

Photography:  
“Changing Faces”

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# Life Learning Academy Project-Based Curriculum

**Project Title:** Changing Faces

**Project Design Team and/or Instructors:** Justin Warren

**Subject Area(s):** Photography / Social Studies

**Grade Level(s):** 9-12

## **Project Overview:**

This lesson requires students to examine the diversity of appearance of human faces, and to recognize similarities and differences across racial, ethnic, and ancestral lines. This lesson helps students understand that visual similarities do not always abide by racial, ethnic, and cultural lines, and that assumptions based on appearance are often inaccurate. In addition, the lesson encourages students to acknowledge the validity of mixed-race categories, and the options individuals have to designate their own racial categories, or to use none at all. The photographic activities in this lesson challenge the student to control light, contrast, and composition in their photographs to create a balanced blend of two different images.

Specifically, students will define and discuss race, racial stereotypes, ethnicity, and cultural and regional differences. They then use photographic and darkroom techniques to create a composite photographic image wherein two photographic portraits are layered, and a hybrid image is formed. Students write about the creative process of conceptualizing the artwork, the technical challenges of executing the artwork, and several of the ideological issues presented by the artwork.

## **Educational Standards Addressed:**

1. **CA Visual Arts Standard 1 – Artistic Perception**, especially Benchmarks 9-12.1, 9-12.2, and 9-12.3.
2. **CA Visual Arts Standard 2 – Creative Expression**, including Benchmarks 9-12.1, 9-12.2, 9-12.3, and 9-12.4.
3. **CA Visual Arts Standard 3 – Historical and Cultural Context**, particularly Benchmark 9-12.2.
4. **CA Visual Arts Standard 4 – Aesthetic Valuing**, including Benchmarks 9-12.1, 9-12.2, and 9-12.3.
5. **CA Visual Arts Standard 5 – Connections, Relations, Applications**, especially Benchmarks 9-12.1 and 9-12.4.

## **Project Goals and Rationale:**

This project meets several important goals. First, it requires students to refine, and, in many cases, challenge their understanding of race, especially as it relates to ethnicity, ancestry, and culture, as well as social diversity, stereotypes, and discrimination.

Students are allowed to deconstruct 'race,' and understand it as a social tool used to affect power and control privilege, rather than as a biological imperative. Secondly, the students have an opportunity to apply their new understanding of race and its implications about 'diversity' to a creative photographic project. Specifically, students create a work of art that layers two unique facial portraits upon one another, which requires the viewer to consider visual similarities and differences in diverse faces. The finished artwork emphasizes the idea that diversity takes on many forms.

In addition, the lesson encourages students to question what takes place when two (or more) 'races' mix, and whether, or to what extent, current racial categorization remains practical. The hands-on art project provides students with a challenging and fun activity that offers a simple, exciting, and concrete launch point into a theoretical exercise in critical thinking on racial theory and diversity.

### **Project Objectives**

- Students will learn current and historical definitions of race, ethnicity, and engage in group discussion about the nature of these categories, the challenges they present, and changes in theory and practice with regard to race and diversity.
- Students will become familiar with the Bill of Rights for Racially Mixed People, and evaluate the validity of the ideas therein.
- Students will devise and test a number of methods for combining two photographs into one composite, and determine which method best suits their goals and creative vision.
- Students will create a finished work of photographic art that combines two images into one, and speaks to issues of race, ancestry, and diversity.
- Students will write a brief essay that articulates their understanding about race and diversity, explains their photographic goals and processes, and analyzes the success of their finished artwork.

### **Project Outline/Detailed Description**

See Project Outline.

### **Key Assignments:**

1. Discover how to combine two images together in the darkroom (2 – 4 examples)
2. Read about the arbitrary and changing nature of racial classification, and the mistake of assumptions based on physical traits
3. Review the Bill of Rights for Racially Mixed People
4. Activity: Trait-based assumptions
5. Try to combine two faces together  
Method 1: overlap two similar front-facing portraits

Method 2: overlap one frontal portrait with one profile portrait  
Method 3: tear apart similar frontal portraits and reassemble into collage  
Method 4: “shared eye” overlap

6. Select final artwork for display.
7. Write a brief essay describing the project and drawing connections between the artwork and the ideas of the lesson.

### **Assessment Methods and/or Tools:**

Assessment methods are described in the Project Outline. Rubrics are attached in Appendix A and B.

### **Supplemental Materials**

Root, Maria P.P., and Kelley, Matt, Eds., “Bill of Rights for Racially Mixed People,” *Multiracial Child Resource Book: Living Complex Identities*, MAVIN Foundation, 2003, p. 32.

