NATIVE ART AND SCHOOL CURRICULUM:
SASKATCHEWAN ABORIGINAL ARTISTS' PERSPECTIVES

by

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This study presents Aboriginal artists' perspectives on the study of Native art in the school curriculum. The case study is a naturalistic inquiry that employs ethnographic techniques to interview nine Saskatchewan artists, five females and four males.

Overall, the artists agree on having Native art content in school programs, especially for Native students. All the artists believe that Aboriginal peoples should be involved in the definition and presentation of their art in the school curriculum. The artists show that content, and materials, may or may not be traditional.

The artists prefer an observing and modelling approach to teaching bead and leather work, and to teaching drawing and painting. The male artists, primarily, support a research approach for studying the vast, diverse, and complex art of Indigenous peoples. As well as learning about the art, the artists stress learning from the art including history, ecology, and about art from a non-Western perspective.

The words, stories, and views of all the artists emphasize that art is a dynamic part of Aboriginal peoples' lives and cultures; one which they are willing to explain and share. Native art is a rich resource for school
curriculum. It is a resource that must be and can be shaped by Aboriginal peoples.
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I. INTRODUCTION

RATIONALE AND NEED FOR THE STUDY

The Saskatchewan Department of Education identifies the study of Indian, Metis, and Inuit cultures as a priority for all students in Saskatchewan schools. Current curriculum reform, and policy, include incorporating Native content in school programs, one of which is arts education (Saskatchewan Education, 1989, April).

The study of culture, as it relates to art, is consistent with the position of a number of art educators (eg. Chalmers, 1987; Grigsby, 1977; 1986; McFee, 1986). The art of Indigenous peoples has a long history of being studied by non-Natives, and presented in school curricula from the Western perspective.

Presentation of the Native perspective on the study of Native art is needed. Artists of Native ancestry are one group who can provide insight into Native art, and help define its presentation in school programs. A research inquiry with selected artists in Saskatchewan would be relevant to the purpose of defining the presentation of Native art.
PURPOSE

The purpose of this inquiry is to present Native perspectives, from within a specific region in Saskatchewan, on the teaching and learning of Native art in school programs. By directly involving Aboriginal peoples in that part of the school curriculum which represents their cultures, a more knowledgeable approach to the study of Native art in schools can be built. This research inquiry can inform the field of Canadian art education, and assist curriculum development in Saskatchewan.

DEFINITION OF TERMS

Art: a way of seeing, and knowing (Highwater, 1983; McFee, 1988; p. 263).

Culture: "... includes both the processes of knowing and acquiring knowledge and displaying such meaning through language, art, and social structure, of values, belief systems, and social roles. Culture is learned as prepatterned, but is used to address new situations. It is always in some degree emergent; it is transmitted and received by individuals in somewhat different ways" (McFee, 1988, p. 263).

Indian: people of indigenous descent, legally defined
in Canada as status and non-status.

Indigenous peoples: the original inhabitants of that land colonized by Europeans. Interchangeable with the terms "Aboriginal," and "Native peoples." Also, as identified by Native writers and as a sign of respect, words referring to Aboriginal peoples or things Aboriginal are capitalized.

Inuit: a culturally distinct group of Indigenous peoples.

Metis: a culturally distinct group of Indigenous peoples.

Native: Indian, Metis, and Inuit. When used within the context of Saskatchewan, refers particularly to Indian and Metis.

Native art: "reflects a certain system of thought which enables it to be identified as such" (Pakes, 1987a, p. 3); in other words, refers to art produced by those of Aboriginal ancestry.

Non-Native: those not of Native ancestry.

METHODOLOGY AND LIMITATIONS

To achieve the research purpose, the method is qualitative in nature. It relies on ethnographic techniques, primarily the interview. Artists of Aboriginal ancestry living in an area of central Saskatchewan were
interviewed. This geographical location was chosen because of the investigator's familiarity with the area and with the artistic activity of Native peoples living there. The research is a naturalistic inquiry that is presented as a case study, specific to the area in which the research fieldwork was conducted.

The researcher, a non-Native, worked with those whose cultures are not her own. Therefore, the outcome of the study is limited to her understanding as gleaned from the existing literature on the topic, and the particular research experience.
II. LITERATURE REVIEW

INTRODUCTION

This review of the literature draws on pertinent research, opinion, and curriculum development to ascertain Native views as they pertain to the study of Native art in schools. The investigation is framed by three study contexts: for Native students, for non-Native students, and for all students.

The study of culture, as it relates to art, is one of the major contemporary developments within the art education field (Farley & Neperud, 1988). In a recent review of thirty years of selective research and theory from various fields applicable to the cultural dimensions of teaching art, McFee points out that "Western perspectives and ways of knowing are inadequate for theorizing about non-Western art" (1988, p. 232). Comparatively, Alfred Young Man, a Native artist-educator in Alberta, states:

Bourgeois institutions (and ideology) .. are overly concerned with universalizing, ahistorical, conflict-free, object privileging assumptions (1988, p. 28).

Developing a Native perspective is no small order, a perspective which is as imperative as it is essential
to an understanding and appreciation of Native art 

In Saskatchewan, current curriculum reform includes a 
focus on the study of indigenous cultures of Canada. One of 
the six guiding principles for development of the arts 
education program, which consists of dance, drama, music, 
and visual art, reads: "The curriculum should include 
Indian, Metis and Inuit content and perspectives" 
(Saskatchewan Education, 1988a, November, p. 4; 1988b, 
November, p. 4). Similar efforts to include Native art 
content and views in art education curriculum (Rapp, 1982; 
Schubert, 1988) and in overall curriculum (Novelli, 1990) 
are occurring in other parts of North America.

FOR NATIVE STUDENTS

The Native view comes through most strongly in support 
for Native students studying Native art (eg. New, 1972; 
Stump, 1973a; Zastrow, 1977). Research provides some 
evidence to indicate that Native students' self esteem can 
increase. Berger (1983) designed and taught a four-month 
art program in a Vancouver Native Indian alternate school. 
The program centred on Kwakiutl culture, and was designed to 
develop cultural awareness and enhance self esteem in fifth 
to seventh grade Native students. Post test responses
showed no significant change in self esteem, but "students did show changes in attitudes, and increasingly exhibited positive behavior" (p. ii). Although Berger's study documented little change, statistical findings from a similar study based on East Indian culture showed a more significant improvement in Indo-Canadian elementary school students' attitudes towards their own group (Ijaz & Ijaz, 1981).

When linking school programming and Native cultures, Verna Kirkness, a strong Native voice within the Canadian education community says:

To ensure survival as Indigenous peoples, it is imperative that the approach be based on 'education into culture' and not 'culture into education' as is commonly practised today. It is also necessary for Indigenous peoples to seek direction from within rather than from the Western world as surely 'the answers are within us' (1986, p. 1).

Young Man, similarly comments: "The trend is once again toward developing an art that serves the needs of Indian societies and education" (1988, p. 28).

Native Americans' suggestions for the development of a Southwest American Indian art education secondary curriculum for Native students, revealed that curriculum should include "courses which deal with 'Indianness' [and] a typical core
of fine arts courses," such that students could compete "in the real world" (Schubert, 1988, pp. 201-202). Similarly, Sturgess, a non-Native instructor who taught a university curriculum and instruction in art course in northern British Columbia, ascertained that the particular need of the Bella Bella Indian women was "to learn techniques and the mastery of new materials" (1984, p. 20).

Perhaps descriptive of art education into culture is the approach taken by Lloyd New, of the Cherokee tribe and a key figure with the Institute of American Indian Art program in Santa Fe, New Mexico. Its primary goal is to give Native students "a basis for genuine pride and self-acceptance" (1972, p. 413). After orientation to the history and aesthetics of Indigenous peoples' accomplishments and contributions in the arts, students are encouraged to investigate and develop within their particular cultural framework through study and creative expression (New, 1972).

FOR NON-NATIVE STUDENTS

With such a strong emphasis on Native students studying their artistic heritage, it seems that Native support for non-Native students to study the art is almost incidental. It has been generally viewed as a way for students to develop tolerance and understanding of Aboriginal peoples
and cultures (Goddard, 1988). Currently though, there appears to be a shift in perception from non-Native students learning **about** Native art to learning **from** Native art, especially in terms of the environment (Verrall, 1988). Nature is an important influence in the art (McMaster, 1981; Stump, 1973b; Zastrow, 1979).

Stronger support for non-Native students studying Native art comes from a broader perspective and those art educators who promote the study of art within a cultural context as a way to understand society itself (e.g. Andrews, 1984; Chalmers, 1984; Duncum, 1987; Grigsby, 1977; 1986; McFee, 1986). Research conducted in Canada indicates that learning about the art of different cultures can contribute to elementary students' intercultural understanding (Andrews, 1983; Cipywynk, 1987; Ijaz & Ijaz, 1981).

Various theoretical approaches have been put forward, such as: culturally-based methodology (Andrews, 1980), ethnographic, (Chalmers, 1981), universal-relative (Hamblen, 1986), cultural literacy program (Boyer, 1987), and a neo-Marxist approach by Duncum (1987) which is based on the study of "minority and ethnic arts as examples of alternate and resistant experiences" to the dominant society (p. 12). However, the aforementioned approaches come from non-Native frames of reference and purposes. Such art education research and theory is often of a multicultural nature, with
cultural similarities as a predominant factor. Native cultures, though, do not belong within the multicultural paradigm; they are indigenous cultures to North America. The Native view stresses cultural differences. Lloyd New, succinctly says: "Cultural differences are precious" (1972, p. 413). These differences are, not only between Native and non-Native cultures, but also among Native cultures. As with the art of non-Native peoples, the art of Native peoples is not all the same.

When interviewed for their suggestions towards developing Native art curriculum, the primary concern of Native Americans was the elimination of stereotyped images. "They felt demeaned when they go into a classroom and see students wearing construction paper feathers in their hair" (Rapp, 1982, p. 288). Native Americans suggest avoiding a pan-Indian approach, and stressing the uniqueness and distinctiveness of individual tribes (Rapp, 1982; Schubert, 1988, p. 202). As well as recognizing the rich and complex artistic diversity of Native cultures, Native artists and writers emphasize recognizing the artistic achievements of Indigenous peoples pre-European contact (New, 1972; Stump, 1974; Young Man, 1988).
FOR ALL STUDENTS

The information on Native art should be accurate (Aquila, 1988; Rapp, 1982, p. 288-289). Young Man notes that "good critical, scholarly literature ... although not great in quantity, continues to grow in quality" (1988, p. 28). It is informed by research, and the various views of those within the Native art world and their cultural knowledge (eg. Highwater, 1980; McMaster, 1981; Stump, 1973b; 1974; Wade, 1986). Of particular interest to art education curriculum development in Saskatchewan is the recent literature on the art of the Canadian prairies (Anson Warner 1985, 1990; Cuthand 1988; McMaster 1988; Pakes 1987a, 1987b).

As well as ensuring the accuracy of information in Native art curriculum, Aquila points out that resource materials used for instruction should be of high quality. Furthermore, for all students who study Native cultures he suggests a holistic sensory approach (1988). A Saulteaux elder made the following comment. "In our learning, we begin the traditional way. We begin with the whole, and we examine every part in relation to that whole" (C. Papaquash, personal communication, June 13, 1990). Aquila advocates the use of recent advances in audio and visual materials so that "the voices, music, art, and culture of American
Indians can be experienced in the classroom by all students" (1988, p. 408).

In one Minnesota school, technology is central to a program based on "Ojibwe Indian art, customs, and values." The program appears to respect the Native view as the curriculum is designed to help build Native students' self esteem, and to help non-Native students "gain a better understanding of a culture that is vastly different from their own." At the same time, the program's purpose is to "make learning more relevant for students and promote cultural understanding in their community." The focal point of the curriculum is "an interactive videodisc scripted and videotaped" by students. (Novelli, 1990, p. 31)

Kindergarten to grade twelve students will interview Ojibwe elders and artists in the community about their culture, and high school students will videotape Ojibwe artists demonstrating skills. The visual images, combined with the interviews, and student written or artistic interpretations of the interviews, will be scripted and pressed into a laser disc. After pilot testing the videodisc, and if funding is available, further evaluation and expansion of the project will occur (pp. 32 - 34). The project uses "technology to teach students about the Ojibwe culture and to relate that culture to all areas of the curriculum" (p. 32).
If the promise of the project holds true, technology may prove to be an important consideration in developing Native art curriculum for all students. Although, Wilson, one of the key teachers involved in the project and herself an Ojibwe Indian, said that initially the main concern voiced "was whether videodisc could accurately convey our culture. Our history has been handed down through oral tradition" (p. 32). The concern led to the interactive nature of the videodisc. On the use of oral history in developing art curriculum, Rapp's study revealed that Native Americans want the credibility of oral history to be recognized by the academic community (1982, p. 288).

The Minnesota project reveals that the study of Native art for all students should be characterized by interaction with and integration of community, culture, and curriculum. The local art, in this case, of the Ojibwe culture determines the study focus. Presently, Ojibwe artists are visiting the Minnesota school in preparation for working with teachers and students (p. 32). The late Sarain Stump, an influential Native American artist-educator in Saskatchewan, recognized early the value of Indian artists going into schools to work with Indian students (1973a). Research indicates that the success of culturally based art programs to promote students' cultural understanding may be attributed, in part, to the teacher being indigenous to the
culture under study (Ijaz & Ijaz, p. 19).

This factor becomes pertinent for the study of Native art because research implicitly reveals that non-Natives can be uncertain, and uninformed in their approach to teaching the art of Indigenous peoples, whether it is to Native students or non-Native students. Berger (1983) determined that the art is so intertwined with culture "that it would be impossible for anyone, particularly a non-Indian to fulfill the task of teaching Indian culture" (p. 32). In a study on the implementation of her culturally based art education methodology, Andrews (1983) reports that the instructor of the grade four theme, Northwest Coast Indian culture, "indicated that prior to the study she had assumed that 'a totem was a totem. It didn't really mean anything'" (p. 486).

