

Instructional Strategies For:

***Stó:lō* ARTISTIC TRADITIONS**

Fine Arts 10, 11, 12

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Introduction

This curriculum is not intended to give exhaustive coverage of the topic. Rather, it is intended to lead the teacher into directions for thinking about *Stó:lō* art traditions and contemporary *Stó:lō* art. It is strongly recommended that the suggested readings listed at the end of this unit be consulted for further information about historical, anthropological and archaeological treatments of traditional *Stó:lō* art. The best possible situation would be to invite a *Stó:lō* artist into the classroom to discuss their work and share their cultural knowledge.

The First Nations 12 Curriculum has provided some guidelines for looking at the artistic traditions of First Nations people. This document has identified a number of issues which can be addressed while respecting the sensibilities, meanings and appropriateness of studying First Nations artistic traditions in the class room:

Students should understand that First Nations art is a total cultural expression and that First Nations artistic traditions are continually evolving, vital aspects of First Nations culture... features that make B.C. First Nations art distinctive ... purpose (practical and social functionality), ownership/identity (hereditary property), symbolism, aesthetics (e.g., balance, pigments - in painting), connections with established cultural traditions, connections with spiritual aspects of life, choice of themes (indicating relation to the natural world), materials (e.g., wood, bark, natural oils and pigments, bone, hide, stone).¹

The slide set included in this curriculum has been divided along the broad themes of ancient art, two-dimensional, sculpture, basketry, textiles and contemporary art. However, these categories by no means should restrict how teachers approach *Stó:lō* Artistic Traditions.

Each of the objects shown in the slides tell a number of stories. We can listen to these stories in a variety of different ways: how the object is made; how the object is used; who made the object; the purpose for which the object is made; the history of the object, its makers and owners; and the actual stories the object invokes, either through images represented on the object or events which it may signify or represent.

Clearly, all these stories are told differently by individual people at various times. Thus, the study of *Stó:lō* artistic traditions is holistic and should include the voices of the people who give the objects their meaning. This curriculum encourages selecting people from the *Stó:lō Curriculum Consortium Resource Persons Guide* and bringing them into the classroom to present their thoughts and views on *Stó:lō* artistic traditions. These people might also be invited to go through the slides with the class and tell their stories about them. Artists and anthropologists, elders and students can all provide a new perspective on these complex things.

To facilitate a broad understandings of *Stó:lō* artistic traditions, an extensive bibliography has been compiled at the end of this document. Most of these readings are from the perspective of the art historian or anthropologist and tell only one version of the stories which these objects hold.

Other perspectives can be gained by watching the National Film Board video *Hands of History*. This video provides the perspectives of four native women artists on their work. Rena Point Boulton is

an elder from the *Stó:lō* community of Sumas. Her words from this video have been transcribed here for reading and discussion.

Other voices of *Stó:lō* people are included in this curriculum to present several indigenous perspectives on *Stó:lō* artistic traditions. The many different accounts and ways of talking about *Stó:lō* artistic traditions show clearly the rich and diverse meanings that this art holds. Learners will benefit from understanding that there are multiple ways to look at art - and by extension at the world in general. By broadening a learner's perspective in this way, it is hoped that individuals enhance their own sensitivity and creativity both inside and outside the classroom.

Resource List for *Stó:lō* Artistic Traditions Curriculum

- *Stó:lō* Artistic Traditions Learners Resource Package
- slide set
- *Stó:lō Curriculum Consortium Resource Persons Guide*
- Bibliography of books and articles on *Stó:lō* Artistic Traditions
- Film - *Hands of History*. National Film Board 1994

LEARNING OUTCOMES

The Ministry of Education has prescribed a number of learning outcomes for the Fine Arts curriculum. These outcomes are in the areas of creating, performing, communicating, perceiving, responding, and reflecting. In addition, the *Stó:lō* Curriculum Consortium has identified a number of additional learning outcomes. All of these are defined below.

Personal, Social, Cultural and Historical Contexts:

- Identify, describe and analyze cultural or historical styles as represented in a variety of art works.
- Reflects an understanding of the impact of social, cultural and historical contexts.
- Communicates specific beliefs or traditions in response to historical and/or contemporary issues.
- Critique a work of art relating its content to the context in which it was created.
- Describe or demonstrate how a specific work of art supports or challenges specific beliefs or traditions, or responds to historical and/or contemporary issues.

