Insights of the visual art

Image caption: Between the past and future – exploring the visual artwork in the light of new technologies. Parisian museum The Louvre is marking the 500th anniversary of the death of Leonardo da Vinci by creating a virtual reality experience about his most famous piece of work, the Mona Lisa. The Louvre's curatorial team worked alongside HTC Vive Arts to create the experience, which will allow audiences around the world to gain new insight into the painting, as part of a wider retrospective exhibition covering da Vinci's life and work, which is open to the public on October 24, 2019.

Photo source: https://arts.vive.com/us/articles/projects/art-photography/mona_lisa_beyond_the_glass/

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General overview

Masterpiece "Mona Lisa" by Leonardo da Vinci is one of the most known examples of tangible cultural heritage in a visual art area. The name of it sometimes is used as a label describing the most popular exhibit of the museum (e.g. https://www.edvardmunch.org/the-scream.jsp, https://www.princessehof.nl/collectie/topstukken/mingvaas/). At the same time, it is one of the thousands of examples from the cultural heritage objects listed in UNESCO World Heritage List (can be found here: https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/) or cultural property list of individual countries. For example Lithuania has more than 7000 thousands registered movable cultural property objects (List can be find here: https://kvr.kpd.lt/#/heritage-search). What makes our eyes stop near some of them or pass through others? What is behind them: details, connections, stories? How to learn to see the creation not the item? The exercise was inspired by the publication "How to look at art" by Jane Norman, the author of a popular lecture series at the Metropolitan museum "The art of seeing".

We expect that implementation of the exercise will encourage students to take a closer look at the world wide known cultural heritage objects and at the same time to learn more about the cultural property around them.

Take a closer look at the visual art. Activity overview

In modern today's world – full of rapidly changing images, accessible with the one touch of a finger, teachers may find it difficult to find ways to present students the visual art objects that is immovable, unchanging, and uniquely unfolded by exploring the work itself, its individual symbols and their encoded stories. We offer this exercise as a tool which teachers can use to encourage students to explore and look deeper, analyze and discuss the well known works of art.

Historically, math has played an important role in visual art, particularly in perspective drawing; i.e., the means by which a three-dimensional scene is rendered convincingly on a flat canvas or piece of paper. Mathematics and art are two seemingly disparate fields according to contemporary views, the first often considered analytical and the second emotional. In the first part of the exercise, students will be able to compete by analyzing artwork using geometric shapes. Different geometric shapes also surround us in our everyday environment. With this exercise, students will have the opportunity to take a closer look at it. This exercise will invite students to reflect on which figures we identify more easily than others, how these figures fit into the artwork, or how they affect our emotions. In the second part of the exercise, proposed activity will invite students to investigate the visual artwork objects in a local or regional area. How can it become interesting and encourage interest to reveal it closer not only for art lovers, but for all of us? How digital programs can help to do it in an engaging way? In this exercise, students will have the opportunity to improve their analytical skills, skills to deal with complexity, identify individual details and reflect on their connection, as well as how they can enrich the presentation of their chosen topic.

The activity can be applied for the VET students of various programmes during the subject/topic related to #history,#culture, #ICT, #art, #math and engineering.

General objectives:
- To increase the knowledge and awareness about the worldwide known visual art object also local (regional) one of the students;
- To foster their curiosity about the world, and a willingness to participate in cultural experiences;
- To explore the ways of visual literacy competence development.

Descriptive activity sheet

1st activity "Shapes in the visual art"

Resources for the activity implementation: network, computer, projector, mobile phone/camera.

The exercise should start with the presentation and discussion to explore the main definitions and resources related to the visual art topic.

- What is visual art?
- What is the role of visual art?
- What part does it take in the cultural heritage list?
- What visual art examples can we relate to cultural heritage site?
- What makes us think about the visual art object as a cultural heritage site?

The sources to encourage the discussion are available in the internet e.g. : https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QZQyV9BB50E or prepared by the teacher.

The presentation and discussion will help you to define the exercise entry level (pre-knowledge about visual art, cultural heritage) of the students and proceed with the following activity. Invite the students to search in the internet and choose one of the well-known visual art examples, defined as object of cultural heritage: e.g. 20 of the World's Most Famous Art Pieces:
https://historylists.org/art/20-of-the-world's-most-famous-art-pieces.html;
https://en.unesco.org/galleries/unesco-works-art-collection
The students have to analyze the work of art and try to identify concrete details – basic forms of it: squares, triangles and circles, irregular shapes. Which one(-s) are the most noticeable?
Students have to save the picture of the chosen art example as a jpg or pdf file and point out the identified shape using the Toolbar of the programme (or Paint, Gimp and etc. programs).
E.g.
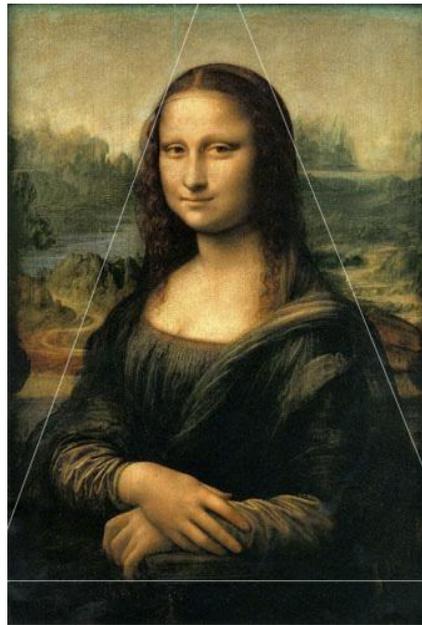
After it, students have to look for the similar shapes in the environment related to their training programme. They have to find and upload or make a photo themselves (using the mobile phones or camera) and do the same marking for it. Present and discuss the findings with the class – was it easy to identify the shapes? The same activity can be held identifying the colors of the picture and environment around us.

