

Shoe Project

A week before we begin this inquiry trail, I ask students to bring a shoe/boot/sandal from home. We start the project by putting all the footwear on a table, then choosing one to **paint realistically**. Next, we make a **concept web** about shoes to dig up prior knowledge, **interview** the shoe to imaginatively gain two perspectives, and, finally, choose a **creative strategy** to create a second work of art.



Step #1

Paint the Shoe

Students have ~3-5 hours to paint (including Poscas) their shoe realistically. During this time I give individual and whole-class mini-lessons on perspective, negative space, color-mixing, etc. as needed. I also encourage students periodically check in with one another to ask for advice.













Step #2

Concept-Map the Shoe

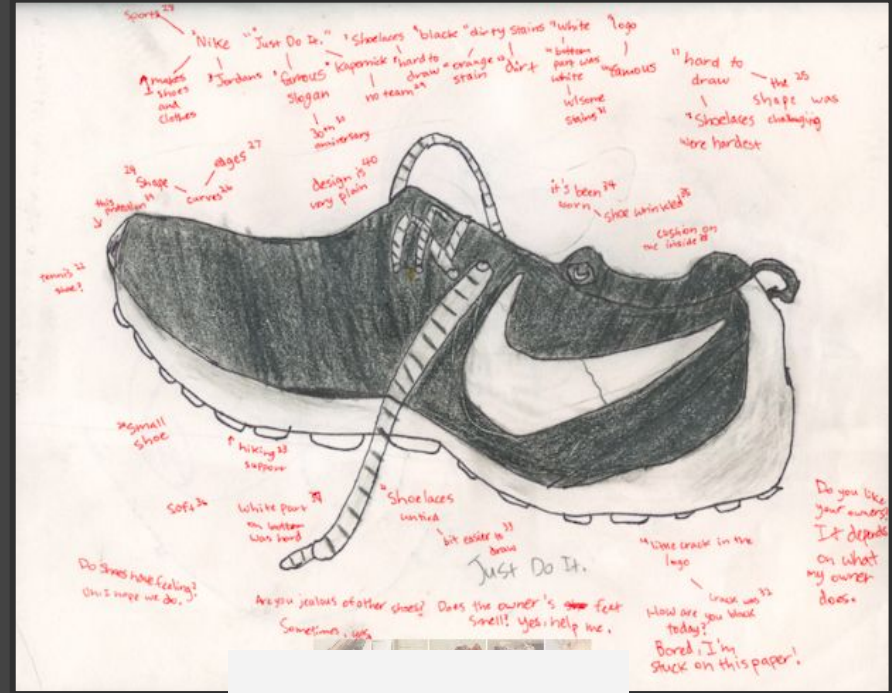
- Prompts thinking and learning
- Provides a broad foundation for inquiry by prompting background knowledge
- Makes thinking visible

Directions

This is a rolling 2-week (~10-hour) project, so students learn to manage their time and set their own pace.

As most students near completion with their painting, I tell them they are going to spend 25 minutes writing down words and phrases that come to mind when they look at their shoe. I show them several different examples of ways their concept web/ concept map can be organized and artistically designed.

The goal is to get students thinking deeply about everything they know about both the shoe in front of them, and shoes in general.





