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Subversive beauty : reading and creating culture

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**Subversive Beauty:
Reading and Creating Culture**

**by
Normi Burke**

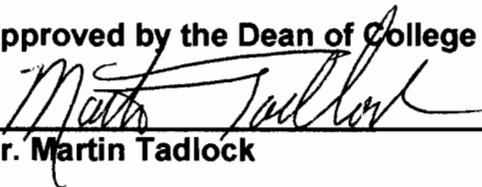
**A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Arts in Education
California State University, Monterey Bay
December 2006**

**Subversive Beauty:
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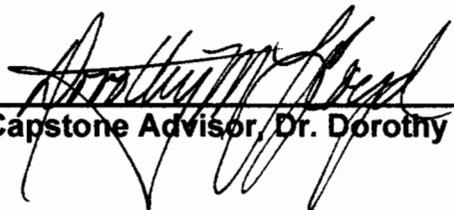
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Abstract

Subversive Beauty
Reading and Creating Culture

“...the world is a place where beauty and grace exist alongside sordidness and violence- and that it is on behalf of expanding the domain of the former that we denounce and resist the latter.”

Paul Rogat Loeb

The Impossible Will Take A Little While:
A Citizen's Guide To Hope In a Time Of Fear

This thesis represents an exploration into the meaning of artifacts from the point of view that artifacts may be considered living testaments to the culture of a community and thereby become a source of revelation, knowledge, resistance, empowerment and hope.

The primary focus of this project is a curriculum unit supported by emancipatory pedagogy, developed to introduce concepts of cultural identity and art making. Several sections of the curriculum incorporate aspects of communities of Northern California Native American basketweavers. The intention is to provide students with a basis from which a discussion may take place regarding the relevance of artifacts, more than one way of knowing and the decolonizing aspect of art.

For my parents.

Acknowledgements:

Thank you Pomo basketweavers of Northern California, past and present – powerful conveyors of tradition, innovation, resistance and the nature of living art.

Thank you so much dear family, friends, colleagues, teachers and advisors - for the enthusiasm and guidance. And especially to Burke and Eva - for all of your patience and love.

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Chapter One

Subversive Beauty: Reading and Creating Culture

Introduction

The purpose of my research was to investigate ways in which interpreting and creating artifacts supports concepts of individual and collective identity in order to be applied as a means of activism. Intended for use as a transformational approach to teaching, in which status quo is challenged and where new knowledge may be created, I designed curriculum meant to explore a path to anti-racist education by asking students to learn about themselves and others.

Statement of Purpose

Based in arts inquiry, the curriculum is set up to explore identity awareness for the purposes of providing students with an experience that combines critical thinking and art making. It is also meant to help students discover the way in which cultural objects may invite conversation about the connections between traditional and contemporary society; to challenge students to explore the aesthetic in context and incorporate current concerns, ultimately aimed at cultivating dialogue regarding matters of social justice. Components of the curriculum include concepts of object literacy, interpretation and methods of art making that incorporate several styles of weaving.

Through these concepts students look critically at the way knowledge is created and used in mainstream society. The premise is that curriculum viewed as activism empowers students by giving them the opportunity to analyze and evaluate themselves and their standing in relation to status quo (Banks, 1997; Chalmers, n.d.; Kana'iaupuni, 2005; Sleeter, 2005). Including information regarding historically marginalized

communities is part of the foundation in which students become aware of other ways of knowing. Within the field of multicultural education, social reconstructivist theory guided the curriculum to stages of action, creating an environment in which change is the focus.

Selected to simultaneously connect to and oppose the fragmented, over-stimulated nature of contemporary society and Western frame of logic, the aesthetics and cultural relevance of Northern Californian Native basketry provided a basis to create dialogue regarding the meaning of artifacts. When viewed in context to the ideology of the makers, Native basketry defies the trend we find in our nation's educational values: that art is not necessary for survival. It is for this reason that these forms, both ancient and modern, signify resistance. Marcuse (1978) asserted:

...the radical qualities of art,...its indictment of the established reality and its invocation of the beautiful image...of liberation are grounded precisely in the dimensions where art transcends its social determination and emancipates itself from the given universe of discourse and behavior while preserving its overwhelming presence. Thereby art creates the realm in which the subversion of experience proper to art becomes possible: the world formed by art is recognized as a reality which is suppressed and distorted in the given reality (as cited in Becker, 1994, p. 116).

Learning to "read" Native American basketry allows the subversive nature of these holistic forms to become evident. Their existence is testimony to history in context; to an ongoing life force that survives and disrupts boundaries. This art

communicates through and beyond aesthetics to a space of inquiry where it is possible to critically look at the way people regard one another.

Rather than simply showcasing Native American baskets, the planning of this project began with an interest in transformational education, the ethical obligation of education to empower students, and to establish the “relationship between material and non-material aspects of life” (Slapin & Seale, 1992, p.256). Due to the wide range of concerns and broad implications associated with this topic, communities of Northern Californian basketweavers were selected to provide students with tangible evidence and a means through which information may be gathered about culture. Also, the work of certain Native communities was selected in order to share and learn with students about the makers of regional baskets.

The curriculum is intended to direct students to connect aesthetics to ethics and leaves room for students to discover in what form this will manifest. Applying art as evidence provides an innovative way for students to access, explore and develop their values and standpoint. By the end of the course, students will understand that cultural objects present artistic aesthetics through factors such as materials gathered, prepared and created, and also that there is legacy, history and social issues regarding these objects that are relevant today and necessary to consider. For example, to see Native American basketry as highly evolved objects from which modern society may benefit is to understand that the creation of a basket from natural, hand-gathered materials critically questions present day disassociation from all things natural. Throughout the course students engage in creative, reflective processes in ways that draw upon their personal cultural experiences.

Background

Long before researching the history and current status of California Native American basketry, I was profoundly moved by the incredible beauty, sensuality, integrity and highly sophisticated aesthetic these vessels embodied. My interest in this topic derives from several sources. I have always been an object maker. After my father, who owned every imaginable tool and who into his 90th year worked on projects in his workshop, art has been a means of self-exploration and expression.

As a child I attempted to reproduce objects that an uncle sent regularly from Mexico: clay pots, balsa wood religious scenes, etc. Perhaps typical of many people, certain objects from childhood become heavily invested with family history, tradition and meaning. Recently, I have been reminded of the significance of these objects as my siblings and I sorted through my mother's kitchen and father's workshop. Recipes, cherished bowls, a handmade spoon made by my sister in Girl Scouts; hammers, drills and neatly organized drawers of nails, bolts and miscellaneous hardware, each laden with thousands of family fingerprints, represent a sort of marker. Objects to artifacts, they connect me to a heritage of strong women and loving family.

As an undergraduate, I spent countless hours in ceramics, printmaking and painting studios making and processing my world. It was natural to put these art-making tools into the hands of my children from which they developed their own creative interests. Volunteering in their classrooms grew to considerable school-wide projects, and the development of art classes for teacher training. These experiences, coupled

with travel through Europe and Asia, have nourished my fascination with handmade objects as well as an interest in teaching.

One particular exhibition of Native American baskets, displayed at the High Desert Museum in Bend, Oregon, has remained vividly in my memory as one of the most sophisticated, aesthetically and personally inspiring examples of art I have seen. Transfixed, I stood before natural fibers woven into graceful shapes that, through my investigation, I have come to realize represent incredibly complex and culturally diverse ideas. Design elements, some bold some subtle, revealed individual identity and community tradition at once. The forms themselves empowered me to research this topic. I now know that on many levels I have barely scratched the surface of the meaning behind these living objects; that aside from their natural grace, they possess a certain way of knowing.

As a museum educator, I coordinated an outreach program that served schools in Monterey and surrounding counties. Museum On Wheels displayed an international folk art exhibition that included over 200 artifacts representing 50 countries. My participation in the museum program allowed me to see first hand the way in which students identified with and related to artifacts from their native cultures. Through the observation of indigenous artifacts, students expressed pride, knowledge, respect and awe.

In addition, I have been a volunteer and employee in local schools for 15 years (almost always as art instructor, coordinator or designer, creating stage props and student exhibitions), and have seen the waning commitment to art in some classrooms. Lack of teacher training in the arts was evident in the reticence with which many

teachers approached involvement with art related curriculum. Developing and implementing teacher in-service workshops for local school districts gave me this impression as well. (I acknowledge that there may be other factors at play regarding the incorporation of art into the classroom.)

Currently, as a teacher at California State University, Monterey Bay, I am working with undergraduates, many of whom are forging a career in elementary and secondary education. Students are in the course *Expressive Arts* (visual arts component), for five weeks of the semester before they rotate through to the music and dance components. I see approximately 150 students per semester through three rotations. The course provides an opportunity to experiment with a variety of art materials, view related slides, and research a selected artist. Typically my students are insecure about their “ability” and knowledge base in art. I cannot help but make the connection from the artistic underexposure of teachers, to that of students. I assure my students that, in this case, assessment will not focus on specific ability level, that the course is intended to introduce the potential and satisfaction of artistic expression. It has been my aim to provide an experience that encourages and supports; to intervene in the perpetuation of insecurity around art-making processes in the classroom. These are some of the experiences that motivate me to study cultural connections to art and to design curriculum that includes different ways of knowing.

Within the Master of Arts in Education program at California State University, Monterey Bay I have completed several projects that have given me the opportunity to develop and articulate pedagogical practice, ideological beliefs and perspective (in visual and written form), and to critically research and investigate transformational

education. Examples of these projects are: 1.) a mixed media artwork representing fabric from a diverse selection of cultures in connection with multicultural literature, 2.) a painting expressing reaction to the standardization of schools, and 3.) a foundation for the design of curriculum meant for higher education in which students explore individual and collective culture through multiple perspectives.

I see this thesis project as an extension of these works, that when combined with my experience, will culminate in an art-based curriculum that includes an introduction to individual and cultural awareness, the regenerative power of art and inspiration and avenue for social change.

Terminology

- *artifact* – a material object, often made by hand, that may have cultural significance.
- *Backward Design* – an approach to curriculum design in which “explicit focus on important ideas and appropriate evidence of learning” is the main consideration in planning (Wiggins & McTighe, 2005).
- *culture* - "The totality of socially transmitted behavior patterns, arts, beliefs, institutions, and all other products of human work and thought." (Miraglia, 1999).
- *cultural lens* – “Learned culture is like a lens which filters all the information we perceive through our senses; sensory information passes through this lens of culture and is filtered, or interpreted, into a recognizable pattern that has meaning” (Miraglia, 1999).
- *cultural identity* – “how group members actually see and identify themselves” (Sleeter & Grant, 1999, p. 129).
- *material culture* – a label given to all artifacts, past and present, that have been created or modified by humans; therefore, material culture encompasses all non-natural objects (Bolin, 1995).
- *multicultural education* – where the curriculum “should help students develop the ability to make reflective decisions on issues related to ethnicity and to take personal, social, and civic actions to help solve the racial and ethnic problems in our national and world societies” (Banks, 1997).

- *Native* – “Aboriginal, Indian, American Indian, Canadian Indian, Inuit, Native American, Amerindian, Status, non-Status, Treaty Indian, non-Treaty Indian, Metis, First Nations and Indigenous. These terms collectively refer to those people whose ancestors were the originals inhabitants of land that are now subject to rule by other governments and peoples” (Hanohana, 1999).
- *Social reconstructionist theory* – a guideline that “seeks to reconstruct society toward greater equity in race, class, gender and disability” (Grant and Sleeter as cited in Banks & Banks, 2001, p. 69).
- *Traditional* – “as used by many Indian people and scholars... an overarching term with varying meanings. Sometimes it refers to the oldest norms: languages, religions, artistic forms, everyday customs and individual behavior. At other times it refers to modern practices based on those norms...that draw most closely on ancient, established practices” (Heth as cited in Nahwooksy, 1994).
- *Transformative approach* – “...enables students to view concepts, issues, themes, and problems from several ethnic perspectives and points of view” (Banks, 1997).

Boundaries

This curriculum has been developed within an atmosphere of support for multicultural education. California State University, Monterey Bay (CSUMB) states that the university mission is “*to build a multicultural learning community founded on academic excellence from which all partners in the educational process emerge prepared to contribute productively, responsibly, and ethically to California and the global community*” (1994). While originally intended for use at CSUMB, the concepts included in this project may be used in a wide range of settings.

I acknowledge that my Euro-American heritage, age and gender give me a specific outlook in which cognizance of the politics of power and its use must be considered. It is widely conceded that any claims to know other cultures and perspectives may be problematic. Rather, with the inclusion and reference to cultural

knowledge, this thesis is intended to bring to the forefront a questioning of dominant culture (Kuokkanen, 2003). For this reason I have looked at related scholarly literature and discussed this project with others in the field of multicultural and art education. I have left room for refinement within the stages of the course.

Conclusion

This thesis presents an exploration intended to conceptualize the nature and transformational possibility of a particular curriculum design. It is offered as a way to lessen cultural incomprehension and promote social change at an introductory, if not fundamental, level. Created to explore and strengthen strategies using cultural knowledge, this project attempts to provide aspects of historical context and investigative options based on concepts of inclusion and emancipation.

Chapter Two reviews literature on topics related to culture, multicultural curriculum design and theory, the ethics of addressing Native knowledge as a non-Native teacher and art-making as vehicle for transformation. While there is a wide selection of research on art as social activism, there is a lack of literature addressing “traditional” art/artifacts as a place to begin decolonization. Observation, literature and dialogue were the primary methods used to gather information and are discussed in Chapter Three.

In Chapter Four is found the curriculum in its entirety. Within five Stages, defining “culture” is the objective of Stage One, focusing on the way personal culture influences viewpoint. This Stage culminates with a project in which students express personal cultural group(s) in images. In subsequent Stages students investigate related aspects of Native American culture in order to begin a discussion about marginalization and the

value of worldview. It is believed and intended that modest, respectful inquiry is beneficial to students and the Native communities who are the subject of the research. The relationship between traditional and contemporary Native artists emphasizes the current status of Native groups and provides a point of connection for students who straddle more than one cultural generation. Northern Californian Native basketry provides a powerful display and metaphor for the values of a society that endures colonization. Here students recognize the subversive beauty of Native basketry.

