

## Pop 'n Poetry

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### Introduction

What is ekphrasis? Why employ the use of it in the second language classroom? These are questions that I posed to myself while participating in a seminar about ekphrastic poetry. If your students are anything like mine, their attitude towards poetry may be one of intimidation, they might feel lost or quite possibly inept; poetry seems mysterious to them. Now add into the mix poetry in another language, a language in which a great deal of the vocabulary is unfamiliar to them. Approaching a poem in the second language may seem quite daunting, almost impossible for first or second year language learners. Ekphrastic poetry can ease the introduction of poetry in the target language to students by providing a means for them to enter into a poem, using a method that is very similar to reading illustrated nursery rhymes as a child. Provided with the visual, the language learner begins to believe that understanding the poem at a very basic level is possible. Poetry written in response to a work of art invites discussion about the components of the poem, its structure and its function. For language learners it provides plenty of opportunity for growth in and practice using the target language vocabulary aurally, verbally, and written. In this unit designed for a World Language class, I will focus on writing poetry in the target language in response to visual works of art, specifically Pop Art. Students will learn how to closely observe a work of Pop Art and interpret it using the *Visual Thinking Strategies* method.<sup>1</sup> The same strategies that students employ for close reading of text are easily applied to observation of works of art. Students will practice both strategies as they read poems inspired by Pop Art.

### Background

I currently teach at John Dickinson High School in Wilmington, Delaware in the International Baccalaureate Middle Years Programme, which has been in existence for three years. The middle school is located within the high school building in a wing of its own and was created as an extension to the International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme for grades 11 and 12. The Diploma Programme was initiated at Dickinson five years prior to the inception of the Middle Years Programme (MYP). MYP was implemented to encourage more students to participate in the Diploma Programme. In its first year, MYP included grades six, seven, eight and this year will be expanding to include grade ten. A continuous sixth through twelfth grade International Baccalaureate Programme will be established at Dickinson in the near future. Our Middle Years Programme will be growing in size this coming school year from about 240 students to the maximum of 300.

Students must apply to participate in MYP. To be eligible, students must be on grade level in both Reading and Math, and must be motivated to learn. I am currently the only Spanish teacher in MYP teaching Spanish 1A (Grade 6), Spanish 1B (Grade 7), and Spanish 2 (Grade 8), meeting with my classes for forty-five minutes every day.

Open-mindedness is one of the ten attributes included in the IB Learner Profile. To be considered open-minded students, “critically appreciate our own cultures and personal histories, as well as the values and traditions of others. We seek and evaluate a range of points of view, and we are willing to grow from the experience.”<sup>2</sup> Our school population is fairly diverse but the students typically have a shallow understanding of various cultures not only around the world, but also close to home. They need opportunities to immerse themselves culturally in order to appreciate the similarities in our human experiences that on the surface appear to be different. My plan is to use authentic Spanish language texts and both Hispanic artists and student created Pop art to present students with opportunities to immerse themselves in the Hispanic culture using authentic target language literature accompanied by a culture rich works of art. It is my intention to incorporate ekphrastic poetry into this unit so that students can have exposure to Hispanic culture through the personal experiences of native speakers as told in their native tongue. Authentic literature exposes students to culture through the experiences of the author/speaker because the words the poet uses “refer to common experience,” expressing facts, ideas or events referring to certain knowledge about the world that others share. Words also reflect the poet’s beliefs, attitudes, and point of view and those of her/his culture. Through this unit my students will see that “Language expresses cultural reality.”<sup>3</sup>

Incorporating ekphrastic poetry in the target language not only enriches students’ vocabulary in the target language but it increases their understanding of the target language culture(s). Poetry is an integral component of any culture. Poems express the distinctive culture and worldview of the people from where they originated. In the article entitled *Multicultural Moments in Poetry: The Importance of the Unique*, David Hanauer points out that poetry affords the language learner entrance into a multileveled socio-cultural linguistic experience; therefore, including poetry in the second language classroom aids educators in teaching multiculturalism.<sup>4</sup> There is value in the second language classroom that can arise from incorporating authentic target language poetry in order to increase student understanding of the target language culture(s).

Poetry, unlike any other work of literature, brings to the attention of the language learner the linguistic elements of the sounds of the target language, in addition to the sounds’ functions and patterning. Poetry aids students in noticing the phonetics and phonology of the target language. Poetry reading work in the target language enhances the learners’ awareness in phonetic linguistic items.<sup>5</sup> According to Ayse Akyel in her 1995 article published in the TESL Canada Journal, “Poetry reading tasks encourage

students to employ their knowledge of all linguistic forms, including the knowledge of phonetics and phonology, to make meaning of poetic texts.”<sup>6</sup> Also, Hanaeur states in his article entitled “The Task of Poetry Reading and Second Language Learning,” poetry reading is primarily a construction process of close reading—of noticing and interpreting: noticing, among other elements, the particular sounds, and then, interpreting the poetical meaning based on all noticed linguistic elements.<sup>7</sup> Further, according to Lazar, there is an additional benefit of grammatically analyzing target language poetic texts while calling attention to the linguistic forms. Reading poetry can increase students’ awareness of various language registers, so it will be easier for them to understand the meaning of native speakers’ discourses.<sup>8</sup> Finally, according to Robert Woore of Oxford University, the act of reading poetry aloud is an efficient means of teaching accuracy of pronunciation in the target language.<sup>9</sup> For the students to fully benefit from the poetry, they need to speak the words of the poet.

