

The Power of Children: Making a Difference

Lesson Idea 1

Make a Difference: Make a Mural

Grade Levels 5-12

Summary:

Using the lives of Anne Frank, Ruby Bridges, and Ryan White as inspiration, students will work collaboratively as a class group to create a transformational work of public art to inspire change to make a difference in a community (at school, in a neighborhood, or in another public space in their city). Students will identify a community public space to transform, consider a problem or message they wish to convey to inspire others or to implement change, design an image that relays this message to others, and then execute the artistic production of the mural as a group.

Objectives:

- Students will research and work collaboratively to identify an issue they wish to change or message they wish to promote in a local community for greater social good.
- Students will work collaboratively to research and plan the message they wish to convey (or the community problem to solve) and determine the best location for this public art project.
- Students will work collaboratively to design an image that conveys this message and will work together to execute the mural.

Materials Needed:

- Notebooks/sketchbooks
- Cell phone cameras (or another way to snap pictures)
- Pencils
- Access to the internet for conducting research
- Images of other mural projects in art history and/or in your region/city/state
- Worksheets for brainstorming (see resources)

The Programming Guide for *The Power of Children: Making a Difference*
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- Graph paper
- Overhead Projector
- Acrylic exterior house paint
- Brushes

Lesson Time: (one-two months depending on class time, mural size, and mural location)

- one class period for viewing the *Power of Children* exhibition
- one-two class periods for a discussion about making a difference and brainstorming ideas
- one-two class periods for determining the message and design direction using art historical and other local mural projects as inspiration
- four-twelve class periods or afterschool time for execution of the mural (depends on the mural)

Lesson Procedures:

Step one

Following a visit to the *Power of Children* exhibition and a discussion of the ways that each child featured in the exhibition made a difference in the world through words, voice, or action, present to the group an opportunity for students to make change in their own community through the visual power of a mural. Share with students examples of mural projects executed for the purpose of social change or for communicating about an issue to suggesting a powerful message of change. Explain that the term mural comes from the Latin word *murus*, which means "wall." Most public murals deal with social, political, or economic problems in urban neighborhoods. They can serve as a means to inspire or promote change for the greater social good.

Step two

Use the brainstorming worksheet (see sample in resources section) as a tool for discussing mural topics, potential locations, and possible design directions for the project. Have students work in small groups to generate three ideas in each topic area (message or topic; location; images; symbols; sources of writing or quotes that relate the theme). Have each small group share their collective ideas with the larger group as an oral and visual presentation. As a large group, discuss and vote on one topic/idea and determine what the main message will be. Using the voted upon topic/idea, assign each individual student a brainstorming worksheet as homework for further research and refinement and to share back with the class for a second small group discussion. **NOTE:** It is helpful and useful to engage community leaders, community members, and the media during the design planning and execution phases of this project to fully engage

and benefit the community and/or get the message to others about the mural project and why students are making this mural. Depending on the determined and secured mural location and the nature of the project, work with community leaders/members or other organizations to plan the mural project from the start.

Step three

Using the individual brainstormed worksheets as tools for further small group discussion, have each small group collaborate and discuss pros/cons of all ideas or work as a team to create a new worksheet that integrates everyone's ideas with one topic idea/direction with a proposed location, supported images, symbols, and/or quotes that support the message. Have each small group present their selected idea and take a vote as a large group to choose one. Following this vote, determine and secure permission to create a public art project in this space. If possible, work with your school's art teacher, a visiting artist, or other visual art collaborator who will serve as a mural design leader. Initiate a second homework assignment to have each student generate individual sketches for the mural design that integrate the images, symbols, and text the class selected to support the desired mural message or theme. Encourage students to investigate the site of the proposed mural in order to make their sketches, making photographs if necessary to assist them in the design process. Each student should note color ideas in their finished homework sketches. Have students bring sketches and site photos to the next class meeting for further small group design work.

Step four

Using the individually made sketches and photos for small group discussion, have each small group of students collaborate to discuss/debate each other's design ideas and as a small group choose one designed sketch as a team (or as a team create a new sketch of a proposed mural design together that integrates each other's ideas). Have each small group present their sketch to the larger class and then vote for one design direction. Be sure to have students indicate and resolve color choices and discuss scale for enlarging the final design.

