Joslyn Art Museum

Comprehensive Study Lesson Plan

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1st Semester – American Indian

Focus: Big Elk (Ongpatonga) and Indian Portraiture

Objectives:

- Learn about Big Elk (Ongpatonga) and the Omaha people.
- Discover the impact of American Indian Tribes/Nations on local and regional geography – specifically city names.
- Understand the purpose of recording American Indians through portraiture.

Instructional Strategies that Strongly Affect Student Achievement – Robert J. Marzano

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>01 Identifying similarities and differences</th>
<th>06 Cooperative learning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>02 Summarizing and note taking</td>
<td>07 Setting goals and providing feedback</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>03 Reinforcing effort and providing recognition</td>
<td>08 Generating and testing hypotheses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>04 Homework and practice</td>
<td>09 Activating prior knowledge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>05 Nonlinguistic representations</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Resources: Check out the Teacher Support Materials online, and [http://www.joslyn.org/education/teachers](http://www.joslyn.org/education/teachers) for additional resources.

Suggested Materials: Big Elk teaching poster, Indian portraiture images, handouts from Thursdays for Teachers, images of Big Elk, Lucien and Logan Fontenelle, Fontenelle’s jacket, peace medal book, art-making materials, Bodmer images, lithography project materials.

Vocabulary: archaeology, coordinates, ethnology, lithography, mascot, Nation, portraiture, propaganda, stereotype, tribe

Procedure:

- **Engage:** Origin of place names. Ask students to come up with various places that have names relating to American Indian Tribes/Nations. See how many cities, counties, and states the class can list on the board in a set amount of time.

- **Art Talk:** American Indian Portraiture. Study portraits created by Karl Bodmer, George Catlin, Charles Bird King, and Henry Inman. The copies by Inman were turned into lithographs published by Thomas McKenney and James Hall. Discuss why these portraits were created, and the importance of the ethnographic resource, *McKenney and Hall’s Indian Tribes of North America*. Refer to the Big Elk teaching poster for additional information.

- **History:** Who was Big Elk, and what was his relationship to the Fontenelles? Refer to the talk presented by Philip Kaldahl at the November 2011 Thursdays for Teachers. Also refer to Teacher Support Materials for additional information.

- **Aesthetics:** Show students Inman’s portrait of Big Elk (Ongpatonga) and compare with Bodmer’s depictions of American Indians. Discuss Big Elk’s Romanesque stance and European-looking facial features compared to Bodmer’s more harsh, perhaps more realistic drawings.

- **Production:** Lithography. Introduce the lithography process used to create McKenney and Hall’s publication. Have students create place cards using a simplified printing project. Refer to the workshop presented by Barbara Gehringer at the November 2011 Thursdays for Teachers.
• **Close:** Select one city, county or state listed in the **Engage** procedure to briefly research to see how their American Indian heritage is expressed (i.e. city logo or state flags).

**Extensions:**

• **Cultural Connections 1:** The Omaha People. Introduce students to the Omaha Nation and discuss the four tribes of Nebraska. Using a map of Nebraska, have students locate the tribal headquarters. Refer to the workshop presented by Dr. Rudi Mitchell at the November 2011 Thursdays for Teachers.

• **Cultural Connections 2:** Peace Medals. Show students Big Elk's portrait and identify the peace medal around his neck. Have students study the various styles and discuss why they were given to American Indians. For older students, talk about how they may be considered propaganda. Refer to the Big Elk teaching poster for additional information.

• **Fine Arts:** Refer to the **Aesthetics** procedure and have students choose a style to create a portrait of someone who they feel is a leader to them. Discuss why they decided to create softer or more severe depictions.

• **Language Arts:** Debate. Have students split into teams to discuss then debate whether sporting teams should use the American Indian as a mascot. What stereotypes are presented? Is it ok to censor? Follow-up the debates by having the students write up a persuasive piece sharing how they feel about this controversial topic.

• **Math:** Archaeology coordinates. Map out coordinates in your classroom and then lay down images of what was found at an archaeological dig. If available, cover the images with suitable material (i.e. packing peanuts) for digging. Students then need to record the coordinates of where they found the items. Refer to the talk presented by Philip Kaldahl at the November Thursdays for Teachers for additional local archeological information.

• **Science:** Ethnology. What does this science study? Talk about the Fontenelles, and have students draw up a family tree to understand this family’s relationship to Big Elk.