



The  
Teach**Able**  
Project

## Lesson Plan



Grade 8:  
Smell/Feel/Hear

**Smell the Letters, Feel the Sounds,  
Hear the Colours**

**An Art Lesson about Synaesthesia  
for Grade 8 Students**



## Lesson Summary

Students will plan and create a piece of artwork and then reflect upon their creation. Through discussion, readings and cross-curricular activities based on the book *A Mango Shaped Space*, students will come to understand the challenges and gifts faced by a student with synaesthesia. They will have opportunities to develop a different outlook on thoughts and perspectives of persons with disabilities. Synaesthesia is an invisible disability which presents its own set of 'invisible' gifts and challenges.

Please see the **Accessibility+** hub for more information related to this lesson.

## Connections to Accessibility Awareness – The Big Ideas

The following accessibility messages are addressed in the activities in this lesson:

- Empathy for others and respect for the dignity of all persons are essential characteristics of an inclusive classroom, school and society.
- Some disabilities are visible. Some are invisible.
- Accessibility is defined as that which enables people to achieve their full potential.
- Students need to learn about different disabilities and understand the challenges of living with disability.
- This learning must be informed by and understanding that every person has unique gifts to share and a contribution to make.

## Important Considerations for Program Planning

In keeping with the inclusive tenets of accessibility and best teaching practices, lessons and instruction must provide a continuum of supports for all students, including those with accessibility considerations and/or special education needs. The front matter of all revised curriculum policy documents highlights elements to consider in planning classroom lessons and instruction, including Universal Design, differentiated instruction, equity and inclusive education, the perspective of First Nation, Métis and Inuit people, meeting the needs of English language learners and of students with special education needs. Please see the **Accessibility+** hub for more information.

## Community Connections

Connections with parents, members of the broader school community, agencies and institutions, social services, community organizations, corporations, and local businesses provide important opportunities for supporting accessibility awareness for students.

Community partners can be an important resource in students' learning as volunteers, mentors, guest speakers, participants in the school's accessibility events or models of accessibility awareness in the life of the community. Modelling and mentoring can enrich not only the educational experience of students but also the life of the community.



Schools should ensure that partnerships are nurtured within the context of strong educational objectives. If the disability of a particular child is the topic of a lesson, it is important to discuss that lesson with the child, if appropriate, and his or her parents so that planning can be respectful and strengths-based in perspective.

## Curriculum Document(s)/Grade

*The Ontario Curriculum, Grades 1-8: Language, 2006 (revised) Grade 8*

*The Ontario Curriculum, Grades 1-8: The Arts, 2009 (revised) Grade 8*

## Curriculum Expectations

(as stated in the Ontario curriculum documents)

### Language

By the end of Grade 8, students will:

#### ORAL COMMUNICATION:

2. use speaking skills and strategies appropriately to communicate with different audiences for a variety of purposes

#### WRITING:

1. generate, gather, and organize ideas and information to write for an intended purpose and audience.

#### READING:

1. read and demonstrate an understanding of a variety of literary, graphic, and informational texts, using a range of strategies to construct meaning.

### Visual Arts

By the end of Grade 8, students will:

#### D2. REFLECTING, RESPONDING AND ANALYZING:

apply the critical analysis process to communicate feelings, ideas, and understanding in response to a variety of art works and art experiences

## Instructional Components and Context

### Learning Goals

Students and the teacher will work together to create Learning Goals in student friendly language that are connected to the curriculum expectations. Co-created Learning Goals should be posted in the classroom for reference. Please see the Glossary in the

**Accessibility+** hub for more information.



## Success Criteria

Success Criteria for each lesson will be developed by the teacher and the class based on the curriculum expectations, the students' ability to demonstrate knowledge of content, use critical thinking processes, to make connections and personal knowledge or experience according to the nature of the activity. Co-created Success Criteria should be posted in the classroom for reference.

Please see the Glossary in the **Accessibility+** hub for more information.

## Differentiated Instruction and Assessment

Please refer to *Learning for All: A Guide to Effective Assessment and Instruction for All Students, Kindergarten to Grade 12* for more information about differentiated instruction and assessment practices.

## Readiness

Students should have prior experience with:

- Co-creating Success Criteria and Learning Goals
- Literature circles (See Literature Circles User Guide at [http://www.eworkshop.on.ca/edu/pdf/Mod17\\_lit\\_circ\\_user\\_guide.pdf](http://www.eworkshop.on.ca/edu/pdf/Mod17_lit_circ_user_guide.pdf) for more information.)
- Response journals
- Viewing works of art
- Using art materials appropriately
- Working independently and in groups
- Elements and principles of design (see the Glossary in the **Accessibility+** hub for more information)

Before beginning this lesson, students should be part way through the book *A Mango Shaped Space* by Wendy Mass.

## Terminology

Attitudinal barrier, empathy, neurologic, neurology, sensations, sensory, synaesthete, synaesthesia

This terminology should be discussed and understood to help students meet the expectations of these lessons. These and other words that come up in discussion should be posted in the classroom for reference.



