

CULTURE AND SPORT (CHAPTER TWO)

The purpose of this chapter is to investigate:

- the arts, media and sport as forms of cultural expression
 - the dynamic nature of Indigenous cultures
 - current forms through which culture is celebrated, conserved and expressed; for example, in music, painting, literature, oral traditions, film, sport
 - how cultural expression contributes to contemporary cultural identity
- the impact of invasion and colonisation on Indigenous arts
- the arts as a means of conveying Aboriginal history, experiences and points of view
 - the contribution of the Indigenous arts, media and sport to the Australian community
 - the relationship between increasing Aboriginal participation and success in sport and breaking down barriers between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people and communities.

BACKGROUND MATERIAL AND INTERPRETATION FOR TEACHERS

About the chapter

'Culture and Sport' explores the importance of cultural expression to the survival of cultures and identities of Indigenous Peoples within Australian society.

Art is the primary vehicle for traditional Indigenous cultural expression and it is through our art that we express our identity, our history, our relationship to land and a means by which customary laws and practices are learnt, reinforced and respected. ADEN RIDGEWAY 2004.

Indigenous art and change

Prior to colonisation Indigenous people lived as hunter-gatherers over the entire Australian landscape. There were regional differences between communities: the cool temperate, well-watered southeast which supported a high density of population and the dry interior where Aboriginal people required much larger areas to sustain themselves. In turn, geographic differences created a diversity of styles and forms in cultural expression. Elements of traditional Indigenous cultural expression include music, dance, art and craft and oral storytelling.

The historical impact of colonisation, in conjunction with regional differences, has given rise to the diversity of contemporary Aboriginal art. Traditional arts are being revitalised, as well as the generation of new forms of artistic and cultural expression among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in urban and regional areas.

The diversity of Indigenous art

Indigenous cultural expression takes many forms:

- visual arts (works on canvas, printmaking, bark, ceramics)
- crafts (revived traditional crafts and new ones: wood objects and carving, basket-weaving, beads and seeds, sculpture, jewellery, clothing, fabric screen printing, weaving and knitting)
- music (traditional songs and contemporary music)
- performing arts (theatre and dance)
- writing (fiction, non-fiction, poetry, drama)
- film, television and radio (documentary, drama, Indigenous-owned media).

Traditional mediums that have been revitalised and transformed are being explored in two ways. Music, dance and painting are ancient Indigenous forms of expression. They are a powerful part of Aboriginal culture, both in everyday life and as a vital part of sacred ceremonies. Traditional forms of music dance and painting are still practised and performed widely in Indigenous communities. There is also a very strong and lively contemporary arts scene where traditional forms are explored in new ways.

'Non-traditional' forms of cultural expression are also being practised by Indigenous artists. Writing, film and television and radio, together with their cultural

counterparts, occupy a key place in Indigenous self-affirmation and political development.

Artistic mediums traditionally occupied by non-Indigenous Australians such as film, comedy and broadcasting, where Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders had no control over the way they were represented, are being used by Indigenous Australians to negotiate their own forms of representation. They are also enabling Indigenous Australians to select and transform their culture, items and practices on their terms.

Art and Australia

Indigenous cultural expression not only acts as a celebration of identity and culture, it also makes an important contribution to modern Australia. The arts and culture of Indigenous people are integral to Australia's national identity: socially, politically and economically.

Sport

An important element of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture is sport. It is through sports that Aboriginal communities can unite and to participate at a competitive level.

Sport plays a significant role in contributing to the establishment of Indigenous identity and to the development of role models for Indigenous young people.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

After reading the chapter 'Sport and Culture' and completing the activities in these notes, students should be able to do the following:

- a) describe the diversity of styles and forms in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander arts
- b) evaluate the contributions and significance of Aboriginal people and their cultural expressions, including in the visual and performing arts, language and spirituality to maintaining culture and identity
- c) explain the impact of invasion and colonisation on Indigenous arts
- d) analyse the significance of Indigenous arts to:
 - survival and continuity of cultural heritage
 - connection to land
 - identity and spirituality
 - making social and political comments.
- e) assess the effects of modern technology on Indigenous arts
- f) evaluate the contribution of Indigenous arts to Australia's identity and its international image
- g) describe examples of Aboriginal-controlled media
- h) examine the ways Aboriginal arts present Aboriginal culture, images and experiences to Indigenous and non-Indigenous audiences
- i) evaluate the significance of the arts to Indigenous self-determination and autonomy
- j) recognise the significant role and contribution of sport to Indigenous individuals and communities, and their lifestyles
- k) assess the contribution of Aboriginal sportspeople as role models for Indigenous and non-Indigenous people
- l) identify a diverse range of Indigenous writing styles and analyse the writer's purpose in choosing a particular style
- m) explore a range of Indigenous written texts
- n) examine reasons for sport becoming a significant avenue for the expression of Indigenous identity
- o) analyse the contribution of Indigenous sportspeople to Australian sport and Australia's performance internationally in sport.

