THE IMPlications AND PRACTICES OF TWO TRANscULTURAL
ARTISTS: GU XIONG AND XU BING IN CHINESE IMMIGRANT
DESCENDANTS' ART EDUCATION

by

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ABSTRACT

This study has investigated the problems that Montreal Chinese immigrant students encountered during their learning Chinese culture as they are also attempting to integrate into local culture. A research approach was taken to determine whether the study of two transcultural artists, Xu Bing and Gu Xiong, can help the students learn their own culture and the local culture. From the case study, it was found that the two artists’ work and their attitudes have a great potential to help students bridge the host culture and their heritage culture. I have also designed lessons with power point presentations about these two artists and tried to use them in the teaching practices at a Chinese weekend school. However, I was not able to implement this teaching approach in the school due to their little awareness and interest in art and the economic concerns with their children’s future career selection. From cultural art activities in both Chinese and English schools, I found Banks (1989) level one and two approaches could stimulate students’ interests in cultures and arts but do not much help students understand how the local culture and other cultures are interconnected and interrelated. Although the contributions and additive approaches represent possible beginnings for helping students to understand art from Chinese culture and other cultures in general, when I tried to move further to a higher level of cultural integration in the Chinese school I was not successful. The implication from the case study of these transcultural artists demonstrated that their work could provide linkage between Chinese culture and North American culture. It also related to Chinese immigrant students’ life. In my thesis, I tried to demonstrate that the transcultural artist approach could reinforce a cross-cultural understanding especially for Chinese immigrant students to learn the relationship between their own culture and the
local culture. I also tried to explore whether we can move from lower level approaches to
the higher level approach identified by Banks (1989) to reflect sociocultural diversity in
the curriculum by studying these two transcultural artists, Gu Xiong and Xu Bing.
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Chapter One: Introduction

Chinese immigrants in Canada

Canada is a country built by immigrants. The first Europeans, Norse (Vikings), arrived around 1000 CE to this “New World” which was already home to its natives for over 5,000 years. However, it was not until the early 1600s before European immigrants established permanent settlements in North America. There was a huge influx of immigrants into Canada following the American Revolutionary War which included not only those of European descendants, but also blacks and native people from the six Iroquois nations. However, British and French descendants have dominated the Canadian demographic until the end of the 20th century. For the first 60 years of the past century, European nations such as the United Kingdom, Italy, Germany and the Netherlands, as well as the United States, were the primary sources of immigrants to Canada. Today, immigrants are mostly from Asian countries. The changes in the 1967 immigration regulations resulted in the adoption of a universal point system to assess prospective immigrants, irrespective of racial and cultural background. This policy has, since then, facilitated immigration from all over the world including China. During the last three or four decades, there has been a significant change in the Canadian demographic pattern.

According to “Census 2001” conducted by Statistics Canada, immigration now accounts for over 50% of the total population growth in the country. According to the latest statistics from the Canadian Citizen Immigration Department, the arrival of 36,000 Mainland Chinese immigrants to Canada in 2003 surpassed the 2002 record of 33,000. Mainland China continues its record of being the largest source of new immigrants to Canada during the past five years. The Chinese are now considered the largest visible
minority group, surpassing one million for the first time. A total of 1,029,400 individuals identified themselves as Chinese, up from 860,100 in 1996. They accounted for 3.5% of the total national population and 26% of the visible minority population. Chinese language has become the third most spoken language in Canada (after English and French). Most Chinese-origin immigrants choose to live in metropolitan areas such as Toronto, Vancouver and Montreal. About 17% of the 1.8 million immigrants arrived since 1990 were school children between the age of five and sixteen. Sixty-nine percent of these immigrant children live in Toronto, Vancouver and Montreal.

Multiculturalism and Transculturalism

Increasing cultural and racial diversity has inevitably brought dramatic changes in Canada’s social development. In 1972, Canada established “multiculturalism” as an official policy within a bilingual framework. This policy recognizes a multitude of “ethnic communities” within the frame of the English and French “founding nations”. According to the theory behind it, the policy is to establish an eventual cosmopolitan identity of Canadian citizenship. How Transculturalism and Multiculturalism should lead to the establishment of cosmopolitan citizenship is a key issue still widely debated within Canada.

Cultural disjunction begins when people move from their homelands to a foreign land. Although time and distance have been shortened with accessible rapid means of modern transportation, new technology has yet to put us in contact with the “others” and foster an understanding of others. As an immigrant from China, I have observed and

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1 Transculturalism: In 1940 Ortiz introduced the term “transculturation” to indicate the multiple directions of the flow of cultural influences in the history of the Americas.
experienced misunderstanding and frustration as a result of cultural conflict. Like other immigrants, I was swinging between two cultures and was uncertain about whether to adapt to the new culture or to evolve from my own. The term “transculture” arose and art has been considered a positive concept to resolve a part of the puzzle. “Transcultural art” is emerging as an interesting topic for both artists and educators. As a more interactive and egalitarian approach, transculturalism* can possibly break down numerous borders both physically and psychologically, and might be a very good theory to prepare us for cosmopolitan and globalized citizenship. This approach is based on the recognition that each person of the nation state processes multiple identities that not only link him or her to their own cultural heritage, but also to the culture of the host country, continent, neighborhood, street etc. It seems that Art can function as a bridge to link individuals to their own cultural heritage and the host culture, to help them develop their own identities, to communicate better with others, and to express both universal and individual meanings …

There is an increasing interest on how globalization and transnationalism are altering the concepts of culture and community. Although “multiculturalism” has been recognized as the dominant framework that guides the examination of ethnic communities and identities, the emerging concept “transculturalism”, argues that multiculturalism is not the single lens through which the self and community must be viewed. Transculturalism casts identity in a new light: as the amalgamation, or fusion of ethnic backgrounds and cultural experiences. With globalization, increased mobility and ethnic intermingling, everyone is being forged by a melding of cultures. According to Cuccioletta (2001), “a journey from multiculturalism to transculturalism, which would
open the horizon and eventually lead to a cosmopolitan citizenship, forces us to envision
the world through a cultural prism. ... Culture therefore becomes all encompassing,
recognizing the interaction without barriers among peoples at the basis of a world outlook
(p. 9).” Transculturalism and the popularity of immigration are shifting the traditional
ways of knowing and thus challenge traditional views and assumptions. The theory will
help us reexamine and rethink the role of art education through non-dominant
perspectives and develop new ways of thinking.

The discourse about multiculturalism began in some Western countries during the
1960s, and has been continuously spreading around the world since then. With the
conceptual analysis of contemporary notions linked with multiculturalism, such as inter-
culturalism, internationalization, globalization and the more newly emerged concept
transculturalism, the major theme in education is shifting within the context of global
human rights and responsibilities. In educational terminology, Art is defined as a unique
tool for investigating cultural values because it transcends the barrier between languages
and provides visceral and tacit insights into cultural changes. While the term
“multiculturalism” is increasingly seen as problematic, does the notion of
“transculturalism” give us better solutions for education? Can art serve as a powerful
force within transcultural education? According to Welsch (1999),

The concept of multiculturality takes up the problems which different cultures
have living together within one society. But therewith the concept basically
remains in the duct of the traditional understanding of culture; it proceeds from
the existence of clearly distinguished, in themselves homogenous cultures - the
In recent years many eminent scholars and noted novelists such as McRoberts (1997) have written about and directed criticisms toward the idea that multiculturalism, as a political policy remains the only avenue towards a cosmopolitan harmony in Canada. McRoberts (1997) states:

> It has been argued that the policy of multiculturalism has impeded rather than facilitated the integration of immigrants into Canadian society. In effect, there is an inevitable contradiction between the first two goals of the multiculturalism policy, namely preserving cultures and eliminating barriers to mobility. (p. 131)

Although, the term “transculturalism” was first introduced by the South American scholar Fernando Ortiz in 1940, the concept of “transculturalism” was initially derived from the ideas expressed by Jose Marti in his celebrated article “Nuestra America” published in 1891. In this article, Marti stated that intercultural mixed peoples (metissage) play important roles in legitimizing the American. He also referred to the process of metissage as a distinctive trait of a culture that is founded on the native people and all the different immigrant groups who had become and are becoming Americans. In Marti’s thinking, the inhabitants of the Americas were biologically and culturally Métis and therefore always part of the dialectic with the other. According to Marti’s thinking, Ortiz defined transculturalism as a synthesis of two phases occurring simultaneously. Ortiz introduced this term to replace the paired concepts of acculturation and deculturation that described the transference of culture in a reductive fashion imagined from within the interests of the metropolis (Pratt, 1992, p. 228). This
new cultural form is based on the meeting and the intermingling of different peoples and cultures. The term, *transculturation*, according to Triki (2002), "has been used by Moroccan Abdellatif Laabi and Tunisian-Canadian writer Hédi Bouraoui to denote the subversion of linguistic and cultural identities through the intervention of other models, other figures grafted onto one's older identities in order to create not a 'synthesis of cultures,' but new structures which allow one to think otherwise" (p. 209). Transculturation is therefore a phenomenon of the "contact zone." According to Mary Louise Pratt (1992):

Contact zone refers to the space of colonial encounters, the space in which geographically and historically separated come into contact with each other establish ongoing relations, usually involving conditions of coercion, radical inequality, and intractable conflict. It is also an attempt to invoke the spatial and temporal co-presence of subjects previously separated by geographic and historical disjunctures, and whose trajectories now intersect. The term "contact" thus foregrounds the interactive, improvisational dimensions of colonial encounters so easily ignored or suppressed by diffusionist accounts of conquest and domination. A "contact" perspective emphasizes how subjects are constituted in and by their relations to each other. It treats the relations among colonizers and colonized, or travelers and "travelees," not in terms of separateness or apartheid, but in terms of co-presence, interaction, interlocking understanding and practices, often within radically asymmetrical relations of power. (p. 6)

Wolfgang Welsch (1999) presents the concept of *transculturality* as the most adequate concept of culture today. By this he refers to a new conceptualization of culture
differing from classical monocultures and to the more recent conceptions of interculturality and multiculturality. Transculturalism emphasizes transcultural blend rather than a juxtaposition of clearly delineated cultures. “The concept of transculturality seeks conversely to articulate today’s cultural constitution, one characterized by intertwinement, and to elicit the requisite conceptional and normative consequences.” Welsch (1999) further states that “the tendency towards transculturality aims for cultures with the ability to link and undergo transition whilst avoiding the threat of homogenization or uniformization” (p. 194 - 213).

The International Journal of Canadian Studies published a theme issue on “transculturalism” in spring 2003. Robert Schwartzwald states: “Canada is not so much (an) exemplary entity (...) as it is itself subjected to destabilizing analyses: Here is Canada in struggle with its contemporary internal challenges for recognition by its subaltern, internal Others: and precariously situated in its relations of interdependence and hegemony in a newly configured global conjuncture”(p.5). Among the contributors to this volume, Roland Walter shows greater interest in the space of in betweenness, not simply as a place of transit from one home to another, but a space in which old homes are rememorialized and new ones refigured in a process of reculturation. After analyzing two novels by Dionne Brand, Walter states that “Dionne’s writing transforms cultural in-betweens as an unconscious state into a synthetic transcultural home within language - a home characterized by relations in which cultural differences are not sublet as they flow together into new forms” (p. 23).

'celebratory' to 'critical' or 'insurgent' multicultural art education and to increasingly acknowledge and embrace changing transcultural migratory experiences” (p. 293).

We know that teaching involves the ability to relate to and understand students' lives. But the emphasis on the importance of teachers' learning about individual students' experience of culture, and the work of immigrant artists is limited in teaching practice. As I talked with teachers in different schools, the importance of transculturalism within school contexts has yet to be addressed with reference to art education.

It is apparent that traveling cultures and having flexible citizenship are not available to everyone. However, teachers and students can share the experience and the version of “transculturalism” from immigrants by studying, for example, immigrant artists and their art. I have contacted several Chinese immigrant artists whom I found are seriously rethinking their origins and addressing the changing relationships between the local and global, the spiritual and material, the production of art and the producer. Many are striving to develop a means to communicate with audiences who are not totally familiar with Chinese iconography. They have effectively served as communicators between East and West, local and global. Post-colonialist culture critic Homi Bhabha (1994) suggests that the "oriental" identity of these artists is not an irreducible given; it is always in negotiation. Homi Bhabha has been influential in the movement to redefine post-colonial and minority cultures. In the Introduction to his *The Location of Culture*, Bhabha (1994) demands:

We, as members of society and as literary critics, should try to understand cultural differences as being based on hybrid ties created in moments of historical transformation. We should no longer classify groups of people based on
'organic', pre-existing traits attributed to ethnic groups. Instead, we should locate the differences created "in-between" time and space spanning different cultures. People's characteristics are not limited to their ethnic heritage, but rather are subject to change and modification through experience. (p. 134)

Besides, Said (2000) states in his essay “Reflections on exile,” that the experience of living between cultures has been central in developing new models of identity, new ways of thinking about the dynamics of cultural power.

In a book entitled Thinking Globally about the Arts in Education (MacGregor, 1995), most of the authors have focused on the emerging consciousness of the meaning of globalization on education today and tomorrow. Tony Rogers and Rita Irwin emphasize the importance of seeing art from a cultural point of view and the artist's social value system to understand their art. “The chief aim of art education as global education is to make art that has both personal and social meaning and to gain knowledge and understanding of art as an important part of all human activity” is a view expressed by Graeme Chalmers (p. 25). Juliana Saxton and Carole Miller proposed that global education involves “re-imagining the world and ourselves” by creating links between people and they suggest that art contributes to develop this “collective vision.” (p. iv) Bill Zuk and Robert Dalton suggested that the insights gained from the study of art and culture within one region can be used as the basis for studying another region and, thereby, contribute to larger global understanding. Seven chapters explore the global education implications and contributions of the visual arts and drama. As art changes with the shifting of the culture, “studying art as cultural communication can bring it into a more central position in children’s learning and they can recognize its vast impact on
themselves and their own communities as well as opening bridges to other people’s art and culture.... The success of cross-cultural experience depends on how much crossing takes place" (McFee, 1998, p.87). Another book, The Turbulence of Migration (Papastergiadis 2000), discusses the structure and impact of migration in the past and contemporary societies. Papastergiadis analyzed the theoretical concepts of deterritorialization and hybridity and suggested a new concept for understanding the relationship between cultural difference and modernity. Ien Ang (2001), as a cultural thinker, has specifically questioned “identity” in an age of globalization and Diaspora. She investigated ‘Asia’ and ‘the West’ to discuss the social and intellectual space of the ‘in-between’, arguing for a theorizing not of ‘difference’ but of ‘togetherness’ in contemporary societies.

Political, economical, and social developments have posed a challenge for education in Canada, where immigrants from a variety of cultural backgrounds and different value systems come together. In this country, discord between cultural identities exists almost everywhere in the social framework. Art education has a potential to play a key role in reconciling the discrepancies between cultures. As a Chinese immigrant, I intended to focus my thesis study on the potential function of art education to bridge Chinese and Canadian culture.

The current status of Chinese immigrant children’s education in Canada

In the process of adapting to new surroundings, immigrants encounter social problems and culture conflicts. The conflict involves not only external social structure but also ways of preserving the past and interacting with the cultures of their new home.
The cultural shifting has profound influence on the Chinese immigrant’s children. They experience difficulties to adapt to a new place and master English and French during their initial years in Canada. While Chinese immigrants’ children are integrated into the host society - Canada, their parents start to worry about the fact that their children start to lose their mother tongue and their cultural heritage. So the issues of adding Chinese and Chinese culture to the mainstream curriculum have arisen between Chinese communities and public schools in several major cities of Canada, where most Chinese immigrants settled in.

Effectively dealing with diversity is a key issue for today’s Canadian education system. As the Chinese economy is expanding at an unprecedented pace, and Chinese immigrant’s population is growing at a surprising pace, China and Chinese culture have been paid more attention in Canadian society and the education system. More and more Chinese and Canadian educators have directed their research to address the problems of Chinese Canadian’s education in Canada. They investigated the social, cultural and educational relationships and difference which are embedded in this group of students’ education in Canada. For example, Guofang Li (2003) describes a Chinese Canadian immigrant family encountering difficulties with schooling, demonstrating the complex interrelationship between home literacy, culture, and politics of schooling. He suggests that cultural mismatch theory alone cannot explain minority school failure. Rather, multilevel interactions, including cultural differences, modes of incorporation, and differential power relationships between school and home result in minority students' school difficulties (p. 182-204). Most Chinese parents hope their children can integrate with the local culture as soon as possible. Meanwhile, they also expect their children can
keep Chinese and Chinese culture. According to Jun Li (2003), parents’ expectation plays important roles shaping Chinese immigrants’ education in Canada. However, the values and cultures which the students learned from school are quite different from what they learned at home which makes students quite confused. Under the parents’ high expectation and strictness, most Chinese students achieve very good academic performance at school. However, some adolescents experience anxious thoughts and feelings under parental pressure, especially their parents’ extreme concerns about their academic achievement and future career. Some adolescents feel that the generation gap is widening in the presence of the conflict between the home culture and school culture (p.198-200). Values advocated in the Canadian education system may not be consistent with Chinese cultural and educational values, these conflicts between their own culture and host culture, home and school among these Chinese immigrants should be alleviated through public education. Curriculum development and schooling of immigrant children should be examined within the socio-cultural context of Canada and the context of the home culture in which the parents and students were raised.

**Chinese Schools in Montreal**

In order to preserve Chinese and Chinese traditions for Chinese immigrant’s children, thousands of Chinese families send their children to weekend schools to learn Chinese and the Chinese culture. In Montreal and its surrounding areas, there are at least eight Chinese schools. These schools are Chinese community based and registered as non-profit organizations. All the Chinese schools have the same objectives to promote interest, knowledge and understanding of Chinese culture, to strengthen academic
learning, and to help students build a solid foundation to develop them in an all-around way, morally, intellectually, physically and aesthetically. Although the initial purpose of establishing the schools is to serve the Chinese community in Montreal, they are also open to the whole society at large for anyone interested in learning the Chinese language as well as Chinese culture and arts. Over the years, Montreal Chinese schools have developed from a tiny operation of merely one or two classes into more than twelve classes with thousands of students. Most Chinese schools offer Chinese Mandarin courses at all levels and for all age groups. There are also Chinese courses specially designed for non-Chinese speaking children and adults. Culture classes, such as Chinese Painting, Calligraphy, Dance, Chess, Taiqi and Kongfu, are also offered in these schools. Most classes are held on Saturdays, usually for two to three hours. Each school has a team of administrators who devote their time to the cause of learning and education, as well as to the promotion of Chinese culture and cultural harmony in the society. The team is responsible for policy, overall planning, direction, curriculum and day to day work of the school.

As a teacher in one of the Chinese schools in Montreal, Brossard Chinese School, I have the opportunity to closely observe the learning processes of these students. Most of the students came from Mainland China, Hong Kong, Taiwan and other places in Asia, such as Malaysia, Viet-Nam, Singapore. These students study in the Chinese schools from a few months to more than ten years. Some of them have been studying in the school since they were in kindergarten.

Brossard Chinese School was established in 1991. Most teachers are also the parents of the students in the school. There are fourteen classes from kindergarden to
adult level. From 3:00 to 5:00 is the Chinese language class for each group and the following hour, 5:00 to 6:00 is for cultural studies or verbal conversation. Everyone, including the principal, teachers, students and parents involved in the Chinese school, has strong commitment to devote their time to preserve their language and the culture. The teachers and administrators almost work on a voluntary base which is the only way to keep the school alive.

In spite of the considerable amount of time and effort that both parents and teachers have put into the Chinese weekend school, many students lack motivation to learn Chinese and Chinese culture. In a previous investigation (Appendix 1), I tried to ask three groups of questions to students from grade 7 to grade 12. These students study in different public schools, such as Antoine Brossard, Centennial Regional High School, College Notre-Dame-de-Lourdes .... These questions include: 1) What is the main reason for you to go to Chinese school on weekends? 2) Do you want to learn Chinese cultures while you learn Chinese language? Do you know anything about Chinese cultures? 3) Do you speak Chinese at home or other locations? Have you learned any Chinese cultures at your schools or at home?

For the first question, almost half of the students answered that they come to Chinese school to learn Chinese, however, one third of the students said that they were forced by their parents to go to Chinese school. The rest of students answered that they have nothing else to do on weekends. Only few students think that the main reason is to conserve their heritage. I found that almost half of these students have no motivation to learn Chinese. It is surprising for me that after several years studying in Chinese school, some students are still not enthusiast to learn Chinese and Chinese cultures. For the
second question, the majority of these students expressed that they were interested to learn all kinds of Chinese cultures and other cultures. They listed things like Chinese history, painting, Taichi sword and Kung Fu. Some of them answered that they don’t know what part of the culture they should know. For the last question, most students mentioned that they speak Chinese and learn Chinese culture at home. But there is no or little education in Chinese and Chinese culture at their public schools.

The main reason that students are not very enthusiastic about their mother culture is probably due to the fact that there is a lack of connection between their mother culture and their daily school life in Canada. Most of the content in Chinese text books does not address daily life and experience in Canada. For example, in a grade nine Chinese textbook, the first and second lessons introduce Chinese philosophers – Confucius and Mencius. The next four lessons talk about Chinese traditional idioms and legends where Chinese traditional morals and essence are introduced. The last few lessons introduce a Chinese famous artist Qi Baishi and a Mexican Chinese business man Huang Kuanzhuo. The overall objective of the text book is to increase students’ knowledge of Chinese and their reading comprehension. The students learn Chinese and Chinese culture based on these text books where the content is a list of Chinese folk stories and historical figures. The students are asked to remember all these facts and important figures or their brief philosophies, but not required to understand the social and cultural meanings and its relation with the other cultures. The teaching methods in Chinese school are mostly focused on improving students’ reading and writing, with little attention to teaching culture or art.
These are similar teaching materials when I was in primary school in China. It is not surprising that they are not able to capture the interest of Chinese students in Canada. The geographical, cultural and social environment is totally different from China. Although it is important to promote students’ knowledge of their Chinese and cultural heritage in Chinese school, it is also essential for the students to use their cultural heritage to add new meanings in their life. **How to teach Chinese and Chinese culture in connection with students’ daily life in Canada is an important research question.** As an art teacher and also from my previous teaching experience, I have a strong believe that art has the potential to encourage students’ interests on their homeland culture and bridge the cultural gap and help foster cross-cultural understanding.

It is also important that, not only the students should learn Chinese traditional art, such as papercuts, calligraphy, Chinese painting, Chinese chess and Chinese music, but also understand its connections to Canadian art or other cultures and try to apply the traditions to our contemporary life. If students do not have a sense of connection between Chinese culture and Western culture, traditional art and contemporary art, Chinese culture and traditions will be just like dusty antiques in the corner of a museum and nobody will want to see and touch it. So we have to make it shine and attractive in order to capture audiences’ attention in ways that will make meaning for themselves. We need to explain to the audiences why this antique was placed here and its significance brought to the place. We need to tell a meaningful story about its history, cultural background and its relation to the present and life today. We need to bring the contemporary life of China to the students instead of staying in the old vision of China. When we teach Chinese cultures we need to clarify to the students that China is not like what we see in the
Chinatown in Montreal or Vancouver. It is not like the one we know five or ten years ago. It keeps growing on both economic and social dimensions; therefore, teachers have to update students with new information about China and its culture. **How to design a curriculum that incorporates both Chinese history and its traditions into a growing global cultural context presents a great challenge.**

Another issue is that the public schools which these students attend don’t include enough information about their culture, history and language in regular school curriculum. If Chinese and Chinese culture were included in public school curriculum, the immigrant students would have a high motivation and enthusiasm to know their own mother language and heritages. It also makes the immigrant students proud. A parent told me that her thirteen year old daughter was very excited to tell her one day after school: “Mom, my teacher talked about Chinese and Chinese culture in the class. Everybody in class asked me about China and how to write Chinese.” She was very proud to share her knowledge of Chinese culture with her classmates in the class. But this does not often happen in regular classes of public schools. Most Chinese students told me that they are only exposed to very little Chinese culture in their public schools. Many students think that what is important in the school is to learn things that are related to their future careers. What they learn in the school helps them to adapt to the host society and achieve their career goals. For them learning Chinese is not a priority. When I asked the students why you sometimes do not finish your homework from a Chinese class, they answered: “we had an exam this week and we also had lots of homework at our public school.” When they say that, I couldn’t say anything more. These Chinese students have too much to learn. They already haven’t weekends. I know lots of parents not only send their
children to the Chinese school but also send them to their private teachers to learn music and art on weekends. These parents are busy on weekends even more than on weekdays. For those parents who work on weekends, they think Chinese school is a good place for their children to stay. Beside a safe and learning environment, Chinese school also provides a place where students can make friends with those who have the same cultural background. This is the place that gives those students who are newcomers to Canada a sense of belonging and support. But after several years, students start to feel bored particularly once they have adapted to the host society very well. Although we need to rethink the curriculum in Chinese school and bring students’ lives into the curriculum, the curriculum design and public system in the public schools also needs to be considered for these growing numbers of the group in Canada. With more and more Chinese immigrants coming to Canada, a program revealing the linkage between these two cultures needs to be developed and used in the regular classes.

