

Lesson Title: Sculpting Letters: Inspired by Ceceilia Moseley

Grade Level: Adaptable for Upper Elementary and Middle School (Grades 4-8)

Learning Objectives:

Students will be able to:

- Understand the connection between spatial visualization and mathematical thinking.
- Identify characteristics of three-dimensional art and sculpture.
- Learn about the artistic practice of Meridian artist Ceceilia Moseley and her exploration of dyslexia through letterforms.
- Understand that dyslexia is a unique learning style that affects how individuals perceive language.
- Create an open, expressive three-dimensional sculpture of a letter.
- Discuss their creative process and the form of their letter sculpture.

Mississippi Career and College Readiness Standards Alignment:

English Language Arts:

Grade 4: CCRS.ELA.SL.4.1: Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grade 4 topics and texts, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly. (During introduction and sharing).

Grade 6: CCRS.ELA.SL.6.4: Present claims and findings, sequencing ideas logically and using pertinent descriptions, facts, details, and examples; use appropriate eye contact, adequate volume, and clear pronunciation. (Sharing their letter sculptures).

Grades 4-8: CCRS.ELA.L.4-8.6: Acquire and use accurately grade-appropriate general academic and domain-specific words and phrases; gather vocabulary knowledge when considering a word or phrase important to comprehension or expression. (Discussing sculpture, spatial visualization, dyslexia).

Mathematics:

Grade 4: CCRS.Math.4.G.A.3: Recognize a line of symmetry for a two-dimensional figure as a line across the figure such that the figure can be folded across the line into matching parts. Identify line-symmetric figures and draw lines of symmetry.(Considering symmetry in letter forms).

Grade 6: CCRS.Math.6.G.A.4: Represent three-dimensional figures using nets made up of rectangles and triangles, and use the nets to find the surface area of these figures. Apply these techniques in the context of solving real-world and mathematical problems. (Understanding the components of 3D forms, though this lesson focuses on open forms).

Mathematical Practices (Grades 4-8): MP.4 Model with mathematics. (Representing a letter in 3D). MP.5 Use appropriate tools strategically. (Using wire and paper). MP.6 Attend to precision. (Forming recognizable letters).

Background Information for Educators:

Scientists have devoted much research to the human mind's understanding of spatial visualization and reasoning. Thinking in 3D seems to correlate with being able to grasp mathematical concepts, visualize ideas, and solve complex problems.

Three-dimensional art displays height, width, and depth - visual spatial concepts that fill a physical space and can be viewed from all sides and angles. Two-dimensional works of art - paintings and drawings — are observed only in terms of height and width.

When modeling a 3D object, a designer might begin with a 2D sketch or an armature. Lines that join to form shapes that can then be interpreted as dimensional forms. A sculpture can have a solid, "closed" form where the art is complete within its own shape (think of traditional figure sculpture or the giant head sculptures of Jaume Plensa). Or, it may interact with surrounding space in a more "open" manner. Artist Henry Moore, who revolutionized form in modern sculpture, was known to have said "a hole can have as much shape and meaning as a solid mass."

Developing sculptors will be able to grasp concepts of 3D art when they bend wires into lines, twist them into shapes, then cover them with paper to make open, expressive forms. This process takes advantage of the starch found in rice paper to make crisp, rigid, paintable paper sculpture.

Incorporating Ceceilia Moseley and Dyslexia Awareness:

Introduce students to Ceceilia Moseley, a talented mixed-media artist from Meridian, Mississippi. Her artwork often explores the fascinating ways individuals experience and interact with language, particularly in relation to different learning styles such as dyslexia. Moseley utilizes diverse materials, including metals and acrylics, to create sculptures that represent letters and symbols, reflecting her unique understanding of how these forms can be perceived. Her exhibit, "Remnants of Language," features immersive installations designed to evoke personal interaction and reflection on learning and understanding. Just as Moseley explores the intricacies of letters through her art, in this lesson, we will create our own three-dimensional interpretations of letters. It's important to remember that dyslexia is simply a different and unique way that some people's brains process language, and it can even lead to innovative and creative ways of thinking, as seen in Ceceilia Moseley's inspiring work.

Materials:

Thin, bendable wire (craft wire, floral wire, or pipe cleaners for younger students)
Lightweight paper (such as rice paper, tissue paper, or newspaper) cut into various sizes
Liquid starch (or diluted white glue for a less rigid finish)
Small bowls for starch/glue
Paint brushes or sponges
Optional: Markers, crayons, or paint for decorating the finished sculptures

Lesson Procedure:

1. Introduction & Discussion (15 minutes):

Begin by discussing the concept of letters as both symbols for language and visual forms. Introduce the idea of three-dimensional art and sculpture, contrasting it with two-dimensional art. Discuss the background information on spatial visualization and 3D art provided above. Introduce the work of Ceceilia Moseley, highlighting her connection to Meridian and her exploration of dyslexia through her art, particularly her use of letterforms in sculpture to represent different ways of understanding language. Emphasize the positive aspects of diverse learning styles. Explain that in this lesson, students will be creating their own three-dimensional sculptures of letters, inspired by Moseley's approach to exploring these forms. For younger students, utilize this video for a hook: https://youtu.be/cTslqS_H7Jg?si=Vd_vL2vW4Mzy-9Kf

2. Creating the Wire Armature (10 minutes):

Instruct students to choose a letter or letters that they find interesting. Demonstrate how to bend and twist the wire to create the basic outline of their chosen letter in three dimensions. Encourage them to think about creating an "open" form, as discussed in the background information, allowing space to interact with the form.

3. Applying the Paper (20 minutes):

Show students how to dip or paint strips of paper with liquid starch (or diluted glue). Guide them in carefully wrapping the starched paper around their wire armature, layering the strips to create a thin but sturdy skin over the wire. Encourage them to think about how the paper follows the lines and shapes they created with the wire.

4. Drying Time (Independent Work/Clean-up):

Allow the sculptures to dry completely. This time can be used for other activities or clean-up. The drying time will depend on the type of paper and adhesive used.

5. Decoration and Presentation (15 minutes - next class period if needed):

Once the sculptures are dry and rigid, students can decorate them with markers, crayons, or paint, if desired. Have students present their letter sculptures to the class. Encourage them to discuss:
Why they chose that particular letter or letters?
What they found interesting or challenging about creating the three-dimensional form.
How their sculpture interacts with the surrounding space.
Any thoughts they had about different ways people perceive letters and language, inspired by learning about dyslexia and Ceceilia Moseley's work.

Assessment:

Observe student participation in discussions about spatial visualization, 3D art, and dyslexia.
Evaluate the creativity and effort demonstrated in their wire and paper letter sculptures.
Assess student understanding of the concepts through their presentation and reflection on their work.



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