



Teaching and Learning in Art Education 2nd Ed

Cultivating Students' Potential from Pre-K through High School
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Model Teaching and Learning in Art Education Lesson Plan

Lesson Title ☒: Marionettes and the Story of Our Community

Name(s) ☒: Authentic Teacher

Grade Level ☒: Multiple Grade Levels

Lesson Time / Class Sessions ☒: 5 – 1 hour classes

Big Idea ☒: Our Local Community

Essential/Guiding Question(s): What is the nature of our community?

Artistic Behavior(s) ☒

- ☐ Idea Development
- ☐ Observation
- ☐ Imagination and Wonderment
- ☐ Persistence
- ☐ Making Creative Connections

Explain how students are applying the artistic behavior(s) ☒: As part of a unit of study, this lesson engages students in the artistic behaviors of idea development and making creative connections through the study of the big idea of community. By learning context, brainstorming, and answering art inquiry and essential questions, students will identify the unique qualities that define their own and other communities. Students will then translate their insights into visual representations by creating original marionettes, sets, and props for a collaborative marionette production.

Materials ☒: string, fabric, ribbon, masking tape, buttons, fabric, glue, found objects, drawing paper, and pencils

Instructional Resources ☒:

- *Artists' Lessons to Thrive! 2.1. on Vannoy Streeter in Teaching and Learning in Art Education* (Sickler-Voigt, 2026).
- Faith Ringgold's book *Tar Beach*
- Images of historical marionettes from around the world and the book *Pablo Cano: Full Circle*

Vocabulary:

Elements of Art ☒:

☐ line ☐ shape ☐ color ☒ **form** ☐ space ☐ value ☒ **texture**

Principles of Design ☒:

☒ **balance** ☐ pattern ☐ rhythm ☐ repetition ☐ emphasis

☐ variety ☐ proportion ☐ movement ☒ **unity**

Other ☒:

community, immigrant, marionette, puppet, fairness, equality

Rationale ☒: Dating back to prehistoric times, societies called upon puppetry to present societal issues, teach life skills, and entertain audiences (Blumenthal, 2005; Currell, 2004). Using the essential question: “What is the nature of our community?,” this lesson calls upon students to explore the big idea of our local community through content presented in a local museum’s exhibition on community, class discussions, and social justice. Students will discuss fairness and equality within the community, research the meaning of community, and apply contextual information to create marionettes.

Puppetry serves as an excellent medium to investigate the theme of community because of its appeal as an art form in encouraging children to discuss issues and reenact situations and events (Sickler-Voigt, 2026). By examining the work of local quilt makers and community artist Vannoy Streeter, as well as historical marionette artists and contemporary artist Faith Ringgold, students will learn the many ways in which artists have depicted storytelling and community in their art. Like the artists and societies before them, students will design marionettes for the purpose of presenting a story about community and sharing their sense of humor with others.

Objectives ☒:

- A. Given a class discussion centered on the lesson’s essential question and significance of local community, the class will orally brainstorm ideas and make a list of at least ten unique things that represent life within their community. (VA:Re7.2.5)
- B. Inspired by their class discussion and brainstorming, each student will work in a small group to create an original marionette for a performance on their local community that they form using found objects. The student marionette will have a moving head, arms, and legs and will demonstrate a strong sense of unity, balance, and craftspersonship. (VA:Cr2.3.5)
- C. Given examples of Streeter’s sculptures, community and Ringgold’s quilts, historical marionettes, and artworks that depict the theme of community from the local museum, the student will answer all 10 art inquiry questions presented on a class handout. The students will write their answers in complete sentences and present their answers orally to the class. (VA:Re7.2.5; VA:Pr6.1.5)
- D. The students will write a one-to-two-minute script that identifies two unique qualities about their local community and perform it using their marionettes. (VA:Cn11.1.5)

Learning Targets ☒:

- A. I can participate in a class discussion about my local community.
 - ☐ I can work with my classmates to brainstorm a list of at least ten unique things about life in our community.
- B. As an artist, I can create a marionette inspired by my local community.
 - ☐ I can create a marionette with found objects that has a moving head, arms, and legs.
 - ☐ I can design a marionette that demonstrates unity, balance, and craftspersonship.
- C. I can answer 10 art inquiry questions that focus on the big idea of local community through art.
 - ☐ I can write my answers in complete sentences.
 - ☐ I can summarize my answers orally to the class.
- D. I can present a marionette show.
 - ☐ I can collaborate with my peers to produce a one-to-two-puppet script that identifies two unique qualities about our local community and perform our script using group’s marionettes.

