Lesson Plan: Egyptian Masks

Grade Level: 8-12

Duration: Ten 45-minutes class periods

Media Type: plaster casting, acrylic paint

Subject Integration: Social Studies

Content Standards:


NA-VA-5-8.1, NA-VA-5-8.2, NA-VA-5-8.3, NA-VA-5-8.4, NA-VA-5-8.5, NA-VA-5-8.6

Objectives:
Students will create their own Egyptian mask after researching Egyptian culture, history and artwork. Students will use their own facial structure as the template for their mask. **This lesson can be adapted to create any type or style of mask.

Assessment:
Students will demonstrate an understanding of Egyptian culture by creating their own 3-dimensional mask from plaster casting material. Students will paint their mask with true Egyptian colors (blue, rust, gold, black). Students will show meaning via symbolism in their finished artwork.
Rubric:

0 - Little evidence of casting technique used, paint color choices or incomplete artwork
1 - Some attempt at casting techniques, expressing Egyptian history through color concepts, but a major lack of concepts and overall understanding
2 - Casting techniques are clearly used, paint choices are clearly understood, Egyptian culture somewhat expressed
3 - Casting techniques are clearly used, paint choices are clearly understood (blue, rust, gold, black), Egyptian culture clearly expressed, quality work shown
4 - Above, plus exceptional use of detail and application of all techniques clearly expressed

Materials and Procedure:

Plaster casting material
Plastic wrap
Tag board pieces
Acrylic paint (rust, black, gold, blue)
water bowls, water
paint shirts to protect clothing
permanent markers for name on back of work

Day 1:
1. Students research Egyptian history/culture. Students view Instant Expert: Ancient History: Egypt (DVD, 2010) and take notes on material presented.

Day 2:
Students view color slides of Egyptian masks on Smartboard. Discussion: “What do you see?” “What colors do you see?” “What is the significance of these colors?” “What did you learn from the DVD?” “What do we know about Egyptian culture?” What else do you know about Egyptian history?”

Day 3:
Students draw rough sketches of the type of Egyptian mask they would like to create. Students jot down color choices and symbols being used.

Day 4:
Show PlayList video: Mary Plaster: Mixed Media Masks (4:01)
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aeVdPVFeFk
Discuss procedure of casting (similar to papier mache). With students, talk about artist Mary Plaster, her work, techniques, etc. Casting procedure: students take turns casting each other’s faces. One student lies on the table at a time, while team members help to cast his/her face. Student’s face is first wrapped in plastic wrap with careful detail to leaving nose holes for airflow. (Casting material is cut into strips and dipped into water to make it pliable.) Three layers of casting material are used per face mask. Student being casted must wear a ‘paint shirt’ to keep from dripping casting material on clothing.

Day 5:
Continue casting
Day 6:
Continue casting
Day 7:
Masks are dry, plan painting design, start acrylic painting.
Day 8:
Acrylic painting
Day 9:
Acrylic painting
Day 10:
Finish painting; students complete rubric

**Discussion Questions:**
With students: What did you enjoy about this lesson? What would you have done differently? What do you know about Egyptian history that you didn’t know before? How did you feel when you found out that a classmate would be casting your face? How did you feel after the process was complete?
Resources:
http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/ancient/egyptians/
http://www.historyforkids.org/learn/egypt/history/history.htm

Eyewitness: Ancient Egypt, by George Hart.

The Oxford History of Ancient Egypt, by Ian Shaw (2002).


Follow-up activities:

If time permits, either before or after this lesson, give groups of four or five students a roll of toilet paper. One person is designated the “mummy”. Groups are asked to completely cover the designated student from head to toe in toilet paper until he/she looks like a mummy. Eyes may be revealed, but rest of body must be covered. The team that creates their mummy, first, wins!