

Lesson Plan adapted from Christine Phillips, Newton, MA Public Schools
Annotations by Lois Hetland and Diane Jaquith

Phillips, Hetland,
and Jaquith © 2018

Once a goal is formulated, teachers categorize it using the studio habits. They may go back and forth iteratively between the goal and habits to align goals and habits.

Description of the lesson: Third graders consider how artist Jen Stark advances new ideas in her work, through the lens of the stretch and explore studio habit. Looking at Stark's works, they consider the "stretch" questions that she asked herself. The leading question, "What if I...(change something)?" is one they can ask themselves while working.

To do that, teachers often start developing goals intuitively with understanding based on their expertise as artists.

Materials Required: Open studio centers (drawing, collage, painting, 3-D), powerpoint of images, artist Jen Stark

Throughlines and goals work together to build understanding. Goals are the feeder streams that push nutritious ideas into the main rivers. It is critical that lesson goals align with one or more throughlines.

Essential Questions/Throughlines¹:

1. Where do artists get ideas?
2. How do artists make their best work?
3. How do I get an idea for art?
4. How do I do my best work?

Big Idea

Artists get ideas and refine their work by exploring playfully. One way to explore is to ask yourself "What if I...?" questions.

Understanding Goals³

1. **What are we learning?** Artists discover new ideas by exploring. They ask themselves, "What if I...?" (S&E, Env, UAW)
2. **Why are we learning this?** You can discover new ideas for your artwork. (S&E, Env)
3. **How are we learning it?** Ask yourself, "What if I...?" questions. (S&E)

Once a goal is formulated, teachers can categorize it using studio habits. Often, they will need to go back and forth iteratively between the goal and the habits they fall within to align goals and habits.

Many teachers set overarching themes or questions to guide curriculum. These are meant to link the direct learning experiences students have to the larger ideas they are meant to develop.

Studio Habits Emphasized: Stretch and Explore, Envision, Understand Art Worlds

Related National Core Arts Standards: VA:Cr1.1.4a, VA:Re7.1.3a

Message⁴ (written on a poster in the meeting area)

Hello Excited Explorers,

Artists get ideas for their artworks by stretching beyond what they know to explore. Today's studio habit is called Stretch and Explore. One way to explore is to ask yourself "What if I...?" questions. We will look at artist Jen Stark's work. Her question is "What if I change a rainbow?" Let's look together for ways she changed a rainbow.

☺ Ms. Phillips

Unless studio habits match the goals, teachers will have trouble assessing how well students are developing dispositions and their elements (skill, inclination, and alertness).

Instructional Sequence

Transition (2 min.): Meet in the hallway and direct students to the meeting area. Tell students how well they met the expectations of how to enter the studio and ways to improve next time.

Teacher-at-the-Center (7 min.): Ask a student volunteer to read the message out loud. Show images of artist Jen Stark. (Sculpture, Drawing, and Animation).

Discussion prompts: Use a *What if I...?* starter to describe how the artist changed a rainbow. (Chart paper with the question, "What if I...?" at the top, add students' responses under the heading.) *What if I ...*

- *change the shape?*
- *change the color?*
- *change it from 2-D to 3-D?*
- *make it move?*
- *make it big?*
- *make it tiny?*

Why would the artist change a rainbow? (Watch for and/or add these reasons)

- *To make it more challenging for her*
- *To make it different from what other people do*
- *To make it different from what people think a rainbow should be so they'll look more*

Why are we talking about ways to change artworks? Explain how using "What if I..." questions as you work help you get unstuck, imagine new possibilities, come up with new ideas, and avoid doing it like everyone else.

Try using "What if I..." questions today as you work. Ask yourself, "What if I.... make it bigger, smaller, different colors, make it move, add collage..."

Ongoing Assessment

Assessing Studio Practice: Teacher observes students to gauge their energy and see how they arrive at the art room.

3 High: Come in quietly, sit, wait, with no reminders

2 Middle: Come in quietly, sit, wait, with a few reminders

1 Low: Many reminders to come in quietly, sit, and wait

Assessing Teacher-at-the-Center: In Teacher-at-the-Center times, teachers can assess how clearly they presented information and directions, but assessment of student learning is minimal. Teachers can get some idea of their clarity and of who understands the directions with "dip-sticking"⁵ methods:

- Thumbs up, thumbs down
- Five-finger hand (1-5 fingers raised)
- Confused or excited faces
- Listening as students Turn and Talk
- Listening to the questions and comments students ask (or don't).

Students-at-Work

Assessing Stretch & Explore

3 High: Students spontaneously ask *What if I...?* questions and respond to them in their work, and post new questions on the wall chart.

2 Middle: Students respond when prompted with *What if I* questions, sometimes respond in their work, and post questions when reminded.

1 Low: Students need teacher support to form *What if I...?* questions and ways to respond in their work.

Phillips, Hetland, and Jaquith © 2018

The third link in the essential gears that hold learning together (along with goals and experiences) is ongoing assessment. Ongoing assessment includes check points that teachers and students use in the process of learning and help students and teachers see what's making sense and what isn't yet.

