South Dakota Artists Curriculum Unit

Arthur Amiotte
“A Blending of Cultures”

Provided by the South Dakota Art Museum
Brookings, South Dakota
South Dakota Artists Curriculum Unit

Unit of Study: Arthur Amiotte

Title of Lesson Plan: A Blending of Cultures

Grade Level: 3 – 5
South Dakota Content Standards

U.S. History:

3.US.1.2 Students are able to describe characteristics of a community.

4.US.1.1 Students are able to explain factors affecting the growth and expansion of South Dakota.

4.US.2.2 Students are able to explain the effects of the Native American conflicts and establishment of reservations on the Native American culture.
South Dakota Content Standards

Fine Arts:

Visual Arts Standard One 3-4:
Students will describe how visual arts tell stories, express moods, or convey ideas.

Visual Arts Standard Two 3-4:
Students will understand selected techniques which give artwork detail.

Visual Arts Standard Two 5-8:
Students will describe the various techniques which give artwork definition and detail.

Visual Arts Standard Three 3-4:
Students will describe how selected works of art have recorded and preserved history.
Assessment Strategies

- Class discussion
- Observation skills utilizing VTS
- Creation of a family history collage
Learning Objectives

- Students will learn about South Dakota artist Arthur Amiotte.
- Students will discuss observations made using VTS techniques.
- Students will create a family history collage assessed with a rubric.
Time Required

- Two class periods of 45 minutes each (plus students will need time outside of class to find pictures/images of family)

Materials/Technology Needed

- Arthur Amiotte Painting: “My Son-In-Law, My Father-In-Law”
- Drawing paper
- Markers, crayons, colored pencils, etc.
- Scissors
- Glue
- Magazines
- Copies of family photos (could be scanned or printed)
Arthur Amiotte is an Oglala Sioux who grew up on the Pine Ridge Reservation. In the article, “Artist Arthur Amiotte’ from Inside the Black Hills, Amiotte explains how he combines, “. . .his French/Indian heritage. In collages that incorporate aspects of both white and native cultures” (Mullaney 33). This work by Amiotte, “My Son-In-Law, My Father-In-Law”, was designed to reflect the meeting and blending of the two cultures. As you look at the piece, you notice that the collage is done on ledger paper with images of Native Americans and an actual copy of a photograph of one of Amiotte’s white ancestors. According to Amiotte, the writing on the collage represents, “. . .words remembered from his childhood” (34).
Lesson Description

- Show students an image of the collage “My Son-In-Law, My Father-In-Law” by Arthur Amiotte. Students should use VTS questioning to examine this collage. Discuss elements of the collage in a class discussion.

- Share with students that the artist is using a collage as his medium of showing the relationship between his ancestors which are Indian and French.

- Have students think about their own families. What are some of the traditions that they observe (i.e. during holidays, birthdays, etc.)? Do they have the same traditions on both their mother’s side of the family and their father’s side?

- Have students think of positive things that their parents or grandparents have said that they feel that they will always remember (advice, comical sayings, etc.).
Lesson Description continued

- Have students ask their parents/relatives about their family origins.

- From this research, have students find images in magazines or draw pictures that would represent the things that have shaped who they are. Students can also incorporate pictures in their collage, but make sure that they have permission to use the photos, or scan them and print a new copy - just in case.

- Students should also use at least two sayings or pieces of advice that have been passed down to them by grandparents, parents, or other relatives. (Or find an inspirational quote to use.)
Lesson Description continued

- The final project should be a collage that represents who the students believe they are based on experiences and ancestry.

***This project could be difficult for some students that only have relationships with only one side of their family or have such a traumatic upbringing that this project would create too many problems. You could definitely adapt this project however you see fit. A couple of examples might include having students create a collage about their school experiences, relationships with friends from school, or some event that provided positive memories, etc.
Enrichment

- Students could research the significance of ledger paper in Native American art. (There are several internet resources that detail how Native Americans were forced to move from using buffalo hides for painting to using used ledger paper given to them by U.S. military men that were holding them prisoner. This made a significant shift in Native American art because not only did the material change, but so did the colors that they used because they were given access to colored pencils, etc.)
Bibliography/Resources

- Native American Painting Collection at the South Dakota Art Museum.
  - Arthur Amiotte painting: “My Son-In-Law, My Father-In-Law”

Arthur Amiotte Presentation to Students
Arthur Amiotte

http://www.aktalakota.org
Arthur Amiotte

- Born on the Pine Ridge Reservation in 1942
- Raised in South Dakota
- Attended Northern State University in Aberdeen, SD and University of Montana
Arthur Amiotte

- Artist for over 40 years
- Contemporary Lakota artist, historian, and educator
- Inspired by SD artist Oscar Howe to use his Lakota heritage in artwork
- One of the most influential artists who portrays Lakota life, thought, and philosophy in the Northern Plains Region

*For more information or to show students other pieces of artwork by Arthur Amiotte contact the South Dakota Art Museum.
My Son-In-Law, My Father-In-Law

Image Courtesy of the South Dakota Art Museum
Other Examples of Arthur Amiotte’s Artwork
Hand Shield

Image Courtesy of the South Dakota Art Museum
Turtle Seed

Image Courtesy of the South Dakota Art Museum
Different Worlds

Image Courtesy of the South Dakota Art Museum