Appropriation – Culture Clash and Hybridity

Introductory Information

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Grades: 8th or 9th graders
Class Size: 24 students
Length of Class Period: 60 Min

Enrique Chagoya, Friendly Cannibals: Superman and Mayan God (1996)

Lesson Topic:

Appropriation – Culture Clash and Hybridity is a lesson designed to have students explore their own experiences about the meeting points of various cultures. By framing it in the context of “appropriation” the students will explore notions of authenticity and ownership both in terms of the creation of new cultures through cultural mixing, and through the exploration and combination of various forms of visual culture. The students will be exposed to the artworks of Enrique Chagoya contextualized by the tradition of ancient codex (codices) and American comic book imagery. The students will analyze the works and the artist’s use of appropriation of older art forms to create new and original statements about culture, multiculturalism and hybridity. The students will then brainstorm ideas about how different cultures play in their lives. As a result students will create mixed media projects combining and appropriating various forms of visual culture.
STAGE 1 – DESIRED RESULTS

A) Enduring Understandings
   - Artists *appropriate* culturally meaningful images and re-contextualize them in order to make statements about cultural dynamics in society.
   - Artwork that uses appropriation challenges our notions of originality and authenticity not only in art but in the formation of culture.

B) Essential Questions:
   - How do artists use appropriation to address cultural dynamics, cultural clashes, and the creation of a bicultural and transcultural visual culture?
   - Does art that appropriates images from various cultures obscure the original sources or give them new life?
   - How does art work that appropriate images help us understand our own positioning within the cultures/visual culture around us?

C) Massachusetts Frameworks:
   - Learning Standard 5: Critical Response. Students will describe and analyze their own work and the work of others using appropriate visual arts vocabulary. When appropriate, students will connect their analysis to interpretation and evaluation.
   - Connections Strand 6: Purposes of the Art. Students will describe the purpose for which works of dance, music, theatre, visual arts, and architecture were and are created and, when appropriate, interpret their meanings.
   - Learning Standard 10: Interdisciplinary Connections. Students will apply their knowledge of the arts to study of English language arts, foreign languages, health, history and social science, mathematics, and science and technology/engineering.

D) Learning Objectives:
   - Students will participate in small group discussion examining images by Enrique Chagoya dealing with cultural experiences, cultural conflict, cultural mixing and appropriation.
   - Students will share their group’s insights with the larger group.
   - Students will brainstorm a definition for appropriation.
• Students will discuss the meaning of culture and the various forms of culture present in their lives and communities.
• Students will discuss the ways they have observed cultures become mixed and people become bicultural.
• Students will become aware of the competing messages sent by different cultures and take notes on their various influences.
• Students will collect pieces of visual culture from the various cultural spaces they inhabit throughout their day.
• Students will do research on the gathered pieces of visual culture by having conversations with family members, friends, or other community members.
• Students will be given access to the library in order to engage in academic research on their cultures of interest.
• Students will develop narratives or statements about the way they perceive various cultures interacting with each other.
• Students will participate in one-on-one discussions with the teacher about their collected materials, research, and ideas for their visual narrative or statement.
• Students will appropriate the images collected by creating a mixed media project that changes the context of their images and now uses them to express their own point of view about cultural interactions.

STAGE 2 – ASSESSMENT EVIDENCE

A) Performing Tasks as Evidence:
• Students will collect and bring into class digital or printed images that represent different cultures that they encounter on their daily lives.
• Students will keep a journal where ideas and observations about culture and the way different cultures interact will be recorded.
• Students will select the most meaningful images and do further research on their original context.
• Students will create mixed media works that make a statement about their own culture/s by using appropriated images.
• Students will develop vocabulary about appropriation, culture, culture hybridity.

B) Other Evidence/Continuum of Assessment Strategies:
• Students will participate in small group discussions about the art pieces presented to the class.
- Students will discuss their own perceptions of the ways different cultures and cultural influences interact in their lives, their communities, and throughout the world.
- Students will share the insights of the group with the rest of the class.
- Students will demonstrate their heightened awareness of culture by writing notes about their observations.
- Students will collect the visual culture (found pictures, calendars, digital files, advertisements, paintings,) from the places they inhabit throughout their day.
- Students will generate research based on the bits of visual culture they collect by asking questions of community members, looking at art books, doing online research about the social political context the images originally come from.
- Students will be encouraged to ask themselves questions about their pieces.
  - Does the piece express the relationship between multiple cultures present in the student’s life? Is the art piece appropriating culturally rich image and successfully creating new meaning through their use of juxtaposition and variation of art skills and styles?

C) Criteria:
- Did the student actively participate in group discussion of the images presented?
- Did the student contribute by sharing the ideas of the group with the larger group?
- Did the student engage with the questions on the handout by naming and listing various cultures and how they influence her life and that of the community?
- Did the student do the research necessary to provide more depth to the images later selected to appropriate?
- Did the student participate on productive one-on-one discussions with the teacher in order to further develop their creative process and ideas?
- Did the student’s appropriation of images on their work illustrate the cultural exchanges they researched and developed?

