

On the Table: An Exploration of Culture, Class, and Stereotypes through Food

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Content Objectives:

Students at my 9-12 academic magnet high school create a diverse cultural and socio-economic school. We are an academic magnet, drawing students from neighborhoods all over the city. While the school is very diverse, I wonder how much they actually know about each other, their similarities and differences. I enjoy learning about different cultures through my students and I feel students can benefit from this as well. Additionally, many of our students encounter culture shock when they go to college, both within socio-economic differences as well as ethnic cultural differences. Through this unit of study, I hope to give students a range of tools and methods to better examine their own culture and learn about the cultures of others in a supportive and objective space by studying food. Learning how to navigate through cultural differences while maintaining pride (or benign understanding) of one's personal cultural experience and even acting as an ambassador of cultural understanding is necessary in our diverse nation.

A commonality in culture is food. Food sustains us in our daily lives, some people think very little of what they consume, but some give their choices much thought. Food is also intimately tied to celebration and ritual. One of the first writers about food, Jean Anthelme Brillat Savarin stated, "Tell me what you eat and I will tell you what you are." What we eat is tied to place and the foods that are available and indigenous to the region. Many cultures share similar yet different foods, picture a pocket made from dough stuffed with a filling. What do you call that? A pierogi (Polish), dumpling (Asian), calzone (Italian), empanada (Latin American), spinach pie - fatayar (Lebanese/Syrian), samosa (Indian), momo (Nepalese). They are all similar, but different. Some may be more familiar than others, maybe part of our own cultural heritage or due to when a cultural group arrived in the United States and under what circumstances. As we study different foods and their role in the rhythm of life, we create pathways of understanding and connections among students. We will examine the role food plays in or daily lives (where and when we eat), in celebrations and rituals, who prepares food (how and why), and what emotional attachments and memories we have surrounding food will be studied

in this unit. All the while making connections across cultures to build connections between students. Teaching that difference isn't weird or gross, but just different - something we aren't used to..... yet.

Background

Two themes and topics studied in the seminar, "Learning about America and About the World from McDonalds: An Interdisciplinary Approach" with Temple University Professor Bryant Simon, that can add to this curricular investigation are the ideas of food as a definition of culture and how McDonald's created a standard of American culture through food.

Culture is a set of practices, customs, beliefs and value systems shared by a group of people. As the seminar focused on McDonald's, it was easy to make connections to the role food plays in identity and culture. Our group conducted an ethnographic study of a McDonald's restaurant. This allowed us to practice and employ observational skills and to objectively describe a specific place and its role in a community. The practice of objective observation is an important skill to foster in students as they begin to make sense of the world around them, looking and evaluating objectively without rushing to judgement or accepting what others say without question. Encouraging students to be curious about things different from their own experiences, learning how to ask questions in a respectful way promotes learning and sharing of culture is important to our school culture and greater community.

Everyone has culture, maybe even more than one. How do immigrants navigate "becoming American" while still retaining their original cultural identity? How do students "code switch" between different cultural groups? Understanding the role personal identity plays within a cultural group is an important part of studying culture. As people travel throughout the world, whether from country to country or between neighborhoods, navigating culture is happening constantly. How much do you adopt from a majority culture versus what you keep from your own ethnic culture? My goal is to help students safely navigate these stages of culture awareness and identity. Ultimately coming to a state of acceptance and integration of their own culture in harmony with the dominant culture as well as learning and appreciating the cultural journey of their classmates and other individuals. American culture often defines itself as a melting pot, but how are cultural practices embraced and transformed as part of this process? Food is the pathway that will help us answer all of these questions.

Another important learning from the seminar was how political events help shape culture. The discussions our seminar group had based on our readings from *Fast Food Nation* by Eric Schlosser helped us understand how various political events and scientific discoveries gave rise to the success of McDonald's. We examined how these geo-political events influenced the industrialization of food systems and how the systems

were influenced by the proliferation of fast food. Discovering how each system is intimately connected, acting and reacting to the actions of the other, was crucial. The advent of McDonald's in Post-War America created an experience of uniformity. McDonald's aims to provide a product standard so consistent that you will be able to have the exact same sandwich in New York, Los Angeles and even in New Delhi. Understanding the impact of mass production and standardization of food and how food defines a culture is a core finding from our study of McDonald's. McDonald's became a place where people all over the country could participate and be part of the same American culture. The predictability of fast food is very appealing to people, the fear of the unknown and of different foods is a result of the industrial food system. The expectation that foods should be the same everywhere creates more fear of the unknown and therefore more skepticism of people and practices different than their own.

If we focus on the role McDonald's played in the standardization of foods we can see how this is a fundamental shift in American food culture. Previous to 1926 almost all meals were eaten at home as restaurants were mostly for the wealthy. With food being prepared at home, there was a greater amount of variation among how dishes were prepared. Regional specialties abounded and there was little opportunity for one cultural group to have access to the foods of a different cultural group. These disparate groups came together as one "American" culture by eating at McDonald's. They went to a McDonald's because they knew what to expect and the food was inexpensive, which also allowed for a mix of socio-economic groups to share the same food and cultural experience. By studying what we think "American" culture is, we can look at how we stereotype other cultures and socio-economic groups through food. How do we define groups by the foods that they eat or don't eat? Starting in a familiar place, McDonald's, we can open ourselves to a deeper understanding of food culture and the role food and culture play in our lives.

Teaching Strategies:

The content objectives of this unit of study are based in visual art and sociological study. Additionally, another goal is for the students to become independent art makers, learning about process and materials in the studio environment. The students will analyze works of art that center around food for cultural meaning and interpret how this information enhances our understanding of the culture within that work was created. Understanding the goal of the artist making the work is an important decoding skill. Considering the intent of the artist is important when analyzing and interpreting works of art. Using critical thinking skills to discern the meaning of art works will deepen the students understanding of art, preparing them to create their own works based on the themes of culture and stereotypes. Using food as a theme narrows the focus of the study, creating an entryway for students of all backgrounds to engage and learn, finding ways to understand themselves and others.