Writing poetry in the target language provides students with the rare opportunity to express themselves in a unique way, not only personally but emotionally; it affords the learner the chance of self-expression and self-realization in the second language. Another creative process of individual self-expression is reading poetry. As Lazar states, “Decoding the meaning of poetry is more than a mechanical exercise—it demands the learners’ personal response, and by personally responding on decoding the meaning of poetry, the language learners become personally involved.”<sup>10</sup>

The personal involvement of language learners in the process of writing and reading poetry in the target language can be a source of motivation for the internalization of the second language.<sup>11</sup> Analyzing poems with emphasis on the lexical items motivates students as well as teachers in the process of discovering unique word choices for conveying meaning, according to Akyel.<sup>12</sup> Additionally, as pointed out by Hanauer, the initial stage of writing poetry by learners of the target language is generating the personal drive that is required for second language acquisition.<sup>13</sup>

## **Content Objectives**

I am focused on three goals in the creation of this unit. First, I would like my students to gain a cultural appreciation and understanding of poetry written in the target language authored by native speakers of the language. I plan to incorporate ekphrastic poems written by such poets as Xanath Caraza and Pablo Neruda to allow the students to delve deeper into the cultural significance of each work.

Second, I would like the students to be risk-takers in their approach to learning. Delving into literature in the target language for first and second year students of the language will seem quite daunting and almost impossible initially. Hence a visual, the work of art, to accompany the poem can be a useful tool for teaching beginning language students, especially those who are visual learners. A visual work of art can clarify

meaning and may be a tension diffuser. It is my hope that with the use of a visual, the students will explore the literature in depth, spurring them on to make deeper cultural connections.

Third, I would like students to develop their individual ways of self-expression and self-realization in the target language with poetry and the use of poetic devices. Writing one's feelings and emotions in the target language can appear to be nearly impossible for first and second year students, especially early on in the process. Using ekphrastic poetry as a means of expression makes this task less daunting as the work of art is the point of focus and the visual provides opportunity for a plethora of visual terms in the target language.

As previously mentioned, authentic poems, poems written in the target language for native speakers, will enrich the vocabulary of my students. Poetry in any language plays with grammar and words in unusual and different manners in order to effectively express imagery and ideas. In doing so, it explores the varying complexities of the language with the goal of creating vivid images to capture the heart and mind of the reader.<sup>14</sup> Some specific features of poetic vocabulary have been proven to be beneficial for learners of a second language. For example, according to Gillian Lazar, poetry uses words that have a diversity of meanings, polysemous words, in various contexts. By decoding the meaning of these words students obtain a deeper understanding of grammatical and semantic contexts.<sup>15</sup> This will encourage the students to get creative and “play” with vocabulary as they write their poems.

## **Unit Overview**

It is my goal to design a unit in which students will use a visual work of art, a poem in the target language, by such poets as Xanath Caraza and Pablo Neruda as a springboard to authoring their own ekphrastic poem. The class will study the ekphrastic poems using the following learning strategies; vocabulary; access prior knowledge, direct instruction, and semantic gradients; close reading and visual thinking; modeling; and CAFE - check for understanding. To conclude the unit, students will select a visual work of Pop Art, either created by themselves or a classmate, that appeals to them. The students will use their choice as the subject of their own ekphrastic poem in the target language, having experimented with various poetic forms and devices.

## **Background Content**

### **Student Background Knowledge**

During the semester of Spanish prior to this unit, students completed an eight week unit of study on the Mexican celebration of El Día de los Muertos (The Day of the Dead) in which they were exposed to Calaveras, which are poems recited for the Day of the Dead.

These are satirical poems that poke fun at people who are alive in such a way as to suggest they are dead. The people being satirized are in the public eye, often politicians and people of power. Calaveras poems are an accepted and safe way to make fun of the rich and powerful. These poems also point out that in the end we all end up in the same place. These satires can also be found in the form of illustrations incorporating skulls, thus the name Calaveras. In this unit, my students had the opportunity to create their own Calavera poems about a famous individual or a family member. This unit provides my students a solid foundation in analyzing and creating poetry in the target language.

Each year of Art in our middle school is focused on theme, in seventh grade the students focus on the culture around them as student in the United States. They examine ever- changing popular culture and Pop Art. The students create three projects using the work of Roy Lichtenstein, Shepard Fairey and Claes Oldenburg as inspiration. The Pop Art sculpture project is based on the work of Claes Oldenburg. Students examine "iconic" images and products and create oversized sculptures focusing on proportion, texture and detail. The students work in mixed media and often have to brainstorm and experiment to create the textures in their sculpture. Pictured below in Figure 1, Figure 2, and Figure 3 is a sampling of Pop Art sculpture projects from previous years.



Figure 1



Figure 2



Figure 3

One of the goals of this art project is to create a detailed sculpture focusing on the small details that make each student's object iconic. In order to obtain this goal, in Art class each student is provided with a graphic organizer. Using the graphic organizer, they are instructed to use words as many words as possible, both in English and the target language, to describe their objects. The categories of descriptors students will be asked to consider are smell, taste, touch (texture), color, and sound. My students will bring this graphic organizer with them to Spanish class.