STAGE 3 – LEARNING PLAN

A) Art Materials
- 24 Sheets of good drawing paper, (18x24)
- Pack of construction paper in various colors
- 24 Scissors
- Glue
- 24 Pencils
- Colored Pencils 24 Sets
- Chalk and oil Pastels 12 sets each
- Watercolor, Acrylic, Tempera paints
- Brushes
- Access to the computer lab
- Access to photocopy machine
- Blending Pens or Winter Green Oil for transfers
- A variety of art books
  - Showing examples of appropriation
  - Serving as sources to appropriate
- Magazines

B) Vocabulary

- Apropiación
  - Implica la duplicación directa o incorporación de imágenes (pinturas, fotos, etc.) por un artista el cual representa las imágenes en un contexto nuevo y así altera el significado original y así cuestiona ideas sobre la originalidad y autenticidad.

- Appropriation
  - The direct duplication, copying or incorporation of an image (painting, photograph, etc.) by another artist who represents it in a different context, thus completely altering its meaning and questioning notions of originality and authenticity (Thames and Hudson Dictionary of Art and Artists: Stangos 1994: 19)

- Culture
  - The behaviors and beliefs characteristic of a particular social, ethnic, or age group: the youth culture; the drug culture.
  - Anthropology. The sum total of ways of living built up by a group of human beings and transmitted from one generation to another.

- Cultura
  - Los comportamientos o creencias características que caracterizan a un grupo social, étnico, o de cierta edad: la cultura de los jóvenes, la cultura de las drogas.
  - Antropología. La suma total de la manera de vivir creada por un grupo de humanos que es trasmitida de una generación a la siguiente.
C) Cite visual references as resources

- **Books:**

- **Images:**

D) Learning Activities and Instruction:

- *(These represent days in which the project will be revisited; it may be the very next day or a week after. In between those days they will be learning various technical skills that can be applied to this larger project)*

**First Day of the lesson**

- Teacher will begin by having students get into groups of 3 or 4 people.
- Through the discussions students will explore issues of visual culture, cultural clashes, and appropriation.
- Students will be introduced to the definition and function of appropriation in contemporary art.
- Students will look through various magazines, cut images out and begin to explore ways to borrow images and give them new contexts through constructing colleges.

**Second day of the lesson**

- Using Worksheet #2 students will be asked to:
  - Reflect on the various cultures that affect their lives.
  - They will be asked to list cultural influences and how those influences can sometimes be contradictory.
  - Students will be asked to identify ways in which they have appropriated aspects of different cultures in their own lives.
- Students will then discuss the worksheet as a whole class.
- Students will be asked continue to think about the questions presented during discussion.
- Students will be introduced to the process of journaling as part of the creative process.
  - As homework students will be assigned to use their journals to make observations about cultural differences and instances of appropriation present in their lives.
- Students will be asked to begin collecting bits of visual culture identifying the various cultures they experience in their everyday life. (School handouts, discarded advertisement posters, a calendar from home originally from the Carniseria.)

**Third Day**
- Students will meet in the computer lab in order to do research on the ideas and images they have collected thus far.
- Students will return to class where they will individually begin to brainstorm and sketch out their ideas for the final piece.
- Teacher will have short one-on-one conversations with the students to check for understanding of the project and that the students are beginning to forge a direction.

**Fourth and Fifth days (Maybe more)**
- Students will continue working on making a statement or narrative about culture using appropriated images.

**Final day**
- Students will have a group critique to evaluate the art work and learn from each other. Students and teacher will begin to brainstorm on ideas about displaying the work as an art show (in the cafeteria, a local community center, etc.)

E) All questions handed out to students will be both in English and in Spanish.
- While in group discussions, the English learners will be given opportunities to discuss their ideas sometimes with English only speakers while other times with other bilingual students in the class. This will provide the English learning students with different types of opportunities for growth and support.

F) Cleanup
- Students will be asked to stop work 15 minutes before class ends and will be given different responsibilities in putting away materials
- Students will be asked to reflect on the day’s work and will be given the day’s homework assignment.

*Enrique Chagoya, Friendly Cannibals: Indians with dismembered Superman (1996)*
Group Conversation

What is happening in this image?
¿Qué está sucediendo en esta imagen?

What do you recognize in this image?
¿Qué reconoces en la imagen?

What is surprising about the image?
¿Qué te sorprende sobre la imagen?

What is the artist trying to say?
¿Cual podrá ser el mensaje de el artista?

What do you see in the image that makes you say that?
¿Que ves en la imagen que te hace pensar eso?
Apropiación

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¿De qué manera interactúan diferentes culturas en tu vida y/o en tu comunidad? Cuáles son las diferentes expectativas expresadas por la cultura en tu casa, en la cultura de tus antepasados, la cultura de la escuela, la cultura popular, o la cultura(s) de los jóvenes?

Por ejemplo: Masculino/Femenino, conducta apropiada

How do different cultures interact in your life or in your community? What are the different expectations held by your home culture, your ancestors’ culture, the schools culture, your friend’s culture, mass/pop culture, youth culture(s)?

Examples: Masculinity/Femininity, “good behavior”

How do you appropriate, steal, borrow, adapt and mix from the various cultures in your home, your school, in your community?

¿De qué manera tú te apropias, robas, pides prestado, adaptas y kombinas las diferentes culturas que existen en tu casa, tu escuela, tu comunidad?