



ARTIFACTS

- ✓ Students examine a collection of cultural artifacts and try to understand what they represent.
- ✓ The goal is to try to understand another culture and to practice the skill of observation. Also, students practice entering another culture by looking for the meaning behind cultural artifacts and examine how meaning is ascribed.
- ✓ Students enter a classroom where a variety of artifacts from one culture have been put in various spots. The artifacts should be objects that would allow the students to gain some insight into the cultures. Some suggestions are: clothing, jewelry, toys, photos of people, tools, utensils, arts and crafts, symbols, emblems, photos of dwellings and foods.
- ✓ Students walk around the room, surveying all the objects and then select one they would like to study. Two students can choose the same object as long as they study it separately. Two different interpretations can be a very useful point of discussion.
- ✓ Students study their objects for 5 minutes. Teacher encourages them to ask themselves the following questions:
 - What kind of society does it come from?
 - What meaning does it hold for the people of this culture?
 - What is my reaction to this object?
 - How would I describe it?

- ✓ Teacher assures students that they will have an opportunity to ask and receive answers to their specific questions at the end of the exercise.
- ✓ The class sits in a circle, each student with his/her object. Each student has 2 minutes to report to the others their experience with the object: any thoughts, feelings and questions.
- ✓ If language proficiency is a challenge, teacher helps the discussion by asking the following questions:
 - What were you thinking as you looked at your object?
 - Did you have any particular feelings?
 - What ideas did this object give you about the people who use/made it?
 - Did it remind you of anything in your own culture?
- ✓ Teacher asks the group to put the pieces together to make a comprehensive picture of the cultures. Two key questions are:
 - Describe the culture these artifacts come from.
 - How did you arrive at these conclusions?
- ✓ Teacher records responses to question one first on the board. It isn't important if responses are dissimilar or contradictory. The second question might be difficult for students to understand. So, it might be helpful to ask a specific question. For example, "Huang, you think art is important to the people of this culture. Why do you think so?" Students will likely have differences of opinion and there should be an opportunity to discuss the differences. Teacher needs to help students see *how* they gave meaning to the objects and to the cultures.
- ✓ Now, the students have a chance to ask their specific questions.
- ✓ Synthesis: What did you learn from doing this exercise?