



***Mask Making: The Seen and Unseen***

Kelley Hund-Shelley 2015 CTI Fellow  
David W. Butler High School

This curriculum unit is recommended for: Intermediate, Proficient, Advanced Visual Arts  
*Grades 9-12*

**Keywords:** mask-making, paper mache, armature, spirit masks, African masks, Northwestern Indian Masks, ancient Greek theater masks, exaggeration, scarification, pattern, color scheme, craftsmanship, motif, simplification, personal voice

**Teaching Standards:** See [Appendix 1](#) for teaching standards addressed in this unit.

**Synopsis:** This curriculum unit explores how mask-making can help students become more aware of their inner and outer theatre, especially regarding the right brain trickster and the left brain analyzer. We will watch the movie “The Mask” and use this movie as a springboard to begin a discussion on inner and outer personalities/theatre. I will use a variety of activities including brainstorming, Venn diagrams, visual thinking skills, and think, pair, share to facilitate recognition of personality traits the student shares versus what they keep hidden from others. This unit will assist young adolescents in gaining an understanding of the hyper-awareness of one’s appearance and the power that can come from understanding this awareness. Guiding students in the process of meaning making, developing personal voice and discussing what story they want to tell with their artwork is a large part of this project. Our goal is that by collaborating with others, sharing, and observing we will respect and honor one another’s individualism and artwork. Awareness of self and the development of personal traits, as well as cognitive development, will assist students in integrating cognitive and emotional memories, and personal traits into their mask. Tying their mask to their own inner and outer theatre, with various aspects of self, will increase the students’ chance of connecting with their masks.

*I plan to teach this unit during the coming year in to 70 students in Proficient, Advanced and Intermediate Art in Grades 10-12.*

*I give permission for the Institute to publish my curriculum unit and synopsis in print and online. I understand that I will be credited as the author of my work.*

## **Mask Making: The Seen and Unseen**

*Kelley Hund Shelley*

### **Introduction**

When applying to the Charlotte Teachers Institute, I was intrigued by the seminar, “Supernatural Figures in Theatre, Film and the Brain.” This seminar proposed to explore connections between our physical brain, the internal theatres it stages, and specific spirit characters in drama and film-through theories and evidence from psychoanalysis and neuroscience. And it planned to investigate how the idea of self can be illusory, how we’re often performing for a ghostly “Other”, how young people are haunted by parental and peer influences, as their own identities take shape. I was intrigued and interested in how I could parlay this information into my classroom. According to Dr. Pizzato, “knowing about the brain’s inner theatre and our culture’s outer theatre increases our awareness of unconscious, impulsive tendencies towards conflicts, fantasies, and projections, through ‘catharsis’ in the classroom.” My charge then became how could I incorporate these ideas into a successful unit incorporating a sense of self and development of personal voice?<sup>1</sup>

Parental, peer influences and a sense of self were all ideas I believed I could use in a unit about personal voice and mask making. High school students have a constantly abstracting and transitory idea of self that can change day by day or hour by hour. Helping the students develop an awareness of these ideas and why they have them became the focus of my curriculum unit development.

I believed the seminar would provide me with innovative and collaborative ways to incorporate theatrical elements into my class. Butler High has a phenomenal theatre department and I felt that this class would provide me with a better background to work with collaboratively with our theater department and involve my classes. I started brainstorming about various ways I could use the seminar experiences within my own classroom. When I looked at the seminar description I thought about doing gargoyles and studying the Middle Ages and their use of Christian and pagan idolatry, but as the class progressed I decided to change my topic to mask making. I found out during this time that our theatre department was doing the play *Antigone* and at the same time I was assigned to lead the seminar discussion about a chapter on ancient Greek Theatre, so I took the mask idea and ran with it.

Masks were used extensively in ancient Greek Theatre for all roles, which were performed only by men. Thus, only men were allowed to wear the masks. This is also the

case in all but one modern African society that I found in my research. Discussing the roles of male/female as wearers of masks throughout history will be part of my curriculum activities.

In the seminar, I learned that masks are not only a way to mask and or amplify one's personality but also a way to give mask wearers a vessel to express themselves in ways that they normally would not. Masks have been used throughout history for numerous purposes ranging from protection, pageants, death masks, spirit masks, Halloween masks and ceremonial masks. I was fascinated by the change that occurs when one puts a mask on. In class, we discussed how when children put on a costume they become uninhibited and truly believe that no one knows it is them. I wondered if this is why costume parties, Mardi Gras, Halloween, Carnivale are so popular with adults as well. The ability to go outside of oneself and become whoever you want to be is exciting and freeing to children as well as adults.<sup>2</sup>

I have created masks before with my students and I am interested in having the students create a two-sided mask that shows their inner/outer theater.

The students will create a mask that has two sides: the outside of the mask will show how they feel they are seen by the outside world (as a "character") and the inside of the mask will show how they see themselves differently (the "inner actor"). I feel this could address the inner theatre and outer theatre concepts that Mark Pizzato discussed in our seminar, with the masks showing aspects of the brain's right hemisphere "improviser" and left hemisphere "critic."<sup>3</sup>

High school students are constantly acting with different characters showing and/or being displayed depending on the situation. I can't count how many times I've had high school students say to me that no one really knows me or how I feel/see myself. It is a difficult time for young adolescents with changes in their body and their brains occurring rapidly. I want this to be a unit that will provide the opportunity for the students to share as much or as little as they feel comfortable doing with their classmates. I feel that this project would also help my students to express themselves in a way that is non-threatening as well as learning about masks from different cultures and their uses throughout history. Using this information to craft their own masks will also help students to feel comfortable sharing with others.

