

The Educational Paths of Art and Craft Experiences

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Some assumptions that accompany the terms art and craft are examined to help educators to create and effect pedagogies of making that best convey appropriate cultural perspectives. The article is divided into three general parts. The first addresses concepts associated with specific making terms; the second provides some directional markers that allow assumptions in theoretical ideas to be revealed, especially with respect to embodied experience; the third proposes suggestions for communities evaluating and designing their own curricula.

When our grandmothers sent their children to school it was with self-sufficiency and mastery over the production of new things in mind. They did not realize that we would never be taught to create iron cooking pots from the ore of the earth. Our third generation is being educated in the European system and our children know less about the production of the stuff of life than did our grandmothers. Schools have shown themselves to be ideological processing plants, turning out young people who cannot produce the means to sustain themselves, but who are full of the ideological nonsense of European culture.... And don't point at the new crew of Native teachers who have been processed in the same fashion as all the other teachers, as an example for me to follow. ... Education is all about maintaining culture.... It is ridiculous that children don't acquire the practical training necessary to participate in the productive life of society. (Maracle, 1996, pp. 88, 91)

This article explores the world views associated with the terms and experiences of making and examines some of the ways that making involves and conveys cultural practices, especially in First Nations communities. Most First Nations' cultures do not have traditional words to stand for or to distinguish between the English terms *art* and *craft*. Yet these English terms carry varying assumptions about the natural world and humans' role in it that may differ from the views of First Nations people. In order to best convey the desired cultural perspectives, we should pay careful attention to how the terms are used in educational curriculum.

My interest in this topic developed when I began to recall that despite showing talent for and enjoyment in making things as a child, I was encouraged to perceive these activities only as a hobby, not a profession. As a graduate student I started to explore the cultural assumptions about the environment embedded in various curricula that involved making things and began to reflect on more than 10 years of teaching and directing camps on First Nations land in northwestern Ontario. When asked to recall my most meaningful educational experiences, I found myself remembering activities of craftmaking and of witnessing Native elders educate children by weaving cultural practices and lore into the task of

creating an item. The philosophical ideas about culture raised in lecture halls seemed dull compared with first-hand experiences exploring the same issues. Learning to tan a hide informed me about animal rights, and making offerings to a birch tree before peeling its bark introduced me to diverse spiritual practices. My doctoral dissertation is entitled *Craft-making: A Pedagogy for Environmental Awareness*. As part of my research I immersed myself in theories and experiences associated with the act of creating something tangible—what I refer to as *making*—and specifically with art, craft, and technology education.

Concepts of Making

An intricate, porcupine-quilled leather pouch, whether displayed in a museum or personal collection, can be referred to using many English terms: *artifact*, *art*, *craft*, *item*, *handicraft*, *technology*, *ware*, *object*, *thing*, *creation*, *product*, *curio*, and *commodity*. Each term holds its own positive or negative connotation based on history, personal experience, and popular use. For example, some people may consider their work devalued if it is referred to as a craft instead of art; in addition, the expression “primitive technology” may also seem belittling of the skill involved in designing and using ingenious yet fundamental items such as a bow drill to create fire. My goal is not to define each term individually, but instead to outline some of the historical shifts and relevant ideas that distinguish the terms today. These terms may become associated with specific criteria by various groups, but generally the West has one dominant understanding. Without an awareness of how to step away from a dominant perspective of making, it becomes easy to follow well-worn paths of practices that take us to the same ideological destination as earlier travelers. The opening passage by Maracle (1996) speaks directly to this ideology; evidence of the ideology resides in the types of items made by Natives historically and currently available in stores.

Fifty years ago a person entering a Native arts and crafts store would probably have found an assortment of carved wooden masks, birch bark and woven ash baskets, mittens, moccasins, and mukluks handmade of home-tanned leather. In the same store today most items for sale would be T-shirts with “Native” images on them, a few machine-sewn moccasins, and a plenitude of prints and paintings from a variety of well-known and not-so-well-known, yet local Native artists. Image-oriented (conceptually based) and machine-produced items have replaced aesthetically pleasing, functional, handmade items. Such changes can be explained by the tourist market’s demand for inexpensive items (Lyford, 1982) and the subtle notion that art is worthier than craft (Dormer, 1997). More important, these changes reflect an alteration in the experience undertaken by those involved in making items. The feel of a paintbrush and smell of synthetic paint have replaced the experience of traveling into the bush to harvest material, thereby handling and connecting with unaltered substances

from the land. Such land-full experiences shaped and informed the cultures of the past.

