

POSTCARDS FROM UTAH ARTISTS

Introduction

This packet of lesson material is based on the Springville Museum of Art's Elementary Postcard Set. These 24 postcards are the same images as the SMA Elementary Posters (Each set has 24 postcards because the 4 images on the Cyrus Dallin Poster have been made into separate postcards). Each Elementary School in Utah will receive 16 sets of the postcards.

The postcards were chosen as a tool for visual art education because they are relatively inexpensive, children focus longer on objects they can hold in their hands, and because postcards lend themselves so well to cooperative learning. In addition, teachers can easily increase their postcard collections by purchasing postcards from museums or through art supply catalogs or by downloading images and making

color copies of the images. Another free source of postcards is from galleries with mailing lists.

In the field of education, cooperative learning has been shown to result in substantial and consistent positive effects on achievement. Multiple sets of postcards lend themselves particularly well to this cooperative approach because they can be used in small groups in which the discovery and

processing of knowledge shifts from an individual learner to that of a group of learners. Effective cooperative learning has many benefits for students. Some of these are the following:

- (a) students are individually accountable for their own learning gains,
- (b) they learn to respect the contributions of others,
- (c) previously reluctant or hostile students are drawn into full participation,
- (d) students learn both to provide and also receive encouragement,
- (e) they participate at an increased rate in language building, and
- (f) they develop leadership skills.

The core of the curriculum using these postcards is from Robert Nickelson's Master's of Art Education thesis. The lessons are formulated as integrated lessons that cover the four areas of art education: Aesthetics, Art Criticism, Art History, and Art Production. [The Utah State Core divides elementary visual arts into the areas of Making, Expressing, Perceiving, and Contextualizing.] Each lesson will take at least four class periods.

The thesis curriculum has lessons only for grades 1, 3, and 5, but the lessons are adaptable and have been used successfully for grades 1-7. In addition, the lessons have been used in university classes for elementary education majors and were enjoyed by those students. Other lessons have been added for grades 2, 4, and 6.

The packet contains some other ways to use the postcards in grades K-12, identified by grade level and topic. Most are for visual arts, but a few other areas of the curriculum are included.



Lee Bennion, *Snow Queen*