

A Team Arts Education: What is Illustration?

Theme: Nature in the City.

Based around the idea that ecologies are as valuable as people: Designing (Characters, Clothes, Background design?) by breaking down the shapes, traits and colours as research for the illustrations. **Need to look through lesson notes on the specifics of what this idea is called and why it's important.**

Inspired by the David Attenborough documentary Wild London. **Should I introduce the documentary as a part of the session, or is it just something I use to research and plan the outcome**

End result: Combining all the designs and illustrations to create a zine/concept book/publication that highlights and humanises the wildlife in London, to make young people in London feel less separated from the natural world. **I need to consider the book's design. I was thinking to make a zine, to prioritize reproduction so all the students can take a copy of the book home, and perhaps print out their own copies to give to friends and family; however, they might not even want their own copy, so it might be cooler to make a single edition to keep at the centre? Handmade bookbinding techniques or printing a single copy professionally? What outcome will make the students the most engaged with the project?**

It is important to be realistic with what can be achieved in the session. This term sessions run 11am -2pm. Some stages may require demonstrations

Begin by introducing "What is illustration" (What is illustration as a practice and as a subject, showing some examples of illustrations) **Create a few PowerPoint slides on the different use cases (Illustration as the final product: Picture books, Comics, Advertising and Editorial. Illustration as a tool for communication: Fashion Illustration, Storyboarding, Concept Art) Take another look at that guardian article and try and find the "What is Illustration" lecture.**

I think you should start with this section at the start of the session and show examples of what illustration and it means to you and why you have selected this pathway would be good way to engage the group.

Starter activity: Introducing the relationship between text and images. (10 mins)

Draw a picture describing what art means to you. Write your answer to the question on the same page. (30 seconds for thinking and writing. 1 minute for drawing)

Perhaps swap with the person next to you and draw from their text? **Decide**

The picture on the page has now turned from a drawing into an illustration, as it illustrates the meaning of the words on the page.

Good to have an ice breaker to start with to help inform an engage learners to your planned workshop.

Do it one more time, but instead answering a question asking, “What is the nature?” or “What is your relationship to the nature?”

Explain today’s project. Today we are going to use illustration to create designs based on the ecologies of London. At the end of the session, I’m going to collect all the designs to create a book about our relationship to nature.

How are we going to do this? (Collage, drawing, cutting out shapes?)

Describe the basic process of an illustrator: **Create an example illustration documenting all these steps of the process to demonstrate.**

Research, thumbnailing and drafting, sketching, line art, colour.

Good to plan your activity through small stages but think about the time and if everything can be completed in time. New session time for the this term is 11am- 2pm.

Its best to keep the activity simple and focused without giving to many options.

Step 1: Generating research (20 mins)

Choosing which animal/plant you want to look at and breaking it down into shapes and details. Using information and writing about functions

Step 2: Drafting and Designing (30 mins)

This bit is about getting creative. Decide what you want to design (Character, prop, clothing item). Using the research, think about the different ways the shapes can be arranged (design theory, big, medium, small). **At this stage, some might need extra references to execute their concept. Can I allow them to use their phones for this?**

To add to PowerPoint: Things they might want to decide while designing. What is the context of this design? What ratio of fantastical to realistic? Time period? Age of character? Suggest setting to be based on or around London; however, fantasy contexts

and creatures are permitted and encouraged. It might help to think about characters in media you enjoy, or people you know, to help you decide on a personality for your character. You can even draw characters based on yourself!

Step 3: Text and Layout (5 mins)

Get them to think about text placement and/or what they want to write about their characters on the page it would be interesting if people wanted to make a short comic page about their character too. Creating some small thumbnails could be useful too. I don't want to force people to write too much since it might be too much like school, but a few bullet points explaining their ideas is kind of necessary to make a book.

Step 3: Sketching (20 mins)

Choose one design and draw it neatly on a larger piece of paper using a mechanical pencil and eraser. What about using other materials like pastels and charcoal to increase line confidence? Might be good during experimentation phase.

(Optional steps for those who finish early, based on preference)

Step 4: Line art

Use either an ink pen or coloured pencils to go over the sketch. Bring out a lightbox for people whose sketch is too heavy and need to transfer to a different paper.

Step 5: Colour

Bring out colouring pencils, pens, and watercolours for those who want to finish their illustrations with colour (Take a scan of their work first, though)

If I could do a second session, I would want to focus more on storytelling though the collaborative aspect of this project. It would be fun to draw comics in small groups getting people's characters to interact with each other and making short stories from them.

Action Points:

Go find lecture on Eco Futures and define key concepts with correct names.

Search for What is Illustration lecture series through Year 1 Moodle and Outlook.

Take some notes on the Guardian Article about the future of illustration you read and do a bit of reading on illustration as a tool for communication. Add to bibliography.

Create resources for the students to reference from using “Wild London” as a starting point and perhaps include some fun facts (that cannot be observed from the image itself) to help inspire character concepts.

Do the project once alone and photograph all the stages to use in the example. Prepare printouts to test the collage method.

Prepare some examples of bio design and animal-based character designs!!

Look through Arts Award.

Things to think about:

Is collage a more realistic (time-wise) or interesting way to approach the research and making part? It could possibly make the project more cohesive.

Should I create some bases? Page layouts and backgrounds. Pose references and character proportions that can be traced or copied?

Should I create a dummy book to decide the format of the book before getting the illustrations or let the students decide the format?

How much should I standardise the session? I think the point is kind of to humanise the animals so that we can relate to them more, but I don't want to force people who don't want to draw characters to draw them. There is a possibility having the lesson be more generally about bio design and using research to develop ideas would be useful across design disciplines.