Further support that it may be preferable for Native instructors to teach Native art to students, again, comes from McFee's review. She writes that the complexity of "comprehending the art of cultures other than one's own, and teaching students who do not share one's cultural roots, has become more apparent" (1988, p. 225).

There is a general call for non-Native teachers to be culturally sensitive. For example, teachers could demonstrate a more respectful approach to art production stemming from the study of the spiritual foundations of
Native art (Pakes, 1987a, p. 5). Also, teachers could be aware that Native students who are inclined to not participate in certain activities are perhaps being influenced by the age and gender differentiation in the artistic activity of their cultures (Pakes, p. 11). Furthermore, the way in which a particular art is learned in the non-school setting may indicate a similar approach to its study in the classroom (Stuhr, 1987 p. viii; Zastrow, 1978).

CONCLUSION

It becomes apparent that Native art is a vast, diverse, and complex area of study. Native artists, writers, and those who participate in research provide general guidelines, and direction for its study in schools. Most views expressed come from the United States. Because the art is a vast, diverse, and complex area of study, and because Native art and perspectives are being included in Saskatchewan art education curriculum, it is beneficial to examine Native viewpoints from within the Canadian context. The inclusion of Native content and perspectives represents a significant change from previous art education curriculum in Saskatchewan where references to Aboriginal peoples and their art were rare, and even then, appear in
mainstream terms (Saskatchewan Education, 1967; 1977; 1978, May). One example from a little over ten years ago noted a single reference to Native peoples in the history of Canadian art section, under the major period of "Artists of English Speaking Canada" with "Paul Kane [who] travelled to Western Canada painting scenery and Indians" (Saskatchewan Education, 1978, May, p. 243).

Ten years later, Aboriginal artists, Cuthand (1988) and McMaster (1988) clarify the omission and write of the rich artistic expression and activity of Native peoples in Saskatchewan historically and presently. Metis resistance leader, "Louis Riel once said: 'My people will sleep for 100 years. When they awake, it will be the artists who give back their spirit" (as cited by Johnson, 1990, p. 54). A research inquiry with artists of Aboriginal ancestry in Saskatchewan can help further define the study of Native art in Canadian schools.
III. METHODOLOGY

INTRODUCTION

The methodology used in this study is based on the tradition of cognitive anthropology which focuses on oral narrative as the primary way to understand cultural knowledge. Such research allows for a holistic understanding and presentation of knowledge that connects directly with issues of concern in education and in our society (Agar, 1982).

An oral approach is highly appropriate because Native cultures have a strong tradition of oratory. Current research demonstrates the effectiveness of the oral approach, primarily the interview, to present perspectives of Indigenous peoples (Haig-Brown, 1988) and to study their art (Schubert, 1988; Stuhr, 1987; Wasson, 1983). Interviews provided the major portion of data for this research inquiry. The following sections elaborate on the procedures used in: artist selection and interviews, and data collection and analysis.

ARTIST SELECTION AND INTERVIEWS

Nine practising artists of Aboriginal ancestry, born in
Saskatchewan and currently residing in an area of central Saskatchewan were interviewed (see Appendix A). Within present-day Saskatchewan, are members of the Metis Nation, and five Indian Nations: Assiniboine, Cree, Dakota, Dene, and Saulteaux. Members of the Metis and Cree Nations primarily reside in the area where the research was conducted. The specific geographical location of the study, the city of Prince Albert and district, is unique in that a number of well known Aboriginal artists and writers, not only provincially, but also nationally and internationally, come from the area (see Achimona, 1985).

Selection was based on two criteria: identification as an artist, and recognition as an artist. Identification was determined by self definition and by identification from other Native people because culture is "shared by individuals" (Dougherty, 1985, p. 3). Recognition was evidenced by at least one of the following: exhibition of art work, publication of art work in educational material or literature, and experience as a resource person. A conscious effort was made to balance aspects of age, gender, and place of residence which includes urban, rural, and reserve. An effort was also made to select informants whose work reflects a variety of art forms. (Basic information on the artists and the interview order is outlined in Appendix B.)
Artists already known by the researcher or suggested by others as strong participants were personally contacted. The purpose and nature of the interviews, which consisted of two stages, were discussed, and assurances of confidentiality were given. Twelve artists were contacted; three chose not to participate. (Their non-participation is discussed in the final chapter on summary and conclusions.) Following consent, sites and times for the first set of interviews were arranged. The interviews took place in either the artist's home or in the researcher's work space at the Saskatchewan Urban Native Teacher Education Program in Prince Albert.

An interview guide was prepared for the first set of interviews. It was pilot tested and refined after discussions with several Indian and Metis people who are knowledgeable about art. The guide was semi-structured around three areas of inquiry. Firstly, the artists' biographical and cultural backgrounds were explored, and secondly, their views on having Native art content in school programs were sought. Thirdly, their suggestions on the desirable content and approach for the teaching and learning of Native art in schools were sought. All the areas of inquiry were interrelated. (See Appendix C for a copy of the interview guide.) The exact manner of questioning varied from individual to individual. The artists were
aware that they could end the interview whenever they chose or could refuse to answer any questions.

A second set of interviews was arranged for two reasons: validation, and an attempt at research as praxis (Lather, 1986). The second interview session involved discussion with each artist for purposes of clarification, and elaboration of his or her responses from the first interview. Verification of the researcher's understanding of their responses was sought.

DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS

Primary data consists of interview tapes, notes, and transcripts. The first interview was tape recorded with the permission of all artists, and transcripts were made. Interview notes were taken either during the interview or as soon as possible after the interview. Most often, this occurred following the interviews. The second interview was not tape recorded. Throughout the conduct of the research, field notes containing contextual data, personal reactions, and reflections as the interviewing progressed were kept in order to assist in the final data analysis.

The initial analysis consisted of reviewing, several times, the data collected from the first interview session, and preparing a narrative account of the interview. The
narrative was forwarded to the artist prior to the second interview session. During the second interview, informant verification of the narrative (the written presentation of his or her responses) was sought. Revisions to the narratives were noted, and the narratives were revised accordingly. The narrative accounts developed from the interviews are included within the thesis text. To ensure confidentiality, pseudonyms are used and any pertinent biographical or cultural information is referred to in general terms.

Once all nine narratives were validated, a deeper analysis was possible and began by thoroughly reviewing all the data and studying the narratives. In constructing the narratives, patterns soon emerged and the researcher was able to compare and contrast the artists' responses to the three areas of inquiry. In the final analysis, the patterns or themes were interpreted by gender, and by the artists' biographical and cultural backgrounds. From this analysis, implications for the study of Native art in schools were developed.
INTRODUCTION

The following narratives are presented as data. They are written accounts of the interviews with the artists, and all narratives have been verified by the artists. The narratives are grouped by gender, with female artists placed first, and ordered by age starting with the youngest artist. Pseudonyms are used, and any pertinent personal information is referred to in general terms.

BONNIE

Bonnie is Metis and was raised on an off-the-reserve Metis community in northern Saskatchewan. Bonnie does primarily bead and leather work. She also makes quilts and paints. Her mother taught her beading and quilting, but her painting talent was self developed, and art is part of Bonnie's present university studies. As a parent who is involved in her children's schooling, the school invites her in for certain school functions to talk about Native art.

Bonnie began learning the art of beading at a very young age. She remembers "watching Mom" bead. "Mom used to make us separate her beads. When you bead, you get the colours
all mixed up, so she'd make us string them. That's how I started."

She also remembers a time when she was about eight years old and a student at the mission school in the community. A man came to the mission and provided beads and other materials for the students. The man paid them thirty-two cents for each item made. Bonnie tells how she and other students "would make silly things like forty-eight-inch strands of patterned beads that he would sell to the tourists as Indian art." Students also made little teepees out of twigs, and little dolls with leather outfits "with a bead here and a bead there."

Today, Bonnie's main purpose for making leather and beaded items is economic. She makes mukluks, moccasins, belts, jewelry, and a wide variety of decorative pieces such as cigarette lighter holders for sale out-of-province in order to provide additional income for her family.

The speed of production involved in an economic purpose is reflected in Bonnie's descriptions of her work. She admits that she "is more into technology." Bonnie says: "Now I use a leather sewing machine to do a lot of my sewing, where before I used to do it by hand. Some people go: 'Oh, that's not Indian anymore.' And I would say to them: 'If my great grandmother had my machine and could use it, you think she wouldn't have used it? You
know, she wasn't stupid. Just because she's Indian, doesn't mean she's going to keep doing it like this forever. It changes; then you change.'

Bonnie sews commercially tanned hide because "home tanned hide is expensive;" although, she prefers it because "the needles just slide through, almost like flannelette. Commercial is hard."

She beads mostly floral designs. She says: "I like them, besides it's easier to do. There's not really any meaning. There's no symbolism or nothing in the geometrics for me." Patterns "just come" to her when she beads. She likes "really bright colours, lots of primary colours." For Bonnie, "colour serves a purpose, that is, "it's nice to look at."

Some of her bead and leather work is intended for family use, but she finds that her children and husband are not particularly interested in wearing or using the items. Bonnie comments that "before, people would do bead and leather work out of necessity. Now, it gets built into something else that is not entirely useful but it still looks nice." The quilts Bonnie makes, though, are used by the family.

Bonnie's paintings reflect her need for self expression. She says that "sometimes painting just doesn't seem to connect" with her bead and leather work; yet, her recent
painting depicts patterns similar to beaded geometric designs. She is enthusiastic about developing her painting skills and learning new techniques.

Bonnie takes pride in her artistic talents and her Native background. She has strong views about the content, and the approach to be used in the study of Native art in school programs.

Bonnie strongly supports the study of Indian, Metis, and Inuit art in school programs because she thinks that "it will help a lot of people." She says:

Indian people who live in town lose their culture really fast. If those Native kids could learn about their own culture it would give them more pride, and pride is what you need to fight racism.

Bonnie believes that non-Native students who study Native art can increase their understanding of Native people because "knowledge combats ignorance and racism. The more you know, the less likely you are to judge without thinking."

Furthermore, of the many cultures in Canada, Bonnie believes Native cultures should be studied in schools "because ours was here first. It's pretty important."

Bonnie explains:

We have a history. It's not like we have done nothing or never been anything.... We have art, and the white
race, the white culture, is not a superior culture. That's what students are getting taught in schools. Bonnie's strong support for Native art content in school programs comes from personal experiences with schooling and racism. Her art work gives her a sense of strength, and pride in being Native.

Those teaching about the art of Native cultures in the classroom should "definitely be Native people," and they should "integrate art with social studies." History is very important to Bonnie. She believes that students cannot make sense of Native art without inquiring into the past as well as contemporary contexts of Aboriginal peoples. Bonnie elaborates and provides an example:

This is Indian, and this is how Indians make their moccasins. Well, what's an Indian? What do they do? ... Why do they make moccasins? Why the decoration? There's a reason for all this, and it has to do with way of life. You can't separate art from culture. You can't say this is Indian art and that's it. You can't separate Indian art from Indian culture. It is art. You can't separate moccasins from the culture and just have that sitting there.

Bonnie also believes that study of Native art has to be relevant to students.

She recalls learning in school "more the Inuit and West
Coast art" which, for her, was "totally irrelevant." Bonnie thinks that students should, firstly, learn about the art of Indian and Metis people who live in the immediate community, whether it is an urban, a rural, or a reserve community.

She thinks that the art of Native cultures "has to be learned like at home -- by watching it, by seeing it," and suggests visiting local artists to see their art work or inviting them into the classroom to work with students. She further suggests that "it should be videotaped to get it the way it was, the way it is, not the way somebody else thinks it should be."

Once students are aware of the art in their own community, then they can study the art of other communities within the province. Bonnie provides two strategies: going on field trips, and sharing of the videotapes. She especially draws attention to the art found in northern communities, and says that "there has to be more exposure."

From a broader perspective, Bonnie points out that there are differences in art forms among Cree communities, and "Cree is different from the Dene, is different from the Inuit." According to Bonnie, comparing the art of different Indigenous cultures would be interesting and more understandable for Saskatchewan students after they were familiar with Indian and Metis art from their immediate and nearby environments.
When Bonnie talks more specifically about the art of bead and leather work, she promotes teaching and learning the traditional art. She says: "Teach beading the traditional way, the way it was, then it won't die, and people can pick up from that and go wherever they want to." Moreover, she thinks students should recognize how tradition and change work together in beading and other art forms by Aboriginal peoples. She says "each individual will change the traditional," and refers to how her way of doing bead and leather work differs from her mother's way. Bonnie still considers her work traditional.

Bonnie talks about the importance of nature in the art of bead and leather work, and emphasizes Indigenous peoples' wise use of nature's materials. She stresses how in the past, using nature's materials was not only necessary, but also practical. Materials were used, and still are used, in a practical and proper manner, that is, nothing is wasted. Bonnie has "chunks of leather" that she has been "saving for years and years." She says: "I don't waste anything."

Bonnie believes that Indigenous peoples can contribute a great deal towards working for solutions to today's environmental problems because of Native peoples' high regard for nature and their tradition of using nature wisely. She also believes that there is need for informed discussions on environmental issues. For instance, she is
irritated by those people who are against trapping of animals. She comments:

They'd like to close down trapping in the north. Then what are these people going to live on? What about when the animals start overrunning everything else? ... Don't they know that a lot of the fur used is ranched.

The questions posed by Bonnie reveal a perspective on the study of Native art that considers not only socio-cultural circumstances, but also socio-economic conditions.

She presents a picture of the study of Native art which needs to consider the context of art and culture from historical through to present times, and perhaps into the future as well. As Bonnie puts it, "the why" is crucial to understanding Native art and cultures. That understanding, Bonnie believes, can help build up the pride of Native students, and break down racist attitudes of non-Native students towards Aboriginal peoples.