By participating in the seminar "Supernatural Figures in Theatre, Film, and the Brain," I have gained an understanding of theatre and the brain's right and left hemisphere functions. I now have an appreciation of the history of theatre and how it has been used to teach, inform, express ideas, spread propaganda and educate its patrons.

This is a mask-making unit for my Proficient and Advanced Art classes inspired by mask making throughout history. Students will be exposed to a variety of masks from

different cultures. They will compare and contrast these masks and their uses before beginning work on their own mask. This unit will use paper mache, armatures, metal-working, and plastic to develop a personal mask. The students will use image transfer techniques to transfer writings to the inside of the mask.

## **Historical Background**

Merriam Webster defines a mask as “a cover or partial cover for the face used for disguise, the figure of a head worn on the stage in antiquity to identify the character and project the voice *and* a grotesque false face worn at carnivals or in rituals.” The word “mask” only entered the English language in the 1530’s. Some claim it comes from the Arabic word “Makharah” meaning buffoon. While others believe it comes from the Spanish “Mas que la cara” meaning extra face.

Masks have played a key role in the ceremonies of mankind since the beginning of time. Whether worn for disguise, protection, entertainment, or performance masks have been a staple part of the cultural and artistic development of people all around the world. Masks are believed to have been used as long as 40,000 years ago.<sup>4</sup>

In ancient times, masks would have been made of wood and leather, which is why they did not last. While none of these ancient masks are now in existence, we have images of what they looked like from paintings, frescoes, and pottery. Here is a link to the mask history website: <http://visual.ly/history-masks-halloween>.

Masks provide us with a unique way to transform immediately. We can share our inner theater or we can obfuscate traits we wish to hide/change. The seminar discussions made me cognizant of how young adults transform themselves daily. Whether with make-up, clothes, peer groups association with sports teams, or clubs, there is almost a constant stream of pressure to perform various characters, like and unlike their inner sense of self as an actor. The ever present superheroes and villains are everywhere, games, movies, comics and graphic novels. The constant push of young adolescents to be someone special is what makes these characters so popular in today’s culture.

In the seminar, we have looked at numerous ways that people hide/transform themselves through the use of masks whether metaphorical masks or tangible masks. We’ve talked about the character, actor, director, stage manager, trickster, audience and the critic showing different aspects of one’s personality and/or the right hemisphere and the left hemisphere.

The types of masks listed below are a few of the artifacts the students will study to develop a knowledge base of mask-making. The study of these masks is not so the students will mirror what they see in their own creations but to develop a visual repertoire of a variety of masks.

### Egyptian Masks

In Egypt masks were used in rituals and as death masks. These masks were extremely important because in order for the soul to successfully reunite with the body in the afterlife the soul had to recognize its own body. These masks were made from precious metals, lime, plaster, and clay.

### Greek Theatre Masks

Greek masks were designed and used for theatre. The actors used them to communicate strong expressions, which is why the mouth and facial features were exaggerated so theatre-goers could see them from far away. They also allowed actors to assume multiple roles during the performance. Only visuals of these masks remain because they were made with linen, leather, wood, and cork.

### African Masks

African culture relies on masks in their rituals and ceremonies. These masks take on human and animal imagery. They are elaborately decorated and styled to reflect the qualities of the animals they depict.

<http://www.artfactory.com/africanmasks/information/african-mask-artists.htm> will be used as one site to complete research by the students.

### Northwestern Indian Masks

I will use <http://natural-history.uoregon.edu/collections/web-galleries/native-american-masks-northwest-coast-and-alaska> as one site for research for the students.

For native peoples of the Pacific Northwest, winter was a time of dance and performance. The dramatic impact was enhanced by music, flickering firelight and shadows playing against plank house walls. Among Northwest Coast peoples, including the Kwakwaka'wakw, Makah, and Nuuchahnulth represented here, masks were an essential part of important winter ceremonials, which re-enacted the adventures of hero-ancestors and spirit beings in the mythological past. The rights to these ritual dances were passed down in families as treasured privileges, and while the themes are similar, the ceremonies were complex and varied in detail from region to region. Some of these traditions are still maintained today.

### School Background

My school is David W. Butler High School, which is located in Matthews, North Carolina. It is in the Charlotte Mecklenburg school district. Our school has 2135 students. My students come from many socio-economic backgrounds, ranging from homeless students to upper middle class. In 2014, David W. Butler High School was recognized by *US News and World Report* as the #1 high school in CMS and the 5th highest rating in North Carolina. The graduation rate in 2015 was at 91.4%. Current student enrollment is 2135. Ethnic breakdown as follows: White 44%, African-American 30%, Hispanic 19%, American Indian 1.8%, Asian 5%, and Pacific Islander 0.2%.

I am a visual art teacher at Butler where I teach Beginning Art through Advanced Placement Visual Art 2D, and AP Drawing. The AP classes are primarily composed of students that plan on majoring in an arts related field in college.

This is my thirty-fourth year of teaching and my fifth year in the Charlotte Mecklenburg School district. I have taught every grade level from pre-K-through college, as well as in a Montessori program. I have multiple certifications including, elementary education, gifted and talented, English Language Learners, Math, Reading, Administration, and I am a National Board Certified Teacher. I love to learn and experience new ways to bring information to my students. Teaching in a new state with different standards and expectations pushed me to incorporate other disciplines within my subject area.

