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# Teaching the Soft Skills through the Arts: A Supplementary Art Curriculum

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TEACHING THE SOFT SKILLS THROUGH THE ARTS:  
A SUPPLEMENTARY ART CURRICULUM

by

Brittany Boverhof

A thesis submitted to the Graduate College  
in partial fulfillment of the requirements  
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TEACHING THE SOFT SKILLS THROUGH THE ARTS:  
A SUPPLEMENTARY ART CURRICULUM

Brittany Boverhof, M.A.

Western Michigan University, 2018

Soft skills are the ability to work with, for, and among other people, yet we can no longer expect students to develop these skills organically. This research builds on the knowledge that if we want the students we are educating to be successful in employing their own soft skills, then they must be taught. This paper defines soft skills, shows their importance, and introduces practices that are proven to build soft skill ability. I have constructed twelve lesson plans that teach the soft skills through experientialism, working in groups, art, critique, classroom management, and problem solving. This supplementary curriculum provides lessons and assessment rubrics that teach the soft skills through application and practice, targeted for a middle school art classroom.

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## RESEARCH PROBLEM

What are soft skills? Generally speaking, soft skills are the skills a person needs to communicate with others and work cooperatively with other people. Hard skills, on the other hand, are simply the technical skills and abilities to accomplish a task. With the new age of technology and the instant gratification of getting the information or answer we want with a click or a text message, the soft skills that are a necessity in human interaction, communication, problem solving, and teamwork get lost, and specifically, “for generation z, social interactions have moved away from the parks and streets to mobile devices” (Smith, 2016, para. 10). The generation of millennials (born between the 1980s and the early 1990s) that are stepping into managerial roles, and the young people of generation z (born between the mid 1990s and mid 2010s) who are entering the work-force, are both lacking in the area of soft skills (Smith, 2016, para. 4), and from my own observation of working with students, kindergarten through high school, this trend is continuing. “Soft skills have risen to prominence in recent years in the national discussion about workforce readiness, with many employers saying those skills are more important than job skills that can be taught on the job” (Smith, 2016, para. 5). Soft skills are more important skills to have than the technical skills that can be taught on the job, because they translate across all areas of work and life. My mother was a commercial designer in the 1980s, a job which no longer exists due to computers and technology. Seeing the decline of that industry, what technical skills are being taught right now in colleges and universities that will be useless in the next 10-15 years with technological advances? Soft skills are highly valuable to each individual, regardless of job position or employment. Isaacs writes in the article “Hard Jobs Take Soft Skills” (2016),

Historically, hard skills largely ruled, although there are plenty of instances when a person

with brilliant hard skills are fired for lack of soft skills...Today, there is a cartwheel of change concerning job skills. Not only are soft skills now increasingly valued, their importance rivals or exceeds those of hard skills in many surveys and reports of business executives. This constellation of skills even has a name upgrade - now often called 'employability skills' or 'essential skills' (p. 26).

It would be nice to say that there is one puzzle piece or potion that magically helps improve a student's soft skills. However, we are complex human beings with complex brains that need to be engaged, entertained, provoked, challenged, and grown. Teaching students isn't about the easy solution, the one-size-fits-all. It is about training the next generation of humans to be more grounded, well-rounded adults and members of society, each unique and original, and for that reason there are a number of theories and practices that I believe will best teach the soft skills, and cultivate life-long learning and adaptable individuals. In this paper, I define soft skills, compare sources and theories about their importance, explore why they are missing, offer the best-practices to teach the soft skills, show how art education provides a vehicle for developing soft skills in students, and provide twelve lesson plans and assessment rubrics to implement intentionally teaching these skills in an art classroom.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### **Defining Soft Skills**

I was introduced to soft skills in a faculty meeting three years ago, and was astonished that I had never heard the term before. There is quite a range of ways to define and teach the soft skills, meaning there are multiple interpretations in what they are and how they can be taught. One of the simplest definitions of soft skills I found was in the article “How Volunteering Helps Students to Develop Soft Skills” (Khasanzyanova, 2017), which shares that soft skills are simply a person’s personal and interpersonal skills. That is true, but couldn’t there be more to soft skills, and shouldn’t we be able to better understand them with a better definition? A more articulated definition of soft skills was expressed in the article “Teaching Soft Skills through Workplace Simulations in Classroom Settings” by the Office of Disability Employment Policy, which states that soft skills are, “the employability skills that speak to a worker’s interpersonal skills and character,” such as, “teamwork, problem-solving, critical thinking, effective use of resources, and effective communication,” and, “a natural aspect of a person’s social skills and character attributes” (2010, para. 1). I do believe that soft skills are partially a natural part of a person’s character, meaning that the soft skill seed is there, but it must be nurtured and grown.

Naufalin, Dinanti, & Krisnaresanti (2016) define soft skills in relation to entrepreneurial success, using such descriptive terms as, “belief, independence, individuality, optimism, always trying to achieve, profit oriented, perseverance and fortitude, a strong determination, hard-working, energetic and having initiative, the ability to take risks and loving the challenge,” as well as, “behaving as leaders, getting along with others, glad to get suggestions and constructive criticism, having innovation and creativity, are flexible, versatile, and are building an extensive business network” (p. 67). Naufalin, Dinanti, & Krisnaresanti first describe soft skills, in that

definition, as general things an employer would hope for in each individual's personality and ability to communicate. This is the way that I originally viewed soft skills; a term you could throw any feel-good personality trait at or define by the words you would intentionally use when being interviewed for a position. However, I don't believe this is the best way to define soft skills. In fact, I believe soft skills can be defined more concretely and in an organized fashion. In the article "Experiential Learning Model on Entrepreneurship Subject to Improve Student Soft Skills" (2016), Nauflin, Dinanti, & Krisnaresanti conduct a test to determine the condition of college students' soft skills abilities, and within this test it lists a more simplified set of terms defining soft skills: confidence, task and result oriented, courage to take risks, leadership, originality, and future oriented (2016). This is more in the right direction for defining soft skills, yet simple.

The book *Bridging the Soft Skills Gap* (2015), Tulgan decisively breaks down soft skills into three categories; professionalism, critical thinking, and followership. Tulgan writes that the soft skills are less tangible and in fact much harder to define than hard skills, but they are critical to success within the workplace. I created a simplified table of the soft skills Tulgan defines within the three categories.

Table 1. Tulgan’s categories of soft skills.

Soft Skills		
Professionalism	Critical Thinking	Followership
Self-Evaluation	Proactive Learning	Respect for Context
Personal Responsibility	Problem Solving	Citizenship
Positive Attitude	Decision Making	Service
Good Work Habits		Teamwork
People Skills		

Every skill in this table is a valuable soft skill to possess, and I believe in teaching these skills by modeling them, and intentionally building them into the classroom content. “NWA Job Market Calling for Soft Skills” by Cook (2015) discusses the purpose of teaching soft skills. In the article, Mark Harvey, COO of the Northwest Arkansas Council, shares, “we are educating students for jobs that don’t exist yet. Those soft skills will be helpful no matter what job they go into. We want our students to be prepared for life” (Cook, 2015, para. 11).

**Importance of Soft Skills**

Beyond the obvious reasons that communication is important for survival and mental or emotional health, why are soft skills important and vital to employers and students? The teaching of soft skills is important because the soft skills abilities are missing, and have been declining for two decades. Tulgan writes, “the incidence and insistence of managers complaining about the soft skills of their new young workers has risen steadily year after year since we began tracking

it in the mid-1990s” (2015, p. 3). Students are graduating from high school, colleges, or institutions lacking these skills. Employers are often looking for their new employees to show up on time, pass a drug test, to work hard, and be teachable and reliable (Cook, 2015, para. 9).

These seem like simple requirements of any person at any job, but when the all important soft skills are lacking, the parameters of what constitutes a good employee go out the window.

Khasanzyanova (2017) states,

Globalized economies have amplified the demand for workers who possess flexible, adaptive, and transversal skills. Labour markets increasingly favor those who are able to deal with the unexpected, work both independently and in a group, and who are sociable, responsible and capable of taking initiative. Those who possess these ‘soft skills’ are frequently preferred over those who merely possess technical skills (p. 364).

Having soft skill experience and ability increases your likelihood of getting a job or moving up within your existing company, as well as being a better-equipped, fully functioning member of society. Beggin and Vaughn write in the article “Reporting the Success of the Whole Student: Assessing Career and Employability Skills”, “in a survey done by the Seattle Jobs Initiative, more than 75 percent of employers surveyed said that soft skills were as important as, or more important than technical skills in securing entry-level employment” (2017). Naufalin, Dinanti, & Krisnaresanti (2016) conducted three cycles of tests beginning with an initial test to establish a baseline, which measured the soft skills abilities of college students. The baseline test was followed by soft skills training, which continued through a second and third test. Six dimensions of soft skills were measured on scale of very good, good, and bad abilities. As expected, the baseline test showed that the majority of students assessed performed poorly in each of the dimensions. The dimensions that showed the worst results were leadership and courage to take risks, while the most promising dimension, yet still weighted in the bad column, was confidence.

The second test revealed progress in a variation of weighted percentages in each dimension, but it overall showed a digression from the percentages in the bad column, meaning student soft skills abilities were slightly progressed from their pre-existing abilities. The third and final test revealed even more progress, and further digression in the bad column. All of the dimensions were now heavily weighted in the good column, with the exception of confidence which was most heavily weighted in the very good column. In addition, the very good column in every dimension had good progression. When intentionally focusing on teaching the soft skills, and teaching them through experiences, Naufalin, Dinanti, & Krisnaresanti proved that consistent and measurable growth can occur. We simply can no longer afford to abandon teaching these skills, knowing that they are lacking, and that they can be learned and grown.

### **Teaching Soft Skills through Experientialism**

Shown through research by Naufalin, Dinanti, & Krisnaresanti (2016), experientialism is a successful way to teach the soft skills. In the article “From Tech Skills to Life Skills: Google Online Marketing and Experiential Learning”, the authors Croes and Visser state, “it is well established that experiential and other active learning activities tend to result in a higher level of comprehension, help to translate knowledge to skills, and often result in life-long learning” (2016, p. 306). Experiential learning can be simply defined as learning through an experience, and being involved in the process and completion of a task, and my personal favorite, “the best way to learn is to get on the bike.” Another definition of experiential learning would be, “the process of creating and transforming experiences into knowledge, skills, attitudes, values, emotions, beliefs, and senses. It is the process through which individuals become themselves” (Jarvis, et. al. quoted in Ling, 2016, p. 46-47).

Surrounding experiential learning, there are theories of how to teach it. Croes and Visser further define experiential learning theory as being,

based on six propositions: learning is best conceived as a process, all learning is re-learning, learning requires the resolution of conflicts, learning is a holistic process of adaptation to the world, learning results from synergetic transactions between the person and the environment, and learning is the process of creating knowledge (2016, p. 306).

The propositions are listed below in Figure 1.

Experiential Learning Theory
Learning is Best Conceived as a Process
All Learning is Re-Learning
Learning Requires the Resolution of Conflict
Learning is a Holistic Process of Adaptation to the World
Learning Results from Synergetic Transactions between the Person and the Environment
Learning is the Process of Creating Knowledge

Figure 1. Propositions about experiential learning. Derived from Croes and Visser (2016).