MAXINE

Maxine does leather work, and bead work. She beads designs on hand sewn mukluks, gauntlets, moccasins and purses. Her designs include geometric patterns but are mostly floral patterns, ascribed to the Woodland Cree style. Maxine is Woodland Cree.
As a young girl, Maxine lived on a trapline in northern Saskatchewan and learned beading from her mother, a Scottish woman who obtained treaty status after marrying Maxine's father. Maxine remembers learning "mostly from watching" her mother bead, and being taught certain techniques when "it was time." Initially, items made by Maxine, her sisters and mother served a practical purpose for the family. Later, out of necessity, items were produced for sale in order to provide additional income for the family.

Today, Maxine sews and beads articles once again to be used by members of her own family, and also by relatives and friends. There is no need to sell her art work. In fact, she would not consider selling any pieces because that would take away from her pleasure in creating them, and in giving them away.

Her art work includes a variety of beaded pieces such as necklaces, earrings, and key chains. While working as a teacher associate in an urban elementary school, Maxine taught grade six students how to make this type of bead work.

Maxine thinks that having Native art content in school programs is "a very good idea," if taught "in a proper way." One reason is because it would bring non-Native and Native students together by helping non-Native students come closer to an understanding of Native cultures. Maxine's
main concern, though, is for the Native student and the positive effects such programming could have on him or her.

Maxine's concern comes from working with Native students in the school and from personal experiences with her own children. Maxine did not teach bead and leather work to her daughter, who as an adult now, wishes that she could practise the art. Maxine says:

I'm glad my Mom taught me how to do beading....
It's passing it on.... I never taught my girl how to do bead work.... I really regret that I didn't sit down like Mom did with me and teach her.

Although Maxine's daughter is not a beader, one of Maxine's sons is an artist. He works in a modern style, and Maxine says that "he was born with artistic talent." Maxine's reason for not passing on her art to her daughter is because "it's such a fast moving pace in the city. On the trapline, you have a lot of time."

Maxine realizes now that the younger generation needs to be taught the art forms, which she considers part of culture, in order to pass them on to the next generation. She explains:

I care about what happens in the future because I've seen so many changes in the past that we're slowly losing our culture.... It's just like I'm opening my eyes now and wondering, hey, it's going to be this way
if we don't do something about it. We're going to lose it all. The younger generation have to be taught to pass it on to their kids because if we don't do it now, who is going to do it?

Maxine notes that "not many young urban parents have the skills or time to teach their children bead and leather work." Maxine believes that learning the art in schools is a way to pass on the culture. It is a way to give Native students knowledge, appreciation and pride, and these attributes are important for the future of Indigenous peoples.

She strongly believes students should be presented with accurate information when studying the art of Indian, Metis, and Inuit peoples. Students need to be aware that there are differences among the art of Aboriginal cultures. The art and the cultures, though, are similar in their strong connections to nature. She refers to the animal imagery often seen in Native art. Maxine, too, points out the close ties to nature that her art work has in her use of floral designs.

Along with presenting accurate information, Maxine encourages the use of accurate as well as sensible materials when doing leather and bead work in schools. She talks about her preference for working with home tanned moosehide, rather than the commercially processed cowhide because
"cowhide is very very strong, and I break needle after needle." Moosehide is also very strong, but is softer and easier to work. She suggests that students be able to work with moosehide and would like to see students being taught in the traditional way, in the way she was taught.

Maxine realizes the way of doing her art has changed with the influence of technology, specifically the sewing machine, but she still does her leather work in the same way as her mother did. "I make them by hand; Mom made them by hand." Maxine gets more meaning out of doing it by hand without the help of a machine and even though more time is involved, she appreciates her work more.

Maxine tries to teach students beadwork in the same way she learned it, but for the most part, she finds herself moving from student to student to help them thread a needle or with other problems. Maxine would like to be able to sit and bead at the same time. She finds that once students are working individually, they become "very relaxed and quiet" as they concentrate on their beading. Of her experience teaching bead work to students, she comments: "It was really enjoyable working with them, to see them working away on those little beads."

Maxine's approach in teaching bead work to students is first of all to show them some of her own work. She finds that students become very excited and enthusiastic when they
see samples of what they themselves are going to make. Maxine then illustrates the technique, such as for loom beading or beading objects like earrings or a necklace. Students are asked to think about the colour combinations they wish to bead.

Much time and thought goes into choosing bead colours and formulating designs. Maxine encourages students to get ideas for patterns in the same way she does, which is "from the top of my head" or looking "through books of Indian designs." Colours are selected according to what may "look nice." When making decisions, Maxine does not think of colours in terms of symbolic meanings; although the patterns, such as flowers and familiar Indian designs are meaningful to her personally. She says:

I never think of the meaning of colours. They say it does have meaning; even my Dad says that. But I wasn't taught that. I use colours the way that it comes to me and the way I think they should be organized. Colours never really have any meaning for me when I'm doing it. I just do it because I like the looks of it. If a particular flower appeals to me, I just pick that out.

Maxine spends time now with her father, who is close to his eighties, learning more about the Cree culture.

Maxine thinks that the person who is teaching Native art in the classroom should have a background knowledge of
Aboriginal cultures. She does not want to appear prejudiced by saying the teacher should be Native, but is very clear that he or she should be familiar with the literature on Indigenous cultures. More importantly, the person should talk with the people and even visit some reserves.

To ensure the passing on of correct information, Maxine suggests inviting Native people into the classroom to talk about "the meaning of certain types of art work [and] why items were made, how they were made, how they were used, and who made them." For example, Maxine recalls that she never saw her brothers sitting and doing any bead work. The boys helped on the trapline, and they learned how to make such things as snowshoes and fishnets.

Maxine asks that teachers be aware of and sensitive to gender influences, and not force Native students to do something which may be traditionally women's or men's work. Maxine would like students to have the option, and be allowed to make that decision for themselves. Indeed, Maxine prefers to work with girls when teaching bead work because they seem to be "always so enthusiastic."

As a Cree speaker, specifically the "th" dialect, and also as a teacher of Cree, Maxine speaks Cree to students when teaching beading. They become familiar with words like "mekis" for bead, and "mekisak" for beads. Speaking Cree reinforces the language for Native students. Hearing Cree
gives non-Native students a sense of the context in which beading took, and still takes place. Bead work, Maxine believes, can be integrated into other subject areas like Native studies and social studies.

Maxine considers beading a beautiful and integral art form of past and present Cree culture, and will continue to be so. Schools can help pass on this part of culture. Modern art forms, such as her son creates, should also be part of Native art content in school programs "because that's part of our culture today too." Maxine understands from the changes in her life that "Native culture, especially, has changed.... And the art has changed. It's not like we had." Maxine knows she will "never lose" the art of bead and leather work, and that the art can be and should be passed on to the next generation.

SHIRLEY

Shirley is Metis. Her Cree mother taught her bead and leather work and Shirley, in turn, taught the art to her daughters. Shirley also showed small groups of young girls how to bead, do loom work, and make moccasins and belts during her involvement in a community club.

Shirley speaks Cree fluently, and she works as a tutor at the school in the Metis community where she lives.
She thinks schools "seem to push culture a bit too much sometimes." Shirley considers art, a part of culture and believes "culture should be taught at home."

However, she agrees in general with having Native art in school programs, and believes students can benefit from studying Indian, Metis, and Inuit art. For non-Native students, Shirley thinks:

Maybe it'll give them a greater understanding of Indians -- not to say: 'They're just Indians.' If a child learns, a white child learns, at an early age that Indians are people maybe there wouldn't be so much of this, you know, prejudice stuff.

She believes that even before non-Native students can begin to learn about Native art, they have to "know the people, know their background, and know their history."

For Indian and Metis students in Saskatchewan, Shirley thinks that studying Native art in school will give them pride, and she believes that as a Native person "you need pride" just to function in our society. She believes that as a Native person "you can't go on feeling that you're conquered by the white people."

Shirley draws attention to the fact that Aboriginal peoples "have a background. We have a history. We have a culture. We have our own language. We have art." Ideally, Shirley wishes all Aboriginal children could learn these
things in the home, rather than in the school environment.

Shirley recalls the home environment in which she, her sister and brothers came to know the Cree culture. As they were growing up, there was a strong "family feeling." There was a "feeling of closeness," and the family was "always together" working and playing. Shirley relates the experience to the imagery in the paintings of Allen Sapp, an internationally known Saskatchewan artist of Cree ancestry whose art she "really enjoys."

Shirley says that the "culture is within you" and that "you just learn by helping." Basically, her brothers helped their father with the work involved in trapping, fishing, cutting wood and so on. She and her sister helped their mother with, as Shirley calls it, "women's work" -- the work involved in maintaining the home like cooking, repairing things such as snowshoes and nets, and making things like moccasins and quilts.

Of course, along with the work there was play. Shirley fondly tells of a game that she often played with her younger brother. The game is called snowsnake.

My younger brother used to carve snowsnakes. It's just an ordinary stick. Just carve the bark -- sometimes spirals. And then we'd throw them (snowsnakes) in a snowbank and they'd come out somewhere.

Just as her younger brother learned about snowsnakes,
Shirley and the other children also learned from their grandparents, parents, uncles, and aunts about various art forms and objects such as hide stretchers, snowshoes, woven fur blankets, birch bark baskets, and birch bark bitings, where patterns are created by gently biting folded pieces of birch bark.

When Indian and Metis art is being taught in the classroom situation, Shirley says "a Native person, and I would say an older Native person" should be teaching. Shirley knows that from her local community "there's a lot of older people that would go into the schools, even for one day a week." Older people are "qualified" in the art and culture; they have the skills and knowledge. Even Shirley admits that she has "forgotten somethings," and that she "didn't learn everything from [her] mother, like quill work and how to web snowshoes."

Furthermore, Shirley thinks the older people are more able to duplicate the learning context of the home environment. Shirley remembers "in [her] day, ladies sitting around sewing, talking, telling stories, and having tea" as she and her sister were "playing with beads or biting birch bark." The women spoke Cree which Shirley says is "a very colourful language, very descriptive." Students could be learning the language and the values of the culture, along with learning the art, while listening to
stories and legends the old people could tell. Shirley's mother often beaded and told Cree legends at the same time.

Shirley began learning the art of beading at a "very young age" by "watching Mother as she sat there by the hour doing bead work." Shirley began to bead, and as she grew older her bead work "definitely improved," and she is a skillful beader. Shirley describes the experience of beading: "It's very soothing. You just get comfortable and just sit and think and sew.... Bead work -- it's something that you just grow into. You learn it in the home."

Shirley's own daughters learned bead and leather work "in the same way" she did, and as adults they continue practising the art. Neither Shirley's son nor brothers learned beading, and she thinks male students should be allowed to decide for themselves whether they would like to learn. She comments:

If they're interested, fine, but not to force them. I couldn't imagine my son doing bead work.... I think it would have to be by choice because bead work is women's work.

Along with a sensitive approach to teaching bead work, Shirley thinks students need to develop an understanding of why bead and leather work was, and still is, done. Shirley considers it in terms of a means of survival, a survival for Indigenous peoples in the past that was very dependent on
nature. Shirley explains:

They had to make their own footwear. They had to have leather [and] it had to come from animals. It had to come from nature. It was a way of life. It was a necessity. You had to kill an animal to survive [and] you do not waste food; you do not waste a piece of leather.... Everything has to have a use. Whatever they did, it had a purpose and as for decoration on their moccasins -- well, a little beauty in their lives.

Mostly everything was done for survival.

Shirley believes Native people "are very practical and it's probably not from choice, but if you're not practical, you don't survive."

She believes that bead and leather work done today still reflects this same means of survival, and is still consistent with a respect for nature and materials. Shirley knows that she and other women are very conscientious of not wasting beads nor leather. Beading done in schools should be approached in the same way, and she thinks bead work designs and colours should be decided by students on the basis of decorative purposes; although, students need to be aware that for many women the purpose for their bead and leather work goes beyond decoration.

The purpose for the bead and leather work made by Shirley's mother was practical, and partly economic.
Shirley remembers:

Mother used to make a lot of beaded jackets. She'd give them to my Dad, but she sold a few. And moccasins, well, that was footwear when I was young. You either wore moccasins or you went barefooted.

Shirley knows that she and other women bead "not for practical use anymore, but so they can sell." For many beaders, selling their work provides necessary income or additional income.

When Shirley's children were younger, she made beaded belts to sell. The belts were made for a local storekeeper who sold them to tourists. Shirley tells an interesting story about the shopkeeper's actions in his selling of her work.

I used to make geometric figures, diamonds, whatever.... He told the tourists that they had a lot of meaning. They had no meaning whatsoever. They looked nice -- blue on red and yellow.... The colours were nice. The designs were easy to bead. He sold a lot of my belts because he told the tourists it had special meaning, kinda meant good luck to the Indians. That's a lot of bull.... It wasn't something that I'm going to kill a moose tomorrow or it's gonna bring me luck. I don't know where they get that idea from.

Today, Shirley's finished work is usually passed on to one
of her daughters who sells it.

Shirley thinks the styles and forms of bead and leather work taught in the school program should be those that are done in the local community, thus making the content more meaningful and relevant for students. For example, she says that it would not make sense if a Dene person came into her community "to teach us their art because their art is completely different from ours." She thinks:

Every community is different. Our bead work is different from everyone else's bead work. La Ronge's got a lot of flowers. We have geometric figures.... You know they have their own different ways and cultures. She tells of a Metis teacher who recently came from the south to the school and tried "to teach our Native children Indian art, and it's just completely nothing to do with what we know. It's strange."

Shirley admits that her "way is still the old way, the traditional way," but she understands somethings may change. For instance, commercially tanned hides may be used rather than home tanned hides for reasons of availability or economics. She maintains, though, that the way of teaching in the school classroom be similar to that in the home.