## Materials and Equipment

Class set of the book *A Mango Shaped Space* by Wendy Mass, published 2005 by Little, Brown Books for Young Readers

Large size paper (at least 11x17)

Slide or picture of Wassily Kandinsky's work – *Yellow Red Blue* which can be found at [http://gogeometry.com/geometric\\_art/wassily\\_kandinsky\\_yellow\\_red\\_blue\\_golden\\_rectangle.html](http://gogeometry.com/geometric_art/wassily_kandinsky_yellow_red_blue_golden_rectangle.html)

Hand out Appendix A – Colour in the Key of C#

Art supplies, including fine black markers, paint (tempera or acrylic), paint brushes (class set/ various sizes), paint trays/ palettes, rinsing cups with water, rulers, pencils

Various scented extracts (coconut, mint, banana, lavender)

Video on synaesthesia <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lzRcJ8C6SL0> which highlights research on synaesthesia being conducted at the University of Waterloo. There is a site under construction on the research on synaesthesia that is going on there at <http://www.synaesthesia.uwaterloo.ca>.

Please see the **Accessibility+** hub for additional information and resources related to this unit.

## Minds On

### **Whole Class** ⇄ **Considering Colour, Sight, Smell, Sound and Taste, Visualization, Think Aloud,**

- Activate prior knowledge from the text *A Mango Shaped Space* about synaesthesia, its definition, what one might experience by trying to relate to the experiences to those of the main character.
- Ask if anyone in the class has ever had these types of experiences or knows of someone who has. Consider how a person might feel if they had these experiences - would they readily tell their peers? Why or why not? What do you think they might be afraid of?
- What does the phrase “attitudinal barrier” mean to you? Can you give some examples of attitudinal barriers you have observed or experiences? Do you think it is important to challenge attitudinal barriers? Why or why not? How are empathy and respect related to attitudinal change?
- Hand out **Appendix A** (note on Kandinsky) and discuss what is seen in the slide. What do you notice when you look at the composition? What do you feel when you look at the composition? What might you hear? Smell? Taste?
- Develop the learning goals with students.



## Action

### **Whole Class** ⇨ **Considering Colour, Sight, Smell, Sound and Taste,**

1. Have a few students hand out materials. Ask the class to think about which extracts to mix into the paints. In small groups, ask students to choose what colour will be mixed with what scent. (orange with peppermint, purple with vanilla, for example) Questions: What does it feel like to see a colour and smell a scent? What it would feel like if you always smelled a scent when you saw a colour?
2. Students will begin by drawing out a composition in pencil using a variety of shapes and lines. Once their composition is drawn, they will add in colour with paint. Encourage them to think about the scent of the colour and the shape or area they are applying it to.
3. Add background music and ask students if they can relate what they are hearing and smelling to what they are creating and seeing on their paper.
4. Once students are finished and the composition is completely dry, students can go back and add lines with the black marker to strengthen their composition visually.

## Assessment

**Assessment for Learning:** Are students able to attend and listen to information and instructions shared orally by the teacher? Can students use the tools provided to complete the task in a safe and appropriate fashion? Do students understand the elements and principles of design? Do some students need support in order to complete this activity?

**Assessment as Learning:** How are the students working in their group? Are they considering the critical and creative process when creating their work? Are they including both the elements and principles of design in their painting? Are they able to explain why they chose a specific scent and/or colour for a particular element of their work?

## Consolidation

Using probing questions, try to elicit the key ideas related to the Accessibility Awareness statements for this unit:

- Empathy for others and respect for the dignity of all persons are essential characteristics of an inclusive classroom, school and society.
- Some disabilities are visible. Some are invisible.
- Accessibility is defined as that which enables people to achieve their full potential.
- Students need to learn about different disabilities and understand the challenges of living with disability.
- This learning must be informed by and understanding that every person has unique gifts to share and a contribution to make.



As another consolidation activity and to promote metacognition, ask students to write a short paragraph describing their artwork and the experience of creating it. Guiding questions for students could include:

- Why did you choose a particular scent and colour for different parts of your painting?
- How did you decide what elements and principles of design to incorporate?
- Did the addition of music affect your choices (if applicable), and if so, how?

## Teacher Reflection

Did I incorporate student friendly teaching strategies that support best practices that incorporate accessible methods and materials to reach as many students as possible?

Are the resources I selected appropriate for the grade level and varied to meet the needs of all my students?

If the resources I selected presented aspects of accessibility awareness, was the perspective strength based?

Did I use differentiated instruction and assessment to meet the varying learning styles of my students?

Were all my students engaged at all steps of the lesson? How do I know?

Were my assessment procedures fair and equitable? Have I demonstrated best practices and met the individual needs of my students? Have I accommodated in fair and equitable ways for students with special learning needs?

How do I ensure that the concept of accessibility is not only discussed but embedded in all conversation topics taught in the classroom?

How could this lesson be improved in the future?

How can I improve my own teaching practice to better address accessibility awareness issues?

How do I help promote accessibility awareness across my school and school board and share the results with parents and colleagues?



## Appendix A

### Colour in the Key of C#

Wassily Kandinsky, a Russian artist, is known for his abstract art. It is unknown if Kandinsky had synaesthesia but he said that as a child he remembered hearing a sort of hissing noise from his paint box as he mixed his colours. Much like those with synaesthesia, when they hear a single music note, like a C sharp for example, they envision a hue of red. Kandinsky noted that hearing a cello brought to mind the darkest of blues. Although Kandinsky may not have had synaesthesia, he was able to create works of art which were vibrant and replicate a truly synaesthetic experience.



Kandinsky, W  
*Yellow Red Blue*  
1925

Notes: