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**Teaching Historical and Cultural Context  
in a High School Crafts Course using  
Learning Cycles**

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## **ABSTRACT**

This qualitative research study was designed to improve the methods of teaching the art standard of historical and cultural context in order to encourage a deeper appreciation and understanding of art in high school students enrolled in a crafts course. During the study, the researcher observed and reported on the experiences when cultural and historical perspectives were taught using learning cycles and incorporated with the production of crafts. The participants were six seniors, five sophomores, one junior, and two freshmen, who selected the craft course as an elective at their suburban high school.

The researcher introduced the Pennsylvania German and Japanese cultures to the students through learning cycles and small group activities. The learning cycles were composed of three phases: exploration, discussion/new content, and application/expansion. In addition, students produced artwork connected to the aesthetics of the cultures studied.

The researcher found that learning cycles and the incorporation of the four art standards were beneficial to the students in the crafts course in developing meaningful connections to artwork. By focusing on selected cultures, breaking down the interpretative steps, and building on students' prior knowledge, students developed the skills and understanding needed for art interpretation. Also students' production skills and written critical and aesthetic responses improved through learning cycles, practice sessions, and incorporation of the art standards.

While individual, small group, and full group discussions improved following a learning cycle, students' individual oral critique skills did not change. In addition, a field trip to the art museum played an important role in encouraging the students' interest in the arts.

As most students had a positive reaction to the learning cycles and activities that were carefully planned to encourage active participation, the researcher will continue to adapt the techniques to the needs of her students. Future research will examine the effect of learning cycles on students' confidence in oral art critiques and the connection between learning cycles and creativity. In addition, the research has allowed the teacher-researcher to learn to share more responsibility for learning with her students.

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT .....	iii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS .....	v
LIST OF FIGURES .....	x
RESEARCHER STANCE .....	1
LITERATURE REVIEW.....	5
Art is Essential .....	5
Discipline Based Art Education.....	8
Art Criticism .....	12
Teaching Interpretation Skills.....	15
Learning Cycle and Construction .....	17
Selection of Material .....	21
Aesthetics and the Museum Experience.....	23
Conclusion .....	26
METHODOLOGY .....	28
Setting and Participants .....	28
Past Methods.....	29
Purpose .....	30
New Methods .....	30
DATA GATHERING METHODS.....	36
Lesson Plan Log.....	36
Participant Observation Log .....	36
Student Written Work .....	37
Student Production Work .....	37
Student Surveys.....	38

Small Groups or One on One Interviews .....	38
TRUSTWORTHINESS AND CREDIBILITY .....	39
OUR STORY .....	42
The Beginning.....	42
First Small Group Activity.....	44
Learning Cycle One.....	45
Sgraffito Tiles .....	47
Learning Cycle Two.....	48
Pennsylvania German Inspired Project .....	49
Learning Cycle Three.....	52
Play: Phase One.....	52
Learning Cycle Three: Phase Two .....	54
Learning Cycle Three: Phase Three .....	56
Brad’s Vignette.....	58
OUR STORY PART TWO.....	60
Japanese Inspired Project and Learning Cycle Four .....	60
Brad’s Second Vignette .....	64
Learning Cycle Five and Glazing .....	68
Small Group Review .....	69
Posttest.....	70
Fiber Unit.....	72
Final Learning Cycle.....	75
Museum Trip.....	76
DATA ANALYSIS .....	80
Analysis During Data Collection .....	80
Analysis After Data Collection.....	82

FINDINGS .....	88
Theme One: Building on Prior Knowledge and Breaking Down Interpretive Steps.....	88
Theme Two: Active Participation .....	90
Theme Three: Focus on Selected Culture’s Aesthetics.....	93
Theme Four: Discussion.....	95
Theme Five: Production .....	97
Theme Six: Practice Sessions .....	99
Theme Seven: Critical Responses.....	101
Theme Eight: Incorporation of All Four Art Standards .....	105
Theme Nine: Art Museum Visit .....	107
FINAL REFLECTION .....	109
REFERENCES .....	111
RESOURCES.....	115
APPENDIXES.....	116
A- HSIRB Letter .....	116
B- Principal Consent Letter .....	117
C- Parent/Guardian Consent Letter.....	118
D- 18-year-old Consent Letter .....	119
E- Student Survey .....	120
F- Student Pretest.....	121
G- Learning Cycle 1: Logos and PA German Art.....	123
H- Learning Cycle 2: Our Culture and PA German Culture .....	124
I- PA German Inspired Journal.....	126
J- PA German Inspired Project Rubric.....	127
K- Student Mid-Point Survey .....	128

L- Japanese Project Rubric.....	130
M- Interview Questions.....	131
N- Review Sheet.....	132
O- Posttest.....	134
P- Final Survey .....	137
Q- Fiber Journal .....	139
R- Aesthetic Worksheet.....	140
S- Final Learning Cycle .....	141

## LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1. Learning Cycle Chart.....	31
Figure 2. Small Group Activities and Learning Cycles Used in Study .....	34
Figure 3. Pastiche of First Phase of Learning Cycle One .....	46
Figure 4. Kevin’s sgraffito Sketches and Tile.....	47
Figure 5. Examples of Sgraffito Tiles.....	48
Figure 6. Kim’s PA German Inspired Bowl.....	50
Figure 7. Katie’s Sketches and PA German Project.....	51
Figure 8. Learning Cycle Three Plate Designs.....	55
Figure 9. Learning Cycle Three Plate Designs 2.....	55
Figure 10. Tricia’s Sketch and PA German Project .....	56
Figure 11. Kevin’s Sketch and PA German Project .....	57
Figure 12. Brad’s completed PA German Project.....	59
Figure 13. Hannah and Heidi’s PA German Projects .....	59
Figure 14. Venn diagram .....	60
Figure 15. Kim and Ned’s Japanese Pieces .....	63
Figure 16. Hannah, Lucy, and Tara’s Japanese Pieces.....	64
Figure 17. Brad’s Tile and Japanese Pieces .....	65
Figure 18. Pastiche of Japanese Pieces and Student Comments .....	67
Figure 19. Katie’s Japanese pieces .....	69
Figure 20. Lori and Sarah’s Japanese pieces.....	69
Figure 21. Heidi’s Batik.....	73
Figure 22. Pastiche of Nametags and Written Responses.....	74
Figure 23. Pastiche of Comments at the Museum.....	78
Figure 24. Graphic Organizer in the style of Hokusai .....	86
Figure 25. Graphic Organizer of Codes and Bins .....	87
Figure 26. Comparison of Pretest and Posttest.....	102
Figure 27. Student Writing from Pretest and Posttest .....	104

## **RESEARCHER STANCE**

Imagine a darkened room, a professor's voice droning on in an endless stream of facts, the hum of the slide projector and the flickering of colors and shapes on the screen in front of you. This is an average art history class at college. While it might seem like an example of how to put your students to sleep rather than teach, I miss these classes. The image fills me with a unique sense of anticipation and peace.

The art history classes connected my previous basic understanding of certain artists and pieces into a continuum filled with wonder. The classes instilled in me a sense of art's power to express a culture's voice or an individual's passion. I was awed to find in art the memory of people who no longer existed. Some had no written language, but were communicating directly to me, a viewer in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Had they imagined that the work their hands created would affect a young woman so many years in the future?

Now, as an art teacher, I strive to convey to my students the wonder I felt in my college art history classes, discovering the power of art as a source of cultural and personal communication. Although some high school students have boundless enthusiasm, they are overall (or at least pretend to be) a jaded bunch. They understand the system of grades and school. Some know how to get by with the minimum amount of work. Others count every point as if it holds the secret to success. Outside of school, they have seen events unfold on every media source

from books and newspapers to television and computers. Capturing their attention and interest for academic purposes is a challenge.

The art education standards are an excellent framework to aid in this monumental task of introducing the wonder of art to high school students. Art education standards incorporate the areas of production, history, criticism, and aesthetics. Examination of all four areas enables a deeper and richer understanding of the arts as a whole. When you interpret a historic piece, critically examining the meaning or aesthetic of it, you discover new ways to be creative in production. Through producing art, you can better understand the processes and expressions of other artists and cultures. The interdependence of these tasks is lost on many of my students who just want to make stuff or get a credit in the easiest way possible.

Producing art or “making stuff” is the core activity of the art classroom. Even the most resistant students who just want an easy credit generally create at least one piece that they take pride in. In previous Moravian courses, Teacher as Inquirer and Teacher as Researcher, I completed mini research studies on the technique of differentiated instruction. This helped me feel confident in my ability to use multiple teaching tools to instruct a wide variety of students in any media of art. In fact, seeing a student who thinks he is not creative grow to understand his potential through art is one of the joys of teaching. The criticism and

aesthetics standard areas fit easily into class discussions as the art production process evolves.

The historic and cultural background of crafts is more difficult to involve students in. While students are usually enthusiastic during the production process, their attention wanes when I begin to discuss an artwork. In the past, although I did not use slides in a dark room, I did lecture. I added in more questions than my art history professors, but only a few students answered as the rest of them stared at the clock or yawned. They seemed to just be waiting for it to end so they could work on their projects. The sense of impatience and boredom in the air left me searching for something to say that would spark their interest. While some of them memorized the worksheets they were given for study guides, they seemed unable to connect with the artworks and information in a meaningful way. Even when students incorporated historically and culturally inspired designs into their work, they rarely understood their significance. Leaving with only the external evidence of grades and projects along with some briefly memorized but ultimately forgettable facts is not what I want for my students.

I want success in the class to be about more than getting a passing grade. I do not want to instruct a timetable of the development of skills through time and culture, but rather a connection to a particular process, culture, and symbolic meaning or story. I want my students to feel that awe of connections slipping into place as I did in my art history courses. I hope they develop a passionate

appreciation for the rich culture and history of crafts and arts and a desire to learn more.

In order to make this happen, I could not rely on the old method of lectures paired with worksheets and projects to cover the extensive craft traditions of a culture. I needed to encourage the active participation I saw during production activities. I believed that learning cycles, which allow the students to discover the information for themselves through small group work, would benefit my students. Rather than trying to introduce as much as possible, selected cultures and pieces would be intensely studied in order to teach the skills of interpretation, which could then be applied to new art.

I hoped that by breaking down the interpretative steps and building on students' prior knowledge, I could guide them to developing the skills and understanding needed for art interpretation. I hoped that art interpretation skills would strengthen their studio production experience. I hoped that this knowledge would transfer to real life experiences, such as appreciation of artwork in a museum. Most importantly, I hoped that a lifelong interest in the arts would be fostered. As I started my study, I was excited to see what would happen as I observed and reported on the experiences in Crafts when cultural and historical perspectives were taught using learning cycles and incorporated with production of crafts.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### Art is Essential

With an increased emphasis on standardized testing, many schools are reducing the time and budgets for the arts or in the case of some urban schools, eliminating the arts all together (Quinn & Kahn, 2000). Therefore, the importance of arts as an essential skill must be highlighted. The arts can help prepare students for workplaces, as well as develop students as whole individuals capable of evaluating and making choices on their own (Greene, 2003). While the arts can be integrated into every subject, the arts are worth studying as an individual topic with value of its own (Consortium of National Arts Education Associations (CNAEA), 1994). This is supported by the passage of the *Goals 2000: Educate America Act*, which wrote the arts into federal law acknowledging that the arts are a core subject as important as English, math, and history. It also led to voluntary content standards which define what a student should know and be able to do. For example, students should be able to communicate in the four art disciplines; dance, music, theatre, and visual arts, and analyze works of art from various cultural and historical periods (CNAEA, 1994).

What possible benefit could knowing and being able to do these things have to students and society when standardized tests loom over our heads? The Consortium of National Arts Education Associations (1994), states that standardized tests encourage a “normal” way of linear and sequential thinking,

but the arts teach students to problem solve and make decisions in situations where there are no standard answers. Students of art disciplines gain tools for understanding human experiences and the power of the arts. By analyzing non-verbal communication, students make their own informed judgments about cultural issues. The arts also allow students to communicate their own thoughts and feelings in a variety of modes.

These skills can be especially important in conflict ridden urban environments. Unfortunately, these areas often have limited opportunities for the arts. After school programs such as Artists in the Making (AIM), attempt to fill the gap by offering visual arts classes to motivate inner-city children. “Art programs can help children to become more resilient, give them the skills to be independent, and most important, foster an ability to step outside of their personal situations and take control of their lives and their futures” (Gasman & Anderson- Thompkins, 2003, p. 447). An involvement in the arts can help keep students engaged in school and away from pitfalls, such as dropping out, drugs, and alcohol. Making art can also encourage students to have higher expectations for themselves (Gasman & Anderson- Thompkins, 2003). Obviously, art education is of value to our students and society as a whole.

Art education’s focus has varied from “(1) art to support society, (2) art to enhance the individual child, (3) art as a curricular discipline” (Bates, 2000, p.2), and Discipline Based Art Education. Art education began in the United States’

public schools in the 1800s. Mechanical drawing was taught in order to prepare draftspeople and designers who were needed to build an economically strong nation during the Industrial Revolution. Society-centered art education was still visible in the 1950s when creative thinking skills were encouraged in order to compete with the Soviet Union in the space race and currently to address concerns such as natural resource conservation (Bates, 2000). The work of Dewey in the 1920s led to a reaction against education that put the needs of society above the needs of the individual. The power of Dewey's words is clear in his statement,

What avil is it to win prescribed amounts of information . . . , if in the process the individual loses his own soul: loses his appreciation of things worth while, of the values to which these things are relative; if he loses that ability to extract meaning from his future experiences as they occur?  
(Bates, 1997, p. 49)

Dewey's push for education that encouraged creativity, choices, and problem-solving rather than rote memorization, fostered the growth of correlated art and art for self-expression.

Correlated art asks students to work together in communities to solve real world situations through cooperative projects such as murals, puppet shows, and displays. Art for self-expression is an open-ended approach where teachers present a problem and students work within criteria to express their individual

solution. A laissez-faire approach, where students are free to explore materials without contamination of adult influence, grew out of this. Dewey (1997) would warn against this extreme and mentions the benefit of a guiding, knowledgeable adult in his writings.

Bates (2000) further explains art education's journey by discussing Lowenfield's (1947) belief of developing the whole child through free and therapeutic expression. This philosophy reflected post-war conscience. Other world events, such as the Soviets' launch of Sputnik, led to a "back to basics" push that perceived self-expression as lacking in substance. Curriculum materials were developed with specific concepts and content, which lead to subject centered, content centered, or discipline based approaches.

### **Discipline Based Art Education**

Bates (2000) states that, Discipline Based Art Education, or DBAE, was introduced by the Getty Education Institute for the Arts in the 1980s. DBAE presents four interrelated domains or standard areas: production (art making); criticism (understanding visual qualities of art through critical language); aesthetics (developing personal opinions and knowledge of value of art to various cultures and times); and art history (art in context of time and culture). Originally DBAE was met with great skepticism because many art teachers believed it would take away from the time, self-expression, and quality of art production of students.

Time has shown that studio work alone does not “adequately prepare students for fully appreciating works of art. Students need knowledge about art including its historical heritage, context, relevant aesthetic issues as well as critical appreciative skills” (Stone, 1993, p. 54). Art history and art production can, and should, work hand in hand with each other. Art production allows students to explore personally the concepts and techniques used in the art history works they view (Freedman & Wood, 1999). Several studies prove that art history, aesthetics, criticism, and production incorporation can work when implemented with balance. An example is Short’s (1998) research, which demonstrates that art production improves with art history instruction providing deeper understanding and motivation.

Short (1998) writes about his experience when his district’s art teachers were asked by administrators to prove that their studio based program built students’ understanding of unfamiliar works of art when studio production was integrated with art related critical inquiry. The art teachers created several groups in their design plan. They worked with a fairly mixed socio-economic and ethnic group of incoming ninth graders in Drawing I courses and an English course. In one group, the drawing students received the traditional curriculum based on elements and principles of design and production work. The second group, enrolled in two drawing classes, received a semi-inclusive art curriculum in which discussion and writing activities were incorporated with art making

assignments. Within the second group, one class had the pretest and one class did not, in order to avoid any question of the pretest changing results. The third group was an English class, which served as the control group with no art training or pretest. They only completed the posttest.

The image, *Into the World There Came a Soul Called Ida* by Ivan Albright, was used in both the pretest and posttest. The students in Short's (1998) research were asked to write about what they saw and knew about the artwork. The students were assessed on items related to knowledge-based, knowledge-seeking strategies, higher and lower order understandings, and misunderstandings.

The findings show that the semi-inclusive art curriculum, pretest/posttest group revealed dramatic improvement in students' response to the artwork in all dimensions. The comments were also considerably longer, contained more detail, and were better organized than pretest data. The semi-inclusive art curriculum, posttest only group, had the same results, showing the pretest did not improve results artificially. The standard art curriculum group exceeded those of the English only group, but the descriptions were much more limited than the semi-inclusive group. The English group showed lower order understandings and misunderstandings. The results show that incorporating written and oral discussions about works of art into the studio curriculum provides students with skills and understandings beyond what studio curriculum alone can provide.

Graham's (2003) study examined six ninth grade students from an art class of 21 students. The art teacher provided them with historical and aesthetic information on the European Renaissance as well as specific strategies for creating illusion of depth and using media effectively. The teacher was aware that learning a traditional method could be mechanical and strived to incorporate the students' thoughts and interests. Graham (2003) found that the students appreciated the freer atmosphere of an art class compared to classes where they sat in rows and quietly took notes on lectures in order to prepare for tests. The students were able to apply the more technical lessons to imaginative projects. Graham (2003) concludes that engaging adolescents in challenging art activities which encourage students to develop mastery of artistic skills and an understanding of culture, with their own artistic expression or narrative can, "forestall a sense of artistic inadequacy, and motivate them to continue their artistic explorations" (Graham, 2003, p. 176).

Art teacher Danser (1994) also worked in this area of study developing an art history curriculum designed to make his ninth grade art students aware of the role of art in human history. He found that students were enthusiastic about learning and made connections when coloring and creating activities were combined with art history information.

Simpson (1996) agrees with the beneficial effects of incorporation of art production with interpretation of historical and cultural works. She states that a

learning environment should be conducive to looking inside one self for answers. Students can accept their own ideas as valid when a variety of interpretations, understandings, and artists' methods for conveying concepts are discussed. The effect of connection making and student-centered constructivist planning "is students [who] are eager to get involved, in knowing about art, art making, and learning technical processes" (Simpson, 1996, p. 58). When students are eager to learn, their work in all areas of art education; production, aesthetics, history, and criticism, are improved.

### **Art Criticism**

Art criticism has an important role in understanding art and is one of the four domains of study as defined by the National Standards. Research supports the use of guided critical activities, including describing art, interpreting art, judging art, and theorizing art, to develop a student's understanding of artworks. In fact, high school students who do not receive specific instruction in looking at and interpreting works of art are unable to go beyond an innate sense of likes and dislikes (Short, 1998). Initial responses to artwork are generally short and to the point. "I like it because it is cool" is a common response. Some students feel they do not know the answer and wait for the teacher or the top student to fill in the answer. Freire addresses this moment of waiting by quoting an interview with a peasant. "'Why don't you,' said a peasant participating in a culture circle, 'explain the pictures first? That way it'll take less time and won't give us a

headache” (Freire, 2003, p. 63). The peasants, in Freire’s quote, and the students in classrooms, do not realize that they have answers. With a structure to guide deeper looking, students can discover their innate abilities and understandings of the non-verbal communication of art.

Stinespring and Steele (1993) discuss a critique approach, which is similar to an art historian’s process. It involves description, analysis, interpretation, and judgment. The approach requires students to comprehend the difference between an opinion or personal taste and a critical judgment based on thoughtful analysis of completion of criteria. (Stinespring & Steele, 1993). The separation of personal judgment from objective comparison to criteria provides a structure to look at the work on a deeper level and places responsibility on the student to become actively involved with the work. This approach is more effective than a teacher “lecture [which] tends to make a teacher do all the work while the passive (and often bored and inattentive) students’ brains remain idle” (Stinespring & Steele, 1993, p. 7).

In addition, the criticism standard involves students in the assessment of their own work. Instead of blaming the teacher for a bad grade, students are actively involved in their assessment with a rubric and written critique. This process is supported by Simpson (1996) who writes,

Students who have been helped to make connections between themselves and problems they are asked to solve, who also have clear understandings

of the aesthetic, technical or other criteria, are able to fairly examine their own and others' work in light of those criteria. (p. 58)

This allows students to build skills to write and speak about their own work. Students are also able to judge their work according to their individual progress, which alleviates fear of failure (Simpson, 1996).

