Sierra Nevada College

A STUDIO-BASED APPROACH TO FOSTERING CREATIVITY IN PRIMARY EDUCATION

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of
Master of Arts in Teaching

by

Alison M. Lee

Dr. Dave Mussatti/Thesis Advisor

August 2010

We recommend that the thesis by Alison M. Lee
prepared under our supervision be accepted in
partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

MASTERS of ARTS in TEACHING

_____

Dave Mussatti, Ph.D., Thesis Advisor

_____

Betts Markle, Ph.D., Committee Member

_____

Taylor Simmers, M.A.T., Committee Member

August 2010

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES

Page

LIST OF FIGURES

ABSTRACT

Creativity is inherent to human beings. The moment a child scribbles on a piece of paper, he or she begins the journey to communicate and express personal meaning. This action research study used a student focus group, gathered qualitative data, and investigated how a studio-based visual arts framework, *Studio Thinking*, would foster and develop the mental habit of creativity in second graders. Research of literature explored what visual arts could teach and demonstrated that arts learning did foster mental habits of Stretch and Explore, Engage and Persist, Express, Reflect, and Develop Craft. Finally, the necessity for reform of current elementary school curriculum in the United States was discussed, and suggestions about how to integrate visual arts learning in core curriculum were presented.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

A deep gratitude goes out to some notable individuals who have made this project possible. Foremost was my thesis advisor, Dr. Dave Mussatti, whose gentle guidance helped me through the bumps along the way. Next, there was the endless support of my family, who rallied around me and provided me with physical and mental strength to get the job done. Lastly, there were numerous professional colleagues who gave me insight and inspiration into educational practices and ideologies that led me to my topic. Of special mention were the participants of this study; without their constant cooperation and patience, this project would not be what it is. An immense thank-you is bestowed upon all.

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION TO STUDY

For many decades, elementary curriculum in the United States has focused on the three "R's." Reading, writing, and 'rithmetic are commonly viewed as the essential components of a child's education. In Kindergarten, learning to read and write is widely accepted as substantial developmental steps in a student's education. Most schools employ literacy blocks that give teachers and students uninterrupted time to practice skills in the language arts. In 2002, the Federal Government passed No Child Left Behind (NCLB) legislation to address concerns of school performance and set standards of accountability for schools. Unbeknownst to many, the legislation also called for the arts to be included as core subjects in school curriculum. In actuality, arts programs had been cut in many schools, while traditional academic subjects such as literacy and mathematics have continued to be prioritized because of allocations of government funding. Unfortunately, students lose significant and essential learning experiences that they may not receive in "traditional" education. Art education teaches students social skills and traits such as self-regulation, independent thinking, problem-solving skills, and innovation; learning to think "out of the box." An art education teaches students to think creatively.

This thesis argued for the validity of providing quality visual arts programs to elementary students. It investigated how implementing the visual arts framework, *Studio*

Thinking (Hetland, Winner, Veenema, & Sheridan, 2007) fostered and developed creativity in second grade students and it provided suggestions of reforming current primary education to include visual arts as a core subject.

Background of the Study

The teacher-researcher has taught visual arts at a small private elementary school for 5 years. The ages of students taught range from 3 years old to 13 years old (pre-Kindergarten through eighth grade). The wide range of instructional levels and continuous scope and sequence of visual art curriculum gave the teacher-researcher a unique opportunity to observe students over an extended period of time, year after year.

The teacher-researcher chose to investigate the specific framework of *Studio Thinking* (Hetland et al., 2007). In 2001-2002 the authors of *Studio Thinking* investigated what "excellent art visual teachers teach, how they teach, and what students learn in their classes." (p. 4) From the research came the concepts of a visual arts teaching framework used in this study, as well as the 8 mental habits they called *studio habits of mind*. Furthermore, in 2004-2006 Hetland and her cohorts introduced the *Studio Thinking* framework to public school visual arts teachers in Alameda County, California. The framework was used in five public schools, two of which were K-8 schools. In this study, researchers found that teachers mainly used it to assess their own teaching practices. Three questions that teachers using the framework generally came up with were:

1. What habits of mind do I tend to teach?
2. What habits are naturally built by particular assignments?
3. Which habits come up frequently in individual consults with particular students?

(Hetland et al., 2007, p. 109)

The teacher-researcher of this study was interested in looking at the studio habits of mind and how they may or may not develop with younger students, particularly with students in the primary grades. Of great interest to the teacher-researcher was how students develop creativity, one of the eight *studio habits of mind* that Hetland and others proposed was taught through studio-based visual arts framework, *Studio Thinking*. This visual arts program was the first of note that addressed common themes of character traits that visual arts taught. The teacher-researcher has noted these specific traits or "life skills" in students, but had never documented them as the *Studio Thinking* framework did. Of relevance to the teacher-researcher was fostering these traits that developed creativity and creative thinking skills. Creativity allows for individual self expression, which builds confidence and self esteem in a student. Fostering creativity has been documented to be of social and cognitive significance and aids in the development and success of students, in their own education as well as future participants of the 21st century.

The Problem Statement

Creativity, an intrinsic characteristic of young children, has been recognized and encouraged through exploration and play in early childhood education. The visual arts are universally recognized as a means to foster and develop creativity and curiosity of the mind. As young students enter their "formal education years," a dramatic shift occurs. Learning to read, write and practice arithmetic is emphasized as essential cognitive skills and is pushed to the forefront of elementary education. Mandated by federal law NCLB

(2002) and viewed by many educational experts as the "meat and potatoes" of learning, this "core" curriculum trumps the visual arts in many schools across the nation. Concurrently, change is happening at record pace in the economic world and students need to have certain skills to adapt and succeed in the new 21st century. The problem presented in this thesis is that school curriculum in America's primary grades lacks engaging visual arts programs that foster creativity, a mental disposition essential for individual success in the 21st century and beyond.

Research Question

This thesis investigated the research question: "How did implementing the visual arts framework, *Studio Thinking* (Hetland et al., 2007) foster and develop creativity in second grade students?"

Definitions

Studio Thinking: a studio-based visual arts learning model that encompasses two aspects of a studio art classroom; first is the classroom organization and structure, second is what is being taught-the eight "*studio habits of mind"* (Hetland et al., 2007).

Studio classroom: an art classroom that is set up to promote "work-flow," where teachers create a studio culture and students are taught through assignments (Hetland et al., 2007).

Habits of mind: general and cognitive attitudes or dispositions of the mind.

Develop Craft: one of the eight habits of mind in *Studio Thinking;* is learning to use art materials and tools, as well as methods of art mediums. It also entails learning to respect and care for tools, materials and studio space.

Engage and Persist: one of the eight habits of mind in *Studio Thinking,* refers to developing focus, attention and perseverance while making art.

Envision: one of the eight habits of mind in *Studio Thinking,* the ability to picture mentally next possible steps in art making.

Express: one of the eight habits of mind in *Studio Thinking,* learning to create works of art that convey a meaning, an idea or a personal feeling. Also know as self expression.

Observe: one of the eight habits of mind in *Studio Thinking;* is paying close attention to visual contexts more than ordinary "looking."

Reflect: one of the eight habits of mind in *Studio Thinking;* is the ability to question and explain one's own work or working process. Also refers to learning how to judge artworks in relation to the standards of the field.

Stretch and Explore: one of the eight habits of mind in *Studio Thinking;* is learning to expand beyond one's capacities, to explore new avenues of art making without preconceived plans and to learn from mistakes and accidents.

Understand the Art World: one of the eight habits of mind in *Studio Thinking;* involves learning about art history and current art practices and Communities; learning to be an artist and interact with other artists in communities and in society.

Creativity: is having the mental capacity to make something new and original (Duffy (2006).

Big C creativity: refers to breakthroughs and innovations in a field; new and significant ideas that change the way humans think and feel about something and mastery of a particular domain (Feldman, Czikszentmihalyi, & Gardner, 1994).

Little c' Creativity: a process of conscious invention and describes the resourcefulness of ordinary people rather than extraordinary contributors (Duffy, 2006).

R-directed thinking: a "form of thinking and an attitude toward life that is characteristic of the right hemisphere of the brain-simultaneous, metaphorical, aesthetic, contextual, and synthetic" (Pink, 2005, p. 26).

L-directed thinking: a "form of thinking and an attitude to life that is characteristic of the left hemisphere of the brain- sequential, literal, functional, textual, and analytic (Pink, 2005, p. 26).

Arts education: commonly refers to instruction in music, dance, drama, and visual art.

Visual arts: also known as the fine arts, commonly consist of art forms of visual nature, including drawing, painting, printmaking and photography.

Transfer: is defined by educational researches as "a one way effect in which learning in one domain (e.g. music) causes an effect in another (e.g. spatial reasoning)" (Arts Education Partnership, 2002).

Elements of art: are seven basic elements that compose any artwork including line, shape, color, texture, value, space and form.

Principles of design; are six concepts of how art elements are arranged in a composition including balance, contrast, unity, harmony, rhythm and directional movement.

Hypothesis

It was the hypothesis of this thesis that implementing the visual arts framework, *Studio Thinking* (Hetland et al., 2007) would foster and develop creativity in second grade students.

Summary

In summary, this chapter introduced the research problem-how current curriculum in the primary grades lacks visual arts programs that are deemed an essential means of fostering creativity. The research question of intended study was: How did implementing the visual arts framework, *Studio Thinking* (Hetland et al., 2007), foster and develop creativity in second grade students?

The teacher-researcher was closely connected to this investigation of creativity and her 5 years of art teaching experience allowed, through trial and error, for studio-based teaching methods to be practiced. The teacher-researcher hoped that this study would inform educators about the intrinsic value of a specific style of visual arts education and emphasize the urgent need to teach creativity as part of core curriculum.

Chapter Two will introduce theoretical review of literature and empirical research on the research question; did implementing the visual arts framework *Studio Thinking* (Hetland et al., 2007) foster and develop creativity in second grade students. The theoretical review will presented various definitions of creativity and discussed the significance of the creativity continuum. It also explored the argument for reforming current elementary curriculum to include arts learning as a core subject.

The empirical research compared the relationship of the art instructor and student to that of a master artist and apprentice. It took an in-depth look at *Studio Thinking* (Hetland et al., 2007), a visual arts framework. Through the *Studio Thinking* lens, the teacher-researcher explored the how and what an engaging visual art program can teach to students. Specifically, the eight *studio habits of mind* were examined in how they relate

to creativity, one of the significant life skills proclaimed necessary for personal success in the rapidly changing economy of the 21st century.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Reviewed in this thesis was theoretical literature and empirical research that supported the hypothesis that implementing and teaching the visual arts framework, *Studio Thinking* (Hetland et al., 2007) to second grade students fostered and developed creativity. Although the term "creativity" has had many interpretations over years of educational research, this theoretical review gave an overview of creativity and the creativity continuum (Duffy, 2006). The review also explored the relevance of creativity to the cognitive development of a young child and examined the need for "teaching for creativity" (Craft, 2005, p. 42) in elementary schools.

The empirical research investigated the history of studio-based educational practices from the Middle Ages to present day, and it looked at the importance of the "artist as educator" (Craft, 2005). The teacher-researcher gave a comprehensive overview of *Studio Thinking* (Hetland et al., 2007), a studio-based visual arts framework that emphasized the relationship of teacher as master artist and student as art apprentice. Understanding how and what a visual arts curriculum taught were crucial to this project. Implementing the *Studio Thinking* framework successfully was the essential goal of the teacher-researcher and the basis for which to measure growth of creativity in second grade students.

Theoretical Review: Creativity as the Core

There were numerous definitions of creativity, and its meaning was pondered by a multitude of researchers and scholars for many decades. Through the history of mankind there had been ample evidence of an innate human desire to create, for man to express and visually record the human experience. The cave paintings of Lascaux buried deep in the earth, the Egyptian relief carvings of the pyramids and the petroglyphs of the ancient Anasazi. All are grand exemplars of man's earliest creativity.

It wasn't until J. P. Guilford's speech on the topic of creativity to the American Psychological Association on September 5, 1950, that creativity was viewed and tested through psychometric measures (Guilford, 1950). Since that time creativity had become a buzz word in the field of educational research. In 1994, cognitive researchers Gardner and Feldman investigated highly creative individuals such as Freud, Einstein, Picasso, and Stravinsky and focused on the genius of these minds. With this investigation, they developed the concept of "big C" creativity, which referred to breakthroughs and innovations in a field. These new and significant ideas essentially changed the way humans thought and felt about something and demonstrated mastery of a particular domain (Feldman et al.,1994).