A discussion of how this curriculum would best serve students and community is the topic of Chapter Five. There are also ideas for refinement and suggestions for modification.

Chapter Two Literature Review

Introduction

The challenge, to incorporate Native concepts into curriculum design, was originally based on my interest in the work of Pomo basketweavers. Research revealed right away that reviewing literature on the subject of Native art and traditions would need to expand to many levels. I began to grasp the idea that scraping the surface of any perspective other than my own Euro-American heritage would be an extremely complex endeavor. Naïve intentions did not change the fact that I believed it valuable to investigate the work of educators who have incorporated Native art into curriculum, and also to have the opportunity to study cultural artwork that impacted me personally.

Several questions served to guide the selection of literature: What methods and theories would best contribute to contemporary curriculum design intended to create student self-reflection that evolves into a connection with larger issues and meaningful generalizations aimed at social change? In terms of incorporating Native tradition: which concepts best contribute to a process in which students “emerge with a sense of both the beauty of Indigenous traditions and of what’s at stake with Indigenous survival” (McNally, 2004, p. 609). How will Native people view this work? To this end, the review is divided into three key sections: Reading Culture, Multicultural Education, and Native American Worldviews.

Reading Culture

As interactions between diverse groups increase, the concept of “culture” becomes a valuable way to make sense of individual and group identity. It is an extremely complex issue with potential for all kinds of repercussions. Curriculum design

aimed toward multicultural perspective and analysis of culture may generate powerful possibilities for empowerment and transformation (Kluckhohn, cited in Miralgia, 1999). Geertz (1973) claimed, “the analysis of culture comes down...to a searching out of significant symbols -- the material vehicles of perception emotion and understanding -- and the statement of underlying regularities of human experience implicit in their formation....” (p. 408).

This project proposes transformative curricula using “significant symbols” in the form of material objects. One way to begin the complex task of understanding aspects of a culture is to examine and consider artifacts (acknowledging that certain concepts may not be interpreted literally or completely by an audience outside the culture). Artifacts, not merely tools for survival, are cultural symbols through which ideas, beliefs and existential stance may be represented. Integrated into curriculum, these concepts allow students access to more subtle understandings of the relationship between identity and the large umbrella “culture” (Burkhart, 2006; Eder & Finkelstein, 1998; Grassby, 2005; Geertz, 1973).

According to Chalmers (n.d.), *context* is critical to understanding the history and values of cultures when exploring artifacts. The inherent meaning of an object is dependent upon the circumstances within which it was created and conversely how art is discussed and interpreted “is never innocent of the political and ideological processes in which the discourse has been constituted” (Wolff, as cited in Chalmers, n.d.). The Center for Research on Education, Diversity & Excellence (2002), claimed that evidence of contextualization in curriculum includes lessons that incorporate student prior knowledge and interests, direct students in application of learning beyond the

classroom, allow for student in-put in planning and uses a variety of styles of conversation and participation.

In order to explore the meaning of *culture*, the curriculum is sequenced in Stages. Initial stages emphasize the nature of evaluating a community through their cultural objects, including the unifying aspects as well as the dangers of interpretation and value judgment. To experience the way in which context relates to a material object, students also create objects through a variety of methods; a kind of “student artifact.” The assignment allows students to express concepts such as tradition, symbolic meaning, function, cultural change or stance; references to individual and/or collective identity. Students discover the reasons for using art to express ideas and become aware of the context within which these objects are created and that the visual qualities of art can influence the understanding of a culture (Freedman & Wood, 1999).

In subsequent Stages students participate in several lessons that serve to introduce the validity of differing worldviews. Looking at the art of Native American communities of Northern California without contextualization is to eliminate socio-cultural opportunity (Chalmers, n.d.). In fact, because many Native communities do not categorize or separate meaning, function and aesthetics, it is necessary for curriculum to include facets that pertain to and illuminate core methodologies of the culture and to the relationship between concepts (Eisner, 2000).

Investigating Native American history and the relationship between Native concepts became the foundation to look at contemporary Native art. Hutchinson (2001) discussed “transculturation,” a concept that includes:

“intersections between art, modernity, and ethnic identity...that includes the painful impact of colonialism...Key to [transculturation theory] is the uprooting of old cultural forms and the creation of new ones that reflect marginalized peoples’ relations to mainstream culture” (para 5).

This idea is important for students who find *themselves* straddling traditional and contemporary life and applies to a course in which students are invited to explore and create a way, (their way), of knowing.

The investigation of an artifact, the way it was made and the context of the object becomes a means for students to consider more than one viewpoint. In their research throughout the course students learn to critically consider an author’s stance in order to select ethical and accurate work (Sleeter, 2005). A course created to actively integrate Native pedagogy and culture should include planning for dialogue regarding the disenfranchisement of Native communities (Martin, 1994; Giroux, 1992; Freire, 2004). In this way the curriculum connects to “meaningful generalizations” with overarching aims that tackle how art affects society.

Multicultural Education

There are four categories within the section on multicultural education. First, motivation and goals for the thesis are presented by grounding the project in social reconstructionist theory. Next, curriculum design and pedagogy begins the discussion regarding the inclusion of Native tradition. Also discussed is the challenge of creating multicultural curriculum as a non-Native educator. The field of art education is brought into the conversation as it relates to a multicultural format.

Social Reconstructionist Theory

Aspiring to develop pedagogy and curriculum with an emancipatory premise, I have selected literature based in social reconstructionist theory. There are multiple theories that describe and support the scope of social reconstructionist education. Critical pedagogues, in which status quo is challenged and the consequence of schooling is addressed, are core to this approach (Banks, 1997, Freire, 2005). As defined by Grant and Sleeter, social reconstructionist education, “seeks to reconstruct society toward greater equity in race, class, gender and disability” (as cited in Banks & Banks, 2001, p.69). In this approach teachers actively question mainstream education including traditional roles of gender, student / teacher positions of authority, variation of learning styles and lived experiences. Toward democratizing and diversifying the classroom, collaboration and communication that emphasize student experience are important components that affect the design of content and methods utilized. (Reisberg, Brander & Grunewald, 2006; Cahan & Kocur, 1996; Freire, 2005; Martin, 1994; Sleeter & Grant, 1999).

Core concepts of multicultural education that merge with social reconstructionist theory include critical questioning, practicing democracy, analyzing systems of oppression, and encouraging social action (Sleeter & Grant, 1999). Seen as a philosophy that addresses not just course development but school and district mission statements, social reconstructionist multicultural education has more than one implication for application.

Curriculum design and pedagogy

To frame the “big idea,” (the concept of cultural identity, within overarching themes relating to the way art influences society), the curriculum design follows a

strategy that began by defining selected goals (Banks, 1997). To this end, Wiggins' and McTighe's (2005) *Backward Design*, in which "desired results" as the first concepts identified, was used for planning the course. Objectives for multicultural classes need to include concepts that underline the experiences of marginalized groups (such as racism, discrimination, oppression and privilege), and pedagogy that challenges the mainstream agenda by asserting, "idealized goals" (Banks, 1997; Banks & Banks, 2001; Sleeter & McLaren, 1995; Martin, 1994).

Oppressive history, different worldviews and current day relations make bringing Native pedagogy into course design challenging, if not questionable. The colonization of Native Americans, achieved by genocide, forced assimilation, misappropriation of Native culture and illegal seizure of land, brings past and present power relations into the forefront of curriculum planning (Banks, 1997; Lambe, 2003; Larson, 2000). Ethically the conversation cannot proceed without a discussion that includes accountability. Discussing her experience teaching a wide range of cultural backgrounds, Bailey (2000) listed the following concerns regarding critical pedagogy in multicultural education:

how we frame and name our own racism -- to come to feel comfortable talking about our own biases and prejudicial thoughts, actions, and attitudes, as a necessary first step to action; how we disadvantage Aboriginal students in our universities, for whom success may require some form of personal amputation; how we, as teacher educators, can begin to model through our own culturally sensitive actions, and through

our teaching, ways of becoming culturally sensitive classroom teachers (p.126).

Scholars insist that in multicultural education, necessarily included is an accurate account with perspective of the disenfranchised, regarding the topic of power relations (historic and current). As Loewen (1995) noted, typical high-school history is taught in a way that leaves many students to acquire their “knowledge” about Native Americans through movies, books and misused imagery. Romanticized and/or demonized representations have been the norm in media and textbook representation. Contemporary Native Americans live with prejudicial stereotyping and discrimination based on dominant group assumptions. This curriculum project aims to work with this polarizing misinformation by both discussing inaccuracies and accountability, and by reflectively working with respect to Native pedagogy.

Intended as scaffolding, the curriculum builds in Stages. Within each Stage, lesson plans progress from individual focus to a collaborative environment. There is an attempt here to leave some flexibility within the curriculum to allow student directed planning and to explore power sharing (Sleeter, 2005). Readings are assigned to direct focus toward topics discussed. For example, in his writing, *At Home In The World*, Jim Carnes (2003) asked, “if membership and identity remain such vexing issues in our country, what can educators do to help students not only cope with the problem but also take action to resolve it?” When students begin the process of creating their own artifacts in class, they may find in Marjane Ambler’s (1999) article, *For Native People, Art Is Not Optional*, a suggestion to look at their art work differently: as “prayer work.”

These aspects of curriculum design intend to reflect an approach to education that evolves toward active participation.

Non-Native educators

Some believe that addressing Native culture as a non-Native may further disenfranchise. Popkewitz (1988) warned, “what culture is brought into schooling is an important social and political issue; the relation between culture and groups has to be understood as a problem of power” (p. 78). He contended, “the decontextualization and reformulation of cultural systems are imbedded in most discussions of multicultural education” (p. 87). Fry and Willis (cited in Stevenson, 1993) criticized the use of an agenda in which non-Native educators include Native knowledge of any kind. They claimed that certain concepts “may never be accessed because they do not share the same system of beliefs and values” (p. 33). Context displacement, appropriation, repatriation and assimilation form critical points of debate to consider when developing a course that combines multiple worldviews (Banks, 1997; Popkewitz, 1988; Sarris, 1993).

There are Native and non-Native educators who believe, however, that to exclude Indigenous peoples from curriculum further suppresses these populations; that colonizers who created oppressive conditions have the capacity to decolonize (Champagne, 1996, 2003; Wilson, 2004). A teacher who is not comfortable with Indigenous culture and gladly omits Native concepts from curriculum perpetuates oppressive pedagogy. Stevenson (1993) observed that to leave the teaching of Native culture to Native populations alone “would be to leave the entire burden of decolonization to them” (p. 34). I agree with Einhorn (2000) when she stated, “we only

further segregate ourselves when we claim that only certain people can identify with certain cultures” (p. xvi). Nehamas pointed out that “since power is productive, the subjects that it produces, being themselves a former power, can be productive in turn” (Allsup as cited in Sleeter and McLaren, 1995, p. 275).

Art Education

“I have made my world, and it is a much better world than I saw outside” (cited in Vallenge, 2004, p. 513). Louise Nevelson alluded to the ability provided by art to create change. A hallmark of multicultural art education is the intention to broaden the perspective of students by including the traditions of more than one community. Hamblen (1990) noted, “ with reference to critical theory, cultural literacy should take the form of ethnoaesthetic studies of art and culture wherein the value systems of different aesthetic systems are examined, analyzed, and contrasted” (p.217). Hamblen’s directive, coupled with hands-on experiences (interpreting and creating objects), allows students access to concepts that may generate enduring learning and critical social consciousness via art processes. Sensory experience relates more to real world experience; hence, deeper meaning out of lived experience (Eisner, 2002).

Against the backdrop of history, “art is studied as being integral to the value systems and meanings ascribed by the creators and users of art” (Hamblen, 1990). Without background information, students have no foundation from which to base the reconstruction of anything. To study cross-cultural art work in context, as a means of understanding self and other cultural systems, is to take steps that lead to becoming critical thinkers who question inequality.

Several stages of this course focus on communities of Northern California basketweavers. If seen as independent and unconnected to curriculum, the use of unique cultures that are marginalized may be considered to be the use of what multicultural educators term “additive.” The belief is that adding one Native population to the course structure does not make curriculum multicultural. In other words, integral changes in assumptions and goals overall, with less one-sided, Eurocentric perspective, is essential to education that is multicultural (Banks & Banks, 2001). Conceived as one of a series of courses for introductory-level students, this thesis project design is intended to support subsequent projects, similar in approach with room for revision and expansion based on the results of the first class and student needs.

The role of imagination is seldom discussed as a basic concept of curriculum design. Educational philosopher Maxine Greene, known for her interest and standpoint on the importance and impact of multicultural arts education, advocated an emphasis on developing imagination as one aspect toward improving education. A proponent of emancipatory pedagogy, Greene (1995) made clear the relationship between imagination, the arts, multiple ways of knowing and resistance. Acknowledged is the point that there are limits placed by dominant social practices.

The arts may move us into spaces where we can envision other ways of being and ponder what it might signify to realize them. But moving into such spaces requires a willingness to resist the forces that press people into passivity and bland acquiescence...that the qualities of art allow it to indict established reality and evoke images of liberation (p.135-136).

Further, Greene (1988) explained:

There is always possibility...for the pursuit of freedom. Much the same can be said about experiences with art objects...they have the capacity, when authentically attended to, to enable persons to hear and to see what they would not ordinarily hear and see, to offer visions of consonance and dissonance that are unfamiliar and indeed abnormal, to disclose the incomplete profiles of the world (p.128-129).

