



Grade/s: 9-12

Enduring Idea: Identity

Integrated Discipline: Language Arts

Unit Title: A Note to Self: Mixed Media Self-Portrait Drawing

Unit Designer: Katie Pfrommer

Unit Description: High school years are a time when many adolescents begin the quest of self-discovery, establishing their own identity. This unit explores the enduring idea, *Identity*, through a multidisciplinary approach incorporating language arts, social media, and mixed media art making. Within this unit learners will study art history comparing and contrasting a variety of portraits, use descriptive and expressive writing, incorporate technology through the use of *Instagram*, and the creation of a mixed media portrait drawing while exploring the depths of their own identities.

Images:

- *Phil I Fingerprints* lithograph, Chuck Close, CMA1981.24



- *Portrait of a Poet: Kenneth Koch*, Alex Katz, CMA1995.7.9



- *Melancholoy (formerly titled Girl with Auburn Hair)*, Jean-Jacques Henner, CMA1963.52



- *Thomas Willoughby, 4th Baron Middleton (1728-1781)*, George Romney, CMA1967.1



- *Portrait of a Little Boy in Red Holding a Goldfinch*, Santi Di Tito CMA1954.37



Key Concept: Cultural background affects personal identity

Essential Question: How does personal identity change or evolve over time?

- CCSS Art:**
- VAH2-3 The learner will examine the content of works of visual art and use elements from them in creating his or her own works.
 - VAH2-3.3 Select and effectively use subject matter, symbols, and ideas to communicate meaning through his or her artworks.

Integrated CCSS: [CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.9-10.2](#) Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source; provide an accurate summary of how key events or

ideas develop over the course of the text.

Learning Outcomes:

- Learners will study the concept of *Identity* and explore and express characteristics within their own identities through art making, art criticism, and writing.
- Learners will integrate writing by composing a self-addressed letter on their own identities and goals for growth.
- Learners will study works of art from the Columbia Museum of Art collection, comparing and contrasting the identity of the subjects.
- Learners will study the biography of Chuck Close and watch the *CBS This Morning* video *A Note to Self* and discuss additional portraits by Close.
- Learners will select one of the exemplar portraits from the Hand Held Art to complete a detailed Feldman critique.
- Learners will discuss different aspects of *Identity* (for example: identity at school and home, versus online through technology).
- Learners will take two to three self-portrait photographs using Instagram, choosing one for the reference photograph. Image must be a high-contrast, gray scale composition including at least three facial features and one object at an interesting angle to use as a reference photograph.
- Learners will list expressive and descriptive words that represent their identity. Learners will apply this list stylistically to the background of their portrait drawing to create a colorful surface treatment.
- Learners will use the reference photograph to apply the grid drawing process of Chuck Close to draw a realistic self-portrait on a surface that has been treated with various colors, and written text using descriptive adjectives by the learner.
- Learners will compare and contrast the portrait from the motivator activity to the final portrait and write a reflection on the process after reading their self-addressed letter.
- Learners will write a reflection discussing their growth in art making skills as well as growth or changes in their identity since the beginning of the unit.

Motivator:

- Prior to any introduction or discussion, for one class

block, learners will draw a self-portrait without any prior instruction. This will be used to measure growth and development of drawing skills.

- Learners will view the short *CBS This Morning* video *Note to Self* in which famed portrait artist, Chuck Close, writes a letter to himself at age 14, offering himself advice on how to overcome his learning disabilities and his problem with face blindness.
- Learners write a letter to their future selves explaining how they would like to change, evolve, or grow for the better.

Day Breakdown: Day one: Self-portrait motivator activity.
Day two: Motivator video, letter writing activity, and discussion on identity. Introduction to Unit and Enduring Idea *Identity*. Homework: Learners will take two to three different high-contrast Instagram photos using specific composition requirements.
Day three: Class critique on exemplar portrait works of art. Compare and contrast portraits and address symbolism. Discussion on the identities of the subjects. Presentation on biography of Chuck Close and Enduring Idea *Identity*.
Day four: Water color surface demonstration. Learners will prepare the background surface.
Day five: Select and print portrait, choose composition using printed grid transparency. Grid drawing demonstration: preparing grid, drawing demonstration.
Days six-eleven: Begin each class block with discussion, written Feldman Critique on the selected work of art, and class critique with all portraits on the board. Remainder of the class block learners will work in the open studio.
Day twelve: Final class critique. Reflection on the process reading self-addressed letter, comparing and contrasting self-portrait from the motivator activity to final drawing. Written reflection on growth in art making skills and changes in their identity.

Materials: Handheld Device- iPad, Smartphone
Hand Held Art application
Instagram application
Sketchbook

Paper for motivator portrait
Printout of selected 6"x6" photo
6"x6" grid transparency
12"x12" paper for final portrait
Watercolors
Paintbrushes
Water cups
Paper towels
Light colored pencils/pens
Rulers
Drawing pencils
Erasers
Sharpeners
Scratch paper

- Resources:**
- CBS *This Morning* video *A Note to Self*
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=milXH-433vs>
 - Instagram application
 - chuckclose.com

- Assessment:**
- Formative Assessments:
- Rubric for Final Drawing
 - Written Feldman Critique/reflection on portrait drawing
- Summative Assessments:
- Checklists: letter, written critique, work ethic, class discussion
 - Written Reflection/Critique on CMA artwork