6-2011

History through Art: A Native American Perspective

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History through Art: A Native American Perspective

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2011

A thesis submitted to the Department of Education and Human Development of the State University of New York College at Brockport in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Science in Education
History through Art: A Native American Perspective

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Historiography (Review of the Literature)
Introduction

Why study history? What is the purpose of looking into the past and trying to figure out why people did what they did or lived like they lived? The reason so many people study history is to learn from the past, to avoid the same mistakes, see the development and progress in a society, or see how an extinct society lived. Author, educator, and member of the American Historical Association, Peter Sterns of the University of North Carolina states in his essay *Why Study History*, “history should be studied because it is essential to the individual and to society and because it harbors beauty”.¹ Every individual has their own history, their own story to tell. The society that individual lived in has a greater story to tell, a story for thousands or millions of individuals. Each story, no matter how big or small, is a story worth telling, a story filled with beauty to enhance the world around. Studying these stories from the past give life to those people that have passed. Studying the history of yesterday offers new insight to the histories of tomorrow. The reasons for studying history are endless. There are many different approaches to studying history. Some historians choose to read text or scholarly literature to learn about history. Some historians choose to navigate history by travel and studying the places around them in person. Other historians choose to study history using art and artifacts. Historians that choose to study history using art and artifacts ask

certain questions about a piece they have discovered or are studying. Questions such as what was this used for? What is the symbolism of the design on the object? How was this used? Historians that study the art and architecture of a time period see how the real people of that time lived. They are able to study the values and beliefs of that society. They have the chance to see what was actually used by those people and try to piece together meaning to find the purpose of their lives.

"History never looks like history when you are living through it.” ~John W. Gardner.2 In other words, the people of today do not see it as tomorrow’s past. They see it as the lives they are living. To be able to look into the lives of the past, see what they saw as important and relevant to their lives, is a gift. Art is this gift in its purest form. To study Native American art and artifacts in a history class offers the opportunity to see life as Native Americans saw it. It is an opportunity to travel to a different time, to see society in a different light. The use of art in a social studies classroom is a primary source for studying history instead of secondary sources where other historians give their opinion. It allows for students use critical thinking skills. The use of Native American art and artifacts in a social studies classroom is a direct link to their cultures, and a primary source for study.

For the purpose of this study we will examine why studying art and artifacts is an important manner in which to study history. The focus of art and artifacts will

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be on Native Americans. We will observe why items of art and artifacts are keys to studying the past and why they are important when it comes to studying the history of Native Americans. Furthermore, we will dive into the lives of Native Americans across the United States by studying their art and architecture. What do these items tell us about Native American history? Why it was important to Native Americans then and why is it important to students of history today. We will also find meaning in how to teach social studies using art and artifacts. How historians choose to study history is as important as how teachers choose to teach history. We will study how teaching history using art and artifacts instead of just textual resources is critical to the education of young students and future historians.

The Importance of Studying Art and Artifacts

Art is man’s expression of his joy in labor. – Henry Kissinger

In order to dive into the reasoning for studying history using art we must first answer the question: why art? Art holds three key meanings, all of which can be taken into the study of history. First, art means work. When an individual takes the time to create something they put effort, or work, into it. They are trying to convey a message, demonstrate creativity. It is a personal fulfillment, a
demonstration of the society they thrive in. Studying Native American art and artifacts thus allows students of history a view into the work and achievement of those peoples. Studying the art opens the window into the opportunity to view what they valued, what they saw as a representation of their society, how they worked. Secondly, art means language. Language is a means of expressing oneself. Art is another means of expression. Being able to read visual images is an enhancement to verbal communication. Students of art learn to understand, respond to, and talk about the art they view. Students of history learn to understand, respond to, and talk about the history they study or sources they read. The combination of using art and text to study history is then a very easy and natural connection. Students that use art to study history can describe what they are seeing, analyze it, and interpret or find meaning in it. Thirdly, art means values. Art reveals values about home and family, work and play, the individual and society, nature and the environment, war and peace, beauty and ugliness, violence and love. Studying art reveals the values of its creator. Studying Native American art and artifacts reveals the values Native American upheld. Native American art then becomes a primary source for learning about their lives, values, work, etc. These three meaning of art are the values behind the National Art Education

Association. In all works they publish, represent, uphold, or promote these three values stand strong. These three values should also be upheld by all educators, especially social studies teachers using art as a means of studying history.

For students of social studies, history is often learned in a class where the teacher uses only text books. This is a huge disservice to students. Textbooks are often written from only one perspective, generally a white perspective. What about Native American students? How are they supposed to like a textbook designed to perk interest in history if their history is skewed to the white people’s perspective? How are they supposed to like a textbook that gives little to no mention of their history, and what is mentioned is purely white viewed? Educators need to teach the true histories. This may mean working a little harder and finding relative material, but if teachers take the time the students will like the true history more. Most textbooks make no use of primary sources. Teaching history using only secondary sources is a disservice to students. They are not learning true history. They are learning about what other people thought about events not the actual events themselves. Until very recently, many textbooks are created and designed around white European points of view in regards to history. For example, artifacts of history show that the Phoenicians reached the New World first. However Christopher Columbus’ story is the one told to school aged students. Why? One,

he was white. Two, he was European. Three, “to tell about earlier explorers, textbook authors would have to familiarize themselves with sources. It’s easier just to retell the old familiar Columbus story”.

Teaching in this manner is unacceptable. Teaching using primary sources, relevant materials, and more is acceptable and art and artifacts are front running primary sources to teach with. Native Americans are not white, are not European, and do not have an easy story to tell. They are often disregarded by history in its textbooks. Teaching about Native Americans using their art and artifacts tells the true story, the Native American story, not a white man’s version of their story.

Historians that study the art and artifacts of a time period truly see the beauty history harbors such as Peter Stens was describing. Not only is it fascinating to study people and how they lived in the past but it is often a thing of beauty and amazement. Studying history through the lens of art and artifacts can add new perspective to what is being studied. Instead of reading books and articles and journals about what happened in the past, one can jump right into the story by studying a painting, a buckskin dress, or a tribal mask. Being able to see what the people of the era actually crafted with their own hands and created their own piece of history is a fantastic way to study and understand history.

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The example of using Native American art and artifacts to tell the story of Native Americans instead of just reading a textbook is a more valid strategy of teaching history. Looking at and studying actual evidence of Native American lives gives greater insight than any textbook could offer for two reasons. First, it is primary history, not other people’s ideas about events. It gives students the chance to come to their own conclusions. Second, as mentioned earlier, textbooks do not do justice to Native Americans. The writing of their history is very white-Anglo sided and not coming from their own ancestors. Studying art and artifacts allows for their ancestors to tell their own story. As Napoleon Bonaparte said, “A picture is worth a thousand words.” It allows for the people to tell the story, in a sense, in their own words. Words that may come in forms of paintings, carvings, tools, clothing, and more. Words of their own telling nonetheless, instead of words of another about them.

Studying the art created by Native Americans allows the people of today to enter their world and see it through their perspective. One example of art that can be studied is a buckskin dress that a Native American woman would have worn as the one on display in the National Museum of the American Indian. “Sioux artists are well-known for their fully beaded yokes. Historically....the background color is often light blue, representing a lake. The designs on the yoke are reflections of clouds, and the narrow white band is the shore. In the center, a beaded u-shaped design represents a turtle. The Sioux believed that turtles had the power to protect
a woman’s health." The dress, worn by a Native Sioux woman is now considered a piece of art and a piece of history. The intricate design of the bead work circa 1900 is both remarkable in beauty and in the story it tells. This is just one small example of how art can tell a story through the eyes of the Native Americans themselves. Circa 1900 Native Americans did not have art exhibits or museums where they displayed their art work. It was displayed all around them in their everyday lives. It was displayed on their dresses, on their quilts, on ceremonial robes, and more.

Native Americans celebrated their culture through their art and craftsmanship. For example, “the quilled designs suggest that this robe was used during a Hunka (Making of Relatives) Ceremony. The horizontal lines represent life’s many paths. Other designs show calumets (pipe-like wands used in the ceremony) and eagles (capable of carrying messages to the Creator). The Turtle charm was used to ensure long life. During the ceremony, a girl established a relationship with a significant member of the community, who will guide her throughout her life.” Art is symbolic and demonstrates what was important to people of the time when it was created. When the dresses described above were created the art of bead work on the dresses symbolized what they saw as important.

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to their culture. Native American art was, and is, more than just a painting or a drawing. It was a part of their everyday lives. Their art tells the story of their lives and their culture. The art on the dresses is just one example of the art that was such an intricate part of the Native American life and demonstrates why studying art and artifacts can be critical to learning about past cultures.

Native American Art and Artifacts

All art is autobiographical. The pearl is the oyster’s autobiography. — Federico Fellini

Native Americans are, quite simply, the natives or first people that lived on our lands. As a society, there are many unique qualities within the study of Native Americans. As noted in The Hall of the North American Indian: Change and Continuity by Hillel Burger, Ian Brown, Barbara Isaac, and J.J. Brody, there were a variety of different locations across the country that Native Americans inhabited. These spheres were broken up into ten different culture areas: Northeast, Southeast, Arctic, Subarctic, Plains, Plateau, Great Basin, Northwest Coast, Southwest, and California. Though there are some similarities in the art and artifacts of all the Native American regions, most of the regions were culturally diverse in their own unique manner. All objects created by Native Americans, no matter what region
they dwelled in, was handmade and served a purpose. They created everything from tools and clothing to ornaments and other artifacts used in daily work and play. Everything was made with a purpose of a social, ritual, or political significance to their lives. Their lives revolved around the environments they lived in.

Unlike what people today think of as art, Native Americans did not create something just to hang on a wall adding beauty to their surroundings. Today, and even in past times with different cultures such as the Europeans, people created painting or sculpture for the simple pleasure of having something beautiful to possess. The Native Americans, however, created art that was functional. As Norman Feder notes in *Two Hundred Years of North American Indian Art*, everything made had a purpose to the Native Americans and hanging art just to admire it was a foreign idea. There were no artists in the Native American tribes; there were craftsmen who took great pride in their work. This is not to say that beauty was unimportant to the Native Americans. Everything surrounding them had a purpose, it was also often decorated. The inside of tipis were decorated with elaborate scenes of great battles, religious pipes were decorated with symbolic images, bead work on clothing depicted images telling stories. What the typical individual, outside of the Native American societies, would consider art is not


found when studying Native Americans. However when taking a look into their lives and seeing how they lived art is ever present. Bowls are elaborately decorated, pipes, tipi, moccasins, clothing, spoons, and more. The Native Americans took great pride in the beauty around them and integrating it into their lives.

Furthermore, Native Americans used the resources around them to create their possessions. As previously mentioned, there were a number of different regions of Native Americans across the United States and each region left behind different art and artifacts. This was in great part to the resources around them. Each region had different natural resources to work with, as Rebecca Dobkins notes in *A Companion to the Anthropology of American Indians*. For example in the Arctic Native Americans relied on animals. They used animal skins, bones, ivory, and organs to make everything from tools to clothes to ritual objects. The use of the animal in the Arctic Native American lives symbolizes the connection and relationship between human and animal. This relationship is characterized by “attitudes of respect toward the animal life which is shared by the Arctic peoples”.

A different example is that of Native Americans in the Southwest. Natives in this region used resources such as clay, plant fibers, and semi-precious stones or shells. These resources also came from the land in their native habitat.

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The use of natural resources in this manner symbolizes the connection to Mother Earth and the belief Native American had in regards to her sustaining their peoples.\textsuperscript{14}

In addition to the creation of Native American art as more of a material need than the basis of art in today's standards, their art was also spiritual. Native American culture also revolved around their deep spiritual beliefs and this was reflected in their day to day lives, in their material possessions, and in turn their art and artifacts left behind. Native Americans hold a strong belief in being connected to every other element of creation.\textsuperscript{15} The study of Native American art and artifacts thus leads today's historians to understand what the Native Americans saw as important. It is the study not of ideas thrust on a people but the study of ideas of a people. Studying what is left behind, creating meaning and importance as told to us through a true Native American perspective. This is the importance of studying Native American art and artifacts.

