**Lesson Title:** Teaching Symbol through the Buddhist Lens

**Subject Area(s):** Fine Arts / English Honors

**Grade Level:** 11

**Author:** Leslie Greene

**County:** Montgomery County, MD

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Maryland Standards, Indicators, Objectives</th>
<th>English 11-MCPS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Visual Arts Content Standard</strong></td>
<td><strong>English 11-MCPS</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Standard 1.0: Perceiving and Responding: Aesthetic Education: Students will demonstrate the ability to perceive, interpret, and respond to ideas, experiences, and the environment through visual art.</td>
<td>Standard 1: The student will comprehend and interpret a variety of print, non-print and electronic texts, and other media.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Standard 2.0: Historical, Cultural, and Social Context: Students will demonstrate an understanding of visual art as an essential aspect of history and human experience.</td>
<td>Standard 2: The student will analyze and evaluate a variety of print, non-print and electronic texts, and other media.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Standard 3.0 Creative Expression and Production: Students will demonstrate the ability to organize knowledge and ideas for expression in the production of art.</td>
<td>Standard 5: The student will communicate orally in a variety of situations, for different audiences and purposes, and in different formats.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fine Arts Indicator(s):</th>
<th>English 11 Indicators:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Indicator 1.1- Identify, describe, interpret, and produce visual representations of the physical qualities of observed form</td>
<td>1.1.2— Monitor understanding while reading, viewing, and/or listening to a text.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indicator 2.1- Compare and explain how works of art from various cultures</td>
<td>1.1.3— Confirm understanding after reading, viewing, and/or listening to a text.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1.1.4— Apply knowledge of a word</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Fine Arts Objective(s):**

1.1.1 Describe how artists represent visual qualities such as spatial relationships, detail, and specific features of subject matter

1.1.2 Represent accurately in visual form spatial relationships, detail, and specific features of subject matter

2.1.1 Analyze the roles and functions of the visual arts in expressing ideas, events, and universal themes within and among cultural groups

2.1.2 Compare images and forms that explore universal themes about human experiences from different times and places

3.2.1 Apply elements of art and principles of design to communicate specific ideas in visual compositions

**English 11 Objectives:**

1- Examine and analyze print and non-print texts
2- Express ideas on how different cultures express themselves through symbol
3- Define and apply the term “symbol”
4- Reflect upon their learning
5- Reflect upon how they would represent themselves.
Objective(s) (Connecting the content areas):
Through the study of symbols using an exploration of artistic techniques, shapes, and colors students will define and create an individual and class symbol.

Description of Lesson/Activities

Procedure:

Day 1
1) Activate by having the definition of symbol on the board with a stop sign shape up, but no “STOP” in the middle. Have a brief discussion of how we know what this symbol means with absolutely no language.
2) Have the Olympic rings up next and ask what these rings represent. Then show them the artist’s reasons for creating this symbol which deals with colors and unity.
3) Show them the Bald Eagle and have them journal on what the Eagle represents in the United States and ask what it says about us as Americans. Discuss.
4) Homework for that evening is to brainstorm images, adjectives and passions they have. Any images they will want to use need to be printed and brought into class the following day.

Day 2
1) After choosing your class symbol explain your choice. I chose the symbol of Yin and Yang and explained how it represents the push and the pull of the classroom and also how it represents how we are all individuals but part of a whole. While the Yin/Yang symbol is traditionally Chinese it did spur a discussion on Buddhist beliefs.
2) Link to the website religionfacts.com to show them the different meanings of colors and explain how color can tie into mood. Have a brief discussion on how the Tibetans use color to represent mood.
3) Minimum requirements for their symbol are one strong adjective, one image, one color, and they must use the entire piece of paper.
4) Encourage the use of the thesaurus as a way to locate their one (or more) strong adjective.
5) Explain how some students are more visual and some are more drawn to the written word and that using more words is fine but they must have at least one visual.
6) Have the students rough draft their symbols onto a piece of 81/2 by 11 paper. Then have them choose a piece of the symbol to final draft their symbol onto considering color, image, and language.
7) Have them glue their pieces down onto the corresponding space.

Day 3
1) Present completed symbol and ask students to share their symbols and why they made the decisions they made.
2) Have them reflect on the process.

Materials for Teacher/Students

Butcher paper
Traced Pieces for the mural
Complete mural
Oil Pastels
Glue
Glaze
Mounting board
Good heavy weight paper.
Hand out for brainstorming their symbol
Picture of class Symbol with brief explanation of the meaning
Hand Out-reflection

Note: Teachers will have to take their class symbol and project it onto a large sheet of paper and then create the puzzle pieces for when the students start transferring their sketches to their puzzle pieces. You will need two large projected symbols and pieces, one you can cut up that is numbered and one that is complete with the same numbers.

Assessment Strategies:
Journals with justifications.
Sharing and justifying their choices for their individual symbols.

Please Note: Because this was an ice breaker I opted not to make this a formal assessment. I wanted to give the students the parameters for their symbols, but not a formal grade. Informal assessment was given verbally throughout the drafting process.