

Myths through the Generations: Influence Beyond Reason and Logic

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INTRODUCTION

Myths and folklore remain important in contemporary society. Today's mythological versions differ from ancient civilization's approach, but the need for myths continues. Our children are bombarded with information from numerous sources at a rapid pace. Because of technology, our brains input instantaneous data. For developing minds this creates a difficulty in processing data beyond their maturity level in an appropriate manner. Far too many of our young people have no one to turn to for counsel, and their questions remain unanswered. Parents are working to provide the necessities for their family, so children are secluded and left to their own devices. They rely on technology to communicate. Societal mores become less clearly defined when personal interactions diminish. Our children get mixed messages regarding appropriate behavior in unfamiliar situations. Like children of ancient civilizations, our youth also learn about themselves through stories, folktales, and myths. Ancient myths existed to make unexplainable events more plausible, and to set standards to live by to make daily life better. Contemporary myths exist for the same reasons. Akin to ancient civilizations, unexplainable events continue to occur and we all desire direction to make our daily lives better. Myths tell us what we desire and what we dread, and they give relevance to their concerns. They allow us to learn more about ourselves through the characters' adventures.

Myths demonstrate that there are consequences to our actions. Even though we have more technology, human fears and desires have not changed, and they're echoed in the myths that have been with us for centuries. Inexplicable events are now steered by television, movies, and comic books, and resolved through internet chat rooms, text messages, and telephone conversations. We seek escape from the humdrum of everyday life. We know that Thor's power only works in a videogame, and X-men's powers are limited to the confines of a comic book, but they offer a break from reality. Learning ancient myths and their correlation with events in our lives assists in determining right from wrong, makes us question what we see and hear, teaches that to every action there is an equal and opposite reaction. Mythology is more than learning history lessons and talking about ancient cultures; it allows us to know ourselves better.

This unit is written for middle school students enrolled in a Pre-AP art class. Our school is a small public middle school comprised of children living within the boundaries of a very large school district. Students apply to our program and meet rigorous standards before being accepted. They mirror our city's changing demographics, and represent all segments of our diverse population. Many students are first generation Americans, and have come to our country recently. A great number of families maintain cultural traditions of their native country and adhere to longstanding cultural mores. Parents are extremely involved in their child's life.

Despite ethnicity, religion, gender, or socio-economic standing, our students recognize the opportunity afforded them by attending our school. Success in our program is a result of tremendous effort by students, teachers, parents, administrators, and any others associated with our school. Because of our diversity, attending our school is in itself a life-lesson in compassion

and acceptance for all of us. Our school creates an extremely accepting atmosphere for our children that definitely adds to our curriculum. Students and their parents share experiences, traditions, and artifacts that reveal elements of significance in their country of origin. Just as their contributions permit glimpses into their culture, mythology affords the same opportunity on a universal, historical scale.

Mythology provides significant insight into our worldwide history, and plainly illustrates the need of each society to provide a suitable rationalization to otherwise unexplainable elements in our lives. It also gives hope and adds significance through the stories of gods and goddesses. Mythology covers every aspect of life and has the potential to infringe on religious tenets and established traditions. Broaching the topic requires an organized, clearly defined definition of myth that explains its importance in every society throughout recorded history. It needs to be presented in a way that does not confront religious doctrine. To avoid possible repercussions, I selected age-appropriate myths, folktales, and gods to research and use as the foundation of our lessons and projects. It is almost impossible to bypass all the gods that are not rated PG, but that is my goal. Opportunities to learn more mythology are available in high school and college courses, so I leave more controversial gods' stories up to them.

OBJECTIVES

These lessons satisfy our school district's middle school curriculum requirements in art, English, social studies, and world cultures. Objectives for students include learning the meaning of mythology and its importance throughout history by introducing myths and folktales from cultures around the globe. Furthermore, I want students to recognize the significance that artistic endeavors play in recording daily life in ancient societies. These artistic artifacts remained while other methods failed. Each culture offers an artistic medium specific to that civilization. In this unit students learn about various mediums and observe diverse artistic techniques. Using these artistic approaches every student will complete a composition representative of each culture introduced in class. Their composition's subject matter is a mythological visualization of a god specific to that culture using a medium that is relevant to that culture.

