



K-12 Across the Table, Across the Land Assignment

Potluck: A Portrait of School Communities through Clay and Food

Join in the celebration of K-12 ceramics students and instructors around the world by sharing clay, stories, and food in this very special NCECA 50th Anniversary project!

Across the Table, Across the Land is an initiative of the National Council on Education for the Ceramic Arts that encourages people in communities to explore how ceramic art and food create senses of community and meaning in everyday life. Educators are able to integrate key learning concepts of *Across the Table*, *Across the Land* into any clay project already planned for the year. Simply add the discussion components on the connections created between clay, food, and people; document your ideas, learning process and results through photos and text to share on social media.

Each participating school will have a designated social media feed at app.ncecaacrossthetable.com that presents a portrait of their local community featuring images and narratives to connect different learning communities together. This project allows students and the public from anywhere to see what other schools look like and to become part of a collective “Potluck” of people, clay, and food!

Core Concept

Through the visual arts, including ceramics, people express ideas and emotions that they cannot express in language alone. In order to understand the range and depth of the human imagination, one must have knowledge of the arts. Through *Across the Table*, *Across the Land*, students will be engaged in creating, presenting and responding to works of ceramic art in the contexts of food and community.

National Visual Arts Standards

1. Understanding and applying media, techniques, and processes
2. Using knowledge of structures and functions
3. Choosing and evaluating a range of subject matter, symbols, and ideas
4. Understanding the visual arts in relation to history and cultures
5. Reflecting upon and assessing the characteristics and merits of their work and the work of others

Goals

Students will be able to develop conceptual connections between ceramic objects, people, and food. Students will be able to design and create ceramic objects that serve a particularly designed purpose in a social setting.

Students will be able to take a series of well-composed photos to document the conceptual meaning of the object they created.

Below is a basic outline of a lesson plan to guide discussions and documentation procedures:

Procedures

1. Initiate a discussion on how food is a point of connection in students' lives:
 - a. How does food strengthen relationships with friends and family?

- b. What kinds of foods are served as part of these activities?
2. Discuss the following three categories of objects
 - a. **Utilitarian:** casual usage of a functional ceramic object to hold food or drink.
 - b. **Ceremonial:** special occasion that brings people together in celebration...the role of the object is to enhance the moment i.e. A cup shared at the moment of marriage. While still utilitarian, the object plays a larger role in the conversation
 - c. **Abstract/Sculptural:** Sculptural objects that while not used to serve food, might celebrate form while transmitting an idea, expression, cultural tradition or belief.
3. Have students brainstorm situations where each category would be most appropriate (OR IRONIC!) when food and people come together or how a ceramic object can be part of the eating experience in an interesting way.
 - a. For example, a very casual food like tortilla chips consumed after school could be served on a highly ornamental, “fancy” serving tray, bringing a bit of humor to the situation.
 - b. How does food relate to a social situation? Birthday, Sporting event, a Fair, etc.
 - c. How does food help to define who we are, our peers, our families our friends?
 - d. How effectively do industrially designed objects serve food? How can we design it better?
 - e. Can pots be made to fit the shape of interesting foods? For example, asparagus!
4. Assign students to design visual plans for an object to be used in a social setting from one of the above three categories. In the visual plans, the following should be considered as integral parts of the intentional usage of the object in its role:
 - a. Function
 - b. Form
 - c. Surfacing (texture, color, firings)
5. Use peer critiques to push designs to more dynamic and interesting approaches. Encourage questions such as:
 - a. How can this object become more unexpected?
 - b. How can this object become more familiar?
 - c. How can this object encourage people to come together?
6. After final designs are made, students should document their visual plans using scanners, phones, or cameras and uploading to a digital portfolio to be shared at the culmination of the project.
7. Guide students through the creation of their designed object. Document the object in both greenware and glazeware states.
8. Introduce concepts of pushing documentation beyond “sending images of food to besties”. An excellent resource is Ayumi Hori’s excellent tips on taking great photographs: <http://ayumihorie.com/a-guide-to-using-instagram-for-studio-artists/>
9. Upon the completion of the glazeware object, assign students to bring their object into the social situation it was designed for and to serve the intended food. The usage must be documented photographically using similar principles from Ayumi’s guidebook. The combined images the students become an overarching portrait of a school’s ceramics program.
10. Each student will upload (3) images and a short narrative for each under your school’s image stream. You will receive a special link to this stream once you are a confirmed participant. Descriptions of each below.
 - a. **Food:** An image of what they eat and a short narrative that tells the story of how this food is part of their identity. There is space on the image stream to include this.
 - b. **In-Studio:** Any stage of the making process pre-fire, planning, making, glazing, etc. This should be accompanied by a short written description of what we are seeing. There is space on the image stream to include this.

- c. **In-Action:** An image of the object they made to accompany this food in an environment where it is used. This should also be accompanied by a short written narrative of how they fulfilled the assignment. There is space on the image stream to include this.
11. Each student who contributes to the image feed is entering the exhibition. When the submission date closes, we will jury the images into a body of work that will become part of the “Across the Table” exhibition, which will also contain images that were uploaded via hard copy and digital platforms.
 12. Students with the most engaging narrative portraits may be invited to participate with their ceramic creations for the exhibition in Kansas City.

SPECIAL NOTE TO TEACHERS: IMAGE RIGHTS

This project depends on documentation to tell the story of how you are participating. Teachers should submit images that include students’ faces only if they have returned NCECA’s signed parental release forms. The document is below and should be distributed and gathered by the teacher. Because of this, the only person who is allowed to upload will be the teachers in charge of the project. NCECA shall have the right to incorporate submitted images on reports, publicity, communications publications and exhibitions in print and electronic format.

To submit your School and get your own image stream started, please email us the following information at:

ncecaacrossthetable@gmail.com

Your name (Teacher)
Your School Name
City
State
Email Address
Telephone Number

Upon receipt, we will confirm your participation – start an image stream JUST for your school and will keep in touch with all the schools as a group.