PUBLIC SCHOOL VISUAL ARTS TEACHERS
AS CURRICULAR DECISION MAKER

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To my Wife, Andrea and our children, Payton and Piper; you have lived this journey with me. Thank you for supporting me.

To the memory of my mother, Mary Ann, who always said, "When you go to college" not "if."

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This is a study of how elementary visual arts teachers' perceive the contexts under which they make curricular decisions. In this autoethnographic study, I draw from my personal and professional experiences as an elementary art educator, triangulated by interviews with six other art teachers to describe contexts that impact decisions regarding curriculum design and strategies of instructing k-6 students in art. I explore how we perceive the contexts that impact the process of curricular decision-making through narrative analysis. An assumption underpinning the thesis of this study is that valuable insights into the work and identity of teachers can be gained by examining perceptions of personal experiences in schools and with students. Visual arts teachers work within varied and complex contexts, and decisions are based on the unique setting within which they work.

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Chapter 1 Introduction

"A good story is authentic; it tells who you are and what you stand for. It brings out the essence and shows the road you're on. It speaks to the imagination and gives customers and employees something solid to hold onto." --Raf Stevens[1]

Stories are meant to be shared, and when we share, our understanding of teaching can often be transformed in hopeful and promising ways. --D. Graham[2]

When asked to talk about my dissertation the first question is often, "How did you pick that topic?" I respond, "It is what I have lived." My research reflects the story of how I came to be an educator, what I chose and how I chose to teach it and my lived experiences as a teacher of students from diverse backgrounds in several school locations. Currently, I teach visual art to students in a 'high needs, low-performing"[3] elementary school in a small Midwestern town. My research describes the journey of developing a curriculum that has been informed through years of teaching art in public schools, and how that curriculum evolved based on particular events and experiences I lived through with my students. My experiences were not unique in the sense that no other teacher has had similar experiences, but are exceptional in the confluence of contexts that made up my teaching experience. Curricular trends and the cultural place and time of a school influence the decisions that teachers make within their classrooms; this is what

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[1] Raf Stevens, corporate storyteller / presenter - from presentation 10/8/2011
[2] Graham, D. (2012). Teacher stories: The language of learning in teaching
[3] low socio-economic demographic and failing the state mandated assessment for multiple years

Shulman (1987) referred to as the "distinctive bodies of knowledge for teaching" (p. 8). Unique individual experiences are rites of passage for public school visual arts teachers.

As an instructor in an art teacher education program, I shared stories of how I evolved from novice to adept designer of curricula with my students, who were pre-service teachers. Hearing my stories, these students appreciated a glimpse into their future. After they had become practicing teachers, many would return to tell stories about particular circumstances that shaped their curricular decisions. I recognized a common thread in all our stories - that settings and situation influence teachers' decision-making.

These stories were the genesis of a journey to better understand how art teachers perceive the local contexts and processes of making curricular decisions. When I began this writing, I was teaching at the university level, and like Jean Clandinin and Michael Connelly (1992), I regard myself as "school [teacher] working in a university setting" (p. 363). My interests and my sympathies lie in the classroom with visual arts teachers. Initially, my study was to be reflective of my position outside looking in at six other teachers' perceptions. Yet, I think the study was always about my experiences. When eventually I returned to the K-6 art classroom, I consciously refocused the subject of my study. I determined it is important that I describe and reflect upon, to critically understand, my own curricular decisions in the context of the particular school and among the specific group of students whom I taught.

In 2013, I returned to the K-6 art classroom at the request of a principal of a school that had been deemed failing by state assessment standards[4] and negative community perceptions. The school's principal and staff were struggling to implement an arts-focused curriculum in an attempt to improve the schools failing status. Based on conversations with my university mentors, the principal had come to believe that my knowledge, background in arts-based strategies, curricular understanding, and multicultural backgrounds could assist in making this significant change. I agreed to leave my university position and accept the challenge to work with students and staff of the school in developing effective arts-infused strategies aimed at improving student learning. Thus began a new phase of my career and life.

The transition back to the K-6 classroom shifted the focus of my study from the experiences *other* art teachers to reflectively studying myself as one of a group of art teachers. The study became about *we* teachers rather than *those* teachers. I became a participant in my own study. The process of studying others morphed into a study of self and others through an analytic autoethnography methodology, as described by Anderson (2006). Some may argue this strategy might bias findings in favor of teachers. I see such a potential bias as a strength. In centering my view by providing a window into the teacher's' point of view, I

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[4] For details on state accountability ratings please see: http://www.doe.in.gov/accountability/annual-school-performance-reports
Individual school reports available at: http://compass.doe.in.gov/dashboard/overview.aspx?type=school&id=6197

give voice to those who are on the front lines of curricular decision making and who interact one-on-one as instructors of students.

This study looks at perceptions voiced by six teacher participants as examined through an auto-ethnographic lens, for once I re-entered the K-6 art classroom I was compelled to examine processes of curriculum decision making from a personal rather than an outsider perspective. I agree with Richardson (1994), who supposed "that it is a teacher who knows best what it means to be a teacher" (p. 5). A few researchers have argued that research by teachers (for teachers) is fundamentally different from research conducted by outside researchers (see Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1993). I concur with Richardson that "research conducted by teachers may be more useful to teachers for the improvement of practice" (p. 5). Thus, the scope of this research has been limited to teachers, for the benefit of teachers and future teacher (and thus teacher educators) as designers and instructors of curriculum.

In this autoethnographic study, I have sought to understand what and how various factors influenced a select group of teachers and my processes of curricular decision-making. The inquiry arose from questions about my experiences, first as a new art teacher of K-12 students, then as an educator of pre-service teachers, and then again as a K-6 art teacher. Through auto-ethnographic study, participant interviews, and subsequent analysis using grounded theory, I show how these teachers and I perceived our unique contextualized experiences as impacting our curricular decision-making.

Visual Arts Teachers as Curricular Decision-Makers

Teacher education programs deal explicitly with curriculum, and virtually every pre-service teacher is required to write lesson plans and curriculum units as part of their program requirements (Day, 1996). However, less attention is given to considerations of the contexts of teaching that impact art teachers' curricular decisions on a daily basis. These considerations include physical, financial, and time issues; community support; student diversity and interest; administrator, teacher, and parental attitudes; the breadth of art content; and their values and philosophical foundations (Day, 1996). In comparison to teachers of other subjects, art teachers traditionally have been granted flexibility and autonomy in their curricular choices, and they tend to eschew reliance on a prescribed "teacher proof curriculum" (Erickson, 2002). In schools or school districts without visual arts supervisors, where standardized state or local curriculum guides are either not dictated, are overly general, or where no standardized state achievement tests are required, art teachers are particularly reluctant to depend upon prescriptive curricula (Day, 1996; Dorn, 1994; Eisner, 2002; Erickson, 2004). These art teachers, therefore, accept, are assigned, or must assume responsibility for the development of a school's art curriculum, as well as its implementation. The nature of curriculum design and decision-making is complex and as such, art teachers must consider a wide range of contexts as they develop curricula. Teachers make choices about which philosophic approaches to art education they will take. These philosophies often contradict,

oppose, and compete with each other in the research and literature of art education. Teachers must maneuver through complex national, state, and local school policies that impact teaching and student learning; consider practical contexts of teaching, and determine how to incorporate new information-communication technologies and media into their lessons (Chapman, 1997; Congdon, 1996; Eisner, 1998; Erikson, 2004; Stockrocki, 2004). The bewildering array of contexts and choices teachers make during the curriculum development process makes it difficult for teacher educators to prepare pre-service teachers with definitive instructions about curriculum planning. To get at these contexts, we need to know what the teacher is thinking. I have chosen narrative as my form of investigation to get at what teachers are thinking. Connelly and Clandinin have used narrative inquiry in the form of storytelling as a tool to help teachers reflect on their personal, practical knowledge (Connelly & Clandinin, 1985). This approach appealed to me, as I have become a part of this investigation.

Rationale – Why study teachers as curriculum decision makers?

Theories of curriculum, teaching, and learning cannot alone address the many situations which arise in the classroom (Schwab, 1971), situations that may include the physical environment, or administrative, socio-cultural factors, economic, political, and technological challenges. As a general term I will refer to these situations as the *context of teaching*, that is, as influences beyond the scope of pedagogy or content knowledge. The value of studying how "concrete situations" (Lampert & Clark, 1990) or other contextual influences shaped the

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curriculum of experienced classroom teachers, may serve to better prepare pre-service teachers for their future teaching experience.

Stokrocki (2004) emphasizes context as an important element of deliberation when designing K-12 art curricula. Contextual considerations include the physical environment, socio-cultural factors, and economic and political challenges that are salient factors to consider with respect to teaching art. Clark and Peterson (1986) described contexts in terms of constraints and opportunities. They suggested teachers' pedagogical decisions are either constrained within school and community or are provided expansive opportunities by these contexts. Congdon (1996) stipulated that "art educators should not proceed with curriculum development, instructional decisions, or even choices about theoretical approaches apart from considering the context in which learning takes place" (p. 51). Curricular decision-making is complicated by multifarious, complex, broad, and locally specific contexts that bear upon the process and its outcome. Eisner (1998) recognized this reality when he wrote,

> [T]here is not nor will there be a replacement for the teacher who understands which course of action and which decision is most appropriate in this particular circumstance at this particular time (Eisner, 1998, p. 209).

These circumstances, as Eisner called them, have been identified by several names in research, including "contexts" (Stokrocki, 2004) "milieu" (Schwab, 1970), and "affordances and constraints" (Clark & Peterson, 1986). For

this study, I have chosen to call them contexts. These contexts will be defined as the contextual considerations that include the physical environment, administrative, socio-cultural factors, economic, political, and technological challenges, as well as the internal factors, values, beliefs, and assumptions of the individual teacher, which serve as factors in the curricular decision-making processes of art teachers.

In a recent study, LaPorte, Spiers, and Young (2008) surveyed teachers to discern factors that influenced their implementation of curriculum content. The study was empirical in nature and did not delve into a detailed description of the complexities, constraints, and opportunities of various contexts that teachers must maneuver while making curricular decisions. Similarly Bain, Newton, Kuster, and Milbrant (2010) investigated first-year teachers' understanding and implementation of meaningful curriculum. These researchers cursorily discussed the external factors that influenced the curricular decision making of their participants. My study works to expand upon the findings of these studies by looking at how a group of art teachers, including myself, perceive and describe the nature of our curricular decision-making processes within each of our unique contextual circumstances.

Methods and structure for the study

In this study, I have explored how a select group elementary visual arts teachers and I perceived the contexts that impacted our processes of curricular decision-making. This endeavor required delving into our decision-making

processes. As Clark and Peterson (1986) pointed out, a teacher's thought processes occur "inside teachers' heads" and thus are unobservable (p. 257). Through a self-narrative of my experiences (Laboskey, V & Lyons, N., 2002) in conjunction with in-depth, open-ended interviews with fellow participant teachers who tell stories about contexts as circumstances that influenced their decision-making, I sought to explore experiences of curricular decision making "with the goal of understanding those experiences" (Adams, Holman-Jones, Ellis. 2015, p. 68). Ellis (2004) told us the purpose of the personal narrative is to "understand a self" or aspects of a "lived life in a cultural context" (45). The author becomes the "I" in the narrative, and the participants become "us" (Ellis 2004 45). In this study, "I" am both subject and author. Thus, there are multiple "I's" in this journey. Connelly and Clandinin (1990) described their sense of the "I" this way:

> "As researchers writing narratively, we have come to understand part of this complexity as a problem in multiple "I's." We become "plurivocal" (Barnieh, 1989) in writing narratively. The "I" can speak as researcher, teacher, man or woman, commentator, research participant, narrative critic, and as theory builder. Yet in living the narrative inquiry process, we are one person. We are also one in the writing. (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990, p. 9)

The interview questions and techniques were informed by methods of inquiry such as Clark and Peterson's "thinking aloud" (1986) and Lyle's "stimulated recall" (2003), while my native analysis has been informed by Anderson (2006) and Ellis, C. (2004). Further, Clandinin and Connelly (1995) believe 'teacher knowledge' is related to teachers' personal history /past and

expressed in the teachers' present classroom practices. Interviews were conducted in each teacher's work environment, and questions were based in part on my observations of their working space as well as their spoken and gestural comments. This allowed for rich, in-depth recall and description by the teacher participants, which was often presented in narrative story form.

This study is based in part on the assumption, supported by academic literature (See Day, 1996; Dorn, 1994; Eisner, 2002; Erickson, 2004), that art teachers are free to develop and adapt the curriculum to their unique set of contexts. This is a study of the teacher's perceptions of their curricular decision-making within their unique contexts and how these contexts influence their vision or agenda for the visual arts curriculum.

Schwab's (1973) Curriculum Commonplaces and Schulman's (1987) Model of Pedagogical Reasoning and Action provides theoretical scaffolding for the study. Scaffolded around Schwab's framework of experiences that teachers must consider while creating curriculum, and Schulman's (1987) Model of Pedagogical Reasoning and Action provide processes for "making effective instruction" (p. 14). Scaffolding the analysis of this study around Schwab's framework of experiences that teachers must consider while creating curriculum, and then comparing my findings with Schulman's model provides a theoretical frame for the study. The study was one of self-examination (auto-ethnography) and examination of a comparative group of fellow art teachers. I coded texts of their interviews, using Corbin and Strauss' (2007) axial coding techniques, to

situate the elements identified by the participants within (or outside) that framework. A content analysis was then conducted.

Using analytic autoethnographic techniques (Anderson, 2006) I use my narrative to situate my experience and understandings. Anderson proposed five features for an analytic autoethnography that is grounded in self-experience:

1. Complete member research
2. Analytical reflexivity
3. Narrative visibility of the researcher's self
4. Dialogue with informants beyond the self
5. Commitment to theoretical analysis (Anderson 2006 p. 378)

These bear similarity to Lyboskey and Lyons (2002) characteristics of practices as modes of inquiry and ways of knowing:

1. Intentional reflective human actions
2. Socially and contextually situated
3. Engaging participants in interrogating aspects of teaching and learning by "storying" the experience
4. Implicating the identities of those involved
5. Toward constructing meaning and knowledge. (p. 21)

Research Questions

The study was prompted by three overarching questions formulated out of my experiences and were used to guide the investigation:

1. How do visual arts teachers perceive the contexts influencing their curricular decision-making processes?
2. What constraints and freedoms influence elementary visual arts

teachers' curricular decisions?

3. What external and internal circumstances affect curricular decisions?

Organization of the Dissertation

In the following chapters, I review literature related to the topic described above, establish a focused research question and theoretical model for investigation, describe research methods, participant reliability and the establishment of validity, present my story and the stories of those select fellow art teachers, and then present the analysis and conclusions to this investigation.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

As a boy growing up on a farm in Kentucky, my grandfather insisted we plow the potatoes "by hand" (i.e., by horse and hand plow[5]). Before he would allow any plowing to take place, we would walk the field, checking for items that might injure the horse or damage the hand plow. It was this preparing before the work that has sustained me, made it possible for me to be successful. I am doing that here; I am metaphorically "walking the field". Preparing myself and the reader for the work ahead, grounding our understanding in the field of art education and curricular decision making in this contemporary age.

In this chapter, I will review briefly the foundational knowledge that informs this investigation. Primarily, I will focus on literature about teacher's decision-making practices and contexts that have been documented as influencing pedagogy in art education, and how these contexts are instrumental in forming teachers' identities as curriculum designers. Visual arts education possesses a unique place among other disciplines in the educational realm. My experiences and the literature affirm that there is a curricular openness to visual art education that is not characteristic of curricula designed for teaching subjects like math, language arts or other 'academic' subjects. This review will help to ground the analysis of my experiences in the broader academic literature about the experiences of visual art teachers and nature of art education.

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[5] He insisted on horse and hand plow to prevent the tractors from damaging the potatoes.

Art Teachers' Decision-Making Practices

Although art teachers traditionally have a great deal of flexibility and autonomy in their art curriculum choices (Day, 1996; Dorn, 1994; Eisner, 2002; Erickson, 2004), they have tended to avoid reliance on 'teacher- proof curriculums' (Eisner, 2002). Eisner (2002) described teachers' uses of prepackaged, teacher-proof curriculum (i.e. elaborate productions designed by large publishers that are prescriptive and detailed with goals expected to be universally effective), as occasional, with commercially produced curricular materials being incorporated in only part of the teachers' overall planned curriculum. Pre-packaged materials may provide inspiration and serve as rich resource materials, but art teachers rarely use them without making "the sorts of adjustments that are needed to suit local circumstances" (Eisner, 2004, p.148). Eisner insisted that there is always a "distance between the intentions of curriculum designers and actual teaching practice" (p.149). Within that space, many factors at play influence what art teachers select to teach and how they approach the design and implementation of their art curricula.

Context

Stokrocki (2004) emphasized context as an important element of deliberation when designing K-12 art curricula. Contextual considerations include the physical environment, socio-cultural factors, and economic and political challenges that are salient factors to consider regarding teaching art. Clark and

Peterson (1986) described contexts as constraints and opportunities. They suggested teachers' pedagogical decisions are either constrained within school and community or provided expansive opportunities by these contexts. Congdon (1996) stipulates that "art educators should not proceed with curriculum development, instructional decisions, or even choices about theoretical approaches apart from considering the context in which learning takes place" (p. 51). Eisner (1998) recognized this complicated and locally specific reality of contexts of curricular decision making as requiring the expertise of a thoughtful "teacher who understands which course of action and which decision is most appropriate in this particular circumstance at this particular time" (Eisner, 1998, p. 209).

In the following sections, I examine literature concerning the impact of contexts related to teaching in the public school setting. These contexts include-school policy, school environment (the physical space, school culture, student population), community and culture, interactive communication technologies, historical, and teachers' professional philosophical, curricular, and educative conditions; contexts that have an impact on curriculum decisions made by art teachers.

Historical context

Some enduring philosophical and curricular ideas have influenced art education practices in the United States. Notions have changed over time about

why art should be included in the school curriculum and the purpose for which it should be taught.

Early advocates argued a role for art education in schools based on two needs: to prepare children of the elite to participate in genteel society and to prepare working-class youth to enter artisan vocations for the advancement of industry. In the United States during the 1830-40s, education in the arts was perceived to be a proper pursuit of polite society, since it was believed that engagement with certain kinds of art could elevate moral faculties. Art education was additionally valued as a means of ensuring technical literacy among children of middle and working classes (Efland, 1990; Stankiewicz, 2001; Wygant 1997). These students would "practice the faculty of observation and representation, a correct knowledge of relationships, especially those of the human body, the ability to translate objects from nature directly onto paper, and hence to use drawing as a kind of language" (Efland, 1990, p. 78). This kind of art instruction was to prepare young citizens for entry into vocational positions as designers and artisans, who were necessary for the advancement of a growing industrial society.

At the turn of the twentieth century, the rationale for including art in the school curriculum expanded from purposes of vocational training to include art in the service of social reform and art as creative self-expression. Wesley Dow's insistence on originality in student work, for example, marked this latter significant shift (Efland, 1990). Art education as a means of nurturing creative

self-expression also coincided with growing interests in child development and psychological studies of artistic aptitude. This refocused notion of the purpose of art mirrored movements in the art world that advocated art for art's sake (Efland, 1990; Stankiewicz, 2001).

During the 1930s, partly in reaction to the Great Depression, art education came to be seen as a means of improving everyday life; attention was paid to applied arts, design, craft making, and public art that inspired and encouraged a sense of community and communal purpose. Art educators also encouraged integrating art with other subjects within the schools. World events brought about additional changes to ideas about what art styles, content, and strategies should be the focus of teaching art. With the closing of the Bauhaus[6] in Germany in 1932, a significant number of its faculty fled to and resettled in the United States. As aesthetic ideals of the Bauhaus were espoused and disseminated throughout the United States, many art educators began embracing modernist styles, focusing on the elements and principles of design, and incorporating art history content into their curricula (Efland, 1990; Stankiewicz, 2001; Wygant, 1997). Child art making as an expressive activity that was best nurtured by permitting it to unfold naturally without interference from adult models was advocated by influential art educators, including Victor Lowenfeld, whose ideas were especially popular among art teachers of elementary students (Lowenfeld & Brittan, 1987).

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[6] An innovative school, run by artists-craftsmen, that combined Minimalist aesthetic notions of craft and fine arts

Response to the launch of Sputnik and the era of the Cold War, 1957 brought curriculum reforms and an interest in the 'science' of education. Educators developed curricula for disciplines, which were seen as organized bodies of knowledge that drew upon specific methods of inquiry and involved communities of scholars. In the field of art education, the result was the evolution of a curricular framework that would come to be known as Discipline-based Art Education (DBAE). Later, during the 1980s, the *A Nation at Risk* report instigated a movement for excellence and accountability in education. Art educators felt pressures to justify the existence of art in public schools. Efforts made to establish art education as discipline-centered with a clear focus on a developmentally appropriate curriculum was grounded in Bruner's spiral curriculum theory (Erickson, 2004). These changes placed art education squarely in the DBAE camp. The discipline-based approach was further supported by public resistance to the rise of educational costs and taxpayers' resistance to funding educational programs that, if test scores were indicators, fell short of expectations. Schools were pushed to be accountable for student learning, and DBAE curricular designs addressed this by incorporating evaluation of art products and assessment of student learning in and about visual art (Sabol, 2004).

Current theories about the purposes of art education reflect both past and contemporary post-modern thought within an increasingly interconnected world. Influences from within and outside the field of art education, including those

pertaining to visual cultural studies, aesthetics, art criticism, art history, sociology, and psychology, inform contemporary art education (Anderson & Milbrant, 2005; Chapman, 1978). Although Visual Culture Art Education (VCAE) has been widely written about and advocated for as a curricular approach in art teacher preparation courses nationwide (Freedman, 2003a, 2003b; Freedman, & Sturh, 2004), it is not the only approach presented as effective or appropriate for the art education of K-12 students. Art for life (Anderson & Milbrant, 2005), community-based art education (CBAE), Social Action (Gude, 2000) multicultural art education (Cahn & Kocur 1996; Stuhr, Petrovich-Mwaniki, & Wasson, 1992), and creativity focused curricular instructional practices, all vie for a central place in art education theory and practice.

Which of these approaches will be embraced by art teachers as they design or develop curricula for their students might be influenced by a school's stated mission and an art teacher's perception of student needs. There are a wide variety of purposes that teachers may choose. These include art for vocational purposes, art as social activism, art as creative endeavor, art as personal and shared meaning (communication), art as a critical eye, art as cultural capital /enlightened citizenship, art as cultural lens, art as studio process and art as integrative tool (Burton, 2004; Irwin, & Chalmers, 2007; White, 2004). Teachers are influenced by what they learned in their pre-service education, but the largest influence upon how teachers teach may be what were exposed to and

came to be comfortable with as student teachers (LaPorte, Spiers, and Young 2008) and what they knew from their own experiences.

Research suggests that teachers have a proclivity to teach as they were taught (Kennedy, 1991). Taking this into consideration, art teachers may reject approaches or certain aspects of approaches they learned during their teacher education preparation in favor of approaches they experienced during their own K-12 education (Stuhr, 2003). As a result, elements of earlier curricular approaches may reappear in their decision-making.

Chapman (1982) found that, regardless of the theories espoused by teacher education programs and the philosophical beliefs art teachers 'claimed to espouse' in practice, art curricula across the nation was heavily biased towards a form of "school art" (p. 58) that while allowing the use of art materials and the creation of "clever projects that require little mastery and thought" (p. 2). My personal observation of child art exhibitions suggests that school art is still prevalent in K-12 schools and may drive many decisions about art curriculum. Perhaps some teachers choose this traditionally practiced curriculum, not because it is the way they were taught, but because it is widely perceived as being politically neutral and ideologically safe.

Policy as context

A push towards accountability continued with the passage of the *Goals 2000: Educate America Act.* Standards for all content areas, including visual art, were mandated and written into federal law. The law acknowledges visual art as

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a core subject, as important (theoretically) to the school curriculum as English, mathematics, history, civics and government, geography, science, and foreign languages. As academic standards emerged as a focal point of the reform legislation, the Consortium of National Arts Education Associations successfully approached the U.S. Department of Education, the National Endowment for the Arts, and the National Endowment for the Humanities, for a grant to determine what the nation's school children should know and be able to do in the arts. The consortium established and published the first national standards for art education (Consortium of National Arts Education Associations, 1994). Emphasis on state testing in the visual arts is of concern for art teachers, who teach in states that employ state testing in art, and therefore art teachers must reconsider their curricula designs based on standards, which are assumed to be frameworks for art learning that assessed on state tests (Sabol, 2004).

