

My Monster Wears Prada:

or how I learned to be human by becoming a monster

How do we represent ideas about social issues in the arts?



This unit uses “monsters” as a metaphor to examine and explore social ideas and problems through drama, visual art, dance and music.

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Living Sky School
Division No. 202

Grade 8
ARTS EDUCATION

Strands
Visual Art, Drama,
Dance, Music.

Outcomes
CP8.1
CP8.6
CP8.8
CP8.12
CR8.3
CH8.4



Living Sky School Division no. 202

I. Curriculum

Outcome: Creative Productive

CP8.1 Create dance compositions that express ideas and student perspectives on social issues (e.g., poverty, racism, homophobia, sustainability, gangs).

- Investigate how a single idea can be developed in many ways and directions (e.g., How many different ways can we represent through movement a feeling of hopelessness or anger about this injustice?).
- Reflect on how movement, dance elements, and principles of composition can be organized to convey meaning in dance (e.g., What message or ideas does our dance communicate about current attitudes towards poverty or racism?).

CP8.6 Express student perspectives on social issues (e.g., poverty, racism, homophobia, sustainability, gangs) in drama and/or collective creation.

- Analyze and discuss how drama may be used to explore perspectives on social issues and promote understanding of topics of personal significance.
- Collaborate with other students to explore compelling questions through drama
- Contribute to the creation of a plan to document the creative process (e.g., reflective journal entries, video, photography, blog, or web-based diary)
- Analyze and describe the effectiveness of own drama to convey perspectives.

CP8.8 Investigate and make choices about musical structures in sound composition.

- Conduct a collaborative inquiry and experiment with voice and instruments to explore inquiry questions about musical structure (e.g., In what ways could we rearrange these motifs or phrases in different sequences?).
- Demonstrate knowledge of how the elements and principles are used to create form and structure in music.

CP8.12 Solve visual art problems using a variety of processes and media.

- Explore and expand upon an idea to achieve more depth of meaning and expression.
- Take risks by working with innovative ideas, unfamiliar styles, or media.
- Keep an ongoing record of ideas and works in progress for own visual art expressions

Outcome: Critical Responsive

CR8.2 Investigate and identify ways that today's arts expressions often reflect concern for social issues.

- Conduct inquiry into social justice and diversity issues in the arts including stereotyping and bias (e.g., stereotyping of male dancers, or the lack of women or First Nations artists represented in history of the arts books).

Outcome: Cultural Historical

CH8.4 Examine and respond to the work of artists who incorporate more than one art form in their work (e.g., combining poetry and music).

- Examine and discuss various interdisciplinary arts expressions (i.e., using two or more disciplines in the work).
- Collaborate with others to create interdisciplinary work that addresses issues of social justice and/or other topics of interest to youth (e.g., relationships, body image, racism, sustainability).

II. Overview

Students will know:

- That there are connections between the art strands.
- They can solve creative problems in a number of ways.
- They can express their perspectives on social issues through the arts.
- That artists use their medium to express their own political views.
- Theatrical elements combine to achieve dramatic purpose: tension, conflict.
- Creative dance and mask provide ways to express with movement.
- They can choose to move in and out of character.
- Accepting one another in role, creating the mythology makes the experience “more real” and beneficial.
- Creating theatre involves making decisions in a group environment.

Students will do:

- Experiment with ways to create a monster from an ink blot, seeing possible form and character within non-representational shapes.
- Develop a specific character for the monster through movement, writing and improvisation.
- Collaborate with the class to create a societal structure, a community, for the monsters through a variety of strategies, including: hot seating, walking, visual mapping, rules for governance and identifying class structure.
- Create a mythology, both intellectual (memories, history, facts) and of the physical world (maps and documents) to construct the context of the monster world.
- Analyze the class system within their society and explore the possible benefits and injustices as expressed through drama, music and dance.
- Reflect on the links between their fictional world and the world that they live in.

Questions for Deeper Understanding

How does inclusion and exclusion affect individuals within a community? Why does it exist?

