

Cultural Triptych
2013 National Art Education Conference
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Here are some recommendations and resources that may make it easier to “seamlessly” infuse multicultural information into your art curriculum throughout the entire school year in most of your units.

The Triptych Approach: “Bracket “ every Euro-centric exemplar with two exemplars from another culture that have similar art content (materials or themes).

1. For example, if you are teaching Mt. Rushmore, bracket with The Crazy Horse monument in South Dakota, the Bamiyan Buddhas in Afghanistan, Abu Simbel in Egypt, or the Leshan Buddha in China. You may want to select an image from a culture that your students have covered in Social Studies to deepen connections.
2. DaVinci’s Mona Lisa can be paired with the depiction of Mona Lisa as an old woman by visionary artist Elizabeth Layton, and Iranian artist Farah Ossouli’s disturbing version of the Mona Lisa.
3. What cultural triptychs can you think of?

The Helping Folder Approach: Have available folders of heroes of varying fame for use in any unit that include portraiture. Have students select a hero as the subject of their portrait. Make sure you include lesser known heroes. For example, if students are designing currency, have their bill honor a hero from a less celebrated ethnic group (their own or another’s). All details in the bill could support the theme – the life of the hero. For architectural resource folders, be sure to include architecture from a variety of cultures.

Pair Contemporary and Ancient: As we know, some students may not realize that other cultures, like ours, are simultaneously both modern and traditional. Show the Nairobi businessman in a western suit wearing Kente cloth. Show the car filled highway in Shiraz, Iran

("modern day Persepolis") covered with a portal, not just the ancient Persepolis portal.

Ancient Examples of Multicultural Collaboration Abound: Let your students know that cultures have collaborated for centuries. Multiculturalism is not a modern invention! Silk Road artifacts, Ancient Norse (Viking) jewelry, Chinese porcelain from the 1600 – 1700s are all wonderful examples of ancient collaborations. Cellist Yo –Yo Ma called the Silk Road "The Internet of Antiquity." Many cultures shared ideas and prepared merchandise for and with each other.

Showcasing Child and Family Culture: Students in a less dominant culture may enjoy formally identifying their family members as a cultural icon. A Throne drawing unit could require that a distinguished family member be honored. An African-American history month celebration could showcase family artifacts that identify local or family heroes in a "museum" setting – the school library or even a temporary "museum" display at an evening event.

Helpful Resources:

The Walters Art Museum in Baltimore Maryland has a great set of visuals to access easily for power points. art.thewalters.org

The Reginald F. Lewis Museum of Maryland African-American History and Culture in Baltimore (Excellent Teacher Resources Department) Perhaps you have a local institution that provides similar resources.

The National Park Service NPS.org

CyArk: International Heritage sites

Flickr.com (I recommend that you filter for Creative Commons images)

Local Historians

As always, I welcome your insights at mrastegar@bcps.k12.md.us or monrastegar@yahoo.com.