

You Can Count on van Gogh



After exploring van Gogh's painting, students began to work on an artwork of their own. They first traced a small paper plate as the center of a sunflower on a 12 x 18" piece of oak tag. Next, they started writing numbers in the top corner, beginning with the number one and writing in sequential order until they filled up the paper, but leaving the circle blank. They became excited about writing and counting as the numbers got higher and higher, some reaching 100 and above. Students then used markers and crayons to outline the numbers and color the background.

Next, students ripped pieces of yellow, orange, and green construction paper for the petals, stem, and leaves of the sunflower. They glued on the petals, following the outside edge of the circle they had traced. Students used the same small paper plate to trace another circle on black construction paper for the sunflower's center. Before cutting out and gluing this circle down, students once again wrote and counted inside the circle, starting with a number of their choice, this time using a white crayon.

Marlanda Montanaro Birns

Lesson planning should be as meaningful and interesting to teachers as the lessons themselves are to students. I found the best way to do this is to integrate my art lessons with the themes other teachers are using in their classrooms.

Calling All Teachers

Every year at the beginning of school, I send out a form letter to classroom teachers asking them to list the themes, books, units, topics, and other specifics they will be teaching in all subjects from reading to science to math. This list helps me generate what I will teach throughout

the school year, integrating art with classroom learning.

An Example of Integration

Our first graders were learning how they could play with numbers to make sense of a problem, so I wanted to integrate the use of numbers in art. I wanted to use numbers in a way so that the students could practice their counting skills and still create an interesting work of art. I chose Vincent van Gogh's *Vase with Twelve Sunflowers*, as a prompt. Integrating van Gogh with first-grade math was also a great way to energize the typical van Gogh lesson.

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Conclusion

The value of integrating art with other subjects goes beyond just being helpful to the art teacher when planning lessons. Rather, thematic integration extends into students' education to help make the connections in the classroom that become most valuable.

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Materials

- 12 x 18" (30 x 46 cm) oak tag or construction paper
- crayons
- glue
- scissors
- yellow, orange, green, and black construction paper