YALE NATIONAL INITIATIVE
to strengthen teaching in public schools®

Curriculum Units by Fellows of the National Initiative
2006 Volume IV: Native America: Understanding the Past through Things

Native American Art Traditions in the Middle School Arts Curriculum

Curriculum Unit 06.04.03, published September 2006
by Kennan Girdner

Introduction

Students have forever been concerned with the issue of relevance of schoolwork in their everyday lives. I, too, grapple with this increasingly difficult task of successfully engaging students in the classroom. My students are confronted by a changing world, which demands from them the ability to rapidly process and evaluate increasing amounts of information. As our world grows and changes, students too must grow and broaden their cultural perspectives. One approach in dealing with these issues is to present students with a multicultural curriculum that generates positive change towards cultural awareness. This curriculum unit addresses the issue of cultural sensitivity. By exposing students to the rich Pueblo and Navajo folk art traditions, I hope to increase student awareness and appreciation of the artwork from these two very unique cultures. The students will be given a view of very old customs and traditions. Additionally, they will get a look at what is taking place with modern work created by native artists. Pueblo pottery and Navajo weaving will be the primary focus of the study unit. Art forms such as basket making and sand painting will also be included. The unit will be designed to align with the New Mexico Content Standards and Benchmarks of Visual Arts 5-8.

As a middle school teacher in Santa Fe, New Mexico, I am constantly addressing the issue of cultural awareness in curriculum for my 7th and 8th grade classes. My school population consists of 82% Hispanic, 13% Anglo, 2%African American, 1% Native American. About 90%" of our students qualify for the free and reduced lunch program; many live in impoverished situations. In the past, I have successfully developed and implemented guest artisan visits to present Spanish folk arts, both traditional colonial and modern. I did this to show students the relevance of schoolwork to their everyday lives. It was not uncommon to find that students themselves had already participated in making folk crafts at home. Many times they would relate to me that they were familiar with folk artisans. These people were often family members, parents, grandparents, uncles, and aunts. This kind of curriculum promotes a greater sense of consciousness towards one's own culture and hopefully for other cultures. Designing a folk arts course that includes these ideas can be of great value in today's classroom.

Overview

Before I go on much further, I need to discuss briefly the concept of folk art and folk traditions. One can certainly discuss the difference between folk crafts and fine art at great length. Some consider certain fine art to belong to a class of art that is some how separate or elite. Fine art is often thought of as being taught in formal institutions, passed on in the network of "high culture." It is practiced by professionals in the field. Elite, or fine, art is often considered to be fixed in form, concerned with individual authorship or creativity. If this is the definition of fine art, then universities and academies have carried on the tradition of fine art instruction for centuries. Some might go so far as to place a greater value upon the merits and monetary value of fine art than folk art.

In contrast to fine art, we might then talk about what some people think about folk arts and crafts. I think generally that folk traditions are thought of as having a distinctly local character through the influences of history, geography, and the talents of individuals from a much narrower group of people. The folk group or culture is unique to a specific geographic area. The art found in these regions has often changed very little over time, or at best very slowly. The art forms tend to represent or satisfy broad portions of the population's aesthetic needs and often portrays daily life (Nunsz,1994). The people who create these works are not necessarily concerned with trends in popular or fine arts. Often the subject matter deals with the mundane, and is usually informal in its representation. Folk art is not confined to rural areas. It can be found in urban settings, and it can be carried out with the use of modern materials. It can even take on a modern look. When we think of folk art we often tend to think of the craft or art as having been passed down through time, from one generation to another. It is thought of as knowledge or skill that is passed within one's own familial or tribal group.

Each year in August, at the peak of the tourist season, an amazing two-day crafts festival takes place in the old downtown plaza in Santa Fe. Early on a Saturday morning, just before dawn, hundreds of native artisans begin to fill up hundreds of covered vendors stalls. In the cool morning air they begin to put on display a variety of arts and crafts they hope to sell, and often sell out by noon the first morning. Seemingly endless variations of traditional hand-coiled pots appear, painted with traditional plant-based paints. Silver jewelry appears, turquoise abounds. Cottonwood drums covered in rawhide, blankets with a dazzling array of patterns and design work are hung up and shown off in the morning sun. Flutes made of cedar wood, gourd rattles, kachina figures with intricate human features and fancy feathers, baskets of all sizes appear. As one continues into the heart of the market place you begin to see other works: huge sculptures carved out of stone, wonderful figures seem to spring forth from great pieces of marble and granite.

Over six hundred native artisans begin to fill the plaza as the darkness recedes. With the coming of the morning sun a steady stream of tourists, curiosity seekers, buyers, and collectors flow through a sea of white topped stalls. The annual Indian Market has begun, just as it has for over eighty years.