Educators should be concerned with how the experiences of purchasing art materials and the emphasis on making conceptual images for display purposes affect a culture. The understanding of the world that arises from activities dependent on developing skill with an awl or knife will not be the same understanding of the world that arises from using a pen, paintbrush, or computer mouse. It may not even be a desired understanding of the world. The “ideological nonsense” that Maracle (1996) refers to in the opening passage, I suggest, is closely associated with the fine arts educational curricula, including the rendering of conceptual images on paper. Maracle’s “stuff of life” I recognize as the practical skill associated with craftwork that results in functional, three-dimensional items made of local material. I encourage the critical examination of school activities so that they better address an array of experiences that are validated by a variety of types of intelligences. A well-rounded curriculum will only result when the intellectual value arising from practical skill development is acknowledged as being as worthy of that arising from the creation of abstract conceptual pieces.

The Emphasis in Art and Craft

Although many define art in its broadest sense as a way to live in the world, the term is most readily associated with two-dimensional images, usually painted, that convey concepts. This perception of art is ubiquitous in the Western world and can increasingly be found in Native cultures. Similarly, craft is associated with items of utility made of materials historically perceived as inferior (skin not canvas, wood not marble, clay not gold). Craftmaking also relies on bodily skill in its articulation. The modern Western notion of craft results from a history that perceives craft as less worthy than art because craftwork is bound to the earth and body through its useful aspect. Art is considered free from utility, so better capable of representing the ingenuity of the human intellect. The distinction between art and craft arose from a society that liked to assign value. The establishment of a class system encouraged the ideas of control, whether it was of humans, animals or “resources” from the land.

Acknowledging the differences associated today with the terms *art* and *craft* is to accept the meaning and economic system of the class structure from which they arose. For a few designated individuals to work full time as artists, wealthy patrons must exist and support them. This allows a few “dictators of taste” to affect society by controlling what and how things are produced and what ideas are supported through exposure. Without wealthy patrons willing to support their work financially, specific artists must support themselves through other kinds of labor. A class system encourages a few individuals to control the work of others. Cultures in contact stay autonomous when their people retain the skill and ability to

make the items they need. I recall hearing a CBC radio interview in which a graduate art student from Toronto described her shock at discovering that an Inuit woman carved only soapstone because its sale allowed her to pay for food. The student seemed unaware of how dependent today's art world is on a money economy. Working as an artist making purely conceptual pieces (soapstone sculptures) played little role in traditional cultures. Supporting oneself as an artist is a foreign idea introduced to many Indigenous cultures when their traditional economies changed.

Dickason (1972) makes a connection between economies and art when she says that on the West Coast, where the wealth of the sea provided more time for leisure, more individuals were able to devote greater time to making complex carvings. Historically, new designs and ideas flourished because they allowed people to work better with the land, not because they involved a novel concept that might sell well in the Western art market. The influences of the art market, money economy, and class system should be examined not only for their effect on what is made in a culture, but also for how they are linked to the education of the children. The long history of First Nation people perceiving themselves as capable of making the beautiful, practical items of their everyday life should be retained in educational curricula and not lost with the introduction of art education.

Before continuing to probe the distinction between art and craft it is important to acknowledge that recently a few art critics and academics have begun to articulate the effect that distinguishing art and craft may have on society and nature. Gablik (1991) ardently calls for redefining art to include a moral, social, and environmental perspective. She raises critical questions like What happens to society when art becomes understood only as a product whose usefulness is limited to the ideas its image conveys? Berman (1989) describes the somatic history of people through examining their creative projects. His work outlines how cultures saturated in craftmaking experiences traditionally have maintained a sense of enchantment or participatory consciousness with the natural world. Craft theorists like Dormer (1997) continue the challenging work of trying to articulate the embodied knowledge that underlies craftwork to reclaim how this craft knowledge is as worthy as the intellectual knowledge associated with fine art, science, and mathematics.

