

Williamston Middle School
Chris McDonald
Micro-entrepreneurs of Mali
Grade 7

Overall Goal of the Project:

Students will see the significance between geography and culture and how art and identity play a part in the culture.

Objective(s):

- Students will explain challenges faced by women in developing countries
- Students will describe how African women micro-entrepreneurs have changed the human characteristics where they live and work
- Students will explain the connection between designs used in clothing production and representation of culture
- Students will describe the differences in art produced in the United States vs Mali, Africa

Content Area Standards (GLCEs, HSCEs)

1. Explain that communities are affected by technology G2.2.2
2. Describe the human characteristics of the region G2.2.1
3. Roles of women in African society G4.1.2

Instructional Outline

Materials:

We will be using the text Geography Alive from Teacher's Curriculum Institute for the lessons.

Introduction

We began this unit of study with a trip to the MSU Museum to view an exhibit of printmaking with textiles from Mali, Africa.

Preview to Lesson

Students will view a picture of a woman selling bread on an African street and discuss the following questions with a partner: What interesting details do you notice?

Women in developing countries in Africa face many challenges. What might some of them be?

What small business or micro-enterprise, might this woman have created?

The teacher will explain that in the upcoming lesson students will learn about women micro-entrepreneurs in Africa and how they are changing themselves and their community

Main Activity

Pairs were assigned to read one of three case studies of women micro-entrepreneurs in Africa. Students took notes and answered questions regarding the geography of the area, the micro-enterprise and how people's lives and the community were impacted by this micro-enterprise.

Assessment Task

The partners were asked to create a pamphlet to educate women in developing countries about micro-entrepreneurs.

Follow up

Students were able to participate in two activities. The first involved visitors from Mali teaching a print making activity in which they created designs to represent something about their life on fabric scarves using actual mud from Mali. The second activity was a trip to the Wharton Center to view a performance by a drum/dance troupe from Africa.

Williamston Middle School
Making Cents out of Fashion and Culture
Adapted by Mila Theroux Art Teacher
Grade 7

Overall Goal of the Project:

This unique project is based on a cross-curricular educational experience between seventh grade Social Studies and the middle school Art Department. The goal of this project is for students to learn about how geography and culture directly influence art and more specifically the clothing that people wear.

Objective(s):

- ▶ Students will identify how the Elements and Principles of Design appear in textile design: Fabric choice, cut of clothing style, and decorative design.
- ▶ Students will identify and bridge the gap between the storytelling African signs and symbols/traditional Mali Mud Clothing styles and the trendy logos that appear on American style clothing.
- ▶ Students will design their own trend in fashion that meshes the traditional storytelling symbols from Mali and American style cuts in clothing. Students will present their Mali Mud Cloth inspired *Outerwear* at a fashion show.
- ▶ Students will write a paragraph or more that provides details on how they believe this cross-curricular activity inspired their deeper understanding of art as a social statement and fashion design as a career opportunity.

Arts Standards (GLCEs, HSCes)

1. **PERFORMING:** VA.CS1.MS.4: Be involved in the process and presentation of final product or exhibit.
2. **CREATING:** VA.CS2.MS.4: Use subjects, themes and symbols that communicate intended meaning in artworks.
3. **ARTS IN CONTEXT:** VS.CS4.MS.1: Know and compare the characteristics of artworks in various eras and cultures.
4. **CONNECTING TO OTHER ARTS, DISCIPLINES, AND LIFE:** VS.CS5.MS.2: Describe and compare skills involved in art-related and visual arts careers.

Instructional Outline

Art Materials: Extra large brown paper lawn bags, scissors, oil pastel, tempera paint, large paint brushes, sponges, large sewing needles, embroidery thread/yard/ribbon, other clothing embellishments, stapler. Rope to use as a clothesline and clothes clips for hanging.

Reference Materials: African signs and symbols, pictures/patterns of traditional Mali clothing, pictures/patterns of traditional American style clothing.

Diagnosing:

Choosing from the list below, all art students write one paragraph outlining what they is gained from this "whole educational experience":

- (1) Learning about Africa in 7th grade Social Studies class
- (2) Field trip to the Michigan State Museum, Mali Mud Cloth Exhibit
- (3) Mali Mud Cloth Workshop

Students who visited the museum or workshop are asked to stand up in front of the class to share their experience and answer questions from other classmates.

Introduction

- b) Introduce Mali Mud Cloth Fashion Design as a project that "Bridges the Gap" between social studies and art: Clothing is representational of climate, culture, economics, and *the date in time*.
- c) Make connections between fashion trends throughout history
 - i) Fashion trends in The United States and the value of "What we wear" and "How We Express Ourselves through Clothing".
 - ii) The tradition and value of the Mali Mud Cloth
- d) Identify logos, symbols, types, fabric, cuts of the clothes American students wear: What is cool and WHY?
- e) Review the Elements and Principles of Design. Make connections between art and clothing design.

Main Activity

Students will work in groups of three (one model, one main designer, and one assistant) to design a Mali Mud Cloth. Cut along the seams of the brown paper lawn bag to open it up to use as one large piece of fabric. Use oil pastel and African signs and symbols reference guide as well as Bogolanfini Mud Cloth reference guide to create a story on the cloth. FILL THE ENTIRE PIECE OF PAPER/CLOTH with patterns. Students may integrate American signs and symbols into their patterns on the cloth. Apply a medium thickness of tempera paint over the entire piece of fabric. It is important to press gently with the paintbrush when going over oil pastel, use even coat of paint, and work quickly. Use a wet (but not soaking sponge) to wipe off excess paint and allow oil pastel to resist and show through paint. Allow at least twenty-four hours for paint to dry. Students will use reference images/clothing patterns of African style of clothing as well as American clothing ideas/patterns to create a new trend in fashion. One shirt, skirt/dress, pants must be sewn together to fit model for fashion show. At least one accessory should accompany clothing piece (headband, handbag, belt, necklace, etc...).

Assessment

To assess each student's individual understanding and comprehension, students will choose one essay question from a list of five to provides details on how they believe this cross-curricular activity inspired their deeper understanding of art as a social statement and fashion design as a career opportunity. The paragraph essay is graded with a rubric based on topic sentence, supporting details, conclusion and CUPS.

Reflection

The class concludes this integrated lesson, **Making Cents out of Fashion and Culture**, with a round table discussion. The discussion should include topics such as: Did you know that social studies have such a large impact on what people wear? Judging by these images (display pictures of people from other areas of the world), what can you tell about where they live (geography), the period (history), and the climate? How has your view about textile designers, fashion designers, and runway models changed? In which ways do artist inspire culture and society?