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Mixing It Up: Building an Identity is a three-unit lesson plan designed in conjunction with the exhibition of the same title at the Gallery at Tempe Center for the Arts.

Present the [Mixing It Up: Building an Identity exhibition PowerPoint](#).

Themes

- *Theme in Life:* Every culture builds its identity from shared activities, beliefs and values.
- *Theme in Art:* Artworks can help us understand the activities, beliefs and values of our own and others' cultures.

Key Questions

Lessons approach the themes through three key questions.



1. Why do artists choose to use bright and muted colors in their work?
2. Why do artists sometimes choose printmaking when they want to expose their ideas to more people?



3. What activities, beliefs and values from their own cultures do artists sometimes show in their art?

Community Connections

Many people who live in the Phoenix Metropolitan Area are newcomers and were born elsewhere. Others have ancestors who have lived here for many decades or even centuries. Yet many people have developed overlapping cultural identities based on shared activities, beliefs and values. Throughout its 100-year history, the state of Arizona has become famous for what is called *The Four C's*: climate, copper, cattle and citrus. Recently, some people have suggested adding a fifth "C" for computers because of the high amount of technology industry and research in the area.

People often build cultural identities from broad concerns, like Arizona's *Four C's*, and also from activities, beliefs and values that are closer to home. Many people relate strongly to the special aspects of a community such as local sports teams, celebrities, special foods, schools or landscape. For example, if you were to tell someone from New York City that you were from Arizona, you might have a conversation about the Arizona Diamondbacks baseball team or the beauty of Saguaro cacti, and he or she might talk about the New York Yankees and where to get the best slice of pizza.

Each of us is unique, but we are also a member of several larger groups that help give us a sense of who we are and where we came from.

Key Term

The unit developers and the Tempe Center for the Arts recognize that there are a number of terms such as Hispanic, Chicana/o and Latina/o that people prefer to use to describe themselves. For the purposes of this unit, the term Mexican American will be used to describe the artists represented in the Mixing It Up exhibition.

Lessons

[One: Who Am I? \(pdf\)](#)

[Two: Exploring Themes and Styles at the Tempe Center for the Arts \(pdf\)](#)

[Three: Parts of Me \(pdf\)](#)

Resources

[Mixing It Up: Building an Identity Exhibition Preview PowerPoint](#)

[Who Am I? PowerPoint](#)

[Loteria Description \(pdf\)](#)

[Loteria Games Cards \(pdf\)](#)

[Introduction to Printmaking PowerPoint](#)

[Bright and Muted Colors PowerPoint](#)

[Step-by-Step Printmaking PowerPoint](#)

[Questor Questions featuring work by Frank Ybarra \(pdf\)](#)

Websites

[Latino Art Community \(HRC\)](#)

[What is a Print? From The Museum of Modern Art in New York](#)

[ASU Art Museum Jules Heller Print Study Room](#)

Supplies

pencils

scrap paper

scissors

craft foam

styrofoam food trays

non-water-based glue (such as “Tacky Glue”)

sticks for spreading glue

assorted colors of tempera paint or water-based printing ink

brayers

9-inch x 10-inch acrylic sheets for palettes

assorted colors of construction paper, including both bright and pastel, neutral, or earth-tone colors

old t-shirts to protect students’ clothing

old newspapers to protect tables

Estimated Time

Previsit Lesson = 30-60 minutes

TCA Visit Lesson = Field Trip

Postvisit Lesson = 270-400 minutes (Times are estimates and may vary based on age groups and prior art experiences.)

Lesson 1: Who am I?

Objectives

1. Students are able to analyze how some artists show who they are through their artworks.
2. Students are able to find art ideas by thinking about their own identities.

Arizona Visual Arts Standards

RELATE: Artworlds: PO 101, 201 & 301: Interpret meanings and/or purposes of an artwork using subject matter, symbols and themes.

RELATE: Artworlds: PO 203 & 303: Use contextual information to investigate and interpret meanings and purposes in artworks from the viewpoint of the culture in which it was made.

CREATE: 101, 201 & 301: Contribute to a discussion about ideas for his or her own artwork.

Preparation

Preview [Who Am I? PowerPoint](#) and the [Mixing It Up: Building an Identity Exhibition Preview PowerPoint](#).