These six propositions apply equally to learning soft skills and to learning in the art classroom, which functions mostly as an active, experiential learning environment.

Additionally, the University of Roehampton in the UK now offers an accredited academic credential to soft skills trainers, coaches, and teachers. This degree, “provides an international gold standard of training excellence in soft skills and experiential learning and will enable trainers to develop their learners’ soft skills and employability” (PR Newswire, 2014, para. 1). Teaching the soft skills through experientialism is such a valid idea that a London University



created an accredited certificate in this training, to better equip students' soft skills, learning, and ability to be employed.

### **Teaching the Soft Skills through Learning Communities/Inquiry Groups**

Howard & England-Kennedy (in Ling, 2016) point out the benefits of learning communities.

Learning communities are thus communities of practice: groups of interconnected inquirers who value and practice specific behaviors that relate to the overall goal and shared practice of learning...Learning communities that emphasize individuality over conformity provide a diverse set of resources for their members and help preclude groupthink and stagnation (p. 11).

Learning communities emphasize and encourage individual knowledge and pursuit of learning, reflecting and questioning the information provided, while collaborating with a group. Inquiry groups have a slightly different definition, yet are comprised of the same overall goals. Taylor and Otinsky state that the proper function of an inquiry group, "is a relational process; it relies on the give and take of questions, ideas, perspectives, and even explanations to draw conclusions about the world and raise new questions and ideas" (2008, p. 34). Learning communities and inquiry groups both function on the ability to question, dig deeper, search for solutions, evaluate information and personal reflection, collaborate with others, and justify answers. Naturally, these exercises have the potential to better equip students with interpersonal soft skills such as teamwork, respect for context, problem solving, decision making, and people skills.

### **Teaching the Soft Skills through Classroom Management**

Some of the most influential people in an individual's life are mentors, counselors,

coaches, business owners, teachers, and bosses. As a parent, I understand that modeling the behavior I'd like my children to copy is effective. I often believe that as the art teacher, teaching art is only half of my job. The other half includes modeling the behavior of an honest, caring, kind, compassionate, and strong adult (recognizing that there are many students who may be lacking a responsible adult in their own lives), and holding students accountable, with clear consequences for their actions. What I say to my classes and how I say it is important. Last school year, a portion of my district's professional development was focused on how we speak. Do we discourage risk-taking and questions, or do we invite them? Are we approachable and helpful or intimidating and forceful? This realization that words, tone of voice, and actions carry weight in the learning process is understanding our own soft skills, and encouraging them in our students by modeling them daily. In the article, "The Role of Soft Skills in Employability" (2012), Remedios shares,

besides raising awareness regarding the importance of soft skills and encouraging students to improve their skills, lecturers should actively practice soft skills with their students. A very effective and efficient way of doing this is to include soft skills training into the teaching of hard skills (para. 20).

At the beginning of the marking period, I begin by creating a social contract with the class. This contract is then signed by myself and each student. A social contract is defined in the book *Discipline with Dignity* by Curwin, Mendler, & Mendler (2008) as, "the process of teachers and students developing values, rules, and consequences" (p. 66) and it is, "a system designed to enhance human interaction in the classroom" (p. 70). Creating rules and identifying consequences with students begins to teach and build communication from the student to the teacher, or more generally speaking, from the student to a person of authority. "The importance of specific and predictable rules is directly related to developing responsibility. The more

understandable the expectations, the better the students' chances of meeting them" (Curwin, Mendler, & Mendler 2008, p. 72). In addition, Curwin, Mendler, & Mendler state that a, "consequence is merely a vehicle to a destination. The destination is not simply for the student to be obedient, but for the student to be responsible to make the best choice" (2008, p. 83). Creating a social contract involves students in the planning and decision-making, which mimics our own US government. "The social contract is patterned after our democratic decision-making system of government, which has been shown to be an effective model in schools, although it is within the context of the teacher being in charge" (Curwin, Mendler, & Mendler 2008, pg. 68). Using a social contract in the classroom increases the use of soft skills in the Followership and Professionalism columns of Table 1. Citizenship, teamwork, and respect for context in the Followership column, and personal responsibility, positive attitude, and people skills in the Professionalism column are all taught through creating and using a social contract in the classroom.

### **Teaching the Soft Skills through Art**

I believe that through the arts you can teach a variety of subjects, materials, theories, ideas and skills. Much of teaching art is teaching students to creatively solve a problem, of sorts, through the creation of an art piece. Ultimately, this process teaches the three sub-categories of critical thinking; proactive learning, problem solving, and decision making (Tulgan, 2015). Within any given drawing, painting, or sculpture, for example, a student must be proactive in finding and using supplies (proactive learning), figure out how they will creatively design and create the piece given the criteria required by the teacher (problem solving), and choose a pathway of steps to get from the beginning to the end of an artwork (decision making). Critical

thinking is not as simple as regurgitating vocabulary or a factual answer. Critical thinking is defined as, “the intellectually disciplined process of actively and skillfully conceptualizing, applying, analyzing, synthesizing, and/or evaluating information gathered from, or generated by, observation, experience, reflection, reasoning, or communication, as a guide to belief and action” (Howard, Tang, & Austin 2015, p. 134). In addition, Holden states in the article “Using Art to Assess Critical Thinking and Reading Comprehension in Adolescents” that,

art education theorists such as Arnheim (1971), Corwin (2001), Eisner (1992), and Efland (2005) have established a clear link between the brain's cognitive processes and art activities. Specifically, research connects experiences in the arts to higher level thinking and problem-solving skills (2012, para. 3).

Teaching problem solving and the bigger umbrella of critical thinking, can be learned organically through the process of creation and art critique. In the article “Critical Thinking and Teaching Art” (1969), Templeton writes about “self-concept” and how a student’s self concept influences their verbal responses to visual pieces, and overall drives their critical thinking. Critiquing art pieces in the classroom is an important way of verbally expressing opinions, emotions, responses and is, “a tactic which employs as well as develops critical thinking in the examination of art forms of the past” (Templeton, 1969, pg. 7). When talking about a blind critique, which is critiquing a piece unaware of who created it, when, and where it was created, Templeton states,

for a while [the students] felt uneasy; they wanted to know who the artist was, the date of the work’s execution, and the school in which the artist had been classified. Once they pushed aside the drive for chronological closure and realized what was wanted was their personal observations in their own terminology, the feeling began to build that, ‘...this talking about art works isn’t so tough after all’ (1969, pg. 7).

Through a well written and taught art lesson, not a paint by number or connect the dots, the soft skills category of critical thinking can be intentionally taught.

### **Assessing Soft Skills in the Art Room**

Assessing art in general can be difficult because art is subjective, to some extent. The longer I teach, the better I am able to grade art pieces decisively and give objective guidelines and requirements that are assessed. Even grading the creativity of an art piece is achievable. But how do you assess the soft skills? If I am teaching the soft skills, I must be able to assess them and provide data of student growth. Unfortunately, the soft skills are also subjective, and aren't as easy as grading a multiple-choice test. Yet, assessment on soft skills is attainable. Data will need to be collected systematically throughout the course to show tangible growth in each category of soft skills. Currently, there is pressure to base grading on state and national standards, however, this doesn't actually represent a student's soft skill growth because, "standards-based grading is designed to measure learning - the mastery of a learning target or academic standard" (Beggin & Vaughn, 2017). Understandably, standards need to be assessed, but how a student arrives at a given solution, answer, idea, or finished product is equally as important, and should be graded as well, and with that in mind, it can be argued that soft skill development is an important learning target. Beggin and Vaughn state, "The process, how a student arrived at the end product, [has] virtually been eliminated from grade reporting. Yet it is "the process" that encompasses the skills employers are so desperately seeking in high school and college graduates" (2017). Beggin and Vaughn discuss the positive implications of teachers having two sets of grades; standards-based final grades, and career and employability skills (CES) grades. The system of CES standards were developed with the staff at Anoka-Hennepin

Secondary Technical Education Program in Anoka, Minnesota, and what began as one hundred or more CES standard ideas were refined down into five key standards that could be assessed across disciplines and classrooms (Beggin & Vaughn, 2017). These five standards are listed in Figure 2.

Career and Employability Standards
Model behaviors that demonstrate reliability and dependability
Demonstrate self-discipline, self-worth, positive attitude, and integrity
Identify work behaviors and personal qualities necessary to retain employment
Treat people with respect
Use correct grammar/ spelling/punctuation/capitalization when preparing written documents

Figure 2. Career and employability standards.

With an implemented pilot of classrooms comparing standards-based grades and CES grades, teachers found that a much lower percentage of students were tardy or had truancy in their classes (Beggin & Vaughn, 2017).

Beggin and Vaughn quote teachers involved in the study.

Implementing career and employability skills grading as both a separate and integrated part of classroom learning has led to an increase in student efficacy and an overall improvement in student engagement. Students tend to regard their personal successes with a deeper sense of pride, and are dedicated to working each day to improve themselves in new ways that better prepare them for their futures.”

"One of the most important outcomes I have seen since implementing career and employability skills assessments is that the focus for students is still on learning; however, students are keeping themselves more accountable for developing the skills

necessary for postsecondary education and the workplace (Beggin & Vaughn, 2017, para. 17-18).

Grades can be a motivator, and assessing soft skills with a grade places value on those skills, and encourages a student to be intentional and grow their own soft skills with practice. As a student, I always preferred a teacher who wasn't trying to trick me or hide the objectives being graded, and with that mindset, I believe in having two systems of grades in each classroom, and communicating well with each student on what is expected and how it will be assessed.

## **Conclusion**

The soft skills are not something new, however they are becoming more prominent due to the number of students lacking these skills as they enter the workforce. Employers are seeking strong soft skills in potential employees, and as educators it is our job to prepare students for whatever their future may hold, regardless of the careers they may someday enter. We have reached an era where we can no longer assume we are teaching these skills, hoping students pick them up along the way, and instead need to be intentionally teaching and assessing these skills. There is a vast array of ways to define these soft skills, some over-simplified and others contradicting themselves. The clearest and most concise way to define the soft skills are shown in Table 1, which creates a road map to specific skills under broader category headings, that should be taught, learned, and applied.

Subject-specific state and national standards per subject area are important, but additionally the soft skills that are applicable in every subject and in every potential job a student may encounter need to be examined and taught, as well. Remedios states, "Educators have a special responsibility regarding soft skills, because during students' School and University time they

have major impact on the development of their students' soft skills” (2012). The educational system of testing and assessing should refocus its lens on a student’s soft skills for life in addition to subject-matter knowledge addressed in the state and national standards (Beggin & Vaughn, 2017). The best practices for teaching of the soft skills in the classroom are experiential learning, inquiry groups, art, critique, a consistent classroom management system, and an additional assessment system that students understand and are aware of (Naufalin, Dinanti, & Krisnaresanti 2016, Holden 2012, Curwin, Mendler & Mendler 2008, Beggin & Vaughn, 2017). A curriculum developed to teach the soft skills throughout a semester or trimester, that provides activities and art lessons intentionally teaching these skills, would be a beneficial addition to the art education community and answers the need to address, teach, and assess the soft skills in the classroom. The arts can be effective in providing a platform for introducing non-subject specific elements such as soft skills, and recognizing them as a vital part of a student’s educational experience and growth.