The common format of formal art criticism, mentioned by Stinespring and Steele (1993), is to describe an artwork (subject matter, medium, artist name, size), analyze the use of art elements and principles (color, balance, etc.), interpret the meaning, and form a judgment based on the description, analysis, and interpretation observations. Gooding- Brown (2000) attributes this four- part model of art criticism to Feldman (1967) and states that many teachers have found it problematic. The teachers often believe the problems are the result of misuse rather than examining the structure itself. She believes that these structuralist models of interpretation need to change to allow students to come to an understanding of self by considering the social and historical construction of the viewers' standpoint. She discusses a study where students examine written critiques of artwork using wordplay and a disruptive model. A disruptive model involves taking apart or rethinking the critiques by professionals. By deeply examining the language and thoughts of what we would normally accept as expert, students have space to explore change in their own thinking. Gooding- Brown (2000) states that instead of accepting an outside expert view of the

artwork, students become their own experts. Therefore, a link is created between the student and the artwork. Personal reflection on art and the self-confidence to do so, becomes an integral part of them rather than an activity for which only experts are prepared.

### **Teaching Interpretation Skills**

Criticism includes the personal reflection or judgment, as well as an informed interpretation of artwork. The interpretation of art is complex. To teach art interpretation effectively, it is important to understand what students' prior experiences are. Research shows that interpretation of historic images is not a natural task for many students. The skills of art interpretation must be taught (Heitzmann, 1998). It is easiest for students to discuss artwork from a personal point of view or the point of view of the artist. Students will state the artist was happy and drew a family. This type of answer demonstrates recognition of the subject matter and the artist's mood. Students rarely think about an artist's intention with the image. For example, an artist depicting a happy family scene might want to inspire us to spend more time with family, but students would simply state that the artist drew some people. (Erickson, 1994, 1998).

Erickson (1994,1998) states that it is even more difficult for students to see art from the historic viewers' point of view. Students have a hard time understanding how someone might view art in another place or time. Yet, it is an important component in understanding art history. The most difficult type of

interpretation involves understanding the cultural impact of art. This involves questions such as: What would the culture think of it? What does it represent about the culture as a whole? (Erickson, 1994, 1998).

Heitzmann (1998) demonstrates through his research that, in order to teach art history, we must break interpretation down into smaller skills and start with the students' prior experiences and knowledge. An example is commercial images and advertisements, which are a constant in our world. Although most students are unaware of it, they have many processes they use to understand and store these contemporary images quickly. By discussing contemporary images we can help students understand the basics of art interpretation from a personal viewpoint (Heitzmann, 1998; Sowell, 1993).

This theory is demonstrated in Heitzmann's (1998) work. Heitzmann discusses history teachers' use of political cartoons to teach aspects of history. Heitzmann states that research shows students do not understand cartoons, so teachers must use a strategy of providing knowledge of basic content and background information prior to beginning analysis of historical cartoons. Teachers should start with lower order thinking of recognizing satire, identifying issues, explaining the use of historical references and symbolism, and identifying the artist and caption. Then students move onto higher order thinking, such as comparing, appreciating, and evaluating the cartooning techniques, messages, and editorial functions of two or more cartoons.

This method for instructing cartoons can be applied to visual art interpretation. Instead of presenting an image and expecting students to be able to discuss it as a large group, skills are broken down and explained. The lower level skills, such as recognizing the subject matter or issue, identifying the use of symbolism, and identifying the artist, are first discussed. Then students learn higher order thinking, such as comparing and evaluating the techniques, messages, or viewpoint. The sub skills are instructed by starting with students' prior knowledge. Students recognize popular advertisements, for example the "M" that represents McDonald's, and can then move on to discuss what a vulture, donkey, or snake might symbolize.

Freedman and Wood (1999) also suggest building on students' previous knowledge of popular culture in association with fine art interpretation. They studied what 15-16 year olds understand about the purposes of various types of visual imagery and how they interpret visual images. They found that students are more comfortable interpreting meaning from popular images than from fine art because they have greater experience with the content of the imagery.

### **Learning Cycle and Constructivism**

Sowell (1993) suggests using popular culture, such as advertisements, as well. She uses these popular images with the learning cycle method in order to better teach interpretative art skills. The learning cycle was first developed by Professor of Physics Robert Karplus in order to help elementary students learn

science by allowing them to explore materials, construct a concept, and then apply this concept to new ideas (Marek & Cavallo, 1997). It builds on the work of Jean Piaget, Lev Vygotsky, and constructivism. Instead of the teacher imparting skills and knowledge, a change in perspective is created through the free interchange of peers. The learning cycle is an active, inquiry-based method for approaching any subject including works of art (Marek & Cavallo, 1997; Sowell, 1993).

The first stage is exploration. Students work in small groups in order to manipulate concrete objects. Although the teacher intervenes as little as possible, she interacts with the groups in order to lead the students to the desired concept. Sowell (1993) gives the example of groups looking at advertisements to decide what cultural knowledge one would need to know in order to understand the advertisement. Students could also sort the images into piles that categorized them according to style or time periods. Sowell (1993) found that students who were normally shy about speaking up participated in the sorting because they discussed the characteristics of what they were observing as a small group.

The second part of the cycle is more guided by the teacher as she leads the whole class in a discussion of what was discovered in the small groups. Vocabulary and new content or concepts are introduced in this phase. Sowell (1993) gives the example of examining an advertisement that reads, “Put a quick one over the plate” with a chicken sandwich next to a baseball glove and bat.

Discussion included the basics of needing to understand baseball to the complex concepts of cultural understandings of American pastimes, quick family meals before running to sports, and stories that seem to be told by the image of family life. This leads to insights on what is understandable to everyone in a culture and what is specialized knowledge.

This can then be applied to another subject such as ancient Egyptian art, which might have the same levels of general cultural knowledge and specialized knowledge. Instead of simply stating the subject matter of a piece, students are now ready to look deeper at what symbols might mean for that culture. This is the third and final part of the learning cycle, application, where the concept is applied to a new situation. This allows the student to see that the concept can be applied or transferred to other situations (Sowell, 1993).

Learning cycles are part of the constructivist teaching philosophy, which “contends that learners must actively formulate or *construct* understandings for themselves, based on their experiences” (Marek & Cavallo, 1997, p. 15).

Learning cycles allow students to construct their own understandings using personal experiences connected to their prior knowledge, which makes the new content meaningful to them.

A study using similar art history constructivist methods conducted by Chanda and Basinger (2000) looked at the responses of 19 third-grade children to Ndop statues. The children were asked to look at several Ndop statues and a

portrait of Henri VIII in small groups guided by an adult to discover symbolic significance. The portrait was recognizable to most students as a king. It helped students understand the statues as representations of different kings rather than the common misunderstanding of the figures as idols to be worshipped. The study concluded that, “activities for contextually based learning must be presented so that students can construct their own understanding and use their pre-existing knowledge to construct new knowledge” (Chanda & Basinger, 2000, p. 81). They go on to suggest that unknown artworks should be introduced with an artwork that is known to the students and is parallel in a visual concept. They state that more research is needed in this area, particularly due to the small numbers and language differences in their study.

Hackmann (2004) also supports applying constructivism techniques, such as learning cycles, in order to use the longer time provided by block schedules more effectively. He states that many schools adopt block scheduling without thought to a particular teaching method, leaving teachers struggling to fill the time. Block scheduling and constructivism can work hand in hand, allowing educators to guide the student to a depth of understanding rather than superficial treatment of a subject instructed through teacher lectures. With a balance of complementary teacher directed and student-centered activities, teachers can help students construct meaning from the curriculum (Hackmann, 2004).

### **Selection of Material**

In order to help students construct meaning from the curriculum and make connections between the new information and their prior knowledge, we must carefully select subject matter. While the National Standards state what students should know and be able to do, they leave the selection of methods, art works, and cultures up to the teachers and districts (CNAEA, 1994). We should carefully consider our reasons for selecting text, images, and methods for instructing the concepts of the standards. This is demonstrated in Coughlin's (2003) study of the underlying narratives, both public and personal, that shape subject matter in United States History courses. Using interviews with teachers, Coughlin demonstrates that the personal background of the teacher influences the way he understands history and therefore the manner and style in which he instructs his students. Stout (1997) also states that "the interpretive context of both student and teacher play a significant role in multicultural understanding" (p. 103). This is found to be neither positive nor negative, but it is important to make our students aware that all information should be considered critically with awareness of its source. Teachers can use the awareness of themselves as a lifelong learner to motivate students with an open exchange of cultural experiences and ideas between teacher and student (Stout, 1997).

In our role as life-long learners, we must carefully research our selection of multicultural lessons. An art instructor has an overwhelming collection of

historical, cultural, and contemporary pieces to select from when instructing the standards. Well-intentioned art teachers make the common error of covering too much too quickly, creating short-lived exposure, replication of artifacts, and low level thinking instead of the deep connections that are possible (Stout, 1997). Bates (2000) warns against using generalized presentations with superficial approaches. She suggests that the teacher focus on one people at a time, point out similarities and differences of like peoples, search out accurate information on the culture, and present “sensitive” issues sensitively (Bates, 2000, p. 172). Without this, we water down the information, conflicts, and issues, such as poverty, religion, and war. We also do a disservice to the culture, the art, and our students. Significant learning takes place when students collaborate and struggle with one another as they form understandings of these sensitive issues (Stout, 1997).

In selecting work, we should look to the population of our students, but “go beyond skin color, race, religion, and gender as the primary reason for selecting an artist” (Bates, 2000, p. 175). An inner city African American student might feel he has little in common with a tribal society in Africa, but through careful material selection we can form connections. Bates gives the example of creating a mural on the school inspired by the houses of the Ndebele people living in Southern Transvaal of South Africa. “They are suggested not because they are expressions of an African culture (or women), but because they are

magnificent examples of murals, which just happen to be created by African women” (Bates, 2000, p. 175). The distinction here is important. These African women were selected and discussed for their skills as muralists, not because the teacher was mentally checking off another box on her “cultures to cover this year” list. Rather than a quick race to cover every culture, a slow and steady approach is needed. Multicultural content should be integrated within units concerned with contemporary cultural issues, focusing on depth versus breadth (Stout, 1997).

In addition, work must be appropriate for the student age and experience level. If we want students to be actively involved in interpretation, we must provide works of art that are interesting and challenging but not too difficult to understand (Carpenter, 1999). If we make the artwork relate only to the world of fine art, it is meaningless to our students. Connections need “to be made between the real world and that of the artist; between artwork, students, and the power of visual expression” (Simspon, 1996, p. 56). In order to connect students to the power of visual expression fully, they need to be involved in the four required standard areas; production; historical and cultural context; critical response; and aesthetic response.

### **Aesthetics and the Museum Experience**

Aesthetics refers to the study of the nature of art or what has been perceived to be a sense of beauty, worth, or value (Bates, 2000, p. 212). Bates

(2000) explains that aesthetics were taught, by most art educators, as a part of criticism and appreciation until it was formally defined as one of the four domains of DBAE in the 1980s. Aesthetics and museums can both be seen as mysterious and intimidating, and are often discussed together.

A feeling of isolation from the everyday is created by a traditional museum's neutral colored walls, high pedestals, cathedral like lighting, and categorized areas. Dewey criticized this perceived separation and believed that the aesthetic experience should be attainable for all, not just an elite upper class. He believed museums should be dedicated to improving society through educating children and adults. Art could be brought into everyday life, by training people to see with an aesthetic perception (Costantino, 2004).

Costantino (2004) summarizes Dewey's aesthetic philosophy with three central ideas:

First, that the fine and useful arts are unified in experience, second that perception is essential to the meaning-making process that underlies the educational value of aesthetic experience; and third, that it is consequently very important to train the aesthetic perception of all people. (p. 400)

The distinction between fine art and applied crafts is complex. The useful applied arts or crafts are commonly thought of as hobbies done by hand. The term "crafts" actually covers amateur crafters, concept developers creating prototypes for production, and professional craftsmen using materials and techniques that

range from traditional to modern. The divisions are constantly in debate involving complex issues such as classification, economy, amateurism, technology, ethnicity, gender, history, quality, and more (Greenhalgh, 2002).

Dewey erased the distinction between fine and useful arts by focusing on the experience of the object rather than qualities inherent in the object. The experience of the object or art could be limited through undeveloped skills in perception. "Perception is the recognition of how various parts of an experience relate to form a unified whole. Discerning this relationship constitutes the meaning-making process" (Costantino, 2004, p. 403) necessary for an aesthetic experience. In other words, Dewey believed the interaction with art was more important than the artwork's use of color or other qualities. A person's lack of experience with art could inhibit their confidence and ability to respond to the artwork.

Greene expands on the term aesthetic experience stating, "Mere exposure to a work of art is not sufficient to occasion an aesthetic experience. There must be conscious participation in a work, a going out of energy, an ability to notice what is there to be noticed" (Greene, 2003, p. 38). Without proper training, people are merely tourists hastening through a museum in search of the right labels, the recognition of artists' names, without a dialogue with the artwork (Greene, 2003). A trip to the museum, paired with instruction before, during, and after the trip, can expose students to original works of art, build an appreciation

for the art museum, and strengthen and extend classroom discussions. It can also spark enthusiasm for their studio projects spurring them to explore new avenues in their work (Stone, 1993). Greene warns, however, that in instructing students educators should, “strike a delicate balance between helping learners to pay heed--to attend to shapes, patterns, sounds, rhythms, figures of speech, contours, lines, and so on--and freeing them to perceive particular works as meaningful” (Greene, 2003, p. 38). Students should be encouraged to use design elements (color, line) and principles (balance, unity) knowledge in interpreting artwork. However, this should not fill their head so completely that they cannot have space to form their own connection to the emotion or concept of the piece.

### **Conclusion**

Successful art education must provide students with an understanding of production, history, criticism, and aesthetics without curtailing their innate abilities and desire to create art. When properly instructed, art can be extremely beneficial to a student’s problem solving, communication, and self-expression abilities. Educational best practice involves being aware of how students actively learn. Art teachers can appeal to students’ prior knowledge of contemporary symbols, such as advertisements, to instruct interpretation. Constructivist teaching methods, including small group cooperative learning and learning cycles, can also be used to encourage active construction of understanding.

To provide a deeper understanding, interpretation of historic and cultural artwork should be incorporated into art production. Materials used in instruction should be carefully selected to suit the level and interest of students. Rather than superficially covering cultures, teachers should use an in-depth approach to individual cultures and artists. Learning to discuss the work of different artists and cultures, as well as their own production work and the work of peers, encourages students to think deeply about artwork. This leads to an ability to comprehend aesthetics, which requires a personal dialogue with the artwork. In this way we can meet the goal introduced by Dewey's question, "How shall the young become acquainted with the past in such a way that the acquaintance is a potent agent in appreciation of the living present?" (1997, p. 23).

If we want students to have "significant encounters with works of art" (Greene, 2003, p. 38), in museums and in everyday life, we must prepare them with careful instruction in interpretation skills, historical and cultural background, production knowledge and techniques, and an understanding of aesthetics. We must also allow them the freedom to experience art and discover what is meaningful for them as unique individuals.

## **METHODOLOGY**

### **Setting and Participants**

The school where my study was conducted is a suburban high school in northeastern Pennsylvania. The high school has an enrollment of approximately 1,300 students. The area is a mostly middle class, white, Christian population with a significantly below state average population of blacks and Hispanics. Students have the opportunity to select from a wide range of electives, including courses in the visual arts that range from beginning levels (How to Draw, Ceramics I, and Photography I), to advanced courses (Art III and Photography III). Students can also select Crafts, which incorporates the wide variety of ceramics, fibers, metal, wood, and mosaic mediums. The Crafts course meets every other day for the full school year. The students who select Crafts range from ninth to twelfth graders, learning support to honors, and little art experience to advanced art experience.

The craft room has four wooden tables with cabinets underneath in the center. Four to six students sit on stools around each table. Large equipment, such as wheels, jigsaw, and the kiln, fills the left side of the room. The right side of the room has the teacher's desk and a partially separated area for shelves, cabinets, and a workspace along the wall. By the room's entrance, there is a chalkboard and more cabinets. Across from the entrance are a workbench, wedging table, and cabinets. The room is filled with current and past examples of student artwork.

The crafts class observed in the study has 15 students. Fourteen students brought in consent forms. Of those 14, four are male and ten are female. Five are seniors, one is a junior, five are sophomores, and two are freshmen. The students have varied levels of experience in Art. One of the 14 students is in Crafts II.

### **Past Methods**

In the past when instructing the students in Crafts, I have used worksheets and lectures on cultural craft pieces and background information in a large group format on the first day of a craft project. I tried to include as much as possible to expose them to various cultures. Occasionally, as students worked on projects, we would review some of this information through question and answer sessions. There were also times when we would view and discuss artwork as a group or write about it individually. Students were encouraged to use techniques, symbols, and forms that were similar to the cultural pieces discussed.

The result of this was that students completed well crafted, aesthetically pleasing work that they were, in general, proud of. However, some students were unable to adapt the designs in a creative way and instead copied, without thought, the cultural designs shown. Some students did well on the exams and writings that tested their knowledge, but few students seemed to have any connection to the information. I worried that, as soon as the class was over, all the knowledge was tossed in the waste bin along with their notebooks.

### **Purpose**

My study was constructed to improve these methods of teaching historical and cultural perspectives. By focusing on selected cultures through learning cycles, I hoped to create more meaningful connections between my students and artwork. I believed this connection would lead to a deeper appreciation of art and improve the art education standard areas of production, cultural and historical understanding, aesthetics responses, and criticism responses.

### **New Methods**

Before beginning the study, I created my proposal outlining my purpose and submitted it to the Human Subjects Internal Review Board (HSIRB) at Moravian College (see Appendix A). Following approval, I asked the principal of my school for permission to conduct the study (see Appendix B). I discussed with him the trustworthiness guidelines I would follow in order to protect the students. Permission slips would be given to the parents and 18-year-old students (see Appendix C, D), all students would be given pseudonyms (Hubbard & Power, 2003), and students would be made aware that they could withdraw from the study at anytime (Arhar, Holly, & Kasten, 2001). After the principal signed the consent form, I completed preparations for the new school year and my study.

As the school year began, I introduced a limited amount of images from the Pennsylvania German and Japanese cultures through learning cycles to my craft students. Each learning cycle has three stages or phases. In the first phase of

the learning cycle, exploration, students sat in table groups that they selected, discussed artwork, and wrote out thoughts. In the second phase, the groups shared their discussions with the whole class as I added additional vocabulary and concepts. After this, students applied these concepts in related small group or individual activities, which is third phase of a learning cycle, application (see Figure 1). This is an adaptation of the learning cycle method developed for use in teaching science (refer to p.17-19). Historical and cultural concepts were reinforced throughout the study with production activities. Students were given time to practice the production techniques, such as hand-building ceramics, before incorporating the cultural aesthetics in a graded project.

<b>The Learning Cycle</b>	
Phase 1: Exploration	Students address a problem, make hypothesis, and predict solutions.
Phase 2: Discussion and Presentation of New Content	Students and the teacher discuss the result of Phase 1; the teacher introduces new concepts through a mini lecture.
Phase 3: Application and Expansion	Students use knowledge gained from Phases 1 and 2 to address a new problem.

*Figure 1.* Learning cycle chart (Bevevino, Dengel, & Adams, 1999, p. 276).

The work began on the first day with a survey (see Appendix E) and pretest (see Appendix F). Following this, the class completed a small group activity where students sorted photos of artwork into categories of art and crafts. This was followed up with a whole class discussion and overview of the course.

During the overview of the course, the study was described and the permission slips were handed out.

The first learning cycle (see Appendix G) began with finding and examining logos in small table groups of three to four students. After the whole class discussed what each group discovered, students returned to their small group to examine Pennsylvania German art using the same criteria.

The second learning cycle (see Appendix H) occurred on the fourth day of class and involved discussing examples students' cultures with the small and large groups. Students searched for clues to the Pennsylvania German culture in readings and artwork. The third learning cycle, occurring in week five, had students create a plate design using Pennsylvania German motifs with their small group. The success of these designs was discussed with the full class. Students returned to their tables and worked individually on a journal (see Appendix I) critiquing their sketch for a slab built clay piece. Students also revised their sketches applying the skills covered in the first stage.

Students were given time to practice Pennsylvania German decorations on sgraffito tiles and the slab technique on small forms before actually building a slab form for their project. (Sgraffito is commonly used Pennsylvania German technique where colored slip is applied on another color clay and then scraped through to reveal the clay color underneath. Slab building is a hand building technique where flat pieces of clay are used to construct a three-dimensional

form.) After the Pennsylvania German slab projects were completed, critiqued, and graded, we began to look at Japanese tea bowls (week seven). In a small group activity students recorded characteristics of Pennsylvania German art, Japanese art, and similarities of both in a Venn diagram. In the fourth learning cycle, on the following class day, students thought of four qualities of American gatherings and found photos of objects that represented these words with their small group. After a large group discussion, students watched a video of a Japanese Tea Ceremony and looked for objects or actions that represented the four qualities of respect, tranquility, harmony, and purity.