## Key Content

Definition of Ekphrastic Poetry

To be successful in this unit, I believe it helpful to understand the concept of ekphrasis. In addition to understanding the concept, it is also essential to understand the intention of the poet. These understandings will allow the teacher to develop a framework of skills necessary for teaching ekphrastic work. The simple definition of ekphrasis is “a written piece in response to a work of art.” According to the Poetry Foundation, “An ekphrastic poem is a vivid description of a scene or, more commonly, a work of art. Through the imaginative act of narrating and reflecting on the “action” of a painting or sculpture, the poet may amplify and expand its meaning.”<sup>16</sup> However, there exist various types of ekphrasis, along with multiple approaches, and purposes (objectives) for this kind of writing.

There are three types of ekphrastic poetry: notional ekphrasis, actual ekphrasis, and unaccessible actual ekphrasis. Notional ekphrasis is literature based upon an imagined work of art. An excellent example of this type of ekphrasis is “Ode on a Grecian Urn” by the romantic poet John Keats. The urn in Keats’s poem cannot be found anywhere other than in his imagination. Actual ekphrasis is a written response to a piece of art that we can find and view. One such work that we studied in seminar was “Musee de Beaux Arts” by W. H. Auden written in response to Pieter Brueghel’s “Landscape with the Fall of Icarus” in which the writer describes for us a specific moment in time showing the indifference of others to the suffering of another individual, of inconsequence to them. The fall of Icarus is the tragedy of this work, he having flown too close to the sun and melted his waxen wings. Unaccessible actual ekphrasis is literature written in response to a work to which we do not have access, perhaps because it is lost. Any one of these forms of ekphrasis can be an effective tool used to introduce poetry to students.

Actual ekphrasis is the most obvious choice for me, as a Language Acquisition teacher, because I anticipate that my students will struggle with comprehension of the poem in the target language. This variation of ekphrasis will provide a clear frame of reference and provide an entry into the poem. Reading and comprehending literary works in Spanish are intimidating enough for my seventh grade students, even more so when that literary work is a poem. Introducing Spanish poetry through ekphrasis will allow my students to seek out lines in the poem that refer to the work of art and from there they can begin to piece together its meaning along with the poet’s intent.

### A Brief History of Pop Art

Pop Art emerged onto the art scene during the mid-1950s. Artists began creating art inspired by advertising, comic books, Hollywood movies, and pop music. There are two types of Pop Art, art created in the United States about the United States and art created in Great Britain about the United States. Artists in the United States created their works about what it was like to live the American dream.

Ground - breaking American pop artists in the mid – 1950s were Andy Warhol, Roy Lichtenstein, and Claes Oldenburg. Andy Warhol used the same screen-printing technique as used in advertising to print pictures of objects onto canvases. The subjects of his art were mainly fame and money. Roy Lichtenstein is best known for the employment of parody in his art. He imitated the industrial techniques of mass production in his work. Lichtenstein portrayed the world as a comic strip. Klaus Oldenburg took everyday objects, such as an ice cream cone, and enlarged them monumentally in an attempt to question what constitutes an iconic image in a modern society that embraces disposable mass-produced items.

Post Second World War, British artists began creating art about America’s vibrant and optimistic culture. Their works were often whimsical and witty, and sometimes ironic. Richard Hamilton was a collage artist whose work confronts the mass advertising coming to Great Britain from the United States. The paintings of artist Peter Black depict the influence that American culture is having at that time on the Britain.

Not everyone appreciated Pop Art, in fact many people found it to be superficial. Andy Warhol was in total agreement stating the he himself was a deeply superficial person. Warhol stated, “Once you got Pop, you could never see a sign the same way again...” “... and once you thought Pop, you could never see America the same way again..”<sup>17</sup>

## **Teaching Strategies**

### Vocabulary

Just reading an ELA standard with the words “Distinguish shades of meaning” is like a neon sign flashing “natural connection to visual art!” I plan to use shades of color to connect the shades of meaning/emotions of ekphrastic poetry by using paint chips to illustrate the semantic gradients of their descriptors.

Semiotics is a study of how meaning is created and how that meaning is communicated. We are able to communicate using color, as each one has its own meaning which can vary from one culture to another. Colors can be used to signify value, order, or emotions. For the purpose of this curriculum unit, I am incorporating the semiotics of color to teach vocabulary in such a way as to not cause confusion and to ensure that my students and I all understand and are following the same system. For the purpose of this teaching strategy, I selected the following universal color meanings from the “Colours in Cultures” color wheel on the *Information is Beautiful* website; red will be used to express anger or passion, yellow to express happiness, blue to express melancholy or sadness, green to express envy or jealousy, orange to express geniality, pink to express health/life, black to express evil, and white to express goodness/purity.

Using semantic gradients, students examine the subtle differences between related words by arranging them in a continuum. The goals of using this strategy are to help students develop their vocabulary, extend their knowledge of words, and encourage them to think about the relationships among similar words. Understanding these relationships will help students become effective communicators in the target language. The teacher will select a descriptor in the target language related to the ekphrastic work being studied, students will write it on the top shade of the paint strip with shades of the color universally associated with it. On the next shade of the strip, students will write a synonym in the target language for that word, likely another commonly used descriptor. Then students will use the remaining shades of color to create a list of semantically similar words arranging them in an order that illustrates an understanding of each word's meaning. I will encourage students to arrange the words in order of intensity, from least to most to reflect the intensity of the color shades. Upon completion, students will discuss the rationale for placing their chosen descriptors in the specific order. I will encourage conversations about the subtle differences among the words.

