THE EDUCATION FUND

FOR EXCELLENCE IN MIAMI-DADE PUBLIC SCHOOLS

2020-2021

Ideas With IMPACT

idea packet

sponsored by:

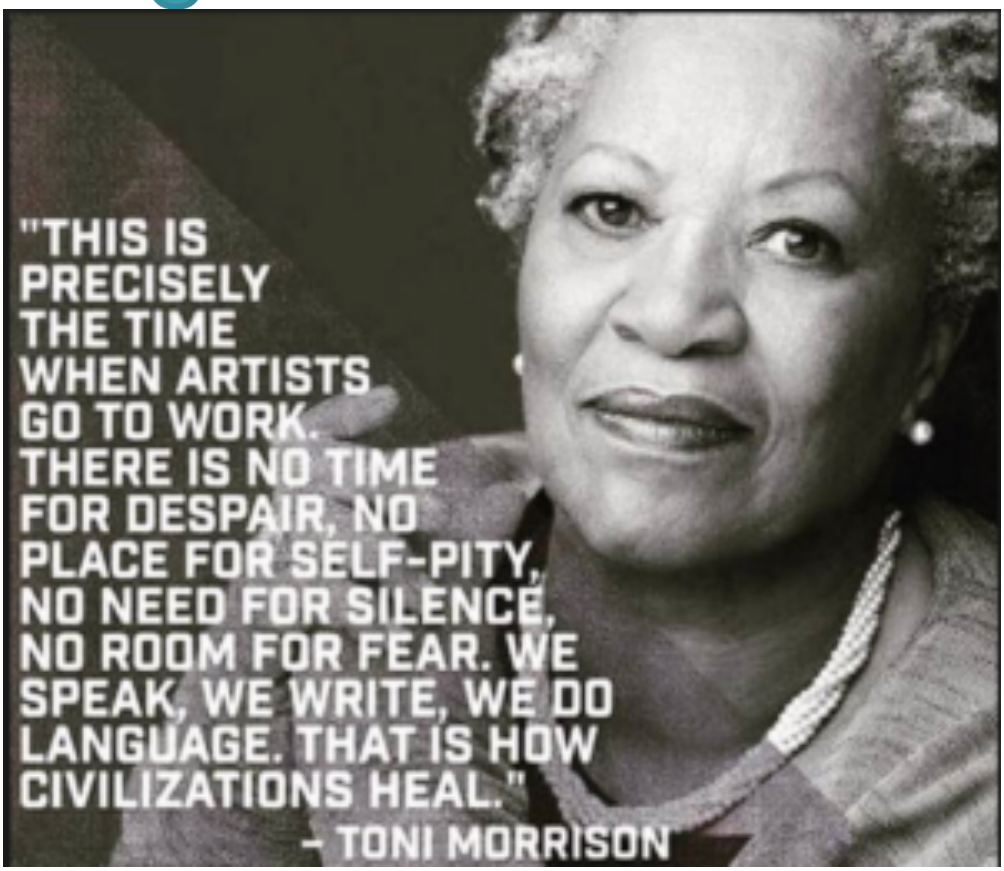
CONSORTIUM OF FLORIDA EDUCATION FOUNDATIONS

FLORIDA EDUC8 SUPPORT EDUCATION

ARTivism:

Advocating Activism through Transformative Art

ARTivism:
Advocating Activism Through Transformative Art



Jennifer Pike-Vassell, MA

Visual Arts & Culture Educator/Curriculum Developer

jvassell@miami.seedschool.org/ The SEED School of Miami

For information concerning Ideas with IMPACT opportunities including Adapter and Disseminator grants, please contact: Audrey Onyeike, Program Director | Ideas with IMPACT | The Education Fund | 305-558-4544, Ext. 113 | Email: audrey@educationfund.org
www.educationfund.org