How do you build empathy through the arts?

How do artists represent ideas about social issues?

How do we solve problems creatively?



III. Assessment Plan

Formative

Assessment Evidence	Assessment Task
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Observations and checklist • Student Portfolio 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students participate in a variety of drama strategies and discussions to build monster world • Visual vocabulary for monster characteristics; monster society analysis; musical notation; dance notation; drama strategies; personal reflection and self assessment.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exit Slips 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Questions to further process and prompt direction for next day.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visual map 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collective monster world map (2D or 3D model).
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social issues analysis 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collectively identify possible issues that could be present in the created world.

Summative

Assessment Evidence	Assessment Task
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rubrics for outcomes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussion to co-construct criteria for inter-disciplinary work and performance.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ink blot monster defense 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Present your monster to the class in role. Refer to monster mythology.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Analysis of social issues as it relates from the drama to action in the real world. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Present analysis in written, oral or drawn form to the class.

IV. Learning Plan

Lesson One: Monster as Species

Time Frame: 1 hour

- **Ideas from Artists:** Students look at images and discuss videos of the Daily Monster by artist, Stefan G. Bucher (online resource). The monsters are generated from ink blobs, the artist recognizing potential shapes within the blob to manipulate further.
- **Visual Vocabulary:** Students analyze the pictures the artist has posted and identify characteristics and collaboratively create their own visual “vocabulary” of what constitutes a “monster”. What does a Monster eye look like? Do they talk? Do they have fingers? How will they move? The class should negotiate and agree upon similar characteristics that will classify the monsters as belonging to the same species. They should also agree upon the ways in which they can be unique or show adaptations to environment.

The artist’s drawing process is documented through time lapsed photos <http://www.dailymonster.com/>

Lesson Two: Monster Blobs

Time Frame: 1.5 hours

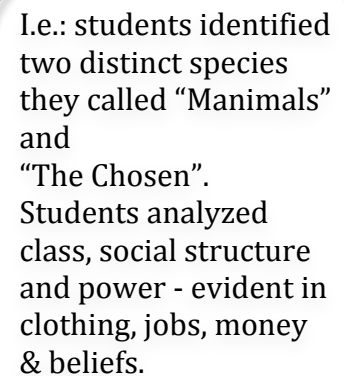
- **Inking:** Students create their own original Monster from inkblots, following the process as demonstrated by Stefan Bucher. India ink is preferred for the richness and flow but it is very messy and can stain. Each student can have a straw for blowing the ink and if possible, provide a can of compressed air to move the ink in fine patterns.
- **Seeing Form:** Encourage students to really take time to look at the ink blot from several angles and determine how to develop the character from the abstract shape. This means being able to see what is not there, envision the potential by adding new lines and incorporating shapes. It may be helpful to connect this to the concept of the Rorschach inkblot test to put it into a different context.



Lesson Three: Monster World

Time Frame: 2 hours

- **Character:** The Monsters will continue to develop and gain personality through the course of the unit. Write a biography (for inclusion in their portfolios) – this could take the form of a dating profile for a website or a wanted poster for example. Include name, interests/hobbies, weakness or fear, dream/goal, aptitude.
- **Partner Talk:** Take turns introducing your Monster to a partner. Drama strategy – introduce the Monster while in a role as their psychiatrist, or priest, or mother, or fellow employee, etc. How does this change how you speak about them and the perspective taken in the description?
- **Walk About:** Drama strategy – students mingle in the space, holding up their monster in front of them as they walk, greeting one another in role as the monster. Avoid speaking words at this point and try to get a sense of the entire group, how they move, greet and interact. The teacher side coaches students as they mingle by calling out questions and prompts such as “Do they have a way of vocalizing? What is their manner? Are they friendly or suspicious? How much energy do they give off as they move? Do they make eye contact?”
- **Categorizing:** Discuss what students noticed about the Monsters as they mingle? Were there similarities? What stood out as different? Without talking, ask students to form groupings of alike Monsters, see what happens when they move to groups without discussion first. Then discuss the groupings as a class and negotiate if any groups should separate or merge or if any should move to another group. Once the Monster group (or community) is formed, students discuss the important characteristics that make them a community, and determine what is it that they have in common.
- **Mapping:** Students work collectively in their community to make a “Visual map” of their world. The visual map will be displayed in the classroom and referred to throughout the unit. The map might be drawn 2D or consider how it could be made as a 3D model from cardboard, recycled items and plasticine. Teacher observations – move about and ask questions as they create the world, listening to explanations and descriptions of the world. The way the actual map/model looks is not as important as the talking and interacting between students as they collectively build the world, adding details, stories, and explanations of how things work. How do they get food and water? Do they have social spaces? How do they relax? Where do they sleep, eat and work? How are they governed? What