Elements and Principles:

- Demonstrating an awareness and experience of the basic elements and principles of the discipline used.
- Develop vocabulary for the discipline studied.
- Demonstrating the use of the basic elements and principles of the discipline to communicate specific ideas, moods or feelings
- Identify, describe, analyze, interpret and make judgements about the basic elements as used

- in a variety of art works
- Demonstrate the use of strategies for developing an artistic image or idea.

Expressing our Humanity:

- Expressing the students own ideas, thoughts or feelings.
- Identify, describe, analyze, interpret, and make judgements about how ideas, thoughts, feelings or messages are communicated in a variety of others' art works.
- Examine the tensions between public acceptance and personal expression in the art discipline studied.

***Stó:lō* Curriculum Consortium Learning Outcomes:**

- Distinguish between Western and traditional *Stó:lō* concepts of “art”.
- Identify features that make *Stó:lō* art distinctive.
- Analyze contemporary interpretation or “meanings” of traditional *Stó:lō* art.
- Gain an appreciation of *Stó:lō* traditional methods and "rules" of art.
- Demonstrate an awareness of the use of artistic traditions to display beliefs, stories and personal or cultural experiences.
- Demonstrate an appreciation of *Stó:lō* art as an integral part of *Stó:lō* lifestyle.

The following lessons have been developed to aid teachers to present lessons on *Stó:lō* Artistic Traditions in the classroom. The first three lesson plans should give students the cultural and philosophical background to understand *Stó:lō* Artistic Traditions in a appropriate context. The last three lessons are intended to give students the opportunity to explore various mediums of *Stó:lō* artistic expressions. All six of these lessons can be given together as a unit on *Stó:lō* artistic traditions, or any one of the last three lessons can stand alone if there are time constraints. It is advisable, however, to take the class through exercises like those presented in the lessons which provide cultural context like the first three presented below.

LESSON 1: HOW ART & DESIGN CREATES CULTURAL IDENTITY

Instructional Strategies

Suggested Time: 2-3 Hours

(1) *Responding*

Look at slides and pictures of 2- and 3- dimensional *Stó:lō* art (narrative attached).

Brainstorm: What do students see in this art in terms of:

- form
- images
- materials used
- function
- techniques
- colours

(2) *Analyzing*

Discuss the following ideas:

- Why do the students think the artists made the choices they did? (criteria above)
- What traditions are apparent?
- On what basis did the artist make these choices?
 - make sure the students address the issues of tradition (“because it is done”) versus the modern concept of personal choice (“because I like it”).
 - also address conscious choice in planning versus intuitive designing.

Look at and analyze contemporary images within the students own lives. Apply the same criteria as above.

Rules of *Stó:lō* art:

- Brainstorm possible rules guiding traditional *Stó:lō* art. What is style?
- Guest speaker: Invite a *Stó:lō* artist to talk about their work.

(3) *Creating*

Under the supervision of the *Stó:lō* artist do a guided, traditional style drawing.

(4) *Synthesis*

Students will create their own drawings using traditional *Stó:lō* rules or style.

Assessment Strategies

- Active participation in the discussions.
- Attentive and respectful attitudes demonstrated during guest speaker presentations.
- Completion of guided traditional drawing.
- Completion of student drawing exhibiting a clear understanding of traditional *Stó:lō* style and rules.

- In evaluating student work, consideration should be given to the following distinctive features of *Stó:lō* art:
 - purpose (practical and social functionality)
 - ownership/identity (hereditary property)
 - symbolism
 - aesthetics (balance, pigments in painting)
 - connections with established cultural traditions
 - connections with spiritual aspects of life
 - choice of themes (indicating the relation to the natural world)
 - materials (examples: wood, bark, natural oils, pigments, bone, hide, stone)
- In consultation with the student, the appropriate criteria for evaluation will be determined upon assignment.

Learning Resources

- Slides with accompanying dialogue
- Guest speaker list and resource binder
- Articles on rules in *Stó:lō* art:
 - Art Legacy of the Coast Salish*; Harry J. Calkins
 - Incised Relief Carving of the Halkomelem and Straits Salish*; Norman Feder
 - Sculpture and Engraving of the Central Coast Salish Indians*; J. E. Michael Kew
- Photocopied reproductions of traditional *Stó:lō* art.