Because “culture” is an important concept in this unit, consulting the [“What Is Culture” PowerPoint](#) in the “Outsiders Within” exhibition unit may be helpful. This unit presents a young person’s introduction to culture and includes a [lesson plan](#) with activities for more fully introducing the concept of culture.

Decide whether you might want to use [Questor Questions about Frank Ybarra’s Art PDF](#) to extend students’ thinking about how artists can express their identities through art. The exhibition includes several works by Ybarra, so, if your class is able to visit the exhibition, you may wish to use the handout after students have seen Ybarra’s work in person.

You may want to bring to class artworks, images or artifacts that reflect your own identity to show as examples. You might invite students, parents or other community members from diverse cultures to bring in and talk about images and objects that reflect their cultural identities.

Resources

[Who AM I? PowerPoint](#)

OPTIONAL: [What Is Culture PowerPoint](#)

OPTIONAL: [What is Culture lesson plan](#)

OPTIONAL: [Questor Questions about Frank Ybarra’s Art PDF](#)

OPTIONAL: Samples of artworks or other artifacts that reflect your own, your students’ or community’s cultural identities.

Activities

Unit Preview and Definitions: Introduce the theme in life: “Every culture builds its identity from shared activities, beliefs and values” first defining “culture” and then “identity.” Explain that a culture is a community in which people share activities and ideas, and most people are members of several groups or cultures. Explain that a person’s identity is made up of the characteristics that tell him or her who he or she is.

- Culture = a group of people who share activities and ideas
- Identity = the things that make you - you

Guided Practice: Lead a discussion of cultures by sharing some of the groups with which you identify, such as generation, gender, ethnicity, professional groups, activist groups (as appropriate) and recreational groups. Ask students if anyone would like to share some of the groups with which he or she identifies.

Introduce the theme in art: “Artworks can help us understand the activities, beliefs and values of our own and others’ cultures” by explaining that images and objects can sometimes express a person’s identity. Name or show examples, such as state and national flags, school colors, sports team logos, city seals and club insignia (Scouts, Audubon Society, Star Trek regalia). Explain that the class will be examining artworks that express cultural identity and that, later, students will have an opportunity to make their own identity artwork.

Introduce the key questions students will be working with in the unit:



1. Why do artists choose to use bright and muted colors in their work?
2. Why do artists sometimes choose printmaking when they want to express their ideas to more people?



3. What activities, beliefs and values from their own cultures do artists sometimes show in their art?

Practice and Assessment: Display slides 1-3 of the Who Am I PowerPoint to recap the concepts of “culture” and “identity.” Next, while showing slides 4 and 5, explain that you will be showing examples of art by Mexican American artists that reveal their cultural identities. After showing and reading the background information about Larry Yáñez on slide 6, ask students to identify details in his work that suggest his American and Mexican identity. Slide 8 offers an opportunity to interpret how identity is expressed in Tony Ortega’s work.

Application: As a culminating activity ask students to write on the left side of a piece of paper lists of groups (cultures) with whom they identify, and then, on a column on the right, list possible ways they might visually refer to each culture, for example, colors, symbols, special objects, etc.

Vocabulary

identity
culture

activity
value
symbol

Extension Activities

Language Arts: Students might write “Who Am I?” identity essays.

Assessment Checklist

_____ Students are able to analyze how some artists show who they are through their artworks.
(Discussion during Art PowerPoint presentation.)

_____ Students are able find art ideas by thinking about their own identities.
(Lists of cultures and visual references)

Lesson 2: Exploring Themes & Styles at the TCA

Objectives

1. Students are able to identify broad themes addressed in a variety of artworks.
2. Students are able to identify style characteristics in artworks.

Arizona Visual Arts Standards

RELATE: Artworlds: PO 101, 201 & 301: Interpret meanings and/or purposes of an artwork using subject matter, symbols and themes.

RELATE: Artworlds: PO 203 & 303: Use contextual information to investigate and interpret meanings and purposes in artworks from the viewpoint of the culture in which it was made.

Preparation

Make copies of “Loteria” cards for each student.

Make arrangements for field trip to the TCA.

Before your visit, talk with assigned TCA docent, if possible. Explain that you will have introduced the three themes and three styles before arriving and each student will bring his or her own set.

