

Masks as Tools for Teaching, Learning and Engagement: A Review of Multidisciplinary Resources from the 21st Century

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Hands-on learning activities enable students to process information in a different way from just reading about ideas, and they allow students to express their understanding and experiences externally. The following selected annotated bibliography primarily focuses on masks and the activity of mask-making. Masks can provide opportunities for instructors to incorporate deep learning contexts, as well as active learning techniques to help students utilize a variety of ways to understand the subject being taught. While masks have recently become a staple in our lives with the COVID-19 pandemic, these objects have historically been significant for cultures around the world and remain important items of expression.

Considered one of the oldest cultural masks in existence, a Neolithic stone mask with two holes for eyes and one for the mouth was excavated in 2018, and dates to 7000 B.C. Such masks may have been used even before language became a form of communication among humans (Second Face-Museum of Cultural Masks, n.d.). Since ancient times, masks have been in use in multiple forms and functions representing diverse cultural practices across the world as both literal and metaphorical face coverings

Masks as facial coverings have been created and used by people for safeguarding against infections, injury, or evil spirits; for transforming in disguise, pretense, or play; for performing ritual, cultural, and religious practices; or in a figurative sense, for conveying deception, camouflage, or inauthenticity (Wingert, P.S. 2020; Oxford English Dictionary, n.d.). Masks are used diversely in rituals and performances to include spiritual representations, and to act out internal feelings. Rituals can also be performative in nature through symbolic mask design and through music and dance, which immerses the wearer and audience in the experience (Gray et al., 2016). As a participant researcher in the Chinese Dixi mask performers group, Chu (2006) describes how learning through lived experiences occurs in the process of enculturation. Masks

are also communicative in their design--whether it be a physical mask that is worn, or an online persona that acts as an external representation of oneself (Johnson, M. & Brierley, C., 2007). In addition, masks can be used in a metaphorical sense for what people are hiding behind (e.g. their other selves or roles) or how they want to be perceived. Brands and symbols in the world of business, products, consumer psychology, and marketing emulate the forms and functions of masking (Dholakia, N. & Zwick, D., 2006). These versatile aspects and uses of masks and masking have important connotations that make them amenable for teaching, creative activities, and experiential and transformative learning.

Using masks and mask-making in teaching and course curricula expands the knowledge base for students in interesting ways. It “awakens student ownership,” “meaning making,” self-exploration and independent thinking. McElhany (2017) notes that these works “are not simply teacher imitations, but reflections into students’ individualized worlds” (p.34). As a teaching tool, masks and mask-making promote student interest and enthusiasm for exploring complex concepts through interactions, shared understanding, and introspective creation.

The following selected resources provide a comprehensive information base that reaches across multiple disciplinary areas of the arts, education, business, literature, natural sciences and social sciences for using masks and mask-making for multi-level instruction and experiential activities. In addition, information resources on two topics which surfaced as important categories in our research - identity development and cultural diversity- are included. The use of masks and masking at a metaphorical level also shows implications for how instructors can expand their teaching to engage students to learn. Each of the sources reviews the content and highlights its importance for teaching and learning. We have also included articles that describe experiences with the use of masks in K-12 contexts. Active learning techniques using masks and mask-making employed by teachers in schools provide interesting sources for generating new ideas, variations, and extension of experiences for students in higher education. Such activities can be adapted to engage college students by providing more in-depth coverage across a wider variety of content. Also, to help increase student engagement with the class content and learning objectives, college or university instructors could guide and delegate the responsibility of planning, collaborating, performing, facilitating, and analyzing such hands-on activities to students. The sources included in this compilation are limited to English, but the scope is global and covers research, reviews, reflections, and practical tips that can act as a springboard for engaging students in innovative ways.

A variety of publication types such as articles, books, and theses or dissertations are included. Some of the publications included are conceptual in approach, others are practical, and some include assessment and reflections of participants of mask-making activity. The literature was scanned between year 2000 and 2020 using popular and subject specific search engines: Academic Search Premier, Academic Video online, AnthroSource, Anthropology Plus, Business Source Premier, ERIC , Google Scholar, JSTOR, Proquest Education, Proquest Sociology, APA PsycInfo, ScienceDirect, and Sociological Abstracts. Search terms used included “teach,” “teaching,” “teachers,” “learn,” “learning,” “education,” “educators,” combined with the term

“masks.” Truncation was used where allowed for “teach*,” and “learn*” to conveniently broaden the search results. With this process we located 54 publications across multiple disciplines on the uses of masks and mask-making. The citations are organized into seven categories: Exploration of Identity; Historical and Cultural Context; Metaphorical Masks and Masking; Online Avatars as Masks; Professional Development; Promoting Cultural Awareness; and Role-Playing and Performance. The sources are listed alphabetically by category and in a chronological order within each category. Additional relevant sources when available are listed as “Also See” below each annotation. The number of annotations included within each category differ and are dictated by the number of pertinent sources that emerged during the literature search. Interestingly, we found relatively more relevant sources between 2006 and 2016 than after 2016.

Exploration of Identity

Masks and mask-making provide an important avenue to explore the individual self and reflect on identity related issues. In the process of making masks, individuals gain knowledge about cultures, learn art based skills, and reflect on the implications of individual differences on interactions and communication. We found that the largest number of relevant citations came under the topic of exploration of identity. Authors included here have used art based methods and techniques, narratives, and reflection to evoke identity related learning through the making and use of masks.

Barbera, L. E. (2009). *Palpable pedagogy: Expressive arts, leadership, and change in social justice teacher education (an ethnographic/auto-ethnographic study of the classroom culture of an arts-based teacher education course)* (Order No. 3385408). Available from ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global. (305151034).