Folk art or fine art? How do we classify the work on display in the market? It actually seems to be a lot more difficult to tell the difference anymore. The lines have become extremely blurred, although various shades of gray exist. Many of the pieces shown can trace their style and design elements back over two thousand years. The Indian Market gives us a very good representation of the evolution of several ancient craft traditions. Many of the works purchased at the Indian Market have ended up in museums across the nation and around the world. Many pieces sell for thousands of dollars, and indeed thousands of dollars will be exchanged before the weekend is over. Santa Fe, a city of about seventy thousand people, will increase in size by an estimated

one hundred thousand people. Over sixty thousand dollars of prize money is given out to artisans in selected "best of show" categories. Many of the artists in the show have been educated at universities and art institutes around the country. Many have studied overseas and are very well traveled. Others have not traveled so broadly, but have a rich cultural heritage that has been passed down through the generations. They have learned their craft from parents and grandparents. What they have in common is the fact that they are carrying on traditions that have their roots in an ancient culture that some call Anasazi. The term Anasazi is a term that comes from the Navajo language. It translates roughly into "enemy ancestors." Some people prefer to call it Ancient Pueblo Culture. We will revisit the question about fine art or folk art as we begin to clarify and refine our study of Pueblo and Navajo crafts.

During the first four weeks of this unit it will be important to give the middle school students a general overview of the ancient Pueblo and Navajo culture. We will take a look at the origins of the modern tribes throughout the southwest. This can be done in a couple of ways. We will look at the past through the scientific process as well as a less traditional view, through the oral tradition. Storytelling can be a useful tool to use while explaining the past. Students are very familiar with the art of telling stories. Much of their social interaction with others involves the telling of stories. Emphasis will be placed on the fact that both Navajo and Pueblo cultures use storytelling extensively to explain the past and the present world in which we live. What kind of stories does each of us have within our own families? How did they start? Do the stories change over time? Are they true?

So who are these native peoples, the Navajo and the Pueblo? Where did they come from? Where do they live today? These are important questions to answer as we begin to study the crafts created by these folks.

Historical Background

Ancient ancestors of the Pueblo people roamed around Chaco Canyon about ten thousand years ago. These people are known as the Paleo-Indians. They were hunters of big game, stalkers of bison, mammoth, antelope, and elk. People trying to live in those days must have had an incredibly difficult time. When there was nothing left to eat in camp they would have to look for food on the hoof. If a herd of mammoths was spotted, Paleo-Indians would have to gather a small group of able-bodied people together. It is generally assumed that they typically lived in small groups or bands of less than seventy or eighty people. Finding a herd was difficult enough, but then they had to figure out a plan of attack. The animals they killed were brought down using spears tipped with stone points made of chert or obsidian. When obsidian is broken or cracked, the resulting fragments are sharp as razor blades. These stone points were roughed out by holding a core stone in the palm of the hand, using another stone as a hammer to break off smaller pieces. A piece of hide would protect the palm of the hand during the shaping process. Once a piece was roughly the size needed, an antler tip would have been used to apply pressure to the edges of stone shape. Little flakes of stone could be carefully broken off the main stone until the final sharp notched shape was achieved (Cheek, 1994). These points were anywhere from a half-inch in length to several inches, depending upon their intended use. Spear points could be six inches, sometimes longer. They made excellent knives, scrapers, arrowheads, and spear points using this chipping method. The tips were bound tightly to their wooden handles with animal sinew. Held in the hands of an experienced hunter, they made excellent killing tools.

Armed with these stone tipped spears the hunters would track their game and wait for the most opportune

moment to move in for the kill. Picture yourself for a moment, if you will, standing in elephant's pen at the zoo. You are holding a long wooden pole not much longer than the custodian's mop handle. You are not alone; two of your clan members are with you. Elephants probably run about as fast as a wooly mammoth. What's going to happen when you run up to the elephant and stick it in the side? It's quite possible that it is going to become more than a little incensed. It might even decide to chase you around a little bit. Hopefully your hunting pals don't chicken out and run away when the action starts. The hunting done in ancient times probably was not done for sport. Chances for injury to the hunting party were great. Paleo-Indians tried at every turn to find ways to kill prey without injury to the hunters. Why not run the animal into a muddy bog or creek, slow it down a bit? Perhaps a herd could be run over a cliff. These alternatives were often sought. Archeological evidence shows us that this is exactly what happened. At some sites there have been multiple stone points found, meaning that a number of animals were killed in the same place, probably by a number of people. One has to wonder if this was good for the hunters in the long run. Did they help bring an end to good hunting in an area? Killing a lot of animals at one time means that the herd will not produce more of its kind any more. Eventually, large mammoth herds became extinct, possibly hunted to extinction. As big game hunting activities decreased, there would naturally have been a very real need to find other food sources. There are some who believe that perhaps this need for alternative food was the reason agricultural methods were developed, perhaps there was no other choice. Gradually foods that formed the basis of the native diet were corn, beans, and squash.

Before we look at reasons for the beginnings of farming in the southwest it might be good to review what we know about archeology. So, what is archeology? Simply put, archeology is the study of past human cultures. It involves the study of material evidence, artifacts and sites. Artifacts would be any objects made or used by people. An archeological site is a place where humans lived and where there are material remains left. The archeologists are the people who study human cultures by analyzing or studying material evidence. But wait, now we need to have a good definition for what culture is. How about this one? The way individuals in a group of people live, what they think, what they believe, the way they do things in their day-to-day lives. Now we need to consider this: why is it necessary to study the past?