Nevertheless, uniform testing in the arts has not been mandated by any state (Sabol, 2004). The lack of formalized accountability provides some leeway regarding art curriculum design. Teachers of art may interpret standards differently since they are not required to 'teach to the test.' On the other hand, some administrators are requiring that visual arts teachers assist in preparing students for academic testing in other academic areas by integrating art content with non-art specific content in ways that support student learning in other academic areas and encourage higher test scores in these non-art specific areas (Sabol, 2004).

The No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act was enacted in 2002. Since that time, research has found that among school districts that reported increasing time for language arts or math, 72 percent of those districts reduced time by a total of at least 75 minutes per week for one or more other subjects. Some districts reported decreasing the total instructional time for arts and music by 50 percent or more below pre-NCLB levels.

For school districts with at least one school identified for NCLB improvement, the average number of minutes per week devoted to art and music is fewest out of all subject areas studied, with 97 minutes for arts compared to 568 for reading. (McMurrer, 2008) These cuts would have significant ramifications for art programs in those schools and, likewise, have implications for curricular choices teachers in these schools might make.

The school context

The school context is described by May (1993) as the conditions and circumstances that are unique to the teacher and in this case the art teacher. These include: (a) conditions and circumstances relating to school environment such as location and physical space, (b) school culture, which includes politics, pedagogical/methodological policies, and philosophies espoused by policy makers, administrators and faculty of a school, (c) demographics of the student population, and (d) the socio-political forces influences exerted from the larger external community (p. 211-218).

School Culture: Environment and Working Conditions.

The logistics of working conditions dramatically impact curricular choices made by teachers. Working conditions vary widely from one school to another and force teachers to adapt curricular programs accordingly. Examples of these may include loudspeaker interruptions, too cool or hot rooms, poor versus good lighting, high versus low student to teacher ratios, budgetary limitations and inaccessibility of art materials, tools, cleanup facilities, and 'art a la carte' versus classroom space set aside for the art instruction. Circumstances of scheduling, such as having to travel between multiple schools, or teaching twenty-five versus fifty-minute classes, also affect curricular design in fundamental and practical ways. Finally, safety issues will affect decisions about curriculum and instruction (Champlin, 1997; Conners, 2000; Susi 1990). Any one of these situations may pose logistical problems that art teachers must consider and account for, to provide content-rich, in-depth art learning and making.

Issues of attitude and support for art programs and curricula are addressed in the work of Champlin (1997) who sees art teachers burdened with circumstances with which "teachers of most other subjects need not contend," such as the need to "sell" their program "up and down the line," from school counselors, principals, and other teachers within the school, to parents, PTAs, school boards, state departments of education and state legislatures on the outside and beyond the school (p. 117). The need to keep gatekeepers informed and impressed to maintain an adequate level of support for art programs is an

aspect of the school context rarely discussed in the literature yet is necessary to the survival of art education. How does this affect teaching practice? Champlin (1997) finds it detrimental to a fully developed art education program. Many teachers would agree that it is easier to "impress" with an art program through its visibility and product orientation than to "inform" with an art education program which consists more of foundation building, reflection, and process orientation. (Champlin, 1997, p. 123)

An issue faced by many art teachers is administrative in nature whereby "principals demand constant participation in exhibit after exhibit and contest after contest" (Champlin, 1997, p.123). While not written policies, these expectations dramatically impact art education in that they influence the development of curricula focused entirely on producing products.

Demographics of student populations

Students arrive at art teacher's doors having a variety of ability levels, preparedness, needs, wants, and personal life situations. Teachers must take into account these contexts when planning art curricula. The cultural understandings children bring with them to art classrooms, which may be grounded in class or socio-economic differences, gender identities, racial and ethnic identities, or geography will determine students' receptivity to particular images, art forms, and ideas about art (Thomson, 2007). This, in turn, suggests some content and instructional strategies may be more effective than others when planning art programs for specific groups of diverse populations.

Nevertheless, curricular approaches to teaching to and about cultural difference

fall into one of three categories; teaching for cultural awareness, cultural

pluralism, or social activism (Blocker, 2004; Garber, & Costantino, 2007; Irwin, &

Chalmers, 2007). Preference for one approach over another may depend on a

teacher's intuition of student needs and upon the theoretical stance advocated by

instructors of their teacher educational experiences, and/or upon external

preferences or pressures from the school and/or larger socio-political community.

Technological context

A recent addition to the schooling context is the role of communication

technologies such as the Internet (including web 2.0 technologies) and other

digital and interactive technologies that have altered the way people, who have

access to these technologies, conduct business and live their lives.

Information/communication technologies have altered the way we perceive and

interact with the world. The physical and conceptual boundaries that formerly

worked to establish and maintain distinctions have given way to different

configurations of community and intersections of population and culture (Tavin &

Hausman, 2004).

Technological options have profound ramifications for education. Students

with access to these technologies need no longer rely on traditional education

settings, texts, or instructional delivery modes for learning. Students use

technology and online infrastructures to find, learn, and create in their own self-

selected interest communities. Web 2.0 technologies like *Flickr*, *Youtube, Twitter,*

Facebook, Myspace, urban dictionary, digg, and *del.icio.us* facilitate, learning, creating, and interacting with user generated, widely shared, visuals and information (Brown 2006; Lorenzo, Oblinger, & Dziuban, 2007). Communities like Instructables[7] and MAKE[8] demonstrate what Brown (2006) described as the Digital Age giving way to the Networked Age; where learning "communities self-organized on the net form distributed learning milieus" (p. 35). Manifold, (2007) researched the learning taking place in online artist sites like deviantArt.com[9], Cosplay[10], and FanArt Central[11], and found that these communities serve as learning communities as well as social communities.

Images and image-based information are becoming pervasive, and are increasingly referenced over texts. New technologies have made it easier to manipulate and alter images as well as share these images, blurring the line between fact and fantasy. Teachers of art have a responsibility to help students deal with the vast amounts of image information, from fine art and commercially produced visual culture, to art works created and co-created by amateurs, without always knowing how to critically evaluate or reflect on this information (Lorenzo, Oblinger, & Dziuban, 2007). Therefore, new technologies present a new set of challenges to curricular choice: What images will be examined? How will these be evaluated? What kinds of art might be created using media technologies, what crosses the line between original creation and plagiarism

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[7] www.instructables.com

[8] Blog.makezine.com

[9] www.deviantart.com

[10] www.cosplay.com

[11] www.fanart-central.net

when interacting with, and manipulating media conveyed imagery? Furthermore, technology alters the way students interact with one another in local communities, global interest groups, and online communities. This creates a new set of circumstances that informs curricular choice.

Instructional and disciplinary content

Many authors have argued for a new approach to art education in response to changing conditions in the world where the visual arts are concerned. Popular culture and the world of fine art are no longer separated and are a part of the larger visual culture that surrounds and shapes our daily lives (Ballengee-Morris & Stuhr, 2001; Blandy, 1994; Congdon, 1991; Duncum, 1990; Freedman, 1994, 2000, 2003, 2004; Smith-Shank, 1996; Tavin, 2000) in a time when technologically savvy youth are creating new forms of art and engaging with art learning in new ways (Jenkins, 2008; Johnson, 1999; Manifold, 2007). With this in mind, the curricular approach that is currently most widely advocated, i.e. visual culture has both its advocates and detractors. Many art educators advocate replacing the current curriculum and instruction with an "expanded vision of the place of visual arts in human experience" (Freedman & Stuhr, 2004, p. 816). One root of the visual culture approach to art education is the "importance of considering student identity in art curriculum planning and implementation" (Freedman, 2003b, p. 15). The arts allow cultural differences and identities to be illustrated and supported, and cultural boundaries to be crossed in ways that permit reflection and "self-revelation" as "a process of

identity development" (Freedman, 2003b, p. 16). Technology continually challenges understandings of self-identity and culture, and these challenges need to be understood and addressed by art educators as they plan curricula (Kellner 2002; Manifold, 2007)

Visual culture is a popular contemporary curricular choice but has its detractors. One major criticism leveled at visual culture art education is that it requires approaches and methods that are, as Duncum (2002), described, "A substantial shift in what is to be known and thereby have far-reaching implications for change in pre- and in-service training of teachers" (p. 7). Currently, most art teacher preparation programs are not prepared to instruct future art educators in visual culture approaches and methodologies of curriculum design and delivery (see Tavin, Kushins, & Elniski, 2007), nor are they prepared to incorporate changes in society and education that are being driven by communication technologies (Pletka, 2007). The interdisciplinary nature of visual culture is broad and complex, and the wide variety of information and courses needed to attain this knowledge are not built into most current pre and in-service programs (Anderson, 2003).

While no single focus dominates practice, many advocate for an inclusive social framework approach that would serve "the whole human person as an economic, social, cultural, and spiritual being" (Efland, 1996, p. 55). This model would include visual culture, issue based approaches, social action, global and multicultural, sexual/gender orientation, and other pluralistic ideas that pervade

current literature (Anderson & Mildbrandt, 2005; Erickson, 2004; Fehr, 2000; Freedman, 2003; Gaudelius & Spears 2002; Gude, 2000, 2004). Such an inclusive model might be modified as education moves out of formal classrooms to online learning sites directed within or extracurricular to traditional school environments (Pletka, 2007).

Teachers' Thought Process

Clark and Peterson (1986) identified three categories of teachers' thought processes:

  1. Teacher planning (pre-active and post-active thoughts);

  2. Teachers' interactive thoughts and decisions; and

  3. Teachers' theories and beliefs. (p. 257)

Categories one and two are temporal in that the first occurs before and after interaction with students, while the second occurs during classroom interaction. This distinction between the pre and post active thought (teacher planning) and the thought that occurs while interacting with students appears to be qualitatively different in the teachers' thought processes. The third category, teachers' theories and beliefs represent "the rich store of knowledge that teachers have that affects their planning and their interactive thoughts and decisions" (p. 258).

Research on Teacher as Curriculum Maker

According to Clandinin and Connelly (1992), literature directly focused on teachers as curriculum makers is "not adequately covered by the literature on teaching," rather teachers were absent from literature on "teaching of schools

subjects" and the "learning of subject matter" (p. 363). Clandinin and Connelly (1992) concluded that to the researcher, teacher and curriculum have often been held as separate inquiries, with the relation of teacher to curriculum being described as follows;

> …what researchers are inclined to call curriculum, i.e., the course
> of study is more akin to the Oxford English Dictionary's (OED)
> "curricle," defined as "a light, two-wheeled carriage for rapid
> movement." Curriculum packages, complete with intentions,
> instructional strategies, and materials, are rather like a carriage for
> the curriculum, and teachers become the curricular drivers. (p. 365)

This metaphor clearly defines the teacher's role not as a builder of curriculum, but rather as a driver to put forth what has been predetermined. The authors further demonstrate that researchers of education have subdivided curriculum into 'forms' and 'methods.' To illustrate this point, Popham and Baker (1970) wrote:

> [T]here are basically two kinds of decisions that the educator must
> make. First, he must decide what the objectives (that is, the ends)
> of the instructional system should be and second, he must decide
> on the procedures (that is, the means) for accomplishing those
> objectives. (p. 82)

Research about Teacher Decision Making

Decision-making processes involved in curriculum design and delivery have been studied as a larger part of the thought processes of teachers. Schwab's "practical" was "built around the forms of thought that address choice and action in the reality of ongoing experience" (Westbury, 2005, p. 94). While the first studies to consider this discourse are found in the mid-sixties, the "vast majority of the work has been done since 1976" (Clark & Peterson 1986). Studies have examined the relationship between teacher thought and action, teacher planning, and teachers' interactive thoughts during teaching (Clark & Peterson, 1986). Teacher decision-making processes have been studied in a psychological context for teaching, and educational research of this point of view seek to describe, understand and explain "how and why the observable activities of teachers' professional lives take on the forms and functions they do" (Clark & Peterson, 1986). The majority of studies examined by Clark and Peterson in 1986 focused on relationships between teacher behaviors, student behaviors, and student achievement. Also, researchers interested in teacher cognition explored differences between expert and novice teachers (Westerman, 1991). In one example, Fogarty (as cited in Clark & Peterson, 1986), found that expert teachers considered a broader scope of information than novice teachers. This broader scope of information includes knowledge of curriculum, students, pedagogy, subject matter, and beliefs; they weighed each component of information quickly and integrated this information into their planning and

teaching. Burton's (2004) analysis of data from a 1999 national survey of instructional strategies used by secondary art teachers in the United States corroborated the findings of Fogarty. Burton found that art teachers most frequently used studio-oriented teaching strategies and consider these strategies most effective in motivation, demonstration, and questioning strategies. Burton also discussed teacher's decisions regarding assessment and evaluation, use of electronic technology, and involvement in art exhibitions.

More recent research, reported by LaPorte, Spiers, and Young (2008) looked at the degree to which art education theory taught in teacher education programs influenced practice in the classrooms of early career art teachers. They found:

Even though students were influenced by what they learned as an undergraduate, what they knew and felt comfortable teaching was the highest influence. The survey instrument did not differentiate between the attitudes coming in or interests modified through a program, but being exposed to broader issues resulted in direct application, not reverting to public school enculturation. (p. 367)

The implication is that a significant factor in curriculum decision-making may still be what the teacher was taught prior to entering the teacher education program, regardless of or despite all other influences.

Teacher Planning

Teacher planning is a relatively recent focus of research and is part of the larger body of research concerned with teachers' thought processes. It has been studied significantly since Ralph Tyler (1949) proposed his sequence (see; Clark & Peterson, 1986; Clark & Yinger, 1979; Jackson, 1968; Shavelson & Stern, 1981). Planning is a concept that can be described as both a thought process and as an action (activity) (Clark & Peterson 1986). Clark and Peterson (1986) described the process of planning as one in which "a person visualizes the future, inventories means, and ends, and constructs a framework to guide his or her future action." and as a practical activity, as "the things that teachers do when they say that they are planning" (p. 260).

Curricular Choice Issues

Perceptions of the overarching purposes of art education within the public schools continue to ground basic curricular decisions. Efland, Freedman, and Stuhr (1996) described seven paradigm shifts that have occurred over time in art education curriculum: academic, elements of design, creative self-expression, art in daily life, art as a discipline, and current postmodernist directives. Many mid and late career art teachers were taught to use discipline-based (DBAE) curricular design strategies and most state art curricula are based on DBAE curricular designs (Burton, 2004; Sabol, 2004). Newer art teachers may have been trained in and adhere to visual culture (VCAE), community-based (CBAE), or other postmodern frameworks of curriculum design, but need to function within

DBAE-based state standards. The decision about which of these or several other approaches is selected will be influenced by the purposes for which art is perceived as being needed by administrators of the local school or citizens of a community. Perceptions of needs of students within a community may override theories about curricular approaches that were advocated during the teacher's teacher education (Burton, 2004).

Beyond curriculum choices driven by perceptions of arts purpose within the community at large, the context of the school experience itself triggers ideologically differing concerns. On the one hand, we might assume that those who were educated as teachers during a period of particular philosophic foci will turn to those espoused theoretical and philosophical underpinnings when designing curricula. On the other hand, if teachers are more likely to teach the way they were taught as K-12 students, they may continually draw from older paradigms, especially when restricted by environmental constraints such as too small a budget or too many students that must be taught in too short a time. When art teachers feel pressured or anxious to 'sell' their art program to parents, community and school administrators, even well-educated art teachers may revert to assigning school art projects that appear to be 'instant art, instant culture' in order to display visible evidence of art in the school (Chapman, 1983). In other cases, as time is pulled from visual art programs and reallocated to remedial instruction in tested subject areas, teachers may dispense with

preferred approaches in favor of art as a support mechanism for tested subjects or art as a pleasurable release or break from rigorous studies.

There does not seem to be research that articulates factors likely to cause teachers to dig in and maintain their deep ideological preferences in spite of or in resistance to obstacles, challenges, or opposition from internal or external contexts of teaching. If teachers are inclined to teach what they were taught, rather than what they were instructed to teach during teacher education, what are the implications for teaching in a context of Web 2.0 technologies and online learning communities? This is pioneering territory. As these technologies move teaching and learning into cyberspaces, teachers may no longer have to deal with some of the traditional environmental or logistical contexts of teaching, such as too cold or warm classrooms; but they will have a whole new group of contexts with which to contend, such as: Who does or does not have access to technology? As a consequence of access, what students are excluded? What socio-economic or cultural groups are ignored or left out. What cultures become extinct, or become invented or created? What constitutes originality versus plagiarism when images and ideas float freely in cyberspace, often without reference to a singular origin? What strategies are most beneficial and effective when teaching art in online versus real classroom environments? Will art education for those with access to technology differ in purpose and ideological grounding from art educational programs for those without access?

According to LaPorte et al (2008), "A balance between traditional and contemporary art education curriculum is a paradigm shift that takes time to occur" (p. 367). As economic and social conditions make online learning an option for students, how can teachers make the paradigmatic shift from teaching in traditional classrooms to teaching in cyberspace, especially when they have few prior experiences in online learning to inform their practice?

Ultimately, curricular decision-making as it relates to art education remains a complex process in practice as well as concept. Art teachers must take into consideration multiple internal and external factors (Clark & Peterson, 1986) that may limit, direct, or open up curricular possibilities. Teachers must work within the unique context of a school environment with its physical/virtual space, school culture, and student population. They also must work within the larger environment of parents, business people, school administrators, and political leaders.

Summary of Relevant Literature

The literature has demonstrated a wide variety of reasons for which art might be taught and presented various theoretical approaches to curriculum design. Mays (1993) pointed out that the decisions a teacher make regarding the design and implementation of a curriculum depends on "how the teacher was trained and where the teacher is teaching" (p. 37). However, research also suggests that, in spite of the best efforts of art teacher education programs to advocate for particular theoretical approaches, teachers may fall back on

teaching what they have experienced as students rather than teaching what they have been taught in teacher education programs.

Research also shows that curricular decision-making processes of teachers are complicated by the disposition of contexts within which they work. Teachers must maneuver through school contexts, which include physical-logistical, cultural, and community situations. The physical-logistical working conditions for teachers, including physical plant, student to teacher ratio, administrative issues, budgets, as well as other milieu, have been shown to impact curricular decisions (Champlin, 1997; Conners, 2000; Susi 1990). Art teachers may be more affected by some of these conditions than others. Teachers also must maneuver within the cultural contexts of the school, students, and community. These cultures according to Clark and Peterson (1986) can constrain or expand the opportunities for curricular decision-making provided teachers by their unique teaching context. Additionally, research into the use of technology by and impact of technology on students, teachers and on pre-service teachers demonstrates that the way teachers make curricular decisions has changed with the development and advancement of technologies.

The question that interests me is not if teachers' curricular decisions are impacted by these various factors and conditions, but rather in what ways and to what extent these and other factors affect the design and implementation of their curricula? Because art teachers, even novice teachers, are often entirely responsible for curricular choices in their classrooms, a greater understanding of

the processes that teachers undertake in making curricular decisions would be valuable in preparing future visual arts teachers. In short, better understanding about how, why, and under what conditions public school art teachers make curricular decisions may inform program planning for pre-service teachers to help them to be better prepared in their future as visual art teachers, who are flexible and able to adapt to a variety of teaching situations and create appropriate and equitable curriculum for their future students.

Chapter 3 Methodology: Autoethnography, Narrative Analysis, and Grounded Theory

Introduction

In this chapter I tell the story of the methods used to conduct this descriptive study and each step that was taken in the process. The study was undertaken to investigate how a select group of elementary visual arts teachers and I perceive and describe the contexts within which we make curricular decisions. This study is designed to discover dimensions and conditions related to these phenomena (Strauss & Corbin 1998), in this case; our (we teachers) perceptions of the influences on our curriculum making decisions. Through autoethnography, narrative analysis, and interviews, I examine how my fellow participants and I perceived the contexts that influenced our curriculum decision making.

The Purpose of this Study

LaPorte, Spiers, and Young (2008) surveyed teachers to discern the factors that influenced their implementation of curriculum content. Their study was empirical in nature and did not delve into a detailed description of the complexities, constraints, and opportunities of various contexts that teachers must maneuver while making curricular decisions. Bain, Newton, Kuster, and Milbrant (2010) investigated first-year teachers' understanding and implementation of meaningful curriculum. These researchers cursorily discussed

the external factors that influenced the curricular decision making of their participants. I hope to expand upon the findings of these studies by looking at how a group of art teachers and I perceive and describe the nature of curricular decision-making processes within our unique contextual circumstances in a small Midwest town.

A Narrative Type of Study

Narrative practices have been described as:

... intentional, reflective human actions, socially and contextually situated, in which teachers with their students, other colleagues, or researchers, interrogate their teaching practices to construct the meaning and interpretation of some compelling or puzzling aspect of teaching and learning through the production of narratives that lead to understanding, changed practices, and new hypotheses. (Laborskey & Lyons, 2002, p. 21)

My original plan to look at a select group of six teachers evolved into a narrative investigation of my own experiences supported by interviews with six other visual art teachers in nearby school districts or schools. The endeavor is based on grounded theory (Charmaz, 2006; Stern & Porr, 2011; Straus & Corbin 1998); the study was emergent, developing from my self-analysis and the data as I collected it. This study differed slightly from traditional grounded theory, in that I prefaced the investigation on my experience as a visual arts teacher in public schools, which informed both the direction and selection of research questions.

The nature of the dissertation process, namely the proposal process, also altered the nature of the grounded theory methods. As a result of a literature review conducted for an earlier unpublished research project, where I investigated visual art teachers' choices in the selection and implementation of multicultural content in their visual arts curriculum, I was able to hone the direction and formation of the present study.

Anderson (2006) proposed three key theses (principles) for auto-ethnography: ethnographic work in which the researcher is; (a) a full member in the research group or setting (b) visible as such a member in the researcher's published text and (c) committed to an analytical research agenda focussed on improving theoretical understanding (p. 375), (see also Laboskey & Lyons, 2002). These theses inform the five attributes of analytic autoethnography espoused by Anderson (2006):

- Complete member research - the researcher is a complete member in the social world under study (p. 379).

- Analytical reflexivity - "researchers' awareness of their necessary connection to the research situation and hence their effects upon it" (p. 382).

- Narrative visibility of the researcher's self - "the researcher is a highly visible social actor within the written text" (p. 384).

- Dialogue with informants beyond the self - to limit losing sight of

the phenomena to the Self, analytic autoethnography imperative calls for

dialogue with "data" or "others" (p. 368).

- Commitment to theoretical analysis - to use empirical data to gain

   insight into some broader set of social phenomena and go beyond self-

   reporting (p. 387).

Research Questions

The research questions explored in this inquiry question what and how

visual art teachers address unique contexts in their classrooms, communities,

within the larger milieu policy decisions; the teacher's background, philosophy of

teaching and art education. Academic literature about these topics (Chapman,

1997; Congdon, 1996; Day, 1996; Dorn, 1994; Eisner, 1998, 2002; Erikson,

2004; Stockrocki, 2004) and my personal experience as a classroom teacher of

visual arts in the public schools informed these questions. The research

questions were:

1. How do visual arts teachers perceive the contexts influencing their

   curricular decision-making processes?

2. What constraints and freedoms influenced elementary visual arts

   teachers' curricular decisions?

3. What external and internal circumstances affect curricular decisions?

Supporting the Research Framework

This study is based in part on the assumption, supported by academic

literature (See Day, 1996; Dorn, 1994; Eisner, 2002; Erickson, 2004; May 1993),

that art teachers are free to develop and adapt the curriculum to their unique set

of contexts. This is a study of the teachers' perceptions of how contexts influence

their vision or agenda for the visual arts curriculum. The framework is informed

by Clark and Peterson's (1986) *model of teacher thought and action*, and by

Schwab's *Curriculum Commonplaces* (1973, 1978) and Schulman's Model of

Pedagogical Reasoning and Action (1987). The Clark and Peterson model

informs the teacher's thought processes and Schwab and Schulman models

inform the curricular process.

Clark and Peterson's Model of teacher thought and action (1986) (Figure

1), an investigative device developed for making sense of the literature on

teachers' thought processes, depicts two domains: thought processes and

actions and observable effects (p. 257).

