

Module Report 9(b)

Frida Kahlo, An In-depth Study

Class Plan, Website Activity, Flash Concentration

I have chosen the Mexican artist Frida Kahlo as the artist with whom I would like to model an in-depth study. Her works are full of details and symbolism. They are also historical in the sense that she, along with her husband, Diego Rivera was instrumental in bringing Mexican art not only to the Mexican people, but to the world.

In this module, I present some traditional ideas and a recommended bibliography for introducing her life and her work in the classroom, guided questions for optimal viewing of the best Frida websites that I have found, and an interactive *Flash 5.0* concentration game that focuses on 18 of her works.

Class Plan

The Art Institute of Chicago sells postcard packets of works by many well-known and well-loved artists. These packets contain 30 reproductions of the art works. The packets are found in the bargain section of the bookstore, cost less than \$10.00 (I purchased them five years ago at \$5.99 each) and are of excellent quality.

The publisher of the packets is Taschen. Information about Taschen and for ordering materials online can be obtained at www.taschen.com.

Introduction

- Divide the class into groups of three to five students. Each group receives a postcard packet. Without looking at great length at the pictures, instruct the students to turn the postcards face down.
- Have the students put the cards in chronological order, according to the year that the work was painted.
- Once the cards are organized by year, have the students turn the cards right side up.
- Have the students look carefully at the cards and comment on any changes in style, subject, color, or other predominant details that they see in the artist's work.

The groups share their ideas with the class. At this point, students have not studied or read about the artist's life; therefore, their curiosity will be piqued, wondering what could have caused these changes.

- Students now focus once more on the cards, face up. Without looking at the title of the artwork, each student should choose one piece of art that they particularly like and one that they dislike. In groups, they should compare their cards and discuss what about the works make them feel as they do.

- Share opinions with the class to compare similarities.
- Looking once again at the favorite and least favorite artwork, distribute small cards, and have the students give a title to the works they have chosen.
- Turn the cards and compare their titles with the titles given by the artist. Discuss the results.

[Because Frida's works are quite realistic, the results are usually quite similar; however, the same activity with works by Dalí, Picasso, or Miró can lead to some pretty original and unusual results.]

Website Activity

Below are the best sites that I have found on Frida Kahlo. I give the students sites in both languages; this is done in order to give the students the opportunity to practice their reading skills and to verify that they have understood the material.

Website Information

<http://www.arts-history.mx/frida/> (español)

<http://members.aol.com/fridanet/kahlo.htm> (English)

Suggested Guide for Visiting the Websites

As you read the biographical information about Frida Kahlo, write down the five most important facts you learn about . . .

- Frida's birth and childhood.
- Frida in the 1930s.
- Frida in the 1940s.
- Frida's death.

[The purpose of this activity is to provide the student with simple and quick biographical information that will help them to understand the content of her work. By limiting the facts to the most important, you help the student to focus and not be overwhelmed by the information.]

Frida Flash Concentration Game

The postcard activity and the visit to the website help the students become quite familiar with the life and works of Frida Kahlo. The concentration (or memory) game was created to provide the students with an activity that would focus on 18 of the artist's most famous works.