The ABSTRACT

Art education theory literature advocates for an integration of visual culture into art education curriculum as a way to make meaning from the visuals within a learner's everyday life. The Visual Culture Art Education (VCAE) model is one current paradigm designed to achieve this integration by bringing visual culture elements that students are familiar with on a daily basis (e.g., advertisements, television, contemporary art, political iconography) into the art education classroom. While support for VCAE in the art education theory literature has been steadily increasing, there remains weak empirical evidence addressing the extent of its implementation. This study sought to explore teacher perspectives surrounding visual culture in their own experiences, in the art classroom, and in the design of art education curriculum. This was addressed through an emergent qualitative analysis of five high school art teachers including how their art learning experiences influence their teaching practices, their understanding of the visual culture model of art education, and the exploration of the factors that impacted the creation of their art curriculum.

Findings include that teaching styles reflected teachers' own learning history, that instances of VCAE model implementation were infrequently observed, even then not with the intention of implementing the formal VCAE model, and that a disconnect from VCAE theory or practice left teachers with a lack of fluency of the VCAE model. In the absence of fluency with VCAE, traditional modes of art education curricula were employed instead. The results of this study provide recommendations for pre-service training programs, implications for future research surrounding the applications of

VCAE, and suggestions for increasing art teacher professional development to bridge the

gap between VCAE theory and wider practice.

APPLYING CURRICULAR FILTERS: A QUALITATIVE STUDY OF HIGH

SCHOOL VISUAL ART TEACHER PERSPECTIVES AND PRACTICE OF VISUAL

CULTURE ART EDUCATION IN THE ART CLASSROOM

By

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DISSERTATION

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Now lets go purify ourselves in the waters of Lake Minnetonka.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

A surge in art education theory and literature attests to the benefits and importance of incorporating visual culture into the art curriculum (Bolin & Blandy, 2003; Boughton, 2004; Carter, 2008; Darts, 2004; Duncum, 2001; Eisenhauer, 2006; Freedman, 2000, 2003; Kindler, 2003; Tavin, 2003; Wilson, 2003). Visual culture art education (VCAE) is one current model of art education that aims to incorporate postmodern visual artifacts by building curriculum based on imagery a student might be exposed to on a daily basis, ranging from advertisements, television, contemporary art, to political iconography. This method of teaching cultivates an inclusive, enhanced student experience emphasizing the making of meaning through a variety of art media. It combines the "art world and popular imagery on the basis of shared subject matter and themes," thus potentially democratizing the art learning experience (Duncum, 2001. p.107).

However, despite the fifteen plus years of discourse surrounding VCAE, findings are still unclear as to the degree of implementation of the VCAE model of teaching beyond case studies of singular lessons (Duncum, 2006; Markello, 2005; Pauly, 2005, Selig, 2009). Researchers and policymakers are faced with a question: Does this rapid growth in VCAE art education literature reflect what practicing visual art teachers are teaching in the art classroom? Additionally, is the discourse on visual culture in the curriculum a movement limited to academia or also a movement inclusive of the voice of classroom teachers? While Stewart (2012) notes that "the central concepts of visual culture art education are actually threads that have woven throughout the history of art education," it remains to be determined whether visual culture art education is similarly

woven into current high school art curriculum (p. 53). The central research problem then surrounds the following question: If recent theory suggests incorporating VCAE practice into classroom practice, is VCAE emerging as clearly evident in contemporary high school visual arts classrooms? Furthermore, if VCAE is not evident, what factors or models are privileged in the visual art classroom? The intent of this dissertation is to determine how or if visual culture is integrated into current teacher histories, professional development, classroom practices and curricula.

Visual Culture Art Education (VCAE) has been at the center of a discourse in art education since the 1990s. Multiple journals in art education have been dedicated to the themes of visual culture, in addition to many presentations on visual culture at the National Art Education Conference and publications on the subject. Hausman (2007) asserts that this "mounting interest in "visual culture" in our conferences and publications signals a desire to situate art instruction in the dynamics of present-day experience" (p. 318). Exposure, access to, and understanding of VCAE literature might be a factor in how teachers begin to negotiate their creation of lessons for the classroom. Another indicator might relate to curricular restrictions because of mandates imposed by the school district, administrators and policy makers. In addition, the expectation to yield measurable achievement scales, emphasizing for example technique and skill mastery or achievement of realistic art production might limit the implementation of VCAE. Further, prevailing perceptions of what college level art programs expect from incoming high school students may impact the application of the VCAE model in school curriculum and is another important element to investigate when looking at the application or implementation of the VCAE model in school curriculum.

Policy and standards for curriculum in art education are in place to reflect the needs of students and to assist educators in creating quality pedagogical strategies and instruction. In the National Art Education Association's (NAEA) "Commission on Art Education" (1977), the association frames its core beliefs at that point in time regarding the role of art education as follows: art education as a source of aesthetic experience; art education as a source of human understanding; art education as a means of developing critical consciousness; art education as a means of developing creative and flexible forms of thinking; art education as a means of helping students understand and appreciate art (pp. 36-42). These core beliefs continue to be the overarching principles that NAEA, and many art education theorists still base their policies, standards and curricular writings upon today (NAEA, 2010b). Nonetheless, an ongoing dialog should–and does–continue as to how well the policies, standards, and assessments fulfill the ultimate goals and implementation in art education (Freedman, 2011). The roles outlined for art education can read as inclusive of multiple models for instruction. With these qualities in mind, one of the purposes of this study is to examine if VCAE is not evident, what models and methods are privileged in the classroom. These relationships to visual culture art education will be further discussed in the literature review, and in the data chapters.

Visual culture supporters assert that the VCAE model can be used in the art education curricula to increase democratic, inclusive practice, enhance understanding of multiple art media, and foster critical thinking (Duncum 2003; Freedman, 2004; Wilson, 2003). Teaching and learning become more reciprocal in the classroom, where teachers and students can co-construct knowledge, and the definition of the teacher can be further expanded "to include images, objects, events, encounters, and so on" (Castro, 2012, p.

165). But how do teachers navigate and negotiate visual culture in their classrooms, art education literature and in their personal lives? Are teachers working within a reciprocal model of teaching with students?

Although the literature has identified many benefits (Duncum, 2002; Freedman, 2004; Hausman, 2007; Tavin, 2000) of the incorporation of VCAE into the classroom curriculum, concerns have been raised as to the degree of the successful implementation of VCAE. Carpenter (2011) writes, "as new media emerge in the common culture, we recommend that art educators adopt those media to facilitate deep understanding of visual culture and literacy" (p. 33). Despite a push within art education theory to include some form of visual culture learning that draws on student and teacher interactions with visual culture, teachers appear to struggle with how to apply, or overtly resist, the use of visual culture in their classrooms (Milbrandt, 2006; Smith, 2003, 2004; VanCamp, 2004; Silvers, 2004; Stankiewicz, 2004). The infiltration of visual culture theory in art classrooms may be further complicated by the fact that teachers are required to create curriculum that adheres to specific district and state standards that typically make no reference to our increasingly "visual culture" (Tavin, 2003).

In addition, a teacher's own cultural influences, budget constraints, material selection traditions and a confusing array of choices for facilitating arts learning all tend to play a role in mitigating the adoption of visual culture theory. LaPorte (2008) asserts that teachers tend to teach how they were taught and further posits, "if this was and still is true then, current curriculum content being taught in public schools should reflect the elements that most influenced the new teachers" (p. 359). These factors contribute to a series of decision-making moments that teachers must negotiate when creating

curriculum for their art classes—in effect, inserting and removing art content in their classrooms. Further, what are the present culturally determined roles of the art teacher within school discourse?

In order to better understand high school visual art teachers perspectives on visual culture in art education, further investigation into their relationship with and definitions of visual culture, educational background, curricular preferences, art media preferences, as well as observing their classrooms in action will help to unpack their feelings about visual culture and curricular choices that art teachers make. Although teachers have certain perspectives and understandings about visual culture, it is important to understand that their perspectives might not be generalizable to all high school visual art teachers. Collective voices of practicing high school visual art teachers in current art education literature are underrepresented (Duncum, 2006). Further investigation is warranted in order to learn more about these teachers' views on visual culture in the art classroom.

This study's purpose is to examine how high school art teachers make meaning of visual culture in their personal lives and in art education literature. I will also examine how or if visual culture is integrated into the art education curriculum, and how meaning derived from visual culture content either infiltrates or is filtered out of their pedagogical and curricular practices. This study also explores what factors were influential to the creation of high school visual arts curriculum along with examining curricular practices that are privileged in the art classroom.

To best address this purpose, this dissertation employed a multi-case study of five high school visual art teachers to investigate the degree of implementation of the VCAE model. I conducted a qualitative exploration of the culture in art classrooms over the

2011-2012 school year using participant observation, life history interviews, textual analysis and semi-structured interviews. This methodology provided a rich, descriptive dataset for each participant and presented a more detailed representation of the views of the five high school teachers' and their art classroom settings.

Ultimately, this study's aim is to investigate the extent of VCAE practice evident in the high school visual arts classroom, along with what instructional and curricular practices are privileged to examine the application of theory to practice. The analysis of this data set was guided by the following questions: How do high school art teachers understand VCAE? In what ways do teachers who choose VCAE integrate the model within standards of curriculum design? Is VCAE meaningful to teachers as a concept? Is VCAE theory being manifested in teacher pedagogies, and if so, how? What are the ways in which VCAE is presented via student initiative and in what ways do teachers take this up? What factors influence how teachers create curriculum in the art classroom? What kind of choices do students have in their art making experiences? Are students positioned to take initiative and if so, when does VCAE play a role? This study aims to investigate these questions and provide data to contribute to the understanding of how art teachers engage with visual culture in their classrooms.

In the following chapters, I will review the literature surrounding visual culture art education (VCAE) by defining the model, presenting examples of VCAE in the classroom, and acquainting the reader with arguments against the implementation of VCAE along with literature reviewing current art education policy, standards, assessment and curriculum guidelines. The last section of the literature review will explore the existence of the "School Art" style of art production as a deterring factor in the wider

adoption of VCAE practices in schools. Chapter 3 will outline this case study's qualitative methodology. Chapter 4 illustrates the participants' paths towards teaching, the formation of their art teacher identity, and how their art teacher training influences their teaching practice. Chapter 5 exhibits the varying degrees of implementation of VCAE in the participants' art classrooms through examining how the teachers' understand VCAE as a concept, examples of unintentional VCAE, and facilitate instances of democracy in the classroom in relation to the choices students were able to make with their art work. Chapter 6 outlines the factors that influence the creation of curriculum in the participants' art classrooms, focusing on the Elements and Principles of Art and Design, drawing, technology, assessment, the Scholastic Art awards and perceptions of college level art production. The final chapter concludes with the practical and theoretical implications of this study as well as provides recommendations for further research, pre-service teacher educators and programs, and practicing classroom teachers.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

The bodies of literature that informed this study are: 1) Visual Culture Art Education (VCAE) theory, and 2) contemporary art education practices—specifically the phenomenon of "School Art" (Bresler, 1998; Efland, 1976; Green & Kindseth, 2011) as manifested in policies, standards, and assessment guidelines—with regard to their potential to support, challenge and inform VCAE curriculum. By examining the perspectives that advocate or contest VCAE, the framework for VCAE implementation can be better understood. Policies, standards, assessment and curriculum literature in art education do not overtly exclude VCAE, allowing educators interested in VCAE to interpret and incorporate visual culture objects to fit their classroom's needs. Popovich (2006) writes that "a comprehensive, well designed approach to curriculum and assessment is fundamental to effective teaching and learning in the field of art education...exemplary curriculum and assessment is evolving, non-linear and responsive to students' interests and current events" (p. 6). Kraehe (2010) adds, "effective art education requires knowledge and skills about education, art and sociocultural influences on and within these fields" (p. 162).

Current studies in art education informed this study, but do not answer the proposed questions surrounding this research. Findings from this study will provide additional data to inform policy, standards, assessment and curriculum literature. By examining art education policy, standards, and curriculum, the relationship that VCAE might have within the structures that inform policy and practice can be explored—and what makes for acceptable practice in the art classroom will be clarified.

Defining Visual Culture Art Education

VCAE literature advocates a paradigm shift in art education. It aims to modify contemporary curriculum content by changing or expanding the images and objects used in art classroom instruction (Duncum, 2002; Freedman, 2004; Hausman, 2007; Tavin, 2000). The inclusion of cultural (popular, material, or visual) imagery can motivate students to examine, question, and engage with images that they encounter organically in everyday life. An image serves as an access point towards discussion, and a jumping off point for appropriation and/or the creation of new images. Visual art education, as espoused through Visual Culture Art Education (VCAE) literature, encourages teachers to expand their curricula to include the study of popular culture, folk traditions, media, and all things postmodern—while spending less time on more traditional art education, such as the study of Western masterpieces and familiar disciplines like drawing and painting (Efland, 2005). VCAE differs in that it expands the definition of art through the inclusion of a new canon of postmodern art artifacts in addition to the inclusion of anything we can see or encounter in our visual, human-made world. Mirzoeff (1999) suggests that visual culture throws a wrench in the textual world of traditional Western schooling where we can begin to piece together images to create meaning. Images, then, can become text. Visual culture in art education also involves examining and contesting traditional visual forms with new visual forms (Freedman, 2000; Gude, 2007; Tavin, 2003). The meaning of images can change within different contexts. We take these different contexts into consideration as different texts to achieve visual literacy, understanding, or new inquiry.

VCAE stems from postmodernist ideals. A postmodern education seeks to examine and critique cultural, social, political, and economic elements of the modern art world. For art education to be postmodern, an iconoclastic approach resembling VCAE is necessitated. Postmodernism is a reaction to Modernism's Western, traditional, dominant ideals. Where Modernism featured a "disdain for popular tastes, denial of pre-modernist styles, a disregard for non-western cultures, and a deferral to art critics," postmodernism embraces popular culture and upends Modernism's canonical rigidity, cultural bias and elitism (Clark, 1996, p. 124). Postmodernism also embraces the appropriation and reinterpretation of Modernist images—because in a postmodern world, the concept of originality is considered to be a fallacy (Barrett, 1997).

Postmodernism rejects Westernized high art/low art distinctions (for example, Western conceptions of high art as only the elite having access to museums; painting, architecture, and sculpture: Low art categorized for the masses; mass reproductions, kitsch, dollar-store sculptures, prints, crafts, artwork of children) and supports an inclusive, equalizing stance for viewing artwork, encouraging viewers to engage in participatory inquiry (Auger, 2000). Where Modernism argues that a "visual image should be able to speak for itself; that if it needs to be explained it is a failure," postmodernists argue that the relativism of verbal and visual communication makes a difference in the reading of an image (Anderson, 2003, p. 19). This opens up dialogue between the piece itself and the viewer, and not just for those with access to high art and technical art skills or training. This offers the opportunity for educators to delve into the democratic undercurrents of postmodernism, allowing for art objects to become more inclusive of a variety of media, cultures, and messages. Art thus becomes accessible to a

broader audience, not only to those who have direct access to art museums, galleries and cultural connections (Tavin, 2003).

Ideally, a postmodern art education aims to include:

(a) A concern with art that references individual and group experiences of the world, particularized by class, race, gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation, etc., and that questions the aesthetic as the end of art, and (b) A recognition of the need for new definitions of quality inclusive of art defined by the heterogeneity of multiple voices representing the current situation in the visual arts. (Hutchens and Suggs, 1997, p. 14)

Postmodernist philosophy and aesthetics provide the foundation that VCAE. Public spaces, advertisements, and places where people gather can become texts worth studying and analyzing, and students have been immersed in these visual images simply by growing up in American culture (Duncum, 2004; Tavin, 2003). The capacity to interpret the visual culture that is encountered in everyday experience has become a key to the understanding of the culture we live in. Canadian philosopher Charles Taylor (1976) suggests that there are multiple visual phenomena, that while not being text, are nonetheless analogous to text in that we treat them as the objects of interpretation by observing that:

Interpretation, in the sense relevant to hermeneutics, is an attempt to make clear, to make sense of an object of study. This object must, therefore, be a text, or a text-analogue, which in some way is confused, incomplete, cloudy, seemingly contradictory—in one way or another, unclear. The interpretation aims to bring to light an underlying coherence or sense. (p. 153)

Visual culture in art education "rests not so much in the object or image but in the processes or practices used to investigate how images are situated in social contexts of power and privilege" (Keifer-Boyd & Maitland-Gholson, 2007, p. xix). In one of the chapters at the outset of the text *Engaging Visual Culture* (Keifer-Boyd & Maitland-Gholson, 2007), the authors dedicate their text to "teachers and learners willing to engage seriously with the visual culture meanings vital to fostering social justice in a democratic society" (p. vii).

Inclusiveness for all students, regardless of ability, through the use of visual culture materials is a central facet to the model. VCAE is not based on modernist concepts of "aesthetic experience, artistic genius, or elements of principles of design…it's based on understanding cultural practices as ideology, social power, and constructed forms of knowledge" (Keifer-Boyd, Amburgy, & Knight, 2007, p. 19).

VCAE considers all kinds of imagery and visual phenomena in everyday life to be meaningful. Critical to VCAE teaching is the belief that students have the power to shape their own worlds through their beliefs. When teaching visual culture in the classroom, teachers must understand the power that visual culture holds in shaping our worlds (Darts, 2004; Keifer-Boyd et al., 2007). Theorists believe that art education and art educators have not prepared their students to be able to interpret the barrage of visual images in their everyday lives (Duncum, 2002; Efland, 2005; Freedman, 2000). Through VCAE, a student's viewing habits become more complex and critical.

The need for change is also a big motivator for VCAE advocates. Changing the world around you, changing the status quo, and deconstructing unexamined ideas are key concepts to this model (Darts, 2006; Keifer-Boyd & Maitland-Gholson, 2007). By

breaking down and analyzing images, we can begin to challenge the assumptions embedded within them, which engenders a sense of ownership and constructs new meaning. This is also true when students are engaging in their own art making. Students can construct meaning through appropriated imagery and create a new visual document. Artistic skill becomes less of a focus, while the democratic nature of image creation and the universal right to create and critique culture is emphasized (Smith 2003).

Ultimately, teachers are asked to promote an egalitarian inclusive practice in their classrooms, through dialogue and art making, in order to challenge the embedded messages within imagery. Freedman (2000) asserts:

> The visual arts are expanding not only in their forms, but in their influence through connections to the range of social issues, including issues not always thought of as social in character, such as ecology and conceptions of self. As a result, the visual arts have become fundamental to the cultural transformation of political discourse, social interaction, and cultural identity that characterizes the postmodern condition. (p. 1)

Within VCAE, students can generate discussions within a classroom by examining visual artifacts that come from students. In turn, teachers can also bring in images and objects of visual culture to prompt a dialogue. Teachers can influence students – and the students mutually influence their teacher – to create substantive engagement within a classroom. VCAE questions power relationships within an art classroom by problematizing (a) hierarchical notions about teachers and students, (b) who chooses which images to be significant, and (c) who controls the outcome of an art project or assignment (Wilson, 2005). VCAE posits that if students are not provided the

opportunity to take hold of and express their agency to shape the world, the world will shape students by immersing them with images. Systems of belief, values, and inherent stereotypes embedded within visual images need to be read and challenged in order to re-frame the messages that are being delivered to the viewer (Duncum, 2004; Freedman, 2003). This provides opportunities for students to exercise agency, to contribute their knowledge to the classroom dialogue, and to bring in learning objects that also changes the power structure within the art classroom (Wilson, 2003). Teachers are asked to encourage dialogue and to welcome a student's knowledge and insight as valuable information in constructing shared meaning.