43
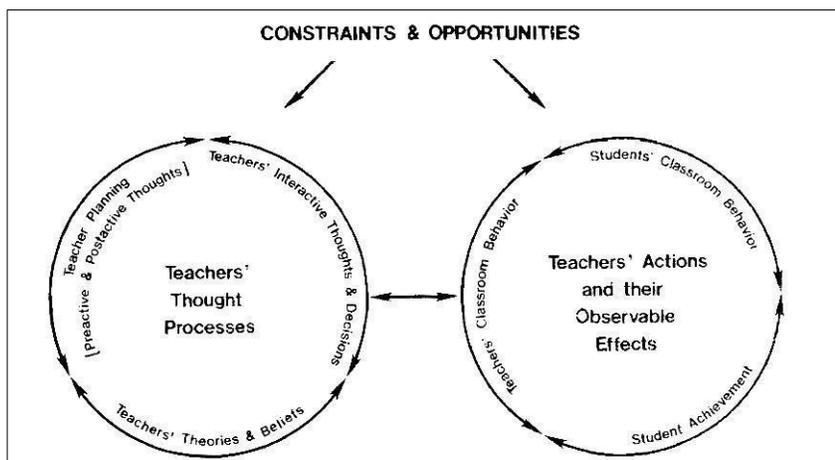
Figure 1 Clark & Peterson, Model of Teachers Thought Process (1986)

Schwab's framework (1973, 1978) comprised the bodies of experiences teachers must consider while creating curriculum, and while Schulman's (1987) consideration of pedagogical processes describes the challenges, a teacher faces when shaping content knowledge for effective instruction. Here I suggest together Schwab's framework (1973, 1978) and Schulman's (1987) together form a model of looking at teacher's curricular decision making process. A visual representation of the model is laid out in figure 2 below.

Schwab's (1973)
Commomonplaces

- *Subject Matter*
- *Learner*
- *Teacher*
- *Milieu (context)*
- *Curriculum-Making*

Teacher's curricular Decision Making Process

Schulman's (1987)
Model of Pedagogal
Reasoning & Action

- *Comprehension*
- *Transformation*
- *Instruction*
- *Evaluation*
- *Reflection*
- *New Comprehensions*
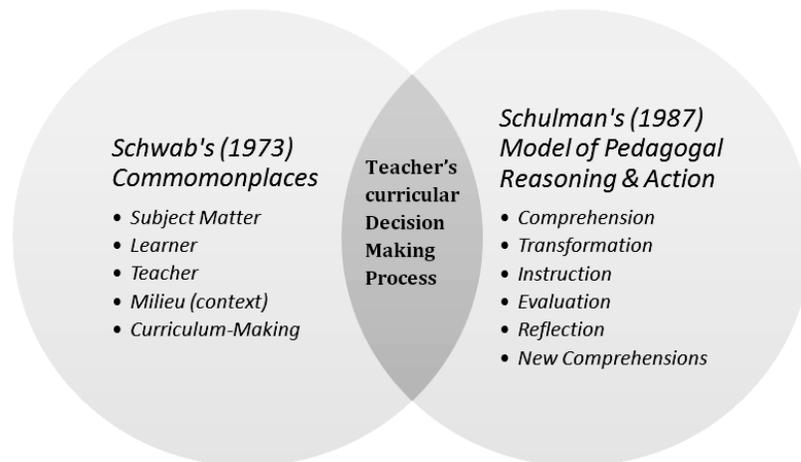
Figure 2 Teacher's Curricular Decision Making Process

In a series of essays on 'the practical,' (Schwab, 1969, 1971, 1973, 1983) and in particular, *The Practical 3: Translation into Curriculum* (1973), Schwab

identified the need for explicit interaction among five bodies of experience or 'commonplaces' in curriculum development and practice. Production of curricula depends equally on the interaction among these five bodies of experience or 'commonplaces', which include:

(1) Subject matter - The teacher must have a deep understanding of the subject matter.

(2) Learners - The teacher should know what his or her learners already know, what each will find easy or difficult to learn, and what motivates each learner or creates anxiety in him or her.

(3) The teacher -This refers to the knowledge the teacher brings to the enactment of the curriculum.

(4) Milieu - The milieu refers to peripheral features such as the inside and outside of the classroom, the relations of others within the learning institution, the student's' parents, the outside community, and the administration.

(5) Curriculum-making - Production of curricula depends equally on the interactions among the five bodies of experience, or 'commonplaces.'

Schwab (1978) identified these commonplaces as pluralities, each retaining its unique theoretical foundations but influencing others with equal emphasis. May (1993) described the fifth commonplace - curriculum making as

purposefully reflective; integrative, open to critique, and socially negotiated into a "partially-coalesced whole" (p. 214).

In Schulman's (1987) view of teaching, teachers begin with an act of reason, which continues with a reasoned process, culminates in teaching performances of engaging learners and is then subject to reflection until the process repeats itself. Schulman contended that as the reasons for teachers' curricular decisions are explored, emphasis should be on pedagogical reasons that can be referenced to explain pedagogical actions. Schulman's model of pedagogical reasoning and action is taken from "the point of view of the teacher, who is presented with the challenge of taking what he or she already understands and making it ready for effective instruction" (Schulman 1987, p. 14). The model works from the assumption that teachers are working from a form of 'text.' This text can be a syllabus, other prepared materials or the textbook used as the basis for instruction. Given a text, educational purposes, and/or a set of ideas, Schulman's (1987) process of pedagogical reasoning and action involves a teacher cycling through processes of comprehension, transformation, instruction, evaluation, and reflection (Table 1), yet, always beginning and ending the process in the act of comprehension. The model of pedagogical reasoning and action as described by Schulman (1987, p. 15) is summarized in Figure 3. For this study, however, I also assumed that a teacher might start with an educational purpose, set of outcomes, or goals. For example, under current state mandates, all teachers are required to prove student growth or performance

increases on summative assessments[12]. For teachers in non-testing areas such

as visual arts, teachers must develop summative assessment methods that

administrative teams find appropriate.

Schulman's Model of Pedagogical Reasoning and Action

Comprehension
        Of purposes, subject matter structures, Ideas within and
outside
        the discipline

Transformation
        Preparation: Critical Interpretation and analysis of texts,
        structuring and segmenting, development of a curricular
        repertoire, and clarification of purposes
        Representation: use of a representational repertoire which
        includes analogies, metaphors, examples, demonstrations,
        explanations, and so forth
        Selection: choice from among an instructional repertoire which
        Includes modes of teaching, organizing, managing, and
        arranging
        Adaptation and Tailoring to Student Characteristics:
        consideration of conceptions, preconceptions,
        misconceptions, and difficulties, language, culture, and
        motivations, social class, gender, age, ability, aptitude,
        Interests, self-concepts, and attention

Instruction
        Management, presentations, interactions, group work,
        discipline, humor, questioning, and other aspects of active
        teaching, discovery or inquiry Instruction, and the observable
        forms of classroom teaching

Evaluation
        Checking for student understanding during interactive
        teaching
        Testing student understanding at the end of lessons or units
        Evaluating one's performance, and adjusting for experiences

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[12] Indiana is one such state. http://www.doe.in.gov/sites/default/files/evaluations/rise-handbook-2-0-final.pdf

Reflection
    Reviewing, reconstructing, reenacting and critically analyzing
    one's own and the class's performance, and grounding
    explanations In evidence

New Comprehensions
    Of purposes, subject matter, students, teaching, and self
    Consolidation of new understandings, and learning[s] from
    experience

Figure 3 Schulman's (1987) model of pedagogical reasoning (summary)

Research Methodology

In order to better understand our perceptions of the contexts within which
we make and our process of curricular decisions, I undertook an analytic auto-
ethnography methodology (Anderson, 2006) study where I investigated my
journey as curriculum decision maker, triangulated with personal interviews with
six other visual art teachers about their perceptions of the context with which they
work and make curricular decisions. The participants of this study are elementary
public school visual arts teachers, who teach in a variety of settings in the
Midwest. As my life and work evolved during the period of writing this study, the
study itself has evolved. Shifting from a study of others to a study of self, I have
chosen to keep the voice of my fellow teachers fully present as they serve as
triangulation for my voice. I had chosen a purposeful sample of teachers, some
of whom teach in metro-urban communities or a small Midwestern town, and
others in rural communities surrounding these and my small town community.
The participants represent different levels of teaching experience and were

interviewed in-depth about their history (personal experiences), education, teaching contexts within which they teach, and how they made curricular decisions. These interviews unfolded with stories and often became an exchange of stories between the interviewer (me) and the participants.

Auto-ethnography: my story

As I returned to the elementary art classroom and began planning a curriculum, the milieu of my setting impacted my curricular choices. The choices I was making in my classroom and contexts of my experiences were foremost in my thoughts as I worked with interview data of the other teachers. Reflection on my perceptions and experiences became central to what I was doing, so I embraced it. I chose to shift focus from the interviewed teachers to myself. I collected artifacts in the form of my lesson plans, my visual journal, my notes, and the website where I shared my students' work and information about what we are doing in the art room. I reviewed and reflected on these to help me in the process of writing my story. I began by presenting a brief history of my teaching, then shifted to writing the story of my placement as a visual art teacher in a particular elementary school. Using rich description and personal voice, I attempt to take the viewer with me as I go back to individual scenes.

Methodology: How to look at myself and the selection of Informants: my fellow teachers

Anderson's (2006) approach to auto-ethnographic methodology and a maximal variation form of purposive sampling methodology (Creswell, 2005;

Wallen & Fraenkel, 2001) were used in this study. This emphasizes the use of "previous knowledge of a population and the specific purpose of his or her research, [the] researcher assumes that personal knowledge of the population can be used to judge whether a particular sample will be representative" (Wallen & Fraenkel, 2001, p. 139). The sample of teachers I selected for this study were from the urban, small town (suburban), and rural schools that make up the service region of a large Midwestern university.

The sample chosen included six elementary art teachers who taught in local[13] public schools. These participants demonstrated a range of experiences including different levels of education and educational backgrounds, differing philosophical approaches to art education, and varying years of teaching experience in diverse settings (urban, small town, and rural). Additionally, all were mentor teachers for university practicum students who were placed in their classrooms and whom I served as a supervisor.

A pool of 10 to 15 potential participants was identified through my prior working relationships as mentoring classroom teachers to students I taught as an associate instructor in the art education program at a large Midwestern university. I invited these teachers to participate in the study. Those respondents who were willing to participate in the study completed a short email questionnaire which included questions about the grade level they taught, whether they taught in a public school, the length of time they had taught, the teaching degree(s)

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[13] By local I mean the small Midwestern town and its surrounding area schools with a sixty mile radius, a service region as identified by the university.

obtained, grades previously taught, and current place of employment. The questionnaire and the researcher's prior working knowledge of the participants were used to select a purposive sample of six participant informants.

Methodology: Data Collection

In addition to including my voice and story to the reader, I have chosen in-person interviews as a source of data from my fellow teachers. Teachers often tell rich and informed stories of their experiences, stories which informed the researcher of their background, beliefs (Clandinin 1985), and perceptions about the unique contexts within which they make curriculum decisions. Furthermore, the interviews were conducted after school in each teacher's classroom, where examples of anonymous students' artwork were displayed, as additional prompts for reflection and discussion with the participant.

The interview process was partially structured (Gay & Airasaian 2000); one-on-one interview sessions lasted from 60 to 90 minutes. Interview questions were open-ended, and follow-up questions evolved during the interview. The interview questions were constructed to prompt the participant's thoughts and experiences relevant to the contexts that influence the curriculum decision-making process. The interviewer kept the questions open-ended and modified or probed as deemed appropriate. The research questions were broad based and open-ended to allow for broad, deep responses from the participants

Methodology: Data Analysis

All interviews were recorded and transcribed and coded, using open and axial coding procedures described by Strauss & Corbin (1998). A review of coding revealed the emergence of themes and subthemes in the data which can be further analyzed using content analysis strategies suggested by (Wallen & Fraenkel, 2001).

Validity was established through the triangulation of the data between the participants, the literature, and the experiences of the researcher. Dyson (2007) find the credibility of auto-ethnographic research in the 'ringing true' of the story, and Lyons and LaBoskey (2001) suggested that considerations of validity in autoethnographic studies be tested on the "basis of trustworthiness and validation" and "validity claims . . . tested through the ongoing discourse" (p. 19).

Riessman (2005) outlined three methods of narrative analysis, Thematic, Structural, and Interactional. Thematic focuses on (1) "content of a text and 'what' is said more than 'how' it is said;" (2) the "structural analysis the emphasis shifts to the telling, the way a story is told;" (3) Further, the "thematic content does not slip away; the focus is equally on form – how a teller by selecting particular narrative devices makes a story persuasive," and (4) "Interactional analysis, the emphasis is on the dialogic process between teller and listener" (p.1-4). My focus falls into these last two categories, thematic and interactional. Similarly, Brown's (2002) approach sets the focus "by shifting the emphasis from what a statement might mean to how it has been used by someone in a specific

situation, the human agent becomes implicated, and a certain perspective gets revealed" (p. 25). As this autobiographical approach focuses on the narrative nature of my story and the story of my fellow participants "[i]nsider meanings" (Anderson, 2006 p. 389) are at the heart of understanding the perceptions of a teacher's contexts by looking "through the eyes of a teacher" (2009 p.389).

In Denzin's (2001) Interpretive Interactionism, the researcher or "interpretive interactionist" are interpreters of "[problematic], lived experiences involving symbolic interaction" (p. 32). Analytic interpretation is "the process of progressively defining and interpreting the phenomenon to be understood" (Denzin 2001 p.131). Narratives are analyzed and the collective "phenomena," which are explored through an Interpretive Interactionism lens, are reduced the to "essential elements" (Denzin 2001, p.70).

In conducting this study, I was not interested in those "canonical or sacred stories" (Olson & Craig, 2005) or "Metanarratives" (Olson & Craig 2009) (see also Crites, 1971; Eisler, 1987; Clandinin & Connelly, 1996; Ritchie and Wilson, 2000) that define what it means to be a teacher, but rather stories that make my perceptions and the perceptions of six fellow visual art teachers of the contexts within which we work from day to day understood within this framework.

Limitations of the Study

Due to the relationship between these teachers and the university, the art education program, and the researcher, some limitations to the findings should be expected. Because these teachers are mentors to our practicum students,

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and I had a prior relationship with the teachers as a supervisor of the university's

practicum students, and as a colleague, these teachers might be cautious about

criticizing their education (if received from this university) or currently

recommended teaching methods[14]. Additionally, due to the size of the field of art

education, teachers may feel they will be identifiable due to the location of the

study and a limited number of elementary art teachers in the given area.

Teachers may feel the need to report 'typical' responses they would expect a

university representative to want to hear; they may want to 'impress' with their

responses.

Due to the size of this study, there are no claims of generalizability of the

study findings; the purpose is to inform or enlighten the researcher and fellow

university researchers as to how these particular six teachers and I perceive and

describe the contexts surrounding of our curricular decision-making.

Contributions to the Field

This study focuses on my journey to understand my perceptions of the

contexts within which I make curricular choices, informed by voices of my fellow

art teacher participants. The result is a glimpse into the processes of a select

group of elementary art teachers during curricular decisions. Because art

teachers, even novice teachers, are often entirely responsible for curricular

choices in their classrooms, a greater understanding of the processes that

teachers undertake in making curricular decisions would be valuable in preparing

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[14] District level curriculum guides developed by members of the teaching staff during PLC professional
Learning Communities.

future visual arts teachers. In short, better understanding about how, why, and under what conditions public school art teachers make curricular decisions may inform program planning for pre-service teachers to help them to be better prepared in their future as art teachers, who are flexible and able to adapt to a variety of teaching situations and create appropriate and equitable curriculum for their future students.

The most recent research on this subject in art education have informed the field[15] but have left room for further research that is more empirical and focused on the teacher's perceptions. This study contributes insight into the experiences and curricular decision making of a select group of teachers and me, as we worked in specific schools with particular students during a given time.

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[15] See LaPorte, A. M., Speirs, P., & Young, B. (2008). Art curriculum influences: A national survey

Chapter 4: My narrative

"Many rivers have flowed into my life experience."
-Rev. Dr. R. Scott Colglazier

Natural proclivities

I come from a long line of storytellers, artists, and informal teachers,

although none of them would call themselves such. My father and his father were

both artists, who whittled (carved) for leisure and drew when working to figure

something out, but they never considered themselves artists. Both were lavish

storytellers and teachers at heart. If either my father or grandfather was going to

complete a task, it was an opportunity for a lesson and a story. I come by these

inclinations naturally.

I became a teacher of art by accident

I was never a very good student. I struggled to keep up and often found

myself lost in the assignment, something I can now attribute to dysphonetic

dyslexia/dysgraphia[16]. The only areas I excelled in were the visual arts,

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[16] Dysphonetic dyslexia / dysgraphia was diagnosed during the time I was working on my master's degree. I was taking the required *reading in the content area* course in the summer of 1999. The instructor ask me to see her after class and when I did, she presented me with the hand written work completed in class the day before. She points out that I had misspelled the same word three different ways in a single page, she ask if I was dyslexic. I answered no, she wasn't convinced. She ask to meet outside of class, where she administered a series of tests to diagnose me. She commented, I hid my disability well with strategies but it was obvious to her as a clinician. I was 28 years old.

geography, and geometry. School was not an unenjoyable place, but I never imagined I would end up spending my career in schools.

Regardless of my struggles, my mother was determined that her children would go to college and made statements to that effect constantly. It was always "when you go" not "if you go." My father often talked about the back-breaking work he did on the farm and as a skilled carpenter, and how he wanted us children to do more than work farms, build houses, or work in factories. In the summers, I worked with him, and my uncles on construction sites and they would say, "someday maybe you will design the houses or engineer them." There was never a doubt that we would go to college, and for me, the doubt was "will I be able to do it?" and what will I do.

As I grew up on a farm and worked with livestock daily, I decided to be a veterinarian, not a teacher or anything related to the arts. As is the case with so many students, the skies seemed limitless, and I was drawn in many directions after starting college. My first on-campus job was working in the science building cleaning beakers and making culture media for biology classes. My supervisor in that position was a professor who strongly suggested that a person needs a fallback plan, for him it had been a minor in teaching, and it had served him well as a college professor. He insisted that I take up a minor in teaching, so I did.

Over the course of the next two years I moved toward the social sciences and history as majors and began taking art classes purely for the enjoyment of it; yet, I kept the teaching minor. In my junior year of college, I took a new position

as a darkroom assistant to a professor who had been stricken with polio as a child. I had taken the basic photography courses and had begun 'hanging out' in the photo labs during open lab times and parts of the advanced classes. This allowed me to pick up skills and techniques from the more advanced students. When the darkroom assistant position opened, I was more than qualified for the work. Dr. Sadler stood and walked with the aid of crutches and leg braces. He struggled to sit and stand and the darkroom; long, narrow, and crowded with students did not allow him room to maneuver or to sit. Thus his hands were occupied with steadying himself with his crutches. My job was to be his hands and demonstrate while he talked. After a few days of doing this, he left me to demonstrate and instruct the darkroom procedures alone.

After a few weeks of working with him, we were sitting across from one another eating lunch, he opened a manila folder and began to flip sheet after sheet, banging his crutch against the desk with every page turn, periodically looking up at me from under the brim of his ever-present newsboy cap. Finally, in a long, drawn-out sigh and typical clearing of his throat (as was his way when he wanted someone's full attention) he asked me my major. I told him History with a teaching minor. He laughed and said, "You have 36 hours of art credits and 24 hours in education, but only 12 hours in your major field. Why aren't you going to be an art teacher? You are a natural teacher; that is why I leave you alone in the darkroom." A lightbulb went on for me. I had never considered the arts as anything more than a distraction, a relief from the stresses of other

courses. That is the genius of my becoming an art teacher. As I begin my 20th year of teaching art, it is still hard to believe that I could have missed this journey if not for the insight of one man.

Early career

After completing my degree, I took a split position between middle and high school, in a small district on the Ohio River. The district was vastly underfunded and had been one of the 66 original districts to file suit against the state for inequitable funding for public education (see Day & Ewalt, 2013 for a full description). A short six years later, the district still felt the decades of underfunding[17] but was also enjoying the benefits of the new funding formula[18]. One area that had not caught up with the new funding was teacher pay. When I interviewed with the superintendent, I distinctly remember him saying, "I know you will leave, why wouldn't you? When you can drive twenty minutes in any direction and make five thousand dollars more." I would spend my next few years working beneath the cloud of this statement. The realities of teacher turnover due to low teacher pay, especially in schools where students are in most need of teacher attention, is at the heart of my frustrations even amidst the joys of teaching challenging students.

While I was confident in my teacher education, I fully expected to have oversight in my curricular decisions. As I prepared to start the year, I began to collect and plan my curriculum. I approached the high school principal, Mr. Span;

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[17] As evidenced by, State mandated curricular reform and supervision due to poor performance on statewide evaluations.
[18] New facilities were being built for the Elementary and High schools.

a tall, thin man who always had a stern look on his face, but at heart was a wonderfully warm man. I sat with him and requested details on my budget, which amounted to an abysmal pittance of just over a dollar a student. Next, I ask about curriculum, he looked at me and said, "it must be in the room; if not make it up." I followed that conversation up by visiting the middle school principal, where I ask the same two questions. Mr. Daggett was a short round man, with full cheeks that were always red; he wore a short trimmed beard and had a penchant for red sweaters, which gave him the look of a Coca-Cola Santa ad from the 1930s. The budget situation was even worse, approximately 69 cents per pupil. When I came to the question of curriculum, he was a little more sympathetic. Having been a band director before his time as principal, he quickly ascertained that I expected the district to have a curriculum or guide. He pointed out this absence and suggested that I develop the curriculum based on the state standards and that I compile and turn in the work product as a district curriculum. To this day, I am still in awe of his trust in a first-year teacher to set policy. As I worked that first year developing curricula and lessons, I was in contact with many of my classmates and discovered that this situation was not unusual among art teachers working in Kentucky at that time.

Over the next decade, in both positions I accepted, a similar condition existed; the curriculum was by teacher design. The topic of curricula design always came up at regional art teacher meetings and state conferences. Teachers exchanged resources, notes, inspirations, lessons, and at times, whole

curricula. Large metropolitan districts often had a curriculum framework to follow, and teachers in smaller districts often requested these as reference[19].

During those years, as I grew as a teacher, my curriculum evolved. I was on a journey of developing curricula that were based on the distinctive events and experiences I lived with my students. As I expanded my knowledge-base as a teacher, my curriculum would grow and change as well. Each of these changes was reflected the unique milieu that arose in each teaching situation.

Transformation/realization

My second year of teaching was a pivotal year in my journey as a curriculum designer. As I stated earlier, I was afforded control of the curriculum as long as I aligned with the state curriculum. One aspect I had adopted from state guidelines was the art history recommendation, including suggested artists for study. During a discussion of a research assignment, a ninth grade boy stood up and interrupted my directions. Kawika[20] was tall and thin as many 9th grade boys are. He had grown taller over the summer and his arms and legs looked lean and gangly, moving about his body as if he had not yet become accustomed to them. On his head was perched a wriggled nest of jet black hair that hung low on his brow. He often used this mop to shield his eyes, making it difficult to make direct eye contact with him. Kawika was in his second year in our school, a transplant from his native Hawaii. His father had been a local before joining the

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[19] These were pre-internet days. The revolution of online sharing was still a few years away and made a dramatic change in the way my colleagues and I shared ideas and materials.
[20] Pronunciation: kuh-VEE-kuh

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Airforce and marrying Kawika's mother while stationed in Hawaii. Upon the father's retirement from the military he moved the entire family to our small town in the Ohio River Valley, an adjustment the three children had taken hard. Arriving just before Christmas and starting school in January was difficult for Kawika. Now in late August, he stood in front of me, cutting off my speech by yelling out, "Why should I care about a bunch of dead white guys?" My mind raced to the pat replies I had learned throughout my own education; *they are important to the foundation of Western art, they are masters of their craft,* etc., but I realized for this student, at this moment, expressing his feelings as a minority in this community, those answers meant nothing. I realized they didn't mean anything to most of my students right then, right there. I took a deep breath and blurted out, "I don't know why anymore, let's find out." With that very statement, I had turned my teaching on its proverbial ear.

