

## **Plymouth Elementary School**

### **Kindergarten: Foundations of an Art Program**

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#### **Featured Lessons:**

- *Dots*
- *Kandinsky's Circles*
- *Snowman*
- *Monoprint*

When I first came to Plymouth Elementary School I had experience teaching art at the high school and middle school levels and Art Education in the MAT program at PSU. I had student taught in an elementary school, but never did I have to build a program starting with kindergarten; at first it seemed so daunting! It is paramount to meet learners at the appropriate developmental level so that they are able to be successful but also are able to be challenged and grow as learners. As I became more familiar with the primary age learner I went back to my art education roots and found that my program should address the basics:

- Gross & fine motor skills
- Hand-eye coordination
- Introduction to basic Art Elements & Principles of Design (color, shape, pattern, texture, contrast....)
- Introduction to Aesthetic Scanning (how to look at & talk about art)

This is not to say that “basic” means “simple”. As an educator I am constantly bothered by the notion that primary age students are not capable of higher order thinking. This is simply not true. Every time we ask a kindergartener to “imagine” something, they are engaging in higher order thinking skills. In fact, “Creation” is the highest category of educational objectives according to the new revised Bloom’s Taxonomy (a system that classifies learning objectives according to level

of difficulty). I observe my kindergarteners engaging in higher order thinking skills every day!

### **Dots, Circles, and Scissors, Oh My!**

We start with making circles (***Dots, Kandinsky's Circles***) inspired by Peter H. Reynold's book The Dot and the work of Wassily Kandinsky. Making circles requires the coordination of gross & fine motor skills along with practicing using and gripping different art tools (pencils, brushes, etc.). ***Kandinsky's Circles*** encourages students to practice drawing circles, cut circles out successfully, and then sort circles by size and color. Students were asked to make six stacks of circles, each with three circles (so yes, math practice too!). Perhaps one of the most challenging tasks for a kindergarten student to master is the use of scissors. It requires control of fine motor skills AND hand-eye coordination at the same time...and takes lots of practice!

From there we move on to a fun winter-inspired lesson that also incorporates use of perspective (representing three dimensional objects on a two dimensional surface). We discuss how size and shape play a role in creating this illusion. Our ***Snowman*** lesson is a wonderful example of this as we try to create the illusion of our snowman leaning over us to say "Hi!". This lesson also introduces kindergarteners to the use of watercolor and the interaction of watercolor and crayons; notice the snowflakes falling in the sky? Those were created by "revealing" the white crayon snowflakes by painting over them with watercolor paint. Crayons, made out of wax, resist the watercolor! It's magic!

The last lesson in this exhibit is the ***Monoprint***. Students were introduced to printmaking and color theory with this project using tempera paint painted on plexi pieces and printed onto paper. They were asked to experiment with color, mark, and line. The colors they were given are the three primary colors: red, yellow, and blue. Students were asked to pay special attention to how these colors mixed together to make new colors. Before their very eyes kindergarteners made secondary colors: green, orange, and violet.