Art is the product of human creativity, or the creation of beautiful or significant things.\textsuperscript{16} The Native Americans, no matter what region they lived in, never saw what they created as art, however. They saw their creations as things of

\textsuperscript{16}Definitions.Net
purpose. They saw their world as beautiful and created things of beauty in their world. As Christian Feest notes in *Native Arts of North America*, Native Americans made things not because they wanted to but to meet their material and spiritual needs. Taking this philosophy of not creating anything without a purpose, Native American art is everything from a tribal mask to a bowl or a spoon. Or, as Feest notes, a shield used during battle. Native Americans were very spiritual people and believed in the power of dreams. They believed that at certain times of age a dream would come and tell one their future. Warriors painted dream visions on their shields to symbolize their greatness as a warrior and the power of their dreams.\(^\text{17}\)

One example of Native American art that is spiritual and serves a purpose to their society is that of the dream catcher. Native Americans believe strongly in their dreams. They believe in their dreams, believing they are messages sent from the spiritual world, and create meaning from them. Dreams to Native Americans are story tellers and future predictors, not merely passing thoughts. The dream catcher symbolizes this Native American belief:

A spider was quietly spinning his web in his own space. It was beside the sleeping space of Nokomis, the grandmother.

Each day, Nokomis watched the spider at work, quietly spinning away. One day as she was watching him, her grandson came in. "Nokomis-iya!" he shouted, glancing at the spider. He stomped over to the spider, picked up a shoe and went to hit it.

"No-keegwa," the old lady whispered, "don't hurt him."

"Nokomis, why do you protect the spider?" asked the little boy.

The old lady smiled, but did not answer. When the boy left, the spider went to the old woman and thanked her for saving his life. He said to her, "For many days you have watched me spin and weave my web. You have admired my work. In return for saving my life, I will give you a gift." He smiled his special spider smile and moved away, spinning as he went. Soon the moon glistened on a magical silvery web moving gently in the window. "See how I spin?" he said. "See and learn, for each web will snare bad dreams. Only good dreams will go through the small hole. This is my gift to you. Use it so that only good dreams will be remembered. The bad dreams will become hopelessly entangled in the web.  

The belief in dreams and their power led to the creation of the dream catcher. It became a staple possession to many Native American tribes and a key part of their daily lives. The above story represents the power of dreams, and the power of beliefs to the Native American society. The dream catcher provides students of history today a glimpse into a belief of Native American culture. It provides an art to be studied, and a ground for studies to stem from.

Additionally, the dream catcher story adds to the history of Native Americans. Not only can students study a Native American dream catcher, but they too can study the oral history. Both of these artifacts allow for students of history to use primary sources to study and create their own meaning of history. It is not just a retelling of information but students engaging and taking part in the

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learning of history. Oral history is a big part of Native American heritage. Much of what they created held meaning, as mentioned before in their strong spiritual belief systems. Oral history surrounding these items is an important aspect to learning about them. There are many other examples of this such as the peace pipe, tomahawk, cradle board, and kachina dolls to name a few. All of these items held a purpose in the daily lives of Native Americans as well as had oral history behind their meaning.

Why Teach Social Studies Using Art and Artifacts

*Art deals with the most sensitive of human striving. Art is personal. Art is universal. It is a means of communicating and expressing our perceptions in graphic form. It must be available to all students, in all its aspects.*

—*From NAEA’s Professional Code for Art Educators*

Teaching about different cultures and the diversities of the world is a very important aspect of teaching social studies. It is the study of different civilizations, cultures, and peoples. Using art to teach these different aspects of history is a creative perspective. Not only will it grab student interest versus lectures and notes and readings, but it will also get to the heart of the matter. The art will show what the people of the era left as their legacy, what should truly be studied. Learning
facts and dates and events is often only relative once one studies the story behind those details. Art of the time period will allow for the perspective of the people that lived during those events and dates to tell their story. A student studying these histories must then keep an open mind and let the art tell the story. Educator Trevor Roper, formerly of Oxford University, is emphasized on this notion in *Imagination and Speculation as Historical Impulse: Engaging Uncertainties within Art Education History and Historiography* by Paul Bolin explaining that “if we are to study history as a living subject, not merely as a colored pageant, or an antiquarian chronicle, or a dogmatic scheme, we must not indeed lose ourselves in barren speculations, but we must leave some room for the imagination.”

There are many sources available that advocate for the use of art in the classroom and see its importance. Authors and educators such as Paul Bolin who publish works for *Studies in Art Education: A Journal of Issues and Research* are among these sources. Paul Bolin, a contributor to this journal, captures the idea behind art and its importance to studying history exploring the ideas of imagination and speculation behind the study of history in his piece *Imagination and Speculation as Historical Impulse: Engaging Uncertainties within Art Education History and Historiography*. Much of history is subjective, and up for

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interpretation by the historian studying it. Art is much the same way. In many cases each person that studies a piece of art will get something of importance out of it, and that something for one person may be different from the next. The study of history is the same way. For example, the study of Native American history. How Native Americans view their history is different than how white European Americans study Native American history. A sort of beauty is in the eye of the beholder standpoint. Paul Bolin captures the idea of studying history using art in this context. If students of history go back to the true history, dig in the dirt per say, and study the art and artifacts they can study the true history of that time. Studying the art and artifacts of a time, for example Native American history, instead of just reading what other historians think allows for more freedom of expression. Using this method in the classroom allows for students to dig deeper, to create their own ideas, to think and evaluate for themselves. It allows for them to become an integral part of the learning instead of just memorizing what they are supposed to learn.

When learning, students should be pushed to ask the key questions of what if, how might, and what did happen. Art can be the open door to answering these questions and keeping an open mind and imagination when studying history and learning the stories. Often historians study a period, study artifacts found from that period, and work to assemble what was believed to have taken place. “Any attempt to understand a time and place beyond our own requires the ability to wonder about
and empathize with questions and speculations we can never fully know... imagination and speculation are qualities that can assist the historian in delving into investigations in ways that are both unique and meaningful."20 Art is the perfect medium for this study of history. Teaching history through art thus allows for students to use their imagination and create meaningful and unique ideas about what they are studying. It allows for the students to become historians themselves instead of just regurgitating facts stated by their teacher.

Art is about more than learning history. It is a fantastic tool for teaching and learning, but it is also a cultural norm that started centuries before today. A lot of knowledge about the history of education, including the study of art in education has been accomplished and published by the Society of Philosophy and History Education or SOPHE, formerly known as the Southwestern Philosophy and Education Society. Author and educator Kevin Hinegardner of the University of Kansas has published a paper, *A History of Paulo Freire’s Ideas in Art Education*, in the SOPHE journal. In this paper theorist, Kerry Freedman, is quoted and believes that “visual culture is all that is humanly formed and sensed through vision or visualization and shapes the way we live our lives."21 Thus using art, a visual medium, is a tool of study for learning. Another theorist mentioned in the paper,


Paul Duncum, asserts, "Visual culture studies adopt a critical view of society." The study of the art left behind by certain groups, such as the Native Americans in earlier centuries, allows us to view what they believed as important and valuable to their culture and society. Studying their art allows for students to study the cultures and values imposed by that group. It also allows for students to expand their own awareness of the world around them, according to educator Vincent Lanier, also in the paper. All three of these educators, and Kevin Hinegardner himself, present the basis of why using art in the classroom is so important. Teaching history is teaching about a vast diversity of groups, ethnicities, cultures, etc. Using art as a medium of education allows for students to expand their historical knowledge as well as their worldly knowledge.

The lack of art in the context of history "deprives teachers and students of a potent instructional tool for interpreting the past, one inspiring hands-on, inquiry-based, and problem solving behaviors," claims Joseph M. Piro of Long Island University. This is why using art in a social studies classroom is imperative. Immersing students into the learning instead of just telling them about it is critical to their grasping of the material. In addition, the main goal of an educator should be student centered. Teachers are teachers to educate students, to make an educational difference on a young student's life. Teaching a student centered

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classroom is a great tool to help students learn in the ways that suit them best. Using art and artifacts in a classroom one successful method used in student centered learning classrooms. This is what Piro was talking about. A prime example of this success is Discipline Based Art Education (DBAE). This model of instruction is inquiry based learning. The student’s interests, judgments, reasoning, and critical thinking skills are front and center.\textsuperscript{24} The students are the learner, historian, interpreter and more. Their skills and ideas are being brought to the table, analyzed, and learned from. This student centered approach enables the students to be the focus of the learning instead of the material being the focus. This is not to say that the material is irrelevant. The material is extremely relevant, however the manner in which the students learn and use the material is important. The Discipline Based Art Education method is a tool that enables this method of student learning to work, and work well.

As the Alabama Institute for Education in the Arts (AIEA) points out, using the approach of art in a different disciple is also a great life skills building tool. “By combining knowledge and thinking in different disciplines, students learn to apply knowledge learned in one area to challenges in another area—a skill that will serve them well—both in school and in real life,” claims Charles Fowler, member

\textsuperscript{24} Education. "Discipline Based Art Education." DBAE. aco.artsnet.org/Portals/10/documents/Educational_Theories_2004/1-4_Discipline-Based_Art_Education.pdf (accessed March 2, 2011)
of the AIEA. This idea if further confirmed by Sir Ken Robinson in his speech “Creativity” in a TED Conference, author to the forward of Renaissance in the Classroom: Arts Integration and Meaningful Learning. Robinson states that, “Education should be a social process. It must help young people to engage with the cultural universes where they live and must make their way. It is through the arts that cultural values are most vividly expressed.” Students of history are learning about different societies, how they lived, how they functioned, and what can be learned from them. Art is a universal social medium, and as Robinson is suggesting, should be used to teach a variety of different educational classes. Teaching and using art as a resource will give clear visual representation to that particular society’s value. Studying Native American history, and using Native American art and artifacts, in turn allows for students to see the values expressed by their cultures. Furthermore, it also established life skills where students learn the values and skills necessary for communication. They learn how to adapt to their learning process, as the AIEA suggested.

Robinson also goes on in his forward to explain that children learn best when it is focused on their abilities, connecting to that of the Discipline Based Art Education method. He states that “children often learn best by being absorbed in

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tasks that require the incidental use of skills and ideas, rather than by focusing on them in a detached way. In other words teachers cannot just talk at students. They need to engage students. Using art in the classroom is a great tool for engaging students. Using the student centered approach students to do the analyzing and interpreting. It allows for students to take control of their learning. Instead of detaching the learning through notes and lectures, it pulls the students into the lesson, engaging them in their own education.

Conclusion

Art is a representation of an individual or societies views on their world at that time. It can reflect values, speak volumes, and teach concepts. Art is something people look at, analyze, draw conclusions from, and discuss about. Art is a glimpse into the past to see what was valued and honored. Using art in a social studies classroom injects these values into the study of history. History is something to be discussed, dissected, and interpreted. Just as is art. Combining the medium of art to the discussion of history allows for a deeper connection and learning experience for students of history. No longer is it just a discussion of words. It is now a discussion with visuals. Students can study an artifact, a piece

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of art, draw their own conclusion, and work it through in their own ideas. Often social studies class is a class of memorization, a class of learning about what others think of a period. Using art to teach social studies allows for the students to see a primary source and create their own ideas, to think on their own two feet. It allows for the study of history to become more about personal and original research instead of a regurgitation of facts.

The study of history using art and artifacts is an important view into the past. Having the opportunity to study things that were used by the people being studied, to see how they actually lived and where their beliefs stemmed from, is a fascinating opportunity. For the purpose of this study, we looked at the Native American perspective. Native Americans never created anything unless it served a purpose to their lives both materialistically and spiritually. This allows for a clear perspective. Random art was not created to lead a historian astray. All the artifacts collected hold a purpose to Native Americans and their connections to spiritual beings such as animals for Natives of the Arctic or Mother Earth for Natives of the Southwest. Using this in a social studies classroom creates many opportunities. Students of history that study these artifacts left by Native Americans are opening a window into the Native world. They are looking are real life examples of what Native Americans valued, worked for, survived off of. They are not merely reading a different historians account of Native American life. They are taking a firsthand approach. It brings in the realist factor for students. Just as Native Americans
connected themselves to their surrounding, using art and artifacts to teach history will connect the students to what they are learning. Teaching using a student centered method is also way to immerse the students in the learning. They will become connected to what is being taught and using art and artifacts in the classroom provided a means for the students to take control of their learning, to create their own ideas.