My students in the community were divided into two major groups, local rural students and urban students who had moved in search of housing and a "better life." Both groups reacted the same way during my first year teaching; they were disinterested and disconnected. As a new teacher, overwhelmed in the job of teaching, I had simply attributed this to their poor behavior. In that one exchange with Kawika, I began to recognize the importance of connecting to a student's reality to his or her lived experience. Each year as I grew as a teacher, I had more and more tools to help focus my curriculum on the lived experience of my students. I continued my education to become a better teacher. I completed

my MA-Ed. in 2002, and in 2005, desiring a greater understanding of art

education and wanting to work in teacher education; I left the K-12 classroom

and enrolled in Indiana University to pursue my advanced degree. Eventually,

after completing coursework toward a doctorate in 2011, I left Indiana University

as an 'ABD' to serve as assistant professor of art teacher education at a large

upper Midwestern university.

My present journey, the heart of this investigation.

While working as assistant professor of art education at the upper

Midwestern university, I received a phone call from the principal of a high

needs/low performing elementary school, Corinth Elementary[21], where in an

effort to change the school culture, promote learning, and raise state mandated

test scores, an arts-integration approach to teaching/learning was being adopted.

The principal was in need of an individual to lead these efforts as the original

experts had moved on. He had reached out to the local university, and the area

chair and one of my mentors had given him my name and contact information. I

visited the school and principal; we discussed their needs and desires. I felt

'called' to leave my university position and return to the K-6 public school setting

in order help carry out this mission[22]. I joined the staff of Corinth Elementary as

the visual arts teacher and arts integration coach for a staff of 28 teachers and a

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[21] Corinth is a pseudonym for the actual school.

[22] Other factors made this decision easier; it was in the same university town where I had done my post master's work, my children could return to their previous school, the salary and benefits were comparable between positions, my wife was offered back her prior position before I accepted the position at the university two years prior, and we had many friends still living in this town.

student body of approximately 375 students. Student population varies week to week due to the transitory nature of our population.

My students/my school

Corinth is a pre-K through 6th grade elementary, sitting on the corner of the downtown district. The students of Corinth Elementary are from families of generational poverty; 89% of the students qualify for free lunch. The school demographic[23] is 16% multiracial, 13% Black, 8% Hispanic and 63% who claim White as racial identity. Twenty-seven percent of our students are identified for special education services and 63% our students did not pass the required statewide assessment in 2014. Numbers tell only a part of the story, the population is highly transitory. During the last year, our population has fluctuated between 395 and 350 during the second grading period and return to a high of 375 by February. As an example of the transitory nature of our population, in the fall of 2015, one 3rd grade class saw a 90% turnover between August and December. The transitory nature of our population is a direct effect of (A) the high poverty rate, (B) reported drug and alcohol abuse, and (C) split families (Corinth school social worker, personal communication, 2013). Students often rotate through a number of local schools and school systems throughout the year, including other low-income schools in our system and in the adjacent school districts (Corinth school records clerk, personal communication, 2013).

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[23] Demographic data collected from
https://compass.doe.in.gov/dashboard/istep.aspx?type=school&id=6197 on 6/11/2016

Generational poverty and the transitory nature of the families whose children attend Corinth present a distinct set of contexts that are not clearly evident from the outside. Prior to taking this position I had taught in schools with high percentages of poverty, but like most teachers who have taken teaching positions at Corinth and thought they understood the issues of teaching children of economically impoverished communities (personal communications with various teachers of Corinth 2013-2016), I was wrong.

Corinth students pose a unique set of learner characteristics as a result of their out of school lives. In a recent meeting, our principal reported that 93% of our students performed significantly below grade level on the first round of reading assessments, with only 3 students in first grade performing within the 75 percentile or higher of grade level and only six total students in the fifth and sixth on or above grade level (out of nearly 90 students) (Corinth principal, personal communication, 2013). In the art classroom, students present below grade performances in skills like scissor use, pencil grip and manipulation, fine motor skills, and the concentration needed for brush skills. Other observable deficits include; low self-regulatory behaviors, learned helplessness, lack of motivation, and decreased attention spans[24].

The School-Wide Curriculum

Corinth Elementary is an Artful Learning School, a program designed by the Leonard Bernstein Foundation. Artful Learning is a "school improvement

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[24] for a discussion on poverty and impact on self regulatory behavior, learned helplessness see the work of Gary W. Evans, Cornell university.

model that stimulates and deepens academic learning through the Arts" (Artful

Learning Model, 2008). Artful Learning (AL) was adopted in 2011, after a

national search for a means to school improvement, namely, academic learning.

The staff, school district, parents and the community had a stake and seat at the

table in the process of adapting a model for reform of Corinth school

performance. AL was adopted for its flexibility and its novel approach to the

instructional methodology. The arts-based skills were believed to improve

student engagement, promote a feeling of success among students, and provide

differentiation to meet the needs of all learners.[25] The Bernstein Foundation

(2008) described the model thusly:

> The four main quadrants of the Artful Learning model (EXPERIENCE,
>
> INQUIRE, CREATE, and REFLECT) encourage and support best teaching
>
> practices while improving the manner in which both students and teachers
>
> learn. Classrooms systematically employ the four quadrants to strengthen
>
> understanding, retention, and application. (Artful Learning Model, 2008)
>
> Using the model described above each grade level team developed units

around a concept/theme and a significant question to guide student research.

Teams then, in consultation with arts specialists, selected works that exemplified

the concept or engaged the viewer (in our case students) in a significant question

or concept. Teachers followed up by creating lessons that incorporated the core

curriculum subject matter into the concept. These lessons were to culminate in a

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[25] Personal communication with a member of the teaching team, Kathy, who brought Artful
Learning to our school.

final project-based art product that demonstrated an understanding of the concept.

Due to high turnover in staff and administration, the model has not been fully or properly implemented in several years, but other special areas teachers and I have adopted the core elements in our curriculums. I have adopted the concepts created for the AL curriculum and based my curricular development around these concepts. Included in Appendix A is a list of the concepts studied.

The regular curriculum in language arts, reading, and math is approached through prescriptive[26] curricula programs purchased by the district to more effectively teach the skills that appear on state mandated test.

Structure

My daily schedule at Corinth consisted of 5 to 7 classes per day. Outlined in figure four is the visual art schedule. Most classes receive one 60 to 62-minute block of visual art per week, while six classes receive an additional 30 minutes of art time on Wednesdays. These classes were assigned randomly, and other classes received an additional 30 minutes of either music or PE (Physical Education). The schedule was developed by the assistant principal with no input from the special areas teachers (art, music, or PE).

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[26] My term

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
8:40 - 9:10 30 min	prep	Artful Learning strategies	Teacher PLC no students	Artful Learning strategies	prep
9:10 - 10:12 62 min	3rd grade A	6th grade A	Teacher PLC no students	5th grade A	5th grade B
10:12-10:42 30 min	4th grade A 60 min	4th grade B 60 min	Prep	prep	prep
10:42 - 11:12 30 min			4th grade A 30	3rd grade C	3rd grade B
11:12-11:44 32 min	2nd grade C	2nd grade C	2nd grade C		
11:44-12:16 32 min	lunch	lunch	lunch	lunch	lunch
12:16-12:46 30 min	2nd Grade A	2nd grade B	1st grade A	1st grade A	1st grade A
12:46-1:16			Pre-K	Kindergarten A	Kindergarten B
1:18-1:48 30 min	Kinder C	Kinder C	Kinder C		

1:50 - 2:20 30 min	4th grade C	1st grade B	4th grade C	6th grade B	1st grade C
2:20-2:52 32 min			1st grade D		
2:55 - 3:35 30 min	Wildcat math review 3rd grade	Wildcat math review 3rd grade	Wildcat math review 3rd grade	Wildcat math review 3rd grade	Wildcat math review 3rd grade

Figure 4 2014 -2015 visual arts schedule as developed by the assistant principal.

Variations of time allotted to art for classes in a single grade level posed an issue with curriculum planning and time management. Teaching 22 classes per week with multiple classes of each grade level, I prefer to keep all students of a grade level on the same project and near the same pace. This limits the need to switch out supplies and resources frequently during the day. (Any material left in the open is considered 'fair game'[27] by students, who may 'appropriate' it as their own.)

My curriculum journey at Corinth

I came to Corinth with a vision for curriculum grounded in my last eight years exploring art education from the outside as a university level teacher

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[27] fair game; someone or something that it is considered permissible to attack or abuse in some way. Retrieved from McGraw-Hill Dictionary of American Idioms and Phrasal Verbs. on 6/24/2016 from http://idioms.thefreedictionary.com/fair+game.

educator. During those eight years, as I taught and researched art education practices, I had been developing a mental compendium of best practices or ideal practices based on new literature in the field, discussions with colleagues, and my developing ideas about art education.

Upon my return to the classroom, I compiled my ideas and began to craft a loosely configured curriculum. Guided by the works of Anderson and Milbrandt (2005), Gude (2000, 2004, 2007, 2013), Hetland, Winner, Veenema, and Sheridan, (2008), Rolland (2014), and Szekely (1988, 2006), among others, I conceived an opportunity for curriculum based on real life explorations of concepts and questions developed from the students' lives. Student choice was at the center of this exploration and products were to reflect the act of exploration itself. I was determined not to fall into the trap of lessons and products done in 'school art style' (Chapman, 1982; Efland 1976). Approaches gleaned from the aforementioned authors informed a series of decisions toward the approach of art education I would undertake in this position. For example, by leaving open either subject matter, material, or technique/skill I was hoping to engage student interest. Approaching curricula as a series of real world explorations would shift the focus of art in the elementary towards methods that real world artists use to explore their experiences / worlds. As will be evidenced in the next sections, the reality of working within the unique contexts at Corinth altered my envisioned plan.

My day at Corinth

In this section, I will walk through a typical day that I would experience at Corinth. This is an amalgamation of my daily experiences, not a specific day. As the researcher, I have chosen to "compress years of research into a single text" (Ellis, Adams, Bochner, 2011, p. 2).

Ellis and Bochner (2000), describe the goal of autoethnography as "...to enter and document the moment-to-moment, concrete details of a life. That's an important way of knowing as well" (p.761). I found it important to do that here.

I begin my day early, arriving at school around 7:15 a.m., which gives me an hour to prepare for the day. I enter the building, check my mailbox, sign in, grab a roll of invisible tape, and climb the three floors to the art room. I unlock my door and flip on the lights. Today, the room is 82 degrees at 7:15 and the AC will not turn on till 8:20, the official start of the school day. I peel off any extra layers of clothing I can; I will be sweaty. I start the computer to allow it to 'warm up' and turn my focus to the necessary activities of the day. Any number of duties may take place during this time; cleaning, prepping materials for the day, removing and storing work from the previous day, grading, etc. Materials storage is limited and – regardless of admonitions against taking supplies that are not their own - any items left out will be viewed as 'fair game' for taking by the students; so I can only prep limited amounts of materials for one or two days use. Materials are costly, and on my limited budget, I have to keep a keen eye on them. Limiting access to those supplies needed for completion of the students' work is

important. Storage and drying space is very limited, and I must rotate work to and from the drying rack and drying areas to the classes' storage space multiple times a day. Work left out by one student may, like general art materials, be taken or appropriated by another student. Work products of fellow students are not respected or valued, even though I have made multiple attempts at encouraging student empathy for one another's sense of loss.

I strip the drying rack and place students' works in the respective class drawers. I often flit between jobs, and this morning I am doing that because I have grading to do and find it best to break grading of students' works into small chunks to avoid grading fatigue[28].

Between chunks of grading, I stop to sharpen the pencils, a task I can no longer entrust to students as I am on my 3rd pencil sharpener in two years due to student attempts to use the device for sharpening various non-pencil items. I find myself constantly balancing management and desires for students to act as artists. This prior statement is at the core of teaching in this high needs school; I must balance management of actual student behavior with an ideal of student behavior. Ideally, students should be responsible enough to use a pencil sharpener the correct way, but after purchasing a third pencil sharpener, I found it more cost effective to simply remove the pencil sharpener from student use.

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[28] For a great discussion of grading issues please see:
http://www.theatlantic.com/national/archive/2013/01/why-teachers-secretly-hate-grading-papers/266931/

I begin another quick round of grading, trying to remain fresh in my ability to assess works fairly. Grading involves summatively evaluating both skill level achieved and level to which the artist was able to communicate a concept to the audience - in this case, me. With my handy rubric, I can work through a classes' work and try to maintain a sense of perspective. Criterion-referenced based grading is the only fair way I have found to do this work. Even so, some evaluative criteria are subjective.

To finish the morning, I grab a stack of large (24"x36") paper that I received for free[29] and cut it to 9x12 inch paper that students can use. I chose this size for their work because it fits both the physical space I have and time constraints of the class. With four children per table, we can work up to 12"x18" inches, but this leaves little space for other materials. With our time limits, working 9"X12" allows for ample work time, one day for background and large area work, and a second work day to get the details painted in. Additionally, limiting work time allows for better classroom control. Students who become disinterested or disengaged often become distractions in class. Working at the 9"x12" size allows for ample drying rack space; I can get an entire class on one side, and then turn the rack 180 degrees for the next class. This gives an hour or two for works by class #1 to dry. I will pull these works out during my lunch break, leaving space for the work of students in class #3. I glance up at the clock; It's the end of the hour. My work day officially begins.

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[29] A local print shop donated the paper after dropping it and damaging the corner. For them it was no longer usable as the crease would jam in their equipment, but for us it was manna from heaven.

At 8:15, I take the stairs down three floors and assume my post at bus duty, standing on the front steps to make sure students enter the correct set of doors. Non-teaching duties are a requirement for all teachers, especially 'special area' teachers, as we don't have homerooms. I have mixed feelings about this status. In my situation, the special area teachers (art, music, physical education) are often not regarded as teachers on the same level as the general classroom teachers. This can be frustrating.

As I assist in guiding students into the building, I use the time to remind students of what they are doing in art this week. I want their brains to 'percolate' on the ideas we will be utilizing for our projects. I make a point of talking with the fourth graders I will be teaching today. This will be the first day of our new projects, and I want students to begin conceptualizing ideas for their work since students often struggle with formulating ideas and getting started on actual production. Among the observed deficits mentioned earlier in this chapter, students demonstrate a lack of independent planning or forethought. Though not unique to these students, the percentage of students who demonstrate this is higher at Corinth than among students in my previous elementary teaching positions.

[The example of Jeff, a smallish 6th-grade boy with blonde hair is typical of many students' struggles to conceptualize artworks in the *formal* classroom. He is constantly telling me stories from Dr. Who and showing sketches of doodles he has created during other (non-

Art) classes. Yet in actual art class, Jeff often seems at a loss for ideas about what to create. Regardless of how much time I spend introducing an aesthetic concept, Jeff seems to struggle coming up with an idea for the assigned work.]

At 8:40 I climb back up the stairs to my classroom; I have a short 30 minute prep period before my classes. This is a good time to review where individual classes for the day ended last week and retrieve materials for use with the first class. I pull out my lesson plan book and review any notes, then pull open the drawers and look at the work of students in the classes I will teach this morning. Twenty-two classes per week with two and three classes of each grade level make it impossible for me to keep track of where an individual class has stopped week to week. Once satisfied that I know where to begin teaching the first group, I check my email and write myself a quick note so as not to forget to call a parent back about a student's behavior during my lunch. Our policy is to make a phone call to parents at the time a child is misbehaving. My experience is most parents from Corinth stop answering the phone after a few phone calls. Many have no working number, are out of minutes on their prepaid service, switch numbers and don't update the school or have blocked the school phone number. Some will return calls at their convenience. When they do, I get a message to call them back as soon as possible from the office staff. I glance up at the clock and see that it is 9:00 am, time for a quick restroom break, my classes will be back-to-back until lunch.

At 9:10, my first class of the day arrives. The students enter the room running and screaming. Two boys are pushing tables. I announce in my 'big' voice, "Give me five!". That announcement is part of a school-wide behavior plan, whereby students are to understand that a teacher is requesting they '5", that is:

    5- Place eyes on the teacher,
    4-Get quiet.
    3-Listen,
    2-Stop all movements,
    1-Check themselves for compliance.

The students continue to move about, being loud. In my "big" voice I elaborate my request, " 5 - eyes on me, 4- bubble in our mouth, 3 - ears listening, 2- hands and feet still 1, 0" They have stopped moving and are mostly looking at me, only making a little noise. "This is not the procedure we have for entering the art room, line it up outside and let's try that again." I say in my stern voice.

Students mumble complaints and look at me, "NOW" I say, and students file into the hallway. It is the procedure of our school that we immediately practice any procedure that has not been conducted correctly the first time. When the students have all entered the hall, I see a substitute teacher standing there; I turn to her and ask, "Are you Ms. Ball today?" She affirms this to be the case and apologizes for the students' behaviors. I shoot my eyes to the students and speak to her, "This is their behavior, nothing for you to apologize for. I know they know the procedure, and they should be able to follow it regardless of who walks them to the classroom." I am attempting to coerce them into taking responsibility

for their actions. I have to say, I never expected nor was taught that such a large percentage of my job would be about management and not about the process of teaching art.

I turn fully to the students who are getting restless, repeating our procedure to enter the room, "We enter the room single file at a voice level zero. We take our assigned seats, check the board for instructions, and wait at a zero for the teacher." This time, the students follow the school rule correctly, and I rush to get them started as we have lost 5 minutes to the corrective teaching. This scenario is repeated frequently throughout the week and occurs week after week with some of the same classes. I have had to adopt the persona of a 'tough teacher' in order to maintain order in my classes. In my previous teaching experiences, this level of sternness was seen as harsh; student compliance rarely required this level of rigidity, and parents rarely used loud verbal commands with their children (Principal upper elementary, personal communications 1996/97). Here, I often have to raise my voice, not as a threat or demand but to be heard over the din of noise in the room. I do this only when addressing the class, not individuals, as that would only result in the student withdrawing or an escalation of his or her behavioral inappropriateness. Students ignore requests that they be quiet and polite. My perception is that many students view the submission to rules as a personal weakness and may attempt to usurp teacher authority in order to assume authority in the room. For three years I have attempted to teach my students to respond to quiet or non-

verbal (head nods, hand gestures) requests and have been unable to do so successfully. From personal observation (at the park or after school activities) many of parents only use loud and "harsh" tones to give their children directions. The children are addressed in short commands at loud volumes and strident tones. Many parents follow up the command with statements of punishment if the command is not immediately followed. In the school setting, it is hard to impart a separate set of listening expectations when the home norms are so much more influential.

Just before they arrived, I had spread the work of these students out across the counter. After their arrival, I instructed students seated at the first two tables to retrieve their work. This process of retrieving in-progress work continues until students at all tables have their work. In previous teaching environments, student work could be collected by table groups and returned to table groups, but at Corinth, due to limited storage situation, students' failures to place their names on their work (even after repeated reminders), and students' misbehaviors, the latter procedures were rendered impossible. Students at Corinth resist letting another student touch their work; this is true of any of their possessions. I proceeded to give a quick reminder of the project rubric and proper techniques for using watercolors. This process often falls on 'deaf ears' as students' desire to 'play' randomly with materials and are less interested in learning correct processes of working with these media. I directed specific students to retrieve materials (i.e. one brush per person, one set of water colors per pair and one cup

of cold water, filled half-way) and return these to their tables. We are using Prang watercolor pans; I like the workability of this brand, and the price is excellent for the budget I have. These are student grade watercolors and adequate for techniques used by elementary students. Our PTO was able to purchase some middle-grade watercolor paper at the end of last year for the art classes, and this better quality paper is helping the students in their technique.

During the previous art lesson, these students were given guided instructions about employing watercolor techniques. Using a gradual release of responsibility[30] (i.e. 1. I [teacher] do it 2. We do it; 3. You do it together; 4. You do it alone) method students experienced proper techniques and were afforded the time to experiment with water coloring. Providing this time for experimentation, I hope will inform their understanding of the techniques and also help to satiate some of their desires for "play."

The next 40 minutes of class time should be spent monitoring the room, giving whole group reminders, assisting individual students as needed, and 'putting out fires' of behavior as they occur. When things are going well, this is the time I feel most like a 'good' teacher, but that is not the case today. My previous experiences tell me that Kevin is not behaving in his normal way, so I am keeping an eye on him. After a few minutes, I see him making faces and gesturing with his body (in a threatening manner[31]) towards another student,

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[30] for an explanation of this method see Pearson, P. D., & Gallagher, M. C. (1983). The instruction of reading comprehension. *Contemporary educational psychology*, *8*(3), 317-344.
[31] thrusting his chest and shoulders toward the other students while maintaining constant eye contact. A clearly aggressive facial expression and clinched fists.

Timmy. Before I can react, Timmy is 'flipping the bird[32]' to Kevin. Kevin yells and

gets up from his seat, starting towards Timmy. I use my body to block Kevin's

view of Timmy and ask Kevin to tell me what is going on. He is silent. I can't keep

my back on the rest of the class for long so; I ask Kevin to walk with me to the

side of the room where I have Kevin stand with his back to the class so I can

observe the entire group.

I ask Kevin again what is going on. He begins to speak way too fast for me

to comprehend fully everything he says, but I get the idea. I then ask him to get a

drink of water and calm down. I turn back to the class. No one is working; they

are all talking and looking at Kevin and me. Kevin exits and students, in unison,

begin yelling details about earlier events involving Kevin and Timmy. I raise my

hand and gesture for the discussion to stop. I say, "I don't care about earlier",

and make attempts to refocus the students on their work. It will take some time to

get them back on task.

This is the second week of our project; students have previously

investigated the concept of home as a place and feeling through group

discussions. Some prominent ideas from their discussions were that a physical

concept of home may be a single family house, apartment building or complex,

trailer home or, in one case, a motel room[33]. For animals, home may be a

burrow, nest, or hollow. Home as a feeling was described with various one-word

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[32] raising his middle finger, an obscene hand gesture and insult in American culture
[33] The student described it as feeling like home, because they were all back together again and not sleeping on various friends' couches. The mother had lost their apartment after her boyfriend had been picked up for drug use in the apartment. For a period of time the 4 kids had slept at various locations, sometimes separated from Mom (student communication 2015).

answers like, safe, warm, happy. I believe many of these responses are what the students perceive as the expected responses because I know some of the students who are giving these responses have expressed home life events that are anything but safe, warm, or secure. But I will accept these responses and move ahead because they fit the educational outcome I desire.

I prompt students to elaborate on these one-word responses with a neighbor. When I bring them back together as a single group, I ask for examples of what they had arrived at during their discussions.

Abi: "My home is where I can do what I want."

Crystal: "Not in my house; that is my grandma's house."

Abi: "My grandma makes the best spaghetti."

Several children then chime in, telling what foods they like and who makes them.

Billy, a young man who rarely speaks says, "My favorite is mac-n-cheese on Sundays at my mom's house." The whole class grew quiet, shocked that Billy had spoken. Then several students bust into 'yums' and patter about mac-n-cheese.

Me: "Describe how thinking about those foods or meals, and where and who serves them makes you feel?"

Students shout out answers like good, warm, loved, hungry. Everyone laughs. One student yells out "hungry" again louder. Everyone laughs again. Then suddenly they are all yelling hungry, and I have to quickly 'wrangle them' them back to the task at hand.

Students completed sketches in their sketchbooks that reflect on their understanding of home, and our time for that day was up. Today, students are working to get a final sketch on painting paper. In an attempt to keep students from making dark marks that are impossible to erase, I repeat a mantra over and over, "keep it light till its right." Many students' frustrations with the inability to fully erase unwanted marks have prompted complete 'meltdowns'[34] in the art room.

It is 10:00 and I begin to pick up loose materials and suggest to students, who are at a stopping point, to begin cleaning up. I ask early finishers to take one of several jobs, such as washing brushes, rinsing cups or wiping out mixing trays. At 10:05, I give a rhythmic clap to gain students' attentions and announce that it is clean up time, and give specific jobs to selected students at each table. The students selected for these tasks tend to be more focused and better-behaved students. "Charlie, collect the brushes and cups and take to Jeff at the sink, he will wash them today. Jill, return the watercolor sets to the counter, Claire will wipe out the mixing tray today. Erin and Tom take your tables' work to the drying rack."

The concept of home was inspired by my desire to focus the curricula on real-world experiences that students can explore in the way that artists work. Additionally, the concept coincides with the Artful Learning curriculum for this grade, without searching out a real world relationship.

