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**Lesson Theme:** Patterns in Nature

**Grade Level:** Kindergarten

**Time:** 2 classes, 45 minutes each

**Lesson Overview:** The students will listen to the children's book "McElligot's Pool" and discuss the unusual patterns and features they observe on the fish in the illustrations. They will then view two paintings by Melissa Leaym-Fernandez, "Mother and Calf in India" and "Enlightenment", discussing the artist's use of pattern and texture and how it affects the elephants it portrays compared with photos of real elephants. Next, they will experiment with texture and pattern through crayon rubbings and drawings, and finally the students will create their own unique drawing of a sea creature with three unusual features.

**Visual Culture Component/Relevance:** Patterns and textures surround us, and can be manipulated in such a way that they completely change the viewer's perception of an object. Animals have certain patterns and textures to attract mates, camouflage, and ward off predators. Children can compare their knowledge of real animals with artwork that changes these features, and learn to manipulate these features themselves to create expressive artwork.

**Virginia Standards of Learning:**

Visual Art Standards

- K.1 - The student will create works of art that represent personal solutions to art problems
- K.3 (2,5)- The student will identify and use textures (sight and touch) and patterns (natural and man made)
- K.11- The student will identify people who make art as "artists"
- K.14- The student will describe and respond to works of art.

Grade 3 Standards

- Science K.8 - Recognizing patterns in the natural world and home

**Lesson Objectives:**

The Students Will:

- Participate in a discussion about the various patterns and textures in the illustrations of the book "McElligot's Pool" by Dr. Seuss and compare these to their knowledge of real-life sea creatures.
- Discuss how animals use their patterns and textures for survival, and compare knowledge of real animals to both the illustrations in the book and the paintings of Melissa Leaym-Fernandez
- Explore textures and patterns by making crayon rubbings and drawing their own.
- Design a unique sea creature with at least one unusual pattern or feature.
- Explain their creature and where it lives, what it does, how it moves, etc.

**Vocabulary Words for Visual Analysis:**

- Texture: the structure, feel, and appearance of something
- Pattern: an artistic design that has repetition
- Habitat: the place where an animal naturally lives or grows

- Trait: an inherited characteristic
- Camouflage: blending in with surroundings
- Realistic: true to life or nature
- Fictional: made-up

#### **Historical/Cultural/Artist Information:**

- drawing with crayons (various types of line created by different pressures and ways of holding the crayon)
- colors and how they mix
- fish and other sea creatures (what types of animals live under the sea?)
- textures found on sea animals vs. textures found on land dwelling animals
- patterns and where they can be found
- Melissa Leaym-Fernandez is an artist who has painted numerous pieces featuring elephants, each one rendered in a different way. Viewing Leaym-Fernandez's work will help children to see that there are many ways of rendering one subject, and the decisions of the artist can change its overall appearance in their art.

#### **Image Descriptions:**

The students will view large reproductions of paintings by Melissa Leaym-Fernandez. In "Mother and Calf in India", the elephants have colorful, whimsical patterns, and in "Enlightenment", they are swimming under water. These images will illustrate a few ways to make an animal appear unique and make believe (through adding new patterns or colors), and also serve as an example of a piece of art in which the subject is placed in a different, unusual environment.



#### **Questioning Strategies:**

While Reading "McElligot's Pool:

- Have you ever seen a fish that looked like this?
- What is unusual about this fish?
- Why don't real fish look like this?
- Why do you think real fish have scales and fins?

Melissa Leaym-Fernandez Paintings:

- What type of animal is this?
- What do you notice about these elephants?
- What colors did the artist use to paint these elephants?
- What color are elephants normally?
- Why are real elephants gray?
- Do you see shapes in the painting?
- What kinds of shapes are there?
- How did you know they were elephants in the painting if they looked different?

- Why is one elephant smaller than the other?
- Why do you think the artist used so many colors instead of just gray?
- How do you feel when you look at the painting?

**Final Discussion:**

- What is the name of your creature?
- Where does it live?
- What unusual features does it have?
- How does it use those features?