VCAE stemmed from a postmodern interest in pluralism, which recognizes that knowledge can come in many forms (Eisner, 2001). A pluralist ideal allows for art educators to begin thinking about other ways to teach art and approach art education. Classroom learning prompts can thus come from a variety of sources. Wilson (2005) asserts that students can engage in visual culture through three "sites": firstly, the contexts outside the classroom, where students regularly engage on their own with visual culture texts through consumption and constructed understandings; secondly, through teacher-directed art classroom instruction; and thirdly, in a space that folds a student's experiential understanding of visual culture outside of the classroom within the context of the classroom space of learning in a blended pedagogical space. VCAE considers these three sites of learning and examines how these spaces are combined to make meaning through the process of making and looking at visual texts.

As an instructional model, VCAE makes the image and the exercise of making of meaning about imagery central throughout the examination of visual culture. VCAE

emphasizes the importance of critical empowerment and understanding as central to the paradigm (Duncum, 2002; Freedman, 2004; K. Tavin, 2000). We begin to reevaluate the meaning of imagery. Is an image just a piece of visual data, or does it also present values? We begin to question what makes a particular image a work of art, and how an image gets defined as art through varying sets of beliefs and values. We examine the consumption and production of images as core art making practice. VCAE looks beyond object-making, through a postmodern lens of interpretation, questioning the intention of the image, and thinking about what it is trying to tell us. We begin to critique imagery to decipher what an image means, and can look at an image with a critical perspective to identify sexism, classism, racism, etc. (Garoian & Gaudelius, 2004; Tavin, 2010). Freedman (2000) sums up the activity and outcome of VCAE practices as such:

> Students, teachers, artists and curriculum theorists take part in the intellectual field, which is interpreted and re-interpreted. The intellectual field is enabled through the knowledgeable creation and viewing of visual culture. It is the intersection of the fields of art and education and it shapes how people, including artists, think about art. In a sense, art produces curriculum as curriculum produces art. (p. 8)

VCAE literature challenges educators to re-think their approach to curriculum and teaching. It is evident that recent discourse on visual culture in art education has made an impact on the canon of literature within art education. Hurwitz and Day (2007) cite that in addition to creating an interest in the lives of students and teachers, visual culture literature has:

- Renewed an awareness of contemporary art and artists

- Highlighted the work of applied artists who create visual culture

- Raised awareness of the cultural environment that surrounds us

- Revived student-centered pedagogy practice

- Provided another approach to be able to connect with students' lived experiences (p.268-271).

Although these ideas are not new to the field of art education, the surge of visual culture art education literature offers another venue for educators to consider. Textbooks like Hurwitz and Day's (2007) is an example of how art education texts are modifying their content to include VCAE material for pedagogical consideration.

VCAE Theory to Practice

Art education practices vary from classroom to classroom. What a teacher decides to include or not include in a curriculum relies on multiple variables. However, a contemporary art education practice looks to include:

Thinking and conceptualization, building conceptual and technical skills simultaneously; utilizing current art strategies; appropriates or quotes images from visual culture and art; examining how art expresses cultural values and meanings and has meaning making as its primary objective. (Marshall, 2006, p. 17)

VCAE continues to build upon prior art paradigms as it encourages the study of "production, reception, and functions (of art) as well as technical and compositional aspects of the work (Anderson, 2003). Implementation of VCAE, however, is dependent on certain factors within a classroom.

Typically, a classroom is run by a teacher with some form of visual art or visual art education background who predetermines what kind of information or skill a class will learn during a particular project or assignment generally based on state standards or measurable outcomes. Teachers function under the belief that they are teaching the skills and information that are essential to learning in the classroom. Wilson (2005) corroborates, referencing "situations in which teachers tell students what to do, what to make, how to learn, what to believe," along with the observation that "in these instructional contexts students have little opportunity to act upon their own interests, their own knowledge, or their own ideas" (p. 19). However, within a VCAE framework, the teacher and student ideally become co-constructors of meaning. VCAE requires that the teacher take into consideration the notion of "pleasure" that a student may encounter from viewing or working with re-constructing visual images both inside and outside of the classroom (Duncum, 2009; Duncum, Freedman, & Tavin, 2010; Wilson, 2005).

Through the surge of VCAE literature in art education theory over the last decade, scholars have taken to writing texts and documents to help practitioners to engage in informed practice, and to understand how to implement VCAE into the classroom (Duncum, 2006; Freedman, 2003; Keifer-Boyd & Maitland-Gholson, 2007). One of the challenges in implementing VCAE is how to actually put it into practice. What does a VCAE lesson look like? Herrmann (2005) argues that teachers want written-out lesson plans exemplifying VCAE implementation, which are sparsely available. At the same time, a written-out lesson exemplar would go against the student-centered nature of exploring relationships to contemporary art and culture through a postmodernist lens. I will highlight briefly three texts: A typical textbook example, an instructional textbook

specific to engaging with visual culture in the art classroom, and a general art education textbook.

In the 2007 book by Keifer-Boyd and Maitland-Gholston, *Engaging Visual Culture*, the authors formulaically divide each chapter into the following sections: *Expose, Explode, Empower, Reflect*, thus centralizing VCAE's main curricular interests by guiding the reader through these properties. These chapters are intended to be jumping-off points for the creation of visual culture curricula.

One of the challenges with this textbook is that it assumes that readers have prior knowledge in some form of VCAE literature or visual culture. This is typical of VCAE textbooks aimed at curriculum creation. There are vignettes of lessons that the authors have used or experienced, but they are not written out lesson exemplars. The text is dense and requires the teacher to be willing to interpret the material. Despite these limitations, this text does provide some examples that one could import or translate into one's own curricula.

At the art education textbook level, Hurwitz and Day (2007) present a chapter that overviews the incorporation of visual culture in art education. This textbook is designed for pre-service art teachers and art education methods courses at the post-secondary level. The chapter offers up three approaches to incorporating visual culture in the classroom. The first approach in the chapter is a shift from *art education* to *visual culture art education*. This paradigm shift is described as the most radical, in that the field of art education would adopt a critical theory perspective that educates children based on political and social agenda. Critical theory based pedagogy seeks liberation and equality for all people; the process of making and creating art "offers participants a way to

construct knowledge, critically analyze an idea, and take action in the world" (Dewhurst, 2010. p. 6). Art becomes a subset of visual culture, making studying visual culture the top priority in a classroom. Students respond to visual culture as their meaning-making practice. Art making is not central to this approach; the end product could instead be a discussion, a sketch, an idea, etc. Concern has been expressed that the creative art-making element may be lost in this shift, blending art into the social studies discipline. However, the addition of the political element may decrease demand for art education in schools (Chapman, 2005; Sabol 2010). This approach requires a willingness to embrace the interdisciplinary nature of art and visual culture, however due to the lack of focus on a final art product may feel threatening to art teachers.

The second approach outlined by Hurwitz and Day (Hurwitz & Day, 2007) is a traditional art teaching approach coupled with the study of *applied artists and their art*. This approach informs students about the various approaches, types of artists and art they create. The use of traditional art materials is utilized, combined with a variety of artist exemplars, including contemporary artists. The text is quick to point out that the term "visual culture" does not exist in this approach because it assumes it is being incorporated into the middle and high school curriculum. The applied artists approach seems to differ from a traditional, formalist mode of instruction in that it could include studies in graphic design, photography, ceramics, illustration and other applied art or design practices. This model also encourages students to consider applied art careers, thus adding a practical spin to the curriculum.

The third approach places visual culture within the contemporary art canon, and focuses on both the fine arts and the applied arts within teaching and learning. Hurwitz

and Day (2007) call this approach a *comprehensive art education*. Visual culture is considered a central piece within a comprehensive art curriculum. The authors note that this mode is an "art education" separate from "visual culture art education" outlined in the text and from the beginning of this section. Central components to this approach suggest that:

- Teachers should note the aspects of visual culture that are central to art, omitting any visuals that are not related to art.

- When the non-art images are omitted, visual culture is recognized as an important component to the art realm.

- Contemporary art, which includes visual culture, receives heightened focus along with art from varied cultures, and past time periods[1].

With this approach, the everyday visual becomes irrelevant unless you can connect it to works of art to enhance its relevance. Compared to the first two models described in this section, this VCAE curriculum model offers the most flexibility since you can use and examine visual culture objects when necessary and relevant to a lesson's objective.

These three approaches are crucial to note when looking at a visual culture lesson, or case studies in literature or in a classroom, as the textbook specifically categorizes ways to interpret the theory into practice. The tone of the first approach presented in the chapter on visual culture in art education in Hurwitz and Day (2007) seems to view the first paradigm approach as too radical, which might sway the textbook reader away from such a pedagogical path. The second stresses the applied approach, implying that visual

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[1] Contemporary art is defined as art created after 1980, or the art created within in a viewer's lifespan (Hurwitz & Day, 2007, p. 290).

culture based artworks have an intended purpose (to design a CD cover, or to pursue a career path, etc.). The third approach, defined as comprehensive, only allows visual culture into the art classroom if the intent of the visual artifact is central to the art lesson at hand. All these methods read as teacher-centered approaches. It is unclear if that is the intent of the authors, but it is important to note when a teacher is considering a teaching approach incorporating visual culture into the curriculum. This Hurwitz and Day (2007) textbook is more plainly spoken, and could serve as a catalyst to transition to an *Engaging Visual Culture* type textbook for further investigation. *Engaging Visual Culture* assumes you have an interest, and are already engaging with visual culture in practice and are looking for enrichment.

Identifying a VCAE Based Lesson

When assessing what a VCAE lesson might look like, the possibilities vary. VCAE is often based more on conceptual practice rather than an end product of artwork. This is not to say that a VCAE lesson does not involve an end product; however according to certain VCAE definitions, students do not need to produce a work of art as a final outcome for a teacher to adhere to the guidelines of VCAE literature. VCAE involves collecting visual artifacts and then using those visual artifacts as catalysts for new ways of understanding art in the classroom (Barrett, 2003; Keifer-Boyd et al., 2007). Examples of student agency within a VCAE lesson are a strong marker in identifying whether a lesson is aligned with VCAE. Agency can be identified when students are at liberty to decide the content, subject matter, or outcomes of an art lesson (Wilson, 2005). VCAE looks to create "nuanced observers" who can de-construct how meaning is constructed with images (Gude, 2007, p. 13).

A central facet to VCAE is that the meaning made from a visual artifact is specific to a person's location and own culture. Marshall and Vashe (2008) support that "making connections is the basis of learning … when we encounter something new, we connect it to what we already know in order to make sense of it" (p. 7). Therefore dialogue becomes a central facet of VCAE in order to be able to describe and discuss a visual piece. An outcome of a discussion about an artwork is typically a sense of social reconstruction. Anderson (2003) furthers that dialogues within a classroom:

> Examine the given, socially centered concept that holds the position of social power; deconstructs the assumptions, values, and mores that lie at the heart of these privileged constructions in a quest to find contradictions, disjunctions, and dysfunctions; and thereby moves them out of power, centralizing instead values, mores and institutions that were previously peripheralized. (p. 20)

This can be demonstrated not only through dialogue between teacher and students, but can be visible through an artwork created through this dialogue.

Duncum (2006) notes that examples of lessons in visual culture in art education are broken down into three sub-sets: deconstruction, discussion and production. Deconstruction of visual culture is suggested as a good jumping off point to begin incorporating visual culture in the classroom. The aim is to deconstruct an image with semiotic analysis, where no artifact ("text") can signify or create meaning without an interpretant. This relationship between the sign, the interpretant, and the object reveals an ideological and cultural message. Deconstruction can then be followed with discussion, where one discusses the deconstructed image.

Duncum (2006) notes, that with these two pedagogical strategies accomplished you can either move on to production or end the lesson at discussion. Rather than discussing artistic technique, the production of an artwork reflects the student's lived experience with content and personal meaning. Artwork becomes more conceptual. Freedman (2003) argues that student artistic production should be an important outcome in a visual culture curriculum as it is important to a student's artistic identity formation, and that through the complex connections between making an image and viewing an image is where intellectual growth occurs.

A teacher's role also visibly shifts in the classroom that incorporates some mode of VCAE. Herrmann (2005) cites that:

> As the instructor, I suggested materials when a student told me what he or she wanted to do or I taught techniques as they became necessary for a student's work. The student's ideas came first, followed by an investigation to find a material or process that might best communicate their idea. (p. 148)

The process outlined above marks an important shift in instruction under the VCAE model, as the teaching of fine arts techniques occurs on an as-needed basis, rather than because a teacher, without student input or goals in mind, created a curriculum based on teaching techniques. Materials selection also becomes more flexible toward an art product outcome as materials take on personal meaning. Through varied visual styles and materials the classroom itself can become a site of critical production of culture through new media not widely addressed in today's art classroom (Eisenhauer, 2006).

VCAE can manifest in a classroom in a variety of ways. Some argue that the sheer inclusion of a visual culture artifact equates to a visual culture agenda (Smith,

2003). Inquiry-based instruction seems to be at the crux of this model and content is less clearly defined (Duncum, 2006). Many scholars view teaching and learning the Elements and Principles of art and design (line, shape, form, unity, etc.) as passé, better substituted by what is perceived as the more radical approach of allowing a student's idiosyncratic interests to guide instruction (Tavin & Toczydlowska, 2006). Ultimately, a visual culture centered curriculum must invite the imagery and artifacts of a student's community and culture, balanced with the interests of the political, social and economic visual climate of our world today.

Media Sites Documenting Visual Culture Learning

As far as lesson plans are concerned, it is fairly easy to do an Internet search for "art lessons." Although it may seem problematic to do a search for lessons based on VCAE, as best practices of VCAE would arise from interactions with students and their experiential encounters, practicing teachers still use the Internet to search for lesson ideas (Hermann, 2006). If you search "visual culture art lessons," the results are limited. There are many places a teacher can find information and inspiration for art lessons: textbooks, trade publications (ex. *School Arts*, *Arts & Activities*) or on the Internet (sites such as Spiral Art Education, Art21, Amaco, Artsedge, Artsonia, IncredibleArt, etc.). However, the quality of a lesson is largely dependent upon a teacher's personal pedagogical philosophy and skill at implementation. Finding a lesson plan that is categorized as VCAE is more challenging, and seemingly non-existent. Finding a lesson that incorporates a visual culture artifact is slightly easier; however, a teacher would need to understand the principles of VCAE when using a lesson plan found online. More likely, you will find a scholarly article that includes a case study of a lesson that incorporates

visual culture and a discussion of media used during a lesson. Here I focus on media sites used for visual culture learning.

When incorporating some form of VCAE into the classroom, the content of instruction inherently becomes more critical. Eisenhauer (2006) discusses the implications for VCAE within the classroom, asking the following critical questions:

> What objects and images are deemed important to art curriculum? How do we construct the categories of art, popular culture and the visual itself? What are the implications of blurring and complicating such normative categories? In what ways might the art classroom become a site through which students engage in raising critical questions about their world and everyday experiences and what is the importance of doing so? (p. 155)

Students are encouraged to critique what they see, and the teaching of technique becomes less of the focus of instruction. The questions Eisenhauer asks become jumping off points for classroom application.

Gude (2007) provides an example of visual culture studies based on the notion of bricolage, where students re-appropriate images and make meaning out of the images in their own life. The bricolage project's goal was to empower students to create alternate meaning by making "postmodern postcards." (p. 13). She cites that students would take advertisements that were available within their local communities and re-create a visual record of their interpretation of the advertisement as it may pertain to their lives. Bricolage with multiple media becomes an important concept in VCAE, and new media, beyond traditional drawing, painting, etc., plays a central role (Carpenter & Cifuentes,

2011). Computers, photography, installations, and performance are incorporated, and in some cases replace traditional fine art media.

Examining and deconstructing political advertisements, political figures, political imagery, and political campaigns are part of examining visual culture in art education (Chung, 2006; Cummings, 2006; Darts, Tavin, Sweeny, & Derby, 2008; Pauly, 2005; Tavin & Toczydlowska, 2006). Imagining what a qualified elected official, or ideal political climate might look like to a student requires research, appropriation of images, and exposure to contemporary art and artists. These lessons require students to exercise self-reflexive inquiry, as they are encouraged to examine their own beliefs. The lessons also can be challenging due to the sensitive political nature of an image and the discussion that follows. Pauly (2005) discusses her experience when she saw the infamous photographs of Abu Ghraib prison and "reacted strongly to the images and made connections to other experiences, thoughts, memories, histories, and feelings during this media event" (p. 161). The teacher has to be reflexive, too, which could prove challenging depending on how they were trained.

Engaging with personal visual artifacts and examining visual encounters within a student's life are part of examining visual culture in the classroom (Darts, 2006; Freedman, 2003; Wightman, 2006). Rebecca Plummer-Rohloff (2006) led her students in a form of "hyper-texting" where a simple image (an oak tree) became a jumping off point for other images. Students responded to the image of the oak tree with personal images that it elicited such as childhood memories, the weeping willow tree from Harry Potter, etc. (p. 66). Via this exercise students began to collect and categorize their images and were able to analyze the underlying messages regarding gender, beauty, power, desire

and success. This process of decoding and categorizing images allowed the students to view their visual worlds with a fresh perspective on their viewing habits and assumptions. This also enabled her students to better understand culture production and "plant the seeds for a socially-just and transformative consciousness" (Plummer-Rohloff, 2006. p.71).

In VCAE the self-portrait is a key place for further reflexivity, expression and examination. Identity, representation, and cultural narratives are central concepts when approaching a visual culture informed self-portrait (Amburgy, Knight, & Keifer-Boyd, 2006; Cummings, 2006; Rolling, 2009). For example, persistent gender stereotypes are learned partly through contemporary imagery. VCAE allows the exploration of these gender stereotypes to create a place for youth to deconstruct and examine their perceived identities through icons (Markello, 2005; Selig, 2009). Online media are often venues for analysis of identity formation and construction (Han, 2011; Liao, 2008). Social networking sites such as Facebook give users the ability to edit and control the presentation of their life stories; and fantasy realms such as *Second Life* allow users to create avatars to represent themselves via animated characters.

With VCAE, music videos also become sites for learning (Chung, 2007; Taylor, 2007). Approaching music videos in the art classroom requires an "examination of the social, political, and ideological contextual constructs of the video, artist, director and the music video genre" (Taylor, 2007, p. 233). Interaction with music videos allows students to reflect on the meanings within a music video in order to create in the art classroom. Students analyze the marketing of a music artist, the meaning behind the artist imagery, contexts of stardom, and the cultural meanings embedded within the music video.

Students then become ethnographers, developing research questions and conducting background investigations into a music video, through a serious of questions asked by the teacher and students (Taylor, 2007). The outcome of this research arrives in the form of "student led- presentations, research papers, web page constructions, video recreation, collage, construction of a personal star text as an avatar, video construction or traditional self portraits" that include a reflective visual process through student work (Taylor, 2007, p. 243).