Providing choices during all phases of the project gives students the opportunity to create authentic pieces that truly reflect the meanings and concepts they wish to convey. The role of the teacher shifts from technical expert to project manager and director of materials and space. While this might be overwhelming and scary at first, giving up control over the product and outcomes, ultimately students will be more vested in the project and become more independent makers as they create within this framework.

Analyzing and Interpreting Works of Art:

Students need guidance in analyzing and interpreting works of art, a skill that needs to be practiced. These steps: Observe, Analyze, Interpret, and Reflect; stepping stones to understanding art and making art. It is important to represent a variety of media, time periods, and cultures in a study of art. Students may be more familiar and comfortable analyzing paintings and 2-D works, but less sure of the process with performance pieces, installation and sculpture. I have included a handout (Appendix A) that I use when teaching art history lessons. It gives students a framework for taking notes on pieces and facilitates easy discussion.

Observe:

With each work of art, start by having students take a close look and write down clear observations of what they see. This can be done by looking at the Elements and Principles of Art and Design as well as creating a list of recognizable objects or the setting. The Elements of Art and Design are: Color, Line, Value, Shape/Form, Space, and Texture. The Principles are created with the Elements: Repetition (Rhythm/Pattern), Contrast, Emphasis, Balance, Movement, Unity. Practice together with one work, then have the students work independently or in groups.

Analyze and Interpret:

Once the students see what is in the work, the next step is to interpret the meaning of the work. This is done by taking the observations of what is present and connecting it to who made the work, where the work was made, and when the work was made. Together these create the interpretation or meaning of the work. Some artworks have a clear meaning, while some works are ambiguous. It is important to have background knowledge of each work presented to understand it fully, but it is impossible to know everything. Invite questions when they arise and be honest if you don't know the answer.

Reflect:

Reflecting on a work of art is two-fold, both objectively and subjectively. In an objective way, the student can understand and appreciate the role the work plays in the larger art

world. They can explain and reflect on the impact the work has on society and decide for themselves the importance the work plays in their understanding of the art world. In addition, provide an opportunity for students to make personal connections and judgements about the art they have studied. Do they “like” the work they see? Why or why not? Have the students explain their opinion with a meaningful response, not just “It’s cute.” or “I like the colors.” Remind them that it is possible to appreciate the meaning of a work without enjoying the aesthetic presentation of the work.

Sociological Study:

This project will require students to create works of art based on a study of culture through food. The students will practice two ways of studying culture. The first way will be to document their own lives. They are doing this constantly, but maybe not as thoroughly as needed for a clear depiction of an event to a viewer. Ways of documenting an event can be visual (photography, drawing, painting), written, or an video/audio recording or a combination of these. The goal is to gather information to interpret into an artistic response that contains a visual element.

The second way of studying culture is to study a culture that the researcher is not a part of. This might be more challenging for students to accomplish as it would require them to step outside of their comfort zone. Benefits of completing this type of study are to practice observational skills, experience something new and different. Challenges for this type of study are that students may be restricted by their families or time constraints to attend events or places outside of their normal travels or schedule. I would encourage students to work together for this phase, acting as a chaperone or guide. Perhaps a student familiar with a space, place or event could “host” the researcher, the students could then switch places to reciprocate the experience.

Artifact Creation:

In an art classroom that functions more like an artist’s studio, the goal of each artist/group is to make a unique artifact that represents their vision and conveys the meaning of their ideas clearly. Providing a choice of media allows for the artist/group to choose the media that is right for their piece. The role of the art teacher in this phase of the project is to act as a manager of production and materials and less of an expert of technique or guiding students to a common outcome. It is important to expose students to a wide variety of media, both traditional (painting, drawing, photography, sculpture etc.) and non-traditional or contemporary art practices (performance, video, installation, community/participatory art, etc.) so they can make a choice that best suits their ideas. For each work created an artist/group will complete a Project Proposal and have planning and process meetings with the teacher. The teacher is responsible for helping students gather necessary materials, trouble-shooting or talking through challenges in the

production process, finding or creating appropriate space for the students and their work to guide the group to achieve their goals.

Assessment:

Due to the individual nature of each artifact, an expectation for each medium will be decided upon when students present their proposal. A rubric (*Figure 5*) will be presented and developed at the beginning of the project that clearly states the desired outcomes for the work. In addition, the Project Proposals and Process Updates can serve as ways of assessing the progress and artistic concept and effectiveness of the work.

Classroom Activities:

The goal of these teaching strategies are to create a number of ways for students to think about food, meaning and culture. The scope and sequence of activities is designed to flow from group discussion and formal analysis of works of art to art making and reflection. The following themes will be explored throughout the unit: Consumption, Ritual, Stereotype, Document. We will study works of art that depict food to understand the ways in which artists from various time periods and cultures using different techniques and themes create meaning. The students will demonstrate their findings and understandings through the creation of works of art, both individually and in a group.

Preparing the class for cultural analysis and creating safe spaces for sharing

Asking students to share about themselves and their experiences and their culture can be stressful. It can create a vulnerable moment for students, they might feel embarrassed or anxious to talk in front of their peers about personal details. It is important to create a learning environment where all students feel comfortable sharing their ideas or questions. The four topics below are suggestions about where to start when creating a safe space in a classroom.

Listen: Be present during the discussion. This means no obvious physical distractions such as a phone or headphones. Focus on the speaker.

Respect: Be mindful of your response to a person or information you are taking in. Body language says a lot about our beliefs and feelings. Phrase a question or response in a non-judgmental manner.

Trust: What do we need to trust each other in this space? In order to trust each other we need to believe that they are acting in the space in a positive manner.