A representative from CTI spoke to our faculty about the CTI program and how it assisted him in becoming a better educator, as well as renewing his enthusiasm for learning. I became interested in finding out more about CTI and how I could use the seminar to improve my own teaching. After researching the seminars in this year's Charlotte Teacher Institute, I applied to be a fellow in the seminar Supernatural Figures in Theatre, Film and the Brain. When I applied to CTI, it was my goal to use the information I gleaned from the seminar as a way to integrate my curriculum with components from theatre, social science, technology and language arts.

My classroom is in the Fine Arts Wing along with three other visual art teachers, orchestra teacher, choral teacher and band teacher. Our hall is separated from the rest of the school by the commons area. All the fine arts teachers, physical education teachers and the ROTC instructors are on an A/B day block schedule rotation. All other school programs are on the block schedule. I currently have two hundred students with classes ranging in size from thirty-nine to twenty-five students. Large classes make it difficult to know my students as well as I would like to and difficult for the students to work on larger projects.

I have a large classroom with 10 tables, a printing press, three sinks, and access to a chrome cart with 35 computers, a separate kiln room, a damp closet and several storage closets. My students have the opportunity to work in a variety of mediums including drawing, painting, printmaking, glass, ceramics, sculpture, weaving and collage. Despite having large classes, I believe that I have created a work-space that facilitates creative expression. Student work is displayed in the hallways, glass cases, and in numerous venues around the community. This year students are sharing their work with me and their peers on CANVAS. CANVAS is a new online platform that is being used by teachers and students to share work, discussions, assessments and grades. Students are able to peer review their classmates' artwork, write comments/ask questions, and submit artist statements using their phone or a computer/tablet.

## Objectives

This unit is taught according to the North Carolina Essential Standards for High School. During the first or second quarter, the students are taught a two-week lesson focusing on the I.V.I visual arts standard which states the student will use the language of visual art to communicate effectively by using arts vocabulary and analyzing images. In the Mask-making unit, the students will use appropriate vocabulary focusing on the elements and principles of design when they write, discuss, assess artwork and films.

The students will become aware of the social purpose and significance of cultural artifacts such as masks.

The student will recognize the influence that stereotyping can have on one's response to artifacts of a different culture or society.

The student will explore connections between cultures and societies--including American society--relating to their use of masks.

We will also focus on I.V. 3, which states the student will create art using a variety of tools, media, and processes, safely and appropriately. By designing and creating their mask the students will learn new processes to build their three dimensional paper-mache masks. Students will have the opportunity to learn how to build armatures, work with the medium of paper mache, embellish and paint the masks and use the materials in a way that promotes safety in the classroom.

My goal with this unit is for my students to understand the uses of masks throughout history and reference these to the inner and outer theatre of the brain. Students will express their own inner and outer theatre in a mask showing a knowledge and acceptance of self. The masks will be a way for the students to explore mirroring as well as exploring the subtext between the lines. Students can become aware of new perspectives by becoming aware of the supernatural and their inner theatre.

I want my students to see parallels in the uses of masks from one culture to another. How masks have been used as forms of disguise, protection, transformation, medicinal, religion, funerary, decoration, and collection to name a few. My students will have the opportunity to relate masks from traditional cultures to supernatural faces with good and evil aspects as seen in movies today. This will help them to question today's stereotypes of race and gender, beauty and ugliness regarding their own inner actor and outer character types.<sup>5</sup>

I would like my students to find connections between these masks and what they want to express in their own masks. What do they want to share with others about

themselves? What colors will they use to express their emotions/personality? What materials do they want to use to embellish their masks? Are there personal objects that they want to add to their masks? What writings will they use for the interior of their mask-poems, song lyrics, journal writings, etc.?

### **Visual Background**

By introducing the history of mask-making, students will recognize the importance of masks and their various uses in different cultures. Students will have the opportunity to relate masks from traditional cultures to the modern day superhero mask with aspects of good and evil.

Masks can include many forms from basic facial embellishments using paint, mud, and other materials to elaborate masks for protection. Providing a variety of learning materials to the students showing masks throughout history will increase the students understanding about the form and function of masks. Giving students the opportunity to research masks they find interesting will help them develop a visual repository of images and materials (to add to their mask) in their sketchbooks.

Posters of masks will be displayed throughout the classroom, as well as, my collection of masks to provide students with a visual narrative of mask making.

### **Content Background**

Students will watch the videos “Oresteia” and “Behind the Mask,” plus the movie “The Mask.” These works deal with good and evil aspects of masks and the people that wear them. Watching these programs will foster further discussion of the variety of supernatural images they find in their own research and current media. An increased awareness of their own conflicts, fantasies, and aspirations will assist the students in gaining knowledge of their own identity.<sup>6</sup>

#### *The Oresteia*

This play deals with the timeless story of revenge, good vs. evil, and love. *The Oresteia* is a collection of three plays that explores the last two murders of the Atreides Curse--Agamemnon's murder by his wife and her lover and his wife and lover's murder by Agamemnon's son, Orestes. The hero in this play is Orestes as he is required to avenge the death of his father at the hands of his mother and his uncle. According to Dr. Pizzato, “Man can be inherently flawed but still be considered a hero”<sup>7</sup> The third play explains the end of the curse. This is the link to the YouTube video [Oresteia](#).



