STEAM LESSON PLAN

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Grade Level Middle school (adaptable for lower and higher grades)

THEME Narrative
INSPIRED BY Angelica Kauffmann, A Portrait of Mary Tisdal Reading

PROJECT TITLE: SHOW ME A PICTURE – I’LL TELL YOU A STORY

DRIVING QUESTION
What is the role of imagery in storytelling?

STUDENT LEARNING OBJECTIVES: Put these on the board or have students write them in a notebook/journal.

• I will create an artwork where I portray a character from a story.
• I will respond to photographs to discover the narrative and consider their absent narrative.
• I will present the story of “from sheep to sweater.”
• I will connect an eighteenth-century artwork with a Nebraska artist.

CONTENT STANDARDS
NEBRASKA CONTENT AREA STANDARDS
IOWA CORE STANDARDS

THE FOUR C’S FOR STEAM CAREER READINESS SKILLS
• Critical Thinking: students will determine the absent narrative in photographs.
• Creativity: students will demonstrate this through the production of an artwork featuring themselves.
• Collaboration: students will work with their classmates to learn more about sheep farming.
• Communication: students will learn how to visually tell a story.

VOCABULARY: absent narrative, fiber art, narrative, Neoclassical, portrait, scene, story, textile, wool

RESOURCES: Kauffmann Teaching Poster; Kauffmann Pinterest board; Nelson Teacher Resource Center
• Video – “Sheep Shearing Made Simple,” David Duke
• Video – “Processing Wool,” DiscovARCountryside
  ➢ Preview all videos before sharing with students.
• Lesson Plan – Picturing Classical Mythology, The Museum of Fine Arts, Houston
• Lesson Plan – Women Artists, Utah Museum of Fine Arts

Angelica Kauffmann (Swiss, 1741-1807), A Portrait of Mary Tisdal Reading, c. 1771-72, oil on canvas, 24 3/4 x 29 3/4 in., Museum purchase with funds from The Jack Drew Art Endowment Fund for 18th- and 19th-Century Art, 2016.9
• Lesson Plan – Book Loom, Blick Art Materials
• Essay – Kauffmann, Cornelia Presenting Her Children as Her Treasures,
• Essay – The Most Accomplished Woman in Europe: Angelica Kauffmann, Andrea Fernandes, Mental Floss
• Website – Mary Zicafoose Textiles
• Website – Nebraska Artists – A Video Resource Site for Teachers and Students (Mary Zicafoose)
• Website – American Sheep Industry Association
• Resource – Absent Narratives Resource Collection, Minnesota Humanities Center

PROCEDURE
Overview: Using Angelica Kauffmann’s A Portrait of Mary Tisdal Reading, students will explore the idea of narrative. They will also discover how wool is processed from sheep to sweater.

Engage: Show students Angelica Kauffmann’s A Portrait of Mary Tisdal Reading. Have them dissect what they are seeing first. Have them describe the facts of the artwork then have them wonder about the artwork.

Ask students...
• What do you see?
• What do you think is happening?
• Is there a story? What is it?
• What is she thinking?
• Does she like the book she is reading?
• What is the sheep’s role in the painting?

Move to current events imagery – show them a photograph and talk about the narrative portrayed. Select a story that appeals to your students to make connections to the idea of a narrative or a story.

Then reveal the narrative of the Kauffmann canvas in that the artist placed Mary Tisdal in a scene from the book, Jerusalem Delivered, which she is reading. Refer to the teaching poster for additional information about this artwork including how Kauffman depicted Mary as the princess Erminia (the heroine of the story).

Ask students...
• What is a narrative?
• What is the narrative of the painting?
• What is the conflict?
• What do her eyes tell us?
• What is her body language telling us?

Deliverables: Tell students they will...
• create an artwork with a clear narrative before adding a selfie to it.
• discover the story of how wool is processed and teach each other through interactive presentations
• write narratives for photos and discuss absent narratives
Art Talk: Have students research women in art from different time periods. They should share their findings with the class.

Ask students...