After an introduction and quick walk through the exhibition, the docent may decide to divide your students into three groups, depending on the number of adults available. One group can work together to place loteria magnets by designated artworks; another group can play the loteria matching game in the “little kitchen” area; and a third group can think about what they want to write about their own identities in the visitor comment book.

If you are working with younger students you may choose to focus primarily, or even only, on the three themes, which are each illustrated both with United States and Mexican images.

Resources

[Loteria Cards PDF](#)

Activities

Distribute a set of nine “loteria” game pieces before visiting the Tempe Center for the Arts. Read through the three themes (one U.S. and one Mexican for each theme) and three styles.

Themes

- National Identity: Artists explore connections with their U.S. and/or Mexican heritages.
- Labor: Artists comment on issues about workers.
- Family and Community: Artists celebrate connections with others.

Styles

- Traditional: Artists use old world knowledge and techniques like anatomy, perspective and shading to make their artworks look real.

- Folk: Artists inspired by affordable art of the people often use lots of details, bright colors and simplified, even cartoon-like, shapes.
- Graphic: Artists use affordable processes for wide distribution of dramatic, attention-grabbing designs.

Take notes on any new information presented by the docent as well as interesting questions, observations or responses made by your students during their tour. If the circumstances of the visit do not allow all students to use loteria cards to practice recognizing themes and styles, or if your class is unable to visit the center, you can play a version of loteria in your classroom. Display artworks in the “Mixing It Up” Exhibition Preview PowerPoint and ask students to hold up theme and style cards as you show each. Ask students to point out evidence of the theme or style in the artworks.

Assessment Checklist

- _____ Students are able to identify broad themes addressed in a variety of artworks. (Placing loteria icons and playing the loteria game in the “little kitchen.”)
- _____ Students are able to identify style characteristics in artworks. (Placing loteria icons and playing the loteria game in the “little kitchen.”)

Lesson 3: Parts of Me

Objectives

1. Students draw upon their own cultural identities for subject matter in their art.
2. Students make a printing plate and produce clear prints with it.
3. Students experiment with bright and muted color options for their artwork.

Arizona Visual Arts Standards

CREATE: Materials, Tools and Techniques: PO 101, 20 & 301: Identify and experiment with materials, tools and techniques (appropriately and expressively) in his or her own artwork.

CREATE: Elements and Principles: PO 201 and 301: Identify, select and use elements and principles to organize the composition in his or her own artwork.

CREATE: Meanings or Purposes: PO 101: Select and use subject matter and/or symbols in his or her own artwork.

CREATE: Meanings or Purposes: PO 201: Explain purposeful use of subject matter, symbols and/ or themes in his or her own artwork.

Preparation

Preview Introduction to Printmaking PowerPoint, Bright and Muted Colors PowerPoint and Step-By-Step Printmaking PowerPoint.

Choose the printmaking process that will work best for your students. The detailed PowerPoint instructions in this lesson use Styrofoam food trays, colored construction paper and tempera paint for ink. With older students, you might choose to make linocuts, which require other supplies and equipment, such as linoleum blocks, linoleum cutters, water-based printing ink, brayers and perhaps, alternative paper choices. See “detailed procedures” at the end of this lesson. Try the process yourself before teaching the lesson.

Resources

[Introduction to Printmaking PowerPoint](#)

[Bright and Muted Colors PowerPoint](#)

[Step-By-Step Printmaking PowerPoint](#)

OPTIONAL: [Mixing It Up Exhibition Preview PowerPoint](#)

Supplies

pencils
scrap paper
scissors
craft foam
styrofoam food trays
non-water-based glue (such as “Tacky Glue”)

sticks for spreading glue
assorted colors of tempera paint or water-based
printing ink
brayers
9-inch x 10-inch acrylic sheets for palettes
newspaper

Activities

Review: Theme in life: “Every culture builds its identity from shared activities, beliefs and values” and review the theme in art: “Artworks can help us understand the activities, beliefs and values of our own and others’ cultures.” Also review the unit’s three key questions:

- Why do artists choose to use bright and muted colors in their work?
- Why do artists sometimes choose printmaking when they want to expose their ideas to more people?
- What activities, beliefs and values from their own cultures do artists sometimes show in their art?

Definitions with Examples: Display slides 1-10 of “Introduction to Printmaking” PowerPoint to introduce four printmaking processes:

- Etching
- Woodcut
- Lithograph
- Silkscreen (serigraph)

Explain that students will be making a Styrofoam print, most similar in process to a woodcut, where the raised surface will be covered with ink and printed.