Successfully working in a group setting is a major goal, as is using research sources without using the computer exclusively. After their research each group reports their findings regarding an art form associated with a culture. Following discussion of notable art associated with a particular civilization students observe and analyze the message that each work of art reveals.

Analyzing artwork requires knowledge of the elements and principles of design. Experienced and novice artists use the same guidelines in critiquing a work of art.

The elements of design are line, shape, form, color, and texture. The principles of art are pattern, symmetry, value, proportion and repetition with variation. Artists differ in the number of characteristics that are considered as one of the principles of art.

Line is a point moving in a direction. There are many types of lines, but these are divided into two basic classifications. They are organic and inorganic. Organic lines are found in nature, and inorganic lines are manmade. Some lines are thick and others are thin, some are dark and others light. Line creates a framework in a composition and adds the illusion of depth in many art projects.

Lines put together make shapes. The five basic shapes are a circle, square, rectangle, triangle, and oval. If you can draw these shapes in proportion one shape to another, you can draw anything. Shapes and their placement within a composition is an extenuation of the artist's vision.

Color sets the mood for any artwork. Colors are divided into three classifications on the twelve-color color wheel. These classifications are primary, secondary, and tertiary. Primary colors are those colors only found in nature. You cannot make these colors by mixing any colors together. They are red, blue, and yellow. Secondary colors are made by mixing two primary colors together. Green, violet, and orange are secondary colors. Tertiary colors are made by mixing one primary and one secondary color together. There are six of these colors on the color wheel and they are recognized easily. They are all double named. They are blue-green, yellow-orange, blue-violet, red-violet, red-orange and yellow-green. Mixing color is an entertaining process. A paint mixing experiment does not always produce the desired result.

Texture is the roughness or smoothness of a surface. Everything has texture. Texture also creates a tactile component in a composition. Texture is often created by the use of a brush, a palette knife, or any chosen artistic implement. Artists accept an individualistic approach as their given rite. One personal law is limiting mandatory requirements, thus allowing more individualistic interpretations. I explain the importance of the mandatory requirements in meeting particular concepts prior to embarking on a project.

Elements of design work in tandem with the principles of design. Shape is of little value without the correct proportions or the artist's vision to make them disproportionate. How can pattern exist without repetition with variation?

All of these elements and principles live in harmony to create a composition. A composition must have two elements: a subject and a background. More can be added, but it must include these two parts to be considered a composition.

While maintaining a focus on the design elements and the principles of art, it is extremely important to incorporate other disciplines into each lesson. As students work on projects they learn the properties of materials and processes required to complete different forms of art. They must always remember to include mandatory requirements for assessment. Through their research and our class discussions, mythological terminology, cultural nomenclature, and a working vernacular of art terms will inevitably increase significantly.

Every student produces creations based on a mythological character related to a specified civilization in an art style linked to that culture. For historical reference each student must learn about a piece of artwork produced by a known or unknown artist who used a god as the subject of one of their artworks. They must also write a descriptive about the god they propose to portray in their project. The descriptive includes the god or goddess's purpose and powers and the methods the artist employs to capture the fervor of the state of affairs. Minimum standards for their essay include a written descriptive outlining their god's purpose and powers, a timeline for their character, identification of the culture with which he/she is associated, and a description of the art forms associated with the specified civilization. The subject matter of each project is a visualization of a god, goddess, hero, or icon from a myth, or a character from a folktale or story.

RATIONALE

"Myth must be kept alive. The people who can keep it alive are artists of one kind or another. The function of the artist is the mythologization of the environment and the world," as stated in 1988 by Joseph Campbell on Bill Moyers's show *"The Power of Myth."*

We are concentrating on the significance that myth had on artists and their artistic endeavors throughout history. Introducing mythology allows students to work on extended projects using a wide range of mediums, and it meets our school district's middle school art curriculum requirement. This is a very ambitious, comprehensive unit. We will achieve as much as possible within the semester. Due to the complexity of a project some students take longer than others to complete a project.

This unit introduces gods and myths significant to worldwide ancient civilizations. Changes in myths with each successive generation give insight into the lives and thoughts of people who came before us. Myths remain constant in that they bring meaning to our existence, and art is the means by which we know a great deal about past societies. To the artist, myth is especially important because it encourages creative, individualistic visions of mythological characters in surreal settings. Freedom of interpretation crafts imaginative compositions untainted by reality. Contemporary artists and their predecessors take advantage of each opportunity to extend their imaginations to new proportions.

