South Dakota Artists Curriculum Unit

Oscar Howe
“The Spirit Within”

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

**Unit of Study:** Oscar Howe, Native American painter

**Title of Lesson Plan:** The Spirit Within

**Grade Level:** 3 – 5
South Dakota Content Standards

U.S. History:

3.US.2.1 Students are able to describe characteristics of a community.

5.US.1.1 Students are able to differentiate the lifestyles of various Native American tribes.
South Dakota Content Standards

Listening, Viewing, & Speaking:

4.LVS.1.3 Students can express ideas and convey information in an oral presentation.

5.LVS.1.1 Students can identify the purpose and content of a presentation through listening and viewing.

Writing:

4.W.1.2 Students can create sentences using words that describe, explain, or provide additional details and connections.
Assessment Strategies

- Individual observations using VTS
- Monitor participation in small group discussion
- Participation in class discussion
Learning Objectives

- Students will use VTS criteria to analyze this painting.
- Students will learn teamwork skills by working in groups.
- Students will learn and practice oral speaking skills.
Time Required

- One 45 – 60 minute class period

Materials/Technology Needed

- Image of the Oscar Howe painting: “Dakota Medicine Man”
- Notebook paper
- Pen or Pencil
- Markers
- Large sheets of paper
Background Information

- Medicine Men (not always men) are found in many different types of indigenous tribes. They perform a significant role in the tribe in that they are a link between the tribe and the spirit world.
Lesson Description

- Start by showing students a copy of the Oscar Howe painting “Dakota Medicine Man”.

- Ask students to write their reactions to this painting on notebook paper answering these types of questions:
  - What do you see? (list everything big and small)
  - What do you hear?
  - What do you smell?
  - What do you think is going on?

- After students have had a few minutes to answer these questions, separate them into groups of 3 students. Give each group a large sheet of paper and a marker.
Lesson Description continued

• Each group will discuss the questions and write their answers on the large sheet of paper, everyone’s questions should be represented on the sheet. Student can add any additional comments to their sheet that they come up with in their groups.

• Each group will place their sheet on the wall in front of the room. As a class, they will discuss similarities and differences in what the answers were to the initial questions.

• Explain to them the basic role of medicine men in tribal culture and how they had an impact on tribal communities.
Enrichment

- Students could research the role of medicine men and differentiate them with other types of spiritual leaders (i.e. medicine man and a minister or priest).
Bibliography/Resources

- Howe Painting Collection at the South Dakota Art Museum
  - Oscar Howe Painting: “Dakota Medicine Man”
Oscar Howe Presentation to Students
Oscar Howe

http://www.oscarhowe.org
Oscar Howe

- Born May 13, 1915 at Joe Creek on the Crow Creek Indian Reservation of South Dakota

- Attended Dakota Wesleyan University in Mitchell, SD

- In 1948, appointed designer for the Corn Palace panels (Mitchell, SD)
  - Continued annually until 1971

- Taught art at the University of South Dakota in Vermillion, SD for 25 years

- Died October 7, 1983
Oscar Howe

- Major influence on the course of Indian art today

- Encouraged by his instructor, Dorothy Dunn, at the Santa Fe Indian School to paint scenes from everyday life, history, and legends of his heritage

- Drew inspiration from his heritage for artwork

- Translated stories he heard from his grandmother into drawings

- Artwork brings together European American and Native American cultures
Bibliography


*For more information contact the South Dakota Art Museum*
Dakota Medicine Man

Image Courtesy of the South Dakota Art Museum
Other Examples of Oscar Howe’s Artwork
Sioux War Dancer

Image Courtesy of the South Dakota Art Museum
Eagle Dancer

Image Courtesy of the South Dakota Art Museum
Grass Dancer

Image Courtesy of the South Dakota Art Museum
The Singer

Image Courtesy of the South Dakota Art Museum
Buffalo Hunt

Image Courtesy of the South Dakota Art Museum