Intention: What is the intention of our remarks or actions? Reflect on what you say and do to find the goal of your action or words. Focusing on kindness and positivity.

Food Insecurity:

Food insecurity is a reality for many students. Have a discussion with the whole group at the beginning of this unit providing the supports available in your community for those in need of food assistance.

Duration and Sequence of Activities:

This series of activities will guide the students through the learning process. At my school, art courses meet every day for the full school year. We have seven 50 minute class periods each day. Students are expected to complete work outside of class, the assignments I created reflect this. With these factors in mind, I envision the duration of this unit being between 6 and 7 weeks (33 - 35 class periods).

Pre-Test:

Assess the students' knowledge, understanding and identification surrounding the topic of culture and the relationship between food and culture. Some questions to consider asking are:

- What is culture?
- Do you feel closely tied to a culture? Explain.
- Do you know about cultures different than your own? Explain.
- Describe the role food holds within a culture.

Use these responses to learn about your students and inform your presentation of works of art and discussion topics throughout this unit.

Activity 1: We are what we eat.

Duration: 1 class period

Students will work individually and in groups to categorize foods, and reflect on the food they eat and the food they don't eat. There will be a period of work time and then a period of sharing, focusing on noticing similarities and differences among students.

Question: Who eats this?

Each student will receive a list of foods to categorize into groups such as belonging to a distinct culture, socio-economic class, or the consumers age/life stage. Students will compare their lists with their table groups and create a group list, noting any differences or similarities. Through this categorization, the students will be creating cultural groups. The concept of culture as a set of practices, beliefs and values that a particular group of people hold will be introduced as we share the lists we created. We will discuss America as a general culture, and then regional cultures within the United States, as well as cultures around the world. This discussion will focus around how we stereotype and make assumptions about people. What does it mean if someone consumes foods "assigned" to a different group? Do all people from a certain group always eat the foods associated with that group? What is the role of stereotyping and assuming?

Sample list of foods: kale, pizza, oatmeal, Fruit Loops cereal, chicken nuggets, lobster, pasta, sushi, Doritos, Cheddar cheese, rice, tacos, collard greens, macaroni and cheese, asparagus, black beans

Activity 2: What do you eat? What don't you eat?

Duration: 14 calendar days, 4 class periods, journaling done outside class time

This set of activities takes place over the course of two full weeks. The journal activity is introduced on Day 1 at the end of the lesson "Who eats this?". There are two subsequent check ins. The first has students then complete the sharing activities on Day 8.

Day 1: Introduction to Journaling

Students will journal what they eat for a week, noting what foods they eat as well as the setting (where, when, with whom). In addition to journaling what they *do* eat, have them create a list of foods they *don't* eat. Have each student write an anecdote about one of the foods from each list, maybe explaining what they love about their favorite food, or describe an experience when they tried a new food.

[Note: Move onto Activity 3 while continuing to have students journal about what they eat. These journals will be used again in *Activity 6: Ritual and Meaning* and as a starting point for the *Activity 7: Document, the personal artifact.*]

Day 8: Class sharing and discussion

At the end of one week, as table group (4-6 students), combine all of the foods into one list. Post the lists around the classroom and have students walk around and study the results. Look for similarities in experiences and differences. Share anecdotes or questions they have about foods on the lists. Continue to journal for a second week in preparation for the data visualization.

Day 14: Visualizing Data

Introduce the culminating visual representation of data for the food consumption journaling activity. In 2014, the artists Giorgia Lupi and Stephanie Posavec created a year-long project visualizing data. Each week had a theme and at the end of the week each artist created a visual for that set of data on a postcard and mailed them to each other. Choose examples from this collection as guidance for students in the creation of their visual data pieces. Students will choose a category to represent, for example, the different food groups they have eaten that week, or the time of day that they ate certain foods. Provide a few days for students to complete their visual work outside of class. Take a class period to have a gallery walk and share the visual pieces. Reflect about what we would know about the student from the data they presented about what they eat.

Activity 3: Observe and Analyze: Food in Art

Duration: 2 class periods

We will look at artworks and analyze them for the role that food plays in history, class, culture and time period. Creating a review that shows varied depictions of food through societies and cultures from pre-history to contemporary times gives many avenues for connection. We will look at the classification of foods, what foods are considered a luxury or exotic in what culture at what time. Also analyze works for the Elements and Principles of Art and Design. Understanding how artists use the Elements and Principles to create powerful effective works of art is important and necessary as students begin their own art making process. Provide a note taking handout to alleviate tedious copying of information in order to focus on the important skills of observing, analyzing and interpreting, (Figure 1).

A list of works to include in this investigation are:

Lascaux Cave paintings; *Last Supper*. Leonardo DaVinci; *Banquet Still Life*. Adriaen van Utrecht; *Still Life with Lemon and Cut Glass*. Maria Margaretha van Os; *Nushirvan Eating Food Brought by the Sons of Mahbud*. Folio from a Shahnama (Book of Kings). Abu'l Qasim Firdausi; *The Gleaners*. Jean-Francois Millet; *The Potato Eaters*. Vincent Van Gogh; *In many places, because of the war, food had doubled in price*. Migration Series. Jacob Lawrence; *Floor Cake*. Claes Oldenburg; *Soup Can series*. Andy Warhol; *Cakes*. Wayne Thiebaud; *Lunch*. Wayne Thiebaud; *Untitled #466*. Cindy Sherman; *Untitled Film Still #3*. Cindy Sherman; *Untitled #10*. Cindy Sherman; *Sandwiches*. Jeff Koons; *Mountain*. Jeff Koons; *Panza Llena Corazón Contento*. Christina Erives; *31 Flavors Invading Japan*. Masami Teraoka; *McDonald's Hamburgers Invading Japan*. Masami Teraoka; *Tibetan Butter Lamps*; *Buddhist altars*; *Mexican Chocolate Jar*

Another work to consider presenting is *The Dinner Party*, by Judy Chicago. While this work doesn't contain food it speaks about acceptance and agency. The work was created from 1974-1979 by Judy Chicago and many volunteers to recognize the accomplishments of women in history, bringing light to overlooked and marginalized women who were not allowed to be part of the mainstream culture during the time they lived. Understanding who tells a story is an important part of the meaning of the story. Continuing to make this aspect part of a holistic knowledge of a work of art brings a deeper meaning to the viewer.