Ultimately, all forms of art can be re-examined under VCAE (Taylor & Ballengee-Morris, 2003; Trafí-Prats, 2009). Pop stars like Britney Spears or Kanye West can be examined through the lens of the creation or construction of pop icons. Students can study their rise and fall in popularity, and explore the star's appropriation or creation of imagery. Through VCAE, comic books or cartoons become worth studying and analyzing (Tavin, 2005; Ulbricht, 2005).

Environmental concerns are also important topics within a VCAE lesson focusing on cultural and social dislocation (Hicks & King, 2007). Hurricane Katrina, the tornados in Joplin, Mississippi, and the earthquakes in Japan become subjects of action and discussion within the art room. Visual communication and street art such as graffiti, public art, and sticker bombing also provide insights to communities (Keys, 2008). Through the communal process of existing within a society, community or local ecology, students can begin to examine how people cope and communicate.

To facilitate visual culture literature, courses are also developed for teachers in training or for professional development that study visual culture (Keifer-Boyd et al., 2007; Pauly, 2003). During my own studies at Syracuse University, I took a Visual

Culture course where we examined reading imagery and re-creating and re-appropriating imagery for our own research. As an instructor of the Methods of Art Education course at Syracuse University we frequently included readings based on VCAE and democratic classrooms into the lesson plans and required students to engage with VCAE in some way. Penn State faculty members Keifer-Boyd, Amburgy, & Knight taught a professional development course at Pennsylvania State University that developed VCAE curriculum for art educators addressing the issues of power and privilege (Keifer-Boyd et al., 2007; Keifer-Boyd & Maitland-Gholson, 2007). Additionally, Keifer-Boyd et al. simultaneously taught an online class called *Pre-K-12 Art Teachers Exploration into Visual Culture* in four different states. Some universities offer Visual Culture studies within art education departments as well as visual culture units in art education courses. Tavin, Kushins and Elniski (2007) criticize the lack of coverage of contemporary visual culture in art teacher preparation programs, but there is evidence of visual culture being taught in pre-service programs (Duncum, 2000; Luehrman, M & Unrath,2006; Campbell, 2006; Wang, 2010). However there is nothing that clearly defines a pre-service teacher preparation curriculum for VCAE, or how art education teacher preparation candidates can make meaning from a visual culture based curricula in their novice practices.

Arguments Against VCAE

Most of these texts or examples reflect educators who are promoting the incorporation of visual culture through visual artifacts, discussion and course curriculum. There is some resistance, however, to the implementation of a visual culture model.

One argument cites the disconnect between the theory and practice within the translation of the model's application (Herrmann, 2005). Yvonne Gaudelius (2000)

outlines some major curricular battles that teachers have to overcome in implementing the visual culture model: Modernist training and formalism, Western art history, outdated art teacher practice coupled with lack of professional development, poor licensure and curriculum guidelines, poor administrators and public officials, and inappropriate advance placement content and college entrance portfolios (Gaudelius, p. 130). In addition to these hurdles, teachers have to be familiar with current visual culture, which poses one of the larger challenges for teachers: the ability to connect current content to their student's interests. Teachers tend to teach the way they learned art in school when they were students (Heise, 2004).

Wilson (2003) also suggests that re-structuring curricula to accept contemporary visual works can be daunting for teachers who already have curricula set in place that is based on a traditional canon of visual arts exemplars. Clark (1996) believes that "preoccupied with efforts to stave off assaults from technophiles and educrats fixated on issues of curricular accountability and budgetary efficiency, art teachers have been simply too busy to notice the arrival of postmodern art" (p. 65). In addition, many teachers may have the opinion that teaching visual and popular culture is too ephemeral and not as traditionally aesthetically pleasing as established art forms already deemed worthwhile of study. Another factor making an instructor reluctant to use visual culture is likely the conception that art has to be product based and assessment driven. Some teachers plainly do not feel comfortable incorporating visual culture into their curriculum due to a lack of experience with fostering visual culture encounters as a means of visual arts learning (Heise, 2004; Silvers, 2004). Some scholars feel that teachers may fear

VCAE because it negates the kind of art learning experiences that they might have had and is not viewed as legitimate art learning (Heise, 2004; K. Tavin, 2005).

New media and new postmodern theories advocate the use of visual culture in the art classroom, but simultaneously leave a sense of ambiguity about what pedagogy is the most sound (Heise, 2004). Facets of VCAE blend into other art education models as well, including multiculturalism, and constructivism where students are also asked to contribute to their own learning process and teachers act as facilitators in constructing art knowledge (Hesser, 2009). Many teachers are not exposed to visual culture as a relevancy in their training, and in addition to longstanding traditions of formalism in art education, parental expectations as well as administrative expectations make VCAE a difficult shift for teachers to make (Duncum, 2002; Silvers, 2004). Duncum further postulates that just as the paradigmatic shift into the DBAE[2] model was slow moving, the movement towards VCAE will also be slow moving. Exposure to the VCAE model of teaching through a teacher's education or via professional development could result in the use of the VCAE paradigm in practice. Villaneuve (2003) discusses the reluctance of teachers to accept the paradigm shift towards VCAE, but believes that it is happening, albeit slowly.

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[2] DBAE (Disciplined Based Art Education), conceptualized by art educator Manuel Barkan in the 1960's and supported by the Getty Center for Education in the Arts, sought to improve the status and quality of the visual arts by highlighting the technical process of art-making through four disciplines: art history, art making, criticism and aesthetics. This model is often criticized (by VCAE supporters) for its attention to Modernity and its focusing on the artists and ideals of the past (Allison & Hausman, 1998).

Texts on VCAE implementation may foster a disconnect for practicing teachers who want to implement this model. The language is less formal and more iconoclastic than typical lessons that one might find in *School Arts*, an example of a teacher resource which presents project-oriented lesson plans to teachers in a glossy illustrated format. Although teachers want to incorporate new theory into their practice, they simply do not have enough time, resources or energy to sift through the reading on VCAE (Keifer-Boyd & Maitland-Gholson, 2007, p. iv).

Duncum (2010) confirmed that current VCAE theory does not always directly address what is happening in the classroom. Freedman (2010) corroborated this concern by suggesting that teachers do not know how to apply VCAE in the classroom. As mentioned previously, there is no lock-step example of a VCAE lesson plan to follow, which may turn a teacher away from implementation because they can't understand what a VCAE lesson might look like. Students may meet the inclusion of visual culture with resistance due to the technique learning and studio nature of prior art classes (Plummer-Rohloff, 2006). Teachers and students learn that in an art class, there is a final art product that can be displayed on a wall, in a gallery, etc. Just having a discussion about visual culture might be resisted without thoughtful, well-planned instructional scaffolding.

Visual culture studies often runs into criticism for its broad scope (Stankiewicz, 2004) and its lack of practicality compared to other traditional academic disciplines—as a result, it is sometimes viewed as a secondary learning tool rather than a serious discipline (Mirzoeff, 1999). Smith (2003) argues that VCAE theories are out to abandon all other art education paradigms, and that they focus on an ugly side of art and imagery rather

than on beauty. With the inclusion of contemporary art and visual artifacts, theorists worry about what is being left out within a VCAE centered curriculum.

Efland (2005) states that VCAE is trying to undermine the study of painting and drawing and art history's masters in favor of studying imagery within visual culture. Peter Smith (2003) argues that the incorporation of visual culture in art education dismisses the core of art education, which is art production. He also argues, "all VCAE seems to do is replace formalist fine arts proceduralism with socio-politico-economic analytical proceduralism" (Smith, 2003, p. 6). This may be true; however, with more praxis-based research we might be able to have a clearer idea of what VCAE ultimately looks like in actual classrooms. The literature does indeed seem contradictory on the question of artistic production. While citing that dialogue is central and in some cases the whole of a lesson, there is clear evidence of artistic production.

In one review of VCAE literature, the reviewer felt that VCAE was very elitist, due to its theory-heavy foundation (Lankford & Scheffer, 2004). Smith (2003) also makes this claim, due to the know-it-all nature of the theory. Another argument against VCAE contends that its focus on dialogue rather than production makes it devoid of expressive meaning, as it strays from the art studio. Dorn (2005) even goes so far as to call the movement "The End of Art in Education."

Recently in the *Wall Street Journal*, Michelle Marder Kamhi (2010), criticized the National Association of Art Education for supporting visual culture art education and social justice based art teaching practice, branding the movement a "political assault on art education" (para 1). Among her many claims, Kamhi argues that the inclusion of visual culture and social justice content are too left-leaning, political, and not focused on

art. She furthers, "Parents and others who want to keep the visual arts in K-12 education under challenging economic conditions should let Congress and the NAEA (not to mention their local schools) know that they support genuine art education—but reject the 'social justice' and 'visual culture' models of spurious art and misguided politicization" (para 14). This assumption becomes problematic as many districts, schools, and teachers approach many different pedagogical strategies. Instead, she argues that politics in the art classroom could be addressed by "emulating works" of art, such as familiar twentieth century Spanish anti-fascist paintings. Notably, these works depict brutal violence by the fascist regime, offer little ambiguity as to with whom the audience sympathizes, and are unlikely to generate critical conversation or utilize multiple student perspectives. It is important to note that Kamhi's definition of genuine art education encompasses the learning of traditional art skills and materials, excluding new media. Additionally, it is necessary to note that this opinion was published in a widely regarded conserved-leaning newspaper and not in a scholarly, peer-reviewed journal.

School Art

The institutionalized visual arts learning model known as School Art is a phenomenon has been documented for more than half a century (Bresler, 1998). School Art, generally speaking, is the production of artwork in a school setting where the art products of the students look similar in style, materials, and in "personal" expression. Typically thought of as a prescribed art lesson, the art products visually demonstrate to the viewer a similarity in "materials, technique and exhibition style…the lack of guidance to explore, to invest themselves in creating something meaningful…reflecting few themes of personal relevance, few indications of exploration of ideas, moods or feelings"

(Bresler, 1998, p. 4). Efland (1976) reminds us that School Art is far from the only form of institutionalized, stylized art: "there is church art and corporate art and there is a museum art" (p. 38). Wilson (1974) furthers the critique of School Art products, observing how "conventional themes and materials are fed to children which result in school art with the proper expected look" (pp. 5-6). The School Art model is questioned by scholars in art education theory, yet is still a dominant style in today's visual art classroom.

Certain materials and art products are omnipresent in the K-12 art classroom: tempera paint, tissue collages, masks, *papier-mâché*, hanging mobiles, markers, crayons, etc. (Efland, 1976). Cultural symbols from holidays like Valentine's Day, Halloween, and Thanksgiving are also hot topics for art making in schools. Art is expected to be fun and art teachers are expected to facilitate productive activity, broadly speaking. The art room is viewed as a space devoid of rigor and is referred to a "special" class, and not an academic discipline. Manual activity free of "cognitive strain," colorful art products which are easily read by the viewer are central facets of the School Art style (Efland, 1976). Postmodern art and responses are viewed as trivial in contrast to replicating the style of works by master artists like Renoir, Picasso and Michelangelo.

Clearly, the pedagogy behind School Art lies in stark contrast to the theory behind VCAE. While the School Art movement aspires to produce tightly stylized pieces, VCAE promotes postmodernism and rejects stylization to focus on the meaning of artworks. While School Art today might not be as prevalent or conspicuous in the art classroom as when Efland (1976) described the phenomenon, School Art's importance nonetheless remains as a cultural artifact of the American art classroom. It remains unclear exactly

why School Art (and perhaps its more inconspicuous descendants) remains in use rather than alternatives like VCAE: Is it believed to be good practice? Are contemporary art teachers simply drawing from their own education, when School Art was part of their training? Or is the School Art model so widely used because its rigidity and predictability make it far easier to implement than methods that rely on student interests and student voices? If so, what is the impact of School Art on the implementation of VCAE?

School Art is believed to enhance the act of learning, and to demonstrate the expertise of the student and teacher in a style that is easy on the eyes and easy to understand. Central to the School Art model is the notion that different art styles and projects will deal with different themes and interests surrounding the social functions of the school community. School Art ultimately communicates to its audience (classmates, parents, administrators, community) a set of shared art symbols and marks that are (presumably) supposed to reflect a set of educational beliefs, techniques and technical disciplines that are valued within the school's community. However, Efland (1976) furthers that this may seem paradoxical in practice as,

> The typical art program operates in a school where students are regimented into social roles required by society. If the school's latent functions are repressive in character, what effect does this have on the art program? It's my speculation that the art program's manifest functions are subverted by these pressures. As the pressure builds, art comes to be regarded as "time off for good behavior" or as therapy. (p. 40)

Schools present themselves as spaces for democratic learning, but in reality conform themselves to an industrial model where a product is expected to be regularly churned out. This function is still evident today.

School Art style also functions as a way for a school to look good, by placing these vivid works of art on the school walls as a decorative strategy. At first glance the artwork on the walls gives the viewer a feeling of artistic expression and technical mastery; however, with closer inspection the repressive nature of School Art becomes more apparent. The notion of the art teacher as a facilitator of creative practice is widely accepted as a central feature to the importance of the visual arts. But are teachers really supporting a creative learning space? Bresler (1998) shares that "creativity comes out of explicit probing into meaningful issues, and meaningful issues can be emotional and painful…it involves problem solving as well as problem setting which requires personal investment and ownership" (p. 4). Without authentically creative experiences, personal expression, and the agency to attempt and re-attempt, development of understanding and personal interpretation are stifled. However, with schools emphasizing the importance of evaluating individual student performance, the prescriptive nature of the school art style provides a gauge that can appear to easily quantify the success of a student's artwork (Green & Kindseth, 2011). The adherence to the School Art style becomes problematic in the visual arts classroom considering the implementation of VCAE because it works in opposition of the meaning-making approach to art over the creation of a standardized art product.

Policy, Standards, Assessment, and Curriculum in Art Education

Although a growing sentiment in the academic literature is supportive for integrating VCAE findings into school art curricula, this effort has not been facilitated by policy, standards, or assessment practices in art education. The No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act of 2001 provided a mandate to improve school performance by reducing the funding of schools that do not meet performance goals in math, science, and reading, while not considering art. Consequently, Grey (2010) reports that since 2007, schools have cut 71% of their instructional time in areas that are not addressed in NCLB, including art, to maximize instructional time for math, science, and reading. A common concern among advocates for the arts, like NAEA, and voiced here by Chapman (2007), is that NCLB's curricular focus on math, reading, and science neglects art and serves to "impose a discipline-based curriculum model on schools with a clear disdain for social studies and other interdisciplinary approaches to teaching and learning" (p. 25).

It remains unclear how the reaction to policy decisions ultimately resulting in decreased art education funding has shifted attitudes towards various art education models. The shift in focus towards math, science and reading has broadly engendered the notion that the arts must, or should, support the other disciplines, help improve test scores, or help other disciplines by incorporating math, science, and reading into a lesson (Chapman, 2005; Sabol, 2010; Winner, et. al. 2007; Hetland & Winner, 2007). Some argue that the most important and effective aim of art education policy is to reclaim art education as a necessary subject, emphasizing the creation and production of artworks as being of intrinsic value in and of itself, rather than serving the extraneous goals of other core courses (Smith, 2004, p. 88). One possibility is that this reaction to current policy de-emphasizing the arts has maintained implementation of curricula focused on product-

based "pure art" in defense of art, at the expense of implementation of the process-based VCAE model. In support of this possibility, scholars have expressed concern over the expansion of art education to include the incorporation of visual and popular culture as well as the move towards more interdisciplinary subject matter that appears to demote the arts to serving as a "handmaiden to social studies" (Eisner, 1994, p. 190; Steinspring, 2001, p. 11). The NAEA has taken a mixed position in its recommendations of policy changes, advocating for increased funding and recognition of art as a core subject, while also calling for increased interdisciplinary outreach of art with other subjects.

Despite art education's policy-induced predicament, education policy, is "designed to ensure the good of the many" (Rolling, 2008, p. 5), in that policymakers should make decisions based on concerns for students and be sensitive to how schools function. With this in mind, policy should possess a specific and clear vision that takes current theory into consideration and aims for the future success of the art education field (Freedman, 2011). Hoffa (1996) notes "art education policies … are not carved in stone" but "instead evolved almost entirely out of prior practice" (p. 9). It is important to remember that even though policy might be based on empirical research, elections, or pure theory, policy must be malleable and cater to varied education climates and student backgrounds. Art education policy should be flexible and reflexive and should be viewed as such.

Despite the rigidity and testing protocols of No Child Left Behind standards and similar measures that followed it, some, like Freedman, believe that a strength within the field of art education is that educators can be flexible with instruction, and reference new philosophies and teaching strategies to meet the needs of a diverse population (2011). In

theory, VCAE is particularly is well suited due to its flexibility in addressing many

student perspectives and dynamic, critical curricular strategies. However, it remains

unclear to what extent VCAE is overcoming the policy obstacles to be implemented in

the art classroom.

Assessment and Curriculum

Ultimately, standards have embedded agendas that favor a particular paradigm of

instruction, or a particular type of output from the teacher or student. Creating an art

product is central to the standards, as is art appreciation. But what kind of art product is

to be created, and which culture's art do we appreciate? Is there always an art product?

How might a newer art education paradigm, such as Visual Culture Art Education—a

model that values examining all visual phenomena—be represented within these

standards? Or does VCAE require its own set of standards? Perhaps the vagueness of the

current standards are deliberately intended not to favor a particular community's

interests, thereby enabling varying education communities the space to interpret those

standards—encouraging student art making on one hand, while providing general

constraints on the other hand.

VCAE offers a unique challenge when considering best practices for assessment

within the VCAE. One might consider how assessments might be made in VCAE using

one set of standards as a framework (The National Visual Arts Standards, 1994). On the

one hand, critical dialogue that is inherently a component of VCAE can offer detailed

insight into the student's ability to understand historical and cultural art perspectives and

to critically evaluate art works. However, VCAE's relative de-emphasis on the product of

art making presents a problem when evaluating a student's ability to apply art-making techniques and use knowledge of structure and function (Smith, 2003).

But what matters then, when assessing art as it relates to VCAE? Ultimately, teacher instruction and the art product become the most important element of making art in schools. Eisner (1996) states that art making needs to be designed not only to assess completion of the lesson and curricula objectives, but also to assess for adequate instruction. Assessment of teacher and student work recognizes the cause and effect in teaching and learning. How do we define quality learning and art production, and how do we define what a model for quality instruction looks like based on assessment?

Hetland, Winner, Veenema, & Sheridan (2007) suggest a form of assessment based on the student-at-work model where the teacher lectures about or demonstrates the art to be experienced, and then the student works on the assignment, followed by a critique of the project. This method places the value of making as the most central element of learning, valuing the process over the product and individualizing the curriculum, but assessment would have to be reflective of the demonstration the teacher presents. Still, this assessment would not provide strict, objective measurements. However, this form of assessment would adhere to the central tenets of VCAE, where assessment would address the process more than the end art product. The encouraging news for supporting and implementing VCAE is that in the United States there is no national curriculum for art education, which allows for a teacher or art department to have a say in how they interpret the standards into practice (Freedman, 2011).