Imagination as an interpretive concept that allows for envisioning a future of possibility and as a tool to discover creative solutions to complex problems necessarily implies critical thinking. Greene believed, "in order to engage with the arts, you have to release yourself by means of imagination into an alternative world..." (cited in Kay, 1995, p. 63). The development of student imagination through pedagogy that employs social reconstructive methods and higher order thinking skills, may result in revolutionized ways of knowing. Greene (1988) referred to the relationship between imagination, rational criticism and freedom:

Surely, education today must be conceived as a mode of opening the world to critical judgments by the young and to their imaginative projections and, in time, to their transformative actions. We must learn how to enable the diverse young to join the continually emergent culture's conversation. (p.56).

On the topics of pluralism, democratic possibility, hope and alternative realities, Greene (1988, 1993, 2000) called for attentiveness to the oppression of marginalized peoples through more challenging forms of education. She noted that:

...we might begin by releasing our imagination and summoning up the traditions of freedom in which most of us were reared. We might try to make audible again the recurrent calls for justice and equality. We might try to reactivate the resistance to materialism and conformity. We might even try to inform with meaning the desire to educate 'all the children' in a legitimately common school (Nieto as cited in Sleeter and McLaren, 1995, p. 214).

Native worldview

Reiterated in scholarly literature are distinctive differences between Native and Western worldviews. Secular in nature, Western epistemology is demonstrated as centralized power, top to bottom order, clear lines of organization, competition as necessary, rules, logic and reason. Native knowledge, based on a non-linear, complex society that collaborates and values listening, focuses on spirituality and the interdependence of all things as integral to life. This section includes an initial exploration into perspectives of Native communities, particularly the ways Native perspectives diverge dramatically from Western ways of knowing. Demonstrated are opposing belief systems that become critical and relevant when the goal is designing curriculum aimed at transformative education. The aim here is to point out how different ways of knowing may unintentionally divide groups and that awareness of more than one way of being in the world (through various modes of expression), provides a platform from which social justice may be addressed. With a curriculum based in non-static art education, imagination and creativity become necessary agents of change through which students develop a store of methods for adaptation.

Educators and scholars vary in their recommendations regarding the use of Native American tradition as a part of multicultural curriculum design. There is quite a bit of focus in literature on current curricula in tribally controlled schools and universities. These schools concentrate on the education of Native students for the recovery, preservation and empowerment of Native cultures (Simpson, 2004; Wilson, 2004).

Native life, lived as a holistic experience, may contradict standard school formats in which concepts are often practiced as separate (such as the categorization found in: religion, art, science, etc.). This makes the integration of Native tradition into a mainstream classroom potentially problematic (Crazy Bull, 1997; Danenhauer, 1999; LaPena, 2001; Sarris, 1993). Yet Gross (2005) argued that introducing “problematic” curriculum is specifically what is called for in an attempt to “turn ritual indoctrination into a ritual of empowerment [by introducing] American Indian ways of knowing and being as legitimate topics of study” (para. 3).

Epistemological perspectives include those that revolve around Western and Native ways of knowing. Conception of what is real and the means of justification grow out of opposing belief systems. Essentially, the difference lies in a “naturalistic” explanation, in which nature and life are connected versus a “humanistic” account wherein people are seen as separate and above the rest of the world (Tuhiwai-Smith, 2004). Even though there is consistency and shared characteristics among Native communities, this does not mean to imply that all Native American groups construct their views identically.

Expressed in the literature is an epistemology of Native people that refers often to relationships. Spirituality is a fundamental imperative that is directly associated with

Native ways of knowing in which aspects of life are related and considered to be interdependent, equal and holistic. Spiritual traditions live in “the dream-space intensity of personal vision and in the shared cosmic ordering of words and actions...”

(Ridington, 1996, p. 468). Sioui explained:

...life finds its meaning in the implicit and admiring recognition of the existence, role, and power of all forms of the life that composes the circle. Amerindians, by nature, strive to respect the sacred character of the relations that exist among all forms of life. (as cited in Hanohana, 1999; p. 213).

For some Native groups, spirituality manifests as shared beliefs in the sacred nature of visions and dreams as a principal way of knowing. Ridington (1996) wrote:

The experience of visionary transformation is fundamental to Native American spirituality. Although it is ultimately personal and begun in isolation, the quest for it is fundamentally conversational and social. Power comes from a person's conversation with the supernatural. It comes from an encounter with sentient beings with whom humans share the breath of life. It appears when a human makes contact with the non-human persons of the cosmos. It comes to a person when he or she is humble and pitiable. It comes to children and it comes to adults who make themselves like children. Power comes to people who listen carefully to the storied world around them. It comes when the story of a person's life joins the circle of conversation. Power comes when a person realizes a story that already exists. Power comes when he or she adds a new episode to that

story. It comes when the story of a person's life becomes that of life as a whole (p. 471).

Visions and dreams, as a way of knowing, become the method through which is conveyed meaning and guidance. Lee (1994) noted that for some Great Plains Native communities "...visionary experience is integral to everyday waking consciousness" that includes "...altered states, and various encounters with sacred beings as normative to human potential and ability" (p.258).

Oral tradition exemplifies differences between Native and Western epistemology and methods. An "embodied art" (McNally, 2004), oral tradition is not simply transmitting history, but is evidence of "cultural authority of people invested by the community with the authority to articulate culture" (p. 605). This form of narrative is a vital component to the well-being of many Native communities (Morris, 1996). As opposed to the nature of Western oral "communication" and written history, Native oral traditions consist of knowledge and *felt* relationship through stories. McNally (2004) explained that:

Lived moments of oral exchange are never simply locked up in bygone eras...The resonant authority of an old person's voice speaking with economy and resonance of Ojibwe idiom, can collapse the abstraction of historical duration and make the Treaty of 1855 or Allotment Policy feel like they occurred yesterday (p 606).

Further, Einhorn (2000) stated, "Native American oral tradition helps to account for the survival of their people and rhetoric. Things do not exist until put into words...saying words with our breath affirms existence" (p. 3).

Referring to Native oral tradition as simply a spoken way to communicate information implies a historical timeline based in linear Western thinking. This negates the way in which past relationships with colonizers defines current day reality and standing of Native peoples. “Native communities sense of proximity to what non-Natives might deem a distant past is not simply a function of orality” (McNally, 2004, p.606). Holistic in nature, oral tradition is a concept through which all aspects of life may be addressed. In other words there is no separation, as in Western pedagogy in which discipline based learning may be classified into different fields of inquiry.

In contrast to a Western didactic approach to teaching, in which hierarchy is core, the concept of “mentoring” illustrates one form of Native pedagogy. Lambe (2003) highlighted this concept as powerful due in part to the nature of personal relationships when he asserted:

Each being and process in nature is unique, contributing to the maintenance and continuance of the cycles of life in their own way...
Implicit in understanding of Indigenous education is the term ‘diversity’—a person coming to know for themselves, on their own terms, guided but not directed by a mentor or role model... (p. 310).

Staikidis (2005) reported on an art education project in which Mayan artists served as mentors. One objective of the study, “cross-cultural aesthetic inquiry [that required] participation in an artistic activity of another culture in order to understand that culture on its own terms” (para. 2), formed a basis to contradict Western epistemological assumptions. Pointed out was the Eurocentric tendency in art education to discount female and Indigenous ways of knowing, excluding a holistic, reciprocal approach.

Contemporary Mayan methods included “decentralized teaching, collaboration, negotiated curriculum and personal and cultural narrative” (para. 5).

Traditional Western education is viewed within a linear time frame consisting of concepts organized into “empirical or rational propositions and systematically tested” (Glover, 2003). Based in disciplinary learning and logical processes, this viewpoint locates classification of knowledge as a core principle (Banks, 1997; Glover, 2003; Lambe 2000; McNally, 2004). Seldom contended as the mission of Western education, perspectives that include harmony, relationship, fulfillment and balance are part of the basis for Native epistemology that values relationships.

In terms of art education and using Native artifacts in this thesis project, the consideration of Native concepts in context is core to several Stages of the design. The Western tradition of art has historically endorsed what Dunn (1993) called “correct distance,” in which space and distance revolve around evolutionary development (para.1). The idea of a linear time space continuum, used to “compartmentalize, define and measure” (Tuhiwai-Smith, 2004), is based in colonial ideology that contradicts Native perspectives. Tuhiwai-Smith (2004) stated that “deeply embedded in these constructs are systems of classification and representation which lend themselves easily to binary oppositions, dualisms, and hierarchical orderings of the world” (p. 55). Gross (2005) described an opposing method, “accretive thinking,” (p. 123) in which Native traditions include a fusion of beliefs and layers of information developed for meaning. Native languages often have no word for “art,” yet for Native people this does not negate the notion that objects “communicate meaning and information over time”

(Brascoupe, 1994, p. 93), and may have aesthetic presence that serves to represent aspects of Native ways and beliefs.

Western ideas of what constitutes knowledge (and the methods in which it is known and measured) connote superiority and non-existence of Native ways. Some Western approaches to research, policy and pedagogy discount the fact that Native peoples have survived colonizing strategies using belief systems that are contrary to that of Eurocentric origin (Wilson, 2004).

An example of divergent viewpoints between Western and Native epistemology in education may be found in research initiated to understand why Kickapoo students were not engaged within the classroom. A study was posed to investigate the differences in worldview of Traditional Kickapoo students with worldviews found in Western science instruction. Prior to the project, researchers Allen and Crawley (1998) acknowledged their bias and belief that there would be very little disparity in worldviews due to assimilation.

Using qualitative research methods that included classroom observation, interviews, drawings and text evaluation, the research concluded with findings that contradicted Allen and Crawley's initial assumption. The data illustrated positivist epistemology on the part of Western instruction in which knowledge was presented as separate and outside student experience. In addition, the authors point out that "teachers were constantly baffled and frustrated by the refusal of the Indian students to compete in the classroom. Cooperation, rather than competition, is highly regarded among Kickapoo people" (p. 122). This is indicative of a different way of being in the

world and points to an epistemology based in egalitarian principles, the opposite of Western argumentative discourse (Lambe, 2003).

Highlighted in the study was not only difference in the way students learn, but also student motivation for participation. Pursuing knowledge as secular and disconnected from other facets of life contradicts Native methods and tradition. Hanohana (1999) and Simpson (2004) make the point that because Native concepts are missing from Western educational agendas, Native students may be misunderstood and undervalued. In this paradigm, an opportunity for non-Native students to experience relevant Native ways may be considered to be invalid, and therefore missed. Difference in epistemological approach, in this case, directly affected the experience of Traditional Kickapoo students and placed them in a subordinate position.

Conclusion

Scholars endorse the idea that Native American pedagogy is relevant in the classroom. Asserted by Bailey (2000) is the view that planning and precaution is necessary to respectfully use Native pedagogy in education. Based on student level and interest, access to a community within Native groups to be studied, preparation in background history and concepts, exploring multicultural art education is a vital means to emphasize the interconnectedness of people and things. Not all schools encourage critical pedagogy oriented toward social activism. Stories concerning frustrated teachers over mandates that do nothing to question the status quo are plentiful. There are also inspiring accounts in which teachers manage to take steps (with or without the support of administrators) to address injustice.

This thesis curriculum project is aimed at finding new ways to direct lessons around the concept of culture and ways of knowing. Interpretation and creation of material objects lends itself to the exploration of epistemology by underlining assumptions about the ways in which knowledge originates. In exploring certain aspects of Native American tradition (basket weavers of Northern Californian communities specifically), epistemological standpoint becomes relevant in that Western tradition often categorizes artifacts one-dimensionally as utilitarian vessels, evaluated on linear timeline and materials used, separate from their maker. Sarris (1993) asked:

What happened and continues to happen that allows one group of people to discuss the artifacts of another people separate from the people themselves? Displaced is the historical testimony and subsequent authority, and this displacement not only maintains a separation of the spectator from the world and history out of which the baskets were created but also precipitates a closed cycle of presentation and discussion about the basketry itself (p. 53-54).

Social reconstructivist theory guides educators to plan for multicultural pedagogy that is more than superficial. It requires active steps for deep level change.

Chapter Three Methodology

A variety of teaching experiences, personal creative processes and observation of an exhibition of Native American basketry (particularly the baskets of Pomo communities) set in motion the investigation into activist curriculum design with the intention to incorporate more than one worldview. The desired results of the curriculum were identified initially based on several questions: What are some ways to best direct students to reflect on issues of identity and make explicit interpretations about biases, assumptions and concerns upon which judgments are made? How can Native artifacts be incorporated into arts-inquiry curriculum design in a way that ensures the integrity of the object maker and highlights the decolonizing aspect of the objects?

Artifact Observation

It made sense to begin designing the curriculum by re-examining the cultural artifacts from which the thesis topic began. In 1993, the High Desert Museum in Bend, Oregon displayed an exhibition of Native American basketry that served as the original inspiration for this project. Part of a private collection, the actual exhibition is no longer available for public viewing. In 2005 and 2006 the Grace Hudson Museum in Ukiah, California, the California Museum of Art in Oakland, California, the California Indian Museum and Cultural Center in Santa Rosa, California were subsequent sites visited in order to (re)observe Pomo baskets for the purposes of this project.

I noticed that my own perception of the baskets deepen significantly between 1993 and 2006. This paradigm shift deserves mentioning, as teachers and students who may use this curriculum could share a similar experience. The first exhibit (High Desert Museum location) had a profound and personal effect on me. Even though very

little background information was known about the creators of these baskets and their specific history and worldviews, a transformation of sorts took place. Mesmerized by the beauty, almost uncomfortable, it was like seeing someone's very private belongings. The feeling was one of privilege for having seen this exhibition and the memory and impact of these baskets never faded. In 2005 – 2006, the visits to museums were made with specific intent (for the purposes of writing curriculum), and with a bit more background information, which helped to place the baskets in context. Upon viewing these works, as before, the reaction was of being privileged for having seen them. The difference came from the recent, limited exposure to Pomo culture, based primarily in reviewing literature for this project. This time the forms were seen more as testimony to reality, reaffirming the premise of this thesis. The Pomo baskets displayed in these museums, while out of the original context, demonstrated “in form and content [the] aggressive refusal to sustain society's illusions” (Becker, 1994, p. xiii). Within the curriculum design, students are asked to evaluate Native American basketry, first without background information, then as a re-evaluation once students have investigated concepts and context that contribute to the creation of these works.

