

In teaching fine arts and art history, I have often noticed that modern Western thought typically separates the arts from daily life, thereby suggesting that “art” represents the tastes of only a highly educated elite. As a result, educators (and students) tend to view art as a foreign, abstract language—something the average individual cannot understand, teach, or appreciate. Consequently, many elementary, middle, and high school teachers have little desire to incorporate art into their daily schedules, and students only get an occasional lesson when the already tight schedule allows or a volunteer can come into the classroom and instruct students. The reason commonly given is that teachers are too busy teaching the “basics” and have little inclination to create lesson plans for an area in which they have no skill or “talent.” This problem of viewing art as an activity that involves paint, clay, or other items that generally make a mess prevents many teachers from venturing into this area. Many educators don’t realize that art is more than just production, it is a rich historical tradition. Originally, it was defined as the trade of creating visual objects that derived meaning from interaction between humans and their physical and social world.

Fortunately, a shift in thinking is now taking place, thanks to multiculturalism and curriculum integration. Looking at art in the broadest sense, it becomes clear that most cultures, both current and past, have not distinguished between art and religion or art and craft. The items that modern Westerners regard as a foreign culture’s art are in fact the things those cultures use for adornment, for healing and cleansing, for worshiping, and for festivals.

If teachers redefine art as the *cultural arts*, they will become more sensitive to how the arts play out in their own culture.¹ Seen in this way, art becomes a way of living that nurtures creativity, artistic skill, and attitude. Art education becomes a thriving tradition that both encompasses and is essential to everyday life. As teachers integrate art into ethics, spirituality, and daily life, their students learn how it overlaps with other issues such as environmental ethics, character education, and philosophy.

Modern students expect speedy mastery of a subject. They often fail to understand that true learning requires more than the memorization of information. When they immerse themselves in an environment in which they explore the meanings of ancient art from another culture, they can learn about their own perceptions and biases, and thereby enhance their understanding. These experiences will help them understand

why people create art. Students will thus gain a greater respect for ancient artifacts and cultures as well as an awareness of the cultural artifacts and art created more recently.

Integrating the Arts Into the Curriculum

Much of my research in art education has centered on curriculum integration and visual culture. Coming from a middle school and high school teaching background has led me to seek solutions for the challenges faced by the average Adventist educator in teaching art. I have concluded that in multigrade schools, the only way to successfully teach the arts is to integrate them into the regular curriculum. One need not have artistic talent to expose students to the rich traditions and history of art that are so vital to an understanding of different cultures

Integrating the Arts Into the Classroom



and societies. When students learn to both appreciate and create art, they will gain an understanding of the meanings and traditions of art that will also give them a deeper aware-

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ness and appreciation for the artistic expressions that surround them today. They will understand that art is a component of other subjects, not just an elite field in which one must possess “talent.” As a result, they will develop the desire and courage to create their own art. Once they see how other cultures have visually conveyed beliefs, traditions, and lifestyles, it will be easier for them to understand the ways people communicate and what visual creations say about the creators’ beliefs, traditions, and lifestyles.

So how can teachers incorporate art into the curriculum? Social studies and history are the perfect conduit. Much of what we know about ancient culture comes from art objects and architectural remains that have been preserved.² A major objective of the history curriculum should be to provide students with the opportunity to view and study artworks from the past in the context of historical documents and movements. This helps students understand how art reveals and demonstrates the values and beliefs of a society and how social, political, and economic conditions influence the arts. Making these connections helps them develop insights about their own beliefs and ideas and to explore them in the creation of their own art.

According to Elliot Eisner,³ art education can enhance social and cultural awareness. As part of a wholistic education, students need to see how academic subjects relate to their world and daily experiences. Mary Erickson⁴ suggests that intermediate and middle school students are better able to understand and interpret artwork from the past if the teacher presents it from the viewpoint of the artist who created the work. History comes alive, and both ancient and current cultures become more comprehensible as students become familiar with historic artifacts and visual imagery.⁵ Research has revealed that the project approach to art education is much more meaningful than the traditional approach, since it encourages students to ask questions, seek answers, and to collaborate with their peers.⁶

My research, along with consultations with archaeology professors and colleagues, has led me to use archeology (the study of ancient or historical peoples and their cultures using the artifacts and art objects they left behind) to teach about the artworks of the past. After careful excavation, archaeologists analyze their findings so they can accurately describe how cultures and societies function. Doing their own analysis of archaeological findings provides students with a mystery-laden experience that requires imagination, creativity, and logic. Teachers can point out that the conservation and exhibition of artifacts in museums demonstrates the



importance of artworks in our understanding of past cultures.⁷

Archaeology as a Discipline of Integration

Within the past few years, several studies have shown the benefits of incorporating archaeology into the elementary and secondary grades. While curriculum integration is the most plausible method of introducing archaeology, some teachers are creating separate curriculum units on this topic. The Society for American Archaeology has worked diligently since the 1990s to promote K-12 archaeology education through teacher workshops, school outreach programs, and lectures, exhibits, and publications that encourage and facilitate interaction and networking.