## A SUPPLEMENTARY CURRICULUM FOCUSED ON TEACHING THE SOFT SKILLS THROUGH ART

This curriculum consists of twelve lesson plans, an assessment rubric and directions of how to assess, and additional documents needed for specific lesson plans. Each lesson plan is to be used as a supplementary learning experience to an existing art curriculum. Use these systematically and consistently on the same day of the week, in order to build structure in your daily schedule. Each lesson plan has been created to facilitate the use of soft skills within the art room, which must be applied in order to solve or experience a specific problem or event. Participation is essential, as is grading the application and effort each student is applying. The lesson plans encompass art-related terms, procedures, movements, and creative problems that need solving given specific parameters and resources.

### **Lesson Plan Break Down**

Breaking down these plans reveals the same organizational structure. Beginning with Materials, these are the physical things you must have on hand for the plan to be successful. The Goals/Objectives are the expectations of how the students should be engaging or participating in the lesson, as well as what is created or achieved. The Vocabulary identifies what terms are presented in the lesson. Either write these out on the board, project them on the board, or print and hand out to the students. Students should be able to see and read these terms for understanding; do not just imply that you are using them. Soft Skills is a section that lists the soft skills that are appropriate for each lesson. The soft skills listed under this section suggest soft skills to assess during the lesson activity. The Pitch provides a written description that should be read to the class, and generally signals the beginning of the activity, and instructions for

classroom set up. The Procedures section goes chronologically step by step, stating what should be done and said for the lesson plan from beginning to end. A facilitated Discussion period follows the completion of the lesson, and allows students to reflect and participate in open communication. Allow your students time to process and share their thoughts, guiding the conversation, and digging for thoughtful responses from a variety of students. The Write Out section of the lesson plan provides a question or multiple questions in response to the lesson. Each student must respond to the question or questions using correct spelling and grammar. This can be done as a hand-written response turned in directly to the teacher, or as a digital document to be turned in online.

### **Assessment Instructions**

Assessing the soft skills is key, in that it creates the necessity to use soft skills. Each soft skill has its own rubric table, and is listed under one of the three categories; Professionalism Soft Skills, Critical Thinking Soft Skills, or Followership Soft Skills. Each category has a matching color header to assist grouping the soft skills within each category. Students must be aware of these rubrics and notified if and when they will be graded on their application of soft skills, as well as evaluating themselves. I recommend choosing one soft skill three days a week to share with students, grade their application within that day, and have them evaluate themselves. When you are teaching a soft skill activity lesson from this thesis, encourage the use and grading of two or three soft skills that best suit the tasks and assignments. Choose the soft skill(s) for specific days in which they will be employed, for example, the teamwork soft skill under Followership Soft Skills, should be graded on a day in which there is group work of some kind, or a soft skill activity lesson. Grading every student on every soft skill daily is an insurmountable task, which

is why breaking it down to one soft skill at a time, students can clearly focus on their work and tasks for the day in addition to the one soft skill they are working on employing. Every soft skill should be considered each day, but grading one at a time will hyper focus attention on that particular soft skill, making it more habitual as it is employed and applied consistently.

At the beginning of a soft skill graded day, identify which soft skill is being graded, and give students time to review the rubric. Nearing the end of the class, have your students revisit the rubric, evaluate how well they employed the soft skill, and submit a grade from themselves using that particular soft skill, 5 being the highest grade, and 0 being the lowest. If your students have technology of sorts, such as an iPad or laptop provided by the school, upload these rubrics and share them with your students. If technology is not accessible or practical, print, and cut the soft skill rubrics, and hand out the specific soft skill being graded. At the end of the class, have your students write their name on the top, and highlight a grade for themselves on the rubric. You the teacher must grade the soft skill(s) for each student as well, and store the data of the grade you assign each individual, along side their self-evaluation grade. The self-evaluation grade students give themselves must not be their actual grade. Compare your grade to a student's self-evaluation grade, and have a conversation with the student if there are two or more points between your assessments, discussing what you each think. You have the ultimate say in the final grade for the application of soft skills conducted by each student, yet be transparent in acknowledging the need for work, or celebrating successes with each individual student and their soft skills progress.

Relaying this information to parents is important as well. Given the data accumulated from the art class, a grade may be presented on a report card. Each category has an overarching standard that may be listed and a grade assigned on every report card. It is up to your discretion

whether you list a grade for each soft skill or for each standard.

## ASSESSMENT RUBRICS

Rubrics clearly describe and outline expectations for each soft skill, making the assessment process less subjective and more concrete. Each rubric uses specific descriptors to define expectations. All students must be aware of the rubrics they are being assessed on. Give your class time to review the rubrics so that they are individually conscious of the expectation, and the amount of effort they will have to put forward to meet or exceed the expectation.

### **Soft Skill Foundation Standards**

Professionalism Standard:

Student conducts oneself with poise, is kind and considerate of others, is aware of and accomplishes own tasks, and assists others.

Critical Thinking Standard:

Student actively engages in learning, works to identify problems and find solutions, and is decisive and thoughtful in making decisions.

Followership Standard:

Student works collaboratively with and for others, respects and complies with classroom rules, procedures, and expectations, and finds and fills roles within or outside of the classroom.

### **Individual Soft Skill Rubrics**

Below are individual rubrics for each of the soft skills. These rubrics are to be used for student self-evaluation and teacher formative assessment during the lesson activities. For each lesson, choose one to three of these soft skill rubrics to assess your students. Provide the selected soft skill rubrics to your students before the activity begins, so that they are aware of what is

expected. The rubrics are the same for you the teacher as they are for the student using them for self assessment.

Table 2a Professionalism Rubric: Self-Evaluation

Professionalism Soft Skills	Excellent : 5 Points	Strong : 4 Points	Good : 3 Points	Moderate : 2 Points	Weak : 1 Point	Lacking : 0 Points
Self-Evaluation	Student critically and honestly evaluates the effort, creativity, craftsmanship, and overall quality of his or her own work	Student honestly evaluates the effort, creativity, craftsmanship, and overall quality of his or her own work	Student generally evaluates the effort, creativity, craftsmanship, and overall quality of his or her own work	Student generally evaluates the effort and overall quality of his or her own work	Student poorly and inconsistently evaluates the overall quality of his or her own work	Student does not evaluate the overall quality of his or her own work, and is dishonest about the work presented

Table 2b Professionalism Rubric: Personal Responsibility

Professionalism Soft Skills	Excellent : 5 Points	Strong : 4 Points	Good : 3 Points	Moderate : 2 Points	Weak : 1 Point	Lacking : 0 Points
Personal Responsibility	Student creatively accomplishes own tasks and independently organizes and carefully maintains materials and documents	Student fully accomplishes own tasks and independently organizes and maintains materials and documents	Student completes own tasks and organizes and maintains materials and documents	Student nearly completes own tasks and maintains most materials and documents	Student participates partially in tasks and is aware of materials and documents	Student ignores tasks and does not maintain materials and documents

Table 2c Professionalism Rubric: Positive Attitude

Professionalism Soft Skills	Excellent : 5 Points	Strong : 4 Points	Good : 3 Points	Moderate : 2 Points	Weak : 1 Point	Lacking : 0 Points
Positive Attitude	Student chooses to respond to activities, assignments, the teacher, and other students always in a positive way	Student chooses to respond to activities, assignments, the teacher, and other students in a positive way	Student chooses to respond to activities, assignments, the teacher, and other students frequently in a positive way	Student chooses to respond to activities, assignments, the teacher, and other students occasionally in a positive way	Student chooses to respond to activities, assignments, the teacher, and other students rarely in a positive way	Student does not choose to respond to activities, assignments, the teacher, and other students in a positive way

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Table 2d Professionalism Rubric: Good Work Habits

Professionalism Soft Skills	Excellent : 5 Points	Strong : 4 Points	Good : 3 Points	Moderate : 2 Points	Weak : 1 Point	Lacking : 0 Points
Good Work Habits	Student recognizes what needs to be done and organizes his or her path in fully accomplishing tasks, without wasting any time	Student recognizes what needs to be done and chooses his or her path in fully accomplishing tasks, without wasting time	Student is aware of what needs to be done and chooses his or her path in accomplishing tasks, without wasting much time	Student is slightly aware of what needs to be done and needs guidance choosing his or her path in accomplishing tasks, yet wastes some time	Student is unaware of what needs to be done and needs guidance understanding how to accomplish tasks, and wastes time	Student is unaware of what needs to be done and denies guidance for understanding how to accomplish tasks, and wastes much time



Table 2e Professionalism Rubric: People Skills

Professionalism Soft Skills	Excellent : 5 Points	Strong : 4 Points	Good : 3 Points	Moderate : 2 Points	Weak : 1 Point	Lacking : 0 Points
People Skills	Student is self-less in interpersonal interactions, and is continually looking for the best solutions for all parties involved. Student reacts calmly and strategically to changes in events.	Student is generally self-less in interpersonal interactions, and is looking for the best solutions for all parties involved. Student reacts strategically to changes in events.	Student is often self-less in interpersonal interactions, and is occasionally looking for the best solutions for all parties involved. Student reacts quickly to changes in events.	Student is occasionally self-less in interpersonal interactions, and is looking for the best solutions for his or her self. Student reacts to changes in events in an uneasy manner.	Student is occasionally selfish in interpersonal interactions, and is looking for the best solutions for his or her self. Student reacts to changes in events frantically.	Student is selfish in interpersonal interactions, and is only looking for the best solutions for his or her self. Student reacts to changes in events in a negative way.

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Table 3a Critical Thinking Rubric: Proactive Learning

Critical Thinking Soft Skills	Excellent : 5 Points	Strong : 4 Points	Good : 3 Points	Moderate : 2 Points	Weak : 1 Point	Lacking : 0 Points
Proactive Learning	Student actively seeks information, solutions, and methods, frequently questioning to learn more and understand concepts for life long learning.	Student seeks information, solutions, and methods, often questioning to learn more and understand concepts for life long learning.	Student often seeks information, solutions, and methods, occasionally questioning to learn more and understand concepts for the task as hand.	Student occasionally seeks information, solutions, and methods, rarely questioning to learn more and understand concepts for the task as hand.	Student rarely seeks information, solutions, and methods, irregularly questioning to gain information.	Student does not seek information, solutions, and methods, nor questions to gain information.

Table 3b Critical Thinking Rubric: Problem Solving

Critical Thinking Soft Skills	Excellent : 5 Points	Strong : 4 Points	Good : 3 Points	Moderate : 2 Points	Weak : 1 Point	Lacking : 0 Points
Problem Solving	Student fully grasps and identifies the problem, offers multiple solution ideas, and openly evaluates which direction is best suited for the group or self.	Student identifies the problem, offers a couple solution ideas, and evaluates which direction is best suited for the group and self.	Student assists in identifying the problem, offers a solution idea, and evaluates which direction is would work for the group and self.	Student participates while group identifies the problem, offering a solution idea, and assists in evaluating which direction should be taken.	Student watches while group identifies the problem, offering minimal contributions for solutions and for evaluating.	Student does not participates while group identifies the problem, does not offer a solution idea, and does not assists in evaluating which direction should be taken.

