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WRTG596

Lesson Plan

Game Day: Dixit

Dixit is a game very similar to Apples to Apples, but uses dreamlike, highly detailed pictures as a starting point. As the class was beginning to explore visual rhetoric, I thought this would be an excellent activity to get them thinking about visuals not only as a whole, but also in terms of the separate, individual elements of each visual.



To begin, I broke them up into five teams (each team had 3 or 4 people) and they came up with team names. Then we played Dixit collectively as a class. (Note: this game can be hard to find, but Amazon sells it [here](http://www.amazon.com/Dixit-Cover-Art-May-Vary/dp/2914849656/ref=sr_1_1?ie=UTF8&qid=1417545394&sr=8-1&keywords=dixit) for $23.00, and most Toys R Us stores sell it as well). I gave each team 7 cards, and they had to pick a card together, and come up with a word to describe it. Then the other teams had to pick a card they thought the chosen word could also be applied to. Once I had collected them all from each team, I placed them on the projector and each team had to guess which card was the original. While they began by picking detailed words that described the whole picture such as “artistic” when describing a picture of a woman playing an upright bass, or “freedom” when describing a card portraying an escape from jail, they eventually learned that they could get more points by paying attention to smaller details, and choosing their words from that. They also started using words that were vaguer. For instance, one group chose the word “female” to describe their card. It was an image of a scale, and at the top of the scale the circle and arrow symbol for “female” was hidden in the metal joining. They were particularly proud of themselves that no one was able to guess their card for that round. This forced the entire class to pay closer attention to all of the elements of the visuals. It also introduced them to the vocabulary of analyzing visuals, such as how to talk about what is placed in the foreground and background, and what impression or feeling these choices influence.

To connect this back, I had them end by writing about what they learned about visuals, how intention plays into interpretations, and how word choice (especially limited words) takes great consideration in visual rhetoric. We also discussed the ways in which logos, ethos, and pathos contributed to how we thought about the game. The students generally agreed that pathos and logos were the most relevant, but I found the conversation about ethos to be particularly interesting. When considering ethos, most of my students told me that they changed the way the thought of the word and the pictures, depending on which group originally picked the word.