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[34]a breakdown of self-control (as from fatigue or overstimulation). http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/meltdown

At 10:12, the classroom teacher has not shown up, and the next class is standing at the door. I direct the students, who are still in the classroom to; "line up in line order" and stand to the side of the door. I open the door and ask the next class to take their seats at a zero. They enter at a quiet murmur and find their assigned seats, I ask the leaving class to enter the hall and line up, just then their substitute teacher appears around the corner. I re-enter the room and am surprised to find the entire fourth-grade class seated and quiet! I praise them and follow up with, "what's up?" smiling. Everyone throws their hands into the air. I pick Karen, she explains the class is two brownies short of a party[35] and if they do well in art they will earn the two brownies. As she is explaining I turn on the overhead projector, pull down the screen and turn on my presentation software (Google slides). I have a set of images relating to the concept of transformation. Artful Learning selects an artwork that demonstrates the concept, in this case, Dorothea Lange's *Migrant Mother*. I put Jimmy at my desk and ask him to advance the slides when I indicate for him to do so. I start the lesson by asking students to give a definition of 'transformation.' I ask them to think about it for 30 seconds, and I watch the clock. Giving time for students to process is important, and I am not always the best at this, I have to remind myself constantly to allow thinking time. Sometimes "think time" doesn't work. Students accept this down time as talk time or movement time, and I have to cut it short, but today it is

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[35] Teachers are encouraged to use a long term reward system to modify behavior. Several teachers use the brownie reward system. Dividing a 9 x 13 pan into 12 sections and rewarding a student's good behavior with paper "brownies". When the pan is full they earn real brownies baked by the teacher. In older grades as the year progresses the pan is divided into smaller sections (16 or even 24 sections).

working. The motivation of a brownie party is working. After our 30 seconds, I ask

for students to hold up their hands if you know the definition. I get a few hands,

and I pick a student who doesn't throw her hand up every time I ask a question.

Samantha: A transformation is when a butterfly becomes a

butterfly.

Me: Oh, she has the right idea, but . . .

(Interrupted by Rowan) Not a butterfly but a caterpillar becomes a

butterfly.

Me: You are both on the right track. Someone else

Angie (blurts out): When something becomes something else.

Me: Does everyone agree?

I take the few heads bobbing up and down as agreement and say "Great."

I turn and write what Angie has said on the board. I nod my head to Jimmy, who

clicks to the next slide. On the screen under the word Transformation appears

the definition: *a thorough or dramatic change in form or appearance; a

metamorphosis during the life cycle of an animal.* I read through the definition

and ask if that is what we had decided as a group. Only a couple of kids shake

their heads in agreement. I am losing too many. I ask Samantha to read the

second sentence of the definition, and she does. I ask David if she was correct in

her definition earlier, he was not listening and is glancing around the group for

help. Mave is staring at him and bobbing her head up and down in an

exaggerated manner; David sees it, looks back to me and says, "yes."

I ask the Samantha to repeat her original definition; she says, "a transformation is when a Caterpillar becomes a butterfly. I ask everyone to recall the life cycle of a butterfly, something I know they have covered in both 2nd and 3rd grades. After a second, I ask for volunteers: one to draw the first stage, one for the 2nd, etc. While they are drawing, I hand out sketchbooks and ask the class to put a 'thumbnail sketch' of the life cycle in their books and think about how it is a transformation and to consider other transformations. Teaching from a concept building up to creation is an approach I adopted many years ago when teaching high school and it is exactly what this schools Artful Learning approach requires of all the teachers. It is something I have tried to instill in my pre-service teachers while in my prior positions as an instructor of teacher education courses. It was sometimes counter to the way student teachers were taught and are often still taught at the undergraduate level.

When I observe most students have finished, I ask for other examples of transformation. Standing at the board with marker in hand, I look about the group smiling, giving smiles and encouraging nods to those who I suspect have something to contribute. After what feels like an eternity, Caleb raises his hand and says

Caleb: something dying.

Me: Good, why is it a transformation?

Ginger pipes up with, "because it rots."

Me: that is a physical transformation? Good. Someone else thinks of physical transformation?

Mark: Ice melting, it turns to water.

Me: watch me, please.

I quickly draw a diagram of a rotting mouse. Mouse with x's on eyes, arrow, mouse with flies, arrow, a less defined mouse with maggots, arrow, paddle shape with ears, arrow, bones, arrow, soil and new plant. Students giggle and say, "Aha, gross" while pointing and laughing. These students enjoy being "grossed out" at this age. I use this as a means to keep their attention. We have not even gotten to the art skills; we are still in the concept stage of our lesson.

I ask the students, Can you diagram Ice the same way? While pointing to their sketch books. Students start working, I see that Kevin has recalled the cube form we were drawing earlier in the semester, I say out loud how I like the way Kevin is using the cube form to represent the ice. I am walking around and notice line drawings of the cube, so I state to the group, remember our shading skills; light source, light, medium, dark.

Caleb blurts out, but ice is clear!

Me: Oh, Caleb is thinking! What happens to light in a clear solid everyone? I don't wait for them to recall, it is an advanced concept and was only mentioned in passing. "It allows most of the light through but not all, keep that in mind as you work.

Caleb: it would be light, light, medium light!

Several students are raising their hands frantically waving. "Show me; I can't do it." More students are raising their hands. I realize that everything is grinding to a halt over the light issue. I go to the board and quickly draw that cube shape and only light shading to the form. Then I say, what comes next? Together we finish the diagram. This whole process takes 7 to 10 minutes but works into the concept of teaching them to think and act like artists. The concept has to be understood before they can make art about it. This has gone very smoothly for a couple of reasons, high interest and the anticipation of earning two brownies.

I prompt Jimmy to click to the next slide, and we begin to see images of transformations; a chick hatching next to an unhatched egg, next to a broken raw egg; the Grand Canyon with weathering of rocks; and Cindy Sherman's *Clowns and People*[36]. This work sparks the most conversation. Questions are raised about how taking pictures of yourself might be "art"? This leads to a discussion of the concept of transformation and what our artworks might communicate about transformation.

Caleb: I get it, she is transforming into clowns! I could transform into a car, and it would be the same.

Me: Yes

Chatter breaks out about another student who, for the previous Halloween, had built a costume with his Dad whereby he could lie on the floor and would look like

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[36] I was inspired to include work by Sherman after watching the Art21 series on transformation. I chose not to include the video for students due to time constraints and my feeling that they would not stay engaged by hearing from the artist herself.

a Transformer car[37]. I allow the conversation to go on for a few minutes. I feel it is allowing a connection between concept and reality. it is also bridging the gap for those who maybe not yet understand the concept.

I look up at the clock; it is 11:07 and we have 5 minutes left. I ask the students to write or draw one thing they want to remember for next week and then stack their sketchbooks up on their table. After a couple of minutes, I begin to walk around collecting pencils. I am peppered by questions about their behavior and if they earned both their brownies. I smile at each question and say, "yes." We have not gotten to the visual arts concepts to be taught, but that will wait till the next lesson.

11:12 on the dot, Ms. Johnson arrives at the door, I open it and in a loud voice say to Ms. Johnson that her class has been very well-behaved; the kids cheer. Ms. Johnson smiles at me, then has to calm them down and ask them to line up at a "0" (zero). As they walk from the room, the next class is lining up in the corridor. It is the second-grade class that I meet with three times a week.

The first two classes of the day have gone well enough, with only minor outbursts and limited distractions. I am 'on a high' as teachers say, I feel good about my teaching and the level of work that has been accomplished. Students of the second-grade class enter the room and begin running to their seat. I comment to the three young ladies walking, that I appreciate their following the entrance procedures, this is part of our school management system: Positive

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[37] Similar creations can be seen in this Youtube video https://youtu.be/4zSzztA0wSo

Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS). I then ask a student who was not entering the room properly to come back and show everyone the correct way to do it. He does. Then, I ask everyone who has not entered correctly to please go back and do it again. Most do it without prompting, but I have to ask a few, by name, to do the procedure again.

This behavioral management approach is slightly different from the one used with the earlier 3rd-grade class. I am less stern, more accommodating in my tone with these younger students. This is due, not only to their younger age but also as a result of my previous working experiences with each class. Students of the 3rd-grade and 2nd-grade classes require vastly different behaviors on my part to elicit compliance to school or classroom procedures. I am working to upscale my corrective messages so students of the 3rd-grade class can comply more consistently to rules. As they are able to follow my requests when I use a softer tone of voice, I will speak quietly more often; I also will use more requests and fewer demands. Polite behavior does not just happen; I have to teach behavioral expectation, and I have to teach students that their response to a more polite and softer tone should be the same as if I were speaking in a demanding tone. I often use the phrase 'school language and tone versus home language and tone'. Students of the second-grade class are already responding to a gentler level of school language tone, partly because at their young age, they are still eager to satisfy and they take directions more readily.

This second-grade class meets for three 30 minute art sessions a week; it is one of the classes that receive an extra 30 minutes of art instruction per week. This variation in the schedule, both in terms of total instructional time per week and time of day each session, is disruptive to curriculum planning and materials management. I will have another second grade later in the day, but because of differences in class length and frequency (i.e., an additional 30 minutes of instructional time), the 2nd-grade groups are progressing through at a completely different stage in the lesson. Thirty minutes difference may not sound like much of a difference in time, but when you are managing 22 classes of students and providing twenty-six and a half hours of instruction per week, it can be a daunting difference.

This group of second-grade students is on week three of our unit on 'adaptations.' The students have studied adaptation as a concept through discussion, focus lessons, and guided instruction. They have explored many examples of adaption and have already created sketches in their sketchbooks and storylines for a story on adaptations. They have studied illustrators and their styles, techniques, and ways of work. As a class, they have decided to use colored pencil and have practiced some colored pencil techniques before starting the final projects. They are to be illustrators and authors of their books. As a prompt, I have assigned the students to think of themselves as astronauts who have discovered a new world. They will describe the planet (habitat) and a new creature they have discovered on the planet. They are to highlight how the

creature is adapted to living in its habitat. This level of work is only possible due to the scaffolded learning and support they have received in both their generalist classroom and art lessons, which have guided them to achieve higher level thinking. Our project is a taking the form of an accordion folded 'zigzag' book with illustrations and text by the students. Most of the students are finishing their storyboards and designs. As a group of students finishes, I have set up a center where they will create the zigzag book with my assistance. Between helping groups of students create their blank books, I am assisting students with their sketches and storyboards. A few students still are struggling with the concept, but that will have to wait for the next class as it is now time to clean up materials. I give instructions for cleanup, and pass out post-it notes for name labels to be placed on their in-progress works.

11:44 the second-grade students have cleaned up and are restlessly waiting for their classroom teacher to arrive. They will immediately go to recess when they leave my class. As we wait, I make a mental list of items that must happen during lunch break, call a parent, turn in lesson plans, cut additional paper, make a restroom break and eat lunch. Ms. Tocsin picks up her class, and I am able to accomplish the items on my mental list before the next class starts. The afternoon section consists of three classes, another second grade for an hour, a kindergarten class for half an hour, and another fourth-grade class for an hour.

12:28 p.m. The second-grade class is 12 minutes late to class. Lunch is running behind, and it has cut 12 minutes from our scheduled time. Again, this time may not seem like much to a generalist classroom teacher or administrator, but 12 minutes is actually a lot of time for a special area teacher. At Corinth, I see most classes for an average of 60 minutes per week. We have 36 weeks of classes per school year, which translates to 36 hours of visual arts instruction per year. Grade levels two through six take two full day field trips per year reducing arts instruction to 34 hours per year. Factor in snow days, school assemblies, state-mandated testing, and I average 30 hours per year to cover my curriculum. The elementary student school day in Corinth's district is seven hours and 45 minutes. The instructional time is six hours and 55 minutes per day equaling 29 hours and 58 minutes of instruction per week. Special area teachers are given the equivalent of one school week to complete an entire curriculum. Guarding my instructional time has become important to me in accomplishing instructional goals.

This second-grade class that I teach before lunch is approximately one week ahead in the curriculum compared to the students now entering the classroom. This group of students has been introduced to the adaptation concept, and I want to remind them of last week's lesson.

Me: Can someone tell me what we studied last week?

Israel: About birds

Me: Ok what did we learn about types of birds?

Israel: They live in lots of places

Case: They fit their environment

Me: What did we call that?

Silence -----

Me: started with an A

Adoption, yells a student

I give up and write the word on the board ADAPTATION

Me: the weather is getting warmer, and people are starting to go

outside without their jackets, is this a simple form of adaptation?

Case: yes!

Me: good, let's move on to how we are going to make our art.

I lower the blinds and pull up my presentation about illustrators. The slides show

a series of book covers and pages, each in a different style; many are from

books with which the students would be familiar. We discuss how each

illustrator's work is different and I explain that each has a style that is dependent

on a set of technical and artistic choices. The last few slides are illustrations

done in colored pencil, and I am encouraging them to choose colored pencil as

their medium. I feel like this is a medium that would permit them to be successful.

I have established a system in which students (as a class) get a choice of the

media, subject or some other aspect of the project. Since I have chosen the

subject and the project (i. e. an illustrated book), I feel obligated to let them make

an informed choice, but I am not above coercing them with the idea that colored

pencils would be a better option. It is easy to persuade them, which makes it less time consuming for me to prepare materials.

The remaining 30 minutes are used practicing colored pencil techniques with an *I do; We do; You do together; You do alone* method. I use the overhead video camera to demonstrate, and students then use the technique. I encourage the students to create images they would want to keep, as they will take their practice images back to their regular classrooms. Letting them create images they find interesting as practice is a way to keep them focused.

When we get complementary color shading, the room fills with oohs and ahhs. We have had a good class; disruptions have been at a minimum. I have had to stop several students from talking and redirect them to the work at hand or refocus them on watching a demonstration, but this has not been disruptive enough to make me feel like we have lost the day. With five minutes left, I ask for one person from each table to please make a stack of colored pencil containers on the supply table and instruct everyone to take their practice work with them.

The next class to appear is a kindergarten class. This is a 30-minute class, which is perfect for students of this age. Their ability to sustain interest on their work is limited, so moving in and out of the art room in 30 minutes works well for them. We have been working on the concept of 'community' for a couple of weeks and we are currently working on collages of our community. We have established a list of places in our community that we visit or know and are now

creating images of those places. I pull their work from the drawer while the teacher's aide takes the lead in getting the students seated. Assistance from a paraprofessional is invaluable for keeping the class going. I feel lucky that she is able to spend some of her time in the art room when the students are here. I pass a stack of student artworks off to her, and she begins to distribute the work, she can pass them back without calling out names as I would have to do. While she is doing this, I grab supplies from the cabinet. These include stacks of colored paper cut into 4" x 6" rectangles, with some triangles, and squares as well. I pick up glue sponges, scissors, and crayons. I distribute these materials as quickly as possible. Only then do realize I have not yet reminded the students of techniques related to scissor use. This mistake will make it harder to regain and keep the students' attentions. I ask for 'five' and quickly count down; five - eyes on me, four- bubbles in our mouth, three- hands and feet still, two - ears listening, one, zero. A few are not looking but all are silent, so I quickly remind them of the artwork to be completed: a community place. Then I demonstrate the correct way to use the scissors and remind them that scissors are for cutting paper only - no hair, no clothes, no body parts. Students begin grabbing stacks of papers and throwing them on their background paper; I am beginning to worry that they are going to 'play' idly and not work in a considerate manner. I notice Amarra carefully arranging shapes and announce loudly, " I like how Amarra is working like an artist, making choices and thinking about what the completed work will look like." Most students stop what they are doing and look at her. Some stand

and a few leave their seats to see what she has done. Amara announces that she is 'considering' where to put her work. I assume from the inflection on the word considering that it must be a new word in her vocabulary and she is proudly demonstrating it.

Kindergarten is a wonderful age for art learning. Engagement with materials initiates creative processes. The act of cutting is a driving force for the shapes that some students make. Their work is reflective of their individual personalities. Kerrian is very active and requires movement; he stands instead of sitting, and he rocks his hips side to side. His artwork is scattered across the paper; small house shapes created from squares and triangles. No baseline is established, so houses float about in space. He quickly smashes the cut shapes on a glue filled sponge, applying an excess of glue, which drips in directional lines from the right side of his page to wherever he has chosen to place the cut piece. Amarra on the other hand, is still, focused, and thoughtful in her approach. She has arranged a series of papers around her work area and is carefully considering color choices for each next shape she plans on cutting. She constructs a playground or park out of pieces she cuts. She carefully dabs each piece on the glue sponge adding just a small amount of glue before carefully arranging the new piece in relation to the prior pieces. My job with students of this age is to direct them to stay on task and encourage their work. I try to balance between teaching techniques and allowing their natural creativity to come through.

My musing on differences in work styles is interrupted by Gerry yelling loudly, " it is not fair, I had it first," I turn to see Gerry laying across the table arms outstretched toward Howard who is holding a piece of black paper. I rush to their table picking up another piece of black and offering it to Gerry. He refuses, and I ask Howard to trade pieces with me; he does, and I hand Gerry the other black rectangle. Gerry is pacified, and I can help him off the table and back into his seat. Time has gotten away from me; Ms. Knight shows up to collect her class, and we are still working. I announce that they should glue their last piece down and line up. Both Ms. Knight and I have to prompt individual students to finish up and line up. I feel flustered; the tables are covered in student work, loose papers, small clippings from scissoring, glue on the tables both wet and drying, and my next class at the door.

As the kindergarteners proceed to walk out of the room, Allie yells out, "Thank you Mister Reynolds," others repeat in cascading echo. I feel good for I know it is sincere. I step into the hall and raise my hand high above my head holding my fingers open in a five position. I am ignored.

Ms. Nance calls out to give me five, the students immediately respond to her, falling silent and still. She then directs them to me. I ask that they please help care for the kindergartners and their work. I ask that each table assists in the cleanup, as we were working so hard we had lost track of time.

Me: One person from each table place the kinder work in the drying rack, another collect the large pieces of paper and return to the box on the supply

table, another collect scissors or glue sponges; another collect the small scrap. Let's have two volunteers to wipe the tables. A few hands are raised, and I select trustworthy students to do that job.

Josh: "You always pick Mary and Kate."

Before I can answer, Ms. Nance interrupts Josh, "Why do you think he picks them?"

Josh *with his head shaking side to side and in an exacerbated voice*, says, "because he can trust them."

Ms. Nance: 'Why can't he trust you?' She reminded him of a previous event when Josh had poured a cup of dirty water down another student's shirt.

Me: Please be helpful to the kindergartners and make the clean up fast, so we can go to work.

Students entering the room quickly AND begin the cleanup procedure. Many are talking about how cute the work is and recalling their year in kindergarten. Clean up goes quickly, and we are settling into our seats when the fire alarm goes off. I race to the other side of the room for my roster and begin counting children at the same time. As we exit the room, I count again. We make our way down the three flights of stairs, out the front door, and to our designated place. After a few minutes, the procedural drill is complete, just as we are preparing to reenter the building an announcement is made that we will practice our lockdown procedure and tornado drill as well. Ms. Nance meets me on the

stairs and joins us as we climb the stairs to my classroom. We return to our seats, and I begin to remind them of the procedure when the next alarm sound rings. I close the door and cover the window with paper. I escort all 19 students into the closet and sit them on the floor; I leave the door open, and Ms. Nance and I stand in the doorway. If this had to be a full or real lockdown, we would have closed the closet door and remained silent. We continue to wait the 10 or so minutes it takes for the principal to walk the hall and check that all rooms are locked, windows covered and silent. We get an all clear and return to our seats. Ms. Nance reminds students of their location in the tornado drill, and we wait a few minutes for the drill to start. While waiting, we play a game of 'name the artist.' I pull posters of artists' images from a rack and ask for the artist's name, Even though we have studied them, most cannot recall these artists' names. The warning Bell rings again, but with a different tone indicating a tornado is approaching. We line up and go down four flights of stairs to the ground level. We position ourselves along the wall and assume the tornado safety position. After a brief check from administrators, we are allowed to return the classroom. As we climb the stairs, two students begin yelling at one another. Kegan throws a punch at another student, and the two are fighting. I step between them, and Ms. Nance joins me. She says she will take the class back to her room and I should take the fighting students to the office. I follow her directions and complete paperwork required of reporting incidents of fighting before climbing the three

flights back to my room. It is 2:50, almost time for the class to end - another day when work on an art lesson has been lost.

The remaining rest of the day is spent outside of the art room. In the next 30 minutes, I will be helping in remedial math support of a small group of third-grade students in their classroom. I feel completely unprepared to teach and support math instruction for students who are more than a year behind in their math skills. I must rely on the classroom teacher to provide me with instruction and mentoring about how to properly support the students. Following this remedial work, I can take a 3rd restroom break of the day before reporting to my after-school duty, where I direct traffic at the parent pick-up location.

If you have stayed with me this long, you are probably tired just from reading the events of my day. Your head may hurt, and you may be ready to move on to something else. This is, in actuality, exactly how I feel at the end of the teaching day!

In the next section, I will provide further interpretation of this narrative, triangulated by reports from six interviewed teacher.

Chapter 5: Teachers and Teaching as Weavers and Weaving

When I was 10 or 11, my younger brother and I would roam the woods and cliffs adjacent to our family farm. There was a well-established path leading down the far side of a ravine 200 hundred feet down to the bottom. My brother and I would walk along the near side looking for a quick way down. We found a large poplar tree standing near the edge of an overhang, maybe five feet from the edge and growing 80 to 90 feet to the bottom, just too far to get my arms around but close enough for fingertips to touch. I don't remember who had the initial idea, but we decided if we jumped out we could grab the trunk and shimmy down. It took a couple of days to build up the courage, but finally I stepped to the edge, reached out my arms, bent my knees, held my breath, and flung myself forward. That is the same feeling I have now, as I begin this chapter, it is a leap of faith. Just so you know, I did manage to grab hold and shimmy my way down those 80 odd feet; my brother did as well. In fact, it became a habit, until I became interested in other matters and my trips 'under the cliffs' became infrequent.

In this chapter, I discuss both my own as well as a select group of participant teachers' perceptions about the contexts within which we are working. As Brown (2002) suggested; "by shifting the emphasis from what a statement might mean to how it has been used by someone in a specific situation, the human agent becomes implicated, and a certain perspective gets revealed" (p. 25). Riessman (2005) referred to this as the "structural analysis" as the

"emphasis shifts to the telling, the way a story is told" (p. 3). Further, the "thematic content does not slip away, focus is equally on form – how a teller by selecting particular narrative devices makes a story persuasive" (p. 3). Thus, I divide the chapter into sections based on the contexts we perceive about our work.

Ascertaining our perceptions about the contexts within which we work is dependent upon accepting that these teachers' and my understandings of teaching practice are constructed orientation created within the "specific orientation of . . . individual and . . . socio-cultural processes" (Atkinson, 2002, p. 29). Our common understanding is informed by our collective experiences. These become a narrative we tell ourselves as we each construct the daily act of being a teacher. They are the stories we share with one another. "Insider meanings" (Anderson, 2006 p. 389) or understanding the perceptions of a teacher's contexts through the eyes of a teacher are at the heart of this investigation. Beyond my own story, I include parts of stories told by six other teachers, because as Anderson says, "autoethnographers must assiduously pursue other insiders' interpretations, attitudes, and feelings as well as their own. (2006 p. 389)"

Denzin's (2001) Interpretive Interactionism method was chosen for analysis of these data. In Denzin's method the researcher or "interpretive interactionist" is an interpreter of "[problematic], lived experiences involving symbolic interaction" (p. 32). Analytic interpretation is "the process of

progressively defining and interpreting the phenomenon to be understood"

(Denzin 2001 p. 131). Narratives are analyzed and the collective "phenomenon"

explored through an Interpretive Interactionism lens is reduced to its "essential

elements" (Denzin 2001, p. 70). I have chosen to focus on and call the "essential

elements," *contexts.*

Additionally, my analysis is grounded in Gadamerian hermeneutic theory

as it relates to the nature of our teacher-perceptions about our teaching-context;

our stories reveal our perceptions. My story is a conversation with my fellow

teachers' stories; my experience is informed by and through interactions with

other teacher's stories. Moss (2004) described hermeneutics as "a holistic and

integrative approach to interpretation of human phenomena, which seeks to

understand the whole in light of its parts, repeatedly testing interpretations

against the available evidence, until each of the parts can be accounted for in a

coherent interpretation of the whole" (p. 49). Gadamerian hermeneutics is an

attempt "to clarify the conditions in which understanding takes place" (Gadamer

2004, p. 295). These perceptions are the foundations of my personal narrative, I

am retelling my teaching story of the contexts within which I work, as a means to

understand my perceptions and to communicate my expressions about these

things. In other words, this study is not interested in "canonical or sacred stories"

(Olson & Craig, 2005) or "Meganarratives" (Olson & Craig, 2009) (see also

Crites, 1971; Eisler, 1987; Clandinin & Connelly, 1996; Ritchie & Wilson, 2000)

that provide an outsider's definition of what means to be a teacher, but rather

these stories tell how we perceive the experience of teaching, being teachers, and engaging with students as teachers in realistically relevant ways. It is hoped that, "The resulting analysis. . . .[will] inform our broader social understandings and upon our broader social understandings to enrich our self-understandings" (Anderson, 2006, p. 390).

