

PERSHING MURAL PROJECT CURRICULUM

Learning From the Past, Understanding the Present, and Discovering the Future



THE PERSHING MURAL ~ A NEBRASKA CULTURAL LANDMARK

Using Art to Promote Inclusion and Respect

In this lesson, students will learn about ways to make art accessible to blind and low-vision people. They will be encouraged to grow in understanding and empathy and learn the importance of inclusion in their classrooms, homes and community. The students will be invited to create an art piece that can be experienced tactically as well as visually and complete two exercises that help students understand and promote inclusion and respect.

Included in this Lesson:

Lesson Plan: Inclusion and Respect

PDF: Personal Inventory

PDF: Getting to Know your Classmates (Interview Sheet)

Power Point: Pershing 3-D Model

Nebraska Standards Addressed:

Present: FA 8.2.3.d Explain why a work of art can evoke different interpretations and how artwork is interpreted and evaluated by the way it is displayed or presented.

Respond: FA 8.2.1.c Engage in the sensory experience and relate it to making expressive artwork.

Connect: FA 8.2.4.d Explain how images and objects are used to convey a story, familiar experience, or connection to the world.

Connect: FA 8.2.1 Students will use the creative process to investigate and communicate personal voice in artwork.

Respond: FA 8.2.2 Students will understand and apply their knowledge of a variety of presentation and communication techniques.

Objectives:

- Students will learn about new technology that enables blind and low-vision people to experience art in a tactile way.
- Students will create art that to be experienced in a tactile way.
- Students will gain a better understanding about the importance of empathy and appreciating different ideas, personalities, backgrounds and cultural differences.
- Students will be encouraged to respect differences among individuals within their schools, neighborhoods and beyond.
- Students will develop critical thinking skills.
- By learning about empathy, students will be encouraged to be open-minded, inclusive, supportive, and foster those feelings toward others.

Grade Level:

Written at 6th Grade Level (educators are encouraged to adjust the lesson to meet needs of Pre-K to 12th Grade)

Materials Needed:

Blind folds, Card stock, Paper, Pencils, Colored Markers, foam, clay, felt, cotton balls, string, yarn, glue, sprinkling sand, puff paint, sand paper, fabric, pompoms, pipe cleaners, popsicle sticks, and any other tactile materials that are available

Time Requirement:

Activity #1: Two 50-minute class periods

Activity #2: One 50-minute class periods

Activity #3: Two 50-minute class periods

Vocabulary:

Community: A group of living creatures (large or small) in a particular area, often interested in the same things with common needs, with a sense of trust, belonging, safety and caring for each other.

Diversity: The range of human differences among individuals that may relate to various backgrounds, cultures, beliefs, economic levels, abilities, age, national origin, race, gender, etc.

Empathy: The ability to feel, understand, accept, share and respond to another individual - 'to be able to stand in someone else's shoes.'

Ethnicity: The social and cultural characteristics, backgrounds, and experiences shared by a group of people. These include language, religion, beliefs, values, and behaviors that are often handed down from one generation to the next.

Exclusion: Not accepted—to prevent someone or something from entering a place or taking part in an activity.

Inclusion: The act or practice of including and accommodating people who may have been excluded in the past because of their economic status, race, gender, religion, or abilities/disabilities.

Neighborhood: The area in a community that surrounds someone's home. It is sometimes used to describe a single street and the homes or buildings lining it.

Open-Minded: Willing to accept ideas and opinions which are different than your own and being receptive to new ideas or arguments.

Outsider: A person who is not accepted and does not belong to a particular group. An outsider doesn't fit in or is someone who observes a group from afar.

Prejudice: An opinion or judgement about someone or something that is not based on reason or experience without just grounds or before sufficient knowledge. Prejudice can be shown against people because of their race, gender, age, nationality, etc.

Respect: Demonstrating acceptance and high regard of another person and listening to their ideas with an open-mind.

Introduction

“Arts-based engagement helps participants cross cultural and communication bridges. Through the arts, diverse participants can learn to share and hear each other differently, increase understanding, and manage conflict. Arts-based engagement gives more diverse groups a stake in the process of community change.” www.civicarts.org

When the Pershing Mural was mounted on the west side of the Pershing Auditorium, it was far above the sidewalk and out of reach from the public. With its new installation at Wyuka Park, visitors will be able to experience the mosaic from afar or up close and personal. However, not everyone will be able to see the Mural and will need other means to interact with the art.

According to the National Federation for the Blind, in 2016, 39,700 Nebraskans had a visual disability. The National Endowment for the Arts has stated, *“Not every mind or body will experience Art the same way. But every mind and body are entitled to the experience.”* In order to make sure that ALL are included in experiencing and interacting with the Pershing Mural, the Pershing Mural Historic Preservation Committee contracted with John Olson, founder of 3DPhotoWorks.