On the other end of the creativity spectrum, "little c" creativity was demonstrated by people of normal intelligence in daily activities, be it a student at school who solved a geometry problem or a computer programmer who developed a new software. The researcher Anna Craft described "little c" creativity succinctly in her book, *Creativity in*

the Early Years, A Lifewide Foundation, she wrote, "little c creativity has been suggested to be the ordinary but lifewide attitude toward life that is driven by 'possibility thinking' but is about acting effectively with flexibility, intelligence, and novelty in everyday rather than extraordinary (Craft, 2002, p. 43). For example, a child that played with building blocks would have to experiment with differt size blocks before his tower stood firm. Bernadette Duffy describes "little c" creativity as a personal endeavor, "a process of conscious invention and describes the resourcefulness of ordinary people rather than extraordinary contributors" (Duffy, 2006, p. 17). Measuring this form of creativity was the teacher-researcher's main focus of this project and has driven her investigation of how a teacher could foster this seemingly innate trait of human beings. Creativity in early childhood education was commonly defined as having the mental capacity to make something new and original. It was this more generalized definition of creativity that was of significance to educators of both young and old. Duffy (2006) suggests creativity involves the following six characteristics:

(a) the ability to see things in fresh ways,

(b) using non-traditional approaches to solving problems,

(c) thinking along unorthodox lines and breaking barriers,

(d) going further than the information requires,

(e)learning from past experiences and relating this learning to new situations, and

(f) creating something unique or original.

Often linked with imagination, creativity was universally thought to be inherent in young children. Brain research on the young child showed that the years between birth

and age 5 were crucial periods where “hard wiring” of the brain was occurring. Experts in psychology and early education have concurred that the early years have been highly significant in future development of an individual’s brain and that “rich, stimulating experiences provided in a safe, responsive environment create the best conditions for optimal brain development” (Drew & Rankin, 2004, p. 34).

For years, early childhood education programs promoted creative thinking, imagination and self expression across the curriculum through the use of play and explorations of materials (Bodrova & Leong, 1996; Drew & Rankin, 2005; Duffy, 2006). Not only early child educators believed that experiential learning was an effective and successful way to learn in school. The Austrian philosopher, Rudolph Steiner, developed the Waldorf Schools based on curriculum rich in artistic experiences from early childhood to high school (Edwards, 2002). So why does mainstream elementary curriculum change as a student enters into the formal education years?

Researchers agreed that a child’s early years were optimal for developing and enhancing the natural tendencies young children have to explore their world. Psychologist and author, Howard Gardner spent a lifetime researching cognition and the brain. Most recognized in the educational world for developing the theory of Multiple Intelligences, he had also researched and written many books on cognition and creativity. Of note is the book *Art, Mind and Brain*. This literature spoke to ideas of how the creative processes of art had affected cognitive learning. In the study Harvard Project Zero, Gardner and his colleagues observed young children in a variety of artistic activities. He hailed the preschool years as “the golden age of creativity” (Gardner, 1982,

p. 86). Yet his research noted a tendency for children to cease creating works of art as they grew older and began their formal school years. Gardner suspected that one reason why this was happened was the change in environment in which cognition was taking place. Also mentioned in *Art, Mind, and Brain*, Gardner talked of a "sensitive period" before the adolescent years, where children become more affected by "rules and conventions" of their world. The beginnings of formal education brought into the picture critical views of peers and adults. Gardner believed these views stifled the willingness of children to create because of concerns of not being as good as their peers.

To understand how creativity might be fostered in a school setting through a visual arts curriculum, one needs to comprehend the cognitive development of a child. New brain research illuminated much about how the human brain functions, and had broken down old beliefs about the significant, but differing functions of the left and right hemispheres of the brain. Daniel Pink, author of *A Whole New Mind: Why Right Brainers Will Rule the World* (Pink, 2005) presented innovative ideas about the emergence of a new *conceptual age*, in which creativity, innovation and flexibility are necessary attributes for success in life. Noted in his book were studies utilizing newer technology of magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) of the brain. These studies revealed more accurately the cognitive capabilities of the left and right brain. Specifically pertaining to this study was Pink's concept of *L-directed* and *R-directed thinking.* According to Pink, *R-directed thinking* characterized the "creative" side of the brain and accentuated aesthetic beauty, holistic reasoning and non verbal expressions. Although Pink strongly believed that developing both sides of the brain was essential for optimum success in life, he

highlighted the widely felt view that the right brain functions were less important and continued to be underdeveloped compared to the left (Pink, 2005). The teacher-researcher next examined how embracing an elementary education that had emphasis in both right and left brain abilities could bridge this difference in left and right brain development and teach creativity.

Creative Cognition in Education

If experts in the field agreed that promoting creativity and imagination was deemed essential as best practices of early childhood education, why was creativity not developed further through a child's elementary education? Why did elementary education focus so intently on the left hemisphere's activities of reading, writing and math? Again, Pink defined *L-directed thinking* as thinking that is sequential, literal, functional, textual and, analytical. Pink believed these traits were essential to the learning of the subjects mentioned above. However, further analysis of right hemisphere functions in Pink's book revealed that *R-directed thinking* allowed for a very important characteristic: synthesis, which was the blending of independent parts together to create or see things as whole. Another definition was a "form of thinking and an attitude toward life that is characteristic of the right hemisphere of the brain-simultaneous, metaphorical, aesthetic, contextual, and synthetic" (Pink, 2005, p. 26).

Arts education has been recognized as a means to foster creativity through curriculum. In fact, the arts were recognized as core subjects along with mathematics, language arts, and social studies by the United States Department of Education when the federal mandate NCLB (2002) was passed. Unfortunately, the reality of this law resulted

in an emphasis on funding of programs focusing on literacy, writing instruction, and mathematics; funding for arts programs was dramatically cut across the nation. Still, the prevalent attitude in American educational systems today is that the arts are a luxury (Hetland et al., 2007).

The tide of economic change has once again created a ripple of interest in best practices of educating the youth, the leaders of tomorrow. Research by Sloan and Nathan (2005) and Lynch (2008) reinforce Daniel Pink's call for fostering creativity in light of this change. Lynch substantiated an economically driven requisite for implementing arts programs in K-12 education and clearly stated his position on the importance of arts learning in education.

> The reality of life in the 21st century is that the skills associated with artistic practices-Creative thinking, self discipline, collaboration and innovation-are skills that are in great demand. In fact, in our rapidly changing global economy, the skills the arts teach may be mandatory for everyone's success (Lynch, 2008, p. 1).

Similarly Sloan and Nathan (2005), discussed a need to reemphasis "arts-centered curriculum" that developed both right-brained thinking-"problem solving, synthesis, artistic and creative expression and passion" and left brained characteristics-"analysis, logic and computer literacy" (p. 19).

Further documentation of the need to promote creative thinking was written in the national report, *Greater Expectations: A new Vision for Learning as a Nation Goes to College.* This report documented 2,713 studies that examined the role of visual art on creativity. It addressed a call for rethinking college instruction in light of changing

expectations of student success in the 21st century. Noted was the importance of student centered learning. Students needed to become "intentional" and "informed" learners that possessed cognitive and practical skills. To be "informed learners," the report surmised, students needed to have experiences that developed "the human imagination, expression, and the products of many cultures." The *Greater Expectations* report also encouraged teachers to become the mentors of students and students to develop their talents as creators, inventors, performers; artists. Finally, this report circled back to the beginning of education and stressed that "preparation for liberal education begins long before students begin college" and "will take a concerted and collaborative action across educational levels" (Association of American Colleges and Universities, 2002. p. 28).

In these tumultuous times, arts programs in public education have been dramatically cut due to mandated focus on accountability to core subjects such as language arts, science and mathematics. However, there is an emerging concern to rethink schools' curriculum to develop and foster the imagination, creative thinking, and self expression (Center for Community Arts Partnerships, 2008; Hetland et al., 2007). Eisner (2002), professor of education and art at Stanford University has advocated the significance and value of visual arts in education for many years. In a letter to Stanford alumni, his article *Three R's are Essential, But Don't Forget the A--The Arts* talks about substantial traits of metacognition: decision making, problem solving, and flexibility. Furthermore, he argued that schools needed curricular reform to include the arts. He wrote,

> Although we don't think about it this way, a school's curriculum is a mind-altering device, a means through which children's minds are shaped with ideas, skills and beliefs about the world. Because what we teach the young is so important, we need to be particularly careful about what we include and equally as careful about what we don't. (p. 1)

Eisner's theories about arts learning and cognition echoed those of Howard Gardner and bring to light the true value of arts education, in particular, the visual arts as a core curriculum in education (Eisner, 2002; Gardner, 1990).

For reform to take place, educational leaders need to recognize and value what the arts can teach. Numerous educational researchers, including Catterall, Horowitz, and Webb-Dempsey (2002) have taken a serious look at learning through the arts and have done comprehensive studies that document the value of arts education. The Arts Education Partnership, funded by the National Endowments of the Arts and the U.S. Department of Education, compiled a comprehensive report on learning in and through the Arts. The *Critical Links* Compendium featured 62 studies, accompanying essays and commentaries concerning cognitive connections between dance, drama, music and the visual arts.

This array of complex, contemporary studies, punctuated two arenas of learning through the arts. The first concept was "transfer" of knowledge learned through arts curriculum to core curriculum. "Transfer" was defined Catterall as "learning in one situation and context that produces capabilities and dispositions or inclinations producing effective performance in a different situation or context" (Arts Education Partnership,

2002, p. 61). Catterall's essay on transfer in Critical Links talked about the academic connections that art learning may foster. Catterall and his cohorts further suggested a more symbiotic nature of arts learning, they argued that "transfer involves reciprocal processes involving multiple interactions among domains and disciplines" (p. 61). It was possible that skills that were learned through arts curriculum are utilized by students in other subject matter. Hence, if creative thinking was developed through arts learning, it enhanced learning in subjects such as social studies, science, math and language arts.

The second area of focus in *Critical Links*, which related directly to the hypothesis of the thesis, was the studies on the social skills required to be successful participants in life. Similar to Eisner's views, researchers in the Compendium argued that there were specific "dispositions of mind" that were inherent to arts learning: self-regulation, self-efficacy, creative thinking, and problem-solving skills (Arts Education Partnership, 2002; Center for Community Arts Partnerships, 2008; Teachers College, Columbia University, 2007). This prevalent view of experts in the field of arts education further validated that arts learning was an authentic means to developing creativity in a young children.

Empirical Research: A Studio-Based Approach to Visual Arts Education

The authors of *Studio Thinking* have framed a style of visual arts teaching that was a hands-on approach to learning. At the heart of this framework was the exemplary visual arts teacher, fostering "students-at-work", which is where most of the class time was spent developing works of art, while the teacher observed, circulated around the studio to give on sight instruction or ask a relevant question to further deepen a student's project

(Hetland et al., 2007, p. 26). Although this teaching style was a contemporary concept in arts education, one could liken this archetypal instruction to the past. The notion of learning a craft, skill or trade through a master/apprentice relationship developed in the Middle Ages and continued throughout history as cities developed (Hughes, 2001).

By the beginning of the 19th century in Europe, artisans were the majority of workers in the developing cities and the education of artisans (those workers who learned a specific craft or trade) was necessary to provide economic security for a family as well as to carry on the trade. It was common practice for a son of a master to be apprenticed to another master artisan to learn that trade, craft, or art (Hughes, 2001). The apprentice or learner had to "follow and apply rules and patterns, steps and methods, practices given or demonstrated by masters, and to do so with sufficient care to obtain repeatable, reproducible and verifiable results" (whyslopes, 2007). Furthermore, in this historical type of education, an apprentice was sent away to live in a supervised familiar situation and had to learn social skills as well the technical skills of the craft, trade or art. Those social skills learned through the master/apprentice relationship can even be likened to the "studio habits of mind" that the *Studio Thinking* framework cultivated (Hetland, et al., 2007).

Comparing this learning style of old to modern visual arts education of American youth, there most certainly were differences in content and skills being taught. But of significance were the similarities of the master/apprentice education and a modern visual arts studio-based education. The learning environment of the master artisan and the working apprentice paralleled that of a studio-based art room. Furthermore, a

contemporary art instructor and his or her students can be compared to that of a master artisan and his apprentices. Noteworthy was the tried and true methods of this educational practice of the past and the knowledge and insight it could bring to present day visual arts education.

Within a studio approach to visual arts learning, techniques and mediums of visual arts were taught like drawing, painting, printmaking and ceramics. There were also essential mental and social skills related to studio arts teaching and learning that developed such as the ability to focus, innovation of ideas, problem solving skills, and cooperative learning skills (Arts Education Partnership, 2002; Hetland et al., 2007).

Studio Thinking: *The Real Benefits of Visual Arts Education* presented an authentic way of teaching and learning visual arts through a studio classroom setting. In the text, it depicted two overriding components of a studio classroom. The first component is the "Studio Structure" which was how the classroom was ordered to facilitate exemplary arts learning. There were three parts to the studio structure that include "Demonstration-Lecture, Students at Work (independent work time) and Critique (reflection or art talk) The parts could be altered in order but typically the Students at Work part of the pattern was the primary focus of the art teacher and where most learning occurred (Hetland et al., 2007, p. 4).

The second component was "what" was taught in these classrooms. Authors of *Studio Thinking* identified eight "studio habits of the mind". These "mental habits" or "attitudinal dispositions" included *"Develop Craft, Engage and Persist, Envision, Express, Observation, Stretch and Explore, Reflect and Understanding the Art World***.**

These mental traits or characteristics had been uncovered as the *Studio Thinking's* "hidden curriculum" (Hetland et al., 2007, p. 4). Hence, art class was not just about developing technical skills in a particular medium. Rather, it was about developing these inherent traits in individual students through the practice and process of creating art.