Some Influences

The plan for this curriculum unit was originally laid out in a linear format based on the concept that goals for beyond the curriculum had to do with student understanding of the ways in which art may influence society. The final design does progress in Stages. However, the process by which the layout was created was anything but linear. The desired results, objectives and procedures for the curriculum were revisited and revised many times, and if there were not pending deadlines, the

content and design might be in a perpetual state of revision. For these reasons I began to think of curriculum as a process in motion. Part of my evolving experience as a teacher has been to note the way curriculum may be affected, not only by content, but personal growth, changes in society and student demographics, and that there is connection between pedagogy and local/world community. Nothing stays the same. It is interesting to consider this thought for the purpose of creating curriculum in the future; to build in space for change.

Another influential factor in the revision of the curriculum design was based on correspondence and a meeting in person with an artist and basketry authority. A Native American of a Northern Californian Pomo Tribe, the artist is a distinguished basketmaker who was taught to weave by older generations renowned for their contributions to the legacy of Pomoan basketry. It was always part of the project plan to consult with Native community members who could comment on the validity of the project.

Over a year's time I spoke with Susan over the telephone and also contacted her via email. The curriculum was described in various phases of the design process, from the beginning Stage to the culmination. Remarks by Susan were not particularly informative or encouraging and it was agreed that the entire curriculum needed to be complete and presented before substantial commentary could be given. A draft of the completed curriculum project was posted to Susan several weeks prior to an in-person meeting.

During the meeting Susan graciously rejected the curriculum. Comments ranged from "It's like a treasure hunt," to "You can not make an artifact, it has to become one."

Throughout the conversation Susan shared photographs and rare books describing Pomoan baskets, locations from which materials may be gathered and former generations of basketmakers. She also loaned me an out of print journal. The critical piece of the discussion lay in an understanding and agreement that the baskets, upon which this thesis is based, are living objects.

Listening to Susan was a valuable, if not sobering, experience that caused me to put the work down and reflect. This said, it was eventually decided to move forward with the project, confident that there was personal conviction, a sense of possibility and scholarly evidence to merit modest, respectful incorporation of Native artifacts into the curriculum design. The conversation with Susan instigated revisions and broadened my vision substantially but did not change the purposes of the project: to introduce students to the decolonizing aspect of Native artifacts; to present students with the opportunity to look at the concept of culture through arts methods; to apply these concepts for the benefit of social change.

Within the Masters of Arts in Education (MAE) program at CSUMB, it was affirming and alarming to realize the nature of oppressive doctrines in and outside educational institutions. Major authors were identified in these MAE courses and from there, the list of authors and artists rapidly expanded. I reference the literature here because the work of many writers fostered reflective analysis, which in turn directed the pursuit of a variety of curriculum models from which aspects of each Stage of the unit, was developed. For instance, the curriculum put forth by Eder and Finkelstein (1998) became scaffolding activities in Stage Two. In this section students learn to look at

artifacts in ways that highlight the framework of value judgment. Walker's (n.d.) guidelines for object interpretation are also included in Stage Two.

Certain parts of the curriculum format were either inspired by or directly modeled after those implemented in MAE courses. The suggested rubrics in the unit are one such example. I attempted to obtain permission from several publishers and institutions to reproduce photographs in the curriculum, of which one photographer consented without the burden of forms and complicated contracts. Kidder's (2002) photographs of weaving styles, appearing at the beginning of each Stage, were taken for the Bulletin of Primitive Technology. Internet websites such as the National Art Education Association website, The Getty Education website and the Nihewan Foundation for Native American Education provided resources and models for relevant curriculum development.

Part of the literature reviewed concerned the critical area of incorporating Native American content into curriculum design as a non-Native educator. Scholarly literature (by Native and non-Native authors) revealed quite a bit of debate on this subject, and while there is no definitive rule to follow, virtually all the readings advocated for methods that respectfully address the topic. It is highly recommended that Native communities who are the subject of a study review the content. Naïve in conception, the intention for the curriculum was to develop a way to combine the processes of art with other ways of knowing and to point out subversive possibilities. McNally (2004) wrote:

When facing hard problems [the idea that justice may be served through an introductory course using artifacts] it is simply a good strategy to consider a wide range of enduring, respected ideas bearing on those problems. We of course must be wary of the possibility that the other

tradition is not really addressing the same problem we are, or that it is addressing only part of the problem we are addressing. But when there is common address of a problem, it is not always the case that one tradition must be adjudicated as entirely right and the other as entirely wrong.

There is a good possibility that each tradition has something insightful to say about some aspect of the problem and that each tradition could incorporate something of what the other tradition has to say (p. 604).

Partial Implementation

I have implemented certain aspects of the thesis curriculum design into a class I taught in the fall semester of 2006, MPA 233 (Expressive Arts). As an opening to the course, students work on a project that does not require formal “drawing” skills, an icebreaker of sorts. Using words cut out of the headlines of a variety of newspapers, students assemble a “message/poem” to someone in the year 2106 (100 years in the future). Words are laid out on large tables, moved around like puzzle pieces and shared by classmates. As in the curriculum project journal, students are asked to consider what their “message/poem” might say about them individually and as a culture, what their time in history was like and to bear in mind that a culture from the future might make value judgments, based on these found “message/poems.” Even in a one-day assignment, the idea seems to intrigue students and has proven to be a starting place for dialogue as the work is displayed at the end of class. I particularly enjoy watching students read the work of their peers. This connects to several features of the curriculum unit, primarily the notion of individual and community awareness, as a means of expression, and to consider the way cultures may be judged.

Another piece of the curriculum that I have auditioned in MPA 233 is incorporated into a lesson with several styles of printmaking. An assignment is included in which students use a Styrofoam printing plate to write a descriptive sentence about themselves. Taken from the “I am” poem in Stage One, students complete one sentence: I am _____ and I am _____. In printmaking, text must be written on the printing plate in reverse, as in a mirrored image (if it is intended to be read easily). The challenge of writing a personal statement backward, along with using simple watercolor mixes has produced surprisingly revealing prints. Writing backwards levels (somewhat) the aesthetic playing field of this assignment.

The assertion that artifacts may be considered tools for critical thinking, impetus for the generation of ideas and applications, and ultimately as anti-racist education, was part of the original inquiry. The thinking was that if students learned to “read” cultural objects, to cultivate visual literacy, these skills could significantly influence the process of learning about themselves and others as they create “culturally charged” objects.

The following chapter presents the curriculum unit and primary element of this thesis. Chapter Four, written in a lesson plan format, is meant to be viewed as a component of the project that may stand on it’s own as a resource for teachers.

Chapter Four

SUBVERSIVE BEAUTY

READING AND CREATING CULTURE



GIFT BASKET
Artist unknown (Pomo) c. 1880

Course Description and Rationale

“Every culture has an aesthetic system, a way of looking at and representing the world that influences the way artists express themselves in relation to the surrounding world” (Smithsonian, 2003). In this introductory course, students explore ways in which visual representation, context and historical experience connect to create cultural meaning. Organized in stages, the curriculum progresses from observing everyday objects to interpreting and creating artifacts for cultural meaning. While the course follows a sequence, the stages are interconnected, bringing together arts-informed inquiry and hands-on creative processes.

The art of basketry provides a focal point from which students develop cultural comprehension skills and motivation for course projects. Sections of the course focus on Native American cultures, in particular, basketweavers of Northern California, as a means to highlight different ways of knowing. Students engage in creative processes through a variety of methods. Concentration on ways to “read” and express identity and

culture is directed toward understanding the intention of such an investigation: to engage actively in self-actualization that evolves toward human connection, social responsibility and to imagine questions and repercussions in a larger context.

Student creations, such as a journal kept for the duration of the course, take on the significance of “student culture.” The journal / sketchbook is treated as an *artifact* of classroom culture in which will be recorded all assignments, notes, drawings and any other information deemed relevant by the student. Students are asked to imagine someone in the next century using their journal to learn about key concepts of their culture. What would the journal reveal about them as author / artist, the era, cultural values and beliefs, cares and concerns, and individual / collective standpoint on issues? How accurate and just would it be to interpret what a person and their culture were like based on this found *artifact*?

Other main points of the course include the use of objects as a means to discuss different types of value judgment. Noting subjective and objective forms of judgment using cultural objects draws attention to student prior experience and the structures of society. When Native American artistry is brought into the picture, the opportunity presents for a dialogue regarding oppressed communities. It is hoped that this conversation sets in motion student empowerment for social change.

Inspired by the beauty and subversive nature of Native American basketry, this course underlines the extreme integrity of design and technique used by Northern California Native basketweavers, along with the profound implications of the very existence of this art. The presence of baskets as records of history, as a reminder of what has been buried, affirms the “subversive function of sustaining life in the face of

deprivation, unrelenting pain, and suffering” (hooks, 1995, p.49). When students learn to critically think about identity, tradition and the meaning of cultural objects, and in turn take steps to develop their own identities through art processes, a connection may be made to concepts such as differing worldviews, status and social justice. In this way the arts demonstrate the possibilities and vital connections between education, culture and society (Chalmers, 1987; Desai, 2005; Freedman, 2000; Greene, 1995; Stuhr, 2003).

In the final Stage students combine course concepts to collaboratively “weave” an object of cultural standpoint. To this end, basketry is intended to facilitate multiple perspectives and generate new knowledge. The value of this exercise? Transformation – or at least steps toward transformation. McDermott (2002) wrote that, “critical re-examination of identity representation...uses aesthetics to rupture oppressive thinking that expands beyond art worlds into life worlds” (p. 53).

Course materials

journal / sketchbook
art supplies (TBA)

Suggested reading

Suzanne Abel-Vidor, Dot Brovarney and Susan Billy, Remember Your Relations: The Elsie Allen Baskets, Family and Friends, 1996. Berkeley: Heyday Books.
The authors present Pomo Indian baskets as documented works with known weavers, rather than anonymous 'ethnic' art. In providing background on the lives and relationships between artists, the living, changing context and history of Pomo basketry is discussed.

Greg Sarris, Keeping Slug Woman Alive: A Holistic Approach to American Indian Texts, 1993. Berkeley: University of California Press.
Sarris describes the indivisible relationship between Native concepts as he weaves his own story into essays on oral tradition, Native medicine, spiritual truths, relationship to land, basketweaving traditions and worldview differences.

Lobo and Talbot (Eds.), Native American Voices, 2001. New Jersey: Prentice Hall.
Included are Native perspectives on stereotypes held by many non-Natives, historic and contemporary concerns regarding injustice, Native strengths, resistance and survival.

Lyn Siler, Handmade Baskets, 1991. New York: Lark Books.

Jane LaFerla, Making the New Baskets: Alternative Materials, Simple Techniques, 1999. New York: Lark Books.

Marjane Ambler, *For Native People, Art Is Not Optional*, 1999. Tribal College Journal, Vol. X; 4.
<http://proquest.umi.com/pqdweb?did=625176441&sid=3&Fmt=3&clientId=17856&RQT=309&VName=PQ>

Jim Carnes, *At Home in the World*, 2003. Cultural Arts Resources for Teachers and Students (C.A.R.T.S.), Vol. 7. http://www.carts.org/res_articles.html

Stage One – Defining Culture



Single Strand Weaving

Overview:

The foundation of Stage One is based upon the understanding that knowledge is anchored in the context in which it is produced (Sleeter, 2005); that cultural identity may color perspective resulting in marginalization. In this section students begin a process of self-identification toward community connection.

Objectives

1. Students will think of themselves as cultural beings.
2. Students will be able to identify circumstances that define culture.
3. Students will explore ways to express “culture” visually.

Time Eight hours, depending on the number of students
 Three hours for discussion and “I am” poem.
 Two hours to go over the project, “Show an ID” (discuss the ways some artists represent ideas in images, show examples, discuss student ideas).
 The rest for working on projects / journals in class.

Materials

Journal
 Art supplies
 Handouts #1, #2, #3 - definitions of culture; “I am” poem; evaluation rubric

Suggested procedures

1. Give students time to read Handout #1.
 (Armstrong, 1990); (Miraglia, 1999).
2. Hold an open-ended discussion as students define *culture* and how it is *learned*.
 Cultural groups may generally be defined as people who share characteristics, such as gender, family ties, neighborhood, age, religious affiliation, or workplace, which often leads to shared experiences, values, and communication patterns (Sidener as cited in Hamer, 1997, p. 45). Examples: individual / family culture, community or national culture, popular culture, heritage / ancestors, religious culture, region, school, occupation.
3. Divide class into six groups for discussion of following questions.
 Afterward, groups present ideas to class for further discussion.
 - a. What are some traditions, relevant within families and / or communities

that may be defined as *cultural*?

- b. What are some visual signs of culture?
 - c. Why do cultural traditions remain, modify or change? Give examples.
 - d. What does *cultural lens* refer to? Give examples.
 - e. Discuss opposing *cultural realities*. Give examples.
 - f. To what extent is culture destiny?
3. "I am" poem. Have students complete the writing and share. Discuss the ways in which individual identity informs and is informed by culture. Exhibit poems where they may be read by the class. Students include poems in their journals.
 4. Assignment: Have students bring to class images, drawings and objects of cultural identification to include in "Show an ID" project (described below).
 5. Project – "Show an ID"

Students receive Assessment Rubric at the beginning of the project. List ways to visually represent aspects of culture as discussed in class (national flag, foods, clothing, community organizations, etc.). In their journals students combine written reflection with visual images of culture. Any style may be selected for visual representation: collage, drawing, painting, photography, poetry, stories, etc. Students use 5 - 10 pages in journal / sketchbook and are given a rubric for criteria and assessment.

Concept suggestions for journal work:

individual / family culture
 community or national culture
 popular culture
 heritage / ancestors
 religious culture
 changing / multiple cultures
 future cultures

Suggestion: Show examples of work that combines text with imagery, i.e. images created during Dada Art Movement (for an approach to using materials).