Shirley's suggestions and considerations for teaching and learning bead and leather work in the classroom based on her experiences and her community give insight into the way
and the why of Native art and cultures. She is proud of her art and of the way in which she learned it. Shirley proudly says: "If a child wants to do bead work, it's beautiful; it's easy." The Native child may feel that same pride, and the non-Native child may feel that he or she better understands Indian and Metis people and their art.

MARY

Mary is Assiniboine-Cree, and laughingly says her Native identity is given "alphabetically." Mary does bead work and beads, as she says: "basically for our own family," which Mary describes as "a traditional family." She has taught beading, and also Cree and Native studies, in the school situation.

Mary taught a group of non-Native students to bead "very basic things," and says that "you gotta have lots of patience if you have ten kids and they're all beginners." For Mary, "teaching the bead work was really kind of strange [because] no Natives came to the beading classes." The classes were held after school. She comments: "I hate to see it as an after school program. When I was teaching bead work and Cree, it was all after school programming. It wasn't important enough to be part of the curriculum."

Mary thinks "it's a good idea" that Indian, Metis, and
Inuit art is taught as part of the regular school program. She says:

It should be part of curriculum, and it should be the Native artists themselves teaching.... It should be a Metis teaching Metis art, and an Inuit teaching Inuit art, and so forth.

Mary believes Native artists "would be more than willing" to share their art and knowledge with students, and "would be honoured if they were asked."

It was Mary's Cree grandmother who taught Mary the art of bead work. She compares her grandmother's way of beading to today's way.

Nowadays, we use patterns -- like we draw the flower or whatever, and we do bead work on it. But years ago, she used to sit there and just do bead work without a pattern. And she taught us how to do that.

Mary describes the way she and her sisters were taught.

We watched. But those were the days where you learned by watching, and then you did it on your own. They sorta didn't tell you: 'That's not how you do it.' They waited till you finished. Then they told you. Not like today where they, I know I, you sorta tend to scold and say: 'This is not right.' You know, you criticize. But those days, like you were allowed to make your own mistakes, and then you learn from them. They told you
after. It sorta meant for you to do it over again. So as you got older, you didn't make any mistakes.

From her grandmother, Mary learned about design and colour.

Mary says: "In my area, the Crees have their own design ... it's a floral or geometric," and Mary's grandmother taught the floral design. She also taught Mary "how to use our colours." In "Indian society, there's four different colours, same as the four directions." Mary elaborates:

Some of the colours mean different things in the different ceremonies.... We could use the red, blue, white, or yellow, and some use black for different ceremonies. All the different colours mean something.

... Where I grew up there's four different tribes; they all had their own designs and we were sorta taught, out of respect I think, to stay with our own. I'd say: 'Oh, I really like those colours; I like that design,' but we knew we couldn't use them ... till you ask permission for that.

When the traditional bead work done locally is studied in schools, Mary believes: "Out of respect, the family should be asked." Again, she thinks Native people would be willing to share and explain their designs and colours.

Mary follows "different customs and traditions" in doing bead work. She has taught her daughters beading. As a grandmother, she beads all the regalia for her
grandchildren's initiations, such as in dance and name-giving ceremonies. It is "the grandmother ... she puts on sort of the show, I guess. She's the one bringing out this child [and] she takes great joy in doing this." Mary comments: "It's sort of expected of you. You don't have to say: 'Oh, you're going to do this or you're going to do that.'"

Mary talks about other customs and traditions that the family "keeps up." She says: "It makes me feel proud, it makes me feel good -- proud that we're still maintaining it." She observes, though, that "we just assume that everybody is supposed to be doing this, but when you go out there, you know it's not happening. It's lost a lot."

When Mary goes "to a gathering with Native people," she "still can tell from the different areas," those tribes that have "kept up their traditional dress, their regalia. You know where they are from by the way they dress, and their colours." She can't always tell, though, "from the bead work designs on the regalia where people are from.... Nowadays, it's all muddled up."

Mary believes that more and more, design and colour use "really mean nothing." She refers to bead work that has "skidoos on there -- real silly things, even the mounties ... it's not right." Mary concedes that the purpose of such work may be just for selling, especially to non-Native people, but she says:
I wouldn't buy anything like that. If you have to buy something, you try and buy something that relates to us -- that you can identify with, like either by the colours or by the design.

With that particular intent behind bead work, Mary has "made necklaces for fundraising or just to give to a friend."

Mary recognizes that the art of beading has been influenced by new materials and techniques. She refers to the use of sequins and looms. "Sometimes the younger kids really get carried away with lots of sequins now." Mary says:

That wasn't part of our culture.... But it's a lot faster to do, and less expensive. After I thought about it.... The more shinier you are, the more you stand out, and the kids like that.

Mary makes similar comparisons to beads replacing porcupine quills, and beading with a loom, rather than by hand. She has worked with the loom, and says:

[It] is much faster, and there are patterns that you can follow ... if you are going to make something large and square. But a lot of our patterns aren't like that, like our own traditional patterns. I don't remember anybody using a loom to make a belt. It was done bead by bead.

Mary accepts, to a certain degree, the use of new materials
and techniques for bead work.

Mary points out that today, "most of the men are doing bead work.... A lot of our Indian men who are making their regalias now, do it on their own." Mary recalls that her brothers did not do bead work, which she attributes to the effects of their attendance at a residential school. As for boys doing bead work in schools, Mary says: "Well, why not?"

When teaching traditional bead work in the schools, Mary suggests that students "actually tan" the hides, then students get to "know how much work goes into making a jacket or mocassins." She jokes: "If you got six hides, that would take care of your classroom for the year."

Students could "actually go hunting," which Mary thinks "would be a good experience" because students could experience how Aboriginal peoples respectfully use nature. "They use everything; there's no waste."

Mary explains the traditional way that is followed when using nature.

You have to do some offerings [because] you are taking part of, I guess what we learned, was one of mother nature's. We're all here, here together, to live in harmony, and why go kill something for your benefit. But you have to do an offering, saying .. what it's for.

Offerings are done when using any materials from nature,
such as red willow or birch bark that may be used in the
making of other art forms.

Mary believes that the study of Native art "should be
well balanced" for students. "Some may want to do bead
work; some may want to do art." Furthermore, she firmly
believes that studying the art is especially important for
Native students.

Indeed, Mary thinks that the study of Native art as part
of the curriculum "should have happened long ago really
[because] a lot of Indian students are very artistic, and
they are never given the benefit." She talks about the
artistic talents of Native children.

A lot of parents just take it for granted because it's a
part of our life... They are artistic in different
ways. A lot of our younger people come out; you can see
he's going to be a good artist, and you just watch. A
lot of them sorta hide it because they haven't been
given credit for it, especially in the school. They
hide a lot of their work because they're supposed to be
doing math instead of artist-type work.... I think too,
a lot of parents, they just take it for granted, I guess
you know, that it's not being recognized and nothing is
being done about it.... More emphasis should be on
recognition of young Native kids doodling -- what you
call doodling, because it means something to them....
It's always the beginning of an Indian picture.... a favorite one, is the eagle.... Like they see something you don't. A lot of teachers -- non-Native art teachers, maybe they don't understand because they haven't learned. They really don't know the significance of what it means to that child -- what that child is doing. He's thinking of his own people, not only of himself. But that's what the non-Native teachers miss out on. When that child is doodling, he sees his Nation.... They say: 'They're only wasting their time drawing pictures,' you know like they should be more academic, and so a lot of our kids lose. They're good artists.

At the same time as recognizing the artistic talent of the Native student, it should also be "encouraged ... and it shouldn't be like, hey, this kid is doing real fantastic." Mary suggests that the teacher not over praise, but quietly encourage the student. "It's between that teacher and that student." Eventually, the student "can share." Mary believes encouraging their talents can lead to a career in art for students.

Mary would like non-Native students "to recognize that there are Indian artists, and respect them for it because we do have a lot of natural Indian artists out there." Before learning about artists of Native ancestry from other parts
of Canada, Saskatchewan students should study artists "from our own province whose work they can identify with," such as Sapp and Lonechild. Mary thinks studying Native art will help non-Native students develop "a better perspective," and respect for Native peoples.

Even though Mary supports and gives reasons for study of Native art in schools, and provides suggestions towards content and approach, she is somewhat skeptical "because when you want something like that done, they always say: 'We don't have money. We don't have money.'" Mary believes adequate funding for resources and materials must be available in order for the study of Native art to be a "good thing in schools."

Mary gives direction for the study of the art, particularly the art of bead work within a traditional context. She reveals that art truly is part of the lives of Native peoples, and that they, the artists, are the ones to share that art with students. The artistic talents of Native students, Mary believes, deserve as much attention as Native art itself.

GRACE

Grace has lived on the same reserve all her life. She is Plains Cree. She considers herself a self taught artist,
and refers to all her art work as "Indian art." The variety and amount of her artistic work over the years is amazing.

Her art work includes bead, quill and leather work, painting, drawing, fabric work, and an array of three dimensional pieces. Grace has exhibited her work at art and craft shows in Prince Albert and district.

Grace believes that studying Native art in schools is a good idea. She explains:

I think it will be good because I think it is dying.... Students are very interested in my teaching these things, and they should learn more about Indian art and the beliefs.

Grace goes into the band operated school on her reserve to work with students. She finds that students "really want to learn," and grow in pride as they are learning.

Other reserve communities in the area recognize Grace's artistic talent and invite her to conduct sessions for adults, as well as for children. Grace proudly talks about once being a guest at one of the schools in Prince Albert to discuss her art with teachers and students. She treats visitors at her home to a delightful session talking about and looking at her art work collection.

The collection is so large that storage boxes are needed to contain all of it. About the many pieces, Grace says: "I feel like getting rid of these things sometimes, but then
again, people come and they want to see the things and I wouldn't have anything to show them." Admidst her own art work, paintings by two of her sons are proudly displayed on the walls of her home.

Viewing her collection reveals two common patterns in her art work. Firstly, materials from nature are mostly used in making her art, and secondly, images from nature, most often, constitute the subject matter.

Grace constantly looks for materials from the environment. She picks up things anywhere she may be, and regularly goes "into the bush to gather." About her gathering of materials from nature, Grace laughingly says: "I just have to ... I can't help it." Grace gathers such things as: bones, shells, mosses, fungi, seeds, reeds, roots, small stones, red willow twigs, and pieces of fur, birch bark and spruce.

She creates a number of objects made entirely from natural materials. Grace weaves reeds into mats, and weaves red willow into baskets and god's eye shapes. She twists and coils grasses, which she sews together with spruce roots, into small basket containers. She shapes larger pieces of spruce and birch bark into miniature canoes and stitches them together with roots.

As well as nature's materials, Grace gathers all sorts of commercially available materials. Friends and neighbours
"save things" for Grace too. She collects such things as: leather scraps, small animal and bird figurines, and various papers, fabrics, and yarns. Grace saves, as she comments: "anything I can make use of."

Grace combines these commercial materials with natural materials to create pieces based on themes from nature. For instance, she covers wood pieces such as driftwood with sand, moss, fungus, stones, twigs, and places the small animal or bird figurines within the scene. Another type of her art work where nature themes are evident is when she coils brightly coloured yarns into shapes of animals, birds, flora and fauna, and glues these shapes onto wooden backgrounds.

Although nature strongly influences Grace's art in terms of materials and images, other themes do appear. One theme is reserve life. Grace depicts scenes of everyday life on the reserve in colourful patchwork applique work. She cuts and stitches pieces of differently patterned materials into realistic scenes filled with houses and people. (This work looks similar to the patchwork pictures made by Chilean women. See Brett, 1986.)

Names of people, especially of family, are intertwined in Grace's descriptions and stories about her art work. She makes items for family members to be used by them, or for display in their own homes. Grace gives "a lot of things
away." Even when asked by some people, the cost to purchase a piece, Grace says:

I never sell anything. If they want to buy something, they always ask me how much I want for it. I don't know. [She laughs.] I always say you can have it. I don't know how to charge for anything.

Grace "feels good" when she gives her artwork to others, and also "feels good" when she makes art. Grace further accounts for the amount of her artistic production by saying that "I can't sit quiet, I have to do something all the time."

Certain people have influenced Grace's artistic talent. She talks particularly about her mother, her father, and an artist who spent time some years ago living and working on her reserve. He encouraged Grace to learn different techniques and to explore various material use.

Her Mom taught Grace "just the sewing." Grace's mother made moccasins sewn with horse hair and with dyed quills on the vamps of the moccasins for decoration. In particular, Grace learned from her mother, the unique stitchery patterns seen on Grace's quilts, vests, and patchwork pictures. Grace's ability to do bead work, though, was self taught. She says: "I taught myself. I didn't have anyone to teach me."

Grace's father encouraged her to develop her artistic
talent. Grace remembers that as a young girl she spent much of her time drawing and painting. She says that her father "used to really like my drawings and paintings [and] he would put them on the wall." Grace no longer paints or draws because she was upset when two of her portrait works were not returned from an exhibition.

Just as her father, her mother, and the artist influenced and encouraged her, Grace similarly fosters the artistic talent of students in the classroom.

When teaching art to students, Grace's prime consideration is their age. She finds it "hard to teach the little ones" because young children are not skillful in using sewing or beading needles safely. Grace does bead work and any sort of needle work with older students. Although, even with older students in the classroom, she seldom teaches quill work because quills are very sharp and require careful handling.

Grace says that all students enjoy making items they can wear such as hair ties, bone chokers, and beaded jewelry. Colours and patterns for beaded jewelry are decided by "what looks nice." With young children, Grace prefers to do the yarn paintings and adaptations of the patchwork pictures, both of which students "really like doing." Another activity the younger children enjoy is making large paper cut designs.
A very large piece of paper, about one meter square, is folded evenly about four times to make a smaller square. This small folded square is then again folded like a fan. Designs are then cut into the folded paper. Grace explains: "In the middle, I cut out arrows, and then from there, I cut out animals and trees." When the paper is unfolded, these designs are repeated in a circular pattern. The technique for creating the paper cuts is similar to the technique for birch bark biting.