PRE-READING ACTIVITIES

Teacher-led discussion

Bring a range of different contemporary and traditional art forms to the class. Discuss where they come from, the purpose and meaning of each work, and the artist or community etc..

Keeping the definition of culture from 'Who are We?' in mind, discuss why sport and the arts are considered expressions of culture with students.

When you think of Indigenous art, what is the first thing that you think of?

What might Indigenous people across the country use different artforms?

What does traditional and/or contemporary art reveals by its subject matter?

What contribution have Indigenous artists, writers and sportspeople made to their community? What contribution have they made to Australia?

Questions for class discussion during the reading

Traditional stories, regional differences

- What are some of the factors contributing to the regional differences of Indigenous artworks? Think about environment, climate, materials available, land forms etc.

Arts

- What are the two worldviews mentioned in this section of Indigenous art practices? What is the purpose of each? (Think pre- and post-invasion and colonisation).

Music

- How can Indigenous music demonstrate a connection to the land?
- Both traditional and contemporary Indigenous music is used for storytelling. What are some of the stories told in contemporary Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander music?
- What are some of the influences that can be heard in Indigenous music?

Theatre and dance

- Dance is an ancient and powerful Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander art form. How is it being revitalised and transformed?
- What other types of performances are being explored?
- How do Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander dances reveal the adaptation of external influences? Give examples used in the text.

Art

- What are some of the contributions Indigenous visual arts like painting have made to Australian society? (economic, educational etc.)
- Name some of the artists mentioned in this section, where they came from and the media they use. Do you think these people are representing themselves or their community/culture? Is it possible to represent both?
- How has Indigenous art evolved in Australia? What are some of the ways artists have adapted traditional techniques and styles in their own work.
- Discuss some of the ways in which non-traditional formats are now being used

by artists (painting on canvas, using acrylics, different colours, multimedia, photography etc.)

Flags

- Discuss the symbolism in the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander flags.
- What are your thoughts on the Australian flag? Do you think it is an appropriate design? Does it represent all Australians?

Film and television

- What are some of the benefits, both to Indigenous Australians and the wider Australian community, of having Indigenous actors and film and television makers? How do you think it affects the content on our screens?

Writers

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders have an oral language tradition. What are the benefits to both Indigenous Australians and non-Indigenous Australians in having Indigenous writers and literature?
- Name some of the writers mentioned in the text and the literary format they use (poetry, fiction, non-fiction).
- How has writing been used to empower Indigenous Australians? How is it used to carry on traditions even though it is a non-traditional art form?

Media

- What role does the media play in your life? Why do you think it is important that Indigenous Australians have their own media?

Sport

- Sport is very important to Australians. What benefits does sport offer? What can it offer to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander individuals and their wider communities?
- Why has sport been seen to be an equaliser among Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians?

ACTIVITIES

Activity 1

The purpose of this activity is for students to investigate the visual arts as expressions of Indigenous culture. It also reveals to students the diversity of contemporary Indigenous art practice.

Have students explore the Culture Warriors website in depth <
<http://nga.gov.au/Exhibition/NIAT07/>> paying particular attention to the diversity of artworks in the exhibition, as well as the stories behind the paintings as told by the artists.

Some of the themes that students might recognise would include: identity, culture, history, tradition, activism, art from a particular region, community or artist.

Prepare a worksheet with the following questions for distribution (you may like to include additional questions):

- Think about the title of the exhibition. What do you think 'Culture Warriors' means?
- Who curated the exhibition? Why is this relevant?
- What are some of the themes you identified in the exhibition? Give examples to support your answer.
- What are some of the media being used in the exhibition? Give examples.
- Research, using books or the internet, one of the featured artists in the exhibition. Describe some of their other works.

As a class, and using the images from the educational kit on the National Gallery of Australia website, students may also like to put together their own Culture Warriors exhibition for other students and classes.

Students should ensure that all works are properly annotated, and, where possible, include information from the exhibition where the artist is talking about their work.