<http://www.artlex.com/ArtLex/d/dada.html>

"I am" poem may be recorded in journal this way as well.

Evaluation - Assess journal/project – Stage One with rubric.

Handout #1

“ ‘Culture’ consists of behavior patterns, symbols, institutions, values and other human-made components of society” (Banks, 1984, p.52) or “the sum total of ways of doing things and the objects of human manufacture acquired by man as a member of society and transmitted from generation to generation...or a body of shared symbols to which conventionalized meanings are accorded” (Lee, 1963). The symbols of a culture may be concrete or abstract, and value is determined by criteria of truth and worthwhileness. Cultures may include subcultural or microcultural groups, such as college students, miners, or southerners; or ethnic groups such as African Americans, Polish Americans, or Jewish Americans. From: *Teaching Art in a Multicultural / Multiethnic Society* by Carmen Armstrong (1990).

“Learned culture is like a lens which filters all the information we perceive through our senses; sensory information passes through this lens of culture and is filtered, or interpreted, into a recognizable pattern that has meaning” (Miraglia, 1999).

Handout #2

I am (title of poem) _____ **and I am** _____
(write two special characteristics that describe the kind of person you are)

I wonder _____
(write something you are curious about)

I hear _____
(imaginary or real)

I see _____
(imaginary or real)

I want _____

I am _____ **and I am** _____
(write first line again)

I pretend _____

I feel _____
(write a feeling you have and when or why you have that feeling)

I touch _____

I worry _____
(write something that worries you)

I cry _____
(write something that makes you sad)

I am _____ **and I am** _____
(write first line again)

I understand _____
(write something you really understand)

I say _____
(write something you believe in)

I dream _____

I try _____
(write something you make an effort to do)

I hope _____

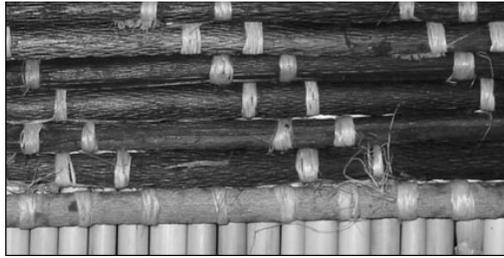
I am _____ **and I am** _____
(write first line again)

Handout #3 - Rubric

Stage One – “Show an ID”

	Understanding		Reflection		Presentation
	Journal	Project “Show an ID”	Journal	Project “Show an ID”	
Exemplary	You synthesized main ideas and show a high level of understanding based on class discussions.	Your visual interpretation clearly presents concepts regarding culture using both visual images and written description.	You show a good deal of thought and insight and connect topics to personal experience.	Your project shows consideration in the selection of images that represent aspects of personal culture.	Time and effort is obvious in the “Show an ID” assignment and journal overall. You worked with specific attention to detail. The organization of visual artwork and text make clear the connection.
Developing	You accurately identify key ideas.	Your project presents the relationship to the assigned theme but could use more detail.	You cover the discussions but expand by connecting key idea to personal experience.	You selected images that work ok, but may want to think about adding for clarity.	Attention to detail is evident. Neat and well organized.
Emerging	Your journal needs further development of key ideas discussed in class.	Your project is unclear and may need more written explanation to accompany the imagery.	Only parts of the class discussions are evident in your reflection with little or no reference to personal experience.	Your project is unclear and may need more written explanation to accompany the imagery.	Presentation could be refined.

Stage Two¹ - Reading Objects



Lashed Weaving

Overview

Stage Two is about learning to look at objects and is intended to develop skills and awareness regarding the interpretation of material culture. This Stage is divided into two parts: Part 1 uses everyday objects and highlights skills of observation. Cultural artifacts are used in Part 2 as a vehicle to discuss value judgment and factual comparison. The guiding question: Are values absolute?

Part 1

Objectives

1. Students will be able to describe an object based solely on visual evidence.
2. Students will observe a complex object critically.

Time Two hours

Materials

Journal
Familiar objects such as paper clips or paper cups.

Suggested Procedures

1. Paper clips
 - a. Hand out one paper clip (or selected familiar object) to each student. Ask the students to study the paper clip for one minute. Ask the students to put the paper clip away and then as quickly but as accurately as possible sketch the paper clip in their journals. (Allow no more than two minutes). Students take out paper clip for a short discussion.
 - (1.) How does your drawing compare to the actual object?
 - (2.) What was difficult about drawing the paper clip accurately?

Adapted from Eder, E.K. & Finkelstein, B. (1998). *Hidden messages: instructional materials for investigating culture*. Yarmouth: Intercultural Press.

- b. Ask students to describe a paper clip, using one-word descriptions, as if to someone who has never seen one before. Take turns giving one-word descriptions out loud (e.g., shiny, silver, etc.). No repeats are allowed. Keep track of the words by writing them on the board.
- c. Ask students to write a group description of the object using words or phrases based solely on what they SEE (e.g., silver), not on what they know (e.g., flexible). Ask a few students to read their descriptions out loud.
- d. Hand out five more paper clips to each student and ask students to look at each one of them carefully for two or three minutes. (Try to include both new and used paper clips). Have the students discuss their collection in small groups.
 - (1.) How are the paper clips similar? How are they different?
 - (2.) How do used paper clips compare to new ones?
- e. Have the students look at their collection of paper clips once again. Now ask them to choose just one paper clip from the collection and write a description of it so that someone else will be able to find it in the group of six. After the descriptions are written, ask students to exchange their collection of paper clips and the description with another group to see if they can find the paper clip that was described.

2. Paper cup

- a. Hand out one cup to each student. Ask the students to study the cup carefully for a few minutes without talking.
- b. Lead a discussion about the cup. Throughout the discussion, limit students' responses to purely descriptive observations. Students' responses may stray toward interpretive or evaluative answers. If this is the case, discuss why it is sometimes difficult to describe an object or event objectively.
 - (1.) What is this?
 - (2.) How would you describe it?
 - (3.) Is there anything significant about its shape or color? (Try to elicit answers that include that it has no handles, it can be stacked, it is a graduated cylinder, etc.)
- c. What else do you notice? (a marking such as lines, bumps, letters, or symbols).

Assignment

Students write in journal a description of an object as if they were explaining to someone from another culture who may not be familiar with this kind of object. Descriptive information only. Sketch image of the object in journal. Have students include a written reflection that describes the importance of "reading" an object based on visual evidence alone.

Part 2

Objective

1. Students will be able to identify two types of object evaluation: judgment and factual comparisons.
2. Students will be able to distinguish between subjective and objective judgments in relation to objects.

Time Two hours

Materials

1. Handout: "What Is This Object?"
2. Four cultural artifacts
3. Five tokens per student (cardboard squares 1" x 1") with symbols drawn on.
 - a. heart – object you like best
 - b. \$ - object you think costs the most
 - c. clock – object you think took the most time to make
 - d. house – object you would most like in your home
 - e. sad face – object you like least



Suggested Procedures

1. Discuss lesson purpose: the evaluation of objects in at least two ways:
 - a. value judgments
 - b. factual comparison
2. Ask students to define *judgment* in their own words.
3. Place four or more artifacts on the table. The objects should be similar (e.g., all made by the same person or from the same geographic region) and well documented (students should be able to research the artist, technique, region, etc.)
4. Hand out the tokens. Explain the meaning of the symbols.
5. Students will take a few minutes deciding where to place each token. They will then lay the tokens next to the appropriate object.
6. Students will count tokens and record the totals on the board.
7. Students will divide into four groups to discuss subjective vs. objective judgments based on the following questions (questions written on the board).

Afterward, each group presents to the class. Connect conversation to the previous exercise with artifacts.

- a. What is a subjective value judgment? (a preference that you *feel*, justified by reasoning, personal aesthetic judgment, “gut feelings,” etc.)
 - b. What are examples of subjective value judgments you made regarding the artifacts?
 - c. What is an objective judgment? (preference based on objective criteria – what you *think*).
 - d. What examples of objective value judgments you made regarding the artifacts?
 - e. Is making a choice between subjective and objective value judgments complex? Possible? Dangerous? Explain.
8. Discuss Stage Two concepts as a class. Ask students what these concepts will equip them to do regarding cultural artifacts? Why should they learn this? What is the connection of value judgments to communities, states, nations, etc.?

Assignment

Students select a material object (from outside their cultural community) to explore Stage Two concepts (understanding objective and subjective value judgments). See Handout #4. In their journals students record a written reflection describing the way these concepts apply to interpreting cultural communities. Use the terms: *subjective evaluation*, *objective evaluation*, *value judgment* and *factual comparison*.

Journal exchange - Students read Stage Two assignment in partners' journal. Students read journals for clarity and understanding of Stage Two concepts: the different types of value judgment and how that applies to cultural interpretation. Written comments from journal partner may be included in journals.

Evaluation

Assessment is based on journal comments and class discussion.

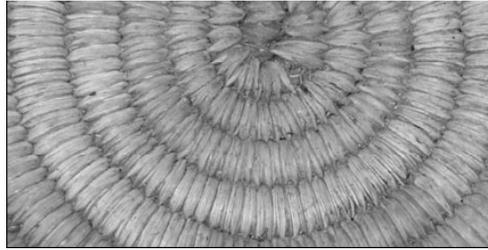
Handout #4What Is This Object²?

Some things to think about when looking at a cultural object / artifact:

1. Do you know the historical context of the object?
2. What is the symbolic role of the object in the society from which it originated?
3. Can characteristics of the object be related to particular cultures? (e.g. regional styles)
4. What is the connection to the physical environment? (availability of natural resources, etc.)
5. What is the function or way the object is used?
6. How was the object physically made?
7. What is the interaction of the object and behavior patterns?
8. What is the interaction of the object and the society which forms/reflects a common viewpoint/character?
9. What is the story or provenance of the object itself?
10. Give an example of the way a cultural community may be interpreted / misinterpreted based on subjective and objective value judgments.

² Walker, Katherine, (n.d.). Nine Models of Interpretation. Princeton Online:
<http://www.princetonol.com/groups/iad/lessons/undergradlessons.html>

Stage Three – Native American Culture



Coiled Weaving

Overview

The foundation of Stage Three is based upon the concept that transformation requires an awareness of the nature of subjugation and acknowledges the value of different ways of knowing.

Objectives

1. Students will recognize the interconnected nature of concepts for some Northern California Native American communities.
2. Students will appreciate the depth of meaning represented by Northern California Native American basketry.
3. Students will apply lessons on value judgment based on objectives of Stage One and Two.
4. Students will be able to locate information endorsed by the communities who are the subjects of their research.

Time Six hours One hour to view slides
 One hour to write impressions and divide into groups
 Two hours to research using the Internet
 Two hours for presentations and written reflection

Materials

Journal
 Handout #5 – Internet resources

Suggested Procedures

1. Show slides of basketry from Native American communities of Northern California. (Suggested reference: Bibby, B., Ed. (1996). *The fine art of California basketry*. Berkeley: Heyday Books). Describe materials used by artists.
2. Ask students to sketch and comment in their journals as they view slides.
3. Take class time to write general impressions and reflections of Native American baskets (based on slide presentation) in journal. Students will make a second entry later.
4. Divide students into five groups to research concepts on websites that post information written and endorsed by Native American communities. Each group will include historic and current situations within their topic of inquiry.

Limit the search to Native communities of Northern California.

Provide a list of websites to begin the search (below).

- Group 1: Explore the role that the *environment* plays in Native American culture. How does this topic relate to Native baskets/art?
- Group 2: Explore the role of *oral tradition* in Native American culture. How does this topic relate to baskets/art?
- Group 3: Explore the role that *medicine* plays in Native American culture. How does this topic relate to Native baskets/art?
- Group 4: Explore the role of *elders* in Native American culture. How does this topic relate to Native baskets/art?
- Group 5: Explore the role of spirituality in Native American culture. How does this topic relate to Native baskets/art?

5. Provide time for groups to organize, research and summarize.
6. Have students document information discovered on assigned concept in their journals. Include images (drawings, collage, etc.)
7. Students share information with the class, noting any change in their own perspectives (during discussion, show slides again).
8. Show DVD: *From the Roots: California Indian Basketweavers* and/or video *Roots of Beauty*.
9. Informed by Internet research and DVD(s), have students make a second entry in journal that reflects reevaluation of Native American basketry. Apply Stage One discussions about subjective and objective judgment.
10. Groups share their findings with the class.

Evaluation

Assess journal entries and class discussion for reflective reevaluation of Native baskets of Northern California.

Handout #5**Internet Research**

Akwe:kon Journal <http://www.oyate.org/catalog/magazine.html>
 American Anthropologist <http://orgjournals/00027294.html>
 American Indian Review <http://www.american-indian-review.co.uk/>
 Ayaanngwaamizin <http://www.lights.com/sifc/cjne.html>
 Cultural Survival Quarterly <http://209.200.101.189/home.cfm>
 HONOR <http://honoradvocacy.org>
 Indigenous Policy Journal <http://www.indigenouspolicy.org/>
 Tribal Arts Review <http://www.tribalarts.com/index.html>
 Tribal College Journal <http://www.tribalcollegejournal.org/>
 Winds of Change <http://www.wocmag.org/>
 News from Native California <http://www.heydaybooks.com/news/>
 Turning Point <http://www.turning-point.ca/>
 Redwire <http://www.redwiremag.com/>
 Tribal College Journal of American Indian Higher Education
 Rancheria Band of Pomo Indians
<http://www.drycreekrancheria.com/historical.html>
 The Heard Museum <http://www.heard.org/>
<http://www.mip.berkeley.edu/cilc/bibs/pomo.kashaya.html>
<http://www.nmai.si.edu/exhibitions/baskets/subpage.cfm?subpage=intro>
<http://www.kstrom.net/isk/art/basket/pomohist.html>
 National Indian Justice Center <http://nijc.indian.com>
 California Indian Museum and Cultural Center
 Healthy Traditions Garden
<http://www.cimcc.org/healthytraditions/index.html>
 California Indian Storytellers Association <http://www.cistory.org/index.htm>
 California Indian Basketweavers Association <http://www.ciba.org/>

art? Give examples.