What Art Offers

Berman (1989) outlines three forms that creativity can take in the development of a person. His ideas are useful in determining the influence that Western notions of art have had on Aboriginal artists and in understanding the desire in the Western world for indigenous images.

The first form (Cr I) results when a person's curiosity to explore the sensual world becomes inhibited and is replaced by a bias toward knowing through reason alone. Cr I is more of a withering of creativity than a

form. Most people from capitalist-oriented societies fall into this category as their schooling emphasizes the understanding arising from the disciplines of mathematics and science that are based on objective thinking.

The second form (Cr II) occurs when people realize that their development has become interrupted, yet they retain the ability to react and express this fracture. Cr II is like a scream of freedom—an expression of the angst, a cry for healing from the wrongs society has imposed. Most modern art as we know it falls into this category. Images abound of hurt, struggle, and the strength to endure. Contemporary First Nations art has increasingly taken this form as it aims to voice the injustices experienced at residential schools and the struggles imposed by colonialism.

The third form of creativity (Cr III) results when a person makes a smooth sublimation into adulthood and a full, somatic world. Cr III is becoming increasingly rare, yet was once readily associated with the material world of indigenous cultures. Berman (1989) describes the images of Cr III flowing from people who are at peace with the world. “This kind of art is continuous life; it doesn’t attempt to ‘outdo’ life by means of psychic acrobatics” (p. 337). The Western world’s fascination with Aboriginal art stems from the artist’s ability to provide evidence of something the industrial developed world has forgotten: how to be at one with the world. Berman’s Cr III examples include Aboriginal art, children’s art, Celtic art, and Eastern art.

When Aboriginal artists like Norval Morrisseau began to illustrate Anishinabe legends, thereby revealing his people’s perception of the world, his images gave Westerners a glimpse into this sense of oneness. Morrisseau readily intertwines animals, plants, humans, and spirit lines, providing a representation of a world that is better felt than seen. Cr III images in a culture confirm that a culture is nurturing its citizens well and surrounding them with a healthy outlook toward the land and life. What the Western world first identified in Norval Morrisseau’s paintings, and what draws them to other indigenous work, is how the images reflect the sense of oneness that their own culture lost when it began to center on a human ego reality.

Berman’s (1989) ideas offer a way to deconstruct the effect that the colonization process has had on Native creativity and a way to understand the extent that European ideas of art define, and have influenced, the material world of Native people. The increasing number of Cr II images produced by First Nations people serves as a warning sign that all is not well and that healing is required. Evidence of Cr II should encourage educators to determine whether their teaching practices encourage Cr I or Cr II or offer the sensory-rich environment that nurtures Cr III images.

Increasingly, whether on or off First Nations lands, school curriculum emphasizes making conceptual art. Teaching art as outlined in many curricular guidelines, with the emphasis on mastering the “elements of

design" (color, line, shape, form, space, and texture) in order to communicate artfully, encourages students to move from Cr I to Cr II while professing to be in Cr III. The trend toward creating art instead of craft items is readily observable by examining curricular documents. The Ontario curriculum for the arts emphasizes communicating conceptual ideas through visual images (Ontario Ministry of Education, 1998). Examples of the types of items students can or are to make include 41 two-dimensional images, two three-dimensional projects, and one item of potential utility, a mask. Using the criteria of European art to judge and influence the development of items made by First Nations people becomes an example of hegemony. Gitlin (1982) explains that hegemony is the suffusing of the society by ideology that consists of those assumptions, procedures, and rules of discourse that are taken for granted by rendering their preeminence natural, justifiable, and beneficial. The hegemony increases as First Nations people find themselves schooled in making abstract conceptual pieces for an art market while losing their traditional ability to make the practical items of everyday use.

