

Unit Title: *Art Accessible*

Grade Level: 3th - 6th (see footnotes throughout for modifications for high, and low-functioning students with special needs)

Materials:

Overhead projector
Ceramic slip for casting
Play money (or fake currency of choice)
Clay
Plaster
Mold straps
Ceramic tiles
Clay tools
Glaze
Brushes (for glazing)
Adhesives (Modge-Podge, hot glue, tacky glue suggested)
Scissors
Acrylic Paint (tempera can used as a substitute)

Vocabulary:

Accessibility
Resource
Public Art
Audience
Installation Art
Multiple
Repurpose

WHERE

This is a critical inquiry into accessibility and art making, conceptualized initially for use with advanced high school students. Through adaptation, the entire unit has been modified for use in special needs, elementary classrooms. Based on a small class size—between five and ten students—this unit focuses on the availability of artwork and other resources.

Students range in ability, and include high-functioning students on the autism spectrum, low-functioning students with developmental delays, students with Oppositional Defiant Disorder, and students with severe emotional issues. No names will be used throughout this unit overview, to protect student confidentiality. Student IEPs call for various modifications to instruction; most commonly, students require chunking of information, different modes of presenting the same information, repetition of concepts and expectations, word banks, large fonts, and simplified language. Distribution of materials must be monitored and choices for students should be limited to prevent conflict from overloading or fixation. The frustration level of students must be monitored to avoid possible crises and shutdowns. All students' IEP goals include encouraging positive social interactions and use of coping skills to manage frustration or anger. To avoid negative student interactions and distractions, two students must be separated throughout, in accordance with their personal IEPs, and all peer-to-peer interactions must be monitored.

Art Accessible is framed in such a way that each lesson will build off of the lesson prior, adding to the analysis and art techniques addressed previously. Students will learn to consider the power of accessibility, and using art, will attempt to provide solutions for issues surrounding the lack of access. In attempting to make art available to more people, in more places, they will reflect on what other resources could be made more available by the same devices.

LESSON ONE

(Affordable Art: low-cost and no-cost art making)

ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS:

“How can art be made more accessible?”

“How can the cost of a resource make it more, or less accessible?”

“What impact does cost have on the value of a resource?”

OBJECTIVE/ENDURING UNDERSTANDINGS

Students address and analyze the concept of accessibility through art making. Students are asked to consider how to make resources, such as art, more assessable. Students will create “affordable art” and reflect based on the idea of cost as a factor in accessibility. In creating low-cost and no-cost artwork, students will attempt to battle accessibility while addressing the challenges of lowering the cost of resources, like art. In working with nontraditional and low-cost supplies, students will overcome the challenge of having to repurpose and use only what they have available.

STANDARDS

National Standards

1: Students will:

- a. know the differences between materials, techniques, and processes
- b. describe how different materials, techniques, and processes cause different responses
- c. use different media, techniques, and processes to communicate ideas, experiences, and stories
- d. use art materials and tools in a safe and responsible manner

State Standards

9.3.8A: A. Know and use the critical process of the examination of works in the arts and humanities. (Compare and contrast, Analyze, Interpret, Form and test hypotheses, Evaluate/form judgments)

9.1.8C: Identify and use comprehensive vocabulary within each of the arts forms

9.1.8F: Incorporate specific uses of traditional and contemporary technologies within the design for producing, performing and exhibiting works in the arts or the works of others.

HOOK

Upon entering the classroom, students will be given play money, and will be asked to brainstorm an item, or resource that they would buy with that money if they could. The teacher will explain that she is has made and will sell each of their dream items, but for the right price. Students will be instructed to raise their hands and attempt to “order” their item from the teacher. The teacher will explain that at his/her shop, all of these desired items made of gold, and the class cannot afford them with their monopoly money¹.

