

Americana: Word and Image

Conceptual Art Maps

Grades 9-12

Summary

Conceptual Art Maps are a way to look at patterns, differences and paths that we see in the world around us. By tracing the paths we see, we can organize information in new ways that deepen our understanding. This lesson is a way to understand social dynamics and strengthen the collaborative spirit in a group. During grades 9-12, identity is an issue that is being explored internally and externally, individually and as a group. Students recognize the benefits of working together when they can see the end product that they are making. As they share and participate, they also realize there is much more meaning to the activity than just the finished artwork they have made. While standing in a circle, the students answer questions about their identity. As they answer, they tie string or yarn around one wrist and throw the ball of string or yarn to the student who answers next. At the end of the lesson there is a web of yarn criss-crossed through the circle in various colors. Everyone is connected.

Curriculum Ties

Social Studies 9-12

Fine Arts - Visual Arts 9-12

English Language Arts 9-12

Time Frame

1 Hour

Materials

Balls of string or yarn in various colors

Resources

Kate Ericson and Mel Ziegler examined community, social, and political issues in America through public art and social practice during their decade-long collaboration. Some of the work they made was site specific and involved mapping trajectories, questioning history, and highlighting what makes a place unique.

www.vanderbilt.edu/arts/ziegler.html

[www.perrotin.com/artiste-Kate Ericson et Mel Ziegler-181.html](http://www.perrotin.com/artiste-Kate_Ericson_et_Mel_Ziegler-181.html)

[www.nytimes.com/2014/08/03/arts/design/kate-ericson-and-mel-ziegler-collaborated-in-color.html? r=0](http://www.nytimes.com/2014/08/03/arts/design/kate-ericson-and-mel-ziegler-collaborated-in-color.html?_r=0)

Students Should Understand the Following Vocabulary

Ephemeral Art- A number of art forms can be considered ephemeral because of their temporary nature. Early land art and all sand sculptures, ice sculptures and chalk drawings on footpaths are examples of ephemeral art.

Conceptual Art- Sometimes simply called Conceptualism, is art in which the concept(s) or idea(s) involved in the work take precedence over traditional aesthetic and material concerns.

Identity- In psychology, sociology, and anthropology, identity is a person's conception and expression of their own (self-identity) and others' individuality or group affiliations (such as national identity and cultural identity).

Conceptual Mapping- Concept maps are graphical tools for organizing and representing knowledge. They include concepts, usually enclosed in circles or boxes of some type, and relationships between concepts indicated by a connecting line linking two concepts.

Intended Learning Outcomes

1. Students develop the ability to express themselves about who they are as individuals.
2. Students think abstractly as they understand the concept of collaboration and see connections between their classmates as equally or more important than a lasting piece of art.

Instructional Procedures

1. Students get in a circle.
2. The first question is asked: *What is your most positive character trait?*
3. The students answer in alphabetical order. The students throw the same ball of yarn to each other as they answer and connect it to one wrist.
4. The next question is asked with a new color of yarn thrown and tied to the wrist as they each answer. With every question the students answer in different order.
5. The questions continue until everyone is connected to the web in every color.

Questions to ask during the art making process:

What is your most positive character trait?

If you had to choose one social issue to stand behind what would it be?

If you live in another country, what country would you choose and why?

What is one value about your parents that you hope to adopt?

What is your favorite thing to learn about?

Who is your hero or heroine?

What is one thing you bring to this team?

What is your favorite thing about school?

What do you like best about living in this state?

What do you like best about living in this country?

If you could change one thing for future generations what would it be?

Questions to ask at the end of the project:

What surprised you the most about this lesson?

Did you notice differences in your fellow students as well as similarities?

Do you see that the differences also connected you as a group and made your web stronger?

What will you remember about this lesson?