Art and artifacts hold great significance in the world of history and its study. Many texts and literatures studied stem from the study of art and artifacts. Using such studies in a classroom and teaching students how to study history using such primary resources is a great tool. Studying Native American art and artifacts is just one example of this implementation.
History through Art: A Native American Perspective

Original Research about Art in the Classroom and Native American Art and Artifacts
Introduction

To be able to travel to extraordinary places is a gift. You can immerse yourself into a new culture, style of living, food, and more. New places mean new things. It is more than an adventure, it is an education. For educators the purpose is to teach students new and exciting things. Social studies educators have the opportunity to teach new and exciting things about different times, different peoples, and different places. It is an opening to a world of opportunity. Being able to do this travel in the comfort of your own home, or for the sake of educators, your own classroom, is still a gift. Bringing in pictures, things, artifacts, people, and more from those places into ones classroom takes the learning to a whole new level. Art in the classroom is a fantastic tool that all educators should use to enhance what they are teaching, to spark student interest, to make education come alive. Art in the classroom is about more than a picture here or a sculpture there. It is about teaching students to their fullest potential, it is about making the learning concrete and real, it is about taking them to those extraordinary places.

The goal of educators is to teach, to make pupils learn. The goal of great educators is to teach, to make pupils eyes light up from learning, to see students build in their excitement about something new, something remarkable. Using art and artifacts in a classroom can help to make great educators see this spark of learning in a student. Using art and artifacts in a classroom can make the learning
more personal, more concrete. It gives the topic a focus, a meaning. For example, if teaching about Native Americans, bring in something a Native American created. Make the learning real. Let the students touch, study, explore the art or artifact. What is its purpose? Why did they use this? Let their imaginations run wild and ask questions. Let them explore learning instead of just having it fed to them.

Using art and artifacts in the classroom to teach social studies makes history real, makes connections for the students, and makes it come alive. To teach is to give life to learning. Using art and artifacts in the classroom can do just that. For the purpose of this study we will examine why using art and artifacts in the classroom, especially the social studies classroom, is critical to the education of all students. How historians choose to study history is as important as how teachers choose to teach history. Choosing to teach using art and artifacts will enhance the lessons and learning: Furthermore, we will study what current social studies educators have to say about how teaching history using art and artifacts instead of just textual resources is critical to the education of young students and future historians. Also, as a focus, we will study the art and artifacts of Native Americans and observe why how studying their art and artifacts is a tool to use when studying history. The world is filled with art, with beauty, and people see it every day. Why not take what is a constant in all cultures, and use it to teach about those cultures?
National Art Education Association (NAEA)

_Every artist dips his brush in his own soul, and paints his own nature into his pictures._

- Henry Ward Beecher

What is art? Why is it important? For clearly there must be some importance to it, as it is everywhere and a part of everything. No culture, from the beginning of time, went without art in their society. Art is about expression and feeling and representing ones true self to others. When studying history, art is a tool that can be used to represent that society or culture. What did they find important? How did they express themselves? How did they live, eat, work, and play? All of this is expressed and represented through art. Using this art in a classroom will not only enhance the learning but make meaningful connections for the students. Art was a big part of past societies, and it still is today. Try to look around and not find art. It decorates our walls, litters our billboards, designs our buildings, and is worn on our bodies. Art is all around us, representing our culture and society today. Using art in the classroom is a tool to represent the cultures and societies of days past.

What do the children think? Do students find art important or is it something that does not matter to them? The film _Art Advocacy – Let Them Be Heard_ by Susan Sward and Emily Pichette filmed at the Rhode Island Scholastic
Art Awards is a short film letting the students be the voice. Here is what they had
to say: “Lately schools have been stressing only key classes that are state tested and
you have to be proficient, which is my least favorite word because it doesn’t really
mean anything. It just means that you can pass a test. It doesn’t mean that you are
particularly intelligent or that you are capable of going out into the actual world, it
just means that you can fill in bubbles correctly,” one girl said. Learning and
education should not just be about fitting into a mold. Students need to be able to
be individuals. The world of education should exist to teach students new things,
to help them find what sparks their interests and talents, and help them grow into
those to be a better citizen of this world. Education is not about being boring and
mundane. Learning should be “about enjoying what you are doing,” said another
student interviewed in the film. Learning should be fun and exciting. Great
teachers are the ones who light the fire of education and learning in students.
Furthermore, the use of art in classrooms is for students to make connections. Art
was created by the artist because it was how they were able to express themselves.
Students today create art for the same reasons. One student claimed that art “helps
me to express myself without talking. It is speaking without talking”. Another said
that art is “basically expression and how I can get certain feelings across.” These
students who love art just for art will make connections to their social studies
content if art is used. It will enhance the learning and make it more meaningful
instead of just fact after fact. Most students think that in “all other classes at school
you just sort of do your course work and you do not get to actually express yourself at all." 29 What justice are we doing to students?

The National Art Education Association is mainly geared towards art teachers. Art is a dwindling venue in our schools and is often the first to be cut from curriculum in desperate times. This does not mean all educators cannot be art educators. I will argue the point that we are not all proficient in our abilities to draw, paint, sculpt, etc. However, that does not mean art cannot be taught and cannot be a cementing force in curriculum. The National Art Education Association wrote an article about what a visual art educator is. I argue that these same points should be for all educators, especially social studies teachers, and art should be used in every classroom for every student not just the few that take an “art class”. Why is art important? The following reasons are why art is important. Why is art important in a social studies classroom? The following reasons are why, also.

According to NAEA, a visual art educator is “experienced in using diverse media, processes, and technology.” A social studies teacher needs to use diverse media and know how to use technology. Teaching technology in any classroom is important. Students need to be able to work in a modern world that technology is a big part of. Furthermore, teaching using a diverse set of tools allows for all types

of learners to be able to learn and grow. A visual art educator is “knowledgeable about diverse cultures and art forms, past and present.” Social studies is all about diverse cultures. It is the study of different societies. Art, past and present, is a big part of society and cultural values. Thus teaching art in a social studies classroom needs to be second nature. A visual art educator is “dedicated to making the visual arts accessible and meaningful to foster visual literacy.” Literacy is a topic of up and coming importance in all classes, not just English classes. The goal is for students to be able to read, write, and be literate and see its value in all aspects of life. Art is the same way. It holds value to people who do not even see it. Some people claim to not like art yet take pictures and hang things on their walls. Art is important to everyone whether or not they see it. Art is a staple in all societies and should be taught in social studies class as such. It gives visual representation and visual literacy to what they culture held as important. As a student in the film, Art Advocacy – Let Them Be Heard, said, “Art is everything so how can we take away something that is everywhere.” We cannot. We need to teach it, and not just in art class but all classes, especially social studies classes.

Furthermore, a visual art educator is “prepared to nurture every student’s talents and abilities.” All students in all classes have different needs, talents, and abilities. All educators, not just social studies teacher or art teachers, need to be

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prepared to help any and all students. Great educators take each student’s abilities and help them turn it into a talent. A classroom environment for great educators thrives on diversity and learning from each individual student and teaching them that individuality is ok and accepted. A visual art educator is “essential in captivating students in critical response to works of art and visual culture.” Culture is the key word. Social studies is the study of different cultures. Art is a key component of all cultures and should be studied in order to better understand those cultures. Also, teaching students to ask those critical questions, to learn to analyze what they are studying, is a key skill in a social studies classroom. A visual art educator is “skilled at engaging students with a variety of learning styles, and is sensitive to the individual needs and interests of all students.” This goes along with the preparation to nurture all types. Each learner brings a different set of skills to the classroom. Being able to teach using a variety of teaching methods from media to art to text, etc. and in different styles from individual to group based and more allows for each learner to be able to succeed. All educators need to be able to reach every student in their class, not just the ones that fit to the “normal” mold. The social studies curriculum covers a vast amount of information, tailor this to each student. What is their heritage? Where did their ancestors come from? Find topics to connect them to the curriculum and find art that connects to what they

might like today. Show the art made by their ancestor’s cultures and societies. Pull
the students into the learning.

Moreover, a visual art educator is “adept at using a variety of assessment
techniques to evaluate teaching and learning.” Not all students learn the same so
assessments cannot always be test form. When the student in the film, as
mentioned previously, stated that proficiency is based on passing tests and filling in
bubbles, she was alluding to the fact that not all students are the same. Using
different forms of assessments to evaluate learning allows for all types of learners
to be appreciated. Furthermore, it broadens the spectrum of what students know. If
they only learn and are tested in the style they do best they are no experiencing
different things. They should be exposed to new ideas and learn about new styles.
A visual art educator is a “reflective practitioner on current literature and best
practices, and is committed to ongoing professional development.” Educators
should be the best students, no matter what field of education. Keeping up with the
most current ideas and concepts within you subject area is extremely important in
order to be the best possible educator of that subject. Enhancing the students
learning by exposing them to this is always a plus. Always working to improve
yourself as an educator is also leading by example and teaching your students to
constantly better themselves. A visual art educator is an “advocate for art
education to a variety of audiences, in school and community.³³ Education is clearly important to teachers, otherwise they would not be teachers. Teaching others about what educators do, representing the importance of education and the future of our young students is important.

Survey of Current Social Studies Educators, Grades 7-12

A man's feet should be planted in his country, but his eyes should survey the world.

— George Santayana

In order to gauge what current social studies teachers, that teach grades 7-12, think about using art in their classrooms, I created and sent out a survey. The purpose of this survey was to have the current educators from across Western New York answer a few short questions about whether or not they used art in their classroom, if they found it enriching, and how they put it into practice. The purpose of researching a topic is to find all the necessary sources on that topic and see what those sources have to say. What better source is there than social studies teachers when writing a thesis about a social studies issue?

Having the opportunity to write a thesis on using art in a classroom meant I was a biased participant. Yes, I one hundred percent think it is important. I have put a lot of time and effort into researching art in the classroom, Native American art, etc. I am fully involved with this thesis. However, being a historian, I know what bias is and I respect its ability to sneak into any good piece of writing. I wanted to see if my bias was too far over the edge and current educators would run away from me in droves when I enter the educational system, or if it was just biased enough and current educators understood my opinion and had similar ones themselves. Needless to say, I was happily tearing open the envelopes to read the survey responses and smiling while doing so. It is a pleasure to see other educators take such time and consideration into their own teaching practices so as to enhance learning for their students.

The response that I received from my survey was great. I pleased me to know that collaboration is still a big part of the field of education. Many current teachers were willing to assist me in my personal research on a matter that is important to me. Besides their willingness to help out a soon to be fellow colleague, the majority of the responses believed that using art and artifacts in a classroom is an asset to a student’s ability to learn.

I want to share with you the collaboration of thoughts about using art in the classroom. The follow are not just the “right” answers that work with my thesis research. These are the anonymous answers from current social studies educators
dedicated to the education of young students. The following letter and questions were mailed to over twelve school districts in Western New York. The following are their responses:

To the Social Studies Department Head:

I am a Graduate student at the College at Brockport currently working on my thesis. I have chosen to write my thesis on Art in the Classroom. As I am doing original research, I was hoping that you and your department coworkers would be able to assist me.

Enclosed in the envelope are copies of a survey pertaining to Art in the Classroom and its use. I am looking for current social studies educator viewpoints on the topic. If you could please have your department fill out the survey and return it to me it would be greatly appreciated. I am targeting social studies educators in the 7-12 grade range only.

I am very appreciative of your help in my thesis research. If you are interested in the results of my survey, as I am asking numerous educators across Western New York, please let me know and I will forward you my results.