PROCEDURES

Set ☒: The teacher will present the big idea of our local community, ask the lesson’s essential question, and present a digital presentation showing artworks by Vannoy Streeter, community quilters, Faith Ringgold, and marionette artists, as well as artworks on display at a local museum that tells the story of immigrants living in the region.

Instructional Strategies ☒: (A) The teacher will collect found objects to create the marionettes and ask students to do the same. The teacher will: (B) Identify the lesson's objectives, vocabulary words, and assessment criteria and write key information on the board. (C) Probe the students to identify the meaning of community in their own lives, making connections to transformative art education, life skills through art, and the meanings of fairness and equality within a community. (D) Demonstrate how to write a script and form a marionette using found objects. (E) Model safety procedures. (F) Explain the procedures for completing the art inquiry activities. (G) Demonstrate how to decorate and string the marionettes. (G) Monitor the class throughout the learning process and facilitate the class closure activities.

Group Learning ☒: The students will: (A) Repeat the lesson's objectives and acknowledge that they understand them. (B) Discuss the meaning of the local community, identify the characteristics that make their community unique, and review vocabulary words. (C) Participate in the class art inquiry discussions and summarize their findings. (D) Watch and participate in the teacher led demonstrations on how to write a one-to-two-minute script about their community and form a marionette while following safety procedures. (E) Work in small groups to write a script for their marionette show about our local community. (F) Participate in a teacher led demonstration on how to decorate and string marionettes. (G) Discuss the links between transformative art education, life skills through art, and the meanings of fairness and equality within a community. (H) Make final revisions to their marionettes and scripts upon receiving the class's feedback.

Independent Practice ☒: The student will:

(A) Complete the lesson's art inquiry questions in written form. (B) Design an individual marionette with moving parts. (C) String the marionette.

Accommodations ☒: The teacher will:

(A) Break down academic vocabulary and the steps necessary for students to participate in class learning tasks. (B) Provide a hands-on demonstration to show students how to create a script and marionette. (C) Post information on the board and provide additional instructional resources, such as handouts. (D) Meet with students individually to review key information and check for understanding.

(E) If advanced learners progress through the marionette project more rapidly than their peers while meeting the project's objectives, they can design additional props or other resources for their performance.

Closure ☒: Students will:

(A) Be responsible for cleaning their workspaces and storing their marionettes at the end of each class session. (B) Orally review the big idea of our local community, community centered artworks by Vannoy Streeter and the lesson's other artists, and how creating art as well as writing, talking, and reflecting on the community, the artists, and their work provided them with enduring understandings and possibly transformative understandings about the local community.

(C) Upon completing the assignment, the class will perform their marionette shows and self-assess their performance orally as a class after its presentation.

Quantitative and Qualitative Assessments

- ☒ **Informal Assessment** ☒: The teacher will monitor the class as they participate in all activities to ensure that they are on-task.
- ☒ **Formative Assessment** ☒: Students and the teacher will review the learning targets and the rubric during the learning process to check for student understanding.
- ☒ **Formal-Summative Assessment** ☒: The completed marionettes are worth 200 points using the criteria listed on a rubric. The completed art inquiry worksheet is worth 50 points.
- ☒ Authentic ☒ Rubric ☐ Portfolio ☐ Test/Quiz ☐ Essay ☒ Peer/Group
- ☒ Self-Assessment ☐ Interview ☐ Checklist ☐ Rating Scale ☒ Other - Worksheets

Standards ☒

National Visual Arts Performance Standards (SEADAE, 2014):

- VA:Cr2.3.5—Identify, describe, and visually document places and/or objects of personal significance.
- VA:Pr6.1.5—Cite evidence about how an exhibition in a museum or other venue presents ideas and provides information about a specific concept or topic.
- VA:Re7.2.5—Identify and analyze cultural associations suggested by visual imagery.
- VA:Cn11.1.5—Apply formal and conceptual vocabularies of art and design to view surroundings in new ways through art-making.

References ☒

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