On being a teacher

In this section the participants' perceptions of working as an elementary visual arts teacher are presented as a way of illuminating the sense of contexts within which we work. A number of common themes about being a teacher emerged from the data, including the rewards and challenges unique to teaching elementary art, and the influence of personal experience on teaching.

As I have had a working relationship with each of these teachers over the course of several years, their stories with idiomatic expressions[38] and intonations[39] have become part of the whole in describing them as teachers. The line between the interview and our shared experience is permeable, as prior knowledge of our shared experiences informed my understanding of what I hear them say. Additionally, as I continue to work with several of these teachers, our post interview history informs my interpretation. Hayler (2011) briefly described Sartre's progressive-regressive method (1963), as a "temporal forward and backward direction of the process of interpretation." As I work through and with

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[38] Idiomatic expressions are phrases where the words together have a meaning that is different from the dictionary definitions of the individual words from (Anderson-Woo, C 2008)

[39] Intonation patterns add meaning to an utterance: question, statement, surprise, disbelief, sarcasm, teasing.(Anderson-Woo, C 2008)

our stories, I am informed by my past and our shared experiences, the interview data, and our current working relationship in much the same manner.

Triangulation — the Participants

My story has been interwoven with and triangulated by the experiences described by six elementary level visual art teachers, who I originally interviewed as fellow participants of this study. These teachers are of various ages and have had differing years of teaching experience, within various types of communities, and schools. They are a purposefully selected sample of teachers with whom I had developed a prior working relationship while employed as a teacher educator in the art education department at Indiana University, a large Midwestern university. It is this specific long-term working relationship that made me invite them to be part of an original study.

Together we have had a wide range of experiences as art teachers. No other male teachers chose to participate in this study and are therefore not represented in this analysis except through my personal representation. As a male and current teacher, I have found this group of women teachers' perceptions to be typical of my experiences, and therefore gender will not be a context. While this work is not generalizable to the wider general population of teachers, it is representative of both my own as well as their stories.

The teacher participants of this study have had from 3 years to 21 years of K-6 art teaching experience. We had varied backgrounds before entering teaching art at the elementary level, including teaching in the general elementary

classroom, working in community-based arts programs, being professional artists[40] or graphic designers, and running small businesses. All hold visual art education degrees; three have earned a Master's degree (initial certification), two earned Master's degree in Art Education (post bachelor's), and two earned other advanced degrees.

As my story was paramount to the understanding of my perceptions, it is also important to know the other teachers with whom I am working. I would like to describe each of the other teachers briefly and generally (to protect their identities), and in no particular order.

Ms. Hoffman is a tall, thin woman with her hair neatly bobbed; she moves about with purpose in and out of the classroom. She holds her head high, and it leads her body as she walks, she is quick in her movements and appears 'busy' regardless of what she is doing. On the day I visited her in her classroom, she was wearing a fitted white button down blouse, and I joked with her that I could never keep a white shirt spotless until the end of the day, she remarked, "the day is not over yet," but no doubt she *will* keep it spotless for the remainder of the day. Her classroom is neatly organized, materials neatly arranged on the open shelves with labels. Her walls are filled with examples of artworks by both famous artists and by students. Ms. Hoffman has been teaching for four years as a visual arts teacher, but had a prior career as an elementary classroom teacher for a "little while." She left the classroom to raise her children and after her children were older, returned to university to earn a certification to teach visual art

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[40] Professional artist here is defined as being employed as an artist (commercial not free lance)

education. Prior to teaching, she held a job as an artist in the printmaking field. When she talked of this time, her eyes lit up and her hands involuntarily began to move about in front of her as she told stories of the jobs she did. In a reverentially hushed tone, she recounted working with several important contemporary artists she assisted when they came into the print shop to make prints of their works.

Ms. Hoffman works in a small university town. She works in two different schools, rotating between three days a week at one school and two at another in a leapfrog manner. She describes her students as coming from a mix of low and middle-class socioeconomic backgrounds. The day I visited she was in the newer of her two schools and the halls were filled with artwork created by students.

Ms. Hoffman became an elementary teacher after her art career and later becoming an art teacher. She indicates that when she started thinking about teaching, "I really didn't want to be an art teacher. I never had that as an aspiration, ever, because I detested the way art was taught to me as a child" (Hoffman personal communication 11/15/10). While raising her children she reconsidered teaching art, "because of my own children's experience in school and I saw how it was different than what I thought it was, or certainly what it was when I was a kid" (Hoffman. personal communication 11/15/10).

Ms. Bardot is a 'take charge' person and met me at the door to her room with questions about former practicum students and my own child, whom she had as a student in her art class some years before our interview. She directed

me to a carpeted area where she reads to children and offered me a chair. I explained what I was doing and she said, "I don't know why you want to interview me." I reassured her that she is exactly who I wanted to be talking with. Ms. Bardot is tall and wears her hair in a braid down the back. She is dressed in a multicolored sweater and flowing skirt. Her hands are speckled with grey paint and she has a small smudge of orange on her cheek. Ms. Bardot has been teaching for 21 years, she currently teaches in a single school, but has worked split assignments between multiple schools for many years. Ms. Bardot's principal describes her as a teacher leader; her opinion is valued by fellow teachers, who hold her in high regard (Principal of Bardot's school, personal communication 2011). Thirty-six percent[41] of the students at her school qualify for free or reduced lunch[42]. Ms. Bardot teaches 525 students every week and teaches each class of students twice per week. She creates the schedule for 'special area' classes herself, which involves setting not only their schedules but the lunch and recess schedules as well.

Ms. Brown is a bubbly, cheerful teacher, who is still full of youth but is nearly my age. She is a very optimistic person and has been teaching for three years. She describes herself as having always been "into the arts and teaching". Ms. Brown came to teaching after working in other fields, namely, as a restaurant owner for several years. She has worked in the arts "on and off" before becoming certified; namely, she worked as a community-based teaching artist teaching

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[41] Retrieved from district website; May 2012

[42] Percentage of Free and reduced lunch eligible students is used to establish socioeconomic average of school, in itself a context the teacher works within.

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crafts and fine arts to older students. She comes from a family who works in the arts. Her mother teaches bookmaking and other art techniques. Her grandfather is a folk artist, who is in his mid-80s is still working. Her stepfather was a sound engineer and Ms. Brown recalls, "hanging in the rafters, watching the stage setup and lighting guys getting ready." She felt motivated to become a teacher after having children of her own, although she explains that teacher elementary art was "always in her mind."

Ms. Brown teaches at a school she calls her "dream school." Her school is situated in an economically mixed community, with 66% of the students qualifying for free or reduced lunch. The new housing development directly adjacent to the school offers "eco-friendly homes beginning in the low $200s."[43] Her classroom is filled with student work around the top of the walls. Materials are placed on shelves at student height and are available to students as they need them. She has created a seating area with two small love seats on a carpeted area in the corner next to the book area. With low ceilings and natural wood cabinets, her room feels cozy.

Ms. Brown's journey to the classroom involved a career in other non-education areas and later returned to the university to pursue a career in education as an elementary teacher discovering the art education program and following that passion. She considers herself a child-centered teacher. She places children at the center of her teaching and planning. "First and foremost is

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[43] Personal observation of the sales billboard

understanding the individual student and accommodating, being aware that the kids are not all the same" (Brown, personal communication 7/28/12).

Ms. Bailey is a short woman with salt and pepper hair. She sweeps it back from her eyes routinely, in a rhythmic head toss and hand sweep motion. She speaks in a cadence uniquely her own, and often uses her hands to punctuate her speech. Ms. Bailey worked in community-based arts programs before entering the public school art classroom. She directed and taught a highly regarded enrichment program and is well known throughout the town for having served in such a public position for many years. Ms. Bailey has been teaching for more than fourteen years in public schools. Her knowledge of art education theory comes to the surface as soon as she starts talking about her students work. She works as an art teacher in a split assignment between two elementary schools: a lower elementary composed of K-2 and another k-6. In her primary school assignment at the K-2 school, where only 22% of the children qualify for free or reduced lunch.

Ms. Krauss has been teaching for nine years in a rural school system. She is a warm person who puts you at ease the moment you meet her. She has short auburn hair. When I met with her, she was wearing an apron covered in paint streaks, with rolled up sleeves, and, a huge welcoming smile. As we walked to her room from the office, student artwork was hanging along the halls, and she would intermittently name the students who created them. Ms. Krauss had a background in the arts and worked for a short time as a commercial artist. She

describes her teaching as choice-based and uses the phrase TAB[44] and choice-based interchangeably. Ms. Krauss's room is clearly a TAB classroom with tables pushed to the edges of the room; each table holds an assortment of materials relating to various art media or projects, the walls adjacent to the tables contain images and poster with notes about techniques, skills, or directions. Along the counter are several sculptures constructed from pipe cleaners, cardboard, paper towel rolls, etc. The sculptures are clearly individual's creations and bear no resemblance to one another, indicating an independent work environment.

Ms. Krauss selected her career early and identifies specifically as an art teacher, "not as a teacher who happens to teach art or as an artist who teaches." She says, "I wouldn't be a teacher if I didn't teach art" (Krauss, personal communication, 10/27/10), and "[I am] someone who is sharing art with everyone, making and learning about it. ...I'm a teacher of art, not necessarily just a teacher" (Krauss, personal communication, 10/27/10).

Ms. Todd is warm and courteous when we meet at her school. She has cut her hair short since the last time I saw her and explained it is because she is a new mom with "no time". Her speech remains bubbly and punctuated with smiles. We walk to her room which is filled with stacks of student work and lots of images on the walls. She has arranged her tables in a large L in the room. She has placed tissue paper squares on the window to create faux stained glass effect. She invites me to a seat near her desk and offers me a cup of coffee. Ms. Todd has been teaching for five years in an urban school in Indianapolis, a large

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[44] Teaching for Artistic Behavior

Midwestern city. Ms. Todd grew up on the east side of the same city, only a few blocks from where she now teaches. She describes art as her first love and talks about her art teacher with praise. Ms. Todd had a background in graphic design and worked outside of education for many years before returning to university to earn an initial visual art education certification. She describes her students as 'urban and sweet,' and "not unlike [children] in the school" where she went as a child.

Ways of perceiving our curricular choices and working environments

From the beginning of my conversations with the participants, it became clear that the ways in which they perceived their choices within their unique teaching contexts were dependent on their prior experiences and previous teaching contexts. Hermeneutic theory believes "all understanding is filtered through previous understanding socially and culturally formed" (Atkinson, 29). All the participants referenced prior experiences in or out of the classroom as they described their current attitudes and ideas about teaching. Their experiences included teaching art to students in formal, informal, and non-school settings, working as teacher assistants or in non-art subject areas. References to teacher training or schooling were limited and were not cited as having practical implications for the curricular choices these teachers made. Similarly to the findings reported by LaPorte et al. (2008) these teachers did not reference public school enculturation as relevant to their decisions about how to address the day-to-day realities of teaching.

Elementary visual art teachers as weavers

The participants and I agreed upon a single point: We teachers were doing more than just teaching, we are *creating an environment*. I had not considered a term for this feeling until one of the participants mentioned the term weaving. She described her work of integrating art in the student's whole curriculum as "weaving" the general classroom content into the art room. It struck me that this was exactly what I had been doing, observing, hearing, and understanding. We, teachers, are weavers of all sorts of 'cloth,' both curricular and cultural.

Weavers take a variety of raw materials and through a process that combines art and craft, they fashion a product that is more than the sum of its individual parts. Teachers as weavers work within the fixed contexts or "*warp*"[45] of their situations. Using the weaving metaphor, the *weft*[46] is the diverse teaching choices these teachers make to compose effective curriculum and classroom/school culture. Working around the warp, these teachers choose the varied 'strings' of the weft then arrange and rearrange these weft strings to compose an effective curriculum. Below in figures 5, I explore their unique perceptions of the *warp (fixed contexts)*.

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[45] Warp (Textiles) the yarns arranged lengthways on a loom, forming the threads through which the weft yarns are woven. Collins English Dictionary – Complete and Unabridged, 12th Edition 2014

[46] Weft (Textiles) the yarn woven across the width of the fabric through the lengthwise warp yarn. Also called: filling or woof [Old English, related to Old Norse veptr; see weave].Collins English Dictionary – Complete and Unabridged, 12th Edition 2014
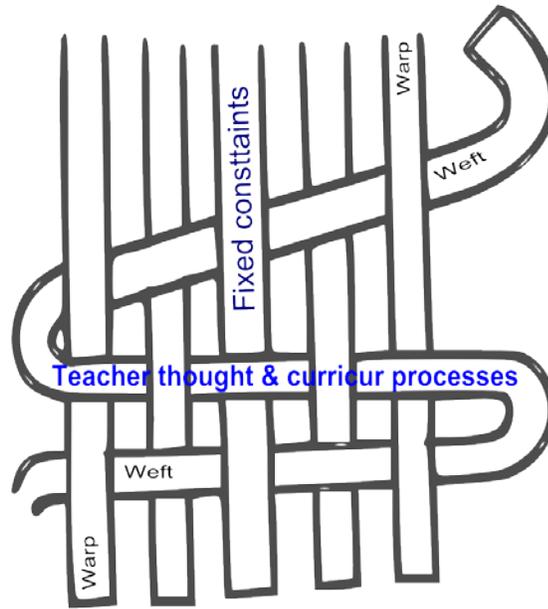
Figure 5 Warp and Weft of teaching

The Warp equals the fixed contexts (Time / Space / Budget / Accountability), while the Weft are the non-fixed contexts (teacher background and education, control of curriculum content and teaching methods) that the teacher has an influence on or control over.

Teachers' perceptions of the contexts

In my 20 years of teaching art at all grade/age levels (ages one year through graduate students), I have discovered that teaching is site, time, and culturally specific. Each individual that I have taught, presented a unique instructional 'problem,' not only as a student at a specific artistic developmental level with an exclusive set of motivational needs, interests, goals and cognitive skills but also as a problem of teaching/learning within a particular place, time, culture and community. Mary Stokrocki (2004) recognized the uniqueness of each teaching/learning environment by stating, "[T]he form, content, meaning,

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and value of art teaching are determined by the context in which they are used"
(394). The impact of context on teaching is the element of teaching that is
hardest to communicate to pre-service teachers, and the element of teaching
they discuss most when returning to share their stories. As Eisner (1998)
explained, "Teaching always occurs in highly contextual situations; there is not
now nor will there ever be a replacement for the teacher who understands which
course of action and which decision is most appropriate in this particular
circumstance at this particular time" (p. 209).

As I work through our story, some perceptions of context were universal
among us as elementary art teachers. Contexts of time, space, budget, and
meeting the expectations of some other entity were common among all these
teachers (accountability). Other contexts were not shared among the whole
group but were unique to teachers of specific types of students or climates.

The warp consists of "fixed" constraints the teachers work within. Time,
space, and budget are "fixed" contexts; the teachers have little influence over
these contexts. In the next sections, we will discuss the various contexts and
perceptions we as a group experience.

Warp: The "fixed" contexts

Schwab (1973) identified the *Milieu*, "the peripheral features inside and
outside of the classroom, the relations of others within the learning institution, the
student's parents, the outside community, and the administration" (503), these
are the fixed contexts teachers work within. Within the milieu (or contexts), the

influences on teacher thought processes are unique among Schwab's five bodies of experience or 'commonplaces.' I divide the milieu into its category within teacher thought, and the one I refer to as the "fixed" context. The fixed contexts are hard to alter in the teacher's traditional role as instructional planner and leader. The warp (fixed contexts) are squarely grounded in the reality of the school world and are clearly observable to informed individuals; other teachers can evaluate a teaching situation of time or space equally with only minimal information. It is these experiences that constitute the connectedness of teaching in a field. The contexts below exhibit the three common factors this select group of teachers found to be universal and one that appeared among some of the participants.

The context of Time

The school year calendar with set times when activities take place within each school day presents time as an inflexible context within which all teachers must work. The teacher must be thoughtful and respectful of time, in order to fit the maximum instruction into this framework. In my current position, the student day is 6 hours and 45 minutes, with 5 hours and 45 minutes of required instructional time per day. Each student receives approximately 60 minutes of visual arts instruction per week (in contrast, students receive 7.5 hours of reading instruction per week, every week). An art teacher ideally would provide 36 hours[47] of meaningful art instruction to each student over the course of school

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[47] In my current position the visual arts receive only 4% of the school year for the arts and for comparison, 30% for reading instruction.

year, which consists of 180 days or 900 hours. In reality, however, after

mandatory drills, snow days, and classroom management issues, I and the other

art teachers of this study, were able to provide only around 30 or 31 hours per

year. Thus, selecting and discarding elements of potential curricula in an ongoing

process throughout the year. I and the other art teachers of this study, as

instructional designers, must make difficult decisions about the most valuable (or

needed) curricula within the floating time[48] context during the year[49], knowing it

might be necessary to skip other important content.

    Some teacher participants report having been, given a daily work/teaching

schedule without having been consulted, and not given an opportunity to provide

input into the scheduling of the classes they teach. Other teachers were able to

take control of their schedules[50] by building the schedule themselves. This gave

some freedom within the overall constraints of time but adapting the internal units

(order of classes and class lengths) to their teaching preferences. Both Ms.

Bardot and Ms. Brown, for example, have assumed the responsibility of leading

the scheduling process to adapt it their curricular vision. Ms. Brown describes

considerations of time as,

> Not so much in thinking about [the amount] time, but thinking about how I
>
> had put a little bit of restraint on the kids; focusing them and their
>
> creativity, because you really only have so much time and you have to get

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[48] Floating time context is defined as a fluctuating amount of time lessened from the ideal (36 hours in my case) due to events like school assemblies, snow days, fire drills, etc.
[49] This is not uncommon of ALL teachers within the profession.
[50] They were afforded this opportunity by administrators.

them working in a way that they will finish in a timely manner. (Brown,

personal communication 7/2812)

For others, scheduling was handled by someone else. In my case, an

administrator designed the schedule featured in chapter four (see figure 4). As

can be seen, the schedule includes an extra arts block on Wednesdays which

results in having to plan for the fact that each of five grade level classes (out of

22 total classes of those grades) are perpetually two weeks ahead of their peers

in other sections of that grade. The logistical and management issues raised by

such a schedule cause frustration play havoc with planning an orderly sequence

of instruction for all students of these grade levels. It results in a snowballing

issue of educational inequity. At the end of two months the Wednesday block

classes have experienced an additional month ahead of art education and are a

month ahead of their peers in other sections of that grade.

Logistically, the extra materials needed to create more complex or

additional projects, the additional space needed for storage, and the mental

mapping required to keep any one group of kids separate from others of their

grade level is daunting. I cannot think simply, "first grade is here, and third grade

is here in the curriculum." I must think of each class within a given grade level as

being at a separate place in the curriculum. Similarly, Ms. Krauss experienced

schedule in which the reduction of the music teacher to part time, doubled the

amount of time students were in the art room. "So they're in the room more times

which is great, but it's at the same time, you have to come up with more things to

do and [figure out] how to manage that." Her concerns were not about the need to find more activities, since deeper learning is a positive outcome of the increased time, but this places stress on managing other aspects of fixed contexts, such as budget and space.

Upon asking Ms. Krauss about the greatest challenges she faces regarding fixed contexts, she mentions "time and space." "I don't do nearly as many three dimensional projects as I would like to. I don't have the space to store them or the time to do them or the hands to help" (Krauss, personal communication 10/27/10).

The context of Space

The prior two examples both raise the issue of space and now would be a good time to transition to that context. I define space here as the physical area/expanse available to the teacher to work, store, arrange, and inhabit. Space is of concern universally among these teachers and teachers with high volumes of children spoke more often of space. In my case seeing approximately 400 students every week requires a fine grasp of managing the space within which I teach, and they work. Ms. Bardot sees approximately 550 students per week and describes her need to be both "efficient and organized" to handle the storing of student work and supplies.

The physical space of the classroom dictates much of my management plan. The availability of seating, storage space, and accessible space for

supplies impacts how I choose to operate the class and my arrangement of areas for work.

The context of budget

Budgets (i.e. the money a teacher might use for instructional materials and supplies) are a context of teaching. Budgets allotted to the participants in this study varied greatly. In my case, the amount of money I may spend for materials and resources is determined by the principal of my school. Other teachers confirmed this as typical but reported the amount of funds they received varied from school to school. Again, in my case, I have seen four principals come and go over the past four years and have experienced vast swings in school management including budgets. My budget for the 2015 -16 school year was $480 which included a $92 dollar supplement from the district. This total equaled $1.28 per child. From these meager funds I was to provide the materials of basic art making needs, such as paper, tempera and watercolor paints, markers, scissors, glues, etc.). The entire amount had to be spent on consumable supplies.

I have been able to supplement basic needs for students' art supplies and instructional materials by requesting additional funding for specific items from our Parent Teacher Organization or through fundraising or applying for grants to purchase non-consumable supplies. I would consider my budget average within my current district, with some teachers receiving slightly more funds and some

receiving less.[51] Ms. Brown is at the lowest end of the scale for art supply funding, compared to other participants in this study. She receives only $119 dollars from her principal for supplies per academic year. She also receives the $92 supplement from the district. All additional funds she requires must be raised through fundraising. She indicated that she raises approximately $800 through fundraising every year and considers it "exhausting and time-consuming, but what are you going to do? You have to have the supplies" (Brown personal communication 09/2014).

Ms. Bardot, who works in the adjoining school district, is permitted to collect art fees from her students. She collects a fee of five dollars per student. The fee is collected as part of the general school fees charged to students, so she does not have to be responsible for collecting or handling the money (personal communication 11/1/10). However, because students receiving free lunch do not pay the fees, Ms. Bardot only collects the fee from approximately 59% of her students. Nevertheless, she collects approximately 1600 dollars with which to buy art supplies and materials needed to teach art over the academic year. Thus, Ms. Bardot has the highest budget of all participants in the study.

The context of accountability

The subject of accountability in education is a concern of educators, educational reformists, and policymakers. Accountability is defined as a system

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[51] In my current district, budgets are decided at the school level with one art teacher receiving 119 dollars, the lowest in the district and at the other extreme, one teacher receiving 1200 dollars.

(formal or informal) wherein teachers are held responsible for the performance of their students[52]. Within the last several years, measures of accountability[53] have transitioned from measurements teacher performance and student achievements. When I discussed accountability with teachers of the study during interviews, our conversations did not focus on issues of the formal evaluative system, but rather on the less formal or informal expectations of others. To administrators, parents, and members of the local community where we teach, accountability is referred to in a more general sense of "meeting the needs of the students," "keeping the class under control," and "producing work that was appreciated or understood by the community-at-large." Additionally there is pressure to create work that meets parental expectations of what "school art" should look like. Therefore, discussions with other teachers of this study addressed a dilemma of instructing lessons that resulted in "school arts style" (Chapman 1982, Efland 1976) products versus artistic ways of working. In several of our cases, expectations that, as art teachers, we keep school bulletin boards covered in "pretty or interesting artwork" is a real expectation that has impact on our curricular planning. Formalized accountability measures adopted by Indiana[54] in the summer of 2011[55] have not supplanted these localized school expectations but rather created a separate level of accountability for art teachers.

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[52]For an in-depth review of accountability, see
http://www.education.com/reference/article/accountability/
[53] For a discussion of various forms of accountability in education see
http://www.rand.org/content/dam/rand/pubs/technical_reports/2009/RAND_TR606.pdf
[54] For a brief on teacher evaluation in Indiana please see www .teacherevaluation.indiana.edu
https://goo.gl/CHY0J4

Besides formal state and informal local accountability requirements, school districts may require that their teachers adopt currently popular, research-based evaluative models. My district, for example, has adopted the Marzano Teacher Evaluation Model[56] for teacher evaluation. The Marzano website describes the model as, "based on [Robert J. Marzano's] acclaimed Art and Science of Teaching Framework and the meta-analytic research he has conducted over the past several decades" (Marzanoevaluation.com, 2016). The model is an observation framework summative assessment which provides a calculation system based in four domains: 1.classroom strategies and behaviors; 2. planning and preparing; 3. reflecting on teaching; and 4. collegiality and professionalism. Each domain contains a number of indicators of effective teaching. According to the Marzano website,

> the 60 elements in the four domains constitute a systematic approach to teacher development that incorporates self-assessment, peer review, evaluation, and focused mentoring to give teachers a solid, measurable foundation for improving their practice, thereby raising student achievement year by year. (Marzano, 2016, n.p.)