Art educators unfamiliar with *Studio Thinking* practices might have readily recognized many of these mental habits of mind as vital components of cognition in the visual arts. Most would agree they already taught these important life skills mentioned above. Establishing and naming these "studio habits" provided tangible evidence for advocating for a more visual arts curriculum. It validated what art teachers had pronounced and educational researchers had concluded-a dire need for reform of school curriculum to include visual art as a core subject in American primary schools (Duffy, 2006; Eisner, 2002; Greene, 1995).

Summary

In summary, this chapter reviewed theoretical literature and empirical research that indicated teaching through visual arts; "*Studio Thinking*" (Hetland et al., 2007), a studio-based teaching framework, in the primary grades, fostered and developed creativity found significant for personal success in the 21st century. The theoretical review examined three concepts concerning creativity. First was how did one define creativity in context to early childhood education. Second was discussing the need for nurturing creativity in light of changes in the global economy. The third component was investigating the need for reform of primary curriculum to include visual arts education as part of the core subjects taught in elementary schools nationwide.

The empirical research briefly touched on the history and ancient practices of studio-based art education, and it reviewed "*Studio Thinking*", a contemporary visual arts studio-based program (Hetland et al, 2007). In particular, it highlighted the value of the "eight studio habits of mind" which are defined in Chapter One.

In Chapter Three, the methodology of this study was reviewed. The research was a myriad of qualitative methodology and included art surveys and focus group discussions, teacher observations during studio work time and a pre- and post-art project comparison that was used to deem growth of creativity in the participants of the action research study.

CHAPTER III

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLGY

Research Question

The methods used in this action research study were of mixed methods, combining qualitative and quantitative measures. Primarily, the organization of a student focus group (Berg, 2004) allowed the teacher-researcher to closely observe art making practices, collect data on specific behaviors in an art studio and introduce an arena where creative processes can be discussed and reflected upon "as it happens". The main objective of this action research study was to investigate if creativity can be enhanced through visual arts learning. As stated previously, the question of research in this study was; How did implementation of the visual arts framework, *Studio Thinking* (Hetland et al., 2007) foster and develop creativity in second grade students?

This chapter presents a synopsis of the school setting and the participants in the action research study, including the organization of the student focus group. It also reviewed instruments used in collecting data, research design and data collection and data analysis procedures.

School Setting

This action research study was conducted by the teacher-researcher in a visual arts classroom located in a small private elementary school in western Nevada. The teacher-researcher was an enrichment teacher employed by the school to instruct art to all grade

levels, including Pre-School through 8th grade. The school population consisted of students from pre-kindergarten through eighth grade. The current total enrollment of the school was 150 students. The student-to teacher ratio reported at the research site in second grade was 21:1 (S. C. McKibben, personal communication).

Participants

The participants in this action research study were 10 second grade students in this private elementary school. From the class population of 21 students, a student focus group (Berg, 2004) was organized, consisting of 5 females and 5 males, ages 7 and 8 years-old. The majority of the students in the second grade class were in school together since their Kindergarten year. Seven of the 10 members of the student focus group were taught art by the teacher-researcher since Kindergarten. Participants were chosen at random and were kept anonymous throughout the study.

Data Collection Instruments

The teacher-researcher used an array of qualitative and quantitative methods to collect data for this action research study. Primarily, a student focus group of five males and five females was formed from a second grade class of 21 students. The intimacy of the student focus group was essential to collect quantitative data, and the rationale for choosing this methodology came from the significance of group discussions in focus group research (Berg, 2004). In order to establish the *Studio Thinking* framework (Hetland et al., 2007) as the teaching instrument in this study, it was necessary to increase student communication about the art making processes, as well as create specific times set aside to evaluate art products. On a regular basis, the student focus group and the remaining

students in the class participated in group discussions labeled *art talks*. The art talks were open-ended discussions concerning art processes and procedures of the current project. Art talks also allowed students to share thoughts and feelings about their own work or the work of fellow classmates.

Additionally, the teacher-researcher used art talk time to conduct appropriate grade level critiques midway and at the end of a project or assignment. Critiques differed from art talks in that students had to practice self evaluation and learn to be self critical. Critical evaluation was crucial for students to learn about specific art techniques, as well as develop observation skills. Both of these traits were recognized by the authors of *Studio Thinking* (Hetland et al., 2007) as essential to developing and fostering creativity. Henceforth, the use of a student focus group provided for authentic investigation into students' perceptions about the art making process, as well as fostering regular use of art talk time (Berg, 2004).

Another qualitative tool for data collection in this action research study was teacher observation. Most of the research gathered during this study was through observations done in the visual arts classroom. A key component of teacher observation was reflecting on observations witnessed during art making. In order to accurately document observations, the teacher-researcher kept a field journal, making a written review of art talks, taking notes of student behaviors during independent work periods and scribing quotes from students during art talks and critiques.

A quantitative instrument used for data collection was the Studio Habit Abilities Assessment (Appendix A). It was created to measure the studio habits of each of the

focus group members. The teacher-researcher chose five of the eight studio habits to measure that were developmentally appropriate for primary students. The five traits included *Develop Craft, Engage and Persist, Stretch and Explore, Express, and Reflect.* A Studio Habits Ability Results (Appendix B) was developed by the teacher-researcher to access the student's ability and performance in each of these five areas. The rubric delineated a point scale of 0-2, 3-5, 6-8, and 9-10; 1is lowest and 10 the highest in ability.

Another instrument utilized to gather data concerning student attitudes about art in school was a Pre- and Post-Art Survey. The Pre-Study Art Survey (Appendix C) was an art survey from New Zealand's National Education Monitoring Program (NEMP, 2003). It consisted of 24 questions written in child friendly language and was administered by a teacher's aide to gather general feedback from students' thoughts and feelings concerning the subject of art and art making practices in school. Similarly, an abbreviated Post-Study Art Survey (Appendix D) was administered at the conclusion of the six week study. This post study survey, given by the teacher-researcher, included eight identical questions from the pre-study survey. By comparing the two surveys, the teacher-researcher wanted to discern if students' attitudes about art in school would changed after the study was complete. Of interest to the teacher-researcher were the students' answers to the final question on the Post-Art Survey; what do you think it means to be creative? Answers ranged from "

The final tool used in this action research study was an art project entitled *The Creative Shape* project (Appendix E). It was assigned twice, once at the beginning of the study and then again at the end of the study. The before and after products were

compared and used as a means to determine if students developed creativity after being taught with the Studio Thinking framework.

This project involved giving students two pre-cut shapes, a glue stick, and a blank piece of paper. Students were also given colored pencils and markers to draw with. The class was asked to create a picture from their imagination, while incorporating the two shapes. The students were assigned this project twice, once at the beginning of the 6-week study and again at the end of the study. The first project used the pre-cut shape of a blue dot and a red square (Figure 1). Similarly, with the final project students were given two shapes, although the shapes were different, a purple triangle and a green square as seen in Figure 2. The concept behind this tool was to compare the initial artworks done by the student focus group to the final works produced by the same individuals in the student focus group. These projects were the basis for the teacher-research to measure creativity within the student focus group.

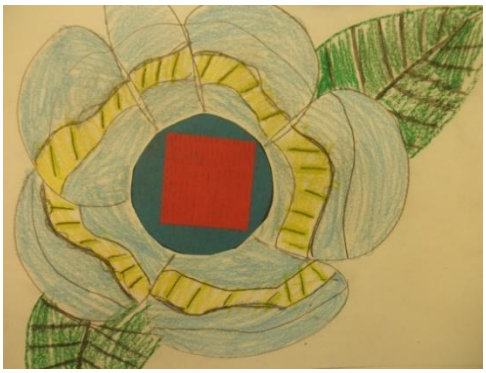


Figure 1. Student example of Creative Shape project with blue dot and red square.

Figure 2. Student examples of Creative Shape project with purple triangle and green square.

Research Design and Data Collection Procedures

Qualitative data were collected during a 6-week period in the fall of 2009. Data were collected from mid October through the end of in late November. The environment where data was collected was a visual arts classroom where all elementary students came to participate in art classes. The second grade class, from which the student focus group was chosen, participated in art twice a week. Research was conducted during their weekly art classes on Monday and Friday afternoons, for a 40-minute period.

Careful preparation for this action research study took place prior to the study itself. The student focus group was chosen in early fall and consisted of 10 students, 5 female, 5 male. The choice to use a student focus group came from the qualitative nature of this study. Increasing the amount of student reflection time and critical evaluation time was a goal of the teacher-researcher and key component of the *Studio Thinking* framework (Hetland et al., 2007). The benefit of using a student focus group allowed for data to be collected in a familiar, non threatening environment. It also allowed the teacher-researcher to gather data without varying arts instruction for specific students. The student focus group remained anonymous to the class as a whole, and individual

students in the focus group were labeled A-K for identification during data collection procedures.

Prior to the study, there were necessary changes to the organization of the visual arts studio. Essential to this study was the implementation of the visual arts framework, *Studio Thinking* (Hetland et al., 2007). This framework revolves around two main ideas. The first addressed the environment of the studio classroom-how it was physically organized to teach through visual arts projects and obtain the goals of arts instruction. This required creating a "studio culture" in the visual arts classroom. Consideration of space and how to set up materials and supplies to promote fluent transitions from teacher instruction time to independent work periods was necessity of this study.

Also essential to promoting the *studio culture* of a visual arts classroom was teaching students to reflect and explain the processes of their work, including being able to evaluate their own work in the form of critiques. In order to facilitate more frequent group discussions, an area dubbed the *Reflection Wall* was created in the visual arts classroom. A prominent wall space in the visual arts classroom measuring eight feet in height and fourteen feet in width was reserved for this purpose. To construct the *Reflection Wall*, two nails were placed evenly on each of the sides of this area at two foot vertical intervals. Wire was then strung across the wall, creating four hanging wires, spaced vertically roughly two feet apart. Multiple clips were added to the wires to accommodate for roughly 5 works of art, sized 18 by 24 inches. As seen in Figure 3, the *Reflection Wall* provided hanging area for approximately 20 works of art of the above-

mentioned size. This area also allowed students to easily hang art work in progress (as well as final products) so that art talks and critiques could happen on a regular basis.

Figure 3. Picture of Reflection Wall in visual arts classroom.

The second main concept of the *Studio Thinking* framework (Hetland et al., 2007) was "what" was being taught through a visual arts curriculum. Authors of this framework have formulated the *eight studio habits of mind*. Defined in Chapter One, these skills or dispositions have been previously researched with middle school and high school students and were identified as mental attributes that could be learned through creating and reflecting upon artworks (Hetland et al., 2007). For this research project, the introduction of the language and concepts of the *eight studio habits of mind* was essential. To accomplish this task in an age appropriate manner, a large, colorful poster (Figure 4) was created with definitions and pictures describing each of the habits. This visual aid hung in the visual arts classroom and was referred to intermittently by the teacher-researcher to reinforce the language of the eight studio habits, define what each of the habits were and explain why the habits were important to learning.

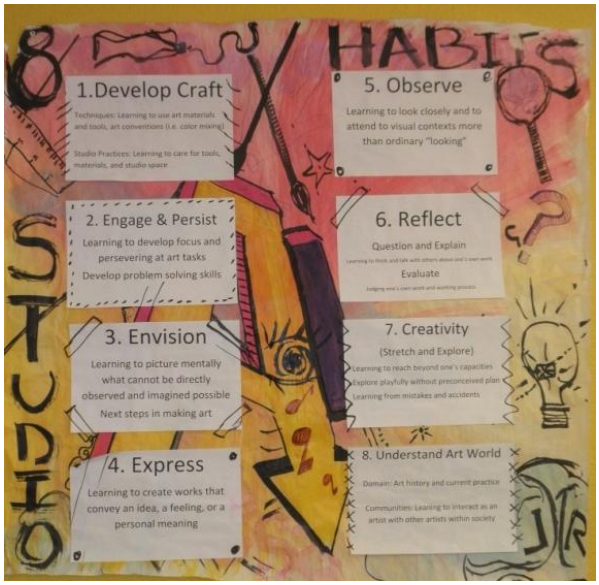


Figure 4. Eight Studio Habits of Mind poster hung in art studio.

Although students were introduced to all eight studio habits, the teacher-researcher narrowed the focus of this study to measure five of the eight habits, including *Develop Craft, Engage and Persist, Stretch and Explore*, *Express,* and *Reflect.* From her experience of teaching art to children of all ages for the past 5 years, the teacher-researcher chose these specific attributes as being the most fundamental for developing art skills and fostering creativity in young children.

Lastly, in preparation for this study a Pre-Study Art Survey was administered to the student focus group by a teacher's aide. The survey was a means to collect data on students' attitudes and feelings about the importance of art in school. A shortened version of the Pre-Study Art Survey was also administered after the six week study. By comparing the two surveys, the teacher-researcher hoped to gain insight into attitudes that may have facilitated creative learning.

After organizing and implementing the concepts of a studio classroom, data was gathered weekly through teacher observation during the course of regular arts instruction time. For the teacher-researcher, regular arts instruction involved a three part format of presentation and demonstration, students at work (independent work time) and reflection and critique (art talk).

