Planning document: Engage, Investigate, Act

Big Idea: Visibility and Invisibility

Engagement:
Identify Big Idea: Visibility and Invisibility
Essential questions:
What is the importance of gathering spaces?
Who is included or excluded from these spaces?
When do you feel invisible?
When do you feel visible?
How does it feel when you are invisible or visible?
What do being invisible/visible look like?
What does being invisible/visible sound like?

Challenge: How can we address the Big Idea while making art with our community?

Students will begin with a brief introduction of Contemporary Art. After they visit the MCA, they will create their own definition for contemporary art based on their visit to the MCA and the work they viewed. For the introduction of the project, the students will examine Kerry James Marshall work to develop the big idea--visible and invisible. After viewing the Kerry James Marshall exhibition, students will create their own inquiry questions that will lead to developing project plans and creation of work.

Investigate
Guided Activities:
Students will develop their own means of collaboration through discussions, research and examining how contemporary artist collaborate with communities and make art. Students will be given time to develop plans and contact organizations within the community that they would like to collaborate with. I will develop and plan mini lessons that help students understand the process and expectations of their projects.

Guided Activities:
  • Students will begin with a study of contemporary art and begin their research.
  • Students will develop a Big Idea from their research
  • Instructor develops guided questions and activities

- Students will develop plans for their projects and have contacted a community member to collaborate with.
- Students will present their projects to the school community and solicit reflections.
- Instructor and students will conduct ongoing and frequent analysis to guide the project, assess the objectives and identify learning needs

Inquiry, Open-ended and guiding questions to develop the "big idea": See "Invisibility conversations"

Guided Questions: What is Community?
Students will create their own definition of community and engage the community according to their own ideas. How they engage the community will be individualized and according to their interest using personalized learning paths. I will develop rubrics to guide a competency-based progression to help students reflect on their process and move on to the next steps of their plans.
I will create mini lessons that demonstrate the criteria of engaging the community.
 Together we will analyze the process.

Resources:
- Museum of Contemporary Art
- Contemporary Art and artists relevant to your project:
- I reviewed with my students powerpoint presentation "Museum of Contemporary Art--Who's Afraid of Contemporary Art"
- Artist: Felix Gonzalez-Torres, Untitled (The End), 1990--use of creative participation
- Artist: Doris Salcedo, Untitled Works, 1989-2008--using art and personal belongings to define a community and cultural experience.
- Artist: Kerry James Marshall, Mastery Exhibit--use of addressing invisibility
- Kerry James Marshall, Untitled (Painter), 2009.
- Portrait of the Artist as a Shadow of His Former Self (1980)
- One of Marshall's first works as a professional artist, painted soon after he had graduated from the Otis Art Institute, Los Angeles, this self-portrait was inspired by Ralph Ellison's 1952 novel Invisible Man, in which a African-American man tells the story of how society stopped seeing him. "What I was reading there, the notion of being and not being, the simultaneity of presence and absence, was exactly what I had been trying to get at in my artwork," the artist told the curator Dieter Roelstraete in a 2012 conversation. The portrait is painted in black on black, with the artist's eyes, gap-teeth and a peek of shirt the only features to stand out in startling whiteness.

Analysis:

For ongoing and frequent analysis of the work:
Students will use an online portfolio to document and reflect on their project
I will document the student's process of examining the big idea and their artwork
 in a blog which will invite feedback and reflection
Students will develop personalized learning platforms that they self direct, assess
and reflect upon throughout the process of art making
Students will create art that conceptualizes ideas about visibility and invisibility
both individually and in the world around them

Action
Students reflect on their investigation and collective create a plan of action

Solution:
Students discussed in depth their ideas about feeling invisible. Reflecting on
their community they contemplated members of their community that are invisible
to them or may feel invisible. The students planned two projects that would
engage with the community and address their Big Idea.

After reviewing the work the students are compelled to encourage more creative
participation--they have brainstormed ideas and decided to take a walking field
trip to reach out to the community to get to know them and encourage active
participation in the project they designed (see invitation).

Students are defining community through art making and reflection of the work
the community creates.
Students are problem solving on how to encourage creative participation and
move to collaborative participation.

Implementation:
  • Students are narrators and translators of their experience of creating a
    working definition of community through art making
  • To launch the project a participatory structure is created where students
    and the community create a work of art and look at the work of others
    creating a sense of belonging.
  • The work moves from a creative participation where the participants have
    created the work instructed by the students to a more collaborative
    participation where during the opening opportunities are given for direct
    dialogue with the artist and the visitor shares responsibility for further
    developing the structure of the work.

Implementation: See "Identity in a Jar" and "Rock Garden"

Implementation: Students first reached out to their school community and planned to reach out further to surrounding community and businesses. Students worked with two volunteers to plan the installation of the work.

Evaluation:
It was decided that we would create a website to document the project. Students are working with me to outline the process, select images and give explanations of the process.

Evaluation: facilitating student voice in documentation

- Using the smartboard the students review the website and make selections of what to add or deleate.
- Students have highlighted next steps in the process.
- Students take notes of conversations and make suggestions of what should be added to the documentation.

Evaluation:
Student collaboration in reaching goals:
Through discussions and critiques of the work in progress we discussed our roles in the work to be created and identified next steps to promote collaborative participation. The stories the community shared were riveting and emotional, the students appreciated the insight that they were offered into the lives of those around them.

Challenges:
The content of the work was unexpectedly emotional and rich, it left us all wanting to hear more and brainstorming ways in which we can reach out to more community members to encourage their involvement in the art making.

Challenges: Obstacles encountered
Student put a lot of effort into encouraging the community to participate and it is difficult to receive a response.

Teacher as Learner:
The students were capable of designing a solution, planning and implementing the project. I think the project is beautiful in many ways, I am honored that people would offer such prized possessions to be included in the work. The stories are personal and moving and show a very tender human side people are compelled to share. I realized that community members were eager to tell their story and their story gave them a sense of belonging. Additionally by making art with the community the students and I felt we belonged to their community and

they belonged to ours. The identifying elements of community became very fluid and inclusive which in turn can be the actual definition of community--"fluid and inclusive".