



Integration of Indian Education for All in K-12 Visual Arts Education

Primary Considerations for Guiding Principles

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Primary Considerations for Guiding Principles

Introduction

The purpose of this guidance is to provide assistance to K-12 teachers with integrating Indian Education for All in visual arts instruction. These primary considerations are based on discussions held in 2011-2012 with a group of Montana American Indian artists and art teachers in Montana.

Article X, Section 1 (2) of the Montana Constitution

(2) The state recognizes the distinct and unique cultural heritage of the American Indians and is committed in its educational goals to the preservation of their cultural integrity.

The Language of Art

The language of art incorporates multiple disciplines, media, and perspectives; it reflects the whole human experience. It acknowledges the human spirit, promotes mutual respect for diverse peoples, and, in particular, promotes the awareness of Indian people, not only in a historical context but as contemporary and contributing members of the world. Art has the power to debunk stereotypes and expose biases and can avoid objectifying Indians, as has been common throughout history. As our state moves forward with ongoing implementation of Indian Education for All, art curriculum and instruction present an excellent opportunity for integrating the Montana Art Standards and the Essential Understandings Regarding Montana Indians. In doing so, culturally relevant content and context become viable and essential components of effective art instruction. In adapting instruction, it is important to define and maintain tribal specificity, both traditionally and in a contemporary sense. Authenticity is defined in many ways. Designs, symbols, and stylistic expressions reflect the identity and tradition of one's tribe, culture, family, and self.

The Arts provide powerful tools for understanding human experiences and cultures—past, present, and future. The Montana Content Standards for Arts embrace the idea of Artistic Literacy – the ability of students to create art, perform and present art, respond to or critique art, and connect art to their lives and the world around them. The arts are essential to a world-class education. Studying the arts helps to develop critical habits of mind—creativity, collaboration, communication, and critical thinking that lead to college, career, and civic readiness.

Anchor Standard #11. Relate artistic ideas and works with societal, cultural, and historical context to deepen understanding, including artistic ideas and works by American Indians.

The Art standards aligned with the *Essential Understandings Regarding Montana Indians* provide educators guidance for integrating INDIAN EDUCATION FOR ALL content into their curriculum.

Refer to the full document for a more detailed description of the [Essential Understandings Regarding Montana Indians](#)

The Art standards reinforce Essential Understanding 3, which pertains to traditional beliefs persisting into modern life. This Essential Understanding is reflected in American Indian connections to the earth and the environment through a shared heritage of Indian peoples living on the land and respecting the natural world. A historic and contemporary instance would be the bison: many tribes used (and still use) all parts of the bison for daily living and for cultural purposes (e.g., buffalo horns, skull, robe, and



Essential Understandings Regarding Montana Indians:

- EU 1 – Tribal Diversity
- EU 2 – Individual Diversity
- EU 3 – Beliefs, Spirituality, Traditions, Oral History Persist
- EU 4 – Reservations – land reserved
- EU 5 – Federal Indian Policy
- EU 6 – History from American Indian Perspectives
- EU 7 – Tribal Sovereignty

specific tribal symbols). Traditional American Indian knowledge comes in the form of stories through oral traditions as evidenced by winter counts, which were created by some tribes to identify significant events in time. Beauty and function are combined in historic and contemporary art.

Communities are defined by their languages, cultures, and histories. The languages of Native Americans were not traditionally written. They were only spoken, which meant that tribal histories and other important information had to be remembered by people and passed down orally from generation to generation. This is what is known as an oral tradition. Sometimes, Native communities used creative tools to help them remember their complex histories. A winter count was one such tool that certain Native American communities of the Northern Great Plains region

used to help record their histories and to keep track of the passage of years. One such example is the [Lone Dog Winter Count \(NMAI\)](#), which contains pictographs of seventy years of history, beginning in the winter of 1800 and ending in 1871.