For the practicing teacher this involves a combination of both observation-based indicators by an administrator and teacher submitted evidence to indicate achievement of the other indicators. The latter is little different from the annual review-performance portfolio that I as higher education faculty submitted yearly

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[55] Senate Enrolled act No.1 (2011) http://www.in.gov/legislative/bills/2011/SE/SE0001.1.html
[56] http://www.marzanoevaluation.com/

leading up to tenure. In the case of observational data collection, it has been suggested that teachers make explicit (through indicators in writing or verbally) which elements of the evaluation domain they are demonstrating during the observation and make explicit in their lesson and teaching structures where indicators are being met[57] (principal, personal communication, 2015). For teachers in subject areas like the visual arts, this can require a shift in teaching methods or additional work to help define the indicators. For example the length of time spent on a skill, method, or project may be prolonged in an arts classroom. Also, the use a of modified gradual release of responsibility (i.e. a teacher leads instruction, but student time working together or independently is supported) does not adequately or appropriately describe what goes on in the art teaching-learning experience. This means the art teacher must provide additional information about what is occurring in teaching-learning interactions, in order for this to be understood by administrators, who are generally unfamiliar with pedagogies (curriculum and instruction) of art education. Although a requirement of the school district, none of the additional work art teachers must address in order to prove measurable accountability of art education to school administrators adds benefit to the actual curriculum or the overall instruction of art students

Accountability to the students was mentioned as a motivator by several participants of the study. I also have concerns about providing an appropriate

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[57] The suggestion is not an attempt to "comply" with the structure of evaluation model, but to make explicit which elements of the teachers preferred model meet the indicators in the observation.

curriculum to students, and I often wonder if I am keeping up with the intersections and integrations of art and the real world with regards to new media and technology based arts in the classroom. The way artists have embraced and utilized technology over the past few decades has altered the face of the art world and, thusly, I believe should be reflected in art curriculum and instruction. Tension between potential needs for art skilled citizens in the real world and expectations from non-art savvy administrators, parents and community members about what art education in schools should look like in schools, i.e. "school art" (Chapman 1982, Efland, 1976) is part of my curricular thought/planning processing.

Ms. Bailey expressed concerns for students who receive less than ideal art times because of their behaviors or the disruptive behaviors of other students, lack of supplies available for teaching and limited teaching time. She expressed similar statements to the ones I made in Chapter 3 concerning the limited amount of time committed to visual arts, namely the limited contact time which is encroached upon by mandatory drills, snow days, school events, and management issues.

Accountability also may be looked at in the inverse as a problem of *lack* of accountability. Curricular independence experienced by art teachers, as related in academic literature and described in my story, was discussed by several teachers. In my school district, where a curricular map of art education is in place, the deliberate openness of the map allows for abundant personalization

within the classroom. My district has limited mandates about how and what visual arts and the arts in general curriculum guide may be taught. Even though there is an expectation that individual lessons and the curriculum in general will adhere to state standards in visual art education, ambiguities in language about what these standards mean and how they are to be applied, plus the realities that few principals are familiar with arts education and the arts are not tested subject areas, allows art teachers freedom to interpret these standards and apply them at their individual discretion. Other areas of the curriculum (language arts, reading, and math) are mandated through pacing guides and prescriptive teaching systems.[58] One participant, Ms. Todd, who teaches in a large urban district describes the lack of accountability of the outside educational mandates on her curricular choices; "This [mandate] will come and go like everything else. So . . . . I feel like . . . , I'm not going to go into this full force because I don't want to waste my time - which is [a] horrible [attitude to have], but at the same time, it ends up being a waste a lot of the time." (Todd, personal communication 11/1/10)

Accountability takes many forms for this select group of teachers, both externally (to the administration, parents, community) and internally (the desire to do the best for your students). Both forms impact how we as teachers perceive our roles and our preparation and delivery of curriculum and instruction.

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[58] The district has adopted the Fountas and Pinnell literacy intervention system for all elementary schools in the district. http://www.fountasandpinnell.com/ Similar programs have been adopted in the other subject areas.

Weft: the teacher's thought processes and the curricular process

Weft in the metaphor of this dissertation subject, are aspects of control that art teachers have in decision making about what and how they teach. In the weaving analogy, these are the elements that are at the core of teaching. Teachers have control of the weft (non-fixed contexts) through freedom they exert regarding educational choices and professional growth. Schwab's (1973) commonplaces serve as the categories of the weft; subject matter knowledge, knowledge of the student, knowledge the teacher brings to the act of teaching / curriculum design, and production of curricula, which "depends equally on the interactions among the five bodies of experience, or 'commonplaces'" (p. 504). Teachers, especially teachers of art have much control over the depth and breadth of material to be taught and can plan ahead to prepare ourselves with the proper knowledge and understanding.

The subject matter context

"The teacher must have a deep understanding of the subject matter." Schwab (1973)

Lee Shulman (1986) divided content knowledge into three categories: "(a) subject matter content knowledge, (b) pedagogical content knowledge, and (c) curricular knowledge" (p. 9). Like other teachers of this study, I have strong background knowledge in the content area of art and art educational pedagogy and curriculum planning. In all my previous positions as an art teacher, the content of lessons (within a very loose framework) was completely open to me.

For example, so long as I taught basic principles of color theory to students, I could select from an almost infinite array of possible projects, which would result in students learning about, experimenting with, and applying an understanding of mixing colors. In my current teaching position, we have a curriculum map developed by the eleven elementary art teachers who are employed in my district. The guide is simply a list of concepts (vocabulary) and selected state standards to be covered each quarter of the school year, with only two concepts to be assessed each quarter. These teachers and I are unwilling to surrender any individual control regarding specific content or methods/techniques to be taught, or the manner in which we teach during the quarter. I enjoy the curricular freedom afforded by this loosely defined map and the lack of any district mandates. My unique teaching situation is vastly different from some of my colleagues in other schools in the district. Student demographics in other schools of the district differ significantly. Student backgrounds influence what knowledge they come into the art room with, the way they respond to art, art education or instruction in general, the kinds of art they find important to engage with or make, and the strategies used to engage them in art learning and making. Working in a way and at a level appropriate for my students may be quite different from content and instructional strategies appropriate to other students in other schools.

Ms. Krauss works in a small rural district adjacent to my current district. Her current situation affords her total control over her curriculum and subject

matter. As one of only a "few" elementary art teachers in the district, she states that she "assumed I'd be creating all of my lessons and the way I was going to teach it, pretty much myself" (Krauss, personal communication 10/27/10). She has found that she is permitted complete curricular decision-making authority. She describes her curricular design as "appreciation for the arts regardless of your personal ability for the arts" and indicates that her lessons are guided by student interest in aspects of one project, which suggest future directions of exploration, and thus direct the curriculum. She continues, "I do have textbooks and I mostly just use them for vocabulary. I think I've done probably less than five projects from the textbooks for the whole school" (Krauss, personal communication 10/27/10). Student interest and art appreciation bookend her curricular decision-making process. Among the participants in the study, this general idea of appreciation/understanding/grounding in student interest was a common means of determining the specific content and organizing curriculum.

The learner context

According to Schwab (1973), the teacher should know "intimate knowledge of the children under consideration- knowledge achieved by direct involvement with them. This is required in order to know the ways in which this unique group of children depart from generalities about similar children of the same age."(p. 502)

As described in the introduction to this study, deep questions about the appropriateness of the art content and methods I had been prepared to teach, came with realizations about the unique circumstances and educational needs of

the students I encountered early in my teaching career. Kawika's outburst and my subsequent comprehension of the role students' lives have on their connection to the curriculum have informed my curricular decisions for 20 years. I now see the role of an art teacher as that of a curriculum designer who builds the curriculum to meet students where they are and takes them to a higher and more complex level of knowledge and skill.

Ms. Bailey and I work in the same school district and, in the previous year before our interview, she had been assigned a split appointment in two schools. In addition to teaching art in her home school, Roberts Elementary, she was to travel to a second school, Trident Elementary, in order to teach two additional classes of students. This gave her a unique opportunity to compare the students of her homeschool with those of the second school. Her home school is in a relatively affluent neighborhood with only 20.1[59] % of students receiving free or reduced (cost) meals. Trident Elementary is in another part of town and with students whose families are in a much lower socio-economic class. In Trident Elementary, 73.8% of the students are eligible to receive free or reduced meals. Ms. Bailey discussed the differences in her two populations. She stated that in teaching her home school population, "I can break things up into little bits and they listen and are motivated and want to do it, they have the same sense of it being this wonderful joy, but that's because they are really confident little people". Ms. Bailey found things to be different at Trident elementary. " I am finding out

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[59] Department of Education data
http://compass.doe.in.gov/dashboard/overview.aspx?type=school&id=6217

that it is a lot different when kids have been left on their own to raise themselves and you know they don't have a lot of listening skills or a lot of confidence, and it's quite different, the outcome is so different and for me that is hard" (Bailey, personal communication 9/24/10). She goes on to describe events and stories that have been shared by the students; she summarizes this way, "..they are the ones fixing, cleaning up for the younger kids, they're parenting – you know the 8 year olds they are parenting the toddlers. And they, . . . it's such a different thing, they can't listen, can't follow directions, they are not used to taking directions, listening to anyone" (Bailey, personal communication 9/24/10).

Her tone shifts when she speaks of Trident, it is softer, more cautioned, she draws out her words as she considers each one. She is a very experienced teacher, having taught for 14 years in public schools and for many additional years as a teacher/director of a community arts program. She seems less self-assured when discussing the children, their behaviors, and her teaching at Trident. This shift in tone and resonance 'rings true.' I believe this experience has shaken her view of herself as a teacher, because in my experiences teaching art at Corinth, which serves a similar population of students from lower socio-economic backgrounds, has had a similar impact on me as a teacher. My understanding of these students' needs and circumstances are less familiar than they might be of children from my middle-class experience, and at times my confidence in my ability to teach them what they need to know and understand; wavers. I begin to self-question. Ms. Bailey's statement, "the outcome is so

different," resonates with me. When students of Corinth are taught lessons and complete projects that would result in capable results among students of a generic middle-class population, the product of Corinth students seem below grade and age levels. Their attention to details, abilities to visually conceptualized, fine motor control skills, and craftsmanship abilities are all far below students of similar ages and grade levels in other higher Socio-economic schools within the district. The low performance and less sophisticated products created by Corinth Elementary students compared to the work of students in other schools I have taught during 20 years of experience as an art teacher have negatively affected my self- image as a an art teacher. I have come to question my ability to teach. Rationally I can process out the reasoning for such results among these students, but I internalize the result, making me question my ability to teach.

Ms. Bailey is experiencing, in the students of Trident Elementary, a population similar to the one I teach at Corinth. The stories she tells of Trident student behaviors and work results are similar to my perceived experiences as Corinth. Her home school is a different 'world', student self-regulation and attention span is more advanced at Roberts, her home school, compared to Trident. When she switches to talking about her homeschool, her voice level rises, her tone becomes more lyrical, and her speed of speech increases. Other teachers of this study, who taught in schools of high poverty, also exhibited a

slightly different 'tone' from those teachers of schools where more middle-class students attend.

The teacher as context

Teacher as context refers to the knowledge the teacher brings to the enactment of the curriculum. A teacher's prior out-of-classroom knowledge and in-classroom teacher knowledge both are factors in being an effective teacher. My past experiences as an art teacher in schools with high populations of students from lower-socioeconomic backgrounds, plays a factor in my ability to work effectively and successfully in Corinth. My non-teacher experience also contributes to my ability to relate to, empathize with, and teach these students. Growing up as a member of a low-income family living in a poor rural county and attending school in that community provided a foundational knowledge about poverty that helps me understand the motivations of some of my students and parents.

In a conversation with the principal of Corinth in the spring of 2015, he revealed that he had grown up in a poor urban neighborhood. With his background understanding of urban poverty and my background understanding of rural poverty, we could experience 'glimpses' into motivating reasons for our students' behaviors that others, who were inculcated in more affluent circumstances might not understand or with which they could not easily empathize (Principal, personal communication spring 2015). We discussed how another teacher, whom I was to mentor, was not 'prepared' by life experiences to

work with the type of students we teach at Corinth. He pointed out that neither 'the mentee's[60]' prior teaching, nor the life experiences had equipped 'the mentored' to be effective at Corinth. I was to help build these qualities into this teacher. The teacher's outside of teaching knowledge is important to informing their world of teaching, but I am not making a blanket statement that teachers with a knowledge of poverty have a different impact on the teaching of students of poverty. It is simply that in this particular case my principal believed that my background (and ultimately his) had provided us an advantage in the form of understanding student motivations that the other teacher was not equipped with as a result of his/her background experiences growing up with and working with student from higher socio-economic backgrounds.

My teacher knowledge (subject matter content knowledge, pedagogical content knowledge, and curricular knowledge) and my understanding of students are informed by and interrelated to the prior life experiences I bring with me to the teaching field and impact within the current situation I teach.

Identifying as a teacher

Each of the visual art teachers who were participants of this study, although she might have had a different reason for becoming or perception of *being* a teacher of art, demonstrated qualities that made her an effective art teacher; and showed confidence in her art teacher role. Throughout our discussions and storytelling, our inside classroom and our outside classroom lives impact our view of teaching, but our self-view as teachers is more directly

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[60] Neutral pronoun to protect this teacher's identity

tied to our in classroom experiences. As my experience grew and I felt successful as an educator, I felt encouraged to see myself as a competent teacher of art. My education had provided confidence and knowledge base as well as a sense that I could see myself teaching art to my students and being able to adapt that curriculum to fit their needs. Becoming a teacher and remaining a teacher was a result of relating to the students as well as the subject and being able to view myself as successful, even though in my 17th year of teaching my identity as a competent teacher was somewhat shaken by experiences of working with my students at Corinth.

Each of the teachers in this study are viewed by others, including parents, their principal and fellow teachers, as successful teachers and consider themselves as such. But, this can be dependent upon feeling success in the teaching situation. Both, Ms. Bailey and I had experienced a shaking of this confidence in our teaching success when we encountered populations that were harder to teach. Teachers are more likely to see themselves as competent teachers, if they work with students whom they understand. For example, Ms. Bailey seemed less assured when talking about Trident than when she talked about Roberts Elementary. She spoke more competently and comfortably when discussing Robert's students than Trident students.

The warp and weft again

The warp or fixed constraints are the contexts the teacher has limited impact upon and must work within. For the group of teachers, the most discussed

examples include; time, budget, and space, which are the weft or non-fixed constraints that the teacher has an influence upon. As I come to this chapter's end one aspect that has been illuminated for me is that fact that through our discussions I identify the learner not as a fixed context but as part of the weft. This line of thinking has a direct impact on the teacher view of oneself. If the learner were a fixed context, then our ability to impact the student or failure not to do so would not have the impact of the teacher's perception his has had for Ms. Bailey and myself.

In the next chapter, I will present some perceptions and summarizes the questions and findings I have presented here and provide implications for art education.

Chapter 6 Conclusions

When I was in my 2nd year of first grade, we were given the assignment to write a paragraph describing the water cycle. That assignment was taking the entire morning for me. At one point Ms. White (out of frustration, sympathy, or both) turned my paper over and said: "just draw it for me." I did, and upon completing that drawing, I knew I had successfully described the water cycle. I was happy to see Ms. White look at it and seem surprised that I had all of the information detailed within that single drawing. At times like this, where I must summarize so much in such a short space, I wish I could just turn the page over and draw it for you.

I began this investigation as a teacher who, having recently left the art classroom, was looking in on other art teachers' perceptions of experiences to explore a set of questions formulated out of my experiences. When I returned to the K-6 art classroom, I revised the study to focus on my experiences. Shifting to a look at the self, changed some aspects of this journey namely the method of investigation – autoethnography. The approach to autoethnography I chose was laid out by Anderson (2006) as analytic auto-ethnography. The five features of analytic auto-ethnography are all grounded in self-experience:

1. Complete member research
2. Analytical reflexivity
3. Narrative visibility of the researcher's self

4. Dialogue with informants beyond the self

5. Commitment to theoretical analysis (Anderson 2006 p. 378)

Complete member research can be defined as being a part of the group being studied and that was important to me. The teachers whom I interviewed prior to revising a descriptive multiple case study to an autoethnographic investigation became a source of triangulation for this work. While access to my own and others' 'insider meanings' allowed me to provide perspectives of a culture in action that would have been unavailable through other approaches (Hayler, 2000, p.103), the reports of fellow teachers broadened the perspective while confirming or challenging my experiential narrative. Narrative visibility of my voice and experiences as researcher and a dialogue beyond the self, were important methodological aspects of this study.

The study began as an investigation of three questions:

1. How do visual arts teachers perceive the contexts influencing their curricular decision-making processes?

2. What constraints and freedoms influenced elementary visual arts teachers' curricular decisions?

3. What external and internal circumstances affect curricular decisions? These questions collapsed into one as the investigation evolved. The overarching investigation could be summed up as an inquiry into the ways teachers perceive the contexts and the extent to which these perceptions affected the design and implementation of their curricula?

Perceptions of an elementary art teacher curricular design

Art teachers traditionally have a great deal of flexibility and autonomy in their art curriculum choices (Day, 1996; Dorn, 1994; Eisner, 2002; Erickson, 2004), but ultimately teachers work within a set of contexts that either constrain or afford[61] their influence upon the curricular design including curricular programming (scope and sequence) and implementation. I have perceived this set of contexts as weaving. Teachers' weaving is a metaphor for the act of curricular design and implementation out of warp of fixed contexts and a weft of teacher malleable contexts. The act of teaching requires a weaving of multiple threads of context. Eisner (1998), for example, described the act of teaching as both complicated by and locally specific to realities and contexts that are "particular circumstances at particular times" (p.209).

This weaving of multiple threads of context consists of the weft and warp. In figure 5 (from Chapter 5) below each defining context that influence act of teaching is illustrated as either a fixed constraint (Warp) or part of the teacher thought and curricular processing (the weft).

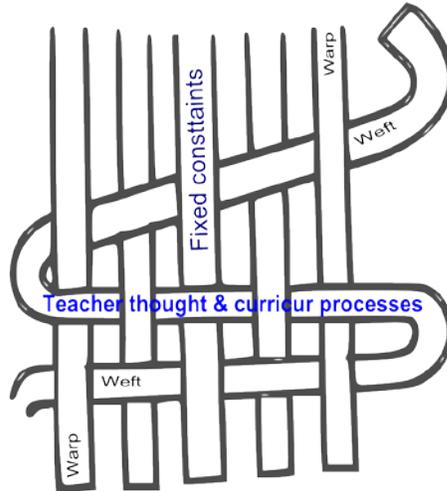[61] For a discussion on this see the work of Clark & Peterson (1986).

Figure 5. Warp and Weft of teaching
The Warp equals the fixed contexts (Time / Space / Budget / Accountability), while the Weft are the non-fixed contexts (teacher background and education, control of curriculum content and teaching methods) that the teacher has an influence on or control over.

I envisioned this process as an act of weaving weft through warp threads. The model above indicates those features of warp (fixed constraints) and weft (non-fixed constraints) being woven into a curriculum. I and other visual arts teacher participants of this study perceived those contexts influencing our curricular decision-making process as two-fold, fixed constraints and non-fixed constraints. The fixed constraints were the contexts which we had limited control and had to work within, and non-fixed contexts that we could influence or that were influenced by our backgrounds and students, who presented a fluid and to some degree unpredictable variable.

The Warp of Curricular Decision Making

Here, the warp threads consisted of the fixed constraints of time, space, budget, and accountability, upon which art teachers have little influence or say as they are externally determined or fixed conditions. The weft are contexts that

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have been internalized by the teacher or over which she or he has control, such as prior experiences in classrooms, selection of curricular pedagogy and methodology of curricular design, content of the curriculum, and variables of the student (including his or her inculcated attitudes, level and phase of cognitive development, abilities and habits grounded in Socio-Economic/Cultural Community Experiences). Teachers craft curricula by integrating these malleable elements within fixed constraints.

The fixed contexts of time, space, budget, and accountability were the constraints most discussed among the seven of us as elementary art teachers. A generalist classroom teacher may not be impacted by these fixed contexts to the same extent as the art teacher. Time is more flexible and abundant to the classroom teacher; accountability and space are contexts the generalist teacher must deal with, yet budget impacts an art teacher most critically. Generalist classroom teachers work from texts and instructional materials that are provided to them as a consequence of district adopted curricula. The materials of art making, which are dictated by requirements of an imaginative teacher-designed curriculum, are largely consumable and frequently must be procured by the art teacher. Time, space and budget were contexts normally determined by policymakers or administrators. These decisions are generally external to the role of the art teacher. Yet, two teachers were willing to step outside the traditional responsibilities of their roles as art teachers, to make the schedules (i.e. a time constraint) for all teachers of their buildings, which allowed them to assign more

time to special area subjects. But this was not without negative impacts upon those teachers who took on these administrative roles. Ms. Brown described a backlash from several teachers in her building regarding the time she assigned to the arts in the schedule. Unhappy teachers were not content to voice their concerns with the building principal or openly complaining to other staff members in the building. They may be direct in their complaints. As a result, Ms. Brown felt personally attacked and stated,

"I won't make it [schedule] again, I have done it for four years with no complaints, but this year it has been terrible. I do it to make the most time for the kids, not [to make] a better schedule for me, which it isn't. [The schedule] is awful for the specials [teachers]. [Specials teachers have] back-to-back classes with no restroom break for 4 to 5 hours. It is just not worth the personal attacks" (personal communication August, 2016).

Once the schedule is in place, whether or not the art teacher stepped into an administrational role by designing the schedule for all teachers for his or her building, the schedule serves as a fixed constraint. There is no luxury of allowing students to work a little longer than the allotted class time, because another class may be lined up at the door, ready for instruction. Unequal time allotments, such as providing some students of a grade level an hour of art once a week, while others of the same grade level receive only a half an hour once a week, makes demands upon the curriculum design. Additionally, interferences upon that time, such as fire drills, tornado drills, unforeseen emergencies or disciplinary events,

must be accepted and addressed by adjusting the curriculum to accommodate the interruption.

Most teachers also had some ability to influence the constraints of budgets, but only by taking on additional roles outside of the normal one of curricular planner and instructor. Various approaches to supplementing the budget were discussed among the group, including grant writing, and requesting funds from PTO or other organizations. Many times teachers contributed from their own pockets for materials, as this was the simplest and least cumbersome means to supplement their budgets. Yet, salary differences may mean some teachers have more disposable income to spend out-of-pocket than others. Ms. Brown and Ms. Todd both fundraise to supplement their school budgets. Ms. Brown has to fundraise as she only receives $119.00 from her school and must raise all additional funds herself. Working to gain additional classroom teacher materials might be understood as weft or malleable context that is, driven out of necessity to work around the warp constraints of a penuriously fixed budget. However, the resources of the art teacher to purchase additional materials might be constrained, not only by the teacher's salary (a fixed constraint), but also by available resources within the local community.

Accountability for the teachers of the study consisted of several forms. The formal evaluative system, the less formal or informal expectations of others (administrators, parents, and members of the local community where we teach), and the more general sense of 'meeting the needs of the students. Impacts on

the curricular design can be pressures to create work that meets parental, administrative, and community expectations of what "school art" should look like. Therefore, discussions with other teachers of this study addressed a dilemma of constructing lessons that resulted in "school arts style" (Chapman 1982, Efland 1976) products versus artistic ways of working. Additional expectations such as art teachers keeping school bulletin boards covered in "pretty or interesting artwork" were direct contexts teachers considered when working with the constraint of accountability. Meeting the needs of the students was discussed as the most important aspect of accountability. Some teachers even discussed this as the aspect of accountability they were will to hold "true to" at the detriment of other forms of accountability (personal communication 2010).