“Behind the Mask” is a YouTube video that gives an overview of the history of masks. It goes over a wide range of theatre masks as well as, masks for protection, ceremonies, celebrations and funerary. The moderator discusses how masks become and identifier for a character such as batman, superman, and wonder woman. This is a link to the Vimeo [Behind the Mask](#).

“The Mask” according to Rotten Tomatoes, shows “hyperactive mayhem that results when a mild-mannered banker finds an ancient mask that transforms him into a zany prankster with superhuman powers in this special-effects-intensive comedy.” I think this movie will help the students question today’s stereotypes of race and gender, as well as beauty and unattractiveness.

Stanley Ipkiss becomes green when wearing the mask and is definitely not attractive in the “normal” sense of the word. He develops superhero characteristics, as soon as he puts on the mask by fighting evil and winning the love of the beautiful heroine. The mask transforms shy and socially awkward Stanley into a comical trickster with superpowers.

### **Teaching Strategies**

I will vary the teaching strategies throughout the lesson to ensure that all learning styles are being met. The students will write notes and questions, sketching out ideas in their sketchbook using the format that we have used all year. This includes a visual of the artwork, information about the history/style of the piece, materials used to make the artwork, dimensions of the artwork, and the students’ personal feelings about the piece. Students can refer back to these notes to enhance their online discussions, and/or when participating in a critique.

Providing a wide variety of activities, this curriculum unit will focus on my students’ sense of self in relation to the supernatural images in their research both in print and film. Through images, videos, movies, plays, fables, folktales and trickster tales, the students will gain an understanding of their own inner theater and devise ways to tie these attributes into their masks.

### **Integration**

This unit will use cross-disciplinary teaching strategies. Literacy and visual art skills will be integrated throughout the unit. Our school’s focus this year is on integrating reading and writing across the curriculum. This unit will allow the students to complete a variety of tasks related to reading and writing across the curriculum such as visual journaling, close reading activities, peer review, critique and developing the artist statement.<sup>8</sup> The

focus of this unit will reach beyond basic art production by incorporating these activities to gain an understanding of the topic before creating art.<sup>2</sup>

### Visual Thinking Skills

In VTS discussions the teacher's focus is on supporting student growth by facilitating discussions of works of art. I will ask open ended questions such as, "What's going on in this picture?" and "What do you see that makes you say that?" I will link and frame the students' comments about the various masks we research, as well as student masks that we discuss. This will create a supportive and safe atmosphere to learn and keep the students engaged. This information is from the VTS in Action website: [www.vts.home.org](http://www.vts.home.org).

### Visual Journaling

Students will write and sketch in their sketchbook in response to various types of masks and questions regarding personal likes and dislikes. According to Karen Cummings,

Visual journaling is a creative way for them to share their experiences and personal responses to life's events in visual and written form. Through selecting and arranging text and images, students will broaden their understanding of art, enhance their expression of ideas and provide heightened critical responses to visual culture. It also encourages students to know themselves on a deeper level, reflecting on personal strengths and challenges, values and concerns, and desires and dreams for the future.<sup>9</sup>

In this unit, the students will create three-dimensional masks in paper mache. Students will develop a series of thumbnail sketches of the type of mask they want to make with attached research including but not limited to ceremonies, animal/bird photos and lists of what they want to express their masks. The students may also relate their mask to a superhero or include superhero traits they would like to possess. The students will be able to paint the masks in color schemes that are indicative of the personality traits expressed in the mask. Students can also add objects, feathers, beads, yarn, metal, and assorted materials to personalize the mask.

The unit will also address the process of building an armature with cardboard, poster board, and tape, and how to bend, score and attach the pieces correctly. Students will know the basics of building a mask using an armature, and how to correctly use paper mache to form a smooth mask surface. Students will learn the correct consistency of paper mache, how to correctly use paper mache alternating the position of the strips to increase durability, and how to store the masks so they dry correctly.

All students will explore a variety of techniques to paint, and then add embellishments and writings to the masks. The students will add these writings using a variety of transfer techniques.

I am lucky to have a department that has/takes time to collaborate on different lessons. I have been talking to our theatre teacher about various theatre games, developing storylines, and staging. Students will have the opportunity to share their project with others in a multitude of ways.

Integrating learning with other disciplines helps to develop a more rigorous and memorable lesson. Lessons combining several disciplines assist in students in learning and understanding a unit of study. Developing an integrated unit with input from educators from other fields facilitates a deeper understanding of material. It also is setting an example of acceptance and collegiality that will assist the students in acting in a similar manner. This develops collaboration and high expectations for students working together. Businesses today want students who can think outside of the box and be team players. Projects like this assist the students in coming up with numerous solutions to a problem as well as working together to successfully complete the project. As Ben Johnson states, in *Deeper Learning: Why Cross-Curricular Teaching is Essential*, “collaboration is necessary for students in order to be expert learners and demonstrate their learning by applying and creating.”<sup>10</sup> In order for all this to happen in a sustainable way in our schools, deeper learning requires that groups of teachers pool their talents, resources, time, and efforts to maximize coherence, relevance, and connections among the content areas.