### Close Reading

The Delaware Department of Education - World Languages current focus is connecting proficiency and the Common Core State Standards for ELA with a focus on Reading and Writing. Close reading is a technique used to teach students to carefully study a piece of writing by reading it several times, each time looking for a different bit of information. The process can begin with a pre-reading question, or a "hook" with the teacher asking the class a question or providing some background information. Then the teacher will have the students identify the text feature of the reading. The first reading is done aloud by the teacher as students follow along circling any words they do not know and annotating any sentence(s) or paragraph(s) they do not understand with a question mark. After the first reading, using a graphic organizer for learning and reflection, students will write a Learning/About statement, a statement telling about what they just read, a brief summary. The students complete the second reading independently. As the students read, they underline details in the text that support their Learning/About statements. Next, the students, using the same graphic organizer from the first read, write a reflection. The reflection can be questions they still have about the text, predictions, or a personal connection that they have to that particular part of the story. With a shoulder partner, each student discusses the details they selected from the text and how they support their Learning/About statement. Reflections are also shared. The teacher then conducts a whole class discussion regarding the details of the text in order to check for understanding. In addition, the teacher addresses student questions about the reading. This discussion is followed up with a series of text dependent questions. Students work through these questions in pairs. The teacher continues the close reading process with a whole class discussion of the questions and the text in order to check for accuracy.<sup>18</sup>

### Modeling



The teaching strategy of modeling demonstrates to the students what is expected of them. Through explicit teacher modeling, the teacher provides students with a clear example of a skill or strategy. The teacher provides a framework to guide students by describing the skill or strategy, clearly describing features of the strategy or steps in performing the skill, chunking the skill into learnable parts, modeling using a variety of techniques, engaging students in learning through expressing enthusiasm, keeping a steady pace, asking good questions, and checking for student understanding. The teacher makes sure to clearly describe the concept, and then models the desired outcome by using visual, auditory, tactile, and/or kinesthetic instructional techniques while thinking aloud. The teacher can provide examples and non-examples to show students the expectations and stop frequently to get student input or ask questions. This technique of modeling provides high levels of student-teacher interaction.<sup>19</sup> With teacher modeling, the students have a better understanding of the thought processes required for completing a task.

#### CAFE – Check for Understanding

CAFE consists of learning strategies to check for students' Comprehension (I understand what I read), Accuracy (I can read the words), Fluency (I can read accurately, with expression, and understand what I read), and Expanded Vocabulary (I know, find, and use interesting words). The teaching strategies are used to assess the students' understanding of a concept, determine if the students can transfer the lesson objectives to a new situation, emphasize the key points of the lesson, or extend the lesson's content. The strategy used is usually brief and is typically used as a formative assessment, helping the instructor to determine a course of action for the learning activities that will be implemented in the near future.<sup>20</sup>

#### **Classroom Activities**

##### Activity 1: Introduction

The first activity was designed as a hook to get the students to engage with the themes that will be covered throughout the unit. This activity consists of three parts: Access Prior Knowledge, Review of Pop Art, and Study of Ekphrastic Poetry.

##### *Step 1: Access Prior Knowledge – Pop Art*

To assess what the students already know I will present the students with questions in the target language like “What do you know about Pop Art?” “What do you remember from Art class about Pop Art?” “How would you describe your Pop Art project from last semester?” Students will record their responses on paper. I anticipate that some students will mention the scale and size of their art piece and name Pop artists like Roy

Lichtenstein, Shepard Fairey, and Claes Oldenburg. As mentioned under Background Knowledge, my students will also be coming to me with written descriptors in both English and the target language of their pop art sculpture that they created in Art class.

After, the students share their responses with a shoulder partner, I will direct a whole class discussion related to the questions. I suggest conducting a class poll related to the questions having the students create bar graph or a pie chart of the results. This will give students visual data indicating the similar opinions and experiences of classmates.

### *Step 2: Review of Pop Art*

The next part of this lesson will extend and refine student understanding of Pop Art through the use of a video. This type of media works well in my curriculum as a large percentage of my students acquire information visually, from charts, illustrations, photographs and videos. Before delving into ekphrastic poetry, I suggest using photographs or a video to review the history of pop art to provide the students some context. There is a colorful and informative short video on *You Tube* titled “What is Pop Art?” narrated by a young girl, about the age of my students, defining Pop Art, explaining the history of it, and providing examples of the various types of this genre of art. Using visuals, such as videos and pictures, is especially helpful for students with special needs as they assist these students in acquiring background knowledge and putting the elements of the lesson into context. After watching the video, or as students look at photographs, I will ask questions in the target language such as “What are the types of Pop Art?” “Where in the world can you find Pop Art?” “What is Pop Art all about?” “What evidence from the video led you to these conclusions?” and “Did you like the video?”