PBS Online: Race – The Power of an illusion: “Human Diversity – Go Deeper,” *California Newsreel*, 2003. [http://www.pbs.org/race/000\\_About/002\\_04-background-01-11.htm](http://www.pbs.org/race/000_About/002_04-background-01-11.htm)

Lesson #	Content Outline	Teaching Sequence	Equipment and Materials	Preparation	Assessment
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## Changing Faces Unit Outline

1 90 min	Students learn the basic steps to creating overlapping images in the photographic darkroom, and practice completing an example image, noting any technical challenges that may interfere with creative goals.	<p>Discuss with students how it would be possible to create a photographic print that has more than one image on it. At least 2 darkroom techniques can accomplish this goal, and both should be noted. Discussion may also include methods to create overlapping images in the camera, as well as digital methods using photo editing software. (15 min)</p> <p>Demonstrate the key components of one (or both) darkroom methods for combining two images in one print. (10 – 15 min)</p> <p>Provide students time and materials to attempt this method. (45 min)</p> <p>Evaluate methods and results (15 min)</p>	Functional B&W photographic darkroom, enlargers, B&W film, photographic paper, developing chemicals, tape.	Prepare materials and (optional) examples.	Visually evaluate results of student work, discuss outcomes and process.
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Lesson #	Content Outline	Teaching Sequence	Equipment and Materials	Preparation	Assessment
2 55 – 70 min*  *not including optional assessment	Students read “Human Diversity – Go Deeper” as a group and discuss the reading. Students examine the “Bill of Rights for Racially Mixed People” and discuss the validity of each stated right.	<p>Present the reading packet. Assign reading roles, and read the “Human Diversity – Go Deeper” aloud as a group. (15 – 20 min)</p> <p>Discuss the reading, clarifying any confusing vocabulary and identifying the key points with students. (20 – 30 min)</p> <p>Read the “Bill of Rights for Racially Mixed People,” and discuss with students the validity of each ‘right’ as identified in the document. Allow for some time to debate some lines about which students disagree. (20 min)</p>	One copy per student of both the “Human Diversity – Go Deeper” reading and the “Bill of Rights for Racially Mixed People.”	Prepare reading packets. Familiarize yourself with the readings.	Verbal evaluation of students’ understanding of readings.  *OPTIONAL: Use a brief writing assignment to allow the students to respond to the readings. (Allow 15 – 30 min extra)

Lesson #	Content Outline	Teaching Sequence	Equipment and Materials	Preparation	Assessment
3 30 – 40 min	Students discuss and write about trait-based assumptions. Students identify connections between physical traits and racial/ethnic stereotypes. Students finish a written short-response/essay assignment.	<p>Provide the following writing prompts to students:</p> <p>Describe at least 3 assumptions that you think people make about you based on your appearance.</p> <p>Which (if any) of these assumptions are most accurate? Explain how.</p> <p>Which is the least accurate? Explain how.</p> <p>Is either assumption (whether accurate or not) justifiable? Why or why not?</p> <p>Require students to respond in paragraph format. (30 – 40 min)</p>	Materials to distribute writing prompt, pens, binder paper.	Gather materials, prepare prompts.	Use “Trait-based Assumptions Rubric” (Appendix A).

Lesson #	Content Outline	Teaching Sequence	Equipment and Materials	Preparation	Assessment
4 115 min*  *not including drying time for developed film	Students create facial portraits of each other. These portraits will be combined to create portrait composites.	<p>Identify the requirements of the finished portraits: consistent size, attention to light (bright side/dark side, even light, etc.), angle and direction of face, facial expression. (15 min)</p> <p>Provide students cameras, film, lighting equipment, space and time to complete the portraits. (45 min)</p> <p>Provide students time and resources to develop film. (40 min)</p> <p>Create contact sheets for image editing. (15 min once film is dry)</p>	Cameras, film, reflectors or other lighting devices, photographic darkroom, developing tools and chemicals.	Prep equipment and materials.	Examine the quality of the images on the developed film.
5 100 – 135 min	Students begin to explore the process of combining two images onto one sheet of photographic paper, creating a composite portrait. Students examine the advantages and challenges of	<p>Describe and demonstrate three different techniques for combining two (or more) images together to create a composite.</p> <p>Technique 1—Overlapping Negatives: Select two negatives with compatible images, overlap the negatives on the light table, attach them together with tape, insert negatives into the enlarger, follow standard procedure for printing one negative.</p>	Developed film, black & white darkroom with enlargers, photo developing chemicals, scissors, tape.	Prepare materials and equipment, create finished examples of the three techniques.	Assess the technical and aesthetic effects of each technique.

