

TETAC Guidelines for Arts-Centered Instructional Units

Worksheets for Developing an Art-Centered Unit of Study

This guide offers a model for designing a unit of study based on works of art. Through such a unit, students should be provided opportunities to:

- Make artworks
- Interpret and judge artworks.
- Examine the historical, social, and cultural context of artworks
- Explore the nature and value of art
- Make connections between art and other content areas
- Demonstrate learning and complex understandings and skills

Select Unit Foundations

Unit foundations should be enduring ideas that underlie our culture. They are the big questions which artists and other thinkers have pondered over time. Additionally, the unit foundations include enduring ideas that are important for the arts. Enduring ideas, key concepts, and essential questions guide students to understand what it means to be human, to live alongside others, and to live in the natural world. Such ideas can serve as overarching guides to aligning instructional activities to assessment. Unit goals and objectives will grow out of these ideas to provide paths of investigation through making and experiencing art.

Choose One or Two Approaches to Begin

A unit may begin through either of two approaches. One approach is to choose an enduring/big idea, then select artworks that express that idea. The second approach is to choose artworks first, then derive the enduring idea from the work. Either way, key concepts and essential questions that evolve from the enduring idea must provide the focus for the unit.

Enduring Idea:

Artwork(s) Selected:

(Choose from 2-5 works and list titles, artist names, and dates)

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

Determine Key Concepts, Essential Questions, and Key Art Ideas

Key concepts and essential questions express the same idea, but the first is written as a statement and the second as a question. You can use either or both. Key concepts and essential questions are derived from the enduring ideas of the unit. They should prompt the most meaningful exploration of the artworks.

List Key Concepts

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Essential questions have the following characteristics:

- They are "big" questions.
- They are not easily answered and cannot be answered with lists or statement of facts.
- Essential questions require students to make a decision or solve a problem.
- Answers to essential questions require reasoned support.

List Essential Questions

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Determine Key Art Ideas

Key art ideas are embedded in the artwork that express the enduring idea, key concepts, and essential questions. Select 2-3 ideas which are strongly represented by the chosen artworks.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Identify Sources for Reproductions and Research Materials

Reproductions:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Other Research Materials:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Conduct Research for Background Information on Artworks and Artists

Research and document relevant historical and cultural information about each artist and artwork. This material may be written at appropriate reading levels if you choose to provide it to students as readings. Information could include (as appropriate):

- Biographical information on the artist
- Style of the artwork
- Other works by the same artist
- Contemporaries of the artist
- Historical and cultural events around the time the work was created
- Artists who influenced the artist being studied
- Artists influenced by the artist being studied
- Other relevant historical information

Determine and Align Objectives, Instruction, and Assessment

These should be behaviors which can help in evaluating students' understanding of the essential questions. It can be useful to utilize them in writing assessments tasks because they demonstrate understanding through concrete behaviors. For example, students will: explain, interpret, compare, judge, apply information to new contexts, make meaningful connections, show evidence, provide examples, generalize, use new perspectives, or support with reasons.

Identify Lesson Content for the Unit

Identify the best instructional strategies and experiences that will lead students to an in-depth understanding of the enduring idea, key concepts, essential questions, and key art ideas of the unit. Determine at least one instructional strategy for each of the four art disciplines, one for each of four lessons. If desired, the unit planner form may be used to outline the unit.

Art Criticism:

Art History:

Aesthetics:

Art Production:

Sequence Lesson Content

With the enduring idea, key concepts, essential questions, and key art ideas in mind, describe four sequential lessons for the unit.

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

Plan Individual Lessons

Develop individual lessons using the lesson planner form or other formats.

Glossary

List and define key terms that may be new to teachers and/or students.

Resources

Credit all references used in the development of the unit.