This isn't always easy to answer. People have different reasons to study the past. Sometimes we study the past so that we can remember who we are, who our family members were and what they did. Many of us want to know about our grandparents. Some of us want to know about our great grandparents. Often by taking a look towards the past we can begin to get a better picture of where it is we are going. We can also begin to see why things are done the way are, and why some things don't change very quickly.

Many of us visit special places over and over again. Maybe we have a special park we like to go to, certain places we go to have fun, ride our bikes, hang out. We develop a casual familiarity with places we like to go back to again and again. Other times we visit certain places repeatedly for different reasons, reasons that are often somewhat private. These could be important reasons to ourselves and to our families. Churches are like this for many people. They are important for deep-rooted, spiritual reasons. By placing importance on physical places we begin to realize that it is often necessary to preserve these places. Many of us would be quite angry, and insulted if a large company came into Santa Fe to tear down the cathedral, replacing it with a large hotel. The cathedral stands for something very important to a lot of people, not just the people who worship there on Sundays. It means a great deal to anyone who cares about preserving the past.

The two native cultures we are studying place a great deal of importance in preserving the past. They are cultures that use storytelling as a way of keeping in touch with their ancestors. Keeping traditions alive is of primary concern to a large number of Native Americans today. By studying their culture we too will become

more aware of what places are important to them and why those places are worth saving. Even the camps of the nomadic hunter-gatherers are of historic value. Many of these are destroyed or at least overlooked by modern day people.

The ancient Pueblo native hunters were also gathering plants and seeds as they wandered from camp to camp. Once the larger game animals died, though, these people began to settle down. As they eventually settled into areas along the Rio Grande, they were able sustain themselves with planted crops. Squash, beans, and corn became the main food sources for these people. Once agricultural methods were developed into farming, people had a need to store the foods they grew. Baskets began to appear about eighteen hundred years ago. Yucca-fiber baskets have been found that were tightly woven and could hold water (Cheek1994:94). Having established maize agriculture, people could stay in one place for several generations. Establishing a steadier food source meant that it was not necessary to move as often.

The woven basket would have been a great step towards grain and food storage. An even greater advance would have been the discovery of pottery. It makes sense that a clay pot would be much better to cook food in than a basket. Prior to pot making the only way to heat water would have been to add hot rocks to the filled basket. The question of how pottery was discovered is an interesting one. There is evidence that early people lined baskets with clay. Once the baskets were placed in the fire the woven material would eventually burn away. The result would have been fire-hardened clay in the shape of the basket. It is also possible that people may have discovered that clay can be fire hardened in fire accidentally. It is possible then that pottery was not necessarily discovered after basketry. In any case, the discovery of clay as a vessel making material was an important one.

The early pots were very utilitarian, not at all fancy. It wasn't until about thirteen hundred years ago that we begin to see the use of simple designs used as decoration on the outside of pots. Somewhere around eight hundred years ago the pots that were being designed had very intricate, with a variety of styles. All the work was hand built, the coil method. The inside and outside of the pots were scraped smooth using gourd pieces or an old pot sherd. On some cooking pots you might find corrugations, little indentations. These pots have a very textured look to them. Looking at ancient designs today you can see all types of patterns, geometric shapes, checkerboards, zigzags, symmetrical patterns, organic shapes, and dots. These techniques and styles have been modified over the years, but the basic concepts are used even today in traditionally built pottery.

As ancient people developed their farming lifestyle and the making of pottery, and woven goods, both crafts reached a very advanced state. Clay color varied from area to area, as did color of the fired product. The ceramic process involved the use of clay as a paint or slip to decorate, and the dried pots were fired under organic material found locally. Some say that perhaps the intricate color use and patterning on the pottery, which now had taken on numerous shapes, was of great importance, the symbols having lots of meanings that may be lost to the modern viewer. The woven goods became quite varied and of a fine quality. In addition to baskets, bags, sandals and pieces of clothing were created. A variety of fibers, including cotton, dog hair, human hair, and plant fibers such as the yucca, were utilized. Rabbit fur and feathers were also woven into textiles. At this point in time large numbers of people were living in the Rio Grande pueblos, from Isleta in the south to Taos in the north. Out west the Zuni and the Hopi were trading now with people hundreds of miles to the south, east, and west. All in all, life in the upper Rio Grande valley in 1492 was relatively uneventful and satisfying, with rich trade and beautiful and complex ceremonials to break up the drudgery of the agricultural round (Riley,1994:119). In less than fifty years life would be changed radically for all the natives of the continents, for in 1540 the Spanish expeditionary force reached the area around what is now called Albuquerque. With the Spanish came disease, war, and ultimately slavery for many of the natives. Over the

next hundred years the native inhabitants found them selves in the midst of all out war, their traditions and beliefs were attacked, their homes destroyed. The population dropped dramatically. The fabric of their culture was unraveling.