Example of an artwork connection:

The Potato Eaters. Vincent Van Gogh. 1885.

Van Gogh created this work to show the toil of the peasants in their struggle to gather food for their family. The dark earthy colors of the painting echo the color of the soil and bleakness of their existence. There is a sense of urgency with the family crowded around the table reaching towards a simple plate of cooked potatoes, while tea or coffee is being poured for the evening meal. Movement in the painting is created by the gaze of the

people. The center figure, with her back to the viewer divides the canvas, each figure on either side of her looks outward and the outer figures look back towards the center. The static symmetrical composition adds to the feeling of the family being trapped in their bleak situation of poverty. The emphasis on the large plate of potatoes on the table is created through value with it being the lightest area of the work. The artist wanted to convey the meager existence of these peasants by showing us their simple evening meal.

Reflection:

Provide opportunities for students to make personal connections to the works they have seen. These questions could be given as an exit ticket or small group discussion. Example questions:

How do our eating habits (what we eat, when and where) create meaning and define our lives? What does it look like when we know we are on display versus when we don't have an audience?

Activity 4: Memory

Duration: 7-10 days - 3 class periods and work outside of class

Students will examine their personal and familial experience with food and make connections to life experiences and culture. Some events and traditions in a student's life are the result of family choices. This idea came to me because of my own family experience of moving to Australia for my father's job. Foods my family eats today were influenced by this period of our life. Lamb was abundant and cheaper than chicken, which was expensive. A dessert we learned pavlova, a meringue like cake topped with whipped cream and fresh fruit, named after the ballet dancer Anna Pavlova. Treats like ANZAC (Australia/New Zealand Army Corps) biscuits - oatmeal and coconut cookies and fairy bread - a slice of white sandwich bread spread with butter and topped with "100's and 1000's" (round multi-colored sprinkles). In my personal making of this treat I add a little sprinkle of sugar as well! While I don't have Australian heritage, these foods are part of my childhood and family culture. As my family experience is unique, so are the experiences of each family. While students might not have had an experience like my family had of moving to a different country, each of them surely has had a set of personal or family or cultural influences that shape their food choices. Often we assume these are the foods everyone eats. Acknowledging and preserving the history and legacy of a family creates meaning and understanding of their family's experiences for future generations.

Two books to include that fit with the themes of memory and food are "Like Water for Chocolate" by Laura Esquivel, and the "Tassajara Recipe Book" by Edward Espe Brown. "Like Water for Chocolate" is a story of a family based in Mexico and their rich history. Each chapter is a month and starts with a recipe, the recipes are somewhat functional, but mostly they create a backdrop for the story being told. The first chapter,

January, has a fantastical passage about turning balloon animals into sausage for a meal. Throughout the book the author uses food to tell stories, distorting memories and events to heighten the emotional connection to the story.

The Tassajara Recipe Book, Brown gives anecdotes about how the recipes came to the Tassajara Zen Buddhist meditation center in Northern California. Two recipes that fit with this investigation are the Mocha Cake with Mocha Icing and Brian's Chocolate Chip Cookies. The Mocha Cake recipe used to be called "Allen's Groovy Chocolate Cake", probably originating with a cook named Allen, and at the end the instruction is to .."give the cake away, and maybe a slice will come back", magically perhaps! The cookie recipe seems more straight forward, while there is no explanation of who "Brian" is, the inclusion of a proper name infers that it is someone known to the community and "Brian" made the recipe up. Many of us can describe foods in our family with titles like "Nana's meatballs" or "Grammy's Chocolate Cake", where did those foods come from? What makes them special and unique to your family experience?

Have students interview a family member about a memory where food played an important role. Record as much detail about that event, the time period, place, cultural heritage, emotional response, age of subject at the time of recording and their age at the time of the event. Maybe it is about a specific dish or special event, but it could also be something more mundane. The final presentation of the information will be a visual work that includes text. Possibilities include a recipe, illustration, or illuminated narrative piece. Once the interviews are completed, devote a class period sharing the interviews and brainstorming ideas for how the students envision presenting their memory, give work time outside of class for them to complete their work. Come together again for a class period of sharing and critique.

Activity 5: Storytelling through food: Advertising traditional and social media
Duration: 2-3 class periods, some out of class work

Advertisements for food create another facet of meaning to who eats what foods. Analyzing and interpreting how food companies sell not only food but the emotional expectations that they want us to believe we will have after consuming such foods is an important part of understanding meaning in an ad. Does a Snickers really satisfy? Are Frosted Flakes actually "Grrrrreat!?"? Who gets to eat the Grey Poupon mustard? One resource that is helpful to understand the process of advertising is the 2013 fictitious campaign by the ad agency Victors and Spoils to promote vegetables the same way processed foods are promoted. This piece shows how advertisers go about creating campaigns and then the final results.

Introduce the New York Times piece, "Kale vs. Broccoli". Focus the discussion around what is happening in the ads: what emotions are present, audience, what are they trying to sell - a product, an experience? Continue to call attention to the Elements and

Principles of Art and Design and how they are being used to create effective communication. Notice how font, shape, and color choices add to the meaning and effectiveness of the ad. Connect these findings back to the fine art works studied to see similarities and differences. *The Potato Eaters* by Van Gogh and *Sandwiches* by Jeff Koons would be two great examples to compare and contrast with contemporary advertisements.