Typically, presenting the project began with engaging students through some type of anticipatory set; showing a model of a finished work, reading a story that related to the project, looking at art prints that were of the same style or medium. The learning objective was clearly defined and written on a white board at front of the studio. Along with presentation of the project, the teacher-researcher demonstrated and/or modeled techniques and mediums being introduced. The presentation time was used to communicate what was expected of the students, but it was kept relatively short. What followed next, was "Students-at-work" (Hetland et al., 2007). This was where students worked independently on the given project. Within this period, students learned to gather their own supplies, pass out needed class materials, and learn clean up routines of the studio. This was an essential time for the teacher-researcher to observe and assess individual needs and gauge student progress in a particular skill, method or medium.

Finally, the third part of regular arts instruction was the inclusion of regular art talks and student critiques. The previously mentioned art talks and critiques were facilitated and moderated by the teacher-researcher and occurred twice during two of the projects assigned throughout the study period. Art talks and critiques were approximately 15-20 minutes in length, totaling group reflection time of approximately 60-80 minutes

out of the approximately 480 minutes of arts instruction time. Observations and student discussions were recorded in a journal during the art talks and critiques to document student discussions, behaviors and other relevant observations. These notes were carefully reviewed by the teacher-researcher and were used to gather students' perceptions about their art making process and the final product. Both the second and third components of regular arts instruction were significant periods for data collection throughout this study.

During the study timeframe, there were three art projects assigned to second grade students. The projects included *Layers of a Landscape* (Appendix F), *Shapes Our Hands Create* (Appendix G) and *Harvest Wreathes* (Appendix H). These projects were chosen because of the variety of technical skills and mediums covered. They also varied in length and were age appropriate for the level of students being researched.

The *Layers of a Landscape* (Figure 5) was a more challenging project having many steps done over a three week period (six class sessions). The objective of this project was for students to create a picture with depth, including a foreground, a middle ground and a background. It involved students creating a preliminary landscape sketch with large, medium and small objects placed in the bottom, middle and top of the page. Students then had to dissect their sketch and transfer their drawing by tracing their foreground, middle ground and background onto three separate pieces of tracing paper. Each of the three pieces was then colored with markers and stapled together to create a final layered landscape.

Figure 5. Student example of *Layers of a Landscape* project.

In contrast, the *Shapes Our Hands Create* project (Figure 6) was a relatively short project that was done in one and a half week's time (three class sessions) and had been done successfully with all grade levels (Kindergarten through fifth grade). The learning objective of this project was design based and focused on the art element of color. It required students to trace their hands three times on a piece of white drawing paper, making sure that the hands overlapped in some way. Next, students had to color in the individual shapes with markers. The singular design challenge was that the same color could not be used in a shape next to it. As seen in Figure 6, the placement of hands affected the entire design of the work and could create many shapes within the design.

Figure 6. Student example of Shapes Our Hands Create project.

Figure 7. Student example of Harvest Wreaths project.

The final project of regular arts instruction was *Harvest Wreathes* (Figure 7). It was completed in one week's time (two class sessions), and was theme based and focused on the Autumn Harvest season. A book about autumn leaves was read to the class to introduce the theme and show examples of fall colors. Students also were able to look at a wreath displayed in the front of the room. The first day included a demonstration of painting with liquid watercolors on coffee filters. Students were shown how to drip watercolor paint onto an oversized coffee filter with paintbrushes. The coffee filter absorbed liquid color in such a way that it created a unique pattern when mixed with other colors. The immediate visual product of this activity contributed to high student engagement and was very successful in fostering confidence in the art making process.

The second day involved the creation of the harvest wreath, including cutting and gluing leaf shapes out of the colored coffee filters. This was more challenging and time consuming for students, but majority of wreathes were completed in this period.

Of major import to the design of this study was having a means to test the hypothesis proposed in this thesis. Does teaching through a studio-based visual arts program develop creativity in young students? The teacher-researcher wanted a visual tool to measure students' creativity at the beginning of this study. By repeating the same project at the end of the study, the teacher-researcher then had a product to measure creativity within the student focus group. To accomplish this, the teacher-researcher devised the Pre- and Post-Creative Shape project. It was based on published creativity tests she reviewed, as well as her years of personal experience with adapting art curriculum to specific objectives. The basic idea of the project was that students had to create a picture from their imagination using limited prior knowledge (the geometric shapes) to make something original. In both instances, the project took one week (two class periods) to complete and was documented by digital photographs for analysis. A Creative Shape Project Comparison was created to document the potential increase of creativity.

Data Analysis Procedures

Regular analysis of the data collected occurred weekly during the 6-week study. Each Friday, a review of observations in the form of field notes led to teacher assessments of either art works in progress or finished products. At that time, the Studio Habit Abilities Assessment was completed. This entailed assigning points to each student in the focus group based on student performance in conjunction to the five studio habits identified in the assessment. The Studio Habits Abilities Rubric was the assessment guide to student performance.

At the completion of the study, the teacher-researcher reviewed and charted each student's points in each of the five areas on the Studio Habit Ability Assessment throughout the six weeks of research. By comparing individual points in the specific areas through the weeks, the teacher-researcher could determine if growth in these areas occurred. Of particular interest to the teacher-researcher was growth in the studio habit of *Stretch and Explore.* This trait, defined by the authors of *Studio Thinking* (Hetland et al., 2007) as the essence of creative thinking through art making, was then graphed for each student. By creating a line graph of the single ability of *Stretch and Explore* of each student over the six week study period, the teacher-researcher could then formulate an outcome of student's growth of creativity. The analysis of this data was key to answering the proposed research question, "How does implementing the visual arts framework, *Studio Thinking* (Hetland et al., 2007) develop and foster creativity in second grade students?"

Additionally, the two art surveys administered pre- and post-study were reviewed and select questions with their answers were made into a pie chart. The art surveys were given to gain initial attitudes and perspectives of the study group concerning art making practices in a school setting. The second survey gave the teacher-researcher a means to compare attitudes of students after the study was complete. Because of the qualitative nature of this study, the attitudes and perceptions about art in school give the teacher-researcher some background knowledge to discern how to best implement the visual arts teaching framework, *Studio Thinking* (Hetland et al., 2007).

Furthermore, individual art works from the pre- and post-Shape Creativity projects were analyzed by the teacher-researcher to provide data on the possible growth of creativity in students, as well as in the student focus group as a whole. The teacher-researcher analyzed this project by two methods. The first method involved using the Studio Habits Ability Assessment to assign points in the five habits previously mentioned, based solely on the pre- and post- Creativity Shape project. The initial project gave the teacher-researcher a base line of creativity for each of the student in the focus group. The post project was done to give a visual means to compare the single trait of *Stretch and Explore*, also referred to as creativity, to the initial works.

The second method of analyzing the Creativity Shape projects was done through teacher assessment of critiquing artworks based on the two following questions; 1. How many elements of art did the student incorporate in their picture? The elements of art included color, line, shape, value, texture, space and form. 2. Did the student include any of the principles of design in their picture? The principles of design included unity, rhythm, contrast, pattern, emphasis, and balance.

These elements and principles of art were known as the standard building blocks taught through disciplined based art education throughout the country. A student's ability to understand these elements and principles and use them to compose artworks was necessary to further developed self expression and creativity.

In the following chapter, the teacher-researcher will present the myriad of findings from the qualitative data gathered. With the use of line graphs, pie charts, and photographs of student art works, the teacher-researcher will analyze the array of results

and determine if the hypothesis was valid and how obtainable was the goals laid out in the action research study.

CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS

In order to analyze the qualitative and quantitative data gathered and accurately summarize findings in a cohesive manner, the teacher-researcher organized a student focus group of ten second graders in a private elementary school for the action research project in this thesis. The instruments and methods of data collection included a Pre- and Post-Art Survey, teacher-researcher observations of the student focus group during regular art studio classes, which included weekly journal entries and recordings of the Studio Habits Abilities Results for each member of the student focus group. Additionally, a visual and written documentation of the Creative Shape Art Project was presented as a means to determine if creativity was fostered and developed over the study's timeframe.

Pre- and Post-Study Art Survey Results

Examination of the data collected from the action research study began with the initial instrument used, the Pre-Study Art Survey (Appendix C). The survey consisted of 24 questions written in child friendly language developed by New Zealand's National Education Monitoring Project. It was administered by a teacher's aide to the entire second grade class during a regular art class period. A Post-Study Art Survey (Appendix D) was administered to the same students after the six week study was completed. The Post-Study Art Survey was an abbreviated version of the initial survey, using exact wording of questions but including only eight of the original questions from the Pre-Study Art Survey. The teacher-researcher chose to abbreviate the post study survey to

include the questions that correlated more specifically to the subject of art processes and practices within an elementary school setting. By comparing the two surveys, the teacher-researcher wanted to discern if students' attitudes about art in school had changed after the study was completed. For the following presentation of data, the teacher-researcher has labeled the Pre-Study Art Survey as "Survey A" (color coded blue) and the Post-Study Art Survey as "Survey B" (color coded green).

The first question of both surveys asked students what subjects they liked best at school. There were 12 subjects listed and students picked their top three choices. The choices were science, technology, reading, writing, music, dance, drama, math, PE, health, social studies and visual art. The teacher-researcher totaled the number of times a subject was chosen in each of the surveys. As seen in Table 1, the Pre-Study Art Survey illustrated that students chose PE the most frequent amount of times, science second most frequent and reading was chosen third most frequently. Also seen in Table 1 were the results of the Post-Study Art Survey where PE was still chosen most frequently for favorite subject in school. Visual art was chosen second most frequently and reading was third choice of subjects they liked best.

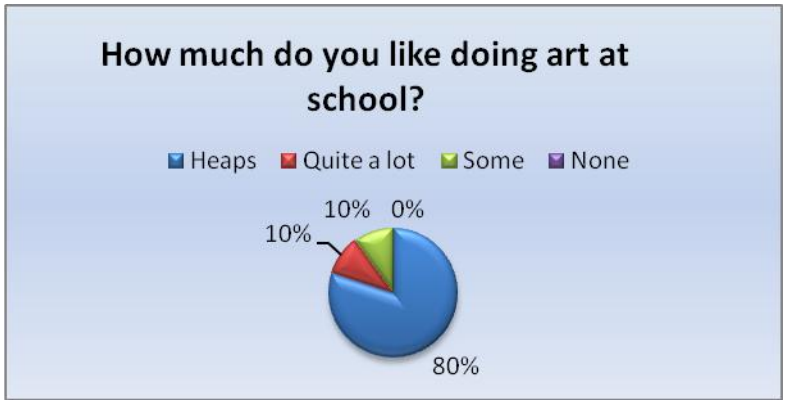
It was interesting to note that visual arts was recognized in the top three choices of favorite subjects in school by the students after the action research study occurred. However, what this information portrayed in relation to the study could be open to interpretation. Information of this nature has its limitations because specific student answers were not tracked for change of choices made. What it did illustrate to the

teacher-researcher was that the students in the study became more aware of art as a subject of notoriety in school.

The following findings were also results of the Pre- and Post-Study Art Survey. Figures 9-12 depicted results of four questions that related specifically to how students viewed the importance of art in school. A pie chart format was used and the teacher-researcher placed both the pre- and post-study survey results together, one above the other for a relevant visual comparison. Again, limitations to the data being presented would be that increases or decreases in specific percentages were not distinguished by the teacher-researcher for individual focus group members. The pie charts were created to express the overall trend of thoughts and feelings about art in school that the student focus group had prior to the study, as well as what they felt about art in school after the study was completed. Also of note, was that the pre-survey was given by a teacher's aide and the post-survey was given by the teacher-researcher. Hence, students may have felt more compelled to answer questions in a specific way on the post-study art survey than the initial survey.

Figure 9 shows the results of the question how much a student liked doing art at school. As seen in Survey B, there was a 10% decrease from students liking art *heaps* to students liking art *quite a lot*. Interestingly, there was also a10% increase in Survey B from students liking art *some* to liking are *quite a lot*.

Survey A



Survey B

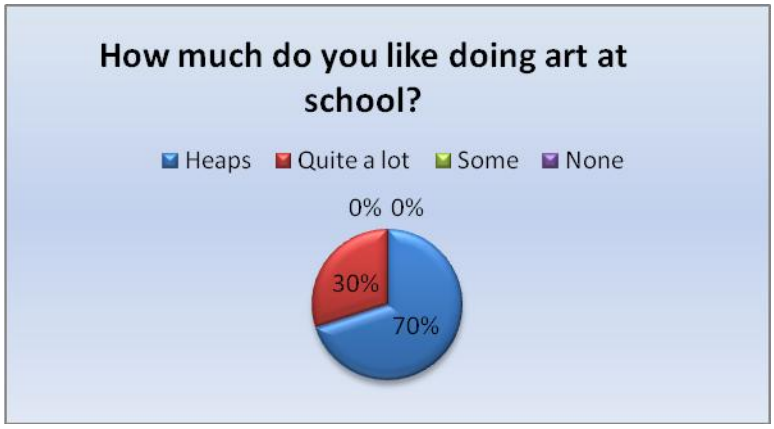


Figure 9. Survey results for the question: "How much do you like doing art at school?"

