

Statue of Liberty Class-as-Curator Workshop

This lesson plan was developed for a workshop at the Teaching and Learning Center at the CUNY Graduate Center in February, 2018. It combines the pedagogies of physicality, narrativity, and materiality to create a classroom-based curatorial process. By turning students into curators and the classroom into a gallery, these activities also harness the contemporary practices, skills, and social identities that many students are familiar with from social networking, where each of us is the curator of our own life, and the art critic of others'. We chose to focus on the Statue of Liberty since its history and meaning are iconic. Try some or all of the activities in this sequence with your own course-specific content!

Lesson Name: Statue of Liberty Class-as-Curator Workshop

Lesson Type: Physicality, Narrativity, Materiality

Course Title and Description: Museum Pedagogy in the Classroom Workshop, Teaching and Learning Center, CUNY

Pedagogical Considerations:

- This lesson combines several activities that highlight museum pedagogies into a sequence.
- These activities can be combined, expanded, used separately or in the sequence laid out here.

Content Objectives:

- Students explore how various museum methods can be applied to the college classroom.
- You may wish to reveal your methodology in selecting the images of the Statue of Liberty. That in itself is a curatorial process that you, the teacher, undertook.

Materials:

- Image of the Statue of Liberty, which you might supplement with additional objects and images
- Tape to affix images to walls

Procedure

Barometer (5 min)

As everyone to stand up and direct them to a long space where your entire class can stand up. (A hallway works well if your room is too crowded)

- Ask: **Does the Statue of Liberty Represent America?**
 - On one side: Yes, 100%

- On the other: No, not at all
- Tap 2 people on the shoulder, ask them to explain why they're standing where they are.

Rummaging (5 minutes)

Spread out the images of the Statue of Liberty included in the powerpoint on desks or on the walls, and encourage students to walk around the space as they rummage. You may wish to say a word of two about where these images came from/how you selected them.

- "Look through the representations of the Statue of Liberty we've provided. Take a minute to choose one that speaks to you."

Close Looking (2 minutes)

Ask everyone to take their image and find a seat.

- Look at just this one image closely for 2 minutes. Write down as many descriptors as you can—what do you see? What do you wonder?

Tell a Story and Narrative Voices (15 min)

- "As you know, the Statue of Liberty has a poem on it, [The New Colossus](#), which was written by Emma Lazarus. In it, she imagines what Lady Liberty would say if she could speak. [Read it]
- Now it's your turn to put words in your statue's mouth. Take a few minutes to write a short poem or statement that you would imagine your statue of Liberty saying."
- "Find 1-2 other partners and share your images and what you wrote."
- Small Group Discussion:
 - What would you imagine these two statues saying to each other? From your statue's perspective, how would it react to these other statues and why?
- Ask a few pairs to share their image, one or both poems, and the conversation they had
- Ask what distinct ideas about the meaning or depiction of the Statue of Liberty emerged from this?

Class as Curator (10 min)

Ask the pairs to combine into groups of 4.

- "You have been chosen to curate an exhibit about the Statue of Liberty. How will you display these images?"
 - Think about how you will choose to arrange the images: According to chronology? Meaning? Perspective? Material? Relative height, size, and order to curate them

Gallery Walk (10 min)

- Ask the entire group to gravel from “exhibit” to “exhibit.” Each explains their curatorial choices and how they came to them.

Repeat of the above barometer (5 min)

Ask everyone to stand up and direct them to a long space where the entire class can stand up. (A hallway works well if your room is too crowded)

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