Table of Contents

Goals and Objectives 4

Florida State Standards.....5

Course Outline/Overview 7

Lesson Plans 9

Resource List 10

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

If it was never evident before, it certainly is now: EMPATHY is our most important 21st-century skill. If we cannot face our collective humanity in a truly humble, respectful way and see that we're all in this together, then what chance do we stand for the sustainability of our planet? At the start of the 2019-2020 school year, I decided that I would focus on empathy as a cornerstone theme from which to radiate our arts discussions and projects in middle and high school. My 6th through 9th grade students engaged in sustained and continued dialogue in class, largely through the multiple lenses of various artists from local, national, and international perspectives. As I look back on the rapid move to distance learning since mid-March, as well as our current "Innovative Learning" platform in starting the 2020-21 school year, Visual Arts classes have sought meaningful ways to continue and expand our general theme of empathy. We have worked to include meaningful research and response to the Covid-19 pandemic, Black Lives Matter, and police brutality in our creative work in a variety of genres. As this school year continues to unfold, we will pursue relevant ideas for a potential blended model of learning, and one that will move further into a state of **ARTivism**, or the intersection of art-making and activism.

One of the hopes in utilizing such an approach is for students to realize their potential as agents of transformation in society. This pedagogy originates from an educator mindset of providing the tools and safe space to empower students, and helping them to develop as leaders and lifelong learners. A pedagogy of **ARTivism** depends upon educators who seek to create a curriculum of authentic connections between important social justice issues, and that opens up a safe classroom space (whether physically at school or in "Innovative Learning" mode). Such an approach honors the voice of our youth and gives them an opportunity to engage in difficult conversations. This is an ongoing goal for my over 15 years in various classrooms around the country, but that is uniquely and pivotally important at this moment in history.

FLORIDA STATE STANDARDS

VISUAL ARTS

VA.68.C.1.1
Apply a range of interests and contextual connections to influence the art-making and self-reflection processes.

VA.68.C.3.3
Use analytical skills to understand meaning and explain connections with other contexts.

VA.68.H.1.3
Analyze and describe the significance of artwork from a selected group or culture to explain its importance to the population.

V.68.H.1.4
Explain the significance of personal artwork, noting the connections between the creative process, the artist, and the artist's own history.

VA.68.H.3.3
Create imaginative works to include background knowledge from other subjects.

VA.68.F.1.2
Use creative risk-taking strategies learned from artists' works to incorporate artistic solutions in the creation of new personal artworks.

VA.68.F.2.5
Create an artist statement to reflect on personal artwork for a portfolio or exhibition.

VA.68.S.1.3
Use ideas from cultural, historical, and artistic references to create personal responses in personal artwork.

VA.912.C.3.3
Explain relationships among social, historical, literary, an/or other references to explain how they are assimilated into artworks.

VA.912.H.1.4
Apply background knowledge and personal interpretation to discuss cross-cultural connections among various artworks and the individuals, groups, cultures, events, and/or traditions they reflect.

LANGUAGE ARTS

LAFS.K12.W.2.5
Develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach.

LAFS.8.W.1.3.d
Use precise words and phrases, relevant descriptive details, and sensory language to capture the action and convey experiences and events.

LAFS.8.L.3.5
Demonstrate understanding of figurative language, word relationships, and nuances in word meanings.

LAFS.8.W.1.3 Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, relevant descriptive details, and well-structured event sequences.

COURSE OUTLINE/OVERVIEW

DESCRIPTION

Inspired by over 15 years of teaching and learning with students from Kindergarten through high school in Harlem (NYC), New Orleans, and Miami, **ARTivism: Advocating Activism Through Transformative Art** puts visual arts, interdisciplinary studies, culturally relevant pedagogy, and social/emotional learning in a context that has mattered for my students and that continues to make their learning and connection to issues of social justice alive. Through various genres and modes of creative expression, students have found a safe space for risk-taking and exploration in our Visual Arts classes. As such, this presentation will give an overview of some of the work that we have created, and offer possibilities to be adapted by those who work with youth in various capacities.

This project seeks to engage students in the inner quest of **ARTivism**, through introducing them to a series of culturally relevant visual arts and creative writing projects that address social justice issues and inspire them to become the active change makers of the next generation.

