

THE DOT

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by Peter Reynolds

Themes: School, self-esteem, art

Grade Level: 1-3

Running Time: 5 minutes

SUMMARY

Vashti may not be able to draw, but she can at least make a dot. Her art teacher encourages her to sign her picture, which Vashti does scornfully. When she sees the dot framed above her art teacher's desk she decides that she can make a better dot. Soon Vashti is making big dots and small dots, red dots, blue dots, and purple dots. At the school art show everyone admires Vashti's dots and she realizes that art is about more than being able to draw.

OBJECTIVES

- Students will learn about different types of art.
- Students will discuss self-confidence and encouragement.

BEFORE VIEWING ACTIVITIES

Discuss students' ideas of art and what constitutes a piece of art. Guiding questions:

- What do you think of when someone asks you what art is?
- Who are some artists that you can think of?

What do they make?

Record students' answers to be reviewed after viewing the video.

Talk with students about whether there is something in their lives that they really don't like or don't think that they're good at. Have students share how

they feel during those times. Brainstorm ways that students can work through these challenges. Tell students that the video will show one girl's challenge and how she worked through it. Ask students to look for similarities and differences between themselves and Vashti.

AFTER VIEWING ACTIVITIES

Review students' ideas of art from the Before Viewing Activities. Have they changed, if so, how? Make a chart or other graphic organizer that categorizes the changes in the students' opinions and understanding of what a piece of art is.

Show students slides or pictures of Jackson Pollock's artwork. Share with them the picture book, *Action Jackson*. Ask students to discuss in small groups their opinions of his work. Give students the opportunity to attempt to create artwork modeling Pollock's style. How do they find this style compared to other types of art that they have done?

Ask students to reflect upon someone who has given them encouragement in their lives. Younger students and second language learners may need a definition of the word encouragement. After reflecting, students can write a thank-you note to this person. Alternatively, or in addition, students can reflect upon times when they have helped to encourage someone else. Students can write about how this made them feel.

Take a trip to a local art museum. If possible, arrange to meet one of the featured artists through

the museum curator (this is often possible through a university art exhibit or a museum that features local artists). Encourage students to ask questions about the artist's inspirations and people who have supported and encouraged him/her. If it is not possible to meet an artist, give students guiding questions or create a "scavenger hunt" to guide them through the museum. Some ideas are:

- Find the piece of art that you like the most. Why do you like it? How do you think that the artist created this piece of art?
- Find the piece of art that looks the most difficult to make. What challenges do you think that the artist came up against? How did he/she solve his/her problem?
- Find the piece of art that is made of the most unusual material. What is the material(s)? What is it usually used for? How did the artist use it?

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