Nevertheless, some schools in Toronto and Vancouver, front-line settlement cities for Chinese immigrants, have tried to integrate Chinese culture into the public school curriculum due to a large percentage of Chinese immigrant students enrolled in the school. For example, according to Deosaran, Ramesh A. and Gershman, Janis S (1976), a Chinese-Canadian bi-cultural program was implemented in two Toronto public schools where there is a high percentage of students with Chinese background. The objectives of the program were to: (1) provide the children of the Chinese parents with educationally sound opportunities to learn the culture and language of their adopted country; (2) preserve the culture and language of their Chinese national origin; (3) eliminate the necessity for Chinese parents to enroll their children in a Chinese school after regular
school hours; and (4) prevent or minimize the communication gap between the Chinese parents and children. It was reported that according to most students, parents, and teachers, the program was successful in making students closely engaged with Chinese culture. However, some teachers felt that the program was less successful in relating Canadian and Chinese culture. Another example is with Spul'u'kwuks elementary school in Great Vancouver’s Richmond School District. According to Tony Carrigan and John Kibblewhite (2002), Spul'u'kwuks runs a Multicultural Friendship Club to foster intercultural understanding on Aboriginal, Chinese, Philippine and Somali cultures. Similar clubs are currently in place in over half of Richmond's elementary schools where, during the past decade, the student population has reached several thousands. These programs have contributed to a better overall feeling in a community undergoing rapid demographic change. These clubs enable students from different ethnic backgrounds to meet and share their cultural experiences, such as Chinese calligraphy, Punjabi Bhangra music, Aboriginal dream catchers, and even floor hockey. The ultimate goal is to help newcomers and long-time residents develop friendships and gain appreciation of different cultures in a non-threatening way. These two authors further state: “Diversity is not just about celebrating multiculturalism or acquiring a new culture and language. Major challenges exist in building pluralistic societies. Spul'u'kwuks is succeeding in meeting many of these challenges, but concerns continue” (p. n/a). Although urban schools in Canada are front-line settlement sites where immigrant families with children join the Canadian tribe, Carrigan and Kibblewhite (2002) also advocate that all Canadians and government ministries other than education need to pay attention to the great social experiment that is playing out in hundreds of urban schools like Spul'u'kwuks.
It is recognized that levels of integration of ethnic content in most public school multicultural programs have been limited to “the contributions approach” (Banks, 1989, p. 192-194).

How to well integrate the school curriculum with ethnic content and to move away from a mainstream – centric and Eurocentric curriculum presents a great challenge for schools? This has inspired me to examine the potential of art education as bridge to help students develop their understanding about the culture from their homeland in relation to their host cultures. During my study, I hope to address some of the following questions: How to connect the cultural fragments with students’ life experiences? How to guide Chinese immigrant students to better understand their cultural heritage through art? And to explore the content in the curriculum that can possibly function as a bridge to connect homeland culture with the host culture?

In the following chapter, I will focus on two distinctive Chinese transcultural artists, Gu Xiong and Xu Bing. After living in different places between the East and the West, these two artists have developed their unique perspectives towards unifying aspects of cultures through art. Through collecting, analyzing, and presenting these two successful transcultural artists’ cultural backgrounds, art work and experiences, I will find out how they effectively blend Western and Eastern cultures in their art work, how they use visual language as a powerful tool to express their notions of transculturalism. How their immigrant experiences affect their art creations? I will try to provide some implications for Chinese immigrant students’ art education by exploring these questions.
Chapter Two: Trans-cultural visual artists and implication

The research is based on the premise that knowledge and cultures are not fragmented, and that education should encourage learning of new knowledge based on the previous knowledge and the experience of the learners. Art can bridge different cultures and foster cross-cultural and transcultural understanding. This educational content takes into account Chinese immigrant students’ multiple understandings and experiences in an attempt to maintain their individual identities and their homeland culture while constructing new knowledge. According to Smith (2003), “The visual arts have always played a major role in motivating students, increasing self-discipline, fostering inclusion of special populations into main-stream educational systems, increasing cultural awareness and appreciation, and enhancing aesthetic capabilities in students” (p. 121). Based on the problems which I have observed over the years in Chinese immigrant descendants’ learning their own homeland culture, I felt that introducing some successful Chinese immigrant artists to these children will be a good approach for them to learn both aspects of Chinese culture and North American culture. This chapter describes the approaches I have taken to collect information from two transcultural visual artists -- Gu Xiong and Xu Bing. I try to analyze their work and to develop a methodology on multicultural art education for Chinese immigrant descendants.

Biography of two artists

Gu Xiong was born in Chongqing, China in 1953. He was sent to the countryside for re-education during the Cultural Revolution. Re-education is a process that was implemented by Mao Zedong in 1968. In the following several years, there were millions
of young people, mostly secondary and high school students, were 'sent down' in this way and many of them eventually stayed in countryside for the rest of their life. It was starting in 1977, when China restored its university entrance examination system; Gu Xiong had the opportunity to enroll into Sichuan Fine Arts Institute in Chongqing, Sichuan. He obtained a Bachelor's degree and a Master's degree in Fine Arts in 1982 and 1985. After graduation, he worked as a lecturer in the university. In 1986-87 and 1989, he participated in the "Art Studio Program" sponsored by Banff Centre for the Arts in Alberta, Canada. Gu Xiong immigrated to Canada in 1989. He first stayed in Banff then moved to Vancouver, B.C. where he has been working as an Assistant Professor in the Department of Art History, Visual Art and Theory at the University of British Columbia since 2001. Gu's work was shown in a number of exhibitions including, among others, the National Gallery, Ottawa, Vancouver Art Gallery; Art Gallery of Greater Victoria and the Burnaby Art Gallery, B.C. Many of his works reflect his personal experience living between cultures, and are related to issues of cultural conflict and personal identity.

Xu Bing was also born in Chongqing about two years later than Gu. In 1975, he was also sent to the countryside for re-education. After staying in the countryside for three years, he passed the national university entrance examination and enrolled in the Central Academy of Fine Arts in Beijing. He studied printmaking and obtained a Master of Fine Arts degree in 1987. After working as a lecturer in the Central Academy of Fine Arts for three years, Xu Bing immigrated to the United States and has lived in Brooklyn, New York since then. His art work has been shown in exhibitions around the world including the 45th Venice Biennial in Italy, the Museum of Modern Art in New York, Museum Ludwig in Köln, Germany, the Reyna Sofia Museum, Madrid and others. In
1999 he was conferred the MacArthur Award for Genius by the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation. He also received the *Asian Cultural Award* in 2003 in Fokouda, Japan. Xu Bing's work largely deals with issues related to language and being human.

It is apparent that these two artists have very similar backgrounds and life experience. They have gone through the “Chinese Cultural Revolution” and finally decided to come and live in North America. They both have studied in prestigious art schools in China. They have faced and struggled with conflicts between Western and Eastern cultures. Both of them have found effective means to incorporate Chinese culture and Western culture through visual art, and have been well recognized for their work and contributions to transnational art forms.

**The Implication for art education**

From the art education perspective, the study of these two artists can provide valuable information to help educators to bridge Chinese and Western cultures for Chinese immigrant students. Study of these two artists and their work can be developed into educational material that reflects and connects with Chinese immigrant students' daily lives. These artists' art has the potential to encourage students to be interested in their homeland culture and to bridge the cultural gap and help foster cross-cultural understanding. By carefully studying these two artists' work and their personal experience, I found the following implications for immigrant students' education:

1) **By studying these two artists and their art, students can learn about Chinese immigrants’ lives, history and inherent cultural conflicts, which reflect and connect to Chinese immigrant students’ experience and life.** For example, Gu Xiong’s
installation *The River* (Figure 2-1) is his meditation on modern immigration and displacement. Instead of telling immigrant history in the school history class by using a timeline and introducing people and Canadian immigrant policy, Gu Xiong’s *The River* visually presents a narrative of a Chinese immigrant’s journey from China to Canada. This installation visually displays not only the geographical process of border crossing but also the process of cultural crossing. In his statement of the work, Gu Xiong explained this journey of border crossing – from the Yangzi River in the south of China to the Fraser River in the west of Canada. Gu (1999) described the following in his statement of *The River*:

When I saw the salmon spawning in the river and streams in Fraser Valley, I was really moved by their life. I felt a deep connection between their experience and my own. I dreamt I was in a red space, swimming through the Yangzi River, into the Pacific Ocean, and finally arriving at the Fraser River. (p. ?)

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During this long swim, I saw the silver fish turn red, then white. The river changed from yellow to blue, then red. The fish and the river are intermeshed of two different cultural geologies, carving out an interstitial space. It is full of energy and gives birth to a hybrid culture. When the water comes, there will be a river. When the salmon returns, the river flows red. A spiritual river. A river of migration. (p. ?)

In the artist’s eyes, the river is a symbol of his immigrant journey to Canada. To deeply understand this work, the audience needs not only to acknowledge the geography but more importantly to understand the culture embraced in the geography and the cultural
transformation beyond the geographical borders. Xiao Ping Li (1998, p. 3), a Toronto writer specializing in Asian-Canadian cultural practices, has written about Gu Xiong’s *The River* in his artist’s statement:

The meeting of the Yangzi River and the Fraser River bridged by the Pacific Ocean, and the intermesh of two different cultural geologies through the artist’s migration. The rich symbolism embodied in socks and salmon discerns a journey which is both existential and spiritual. It accentuates a dialectical model of traveling between global and local geocultural currents and, more, carving out an interstitial space.

As professor John O’Brian (1999) in the department of Art History, Visual Arts and Theory at the University of British Columbia wrote in his article *Long-Distance Swimming*, “... we should pay close attention to what meshes and what clashes in The River” (p. 6). For those immigrant students, to explore and understand “what meshes and what clashes” is the important aspect to deeply understand their immigrant life, culture and history. Rather than just simply reveal an amalgamation of two original locations, this work creates an entirely new space. Gu’s art raises not only matters of identity and displacement in a general way, but also “in a specific way to the cultures in which the ‘swimming’ is done” (O’Brian, 1999, p. 6). Gu Xiong’s narrative visual expression on his homeland culture – the Yangzte standing in for China, and his host culture – the Fraser River standing in for Canada, provides a positive image of transculturalism. When I asked Gu Xiong: “What was your intention for your Installation - River?” in the interview with Gu Xiong, he described:
Figure 2-1: Gu Xiong’s *The River*, 1999, Installation.
The life process of salmon is similar to the one of our immigrants, who leave the Yangzi River, pass over the Pacific Ocean and settle down in Fraser River. As human beings, the life process is much more meaningful than that of animals. Once the animals finish the recurrence process and breed the lives, they die. Different from the process of animals, the recurrence process of human beings results in spirits, which should be developed and carried forward. My poem—“You and I” concerns the above process and the relationship between salmon and human beings. (X. Gu, Interview, April, 18, 2004).

For Chinese immigrant students, or Chinese Canadians, this is a good learning material on their cultural heritage and the host culture (and) specifically on the interconnection of these two cultures which they embrace in their daily life. Encouraging the students to explore and understand the possibilities of this entirely new space will be meaningful for these students’ individual development.

Many of Gu Xiong’s works explore migration, culture and hybrid identities which can be exemplified in Ding Ho/ Group of Seven. Ding Ho/Group of Seven is a collaborative exhibition and publication project developed by Gu Xiong and an Canadian independent artist and curator, Andrew Hunter. According to the description of the exhibition, the goal of the project is to present a cross cultural dialogue exploring ideas of individual and national identity, cultural stereotypes, private memories, official histories and the propaganda that typified China during the Cultural Revolution and Canada during the Centennial/Expo’67/Montreal Olympics period. In Hunter’s (2000) words,

For Gu Xiong and I, this project is about dialogue and change, about rethinking one's past and seeing it through the eyes of another, about movement and
migration (both physical and philosophical) and the constant struggle to form a sense of identity that is a hybrid of many identities. Ding Ho/ Group of Seven is about being Canadian. (p. 3)

Gu stated in the interview: “We try to understand and appreciate two different cultures from two different cultural angles and two different cultural backgrounds. This cooperative exhibition talks about the process of how the two cultures blend together, what are the shocks and different cultural backgrounds” (X. Gu, Interview, April, 18, 2004). In this exhibition, these two artists provide a discourse between China and Canada where each of them can both see through each other. At the same time their art provides a linkage between their identities, and between Chinese culture and Canadian culture. Hunter (2000) said: “… the lines between art works, artifacts and common objects are blurred and the traditional authoritative voice of the institution and official history are challenged” (p.3). This installation leads audiences to look into these two artists’ visual dialogue about their personal feelings and thoughts on the idea of China and Canada from aspects of history, politics and culture. In this way, audiences can find connections and commonplaces embraced in these cultures and consider how the perspectives transform from one culture to the other culture.
Figure 2-2: Gu Xiong’s *The Last Spike*, 2000, Photo.
Chinese Immigrant students can learn Chinese immigrant history and Chinese immigrants’ contribution to building the Canadian railway through Gu’s art. In Gu Xiong’s work *Ding Ho/Group of Seven*, he was deeply disturbed by the depiction of the Chinese workers in the *National Dream*. Gu emphasized and clarified the important contribution the Chinese immigrants made to building the Pacific Railway through the Rocky Mountains of British Columbia. Gu (2000) said:

> When I watch the CBC television series *The National Dream*, I was very disappointed by the way they depicted Chinese railway workers. In the series, the Chinese were good workers, but they were violent and superstitious. ... In the famous photo known as *The Last Spike*, there are no Chinese workers present. It seems as though they were forgotten, all their contribution neglected. In my image ‘*Our Last Spike* (Figure 2-2),’ I tried to depict history with irony. We can finally re-tell history as it truly happened. (p. 52)

From the artist’s statement and the documentary photos *Our Last Spike*, students will acknowledge this certain period of Chinese immigrant history which was not clearly documented in the official history textbook. Because of Chinese immigrant students’ unique identity and cultural background, including their immigrant history, dialogues between Chinese culture and Canadian culture in their school curriculum are important since they ensure that Chinese immigrants’ culture is well represented and recognized while they continue to enter into dialogue with the majority.

While Gu Xiong’s art reflects the ongoing process of unmarking and remarking his identity between the demands of cultural adaptation and those of cultural transgression through his everyday objects and experience, Xu Bing’s art reveals his
frustrated feeling and immigrant experience particularly on language which every immigrant has to experience. For those who immigrate from another language, they have to pick up a new language quickly enough to be able to adapt to the new community and society. Although, one can expect that there is less trouble for those who are Canadian born Chinese children, they still have to struggle to preserve their mother tongue. Xu Bing’s experience and art reflects these Chinese immigrant students’ feelings and experience on language and cultural conflict. As Xu Bing’s work shows, people can understand his work from different levels and different angles. His work reveals his simultaneous interest in and mistrust of language from one level to another level -- an extended examination of Chinese characters and culture. In Erickson’s (2001) *Words without meaning, meaning without words: The art of Xu Bing*, Xu Bing states: “My work and my method of thinking have been my ‘search for the living word,’ my response to the realities of the past and my cultural experiences” (p. 13). By studying Xu Bing and his art, it is not difficult to find how his cultural experience shaped his perspective and understanding of culture, language and also his process of art creation.

2) **Two artists’ experience and their art provide a possible linkage between Chinese culture and Western culture.** Their art reveals their personal experiences both in their homeland and the host country. Both Gu Xiong and Xu Bing have experienced the Cultural Revolution. In China most of their art not only expresses their experience at a certain time but it also reveals their integrated feelings and experiences beyond the space and time. Although their art form is different, through their work they “share in the fascinating and often entertaining work of bringing to light some of the problems inherent in social, cultural and linguistic translation” (Metcalf, 2004, p. 4).
Xu Bing’s work reveals his personal experience and extreme sensibility to language and written words. As I read an interview by the editor of Sculpture, Glenn Harper’s (2003) “A Conversation with Xu Bing – Exterior form Interior Substance”, I realize that Xu Bing’s experiences in the Chinese Cultural Revolution are among the threads brought together in his subsequent work (p. 47). During my interview (Appendix 2) with Xu Bing, I asked my first question regarding the relation between his personal experience and his art creation: “I read from the article - A conversation with Xu Bing – Exterior Form Interior Substance, that your experiences in a farming community during the 1974 Chinese Cultural Revolution are among the threads brought together in your subsequent work. What is the impact of the Cultural Revolution on your art creations?” He replied that his experience during the Cultural Revolution has a significant impact on his life and his art creation. His generation has experienced different periods of cultural and historical events in China, such as, Socialism, the Cultural Revolution, the Reform Period, Westernization and Contemporary Art. It took Xu Bing almost ten years for each period of these experiences. However, the Cultural Revolution had a profound impact on his life. He was between twelve and twenty-two during the Cultural Revolution, and he considered that this was the golden time of a person’s life. Most of the personal knowledge and concepts were constructed and formed during that time. The experience from this period had a great impact on him (B. Xu, Interview, September 19, 2003). This can be seen in Xu Bing’s art – A Book from the Sky (Figure 2-3, 2-4) and other art projects. This art work shows the multiple impacts of the Cultural Revolution on his understanding of the concept of language and written words. In Xu Bing’s mind,
the Chinese language has very special and intimidating relationships with Chinese people. Chinese language directly influences the methods of thinking and understanding of all Chinese people. To strike at the written word is to strike at the very essence of the culture. Any doctoring of the written word becomes in itself a transformation of the most inherent portion of a person’s thinking. My experience with the written word has allowed me to understand this. (Erickson, 2001, p. 14)

Based on his personal experience and his interpretation of language, he created a powerful installation *the Book from Sky* (Figure 2-3, 2-4). In this work, Xu Bing invented hundreds of new characters on books, scrolls and panels. One of his intentions in this work was to express his personal experience during the Cultural Revolution and his personal experience related to the language. He told me that during the Cultural Revolution, Mao started his revolution by simplifying the written words. The basic concept of culture was changed with the transformation of the language. So that was why Mao’s revolution reached Chinese people’s inner souls. Mao wanted to get rid of the old traditions and build up new cultures by transformation of the language. Mao’s renovation of language had a great impact on his generation since it was that time when my generation started their education. After mastering complicated words, they were forced to throw these old forms away and start to learn new forms. After a time of reformation of the language, people became confused (to) about language and culture (B. Xu, Interview, September 19, 2003). In Xu’s words:

> When each member of the Chinese cultural community first begins his or her education, he or she must spend years memorizing thousands of characters. This
process is a sort of ceremony in homage to the culture, and it leaves all Chinese with an extreme sense of respect for the “written word.” My generation, however, was irreparably affected by the campaign to simplify characters. This remolding of my earliest memories—the promulgation of new character after new character, the abandonment of old characters that I had already mastered, the transformation of new characters and their eventual demise, the revival of old characters—shadowed my earliest education and left me confused about the fundamental conceptions of culture. (Erickson, 2001, p.14)

In Xu Bing’s personal experience, the feeling of a culture being turned upside down was particularly pronounced. During the interview, Xu Bing told me when he was young, his parents usually took him to the university library where his mother used to work. At that time he was too young to read any books in the library. But he became familiar with all sorts of book covers at that time. He knew very well the appearance of the book but could not read the inner contents of the book. When he finally could read these books after he grew up, there was no book to read during the Cultural Revolution except Chairman Mao’s little red book. When the Cultural Revolution ended, he returned to the library to read or skim book after book. Before long, China began to experience a “cultural warming.” He described that he read too many books that it was like he overate after suffering from starvation for a long time. He started to feel sick and confused about his understanding of the book and the language. Xu Bing said: “It was at that point that I considered creating a book of my own that might mirror these feelings” (B. Xu, Interview, September 19, 2003) (Figure 2-3, 2-4).
Figure 2-3: Xu Bing's *A Book from the Sky*, 1987-1991, Installation.
Figure 2-4: Xu Bing’s *A Book from the Sky* (from another angle), 1987-1991, Installation.
As one can find from Xu Bing’s website http://www.xubing.com/, *A Book from the Sky* took him over three years to complete. The installation is comprised of printed volumes and scrolls containing four thousand characters individually "invented", designed and cut into wood-blocks by the artist. As Xu Bing admitted that creating *Book from the Sky* was a process of great seriousness and commitment,

...The art itself is a joke, a humorous gesture. But the idea of a person putting four years of intensive effort into constructing and completing a joke—this act in itself constitutes the substance of the piece. Here you have years of toil and the most intensive attention to details going into the creation of ‘something that says nothing.’ So this work is also a contradiction: in deconstructing and satirizing culture, it also positions culture as something to be taken very seriously. (Harper, 2003, p. 22)

When I asked Xu Bing: “Is your immigration experience and transformation of Chinese to English different from the experience on transformation of complicated Chinese to simplified Chinese? Does your work reflect any of your immigration experience and conflict on adapting new language?” He replied that his work *New English Calligraphy* (Figure 2-5, 2-6) as an example that reflected his immigration life. He stated that he would not have created such work if he had not lived in North America. He combined two perspectives – English and Chinese into his work. In *New English Calligraphy* (Figure 2-5, 2-6) he used a traditional form of Chinese Calligraphy Art to display a western word; a word that is assembled by alphabet letter in Chinese appearance, yet only understandable to the western viewer. Xu Bing concluded that his intention in both works: *New English Calligraphy* and *A Book from the Sky* remained the
same although from the appearance, these two works express his different experience with languages (B. Xu, Interview, September 19, 2003).

From Xu Bing’s *A Book from Sky* and *New English Calligraphy*, it is not difficult to find that his art reflects his personal experience of language in both China and USA. Xu Bing’s art is not limited to express his feelings and reflect his experience on different time and place but to exploit the contradictions and pressure points inherent in cross-cultural investigation. Although these two pieces of work mentioned above have different appearances and have different influence on people from different cultures, the entry point is identical. “In both, the invented characters have sort of equalizing effects: they are playing a joke on everybody, but at the same time they do not condescend to anybody” (Harper, 2003, p. 48). During Xu Bing’s interview, he described that these two works were just like two brothers who have the same father but different mothers. They looked very alike but have their own identity. In these two pieces of work, he used the same forms: calligraphy, literature and the same medium. These words were like wearing masks. They looked familiar but were not recognizable. There is no one on earth, who could read and comprehend the words which Xu Bing created in *the Book from Sky* including Xu Bing himself (B. Xu, Interview, September 19, 2003). *Square Word Calligraphy*, on the other hand, exists on the borderline between two completely different cultures. To viewers from these two cultures, the characters present equal points of familiarity and of strangeness. A Chinese person sees the characters but can not understand the meaning. To a Westerner, they first appear as mysterious glyphs from Asian culture, yet ultimately they can be recognized and understood. The absurdity of *Square Word Calligraphy* is that it takes two language systems and fuses them together
into one entity. "If you use existing concepts of Chinese or English to read or interpret these characters, you will not succeed. This total disconnection between outer appearance and inner substance places people in a kind of shifting cultural position, an uncertain transitional state" (B. Xu, Interview, September 19, 2003). According to Xu Bing, his intentions in both these works are to challenge and attack people’s routine thinking. When people try to recognize and write these words, some of the thinking patterns that have been ingrained in them since they learned to read are challenged. It is the artists' belief that people must have their routine thinking attacked in this way. While undergoing this process of estrangement and re-familiarizing with one's written language, one can be reminded that the sensation of distance between other systems is self-induced. “No matter what outer form my work take, they all linked by a common thread, which is to construct some kind of obstacle to people’s habitual easy of thinking—what I call the ‘cognitive structures’ of the mind.” (B. Xu, Interview, September 19, 2003)
Figure 2-5: Xu Bing’s *New English Calligraphy - Art For People, 1999-2001, Dye on polyester.*
Figure 2-6: Xu Bing’s New English Calligraphy – Forever, 1998.

