Chemical Identity Masks
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In this interdisciplinary project, student created a two-sided identity mask. On one side they represented their personal identity, as it has been formed through their socialization by family, friends, and the media. On the other side they represented a chemical element that they felt best symbolized their personality.

Teacher Reflection

This was our first project of the year. It was a great way to create a positive culture in our classroom, while introducing students to the basic principles of sociology and chemistry. It takes a certain amount of trust to breathe through a straw and allow someone else to completely cover your face with wet plaster for 15 minutes or so. The students bought in to the process and had a great time. It also was a great way to build a culture of critique and refinement, as students worked through multiple drafts to get to their final product.

In the end, there was a wide range in the quality of the masks. In reading the student reflections, many students with less developed masks mentioned that they wished they used their class time better. We modeled and did several critiques, but because creating the masks was such an involved process, many students had trouble revising concepts once they had begun. When I teach this project again, I will make sure that students take the process of generating ideas and drafting their masks as seriously as making the masks. Then they will have a clearer vision before they begin designing and painting.

—John Fisher

Student Reflection

In this project we made an impression of our face and designed it to show our hidden identity. After getting an impression of my face I started to layer the mask with more plaster until the mask wasn't fragile anymore. When the first mask dried I made a second mask for my chemical identity. Though at first I though I would have two separate masks, one for humanities and one for chemistry, I ended up having my element mask on the outside and the humanities mask on the inside. In the end I think that I was really able to achieve the concept of "Beautiful Work" and have the project up to my standards.

—Devon Stanley, 10th grade

To learn more about this project and others visit the HTH Digital Commons and John Fisher's digital portfolio at
http://www.hightechhigh.org/ and http://staff.hthcv.hightechhigh.org/~jfisher/

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