### Activity 2: Study of Ekphrastic Poetry

For the purpose of this unit, I suggest dividing the study of ekphrastic poetry into two sections: Part 1 – Art; A Wristwatch, the study of an original Pop Art sculpture created by some of my former seventh grade students, and Part 2 – Poetry; the study of three types of poetry; Concrete, Haiku, and Free Verse. These sections, in progression, provide the students with some information and descriptors about the work of art. The students will then learn, through the study of the three previously mentioned forms of poetry, to write ekphrastic poetry in the target language. It is my hope that my students will develop a greater appreciation for the Spanish language through the creation of an original ekphrastic piece about their own or a fellow classmate’s original Pop Art sculpture.

#### Part 1: Art

##### *Vocabulary – Access Prior Knowledge*

To get the lesson started I will provide each student with a knowledge rating scale chart, prior to any instruction of the terms. The chart will have a list of twenty or so vocabulary

words in the target language related to the work art. My students will rate themselves on their level of familiarity with each term by placing a check in a column under one of the following headings; “Have No Clue,” “Have Seen or Heard,” and “I Know It Well.” I will instruct the students to provide the English meaning of the word in another column labeled “Definition” if they know a word on the list enough to provide their own definition. If a student has seen or heard a vocabulary term from the list I will direct them to write an educated guess as to the meaning of the word in the column labeled “I Think It Means.” It is important to encourage them to be honest, as their responses will determine how much time will be devoted to the instruction of each vocabulary term.

### *Vocabulary – Direct Instruction*

After the students reflect on their knowledge of the target language vocabulary, I will use a vocabulary chart made up of two columns, one with the vocabulary terms and the other with their English meanings, to clearly teach the vocabulary. Using this chart makes certain that all students have the needed vocabulary to participate in class discussions and activities. Students use the definitions to complete a graphic organizer based on the vocabulary terms in the target language by writing a definition or meaning of the word in English, writing a sentence in the target language using the term in context, and sketching the vocabulary word. Initially I will instruct the students to complete each section of the graphic organizer for every term with the end goal in mind of each student determining which option; definition, sentence, or sketch is the most effective tool for him/her to learn and remember the vocabulary.

### *Close Reading*

As the students prepare to view the art object I will explain to them that they will be using a strategy called Close Reading, working both independently and collaboratively to closely analyze the work of art. I will further explain that they will view the work a couple of times, each time focusing on a different aspect of it. I suggest that the object to be studied be divided into three separate viewings. In the first viewing, I will ask the students to look at the work of art, an image of which is below in Figure 4, in silence for a minute or two and think about what they see. After a minute or two I will ask the entire class, in the target language, "What do you observe about the sculpture?" I anticipate the students to respond with the obvious — "It is a wristwatch. It actually works. The numbers are Roman numerals. It looks old." When a student provides an answer, I will ask her/him to supply more information. "You said it looks old. What makes you say that?" The students will justify their answers by providing evidence from the work. They may say, "The numbers are Roman Numerals. It is not digital." Next I will encourage the students to share differing opinions and provide justification for their opinions, this will deepen the conversation and allow for a wider variety in the student interpretations of the various elements of the piece. One student may say, "The watch does not work because the time is not correct." I would then ask if everyone agrees with the statement. Another

student might say that s/he doesn't agree because even though the time is incorrect the hands of watch are moving. The discussion continues until students have shared all they can about the sculpture. I will summarize what the students said. After the discussion, the students will use a graphic organizer; a one-page paper divided in half with the first half labeled *Learning* and the other half labeled *Reflection*, to write a Learning/About statement and a brief summary.



Figure 4

The second viewing is viewing with purpose. Students will study the piece of art independently noting in writing details of the sculpture that support their learning statements. Using the above graphic organizer, students reflect upon what they just viewed. I will explain to the students that the reflection can include questions they still have about the work, observations, or a personal connection that they have to a particular part of the sculpture. With a shoulder partner, each student will discuss the details they selected from the sculpture and how they support their Learning/About statement. Reflections are also shared. I will then conduct a whole class discussion regarding the details of the text in order to check for understanding. In addition, I will address student questions about the sculpture.

The next step in the close process is a series of text-dependent questions. I will model for the students the process of answering these questions by working through the first question with them. The process requires the students to begin by reviewing the sculpture. Next, they will review the completed graphic organizer. Then they will seek the answer to the question and discuss the question with a partner checking for accuracy and clarification. The final step is where the students write their best possible answer using all of the information that they have gathered to adequately answer the question.

To end the close reading process I will lead a whole class discussion of the questions and the work in order to check for accuracy and address any inaccurate responses.

### *Check for Understanding*

This check for understanding for the art portion of the unit can be used to assess students' comprehension of the work of art. I will provide each student with a photographic copy of the piece, which they will glue or tape onto a loose-leaf sheet of paper. I will direct the students to write six sentences in the target language about the sculpture. The sentences can be statements or questions. Students will share their sentences with the class. This allows the students to have a visual with their own notes to remind them of what they are learning and thinking, and it provides for me a quick check for understanding of their comprehension of the work.

### Part 2: Poetry

#### *Vocabulary*

The vocabulary introduced in this theme will be related to poetry terms and vocabulary specific to the three forms of poetry; Concrete, Haiku, and Free Verse. In order to provide consistency throughout unit, I will use the same procedures for accessing prior knowledge and direct instruction of vocabulary as in the previous lesson with the exception of the completion of a graphic organizer for vocabulary definitions. Instead of using the graphic organizer I will have students create digital flashcards using the website Quizlet or a similar site. On sites such as Quizlet students can create their personalized study stack of vocabulary terms allowing the students to be active participants in the learning process. Digital media works well in my curriculum because of it has multisensory appeal and will engage my visual, auditory, and kinesthetic learners.