I.e.: students identified two distinct species they called “Manimals” and “The Chosen”. Students analyzed class, social structure and power - evident in clothing, jobs, money & beliefs.

do they care about and how is that represented? They are creating a physical representation as they work through the conceptual framework of the imagined world.

- **Reflection:** Take time to reflect on the world and character development of your Monster. Use the portfolio to document the work created, thoughts about the Monster and important details to describe the community. What might be exciting to explore further? What tensions might exist?
- **Exit Slip:** Describe 2 things you like about your monster's character and 1 thing you think may cause conflict. (Conflict is necessary for drama)



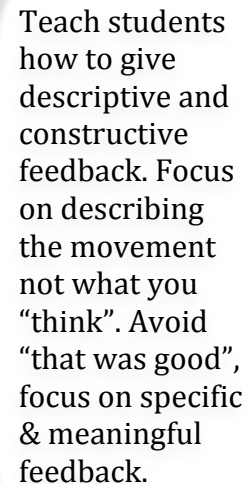
Lesson Four: Creative Dance & Character

Time Frame: 3 hours approximately

- **Monster Defense:** Present your monster to the class in role of choice (defense, prosecution, partner, witness, child, etc.). Refer to monster mythology to provide a context.
- **Monster Motto:** Form into your communities and discuss what you believe to be the guiding principle of your community of monsters. What do you have in common that is valued? What is the common barrier or fear? Try to articulate this into a motto. Begin to share these as a class and get a big picture view of the various monster communities. Are conflicts beginning to become apparent?
- **Warming Up:** How does your monster move? Drama strategy – teacher side coaching: “In role as the monster, lie on the floor and imagine where and how you might sleep. Feel the weight of your body and stretch each limb to see how it

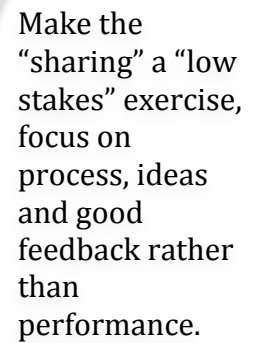
might move. Take time to yawn and stretch, make waking up vocal sounds and prepare to get up to standing. Once you are upright determine what you would need to do first and then move. Continue making gestures, actions and movements as you explore the monster’s daily world.”

- **Partner Talk:** Partner up with someone from the same monster community to discuss the exercise. What do my movements reveal about my character? With your partner, decide on a location and objective, i.e., running away from something and getting to safety, or strolling on a beautiful day and enjoying the sunshine, or carrying treasure to be buried. Try out the movement together and then join up with another pair for sharing. Take turns observing one another and provide descriptive feedback.
- **Moving Across the Floor:** Ask students to take turns moving as a group (their community) across the floor. The other groups wait their turn by observing and then providing feedback. Explore movement by suggesting dynamics, levels and pathways. How does this monster wave hello? Or show disgust? What does it look like to be in a hurry? Students can determine a common objective for the group as they move across the floor, such as: stealing food, capturing a hostage, cleaning the street, or getting on the bus. Discuss what makes movement interesting? Explore changes in dynamics:
 - Space: Direct / Indirect
 - Weight: Strong / Light
 - Time: Sudden / Sustained
 - Flow: Bound / Free
- **Adding Dance Phrases:** Provide each group with time to create a dance phrase that can be done as a group and can be repeated. The phrase should represent something the monsters believe, the motto for the group. Avoid making exact representations of the motto and think of ways to abstract the idea into movement. Dance is a symbolic form. Consider: does the phrase have to be done by each person at the same time, at the same level and at the same speed each time? Each change in the phrase is a variation. Rehearse the phrase and variation in a repeating pattern (ABACADA).
- **Notation and Documentation:** In the portfolio, students can make dance notations to represent their phrase, the variation and the pattern in their choreography. Dance notation is a written system of symbols, shapes, and lines that represent body position and movement. These are invented visuals used to plan, map, or record movement, as opposed to formal forms of dance notation.