Teacher Notes

Stó:lō art is a separate and unique expression of the traditions and culture of the *Stó:lō* people. It is not to be confused with the well known art traditions of the Northwest Coast people.

LESSON 2: HANDS OF HISTORY : VIDEO

Instructional Strategies

Suggested Time: Video - 51 minutes
 Discussion - 30 minutes
 Activities - 1 hour

(1) *Video Hands of History Discussion Topics*

- Students will generate discussion based upon the video in each of the following categories:
 1. Spiritual life (personal story)
 2. Cultural life (traditional, symbolic, historical)
 3. Practical life (functional, ceremonial)
 4. Political life (protest, education, cultural revival)
- Students will demonstrate an understanding of the validity of women as artists both in a traditional and contemporary context.
- Students will demonstrate an understanding of art in response to its context. What are the sources of influence and why are they constantly in flux.

(2) *Artistic Activities*

Students will create a 2-dimensional montage combining drawing, newspaper clippings of personally relevant issues.

Students will research and draw a still-life to include traditional *Stó:lō* art and designs.

See other units on Textiles, Basketry, and Design.

Assessment Strategies

- Students will participate actively in discussion based upon the video and their own artwork.
- Students must prepare a focus and plan for their artwork to be discussed with the teacher.
- Students will provide a self-assessment of their work based upon :
 - effective portrayal of themes and ideas
 - effective and appropriate use of materials and methods
 - workmanship and appropriateness of artistic expression
 - completion
- In consultation with the student, teacher will evaluate the work based on the same criteria.

Resource Materials

- *Hands of History* - video
- Written text of Rena Point Boulton's dialogue from the video
- Reproductions of *Stó:lō* traditional art
- Resources from other units

Teacher Background Information

This video is a series of discussions with four aboriginal women artists, one of whom is Rena Point Boulton, a Sto:lo master weaver. A written text of Rena's dialogue is included in the Learning Resource Package.

LESSON 3: OBJECTS TELL STORIES

Instructional Strategies

Suggested Time: 2-3 hours.

(1) Objects tell stories

Teacher will hold up an everyday object and discuss its "story" from several perspectives:

- Technical perspective: how it was made, materials, etc.
- Life of the object in the classroom:
 - its function
 - its symbolism (implicit and explicit)
- Discuss the life-history of the object outside the classroom and all the "untold" stories about the people who have been involved with that object at different times (ie: designer, labourer/manufacturer, etc, etc...)

Students should select an object in the room. In their sketch-book, students should brainstorm stories and images that are/might-be related to the object.

(2) Stó:lō people use objects and images to tell stories

Using a selection of images of the Sxwayxwey mask, listen to/read the stories of the Sxwayxwey mask told by Chief Richard Malloway and anthropologist Wayne Suttles. These stories, among others, give the objects their meanings.

Create a drawing of a "scene" to illustrate an image taken from either Sxwayxwey story.

Teacher background note: The images on the masks are not directly related to the stories provided in this curriculum. Their significance are powerful and often considered very private. **These masks are the most sacred of objects in Stó:lō culture and should be treated with the utmost respect.** Many Stó:lō people do not even talk about these masks in public without the proper ritual preparation because of the spiritual power they hold. Because of these concerns, activities should not focus on the mask itself. The mask is used here as a vehicle to discuss how stories are imbedded in objects. As a matter of respect, please *do not speculate* on the stories, functions and meanings of the sacred Sxwayxwey mask. The material given in this curriculum and the information provided by guest speakers should provide adequate context to have a useful discussion of the mask.

(3) Extended Activity - Your Objects Tell Stories

Bring an object from home that tells a story. In small groups relate the stories. Student then creates a work (using any medium) that communicates the significant points of the story. They may include the object as a image within their work.

Assessment Strategies

- Collection of images/stories in the student's sketch-book.

- Completing of the drawing of the Sxwayxwey mask story.
- Completion of the work of the story connected with their object.

Resource Materials

- guest speaker to discuss the Sxwayxwey mask
- posters or slides of the Sxwayxwey mask
- hand-outs or audio-tape of the two Sxwayxwey stories.