Sincerely,

Melissa M. Rood
Questions 1 – 4 were simple survey questions pertaining to the subject taught, grade level, location of school (i.e.: rural, suburban, or urban), and the teacher’s number of years teaching. I received back a broad range of answers which I feel enhanced my research. There was a vast response of subjects from AP to general education in US History, Global Studies, Government, Economics, Psychology, and more. The teachers’ number of years in education ranged from 4 years to 20+ years and all locations of schools were considered from rural to urban.

Question 5: Do you use art / artifacts in your classroom to help teach about a subject? Why or why not?

There was, overall, a general consensus. The majority of the surveyed educators responded with a yes. One teacher commented that “students love touching things, hearing authentic music – anything out of the ordinary.”34 “Students like to see tangible objects,” wrote another. Being able to spark student interest in a topic, being able to see them get excited over a new learned concept is part of why teachers teach. We want to be able to see the excitement in learning. Using art in the classroom helps to “enhance student interest”. Using art in the classroom allows for the students to make the connection from what they are learning as real life examples and not just good stories.

34 Anything in “quotation marks” during the survey section of this paper was taken verbatim from the surveys sent out to a variety of current social studies educators. These are their anonymous thoughts on the topic.
**Question 6:** How often do you use art / artifacts in your classroom?

There were a few answers to this question that said they rarely used art in the classroom. What surprised me about these few answers was that they agreed that art in the classroom was enriching to the education. They felt that it was beneficial but not that they were able to implement it into their curriculum.

The majority of answers were such as once a unit, several times a week, or as often as possible. The majority of social studies educators both see the benefits to using art in the classroom and actually use art as well. One educator even went on to say that “art projects are assigned once a quarter. It is important for students that are very creative visually. Art and artifacts throughout time are present typically during every lesson.”

**Question 7:** Do you feel using art / artifacts in your classroom help enrich the content? Why or why not?

“It adds a dimension of authenticity for students when they can see the world from the artist’s perspective,” wrote one teacher. Being able to see what they are studying, and study the piece of art or artifact for themselves, live instead of taking someone else’s word for it, makes the learning more concrete for students, “more relatable”. “It makes history come alive.” It makes it real and not just a story someone is telling. Using art and artifacts may also be that “trigger that helps them (students) remember a fact.” Giving students a variety of options to learn
from allows for all different learners to excel, “providing a visual to accompany the textbook reading, documents, or lectures, etc.” Being able to use as many resources as possible enriches the learning too.

Furthermore, “It allows students to discuss similarities and differences between cultures.” Not only are they learning about a new culture, but they are also building on prior knowledge and expanding their critical thinking skills. It also “gives them a chance to appreciate the skills and culture of civilizations first hand.”

*Question 8:* What do you see the students gain by learning using art / artifacts? Please explain.

“I see them making connections to their own lives. I see them realize that history happens to real people. I see them gain a deeper understanding.” And that is the goal. Social studies teachers are a rare breed of people that have the ability to dive into other worlds, other times, and to bring the students with them. As English teachers get to fall into books and be the lead to a story, social studies teachers get to fall into books and walk with real people. We get to see what they saw, touch what they touched, if we bring art and artifacts into the classroom. It is “going beyond the black and white in terms of seeing.” They also “gain context if the teacher can explain when and how the art or artifact was used.”
Furthermore, “they gain knowledge of art. They start to understand the importance of art throughout history.” There is a greater “appreciation for the diverse cultures in the world.” Art tells a story of the world.

**Question 9:** What type of art / artifacts have you used in your classroom?

The following chart is filled with all of the answers given by the teachers. This list is not all the possible answers to this question, merely just the answers given in the survey.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Paintings</th>
<th>Photography</th>
<th>Political Cartoons</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Museums (field trips if possible)</td>
<td>Period Music</td>
<td>Posters</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Video</td>
<td>Bring in a historian with primary source items (local history) that kids could handle using gloves</td>
<td>Coins</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bag full of artifacts: give to students to figure out</td>
<td>Sculpture</td>
<td>Maps</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Models</td>
<td>Hieroglyphics/papyrus (other writing)</td>
<td>Masks (i.e. African)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Architecture</td>
<td>Pictures (from personal travel, from museums, national websites, etc)</td>
<td>Speeches</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jewelry</td>
<td>Daily Tools</td>
<td>Decorations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cave paintings</td>
<td>Pop art</td>
<td>portraits</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Question 10:** Do you think particular topics lend themselves to using art better than others? If so what topics?

As art is present in all cultures and societies, the majority of teachers agreed that using art and artifacts in the classroom worked in all topics. Some may be easier than others, for example the Renaissance or Golden Age, but that does not mean that art was not present during other periods. “All topics can integrate art.” Sometimes it may “depend on how hard you look for things. I don’t think there is a topic I teach where some type of art or artifact is inaccessible.”

**Question 11:** Other comments about using art, or suggestions for using art, in the classroom?

“All students are artistic to some degree and must realize that art is not limited to drawing.” This answer seemed to be a sum of the entire survey. Using art and artifacts in the classroom is meant to make the learning come alive, to show the students the connections of text to text, self to text, and self to world. So many students are artists and all students love some form of art. Using art and artifacts in the classroom provides that necessary connection for students to make meaning of what they are learning.
National Museum of the American Indian – Smithsonian

*Hok-noth-da. Listen! I have a story to tell...*

As so much of what is taught in a social studies classroom is taught about the past, going to those places is a challenge. Bringing in art and artifacts will help in teaching about a topic, second best to visiting the actual place is going to a site or a museum dedicate to the history of that topic. Wanting to further myself in my study of art in the classroom and my focus of Native American art and artifacts, I went on a journey to the National Museum of the American Indian – Smithsonian in Washington DC January 2010. Going to the museum, seeing the art and artifacts first hand, gave the study of Native Americans new perspective for me. It did make it real; it did make it come alive. If seeing and touching and experiencing art and artifacts can enrich my education then it certainly can enrich the education of students.

The National Museum of the American Indian is a breathtaking establishment. With two locations, New York City and Washington DC, the collection of art and artifacts is over 800,000 representing more than 10,000 years of history of more than 1,000 Native Tribes. The collection is astounding. The building is made of four floors that are separated into different exhibits representing each tribe and culture of the Native Americans, past and present.
There is art and artifacts all around. The building itself is made of Kasota stone from Minnesota representing what tribes that lived there build their homes from. Upon entering the museum you see a life size tipi and canoe, a beaded dress and moccasins next to a ceremonial drum. The first floor is also home to a vast café that serves all types of indigenous Native foods and beverages as well as a gift shop filled with everything from books and t-shirts to actual Native American made and crafted art pieces, jewelry, and more. The museum is a fantastic tool for teaching about the history of all Native American tribes to be sure.

Art is the product of human creativity, the creation of beautiful or significant things. The Native Americans, no matter what region they lived in, never saw what they created as art. They saw their creations as things of purpose. They saw their world as beautiful and created things of beauty in their world. One such example is the pendant *The Creator*. “Among Native Americans, the greatest of all gifts is that of the Creator, the Great Spirit, for it is that eternal force who willed all things in the cosmos. The heavenly bodies, mankind, and all of those things that walk the Earth or fly above it exist because of the Creator. History records the Naja pendant shape as early as the fourteenth century, where it appeared as a talisman for good luck … worn both on the horse’s bridle and as personal

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36 Definitions.Net
adornment to ward off harm and to bring the wearer good luck, as was the sky stone called turquoise."³⁸ "The Creator pendant is both a thing of beauty and serves a purpose. Native Americans were and are very strong in their beliefs and it is represented in their art and artifacts.

There is a story behind every piece of art and artifact created by Native Americans. It was created with a purpose. What is that purpose? What is its meaning and importance to the Native American culture? One such story is the tradition of *Dia de los Muertos*, or Day of the Dead, celebrated by Native Americans in Mexico. These Native Americans, often from the Aztec, Toltec, and Maya tribes, buried their dead in earthenware pots filled with foods, jewelry, etc so that the person would have all they might need in the afterlife. The art and artifacts of their people were critical elements when it came to celebrating the deceased and helping them crossover to the other side. *Dia de los Muertos* is celebrated each November 1¹st and 2¹st. The people believe that on October 3¹st the gates of Heaven are opened at midnight and the spirits of the deceased are able to come back and rejoin their families. There are offerings of food, flowers, and other items at alters to celebrate and honor a passed loved one.³⁹ Much of the art and artifacts created on these days of history are magnificent pieces representing a very strong belief to

the native peoples. Native American culture was often centered on their deep spiritual beliefs and reflected in lives. Native Americans hold a strong belief in being connected to every other element of creation.\textsuperscript{40} \textit{Dia de los Muertos} is an example of this.

Native Americans used the resources around them to create their possessions. The use of natural resources symbolizes the connection to Mother Earth and the belief Native American had in regards to her sustaining their peoples.\textsuperscript{41} Native American tribes that lived in the northern part of the United States used birch bark, or outer paper-like covering, of birch trees in practical and decorative ways. Many canoes were made of this birch bark as an example of its use. Canoes were a staple in the Native American way of life in the northern part of America as they needed to forge waters of lakes and reservoirs. To make these canoes, containers, and other objects, Native artists would turn the white side of the bark inward, stitching it together with spruce roots and other natural materials.\textsuperscript{42}

Generally when thinking about Native American works of art people think hand crafted. There were no processing plants or factories during the time of early Native Americans. What they needed they created. What they created served a

purpose. What served a purpose was both functional and beautiful in their cultures. One prime example of this is pottery. Pottery was generally created for two very important reasons: utilitarian and ceremonial.\textsuperscript{43} Utilitarian pottery was decorated and used for everyday things such as carrying water or holding foods. Ceremonial pottery was used during ceremonies but was not functional in the context of utilitarian. The Hopi create pottery called Sikyatki ware, or polychrome, was first made between 1350 and 1600 and revived during the 19\textsuperscript{th} century. The pottery was, and is, often plain red polish with some incised (designs cut into the surface) in traditional designs.\textsuperscript{44} Jémez pottery is also another tribal style of pottery. The Jémez tribe lives in “Walatowa”, meaning “this is the place”, in New Mexico. This type of pottery was decorated of Jémez Black-on-White. However, as mentioned, much of the art and artifacts in Native American culture has a story with it. The Jémez pottery was no longer made mid-18\textsuperscript{th} century, and actually destroyed by the thousands by the Jémez people so it would not fall into the hands of the Spanish invaders. The pottery was never made again until the 20\textsuperscript{th}-century.\textsuperscript{45} Some ceremonial pottery, like what the Santa Clara tribes created, held significant meaning, such as the wedding jar, a double-necked jar with two mouths connected

by a handle.\textsuperscript{46} The Peruvian tribes used carved gourds, similar to pottery. These gourds stored food and served a function as well as decoration. They were often carved to illustrate stories and rituals, myths, weddings, and other Peruvian history.\textsuperscript{47} Not writing down their histories, pottery and gourds often were the history in writing through their decorative depictions. Similarly, the Zuni tribes, whom lived in the high deserts of the American Southwest, honored water, which was scarce, and fertility by depicting dragon flies, rain, and tadpoles on their pottery.\textsuperscript{48}

Much of what we consider common place today was crafted and created by Native Americans of the past. Many Native American tribes played lacrosse. It was one of many stickball games they played. “Traditionally, lacrosse games were a ceremonial reenactment of creation stories that documented struggles between good and evil and were often used to settle disagreements or as competitions between villages”.\textsuperscript{49} The history of the game was never transcribed onto paper until long after its origins. As much of Native American history goes, there is a lot of oral history. Tribal elders would tell the stories of lacrosse, its purpose, its

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importance to the Creator, and more from generation to generation.  

Original lacrosse sticks and other paraphernalia can be found in the National Museum of the American Indian.

Clothing also tells a story in Native American history. How dresses were made often held importance. For example the women of the Kuna Tribe in Panama used *molas* to create their dresses. *Molas* are colorful fabric panels used for decorative clothing, furniture, or wall hangings. This goes to show how Native American tribes created things for a purpose and added beauty, or art, to it. *Molas* are made by “developing designs on pieces of different colored fabric laid on top of each other, cutting the desired pattern, and expertly stitching the edges to reveal the contrasting colors underneath.” 