New shoes

Types of shoes

sole of shoe

Socks

Feet

leather

old shoes

memory foam

Shoemaker



Foot Protection

walking

Sports

running

Laces

Sewing

color of shoe

Polish

ball

bike

vehicle

heel

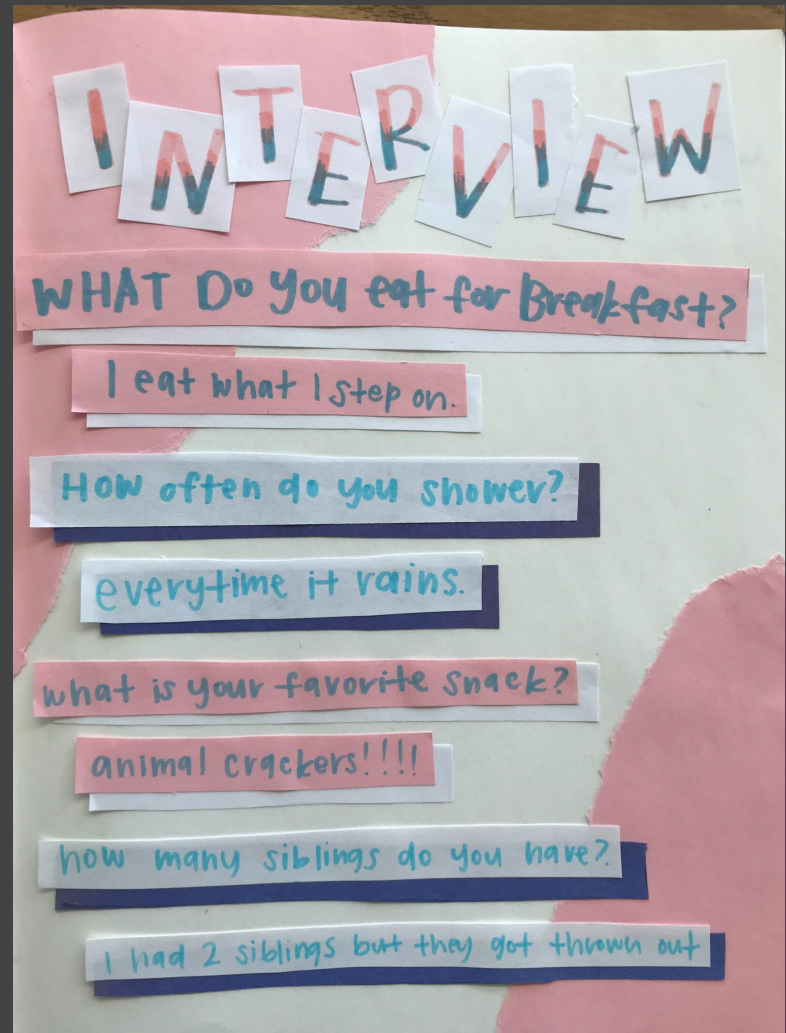
foot

Step 3

Interview the Shoe

When most students are nearing completion with their painting and interview, I tell them that they will now write five questions to ask their shoe.

I explain that questions should be meaningful and thoughtful, and result in a multi-word response from the shoe. As a class, we brainstorm a few thought-provoking and engaging questions, then they write their own.



Shoe

Dose it hurt when someone
uses you?

you 5 min ago

NO, I was made to be
used

5 min ago

do you have a brother or sister?

Yeah, his name is lefty

What happens when you get old?

well, wear & tear

Were were you born

New York

How old are you?

3 months

Wait a sec: How are you typing?

...

“Creative inquiry... embraces the more adventuresome creativity of experimental and imaginative play with ideas and possibilities.”

- Julia Marshall, “Integrating the Visual Arts Across the Curriculum”

“How old are you?”

“3 months.”

“Wait a sec how are you typing?”

“...”

Shoe Interview

me
Do you like walking
around SF can't thought
the streets are so dirty?

Shoe

uh, sometimes
i like to
walk on the
streets, but i also
enjoy going on the
cable car, because
it takes you through
the city from home
to the office

Have you ever stepped in
dog poop and
had to get it off?



dog poop.

uh, well a
few times a month
my owner is looking
at his phone and stepped
in poop! which i
really hate!

okay, what do you enjoy
in your life?

I really enjoy when
my owner takes me
out for the night and
i get to sleep!

Do you hate going to
events?



well yes, one time
my owner dropped
a big piece of cake
on me and got a huge
stain!

And last but not
least, has your owner
ever gotten you so
dirty you go
in the washer?

oh man! well yes
i do get put in
the washer is over
month and boy its
like swimming! It just
keeps on throwing
you in circles

HA! well thanks so
much for talking
with us!

it was a pleasure.