Figure 10 demonstrated results about how students felt about themselves as an artist. Students were asked how good they thought they were at doing art. The results showed that at the end of the study there was a 10% increase of students from not knowing if they were good at art to feeling that they were quite good at art. The percentage of students feeling that they were not so good stayed the same at 20%.

Survey A

Survey B

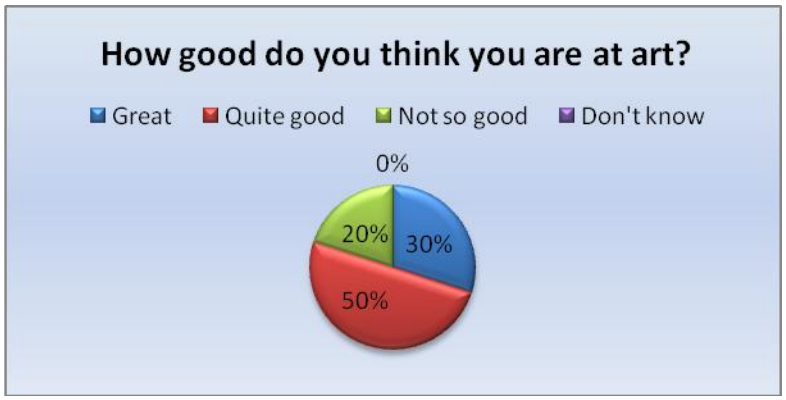
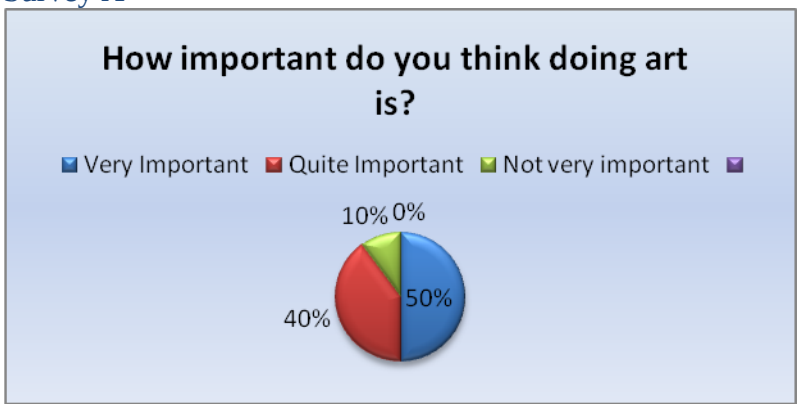


Figure 10. Survey results for the question: "How good do you think you are at art?"

Figure 11 illustrated the question of how important students felt doing art was. In Survey A, students were almost split between art being very important and quite important to do (Very important = 50%, Quite important = 40%). In Survey B, there was an increase to 60% of students who felt that doing art was very important; however, Survey B also depicted a 10% decrease of students feeling that art was quite important to not very important to do.

Survey A



Survey B

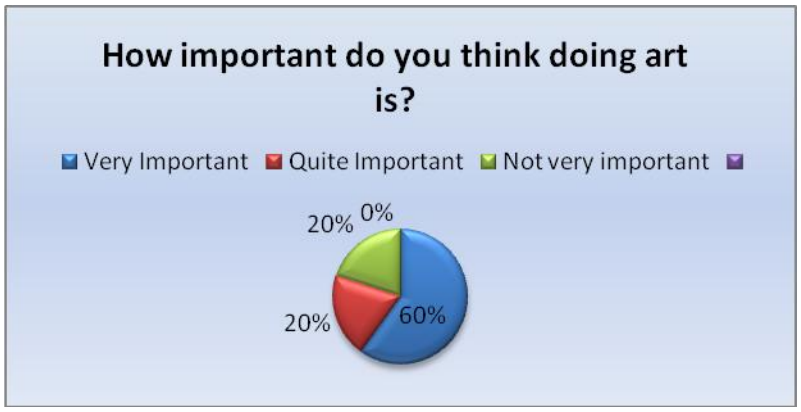
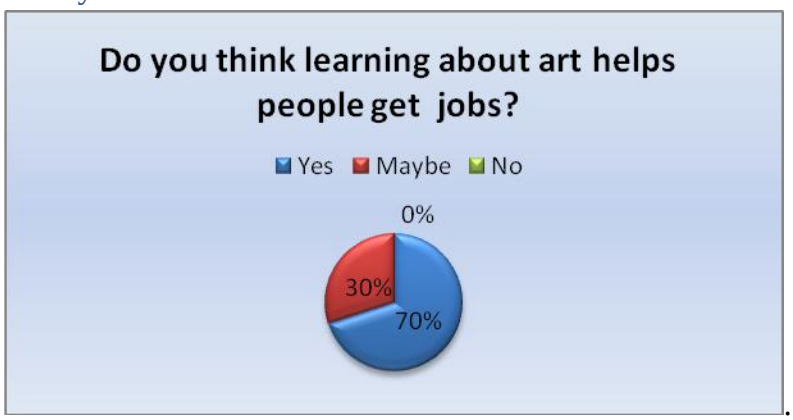


Figure 11. Survey results of the question: "How important do you think doing art is?"

The fourth and final question the teacher-researcher examined was regarding students' feelings about art and people getting jobs. Simply put, it asked students if they

thought learning about art helped people get jobs. As seen in Figure 12, there was a 10% shift from yes to maybe was represented in Survey B's results as compared with Survey A.

Survey A



Survey B

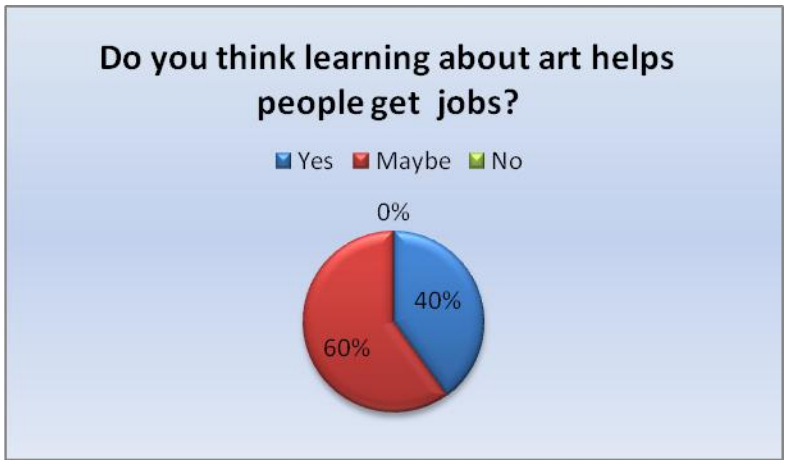


Figure 12. Survey results for the question: "Do you think learning about art helps people get jobs?"

Lastly, the most interesting findings to the teacher-researcher were the answers given to the final question of the Post-Art Survey which asked students: "What do you think it means to be creative?" Students answered in a variety of ways and the teacher-researcher noted some of those of particular distinction; "I think creative meens you add a

lot of details to your picter and you take time in it." Another student answered; "I think creative means do your best work." And yet another stated simply, "that you fill your page." Finally, one young student proclaimed, "creative means you make up your own thing." These definitions provided the teacher-researcher with a clearer picture of how students interpreted the term "creative" and provoked further questions of how to even deepen students understanding of what it means to be creative.

Studio Habits Ability Results

The Studio Habits Ability Results (Appendix B) was developed by the teacher-researcher to gauge the student's ability and performance in each of the five studio habits documented throughout the study. To gather the data, the teacher-researcher first developed a rubric to score the five studio habits mentioned in the previous chapter. They were *Develop Craft, Express, Reflect, Engage and Persist, and Stretch and Explore*. The rubric delineated a point scale of 0-2, 3-5, 6-8 and 9-10, (1 is lowest and 10 the highest in ability) for each of the studio habits being monitored in the study. At the end of each week throughout the study, the teacher-researcher charted each member of the focus group on the Studio Habits Ability Results sheet. The numbers compiled for each studio habit were recorded for individual focus group members and then were averaged and charted over the 6-week study period.

This instrument was useful to record weekly observations of the habits and technical art skills practiced by students that the teacher-researcher was focusing on that particular moment in the study. Nonetheless, certain limitations existed with this tool in that the subject of study, visual art, was vastly subjective and products could vary greatly

but be equally creative. In addition, the traits that were being observed took time to develop and some students had more background in visual arts practices than others. It was up to the teacher-researcher to gauge each student's ability or lack thereof in the mental habits being recorded. To represent these data visually gathered over the study period, a line graph was created.

As seen in Figure 13, there were slight increases in all five of the studio habits assessed over the course of the action research study. Specifically, the studio habit *Develop Craft* increased from an average of 7 points to 8.8 points. The studio habit *Engage and Persist* increased from an average of 8.3 points to 8.6 points. The studio habit *Stretch and Explore* increased from an average of 6.7 points to 7.6 points. The studio habit *Express* increased from an average of 6.7 points to 8.2 points. Lastly, the studio habit of *Reflect* increased from 4.4 points to 5.9 points.

The studio habit that increased the most was *Develop Craft* at an increase of 1.8 points. The studio habit of *Reflect* increased 1.5 points. The habit of *Express* increased 1.4 points. The studio habit *Stretch and Explore* had a slight increase of .9 points. The final studio habit of *Engage and Persist* increased .3 points, being the habit that increased the least amount during the study.

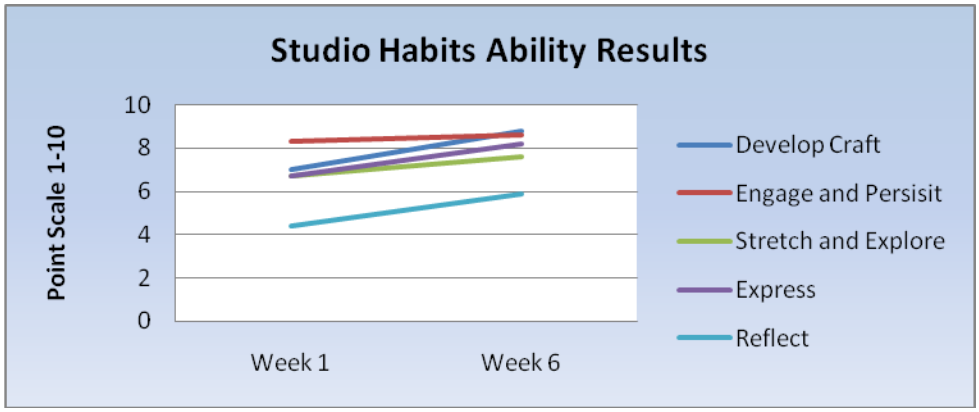


Figure 13. Growth of Studio Habits measured in action research study.

Creative Shape Project Comparison

The final instrument used in this action research study was an art project entitled *The Creative Shape* project (Appendix E). It was assigned twice to the student focus group, pre- and post-study. The before and after products (artworks) were compared and used as a means to determine if students developed creativity after being taught with the *Studio Thinking* framework.

The Creative Shape projects were analyzed by the teacher-researcher to provide data and measure possible growth of creativity in the student focus group. The basic idea behind these projects was to have students use their imagination (creativity) to develop an artwork from two given shapes. For each of the pre- and post-Creative Shape projects, the teacher-researcher first used the Studio Habits Ability Assessment to critique the works made by each of the 10 students in the focus group. Next, the teacher-researcher compared each student's work and noted outcomes of the increased or decreased studio habits demonstrated by the students in relation to this particular project. The specific habit that correlated directly with creativity was the studio habit of *Stretch and Explore*.

The teacher-researcher also critiqued individual student art works by asking the following three questions and recording her answers in note form.

1. How many elements of art did the student incorporate in his or her picture? The elements of art included color, line, shape, value, texture, space and form.
2. Did the student include any of the principles of design (balance, contrast, pattern, emphasis, unity, and harmony) in his or her picture?
3. Did the student use the basic shapes given to create a drawing with original thought?

The first question in the criteria referenced the use of the elements of art and principles of design. These fundamental concepts of art help determine a student's basic understanding of how to compose a work of art. Students first learn to recognize specific elements of art and then develop understanding of how to arrange these elements to create their own artistic expressions. The teaching of the elements and principles of design had been universally accepted in Western culture as the building blocks of art education (Hume, 2000).

The following 10 pages presented the pre- and post-Creative Shape Project Comparison which documented if creativity increased, stayed the same, or decreased by evaluating the two projects. Student critiques were labeled A-J to preserve anonymity and each page included teacher-researcher's notations on the three questions mentioned above. Also included on each page were images of the each student's pre- and post-Creative Shape Project. The pre-study art project in which students were given a blue dot and a red square was labeled Project one. The post-study art project which was the same

project but using different shapes; a purple triangle and a green square was labeled Project two. Lastly, the teacher-researcher documented if the projects demonstrated an increase in creativity, a decrease in creativity, or if creativity stayed the same.

Creative Shape Project Evaluation

Student A

Project 1
Elements of Art used: color, line, shape, value, texture Principles of Design used: balance, emphasis, Originality-(Moderate) The picture used blue dot for the center of a large flower in center of page, to the right is a smaller pumpkin. There is a red square sun at top right corner. Green grass is added at bottom of page. No background.

