

GRADE 1 ARTS: My Heart Fills with Happiness

Summary of Learning Opportunity

This learning opportunity was a part of a larger unit of inquiry into personal identity. Students created an artistic response to the picture book *My Heart Fills With Happiness* by Monique Gray Smith. The teacher shared examples of filled hearts and explained each item and why it was chosen. The teacher modelled the task and created a heart during a class discussion, using prompts to help students generate visual representations of ideas such as visiting the ocean. She also demonstrated adding artistic elements like line and colour, strategies like creating a pencil draft and how to use materials like permanent markers and watercolour paints. The students were very focused on this learning opportunity, spending on average 40 minutes working on the project independently. The teacher assessed the task by asking students individually to explain their chosen symbols and the reasoning behind them.

Arts
Grade 1

Learning
Standards

- Explore artistic expressions of themselves and community through creative processes
- Interpret symbols and how they can be used to express meaning through the arts
- Express feelings, ideas, stories, observations, and experiences through the arts
- Symbolism as a means of expressing specific meaning

Literacy Connections

Instruction and Assessment

Competencies Developed, Practiced and/or Assessed

LITERACY: Comprehends—
Interprets texts

1. The students responded to the picture book *My Heart Fills with Happiness* by Monique Gray Smith. The teacher shared examples of filled hearts and explained why each symbol was chosen. For example, “I drew waves, because I love the ocean and the sound of the waves washing up on the beach”; “My daughter drew an ice cream cone because her favourite thing to eat is ice cream.”

- Interpret symbols and how they can be used to express meaning through the arts

LITERACY: Develops ideas—
Generates ideas, Refines ideas

2. In a class discussion, the teacher demonstrated drawing a large heart shape and asked for suggestions of symbols to fill the heart. “Who would like to share something that fills their heart with happiness? What is something that you will draw on your own paper?” The teacher drew representations of students’ ideas using a pencil. The teacher then demonstrated how to go over the pencil draft using a permanent marker and how to use watercolour paints to add colour.

- Explore artistic expressions of themselves and community through creative processes

LITERACY: Communicates—
Expresses ideas and
information, Justifies and
defends ideas

3. The teacher visited with each child as they worked on the task, asking questions about their symbols and why they had chosen to include it in their art. The teacher assessed the students' ability to share their ideas and their explanation of the symbols' significance.

- Explore artistic expressions of themselves and community through creative processes
- Interpret symbols and how they can be used to express meaning through the arts
- Express feelings, ideas, stories, observations and experiences through the arts

Demonstration of Student Learning, Teacher Assessment and Reflection



Teacher's Observations and Assessment

This student was focused and worked independently in this task, showing growth from their levels of engagement during previous tasks. They were able to make connections to the picture book and the teacher's examples and worked independently without any prompting or support.

The student was able to clearly explain their symbols and reasoning. The student explained that their "mom and dad, sister, pepperoni pizza, Lego, PlayStation and the colour blue" were all things that filled their heart with happiness. The visual representation is clear, and the ideas are easily identifiable through their pictures. The student demonstrated proficient thinking and communication.

Teacher's Reflection

I enjoy using the Learning Pathways to assess this type of activity because I feel that they give me the freedom and the tools needed to assess learning through artifacts that are not traditional pen/paper. In Early Primary, especially at the beginning of the school year, it is challenging to accurately assess student progress, and even more difficult to share the students' learning with others (parents, administrators). The Learning Pathways are a tool that, for lack of a better wording, provide legitimacy to teachers' anecdotal observations and conversations with students as a way to assess their understanding and abilities. The student described above is not yet able to share written ideas and connections in a truly meaningful way. If I only used a writing sample to determine whether or not the student was able to connect to the story and the task, I would have missed the deep connections and the ideas that they were able to share through drawing and sharing orally. Using the Learning Pathways, I was able to use both the artwork and notes from my conversation with the student for my assessment, to show that they are proficient in responding to the book by creating their own artistic ideas.