LESSON TITLE: Visual Culture
TEACHER NAME: Sarah Brown & Lori Bertonazzi
UNIT OF STUDY/TOPIC: Where Do I Fit In?
GRADE LEVEL: 8 & 9
CLASS TIME: 90 Minutes   1 Day   1 Session

RATIONAL/BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The goal of this lesson is to make students more conscious of what's going on in the world around them, as well as how they are directly and indirectly affected by it. At this age, being popular is a main concern. Adolescents are often pressured to buy into certain clothing lines and other products in order to fit in. By exposing students to different advertising methods and the implicit meanings behind popular visual culture images, we are hoping to introduce them to a more critical way of deciding which products and messages they accept. Teenagers are constantly interacting with visual culture images on the Internet, TV, cell phones, etc. It is important that they are critical consumers, rather than passive absorbers of information.

In the process of analyzing visual culture images, students will gain an understanding of the use of color symbolism, advertising techniques (including emotional manipulation), and the use of logos. In order to illustrate their understanding, students will create a personal logo using contour line and screen-printing techniques. Just as advertisers, they too will have to use color and form to create a successful logo that communicates a message about themselves.

The students should have a shallow understanding of advertisements and visual culture images, as they make up the world that surrounds them, and often motivate their actions. They typically look up to sports stars, movie stars, singers, etc. and mimic their actions/dress. Often at this age, adolescents also experience feelings of alienation and a need to be accepted by their peers (Emphasis Art, 206). In order to address this concern, they will critically analyze advertisements that play on these tendencies. They will walk away from the lesson with a better sense of self, and confidence in their own decision making process.

MATERIALS/EQUIPMENT
- American Eagle logo visual
- Computer with projector
- Advertisements: Heinz, CareerBuilder, Pepsi, Proactive)
- Newsprint/ sketching paper
- Pencils

ROOM ARRANGEMENT
Teachers will lead the discussion of visual culture and advertising in the computer lab so that visuals can be seen on a large screen. This will give more of a visual impact. After the discussion, students will move to the Printmaking studio to create their prints.

VOCABULARY
Logos:
- standardized, nonverbal symbols for the purpose of commercial identification

Contour line:
- "outline" of an object or mass; is a clean, connected line, no shading

Silkscreen:
- wooden frame that holds a screen; used to create prints
- Ex: silkscreen

"Embedded":
- advertising technique in which the advertiser targets viewer's emotions

"Hard sell":
- advertising technique in which the viewer is convinced that they will not be happy without the product

Review: symbol, color symbolism

REFERENCE/SOURCES
- Heinz   http://www.hemmy.net/images/advertisements/withoutheinz01.jpg
- Campbell's Soup http://content.answers.com/main/content/wp/en/1/1f/Campbells_Soup_Cans_MOMA.jpg
- Anderson, Tom and Melody K. Milbrandt. Art for Life: Authentic Instruction for Art. New York: McGraw Hill, 2005.
- CareerBuilder   http://youtube.com/watch?v=bpVP70U9LDg
- Pepsi   http://youtube.com/watch?v=6dprQVQ3wOU
- Proactive   http://youtube.com/watch?v=K2V5EK0azgA
- Media Lit Kit Worksheets

STANDARDS/OBJECTIVES
STANDARDS

1.1 Aesthetics
1.1.8 A. Knowledge
1. Examine works of art that communicate significant cultural beliefs or set of values.
2. Use domain-specific vocabulary relating to symbolism, genre, and performance technique in all arts areas.
Students will examine advertisements for Heinz, Pepsi and Proactive. They will deconstruct the images in order to find the values that they project to the viewer. They will analyze how the advertisers use colors, symbols, the stirring of emotions and cultural values (embedding and hard sell) in order to affect the viewer in a specific way.

1.2 Creation and Performance
1.2.8 D. Visual Art
3. Identify form, function, craftsmanship, and originality when creating a work of art.
Students will create personal logos. They will consider: what do I want to communicate through my logo (function); how do I make my message clear to viewers; how will my logo catch the eyes of the viewer (originality); how do I use contour line to create a clean screen printed image (craftsmanship).

1.3 Elements and Principles
1.3.8 D. Visual Art
1. Define the elements of art and principles of design that are evident in everyday life.

Students will examine the American Eagle logo in terms of its shape, color, size, use of positive and negative space, and line. They will consider how these elements contribute to the message that they logo is to project.