Teach students how to give descriptive and constructive feedback. Focus on describing the movement not what you “think”. Avoid “that was good”, focus on specific & meaningful feedback.

- **Sharing:** Students take turns sharing their choreographed pieces and then determine ways to put the pieces from all groups together. Music can add a background and unifying rhythm by which to move. Negotiate to determine the order, location and how to transition from one piece to the next. The teacher may want to video record the piece so that they can take time to view it after and offer feedback. Are there moments of tension? Is there resolution? How does the meaning change when we see the pieces all in one work?
- **Analysis of Society:** Is power and status evident in the dance as portrayed through posture, energy, eye contact, relationship and gesture? Discuss how the communities might relate (or not) to one another. Use the visual maps to create a society of interconnected communities. In the portfolio, students reflect on how the Arts and artists can create work to draw attention to social issues. Students can research the work of an artist activist and share it with the class. Help make connections between the unit and the artist as activist.



Make the “sharing” a “low stakes” exercise, focus on process, ideas and good feedback rather than performance.

Lesson Five: Social Issues

Time Frame: 1 hour

- **History Revealed:** Students discuss and identify what they determine as “key moments” in their monster world. What is the history? Has there ever been an uprising? How are they governed? Are they oppressed or have they been the oppressor?
- **Social Issues:** What is the pressing social issue of this imagined world? In the role as an artist create a short written, or oral presentation, or visual representation for the class to share your perspective on the issue.
- **Tableaux Vivant:** Interpret these key moments and social issues through several tableaux. Use dance to transition from tableaux to tableaux. All movement is evidence of the character. Combine the previous dance phrases and variations created to connect each tableaux.
- **Exit Slip:** What is the key moment in the life of your Monster that you feel is most important? How might an artist interpret that moment?



A key moment of understanding occurred during a role play exercise when one group of monsters took control and belittled the other group. There was clearly an imbalance of power. The students felt it was a natural progression in the situation being explored.

Lesson Six: Story through Drama

Time Frame: 2 hours approximately

- **Creating Back Story:** Students use “Hot seating” as a technique to develop the back story of their character. From the hot seat they answer questions, in role, that other students ask. Questions such as: How old are you? Have you ever been heart broken? What do you dream about? What is your family like? Creative questioning can help lead students to discover new depths to their monster.
- **Scenarios:** Students collaborate in groups to develop 3-5minute scenarios that deal with issues the monsters might experience. Create the scene that uses focus and tension to make a social observation about something current or relevant and putting it into the monster world context.
- **Strategies:** Town Hall meetings, mime, narration over action, fairy tales, inner voices, and the Walls Have Ears can help students find the purpose of their scene. Take time to reflect on the strategies used and determine how the exercise directs the drama in new directions. Has new information become known? How will this be incorporated further? Strategies are purposeful and reveal new ideas, character intention and conflicts for the drama.



Town Hall meeting: “Why are the Manimals not allowed the same opportunities as the Chosen?”