What Craft-making Offers

Berman's (1989) theory has limitations because the examples he provides of Cr III are standard Western art affairs such as two-dimensional images that can be framed. He seems unable to see beyond his own Western ideology except for one statement that indicates another reality. He writes that Cr III "approximates what we call craft as opposed to art as such" (p. 323). The notion of utility associated with crafts in comparison with art better reflects the holistic aspect of creativity that weaves the body and mind together through daily practices with the land. Although Cajete (1994) uses the term *art* to capture what the Western world would refer to as craft, his explanation captures the sense of utility and aesthetics in which Native cultures were immersed.

All Tribal people engaged in the creation of artistically crafted forms. Young and old, men and women, each in their own measure participated in the making of things. Whether songs, ceremonies, dances, pottery, baskets, dwellings, boats, or bows. Indigenous people were one and all engaged in creating the utilities of their lives. Art was an integral expression of life, not something separate; it rarely had a specialized name. The modern perception of art for art's sake, as it is defined and expressed in modern and usually egocentric terms, had little meaning in Indigenous society. Everyone was an artist, a maker of things and the things made always had their proper form and use as well as inherent symbolic meaning.... Indigenous art was functional and meaningful at the same time. (p. 149)

In handwork, emphasizing the conceptual idea over the functional purpose actually acknowledges the superiority of knowing stemming from the intellect over the body's knowing. I question and do not wish to encourage this idea, so I am reluctant to become involved in art activities that do not involve craft skill development. Instead I prefer to use the term *craft* and make a point of attending to the beauty in a useful form well

made. When confused, trying to understand the many definitions of both art and craft, I attempt to envision what Berman's Cr III was trying to address: the traditional way creativity arose in Indigenous cultures—life lived well amid craft.

The framed conceptual art on most gallery walls and in Western art books shows how abstract and conceptually based the art in the Western world has become. Interestingly, the items exhibited in "Native art" books (although if made by a non-Native would be deemed craft) include outfits, baskets, woven rugs, footwear, and other items used in daily life. The usefulness of items deemed "Native art" highlights how concepts of beauty were once designed into every aspect of Native culture and probably explains why Native cultures seldom distinguish items as art or craft. The Western world does so distinguish and thus assigns a value to the knowledge(s) arising from and involved in the process and product of making.

Knowledge Arising from Craft and Art Experiences

Various learning outcomes result from making a functional item and making a conceptual item. To make an item that is comfortable to hold and use—fits the body well—and is also aesthetically pleasing may be more challenging than doing either solely. Dormer (1997) states: "It is your ability to choose and select, not your ability to make, that marks you as an artist" (p. 3). The separation of craft from art and design has led to Western culture distinguishing between the mental attributes involved in the "having of ideas" from the "making of objects" (p. 18). "'Craft' and 'art' are fundamentally different activities and their difference is rooted in the biology of the brain" (p. 19). Of concern to educators should be how such ideas are manifested and experienced through school curricula. The knowledge associated with making functional items is usually associated with the body and, I contend, the body can be recognized as extending out into the land from whence materials are gathered. Craftmaking experiences involve demonstrating a body-based knowledge that is dependent on interacting through multiple senses with material from the land. Actually using the craft reengages the user with the land in a practical manner that extends beyond only mental involvement with ideas and concepts.

One of the main issues that has altered the making experiences of Native people is the ease of acquiring store-bought materials. I can recall my surprise when a Native leader showed up at camp having purchased all the material required to make dream catchers: metal hoops, colored feathers, plastic beads, synthetic thread, and so forth. With the arrival of the store-bought commodities the land-full experiences that once informed cultures were transformed.

The fibre in plants would not need to be touched to determine its strength and flexibility for making a hoop. No prayers or offering of

tobacco would need to be given to a plant before it was harvested. Walks along a beach to gather meaningful items for decoration would be replaced by the experience of choosing color combinations of store-bought feathers and plastic beads. I wonder if dream catchers made with commodities would still work, or was the catching of bad dreams dependent on the maker being engaged with the land while creating such a traditional item? Whether the dream catcher was referred to as art or craft by the Native instructor seemed insignificant next to how the experience had been altered. It is worth asking what cultural ideas will be conveyed when the traditional practices of making are discontinued and commodity-based practices introduced.

