Object Stories: Two Museum Tours

Portland Art Museum Education
Middle School Curriculum

I. Museum Visits: Personal Stories Tour & Museum Stories Tour

II. Outcomes & Indicators
   a. Outcomes: Students tell stories about their own objects with description and personal meaning.
      i. Indicators: Describes own object with detail.
      ii. Indicators: Supports story and develops meaning.
         1. Students tell about the relationship between own object and self: time, place, or people.
         2. Students identify the meaning, significance, associated with the object.

   b. Outcomes: Students tell stories around art objects with personal meaning.
      i. Indicators: Describes art object with detail and descriptive language.
      ii. Indicators: Supports story and develops meaning
         1. Students tell about the relationship between art object and its time(s), place(s), and people.
         2. Students identify meaning, significance, associated with the object.

III. Big Idea: Objects of all kinds carry personal and cultural stories across time and place.

IV. Grouping and Location: Students will be divided into groups depending on the class size. Roughly half the students will participate in the Personal Stories tour while the other half tour Museum Stories. When they return student who did personal stories will do Museum Stories and vice versa.
**Personal Stories Tour:** (formerly Museum visit 1)
There are 2 parts. Parts switch at 45 min.

a. **Part 1:** Object Stories iPad app (contact PAM Education Dept prior to scheduling tour)
   i. **Opener:** Explain what students will be doing in this station.
      1. Tell their own stories.
      2. Title Page for their story (six-word stories) see following.
      3. Listen and reflect on the stories of others using worksheet.
         (see following pages).
   ii. **Procedure:**
      A. Following instructions for Object Stories iPad app
      B. Guide students to the kiosks and display cases. (Please note that during this time students will be asked to use the booth to record their prepared stories). Ask the students to pick an object in the gallery from the cases or kiosks that they were initially drawn to. Ask them to use the given worksheet to explore that Object Story.
      C. After students have written their initial reactions to the story they chose, listen to the story in full, and complete the questions on the worksheet.
   iii. **Close:** Ask students in pairs or as a group to share what object story they picked and whether their assumptions were accurate and what they think the object means to the storyteller. Discuss.

**Modifications:**
   i. Time permitting the docent may leads students through a spoken warm-up
   ii. If there is extra time, ask students to share about the stories they listened to and why they picked them.

b. **Part 2:** Tableau & Personal Inquiries about Art

   i. **Opener:** Tableau- In front of your selected work lead students through visual analysis. (process in italics)

   Visual Analysis= Silent Looking, Observation, Analysis: The docent asks the students to spend a few minutes looking carefully at a work of art without talking about it to anyone.

   After a moment of silent looking he/she asks students to describe what they see or observe. The docent leads the discussion of observations through analysis. If this is an art object
with a known story (see below), the docent should discuss what is known but cannot be seen with the students, if there is no known story the docent may discuss student interpretations.

What do you think the setting is? Why?
Who do you think the characters are? Why?
What do you think is happening? Why?

In this painting...(Story)

Tableau: (Highlighting parts of a story) The docent asks students to create a tableau for the work of art as it appears. (depending on work of art and group size docent may have two groups, chaperone can help- see check list)

1. Ask the first group to perform their tableau.

2. The docent may ask questions of the actors and/or elicit discussion with the student observers. The students should look at the performers—individually or as their characters—and then look at the tableau as a whole. Give prompts such as:

   • Describe what you see.
   • How are your classmates similar to the figures in the artwork? How are they different?
   • How does what you see in the poses give clues as to what this artwork means or is portraying?

To the student volunteers in the poses, ask questions like:

   • How does it feel to be in the pose you’re in?
   • How different is it to actually be in the pose instead of just looking at the work?

3. The docent then has the group perform the before-or-after moment, and repeats the tableau discussion

b. Modifications:

   • Highlighting Character and dialogue- Give students a moment to work out dialogue in their tableau. Explain that you will tap their shoulder and they will speak their thoughts as the character or object in the artwork.

   1. The docent asks the group to discuss the characters with prompts such as:

      • Do you agree with what the characters said?
• What would you have the characters say?
• What is the subject (topic) of this work?
• What visual clues in the work made you choose that dialogue?
• What might the artist be trying to say in this artwork?

• Other conversations:
  Have students strike a pose similar to one of the figures’ (be a statue) and discuss whether it gives them insight into what is going on or how the character might be feeling.
• Naming the characters they are portraying may help students create a dialogue for art objects in which the names are not known.

ii. **Procedure**- Docent leads students to a gallery. Here the docent will demonstrate for students how to choose a work of art, make assumptions, and follow curiosity in order to acquire knowledge.

**A. Student Inquiries about Art:**

1. The docent leads students to their pre-selected work (the one you have pick to model) and leads in Visual Analysis.

2. The docent explains what drew them to this work, originally. She/he reveals assumptions made before they studied the work of art including: *(This is modeling what the students will do!)*
   - I picked this because (why you were drawn to it initially)...
   - I noticed (when I studied it)...
   - I wonder (questions)...

