# TWS - Part B: Unit Overview

My teacher work sample unit will be completed by two high school sculpture classes. The students in the classes range from sophomores to seniors. The project will have students working in "artist collectives" to communicate through a new media interactive sculpture with their school. We will be looking at artist collectives such as SoulPancake and Empathy Museum who build interactive sculptures as social commentary. I feel that this project will inspire the sculpture students to consider how they can use art as a tool to communicate and voice their concerns about topics, current events, and social justice issues that are relevant and important to them as individuals. (Friere, 2000). This assignment also provides students with a platform to bring about change within their own school community and advocate for topics that are important to them. (Perkins, 2010). This unit will give students an opportunity to work with new media and integrate technology into their art, which is not a common activity for students to be able to do in a high school setting but is relevant to the modern art world and applicable to the artmaking process of the 21st century. (Helwick, 2019).

This unit is based primarily on social learning and play theories. Students learn best when learning from each other through interactions, discussions, and activities. (Vygotsky, 1978.) During the TWS each class will be broken into groups or "artist collectives" based on their shared interest in a certain topic. Students will then create an interactive sculpture that will communicate their topic with the rest of the school in a way that educates and informs. (Helguera, 2011). The artist collectives created in class incorporate cooperative learning: each group will test out ideas and work together collaboratively, learning from each other and learning how to work as part of a team to achieve a single artistic goal. (Gillies, 2007).

This unit is centered around student-based learning: students come up with their own topics, research other new media artists and the ways they communicate through their artwork, decide what art elements and structural pieces they will incorporate to effectively share with the school, and create a proposal to get permission for needed supplies, access to location, and feedback. The teacher interaction comes in the form of building up the skills to critically analyze what elements artists use in their work, guiding students through the steps of creating a formal proposal, and giving tips and advice to each group's unique situations as they experiment with new materials. (Friere, 2000), (Green, 2015). This approach not only provides students with experience working in a creative group, but also experience with problem solving and finding solutions as they inevitably hit roadblocks while working with new materials. Guiding students through the process of critical thinking, understanding how artwork is interpreted and using that to reverse-engineer their own artwork, and working through the steps of trial and error are skills derived from STEAM that are applicable to all facets of their life, even outside of the classroom. This process models a healthy work environment and provides students with some of the skills needed for college and entering the workforce. (Gillies, 2007), (Helwick, 2019).

The big idea behind this unit is forms of communication: what can we do and what artistic tools can we use to get others to understand our perspective? Students need to

understand and reflect not only upon the meaning they plan on sharing in their artwork, but also how their use and display of this information will dictate the viewer's understanding of it. If the students want to depict the negative effects of social media, how will they ensure that the viewer understands this? How would this look, and how would it be different than showing the positive effects? These are the kinds of questions I want students to think about while creating their interactive piece.

Throughout the process I will be assessing the students through the use of a formative assessment in response to the groups installation proposals, individual check-ins with groups, and formal assessment tools such as individual and group reflections, sketchbook inquiry and design checks. Every day after announcements when students begin to work, I will walk from group to group and ensure that each student has the tools and means to continue working on their project, offering guidance and suggestions to those who need help with translating their 2D sketchbook ideation into a physical form. The summative assessment will be the project itself and each artist collective's reflection on the responses they got to their artwork. The goal of this project isn't to work with new media, or to create a sculpture, or to create an interactive artwork (though students will be doing all of these as well)--the goal is to understand how to communicate their perspective through artwork and elements of art without directly saying the meaning. More important than the craftsmanship of the piece itself, I want students to be able to reflect on how their work was interpreted or interacted with, and reflect on why.

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