Students were given time to practice the coil technique before constructing their Japanese inspired coil form. In the eleventh week of class, students worked in small groups to complete a Venn diagram comparing Japanese and Chinese glaze styles. Students then created glaze tile samples, which they examined before selecting glazes for their Japanese pieces.

After the completion of the Japanese project, many students attended a field trip to the Philadelphia Museum of Art in order to see some of the work discussed in person. Students moved on from these projects in the aesthetic of Pennsylvania German and Japanese cultures to examining their own aesthetic in fiber projects involving batik, quilting, and embroidery. Because the study involved several learning cycles, in addition to small group and production activities, it might be easier to understand through a chart (see Figure 2).

<b>Small Group Activities and Learning Cycles Used in Craft Course Study</b>		
<b>Small Group Activity One</b>	<i>Exploration</i>	In table groups students sorted photographs into piles to examine what defines the line between art and crafts.
	<i>Discussion and New Content (NC)</i>	Discussed with class art and craft division and introduced what the craft course will cover.
<b>Learning Cycle One</b>	Phase 1: <i>Exploration</i>	Table groups found logos and considered their function, the processes it took to make them, the cultural themes expressed, the value of them to our culture, and stylistic characteristics.
	Phase 2: <i>Discussion and NC</i>	Discussed with class the table group work incorporating art element and principle vocabulary.
	Phase 3: <i>Application and Expansion</i>	Table groups examined Pennsylvania German plates and considered their function, the processes, the cultural themes, the value of them to their culture, etc.
<b>Learning Cycle Two</b>	Phase 1: <i>Exploration</i>	Table groups discussed how to define our culture by completing worksheet of questions.
	Phase 2: <i>Discussion and NC</i>	Discussed with class table group work and other things that define culture.
	Phase 3: <i>Application and Expansion</i>	Table groups examined Pennsylvania German plates and information to consider their culture. I expanded on this information with a note taking session.
<b>Learning Cycle Three</b>	Phase 1: <i>Exploration</i>	Students worked with table group to create a plate design using Pennsylvania German art and motifs as inspiration that fit the objectives for our project.
	Phase 2: <i>Discussion and NC</i>	Discussed with class table group work and discussed how it related to their individual clay projects.
	Phase 3: <i>Application and Expansion</i>	Students individually worked to revise their Pennsylvania German clay project plan and write a journal reflecting on how their sketch met objectives.
<b>Small Group Activity Two</b>	<i>Venn Diagram</i>	Student groups recorded characteristics of Pennsylvania German and Japanese art in a Venn diagram, which was then discussed with the whole class.
<b>Learning Cycle Four</b>	Phase 1: <i>Exploration</i>	In table groups students thought about four qualities of an American gathering and then found images of objects or actions that represented the qualities.
	Phase 2: <i>Discussion and NC</i>	Discussed with class table group work and explained the phase three task.
	Phase 3: <i>Application and Expansion</i>	Students watched a video of a Japanese Tea Ceremony and individually wrote down actions or objects that represented the four qualities of respect, harmony, purity, and tranquility.
<b>Learning Cycle Five</b>	Phase 1: <i>Exploration</i>	Student groups recorded characteristics of Chinese and Japanese glazing techniques in a Venn diagram.
	Phase 2: <i>Discussion and NC</i>	Discussed with class table group work and explained methods for the Japanese style glazing techniques.
	Phase 3: <i>Application</i>	Students created glaze tiles using the Japanese glazing techniques and later applied these to their projects.

Figure 2. This chart details how techniques were used during the study.

During the study, I kept in mind my primary goal to provide a physically and emotionally safe environment where students felt comfortable to express themselves and were protected from harm. This is especially important in an art room, where materials can pose a risk if used incorrectly and students are asked to make artwork and comments that reflect their inner thoughts. The materials that were used in the process of the study involve clay, forming tools, and glazes. In addition, some dyes, sewing materials, and other fiber materials were used. The materials are safe for all individuals when correctly used, including those who might possibly be pregnant. Safety measures included proper ventilation, wetting dry clay for cleanup, and selecting safer materials, such as pre-mixed clay and lead free glazes. When using dyes, students had to wear gloves, and the dye was pre-mixed so they were not exposed to the dry powder.

## **DATA GATHERING METHODS**

Throughout the research, I carefully recorded data in order to reflect on my research question: *What are the observed and reported experiences in Crafts when historical and cultural perspectives are taught using learning cycles and incorporated with production?*

### **Lesson Plan Log**

For each course that teachers at my school instruct they must record the date, activity, and objectives daily. This lesson plan log was a useful tool in keeping track of what occurred on what date as a cross reference for the observation log and documents from the students. The lesson plan log also recorded events going on throughout the school day that might influence an activity, such as PSSA testing or shortened blocks due to an assembly. The lesson plan log was helpful in relaying the clear progression of the project.

### **Participant Observation Log**

I followed the advice of Hubbard and Power (2003) as I created my participant observation log. I kept a notebook with field notes or direct observations about what I saw in the classroom as students interacted in their small groups or did their production work. These rough notes were written down as I walked from table to table or stayed near one table for a length of time during an activity. I attempted to write down actual quotes from the students as often as possible. Occasionally, I could only make jotted notes or mental notes about the

class if students needed more active assistance and I did not have time for more writing. Since the class met the last block of the day, I was able to type up my notes following the school day or that evening. I kept observations in the left hand column and my reflections in the right hand column. In addition, double spacing and margins left room for further reflective comments and coding, which was added when reading over the typed participant observation log.

### **Student Written Work**

As MacLean and Mohr (1999) suggest, student work is the centerpiece of my data, helping me understand and interpret the other data collected. Written work completed by individual students includes pretests and posttests on historical and cultural understanding as well as self-reflective comments following rubrics on projects. Written student documents (in phrases and on Venn diagrams) were also collected from small group sessions and learning cycles.

### **Student Production Work**

As Bates (2000) comments, art production is and should be the heart of the art room. Although my study focused on historical and cultural context, it was important to see this expressed in the artwork created by the students. I collected sketches and photographs of production work to demonstrate how students incorporated the historical and cultural context into their artwork.

### **Student Surveys**

In order to get student feedback I took surveys before (see Appendix E), during (see Appendix K) , and after the study (see Appendix P). The surveys asked students about their prior experience with art, along with their level of knowledge, comfort, and interest in cultural and historical perspectives of crafts. The mid-point and final surveys examined their more specific responses to the projects and activities recently completed, such as the Pennsylvania German slab project or the Philadelphia Art Museum Trip.

### **Small Group or One on One Interviews**

I occasionally interviewed students during the process and recorded their answers through writing, as I felt a tape recorder would make them self-conscious. Interviews took place with small groups of three to five students at their seats or one student at my desk during work time. The interviews consisted of one to four questions on a part of the process occurring at the time (see Appendix M). As stated by Hubbard & Power (2003), the interviews are only snapshots and must be pieced together with other data in order to get a true picture of what occurred in the classroom.

### **TRUSTWORTHINESS AND CREDIBILITY**

Triangulation was created through this careful and accurate recording of multiple forms of data (Hubbard & Power, 2003). Input on the students' thoughts and personal involvement with the historical and cultural background of crafts were gathered directly from my students with surveys and interviews (Hubbard & Power, 2003). I was self-reflective as I recorded the teacher's point of view through a participant observation log with separate observations and reflections (Hubbard & Power, 2003). I also used the student documents to provide evidence of the credibility of the study. By objectively recording and reporting all information, both of a positive and negative nature, I was able to report on the true progress of the study (Hubbard & Power, 2003).

In order to record and report data objectively, I had to be aware of my biases. My classes are a mix of students from various grades, academic levels, and art backgrounds. When I have had a student in class before, I hold a preconceived notion of how they respond to assignments. However, students do change quite a bit from year to year and in different groups of students. Ninth grade students often are more immature than other students, but in a mixed class they tend to act more mature. In addition, some ninth grade students are more mature than some twelfth graders. Some students have been placed in the class and do not start with an interest in art, but develop skills throughout the class. Because students can surprise you by surpassing your expectations, it is important to look past biases I

might have had about younger students, students I have had before, and students who do not seem to have a lot of previous interest in the arts (MacLean & Mohr, 1999).

Throughout the process, I carefully recorded and analyzed data in order to adjust and adapt to suit the needs of all of my students. I believe that the study fit well with the curriculum and standards. All students participated in the projects and activities, as it was part of the curriculum; however, only data from students with signed consent forms was reported.

Consent forms were given to the students following a discussion of my study. I emphasized that if any student decided not to be part of the study, he could withdraw at any time with no consequences (Arhar, Holly, & Kasten, 2001). The consent forms were addressed to parents and guardians and provided correct contact information for my course instructor and myself. An informed consent form was provided for those students who were 18 years of age. Those students who opted to not be a part of the study were not singled out in any way. Feedback was encouraged from all students, both participant and non-participants, through surveys, individual conferences, and small group interviews. This prevented any student from being identified as a participant or non-participant. In addition, my principal was informed of the study and signed a consent form before the school year began (Arhar, Holly, & Kasten, 2001).

I maintained confidentiality and anonymity of students by replacing student names with pseudonyms (Hubbard & Power, 2003). Students did not have access to data, as it was kept in a locked closet in school when not in use. The data was stored in a locked cabinet in my home whenever possible. Minor details of the students' assignments were altered to protect the students' identities. However, the content, implications, and tone of subject responses were not changed. The study was held over a six-month period and incorporated various instructional methods. The multiple forms of data, length, and attention to detail helped create a strong background of evidence for this study.

Throughout the study, I met regularly with my teacher support group in order to reflect on the progress of the study (Hubbard & Power, 2003), and I kept in mind Arhar, Holly, and Kasten's (2005) advice. My study participants were informed of their rights and involved in the process. I ensured confidentiality and anonymity, built relationships of trust, and used self-reflection in order to maintain ethical guidelines. In addition, all data will be destroyed following the thesis completion.

## **OUR STORY**

### **The Beginning**

As students entered the craft room the last block of the first day of school, I wondered where the year would take us. I wondered what the students were like, why they had selected the class, what prior experience they had with art, and how they would respond to the new methods of instruction, which would encourage them to discover concepts rather than being told about them through teacher lecture. To answer some of these questions, I gave students a survey (see Appendix E).

There were six seniors, five sophomores, one junior, and two freshman in the class of 15 that brought in signed permission slips (14/15). Four of the students were male, which is unusual for crafts because I normally have only two males per each craft class. Most (9/14) students selected the class because they like art. In addition, Heidi and Lori are interested in art careers. Many (8/14) students had previously taken an art class at the high school. Half of the students had another art class, besides crafts, during the school year. Lucy, Hannah, Tara, Sarah, Tricia, and David (6/14) had never been to an art museum. While most (9/14) students had some interest in crafts from many cultures, only 3 out of 14 stated they felt very comfortable talking about the interpretation of historical and cultural craft pieces and even less (4/14) stated they felt somewhat comfortable writing about it. Overall, students had a sincere interest in art, as seen by many of

them taking multiple art classes; however, they were unsure of their abilities to discuss and write about the cultural and historical importance of crafts.

The pretest (see Appendix F) was designed to find their level of ability to write about the historical and cultural importance of crafts through analysis, interpretation, and judgment of a Pennsylvania German artwork. The pretest was two full sides of a sheet of paper. Because of the length, I told students they did not have to use complete sentences, but should try to write a short response for each question. I explained to them that they would not be graded, but I wanted to know what they understood at that point. Near the end of the pretest time (20 minutes), I told students to try to finish up soon.

The pretest demonstrated that while 11 out of the 14 students were able to discuss the use of art elements and principles in an unknown craft piece fairly well, interpreting a craft piece's historical and cultural importance was more difficult for them. Five students were proficient, six were basic, and three were below basic in their interpretative abilities. In terms of judgment, 2 out of 14 students were able to make proficient remarks, which were specific and descriptive. Eight out of 14 students wrote remarks that were general (basic), while 3 out of 14 students had below basic, unclear, or incomplete remarks (see p. 83).

*First Small Group Activity*

As they were working on the pretest, I placed stacks of ten images of craft and art pieces on their tables. Students were asked to, “Look at the art objects in front of you and divide them into an art pile and a craft pile. Record what criteria or reasons you used to determine what went where. Carefully consider and discuss the images and criteria taking into consideration every group member’s opinion.” Students jumped into the task right away. Although I was overwhelmed with recording so much activity and talking, I heard that the conversation was focused on the task. From table three came, “Crafts are three-D, art isn’t.” “Yah!” said another table three student. Kevin added, “Some art is three-D.” Kim said, “Hey!” Kevin responded, “I’m trying to be the voice of reason.”

As the students finished, we walked from table to table to see how they had divided the pieces. Ned described how his group set up a spectrum rather than piles and stated that the pieces in the middle were the ones they could not decide on. Kevin and Kim’s table and table one decided that art is on a flat surface and crafts are three-dimensional made from different materials. Table four described crafts as being made without drawing. Rather than give a definition of crafts, I expanded on this small group activity by talking about how experts have debated the controversial issue of art versus crafts and mentioning that some art, such as sculpture, is three-dimensional and some crafts, such as quilts, are on flat surfaces. I then described what we would do in the crafts course during the year. I

explained my study and handed out the permission slips. Students were quiet during this time. As they worked on cutting logos and examples of art elements and principles from magazines, I reflected on my pleasure that an issue I had always struggled with how to lecture on had been discussed and thought about in their table groups. Without being told the issues, they had discovered for themselves the complex controversy of how art and crafts can be defined.

### *Learning Cycle One*

The following class (not the next day because we met every other day for 85 minutes) we hung up the art element and principle charts they had made and took out the logos they had selected. The table groups of three to five students were asked to look at the logos and answer several questions. The conversations during phase one are placed in a pastiche (see Appendix G). The pastiche captures the confusion of a new activity, but more important the interaction of peers discovering together the understanding they possess of logos and contemporary symbols. We discussed the answers to this activity in the full group (phase two) and then students returned to their table groups to ask the same questions of Pennsylvania German art (phase three) (refer to p.34). Following this I asked different table groups to share their answers. The answers were much more thoughtful than what I would receive if I asked the class questions during a lecture format.

*Who is recorder?*

**What does it mean by cultural theme? That question is hard.**

What is the value of them?

Well, do you want to do it?

**A logo goes to a brand and you associate things with that logo.**

*DRAWS ATTENTION TO OBJECT, BRAINWASHING.*

What stylistic similarities? Standout, attractiveness

*I don't know what it means? What is its importance?*

**Our culture – what is it talking about?**

Not very valuable- don't need it?

Shh! Listen.

All of them sell stuff.

**A logo is not what gives them the name- a logo is made through the name.**

Like graphic designers?

What is the value? I'm confused?

*Popularity: the more popular it is the more expensive the logo.*

**Give me something!**

*Figure 3. Pastiche of conversations during first phase of learning cycle one.*

I added content between each question, pointing out information from the packet they were given on Pennsylvania German background, which I compiled.

The packet included written information on Pennsylvania Germans, such as where they immigrated from, as well as images of hex signs and common symbols used in their art. Students listened carefully and were attentive. There were very little signs of distraction. After this students began their homework of two sketched designs for sgraffito tiles using the Pennsylvania German aesthetic.

### Sgraffito Tiles

Most of the students did the assigned sketch assignment of two tile ideas. Kevin had a sketch, but it needed to be improved for better use of space and motifs. Kevin is a senior who has taken one drawing course before and was taking the class because, as stated on his survey, “I want to find my artistic side.” He had a difficult time deciding what to do so I showed him some Pennsylvania German examples. After he selected some designs he liked, I talked him through the steps of creating a border and incorporating the circle with a star.



*Figure 4.* Kevin’s original sgraffito tile sketches and Kevin’s finished tile.

Kim is a senior who had taken four other art courses and took the class because she likes art. For the sgraffito tile, Kim had printed out some hex designs as examples, but drew up a more modern design with the word love on it. She was excited to do the design because it was something she would actually hang in her room. I hesitated at first to tell Kim she could do the design because I get so many heart and flower designs, but Kim’s design uniquely incorporated the

Pennsylvania German interest in making things that they could use, their use of hearts, and limited negative space, without copying a design exactly.



*Figure 5.* Examples of sgraffito tiles (from left to right: Kim, Katie, and Ned).

### **Learning Cycle Two**

During the sgraffito tile process, which took several classes, we did a second learning cycle (refer to p. 34). For phase one, students were asked to discuss their culture as a group using questions, such as, what type of music and food do you like (see Appendix H). As the activity began, many students kept reaching over to work on their tiles. Annie and Katie chattered about the questions but without the rest of their group. Kevin and Kim's group responded to the questions with sarcasm or disinterest, such as commenting on living in a mansion or how their parents just work. In phase two, we read off some of the comments with the whole class. Then I talked about culture in general involving more than what we wrote down, such as how far people stand when they speak and the different objects that are left behind after a culture moves on or dies off.

For the third phase of the learning cycle, students took out their Pennsylvania German information packets and were given some Pennsylvania German art examples. When I told Katie's group that I would be back with more images, Katie said, "Good, because we've had that plate, like, each time." The next table had similar comments. Heidi said, "The plate is back." To which Kevin added, "Oh no." Students did look at the PA German art and through the packet for information but had a difficult time finding the answers. I had made the packet the summer before school started using various informational sites and, now that we were focusing on the aesthetic of the plate and the connected cultural information, it did not seem as useful as I had planned. We read over the answers as a full group and then I added more information on which the students took notes. There was no complaining or sighing as we took notes, as I have had in other years. Obviously, this is partially because of the students, but in addition discussion of art history and aesthetics had become an important part of class through multiple activities opposed to other years when it was a one-class lecture at the beginning of a project only.

### **Pennsylvania German Inspired Project**

As the sgraffito tiles were nearly completed, we moved on to a practice day with slab building. For those who had taken a ceramics class before, I asked them to try to make creative forms by twisting it or making different shapes for sides. I did a short demonstration on decoration techniques and went over the

requirements for the sketch assignment. They needed to incorporate the Pennsylvania German style of using limited space, borders, and repeated motifs with their own personal theme. They also needed to consider how to use different lines and shapes to create balance and unity on the functional slab form. I went around the room as students started to sketch and discussed their ideas with them. Kim explained her concept of a bowl for her mother and I asked her some questions. Kim responded, “and now, I’m brainstorming, because talking to you makes me brainstorm.” Kim used figurative language that could literally mean a storm was taking place inside her brain. Rain and wind would stir things up. Thunder and lighting would produce sparks of new concepts and understandings. It was a great compliment for Kim to say that talking with me made her think of other possibilities. I wish I could make this happen with all my students.



*Figure 6.* Kim’s completed PA German inspired bowl for her mother with the quote “To the world you may be just one person . . .but to one person you may be the world.”

I was absent the following class so they had time to finish and hand in their tiles and sketches. I received a sketch from everyone except Kevin. I was pleased with most of the sketches, which had unique ideas. I wrote comments on all the sketches and the following class we began to construct the forms. Kevin, Kim, and the other students built their forms steadily over the next few classes, asking me questions when they needed assistance. They worked smoothly with each other.

Kevin brought in a sketch plan that was drawn for a square form; however, he had made a rectangle form from slabs. He seemed impatient as I pointed out that he could use borders or designs found from the computer that would be the exact Yankee logo rather than just the letters placed together.

Katie was also struggling with her design. Katie is a sophomore who made a slab form last year in the course, Introduction to Studio Art.



*Figure 7.* Katie's original sketch (on left) followed by the front and back views of her completed PA German Project with the song "Imagine" quoted on the sides.

Katie had liked her original design for this year's Pennsylvania German piece, but she had experimented with her form and made it curvier so the original idea did not seem right any more (see Figure 7). She looked through the Pennsylvania German motifs, but could not settle on a design. She kept asking her tablemates for help.

Others in the class were struggling as well, so I decided it was time for another learning cycle. I was wary because the last learning cycle was not effective, and I did not want to over use the technique. However, this learning cycle was different because the need for it arose from the process and student needs rather than my desire to instruct more cultural background. As Bevevino, Dengel, and Adams (1999) said, "because any inquiry-based strategy is a complicated style of learning, the learning cycle format is not one to be used everyday." The technique is best used when you want students to construct their own knowledge about complicated, controversial, or crucial course content (p. 276).

### **Learning Cycle Three**

#### *Play: Phase One*

*Scene: As the curtain rises, you see four tables in the center of a room. Three to five students sit at each. The bell rings as the teacher is handing out images and a worksheet (see Appendix I).*

*Kim (quietly)– "I'm sick of this peacock."*

*Teacher:* Today you will read over the objectives for the project on the worksheet. You should then work together as a group to meet those objectives in a creative plate design on the blank oval paper using the motifs given to you. The Pennsylvania German plates are to be used as a reference.

*Students are quiet for a moment and then begin looking at and discussing the items on their table. Attention focuses first on table two.*

*Sarah-* I like the star. (*pointing at a star choice from the sheet of motifs.*)

*Heidi-* Is that the center then? (*referring to the star*)

*Kim (as cutting out the star)-* Are you guys deciding what we should add next?