EXPLORE

The teacher will help lead a discussion on the cost of a resource as a possible obstacle preventing its widespread availability. The class will discuss how lowering the cost of a resource, like art, could make it more accessible. Teacher will show a PowerPoint on accessibility, and “recycled art.” Students will be presented with a box of low-cost or no-cost items with which they must create a piece of “affordable art.” Outside of this box, students will only be permitted to use adhesives and a class set of basic acrylic colors³. Students will be prompted to reflect on how the cost of their art, or any resource, while impacting its accessibility, may change how it is viewed⁴. Following completion of their pieces, students

¹For students with the exceptionalities noted previously, prevent conflict by emphasizing that this is just an exercise, and they will not actually be able to get their imagined resource today

²Each student should be given a box with the same materials, to prevent peer-to-peer conflict over materials

will complete a reflection (Reflection Handout) on their process, the concept of accessibility, and the impact of cost on a resource’s availability⁵. A class critique of student work will follow, where students will analyze their results⁵.

REFLECT

In a teacher-lead discussion, students will reflect on accessibility through their ark making. Students will complete written reflections of their exploration into cost and access.



Figure 1: Student created a three-dimensional collage using the materials in her box, and the box itself. All materials had been previously recycled, and required repurposing.

ASSESSMENT

Task	Assessment
Brainstorm desired resource and participate in discussion on cost, affordability, and access	Informal assessment: Teacher monitors brainstorming and accesses participation in discussion
Students experiment and create with the materials provided for them	Informal assessment: Teacher monitors construction process and peer interactions
Students write a reflection on their art making and accessibility	Formal assessment: Teacher assess written responses and analysis
In a class discussion, students reflect on their construction and the concept of access, as it is affected through affordability	Informal assessment: Teacher facilitates discussion and checks for understanding

³Monitor use of scissors and glue carefully; use only youth scissors and assign numbers to students corresponding to the number on the pair of scissors

⁴While students work, bring up initial PowerPoint and continually re-teach the material here through questions and discussion

⁵Reflection handout should include word boxes, explicit instruction, and prompting questions; the instructor should be ready to provide prompts and further instruction as well

⁶Critique should be supplemented with Critique Handouts

LESSON TWO

(Public Art: tile creation and installation)

ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS:

“How can art be made more accessible?”

“What are some implications of allowing a resource to be seen and shared by a greater audience?”

OBJECTIVE/ENDURING UNDERSTANDINGS

Students will explore further the concept of accessibility, and will analyze the impact of publically available resources, like art. Students will reflect on challenges posed and successes gained by making art and other resources available to the masses. Students will learn how to slip-cast, and glaze ceramic tiles for use in a permanent, public installation.

STANDARDS

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1: Students will:

- a.** know the differences between materials, techniques, and processes
- b.** describe how different materials, techniques, and processes cause different responses
- c.** use different media, techniques, and processes to communicate ideas, experiences, and stories
- d.** use art materials and tools in a safe and responsible manner

State Standards

9.3.8A: A. Know and use the critical process of the examination of works in the arts and humanities. (Compare and contrast, Analyze, Interpret, Form and test hypotheses, Evaluate/form judgments)

9.1.8C: Identify and use comprehensive vocabulary within each of the arts forms

9.1.8F: Incorporate specific uses of traditional and contemporary technologies within the design for producing, performing and exhibiting works in the arts or the works of others.

HOOK

Students take a field trip to a local piece of artwork, and discuss how making a resource publically available, can make it more accessible. Students also discuss the implications of making that piece, or resource available to more people (i.e. opportunity for vandalism, overuse)¹.

EXPLORE

The teacher will show the PowerPoint on Public Art, will continue the class discussion on how installing art in a public place, or making a resource publically available, can make it more accessible, as seen from the fieldtrip. Students will make simple molds of tiles within small groups^{2,3}. They will learn simple plaster mold-making and slip-casting. Students will glaze their final tiles, and the finished pieces will be installed in the school’s hallway. Students will write a reflection on the process and the impact of public art on accessibility.

