

Going Deeper with Looking 5x2, Creative Questions, and *Synecdoche* by Byron Kim

Teacher Professional Development: Expressing the Individual

Adapted from Tondra Odom and Julie Carmean, National Gallery of Art and DC Public Schools, Washington, DC

Target Thinking Dispositions: Observing and Describing, Questioning and Investigating

Thinking Routine: Looking 5X2 and the Creative Questions Game

Work of Art: Byron Kim, *Synecdoche*, 1991-Present

Disciplines: Art, English Language Arts, Social Studies

Curricular Topics: Expressing the Individual, Minimalism, Conceptualism,

Audience: Adaptable for any grade level

Total Time: ~1 hour (adaptable for shorter timeframes or two sessions)

Learning Objectives: Teachers will be able to observe, describe, question and investigate a work of art, and draw connections between the work of art, their own lives, and their classrooms.

Materials Needed:

- Art reproduction of *Synecdoche* by Byron Kim (poster, digital image, or individual prints)
- Picture of Artist, Byron Kim
- Looking 5X2 and Creative Questions templates
- 1 notebook and marker to document responses
- pens/pencils (1 per teacher)

Introduction:

~5 minutes

Introduce the lesson for the day, the target thinking dispositions and thinking routines. Connect the lesson with any prior lessons completed by the group, and mention your own teaching background for teachers to know the perspective from which you come.

Looking 5X2

1. Looking:

~2 minutes

Invite teachers to look at the work of art for a couple of minutes, from both up close and far away. Ask them to refrain from reading the wall label at this time.

2. Listing Words:

~3 minutes

Next, invite teachers to complete the first column of the “Looking 5x2” template. Ask them to independently write down 5 words or phrases that describe the work of art. You may suggest that they consider colors, shapes, textures, and/or arrangement.

3. Group Sharing

~2 minutes

Call on 5 teachers to share their observations. Document their comments on paper and explicitly tell them that you are doing so, by saying for example “I’m going to write down some of the things you notice on this notepad to make our thinking visible”.

4. Repeating Steps 1-2:

~5 minutes

Ask teachers to look at the art again and write 5 new words in the second column of their Looking 5X2 template. Optional: allow them to turn to a partner and compare their lists.

5. Group Sharing:

~2 minutes

Call on 5 new people and document their answers again on the notepad.

Extending Looking 5X2

Provide Background on the Artist and Artwork:

~3 minutes

You may show a picture of the artist, Byron Kim, and have it passed around the room. Share a brief story about the artist or the painting. You can explain that he is a Korean American abstract contemporary artist who lives and works in New York City. His work is primarily concerned with colors, ideas, words and the social political issues of our day. The word synecdoche is a figure of speech in which the part represents the whole, and the whole represents the part. Each panel represents a portrait and the skin color of a person. Kim’s goal is not to provide the viewer with an answer or even a single message, but to require him/her to think, to wonder, and to ask questions.

Creative Questions

1. Brainstorming Questions

~20 minutes

Explain to teachers that they will be engaging with a second thinking routine called Creative Questions, which expands and deepens our thinking and curiosity by creating thought provoking questions.

Direct teachers to look at the Creative Questions template.

Step 1: Have teachers pair up and think of 12 thought-provoking, open-ended questions using the question-starts for 5 minutes.

Step 2: Instruct teachers to spend 2 minutes selecting the 3 most interesting questions with their partner and drawing a star next them.

Step 3: Next, ask them to choose the most interesting question and discuss it with their partner for 3 minutes.

In a whole group discussion, invite teachers to spend 10 minutes sharing their questions and thoughts. Document questions by writing them down.

2. Synthesizing Question Themes

~1 minute

Synthesize the types of questions asked. For example: “It sounds like you are interested to know the artist’s intention and process, and all of your questions are truly creative and imaginative”.

Extending Creative Questions

3. Provide Additional Background on the Artist and Artwork:

~2 minutes

Tell the teachers you will tell them a bit more about the Byron Kim’s process. When Kim began his work, he started working with his family and friends doing skin portraits. Then he did skin portraits of neighbors, and then strangers. He included all races, all ethnicities, and all ages. He didn’t consider the work of art finished, but an ongoing piece. He would put a piece of tape on people’s arms and try to match their skin tones using paint. He is asking the viewers some creative questions himself. Like what are the limits of representation? He wants us to challenge ideas about categorization. What does it mean to categorize? What does it mean to put limits? He wants to take those limits off and see the value of the whole versus putting something into a category.

Curriculum Connection – Why might it matter?

~10 minutes

Continue to focus on the curricular topic by posing an open-ended question to the whole group for discussion, such as, “Why might this artwork matter to you?”

Wrap-Up:

~5 minutes

Summarize the activity for teachers, highlighting linkages between the thinking routines (Looking 5X2 and Creative Questions), key dispositions (observing and describing, questioning and investigating), and any relevant educational content. If time allows, reflect on the lesson together by having teachers write or discuss the following question:

“How might you apply this in your own teaching practice, both the work of art and/or the Creative Questions Routine used today?”

Other Suggested Works of Art:

This lesson can be applied to other works of art, such as:

- Rozeal (formerly known as Iona Rozeal Brown), *afro.died.T.*, 2011
- James Castle, *Untitled (Figures Lined Against a Wall)*, n.d.
- Carrie Mae Weems, *May Flowers*, 2002

For more works of art related to the subject of expressing the individual please refer to the Uncovering America resource on the National Gallery of Art website:

www.nga.gov/uncoveringamerica