Step five

Have the mural design leader assist students in projecting the image to scale (enlarging it with a projector or make a to scale paper cartoon of the design using butcher paper sheets taped together to assist in the design transfer on the wall). Have the design leader transfer the design (outline as a cartoon in black) onto a freshly painted and dry surface of the mural wall (it is helpful to paint the surface in white as a clean blank surface to begin the mural project). Assign students various roles in completing the finished work under the tutelage of the design leader. Have the design leader demonstrate how to mix colors, rinse brushes, etc. Be sure to include and engage community leaders, community members, and the media during your execution phase

to get the message to others about the mural project and reinforce why students are making a mural.

Resources:

Mural Planning and Brainstorming Worksheet

Student Name:

Group Name:

TOPIC	List three messages, topics, community-based problems that might be solved by creating more public awareness			
IMAGES	List or sketch three images that suggest or might best illustrate this topic or problem.			
SYMBOLS	List or sketch three symbols that stand for this cause.			
WORDS PHRASES QUOTES	List words or other texts that might help illustrate this topic or problem.			
LOCATION	Where in the community might this mural be best displayed? Why? List three potential locations.			

Connections to National Visual Arts Standards (example grade five)

Creating: Conceiving and developing new artistic ideas and work

VA:Cr1.1.5a

Combine ideas to generate an innovative idea for art-making.

VA:Cr1.2.5a

Identify and demonstrate diverse methods of artistic investigation to choose an approach for beginning a work of art.

Organize and develop artistic ideas and work

VA:Cr2.1.5a

Experiment and develop skills in multiple art-making techniques and approaches through practice.

VA:Cr2.2.5a

Demonstrate quality craftsmanship through care for and use of materials, tools, and equipment.

VA:Cr2.3.5a

Identify, describe, and visually document places and/or objects of personal significance.

Responding: Understanding and evaluating how the arts convey meaning

VA:Re7.1.5a

Compare one's own interpretation of a work of art with the interpretation of others.

VA:Re7.2.5a

Identify and analyze cultural associations suggested by visual imagery.

VA:Re8.1.6a

Interpret art by distinguishing between relevant and non-relevant contextual information and analyzing subject matter, characteristics of form and structure, and use of media to identify ideas and mood conveyed.

VA:Re9.1.5a

Recognize differences in criteria used to evaluate works of art depending on styles, genres, and media as well as historical and cultural contexts.

Connecting: Relating artistic ideas and work with personal meaning and external context.

VA:Cn10.1.5a

Apply formal and conceptual vocabularies of art and design to view surroundings in new ways through art-making.

VA:Cn11.1.6a

Analyze how art is used to inform or change beliefs, values, or behaviors of an individual or society.

Connections to Common Core Standards

(example grade five)

English Language Arts Speaking and Listening

Comprehension and Collaboration

Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grade 5 topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly.

- Come to discussions prepared, having read or studied required material; explicitly draw on that preparation and other information known about the topic to explore ideas under discussion.
- Follow agreed-upon rules for discussions and carry out assigned roles.
- Propel conversations by posing and responding to questions that relate the current discussion to broader themes or larger ideas; actively incorporate others into the discussion; and clarify, verify, or challenge ideas and conclusions.
- Pose and respond to specific questions by making comments that contribute to the discussion and elaborate on the remarks of others.
- Review the key ideas expressed and draw conclusions in light of information and knowledge gained from the discussions.

Presentation of Knowledge and Ideas

- Report on a topic or text or present an opinion, sequencing ideas logically and using appropriate facts and relevant, descriptive details to support main ideas or themes; speak clearly at an understandable pace.

Writing Standards

(these have been adapted “to design an image” for the mural project)

Text Types and Purposes

- Write opinion pieces on topics or (*design*) texts (*imagery*), supporting a point of view with reasons and information.
- Write informative/explanatory texts (*imagery*) to examine a topic and convey ideas and information clearly.
- Write (*design*) narratives (*imagery*) to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, descriptive details and clear event sequences.

Production and Distribution of Writing (*imagery*)

- Produce clear and coherent writing (*imagery*) in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.
- With guidance and support from peers and adults, develop and strengthen writing (*design*) as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting (*redesigning*), or trying a new approach.

Research to Build and Present Knowledge

- Conduct short research projects that use several sources to build knowledge through investigation of difference aspects of a topic.
- Recall relevant information from print and digital sources; summarize or paraphrase information in notes and finished work, and provide a list of sources.
- Draw evidence from informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.