Concluding Thoughts on Visual Culture Art Education

The challenges within VCAE are varied and complicated. It's challenging for teachers to know and be literate in multiple forms of visual culture, to be able to make meaning, and to anticipate what elements of visual culture might be relevant to their students. Wilson (2005) believes that it is rewarding to examine the sites where students learn and to become a part of their complex meaning making systems. He argues that we as teachers must combine our sites with theirs to create a neutral leaning space. Combining our experiences of visual culture along with those of our students can result in a synergistic and vibrant learning environment. As a teacher, it is one thing to know what you know, but it is important to value what your students know as well, and to learn about the different visual communities we all live in—and as this paper demonstrates, there are various ways of implementing some form of VCAE into a curriculum.

Rolling (2010) suggests a paradigmatic shift towards an interdisciplinary model of art education, one that bridges the gap between various models of art education practice. Although a convincing method of praxis of the post-paradigmatic model has yet to be fully identified, the interdisciplinary nature of this emerging model seems to be a natural extension of the visual culture model's trajectory. Ultimately, we are challenged to rethink art education curriculum so that it revolves around the contemporary human experience (Gude, 2007; Kushins, 2007; Marshall, 2006; Stewart & Walker, 2005). Theories like VCAE may be integrated within curriculum to provide a multi-faceted, contemporary art learning experience.

Despite the wealth of support for the integration of VCAE into classroom, an essential, looming question remains: to what extent is VCAE actually integrated into art curricula? Several questions follow from this: To what extent are teachers knowledgeable

about VCAE? What does VCAE implementation look like in practice? What kinds of

visual culture artifacts are brought into the classroom by teachers or are made available

by students? How do teachers choose curricular content for their classrooms? The

following chapters will describe the research I have conducted to address these questions.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

Statement of Purpose

Research has examined the benefits and significance of incorporating visual culture into the art classroom (Bolin & Blandy, 2003; Boughton, 2004; Carter, 2008; Darts, 2004; Duncum, 2001; Eisenhauer, 2006; Freedman, 2000, 2003; Kindler, 2003; Tavin, 2003; Wilson, 2003), however the long-term classroom application of the visual culture model of art education (VCAE) remains under-researched. If recent theory supports the inclusion of VCAE in the classroom practice, is VCAE evident in the current high school visual arts classroom? It is important to examine the application of VCAE in the classroom because it is important to explore if teachers have been exposed to these concepts; how teachers exposed to the VCAE concepts understand these concepts; if and how they implement VCAE in their classrooms; and how visual culture is utilized in the visual arts classroom over the span of a school year. Further, this study aims to determine, if VCAE is not evident in the visual art classroom, what are the dominant norms and privileged curricular practices in the art classroom? If research suggests VCAE is a valuable model of art teaching offering access and equity to students, to what extent is the model implemented?

Given the limited nature of the existing literature, I have chosen to conduct a qualitative study. Marshall and Rossman (2006) explain the qualitative research paradigm is well suited as "a broad approach to the study of social phenomena," which fits the needs of my research interests (p. 3). This study was conducted using qualitative methodology, specifically multi-case studies, to explore the classroom, educational, and professional experiences of five high school visual arts teachers in urban and suburban

settings in Upstate New York. The multi-case study approach allowed for replication of the research design in multiple settings, rather than a singular case, or participant. Tellis (1997) supports that "multiple cases strengthen the results by replicating the pattern-matching, thus increasing confidence in the robustness of the theory" (para. 16).

The previous chapter discussed a gap in the literature requiring more research on the implementation of the visual culture art education model (Duncum, 2010; Eisenhauer, 2006; Hermann, 2005; Friedman, 2003). With this in mind, prior to this study I began to explore the application of art education models during my time as a student teacher supervisor. I began to try to identify the models that I was reading about in my doctoral studies and recognize them in practice when I was visiting art classrooms. Through preliminary observation, and casual discussion with the cooperating art teachers I began to inquire about their curricular practices and teaching experiences.

Throughout this process the cooperating art teachers began to share their stories, philosophies, beliefs surrounding teaching and learning about art. I began to realize that their perspectives sometimes were in opposition with what I was reading during my academic studies and I looked forward to learning more each time I visited an art classroom as a supervisor. Art education literature is saturated with examples of successful lesson plan experiences in the field, along with thoughtful writings supporting particular models or modes of teaching, however at the time I felt art education research was deficient in sharing the voices of teachers who are making curricular decisions in the high school visual arts classroom (Duncum, 2010; Friedman, 2003). I began to wonder, if VCAE theory demonstrates positive outcomes and attributes for student and teacher learning, is VCAE in evidence within current high school visual art classrooms? Does the

theory reflect the practice? With this potential gap in mind, the framework of this qualitative methodology was crafted in order to learn more about the perspectives of teachers and their classroom practices. Methodology for this study was designed to include a variety of data sources, including participant observation, formal and informal interviews and analysis of visual documents to provide a detailed snapshot of each participating teacher's classroom practice and curricular ideologies.

Research Problem

If recent art education literature suggests the benefits of incorporating VCAE into K-12 classroom practice, has VCAE clearly emerged into evidence within the actual high school art classroom? Does the theory reflect current practice? Further, if VCAE is not central to the teachers' practices, what curricular practices are privileged? This study will explore the experiences of public school high school visual arts teachers and their classroom practices related to their employment of the VCAE model of art education and/or their implementation of visual culture elements in the curriculum. Additionally this study will examine the culturally determined roles of the art teacher, participants teaching strategies, overall curricular choices, and the choices students have in the art classroom.

Research Questions

This study constitutes an exploration of the following questions: How do high school art teachers understand VCAE? In what ways do teachers who choose VCAE integrate the model within standards of curriculum design? Is VCAE meaningful to teachers as a concept? Is VCAE theory being manifested in teacher pedagogies, and if so, how? What are the ways in which VCAE is presented via student initiative and in what

ways do teachers take this up? What factors influence how teachers create curriculum in the art classroom? What kind of choices do students have in their art making experiences? Are students positioned to take initiative and if and when does VCAE play a role.

Methods

Methods Rationale

The research questions pursued by this study required a deep exploration of both the teacher (e.g., How do high school art teachers understand VCAE?) and the classroom (e.g., How is VCAE integrated into the classroom?). This required a methodology simultaneously allowing investigation of the participant teachers as well as observation of the classroom environment. Recognizing that researcher-participant and participant-environment interactions construct the data (Lincoln & Guba, 1985), I used (1) an interview approach to explore the perspectives of art teachers' experiences through life history interviews and semi-structured interviews, and (2) a naturalistic qualitative approach by observing the teachers in the culture of their high school art classrooms. Bogdan and Biklen (2007) define culture in a qualitative sense as "embracing what people do, what people know, and things people make and use" as they exist within a community (cited from Spradley, 1980, p. 5). Each classroom had a specific culture, and community. Learning to observe the classroom culture allowed me to gain insight into how the participants made meaning within the classroom. Further, Denzin and Lincoln (2000) describe qualitative research methodology as a way to "make sense of, or interpret phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them" (p. 3). The operational

classroom space was central to the teachers' identities, pedagogy and creation of curriculum.

I employed various methods to piece together new information from smaller bits of information, through multi-case studies. Case studies are useful to develop an understanding of a phenomenon in depth. When the case study design is replicated through a multi-case study, this allows the same phenomena to be investigated in multiple sites (schools) utilizing the replicated research design. Santos & Eisenhardt (2004) further argue, "this variant (multi-case) enables replication, that is, using multiple cases to independently confirm emerging constructs and propositions…it also enables extension…using the cases to reveal complete aspects of the phenomenon" resulting in more generalizable and stronger qualitative data and higher quality theory than single case studies (p. 1). Observations, interviews and photographic data informed the research and will be detailed later in this section.

In all, I believe the integrative approach of interviews and naturalistic observation via multi-case study was necessary because theory regarding the implementation of VCAE remains in its early, explorative stages and draws from sparsely available empirical data. First, for example, one hypothesis is that a teacher's educational background is critical for future curricular implementation decisions (Richerme, Shuler, & McCaffrey, 2012), best elucidated with interviews. While another hypothesis is the classroom environment informs a teacher's curricular implementation decisions (Hatfield, Montana, & Deffenbaugh, 2006), best elucidated with naturalistic observation. Secondly, because a narrowly focused *a priori* set of factors determining curricular implementation decisions would be highly speculative, this study required an in-depth

exploration of the participants which is best achieved using a multiple case-study methodology. The empirical results of the study itself would thusly generate testable factors that determine curricular implementation decisions.

Pilot Study

The rationale for this approach stems from my pilot qualitative research conducted in the fall of 2008 as part of a long-term assignment in *Qualitative Methods I*, the second out of three courses in qualitative methodology training at Syracuse University. I observed six high school art classrooms over six site visits and conducted 8 participant interviews. This "observation and interview" method proved to be valuable as I could effectively see the class in action while separately getting direct responses from the participants. It allowed me to witness how the art classroom operated, and it allowed for the students to become familiar with my face and presence. Furthermore, this mode of data collection helped the teachers feel more comfortable with me, and they seemed to open up to me after my first three observations. Since the general schedule of data collection was (1) interview, (2) block of observations, (3) interview, (4) block of observations, and (5) interview, this allowed me to corroborate each teacher's observations that arose during interviews with my own observations, and vice-versa. Sometimes there were discrepancies, so it was especially valuable to engage in participant observation so I could ask further questions for clarification as the fieldwork continued.

Stemming from my experiences from the pilot study, for this dissertation I wanted to use my observations to build rapport. I wanted to be able to ask a collection of questions that I had from the beginning of the study, and then a series of questions that I

had collected during the study. The interview proved to be a valuable component to the study's methodology. In the pilot study, I really undervalued the interview at first, as I did not trust that I would get enough information from the participant, or that I would ask the right questions. Conducting the interview demonstrated that it is possible to get a wealth of information by asking direct questions. One issue with asking directly is that a participant's answer regarding their teaching philosophy or curriculum choices might not reflect what was observed in their actual classroom practice. For example, one teacher told me that she does not do work for students (assist in their art making process), when in practice I observed her helping a student work on shading by penciling in a portion of a drawing for a student. So while a teacher may espouse that it is not good practice to draw for a student, in the moment they might find themselves doing the very opposite of their ideal. As a researcher, it is important to recognize the potential inconsistency between what a teacher may say, and what they might do and continue to observe and collect data for future analysis. Observations may reveal that a teacher's action was just a singular incident, or highlight that action as part of their regular pattern of pedagogical practice.

Positioning Self in the Research Process and Subjectivity

Seeing Things and Not Being Seen

On my path towards earning my doctoral degree, I have spent a great deal of time reflecting on my journey. I was never outspoken in my classes as a K-12 student, and truth be told, I never really enjoyed school beyond socializing with friends and teachers. I was always interested in the fringe activities happening in school: the marginalized students, the taboo subjects, taking long bathroom breaks during class to explore the

hallways of school, etc. I have always felt that I hold the qualities of a lifelong learner, but not in traditional read-the-textbook-then-take-a-quiz kind of way. I embraced the visual and kinesthetic nature of learning from an early age.

My interest in Visual Culture came about during my own studies as a youth. When I was young I began to realize that my intellectual strengths involved perceiving, collecting and interpreting the visuals within my world. I studied the way people moved, the designs of products at the grocery store, and combed through magazines. I watched countless hours of 80's sitcoms, and 90's films, and *YouTube* clips in the new millennium. Music videos became the soundtrack to my everyday happenings and daydreams. In my mind, I *was* L.L. Cool J's *Around the Way Girl,* even though I was a chunky white girl from the suburbs. Fantasizing about this alternative persona gave me great pleasure in imagining the possibilities, and understanding the realities of the world. Choosing and interpreting fashion and observing how friends decorated their rooms and lockers were treasure troves of information to interpret. Being able to *see* "things" became my obsession.

The problem with remaining open to processing visual and popular culture material is that I often felt disconnected to typical schoolwork because it did not appeal to my interests. I never felt represented, and often felt ignored. I did well in school, but only because I knew how to manipulate the materials to get the grades I needed to achieve. I never felt like my interests and strengths were valued, and did just enough to get to the next phase. My parents always assured me that I was smart and encouraged me to explore media and engage in the visual world, but it took a while to understand the value of these visual skills.

Flashing forward to a point in time after art school, I decided to become a teacher through a master's program in art and art education. I chose to become a teacher because I found I was able to take my observational skills and connect to the students I was teaching through prior experiences working with learners. I began to investigate my students' interests through engaging in dialogue about visual culture and their lives. I would then create curricula based upon of their interests. This became very empowering for both my students and me because we could be co-creators of knowledge within a classroom through visual culture sites. Through my interactions with my students and visual culture I began to re-think how to create curriculum and began to investigate curricular practices in the high school visual art classroom.

This brings me to present day. When I realized the impact on student engagement and participation in my classroom by exploring visual culture, I enrolled in a Doctoral program hoping to explore this further. I did not have any direct exposure to visual culture literature in my Master's program per se, however I had a hunch that maybe others might be interested in engaging with visual culture in the art classroom. I began to have informal discussions with the cooperating teachers of the teacher candidates I was supervising as part of my teaching assistantship. As I sat quietly in the back of the art classroom taking notes, I found myself not only taking notes about the student teachers, but also taking notes about the physical space of the classroom and interactions between cooperating teachers, the student teacher, and the students in the art room.

I realized that as I have maintained my subjectivity as a teacher, my perspective as a teacher, coupled with theory, also informs my understanding of the culture of the classroom. What exactly does "Well now you know what your finished artwork is

supposed to look like, so get to work[3]" mean to a teacher? Does replicating Van Gogh's "Starry Night[4]" apply as a visual culture-learning objective in an art classroom? What do teachers and students assume a finished artwork is supposed to look like? I began to wonder what teachers thought about visual culture and how they view using visual culture in their classrooms. And even more basically, how to they decide what to teach anyways? What motivates them to create a lesson? Are they interested in their kids' interests? How do they perceive their (both student and teacher's) roles in a classroom? Furthermore, I began to examine the literature I was reading in my doctoral classes and realized that a lot of the time the theory was not reflected in the practice within the K-12 classroom.

Teacher to Researcher

Collecting qualitative data requires participation from not only the participants, but also from the researcher. Gaining access to the field, building rapport with participants, and knowing when you have spent enough time in the field required a participatory format for the research questions I had proposed (Spradley, 1980). As a visual thinker whose ideas and understandings are driven by what I see in the world, I like to think of field experiences as visual metaphors, like I am watching a mini-series, or television season. There is always a story to tell and to watch unfold with each episode. When reading a book, or watching a movie, the narrator provides personal perspective, insight, and guidance as you watch the scenes unfold in front of you. Imagine watching

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[3] This was an announcement made by a cooperating teacher to her art class during lesson instruction at a suburban high school. From personal field notes, November 2010.
[4] This was a lesson I observed twice; once with the aim for each student to create a ceramic relief replica, and the second time with the aim being the replication of a painting. From personal field notes, Fall 2009.

The Shawshank Redemption without the narration and insight of the character "Red" (as portrayed by actor Morgan Freeman). Or think of watching *Mean Girls* without Katy's struggling adolescent perspective (portrayed by actress Lindsey Lohan) as she navigates and narrates her experiences as a new girl trying to fit in as she enters high school for the first time. Both narrators provide the viewer with an insider perspective to a scene, or share feelings or secrets with the viewer that make the viewing experience richer and more engaging for the viewer. From my perspective as the researcher, I am observing classroom spaces that I am not native to, while at the same time, the teacher's narrative and perspectives were paramount to answering my proposed research questions.

There were also social factors I took into consideration during data collection in this research. How I dressed, how I introduced myself in the classroom, and how I approached participants were crucial towards gaining access in this study. For every participant, I catered to their comfort. I dressed more like a graduate student than a classroom teacher, depending on the teacher and the feel of her classroom. I was able to find conversation ice-breakers, and I watched how the teachers interacted with their students and worked to exist in their respective environments at a comfortable level.

As a former high school visual arts teacher, I am always interested in learning more about curricular practices as they differ from the practices of an elementary art teacher. High school visual arts teachers see their students every day; elementary/middle schoolteachers see their students maybe one to two days a week. In my experience teaching and visiting high school visual art classrooms, the pacing moves slower because teachers see students nearly every day. This factor requires a teacher to break down the lesson into mini-lessons where each day has a new sub-objective. I also must note that I

had worked with some of the participants in the capacity as a student teacher supervisor, so they knew me prior to this study as an evaluator of student teachers and as a university representative. I never talked to them about my research agenda during my supervision visits. We only dialogue about the performance of the student teacher. Reflecting on my prior experiences as a teacher and from observing student teachers requires that I keep this subjectivity in mind as my own practices and previous observations might not be aligned to my observations in this study.

Data Generation

Prior to the study, I obtained IRB approval from Syracuse University's review board, along with signed consent forms for the participants and letters of assent that I read to each class I observed. The goal of the data generation of this study was to collect a rich data set from the classroom observations and teacher interviews, then provide descriptive analysis of the data to determine findings, limitations, and future research.

To generate data for this study, I used life history interviews, semi-structured interviews, field observation, and visual documentation using a still camera. Formal interviews were conducted at the beginning and at the end of the study, a semi-structured interview was conducted at the midpoint of the observation period, and a life history interview was conducted at the start of the study to learn about personal influences, education experiences and artistic backgrounds; in addition, informal interviews were conducted on the observation days in order to gain deeper understanding of the observations and to clarify questions that arose from the visits. In total, fifteen interviews were conducted totaling ten hours and fifty-four minutes of recorded footage. I made twenty-five visits, about five per participant, totaling fifty-seven hours of observation.

Interviews we scheduled and took place during planning periods, before or after school, or during lunch breaks.

Life History Interviews

Life history interviews provide insight into the participants' constructed life narratives as well as perspective into how they socially situate themselves within a particular community (Linde, 1993). Linde (1993) further supports that life history interviews allow for participants to communicate a sense of self along with details about how they negotiate their sense of self with others; present how people claim membership within a group while adhering to the governing moral standards within that particular group; provide perspectives on shared social constructions, norms, expectations and belief systems.

Life history interviews are useful in learning about teachers' personal experiences. Life history interviews are an effective way to understand teachers' definitions of self within the context of their own histories as it intersects their teaching practice in the visual arts classroom and community. These stories can bring memories to the surface, allowing for the participant to be introspective and bring their experiences to life (Linde, 1993). Life history interviews provide the narrative of the participant from the first person perspective and reveal how a person makes meaning of their life events. As a researcher, the life history interview allowed me to learn the details of a participant's point of view within the context of their life experiences.

When life history interviews are used in case studies, the goal is "usually directed at using the person as a vehicle to understand basic aspects of human behavior or existing institutions rather than history" (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007, p. 63). Examining the paths of

the participating teacher by hearing stories about their art learning experiences can provide insight into their current practices as a way to more deeply understand their belief systems, how they define their ever evolving identities and perspectives, and how they might apply their perspectives to teaching and their practice.

