Student-Designed Docent Tour
Primary Content Area:  Art I

Introduction
One of the best ways to demonstrate learning of a subject is to teach it to others. High school students in Art I classes can accomplish this by designing and completing a docent-led tour of an art museum or gallery for special needs students (Autistic/TMH) in the high school or elementary level. Art I students will research artists and artworks specific to the gallery/museum for visitation after getting to know their partner student. Students will design an interactive gallery guide and tour which will discuss the aesthetic qualities, narratives and artists’ lives for chosen artworks at an appropriate cognitive level. The motivation for the project is for high school aged students to empathize with individuals with special needs and their capabilities. This interaction is meant to provide insight to the abilities, personality and character of those with special needs and for them to be viewed as employable individuals who can contribute to society.

Project Goals
- Art I students will demonstrate their knowledge of the principles and elements of art through the selection and analysis of artworks for a docent-led tour.
- Students will use technology and traditional tools to create an interactive museum guide and activity book.
- Students will apply the knowledge garnered during research to act as a docent in a student-led gallery/museum tour.
- Students will realize the valuable role in society people with special needs fill.
- Students will develop an understanding of the capabilities and potential these individuals possess.
- Students will reflect upon their experience.

Procedure/Project Sequence
1. Art I small groups will be paired with special needs students and have a meet and greet and ice-breaker activity before they begin planning their tour.
2. Students will research the art museum or institution and its artworks and artists using the Internet in small groups (2-4 individuals). Alternatively, students can take a field trip to the museum to conduct their research. Students should conduct background research on the artist or work of art they wish to focus on prior to the visit. Their research will allow them to target certain galleries, artists or artworks efficiently once they arrive at the museum.
3. Students will plan their tour logically and make notes for items to include in the activity book during a pre-service field experience.
4. Students will work in their groups to develop an activity book for special needs students in which they can reflect on their trip and favorite artworks utilizing themes such as best story, most colorful, favorite artwork, ugliest artwork, etc.
5. The service activity will involve Art One students acting as docents and leading the special needs students on an individualized tour of specifically chosen artworks in the museum. Docent students will guide special needs students through the activity booklet and allow time for students to create responses to the prompts in the booklet. Following the tour, students will eat lunch together and spend time adding additional drawings or text to the activity guides.
6. Students will host a party for the special needs students during which they will share the drawings and text from the activity booklets with partner groups. Students will also write a reflection in which they discuss their pre-service assumptions and feelings. They will reflect upon the experience and if and how their ideas changed during the project.

**Community Partners/Resources**

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<tr>
<th>Organization</th>
<th>Contact Information</th>
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<tr>
<td>Intuit Gallery of Outsider &amp; Folk Art</td>
<td><a href="http://www.art.org">www.art.org</a> 312/243-9088</td>
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<tr>
<td>Museum of Contemporary Art</td>
<td><a href="http://www.mcachicago.org">www.mcachicago.org</a> 312/397-3838</td>
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<td>National Museum of Mexican Art</td>
<td><a href="http://nationalmuseumofmexicanart.org">http://nationalmuseumofmexicanart.org</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>The Art Institute of Chicago</td>
<td><a href="http://www.artic.edu">www.artic.edu</a> 312/223-9037</td>
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<td>Museum of Outsider Art</td>
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<td>Art Institute of Chicago Teacher Manuals</td>
<td><a href="http://www.artic.edu/aic/resourcefinder/resou">http://www.artic.edu/aic/resourcefinder/resou</a></td>
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<td>www2.mcachicago.org</td>
<td>rce-type-resourcefinder/26 312/443-3719</td>
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<tr>
<td>Best Buddies</td>
<td>a/supp_info/exhibits.html</td>
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**Addendum**

This project addresses the following Common Core Standards and Social Emotional Standards

- **CC.K-12.W.R.6 Production and Distribution of Writing: Use technology, including the Internet, to produce and publish writing and to interact and collaborate with others.**
- **CC.K-12.W.R.8 Research to Build and Present Knowledge: Gather relevant information from multiple print and digital sources, assess the credibility and accuracy of each source, and integrate the information while avoiding plagiarism.**
- **CC.K-12.SL.1 Comprehension and Collaboration: Prepare for and participate effectively in a range of conversations and collaborations with diverse partners, building on others’ ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.**

**Goal 2:** Use social-awareness and interpersonal skills to establish and maintain positive relationships.

- **A:** Recognize the feelings and perspectives of others
- **4b:** Use conversation skills to understand others’ feelings and perspectives

- **B:** Recognize individual and group similarities and differences
- **4b:** Demonstrate respect for individuals from different social and cultural groups.

- **C:** Use communication and social skills to interact effectively with others.
- **4a:** Evaluate the effects of requesting support from and providing support to others.

**Goal 3:** Demonstrate decision-making skills and responsible behaviors in personal, school, and community contexts.

- **C:** Contribute to the well-being of one’s school and community
- **4b:** Plan, implement, and evaluate one’s participation in a group effort to contribute to one’s local community.
**Duration**

Students who complete the entire project should be awarded between 15-20 service-learning hours depending on the amount of work spent creating the docent guide and the extent of the museum visit and interaction with younger pupils.

**Preparation:** Research on museum/gallery and artist – 2 hours
Field experience selecting artworks and organizing tour – 3 hours

**Action:** Creating activity and docent guide for special needs students – 4-6 hours
Field experience as docents for special needs students – 3 hours

**Reflection:** Partner with special needs student sharing activity books – 1 hour
Written reflection and classroom discussion – 1 hour

**Cross-Curricular Connections**

This project lends itself to many cross-curricular connections. It can easily be incorporated into a science or social studies class by using facilities such as the Peggy Notebaert Nature Museum, The Field Museum, Lincoln Park Zoo/Brookfield Zoo, or McCormick Tribune Freedom Museum.