Designs for the Square Word for the English word "Forever"
In contrast, Gu Xiong's art exploits the contradictions and pressure points inherent in cross-cultural investigation more personally and emotionally. Gu’s (1997) book *The Yellow Pear* is a narrative illustrated story of his immigration experience to Canada. He describes at the beginning of the book:

After several years of struggling with cultural shock, we finally settled down and started a new life here. But our experiences in Canada are always linked to our past in China. We continually weave the old and the new together through our bodies and souls, destroyed and reborn in the clash of two cultures. (p. 3)

In this book, he visually and literally recorded his experiences both in China and on his immigration and conflicts between two cultures. For example, he draws everyday objects such as rice cooker, toilet, kerosene, to express his understanding of the conflicts and connections between two cultures. In his drawing *Kerosene Lantern* (Figure 2-7), Gu (1997) wrote that his family always uses a kerosene lantern when they go camping or enjoy their leisure time at night in Canada. The light of the lantern brings back many memories about China. The kerosene lantern accompanied him through four years hard time in the countryside during Chinese Culture Revolution. He sketched thousands of drawings under the light of that lantern then (p. 56). Gu used kerosene as a connected spot to link his feelings and experiences both in China and in Canada. He (1997) said: “I like the warm light of the lantern. I reached for it in China, and I am able to reach for it here in Canada” (p. 56). In another drawing *Basement* (Figure 2-8), Gu drew the basement where he lived for three years from the view of inside towards outside. He (1997) stated: “Living in the basement, I realized that when someone moves and becomes
part of another culture, he or she must establish new roots in order to begin growing again. For me, the basement came to symbolize this transition, these new roots” (p. 9). These everyday objects such as a water fountain, boxes of mandarin oranges and rice cookers tell a part of the tale of an immigrant’s adjustment to a new life in a new language and a new culture. These everyday objects become symbols of an immigrant’s struggling between two cultures. They reflect both aspects of two cultures – the homeland and the host culture as Gu stated: “My personal experience as a new immigrant was a very good source of art works creation. So, I made those works of art from many different aspects and angles of my life. The Yellow Pear was done under such a situation” (Interview, April. 2004).

Both artists used their art to express and demonstrate their experiences and understandings of cultural conflict and shifting between East and West, and the past and present. They bring audiences a dialogue and build a bridge between these two cultures through their art.
Figure 2-7: Gu Xiong's *Kerosene Lantern*, 1997, Drawing.
Figure 2-8: Gu Xiong's *Basement*, 1997, Drawing.
3) These two artists' art provides materials for a dynamic curriculum which informs Chinese immigrant students with ongoing updated information linking Chinese culture and the host culture. In Gu Xiong's 2003 exhibition Small, Medium, Large and Extra Large, Gu Xiong attempted to explore the transformation of space, people and ideologies in an urban setting under globalization. The exhibition focuses on the changes of international cities such as Belgrade, Serbia; Beijing, China; New York City, United States; and Toronto, Canada. In the exhibition (2003) description:

In the context of globalization, Gu Xiong's work deals with the changes in our personal lives and living space in a postcolonial history. From the continuation of daily life around the building bombed by NATO in Belgrade, to a field of garbage after the rolling Stones concert in Toronto, from the renewal of the World Trade Center to cultural icons in Beijing, these images evoke stories of human migration, cultural clashes and transformations, ideologies and values of life. In this dynamic movement, each culture reacts with others, creating a new diverse and inclusive space. (Exhibition text panels, 2003)

Gu's photo-based work captures the dynamic moment of globalization, local culture and individual identity shifts.
Figure 2-9: Gu Xiong’s *Starbucks in the Forbidden City*, 2001, Photo.
Figure 2-10: Gu Xiong’s *Ice Coffin Store*, 2001, Photo.
In the exhibition *Yellow Rive/Blue Culture* (2001), Gu presented a series of photographic work about contemporary Chinese life and its connection with global economics and cultures. The exhibition is about the culture of China and its global migration. In this exhibition, Gu declared that Chinese culture has become a part of mainstream culture. “A hundred and fifty years ago, Chinese immigrants came to North America for gold, dreaming to take Gold Mountain home with them. In the 21st century, the gold rush has finally hit China.” (2001, p. 10) From *Starbucks in the Forbidden City* (Figure 2-9) to *Images of Mao and Audrey Hepburn side by side* (Figure 2-10), one can easily see that western culture and ideology also crammed in everywhere in China. Gu (2001) states:

It seems that no matter how far we wander from home, we can not escape a sense of familiarity. We can drink original Starbucks coffee, eat Pizza Hut pizzas, furnish a home with Ikea furniture, watch CNN news and chat on the internet in China. We can taste real Sichuan cuisine, drink high-quality green tea, watch Chinese Central TV broadcasts and make overseas calls for a few cents a minute in North America. The flow of difference, whether economic or cultural, has become undeniable and unstoppable. In this dynamic movement, each culture reacts and blends with others, creating a new hybrid identity. (p. 13-14)

Compared to Gu’s previous work, his art now focuses on cultural shifting among the globalization, local culture and individual identity. Gu told me that “these three aspects are both independent forms and related to each other. Meanwhile, the transformation of the above three aspects caused the transformation of other aspects” (Interview, April, 18. 2004).
Figure 2-11: Gu Xiong, *Ikea in China*, 2001, Photo.
Figure 2-12: Gu Xiong’s *Yaohan Center*, Richmond, Vancouver, 2001, Photo.
As Hunter (2001) concludes in *Yellow River/Blue Culture*, “the dialogue is ambient and hard to pin down. There is no single picture that will sum it all up. It is, rather, the accumulation of imagery, scenes recorded by an individual moving about the world, participating and observing that gives the clearest picture” (p. 27). For Gu Xiong, culture is just like a river. It is flowing and transforming very quickly. Different cultures are constantly in a fluid state and are inevitably flowing into each other. Now, the speed of the flow has been increased more than before with accessible transportation and technology. Catching every moment of this increasing flow has constantly been the primary focus of Gu's art. His work provides dynamic pictures to the audience.

The two artists play an active role catching the moment of cultural shifting in the global scale. They work back and forth between Asia and North American, between East and West to absorb all the fresh sources embraced in different cultures and globalization. Their ongoing observation and creation give the students dynamic information on social, cultural, economics and history among cultures.

4) **These two artists’ art and their attitudes show positive influences to immigrant students’ individual and identity development.** Their ability to deal with issues of identity and place, specifically their struggles to understand their newly adopted homeland, and in a broader sense, the implications of dual cultures, of past and present, of individual identity establish positive models for Chinese immigrant students.

As described by Gu Xiong (1997): “Losing the comforts of your inherent culture, you wander back and forth between the two, not knowing which you belong to, unable to establish roots in either. You are left alone, isolated by your own inability to adapt” (p. 52).
Gu provides an insightful and positive attitude for his uneasy situation. "Here in Canada, differences in culture and language have created many problems for me, placing me at the bottom of society. I must struggle to become something better by understanding not just one culture but two – my past and present" (Gu, 1997, p. 63). As in the video – The Yellow Pear, his friend Abe Rogatnick at the Banff School of Fine Arts commented on Gu Xiong and his art: “It is not about gaining Canadianess and losing Chineseness, it is about achieving both – gaining Canadianess but not losing Chineseness” (Mehler, 2000, p. ?). Gu Xiong’s journey from being an avant-garde artist in China, to cafeteria busboy at the University of British Columbia, back to avant-garde artist is a good example for those Chinese immigrant students and other immigrant students. Gu’s attitude and art provide a positive model for understanding the relationship between homeland culture and the host culture. It also provides a future version for Canadian multicultural education. “An appreciation of multiculturalism comes through practice. Here in Canada, People from other lands often experience culture shock. They have to develop new ideas and make different choices based on their own experiences living here. This determines the true multicultural character of Canada” (p. 62). Gu (1997) also states:

All cultures are complex. The culture into which you are born is the one you come to understand most profoundly. … This conflict of cultures that has entered my work since coming to Canada is in a state of constant evolution. In this process, my ideas are born. … It helps to create a different culture that is neither an evolution of one’s original culture, nor a copy of one’s adopted culture – it is simply my own. (p.63)
Gu’s experience of the conflict between homeland culture and the host culture, and his understanding of both cultures and their connection can possibly help these immigrant students develop their individual identities. During my interview with Gu, I asked him: “Do you intent to convey a positive attitude to immigrant identity through your visual art and your poems?” He replied to me: “Certainly. All my works represent a positive attitude to a full extent. Why? It is because being negative could only make people feel demoralized and tend to abandon themselves. On the other hand, being positive can transform negativeness into a positive motivation, which is encouraging and influencing. In our daily life, there are always negative things. But what is important is to transform the negative into the positive and to welcome tomorrow and the future” (Interview, April, 18, 2004). In his video – The Yellow Pear, Inspired by his father, Gu’s daughter, Gu Yu, as a representative for the second generation of Chinese immigrants expresses her understanding of her culture and identity, “Even we have lots of things in common, and we are not the same. No matter I am a Canadian or a Chinese, I do not want to be the copy. I want to be an individual” (Mehler, 2000, p. ?).

Xu Bing also showed a positive attitude on his position and his art creation. “I feel that the state I experience of having left one place but not yet knowing the next destination was actually a pretty good situation to be in. That unclear, uncertain terrain has become a space where my art can grow and develop” (Harper, 2003, p. 51). In Erittta’s book Words Without Meaning, Meaning Without Words: The Art of Xu Bing, he concludes at the end of the book: “Xu Bing has faced cultural quandaries all his life, but his ability to analyze his circumstances and represent them to others in universal termshas turned those dilemmas into catalysts for revolutionary creative ventures” (2001, p. 76).
Figure 2-13: Gu Xiong’s *Car Key*, 1997, Drawing.
Figure 2-14: Xu Bing's *Ghost Pounding the Wall*, 1990-1991, Installation.
Figure 2-15: Gu Xiong’s *Barricade Bicycle*, June 1989 – July 2001. Photo and Drawing.
These two artists show very good examples of turning a disadvantaged position to a positive image. Through their practices in art, their version of hybrid culture will become clearer. Their unique cross cultural background and perspective will aid reflection on social changes and global culture. These artists can provide inspirations to those Chinese immigrant students in ways of thinking, their understanding of identity, culture and many other ways for living between and among shifting cultures.

5) Information about these two artists and their work can be possibly developed into an intercultural interdisciplinary study for Chinese immigrant descendents. Students can explore and understand Chinese culture and the host culture in different disciplines, including philosophy, history, and literature, social and cultural studies, by studying the art of these two artists. Gu Xiong’s art is centered on the creation of a hybrid cultural identity, arising from the mixture of different origins. His work encompasses subjects such as sociology, geography, economics, politics, literature and the dynamics of globalization, local culture and individual identity shifts. Xu Bing’s work also explores literature, history, cultural studies, philosophy and language. They provide rich discourses on Chinese culture and Western culture. For example, for reflection on Chinese traditional philosophy, Xu Bing’s work has a lot to do with a strong identification with Zen philosophy that “words are unreliable.” Xu explained that his approach to the Book from Sky is related to a kind of Zen training of the mind to receive enlightenment (Harper, 2003, p. 49). Gu also revealed the influence of Dao philosophy on his art. He (1997) stated in his drawing Car Key (Figure 2-13): “When I began to experience the excitement of driving, I started to see myself in a new light. The way of driving was like the way of Dao. I learned how to stop; How to be patient with others;
how to follow the rules; and to control myself. Being relaxed is the best way to drive; it is also the best way to live” (p. 23). By studying these artists’ work, audiences can acknowledge the traditional Chinese philosophy and how it influenced and shaped these artists’ thinking and their creations.

These two artists’ work also shows important historical events in China and North America. Gu’s famous work *Barricade Bicycle* (Figure 2-15) visually revealed the Tiananmen Square Massacre in China. Audiences have an opportunity to know the history by his powerful visual presentation. Xu Bing’s installation *Ghosts Pounding the Wall* (Figure 2-14) revisited the heroic and tragic history of the Great Wall of China. In Xu Bing’s new work *Where Does the Dust Collect Itself?* (Figure 2-16, 2-17), Xu Bing spreaded dust he collected not far from Ground Zero New York on September 11, 2001 over the floor of one of the upstairs galleries at the National Museum & Gallery in Cardiff. Traced in the dust is an English translation of the 7th Century AD Zen Master Yeno: "As there is nothing from the first, where does the dust itself collect?" Basini (2004) wrote in the article *Attack of the Cyborgs* in the newspaper the *Western Mail*:

At first the work looks open to all sorts of interpretation. Then you discover that it is a recreation of the site of the World Trade Centre destroyed on 9/11. The scaffolding represents the walkways from which tourists view the site. And the dust was collected from the site itself. Once you know that, the exhibit becomes loaded with memories of the emotions that disaster first stimulated. It is impossible to view it without experiencing the emotions the disaster first aroused
in you. In other words the piece comes dangerously close to spelling out precisely what you should be feeling. (p. ?)

These artists use symbol and metaphor to stimulate and to shape our ideas and emotions about our human condition, our history and our cultures. They are working with ideas of human form or human presence and producing work which adds to our understanding of the human condition in different aspects. They provide very resourceful and educational lessons for the audience. For Chinese immigrant students, these two artists, Gu Xiong and Xu Bing are good educational resources for them to explore social, cultural, historical, literary and philosophical issues between China and North America.

Both these artists’ work displays the displacement experience – both within China through the course of the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution and in North America as they struggled to find their footing in an alien linguistic and cultural environment. As Metcalfe (2004) wrote in Xu Bing and Gu Xiong’s exhibition Catalogue Here is what I mean: “This is the troubled space in which the works of Xu Bing and Gu Xiong stand, a luminal space between cultures and between historical eras. Like a pane of glass, their work is both a (distorting) mirror and a (strangely clouded) window, in which the image of the Other fuses with one’s own reflection” (p. 13).

These two artists and their art are likely to stimulate Chinese immigrant students’ motivations and interests on their cultural heritage and improve their sense of connection between their heritage and host culture. A curriculum can be developed for these Chinese immigrant students to inform and encourage critical inquiry about the past and the present, “home” and “away,” and social and political varieties of Chineseness with a
view to local and global action through art. The inspiration from the artists and their perspective to life will help Chinese immigrant students to improve their confidence, develop a sense of self sharing and formulate their own identity.
Figure 2-16: Xu Bing, *Where Does the Dust Collect Itself?* (English) 2003, Installation.
Figure 2-17: Xu Bing, *Where Does the Dust Collect Itself?* (Chinese) 2003, Installation.
Chapter Three: Practicing multicultural art education programs in public schools and a Chinese weekend school: successes and frustrations

Dilger (1994) has shown that Western dominated curriculum tends to cause a negative impact on both Western and non-Western students, particularly to a child from a non-Western family. These negative impacts include adverse effects on a non-Western student’s self-concept, sense of pride and cultural knowledge as well as instilling in Western students’ erroneous belief that the world is designed primarily from their cultural and their ethnic perspectives leading them to deny the important human experiences from other parts of the world. They remain “culturally and ethnically encapsulated” (p. 50). Such a mentality is detrimental to the integrity of a highly differentiated society. Multicultural education addresses this issue. Chalmers (1996) states: “multicultural art education programs need to be designed and implemented with attention to local concerns, appropriate sequencing of instruction, and individual and cultural learning styles” (p. 70). In the book *Multicultural Education: Issues and Perspectives*, James A. Banks (1989) explains:

Multicultural education incorporates the idea that all students – regardless of their gender and social class, and their ethnic, racial, or culture characteristics – should have an equal opportunity to learn in school. ... Another important idea in multicultural education is that some students, because of these characteristics, have better chance to learn in schools as they are currently structured than do students who belong to other groups or have different cultural characteristics. (p. 19-20)
Introducing Chinese culture with other cultures in English schools

As mentioned in the previous chapters, one of the factors that restrain Chinese students’ enthusiasm to learn Chinese is that public schools generally lack a multicultural curriculum which can link their homeland culture and the host culture in both their Chinese weekend school and their weekday public schools. My previous investigation in Brossard Chinese School showed that there was a need to introduce and promote Chinese culture in public schools in Montreal. Therefore, I designed a lunch activity program named “Creating art around the world” for students from grade four to grade six, which was accepted by Cedar Park School and Sunnydale School in West Island, Montreal. In this program, I sought to introduce Chinese culture and also African and North West Native cultures as well. My intention in this multicultural art program was to make students aware of the existence of art forms and art works from different cultures. This is just an initial step in multicultural education to attract students’ interest in learning about different cultures. In this program, I tried to provide students with a multicultural resource and environment, where students were introduced to different cultures. My long-term goal is to examine whether they can further develop their interests in learning about different cultures, especially Chinese culture. The following is a brief description of this program:

These multicultural art and craft projects will provide the students a glimpse into different cultures. During these eight-week classes, children will be taught a variety of art creations including masks, totems, mosaics, etc., using different media. Students will explore the roots, rhythms, designs and traditions found in
the art and artifacts of different cultures. Children will learn to appreciate different cultures while creating their art work.

The objective of this program was to determine the potential of using an art education program to attract Canadian students to learn about different cultures including Chinese culture. In my thesis, I will focus on the Chinese culture unit – on the theme of Chinese Dragon (See Appendix 4, 5) in this multiculturally framed lunch time program. The specific questions I hoped to answer here include: Are students interested in and willing to engage in the art activities? Can art stimulate the students' interests to learn Chinese cultures? Are students able to create their own art, based on the different cultural orientations including Chinese culture? How do the students react to my being Chinese? Does my role as a Chinese teacher help to improve their understanding of Chinese culture and their art making?

Banks and McGee Banks' (2001) levels of integration of multicultural content identify four approaches to the integration of ethnic and multicultural content into the curriculum. As they described these approaches, in the contributions approach, heroes, cultural components, holidays, and other discrete elements related to ethnic groups are added to the curriculum without changing its structure. The additive approach consists of the addition of content, concepts, themes, and perspectives to the curriculum, with its structure remaining unchanged. In the transformation approach, the structure, goals and nature of the curriculum are changed to enable students to view concepts, issues, and problems from diverse ethnic perspectives. The social action approach includes all elements of the transformation approach, as well as elements that enable students to identify important social issues, gather data related to them, clarify their values, make
reflective decisions, and take actions to implement their decisions. This approach seeks to make students social critics and reflective agents of change (p.227-241).

According to James A. Banks' (2001) levels of integration of ethnic content, this art program most likely belongs to the first or second level of integration. As an "extra-curricular" which is sometimes called a "lunch activity" or an "after school program", I attempted to design this program as supplemental material to the regular class curriculum. In order to attract students to participate in this program, I tried to choose themes which the students probably have not had a chance to learn about in their regular classes. I also tried to select art materials that are easy to obtain, and to ensure the art work could be finished within an hour. Each class took an hour. Most of the activities were completed in one class. Only two activities, "mask making" and "drawing dragons", took two classes to complete. I began each class by introducing information about the specific culture, and explaining the technical skills, which took fifteen to twenty minutes. Then students started to make their art work, during which time I helped students individually.

Although the program was designed to represent diverse cultural groups, due to my identification as a Chinese and my intention of promoting Chinese culture in public schools, I emphasized introducing Chinese culture to the students. For example, in the "dragon" lesson (Appendix 4, 5), I began by introducing the Chinese dragon's features, beliefs and cultural background to the students. This was followed by a comparison of the Chinese dragon with the Western dragon giving information about the perspective, culture, beliefs, and features. I concluded this introduction by showing them some pictures of different dragons from China and Western countries (Appendix 5), and by
encouraging them to create their own dragons. I explained to the students that dragons are imaginary and do not actually exist, so they can use their imagination to create what they like. Students were asked to sketch a draft of their own dragons and then draw carefully on the cardboard using felt markers. They sketched different dragons by combining elements from the examples I showed as well as from their own knowledge. I explained that Chinese people create dragons by combining parts from nine different animals: the horns of a deer; the head of a camel; the eyes of a devil; the neck of a snake; the abdomen of a crocodile; the scales of a carp; the claws of an eagle; the paws of a tiger; and the ears of an ox. Most of the students drew dragons that resembled these Chinese dragon features. Some students added Western features - wings to their dragons to make a combined Western and Eastern vision of dragon. Students seemed to be interested in the topic of the dragon as they thought it is a powerful and magical creature. In this lesson, students learned what this creature symbolizes in China and what Chinese people believe about dragons. They also learned about the cultural difference between the Western dragon and Chinese dragon. I noticed that some students used the symbol of Yinyang in their art because they associated this symbol with Chinese culture (See students' work Figure 3-1 to 3-11).

In the two hour-long classes, students concentrated on creating their own dragon. It was apparent that this theme captured their interests. In the last class of the program, I asked them to choose one of their art works for a photograph. Most of them picked their dragons. They were very proud of themselves so I decided to show their work in the school.
Before I started this program I understood that it was a gradual and cumulative process to move from the first to higher levels of ethnic content integration (Banks, 1989). Although this program did not lead students to inquire about different cultures deeply, it successfully simulated students’ interests in art and different cultures. Art provided a relatively easy way to teach cultural content to these students. Although students were not able to thoroughly understand each ethnic culture they were exposed to, this program at least provided them with a broader view of different cultures and art forms. These children were very open to the different cultures. They seemed very interested in me as they probably never saw an Asian teacher in their school before. They were curious about where I came from. When I talked about Chinese culture, they paid much more attention to what I was saying. This reminded me of another situation, when I was volunteering as an English reading mentor in an elementary school. A grade four student asked me to teach him Chinese; otherwise he would not practice reading English stories with me. In these children’s eyes, I was a Chinese culture resource; they were curious about the culture I am involved in. This program is just the very beginning of my investigation into how elementary students react to the art of other cultures. By asking several questions about China at the beginning of the class, I knew that the students I taught had received little or no instruction about Chinese cultures in their regular classes. All they know was probably about Chinese food and the Chinese spring festival. I think this program was a good introduction to Chinese culture and other cultures through art for these elementary school students.

It has been recognized that multicultural education theory has a limited effect on actual classroom practice in the field of art education (Sleeter & Grant, 1988). From this
perspective, my program has a limitation. This lunch activity program which I taught in Sunnydale Elementary was representative of a practice that would expose students to the existence of stereotypical art forms from different cultures; it did not consider the cultural diversity of the students themselves. It was only a beginning multicultural art education program for primary students to stimulate their interest in and their awareness of different cultures. Through those art activities, students were able to positively participate in their art making in an enjoyable way and started to appreciate different cultures and their art work, as well.