Our world contains many remnants of former cultural icons and mythological characters. We want to draw similarities between ancient myths and current myths. We will also draw parallels between powers of former gods with contemporary figures with great powers.

Mythology is all around us today, from the shoes on our feet to the constellations in the sky. Contemporary artists transfer these stories into sculptures, paintings and drawings that go beyond any one culture. Sergei Chernenko and Michael Keropian create large sculptures to express their understanding and vision of myths. Howard David, an American illustrator, skillfully paints his representation of ancient Greek and Roman mythological figures and events. Renaissance painters and sculptors delighted in bringing the mystical creatures to life. One painting, *The Birth of Venus*, is a classic painting that depicts Botticelli's vision of Venus. These and many generations of artists find these stories are a tremendous source of inspiration. Myths and gods change in scope and power but sustain an essential function in every culture. Without this knowledge we are unable to comprehend the progression of the human race.

Art history for this unit involves artists and artworks that represent a particular civilization. Some of these artists vividly used mythological characters and settings as their area of interest for a composition. Some artisans are named, while unknown artists created many other works of art. One reason that these artists are unknown is because the art was not considered valuable to the society when it was created. The pieces of art became an integral part of everyday life. Many artworks with mythological motifs were utilitarian and not made for aesthetic purposes. Using available materials man continues to embellish the ordinary to enliven life and reflect his personal thoughts for serious or whimsical reasons, or simply because it is there. Artistic endeavors coincide with the needs of a culture. It exhibits the changes in a society that transpire over time. There are artists associated with each culture. Some are known, while others remain unknown. All these artists used the Elements and Principles of Design. We will use these artists and other artists who concentrate on an Element of Design that pertains to the primary element in the cultural work.

It is essential to teach this topic because it shows the relevance and origins of god and myths in society, from the Neolithic man to the present, and the relationship of art in each civilization. We continue to relate to these stories because so many still survive, veiled in superstitions, as well as pious tenets. All civilizations have common themes regarding mythological icons. Many are borrowed or changed largely due to changes in society and geographic locations. The stories pertain to creation, birth, protection, and vital beliefs required to sustain a better life for every individual and every family. Through myths, death and the afterlife transcend time and generations. The myths are not factual, but are significant to humans because each offers insight into the canons a person respects as codes to pursue. Karen Armstrong states in *A Short History of Myth* that successful mythology changes our thoughts on life, gives hope, and enlightens us on the components essential to live a full life if we follow its directives.

Having a better understanding of these myths makes ancient societies more relevant in an historical framework. It sets the stage for learning the value of these symbols in defining existing customs based on these ancient codes of belief. In learning mythology, history becomes more

applicable to today's society. It also provides an opportunity to teach children about teamwork, ancient cultures, research, and different artistic mediums. Parallels between ancient and current civilizations allow students to evaluate comparable beliefs; thus building a powerful bond between then and now.

AN OVERVIEW OF THE UNIT

Each project in this unit involves mythological characters and/or settings as the subject, and the project is a type of art that was an art form used in a specific civilization. In addition to making the project, I want the students to understand the elements the artist agonized over to complete his vision. Discussion precedes the beginning of every project. Only by knowing how elements interact can you achieve a measure of success. Pablo Picasso declared that you have to know the rules before you can break the rules. Learning the work of noted predecessors only reinforces the need for all of us to seek our own form of originality. This unit includes two-dimensional and three-dimensional methods of construction and implementation to create artworks.

The myths and folktales include those from the following civilizations. The cultures are Mesopotamia, Australia, New Zealand, Greece, Rome, the British Isles, Scandinavia, the Far East, Africa, South America, Central America, and North America. This permits a broad spectrum of possibilities. The research rubric requires students to investigate geographic features, specific gods and goddesses, and the powers and importance of each god in a specified society. Research elements include knowing if their myth is based on fact, or is a total fabrication. Visual renderings of symbols associated with the myth are essential. They also need to explain if their myth enhanced or detracted from the success of a civilization. Knowing the history of the myth and its effect on art is required in order to convey the myth's effect on portions of history through artistic visual mediums.

Art forms associated with these civilizations are products of available materials, creative requirements for rituals, or simply created out of necessity. Only a few cultures valued artists; most considered them laborers. This is one reason why few art pieces created during the height of these civilizations are signed. The artists produced these works of art for a person of higher standing.