Eventually the Pueblo Revolt took place in 1680. In this native uprising, the Pueblo peoples drove the Spanish out, first from Santa Fe, and soon from the entire region. A large number of Spanish priests were killed at their mission churches, the missions themselves having been built primarily with the use of Indian slaves. Freedom from the Spanish was not long lasting. In 1692 a Spanish force marched into New Mexico again. Diego de Vargas and his small sued for peace, establishing a peace that has lasted into present day. Natives continued to be subjugated, but the strangle hold eased up somewhat. Little importance was placed on the continuance of native crafts at this time. With such a dramatic upheaval in the lives of the people many of the local methods and techniques were lost. In some areas, many native crafts simply disappeared. It has taken many generations to revive lost crafts traditions. Relocation, death by disease and warfare all contributed to the change in crafts production.

It is interesting to note that the Spanish entrada, the peaceful reentry into Santa Fe, is celebrated even today. Each fall, after the school year starts, the Fiestas de Santa Fe take place. Preparations go on all year, but the culminating event takes place in a week of visits by "Don Diego de Vargas and his royal court" to every school in the district. The court consists of Don Diego, half a dozen princesas, and a whole host of lesser noblemen, soldiers, and even the clergy. Mariachi bands play, parties abound, hotels fill to capacity. Music, and "viva la fiesta" rings through the streets of the down town area. State workers are given flex time to attend fiesta functions, schools adjust schedules to receive the court. Amongst the princesas one can see a young Native American woman in native costume. The fact that Spanish culture has stamped its mark on the culture locally is undeniable. There is also a continual controversy of the ethics of such pageantry in the public schools themselves. Native participation in the fiesta seems to be minimal. The party, no doubt, will go on.

Eventually the native people were left somewhat to their own devices. Populations in the Pueblos areas and in the Navajo country stabilized slightly. The two hundred years after the Pueblo revolt brought a steady pressure on the native religions to except the trappings of Catholicism, and to some extent we see this even today. There are presently mission churches on almost all of the modern day Pueblos. Then, in 1848, after two years of war, Mexico ceded a vast portion of its territory to the United States. The Dineh, the name the Navajo tribe calls itself, later saw a huge change in its structure as large numbers of its people were relocated by the post-Civil War United States Army. The effect of moving a fairly nomadic tribe onto reservations with few resources was dramatic. It was during this time that silver jewelry work was taken up by Navajo craftsmen. After further relocation the tribal tradition of weaving finely crafted rugs became established. Eventually the tribe would become well known for grazing large herds of sheep.

An interesting thing happened in the late 1800's. The southwest was growing steadily, more and more European settlers, trappers, soldiers, and missionaries were streaming into the area. The two really big changes that would affect Indian culture was the establishment of the Santa Fe trail and the arrival of the railroad. Now the dominant Spanish colonial society was itself being changed into more of a melting pot as settlers from the east, and ultimately the west came pouring into the southwest. As settlements along the growing railroad system grew so did tourism. The effect of the tourist trade on the revival of native arts and crafts is very significant. As the country literally rolled into the twentieth century, so did the tourists. Destinations like the Grand Canyon, Navajo country, Hopi and Sky City, Taos Pueblo, all had great appeal for a growing nation of people with more leisure time and some money to spend. With the advent of the automobile expeditions into Indian land went further afield. Indian country tours were advertised widely. The southwest's

uniqueness begins to be translated into economic terms. Tourism brings income, money. The local tribes are not the only people who benefit from this industry. Many areas of the southwest depend upon the annual visitation of people from around the world.

Early in the railroad days of the southwest travelers on the trains could find a variety of goods for sale by native vendors, pots, kachina figurines, baskets. The items were brought to the railroad stations and depots by the crafts people. As transportation and roads improved, visitors traveled to the source. A variety of items could be found at the home. Crafts people could be seen as they created the items for sale. This is a phenomenon, or tradition that carries on today, the artisan working in the home studio. A network of trading posts was also well established by the end of the twentieth century, and to a lesser extent is still in existence. Trading fairs and annual Indian markets, like the one mentioned earlier, have increased the marketability of the crafts and all things native. Under the portal at the Palace of the Governors on can find an orderly row of native vendors selling their wares. Working with city officials the vendors have organized an official body that represents its people. Vendors must go through the proper channels to obtain permission to set up each morning. A range of talent and quality exists under the portal, but one thing remains constant, an adherence to traditional art forms and styles. Through an incredible journey of hardship, decimation by disease, droughts, famine, economic depression, family dislocation, and all the other social ills common to life in America today, we still find native people creating art work that has its roots firmly grounded in the past.

Can a traditional art form change? If a style of art such as we find in the pottery and weaving of the southwest begins to be influenced by the people who buy the art, is it still traditional? If a tourist asks an artisan to use a very modern or recognizable logo (such as a Nike swoosh) to traditional a pot or blanket, and if the artisan complies and makes the piece, is it still traditional art? Modern day artisans do indeed have these questions asked of them. They are asked to do commissioned work, they are asked to create a piece of work in a specific form, color, or design. Over the last one hundred years collectors, museum curators, tourists, gallery and store owners have been interested in obtaining native crafts. Some have requested specific items.