This thesis covers research on the use of art as a way for pre-service teachers to learn about qualities of identity, equity, and compassion. A mask-making reflection activity that explored social justice issues enabled students to think more about how they represent themselves to others. Students watched a documentary that highlighted polarities of social justice issues. They were then asked to reflect and express themselves by making masks. Both the outside and inside surface of the mask was used to share their feelings and ideas about issues such as “being heard and being silenced,” “inclusion and exclusion,” and “Face of oppression and rainbow color.” A sense of community was built from the depiction of their selves and vulnerabilities, and students learned to describe their feelings through the masks they made. This experience builds on the idea that recognizing more about oneself and coming together with others compassionately helps students take social justice action. Mask-making is a visual art method that allows students to go beyond intellectual inquiry and explore “inquiring experientially through visual and performing art processes...as a springboard to dialogue about their feelings and discoveries, imagining alternative realities and the action needed to lead them there” (p. 113). The dissertation would be useful for educators seeking a way to have students participate and connect with one another to better respect each other’s backgrounds and identities.

Becker, A. (2005). *Masks: Awakening archetypes by giving them shape, body, and voice* (Order No. 3187926). Available from ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global. (305398378).

This thesis examines how the sense of freedom and anonymity that comes with wearing a mask can be used to an individual's advantage. By wearing a mask, a person has the chance to explore more about themselves and change character because they have this barrier between them and the rest of the world. The author creates twelve archetypal masks to experience their power: *The orphan, The Innocent, The Magician, The Mother, The Caretaker, The Seeker, The Warrior, The Old Wise Woman, Death, The Witch, The Anger, and The Fool*. Becker describes the detailed process for constructing the masks. She uses art as a methodology, phenomenology, and heuristic to describe her experiences as she interacts and experiences the masks. This process helps her encounter and learn about the forces within her that address the archetypal masks she created. By making and wearing masks she experiences, understands, and eventually adjusts and accepts each of her masks and the changes they bring in her. This work reveals how masks can be used as ways to reflect more deeply about oneself and help understand the different characteristics and attitudes the mask forces the individual to confront. This research would be beneficial for educators in psychology as well as therapists who assist individuals confront their self, identity and personality.

Also See.

Leitch R.M., Conroy J.C. (2015). Masks as methodology and the phenomenological turn: issues of interpretation." In *International Handbook of Interpretation in Educational Research Methods*, edited by P. Smeyers, D. Bridges, N. Burbules, and M. Griffiths, 1533–1551. Vancouver: Springer. https://link.springer.com/chapter/10.1007/978-94-017-9282-0_75

Lashewicz, B., McGrath, J., & Smyth, M. (2014). Mask-making in Human Services Education: A case for Student engagement, *Journal of Teaching in Social Work, 34*(2), 182-198, DOI: [10.1080/08841233.2014.897298](https://doi.org/10.1080/08841233.2014.897298)

Laschewicz et al. (2014), describe the results of engaging with college students through a mask-making activity that related to self-expression and identifying themselves as professionals. The objective of the activity was to have students think critically about how they want to present themselves to the individuals they will help as social workers, as well as how they will care for themselves in this role. These two aspects are then creatively depicted on the outside and inside portions of the mask. Students were more likely to share and open up by having the mask to refer to and act as an extension of their thoughts. Professors in other disciplines outside of social work could apply the mask-making activity as well. This activity enables students and professors to bond with one another and promotes self-expression and the recognition of other people's feelings and identities.

Lippman, M. (2015). Embodying the Mask: Exploring ancient Roman comedy through masks and movement. *The Classical Journal*, 111(1), 25-36.
www.jstor.org/stable/10.5184/classicalj.111.1.0025.

Lippman (2015) explores the value of implementing masks into students' practice of theatre to gain an understanding of the differences in movement and expression when wearing one on stage. Roman and other classical theatres used masks frequently, whereas today this form of acting is not seen as much. Lippman suggests that since masks cover facial expressions of the actor, "a new dimension of expression, as well as a new language" (p.26) to communicate becomes necessary. This requires the use of a different type of skill that students should be exposed to in their theatre curriculum. His students were provided with masks that were created in previous theatrical productions. Masks were useful as ice-breakers for students to open up and participate in class. The mask-wearing activity enabled students to put into perspective how characters and body language can change based on the props one wears and improve their acting range accordingly. Through this exercise, students also were able to see how different people using the same mask could bring about completely different representations of the character of the mask and could influence their audience in distinct ways. This resource would be appropriate for drama or performance teachers looking to expand their students' knowledge of different forms of theatre and acting.

Massie, P. (2018). Masks and the space of play. *Research in Phenomenology* 48(1): 119–46.
<https://doi.org/10.1163/15691640-12341387>

Massie (2018) looks at masks not simply as objects or artifacts, but rather as personifications of characters and identities. Through references to theatre, carnivals, and other forms of performance, the article argues that masks bring to life the people wearing them and their ideas, experiences, and thinking. Massie (2018) also presents a "space of play" that challenges the "normal" or "ordinary." The author distinguishes the different practices of using masks within related acts and draws attention to how masks portray identities and transgression, as well as challenge authority and institutionalized practices. Massie explains how masks should not only be studied as material objects, but also as performance pieces that people manifest. This article could be used by performance educators to show how there is more to objects than they appear, and how the human element added to materials intertwines with the object to take on new meaning, purpose, and feeling.

Also See.

Melcer-Padon, N. (2020). Visual Mask Metaphors in Jean Genet and Maurizio Cattelan. *Partial Answers: Journal of Literature and the History of Ideas* 18(1), 67-82.
[doi:10.1353/pan.2020.0003](https://doi.org/10.1353/pan.2020.0003).

