**Project Brief: African Ceremonial Mask**

**It’s all about the tools and the process!**

“Design thinking” skills can be developed while thinking about the form, function, aesthetics, and creation of objects such as a ceremonial mask. Students should think critically about the design features that make up a mask, the functional and aesthetic design requirements, available resources and technology for manufacturing, and more as they create 3D models of their own their own interpretations of a ceremonial mask. Students begin by formulating and answering some key questions:

* What is the primary function of the mask?
* Who will wear your mask?
* What time period, geographic location, and people is your mask designed for?
* What are the design features that will support the basic function of the ceremonial mask?
* How will you incorporate artwork and aesthetic elements into your ceremonial mask?
* What cultural message does your mask convey?
* What is the ideal size, shape, and weight of the mask?
* How will you express symbolism in your mask design?
* What materials are best suited to make your mask design?
* What elements of the mask reflect you as an individual, and what elements reflect your culture and environment?
* On what occasions will your mask be used?

**Process**:

For this African ceremonial mask project, the first task is to develop basic skills in using Autodesk® 123D Design® software to develop concepts as part of the Design Thinking ideation stage. After completing the sample Senufo ceremonial mask, students are encouraged to develop their own designs and apply their knowledge of the software to generate multiple concepts for alternative designs. The bottom line is this: If students can expand and enhance their ability to combine the innovation capabilities of the software, the power of the design thinking process, and elements of culture and history, then the goals of this curriculum have been achieved.

**Design considerations used in the example project are as follows**:

* Purpose: Is the mask a practical design that could achieve its intended function?
* Design: What does the mask look like? What is the mask made of? How large is it?
* Audience: Who will be using the mask? What is important to them?
* Production: Can the mask be crafted with historically appropriate technologies?
* Scheduling requirements: 1-5 hours