

Lesson Implementation and Reflection

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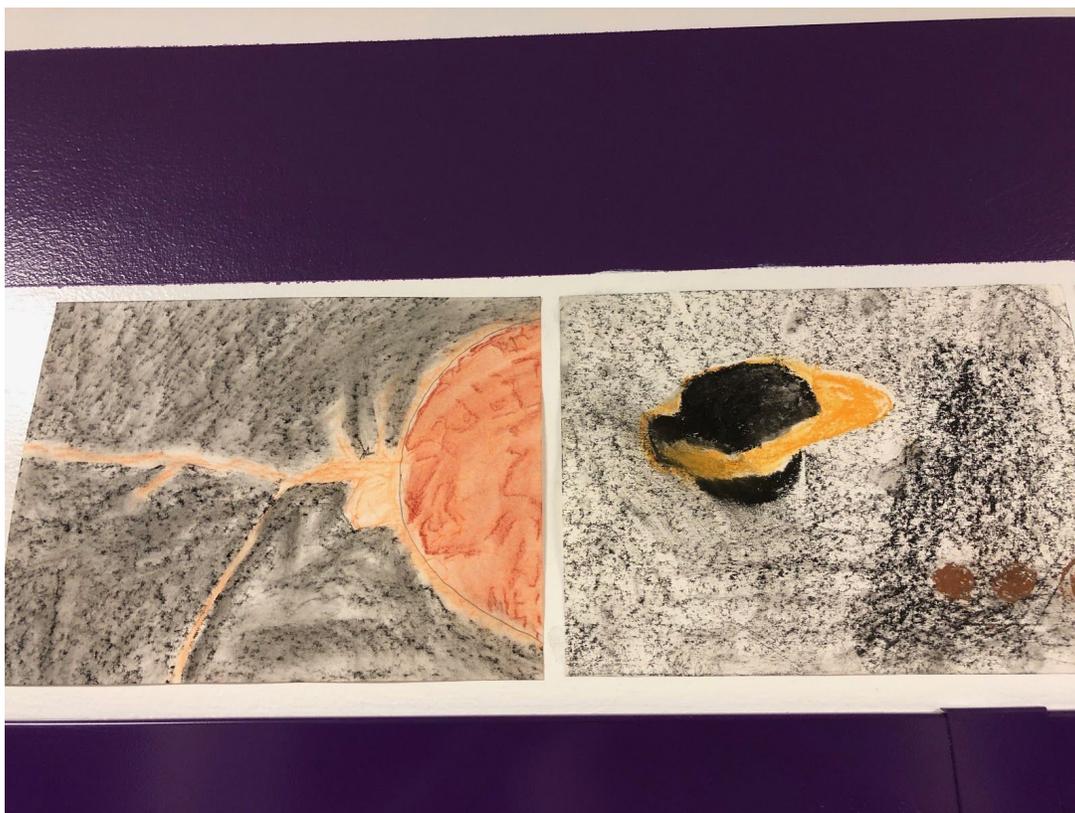
Resource Description

I chose to implement the lesson “Art and the Cosmic Connection” in my fifth grade classroom, accessed at the following link: <https://www.jpl.nasa.gov/edu/teach/activity/art-the-cosmic-connection/>. In this lesson, students consider what they know about the solar system and learn how the elements of art relate to the objects and their features we can see in space. As a culminating activity, students create and share their own works of art, based from NASA images.

Student Artifacts

Student vlog post explaining his image and the process to create it:

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1vPJDdwHAPUoXsZQ6damt6yYP9Ch5hcMJ/view?usp=sharing>



Samples of student work. The left shows a solar flare. The right picture is Saturn.

Summary

This was a well-conceived activity with great resources as I did not need to seek any additional assistance or materials outside of the provided lesson plan. Although we aren't in an astronomy unit at the moment, the lesson still worked because I billed it as an extended art project and that made sense to the students. Students were actively engaged in the PowerPoint presentation portion of the lesson, as well as the artwork itself. The PowerPoint was so powerful and contained so much specific NASA data, we spent an extended period of time going through it. Students generated a lot of additional questions that I was unable to answer and we wrote those down in our classroom's "STEM Parking Lot" for future research.

As students began researching their own information and images to recreate, we used our class set of chromebooks instead of the suggested traditional books in the lesson plan. Students could easily save the image they wanted and have it available for reference as they drew. We viewed the provided YouTube tutorials and students tried many of the techniques while working. I also noticed that students took a lot more care with their art projects than usual. Since they had taken the time to research their own image, there was a sense of ownership in the room and students seemed very excited when it came time to get out the pastels because they wanted to make their work look good.

For the assessment piece, student work was displayed together in the hallway for a gallery walk.. As students worked, I also visited around the room to talk with them about the images they had selected, their artistic interpretation, and the elements of art they were incorporating.

Overall, there were few changes I would make to this lesson plan since I thought it followed sound teaching practices throughout. I thought that starting with basic information about the sun and the planets before moving to moons and other space objects helped students

begin the discussion with some confidence. The questioning techniques and time for student discourse were also positive notes. Instead of choosing which elements of art I would introduce to my class, I asked them to brainstorm any elements of art they knew. While texture was somewhat discouraged in the lesson plan notes for grades 3-5, that was one of the elements named, so we included that in our discussion. The only major change I made was with the KWL portion of the lesson. Trained by Anita Archer, an explicit instruction coach, I didn't want to take students "out of the text" as she says by opening up too broad of a discussion that would lead us to lose focus on what we were really studying. Instead of asking students, "What do you know about the solar system?", I asked, "If we're thinking about space as a scientist AND an artist, what do you know about the solar system that would be important to our conversation?"