Note to teachers: Culture Warriors: National Indigenous Art Triennial presents the work of thirty Indigenous artists. The exhibition demonstrates the wide range of contemporary Indigenous art practice taking place today, from painting on bark and canvas, to sculpture, textiles, weaving, new media, photo media, printmaking and installation. The artists use traditional materials in highly original ways, some revitalising cultural practices, and others tantalising us with contemporary technologies and cross cultural references. Every state and territory of Australia is represented among the thirty Indigenous artists invited to exhibit by the inaugural Triennial curator, Brenda L Croft, Senior Curator, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Art, National Gallery of Australia, and member of the Gurindji and Mudpurra peoples. Brenda formerly held the role of Indigenous Curator at the Art Gallery of Western Australia from 1999 through to 2001.

The theme and title of the 2007 Triennial, Culture Warriors, carries a number of interpretations, from references to historical Indigenous warriors to investigations of current political and social issues. Although there are a number of artworks that have political messages in this exhibition, there are also examples of bark painting and weaving in which the spiritual significance of the works of art reminds us that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander art is the oldest continuing art tradition in the world.

Activity 2

This activity enables students to explore music as a form of cultural expression and the

different forms this expression takes, such as political expression, information about a particular region or connection to land etc.

Students are to put together a music program for the national Indigenous radio station. They may like to explore the websites of Indigenous radio stations:

National Indigenous Radio Service

<http://www.nirs.org.au/>

Gadigal Koorie Radio

www.gadigal.org.au/

3 Kool n Deadly

www.3knd.org.au

Students should visit the programming page of one of these websites with the intention of developing their own program for the station.

Students then choose a theme around which to base their program. They may like to re-read the 'music' section to get some ideas for this. Themes could include: protest and activism, family, land, history, tradition, country and western, hip-hop, contemporary music, music from a particular region or artist, ceremony etc.

Students must script their program taking any guidelines from their chosen radio station into account. The script must explain and justify the chosen theme, and also include a brief biography of their chosen band and artist, and an explanation of how they fit the theme.

If students are able to source the tracks, then they may like to record their program (as part of an ICT-integrated project). However, a script and evidence that they have researched their artists and their work will suffice.

Activity 3

Part A

The purpose of this activity is for students to identify a theme or purpose behind non-traditional mediums, for example, an Indigenous film or piece of writing.

After reading a book by an Indigenous author or watching an Indigenous film, students are to write a review. (They may need to do additional research other than just watch/read the work in order to do this.)

The review needs to include a critique of the work, but also whether the reviewer sees the piece as an expression of Indigenous culture and identity. Does the work have a theme? What purpose does it serve? How does it contribute to the wider art form? What does it offer Indigenous and non-Indigenous readers/viewers?

Part B The purpose of this activity is for students to identify with one of the Indigenous characters in the book or film to gain a better understanding of issues like identity, discrimination or cultural pride etc.

Students are to choose one of the Indigenous characters in the book or film that they review, and are to write three diary entries as that character, in a response to what is happening around them. They can be consecutive diary entries, or responses to three different events in the story/film.

In this activity students should identify with one of the Indigenous characters in the book or film and write a daily diary so they can reflect on how they think the character is responding to what's happening around them.



EXAMPLES OF INDIGENOUS WRITERS

Edward Warrigal Anderson, novelist	Wesley Enoch, playwright, director
Jimmy Barker, memoirist	Lionel Fogarty, poet and activist
Larissa Behrendt, activist, lawyer and novelist	Richard Frankland, playwright, filmmaker, singer, songwriter
Lisa Bellear, dramatist and poet	Kevin Gilbert, activist, writer, artist
Roger Bennett, playwright	Burruga Gutya (Ken Canning), poet
Ross Boddington, children's literature	Jane Harrison, playwright
GL Bostock, playwright	Ruth Hegarty, writer
Margaret Brusnahan, poetry, humor and children's literature	Anita Heiss novelist and children's author
Cheryl Buchanan, playwright	Elizabeth Eileen Hodgson, poet
John Muk Muk Burke, poet	Ruby Langford Ginibi, writer, historian,
Mary Carmel Charles, children's fiction	Labumore (Elsie Roughsey), autobiographer
Jimmy Chi, songwriter and playwright	Sally Morgan, autobiographer, writer
Mona Matilda (Monica) Clare, novelist and autobiographer	Oodgeroo Noonuccal (Kath Walker), poet
Vivienne Cleven, novelist, playwright	Doris Pilkington Garimara, novelist
Cathy Craigie, playwright	Kim Scott, novelist
Evelyn Crawford, memoirist	Samuel Wagan Watson, poet
Jack Davis, poet and playwright	Glenyse Ward, autobiographer
Graeme Dixon, poet and memoirist	Sam Watson, novelist and filmmaker
Lorna Rose Dixon, linguist and memoirist	Herb Wharton, poet and novelist
Bill Dodd, memoirist	Tara June Winch, novelist
Mabel Edmund, autobiographer	Alexis Wright, novelist