Project 2
Elements of Art used: color, line, texture, value, shape, and space Principles of Design used: harmony, balance, unity, emphasis Originality: (Moderate-High) Student A incorporated the given shapes and related them to other shapes in her drawing. Good use of descriptive details expresses an idea clearly.Innovative use of shapes and placement of objects in composition demonstrates creative thought.

Project 1

Project 2

Increased creativity from Project 1 to Project 2

Creative Shape Project Evaluation

Student B

Project 1

Elements of Art used: line, shape, color, space, value,

Principles of Design used: balance, emphasis,

Originality: (Moderate) This picture is of a knight riding a horse with a castle in the background. Innovative idea and good use of details express the theme successfully. Blue dot is the head of the knight, but red square did not relate as well to rest of picture.

Project 2

Elements of Art used: color, line, shape, space, form

Principles of Design used: balance, emphasis, unity

Originality: (High) This picture portrays a scene with three people (elves) and a house and mountains in the background. The shapes were used to make one of the elves and other people are drawn with similar shapes. Paper is utilized fully with snow falling and snow topped mountains

Project 1

Project 2

Increased creativity from Project 1 to Project 2

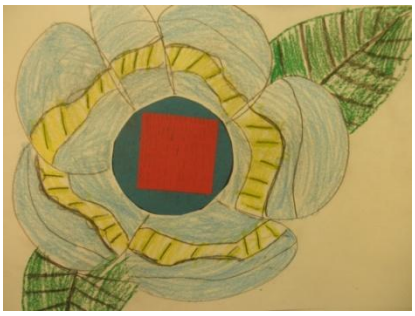
Creative Shape Project Comparison

Student C

Project 1
Elements of Art used: color, shape, line, value, Principles of Design used: emphasis, unity, balance, pattern Originality-(High) The composition is a large flower that fills the page. Blue dot and red square are used as center of flower. Nice use of line repetition in design of flower. Great use of colored pencils, solid careful coloring. Well thought out and creative

Project 2
Elements of Art used: color shape, line, Principles of Design used: balance, Originality: (Moderate-low) The drawing looks rushed. The use of shapes in a house was used many times by students. No details relate the house of the Santa figure. Background looks scribbles and sloppy.

Project 1



Project 2

Decreased creativity from Project 1 to Project 2

Creative Shape Project Evaluation

Student D

Project 1
Elements of Art used: line, shape, some use of color Principles of Design used: balance, Originality: (low) The picture depicts two individuals and a flower and the shapes were used for heads. There is no background and craftsmanship is poor, a previous picture was drawn and then erased. No relationship between shapes and theme of picture.

Project 2
Elements of Art used: color, line, shape, value, space Principles of Design used: balance, harmony, emphasis, Originality: (High) Picture depicts a holiday scene. The central image is a Christmas tree in a house. The shapes relate to other objects in the drawing and are placed in appropriate context with each other. Technical skill and design used is improved from project 1. Well thought out and demonstrates creative thought.

Project 1

Project 2

Increased creativity-from Project 1 to Project 2

Creative Shape Project Evaluation

Student E

Project 1

Elements of Art used: line, shape, color,

Principles of Design used: emphasis, balance

Originality: (Moderate) Bunny image is central to this picture, with flowers and a red square butterfly. Looks as though she did not finish coloring, but her craftsmanship is nicely done.

Project 2

Elements of Art used: line, shape, color, space

Principles of Design used: harmony, balance, unity, pattern

Originality: (High) Picture successfully expresses the Christmas theme. A large tree is depicted with lots of repeated details of circles and squares to represent ornaments and presents respectively. The triangle shape was used as an elf's hat and his position in the picture gives this work a fun element. Although tree is colored, rest of picture is unfinished.

Project 1

Project 2

Increased creativity from Project 1 to Project 2

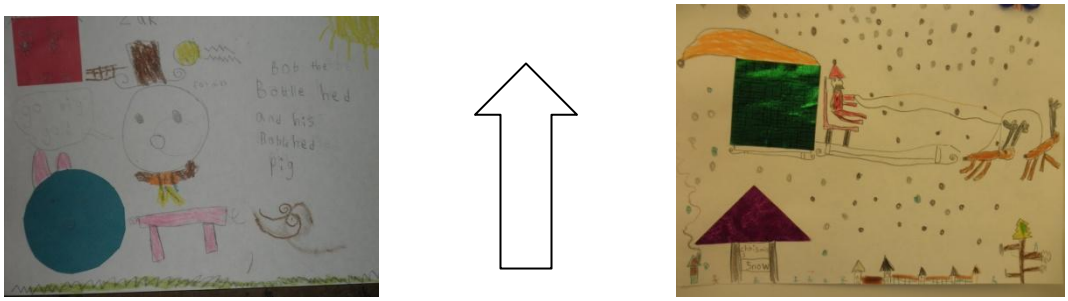
Creative Shape Project Evaluation

Student F

Project 1
Elements of Art used: color, line, shape Principles of Design used: no Originality: (low) The work has random placement of shapes and lines, no real relation between shapes and idea being expressed. D

Project 2
Elements of Art used: line, color, shape, space Principles of Design used: harmony, movement, balance, pattern Originality: (moderate-high) A visually pleasing picture with good use of detail to depict an idea. The purple square relates nicely to the roof tops of the village background. Improved technical drawing skill, as well as improved compositional skills.

Project 1 Project 2



Increased creativity from Project 1 to Project 2

Creative Shape Project Evaluation

Student G

Project 1
Elements of Art used: line, shape, color,
Principles of Design used: balance,
Originality-(low) The work portrays a person-blue dot as head, with a red square as sun. Technical craft of medium is high, student very engaged in creating a background. Not a lot of details, clothing isn't colored, just the background. Red square dies not relate to picture.

Project 2
Elements of Art used: line, shape, space, value, space
Principles of Design used: balance,
Originality: (Moderate) The picture has more details than first project. Shapes were used but to create a house which many students also did (three at same table). S anta's sleigh is colored but a pencil was used for background.

Project 1

Project2

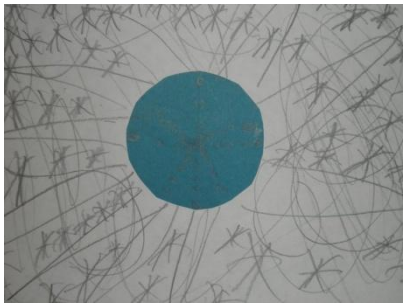
Creative Shape Project Evaluation

Student H

Project 1
Elements of Art used: line, shape Principles of Design used: emphasis, balance, pattern, movement Originality: (low) Did not follow instructions for the project. One shape was used, no red square. The design is abstract, incorporating the blue dot in center. The same design was used at this student's table. The use of line and pattern created good movement.

Project 2
Elements of Art used: color, line, shape, value Principles of Design used: pattern, balance, movement Originality: (moderate) Student used both shapes to create a distinct picture that relates well to composition. Picture expresses a distinct idea. Repetition of lines and dots create visual interest.

Project 1



Project 2

Increased creativity from Project 1 to Project 2

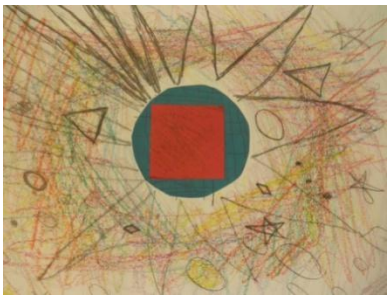
Creative Shape Project Evaluation

Student I

Project 1
Elements of Art used: line, color, shape, value, texture Principles of Design used: balance, movement, unity Originality: (Moderate) Use of layered colors was visually pleasing. Use of line in composition creates an explosion of color. Placement of blue dot and red square are copied from table mates, but incorporation of original thought was present

Project 2
Elements of Art used: line, color, shape Principles of Design used: movement Originality: (low-moderate) The placement of shapes were similar to those of other students. No relation of the shapes to the composition.

Project 1



Project 2

Decreased creativity fro Project 1 to Project 2

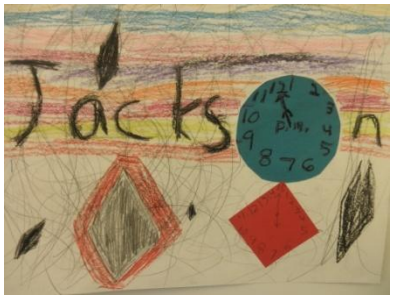
Creative Shape Project Evaluation

Student J

Project 1
Elements of Art used: line, color, shape, value, Principles of Design used: pattern, emphasis Originality: (Moderate) The picture incorporates student's name into design, uses shapes as clocks, nice use of patterned lines to create a background. Technical skill was medium level for student of this age.

Project 2
Elements of Art used: line, shape, color, Principles of Design used: balance, unity Originality: (Moderate) Student used name in picture again, more developed technical skill of medium. More details were added to express an idea.

Project 1



Project 2

Creativity did not increase or decrease, stayed the same.

Out of the 10 focus group students, seven students' artworks demonstrated growth in creativity, two students' works decreased in creativity, and one student demonstrated similar creativity in both the pre-and post-study artwork. As always, the teacher-researcher noted imperfections to the exact nature of how the mental habit of creativity was measured, in so far as the artworks were so individual. Some of the students worked slower and did not finish their pictures in the time given. This in itself may be an argument for creativity, as creative thought involves exploration, practice, trial and error, to the point of risk taking.

Limitations

In any study of a qualitative nature, but especially with the subject matter of the hypothesis of this thesis, "would implementing the visual arts framework, *Studio Thinking* (Hetland et al., 2007) foster and develop creativity in second grade students?" there are degrees of subjectivity that cannot be foreseen and the outcome of practices, observations and artworks that were open to interpretation and done by only one individual, the teacher-researcher. Also open to interpretation was the students' comprehension of lessons and projects taught throughout the study. Did the students have a clear conception of what the teacher was asking from them?

Other limitations of the study were the nature of the subjects and the economic status that enabled these students to attend a school in which visual arts were highly supported and occurred bi-weekly in all grade levels. This particular second grade class has had two years of visual arts education as an enrichment class in addition to their core curriculum. This experience would naturally lead to more background knowledge of

visual arts practices and concepts, then say an average 7 year-old in a public elementary school where no weekly art instruction is offered.

The teaching practices and projects assigned during the study were not of more or less difficultly from practices taught previous to the study. The study itself, took place relatively early in the school year, and so students were somewhat familiar with studio routines, but not completely competent in all mediums they were exposed to during the study. In fact, the assignments were given in first grade and in third grade simultaneous to the action research study and the teacher-researcher observed that projects given to second graders were grade level appropriate for second grade students. What was most significant about the teaching practices during the study was that specific concepts of the *Studio Thinking* framework (Hetland et al., 2007) were employed like the Reflection Wall. Sharing and art talk time was increased, done each week during the six week study versus once a month previous to study.

Summary

The synopsis of the qualitative data painted an intriguing portrait of the mental habits that students developed over the 6-week study. The multifaceted layers of this action research project demonstrated that teaching through the visual arts framework of *Studio Thinking* (Hetland et al., 2007) did increase specific mental habits, and in particular, the mental habit highlighted in this thesis, creativity.

Chapter Five will give a summation of overall findings and relate these findings back to the original problem statement and hypothesis proposed in Chapter One. The teacher-researcher will discuss how the intrinsic value of visual arts and discuss how arts

learning promoted life skills, one of such being creativity. The teacher-researcher will also delineate how school curriculum could be reformed in the primary grades to include engaging visual arts programs that foster creativity, a mental disposition essential for individual success in the 21st century and beyond.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION, DISCUSSION, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

All children are artists, the problem is how to remain an artist once he grows up.

Pablo Picasso

Fostering Five Studio Habits of Mind

Through the hours of research, observation and hands on experiences of creating with the participants of this project, there are obvious opportunities a visual arts instructor has in facilitating technical skills in mediums such as oil painting, printmaking, watercolor or ceramics. But what intrigued and kept me enthralled and passionate about teaching art was the mosaic of "life skills" that could be fostered through an arts curriculum. For this project, I associated "life skills" with the "eight studio habits of mind" that *Studio Thinking* (Hetland et al., 2007) described as what the visual arts teach. Of the eight studio habits defined, five studio habits were underscored- these particular habits being age appropriate for the cognitive development of seven year olds. Further narrowing the hypothesis, I chose to highlight the single mental habit of creativity to see if a studio-based visual arts curriculum could foster this desirable trait. As the creative practitioner of this action research study, I determined that teaching engaging visual arts curriculum through a studio-based framework, *Studio Thinking*, correlated with increased growth of the specific mental characteristic of creativity in second graders.

Creativity, in this study was linked to the noted development of the studio habit of *Stretch and Explore*. *Studio Thinking* defined this term as "learning to reach beyond one's capabilities, to explore playfully without a preconceived plan, and to embrace the opportunity to learn from mistakes" (Hetland et al., 2007, p. 6). This mental trait did increase slightly over the six week study period.