Life history interviews were conducted at the beginning of the study. Participants were asked to choose a location that they preferred, or a "supportive and safe normative environment" in order for them to feel comfortable discussing their own philosophies, experiences and ideas (Carspecken, 1996, p. 155). In this study, I began to ask questions about each participant's first memories of art, their experience with art in their own K-12 schooling, their undergraduate and graduate studies, art media preferences, perceived art teaching expectations within their district, state, teacher training. The objective of the life history interview was to allow the participant to share insight into how each teacher constructs their identity as a teacher, artist, and as a member of the art community. Ultimately these interviews provided a starting point for the study, and allowed me to gain insight into how they construct their professional lives, informing the development of more questions throughout the study (Appendix B).

Semi-structured Interviews

While life history interviews are more centered around participants' sharing stories and answering questions related to the construction of their identity, a semi-structured interview by design varies in the structure while interviewing. Bogdan and Biklen (2007) further detail, "even when an interview guide is employed, qualitative interviews offer the interviewer considerable latitude to pursue a range of topics and offer the subject a chance to shape the content of the interview" (p. 104). Most of these

teachers are isolated within small departments in the school, in remote hallways with complicated directions to find their classrooms. For all the participants, it was unusual to discuss their practices in depth. The interview served to tie the field experience together in the end. Through dialogue the teacher study participant contributed further insight to classroom observations to render them more complete and textured. I conducted two formal semi-structured interviews: one at the mid-point date of my scheduled visits and another at the end of my observations. I used them to support and investigate questions, to confirm the actions that I was seeing as they arose from the field observations. I also used semi-structured interviews to clarify questions I proposed in my research design. I used my pilot study questions as a guide and modified them for this study. I also used my field noted from this current study to write questions to remember to ask the teacher at a later time for clarification.

The two formal semi-structured interviews served to establish perspectives and beliefs, ask overarching questions regarding their art and teaching experiences, and for a summative opportunity to clarify the teacher's perspectives over the course of the school year. Each formal interview lasted from one hour to one and a half hours. I offered my participants the option to choose the location of the interviews, and every one chose to conduct the interview in their classrooms during a period when they were not formally teaching. I asked 10-20 questions, and asked follow-up probes to clarify responses and to dig deeper into the topic. My first set of interview questions sought to establish how teachers planned their curriculum for the year, and thought about lessons, materials, etc. These questions were created and informed by the life history as a way to follow up on

topics addressed by the participants and to establish participants' high school visual art beliefs. For sample questions, see Appendix C.

The final interview directly addressed the research questions surrounding visual culture and other models of art education instruction. The final interview was intended to tie up any loose ends from my research questions that were not addressed in previous interviews or field observations. For example, three of the participants had mentioned an alternative art education model to VCAE over the course of the year, namely DBAE (see Chapter 2), so I wanted to develop an understanding of how that model of teaching became part of their vocabulary. The use of the term DBAE suggested that the teachers were familiar with art education teaching models, so that even if evidence of the application of VCAE was apparent in the classroom settings I still wanted to learn how familiar they were with the terminology surrounding VCAE practice in a follow-up question. My intent was to build on our conversation with topics that I knew they were familiar with, while gaining insight to their definitions and perspectives or the lack thereof. For an example of the final interview questions, see Appendix D.

Formal interviews were digitally recorded with consent from the subjects. Audio recordings were transcribed manually by a third-party fee-based service (Rev.com, San Francisco, CA, previously known as FoxTranscribe.com when transcribed). Field notes were hand written, and transcribed by the researcher using Dragon Dictate software through Microsoft Word. Each transcribed document was spot-checked for accuracy and was found to be near-exactly accurate. I listened to the digital recordings as I read the transcriptions to ensure accuracy of the interviews.

Informal Interviews

Informal interviews were conducted on each visit, approximately seven times per participant, as a way to generate descriptive accounts of the daily teaching practice, and to allow for spontaneous conversation. Probes allowed for further revelations from participants. For instance, a particular observation might lead me to ask, "Can you tell me more about that? Can you show me an example?" From these informal questions, I could speak more candidly, or even conversationally with the participants. As I was taking observational field notes, I would bullet questions, and highlight scenes to clarify later with the teachers through questioning. This allowed me to learn more about their perceived practices, and it facilitated the identification of themes that would emerge during data analysis.

Participant Observation

Observing participants in their teaching environments allowed me to examine teaching practice, teacher-student interaction, preparation of materials and the general climate of the classroom. I observed the teachers in their school settings from September through March during a calendar school year in order to collect rich data that documented the routines and atmosphere of the classroom (Carspecken, 1996). Each teacher was observed between seven to nine half-day visits, where I typically observed two to four classes each visit. My intention was to be present in the classroom as a passive observer, however with regular visits I became familiar to the students, sat at worktables with the teacher and students during class time, and offered to help teachers with brief tasks, such as material preparation and clean up (these brief tasks did not affect note taking).

From my experiences as an observer and as a practicing teacher, participating in the classroom while observing helped to ease the teacher's fear of judgment from the

observer. This was a central element towards gaining deeper access to the most authentic interactions within the classroom. The researcher becomes the primary tool for gathering rich data, thus necessitating varying degrees of shifting between the roles of observer and participant. I did not want to be viewed as the creepy lady in the back corner of the class taking notes, a voyeur to the goings-on of the classroom; rather, I felt it was important to participate in clean-up, help prep materials, and listen to the teacher offer suggestions to students. Because I was not the authority figure, however, this allowed me to be able to slip away to the corner to jot down observations, as well as be able to sit with and listen in on student's conversations, as I was not viewed as the teacher, but I was a participant in the class space.

For this research, I kept detailed handwritten field notes describing the experiences and observations in the school during a visit, and collected documents from the teacher's (worksheets, assignments, etc.) classroom. I typed up all the handwritten field notes on Microsoft Word, scanned and catalogued the collected documents digitally as well as in a binder with plastic protective sheets for each document. This binder was kept in a secure location, and the documents are password protected on my external storage drive. I visited each teacher seven times over the span of the school year, for a minimum of three class periods a visit. I obtained over two hundred pages of written notes; was able to see art projects develop from start to finish; and observed behavior over an extended time period while establishing a neutral existence within the classroom spaces. This is significant because I was able to witness projects evolving, and learn more about the process of teaching high school students.

Participant observation was central to answering some of my research questions, as I learned about the participant's behaviors and actions while in the classroom. Participant observation allowed me to "discover and analyze aspects of social scenes that use rules and norms that participants may experience without explicitly talking about, that operate on automatic or subconscious levels, or are even officially off limits for discussion or taboo" (Guest et al., 2012, p. 75). I could also observe contradictory moments in the classroom, or things that did not match up to something they shared in an interview. With art, sometimes watching the process unfold can reveal more about the resulting piece and its meaningfulness than even the intended objectives of a lesson. Over time, the participants seemed more at ease with my presence while I was there and I am grateful for their hospitality and permission to coexist in their spaces. This is an important element to be cognizant of while conducting fieldwork, as I could establish visual patterns, analyze idiosyncrasies, ideas and practices of the participants over the span of a school year.

Visual Documents

The final piece in the study is textual analysis of visual data. Art is a visual discipline, thus the visuals within the teaching space were central to understanding the practices and perspectives. Visual data is defined as "any kind of visual material, either produced by actors (such as lay photographs) or social scientists (such as video records of social interactions) that depend in their meaning and significance on the visualized records, be it diagrams, photographical reproductions" (Knoblaugh, et al., 2008. p. 2). Visual data in this study include photographs of the physical space of the classroom and school, photographs of artwork, student's journals, art displays and other visual artifacts

encountered in the field. Worksheets and rubrics were also analyzed alongside the visual documents listed above, although it is noted that these artifacts are not, strictly speaking, visual documents.

It is important to note, however, due to IRB protocol I do not have permission to include any images or documents that directly identify a student or participant. I received consent from the teachers, but also have to protect their identities. The photographs reveal the teachers' identities through the artwork on their walls, and classroom organization. The IRB protects the teachers' identities so they can feel comfortable to share their experiences and perspectives without feeling they are jeopardizing their careers, etc. Further, I cannot include student artwork with out student and parental consent. This study examines teacher perspectives, so therefore I can only address the data generated from the teachers. I used student artwork to spark dialogue with a teacher to better understand their perspectives, but I cannot show the artwork as the art identifies the student. The inclusion of student artwork would be unethical to the study's intent. Regardless, visual documents contributed a great deal to the data generation and analysis and provided support for findings in this dissertation.

Any space that I observed the teacher, I photographed the walls (including the ceiling and floors), the posters, signage, messages on whiteboards/chalkboards, technology, materials, artwork, etc. These images were collected, printed in color, organized in time sequence, coded and analyzed for content and context (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007). These images became physical visual data that I used in analysis and in the interviews with the teacher. This method provided rich content analysis of visible data, and was helpful when I needed to discuss fine art instructional practice (Rose,

2001). Stokrocki (1997) describes content analysis as "writing down evolving questions on an event in the beginning of your study…[so as to] include them as assumptions…keep a running account of how they change…then compare them with evidence obtained over time (p. 40).

Through field observations and textual analysis of the visual data, this method was helpful when I had to ask the teachers questions about the data collected. For example, teachers often spoke to students about what makes an art project successful. Afterwards, I might talk with the teachers asking them to describe the difference between a finished piece deemed successful versus a finished piece that was unsuccessful. In addition to the verbal description of study participants, I also asked to see an example of student work and to share the traits that supported their own observations and qualifications.

Incorporating images into the interviews contributed to the development of dialogue. I was interested in learning more about the meaning teachers made of an image, or other visual document like an art handout, film used during class time, etc. As per IRB protocol, I took precautions to have prior permission to take a photograph when collecting an artifact from the classroom of the participant. I did not photograph students, as the focus of the study is the high school visual art teacher. All the participants allowed me to take photographs and willingly shared documents when available.

Participants

I chose to focus on high school visual art teachers in this study given that the research on visual culture lacked the voices of the high school teacher. I was interested in exploring the development of curricula for high school art classrooms because I could

observe the process of multiple lesson progressions over the span of a school year. The participants of the study included five female art teachers, with diverse art and teaching experiences, in the Upstate New York region.

Criteria for Participation

Criteria for participation in this study included that the participant must be a certified 9-12 high school visual arts teacher in the Central New York region. I opted to limit the study to public high schools in the region. Additionally, they had to have graduated from an art education program with a master's or bachelor's degree between 1990 and 2007, which coincides with the ascent of the visual culture art education movement and VCAE literature available in art education journals and materials (Freedman, 2004). They could also qualify for the study if they had participated in at least five professional development sessions or art education conferences. These last two elements were central, as I was seeking teachers who might have been exposed to the visual culture model through literature, workshops, or schooling. Candidates for participation in this study were also required to teach at least one introductory art studio course, providing a baseline for the researcher to learn more about what is viewed as fundamental introductory art learning at the high school level.

This study involved five visual art teachers in four high schools in Upstate New York. Two of the sites were urban schools and two suburban. The rationale for choosing urban and suburban high schools was rooted in learning about a range of experiences across a broad demographic. I focused on sites that have studio art classes as well as specialty art courses such as photography, ceramics, sculpture, and computer. I wanted to be exposed to a wide range of art media.

Recruiting

Based on my experiences as a student teacher supervisor during my graduate work at Syracuse University, I was able to make numerous school visits over the span of five years, and observe a variety of classroom spaces. In order to recruit participants, I utilized a research technique of snowballing emails to high school visual art teachers that I had access to as a student teacher supervisor. I would ask one potential participant via email if they might be interested in participating in the study and if they fit the studies' eligibility requirements. I also inquired if they might know of other teachers who might be interested or fit this study's criteria. This served as a way to potentially widen the search for participants through avenues I might not have access to as a researcher. Ultimately, the snowball method did not actualize as all but one of the initial seven teachers I emailed agreed to participate in the study from the email I sent them.

All contact with participants began with an email before the start of the school year to determine a time to conduct a life history interview at a location of their preference. I initiated contact via email in the late summer. From our first meeting, we then determined times that I could come and observe a day of classes, identifying three instructional class periods at the very least.

I also intended the recruitment process to include teachers who teach studio art, the most common high school class, as well as some media specific courses, like photography, sculpture, computer art, etc. I wanted to explore the relationship between beginning and advanced courses with the teachers. My rationale surrounding recruiting multi-level teachers was that typically the beginning level courses are open to all students, regardless of interest or ability. The advanced classes are typically available to

students after they have completed the basic beginning level studio course, and are more specific in teaching advanced skills and techniques to students who have expressed an interest in a medium. For example, when I was a K-12 art teacher my introductory class content was created as a sampler of a variety of art techniques and introduction to art content. My advanced level classes provided more in-depth exploration of materials and more freedom with art content. This was how my department chair described the differences in course levels to me.

Typically advanced students ask for permission to enroll in an advanced class, or are required to have strong grades from the introductory art course to gain entrance to advanced level courses. As a student, I remembered the structure of my own high school art classes were very different concerning degrees of freedom and choice allowed for with art projects. I wanted to explore how the teachers approached multi-level art curricula and students, so it was central to the study that the participants taught at least two levels of art courses spanning across the four high school grades (9-12).

My initial aim was to recruit six teachers, and to interview and observe those teachers either monthly or twice a month for a minimum of seven classroom visits per teacher. I was interested in sampling teachers within the central New York region in city and suburban schools. Typically, city and suburban schools have more students as well as more variety of course choices. I also felt that this would provide some continuity to the study, as the teachers would be teaching in a similar location, although the student demographics might vary. It was my intention to snowball sample a variety of teachers, however the sampling resulted with all teachers identifying as female. At the outset of the study I was not interested in the diversity of the participants, but rather the diversity of

the locations and the participant recruitment criteria. At the end of the study, five teachers participated over the span of seven months. One of the participants declined participation in the study after agreeing to participate when the school year began.

Participant Description

This section will provide a brief description of the participants. The following names are pseudonyms to protect the identity of the teachers.

- Katy teaches studio art, drawing and painting at a large high school in the suburbs of a mid-size city in Upstate New York. She is in her early 30's. Katy went to college for her BFA at Upstate New York University, and completed her MA at Private Upstate University in New York. She is a painter and enjoys traveling.

- Dina teaches studio art, photography, computer art, and digital media classes at a mid-size public high school in a mid-size city. She is in her 40's and considers herself a non-traditional teacher, in that she worked as an artist before she went back to school to obtain her master's degree in art education from Private Upstate University. She is a potter and actively participates in the local craft scene.

- Michelle teaches studio art, drawing, painting, ceramics and sculpture at a suburban high school on the border of a mid-size city in Upstate New York. Michelle is in her early 40's, and is a painter, media and collage artist. She has a BFA in fine arts, and her master's degree in art education from Private Upstate University. She frequently shows her artwork in shows, publications and galleries.

- Liz teaches studio art, drawing, painting and photography in a mid-size city high school in Upstate New York. She is in her 40's. She has her BA from State University, along with a master's degree in general education and art certification. She is a painter and is an active member in her local community.

- Nik teaches studio art, drawing and painting classes at a suburban high school, shouldering a mid-size city in Central New York. She is in her late 30's. She has a BFA from Private East Coast Art Institute, and master's degree from North State University in art education. She is a drawer and a painter.

Analysis

By using multiple qualitative methods, I can compare data from the varied methods in order to recognize and validate common themes within the data set. This strategy requires a lot of work from the researcher, as collecting multiple sets of data takes extra time. However, this makes the data more detailed and layered. Over time I felt I gained more access to information and experiences. By approaching this study through multiple methods and viewpoints I was able to intensify my understanding of the participants' viewpoints and better corroborate validity during analysis.

Data was analyzed using Carspecken's (1996) two critical ethnographic qualitative phases: pragmatic horizon analysis, and meaning reconstruction. Pragmatic horizon analysis employs a detailed method that examines the cultural systems that influence how a participant shares their definitions of their identity by examining their interactions and behaviors in their environment. Horizon analysis is a way to examine the cultural systems that influence how a participant defines his or her identity. Through horizon analysis, I can establish the participant's set of beliefs, values and how they share

them with the audience. Through horizon analysis, these meanings can be determined by analyzing the participant's views. Carspecken (1996) explains, "the meaning horizon is what the actor emphasizes, which is not always the same as the linguistic content of the act…[it] is a complex set of assumptions made by the actor about knowledge, belief and values she/he shares with her/his audience" (p. 121). Through this form of analysis, a careful consideration of the social and cultural "horizons" embedded in the data, I gained a more detailed understanding and insight about the teacher's classroom culture through meaning reconstruction.

Meaning reconstruction, as defined by Carspecken (1996), asks the researcher to detail, "tacit modes of meaning you believe may underlie the interactions recorded" (p. 97). This allows the researcher to put words to actions observed, such as posture, tone, expression, timing, and other visual cues to create a meaning field. For example, if a student asked his or her teacher if she (the teacher) thought a painting was finished, and the teacher replied "no," I would speculate possible meaning fields to determine what this interaction might mean to the involved actors. The teacher may have been looking for art skill identifiers, such as neatness, or color mixing demonstration, or even if the painting looked realistic. The student may have been looking for the teacher's approval in order to move on to the next project, wanted the teacher to like the final artwork, or just wanted some attention from the teacher. By observing, and articulating these details I can begin to "clarify issues to be explored through additional reconstructions and horizon analysis (Carspecken, 1996, p. 96). Meaning reconstructions are also designed to highlight subjectivities of the researcher within the process.

Through reconstructive analysis (Carspecken, 1996), I developed codes based on my initial research questions (pre-determined codes), and then added codes (emergent codes) as they emerged from data analysis after data collection was complete. Sixty-six emergent codes developed (ex. Scholastics, Elements and Principles of Art and Design, behavior) through analysis after data collection was complete. Detailed field notes, images, sketches, and digital transcriptions from interviews were analyzed and coded through emergent coding at the end of data collection. Emerging themes were discovered and presented through careful qualitative analysis. Ultimately, through horizon analysis, the data set generated insight into the textured perspectives and experiences of the participants allowing for cultural and social norms to appear in regards to their teacher and artist identities, along with the perspectives on how they create curriculum with all the factors that contribute towards the creation of the classroom culture.

The participant observations, interviews and texts were organized using emergent coding and digitally managed with the open-source computer software RQDA (Ronggui Huang, Fudan University, Shanghai, China). Additionally, data was coded and analyzed as it emerged (Glaser & Struass, 1967, Bogdan & Biklen, 2006). Notes were taken by hand, and then transcribed electronically. Photographs were examined by identifying visual markers while noting the significance of the elements within the image in my field notes (Rose, 2001). I collected all the data that had been electronically organized, then carefully re-read and re-examined the data and organized the data electronically using the RQDA program to extract texts from the data to organize into separate coded documents. Sixty-six codes emerged from the data, thus resulting in sixty-six separate Microsoft Word documents containing the collected data. From these sixty-six codes, and sixty-six

documents, along with supporting literature, the dissertation emerged. From the sixty-six

codes, I re-visited my initial research questions and examined the codes to fit my research

questions. As the primary researcher, I was solely responsible for the data collection,

analysis, and interpretation of the data.

