

DESIGN CHALLENGE - The 14th Dalai Lama

Art for Cross-Cultural Communication

OVERVIEW

In this challenge, students will use art to facilitate cross-cultural communication. They will study how art is used to share important messages, exploring public art, both formal and informal. Students will then use art to share the story of an identity being challenged. As a final step, they'll share their artwork with students in other communities to spark cross-cultural dialogue and discussion.

Students will use the design process to create purposeful art and gather feedback to help them refine and better communicate through their art. Feel free to tailor this experience to meet the needs and interests of your students, retaining following essential elements:

1. Students should keep "the right to identity" as the central theme of their artwork
2. Students should share their art with others both for feedback to iterate, and as a tool to facilitate cross cultural dialogue with students in another community
3. Students should follow the 5 steps in the design process to guide their design challenge.

What can this look like?

- Students can work individually, with a partner, or in a small group
 - This design challenge can be done in the classroom, as part of an after school club or project, or a combination of at home and in-school work
 - You can make this design challenge as small or large scale as you'd like, and complete it in a couple of weeks (dedicating one day to each of the stages of the design process below) or extend it to a month or semester.
 - Steps in [the design process](#):
 - Step 1: Empathize
 - Step 2: Define the problem
 - Step 3: Ideate
 - Step 4: Prototype
 - Step 5: Test(students should be encouraged to return to any of the above steps to continue problem solving and iterating until they've found an effective and sustainable way to take action)
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Design Challenge: Art for Cross Cultural Communication

Part I.

Art As a Communication Tool

To begin, students will explore how art is used as a communication tool. They will explore how people around the globe have used a variety of art forms to share important messages and spark communication.

Materials:

- Computers with internet access, books or other learning materials that will allow students to explore how art is used as a tool for cross-cultural communication.

Steps:

1. Allow students to explore different artists and art forms that have been used to communicate powerful messages and create dialogue around an important issue.
 - Option 1: guide students in their learning by pointing them to selected artists and artwork in books, online, or even by visiting a local museum or public art in your community.
 - Option 2: allow students to do their own research to learn how different artists who have used art to communicate important messages and stir conversation around social issues. If you choose this option, give your students parameters to help them focus their research and to ensure they explore only appropriate content.

Part II.

What Will My Art Say?

After students have explored different artists and artwork used to communicate and spark communication around social issues, have them brainstorm the **central message they want their art to communicate**, and explain how it will foster **cross-cultural dialogue**.

Materials:

Student worksheet: What will My Art Say?

Steps:

1. Explain to students that before they think about the type of art they want to create, they must identify the important issue they want their art to address, and what specifically about that issue their art will communicate.
 - Remind students that the type of communication this design challenge focuses on is “cross-cultural dialogue,” so their art should not only

communicate something about a social issue, it should also engage the audience to ask questions and spark further discussion.

- Use the student worksheet “What Will My Art Say?” to help students identify the central message they want their art to communicate, and explain how it will foster cross-cultural dialogue.
2. Next, ask students to brainstorm a list of different forms of art that they can use in this design challenge. The goal is to help them understand that “art” is not limited to painting, drawing, and sculpture.
 3. Following, have students brainstorm different mediums and tools they can use to create their art.

Example list of different forms of art students can use in this design challenge:

- Music
- Photography
- Poetry
- Literature
- Performance
- Theatre
- Film/Video
- Painting
- Drawing
- Sculpture
- Graffiti
- Mural

Example list of medium and tools students can use in this design challenge:

- Graphic design (computers, graphic design software)
- Audio and video recording tools
- Instruments
- Pencil and paper or basic word processing software (Microsoft Word, Google Docs, etc.)
- Paint, oil pastels, spray paint, watercolor, chalk, ink, pencil

4. Finally, have students bring everything together by deciding what kind of art they will create to facilitate cross-cultural communication on the social issue they chose.
 - Remind students to pick an art form that interests them and plays to their personal strengths and talents.
 - Students can work individually or in pairs or small groups on their artwork.

Part III.

Design process step 1: Empathize

Once your students have identified an issue they want to address, but before they begin planning for their artwork, guide them through the first step of the design process: Empathize.