Example of the students photo.

Results of the activity.

Each group of the students have to present at least 2 photos – famous visual art objects and images related to their training programme. The identified details – similar shapes (colors) have to be marked by the help of the chosen software programmes in here. Group also can be asked to prepare a short verbal presentation of the chosen visual art object (author, date, the place of exhibit, other available interesting details) and shapes identified.

Recommendations for the teacher:
1. We recommend to organize this activity as a teamwork in order to cover competences listed below, but it also can be organized as an individual work by the need.
2. Lead the group to choose different pieces of art and try to identify as many forms as possible – this will help your class get acquainted with a wider range of objects of visual art.
3. Encourage students to reason and discuss why some of them include more angled or round details, small or big, bright or pale, and develop their visual literacy.

This activity should help students to broaden their knowledge of local, national, regional, European and global cultures expression through visual arts also develop these key competences:

Cultural awareness and expression competence by developing their skills:
- to recognize the different ways of communicating ideas between creator and audience within art and design;
- to recognize cultural heritage within a world of cultural diversity and visual arts can be a way to both view and shape the world;

Digital competence by developing their skills:
- to use digital technologies to support their creativity towards learning goals;
- to use, create, and share digital content.

The evaluation of the activities of this stage:
Based on the tasks of this activity, we suggest a number of assessment criteria that may be applicable during this stage.
1. Assessment in relation to the requirements of the particular subject (ICT subject: proper use of the specified programs. Art subject: ability to identify the specified details and other peculiarities of the image, presentation of the visual art object, demonstrated knowledge of art).

2. The whole task can be evaluated in the frame of group workflow – are the students involved in the activity, do they understand the task and can present their findings during it.

3. Use / refinement of skills attributed to specific key competences areas during this exercise, also ability to apply the pre- and gained knowledge of different subjects.

Recommended evaluation of the skills related to the cultural awareness and expression competence:
- The idea, context and/ or details of the object of visual art is presented in a proper way.

Recommended evaluation of the skills related to the digital competence:
- The required shapes are identified and marked in a correct way.

2nd activity "Look around"

Resources of the activity implementation. Network, computer, projector, mobile phone/camera.

Invite students to think about visual art objects, which can be found in the area near them (sculpture, painting in the museum and ect.). Ask them to to find as much as possible information about it on the internet, contact the local tourism office. Students have to plan the visit and take a photo, revealing the detail(s) of the exhibit, which usually can not be noticed from the first sight. The results of the students research and visit has to be presented in the prepared presentation (by the programmes Canva, PowerPoint or similar).

Results of the activity.
Oral presentation illustrated by the digital content.

Recommendations for the teacher:
- Help students to map the area they can look for and object, and contact the tourism office;
- Put them on a tract with some examples, which can be implemented by all classes with the help of the teacher. You can find some inspiration ideas in a Google Arts & Culture website: https://artsandculture.google.com/;
- Timeframes of the task implementation should be agreed according to the entry level of the students.

This activity should help students to broaden their knowledge of local, national, regional, European and global cultures expression through visual arts also develop these key competences:

Cultural awareness and expression competence by developing their skills:
- to get and apply the knowledge about the local (regional) visual art objects;
- to communicate ideas with audience oral and digital content;
- to recognize cultural heritage within a world of cultural diversity and visual arts can be a way to both view and shape the world.

Digital competence by developing their skills:
- to use digital technologies to support their creativity towards learning goals;
- to use, create, and share digital content.

Personal, social and learning to learn competence:
- to communicate constructively in different environments, collaborate in teams and negotiate;
- to identify individual (group) capacities, focus on the task, deal with complexity, critically reflect and make decisions necessary to implement the task.

The evaluation of the activities of this stage:
Based on the tasks of this activity, we suggest a number of assessment criteria that may be applicable during this stage.
1. Assessment in relation to the requirements of the particular subject (ICT subject: the quality of the digital presentation. Culture/history related subject: ability to identify/ summarize and present the information about the cultural object).

2. The whole task can be evaluated in the frame of group workflow – are the students involved in the activity, do they understand the task and can present their findings during it. The main criteria of such task evaluation should be presented to the class:
- identification of required info;
- quality of structured presentation;
- ability to work in group, organize and present the group work;
- creativity in the presentation of findings;
- ability to express their opinion, knowledge and perceptions in a respective way.

3. Use / refinement of skills attributed to specific key competences areas during this exercise also ability to apply the pre- and gained knowledge of different subjects.

Recommended evaluation of the skills related to the cultural awareness and expression competence:
- the information about the local (regional) visual art object is comprehensive, various available sources are used;
- oral presentation is linked to and clearly illustrated by prepared digital presentation;
- visual art objective is presented with an open attitude and respect for cultural expression;
- knowledge of local, national, regional, European and global cultures, and expressions are applied in a proper way.

Recommended evaluation of the skills related to the digital competence:
- in order to evaluate this competence properly teacher should be aware about the entry level of the students to identify if they used all potential knowledge to create a qualitative digital content due to they capacities and required task;
- the product is created and presented in a creative and proficient way.

Recommended evaluation of the skills related to the personal, social and learning to learn competence:
- to manage time and information effectively;
- to identify individual/group capacities, focus, deal with complexity, critically reflect and make decisions;
- to collaborate in a team and negotiate (showing tolerance, expressing and understanding different viewpoints).

Other resources

Visual literacy:
Toledo Museum of Art: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=O39niAzuapc

Teaching visual literacy in the classroom:
https://www.literacyideas.com/teaching-visual-texts-in-the-classroom

Shape as a visual element of art: https://www.artyfactory.com/art_appreciation/visual-elements/shape.html