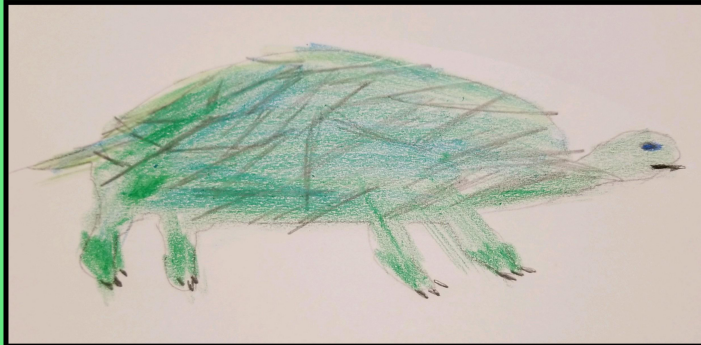


AVOIDING SHELL SHOCK WHEN TRYING SOMETHING NEW

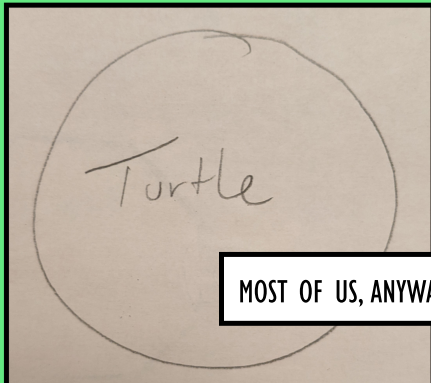
WRITTEN BY LUCAS LANDHERR

DRAWN BY JAMES LANDHERR, VALERIE CENTER,
MARET SMOLOW, LAUREL LANDHERR, GORDON CHAINE,
EMMA LANDHERR, HANNA LANDHERR, LOU SABINO,
TEGAN LANDHERR, AND LUCAS LANDHERR

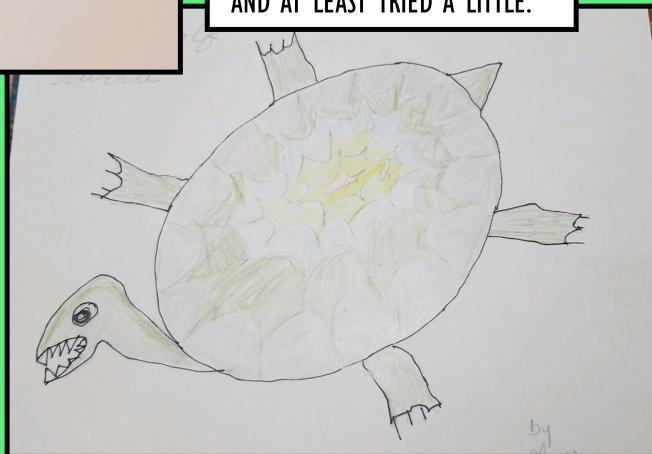


AT A RECENT FAMILY GATHERING, MY YOUNGEST DAUGHTER WENT AROUND THE TABLE AND ASKED EACH OF US TO DRAW OUR BEST PICTURE OF A TURTLE.

MOST OF US TOOK IT SERIOUSLY AND AT LEAST TRIED A LITTLE.

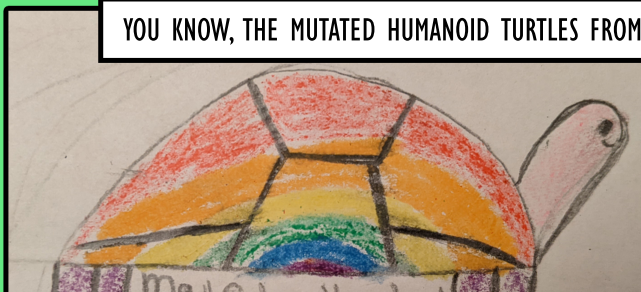


MOST OF US, ANYWAY.

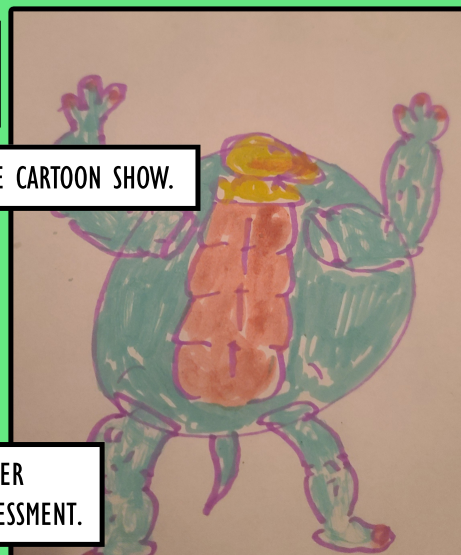


AT THE END, MOST OF US WERE TOLD WE HADN'T EXACTLY DONE IT RIGHT, BECAUSE SHE HAD EXPECTED US TO DRAW NINJA TURTLES.

YOU KNOW, THE MUTATED HUMANOID TURTLES FROM THE CARTOON SHOW.