"HA! Well
thanks so
much for
talking with
us."

"It was a
pleasure."

Interview with my shoe

What do you eat in a day?

In my mornings, I will either have oatmeal with fruit and a drizzle of honey or maybe some baked goods, crepes with whipped cream. My lunches vary if I go out to restaurants or if I stay home I'll have my chef prepare some fish with side trays, or I'll have a burger with fries. And for dinner, I have lobster with creme fraiche topped with caviar from London, or my chef could make soup with bread.

How do you stay in shape?

I have a personal trainer help me maintain healthy and build some muscles, but not too much as too much muscle tends to make tailoring expensive.

Where were you made?

I was hand made in Italy in a small factory. My material is locally sourced and it was fun staying there. Then I was imported here to the US.

What philosophy do you believe in?

I don't have a certain philosophy or religion, but I believe that humans should stay curious and to find a purpose for their life. Whether that purpose is good or bad I have no say in.

What type of music do you listen to?

I have a mixed type of genres. When I'm going over papers in my office, I like to put on 20's jazz quietly. Or when I'm on the road, I play Bon Jovi and Led zeppelin. When reading or doing something that doesn't require a lot of focus I would listen to the Beatles.

What does your home look like?

It is a two story home with a front yard, a garden that has an openning to the outside. In the home, there are 4 bedrooms with a closet, bathroom in each. Then, 2 extra bathrooms, a living space that connects to the kitchen and dining area. My office is also on the first floor next to the opening of the garden.

Children's inquiry can move in unexpected directions, leading to new and meaningful connections and further inquiry.

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Share Out!

Throughout the project, I encourage students to check in with those around them. After everyone has completed their interview questions, I give them one minute each to pass their journal clockwise around the table of four and silently read one another's interview.

Step 4

Chose a Creative Strategy

Give students many possibilities and ways to make meaning

Move inquiry in unexpected directions

Sustain and grow playfulness and creativity

Give students a metacognitive vocabulary to describe what they do and reflect on what others do



Throughout the year, I teach creative strategies from contemporary art, two to three at a time. By the time we get to the shoe project, the students have practiced using about five strategies, including the ones below. We look back at artwork that exemplifies the strategies we've already learned, then I show them a few more. They may then choose any of the strategies to create an artwork with their shoe.



Transform



Hybridize



Personify

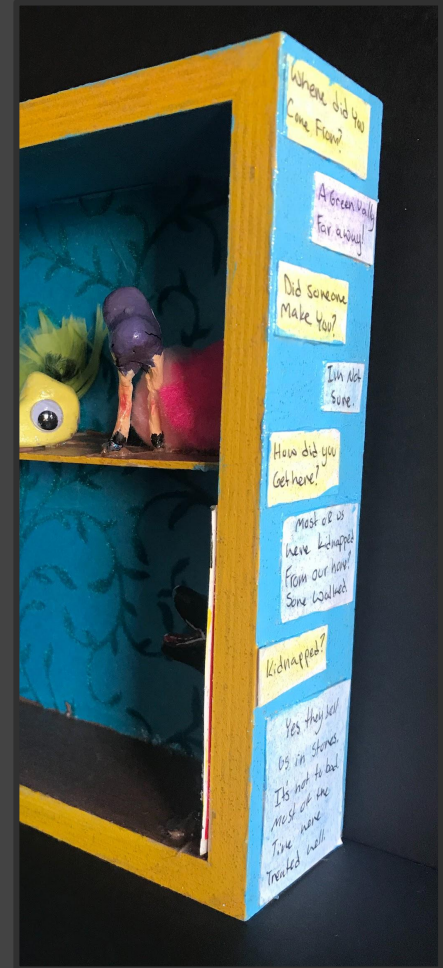
Some Creative Strategies Used in Contemporary Art

