Unit 1: Photography as a Communication Tool/Review of Formal Critique

Content Area: **Fine Arts**
Course(s):
Time Period: **Marking Period 1**
Length: **1-2 Weeks**
Status: **Published**

Brief Summary of Unit

Unit 1: Photography as a Communication Tool/ Review Formal Critique

Students will review the many facets of communicating through images. Heightened awareness of the media culture in which we live will enhance student's understanding of the world around them. The daily bombardment of visual images and social media forces students to look and understand their world in a non-verbal way. Through lecture, discussion, multi-media presentation and selected text readings they will build an understanding of the role of photography in the image making process. Photography was not discovered but evolved over years of use and innovation, new technologies continually affect its change and growth.

Criticism is an integral part of art making and viewing. Students will be introduced to/review the structure of art criticism. Describing artworks in terms of elements and principles of design, how the elements work together in the overall composition, any intended meaning through visual metaphor and whether or not the artwork is successful based on the elements.

Revision Date: July 2025 - Samantha Berk

Standards

ELD standards:https://docs.google.com/document/d/1wdmsiGOdCHlrjU-WPvAtENnEgi0EStZXo0uiFYv1Nu4/edit

1.5.12acc.Cr1a	Individually and collaboratively formulate new creative problems based on student's existing artwork.
1.5.12acc.Cr1b	Choose from a range of materials and methods of traditional and contemporary artistic practices to plan works of art and design.
1.5.12acc.Cr2a	Through experimentation, practice and persistence, demonstrate acquisition of skills and knowledge in a chosen art form.
1.5.12acc.Cr2b	Demonstrate awareness of ethical implications of making and distributing creative work.
1.5.12acc.Cr2c	Redesign an object, system, place, or design in response to contemporary issues.
1.5.12acc.Cr3a	Engage in constructive critique with peers, then reflect on, re-engage, revise, and refine works of art and design in response to personal artistic vision.
1.5.12acc.Pr4a	Analyze, select and critique personal artwork for a collection or portfolio presentation.
1.5.12acc.Pr5a	Evaluate, select and apply methods or processes appropriate to display artwork in a specific place.
1.5.12acc.Pr6a	Make, explain and justify connections between artists or artwork and social, cultural and political history.

1.5.12acc.Re7a	Recognize and describe personal aesthetic and empathetic responses to the natural world and constructed environments.
1.5.12acc.Re7b	Evaluate the effectiveness of visual artworks to influence ideas, feelings, and behaviors of specific audiences.
1.5.12acc.Re8a	Identify types of contextual information useful in the process of constructing interpretations of an artwork or collection of works.
1.5.12acc.Re9a	Determine the relevance of criteria used by others to evaluate a work of art or collection of works.
1.5.12acc.Cn10a	Utilize inquiry methods of observation, research and experimentation to explore other subjects through artmaking.
1.5.12acc.Cn11a	Compare uses of art in a variety of societal, cultural and historical contexts and make connections to uses of art in contemporary and local contexts.
1.5.12acc.Cn11b	Compare uses of art in a variety of societal, cultural and historical contexts and make connections to global issues, including climate change.

Essential Questions

- How do we communicate visually?
- How are photographs used to communicate in society?
- How has the role of photography changed over time?
- How does understanding the elements of art and principles of design help when critiquing a work of art?
- What is the difference between a critique and criticism?
- What factors influence artists' work?
- How does the rule of thirds contribute to successful photographic composition?
- What are the key terms related to a critique?
- What are the elements of art and principles of design? How does one identify them in an artwork and how do they impact an artwork?
- Why does it help to understand the elements of art and principles of design when critiquing artwork?

Essential Understandings

- Photography is nonverbal form of communication that is prevalent in today’s society
- Visual images are becoming a universal form of communicating ideas, thoughts feelings in our society
- The photographer can use information gained in a critique to clarify ideas and discover new insights
- The relationship between the elements of art and principles of design vary form composition to

composition

- The rule of thirds is unique in its application to photographic composition
- Artists make intentional decisions when creating their work, and it is essential for students to observe and interpret the artist's intent.

Students Will Know

- Images are used to communicate a variety of different ideas through media outlets such as print, film, digital, etc.
- The rapid change in social media platforms contribute to how we communicate visually
- The uses and applications of photography as a tool for communication
- The key terms of photography and design
- The elements of art and principles of design
- The difference between critique and criticism
- How to talk about their work and the work of others during a critique
- That a variety of specific factors and events have influenced artists work throughout time
- The key terms related to a critique
- The importance of artist intent

Evidence/Performance Tasks

Fine Arts students demonstrate differentiated proficiency according to their ability to answer the essential questions through formative and summative assessments. Evidence of progression may be demonstrated in divergent ways through the Artistic Process of Creating, Presenting/Producing, Connecting, and Responding.

