Documents of Diversity

Developed By
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Suggested Length
Lesson #1: 30 minutes plus 20 minutes
Lesson #2: 50 minutes
Lesson #3: Two or more 50 minute classes
Lesson #4: 50 minutes

Suggested Grade Level(s)
Eight

Subject Areas
Social Studies, Visual Arts, Language Arts, Math

Overview
Extending the consideration of diversity, students will explore the cultural diversity in their own families, as well as the cultural profile and historical development of their own community. Through developing a walking tour, in booklet or web-based form, they will demonstrate their research and comprehension of the interaction of different cultural groups within their community.

Links to Curriculum Outcomes

Students will (be expected to)
- analyse art work and determine the artist’s intention (visual arts)
- appreciate the use of art as a means to explore identity and tradition (visual arts)
- develop an understanding of culture, diversity, and world view, recognizing the similarities and differences reflected in various personal, cultural, racial, and ethnic perspectives (social studies)
- explore principles of democracy, equality, human dignity and justice (social studies)
- develop writing skills in a range of creative styles (language arts)
- construct and analyze relationships through 2-D models, such as graphs and charts. (mathematics)

Links to Telling Stories: Themes / Key Words
- identity
- mixed media
- installation
Art Works
- Emigratsii (On Emigration), Tanya Rusnak, NA
- Electronic Totem, Mike MacDonald, NA
- Cascadura Stories, Melinda Mollineaux, NA

Lesson #1: Invented Traditions: Recipes

Objective
Students will consider multiple media in the exploration and investigation of personal identity and cultural tradition (including traditional foods), and will compile a class recipe collection.

Related Art Work(s)
- Emigratsii (On Emigration), Tanya Rusnak, NA
- Electronic Totem, Mike MacDonald, NA
- Cascadura Stories, Melinda Mollineaux, NA
- Those who share together, stay together, Jane Ash Poitras, CAG 97.1
- I Triumphed and Saddened With All Weather, William Kurelek, CAG 71.15

Materials
- Index cards
- Pens

Activities
1. Discuss the idea of installations with the class, how they are 3-dimensional works that have a variety of components. Have students consider how the artists in this section use different media to represent their own experiences and ways of seeing. With students, identify the different components used by each artist and discuss the significance of the technologies and objects each artist used in relationship to what they intended to express.

2. Propose the idea that these artists are experimenting, using different things to find the best way to communicate their subject matter and to present contemporary views of identity, culture, and tradition. Are there other objects or technologies that they might have used?

3. Have students consider the differences, for example, between how the Ukrainian identity is expressed by William Kurelek and by Tanya Rusnak, or how the First Nations experience is represented by Mike MacDonald or Jane Ash Poitras.
4. Focus on Melinda Mollineaux’s work Cascadura Stories and discuss the different components.
   - How does the recipe box relate to the work?
   - Have students consider the use of food traditions in different cultures.
   - What foods and dishes are significant in their own families?
   - What are the sources of these recipes – are they new or old traditions?

5. Distributing five index cards to each student, ask them to identify five food dishes that they feel are significant to themselves and their family, writing their name and the name of one recipe at the top of each card. Ask students to take index cards home and return the next day with the recipes filled out, at which time the students will place their cards in a recipe box. Emphasize that these are to be shared and exchanged; students can then remove and add recipes as they desire.

Ideas for Assessment
Observe whether students, during discussion, demonstrate a growing appreciation for the richness of cultural diversity in their community.

Lesson #2: Past Meets Present: Biography

Objective
This lesson will engage students in a writing project that involves researching the life of a Canadian artist, identifying the artist’s background and how their personal history shaped their art practice.

Materials
- Library
- Research materials
- Computers with internet access

Activities
1. Review the backgrounds of the three artists in this section. With students, talk about how their personal histories provide content for their work. Have students consider their own backgrounds:
   - What cultures are represented in the students in the class?
   - In their own families?
   - How do their personal histories shape them as individuals?
2. Ask students to write a biography of a contemporary Canadian artist, musician, writer, or performer, examining their background and reflecting upon how their life is reflected in their art practice. Have students explain the individual’s contributions to the political, social or cultural life of Canada.

Possible Extension
Invite a performer / artist from the community to speak to the class about is / her own background and how it has influenced his / her work.

Ideas for Assessment
Display the collected biographies artists in the classroom, in a “Who’s Who” of Canadian performers / artists.

Lesson #3: Talking History: Interview

Objective
Students will meet and learn about people from diverse backgrounds, exploring individual differences. They will design and implement first person interviews with a recent immigrant to their community.

Related Art Work(s)
• O Emigratsii (On Emigration), Tanya Rusnak, NA

Materials
• Paper
• Pens
• Tape/Video recorders

Activities
1. Focus on the textual elements of Rusnak’s installation, how they are drawn from settler’s personal accounts as well as from documentation and reports that reveal community response to the Ukrainian immigrants.

2. With students, talk about what kinds of different information can be arrived at through different forms of research.
   • What is gained through historical reports?
   • How is this different from first hand accounts?

3. Together brainstorm the kinds of questions they might ask to investigate a person’s background. Write suggestions on the board. As a group, design a questionnaire that students can use to
interview a recent immigrant to their community. Interviews should be not longer than 10 minutes.

4. Have students identify someone who is a recent immigrant. This can be through personal knowledge, or by reference,

5. Have students record the interviews using a tape recorder or a video camera. Stress that they will need to explain why they are asking about people's experiences, and remind them to be respectful when asking questions.

6. Review the interviews in a future class.
   You might ask students:
   • What was the most interesting thing you learned from your interviews?
   • Were you surprised by something you learned? Did you have expectations that caused this surprise?
   • How has this activity changed your feelings and attitudes about people you did not know before?

Lesson #4: Landscapes of Memory: A Walking Tour

Objective Students will create walking tours that provide a glimpse into the historical development of the community.

Materials
- In advance, obtain statistics from local government agencies or Statistics Canada regarding the cultural makeup of the community.

Activities
1. Present the statistics of the cultural population distribution of the community. Discuss profile with students and have students create a circle graph showing relative populations.

2. Talk about how these differences are represented in the community. Have students consider which push / pull factors have affected immigrants in the region over time.

3. Each student should create an inventory that identifies significant landmarks in the community that indicate the presence of different cultures. These might be, for example, buildings, monuments, stores, or restaurants.
4. Ask students to create and describe a walking tour in pamphlet form. Tours should outline starting points, give directions and provide informative blurbs regarding the history and significance of each site. Consideration should also be given to the design of the pamphlet.

5. Emphasize that what each student identifies as significant is unique, although there may be some overlap. The resulting walking tours should provide a glimpse into the historical development of the community.

6. The completed pamphlets could be published on the web, with digital images.