- What are the struggles some women artists, like Kauffmann, faced in their career?
- Do women artists have the same challenges today? Why or why not?
- Why do you think female artists in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Europe were not as popular as their male counterparts?
- How can we tell their story?

Description of Activity:

- Read a book out loud (do not show them pictures from it) or have students listen to a song (with or without lyrics). Encourage them to imagine the characters (or “characters” for music) and build them in their mind.

- Each student may select one character and have them compare their ideas of the character with their classmates.
  - You may also take a book they are reading in school (for older students, collaborate with their language arts or literature teacher). Students will create an artwork for a character from that book, but will not include the character, yet.

- They should reflect on the story they are reading and select a part of the book to create an artwork with a background that tells the story at that moment.

- Kauffmann is considered a Neoclassical artist, and their work was a return to rationality, ideal beauty, and truth as well as celebrating Greek and Roman architecture.
  - Take the opportunity to study the architecture and proportions in the forms and structures these artists included in their compositions.
  - Encourage students to apply this knowledge to their artistic backgrounds.
  - Consider discussing how stage sets establish the scene. Perhaps Skype with a professional set designer to learn more, especially what types of skills and knowledge are necessary for this career.

- Once the background is ready, have students take selfies of themselves reading the book and posed as a character, and print them to add to the artwork they created.
  - Another level could be to add the character’s perspective in the background by including them in it before placing their selfie in the artwork.

- Return to the Kauffmann painting. Talk about the fashion of Mary Tisdal – is this something she would wear every day? Is she wearing a costume? What time period does her attire reflect?

- Transition into talking about wool and clothing made from wool. Focus on the sheep in the artwork. Talk about why Kauffmann included them.

- Have students research how wool is process – “from sheep to sweater.”
o Students may work in small groups to study modern day shepherding – what are farms like today versus 50 years ago, versus 100 years ago, versus 200 years ago and so on.
o In the story, Erminia thought it was a peaceful life. Is that true today? Do you think that was true then?
o Students should develop interactive presentations to share their findings with each other.
o Some students may want to look into info graphics to organize their information and this could lead to studying statistics from them. What narrative do statistics tell?

• Next move students from clothing to decorative textiles or fiber art, and introduce them to Nebraska artist Mary Zicafoose.
o Use this opportunity to study textile art and have students create their own weaving projects.
o Bonus, they could add this weaving to their selfie in the artwork they created.

• While the discussion and activities have addressed the narratives that are evident, conclude this lesson with a discussion of absent narrative.

• Start by having students select photographs, and have students write that story.
o After they write it, discuss the actual story and see if students were close in their writings.
o Consider students’ grade levels and select photographs they may not have seen before.
o Select images that show humanity

• Then have students consider the narrative they do not see.
o After determining as a class what the concept of absent narrative is, in small groups, have students discuss the absent narrative in their photograph.
o Come back together as a class and share.

Closing: Have students discuss how they will look at images more closely to discover the narrative or think about the absent narrative.

Assessment: 3-2-1 Reflection. Find out what students have learned by responding to the following:
• Share three things they learned from the lesson.
• Share two things they want to know more about.
• Share one question they have.

STEAM LESSON PLAN Joslyn Art Museum uses the Nebraska Department of Education’s STEM Approach as a guide, but we took the liberty of adding the “A” to emphasize the ARTS. NDE’s STEM Approach reflects an integrated and interdisciplinary philosophy to teaching and learning that emphasizes collaborative school-based, work-based, family-based, and community-based experiences as a context for helping students to master key competencies within science, technology, engineering, and mathematics.

Teaching and learning resources, experiences, and example activities included within NDE’s STEM Approach serve as a standards-based framework for supporting the engagement of students in hands-on, authentic, and contextual learning experiences that provide students with the opportunity to learn STEM content while promoting essential career readiness skills, including communication, creativity, collaboration, and critical thinking.

NDE’s STEM Approach strives for compatibility with all content-areas, all grade levels, and all career clusters, not just those traditionally defined as STEM.