LESSON 4: *Stó:lō* TRADITIONAL DESIGN

Instructional Strategies

Suggested Time: 3-7 hours

(1) *Learning the "Rules" of Stó:lō Traditional Design*

Through viewing slides and/or photographs of traditional *Stó:lō* design and form, students will identify the basic elements and forms that organize the images in *Stó:lō* work. Students will generate an inventory of these designs and forms in their sketch book. This process is part of learning the "rules" of *Stó:lō* traditional design.

Using a black, construction-paper, create the outline of a spindle whorl. Using an X-Acto knife, cut away the background to create an image which used the basic design elements discerned through the previous viewing. Through using these basic design elements (ie: T's, U's, ovals, etc...), a Salish-style image is created. The teacher should reinforce the idea that these objects have a relationship to the spiritual world through their stories and uses. Incised images appeared on other weaving equipment such as loom posts, as well as on tools and weapons. These carvings are also often associated with supernatural power, as exhibited on rattles and masks used in ceremonies.

Teacher Background Notes: Teacher should stress the concept that this is not an "additive" process, but rather a "subtractive" one. Traditional salish low-relief carving uses *incising* to create the design.

Teacher Caution: Students should be aware of the "ownership" of the work. Students should acknowledge the source of their design in their finished project. If they are copying directly from another piece, the original artist should be acknowledged.

(2) *Invite guest speaker to talk about traditional or contemporary Stó:lō art.*

A guest artist will be able to guide students in using traditional forms and styles, while embodying meaning in the art by discussing the relevance of this work in traditional and contemporary *Stó:lō* culture.

Teacher Background Notes. Not all artists who are *Stó:lō* use "traditional" Salish form and style. If the artist is unfamiliar with Salish traditional style and form and their work is in the "Northwest Coast" style, then comparisons can be made of the two different art styles. Discussion of contemporary *Stó:lō* art should continue to emphasize the link between stories and image/design.

(3) *Extended Activities*

Create a block-print design based on a spindle whorl shape. Take into consideration traditional *Stó:lō* rules.

Create a ceramic spindle whorl, using incised design techniques.

Teacher Background Note: *Stó:lō* people primarily use wood and soft stone for their low-relief carvings.

Clay is not a traditional medium of *Stó:lō* people].

Create a serigraphy with paper stencil. Use the silhouette of a natural form and the *Stó:lō* negative shapes ("rules") to create the interior design. The interior design can represent the "spirit" of the object. Culturally relevant meaning can be embodied in these object by listening to or reading the some of the oral traditions that are provided for the Literature 12 *Stó:lō* Curriculum, or on the World Wide Web.

Referring to the slides of ancient stone bowls, use soft stone, wood, clay, soap, or plaster to create a bowl that has an animal/fish/bird/or seated human form incised on it.

Assessment Strategies

- Completion of sketch-book images of negative design inventory.
- Completion of construction-paper spindle whorl.
- Teacher's observation of student's interest and respect for guest speaker.
- Completion of block-print design.
- Completion of ceramic spindle whorls
- Completion of serigraphy.
- Completion of bowl carving.

Learning Resources

- Some hand-outs should be constructed listing Salish design elements (crescents, T's, U's, circles or ovals)
- Slides and pictures of traditional *Stó:lō* design
- *Stó:lō Curriculum Consortium Cultural Resource Persons Guide*
- articles by Feder, Kew and Calkins

LESSON 5: BASKETRY

Instructional Strategies

Suggested Time: 3-5 hours.

(1) Getting Familiar with Traditional Stó:lō Basketry

Have students view a selection of examples of traditional *Stó:lō* baskets through the slides provided or a museum field trip. Most local museums have basketry in their collections.

Create an inventory of materials, tools, methods, and uses based on what they have seen in the slides and in the museum. Discuss the availability of materials to the local region.

Teacher Background Notes - Stó:lō people are prolific producers of basketry. Women have produced basketry in the traditional coil-wrapped style for many thousands of years, as well as weaving roots, bark and fibres for many other implements such as nets, blankets, mats, shawls, etc. Students should be directed to look at local resources as a source for the following:

materials: cedar root, cherry bark, bear grass, horsetail root, deer skin, etc...
 tools: awls - traditionally bone; sharp knife, traditionally obsidian or quartz; basin of water, etc...
 uses: berry baskets, trays, colanders, baby board, clothing, mats, etc...]