**Lesson Procedures:**

**Day 1:**

- When the children arrive, they should be instructed to sit at the tables with their hands in their laps (this way no one will touch the supplies before they are asked).
- The teacher will read “McElligot’s Pool” by Dr. Seuss aloud to the class, making sure they get to see the illustrations. The teacher will ask the questions listed under the “McElligot’s Pool” section of the questioning strategies as they read.
- Next, the teacher will show the class large prints of the paintings “Mother and Calf in India” and “Enlightenment” by Melissa Leaym-Fernandez, and then ask the questions listed in the “Melissa Leaym-Fernandez” section of questioning strategies.
- While discussing the prints, the teacher will make sure to help the children to define the vocabulary and understand the concepts of texture and pattern.
- The teacher will then gather all students around a table for a demonstration of the warm-up activity. Using scrap paper, and crayons, the teacher will show students how to look at the images of sea creatures in their folders, and use ideas from these images to sketch their own animal. The teacher will demonstrate how to break an image into simple shapes to draw. On a new sheet of scrap paper, the teacher will show students how to create textures and patterns with crayons and markers. The students will be given the option of finding textures around the classroom to make crayon rubbings, as well as observing patterns to draw from.
- The teacher will have the children go back to their respective tables and create texture rubbings and patterns, as well as sea creature sketches with their scrap paper as demonstrated. The teacher will walk around and give feedback to students.
- Once students have finished their warm-ups, the teacher will call on a few volunteers to share their ideas they came up with during the warm-up activity.

**Day 2:**

- When students arrive, the teacher will remind them of their precious discussion about patterns in nature by asking students to share what they remember and writing key terms on the board.
- The teacher will call students to a table for the second demonstration. The teacher will explain to students that they will use ideas from the patterns, textures, and sketches they just made to create their own wacky sea creature.

- The teacher will start by drawing a basic sea creature by looking at an image from the folder on the table or the drawings on the board, then ask students for ideas of what to add to make the creature unique. (Examples: mittens on an octopus that lives in the Arctic, wings on a fish so that it can fly to catch insects, leopard spots on a turtle so that it can blend in when it travels on land). The teacher should emphasize that everyone's creature should be different, and that each student should include at least 1 "wacky" trait on their animal and be able to tell the class why their animal has that trait.
- After demonstrating the project to completion, the teacher will send the students back to their tables and distribute cardstock. The students will have all of the materials they need in the middle of the table, and will be able to begin their drawings. The teacher will walk around giving feedback and assistance if needed, and call attention to students who try new techniques and ideas.
- If a student finishes early, they may use additional scrap paper to try out new patterns and textures, borrowing ideas from friends if they wish.
- Once students have all finished their drawings, the teacher will ask for volunteers to share their work with the class, using the questioning strategies listed under the "Final Discussion" section.
- The teacher will ask the students to clean up their tables by putting all supplies in the middle of the table.
- Once everything is cleaned up, the teacher will begin the follow-up activity, which will consist of three questions posed to the class: 1) Does anyone remember what a texture is? 2) How about a pattern? 3) How do animals use patterns and textures to survive?

#### Evaluation:

Did the Student...	Accomplished	Emerging	Not Yet Observed
Participate in a discussion about patterns and textures			
Discuss how animals use their patterns and textures for survival, compared with patterns and textures in art examples			
Explore textures and patterns by making crayon rubbings and drawing			
Design a unique sea creature with at least one unusual pattern or feature			

Explain their creature and where it lives, what it does, how it moves, etc			
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### **Materials and Preparation:**

The materials needed for the lesson include:

- A copy of "McElligot's Pool" by Dr. Seuss
- Large reproduction of the paintings "Mother and Calf in India" and "Enlightenment" by Melissa Leaym-Fernandez
- Folder of various images of sea creatures and patterns for each table
- Basket of crayons for each table (some sharp, some broken and without paper)
- Basket of markers for each table
- 3 sheets of scrap paper for each child to practice textures
- One 8x10" sheet of white cardstock per child for final drawings

The teacher should make two to three examples of different interpretations of the project ahead of time to show children after the demonstration. There are no safety issues related to these materials and they are age-appropriate, however, children will need to be reminded to keep markers and crayons on their papers so that they do not stain clothing or tables.

### **Resources:**

"McElligot's Pool" by Dr. Seuss

Seuss, and Seuss. *McElligot's Pool*. New York: Random House, 1974. Print.

"Mother and Calf in India" and "Enlightenment" by Melissa Leaym-Fernandez

Leaym-Fernandez, Melissa. "Photo Galleries." *Welcome to The Elephantworks Studio*. Web. Sept. 2011. <<http://www.elephantworkstudio.com>

### **Extra Materials:**

- Scrap paper for demonstration with different crayon rubbings, depictions of texture, and ways to draw with markers and crayons
- Extra paper for early finishers

### **Special Populations:**

This lesson would need adjustment for any special needs students who need help with fine motor skills. If available, an extra adult volunteer could help these children with each step, but if not, the teacher will need to spend extra time with these students to make sure they are able to complete their projects. Another option would be to privately ask gifted students to help their classmates who are having trouble. Gifted students could expand on this project by experimenting with different patterns and textures, and adding more than one unusual feature to their final projects.