Many times the beadwork on an item of clothing tells a story, or has a rich history of its own. A parka from the Inuit Tribe of Native Americans is a prime example. Parkas are often rich in detail and remarkable bead work covers the garment. Beads were regarded as a woman’s treasures and often passed down, or gifted, from mother to daughter or daughter-in-law. Some have over 160,000 beads in the design, an array of floral, anatomical designs, and geometric motifs.

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52 Driscoll Engelstad, Bernadette. "Infinity of Nations: Art and History in the Collections of the National Museum of the American Indian - George Gustav Heye Center, New York." National
As mentioned, Native American histories were not recorded on written paper, not in the context viewed today as recorded. However, this is not to say they did not have their own methods. Stories and histories were recorded on pottery, clothing, oral stories, and more. One example of how history was recorded is the totem pole. Typically found in Northwest Coast tribal communities, the totem pole often represented many figured carved into cedar poles. These poles served as decorations and memorials to the deceased or to chiefs. Family crests, animal designs, and other images were carved into the poles each believed to have specific qualities and meaning. Totem poles were raised during potlatch ceremonies. A modern totem pole was erected in the National Mall in Washington, DC to celebrate the opening of the museum there.

Through all of these examples, from pottery and clothing to lacrosse and totem poles and more, Native American culture is rich with history. All we need to do is listen and hear the stories the art and artifacts are telling us. Each of the art and artifact examples mentioned hold a rich history of Native American cultures and if used in a classroom can help to teach those stories.

Conclusion

To look around our world today we see beauty all around. From flowers growing out of the ground, to paintings and pictures hanging on walls beautiful things encircle our world. Human nature is naturally drawn to beautiful things, and as humans we surround ourselves with beauty. Cultures and societies of the past are no different than people today. Art was a big part of their worlds as well. Teaching social studies is to teach about those cultures and societies. Teaching using art and artifacts will give a true representation of the beliefs and values of those cultures and societies.

Using art and artifacts in the classroom will help students to see what life was truly like for the cultures being studied. People put their values, beliefs, norms, and more into their art. Art and artifacts are the representation of what a culture stands for. Using those artifacts to teach social studies opens up the minds of students to other possibilities. It makes the learning more real, more concrete. If they can see what they are studying it makes the past come alive. Those people really did exist, really did live and prosper, and really did leave their mark on this world. The goal of teachers is to teach all students and to make learning fun. Using tools such as art and artifacts in the classroom opens the possibilities of how to reach different types of learners while making it fun and more real.
All teachers can and should be visual art teachers. The National Art Education Association has core values of what it means to be a visual art teacher. All of these values should be the values of all educators. From teaching all types of learners in the ways they know best, to teaching creatively and with purpose, all educators should be visual art educators. Teaching art is about more than just teaching someone how to paint or color. Teaching art is about teaching the significance, the story behind the piece, and more. Teaching art is like a social studies teacher teaching history. It is about the appreciation and new understanding of things of the past and present and their connections. Teaching art in a social studies classroom should be second nature as we teach the past. Art is a part of everything, including the past we are teaching about.

Using Native American art and artifacts as an example of why to teach art and artifacts in the classroom is a great tool. Much of what Native Americans created held a purpose to their culture and society but also was beautiful in the sense of art. Native Americans told the stories of their people on their pottery and dresses and other materials. Nothing was created without a purpose in their societies and nothing was considered ordinary. Seeing beauty in their world around them they created things with beauty in mind. Native American art and artifacts can be using in a social studies classroom to tell the history and stories of their cultures and societies. Their stories are often “written” right on the piece being studied.
Art is something to be treasured. History is something to be learned. The combination of art and history allows for students to learn about the past, make connections, and appreciate who other cultures were and learn how they lived. Using art and artifacts in a social studies classroom is critical to the education of students. It allows for student to see what they are learning, make meaningful connections, and appreciate the past in a different light. Art is all around us. Not using art to teach would be like not giving a student the whole picture, no pun intended.
Implementing Art & Artifacts into the Classroom
Connection to Teaching

After you understand all about the sun and the stars and the rotation of the earth,
you may still miss the radiance of the sunset.

— Alfred North Whitehead

The study of history allows for students to venture into the past and learn about people, places, and events that are out of reach today. Social studies classrooms are often places where students study how a culture lived, how a civilization rose and fell, and other such history themes. One theme that should be immersed in all of history is art. Art is found in all cultures, civilizations, and periods of time. From cave dwellings to modern billboards, people have infused art into everyday life. People of the past and present create art to symbolize the beliefs, traditions, and culture of an era. The art can be bold and obvious, or subtle and reserved. Art can be hung as decoration and simply be aesthetically pleasing, or it can serve a purpose and function within a given element. No matter how it is created or used, art is found all cultures and represents those cultures in ways literature sometimes cannot. This being said, art is not represented enough in the classrooms where history is being studied and learned. Art is a teaching tool, and should be used as such much more often that it is. There are many reasons behind why to use art in the classroom.
A simple reason for using art in the classroom can simply be to enhance the classroom environment. Creating a warm and welcoming atmosphere for student to learn in extends beyond the teacher’s attitude. Having posters, artwork, artifacts, books, and more decorate the classroom in way to create a more welcoming classroom environment. It gives the classroom the appearance of care and concern for what is being studied within the four walls. To study history and never represent it in real life is almost to what is being learned.

Art is a good tool for teaching all types of learners. The first reason for this can be addressed to visual learners. Visual learners are the students in a classroom that have difficulty learning if the lesson is only spoken or read to them. The need to see, the need to visualize, what is being talked about and studied is a critical element to learning for visual learners. Without it they will not gain as much as they can from the education. Using art in the classroom allows for visual learners to make connections to what they are studying. They can put a picture, a face, and image, to the content being studied. For other types of learners, such as kinesthetic or auditory learners, using art offers up similar enhancements to their education. They might be able to grasp what is being taught, but having a visual can make it more real. It puts the subject matter into real world events. “It adds a dimension of
authenticity for students when they can see the world from the artist’s perspective,” writes a current social studies educator.\textsuperscript{53} It makes the learning more concrete.

Art is a good tool for teaching all types of lessons. No matter how you are broaching a subject, art can be used to enhance the lesson. The art or artifact can be used in a subtle approach by simply showing a picture to enhance a lecture and move on, or it can have a more meaningful approach such as studying a piece to gain meaning and insight from what it is projecting. No matter how the art it used, whether in a big or a small way, it will make a deeper connection for the students of the lessons. Art is not about simply adding color to a page full of notes, it is about making history come alive and offer up real examples of what the students are learning.

Art is a good tool for teaching all types of cultures, civilizations, and subjects. Art is a part of every civilization and culture. Art is one constant in all of history. The art changes based on who is creating it and what era it is created in, but throughout all of time art has been immersed into every culture and civilization. "It allows students to discuss similarities and differences between cultures.” Not only are they learning about a new culture, but they are also building on prior knowledge and expanding their critical thinking skills. It also "gives them a chance

\textsuperscript{53} Taken verbatim from a survey, \textit{Art in the Classroom} by Melissa Rood, sent out to a variety of current social studies educators. Anonymous thought on the topic.
to appreciate the skills and culture of civilizations first hand." Art is how those people are able to express themselves, represent their culture and identity, and leave their mark on the world and history.

In spite of all the reasons to use art in the classroom, teachers still find ways to avoid it. When asked in a survey about using art in the classroom a number of teachers responded with “only one unit each year”, or “a few times a semester”. These teachers all agreed that art in the classroom was enrichment to the education, however they could not seem to be able to implement it into the classroom. Access to art and artifacts can be a challenge. Field trips can be expensive or the trip a teacher wants to take is in a different state or far off location. When studying Ancient China it is not ideal to uproot students and take them off to China. However, showing students artifacts from Ancient China can be accessible. Simply having a poster is a step in the right direction. Using art in the classroom is something that should be done for every unit taught, but there are many different ways to implement art in the classroom. Everything from paintings, photography, political cartoons, music, posters, video, coins, sculpture, maps, models, masks, and more, can be brought into a classroom to enhance the learning through art. The availability of the internet and other such

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54 See survey Art in the Classroom in Original Research.
55 See survey Art in the Classroom in Original Research.
The curriculum of New York State social studies does suggest using art and artifacts in the classroom to enhance learning. However, the options suggested simply skim the surface of what can and should be done to implement art into the classroom. Certain options, such as using maps or reading folklore stories, are provided. In depth learning via art and artifacts is not specifically mentioned. This is something that should be changed in the standards. Individual teachers or a team of teachers, taking the initiate to use art and artifacts in the classroom is a good start. All teachers in New York State should have an awareness and understanding of how to use art and artifacts in their classroom.

The focus of this thesis is twofold. First is the importance of using art and artifacts in the classroom. Second is the focus on Native American art and artifacts. New York State curriculum is sorely lacking when it comes to Native Americans. There are many tribes and different Native American nations that lived, and many that still live, in the United States. The curriculum has a very general overlay on Native American history. Instead of giving each tribe and nation the history they deserve, they are shoving them together. Furthermore, the curriculum is also lacking in how much history is provided for Native Americans. During the seventh grade years students are to learn about the Algonquian and Iroquois Nations, and the relationship to new settlers. The curriculum is roughly a page in length, giving
very little consideration to these peoples and with a focus more on white history rather than Native American history. Later on in the curriculum the French and Indian War is given a solitary sentence of mention, seemingly indicating minute importance to the surrounding events of the American Revolution. With a few brief lines, Native Americans are all but not mentioned again until the Trail of Tears and Reservations.

Native Americans are an important element to the history of the United States. The New World was not, in fact, new. It was a world that the Native American peoples lived in. It was their world long before it became a white man’s world. The history and study of these peoples is deficient in New York State curriculum.
Why use Art in the Classroom

We can never discover new continents until we have the courage to lose sight of all coasts.

– Andre Gide

The act of teaching has changed over the course of the years. “The art of teaching is rapidly becoming the science of teaching.” The creativity and the flow of learning are beginning to become stifled. Testing, standards, curriculum, and more have all been sharpened, focusing more on scores and achievement levels rather than the actually act of learning itself.

New York State social studies teaching standards leave teachers with only few of ways to use art or artifacts in the classroom. However, the options are endless when it comes to using art and artifacts to teach the standards and the curriculum should better reflect such methods of teaching. The following are simply examples of what could, and should, be done. Standard one: History of the United States and New York. The flag can be seen as art and or an artifact to teach this standard. When teaching about the birth of the United States teachers can bring in the first flag and compare it to the current flag hanging in their classroom. Portraits of the founding fathers give a face to a name. Standard two: World

History. This is an endless option. Tools, clothing, homes, food, transportation, etc, can all be shown to demonstrate the differences of cultures. Bringing in these items or having a picture or poster of these items can enhance the understanding of what they are. Standard three: Geography. Maps offer up clear views of what is being taught. When referencing trading routes, or the Silk Road, using a map to demonstrate where the route was, who was involved, how long it was, makes the information more concrete. Standard four: Economics. Political cartoons are often a popular form of art that can represent the economics of different periods of time. Having coins from different nations and tribes, both ancient and today, and comparing and contrasting their significance to their own nation and to others. Standard five: Civics, Citizenship, and Government. Videos, pictures, posters of the Civil Rights movements, or pictures of slavery, Jim Crow laws, and segregation are just a few examples.

The definition of each standard starts out with the line “use a variety of intellectual skills to demonstrate their understanding of.”57 The “variety of intellectual skills” means more than just lecture and note learning, or discussion learning, or project learning. This means teaching to all types of learners in a variety of ways such as using art and artifacts in the classroom to deepen their understanding. The use of art and artifacts in the classroom is about more than creating a visual aid, it is about making the connection of words to image, it is

about making history come alive and deepen the understanding and appreciation for events and peoples of the past. Teachers need to take the initiative and read between the lines of the standards. Teachers need to enhance student achievement and learning through a variety of methods and activities and learning opportunities. Using art and artifacts in the classroom offers up a variety of these options as art and artifacts can be so versatile to learning about different histories and peoples.