Table 3c Critical Thinking Rubric: Decision Making

Critical Thinking Soft Skills	Excellent : 5 Points	Strong : 4 Points	Good : 3 Points	Moderate : 2 Points	Weak : 1 Point	Lacking : 0 Points
Decision Making	Student makes thoughtful, thorough, clear and concise, yet timely decisions, aware of what is best for the group opposed to selfish desires.	Student makes thoughtful, concise, yet timely decisions, aware of what is best for the group.	Student makes thoughtful decisions, slightly aware of what is best for the group.	Student makes decisions, and is relatively unaware of what is best for the group.	Student assists group with decisions, and pushes their own ideas even if it isn't what is best for the group.	Student does not make decisions, and chooses not to participate.

Table 4a Followership Rubric: Respect for Context

Followership Soft Skills	Excellent : 5 Points	Strong : 4 Points	Good : 3 Points	Moderate : 2 Points	Weak : 1 Point	Lacking : 0 Points
Respect for Context	Student competently adapts and diligently complies with the set rules, regulations, and structure within an activity, classroom, or culture.	Student fluidly adapts and actively complies with the set rules, regulations, and structure within an activity, classroom, or culture.	Student easily adapts and frequently complies with the set rules, regulations, and structure within an activity, classroom, or culture.	Student adapts and complies generally with the set rules, regulations, and structure within an activity, classroom, or culture.	Student partially adapts and occasionally to the set rules, regulations, and structure within an activity, classroom, or culture.	Student does not adapt or comply with the set rules, regulations, and structure within an activity, classroom, or culture.

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Table 4b Followership Rubric: Citizenship

Followership Soft Skills	Excellent : 5 Points	Strong : 4 Points	Good : 3 Points	Moderate : 2 Points	Weak : 1 Point	Lacking : 0 Points
Citizenship	Student positively accepts and thoroughly participates in the duties of an active member in society, within the classroom, following structure, customs, and leadership.	Student openly accepts and actively participates in the duties of an active member in society, within the classroom, following structure, customs, and leadership.	Student accepts and participates in the duties of an active member in society, within the classroom, following structure, customs, and leadership.	Student relatively accepts and often participates in the duties of an active member in society, within the classroom, following structure, customs, and leadership.	Student reluctantly accepts and rarely participates in the duties of an active member in society, within the classroom, following structure, customs, and leadership.	Student does not accept or participate in the duties of an active member in society, within the classroom, following structure, customs, and leadership.

Table 4c Followership Rubric: Service

Followership Soft Skills	Excellent : 5 Points	Strong : 4 Points	Good : 3 Points	Moderate : 2 Points	Weak : 1 Point	Lacking : 0 Points
Service	Student frequently offers assistance, care, time, and efforts to classmates, teacher, and others encountered, focusing on the needs or others instead of their own desires.	Student offers assistance, care, time, and efforts to classmates, teacher, and others encountered, focusing on the needs or others instead of their own desires.	Student occasionally offers assistance, time, and efforts to others, focusing on the needs or others instead of their own desires.	Student irregularly offers assistance, and efforts to others, focusing slightly on the needs or others instead of their own desires.	Student rarely offers assistance and efforts to others, focusing primarily on their own desires.	Student does not offer assistance and efforts to others, and solely focuses on their own desires.

Table 4d Followership Rubric: Teamwork

Followership Soft Skills	Excellent : 5 Points	Strong : 4 Points	Good : 3 Points	Moderate : 2 Points	Weak : 1 Point	Lacking : 0 Points
Teamwork	Student graciously participates in a variety of different rolls needed to accomplish tasks within a group, collaborating openly, and genuinely celebrates the success of individuals as well as the group.	Student participates in a variety of different rolls needed to accomplish tasks within a group, collaborating openly, and celebrates the success of individuals as well as the group.	Student participates in a couple of different rolls needed to accomplish tasks within a group, collaborating occasionally, and often celebrating the success of individuals as well as the group.	Student participates in a roll needed to accomplish tasks within a group, sparsely collaborating, and occasionally celebrating the success of individuals as well as the group.	Student reluctantly participates partially in a roll needed to accomplish tasks within a group, rarely collaborating, and seldom celebrating any successes.	Student does not participate in a roll needed to accomplish tasks within a group, does not collaborating or celebrate any successes.

## SAMPLE LESSONS FOR TEACHING THE SOFT SKILLS

The following lesson plans are designed for use in the middle school curriculum. They are applicable in art classrooms, and may be modified for general classroom settings. Use these twelve lesson plans in whatever sequence you see fit, they do not chronologically build on each other. Choose lesson plans that are applicable to what you are currently working on in class

## **Lesson 1: The Machine**

### **Materials.**

- Random Groups Document
- Dry erase markers and white board
- Pencils and scratch paper
- Timer
- Soft Skills Rubric

### **Goals/objectives.**

- Share ideas with teammates
- Speak when it is their turn, and patiently wait when it is not
- Actively listen to teammates and positively collaborate on ideas
- Decide as a team how to present and respond to that decision positively
- Participate appropriately in the presentation
- Complete a write-out stating “for” or “against” the production of The Machine

### **Vocabulary.**

- Ethics: Moral principles that govern a person’s behavior.
- Moral: A person's standards of behavior or beliefs concerning what is and is not acceptable for them to do.
- Defendant: The person or group charged with the “crime”.
- Plaintiff: The person or group who bring a case against another in a court of law.
- Bench Trial: A trial without a jury. The judge hears the case and passes judgment.
- Opening Statement: The first opportunity to speak to the court.
- Closing Argument: The last opportunity you have to address the court in your case. You need to argue the strengths of your case and the weaknesses of the prosecutor’s case.

### **Soft skills.**

- People Skills
- Problem Solving
- Decision Making
- Citizenship
- Teamwork

### **The pitch.**

A machine has been created, and there is a controversy over whether it should be put into use or be destroyed. “The Machine” has the ability to take any 2dimensional piece of artwork and replicate it exactly, down to each individual microscopic molecule. This Machine is so advanced that expert art critics and appraisers are unable to distinguish the original art piece from the replica. The hype of this machine has not been publicized as it could currently be dangerous if it ended up in the wrong hands. Is this Machine something that should be put into production and use, or should it be destroyed?

### **Procedure.**

- Break the class into four groups. Do this randomly (see Random Groups Document).
- Split the classroom down the middle, and place two teams on each side facing the middle line.
- One half of the room, are the two law firms hired to defend the use and production of The Machine, supporting the inventors of The Machine. The other half of the room are the two law firms fighting against the use and production of The Machine, supporting the artists, museums and owners of original, historic art pieces.
- Draw a line down the center of the white board and title the two sides writing “Plaintiff” on the room side of the Artists/Museums/Art Owners and “Defendant” on the room side of The Machine creators.
- Go to each group and number them 1 - 4 or 5 depending on how many students you have in the class.
- Direct the students to share their ideas for defending their client, one at a time starting with

number 1. Students are only allowed to share during their turn, and once each person has shared two ideas, their group will then be open to collaboration and elaboration of the ideas.

- If a student does not have an idea to share they may say “pass” during their turn.
- Randomly choose a number, say 3 for example, to be the scribe who writes for the group as they share.
- Set an amount of time for the ideation and collaboration, such as four minutes, and use a timer visible for students to watch and know the remaining amount of time.
- Have each group choose for themselves how they would like to present their firm.
- They may choose one lawyer who counsels with the group before their turn to speak, or they may choose multiple lawyers who each have a specific idea to share.
- Give each team one minute to decide how they want to present their ideas.
- When the timer goes off the debate begins with the opening statements from each group. Go every other, Plaintiff group - Defendant group -Plaintiff group - Defendant group, and then start over.
- Each group may share one idea at a time as to why The Machine should or shouldn't be produced and used.
- Go around the room a few times (3-5 times depending on how many ideas students have), being sure that the lawyers are only attacking the idea of The Machine, not the other lawyers and law firms. There is not a winning team or a losing team in this, just an interesting debate.
- Once finished, have everyone go back to their seats, and open a discussion about The Machine.

### **Discussion.**

- Regardless of your law firm affiliation, what do you really think about the possible production of The Machine? For / Against / Neutral
- What are ethics and morals? Give an example.
- What do good morals and ethical behavior look like as an employee at a company?

### **Write-out.**

State “for” or “against” the production of The Machine, giving one important reason why, in three to five sentences.



**Assessment.**

Refer to Soft Skills Rubric

## **Lesson 2: Tallest Tower**

### **Materials.**

- Large drawing paper
- Paperclips
- Pencils
- String
- Random Grouping Document
- Soft Skills Rubric
- Table for testing the towers
- Tape measure or yard stick

### **Goals/objectives.**

- Sketch out an idea for building a tall tower out of the materials provided.
- Speak when it is their turn, and patiently wait when it is not.
- Collaborate with their teammates on the ideas presented by classmates.
- Decide which ideas will be used, and positively respond to this decision.
- Proactively assist team in creating the tower, communicating what they intend to do and following through.
- Include teammates in the production of the tower, encouraging each other.
- Withhold from any negative speech or discouragement of teammates or other teams.
- Respond to the “curveball” collaborating with their team quickly to make a decision.
- Participate in the three tests of the tower, and respond positively to the outcome.

### **Vocabulary.**

- Adhesive: a substance used for sticking objects together.
- Stable: Not easily disturbed.
- Independent: Free from outside control, not depending on something else.
- Collaboration: The action of working with someone to create something.

- Ideation: The formation of ideas or concepts.
- Communication: Sharing or exchanging information or ideas verbally or written.

**Soft skills.**

- Personal Responsibility
- Positive Attitude
- Proactive Learning
- Problem Solving
- Decision Making
- Teamwork

**The pitch.**

Build the tallest tower possible using all of the materials you are provided, and they may not use additional materials or any sort of adhesive. You must use every material in some way, and in addition, you must tear the paper three times. (The size of the tear does not matter, but let them figure that out). You will be given ideation time, team collaboration time, and tower assembly and creation time. During the activity, there will be a curveball.

**Procedure.**

- Break the class up into groups of 4-5 students using the Random Grouping Document.
- Have each person bring a piece of paper and a pencil to their group, and sit around a table.
- Pass out the same materials to each group, but warn them that if they start assembling a tower before the given time, there will be a “team consequence”:

1 Large piece of drawing paper

1 Pencil

3 Paper clips

3” of String

- The groups will have two minutes to individually draw out ideas for the design of their tall tower using all of the materials, drawing on the sketch paper they brought with them to their group. Start the timer to count down from two minutes in a place where students can see it.
- When time is up, go to each group and number each student 1-4 or 5.
- Have each student share their idea with their group in number order, and if they are

interrupted during their share time, have them just quickly raise one hand and put it down.