- **Hybridize:** Join parts of different things
- **Reformat:** Use a format from outside art
- **Project:** Imagine or envision what is not there or speculate on what could happen next.
- **Juxtapose:** Place contrasting images or objects in proximity to each other
- **Transform:** Morph or change something into something else
- **Personify:** Cast animals or inanimate objects as human
- **Change Scale:** Make an object larger or smaller relative to other things
- **Use Unusual or Metaphorical Materials:** Construct an object out of surprising materials and/or components
- **Categorize or Re-categorize:** Place something in its common category, a new category, or multiple categories
- **Layer:** Superimpose an image onto another image or form

Creative Strategy: Personify

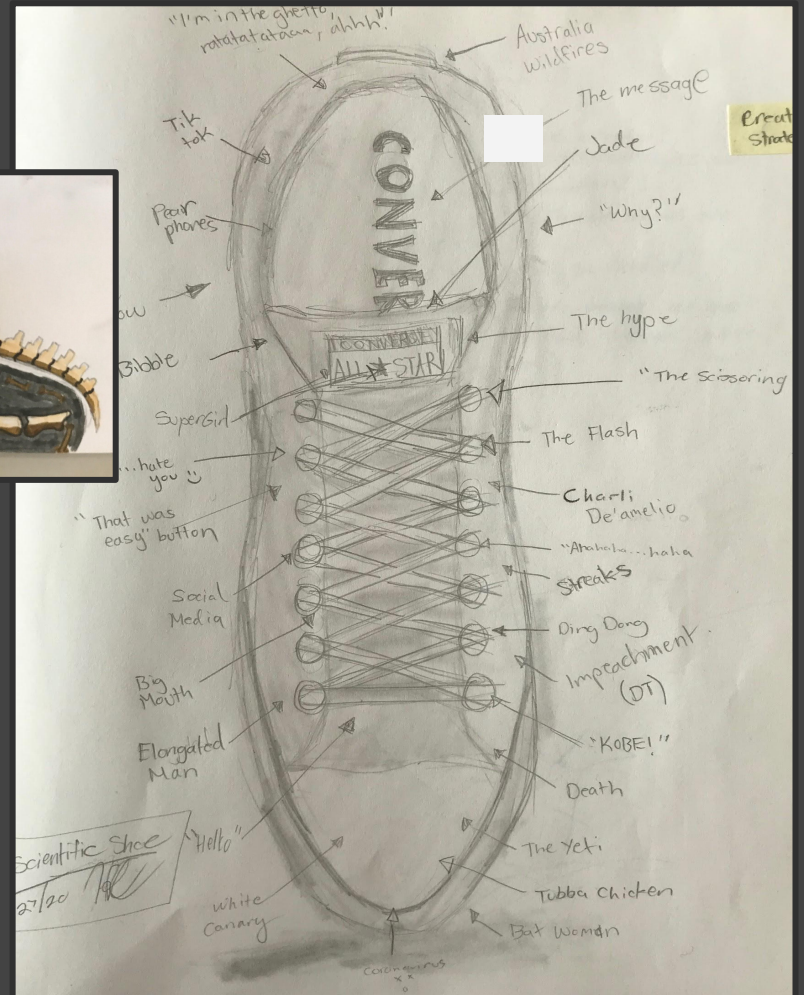
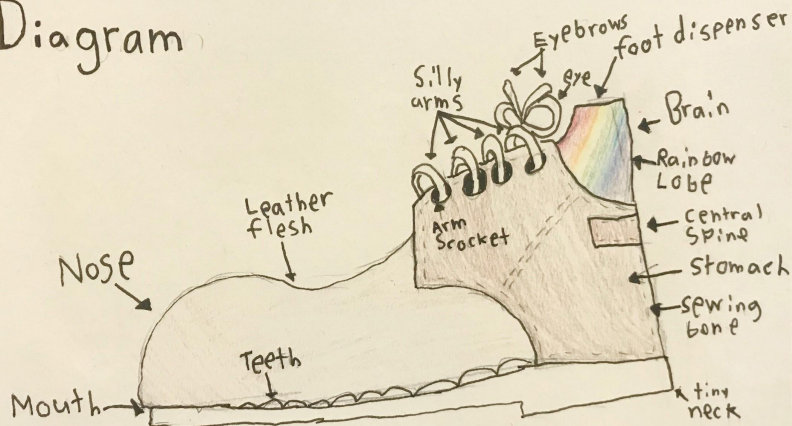