CONCLUSION

This unit establishes a curriculum that relates facts in a fun, informative way. Student's interest heightens with the implementation of technology in concert with creative visual projects. This component creates engaging lessons and projects where each student explores ancient myths and their affect in ancient civilizations. They also demonstrate how art continues to reveal more about a culture, and these works of art continue to influence us today. Throughout history myths and gods change in scope and power but sustain an essential function in every culture. Without this knowledge we are unable to comprehend the progression of the human race. A wise person said that even when science and technology fail, art prevails.

PRELIMINARY LESSONS

After reading a myth to the class, and without any prior preparation, individual students contemplate the meaning of the myth and its purpose. Students create their own definition of a myth. In a class brainstorming session students give their definitions. After all give their input, the class combines these components to make one cohesive definition. Students name cultures known to them, and all are listed on the board to demonstrate the profusion of prior civilizations.

Presenting instruction concerning myth must begin with the definition. Scholars differ in their definitions, but each class will define myth by combining individual ideas from students in a class to craft one definition. After we acquire more information about myth, we will revisit our initial

definition and revise it. Making clear distinctions between heroes, folklore, and myth is necessary before debate proceeds; as is defining the need and the common thread between groups of people to create myths. Mythology demonstrates changes in the gods and goddesses based on geographical topography, and societal advances. We will discuss myths and folktales from many societies around the world and in varying time periods. Student groupings investigate specific cultures and their gods and goddesses and the powers each god possesses. Of necessity, I am limiting the gods to research to make them more age-appropriate for middle school students.

There is always some shuffling of students during the first few days of school, but we begin teaching the first day the students walk through the door. Our introduction to myth is by watching *Princess Mononoke*, a film directed by Hayao Miyazaki and his Ghibli Studio. It was distributed by Miramax Studios in 2000. This adventure film is a tale about a mythical forest inhabited by humans, animals, and gods. They all feel they deserve more respect, and they can no longer live together in the forest. This animated film shows the conflict between the warring factions, and is not resolved with a happily ever-after ending. It does end with the creatures tenuously coexisting in this mythological forest continuing with their adventures. This movie escapade is a stunning film that uses hand drawn cells and some computer drawn elements. The humans are drawn in an Anima style art, an art form I NEVER let my students use. The animals and the gods have some human qualities and supernatural powers. This film has enough action to keep the class involved, but it will take two 45-minute classes to view and discuss the film.

The second Mononoke film is *Spirited Away*. It was produced and distributed by Walt Disney Studios in 2003. This Japanese film tells the story of the spirit world, Chihiro, and the setting is in a spirit bathhouse. The creatures all have powers, and they change into animals and other creatures. The animals have endearing human qualities that pull you into the storyline and keep you entertained. The art is mostly hand-drawn and each cell is adeptly completed. The story line is a wonderful journey of fantasy.

Working in teams is more difficult for my students. At this point in this series of lessons each class is divided into like civilizations. Usually we urge our students and our children not to play computer games, and to use their time more productively. For these lessons I want them to play the video games individually and in teams. They are great games that teach aspects of varied ancient cultures, their icons, and mythological characters. The games are fun, and the children love them. It is a way to get all the students interested in mythology immediately. Different information about a civilization is revealed as the game progresses. While one student plays the game, another member of their group records the icons, their gods and goddesses, and the particular god's purpose and powers as they are revealed. After completing the game we will discuss the relevant icons and mythological characters displayed while playing the game. Each student receives a hand-out with icons from cultures mentioned in this video game. Another hand-out lists all the selected gods and goddesses and their responsibilities. After learning icons germane to a culture, each member of the team plays a segment of four different computer games. Two of the games are "Civilization Four" and "Age of Mythology."

"Civilization Four"

Civilization Four illustrates symbols of the myth, and permits the group to combine their accrued points in order to advance so that they can learn more about the cultural site. As the points accumulate, more features are revealed. This advances their historical knowledge. Some of the games include Early Civilizations while others bridge the Axial Age, the Post-Axial Age, and Western Transformations. Some of the games include Early Civilizations while others bridge later societies, but all are relevant to this unit.