- d. Using objective / subjective judgment, examine and describe one particular work of selected artist.
4. Students give oral presentation with slides or Power Point using selected artists' work.

Suggested list of artists

Susan Billy	Mateo Romero	Truman Lowe
Doug Hyde	George Morrison	David Bradley
Allan Houser	Dana Tiger	Joe Fedderson
Nora Naranjo-Morse	Elizabeth Woody	Joane Cardinal-Schubert
Judith Lowry	Angel DeCora	Bob Haozous
Juane Quick-To-See-Smith	Fritz Scholder	T. C. Cannon
Kay Walkingstick	Julia Parker	Kathy Wallace
Frank LaPena	Brian Tripp	Kathleen Smith

Evaluation:

Base evaluation on oral presentation, journal notes and class discussion.

Handout #6**ART: THE OLD AND THE NEW; DIFFERENT FORMS OF THE SAME MESSAGE**

by Richard Hill

Both Indians who call themselves "traditional artists" and scholars sometimes call into question the validity of art by native artists who have adopted Euro-American artistic traditions. Such questioning suggests that there are separate camps of "traditional" and "contemporary" forms of expression and uses technique and imagery to establish false notions of what Indian art should be. Do Indians still use the thinking and aesthetic and aesthetic traditions of their ancestors in creating expressions about Indian realities? Is there an underlying tradition of creativity that manifests itself in different forms from generation to generation? How is Indian art of today the same as historic art?

Finding the answers to these questions involves looking into the origins of the Indian creative process in order to better understand the continuities. The differences are more obvious -- changes in materials, new techniques of craftsmanship, and the introduction of new imagery. While these changes are usually considered a break from tradition, I suggest that there is a deeper tradition at work, a tradition of storytelling and creativity that has always allowed art to change, even before contact with other art traditions. The search for the connections between contemporary art and historic art involves investigating the sacred origins of art.

SACRED ORIGINS OF ART Looking at the most ancient objects in the collection of the National Museum of the American Indian (NMAI) and comparing their imagery and style to the sacred stories that are still told, provides an idea of the origins of image-making from an Indian point of view. Within the native philosophical context, culture must be seen as a problem-solving mechanism that applies certain values and principles to any situation. The artist transforms materials into a cogent statement of those values and principles.

In the past, images of spirit forces appeared frequently. Clay pipes had animal effigies looking at the smoker of the pipe. Shell gorgets had circular symbols with the four directions engraved in their surface. Design motifs and symbols gave the community the sense of a common origin and a common destiny.

The NMAI collections contain examples of Seneca hair combs, for example, that tell stories -- people and animals in a state of frozen animation as though performing for the wearer. Among them are seventeenth-century combs with images of white men, horses, flint locks, and three-cornered hats. By carving a never-before-seen horse instead of a bear or a turtle, the artists were recording what was happening in their times. The older hair combs also recorded stories from their own times. The stories changed, but the art captured the moment.

My own father, Stanley Hill, Sr., has revived the tradition of antler carving among the Iroquois. Instead of using steel files obtained in trade from the Dutch, he uses electric Dremel tools, obtained through trade with Sears. At first, my dad did not want to carve hair combs because he felt that their style and imagery belonged to someone else. He had to find his style. Eventually, he found a close connection to those ancestors through long years of carving moose antler and contemplating what the old-timers must have thought about. Today, he carves hair combs to show a companionship

with the thinking of the old-timers. In this way, he is not replicating the past through his art; he is creating a symbiotic expression of his ties to the ideas behind the older hair combs. Since my father grew up as a farmer, very much like his ancestors, food plants, trees, and animals have a special meaning to him. His art is not a shallow reflection of the past. It shows that he has come to the same understanding about the value of corn, the power of the eagle, and the endurance of the turtle as did those who did not think in English.

The creative process is the same for contemporary artists. It is a different world today, so it is only natural that the art should be different -- not better or worse, just different. The art of today has to talk of different things to be valid for its times. At the same time, some of the old stories are still relevant, and they will be retold. Art, therefore, is another form of storytelling by which each succeeding generation adds its experiences to the collective consciousness. I still wait to see the Iroquois hair comb depicting the Arab terrorist blowing up the skyscraper built by Mohawk ironworkers, or of the Pope apologizing to Catholic Mohawks for the conduct of the Jesuits, as proof of my theory. The good thing about art is, you never know what you will see next.

A BRIEF HISTORY During the boarding school days, the campaign by the federal government and most Christian churches to save the individual by destroying Indian culture also attempted to divorce Indian art from its native roots. Teachers tried to remake Indian children through the use of "domestic arts" for Indian girls and "industrial arts" for Indian boys. Traditional Indian arts were routinely discouraged, as were native languages, rituals, and ties to reservation or community life. When this approach failed, art was transformed once again. This time, Indian aspects were brought back into the classroom as an incentive to have Indians stay in school and use art as a way to make a living. Indian schools began to teach art as a form of economic development, allowing and even promoting the use of native imagery, which previously had been discouraged.

The early narrative painters among the Indians carried that marriage a step further to produce a whole new form of expression -- easel painting. Fueled by anthropological zeal, Indians were commissioned to paint ceremonial scenes or to recall former lifestyles through their visual art. Indian painters began to manifest the oral traditions of their people.

The emergence of Indian artists as tourist props coincided with the movement to create a museum culture about Indians, resulting in stereotypes. Indians were expected to paint a certain way. In the last century of imagemaking, art has become a commodity of exchange -- the transmission of information into non-Indian hands, and the transmission of money into Indian hands.

The function of easel painting is different from the other forms of expression currently employed by Indians. Romanticized notions about life as an Indian, scenes from a distant past, and clichéd images of buffalos, warriors, horses, eagles, and spirits serve for many as a form of cultural therapy, connecting the artist to a distant cultural consciousness. Most of the leading contemporary Indian artists, however, have grown to have a deeper respect for the cultural foundations of their home community and many have returned to reestablish communal ties that, in turn, reinvigorate their art.

By the same token, some are both visual artists and "traditionalists." They make art about their beliefs. They exist both as art world luminaries and as religious practitioners. They become the modern interpreters of ancient thought, providing both

ritualized expression of that communal interpretation and a visual expression of their individual point of view.

Contemporary arts now include painting, sculpture, photography, printmaking, theater, literature, film- and video-making, performance, and installation. They also include jewelry making, clothing, beadwork, ceramics, textiles, and quilting. All forms of expression are valid. All points of view are Indian.

FUNCTION OF ART Indian art should not be measured by an anthropological ruler. This means that all forms of expression -- from powwow crafts to performance art -- should be seen in relationship to their own changing social, cultural, and economic landscapes. We need to see how art functions to meet Indian needs, beyond the marketplace or the institutional collection, and to see how art helps Indians remain Indians.

Art, meaning objects made by hand to manifest the world view of the people, is the only real evidence we have from the past of the beliefs and practices of the people. This is why archaeologists have sought out these objects as if they were road maps of the past, showing village migrations, changes in cultural patterns, and acculturation through contact with Europeans. Beyond science and history, though, these objects also contain a spiritual essence that still resonates.

In 1632, French Jesuit, Father Gabriel Sagard traveled among the Huron Indians and wrote, "They are fond of painting, and practice it with considerable skill, considering they have no rules of art." Sagard could not see the Indian rules, and instead judged their art by his own. It is futile, however, to try to fit the works created by the indigenous people of this hemisphere into the definitions that were made for Europe. Instead, we need to accept that the work is self-validating, that it defines itself. This is possible when we look at it for what it is, rather than for what it is not.

This does not mean that the works made by Indians cannot be appreciated across cultures or should not be viewed as fine art. Rather, there is a need to better appreciate function, intention, and creativity over stylistic convention:

Are non-Indians therefore banned forever from understanding the beauty and the meaning of Native American art? No. Yet, too often the art objects of a holistic society are seen as static, isolated, physical entities. So perceived, they become mere cryptic specimens -- dusty pots on shelves, curious dancing garments forever separated from the dancer and the dance. Native American art is an integrative social phenomenon, a complex creative collage of song, dance, ceremony, myth, prayer, and vision. The visible "art object" is a small part of this cultural experience.(1)

No single definition captures the Indian understanding of art, which varies from region to region, tribe to tribe, artist to artist, and generation to generation. An understanding of a definition emerges from the following variety of voices. Gary Witherspoon: Navajo art thus expresses Navajo experiences, and Navajo experiences are mediated by the concepts of and orientations to the world found in Navajo language and culture. All experiences are directed towards the ideals of hozho, and hozho is the intellectual, moral, biological, emotional, and aesthetic experience of beauty. A Navajo experiences beauty most poignantly in creating it and expressing it, not observing it or preserving it. The experience of beauty is dynamic; it flows to one and from one; it is found not in things, but in relationships among things. Beauty is not to be conserved but continuously renewed in oneself and expressed in one's daily life

and activities. To contribute to and be a part of this universal hozho is both man's special blessing and his ultimate destiny.(2)

Loretta Todd, Canadian Metis filmmaker: But what of our own theories of art, our own philosophies of life, our own purposes for redemption? By reducing our cultural expression to simply the question of modernism or post-modernism, art or anthropology, or whether we are contemporary or traditional, we are placed on the edges of the dominant culture, while the dominant culture determines whether we are allowed to enter into its realm of art. When we assert our own meanings and philosophies of representation we render the divisions irrelevant, and maintain our aboriginal right to name ourselves. However, when we articulate the dichotomy of the traditional versus the contemporary, we are referencing the center, acknowledging the authority of the ethnographer, the anthropologist, the art historian, the cultural critic, the art collector. We have to play "catch up" to the academic and other institutions of art. And we set up an opposition within our communities that keeps us in our position of "other." We are caught in the grasp of neocolonialism, in the gaze of the connoisseur or consumer, forever trapped in a process that divides and conquers.(3)

Alfred Young Man, a Cree artist and professor at the University of Lethbridge: North American Indian artists, on the other hand, have literally reinvented their cultures many times over with no loss of continuity with earlier native cultures and consequently, they have had, and do have, an untold influence on the way the "outside" world perceives them. They have reconstructed their societies as true artists must, as technicians who were, and continue to be, involved in the actual creative process from within.(4)

Mary Lou Fox Radulovich, Director of Ojibwe Cultural Foundation on Manitoulin Island, Ontario: Indian people have no word for art. Art is part of life, like hunting, fishing, growing food, marrying and having children. This is an art in the broadest sense...an object of daily usefulness, to be admired, respected, appreciated and used, the expression thereby nurturing the needs of both body and soul, thereby giving meaning to everything.(5)

Fred Benjamin, a Mille Lacs Ojibwe elder: The way the Indian people, long ago, made their songs was by looking at what the Great Spirit gave them to understand in their minds...to make songs out of what they saw. Like the leaves when the wind blows they're shaking; they make a little noise. That's how they got the idea to put bells on their legs. And sometimes you see a fowl, like an eagle, an owl, a chickenhawk. The Indian people looked at them, the way they'd swing their wings, how they'd go down and up. That's how they'd make the pitch of their songs....And everything they'd see; when they looked at the sky, the clouds, they'd make songs out of those. And they'd make words out of the clouds that they saw. And they'd think that there's kind of a holy spirit going around, and that's how they'd make their songs.(6)

Inuit sculptor, Paulosie Kasadulak: It is not only to make money that we carve. Nor do we carve make-believe things. What we show in our carving is the life we have lived in the past right up to today. We show the truth...we carve Inuit figures because in that way we can show ourselves to the world as we were in the past and are now....There is nothing marvelous about it. It is there for everyone to see. It is just the truth.(7)

CONCLUSION Handmade objects still have an important role in the contemporary life of the native people of this hemisphere. Personal and community rituals of thanksgiving and healing continue, and are often dependent upon such

objects. Social and religious dances continue to be important forms of expression, requiring each generation to make clothing that manifests its tribal identity. Indian households still contain handmade objects of cultural identity, as if to offset the complexities of modern life. The objects in the collection of the National Museum of the American Indian continue to be important inspirations to Indians of today.

Amos Owen, a Dakota elder, at a conference on repatriation held several years ago, spoke about talking with the dead Indians whose bodies were held by a museum. He described the pain they suffered, separated from those things that were buried with them to help them on their journey to the spirit world. He used the sacred pipe to communicate with them. Owen, who recently passed into the spirit world himself, helps us to remember that art objects may have a deeper meaning than visual pleasure:

I watched the old Sioux men carve and learned from them....The quarry is sacred ground. I make my offerings before I go....Back at my home, I say a prayer with the stone....It's a good feeling to know the spirits are with me....The Sioux have always carved. In earlier times, a holy woman gave us the pipe, with instructions as to how we should live...the pipe has meaning to our people today....The pipe provides guidance, shows us a way of life....When we travel, we place the pipe on the dashboard of our car, and they watch over us....It's a presence. I know it's there. (8)

Notes

(1.) Ed Wade, Carol Haralson, Rennard Strickland, *As In A Vision -- Masterworks of American Indian Art* (Tulsa: University of Oklahoma Press, 1983).

(2.) Gary Witherspoon, *Language and Art in the Navajo Universe* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1977).

(3.) Loretta Todd (Metis), "What more do they want?" In *Indigena: Contemporary Native Perspectives*, Gerald McMaster and Lee-Ann Martin, eds. (Vancouver: Douglas & MacIntyre, 1992).

(4.) Alfred Young Man, Plains Cree, "The Metaphysics of North American Indian Art" in McMaster and Martin.

(5.) Mary Lou Fox Radulovich, Director, Ojibwe Cultural Foundation, "Quillwork" (Toronto: Ontario Crafts Council, 1984).