John and his Company developed a process whereby they take a conventional, two-dimensional image and convert it to 3-D data. Once that data has been converted, they send it to a machine that sculpts the data out of a block of substrate. Once that’s been sculpted, it goes through a printing process where they lay the image back down on top of the relief in perfect registration. What you end up with is a three-dimensional print that has length, width, depth, and texture. When headsets are made available, narrative will help the visitor experience the exhibit using multiple senses.

By using this cutting-edge technology to create a 3-D model of the Mural, those who are blind or have low vision will have tactile access to the mosaic rather than just listening to words describe it. This model will ensure that ALL are included in experiencing the Mural.

Guided and Independent Practice:

Activity #1: Creating Tactile Art

After viewing the power point “Pershing 3-D Model”, begin a class discussion:

- What would it be like to go to an art museum if you were blind?
- Would it be hard to experience the art by only hearing about it?
- How would it make you feel if you could not see the art the same way as everyone else? Would you feel left out?
- Why is it important to make art experiences available to everyone?
- Do you think even sighted persons could have a richer experience interacting with art tactically? Would it help a sighted person have more empathy for a blind or low-vision person?

After the discussion, the students will be invited to create art that can be experienced with touch as well as sight.

Process:

- 1) Explain to the students that they will be creating a simple design of a recognizable shape (e.g. snowman, tree, elephant, etc.) and transfer it onto cardstock.
- 2) Encourage the students not to share their designs or look at each other’s work.
- 3) Their goal will be to have someone make tactile contact with the art and be able to identify what the design portrays by touch alone.
- 4) They will then use a variety of materials made available to make the image tactile. For instance, they can create raised lines with glue, pipe cleaners, yarn, string, puff paints, etc.
- 5) The lines can be filled in with other materials like sand paper, cloth, etc. to give additional texture.
- 6) Advise the students to keep their designs simple—too much activity on the page may make it difficult to identify the design tactically.
- 7) Once the artwork is completed and has had ample time for glue to dry, the artwork will be laid out on tables so students can interact with it.
- 8) Students will use their fingers and sense of touch to determine the shape each artist has create to experience the art tactically.

Note: It might be helpful if the students are shown a very simple pre-school age coloring books to see examples of simple images and draw inspiration for their own design.

Discussion Questions:

- What special considerations did you make in selecting materials to make your design tactile?
- Did you change your mind or change course during the process when you ran into difficulties?
- What was it like using only your fingers to explore the art? Was it frustrating or did you enjoy using senses other than sight?
- Did you gain even a small understanding of what it must be like to be blind or have low vision and not experience the world in the same way as everyone else? To be deaf and not hear like everyone else?

Evaluation:

The students will be evaluated on:

- 1) Use of their time
- 2) Following directions
- 3) Creating a simple design
- 4) Making the design three-dimensional with the use of materials provided
- 5) Participation in the sensory experience
- 6) Participation in small group and class discussion

Activity #2: Using Art to Illustrate Inclusion

Begin a class discussion with a simple definition of inclusion -- The act or practice of including and accommodating people who may have been excluded in the past because of their economic status, race, gender, religion, or abilities/disabilities.

Warm-up Questions:

- How would you define inclusion?
- Has there ever been a time when you were excluded from a group or activity? How did it feel?
- Have you ever witnessed someone being excluded? How did you feel about watching that happening?

- Have you or someone you know ever gone out of their way to include someone? Please explain?
- How does it feel when you are accepted and included in a group or activity?
- When you see someone being excluded, is there any action you can take?

After completing the discussion, pass out three sheets of paper per student.

Process:

- 1) On the first sheet, ask the students to draw a picture of people involved in an activity where someone within their picture feels excluded or like an outsider.
- 2) Ask the students to draw a second picture as a follow-up of the first picture of someone reaching out to the 'outsider' and this person's reaction to the welcoming gesture.
- 3) Ask the students to draw a third picture building on the second picture of the activity and the person that was now included and participating with others.
- 4) As a class, ask students to volunteer to share their three pictures and describe the overall feelings from the standpoint of each person in the three drawings.

Discussion Questions:

- How do you think the feelings of the person excluded in the first drawing changed in the second and third drawings?
- How do you think the feelings of person who eventually included the excluded person changed throughout the drawings?
- How will you look for ways to include those who may feel excluded at school? At home? At activities?
- Why do you think it is important to include those who feel like they are being left out?

Evaluation:

The students will be evaluated on:

- 1) Use of their time

- 2) Completing three, evolving drawings of an activity and interactions within it
- 3) Participation in small group and class discussion

Activity #3: Communicating to Encourage Inclusion and Respect

Students can sit beside each other every day but may not really get to know each other. By digging a little deeper and learning more about each other, students will have a better understanding of their classmates which will promote more inclusion and respect.