Students then find an ad to analyze for audience, message, and Elements and Principles. Once students have analyzed their ad, come together as a class and group the ads by category (message, focus group, emotion, etc.). Continue to analyze for the Elements and Principles - often font and color choice - and how they help create the meaning of the ad.

Social media has eclipsed traditional advertising as a way to distribute advertising content. Media literacy is an important part of navigating information found online. Discuss with students the intent of the site, who creates the content, and the desired outcomes of publicizing this content. Discuss with students how they use social media regarding food. Reflect on the intent and purpose of these (and all) social media posts and platforms. One trend that fits with this artistic investigation is the idea of “Instagrammable” food. “Instagrammable” food is a photograph of a food altered (or already brightly colored) to heighten color and contrast, all to create an eye catching image and accrue “likes”. Is this true documentation? What does it mean to document something? Can a viewer ever know the truth of an image?

Research 2-3 different social media sites or posts based around food. Maybe your own or a professional in the food world. Find a few different images and analyze these artifacts for content, message, and audience/creator as was previously done for the advertisements. Also look at how the Elements and Principles are used here and what role they play in the meaning and effect of the image.

Activity 6: Ritual, Celebration, and Food

Duration: 3 class periods - intro, work day, gallery walk

As students continue to journal about their own food consumption, remind them to note when, where, and with whom they eat specific foods. While it is preferable for this phase of the project to take place over the course of a holiday event, it is not necessary. Students can refer to past events by interviewing family members, or recalling their own memories of a holiday or special event.

Begin a discussion comparing an everyday meal to a special occasion or holiday meal. Holidays are a large part of what creates a “culture”, creating an ordered understanding of the world around us. Whether they are rooted in a religion or simply a family tradition, a holiday brings meaning to a period of time. Revisit artworks that

depict special occasions or religious events such as the *Last Supper* by Leonardo DaVinci, Buddhist altars, or a personal example of a holiday where food plays specific and important role. Look for symbolism in these works. What role does food play in the celebration? Are there myths or historical reasons why certain foods are eaten to celebrate these holidays? If it is a family celebration, what special foods are present and why?

Story Page Artifact:

“Story Pages” are often used in an elementary school setting. There is a title, a place for drawing at the top and writing below. This assignment is a high school version of that exercise. Have students write about an event where food played a meaningful and significant role, using a photograph to illustrate. Share the works during a gallery walk focusing conversation on the following topics: similar practice, different practice, things I learned, questions I have, foods I know, foods I don’t know. After the gallery walk gather students together to share their findings. Share the works in a common space with a paper next to each with space for “Thoughts” and “Questions” to invite participation from the greater school community.

Activity 7: Document: Consumption

Personal Artifact

Duration: 8-9 class periods

Students will create their own work documenting an event where food is consumed. The student will choose the event (in/out of school, public/private, family/friends/alone; every day/special occasion) as well as the medium used to document - photography, video, or drawing/painting/mixed media. This could be one single image, series of images, self-portrait, portrait, or not include people at all.

Show a few examples of documentary works, artists and works to include could be: Ai Weiwei, *Dropping a Han Dynasty Urn*; Gordon Parks, Portraits series; Dorthea Lange; Ansel Adams; Lee John Phillips, The Shed Project. Note the difference between a staged event or performance or a found space or object. Analyze the works for content and meaning as well as the Elements and Principles. Have students think of what the artist wants the viewer to know or learn by looking at this work. What story does the piece tell?

I envision two ways of working for this project, one is thoroughly planning before the creation of the work in order to create a piece with clear meaning. The second process is to create multiple pieces - think of these as sketches - then curate the meaning through a peer and teacher review. The culminating artifact should convey clear content and meaning, as well as thoughtful use of the Elements and Principles, based around an event or events where food is consumed.

Allow for two classes of introduction and planning, a period of work time - I would suggest a week with a period of time where there is a weekend or other non-school days included. Then conclude with a presentation of work for critique and reflection.

Activity 8: Culminating Artifact

Duration: 2 - 3 weeks, 2 class periods of intro/planning; 8-10 class period of work time; 1-2 class periods for critique.

This culminating exercise will synthesize all of the observational and creative investigations in the unit. Students will exhibit their findings and understandings through a choice of media: two dimensional (painting, drawing, mixed media, digital), sculpture, installation and/or performance art pieces. They may work in groups or individually. Start by having students generate ideas for two of the three prompts below:

Stereotypes: What assumptions do we hold about each other based on someone's (perceived) class or culture centered around food? Investigate a stereotype that is food centric and

Same/Different: Compare two (or more) cultures and show how the foods they eat are the same, yet different.

Show/Tell: Document an event where food is consumed and tell a deeper story of culture and class. This can be your own culture (artist as participant/initiator) or other than your own (artist as observer).

Discuss these prompts in a brainstorming session, have students write and illustrate their ideas with sketches on paper, post these proposals around the room, then circulate and study the ideas. Students can then decide if they are interested in collaborating in a group project with a larger scope or creating their own personal work.

Student proposal and timeline for final culminating project:

Each student/group submits a project proposal (*Figures 2 and 3*) along with a timeline and division of labor. The role of the teacher is one of a studio manager and production assistant, setting the time frame for completion and upholding the expectations for the artifact. Students are responsible for creating and monitoring the progress of their work as well as communicating with the teacher about any problems, questions, or needs.

Individual planning meetings:

While students are creating their proposals, the teacher will meet with the artists and discuss their works, providing guidance and expertise where necessary, regarding materials and art techniques or content. The timeline and division of labor (for group works) and tasks will be reviewed to ensure that all students are engaged in the art making process and the project has a manageable scope. It is important to be flexible and accommodating in order to meet with all artists/groups. These meetings are integral in

facilitating independent student work, turning responsibility over to the students for their ideas and production of the work.

