Abstract

This curriculum unit will use weaving as a means to examine different cultures and their concept and use of time. The curriculum unit will specifically explore the Navajo, their traditional textile forms, and the context in which the textiles were and are currently produced. Students will be introduced to the labor intensive, time demanding activity of weaving. This unit will be taught to middle school students in seventh and eighth grades. Class sizes vary from approximately 28 to 33 students per classroom. The hands on weaving and spinning aspect of this curriculum plan will be presented as a classroom project for those art classes seen more than once a week.

During our exploration of the Navajo and their way of life, we will examine the art, symbolism and traditional techniques of Navajo textile construction; the context in which the woven form has developed over time; the relationship between geographic region and the way of life in the Navajo culture; and the impact of customs, beliefs, traditions, cultural identity, and sense of place on Navajo textile art.

Navajo weavers design and weave patterns that hold meaning for them. A particular land formation, the landscape in general, or a story might inspire the use of certain colors and patterns in a design. The unique sense of time and place in Navajo culture will be explored as students seek to understand the relationship between the land, traditions and beliefs as expressed in Navajo textile design. Pictures of Navaho rugs and blankets and the Navajo environment will be compared to identify lines, shapes, colors and textures used in Navajo weaving. Students will then be ask to study their own urban landscape and design a weaving using lines, shapes, colors and textures to reflective the urban environment

The hands on aspect of this curriculum plan will focus the attention of the students on authentic experiences of designing, weaving and constructing a flat-loom weaving. The goal of this curriculum unit is to extend and expand student awareness, understanding and appreciation of traditional techniques and contemporary methods. and create relevant connections between cultures, generations and traditions.