, Thomas Alva Edison began experimentation as early as 1894 with film and sound in the development of motion pictures. By 1895, he produced a machine called a *Kinetoscope* with a phonograph inside. The *Kinetoscope* had peepholes where the viewer could watch a motion picture.

Edison’s phonograph included two rubber ear tubes connected to the *Kinetoscope* so that there was sound that was synchronized with the action in the film. This rudimentary motion picture machine fell out of use, and a later model was introduced in 1913 that allowed film images to be projected onto a screen, and sounds to be heard from a celluloid cylinder that were connected by a long pulley (“The Marriage of Sight and Sound”). Music and photography were well on their way to becoming part of the mass media.

LESSON PLANS

Lesson One

In this introductory lesson, it will be important to offer students a broad historical perspective of how images have been used to promote products, advertise events, and capture important moments in time. Included in the discussion will be what techniques have been used most effectively. From the invention of daguerreotypes to the popular use of digital cameras, images have conveyed what was of value to a majority of people in the culture. From a technological

standpoint, students will be able to trace a brief timeline sequence of milestone events in the history of photography.

Materials

- Various magazine images of consumer products, i.e. fast foods, toys, and games
- Two contrasting videotaped television advertisements
- Two or three daguerreotype images
- Postcards that advertise places in the United States
- Several black-and-white photos
- Several digital photos of classmates, scenes at school, or family members
- Access to Library of Congress' *Edison Motion Pictures* web site and *The Great Train Robbery* film clips online

Objectives

The main objective of this lesson will be to introduce students to a brief history of images and the ways that they have been effectively used to influence society. Part of this objective will be to stimulate interest in how music and photographic images have been combined to stimulate emotion. The students will begin to explore how sounds and images persuade us, as we seek to find truth and personal meaning in photography. One of the musical objectives will be to create an original composition based on a personal experience of the student.

Activities

Introduce current or recent magazine images that promote products. These might include popular breakfast cereals or fast food hamburgers. View two contrasting television advertisements promoting a child's product. For class discussion, ask the students several guiding questions about each image: What does the image tell about the product? What colors used capture interest? What music or sounds caught your attention? Is there a "message" about the product and its usefulness? How will the product improve life? Would you buy this product? Will you ask your parents to buy this product for you? Why?

Next, show images of people in a variety of photographic poses using available daguerreotypes, postcards, black-and-white snapshots, and color portraits. Include an image of Abraham Lincoln before and after the Civil War. Discuss the emotions conveyed in the images. Talk about the clothing, the facial expressions, and the possible lifestyle of the subjects. What do the photos tell about the person projected in the image?

Show a variety of historical images depicting several subjects such as landscapes, nature, famous events, social trends in society, and themes, such as Walker Evans' *Signs*. Ask students to recall any billboards that have captured their attention recently. The discussion should lead to the students to conjecture about life in a different time and compare that time with contemporary life. Ask students how they can learn more about the past from the objects that have been left to us through images. Any questions about objects in the photos should be recorded in a journal for further research.

A final activity for this lesson would be to view Edison's *The Great Train Robbery* and compare the action with a movie like *Superman* or *Spiderman*. To understand further how music enhances and complements visual presentation, ask students to create musical sounds to enhance the action in *The Great Train Robbery*. Since there are three film clips available online, divide the class into three groups of students, encouraging each group to create a "sound track" to accompany the action.

These "sound tracks" will be developed using classroom rhythm instruments, a digital keyboard with various settings, and any other musical instruments that may be available. For variety and

interest, students may also use *found objects* to make sounds. Examples of *found objects* would be soda pop bottles, oatmeal boxes, rice in a covered can, pot lids, and any other everyday object that makes an interesting sound.

Evaluation

Have students keep a journal about their discoveries. Encourage students to view television advertisements, collect magazine images, and elaborate their effects on them in their writings. Students may be assessed according to the depth of discovery about their collected images. Student participation and comprehension will be evaluated when each group presents the “sound track” for *The Great Train Robbery*.

Lesson Two

Artists and musicians have manipulated their materials in a variety of ways to help them express their emotions and communicate to their audience. This lesson will focus on photography as an art form and relate its basic characteristics to musical elements. When we view an image and listen to a piece of music, can we identify the elements of form, tone color, rhythm, line (melody), harmony, contrast, dynamics, and theme? Students will experience several works of art that use the visual and the aural to express the artist’s viewpoint.

Materials

- *Koyaanisqatsi: Life Out of Balance* DVD
- *Signs* [movie soundtrack or DVD]
- Walker Evans images of *Signs*
- *Seven Studies on Themes of Paul Klee* compact disc.
- Several Images of Paul Klee’s artwork, including *The Twittering Machine* (1922)
- Grofe’s *Grand Canyon Suite* compact disc
- Ansel Adams photos of American West images
- *National Geographic* images of the Grand Canyon

Objectives

By exploring several examples of music and images together, students will identify basic compositional elements of music and visual art, including form, tone color, rhythm, line (melody), harmony, contrast, dynamics, and theme. The student will be able to compare and contrast examples of abstract and formal works of art.

Activities

Open the lesson by playing the soundtrack music by James Newton Howard from the movie *Signs*. To create an atmosphere of mystery, turn out the lights in the classroom or ask the students to close their eyes. After listening, ask students to describe how the element of surprise and fear were expressed. What musical instruments were used? (tone color) What level of dynamics (loud and soft) created the mood of the piece? How did the composer use rhythm, melody, and contrast? What does the music express about the supernatural? How can our imaginations partner with sound to create mind images? Ask students to write in their journals about the types of supernatural creatures they may encounter in their imaginations.