Grace uses small squarish pieces of birch bark, at most about ten centimeters square. The piece is evenly folded twice. Grace asks students to think in their minds of designs and patterns as students bite the small folded bark with their back upper and lower teeth. When the delicate bark is unfolded, the marks formed by the teeth create a repeated pattern. Grace has worked with some students who were very adept at biting designs of insects and birds.

Students who have the opportunity to do bead work with Grace experience not only the familiar forms like beading moccasin vamps and jewelry pieces, but also experience making their own beads.

From the leather scraps Grace collects, students make leather beads. Square and diamond shapes are cut from small pieces of leather. The square or diamond shaped pieces are smeared lightly with glue on one side, and rolled into tube
forms which are about three centimeters long. The tube forms become leather beads and are strung together to make a necklace or bracelet. In the same way, birch bark beads can be fashioned from pieces of birch bark.

Another type of bead Grace has students make is from the red willow twigs that she gathers. The willow is cut into short pieces, again, about three centimeters long. Grace describes the process: "After you cut the pieces, you soak them in water until you can work with them. They get soft and they're easy to put a needle through." The bark of the red willow beads can be carved or completely peeled so as to create interesting variations in the look of the beads.

Grace learned some of these ideas for making one's own beads from the artist who had encouraged her to explore the use of nature's materials. Nevertheless, Grace has taken this innovative approach to bead work into the classroom situation, and she finds that students become enthralled with creating their own beads, and designing jewelry with them. Grace, has also discovered ways to make beads from commercial materials, such as paper clips and mac tac papers. She delights in using all sorts of materials.

Grace presents a picture of "Indian art" teaching and learning that is innovative, fun, and that has close ties to nature. Grace believes that Native students need to know about Native art, and she knows that both Native and
non-Native students enjoy learning about the art. Her sense of giving to others, the sharing of her art work and her artistic knowledge, is perhaps most indicative of the value of sharing amongst Native peoples.

GERRY

Gerry has a "passion" for drawing. His artistic talent was evident as a child in his fascination with drawing cars. He describes his present art work, done "mostly in black and white," as "kinda like cartoon art." He does draw cartoons, but more and more Gerry draws "Native pictures," primarily of bird and wildlife such as loons, eagles, and moose. He says: "My eyes are just starting to be open to Native art."

Gerry is Cree. He was born and raised in Prince Albert, and comments: "I don't really know much about my culture because I lived in the city.... My culture was the city." Nevertheless, Gerry believes that his Native identity "is still alive." Sometimes during the summers, he spends time in northern Saskatchewan fishing, and visiting relatives. Gerry says:

When I go up north it makes me feel good because this is home, this is natural. It just feels that way to me. And when I draw animals, it's that way too. When I look
at the eagle, to me it kinda represents power and strength and achievement. That's what I get out of drawing it; it makes me proud to draw it.... It's beauty.

That feeling of pride is also evident in Gerry's work situation. Gerry works as a teacher associate in a Prince Albert elementary school where part of his responsibilities include teaching after school programs. His program is on Native art.

Gerry "definitely" agrees with students studying Indian, Metis, and Inuit art in the regular school program. His support stems from the fact that "there's not only white students in school, there's Natives too.... Natives are part of the school system."

Even if Native students are not sitting in classrooms, Gerry still thinks Native art "should" be taught. It should be part of social studies. He believes the art of Indigenous peoples "records [and] brings back the past," and its study will help students learn a more balanced and accurate view of the history of Canada. He explains:

Natives are a part of social studies because, well, we were here first. You know, if you want to record the history of Canada, you have to put the Natives in there [who] existed before the white people came over. Natives had a certain way of life. And art preserves --
to me, I'm starting to realize that it preserves our history. It's not a book, but it's a visual book. You can see the past. 

Gerry also supports studying Native art within the context of the art class. 

From his after school program, Gerry knows that non-Native students are "interested in learning" about the art, and "really like it and wanted to be able to draw Native art." Gerry believes the students came closer to an understanding of Aboriginal peoples and their cultures from the experience of participating in the program. 

Gerry's observations of Native students, tied in with discussion of his own school experiences and his experiences working in schools, give insight into the importance of studying Native art for students of Aboriginal ancestry. Gerry observes that "they got interested too, but they didn't really show it, but I knew. They were kinda passive about it, but they enjoyed it."

Gerry believes that many Native students are "really artistic," and learning about their art in school "gives Natives a lot of self confidence." Gerry elaborates: 

[It] gives them self confidence, and fulfillment too because a lot of them are artists, and it's fulfilling to be able to do something that makes you feel good. It's something that's a part of you, and plus it shows
the other kids that you have something inside of you that's a gift, and you can share it. Other people will look on you with respect too, because they can see that you have a gift. It gives you a bit of self pride.

Even though Gerry was not drawing Native themes as a student in school, he describes how important his gift of artistic talent was to him then.

I didn't really do good academically.... I would get into trouble at school. The teachers would be complaining that I never got my homework done and I wasn't doing good because I was always daydreaming. But art was always something that I could escape to, that was something I excelled in at school.

There were teachers who encouraged Gerry's drawing talent and made him "feel a little bit more positive about school."

Art classes in school were "kind of simple" for Gerry, and he "would have liked to have taken a higher level of art." Even today, he calls his artistic ability "underdeveloped talent" and wants to "work more with the drawing [and] do some Native arts." Gerry suggests that those Native students who have talent be challenged. They should have the opportunity to explore various art materials, techniques, and styles, as well as the Native style art. Gerry notes:

Native students are interested in their past and their
culture, and the kids kinda see it rising too -- Native art. And they are curious about it.... But they are also interested in present art forms too.

Gerry refers to cartoon characters that he draws for the students which "the kids are just nuts over, and so that draws them to the art. You kinda fit the art in with them."

Gerry describes his feelings now, in relation to Native art, and to teaching Native art.

I'm just really starting to feel proud of being Native. Like all my life, I was kinda ashamed of being [pause] because of getting cut down. I didn't get cut down as much as other Natives, but when I did see other people get cut down or somebody talking about Natives, I felt that I was being cut down too, because that's me. But now I'm starting to feel proud of it, and my art expresses it. When I draw pictures of Natives and stuff, and wise men, or eagles, or something, it makes me feel good. That's my way of expressing, showing the kids that Natives are good and I'm proud of it, is by drawing and showing, sharing my art with them.

Gerry shares his art, not only with students, but also gives his drawings "to other people" and members of his family, especially his mother who encourages Gerry's art work.

In the after school program, Gerry says he "demonstrates and shows the kids some Native style art [and] I share with
the kids some of my Native drawings." Sessions occur once a week, and Gerry works with a different grade each month; the grades include four through to seven.

The time scheduled for the sessions is limited, so there is one main activity. It is making a "postcard" that combines a "Native style drawing" on the front with a poem or free verse inside the card. Gerry describes the drawing part of the activity.

First, we do a practice sketch, a rough copy of what we want to draw, with pencil. Then we sketch it onto the card with really light pencil; then we go over it with black ink, all the lines, and then we colour in with felt [markers] and it shows up really nice.

Students take their ideas for their drawings from art books or pictures of Native art. Gerry approaches his drawing in a similar manner, and often works from published art work. He says: "I redo them myself, in my way."

Gerry's observations of the students' drawings are also similar to his descriptions of his art work. He notes that "most" students choose to draw animals like bear and moose, or birds like loons and eagles. "It was describing what it was like up north." A few students draw pictures of Indian designs or symbols, or images from the West Coast.

In school programs, Gerry suggests studying the art of Indigenous peoples according to the various geographical
regions of North America, such as the West Coast and the Plains regions. He thinks studying the art from a broad perspective reveals the richness of the whole culture, and similarities among and differences between cultures and their art forms. Gerry says:

[Students] get to visualize that [cultures] were separate. They were all Natives, but they lived separate kinds of lives. They fitted their environment, and with the art you can show that.... You can see the differences in their art. They were different, but they were all Natives and fit together, like a puzzle with different pieces.

Gerry believes environment or nature was, and still is, a strong connector among Native peoples. In the past, "nature was their world," and materials from nature provided food and shelter. Materials were used in producing the various art forms, to which Gerry says: "That's creativity."

Gerry thinks "it's good" having modern materials "to show our art." He adds: "But I also believe that you should preserve the old style and the old way of the art 'cause that's the way they did it; that's part of history too." Gerry thinks those teaching Native art should "have the ability" and the knowledge. It may be "anybody, even the white people."

Gerry says to art teachers who use Native art in their
programs:

Just be sensitive about it, not to change it. Try and recreate it, and teach it the way it was before -- to be sensitive to what the art really meant.... There probably is more that should be said about it, and more talked about it, but I don't really know anymore because I haven't lived it like some people have.... I'm learning.

He does add: "Just a caution on the spirituality." In reference to the spiritual that is a part of Native art, Gerry says:

I think it might even be wise to leave spirituality out of it because spirituality is personal, and there may be conflicts with students' values and beliefs.

Even though Gerry himself does not follow traditional spirituality, he "wants to keep an open mind," and it is a "learning process" for him.

Gerry considers himself as one who is learning his Native culture. He believes art is "part of culture," and Gerry reveals how significant Native art can be for the learner. As a learner and teacher of Native art, Gerry shows that the learning and teaching of the art in schools benefits students, and needs to be approached in a thoughtful manner by teachers.
DAVID

David paints and draws in a realistic style. His works are of wildlife, and prairie scenes with Indian themes. David is Plains Cree. He considers himself fortunate to have been "born with" artistic talent, and is proud that he has developed his talent. He is also proud of his leatherwork skills, as in the making of western saddles.

David "spends a lot of time" researching and sketching before he even works on a painting or drawing. He "paints in oils, acrylcs, and water colours [and] likes working in pencil and charcoal;" he "works with a lot of detail" in his art. David comments:

As far as I can remember, I've always been drawing all the time.... The talent of being able to draw anything has always been with me. The ability to paint and to be able to sketch properly now is something I've learned more and more over the years.

David exhibits and sells his art work, and also does commission work.

For "quite a few years" now, he has been invited into schools to work with students, and says: "It's something I enjoy a lot; I like working with kids." Most of the students David works with are of Aboriginal ancestry, as the schools are band operated schools or schools in Metis
communities. In some schools, there are mural "paintings of eagles" that David was commissioned to do.

David thinks educators should be careful when planning "to stress the Native content of art [and] to teach Indian art, I guess because a lot of people [pause]; the definition of Indian art is a little different for everybody."

He agrees "in one way," with studying Native art in schools. David says:

Art in school should cover all areas in art. I feel art should be taught in school more seriously, and part of it should be Indian art. I guess I say that because I look at art different, and I look at Indian art different.... I've always referred Indian art as to art that has a lot of the abstract -- colours, with flowing colours, where there's strong lines.

He thinks most people consider "that type of art as Indian art," art, as in the work of Chee Chee and Morrisseau. David notes: "When I go to the schools, I see that too many kids want to paint that type."

David believes students should have the opportunity to explore various art styles, materials and techniques. Study of Native art is one of many ways to increase students' artistic knowledge. Additionally, for non-Native students, David thinks: "In some ways it may help them to understand the Indian more ... it would help them to understand the
other Native kids in the class a little bit."

David views the art of Indigenous peoples as a rich and diverse area of study that should not be limited to the popular perception of Native art. He thinks it is the artists of Aboriginal ancestry who should be teaching their art, no matter how they define it.

When students are studying traditional art forms, he says:

Someone that really has a good knowledge of the Native background, like the culture, could come in and talk to them once in a while -- get them to understand why there's certain ways of dressing ... so that they don't just do a picture of an Indian with a headdress and not know why he is wearing it. I guess that's part of researching art.

At times, it would be a good idea to "have elders come in and talk to the kids."

David thinks that the study of Native art should begin with the art work of Indian and Metis people done locally. In Saskatchewan schools, students should study the work of Cree artist, Allen Sapp who "paints a day and age where no one really is capturing that time of the Indian's life."

David says:

Usually if there's something to be taught about Natives, they [students] are learning about Natives from
someplace else, like the ones in the U.S. or B.C. or the eastern part of Canada. But they never teach about the Indians that are living right next door to them. If they started from there, it would probably help them understand the Natives better. Then, from there they could slowly move on to other areas in Canada or North America.

David believes: "There's a connection amongst all the different tribes of North America.... Indians are always able to communicate with each other," and "nature does, or has played a big role with the Natives ... survival meant understanding nature, really understanding nature."

David comments that "there are so many things in the Native or Indian culture that can be taught in the school if you really wanted to get into it." In the schools, David teaches and talks about "just art."

He has worked with students from the kindergarten to high school levels. He visits with the younger students, and draws for them. David says:

What they like [is] cartoon characters.... For the older students, then I start to teach them something about art. I try and teach them to be able to see the shadows, to see what the sun actually does, and then teach them to draw with shading, without having to use lines.
At the start of a session, David "works together with the kids" on a drawing, "talking to them and teaching them at the same time."

The drawing is often of a bald eagle because "a lot of those kids, like in Native schools, they like lots of eagles." First, students lightly sketch an outline of the eagle on their paper in pencil. Then David has students use charcoal because he believes:

[Charcoal] is something different for them to work with, so that when they do get into drawing with pencil again, they're not outlining and they're working harder at trying to shade in the areas.

David explains the shading for the drawing of the eagle.

I teach them to make a dark background first, in the area where the head is going to be ... and then, on the lower part of the page about half-ways down, the background, it's not as dark -- so that it fades off, so that the white of the head sticks out in the dark background. Instead of having to draw the head out, you're shading around it, and when I get to the beak, it's just a different shade.

Instead of a drawing of an eagle, David sometimes does a drawing of one of the students' faces.