¹The educator may wish to keep the “field trip” limited to an in-school trip down the hall to a display case, or school courtyard installation, depending on class dynamics from the project previous

²Separate students as necessary, putting them in workable teams to limit distractions and negative interactions

³Use commercial, bisqued tiles, and only teach the glazing process to simplify process further



Figure 2: Completed student work after installation

REFLECT

Students will reflect in discussion, and through their written reflections on how art be made more accessible, and on some of implications of allowing a resource to be seen and shared by a greater audience.

ASSESSMENT

Task	Assessment
Students observe and discuss public art (“fieldtrip”)	Informal assessment: The teacher will use a checklist/point sheet to track student participation
Students create molds for tiles, and glaze tiles for installation *modifications may occur here	Informal Assessment: Teacher checks for citizenship, that each student is actively, and positively ⁴ involved in the creation and glazing processes
Students will reflect on written reflection handouts	Formal Assessment: Teacher checks off that students have reflected on their public art tiles (exit ticket)

⁴Positive behaviors and interactions must be supported throughout, given IEP goals

LESSON THREE

(The Multiple: mold-making and slip-casting)

ESSENTIAL QUESTION:

“How can art be made more accessible?”

“What are some implications of allowing a resource to be seen and shared by a greater audience?”

“What resources can be made more accessible by increasing their number?”

OBJECTIVE/ENDURING UNDERSTANDINGS

Students will be able to better understand their impact on their surroundings. Students will understand how artists can use recycled materials as a sustainable art practice. Following completion of the lesson, students will have the skills required to create three-dimensional sculptures from found materials.

STANDARDS

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1: Students will:

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HOOK

Students enter, teacher sits with a piece of candy (or treat of choice) in front of her. She brings attention to the treat, and says there is only one, so only one person in the room can have the treat. With this (and after providing multiple treats so that each student can have their own) the teacher continues conversation on accessibility in art—if only one version of an art piece exists, it is hard to access¹.

EXPLORE

Teacher leads a discussion to recap how the class attempted to solve accessibility issues in previous projects, (public art, and cost of art). The instructor will re-teach when necessary. Teacher shows video (AT&T “More is Better” commercial) and PowerPoint on the use of the multiple in contemporary art². Teacher leads discussion on methods of creating the multiple in clay. Students are lead to brainstorm/sketch on planning document a concept/three-dimensional form of which they will create multiples³. While brainstorming, the teacher will prompt students to consider the following: Why is it important that many people can have access to this object? Is it functional? Can it be cast with a hand-made mold, like the last pieces? Will each object be identical or will there be variations? With their plan approved, students will create their multiples in clay. Students will glaze their multiples, upon completion of clay construction, and will complete another written reflection on the process. A final class critique will wrap-up the discussion on accessibility in art.

¹Avoid conflict here by showing video, “More is Better” (attached), instead to begin conversation on the multiple

²Disregard this step if modification 1 was taken

³Require that students create one-part molds, rather than multiple-part molds, or modify farther by requiring students select a previously existing object that could be used in a one-part mold; eliminate conflict entirely by assigning objects to students to limited choices



Figures 3-4: Students’ multiples before bisque firing. Here, students created one-part molds from existing objects that were chosen for them ^{*see modifications} and altered some of their castings, or multiples.

REFLECT

At the end of each work period, students will respond to the following prompts: “How might I display or share my multiples so that they can be more accessible? What else could be made more accessible through replication? Students complete a written reflection on the process, techniques used, and access in art.

ASSESSMENT

Task	Assessment
Students discuss accessibility in art and the multiple	Informal assessment: The teacher will use a checklist to track student participation
Students create molds of their objects to create multiples	Informal Assessment: Teacher checks for citizenship, that each student is actively engaged in creating a mold, and a set of multiples
Students will reflect on their process of construction, the multiple, and accessibility through written reflection and discussion	Formal Assessment: Teacher checks off that students have completed their reflections, and checks written response for thoroughness and understanding