CHAPTER 4: THE ART TEACHER

A Snapshot

This chapter serves as a foundation for the next two chapters examining 1) The art classroom and the application of VCAE, and 2) How teachers make/filter curricular choices. In order to understand the teachers' practice, this chapter will examine five different art teacher's (Nik, Katy, Liz, Michelle and Dina, Table 4.1) definitions of artistic identity and teacher identity. The participants' experiences provide an understanding of how they define art, approach visual culture, develop curriculum, and filter curricular strategies, concepts and materials in and out of the classroom. How the teachers learned about art in their own schooling experiences, as well has how they learned about what qualifies as an "art education" in their licensure programs, both factor into how they approach teaching and learning in the high school visual art classroom. These beliefs inform their perception and practice of teaching art, including their definitions of art and what constitutes an artist.

By examining the participants' paths to becoming art teachers, I saw that their teaching careers were shaped by their individual experiences, cultures, and histories. Unrath and Kerridge (2009) agree that "each participant with a particular background, a particular cultural imprinting, and a unique aesthetic sensitivity" constructs their teacher identities (p. 275). Unfolding their stories helps to depict the larger picture as "it is important to know about those who came before us; to uncover the paths they broke, to understand the circumstances of their decision to teach, and to examine the nature of their educational commitments" (Florio-Ruane & Williams, 2006, p. 7). Ultimately their experiences affect their practices and beliefs about art and teaching.

There were multiple commonalities between all the participants, any of which, if pertaining to just one participant, might seem inconsequential. However, most of the findings were visible across all the classrooms I visited. This supports my research methodology, as I believe it is worth exploring common experiences within the high school visual art classroom. How did the participants imagine their "culturally determined roles as teachers," and how did their own schooling and practice influence their calling to teaching (Knight, Kiefer-Boyd, & Amburgy, 2005, p. 268)? Despite varied educational paths, each participant shared their choices, experiences, challenges and joys on becoming K-12 visual art teachers. Through their narratives, the culture of visual arts education and the nature of the classroom came alive. Their perspectives, based on their own academic journeys, also provide insight to better understand how teachers view VCAE and made curricular decisions.

After completion of data collection and analysis, described in Chapter 3, certain attitudes about artist/teacher identity became apparent as factors in curricular decision-making. Specifically this chapter examines teachers' relationships with—and definitions of—artist/teacher identity, their educational preparation, how the teachers taught, and professional development. Learning about these perspectives helps to unpack their ideas about the culturally determined roles of the art teacher, dominant norms within art education teacher preparation programs, curricular practices being privileged, best practices, definitions of art learning, and curricular choices that art teachers make in their varied classes.

Paths to Becoming an Art Teacher

Part of being an art teacher is negotiating one's personal artist identity alongside his or her teaching identity. For this study, I will briefly examine the art teachers' constructions of the *artist* identity, but will focus specifically on the participants' *art teacher* identity formation. How did they define what it means to be an artist, and what are their perceptions of art teacher identity? Professional identity is rooted in personal identity so the personal experiences of the teachers have a great impact on their professional identity. Establishing an identity baseline with the participants allowed me to understand their artistry, classroom practice and central beliefs regarding art education.

Anderson (1981) states that while the art teacher's "roles are usually categorized as professional artist, or professional teacher of art…the two professions are clearly separated in regard to education, technical training, philosophical indoctrination, and professional prerequisites" (p. 45). The teachers in this study felt stigmatized being identified as art teachers rather than as artists, due to the assumption that teaching somehow makes them not "real artists," a notion emphasized by study participant Nik. Richerme et al. (2012) support Nik's observation, while also noting an associated stigma attached to being a certified art educator, namely the "perception of unequal status with classroom educators and the challenge of maintaining teacher skill and artistry" (p. 9). It is presumed that an art teacher is a "Jack of all trades, but master of none." The awareness of this stigma held true for all the participants in some capacity. Each teacher at some point made statements about how they were not making enough art, showing enough art, or engaging in the art world through museums and classes, etc.

I found that all five of the participants did not intentionally go to college to become teachers (all pursued art-related majors in college), but rather settled upon

teaching as a career with stability in mind, simultaneously destabilizing their artist personas. All five teachers acknowledged having positive art learning experiences prior to applying to college. Three participants chose to complete a bachelor's degree in fine art, and two participants received a minor in elementary education in addition to a fine art degree. All completed their teacher licensure programs in a master's program—any time from immediately after they completed their bachelor's degree to fifteen years after undergraduate studies.

Table 4.1

Participant biographical information.

	Teaches	Degrees	Teaching Experience
Katy	Studio Art Drawing Painting	BFA MA Art Ed	6-9 years
Dina	Studio Art Photography Media Arts	BA (worked as artist) MA Art Ed	6-9
Michelle	Studio Art Drawing Painting Sculpture Ceramics	BFA BA Art Ed	12-15
Liz	Studio Art Drawing Painting Photography	BA MA Gen Ed Art Certification	18-21
Nik	Studio Art Drawing Painting	BFA MA Art Ed	12-15

Uniformly, the participants each realized that they had artistic talent, but were unsure of how to make a secure living off their artwork alone. Whether it was familial pressure, pressure to pay the bills, or the desire for a change of pace, most became teachers with some hesitation. All identified some make-or-break moment where they decided to get a teaching license. None of them were set on an education pathway when they entered college. Their career paths evolved toward teaching.

For example, at a point in her thirties where she was unclear of what exactly she wanted to do Dina decided, "Well you better get your teaching certificate because if you don't you're probably not going to get a job…and I didn't want to, but I went into art education and I found out that I really loved it." Prior, she was selling her craftwork at art shows and working odd jobs in retail to supplement her art sales.

Additionally, none of the participants targeted becoming an art teacher as result of their trajectory on in higher educational study. Their entry into the profession of education was not indicated in any way by their undergraduate studies. Liz remarked, "I was going to be a painter, and it was going to be romantic and lovely." What changed her mind was a fear of not having any job opportunities, and her positive experiences with teachers. Franzak (2002) writes of four sources that impact the pre-service teacher's self-conception, "1) role models, especially positive ones; 2) previous teaching experiences; 3) significantly positive or negative education classes; and 4) remembered childhood experiences about learning and family activities" (p. 259). These four factors shape how teachers create their teacher identity.

Liz's father is a professor and she remembered how much he loved teaching. She also went back to her high school art teacher for guidance, and keeps a picture of both of them on her desk in her classroom. These two men influenced her career development. Liz shared, "I thought that they really had amazing lives and the way I saw students

interacting with the two of them, and thinking about the impact they had had on my own life, I thought, 'This is something that I really should think about.'" She took a break, had three children, took 5 years to complete her master's degree, and then settled permanently on the notion of teaching art.

Similar to Liz, Katy wanted to become a teacher based on a positive experience with a middle school music teacher. She remembered, "Instead of telling kids, 'You practice and you could be better,' she would say, 'One day you're going to be a conductor.' So instead of saying what you could do, she would just tell you you're already there and I was like, "Really?" It was really remarkable. Instead of framing it like, 'With a lot of practice maybe you could be like Picasso one day,' it was like, 'No, you are, you're an artist.'"

The study participants remembered positive early experiences as being important factors in their deciding to become teachers. Art class made them feel welcome and valued. Echoing Hatfield et al.'s (2006) study citing the influence of early experiences on the development of "childhood artist identity that became a part of the foundation for their professional lives," the participants also based their professional identities on childhood art learning foundations (p. 45).

A common factor in the participant's paths towards licensure was a supportive mentor. Teachers from their K-12 schooling helped to shape their path and teaching identity. Having a mentor is "key in helping students clarify values, as well as educational career goals" (Hatfield et. al, 2006, p. 44). Exposure to a strong professional mentor creates a platform for the novice teacher/artist to stand on as they begin to develop their teaching practice. Liz had two teaching mentors who influenced her career

path. Katy modeled her career path after a middle school art teacher she had. In college, art education professors and fine art professors strongly influenced their practice. As Unrath and Kerridge (2009) note, "The emerging teacher's educational experience embraces the long journey from K-12 through university years…each soon to be teacher has been constructing meaning within the field of education for most of their lives while living through the multi-faceted process related to being taught" (p. 279). The participants learned how to construct their teacher identity based on observations and experiences through their schooling. On the other hand, participants also learned what they did not like or feel comfortable with based on their personal learning experiences.

Formally, Katy defined her BFA experience as pursuing the goal of becoming "a real artist." At one point she disclosed, "There is something about being an undergrad and you're meeting all these professors and you're learning theories. I was like, 'I don't want to become a teacher.'" This theoretical approach turned a few of the participants off, but mostly due to fear of not knowing all the current literature, or feeling up to date with university practices.

There was an understanding early on in the participants' education experiences that there were marked differences between a college professor and a K-12 schoolteacher. The idea that they all became teachers as a fallback is important to consider, since in the artist/art teacher identity struggle, the "slash" always places them in an in-between space. By having professional mentors, the participants learned and imagined what their lives might look like as practicing teachers. Their mentors' experiences served as a rough blueprint for developing their teaching personas. Participants noted that even their

mentors struggled with their own artistic identity and recognized the constraints of teaching art at any level.

I began to wonder how the teachers knew they wanted to become art teachers, and how they identified as artists. Among the teachers participating in this study, ideas about art in school began as early as elementary school, but typically emerged in middle school and into high school, when most were identified or identified themselves as being talented in art.

Dina recognized her artistic abilities, later, in college: "I'm not typical of most people. I didn't take art in high school. I took wood shop. I took jewelry, I think…I've always loved doing things, but I'm just not educated in art at all." Because she perceived shop and jewelry as hands-on art activities, she never categorized herself as an artist, but rather a crafter. There was a difference between being a drawer or a painter, typically perceived as fine art, as opposed to being a potter, which was described as a craft that is lesser refined than a fine art by both Katy and Dina. Katy also recognized this difference in labeling her art class experiences as "really hands-on, like you have to take this knowledge and then apply it." Participants agreed that the craft instructor is perceived as a lower-status teacher than the teacher who teaches the fine arts of drawing, painting and sculpting. This perceived hierarchy was another hurdle in establishing an identity as a teacher.

All the participants had a love for a certain medium, favored specific artists, and held strong beliefs about what being an artist is; however, their self-definition as an artist was often eclipsed by the demands of their teaching. When they defined what an artist is to their students, they did not often discuss the possibility that an artist might also be a

teacher. If one completes a terminal fine arts degree (an MFA), the assumption is that you will show your artwork in galleries, but that you might also teach at a higher education institution. Most major universities will not accept applicants for art teaching positions unless they have an MFA or an impressive resume documenting pages of exhibitions, shows, museum entries, etc. There is a marked difference in expected qualifications of grade school art teachers compared to college professors (Graham, 2009).

Nevertheless, it is expected that high school art teachers must be technically proficient. Richerme et al. (2012) explain, "certified arts educators receive broad training in their subject as well as coursework in pedagogical techniques, school policies and general education…visual arts educators typically excel in one art form, such as painting or graphic design, but are proficient in several" (p. 3). Teachers' artistic identities were affected by feelings that they lacked studio training, or that there was a particular strength or weakness in their artistic abilities (Hatfield et al., 2006).

All participants were certified through graduate programs, and expressed that they had little time to explore their artistic identities separate from their teaching identities. Dina rationalized her teaching responsibilities as causal to her lacking art practice saying, "I don't have any time to do that much art any more…I didn't really want to be a teacher, but I [ended up] liking it [teaching]." She struggles with striking a balance between her own artwork and her teaching work. Richerme et al. (2012) explains the artist identity in the art teacher component:

> As a consequence of their devotion to effective teaching, arts educators typically
> cannot bring the same depth to a specific medium or activity as providers of
> supplemental arts instruction who specialize in that area. Additionally, arts

educators full time work in schools prevents them from experiencing the day-to-day activities of a visual artist, so they may not understand the realities of the professional art world as well as would a visual artist who makes a living selling his or her work. (p. 5)

Art teachers are seen as being disconnected from the real world of art. The presumption is that artists are not educators, and educators are lesser forms of artists. All the participants felt to some extent that their "primary responsibility at work was to educate students rather than promote themselves as artists" (Hatfield et al., 2006, p. 44). There was usually evidence of the teacher's artwork in the classroom, but the participants rarely spent class time talking about their personal artwork. Despite this, Nik recently has started showing her work in galleries, Michelle takes art classes at the local university and has had her work published in magazines, Katy does her artwork in the summer and sometimes during her off class periods, and Liz works on her artwork on weekends and on school breaks.

Szekely (1978) states, "the ideal teacher should be able to recognize essential personal traits he has as an artist and explore those factors in the development of the student" (p. 18). The difference between the artist and art teacher is that the art teacher applies their artistic knowledge to the student. Liz enjoys painting, and you can see her affinity towards art even in the clothes that she wears. She is very animated in her gestures and her movement, and in her interactions with her students. She loves the kinesthetic nature of painting. She declares, "I think I just naturally live an artful life. I think that in pretty much everything I do, I'm thinking about the visual aspect of it. So how I dress. How I put food on a plate. I mean, I'm not a great cook but it's important to

me how the presentation is." Artists also have to have a sense of adventure and take risks, she shares, and this is how she says she lives her life. Her artwork is displayed on all four walls of her art classroom, as well as in local cafés, and she is active in the local art scene.

Dina identifies as part of a local artist community. Her partner teaches sculpture classes at a regional college and is active in the local artist community as well. As mentioned, she considers herself a crafter. She weaves, felts, pots, and embroiders. By my observations, she is also very adept at learning and implementing technology, more so than any of the other participants in this study. She has a significant online teaching presence, and uses technology as a tool to engage her students. She uses a variety of free mediums and online media—Blogspot, Prezzi, YouTube, Vimeo, and PowerPoint—to communicate her message to her classes. In her initial interview, she identified herself as not very tech savvy; however, her practice reveals the opposite. She is not afraid to try new media as a way to engage her learners. There was no evidence of her artwork in the classroom, however.

Richerme et al. (2012) explain "the wide scope of training required for certified arts educators to develop the multiple areas of expertise necessary to deliver a comprehensive arts curriculum often prevents them from specializing in a narrow subset in their art form. Simply put, teaching is an art in and of itself" (p. 4). Dina's teaching practice has merged into her artistic practice because by understanding new technologies such as blogs and computer animation, she learns the process before she presents it to the class, and this is her art form.

When first asked about her artistic practice Katy divulged, "I like crafting things and I know that's like a dirty word in arts sometimes." She identifies as a two-dimensional mixed-media artist and frequently works on her artwork during class time, and in between classes at the high school. Katy had ideas of becoming an artist early on in her life. She confessed, "That's all I did in church—study stained glass. I know exactly what types of shapes you can and cannot make. So, I don't know, I think really being an artist is about how you see things. It's not actually about what you're making, but the way to see the world." Having people "see" her artwork was also important to Katy's artistic identity.

Nik, on the other hand, is really shy about sharing her artwork. It took her a while to overcome her fear of showing her work in galleries, saying, "I'm really private about it…it took me a long time before I could call myself an artist. It was like, I'm not worthy. And I would imagine my ideas, thinking, 'You're just not good enough, you're not spectacular enough,' and so I kept changing my mind, just over-thinking the whole thing." However, once she showed her work and received praise for it, her confidence grew, and exhibiting her artwork is now part of her practice.

Part of maintaining the self-concept of "artist" as a component of identity is developing and further honing their teaching practice. Art teachers have the dual roles of being educators as well as skilled artists, and participants shared that finding the balance between the two has been a struggle since they made the decision to pursue licensure. Hatfield et al. (2006) explain, "pre-service preparation sets the stage for professional identity and lays down a foundation, but over time decreases in importance as practice takes over" (p. 44). Part of that pre-service preparation involved training in the visual arts

disciplines and professional teachers need to grow more efficient in figuring out how and what they want to teach so that they can find the time and space for their own art practices. The participants were always trying to find more time to work on their own artwork while balancing their teaching responsibilities, and felt that they needed to excel in both realms in order to be considered excellent art educators. Thompson (1986) asserts that creating and exhibiting works of art can give art teachers a source of satisfaction that offsets the emotional drain of teaching, keeping them from "burning out" (p. 47).

Michelle shows her art frequently and makes time to work on her art. She says it took her ten years of teaching to be able to get to the point where she could pursue her art again. She said that it took that long just to get the hang of how to teach, and to understand how schools worked as she bounced from teaching job to job. While the participants became teachers to gain stability, they always felt that their jobs were in jeopardy. At any time, they worried they might lose their teaching positions due to budget cuts or administrative shifts in the district. Many began as part time teachers, or traveled between two schools in order to teach art in public schools. Robinson-Cseke (2012) writes, "A conflict arises within the study of art education where the disciplines of art and education are interwoven" (p. 247). If teachers had formal training in a program that addressed the interaction of these multiple identities, it would be an ideal way to reinforce and support their emerging professional identities as well (Hatfield et al., 2006, p. 43). This notion becomes relevant when the participants shared how they construct their teaching identities and how their licensure programs impacted their artistic and teaching practice.

Pre-Service Training and Mentors

After examining how the participants identified as artists, I sought to examine how their art teacher training programs prepared them to teach and influenced their artistic and pedagogical practice. How did these programs help shape their identities? Day (1997) asserts that if art educators "enter the field as teachers of art, not having the benefits of knowing their professional foundations, the literature of their chosen field, or the major contributors of art education" this can prove problematic in bridging the divide between theory and practice (p. ix). According to Hatfield, Montana & Deffenbaugh (2006), "Thoughtful, thorough art education preparation has the potential to build foundational identities that enable art teachers to move into the real world of their field" (p. 43).

All participating teachers remembered they felt "a calling" to pursue art education. The calling came in a variety of ways. Nik shared, "I thought at first that I wanted to do elementary education, so it was the field in general that interested me. It wasn't like, "Well I want to be an artist, but I want to have a career too…I had a genuine interest in teaching and then it just evolved into incorporating my art as well." After sampling an education class Dina remembered, "I think it was the art ed classes and thinking, 'Well maybe I can do this. This is pretty interesting. Maybe it would be an interesting way to spend my life.'"

Regarding the possible undergraduate arts-related degree tracks, all participants felt that a BFA (Bachelor of Fine Arts) held a higher status position in the arts than a BA (Bachelor of Arts). Katy received her BFA and stressed that she just studied drawing and painting in college, not education. All the participants noted stratification of degrees to some extent, where certain pathways towards licensure, like the BFA to MA in Art

Education was superior to the BA to MA in Art Education because of the specific focus on the fine arts as an undergraduate compared to the general BA degree. Participants liked to emphasize their art learning over their education coursework as it legitimized their self-identification as an artist.

Similar to Powell & Lajevic's (2011) study of student teachers shifting into the role of a classroom teacher, when the participants in this study made the decision to pursue a teaching degree, their role as an artist shifted. In art school, you make art. In art education certification programs, you share lesson plans, learn about class management, and how to play the role of classroom teacher. Dina recollects her art education professor and mentor: "She got remarkable things out of everybody…you never really got much feedback…the whole class would just be presenting to each other, basically. It was very valuable and some of the lessons that I do now, I got from them, from that time…lessons that I really like that I go back to again and again."

Teachers agreed that they learned about what a teacher persona might look like in the classroom and classroom management through their education training. They practiced using their voice and how to imagine different student behaviors along with discipline practices. Katy says of her certification program mentor, "She just had us all engaged immediately…she would make us do things like [pretend] 'You have a student named Richard and he is running across the room with scissors. I want you to get him to stop by saying only his name.' So we would have to like, yell 'Richard!', and she'd go, 'No, he's not going to stop if you say it like that. Louder and more abrupt!' So we would practice ways to have command in the classroom and everyone was so embarrassed they

had to do this stuff but it really worked. I think it was really helpful, and I will never forget that."