1.4 Critique
1.4.8 A. Knowledge
1. Explain the process of critique using the progression of description, analysis, interpretation, and evaluation.
Each area of critique listed above will be addressed as students deconstruct advertisements.

1.5 History/Culture
1.5.8 B. Skills
2. Discuss how cultural influences add to the understanding of works of art.
Students will examine how certain visual culture images reflect the popular culture's values, fears, needs, etc.

Language Arts Literacy

STANDARD 3.5 (Viewing and media literacy) All students will access, view, evaluate, and respond to print, nonprint, and electronic texts and resources.
3.Analyze and respond to visual and print messages (e.g. humor, irony, metaphor) and recognize how words, sounds, and still or moving images are used in each medium to convey the intended messages.

B. Visual and Verbal Messages
1. Analyze and compare the pros and cons of visual and verbal advertising

C. Living with Media
2. Analyze media content for emotional effect on audience.

STANDARD 3.2 (Writing) All students will write in clear, concise, organized language that varies in content and form for different audiences and purposes.

D. Writing Forms, Audiences, and Purposes (exploring a variety of forms)
14. Maintain a collection of writing (e.g., a literacy folder, or a literacy portfolio).
At the end of class, students will write for five minutes to reflect on the learning that has taken place.

OBJECTIVES
Students will be able to:
- Create personal logos using silk-screening.
- Demonstrate their knowledge of advertising by designing a personal logo that communicates a message to its viewers.
- Analyze visual culture images, such as clothing label symbols, in terms of their social and cultural implications.
- Examine and criticize the values of the dominant culture.
- Apply the use of positive and negative when creating their logos.

LEARNING EXPERIENCE
  INTRODUCTION
- Topic Question: (*Show students visual of Heinz advertisement*)
    - What is this? *(image of food, breakfast, ketchup advertisement)*
    - Do you notice anything odd about this image? *(food is cardboard)*
        - What is the purpose of this advertisement? *(To make you hungry, to sell ketchup)*
        - How is the advertiser trying to get you to buy this product? *(Profit)*
        - How does this advertisement affect your thinking? *(Causes hunger, craving for ketchup)*
        - How does this ad serve the advertiser?
        - Who is served when I buy this product, and how? *(Heinz- money, me- I get to eat ketchup)*
        - Is this art? If it was hanging in a museum, would you consider it art?
        - (*Show Campbell's Soup Cans*) Do you consider this art? Why/why not?
            - Do you think this image represents our culture? How?
    - Advertising-
        - There's a lot more going on in these than I'm sure you realized at first glance. In fact, advertisers use a number of specific techniques to get you to buy into what they are selling. How does it make you feel?
            - "Hard Sell"- here the advertiser doesn't just convince you that your life will be better with the product, but that your life will be miserable without it.
                - (*Show ad for Proactive*)
                - How did the advertisers get Jessica Simpson to make you think that you couldn't live without this product? What did she say/do?
            - "Embedding"- when advertisers use symbols in their images to stir up your emotions without you even realizing it.
                - *(Show ad for Career Builder.com and Pepsi commercial)*
                - Describe what is happening in this ad?
                - What is this ad trying to get you to do?
                - What specific things in the ad told you this?
                - What emotion is this ad targeting? How?
                - What is the explicit/implicit message?
                - Why kinds of symbols do you see?
                    - What does the lobster represent?
                    - Does the color use tell you anything?
- Association: As you can see, there are all kinds of messages being communicated through images that seem so simple and direct. The advertisers played on emotions, and used a number of words and images to catch your attention and sell you their product.

- o In order to get their messages across short and sweet, advertisers use logos.
- o Though the logos are often simple in shape and color, they still communicate a lot of complicated ideas.
- o For example: (*show American Eagle logo*)
  - What is the logo? *(Eagle)* What company is this for *(American Eagle)*
  - Why do you think they chose the eagle as their logo? What does this animal symbolize? What emotions are involved? *(Patriotism, freedom, strength, America)*
- Visualization: The purpose of a logo is to grab the viewer's attention and sell them an idea or product.
  - o It must communicate something specific- a small idea or message is easier to represent than a broad one
  - o It must be simple in design in order to keep the message direct and avoid any confusion from the viewer.
  - o It is ideal to use large and simple shapes.
  - o Advertisers want you to be able to "read" the logo in less than 6 seconds.
  - o Colors are used for its manipulative affects- to influence your thoughts or feelings- similar to what we discussed last week.
- Transition: Today, you are going to be taking the role of the advertiser. You are to create your own personal logos that communicate a specific, simple, straightforward message about yourself.
  - o Things to think about:
    - All of the rules we just went through apply to your project. Some additional rules: No words, no stars, hearts, etc.
    - You can use text, but only as a shape.
    - You can place your logo anywhere on your T-shirt: it does not have to be on your chest.
    - Your logo will be one color, so choose it wisely and think about how that color will affect your message.
    - So, I should be able to completely understand your logo by glancing at it, as if I were a car passing you by on a highway.

