

MUSEUM EXHIBIT!

Creating Your Own Exhibit Tour

ART AND SOCIAL STUDIES

GRADES: 7-12

BASED ON



Otagaki Rengetsu (Japanese, b.1791, d.1875),
attributed ceramist
Untitled, 19th Century
Glazed stoneware
Gift of the Rookwood Pottery Company; 1898.27

OBJECTIVES

- Students will be able to produce a virtual exhibit tour, in which they design/build all graphic components (artifacts and museum exhibit environment/structure) themselves
- Students will be able to produce an audio recording (or series of recordings) to accompany the visual piece, in which they draw upon considerable research to provide key content information for various artifacts.
- Students will be able to synthesize the visual and audio pieces into one cohesive display (physical piece or digital) in which a visitor is presented inside of the actual exhibit (analyzing key artifacts).

CONCEPT

The origins of this particular lesson trace back to my days in elementary school, in which my art teacher introduces my second grade class to "shoebox art", or art that was presented inside of a shoebox. The shoebox, in turn, would become a physical space in which tiny, hand-crafted artifacts would be displayed. The function of the shoebox was to provide both the framework and space for these miniature exhibits of artifacts that we, the willing second grade students, would attempt to sculpt (found objects of the day were toothpicks, sticks, cardboard, Q-tips, and the random Lego block or two). The goal of the assignment was for us students to present five artifacts from a period in history belonging to a former U.S. President. I was thrilled to have the opportunity to build pieces that depended as much upon spacing and construction as they did design. In the end, my shoebox art piece made its way into a regional art show and claimed second prize in the K-6th grade bracket!

CLASS EXPERIENCE

Years later, as a student teacher, I revisited this very concept when working with high school students in an intro studio class. The students were much older than I was when I created shoebox art, but the core concepts remained the same. The students loved the assignment (instead of U.S. Presidents, they recreated miniature prints of five major works of art of various artists [Van Gogh, Picasso, Warhol, Cassatt, and/or O'Keefe]). The students had a lot of fun building miniature exhibit galleries (some opted for larger boxes) in which elaborate table models and display cases were constructed with various found objects. During the presentation, each student provided a narrated piece in which they described each piece of art, much as a docent would during a tour through select art galleries.

Several years into my teaching career, I found myself revisiting the project, but from a digital perspective. As I began to instruct from the digital arts curricula (Adobe applications and the like), I began to explore new opportunities. Still, the core concept of the entire unit remained in tact.

PURPOSE:

The students need to learn from countless perspectives, and often they touch upon the recalling of facts and/or analyzing key targets or graphics. Yet, how often are the students empowered to create every single key component of an assignment, from both a tactile and then audible perspective? The "MUSEUM EXHIBIT" requires that each student first research at least five artifacts within a particular bracket of time. The artifacts can be derived from any point in history relevant to a particular unit. For example, if the over-arching topic is Japan: Everyday Life, circa 1850-1899, then the student would look to research at least five artifacts from that time period. You can be more concise or more generalized, in terms of time periods. The students then design/develop their artifacts, either utilizing computer-generated graphics or building the artifacts by hand. In the end, the students must orchestrate a museum exhibit by placing the artifacts throughout a virtual (digitally created) or physically designed space. The teacher has the option of requiring audio tracks (which can be uploaded into the timeline in a movie-editing application) or students can actually script and then read aloud historical/informative content to the class.

Why the teapot (artifact pictured above)?

The teapot represents precisely what each student should aspire to re-create: an object that possesses texture, dimension, varied colors, and can even be viewed in an actual 3D space (part of the collection at the Cincinnati Art Museum's Japanese Art collection); thus, providing the added element of authenticity.

Be sure to provide students with direction at the onset of the research process; specifically, show previous student work (both in-process and finished) so that they can see (visually) how the aesthetic can be developed for the informative work (audio files or read aloud content).

MATERIALS

Studio Based

- Shoe box, or slightly larger cardboard box
- Scissors (*matte knives for older students)
- Rulers
- T-squares
- Pencils
- Paint
- Glue (glue gun works best > supervised)
- Transparent film sheets (if possible, for simulating glass surface appearances)

CLASS EXPERIENCE

Computer Based

- Adobe Photoshop (or similar render-based computer application software)
- Windows Movie Maker
- iMovie
- scanner/scanning device (to import illustrations into Photoshop, as needed)
- Recording microphones (if possible)
- Audacity
- iTunes
- Garage Band

VOCABULARY

Mixed Media – artwork in the making of which more than one medium has been employed

Animation/Sequential Art – the process of making movies, or sequential art, with drawings, computer graphics, or photographs, all of which advance movement over a particular set of frames (in a timeline).