Display the last slide of “Introduction to Printmaking” PowerPoint, asking students to think about the question: “Why do you suppose some artists choose the complex process of printmaking when they want to communicate their ideas or feelings to many people?”

Compare the number of steps needed to make prints with the steps involved in other media, such as drawing, painting or collage.

You may wish to display the “Mixing It Up Exhibition Preview” PowerPoint noting how many of Mexican American artists in the exhibition chose printmaking.

If necessary, remind students that an artist can make more than one artwork through printmaking, but that drawing, painting or collage results in just one artwork. You might also discuss an economic advantage of printmaking. An artist can sell prints to several buyers at a lower price and make as much money as selling one painting, drawing or collage to one buyer at a high price. More people can afford to buy prints at their lower prices than can afford to buy other, more expensive artworks.

Explain that a set of prints made from one printing surface (plate, block, stone or screen) is called an edition. NOTE: in the case of multicolor prints, there are as many plates, blocks, stones or screens as there are different ink colors.

Presentation and Guided Practice: Display “Bright and Muted Colors” PowerPoint. Ask students to point out examples of bright and muted colors (not black and white) around the classroom and in their own clothes, notebooks, book bags, etc. You might show the “Mixing It Up Exhibition Preview” PowerPoint again, while students identify bright and muted colors and reflect on how the artist’s choice of color affects the overall feeling or mood of the artwork. Which colors seem more serious? Fun? Loving? Scary? Bold? Quiet?

Review: Ask students to review the list of images or colors they listed as part of their identities in lesson one as a starting point for thinking about subject matter **for their Parts of Me print.**

Assignment: Explain to students that they are to demonstrate what they have learned by:

1. Making images that represents several aspects of their identities.
2. Making an edition of at least three identity prints from one Styrofoam plate.
3. Experimenting with bright colors, muted colors and **combinations** of both bright and muted colors.
4. Writing an artist statement **about their prints**.

Instructions: Show “Step-By-Step Printmaking” PowerPoint slides 1-14, which illustrate:

1. Materials needed to make a print
2. Getting ideas (Review list from Lesson One)
3. Combining several ideas into one image.
4. Cutting simplified shapes from craft foam
5. Gluing shapes to Styrofoam tray to make plate
6. Loading brayer
7. Rolling paint (ink) onto plate
8. Applying pressure to make a practice print
9. More complex versions with additional techniques (for older or more experienced students)

In-Process Feedback: After completing practice prints, ask students to partner with one or two classmates to seek suggestions on improving the quality of their prints, for example, by:

- rolling paint more smoothly,
- applying more or less paint to the plate,
- holding the paper so it doesn't move as you apply pressure or
- applying pressure more evenly when making a print.

Show remaining Show “Step-By-Step Printmaking” PowerPoint slides, which illustrate:

1. Review bright and muted colors
2. Examples of fifth grade students' prints and artist statements.

Presentation: Display completed identity prints with artist statements. Lead a discussion with the following questions, reading students' statements as appropriate:

1. What ideas can you see in your classmate's prints? Point to a part of a print and say what you believe you see.
2. Point to prints that used bright colors and name those colors.
3. Point to prints that used muted colors and describe those colors.
4. Which prints mixed both bright and muted colors?

Vocabulary

etching

woodcut

lithograph

silkscreen (serigraph)

printmaking

press

edition

brayer

bright

muted

dull

Assessment Guides

OBJECTIVE 1: Students draw upon their own identities for subject matter in their art.

Exceeds Expectations: Student submits an artist statement that identifies three or more things in his/her life or culture that are clearly visible in his or her print.

Meets Expectations: Student submits an artist statement that identifies two things in his or her life or culture that are visible in his or her print.

Approaches Expectations: Student submits an artist statement that identifies something in his or her life or culture that is visible in his or her print.

Fails to Meet Expectations: Student submits a print.

OBJECTIVE: 2. Students make a printing plate and produce clear prints with it.

Exceeds Expectations: Student makes a printing plate and uses it to make more than two prints with even application of paint/ink.

Meets Expectations: Student makes a printing plate and uses it to make two prints that have even application of paint/ink.