Nurse, A. M., & Krain, M. (2006). Mask-Making: Incorporating service learning into criminology and deviance courses. *Teaching Sociology*, 34(3), 278–285.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/0092055X0603400306>

Nurse and Krain (2006) discuss a mask-making service learning project that was conducted with college students in a criminology and deviance course. They organized the project with a local juvenile prison facility, so that students could work alongside individuals who were around the same age. In the initial visit, students were introduced and partnered with individuals from the prison. Through a few icebreaker activities, interaction between partners was encouraged. Students in the class had previously learned how to make masks with plaster and were asked to make a mask based on their initial interactions with their partners. However, the authors later felt that this was a misstep since it would have been better for both partners to create the mask together. So during their second visit, the students decorated the masks along with their partners. This increased the interaction and engagement of both groups as they worked on the mask. The class then returned and reflected through journaling and discussions about their experiences. This mask-making project enabled students to put a face and identity to those who are labeled as deviant. The project put the idea of how deviance is socially constructed into proper perspective for the students. This article would be beneficial for a professor to convey how constructive projects such as mask-making can bring people together and make them more comfortable with one another so that they can better understand each other's perspectives.

Petteway, L. D. R. (2006). *Mask-Making: Enhancing the self-esteem of adolescent males of African descent* (Order No. 3616596). Available from ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global. (1526472082).

This dissertation looks at the impact of mask-making as a cultural activity to enhance the self-esteem of young African American males. Twelve male African American participants (12-18 years) participated in a Coopersmith Self-Esteem Inventory before and after participating in a mask making activity. They made masks out of plaster and decorated them. After this activity, they were asked to share their mask and present a narrative about it. A pre and post-test for self-esteem found that the artistic interpretation of mask-making and connection to their cultural roots had a positive impact on the adolescents in the case studies. Valuing aspects of one's culture and having the chance to express that value led to positive feelings, which could help with overall achievements and motivations in educational pursuits. These findings can be applied by other educators as a way to improve student's confidence in themselves and their abilities, as well as draw in cultural teachings and understanding. The opportunity to learn more about oneself and identity can assist with educational success.

Roy, D. (2016a). Masks as a Method: Meyerhold to Mnouchkine. *Cogent Arts & Humanities*, 3 (1).16p <https://doi.org/10.1080/23311983.2016.1236436>

Roy (2016a) delves into the way masks are used in theatre and performing arts. Roy asserts that masks can be used as educational tools for performers, as the mask separates the individual from him/herself so that they can fully take on the role of the character. Using a mask

to get more into character, or to outwardly exaggerate emotions, helps performers become more in tune with their roles and the emotion and motivation behind the characters. This resource and performance method would be useful to educators as it would provide another form of practice for students to enter the mindset of the characters and separate themselves when performing.

Roy, D. (2016b). Masks in Pedagogical Practice. *Journal for Learning through the Arts*, 12(1).
<http://dx.doi.org/10.21977/D912128864> Retrieved from
<https://escholarship.org/uc/item/83d8c84g>.

In this article Roy (2016b) expresses how masks can be used for drama students to explore identity and be used as pedagogical tools. Roy implements a variety of drama teaching strategies to devise a mask workshop for students to learn about the history of masks in theatre, and how these masks impact their movements, communication, and meanings. This article shows that making and using physical masks bring about increased awareness in terms of identity, cohesion, and shared collegiality. This indicates the potential for such exercises within the classroom curriculum. The article would be beneficial for drama professors as it includes a replicable workshop to use with students and explores the different ways in which masks can teach students about their acting.

Also See.

Vervain, C., & Wiles, D. (2001). The Masks of Greek Tragedy as Point of Departure for Modern Performance. *New Theatre Quarterly*, 17(3), 254-272. DOI: 10.1017/S0266464X00014767

McElhany, J. S. (2017). Awakening Student Ownership: Transitioning to a Student-Centered Environment, *Art Education*, 70(1), 29-35,
<https://doi.org/10.1080/00043125.2017.1247567>

Steven S. T., & Ladkin, D. (2009). Understanding arts-based methods in managerial development. *Academy of Management Learning & Education*, 8, 55–69,
<https://doi.org/10.5465/amle.2009.37012179>

Citing mask-making as one of the examples, the authors identify four processes that explain why training with art brings about important interventions in organizational leadership and skills development. Through a physical mask-making project, the authors indicate that activities with art components help bring latent skills into use; allow the projection of intangible feelings; highlight what is of core importance; and show how making sense involves being present and connected. The leadership mask-making exercise involved a “making” process that resulted in a two sided mask (an end product) that served as a “projective technique” to help the self-reflection of participants. This is one of the few articles that describes how art-based methods can reveal and bring about more understanding of nuances and human emotion for leaders in business organizations. The description of such a mask making project is also useful for inserting self-reflection learning objectives into a business or management course curriculum.

Historical and Cultural Context

Citations within this category present a global view of different religious and cultural practices that make and use masks for a variety of purposes. These authors also provide an in-depth look into the functions and implications of the use of masks on societies and individuals. The citations included here cover information about masks from the point of view of history, literature, performance arts and theatre. A complication when putting masks in historical and cultural contexts is work respectfully to avoid cultural appropriation. It is imperative for students to learn, acknowledge, respect, and appreciate the traditions of cultures and individuals who are different from themselves.

Edson, G. (2005). *Masks and Masking: Faces of tradition and belief worldwide*. McFarland & Co.

This book covers an array of uses and symbols for masks from cultural groups around the world. Edson discusses broadly the purpose of masks in rituals, cultural beliefs, and forms of self-expression. Also Edson illustrates the similarities and differences between masks in different cultures through his numerous drawings. By describing the various functions of the masks from different cultures around the world, he presents the mask as a “powerful cultural phenomena” (cover description). Even if the book was written over a decade and half ago, it provides examples that are still useful and which resonate with the present times. This resource would be ideal for educators in the social sciences who examine different cultures, as the book offers examples and explanations of how masks function and have symbolic nature in a variety of cultures. Students could be exposed to diverse cultures and read about masks put into perspective as widespread among groups and embracing multiple meanings and uses.

Grace, D. (2004). *The Woman in the Muslim Mask : Veiling and identity in postcolonial literature*. Pluto Press.