Artifact Production:

Process meetings will happen throughout the production of the works. The artists will be expected to keep a Production Log (*Figure 4*) documenting what they accomplish each day as well as setting new goals for the next work session. This process helps keep the work on track to meet deadlines or stretch and explore through an idea to deepen the meaning of the work. Students are encouraged to take a break from their work to observe other groups, allowing for new ideas and collaboration. While feedback can happen at any time, a formal mid-point class critique is encouraged to address any changes in ideas or roadblocks the artists have come up against.

Presentation, Critique, and Reflection:

Students will present their final works along with an artist statement describing the meaning of the work to the class during an in-class critique. The students will evaluate and reflect on the works their classmates have created through meaning/concept and technical use of the Elements and Principles. Remind students that feedback should be constructive and relate clearly to the work created. Topics that should be included for the final critique are based in both content and meaning, as well as analyzing how the artists used the Elements and Principles of Art and Design to create effective communication of a concept or meaning. A handout (*Figure 6*) for notetaking is helpful to guide their thoughts during the looking phase and start discussion about a work.

Rubric and Reflection:

Each student completes a rubric and reflection for their final artifact which helps them look objectively at the art making process through categories and the reflection is a way for them to elaborate and qualify their reasoning. True growth emerges from facing reality and being able to look at the work you created in an honest and objective manner. I have provided an example of a rubric and reflection (*Figure 5*) for this activity.

Expected Outcomes:

The expected outcomes of this unit of study are that students will deepen their understanding of their own culture and broaden their knowledge of other cultures. That students will approach differences with curiosity and find vocabulary to ask questions to learn about cultures in a non-judgmental way. Students will gain independence creating in the art classroom, stretching and exploring through various mediums. Students will learn how to analyze and interpret works of art and cultural artifacts for content and meaning, using this type of formal study to deepen their understanding of culture and identity. In addition, they will use these methods to inform their art making practice, and continue to employ these skills and methods for future art investigations.

Evaluative Tools:

The students will be assessed throughout the project through written assignments, class discussion, small group discussion, individual discussions, rubrics, reflections, and artifacts all serve as ways to evaluate student learning. The two purposes to assess student learning, the most important should be authentic student reflection and evaluation. The second is for the teacher to assign a grade to the project and work. Focusing on authentic student reflection is what should be honored in the process of evaluating the work.

Formative Assessments: *Pre-Test, Class Discussions, Discussion Questions, Process Critiques*

A *Pre-Test* gauges understanding and familiarity with a topic, especially one with potentially sensitive content, before embarking on the unit. Take into account the student responses and adjust the lessons accordingly. Throughout the unit facilitate short checks for understanding or responses. In addition to class discussion, I also use an online platform, posting 2-3 questions regarding the in class discussions or content. *Process critiques* (individual or group) are helpful during the production of an artifact to evaluate process and progress.

Summative Assessments: *Rubric, Reflection, Artifact, Critique:*

Upon completion, the students will evaluate themselves using a rubric and reflection about their engagement as well as their artifact. The teacher uses this same rubric and reflection to evaluate the student based on their engagement, growth as an artist, and artifact(s) that were created. The artifact along with the rubric and reflection will serve as a thorough assessment of student learning.

The final artifact will be presented to the class through a gallery walk. The artist/groups will present an artist statement to qualify the work. During the class critique, the students will participate in a discussion reflecting on the strengths and weaknesses of the artifacts in an objective and constructive manner. The teacher ultimately gives the student a grade based on the students objective evaluation of their artifact through the rubric, reflection on their process and product, their overall effort and engagement in the project, as well as the overall presentation of the piece.

Resources:

Brown, E. E. (1985). *The Tassajara Recipe Book*. Boston: Shambala Publications, Inc.

Esquivel, L. (1995). *Like water for chocolate: A novel in monthly installments, with recipes, romances, and home remedies*. (1st Anchor Books trade paperback ed.). New York: Anchor Books/Doubleday.

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Mishan, L. November 29, 2018. These Artists Are Creating Work That's About, and Made From, Food. *The New York Times Magazine*. Retrieved from:
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National Coalition for Core Arts Standards. 2014. National Core Arts Standards: Visual Arts. Retrieved from:
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Pennsylvania Department of Education. 2002. Academic Standards for the Arts and Humanities. Retrieved from:
http://static.pdesas.org/content/documents/Academic_Standards_for_the_Arts_and_Humanities.pdf

Schlosser, E. (2012). *Fast food nation: The dark side of the all-American meal*. (1st Mariner Books ed.). Boston: Mariner Books/Houghton Mifflin Harcourt.

Works of Art:

These resources are for both student and teacher. Included is a list of artworks for the activities/lessons along with links to where you can find the content and images.

Adams, A. *Cedar Tree, Winter, Yosemite Valley*. (1935). [Gelatin silver print]. Retrieved from: <https://www.sfmoma.org/artwork/74.52.85/>

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- Da Vinci, L. *Last Supper*. (1494 - 1498). [Fresco]. Retrieved from:
<https://whc.unesco.org/en/documents/137378>
- Erives, C. *Panza Llena Corazón Contento*. (2016). [Earthenware]. Retrieved from:
http://archiebray.org/residence_program/residents/current%20residents/resident_christina_erives.html
- Firdausi, A. Q. *Nushirvan Eating Food Brought by the Sons of Mahbud", Folio from a Shahnama (Book of Kings)*. (c.1330). [Ink, opaque watercolor and gold on paper]. Retrieved from: <https://www.metmuseum.org/toah/works-of-art/52.20.2/>
- Koons, J. *Sandwiches*. (2000). [Oil on canvas]. Retrieved from:
<https://www.guggenheim.org/artwork/10733>
- Koons, J. *Mountain*. (2000). [Oil on canvas]. Retrieved from:
<https://www.guggenheim.org/artwork/10730>
- Lange, D. *Migrant Mother, Nipomo, California*. (March 1936). [Gelatin silver print]. Retrieved from: <https://www.moma.org/collection/works/50989>
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- Lawrence, J. *In many places, because of the war, food had doubled in price. Migration Series*. (1940-41). [Casein tempera on hardboard]. Retrieved from:
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<http://www.stefanieposavec.com/dear-data-about>
 These artists had a year-long correspondence visualizing different sets of data.
- Mexican Chocolate Jar*. (c. 1700). [Tin-glazed earthenware and iron]. Retrieved from:
<https://www.metmuseum.org/toah/works-of-art/11.87.7/>