*Heidi-* Should we have a scallop border? Dots?

*Sarah-* I think we should have words around it.

*Kevin is doodling on his paper and not participating. The attention shifts to table one where Lucy is drawing the design by looking at the images.*

*Annie-* This is a good use of line variation, good thinking. Does it have to be black and white or can we color it?

*Tara-* They don't use a lot of black, look at these. (*points to Pennsylvania German examples*)

*Annie-* Oh! I forgot we were supposed to look at those.

*Katie-* I think we should have another design.

*Annie-* Flowers are important to them, I remember that.

*Tara-* We need a border.

*Maintenance man starts to loudly vacuum out the sink storage tank, which was clogged. The students' conversations continue without pause. Kevin is cutting a shape out for table as most students continue to work on plate design despite the noise. After a few minutes, the vacuum stops.*

*Teacher-* In five minutes we will discuss the plate designs and how they do or do not fit objectives. *After five minutes the teacher calls everyone to table one.*

*Ned (pointing to the plate, as he walks to table one)-* This has to be the worst thing I've ever done in an art class. *The scene closes as the teacher gathers the students at table one with their designs.*

This play records the actual words and actions of students during the first phase of learning cycle three (refer to p.34). Although it is evident that the groups should have been broken down to pairs so everyone could work at once, one can hear that students were discussing the plate options and how to incorporate the objectives. It is an example of how well the students worked together during both discussions and production activities.

#### *Learning Cycle Three: Phase Two*

Unfortunately, the vacuum started again just as we began the large group discussion, but students leaned forward and focused on the large group discussion (an amazing feat). Only Kevin leaned back in his seat and that was so he could lean against the table behind him. I asked Ned's table if their plate successfully met all of the objectives. They laughingly stated it did not, but it did have

informal balance. I suggested that it was important to be able to see what does and does not work so when we returned to our tables we could examine our own sketches in the same way. Next we talked about the plate design from Brad's table. As they held it up, everyone laughed and Heidi said, "That's awesome." They had made a face from the motifs, which they explained had balance.



*Figure 8.* Learning cycle three plate designs: Ned, David, and Lori's plate is on the left. On the right is Brad and Hannah's design.

Next Katie's table and then Kevin's table discussed their plates and the conversation turned more serious as we discussed their use of objectives such as line variation.



*Figure 9.* Learning cycle three plate designs 2: On the left is Katie, Annie, Tricia, Tara, and Lucy's plate and on the right is Kevin, Kim, Sarah, and Heidi's plate.

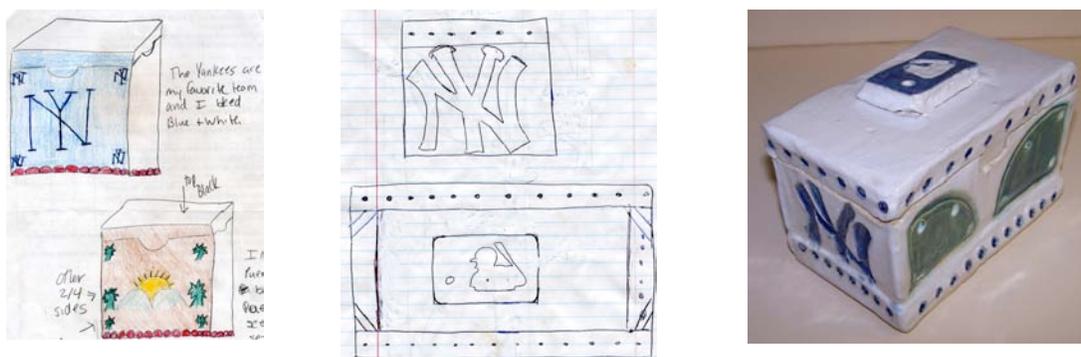
*Learning Cycle Three: Phase Three*

Students returned to their tables and examined their sketches. Some students kept their plan the same and some completely redesigned their pieces. All students answered the journal questions. As they worked, I asked Tricia, a sophomore, if she was happy with her sketch. She stated, “It looks too boring.” She did like the curvy lines, star, and quote. The quote, on the lid, was something she and her friends came up with and that her friends put on a pillow for her when she moved away from New York. I stated that her design dealt with each side separately, but that borders could actually go around the whole box. We also discussed that the flower did not fit the meaning of the piece, so Tricia selected a butterfly. It still looked busy, so I suggested that she replace the bottom border with the movement of the butterfly. You can see in the final piece that Tricia kept the elements she liked, but added borders going all the way around her piece, rather than around the front.



*Figure 10.* Tricia’s original sketch (left) and final PA German project (right).

Kevin also worked on his design. He asked about his design stating, “last time you said this would not work.” I discussed with him that the two sides seemed random and he should use a more exact design such as the actual logo. He went to the computer to look up the Yankee logo, and on his way asked how a student did an edge on a ceramic piece. I explained and later Kevin added this dot pattern to his sketch. After Kevin found the logo of the ballplayer and ball, he did not know what to do for the other side. He began drawing random shapes, so I suggested baseball fields on the sides and the ball player for the lid. He happily agreed with the idea and redrew his sketch (see Figure 11).



*Figure 11.* On the far left is Kevin’s original PA German sketch. In the center is the side and top of the revised PA German plan. On right is Kevin’s final PA German inspired piece.

Several days later, as students continued to work on their slab boxes, I asked them if they remembered the plate design activity and if they thought it was fun or helpful. Tricia said, “I thought it was fun. It helped me on my sketch a lot to make a lot of changes. I changed the whole design.” Kevin said, “It was a little

boring, but it made me realize that I needed to redraw my sketch to make things proportional, so it was helpful.” I asked Kevin if smaller groups would have made it less boring, and he said it would. Overall, out of the 13 students interviewed (one was absent), three thought it was a fun activity (although Brad said this with no enthusiasm), six thought it was fun and helpful, one thought it was boring and helpful, and three stated it was helpful.

The following class, I had an appointment and missed fourth block, but the students had made good progress even in my absence. Unfortunately, Brad, a freshman, had misunderstood the instructions and cut all of his designs out of his piece rather than drawing them on the surface. He had cut them so close together that pieces broke off.

*Brad's Vignette*

*Mrs. Mooney was gone last class, now she's looking at my piece. Oh, no, she's coming over here, and she doesn't look happy. Well, too bad. I did all that work; now it's done. Did she really just say it is not going to work? I ask, "Why?" She says something about meeting project something, being orderly, and not having cutouts so it can hold stuff. I don't know why it has to hold something anyway. She asks if I want her to fire it, but what am I going to do with it. I shrug and she walks away. Fine, whatever. I toss it in the slip bucket and start rolling out new clay.*



*Figure 12.* Brad's completed PA German box using skateboard logos.

The students, Brad included, continued to build their Pennsylvania German inspired slab pieces. All the students completed their projects by week seven. We completed the rubrics and self-critique questions (see Appendix J) that accompany all art projects at our school. We also had an oral group critique where students commented on peers' work. All of the students participated in the oral critique, although Heidi, Kevin, Brad, and Sarah only commented on the piece they were assigned to talk about. I had hoped that, since the last large group discussion was such a success, the critique would flow more smoothly than normal. However, without the group guidance some students were reluctant to speak up.



*Figure 13.* Hannah (left) and Heidi's (right) PA German pieces are two of the student works discussed in the oral critique.

## OUR STORY PART TWO

### Japanese Inspired Project and Learning Cycle Four

As an opening exercise to the Japanese Inspired Project we compared the PA German aesthetic of limited negative space, repeated motifs, and border use with Japanese tea bowls' asymmetrical forms and glazes flowing in harmony with its nature in small groups using Venn diagram (second small group activity).

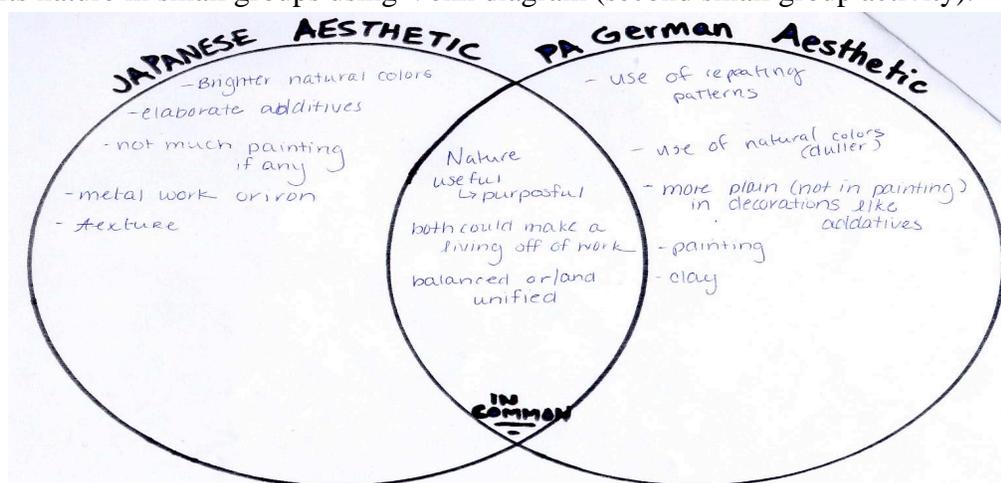


Figure 14. Sarah, Heidi, Kim, and Kevin's Venn diagram comparing Japanese and PA German aesthetics.

We continued to examine Japanese culture in the fourth learning cycle. First, during phase one, students worked as a group to think about an American gathering and four qualities that represent it (refer to p. 34). Then they looked for objects or actions that represented the four qualities. Heidi, Sarah, and Kim started right away with Heidi saying, "Indulgence." Sarah responded, "Oh, good one. Excitement." Sarah added, "Happiness." Kim said, "Let's get one from

Kevin.” She yelled over to the sink to Kevin, who was late to class and was at the sink cleaning the edges of a tile (which the rest of class did at the beginning of class). Kevin responded, “Warmth, loving.” For indulgence, they found a picture of a giant ice cream sundae and for happiness they found an image of a woman smiling with her cat. They used an image of a man smiling who caught a crab for excitement and a photo of a smiling child on the shoulders of a smiling woman, for loving.

The other tables were all shuffled around to new groups because I had wanted to see if some of the more quiet students, such as Tara and Tricia, would participate more in other groups. I probably should have changed Sarah, Heidi, Kevin, and Kim’s seats at the same time, but I was hesitant to because they worked so well together. Tara surprised me and took the lead in her new group consisting of Tricia, Hannah, and Brad. She took the paper to write down the words, asked me if the words had to be adjectives, and said to her group, “People, let’s stay on task here.” Tara asked me if she could use people sunning, to which I replied, “Is that what you mean by warmth?” Brad stated, “Find a fireplace.” Tara asked, “What if it means two things?” Her group began to discuss the concept of family warmth and physical warmth along with the other qualities of cheerful, loving, and fun. Everyone, even Tricia, participated in the conversation.

Ned, Lucy, Annie, Katie, and Lori came up with togetherness, conversation, bonding, and fun activities. Although I talked to them about the

words needing to be more about a quality of a gathering, they had a difficult time coming up with different adjectives. We gathered at table one and discussed what we found (phase two). I then explained we would be doing the same thing with another cultural gathering, a Japanese Tea Ceremony (phase three). As the Philadelphia Museum of Art's Japanese Tea Ceremony video played, students looked for objects that represented the four qualities of the tea ceremony: respect, purity, tranquility, and harmony. A similar activity was suggested in the Philadelphia Museum of Art's informational booklet that came with the Japanese packet. The definitions for these words were written on posters on the board. Students were quiet and watched the video carefully.

I believe many of the students did better on this task than they would have without the activity because normally students ask, "What are we doing?" or talk during a video without paying attention. However, in an anonymous survey (see Appendix K) 7 out of 13 students wrote that they disagreed with the statement that they did better with the video activity following the American quality search. In the same survey, 11 out of 13 students somewhat agreed that the activity had helped them understand and find objects and actions in the Japanese Tea Ceremony that represented the qualities. One student wrote, "fun activity," while another student wrote, "I kind of had a hard time relating American traditions with Japanese because they are different."

Fortunately, most of us agreed that the activity did help prepare and get the students excited for starting a Japanese Tea Ceremony project and creating a sketch for a coil or wheel piece that followed the Japanese aesthetic (see Appendix K, 6/13 agreed and 5/13 somewhat agreed to #3,4 in mid-point survey, and 9/13 to #5). Students were attentive during the demonstrations for the wheel and coil hand building. They seemed ready to start the new project and progressed quickly from practice time to a final piece. Kim commented, “This is a relaxing class to come to- just working on the wheel on your own. I like it.” A few days later, Ned asked what are we doing today. When I told him that we were continuing our projects, he said, “awesome.”



*Figure 15.* Kim’s Japanese cups on left, Kim’s bowls in center, and Ned’s Japanese cups on right. These pieces were all made on the potter’s wheel.

Students were beginning work even before the class bell rang and asking thoughtful questions about the process. Kevin asked if he could change his sketch to stagger the sizes of his pieces, Hannah decided not to curve her bowls, Lucy questioned what textures she could use, and Tara and I discussed whether her

form should curve or stay straight. Students were frequently observed discussing their pieces and asking peers for their advice or help.



*Figure 15.* Hannah’s Japanese tea bowls (left), Lucy’s Japanese vase (center), and Tara’s Japanese jar and stand (right).

#### *Brad’s Second Vignette*

*Mrs. Mooney is talking to me about adding a lid by attaching. Why would I attach it if it has to come off? Why can’t I just do the lid like I did my box lid? I ask her, “You want me to connect it?” She talks about notches on the lid and I draw on two and cut the lid off. Mrs. Mooney scrapes some clay off the top and talks about shaping the edges. Why is she still here at our table? I wish she would just let me work without critiquing me. The only project I was able to do on my own was the tile project. She is talking about carving down my jar to match the cups. “Okay, can I carve down the bottom?” She says yes and to not forget to even out the top edge. “You carved it down on that side.” She says that my sketch had an angle top and the bird on top. Whatever. She walks away. FINALLY. I don’t want to do the stupid bird. After a while, I go up to her desk and ask if I can*

*do something else. She says as long as it has a Japanese aesthetic. I go back and add the Volkum logo on top. Here she comes again. She asks how I think it fits a Japanese aesthetic. I don't know. I shrug and say, "It is from Japan." She asks what else. I say, "It's simple." She says okay, which is good because I wasn't going to redo it. Then she says the design looks uneven and asks me to draw it out on paper and fold the paper in half so it is symmetrical. I tell her, "It's supposed to be uneven." She starts talking about glazing and that the lines aren't deep enough. She says it would be better lined up with the notches of the lid. I think it's fine, but whatever. I dig it in deeper after she walks away, but I'm not redoing the symbol. I tell Hannah, "She always. . ."*

I do not know how to end the vignette, as I did not hear all of his mumbled statement. He did state in a survey that he liked doing the sgraffito tile best, "because that was the only one I got to do without getting critiqued on every little detail." I know he was very frustrated, but he did continue to work on his project and improve it (see Figure 17).



*Figure 17. Brad's sgraffito tile (left), Brad's Japanese pieces: lidded container and two tea bowls (center), and detail of container lid (right).*

When the students completed the Japanese pieces, we completed the peer score of the rubric (see Appendix L). Students carefully considered the objectives, which was demonstrated by the time they took and the careful way they touched and examined the forms while grading. We then prepared for the self-critique questions (see Appendix L) by reviewing the Japanese Tea Ceremony. I asked the class to tell me how the tea ceremony reflected harmony. There is no answer for a while, so I asked Kim how is it in harmony with nature. Kim says, “Colors of materials?” Katie added, “Sound of water?” Kim responded, “Isn’t that tranquility?” I explained that it could be both and mentioned the materials are all in harmony and that the conversation is calming with the guests in harmony with one another. When asked about respect, Lucy stated, “bowing before serving bowls.” Ned added, “It’s prepared in front of them.” Lori explained that they sterilize everything for purity, and Kim added that, “everything is from nature, so that is pure in a way.” After this discussion, students answered the self-critique questions that asked them to think about the Pennsylvania German and Japanese aesthetic and techniques used. The figure 18 pastiche incorporates some of the students’ responses with their Japanese projects (David’s Pennsylvania German piece is also pictured).



I never thought PA German or Japanese aesthetics would interest me. After doing this it made me realize I do like one more than the other, though both are close. I like the PA German better. I like how they use different symbols like hex signs to mean things. I also like how they use a lot of repetition like scallops or lines throughout the piece. —Kevin

*[Although] my dragon is too out there for the Japanese aesthetic of tranquility and humbleness. I prefer Japanese over PA German. Japanese has a beauty connecting with nature. PA German is too busy and too colorful. I like white space and Japanese aesthetic has that. —Heidi*



The PA German look is better I think; they just seem to have more symbolism in their art, and in the pictures or objects in the art. —David

David's Japanese piece



David's PA German piece

*I enjoy using a Japanese aesthetic because I like the meaning more. I like the way the pieces have tranquility, peace, harmony, and the pure feeling it gives. It seems more of a relaxing aesthetic than the PA German. The PA German had many symbols that you could decipher and evaluate but the Japanese aesthetics' simplicity yet beautiful is more enjoyable for me. —Annie*



Figure 18. Pastiche of student pieces and written comments.

### **Learning Cycle Five and Glazing**

Following the critique of the Japanese pieces, we began the first phase of the fifth learning cycle as small groups discussed Chinese and Japanese glazed pieces using a Venn diagram (refer to p. 34). The groups were all reassigned in order to encourage more communication in the class overall. I was concerned that the new groups would be awkward, but conversation flowed and was focused on comparing the two styles of glazing. When the groups were finished, we gathered at one table to share the responses (phase two). I started by asking for someone to share the similarities, and Brad raised his hand to read, “Colorful, colors go with pieces, colors flow . . .” He paused and shook his head, then said, “It’s all about color.” I asked other groups to add responses. Many people added freely to the conversation, not just the assigned speakers, as we continued on to discuss the Chinese characteristics and then the Japanese characteristics. I explained how colors would combine and reviewed glaze tips. I also demonstrated how to layer the glaze, drip glazes, and use wax.

Students then began to glaze previously bisque fired tiles with unique glaze combinations (phase three). The students asked thoughtful questions as they began to glaze the practice tiles. For example, Kim asked, “Is there anyway to get the drips without the texture?” and “Where is the color wheel?” After the tiles were fired, students selected glazes to use on their Japanese pieces. The finished pieces show successful use of the techniques we covered and practiced.



*Figure 19.* Katie's completed Japanese pieces used wax resist for the symbols.



*Figure 20.* Lori's Japanese inspired wheel pieces (left) show use of creative glaze layering and drips, while Sarah's vase (right) shows application of drips.

### **Small Group Review**

Several classes later, I announced that we would have a test next class. Kevin made a taken back look. During a short verbal review of the information using a review sheet, Brad bent his pen as Kevin tapped on the table. Students were then asked to work with their original small table groups to answer questions about a Pennsylvania German or Japanese piece. These questions were very similar to those that would be in the essay on the posttest. As we began our group review activity, students worked together to ask and answer questions on either a Japanese or Pennsylvania German piece. They cleared up confusions with each other that I do not think they would have asked in a large group review. For

example, Tara asked her tablemates, “What is functional?” Hannah asked me, “How do you know if it is slab or coil?” Brad recorded answers on his review sheet (probably because he thought he had to hand it in) and asked his tablemates questions.

As the students reached the judgment part of the review, Heidi said, “It’s too busy, no white space, I love white space because I’m a photo nerd.” Then she quietly added, “I’m sick of her” as Katie at the next table suddenly talked more loudly. Heidi continued on to discuss the piece again with Sarah, Kim, and Kevin. Heidi’s comment about Katie is not a surprise. On a previous day Heidi asked me if our tables would ever get switched. When asked why, she stated it was sometimes hard to concentrate because Katie’s table was so loud. I told her I would think about it. Following the test day, I did move the tables around slightly in order to keep Heidi farther from Katie, who is friendly and pleasant, but also loud.

### **Posttest**

On the testing day, Brad asked, “What’s our test on?” When I told him that it was on the review sheet, he stated he had handed that in. Hannah pointed it out to him in his folder, and Brad said, “We have to know that? Oh my God!” Kevin asked what the essay was on, and I told him to look at the review sheet. Kevin responded, “All of it?” After I explained the directions, Brad asked, “Do you have to write five paragraphs?” Students completed the test quietly. Heidi,

Kevin, David, Brad, and Tara were done in less than 40 minutes. The rest of the class finished after about 55 minutes. As students completed the test, they got out their ceramic pieces to glaze.