Katy viewed the same professor's flexibility in choosing reading topics as an empowering experience, noting, "She would give us this amazing amount of information…it was like, 'Here's 15 articles' and we had this amazing wealth of information. There was something really wonderful about getting all these different perspectives. I feel like so often you go into a class, and it's here's my one view of whatever and that's all you're going to get. She was like, 'No, here's this article by this guy and it's a totally conflicting viewpoint.'"

Regardless of her presentation of various ideas, Katy's teacher did demonstrate some pedagogical preferences in her transfer to the pre-service teachers. "She had clear ideas of what a proper art classroom looks like, and the type of art projects worthy for K-12 instruction. And I also liked that when it came down to it, she had a very solid view of art education and she did not waver and if you were going to create a project where you were going to have students 'draw music,' you were done, because that is not art at all. She was very strict, like, 'You're not going to do that because that's a waste of time activity.'"

Additionally, participants learned how to behave as art teachers in their training programs. Michelle recalled being taught, "Don't let them call you a 'special'…which they do call us 'specials' here." Schools often use the term "specials" for what are deemed as the peripheral classes in schools such as art, music, and physical education. Typically, "specials" are perceived as low-stakes classes wherein students are not subjected to today's emphasis on standardized testing protocols. Again, this underscores

the idea that art teachers are always working from a perceived deficit, always trying to prove something, and working to demonstrate value. The prevailing idea at the school is often that the art teacher is "not a *real* teacher" or is considered second class." Katy's teacher reminded her students that part of their role as art teachers is to advocate for their position.

Study participants also learned to convey to their students that art is serious. Anderson (1981) confirms this noting, "They must be able to communicate to the student the significance of art in his experiences and environment as a means of self expression" (p. 46). What the participants learned in their pre-service programs set the standards of how they should act as teachers who value art.

Katy summarizes her takeaway objectives and goals of teacher education programs:

> I think it's really important that the students studying to become art teachers were learning that the students need to leave your classroom with the sense that art is a serious discipline. That's number 1. So if you're using cotton balls and popsicle sticks, you're going to be a joke. I think that was really at the forefront of everything that she was trying to teach us…art is a serious discipline and because it's a serious discipline, you have to do things in a certain way, based on what works and based on theory and based on the history of art. So, if your art is coming out of something other than the real foundation of art history, then you're not teaching art to your kids."

Katy also notes how her art education professor presented examples of what kind of art lessons were considered less-than. She also learned about art project schematics, and

placed little value of that style of art teaching noting, "And then also just not creating a shallow experience. I sometimes laugh when I see other teachers doing it and I'm like, 'You can do that, I'm not really laughing at you. Please, just don't call it art when you do it.' Like they'll take one of those plastic mask things you can buy at E-Z Mart, and they'll cover it with beans and will be like, 'It's an African mask!' and I'm like, 'It's not an African mask. That's not how they make masks in Africa actually. It's a plastic bean mask from the United States and actually the plastic mask is made in China.'"

Participants felt that they needed to leave their teaching programs with a sense of confidence in order to go out and find teaching positions, keep their positions, and continue to want to teach. Katy summarized her certification experience and what she gleaned from her mentor: "She gave me the confidence to stand up for what I believe in, the importance of art, and so every year at open house, I give parents this enormously long list of careers in the arts. And I'm like, 'Are there that many careers in Math? I don't think so…so just go home and think about this.'"

How the Teachers Taught: Teaching in the Real World

Ultimately, the participants in this study taught based on how they were taught, or based on what they think students should be learning based on their own art learning experience. In their personal experiences, something clicked for them in an art classroom, and the idea that they could perhaps share, or incite, that kind of experience with their own students was an incentive to teach. "Using whatever knowledge and skill they possess, art teachers make pedagogical decisions that affect the quality of students' engagement with art forms, traditions, and meanings" (Kraehe, 2010, p. 163). Katy confirms, speaking of her mentor again, "I do think I teach in a very similar way and that

only makes sense because that's how I was taught." Katy's art education teacher talked to students respectfully, which Katy tries to emulate to this day. She finds a way to talk with the students, usually based on the art project. Katy felt that her teacher really wanted to know the students and cared about them, and this left a strong mark on her identity as a teacher.

The participants also understood their preferred habits and learning styles and incorporated that into their teaching practice. Nik reflects on what worked for her as a student, and applies it to her own classroom. "I'm one of those people that can't work around people. If I had my lunch hour at school, I might do a little work on a painting...If someone comes in my room, I tuck it away. I try to do that with my students [give them space and privacy]. I don't want to hover, so I kind of look quickly."

Michelle also reflects on her learning experiences, "I try to be very thorough. I try to always take into account that you have students that learn in different ways. So I usually give them a hand out. I make sure to take notice of students who have IEPs or special learning needs…I try and give them freedom…but also challenge them. I try to be easy to talk to. I think it is really important to have a great sense of humor with the students, because it helps to break the ice when you can laugh together. Even when you have harder things to say, maybe some really tough constructive criticism…then, I think they know that you genuinely care about them, because you can act like a friend to them, but also a mentor and a teacher. I think it is good to encompass all of that." These were important traits that she had collaged together from her learning experiences, recognizing that creating and looking at art requires careful reflection and critique.

Teachers also recognized that they could not please everyone. As Michelle said, "Not everyone is going to like you and you have to be okay with that.'" Reflecting on their own learning experiences proved very influential to the participants' teaching practices. When they examined their own school experiences, the less likely they were to repeat the practices they felt were damaging to their educational growth. This understanding required analysis of their own educational identity formations and enabled them to develop their teacher/artist personas.

It is valuable to examine how these teachers transferred the lessons garnered from their teacher training, if at all. You can *say* one thing, but *do* something completely different. Unrath and Kerridge (2009) summarize that an exemplary teacher embodies a "'deep understanding, respect for students (or altruism), use of knowledge and passion for teaching and learning (or competence), and lastly, multidimensional perception (or community) (p. 283). This caused me to wonder during the research: what does a "good" teacher do consistently and do these aforementioned qualities apply to the art classroom? Was there a difference between performing for an audience such as an official observer and using teaching strategies they think are effective? As my year in the field passed by, I realized that the participants revealed subtle adjustments in their teaching style as they began to feel more comfortable with my presence and intentions in the classroom. I had observed all of these teachers at some point over the five years I was supervising student teachers, and they initially performed differently when I was conducting my research.

Based on Robinson-Cseke's (2012) interpretation of Bell's (2008) identity work as a "construction negotiated among self, society, and the performance of expectations," I coded their teaching as "performing" because it seemed like they were trying to perform

in the best possible teacher role (p. 248). For example, they tended to walk around the classroom silently observing and offering suggestions, or joking with students, and in one case, carrying a mug with "I love teaching!" written in script. The embodied archetype of the teacher wandering the room along with the confirmed message of "I love what I am doing right now" was meant to be overtly visible to the students and myself. As much as I believe that the subjects love teaching, as I do myself, I noticed a difference between their teaching "performance" as I conducted the research—how they acted out the role of what they believed to be a good teacher—versus my previous observations as a university supervisor of student teachers.

While I was a university supervisor, I noticed that the student teachers typically sat back and let students come to them at their desk for advice. I remember doing this as well when I was in the high school classroom. I would walk around, and when I felt that everyone was off to a solid start of the work day I would retreat back to my desk. When I am teaching pre-service teachers in a university setting, I always tell them that they should be out and about all class period, but this typically may not be feasible with all of the other responsibilities of teaching. With this in mind, I started to wonder if they were teaching to the audience (me) with me in the room, as I was affiliated with the local university and I had supervised their student teachers. I worried that they felt that I was evaluating their teaching, rather that observing their practice. I made sure to work to undo this perception, and visit as often as possible. Frankly, I was learning from them and I sincerely hope my gratitude was reflected in my presence.

How then, did their presentation of a teaching identity play out with students? Nik shared one of her teaching strategies as, "Well, I try to be very light about it with the

kids. You know, like I said, I try not to take myself too seriously, but not let them think it's a joke. I also try to be that fine line between mentor/teacher/friend. But I feel like they're comfortable with me…it's amazing how much they'll let you into their life once they get to know you." Appearing lighthearted, and interested in learning more about student's experiences, was one way she would appeal to her students.

Another teaching strategy was to keep demonstrations short, to keep students working and engaged. For example Nik often said before her lesson demonstrations, "Oh, can I have your attention? Let me give you a reminder, just listen, you can work…I try to keep them working all the time…so I keep my demos short." Nik and the others understood their student's limitations, and recognized the overload that occurred when presenting copious amounts of information at the beginning of class.

Study participants recognized that their unique position in the high school culture was an advantage, and used it to help students think about possibilities outside of the art classroom. All the teachers recognized the importance of caring about students. Nik elaborated "there was a situation a couple years ago where some of the students did something inappropriate, with phone calls and pictures, and a couple of the girls came to me and said, 'Listen, this is kind of weird and we don't know what to do,' so, I was like, 'Well, you need to go to the Principal'…they could come to me about things—like which college they should go to.'

Teachers also role-played as cheerleaders, and motivational speakers. Nik shares a motivation technique: "I still feel like I can teach kids how to draw better. Because people always have this idea, like, they'll come to class, and they'll be like, 'Oh, just so you know, I stink at drawing.' And then I'll say, 'Oh, good, you've come to the right

place, because I'll teach you.' And then they look at me funny, and then I'm just like, 'Okay, how many of you play an instrument, play a sport? Okay, the first time you picked up your trumpet, could you play a whole song?' 'No.' So, I give them that little spiel and then I use the blind drawing exercise from the book *Drawing From the Right Side of the Brain*. That really does help them improve, and I tell them, 'I want you to go from point A to point B. I just want you to improve a little bit. Increase your skill. That's all we're looking for.'"

All the teachers felt that they needed to provide safe spaces for students to be able to explore and experiment with creative ideas and materials. Michelle feels she can motivate her students by creating a nurturing classroom space. "I try and create an environment where the students feel like they are learning something, a really receptive environment, and you are almost like a surrogate parent to them…I like students to come in here and feel like they can create, they can learn, they can be inspired."

Some teachers also recognized the significance of the student's voice and opinion. Liz believes, "I want them to take away the idea that what they have to say is important. And that they have the means now to say it, and the forum, and that they'll be heard or seen." During a classroom observation, one of the students was struggling with an activity. Liz went and asked the student, "What do you like? I know what I like." She wants the student to be able to identify what they are interested in, or what she feels confident addressing. She doesn't overtly say what she's thinking but asks her students to engage in a dialogue with her. Rather than telling them what to do, she asks them what they think.

Instilling artistic confidence through modeling is central to Katy's teaching style. "I think that's really how people learn, by emulating…I think art is a lot about how you view the world and so I tell them, 'What I'm looking at when I see this, is this, and this, so when I start to paint, this is what I do. It's because I see this in this way.' I think it really helps to show them, for them to actually see. 'This is what my hand is doing' is really valuable and I like to think that… eventually anybody can learn...the majority of the students, if they see it enough, they'll pick up pieces."

Katy views modeling as a problem-solving technique, where she and the student can figure out a challenging skill or concept together. However, she also recognizes that modeling can have a negative effect on student learning. "There is always a tough thing, how much of the students' project you're going to do yourself…as a teacher you have to say, 'Is it okay to paint on their painting?' And it's like, 'Yeah.' It's like practice, like the math teacher does the equation too. So I'll do one-half of the face and say, 'Well now you get the other side and you got to make it look the same. It has to fit. It can't be like one person made this side and one person made this side. You have got to really try to emulate my technique now.'"

Ultimately, all the participants acknowledged the vulnerability of being an art teacher, and asking students to create artworks. Michelle remembered, "My first year in Central High I had this awful, awful studio class that at the end of the day that would just would railroad me into the ground. I remember a couple days…I would just shut the door and cry at my desk and I was like 'I hate them.' You know, but you never should let students see you cry because then they will totally feed off of that." Having to perform and yet mask certain emotions or feelings was an understood disposition of being a

teacher. Their target audience of students, parents and administrators required them to maintain decorum for fear of alienation, losing their job, and harming their reputations in the school community.

Professional Development

"My professional development is when I take a trip and I go to galleries, network with artists, explore new mediums and try new techniques" – Katy

Richerme et al. (2012) state that "to maintain their status on school faculty, certified arts educators advance their teaching and artistic knowledge through ongoing professional development" (p. 3). I wanted to learn where the teachers could turn to find opportunities to learn, improve and enrich their art teaching practice. When asked about how much professional development any of the participants received, most responded, not enough. None of the five participants have been to a national art education conference; only three had been to a state conference for art education within the past five years.

All of the participants were interested in professional development such as learning a new art skill, or taking an art class. Rather than having specific art-centered professional development at her school, Michelle shared that "On professional development days we have sessions like updating your website or, anytime we have a new program to learn like MyGradeBook, there an introduction to the program, so we have stuff like that. Or there might be something like dealing with the classroom bully and more general admin stuff." This type of non-art-centered professional development was common across all sites, and was disappointing to the art teachers. Occasionally,

they would go to a museum on their own with other art teacher colleagues, or were offered free time to work in their art classrooms, but the majority of the in-school time dedicated to professional development was not art related.

As Katy said, "Am I getting any sort of professional development? The answer is no. I think that is pretty typical for the way that these district professional development days go…you do a lot of busy work stuff and it's not actually anything that is benefiting me as a teacher or my students to be perfectly honest."

In-school professional development opportunities frequently did not address the visual art teachers' needs. Most sought out enrichment opportunities outside of the K-12 school setting. Katy returned from a trip abroad during the summer where she worked on curriculum. She reflected, "It was really great to have this huge support group…I was with all these art teachers who were able to help me integrate art into my core subject area to I think it allowed them to see the ways that teaching art is really valid in a way that it's a core subject area. I don't care if schools call it that or not, but it really is."

Being a visual art teacher is typically viewed as a very specific discipline, meaning that art teachers are thought of as incapable of imagining curriculum outside of the fine arts (Milbrandt & Klein, 2008). This was often frustrating to the participants, especially since they were asked to integrate other disciplines to make their classes relate to state tests at their schools. They also felt that by nature the arts are interdisciplinary, and felt frustrated by the failures of their colleagues to recognize the unique learning opportunities made possible in the visual arts classroom.

As part of their own personal professional development, Katy and Michelle were taking classes at the local university and through art seminars. Katy shared, "something I

really miss now that I'm a teacher is academic discourse in a university setting." Earlier she had mentioned her distaste for academic discourse/theoretical language; however, she enjoys the dialogue and activities in the sociology class she is taking using her tuition credits from her experience as a cooperating teacher. Her school district does not pay tuition, so the teachers either pay with their own money or through accrued university credits from the local university's cooperating teacher incentive.

While most participants cited issues with finding the time off and the money to attend state conferences, all had attended their state level art education conference at one point. When they went, they all made valuable connections with other state art teachers and felt energized after attending. Katy said, "What I find most valuable is simply networking with other teachers. I think that for the most part, the workshops themselves are oriented more to elementary level teachers and are sometimes a little watered down…and very often they are repetitive." She felt that the secondary art teacher was not addressed as often as she would have liked, as did the other teachers when asked about conference opportunities for the secondary art teachers.

From my own state-level experiences, I too have noticed that the secondary art opportunities are lacking. What the offerings do reflect for the secondary fine art educator focus on portfolio development, college readiness, application of the arts towards the Common Core, winning Scholastic Awards, achieving high scores on the Advanced Placement (AP) Art Exam and product-based lesson plans. This will be discussed further in the following chapters, but it appears their agenda for the secondary visual art teacher is geared towards recognition and success as a teacher.

Regardless, participants found the state level conferences reassuring in that there are other art teachers who share their experiences. Having relationships with other art teachers helped the participants feel less alienated, and part of a larger community. Milbrandt (2006) reports "for the overwhelming majority of art teachers, the enterprise of teaching is one of isolation from other colleagues in the same discipline" (p. 16). Katy reported, "I do think it's really important to have time with other art teachers to hear about their struggles or successes, to feel like you are not in it alone, particularly in a time when there are huge budget cuts going on…sometimes you feel like it is just you, or it is just your district or your building." This isolation is literal, too. All of the teachers in the study had classrooms detached from the rest of the building, or in a back corner somewhere. Often, there was a second art classroom next door, but all of the rooms were either on the top floor of the building or in a far-off wing within the high school campus compound.

Teachers noted that sometimes they felt unwelcome or detached from the academic community of art education at the college/university level. Teachers felt as if they had to perform to a certain degree around university representatives, specifically student teacher supervisors, and felt disconnected from the new theories introduced in the academic classroom. Consequently, there was also resistance towards modifying their pedagogical practices in alignment with current art education theory. On one visit, the department chair of the arts program came into Liz's class to discuss a concern with a student. I sat and listened patiently. The department chair had approved my visits, and viewed my IRB, so she was informed about what I was doing. She then started up a conversation with Liz about how art theory does not reflect what is actually happening in

art classrooms. When she hears newer teachers, or student teachers discussing what they have been reading in their studies, she feels that they are ill prepared, as theory is not reality.

In a similar vein, Liz continued,

"I try to go to conferences that are meaningful which are sometimes hard to find. Right now, we're trying to get up to speed on Common Core…nobody knows what they're talking about. I've been to two Common Core workshops so far and they both started out by saying, 'We don't really know what is happening.'"

Trying to keep up with current education trends and buzzwords was a constant challenge, let alone deciphering how current educational policies directly affected the visual art classroom. I felt the mentality was similar to Dory's mantra in *Finding Nemo*: "just keep swimming." That is, at least until the next shark or obstacle presented itself.

In my research, I observed a lack of communication from the top down; from administrators and art education theorists, to district coordinators and others. Teachers recognized the "chain of command" and felt that they were at the tail end of receiving information. This is problematic. Frequently, participants would let me know how out of touch professors are with classroom practice, and how disappointed they are with current pre-service preparation to enter the art classroom.

Florio-Ruane and Williams (2008) summarize "we need to understand these (life history) experiences as they have engendered several generations of teachers—both to help us to understand our own lives and choices, and to illuminate the dynamics of education and social change in the nation at large" (p. 20). The teachers in this study offer significant insight into their teaching and curricular rationales as well as their perceptions

of artistic practice. These experiences impact the next two chapters that will further illuminate choices for both the teacher and student in the high school visual art classroom as it pertains to VCAE.

CHAPTER 5: VISUAL CULTURE ART EDUCATION IN THE CLASSROOM

The last chapter examined how the study participants found their way into the teaching profession. It argued that their teaching identities were shaped largely by their individual art learning experiences. I know that when I first read about visual culture art education in my doctoral studies, even though I felt very connected to the central theories behind VCAE, I was skeptical about whether VCAE would apply effectively to the high school art classroom. Having been a university supervisor of student teaching, and having reflected upon my own art learning experiences in high school and in college, I experienced difficulty connecting the VCAE literature to my experiences with art teachers, and to the student and the cooperating teachers I was observing.