Grace addresses how the veil, as a face covering in the genre of masks, is portrayed in works of literature, whether it is used as a symbol of oppression of women, and how it relates to religion and cultural perceptions. By looking at how the veil is described in literature from around the world, readers can get a sense of the dichotomy between these depictions and how the veil is perceived as a mask by different groups. This book provides a comprehensive look at the "cultural arguments on the veil from both 'western' and 'eastern' perspectives in order to analyse the phenomenon within its patriarchal, religious, and political contexts" (pg. 2). Even though this text was written nearly two decades ago, it is one of a kind analysis that covers the perspectives from across different regions of the world and continues to be relevant. This text would be beneficial for those studying religion or social sciences in order to learn more about how veils are used in different cultures and perceived as symbols for topics such as gender, oppression, and culture.

Thomas, K. (2015). Masks of Sumatra. *Asian Theatre Journal*, 32(2), 575-597. Retrieved November 23, 2020, from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/24737048>

Thomas (2015) examines the ritual and ceremonial masks of Sumatra, which are a major part of their theatrical performances. By tracing the history of mask design in Sumatra and the symbolism of deities, animals, and other figures through masks, the author conveys the significance of masks and what these objects represent in Sumatran theatre. This article would be striking for social scientists and ethnographers looking to learn more about the rituals and material culture of other groups. It is useful in the classroom to introduce students to learn about and connect to information about cultural practices other than their own.

Wilsher, T. (2007). *The Mask Handbook : A practical guide*. Routledge.

This foundational text considers what masks are, how these objects have been used, and in particular, how masks are used in European theatrical performances. Wilsher explores the transformative power masks have in theatre and the way in which different mask types add to this sense of change of identity, and how the representation of identity on the stage. This book delves primarily into masks of performance and discusses physical and psychological transformations that take place with masks. It is especially of interest for theatre educators.

Metaphorical Use of Masks and Masking

Figurative uses of masks and masking concepts provide insightful ways for understanding their effects that go beyond the use of masks as material objects. In these sources, for example, role-playing as another character is seen as a form of masking that enhances the participation and learning process for students in a classroom. In addition, masks and masking have been used in marketing and advertising literature to influence consumer behavior and develop a brand for companies and products. Sustained impact of brands is visible even when product information is masked, and in advertising, humor is used as a mask to deceptively engage consumers.

Baruch, Y. (2006). Role-play Teaching: Acting in the classroom. *Management Learning*, 37(1), 43–61. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1350507606060980>.

Baruch (2006) presents a model to emphasize the importance of teaching practices. the author presents how using role-playing or acting as a metaphorical mask creates and enhances teaching and learning. He proposes a model that helps to analyze and compare different types of interactive and passive metaphorical masks used in teaching. Instructors wearing such metaphorical masks (e.g. acting a role) in the classroom have the advantage of creating shared understanding with students. This brings out positive feelings among students and enables better learning. Whereas the audience in a theatre expects the actor to be playing a role, such expectations are not associated with the participants in a classroom. Baruch (2006) encourages instructors to be explicitly aware of the roles they are choosing to play, especially choosing the

“who, when, where and what” of the roles they perform (p.48). Baruch’s model presents choices of roles and personality types instructors are trying to enact - logical or rational vs. idealist or compassionate. The article lists an interesting variety of roles for the field of management education that are categorized under Interactive-Thinking, Passive-Thinking, Passive-Feeling, and Interactive-Feeling roles. Baruch (2006) presents an approach for instructors to consider using metaphorical masks through role playing as a tool for student engagement and learning.

Dholakia, N. & Zwick, D. (2006). Brand as Mask. (No. 3). [Working Paper]. *William A. Orme Working Paper Series*. College of Business Administration, University of Rhode Island. https://www.academia.edu/2875004/Brand_as_Mask

In this working paper, Dholakia and Zwick (2006) observe how company “brand[s] often serves the corporate purpose of being a mask.” There is a greater emphasis on how items are marketed and presented to consumers compared to how products are manufactured. The brand is what is visible and depicts values and attributes of the company to help maintain its integrity. The authors note how once these brand masks begin to crack, sociopolitical concerns come into play, and can harm the perception of the company behind it. As consumers look more deeply into what lies beyond marketing masks, brands may start to suffer. This paper would be valuable to those studying marketing and business in order to assess how brands function as masks to influence consumer behavior, as well as how companies have to be cognizant of their actions behind those masks and how such information could impact sales and brand integrity.

Shabbir, H., & Thwaites, D. (2007). The use of humor to mask deceptive advertising: It's no laughing matter. *Journal of Advertising*, 36(2), 75-85. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/20460784>

This article addresses how humor is used as a kind of mask in advertisements to deceptively influence consumers. Shabbir and Thwaites’ (2007) goal is to study “the role of humor as a mask for deceptive claims” in advertising (p.76). They look at the types of humor used for different forms of deception. One of their examples of “incongruity” serves to illustrate how humor makes deceptive suggestions or claims to the person watching the ad. "Example: Ad for washing powder—Man interrupts wedding ceremony. Bride leaves the proposed groom for this man who is wearing a whiter shirt than the proposed groom. (The viewer is left to make a connection between the correct choice of husband and choice of washing powder brand)" (p. 78). In this article, the authors completed a content analysis of advertisements that were using humor as a mask and found that 74.5% of these ads had illusionary content. This article would be of value to classroom teachers to help students critically analyze how sales and advertising language is used as a masking technique.

Mittal, S. and Silvera, D.H. (2020). Makeup or mask: Makeup's effect on salesperson trustworthiness. *Journal of Consumer Marketing*, 37(3), pp. 271-277.

Mittal and Silvera (2020) explore the use of makeup as a mask. They performed a study to gauge whether the amount of makeup on a salesperson impacts their perceived level of trustworthiness in customers. Putting makeup on both male and female salespeople, the researchers found that a heavier mask of makeup coincided with a decreased level of trustworthiness and sales. This reveals how masking oneself can create a negative connotation and sense of distrust in consumer interactions. The article could be presented to businesses, professionals in the service industry, and students in workshops or classrooms to understand how appearances and outward presentation impact the sales relationship.