When all the students were working on glazing, I asked Kim to come up to my desk to answer questions about the test. Kim thought the test was fair, that she was well prepared for it, and that she would have been okay without the review, but it was good for other people. Because Kim seemed less comfortable answering questions on her own than she had when I asked questions to the table groups, I went to the tables to ask the rest of the interview questions. Tara said the test was easy. She would have been fine without the review, but she liked the review sheet. Katie said, "I think for the multiple choice the review was good, but for the essay, all the stuff has been pounded in our head for the whole class so it was automatic." When asked what she meant, Katie explained, "The essay was more general, but the multiple choice was more specific. We kinda went over it everyday, a mini review everyday." Annie had heard Katie's answers and commented on the repetition of material by stating, "That's always good because if you say it once we are not going to remember it as much as we will if you briefly go over it everyday."

In addition to interviewing the students and observing their behavior during the test, I analyzed the posttest and compared the results to the pretest. I had originally planned to have the posttest be the same format as the pretest so

comparison would be easier. However, it did not seem to be an appropriate format for the information we covered, which focused more on the aesthetic and how it fit with the culture than just information about the culture. The posttest had 20 multiple-choice questions, each worth one point, on clay techniques and facts about the culture. A 50-point essay followed this where students looked at a Pennsylvania German plate and a Japanese tea bowl on a card given to them. They then wrote an essay that described, analyzed, interpreted, and judged the Japanese and Pennsylvania German art pieces. These are the same sections that were examined on the pretest. The difference is the format changed from individual questions on the pretest to essay format on the posttest. In addition, the wording was changed from questions that I found in my readings to wording that was more familiar to the students.

Most students improved from the pretest to posttest (see Figure 26, p.103). Some students seem to have stood still or actually lower their level of ability, according to a simple comparison of ratings. However, when you examine the individual written responses, it becomes clear that the general responses given in the pretest evolved into specific commentary of the culture's aesthetic on the posttest (see Figure 27, p. 104).

### **Fiber Unit**

As we completed the clay unit and glazing, we began the fiber unit. Fibers involve techniques such as weaving, knitting, batik, beading, papermaking,

quilting, and more. Because time was limited with the winter holiday and because the clay unit with learning cycles had taken longer than I expected, I began the fiber unit with a brief reading assignment and questions for written responses (see Appendix Q). When we gathered as a large group to go over the answers, I was surprised that students did not want to volunteer their answers. Even with the time to prepare their responses, they were hesitant to speak up without the support of the small groups. In addition, some of the students had not done the assignment at all.

The batik project encouraged students to consider their own aesthetic and select or create an image that suited their own aesthetic. They began with an aesthetics worksheet where they selected three images and described how the images fit their aesthetic (see Appendix R). Students then selected one of the images to draw resist lines with Magic Batik on fabric stretched on a frame. When the resist dried, they applied dye inside the divided sections. Heidi's response to the aesthetic statement is shown next to her batik. Although only the Misfits image is shown, one can see the overall aesthetics of the other images reflected in her batik.

*The first picture I like because of the contrast between her pink hair and her black clothes. The second one is my favorite band, I like the balance and symmetry. Last, the Misfits are such a huge band with my Dad and I. I like the emphasis with it being centered. I like the dark imagery.*



*Figure 21.* Heidi's batik and written aesthetic response.

Some students used the batik as the center point for the second fiber project in which students had to use quilting and embroidery to make a creative nametag that fit their personal aesthetic. Four of the students selected the batik and nametag as their favorite project on the final survey because they had more freedom (see Figure 22). I feel that the students were prepared to take this step of defining their aesthetics and coming up with creative plans for the fiber projects because we had started the year with studying the aesthetics of other cultures. Although some of the students would have preferred more freedom earlier, I believe it was important to build their understanding of aesthetics first.

**(BATIK) I LOVED THE FREEDOM WITH CREATING A DESIGN. YOU DIDN'T HAVE TO WORRY ABOUT WHETHER IT WOULD WORK IN TERMS OF CLAY AND BUILDING IT. — HEIDI (SEE FIGURE 21)**

*(Nametag) I could be creative with it and really make it my own where the PA German pieces had a certain aesthetics that had to be included. (Japanese pieces were more simple.) - Annie*



(Nametag) So far it's easy to do and I like that it can be whatever you like and not according to culture. - Tricia



**(BATIK) BECAUSE I ENJOYED CHOOSING AN IMAGE THAT I LIKED AND DYING IT CERTAIN COLORS. - SARAH**



Figure 22. Pastiche of nametags and written responses (of which piece they liked doing the most) and why on final survey. Embroidered names have been removed.

### **Final Learning Cycle**

I had wanted for several years to have students create fiber pieces that expressed a political, cultural, social, or personal commentary. I had never included this project because to allow students to select any fiber technique and then to help them all with those techniques is very challenging. In addition, making art with a strong message is a difficult concept for some students. I felt that the class discussions, the first projects using other cultures' aesthetics, and the nametag project had prepared them for this challenging project.

I decided to introduce fiber artists' examples of expressive artwork with a learning cycle. In phase one, I broke the small groups into pairs or groups of three and asked them to examine one artist's work and written information about the artist. The pairs of students then completed a critique involving description, analysis, interpretation, and judgment, on one of the pieces (see Appendix S). Although the interpretation was difficult for them, they struggled through applying the interpretation skills they had learned in previous learning cycles on Pennsylvania German and Japanese artwork. We shared the responses with the full class in phase two, and I added new content as I explained what students could do for their final fiber project. In phase three, students were asked to think about important messages that they could express using fiber techniques and create a sketch.

Tara planned a batik with clouds centered in quilted squares with photographs of loved ones who had passed away. Annie designed a dress with printed chains and an embroidered woman with a man's shadow across her to bring awareness to the sex slave trade. Katie planned two baskets. One would be the colors of the American flag and have the full pledge on it. The second basket would be poorly constructed and have the words "Under One God" on it. Lucy also planned two baskets: one with rich colors and materials and a round form to represent the rich and a second basket with a thin form and rough materials to represent the poor. The students were applying the thoughtful discussions from class to an expressive craft project of their own.

### **Museum Trip**

As the final part of the research study, I planned a field trip to the Philadelphia Museum of Art that took the whole school day and cost students \$16 each for the bus fee and entrance fee. Students were required to stay with a chaperone in groups of ten. Students were able to request whose group they would like to be assigned to. Students from my other two craft classes attended as well as 9 of the 14 students in the study. I was especially excited that Lucy, Sarah, Tricia, and David came on the trip because they had never been to an art museum before. Katie, Heidi, Annie, Ned, and Lori also went on the fieldtrip. I was disappointed that 5 of the 14 students in the study did not attend. Kevin and Hannah did not go because they could not miss school (Kevin in particular had

recently had a lot of absences). Kim did not attend because she did not know anyone going well enough. Tara stated she did not go because she could not miss school, it cost too much, and she was not interested. Brad wrote that he did not want to go.

The trip involved a guided tour of craft pieces in the Japanese and contemporary areas as well as some tapestries in the Great Hall. During the tour, the students were quiet and looked around at the artwork. Most of the students did not interact a lot with the tour guide. Katie did ask the tour guide some insightful questions, such as how did the museum staff hear about art pieces that were available for purchase. Following the tour, individual groups of ten students were given 40 minutes to look around with a chaperone. I stayed with the students from my research class, and, since they were not sure where to go, I suggested we see the Pennsylvania German room. They agreed, seeming happy to just go anywhere in the museum.

We then went to tour as many other galleries in the museum as we could before we had to leave. When we were looking at the art, the students carefully read labels and examined the pieces. They seemed involved in the art. According to the final survey, most of the students agreed that they felt a stronger connection to the craft pieces we saw because they had made something similar (7/9) and had studied the Japanese and Pennsylvania German pieces in class (6/9). You can hear

the connections made through some comments students made when we were in the Pennsylvania German gallery and entering the glass gallery.

**I like the heart thing that's like my batik.**

*Isn't that our plate?*

**It's cool to see it for real.**

**I'm so glad our plate isn't here.**      They look shiny.

**They're getting married and the dove means prosperity.**

**I like that one. It looks like something I would make.**

**WOW! Let's go in there.**

**WOW! It reminds of me of beauty and the beast.**

*Figure 23. Pastiche of comments at the museum.*

According to the final survey, seven out of the nine students who attended the Philadelphia Museum of Art fieldtrip enjoyed it a lot. Tricia said she only enjoyed the trip some, “since I learned it in pictures, it didn’t hold my interest when it was repeated, but it was cool to see the things real and there.” Lori only enjoyed the tour a little because she felt the tour guide did not know much and ran us through too many rooms without stopping. Lori stated that we should not have gone on the guided tour, but should have had time for just looking around the museum. Five other students agreed with the fact that it felt rushed and we needed more time. Katie wrote, “I wish we could have had more time. I saw things, but I

don't feel I got to look closely enough at them." Heidi agreed stating, "It felt rushed."

Despite the rush, all the students stated I should take other students to the museum in the school years to come. Students explained why they felt it was a positive experience in their written responses on the final survey. Lucy wrote, "It was interesting and you actually knew what they were talking about with craft vs. art, Japanese pieces."

Annie expanded on this concept writing:

*It was neat looking at real pieces instead of the visual pictures we see in class. Actually seeing them gives a greater sense of admiration. I really enjoyed this trip because it felt the principles of Japanese aesthetics the most when seeing the tea houses and I thought it was a good experience that can make me a well-rounded and knowledgeable person, which I think is important in today's society (from Annie's post survey).*

I could not agree with Annie's statement more. I am so pleased that, for the most part, the students enjoyed the museum experience. It is a symbol of the students' interest in the visual arts, which I hope will be long lasting.

As Dewey stated in his address at the dedication of the Barnes foundation, "Art is not something apart, not something for the few, but something which should give the final touch of meaning, of consummation, to all the activities of life" (Costantino, 2004, p. 413).

## **DATA ANALYSIS**

### **Analysis During Data Collection**

Analysis began during data collection. Handwritten notes were taken during class on notebook paper. After school or in the evening, I would type these notes, separating observations and reflections. As I typed I would include additional self-reflective comments in the separate reflection column (Hubbard and Power, 2003). I also followed MacLean and Mohr's (1999) advice of frequently stopping to reflect and analyze. After several log entries, I read back over the observations and reflections in order to add codes in the margins that identified events, interactions, and important moments (Ely, et al., 1999). The interview questions evolved from this self-reflective practice. As I reflected on events, I wondered what the students' thoughts were and devised questions to ask them. The student interviews were recorded with hand written notes and then typed in the observations of my field log. I reflected on their comments in a separate column.

Student written work was collected throughout the study. I evaluated the work and recorded student grades. Then I read over the student written work and reflected on their responses in order to meet students' needs in future assignments and identify relationships to codes and emerging themes. During the study, students also produced artwork. The student, a peer, and myself graded the artwork using a rubric of objectives. The students then participated in an oral

critique and wrote responses to reflective questions. The self-critique questions were analyzed as part of student written work. Photographs were taken to document the students' artwork. I reflected on how the artwork demonstrated the themes being discussed and studied.

In addition, I attended my Thesis Action Research Group where we discussed the progress on our studies. Hearing about the struggles and successes others were making, allowed me to reflect more deeply on my own progress. We also examined the writing of several philosophers including, Dewey, Friere, Delpit et al., and Vygotsky. Our discussions and reflective memos demonstrated the connections between the philosophers' work and our own classroom experience. In particular, I was drawn to the work of Dewey, whom I had included in my literature review. His view of art as something that belongs to everyone instead of to the few (Costantino, 2004) inspired me to work harder to bring understanding to my students so they could have a rich experience with the cultural and historical context of crafts.

As part of the Action Research Course, I completed a reflective memo on metaphors (figurative language use). I found this difficult, and at first, not very helpful, but as I read through my log and student work again I found myself examining the words used in class in a different light. This demonstrates the importance of collecting and reflecting in a circular fashion. Constantly going back over the data can be tedious, but in the end it allows a truer picture to emerge

(Ely, et al. 1999). It is easy to become overwhelmed in the everyday details so the mid-point memo was helpful in focusing the completion of the data collection through sub-questions and reflection. Sub-questions, such as; what are the observed and reported experiences in Crafts when every graded task is practiced, were helpful in analyzing data and are reflected in the findings.

### **Analysis After Data Collection**

Near the end of the data collection period, I went back to the data again. I examined my codes and began to organize them into bins (Ely, et al., 1999). Then I tried to organize the bins into a graphic organizer. I made several versions in pencil, crayon, and marker, until I was ready to work on the computer. My first computer version of a graphic organizer showed the four standard areas of production, historical and cultural context, aesthetics, and criticism in boxes.

To begin writing the story of my research, I again returned to examining my data. I began with the field log and cross-referenced it with the lesson plan log in order to follow the chronological events. The field log codes helped to organize the connections to the themes. The field log also directed me back to the student work, surveys, and interviews.

The students' survey results and interview responses were tallied, so I could include the general class response to the events I had observed and reflected on. I also selected some student comments and unusual responses to expand on in the story narrative. I incorporated the students' words into the narrative through

literary devices, such as vignettes and pastiches. Charts were used to clarify details such as the learning cycles of the study.

I analyzed the posttest and compared the results to the pretest. The pretest (see Appendix F) was examined for how well students could describe, analyze, interpret, and judge an unknown Pennsylvania German craft piece. The description section was not analyzed, because it just asked them for basic information. The analysis section was determined to be good (proficient) if it explained the use of an element and principle correctly. I judged their interpretation answers to be below basic, basic, proficient, or advanced. An example of a below basic response is “I don’t know” (Tricia). An example of a basic response is “it represented their culture” (Tara). An example of a proficient response includes attempts to interpret a more specific purpose and meaning of the Pennsylvania German craft piece. Katie’s response borders on advanced because it is accurate to the Pennsylvania German culture, “Back then I think art was very important to people because they used it to symbolize things like religion and in some cases art skills were passed down.”

Students were determined to be proficient in judgment if their remarks were specific and descriptive, such as, “ It reminds me of Thanksgiving and the season of fall. It’s ok. I like the details but I don’t enjoy all of the colors. It needs more brightness” (Annie). Remarks that gave an opinion but were more general were determined to be basic, such as “a plate with a bird on it, I like it because it

is very simple but it is very beautiful.” (Sarah). Below basic remarks were incomplete or unclear such as, “Kinda. I don’t really get the culture of it” (Tricia).

On the posttest essay (see Appendix O), students were graded using a rubric looking for specific information on description, analysis, interpretation, and judgment of a Pennsylvania German and Japanese piece. The description section in the pretest and posttest was not analyzed because it was fairly simple. The analysis section of the posttest involved questions on art elements in paragraph one and on art principles in paragraph two. Interpretation included identifying what culture made the piece, explaining three characteristics of the artwork that helped identify the culture that made it, and three facts about the culture or the significance of the piece to the culture (paragraph three and four). The judgment section, in paragraph five, asked students to explain which piece they liked better and why. The student’s percentage for each section was calculated, and if they had a 100 to 90%, they were listed as advanced in the pretest/posttest comparison chart (see Figure 26). If they had 89 to 80%, they were proficient, 79 to 70% was basic, and anything below 69% was below basic.

When my story was written, I again began to examine my codes, bins, and graphic organizer. I realized that the straight boxes of my first graphic organizer reminded me of my old teaching methods where a lecture would introduce cultural material and then a related project would be created. Although I felt there was a strong connection between the culture and the project, the students rarely

understood the cultural and historical context. Dewey stated that when subject matter is taught in isolation it remains there, locked away until the exact conditions under which it was acquired appear again (Dewey, 1997). I did not want the graphic organizer to represent the “water-tight compartments” mentioned by Dewey (1997). I went back and reread my goals for the project from my researcher stance, my literature review, and my purpose statement. I then created my current graphic organizers.

The first graphic organizer uses the image of a waterfall by Japanese artist Hokusai to represent the observed and reported experiences when the cultural and historical context was taught using learning cycles and incorporated with the production of crafts (see Figure 24). The four standards are together in one circle. Under the standards’ circle are the techniques of learning cycles, small group activities, and practice sessions through which ideas flowed into the discussion, artwork, and museum trip bins.

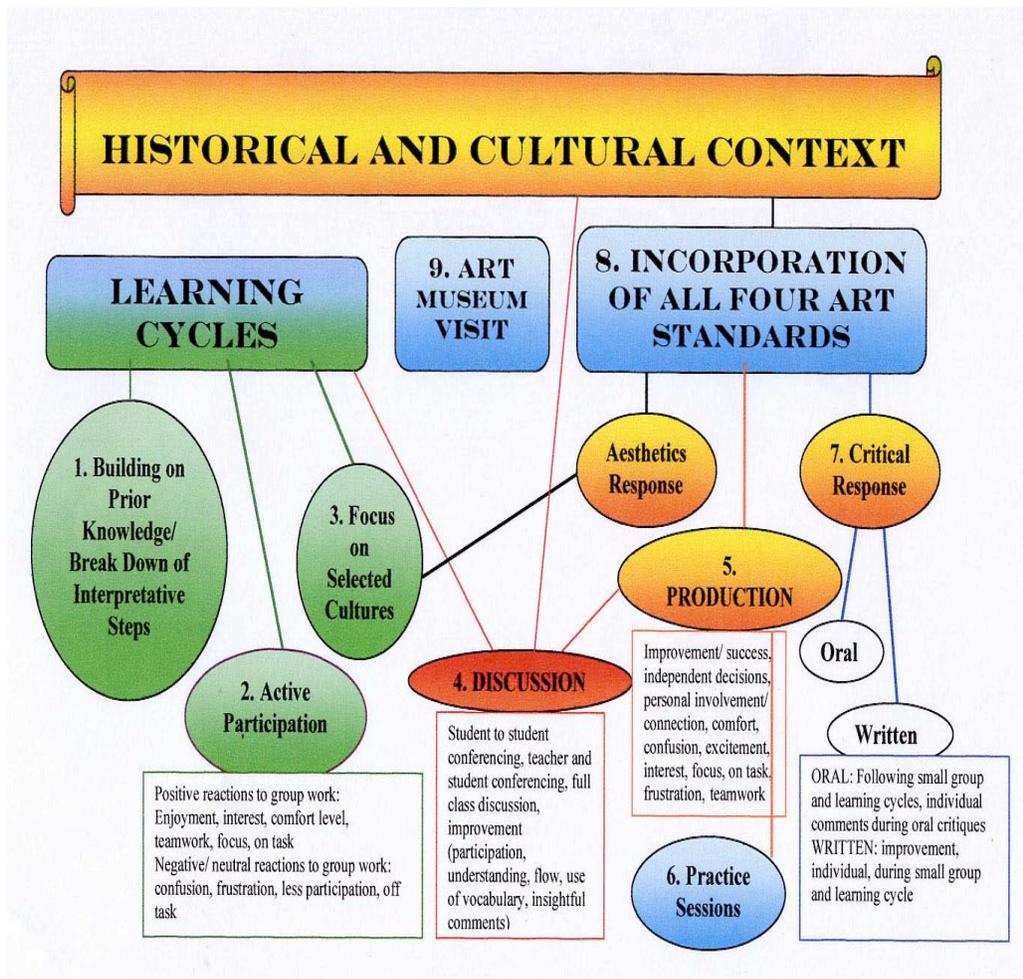
I was worried that the drawing did not clarify the connections so I created an additional graphic organizer that had a more typical look and included the codes (see Figure 25). The process of creating multiple graphic organizers helped me to organize my thoughts. This was an essential step in extracting themes, because “if themes ‘reside’ anywhere, they reside in our heads from our thinking about our data and creating links as we understand them” (Ely, et al., 1999, p. 206).

*What are the observed and reported experiences when historical and cultural context is taught using learning cycles and incorporated with production?*



Figure 24. Graphic Organizer of bins based off Hokusai Katsushika's *Amida Waterfall on the Kiso Highway*.

*What are the observed and reported experiences when historical and cultural context is taught using learning cycles and incorporated with production?*



*Figure 25.* Second graphic organizer of bins and codes. The four art standards are in yellow/orange, the actions taken are in blue, green refers to bins related directly to the learning cycles and small group activities, and the numbers refer to the corresponding themes.

## FINDINGS

The study was designed to improve my methods of teaching the standard of historical and cultural context in order to encourage a deeper appreciation and understanding of art in my students. During my study, I observed and reported on the experiences in Crafts when cultural and historical perspectives were taught using learning cycles and incorporated with the production of crafts. I found that *learning cycles and the incorporation of the four art standards were beneficial to my students in developing meaningful connections to artwork*. More specifically the following nine themes emerged after analyzing the data collected:

### Theme One:

#### **Building on Prior Knowledge and Breaking Down Interpretative Steps**

*By breaking down the interpretative steps and building on students' prior knowledge, students developed the skills and understanding needed for art interpretation.* Small groups of students were asked to explore something familiar with an unfamiliar format broken down into steps. For example, in phase one of learning cycle one, students examined logos, which are familiar to them. Students worked with their group to determine the logo's meaning, cultural importance, and similarities to other logos. These questions took one segment of a formal critique and asked students to focus on that aspect. We next discussed this information as a full class as I added new content, such as specific art elements and principles. Students then analyzed a Pennsylvania German art piece using the

same format they had completed with the logos. Rather than asking the small groups to critique an unknown artwork with no preparation, this method starts with something familiar (logos) to introduce a new format, such as the questions on function, process, and cultural themes (see Appendix G). Then the format, which is now known to the students, is applied to a new artwork.