“Age of Mythology”

Taking on the role of one of nine ancient civilizations, players in this computer game lead their people to prominence by commanding all aspects of their empire: gathering resources, raising massive armies, waging war against enemies, and establishing profitable trade routes are functions each civilization must establish. Other societal elements imperative to any culture are building new settlements, enhancing production or military might with improvements, exploring new frontiers, and advancing through four distinct ages. These are all beneficial incidents in learning the components needed to build a strong society.

Age of Mythology builds on civilization delineation with nine distinctive factions that play a part considerably different from one another. Each of the nine unique civilizations is split between three cultures: the Greeks, Egyptians, and Norse, with each providing their own special units, gods, powers, heroes, and other crucial cultural features. Choosing particular gods for your pantheon influences economic and military abilities of your civilization. Your chosen gods can advance your civilization’s superiority dependent on the gods’ powers (earthquakes, meteor showers, etc.) and which mythological creatures (Cyclops, Medusa, Minotaur, etc.) you can beckon. Players can reinforce their armies with Minotaur, giants, Cyclopes and many other mythological creatures. This interactive experience teaches and entertains students throughout the unit.

This sets the stage for learning the value of these symbols in defining existing customs based on these ancient codes of belief. In learning mythology visual expression brings ancient cultures to life and makes history more relevant to today’s society. It also provides an opportunity to teach children about teamwork, ancient cultures, research, and different artistic mediums. Parallels between civilizations from Neolithic man to current times allow students to value comparable beliefs, thus building a powerful bond between Stone Age Man and Technology Era Man.

There are many possible cultures to incorporate into this unit; however, the following are those that we are using as the impetus for our projects, and there is an art medium assigned to each of these civilizations. Metal relief tray compositions represent the Mesopotamian society while narrative paintings with extensive patterns and continuous design characterize Aboriginal art. The Maori civilization was noted for their carved wooden pieces. Our Egyptian project is creating a funeral mask, and a narrative mural using icons and glyphs. A narrative plaster relief carving is our project characterizing Greek art, and mosaics are our chosen Roman art form. A functional woven textile piece is our lesson regarding the Norse, Viking, Scandinavian civilization, and braided Celtic knots is our British Isles construction. The Far East projects are divided into three different cultures and three different projects. Making Daruma dolls is our Japanese project, and Korean block printing illustrates an art form of that culture. Our Chinese projects are Kirigami and calligraphy. The Middle Eastern Indian project is making a wire statue. Our African project is creating a jewelry piece that symbolizes their icons and color significance. Textured headdresses using many different types of coverings are our Mayan project, and a plaster three-dimensional carving in the round is our creation for the Inca portion of our art creations. Yarn paintings are our North American Indian project. The student’s final project is creating a fantasy composition devising their own contemporary god using the medium of their choice. The subject matter of each of these projects is a god, goddess, or icon indicative of the specific civilization.

LESSON PLANS

Lesson Plan One: The Art of Mesopotamia

Metal Relief – A Working Example of Line, Shape, and Form

Grade and Subject

Eighth grade: Art, World Cultures, and English

Information on Featured Culture

Assyria, Babylonia, and Sumer composed Mesopotamia, which is one of the Cradles of Civilizations that dates back to 3500 B. C. It is located between the Tigris and the Euphrates Rivers. Mesopotamia literally means “The Land between Two Rivers.” This area developed into what we call Iraq. The Mesopotamians were wealthy people who used their wealth to make things better for every citizen. They were ingenious people who are credited with many advances. They were advanced farmers, good with business and commerce, and inventive. Advances in farming techniques developed in Mesopotamia as did the use of clay tokens for trade. The beginnings of writing began here with the writing form called Cuneiform. They used the materials that were available to them. They had mud and water, so they built their homes out of mud bricks and almost every other building was made from mud also. When it rained and the bricks were destroyed they would build another home on top of the old one. Because of that it is difficult to excavate meaningful materials that are representative of their society. The people believed in many gods. The gods, goddesses, demons and monsters controlled every part of their lives. In Sumer the gods were called dingir. Each city had their own god that protected their city. They built temples called ziggurats that linked heaven with earth. They had many major gods, and other gods that answered to the major gods. The gods looked and had the emotions of people. Some of the gods are Enlil, the air-god, Enki, the water-god, Utu, the sun-god, and Nanna, the moon-god. Amurra was god of nomadic people and his symbol was the gazelle or the shepherd’s crook. Ninhursag was mother-earth goddess. Most of the people were literate; writing on clay tablets. They raised sheep and exported wool to other countries. Sheep farming was a major source of revenue, so **woven products** became a major art form. **Pottery** and **jewelry making** were additional art forms. With the development of Cuneiform writing and the availability of metals **inscribed works** became another important art form. They were also advanced in sculptures and made beautiful reliefs on their buildings. Their society depended on many gods to assist them through their daily lives.