The Weft of Curricular Decision Making

The weft or non-fixed contexts of curricular decision making include internal factors of teacher's education, experiences, and reasons for being a teacher. Mays (1993) pointed out that the decisions a teacher makes depends on "how the teacher was trained and where the teacher is teaching" (p. 37). The teacher educational backgrounds of this group of teachers was not directly discussed, but several indirectly revealed aspects of the teacher education they received by contrasting strategies they had been taught with the realities of teaching art in their current practices. Bardot, Krauss, Brown and I were all educated in programs that advocated a Discipline-based (DBAE) curricular approach to art education. Yet each of us has moved away from the DBAE

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model to embrace other approaches. Ms. Krauss, for example, now implements a TAB (teaching for artistic behavior) learning model for structuring her curriculum and described how it is different from her DBAE training (personal communication 2010). Conversations about learned approaches to curriculum design with and among the teacher participants were notable in that they did not address the value or quality of the teacher education we had received, but rather demonstrated how we had grown in our knowledge of curricular possibilities and new strategies were proposed by experts in our field or due to growth of knowledge in the field of art education.

All the teachers in this study used student-centered approaches to curriculum design, placing the student needs at the center of the curricular influences. For example, Ms. Krauss used a TAB approach, but I cannot because of the 'fair-game" issue with students. I have had to alter my curricular desires with the reality of the contexts within which I work. A more linear approach to material distribution is required in my case.

One's personal life experiences may influence curricular choices in a variety of ways. For example, my background of experiences living in a community where poverty was a common condition, may enable me to consider choices of content, material choices, and distribution modes, and appropriate on-the-spot instructional strategies that would not occur to another, such as my colleague Ms. Bailey whose point of reference in terms of curricular decision making is a school population of students from middle-class backgrounds.

Additionally, experiences such as growing up in a community that values narrative might influence how I would listen to students, draw students into conversations about their work, or encourage thinking processes about their work differently than might a teacher whose experiences are that instructions be delivered to the student in a terse, explicit manner.

The Art teachers in this study have varied educational backgrounds in areas that might not or are limited in the way they can be applied to the curricula they design. For example, Ms. Krauss had a background in design and production in 3D products, but was limited in the amount of 3-D work she could do with students because there was no space to create and store crafts.

One's reasons for becoming a teacher might influence curricular decisions in a subtle manner. Those who become art teachers as a supplement or financial backup to their own artistic aspirations might prepare a curriculum that focuses on the discipline of art; that is upon knowledge of the elements and principles of design and exemplars of great artists. One who fell accidentally into the profession might be more flexible in seeing arts applications and, thereby, be willing to consider visual culture or craft applications of art above strictly 'fine art' focused curricular content. To a great degree, changes in our perceptions of appropriate curricular models were spurred on by needs to address models most appropriate to the needs of the particular community of children we teach. Guided by our educational experiences and personal backgrounds (as these influenced thinking about curriculum), and our notions of appropriate goals for

teaching art – based to a subtle but important extent on our own reasons for becoming art teachers. Being aware of the life experiences of our students, as understood through the lens of our own lives and our educational backgrounds, guided us to make judgements about what our students needed in order to be successful in life. As Ms. Bardot so eloquently stated, "we are creating an environment" by "weaving" curriculum content into the art room that is perhaps as much about culture as it is the discipline of art per se.

Students – the most dominant determinant of curriculum decision-making.

Burton (2004) found that the perceptions of needs of students within a community may override theories about curricular approaches that were advocated during the teacher's teacher education. This was certainly true for other art teachers and me of this study. For example, Kawika's outburst prompted a realization that connections between the students 'lives and the state-advocated art history curriculum were at odds; this forced me to reconsider my approach to the art history curriculum and the curriculum itself. In my current position, the perceptions of students that any items left out in the open were 'fair game' for their taking influenced my decisions about how materials needed to be prepared, distributed, and stored. Basic decisions about material were constrained by the fixed situation of limited funds, but how these were utilized in lessons and the classroom, were largely determined by my understanding of the students' perceptions about materials as desirable items to own rather than as items for art making. Additionally, the students' notions about ownership of art

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drove my curricular choices about teaching students to respect one another's artwork.

Other teachers and I, especially Ms. Bailey, found that delivery of curriculum from content choices, selection of materials, to pacing of information delivery, to the tone of voice used during instruction, were all determined by the students. Students from different backgrounds and life circumstances were able to process information differently; depending upon their life circumstances and the ways they had come to negotiate their specific community environment.

Implications for art education and art education programs

The high transitory nature of my students creates a need for art teachers within districts or regions where migrating populations circuit, to work together in dialogue about their curricula, so there can be continuity in the curricula and instruction of these students. In these instances, collaboration is another important aspect of curriculum planning. Within my own district, the teachers of the high transitory schools informally discuss our curricular maps and plans. A formalization of this endeavor might benefit students. Learning strategies for collaborating with parents and teachers across schools and/or districts might be useful to pre-service visual art teacher education.

Art teacher education programs might better prepare art teachers to teach if they differentiated between factors that are fixed (time, space, budget, accountability to the stakeholders, students, and self) and those that are not fixed, like the context of the learner. The parameters within which the teacher

must work are thick and varied but defined as either fixed (limited impact by the teacher) or non-fixed (influenced by the teacher).

Because of the autonomy of the art teacher in curriculum development, these teachers need to be educated differently than generalist teachers. More focus and practice needs to be placed on theory and practice of curriculum design and especially on designing curricula content to meet needs of diverse populations of students. Further, teachers can become better prepared for these contexts by including better teacher preparation that focusses on how to design a flexible curriculum that is based on objective or outcomes based planning[62]. Teaching teachers to design the curriculum around learning goals (outcomes) rather than projects or materials (the studio approach) will allow for flexibility. The studio approach is the most common approach to art teacher curriculum design according to Burton (2004), and I find often, that it is a more linear approach to curriculum design. For example in a unit designed for nine weeks based on processes or materials is designed on a spiraling series of skills and a teacher has less flexibility to alter their plans when time is shortened during the school year, but designs based on outcomes or goals can be reconfigured based on priorities of need. For example a nine week unit based on drawing media and techniques is designed sequentially to build the series of skills. While an outcome/goal based curriculum where students will be able to demonstrate dramatic/expressive art works through the use of contrast, could more flexibly

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[62] See the work of G. Wiggens and J. McTighen .

approached by zeroing in on the needed skills to achieve the goal of dramatic/expressive images using contrast.

Art teachers also need to consider that each school is specific in the types of fixed and non-fixed contents that the teacher will encounter. Students are a non-fixed context insofar as, for example, issues of socio-economic or cultural differences, such factors require that art teachers account for the transitory nature of students' attendance or inadequacies of their attention spans in their weaving of curriculum; many art teachers may not be prepared by experience or education to address these issues. The context of the learner will influence choices of subject matter, methods of instruction, and methods of classroom management. Learner differences will influence strategies of teaching that must be part of the teacher's non-fixed contexts. To better prepare art teachers, approaches that base curriculum design on a specific set of conditions or scenarios might better serve the student. Rather than advocating one approach to art education as the current trend, various approaches to art education, including DBAE, CBAE, VBAE, TAB, Anderson's Art for Life, etc., be taught so the pre-service teachers be familiar with multiple models upon which to draw to best address the population of students with whom they find themselves working.

Increasing the variety of sites, in particular schools with large populations of low SES, visited by students prior to and during student teaching will better prepare future art educators for the varied roles that they may play as teachers.

Background knowledge was an important non-fixed context among the teachers in this study and having exposure to a variety of settings might be of benefit.

A question that art teachers might consider in future examinations of this subject might be, what means do teachers take to effectively create curriculum for their populations. This questions the role and influences that arts teachers take to affect the fixed constraints. If teachers urged policymakers to adjust this fixed constraints, might the overall design of the woven curriculum be vastly different? Might the result be a weaving that has practical usefulness, based upon needs of the student rather than some disconnected notion of art education needs as a secondary importance to the school day.

Final thoughts

Reflecting on my description of my teaching performance here, I want to make explicitly obvious that I have struggled between my feelings of empathy for these students (i.e. as one who understands their poverty) and a role I have been forced adopt, the 'hard' teacher role - a character the teachers at Corinth have experienced as necessary. Yet, this teacher persona is balanced and informed by a deep empathic resonance with my students. Other teachers also balance resonant (or lack of resonant) knowledge and understanding of their students with their pedagogical ideals. This places a deep importance on a self-questioning - "What is the point of art education for these students?" This question stands in the shadow of a larger question about what the value or point

of art education might be in general. Do we discuss this enough in art teacher education programs?

Concluding

In this dissertation, I have attempted to take the reader along with me as I explored my perceptions of the contexts within which I work as a public school visual arts teacher. Along with my voice, I have shared with you the voices of six other teachers and their perceptions of the contacts with in which they work. This investigation was about getting "inside the heads" of visual art teachers rather than looking at any of these factors as *hard facts*. I have looked at and discussed the current state of public art education in our small pocket of the United States. We all teach and live within the state of Indiana and within 50 miles of one another, but experience variation in different contexts based on our student population, our district, administrators, and personal backgrounds. I have shared through my narrative my journey as a teacher as if occurred within one day in my elementary school. I have offered a grounding in literature relevant to my work, offered analysis of our narrative and ended with a few conclusions and suggestions for art teacher preparation.

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Appendix A

Corinth Elementary School- Artful Learning Concept Matrix by quarter

Grade Level	Concept Quarter 2	Concept Quarter 3	Concept Quarter 4
Kindergarten	Patterns	Change	Community
First Grade	Home	Change	Perception
Second Grade	Relationships	Connections	Adaptation
Third Grade	Transition	Responsibility	Systems
Fourth Grade	Origin	Interdependence	Power
Fifth Grade	Transformation	Relationship	Balance
Sixth Grade	Stability & Change	Innovations	Cause and Effect

Roy J. Reynolds

Education

Indiana University, Bloomington, IN

December 2016
Ed. D., Curriculum and Instruction- Art Education

Eastern Kentucky University, Richmond, KY

May 2002
M.A. Ed., Secondary Education - Art Education
Gifted & Talented endorsement

May 1997
Bachelor of Arts, Art Education P-12

Academic Appointment & Teaching Experience

August 2013 - current
MCCSC - Fairview Elementary

Visual arts teacher / Arts integration coach

August 2011 – May 2013

Central Michigan University *Mt. Pleasant, MI*

Assistant Professor, Department of Art & Design, Art Education

ART 343   - Art in the Elementary School Grades K-4 3(3-0)
An art methods class for the art education major covering developmentally appropriate   curricula and content for the elementary school student.

Coordinator: Saturday Art School
A community based art enrichment program and field experience designed to provide pre-service teachers practical experience inside a classroom setting to merge theoretical principles and classroom experience.

ART 344 - Art in the Middle School Grades 5-8 3(3-0)
An art methods class for the art education major covering developmentally appropriate curricula and content for the middle school student.

August 2005 – May 2011

Indiana University- *Bloomington, IN*

Associate Instructor, Department of Curriculum and Instruction, Art Education Associate instructor (Instructor of Record) / supervisor field experience

M500 Integrated Professional Seminar (0-6 cr.) This seminar is linked to courses and field experiences included in the Transition to Teaching (T2T) program. It will allow for collaboration among school-based mentors, university-based instructors, and T2T candidates in offering academic content appropriate to the program. The seminar will provide a technology-rich and performance-based professional experience.

 M501 Laboratory/Field Experiences in elementary education (2cr.) field experience focusing on gaining understanding of daily classroom culture, including development of appropriate relationships with all constituencies. To experience various instructional strategies and learning experiences. To develop habit of thoughtful, comprehensive reflection, and to work with individual students and small groups, planning and delivering series of units within the classroom.

K 352 Education of Students with Learning Disorders (3 cr.) *Interim instructor* This course focuses on educational programs for optimum growth and development of educable mentally retarded and learning disabled children. Study and observation of curriculum content, organization of special schools and classes, and teaching methods and materials.

K 495B Laboratory/Field Experiences in Special Education (1-3cr.) *Interim supervisor* Provides the student with a field-based, supervised experience with individuals with severe handicaps. It allows the opportunity to interact within school/ work/community settings on a regular basis with specific assignments, which are mutually agreed upon between student, cooperating teacher, and practicum supervisor.

M333 Art experience for the elementary teacher (2 cr.). This course focuses on the integration of the visual arts into the classroom as a means to facilitate learning in all subjects / fields.

M130 Introduction to Art Education (3 cr.) Undergraduate-level course required for Art Teaching Certification. Historical, sociological, and philosophical foundations of education, and the general processes and techniques of teaching as they apply to art instruction.

Course Coordinator M333, Art Experiences for Elementary Teachers Responsibilities included:

Z533 Introduction to Art Education (3 cr.) Graduate-level course required for Masters in Art Teaching Certification. Historical, sociological, and philosophical foundations of education, and the general processes and techniques of teaching as they apply to art teaching.

M101 Early Field experience (1cr.) The laboratory or field experiences are designed to give students practical experience inside a classroom setting to merge theoretical principles and classroom experiences.

M330 / Z531 Foundations of Art Education & Methods I. Undergraduate and graduate-level art teacher certification courses. This course is an introduction to art education theory and related social issues. Responsibilities included:

M301 Field experience for juniors (1cr.) The laboratory or field experiences are designed to give students practical experience inside a classroom setting in order to merge theoretical principles and classroom experiences. Supervised and evaluated pre-service teachers during Saturday Art School field experience providing feedback and suggestions to improve content and pedagogy

M430 / Z532 Foundations of Art Education & Methods II. Undergraduate and graduate-level art teacher certification courses. This course is an advanced study of curriculum developments in art education.

M401 Field experience for undergraduate seniors and graduate teacher-certification students (1cr.) The laboratory or field experiences are designed to give students practical experience inside a classroom setting to merge theoretical principles and classroom experiences.

August 1998 – May 2005

Laurel County Public Schools

Visual Arts Teacher, South Laurel High School
 Visual Arts Teacher, Gifted & Talented summer program

August 1997 – May 1998

Gallatin County schools

Visual Arts Teacher, Gallatin County schools visual art standards.

May 1996- August 1996

Morehead State University- Upward Bound

Visual Arts instructor

Research

2009-2016   Dissertation Research: *Visual arts teachers as curricular decision-makers.* In this autoethnographic study, I draw from my personal / professional experiences as an elementary art educator, triangulated by interviews with six other art teachers to describe contexts that impact decisions regarding curriculum design and strategies of instructing k-6 students in art.. I explore how we perceive the contexts that impact and the process of curricular decision-making through narrative analysis. An assumption underpinning the thesis of this study is that valuable insights into the work and identity of teachers can be gained by examining perceptions of personal experiences in schools and with students.

2007 -2008   Research Assistant with Dr. Robin Moeller on "*No thanks, those are boy books": a feminist cultural analysis of graphic novels as curricular materials.* Duties included, conducting interviews with male high school students in both group and individual settings. Assisted in the development of research questionnaire.

2006-2008   Early Inquiry project: How visual arts teachers choose multicultural curricula content; a study of seven art teachers and how they incorporated multicultural content into their visual arts classes. (within Y 611 & J 605) Unpublished research project.

2006-2007   *The Arts and the Great Depression: Curriculum development for teaching through the arts.* As part of a Scholarship of Teaching and Learning Grant, along with Dr. Lara Lackey and Dr. Moxie Stoermer. Conducted a wide-ranging search for resources related to the Arts in the Great Depression, developed curriculum and course materials focusing on the use of the Arts of the Great Depression as a means to demonstrate teaching through the arts to

undergraduate pre-service teachers. These resources were shared with students and other instructors and became the basis for numerous new projects demonstrating teaching through the arts and integrating the arts with social studies.

Publications

2014 Contributing author in Nye, J: Pinterest Perfect!: Creative prompts & pin-worthy projects inspired by the artistic community of Pinterest. Walter Foster, Publisher

Lackey, L., Abowd, G., Basak, R., Chou, C., Hsu, P., Reynolds, R. Soylu, M., Stoemer, M., Wang, T. (2009) What the Best College Teachers Do: Implications for Teaching Art Education Methods Courses for Elementary Majors. *Studies in Art Education* 50 (2) 205-208

Grants and Awards

Outstanding Associate Instructor -Teaching Award
  Indiana University for Academic year 2008-2009. Faculty nominated and reviewed award for outstanding teaching by an associate instructor.
The Daisy M. and Vivian L. Jones Fellowship
  Indiana University School of Education, Department of Curriculum and Instruction. 2006. $3000 for support of research conducted to improve the quality of elementary education.
Active Learning Grant
  Indiana University Instructional Support Services in conjunction with the Office of Academic Affairs and Dean of Faculties. 2006. $1500.00 for revision of M333, Art Methods for Elementary Teachers. Dr. Lara Lackey with R. Reynolds and M. Stoermer

Presentations

Juried Presentations, National Level
Reynolds, R (2014) Launching a Saturday Art School Program. Presentation at the annual convention of the National Art Education Association, San Diego, CA.

Makemson, J. Gatlin, L. Reynolds, R (2014) The New Normal of graduate-level art education: A higher education roundtable. Presentation at the annual convention of the National Art Education Association, San Diego, CA.

Reynolds, R., Gatlin, L., & Makemson, J. (2013) Drawing on experience: storytelling in the methods class; Narrative and informal education. Presentation at the annual convention of the National Art Education Association, Ft. Worth, Texas.

Reynolds, R., Gatlin, L., & Manifold, M. (2013) Pinterest Mindless Addiction or Valuable Site of Teaching & Learning? Presentation at the annual convention of the National Art Education Association, Ft. Worth, Texas.

Gatlin, L., Reynolds, R. & Stoermer, M. (2011) The "New" Creativity As An Approach To Teaching Art Methods For Elementary Teachers. Presentation at the annual convention of the National Art Education Association, Seattle, WA.

Reynolds, R (2010) Ten Artists You May Not Know, But Should: Using Contemporary Artists to Address Broad Social Themes with Students. Presentation at the annual convention of the National Art Education Association, Baltimore, MD

Reynolds, R (March, 2007) The Role of Multicultural Education in the Visual Arts. Presentation at the annual convention of the National Art Education Association, New York, NY.

Reynolds, R., & Stoermer, M. (March, 2007) Teaching through the Arts: Images and the Great Depression. Presentation at the annual convention of the National Art Education Association, New York, NY.

Juried Presentations, State and Regional Level
Reynolds, R. (2011) *Using Contemporary Artists to Address Broad Social Themes with Students 2.0.* Presentation at the annual convention of the Michigan Art Education Association, Kokomo, MI. November 12, 2011

Reynolds, R (2008) *Ten Artists You May Not Know, But Should: Using Contemporary Artists to Address Broad Social Themes with Students.* Presentation at the annual convention of the Art Education Association of Indiana (AEAI), French Lick, IN.

Reynolds, R & Stoermer, M. (2007) *Teaching through the Arts: Images and the Great Depression.* Presentation at the annual convention of the Art Education Association of Indiana (AEAI), West Lafayette, IN.

Reynolds, R (2002) *Art & Humanities strategies in the art classroom.* Presentation at the annual convention of the Kentucky Art Education Association (KAEA), Morehead, KY

Reynolds, R (2001) *The Art & Humanities requirements: what it means in the Visual Arts Classroom.* Presentation at the annual convention of the Kentucky Art Education Association (KAEA) , Richmond, KY

Invited Presentations: University, College, Department, and Local Level
Reynolds, R (2012) Content through the arts: what it means to your students. 7th annual Learn today, Teach tomorrow conference. Central Michigan University

Reynolds, R. (2012) Art & Science: FUNdamentally intertwined. Invited speaker at the National Teachers of Science Education Student Chapter. February 21st, 2012

Reynolds, R. (2011) Art's Role in the New Creative Community. Invited presenter at *Art: What is it good for?* Symposium on the Arts & Education. November 19th, 2011

Reynolds, R. (2010) *IN Focus on Art Education*. Invited panel guest on *InFocus*, a live 30 minute monthly production, airing on WTIU public television. Episode focuses on the   state of arts education in light of the recent statewide budget concerns

Reynolds, R. (2010) Multicultural Art Education – Beyond the Benetton Ad. Invited speaker in P. Heu's M333 Art for the Elementary Teacher.

Reynolds, R. & Gatlin, G. (2010) *Technology in the visual arts classroom: Free alternatives to costly software*. Invited speaker in M430. Instructor: Dr. M. Manifold

Reynolds, R. (2009) Cooperative Biography: Bookmaking, Storytelling, and, Art making . Invited speaker in E325 Social Studies in the Elementary Schools. Instructor: Dr. Lynn Boyle-Baise, Indiana University, Bloomington, IN.

Reynolds, R. (2008). Storyboarding and Bookmaking Techniques. Invited speaker in E325 Social Studies in the Elementary Schools. Instructor: Dr. Lynn Boyle-Baise, Indiana University,   Bloomington, IN.

Lackey, L., Reynolds, R., & Stoermer, M. (2007). *The Arts and the Great Depression: Overview of Curriculum Development related to an Active Learning Grant.* Indiana University February 9, 2007

Reynolds, R (2006). *Classroom Management: what new teachers need to know.* Indiana University Invited speaker in M430 Dr. Manifold.

Reynolds, R., Miller, B., & Kennedy, T., (1998). *The Arts & Humanities requirement: a team approach.* Presentation at the annual conference of school superintendents, Louisville, KY

Service
<u>University</u>
2012- 2013   Professional Education Selection and Retention Committee
                 (PESAR) Member, Central Michigan University

Grade Grievance Committee, member, College of Communications and Fine arts, Central Michigan University

Artist in Residence Committee, Chair, Department of Fine Arts, Central Michigan University Scholarship committee, Department of Fine Arts, Central Michigan University

Art Department Representative: Arts Expo: The college fair for students of the arts. October 24, 2012 Lansing, Mi.

2011-2012   Participant / presenter CCFA's Brown Bag focusing on Research in the Fine Arts *"Vignettes: Elementary visual arts teachers reflect on their curriculum decision making process"* Wednesday, February 1, 2012

Grade Grievance Committee, College of Communications and Fine arts, Central Michigan University

Artist in Residence committee, Department of Fine Arts, Central Michigan University

Scholarship committee, Department of Fine Arts, Central Michigan University

Co-Advisor of the Central Michigan University Student Chapter of National Art Education Association (NAEA)

2009-2010   Coordinated, planned, and conducted art education activities for the *Martin Luther King: A Day On* observance with Mathers Museum education staff.

2007-2010   Advisor of the Indiana University Art Education (IUAE) Student Chapter of NAEA.
   - Organized and assisted in the re-launch of the Indiana University's student chapter of the National Art Education Association, coordinated meetings, assisted in writing of charter with Laurie Gatlin; under advisement of Dr. M. Manifold.

2008   Planned and coordinated welcoming reception for Dr. Xia; visiting scholar with L. Gatlin.

2005-2008   Indiana University child care collation, committee member

2006- 2008 New member coordinator, Knee High Cooperative Daycare, Indiana University

2005-2006 Coordinated, planned, and conducted art education activities for the *Martin Luther King: A Day On* observance with M. Stoermer

State
2001-2005 Kentucky Art Education Association, Treasurer
2001-2005 Grant Review Committee, Member, Kentucky Art Education Association

Local / School

2013 - 2016 Artful Learning Committee member / chairman

2009-2011 Volunteer- Edgewood Primary School. Reading coach / classroom volunteer, Guest teacher.
2006-2009 Edgewood High School, Richland-Bean blossom Schools district, Ellettsville, IN
Invited judge – Juried visual arts show

2002-2005 Site Based Decision Making Council, teacher member, South Laurel High School
   o School councils are shared leadership with membership of each council includes parents, teachers and an administrator of the school. The council has the responsibility to set school policy and make decisions outlined in statute which shall provide an environment to enhance student achievement and help meet the goals established in KRS 158.645 and 158.6451.

2001-2002 Consolidated plan writing committee, chair, South Laurel High School
2000-2003 Program coordinator arts and humanities South Laurel High School
   o facilitated course instructors, schedules, and materials. Coordinated student exhibitions and events including school wide field trips,

2000-2004 Senior Class Coordinator, South Laurel High School
   o directed communication between staff, students, parents and administration. Worked in tandem with councilors to make sure all graduation requirements were being met. Administered graduation process and program

1998-2002   Professional development committee, Chair, South Laurel High
             school

1996-1998   Yearbook advisor, Art club sponsor, Gallatin County HS and MS

Certification / licensure

Indiana Department of Education:
Professional Educator's License
License Number:10088063
Visual Arts grades P-12

Kentucky Professional Standards Board:
Certificate For Teaching In The Secondary Grades 9-12
(Departmentalized Grades 7-8 in Field)
Teaching Major: Visual Art
Endorsement For Elementary School Art
Endorsement For Teaching Gifted Education, All Grades
Rank II Master endorsement