Art is a tool for teaching history. All of history is infused with art. From an educational standpoint, to not use art in the classroom is a disservice to all students. Art is a versatile teaching tool. It does not require specific forms of teaching. Art can be infused into any and every lesson, and should. Whether you are lecture teaching, cooperative learning teaching, or project based teaching, art can play an important role. As Marcel Proust, a French novelist, writes, “Only through art can we get outside ourselves and know another’s view of the universe, which is not the same as ours...Thanks to art, instead of seeing a single world, our own, we see it multiply until we have as many worlds as there are original artists.” Art is the connection needed to be able to fully understand, study, and appreciate history. Art, as Proust writes, is the connection to other worlds, a door to seeing the world in a new light. The study of history is the study of different worldly cultures and peoples, studying their art breaks the chains on learning and opens the doors wide.

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The learning gained from using art in the classroom may be direct or indirect. Taking a field trip to a museum is an example of direct learning gained from studying art. Students can study the art; observe, analyze, and interpret what the piece is trying to convey. They can then tie what they have observed and learned directly to a lesson, or simply to the piece being studied. History is not simply facts to be learned out of a text book. History is to be learned from all around us as it is lived all around us. An art museum, a history museum, a memorial park, or even just a walk downtown, offers up lessons to be learned from history and the art that adorns the world. It is often how the teacher chooses to use the art or artifact in the lesson or unit that determines if the use is direct or indirect.

Art in Action

*The real voyage of discovery consists not in seeking new lands but seeing with new eyes.*

—Marcel Proust

The following compilations of work are examples of how to use art and artifacts in the classroom. With the help of Carol Yost, Assistant Curator of Education at the Rochester Memorial Art Gallery, this professional development unit was put together. The goal of this is to help teach teaches how to use art and
artifacts in the classroom, to teach teacher how to help their students understand and gain by learning using art and artifacts, and to offer up suggestions and methods as to how to approach these two concerns.

The examples provided have a focus related to taking a field trip to a museum. However, the focus of these examples can still be successful if the teacher is having students look at posters of the art or artifacts, or if the teacher is able to have examples brought into the classroom. Essentially the options are endless. The examples provided have a focus on Native American art and artifacts for the purpose of the activities. Worksheets A, B, and C are all general questions that can be applied to any piece of art or artifact. Worksheet D can be altered to fit the needs of the subject being taught.

The activities, with their focus on Native American art and artifacts, also bridge a connection to Native American legends and histories in connection with their art and artifacts. Native Americans built everything with a purpose. Whether it was a dress, pottery, or a sculpture, it always served a purpose to their societies. The three activities provided (worksheet D materials) are all examples of this. Oral history is the most prevalent form of Native American history that was learned and passed down over the years. Teaching students these histories, making connections to what is known, and offering up art and artifacts to make concrete the learning of the histories and cultural beliefs of Native Americans is an important concept. Much of how Native Americans lived their lives, and how some Native American
cultures still do, is based on their oral histories. Demonstrating the cultural beliefs to students of history in this fashion is one method of connecting their learning to art and artifacts in a significant manner.

The purpose of this professional development is to assist teachers with a greater understanding of how to use art and artifacts in the classroom. The following activities and worksheets are guided outlines, samples, and activities teachers may use in their own classrooms. The focus for this professional development is Native American art and artifacts, however, what will be learned here can be transferred to almost any other subject matter.

Ideally each activity would take place in front of the actual piece of art or artifact. However, that is not always an option. Not being able to physically go see the piece does not mean it should not be taught. Using posters is often a second best option and highly recommended to adorn classroom walls.

The following consists of the materials to teach art within three examples: Lakota Legend: Recreation of the Earth, Sedna: Goddess of the Sea, and Hiada Legend: Chief’s Rattle.
Art in the Classroom

Guided Inquiry, Analysis, and Interpretation Learning

*Goal:* For students to have a greater understanding and appreciation of Native American art & artifacts and their connection to Native American histories.

*Objective:* Students will learn and practice critical thinking skills as they move from observation to analysis and interpretation of certain Native American art & artifacts.

*Procedure:*

1. Students will interpret a piece of Native American art or artifact.
   a. Guided Art History Packet
      i. The Story (The Art)
      ii. The Background (The Artist)

2. Students will observe a piece of Native American art or artifact.
   a. Guided Inquiry Learning Discussion (Worksheet A)
      i. Observation
      ii. Description
      iii. Interpretation
      iv. Reflection

3. Students will analyze a piece of Native American art or artifact.
   a. Guided Analysis Learning Worksheet
      i. What does art communicate? (Worksheet B)
      ii. From ordinary art to beautiful meaning. (Worksheet C)

4. Guided questions for analysis and interpretation (Worksheet D)
Art in the Classroom

Lakota Legend: Recreation of the Earth

Activity One

Lakota Indian Legend (Oral History)
The Story: Lakota Legend (Oral History)

There was another world before this one. But the people of that world did not behave themselves. Displeased, the Creator set out to make a new world. He sang several songs to bring rain, which poured stronger with each song. As he sang the fourth song, the earth split apart and water gushed up through the many cracks, causing a flood. By the time the rain stopped, all of the people and nearly all of the animals had drowned. Only Kangi the crow survived.

Kangi pleaded with the Creator to make him a new place to rest. So the Creator decided the time had come to make a new world. From his huge pipe bag, which contained all types of animals and birds, the Creator selected four animals known for their ability to remain under water for a long time. He sent each in turn to retrieve a lump of mud from beneath the floodwaters. First the loon dove deep into the dark waters, but it was unable to reach the bottom. The otter, even with its strong webbed feet, also failed. Next, the beaver used its large flat tail to propel itself deep under the water, but it too brought nothing back. Finally, the Creator took the turtle from his pipe bag and urged it to bring back some mud.

Turtle stayed under the water for so long that everyone was sure it had drowned. Then, with a splash, the turtle broke the water’s surface! Mud filled its feet and claws and the cracks between its upper and lower shells. Singing, the Creator shaped the mud in his hands and spread it on the water, where it was just big enough for himself and the crow. He then shook two long eagle wing feathers over the mud until earth spread wide and varied, overcoming the waters. Feeling sadness for the dry land, the Creator cried tears that became oceans, streams, and lakes. He named the new land Turtle Continent in honor of the turtle who provided the mud from which it was formed.

The Creator then took many animals and birds from his great pipe bag and spread them across the earth. From red, white, black, and yellow earth, he made men and women. The Creator gave the people his sacred pipe and told them to live by it. He warned them about the fate of the people who came before them. He promised all would be well if all living things learned to live in harmony. But the world would be destroyed again if they made it bad and ugly.\textsuperscript{59}

The Background:

The Lakota were Plains Indians in the west. The Lakota acquired horses, introduced to North America by the Spanish in the 17th century, and by the 18th century were nomadic buffalo hunters. By the mid-19th century, Euro-American settlers had overrun the sacred lands of the Lakota, and white hunters had decimated the buffalo herds on which the Plains Indians, the varied people who lived between the Mississippi River and the Rocky Mountains, depended. Eventually the United States government confined the Plains Indians to designated lands called reservations. Although reservations deprived them of their traditional way of life, the Lakota struggled to preserve many of their cultural traditions.

Lakota dance dresses are traditionally decorated with a beaded yoke that incorporates the turtle-by-the-shore-of-the-lake design. Because of her role in the creation story of the Lakota, the turtle is a sacred animal. The Lakota associate women with the sacred turtle because of their gift of creating human life. Lakota women aspired to be like the turtle - resilient and long-lived. Turtle motifs were beaded on women's dresses, leggings, and bags and on cradle boards and protective umbilical amulets for baby girls.

This was the "best dress" of a Lakota woman, worn for dancing or for special occasions. When a woman danced in this dress, the beaded yoke sparkled in the sunlight, the fringe swung up and down, and the bells jingled. The beaded designs on the yoke have spiritual power and significance. At the lower center of the yoke, resting directly over the wearer's heart is a multicolored U-shaped design representing the sacred turtle. The narrow white strip across the width of the yoke is the lakeshore. The blue-and-gold design in the white strip above the turtle may represent a morning star, and the checkered designs around it may suggest mountains or hills. Above the white strip, the broad blue area punctuated by symmetrical designs represents the sky's reflection in the waters of the lake, the home of the sacred turtle. While the meaning of most of these designs is no longer known, designs in this part of a Lakota dress traditionally referred to spiritual beings who lived in the sky and on the lakeshore.  

**Art in the Classroom**

**Guided Inquiry Learning Discussion**

This process for each work of art or artifact takes about 20-25 minutes.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question One: (7 minutes)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>What do you see? What else do you see?</strong> Have students begin to generate ideas, gather inventory of the art or artifact before making an interpretation. Break it down, study the details.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Reflect observations back to the student(s) thoughtfully and without judgment. <strong>Why do you say that?</strong> <strong>What makes you think that?</strong> Steer conversation to observation and not inquiry.</td>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Questions Two: (2 minutes)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Does this remind you of anything?</strong> Encourage multiple answers or expressions.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Reflect observations back to the student(s) thoughtfully and without judgment. <strong>Why do you say that?</strong> <strong>What makes you think that?</strong></td>
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<tr>
<th>Questions Three: (3 minutes)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>What do you think is happening? What is the subject of the art or artifact? What is the artist trying to convey?</strong> Have students dig deeper into their observations to make a hypothesis as to what the piece represents, is portraying, etc.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Reflect observations back to the student(s). <strong>Why do you say that?</strong> <strong>What makes you think that?</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Is there anything that does not support your interpretation?</td>
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<tr>
<th>Question Four: (5 minutes)</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>What information would help support your hypothesis? What would the information specifically clarify?</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Allow all questions to be asked before answering. As you answer, ask what information added to the understanding of the piece. Answer questions and give brief information.</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question Five: (3 minutes)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reflect on the piece of art or artifact as a whole. <strong>What do you think about when you see this piece? How does it make you feel? What do you like about it?</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Reflect observations back to the student(s).</td>
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<table>
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<tr>
<th>Question Six: (3 minutes)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reflect on the experience. <strong>Take a moment and observe how this process of looking at art or artifacts went. What did you notice about the process as a group? Do you have any observations about yourself?</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Reflect observations back to the student(s).</td>
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61 Adapted from Guides for Leading *Learning to Look, Looking to Learn* Lessons, Rochester Memorial Art Gallery
Art in the Classroom

Guided Analysis Learning Worksheet

What Does Art Communicate?

Directions: Answer the questions as best you can. Base your answers on what you already know, and what you see. What do you see? What in the art or artifact makes you say that?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Belonging:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What important beliefs are being expressed?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What traditions are being expressed?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How might this object have been important to its community?</td>
</tr>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Daily Life:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What is the purpose or function of this piece?</td>
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<tr>
<td>How was the piece made? What tools or skills were needed?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Would this piece have been used in daily life or special occasions?</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Messages:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What is the meaning of the decorations, shapes, patterns, and colors?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Was this piece religious or spiritual?</td>
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<tr>
<td>How was it used?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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Adapted from Art and the Human Experience: Art Communicates How People Live Their Lives, Rochester Memorial Art Gallery
### Worksheet B

#### Nature:
How does the piece reflect the geography of its origin? (natural resources, climate, location, etc)

What is the piece saying about the natural world? Supernatural world?

#### Change:
Does the piece reflect and inspire change?

Was the artist influenced by other communities when making this piece?

#### Celebration:
What is the piece’s purpose?

What member of the community could have created this piece? Was this a designated role supported by the community?

How does the artwork express pride in community?

#### Other notes, ideas, expressions, meanings…
Art in the Classroom
Guided Analysis Learning Worksheet

From Ordinary Art to Beautiful Meaning

Directions: Answer the questions as best you can. Base your answers on what you already know, and what you see. What do you see? What in the art or artifact makes you say that?