In the final learning cycle, students began with unfamiliar artwork but the familiar critique format. Rather than questions, the students were simply asked to describe, analyze, interpret, and judge the artwork. Students' skills had been developed to the point that a longer critique with less breakdown of interpretive and criticism steps was possible. Students held in-depth conversations in pairs to explore the artwork. The paired students then shared their discoveries with the class. Although most (10/13) students stated on the mid-point survey that they only felt somewhat prepared to discuss and write about other culture's art, the final learning cycle demonstrates a development of skill. Vygotsky (1978) explains this phenomenon stating,

Once a child has learned to perform an operation, he thus assimilates some structural principle whose sphere of application is other than just the

operations of the type on whose basis the principle was assimilated. (p. 83-84)

The students' skills and understanding of critiquing art formally transferred from the specific Pennsylvania German and Japanese pieces discussed earlier to the contemporary fiber art.

### **Theme Two: Active Participation**

*Most students had a positive reaction to the learning cycles and activities that were carefully planned to encourage active participation.* Learning cycles and small group activities were most effective when students had a hands-on task. As Dewey stated, “The belief that all genuine education comes about through experience does not mean that all experiences are genuinely or equally educative” (Dewey, 1997, p. 25). For example, not all the learning cycles or small group activities allowed students to construct their own understandings. As Bevevino, Dengel, and Adams (1999) state, learning cycles and small group activities are best used sparingly when you want students to construct their own knowledge about complicated, controversial, or crucial content.

In learning cycle two, I wanted students to build on the introduction to Pennsylvania German art and cultural background from learning cycle one by comparing their own culture with Pennsylvania German culture (refer to p. 34). A well-planned learning cycle would have given the students the chance to discuss both cultures. Unfortunately, I had a hard time coming up with an activity, and I worried that the students would have a difficult time understanding what defines a culture. Rather than using the exploration (first) phase to work out their understanding of culture with some type of task, I created a list of questions. The questions asked about music, food, housing, etc. I thought of them as conversation starters, but the students only saw a worksheet to be filled out. As Freire (2005)

explains, “If the dialoguers expect nothing to come of their efforts, their encounter will be empty and sterile, bureaucratic and tedious” (p. 92). I observed many signs of disinterest ranging from students talking about other topics to students working on their tile project. The group written responses also showed a lower level of interest.

During phase two, discussion, I asked groups to share just a few of the comments in order to speed up the process. In phase three, application, I had students look through Pennsylvania German art and informative readings in order to find clues to the Pennsylvania German culture. I then had students read their responses to the whole class and take notes on expanded information. This process had its benefits and drawbacks.

It was beneficial to space the Pennsylvania German information out in smaller chunks rather than hearing it all in one class with no break. The students did not complain about taking notes on historical and cultural information, because they were used to it being incorporated into the class. By having students read their responses and then adding more related information, students had a familiar structure to follow to record notes that made sense to them. This is shown through the notes photocopied from their notebooks and from the responses on the posttest and written critique responses mentioned in the story. Also, when interviewed about the way information on the Pennsylvania Germans was presented, Hannah

stated, “A lecture is harder because you give it all to everyone at once and it’s harder to take in.”

Unfortunately, there were many negatives to this learning cycle. Obviously, students did not construct their own understanding of culture as seen by the signs of disinterest. The timing of this learning cycle, a few days from the learning cycle one, was a mistake. The students were in the middle of the sgraffito tile and wanted to work on it, so learning cycle two disturbed the natural flow of the class. Despite this less successful learning cycle, the overall student response to them was positive.

Although two students commented on the mid-point survey that the group activities got repetitive, 11 out of 13 students said they participated fully in the small group activities and learning cycles and 8 out of 13 stated their peers participated fully. Eight out of 13 also agreed that they learned more about Pennsylvania German culture and art through the small groups than they would have through teacher lectures alone. The high level of student participation is also recorded in my participant observation notes and explained in the story. In addition, some students even made comments about the activities being fun. Written work of the students, such as the posttest and critiques of projects, also demonstrated a positive response to the learning cycles and small group activities.

### **Theme Three: Focus on Selected Cultures' Aesthetics**

*Focusing on selected cultures through learning cycles and production allowed students to develop a deeper understanding of the culture's aesthetic. I selected the Pennsylvania German and Japanese cultures to focus on rather than overwhelm the students with multiple cultures. By focusing on only two cultures students were able to gain a deeper understanding of each culture's aesthetic. This understanding prepared them to look more closely and critically at other work so that fresh understanding of unknown work developed more quickly. Most students also identified with either the Pennsylvania German or Japanese aesthetic, which helped them define their own aesthetic for the fiber projects.*

The Pennsylvania German culture was selected because of its connection to the geographic location of the school. The Japanese culture was selected because many students in the past have wanted to incorporate symbols from the Asian culture into their work and the aesthetic is very different from Pennsylvania German's aesthetic. We began with the Pennsylvania German culture. Students used examples of Pennsylvania German artwork in learning cycles, small group activities, and as inspiration for production. Students had to use Pennsylvania Germans' aesthetic of borders, repeated motifs, and little negative space. The Pennsylvania German pieces also used symbols representing important factors of their life and culture, such as God and agriculture. Students were asked to create a piece that used symbols that were important to them personally. For example,

Kevin selected the Yankee logo stating, “I bleed blue and white” (see Figure 11). This created a connection between the student and his artwork and a deeper understanding of the Pennsylvania German aesthetic for the student. A similar progression occurred with the incorporation of Japanese culture’s simple, humble, and natural aesthetic into students’ coil or wheel production work. Students were also able to identify and explain the aesthetics of the Pennsylvania German and Japanese cultures through writing in the posttest essay.

The students’ production work shows they successfully and creatively incorporated the Pennsylvania German and Japanese aesthetics into their pieces. In addition, it is clear from their writings in self-critiques that students understood the decisions they were making in their work. The structure of the cultural aesthetics was excellent preparation for the exploration of students’ own aesthetic sense in the fiber project. Four students mentioned on the final survey that the fiber projects were their favorite because they had more freedom. It is a delicate balance to have a lesson or project’s objectives guide, but not restrict the students’ creativity. Dewey (1997) mentions this balance when he asks, what good is it to gain the expected amount of information, if in the process you lose your individuality. Dewey also comments on complete freedom being limiting. Students can benefit from the wisdom of teachers or, in this case, the wisdom of other cultures’ aesthetics. The examination of cultural aesthetics through learning cycles and production built students’ thinking skills so that students were

prepared to make challenging, creative, and thoughtful statements in art in conjunction with developing their own sense of aesthetics.

#### **Theme Four: Discussion**

*The small group activities and learning cycles led to insightful comments during small group, individual, and large group discussions demonstrating improvement in understanding.* An example of this can be found in learning cycle three (refer to p. 34). In phase one, students worked together to create a plate design that fit the project objectives. The play on page 52 records the thoughtful and inclusive conversations of two of the four small groups. In phase two, we discussed the plates as a whole class. Students remained focused on the conversation, despite the noise of work being done on the sink. The students leaned forward and fluidly offered comments without pause. Students who were not the required group speaker volunteered thoughtful comments. When students worked on their individual journal and sketch, in phase three, they continued to have insightful comments as detailed in the narrative starting on page 55 and the images of the Pennsylvania German projects. The completed Pennsylvania German pieces demonstrate understanding of the concepts discussed during learning cycle three. In addition, the written work of the students expressed comprehension of the information covered.

On the final survey, half of the students said that they felt more comfortable talking about historic and cultural craft pieces from the Japanese and

Pennsylvania German cultures. I also observed that the learning cycles and small group activities allowed students to feel more comfortable discussing artwork. The ability to talk about Pennsylvania German and Japanese artwork spilled over into production work. As students made their clay projects, they would often discuss their progress with each other or with me. While students were frustrated and confused at times, comfort with peers and teamwork, developed in the small group activities, led to students working well together during production. I was impressed with the thoughtful comments they made to each other and to me about their projects. This led to the students making more independent and careful decisions about the aesthetics of their artwork.

For example, when working on the Japanese project with table one on the nineteenth day of class, Katie and I discussed how she was going to finish evenly curving and sizing her tea bowls (see Figure 17). Lucy explained to me how she was going to make the form go in (see Figure 14). Tara asked me if her form should be taller, and we discussed it by looking at her sketch (see Figure 14). Annie asked her table, "Can someone tell me if this looks okay?" Tricia responded, "It's slanting." Tara added, "We like to be honest at this table." (see Figure 18). The students were truly thinking about the aesthetics of the pieces they were making and were communicating this with peers and myself.

Following the ceramic projects described in the narrative, we began work on a fiber batik project. I started the fiber unit with a short reading assignment and

some questions based on it, rather than a learning cycle, which takes quite a bit of class time. I expected that the students would be open to discussion of historical and cultural fiber information because the students had done so well with speaking about art during the ceramic unit. However, without the comfort of the learning cycle and small group work, students were unwilling to volunteer their individual answers to the large group discussion. Students only responded after being called on. Some students had not completed the written assignment at all. During production, they still spoke intelligently about the processes and aesthetics, but they were not ready to make independent comments about history and culture in the large group without support. For the second fiber project, I decided that it was worth the time to use a learning cycle so the students would be prepared to take part in a worthwhile whole class discussion.

### **Theme Five: Production**

*The experiences of examining historical and cultural art in learning cycles and small group activities strengthened students' studio production.*

Incorporation of historical and cultural context with production and the use of learning cycles led to more personal connection and understanding of the students' own and other cultures' artwork within the study. As Freedman and Wood (1999) state, art production allows students to explore personally the concepts and techniques used in the art history works they view. The clearest evidence of the impact of the historical and cultural context on production work

comes from the students' ceramic artwork. Although four students commented on the final survey that they liked the fiber art pieces better because they could choose images not related to a specific culture, most students were pleased with their Pennsylvania German and Japanese inspired pieces. The information discussed and observed from cultural artwork and information was reinforced through the use of the cultural (Japanese and Pennsylvania German) aesthetic in their own work. Short's (1998) research in his art program also demonstrated that art production improves with art history instruction providing deeper understanding and motivation.

On the mid-point survey, a few (4/13) students agreed and most (8/13) students somewhat agreed that learning about the Pennsylvania German culture and art improved their project. Most (11/13) students also somewhat agreed that making a clay piece that incorporates Pennsylvania German characteristics made them appreciate Pennsylvania German art more (1 out of 13 agreed, and 1 out of 13 disagreed). The evidence of the students' artwork completed throughout the study demonstrates the students' creative application of the PA German, Japanese, and their own sense of aesthetics. Observations of student discussions show how the students carefully came to decisions about their artwork with advice from peers and consideration of the concepts to which they had been introduced.

### **Theme Six: Practice Sessions**

*Practice sessions, which followed the learning cycle format, improved students' understanding of techniques leading to more successful production work.* The practice sessions are mentioned only briefly throughout the story, but are an important lesson for me in the study. Technical exercises and activities, or practice sessions, are a simple concept adapted from Bates' (2000) presentation of product-orientated teaching models. A teaching model is a diagram that presents the sequence or steps used to teach a unit of study. Bates states that students should have an opportunity to practice, build, and explore skills, media, techniques, and ideas before completing a creative product.

Although in the story I did not list the practices as learning cycles, they fit in well with the learning cycle structure. The first phase, exploration, is completed through a short demonstration and time for the students to explore a technique. During the second phase, discussion and new content, students are prepared to follow the in-depth demonstration and ask informed questions because they have had hands-on experience. In phase three, application, students confidently apply their understanding of the technique to their sketch concept and final graded project.

Students were given time to practice on sample tiles before scraping into their own sgraffito tiles. The sgraffito tile project was an opportunity to work with the Pennsylvania German aesthetic on a flat piece and to explore the basics of clay.

This prepared the students for the Pennsylvania German slab project. Students also had a brief demonstration and time to play with slab forms. Those students who had worked in slab before were encouraged to challenge themselves with difficult forms, which they would have been hesitant to do on a graded project. Students also were given time to try the wheel, coil building, and glazing.

These practice sessions improved students' confidence and understanding of techniques, which led to more successful production work. The projects pictured throughout the story serve as evidence of the students' developed skill with clay. In addition, six of the students mentioned on the final survey that the practice sessions helped them do well on the piece they were most proud of. In the observational notes, there are many instances where students stated they were excited to work, actually started work before class began, or confidently discussed the techniques with each other or with me. This led students to make independent informed decisions about their art pieces.

The drawback to practice sessions is the time it takes. While artistic process is as, or more valuable, than the final product, time is a valuable commodity in the classroom. It is difficult to find time for exploration within all of the practical issues, such as clay drying, student absences, snow days, testing dates, meeting all the standards, and completing numerical grades on time for report cards. The end result, of well-crafted projects made through the conscious decisions and actions

of the students, is worth the time. Practice sections led to quality over quantity of projects.

### **Theme Seven: Critical Responses**

*Learning cycles and small group activities on cultural and historical contexts improved students' individual written critical responses, but the oral critical responses were unchanged.* The oral critique responses occurred during group critiques of student artwork, while the written critical responses were completed in self-critique statements and tests. The posttest essay was compared with the pretest responses. For the posttest, more specific knowledge was expected for the proficient and advanced ratings. I kept the traditional criticism format from the pretest (description, analysis, interpretation, and judgment), but changed the phrasing of the interpretation questions from Erickson's (1994,1998) wording. An example from the pretest is "How did life back then make a difference in the way the artwork looks? (Erickson, 1994). On the posttest, the related question is, "How can you tell what culture made the piece? Give three identifying characteristics that you see." I felt that a change in wording would help clarify, for the students, what information was required on the graded posttest. Although it was difficult to make an exact comparison between the pretest and posttest because of the different formats, all students except Brad showed an improvement in ratings on at least one area (analysis, interpretation, or

judgment) (see Figure 26). The description section was fairly simple and; therefore, was not included in the charts.

<b>Student</b>	<b>Pretest: Analysis</b>	<b>Posttest: Analysis</b>	<b>Pretest: Interpretation</b>	<b>Posttest: Interpretation</b>	<b>Pretest: Judgment</b>	<b>Posttest: Judgment</b>
<i>Annie</i>	proficient	advanced	proficient	basic	proficient	advanced
<i>David</i>	basic	advanced	below basic	below basic	basic	basic
<i>Sarah</i>	proficient	advanced	proficient	proficient	basic	advanced
<i>Kim</i>	proficient	advanced	proficient	advanced	proficient	advanced
<i>Tricia</i>	blank	basic	below basic	below basic	below basic	basic
<i>Brad</i>	below basic	below basic	below basic	below basic	below basic	below basic
<i>Kevin</i>	proficient	advanced	basic	below basic	basic	advanced
<i>Heidi</i>	proficient	advanced	basic	below basic	basic	advanced
<i>Ned</i>	proficient	advanced	basic	proficient	basic	advanced
<i>Tara</i>	proficient	advanced	basic	advanced	basic	advanced
<i>Lori</i>	proficient	advanced	proficient	proficient	Incomplete	advanced
<i>Hannah</i>	proficient	advanced	basic	proficient	basic	advanced
<i>Katie</i>	blank	advanced	proficient	advanced	basic	advanced
<i>Lucy</i>	proficient	advanced	basic	advanced	basic	advanced
<b>Key:</b>			=lowered		= improved	

Figure 26. Comparison of pretest and posttest. Blue represents lowered scores, yellow represents improved scores, and white represents scores that stayed the same.

In the analysis section, students explained the use of art elements and principles. All students, except Brad, showed an improvement in analysis. While Brad enjoyed working individually on artwork, he was unmotivated to focus on the other aspects of the class. In fact, Brad did not improve on the rating chart in analysis, interpretation, or judgment. However, if his individual written response

is examined, one can see that he did improve somewhat. For example, when asked what did artwork mean to the Pennsylvania Germans in the pretest, Brad stated, “a plate.” In the posttest Brad writes, “PA German was the culture that made this piece. I can tell they made this piece because there is no space not taken up. It is also colorful.” His answer gives a specific observation of the characteristics of the Pennsylvania German aesthetic. In the judgment section, all but David and Brad improved. I believe David’s frequent absences contributed to his low posttest results.

Although six students improved in interpretation, five students stayed at the same rating, and three students had lower ratings on the posttest interpretation. Erickson (1994, 1998) also found in his research that interpretation was not a natural task for most students. Specifically Erickson (1994, 1998) found that students could discuss artwork from a personal point of view or the point of view of the artist, but rarely thought about an artist’s intention with an image. Students also had a hard time understanding how someone might view art in another place or time. The most difficult type of interpretation involves understanding the cultural impact of art (Erickson 1994, 1998). Therefore, it is not unexpected that students would have the lowest rating results on the interpretation section of the posttest, which asked students to specifically explain the connection between an artwork and its culture.

According to the pretest and posttest comparison chart, Annie, Kevin, and Heidi's ratings lowered from the pretest to posttest in interpretation. Despite this rating, when you examine their individual written responses, it becomes clear that the general responses given in the pretest evolved into specific commentary of the culture's aesthetic on the posttest (see Figure 27).

<b>Student</b>	<b>Response on pretest to what the artwork meant to people back then</b>	<b>Excerpt from interpretation section of the posttest essay</b>
<b>Annie</b>	<i>Artwork was important because it conveyed emotions and it was a skillful hobby.</i>	<i>You can tell it is a Japanese piece because of the sense of harmony it has with the natural combination of the colors and the free form. . . . The Japanese highly value the tea ceremonies . . . . Japanese like a sense of harmony. This can be acknowledged by the way the teahouse is decorated with natural things such as branches and the tea sets are made with natural materials such as clay.</i>
<b>Kevin</b>	<i>It probably had personal meaning.</i>	<i>You can tell that the PA Germans have made this piece. You can tell because it relates to nature, the design is elaborate, and there isn't much negative space. It was very important for the PA Germans to work hard for the important things and you can see that in this piece.</i>
<b>Heidi</b>	<i>The art was part of essential things for life; like plates.</i>	<i>This piece is from the Japanese culture. The piece has a perfectly made foot. Also the glaze and decoration has a very simplistic style. The Japanese culture makes their pieces asymmetrical so it isn't perfect like nature and uses simple designs for tranquility.</i>

Figure 27. Comparison of student writing from pretest and posttest.

In addition to students demonstrating their skills in the posttest critical response essay, students' survey responses reveal that they felt more confident about their skills. On the mid-point survey, 9 out of 13 students stated they felt

they could better identify Pennsylvania German art and its characteristics now. Five out of 13 agreed and 5 out of 13 somewhat agreed that they could better discuss and write about Pennsylvania German art and its characteristics now.

Although students did well with their written critiques, students were unsure of their individual abilities to critique artwork orally. For example, at the end of each project, each student is assigned a peer's work to grade using a rubric of objectives. Students then must present their peer's work to the class with the strengths and weaknesses. Other students are invited to make comments about the work. Although students were able to critique the piece they were assigned to, most of them did not volunteer to make any further comments. I would have liked to see students' confidence in this area grow more.

### **Theme Eight: Incorporation of All Four Art Standards**

*Incorporating historical and cultural context into production, criticism, and aesthetics through learning cycles and small group activities helped students develop their own understandings.* Although I have always included the four required art standard areas of production, historical/cultural context, aesthetics responses, and critical responses in the crafts class, the historical and cultural standard was not truly integrated. It was often part of the introduction of a new technique or design problem, which was left behind when students became involved in making their project. In my study, I worked to teach historical and cultural information incorporated into all the other standard areas rather than in

isolation. Instead of lecturing about many cultures and artworks on the first day of a project, I selected a few images from one culture that the students explored in the learning cycles and small group activities throughout the project. The objectives for each of the ceramic projects involved applying characteristics of Pennsylvania German or Japanese art. These characteristics represented the aesthetic, overall look of what the culture finds pleasing in art, which in turn reflected historical and cultural context. In addition, we discussed the historical and cultural context directly through several activities, such as watching the Japanese Tea Ceremony video.

The posttest essay asked students to complete a standard critique format where they described the artwork, analyzed the art elements and principles, interpreted the historical and cultural context, and judged the piece. Students showed a clear improvement from pretest to posttest in these areas as seen in figures 25 and 26. In addition the multiple-choice section of the posttest showed comprehension of the technical skills as well as factual information about the cultures studied. Only three students got less than an 18 out of 20 questions (Brad 17/20, Kevin 15/20, Tara 17/20). Nine out of 14 students responded on the final survey that compared to the beginning of the craft class, they knew a lot more about the history and cultural importance of crafts from the Pennsylvania German and Japanese cultures (4/13 more, 1/13 the same amount).