Lesson #	Content Outline	Teaching Sequence	Equipment and Materials	Preparation	Assessment
	three different technical methods.	<p>Technique 2 – Double projection:            Select two negatives with compatible images, insert 1 negative into enlarger, complete standard ‘test strip’ procedure, remove first negative and insert second negative into enlarger, repeat ‘test strip’ procedure’ evaluate both test strips and choose exposure times for each negative, insert one negative into enlarger and project image onto photo paper for designated exposure time, repeat with second negative by projecting the second image onto the same sheet of photo paper, follow standard developing procedure.</p> <p>Technique 3 – Collage:            Print individual images on separate sheets of paper, cut or tear into parts, assemble on posterboard.</p> <p>Provide students with materials, tools, and time to practice at least one of these techniques.</p>			

Lesson #	Content Outline	Teaching Sequence	Equipment and Materials	Preparation	Assessment
6 90 min	<p>After evaluating the relative merit of each of the three technical methods of combining images (lesson 5), students explore three different compositional and aesthetic choices and choose which will best suit their creative goals.</p> <p>NOTE: Lessons 5 &amp; 6 can be combined to whatever extent at the discretion of the instructor.</p>	<p>Identify three compositional choices that will create the most visual impact in the finished images.</p> <p>Comp 1 – completely overlap two similar front-facing portraits: Overlap the images so that both the eyes, nose, and mouth are layered directly upon one another.</p> <p>Comp 2 – overlap one frontal and one profile portrait: Layer a profile portrait on top of a front-facing portrait such that the eye in the profile overlaps the corresponding eye in the frontal portrait (i.e. right over right, left over left).</p> <p>Comp 3 – partially overlap two frontal portraits (sharing one eye): Overlap two frontal portraits such that opposite the left eye of one is superimposed over the right eye of the other (or vice versa).</p> <p>Provide students with materials, tools, and time to create at least one of these compositions.</p>	<p>Developed film, black &amp; white darkroom with enlargers, photo developing chemicals, scissors, tape.</p>	<p>Prepare materials and equipment, create finished examples of the three techniques.</p>	<p>Assess the aesthetic effects of each technique, and determine which offers the most visual impact and clarity.</p>

Lesson #	Content Outline	Teaching Sequence	Equipment and Materials	Preparation	Assessment
7 100 – 110 min	Students select their favorite technical method of combining two portraits, and choose a compositional style from the three examples. Students create a finished composite photograph integrating these choices together. Finished artwork is created on large-scale photographic paper (11x14") instead of standard (8x10") size paper.	<p>Review the technical and compositional choices available to the students as they consider how to create their final composite portrait. (10 min)</p> <p>Review requirements of finished artwork:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Composite must include two different images</li> <li>2. Images must overlap in a way that allows the viewer to see attributes of both faces.</li> <li>3. Student should be able to articulate how the composite portrait challenges racial stereotypes or encourages viewers to question their assumptions about the persons depicted.</li> </ol> <p>Provide materials, tools, and time for students to create the finished composite portrait. (90 – 100 min)</p>	Developed film, black & white darkroom with enlargers, photo developing chemicals, scissors, tape.	Prepare materials and equipment; identify requirements of finished artwork.	<p>Visually and verbally assess the technical and aesthetic merit of the finished product.</p> <p>OR</p> <p>Create a rubric that identifies the visual and technical goals and evaluate in writing.</p> <p>(recommended)</p>

Lesson #	Content Outline	Teaching Sequence	Equipment and Materials	Preparation	Assessment
8	Students write a brief essay about both the photographic and the sociological topics covered during the project.	<p>Provide students with materials to respond in writing to the following prompts:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. What is race? How has the definition of 'race' evolved over time? Is it still a useful idea today? Why or why not?</li> <li>2. Describe the steps you used to create a photographic composite.</li> <li>3. How does your composite portrait challenge the viewer to think about race, diversity, and the physical mixing of people of different ancestry? Explain in detail.</li> </ol>	Writing tools & paper, or a computer with a word processing application.	Prepare the prompts for presentation (handouts or overhead transparencies).	Use the "Diversity Photo Project Essay" Rubric (Appendix B).

# Appendix A:

## Trait-based Assumptions Rubric

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

### Organization

Essay is divided into distinct, well-organized paragraphs, each with a topic sentence that introduces the topic of that paragraph.

1      2      3      4      5

### Content

Student described at least 3 assumptions that they think people make about them based on their appearance.

1      2      3      4      5

Student explains which of these assumptions is most accurate and why.

1      2      3      4      5

Student identifies which assumption is the least accurate, and explains why.

1      2      3      4      5

Student describes whether they believe that the assumptions are justifiable and why.

1      2      3      4      5

### Style

Essay is free of spelling, grammar, and punctuation errors.

1      2      3      4      5

Essay is easy to read and understand.

1      2      3      4      5

## Appendix B:

### Diversity Photo Project Essay Rubric

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

#### Organization

Essay is divided into distinct, well-organized paragraphs, each with a topic sentence that introduces the topic of that paragraph.

1      2      3      4      5

#### Content

Essay offers a definition of race, and articulates ways in which the definition has evolved over time.

2      4      6      8      10

Essay addresses whether 'race' is still a useful social category, and provides reasons to support the stated position.

2      4      6      8      10

Essay clearly describes the materials, tools, and procedure(s) used to create a photographic composite that overlaps two images together.

2      4      6      8      10

Essay draws connections between the finished artwork and the issues of race, diversity, and the physical mixing of people of different ancestry.

#### Style

Essay is free of spelling, grammar, and punctuation errors.

1      2      3      4      5

Essay is easy to read and understand.

1      2      3      4      5