The United States Department of the Interior through the Bureau of Land Management has also created pilot programs for teachers so they can empower their students to take responsible and thoughtful actions relating to American heritage. The lessons in these programs are multidisciplinary and teach higher-order thinking skills.

The goals of these research-based programs largely match those of a multidisciplinary curriculum for middle scholars. They include:

1. Increasing students’ appreciation and respect for all cultures;
2. Helping students understand their cultural heritage;
3. Encouraging critical thinking and cooperative learning;
4. Developing informed,





much of the data interpreted by art historians, students do not necessarily understand this process or see the connection. The untapped subject of archaeology enables students to actively explore past and present cultural beliefs and lifestyles through the study of ancient artifacts. By exploring the bigger picture of the interconnecting role of the archaeologist and art historian in helping us understand our collective human development, students begin to see how interpreting artworks of the past can help them explore their own personal symbolism and create meaningful artwork that reflects their own unique traditions, lifestyles, and experiences. ✍



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thoughtful, and responsible behavior toward all forms of art;

5. Promoting the study of non-renewable and fragile remains of past cultures and the importance of stewardship in preserving cultural artifacts; and

6. Drawing upon ancient imagery and technique to create original artworks that express personal beliefs, experiences, and meaningful symbolism.

Educator and archaeologist Christine Nelson summarizes the benefits of archaeology education: "In linking past to present, students learn to appreciate the continuity of human experience, the debt we owe to people before us who established the foundations of modern civilizations and the responsibilities we owe to those who will come after us."⁸

When art is integrated with history and archaeology, students are better able to understand visual culture and how art reveals the nature of the artist and the society in which it was created. By personalizing art from the past, students will better understand how their own art expresses their personal beliefs and life experiences. No longer is art training focused on "talent," but becomes a conduit for personal expression and the sharing of beliefs and values in a visual way.



Art education is changing. Art is no longer a privileged field. The categories that for so long divided the arts from social life are beginning to break down. By teaching visual culture, teachers make it easier for students to connect art from the past and present. While scholars and even many adults understand that archaeologists play an important role in providing

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3. Elicott Eisner, "Alternative Approaches to Curriculum Development in Art Education," *Studies in Art Education* 25:4 (1984), pp. 259-264.
4. Mary Erickson, "A Sequence of Developing Art Historical Understandings: Merging Teaching, Service, Research, and Curriculum Development," *Art Education* (November 1995), pp. 234-247.
5. P. C. Dunn, *Creating Curriculum in Art* (The National Art Education Association, 1995).
6. E. Pitri, "Project Learning: Exploration, Discussion, and Discovery," *Art Education* 55:5 (September 2002), pp. 18-24.
7. C. Garoian, "Performing the Museum," *Studies in Art Education* 42:3 (2001), pp. 234-247.
8. Christine Nelson, "Kids Can Really Dig It: A Guide to Simulating an Excavation." Unpublished manuscript (November 1995), p. 2.

Archaeological and Art History Websites

The Institute of Archaeology/Siegfried Horn Museum at Andrews University

<http://www.andrews.edu/ARCHAEOLOGY/>

The Institute of Archaeology at Southern Adventist University

<http://archaeology.southern.edu/>

The Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago

Features lots of images and educational resources.

<http://oi.uchicago.edu/museum/>

The Metropolitan Museum of Art

This mother of all museums is in New York City—has many educational resources.

<http://www.metmuseum.org/home.asp>

The Michael C. Carlos Museum at Emory University

Click on the Odyssey Online link for lesson plans and activities.

<http://www.carlos.emory.edu/>

The J. Paul Getty Museum

Centered in Los Angeles, the museum houses art collections from all over the world and features an educational link.

<http://www.getty.edu/museum/>

The Uluburun Shipwreck

This fantastic site features an online underwater “dig” for students (grades 6-12) of an actual ancient wreck site off the coast of Turkey.

<http://sara.theellisschool.org/shipwreck>

Archaeology for Kids

Put out by the National Park Service and the U.S. Department of the Interior.

<http://www.nps.gov/archeology/public/kids/index.htm>

The Society for American Archaeology

Features Websites with interactive activities for kids.

http://www.saa.org/Public/links/websites_kids.html

Links to archaeology lesson plans and activities.