Visual Art Instruction

Visual art instruction can incorporate American Indian themes in the context of teaching Elements of Art and Principles of Design, using various examples of art from multiple traditions to demonstrate complexity of style. Culturally relevant American Indian art instruction which includes content and context for background knowledge allows for depth of learning in respectful, artistic expression. Teachers will encourage students to understand the difference in being inspired by works of art and creating their own interpretation, as opposed to copying works of art. This creative process allows students to have a richer learning experience and provides a venue for students to relate personally to their learning and explore expressions of knowledge.

Keeping in mind the restrictions/limitations of materials and resources, when possible, every effort should be made to provide students examples of authentic works of art and appropriate accompanying information and instructional activities (e.g., *making parfleche designs from paper after seeing the real thing*). Ideally, American Indian artists would be invited for demonstrations/discussions, if possible. Appropriate and accessible activities vary, based on student demographics, geography, and resources. Expose students to authentic American Indian art, help

them understand the artwork and respond by creating their own expression of art. Processes and purposes for creating traditional and contemporary art should be shared with students.

Content and Context

Providing students general background knowledge about contemporary and historical Indian issues helps teachers incorporate accuracy and relevancy and can be explored through an examination of Federal Indian Policy Periods (EU 5). An example would be the creation of Ledger Art, which began in the early Reservation Period.

Most ledger art was produced from the 1860s to the early 1900s during a time of great upheaval and change for American Indians, where the recording of heroic deeds and events transitioned from buffalo hide into the use of paper, pens, pencils, inks, and watercolors. Though ledger paper was the most readily available paper, Plains Indians used whatever kind of paper was available. Significant works done by Indians during imprisonment provided historical perspectives of deeds, clothing, accoutrements, etc. and the drastic events during the Federal Indian Polices. This is evidenced by several large, detailed pencil drawings on brown paper by Elk Head, Hidatsa (born ca. 1850), during his incarceration in the territorial prison in Deer Lodge.

(The Art of Storytelling: Plains Indian Perspectives, Montana Historical Society. 2012).

Rebecca Hernandez provides words from the contemporary artist, Jaune Quick-to-See Smith (Salish) that help us understand why such historical illustrations called *ledger art* were created.

“In the most oppressive times in our history, we have produced some of the most illustrious work. When all else in our lives has failed, our ability to produce beautiful work has been the sustenance that carries us through. That process takes us to an inner world, lifts our spirit and nurtures.”

“Identified Indian Objects: An Examination of Category.” American Indian and Culture Research Journal 31, no. 3 (2007): 204.

Implementing IEFA in the Arts

Art educators have an excellent opportunity to meet the intent of Indian Education for All by integrating culturally relevant American Indian art curriculum/model lesson plans, as well as to educate students about all groups that make up the multicultural mosaic of our state.

To support the integration of Indian Education for All in Art instruction, the following resources have been sent to school libraries:

Redefined: Art & Identity - Inside The Mind of The Modern American Indian Artist (DVD)

American Indian writers and visual artists address their personal perspectives on art and identity.

At times, Native artists and writers are expected to produce something that is characteristically “Indian.” In these interviews, people share honest, brave, and insightful ideas about their art and their identity.

The Art of Storytelling: Plains Indian Art Perspectives, a collaboration between the Montana Historical Society and the OPI Indian Education for All division to provide a K-12 visual arts curriculum, integrates Indian Education for All. It is based on a recent MHS exhibit of unique examples which include petroglyphs, buffalo hide accounts (a Sioux, Yantonnais Winter Count and a Crow painted robe), a pictograph, and ledger art - both through historical works and contemporary Native artists’

expressions. This curriculum is presented in a beautifully, cover to cover, illustrated folder using exhibit examples. Within the folder, there is background information for teachers with an introduction to ledger art; grade level lesson plans with accompanying PowerPoints; color templates to use as ledger paper; color reproductions of exhibit pieces; and maps documenting tribal homelands (1855), Montana reservations (past and current).

Please check your local school library to access Indian Education for All resources and visit our OPI Indian Education for All web-page to access on-line resources to assist you with integration of Indian Education for All in the Arts. Implementation of Indian Education for All is an ongoing process and OPI will continue to develop culturally relevant Art resources and provide professional development to support your visual arts classroom instruction.