Creative Strategy: Personify



Creative Strategy: Reformat

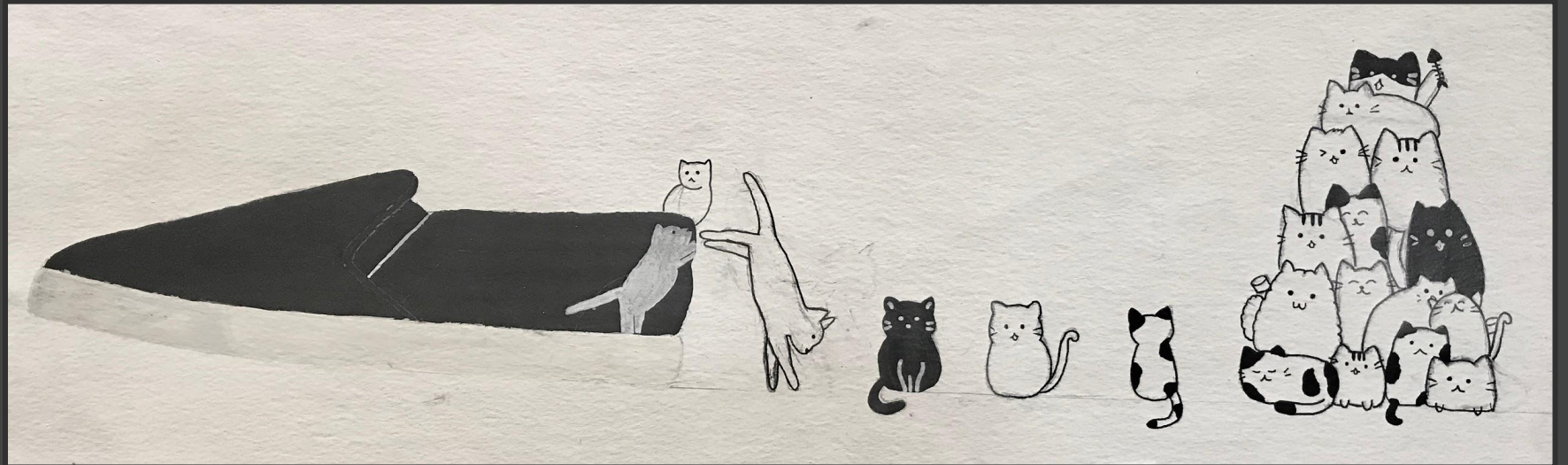
The Shoentific Diagram



**Creative
Strategy:
Different
Materials**



**Creative
Strategy:
Transform**



Creative Strategies: Hybridize & Juxtapose



Creative Strategy: Hybridize



Exhibit & Reflection



Name _____

Artwork Reflection - choose a piece of art that catches your eye & answer the following:

Artist's Name _____

Title of artwork _____

Why did this artwork catch my eye?

Something I particularly like about this artwork/ something that I would like to try in the future:

A drawing of the artwork:

Interview Reflection - choose a Q & A that you particularly like and copy it down:

Q: _____

A: _____

When everyone has had a comfortable amount of time to complete all 4 steps, we set up the classroom for an exhibit. Students set their artwork up and write an artist statement to go alongside it. After talking about how to politely and quietly walk around a gallery, I give the students clipboards and a reflection sheet to fill out about a work of art that catches their eye. Sometimes, we invite other classes and admin to visit our exhibits.