

**Pier Penic**

**Teaching Africa Day**

**African Art in the Classroom Lesson Plan**

**9/7/2024**

**Elementary Level/Middle School (Can be tailored for high school level)**

**Communication in West African Culture-Proverbs**

**Curriculum Focus: Language Arts, Visual Arts, Social Studies, Creative Writing, Mixed Media, Science, Sociology, Religion**



Nuna artist

Boucle du Muhoun Region, Burkina Faso

Face mask

Mid-20th century

Wood, pigment, metal

60.5 x 173 x 17 cm (23 13/16 x 68 1/8 x 6 11/16 in.)

Gift of Walt Disney World Co., a subsidiary of The Walt Disney Company, 2005-6-47

### **Essential Questions:**

- 1) Why are African proverbs essential today and how do they stimulate dialogue in and outside of the classroom?
- 2) How does African art help students succeed in all school subjects?
- 3) Comparatively, African proverbs have taken the shape and form of what elements in other cultures today?
- 4) What is scientific about African proverbs?
- 5) How does the cultural relativism of African proverbs influence society?

## **Lesson Objectives/Outcomes**

**Key Knowledge and Skills students should achieve in the lesson taken from relevant curriculum documents.**

- 1) Creativity-The formulation of original proverbs inspired by African art objects.
- 2) Confidence-The development and the ability to analyze and critique works of art and to engage in analytical thought.
- 3) Problem Solving-The ability to understand the relationship between art objects and literary concepts as well as the ability to translate thought patterns.
- 4) Focus-The ability to learn how to look at art and engage in descriptive writing.
- 5) Accountability-To feel a sense of responsibility and progress in creative thought and engagement.
- 6) Collaboration-To engage in discussion and use open dialogue as a tool for writing and critical analysis along with creating a healthy competitive environment.
- 7) Dedication-Learning how the sense of completion and discipline can be applied to all subjects.
- 8) Constructive Feedback-Learning to use criticism as a way of formulating academic structure and advancement.

## **Resources:**

[www.si.edu/exhibitions/artful-animals%3Aevent-exhib-4544](http://www.si.edu/exhibitions/artful-animals%3Aevent-exhib-4544)

[www.museum-ed.org/looking-at-art/](http://www.museum-ed.org/looking-at-art/)

[www.anikefoundation.org/african-folktales](http://www.anikefoundation.org/african-folktales)

<https://afriprov.tangaza.ac.ke>

[www.africa.mrdonn.org/proverbs.html](http://www.africa.mrdonn.org/proverbs.html)

[www.worldoftales.com/media/African\\_folktales.html#gsc.tab=0](http://www.worldoftales.com/media/African_folktales.html#gsc.tab=0)

[www.nypl.org/locations/schomburg](http://www.nypl.org/locations/schomburg)

[www.loc.gov](http://www.loc.gov)

## Lesson Structure

Time	Introduction	Teaching Approaches
3 Hours	Communication in West African Culture Lesson	Dimensions of Learning (DOL)

## Dimensions of Learning (DOL):

### A. Positive Attitudes and Perceptions

- Explanation of Proverbs

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### B. Acquiring and Integrating Knowledge

- Writer's Workshop
- Creating Symbols

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### C. Extending and Refining Knowledge

- Decoding Proverbs

### D. Using Knowledge Meaningfully

- Comparative Art Project

## **Adaptions for Special Needs**

[Tips For Adapting Art For Special Needs Kids In Your Classroom \(artshoptherapy.com\)](http://artshoptherapy.com)

Providing a successful inclusive art experience is about assessing, simplifying, and adapting to each child's abilities. This can be challenging on an individual level as well as in a group classroom setting. In a perfect world there would be infinite time and resources to provide this. Many times projects can become oversimplified for a child with special needs where they are not learning new skills. Or they simply are not getting to "actively" participate in the creation of their own self directed work.

### **Tips for adapting art for kids with special needs:**

- Present and explain art projects with one step directions. Sometimes all a student with disabilities may need to be successful in having an inclusive art experience is to have information presented to them in a different way. Some kids can't break down the idea as a "whole". But if you help them find a place to begin with a simple Step 1 and Step 2 that they can follow it may be enough support to allow them to participate successfully. They are not just be an observer to someone else "creating " their art work for them.
- Give kids with special needs more time. Many kids may just need more time to process and complete the instructions. This can be a challenge

especially if you are in a group class setting. Let the artist know that it is okay if they just complete a few steps of the project. This can help decrease frustration and anxiety that may cause the artist to not even try to participate.

- Try presenting information in a visual format. If possible and appropriate use pictures with written steps that the artist can look at for completing the art project to reinforce concepts and instructions. Write the steps with pictures of art materials, what the end picture should look like etc.... Think about any visual aids that could be included with written instructions. Since each child is different try different things. Also, a whole list of steps may work well for one child but it may be too much information for another. Some kids need to see one step at a time. This is all about experimenting and adapting.
- Demonstrate what you would like the artist to do. Show the artist how to do the “action.” Then have the artist try. Seeing how something is done may be all a student with special needs requires to be able to successfully start and complete an art project.
- Offer alternative ways of doing things. If a child struggles to hold a pencil for a drawing assignment or project is there a way to translate the project into another art material? Instead of drawing the subject or theme could the artist use clay instead ? It can be especially challenging to find ways to adapt projects for kids with limited motor skills and abilities. Think about ways to translate the project using the process of printing. Kids may be able to grasp an object in the palm of their hand on their own or with hand over hand assistance. Look around and find objects that can be dipped in paint and pressed on the paper. This can be a way for the artist to actively get to participate and not just be an observer as someone else does their art for them. Is there a way to include an element from the lesson you want to teach in this? It is all about experimenting and thinking outside the box. The process of finding a way to adapt projects can be an extremely creative process in itself.

## Assessment

- 1) How did the student's writing skills improve?
- 2) How did the student's critical thinking skills improve from reviewing the proverbs and discussions of symbolism?
- 3) How did the student's problem-solving skills improve after discussing the life's lessons within the content of the proverbs?
- 4) How has the student's analytical skills enhanced from the comparative arts exercise?
- 5) How has the student's discussion of proverbs enhanced his/her awareness of contemporary issues and his/her interest in social issues such as politics and poverty?
- 6) How did the student's ability to use comparative arts help him/her to understand his/her use of science and technology?
- 7) Did the study of the proverbs help the student to embrace the concept of philanthropy as a global collective thought?
- 8) How did the lesson help to create a broader understanding of the word humanity?
- 9) Do African proverbs have a spiritual component?
- 10) As an objective to achieve real world behavior change based on the proverbs, is the student willing to adapt behavioral changes in his/her own life?
- 11) How has the idea of art as inspiration changed the student's view of himself/herself?
- 12) There is something very didactic about African proverbs. Does this lesson plan help the student understand the concept of a teaching doctrine in relation to African proverbs?

**(Please go to the Activity Sheets)**