Lesson Plan Guide - Illustrator Focus - By Marcie Haloin

Laura Vaccarro Seeger

Laura Vaccaro Seeger is the author/illustrator of a handful of children's books with unique design elements.  Many of her books are concept books that utilize cut-out techniques to reveal the concepts.   Before creating children's books Mrs. Seeger worked as an animator for television and her use of creative graphic design is evident in her innovative books.  In fact her illustration process is really one of design.  Most frequently her pictures are painted with cartoon like illustrations.  Many contain flaps and die cuts to create transformations and reveal previously unseen objects.  She begins development of her books just like an animation with a storyboard.   Information can be found about her books and process at

1.  Introduce Laura Vaccaro Seeger by having a classroom/library display of her books making them available in the author/illustrator center.  You could also have a display board of the book covers and brief biographical information.  Show pictures from the exhibit The Animated Artwork of Laura Vaccaro Seeger at the Nassau County Museum of Art (Roslyn Harbor, NY) and explain how her artwork is based upon her background as an animator (creator of cartoons). <http://www.flickr.com/photos/paul_orselli_workshop/sets/72157607497981599/detail/>

Resources:

NBC Writers Speak to Kids Series (NBC 3'41" interview: aired 11/5/12) <http://www.nbclearn.com/writersspeak/cuecard/61706> accessed 1/28/14

Laura Vaccaro Seeger Author Program In-depth Interview, June 24, 2008. Teaching Books.net,             retrieved 10/13/09.

Seeger, Laura Vaccaro. (2008) Boston Globe-Horn Book Picture Book Award Winner             Acceptance Speech by Laura Vaccaro Seeger. *Horn Book Magazine*, LXXXIV (1), page             21-25.

 2.  Focus on *Walter was Worried*.

Seeger, Laura Vaccaro. (2005) *Walter Was Worried*, New York: Roaring Brook Press.

This book was an ALA Notable book for 2006 and a CCIRA Children's Choices book for 2006.  This story creatively uses alliteration to validate student's feelings about the weather.  On one side of each page is an alliterative declaration of a child's emotion (e.g. Pricilla was Puzzled when).  On the other side of the page is a portrait of the child with their facial features made out of the letters of their emotion.  Turn the page to see a two page spread of a weather event (e.g. the fog rolled in).

Activity: Have children practice expressing their feelings using their faces.  Laura says this book was inspired by a game she played with her young children.  She'd make an exaggerated expression on her face and ask them to guess the emotion.  What a great way to make children more observant of the emotions of those around them.  Then read the story.  Older children can also enjoy finding the letters to spell each character on the face of the character. Colorado Standard 2: Students understand and apply the creative process to skills of story telling, playwriting, acting, and directing.

Art Activity:  Give the student's the opportunity to express their feelings through art by creating a self-portrait using paint.  They can be challenged to add the letters that spell that emotion.  Older students may also be able to write and alliterative sentence describing the cause of the emotion. Colorado Model Content Standards Visual Arts 1:  Students recognize and use the visual arts as a form of communication.

  Resources:

Lesesne, Teri S. Borzumato, Terry, (2006, October). Children's Choices 2006.  *The Reading             Teacher,* 60 (2), 177.

Laura Vaccaro Seeger: About the Author. Roaring Brook Press, from Laura Vaccaro Seeger             Blog, posted August 27, 2009, http://www.studiolvs.com/website\_root/bookblog/?page\_id=46

4.  Focus on The Hidden Alphabet and Black? White! Day? Night! and One Boy

Seeger, Laura Vaccaro. (2003) *The Hidden Alphabet*. New York: Roaring Brook Press.

Seeger, Laura Vaccaro. (2006) *Black? White! Day? Night! A Book of Opposites.* New York: Roaring Brook Press.

Seeger, Laura Vaccaro. (2008) *One Boy.* New York: Roaring Brook Press.

In these books the emphasis is on the background, or what the author/illustrator calls negative space.  In each book the pages have cut outs that allow the reader to see only part of the page.  Upon lifting the flap the reader sees the whole of the picture.  In the opposites book the piece seen at first expresses the opposite of the back page.  For example a tiny bug shows on the page with the text "tiny?"  You lift the flap and the bug has become an elephant's eye with the text "huge!"  In One Boy the text is revealed by cut outs through the page so that the entire book is both a counting book and a reading guessing game.

A.  One Boy is a great book for kindergarten and first grade readers who are learning to find words within words.  The book was a 2008 Geisel Honor Book.    After reading the book with the class, have students locate on the word wall, any small words within the words they see.

Colorado Reading Content Standard One: Students Read and Understand a variety of material.

For this activity students will  " use word recognition skills and resources such as phonics, context clues, picture clues, word origins, and word order clues; reference guides; roots, prefixes, and suffixes of words for comprehension"

B. Hidden Alphabet Book can serve as a model for intermediate students to create a piece of artwork exploring negative space.  Fold a large piece of construction paper in half.  Cut a 2"x 2" square in the center of the top page.   Have students paint or draw with crayon or markers the first letter or their first or last name on the back page making sure that an object beginning with that letter is created in the negative space that shows through the  cut-out square.

Colorado Model Content Visual Arts Standard 3:  Students know and apply visual arts materials, tools, techniques, and processes.

Resources:

"Colorado Model Content Standards for Reading and Writing."  Colorado Department of             Education. retrieved from http://www.cde.state.co.us/cdeassess/documents/OSA/standards/reading.pdf,

Robinson, Lolly. (2008, November/December) Laura Vaccaro Seeger:One Boy (Brief Article*)*. *Horn Book Magazine*, LXXXIV(6)

Seeger, Laura Vaccaro. Love Is*.* *Horn Book Magazine*, LXXXIV (6), p. 685.