SEQUENCE OF ACTIVITES
1. Think about something you want to "advertise" about yourself to the world. Begin to sketch out ideas on newsprint. You should have at least two sketches before you start on your final drawing. This logo will be advertised on a T-shirt.
2. Draw you logo out in pencil on the drawing paper.
3. You must make your drawing using contour lines- nothing sketchy or colored in.
4. Trace it with black sharpie marker.
5. When you are done the drawings, you are going to transfer them to your silkscreen.

CLOSURE/CULMINATING EXPERIENCE
Informal Critique:
- T-shirts will be displayed on tables as they dry. As students walk around and view each other works, the following questions will be addressed:

- o What does this logo tell us about you?
- o Why did you use the shape, color, placement that you did?
- o Do you think you were successful? Why? Why not?

ADAPTATIONS/MODIFICATIONS

If a student were to have a physical or learning disability, the teacher would help the student with the screening process.

<u>**LESSON ANALYSIS**</u>
STUDENT ASSESSMENT

- See rubric.
- Journal Entry 2: Students will take 5 minutes at the end of class to reflect on the following questions:
    - o What was the most meaningful part of the project for you?
    - o Where did you struggle the most? Why?
    - o How has this project changed your views on visual images (ads, logos, etc.)

SELF-REFLECTION

I. ***Human Growth and Development –*** *Teacher candidates understand how children and adolescents develop and learn in a variety of school, family and community contexts and provide opportunities that support their intellectual, social, emotional and physical development.*

> **(2.2) Applies learning theory to accommodate differences in student intelligence, perception, cognitive style and achievement levels. (NJPTS 2.1)**

Diverse Learners – *Teacher candidates understand the practice of culturally responsive teaching.*

> **(3.4) Uses knowledge of students and their lives to design and carry out instruction that builds on students' strengths while meeting their needs and taking into account issues of social class, gender, race, ethnicity, language, sexual orientation, age, and special needs. (NJPTS 3.10)**

In order to carry out this lesson successfully, it was important to pull visual culture artifacts that the students were familiar with or related to their age group. At the time the lesson was planned and executed, the Super Bowl had just ended. Since the Super Bowl is known for its commercials, we decided to pull various commercials with hidden messages and deep meaning for the students to deconstruct. The images that were chosen, along with commercials, commented on social class, gender, sexual orientation, and age.

The main purpose for the lesson was for students to be able to view their culture's/society's media images in a critical way. The lesson was designed for students to be able to come up with their own thoughts, morals, and values by deconstructing images in the popular culture. It was important for the teachers to understand that the students may not connect with certain images and may have little experience in talking about the meaning/messages behind the images. The teachers came into the lesson with a careful touch because we understood that all of our experiences are different in life and that we all hold different values and morals. The idea of being able to discuss those and

understand one another's point of view allowed students to understand socially, that we all come from different backgrounds and experiences. Therefore, we must take into consideration these facts when viewing others and the world around us.

II.   As for the developmental characteristics of the students, the lesson dealt mainly with affective development. The lesson was geared to get students to think about the world that surrounds them and thus, to create their own set of morals and values. The motivation became somewhat of a struggle at first. Students were not very willing to speak about their thoughts on the images presented. To get the students talking, we made sure to ask more questions to help guide them to deconstruct the images.

The lesson ended with students beginning to sketch their logos. Before the lesson, I made sure to make an example so that students had something to refer to besides popular culture logos. One student dived in quickly while the other student was having an artist's block. My assistant teacher helped the student with her block by using an exercise that allowed her to make simple, free-flowing marks that would help her loosen up. The students then took home their logos to finish so that they could put more thought into their creation and meaning. To assess the students we used a rubric and we had an informal critique.