This discussion sketches out possible reasons for the increase. Some of the data from the Studio Habit Abilities Results pointed toward more distinct and obvious growth in individual areas, like that of *Develop Craft*. Other research gathered was more general in the information it portrayed, like that of the Pre- and Post Art Survey. The data the surveys provided were qualitative, and open to interpretation; however, they did accomplish the job of imparting common perceptions about art in school. The pre- and post-Creative Shape Project was yet another avenue to measure the growth of creativity. It did provide feedback of increased growth; conversely, using products to measure the mental attribute had its drawbacks. Mainly, artworks were subject to interpretation by only the teacher-researcher, and the critiques of the Creative Shape Project Comparison could be considered biased.

More vital contributors of growth came directly from using the teaching framework of *Studio Thinking* (Hetland et al., 2007). The prior experiences as an accomplished visual artist influenced how I organized my art classroom. Incorporating newer concepts of *Studio Thinking* was pivotal in interpreting and implementing a studio classroom structure for this study. The most significant change made was the addition of

the reflection wall to promote and increase share time, art talk, and group discussion by almost double of what students had participated in the past.

Although the reflection wall's primary use was to create an area in the studio classroom to show case second grade art and facilitate art talk, I seized the opportunity to utilize it in all grade levels I taught. Not only was it a convenient place to dry wet art, it became a source of inspiration and conversation for all of the students. Younger students enjoyed the venue of looking at older students work as well as sharing what they made with their classmates. The Kindergarten class loved their art talk time. This was a time set aside to share one's artwork with the class. For 5 year olds, there was never a lack of students who were willing to share what they had painted, drawn or sculpted. They were thrilled to explain their creations and went go to great extents to do so. This innate aspiration to communicate about their art was an example of *Reflect*, one of the five studio habits I studied throughout this project.

The significance of *Reflect*, in this study was that students learned how to better communicate objectively about their work, as well as evaluate themselves as artists. Through observation and field notes, students gained knowledge about art processes by viewing other's work and apply this knowledge to their own work. It also fostered group discussions, increasing time students spent evaluating their own work, which promoted individual learning. *Reflect* did increase the second most of all the studio habits examined in the six week study. The frequency of using the reflection wall increased the time students spent reflecting and discussing their own work, and could be linked closely to the growth of this trait in the second grade participants.

Of noted interest in regards to the reflection wall, and a possible subject of further research, was the age of when students became more conscious of themselves in relation to how good their artworks were, and hence how they perceived themselves as artists. Similar to Howard Gardner's idea of there being a "sensitive period" when students became more self conscious of themselves and their art works (Gardner, 1982), it was noted that there were distinct age differences in eagerness of students to share and talk about their work. Five year-olds were unabashed and reveled in the attention that art talk allowed them, 6 and 7 year-olds were still fairly excited and enthusiastic to share their works, yet some participants were not so forthcoming. Older students of about age 9 and up found it more challenging to reflect about their art in an objective way, becoming visibly self-conscience about their work, and only half of a class of 20 were eager to share.

Overall, the addition of the reflection wall in a studio classroom was a valuable tool in building student self confidence and skill in the art of evaluation, communication and reflection about art. I could also see this instrument utilized in other core class venues, sharing a book report, or presenting a social studio project. Promoting a culture of creative communication in an elementary classroom and the effects it could have on learning traditional subjects would be a yet another thesis topic of deeper investigation.

Beyond the reflection wall, art materials themselves easily enthralled my participants. Young children are inherently enthusiastic about exploring materials and methods presented by an elementary art teacher. Cutting paper, gluing shapes onto a page, drawing with colored markers, mixing paint colors were all abilities that would be

learned and exercised for children to become proficient enough to progress in creating more complex products. *Studio Thinking* (Hetland et al., 2007) referred to these technical skill sets as the mental habit of *Develop Craft*. This mental habit varied in individuals and motor skills, like cutting paper with scissors, and did not come instinctively to a child; it must be practiced again and again, and then over time they acquire mastery of that skill.

Impressively, the studio habit of *Develop Craft* increased the most during the six week study, which in actuality was a relatively short time frame for this type of skill development. Of note was the variety of skill levels within a group and how an art teacher must differentiate constantly to allow for skills to develop without reaching frustration levels in a student. Two components attributed to the increase of the *Develop Craft* skill were the length of projects, which allowed for more practice in a skill, and the prior knowledge and experience the participants had with the skills presented.

In early childhood education, *Develop Craft* had substantiated as a means for children to develop their natural curiosity and creative thinking skills. Most notable in this study with teaching art to young children was the natural desire they had to create. Recognized by experts as how children learned about their world, art making naturally fosters creativity. In fact, Howard Gardner, psychologist and author of *5 Minds for the Future* speaks boldly of children and creativity. Gardner states, "The mind of a five-year old, represents, in one sense, the height of creative powers" (Gardner, 2008, p. 84). As many other childhood educators had suggested in past research, there could be a strong connection of developing creativity through developing craft skills, and open ended

projects with engaging materials may vary well lay the basic foundation of exploration and developing the attribute of creativity in early childhood.

Working side by side with students in an art studio classroom, I have had opportunities to witness daily, weekly and yearly, the development of characteristics in young students that any parent would desire their child to possess. One such mental trait was self-discipline. Discipline of mind was associated to the ability to *Engage and Persist* in the *Studio Thinking* structure (Hetland et al., 2007). Described generally as commitment and follow through, *Engage and Persist* was defined as "to develop focus and other mental states conducive to working and persevering at art task" (Hetland et al., 2007). During the action research study the mental habit of *Engage and Persist* increased the least amount, yet I felt it was directly linked to the mental trait of creativity, which increased only slightly more than this habit did. From field observations, I noted several times that students who were able to engage and focus for longer periods of time, explored more possibilities in art making practices. There was more trial and error by students, and hence the learning from mistakes made along the way fostered creative thinking skills. As both these mental habits had been observed to take longer to internalize, one recommendation that came from this study would be a longitudinal study over a year or two investigating whether a correlation existed between student engagement and creativity.

The final mental trait studied in this thesis was *Express*, which increased substantially more than other traits in the study. This increase warrants a special look at this trait in relation to how it fostered creativity.

The trait of *Express* was defined by *Studio Thinking* as "learning to create works that convey an idea, a feeling, or a personal meaning" (Hetland et al., 2007, p. 6). Essentially, all humans from birth on learned how to communicate and verbal communication was only one of the ways in which this happen. Writing, singing, dancing, and drawing were all authentic means of communication and were practiced from the beginning of mankind. As previously noted, the studio habit *Express* increased almost as much as *Reflect*. Arguably, the mental habit of expression through visual arts further fosters all the other mental habits investigated, including creativity. Expressing a personal meaning gave students ownership of their work, which in turn, kept students engaged for longer periods of time. The longer students were engaged in the task allowed for more in practice of technical skills. The practice of technical skills eventually led to competence and confidence, which further directed students' exploration and innovation of materials and methods. I call it the wheel of creativity and observed it time and time again in the participants of the study.

In summary, a studio-based visual arts curriculum was the perfect pallet to mix colorful experiences upon. Art practices built confidence, self-regulation and ability to explore and take risks in a safe environment. The natural explorations of a child blossomed, and she was eager to touch, taste, hear, smell and see the world around her. A child's curious nature seemed an inherent trait and this belief was the key for fostering creativity. What if this inherent characteristic was continually cultivated through long term engaging experiences like ones that *Studio Thinking* (Hetland et al., 2007) offer? Would students carry that "love of learning" to other cognition in elementary curriculum?

Would students be more prepared by school to face a new and dramatically changing world?

Artist as Master and Teacher

Through qualitative and quantitative research, it was argued that engaging studio-based visual arts structure fostered cognitive knowledge and life skills. Conversely, the pedagogy of what a teacher teaches was only one factor of fostering creativity through curriculum. How a teacher teaches could be as instrumental in developing creativity in a student as what was being taught. This brought to light an interesting question about what made great teachers. Many qualities contribute to engaging educators. In the 21st century, it was more common for teachers to had previous jobs, coming into teaching as a second or third career, as was my experience. Previous to a career in art education, I was a practicing artist, working many angles of that occupation. Through this previous occupation, I learned many skills and life lessons that have paid dividends with my now advancing career as an art instructor.

The theoretical research in Chapter Two compared the modern art teacher to that of a master teacher and the students as apprentices. The idea of the master/apprentice relationship began in eras past with the master as teacher. The master was recognized in a field as being highly skilled technician of a specific trade. Apprentices (students) were typically sent to live with the master and where wholly engulfed in the learning process, for years at a time. This concept resonated with me in how teachers of enrichment curriculum like visual art, music and drama, could teach potential apprentices. Learning

the particular trade was the primary focus, yet secondary learning of "life skills" were also developed as well.

Recommendations

In addressing the original problem statement of the lack of engaging visual arts education in American elementary schools, one could look forward to transformations being made in prominent world views of infusing arts education into primary curriculum. In 2002, *Creative Partnerships* was introduced by Britain's government, and funding was provided "for practitioners of various art forms to work on projects in school". This initiative was to nourish a growing trend of developing creativity in primary education and "promote partnerships between artists and teachers, cultural institutions and schools" (Hall, Thomson, & Russel, 2007, p. 605).

Another model that could offer educational administrators ideas for reforming curriculum to include visual arts is the LEARNING THROUGH THE ARTS (LTTA) program. Initiated across lower British Columbia, this program was sponsored by the Royal Conservatory of Music. It encompassed the concept of creating collaborations of teachers and artists using professional development opportunities. In the program classroom teachers would:

> learn how to integrate the arts into all subject areas within the curriculum, and to provide children with opportunities to integrate the arts throughout their learning experiences. The program brings three different artists into a school to work with each teacher. Progressively over a three year period, classrooms are added so that

> at the end of three years the whole school is involved. The three year program was designed as an arts infusion initiative to integrate arts into a variety of curricular areas at all grade levels in participating schools (Kind, de Cosson, Irwin, & Grauer, 2007, p. 840)

In this 3-year pilot program, research was conducted in 3 out of 7 primary schools that took part. The studies investigated the challenges for visual arts education and explored the dual need for bringing artists and teachers together. Creating specific professional developments opportunities for both the artist and primary teacher was shown to have benefits for both the artist and teacher. A significant realization that came from this study, however, was that "Artists and teachers both need support in finding ways to develop artist selves and teacher selves" (Kind et al., 2007, p. 857).

Where does this support come from? A conscience change in perceptions of what visual arts can teach a child must be reached. Educational leaders and school administrators should value arts education and create sincere opportunities for teachers and artists alike. Ample research has proclaimed the validity of arts education, and the United States Department of Education passed federal laws mandating that visual arts be taught in public schools (2002). Lynch gave suggestions of how effective arts education might look; he wrote,

> For the arts to effect learning, however, their presence in school must be meaningful. Arts specialists must be present and respected by their colleagues; Sequential and grade level appropriate instruction and learning in all artistic disciplines must be comprehensive; potential community arts partnerships must

> be sought and utilized; and the arts must be incorporated into the educational mission. (Lynch, 2008, p. 3)

Ideally, employing proficient artists, musicians and professional actors who had an elementary teaching background in teaching visual arts, music and drama would be a way to bring artisans into schools, yet the availability of professionals who have the elementary teaching background is uncommon. Utilizing artist-in-residence programs was one way to bridge an ever deepening gap in the lack of arts education in primary schools. In America, more consistent and permanent placement of artist-in-residence type programs could facilitate the tried and true master/apprentice realtionship. Change is difficult but necessary for opening up new doors for growth. American education needs to transform into a new era of education: one that can assimilate to of globalization of the world, the new 21st century. A new curriculum, one that blends ideology of old and new must be found and institutionalized to foster the innovation and creativity, an essential human trait for a new generation.

References

Arts Education Partnership. (2002). *Critical links: Learning in the arts and student academic and social development*. Wahington, DC. 61. Retrived from http://www.aep-arts.org

Berg, B. L. (2004). Qualitative research methods for the social sciences. Boston: Allyn and Bacon

Catterall, J., & Peppler, K. (2007). Learning in the Visual Arts and the Worldviews of Young Children. *Cambridge Journal of Education*, 37, 543-560.

Center for Community Arts Partnerships. (2008). *AIMprint: New relationships in the arts and learning.* Chicago: Colombia College Chicago.

Christine Hall, P. T. (2007). Teaching like an artist: the pedagogic identities and practices of artisits in schools. *Brithish Journal of Sociology of Education*, 28, 605-619.

Craft, A. (2002). *Creativity in the Early Years: A Lifewide Foundation.* London: Continuum, 43.

Craft, A. (2005). *Creativity in School: Tensions and Dilemmas.* Abingdon: Routledge.

Jeffrey, B. & Craft, A. (2008). Teaching Creatively and Teaching for Creativity: Distinctions and Relationships. *Eductional Studis*, 30, 1.

Drew, W., & Rankin, B. (2004). Promoting Creativity for Life Using Open-Ended Materials. *Young Children*, 32-39.

Duffy, B. (2006). *Supporting creativity and imagination in the early years.* New York: Open University Press.