#### *Close Reading*

In order to maintain consistency I will employ the same close reading processes used in the previous lesson when reading examples of Concrete, Haiku, and Free Verse poems. Some examples of the poems that could be used for this activity are "Mi Gato," a Concrete poem by Clare Seccombe, "Haiku Traffic Signs," two poems in the target language by John Morse, and "Helado de Cinco Bolas," a Free Verse poem by Mariana Llanos. To get started, I will explain to the students that with each different poem they will be reading the text a couple of times, each time focusing on a different aspect of it. The first read of each poem is read aloud by the teacher. Students follow along circling any words they do not know and annotating any text they do not understand with a question mark. After this first read students use a graphic organizer, a one-page paper divided in half with the first half labeled *Learning* and the other half labeled *Reflection*, to write a Learning/About statement and a brief summary.

The second reading is reading with purpose. Students read independently underlining details in the poem that support their learning statements. Using the above graphic

organizer, students reflect upon what they just read. I will explain that the reflection can be questions they still have related to the poem. With a shoulder partner, each student will discuss the details they selected from the text and how they support their Learning/About statement. Reflections are also shared. I will then conduct a whole class discussion regarding the details of the text in order to check for understanding. In addition, I will address student questions about the poem.

The next step in the close process is a series of text-dependent questions. I will model for the students the process of answering these questions by working through the first question with them. The students will be reminded of the close reading process. The students will begin by reading the section of poem again. Next, they will take notes to help better understand the section of the text. They will discuss the question with a partner. To finish they will write their best possible answer using all of the information that they have gathered to the question.

To end the close reading process I will lead a whole class discussion of the questions and the text in order to check for accuracy. As with the first poem, the close reading process will be practiced when reading the remaining poems with the text dependent questions being poem specific.

### *Check for Understanding*

To assess the students' understanding of the ekphrastic nature of poems used in the close reading activity, I will instruct students to annotate copies of the works of art to which these poems refer; "Bubba" by Carolee S. Clark, "Haiku Traffic Signs" by John Morse, and "Ice Cream Dessert" by Andy Warhol, identifying figures, items, symbols in them that are eluded to in each respective poem. I anticipate students to identify the similarities between the cat in the painting and the shape of the concrete poem. Some students might point out the number of scoops of ice cream in the poem "Helado de Cinco Bolas," differs by one from the number in the Warhol piece. I will encourage students review and reflect upon their learning statements and reflections from the close readings to help them with their annotations. I will then ask students to justify their annotations with evidence from the poem. I will assess their understanding of the ekphrastic nature of poetry by looking at the evidence from the poems that they provided to justify their annotations.

### Activity 3: Creating an Original Ekphrastic Poem

To conclude the unit, each student will author an original ekphrastic poem in the target language in response to a student original Pop Art sculpture. This culminating activity will require each student to select an original Pop Art sculpture created by him/herself or by another classmate to be the subject of his/her ekphrastic poem. After experimentation with writing Concrete, Haiku, and Free Verse poems, the student will select the form of poetry that he/she believes to be the most appropriate type to deliver the message s/he

desires to convey about the sculpture. I will provide students with a packet containing the following information about this project; a letter addressed to both the student and their parent(s), a detailed explanation of the project requirements along with helpful vocabulary and phrases in the target language, explanations and examples of poetic forms available for the students to use, and the rubric that will be used to assess their work. Students will share their original ekphrastic work with their classmates digitally using a learning management system like Schoology and with the larger school community in a Gallery Walk.

### *Vocabulary – Semantic Gradients*

In this activity students will use semantic gradients to examine the subtle differences between related words by arranging them in a continuum. The goals of using this strategy are to help students develop their vocabulary, extend their knowledge of words, and encourage them to think about the relationships among similar words. This will provide them with a more robust descriptive vocabulary when writing ekphrastic poetry. From the vocabulary list in Activity 2, I will select a twelve or so vocabulary terms and descriptors in the target language. Next, working as shoulder partners, each pair of students will be randomly assigned one of the twelve vocabulary terms. Using the infographic “Colour in Cultures” from the website *Information is Beautiful*, students will select the color that most universally relates to the descriptor; for example, yellow for happiness, or blue for sadness. Then after selecting a paint chip strip with four shades of the chosen color, each student pair will write and illustrate their descriptor on the first shade of the paint chip strip. Students may illustrate using emojis, clip art, stick figures, or whatever type of drawing helps them to best visualize the descriptor. For the vocabulary term *contento*, which in English means content, the students might draw a smiley face emoji. Then students will use the remaining shades of color to create a list of semantically similar words arranging them in an order that illustrates an understanding of each word’s meaning. As they arrange the words, students can discuss and justify their ordering. I will encourage students to arrange the words in order of intensity from the original descriptor given, from least to most to reflect the intensity of the color shades. Upon completion, students will discuss the rationale for placing their chosen descriptors in the specific order. I will encourage conversations about the subtle differences among the words. To differentiate this activity, students can be given the paint chip strip with the first descriptor determined, and the remaining descriptors on sticky notes. Students then have to place the descriptors in order on the strip.