I will give the students a right and left brain test from Betty Edwards’s book, *Drawing on the Right Side of the Brain*. Students will complete several right brain/left brain drawing exercises and look at several pictures showing right/left brain tendencies. We will talk about the traits of each hemisphere.<sup>11</sup>

I will introduce the students to masks by showing the film *The Mask* to the class. The students will discuss what happens to Jim Carrey when he is wearing the mask as compared to not wearing the mask. Students will write their own synopsis of the movie so they will also write notes during the movie, which will keep them engaged. They will then use think, pair, and share to discuss the movie with other students. As we talk about the movie, I will discuss inner elements of the brain’s movie theater as discussed in the seminar.<sup>12</sup>

We will see a teacher made PowerPoint on masks and mask-making and I will give the students the opportunity to research a variety of masks on the University of Virginia Mask website and others. Students will place masks they find interesting in a class CANVAS discussion board. Students will have the opportunity to make

comments/observations about the masks they find interesting/unusual. The students will use visual thinking skills to discuss the works.

Students will make sketches of the masks they find interesting in their sketchbook and begin writing a list of twenty things about themselves. Ten will be things they show the outside world and ten will be things that they don't share with others. Using this list and their mask sketches, the students will begin sketching out designs for their own masks. They will use think, pair, share or peer review with another student to explore ideas for their masks.

I will show the video of "The Oresteia" from YouTube. We will discuss the premise of the play and what ideas the students find interesting. The students can then compare the Furies in the play to the trickster in the film and how this is relevant to their inner/outer theatre. We'll discuss the recurring themes of revenge and love. Why are these themes still relevant today? What is the theme of your artwork? What do you feel comfortable sharing? What do you want to hide/not share with others? Students will write their own story or play about their mask that will be displayed with the finished mask.

Students will then begin the process of building and assembling a mask. I will demonstrate how to correctly tape and build the mask so it will be sturdy. I will also demonstrate the correct technique for applying the paper mache to the masks. Students will sketch out details on their mask before they begin to paint. The students can use the color symbolism handout to assist them in picking out the colors to paint their mask. The students will decide what embellishments to add to the mask. Students will discuss the design principles and how they can assist in making a well-designed mask. Students will have the opportunity to add movable parts to the mask and/or make the mask a whole-head mask vs. a half-face mask.

## **Classroom Activities**

### Lesson One: Seen and Unseen

Goal: Have students create a theme for their mask using a variety of sources for inspiration. The lesson starts with the students watching the film The Mask. The film will facilitate discussion and understanding of the following aspects from of our seminar class: beginning of the conflict (goals, obstacles and primal drives of the flawed hero), middle (with new plot twists and characters in rising conflict with each other), and the end (hero changes as conflict builds to climax and resolution).

The beginning of conflict deals with the initial backstory of Jim Carrey's character, Stanley Ipkiss, and how he was ignored, bullied and basically a non-entity. Stanley begins to accomplish great things, acquiring friends and a girlfriend after finding the mask. He goes through a personal transformation but begins to go through internal

conflicts as he changes into a cartoonish superhero. The end of the movie deals with his acceptance of himself and the realization that he doesn't need the mask to be happy. He gains a new perspective on his life when he realizes he doesn't need the mask to be successful or happy. This movie will help the students gain an understanding of the range of emotions masks are designed to provoke such as fright, amusement, disgust, reverence, curiosity, empathy or a sense of self-identification.<sup>13</sup>

Students will create a Venn diagram showing the personality traits that c (Jim Carrey) displays while wearing the mask vs. not wearing the mask as well as, what traits overlap. As a group, we will discuss some of the ways wearing a mask changed Stanley Ipkiiss (Jim Carrey) and then they will meet with a partner and complete their think, pair, share opportunity. The students will learn through inquiry and active listening. This activity will assist the students in completing a brainstorming activity by listing their own inner theatre characteristics. These characteristics will be used as a guide to develop images and themes for their masks.

As a whole group, the students will look at my mask-making power point and visual images of a variety of masks relating to their historical research. I will ask the students open-questions about each mask after giving them a brief background of each mask. Using VTS (visual thinking skill) students are asked to look carefully at works of art, talk about what they observe, back up their ideas with evidence, listen to and consider the views of others, and discuss many possible interpretations. As the teacher using VTS, I will ask, "What's going on in this picture? What do you see that makes you say that? What more can we find out from this image?"

Students will understand that many times people wearing masks are actually pretending to be someone else. Masks like costumes help tell stories by providing the audience with a way to tell the characters apart. This allows the students to see that many times mask wearers behave in ways that would otherwise be deemed inappropriate or offensive (for example, circus clowns) and while entertaining to viewers this highlights what is appropriate/inappropriate in that particular society.

As the students design their own masks, they can focus on what attributes they will incorporate into the mask that they don't normally share with others. The videos and movie can help the students clearly see their own superhero and trickster traits.

## Lesson Two

This lesson focuses on North Carolina Standard I.V.1. This standard states the learner will use the language of visual arts to communicate effectively. These skills relate to being able to design and fabricate a work of art that visually expresses an idea. This portion of the unit focuses on the student beginning to design and form their masks. Each

student is creating art through the use of the elements and principle of art, composition, visual journaling and the use of media.

This project requires the students to create a paper mache mask that incorporates visual imagery depicting their inner/outer theatre. In order to prepare these sketches, students will take photographs of themselves making various facial expressions. These photos will provide visual references for the students as they begin brainstorming ideas for their mask.

The students will complete several sketches that they feel best describes the way other's perceive them and how they perceive themselves. From these sketches they will decide which sketch and traits they best feel is represented and begin building their armature.

