

Lesson #23 Reinventing the Rainbow

Grade Level: K-3

Description/Objective

Students work in watercolor using lines other than a curve to reinvent the rainbow. During this process they gain an understanding of the variety of lines artists use in their artwork. They also learn that by varying the pressure on the brush they can change the width of the line.

Time

45 minutes - 1 hour

Materials

18" x 24" (or larger) piece of paper and black marker for teacher demonstration

Art prints by artists that use line in their work. Van Gogh, Paul Klee, Alexander Calder and Piet Mondrian are good choices. (Prints available at public library.)

9" x 12" white kid surface vellum bristol paper (1 per student)

Watercolor paints - 8 or 16 color Prang or Crayola brand best (2-3 students can share 1 set if necessary.)

#10 or #12 round watercolor brushes (1 per student)

Water containers (baby food jars)

3/4" drafting tape for border on edge of paper (1-2 rolls, 60 yd.) OPTIONAL

Procedure

1. Optional - Teacher or older students should tape border before start of activity and carefully and slowly "untape" after work is dry to create white border.
2. Gather students together around the large sheet of paper. The paper should be taped to the wall or chalkboard in a place easily visible to the students.
3. Using the marker, demonstrate the following different kinds of lines - wavy, zig zag, dotted, broken, spiral, curved and straight. Discuss how a line can change direction, being vertical, horizontal, or diagonal. Discuss how lines differ in width - some thin, some thick or a combination of both.
4. Have students observe each others clothes, the classroom furniture and bulletin board displays looking for examples of the above lines.
5. Show students art prints of artists such as Van Gogh, Alexander Calder and Piet Mondrian asking them to identify the different kinds of lines they see.
6. Demonstrate how lines can be painted in watercolor. Show the students that by varying the pressure on the brush, the width of the line varies.
7. Students are asked to choose 3 lines from the original demonstration (for example straight, spiral, wavy). Using these 3 lines and the entire paper, they will use watercolor paints to create

a new kind of rainbow. A thin white line should be left between each watercolor line. Suggest to students that they include lines of varying width.

Subject Matter Integration

SCIENCE: Prior to painting their rainbows students can study what atmospheric conditions create rainbows.

SPELLING: Upon completion of the painting, the words describing lines such as diagonal, curved, straight etc. can be assigned as spelling words.

HISTORY: Explore the life and time of each artist mentioned.

Variations/Extensions

1. Students can work with the same concepts and materials, but do their painting on wet paper with wet paint ("wet-on-wet" watercolor).
2. Using magazine pictures, students create a collage based on one kind of line (for example pictures with only wavy lines are chosen as part of the collage).