Who are the modern day native people? The Pueblo people of today are divided into nineteen separate tribes. They are known today by their traditional names and the names given to them by the Spanish after the 1500's. There has recently been a shift to more traditional names. They are commonly known as the Hopi, Zuni, Acoma, Cochiti, Laguna, San Felipe, Santo Domingo, Zia, Taos, Picuris, Sandia, Isleta, San Juan, Santa Ana, Santa Clara, Nambe, San Ildefonso, Pojoaque, Tesuque, and Jemez. Many of today's native people live on tribal lands. They have found work in the modern world outside the Pueblos in a multitude of jobs. Their tribal governments strive to improve life in and around the traditional Pueblo, a variety of agencies provide services on the reservations. The reservations themselves vary greatly in size and population. Some allow visitation by outsiders, charging for entry onto the property. Some are very strict about access to the Pueblo and only allow visitors on feast days and dances. Others limit out side access during special religious observances and dances. People planning to visit the tribal functions call ahead these days and talk to the tribal governor's office, or they contact the tribal visitor center as many of these exist today.

The Navajo Nation has the largest tribal reservation in the country. Many on the reservation adhere to their culture, often living at a subsistence level of existence. Some have moved off the reservation and have blended into the greater population of the United States. They too have made an effort to maintain tribal traditions. They have a well established governing body, a school system, and tribal police force.

Objectives

Ultimately this curriculum unit hopes to help broaden student cultural perspectives about Native American folk traditions. Through the study of several folk crafts, students will be able to recognize and appreciate a variety of craft traditions that are being carried on in the Native American community. They will become familiar with Pueblo pottery styles and characteristics as well as Navajo weaving techniques. Knowledge of the traditional value placed on archeological sites and artifacts will be gained while participating in this unit. Additionally in the course of their studies students will be able to complete the following crafts projects:

Prehistoric Native cordage making. Create a length of cordage using techniques used by

prehistoric peoples of the southwest.

Pueblo style pottery. Shape a ceramic pot using the coil and scrape method. Decorate using traditional techniques. Experience techniques used by the Pueblo people for generations.

Mini blanket weaving. Weave a small blanket during the study of Navajo weaving, using traditional Navajo weaving as inspiration.

Journal writing. Produce writings based on Native folk tales presented during guided imagery sessions. Understand the value of the oral tradition in Native cultures.

Sand symbols. Create personal symbolism in the form of sand pictures during the study of Navajo sandpainting. Evaluate the importance of sandpainting in Navajo culture.

Rock art symbols. Use materials to create personal symbolism to be placed on individual and group displays. Understand the concept and importance of preservation from multiple perspectives, archeological and Native American.

Strategies

As the students listen to the story of Spider Woman's gift of weaving or the Hopi emergence tale there will be many opportunities to introduce guided imagery. As students actively listen to the story they can begin to form their own images of what takes place in the story. Students can learn to use their own perspective while interpreting the story. A drawing or painting can be made once the image has been formed in the mind. During a recent visit to Santa Fe's Museum of Indian Arts and Culture it was interesting to note that the curator of a new exhibit featuring Spider Woman did not include a picture of the featured character. Not many are available. While telling Spider Woman's story is important to many Navajo, the specific imagery seems to be left to the imagination of the individuals hearing the tale.

The weaving will be completed back at the school setting over the course of the next few days Looking at artifacts will also be important to the presentation of the past. Students will be introduced to the variety of ancient pottery and textiles throughout the southwestern region. With the aid of numerous editions on Pueblo

pottery and Navajo weaving, along with a Power Point presentation, it will be possible to show the students numerous pieces from the past. A visit to the Museum of Indian Arts and Culture will take place in the first half of the program. MIAC is located next door to the Laboratory of Anthropology. Both facilities will be visited during a day of field study.

The discussion and interpretation of rock art will also be an important part of the unit of study. There are numerous exercises that will engage students in a dialogue about symbolism in their own lives and those of the ancient people throughout the region. Creating individual symbols as well a group mural will be part of the discussion. Learning about petroglyphs and pictographs will also begin a conversation on preservation of ancient artifacts and sites. The ancient sites are important to both native cultures and the scientific community. The perspectives of each group may be different but both must continue to work together to find ways to help stop the vandalism of sites and the disappearance of artifacts. It is important to show the growing number of incidents throughout the southwest that endanger or completely destroy sites. Illegal pot hunting and road construction threaten sites continually. Raising student awareness is a start towards curtailing these disastrous events.

A visit to the Laboratory of Anthropology will give the students a valuable hands-on experience in the basement of the state-run facility. It is here that they will begin to appreciate the abundance of styles and imagery found on both pot sherds and remnants of textiles. Tools, clothing, cooking utensils, bones, will all serve to get their imaginations going. Who used these items? How did they make them? Did they trade them for other items? How did they make their glazes? What materials did they use to make their textiles?

It is at this point that students will be introduced to the Library of the Laboratory of Anthropology. Here they will find a variety of books from the library's vast collection that relate directly to pottery, weaving, rock art, and native culture. A pre-selected group of books will be made available for students to use as they begin to pay particular attention to the designs found in older native work. They will be making comparisons to modern works when they visit the Museum of Indian Arts and Culture. They can also begin to formulate ideas for their own imagery that will be used as they create their individual textile piece and ceramic bowl. These works will be continued into the second four-week session of the study unit.