FILMS BY INDIGENOUS FILMMAKERS

(Note there are other well-known feature films centring on Indigenous subject matter, like 'Ten Canoes' by Rolf de Heer and 'Rabbit-Proof Fence' by Phil Noyce. The idea here is to investigate and discuss works created by Indigenous filmmakers. Examples follow:

'Here I Am'	Beck Cole, director
'Bran Nue Dae; (based on the 1990 musical by Jimmy Chi)	Rachel Perkins, director
'Samson and Delilah'	Warwick Thornton, director
'Beneath Clouds'	Ivan Sen, director
'Radiance'	Rachel Perkins, director
'Bedevil'	Tracey Moffatt, director
'Jindalee Lady'	Bryan Syron, director
'Crocodile Dreaming'	Darlene Johnson, writer and director
'Convincing Ground' and 'Harry's War'	Richard Frankland, director
'Tent Embassy'	Frances Peters-Little, director

There are also a range of short films by Indigenous film-makers, for example, 'Shifting Sands' (2000) and 'From Sand to Celluloid' (2000) and 'Bit of Black Business' (2007).

Activity 4

This activity motivates students to think about how the Indigenous arts serve Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander individuals and artists and also what they contribute to the non-Indigenous Australian community.

Students are to read about or listen to Indigenous media such as:

Message Stick
Living Back
Koori Mail
National Indigenous Times
Imparja Television
Walpiri Media Association (trading as PAW Media and Communications)
Vibe
3KND radio
National Indigenous Radio Service
The Black Book Directory
National Indigenous Television (NITV)

Look at the 'history' or 'about us' sections of the websites. In a class discussion, students are to contribute to the following questions: How are these organisations contributing to Indigenous autonomy? How are they vehicles of Indigenous culture? How are these organisations reviving and maintaining culture? What do they contribute to the Indigenous community? What do they contribute to the non-Indigenous community?

Students should think about the following: where these organisations broadcast, who runs them, who watches or listens to them, who is able to access them, and the kind of the content they present.

Activity 5

The purpose of this activity is for students to understand the contribution that Indigenous Australians have made to the wider Australian community, specifically through sporting activities. Students also see that sport plays an important role within communities. It has also played an important role within Indigenous history and the struggle for equality, for example the Aboriginal cricket team in 1868. It also encourages students to research Indigenous sportspeople beyond obvious contemporary Indigenous sports celebrities such as Patrick Mills and Cathy Freeman.

Discuss the students' knowledge of Indigenous sports people. Who do they know? What sport did they/do they play? Does there seem to be a sport that has more Indigenous players than others? (For example, does AFL have more Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander players than hockey or basketball?) Are there programs in place, like mentoring, to help Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander sportspeople take part at a competitive level?

Activity 6

Obtain a copy of *Black Gold* by Colin and Paul Tatz (Aboriginal Studies Press) and bring students' attention to the variety of sports that Indigenous sports people have been involved in.

Other books you may like to consider include:

Albert, T 2008, *Indigenous Sporting Greats*, Rigby/Pearson Education, Port Melbourne.

Gorman, S 2011, *Legends: The AFL Indigenous Team of the Century 1905-2005*, Aboriginal Studies Press, Canberra.

Maynard, J 2003, *Aboriginal Stars of the Turf: Jockeys of Australia's racing history*, Aboriginal Studies Press, Canberra.

Jones, G 2000, *True Colours*, Deadly Vibe, Strawberry Hills, NSW.

Saunders, K 1992, *Learning the Ropes*, Aboriginal Studies Press, Canberra.

Students are to choose a lesser-known Indigenous sportsperson or team and write an article about them for their local newspaper. Before choosing their sportsperson they should consider the region that they live in, the sports that are popular in that region and sportspeople that might be from that state or region.

The article should include a brief biography of the sportsperson, their sporting achievements, and their contribution to the sport and their community.

Activity 7

Students should familiarise themselves with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander flags, see pp. XX-XX. They should then choose the national flags of three countries or groups of people, including at least one newer country, like Australia's neighbour, East Timor. Then, via class discussion, students discuss the symbolism of the various elements within the flags and how the flags, taken as a whole, represent the culture and identity of their people, and can be a rallying point for pride.

Activity 8

Just for fun. Students may like to play some of the traditional games found on the following website to learn about the diversity of traditional Indigenous sports.

Yulunga: Traditional Indigenous Games,

<http://www.ausport.gov.au/participating/indigenous/resources/games_and_activities/full_resource>

Educational Resources: Teachers' notes
The Little Red Yellow Black website, <http://www.aiatsis.gov.au/lryb/>