To make the armature for the masks they will use newspaper, tape, masks, wire, poster board, and cardboard. I have made a brief video that describes and demonstrates this process. I will also give an in-class demonstration of form making. The students will begin by building the basic form with poster board and newspaper. Adding details with wire, tape, cardboard will give the mask durability and strength.

Students will begin to add paper mache to their forms. Special care will be given to altering the placement of the paper mache strips to add strength to the forms. Three coats of newspaper paper mache strips and then the final coat will be done with the school issued brown paper towels. This will give the students a neutral background to add their designs and begin painting.

### Lesson Three

Students study symbolism in writings, videos, films, advertising and art. Symbolism has been used throughout history to represent various emotions and attributes (purple-royalty, green-envy). In the movie, The Mask, the mask is green which ties into Stanley's jealousy of other more worldly characters around him. Using color to visualize emotions connects to the student's goal of creating a mask with a personal message of their inner/outer theatre. In The Oresteia, when Agamemnon returns home, Clytemnestra lays out a purple tapestry for Agamemnon's homecoming and subsequent murder at her hands. Purple has been shown to relate to blood. Blood imagery is a prevalent theme throughout The Oresteia, such as bloodshed of a relative leading to retributive bloodshed, and blood related to life and fertility.

In Antigone, Antigone tells the Nurse that she has come from a "gray world." Antigone wanders in this gray "nowhere," a world beyond the universe of the waking. Gray in art is basically a non-color absent of any feeling or warmth.

The students will gain an understanding of symbolic color and use this understanding to paint their masks in a manner that expresses their own inner/outer theater.

The students will develop a specific color scheme for their masks using color to symbolize various inner and outer theater elements. Color can help the students shape meaning and memories. Using their right brain hemispheres as the inner critic and the improviser, the students will develop visual, spatial and tonal openness to the new. Students will look at the following site: <http://www.colormatters.com/color-symbolism> to research color symbolism before painting their masks. Students will make notes about color in their visual journal/sketchbook. Advanced students could also look at the website--<http://millstein.weebly.com/colors-webquest.html>, on color to gain a more in depth understanding on the effects of color on perception, buying, and branding. Color is an important component of the mask because it can change the effect on the viewers and the message the artist is trying to convey.

Painting techniques will be discussed and demonstrated. Most students in this class will have painted before. Because this is a new medium there are techniques (that I will review) that will ensure the success of the project. Students will paint and glaze their masks. Some students may use words, song lyrics, poems, etc. for the inner mask and/or outer mask to help facilitate the message they are trying to share with the viewer.

## **Appendix 1: Implementing District Standards North Carolina Visual Arts Standards**

### Essential Standard Clarifying Objectives

I.V.1.1 Use art vocabulary to critique art. Students will use art vocabulary to write about and discuss their art.

I.V.1.2 Understand how design influences artistic expression. Students will look at a variety of masks and use simplification, exaggeration, and distortion to design their masks expressing the personality.

I.V.1.3 Understand the use of global themes, symbols, and subject matter in art. The student will study the use of masks throughout history and the use of color to add meaning to the works.

I.V.1 Use the language of visual arts to communicate effectively. The students will design and build a mask to create a work of art that celebrates each student's individuality.

I.V.1.4 Analyze images through the process of deconstruction (the components of the image and its meaning). The student will break the picture down using Visual thinking skills the students will discuss how each artisan used basic design components to create a mask



## **Appendix 2**

### **Vocabulary:**

**Armature:** skeletal framework built as a support on which a clay, wax, or plaster figure is constructed

**Color scheme:** an arrangement or pattern of colors or colored objects conceived of as forming an integrated whole

**Craftsmanship:** skill in a craft/art form

**Exaggeration:** in mask making it is overstating the size and/or shape of an object

**Mask:** a covering for all or part of the face, worn to conceal one's identity. A grotesque or humorous false face worn at a carnival, masquerade, etc.

**Motif:** one design that when repeated becomes a pattern

**Simplification:** simplifying a design to its simplest form

**Paper Mache-**mashed and/or shredded paper

**Pattern:** a principle of design one design/motif is repeated to make a pattern

**Personal Voice:** shows your personality and/or emotions in your work

## **Resources**

### **List of Materials for Classroom Use:**

Acrylic paints-student grade acrylic paints including the primary, secondary colors and white and black

Beads-wooden, glass, and plastic beads to add for decoration

Buttons-glue on different buttons for decoration

Chrome books-computers to be used for research and sharing information with classmates

Copper-thin gauge copper sheets to cut with scissors for decoration

Display boards-school display boards 6 feet by 9 feet

Erasers-black pearl erasers and gum erasers

Extension cords-for computers

Folders-used to cut up for three dimensional eyes, nose etc.