In this example, we have described three levels of learning for each part of the sequence. 3 is High, 2 is Middle, and 1 is Low. We describe a generic way to think about the levels in call-outs below.

The instructional sequence is organized by a series of studio structures. Studio structures serve to "chunk" the fragments of the lesson into a coherent and understandable whole. The structures are often scaffolded with prompts that make a mini-script.

Because students show understanding best through what they make, do, and say, TatC sessions offer little time to talk and often no doing or making. As a result, most assessment for what is presented in TatC sessions shows during the Students-at-Work sessions that follow.

For all Studio Habits of Mind, Low levels show in the following ways: Students' skills are minimal and they show little, if any, inclination to use them (motivation) and seem to lack awareness of when to do so. Consequently, they get less practice than they need to improve all three dispositional elements, and teachers need to intervene strategically.

Students at Work (35 min.): Students move to a studio center to continue with their ongoing projects.

Every 10 minutes during the SaW period, the teacher prompts them to practice asking “What if I...” questions.

Teacher circulates to students at different centers. She listens for “what if I...?” questions and affirms them when she hears them. If she doesn’t, she asks:

“Which “What if I...?” question could help you now?”

“Does someone at this table have a “What if I...?” question for _____?”

“I wonder what would happen if you asked, “What if I... (suggest an idea to the student)?”

“What did Jen Stark do to change her rainbow? Could you ask a “What if I...?” question about that?”

When students ask a “What if I...” question that isn’t on the wall chart, they post it using a stickie note.

Clean-up Transition (4 min):

Students follow established routines to put away their artwork, materials, and tools, and to prepare work areas for the next incoming class.

Assessing Envisioning

3 High: Students spontaneously describe ways their *What if I...?* questions help them imagine new ideas for their work.

2 Middle: Students respond to *What if I...?* questions by revising their work.

1 Low: Even when students ask *What if I...?* questions, they cannot respond by revising their works.

Assessing Understand Art Worlds

3 High: Students refer to Jen Stark’s model as they frame new *What if I...?* questions.

2 Middle: Students use Jen Stark’s model to frame *What if I...?* questions.

1 Low: Students need teachers to remind them about Jen Stark’s model questions.

Assessing Studio Practice: Teacher observes students’ responsibility in cleaning the art room.

3 High: Spontaneously follow cleanup routines and help others when they finish.

2 Middle: Follow cleanup routines when announced

1 Low: Need many reminders to stop work and cleanup and may be unable to complete cleanup tasks.

For all studio habits, High levels show in the following ways: Students show high-level skills and strong inclination (motivation to use skills) and alertness (awareness of when to use skills). All three dispositional elements improve rapidly as a result.

For all studio habits, Middle levels show in the following ways: Students can use medium or high-level skills when prompted, but initially they show little independent inclination (motivation to use the skills) or alertness (awareness of when to use skills). All three dispositional elements increase over time and with practice.

<p>Talking about Art (3 minutes): Teacher reads the chart out loud at the end of class: <i>Look at all the ways we stretched and explored today! We asked all these questions.</i> (Ask students to read them). <i>Can someone tell us how a What if I...? question helped you make your artwork today?</i></p> <p>OR Teacher posts a reflection prompt on the board. <i>Turn and ask a neighbor:</i> <i>What "What if I" questions did you use today?</i> <i>What did you do after that?</i></p> <p>Students talk or write to describe the <i>What if I...?</i> questions they asked and what they did next.</p>	<p>Assessing Talking about Art: Notice the level of engagement shown by students as the suggestions are read aloud. Teacher observation/conversation with students: <i>Who can share one way that they stretched beyond what they knew to explore new ideas or ways of working?</i></p> <p>3 High: Students enthusiastically talk about ways they used <i>What if I...?</i> questions and responded by reimagining and exploring new ideas in their work. 2 Middle: Students willingly share <i>What if I...?</i> questions and, when prompted, can describe how they used them in their work. 1 Low: Students can't recall any <i>What if I...?</i> questions they asked and, when prompted with an example, cannot explain how to use it in their work.</p>
--	--

Notes

1. This lesson plan is adapted from the Teaching for Understanding Guide (Blythe et al., 1998). It is useful for clarifying thinking and showing linkages between what we ask students to do, what we intend for them to learn, and how we will check for learning through ongoing assessments. Although this format is detailed, using it regularly builds the muscle to connect goals, experiences, and assessments.
2. "Throughlines" come from the method acting theater artist, Constantin Stanislavsk. In his book, *An Actor Prepares* (1989), he describes Throughlines in a play as the main arteries that are fed by all the capillaries, with a thrust from the heart's pump to give them power. In the same way, Throughlines can be used in curriculum to guide students from the direct actions they make to the deeper understandings we want them to develop.
3. What, Why, and How questions align with the ASK Framework for the Study of Teaching and Learning as outlined in *Instruction for All Ages* (Rutherford, p.).
4. This teacher adapts Responsive Classroom practices to her lesson with a Morning Message.
5. For additional ways to prompt understanding, see *The Skillful Teacher: Building your Teaching Skills* (Saphier, Speca, & Gower, 2008)