



MEDIA ARTS PROJECT

"I am a Person of Character" *People as Metaphors*

Subject Language Arts

Grade 6

Topic Similes and Metaphors

Lesson Description

Students will investigate the mass media and the portrayal of males and females found there and compare them with their own experiences. They will make a digital collage using photographs of themselves. They will write descriptions of themselves using similes and metaphors, and include those with their digital collage. They will also use hands-on techniques to create a mass media collaged figure.

Lesson 1

- Read a passage to the class from a story or poem that uses evocative language and contains similes and metaphors.
- Ask the students to listen for similes and metaphors.
- Discuss the potential for language to reach out and engage the reader and cause all kinds of images to flow through his/her mind.
- Were there any similes in that passage? How did you identify them?
- Were there any metaphors in that passage? How did you identify them?
- Have the students get into groups of 4 and distribute photocopies of a brief passage of a story or poem that employs both similes and metaphors. Each group will get a different poem or passage to analyze.
- Have the groups find three metaphors and three similes from their passage, one of each for each student.
- Have the students record their similes and metaphors on individual pieces of paper labeled with the appropriate term.
- With the class, the teacher will read through some of the sheets from either pile to see whether or not it identifies the literary device correctly.
- Compile a list of similarities between the structures of the similes.
- Compile a list of similarities between the structures of the metaphors.
- Post this list of simile and metaphor criteria prominently in the classroom.
- Each student will create several similes and metaphors about themselves.
- To assist in creating metaphors, the students will be asked if they were an animal, which would it be. Have them repeat that process with other elements that could be used metaphorically (eg: a landform, a type of weather, earth, fire, water, air or type of plant or tree).
- Students will share their similes and metaphors in a group of three classmates. This will be the group that they will work with for the other activities in this unit.



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- As a group they will work with each other to pick out the three descriptions that best describe each of them. The final decision on the choice of the descriptive phrases or sentences to be used will be made by the individual students.

Lesson 2

- Learn how to take digital photographs concentrating on focus, composition and light exposure techniques.
- Show examples of photographs with strong images.
- Create a class list of the criteria of visual and technical elements that contribute to these strong images.
- In their small groups, students take three digital photographs of each other.
- The photographs will be close ups and concentrate on different body parts (eg. eye, mouth, ear).
- Have the students keep in mind their choices for similes and metaphors as they consider what body part to focus on for this section of the project. If they wrote the metaphor for themselves: "I am an eagle, floating far away and watching everything", the student may want an extreme close up of their eyes staring with intensity.
- Download the digital photographs onto the computers.

Lesson 3

This lesson is to take place in the computer lab.

If there are parents or high school volunteers to assist with the lesson, it would be very helpful.

- Demonstrate on the computer of how to open up **PowerPoint** (PP) and how to open up an image file.
- Demonstrate how to import digital pictures in PP and resize them.
- Demonstrate how to add an animated movement and sound effect to the image transition.
- Each of these steps will be charted so that the students can refer to the list for reference.
- Have the students sit in their small groups and open up the program PP.
- With their groups, each student will import their three digital photographs into a new presentation and resize them with one image per slide.
- Each student will collage all three of their images onto a fourth slide.

Lesson 4

This lesson is to take place in the computer lab.

- The students will work in the computer lab to finish importing and resizing their digital photographs into PP.
- Parents and high school student volunteers would again be helpful.

Lesson 5

This lesson is to take place in the computer lab.

- Show a number of PowerPoint presentations where the use of text is obviously successful.
- Lead a discussion with the students to help to create a list of elements of successful use of text with an image.



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- A visual reference chart will be created for the students to help with the addition of text to their presentations. Aspects will include visual considerations such as different fonts, colours, and sizes of type for effective design.
- Demonstrate the use of type in PP and the technical steps necessary to change the text by way of changing size, style and colour of font as well as altering the position of the text.
- The students will work in their groups to add text in the form of their similes and metaphors to their presentations and make them visually dynamic.
- Each student will add text to each of their slides in their four slide presentation. The final slide will be a collage of the three images from that one student (eg: of one set of eyes, one nose, and one mouth).
- This final slide in each student's set of images will be accompanied by the text "I am a person of character".