The following drawings are grade four to grade six students' work in Sunnydale Elementary School.
Figure 3-1: Dragon #1, Drawing by Dylan, Sunnydale Elementary School.
Figure 3-2: Dragon #2, Drawing by Emily, Sunnydale Elementary School.
Figure 3-3: Dragon #3, Drawing by Erika, Sunnydale Elementary School.
Figure 3-4: Dragon #4, Drawing by Idske, Sunnydale Elementary School.
Figure 3-5: Dragon #5, Drawing by student's name unknown, Sunnydale Elementary School.
Figure 3-6: Dragon #6, Drawing by Student’s name unknown, Sunnydale Elementary School.
Figure 3-7: Dragon #7, Drawing by Dayna, Sunnydale Elementary School.
Figure 3-8: Dragon #8, Drawing by Rusha, Sunnydale Elementary School.
Figure 3-9: Dragon #9, Drawing by Taylor, Sunnydale Elementary School.
Figure 3-10: Dragon #10, Student’s name unknown, Sunnydale Elementary School.
Figure 3-11: Dragon #11, Sunnydale Elementary School students’ work
Figure 3-12: Fan Making, Sunnydale Elementary School students' work – Fan making
Celebrating Chinese Culture on a pedagogical day in Windermere Elementary School

I was asked to provide an art activity in Windermere Elementary School on a ‘pedagogical day’, which is a day when the regular teaching staff are involved in a special meeting or professional development activities. I chose the theme of Chinese Peking Opera. There were 26 students participating in this art activity. The students ranged from grade one to grade six. I incorporated artifacts, literature, and art making into my instruction to bring the students an opportunity to explore Chinese theater and culture. First, I presented a slide show (Appendix 6) containing images about the origin, history, and roles in Peking opera, and explained the colors and forms used. Then I showed the basic steps to make a two dimensional paper mask. In the art activity that followed, I asked them to create their own masks, encouraging them to combine familiar North American comic heroes, such as Batman and Spiderman, with the features of Peking Opera masks.

It was interesting to see that all these students concentrated on my slide show (Appendix 6), and were involved in making their own masks during the activity. The daycare educator told me that she had never seen some of the students, who were usually noisy, be so quiet and attentive. As I studied their completed masks, it was quite difficult to recognize the ones made by younger students and the ones made by older students. Most of the students’ work was strongly influenced by the Peking mask style; the students used strong contrasting colors, such as red, black and white (Figure 3-13). In my presentation, I explained that different colors and patterns of facial painting in Perking Opera are representations of the roles of the characters. For example, a red face usually
depicts the character’s bravery, uprightness and loyalty. A white face symbolizes a sinister character’s treachery and guile. A green face describes surly stubbornness, impetuosity and lack of self-restraint. Thus, the pattern of the facial painting reveals information about the character. Unique makeup also helps the audience to understand something about the characters on the stage, just by how they look. The children were very serious about their choice of colored papers for their masks. I prepared green, purple, red, blue, black and white cardboard. Most of them picked red, green and blue as the background colors of the masks.

The cultural icon Yingyang can still be found in some of students’ masks even although I did not mention it at all in the class. They liked to use it as a cultural signifier to reveal their awareness of cultural aspects in their design. It was amazing for me to see that they were so positively engaged in this cultural learning process through the art activity.
Figure 3-13: *Celebrating Chinese Culture - Chinese Peking Opera* in the Windermere Elementary School, Montreal.
It was suggested (Banks and Banks 1997) that lessons about different racial and ethnic groups can help students develop more positive intergroup attitudes when multiethnic materials present positive images of the ethnic groups under study and when they are used in a consistent and sequential way. If I have a chance to teach in the school again, I would like to create a sequence of activities and to chart the students' growth in their understanding and perceptions of Chinese people and Chinese culture.

It is essential for today's students to receive a multicultural education, so that they can participate in the global community. The more they can understand about the different peoples that make up our world, the better they will be able to handle the problems that our generation will leave them (Robinson, 1996, p. xvii). Teaching about other cultures and countries can be meaningful to students when the focus is on people and their art. Providing children with opportunities to engage in aesthetic experiences, such as using art forms, heightens their motivation to learn about others, who are culturally different from themselves. With an in-depth study of culture, perhaps students will pay more attention to aesthetic elements and their understanding on different cultures.

Through this art program, children were encouraged to develop their creativity and imagination. This art activity program provided an overview of Chinese Peking drama. From this activity, they learned different kinds of roles in Peking Opera and their representations, design and art form. They also learned about the background and literatures involved in Peking Opera. During art making, the students were confident to work independently. Most of them preferred to make positive characters instead of negative ones referring to the design patterns and colors of painted faces in Peking Opera.
The images shown in the slide presentation had a great impact on the students' understanding of Peking Opera and their art making. It was apparent that the images which I showed in the class stimulated students' interests in the culture and their creation. Through this activity on the specific theme of Chinese Opera, students learned overall historical and cultural background of the Opera. They also took a close look at the design and art forms of the Opera. Their own mask creations revealed how they were inspired by this study of the art form and culture. The students started to be sensitive to how pattern and colors are used to create particular meanings in a different culture.

**Mask making course in Brossard Chinese School**

Many writers on multicultural teacher education have suggested that having students study or examine their own cultural identities and group patterns is a useful way to begin developing skills needed to explore other cultures (Ladson-Billings 1991). In a seven-week Chinese culture class, my objective was to stimulate students' interests in their cultural heritage and hopefully to improve their confidence and develop a shared sense of self in this diverse and multicultural society. As I mentioned in the first chapter, most students in Brossard Chinese School are Chinese immigrants, who came from Taiwan and Mainland China. Most of the students came to Canada when they were young. Most of them have been in Montreal for more than five years. They came to this weekend Chinese school to learn Chinese and Chinese culture from 2:30 pm to 5:30 pm on Saturdays. The first two hours is Chinese language classes. The last one hour is Chinese culture class. I taught grade seven students Chinese Peking Opera and mask making in the Chinese culture class from 4:30 pm to 5:30 pm.
I presented students with three mask forms (Appendix 7 – Lesson plan): Beijing Opera mask, Northwest Coast Native American masks and African masks. I made a poster (Figure 3-14) illustrating images of these three masks and presented the history, design and belief behind each mask in general. I explained the variety of materials and the methods that can be used to make a mask. I asked them to explore and read at least one of the suggested internet sites or books to find out how masks are used in North America society (e.g. Hockey goalie masks, make-up, comic action heroes, such as, Spider man, Batman etc.) (Figure 3-15). In the following four classes, students created their own masks based on their understanding of the examples we studied, as well as their own identities, cultural backgrounds and experiences as Asian immigrants in Canada.
Figure 3-14: Poster, It contains masks from China, North Western Coast Native America and Africa.
Figure 3-15: Mask samples. Spider man and Guanyu.
Figure 3-16: Brossard Chinese School students’ work – Mask making
This course focused on helping students to understand the commonalities between different cultures, and to find potential personal connections to these cultures. A broader goal was to encourage these immigrant students to think about their own identities and to express their understanding of different cultures, especially the cultures related with their homelands and host country. Mask making provides a potential setting for these students to understand the shared aspects of different cultures, and to find connections between their own cultures and their personal lives by creating their own art works. As in his article Mask, George Ulrich defines mask as the following:

A mask is any device that wholly or partially conceals the face. ... Thus our faces reveal our social selves: who we are in relation to other members of our society by virtue of the roles we play in it. Persona, "the mask," is related to personality, the self or ego we reveal to the world. Masks have the ability to conceal, change, or transform the "person" behind the image into something or someone else other than who we are (2003, para 2).

In John W. Nunley & Cara McCarty’s (1999) book Masks: Faces of Culture, she states: “A universal art of expression and transformation, masks reveal a great deal about the people who make them and cultures that use them (p. 20).” By exploring the mask, I hope students can find the relationships between the cultures behind those masks, and might find the connections between their own culture and the host culture, themselves and others. As I introduced mask to the students: Mask is a form of disguise. It is an object that is frequently worn over or in front of the face to hide the identity of a person and by its own features to establish another identity. As a cultural object, it has been used throughout the world in all periods since the Stone Age and has been as varied in
appearance as in its use and symbolism. Although the essential characteristic of hiding and revealing personalities or moods is common to all masks, they are varied in their appearance as well as in their function or fundamental meaning. For example, some Native Americans use animal masks to communicate a certain symbolism, story, or status. In China, mask making is a special art used in Chinese operas to distinctly show the appearances of different historical or fictional characters as well as their dispositions and moral qualities by means of artistic exaggeration combined with truthful portrayal and symbolism. Exaggeration also serves to express praise or condemnation toward the characters. Masks can portray not only different appearances and personalities of the beings they represent, but also the status, membership and beliefs, which are associated with those masks.

When the students created their masks, I asked them to think about their identity, the mask function and design elements in different cultures. I tried to encourage them to bring their personal experience, feelings and their own understanding of different cultures and design into their own mask making. The students in the class produced different patterns and colors on the mask (Figure 3-16). Some students tried to integrate different symbols, patterns and colors from African and Northwest Native masks with those of Peking Opera masks. One student started to think about his own identity and personal experience when he created his mask. He explained to me that he wanted to hide through his mask (see Figure 3-16 the third one in the bottom left). His mask looks unfinished but he really thought about his identity. I found he is a very shy person and he always sat in the back of the classroom even though there were lots of empty chairs in the class. He
said to me that he wanted to bandage his face just like what he drew on his mask. He is too shy to explain more to me why he wants to hide himself.

Before I started this Chinese culture class, I asked the students if they knew or heard anything about Peking Opera. Nobody in the class seemed to know it. Now they can create their own masks which are mostly influenced by Peking Opera facial painting design. Since I also briefly introduced Northwest Coast Native masks and African masks, and encouraged them to combine those features with their favorite cartoon characters, their work shows variety of design. Two students’ masks resembled cartoon characters. At least four students used detailed pattern and color compositions like those found in Peking Opera masks. Two students used quite dark, low-contrast colors and wild features like those found in Northwest Coast Native masks. Multicultural orientations in the theme of “mask” led them to different interpretations in their creations. Since these students are too shy to speak their thoughts on their art, I couldn’t get enough information on their understanding of cultures and their own identities. If I teach again on this theme, I will spend some time having students discuss questions such as: What is your identity related to your mask making? Are you trying to integrate different cultural aspects and art forms in your mask making? Can you explain how?

This program might close to Bank (1989)’s transformation approach. The goal of this approach is to enable students to view concepts and issues from more than one cultures’ perspective, and to consider issues from the point of view of different culture, ethnic, and racial groups (p. 197). In order to give students an overview of masks, I discussed different functions, religions, and designs in the different cultures, to reinforce
students' overall understanding of the mask through different perspectives and the point of view of the cultural, ethnic, and racial groups.

Planning and testing a curriculum about Chinese Trans-cultural artists – Gu Xiong and Xu Bing in Brossard Chinese School.

Anxious to move further than the above examples, after careful study of two artists, Gu Xiong and Xu Bing, through interviewing them and analyzing their art work, I tried to introduce these artists to my Chinese immigrant students in the Brossard Chinese School. After I studied these two artists, I developed educational presentations (Appendix 10, 12) and lesson plans (Appendix 11, 13) on both artists, to use with Chinese immigrant students. Osborne (1989) has compiled a list of twenty-four ethnographic studies that confirm eleven assertions related to culturally responsive pedagogies. One of the assertions is that the curriculum should be relevant to the students' lives (Osborne and Sellars, 1987; Osborne and Coombs, 1987). As discussed in Chapter Two I believe that the experience of these two artists and their art are relevant to the Chinese immigrant students, sensitive to their experience, and responsive to their needs and interests. Through these artists and their work, we can see the human relationship, local and global cultures from mixed points of view – the integration of both Western and Eastern views. So their work is not only about different separate cultures but global cultures in which Chinese culture is amalgamated with North American cultures. For Chinese immigrant students, study of these two artists can provide valuable information to help them bridge Chinese and Western cultures. I believe that these artists' art has the potential to
encourage students’ interests in their homeland culture and bridge the cultural gap and help foster cross-cultural understanding.

I initially designed a program to teach Gu Xiong and Xu Bing in the Brossard Chinese School and to test the relevance of related materials that I developed for Chinese immigrant students. However, I encountered difficulties. When I first mentioned my research intention to the school principal and teachers, I started to talk about my plan of teaching about these two artists just before the second term started. The administrative committee, including two principals and two teachers, did not agree with my plan at first. Then I had to explain my research details and the lesson plan to each of them. Consent forms (Appendix 8) and the supporting letter from my supervisor were also faxed to each administrative committee. Finally they approved my plan on the conditions that I could only use two or three classes for teaching about these artists, which is half of the time I initially proposed. Then, I prepared PowerPoint presentations with ten pictures of each artist’s work (Appendix 10, 12). I also prepared a lesson plan and handouts both in Chinese and English with photocopies of the artists’ works (Appendix 11, 13). In order to help students better understand the artists, I prepared video clips and tape recordings of my personal interviews with the artists.

Unfortunately, most students did not agree to participate in my research. One of the comments I received from both students and their parents was that they did not think art was a valuable topic or necessary in a Chinese conversation class. Most of them consider that mastering the Chinese language is the only important task for their children in the Chinese school. Even culture class is regarded as ‘extra curricular’ in this Chinese program. One Chinese conversation class or culture class is arranged following the two
Chinese classes in order to ease and entertain the students who are usually bored in the Chinese language class. Ancient Chinese legacies or Chinese arts and crafts, such as paper cutting, lantern making, Chinese painting, and Taischi swords, are usually taught in these classes. This is the reason that my plan on teaching these contemporary artists was reviewed as inappropriate for these students. I prepared everything but did not expect that my teaching practice could be rejected by the students and their parents. I did not expect this result since I thought these two artists would simulate students' interests in contemporary Chinese and Chinese cultures, instead of the "old fashioned" topics they were used to. When I received the consent forms from the students, I was very surprised and disappointed that only a few students consented to participate in my research. One of the parents wrote in the form: "I pay tuition fee for my child to learn Chinese. It is inappropriate to conduct any research, political topics, commercial selling in Chinese School. . . ." I was quite depressed with the parents' comments and this unexpected barrier to my research plan.

Then, I started to explore the reasons why these Chinese students and their parents refused to participate in my research. In the last conversation class, I sent a question to all the students and asked them to write their thoughts about why they did not want to participant in my teaching about these two artists (Appendix 9). Most of the reasons are related to the fact that they are not interested in art. They were also afraid to talk about art because they thought they are not good at art. Three of ten students also mentioned that it might be inappropriate to teach art in the conversation class. Three out of ten students agreed to participate in my research because they thought it is a good opportunity to learn
art. Most students suggested that I teach about these artists in an art program at a public school.

My objectives to teach these two artists to Chinese immigrant students were to promote cross-cultural and transcultural understanding for these students. Students can start to inquire about their own home culture and their identity in a global context. According to Sleeter and Grant (1988) "advocates of education that is multicultural and social deconstructionists recommend that schooling help students analyze their own lives to develop their practical consciousness (p.189)." Through my lesson plans about these two artists, I hope I can develop a discourse between the students and the global culture. I want to see what these students think about these two artists and their art, what topics they bring to the students. As I believe that the lesson is not just for a certain group of students from a particular culture; it is for everyone. But for these Chinese immigrant students particularly, this leaning material can stimulate these students' interests in their homeland culture and inform them of the history, literature, philosophy and art embraced between Chinese and North America cultures. As Sleeter (1988) mentions the multicultural education approach is not just for a certain group of students. It seeks not only to integrate people into our existing society, but to improve society for all (p.153).

The concept of this teaching content is not only to help Asian or Chinese students learn more about their cultural roots but also about their economic, social and political integration with global culture. I developed a series of questions to try to develop a discussion in the class (Appendix 11, 13). My intention was simply to see how the students react to the content and whether this content can be further developed into a curriculum for this group of students.
Through these teaching experiences, I found that art can be an effective vehicle to draw students' interests to cultural studies. They can start to learn and experience a “foreign” culture by making an art work. They can also express their understanding of different cultures by integrating various design characteristics and symbols into their own art creations. As Banks (2001) states that the goal of the transformation approach is to enable students to view concepts and issues from more than one perspective and from the point of view of the cultural, ethnic, and racial groups that were the most active participants in, or were most cogently influenced by, the event, issue, or concept being studied. The content of these two Chinese immigrant artists will help students better understand the nature of culture and the consistency of Canadian and Chinese culture through these two artists’ unique and revealing perspectives on both Canadian and Chinese society and culture. I hope by eventually studying transcultural artists’ experience and their art, students can possibly develop multiperspective thinking which embraces Eastern and Western perspectives and a sense of global culture citizenship. Most importantly, immigrant students can develop a sense that their homeland culture is part of and included in the large global culture. They can be inspired, understand and develop their own identities by studying these distinguished transcultural artists. I hope this can happen, but circumstances have prevented me from being able to teach about these two artists in the Chinese school.
Chapter Four: Discussion of Findings

In the third Chapter, I presented an overview of three teaching events in English elementary schools and a Chinese weekend school. Through these events I intended to find out whether Chinese culture can be accepted and taught in both types of schools; and further more to find out the best way to teach Chinese cultures through art in both schools, especially for immigrant students of Chinese descent.

In the lunch activity “Creating Art around the World”, several cultures had been presented to the students. With this lunch activity I tried to inform students that often there is more than one art form and perspective, and students can learn to expect and seek out multiple versions in their art creation. While teaching at the two English schools, I discovered by asking several questions at the beginning of the class that the students knew little about Chinese culture. The questions I asked were: What do you know about China and Chinese people? What did you learn about China in your regular classes? Which city is the capital city of China? Did you go to Chinatown in Montreal? What was your first impression of Chinatown? What did you like most there? Usually only one or two students raised their hands to tell me Beijing is the capital city of China. Most of them said they like Chinese food and their impression of Chinatown is that the food there is delicious. They learned about China and the role of Chinese dragons during the Chinese New Year at school, but they could not discuss China any further. My hope was that through this lunch activity, the students’ interests in Chinese art and culture could be stimulated; and that they could understand Chinese culture and its relationship with other cultures through several art related themes, I wanted the students to be inspired by Chinese culture and art and to combine these perspectives and art forms in their own
creations. I found that the students’ interest in Chinese culture was stimulated by the images I presented in class and by making their own art. However, my expectations that the students combine cultural perspectives and art forms in their own creation could not be realistically achieved for several reasons. Lunch activities are extracurricular activities and are very limited by time constraints. Because of this students could not learn very much about Chinese culture or any other culture. The students did not have enough time to study the culture in depth and think carefully about their design before they started to make their art. Also the art making procedures took more time than the study of the diverse cultures and arts. After spending fifteen minutes introducing the cultures, I needed to immediately explain the procedure of art making step by step. Since the students were expected to complete their own creation during one or two classes, I had to spend the rest of the time helping each student with the technical aspects of the projects. For example, helping them make holes and put strings on their art works during the mask making activity. It was difficult to make time for the students to learn about the cultures and complete their art in just one or two classes.

Although my intention was to promote Chinese culture in Canadian schools when I initiated the lunch activities, I knew that if I only presented Chinese culture during the eight week lunch activity, it would not attract many students and would probably not have been accepted by the school’s lunch programs coordinator. Teaching Chinese culture in a multicultural framework could be a good start in attracting English school students to learn about different cultures and would more likely be accepted by the school and the parents. Presenting various cultures alongside each other can bridge the gap
between the students own culture and the foreign culture they are learning about; and presents a broader view of global culture.

However, the public English school students could not learn about Chinese culture in depth through either the lunch activity or the "Chinese Culture Celebration", a one day event, on the school pedagogy day. Studying Chinese Culture in one or two classes could not help students understand the historical background and contemporary issues related to the theme and to the art. According to Banks (2001), “when the focus is on the contributions and unique aspects of ethnic cultures, students are not helped to view them as complete and dynamic wholes” (p.231). This approach might provide students with a memorable one or two time experience with Chinese culture, but it fails to help them understand Chinese culture in the total context of Chinese history and society. Banks (2001) states: “when ethnic art is studied separately and apart from the social and political context, students attain only a partial understanding of its role and significance in society” (p. 231).

When Chinese culture was introduced alongside Western culture in the lunch activity, I found local students were interested in the themes, such as dragons, masks and Chinese painting. Due to limited class time I did not have enough time to interact with the students, asking questions and developing discussions based on the students’ understanding of the Chinese culture and how it is related to local and other cultures. Most students could not wait to make their own art when I presented the cultures and art forms. Comparing the students’ work in the Multicultural Art Creation lunch activity with works of those in the one day “Chinese Culture Celebration” event, I found following results: when Chinese culture and Chinese art were presented with more than
one other culture, the students could not fully understand the cultures and could not explore the similarities and differences in the limited class time. Their understanding of the culture was based on the images and art forms I presented to them in the class. When I encouraged them to combine these art forms and concepts into their own art, most students did not show that they were influenced by their knowledge. When students made their own art, they created their art according to their preferences and imagination regardless of what culture and art were presented and studied in the class. For example, in the mask making activity in the Sunnydale Elementary School, the students' work didn't show much influence from the Chinese Peking masks, North Western Native masks and African masks which we studied (Figure 4-1). They just picked up an animal's features and integrated them into their design. Their masks looked quite simple. Through my teaching in the art activity I also realized that I need to be more careful when choosing and presenting the images that present different cultures to the students. The images that I showed to the students could create stereotypes in the students' understanding of the culture.
Figure 4-1: Students’ masks, “Creating Art around the World” in the Sunnydale Elementary School.
Figure 4-2: Celebrating Chinese Culture in the Windermere Elementary School
In the one day “Celebrating Chinese Culture” event, the students’ work showed that most students’ work was strongly influenced by the Chinese Peking masks. They used similar colors and patterns as those of the Peking Opera masks which I showed in class (see Figure 4-3, 4-4). Most of their work (Figure 4-2) is identical in style to the Chinese masks. When I presented the Peking Opera Masks through slides, the students were attracted by the style and colors of the masks. They seemed to like to mimic and copy images that they had seen in the slide presentation. This one day celebration on Chinese Culture was the beginning of learning about Chinese culture. As Banks (2001) states, the contributions approach is the easiest approach for teachers to use to integrate the curriculum with ethnic content. However, this approach has several serious limitations. According to Banks (2001):

Students do not attain a global view of the role of ethnic and cultural groups in the society through this approach. They see ethnic issues and events primarily as an addition to the curriculum and as an appendage to the main story of the development of the nation and to the core curriculum in the language arts, the social studies, the arts, and other subject area. (p.231)

Banks (2001) also states that this approach often results in the trivialization of ethnic cultures and tends to focus on the life-styles of ethnic groups rather than on the historical background and institutional structures (p. 231).
Figure 4-3: A sample of a mask making – Guan Yu.
Figure 4-4: A sample of Peking Opera mask.
I taught eight week classes about masks and Chinese painting at the Chinese weekend school, because of this, the students had more time to learn about the Chinese Peking Opera masks, North West Coast Native masks and African masks. They also spent more time producing their own art. I tried to bring issues of the students’ own identity and their daily experience to their mask making. Some of the students did think about these issues during their creation. Most of their work looked like it had been influenced by the Peking Opera masks, but some of their work did not clearly show the influence. They did various styles of masks and none of their works were the same except for two students’ work (see Chapter 3 Figure 3-16). The students could probably learn more about the Chinese Peking Opera masks, the North West Native masks, and the African masks if they learn these art forms individually and do some research on their own at home as well. They can then discuss the masks from the different cultures during class. After understanding each culture embraced in the masks, the discussions about the similarities and differences between them can be developed by the students and the teacher. Students cannot compare the different art forms and cultures without their fully understanding each culture first. However, I could not teach in this way because in the Chinese school, Chinese culture was emphasized more than the other two cultures.

This teaching approach has also led to negative results. By dividing different cultures and defining each culture before finding the relationships between them, it presents the students with the idea that cultures are defined geographically by different peoples. They have different distinctive features, languages, beliefs and history. Although this approach encourages students to find out the commonality of these cultures, it also emphasizes the differences and their distance. The students might not be informed of the
global view that the Chinese immigrant artists present to us of dynamic cultures that are flowing, integrating and shifting.

