



CRAFT IN AMERICA

WEARABLES MADE FOR STORYTELLING EDUCATION GUIDE

Name:

Worksheet 1: Collaborative Design Planing

Part 1: Thinking about Graham Ebner and the way his creative process relies on collaboration and storytelling, work with your collaborative partner(s) to respond to the questions below:
How does collaboration lead to a unique cross-pollination of ideas? In other words, how can working with another person improve the outcome? How does this enhance the work of the artist?

How do custom-crafted clothing and wearable accessories—plus the embellishments or decorations featured on them—suggest stories about both the wearer and the maker? Give an example.

In what ways can contemporary adaptation to traditional craft inspire renewed interest among today's audiences? In other words, how do updated and new approaches to craft traditions make these traditions more interesting to younger audiences today? Give an example of an updated approach to a tradition that's personally interesting to you.



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Part 2: You and your partner(s) will co-create a design plan for a wearable artwork (clothing or accessory item) that suggests a story about the maker, the wearer, or both. Like the artist discussed in class, your collaboration should combine each partner's ideas into a clear plan.

Interview Question	Your answer	Your partner's answer
What personal, cultural, or literary story would you like to tell through your design?		
What emotions or memories do you have in connection to this story?		
What images, symbols, patterns, or materials come to mind when you think about this story?		

Identifying Common Threads

Which ideas or story elements overlap between your story and your partner's story?	
How could you combine both perspectives in your design? What symbols, materials, or patterns could be used to achieve this?	

Identify a theme or working title for your collaborative design:

Write 2 or 3 sentences describing the story you want to your wearable artwork to share:



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Worksheet 1: Collaboration and Cross-Pollination

Distribute Worksheet 1: Collaborative Design Planning. Assign or have students select collaborative partners to help them respond to the questions and prompts found in Part 1 of the worksheet. Ask the students and offer to them some of your own answers to the questions.

Part 1: Worksheet Questions with Sample Responses

- How does collaboration lead to a unique cross-pollination of ideas? In other words, how can working with another person improve the outcome? How does this enhance the work of the artists discussed?

Collaboration with others expands the kind of information that could be added to an idea or a plan, since it requires the collaborators to combine their knowledge and experiences. Ebner works in collaboration with clients, which improves the outcome of his plans and enhances the impact of his work by incorporating personal client interest and story with visual imagery. The clients are left with custom-made, heirloom quality craftworks that speak to the experiences and interests of both the maker and the wearers.

- How do custom-crafted clothing and wearable accessories—plus the embellishments or decorations featured on them—suggest stories about both the wearer and the maker?
 - *Images and styles worn by individuals speak to the culture and time period they come from.*
 - *The type of material used to make clothing and wearable accessories also tell a story about what a maker might have access to and what ability a wearer might have to afford certain materials.*
 - *Adding custom fitting, along with embellishment, adds layers of story to the wearable item that convey a sense of personal style and can emulate the personality of the wearer and/or maker.*
 - *One example that demonstrates this idea is the pair of cowboy boots featuring Paul Bunyan and his blue ox, Babe, designed and created by Graham Ebner, in collaboration with Kathie Sever of Fort Lonesome embroidery.*
 - *The imagery featured on the boots tell a story of the wearer's childhood vacation memories.*
 - *The materials and method of construction of the boots tell a story of the maker's training and personal design sensibility, and the decision to enlist the help of a fellow artist to embroider fluffy chest hair on Paul Bunyan and fluffy clouds in the sky convey a sense of playfulness in both the styling of the artists involved, as well as the disposition of the wearer.*
- In what ways can contemporary adaptation to traditional craft inspire renewed interest among today's audiences? In other words, how do updated and new approaches to craft traditions make these traditions more interesting to audiences today? Give an example of an updated approach to a craft tradition that's personally interesting to you.
 - *Updated and new approaches to craft traditions make them relatable to people today and offer a sense of connectedness to the past that carries into the present. The upcycling of used textiles, as can be seen in many DIY art examples created today, transforms objects otherwise discarded or forgotten into unique and fashionable items that can be enjoyed by new audiences.*

Prompt students to work with partners to generate their own answers to the worksheet questions, in the manner suggested above. Depending on prior knowledge of the student



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group, you may opt to intentionally assign student partners based on skill sets or interests (e.g. confident illustrator with an experienced stitcher).

Students interview partners and work together to identify a theme and story that they will incorporate into their wearable artworks. The prompts on Part 2 of the worksheet will guide them through the process of collaborative planning.

Explain that their responses to prompts such as those found on the worksheet will guide them through the planning process. With the worksheet, students first interview each other. They then review their responses and attempt to identify common threads. Finally, the worksheet prompts them to identify a theme and/or working title, along with a description of the story they hope their wearable artwork will tell.

Part 2: Worksheet Questions with Sample Responses

- What personal, cultural, or literary story would you like to tell through your design?
I would like to tell the story of my grandmother's immigration to the United States. My partner would like to tell the story of their favorite vacation trip to the beach.
- What emotions or memories do you have in connection to this story?
I feel pride when hearing the story of my grandmother's arrival to the United States. She overcame a lot of difficult circumstances. My partner feels love when they think of their favorite vacation trip to the beach. It was when they felt their family had the most fun together.
- What images, symbols, patterns, or materials come to mind when you think about this story?
For me, I think about the pattern of my grandmother's dress from the first photograph taken of her in the United States. For my partner, they think of the kinds of seashells they collected with their siblings on those vacations.

Prompts to Identify Common Threads

- Which ideas or story elements overlap between your story and your partner's story?
Both of our stories are about family members we love. Both stories also involve travel away from home.
- How could you combine both perspectives in your design? What symbols, materials, or patterns could be used to achieve this?
We could combine the patterns of my grandmother's dress with patterns of seashells. We could also overlap the dress pattern with sea shell images or create a dress in the style of my grandmother's dress, featuring a seashell pattern.

Identify a theme or working title for your collaborative design:

Traveling across time and memory

Write 1 or 2 sentences describing the story you want to your wearable artwork to share:

I want my artwork to tell the story of how travel can lead to life changing adventures and exciting events.

Distribute Worksheet 2: Choice Pathways, using it as a guide for students as they continue working with partners to plan their wearable artworks. From a range of possible options, students should select a choice that supports their collaborative goals, allowing them to create wearable art that tells visual stories. Invite students to browse internet tutorials to inform how they could utilize various



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technical options in their design plans, but also offer fabric marker, fabric paint, and iron transfer as options for each choice to ensure accessibility across ability and readiness levels. Choices include but are not limited to patches, scarves, and upcycled clothing items, utilizing techniques such as embroidery, appliqué, stamping, painting, stitching, mixed media, and quilting. Choices include:

- Story Stitching: Collaborate on a shared memory or story. Each partner designs one panel or section that connects visually to the other's.
- Partnering Patterns: Create a repeating pattern that incorporates symbols from each partner's story into one design.
- Patchwork Story: Piece together visual fragments from each partner's stories or found fabric associated with those stories.
- Texture + Technique: Split roles: One partner focuses on imagery, the other on embellishment or construction.
- Contemporary Creators: Combine traditional and contemporary processes (e.g. digital illustration + embroidery).