

The Colors of Us

By Dayna Koch

Grades K-6

Duration: 45-60 minutes

Materials:

- Watercolors
- Paintbrushes
- Water cups
- 4"x4" heavy paper square for each student (any paper 100lb or more)
- *Colors of Us* graphing worksheet for each student
- *What Color is Your Day?* by Camryn Wells
- Black & white Crayons or china markers (optional)
- *Niko Draws a Feeling* by Robert Raczka (optional)

Standards:

- Math:
 - Strand: Measurement & Data (MD) - Kindergarten, First, Second, Third
 - Strand: Operations & Algebraic Thinking (OA) - First, Second, Third
 - Strand: Numbers & Operations - Fractions (NF) - Fourth, Fifth
 - Statistics & Probability (SP) - Sixth
- Visual Arts:
 - Strand: Create (V.CR)
 - Strand: Respond (V.R)
 - Strand: Connect (V.CO)
- Health Education
 - Strand: Mental and Emotional Health (MEH)

Goals and Objectives:

- Students will be able to identify how they are currently feeling and communicate this to others (using supporting reasons) through words and color choice.
- Students will produce artwork that represents their emotions.
- Students will collaborate with classmates to create a visual representation of the entire class's current feelings or mood.
- Students can represent their feelings and the feelings of their classmates by using a bar graph.

Introduction:

Begin by reading *What Color is Your Day?* by Camryn Wells. After reading the book, ask your students some of these questions:

- What are some colors you saw in this book? Which emotions did they represent?
- Colors can represent more than one feeling. Do you remember any examples from the book?

- Will people always have the same color to represent their feelings? How long did the book say you might feel a certain emotion?

Introduce Art Installation:

Introduce Rebecca Campbell's *Two Years Supply: Clean* (2016) to students. Give them time to sit in silence and see what they notice about the installation; ask them to take special note of the colors used. Then, discuss the following:

- What did you notice about this artwork?
- What did you notice about the color choices? How might it be different if it was red instead of blue?
- How does this artwork make you feel?
- What do you believe the artist might have been representing with this installation?

Give students background on the installation and the artist. Rebecca Campbell's mother faced good times and bad times, just like all of us. When times were difficult for her and she felt sad or a loss of control, she turned to something within her control: cleaning. Each canning jar is blue because it contains a different amount of water and Windex (explain what Windex is for students who may not know). Ask students if they noticed the projections. These images are like flashes of memories.

Now that students know more about the background of the installation, pose these questions:

- Why do you think the blue color of the Windex is important in this artwork? Think about what we learned about the color blue from our story *What Color Is Your Day?* Do you think the blue color of the Windex meant anything to Rebecca Campbell's mother?
- Do you have anything that you do to help you feel calmer or in control during difficult times?
- Why do you think the artist Rebecca Campbell never shows us the flashing images clearly or for a long time?
- How does this installation and the slightly changing color of blues in the jars help you have a better understanding of Rebecca Campbell's mother and some of the emotions she felt at certain times?

Art Project:

Students will create an artwork that represents their feelings and emotions, just like Rebecca Campbell did with her mother's.

Have students recall the story *What Color is Your Day?* Review some of the colors in the story and the emotions they could represent. Ask students to think about how they are currently feeling—what has happened that day or even week to make them feel that way? Have them determine a color that best represents how they currently feel. Remind them that it's possible for the same color to represent different feelings for different people, and that's okay. They just need to be able to communicate the reason they chose that color to represent their current feelings. Have students write down the color they are thinking of as a way to help solidify their choice. Give each student a blank 4"x4" square and ask them to choose a paint color that accurately represents how they currently feel. They will then do a watercolor wash over the entire paper in that color.

When all students have finished painting their feelings card, have them quickly share the color they chose and the emotion it represents for them. Have them present this as an "Artist Statement." Next, they will display their papers as a collective whole to look similar to Rebecca

Campbell's installation. Have students help you organize the cards by colors, then all of you will work together to hang them up as a collective whole (almost like a quilt). Ask students what they notice about their artwork when it's all hung together. Some questions you may consider are:

- Are there any patterns you notice?
- Is there anything that stands out or surprises you?
- What might you do differently today with this information?
- What similarities do you see in our class installation of *Colors of Us* and Rebecca Campbell's *Two Years Supply: Clean*?
- How do you think our class installation would look if we did it on the first day of school? The last day of school? The day before Christmas break?

Math:

Looking at the class *Colors of Us* installation, determine how many squares of each color are found in the group artwork. Use the attached worksheet to create a bar graph of the information. There are grade specific worksheets for grades K - 6.

Assessment:

Math: Math will be formally assessed by completion and accuracy of the graphing worksheets.

Visual Arts & Health Standards: Informally assess students based on their ability to communicate their artist statements about how they are currently feeling and why that fits the color they chose to represent their feelings.

Optional Extension:

Read the Book *Niko Draws a Feeling* by Robert Raczka. After reading the book, make the connection that just like we've learned that colors can represent feelings, so can lines. When Niko draws, he isn't necessarily drawing to have those who look at it see a perfect illustration of something in real life; instead, he uses lines to represent his current feelings.

Show students a horizontal line. Define the line and show examples of it: a sunset on a horizon line, a bed, etc. Explain that horizontal lines are calming and peaceful. Show Winslow Homer's *Moonlight* (1874) and ask them to look at the lines that really stick out. Point out how he uses the horizontal lines to depict a quiet and calm scene.

Show students a vertical line. Define the line and show examples of it: if you want to appear brave or important, how do you stand? Notice that you are making a strong vertical line with your body. Then show students Edward Hopper's *House by the Railroad* (1925). Have them point out the lines they see. Note the vertical lines and horizontal lines. Neither of these lines show a lot of movement or emotion, instead, they are quiet lines. That is why the house seems so quiet and lonely. Notice the lines in *Two Years Supply: Clean*.

Show students a diagonal line. Explain that a diagonal line shows movement. Ask them to try standing at a diagonal line and see if they fall over. Show students Winslow Homer's *Fog Warning* (1885). Ask them to look for the diagonal lines and consider why Winslow Homer may have used them.

Corresponding Extension for Art Project:

Before doing the watercolor wash, have students use a black or white crayon or china marker to draw a line on the paper that represents how they currently feel. Then students will move on to do the watercolor wash over the entire paper with their wax relief line showing through.

Images:



Rebecca Campbell (b.1971), *Two-Year Supply: Clean*, 2016, Windex, tin plated steel, glass, wood, digital projection, 23 13/16 x 30 inches. Brigham Young University Museum of Art.



Winslow Homer, *Moonlight*, 1874



Edward Hopper, *House by the Railroad*, 1925



Winslow Homer, *Fog Warning*, 1885

Graphing Worksheets for Math Integration (K, 1, 2, 3, 4-5, 6 grade options)