As I described in chapter two, the implication of teaching Chinese immigrant students about two Chinese immigrant artists is that it can possibly bring different perspectives and points of view in one integrated context to the students. This teaching approach is most like Banks' (2001) transformative approach. According to Banks (2001),

The transformation approach differs fundamentally from the contributions and additive approaches. In these two approaches, ethnic content is added to the mainstream core curriculum without changing its basic assumptions, nature, and structure. The fundamental goals, structure, and perspectives of the curriculum are changed in the transformation approach. (p.233)

As students learn about these two artists, they will be informed that no single culture can exist; all cultures are flowing, shifting and integrating. The key curriculum issues involved in this approach are not the addition of a list of ethnic groups and discrete cultures, but the infusion of Western and Eastern perspectives. Interpretation should not be on the ways that various ethnic and cultural groups have contributed to mainstream society and culture. The emphasis should be on how the Canadian culture and society emerged from a complex synthesis and interaction of the diverse cultural elements that originated within the various cultural, racial, ethnic, and religious groups that make up Canadian society (Banks, 2001, p. 235). So studying Chinese Canadians, Japanese Canadians, French Canadians will help Canadian public school students understand Canadian culture and society. Teaching about Chinese Canadian and Chinese American
artists will probably extend students' understandings of the nature, development, and complexity of North American society.

Teaching about these two artists to Chinese immigrant descendants seems like Sleeter and Grant (1988)'s single group approach. Various goals are stated by racial groups for the study of their own group. According to Sleeter and Grant (1988),

For students of color, the Single-Group Studies approach should inspire higher student achievement (Giles, 1974), provide the intellectual offensive for the social and political struggle of liberation and cultural integrity (Cortada, 1974), and provide leadership for the group in escaping from physical and psychological bondage (Pentony, 1971, p. 62). It should also give students of color a sense of their history and identity, increase their awareness and self confidence, and provide a greater sense of direction and purpose in their lives (Suzuki, 1980). (p. 106-107)

In my lesson plan, the history of the country the artists originate from and the history of Chinese Canadian immigration would be introduced to the students. The artists' backgrounds, struggles, and achievements are presented along with their art. Traditional and contemporary perspectives are integrated in these two artists' work, which provides unique insight into the group's culture and global culture to the Chinese immigrant descendant students. Unlike the three events which I described before, this Single-Group Studies approach according to Sleeter and Grant (1988) is aimed toward social change. It primarily attacks the knowledge normally taught in schools (p. 116). It provides a starting point to help students develop pride in who they are (p. 127). It can also help members of a dominant group appreciate the experiences of others and recognize how their own
groups have oppressed others (Sleeter & Grant, 1988, p.116). If ethic communities want to see their own cultures and contributions alongside those of the mainstream society, according to Banks (2001):

> Such contributions may help give them a sense of structural inclusion, validation, and equity. Curriculum inclusion also facilitates the quests of marginalized ethnic and cultural group for a sense of empowerment and efficacy. These factors are positively correlated with academic achievement. (p. 230)

If it is significant to bring Chinese culture to Canadian public school curriculum for those Chinese immigrant students, I believe that local students can also benefit from learning Chinese culture. Multicultural education is concerned not only with students of color and linguistically diverse students but also with mainstream students (Sleeter & Grant, 1988, p. 153).

Unfortunately, I could not conduct my teaching plan about the two artists – Gu Xiong and Xu Bing in the Chinese school. There are two main reasons: first, the students and their parents lack of interest and awareness about immigrant artists and contemporary art. Most students thought they do not know much about art and so they do not have any confidence to talk about art in the class. The parents expect their children to learn Chinese and Chinese traditional culture at the weekend in Chinese school but not Chinese contemporary art. The main purpose they sent their children to the weekend school is to preserve Chinese traditional culture and their mother tongue for their children. Studying these two artists seemed not relevant to the purpose. They could not realize the significance of learning about these two artists although I had explained and made a brief introduction about these artists to the Chinese immigrant students before sending the
consent form to them. Secondly, Chinese immigrants try to raise their economic status by choosing demanding careers according to Canadian job market. Art is not one of the most popular careers for their concerns. Most immigrants had difficult times to adapt into Canadian society in the first few years. Most new immigrants had to give up their professions at which they probably worked for many years before they came to Canada. It usually takes a couple of years for them to find a job other than a manual labor work. These immigrants’ experience shaped their children to make a decision on choosing their future careers. Fine Arts such as drawing, painting is usually thought to be an extra-curricular activity in primary and high schools in China. They knew that making a living as an artist is difficult. Most immigrants would like their children to choose their careers in science, computer technology, and business or other fields -- but not art. These two main reasons prevented me from being able to teach about these two artists in the Chinese school.

From my case study on Gu Xiong and Xu Bing, I found that these two artists challenge the traditional conception of Chinese culture and institution. Gu Xiong and Xu Bing’s art and attitudes towards their homeland culture and the host culture is not simply about preserving their homeland culture or adapting and negotiating with the host culture, It is about demonstrating their active roles and taking advantage of their ‘uncertain position’ and turning it into something meaningful and positive. Xu Bing stated in his interview by Harper (2003),

To me, creating art is the expression of one’s sensitivity toward the state of society and culture, which leads to a redefinition of recreation of the existing methodologies. When society changes, thinking changes, and naturally, art
changes as well. One doesn’t have to think about issues of modernity or whatever. Traditional Chinese painting theory expresses the idea that ‘the style of the ink-and-brush should change with the times’. (p.51)

I was inspired by Xu Bing’s work and his statement. When we teach Chinese culture in the Chinese school, we need to think about what aspects of Chinese culture we should be teaching? Should we ‘redefine and recreate’ the definition of Chinese culture toward the current state of a society? More contemporary issues should be brought to the existing curriculum. But how can we bring it to the school if the teachers and students haven’t realized the importance? I noticed the inconsistency between our ideals and social realities during the practice of multicultural education. As Banks and Banks (2001) state:

It is unrealistic to expect a teacher to move directly from a highly mainstream-centric curriculum to one that focuses in decision-making and social action. Rather, the move from the first to higher levels of multicultural content integration is likely to be gradual and cumulative. (p. 239)

When I used Banks’ level one and level two approaches for the integration of multicultural content to teach Chinese culture to the English schools in Montreal, they were quite well accepted by the school and the students. The art activity seemed to stimulate the students’ interests in the culture and art. However, when I was anxious to use higher level and more intellectual approaches in the Chinese school, the introduction of a higher level art curriculum, for immigrant descendants to learn both their homeland culture and the host culture is not appreciated by most of the students and their parents. I was not able to do it due to the circumstances which I described before. The level one and two approaches were quite easily accepted in English elementary schools. In this
circumstance I was not able to show that Chinese immigrant artists can function as a bridge to link students’ cultural heritage to their host culture, and they can help students develop their own identity, to communicate with others, and to express both universal and individual meaning. But I believe that contributions and additive approaches can be used as a vehicle to move to higher and more intellectual approaches, such as the transformation and social action approaches (Bank, 2001 p. 239) if the students can be taught consistently and the content can be integrated in the regular class.

The main goal of the Chinese school is to preserve and transmit their cultural heritage. What they teach is Chinese language, history and culture. It orients students more to the past than to the contemporary issues. It makes the students feel that there is little relevant to their present life and their future career. Since the Chinese school is a separate institution from the public school system, it creates problems for itself. Students see Chinese School is not part of their regular school system, which makes them feel that the course they are taking in the Chinese School is extra curricula. This results in most students thinking that what they learn in the Chinese school is not as important as in the public school. On the other hand, public school curriculum includes little Chinese culture and history at their regular schools. The students could not see that learning Chinese culture is as important as mainstream culture in the public school. All these reasons reinforce the disconnection of the students’ learning their own homeland culture and the host culture which can result in students’ resistant and unmotivated on learning their homeland cultures. In this circumstance, I tried to provide the curriculum about these two artists that can possibly bridge these students’ sense of connection between their homeland culture and the host culture.
For me it was interesting to see that in the public school, the local students were quite curious and enthusiastic to learn the different cultures including Chinese cultures during their lunch activities, while in the Chinese weekend school, most students were less motivated to learn Chinese and Chinese cultures. So how can we integrate more multicultural content into school curriculum? How to motivate the Chinese students’ interests in their homeland culture and design a curriculum that is more relevant to their cultural background and experience? Through my case study about these two artists and my investigation and the teaching events in both Chinese school and the English public schools, I believe that these transcultural artists can possibly provide not only Chinese immigrant students but also other immigrant students and local students a worthwhile learning experience in cultural studies and art, especially in the aspects of Chinese culture and the local culture. Although I could not prove this through this research, it gives me a clearer direction toward how I can implement this in the future and how the circumstances and limitations right now prevent me not doing so.
Chapter Five: Conclusion and the future work

The overall objective of my thesis research was to find the implications that the work of two Chinese immigrant artists, Xu Bing and Gu Xiong, might have for Chinese immigrant students’ art education. I also tried to identify the practical possibility of applying this approach in both a Chinese and public schools in Montreal.

After several conversations and interviews with the two artists and through studies of their works and thoughts, a few implications were obtained from this case study. These include:

1) Students can learn about Chinese immigrants’ lives, history and inherent cultural conflicts, which reflect and connect to Chinese immigrant students’ experience and life.

2) These two artists’ experience and their art provide a possible linkage between Chinese culture and Western culture for the students.

3) These two artists’ art provides materials for a dynamic curriculum which informs Chinese immigrant students with ongoing updated information linking Chinese culture and the host culture.

4) These two artists’ art and their attitudes show positive influences to immigrant students’ individual identity development.

5) Information about these two artists and their work can possibly be developed into an intercultural interdisciplinary study for Chinese immigrant descendents.

It is valuable for immigrant students to learn their own homeland culture and its relation with local culture. The interviews with the two artists also provided me with insight for constructing a teaching plan which I have tried to implement in a Chinese weekend school. Through three teaching events in English elementary schools and a
Chinese weekend school, I found that art lessons designed at Banks (1989) and Sleeter and Grant’s (1988) levels one or level two could be quite easily accepted in English elementary schools. However, some circumstances prevented me from being able to teach about these two artists in the Chinese School. My attempt to introduce a higher level art curriculum for Chinese immigrant students to learn their homeland culture and local culture was not appreciated by most of the students and their parents. They seemed to have little awareness and interest in art, and the economic concerns with their children’s future career selection inhibited their commitment to my proposal. Their intention to send the children to the Chinese school is limited to getting them to read and write the characters. Through this event as well as several conversations I had with some Chinese immigrants, I realized that a lot of Chinese immigrants do not realize the importance of art in cultural education and they rarely help their children to develop interests in art. Some parents send their children to private artists to learn drawing and painting only if their children show strong interests or talents in art.

I have also tried to teach about Gu Xiong in a private art center run by Chinese immigrant art educators in Downtown Montreal. In a one and half hour class, I made a presentation to introduce Gu Xiong and his work to seven Chinese students aged between seven and twelve. They were fascinated by Gu’s drawing skills and they all liked Gu’s work particularly the drawing Garbage Bag most. They were very surprised to see his photo works which he took in China and Canada. They asked me how China can still be China if so many Western restaurants such as MacDonalds, KFC, and Starbucks are in China as shown in Gu’s photos. I was encouraged by these students’ interests in this artist – Gu Xiong; I see the possibility to implement this teaching approach to Chinese
immigrant students. Although these students might be too young to understand some of Gu Xiong's work, such as his installation River, the students started to think about the culture which the artist's art revealed. From this little experiment, I believe that these two artists can be taught at different levels and different aspects emphasized, from drawing skill to cultural inquiry, according to the students' ages. The discussions and inquiry between Chinese culture and Western culture can possibly be developed through learning about these two artists' experience and looking at their art.

The study of these two artists and my investigation and the teaching experiment in both types of schools make me realize that in Chinese immigrant students' education, whether we try hard to help students master Chinese and inherit traditional Chinese culture in Chinese school or help the students adapt and integrate into local culture in public school, these two aspects can not be separated in Chinese immigrant student's education in Canada. Chinese weekend school and public school need to increase their communication with each other and work together to develop a more integrated cultural curriculum for these students so that the students can develop their sense of the connection between Chinese culture and the local culture and develop more positive attitudes towards their unique cultural background. This also helps local students understand other cultures and the nature of this multicultural country.

Before I started my thesis study, the initial plan was to teach about these two Chinese immigrant artists to both Chinese immigrants' descendant children and local public school students in Montreal, and to test how they react to teaching this content. Because of Quebec education policy, almost all the students from Chinese descendant families have to enroll in French schools. As I only know a little French, I was not able to
teach in a French school. Through my teaching in the Chinese weekend school and
English schools, I have found that there is a lack of learning about Chinese culture in
English public school while Chinese school only emphasizes Chinese traditional culture.
These two immigrant artists provided a possible bridge to connect the Chinese culture
and the local culture, and contemporary issues to both types of schools. I believe that the
focus and emphasis on teaching about these two artists can be very different to Chinese
immigrant students and to Canadian students. I think it is necessary to teach in Chinese
school and English school separately first and find a way to meet both two groups' interests and learning styles and then test it again in a public school where both of these two groups can be found. My thesis has focused on teaching Chinese immigrant descendant students about their homeland culture and the host culture through these two artists. During the case study, I was deeply impressed by the perspectives of these two artists and attitudes towards their position living between two cultures. Inspired by their distinctive artistic ways to explore and articulate this new "hybrid culture" where they live, I created three paintings (Appendix 15) through where I tried to reflect my personal feelings about living in Canada as an immigrant and my appreciation of this new culture. I applied emblems such as maple leaves, seagulls and the cloud with statements in my art to present this "in-between culture" from my personal feelings. Through this art practice, I believe that every student with different cultural backgrounds living in Canada can express, demonstrate and explore their personal understandings towards the conflicts and amalgamations of the cultures and all students can make a contribution to this new "hybrid culture". This learning experience not only values each student's personal
experience but also reinforces the concept that all human beings are related and encourages students to explore the diversity and fluidity of culture.

My thesis has focused on teaching Chinese immigrant descendant students about their homeland culture and the host culture through these artists. There are a number of topics deserving further investigation: particularly how the local and other immigrant students react to this content. What Chinese immigrant students and local students can learn about and from each other in the same class when teaching about these artists? Then, I hope these research outcomes will eventually help formulate learning material about transcultural artists to both immigrant students and local students.
BIBLIOGRAPHY


Appendix 1

A survey in Brossard Chinese School
Student ID: ________________

Grade: ___________    School Name: ____________________________

The Place of Birth: ___________ Age: ______________

Mother’s Nationality: ___________ Father’s Nationality: ___________

How long have you been in Canada if you were not born in Canada? ______

Where did you come from before you came to Montreal? ________________

What language do you often speak at home? __________________________

How long have you been studying in this Chinese school? Since when?

______________________________

Explain the main reasons that you go to the Chinese school on weekends:


Do you want to learn Chinese cultures as well while you learn Chinese language? Which part of the cultures you want to know or you are interested in?


Do you practice Chinese at home or other locations? Do you learn any Chinese cultures at your schools or at home?
Grade: College II  School Name: Marianopolis College

The Place of Birth: Canada  Age: 18

Mother's Nationality: China  Father's Nationality: China

How long have you been in Canada if you were not born in Canada? 

Where did you come from before you came to Montreal? 

What languages do you often speak at home? Cantonese

How long have you been studying in this Chinese school? Since when? 12 years

Explain the main reasons that you go to the Chinese school on weekends:

To keep my Chinese writing functional
and to learn Mandarin.

Do you want to learn Chinese cultures as well while you learn Chinese characters? Which part of the cultures you want to know or you are interested in?

I don't care but it depends on some things and the contents in the class.

Do you practice Chinese at home or other locations? Do you learn any Chinese cultures at your schools or at home?

Yes, at home and at work.
Student ID: 19

Grade: Secondary V   School Name: Chambly Academy
School Name: 香港 (Hong Kong)

The Place of Birth: 香港 (Hong Kong)
Age: 19

Mother’s Nationality: 香港 (Hong Kong)   Father’s Nationality: 香港 (Hong Kong)

How long have you been in Canada if you were not born in Canada? 15 years / 十五年

Where did you come from before you came to Montreal? 1989年2月

What languages do you often speak at home? 座族语, 英语, 国语 (Cantonese, English, Mandarin)

How long have you been studying in this Chinese school? Since when? 7 years since 1997

Explain the main reasons that you go to the Chinese school on weekends:
Chinese School is represent the Education from China and Education from Hong Kong

Do you want to learn Chinese cultures as well while you learn Chinese characters? Which part of the cultures you want to know or you are interested in?
I like Kung Fu (but Shaolin and Kung Fu Weapon) as the Chinese Culture because I will look like the movie, "The Matrix" or "Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon".

Do you practice Chinese at home or other locations? Do you learn any Chinese cultures at your schools or at home?
I learned both of them, but not the culture.
Student ID: # 18

Grade: + School Name: Istituuto di Formazione et di Testo du Quebec.
The Place of Birth: Age: 17
Mother’s Nationality: Hong Kong Father’s Nationality: Hong Kong
How long have you been in Canada if you were not born in Canada? —
Where did you come from before you came to Montreal? —
What languages do you often speak at home? Cantonese
How long have you been studying in this Chinese school? Since when?
Since Grade 1

Explain the main reasons that you go to the Chinese school on weekends:
- I don’t want to lose my Mandarin too much because I almost never approach Chinese culture during regular school days.

Do you want to learn Chinese cultures as well while you learn Chinese characters? Which part of the cultures you want to know or you are interested in?

Sure, Chinese culture is interesting but I’m more into being able to know how to read newspapers, actualities are more important in my opinion.

Do you practice Chinese at home or other locations? Do you learn any Chinese cultures at your schools or at home?

By watching Chinese series on TV.
Student ID #17

Grade: 8b 5  School Name: College Jean de la Montagne

The Place of Birth: Hong Kong  Age: 16

Mother’s Nationality: Hong Kong  Father’s Nationality: Hong Kong

How long have you been in Canada if you were not born in Canada? 12 years

Where did you come from before you came to Montreal? Hong Kong

What languages do you often speak at home? Cantonese

How long have you been studying in this Chinese school? Since when?

11 years  Since 1998 (Kindergarten)

Explain the main reasons that you go to the Chinese school on weekends:

My parents want me to study Chinese... And it’s useful for my future career.

Do you want to learn Chinese cultures as well while you learn Chinese characters? Which part of the cultures you want to know or you are interested in?

Singing, Sword, History

Do you practice Chinese at home or other locations? Do you learn any Chinese cultures at your schools or at home?

Yes, I type Chinese in usual communication.

Yes, history.
Student ID: #16

Grade: 8  School Name: Notre-Dame-de-Lourdes

The Place of Birth: Belgium  Age: 12

Mother's Nationality: Chinese  Father's Nationality: Belgian

How long have you been in Canada if you were not born in Canada? 6 years

Where did you come from before you came to Montreal? Belgium

What languages do you often speak at home? French and Chinese

How long have you been studying in this Chinese school? Since when? 1/2 year

Explain the main reasons that you go to the Chinese school on weekends:

Learn how to write and read Chinese.

Do you want to learn Chinese cultures as well while you learn Chinese characters? Which part of the cultures you want to know or you are interested in?

Chinese painting

Do you practice Chinese at home or other locations? Do you learn any Chinese cultures at your schools or at home?

Yes, I practice Chinese at home and in China. I don't learn Chinese cultures.
Student ID: #15

Grade: Sec. 4  School Name: CHABLY ACADEMY HIGH SCHOOL

The Place of Birth: Montreal, Canada  Age: 15

Mother’s Nationality: Taiwan  Father’s Nationality: China

How long have you been in Canada if you were not born in Canada? ———

Where did you come from before you came to Montreal? ———

What languages do you often speak at home? Mandarin (Chinese) and English

How long have you been studying in this Chinese school? Since when?

for 10 years, since Kindergarten

Explain the main reasons that you go to the Chinese school on weekends:

To hopefully learn Chinese and apply it to my life in the future

Do you want to learn Chinese cultures as well while you learn Chinese characters? Which part of the cultures you want to know or you are interested in?

I don’t mind learning new things about the Chinese cultures and characters I am willing to learn all parts of the cultures.

Do you practice Chinese at home or other locations? Do you learn any Chinese cultures at your schools or at home?

I speak Chinese at home, I learn cultures at school, but I do not learn Chinese culture.
Student ID 14

Grade: 9 School Name: Centennial Regional High School

The Place of Birth: Canada Age: 14

Mother's Nationality: Taiwan Father's Nationality: Taiwan

How long have you been in Canada if you were not born in Canada? 

Where did you come from before you came to Montreal? Montreal

What languages do you often speak at home? Mandarin, English

How long have you been studying in this Chinese school? Since when? 10 years

Explain the main reasons that you go to the Chinese school on weekends:

- to learn and improve Chinese

Do you want to learn Chinese cultures as well while you learn Chinese characters? Which part of the cultures you want to know or you are interested in?

- I would like to learn both aspects
  - History & Legends

Do you practice Chinese at home or other locations? Do you learn any Chinese cultures at your schools or at home?

- at Home
  - sometimes in History classes
Grade: 7
School Name: Centennial Regional High School

The Place of Birth: Montreal
Age: 13

Mother’s Nationality: Malaysia
Father’s Nationality: Cambodia

How long have you been in Canada if you were not born in Canada?

Where did you come from before you came to Montreal?

What languages do you often speak at home? English

How long have you been studying in this Chinese school? Since when? Kindergarten

Explain the main reasons that you go to the Chinese school on weekends:
I want to learn Chinese and Chinese culture.

Do you want to learn Chinese cultures as well while you learn Chinese characters? Which part of the cultures you want to know or you are interested in?
I want to learn Taichi sword.

Do you practice Chinese at home or other locations? Do you learn any Chinese cultures at your schools or at home?
No
Grade: 7  School Name: Centennial Regional High School

The Place of Birth: Taiwan  Age: 13

Mother's Nationality: Taiwan  Father's Nationality: Taiwan

How long have you been in Canada if you were not born in Canada? 11

Where did you come from before you came to Montreal? Taipei, Taiwan

What languages do you often speak at home? Chinese

How long have you been studying in this Chinese school? Since when?

Since Grade 2

Explain the main reasons that you go to the Chinese school on weekends:

I want to learn Chinese

Do you want to learn Chinese cultures as well while you learn Chinese characters? Which part of the cultures you want to know or you are interested in?

I don't know

I want to learn Taichi sword

Do you practice Chinese at home or other locations? Do you learn any Chinese cultures at your schools or at home?

No
Student ID 41

Grade: 中五 (Grade 5) School Name: Collège Jean de la Mennais

The Place of Birth: 满地河 (Montreal) Age: 16
Mother’s Nationality: 广东 (Guangdong, P.R. China) Father’s Nationality: 印尼 (Indonesia)

How long have you been in Canada if you were not born in Canada? 

Where did you come from before you came to Montreal? 

What languages do you often speak at home? 廣東話, 法語 (cantonese, french)

How long have you been studying in this Chinese school? Since when? 

一年→從 2018 年開始 (one year)

Explain the main reasons that you go to the Chinese school on weekends:

我妈妈想我来。My mom wants me to learn.

我覺得在這裏學國語會比在滿地河的好。I think this Chinese school is better than Montreal Chinese School.

Do you want to learn Chinese cultures as well while you learn Chinese characters? Which part of the cultures you want to know or you are interested in?

全都想學。

I want to learn all.

Do you practice Chinese at home or other locations? Do you learn any Chinese cultures at your schools or at home?

在滿地河中文學校。

In Montreal Chinese school.
Student ID 110

Grade: 1 (Grade 1) School Name: Pierre Brosseau

The Place of Birth: Taiwan  
Age: 13

Mother's Nationality: Taiwan  
Father's Nationality: Taiwan

How long have you been in Canada if you were not born in Canada? 7 years

Where did you come from before you came to Montreal? Taiwan

What languages do you often speak at home? Mandarin

How long have you been studying in this Chinese school? Since when? 6 years

Explain the main reasons that you go to the Chinese school on weekends:

我本来就想学,加上我父母都想。
My parents want me to learn Chinese. I also want to learn Chinese.

Do you want to learn Chinese cultures as well while you learn Chinese characters? Which part of the cultures you want to know or you are interested in?

