Using the Arts in the Classroom to Enhance Cultural Awareness

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To really dig into a culture, one must look at everything. Language, Geography, Traditions and it's ARTS!
When working with children we know......

• Hands on projects are the way to go! We retain by doing!
• Children who have the opportunity to create cultural pieces of work then make connections to areas of the world and even to peers in the class.
• Art, dance, music and the performing arts is usually the best way to get an idea, vision or a basic understanding of anyone’s culture.
Take a look! Most of us can recognize where these pieces of work came from. They are all specific to a cultural group.
Much of the time cultural art is derived from surroundings. What is going on around you? What materials are accessible?
A region’s art work can say so much about the history!

For an easy example take a totem pole. It is SO much more than a carving of the cedar trees that grow! It gives us a glimpse into the lives of the Pacific Northwest Tribes.

• The animals used are the animals of the areas.
• Each animals has very specific meanings.
• The poles have many different meanings - Clan lineage, ancient tribal tales, notable events . . . .
• Tribal regions also have styles that differentiate their works.
When we give children the chance to be exposed to things they have never seen and make connections it opens up a whole new world of learning!
Medusa Theater Mask

Dramatic Play Space
Russia
Iran

Persian Designs

Flags with our names in Farsi
Persian Art of Calligraphy

Family Calligraphy Set
China

Our Terracotta Soldiers

Great Wall Of China
Dramatic Play
Using real materials when able.

Our Chinese Chops
Language Arts

Three are paper lanterns.

This is a breathing dragon.
Characters

Food
Tangrams

Paper Cuts
In studying other cultures, we learn more about ourselves and our relationship to all things in this world.

~ Eustace Conway