Online Avatars as Masks

Changing identities helps bring out different responses among participants during interactions. These differences are usually based on personal experiences, perceptions, and knowledge about the person. Online personas act as teaching tools enabling the sharing of different perspectives. An Individual's online identity acts as a mask as online interactions require different norms and have fewer bounds as compared to in-person interactions. Masking identities provokes nuanced reactions that are amenable to generating more participation and learning.

Rusch, E. A., & Brunner, C. C. (2013). Transforming Leadership Identity in a Virtual Environment: Learning About the Leading Self. *Journal of Transformative Education*, 11(1), 45–69. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1541344613489351>

The article describes how a group of doctoral students in education leadership were involved in an experiential simulation study that attempts to understand the process of self-reflection in learning and the different ways people learn and behave. Experiential simulation "is an innovative communications method ...that unmasks how identity gets in the way of interpersonal understandings, true dialogue, and socially just interactions..." (p. 52). The study was accomplished by using a digital learning environment with students that were physically miles apart on different campuses. In addition, the students interacted with masked identities without being aware that others did not see their real photo but that of a completely different person. The researchers observed that students communicated based on the visual identity they saw and connected that to how they were participating with others. Interacting under such conditions puts participants into a different perspective, way of thinking, and reflecting on themselves, their decision-making, and how others learn. The authors show how experiences of learning (cognitively, conatively and affectively) connect with sequential, precision, technical, and confluence types of learning patterns. This masked identity 'mock-class' activity would be beneficial for soon-to-be educators or school administrators as it indicates the positionality of students and how they learn and perceive the material and others, as well as themselves.

Also See.

Shaun H. (2011). The leadership mask: A personally focused art based learning enquiry into facets of leadership, *Reflective Practice*, 12(3), 305-317, DOI: [10.1080/14623943.2011.571863](https://doi.org/10.1080/14623943.2011.571863)

Sannicandro, J. (2012). *Nothing behind the mask: An Arendtian approach to virtual worlds and the politics of online education* (Order No. MR84805). Available from ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global. (1264922800).

This dissertation uses the theoretical work of Arendt to propose how the avatars and online personalities people create act as masks. Through these masked, virtual appearances, individuals can engage with one another in another form of a social and public sphere. The author argues that this type of virtual masking could be more liberating for people as there are fewer barriers and bounds online compared to in-person. This thesis could be helpful for educators of students of a variety of ages as it offers insight into the value that an online or virtual classroom could have with engagement and identity.

Ziaeehezarjeribi, G. (2011). Behind the MASK: Motivation through avatar skills and knowledge. *International Journal of Gaming and Computer-Mediated Simulations (IJGCMS)*, 3(4), 19–32. <https://doi.org/10.4018/jgcms.2011100102>

The authors describe case studies where classrooms introduced the use of virtual avatars, functioning as masks, in a game promoting the perception of different points of view. Students created these avatars and went through academic ‘quests’ in the game world to practice problem solving and other skills, but without the fear of failing in front of others or having to be instructed by an authority figure guiding what to do. This case study is important for educators because it reveals how the negative perception of playing games in the classroom setting is misleading, as these virtual worlds grant students freedom to go through lessons on their own, with a different format and perspective than usual. The avatar masks, in this case, functioned as productive role playing opportunities to experience alternative perspectives.

Professional Development

Making masks is popularly used as a method for professional development and enhancing leadership skills. Techniques using art-based methods for self-reflection help identify one's values and beliefs, and they indicate how others are perceived and how one portrays oneself to others. These important exercises allow for the development of critical skills that help individuals become empathetic and communicative leaders. Mask-making exercises and critical reflection through narratives also allow for assessment of students' coping and learning. Interestingly, we found several relevant sources in this category for health care, specifically those that used mask-making and masking for training and professional development of nursing students.

Hughes, S. (2011). Behind the Mask: Using arts-based learning to uncover, explore and improve action. *Citizenship, Social and Economics Education*, 10(2–3), 227–238.
<https://doi.org/10.2304/csee.2011.10.2.227>

Hughes discusses the use of art-based learning to have individuals go through an introspective process to uncover more about themselves and their values, beliefs, and personalities and look more deeply at their forms of leadership. Participants were tasked with decorating a mask on both the inside and outside. This led to an introspective activity where individuals considered what they keep contained inside, and how they express themselves to others or at the workplace. The activity offered greater insight to participants at this conference about themselves as well as how they view the people they lead. This art-based learning project would be beneficial for those going into positions of leadership such as education or as administrators. The project enabled them to reflect on their own habits in combination with their internal struggles or feelings and the impact that can have on them as leaders and on those around them.

Kimera, J., Bader, K., Wilson, S., Walker, M., Stephens, M., & Varpio, L. (2017). Unmasking identity dissonance: Exploring medical students' professional identity formation through mask-making. *Perspectives on Medical Education*, 6(2): 99–107. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s40037-017-0339-z>

This article covers the use of mask-making along with a personal reflection to enable professors to gather insight about how medical students are adapting to their professional identity. The act of creative expression offers an outlet for students to put forth their thoughts and feelings about how they see themselves and their role in the medical field. Mask-making in this setting not only helps students but provides information to professors as to how a student is managing and if they need assistance. While talking face-to-face about issues might be difficult, the mask acts as a form of nonverbal communication to allow the professor to gauge who could use assistance. The combination of mask-making and the self-reflection paper could be implemented by other educators for students who are in periods of transition such as starting a career and taking on a separate identity from being a student.

Leitch, R. (2010). Masks as self-study. Challenging and sustaining teachers' personal and professional personae in early–mid career life phases, *Teachers and Teaching*, 16(3), 329-352. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13540601003634420>

In this article, Leitch describes three self-studies of teachers in their early and mid-professional careers. Teachers created and used masks to share their experiences and learn about their experiences as it affects their personal and professional identities. The article is helpful to design professional development workshops particularly with masks and what masking reveals as a way for participants to initiate change in their professional and personal lives.

