



Personal Crests

All units I teach involve personal identity, sometimes more explicitly than other times. The personal crest unit demands a highly personal approach. The banner with a motto, placed on their shield should be something they are willing to ride into battle carrying. This generally makes the strongest impression on 14-15 year old boys.

The video limits demonstrations of different mediums, but both stenciling, gold leaf, water color, pen and ink, and other materials can be used. It is up to individual teachers to allow experimentation with a broader array of mediums. Experimentation with Canson papers, Prismacolor pencils, pen and ink, water color, or printmaking ink (used in stencils) allows for a deeper student engagement because they have a wider set of choices and can please themselves.

The experimentation is done in process journals (notebooks). Student journals are graded by week, or even in shorter periods. Student achievement requires failure and process. The grade process given a process journal gives as much credit for effort as it does for polish.

It is here students explore how to make and alter images, use special effects, and gain competence with the mediums they choose to use.

Sub units could be:

1, Notebook work includes:

- a. An understanding of the cultural context of the genre-- art history
- b. Drawing animals (See this unit under "Drawing" on this website.
- c. Research on Heraldic art
- d. Drawing banners,
- e. Researched images of objects to be included in the crest composition—with student sketches.
- f. Media research: stenciling, Prismacolor drawings, pen and ink drawings

2. Large provisional drawing of the final composition: Here composition theory becomes important.

- a. Where is the visual weight?
- b. Color theory: The unit on color theory on this website would be very useful before.
- c. Space arrangement: all elements are integrated into a single unity

3. Final crest collage

- a. Technical skill achieved
- b. Degree of authenticity to the self

I have taught this unit in low achieving environments and in high achieving environments. The quality of work I got from students in both groups was similar. The only difference was that with the high achieving groups the unit took five weeks, with the low achieving students it took two months to finish. Success demands the teacher hold the students to completing a learning process, no matter how long it takes. In international schools, notebook work was homework. In the lower achieving environments, journal work was done during class.