Art History References

- Royal Boulliet Bourdelle France Tray Platter Metal Art
- *Statue of Human* – Lorestan (2000 B.C.)
- *Metallix Firestand and Idol* – Lorestan (1000 B.C.)
- *Khosrow Cup* (600 A.D.)
- *Silver Plate with Golden Piece* (300 – 700 A.D.)
- *Silver Dish with Gold Piece* (600 -700 A.D.)

Sources

Islamic Metal Art by James Allen, Philip Wilson Publication, Ltd., 1999.

Early Civilization by Jane Chisholm and Anne Millard, London: Usborne Publishing, 1991.

Cultural Atlas of Mesopotamia and the Ancient Near East by Michael Roaf, New York: Facts on File, 1990.

Media Source

Cradles of Civilization, CD-ROM. Society for Visual Education, 1996.

Time Required

Five 45-minute class periods

Materials

One 12" x 18" thin, flat piece of aluminum

Pencils with dull points

Vellum paper cut the size of the aluminum

Masking tape to hold the paper in place

Old hand towels, not too thick

Straight edges and other forms to use as templates

Visual image of a Mesopotamian icon and/or god

Objectives

1. The introduction of the Mesopotamian culture
2. The introduction of Mesopotamian icons and gods
3. Learning about metal art
4. Learning the process to create a relief pattern on the metal
5. Understanding the importance of preliminary studies before beginning on the material designed to become the final product
6. The introduction of line, shape, balance, proportion
7. The introduction of terminology

Learning Experience

1. Display examples of metal trays and wall hangings.
2. Distribute an instructional hand-out explaining step-by-step instructions.
3. Distribute the names and powers of acceptable Mesopotamian gods and icons.
4. Demonstrate the process to complete this project.
5. Make all the required materials readily available, but only allow the students to get a sheet of paper, pencil, and templates to create their preliminary design.
6. Edit and simplify the composition.
7. After approval is given to the student to proceed to the next step in the process, put the towel under the aluminum sheet and hinge the design drawn on your paper onto the front of your sheet of aluminum.
8. Trace over all the lines. Trace hard enough for the lines to be seen on the aluminum surface, but not hard enough to go through the foil.
9. After checking to make certain you have traced over every line on your drawing and it can be seen clearly on your aluminum sheet, determine where hard-pressed dots can be placed to create your final project.
10. Turn the aluminum sheet over to make certain the pattern is reading through the aluminum correctly.

11. Put your name on the lower right corner of your project, and return all your supplies to their proper place. Put your project on your shelf.

Handout(s) for class notebooks

1. Metal art process sheet
2. Terminology sheet
3. Outline of the items to complete regarding the important elements of the Mesopotamian society. Space is left on the sheet so that each student can complete the sheet by themselves.
4. Rubric for assessment