Shapiro, J., Youm, J., Heare, M. et al. (2018). Medical students' efforts to integrate and/or reclaim authentic identity: Insights from a mask-making exercise. *Journal of Medical Humanities* 39, 483–501. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10912-018-9534-0>

Shapiro et al. (2018), studied medical students who participated in a mask-making workshop. They analyzed the products of students' activities using visual and textual analysis and found implications for personal and professional identity formation of students. They assessed students' perceptions using a survey and located "an overarching theme [of] 'reconciliation/reclamation of authentic identity'" (p. 483). This article is of interest for learning about the impact of hands-on and reflective activities that have implications for self-care and personal identity. Mask-making was a relaxing, meditative activity for these students who were trying to balance their personal lives with their academic and professional careers. The creative activity provided an outlet for sharing their feelings and could bring about greater self-awareness. The artistic engagement and form of self-expression through mask making enabled the students to reflect on their decisions of design and materials. Students could consider their emotive state, how they see themselves, and what factors are important to them when identifying themselves. Masks in particular are relevant for this purpose as the object covers one's face, and the design and words that encompass the mask becomes a form of identification and expression for the wearer.

Also See.

Stephens, M.B. (2019). Behind the mask: identity formation and team building." *Annals of Family Medicine*, 17 (6): 561–561. <https://doi.org/10.1370/afm.2447>.

Bentley, L. L. (2016). *Investigating the use of creative mask-making as a means to explore professional identity of doctoral psychology students* (Order No. 10301672). Available from ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global. (1858816914).

Professional Development in Nursing

Emmanuel, E., Collins, D., & Carey, M. (2010). My face, a window to communication: Using creative design in learning," *Nurse Education Today*, 30 (8): 720–25.
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.nedt.2010.01.011>

This article presents the use of creative design in mask-making among nursing students to reflect on how they want to communicate with patients. Students were tasked to make a wearable mask that was decorated in a way to symbolize how they would approach therapeutic communication. The activity enabled students to have a different form of learning and expression, and they were able to visually depict their values and goals in terms of working with patients. This resource would be applicable for health care educators as well as those in fields such as education or social work who deal directly with individuals and keep their well-being in mind.

McAllister, M., Reid Searl, K., & Davis, S (2013). Who is that masked educator? Deconstructing the teaching and learning processes of an innovative humanistic simulation technique. *Nurse Education Today*, 33(12), 1453–1458. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.nedt.2013.06.015>

According to McAllister, Searl, and Davis (2013), "The simulation technique devised in a regional Australian University named 'Mask-Ed™ (KRS simulation)' ...is a vivid, realistic or high fidelity simulation learning experience that is a captivating and engaging way to learn about the complexities of the nursing role" (p. 1453). This article describes a teaching program for nursing students, where the instructor wears a mask to hide themselves in order to have a more realistic way of simulating a patient. Since students find it difficult to talk with and work on the educator in nursing teaching simulations, the mask helps disguise the identity and offers a barrier so that students can work more comfortably. The findings about the Mask-Ed program would be relevant for educators in the healthcare field because it could lead to different forms of learning/training for students in a way that is more a more realistic simulation of the various patients they will come across.

Randall, C. (2011). Who do you bring to practice? Making plaster of Paris masks. *Journal of Nursing Education*, 50 (8), 487-488.

Randall discusses a mask-making activity completed with undergraduate students in an introductory nursing course. Students were tasked to create a plaster mask that represented themselves, their values, and how they envision themselves in the role as a helper. By completing this activity at the end of the semester, students were able to reflect on what they learned throughout the course, and whether they feel that nursing matches who they want to be. This article is relevant for nurse educators as they can implement this project into their courses. Such a course would enable students to consider how they as individuals would handle being a nurse and how that would influence their career interests.

Reid-Searl, K, Levett-Jones, T., Cooper, S., & Happell, B. (2014). The Implementation of Mask-Ed: Reflections of academic participants. *Nurse Education in Practice* 14 (5): 485–90.
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.nepr.2014.05.008>

Reid-Searl et al. (2014) conducted a study of nurse educators who implemented the Mask-ED simulation (see McAllister et al. (2013) above for a description of the Mask-ED simulation). Nurse educators who participated in this study attended a workshop and then implemented the method at their location for undergraduate nursing students. They wrote journal entries about their experiences for one year, which were collected and analyzed under several “key themes ... of Preparation, Implementation and Impact; Reflexivity and Responsiveness; Student Engagement and Ownership; and Teaching and Learning” (p. 485). The outcomes of the study show that there was more participation by students, and nurse educators were better able to communicate effectively about therapy and person-centered care using the Mask-Ed simulation techniques.

Also See.

Reid-Searl, K., & O’Neill, B. (2017). Mask-Ed: Breaking the barrier of fear of intimate care for nursing students. *Journal of Nursing Education* 56 (9): 572–74.
<https://doi.org/10.3928/01484834-20170817-12>

Lawlis, R., Frost, J.S., Eckley, D, Isbel, S, & Kellett, J. (2018). Enhancing health care student inter-professional learning through a pilot simulation ward experience using Mask-Ed (KRS Simulation). *Australian Journal of Clinical Education* 2 (1).
<https://ajce.scholasticahq.com/article/5096-enhancing-health-care-student-inter-professional-learning-through-a-pilot-simulation-ward-experience-using-mask-edtm-krs-simulation>

Promoting Cultural Awareness

Making and using masks may allow participants to more effectively understand the social, religious, political, and cultural connotations of a particular group. In preparing and using the mask, one’s skills and own experiences are drawn upon, and the individual learns to express feelings and ideas that are incorporated into the design of the output. A story is shared that is constructed by the individual to include interpretations of other’s identities and cultural practices. Art and performing arts-based methods are particularly helpful to generate a reflective learning process that captures some of the intangible aspects of understanding other people, their identities, and cultural practices. A complication when looking at masks as cultural objects and representations of other groups is cultural appropriation. It is imperative for the instructor to emphasize that students acknowledge, respect, and appreciate the traditions of other cultures and individuals.