PURPOSE

We all want to be seen and heard: we all seek those who would dare to know us as we truly are, and love us as such. Part of the sacred design of a true educator is one who prioritizes these human needs in their students, who always seeks creative ways to help find—and visibly amplify—their voices. Many of our students, particularly our most marginalized and vulnerable ones, often lack self-confidence and trust in their own voices and powers of self-expression. Creating and presenting course material into a context that has been culturally relevant for my students has made their learning and sense of self come alive. Through exploration of a range of international artists, exposure to a variety of world cultures, and dialogue around historical and literary texts, students have taken this knowledge and then created original works of art. Students have challenged themselves to explore, excavate, and extend their emerging sense of **ARTivism**. They have shown vulnerability in facing challenging emotional

moments from both a personal and societal point of view, wherein the arts have become the modality for internal and external transformation. In addition, by using some aspects of this project as a vehicle to discuss relevant local and world-wide current events, students have become more aware and concerned citizens, potentially more informed to become the active change-makers of the next generation—the next **ARTivists in Action**.

RATIONALE

As those entrusted with the sacred responsibility of educating our youth, we must be conscious in the realization that providing **access** and **choice** are essential for students to have myriad possibilities through wish to express themselves. When we take the time to build authentic relationships with the students whom we serve, we provide the space(s) for them to **explore**, **excavate**, and **extend** their emerging sense of self-identity and self-esteem. When we teach and model free expression of the self while still maintaining respectful boundaries of others, we create the possibility for student artists/writers to show vulnerability in their work through facing those personal insights and experiences that are uniquely theirs. When we as educators truly **listen** to our students, when we help to facilitate a classroom or seminar model where they are co-creators of knowledge (indeed where they even co-teach at times!), we help to **intentionally** build those skills wherein the arts have become a crucial modality for self-expression and release. By extension, through using some aspects of this project as a vehicle to discuss relevant local and world-wide current events, students have an opportunity to become more aware and concerned citizens, and ultimately more critically thinking and informed to potentially become the active change-makers of the next generation.

LESSON PLANS

Some examples of cross-curricular cultural activities that students will engage in throughout this unit include:

• **"ME/WE":** Originally housed in the lobby of The Studio Museum in Harlem, Glenn Ligon's "Give Us a Poem"(2007) is made from black PVC and white neon. Ligon sourced the text from a speech Muhammad Ali made at Harvard University in 1975. When asked by a student in the audience, Ali replied "me, we,": simple yet profound, this poem connects us to one of the hearts of ARTivism: caring for our community. Students will use the study of Muhammad Ali's social activist choices in conjunction with his poem to create words and works of art that they feel solidify their message of ARTivism in a succinct manner.

• **"Kadir Nelson: Premiere ARTivist of Our Times":** From his most recent covers of *The New Yorker* and *Rolling Stone* magazines, as well as a feature on the show "CBS Sunday Morning," artist Kadir Nelson continues to masterfully depict some of the major issues of our time: gun violence, police brutality, the Black Lives Matter Movement, and Covid-19 and healthcare inequities, to name but a few. This study will give students an in-depth look into the work of ARTivist Kadir Nelson, and inspire them to create their own ARTivist piece of choice.

•**"Street Art: Messages by and for the People"**—an exploration of street art around the world that focus on important issues such as Covid-19, Black Lives Matter, police brutality, and climate change. Prompt: If you could create a piece of street art connected to (issue of choice), what would it look like? What location would you like to see a piece of your street art represented? Create a piece of art that represents this vision (2D or 3D)

• **"Monuments of Change":** Students will explore various statues and monuments around the country, and form points of view about what each represents, and offer ARTivist recommendations for alteration, redesign, or appropriation of such pieces to transform into more ethically just historical choices of representation.

• **"Imagine (Re-Imagined)":** Using John Lennon's "Imagine" as a touchstone song, students analyze the lyrics, make personal connections to music that they feel inspire and elevate our social justice movements of today, and use imagery from such music as the basis for artwork.

• **"Empathy in Action: Offering Words and Images of Kindness":** Students will think locally as ARTivists, writing letters and/or creating art for some vulnerable

community members in this time, such as nursing home residents, essential health care and other workers, etc.

•**"Yayoi Kusama and Corona Virus":** After exploring the life and work of Yayoi Kusama thus far, students will read her recent poem connected to the Corona Virus, and write an original poem or piece of creative writing that reflects their view on the virus and its impact, particularly through Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) and social justice lenses.