Evaluation

Completion of the project on time following provided criteria

Lesson Plan Two: Aboriginal Art

“Dreamtime” Narrative dot and circle acrylic painting

Grade and Subject

Eighth grade: Art, World Cultures, Geography and English

Information on Featured Culture

The Aborigines are the original inhabitants of Australia and have lived there for over 30,000 years. They were numerous small nomadic tribes with different languages and ideas, and no written language. The tribes communicated with each other through their art. They would scratch pictures into rocks or cave walls for other tribe members to see. Their mythology and their art changes from region to region; however, some elements remain constant. Much of their mythology is based on Dreaming and Dreamtime. Dreamtime refers to a time in their distant past when gods were real and anything they wanted was achievable. The Aborigines passed on their myths through storytelling from generation to generation. Although women did not hold a high status in their society, they were responsible for telling the stories to the young people so that they could continue the tradition. Dreamtime was overseen by the god Altjira. His responsibilities began during the times when ancient spirits walked on the earth in a surreal state. These spirits now sleep underground, but some tribesmen can communicate with Dreamtime if they breathe the correct substances floating in the air. All of the Aboriginal gods are associated with Dreamtime. Some of the gods are Wandjina who is a set of all-powerful creation gods with Wallungunder as the leader. Wandjina came down from the skies to create earth and its entire people. He looked over his work and returned to his home in the sky, but Wandjina returned to earth. All the gods are associated with Dreamtime. Daramulum is the All-Father Sky God, who oversees the weather and lives on the moon. The Rainbow-Snake is The Great Creator Serpent who oversees fertility, growth, and rain. He is a combination of different animal parts decorated with flowers and vines. The Snake has many names and can be either female or male. It is one of the oldest symbols. Uluru is the name for Ayers Rock, the ancestral site of primeval Dreamtime. Baiame is the Creator Sky God who likes to control everything, and originally taught humans everything. Alchera is not a god, but is a timeless dream. The Aborigines people were treated badly when Australia was colonized. Their art was dismissed, as were the importance of the Aborigines traditions. Their art is growing in popularity currently, and there are still over two-hundred and fifty tribes in Australia. They maintain strong links with their ancestors through their Dreamtime gods summoned through their shamans. The Aborigines painted narrative paintings on stones, in the dirt, on trees or on any available surface. Their **narrative paintings** have distinctive overall patterns that have a continuous storyline, and are embellished with many colorful dots.

Art History References

Wandjina, the Rain Maker by Ignatia Djanghara

Karnatkurlangu Jakurrpa by Dorothy Napangardi Robinson

Sources

Ceremonie Pitjandi a Lunda Lunda by Sam Tjampitjin

Wandijina, The Rainmaker by Lily Karadada, 1996

Time Required

Five 45-minute class periods

Materials

One 16" x 20" heavy tooth watercolor paper

Yellow, Yellow Ochre, Orange, and Red acrylic paint

Paper to develop a narrative using an overall pattern to tell a story

Practice using the dot and circle painting technique to develop your technique

Pencils and erasers

Masking tape to hold the paper in place

Paint brushes

Reading of a "Dreamtime" story as an example

Objectives

1. Introduction of the Aboriginal people of Australia
2. Introduction of Aboriginal "Dreamtime" dot and circle narrative art
3. Learn the origin of the art, and the laws that dictate narrative topics
4. Learn the process to create a narrative painting
5. Understand the importance of preliminary studies before beginning on the material designed to become the final product
6. Introduction of line, shape, rhythm, color
7. Introduction of terminology
8. Understand the development of this art technique
9. Create a visual composition accompanied by a written explanation of the painting

Learning Experience

1. Display examples of metal trays and wall hangings.
2. Distribute an instructional hand-out explaining step-by-step instructions.
3. Distribute several ancestral stories of the Aborigines to use as the genesis of their projects.
4. Demonstrate the process to complete this project.
5. Make all the required materials readily available, but only allow the students to get a sheet of paper and a pencil to develop their preliminary design.
6. Compose a narrative of your own using the Aborigines laws as guidelines.
7. Edit and simplify the essay so that your composition can translate into simplified, primitive patterns and rhythms.
8. After approval is given to the student, proceed to the next step in the process.
9. Transfer your imagery onto your paper (the paper is heavy to replicate a bark surface.)

10. After checking to make certain you have traced over every line on your drawing and it can be seen clearly on your heavy weight paper.
11. Determine color placement and the meaning of each color. Use only the warm colors.
12. Begin painting your composition beginning with your lightest value first. Always paint from your lightest value to your darkest value.
13. Put your name on the lower right corner of your project, and return all your supplies to their proper place. Put your project on your shelf.

Handout(s) for class notebooks

1. Narrative painting process sheet
2. Terminology sheet
3. Outline of the items to complete regarding the important elements of the Aborigines – people and their history, lifestyle, and their art. Space is left on the sheet so that each student can complete the sheet by him or herself.
4. Rubric for assessment

Evaluation

Completion of the project on time following provided criteria

Lesson Plan Three: Roman Art

Mosaic Visual Interpretation of a Roman God

Grade and Subject

Eighth grade: Art, World Cultures, Geography, Geometry

Information on Featured Culture

Rome's greatness grew by conquering other people and incorporating parts of their cultural aspects in their society into the Roman culture. Ancient Rome was a large city of one million people. They were a wealthy city because of their success in conquering other territories. Fathers taught their sons to read and write and protect themselves by teaching them to use weapons. Boys and girls between the ages of seven and eleven went to school and learned reading, writing, arithmetic. The Roman Empire was extensive and many countries were a part of the Roman Empire. They were an advanced culture that provided for the population within the walls of Rome.