Gray, P., Rule, A. C., Kirkland Holmes, G., Logan, S. R., Alert, A. L., & Mason, C. A. (2016). Learning form and function by dance-dramatizing cultural legends to drum rhythms wearing student-made animal masks. *Journal of STEM Arts, Crafts, and Constructions*, 1(1), 75-97.
<http://scholarworks.uni.edu/journal-stem-arts/vol1/iss1/7>

This article presents the positive impact of incorporating features of art and performance in education programs. Gray et al. (2016) explain how an after-school program had children learn about animal legends of three different cultures, and then created papier-mâché masks representations of the animals. Drums were played along with the reading of play scripts to have an immersive cultural experience. The authors found that this activity not only helped students with their independent artistic abilities but also enabled them to appreciate other cultures. The act of creating and wearing the masks helped create a connection to another culture and gave students the freedom to consider how to honor these groups. Being that masks block facial expressions, these artistic tools become another way of expressing oneself and sharing a piece of one's identity. The results of this program could be insightful for educators to see how different forms of instruction and activities can lead to students learning in new ways. Higher-level educators could incorporate a parallel activity of informative lecture and creative mask creation in order to cultivate a sense of cultural awareness. This activity may be problematic as replicating the cultural objects and beliefs of another group could be considered cultural appropriation. It would be best to facilitate the activity as a form of learning about another culture and trying to express this knowledge through mask-making, rather than having it be a form of depicting that culture directly.

Korjonen-Kuusipuro, K., Kuusisto, A-K., & Tuominen, J. (2019). Everyday negotiations of belonging - making Mexican masks together with unaccompanied minors in Finland, *Journal of Youth Studies*, 22(4), 551-567, DOI: [10.1080/13676261.2018.1523539](https://doi.org/10.1080/13676261.2018.1523539)

These authors discuss how mask-making can be used as an activity to draw different groups and cultures together, while also creating an outlet for expression and understanding. By bringing together Finnish secondary school students with refugees who arrived in Finland, the mask project offered a relaxed environment for these children to come together and foster a sense of belonging. Two visual arts professionals, one Finnish and one Mexican, lead the students in a series of workshops to create traditional Mexican paper masks. The art making involved speaking about color selection, symbols, etc., which all helped students share their cultural identities, and through this mutual sharing and understanding, they felt more connected with one another. This study would be useful for teachers with a diverse array of students as the mask-making activity could be used in a similar manner to create a sense of belonging and familiarity. Universities draw students from all over the world with diverse experiences and backgrounds. Utilizing a mask-making activity such as this can help students have an outlet to share and understand each other through the masks.

Kuper, K., Bales, S., & Zilberg, J. (2000). The Africa Project: A collaboration between a creative movement consultant, an anthropologist, and an art educator. *Art Education (Reston)*, 53(2), 18–24. <https://doi.org/10.2307/3193846>

Kuper, Bales, and Zilberg (2000) demonstrate how art education could be combined with anthropological perspectives and creative exploration using African masks to teach students about African culture. The creative movement specialist came up with primary school lesson plans and activities where students were able to critically analyze the African masks and relate the uses of the objects to aspects of their own life--such as gatherings, a sense of community, and forms of art. The facilitators wanted, “to help students understand the spiritual and emotional qualities imbued in the [African] masks” (Kuper, Bales, & Zilbert, 2000, p.19). The primary school students engaged in visual and physical practices through dance and music to have another connection and understanding of the cultural masks. This article is beneficial to social science educators because it shows how interdisciplinary learning and activities help create a broader spectrum of knowledge.

Rule, A., Montgomery, S., Kirkland Holmes, G., Watson, D., & Ayesiga, Y. (2015). African mask-making workshop: Professional development experiences of diverse participants. *International Journal of Multicultural Education*. 17(2), 135-157. doi: <dx.doi.org/10.18251/ijme.v17i2.953>

This account of an African mask-making workshop for adults describes how participants were taught about and shown examples of traditional African masks and then were given the task to create their own interpretations. The activity was important because it taught students how masks had cultural and religious significance in African culture. Having students create their own masks enabled them to learn about the history and culture of Africa, but also implement this knowledge into an experience and project. Participants of African heritage reported enjoying that their culture was being acknowledged, and participants of other heritages expressed a desire to learn more about their own cultural backgrounds. Other educators of history or social sciences could find value in implementing this kind of an activity to promote cultural knowledge and understanding among students that is not always provided through basic curriculum teachings.

Also See.

Lowell F. (2014). Mask-making and creative intelligence in transcultural education, *Caribbean Quarterly*, 60(3), 58-72, DOI: [10.1080/00086495.2014.11672526](https://doi.org/10.1080/00086495.2014.11672526)

Shin, R. (2008). Korean mask dance drama as an interdisciplinary multicultural performance art. *Journal of Cultural Research in Art Education*, 26, 107-119.

Shin describes a performance activity completed with school students in Wisconsin to have them learn about the Korean Mask Dance Drama (KMDD). Along with Korean music and performance, Shin (2008) emphasized the importance of Korean masks as multicultural art objects that help reveal the “disguised true natures” of different social classes of Korean society (p.110). As symbolic representations, masks display the “common people’s feelings and attitudes” (Shin, 2008, p.111). Students were tasked with creating masks that matched the design

and materials of those used in Korea and were taught about the native instruments and folktales of that culture. These lessons culminated in the performance of a Korean folktale by the students with the masks they created. This article would be of value to art or performance educators to instill a sense of cultural curiosity and cultural relevance of different forms of theatre. Learning through the practical activity of making the masks incorporates the important elements of experiential multicultural education and provides a basis for college instructors to include such visual and performing arts into the curriculum.

Also See.

Bailey, A. (2011). *Study: Non-western approaches to the creative processes, an exploration of tribal practices applied to the art classroom* (Order No. 1507619). Available from ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global. (944325252).