After students model his drawing, they "do their own picture." David observes differences between what Native
and non-Native students decide to draw. He says:

When I go to a class .. always there are a few non-Native kids. There is such a big difference in their ideas in what they want to draw. Most of the Native kids, they're so much into eagles, teepees, and stuff like that. It's just in them I guess, you know, because they are Native.... The other kids, they usually have something different in mind that they want to draw ... usually any type of scenery. I'd say some do barnyards, stuff like that. I've actually never had an Indian, .. a Native kid, do a drawing of even their yard, or say drawing planes or stuff like that. They like to draw the eagle.

Some students use books to help with their drawing.

David comments: "I don't discourage them from looking in the book. That's all they have for reference when they are in the classroom." David suggests taking students outdoors to sketch. When he goes into classrooms, David brings books "on wildlife" for students "that they can use for reference."

David makes another observation about the art work of Native and non-Native students.

I find the Native kids, at a young age, have more ability to draw something I find than the non-Natives, .. at a young age. I don't know if it sounds proper to
say that, but I am able to see that a lot.

When David notices that a student has artistic talent, David encourages the student.

At the start they're usually shy.... It may not be fair to the other kids, but because I see a student there that has the ability to have some talent in art, during that class, I'll sometimes stop and I'll go to that student to encourage him a little more in what he's doing. And tell him a few little different things than what I've told the rest of the class so that, at least he feels a little more special -- that I found him different, or her, because of their abilities in art. And I try to encourage them as much as I can.... I've always wanted to go back to the schools and work with [those] kids ... so when they do leave school, they are going to continue with it.

He or she could pursue a career in art as "an artist, and not just as an Indian artist."

David's work in the schools is purposely directed away from what he thinks is commonly perceived as Indian art. He directs students away from colour and strong line into techniques of shading with charcoal and pencil. Still, Native content or imagery comes through in the students' art work, and indeed, in David's art work.

David says: "When I do the teepees, Indians on horses
... you can call it Indian art or Native art I guess, [but] my Indian art [is] considered as western art" by those in the mainstream art field. David reveals an approach to study of Native art that does not limit Native art to one definition, nor students to one style, nor artist to Native artist.

CHARLES

Charles is Woodland Cree. He is becoming known throughout the province for his art work, primarily painting and sculpture, but Charles sets aside his own art for discussion in terms of schools "because his art has become personalized." Rather, he talks about the more historically-based art of Indian peoples. Still, for Charles, the understanding is essentially the same between his personal art and "what we may call Indian art, what is known as Indian art."

He is often invited to do art workshops with students ranging from the elementary to adult level and works mostly with the Woodland style when talking to students. Charles talks about the understanding behind the art, and he explains the processes and materials involved in creating this art.

Charles agrees with having Native art content in school
programs, "if it is done properly." He says, though, "it doesn't necessarily have to be Indian art." For Charles, "art is life. It's something you live with. Something like breathing." He regards art education as a high level of learning and art, in part, as a tool that can help students in their lives. As learners come to know art, Charles sees "people that are cultured, that appreciate art, that are very open minded."

He acknowledges that students who learn about Native art may enhance their appreciation of the cultures and peoples, but the art goes beyond mere appreciation. Charles strongly emphasizes that the art is a process with pushing forces behind it. These forces, or the philosophical concepts of Aboriginal thinking hold constant over time. Charles believes that language was once instrumental in conveying the messages or teachings of the philosophy, "but language is not there.... Nowadays, I see that if language is not going to convey these messages [pause]; art has taken that place." Charles thinks that it is becoming more important to use imagery because many Native children are not getting the philosophy behind Aboriginal thinking.

Although the art object or visual expression may vary throughout the centuries, the process of its creation is the same.
We're talking about Indian art as a process.... It was a very smooth flow of art in a lifestyle and I don't see anything different today ... through seeing, through living.... It comes sort of innate. You teach those things in that manner.

Based on his highly conceptualized view of art, Charles elaborates on the approach he uses in the classroom situation, which he describes as "the hands-on method."

His main purpose is to try to convey the concept behind the art, and a strategy in his approach which becomes obvious from the descriptions is questioning. Many questions are posed so as to get students thinking about all that is involved in making the art.

Another strategy which directly illustrates the practical hands-on method is bringing in actual objects, such as a Dakota headdress and a drum from the Plains region. Charles says: "Kids can relate to something they can touch. I make them touch." Students are invited to wear the headdress and feel the "wooden aspect" of the drum.

To explain the concepts and processes involved in Indian art, Charles shows students his drum and talks about the creation of the drum from raw materials to finished product. For example, he asks where does the hide come from, which leads to a discussion of the animal and where the animal lives. He then asks how are you going to go
about getting this animal, which leads to talking about hunting.

Those animals ... that's their world. They are not just going to allow you to just come and take them. There is a certain way you have to take that animal -- the respect that's involved there. So once you have the animal, how do you get it into this shape -- the hide? So that becomes another art. You're talking about a process.... Make them think about the whole process.

Charles draws attention the the purpose of the drum. He explains about singing and Indian songs. Charles also explains "some of those spiritual things maybe that are important to understanding art, and a lot of Indian art does contain some -- does need some spiritual thought in it."

Charles makes connections to the lives of students. For example, he compares Indian songs to songs on the radio. Popular music can be listened to and used by anyone, but this is not the case with specific Indian songs.

You cannot even tape them. So how are you going to know these songs in the first place if you don't attend those ceremonies? So all this talk about what's on the side, the forces just for this one little specific thing [drum], that's the kind of thing I go through.

Similarly, Charles talks about the process and meaning behind the Dakota headdress.
One specific reason for showing the headdress is to address stereotyping. Students are quick to identify what it is and comment that "Indians wear those." Charles then makes students think about Indian society hundreds of years ago when headdresses were especially common. Charles explains: "Something like that was not an ornament; it was not ornamental."

He elaborates on how children went through a developmental process, an initiation, and were taught certain things such as to respect elders. Young boys, for instance, were taught to hunt and bring meat back to feed the old people who were no longer physically strong for hunting and preparing food. Boys who learned this were given an eagle feather as "a sign of graduation." So as a Dakota boy:

... if you did all those good things all your life, comes a point in time when you're say sixty years old, you have all these feathers showing you all these great things you did for your people, not just for yourself. Then you go make a bonnet like this and you can wear that.

Dakota girls who accomplished certain teachings also earned feathers towards making headdresses.

To help students understand the concept of the feathers, Charles compares them to report cards. He may also bring
the message of the headdress to a present-day context by talking about First Nations leaders who work for their people today.

Charles calls headdresses and drums "mobile art." These objects have a functional or practical use. A headdress, for example:

... needs to be in motion. It needs to have a whole series of things connected with it to get the full appreciation. We talk about song and dance, drama. Everything is part of the package. You can't just look at it as one specific thing. It needs to be so many other forces involved.

Charles' image of the powwow dancer with his featherwork in motion suggests that mobile art combines the visual with motion.

Like the feathers of a headdress and the hide of a drum, many of the materials used in the traditional art of Indigenous peoples come from nature. Charles emphasizes the strong interplay of ecological influences on Native art, past and present. In an activity based on the Woodland style, he uses the bear image, an image that some may think is child-like because "how they draw a bear doesn't look like a bear;" however, young students identify with the style.

Following the style format allows Charles to get into
ecology, and into legends. He tries to make students realize "what is the importance of the bear in terms of not only Native culture, but also in terms of wildlife as an entity in the world."

When using the image of the bear with legends, Charles firstly tells a legend. After discussing the concept of legends, the class begins the process of creating their own visual legend. Students brainstorm everything they know about the bear and these items, which become the basis for the class's story of the bear, are recorded.

The bear has fur; the bear hibernates ... the bear eats fish. It's all listed down and we say this is our legend. This is our story. Let's keep our mind on this. This is what we're going to show without using words, without using any kind of writing. In this way, the concept of the bear is presented visually.

As students work through the process, Charles is also working so students are able to observe his making of a visual legend at the same time. Charles invites the use of photo and video cameras to record workshop sessions.

When using the Woodland art style in workshops, Charles makes clear that this is only one certain style of art. It is the style he is most familiar with for instruction, but if time allows Charles will talk about other types of art. He has worked with art from the Plains area, typical of
southern Saskatchewan. As Charles explains, it makes sense for a teacher to be guided by and work with the relevant environment of the students, and their experiences. He states:

I could go into a school down south where they don't even have any trees and start talking about totem poles but they [students] can't relate to that. I can start talking about buffalo because they inhabited the area. That's why I follow these [guidelines].

The local environment is instrumental in determining Native art content in school programs.

Charles points out that environmental differences among various geographical areas have resulted in many types of art and styles. Still, a strong connector among the diverse art forms and styles is nature. Charles says: "That's where the art originated and that's where it actuated -- in terms of the land."

Charles suggests that students explore their environment. They could be looking at and making art during visits to forests as well as to galleries. He thinks that the person teaching Native art in schools should be "an environmentalist, someone that has a feel for other life forms ... a feel for what kind of message is to be given out." Art content should be interrelated, or integrated, with other areas of study. Charles says:
If we're going to follow the process I was talking about, then you can tie art with say, history. Tie it with ecology. Tie it with other areas, and it's a subsequent kind of ongoing thing.

As Charles reveals, art is not bound by subject or time, nor language.

Art is important to Charles. He believes that the art which goes into the classroom is very important. One of the first things Charles does when he walks in for a workshop session is to look at the walls to see how much, and what kind of art is being done. He looks for what students "are being fed." Charles believes our minds hold everything we see, and hear. He calls this "our periphery of vision." The term provides a thought-provoking ending for his discussion of art, in particular, the art of Indigenous peoples.

On a final note, Charles adds:

If we are not going to consciously develop ourselves, then subconsciously, the art we view, the songs, the legends, and imagery will do it for us. It is, therefore, important that these things, especially art, be fed to the minds of the young ones so that innate guides will exist for their future journey.
ALAN

Alan is a self taught artist. His art work, and his work promoting the arts and crafts of Native peoples are recognized nationally and internationally. Despite opportunities over the years to relocate, Alan has always lived in Saskatchewan. He comments: "I guess maybe you can say I established my roots in Prince Albert, and they're still here." He was born on a reserve north of the city.

Alan is Cree, but points out that "the word, 'Cree,' it's not even ours. It's just a label. 'Cree' is an English word identifying, really, a race of Indians." Alan speaks Cree, the "y" dialect. His home reserve is "right on the edge of the forests and the plains," and is probably "a bit of both" Woodland and Plains Cree; however, Alan cautions against the overuse of English names and categories to describe Native peoples and their art.

He believes: "People, like educators and anthropologists, have always classified all Indians the same." He thinks a similar approach has been applied to "Indian art." Most often Alan prefers to use terms like "imagery" and "imaging of the culture."

Alan's artistic talent "really came out" in school when he was a young teenager, such that he was boycotted from entering drawing competitions. He developed skills and
knowledge in many art forms and mediums. Alan says:

I've done a lot of commercial art work and fine art work; I've done a lot of things.... It takes some time to recall [all] what I've done. But basically, I've looked at and I'm quite familiar with all the Indian art forms, you know, traditional, non-traditional, contemporary, that type of thing ... the different art forms that exist.

Alan has "met all the major artists" of Aboriginal ancestry in Canada. He is also familiar with the work of Indigenous peoples in other parts of the world such as the Maori of New Zealand who he considers "are coming to the forefront, and not just in art," but in economics and in education as well.

Alan is skeptical when he hears about Native art appearing in school programs. He questions: "For what? What is the ultimate purpose to it?" He hopes that the intentions are not "to pacify" a growing Indian and Metis student population in Saskatchewan, nor to ease "any guilt feelings" on the part of non-Aboriginal society. He questions "how serious" governmental education agencies are about the study of Native art in terms of funding and long term planning.

Alan's skepticism comes from "being an Indian person" who, because of his work and experiences, believes:

As Indians we're forever allowing the institutions, the
government institutions and others to dictate and set the parameters of what we are and what we should be. It's always controlled by money.

Still, Alan thinks efforts to have Native art content in school programs are commendable. He says: "Don't get me wrong, it'll help to some degree," but it needs to be done "along with the Indian people." The central question needs to be "what can we do that will have a full impact."

Alan believes that the starting point is for Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal societies to realize the importance and potential of the study of Indigenous cultures and their art. He states:

It is one of the richest -- really, something that's still waiting to explode. Art, it's one of the richest forms of expression. I won't call it Indian art or any thing. The whole culture is just waiting to explode in North America, the Indian culture, in all areas of existence, and the thing is that it's not being treated the way it should really be treated, that is, it is such a large and vast resource to learn from.

Alan qualifies his premise.

He believes that we "don't have a clue what [the art] is in the first place." He also believes that "you can't separate art by itself, with Indian or any culture." Alan thinks Native and non-Native people hold many misconceptions
about the art of Indigenous peoples. For example, symbolism is "distorted." He explains:

Sure there was Indian art, but what is today perceived to be Indian art was a form of communication symbolism that had really nothing to do with art. But a lot of it was to do with identification, recording of its own way, history, territorialism, so on and so forth — authority, identifying authority, identification. Like on a teepee there was symbolism used for, maybe a bear, to identify maybe a medicine man and nobody else. That bear identified with that medicine man. [It] had something to do with himself personally, his history or something, part of his authority, or part of his knowledge, and so on and so forth.

Similarly, Alan thinks spiritualism is distorting.

He believes the art is overemphasized as "a spiritual thing instead of a happiness thing, a colourful thing." He says:

Too much of our lifestyle and our culture has been too spiritualized. It's just too much. It's got to come out of that and that's one problem today. It's trying to claw it's way out of that.... Hey, my culture is beautiful; my culture is colourful; it's happy.