Lesson Seven: Music of the Nation

Time Frame: 2 hours approximately

- **National Music:** What constitutes the music of a nation? How does music stir us to action, and act as a “voice of the people”? How have governments used music to manipulate people? How have artists used music to take a stand and come together as community? Share examples of music used to invoke national pride or to start a rebellion.
- **Instruments and Voice:** Review different types of instruments: percussion, string, wind. If you do not have instruments then students can problem solve how to create the sound of each instrument with found objects. This will involve improvisation and exploration as they find the sound needed for their composition.
- **Explore the Sounds:** Play each instrument and classify into groups for building an ensemble for a “found instrument orchestra”. Experiment with “tuning” and ways to create rhythm. Create a National Anthem for the Monster world.

Found object instruments – student can collect tubes, wash drums, coffee tins, water jugs, kazoos, sticks, rattles, vacuum hose etc.

Groups can develop their own form of notation to document the song and lyrics. Document in the portfolio and rehearse.

- **Putting it Together:** Sharing your work with an audience is an important step in the collective creation process. In preparing the work for others it allows students to revise, analyze and select what is most effective. Students can determine and negotiate how to best share the work created. Elements of performance could include selections from: Monster images, maps, dance, scenarios, music, issues representations and tableaux. Discuss the message they want to give to the audience. What is their intention? Is there a role for the audience? Do they wish to have an artist talk back session?
- **Reflection:** What was most interesting about the process?
What was the most challenging and why?
What did you learn the most from doing and why?



V. Appendix

Student Portfolios	page 16
Resources	page 17
Dance Concepts	page 18
Rubrics for Outcomes	page 19 - 21

Student Portfolios

When using the portfolio as an assessment tool one must first examine what the purpose is of the evaluation. When we use the portfolio in this unit we are increasing critical thinking skills by developing criteria and allowing the student to be aware of their growth and learning over time. The portfolio is a formative assessment piece but students can select from the portfolio as evidence for the summative assessment.

With these ideas in mind their portfolio should include:

- Learning Log

Regular entries, capture process

- Moments of Choice

Key, funny or interesting moments the student finds noteworthy.

- Graphic illustration of information

Their monster and any graphic sketches of their work including instrument plan, map, blocking of scenes, dance notation and music notation.

- Samples of Work

Could include peer feedback, documentation, video, photographs

- Strategy comments

Writing in Role (as Monster), hot seat, inner voice, narration, etc.

- Possible Extensions

Creative writing - stories, poems, songs, news articles from the perspective of the monster.

Resources:

Daily Monster: Butcher's Blog Showcasing his monstrous creations.

<http://www.dailymonster.com/>

Found instrument Ideas and creation

<http://www.suite101.com/content/found-object-musical-instruments-a217077>

Information on Portfolios

http://712educators.about.com/od/portfolios/Using_Portfolios_in_Education.htm

Dance Notation

<http://code.on.ca/resource/dance-notation>

15 DANCE CONCEPTS

Space

Place – Self space, general space

Size – Big (far reach), small (near reach)

Level – High, middle, low

Direction – Forward, backward, right, left, up, down

Pathway – Curved, straight, zig-zag

Focus – Single focus, multi-focus

Force

Energy – Sharp (sudden), smooth (sustained)

Weight – Strong, light

Flow – Free, bound

Time

Speed – Fast, medium, slow

Rhythm – Pulse, pattern, grouping, breath

Body

Balance – Off balance, on balance

Parts – Head, neck, shoulders, arms, wrists, elbows, hands, fingers, trunk, spine, sternum, legs, knees, ankles, feet, toes, heels, pelvis, hips, etc.

Relationships – Under, over, around, through, above, below, beside, between, in, out, together, apart, on, off, near, far, in front, behind, mirror, shadow

Shapes – Curved, straight, angular, twisted, symmetrical, asymmetrical

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Performance Rubric:

Students collaborate to create an interdisciplinary piece in the imagined world of Monsters on a social issue. Use the outcome-based rubrics to create a rubric specific to the performance task. Invite students to examine the outcomes and identify key criteria that should be considered.