Ayers-Arnone, R. (2012). *Culturally relevant teaching in the art classroom* (Order No. 3516590). Available from ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global. (1029869324).

White, J. (2000). Reading texts, reading traditions: African masks and American Law. *Yale Journal of Law & the Humanities*, 12(1), 117–128.

White (2000) describes how in order to understand a cultural object such as a mask, one must take into consideration the other complex cultural components of that cultural group. By learning about the cultural processes, traditions, and context of objects/text, individuals can have a more complete account for the meaning and purpose of such items. One of the examples White uses - African Pende masks - helps him show that understanding legal text needs the background or context to make meaning. He uses the understanding of an African mask as an analogy to bring attention to the “complex cultural form and practice” of legal text (White, 2000, p.119). White (2000) emphasizes, “like the mask ...the opinion can only be read as a response to its pre-existing world, against which it is shaped - as the mask is shaped to the dance and costume and to the larger tradition in which it occurs. ... It is performance against a background, and as lawyers we know that understanding it requires attunement to that background” (p.124). The study of masks is a useful analogy here to understand what context means and how important it is for students to understand the background so that they can interpret the meaning of the text or object they are reading or observing. This article is valuable to students because it emphasizes how there are many things to consider when doing research, and how a broad picture is necessary to then focus on the details and figure out how they fit into that culture. It is useful for instructors to draw from White’s analysis to design readings and experiential activities such as mask making performances to demonstrate the importance of taking into consideration context and background for a realistic interpretation and a deeper understanding of the meaning of an object or text.

Role-Playing and Performance as Metaphorical Masks

Role-playing is an immersive way of learning. Often getting into the other person’s proverbial shoes helps understand, appreciate, and respect others perspectives. This type of learning allows

students to use their creativity and imagination to explore issues more intensely than only through reading. Such exercises also teach students to find their own voice, apply their skills, and learn new ones. Learning about others helps develop patience, ethics, understanding and acceptance of others' identities and cultural practices. Although we found fewer citations directly for this category, citations mentioned above in Exploration of Identity and Promoting Cultural Awareness categories may be helpful as cross references.

Chu, R. (2006). An apprenticeship in mask-making: Situated cognition, situated learning, and tool acquisition in the context of Chinese Dixi mask-making. (Electronic Thesis or Dissertation). Retrieved from http://rave.ohiolink.edu/etdc/view?acc_num=osu1158693508.

Chu (2006) provides an in-depth analysis of how learning occurs in an apprenticeship using participatory and situated learning. The author conducted field work by becoming an apprentice to Chinese Dixi mask makers and performers in China. The method as well as findings regarding situated learning and cognition have important implications for how and why making and performing lead to experiential learning. Here mask-making has been used as a primary tool to reveal the mask maker's cognitive processes and understanding. The mask-making experience involves both the translation of mental images and socially constructed connections to the physical object. According to Chu (2006), mask-making helps instructors "bestow students with cognitive tools to foster their imagination and creativity." She concludes that learning to use the tools, making the masks, and performing the storytelling that takes place, bring about important processes of enculturation that are not easily understood through traditional methods of teaching and learning. This is a useful publication for instructors looking to gather a deeper understanding for evaluating the use of hands-on activities such as mask-making on student learning.

Rule, A. C & Montgomery, S.E. (2011). Reflections of pre-service elementary teachers after learning about an African culture through mask-making. *Social Studies Research and Practice* 6(1), 58-74. <http://www.socstrpr.org/files/Vol%206/Issue%201%20-%20Spring,%202011/Research/6.1.5.pdf>

This study looked at how soon-to-be teachers learned the value of hands-on activities such as mask-making. Graduate students as pre-service teachers learned about African culture and the significance of masks and making the masks as they created their own masks based on the lessons and information they gathered in class. Their lesson about African culture, traditions, beliefs, practices, and values were integrated into a hands-on mask-making activity. Such an exercise helped integrate art-based information and enabled the students to use their "spatial abilities, reasoning skills, and higher order thinking" (p.71) to value, understand, and relate to information and materials shared in the lesson. This article provides an example of how art can be blended into a social sciences curriculum for engaging and hands-on learning experiences for students. Although the context of the article is primarily for graduate students or pre-service elementary school teachers, the study provides a fundamental rationale for active integration of

unfamiliar and challenging information and materials with a physical “making” exercise that brings attention to the different types of learning that occur during such activities. It provides both pros and cons of students’ experiences with the exercise. Students felt that it was time consuming to merge an elaborate mask making exercise into the curriculum, but also noted the satisfaction of overcoming the challenge of integrating art skills and interpreting details about African culture that was incorporated into the physical object they constructed.

Conclusion

This literature review explores resources about masks and masking as devices for teaching and student engagement. These sources cut across multiple disciplines--as well as levels of education--to list sources that provide interesting, innovative, and useful ideas for incorporating experiential and transformative educational components into the college curriculum. The variety of citations located were organized into seven categories: Exploration of Identity; Historical and Cultural Context; Metaphorical Masks and Masking; Online Avatars as Masks; Professional Development; Promoting Cultural Awareness; and Role-Playing and Performance. These sources describe projects that made or used physical masks as well as those that used masks or masking as a metaphor for better interpretation, contextual learning, and understanding.

Physical masks and hands-on creations help students use skills beyond intellectual engagement with class readings. Students are able to bring out their creative skills as well as use higher-order thinking and reasoning. They can also interpret and express their ideas and understanding of the readings and the hands-on exercise. Masks and masking have important implications on perception of others as well as on interpersonal communications. The Exploration of Identity and the Promotion of Cultural Awareness sections list articles that indicate the importance and effects of masks for individual identity, communication, and understanding different cultures. In this compilation, articles also refer to masks and masking concepts metaphorically. These resources provide ways of thinking about how the idea of masks involves not only physical objects, but also can be symbolic representations that are used to enhance teaching and learning. This literature review provides a varied list of resources for instructors to draw from as they build experiential components into their curriculum.

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