我全部都想学一点点。
I want to learn both.

Do you practice Chinese at home or other locations? Do you learn any Chinese cultures at your schools or at home?

我在家裡都跟父母一起学,在学校也有在学。
I practice Chinese with my parents. Sometime I also speak Chinese at school.
Grade: 6  School Name: Préville (as St-kambeut)

The Place of Birth: Canada  Age: 12

Mother's Nationality: Viet-Nam  Father’s Nationality: Camboage

How long have you been in Canada if you were not boned in Canada? __________

Where did you come from before you came to Montreal? _______________________

What languages do you often speak at home? mandarin, french and a little english

How long have you been studying in this Chinese school? Since when? Since 4 or 5 years old

Explain the main reasons that you go to the Chinese school on weekends:

My parents want me to learn this language because we are chinese and to know more about chinese cultures.

Do you want to learn Chinese cultures as well while you learn Chinese characters? Which part of the cultures you want to know or you are interested in?

Yes, and I want to know arts and crafts...

Also some painting and brothings too (before)

Do you practice Chinese at home or other locations? Do you learn any Chinese cultures at your schools or at home?

I practice a little at home and at church.

Some of the cultures...
Student ID #8

Grade: 8, School Name: Pierre - Brosseau

The Place of Birth: Canada, Age: 13

Mother's Nationality: Chinese, Father's Nationality: Chinese

How long have you been in Canada if you were not born in Canada?

Where did you come from before you came to Montreal?

What languages do you often speak at home?

How long have you been studying in this Chinese school? Since when?

7 years

Explain the main reasons that you go to the Chinese school on weekends:

I went to Chinese school weekends because my mother said if you are a Chinese, you must learn how to write and speak Chinese.

Do you want to learn Chinese cultures as well while you learn Chinese characters? Which part of the cultures you want to know or you are interested in?

Yes, I went to learn the history of China.

Examples: cultures, history, characters.

Do you practice Chinese at home or other locations? Do you learn any Chinese cultures at your schools or at home?

No, I don't learn Chinese cultures at my school.
Student ID # 7

Grade: Sec. III  School Name: Jacques - Rousseau

The Place of Birth: Argentina  Age: 10

Mother's Nationality: Taiwan  Father's Nationality: Taiwan

How long have you been in Canada if you were not born in Canada? Yes

Where did you come from before you came to Montreal? Argentina

What languages do you often speak at home? French, Chinese

How long have you been studying in this Chinese school? Since 8 years

Explain the main reasons that you go to the Chinese school on weekends:

Have nothing else to do

Do you want to learn Chinese cultures as well while you learn Chinese characters? Which part of the cultures you want to know or you are interested in?

Not much

Do you practice Chinese at home or other locations? Do you learn any Chinese cultures at your schools or at home?

Not much
Grade: Sec (3) School Name: Antoine-Brossard

The Place of Birth: Canada Age: 14

Mother's Nationality: Chinese Father's Nationality: Chinese

How long have you been in Canada if you were not born in Canada? ____________

Where did you come from before you came to Montreal? ____________

What languages do you often speak at home? Chinese

How long have you been studying in this Chinese school? Since when?
Since around 6 years old

Explain the main reasons that you go to the Chinese school on weekends:

I go to Chinese school on weekends because I have to go and I have nothing else to do.

Do you want to learn Chinese cultures as well while you learn Chinese characters? Which part of the cultures you want to know or you are interested in?

I would like to learn of the Chinese history's war,

Do you practice Chinese at home or other locations? Do you learn any Chinese cultures at your schools or at home?

I practice Chinese at home and I learn Chinese culture at home.
Student ID  #5

Grade:  4  School Name: Collège Charles-Lemoyne

The Place of Birth: Taiwan  Age:  15

Mother's Nationality: Taiwan  Father's Nationality: Taiwan

How long have you been in Canada if you were not born in Canada?  9 years

Where did you come from before you came to Montreal? 

What languages do you often speak at home? Chinese

How long have you been studying in this Chinese school? Since when? 8 years

Explain the main reasons that you go to the Chinese school on weekends:

My parents force me to come.

Do you want to learn Chinese cultures as well while you learn Chinese characters? Which part of the cultures you want to know or you are interested in?

Not really.

Do you practice Chinese at home or other locations? Do you learn any Chinese cultures at your schools or at home?

No.
Student ID # 4

Grade: Sec 4 School Name: ____________________________
The Place of Birth: Taiwan Age: 15
Mother's Nationality: China Father's Nationality: Taiwan
How long have you been in Canada if you were not born in Canada? around 9 years
Where did you come from before you came to Montreal? _________________________
What languages do you often speak at home? Chinese
How long have you been studying in this Chinese school? Since when?
Since Grade 1

Explain the main reasons that you go to the Chinese school on weekends:
mom force me

Do you want to learn Chinese cultures as well while you learn Chinese characters? Which part of the cultures you want to know or you are interested in?

No

Do you practice Chinese at home or other locations? Do you learn any Chinese cultures at your schools or at home?
at home
Student ID #3

Grade: 5  School Name: College Notre-Dame de Lourdes

The Place of Birth: Mauritius  Age: 16

Mother's Nationality: Mauritius  Father's Nationality: Mauritius

How long have you been in Canada if you were not born in Canada?  Almost 6 years

Where did you come from before you came to Montreal?  Mauritius

What languages do you often speak at home?  French

How long have you been studying in this Chinese school? Since when?  Since 2001, 3 years

Explain the main reasons that you go to the Chinese school on weekends:
Before I came to the Chinese school because I liked it and now my mother wants me to come.

Do you want to learn Chinese cultures as well while you learn Chinese characters? Which part of the cultures you want to know or you are interested in?
No, I don't want to learn Chinese cultures while I learn Chinese characters. I only want to learn taichisword as Chinese culture.

Do you practice Chinese at home or other locations? Do you learn any Chinese cultures at your schools or at home?
No, I don't practice Chinese at home or other locations.
No, I don't learn any Chinese cultures at school or at home.
Grade: 7  School Name: Antoine-Brossard

The Place of Birth: Hong Kong  Age: 12

Mother's Nationality: Chinese  Father's Nationality: Chinese

How long have you been in Canada if you were not born in Canada? 10 years

Where did you come from before you came to Montreal? Hong Kong

What languages do you often speak at home? Chinese, Cantonese

How long have you been studying in this Chinese school? Since when? 6-7 years since grade 1.

Explain the main reasons that you go to the Chinese school on weekends:
The reason is that my mother force me to.

Do you want to learn Chinese cultures as well while you learn Chinese characters? Which part of the cultures you want to know or you are interested in?

not really, the colors of mask.

Do you practice Chinese at home or other locations? Do you learn any Chinese cultures at your schools or at home?

No, I don't practice Chinese mandarin everywhere but yes for Chinese cantonese. I don't learn Chinese culture except Chinese school.
Grade: Sec 2 | School Name: Antoine-Brossard (International Program)

The Place of Birth: Hong Kong | Age: 14

Mother’s Nationality: Chinese | Father’s Nationality: Chinese

How long have you been in Canada if you were not born in Canada? 8 years

Where did you come from before you came to Montreal? Hong Kong

What languages do you often speak at home? Cantonese

How long have you been studying in this Chinese school? Since when?

5 years

Explain the main reasons that you go to the Chinese school on weekends:

It’s because my parents want me to learn Mandarin.

Do you want to learn Chinese cultures as well while you learn Chinese characters? Which part of the cultures you want to know or you are interested in?

I want to learn more about Chinese painting and calligraphy.

Do you practice Chinese at home or other locations? Do you learn any Chinese cultures at your schools or at home?

I never learn Chinese cultures at school.
Appendix 2

Transcript of Xu Bing's Interview
Interview with Xu Bing (Sept, 19. 2003)

1. I read from the article - *A conversation with Xu Bing - Exterior Form Interior Substance*, that your experiences in a farming community during the 1974 Chinese Cultural Revolution are among the threads brought together in your subsequent work. What is the impact of the Cultural Revolution on your art creations?

Xu: The Cultural Revolution has a great impact on my life. Our generation experienced different cultural and historical impacts. Our lives and cultural background are a jumbled knot of socialism, the Cultural Revolution, the Reform Period, Westernization, Modernization. Each period of time almost lasts ten years. I feel that the period of the Cultural Revolution has the most significant impact on my life. I was between twelve and twenty-two during the Cultural Revolution. It was the golden time of a person’s life. Most individuals’ knowledge and concepts were constructed and formed during that time. So the experience during this period had a great impact on my creation.

2. Could you explain how your experience during the Cultural Revolution impacted on your art creation such as *the Book from the Sky* or your other art projects?

Xu: For example, my understanding on written words. Simply to say, the Chinese language has very special and intimate relationships with Chinese people. The transformation of language is to transform a person’s method of thinking, the most inherent portion of a person’s thinking. That is the reason that Chairman Mao started his revolution from transforming Chinese written words. When the words were transformed, our understanding of the culture was also transformed. So Mao’s revolution touched the Chinese people to their very souls. Mao wanted to get rid of the old tradition and establish new culture by starting the transformation of the written words. My generation was irreparably affected by the campaign to simplify characters. We started our education just during the campaign. The promulgation of new character after new character, the abandonment of old characters that I had already mastered, the transformation of new characters and their eventual demise, the revival of old characters—
shadowed my earliest education and left me confused about the fundamental conceptions of culture. In fact, for my personal experience related to language, for example, my father worked in the history department of Beijing University and my mother worked in the department of library sciences of Beijing University. They were very busy so they kept me staying in the library. Most time I was surrounded by piles of books. At that time I was too young to read those books. I was very familiar the covers of those books but I could not read the inside of the books. So I was confused by the cover and the inside of books. When I was old enough to read books, the Cultural Revolution started. We were not allowed to read any books but only Mao's little red book. After the Cultural Revolution, I returned to the libraries to read or skim book after book. Before long, China began to experience a "cultural warming." I read so much and participated in so many conversations on culture that my mind was in a constant state of chaos. I felt that it was like I overate after suffering from starvation for a long time. I started to feel sick and confused about my understanding of the book and the language. It was at that point that I considered creating a book of my own, the Book from the Sky, that might mirror these feelings.

3. Is your immigration experience and transformation of Chinese to English different from the experience on transformation of complicated Chinese to simplified Chinese? Does your work reflect any of your immigration experience and conflict on adapting new language?

Xu: My work New English Calligraphy reflected my experience in here. I would not have created such a work if I had not lived in North America. Although the form I used in New English Calligraphy reflects the relationship to my immigrant experience, my intention of these two works is same. They were just like two brothers who have the same father but different mothers. They looked very alike but have their own identity. In these two pieces of work, he used the same forms: calligraphy, literature and the same medium: Chinese brush and rice paper. The words which I created were like wearing masks. They looked familiar but were not recognizable. There is no one on earth, who could read and comprehend the
words including myself. In the *Square Word Calligraphy*, if you use existing concepts of Chinese or English to try to read or interpret these characters, you will not succeed. So in both of my works, *the Book from Sky* and *New English Calligraphy*, my intention was to challenge and attack people's routine thinking. No matter what outer form my works take, they all linked by a common thread, which is to construct some kind of obstacle to people's habitual easy way of thinking—what I call the 'cognitive structures' of the mind.

4. Is it correct to say that in your work, you did it on purpose to associate Chinese culture with the local culture in an artistic way?

Xu: Actually my intention is to see the world in an equal, systematic way and beyond any limitation of knowledge and conception. If you see the world in this way, then there is no concept of East or West, and concept of tradition or contemporary. All these conceptions are defined under the 'cognitive structures' of the mind. If you look at the world beyond this limitation, all the subjects are related and their definitions are blurred. They are transformable. It's like you are inside me and I am inside you. For example, when you talk about tradition and contemporary, I used a lot of traditional materials, forms and styles in my work. I also applied Chinese traditional philosophy and classical skills into my art. However, when people talk about my work, they consider my work as contemporary art. This also relates to my art, the written words. Those words in my work are just like those pandas wearing masks in my installation *Panda Zoo*; the books with those words are just like wearing the masks. Above all, I try to blur all the concepts and definitions including tradition and contemporary, Western and Eastern concepts. So I did not deliberately associate Chinese culture with the local culture in my work. My intention was not about this, but to deconstruct ‘cognitive structures’.
5. Did you see any differences in the ways of appreciating your works of art from oriental audience and western audience? In other words, could western audience understand your experience and thoughts in the Culture Revolution? Could your works communicate with Western audience?

Xu: Of course. In the West, the subjects of language, words and communications were the popular philosophical themes in the last century. Western people are interested in my work because my works are related to these themes. For example, Derrida and I were asked to make a presentation together. Since lots of people use Derrida’s theory to discuss and interpret my work, I told Derrida: “Actually I had not read your work when I was creating my art.” At that time I do not know his theory. This also means that what we talk about in our work is the same even though we used in different methods and thought in different angles. When you asked whether Western people could understand my works, I think they can not understand what thinking methods I used or why I use this method, but they can understand what themes.

6. When I read about Erickson’s *The Art of Xu Bing*, I knew that you did some renovation in your teaching practice in drawing class. Compared with the traditional teaching method in China, at that time your thinking and methods are quite advanced. What is your opinion about current art education in China?

Xu: I think there is a big progression in Chinese art education now. But essentially there is no big difference. The art education in China is quite conservative. Every artist spends too much time to practice drawing and master the skill. They start to learn drawing from secondary school to university and until they complete their graduate study. It takes them too long during their entire study period. This process wastes lot of time. And also during their study, the subjects remain the same. The only difference is the degree of complexity of the subject they draw. So students inevitably would approach the drawing exercise in the usual manner, conceiving the images in terms of an accumulation. Students’ sensibility and their
ability of observation are shadowed by this academic process. That time my
teaching experiment was very limited. I provided students with unorthodox
subjects in the drawing class, such as, an upturned tree root or plaster cast
wrapped with a net. This method of teaching was similar to that of a Chan master
who presents his students with koan (empty) so as to disengage usual thinking
patterns. By using this method, students can develop their own way of
observation, personal strengths and interests. They can observe the specialties of
different objects from all aspects of their lives. Simply to say, that is my purpose
of teaching. Students can learn a good working method through learning drawing.
The learning process of drawing teaches you how to complete work from the
beginning to the end. Your feeling on the object will become stronger and
stronger when you involve in the learning process deeper.

7. What is your opinion regarding to Chinese immigrant students learning Chinese and
English here?

Xu: Bilingual is very important for immigrant students. But I think it is also important
not to let students have a strong sense of cultures during their learning process. It
is better to be an open concept of culture. For example, I opened a calligraphy
class in a Japanese high school. My teaching objective is not to teach them how to
write the words which I created. I think English and Japanese is more convenient
and practical than my New English Calligraphy. But it is helpful for the students
to develop a new way of thinking by understanding my written words. For another
example, in my work Landscript, I traced the landscape outside onto the huge
plate glass windows on the ground floor of the Art Gallery of New South Wales.
In Landscript, ancient pictographic forms of Chinese characters came together
with words written in Square Word Calligraphy in the landscape of buildings and
vegetation. Visitors to the exhibition who stood on a star painted on the floor
could see the painted landscape of words line up exactly with the landscape
beyond window. Parents of the kids asked their children to read these
pictographic forms of the Chinese characters; they could recognize these words
even though they did not learn these words before. Since I integrated images and the characters together, the children could read these words without limitation of concept of English and Chinese.
Appendix 3

Transcript of Gu Xiong’s Interview
Interview with Gu Xiong (April, 18. 2004)

1. Could you please talk about the relationship between your personal experience and your art creation (i.e. your work of art – The Yellow Pear)?

Gu: The Yellow Pear includes a wide range of art works from my previous exhibitions. These works touch upon the whole process in which we – Chinese immigrants struggled to survive in between the two different cultures, tried to widen our own spaces, put efforts to re-shape our own identities. I had been engaged in modern art before coming to Canada. At the beginning of my immigration life, the priority was to make sure how we were going to survive before thinking about widening our spaces. The issue then was how to adapt to the contemporary culture in the western world. “Identity” was quite popular at that time. The identity of the immigrants is very much related to this new concept of “identity” in the western world. My personal experience as a new immigrant was a very good source of art works creation. So, I made those works of art from many different aspects and angles of my life. The Yellow Pear was done under such a situation. I had an installation and exhibition in Vancouver called “Here, There, Everywhere”, which included most of the art works from The Yellow Pear.

2. I notice that your works of art draw a lot of materials from the Chinese Culture Revolution. I would like to know if your experience in the Culture Revolution influences your artistic creation in Canada?

Gu: Yes, it plays an important role. Upon my arrival in Canada, life was tough and I was in a difficult position. Such a difficult position is quite similar to the ones that the school graduates in the countryside had to go through during the Culture Revolution. In the revolution, the income we got through our hard work of the whole year was not enough to pay for the food. Such an experience spiritually supported me to have stood for the toughness and embarrassment at the beginning of my life in Canada. The experience in the revolution was one from the city to
the country, a cultural conflict, which is related to our own fate. Such an experience is closely related to the experience that we had to restart from scratch in Canada, and to seek for our path.

3. In many of your works (for example, Ding Ho/The Group of Seven), you put the posters of the Culture Revolution together with the landscape paintings of the Group of Seven, the sketches from The Yellow Pear with the quotation of Chairman Mao. Did you intend to express the common characteristics between the period of Culture Revolution and the experience of immigrants?

Gu: In those works, I mainly used sarcasm tactic. During the “Culture Revolution”, we used Chairman Mao’s words as a spiritual tool to overcome the difficulties and frustrations. The experience of the newly arrived immigrants is more or less the same. By referring to Chairman Mao’s words, I associated my experience in China with the experience as a new immigrant through sarcasm. Chairman Mao’s quotation had an interesting effect. In China, only after we experienced the “Culture Revolution” to the full extent did we have a flavor of the cultural transformation. The cultural shock in Canada has an in-built association with the shock in the Culture Revolution. Chairman Mao’s quotation itself is a culture, a representative culture. What I did was to associate, through Chairman Mao’s quotation, our experiences in China with the experiences in this new cultural environment in Canada.

4. Is it correct to say that you did it on purpose to associate your previous and current experiences, associate Chinese culture with local culture in an artistic way?

Gu: Yes, it is correct. I merged the experiences of a person in two different time periods and tried to reshape a new orientation, a new space, within which there is an extension of a certain culture.
5. Do you purposely use ancient or modern materials, methods or contents to do some links in your works of art?

Gu: This has become a very natural element in my works of art through my whole career and study process. In my art creation process, I never specifically tried to link the ancient with the modern. It has never been as simple as moving one thing from one place to another. My works reflect things from unnatural to natural, from non-reconciling to reconciling.

6. Did you see any differences in the ways of appreciating your works of art from oriental audience and western audience? In other words, could western audience understand your experience and thoughts in the Culture Revolution? Could your works communicate with Western audience?

Gu: Certainly they are communicable. I think that it is universal for human beings to understand and to bring together the experiences, frustrations and misfortunes. Through a proper technique of expression, the connotation of a work covers a broad meaning. Everyone has different views and aspects of understanding on a piece of work. They may want to seek a bit deeper into the work and try to find more from it.

7. You did an exhibition - *Here What I Mean* together with Mr. Xu Bing - *The Book from the Sky*. Why did two of you exhibit your works together? What were the intention and the theme of this exhibition?

Gu: *The Book From the Sky* of Mr. Xu Bing is a book that is not done to be readable to certain extent. It contains two parts. One part is done not to be readable and it talks about the culture confusion. Another part is the *New English Calligraphy*, which looks like Chinese characters, but actually they are English letters. This is actually a topic of cultural transformation. The visual art of Xu Bing is to communicate the process and experience of such a cultural transformation in a
form of calligraphy and blocks. On the other hand, my works of art are also blocks, which are not written but drawn. There are different aspects to appreciate the process of cultural transformation, but the intension might be the same. My works of art express more personalized experiences, whereas Xu Bing’s work represents a more general sense. Everyone writes and we all experience differently while writing.

8. The works of art from both of you convey the same theme of cultural transformation, right?

Gu: Right.

9. I realize that your works at an early stage concentrate more on personal experiences and the ones at later stage (i.e. the Exhibition in Montreal) focus on global culture shifting.

Gu: Actually the personal experiences in my works also represent universal sense. Many immigrants, who don’t know art very well, could not find a proper way to express themselves. So you may find more multi-cultural themes in my works at that time. For the works in Montreal, I tried to transfer my focus of transformation from a single family to a group of people and a society. Through such an approach, the conflicts and the transformation under a big picture of a country could be properly expressed in my work.

10. Will you still focus on cultural transformation in your future works?

Gu: In my previous works, I tried to explore the society and groups of people through my own personal experiences. Now my focus has a global aspect, which is the shifting among the globalization, local culture and individual identity. I focus on the shifting and the relationship among these three aspects. They are both independent from and related to each other. Meanwhile, the transformation of the
above three aspects caused the transformation of other aspects. So, this is my focus and theme now.

11. You attached your own poems to your works of art. I think that your poems are very encouraging. Do you intent to convey a positive attitude to immigrant identity through your visual art and your poetry?

Gu: Certainly. All my works represent a positive attitude to a full extent. Why? It is because being negative could only make people feel demoralized and tend to abandon themselves. On the other hand, being positive can transform negativeness into a positive motivation, which is encouraging and influencing. In our daily life, there are always negative things. But what is important is to transform the negative into the positive and to welcome tomorrow and the future.

12. It must have something to do with your optimism?

Gu: You are right. Should I not be an optimistic person, my attitude and way of acting would have changed.

13. What was your intention for your creation Installation - River?

Gu: This is a river of culture. So, it is a blend of my cultural experience in China and in Canada. For example, I mixed the Chairman Mao’s quotation and cultural revolution posters with some cans of local Canadian beers. In this case, there is no space-time difference. Everything, either past or now, is within one space. If we take a look at salmon, we can see that its whole life is a process of recurrence. It goes out from a small stream and comes back to lay eggs and then die. The life process of salmon is similar to the one of our immigrants, who leave the Yangzi River, pass over the Pacific Ocean and settle down in Fraser River. As human beings, the life process is much more meaningful than the one of animals. Once the animals finish the recurrence process and derive the lives, they die. Different
from the process of animals, the recurrence process of human beings results in spirits, which should be developed and carried forward. My poem – “You and I” concerns the above process and the relationship between salmon and human beings.

14. Is it true that you used a lot of symbolic methods in your works?

Gu: Yes, it is true. I used either personification or symbolism.

15. Could you talk about the strengths and weaknesses of the art education in the western world and the Eastern world?

Gu: The major difference is that the Eastern art education stresses more technical skills, whereas the Western art education focuses on conceptual things. In China, it is risky to talk about conceptual things and it is safe to teach technical skills, since skills are needed at any time. In Western world, technical skills are not as attracting as conceptual mindsets. In modern art, a new concept brings much more vibrations and effects than the technical skills. My opinion is that skill and concept is an integrity that cannot be separated. A good concept has to be supported by a good skill. Also a concept cannot be regarded as being good if it is not expressed in a good way. I have always been telling my students that concept and skill is one entity. Concept cultivation is invisible and intangible which we are not able to touch neither to see. It can only be reflected in works of art. Conceptual training can be done through different media, which can be touched and seen. During my years of art education in the Western world, I have been sticking to this orientation.

In Canada, we start to convey the above message to students as soon as they start their first and second year study at the school. By the fourth year, their art works become more natural without purposely seeking for a specific concept and skill,
instead to express their own ideas in a best way. In Canada, the training in class is pretty short, whereas in China, it is too long. We need something in between.

16. How did you start your cooperation with local artist – Andrew Hunter to have created *Ding Ho/The Group of Seven*? What was the intention?