As the visit to the Museum of Indian Arts and Culture begins, students will be taken on a docent-led tour of the museum's permanent collection. Here they will view entire bowls, not just fragmented pieces. The exhibit represents a variety of regional ware, ancient to present day. Also on display will be work of many modern day artisans. One of the focal points of the tour will deal specifically with Spider Woman and how she gave the Dineh the gift of weaving. Dozens of rugs from the Navajo tribal region will be on display. Students will listen to one of the museum's native speakers tell Spider Woman's story. Upon completion of the tour, classes will be taken to an area where they can begin working on a small weaving. This weaving will be taken back to the classroom and completed over the course of the next two days.

In addition to weaving, students will be shown the techniques involved with the creation of Pueblo style pottery. This in-class workshop will begin with a demonstration by a local potter from one of the Rio Grande pueblos. With her guidance, students will hand build a pot which will eventually be slipped and painted in a traditional manner. Creating designs for the decoration of the pot will be left up to the individual. No predetermined outcome is expected. Technique will be stressed, not the importance of making imitation Indian pottery. During this workshop students will be asked to consider the viewpoint of the visiting artisan. How do artisans view their art? Who is it made for? Does the artist take into consideration the tourist when making pottery? Are there certain images that she can or cannot use?

The culminating event in this eight-week program will be a visit to Bandelier National Monument. Prior to visiting the ancient site students will be visited in class by a National Park educator. Students will be asked once again to consider what this monument means to others. Is the site merely a recreational spot, a place to see where real Indians live? Is it an archaeological site, a ruin where scientists can gather data? How should it be treated? Should it be given the kind of reverence one might expect when visiting the Sistine Chapel or perhaps one's own church?

It is all about establishing in the minds of the students the fact that various different perspectives exist. This program hopes to foster the student's own informed perspective and appreciation of native cultures. Helping students to understand their own traditions ultimately leads them to understanding the wide variety of cultures that surround them. It is possible to help students realize the importance of the archeological sites around the state. They need to understand the problems entailed with the preservation of these culturally significant areas. The fact that they are disappearing rapidly makes the issue much more pressing. Once destroyed, these places cannot be replaced. Vandalism is a constant threat to sites all over the country. Wholesale theft of petroglyphs takes place much too often. Power tools are employed to remove slabs of stone from cliff faces at sites that are so remote that it often takes some time before the theft is noticed or reported. Ancient symbols have been used for target practice. How many times have we seen modern names scratched or painted onto very old surfaces? How do ancient markings differ from today's graffiti? Is there a difference? Are there places that we would hate to see painted over, destroyed? How do we come up with ways to protect these places? There are numerous governmental agencies whose job it is to protect the areas in danger. The United States Forest Service, Bureau of Land Management, Tribal Police, National Park Service, Fish and Wildlife Service, and Bureau of Indian Affairs are some of the groups of people involved with preservation. The problem is that all of these agencies deal with a shortage of personnel. There are virtually thousands of archeological and historically important sites around the southwest that are extremely isolated. They are spread out over hundreds of square miles. There are simply not enough people to adequately protect all of them. Some sites are so remote that they are only sporadically visited. Other sites, like many of the places around Santa Fe, are constantly visited by hundreds of people. As students living in an area within a short walking distance of ancient dwellings, students should become keenly aware of these issues. Educating the public about the importance of these places and raising everyone's awareness is the greatest tool that any of the agencies can utilize. Getting the public concerned about threats to cultural heritage is very important, and students can become a part of the campaign that promotes preservation. Creating a PowerPoint presentation aimed at stopping vandalism and promoting preservation is a wonderful way for students to become involved. In addition to classroom presentations, students can work on bulletin boards and display case presentations.

All these difficult questions and problems should be addressed in a study of cultural heritage. Educating students to their role in preservation techniques and practices is very important. Most of the students in my classes come into contact with artifacts and ancient sites. They need to understand that it is important to everyone that they help preserve our pictures to the past for this generation and generations to come.

Classroom activities

I.Prehistoric Native cordage making.

Students will learn how to use prehistoric technology. They will create a length of cordage (string) with plant fiber and use the piece to create a necklace or bracelet. The act of creating the hand-made piece will help students to experience the kinds of methods ancient people developed to survive in the southwest. Fibers from local plants were used to create cordage for everyday usage. Bundles could be tied with cordage, objects and food could be hung up, looms could be constructed. Cordage could also be used for bows, baskets and sandals. There have been rabbit nets made out of human hair. One was over one hundred feet long and two feet tall. Rabbits were driven into the nets and captured by the hunters. The rabbits were used for their meat, hides and bones for clothing and tools. What other things might early people use cordage for? Agave, yucca, milkweed, cedar bark, human hair, rabbit fur, cotton, and sagebrush were all used to create cordage.

Objectives:

Students will learn about a prehistoric craft technique, use different materials to create crafts, and recognize the techniques used in archeology to recreate ancient craft forms. Students will be able to draw parallels between prehistoric cultures and the technology of today.