(6.) Fred Benjamin, quoted in *Circle of Life: Cultural Community in Ojibwe Crafts* (Duluth: St. Louis Historical Society, Chisholm Museum and Duluth Art Institute, 1984).

(7.) Paulosie Kasadluak, from an essay in "Inoucdjouac-Port Harrison," (Winnipeg: Winnipeg Art Gallery, 1976).

(8.) Jane Katz, ed., *This Song Remembers -- Self Portraits of Native Americans in the Arts* (New York: Houghton Mifflin Co.

Handout #7**CONTINUITY AND CHANGE IN NATIVE ARTS by Fred Nahwoosky**

Each year in mid-August, a mass migration of art collectors, gallery owners, Native American artists, and curious tourists journey to Santa Fe, New Mexico, to go to Indian Market. Beneath colorful canopies, in row after row of vendor booths, Native American artists sell all manner of contemporary and traditional arts and crafts.(1) Against this backdrop, numerous gallery openings, receptions, and other art-related events punctuate a week of sales. Thousands of art enthusiasts are finding ever-increasing opportunities to sell and purchase Native American art. The shows, sales, and participation in cultural events have led to some innovations in artistic development, but they have also raised some issues that need to be understood if we are to appreciate the arts and artists, and the traditions they carry forward.(2) Native American traditional arts reflect cultural values. Culture is understood as an ongoing dynamic process that shows continuity of form, use, and practice. As Hopi scholar Emory Sekaquaptewa has said, "language...rituals, customs, and other forms of usage, continue to call up memories of the past that give meaning to the present and future."(3)

HISTORY The federal government has influenced the development of Native American arts in both positive and negative ways. In the last century, it amassed huge collections of information and objects from native peoples -- under the erroneous belief that native cultures would be assimilated into white American society. In this century, it has supported native art through important legislative mandates and executive agencies.(4) Relatively new organizations, such as the Smithsonian's National Museum of the American Indian and the Keepers of the Treasures, will have a long-term role in preserving traditional arts and practices of Native Americans.

Federal government funding is only one factor among many that influence culture and the arts. Resources, materials, tools, economics, cultural function, time, and empowerment all influence the continuity and change in traditional arts and material culture.(5) Historically, objects were made to serve a specific purpose in native societies. Some objects were made purely for self-adornment, and valued on the basis of factors such as materials, personal preference, love, and power. Decoration became a means for identification, statement of status, record of activities and visions, and an opportunity for creating beauty. These individual expressions often became accepted as a community's expressive culture forms.

Established standards of quality and design changed as materials and innovation, construction methods, and popular culture changed. Euro-American culture has had a continuing impact on traditional arts through the introduction of materials and tools (beads, cloth, needles, thread, silver, domesticated sheep), cash economy and trade systems that Europeans instituted in the Americas and Hawai'i, and a personal ownership mentality that leads to the gathering and collecting of property. To their credit, native artists and object makers have retained cultural values in design, construction methods, and materials, and symbols, even when their crafts have been made solely for sale to benefactors and tourists.

Decorative arts, such as beaded fancies and colorful diamond-shaped yarn God's eyes, although they seem to have no meaningful purpose in defining group

culture, claim a form or practice that serves as an element of group identity, even if only in a pan-Indian sense. In this age of global communication, North American native peoples identify with other indigenous peoples, such as Latin Americans, or Native Hawaiian traditionalists, for instance. Our common histories and experiences impact and broaden our sense of "Indianness." Art has frequently played a significant role in the struggles of many native peoples to regain control of their destinies.(6)

IMPACT OF TOURISM ON TRADITIONAL ARTS Tourism has played a role in helping some traditional art forms to survive and prosper. Regarding the survival of pottery making among the Gay Head Wampanoag Indians of Martha's Vineyard, Eleanor Wachs says, "if tourists had not bought the pottery in years past, the tradition might have been lost altogether?"(7)

This point is borne out again in an article by Edith McKinzie: many sacrifices of language and traditional expressions were made to accommodate commercialization of Hawaiian themes and music. On the one hand, such changes brought sacrifices at the expense of the Hawaiian traditions. On the other hand, the changes occurred as a process and have evoked an appreciation of Hawaiian culture by the people of Hawai'i. This will insure the survival of the Hawaiian culture despite the foreign influences in the islands.(8)

In the early 1900s, esteemed Tewa potters Maria and Julian Martinez (from San Ildefonso Pueblo, New Mexico) successfully rediscovered the process for producing highly polished black pottery. Their prior work as traditional craftspeople for the pueblo included producing functional pieces for home use and ceremonial purposes.(9) From their experiments and perseverance, a major tourist/collector market developed for San Ildefonso and, arguably, for native peoples of the entire southwestern United States.

The issues of cultural tourism include the reassertion of Indian control of land access, culture, and the development of their futures. As native control of tourism grows, traditional art forms take on roles beyond the functional and the ceremonial. As objects of tourist/collector commerce, however, traditional art forms have retained their cultural associations and values. The quality of the craft determines its value.

QUALITY Quality is assessed in the overall first impressions -- weight, symmetry, intricacy, durability, color, complexity, functionality, and adherence to an established form. These measures tend to hold as basic starting points when applied to traditional arts, but we also allow for new applications of traditional processes -- beaded baseball caps, for example, using sewing machines to sew ribbonwork, and crafts made with drill presses and other power tools. After all, at what point does a form become traditional? Just as culture is a dynamic process, so is the development of traditions, as elements of culture. It is only now that we have all the means necessary to record and document development, and to facilitate increased production using modern tools and materials. This should not devalue new traditions as they arise.

EMPOWERMENT There is a backlash from native people against the attitudes of many museum professionals, art historians, curators, and collectors who define traditions within narrow academic parameters.(10) I asked a native friend to define Indian art. Because she is highly educated, I expected her to go off on several tangents to explain the possibilities as presented by a range of scholars. But she said, 'If it's art made by an Indian, it's Indian art. End of story.' Her response is an example of the ownership that native people are exerting over their cultural patrimony, including the

arts. They are unwilling to be defined by anthropologists and others as subjects of academic study. Indian people offer explanations on Indian terms and present culture directly from tradition bearers, so that it cannot be misinterpreted by outside scholars. This is a strategy for eliminating stereotypes, validating the beliefs and practices of native groups, and retaining intellectual property rights to cultural patrimony.

TRADITIONAL AND CONTEMPORARY ART In native cultures, traditional and contemporary art play very different roles. Contemporary arts are individual expressions appreciated on a primary level as objects of beauty that engender emotion through visual excitement, while traditional arts are forms that continue to play a role in the maintenance of culture. Traditions are learned forms passed from one generation to another within the community. Contemporary forms are learned in more formal settings like school or through individual trial and error. Definitions like this are not always as clean as we might like, but they are useful for discussion.

Both traditional and contemporary arts involve creative freedom. Makers of traditional art do not mechanically produce objects for domestic and ritual use, any more than a dancer dances a prescribed set of steps without deviation. The creative and individual aspects of the work, and how it retains its traditional character, help to define quality. Although the art of quilting, for example, was introduced by missionaries, Native Americans have endowed it with their own meanings, purposes, and designs. Native Hawaiian quilters, for example, developed a unique approach to design that is grounded in their practices of making clothes from kapa barkcloth.(11) Through similar processes, Lakota people have made the star quilt design famous on the northern plains.(12)

EXPRESSIVE CULTURE Many art traditions continue today and are being developed to a high degree of quality. The Haudenosaunee (Iroquois) longhouse ceremonies require drums and turtle shell rattles.(13) These musical instruments are made by people in the community. The Comanche people in the 1870s developed religious objects that function in the peyote ceremony.(14) Beadwork art on fans, rattles, and staffs (or wands) used in the peyote ceremony has extended beyond religious uses, and is also important in secular settings, like powwows. As the peyote religion has migrated to other groups in North America, so has the development of the peyote stitch, or gourd stitch style of beadwork.

The Osage people of Oklahoma are known for their exceptionally fine ribbonwork. Symmetry, color, and intricacy define quality ribbonwork. Beyond visual appeal, however, clothes that are decorated with ribbonwork maintain an important place in the In-lons-ka Society dances of the Osage people. Ribbonwork patterns of the Osage, Ponca, Pottawatomi, and Winnebago people include both geometric and floral designs that honor their woodlands ties to the Great Lakes region of Wisconsin, Minnesota, and the eastern Dakotas. Georgeanne Robinson, for example, has set a level of craftsmanship that ensure that the ribbonwork tradition would continue to be a viable part of Osage culture.

SUMMARY Iroquois people have articulated what many other native peoples feel is the purpose for everything they do in life. They say life is lived for the Seventh Generation, for those who are yet to come. This belief is reflected in native respect for the earth, retention and development of culture, and adaptation to changing technology, and is grounded in group history, traditions, and practices. After multiple attempts by governments to destroy native culture and cultural practices, many Native Americans

are regaining full control of their communities and their futures. Under these circumstances, traditional arts will prosper as an added dimension of group identity.

Notes

(1.) For purposes of this article, I am using traditional as defined by Charlotte Heth in *Native American Dance* (Washington, D.C.: National Museum of the American Indian, Smithsonian Institution 1992). She says, "Traditional," as used by many Indian people and scholars, can be an overarching term with varying meanings. Sometimes it refers to the oldest norms: languages, religions, artistic forms, everyday customs, and individual behavior. At other times it refers to modern practices based on those norms. Again it may refer to categories...that draw most closely on ancient, established practices. "Traditional" will also refer to practices, methods, materials, and values that are passed from one generation to another so that there is unbroken continuity. Traditions are learned within the informal settings of home and community, and in association with family and group members." I use "traditional art," and "craft(s)" interchangeably throughout. In European thinking, "craft" took on a pejorative meaning during the Renaissance and has been applied to any handwork, or process, that served utilitarian or ritual purpose. "Traditional art" has been used as a response to the pejorative use of "craft" in an effort to show equal value with terms like "fine art" and "contemporary art." I use "craft" without any connotation about the intellectual superiority of art over craft. See Edward Lucie-Smith, *The Story of Craft: The Craftsman's Role in Society* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1981).

(2.) There is an interesting discussion on innovation in Indian art in *Creativity is Our Tradition* (Santa Fe, N. Mex.: Institute of American Indian and Alaska Native Culture and Arts Development, 1992).

(3.) Emory Sekaquaptewa, *The Hopi Dictionary*, 1991 Festival of American Folklife Program Book (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution, Office of Folklife Programs, 1991).

(4.) These include the establishment of the National Endowment for the Arts and the National Endowment for the Humanities (1965), the opening of the Institute of American Indian Arts in 1962, and the Indian Arts and Crafts Act of 1990. See Robert Fay Schrader, *The Indian Arts & Crafts Board: An Aspect of New Deal Indian Policy* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1983); Joy L. Gritton, "The Institute of American Indian Arts: A Convergence of Ideologies," *Shared Visions* exhibition catalog. (Phoenix, A.Z.: The Heard Museum, 1991).

(5.) Ethnomusicologist Tom Vennum ran a program in 1989 that addressed the issue of access to resources. See the 1989 Festival of American Folklife Program Book. Office of Folklife Programs (Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution, 1989).

(6.) See *Akwe:kon Journal*, Volume XI, Number 2, (Summer 1994) for a series of essays about the issues that surround the lifelong struggle in Chiapas. Folklorist Olivia Cadaval addressed the issues of development in a program that she curated for the 1994 Festival of American Folklife. See the 1994 Festival of American Folklife. See the 1994 Festival of American Folklife Program Book. Office of Folklife Programs (Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution, 1994).

(7.) Eleanor Wachs, "Traditional Crafts and Tourism on Cape Cod and the Islands," 1988 Festival of American Folklife Program Book (Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution, Office of Folklife Programs, 1988).

(8.) See Edith McKinzie, *Hawaiian Performing Arts Traditions*, *Folklife Hawai'i Program Book* (Honolulu, HI: The State Foundation on Culture and the Arts, 1990).

(9.) Susan Peterson, *Maria Martinez: Five Generations of Potters* (Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution, Renwick Gallery, National Museum of American Art, 1978).

(10.) Susan Dixon's article, "The Essential Spirit" addresses this issue. She says, "Because art-making has traditionally been integrated into Native cultures, the concept of quality relies less upon fixed rules established by an academy as upon the effectiveness of the work of art within the culture." Unbroken

Circles -- Traditional Arts of Contemporary Woodland Peoples, Northeast Indian Quarterly (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University, Akwe:kon Press, 1990).

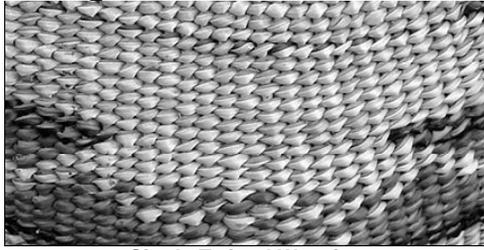
(11.) See Lynn Martin's article in this issue regarding Native Hawaiian traditional arts. Also, see *Folklife Hawai'i* (Honolulu: The State Foundation on Culture and the Arts, 1990).

(12.) See Margaret Wood and Marsha MacDowell's article in this issue for more information about Native American quilting.

(13.) The Haudenosaunee or Iroquois Confederacy includes the Mohawk, Oneida, Onondaga, Cayuga, Seneca, and Tuscarora Nations. Although they are centered in New York State, there are also Haudenosaunee people in Canada, Wisconsin, and Oklahoma. The Haudenosaunee longhouse is not only a physical structure in each community, but is also the manifestation of traditional worldview and ceremonies for the Iroquois.

(14.) Ernest Wallace and E. Adamson Hoebel, *The Comanches: Lords of the South Plains* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1952): 32.
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Stage Five – Woven Culture



Single Twined Weaving

Overview

In Stage Five, students bring together their knowledge and awareness of the meaning of cultural objects aided by viewing original art. The course ends with a demonstration by a distinguished artist / basketweaver and then the opportunity for students to collaborate on the design and production of an object which represents course concepts.