Name of the piece:

Sketch the piece:

Materials:
What materials were used?

Why do you think those materials were chosen?

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63 Adapted from Art and the Human Experience: Making the Ordinary Beautiful, Rochester Memorial Art Gallery
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Worksheet C</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Size &amp; Shape:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Describe what you see.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Why do you think this piece was shaped this way?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Why do you think this piece was sized this way?</td>
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</table>

| **Design & Pattern:** |
| Describe what decorated the piece. What is the design? |
| What do you think the pattern signifies? |
| What might the pattern mean? |

| **Use:** |
| Is the object worn, weathered, or broken? |
| Does the piece looked like it could have been love and respected, or used and discarded? |
| How do you think the piece was used? |

| **Art or Artifact:** |
| Explain your opinion. |
| Can it be both? Why or why not? |
Worksheet D

Guided Questions:

1. What can be learned by studying the Lakota dress?
   a. What is being depicted in the beadwork?
   b. Can you describe the imagery in the beadwork?
   c. Can you figure out when and where the scene is taking place?
   d. Is the scene a real event?
   e. What message is the piece trying to convey?
   f. What is the purpose of this dress?

2. What can be learned by studying the Lakota creation story and the dress together?
   a. Do the two pieces work together?
   b. Are they expressing the same message?
   c. Why do you think the dress is depicting the story?
   d. What is the purpose of “painting” the story on clothing?

3. Further Study...
   a. Research the Lakota tribe.
      i. Does other clothing have similar messages?
         1. What other messages are depicted in clothing?
         2. Does gender play a role in the clothing decoration?
      ii. Do other artifacts convey messages? (i.e. housing, pottery, baskets, etc)
         1. What messages are depicted?
         2. What is the significance of the Lakota tribe decorating their possessions with these images?
   b. Research other Native American tribes.
      i. Did they have the same dresses? The same creation story?
         1. Similarities? Differences?
         2. What other clothing designs portray messages or oral histories?
      ii. Do other tribes have artifacts that convey messages?
         1. What messages are depicted?
         2. What is the significance of the Lakota tribe decorating their possessions with these images?
   c. Research American history.
      i. What was taking place during the era the dress was made? Are these events significant to Lakota history?
      ii. Do events in history play a role in the design of dresses and other clothing in Native American culture?

More Information:
1. Identity by Design NMAI online exhibit at
   http://www.nmai.si.edu/exhibitions/identity_by_design/IdentityByDesign.html
Art in the Classroom

Sedna: Goddess of the Sea

Activity Two

Inuit Indian Legend (Oral History)
The Story: Inuit Legend (Oral History)

Once there was a young woman named Sedna. She lived in the Arctic with her mother and father. She loved her mother and father very much and was very content. Her father was a skilled hunter, so he provided very well for his family. Sedna had plenty of food and warm furs to wear. She liked the comfort of her parent's home and refused to marry. Many Inuit men desired Sedna for a wife and asked her parents for permission to marry her. But Sedna refused them all. Even when her parents insisted it was time for her to marry she refused to follow tradition and obey them.

This continued for quite some time, until one particular Inuk came to visit Sedna. This man promised Sedna that he would provide her with plenty of food to eat and furs for clothes and blankets. Sedna agreed to marry him. After they were man and wife, he took her away to his island. When they were alone on the island, he revealed to her that he was not a man at all, but a bird dressed up as a man! Sedna was furious, but she was trapped and had to make the best of it. He, of course, was not a good hunter and could not provide her with meat and furs. All the birdman could catch was fish. Sedna got very tired of eating fish every day.

They lived together on the island for a time, until Sedna's father decided to come and visit. Upon seeing that his daughter was so unhappy and that her husband had lied to her, he killed the birdman. Sedna and her father got into his kayak and set off for home. The birdman's friends discovered what they had done and wanted to avenge the birdman's death. They flew above the kayak and flapped their wings very hard. The flapping of their wings resulted in a huge storm. The waves crashed over the small kayak making it almost impossible to keep the boat upright.

Sedna's father was so frightened that the storm would fill his kayak with water and that he would drown in the icy waters that he threw Sedna overboard. He thought that this would get the birds to stop flapping their wings, but it did not. Sedna did not want to be left in the water, so she held tightly to the edge of her father's boat and would not let go. Fearing that she would tip him over, the father cut her fingers off, one joint at a
time. From each of her finger joints different sea creatures were born. They became fish, seals, walruses, and whales.

Sedna sank to the bottom of the ocean and there became a powerful spirit. Her home is now on the ocean floor. If you have seen her, you know she has the head and torso of a woman and the tail of a fish.

Sedna now controls all of the animals of the sea. The Inuit who rely on these animals want to maintain a good relationship with Sedna, so that she will continue to allow her animals to make themselves available to the hunters. If the hunters do not catch anything for a long time, the Shaman will transform himself into a fish. In this new form, he or she will swim down to the bottom of the ocean to appease Sedna the Sea Goddess. The Shaman will comb the tangles out of Sedna's hair and put it into braids. This makes her happy and soothes her anger. Perhaps it is because Sedna lost her fingers that she likes to have her hair combed and braided by someone else. When she is happy, she allows her animals to make themselves available to the hunters. The animals do not mind giving themselves up to provide food, clothes, and shelter for the Inuit.64

The Background:

Along the coast of the Arctic Ocean and Bering Sea—from Siberia, across Alaska and Canada, and east to Greenland—Yup’ik, Unangan, and Inuit peoples live in the most forbidding environment on earth. Their ability to survive depends upon their understanding of land, ocean, ice, and sky, and of animal behaviors—knowledge gained over thousands of years. For millennia, families exchanged goods and shared feasts and ceremonies with neighboring bands. By the 1700s, Native and non-Native traders were extending these chains of contact into the interior in response to European demand for furs. Whaling and prospecting brought further change to the region, as previously nomadic peoples established villages around the wintering sites of ships.65

Art in the Classroom
Guided Inquiry Learning Discussion

This process for each work of art or artifact takes about 20-25 minutes.

**Question One:** (7 minutes)

What do you see? What else do you see? Have students begin to generate ideas, gather inventory of the art or artifact before making an interpretation. Break it down, study the details.

Reflect observations back to the student(s) thoughtfully and without judgment. Why do you say that? What makes you think that? Steer conversation to observation and not inquiry.

**Questions Two:** (2 minutes)

Does this remind you of anything? Encourage multiple answers or expressions.

Reflect observations back to the student(s) thoughtfully and without judgment. Why do you say that? What makes you think that?

**Questions Three:** (3 minutes)

What do you think is happening? What is the subject of the art or artifact? What is the artist trying to convey? Have students dig deeper into their observations to make a hypothesis as to what the piece represents, is portraying, etc.

Reflect observations back to the student(s). Why do you say that? What makes you think that?

Is there anything that does not support your interpretation?

**Question Four:** (5 minutes)

What information would help support your hypothesis? What would the information specifically clarify?

Allow all questions to be asked before answering. As you answer, ask what information added to the understanding of the piece. Answer questions and give brief information.

**Question Five:** (3 minutes)

Reflect on the piece of art or artifact as a whole. What do you think about when you see this piece? How does it make you feel? What do you like about it?

Reflect observations back to the student(s).

**Question Six:** (3 minutes)

Reflect on the experience. Take a moment and observe how this process of looking at art or artifacts went. What did you notice about the process as a group? Do you have any observations about yourself?

Reflect observations back to the student(s).

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Adapted from Guides for Leading Learning to Look, Looking to Learn Lessons, Rochester Memorial Art Gallery
**Art in the Classroom**

**Guided Analysis Learning Worksheet**

**What Does Art Communicate?**

*Directions:* Answer the questions as best you can. Base your answers on what you already know, and what you see. What do you see? What in the art or artifact makes you say that?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Belonging:</th>
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<tr>
<td>What important beliefs are being expressed?</td>
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<td>What traditions are being expressed?</td>
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<tr>
<td>How might this object have been important to its community?</td>
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<th>Daily Life:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What is the purpose or function of this piece?</td>
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<td>How was the piece made? What tools or skills were needed?</td>
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<td>Would this piece have been used in daily life or special occasions?</td>
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<th>Messages:</th>
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<tr>
<td>What is the meaning of the decorations, shapes, patterns, and colors?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Was this piece religious or spiritual?</td>
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<tr>
<td>How was it used?</td>
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67 Adapted from *Art and the Human Experience: Art Communicates How People Live Their Lives*, Rochester Memorial Art Gallery
Worksheet B

Nature:
How does the piece reflect the geography of its origin? (natural resources, climate, location, etc)

What is the piece saying about the natural world? Supernatural world?

Change:
Does the piece reflect and inspire change?

Was the artist influenced by other communities when making this piece?

Celebration:
What is the piece’s purpose?

What member of the community could have created this piece? Was this a designated role supported by the community?

How does the artwork express pride in community?

Other notes, ideas, expressions, meanings...
Art in the Classroom

Guided Analysis Learning Worksheet

From Ordinary Art to Beautiful Meaning

Directions: Answer the questions as best you can. Base your answers on what you already know, and what you see. What do you see? What in the art or artifact makes you say that?

Name of the piece:

Sketch the piece:

Materials:
What materials were used?
Why do you think those materials were chosen?

Adapted from Art and the Human Experience: Making the Ordinary Beautiful, Rochester Memorial Art Gallery
**Worksheet C**

**Size & Shape:**
Describe what you see.

Why do you think this piece was shaped this way?

Why do you think this piece was sized this way?

**Design & Pattern:**
Describe what decorated the piece. What is the design?

What do you think the pattern signifies?

What might the pattern mean?

**Use:**
Is the object worn, weathered, or broken?

Does the piece looked like it could have been love and respected, or used and discarded?

How do you think the piece was used?

**Art or Artifact:**
Explain your opinion.

Can it be both? Why or why not?
Guided Questions:

1. What can be learned by studying the sculpture of Sedna?
   a. What is being depicted sculpture?
   b. Can you describe the imagery?
   c. Can you figure out when and where the scene is taking place?
   d. Is the scene a real event?
   e. What message is the piece trying to convey?
   f. What is the purpose of this sculpture?

2. What can be learned by studying the Sedna legend and the sculpture together?
   a. Do the two pieces work together?
   b. Are they expressing the same message?

3. Further Study...
   a. Research Inuit tribes.
      i. Do other sculptures have similar messages? What other messages are depicted?
      ii. Do other artifacts convey messages? (i.e. housing, pottery, baskets, etc)
         1. What messages are depicted?
         2. What is the significance creating these?
   b. Research other Native American tribes.
      i. Did they have the same story and/or sculpture?
         1. Similarities? Differences?
         2. What other sculptures portray messages or oral histories?
      ii. Do other tribes have artifacts that convey messages? What messages are depicted?
Art in the Classroom

Haida Legend: Chief’s Rattle

Activity Three

Haida Indian Legend (Oral History)
The Story: Haida Legend (Oral History)

In the beginning, the world was dark. The people wondered and argued about something they had heard of, but had never seen - daylight. Some said that the river chief kept daylight in a special box.

Raven lived in the dark world. He was sly, wise, greedy, and meddlesome. And he could change his form to suit his own needs. Raven decided to find out about daylight, so he turned into a hemlock needle and dropped into a freshwater spring. When the river chief's daughter came to the spring to drink, Raven floated into her cup, and she swallowed him. In due time, Raven was born as the grandson of the river chief.

Raven grew very fast and his grandfather adored him, even though he threw tantrums and his eyes looked a little like a raven's. When he screamed, his doting grandfather let him play with the Moon Box. He opened the box and the moon escaped into the sky. When Raven wailed again, his grandfather let him play with the Box of Daylight. As soon as the box was in his possession, Raven changed back into a bird and flew through the smoke hole and disappeared into the darkness.

Raven brought the box to the people and opened it slightly, allowing a few streaks of daylight to escape. But they did not believe he actually had daylight. Angered by the people's skepticism, he threw open the box and flooded the world with the bright light of day.69

The Background:

Originally, the Haida people lived on the Queen Charlotte Islands off the coast of present-day British Columbia. In the early 1700s some of them settled in the southern part of Prince of Wales Island, now part of Alaska. The Haida were fishers who depended largely on halibut and cod for their livelihood.