- Millet, J. F. *Gleaners*. (1857). [Oil on canvas]. Retrieved from:
https://www.musee-orsay.fr/en/collections/index-of-works/notice.html?no_cache=1&nnumid=000342&cHash=208fcd6ac2
- Oldenburg, C. *Floor Cake*. (1962) [Synthetic polymer paint and latex on canvas filled with foam rubber and cardboard boxes]. Retrieved from:
<https://www.moma.org/collection/works/81450>
- Parks, G. Portrait series; Retrieved from:
<http://staging.new.gordonparksfoundation.org/archive/portraits-1947-59?view=slider#2>
- Phillips, L.J. *The Shed Project*. (2014 - current). [ink on paper]. Retrieved from:
<https://www.leejohnphillips.com/>
- van Gogh, V. *The Potato Eaters*. (1885). [Oil on canvas]. Retrieved from:
<https://www.vangoghmuseum.nl/en/collection/s0005V1962>
- van Os, M. M. *Still Life with Lemon and Cut Glass*. (1823-1826). [Oil on panel]. Retrieved from: <https://www.rijksmuseum.nl/en/collection/SK-A-1107>
- van Utrecht, A. *Banquet Still Life*. (1644). [Oil on canvas]. Retrieved from:
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<https://www.moma.org/collection/works/56555>
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- Teraoka, M. *Today's Special: 31 Flavors Invading Japan*. (1982). [Woodblock print]. Retrieved from:
<http://asianart.emuseum.com/view/objects/asitem/search@/2?t:state:flow=929abbf2-9b91-432c-83ff-313cd911daf1>
- Teraoka, M. *McDonald's Hamburgers Invading Japan; Geisha and Tattooed Woman*. (1985). [Watercolor on paper]. Retrieved from:
http://masamiteraoka.com/archive/early_work.html

Thiebaud, W. *Cakes*. (1963). [Oli on canvas]. Retrieved from:
<https://www.nga.gov/collection/art-object-page.72040.html>

Thiebaud, W. *Lunch*. (1967). [Etching with watercolor on paper]. Retrieved from:
<https://art.famsf.org/wayne-thiebaud/lunch-1978134>

Tibetan Buddhist Altar. Retrieved from: <https://www.tibetanbuddhistaltar.org/about-altars/>

Warhol, A. *Soup Can series*. (1962). [Synthetic polymer paint on thirty-two canvases]. Retrieved from: https://www.moma.org/learn/moma_learning/andy-warhol-campbells-soup-cans-1962/

Weiwei, A. *Dropping a Han Dynasty Urn*. (1995). [Three gelatin silver prints]. Retrieved from: <https://www.guggenheim.org/arts-curriculum/topic/ai-weiwei>

Materials: Art materials provided for student use are at the discretion of the teacher implementing the unit.

Appendix:

Visual Arts Standards:

The arts standards addressed in this unit are based on the National Art Education Association's Visual Art Standards as well as the Pennsylvania Standards for Arts and Humanities.

National Core Arts Standards:

Creating:

This standard is about the artistic process and how students go about conceiving and developing new artistic ideas.

Anchor Standard 1: Organize and develop artistic ideas and work.

VA:Cr1.1.IIIa: Visualize and hypothesize to generate plans for ideas and directions for creating art and design that can affect social change.

VA:Cr1.2.IIa: Choose from a range of materials and methods of traditional and contemporary artistic practices to plan works of art and design.

Anchor Standard 2: Artists and designers balance experimentation and safety, freedom and responsibility while developing and creating artworks.

VA:Cr2.1.IIIa: Experiment, plan, and make multiple works of art and design that explore a personally meaningful theme, idea, or concept.

VA:Cr2.3.IIIa : Demonstrate in works of art or design how visual and material culture defines, shapes, enhances, inhibits, and/or empowers people's lives.

Anchor Standard 3: Refine and complete artistic work.

VA:Cr3.1.IIIa: Reflect on, re-engage, revise, and refine works of art or design considering relevant traditional and contemporary criteria as well as personal artistic Vision.

Presenting: The standard is concerned with how students interpret and share artistic work as well as convey meaning through the presentation of artistic work

Anchor Standard 4: Select, analyze, and interpret artistic work for presentation.

VA:Pr4.1.IIIa: Critique, justify, and present choices in the process of analyzing, selecting, curating, and presenting artwork for a specific exhibit or event.

Anchor Standard 5: Develop and refine artistic techniques and work for presentation.

VA:Pr5.1.IIa: Evaluate, select, and apply methods or processes appropriate to display artwork in a specific place.

Anchor Standard 6: Convey meaning through the presentation of artistic work.

VA:Pr6.1.IIa: Make, explain, and justify connections between artists or artwork and social, cultural, and political history.

Responding:

This standard focuses on how students perceive and analyze artistic works, and interpret intent and meaning in artistic work.

Anchor Standard 7: Perceive and analyze artistic work

VA:Re7.1.IIIa: Analyze how responses to art develop over time based on knowledge of and experience with art and life.

VA:Re7.2.IIIa: Determine the commonalities within a group of artists or visual images attributed to a particular type of art, timeframe, or culture.

Anchor Standard 8: Interpret intent and meaning in artistic work.

VA:Re8.1.IIa: Identify types of contextual information useful in the process of constructing interpretations of an artwork or collection of works.