The students' posttest, artwork, surveys, and my observations demonstrate improvement in understanding the four standard areas. Historical and cultural information was not memorized for the test, but was applied to artwork and discussed in individual, small group, and full class discussions. The aesthetics of each culture was incorporated into the artwork and tied to the cultural facts through discussion. The criticism steps of description, analysis, interpretation, and judgment were broken down and explored with small groups preparing students to critique artwork individually through writing. Rather than being lectured to, students applied, discussed, and used the concepts to develop their own understandings.

### **Theme Nine: Art Museum Visit**

*Field trips to museums play an important role in teaching historical and cultural context and encouraging an interest in the arts.* One of my original goals of my study was to foster a lifelong interest in the arts in my students and to wow them with art's power rather than bore them with facts. While it is difficult to determine if an interest in the arts is life long, a trip to a museum, such as the Philadelphia Museum of Art, goes a long way in encouraging interest and wowing the students. My observations of the students' enjoyment and involvement in the museum pieces they saw demonstrate the importance of fieldtrips to see the real thing. Although not all the students chose to attend, most of the students who did enjoyed the trip. Six out of nine said they would go to the art museum again and

the trip made them look forward to making more crafts with different materials.

Seven out of nine somewhat agreed that the museum trip made them look forward to learning more about crafts' cultural and historical importance. Many of the students stated that they wished we had more time to look around the museum.

## FINAL REFLECTION

Dewey (1997) emphasized that in a search for new methods, we should not throw out the old. There is a space in teaching for lecturing, but learning cycles and small groups are a great alternative. In fact, the learning cycles worked well when paired with mini-lectures emphasizing and expanding on the information the students' discovered during their group discussions. The learning cycles and small groups allowed students to be involved with constructing their understanding rather than being told what to memorize.

I will continue to use learning cycles in all of my classes, as appropriate. The techniques of small groups and learning cycles take finesse and careful planning. As with any technique, the teacher must adapt it to the needs of the students. Further learning cycle research could focus on the observed and reported experiences during that process. I would also like to use learning cycles and small group activities more effectively to encourage students' confidence in critiquing artwork orally, as I feel that this area was not as successful in this study. On the other hand, students were very successful with creative production concepts, and I would like to observe more closely the connection between learning cycles and creativity.

This research did more than add a trick to my teaching bag; it changed how I think about instruction. As Hilliard (2002) comments, "It is not the bag of tricks but the general attitude of a teacher that is important" (p.101). When

planning a lecture, I have always considered how to break the information down so it is understandable, but now I also ask myself how the students can explore this concept in a hands-on manner. As Freire states,

I cannot think *for others*, nor can others think *for me*. Even if the people's thinking is superstitious or naïve, it's only as they rethink their assumptions in action that they can change. Producing and acting upon their own ideas—not consuming those of others—must constitute that process. (p.108)

Instead of developing teacher techniques, I am working to create an atmosphere of respectful listening by stepping back from the teacher role and allowing students to interpret the information in their own ways. Instead of art history being seen as a separate time where the teacher lectures with unknown terms in her own language, students investigate with peers in a language comfortable to them. Therefore, an overall class attitude of incorporated and thoughtful historical and cultural responses can develop, where students are prepared to discuss the topics with the whole class, creating a common language between student and student, teacher and student. Through this classroom environment, growth can occur.

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**APPENDIXES**  
**Appendix A: HSIRB Letter**



July 12, 2005

Dana S. Mooney  
1342 Easton Avenue  
Bethlehem, PA 18018

Dear Dana S. Mooney:

The Moravian College Human Subjects Internal Review Board has approved your proposal: Teaching Art History in Secondary Craft Courses. Given the materials submitted, your proposal received an expedited review. A copy of your proposal will remain with the HSIRB Chair.

It is requested, however, that you consider the following points before continuing your research.

The Human Subjects Internal Review Board's review of the proposal pertains to data collection between the dates of August 30, 2006 and December 23, 2006 only.

Please note that the current Parental Consent form should be addressed to both parents and guardians. The forms both parents and the principal provide an incorrect phone number for Dr. Shosh as well as a number of grammatical errors, and a change in font. In addition, the faculty sponsor indicated on all consent forms should be your MEDU 702 instructor. Please be certain to provide the correct name and telephone number.

Please note that it may be necessary for you to provide Informed Consent forms to students aged 18 or older, as these individuals are considered legal adults.

Please be sure that students understand that they may withdraw from the study at any time without penalty.

Please remember that all students in the classroom, regardless of whether they participate in the study, must be given equal opportunity to provide feedback to the classroom teacher. Allowing this opportunity prevents those who do not participate from being identified as such and prevents particular subjects' answers from being "singled out." It is possible to report upon data only from those who become the focus of the study.

Please consider the possibility of a pregnant participant, specifically the way(s) in which she may be affected by adhesives, solvents, and other substances used in the classroom.

Please note that the "minor details" that you indicate may be altered may not change the content, implications, or tone of any subject responses.

Please note the committee's preference that, whenever possible, data is not stored on school grounds.

Please note that if you intend on venturing into other topics than the ones indicated in your proposal, you must inform the HSIRB about what those topics will be.

Should any other aspect of your research change or extend past one year of the date of this letter, you must file those changes or extensions with the HSIRB before implementation.

Copies of this letter have been sent to you through e-mail and campus mail. Please retain at least one copy for your files. Good luck with the rest of your research.

Debra Wetcher-Hendricks  
Chair, Human Subjects Internal Review Board  
Moravian College  
610-861-1415 (voice)  
medwh02@moravian.edu

## Appendix B: Principal Consent Letter

August 5, 2006

Dear [REDACTED],

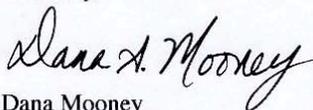
I am currently taking graduate courses toward a Master's degree in curriculum and instruction at Moravian College. As part of my course work, I will be conducting a systematic study of my own teaching from August 28<sup>th</sup> through December 22<sup>nd</sup>.

My research will examine better ways to teach students the multicultural and historical background of crafts as well as interpretation skills. The study will be done using small group discussions, class discussions, and the interpretation of many pieces from various cultures and times. I will be gathering information to support my study through student interviews, surveys, work samples, and observation. All of the students' names and the name of the school will be kept confidential. Any information that may reveal a student's identity will be altered to protect anonymity. No names will be included on work samples or in any reports of my study. All research materials will be kept in a secure location in my home.

All students will be participating in interpreting and learning about the historical and cultural background of crafts as part of the regular curriculum, therefore no student will be signaled out as a participant or non- participant. Students may withdraw from the study at any time without any penalty. Withdrawal will not affect a student's grade and if a student withdraws from the study I will not use any data pertaining to the child. A student will only be part of the study if I receive written parent or guardian permission.

If you have any questions or concerns about my research at any time, please contact me at ext. [REDACTED]. My Moravian faculty sponsor, Dr. Zales, can also be contacted by email at crzales@moravian.edu. If you approve of my in class study, please sign and return one copy of the letter. Thank you for your help.

Sincerely,



Dana Mooney  
Craft Teacher

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I understand that Dana Mooney will be researching the best methods of teaching historical and cultural art interpretation skills in the crafts classroom. As principal of [REDACTED] I give permission for Dana Mooney to conduct this teacher action research study in her craft classes during August 28<sup>th</sup> to December 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2006.

Principal's name (printed) \_\_\_\_\_

Principal's signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: 8/8/06

### Appendix C: Parent/ Guardian Consent Letter

August 28, 2006

Dear Parents and Guardians,

I am currently taking graduate courses toward a Master's degree in curriculum and instruction at Moravian College. As part of my course work, I will be conducting a systematic study of my own teaching from August 28<sup>th</sup> through December 22<sup>nd</sup>.

My research will examine better ways to teach students the multicultural and historical background of crafts as well as interpretation skills. The study will be done using small group discussions, class discussions, and the interpretation of many pieces from various cultures and times. I will be gathering information to support my study through student interviews, surveys, work samples, and observation. All of the students' names and the name of the school will be kept confidential. Any information that may reveal a student's identity will be altered to protect anonymity. No names will be included on work samples or in any reports of my study. All research materials will be kept in a secure location in my home.

All students will be participating in interpreting and learning about the historical and cultural background of crafts as part of the regular curriculum, therefore no student will be signaled out as a participant or non- participant. Your child may withdraw from the study at any time without any penalty. Withdrawal will not affect your child's grades. If your child withdraws, I will not use any data pertaining to your child in my study.

If you have any questions or concerns about my research at any time, please contact me at the school \_\_\_\_\_ or through email \_\_\_\_\_. My Moravian faculty sponsor, Dr. Zales, can also be contacted by email at [crzales@moravian.edu](mailto:crzales@moravian.edu). If you approve of your child being a participant in my teacher research, please sign and return the bottom portion of this letter. Thank you for your help.

Sincerely,

Dana Mooney  
Craft Teacher

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I understand that Mrs. Mooney will be researching the best methods of teaching historical and cultural art interpretation skills in the crafts classroom and my child has permission to be a participant in the study.

Student name (printed) \_\_\_\_\_

Parent/ Guardian signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

### Appendix D: 18-year-old Student Consent Letter

August 28, 2006

Dear 18 yr- old Student,

I am currently taking graduate courses toward a Master's degree in curriculum and instruction at Moravian College. As part of my course work, I will be conducting a systematic study of my own teaching from August 28<sup>th</sup> through December 22<sup>nd</sup>.

My research will examine better ways to teach students the multicultural and historical background of crafts as well as interpretation skills. The study will be done using small group discussions, class discussions, and the interpretation of many pieces from various cultures and times. I will be gathering information to support my study through student interviews, surveys, work samples, and observation. All of the students' names and the name of the school will be kept confidential. Any information that may reveal a student's identity will be altered to protect anonymity. No names will be included on work samples or in any reports of my study. All research materials will be kept in a secure location in my home.

All students will be participating in interpreting and learning about the historical and cultural background of crafts as part of the regular curriculum, therefore no student will be signaled out as a participant or non- participant. You may withdraw from the study at any time without any penalty. Withdrawal will not affect your grades. If you withdraw, I will not use any data pertaining to you in the study.

If you have any questions or concerns about my research at any time, please contact me at the school \_\_\_\_\_ or through email \_\_\_\_\_. My Moravian faculty sponsor, Dr. Zales, can also be contacted by email at [crzales@moravian.edu](mailto:crzales@moravian.edu). If you approve of being a participant in my teacher research, please sign and return the bottom portion of this letter. Thank you for your help.

Sincerely,

Dana Mooney  
Craft Teacher

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I understand that Mrs. Mooney will be researching the best methods of teaching historical and cultural art interpretation skills in the crafts classroom and give permission to be a participant in the study.

Student name (printed) \_\_\_\_\_

18 yr. Old Student signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

## Appendix E: Student Survey

*Circle the italics that best describe your answer and fill in any blanks. Thank you.*

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Grade: 9 10 11 12 Class: 4ACE, 2 BDF, 4 BDF

1. **I selected this class because I:** *am interested in the art career:* \_\_\_\_\_  
*Like art/ needed a credit/ other:* \_\_\_\_\_
2. **I previously had these art courses:** *Art I/ Art II/ AP ART/ How to Draw/ Ceramics/ Fashion Design/ Interior Design/ Intro to Art/ Photo I/ Photo II/ Photo III/ Craft I/ other or private art lessons:*  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. **I have the following art courses this year:** *Art I/ Art II/ AP ART/ How to Draw/ Ceramics/ Fashion Design/ Interior Design/ Intro to Art/ Photo I/ Photo II/ Photo III/ Craft I/ other or private art lessons:*  
\_\_\_\_\_
4. **I have been to an art museum with:** *my family/ school/ never.*
5. **I have been to an art museum:** *never/ 1 or 2/3 or 4/5 or 6/7 or more times.*
6. **I enjoyed my trip to the museum:** *a lot/ some/ a little because:*  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
7. **I know a lot/ some/ a little about the history and cultural importance of crafts from various cultures.**
8. **I feel a lot/ some/ a little comfortable interpreting historic and cultural craft pieces through writing.**
9. **I feel a lot/ some/ a little comfortable talking about the interpretation of historic and cultural craft pieces.**
10. **I feel a lot/ some/ a little interested in crafts from many cultures.**
11. **I believe art and crafts are a lot/some/ a little important to America's culture.**
12. **I believe art and crafts are a lot/ some/ a little important to other cultures.**

**You can write any additional comments, explanations, or concerns here:**

## Appendix F: Pretest

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Class: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Directions: Look at the image of a historic clay piece and answer the questions about the piece in complete sentences. You will not be graded on this, but your answers will be used to see how much you already know and what you need to learn, so do your best.

### Section One: Description

- What do you notice about the artwork? (Erickson, 1994).

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- Artist name and title of piece:

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- Material and processes used in fabrication:

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- Subject matter:

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### Section Two: Analysis

- Circle the art elements and principles that you see in the artwork.

Art elements: color, line, shape, form, line, texture

Art principles: balance, unity, rhythm, pattern, contrast, and emphasis

- Describe how the two most important elements and two most important principles are used in the piece.

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### Section Three: Interpretation

- What is the purpose of the image or object? (Freedman & Wood, 1999).

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**More questions on back- please continue.**

- How was life back then different from today? (Erickson, 1994). (Recall any knowledge of the historical period, such as: lifestyle, economy, housing, clothing, family/ social structure, daily life, beliefs, ceremonies, etc.) (Bates, 2000, p. 176).

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- What did the artwork mean to people back then? (Erickson, 1994). (Consider symbolism, value to culture, etc.) (Bates, 2000, p. 176).

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- How did life back then make a difference in the way the artwork looks? (Erickson, 1994)

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#### **Section Four: Judgment**

- What does the image remind you of? (Freedman & Wood, 1999).

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- Do you like the artwork? Why or why not?

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- What questions would you like to ask to help you better understand this artwork? (Erickson, 1994).

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### Appendix G: Learning Cycle 1: Logos and PA German Art

TABLE #: \_\_\_\_\_ CLASS: \_\_\_\_\_ DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

#### LEARNING CYCLE 1: STAGE ONE: LOOKING AT CONTEMPORARY SYMBOLS SUCH AS LOGOS CRITICALLY

- Select a recorder to record notes: \_\_\_\_\_
  - Select a reporter to report to the class: \_\_\_\_\_
  - Look at the logos and other contemporary symbols in front of you. Carefully consider and discuss the following taking into consideration every group member's opinion.
1. What is the purpose or function of the contemporary symbols?
  2. What materials and process were used to fabricate or make them?
  3. What cultural themes or ideas are expressed by the symbols? What do you need to know to understand them?
  4. What is the value of them in our culture?
  5. What stylistic similarities are there between all of the logos and contemporary symbols? Think about the use of art elements and principles.

#### STAGE TWO: DISCUSS WITH THE WHOLE CLASS

#### STAGE THREE: LOOKING AT PA GERMAN ARTWORK CRITICALLY

- Select a recorder to record notes:  
\_\_\_\_\_
  - Select a reporter to report to the class:  
\_\_\_\_\_
  - Look at the PA German art object photo given to your group. Carefully consider and discuss the following taking into consideration every group member's opinion.
6. What is the purpose or function of the art object?
  7. What materials and process were used to fabricate or make it?
  8. What cultural themes or ideas are expressed by the symbols? What do you need to know to understand them?
  9. What is the value of them to the culture that made them?
  10. **When told to** quickly walk around the room to see the art objects the other tables have. What stylistic similarities are there between all of the PA German art objects? Think about the use of art elements and principles.

### Appendix H: Learning Cycle 2: Our Culture and PA German Culture

TABLE #: \_\_\_\_\_ CLASS: \_\_\_\_\_ DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

#### LEARNING CYCLE 2: STAGE ONE: LOOKING AT OUR CULTURE AND LIFESTYLE CRITICALLY

- Select a recorder to record notes: \_\_\_\_\_
- Select a reporter to report to the class: \_\_\_\_\_

**Imagine that someone from another country is asking your small group questions about American culture and lifestyle. Answer the following questions considering the different answers from the members of your group:**

1. What type of government do you live in?

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2. What food do you eat?

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3. What music do you listen to?

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4. What clothing do you wear?

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5. What type of house do you live in?

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6. How do your parents make a living?

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7. What important ceremonies have you had or been to?

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8. What do you like to do with your time?

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9. What modern objects do you think would best define your culture and lifestyle?

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STAGE TWO: DISCUSS WITH THE WHOLE CLASS

STAGE THREE: LOOKING AT PA GERMAN ARTWORK CRITICALLY

- Select a recorder to record notes: \_\_\_\_\_
- Select a reporter to report to the class: \_\_\_\_\_

**Look at the PA German art object photos given to your group and your PA German information packet. Answer every question you can and note how you know the answer.**

1. What do these objects say about their life style? (What food did they eat, what music did they listen to, what clothing did they wear, what type of houses did they live in)

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2. What do these objects say about their family and social structure? (Government)

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3. What do these objects say about their daily life and economy? (How did they make a living, what did they do with their time?)

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4. What do these objects say about their beliefs and ceremonies?

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5. What do we have in common with the PA Germans?

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**Please take out notebook paper and take some notes as we go over these answers.**

### Appendix I: PA German Inspired Journal

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Class \_\_\_\_\_

## PA German Inspired Project Journal 18 pts.

Objectives for sketch and final project:	Teacher
1. <b>Craftsmanship of form and function:</b> piece is functional (useable) with attention paid to the lip and foot and specific function such as clean cut out for candle holders and fitted lids on boxes	
2. <b>Size and Level of Difficulty:</b> If making a bowl or plate the size should be 11" x 11" minimum, all other forms should be an equivalent size, simpler forms such as candleholders or mugs should be made in multiples	
3. <b>Element use:</b> Vary the lines and shapes of motifs	
4. <b>Principle use:</b> arrange the motifs to create a sense of balance and unity between decorations and form	
5. <b>Theme:</b> personal or cultural meaning using unique motifs, sayings, and / or arrangements	
6. <b>Connection to PA German aesthetic:</b> limited negative space, use of a border, and use of repetition	
7. <b>Overall craftsmanship and neatness:</b> If sgraffito= even slip application, cleanly carved white areas and lines, if glazing= all added areas are well attached, layers and lines are neatly and deeply carved so glaze will not run between layers	

**1. Revise your sketch.** Some of you will only need to add notes on decoration techniques and colors it will be glazed. Others will have to redraw their sketch so that it will meet the objectives above. All sketches will be regraded applying the objectives above. 7 pts. total. (+2 pts. extra credit possible for more detail in sketch or answers)

**Answer the following questions. Answers should be about three sentences in length and have specific details relating to vocabulary words, your individual project sketch, and the objectives above.**

2. How does your revised project plan meet the objectives #3 + #4, art element and principle use? 6 pts.

3. How does your revised project plan meet objectives #5 + #6 personal theme and connection to PA German aesthetic? 6 pts.

### Appendix J: PA German Inspired Project Rubric

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Class \_\_\_\_\_

Select a score from 4-1 that best suits the level of completion of each row's objective.

If given all:	Percent would be:	Description would be:
4	100%	A= advanced, more than meets objectives
3.5	88%	B= meets objective well, proficient
3	75%	C= average
2.5	63%	D= basic, needs improvement
2	50%	F= below basic
1.5	38%	Incomplete

#### PA German Inspired Project

Objectives	Self	Peer	Teacher
1. <b>Craftsmanship of form and function:</b> piece is functional (useable) with attention paid to the lip and foot and specific function such as clean cut out for candle holders and fitted lids on boxes			
2. <b>Size and Level of Difficulty:</b> If making a bowl or plate the size should be 11" x 11" minimum, all other forms should be an equivalent size, simpler forms such as candleholders or mugs should be made in multiples			
3. <b>Element use:</b> Vary the lines and shapes of motifs			
4. <b>Principle use:</b> arrange the motifs to create a sense of balance and unity between decorations and form			
5. <b>Theme:</b> personal or cultural meaning using unique motifs, sayings, and / or arrangements			
6. <b>Connection to PA German aesthetic:</b> limited negative space, use of a border, and use of repetition			
7. <b>Overall craftsmanship and neatness:</b> If sgraffito= even slip application, cleanly carved white areas and lines, if glazing= all added areas are well attached, layers and lines are neatly and deeply carved so glaze will not run between layers			

**The following peer critique will be graded. (written response 6 pts.)**

**Peer Critique: Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Strength:**

\_\_\_\_\_

**Thing to Improve:**

\_\_\_\_\_

**Strength:**

\_\_\_\_\_

**Presentation to class: (verbal response 10 pts.)**

Speak loudly and clearly, give specific details related to project and objectives, pay attention during critiques, respond to other pieces not assigned to you to critique

### Appendix K: Student Mid-Point Survey

Please carefully read the comments and check off whether you agree, somewhat agree, or disagree with the statement. When I fill out a survey I always feel like the boxes don't give enough options, so if you feel that way or have other comments please write them down. Please answer honestly and do not put your name on the paper.