ASSESSMENT:

The 4Cs of Visual Arts assessment—**CRAFTSMANSHIP, COMPOSITION, COMMUNICATION, CREATIVITY**—explained below and indicated on grading rubric provide the key touchstones that students use throughout the year as a consistent grading model. These 4Cs help guide students to create assigned projects that are well-thought out and executed with care for detail. Additionally, **Artist Statements** are required for this project, wherein students have an opportunity to explain their project in a written format complementing the visual image. Please see Rubric options at the end of this document, which can be used for Self, Peer and Teacher Critiques, all of which are experientially important for our students.

THE 4Cs OF VISUAL ARTS ASSESSMENT

- **CRAFTSMANSHIP-** Did I develop my artistic skill with the art tools and materials provided?
- **COMPOSITION**- Did I intentionally organize Art Elements to create a unified design?
- **COMMUNICATION**- Did I apply art knowledge and skill to express, identify, and evaluate my ideas in visual, written, and oral presentation formats?
- **CREATIVITY**- Did I face challenges and express my ideas in unique and personal ways?

RESOURCE LIST

CLASSROOM MATERIALS & SETUP

Any classroom space, whether physical, distance, or a blended learning model, can successfully implement the ideas and projects contained within this

presentation. Additionally, many of these projects lend themselves to an interdisciplinary model of learning, fusing Visual Arts, English Language Arts, and History—all while implementing a focus on Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) that is empathy-based. A projector or SMART board is helpful for class discussion, and interactive PowerPoints bring life to a distance learning model in various genres that provide reference points for student work. Technology that students' potentially have access at home, such as laptops, iPads, and cell phone cameras provide some opportunities for photography/mixed media work. A variety of art supplies that can be adapted to the instructor's needs and desired outcomes were also used throughout the course of this project. These assorted art supplies include, but certainly are not limited to: various paints/brushes; background papers/poster board; Sharpies and other markers; oil pastels; printmaking supplies, etc. Teachers interested in adapting this project will receive more detailed lesson plans, PowerPoints, and interdisciplinary ideas for further creative ideas across subject areas.

RESOURCES

Students can continue their study of artists and historical/cultural references initiated in class by further research/exploration using personal Internet access at home, at school, or at a local public library or community center. Student learning would also be enhanced by inviting local artists to the school, or alternately to a guest webinar if in distance learning, mode. The purpose of such a visit would be to provide a lecture, workshop, or interactive "Master Class" (or series of classes) to further activate and inspire students' imaginative potential. Other guest speakers such as writers, dancers, singers, actors, etc.—especially those with an ARTivism bent—would bring particularly relevant and powerful role models to this project. Students can further be engaged by participation in field trips to some of the city's great cultural resources: museums such as PAMM (Perez Art Museum of Miami), as well as art walking tours of areas such as Wynwood to bring creative ideas to life for students in a different way than the classroom alone. If such in person field trips are not possible, many cultural and historical institutions are offering free access to virtual tours and webinars with notable speakers at this time, whether through their website, YouTube, Facebook or Instagram Live, etc.

ADAPTABILITY & GROUPING

This project can be easily **adapted** not only by educators in middle and high school arts classes, but also by elementary teachers, English Language Arts teachers, and Social Studies/World History teachers due to the interdisciplinary

nature of the activities. Additionally, this project is adaptable for mental health counselors and social workers, as the highlighted focus of the activities could primarily rest on the social-emotional learning and connectedness aspects. Grouping size is also easily adaptable as the activities presented can work well whether one-on-one, small group, or full classroom number of students. By extension, these activities can be adapted for those presenting for PD at their respective schools, modeling for adults the importance of social/emotional connection to our students and to each other.

OVERALL VALUE

Any classroom space--particularly Visual Arts, English Language Arts, or History--can successfully implement this project. Additionally, the ideas within this project lend themselves well to interdisciplinary learning, wherein educators teaching in different subject areas work together to bring students' learning more alive through connectedness and shared relevancy in thoughtfully engineered curriculum planning.