Gu: After I got to know Andrew Hunter, we talked about the Group of Seven. During the Cultural Revolution, I saw some exhibitions of the Group of Seven. Andrew got to understand Chinese culture from a local Chinese restaurant – Ding Ho Restaurant in Hamilton Ontario. We try to understand and appreciate two different cultures from two different cultural angles and two different cultural backgrounds. Our cooperative exhibition in Canada talks about the process of how the two cultures blend together, what are the shocks and different cultural backgrounds. The exhibition of the Group of Seven was made in Beijing and Shanghai. At that time, China never accepted any foreign exhibitions with this exception. From the government’s view, this exhibition included works of landscapes, which seem to carry no political content for the government. From an artist point of view, I found it very refreshing when I visited the exhibition, which included expressionism, impressionism as well as personalization of the artists. As such, the Group of Seven brought a big shock to the formulated and propaganda way of expressing art in China. On the other hand, Andrew Hunter has always been dining with his mother in the Chinese Ding Ho Restaurant when he was young. Actually it is not a restaurant with a real Chinese cuisine. The Wanton soup and the meatballs are westernized Chinese food there. For them, this is a real Chinese culture. Eventually both of us found that *the Group of Seven* and the *Ding Ho Restaurant* are all representative, so we decided to bring them together and to express a deeper meaning out of them.
Appendix 4

Lunch Activity: Multicultural Art Creation – Chinese Dragon
Lunch Activity in Sunnydale and Cedar Park Elementary Schools (2 hours)

Activity 2: Chinese Dragon (2 hours)

Introduction and PowerPoint Presentation (20 mins).

Origin of the Dragon

Most Chinese scholars agree that Chinese dragon originated more than 4000 years ago in ancient China under the rule of famous emperor, Huang Di. At the time, China consisted of numerous tribes and each tribe worshipped a different animal, since animals were thought to be much more powerful than humans. Huang Di was the head of a major tribe whose symbol was a bear. After conquering all other tribes, Huang Di wanted to adopt a new symbol for his newly established kingdom, so that those from the conquered tribes would not feel alienated. After careful consideration, he decided that, rather than picking an animal as their new symbol, he would create his own symbol made up of traits of various animals.

(http://www.authenticasian.com/archives/2005/02/27/dragon/)

Culture and Art

Dragons are deeply rooted in Chinese culture, so Chinese often consider themselves, 'the descendants of the dragon'. Dragons have been worshiped by the Chinese for thousands of years. In ancient days the dragon was regarded as a most sacred animal, and used to be the imperial emblem of Chinese emperors. The dragon is one of the four divine creatures to Chinese. The others are the unicorn, the phoenix and the tortoise. Unlike the evil dragon in the West, the Chinese Dragon is a beneficent and gracious creature and is worshipped as the divine ruler of Lakes, Rivers and Seas. It is the powerful yet gentle 'Long' that brings rain to the earth and the crops.

The dragon is a symbol of imperial power. Chinese emperors think themselves as the real dragons and the sons of the heaven. Dragons were heavily used in the decoration of royal palaces. The beds they sleep on are called the dragon beds, the throne called the dragon seat, and the emperor's ceremonial dresses called the dragon robes. During some dynasties, using dragons as ornaments on clothing was a capital offense for commonalty, which would bring death upon not only the offender but also the immediate and extended family members.

The dragon is one of the most popular Chinese art motifs. It can be found in pottery, paintings, architecture, and are featured in many stories and songs. The dragon also plays an important part in Chinese Festivals. The dragon dance has a long history, which was already a popular event during the Song Dynasty (960-1279 AD). The Dragon Boat Festival has become popular international events now.
**Legend**

Nobody really knows where the dragon comes from. It may be just a product from the imagination of Chinese people. As imagined by the Chinese, the dragon has the head of a camel, the horns of a deer, fiery eyes and a long beard. Its ears are like those of a cow, its paws like the tiger’s and its claws sharp like an eagle’s. Its neck is serpentine; it has the belly of a frog and the scales of a carp. The Dragon first appeared in the sky, legend tells us, while an heir to the throne was born, and the country was blessed with peace and prosperity for many generations thereafter. Traditionally the dragons are considered as the governors of rainfalls in Chinese culture. They have the power to decide where and when to have rainfalls. It serves as a symbol of good fortune.

Chinese people have long been obsessed with dragons. Drawing dragons has been popular among Chinese artists throughout history. The Chinese idiom, hualong dianjing (“complete the drawing by putting the eyes on the dragon”), tells us the story of a famous dragon artist in ancient China. For the whole of his life, he drew dragons, but he always left the eyes of the dragons out. When asked, he said that his dragons were so realistic that they would fly away if their eyes were added. When ridiculed by fellow dragon artists, he completed one of his drawings by putting the eyes on the dragon and to everyone’s surprise, the dragon rose up from the drawing and flew up to the sky.

(http://www.authenticasian.com/archives/2005/02/27/dragon/)

**Western dragon**

Western dragons are normally portrayed as quadrupeds with two bat-like wings. They are usually extremely large and look vaguely like those prehistoric meat-eating dinosaurs. They often have large sharp claws and adornments such as horns, spikes, crests, and tail spades. They come in every color of the rainbow and are often covered in scales. Western dragons are also often portrayed as fire-breathers, and have been looked upon as evil creatures in Western society. (http://www.tailchaser-sushi.com/western.html) At the very least they tend to be solitary and bad-tempered. Some stories have the Western dragon as the Devil in Christianity. Other stories in legend say that eating a dragons’ heart will give the consumer the power of understanding birds; eating the dragons’ tongue enables the person to win any argument; and rubbing the dragons’ blood on skin will protect against stab wounds. Another myth references Vlad Drakul to mean Son of the Dragon, or Devil. The end of the dragon came with Christianity, and knights that were eager to prove their faith. The knights quickly discovered that dragon-hunting was very profitable, and soon most the dragons in the world were destroyed in a very short time. Vikings had dragon figureheads on the prow of their ships. The dragons on the ships were believed to endow keen site and cunning to the Viking warriors. Today the Welsh flag still has a red dragon on a green/white background, and the red dragon is their national symbol (http://www.draconian.com/whatis/).
Art making

Students will combine Chinese and Western Dragon features and create their own dragons using texture, line, shape, pattern and color.

Materials:

- white drawing paper
- black felt pen
- pencils
- pastels

Resources:
All kinds dragon from different countries
http://www.dragonorama.com/oriental/chinese.html
Chinese dragon
http://www.chinavoc.com/dragon/default.asp
Dragons
http://www.cdli.ca/CITE/dragons.htm
Western Dragon
http://fantrepose.iwarp.com/western.html
Dragon Pictures
http://home.earthlink.net/~jonesofnh/dragonpics.html
Appendix 5

PowerPoint Presentation – Chinese Dragon
Chinese Dragon

Source: http://www.bible.org/chinese_rv zunächst/171/171.jpg

Dragon Robe

Source: http://www.chineseobjects.com/images/longrobe.jpg

Black Dragon At Entrance To Long Tan, Beijing

Chinese Dragon At Temple Of Heaven, Beijing

Source: http://www.chineseobjects.com/images/longtian.jpg

Nine-Dragon Wall in Beihai Park, a popular tourist site in Beijing. The wall was built in 1756. It is 21m long, about 15m high and 1.2m thick.

Source: http://www.chineseobjects.com/images/beihai.jpg

Head of dragon dance costume – The spherical object in the dragon’s mouth represents the Pearl of Wisdom.

The photo taken by User Leonard G. in Chongqing, China, September, 2002.

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Image:DragonDanceCostume.png From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia
Dragon Boat Festival is celebrated by boat races in the shape of dragons.

Montreal Dragon Boat Festival
Photo Source: http://www.montrealdragonboat.com/photos.jpg

The typical Western dragon is a large, scaly creature resembling a dinosaur or a large lizard. It usually has wings and can fly, often it will breathe fire.

Can you combine Chinese and Western Dragons' features and create your own dragon?

Source: http://www.dragonimages.co.uk/dragon.jpg

The Welsh flag has two equal horizontal stripes, white above green, and a large red dragon passant.

Image resource: http://www.britpics.com/wales/welsh-dragon.jpg
Appendix 6

A Pedagogy Day Activity
Celebrating Chinese Culture – Peking Opera Mask
Celebrating Chinese Culture on a pedagogical day in Windermere Elementary School

Introduction of Peking Opera Mask (with PowerPoint presentation: 25 Mins)

Peking Opera is also called Beijing Opera. It is a harmonious combination of Grand Opera, Ballet and acrobatic display, consisting of dancing, dialogue, monologue, acrobatic combat and mime. Full of Chinese cultural facts, the opera presents to the audience an encyclopedia of Chinese culture as well as engaging stories, beautiful paintings, exquisite costumes, graceful gestures and acrobatic fighting.

Beijing Opera has an over-200-year history. In ancient times, Beijing Opera was performed mostly on open-air stages in markets, streets, teahouses or temple courtyards. The orchestra had to play loudly and the performers had to develop a piercing style of singing, in order to be heard over the crowds. Since the stage is dim and lit only by oil lamps, performers wear costumes which have sharply contrasting colors.

There are four main roles in Beijing Opera: Sheng, Dan, Jing and Chou.

Sheng are the leading male actors. Sheng are divided into “Laosheng” who wear beards and represent old men. “Xiaosheng” represents young men. “Wusheng” are acrobats who play military men and fighters, and “Wawa Sheng” who play male children. These roles usually wear no facial paintings.

Dan are the female roles. It is divided into many categories. “Laodan” are the old ladies. “Wudan” usually play military or non military women capable of martial arts. “Qingyi” usually play respectable and decent ladies in elegant costumes. “Huadan” represents lively and clever young girls, usually in short costumes.

Jing are the face-painted, mostly male roles who represent warriors, heroes, statesmen, adventurers and demons.

Chou refers to clowns who are characterized by a white patch on the nose. Usually white patches of different shape and size mean roles of different characters. They play roles of wit, alertness and humor. It is these characters who keep the audience laughing and improvise quips at the right moment to ease tension in some serious plays.

Facial painting is worth appreciating for its artistic value. The paintings are representations of the roles of the characters. For example, a red face usually depicts the role’s bravery, uprightness and royalty. A white face symbolizes a sinister role’s treachery and guile; a green face describes surly stubbornness, impetuousity and lack of self-restraint. In addition, the pattern of the facial painting reveals the role’s information. In a word, the unique makeup in the opera allows the characters on the stages to reveal them voicelessly.
Beijing Opera / Peking Opera

Beijing Opera has existed for over 200 years. It is widely regarded as the highest expression of the Chinese culture. There are thousands of opera pieces covering the entire history and literature of China.

Roles -- Sheng

Xiaosheng is a handsome young man, who can either be a scholar or a military general.

Wusheng is good at stage-fighting.

Laosheng is a bearded middle-aged or old man who is in most cases a positive character.

Roles -- Dan

Zhengdan is the type representing the gentle and virtuous young and middle-aged woman.

Huadan is the role for a maiden or a young woman, who is either vivacious or shrewish in character.

Caidan, also called choudan, is the role for a woman of comical or crafty character.

Wudan is the role for a woman of the military type.

Laodan is the role for an old woman.

Roles -- Jing

Monkey: A Journey to the West -- The classic Chinese tale of pilgrimage and adventure
Roles -- Jing

Jing is further divided into wenjing (civilian type) and wujing (warrior type). Wenjing particularly emphasizes on singing and Wujing on acrobatic fighting.

Roles -- Chou

A Chou usually paints his nose powder-white and wears an upturned moustache to give a comic effect.

Musical Instruments

Ban | Yue Qin

Musical Instruments

Er Hu | Pi Pa

Facial Makeup

The color red denotes a person who is brave, loyal and righteous

Han Zhongli with a red fairy face, one of the eight immortals in *Eight Immortals Cross the Sea*, an opera based on a Chinese fairy tale.
Black symbolize a character who is honest, guileless and uninhibited. Such characters are often brutally violent, but essentially good-hearted. An example of a black-faced character is Li K'ui (Left), who is legendary not only for his fits of violence, but also for his bravery and loyalty.

Characters with blue faces are extremely headstrong and haughty. Characters who have black faces, but with blue highlights, are scheming, vengeful people.

**Step 1**
- Select the color of the paper whatever you like.
- Drawing a Oval which is big enough to cover your face.
- Cut the oval out.

**Step 2:**
- Design patterns and colors on the paper using pencils.

R for red
B for black

**Step 3:**
Coloring the face according to your design using brushes and paints.
Can you combine comic action heroes, such as, spider man, bat man etc. with the Chinese masks into your design?
Appendix 7

Brossard Chinese School – Masks
Objective: Learn about different art styles and cultures embraced in masks by studying the work of the Peking Opera, Northwest Coast Native and African masks.

Introduction of Masks

Mask is a form of disguise. It is an object that is frequently worn over or in front of the face to hide the identity of a person and by its own features to establish another being. As a cultural object, it has been used throughout the world in all periods since the Stone Age and has been as varied in appearance as in its use and symbolism. Although, the essential characteristic of hiding and revealing personalities or moods is common to all masks, they are varied extraordinarily in their appearance as well as in their function or fundamental meaning.

Functions of Masks

The Masks in different cultures have different functions. Many masks are primarily associated with ceremonies that have religious and social significance or are concerned with funerary customs, fertility rites, or curing sickness. Other masks are used on festival occasions or to portray characters in a dramatic performance and in re-enactments of mythological events. Masks are also used for warfare and as protective devices in certain sports, as well as frequently being employed as architectural ornament.

Masks in different cultures

Chinese Peking Opera Mask
Northwest Coast Native American Mask
African Mask

1) Peking Opera Mask

Beijing Opera, which is also known as Peking Opera, has existed for over 200 years. It is widely regarded as the highest expression of the Chinese culture. Although it is called Beijing Opera its origins are not in Beijing but in the provinces of Anhui and Hubei. It was originally staged for the royal family and was introduced to the public later. Beijing opera was regarded as one of the rare forms of entertainment. There are thousands of opera pieces covering the entire history and literature of China.

Beijing Opera is a comprehensive performing art that combines music, singing, dialogue, pantomime, acrobatics and martial arts. Hence an actor or actress in Beijing Opera has to meet more requirements than those in other forms of performing art. He or she has to be a performing artist, a singer, and a dancer at the same time. It usually takes the student more than ten years of training to learn singing and acrobatic skills. Thus, it is difficult to be a qualified performer in Beijing Opera.
Musical Instruments

Typical Chinese musical instruments are used in a Beijing Opera orchestra. The two-stringed fiddles jing hu and er hu are two of the main instruments. Other instruments include sheng (reed pipes), Yue qin (moonshaped mandolin, pi pa (the Chinese lute), suo na (the Chinese clarinet), drums, bells, gongs, and hardwood castanets.

Character Roles

The character roles in Beijing Opera are divided into four main types according to the sex, age, social status, and profession of the character. Sheng refers to male roles. Sheng is subdivided into Lao Sheng (middle-aged or old men), Xiao Sheng (young men ) and Wu Sheng (men with martial skills).

Dan refers to a female role. Like Sheng, Dan is also subdivided into various types. Qing Yi is a woman with a strict moral code; Hua Dan is a vivacious young woman; Wu Dan is a woman with martial skills and Lao Dan is an elderly woman.

Jing is also known as Hua Lian, a role with a painted face, who is a man of special character, features and personality. Jing is further divided into Wen Jing (civilian type) and Wu Jing (warrior type). Wen Jing must lay particular emphasis on singing and Wu Jing on acrobatic fighting. The face of a Jing role is painted with a variety of coloured patterns which are not only an artistic exaggeration but also an indication of the personality of the character.

Chou (clown) is also called Xiao Hua Lian , or San Hua lian . A Chou may be a kind-hearted, humorous and funny fellow. However, he may also be very wicked or treacherous. Chou is also divided into Wen Chou (civilian type), and Wu Chou (a clown with martial arts). A female Chou is normally called Cai Dan or Chou Dan. A Chou always paints his nose powder-white and wears an upturned moustache so as to give a comic effect.

Opera Facial Painting

In Beijing Opera facial painting, which is applied to Jing roles only, shows the character’s age, profession and personality by using different colors. Each colour symbolizes a certain characteristic; red for loyalty and uprightness, black for a rough, stern or honest nature, yellow for rashness and fieriness, white for a cunning and deceitful character, gold and silver for gods and demons. In Beijing Opera, over one thousand painted facial patterns are used. Each pattern lies in his ability to make subtle and interesting changes within the fixed facial pattern.
2) Northwest Coast Native American Mask

The Native American "masks" had many and varied purposes, from entertainment to spiritual and/or medicinal purpose. Many tribes believe that when a person donned certain masks for specified ceremonies or rituals, the actual spirit of the animal depicted entered the individual wearing it and thus the individual was able to share this creature's power to some degree, be it strength, purpose, wisdom, and the like.

(http://www.snowowl.com/naartmasks.html)

The motivations for Northwest Coast Native mask wearing are as diverse as the masks themselves. Yet it can be said fairly that, for all parts of the coast, masks are the means by which the supernatural world is made visible. They may represent powerful spirit helpers whose potency infuses a shaman or dramatic manifestations of fabled creatures of family history.

Key Symbols of Northwest Coast Native Art

OWL MASK

The owl is often associated with death, perhaps because of its silent flight, eerie call, and nocturnal habits. The Kwakiutl believe that one who heard the owl call their name was soon to die. The Tsimshian believed the owl caused death to a person by flying over their head. The owl mask has large round eye sockets and a short sharp beak.

THUNDERBIRD

This is the most powerful supernatural spirit in Northwest Coast Native mythology and personifies 'chief'. Thunderbird lived high in the mountains and fished for killer whales when he was hungry. He is often depicted with his talons clenched into the back of a killer whale, lifting it from the ocean and soaring through the sky much like an eagle would prey upon salmon. The flapping of his wings caused the roar of thunder and lightning flashed from his eyes when he blinked. The Thunderbird mask has a sharply curved upper beak, similar to that of the hawk. The curled appendages on the top of his head are power symbols.

EARTHQUAKE MASK

In Nuu-chah-nulth mythology the Earthquake mask is named Tagit, an ancestor who lives on the mountainside. He caused tremors or major earthquakes when he felt nature had been disturbed or abused by humankind. He did this to remind us how small we are and that we must all have respect for nature.
The Major First Nations Groups of the Northwest Coast

The Native people of the Northwest Coast are usually considered six distinct peoples. The Tlingit, the Haida, the Tshimshian, the Kwakiutl, the West Coast (Nootka), and the Coast Salish. Each retains a rich cultural and artistic tradition that is conveyed through their masterful artistic creations. The specific geographical area that the people of the Northwest Coast inhabit is the long narrow strip of shoreline that stretches from Puget Sound up to the Alaska panhandle. This area is heavily forested by the dark green conifers of the temperate rainforest. The forests provide abundant wood for the carvers to craft. The work of mask making is, therefore, a natural expression through a natural medium. The closeness these people share with the land is a major part of their cultural identity and how they view themselves. The ceremonial masks of the Kwakiutl are made, primarily from red cedar, which has an easily workable, straight, soft grain. The resource-rich environment of the Northwest Coast, with its abundance of food and wood made it possible for the peoples, in the past, to devote time to their elaborate social and ceremonial life during the winter months.

Carving Masks

Red cedar is the most common material used in the carving of masks. Alder is also used because of its very uniform texture and hardness. Yellow cedar is sometimes preferred for the lighter colour and smoothness but it can be quite difficult to carve with. A section of wood, with no flaw in its center must be selected and removed of its sapwood and bark. Using a wedge and hammer the artist cuts the log to the desired size. A human face mask, for example, is usually about 10" (cm) to 12" (cm) high and about 5' (cm) deep. A rough outline of the features is dug out using a D-adze, chisel and curved knife. Then the back of the mask is hollowed out leaving a hollow shell larger than the finished mask. The carver then places the mask upright in his lap, carving the detailed features with a curved knife. The carver works the details out until the mask is a fraction of an inch thick.

Principles and Elements of Design

Color

An important element of the cedar plank masks is color. Black, blue, and red are imaginatively applied, creating balance within the entire piece. Color is used to define each of the parts of the head as well as shape. Traditionally, just as today, paints were made from materials. Northwest Coast Indians produced red from iron oxide, black from graphite, and white from lime and burnt clamshells. Blue paint from the northern part of the coast has been analyzed to be iron silica. All of these materials were mixed with oils, quite often salmon eggs, to make paint.
Space

There is the avoidance of empty space where a design form or line will add to the interest of complexity. This embellishment is, however, done with sufficient restraint to maintain a proper integral balance of line, form, and carving.

Shape

Geometric and freeform design. Some designs sometimes seem to represent internal body parts, sometimes external appendages, and sometimes magical powers. These special designs are both angular and loose, free forms. A prominent form which is used to depict the body parts is the "U-form". It frequently depicts feathers and ears.

Texture

Texture supplies variation in the design. The carved cross-hatching can be echoed by the use of painted cross-hatching.

Line

Curves are emphasized on nostrils, eyes, and lips, by deeply incised carvings, contrasting color, or both. Nearly all lines, whether incised or painted, have a tendency to run parallel and taper to a terminal point to each end.

Form

The masks were carved in 3-dimensional form.

http://coastalarts.servoweb.com/site/welcome/northwest.html
http://www.mala.bc.ca/www/discover/educate/posters/jodid.htm

3) Introduction of African Mask

Several areas of West and Central African cultures create masks. Masking has different meaning to the Native people such as female and male spirits. The masks are created with such objects as combs, mirrors and bells. Wood is the major material they use to make the masks. Masking is used in different traditional gatherings. Over the centuries masking has been a unique part of the African culture.

West Africa Masks

The Senufo of the Ivory Coast, West Africa, believe in life between the living and the dead. The spirits are called bush spirits and sorcerers. The mask is one of several art forms, which represent these spirits. The mask is used for "important events involving masked dancers and musicians." (The Art of African Masquerade p. 15). Masks have different meanings for each song and dance performed, which also varies according to
each event. The art of mask making reflects great significance in the Senufe culture of the Ivory Coast.

Central Africa Masks

The Yaka of South Western Zaire believes that in the distant past the Supreme Being gave the secret of mask making. "Nkanda" is the primary educational and initiating institution for young boys to undergo. It is also the major institution in the Yaka culture. Women are excluded from "Nkanda". There are ceremonial procedures that the boys must go through to reach manhood. As a kind of charm, masks protect boys from harm during the transition to manhood. Masks have several physical characteristics such as, simple to abstract. The masks are made of a variety of material, for example, carved figures, combs and other artistic objects. The mask has unique meaning and symbolism in the Yaka culture, which include humor, dignity and respect for nature.

Elements of the African Aesthetic

Resemblance to a human being:
African artists praise a carved figure by saying that it "looks like a human being." Artists seldom portray particular people, actual animals, or the actual form of invisible spirits. Rather, they aim to portray ideas about reality, spiritual or human, and express these ideas through human or animal images.

Luminosity:
The lustrously smooth surface of most African figural sculpture, often embellished with decorative scarification, indicates beautifully shining, healthy skin. Figures with rough surfaces and deformities are intended to appear ugly and morally flawed.

Self-composure:
The person who is composed behaves in a measured and rational way; he or she is controlled, proud, dignified, and cool.

Youthfulness:
A youthful appearance connotes vigor, productiveness, fertility, and ability to labor. Illness and deformity are rarely depicted because they are signs of evil.

Clarity of form and detail, complexity of composition, balance and symmetry, smoothness of finish:
African artists place a high value on fine workmanship and mastery of the medium.


http://www.ucalgary.ca/~dmjacobs/edts325/masks/africa.html
Art making

Associate artwork with various cultures

Materials:

- Heavy poster paper about 22" x 28" per student (can be smaller depending on what's available.)
- Pencils
- Scissors (and help for the little ones)
- A paper stapler
- Crayons
- Paint
- Paintbrushes & containers for water
- Glue
- String or elastic

Procedures:

1. Draw an oval shape on the large piece of paper. The larger the better ... masks can cover more then just the face. Cut the oval shape out of the paper.
2. At both the top and bottom of the oval, make a 1" cut. (You will later take these cuts, fold the paper across itself and staple so the mask has some dimension).
3. Draw and cut out where the eye holes and mouth and nose holes (if any) are going to be.
4. Decorate the mask by using bright crayon colors or bright paint colors.
5. Even more details can be added with magic markers and crayons.
6. Now, where you made your cuts, fold the paper and staple in place. This will give your mask more dimensions.
7. Glue found object decorations on the mask. Anything from feathers and string to beads and tissue paper.
8. Staple string onto the mask so it can be tied around the head.