AND I'VE BEEN THINKING ABOUT THAT 'ASSIGNMENT' A LOT THIS SEMESTER AS I'VE BEEN TRYING A COUPLE OF NEW PROJECTS AND MEANS OF ASSESSMENT.



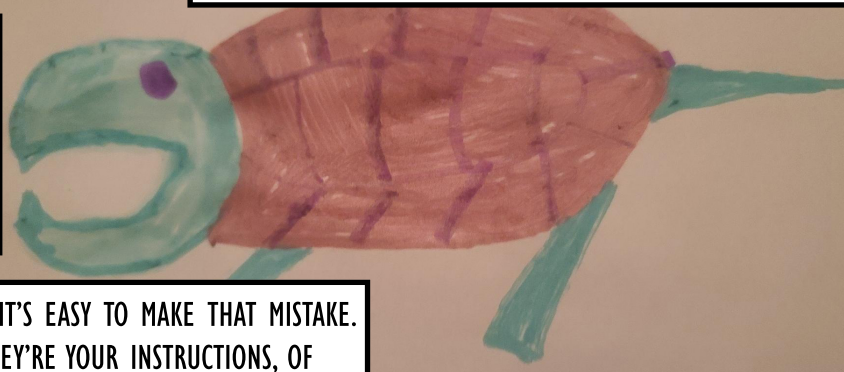
A GOOD EXPLANATION AT THE BEGINNING CAN PREVENT FEELINGS OF SURPRISE/DISAPPOINTMENT AT THE END.



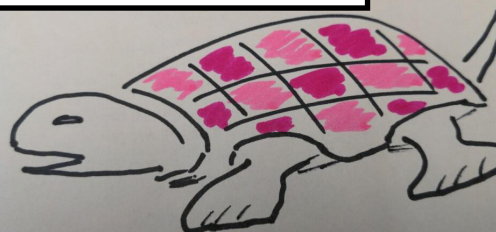
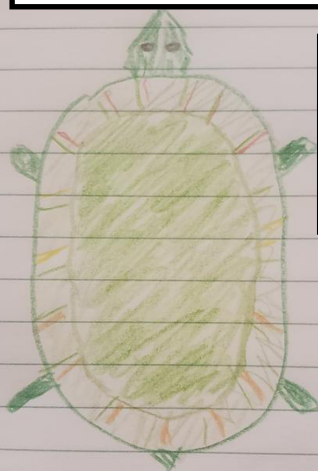
FOR EXAMPLE, CONSIDER THIS TURTLE DRAWING 'ASSIGNMENT'. NONE OF US REALLY BROKE THE RULES WE WERE GIVEN!

IT WAS OPEN-ENDED, SO OF COURSE THERE WAS GOING TO BE SOME VARIATION BETWEEN THE FINAL PRODUCTS. BUT THE OBJECTIVE ITSELF WASN'T CLEAR TO US, SO ALL DELIVERABLES WERE OFF-TARGET FROM THE INTENDED GOAL.

FROM THE OTHER PERSPECTIVE, THE INSTRUCTIONS SEEMED PRETTY CLEAR AND OBVIOUS TO THE PERSON WHO WAS DELIVERING THEM!

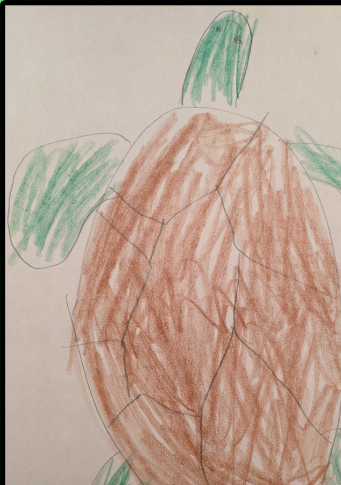


AND IT'S EASY TO MAKE THAT MISTAKE. IF THEY'RE YOUR INSTRUCTIONS, OF COURSE THEY SEEM CLEAR TO YOU. YOU KNOW EXACTLY WHAT YOU MEAN!



AND IF THE ASSIGNMENT TYPE OR APPROACH IS SOMETHING NEW TO THE STUDENTS, THEN THEY'RE PARTICULARLY MORE LIKELY TO MISINTERPRET AND GO OFF THE INTENDED PATH.

SO PREPARE AS MUCH AS YOU CAN WHEN TRYING SOMETHING NEW!



- HAVE A COLLEAGUE READ OVER YOUR INSTRUCTIONS. AND/OR ASK A TA, OR A FORMER STUDENT, TOO.
- EXPLAIN THE ASSIGNMENT/APPROACH BOTH VERBALLY AND IN WRITING TO THE STUDENTS, IF NEED BE.
- IF IT'S APPROPRIATE, HAVE SAMPLES OF WORK SO THEY KNOW WHAT THE INTENDED GOAL IS.

AND BE SURE TO ENCOURAGE QUESTIONS IF THERE'S ANY CONFUSION. STUDENTS CAN ALWAYS FIND SOME GAP IN THE INSTRUCTION.

IF YOU'RE ASSESSING MISINTERPRETATION, YOU'RE NOT ASSESSING UNDERSTANDING. SO, SLOW AND STEADY - MAKE THE OBJECTIVE CLEAR AND ALL ARE BETTER OFF!