Approaches Expectations: Student makes a printing plate and uses it to make a print that has even paint/ink application.

Fails to Meet Expectations: Student makes a printing plate and uses it to make a print.

OBJECTIVE 3: Students experiment with intense and muted color options for their artwork.

Exceeds Expectations: Student submits three or more prints each using different colors, including one that has brighter colors and another that has more muted colors.

Meets Expectations: Student submits two prints, one of which has brighter and the other more muted colors.

Approaches Expectations: Student submits two prints.

Fails to Meet Expectations: Student submits one print.

Detailed Procedures

Creating the Printing Plate

1. Use pencil to make a simplified drawing on craft foam.
2. Carefully cut shapes along pencil lines.
3. Trim off about 1/8" along edges of shapes. This will create an outline around the images when printing.
4. Place pieces on table/Styrofoam tray as you cut each piece. Otherwise all the pieces might get mixed up and it will be confusing and time consuming putting them back in order.
5. Begin to glue each piece onto Styrofoam tray. Try not to glue near the edges of the tray. If the glue is thick, use a stick or brush to apply the glue onto the back of the craft foam.
6. Make sure to glue pieces down keeping the side of the craft foam consistent. That is. None should be upside down. NOTE: There is one exception. Letters and numbers need to be glued down upside down. The image will be reversed when printed.
7. Allow 24 hours for the glue to dry. If trays are stacked, leave a gap between trays to allow the glue to dry.
8. Trim off the side(s) of the food tray if the image is close to the edge(s).

Printing set-up

Newspaper is placed in the center of the table with two acrylic sheets and four brayers placed on top of the newspaper. Each table is assigned one color of paint. Four students print at one table per class session. With younger students, it's a good idea to set up to work with bright colors on one day and muted colors on another day. Each student is given scrap paper on the back of which he/she writes his/her name and room number before printing begins. Students pull two prints and place them on the drying rack before continuing with the next print. (This prevents a traffic jam at clean up time).

Printing (Elementary students)

1. Teacher demonstrates how to use a brayer and pull prints.
2. Teacher places a thick strip of paint in center of the acrylic palette.
3. Using a brayer, students spread a layer of paint on the palette and then roll paint onto the printing plate. Multiple thin layers of paint might need to be applied before there's enough paint on the printing plate for the first print.
4. Apply paint with brayer as evenly as possible. Watch out for lines and streaks.
5. Place paper carefully onto printing plate. Hold down an edge to keep the paper from moving and blurring the image.
6. Use the whole hand to apply even pressure along the top of the paper. (Finger tips might leave individual impressions on the print). If enough brayers are available, use a clean brayer to apply pressure.
7. Starting carefully with one corner, pull the paper off the printing plate.

Clean-up

Using non-water-soluble glue allows for the printing plates to be rinsed without risk of destroying the printing plate. The printing plates can be used twice without cleaning without the craft foam coming off. Two different colors of paint will mix but this can produce some interesting color mixtures.

Leave some space between printing plates to allow for some air flow whether they have been rinsed and are drying or paint is left on them between printing sessions.

Sample Timeline

This timeline assumes students have viewed and discussed the "Who Am I?" PowerPoint in Lesson One, and made lists of ideas they might use for their Part-of-Me Print.

This nine-day timeline was developed with fifth grade students and includes all aspects of the lesson, including bright and muted colors and writing. Abbreviated timelines (6 days) can be used if less attention is paid to color or writing, or with older students.

Day 1 & 2

Students begin drawing the image for their print, focusing on simple shapes. Color can be added.

Day 3

Teacher demonstrates how the image is to be drawn on craft foam, then cut and glued onto the Styrofoam tray. Students begin cutting and gluing shapes on Styrofoam tray.

Day 4

Students continue cutting foam and gluing on Styrofoam tray.

Day 5

Teacher demonstrates how to use brayer with tempera paint on an acrylic palette. Students practice pulling prints using tempera paint and scrap paper.

Day 6

Students assemble their now dried prints. They evaluate what needs to be done for more success.

Day 7

Students print with bright colors. Students have the option of printing on colored paper.

Day 8

Students print with muted colors. Students have the option of pastel, neutral colored and earth tone papers.

Day 9

Each student chooses her or his best print and writes a paragraph describing how it print reflects his or her culture and/or who he or she is.