Outcome: CP8.1 Create dance compositions that express ideas and student perspectives on social issues (e.g., poverty, racism, homophobia, sustainability, gangs).

Beginning – 1 I need help.	Approaching – 2 I have a basic understanding.	Meeting – 3 My work consistently meets expectations.	Excelling – 4 I have a deeper understanding.
I need assistance to create dance expressions that express ideas	I can help to create dance expressions that express ideas	I am able to use inquiry to create dance expressions that express ideas and student perspectives on social issues	I show that I am able to investigate differing ideas and directions and that I can be reflective and constructively critical of how elements and principles are used in a dance piece

- Movement patterns across the floor, explorations
- Phrase to represent motto, variation, choreography, notation
- Transition and phrases with tableaux.

Outcome: CP8.6 Express student perspectives on social issues (e.g., poverty, racism, homophobia, sustainability, gangs) in drama and/or collective creation.

Beginning – 1 I need help.	Approaching – 2 I have a basic understanding.	Meeting – 3 My work consistently meets expectations.	Excelling – 4 I have a deeper understanding.
I need assistance to express my perspective on social issues in drama.	I am able to share my perspective on social issues in drama.	I am able to use inquiry in drama to investigate topics of importance to students. I am able to use drama strategies to create the work.	I show ability to analyze and explore differing perspectives on social issues. I am able to reflect on the drama and its effectiveness of achieving dramatic purpose.

- Drama strategies: hot seat, write in role, narrative, meeting, inner voices, etc.
- Scenarios and tableaux.
- Development of collective and performance for audience.

Outcome: CP8.8 Investigate and make choices about musical structures in sound composition.

Beginning - 1 I need help.	Approaching - 2 I have a basic understanding.	Meeting - 3 My work consistently meets expectations.	Excelling - 4 I have a deeper understanding.
I need assistance to describe elements of music and principles of composition.	I am able to experiment with voice and instruments to explore musical structure and the elements of music.	I am able to demonstrate knowledge and make choices with elements and principles to create form and structure in music.	I can critically examine the connections between the elements of music and principles of composition in my own work and the work of others.

- Found instrument, tuning, rhythm exploration, creating an anthem.
- Lyrics.

Outcome: CP8.12 Solve visual art problems using a variety of processes and media.

Beginning - 1 I need help.	Approaching - 2 I have a basic understanding.	Meeting - 3 My work consistently meets expectations.	Excelling - 4 I have a deeper understanding.
I need assistance to solve visual art problems.	I am exploring and developing an idea to achieve expression and create visual interest.	I am able to take risks in my own art works and can use unfamiliar styles and media.	I show ability to explain my artistic choices, my intention and my art-making process. I can record and reflect on my ideas and progress

- Monster ink blot drawing.
- Visual map.
- Issues representation.

Outcome: CR8.2 Investigate and identify ways that today’s arts expressions often reflect concern for social issues.

Beginning - 1 I need help.	Approaching - 2 I have a basic understanding.	Meeting - 3 My work consistently meets expectations.	Excelling - 4 I have a deeper understanding.
I need assistance to respond to artists who create art for social commentary	I can describe the work of artists who create art for social commentary.	I am able to analyze and interpret the work of a variety of artists who create art for social commentary.	I show the ability to analyze how art can be reflective of different social contexts. I use inquiry to learn more about social justice in the arts

- Conversations, shared research, portfolios, analysis of an issue and artist presentation to class of Monster.

Outcome: CH8.4 Examine and respond to the work of artists who incorporate more than one art form in their work (e.g., combining poetry and music).

Beginning - 1 I need help.	Approaching - 2 I have a basic understanding.	Meeting - 3 My work consistently meets expectations.	Excelling - 4 I have a deeper understanding.
I need help identifying two or more art disciplines in a work.	I can identify the art forms in examples of interdisciplinary work.	I can collaborate with others to create work with two or more art disciplines combined.	I can collaborate on interdisciplinary work and make deep connections to social issues.

- Conversations, research sharing with class, portfolio, performance.