Raven is one of the most popular characters in Haida mythology. He is said to have created the earth when he tired of flying over a world covered with water. Landforms, tides, the habits of certain animals - all those and more are credited to Raven. In many of the stories, such as the story of daylight, the trickster Raven changes his form.

Raven rattles take their name from their ravenlike shape. The first raven rattles may have been powerful instruments used by religious specialists called shamans. However, Haida people who were alive around 1900 said that rattles were the instruments of dancing chiefs, part of the elaborate regalia they wore for a dance to greet canoes from other villages. Raven rattles are now used only for special occasions.

In this rattle Raven's head thrusts upward and his chest puffs out, forming the body of the rattle. His wings sweep downward along his sides. The repeated vertical lines of Raven's beak, mouth, and his diamond-shaped eye emphasize the proud upward thrust of his head. Inlaid shell forms his shiny opalescent eye. Most known raven rattles look much like this one, but they have the additional detail of a small box of daylight held in his beak.

Several birds are evident in this wooden rattle. On Raven's belly is the face of a rather large bird, carved in low relief. The design, barely visible here, may depict a hawk or some other natural being. Another abstracted bird's head faces the rattle handle.
A reclining man rests his head on Raven's head. His long red arms wrap around his drawn-up knees. A long-billed bird bites the man's extended tongue. The meaning of this exchange is unknown, but may suggest the transference of power from one being to the other.

The complex linear design of this rattle is characteristic of Northwest Coast Indian art. Each form is tightly integrated into the puzzle-like composition. Strong contour lines define many of the forms, such as the brow, eye, nostril, and beak of Raven. These lines tie the complex imagery together, leading from one form to another to create a rhythmic composition.

The raven rattle was painted with black and bright colors that also structured the design. Over time, much of this pigment has worn away. However, traces of red paint are still visible on the reclining man's arms and on the mouth, cheek, and forehead of the large bird that is also Raven's chest.\(^{70}\)

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Art in the Classroom
Guided Inquiry Learning Discussion\textsuperscript{71}

This process for each work of art or artifact takes about 20-25 minutes.

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\textsuperscript{71} Adapted from Guides for Leading Learning to Look, Looking to Learn Lessons, Rochester Memorial Art Gallery
Worksheet B

Art in the Classroom

Guided Analysis Learning Worksheet

What Does Art Communicate?

Directions: Answer the questions as best you can. Base your answers on what you already know, and what you see. What do you see? What in the art or artifact makes you say that?

**Belonging:**
What important beliefs are being expressed?

What traditions are being expressed?

How might this object have been important to its community?

**Daily Life:**
What is the purpose or function of this piece?

How was the piece made? What tools or skills were needed?

Would this piece have been used in daily life or special occasions?

**Messages:**
What is the meaning of the decorations, shapes, patterns, and colors?

Was this piece religious or spiritual?

How was it used?

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72 Adapted from *Art and the Human Experience: Art Communicates How People Live Their Lives*, Rochester Memorial Art Gallery
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Was the artist influenced by other communities when making this piece?

**Celebration:**
What is the piece’s purpose?

What member of the community could have created this piece? Was this a designated role supported by the community?

How does the artwork express pride in community?

**Other notes, ideas, expressions, meanings...**
Worksheet C

Art in the Classroom

Guided Analysis Learning Worksheet

From Ordinary Art to Beautiful Meaning

Directions: Answer the questions as best you can. Base your answers on what you already know, and what you see. What do you see? What in the art or artifact makes you say that?

Name of the piece:

Sketch the piece:

Materials:

What materials were used?

Why do you think those materials were chosen?

Adapted from Art and the Human Experience: Making the Ordinary Beautiful, Rochester Memorial Art Gallery
Worksheet C

**Size & Shape:**
Describe what you see.

Why do you think this piece was shaped this way?

Why do you think this piece was sized this way?

**Design & Pattern:**
Describe what decorated the piece. What is the design?

What do you think the pattern signifies?

What might the pattern mean?

**Use:**
Is the object worn, weathered, or broken?

Does the piece looked like it could have been love and respected, or used and discarded?

How do you think the piece was used?

**Art or Artifact:**
Explain your opinion.

Can it be both? Why or why not?
Worksheet D

**Guided Questions:**

1. What can be learned by studying the sculpture of Sedna?
   a. What is being depicted sculpture?
   b. Can you describe the imagery?
   c. Can you figure out when and where the scene is taking place?
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         2. What other sculptures portray messages or oral histories?
      ii. Do other tribes have artifacts that convey messages? What messages are depicted?
How Art Enhances Learner Development

*I never teach my pupils; I only attempt to provide the conditions in which they can learn.*

-Albert Einstein

Students learn in a variety of different ways. Giving students a variety of ways to learn while teaching enhances instruction and retention for a greater amount of students. Using art and artifacts in the classroom offers many different opportunities for students to learn while retaining the knowledge. The *Art in the Classroom* activities are tools to help teach history using art and artifacts while also teaching students how to use skills to enhance their development. The skill set used in the activities are observation, inquiry, note taking, and cooperative learning. All of these skills are implemented throughout the activities, or lessons.

Inquiry based learning means student centered learning. Instead of having the classroom teacher(s) in front of the room leading the instruction, the students are able to explore, think for themselves, and generate their own thoughts and questions. The students are the focus of the learning. “Research shows that the amount of student learning that occurs in a classroom is directly proportional to the quality and quantity of student involvement in the educational program. (Cooper and Prescott 1989)”74 The more students are involved, the more they will learn.

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Using art and artifacts in the classroom, given the three activities provided, will enhance how much the student will learn about the subject. The teacher guides the students through a series of activities while not directly controlling the learning. The worksheets are provided, explanations given, and then the students are given time to study the art or artifact and work on the worksheets. The teacher is there for guidance, but the students and asking the questions, not just answering them. The teachers are filling the role of facilitator or coach while the students are the center of the learning.

There are many benefits to inquiry learning. To start, students are taking a more active role in their education. Instead of sitting in desk chairs and letting the education come to them, students are seeking out the information and gaining the knowledge in a more productive manner. Additionally, inquiry based learning teaches problem solving and critical thinking skills. The students are seeking out the answers to their questions. The students are analyzing a piece of art or artifact and generating their own ideas, thoughts, and solutions. Instead of the teacher providing all the information, the students are generating their own thinking skills. Furthermore, inquiry based learning promotes ownership of work completed. The students will feel a greater sense of success if they completed the task, if they were
able to lead their own learning. A sense of ownership enhances the learning and makes it more meaningful.75

Observation is also a key skill that can enhance learner development and is built into the inquiry based learning. Students need to look at, analyze, and interpret what they are studying. Looking at a piece of art or artifact is a detailed exercise. Using their background knowledge, students need to analyze what they are looking at. How do the pieces, designs, patterns, etc, all work together in the art or artifact? What is the importance of all these elements? Using observation skills to study what they are looking at and determining what to inquire about is important. During inquiry based learning when students are seeking out questions and answers they need to use their observation skills to do so.

Note taking is also an important skill used during the *Art in the Classroom* activities to enhance learner development. Taking notes allows for the students to determine what is important about the art or artifact being studied, and what they need to retain for further learning. Worksheets A, B, and C in the activities provide a variety of ways for students to take notes while analyzing and interpreting the art or artifact. Researchers Nye, Crooks, Powlie, and Tripp (1984) determined that “there was a strong relationship between the amount of information taken in notes

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75 “Inquiry Based Learning.” Northeastern Illinois University. [www.neiu.edu/~middle/Modules/science%20mods/amazon%20components/AmazonComponents 2.html#benefits (accessed June 21, 2011).]
and students’ achievement on examinations.” Further research indicates that note taking is a critical element to learner development. In a study completed by Marzano, Gnadt, and Jesse in 1990 they found a 40% gain in learner development. Henk and Stahl found a 44% gain in 1985. Overall, taking notes is an effective strategy for enhancing learner development.

There are a number of benefits for students that take notes. Using teacher prepared notes, such as the worksheets (A, B, C, and D) in the activities, gives the student a clear idea of what they should be aiming towards. Using note taking in combination with inquiry based learning allows for the learning to be student centered and have the students generate critical thinking skills. The note taking aspect allows for the students to center in on a focus for their questions. It is essentially a study guide for them to fill in as they go. The student is then not completely on their own, and they can gain useful knowledge geared towards the teachers end goal. Note taking is often thought of as a study skill. However, note taking also “provides students with tools for identifying and understanding the most

important aspects of what they are learning." Note taking is more than a study skill, is also is a tool to enhance learner development and understanding.

Cooperative learning is an important skill for students to learn that will enhance their development. Cooperative learning is "the instructional use of small groups so that student's work together to maximize their own and each other's learning." In the activities of *Art in the Classroom*, students can work together when analyzing a piece of art or artifact. During the guided inquiry learning discussion students can help each other to analyze and interpret the piece by working together to observe what they are looking at. The guided discussion has question such as "What do you see? Why do you say that? and What makes you say that?" These guided questions help students to observe what they are looking at. Students can bounce ideas off of each other to enhance the discussion. One student might see one thing and another student something very different. Cooperatively learning allows the learning to be enhanced by all parties involved. No two students think the same. Every student brings something different to the learning table. Having the students work together and rely on each other promotes learner development. Using cooperative learning in conjunction with using art in the classroom ensures that students "are actively involved in the intellectual work

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of organizing material, explaining it, summarizing it, and integrating it into their learning.\textsuperscript{80}

The five essential elements of cooperative learning enhance learner development. Positive interdependence is when the students have to rely on and work together. They are connected to each other through their learning. Individual accountability is when the student is responsible for his or her work as well as the work of the group. Group processing is reflecting on how the group worked together and the breakdown of what was learned. Social skills are the skills needed to communicate with, trust in, and make decisions with group members. And face to face interaction is when students help each other to learn, give positive feedback, and encourage each other to learn.\textsuperscript{81} All five of these elements are needed for cooperative learning to be successful. All five of these elements are included in \textit{Art in the Classroom} to enhance learner development. Students will rely on each other during the observation and analysis phase of studying the art or artifact. Students will individually fill out their worksheets and take notes to promote their own independent learning. Students will discuss as a group, and reflect on the experience. Students will use good communication when discussing the art or artifact.


artifact, and students will work together as a team. Students will also help each other to learn, giving positive reinforcement to each other.

In order for any of these skills to enhance learner development, the teacher needs to take on a crucial role as facilitator. Many of these skills revolve around student centered learning, especially when these skills are incorporated into the Art in the Classroom activities. The student is at the controls of the learning, but the teacher acts as guide through the learning process. If the students were to be left on their own, the learning would not be enhanced. The teacher, allowing for the students to develop these skills, guides the students through the tasks to reach the end goals. “The myth,” claim researchers Jere Brophy and Thomas Good, “that teachers do not make a difference in student learning has been refuted.”

Teachers do leave an impact on student learning. Teachers teach the skills students need in order to learn. Teachers need to teach how observation, inquiry based learning, note taking, and cooperative learning work in the classroom. Student learning will be enhanced with the use of these skills, however, teachers need to teach these skills and coach the students through the learning process for any affect to take hold.

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Using art and artifacts in the classroom is a way to enhance learner development. Art makes the learning come alive; it makes the learning more meaningful to students. Art also can improve learner development when implemented with skills such as observation, inquiry, note taking, and cooperative learning. Teaching students these skills will enhance their learning. Teaching students to use these skills and apply them both in the classroom and in the real world will enhance their learning. Art is more than a decoration on a wall; it is more than a show piece. Art is a story teller of history; art is something to learn from. Using art in the classroom, in combination with these skills and more, will enhance student learning and development.
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- Definitions.Net
- Education. "Discipline Based Art Education." DBAE. aco.artsnet.org/Portals/10/documents/Educational_Theories_2004/1-4_Discipline-Based_Art_Education.pdf (accessed March 2, 2011)