Making Aids

The following ideas are offered to aid educators in examining their own pedagogy and practices pertaining to curricular designing. These making aids provide a means to examine how curricula expose students to conceptual-based knowledge (art as defined by the West) and embodied knowledge (craft as traditional cultural experience). These making aids serve as signs for educators to use to locate themselves and critically analyze the various theory and practices involved in making. They provide educators with a way of determining some of the cultural ideas that are manifested through various art curricula. Awareness of these ideas provides some critical analysis for educators to explore so that they do not unwittingly promote the global-village concept of the world, but instead work toward developing new curricula that better conveys their cultural epistemology.

What Perspective is Offered (Singular to Holistic)

The first making aid acknowledges how Western society's sense of separation from nature is evident in the rise of images that emphasize perspective. Drawing in perspective allows an artist to convey a particular view as a privileged view (Evernden, 1993). The proliferation of images that involve a singular perspective encourages the notions that only one perspective exists (or only one correct answer) and that this perspective is revealed by the artist by his or her image controlling what is seen or not seen. What becomes diminished and unaffirmed is the felt or bodily way of knowing. For example, the illustrations in a field guide on trees convey only part of the information about trees that a walk in a forest might provide. Other perspectives or ways of knowing (sometimes conveniently summed up as a sixth sense) are confirmed through involvement in tasks that rely on multisensory, bodily-dependent involvement such as craft-making.

Place of Knowing Confirmed (Head to Body to Ecosystem)

An increase in portraits reveals a strong anthropocentric bias in a culture. People become the foreground of the painting whereas the rest of nature

serves only as an unobtrusive backdrop. Portraits also tend unconsciously to state that what is important about a person is in his or her head, diminishing the significance of the body's value (Thayer-Bacon, 2003). The proliferation of head-centered images does not acknowledge any awareness of a felt or embodied understanding of the world. Compared with Western art, Eastern art of the 17th century conveys people engulfed in the world. Tiny human figures appear to wander through misty mountain landscapes; humans immersed or engulfed in an environment is a feature seldom seen in European paintings of the last 500 years. When environmentalists show slides involving numerous vistas devoid of people, the images foster the ideology that humans are separate from and do not belong in natural settings.

Wisdom should be sought in the examination of how traditional cultural designs blended land and people, usefulness and beauty, culture and bioregion. Modern curricular emphasis on technological innovation and personal artistic style often supplant an examination of the basic forms of designs that have served cultures well throughout time and locale. Artefact designs arose from each generation making subtle observations of the land and adapting design features accordingly. For example, people in various regions designed unique snowshoe features based on their awareness of local travel conditions. Experienced snowshoers would have altered the degree and angle of the upturn on the tips of their snowshoes in accordance with the depth of the snow crust on the lakes in the areas they frequently traveled. The snowshoes' curve was not for aesthetic appeal alone but confirmed a bodily knowledge gained by physically traveling through an ecosystem. This kind of detailed knowledge is easily lost and hard to regain when direct experience making and using crafts is not maintained.

Recognizing Identity (Individual or Community-Based)

The need to identify the individual self through the use of a signature did not exist in most cultures of the past (Dickason, 1972). Instead, self-expression was overshadowed by the desire to be part of communal expression, as evident through the continuation of regional cultural forms, patterns, and motifs. Individual acknowledgment is a feature of the modern industrial world that values innovation that leads to power and economic profit. Educators can monitor their own emphasis on developing group awareness in students through tasks requiring many people's input in comparison with individual projects that demonstrate the development of personal style

Determining Where Aesthetics Resides (Superficial or Structural)

The increasing ease in acquiring paint has also led to art being readily experienced as something that is added onto the surface of a preconceived form. Even the rhetoric of *art for art's sake* that emphasizes the process over

the resulting product does not address how cultures used to seek both practices and products that embedded beauty deep within them. Aesthetic appreciation needs to move beyond the surface layer and into the social design of a culture. Students should learn aesthetic appreciation by attending to the social conditions of the workers who make the gallery wall and by noticing the wood grain in the wall, not just the framed art that hangs on the wall. We should not encourage students to recognize superficial beauty that masks processes that are destructive to the social and ecological environment.