Procedure:

If local plants or fibers cannot be identified and used, local crafts stores usually carry fibers of various types. Raffia works well for this kind of cordage. Give each student about 18 inches of raffia fiber. Longer pieces can be given if more length is desired for the end product. Thickness will vary; starting with thinner strands is best. Touch the two ends together, thus folding the fiber in half. Tie an overhand knot on the end with the fold, making a loop about 1 inch long.. Hold the knotted fiber in front of you with the thumb and forefinger of the left hand, pinching the knot. Holding the strands out horizontally, form a "v" shape that opens to the right. Working closely to the knot, take the top strand between the thumb and forefinger of the right hand. Apply steady, firm pressure as you twist the fiber, the thumb slides up, the forefinger down. Now carefully pull the twisted fiber tightly over the lower strand, towards yourself in an over and under motion. The tricky part is capturing the twist you just made with your left thumb and forefingers. Now the new top strand is twisted in the same direction with the right fingers. Twist and bring the top strand down over the bottom strand, over and under, keeping the twisting going in the same direction. The tighter the twists, the finer the cordage. Beads or trinkets can be made or purchased to hang on the cordage. Allow 45 minutes for the activity.

Materials:

Raffia

Pictures of prehistoric woven fabric and sandals found on websites and in resource books

Scissors

Beads or medallions, made in class or purchased

New Mexico Educational Standards:

Visual Arts Standard 6: Show increased awareness of diverse peoples and cultures through visual and performing arts. Grade 5-8 students will:

A. Compare and describe artwork of various eras and cultures; and

1. Compare and contrast artworks and artifacts from two dissimilar world cultures.
   Students can look at the culture of Pueblo people in the area, making comparisons with their own lives, contrasting the art of Anglo and Hispanic artists with that of Native peoples

B. Recognize historical and cultural themes, trends, and styles in various works of art.

1. Sort and classify a variety of art objects within an identified historical and cultural context.
2. Create art that reflects a particular period within a specific culture.
   Pueblo pottery and weaving span many years and many generations. Students can look at the changes that have taken place over time. Attention can be given to the types of imagery used in various locations at various times.

Visual Arts Standard 7: Demonstrate knowledge about how technology and invention have historically influenced artists and offered new possibilities for expression.

Grade 5-8 students will:

A. Use, review, and evaluate computers and other electronic media as tools for design and communication of ideas.

1. Identify the appropriate type of technology use to achieve a desired outcome. Demonstrate how all student participation can be enhanced through technology.
2. Incorporate the use of at least one means of technology in creating an original work of art.

Computers can be used in a variety of ways to meet these standards. Power Point presentations can be made by students and presented to the class. Internet sites can be accessed, research carried out, and reports made with the use of computers. Design projects can be carried out in various programs while studying Navajo and Pueblo art. Digital imagery can be used widely: still shots can be used for displays, film can be used for a number of craft demonstrations. Creating a short film on the need for preservation would meet the requirements of this standard.

II. Pueblo Style Pottery

Students will create a ceramic pot in the style of Pueblo potters, what some call America's first art form. Natural clay resources vary greatly and some sites have been used by generations of potters. Some older potters have been known to give up making pottery once the traditional source was used up. The clay gathering process takes a long time. Natural clays have to be gathered, cleaned, dried, ground, re-hydrated, and wedged before they are ready to be used in the creation of a piece.

Objectives:

Students will identify and use the techniques of Pueblo potters and create ceramic pieces of their own. Students will also be able to recognize Pueblo designs in ceramic ware, and understand the value in

preserving ancient pottery sherds.

Procedure:

Prior to working with clay, students will work in sketchbooks. They will begin to search for symbolism that pertains to their own sense of place. What do images in Pueblo culture stand for? Are there images in the culture of the student that have the same kind of importance? Once the image has been found and drawn out the clay work can begin. Students will work with two different clay bodies, one white, another terra cotta. Students will be introduced to the coil and scrape pot-building technique. Using this technique, students will start with a lump of clay just a little bigger than their fist. The moist clay is carefully rolled between both hands and slowly coiled in a circular fashion. The coiling starts in the center of what will eventually become the bottom of the bowl. Coiling continues to spiral upward, forming the curved walls of the bowl. Once the coiling process has been completed, the lines between the coils are gently blended over on one another. Using their hands and fingers dipped in water, the students shape the vessel into its final shape. Care has to be taken at this point to only use enough water to smooth over the pressed coils. Too much water tends to make the clay sticky, and ultimately weaker. If this happens, the work can be suspended and allowed to dry out for a period of time before continuing. If the rough form of the desired shape has been achieved, the young potter can take a scraper and begin to refine the smoothing process. Scrapers can be purchased or made from a recycled plastic container, by cutting a piece in the shape of an oval or a kidney bean. Traditionally, dried gourd pieces were used.