In Figure 5, I have provided two examples of this activity using the descriptors *contento* (content) and *decepcionado* (disappointed). Because universally the color yellow is associated with happiness and the color blue is associated with sadness, I chose the paint chip strips with the shades of those colors. The vocabulary in the target language, Spanish, is written on the paint chips in order of word intensity to match the intensity of the color shades. On the yellow strip, the first paint chip displays the word

Spanish contento, which means content in English. The next word in the semantic gradient is feliz, meaning happy. The third word is alegre, that means joyous. The final word choice is jubiloso, which means exuberant. On the blue strip, the first Spanish term is decepcionado, meaning disappointed. The second word choice is triste, sad. Third, I have selected abatido, which means glum. Lastly is the Spanish word deprimido, meaning depressed. As mentioned previously, students should be encouraged to discuss and justify their ordering during the process of creating their own semantic gradients and they should be prompted to provide their rationale for placing the descriptors in the specific order noting the subtle differences between the words. These semantic gradient charts will be displayed on a word wall in the classroom for the students to refer to when making word choices in the creation of their ekphrastic work.

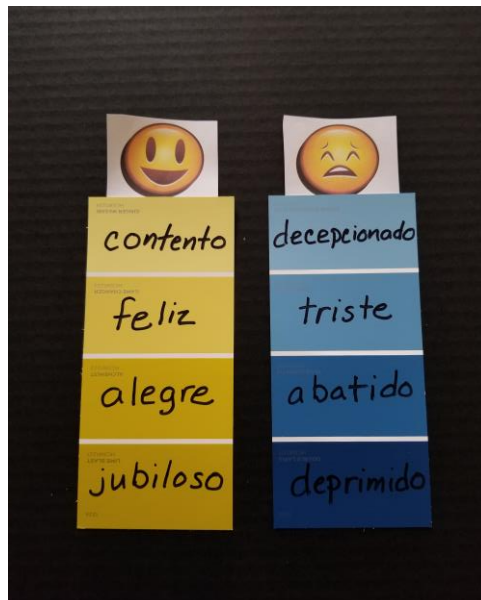


Figure 5

### *Modeling*

In order to prepare the students to author their own ekphrastic works, I will employ the teaching strategy of modeling. Using the information that we gathered together as a class from our discussions about the original Pop Art sculpture “Wristwatch” in Activity 2, Part 1, I will model for my students how to write an ekphrastic poem about this work of art. I will begin by using a Think Aloud by verbalizing my thoughts about which of the three types of poetry that we discussed would be the best to use to communicate my desired message about this artwork. I may pose the question, “Which poetic form would best convey punctuality, if that is my message?” or “Which form would best reinforce



the shape and design of the sculpture?” The use of Think Aloud is an effective way for me to model thinking skills for my students. This strategy will give my students a framework for conducting the activity on their own.

Once we as a class have determined the appropriate poetic form to employ, I will refer my students back to the vocabulary graphic organizers from Activity 2, Part 1 and the semantic gradient charts from this activity, Activity 3, so that we can begin to think about word choice. I may ask, “What word choices best convey texture?” or “Which words describe your feelings about this sculpture?” I will record the responses on the board and then we will experiment together with those word choices in our appropriate poetic form to discover which of those choices actually communicates our desired message.

### *Check for Understanding*

This check for understanding can be used to assess students’ understanding of the composition of an ekphrastic poem. At this point in the unit my students have completed a graphic organizer for vocabulary as well as semantic gradient charts using descriptive vocabulary terms. They have studied three different ekphrastic poetic forms, and I have modeled the writing of ekphrastic poetry. Now, I will direct the students to write their own ekphrastic poem about the “Wristwatch” sculpture. They may choose one of the three poetry forms that we discussed. Students will share their poems with the class. I will instruct students to form pairs and each partner in the pair will read his/her poem aloud to the other student. Then I will ask for volunteers to share aloud with the class their original ekphrastic poem. This allows the students to have a safe space to share their literary work and it provides for me a quick check for understanding of their comprehension of the skill.

### *Original Ekphrastic Poem*

After experimentation with writing ekphrastic poetry using Concrete, Haiku and Free Verse forms, my students will select a subject in the form of an original work of pop art sculpted either by themselves or other classmates, for their ekphrastic poem. I will remind the students to review the graphic organizers about their works that they completed in Art class as they select the sculpture to be the subject of their ekphrastic poem.

Once students have selected their subjects for their poems, I will encourage them to experiment using the three forms of poetry, Concrete, Haiku, and Free Verse in order to discover the best form to use convey their message. I anticipate that most of my students will select Haiku because it is the form with which they are most familiar, it is easy to follow, and it is short. I will instruct my students to follow the same share out process that we completed previously in the *Check for Understanding* portion of the unit. The students will peer edit each other’s ekphrastic works while sharing in pairs.

Each student will share the final draft of his/her ekphrastic poem along with the photograph of the Iconic object chosen as the subject of his/her written work on Schoology, the learning management system used by our district. I will instruct my students to view each other's works and provide, in the Comments section, two statements; one statement will be a positive comment about the ekphrastic work, the other statement will discuss something that the commenter noticed about the poem that is unique. I will provide students with the following sentence frames to facilitate and standardize the commenting process: "I really like \_\_\_\_\_ about your poem because \_\_\_\_\_," or "My favorite part of your poem is \_\_\_\_\_ because \_\_\_\_\_." "I noticed \_\_\_\_\_ about your poem which made me think \_\_\_\_\_," or "I think that \_\_\_\_\_ makes your poem unique because \_\_\_\_\_."