- As they share, count the amount of raised hands and tally on the board.
- When the groups are finished sharing their ideas, direct them to collaboratively devise a game plan of how they will construct their tower.
- If students in a group disagree, encourage them to resolve the conflict on their own, finding a solution that will work for their team and this assignment.
- Set the timer for three minutes, and when time is up stop all groups, and talk them quickly through building as a team.
- Set the timer for four minutes, and let them begin building.
- Encourage each student to actively build, assist, plan, or engage with the group as they build. Communicating with their group, if they have any new ideas to share, and not just start building separately with that idea.
- The room should be buzzing with collaboration and building.
- At 1:30 remaining, stop the timer and have all of the students put their hands up (so they stop working).
- CURVEBALL: Give students 15 seconds to choose one additional item to help build their tall tower. They may choose anything in the room, but it must be a team decision, and the object must be independent from the walls or floor. (Depending on your classroom, you may have things they can not use.)
- Start the timer and when 15 seconds are up, let them continue working on finishing their tower for the remaining 1:15.
- Note: I allowed my students to choose furniture or the trash can as their one object, but let them figure that out on their own.
- During the last minute or so, set up an empty table at the front of the classroom.
- When time is up, have everyone put up their hands and stop working. Instruct one team member (or two) to bring their tower to the front of the room and set it on the table.
- If the tower is too large, it will have to be tested separately.
- Gather the class around the table to watch, maintaining a 2-3 foot space between them and the table.
- Measure each tower and then begin the Tower Weather Tests:
- First Test: Measurement. Measure which tower is officially the tallest.

- Second Test: Earthquake. Start by gently shaking the table, and slowly increase to a harder shake. Note which towers fall over and which towers stay steady.
- Third Test: Tornado / Hurricane. Select a random number, say number 1, from each group to come forward and line them up behind the table about two feet, aware that they shouldn't be behind their own tower. At the count of three, have them blow air out to simulate a tornado or hurricane.
- These students may not lean forward or bend at the waste to unfairly blow air on other towers. Note which towers withstand the tornado / hurricane the best.
- You may reward the winning team if you choose, or just give them bragging rights.

**Discussion.**

- What was challenging?
- What was fun?
- What went well, or how would you have done things differently with this assignment?
- What does it feel like to wait your turn to speak?
- What does it feel like when you're in a group and your voice isn't heard?
- What would've made building easier for your group?

**Assessment.**

Refer to the Soft Skill Rubrics

### **Lesson 3: Surrealism Blind Drawing**

#### **Materials.**

- Printed and Laminated Surrealism Images (4-6 different images), for inspirational ideas view the work of Redmer Hoekstra: <http://www.redmerhoekstra.nl>
- 2 Drawing Boards per Group
- Pencils
- Sketch paper
- Open floor space
- Timer
- Random Grouping Document
- Soft Skills Rubric

#### **Goals/objectives.**

- Collect materials and meet with team as directed.
- Sit back to back and patiently wait to see the final image after the activity is completed.
- Wait their turn to ask questions or give appropriate answers.
- Plan loosely and sketch out ideas as questions are answered.
- Develop and draw a final idea as to what the original image may be.
- Positively share images of their work comparing them to the final image, without criticizing self or others.
- Return materials to their original location (responsibility).
- Follow directions before, during and after activity.
- Participate in class discussion.
- Fill out the self assessment honestly and critically.

#### **Vocabulary.**

- Surreal: Having bizarre, unreal or unusual qualities.
- Verbal: Relating to in the form of words.

- Honest: Free of deceit or untruthfulness.
- Humor: The quality of being amusing or comical.

### **Soft skills.**

- Self-Evaluation
- Personal Responsibility
- Positive Attitude
- Problem Solving
- Decision Making
- Teamwork

### **The pitch.**

Give the pitch after students have been randomly placed in groups, gathered materials and found a location on the floor to sit.

Half of your group will be given an image, while the other half will have drawing boards, pencils and sketch paper. Those who are drawing are unable to see the image that they are drawing, and must ask Yes or No questions to the group members holding the image. The image holders may only answer Yes or No. The goal is to draw the image without looking at it, and find out what the image is with the answered questions. These images may not be exactly what you are expecting which makes this process interesting. You must trust what your teammates say in answering the questions, or you must be honest when answering the questions asked. Tip: Ask a number of questions and begin with a list of small sketches on the side of the paper. When you have enough information, begin the large sketch of the image you are discussing. You will have four minutes to complete this drawing, and then the group members who were drawing will become image holders with a new image, and the image holders will become drawing students.

### **Procedure.**

- Break the class up in to groups of 4 or 5 students using the Random Grouping Document.
- Have your students bring a pencil and sketch paper to their group, and find a general area on the floor.
- Go around and number the group members 1-4.

- Each group will need 2-3 drawing boards, so call a number (say 4) to collect their boards for their group.
- Direct your students sit with their groups, the odd numbered people next to each other (1, 3, 5), the even numbered people next to each other (2, 4), then the odd and even numbers must sit back to back on the floor. One side of the group will have the drawing boards, sketch paper and pencils, while the other side will get the surrealism image.
- Give students The Pitch before quietly passing out the images.
- Once images are passed out, set the timer for four minutes.
- For the first two minutes, students drawing may only ask Yes or No questions, and the students with the image may only respond with Yes or No answers.
- At the two minute mark, students may continue to ask Yes or No questions, but inform those who are answering, that they may respond with a sentence giving more information about the image.
- When the timer goes off at four minutes, the group may share their sketches and the image they were blindly trying to draw.
- Inform students that they must be kind, and not criticize themselves or other students negatively.
- Reset the groups, giving the drawing boards to the other side of the group. When the room is quiet and ready, pass out new images to the groups.
- Be aware of drawing sides from one group that may be facing the image holding side of another group. Give them different images, and so that the drawing side can't see what their own image should look like.
- Set the timer again, and begin with two minutes of Yes or No questions and answers.
- At the two-minute mark, allow the answers to be sentences as previously done.
- Once the timer goes off at four minutes, allow students to view their image, return all materials and return to their classroom seat.

**Discussion.**

- What was challenging about the first round of this activity?
- What was something you found difficult that you thought would be easy?
- What worked well for your group?



- What was challenging about the second round of this activity? What was fun?
- Do you believe that group members were, or are, dishonest with you?
- What would've happened if you didn't trust what your group members were telling you?
- Was it easier to draw the image when you got a better grasp on what the image was as a whole?
- Was patience important and worth the wait?

**Assessment.**

Refer to the Soft Skill Rubrics

## **Lesson 4: Creating a Culture**

### **Materials.**

- Creating a Culture “Tickets” - ticket pages printed, laminated, and cut. Before copying, in front of each sentence in category 1 draw a triangle, in category 2 draw a square, and in category 3 draw a circle.
- White board and dry erase markers
- Timer
- Soft Skills Rubric

### **Goals/objectives.**

- Organize own tickets and maintain five tickets throughout the activity.
- Exchange tickets using the cultural system.
- Apply the language of the culture.
- Positively interact with other ticket holders.
- Encourage and assist outsiders.
- Work collaboratively with teammate.
- Complete and turn in Write-out.

### **Vocabulary.**

- Culture: The characteristic features of everyday existence shared by people in a place or time.
- Outsider: A person who does not belong to a particular group.
- Language: The system of communication used by a particular community or country.
- Task: A piece of work to be done or undertaken.

### **Soft skills.**

- Personal Responsibility
- Decision Making

- People Skills
- Proactive Learning
- Respect for Context
- Citizenship

### **The pitch.**

Before the pitch, ask 3-5 volunteers to wait outside the classroom, and close the door so that they can not hear what is being taught.

You have been dropped into a new community of people in a remote area of the world. The people here have a particularly interesting way of life, that you will quickly become a part of. They have a set language and specific tasks that needs to be accomplished daily. Here is their language:

#### ***Language.***

“Tree”: means triangle

“See”: means circle

“Saw”: means square

“Ya-ya”: means play

“Ra-ra”: means win

“Boo-ya”: means ultimate win

“yo-yo”: means yes

“yum-yum”: means no

Write this language key on the white board.

The people of this community have tickets with shapes on the sides. Their daily goal is to first get all matching shapes, such as all squares for example. In order to get squares, circles or triangles, they play rock-paper-scissors with their fellow community members. The winner of rock-paper-scissors gets to look at all of the losing players’ tickets and swap one ticket for one ticket, in order to get all matching shapes. Each person may only have five tickets at a time. If the winner of rock-paper-scissors uses a different language than the language of the community, the loser has the opportunity to walk away without exchanging tickets.

### **Procedure.**

- Once the pitch has been given, and the rules are understood, pass out five random tickets to each student, giving them a variety of shapes.
- Set the timer for three minutes, and allow them to begin playing rock-paper-scissors and exchanging tickets.
- About 30 seconds in, invite the 3-5 students in the hallway back into the room.
- Do not give them instructions, simply tell them to join the community, and give them each five tickets.
- Walk around the room to check for understanding, and that students are applying the language appropriately.
- When the timer goes off at three minutes, stop the community play. There may be students who collect all of the same shape by this time, which is great.
- Explain that there are five different phrases for each shape and that their new goal is to collect the five different phrases of a single shape, lay them out in order of how you would chronologically accomplish the task, and then yell “BOO-YA” for an ultimate win.
- Walk over to the ultimate winners, check their work to see that they have all of one shape, and that the five different phrases are in chronological order.
- You may reward the ultimate winners if you choose.
- Allow for 3-5 ultimate winners. When finished, collect all the tickets, and have students find their desks.

**Discussion.**

- What did it feel like to be a part of this culture we created?
- Ask the students who were invited in late what they felt like?
- Have any of you felt this way before and in what context? Were they traveling somewhere, were they in a new environment, school or town?
- Did you want to help the community students who came in late from the hallway, or not?
- You had your own tasks to accomplish, why stop and help someone else?
- What if you were in a different culture, floundering, would you want someone to give you a few minutes of their time to help you adjust and get where or what you need?

**Write-out.**

On a small piece of paper, have students respond to this questions in 1-3 sentences.

What is something you would actually do to help someone who may be new to your culture?

**Assessment.**

Refer to the Soft Skill Rubrics

## **Lesson 5: Defining Words**

### **Materials.**

- Paper
- Pencils
- White Board and Dry Erase Markers
- Timer
- Dice, 6 sided, or use computer dice on google
- Random Grouping Document
- Soft Skills Rubric

### **Goals/objectives.**

- Participate by sharing defining word ideas.
- Patiently wait to speak.
- Work collaboratively with team to eliminate words and choose their best solution.
- Respond to word elimination without protest.
- Present definition clearly.
- Complete and submit a thoughtful Write-out.

### **Vocabulary.**

- Define: State or describe the nature, scope or meaning of.
- Omit: Leave out or exclude.
- Grace: Courteous goodwill.
- Poise: Composure and dignity of manner.

### **Soft skills.**

- Personal Responsibility
- Positive Attitude

- Good Work Habits
- People Skills
- Problem Solving
- Decision Making
- Respect for Context
- Teamwork

### **The pitch.**

You will be given one to two minutes to define a particular word for someone who is learning the English language and wants to learn about art. Your goal is to use every word intentionally in the definition to well describe and define the word category you are explaining. However, the number of words you are allowed to use are limited by chance. Every round, a student will be invited up to the front to roll the die. The minimum number of words being one and the maximum number of words being six. In order to find the best possible definition, you must go around your group in number order 1-4/5/6 and each share one word. For best results, go around your group twice, and write down each word shared by your teammates. With your remaining time, collaboratively narrow down your list of the best defining words for the category and circle the amount of words allowed by the number roll of the die. After a round is complete, another student will be invited to roll the die, and another word category will be written on the board.