**Last class we worked in small groups and we thought about four qualities of American family gatherings. We then found and cut out images of objects or actions that represented these four qualities.**

	Agree	Somewhat Agree	Disagree
<b>1. The above activity helped me understand and find objects and actions in the Japanese Tea Ceremony that represented the qualities of harmony, tranquility, respect, and purity.</b>			
Comments:			
<b>2. I did better at finding the objects and actions in the video (which represent the Japanese Tea Ceremony qualities) than I would have without the American family gathering activity.</b>			
Comments:			
<b>3. The American and Japanese quality activities helped me understand a Japanese aesthetic (overall look).</b>			
Comments:			
<b>4. The American and Japanese quality activities helped me incorporate (include) a Japanese aesthetic (overall look) to my sketch for my Japanese project.</b>			
Comments:			
<b>5. After learning more about Japanese tea ceremonies and their art, I feel excited to start a project using a Japanese aesthetic.</b>			
Comments:			

Additional Comments:

*Please consider the PA German project and activities for these questions.*

	Agree	Somewhat Agree	Disagree
<b>1. I participated fully in the small group activities.</b>			
Comments:			
<b>2. My peers participated fully in the small group activities.</b>			
Comments:			
<b>3. I learned more about PA German culture and art through the small group activities than I would have from teacher lecture alone.</b>			
Comments:			
<b>4. Learning about the PA German culture and art improved my project.</b>			
Comments:			
<b>5. Next year, the teacher should teach PA German culture and art the same way.</b>			
Comments:			
<b>6. Making a clay piece that incorporates PA German characteristics (borders, limited space) made me appreciate (like) PA German art more.</b>			
Comments:			
<b>7. I feel I can better identify PA German art and its characteristics now.</b>			
Comments:			
<b>8. I feel I can better discuss and write about PA German art now.</b>			
Comments:			
<b>9. After learning how to discuss PA German art, I feel I am more prepared (ready) to discuss and write about other culture's art.</b>			
Comments:			

Additional Questions I should have asked:

Additional Comments:

## Appendix L: Japanese Project Rubric



### Japanese Tea Ceremony Project

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Select a score from 4-1 that best suits the level of completion of each row's objective.

If given all:	Percent would be:	Description would be:
4	100%	A= advanced, more than meets objectives
3.5	88%	B= meets objective well, proficient
3	75%	C= average
2.5	63%	D= basic, needs improvement
2	50%	F= below basic
1.5	38%	Incomplete
1	27%	Very incomplete



Objectives	Self	Peer	Teacher
1. Coil or wheel technique is effectively used to create a fairly symmetrical form			
2. Overall craftsmanship and even wall thickness (about 1/4" thick)			
3. Overall Japanese aesthetic to the piece with qualities of: respect, harmony, purity, tranquility, peace, spirituality, honesty, and/ or simplicity reflected			
4. Size and level of difficulty: a minimum of three 3" tea bowls or one vase a minimum of 6" high, form took control and skill			
5. Attention to functional aspects: evenly trimmed foot, even smooth lip (if teapot: fitted lid, handle and spout, if container, fitted lid)			
6. Unity between form, function, and decoration in each piece (and between all three pieces if working in multiples)			
7. Creativity and unique concept completed well such as unique textures, decoration, and/ or form			

**Self- critique: answer in complete sentences with specific detail on notebook paper. You should use your notebook in order to include art elements and principles and specific information. 15 points**

- Describe how your piece fits a Japanese aesthetic. Do not just say it is simple. Explain how it is simple and how that fits the Japanese culture. Give specific examples in your piece and from the Japanese tea ceremony.
- In the first piece, we used a PA German aesthetic. In this piece we used a Japanese aesthetic. Which overall look do you prefer and why? Discuss at least two specific examples of each in your answer.
- Did you prefer coil/ wheel or slab/ drape? Why? Which do you think you handled better technically? In your answer give specific information about each technique so it is clear you understand how to explain each technique.

## **Appendix M: Interview Questions**

### *First Interviews asked at table groups as students worked*

1. Would it have been easier to look at one picture of a whole advertisement rather than the logos? (asked to table 1: Kelly, Andrea, Lauren P., Tori)
2. Do you think answering the questions about logos first helped answer the questions about the PA German plates? (asked to table 2: Hailey, Sami, Steph, Chris)
3. Did you like working on the questions in small groups rather than just having me lecture? (asked to table 3: Dan, Nate, Lauren)
4. Do you think it was easier to pay attention to the PA German information I talked about when it was broken up by telling your group answers (compared to a lecture)? (asked to table 4: Heather, Ben)

### *Second Interviews following learning cycle 3 asked to all students as they worked*

- Do you remember that activity where we made a plate design as a group? Did you think it was fun, helpful, etc.?

### *Third Interview following the test*

- Was the test hard?
- Did you feel prepared for it?
- Was the review helpful?

## Appendix N: Review Sheet

### Crafts Test Review Sheet: PA German and Japanese clay unit

1. **PA German culture typically includes people who:** immigrated for religious freedom, work hard, fear god, believe men are head of the household, disagree with slavery, hold religion as central to life, lived in rural settings, supported the electoral process, supported the American revolution, believed in personal freedom, became integrated in the emerging American culture following the American culture

2. **PA German art characteristics:**

- Borders
- Repeated motifs
- Little negative space
- Was used on everything from barns to butter for personal enjoyment, to identify the makers of the item, and to make things “pretty”

3. **Clay Knowledge:**

- Slip is liquid clay used to bond clay pieces together
- Pieces that have been through the kiln are bisque ware and have been fired
- When glazing: Coat the inside and outside, keep the foot and base clean, do 3 even coats
- It is always essential to wedge clay, because it works out air bubbles
- Proper order of the stages of clay is: Raw clay, leather hard, green ware, bisque, glazed
- Tip for coil building: Roll the coils out quickly and about as thick as a finger so they are easy to blend
- The technique where you apply red slip over greenware white clay and scrape through is called: Sgraffito
- When clay air- dries place it in water to soften it and then wedge it
- Semi- dry clay must be dried until it is green ware so the moisture does not cause breakage

4. **Japanese ceramics characteristics:**

- Slightly asymmetrical
- allow the glaze to flow naturally
- not perfect in order to be in harmony with nature and allow the materials to form naturally, the artist is humble in working with the materials instead of completely controlling them

5. **Japanese tea ceremonies qualities:** Respect, Tranquility, Harmony, and Purity

6. **Be able to use and identify the art elements (color, line, etc.) and principles (balance, unity, pattern, etc. ) See the notebook p. 2-3.**

7. **Examples of mediums:** clay, glaze, wood, metal

8. **Examples of clay techniques:** coil, slab, drape, wheel, additive and subtractive sculpture

**Crafts Test Group Review Sheet:  
PA German and Japanese clay unit**

*With your small group select one of the pieces you are given and complete the following questions in phrases using specific information from your notebook.*

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Medium (material) used</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Technique used to construct piece: coil, slab, drape, wheel</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Purpose- is the piece functional/ decorative or sculptural?</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2 of the most important Art elements used (The art elements are: color, line, shape, form, texture, space)</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Specific examples of how the art elements are used</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2 of the most important Art principles used (The art principles are: balance, rhythm, pattern, contrast, emphasis, unity)</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Specific examples of how the art principles are used</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What culture made the piece?</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How can you tell what culture made the piece? Give 3 identifying characteristics that you see.</li> </ul> <p>1 _____ 2 _____ 3 _____</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Give 3 important informative facts about the culture and the meaning or significance of the piece.</li> </ul> <p>1 _____ 2 _____ 3 _____</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Do you like the piece as a group? Why or why not? Give at least two specific reasons relating to the above information.</li> </ul>

## Appendix O: Posttest

**Crafts Test: PA German and Japanese clay unit**

Name \_\_\_\_\_

**/70 PTS.**  
**TOTAL****Section One: Multiple Choice: 1-point each- 20 points total***Choose the one answer that best satisfies the question and write the answer on the line.*

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <p>_____ <b>1. PA Germans originally immigrated to the US:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. To make money</li> <li>b. To escape war in Germany</li> <li>c. For religious freedom</li> <li>d. All of the above</li> </ul> <p>_____ <b>2. PA German art uses:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Borders</li> <li>b. Repeated motifs</li> <li>c. Little negative space</li> <li>d. All of the above</li> </ul> <p>_____ <b>3. Liquid clay used to bond clay pieces together is called:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Sludge</li> <li>b. Slip</li> <li>c. Slop</li> <li>d. Slush</li> </ul> <p>_____ <b>4. The term fired generally refers to:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Pieces that have been through the kiln</li> <li>b. A type of glaze</li> <li>c. Ceramics that have been air dried</li> <li>d. A decorative method</li> </ul> <p>_____ <b>5. Religion was:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Not important to PA Germans</li> <li>b. Central to PA German life</li> <li>c. Less important than making money</li> <li>d. Both a and c</li> </ul> | <p>_____ <b>6. When glazing always:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Coat the inside and outside</li> <li>b. Apply 4 even coats</li> <li>c. Keep the foot and base clean</li> <li>d. Both a and c</li> <li>e. All of the above</li> </ul> <p>_____ <b>7. It is always essential to wedge clay, because:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Otherwise the clay is too solid and unworkable</li> <li>b. It gets the muscles in your hands ready to build</li> <li>c. It works out air bubbles to prevent explosions in clay</li> <li>d. The teacher has not done it for you</li> </ul> <p>_____ <b>8. When building a coil piece:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Roll the coils out quickly and about as thick as a finger so they are easy to blend</li> <li>b. Roll all the coils out and let them dry so it is quicker to connect</li> <li>c. Roll the coils out as thin and perfectly as possible in order to control the form</li> <li>d. Roll out very thick coils</li> </ul> <p>_____ <b>9. Japanese ceramics are:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Perfectly formed</li> <li>b. Symmetrical</li> <li>c. Slightly asymmetrical</li> <li>d. Both a and b</li> </ul> |
|---|---|

**10. PA German culture typically includes people who believe:**

- a. In working hard and fearing god
- b. Women are the head of the household
- c. Slavery is proper
- d. In working as little as possible

**11. PA German art was:**

- a. Only on items for special occasions
- b. Only used to protect people from evil
- c. On everything for personal enjoyment, to make things "pretty"
- d. For religious purposes only

**12. Pa Germans mostly:**

- a. Supported the American revolution because personal freedom was important to them
- b. Kept slaves
- c. Did not support the electoral process or democracy
- d. Worked in cities

**13. The proper order of the stages of clay, from beginning to end, is:**

- a. Raw clay, green ware, leather hard, bisque, glazed
- b. Raw clay, leather hard, green ware, bisque, glazed
- c. Raw clay, leather hard, stoneware, fired, glazed
- d. New clay, leather hard, green ware, glazed, bisque

**14. The technique where you apply red slip over greenware white clay and scrape through is called:**

- a. Slip art
- b. Hex signs
- c. Franktur
- d. Sgraffito

**15. When clay air- dries:**

- a. It is no longer useable, throw it out
- b. Place it in water to soften it and use it right out of the water
- c. Place it in water to soften it and then wedge it
- d. Place in a special machine to make it useable again

**16. What happened to the PA Germans?:**

- a. They lived during ancient times and were pushed westward during Germanic migrations
- b. They returned to Germany
- c. Their colonies were killed by viruses
- d. Following the American Revolution many PA Germans became integrated into the emerging American culture

**17. Chinese ceramics are different from Japanese because:**

- a. Chinese pieces are glazed neatly with detailed nature scenes
- b. Actually all Asian art looks the same
- c. Japanese pieces are glazed perfectly with nature scenes
- d. Chinese pieces allow the glaze to flow naturally

**18. Once through the kiln:**

- a. Clay is permanently hard and called green ware
- b. Clay is permanently hard and called bisque ware
- c. Clay is permanently hard only if glazed
- d. Clay can be reused if placed in water

**19. Japanese tea ceremonies reflect the qualities of:**

- a. Peace, Quiet, Relaxation, and Asymmetry
- b. Respect, Tranquility, Harmony, and Purity
- c. Purity, Peace, Spirituality, and Humility
- d. Nature, Respect, Peace, and Quiet

**20. Semi-dry clay can:**

- a. Must be dried longer until it is green ware so the moisture does not expand and cause breakage
- b. Must be dried longer until it is stoneware, so the moisture does not expand and cause breakage
- c. Must be dried longer until it is stoneware, so the moisture does not cause discoloring
- d. It is leather hard, so it is ready to go in the kiln

**Section Two: Essay: 50 points total.**

*In complete sentences on lined paper write a five-paragraph essay. The first three paragraphs should be about the piece you like best. The fourth paragraph should be about the second piece. The fifth paragraph is a comparison of both. You can write on every line as long as your answer is readable.*

Note: Grammar will be graded 3

	list the # of selected piece	PTS. POSSIBLE	PTS. EARNED
<b>In Paragraph One include the following:</b>			
• Medium (material) used		1	
• Technique used to construct piece		1	
• Purpose- is the piece functional/ decorative or sculptural?		2	
• 2 of the most important Art elements used (The art elements are: color, line, shape, form, texture, space)		2	
• Specific examples of how the art elements are used		2	
<b>In Paragraph Two include the following:</b>			
• 2 of the most important Art principles used (The art principles are: balance, rhythm, pattern, contrast, emphasis, unity, movement)		2	
• Specific examples of how the art principles are used		2	
<b>In Paragraph Three include the following:</b>			
• What culture made the piece?		1	
• How can you tell what culture made the piece? Give 3 identifying characteristics that you see.		6	
• Give 3 important informative facts about the culture and the meaning or significance of the piece.		6	
<b>In Paragraph Four include the following: (about 2nd piece)</b>	list # of piece		
• Medium (material) used		1	
• Technique used to construct piece		1	
• Purpose- is the piece functional/ decorative or sculptural?		2	
• What culture made the piece?		1	
• How can you tell what culture made the piece? Give 3 identifying characteristics that you see.		6	
• Give 3 important informative facts about the culture and the meaning or significance of the piece.		6	
<b>In Paragraph Five include the following:</b>			
• Which piece do you like better?		1	
• Explain why using two specific reasons relating to the above information		4	
		<b>50 PTS. TOTAL</b>	

about 2nd piece

## Appendix P: Final Survey

Name \_\_\_\_\_

*Please consider the question carefully and answer honestly by circling the italics that best describe your answer or by filling in any blanks with phrases. Thank you.*

- 1. Compared to the beginning of craft class, I know *a lot more/ more/ the same amount* about the history and cultural importance of crafts from Pa German and Japanese cultures.**
- 2. Compared to the beginning of craft class, I feel *a lot more comfortable/ more comfortable/ the same level of comfort* interpreting historic and cultural craft pieces from Japanese and PA German cultures through writing.**
- 3. Compared to the beginning of craft class, I feel *a lot more comfortable/ more comfortable/ the same level of comfort* talking about historic and cultural craft pieces from Japanese and PA German cultures.**
- 4. Compared to the beginning of craft class, I know *a lot more/ more/ the same amount of/ less* interest in crafts from many cultures, including PA German and Japanese cultures.**
- 5. I believe art and crafts are *a lot/ some/ a little* important to America's culture.**
- 6. I believe art and crafts are *a lot/ some/ a little* important to other cultures.**
- 7. Which project did you like doing best?**  
*Sgraffito tile      slab or drape PA German piece      coil or wheel Japanese piece*  
*Batik                  Fiber Nametag*
- 8. Why?**

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- 9. Which project do you feel the most proud of or think you did best on?**

*Sgraffito tile      slab or drape PA German piece      coil or wheel Japanese piece*  
*Batik                  Fiber Nametag*

- 10. What helped you do well on it?**

*Looking at examples from PA German or Japanese art*  
*Discussing examples of PA German or Japanese art with the small groups*  
*Having a practice session such as a day to practice slab forms*  
*Other: \_\_\_\_\_*

- 11. If you did not go on the field trip to the Philadelphia Museum of Art please state why:**

*Didn't know anyone                  Cost too much                  Not interested*  
*Couldn't miss school                  Personal                  Other: \_\_\_\_\_*

**If you did go to the Philadelphia Museum of Art please take a moment to fill out the back of the paper. Thank you.**

<b>Check the square on the right of the row that best fits your response to the statement. Add any comments below the statement.</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Somewhat Agree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>
1. I felt a stronger connection to the craft pieces we saw because we had made some pieces using similar techniques (ex. coil building) and aesthetics (ex. natural glazing).			
2. I felt a stronger connection to the PA German and Japanese pieces we saw because we had studied them in class.			
3. I believe I learned more about crafts from the museum trip.			
4. I believe that learning about PA German and Japanese crafts and culture helped prepare me for the museum trip.			
5. I would go to the art museum again on my own, with friends, or with my family.			
6. The museum trip made me look forward to making more crafts with different mediums (materials).			
7. The museum trip made me look forward to learning more about crafts' cultural and historic importance.			

**8. I enjoyed my trip to the museum: *a lot/ some/ a little*, because:**

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**9. I think in other years you *should/ should not* go on the museum tour trip, because:**

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**10. Please write any additional comments about the class so far or the museum trip:**

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### Appendix Q: Fiber Journal

Name \_\_\_\_\_

*Read pages 1-3 of the fiber packet. Answer the following in complete sentences.*

*Hand the whole packet in. This is due next class. (16 points total)*

1. Summarize in sentence form who and when people did fiber art. (4 pts.)

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2. Summarize in sentence form why fibers were so valuable and influential in world history. (4 pts.)

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3. Summarize in sentence form how clothing, fibers, and colors were used to represent a social class. Do you believe they still are representative of social class? Why or why not? (5 pts.)

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4. Think of one way fibers are important to you. Explain in sentence form. (3 pts.)

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**Ex. Credit- possible 10 pts.:**

*Go to the websites listed in the current fiber artist section. Find artwork that you like. Answer the following questions in complete sentences on lined paper. Please staple it to this packet.*

1. Write the site name (1pt.):
2. Describe the piece (medium, size, subject matter- landscape, portrait, still-life, abstract (colors and shapes), other "picture" like a cat). What and how are the main elements used? (3pts.)
3. Describe how the piece uses a main principle. (2 pts.)
4. Explain why you like this piece. Is it because of its meaning, self- expression, the use of elements and principles, because it looks real, or because it is useable? (2 pts.)
5. Are there any other works that caught your eye? Perhaps they were ugly, strange, or disturbing? Was there another piece you loved? Are there any techniques you particularly liked? Describe some of the interesting things you say and had a response to. Be sure to list the site so I can look at the piece too. (2 pts.)

## Appendix R: Aesthetics Worksheet

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Homework Due: Next class

aes·thet·ics or es·thet·ics (s-thtks)

1. the branch of philosophy dealing with beauty and taste (emphasizing the evaluative criteria that are applied to art) (philosophy = the rational investigation of questions about existence and knowledge and ethics)

2. A conception of what is artistically valid or beautiful: *minimalist aesthetics*.

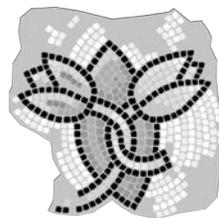
3. An artistically beautiful or pleasing appearance:

*"They're looking for quality construction, not aesthetics" Ron Schram.*

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**INSTRUCTIONS:** We've discussed PA German aesthetics and Japanese aesthetics. Now consider what your own personal aesthetic is. Look through magazines and symbols and select 3 things whose appearance appeal to you. Glue or trace them onto the back of this paper. Write a sentence, on the front of the paper that describes your personal aesthetic. Use an *art element* and *art principle* in your answer. One of the three designs will be used to create our first fiber art sample, so please find one thing that appeals to you that is interesting, but not too complex.

Ex.



The above items appeal to my personal aesthetics because . . . I am drawn to natural organic *forms* more than geometric forms. I enjoy the outdoors, so images of the outdoors remind me of peaceful and reflective moments. I enjoy repeated *patterns*, such as the *texture* of the leaf, the *lines* in the drawing of the fruit, and the *squares* in the tulip mosaic because flat color is not as interesting to me.

**The items pictured on the back of the paper appeal to my personal aesthetics because . . .**

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**Appendix S: Final Learning Cycle**

What techniques does it use?

What medium is it?

What function is it?

Describe how 2 art elements are used.

Describe how 2 art principles are used.

Interpretation: Based on what you have learned so far about the artwork, from the above questions and the readings, what do you think the artist was trying to say?

Why did the artist create this artwork?

What do you think this means?

What feelings do you have when you look at this artwork?

Do you think there are things in the artwork that represent other things- symbols?

Judgment? Do you like this piece? Why- for imitationalism, formalism, or emotionalism reasons?