Summer Institute 2024: Cross-Cultural Perspectives Along the Silk Road
Fulbright-Hays Groups Projects Abroad
UC Berkeley

In partnership with the British Library

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Drawing on the Past- Art Projects Inspired by Ancient Correspondence
9-12th grade, Art Class

Organizing/Essential/Guiding Questions
How do we understand a place and time through their artifacts?
What do objects, particularly the written word, tell us about the lives of previous generations?
What do written words of non-famous individuals tell us about lives from centuries ago?
What human observations transcend time and place?
How can written words be interpreted visually?
What is the role of the specific, unique point of view in the age of AI?

Introduction/ Overview
This lesson "Drawing on the Past" asks students to create artwork inspired by ancient correspondence. We will begin by reviewing ancient artifacts from the Silk Road, particularly those from the Dunhuang Library Cave. We will discuss different eras of human communication, and how these modes impact the messages in the correspondence. Students will conduct conversations about how ancient correspondence compares to 21st century means of communication. Students will create a personal, handwritten letter which will inspire the artwork. Through studio time and a series of discussions, students will develop an artwork inspired by ancient correspondence.

Content Standards
Creating—Anchor Standard 1: Generate and Conceptualize Artistic Ideas and Work
Acc.VA:Cr1.1 Individually or collaboratively formulate new creative problems based on students' existing artwork.
Acc.VA:Cr1.2 Choose from a range of materials and methods of traditional and contemporary artistic practices to plan works of art and design.

Creating—Anchor Standard 2: Organize and Develop Artistic Ideas and Work
Adv.VA:Cr2.1 Experiment, plan, and make multiple works of art and design that explore a personally meaningful theme, idea, or concept.

Creating—Anchor Standard 3: Refine and Complete Artistic Work
Acc.VA:Cr3 Engage in constructive critique with peers, then reflect on, re-engage, revise, and refine works of art and design in response to personal artistic vision.

Presenting—Anchor Standard 6: Convey Meaning Through the Presentation of Artistic Work

Acc.VA:Pr5 Evaluate, select, and apply methods or processes appropriate to display artwork in a specific place.

Objectives

In this lesson, students will

- Learn about human communication pre-21st century
- Compare and contrast verbal and visual communication
- Consider how time and place impact our understanding of text and image
- Experiment with translation of text to image
- Critically analyze their peers' work

Materials/Resources

- Drawing on the Past slideshow
- Computer and projector
- Paper for short writing assignment and sketches
- Art materials (any 2D media, including paint, pastel, ink, charcoal, collage, color pencil)
- Surface for art project (heavyweight paper, illustration board, canvas or other)
- Timer to equalize speaking time in discussions
- Camera to document artwork

Special Equipment

Art supplies, if in a non-studio art classroom

Teacher Preparation

- Familiarize yourself with the slideshow before presenting it.
- Consider the role of correspondence in your own life. Is there a relevant document or experience appropriate to share with students?
- Organize art materials into the order used in the lesson.

Time/Timeline

- Slideshow Introduction- 1 hour
- Warm up (Telephone game) – 1 hour
- Letter writing and 3 sketches – 2 hours
- Small group critique on sketches – 1 hour
- Studio time to prepare for mid-point critique – 5 hours
- Mid-point critique – 1 hour
- Studio time to finish artwork – 5 hours
- Final critique- 1 hour

Procedures

1. Greet students and ask them to arrange themselves for a group presentation. Ask students if time is moving slow or fast for them today. Listen to individual responses.

2. Start the slideshow and pause on the text or image slide. Give students 3 minutes to discuss with peers seated near them, then ask each person to respond to the question.
3. Review slideshow material with students, stopping on slide 13-22 to discuss each question, artifact or video.
4. Fold a large piece of paper into 8 rectangles (18x24" works well). Place students into groups where they can easily pass the paper between them. Lead the Telephone Game drawing exercise.
5. Ask students to write a letter by hand in any language they personally understand. The letter must be created with a writing utensil (not a keyboard), include at least 100 words as well as a greeting and closing. Assist students individually or in groups with subject matter and tone of letter.
6. Supervise students as they re-read the letter at least a day later. Review the questions on the slideshow. Assist them with the creation of three sketches. Make sure that the sketches meet the requirements listed on the slideshow.
7. When students have completed three sketches, place them in groups of 7-8 students for discussion. Share guiding questions for the discussion. (For example: Why is this sketch the strongest? How could these words be better illustrated? How would you title this work?) Ask students to contribute questions for the conversation and write these on the board. Place the questions in a central location so they remain visible during the conversation. At the end of the group discussion, all students should have a plan for the project.
8. During 5 hour studio time preparation for mid-point critique, check in with each student about their project. Ask them the questions listed on slide 26.
9. After five additional studio hours, conduct a final critique with the entire class. Students may submit work that isn't entirely complete if they need more feedback. Share the questions listed on slide 27. Discuss the evolution of each artwork and encourage students to give feedback to their colleagues.

<u>Assessment – Performance Standards, Rubric, Project</u>

- Participation in slideshow discussion
- Handwritten letter
- Three sketches for correspondence project
- Participation in group critique of sketches
- Mid-point critique progress
- Participation, mid-point critique
- Final project evaluation
- Participation, final critique