### **Procedure.**

- Break the class into groups of 4-6 students, using the random grouping document.
- Have each group find a table to sit around, with one piece of paper and a pencil.
- Go around to each group, and number the students 1-4/5/6 depending on how many are in the group.
- Ask the group to choose a scribe, who will write their solutions as they work, keeping the document visible to all group members.
- Explain the parameters of the game as described in The Pitch.
- Make a table on the board with 2 columns, and 4-6 rows.
- Title the left column “Category” and the right column “Number of Words”.
- As you work from one category to the next, the words should get a little more difficult to

define. Here is an example of a sequence of word categories:

Paint            Art            Time            Contrast            Surrealism

- Below is a word bank of suggested words, however, you may choose and use word categories that coincide with what you are currently teaching.
- After you have finished 4-6 word categories, have each team present their best word category definitions.
- Each team member must present a minimum of one word category.
- Go around the room one word category at a time, and ask for the presenter to stand and confidently define that word category.
- You do not have to subjectively score their answers, it is simply a way of grasping terms and the importance of word choice.
- When complete, have all students go back to their seats.

**Word bank.**

Time	Art	Gift	Student
Paint	Printmaking	Sculpture	Line
Shape	Space	Color	Form
Value	Texture	Contrast	Balance
Unity	Movement	Emphasis	Scale
Juxtaposition	Surrealism	Fauvism	Portrait
Arbitrary	Anomaly	Neutral	Horizon
Pattern	Abstract	Realism	Nature

**Discussion.**

- What was challenging about this activity?
- Do you think their word categories were defined well?
- What new ideas did you have to consider when defining words, such as “gift”, assuming you could give the gift of time?
- Does art have to be 2d or 3d, or are dance and music “art”?
- Was it challenging to see or have your word ideas rejected from the final definition list?



Why?

**Write-out.**

Respond to this question with writing 1-3 sentences:

Why is the omission of an idea difficult if the idea was your own?

**Assessment.**

Refer to Soft Skill Rubrics

## **Lesson 6: Color Matching Game**

### **Materials.**

- 6 sets of the same 4 neutral color paint swatches, such as olive brown, or peachy tan
- Paint brushes
- Water bowls
- Paint palettes
- Primary colors and white tempera paint
- Paper towel
- Tables
- Random Grouping Document
- Soft Skills Rubric

### **Goals/objectives.**

- Color mix to match paint swatches.
- Utilize color theory in color matching paint swatches.
- Share ideas of what colors to add with teammates.
- Work collaboratively with team for each color swatch.
- Decisively pick a creative team name.
- Clean up paint mess collectively, and proactively.

### **Vocabulary.**

- Neutral Colors: A mix of the primary colors and secondary colors that result in a mid-tone color that can fall under the color category of brown, tan, gray, black or white.
- Primary Colors: A group of colors from which all colors can be obtained by mixing. The primary colors are red, blue and yellow
- Secondary Colors: A color resulting from mixing two primary colors; green, purple, and orange.

- Complementary Colors: Colors directly opposite each other on the color wheel, such as red and green, orange and blue, and yellow and purple.
- Patience: The capacity to accept or tolerate delay or trouble without getting upset.

**Soft skills.**

- Positive Attitude
- Good Work Habits
- Proactive Learning
- Problem Solving
- Decision Making
- Service
- Teamwork

**The pitch.**

You have just been employed at the Home Depot or Lowes paint department. Their color mixing machine has temporarily stopped working. This machine is used to mix gallons of paint for people to purchase. Generally, a customer chooses a color swatch, brings it to the counter, and the machine matches the color swatch by adding a mix of the primary colors to a can of white paint. Being that the machine is broken, they need “recipes” so to speak, for mixing a specific set of neutral tones. Your job is to perfectly color match a swatch, and bring forward the recipe and a dab of the matched color on the swatch to prove that is the right combination of colors.

Caution: adding too much white paint too soon can quickly change the color. Add white cautiously as you are mixing these colors. You will be given two swatches to begin with, once you have a swatch perfectly mixed and the recipe mirrors the color created, I will put a checkmark on the board for your team. Once your color and recipe have been approved, I will give you another swatch. I, the teacher, am the ultimate judge as to whether a color passes the color matching test, and as for the recipe, it should be made up of the colors that are necessary to mix it. An example of a recipe for a peachy tan color could be something like yellow, a little red, a tiny bit of blue to neutralize it and make it less orange, and white. There are a total of four colors that need recipes and color matching. You may collaborate with your group on how you will accomplish these tasks, however each student must use a paintbrush at least once during this activity. The first team to finish all four recipes and color matching, are the champions (you may

reward this team if you choose).

### **Procedures.**

- Using the Random Grouping Document, break the class up into 4-6 groups.
- Have each group find a table or group of desks to work around. Then, set the time for one minute and allow them to come up with a creative, yet appropriate, group name for themselves.
- While they are discussing, make a table on the board with a row for each group, and a column for the number of paint samples they will be matching.
- When the minute is up, write each team name in their own row on the board.
- Give The Pitch.
- Ask the students to retrieve materials, which are paintbrushes, water bowls, paper towel, and paint palettes.
- When all teams have their materials, you may distribute two swatches to each group and let them begin color mixing.
- As students are collaborating and working, walk around and chart students' application of soft skills, then head to the front of the room and wait for teams to bring forward their color matching swatches with paint dabs.
- As you approve color matches and recipes, put a check in the first column, in the row of that team, noting the first swatch completion.
- Every time a swatch is complete, hand the group a new swatch until they have had them all.
- The first team to get all of their checkmarks "wins".
- Be fair, and really push teams to match colors perfectly. If a color is the right tone but too light or dark, make that rework it to match the swatch. It might take a couple of tries to get the exact color, but that is part of the process of color mixing and team patience.
- Once a group wins, and the other teams have finished a few colors, you may allow more teams to finish, or you may stop the activity, and have your students clean up their brushes, bowls, palettes, and tables.
- Encourage your students to each state and follow through with an act of service for the group, such as, "I will wash the table," or, "I will collect and wash the brushes, then put them

away.” Have students return to their seats when completed.

**Discussion.**

- What was challenging about this activity?
- What was frustrating?
- What types of things did you have to communicate with each other?
- Is cleaning up part of practicing the soft skills? How so?
- Should you always be actively paying attention, participating, engaging with your classmates, or are there appropriate times and places to “check out”?

**Assessment.**

Refer to Soft Skill Rubrics

## **Lesson 7: Following Directions**

### **Materials.**

- “How Well Do You Follow Directions?” handout printed and copied
- Pencils

### **Goals/objectives.**

- Carefully read directions thoroughly.
- Understand the problem or task fully before jumping to conclusions.
- Follow directions once read.
- Focus on self and own tasks, instead of surrounding people.
- Complete and turn in Write-out with “How Well Do You Follow Directions?” handout.

### **Vocabulary.**

- Direction: The general way in which someone or something is developing.
- Self awareness: Knowledge of one’s self, and own character, desires, feelings, and tasks.
- Peer Pressure: The influence of others surrounding you.

### **Soft skills.**

- Personal Responsibility
- Good Work Habits
- Problem Solving
- Decision Making
- Respect for Context
- Service

### **The Pitch.**

This soft skill activity is pretty straight forward. Read this handout carefully and complete it. Do

not discuss with your neighbors, view this like a quiz. When you receive the hand out you may begin.

**Procedures.**

- Pass out the handout to the class.
- Walk around assessing the soft skills selected for the day, and make a note of who has started the questions as not directed by the handout.
- Notice students who followed the directions by not completing the simple questions, and ask them what they are doing in order to get the response listed on the worksheet.
- Give the class plenty of time to complete, and when the class is finished, collect the handouts and discuss.

**Discussion.**

- What were your concerns as you completed this task?
- Did you feel deceived or were you worried about what you should be doing?
- What makes this simple activity so challenging?

**Write-out.**

When it comes to following directions, what are important steps to take? List three of the most important steps.

**Assessment.**

Refer to Soft Skill Rubrics

## **Lesson 8: Before and After**

### **Materials.**

- Before images (Call them Image 1) printed or digital
- After images (Call them Image 2) printed or digital
  - I suggest finding the images taken from exactly the same location, showing the before and after of a hurricane or major storm.
- Technology used to research for every 2 students
- Dry erase markers
- White board
- Random Grouping Document

### **Goals/objectives.**

- Critique a photograph with partner, really observing the image, scene, and what is going on.
- List adjectives to describe what is seen.
- List what the image needs.
- List emotional responses to this image.
- Search and add synonyms to further the lists of descriptors.
- Collaborate lists on the white board.
- Participate in the class discussion.
- Complete and turn in the Write-out.

### **Vocabulary.**

- Adjective: A describing word, that names or lists attributes of a noun.
- Synonym: A word that means nearly the same thing as another word.
- Antonym: A word that is opposite of another word by definition.
- Perspective: A point of view, an attitude or emotion toward something



- Serve: Provide for others with a product or service.

### **Soft skills.**

- Self-Evaluation
- Personal Responsibility
- Good Work Habits
- Proactive Learning
- Citizenship

### **The pitch.**

You have an image in front of you. Make three lists with your partner:

- List 1: Use adjectives to describe what you see.
- List 2: Write what is needed in this image.
- List 3: Write a list of emotions that you feel in response to the image.

After each list, research synonyms for the words you selected, and build the depth of your lists with a variety of words that fit the prompt. Do not rush, and really work to find the best words that fit prompts 1, 2, and 3. Both sides of the room are looking at the same place (do not tell them they are different images).

### **Procedures.**

- Use the Random Grouping Document to break the class up into pairs.
- Put 5-8 pairs on one side of the room and 5-8 pairs on the other side of the room, and have them turn their tables or desks to face each other.
- Each pair needs to have one piece of technology, such as a computer.
- Send, electronically, or hand-out one side of the room the Before image (Image 1), and the other side of the room the After image (Image 2). All students on left side should have the same image, and all of the students on the right side should have the same image.
- Give The Pitch.
- Write the three lists prompts on the white board.

- Allow for 4-5 minutes of work time for each pair to make their three lists, and find synonyms to further the depth of their lists.
- When finished, draw a line down the center of the white board and place a number 1 at the top of both sides of the line.
- Go around the room asking each pair for one word that describes what they saw in the image, answering prompt 1.
- Write these answers on the side of the board that the pair is in the room. For example, a pair from the left side of the room (if facing the white board), their answer would go on the left side of the line under number 1.
- After number 1, write number 2 below it on both sides, and go around the room again, having each pair share one word describing what the image needs, answering prompt 2.
- Do this a third time, writing a number 3 on each side of the line, and have each pair share one word describing what emotions they felt in response to the image, answering prompt 3.

### **Discussion.**

- Why do you think these lists are so different?
- Are you looking at the same place, if so, how? If not, why not?
  - Show the two images, side by side to the class.
- Why do we emotionally respond to these images?
- Is choosing to see another person's perspective important?
- Can we relate to what other people going through if we put ourselves in their place?
- When does that relate to the work world?
- Examples: Customer having a bad day, boss not seeing the work that is being completed, disputes among co-workers, etc.