<http://www.saa.org/public/resources/lessonplans.html>

Dig: the Archaeology Magazine for Kids

Recent developments in the field of archaeology along with games, puzzles, hands-on projects, and more.

<http://www.digonsite.com/>

Art for Kids

Website with links for art history activities and lessons for kids.

<http://www.princetonol.com/groups/iad/lessons/middle/for-kids.htm>

Art History Theme Page

Students and teachers will find curricular resources to help them learn about art history. In addition, there are links to instructional materials for teachers.

http://www.cln.org/themes/art_history.html

Mr. Donn's Ancient History Page

K-12 site full of history lessons from ancient civilizations.

<http://www.mrdonn.ancienthistory.html>

The Cave of Lascaux

Excellent interactive site of Neolithic cave in Lascaux, France.

<http://www.culture.gouv.fr/culture/arcnat/lascaux/en/>

Cottonwood Gulch Foundation

Onsite archaeology expeditions for kids ages 10-19 in New Mexico.

<http://www.cottonwoodgulch.org/>

Crow Canyon Archaeological Center

Highly rated onsite archaeology expeditions for kids and adults in southwestern Colorado specializing in Anasazi art and artifacts.

<http://www.crowcanyon.org/>

Archaeology Magazine

An online publication of the Archaeological Institute of America that covers the latest archaeological findings from around the world.

<http://archaeology.org/>

Features several online interactive digs ranging from shipwrecks to Civil War prisons.

<http://www.archaeology.org/interactive/>

Biblical Archaeology Society

Online version of the magazine. Features great links to current excavations and wonderful photos of artifacts.

<http://www.biblicalarchaeology.org/>

American Schools for Oriental Research

An outreach education site as a resource for teachers and students that gives information about archaeology in the Middle East. The Madaba Plains Project and Adventists in archaeology are a part of this organization and are featured on this Website and within this organization (ASOR).

<http://www.asor.org/outreach/default.htm>

Introduction to Archaeology & Art Artifacts

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Grade Level: 6-12

Timeframe: one 50-minute class period (optional activity allows for block scheduling)

Overview

This lesson introduces the student to the concept that even though archaeology is considered a science, archaeologists study the manmade structures, art objects, and artifacts in order to make interpretations about cultures of the past.

Quality Core Curriculum (QCC) Objectives

Standard 14: Expands and develops a personal position on aesthetics: Why do people create art? Does art have to be functional? Must art be beautiful? Why are certain objects considered art, while others are not?

National Arts Standards for Arts Education

Content Standard 4: Students analyze, describe, and demonstrate how factors of time and place influence visual characteristics that give meaning and value to a work of art.

Lesson Objectives

1. The student will define the role of an archaeologist and tell how archaeologists make determinations about the past through the manmade art objects or artifacts that ancient cultures have left behind.
2. The student will engage in a discussion about what defines art and artifacts and the differences between modern Western notions about what art is versus the views of ancient societies about art.
3. The student will participate in small-group activities, in which he or she will analyze, describe, and draw conclusions about the culture whose “remains” will be contained in a folder, after which he or she will correctly complete the corresponding activity sheet.
4. The student will learn through participation in discussions how important it is to know the context in which an artifact is found, in order to understand the culture that created it.

Teacher Resources*

Folders containing laminated magazine cutouts that depict man-made objects: one folder for each group:

Go through old magazines, and cut out pictures of furniture, artwork, crafts, clothing, books, toys, jewelry, cookware, etc. Laminate each picture. Assemble packets for students consisting of 6-15 pictures (some should have more, indicative of archaeological sites where there may be few or many artifacts). Each packet should have items that tell a story about the family, people, or culture that left the remains. For example: pictures

that reveal objects that would be found in a cold or northern environment or pictures of religious art or spiritual objects revealing belief systems. One packet could have many tools and toys or handmade objects revealing a trade or favorite pastime.

**Optional:* Examples of ancient artifacts (laminated photos or PowerPoint presentation)

**Motel of the Mysteries* by David Macaulay (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1979); ISBN: 0-395-28425-2.

Student Materials

Pencils

Magazine Culture Survey Worksheets (one for each group of three to four students)

Motivation/Hook

As soon as students are seated, present the following scenario and questions:

“Imagine that it is the year 3000. A team of archaeologists

has recently started to uncover the classroom you are in now. The team has documentation that states a massive earthquake happened in the year [insert current year], instantly destroying and burying this area. As the team begins to dig through the remains, they slowly uncover artifacts that reveal the picture of the people that occupied this room.”

Ask:

“What would have survived the earthquake and been preserved? What would have decayed or been destroyed?”

“After studying the artifacts that would have survived, what do you think the archaeologists would conclude about your culture?”