Tasks will include:

- Preview/Answer essential questions
- Meaningfully and appropriately participate in class critique and discussions
- Complete class projects including weekly critique assignments
- Complete self-assessment rubrics

- Participate in assessment discussions with teacher
- Complete final exam

- Brainstorm ways in which photographs are used to communicate.
- Create a visual board illustrating the various ways we use photography to communicate.
- Identify what makes for a successful image through group critique.
- In small groups, decipher message and meaning from selected photographs.
- Participate in meaningful discussions and learning activities practicing how to observe and interpret artist intent.

Learning Plan

- Collaborate with peers to brainstorm ways in which visual images are used to communicate
- Students will express their ideas and findings orally and in writing
- Using research skills to delve deeper into how we use photographs to communicate
- Create and maintain an ongoing photographic portfolio using a platform such as google slides, google site, etc.
    - Students will add to their portfolio throughout this course to build and communicate their artist voice
- Expressing their observations and aesthetics response both orally and in writing
- Analyzing a work of art
- Responding o works of art aesthetically as as critically
- Preview the essential questions and connect to learning throughout the unit
- Class Discussion: What is the value of critiquing photograph works of art?
- Reference a list of terms used when critiquing photographic works
- Students will share findings with class during teacher led discussion
- New terms will be added to list after group discussion
- Critique session will occur at the end of each photographic assignment
- All writing prompts will be submitted for revelation with completed photographic work

Suggested Activities:

- Understanding Photography as Visual Communication
    - Students explore how photography conveys messages beyond words through lecture and multimedia examples, discussing the impact of media culture and social media imagery on

perception.

- Analyzing Images: Elements and Principles in Communication
    - Using selected photographs, students identify and discuss the elements and principles of design and how these contribute to the image's meaning and effectiveness.
- Visual Metaphor & Symbolism in Photography
    - Students learn about visual metaphor and symbolism through text readings and image analysis, then practice interpreting and creating photos that communicate abstract ideas or narratives.
- Formal Critique Review: Structured Art Criticism
    - Review the formal critique process with emphasis on description, analysis, interpretation, and evaluation. Students practice critiquing peer and professional photographs using this structured approach.
- Applying Critique to Personal Work
    - Students present their own photos for a class critique session, applying the formal structure to give and receive constructive feedback focused on communication effectiveness and design principles.

- Discussion topic: How do we communicate photographically? Presentation of images; including prints, PowerPoint, and Internet sources for class discussion will be used.
- Discussion topic: Past vs. Present. How has the role of Photography changed over time? How do new technologies affect change?
- Group critique of images will identify Design Elements and Principles.
- List of findings will be posted in class for reference to reinforce Design Elements and Principles.
- Students will brainstorm ways in which photography is used to communicate. This tasks assists in assessing prior knowledge.
- Students will individually write their answers to these questions to contribute to class discussion.
- Students will share their ideas from notes.
- Working in small groups, students will decipher visual messages and cues from selected photographs. They will present their findings to the class.

Materials

The materials used in this course allow for integration of a variety of instructional, supplemental, and intervention materials that support student learners at all levels in the school and home environments. Associated web content and media sources are infused into the unit as applicable and available.

Digital Cameras, Sketchbook, Various Pencils, Sharpies, Markers, Various Papers, Various Erasers, Mirrors, Blending Sticks, Charcoal, Graphite, Sharpeners, Colored Pencils, Oil Pastel, Chalk Pastels, YouTube Videos, Value Scales, magazines, glue, scissors, Watercolor, Watercolor paper, paint brush, ink, printing materials,

chromebooks, ipads, Paint, Color Wheels, Drawing Pen, Rulers

- Markers, glue, scissors, posterboard
- Photographic magazines as image resources
- PowerPoint
- Smartboard and Projector
- Textbook: Photography In Focus, Jerry Burchfield, Mark Jacobs and Ken Kokrda, NTC Publishing group, Lincolnwood, Illinois, 1997.

Suggested Strategies for Modifications

Suggested Strategies for Modifications:

This link includes content specific accommodations and modifications for all populations:

Fine Arts Accommodations & Modifications

- Auditory re-phrasing to assist students.
- Examples of successful projects to model.
- Hands on activities in addition to writing activities.
- Individualized instruction where needed.
- Peer critique of presentations.
- Smartboard projector.
- Use of rubric as self-evaluation tool.
- Use of Visual Aids such as photographs, and presentation tools.
- Working in small groups.