Eccles, J. & Wigfield, A. (2002). Motivational Beliefs, Values, and Goals. *Annual Review of Psychology*, 110-125.

Edwards, C. (2002). Three Aproaches from Europe: Waldorf, Montessori, and Reggio Emilia. *Early Childhood Research and Practice*, vol. 4.

Egan, K., Stout, M., & Takaya, K. (2007). *Teaching and learning outside the box:Inspiring imagination across the curriculum.* New York: Teacher's College Press.

Eisner, E. (n.d.). *ArtsEdge.* Standford University School of Education Alumni Email Newsletter. Retrieved April 15, 2009, from ArtsEdge: http://artsedge.kennedy-center.org/content/3789/

Eisner, E. (2002). The arts and the creation of the mind. New Haven and London: Yale University Press.

Feldman, D., Czikszentmihalyi, M., & Gardner, H. (1994). *Changing the world: A framework for the study of creatvity.* Wesport: Praeger.

Gardner, H. (1982). *Art, mind and brain. A cognitive approach to creativity.* BasicBooks a division of HarperCollins Publishers.

Gardner, H. (1990). Art education and human development. Los Angeles: The Getty Center for Education in the Arts.

Gardner, H. (2008). 5 minds for the future. Boston: Harvard Business Press.

Greene, M. (1995). *Releasing the Imagination: Essays on Education, the Arts, and Social Change.* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers.

Guilford, J. P. (1950). Creativity. *American Psychologist*, 445-454.

Hall, C., Thomson P., & Russell L. (2007). Teaching Like an Artist: The Pedagogic Identities and Practices of Artists in Schools. *British Journal of Sociology of Education.* 28, 605-619.

Hetland, L., Winner, E., Veenema, S., & Sheridan, K. (2007). *Studio thinking: the real benefits of visual arts ducation.* New York: Teachers College Press.

Hume, H. D. (2000). *A Survivial Kit for the Ementary/Middle School Art Teacher.* West Nyack: The Center for Applied Research in Education .

Jensen, E. (1998). Teaching with the brain in mind. Alexandia: Associaltion for Supervision and Curriculum Development.

Kind, S., de Cosson, A., Irwin, R., & Grauer, K. (2007). Artist-Teacher Parnterships in Learning: The In/Between Spaces of Artist-Teacher Professional Development. *Canadian Journal of Education,* 30, 840.

Knight, W., Keifer-Boud, K., & Amburgy, P. (2007). A Visual Culture: An approach to Art Education. *SchoolArts*, 36-39.

Kreuger, R. (1988). *Focus Groups: A pratical guide for applied research.* London: Sage.

Lynch, R. (2008). Creating a Brighter Workforce with the Arts. *School Administrator*, 65, 26-28.

Mitchell, D. (n.d.). *Waldorf Education: The Essential Phases of Child Development.* Retrieved July 1, 2009, from Why Waldorf Works: http://www.whywaldorfworks.org/02_W_Education/child_development.asp

National Panel Report. (2002). *Greater expectations: A new vision for learning as a nation goes to college.* Washington, DC: Association of American Colleges and Universities.

Perry, M. (2001). Western civilization: A brief history. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company.

Pink, D. (2005). *A whole new mind: Why right brainers will rule the future.* New York: Penguin Group.

Sloan, K., & Nathan, L. (2005). Art Transforms Education: A Boston Pilot School Puts Student Learning Center Stage. *New England Board of Higher Education*, 18-20.

United States Department of Education. (2002) *No Child Left Behind act.* Washington, DC

Whyslopes. (2007, December 28th). Retrieved April 5th, 2009, from whyslopes: Http://whyslopes.com/mathematics_education_essays_/0025%apprentice2%20viewpoint %2

APPENDIX A

STUDIO HABITS ABILITY ASSESSMENT

POINTS SCALE

	0-2 pts	3-5 pts	6-8 pts	9-10 pts
Develop Craft	Materials used inappropriately.	Needed some direction on proper use of tools and materials.	Used materials and tools well Needed little direction with use of tools	Used materials wisely and independently. Shows respect for materials and studio equipment.
Engage & Persist	Unable to focus on task at hand for longer than 5 minutes	Uses time productively for 5-10 minutes	Uses time productively for 10-20 minutes	Uses time productively for 20-30 minutes
Stretch & Explore	Copies others' ideas. No use of original thought.	Copies others' ideas but incorporates some use of originality into design.	Mostly uses original ideas. May "borrow" an idea to develop further an original design.	Consistently uses innovative ideas and demonstrates originality of design.
Express	Creates works that convey little or no personal meaning.	Creates works that somewhat convey an idea, a feeling, or a personal meaning.	Creates works that mostly convey an idea, a feeling, or a personal meaning	Consistently creates works that successfully convey an idea, a feeling, or a personal meaning.
Reflect	Little or no participation in art talks and critiques. Unable to talk about their own work with others about the art processes used.	Some participation in art talks and critiques. Is able to talk about their own work with others about the art processes used.	Good participation in art talks and critiques. Is able to talk about their own work with others about the art processes used.	Consistent participation in art talks and critiques. Readily thinks and talks with others about their own work and the art processes used.

APPENDIX B

STUDIO HABITS ABILITIES RESULTS SHEET

DC-Develop Craft-uses art tools, techniques and materials appropriately and neatly. Shows respect for art studio space

E & P-Engage and persist uses time/materials productively during independent work periods

SE-Stretch and Explore-Uses materials and ideas inventively; demonstrate originality in design and planning of artworks shows understanding of art elements and principles of design by incorporating into works.

EX-Express-creates works that convey an idea, a feeling or a personal meaning

REF-Reflect-participates in art talks and critiques; thinks and talks with others about their own art and the art process

Point scale 1-10,
1=lowest, 10=highest

Date/Week _____

Label	DC	E & P	SE	EX	REF	Name
A						
B						
C						
D						
E						
F						
G						
H						
I						
J						

APPENDIX C

PRE-STUDY ART SURVEY

NEMP Art Survey: Years 4 and 8: 2003

Instructions: Put a ring around the answer you want to choose
or write your answer on the line, or tick the boxes.

The teacher can help you write the answers.

1. **What subjects do you like best at school?** Some school subjects-science, math, reading writing, PE, health, technology, drama, music, dance and visual art

Best_____

Second best_____

Third best_____

2. **How much do you like doing art at school?**

heaps quite a lot some little

3. **How much do you think you learn about art at school?**

heaps quite a lot some little

4. **Would you like to do more art or less art at school?**

more about the same less

5. **How often does your class do really good things in art?**

heaps quite a lot sometimes never

6. **How often do you do these things in art at school?**

Circle which ones you have done.

Drawing	Carving	Photography / video
Making models/construction	Computer art	Collage
Working with clay	Painting	Print making
Working with fabrics/weaving	Group art making	

7. **How often do you look at art and talk about art at school?**

heaps quite a lot sometimes never

8. **How often do you plan and share ideas for making art at school?**

heaps quite a lot sometimes never

9. **How good do you think you are at art?**

great quite good not so good don't know

10**. How good does your teacher think you are at art?**

great quite good not so good don't know

11**. How good does your mum, dad, or caregiver think you are at art?**

great quite good not so good don't know

12. **How much do you like doing art things in your own time when you're not at school?**

heaps quite a lot sometimes never

13**. Do you do really good things in art in your own time when you're not at school?**

heaps quite a lot sometimes never

14. **What do you like doing most in art in your own time?**

15. **Do you want to keep learning about art when you grow up?**

yes maybe no

16. **Do you think you would make a good artist when you grow up?**

Yes maybe no

17. **What do you like most about doing art at school what makes art fun?**

18. **Where do you get to see art?**

most

second most

third most

APPENDIX D

POST-STUDY ART SURVEY

1. **What subjects do you like best at school?** Some school subjects--science, math, reading writing, PE, health, technology, drama, music, dance and visual art

   Best_____

   Second best_____

   Third best_____

2. **How much do you like doing art at school?**

   heaps quite a lot sometimes never

3. **How much do you think you learn about art at school?**

   heaps quite a lot sometimes never

4. **How often do you look at art and talk about art at school?**

   heaps quite a lot sometimes never

5. **How good do you think you are at art?**

   great quite good not so good don't know

6. **Do you want to keep learning about when you grow up?**

   yes maybe no

7. **How important do you doing art is?**

   very important quite important not so important

8. **Do you think learning about art helps people get jobs?**

   yes maybe no

APPENDIX E

CREATIVE SHAPE PROJECT

Lesson Title: Creative Shapes
Grade Level: all
Subject: Visual Art
Medium: Mixed media/collage and drawing
Elements of Art: Shape, Color and Line

Materials: 9 x 11 white sheet of drawing paper, pre cut circles and squares in different colors (one each for each student), glue, colored pencils and markers.
Colored pencils,

Objective: Students will use given materials to create an original design from their imagination.

Anticipatory Set: Read "Shapes," discuss names of various types of shapes. Play "I spy a shape" in the art room.

Activity: Students receive materials and are asked to use their imagination to create a picture using the two given shapes. The only requirement is that students incorporate

Summary: this is an open ended project to gauge students' ability to use creative thought process to create a picture. Do not show examples, allow students to use their imagination. Adaptations for older students: can give students varying shapes in varying colors

APPENDIX F

LAYERS OF A LANDSCAPE

Lesson Title: Layers of a Landscape
Grade Level: all with adaptations for younger grades
Subject: Visual Art
Medium: markers and colored pencils
Elements of Art: line, shape, color and space

Materials: 9.5 X 11 tracing paper enough for 3 per student, 9.5 X 11 drawing paper, colored pencils, pencils and erasers, colored markers, stapler, various pictures of landscapes

Objective:

1. Students will learn to look at a print or photograph and understand what the fore ground, middle ground and back ground is in a landscape.
2. Students will utilize paper and colored markers to create a picture of depth
3. Student will reflect upon the materials used to produce picture depth.

Anticipatory Set: Look at various landscape and cityscapes prints and photographs. Ask students questions, what do they see and what they notice about size of objects in the prints. Introduce the terms "perspective, foreground, middle ground, and background".

Activity:

Week 1: Preparing a Sketch
Each student receives a piece of white drawing paper. I ask students to divide their paper into thirds with 2 horizontal lines. To keep within the seasonal theme of autumn, students are asked to create a simple line drawing using pumpkins as the object in their fore ground. For clarification, the teacher demonstrates by drawing a pumpkin on the lowest third of her white paper. Students are then asked to add middle and background objects. Students complete their sketch by using colored pencils or markers to color their drawings.

Week 2: Students transfer their drawing to three layers of tracing paper. Art talk-students reflect on their sketches.
Prepare tracing paper by stapling three layers together--
Students are shown how to transfer (trace) the various layers of their sketch onto the three layers of tracing paper.

Week 3: Coloring their layers of a landscape/Art Talk-final project critique.

Adaptations: For younger students, use smaller size tracing paper and shorten length of independent work time.

APPENDIX G

SHAPES OUR HANDS CREATE PROJECT

Lesson Title: The Shapes Our Hands Create
Grade Level: all
Subject: Visual Art
Medium: Colored markers
Elements of Art: line, shape, color
Principles of Design: balance, unity, contrast

Materials: 9 x 11 white sheet of drawing paper, pencil and erasers, colored markers

Objectives: Students will use the shape of their hand to create a line design. Students will trace their hand three times in an overlapping design. Students will understand contrast and balance in a work. Students will use the markers to create solid shapes of color on their work.

Anticipatory set: Students each receive paper, pencil and eraser. On the white board, teacher demonstrates how to make a contour line of her hand. Students are all asked to draw one hand contour line on their paper.

Activity: Students are then asked to trace their hand a total of three times on the same paper, making sure that parts of the hand overlap. Students are then given the "rule" of this lesson- the same color cannot be next to itself in their picture. And extra challenge was given-students may choose to place one object in each hand that represents something they like to do.

APPENDIX H

HARVEST WREATH PROJECT

Lesson Title: Harvest Wreathes
Grade Level: all
Subject: Visual Art
Medium: Watercolor on coffee filters/collage
Elements of Art: color, shape
Principles of Design: balance, unity, contrast

Materials: industrial sized coffee filters, paintbrushes, liquid watercolors, paper plates-enough for one per child, raffia, scissors, glue sticks, hole punch

Objectives: Students understand what a wreath is and what shape it takes. Students will understand the technical skill of painting with liquid watercolors. Students will paint a coffee filter in autumn colors. Students will understand the processes of how to cut and glue leaf shapes out of painted coffee filter to make a harvest wreath.

Anticipatory set: Teacher shows students different kinds of wreathes and asks questions about what shape a wreath is. Teacher talks about how they will make their own harvest wreathe and what colors would be used to represent the harvest season. Next, teacher demonstrates liquid watercolor painting on a coffee filter.

Activity:

Week 1: Students practice technical skill with liquid watercolors and have an art talk about process with peers

Week 2: Students receive a paper plate and their painted coffee filters to cut out leaf shapes for their harvest wreaths. First, they cut a circle out on center of paper plate to make a base for their wreath. Students then cut and glue leaves onto paper plate, covering the plate so no white shows. They next punch a whole and tie raffia to make a bow and hanger for wreathes.