He adds:

I hate it when people talk about Indian culture and
Indian tradition like: 'Oh gosh, this is spiritual ... oh, this is Indian culture, gotta be quiet.' Hey, Indians had ceremonies where they had a whole lot of fun. It was meant for fun; it was meant for colour; it was meant for showing off. Our culture is being treated, even to this day, with too much thought and reverence. We're not all medicine men or whatever. We are alive, but that aliveness is not being put out there within that colour the way it should be.

Alan thinks the arts and the cultures of Aboriginal peoples are "understudied," and believes research is crucial.

He says: "People who can make a difference are still quick to jump the gun in putting down something for historic purposes." Alan believes that Native people should initiate research, and "participate more with historians and archeologists." He points out the positive effects of research that have occurred in areas of British Columbia.

They have been lucky enough to have historical evidence where they have really been able to have evidence and latch on and hang on to things in their culture and history. But in the Plains, it's been different.

Alan does not consider the imaging of Saskatchewan Aboriginal cultures as indigenous. He views it as overinfluenced and sporadic.

Especially influential in Saskatchewan was the late
Sarain Stump, who visited and worked in the province during the seventies. Alan says:

You still see that influence in Saskatchewan artists because he had such an impact. But he had an Indianness about him too. But a lot of his designs are related to South American Indian art forms. He adapted it into the central and southern United States, and Central and South American Indian forms.

Alan believes that Stump's style is evident in the work of many contemporary artists from the province and "it's perceived as traditional Indian art from Saskatchewan, which it isn't." Alan comments:

This is the way Indian art has been evolving -- in little spurts, little Sarain Stump spurts, little Morriseau spurts, in little Tony Hunt spurts, in little Daphne Odjig spurts. It's just been little spurts.... Our art, in whatever we do, has been caught in little wee tiny cycles.... We're allowing the non-Indian society to set the parameters of the next process, the next step, and we'll keep going through the cycles until we as Indians sit down and say: 'Hey, wait a minute. We ourselves, what do we want us to be, and let's we ourselves do it and say what it is to be.'

Alan likes the work of Saskatchewan artist, Allen Sapp, and says:
Allen Sapp's paintings have meaning to me as an Indian because I lived exactly those images.... But they don't have the same meaning for kids [today] because they don't live that way anymore.... Where it [imagery] needs building, and where it will grow from, that's from our people.... It's actually got to start from the community.

Alan wishes for a stronger collective desire within the Aboriginal community to discover, learn, develop, create, and use their imagery.

Alan defines imagery: "Indian imagery is life. It's everything." He elaborates on what imagery is, as well as what imagery is not.

It's the way the teepee was made ... not just the design on the teepee, but the teepee itself has become an image today. Picking blueberries has become an image today, and today it exists. Tanning a buffalo hide, even though you hardly see it here. Furniture that was used in a teepee -- like willows for a backrest.... To me, Indian imagery isn't just the mythical that everybody perceives -- the mythical design that went on a drum or a war shield or on a horse shirt or whatever... I think it's a very simplistic appreciation if you look at Indian imagery as those images that were painted or carved onto something material. Indian imagery today
has become all parts of Indian life in the past -- the legends, the storytelling is now Indian imagery. It's put on paper through either oil, or carving, or whatever. To me, when you talk about Indian imagery or Indian art or whatever you want to call it, I don't put a name to it, it's the imaging of our past culture and then sometimes it's reperformed in dancing, storytelling, acting -- modern-day interpretations.

Alan thinks that the importance and potential of this imagery can be explored and implemented in the school situation.

He views it as a redirection of education into the cultural area and necessitates "trying something bold, something different." It requires that non-North American cultures and Indigenous cultures "get serious" about the study of Native art in terms of support and effort.

Alan envisions a school, and describes it as "an art school with meaning, not just to put out artists per se," but to put out Aboriginal imagery and make it "visible on a daily basis." The school would use imagery in an investigative and innovative way, such as through industrial ceramics, jewelry making, or film production. Alan says:

We can get expertise from all over the world to teach us technical things. All we have to do is put in the creativeness.... Let's use it in such a way where it
will benefit us today socially and economically. Let's not be afraid of the economic part of it.... Indians are so afraid of getting our culture and image across using modern-day technology ... using modern-day technology to present our culture in its excitement, its colour.

The impact of the school would be to "impose our imagery in the commercial field," and the ultimate purpose would be to benefit Native peoples.

Alan agrees with the opinion that Natives are "good artists and creative;" yet, in schools "the actual teaching process" does not encourage nor strengthen these attributes. He believes that the "area of visual and performing arts" is potentially "the largest dominating factor in the well being of our people ... economically, socially, culturally -- you name it."

Alan says the school concept "is a big dream, but look out if it happens." He believes it can happen. A visual and performing arts focus is "the way to go," rather than going "piecemeal" with Native art into present school programs and structures.

Alan says: "We Indians only have about two things left in relation to our culture. That's our imagery, our art forms ... and our language." That imagery, at present, is underdeveloped and using it in school programs may be distorting Native art and cultures for all students. Alan
presents a bold picture where Aboriginal imagery is paramount. Alan reveals imagery's vitality, richness, beauty, and potential power to be "forefront" in our society, and to benefit Native students and peoples in many ways.
In constructing the narratives, patterns soon emerged in the artists' responses to the three areas of inquiry: 1) biographical and cultural background, 2) viewpoint on having Native art content in school programs, and 3) desirable content and approach to Native art in school curriculum. By reviewing all the data and studying the narratives, after they had each been verified with the particular individual, a deeper analysis became possible.

The patterns or themes in the responses were interpreted by gender and by the artists' biographical and cultural backgrounds. The four male artists produced the more modern art forms of painting and drawing; whereas, the five female artists primarily produced bead and leather work, a traditional art form of Native cultures. Even though the division is apparent, it is also notable that the youngest and eldest of the female group are and have been active in painting and drawing pursuits which suggests that the type of art produced by Aboriginal peoples is not exclusive to gender.

The reasons given by the artists for their art production did not follow closely along gender lines. There
was a balance between gender groups in terms of enjoyment, learning, and economic purposes. Overall, the element of sharing appeared more pronounced among the females, and economic gain seemed more predominant within the male group. Basically, the males described themselves as self taught and born with artistic talent; the females described their learning bead and leather work by observing their mother or grandmother bead. One male artist did not directly comment on how he acquired his artistic skills, and the eldest female artist considered herself a self taught beader; yet, she observed her mother doing quill work on moccasin vamps. These relationships between artist and art produced found within this particular group indicate some similarities to those found with Wisconsin Native artists in a more extensive and exhaustive study by Stuhr (1987).

The following sections build on the findings from the group of Saskatchewan Aboriginal artists in elaborating viewpoints on having Native art in school programs, and the desirable content and approaches to Native art in curriculum.

VIEWPOINTS ON HAVING NATIVE ART IN SCHOOL PROGRAMS

In general, all nine artists agreed with having Native art content in school programs. Agreement ranged from
reluctance to strong support. Overall, the five female artists were more supportive than the four male artists. The youngest male artist, though, who was also the youngest of the nine artists, voiced definite agreement for Native art study in schools. He and the female group expressed strong feelings of pride stemming from their art production. Additionally, he, along with some of the younger female artists expressed the opinion that Native art should be taught because Aboriginal cultures are indigenous to North America. Age, and more so, the difference in artistic activity associated with gender, seem to account for the varying support and reasons given by the artists for having Native art content in school programs.

The female artists referred to the art of beading as muddled up, changing, being lost, and dying. They indicated concern for its continuity and a preference for passing on this art form within the context of family and home. The group seemed to believe, though, that all Aboriginal children were not guaranteed the opportunity to learn it outside the school. The female artists viewed teaching the art forms of Native cultures in schools as a way of passing on the art and culture to Native students.

Aside from the youngest male artist's clear support, the male artists were less explicit and perhaps more begrudging in voicing support for Native art content in schools. Yet
they all did so, at least to some degree. These artists were more involved in and aware of the mainstream art world, as well as the contemporary Native art world. They viewed the conceptualization of the term "Native art" itself as problematic; although, one artist clearly elaborated on how the art reflects Aboriginal philosophy.

One artist from each of the gender groups expressed some skepticism about the seriousness of educational institutions to implement Native art in school curriculum in terms of funding and long term planning. All the artists believed that Native peoples need to be involved in the definition and presentation of their art in schools.

Everyone foresaw benefits for Native students learning Native art because it instills pride, and motivates them to learn more about the art and cultures. The female artists emphasized the aspect of pride; the male artists stressed the motivational aspect, not only to learn more about Native art, but also to learn about other art styles, techniques, and materials. Pride was viewed as a necessary strength for Aboriginal young people in order to be able to function in society today, and to develop together as strong Nations. Motivation was perceived to strengthen students' self confidence and artistic talents, to encourage a more positive school experience, and to lead towards an economic base for Native peoples.
For non-Native students learning the art, the females emphasized that it helps them to understand and respect Native peoples and cultures. The males stressed the importance of what all students could learn from studying the art in its relationship to ecology, history, and to the broader field of art. The youngest female artist also expressed this view.

As a group, the nine artists agreed with having Native art in school programs. Within that viewpoint, though, varying support, reasons, and benefits were articulated. There was some evident skepticism. What is most apparent is the artists' emphasis on the advantages for Native students, a finding which is consistent with the literature reviewed. Also consistent is the shift in thinking towards learning from Native art, rather than learning about Native art. This thinking parallels the Native voice for "education into culture" expressed by Kirkness (1986, p. 1). All the artists provided insight into Native art, and gave explicit and implicit conditions for its presentation in schools from their particular perspectives; these conditions are discussed in the following section.

DESIRABLE CONTENT AND APPROACHES TO NATIVE ART IN CURRICULUM

The artists revealed that art is not a single autonomous
entity in Aboriginal cultures. Art and culture was, and is
dynamically intertwined in the lives and psyches of Native
peoples, and embedded in their histories. This was evident
in the artists' personal stories, and their stories of those
people around them. The male artists viewed art as
language, on par with oral expression in recording,
teaching, and creating culture.

The artists revealed the importance of the
interrelationship between art and environment. The images
and materials from nature, and its teachings, are evident in
the art. All the artists referred to nature with respect,
and a number of them demonstrated a reverence towards it.
The group, mainly the males, viewed this perception and
treatment of the environment as a common link or similarity
among Aboriginal cultures and their art. Almost all the
artists pointed out, though, that there are differences
among cultures and in their art due in large part to
differing geographical environments.

Collectively, the artists identified themselves as
"Native Peoples" and individually, defined themselves as
members of particular cultural groups and Nations. Their
preference was to be designated by their national or tribal
names, such as Metis or Cree-Assiniboine. An attitude of
territorialism was evident when the artists talked about
art. It seems that when talking about the art of Native
peoples, attention to terminology is needed. Those who spoke their Native language indicated that it was difficult and even deceptive to explain and describe their art and culture in the English language, further suggesting that the terminology used for Native art in the school context requires thoughtful attention.

When the artists specifically addressed the desirable content and approach to Native art in curriculum, it was difficult at times to separate their views as to whether they were directed towards Native students, or non-Native students, or both Native and non-Native students. Most often it seemed that the artists' comments were directed primarily towards Native students, as the artists obviously emphasized their views in terms of Native students.

The artists believed that students should learn the local art first because it would be most relevant and meaningful to them. Relating the art to the students' lives and experiences was also seen as relevant. Working closely with artists in the community was emphasized, and suggestions were made to videotape sessions between artists and students as a way to record the teaching. This was similar to the use of modern technology in the Minnesota school project described in the literature reviewed. Those artists in the group who had gone into the schools expressed feelings of being honoured and willing to be
involved. Once students are familiar with the local art produced, the art of other communities and geographical regions could be studied.

The female artists, especially, thought Native people should be teaching the art. Those artists, mainly the males, who did not distinguish between Native and non-Native teachers described the desired person as an environmentalist, and an expert in art techniques, styles, and material use. The few artists who spoke of the teacher as non-Native suggested that he or she should be knowledgeable of the art and sensitive in approach, and that he or she should talk with Aboriginal people and visit reserves. Whether the responses as to who teaches Native art would be the same or different if the researcher was Native is unknown.

A number of artists asked that teachers encourage those Native students who demonstrate artistic talent. Many of the artists considered Aboriginal students gifted artistically. One male artist believed that the artistic talents of students could be developed in, not only the visual arts, but also in the performing arts. Two male artists and one female artist strongly believed that Native students need to learn modern-day technology in order for young people to record, teach, and create their interpretations of art and culture. The artists perceived
that such learning could provide a strong economic base for Native people in the future.

The female artists provided considerable direction and guidelines for the teaching of bead and leather work. Most of them thought that a similar approach to the way in which they learned should be used in the classroom. Essentially, students would learn by observing and modelling the beader. Such an approach necessitates working with two or three students. The descriptions of the experiences of these women teaching in schools reveal that such a context is usually not the case. They had to consider the age of children to appreciate and to do the skill, including the ability to safely handle needles and quills. It seems that the time and attention required for truly becoming a skillful beader is not all that applicable to present-day school situations. Nevertheless, the female artists viewed its study in schools and the knowledge gained from it as worthwhile.

The female artists revealed that bead work designs and colours may or may not have meaning. This group beaded floral and geometric designs, and most artists said that their designs and colours were decorative. These items were for use by family and friends, and for sale. One female artist explained the symbolic meanings of community and regional designs and colours as indicating distinctiveness
and a way of identification. She, as a grandmother, beaded the ceremonial and initiation dress for her grandchildren. The traditional meanings were not, she said, being taught in all communities, but where they are, out of respect, people should be asked if those particular designs and colours may be studied. There was some evidence of conflict between the artists who knew or were aware of symbolic meanings and those who did not or dismissed them. Unless directed by a Native person, students should probably work towards a decorative purpose, but students should be made aware that there are other purposes in designs and colours, and other purposes for doing bead work as well.