Lesson 6

- Prior to this lesson, spend a few weeks working with the students to develop an awareness of and sensitivity to, the portrayal of males and females in the mass media.
- You may want to have a discussion with the class prior to them bringing in their media images. This discussion could help to set some guidelines about what images are appropriate to share with the class. Within the breadth of images that are available in the mass media, there are many that may not be appropriate for this age level to use as a source for discussion. It may also be helpful if a note was sent home to advise the parents that the class will be looking at images in the media and that some sensitive issues and questions may be raised. If there is an equity department with the school board, they may have some suggestions for handling sensitive issues such as these. All of these steps would be up to the discretion of the teacher.
- Have the students bring in visual examples of men and women as they are shown in the media.
- Have class discussions about the various ways in which both genders are portrayed.
- Begin a list of different gender stereotypes as they are presented in the media.
- For today's lesson, bring magazines and/or other examples of visual media with and without text, such as posters, newspapers, book covers.
- Bring photocopies of a magazine cover that has had the text covered up.
- Introduce the term and idea of mass media and discuss its role in our daily life.
- Discuss examples of different forms of media (i.e. television, magazines and the Internet, as well as its history, and its role in the arts as communication).
- Lead a discussion where you talk about the questions:
What is gender? What is a stereotype? How are both used in media? What effect does gender have on how we read an advertisement? Do you believe that the media provides an accurate view of people in society?
- Discuss the positive and negative effects of media, specifically the portrayal of males and females within it.
- Look at words used in media and begin creating a vocabulary list. How do these words sell the image?
- Create words different in meaning to replace the text in conjunction with an example image. How does this affect your perception on the image? How does this create a story? Does the story change with different adjectives?



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- Show some examples of magazine collage and how this technique can be effective to both use the mass media as well as critique it.
- In the examples, point out the different ways in which the images in the media are used in a collage to express a particular view, some possible approaches could be:
 - reinforcement of the gender stereotypes
 - who is considered beautiful
 - pointing out the inherent weaknesses in that form of imagery
 - showing two contrasting views of the gender
 - showing positive views of gender independent of the stereotype
- Have the students work in their groups of three.
- Craft paper is laid out to accommodate slightly more than the head and shoulders length of a student. One student has their head and shoulders traced in outline onto the paper.
- Each group creates a 'collage person' with images cut out from magazines and other forms of media.
- Encourage the students to create a visual message that is clear. They should choose a theme that is relative to who they are and how they perceive the world. The images should represent a certain point of view.
- Each group also writes or paints and collages adjectives around their mass media images from their newly created vocabulary lists. These words should best describe the images they have just collaged on the paper.
- The words should promote a more in depth look at the images in the collage.
- Hang the completed collages around the class so that everyone can see the creations and be able to reflect on them.
- Have a class discussion about the various collages. Encourage students to verbalize their thoughts and observations.
- Have the students reflect on the power of the words that accompany the collage. How does the use of text, change or enhance the meaning of the collage? Describe the role that the text plays in relation to the images.

Lesson 7

This lesson is to take place in the computer lab.

- Have the students help to compile a list of things to strive for in making an oral presentation.
- During the available time in the class and in subsequent classes before the presentation, the students can practice their presentation with each other in small groups.
- The presentations can include a reading of the similes and metaphors by each student. They can also have a brief reflection on how their PP presentation is different from the gender stereotype presented in the media.
- Working to present their work in the small groups gives them an opportunity to practice presenting as well as working through the process of their thoughts on the gender in mass media topic and how it relates to them.
- Review the methods for changing the text in the PP document.
- Have the students comment and share any technical or visual solutions to composing their images and text together.



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- Allow time to finish off their PP presentations and further development of the text manipulation to completion.

Lesson 8

This lesson will take place in the computer lab.

- Put the collages up on the walls of the computer lab in a way that will allow them to be easily seen.
- The class will watch every presentation.
- At the end of each presentation the students in that group will then use sticky tape to place the printed digital collage on the mass media collages.
- At the end of each presentation, the class will discuss what was just presented.
- Help the class in the assessment of the presentations by asking questions to get past a surface response of whether the group liked the presentation or not.
- Ask questions such as:
 - What most sticks out in your mind from the presentation?
 - What use of language changed or expanded your way of thinking about the use of simile and metaphor?
 - What parts of the presentations opened up your way of thinking about the way that males and females can be shown in our culture?
 - Do you see the presentations that you have created as different than the way that males and females are normally presented in the media? If so, how?
 - What can we do in our society to allow the positive perspectives on the different genders and of ourselves to come forward?

Lesson 9

- Lead a discussion assessing the project and the creation the electronic collages using metaphor and similes.
- Pose questions similar to these:
 - Which one was more interesting to create, the electronic or the cut and paste one?
 - Which one was more challenging to create?
- The teacher will lead a discussion on the positive and negative effects of media targeting specifically to their age group and the portrayal of males and females.

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