

Textile Waste and Fast Fashion Alternative Lesson Sequence

Adapted by Amy Azaroff from the original unit created by Amy Azaroff, Caylin Kenney, Leigh Della Siega, Tiffany Siu

The unit highlights First Peoples Principles of Learning:

- Learning ultimately supports the well-being of the self, the family, the community, the land, the spirits, and the ancestors.
- Learning is holistic, reflexive, reflective, experiential, and relational (focused on connectedness, on reciprocal relationships, and a sense of place).
- Learning involves recognizing the consequences of one's actions.
- Learning recognizes the role of Indigenous knowledge.
- Learning involves patience and time.
- Learning requires exploration of one's identity.

Lesson 1: Where do your clothes come from?

Starting with a provocation/inquiry into where our clothes come from and what they are made of students investigate a variety of clothing labels. They are looking for the name of the brand, where the clothes are made, and what materials they are made from. Using/creating an interactive map, students will plot the clothing's journey on the map and create a timeline/journey line (digital or physical) relating to the guiding questions: Where did the raw materials come from? How were they made or produced? Where was the finished item made? Who was involved and under what conditions? How did the finished item get to you? How might this be problematic for people, communities, and the environment? How could we reduce the impact from the clothing we buy?

Assessment: checklist, observation

***At this point, the instructor can provide the same resources to each group, or a different resource (on the same topic), so that groups are learning slightly different aspects of the topic, which they will share and compare in the culminating activity.**

Lesson 2: What are the impacts of the clothing industry?

Students will collaborate in groups to build and spread awareness about the environmental and social impacts of the fashion industry. Half of the group will watch the video, and half will read sections of the article. The group will create a collaborative Venn Diagram (digital or physical) comparing the information from the resources. The groups will summarize this learning to create a campaign slogan, image, motto, or logo (or combination) to use to raise awareness and encourage change. Each group will create a multi-modal method (audio, video, musical, digital) for sharing this message (to be used in the culminating activity).

Assessment: self-assessment, single-point rubric

Lesson 3A: Cultural Identity Through Clothing and Functional Items

If possible, students will work with Indigenous Knowledge keepers to explore how culture, tradition, history, and place are reflected in clothing and functional items. The First Peoples Principles of Learning will be central to this lesson (and unit), focusing on how our clothing can reflect our identities.

Assessment: observation and will be assessed in 3C

Lesson 3B: Cultural Appropriation vs. Cultural Appreciation

This lesson can be used if it's not feasible to collaborate with an Indigenous Knowledge Keeper – or in combination with 3A, to make the lesson more comprehensive. Students will engage in a discussion after looking at photos and video examples of cultural appropriation and watching the video about culturally appropriating Halloween costumes.

Assessment: observation of discussion, anecdotal, and will be assessed in 3C

3C: This activity is for 3A or 3B, or at the end of 3B (if you do both)

Students (independently or with peers) will annotate photos of pieces of clothing or functional items, explaining the different aspects of the item: where the materials came from, how the entire animal was used, symbols and decorative elements, etc. Students will reflect on their own identities, cultures, and senses of place to create their own personal patch out of discarded materials. This will be used in the culminating activity.

Assessment: criteria checklist, observation, and conferencing

Lesson 4: Refuse, Reuse and Repurpose Clothing (upcycling)

Students will watch a video about what happens to clothing when it is discarded and create a word cloud. They will participate in a jigsaw-style inquiry activity into foundational textile skills: measuring and cutting fabric, threading a needle and basic stitching, sewing on a button, and sewing two pieces of fabric together. Then, students will be regrouped and choose (or bring) a discarded item of clothing and a new functional item to make: shopping bag, hat, wallet, or something else they propose. Students will share their knowledge and skills to support one another in creating a new item, and each student will attach their identity patch from Lesson 3 to the item.

Assessment: word clouds, criteria checklist, single-point rubric, self-assessment, and reflection.

Culminating Task:

Students will take the artifacts they've created through the unit to put on a multi-modal "slow" fashion, upcycle show. They can use video, projection, music, and other media to perform the show that will raise the audience's awareness about the fashion industry and identity. It will incorporate what they learned throughout the unit in images, music, narration, etc. Students can perform the fashion show live or share it digitally. Students complete a group reflection on their process and individual reflections on their learning over the span of the unit.

Assessment: peer feedback, rubric, [Maker Futures Learning Assessment Framework](#)

Exit Ticket: Other students act as judges, giving 3-2-1 feedback exit ticket (3 "WOW"s, 2 "things I learned", and 1 "I want more") at the end of each fashion show (like a reality show, but constructive).

Extensions: Share fashion show videos on school/district website, at an assembly, or through a school film festival to raise awareness with the wider school community.

They could also get into groups and do an advertisement, similar to Jaden Smith's Levi's commercial, using green screens and items they've created throughout the unit.