



Lesson Plan Quick Look

Title of Lesson: The Collection Connection! Become a Curator

Photo/Image: From “El Perú: Art in the Contemporary Past,” NHCC exhibit 2019, artist: Kukuli Velarde

Author: Elena Baca, Educator and Program Curator, NHCC, ElenaD.Baca@state.nm.us and Paloma López, AmeriCorps VISTA, Paloma.Lopez@state.nm.us



Content Area(s): Visual Arts, Language Arts

Grade/Age Level: all ages

Duration: 1-2 class periods

Materials/Cost, if any: Page 2

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Duration: 1-2 class periods

Materials Needed/Cost: pencil, paper, various art making materials (this lesson plan focuses on curation and theme, the specific materials are left up to teachers and/or students)

Handouts:

Standard Addressed:

Visual Arts: VA:Cr1.1, VA:Cr1.2, VA:Cr3.1, VA:Pr4.1, VA:Pr6.1, VA:Re9.1

Language Arts: Writing K-5

Depth of Knowledge/Bloom’s Taxonomy: analyze, evaluate, create

Background: A curator works at a museum. The word curator comes from the Latin *curare*, meaning to care for. Curators oversee museum collections (a collection is a group of more than one thing); they often have specialized knowledge about subject matter specific to their museums and conduct extensive research to come up with ideas for exhibits. An exhibit tells a story with art and/or objects from the museum’s collection. Stories told through exhibits reflect both the mission of the museum and the values of those involved in the development of the exhibition. Curators choose art and/or objects based on their own ideas and experiences, what they learn through research, and community input and collaboration; it is important to recognize that stories can, and often should, be told from various perspectives. Curating collections is a visual means of correcting and contributing to the history and cultural knowledge of any given subject matter. But it’s not just museums that collect art and objects; people can also collect objects for themselves. You can collect just about anything! Like curators in museums around the world, you can curate your collection by organizing your art and/or objects by theme to tell a story from your point of view.

Skill(s): group work, peer review, reflection





Essential Question(s):

1. What is a collection? Do you have a collection? If so, what do you collect? How do you sort your collection (color, theme, size etc.)?
2. What are some challenges you think a curator might face when developing an exhibition? How can they navigate the challenges they come across?
3. How does grouping artwork by theme help to tell a story?
4. How does your understanding of your group's theme differ from your peers? How is it the same?

Objectives: Students will...

- Learn about the job of a museum curator
- Create two original pieces of art that relate to a specific theme
- Review and curate peer artwork
- Write an artist letter to a peer and an artist statement about their own work

Academic Vocabulary/Word Wall: collection, curator, exhibit, theme

Brain Drain or Warm Up Activity: Show students a series of pictures of objects from an NHCC virtual exhibition; ask them to choose just three pieces to include in their own hypothetical exhibit. Ask them to think about their choices, why did they choose the pieces they chose? Why/how do they think that their chosen pieces would work well together in an exhibit?

[NHCC Virtual Exhibitions](#)

Basic Lesson Description and Procedure:

1. Divide students into equal groups (no more than four to a group).
2. Come up with a theme (for younger students, teachers can assign different themes to different groups; for older students, groups can vote on a theme for themselves. Examples of themes for younger students include animals, color, family etc. Examples of themes for older students include social justice issues, conceptual ideas etc.).
3. Create two works of art each that illustrate your theme.
4. Exchange all of your group's artwork with another group to be curated. Review the other group's theme and choose one piece from each student that you think best illustrates their stated theme.



5. Write a letter to one of the students whose work you curated with your group (every student should get a letter). Explain to your classmate why you chose the piece you did; ask yourself as write: Does your classmate's piece fit into their stated theme? If so, how? If not, why not? Does your classmate's artwork make you think differently about the theme? (for younger students, teachers can facilitate guided discussion about themes and student work).

Assessment/Observation Activity: Written/oral response: Write a short artist's statement or tell a teacher or classmate about your artwork. How do you think it reflects your group's theme? What were you thinking as you made it? After reading the artist letter from your classmate, do you think differently about your own work?

Explore the NHCC Art Museum's online exhibitions. Use the artist's letter, the artist statement, and the written assessment as indicators of student understanding.

Lesson Conclusion/Potential Practice at Home:

- Create a collection from objects/artworks you have at home; these might include: family photographs, 3-D objects, artwork created over the years, art on your walls. Decide on a theme and curate your collection into an exhibit. Take your family on a tour of your exhibit answering any questions they might have about your theme or your collection.

Accommodations & Modifications: For online learning...

- Share artwork online, curate and display artwork in a virtual setting. You can create a google slideshow, make a PowerPoint, upload student work to your school's website and/or social media platforms, or create online student portfolios on sites like [artsonia](http://artsonia.com).
- Have students create artwork related to a theme with their families, ask them to write or talk about their theme and how each piece fits into it.

Culturally Responsive Instruction and Modifications: Explore various online exhibitions, take note of the museums' target audiences; do the exhibitions' themes reflect the communities each museum serves? If so, in what ways? If not, how do they fail? Ask students to think about their own lives, families, and cultures as they choose their themes and make their artworks.

Relevance to families and communities: Ask students to think about the art in their lives. Where do they see art? In their homes? In public spaces? In museums? What is the artwork about? Does the artwork reflect or provide insight into their families and/or communities?

Cross-Curricular Connections: Writing, art, areas of study that pertain to chosen themes

Additional Resources:



1. [What is Curating?](#)
2. [What's a Curator?](#) From PBS Digital Studio's *The Art Assignment*
3. [Are Curators on the Verge of Extinction?](#)

Extension:

[Visual Arts](#): Responding

- Visit a museum exhibit (in person or online) and write a critical evaluation. Teachers can facilitate by asking students to think critically about art and curation and by asking questions that correspond to specific Visual Arts standards.

[NHCC Virtual Exhibitions](#)

[Visual Arts 5-7](#): VA:CR3.1.5a, VA:Cr3.1.7a

- Ask students to write an extended artist statement about their work.

[How to Write an Artist Statement](#)

Feedback: [Take this survey to share your feedback on this lesson plan.](#)