### **Appendix A: Standards**

This unit will implement two IB MYP Objectives, two Delaware World-Readiness Standards for Learning Languages and one Common Core State Standard. I will focus on IB Language Acquisition Objective Criterion C: Comprehending Written Text requiring the student to understand information and engage with the text by supporting opinion and personal response with evidence from the text. I will also evaluate Criterion D: Communicating in Written Form which expects the student to organize and express thoughts, feelings, ideas, opinions and information in writing, write for specific purposes, and develop accuracy when writing in the target language. The Delaware World Readiness Standards for Learning Languages are Standard 1.3 Presentational Communication: Learners present information, concepts, and ideas to inform, explain, persuade, and narrate on a variety of topics using appropriate media and adapting to various audiences of listeners, readers or viewers; and Standard 2.1 Relating Cultural Practices to Perspectives: Learners use the language to investigate, explain, and reflect on the relationship between the practices and perspectives of the culture studied. I will focus on the Common Core Standard CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.9-10.7 Integration of Knowledge and Ideas: Analyze various accounts of a subject told in different mediums (e.g., a person's life story in both print and multimedia), determining which details are emphasized in each account.

### **Teacher Resources**

Allens, Ms. "Close Reading in Foreign Language (French)."  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tZkjBP4eink&t=1s>.

This video demonstrates the effective practices of close reading in the world language classroom.

Clark, Carolee S. "Category Archives: Other Animals." Carolee S. Clark, Painter. August 6, 2014. Accessed December 9, 2018.

<https://caroleeclark.wordpress.com/category/paintings/other-animals/page/4/>.

The painting "Bubba," which is the subject of the ekphrastic poem "Mi Gato," is found on this webpage.

Cumming, Alan, and Tate. "Exploring Pop Art with Alan Cumming." YouTube. December 18, 2013. Accessed August 5, 2018.

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lHBm8\\_ooPVo&feature=youtu.be](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lHBm8_ooPVo&feature=youtu.be).

In this video, Alan Cummings provides a brief history of pop art in America and Britain.

"Free Verse - Definition and Examples of Free Verse." Literary Devices. November 11, 2017. Accessed December 9, 2018. <https://literarydevices.net/free-verse/>.

A definition of Free Verse poetry and examples are included on this webpage.

"Haiku (or Hokku)." Poetry Foundation. Accessed December 9, 2018.

<https://www.poetryfoundation.org/learn/glossary-terms/haiku-or-hokku>.

This webpage provides an explanation of Haiku poetry and various examples.

Kids, Tate. *YouTube*, YouTube, 9 Aug. 2016,

[www.youtube.com/watch?v=DhEyoDCTSDQ](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DhEyoDCTSDQ). Accessed 9 Dec. 2018.

This video provides a short introduction to pop art for students.

Llanos, Mariana. "Spanish Poetry for Elementary Students: Poesía Alada." Spanish Playground. December 12, 2018. Accessed January 26, 2018.

<https://www.spanishplayground.net/spanish-poetry-elementary-students/>.

The Free Verse poem "Helado de Cinco Bolas," which is used in Activity 2, can be found on this webpage.

McCandless, David. "Colours in Cultures." Information Is Beautiful.

<https://informationisbeautiful.net/visualizations/colours-in-cultures/>.

This visual provides information about what colors signify in different cultures.

Nesbitt, Kenn. "How to Write a Concrete Poem." Poetry4kids. Accessed December 9, 2018. <https://www.poetry4kids.com/news/how-to-write-a-concrete-poem/>.

A description of Concrete poetry and how to write it are included on this webpage.

Staff, NPR, and John Morse. "Haiku Traffic Signs Bring Poetry To NYC Streets." NPR. December 03, 2011. Accessed December 26, 2018. <https://www.npr.org/2011/12/03/143053082/haiku-traffic-signs-bring-poetry-to-nyc-streets>.

The two "Haiku Traffic Signs" in Spanish, used in Activity 2, are found on this webpage.

Stevens, Lisa. "National Poetry Month – Spanish Ideas." ¡Vámonos! March 4, 2013. Accessed December 9, 2018. <http://lisibo.com/2013/04/national-poetry-month-spanish-ideas/>.

The Concrete poem "Mi Gato," used in Activity 2, can be found on this webpage.

Tate. "'Ice Cream Dessert', Andy Warhol, 1959." Tate. Accessed December 29, 2018. <https://www.tate.org.uk/art/artworks/warhol-ice-cream-dessert-ar00255>.

Andy Warhol's Pop Art painting Ice Cream Dessert can be found on this webpage. This painting is the subject of the ekphrastic poem "Helado de Cinco Bolas."

"Vocabulary/Knowledge Rating Comprehension and Learning Strategy." PDF. National Behavior Support Service.

This document provides various graphic organizers for teaching vocabulary as well as a detailed explanation of Marzano's Six Steps to Effective Vocabulary Instruction.

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[https://www.slideshare.net/NataliaReillyPhD/reilly-poetry-in-sla?from\\_action=save](https://www.slideshare.net/NataliaReillyPhD/reilly-poetry-in-sla?from_action=save).

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