### **Write-out.**

In 3-5 sentences, give an example (without naming) of a person whose perspective is much different than your own, and explain what challenges they may face on a day to day basis.

### **Assessment.**

Refer to the Soft Skill Rubrics

## **Lesson 9: Blind Contour**

### **Materials.**

- A variety of small objects, such as matchbox cars, sea shells, plastic food, etc.
- Drawing paper
- Pencils
- Drawing boards
- Timer
- Sticky notes or small pieces of paper, enough for each student to have 3-5
- Soft Skills Rubric

### **Goals/objectives.**

- Choose one object from the variety of small objects.
- Create three blind contour drawings of the same object, on one page.
- Place paper in a visible location in the classroom.
- Walk around observing sketches, and guessing what the objects were being drawn with a sticky note.
- Participate in the class discussion, verbally and nonverbally engaged.

### **Vocabulary.**

- Blind Drawing: Creating a drawing in which the artist is looking at the object, and blind to the paper they are drawing on.
- Contour: The outline of an object, the simplest lines that create an object
- Critique: Evaluating art works critically

### **Soft skills.**

- Self-Evaluation
- Personal Responsibility

- Good Work Habits
- People Skills
- Proactive Learning
- Respect for Context
- Citizenship

### **The pitch.**

I will walk around the room with a bag of small objects to draw. You will choose one object, and try not to show this off to the class or your neighbors. You will draw this object three times on your sketch paper, however these drawings will be blind contour drawings. This means that you will be looking at the object, and drawing it far off to the side on your sketch paper. That way, you are unable to see the paper while you are drawing, making your eyes focus on the details of the object instead of the drawing itself. (Demonstrate how to set up the drawing board and sketch paper so that you can't see it but can draw on it). You will have two minutes to draw your object, aware of every line, shape, crease, curve, and texture. Try not to lift the pencil off the paper once you begin drawing. If you finish the object before the timer goes off, start over and continue drawing the object. We will do three rounds of blind contour drawing, so prepare for three locations on the paper to have these drawings.

### **Procedures.**

- Have your students get out a pencil, piece of sketch paper, and find a drawing board.
- Allow them to find a spot to sit around the classroom, but not close to anyone else. They may choose to stay in their seats.
- Give The Pitch.
- Walk around the room with the bag of small objects. Try not to let everyone see what object each student receives.
- Have students get situated to blind contour draw.
- Start the timer for two minutes, and have them stop when the timer goes off.
- Do three blind contour drawings on the paper. If there isn't room, the drawings may overlap.
- When completed, walk to each student and have them place their object in the bag.
- Have each student lightly write their name on the back of the paper, and place it in an open

and visible spot in the room, but not at their seat. We want these drawings to be relatively anonymous.

- Pass out 3-5 sticky notes or small pieces of paper to each student.
- Instruct them to go around the room and place their sticky note on a drawing guessing what the object being drawn was. They may be creative with this, yet their answers must be appropriate.
- If a drawing already has five notes, find another drawing to leave a guessing note on. That way, all of the drawings will have a number of ideas, not just a select few.
- When a student has finished their sticky notes, have them return to their seats.
- Once all students are finished with their guesses, have them find and collect their sketches with the guesses on them, and bring them back to their seats.

**Discussion.**

- What are some of the guesses that surprised you with your sketches?
- Did anyone guess correctly?
- What was fun about this activity?
- Do you like getting feedback on work that you have done?
- Is feedback a reflection on the work or the person who created the work?
- Is it easier to give positive or negative feedback?

**Assessment.**

Refer to the Soft Skill Rubrics

## **Lesson 10: Sculpt, Draw, Paint, Cut Trivia**

### **Materials.**

- 5-6 yard sticks or 3' dowels with a paintbrush taped to the end
- Tray or pan of water color paint
- 3 pieces of large white drawing paper (24" x 36")
- Play dough (4-5 small tubs)
- 5-6 Scissors
- 10 pieces of colored paper
- Sketch paper
- Markers
- 3"x5" card or paper with one the material type listed on the back
  - Play Dough
  - Large Paint Brushes
  - Scissors and Colored Paper
  - Markers and Sketch Paper
- Timer
- Random Grouping Document
- Soft Skills Rubric

### **Goals/objectives.**

- Positively interact with teammates.
- Use group material to answer and solve the trivia questions.
- Follow the speaking directions of the activity.
- Respond to consequences positively.
- Clean up location of the room and materials after the activity is completed.
- Participate in class discussion.
- Complete and turn in Write-out.

- Self evaluate on the soft skills selected by the teacher.

### **Vocabulary.**

- Shape: A line that encloses an area.
- Line: A straight or curved length, beginning with and ending with a point.
- 2 Dimensional: Having length and width, but no depth.
- 3 Dimensional: An object with length, width, and depth.
- Consequence: A result or action given, due to an action taken.
- Fair: In accordance with rules or regulations, without unjust advantages.

### **Soft skills.**

- Self-Evaluation
- Positive Attitude
- Good Work Habits
- Problem Solving
- Decision Making
- Respect for Context
- Service
- Teamwork

### **The pitch.**

I will be asking you a variety of questions. In order to answer these questions, you must use the materials you have to work through the question as I ask it. You may not speak. You may not speak to your teammates, you may not ask questions, you must be absolutely silent. You must simply draw, cut, paint, or sculpt the answers to the questions, and as a group decide the correct answer, without a single spoken word. I will walk around during and after each question and write down your answers. If you choose to speak, someone in your group will be given a consequence for that action. Although you will each be using your material to answer the questions, you must collaboratively decide on one group answer. You may point, or motion toward an answer, and if you need to further explain why an answer is correct, you must draw,

cut, paint, or sculpt that reasoning. When I come around to get your answers, I need to see the word answer in addition to the object or shape.

### **Procedures.**

- Break up the class into groups of about five students using the Random Grouping Document.
- Have each group meet together around a table or group of desks, and allow them one minute to choose a team name.
- Start the timer for one minute, and when it goes off, write down the team names on a piece of paper. Allow a bit of space between each team name as you will use this paper to write down their answers for each of the trivia questions.
- Each group must send up a representative to pick a 3"x5" card. Fan these cards like a deck of cards with the written material facing downward, so that they are blindly selecting.
- Give each group their sole material that was selected on the card the representative chose.
- Give the groups about one minute to get situated with their materials.
- Read The Pitch to your class.
- Once directions are read and understood, begin with the Trivia Questions:
  1. I can be straight or curvy, I have no surface area, I begin and end, what am I?  
ANSWER: Line
  2. I am a two dimensional shape, I have no straight lines, what am I?  
ANSWER: Circle or Organic Shape
  3. I am two dimensional, I have 2 pairs of parallel sides, yet all my sides are not equal, and I have no right angles, what am I?  
ANSWER: Parallelogram
  4. I am a three dimensional shape, I have six identical faces, each face is a square, what am I?  
ANSWER: Cube
  5. I am a three dimensional shape, my top and bottom faces are circles, what am I?  
ANSWER: Cylinder
  6. I am a three dimensional shape, I have no edges, I have no corners, what am I?  
ANSWER: Sphere
  7. I am two dimensional, I have two pairs of parallel sides, yet my sides are not all equal, I



have four right angles, what am I?

ANSWER: Rectangle

- As you are asking the trivia questions, if you hear any sort of speaking, stop and give a consequence to one person in that group. The consequence should be given to a member of the group, but not the person who spoke.
- Once completed, each group is in charge of returning and cleaning materials and surfaces they worked on.

### **Consequence suggestions.**

- Stand on one foot for the remainder of the trivia questions.
- You must use your non-dominant hand in creating answers to the remainder of the trivia questions.
- Close one eye for the remainder of the trivia questions.
- You must sit crisscross on the floor while you work for the remainder of the trivia questions.

### **Discussion.**

- What was challenging about this activity?
- Were spoken words necessary to complete this activity? Do we often speak unnecessary words?
- Was it fair to give the consequence to a group member who didn't speak? Why would I do that?
- Have you ever been treated unfairly, and if so, what did that feel like?
- Were you disappointed with the material your group was given?
- Were materials dispersed fairly?
- Does fair mean that everyone gets an equal chance at using materials, or trying something new?

### **Write-out.**

In 3-5 sentences respond to this question:

When things are unfair, what choices do you have and how can you respond?

### **Assessment.**

Refer to Soft Skill Rubrics

## **Lesson 11: Reverse Pic-tionary**

### **Materials.**

- White board
- Dry erase markers
- List of words for groups to draw printed, cut into strips, and folded in half
- Basket with word papers
- Discard basket or waste baskets between the rows
- Random Grouping Document
- Soft Skills Rubric

### **Goals/objectives.**

- Guide and instruct a group member in drawing the word selected, using simple shapes and locations.
- Draw what is instructed to self by another group member.
- Play the game honestly.
- Follow the rules and guidelines of the game.
- Choose and take care of word slip appropriately.
- Actively participate in the class discussion.
- Complete and turn in a Write-out.

### **Vocabulary.**

- Simplify: To make something easier to understand
- Perpendicular: At a 90-degree angle from an existing line or shape
- Parallel: Side by side, existing in a similar way
- Honest: Fairly earned, free from untruthfulness
- Cheat: Being dishonest or unfair in order to gain an advantage

**Soft skills.**

- Personal Responsibility
- Positive Attitude
- Good Work Habits
- Proactive Learning
- Problem Solving
- Decision Making
- Service
- Teamwork

**The pitch.**

You will be competing in groups to all complete a drawing task. Each person will have the opportunity to draw and give instructions. You will be divided in to three groups, and will create a line with your group facing the white board. The first person in line will get a dry erase maker, and the second person in line will get a word slip from the basket. The person with the card will instruct the person with the marker how to draw the word that is on the slip of paper. The person drawing may only guess what the word may be, they may not ask questions or try to see what is on the slip of paper. When the person drawing the word guesses what the word is, they must erase the board, and go to the back of the line. The person with the word slip discards it, and picks up the marker. The next person in line will then pick a new word slip and give drawing instructions. The drawing instructions you are allowed to give are shapes, lines, and locations. For example, if the word slip says “Football” you can instruct the person drawing to draw a circle, then draw a triangle on the left side and the right side. Then put a line across the top, with three small perpendicular lines on top of that line.

Play honestly. If you choose to cheat, there will be consequences for your group.

**Procedures.**

- Give The Pitch.

- Demonstrate how to give the person drawing one shape and location instruction at a time.
- Using the Random Groups Document, break the class up into three groups. If the groups do not have the same number of people, someone may have to draw twice to make each group equal.
- Have these groups each make their own line, facing the white board.
- Invite the first person in line step up to the white board, and pick up a dry erase marker.
- Invite the second person in line to pick a word paper slip from the basket.
- On your count, the groups may begin instructing and drawing.
- Actively watch as students instruct and draw, and if you notice cheating, such as hinting at the word answer or trying to look at other word slips in the basket, give the group a consequence.
- Whichever group finishes their line first, wins the game. You may reward the winners if you choose.
- Dismiss students back to their seats, and pick up the word slip baskets.