“Would they find enough evidence to determine that this room was part of a school?”

“What do you think archaeologists would conclude about the class’ hobbies, lifestyle, and families?”

“What would an archaeologist speculate about the things you worship or idolize?”

“How about the things you ate?”

Magazine Culture Survey Worksheet

Group member names: _____

What did they eat? Where did their food come from?	Where did they live? When did they live?	How did they make their living?	Who were they?
What did they value? How and what did they worship or idolize?	What did they do for recreation, hobbies, etc.?	What evidence is there of other life forms such as animals or insects?	Other

This scenario allows students to engage in a discussion that introduces the concept that the things they create, wear, and surround themselves with says a lot about the culture in which they live. It also creates an introduction to a discussion about the definitions of art and an awareness that art is a reflection of the influence a culture has on the beliefs of an individual.

Ask:

“What is the difference between an art object and an artifact?”

“Is an artifact considered art if it is aesthetically beautiful? What if it is crudely made or considered unattractive? Is it still art?”

“Do you think that ancient craftsmen considered themselves artists? Were the artifacts they created intended to be beautiful or serve a specific purpose?”

These questions should stimulate conversation about how we and other cultures, past and present, have defined art. It also opens the way for students to understand that unless we understand the culture in which an art object was created, we may never fully understand its meaning and therefore make false assumptions as well as incorrect conclusions about that culture.

Ask:

“Do you think the archaeologists would come to any false conclusions about your culture? Why or why not?”

Optional:

Allow five minutes for questions and discussion. You may want to use this time to discuss the difference between an archaeologist, an anthropologist, and a paleontologist. Even though this lesson focuses on archaeology, it is important that students be able to differentiate between the various roles that scientists play in a dig, and why art is a vital and unique part of archaeology. This distinction also shows the overlapping of subject areas and how each one depends on the other, thus reinforcing cross-curriculum ideas.

Activity

1. Divide class into groups of three to five students.
2. Hand each group a folder that is filled with laminated magazine cutouts. Have each group sit around a designated desk or table and empty the folder contents. Because these cutouts are from modern magazines, students will recognize a lot of the “artifacts.” Emphasize that the class is interested in interpreting what the artifacts are and what they say about the person/people who created or owned them. State that all of the folders contain “artifacts” they will recognize, but it is up to them to determine what the artifacts and remains say about the people who owned them.
3. After examining the “artifacts” for several minutes, each group should discuss and draw conclusions about the culture that created the “artifacts,” using the Magazine Culture Survey sheet supplied. Allow 15-20 minutes for this activity.
4. Each group can appoint a spokesperson or elect group members to address certain questions. First, they should show the rest of the class the artifacts they found. Then, depending on the grade level, you may ask questions from the Magazine

Culture Survey or let them present their findings in front of the class (this would be appropriate for high school). Each group should be prepared to describe why they came to the conclusions they did about their folder’s “culture.”

5. Allow each group at least five minutes to answer the questions or to present.

Optional Activity

1. Students may remain in their groups.
2. Hand each group a few pictures of ancient artifacts. (The students may not recognize these objects.)
3. Each group is to try to guess the identity of the artifact and its purpose.
4. This activity should cement the idea that unless one understands the culture and context of the art object/artifact, it may be impossible to identify the object and its purpose.

At this point, you can introduce the book, *Motel of the Mysteries*. This book is only 96 pages, full of great illustrations, and has a 7th-grade reading level but is also appropriate for high school students. The book tells of future archaeologists discovering the buried remains of an American motel room in the 41st century and the misidentification just about every artifact found. The book perfectly and hilariously explains the traps that archaeologists may fall into when trying to explain the past using present-day knowledge and sensibilities. The events portrayed in the book show the reader just how easy it is to make mistakes when one does not fully understand the culture in which one is excavating. Introducing the book could also allow for cross-curriculum connections with English and literature.

Closure/Review

Emphasize that the “remains” the students just analyzed say a lot about the people who left them behind. Suggest that they think about what archaeologists might conclude about the remains left in their own homes. Remind them that artifacts and art remains reflect everyday life and thus are extremely important to archaeologists when they draw conclusions about past cultures.

This could also lead to a discussion or spin-off lesson about modern art and what it says about our culture today.

Assessment

- Did the student express understanding about the role of an archaeologist?
- Did the student participate in active listening and in class discussion about what defines art and artifacts?
- Did the student actively participate in the group activity on magazine culture?
- Did the student show, through participation, that he or she grasped the concept of how art reflects the culture in which it was created and thus can tell us much about the past?
- Did the student complete the activity sheets correctly?

Assessment Instrument

Activity sheets and participation discussions will provide for in-class assessment.