(2) Invite guest speaker to talk about traditional Stó:lō basketry.

Bring a guest presenter to the class-room. Students will observe the process of basket making and listen to the basket-maker's stories about baskets and basket-making.

With the guidance of the guest speaker, students will create a coiled, coaster-shaped basket given available materials. If cedar roots are not available, teachers may want to explore the use of raffia and card. Students can incorporate a geometric design.

(3) Extended Activities

The time-frame for these activities will vary, depending on the size and scale of the project undertaken by the student.

Students will assist in the collection of cedar roots during the month of May or June. Contact *Stó:lō* Nation for guidance.

Students, using traditional coiling technique, will design and create a modern, usable object or piece of clothing. Students can use contemporary or found materials (such as fabrics, paper, twine, wire, etc..) to create baskets, hats, shoes. Students should restrict the colours of their materials to emphasize the geometric pattern integrated into the object.

Assessment Strategies

- Completion of inventory of traditional tools, uses and materials.
- Teacher's observation of student's interest and respect for guest speaker.
- Completion of the coiled-basket project, evaluated according to standards of quality, technical skill integration of image design.
- Participation in and appreciation of the collection of cedar roots.

Learning Resources

- Kit of sample materials (see poster board created by Gwen Point, Longhouse Education Program, *Stó:lō* Nation).
- See people listed in the cultural resource person's guide.
- Slides of traditional and contemporary *Stó:lō* basketry.
- Video "Hands of History". See Instructional suggestions for this video.
- Diagrams of coiled basketry techniques (see Stewart's [Cedar](#)).

LESSON 6: TEXTILES

Instructional Strategies

Suggested Time: 3-4 hours

(1) Introduction to traditional Stó:lō textiles.

Have students view a selection of examples of traditional Stó:lō textiles through the slides provided or a museum field trip. Most local museums have textiles in their collections.

Create an inventory of materials, tools, patterns, methods, and uses of textiles based on what they have seen.

Teacher Background Notes: Discuss the importance of power and prestige that is associated with traditional Stó:lō weavings. Discuss the importance of domesticated dogs and mountain goats, spindle whorls, salish looms, traditional dyes, changes over time (sheep wool, spinning wheel, etc...). The symbolism sheet provided in this curriculum package can be handed out and discussed at this time. It should be noted that this sheet may not reflect the views of all Stó:lō weavers about their work, and was constructed with weavers in the 1960s as a part of a Salish weaving revival.

(2) Invite guest speaker to talk about traditional Stó:lō textiles.

Bring in a guest speaker at this point. Observe the process and listen to stories related to weaving [note historical developments in the weaving, traditional and contemporary techniques, and artistic (spiritual) connections to the work].

Students will create, with guidance, a sample weaving using a traditional Salish loom. Students will have the opportunity to spin wool with a whorl and/or a spinning wheel. Students will have the opportunity to dye the wool using traditional materials and techniques. Teachers should note that a frame loom can be adapted with a dowel (see illustration).

(3) Extended Activities

Using traditional methods, students will create a work that incorporates personal symbols. Materials may be natural, synthetic or recycled.

Assessment Strategies

- Completion of inventory of materials, tools, patterns, methods, and uses of textiles.
- Teacher's observation of student's interest and respect for guest speaker.
- Completion of a traditional sampler of a Salish-style weaving.
- Participation in and appreciation of spinning and dyeing of wool, using different techniques.
- Completion of a sampler Salish-style weaving, evaluated according to standards of quality, technical skill integration of personal symbols.

Learning Resources

- Picture an slide files (spindle whorls - static and in use; Salish-style loom; diagrams of how to "thread" a loom; pattern samples; mountain goat & woolly dog; dyeing materials and methods).
 - Wells 1966 and 1969 articles on Salish Weaving.
 - Mohs 1992 - "Mountain Goats and Woolly Dogs" paper.
 - Gustafson 1980 - *Salish Weaving*.
 - *Stó:lō Curriculum Consortium Cultural Resource Persons Guide*.
1. B.C. First Nations Studies 12 1995:47-48.