It is startlingly clear in these times that our youth suffer from more anxiety, depression, and suicidal tendencies in ever-growing numbers. To ignore these statistics is to ignore the living, breathing students coming into our classroom spaces and influences each week at our respective places of learning. It is up to us to not only challenge ourselves in building academic knowledge and success, but to help mentor and facilitate the social and emotional growth and health of our children. The arts (and the adaptation of the arts in creative and personal ways) is one curriculum area where we can help to provide safe and open spaces in which our youth may honestly express themselves. In such designed spaces, students authentically feel that **their voices matter,** and that **their lives matter.** In giving students opportunities for ACCESS and CHOICE, both in the differentiating of our teaching and projects, but also in the time we spend conferencing with them and guiding them through their idea process, we show that we trust their intellectual capacity, and they are not invisible. Empathy is proving to be our most important 21st century skill globally, and we as educators must ask ourselves: **what will be the legacy we leave for modeling and facilitating dialogue and ARTivist action for our youth that show true respect and care for our fellow Beings and our planet?**

Visual Arts Project Rubric

Rubric Components	Point Scale				Commentary
	4	**3**	**2**	**1**	**Peer/Self-Critique**
CRAFTSMANSHIP Did I develop my artistic skill with the art tools and materials provided?					
COMPOSITION Did I intentionally organize Visual Art Elements to create a unified design?					
COMMUNICATION Did I apply art knowledge and skill to express my ideas in visual, written, and oral presentation formats? Was I a leader?					
CREATIVITY Did I face challenges and express my ideas in unique and personal ways?					
ADDITIONAL NOTES					

the art of education

Studio Habits of Mind Student Self-Reflection Rubric

Studio Habit	4	3	2	1
Develop Craft	The materials and tools I used were chosen intentionally and applied with care. I skillfully incorporated new techniques as well as made connections to my previously made artwork/experiences.	The materials and tools I used were chosen carefully. I applied new techniques as well made connections to other artwork/experiences.	I put some thought (with teacher help) into the choosing of the materials/tools. I attempted new techniques and tried to make connections to other artwork/experiences.	I put little to no thought (even with teacher help) into the choosing of the materials/tools. I did not try new techniques and there are no connections to other artwork/experiences.
Engage & Persist	I challenged myself to embrace my art making problems and developed a distinct focus within my work.	I challenged myself to not let my art making problems hinder my work too much; I developed a focus within my work.	I let my art making problems influence my work and my focus lost clarity because of it.	I let my art making problems take over my artwork and my artwork lost focus as a result.
Envision	I imagined and practiced many ideas/processes before and during my art making.	I considered and tried out a few ideas before and during my art making.	I started and continued my artwork with little envisioning or practice.	I started and continued my work with no consideration of how it might turn out.
Express	My work clearly conveys an idea, mood, or place that expresses some part of me. My work shows an awareness of other viewers.	My work communicates an idea, mood or place. My work somewhat shows an awareness of other viewers.	My work somewhat communicates an idea. There is little awareness of other viewers.	It is not clear what my work is communicating or how it reflects me. There is no awareness of other viewers.
Observe	I spent an extensive amount of time observing my subject matter, art making processes and /or the environment around me that I may have otherwise missed.	I spent time observing my subject matter, art making processes and/or the environment around me that I may have otherwise missed.	I spent limited time observing my subject matter, art making processes and/or the environment around me.	I spent no time observing my subject matter, art making processes and/or the environment around me.
Stretch & Explore	I took risks in my art making and learned from my mistakes. I taught my peers with new ways of art making.	I challenged myself to explore a new idea or try out a new media but I still "played it safe".	I experimented with a new idea or media but my finished work reflects what I always do.	I stayed with what I am familiar with and/or reproduced someone else's work or ideas.
Understand the Art World	I spent time discovering aspects of artwork from other artists that I may have missed before.	I spent some time discovering aspects of artwork from other artists.	I spent just a small amount of time examining others' artwork.	I ignored any and all others' artwork.
Reflect	I am very conscious of my art making process and my honest self-evaluations reflect that.	I am aware of my art making processes and my self-evaluations reflect that.	I am becoming more aware of my art making processes and my self-evaluations are starting to reflect that.	I am unaware of my art making process and/or I have no self-evaluations of my work.

The Art of Education | www.theartofed.com

Leadership Skills
FOSTERED THROUGH ART

Collaboration

Communication

Creativity

Problem-Solving

Commitment/Perseverance

Responsiblity

the art of education

www.theartofed.com