Permanency (Lasting to Fleeting Sensations)

Images can make a lasting impression on a viewer. After Norval Morrisseau began to illustrate Anishinabe legends and beliefs, his work resulted in a style of imagery readily associated with First Nations of the Canadian Shield region. Once a style is introduced, its influence is hard to ignore or diverge from. Many cultures hold taboos that discourage idolatry by banning any representations of spiritual ideas. One reason why religions around the world may have discouraged the representation of spiritual ideas is that once a depiction is made, others can readily alter features to exaggerate positive and negative aspects. The alternative to predetermined images (which are readily controlled by the media) is to allow people to come to understand things in their own way. For example, the early Labrador Innu tea-dolls had no facial features, so children had to imagine any expression on their own. Educators should ask themselves whether they are continually exposing students to images with lingering, uncritical messages or consistently encouraging students to attend to the presence of the more-than-human world surrounding them

Trusting and Restraining (Individual Rights and Community Survival)

After years of being told to think (with the head) it is hard to learn to trust the body, to trust others, and to trust the land to provide for one's needs. Embodied knowledge is based on the material becoming the teacher and informing the user through trial and error about the limits that exist in the world such as how much material can be sustainably harvested and how far it can be bent and manipulated before weakening. These bodily-dependent experiences teach us to trust something beyond ourselves and to restrain our actions as we extend our understanding for other things beyond the boundaries of our mental reasoning.

The feel of water on a hand-made paddle allows the paddler to engage both with the water and the community member who made the paddle. Having to use inferior materials readily makes a person attend to what might be involved in acquiring better material. Manipulating material may encourage people to feel their own limbs extending into the material, as when bending a branch into a hoop. Such experiences define boundaries and limits in new ways that are not easily described in words or

quantitative data. The knowledge demonstrated in craftmaking comes from a person working in unison with material from the land. A reliance between the body and the material is established as each compassionately heeds and takes from the other over time. Making traditional crafts provides an experiential opportunity to learn the traditional knowledge of nature and culture, trusting and restraining as they work together.

Making Knowledge by Making

Classroom teachers need to ask themselves how their choice of classroom activities exposes their students to varying experiences that shape their understanding of the world. Even in a modern world full of technological gadgetry, educators must make sure that students receive adequate experience of making things, especially by manipulating earthy material three-dimensionally. Without this kind of experience much of students' lives and knowledge are based on distant, second-hand information acquired through mediated technology—the conceptual images rendered by others. Fry (1992) addresses education by directly identifying that “what is at stake is the defence of the hand as a vital means of being in touch with the world (as a way of feeling and as a feeling of knowing)” (p. 262)—that modern technology does not need to become the central pivot that shapes cultures.

At its most basic, the loss of hand-exercised skill is the loss of a certain mode of being human in the Being of all and everything. It should be remembered that it was this mode that made our species set out upon its productivist adventure of making its own world in the world. We dwell in the world then by our place being hand made. What technology increasingly does however is to make us, literally, out of touch. Technology becomes a form of the world that stands between us and almost all else, it mediates the world as knowledge, image and touch. The more of the world we see through system technology the less is known to our being—the body is emptied of spirit and the mind drained of life. (p. 261)

Educators must be critical of how all curricula define students' exposure to varying types of knowing. They must ensure that making experiences are adequately provided to students so they can experience and develop a reliance on the “feeling of knowing.” Craftmaking experiences aid students to attend to the feeling of knowing that they are part of the environment in which they dwell. Teachers can choose to limit the degree of technology and conceptual emphasis students may be exposed to. Similarly, educators should remain aware of the different cultural understanding that can arise from various educational experiences. For example, painting a picture of snowshoes using the World Wide Web to research the history of snowshoe making, wearing snowshoes, and being able to design and make snowshoes are all differing educational experiences leading to differing perceptions of the world.

