



Materials:

ACTIVA Fast Mache
A small sandwich bags
Little cups of water
Wax paper
Acrylic gesso (if needed)
Colored permanent markers or acrylic paints
Spray acrylic clear gloss
Optional: flat back gems, sequins,
glitter mod podge, flowers

Resources:

Printed examples of various sugar skulls or Day of the Dead mask designs to have as examples
YouTube - CGI Student Academy Award Gold Medal Winner Short Film HD: "DIA De Los Muertos"
You Tube - The Wild Thornberrys ep Spirited Away PT 1 and PT 2

Lesson Plan Created by Melinda Dunn

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Fast Mache Day of The Dead Sugar Skulls

Lesson plan created by Melinda Dunn

Enduring Idea: The Learner will connect art to Hispanic culture and their traditions by learning about Dia de los Muertos – Day of the Dead. The learner will artistically create a sugar skull made out of fast mache.

Grade Levels: 2nd – 5th

Cross Curriculum: Art, Social Studies, Bilingual studies

National Standards History:

Understands selected attributes and historical developments of societies in Africa, the Americas, Asia, and Europe.

Understands the daily life, history, and beliefs of a country as reflected in dance, music, or the other art forms (such as painting, sculpting, and masks).

Knows the holiday and ceremonies of different societies.

TEKS Art

Explore ideas in family and community.
Discuss elements of art: form, line, color
Practice and produce modeled forms, sculptures
Connect art to history and cultures

Measurable Objectives:

Students will be familiar with the holiday, DIA de Los Muertos, telling about its origins and by creating their own decorative sugar skull from papier mache and selected other art materials.



Vocabulary:

Calaveras: sculptures of skulls used during DIA de Los Muertos and made out of sugar or papier-mache.

Dios de Los Muertos: a Hispanic celebration held throughout Latin American communities on November 1 and 2.

Ofrenda: an offering, often in the form of an altar, honoring ancestors and others.

Form: three dimensional and encloses volume; include height, width, and depth.

Sculpture: a piece of art that is made by carving or molding into a work of art.



Fast Mache Day of The Dead Sugar Skulls

Procedure:

- Discuss with students the brief history and origins of Day of the Dead and some of the traditions associated with the holiday. Show one of the videos above to peak interest. Many children associate skulls with scary stuff. Be sure to explain to them that these are created to memorialize loved one in a joyous way and as a celebration of their life.
- Make a distinction between Halloween and Day of the Dead. Halloween is October 31. Day of the Dead is November 1 and 2nd.
- Hand out small sandwich bags with a couple scoops of Fast Mache and small cups of water. Be sure to experiment with the amounts before the lesson to make sure you have the correct proportions. (I used two handfuls of paper mache and a portion cup (condiment cup) of water)
- Demonstrate the mixing process by adding the water to your bag of Mache and thoroughly mixing. Encourage the mixing into a ball and not smashing it out flat. Getting all mixture well blended into a ball in the corner of the bag. Water may need to be added if mixture is too dry. I recommend a spray bottle to spray water into the mixture. Fast Mache may need to be added if mixture is too wet.



- Once blended well with no dry parts, turn the bag inside out dumping the balled up mache onto the wax paper.
- Demonstrate how to form into a skull like form using the wax paper on the sides as to not get fingers too messy. Emphasize that this shouldn't be flat like a pancake, but more three dimensional. As students work their fast mache into a skull shape, you may spray their work with water if it is still a little dry in spots. Encourage them to blend their surface smooth using a dampened finger or the wax paper.

- With a sharpie, write names on the wax paper and then set aside to dry.
- Next class period, show and distribute various Day of the Dead skull designs. Note the symbols used often, the lines, and the colors.



- Some of the skulls may need a light sanding with fine sandpaper. The learners will create their own design on their skull using a black sharpie. Remind them that this work of art is not 2-dimensional, but 3-dimensional, meaning they should consider the sides of the skull as a part of their art warranting design as well. Write name on the bottom using the sharpie. Throw away wax paper.



- Now students may add color. One option is brightly colored permanent markers or even Crayola basic markers. The other option is to use acrylic paint and small brushes.
- Once skulls are dried, spray with an acrylic protective spray. Also, artists may add flat backed gems, flowers, sequins, etc.



Extending the Lesson:

- Create a class ofrenda (altar). Encourage students to bring pictures of loved ones who have died who they would like to remember. Set up a table with bright coverings, platters of breads or cookies, and vases of flowers. Have students display their sugar skulls on the ofrenda.
- Using ACTIVA Rigid Wrap Plaster Cloth, have older kids make masks on their faces and then trim them and paint them into actual Calavera masks.