Glue guns-low temp glue guns to add decorations to masks

Glue-Elmers water based glue to use as a base for paper mache mix

Hot glue-to glue onto cardboard and/or poster board as well as hair and decorative elements

LCD projector- to project the movie onto the white board

Magazines-used to make armature

Mask PowerPoint-teacher made power point showing a variety of masks by students as well as historic masks

Masking tape-used to tape the armature together

Mat knives-knives to cut cardboard and poster board with

Metallic paints-acrylic paints made to look like metals

Newspapers-used to make armature

Paint brushes-to paint, and apply varnish

Paint pens-pens that contain acrylic paint

Paper towels-used for paper mache

Paper- white bond paper, white sulphite 90lb paper

Pencils-used to sketch out designs in their visual journals

Poster boards-large multi colored boards to display the masks and the student writings

Raffia-thin colored and natural material to make hair

Scissors-used for cutting a variety of materials

Sculpty-clay substance that becomes hard w/exposure to hair

Sketchbooks-student sketchbooks a minimum of 9"x12" for visual journaling

Tape-masking tape a minimum of 1" used for taping the armature of the mask together

Varnish-water based non-toxic varnish

Water containers-for water, paper mache mix, and to clean the brushes

Wheat paste-used to make the mixture to dip newspaper in to make paper mache and cover the masks with

Wire-different types of wire to use in the armature as well as for decorative purposes

Yarn-a variety of colors of yarn for hair, adornments

### **Reading List for Students**

"African Folktales." African Folktales. Accessed December 1, 2015.

<http://ccs.clarityconnect.com/NRiggs/AfricanFolktales.html>.- This site contains numerous African folktales and fables that tell stories about masks as well as, stories with a moral.

"African Masks - The African Tribal Artist." African Masks - The African Tribal Artist. Accessed September 27, 2015. A website that focuses on tribal art and its various uses in the tribe and tribal ceremonies. This site shows a variety of masks made from different materials and giving background information on each.  
<http://www.artfactory.com/africanmasks/information/african-mask-artists.htm>

"United States Folklore." Stories from Each of the Fifty States from American Folklore. Accessed December 1, 2015. <http://www.americanfolklore.net/ss.html>. - Folktales and ghost stories from all fifty states.

"Another Face - Masks around the World." Another Face - Masks around the World. Accessed October 27, 2015. <http://gallery.sjsu.edu/masks/menu.html>. A mask site showing and discussing masks from all parts of the world.

Ching, Elise Dirlam, and Kaleo Ching. *Faces of Your Soul: Rituals in Art, Maskmaking, and Guided Imagery with Ancestors, Spirit Guides, and Totem Animals*. Berkeley, Calif.: North Atlantic Books, 2006. Art uses techniques learned in the unconscious mind to express discoveries from the subconscious, of the deep inner mystery and wisdom, of the realms of dreams.

"Color Symbolism." Color || Symbolism. Accessed October 31, 2015.  
<http://www.colormatters.com/color-symbolism>. A website that focuses on color, color theory and color symbolism. It looks at color symbolism throughout history, perceptions of color, and branding using color.

"Japanese Masks - Artelino." Japanese Masks - Artelino. Accessed November 23, 2015. <http://www.artelino.com/articles/japanese-masks.asp>. This site gives background information on NOH masks and Kabuki Theater. The site also has an embedded video.

Perrault, Charles, and Marcia Brown. *Cinderella, Or, The Little Glass Slipper*. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1954. The story of a young girl with two evil stepsisters and an evil stepmother who triumphs evil and marries a prince.

Rnsen, Peter Christen, and J. Moe. *The Three Billy Goats Gruff*. New York: Harcourt, Brace and, 1957. This is a children's story with a moral dealing with three goats an "eat me when I am fatter ruse".

Snyder, Scott, and Greg Capullo. *Batman*. New York: DC Comics, 2012. One of many Batman comics. Students could read this comic to give them ideas about their own super power.

## Annotated Bibliography for Teachers

- "African Masks - The African Tribal Artist." African Masks - The African Tribal Artist. Accessed September 27, 2015. A website that focuses on tribal art and its various uses in the tribe and tribal ceremonies. This site shows a variety of masks made from different materials and giving background information on each. <http://www.artfactory.com/africanmasks/information/african-mask-artists.htm>
- "A History of Masks for Halloween." A History of Masks for Halloween. Accessed September 27, 2015. <http://visual.ly/history-masks-halloween>. An easy to use site that shows the history of various types of Halloween masks including the background of Halloween.
- Andreasen, Nancy. "In Search of Creativity: In an Excerpt from The Creating Brain, a Leading Neuroscientist Explores the Role of Nature and Nurture in the Evolution of Extraordinary Creativity. (Excerpt)." *The Saturday Evening Post*, November 1, 2006. This article explores nature and nurture in developing creativity in children. The article also discusses how what you hear from parents, teachers, friends, and yourself is what you become and believe.
- "Another Face - Masks around the World." Another Face - Masks around the World. Accessed October 27, 2015. <http://gallery.sjsu.edu/masks/menu.html>. A mask site showing and discussing masks from all parts of the world.
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- "Color Symbolism." Color || Symbolism. Accessed October 31, 2015. <http://www.colormatters.com/color-symbolism>. A website that focuses on color, color theory and color symbolism. It looks at color symbolism throughout history, perceptions of color, and branding using color.
- "Colors Web quest." Ms. Millstein's Reading Module Courses. Accessed October 31, 2015. <http://millstein.weebly.com/colors-webquest.html>. An open web quest that is all about color, color theory and symbolism. A self-paced guide for students with videos, visuals, and the history of color theory.

Cummings, Karen L. "Visual Journaling: Engaging Adolescents in Sketchbook Activities." *Arts & Activities*, March 1, 2011. An article on the positive attributes of visual journaling in the classroom including visuals of examples and writing prompts.

Edwards, Betty. *The New Drawing on the Right Side of the Brain*. 2nd Rev. Ed. New York: Jeremy P. Tarcher/Putnam, 1999. This book focuses on activating the right side of the brain through a variety of drawing exercises. The author believes that these exercises assist the students in becoming more adept at foreshortening, perspective, positive and negative space, and showing value.