Part 1

Objective

1. Students will be able to articulate their understanding of the importance of viewing original works of art.
2. Students will understand the subversive nature of art (particularly art that survives colonization).

Time Part 1 To be decided depending on field trip

Materials Journal

Suggested Procedures

Recommended reading: *Remember Your Relations: The Elsie Allen Baskets, Family and Friends* by Abel-Vidor, Brovarney and Billy (assigned at the beginning of the course).

1. To view a significant collection of Native basketry, visit the Grace Hudson Museum in Ukiah, California. A museum docent will give a guided tour. Students bring journals for notes / drawings and have time on their own to sketch and respond to questions (below).
2. Informed by course readings, class discussions and observation of baskets; students respond in journals.

Drawings/sketches encouraged.

Questions⁴ to guide response:

- a. What clues are revealed about the nature of the culture shared by

⁴ Questions adapted from The Getty Education website, <http://www.getty.edu/education/>

Pomo communities?

- b. What clusters of significant signs, symbols and images are evident in the baskets?
- c. What networks of shared meanings can you identify?
- d. What were the key ideas and values in operation in the evidence you were examining?
- e. Does awareness of Pomo history and culture influence your perception of the basketry? In what way?

Part 2

Objective

Students will appreciate the perspective of an artist.

Time Two hours

Materials Journal

Suggested Procedures:

1. Prior to the guest artist visit, provide students with background on the speaker and develop specific questions they will want to ask. Provide guest artist with information about the class (curriculum objectives).
2. Guest basketweaver demonstration / discussion. Artist discusses the personal significance of basketweaving as social and cultural identity. Artist describes how she prepares for the activity of basketweaving, including traditions associated with seeking materials, purification, spiritual meaning of place, stories, ceremonies, and other practices associated with baskets and basketmaking.

Part 3

Objectives

1. Students will develop problem-solving skills needed to form a collaboration.
2. Students will express "culture" through an art form.

Time The remainder of the course
 Three hours for class discussion and brainstorming
 Two hours for proposal presentation
 Twelve hours for object construction
 Two hours for peer review

Materials Journal
 Handouts #8, #9 – Becker article; Rubric
 Art materials to be decided by students

Suggested Procedures

1. Discuss the attributes of Native baskets that make them powerful objects in which cultural meaning is personified. How do Northern California Native baskets communicate social commentary? How might baskets contradict social injustice or be considered “subversive”?
2. Have students brainstorm ways to “build an artifact” of modern culture. Show examples: <http://www.folklife.si.edu/index.html>

Link to online exhibitions under educational resources.

Divide into groups.

Suggested readings:

Lyn Siler, Handmade Baskets, 1991. New York: Lark Books.

Jane LaFerla, Making the New Baskets: Alternative Materials, Simple Techniques, 1999. New York: Lark Books.

- a. What key concepts do you want your audience to understand about your culture?

naming customs	family food traditions
childhood games	folk speech
holiday customs	oral and family history
significant artifacts	attitudes
stance/position	beliefs
practices	occupational folklife
cultural boundaries	historic boundaries
 - b. What materials would best suit your concepts?
 - c. Decide parameters as a group:
 - (1.) What do you want to communicate and to what audience?
 - (2.) artifact size limitation
 - (3.) How will you present your piece and where?
 - (4.) collaboration with peers / individual responsibilities
 - (5.) How will your group incorporate weaving?
 - (6.) title of work
 - (7.) What is a plan of action you will take once your piece is completed?
3. Have students present plans aided by sketches and/or maquette to the class before “construction” begins. Proposal includes:
 - a. key concept(s) and historical connection
 - b. materials to be used, (and why)
 - c. sketches and / or maquette of object
 - d. collaboration procedures
 - e. plans for the completed piece
 4. Handout rubric for Stage Five.

5. Create artifact. **Note: project must in some way include weaving (literally or metaphorically).**
Periodically check in with students to monitor progress.
6. Have students write reflections in journal:
 - a. “Woven Culture” project
 - (1.) What were the aims and objectives of your project?
 - (2.) What part did group collaboration play in your design?
 - (3.) In what way has this process had an effect on your relationship to this class, your community?
 - b. journal as artifact
7. Have students exchange their journals with a classmate. Using Handout #4 as a guide, students write a review of their classmates’ journal (journal as artifact of classroom culture).

Evaluation

Assess journals and project with rubric.

Handout # 8
Stage Five Evaluation:

	Understanding		Reflection		Presentation		Collaboration
	Journal	Project	Journal	Project	Journal	Project	Project
Exemplary	Course concepts are well documented, developed and demonstrate significant understanding of culture as connected to art and community.	Your project merges visual elements with subject matter to clearly convey cultural viewpoint.	Your journal writing, imagery and notes reflect critical thinking and are connected to your personal experience. As a visual diary of your time and thoughts, the journal goes beyond what was discussed in class.	Your project synthesizes key ideas and shows a good deal of thought about visual exploration. Several design ideas are documented.	A good deal of thought was taken in the layout of your journal. Ideas are well organized. You experimented creatively with a variety of materials and added personal pages.	Well-chosen design elements augment viewpoint. Time and effort is evident. You worked with specific attention to detail.	Your participation was well documented. Your significant contribution to your group enhanced this experience for your peers.
Developing	Most of the concepts from the course are documented with some level of understanding.	Your viewpoint could be made clearer.	Partially developed reflection. You could expand on how you relate to concepts personally.	Basic ideas are there but may be more developed visually.	Ideas are fairly well organized. There could be more attention to detail and personal experimentation.	There could be more time spent organizing and attending to detail.	Your participation was inconsistent.
Emerging	Documentation needs more detail. Key ideas are missing or lack depth of content.	Concepts from the course need review to better interpret visually.	Your journal is incomplete. You still need to make evident the connection to personal experience.	More explanation is needed.	Information is missing. How will another generation view this artifact?	Presentation could be refined.	Your peers had to do your part of the project.

Handouts

- #1 Culture defined
- #2 "I am" poem
- #3 Stage One rubric
- #4 "What is this object?"
- #5 Internet Research
- #6 Art: The Old and The New; Different Forms of the Same Message by Richard Hill
- #7 Continuity and Change in Native Arts by Fred Nahwoosky
- #8 Stage Five rubric

Chapter Five Discussion and Action Plan

In this chapter I will summarize the curriculum unit and reassert significant ideas from the thesis, as well as discuss emerging questions and reflections regarding curriculum design in the arts. Also, I will formulate an action plan that proposes curriculum expansion.

Curriculum Unit Summary

Art is empowering. It has been my experience that art transcends boundaries and perception, which makes for a natural resource to look at matters of justice. One potential benefit to students who participate in activities that include artifact analysis and art making is access to their imaginations as a means of understanding and communication that might be applied to the larger contexts of their lives. This curriculum unit is intended to invite students to explore art as regenerative human connection and introduce concepts that respect worldview. Weaving Native artifacts in context throughout the course presents the actual objects as “living” teachers of culture. From this point of view, it follows that students may view themselves as shapers of culture through art making processes.

Beginning Stages of the curriculum unit challenge students to define culture, what it means to them and how a “cultural lens” affects perception. Journal keeping is introduced here and is to be kept throughout (and hopefully beyond) the course as “artifact” in the making. Students record required assignments and include anything and everything deemed pertinent to their lives at the time. Introductory art students often underuse a relevant tool, the journal/sketchbook. This piece is important because the

journal is a tangible object that captures the intangible and connects students to the possibility of creating living cultural work. Over time, journal documentation may help students see their contributions as shapers of culture.

As a point of focus, the middle Stages of the course concentrate on Native communities of Northern California, and particularly the work of several groups of basketweavers. Pomo basketry was selected as the heart of the course based on my personal interests, and because the forms are powerful testaments of cultural identity that, when investigated deeply, reveal subversive evidence that speaks to the idea that art may not be colonized. In this belief I see a glimmer of hope. This aspect of the curriculum purpose refers to the overarching themes regarding the relationship of art to liberation and the overall influence of art on society.

The unit culminates with a hands-on “artifact”-making making project that has several components. Students collaborate in small groups and come to a consensus on design, purpose, key cultural concepts discussed throughout the course, materials used and for which audience an object of their design will be created. It is required that some form of weaving, literal, symbolic or metaphoric, be incorporated into their plan.

An arts-inquiry curriculum design that involves the use of artifacts as significant symbols of culture facilitates an appreciation for individual and group identity. With this in mind, the assertion is that one function of artifacts (Native basketry in the beginning of the course and then student work) is “to alert the perceiving eye and intellect toward the ideas at stake in it” (Weber, 2003, para. 3). Certain parameters should be considered in the planning of such a curriculum design. First and foremost, curricula that incorporate Native artifacts should include the context of the artifact, Native

pedagogy, epistemology and other multi-dimensional aspects of cultural worldview, if it is to be considered legitimate by some Native communities and more than “additive” by multicultural educators. To create curriculum that is based in social reconstructivist theory teachers critically look at their own practice and require active participation of students. Democratic ideals, such as critical questioning and analyzing systems of oppression, are essential to this theory. Concepts of interpretation and value judgments are key to becoming skilled at “reading” culture and serve to situate students in an empathetic position.

Curriculum Design for Multicultural Art Education

The following is commentary based on what I have observed and learned through the process of gathering information for this project.

I have noticed that much curriculum design emphasizes a format in which many Western educational lessons are developed: with deliberate, careful order, as in the framework I consulted for this project, McTighe and Wiggins’ (2005) “Backward Design.” Other curricular formats, such as standards-based education, discipline-based, place-based, etc., are also laid out very specifically. I have covered the purposes for such designs in earlier chapters of this thesis.

Based on my experience in art-making and teaching art methods, I sense contradictions in an approach to art courses that use traditional models. By this I mean that the challenge becomes designing an art-making curriculum that matches the openness and connection, in content and practice, of artistic activities and to design a plan that avails the space for other realities. For example, in a course intended to include aesthetics in order to address concepts such as interpretation, perception and

art making in fresh ways, there are few curriculum models that include elements such as spontaneity, innovation, fun, student input, surprise, opposition, re-evaluation, flexibility, humor, and an atmosphere dedicated to cultivating imagination. Are these not concepts associated with creativity and are we not in dire need of creative solutions? How does one write curriculum to feature these aspects? I don't believe it can be "written" per se. Undoubtedly, there needs to be a plan that addresses structural content. Often though, I see no outcome based on "emerging imagination" or "exemplary innovation," or ideas that acknowledge different starting and ending points. Indeed, these aspects would be difficult to measure with "normal" assessment tools.

My concern here is that formats for lesson plans seem to be assumed or pre-determined and, at least partially, based in the kind of traditional education I received in which there was very little student participation, and no space to address issues of social justice, as opposed to dynamic educational dialogue that reflects a democratic, contemporary culture. With specific outcomes defined at the forefront of a lesson, does this not largely take the existing social and political order as a given? Current theory suggests that student prior knowledge be considered in curriculum design. Where is this built in to traditional, mainstream formats? The point is underscored when compared to Native ideology in which concepts and practice are not viewed as separate, but holistic. To many Native communities there is no method for the categorization of concepts as in the linear format of Western education. I'm not sure how to create this fresh, non-static curriculum to which I am referring, but later I will make suggestions for changes that may contribute to the expansion of this particular curriculum design.

Another contradiction has to do with the objects themselves. A course designed around cultural artifacts *and* transformative education may necessarily liberate the actual form in which the idea de-emphasizes the object. Yet, the more layers of time that we heap on these cultural objects, the farther we are from the space in which they were created, hence, creating distance from their relevance and legacy.

Information gathered during the thesis development helped me to realize more deeply, ways in which racism is embedded into the educational system. I abhor racism yet must acknowledge that there is no way to remain unaffected by a racist environment; that it is naïve to assume anyone can be objective regardless of one's education and cultural background. Critically analyzing our beliefs and personal positions, however, is a choice we can make. In terms of curriculum development, multicultural education in the arts that uses art methods provides a form to critically address social inequality that is unlike other disciplines. Becker (1994), referring to Marcuse's ideas, insisted that in the process of creating art [artifacts / objects], "it can be transformed, utilized, co-opted, inverted, diverted, subverted. The personal becomes the political; the political is appropriated as personal" (p. 114).

To Further Develop This Project

Presuming students complete the curriculum detailed in Chapter Four of this thesis, a next step could be to reflect a change in emphasis from mostly directed activities to a more open format. Here is an idea for a starting point to the next course:

Course Syllabus: Subversive Beauty 2

Students will select an artifact of interest.

Students will research all contextual aspects from which the artifact originates.

Students will expand upon the artifact.

Remainder of course to be determined.

The idea of a three-sentence syllabus jolts my physical being to the core and represents an incredible leap of faith. But imagine the possibilities! The thinking is that the course is open to student ideas. In this way students get to develop pieces of the curriculum in an order that makes sense to them. Students who have completed the original thesis curriculum will be familiar with concepts related to culture, worldview, interpretation, meaning and creation of objects / artifacts, and some visual art-making methods.

Some thoughts behind the **Subversive Beauty 2** course syllabus:

Students will select an artifact of interest. It is relevant to look at the artmaking of many cultures. A variety of cultural artifacts will be juxtaposed. Traditional and contemporary artifacts will have a history, a connection to the student who chose it. **Students will research all contextual aspects from which the artifact originates.** In the first course it was made clear the importance of critical inquiry, context, an artifact's testimony to survival, student place and relationship to an artifact and concepts of interpretation and value judgment. **Students will expand upon the artifact.** This could take many forms. It could be the creation of an object, image, drama, writing or hybrid of sorts, to symbolize student culture or bridge generations, traditional and contemporary.

Even though this initial sketch for expansion of the original curriculum is unrefined and incomplete, it is meant to point toward the potential match between artifacts and issues of justice. Herrmann (2005) stated, "We must allow students to understand that artmaking is not just about the creative use and transformation of

materials, but also about the transformation, deconstruction, and reconfiguration of ideas” (p. 46).

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