More agreement existed in views on materials and how they should be used. Working with home tanned hide is preferable to working with commercially tanned hide. One artist suggested that students participate in getting and tanning the hide themselves in order to realize how much work is involved in the process of making, for example, a pair of moccasins, and to experience Aboriginal peoples' tradition of using nature wisely. In the past, nature was a means of survival and provided the materials for bead and leather work. Everyone stressed that beads and leather are not to be wasted. One artist explained that in the traditional way, offerings are made when anything from nature is taken. In the case of taking an animal,
everything is used. The artists preferred that students learn beading in the traditional way, that is, sewn by hand, but accepted using newer materials and techniques such as sequins and looms. The eldest female artist created beads out of red willow and birch bark for jewelry items. She also used a variety of materials in innovative ways in teaching art forms other than bead and leather work.

In the interviews, many of the female artists revealed that brothers and sons did not do bead work, and some artists suggested that teachers not force male students to participate in beading activities. One artist thought there was no reason for male students not to participate and mentioned that today some men bead their own regalas. In the classroom, it seems that male Native students should be allowed to decide for themselves whether they wish to bead, but such a direction raises the issue of what choices would be available for female Native students. Rather than consider students' gender, it may be preferable to consider students' interests and how bead and leather work can reflect that interest.

Most of the female artists spoke in reference to the traditional art of bead and leather work, but many of them commented or indicated that the contemporary art work of Aboriginal peoples should also be studied. A number of the women had sons or male relatives who were artists. The male
artists said little about bead and leather work. That may be because the researcher is female or merely because of the manner of questioning. The male artists primarily addressed desirable content and approach to Native art in school programs in terms of the modern forms of painting and drawing.

The three male artists who had worked with students in schools used images from nature. Students observed and followed the artist's discussion and instruction for drawing or painting the image. One artist modelled the Woodland art style using the image of a bear; another artist modelled shading techniques with charcoal for an eagle image. The other artist, the youngest of the male group, showed his drawings of wildlife to students. In each case, after modelling or seeing the artist's work, students created their own drawings or paintings. Sometimes, students used books on Native art or wildlife for reference. A number of artists, male and female, suggested and preferred that students be allowed to explore their environment outside the classroom. In the art work produced by the students from the male artists' approaches, images from nature predominated.

The male artists' descriptions of instruction in drawing and painting are similar to the female artists' descriptions of how they learned beading and of how they would prefer
beading to be taught. However, it seems that a "watch then do" approach to making art is more compatible in the classroom to drawing and painting than to making bead and leather work. One male artist's approach, though, was not based on his definition of Native art, but was based on a broad definition of art. As mentioned earlier in the discussion, the definition of "Native art" was perceived as problematic by most of the male artists. There was also controversy over certain aspects of the art.

The spiritual content often attributed to Native art and its use in the classroom was an area of contention. One male artist thought that reference to the spiritual was not appropriate because it may conflict with students' own religious beliefs; another artist considered spiritual things important to understanding the art. Yet another artist considered the spiritual to be overemphasized and distorted Native art; he expressed the view that the art should be regarded more as a happy, colourful thing. Still another artist suggested allowing artists to bring any spiritual information forward themselves. He also briefly mentioned having elders in to talk about spiritual things.

Overall, this particular group of male artists offered no clear direction for addressing spiritual content in the classroom. It may suggest that presently the school itself has to appropriately determine its inclusion, approach, and
emphasis on the spiritual attributes of Native art according to the nature of the student population, and input from the local community. Nevertheless, all students probably should be made aware of this aspect of the art of Indigenous peoples.

The symbolic content in Native art was not an area of contention among the male artists. The artists talked about visual records and stories. Similar to the one female artist's descriptions of the symbolic meanings of beadwork designs and colours, one male artist described the painted symbolism found on a teepee or hide as communication which showed identification or territorialism. He believed that symbolic content in contemporary Native art is misperceived and distorted. What became most apparent from considering symbolic and spiritual content was that the males artists were indicating, and indeed most of them strongly supported, a research approach to the study of Native art.

From a broad perspective, one artist viewed research as essential to defining the art and ensuring Native peoples' control of it. Within the classroom context, research was viewed as a way to give students a truer understanding and more accurate interpretation of the art. As an example, two artists referred to an Indian headdress as an art object that could be investigated by students. Specific strategies given and suggested by the artists for investigation were:
questioning students' initial knowledge of the headdress, touching the headdress, learning about the materials and the whole process involved in making the headdress, having knowledgeable people in to talk about its meaning and purpose, and relating that to the students' own lives and experiences. For example, one artist related the feathers to report cards as a sign of graduation. He viewed an investigative approach as a way to specifically address stereotyping of Aboriginal peoples. Here, his view was clearly directed towards non-Native students. In some of the interviews, the artists referred to stereotypes, prejudice, and racism, and viewed the study of Native art as a way to help combat those attitudes towards Aboriginal peoples. A research approach to the study of Native art appears to be a promising direction for school curriculum.

All the male artists stressed or indicated that learning from the art of Indigenous peoples was important. The artists viewed the study of the content of the art as teaching a more accurate account of the history of Canada, as teaching ecology, and as introducing art from a non-Western perspective. The male artists and some of the female artists suggested integrating Native art content into the subject areas of social studies and science. Such integration, with the intent of learning from the art, could establish an exciting and new direction for Native art and
As a group, the nine Saskatchewan Aboriginal artists gave direction and specific guidelines for the desirable content and approaches to Native art in school curriculum. These will be summarized in the following chapter. Their perspectives provide a closer look at the presentation of Native art from within the Canadian context, and the conflict and controversy expressed in some of their views only serve to illuminate that Native art is, as one artist described it, "alive."
VI. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The purpose of this study was to make a contribution to curriculum development in Saskatchewan and to Canadian art education generally by presenting Native artists' perspectives on the study of Native art in school programs. Nine Saskatchewan artists of Aboriginal ancestry, five female artists and four male artists, were interviewed. These interviews were presented in narrative form and were verified by the artists. The preceding chapter presented a discussion and analysis of the artists' perspectives. Several conclusions can be drawn from the analysis.

Overall, the artists agreed on having Native art content in school programs. The female artists viewed it as a way to pass on the art and culture, and the male artists also viewed it as a way to learn from the art and culture. The artists' articulation of the reasons and benefits for having Native art in school curriculum was directed primarily towards Aboriginal students. There was some evident skepticism, and all the artists believed that Native people should be involved in their art's definition and presentation.

The artists provided insight into Native art itself. The interplay among art, culture, and environment was, and is, dynamically intertwined with the people. Environment
simultaneously binds and separates the art and cultures of Indigenous peoples. Native art is a rich, vast, diverse, and complex area of study, and the local art should be studied first. The content of the art, and the materials used, may or may not be traditional.

Due to the nature of Native art and the people who produce it, attention to the terminology used for discussion in the classroom is desirable. The teacher should preferably, but not necessarily, be of Aboriginal ancestry. He or she should have a good knowledge of art and expertise in traditional and contemporary artistic techniques, and preferably, a knowledge of modern technology and its use.

The desirable approach to teaching the art form of bead and leather work involves students observing and modelling the traditional way of beading, that is, sewing beads and home tanned hide by hand. Students should also be able to explore newer beading materials and methods. Materials should not be wasted. Students should learn that the purposes of Native artists for doing bead work vary, and that designs and colours may or may not have traditional symbolic meaning. Unless directed by a Native person, students should work towards a decorative purpose. Some consideration may be given as to whether male students are required or not required to participate in beading
activities, but it may be more important to consider students' interests rather than their gender.

A similar approach of observing and modelling can be used in teaching drawing and painting, and a research or investigative approach to studying Native art might be the most desirable approach. It has advantages because of the conflict and controversy over complex aspects of the art, such as the spiritual, and symbolic meanings, and even the definition of "Native art" itself. Furthermore, a research approach can deal with stereotypical attitudes of non-Native students towards Native peoples and cultures. The appropriateness of researching the spiritual aspect of Native art, though, should be discussed at the local level.

As well as learning about Native art, the artists emphasized learning from the art as important for all students. This included history, ecology, and about art from a non-Western perspective. The art content can be integrated into other subject areas such as social studies and science.

Together, the nine Saskatchewan artists of Aboriginal ancestry provided direction and specific guidelines for Native art and school curriculum. Individually, each revealed the variety of influences and experiences any one person can have. Throughout the conduct of this research inquiry, attention was given to the Native voice and
viewpoint, and additionally in the discussion and analysis, to the intended audience -- art educators and other educators.

The investigator's understanding and relaying of the artists' perspectives may have been influenced by her gender, ethnicity, and work experiences. If so, these influences may have been conducive at times because the researcher has worked with Native peoples and students for over fifteen years, and has determined some similarities between her own Slavic culture and Native culture.

Even so, it is worth wondering whether a Native researcher conducting a similar study would arrive at the same conclusions. For example, the three artists who chose not to participate in the study may have participated if the researcher had been Native. Their reasons for not participating are respected; they were expressed in both personal and practical terms. This investigator considered that there was a mistrust of intellectual probing in areas where some Aboriginal people may not wish a researcher, particularly a non-Aboriginal researcher, to go. On the other hand, it was also considered that participation in the study was simply inconvenient.

Along with the study focus, Native art, much was learned about the influence of gender on research, and about the academic exercise of research with Native peoples conducted
by a non-Native investigator. For example, with those artists who participated, some considerations during the conduct of this research inquiry included: protocol, sensitivity, trust, and cultural communication. These differed from artist to artist depending upon his or her biographical and cultural background, which refutes any assumption of a strict Native/non-Native dichotomy.

There is a place for action in dialogue with Aboriginal peoples and non-Aboriginal researchers. It can help create an opportunity for designing and developing a successful education system. The documentation in educational research form of Native art in Canada is new territory. From this investigator's point of view, it is essential that Aboriginal peoples continue to reclaim their control of their art in light of the resurgence of public and institutional attention to Native art. That is the intention of this research inquiry.

The following concluding sections of this research document list implications for practice and research developed from the analysis of the nine Saskatchewan Aboriginal artists' perspectives on Native art and curriculum.
IMPLICATIONS FOR PRACTICE

1) Aboriginal peoples must be involved in the definition and presentation of their art in the school curriculum.

2) Art curriculum could develop the traditional or "watch then do" approach to making art, and the research approach to studying Native art.

3) Native art curriculum could show that the art of Aboriginal peoples may or may not reflect traditional content.

4) Native art curriculum development should occur at the local level, but not in isolation. An effective means of communicating curriculum development that collects and disseminates information and resources needs to be in place.

5) Native art content could be integrated into the school curriculum as a basis for learning from the art, as well as learning about the art.

6) School curriculum could give careful attention to the English terminology used when referring to the art of Indigenous peoples. It could also include terms from Native languages for describing the art.
IMPLICATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

1) A similar investigation in the same geographical area conducted by a Native researcher to compare perceptions and understandings. Similar investigations in other geographical areas conducted by male and/or female, and, Native and/or non-Native researchers.

2) Closer examination of gender as associated with artistic production.

3) Investigation of the ecological learnings from the art of Indigenous peoples.

4) Case studies of Native and non-Native teachers of Native art with both Native and non-Native students.

5) Investigations with the purpose of developing a scope and sequence for the teaching and learning of Native art.
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APPENDIX A

SASKATCHEWAN

AREA IN WHICH THE RESEARCH FIELDWORK WAS CONDUCTED

La Ronge

Prince Albert

Saskatoon

Regina

PRINCE ALBERT

SASKATOON

legend:
Indian Reserve ....
Research Area ....
River ............

scale:
40 miles
50 kms

Source: Indian and Northern Affairs Canada. (1989, October). Indian Reserves of Saskatchewan.
### APPENDIX B

**ARTISTS' BACKGROUND**  
(and Interview Order)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Male</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
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<td><strong>CULTURAL GROUP</strong></td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td><strong>age range</strong></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Gerry:</strong></td>
<td><strong>Cree</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>(7)</strong></td>
<td><strong>urban</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>drawing</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Bonnie:</strong></td>
<td><strong>David:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>(1)</strong></td>
<td><strong>(9)</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Metis</strong></td>
<td><strong>Plains Cree</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>rural</strong></td>
<td><strong>reserve</strong></td>
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<td><strong>bead/leather work,</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Maxine:</strong></td>
<td><strong>Charles:</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>(4)</strong></td>
<td><strong>(3)</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Woodland Cree</strong></td>
<td><strong>reserve</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>urban</strong></td>
<td><strong>painting/sculpture</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>bead/leather work</strong></td>
<td><strong>Alan:</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>(6)</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Cree</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>rural</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>drawing/painting,</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>&amp; many other art forms</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Shirley:</strong></td>
<td><strong>Grace:</strong></td>
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<td><strong>(2)</strong></td>
<td><strong>(5)</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Metis</strong></td>
<td><strong>Plains Cree</strong></td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>stitchery,</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>&amp; 3-d work</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Mary:</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>(8)</strong></td>
<td><strong>(5)</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Assiniboine-Cree</strong></td>
<td><strong>Plains Cree</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>urban</strong></td>
<td><strong>reserve</strong></td>
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<td><strong>bead/leather work</strong></td>
<td><strong>bead/leather work,</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>stitchery,</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>&amp; 3-d work</strong></td>
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APPENDIX C

INTERVIEW GUIDE

A) BIOGRAPHICAL AND CULTURAL BACKGROUND:

I'd like to know about the art that you make. (description, purpose, meaning, and audience)

How did you come to be an artist? (age, residence, cultural group, influences [people, places, events], 'resource experience')

B) VIEWPOINT ON HAVING NATIVE ART CONTENT IN SCHOOL PROGRAMS:

Indian, Metis, and Inuit art content is going to be part of school programs. I am interested in your viewpoint on this.

C) DESIRABLE CONTENT AND APPROACH TO NATIVE ART IN SCHOOL CURRICULA:

In regards to the content of Native art, what would you like students to learn?

I am interested in how you perceive of Native art being taught within the classroom. (teacher, methods, activities, projects, materials)