**Consequence suggestions.**

- Have the student giving drawing instructions stop, get a new word slip and start over.
- Stop both the person drawing and instructing and have them go to the back of their team line. They must do the whole process again, at the end.

**Discussion.**

- What was challenging about this activity?
- Did you find it more challenging to draw or instruct?
- Were your drawing skills and/or the instructor's simplifying skills equally important? Why?
- Did simplifying the image down to lines and shapes make it easier to communicate?
- Does simplifying a problem down to its key components assist in solving the problem?

**Write-out.**

Explain how it is helpful to break down a problem into its simplest form, to best communicate solutions. Give an example of a social problem, such as a disagreement between friends, and how breaking it down can help create resolution between people.

### **Assessment.**

Refer to Soft Skill Rubrics

### **Lesson 12: Lego Car Rally**

#### **Materials.**

- Legos of varying sizes and colors
- Lego wheel sets - enough for each group to have two sets of wheels
- Sketch paper
- Timer
- Random Grouping Document
- Soft Skills Rubric

#### **Goals/objectives.**

- Actively engage in building the group car/vehicle.
- Follow directions of traveling to building locations.
- Run Lead at one of the building locations.
- Actively engage when student is not Lead at a building location.
- Communicate with group throughout the activity.
- Share the creation that was constructed when that student was Lead, with the teacher.
- Participate in the class discussion.
- Complete and turn in a Write-out.

#### **Vocabulary.**

- Engineer: To design and build something.
- Build: To create or construct something new using one or many types of materials.
- Sculpt: To create something through building, shaping, molding, carving, or casting.
- Check-Out: To settle a bill, to leave, to vacate.

#### **Soft skills.**

- Self-Evaluation

- Personal Responsibility
- Positive Attitude
- Problem Solving
- Decision Making
- Respect for Context
- Service
- Teamwork

### **The pitch.**

Your group has a number of building tasks to accomplish. Your first task is to create a Lego car using the sets of wheels and Legos provided to your group. However, you may only put on one Lego at a time per person. Number 1s will start by choosing a base piece to connect the wheels. Then, number 2s can choose one Lego to put on the car, then number 3s, and so on. If you have time, you can go back through the numbers, beginning with number 1, and keep adding Lego blocks. You will have one minute to create your car, when I start the timer you may begin. (After the timer goes off) Now that you have a Lego car, you must travel throughout the classroom to the 4-5 building locations. However, the Lego car may only drive on the sketch paper provided to you, never to touch another surface. When the car is on the sketch paper, the paper may not be moving, it has to stay still. The cars wheels must always be touching the sketch paper, even when at a building location. If the cars wheels leave the sketch paper, there will be consequences for your group. As a group, decide how you will roll your car around the classroom, using the sketch paper. You may cut or tear the paper at any time. Each of the four building locations presents a problem to be solved by building with Legos. Each group member will have the chance to be the Lead Engineer Lego Builder at one of the locations. The Lead is the only person who is able to build at the specific location. You must be kind and patient with each other. The first team to accomplish all four building location problems, and roll their car on the sketch paper back to their original seats, will win the game.

### **Procedures.**

- Set up 4-5 Lego locations around the classroom, each with a pile of Legos.
- Break the class into groups of 4-5 students.

- Pass out two sets of Lego wheels, a handful of random Legos, and a piece of sketch paper to each group.
- Go around the room and give each student in the group a number 1-4/5.
- Give The Pitch.
- Set the timer for one minute, and walk around while groups are building their cars.
- Finish giving The Pitch, and instruct groups to roll their car to their first Lego location.
- Walk around the room to observe how groups are working together, and how they are communicating with each other.
- Watch closely to make sure each groups car stays on a piece of sketch paper at all times. If it leaves the sketch surface, give that group a consequence.
- Once the groups are finished with the Lego building locations, and back at their original group table, have each student stand by the Lego creation that they were Lead on.
- Walk around the room and make sure that the Lego creations follow the guidelines of the Building Location.
- Have the students leave the Legos and creations at each location and then find their seats. Note that if you send them back to their seats with Legos, they will be distracted during the discussion.

**Building location problem examples.**

1. Create a bridge using Legos, that spans a gap somewhere in the classroom. Your bridge must use a minimum of ten Legos. You may not create a gap, choose an existing gap.
2. A lower cabinet needs a vertical support beam, so that it won't come crashing down. Create a beam that can assist in holding the weight of the cabinet, that will stand on its own. Use a minimum of ten Legos.
3. Build a fake piece of fruit out of 8-15 Legos.
4. Build a cube shaped house for a quarter. There must be a doorway that the quarter can fit through.
5. Build a vehicle, other than an automobile or car. It does not have to have a motor to be considered a vehicle, you may be creative with your vehicle choice. Use a minimum of fifteen Legos.
6. Build one piece of playground equipment using a minimum of fifteen Legos.

**Discussion.**

- What did you find challenging about this activity?
- What is challenging about having quite a few directions and instructions to follow?
- What would've happened if you didn't communicate with your group?
- What did it feel like when you were Lead at a building location?
- What did it feel like when you weren't Lead at a building location?
- How could you have helped your team when you weren't Lead? And did you choose to do that or did you choose to check-out?
- When is it permissible to mentally check-out, and no longer pay attention or participate?

**Write-out.**

Respond to this question in 3-5 sentences:

You are the Owner and Boss at a small store, your employees have tasks to accomplish daily in order to keep your store running and making profits. When and how often, if ever, is it appropriate for your employees to mentally check-out?

**Assessment.**

Refer to Soft Skill Rubrics



### ADDITIONAL LESSON DOCUMENTS

These documents are additional pieces needed for specific lesson plans. If one or more of these documents are needed for a lesson plan, they will be listed under the Materials section on the individual lesson.

## **Random Grouping Document**

Breaking the class up into random groups is important in building trust with your students. Often, students are broken up into groups intentionally, separating different talents and abilities, and ultimately are being judged on past experiences as to how hard they will work on a given assignment. Regardless of how you group students make it clear that it is random, do not think too hard on who is in each group. The students must know you are giving them all the same expectation and a clean slate, not comparing who they are to what has happened in regards to work ethic in the past. Each student has a new opportunity to prove that they can put forth effort and share worth, instead of falling into poor work habits with the personalities of other students. Most of the lesson plans call for the class to be divided into groups. Use this document as a reference to randomly assign groups within your classroom. Work to create new groups for every activity, introducing all of the students to each other through these lessons, and giving them a realm to work collaboratively together to learn each others strengths. Here are a few ways of randomly grouping students.

### **Middle name initial.**

Start with “A” and have students raise their hand and potentially share their middle name if they choose. Under the “A” write each students name who has a middle name beginning with “A”. Continue this for the whole alphabet. When finished, group the number of students you want together alphabetically, or by choosing letters and grouping them together. For example, if you are making groups of four, and the letters “C” and “J” both have two students, clump those two letters together to make a group. If a student does not have a middle name, they may choose their first or last initial instead.

### **Birthdate.**

Group students by birth month or day number. Make a list on the board either by month or day number and then circle the number of students close to each other into the number of group members you are hoping to accomplish.

### **Playing cards.**

Take a deck of playing cards and separate out what you want for groups and the number of students you have. For example, if I wanted to split the class of 20 in half randomly, I would count out 10 red cards and 10 black cards, then shuffle, and hand each student a card as I greet them at the door. Another example would be if I wanted groups of 5, I would separate out 4 hearts, 4 diamonds, 4 spades, and 4 clubs.

### **Alphabetically rearranged.**

Be aware that a great deal of the time, students are paired or grouped alphabetically, and work with those students relatively often. However, you can rearrange the alphabet by taking the roster of students in the class, and pairing or grouping them by numbers such as 1 and 10, 2 and 11, 3 and 12, and so on.

### **Colored paper squares.**

Cut the 6 colors of the rainbow (purple, blue, green, yellow, orange, red) into small squares and allow each student to pick a square as they enter the classroom. From these squares you can group the class in a variety of ways, such as warm and cool colors to split the class in half, complementary colors to separate the class into pairs, or putting all of one or two colors together. Collect these squares after the groups are made so that they can be used for grouping again in the future.

### **Color of clothing.**

This type of grouping is much more difficult because of the gray areas of clothing colors. If you glance around the room and see groupings of white, gray, black, blues, reds, etc. then it could be good day for color grouping. Choose a color such as blue, and group students by who is wearing a primarily blue shirt, sweatshirt, dress, or top. Do the same for the number of colors

you need as the number of groups necessary. If you need to group a bunch of extra bright or light colors, label them as such.

### **Creating a Culture “Tickets”**

#### **Ticket category 1.**

Turn on water, and put soap onto paintbrush bristles.

Massage soap on paintbrush bristles, then rinse.

Rinse brush again, then place the paintbrush handle down in brush cup.

Rinse water bowl in the sink, dry, and stack it near the sink.

Place artwork up on the white board or set it out in a viewable location.

#### **Ticket category 2.**

Place artwork in a well-lit location.

Find and sit in a location where you can view the artworks well.

Critically think through what you are drawn to in a particular art piece.

Share your thoughts about the specific piece, using the elements and principles of art to back your idea.

Graciously receive feedback on your own work, then collect it and continue work on it.

#### **Ticket category 3.**

Take a picture directly over top of the artwork using a camera.

Connect the camera to a school computer.

Upload the picture to your online digital portfolio.

Type the title of the art piece, and an artist statement to finalize your submission.

Turn in art piece to be graded.

### **How Well Do You Follow Directions?**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Directions: Before starting this assignment, read all of the questions carefully.

1. Write your first and last name on the line at the top of the page.
2. Underline the word “Directions” at the top of the paper.
3. Underline which one of these colors you prefer: RED BLUE YELLOW
4. Fold over the bottom right corner of this paper.
5. What is your favorite restaurant? \_\_\_\_\_
6. Select a letter of the alphabet and write it in an interesting font: \_\_\_\_\_
7. Skip over questions 8 and 9.
8. Scribble out this question and rewrite it in cursive below.
9. Do three jumping jacks.
10. Flip this paper over and draw a picture of a sail boat.
11. Find the word “scribble” on this paper, and draw a sunshine around it.
12. Fold over the top right corner of this paper.
13. Circle which one of these fruits you prefer: BANANA APPLE ORANGE
14. Write down what you like to eat at the restaurant you answered above.
15. Circle all of the even numbered questions.
16. Stand up and clap your hands twice.
17. Do ONLY problem number 1, then sit quietly in your seat. If asked what you are doing,

respond with, "I don't really want to do this."

### **Reverse Pic-tionary Words**

	Cow
Baseball	Whale
Flower	Ice Cream Cone
Sun/Sunshine	
Octopus	Pizza
Spider	Guitar
Jellyfish	Drum
Michigan	Carrot
Light Bulb	Snail
Cookie	Light House
Rolling Pin	Bow Tie
Spoon	Tea Cup
Boat	Lamp
Cloud	Pillow
Hat	Christmas Tree
Kite	Sailboat
Skateboard	Candle
Spaceship	Slide
Rainbow	Basketball Hoop
Ghost	Book

Bird	Spider Web
Eyes	Money
Cheese	Truck

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