Create a PowerPoint presentation of scanned Walker Evans *Signs* photos to show in conjunction with the movie soundtrack *Signs*. Compare the compositional elements of Evans’ photographic images with the music from the movie *Signs*. As you play the music from the *Signs* soundtrack again, ask students to think about what the Evans’ photographic colors, form, rhythm, dynamics, and general composition show about the theme. What can we learn about every day life expressed through signage? What mood did Evans create in his work? When his photos are partnered with

the music does the music seem to convey that mood? Why or why not? By contrast, how are mysterious signs depicted in music?

Next, view short segments of the movie *Koyaanisqatsi: Life Out of Balance*. Introduce the concept of *minimalism*. Discuss how the repetitive music by Phillip Glass represents the subject matter of the film. Unlike the previous experience in this lesson, the music was composed to deliberately enhance the visual component. Students will write in their journals about their reactions to the music and images.

Another activity in this lesson will be to experience still images coupled with music written specifically about those images. Show images of the American West by Ansel Adams and of the Grand Canyon by modern photographer Michael Nichols. Play *Grand Canyon Suite* by Ferde Grofe. Discuss the form, instrumentation, and overall effect of the music. Ask students if the music conveys the images accurately.

Play the music *Seven Studies on Themes by Paul Klee* by Gunther Schueller while displaying images of Paul Klee. Focus particularly on the image *The Twittering Machine* and its corresponding music. Organize the class into small groups to list their observations about the music and corresponding images. Each small group will then present their ideas to others for class discussion. Do the same activities for *An Arc Ascending*, viewing the photography of Alice Weston.

Evaluation

As they experience music and art combined, evaluate students by their comments during participation in class. Students will personally reflect their understanding by writing in journals about the ways that artists have expressed themselves through music and image. As an extension of this lesson, students may develop a project by selecting their own music and taking digital images that convey the mood or fundamental elements of the music.

Lesson Three

In a previous lesson, students composed musical “sound tracks” to correlate with action in *The Great Train Robbery* film clips. In this lesson’s culminating project, each student will photograph objects, themes, or scenes that they “like” and “dislike” in a collection of digital photos taken around the school. If some students have cameras at home, they will be able to expand the project, involving their parents in the process. Using all of the photos taken, small groups of students will collaborate to produce a PowerPoint slide presentation with original music.

Materials

- Digital cameras and computers to upload photos to be used in a PowerPoint presentation
- *Trip to Vienna 2005: Mozart’s Worlds* (available from the author)
- *Understanding the Wild Things Next Door: The Nature of Houston and*
- *The Music of Our Natural Surroundings*. (available from the author)
- Copland’s “Lincoln Portrait”
- *Lincoln: An Illustrated Biography*
- Classroom musical instruments
- Sibelius music software or similar program
- Audio tape recorder and blank cassette tapes
- Music staff paper

Objectives

In the previous lesson, students discovered fundamental elements of design in both music and art. In this lesson, students will create their own designs and compose original thematic music using

current technology. The final project will be a PowerPoint slide presentation to be shared with the school community, based on ideas within the students' own experience.

Activities

To offer ideas to students about how the final project could be done, show any of the above listed Powerpoint presentations by the author. As an alternate activity, create one of your own slide shows from the music *Lincoln Portrait* by Aaron Copland and available still photos of Abraham Lincoln, contrasting his early days as President of the United States and the way he looked after the Civil War.

In preparation for creating the final project, students will identify visual subjects around the school and at home that show their "likes" and "dislikes." Examples of these might be a favorite pet, litter and trash on the street, sports action shots, dirty dishes in the sink, nature at its best, or a best friend's portrait.

Divide the class into small groups to develop one slide presentation each. The final product will be four or five different projects. Assign students to take the above mentioned photos over the course of a week or two, and bring their images to a computer to upload. If there are a limited number of digital cameras, this activity could be done during class times at the school.

Next, each small group will develop a gesture and a melodic theme or rhythmic motif to represent the photos they select for their presentation. This musical expression could copy patterns in the photo, the feelings suggested by the photo, or some other aspect of the photo. Consider contrasting elements such as light and dark (loud and soft), smooth and rough textures (instrumentation), linear direction (melody line), and balance (form).

After these ideas have been developed, students will use classroom instruments or *found objects* to record on audiotape. Using *Sibelius* music writing software or a similar program, encourage students to create a music composition that will last at least two minutes in length. These will be used to accompany the PowerPoint presentation that students will collaboratively design.

Evaluation

Upon completion of the project, students will share their work by inviting parents, teachers, classmates, and other classes in an inclusion activity. Each group will present their project with short, introductory comments about the process of their work. Comments will focus on fundamental elements of music and art as learned in prior lessons, experiences recorded in their journals, and a brief summary of what they have learned about photography and music.

CONCLUSION

It is essential that we bring the next generation to a clear understanding of the effects mass media and advertising have on their decisions as citizens and consumers. Additionally, we must develop in our students an awareness and sensitivity to both visual and aural images as artistic expressions of humanity. For lasting impact, students will be engaged in discussions, journal writing, music composition, analysis of current media, taking personal photographs, and creating interactive technology. By educating students to analyze image and sound, we can be more confident that they will make intelligent choices and develop into visually and musically literate adults.

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