Flowers, Latoya, writer. *Behind the Mask*. A nine minute video discussing theatre masks and the history of masks.

"Japanese Masks - Artelino." Japanese Masks - Artelino. Accessed November 23, 2015. <http://www.artelino.com/articles/japanese-masks.asp>. This site gives background information on NOH masks and Kabuki Theater. The site also has an embedded video showing examples of these masks and describing their uses.

Johnson, Ben. "Deeper Learning: Why Cross-Curricular Teaching Is Essential." *Edutopia*. January 15, 2013. Accessed November 23, 2015. <http://www.edutopia.org/blog/cross-curricular-teaching-deeper-learning-ben-johnson>. This article discusses the benefits of teachers collaborating on units to foster cross-curricular understanding.

"Merriam-Webster Online." Accessed November 19, 2015. <http://nws.merriam-webster.com/pendictionary/>. This dictionary provides a definition of the word, "mask," plus the history and uses of masks.

"Native American Masks of the Northwest Coast and Alaska." Native American Masks of the Northwest Coast and Alaska. Accessed September 27, 2015. An overview of Native American masks with focus on the Northwest coast and Alaska.

Pizzato, Mark. *Inner Theatres of Good and Evil: The Mind's Staging of Gods, Angels and Devils*. Jefferson, N.C.: McFarland & Company, Publishers, 2011. Explores the cosmic dimensions of the brain's inner theatre as revealed by neurology, cognitive science, evolutionary psychology, psychoanalysis, primatology, and exemplary Western performances.

Pizzato, Mark. "Levels, Stages, and Feedback Loops of the Animal Legacies within the Human Brain." Chart. Forthcoming in *Beast-People Onscreen and in Your Brain*. Santa Barbara: Praeger, 2016. This is a chart from class lectures detailing the left and right neocortical processes. The chart explains the left and right hemisphere of the brain.

Studyguide.com. Accessed November 19, 2015. <http://study.com/academy/lesson/the-oresteia-by-aeschylus-summary-themes-quiz.html>. This website provides background information on *The Oresteia* and a summary of the plot.

"The Mask." Accessed November 19, 2015. <http://www.rottentomatoes.com/m/1053779-mask/>. Rotten Tomatoes gives a basic overview of the movie, *The Mask* and briefly discusses the male protagonist, Stanley Ipkiss as well as other characters.

"The Meanings of Colors." Explore Colors. Accessed November 23, 2015. <http://www.colormatters.com/color-symbolism/the-meanings-of-colors>. A comprehensive web quest for students to research color symbolism, historical roots of color meaning and basic color connotations.

"What Masks Reveal | EDSITEment." What Masks Reveal | EDSITEment. Accessed November 23, 2015. <http://edsitement.neh.gov/lesson-plan/what-masks-reveal>. Students explore the cultural significance of masks by investigating the role they play in ceremonies and on special occasions in societies from widely separated regions of the world. They then reflect on masking behavior in American society, such as at Halloween and in the circus.

Young, Bernard, and O. Gude. *Art, Culture, and Ethnicity*. Reston, VA: National Art Education Association, (1916 Association Drive, Reston 22091-1590), 1990. This book deals with self-identification and the fact that Gude and Young's belief that everyone has a story to tell. The book focuses on Lowenfeld's research.

Wright, Wanda B. "Using Contemporary Art to Challenge Cultural Values, Beliefs and Assumptions." *The Journal of the National Art Education Association*. July 2006, Volume 59, No. 4. pp 39-45. Art educators, like many other educators born or socialized within the mainstream culture of a society, seldom have an opportunity to identify, question, and challenge their cultural values, beliefs, assumptions, and perspectives because school culture typically reinforces those they learn at home and in their communities.

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## Notes

<sup>1</sup> Pizzato, *Inner Theatres of Good and Evil: The Mind's Staging of Gods, Angels, and Devils*.

<sup>2</sup> Flowers, *Behind the Mask*.

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<sup>3</sup> Pizzato, Mark. "Levels, Stages, and Feedback Loops of the Animal Legacies within the Human Brain." Chart. Forthcoming in *Beast-People Onscreen and in Your Brain*.

<sup>4</sup> "Another Face-Masks around the World."

<sup>5</sup> Pizzato, *Inner Theatres of Good and Evil: The Mind's Staging of Gods, Angels, and Devils*.

<sup>6</sup> Andreason, "In Search of Creativity: in an Excerpt from The Creating Brain, a Leading Neuroscientist Explores the Role of Nature and Nurture in the Evolution of Extraordinary Creativity."

<sup>7</sup> Pizzato, *Inner Theatres of Good and Evil: The Mind's Staging of Gods, Angels, and Devils*

<sup>8</sup> "What Masks Reveal | EDSITEment." What Masks Reveal | EDSITEment

<sup>9</sup> Cummings, "Visual Journaling: Engaging Adolescents in Sketchbook Activities." Arts & Activities, March 1, 2011

<sup>10</sup> Johnson, "Deeper Learning: Why Cross-Curricular Teaching Is Essential." Edutopia. January 15, 2013.

<sup>11</sup> Edwards, *The New Drawing on the Right Side of the Brain*. 2nd Rev. Ed. New York: Jeremy P. Tarcher/Putnam, 1999.

<sup>12</sup> "The Mask." Accessed November 19, 2015.  
<http://www.rottentomatoes.com/m/1053779-mask/>.