   **Modification:** The docent then explains how she/he learned more about the piece or answered some of their wonderings.

   i. **Procedure**- Students are given a worksheet to mirror what the docent modeled in the gallery. The docent asks students to find a work of art that is of interest to them, or that they are drawn to, and fill out the worksheet.

   ii. **Closer:** The docent gathers students to share their chosen works of art and their responses to the worksheet questions.
Museum Stories Tour: (formerly Museum Visit 2) The museum stories tour has no set stations. There are 4 activities; it is the Docent’s prerogative to decide where these occur.

1). **Descriptive words**—________________ gallery area. (20 min)
The Docent introduces a work of art in the gallery and demonstrates a process for visual analysis involving use of descriptive language. To close the discussion, the docent asks for descriptive words students would use to describe object. (Docent provides word cards, or Download here.)
   i. **Opener**- Docent Models visual analysis.
   ii. **Procedure**- The Docent gives pairs of students a card with a descriptive word printed on it. Students scan the gallery to find a work of art they think reflects qualities of the word. With their partner they discuss, and on the back of the card students list other descriptive words they think describe their shared object (Min 3 words).
      a. **Modification**: Have students construct a 6 word story for their piece, in addition to descriptive words.
   iii. **Close**- Students share their object choice, and descriptive word choice. The Docent leads brief discussion for each pair.

2.) **2-minute “life” story**- _________________ gallery area. (20 min)
   i. **Opener**- Docent explains what a 2 min “life” story is and generates some examples. The docent models their own condensed “life story” of museum object. A 2 min “life” story is a creative story about a museum object that uses description and is based on observation.
   ii. **Procedure**- (students can do this individually or with a partner)
      1. Students go to selected work
      2. Student observe art object brainstorm for story (can make notes on paper), use descriptive words
      3. Students share their story with a partner or the whole group.
   iii. **Close**- Reflect on the variety of stories.

3. **Story Arc**- _________________ gallery area. (20 min)
   i. **Opener**- Docent takes students to select work and tells a museum story.
   ii. **Procedure**- Students complete a narrative arc for the museum story. Depending on student ability this can be done individually, in pairs, or as a group. (Will need lined paper for arc and story)
      a. Under the arc, they write the names of the characters and the setting in the story the docent just told.
      b. At the bottom of the arc, they write where the story begins — i.e., the inciting incident, or the initial situation associated with the object.
      c. Along the middle of the arc, they write 2 things that happen (or 2 obstacles that are encountered) along the way.
      d. At the top of the arc, they write the most dramatic part of the story, i.e., the climax.
      e. On the descending side of the arc, they write how the story ends or resolves.
iii. **Close** - Docent has students discuss the resolution, significance, and meaning(s) of the story.

4. **Student Story “Free Write”** - _______________.gallery area(s) (30 min)
   
   i. **Opener** - Docent introduces students to writing activity. They will be writing their own story based on one of the museum pieces. This is their own story inspired by what they have learned. (They may choose to use a narrative arc before writing, also go over how to use the wall label for gleaning info.)

   ii. **Procedure** - Students will have 20 min to write their museum object story (15 min). These may be in different locations- use the chaperone!
      
      a. **Modification**: Have students construct a six-word story for the title of their story.

   iii. **Close** - Group gathers and shares their stories, highlights from their stories (15 min).
Frühe Stunde (Early Hour)
Karl Hofer, 1935

Silence is a virtue. As the world sleeps and no single person is awake to break the precious silence. Eventually, one after another, everyone begins to wake. As the man awakens he looks to his wife and smiles as all of the cloudy memories flood into the front of his mind like a tidal wave.

Alder Creek Student

Oregon Still Life

Childe Hassam, 1904

The fruit bowl of fruit
The fruit she loved
The fruit of the girl who loved me so
Red apples, red like her lips
Pink plums, sweet like her
A fuzzy peach, soft just like her
A pear, skinny and tall
It reminds me of her
But the lemon, sour like the day she left me
The only fruit I hate.

Beach Student
Object Stories: Gallery Worksheet

Look at people and their objects in the kiosk or cases. Pick one that seems interesting to you.

Answer the following:
Name of the Object’s Owner: ____________________________________
Six-word story, or Title: ________________________________________

1. Why did you pick this object?

2. Fill in the blanks and complete the sentence with as much detail and description as you can:
   • I see...
   • This object makes me think of ______________________________ because I know...
   • I think the object is important to this person because...

Listen to their story.

3. In one sentence DESCRIBE the object again in as much detail as possible.

4. Recall two pieces of INFORMATION that you think are the most important to the story.
   •
   •

5. Identify the SETTING or PEOPLE in the story.

6. What did you learn about this object from listening to the story?
Your Name: ________________________________

Your Object: ___________________________________________________________________

Your Object Story Title, or Six-Word Story:

___________________________________________________________________________

Tag your story. These are the 2 words you would use to search, or “google,” your story. You can come up with your own or pick 2 from the list.

1. __________________________   2.____________________________

Suggestions:

friendship          hope
tricky             joyful
comic              fear
love               trust
underdog           courage
strange            spirituality
travel             fame
messy              growth
dramatic           fate
cautionary         love
lighthearted       grace
mysterious         loss
kooky              fear
tragic             memory
comic              time
reality            blessings
adventure          happiness
morality           remorse
remembrance        home
wonder             identity
longing            understanding
truthful           scary
silly              witty
nice               sad
passionate         angry
happy              frightening
thoughtful         marvelous