Anchor Standard 9: Apply criteria to evaluate artistic work.

VA:Re9.1.IIIa: Construct evaluations of a work of art or collection of works based on differing sets of criteria.

Connecting:

This standard deals with how students synthesize and relate knowledge and personal experiences to make art; how they relate artistic ideas and works with societal, cultural and historical context to create a deeper understanding of the art world.

Anchor Standard 10: Synthesize and relate knowledge and personal experiences to make art.

VA:Cn10.1.IIIa: Synthesize knowledge of social, cultural, historical, and personal life with art-making approaches to create meaningful works of art or design.

Anchor Standard 11: Relate artistic ideas and works with societal, cultural, and historical context to deepen understanding

VA:Cn11.1.IIa: 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.
VA:Cn11.1.IIIa: Appraise the impact of an artist or a group of artists on the beliefs, values, and behaviors of a society.

Pennsylvania Standards for Arts and Humanities

Production and Exhibition: 9.1

A. Elements and Principles in each Art Form; B. Demonstration of Dance, Music, Theatre and Visual Art; D. Styles in Production, Performance and Exhibition E. Themes in Art Forms; F. Historical and Cultural Production, Performance and Exhibition; I. Community Performances and Exhibitions; J. Technologies in the Arts

Historical and Cultural Context: 9.2

A. Context of Works in the Arts; B. Chronology of Works in the Arts; C. Styles and Genre in the Arts; D. Historical and Cultural Perspectives; E. Historical and Cultural Impact on Works in the Arts; F. Vocabulary for Historical and Cultural Context; G. Geographic regions in the arts; I. Philosophical context of works in the arts; J. Historical differences of works in the arts; K. Traditions within works in the arts; L. Common themes in works in the Arts

Critical Response: 9.3

A. Critical Processes; B. Criteria; F. Comparisons

Aesthetic Response: 9.4

A. Philosophical Studies; B. Aesthetic Interpretation; C. Environmental Influences; D. Artistic Choices

Figure 1: Art History Note Taking Handout

Create a section for each work shown in this format:

<p><i>Cedar Tree, Winter, Yosemite Valley. Ansel Adams. 1935. Gelatin silver print.</i></p> <p><u>Observe:</u></p> <p><u>Analyze:</u></p> <p><u>Interpret:</u></p> <p><u>Thoughts:</u></p>
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Figure 2: Individual Project Proposal and Timeline

Project Proposal: Individual Work				
Working title: _____				
Meaning/Enduring Understanding:				
Type of work:	2-D	3-D	Installation	Performance
Medium: List what materials you will use to create this work.				
Describe the work you envision:				
Sketch: Create a sketch of your finished work. Make notes to clarify understanding.				
Timeline Plan: write what you think you will accomplish each day. Be as detailed as possible.				

Day 1:	
Day 2:	
Day 3:	
Day 4:	
Day 5:	
Etc.	*Add as many spaces as is needed for the duration of your project

Figure 3: Group Project Proposal

<u>Project Proposal: Group Work</u>	
Members of the group:	
Working title: _____	
Meaning/Enduring Understanding:	

Type of work:	2-D	3-D	Installation	Performance
Medium: List what materials you will use to create this work.				
Describe the work you envision:				
Sketch: Create a sketch of your finished work. Making notes where necessary to clarify understanding.				
Suggested roles in a group: artistic director, lead artists, assistant artists, group manager.				
<u>Tasks:</u>				
<u>Division of tasks:</u>				
<u>Timeline Plan:</u> write what you think your group will accomplish each day. Be as detailed as possible.				

Figure 4: Productivity Log

Note: For the group Productivity Log, make sure it is noted which students accomplished which tasks or sections.

	Plan	Actual
Day 1		
Day 2:		
Day 3:		
Day 4:		
Etc.	*Add as many spaces as needed	

Figure 5: Rubric and Reflection

I generally keep the categories in “Objectives” and “Qualities of an Artist” the same, but change the definitions to suit each project. This can be used for the Personal Artifact also.

Rubric and Reflection: You give yourself a grade in each category, then the teacher assess your work. [Score scale: 15= 100; 14= 93; 13= 87; 12=80; 11= 73; 10= 67; 9= 60; 8= 53 etc]	
Objectives:	
Content/Meaning: meaning conveyed clearly,	____/15

Originality/Creativity: fulfilled requirements with unique ideas, explored different ideas ...	____/15
Craft/Skill/Techniques: well crafted, intentional choices, appropriate techniques for piece	____/15
Group Dynamics: respected group ideas, equitable work habits, flexibility, on task/on time...	____/15
	____/60
Qualities of an Artist:	
Planning/Preparation: evidence of planning, insight and knowledge, shows growth and progression.....	____/10
Design/Craft: technical skills and craft, organization, intentional choices	____/10
Creativity: Growth, exploration, problem solving	____/10
Qualities of an Artist: Perseverance, intrinsically motivated, collaboration	____/10
	____/40
Artifact:	____/100

Example Reflection questions:

1. Describe one challenge you (or your group) had while creating this project, how you overcame that challenge and persevered to be successful.
2. Look at your original sketch and compare it to your finished piece. Describe one aspect (or more!) of your piece that changed, how it changed, and why.
3. Describe your favorite part of the finished piece or process of making the work and why (more than just "I like it").
4. Describe one thing you would change or do differently if you were to make this again.

Figure: 6: Final In-Class Critique

Create a section for the appropriate number of works presented.

<p><u>Final In-Class Critique:</u></p> <p>Work 1: Title: _____</p> <p>What are your first impressions based on the visual representation?</p> <p>What are your first impressions of the meaning of this work?</p> <p>What Elements and Principles are present, where are they being used?</p> <p>Describe (at least) one thing this work does well. It could be based in technique, content, or a different area:</p> <p>Describe (at least) one area for improvement. It could be based in technique, content, or a different area:</p>