Resources:
Northwest Coast Native American Mask
http://www.andrew.cmu.edu

African Mask
http://www.rebirth.co.za/African_mask_history_and_meaning.htm

Chinese opera mask
http://www.paulnoll.com/China/Opera/index.html
Appendix 8

Consent Form
Consent Form

Title of Study
When Montreal Chinese descendants study the work of two Chinese immigrant artists, through specially prepared PowerPoint presentations, can art function as a bridge to link the individuals to their own cultural heritage and the host culture, to help them develop their own identities, to communicate with others, and to express both universal and individual meanings?

Purpose:
The purpose of the study is to examine whether these two artists' experiences and their art creations can provide important learning materials for Chinese immigrant students.

Study Procedures:
The study will take two or three classes (the conversation class).
In the beginning of the conversation class (5:10pm - 6pm), an overview of Chinese art history will be given, followed by a PowerPoint presentation about the Chinese artist - Gu Xiong (20 min). Then students will be divided into several groups and discuss the artist and his art (10min). One representative from each group will present the results of their discussion in the class (5min for each). In the second conversation class, a PowerPoint presentation with many illustrations about the other artist - Xu Bing will be given in the class (20 min). Same procedures on discussion will be followed as in the former class.
Your signature below indicates that you have received a copy of this consent form for your own records. Your signature indicates that you consent to participate in this study.

您的簽字表明您已收到同意書並同意您的孩子參與本研究。

Parents please keep a copy of the parental consent form and return the signed form.
請家長保留前三頁表，並退還給老師最後一頁簽過字的表，謝謝！

I consent / I do not consent (circle one) to my child's participation in this study.
我同意/不同意（圈一個）我的孩子參與這項研究。

Subject Signature 簽名 Date日期
(or Parent or Guardian Signature)（父母或監護人）

Printed Name of the Subject or Parent or Guardian signing above.
請寫上面所簽字人的姓名,父母或監護人。
Appendix 9

Student Questionnaire
Question: Why did you refuse to participate in my research? What is your suggestion?

(Among total ten students in the class, seven students refused to participate in the research and three students agreed to participate.)

Student A: I did not accept to participate in the course for I am not interested in art.

Student B: I am not interested in these two artists.

Student C: I do not like art. You’d better teach about these two artists in an art class.

Student D: I am not interested in art. These two artists are too boring.

Student E: I refused to participate to the project because my Mom refused to allow me to participate. She found that it inappropriate for such a project to take place within the Chinese school. I apologize for not being able to participate in your research. Maybe this project will be more appropriate for an art class in a public school.

Student F: Personally, I have no comment on this research but since I am not very good at art, I wish to have a better grade on this class. The project seems kind of interesting though. My advice is that maybe you will be able to do this in an art class at a public school.

Student G: I did not agree because I thought it might be too difficult for me to talk about these two artists in Chinese.

Student H: I was willing to take this art program. I find art is interesting. But because the majority of the class declined, we were unable to make this program successful. To make this program possible, I think teaching this in an art program would be better. Teaching this in a class where everyone is interested in.

Student I: I agree because I think it is a good opportunity to learn about art, especially through Chinese. Secondly, I think Chinese should include some art beside what we learn usually.

Student J: I agree to learn Chinese culture because I think it is a very interesting course. I can learn how to draw, and I love drawing. Chinese culture is my own culture. I want to learn about my own culture. Chinese culture contains a lot of history. I love history.
Gu Xiong

The Yellow Pear Tree

Chairman Mao said, "If you want to know the taste of the pear, you have to bite into it." We tasted the pear of the Cultural Revolution through our sufferings in China. When we moved to Canada, we tasted another pear—culture shock. But we planted the seeds of the pear deeply into this new land, so that it may blossom and bear the fruit of our new life.
— Gu Xiong

Gu Xiong's family

Gu Xiong — Basement

During our first three years in Vancouver, we lived in a basement that was deep underground. It had two small windows that faced the concrete wall outside, which made us feel closed in....

At that time, we were lost in the darkness of that basement. However, we knew that one day we would be able to grow out of it and catch the light....

Living in the basement, I realized that when someone moves and becomes part of another culture, he or she must establish new roots in order to begin growing again. For me, the basement came to symbolize this transition, these new roots.

Gu Xiong — Garbage Bag

When I was a busboy at the university cafeteria, I collected tons of garbage in bags. Through my job, I was getting to know this new culture and its people. I was also learning about myself. In China, I was a teacher at a university, but at this university in Canada, I was a busboy. I felt I had lost something, but I had to accept this reality and turn it something to help me stand up again. I picked up garbage everyday, and I learned to accept myself in a different way. I slowly became closer to my inner self by working at this modest job.

Gu Xiong — Kerosene Lantern

We always use a kerosene lantern when we go camping or enjoy our leisure time at night. The light of the lantern brings back many memories about China. The kerosene lantern accompanied me through four years in the countryside. I used more than twenty sketchbooks under the light of that lantern....

I like the warm light of the lantern. I reached for it in China, and I am able to reach for it here in Canada.

Gu Xiong — Bicycles

In 1989 I saw people use their bicycles to make a barricade to hold back the tanks. Each bicycle represented one person—all were crushed. Twelve years later the streets were still surging with bicycles. For me, those rolling waves of bicycle traffic represent the ebb and flow of economic and cultural changes in China.

Gu Xiong — Forbidden City Starbucks

It was a shock: Starbucks moving into the Forbidden City. The global economy soaks into every corner of the world. A single culture can not stand alone in the world any longer. It reacts and changes, creating a new hybrid identity.
Gu Xiong — River

You and I, focuses on the "river culture" of Jiangnan, China, the region located on the south side of the Yangtze River before it reaches the sea. ... The meeting of the Yangzi River and the Fraser River bridged by the Pacific Ocean, and the intermesh of two different cultural geologies through the artist's migration. The rich symbolism embodied in socks and salmon discerns a journey which is both existential and spiritual. It accentuates a dialectical model of traveling between global and local geocultural currents and, more, carving out an interstitial space.

Gu Xiong — Ice Coffin Store, Mao & Audrey

You are born in a small stream.
You grow up in the river.
And you gather strength in the ocean.
When you return.
You become red.
And give birth to your children.
Finally you lay on the bottom of the stream.
Waiting until next spring comes.
You watch as those red eggs
Turn into baby salmon.
A smile appears on your face.
The tide that takes your newborn salmon
To the river and then the ocean.
I see you in the small stream.
I see you in the river.
I see you in the ocean.
I see you everywhere.
I become you.

Gu Xiong poem (1998) — You and I

You are born in a small stream.
You grow up in the river.
And you gather strength in the ocean.
When you return.
You become red.
And give birth to your children.
Finally you lay on the bottom of the stream.
Waiting until next spring comes.
You watch as those red eggs
Turn into baby salmon.
A smile appears on your face.
The tide that takes your newborn salmon
To the river and then the ocean.
I see you in the small stream.
I see you in the river.
I see you in the ocean.
I see you everywhere.
I become you.
Lesson Plan (Gu Xiong) -- Chinese Conversation Class (5:10pm – 6:00pm)

Brief introduction of the artist – Gu Xiong (2-3 min).

Gu Xiong was born in Chongqing, China in 1953. After being relocated to the countryside during the Cultural Revolution, Gu Xiong enrolled in the Sichuan Fine Arts Institute in Chongqing, Sichuan, where he received a BFA in 1982 and an MFA in 1985. He was a participant in the Art Studio Program of the Banff Centre for the Arts in Alberta, Canada, in 1986-87, and also in 1989. Gu Xiong immigrated to Canada in 1989. He lives in Vancouver B.C. where he is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Fine Arts at UBC. Gu Xiong's work has been included in numerous exhibitions at National Art Gallery, Ottawa, the Vancouver Art Gallery; the Art Gallery of Greater Victoria; the Burnaby Art Gallery, B.C. and so on. His work deals with his personal experience living between cultures, and the issues of cultural conflict and personal identity.

Audrey Mehler's documentary, *The Yellow Pear*, is a portrait of artist Gu Xiong who left China in the wake of the Tiananmen Square massacre in 1989, and came to Canada to make a new home. Let's take a look of the video clips.

Watching the video clips -- *The Yellow Pear: the story of Gu Xiong* (5 min).

Answering students' questions and explaining some historical events which the artist experienced and impacted the artist's art creation, for example: Chinese Cultural Revolution, 1989 Chinese Advent Garde Art Show, Tiananmen Square massacre. (5 - 10 min)

Sharing the specially prepared PowerPoint presentation about Gu with Students. And also listening to the telephone interview with the artist (20 min).

Students will think about the following questions and discuss them in their groups (10 min). There are three or four students in each group. Total is three groups in the class.

- What have you learned from this artist regarding his experience as an immigrant and his art related to the immigration?

- Which art work impresses you most? Why? What message does the artist intend to convey through this art? Ask students to think about how the artists use their art to express his perspective and understanding of Chinese and Canadian cultures?

- In Audrey Mehler's documentary, *The Yellow Pear: the Story of Gu Xiong*, Gu states: "...the Chinese are less confident. They don't know where their cultures come from. ... No matter you are Chinese or Canadians, she (his daughter) doesn't want to be the copy or the reproduction. She wants to be an individual." What do you understand about this statement?
• Do you think this artist is good study material for you to learn art and culture? If yes, explain some reasons.

The representative of each group will take notes and present what the group discusses regarding those questions in the class (5min for each group).

Homework: write a reflective journal about the presentation -- Gu Xiong (either in English or Chinese). The reflective journal might cover all or some of these questions.

• Are you moved by Gu’s art and his statements in any way? Give examples.

• Do you feel his art is related to or close to your personal experience or understanding as a Chinese Canadian? If so, tell a story about your experience or understanding as a Chinese Canadian.

• Does Gu’s art inform you about either Chinese and Canadian cultures or strengthen your understanding on both cultures and globalization?

• Through this presentation, do you want to learn more about Gu? Do you think the presentation can be further developed into an important learning material for Chinese immigrant students or even for students who have different cultural backgrounds?

Provide additional information if the students are interested in:


http://www.dianefarrisgallery.com/artist/xiong/


http://www.whitepinepictures.com/seeds/iv/41/teacher1.html

Cultural Revolution
http://library.thinkquest.org/26469/cultural-revolution/history.html

1989 Chinese Advent Garde Art Show
http://www.time.com/time/asia/magazine/99/0927/art.html

http://www.cnn.com/SPECIALS/1999/china.50/inside.china/art.overview/

1989 Tiananmen Square massacre
The lesson will be continued next Saturday if it is not completed in this class. If so, a review about the artist and his art will be given in the beginning of the next class before students' discussion and presentations start.
Introduction

Gu Xiong was born in Chongqing, China in 1953. After being relocated to the countryside during the Cultural Revolution, Gu Xiong enrolled in the Sichuan Fine Arts Institute in Chongqing, Sichuan, where he received a BFA in 1982 and an MFA in 1985. He was a participant in the Art Studio Program of the Banff Centre for the Arts in Alberta, Canada, in 1986-87, and also in 1989. Gu Xiong immigrated to Canada in 1989. He lives in Vancouver B.C. where he is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Fine Arts at UBC. Gu Xiong's work has been included in numerous exhibitions at National Art Gallery, Ottawa, the Vancouver Art Gallery; the Art Gallery of Greater Victoria; the Burnaby Art Gallery, B.C. and so on. His work deals with his personal experience living between cultures, and the issues of cultural conflict and personal identity.

Additional Information:


http://www.dianefarrisgallery.com/artist/xiong/


http://www.whitepinepictures.com/seeds/iv/41/teacher1.html

Cultural Revolution
http://library.thinkquest.org/26469/cultural-revolution/history.html

1989 Chinese Advent Garde Art Show
http://www.time.com/time/asia/magazine/99/0927/art.html

http://www.cnn.com/SPECIALS/1999/china.50/inside.china/art.overview/

1989 Tiananmen Square Massacre
Gu Xiong – You and I (Installation and poem)

Gu Xiong’s multi-media installation *You and I* continues to address the conflicts he has experienced between the culture he was born into in China and the culture he now lives in, in Canada. His work is both personal and political in its exploration of the fragmentation which occurs between the self and the family as a result of displacement. In this particular work he uses the colour red, plaster cast salmons and socks to examine the complexity of displaced identities and migration. These elements hold historical, cultural and personal significance for the artist and his family as immigrants in a new culture. Gu Xiong’s new work explores the process of displacement through a metaphorical and philosophical installation with symbolic references to waters and rivers. This installation is part of a larger city-wide exhibition entitled *Jiang Nan: Modern and Contemporary Art from South of the Yangtze River*.

Poem -- You and I

You are born in a small stream
You grow up in the river
And you gather strength in the ocean

When you return
You become red
And give birth to your children

Finally you lay on the bottom of the stream
Waiting until next spring comes
You watch as those red eggs
Turn into baby salmon

A smile appears on your face
The tide that takes your newborn salmon
To the river and then the ocean

I see you in the small stream
I see you in the river
I see you in the ocean

I see you everywhere
I follow you
I become you

Gu Xiong
1998
"The installation, You and I, focuses on the "river culture" of Jiangnan, China, the region located on the south side of the Yangzi River before it reaches the sea. Noted for its significance in both historical and contemporary times, the region offers plenty of cultural splendors for celebration. Yet Gu does not intend to extol the cultural glory, nor to expose the despotism, decadence, and excess in the history. No longer culturally coherent and pure, Gu speaks in You and I of cultural transgression carried out by the immigrant artist: the meeting of the Yangzi River and the Fraser River bridged by the Pacific Ocean, and the intermesh of two different cultural geologies through the artist's migration. The rich symbolism embodied in socks and salmon discerns a journey which is both existential and spiritual. It accentuates a dialectical model of traveling between global and local geocultural currents and, more, carving out an interstitial space."

----Xiaoping Li, 1998

Appendix 12

PowerPoint Presentation – Xu Bing
Xu Bing – *A Book from the Sky*

A Book from the Sky installed at the National Gallery of Canada in 1998.


This installation parodies ancient Chinese tests in the context of the modern world and questions entrenched practices such as written communication and reading or human cultures.

> Gallery visitors in Beijing attempt to read the nonsense characters on the printed scrolls of *A Book from the Sky*.

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Xu Bing – *A Book from the Sky*

- A raked set of the original printing blocks for *A Book from the Sky*.
- *A Book from the Sky* at a Renaissance Castle.

The installation is comprised of printed volumes and scrolls containing four thousand characters individually "invented", designed and cut into wood-blocks by the artist, but these characters in fact unintelligible.

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- A mixed media installation: desk/chair sets, copy and tracing books, brushes, ink, video.

The goal of this installation is to simulate a school-like classroom in a gallery or museum space. The copybook instructs on the basic principles of the artist's New English Calligraphy.

> Student examples of Square Word Calligraphy are framed and exhibited in the Square Word Calligraphy Classroom.

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Xu Bing – *Art for the People*

1999–2001, Dye on polyester (9' x 36')

- The phrase is a popularization of Mao Zedong's ideological position regarding art and society.
- Victoria and Albert Museum, London

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Ku Bing – *An Introduction to New English Calligraphy*

The goal of this installation is to simulate a school-like classroom in a gallery or museum space. The copybook instructs on the basic principles of the artist's New English Calligraphy.

New English Calligraphy intends to fuse written English with written Chinese. English letters are arranged in square word format to appear like Chinese characters, yet remain legible to the English speaker.

> Student examples of Square Word Calligraphy are framed and exhibited in the Square Word Calligraphy Classroom.
Xu Bing - Panda Zoo

Xu Bing created an "authentic" space for audiences to view a well-known symbol of Chinese culture - the panda bear. However, Xu Bing's pandas were in fact New Hampshire pigs, a breed with natural markings like the panda bear. The artist doctored their appearance with white masks and placed them inside a "Chinese" environment with a landscape painting on the wall and a bamboo forest.

Xu Bing -- Reading Landscape (April 29 - August 5, 2001)

Xu Bing -- The Living Word

Xu created this landscape indoors, using Chinese characters to "spell out" the natural scenery. Xu took advantage of the visual-verbal relationship. The characters for water, trees, and birds, for instance are easily legible. Xu fabricated about a thousand of these characters in varying sizes and materials and then used them to lay out the outdoor landscape indoors, covering floor, walls and ceiling.

Xu Bing disguised the pigs by putting them in white masks that enhanced their panda-like appearance.

A drawing showing the transformation of the characters.

A design for the final "bird".

As the characters rise up into the air, they transform into a flock of birds.
Appendix 13

Lesson Plan – Xu Bing
Lesson Plan (Xu Bing) – Chinese Conversation Class (5:10pm – 6:00pm)

Brief introduction of the artist – Xu Bing (2-3min)

Xu Bing was born in Chongqing, China in 1955. In 1975 he was relocated to the countryside for three years during the Cultural Revolution. Following that, he enrolled in the Central Academy of Fine Arts in Beijing where he studied printmaking. He received a MFA from the Central Academy in 1987. In 1990, Xu Bing immigrated to the United States: he lives in Brooklyn, New York. His art has been widely exhibited around the world such as, at the 45th Venice Biennial in Italy; the Museum of Modern Art in New York; Museum Ludwig in Köln, Germany; the Reyna Sofia Museum, Madrid and so on. In 1999 he received the Macarthur Award for Genius by John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation and also received the Asian Cultural Award in Fokouda, Japan, in 2003.

Watching the DVD clips – Xu Bing’s Art (5 min)

Sharing the prepared PowerPoint presentation about Xu Bing with students. And also listening to my personal interview with Xu Bing. (20 min)

Students will think about the following questions and discuss the questions in their groups (10 min).

- In Xu Bing’s installation and performance Giant Panda, I will ask the students:
  1) What is the function of panda mask in Xu’s Grant Panda?
  2) What message does the artist intend to convey through this art?

- In Xu Bing’s art – New English Calligraphy and his famous work – The Book from Sky, what is his intention to create these written words which combined English and Chinese forms together?

- Does Xu’s work increase your interests to learn Chinese and Chinese culture in someway? Explain why.

- What is your understanding on the connection or difference between Chinese and English when you learn these two languages?

The representative of each group will take notes and present what the group discusses regarding those questions in the class (5min for each group).

Homework: write a reflective journal about the presentation – Xu Bing (either in English or Chinese). The reflective journal might cover all or some of these questions.
- Do you have similar experiences with Xu Bing on the aspect of learning languages? Describe some feelings or tell a story when you learn Chinese, English, French or other languages?
- Which work are you interested in most? Why? What have you learned from this visual presentation?
- Do you understand Xu’s statement: “cultures are like you are within me and I am within you.”?
- Through this presentation, do you want to learn more about Xu? Do you think if the presentation can be further developed into a learning material for Chinese immigrant students or even for students who have different cultural backgrounds?

The lesson will be continued next Saturday if it is not completed in this class. If so, a review about the artist and his art will be given in the beginning of the next class before students’ discussion and presentations start.
Handouts -- Xu Bing

Introduction
Xu Bing was born in Chongqing, China in 1955. In 1975 he was relocated to the countryside for three years during the Cultural Revolution. Following that, he enrolled in the Central Academy of Fine Arts in Beijing where he studied printmaking. He received an MFA from the Central Academy in 1987. In 1990, Xu Bing immigrated to the United States: he lives in Brooklyn, New York. His art has been widely exhibited around the world such as, at the 45th Venice Biennial in Italy: the Museum of Modern Art in New York: Museum Ludwig in Koln, Germany: the Reyna Sofia Museum, Madrid and so on. In 1999 he received the Macarthur Award for Genius by John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation and also received the Asian Cultural Award in Fokouda, Japan, in 2003.

Additional Information:
Xu Bing's web site: http://www.xubing.com/
Words Without Meaning, Meaning Without Words: The Art of Xu Bing by Britta Erickson
Gu Xiong and Xu Bing: Here is what I mean (Exhibition catalogue)

Xu Bing's New English Calligraphy "Forever" and "Art for the People"
Appendix 14

Students’ work
Figure A 14-1: A sample of a student’s work in the mask making class, Brossard Chinese School.
Figure A 14-2: Samples of students’ work in the lunch activity – Multicultural Art Creation: Mask, Cedar Park Elementary School.
Figure A 14-3: Samples of students’ work in the lunch activity – Multicultural Art Creation: Mask, Cedar Park Elementary School.
Figure A 14-4: Samples of students’ work in the lunch activity – Multicultural Art Creation: Mask, Cedar Park Elementary School.
Figure A 14-5: Samples of students’ work in the lunch activity – Multicultural Art Creation: Mask, Cedar Park Elementary School.
Figure A 14-6: A sample of a student’s work from the lunch activity – Multicultural Art Creation: Dragon, Sunnydale Elementary School.
Figure A 14-7: Samples of students' work from the lunch activity – Multicultural Art Creation: Dragon, Cedar Park Elementary School.
Figure A 14-8: Samples of students’ work from the lunch activity – Multicultural Art Creation: Dragon, Cedar Park Elementary School.
Appendix 15

My work
When I first came to Montreal, I was deeply impressed by the colorful maple leaves in autumn. For me these brilliant maple leaves symbolize the people from different lands and cultures in Canada. They are integrated together and constitute the multicultural Canada.

When I was in China, my first impression of Canada was the pure red maple leaf in the Canadian national flag. At that time I used to think that Canada was full of red maple trees, I was aspiring to see them. Now I find these maple trees are not only pure red but multicolored. They have different hues of red, orange, yellow, green.... Just like an individual who has a unique character, each leaf has different color, pattern and shape. It is not easy to find two identical leaves. When the wind and rain comes, each leaf swings in the air like a snow flake and finally lies down on the earth.

Autumn Montreal is so short compared to the long and harsh winter. Too soon, the colorful leaves would disappear as the beauty can not last any longer. Before the winter would come, I wanted to preserve these beautiful leaves in my books and represent them in my painting. So the coming winter would not be as harsh since those brilliant leaves kept alive and warm in my heart.

"Here in Canada, people from other lands often experience culture shock. They develop new ideas and make different choices based on their own experiences living here. This determines the true multicultural character of Canada" (Gu, 1997, p. 62).
The cloud flows in the sky,
Drifts above the ocean,
Climbs over the mountain.
Resting above the river,
She sees herself mirrored in the water.
"Can this place be my home?"
She asks the river,
The river is silent...
Grass swinging and whistling:
"You belong to the sky.
The wind will chase you away."
So the cloud continues sailing with the wind,
No matter where her home will be,
She reflects the sunshine to wherever she is going.

Xu Bing said: "I feel that the state I experience of having left one place but not yet knowing the next destination was actually a pretty good situation to be in. That unclear, uncertain terrain has become a space where my art can grow and develop" (Harper, 2003, p.51).
I left my country, China and started a new life in Vancouver in 1997. After a few years' adjustment, I wished our family could have settled down in this beautiful city. However, we moved to Montreal in 2003 since my husband found a job there. As soon I moved to Montreal from Vancouver, I started to miss Vancouver. I miss my friends, the Chinese super market, the spring and even the rain, and especially the seagulls on the beach. I remember as soon as I landed in Vancouver, the first place where my husband took me was the beautiful beach besides the University of British Columbia. That was my first time I stood by the Pacific Ocean and took a close look at a seagull. I loved to watch them flying over the ocean and whistling in the wind. Each time I saw them on the beach, my heart was also flying with them. I imagined I was a seagull flying back and forth freely across the Pacific Ocean. I wished I was a seagull with red and blue feathers. I wished I was a seagull with magic power. I wish I could fly back to China to see my parents...

"The flow of difference, whether economic or cultural, has become undeniable and unstoppable. In this dynamic movement, each culture reacts and blends with others, creating a new hybrid identity" (Gu, 2001, p.14).