Common Core Lesson: Identity and the Digital Age in Contemporary Art

Grade Level: 9th - 12th grade

Subject: Art History/Technology Studies

Objective: Students will be able to analyze how contemporary artists respond to technological change in relation to identity, explore the use of digital media and social media platforms in contemporary art, and reflect on the impact of technology on our understanding of self and society.

Common Core Standards:

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.9-10.7: Integrate quantitative or technical analysis (e.g., charts, research data) with qualitative analysis in print or digital text.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.WHST.9-10.2: Write informative/explanatory texts, including the narration of historical events, scientific procedures/ experiments, or technical processes.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.11-12.1: Initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.

Materials:

Examples of contemporary artworks that respond to technological change and explore identity (digital artworks, interactive installations, social media projects, etc.) Please see resources below for examples.

Chart paper or whiteboard

Art history textbooks or online resources

Writing materials

Procedure:

Introduction (10 minutes)
Begin by discussing the impact of technology on our lives and the changes it has brought to our understanding of identity.
Ask students to share their thoughts on how technology has shaped their own identity and their relationship to the world.

Contemporary Art and Technological Change (15 minutes)
Provide an overview of how contemporary artists are responding to technological change in their work, focusing on the exploration of identity.
Discuss the use of digital media, interactive installations, and social media platforms in contemporary art.
Show visual examples of artworks that exemplify these themes and techniques.

Analysis of Artworks (25 minutes)
Display visual examples of contemporary artworks that explore identity in the digital age.
Facilitate a class discussion on each artwork, encouraging students to analyze the artistic techniques, concepts, and messages conveyed.
Ask guiding questions to prompt critical thinking and discussion, such as: How does this artwork use technology to explore identity? How does it challenge traditional notions of representation? How does the artist engage with social media platforms to create and share their work?

Group Activity: Artist Research (30 minutes)
Divide students into small groups and assign each group a contemporary artist who engages with technology and identity in their work.
Instruct students to research their assigned artist, examining key artworks, techniques, and the artist's perspective on identity and technology.
Each group should create a presentation or infographic summarizing their findings and insights.

Group Presentations (20 minutes)

Have each group present their research on the assigned artist to the class, showcasing visual examples and engaging in a discussion about the artist's approach to technology and identity.

Encourage students to ask questions and share their thoughts on the impact of technology on our understanding of self and society, as well as the role of the artist in addressing these themes.

Reflection and Discussion (10 minutes)

Facilitate a whole-class discussion on the ways in which technology is shaping our understanding of identity and the implications for individuals and society.

Ask students to reflect on how the examples of contemporary art they explored have challenged or expanded their own perspectives on identity in the digital age.

Encourage students to share their own ideas or experiences related to technology and identity.

Assessment:

Assess students' understanding of the relationship between technology and identity through their active participation in class discussions and group presentations.

Evaluate students' ability to analyze and interpret contemporary artworks that explore identity in the digital age through their group research and presentations.

Assess students' reflective thinking through their written reflections on the impact of technology on their own identity and society as a whole.

Recommended Artists who engage with technology and identity in their work:

Trevor Paglen: Trevor Paglen's work explores surveillance, data collection, and the impact of technology on privacy, revealing the hidden aspects of our digital lives.

Rafael Lozano-Hemmer: Rafael Lozano-Hemmer creates interactive installations that often incorporate biometric data, allowing viewers to engage with technology to explore the concept of identity in the digital age.

Shu Lea Cheang: Shu Lea Cheang is known for her pioneering work in net art and explores issues of gender, sexuality, and identity in the context of online spaces.

Jenny Holzer: Jenny Holzer uses LED technology to display thought-provoking text-based artworks in public spaces, addressing social and political issues and challenging viewers to consider their own identities.

Rashaad Newsome: Rashaad Newsome combines video, performance, and technology to examine themes of race, gender, and identity within the context of popular culture and technology.

Resources:

Book: "You Are Here: Art After the Internet" by Omar Kholeif - This book examines the intersection of art, technology, and identity in the internet age. It delves into how contemporary artists have responded to the digital revolution, social media, and online culture to redefine concepts of identity and self-expression.

Book: "Postinternet: Art After the Internet" edited by Gene McHugh - This anthology explores the ways in which contemporary artists use digital media and the internet to engage with issues of identity and society. It features critical essays and artworks that reflect on the impact of technology on our understanding of self and art.

Book: "Art and the Internet" by Phaidon Editors - This book provides an overview of how the internet has influenced contemporary art and identity. It showcases a wide range of artists who utilize digital media and online platforms in their work, examining how these technologies have shaped art and society.

Extensions:

Invite a guest speaker, such as a contemporary artist or a technology expert, to share their insights and experiences related to the intersection of art, technology, and identity.

Organize a field trip to a local art exhibition or museum featuring contemporary artworks that engage with technology and identity.

Encourage students to create their own artworks that explore the themes of technology and identity, using various digital media or social media platforms as their artistic medium.