Materials:

Student worksheet: Step 1: Empathize

Steps:

1. Review the student worksheet for this step in the design process.
2. Explain to students that the way to empathize for this design challenge is to spend time learning as much about the social cause they want their art to facilitate communication around, and explore what others in their community and outside their community are already saying about this topic.
3. Students can learn more about their selected issue and the dialogue that already exists around it by doing “research,” that can take any of the following forms:
 - Field trips
 - Reading
 - Online research
 - Conducting or listening to interviews
 - Watching documentaries
 - Listening to podcasts
 - Exploring social media from trusted sources

Part IV.

Design process step 2: Define the Problem

Once your students have spent time learning about the issue their art will address, and the current communication already happening around this issue, they’ll use step 2 of the design process to explain why cross-cultural dialogue around this issue is important.

By the end of this step, the goal is that students have a specific and clear problem statement that will guide the rest of their Design Challenge.

Materials:

- Student worksheet: Step 2: Define the Problem

Steps:

1. Review the student worksheet for this step in the design process.
2. Focus students’ attention on the following during this step:
 - What are the problems that cross-cultural dialogue can help solve? Choose *one* problem that can be solved by cross-cultural dialogue for this design challenge.

3. In addition to the student worksheet, you may have students use any of the following additional strategies to help them define the problem and create their problem statement:
 - Peer discussion
 - Journaling
 - List making
 - Drawing
 - Idea mapping
 - Sharing possible actions with people affected by the problem (if possible) for feedback

Part V.

Design process step 3: Ideate

Now that your students have narrowed down one specific problem that cross-cultural dialogue can help solve, they are ready to have some fun coming up with ideas for the artwork they will create!

Materials:

- Student worksheet: Step 3: Ideate

Steps:

1. Review the student worksheet for this step in the design process.
2. As students ideate, and encourage them to be bold, creative, and unafraid of listing as many possible ideas as they have to complete this challenge. Let them dream big and go for quantity—the more ideas the better!
3. During this step, students can brainstorm both different forms of art they might create, and different elements they want to include in their artwork.

Part VI.

Design process step 4: Prototype

In this stage of the design process, students create a sketch, storyboard, quick model, or other “blueprint” to illustrate the artwork they will create. The idea is to come up with a plan to ensure their artwork communicates the message they intend, and invites others to join the conversation. (In the next step, they will need this prototype to get feedback from others which they can use to improve, or even to scrap their plan all together and circle back to step 3 (Ideate) to continue brainstorming or choose a different idea.)

Materials:

- Student worksheet: Step 4: Prototype

Steps:

1. Review the student worksheet for this step in the design process.
2. Remind students that a prototype should be a quick mock-up of what they intend to create to get feedback before they invest time and energy into their actual project

- This means they do not have to use the same medium to prototype that they intend to use for their artwork. For example, a student who wants to create a sculpture does not have to create a “mini-sculpture” or even a 3-D model. A simple sketch of the sculpture will do. A student who wants to write a song does not have to write a complete song, but might start by putting a few lines to a beat.

Part VII.

Design process step 5: Test

Once your students have a basic prototype, it's time to test it to see if their planned art will communicate the central idea they wish to express, and invite others to ask questions and join in the conversation.

Materials:

- Student worksheet: Step 5: Test

Steps:

1. Review the student worksheets for this step in the design process.
2. Help students connect with others for feedback. Ideally, students can connect with peers from a different community to make sure their key message comes across as they intend, and that it invites others in (and doesn't alienate or make others feel afraid to join the conversation around this issue.)
3. Make sure students record the feedback they receive, and encourage them to think critically about what feedback they will choose to incorporate.

Part VIII.

Share & Reflect

Because the goal of this design challenge was for students to use art to foster cross-cultural dialogue, sharing their art is a critical final step. There are many different ways students can share their art—an exhibit in your school or community, at a local art museum, or even through an online webpage. Ideally the way they share their art not only allows others to view or experience it, but has a space for viewers to interact, ask questions, and “join in” the conversation.

Celebrate your students' hard work and achievements! Consider having a class celebration where students or groups can share the story of the journey they took in this design challenge. Invite others to come and look, listen, and ask questions. Remind your students (and any invited audience) that this Design Challenge was not simply a “school project,” but rather the same exact process designers, engineers, scientists, and many others use in the real world every day

to develop solutions to complex challenges.

Teacher resources for Design Challenge:

- [Write a Problem Statement](#) (teacher and student resource)
- [The Design Thinking Process](#)
- [Common Sense Education: “Curate a Gallery”](#)