Note: Ahead of the class session, the teacher will use slips of paper or popsicle sticks that are numbered and placed in a container. These will be used for students to draw numbers to see who each student will be pairing up with for a brief interview. Two popsicle sticks will have the number 1 written on it and those two students will pair off; the two students who draw the number 2 will pair off, etc. If there is an odd number of students, the teacher can participate in the activity or there may be a group of three.

Process:

- 1) The teacher will explain this activity is geared to help students learn more about each other. At all times, students will show compassion and respect for each other in their interactions. Every voice will be heard and acknowledged.
- 2) Each student will quietly and independently complete “A Personal Inventory” Sheet. Once the students have completed their personal inventories, ask them to put the completed questionnaires inside their desks for the time being.
- 3) Each student will now draw a number from the prepared container and pair up to conduct an interview using the “Getting to Know Your Classmates” worksheet.
- 4) When the teacher says begin, the students will quietly interview each other based on the questions on the worksheet and write down the answers they have heard from their classmate—allow about five minutes.
- 5) When time is called, the students will draw their second set of numbers and begin the process again with a different classmate. If they are paired with a classmate they have already interviewed, they can switch numbers with another student but this is the ONLY situation in which they can change their numbers.

- 6) Once the students have gone through this process five times and completed their worksheets, they can return to their desks

Class Discussion:

- Were there any “ah ha” moments or surprises that you learned from interviewing your classmates?
- Did you find you had more in common with your classmates than you thought or less?
- What was the coolest thing you learned about a classmate?
- Was it difficult sharing information about yourself at first? Did it get any easier as you went along?
- What are some of the good things that can come out of getting to know each other better and listening to each other?
- Did you all answer your questions exactly the same? What does it mean that there were a lot of different answers to these questions? Were there wrong or right answers? Is it ok to be different and have different thoughts?
- Do you think getting to know someone better helps you to have empathy for them (put yourself in their shoes)?
- What does it mean to show respect to someone? How does it make a person feel like they are valued and included?
- Let’s talk about bullying. If someone is being bullied, are they being excluded? Are they being disrespected? Is bullying ever acceptable?
- What can you do if you see someone being bullied or if you are being bullied?
- What can you do to make sure your classmates feel included and respected?

Evaluation:

The students will be evaluated on:

- 1) Use of their time
- 2) Staying on task and being respectful during the interview process
- 3) Completing their interview sheets
- 4) Participation in small group and class discussion in a respectful way

A Personal Inventory

(To be completed by each student prior to beginning the interview portion of the exercise)

You will have 4 minutes to write your answers to the six questions. Write the first thing that comes to mind – no erasing.

1) I wish I was better at:

2) Besides lunchtime (in the cafeteria or playground) and PE, what do I enjoy most about school?

3) When I go to the library – what is my favorite kind of book or topic?

4) What is the most challenging thing for me about school?

5) Most of my classmates don't know this about me.

6) I would love to learn more about this subject in school.

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Getting to Know Your Classmates An Interview

You will be conducting five one-on-one interviews with classmates.

1) I wish I was better at:

Classmate 1: _____

Classmate 2: _____

Classmate 3: _____

Classmate 4: _____

Classmate 5: _____

2) Besides lunchtime (in the cafeteria or playground) and PE, what do I enjoy most about school?

Classmate 1: _____

Classmate 2: _____

Classmate 3: _____

Classmate 4: _____

Classmate 5: _____

3) When I go to the library, what is my favorite kind of book or topic?

Classmate 1: _____

Classmate 2: _____

Classmate 3: _____

Classmate 4: _____

Classmate 5: _____

4) What is the most challenging thing for me about school?

Classmate 1: _____

Classmate 2: _____

Classmate 3: _____

Classmate 4: _____

Classmate 5: _____

5) Most of my classmates don't know this about me:

Classmate 1: _____

Classmate 2: _____

Classmate 3: _____

Classmate 4: _____

Classmate 5: _____

6) I would love to learn more about this subject in school:

Classmate 1: _____

Classmate 2: _____

Classmate 3: _____

Classmate 4: _____

Classmate 5: _____

Closure:

In a society immersed in technology and social media, it is easy for our students to sometimes feel isolated and lack in verbal communication skills. When they gain confidence in being able to interact and know that what they say will be respected and valued, it helps them feel included; it also

encourages them to extend this same respect and gift of inclusion to others.

By “stepping into the shoes of others”, they will grow in empathy. They will come to appreciate all that make us similar and embrace those things that make us different. Celebrating this diversity and uniqueness is an important part creating a healthy community.

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