Suggestions for a First Nations Pedagogy of Making

The following ideas are offered as starting points for communities to use to develop their own specific, culturally sensitive pedagogy of making: a pedagogy that does not unwittingly continue to take them toward the dominant Western ideology.

First, research the traditional terms used to describe items in the past. Aim to create new terms to replace the use of art and craft by incorporating the root meaning of traditional syllables from your own indigenous language. Encourage the use of these new expressions so that traditional understanding of the world as shaped by Native ideology can result.

Second, document the traditional way of making the common crafts associated with your culture before the skills are lost. If possible, use video and digital recording machines. Entrust the continuation of specific skills to specific people and ensure that these skills are routinely practiced and exhibited to students. Identify specific regional techniques of making and enhance a network of understanding that records and shares the depth of knowledge pertaining to the role that items have held in shaping cultural identity: for example, neighboring communities might use subtly differing ways to work with birch bark.

Third, develop a grade-specific curriculum based on the sequential knowledge associated with local materials or traditional tools. For example, what could grade 1 students' make that would introduce them to the material of birch bark, leather, and wood? What skills should they be able to demonstrate with these materials by grade 4, grade 8, grade 10? Are the traditional tools associated with making things in your culture (crooked knife, needle, awl) evident in the curricula so that the acquisition of increasing skill level is evident? For example, grade 1 students could use a leather punch to make a simple circular pouch with lacing, whereas grade 3 students might learn to use a leather needle to create a pouch with a fringe. Waldorf education provides an excellent example of a well-developed handwork program that could be readily adapted to various cultural practices.

Fourth, as an activity, encourage tracing items back through their production process to the source of the original material used. When students are exposed to the intimate details this kind of knowledge involves, they can begin to recognize the complexity and detail involved in any making process.

Fifth, facilitate students walking out onto the land and gathering supplies whenever possible; reduce the dependence on store-purchased materials. Establish libraries or living museums that allow students to touch and handle a variety of well-made local items.

Finally, develop an adult/teacher education program that ensures that cultural awareness is conveyed through traditional making practices. Stevenson (2004) describes a mandatory university course designed by the

traditional Sami people of northernmost Europe for their teacher education program in which teacher candidates are required to learn *Duodji* (local term for the multifaceted meaning, skill, and philosophy associated with traditional handicrafts). The association that Sami culture makes between *Duodji* and cultural survival is apparent in the detailed craft skill they demand of their teachers-in-training; the *Duodji* courses even entail additional time at university beyond the regular teacher-training courses.

Conclusion

The typical understanding of the world that arises from participation in craft-full experiences is different from that of art-full education. Traditional craftmaking activities encourage a person to relate to the natural world through the material they touch while participating in some practical daily activity. These craftmaking activities once informed and shaped cultures, so to lose them would no doubt also mean something would be lost from a culture. Unfortunately, the term *craft* is devalued in contemporary society, so to develop a craft program in a school for people who maintain elitist distinctions may imply some kind of inferior standard. However, retaining or reintroducing traditional making experiences does not mean that a teacher is teaching outdated skills that are no longer required in the modern world. Rather it ensures that students are exposed to the same valuable learning experiences that informed their culture in the past.

Culture is best conveyed through participation in cultural practices rather than discussion about cultural practices. Teachers need to provide opportunities to make and use crafts in authentically meaningful ways, not just discuss and portray ideas through images. What is a more valuable learning experience, to paint a picture of a canoe or have the memory of making a paddle and canoeing?

It is critical to recognize that human cultures have established their unique cultural features and ideologies through their interaction with the land in repeated, simple yet powerful, experiences of gathering supplies in order to make the items needed in daily life. To neglect experiences of making that shaped a culture is to deny many of the root experiences that shaped the culture's ideology. Making experiences of the past have played a significant role in defining cultures. Educators would be wise to retain craftmaking activities in their curricula so that students can experience cultural values instead of abstractly learning about them. Such experiences may become the basis from which students draw insight and learn to recognize their own cultural understanding and how to distinguish it from the overwhelming Western colonizing mindset.

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