Native Roman gods represented the practical needs of daily life and were all a part of an interrelation structure between gods and humans. They were concerned with the needs of daily life. There were two classes of original Roman gods in their rituals. These classes were di indegetes and the novensiles. As the Roman Empire expanded they absorbed other culture's mythology, especially the mythology of the Greeks. The major Roman deities are Cupid, the god of romance; Diana, goddess of the moon and hunting; Fortuna, goddess of fortune and fate; and Juno, queen of the gods. Other major deities are Jupiter, king of the gods; Mars, god of War; Mercury, the messenger god; Minerva, goddess of wisdom; Neptune, god of the sea; Venus, goddess of love and beauty; Saturn, god of agriculture; and Vulcan, god of the forge and fire. Other important gods are Apollo, god of the sun, poetry, and music; Cybele, earth mother; Flora, goddess to flowers; and Janus, the two-headed god of beginnings and endings and of doors.

They especially used the ideas and philosophies of the Greeks. They also assumed the gods and goddesses and their powers, but renamed them to better suite the Roman ideal. The Romans loved the Greek art and architecture, and often copied the Greeks' techniques in these fields and many others too. In addition to their sculptures, the Romans achieved a high level of success in

pottery, mosaics, and wall paintings. The wall paintings in Rome became a status symbol in the wealthy Roman homes, rather than in public buildings as the Greeks did. Additionally they adorned their floors throughout their homes and public buildings and entrances with mosaics. A form of art not traditionally thought of as a form of art should include the elaborate **drawings** composed **on the coins.** Romans actually spread the Greek art, architecture, and **sculpture** to a vast array of people through their conquests.

Time Required

Five 45-minute class periods

Materials

One 9" x 12" two-ply rail board

An array of construction paper colors

Paper to develop your visualization of a god chosen from the approved selection list

Pencils, scissors and erasers

Masking tape to hold the rail board in place

Paper to develop an appropriate, well-planned composition

White glue

Containers to hold the cut bits of construction paper

A stylist or a similar implement for application of the paper onto the glued surface

Objectives

1. Introduction of terminology
2. Learn the importance of mosaic patterns in many different societies
3. Identify the patience required to complete a mosaic composition
4. Learn the process to create a successful mosaic
5. Understand the importance of preliminary studies before beginning on the material designed to become the final product
6. Introduction of shape, rhythm, color, and repetition with variation
7. Understand the development of this art technique
8. Create a visual composition using one of the approved Roman gods as the subject of your composition

Learning Experience

1. Display examples of Mosaics.
2. Distribute an instructional hand-out explaining step-by-step instructions.
3. Distribute several mosaic examples.
4. Demonstrate the process to complete this project.
5. Make all the required materials readily available, but only allow the students to get a sheet of paper and a pencil to develop their preliminary design.
6. Compose a mosaic of your own using one of the gods as the subject matter.
7. Edit and simplify the essay so that your composition can translate into simplified, primitive patterns and rhythms.
8. After approval is given to the student proceed to the next step in the process.

9. Transfer your imagery onto your paper. The paper is a heavy 2-ply railboard. A heavier substrate is better so that it will hold the cut bits of construction paper glued onto the railboard with white glue. Lighter weight papers will buckle and wave.
10. After checking to make certain you have traced over every line on your drawing and it can be seen clearly on your heavy weight paper, determine color placement and the meaning of each color.
11. Begin placing small cut bits of paper working in one area before proceeding to another area. Roman mosaics are made from stone and rock, so leave small spaces between each cut piece of construction paper as it is placed on your design. Apply the cut bits of construction paper with the end of your pencil that has a little bit of white glue on it to make it easier to transfer the small pieces onto your work.
12. Put your name on the lower right corner of your project, and return all your supplies to their proper place. Put your project on your shelf.

Handout(s) for class notebooks

1. Terminology sheet
2. Mosaic process sheet
3. Outline of the items to complete regarding the important elements of the Roman society. Space is left on the sheet so that each student can complete the sheet by themselves.
4. Rubric for assessment

Evaluation

Completion of the project on time following provided criteria

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