After pieces have dried, fine sandpaper can be used to complete the smoothing process. Slip can be made from terra cotta red clay and used as "paint" for final decoration. Some experimentation with other glazes can take place, but commercial glazes can also work well for more predictable results. Black, red, ocher, and browns will best represent the traditional pallet. A glossier finish can be obtained by burnishing with a highly polished stone. This is the traditional technique; however, it does require a good deal of patience and a fair amount of work to achieve the desired sheen. A more traditional technical may be attempted with chewed and trimmed yucca fronds. Fine commercial brushes can also employed for this task. Design inspiration can be drawn from the numerous pictures viewed during the course of study. Traditionally, the pieces are pit fired using dried dung or wood to about 650 to 950 degrees C. An electric kiln will probably achieve a similar low fire effect. A little experimentation with test pieces might be the best approach when dealing with a variety of clays and glazing techniques.

Materials:

White clay

Pictures of Pueblo pottery on websites and in resource books

Sketchbooks

Red clay slip

Brushes

Glazes

New Mexico Educational Standards:

Visual Arts Standard 1: Learn and develop the essential skills and technical demands unique to dance, music, theatre/drama, and visual arts. Grade 5-8 students will:

A. Explore art materials, techniques, qualities, characteristics, and processes; understand what makes them effective in solving specific art problems and how they are used to enhance life experiences and ideas.

1. Engage in problem-solving activities that apply the principles of art to the elements of art.

Creating projects in a variety of craft styles suggested in this curriculum will engage students in problem solving. They will use a variety of techniques as they explore the materials use to carry out the projects.

B. Explore and understand the use of art materials and techniques by culturally diverse artists locally and globally.

1. Research and discuss the relationship between art and artifact and their historical, geographical, cultural and political contexts.

The discussion of artifacts in the preservation of Navajo and Pueblo cultures will lead students into a discussion of art within the culture. What qualifies as art? Is utilitarian craft work art? A whole host of questions will be presented as students become engaged in the activities presented in this unit.

III. Sand symbols

Students will gain some inspiration for their own sand pictures by studying Navajo sandpainting. Sandpainting is traditionally done in a sacred way, usually in the hogan, a traditional Navajo home. The ceremony involved with the sandpainting is performed to cure people who are sick. Elders are present, as well as a medicine man. This is the person who would carry out the sandpainting on the floor of the hogan. The whole process can take days. Red, black, white, blue, and yellow all have particular symbolism in the traditional use of sandpaintings.

Objectives:

Students will identify and use traditional Navajo techniques to create sand pictures. Students will also become familiar with symbols used in Navajo sandpainting. They will learn to appreciate the role of the sandpainting in Navajo culture.

Procedure:

These student sand pictures will be carried out on foam core board that is 5"x 8." Traditionally the paintings are done on the ground, but we are not trying to replicate the actual form; we are merely gaining inspiration for a project using colored sands. The first step is to work on imagery with the students. One approach is to have them select one of the many animals associated with Navajo country, such as coyote, frog, bear, and snake. There are also many monsters that will have appeal for some students. These might include Dune Monster, Monster Slayer, and Water Monster. Folktales will be a good source for imagery. Having students work with colored pencils to create the image in another medium will give them a good starting point for the final project. Once a design has been decided on, it should be drawn in pencil onto the board. Start by painting a thin solution of watered down white glue over the surface of the board. Allow the board to dry. Colored sand can be purchased at a crafts store and is probably the easiest way to go. Traditional colors can be used, but any colors will do. Individual sections should now be carefully painted onto the board's design. Sand is now poured carefully from a small paper cup, making sure that the entire area receives some sand. Excess sand is

tapped onto a piece of 8"x11". This excess can be poured back into the cup for use in other areas. The trick is to avoid mixing colors in the individual cups as this will lead to a dull effect when the painting is completed. Glue each area and apply sand. Finished products can be coated with a spray fixative. Stress the importance of creating a picture with high contrast.

Materials:

Foam core poster boards 5"x8"

Colored sand, various colors

Sketchbook

White glue

Colored pencils

Small paintbrushes

Spray fixative

Paper cups

New Mexico Educational Standards:

Visual Arts Standard 4: Demonstrate an understanding of the dynamics of the creative process. Grade 5-8 students will:

A. Explore the influence of personal experiences, imagination and the dynamics of culture to works of art.

1. Create art in which design elements and principles in conjunction with subject, themes and content are based on personal experiences to create meanings.

B. Understand how the qualities and characteristics of various art, media, techniques, and processes influence the creative process to communicate experiences and ideas.

1. Discuss specific instances in which culture influences art.
2. Identify and describe the emotional connotations of the use and placement of design principles and elements in a particular piece of art.
3. Describe orally or in written form a personal reaction to at least three pieces of art in different media.
4. Demonstrate how the use of traditional and different media can convey meanings, (softness of pastels and watercolors, texture of collage, sparseness of wire, etc).

Sandpainting lends itself beautifully to the presentation of personal experiences and the use of design elements created by the student. In this project they will be asked to use their own imagery to create a piece that uses material which is specific to the Navajo culture, material from the earth itself: sand. Traditional imagery can be studied, students learn about the significance each figure plays in the greater image of a sandpainting. Short written critiques can be done in class to demonstrate personal reactions to the works created in class.