APPENDIX

Montana Code Annotated (MCA) 20-1-501 (Indian Education for All)

20-1-501. Recognition of American Indian cultural heritage -- legislative intent. (1) It is the constitutionally declared policy of this state to recognize the distinct and unique cultural heritage of American Indians and to be committed in its educational goals to the preservation of their cultural heritage. (2) It is the intent of the legislature that in accordance with Article X, section 1(2), of the Montana constitution: (a) every Montanan, whether Indian or non-Indian, be encouraged to learn about the distinct and unique heritage of American Indians in a culturally responsive manner; and (b) every educational agency and all educational personnel will work cooperatively with Montana tribes or those tribes that are in close proximity, when providing instruction or when implementing an educational goal or adopting a rule related to the education of each Montana citizen, to include information specific to the cultural heritage and contemporary contributions of American Indians, with particular emphasis on Montana Indian tribal groups and governments. (3) It is also the intent of this part, predicated on the belief that all school personnel should have an understanding and awareness of Indian tribes to help them relate effectively with Indian students and parents, that educational personnel provide means by which school personnel will gain an understanding of and appreciation for the American Indian people.

History: En. Sec. 1, Ch. 527, L. 1999.

Examples of IEFA Connections with Art Content Standards

Connecting Relating artistic ideas and work with personal meaning and external context Anchor Standard #11. Relate artistic ideas and works with societal, cultural, and historical context to deepen understanding, including artistic ideas and works by American Indians

(3) At each grade level a student will be able to: (k) relate artistic ideas and works with societal, cultural, and historical context to deepen understanding, including traditional and contemporary artistic ideas and works by American Indians.

The visual arts content standards for first grade are that each student will: 4. explain why objects, artifacts, and artwork are valued differently by different audiences;

The music content standards for first grade are that each student will: 11. describe connections between music, arts, and daily life in a variety of contexts.

The media arts content standards for second grade are that each student will: 11. identify how media artworks and ideas relate to everyday life and culture.

The visual arts content standards for second grade are that each student will: 11. discuss cultural uses of artwork from different times and places.

The visual arts content standards for third grade are that each student will: 6. explain how and where different cultures record and illustrate stories and history of life through art;

The music content standards for third grade are that each student will: 11. discuss patterns and connections between music, arts, and daily life.

The media arts content standards for fourth grade are that each student will: 10. examine how media artworks affect meanings, situations, and cultural experiences in popular media;

The music content standards for fourth grade are that each student will: 11. demonstrate understanding of the connection between music and its historical and cultural context.

The media arts content standards for fifth grade are that each student will: 11. research how media artworks and ideas relate to personal, social, and community life and culture.

The dance content standards for fifth grade are that each student will: 7. analyze characteristics of diverse dance genres and styles.

The media arts content standards for sixth through eighth grades are that each student will: 8. compare and contrast the intent of a variety of media artworks and how they impact understanding of one's own culture and other cultures.

The theatre arts content standards for sixth through eighth grades are that each student will: 10. research how cultural perspectives, community ideas, and personal beliefs impact a drama or theatre work.

The visual arts content standards for ninth through twelfth grades are that each student will: 6. analyze an exhibit or collection's impact on personal awareness of social, cultural, or political beliefs and understandings.

The dance content standards for ninth through twelfth grades are that each student will: 11. analyze how dances from a variety of cultures and time periods communicate specific purpose and meaning.

Resources

[The Art of Storytelling: Plains Indian Perspectives \(K-12\)](#)

[Essential Understandings Regarding Montana Indians](#)

Hernandez, Rebecca, "Identified Indian Objects: An Examination of Category." *American Indian and Culture Research Journal* 31, no. 3 (2007): 204.

[Learning About the Seals of the Montana Tribal Nations](#)

National Museum of the American Indian, [Lone Dog Winter Count \(NMAI\)](#)

[Montana Content Standards for Arts](#)

Videos

[Corky Clairmont, Salish-Kootenai Artist/Educator](#)

[John Isaiah Pepion - Native American Ledger Artist](#)

[Montana Stories: Kevin Red Star](#)

Marina Weatherly – Art is the River [Part 1](#) [Part 2](#)