Lesson 3: What do *YOU* Look Like?

Rationale

Video game graphics have come a long way since the 70s and 80s! People are not always aware of the evolution of technology and learn that the graphic style of Spaceteam ESL refers back to these basic graphics and is therefore considered retro. Students will learn a bit about the history of video games in relation to graphics. They will also observe the style of the character graphics for Spaceteam ESL, and will develop some basic drawings skills by copying a few of the characters using graph paper. They will then take some time to reflect about their own personality and characteristics, and through the simple details they add to their character will communicate something about their own personality and preferences. They will practice their English by explaining their choices.

What you need

⋆examples printed or projected of early video game characters (space invaders works well, see Appendix C)
* graph paper and markers or pencil crayons / student
* printed or projected Spaceteam ESL characters

Objectives

As a result of this lesson students will:

* develop a simple stylized drawing skill by copying characters from Spaceteam ESL

* create an avatar to represent themselves in the style of Spaceteam ESL characters
* explain why they chose certain details to represent themselves

Introduction

* share images of Atari 2600 video game characters
* what are you looking at here?
* how are they different from video game characters from now?
* what do you notice about the way they are made?
* graphics for games have come a long way in 30 years
* early computer images were made of very few colours and very few pixels
* basically, just like the example, images were made out of squares that you could see
* to understand what I mean, it helps to look at graph paper - have a look at a piece of graph paper
* in an image you could basically see all of the squares, just like this
* take a few minutes to try to make a simple character using only one colour per square - you can imitate the example or invent your own

Activity

* show an image of a character from Spaceteam ESL (see Appendix C)
* what have you noticed about the Spaceteam ESL characters?
* do you know what the word retro means?
* "that's so retro" often relates to clothing styles from the past

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* show characters from Spaceteam ESL
* why would I call these retro?
* the Spaceteam ESL characters are very retro because they are like the video game characters of the past what do you notice about these characters?
* even though they are standing in the exact same pose, would you say they each have different personalities? why?
* your challenge now is to copy one or more of the characters from the game - just to get used to drawing in this style
* next you will create your own space Spaceteam ESL avatar or self-portrait to represent yourself
* how can you represent yourself through such a simple drawing?
* choose special details to represent yourself - they may not be real details - for example, you may not have a punk hairstyle like some of these characters, but what might such a hairstyle choice say about you? and what about colours? and how would you add pattern to your image? what might that say about you? What do your colour choices say about you?
* can you give your avatar a special name that says something about your personality? perhaps it will be a funny combination of words like a lot of the commands from the game ie/ captain fun-messy-hair

Conclusion

* can you introduce your avatar and explain the design choices you made?
* ie/ colours and what they are wearing or holding

Extensions

* using bright fimo or sculpey (modelling clay that hardens in the oven - can be purchased at most art supply stores) in colours similar to the colour palette of the Spaceteam ESL characters, invite students to make 3D versions of their avatars
* let them know they can poke a hole in the head and wear their avatar as a necklace
* encourage students to take out or wear their 3D avatars every time they play Spaceteam ESL
* if they have created a 3d ship, invite them to store their avatar inside when not using