Virtual – the quality of having attributes of something without sharing its (real or imagined) physical form

PROCEDURE

1. Assign students in groups of 2-3. Groups can be pre-arranged by social studies teacher, if need-be.
2. Assign each group a specific topic within an equally specific time bracket
3. Each student/group researches FIVE artifacts within their assigned time bracket, and begins to compose a script for their audio track/read aloud.
4. Teacher approves list of artifacts and script: thus, the design process begins.

Studio Based:

- Allow a 1-2 weeks, depending on age group, for the development of artifacts and design of the actual exhibit (shoebox or other)
- Provide glue gun station where students can fasten objects into place. If Elmer's glue or rubber cement will suffice, provide enough so that students aren't standing/waiting.
- PRESENTATIONS: each group will stand before the larger group/class and read aloud information relative to the various artifacts in the museum exhibit. Allow for a flexible schedule and provide creative options (i.e., some students may wish to film their exhibit and show it on a larger screen).

Computer Based:

- Allow 2-3 weeks, depending on the scope/depth of digital competencies and/or experience in computer-based rendering software, for the design on the artifacts and exhibit display.
- Allow for one week (minimum) for students to record and align audio tracks with the visual content (in timeline > Movie Maker or iMovie). Adobe Premiere would be ideal, if the school has it.
- PRESENTATIONS: Students can watch the presentations on a Smartboard, or at their leisure (depends on presentation requirements/rubrics of teacher).

ASSESSMENT

Presentations before teacher/class > students prepare for presentations by reviewing project rubrics.

*Students are encouraged to self-reflect/critique their own work, as well as the work of their classmates > younger students can use evaluation sheet (that corresponds with rubric), higher level students can participate in formal critique of the work.

**It is MOST important that the students have the rubrics in advance, so that they are fully prepared for the presentation piece.

NATIONAL STANDARDS

National Core Arts Standards Artistic Processes and Anchor Standards:

Artistic Processes:

- Creating, Performing/Presenting/Producing, Responding, & Connecting

Anchor Standards:

- Creating:
 1. students will generate and conceptualize artistic ideas and work
 2. organize and develop artistic ideas and work
 3. refine and complete artistic work
- Performing/Presenting/Producing:
 1. Select, analyze, and interpret artistic work for presentation
 2. Convey meaning through the presentation of artistic work.
- Responding:
 1. Apply criteria to evaluate artistic work
- Connecting:
 1. Relate artistic ideas and works with societal, cultural and historical context to deepen understanding.

National Council for the Social Studies (NCSS) Curriculum Standards for Social Studies

- Culture: Social studies programs should include experiences that provide for the study of culture and cultural diversity
- Time, Continuity, & Change: Social studies programs should include experiences that provide for the study of the ways human beings view themselves in and over time
- People, Places, & Environments: Social studies programs should include experiences that provide for the study of people, places, and environments
- Individual Development & Identity: Social studies programs should include experiences that provide for the study of individual development and identity

CURRICULUM CONNECTIONS

This lesson weaves historical context through exciting visual pieces of art (either studio-based or digital). Collaboration between social studies and art instructors is vital to the development of the lesson from both the informative and the aesthetic perspectives. Both instructors should collaborate on all rubrics and timeliness of artifact creation.

The standards listed above apply to the lesson that I have presented, but feel free to pull from the other standards listed for the visual arts and/or social studies.

With the widespread interest in Project Based Learning (PBL), collaboration with a visual arts instructor is most important to the student learning environment, as well as an exciting way for instructor s looking for projects to incorporate a fun, engaging, and meaningful assignment into his/her curriculum.

RESOURCES

Books on animation:

Animation: The Mechanics of Motion, Volume 1
(2005) Chris Webster

CLASS EXPERIENCE

Understanding Animation (1998) Paul Wells

Great links for frame-by-frame/sequential art:

<http://framexframe.tumblr.com/>

http://edutechwiki.unige.ch/en/Flash_frame-by-frame_animation_tutorial

Shoebox Art links:

<https://textileartscenter.wordpress.com/2010/10/20/the-shoebox-project/>

<https://www.behance.net/gallery/1711397/SHOE-BOX-ART-WOODLAND-FAMILY>