Hermann (2005) asserts, "teachers maintain tradition by teaching the way they were taught" (p. 44). That concept was born out in my observations. Teachers taught in the style they learned how to make art in their own school experiences. By research design, all the teachers in the study were in school when VCAE literature was available and may have been exposed to VCAE literature in their art education training programs. This criterion for participation in the study was in alignment with the participant requirement in LaPorte, Speirs, & Young's (2008) empirical work studying the understanding of VCAE. Gaining access to the teachers' backgrounds and pedagogical beliefs also helped to inform how or if they implemented VCAE in their visual art classrooms.

This chapter will outline and explore specific instances of actual instruction examining the varying degrees of Visual Culture Art Education (VCAE) implementation in the visual art classroom. The chapter will also explore how individual teachers

understood and interpreted VCAE art education theory, and how and when they utilized academic language. The chapter will present the observation results for three instructors describing their implementation and understanding of the visual culture model actually observed. The first group of observations will describe instances where VCAE implementation in the classroom was lacking. The next segment will illustrate the unintentional or intuitional use of VCAE. The last part will outline the choices students were given in the visual art classroom based on the defined components of the VCAE model. The participants' beliefs and ideas about art and teaching provide insight into how they taught and valued art, and how effectively their art-making beliefs translated to their students learning in the classroom.

With this in mind, through interviews, observations, and interactions between the students and the researcher patterns linking certain educational backgrounds and teaching experience with implementation of VCAE began to emerge. This chapter will address the initial research questions that ask how teachers understand VCAE; in what ways are teachers choosing to integrate the visual culture model within their standards of curriculum design; in what ways is VCAE meaningful to teachers as a concept; what kind of visual culture images are teachers choosing to integrate into their art teaching practice; and lastly, is current art education theory and approaches to pedagogy being used in classrooms, and if so, how?

Given the benefits of VCAE outlined in the art education literature as summarized in earlier chapters, a goal of this study was to learn more about the application of the model in the high school classroom. Stankiewicz (2004) argues that VCAE can offer an opportunity to move beyond the traditional skills-based, school-art product model in

current schools and encourage art educators to continue developing their skills through "learning to understand current theories in relevant disciplines and then apply those theories to interpretation of a range of images and objects" (p. 9). This chapter will provide illustrations of how study participants understand art education models, specifically VCAE. The study examines each teacher's perspectives on art education theory to practice. I will also share instances of VCAE occurring in the classroom, including moments of democratic learning, and providing examples of choices students had in the art room.

Understanding VCAE

A review of some of the core principles of the visual culture model to help structure the findings in the classrooms to provide better understand how and if teachers integrated the VCAE model in their art classrooms. Sullivan (2003) declares, "visual culture researchers are interested in the communicative and political role of art and help us understand the contexts surrounding art so as to exercise control over the visual information we confront" (p. 196). Duncum (2003) notes, "the impetus for the emergence of visual culture at this time is the observation that high tech information societies are visually saturated societies" (p. 20). Duncum (2002) offers his clarification of visual culture art education in light of our current state of media saturation, rationalizing the shift towards VCAE in art education as follows:

Mainstream art education begins with the assumption that art is inherently valuable whereas VCAE assumes that visual representations are sites of ideological struggle that can be deplorable as they can be praiseworthy. The starting point is not the prescribed, inclusive canon of the institutionalized art

world, but students' own cultural experience. A major goal is empowerment in relation to the pressures and processes of contemporary image makers, mostly those who work on behalf of corporate capitalism, not the cherishing of artistic traditions and the valuing of artistic experimentation. The basic orientation is to understand, not to celebrate. (p. 8)

VCAE is designed to be more inclusive of materials and art content as a reaction to a growing visual culture. Stankiewicz (2004) outlines her understanding of visual culture art education application based upon Duncum's (2002) theory of application in the classroom into three components;

First, there is a broadened canon or list of symbolic, communicative images and artifacts for study. Second there is a focus on how we look at these images and artifacts and on the conditions under which we look, or more self-conscious visuality and attribution of meaning. Duncum's third strand places images within social practice, analyzing them more as texts, as elements. (p. 6)

Ultimately, meaning can be derived from visual culture images when used in the art classroom and the consensus is that use of these non-traditional images be incorporated into current art curriculum. The model suggests moving away from a narrow focus on the production of student artwork in the classroom and incorporating more discussion in the art lesson. The application of the VCAE model however can be very challenging to the classroom teacher. Stankiewicz (2004) warns, "nonetheless for art educators, the "broader range of stuff" is the most salient characteristic of visual culture art education" (p. 6). How teachers might interpret and apply the model has been a central point of debate within the academic art education community.

Many scholars have provided broad strategies they believe facilitate the application of VCAE theory to practice. For example, Stewart (2012) suggests "visual culture art education is not limited exclusively to an examination of popular culture, nor is it an apotheosis of popular culture. It is often a critique of idea and attitudes of popular culture. It must be understood that fine art influences and is influenced by popular culture and the world around us" (p. 53). I think what is lost in translation is how to apply the theory to current more traditional classroom practice. How would a K-12 classroom teacher interpret VCAE literature? This is particularly challenging considering that current art teachers are replicating the models that they were taught during their art education experiences. This must be coupled with the natural resistance to moving from a curriculum that typically focuses on art production, formalism and technical skill building to the broader approach of VCAE.

Stankiewicz (2004) argues "that unless advocates for VCAE can adequately explain the importance of visual culture to learning in arts education, and frame it within national and state policy, including art education standards, visual culture is likely to have a minor impact on day-to-day K-12 art education" (p. 11). Teachers in this study were versed in their local and state standards, and all of the participants noted that they worked to develop their curricula within their district's arts framework. The inclusion of visual culture was not evident in any of the schools' explicit materials, but there was also no documentation that said that prohibited addressing visual culture in their curricula.

All five study participants were unable to identify or elaborate on the textbook definition of visual culture art education (VCAE), yet they could describe certain facets of the VCAE model without knowing they were describing visual culture. Two teachers

could define discipline based art education (DBAE), and one participant shared what she knew about constructivist teaching. When asked about a variety of art education models, Liz declared, "I don't read about education so I don't have buzzwords." Stankiewicz (2004) predicted such sentiments, writing that, "in the context of current federal and state reforms, the concerns of art educators in higher education for theory seem distant if not trivial to K-12 teachers" (p. 10). There was a general consensus among the participants that current theory did not apply to their K-12 teaching practice. It was evident that study participants were not familiar with the academic language of theory and therefore did not know the vocabulary to align their practice with the literature.

This was one of the first times I felt the "us versus them" (art teachers versus university representatives) power dynamic as a researcher. As a researcher in their classroom, and representative from the local university, I wanted to connect with the teachers based on my school teacher past, but as a researcher my identity was viewed as more "prestigious" as Liz stated, and made her feel like I knew more about the current state of art education research and she did not (field notes, 12/09/11). Conversely, my insecurity came from the fact that she knew more about the current state of the art classroom, and I was an outsider looking in, having been out of K-12 teaching practice for several years. Participants shared this feeling by sharing stories of working with university professors. Katy remembers working with an art education professor at a curriculum workshop over the summer in the Southwest and felt the professor was out of touch when they were working on creating curriculum. Katy stated, "she (the professor) had never taught in the classroom…she had only been in university settings" (field notes, 10/5/11). Teaching in the K-12 setting is a badge of honor, and professors are sometimes

viewed as having limited experience in the K-12 classroom. From moments like this I sometimes felt that I represented the theory and the teacher represented the practice and I could see and feel the disconnect between our two roles. I often had to share stories of when I was a classroom teacher in order to ensure the teacher that at one point, I was one of them. I tried to act as the bridge between the two institutions, bring my perspectives from my experiences as a schoolteacher and as a researcher.

In order to align classroom practice to the VCAE model, the teacher has to feel comfortable discussing critical issues imbedded in visual culture. Meban (2009) thought that;

> Central to a critical visual culture education, as in a relational and dialogical aesthetic, is the belief that pedagogic intervention is needed to examine, expose, and resist the pervasive influence of consumer culture ideology on our ways of being and acting in the world. (p. 36)

VCAE then is based on the assumption that the classroom teacher is open to and willing to learn about visual culture as it relates to their students and community, and then able to facilitate dialogue with students. Silvers (2004) warns that the VCAE model assumes that K-12 teachers would know how to unpack the theory in the classroom and notes "that such a suggestion (for teachers to implement VCAE) should at least be accompanied by serious and feasible plans for teaching art educators knowledge and skills very different from those that heretofore have sustained them" (p. 22). This is very important to consider.

Participants in this study identified as practitioners, not scholars. The teachers implied that current art education theory was not meaningful to them as a pedagogical

concept. Katy elaborates this perspective on the disconnect between the theory and practice stating:

> I feel like sometimes to look at these models and it's like we do so much with this and with workshops and whatever, even differentiated instruction or different lesson design workshops. Like, you can sort of say: alright, I'm going to try to incorporate this into my teaching practice, but sometimes it's like, you know, when you see the person, they're much more comfortable in blue jeans, but they're trying to wear a suit. It's like, that's how you feel as a teacher, it's like you trying on this model that doesn't really fit and that maybe it's better to just be authentic and whatever is working for you I think it's like, maybe it's good, maybe it's bad, I don't know, but I'm certainly teaching to the students who are most like me. I'm teaching the way that I would best learn and so in some ways, maybe some students, not as appropriate for some students, but I guess (field notes, 2/28/12).

The participants of the study indicated that as practitioners, the literature they encountered in their teaching training was ill suited, and out of touch for their needs in the K-12 school setting. Uniformly, this was how they approached answering the question about theory to practice. Given the varied classrooms, licensure programs and art departments of each teacher's experiences it is hard to know if they could alter their teaching practices or feel safe trying out new models of art education. There are multiple variables that might impact the application of any art education theory for classroom practice. These variables, barriers or attitudes towards certainly deserve further investigation.

The participants acknowledged awareness that there are a variety of pedagogical philosophies and teaching discourses pertaining to art education practice even if they themselves were unfamiliar with the specific academic language. The teachers seemed overwhelmed by the academic language, and when I began to interview them about VCAE the conversation felt tense, as they struggled to answer some of my questions. I also feel that given the time to completion of their art licensure programs, perhaps there was not enough time to attempt to sample different models of art education especially when working with a cooperating teacher who had curriculum and art beliefs firmly in place. When asked to describe what she remembered from her art education coursework Katy explained,

> Like I can think back to my philosophy of art education I had to write in college, right, you're like writing all of this stuff about how you want your test (ideal art) room to be …it's all great theory, but, I don't know, you can't just, I don't feel that it's really practical in my classroom.

For something to be practical for Katy, it needs to directly apply to her teaching practice. She needs to identify with the practice or theory before she will implement it. She struggled with the application of the articles she was reading in her art teacher training in relation to how she saw herself as a future teacher. She shared a story about recently working with a college professor at a workshop over the summer. She remembered being frustrated by the professor's ideas about creating lessons for the high school art classroom citing, "she had never taught in a classroom, only in a university setting." Therefore, the professor was not practical in Katy's mind, as she was suggesting Katy should try the professor's idea in the classroom despite the professor's lack of

classroom teaching experience. This was not practical, as Katy could not identify with the professors idea because Katy views herself as a K-12 practitioner. The professor, a higher education teacher is believed to be less credible as he or she lacks K-12 classroom teaching experience.

The teachers all believed that something was lost in translation from the texts they had read to the application within their own classrooms. Additionally, there was trepidation towards academics and their classroom experiences and abilities, along with feeling disconnected from the current literature in art education. Having teaching experience in the K-12 setting was viewed as more credible in order to make curricular decisions, rather than the theories and ideas of an academic. They all felt that academics were far removed from the classroom teaching experience, while simultaneously the teachers in this study have been removed from academic coursework. This made keeping up with art education theory challenging to study participants, while feeding into their perception that academics have lost touch with the current K-12 classroom landscape. It is hard for teachers to determine the credibility of new art education literature, and they mistrust the ability of published art education scholars to determine what may be relevant and appropriate in the K-12 setting, even if those scholars started out as or are currently still practicing K-12 teachers.

When explicitly asked to describe visual culture, all five participants struggled with sharing their definitions. Once again, none of the participants could define or recognize the term VCAE, or visual culture art education, however they were aware of some of the central tenets of VCAE even thought they could not identify the model. They had never heard of the VCAE model. I then asked what they could tell me about visual

culture to try to understand how they make meaning of this concept. Dina said, "I mean I think your culture does vary an awful lot depending on your age, but I mean they think it's the media, what you see on television, what you talk about with your friends, what music you might listen to, advertising. I mean that's what I think of when I think of popular culture." Dina begins her definition with unpacking the word culture. She then interchanges visual culture with popular culture as this is a concept she feels more familiar with.

> Attempting to define visual culture further, Nik hesitantly responded,
>
> It's like you look at, you take a visual image, like a visual artifact could be contemporary art or things that kids are exposed to every day like, you, Dunkin Donuts, you know, and then you kind of teach from that, you talk about the context, like what's the importance of this. I don't know.

Katy went on to say,

> Potentially it can even be related to how people dress in the world and how identity is formed based on our visual cues around us, so I think that that all of that encompasses visual culture and also of course, you know, fine art, and I guess understanding visual culture would mean having an understanding of actual art images as well.

Their understanding was an approximation of the literature on visual culture, but they were unfamiliar with the formal academic language of VCAE and visual culture per se. The idea of "not knowing" was something that all the teachers presented at various points during the study. While we all encounter this sense of not knowing, the question then becomes: what does a teacher do when she know she doesn't know?

On the other end of the spectrum, Liz presented a stronger grasp on the definition of visual culture:

I think visual culture is almost everything. It's changing so rapidly with technology, so much of our visual culture is technology-based now. I find that really fascinating and I like that wave and we can ride that wave and embrace it. I know a lot of people are resistant to it and a lot of teachers are resistant to it, which just blows my mind, like, why would you try to put the brakes on change. Anyway, visual culture, I think it encompasses everything from obviously traditional art-making media to print media to technology-based media: Internet, film, and animation. Visual culture, I think is a little bit different from that. Visual culture is, I think, sort of an aesthetic, more about what we as a culture, as a community find interesting and beautiful and what we choose to surround ourselves with.

When I asked Liz if she sees visual culture having a place in her art room, she responded "Absolutely. We need to be experiencing visual culture all of the time and I think we need to be contributing to it by making stuff and being part of that of that process." She understood the mechanisms and ideas behind examining visual culture, but she and the others just were not actively creating curricula that directly involved, or centered on the visual culture model.

VCAE in the Classroom

Visual culture prompts present themselves in the classroom in a variety of ways. Visual culture art education evolved from recognition of the variety of media and visual experiences students encounter within their every day lives. Stewart (2012) writes,

> Visual culture art education…developed from a desire to engage and motivate students in authentic ways through their own real life experiences and through topics and issues that are of interest to them. (p. 49)

K-12 students may not have access to museums or galleries, but certainly have access to other visual forms within their communities and cultures. VCAE aims to include more accessible and to be more inclusive of the imagery included in art instruction beyond studying Western art that has dominated art classroom instructional practices and pre-service teacher education. Additionally, Hermann (2005) notes that with the increasing arguments against and for VCAE

> Many art educators have asked for clear-cut lesson plans and projects as a description of what a visual culture approach to art education should really look like in the public school art classroom. (p. 41)

Teachers are interested in having access to concrete lesson examples, and it is unclear how and if teacher-training programs are providing a space to experiment with the inclusion of the model in curriculum.

For example, Amburgy (2011) teaches a class at Penn State University called Diversity, Pedagogy and Visual Culture that specifically offers opportunities for pre-service teachers to learn about methodologies for teaching visual culture in the art classroom. She focuses the course around three central themes:

- Visual representations characterize categories of people in ways that either protect or challenge privileged social positions of class, race, ethnicity, gender, sexual identity, ability, age, and other aspects of identity.

- Visual representations offer positions from which to look at them, and these looking positions may be gendered, raced, classed, or constructed in other ways.

- Viewers make meaning of visual culture in multiple ways. (p. 7)

This example of a methods course for pre-service teachers offers insight into ways teachers might consider incorporating visual culture into their classrooms, however none of the participants in this study had access to this kind of coursework.

I began to observe how visual culture was evident in the classroom. I started to identify some patterns, such as student-led topics for projects, the inclusion of visual culture imagery in the classroom, more discussion based lessons, etc. that were in support of the inclusion of VCAE in the art classroom and curricula, as well as patterns preventing the inclusion of VCAE. For example, teachers allowed students to find inspirations from the images that they see in their lives or the music that they like but were worried about students copying images directly from photographs. The recognition of re-appropriation as a tool for the student's own meaning making was absent. There are implicit, and sometimes invisible/unwritten rules in the school setting and what constitutes a 'worthy' art learning object. These rules are enforced in the classroom and through outside forces such as the Scholastic Art Awards that specifically do not allow students to submit work that includes copying or appropriating images from visual/popular culture.

Dina recognized that her students were interested in graffiti and cartoons noting,

That's sometimes what they want to do and truthfully with the lower levels, if

that's what motivates them and that's what makes them create something in some ways, it's okay with me.

She paused then followed up with, "I guess that's probably not really the correct way" of understanding the problematic nature of her previous statement. From Dina's communication about her art teacher training, her perspective of good art is art that it is technically realistic, demonstrating a high level of skill. She shares with me that she feels her students are less skilled, and need constant motivation to make art. Cartoons are not viewed as realistic or as fine art in the high school art community in Dina's region, but the students enjoy working with cartoons, animation, and manga. However, she acknowledges that most of her students do not arrive in her Studio Art class with a strong background in technical art skills. Demographically, most of her students are labeled as "underperforming" in regards to state testing, so art experiences were minimized for her students in favor of coursework to help improve test scores. The inclusion of visual culture then equates to a less refined art product, and a less skilled student, which was confirmed by Liz, Katy, Nik and Michelle to varying degrees.

Teachers noted their students' interests in musicians, athletes, movie stars, video games, Internet culture and cultural events. Freedman, Heijnen, Kallio-Tavin, Kárpáti, & Papp (2013) conducted research on visual culture communities across the globe through focus groups learning to discover how adolescents and young artists participate in visual culture communities. One of the major themes that emerged from the study was questioning "a desire to learn about art/visual culture that tends to be missing from school curriculum" (Freedman et al., 2013, p. 106). The art classroom is viewed as a safe space

for students to be able to discuss adolescent topics, and cultural happenings. Students wanted to talk about topics that affected their lives.

Freedman et al. (2013) note that students in their visual culture study formed friendships with other visual culture like minded students "because formal (art) education seems to be artistically or culturally narrow" (p. 107). They learned about their interest in visual culture, like Manga, graffiti, or fan art for example, from discussing with their friends. For example, Dina had her media class working on learning the talk show format. Students were asked to prepare and research their topic, then present and digitally record in a talk show format. One of the groups chose the topic of teen sex and Dina's first internal response was "Oh boy, this is going to be a real mess." She was nervous about how the topic was going to actualize in the classroom.

> However, to her surprise, the debate was a success. She continued,
>
> I'll tell you they were almost too good, like one of the girls will say, "You guys are boring because you're all saying just what you think people want you to hear. You're not talking about the controversies." You know. Then she's like, "You guys, there's two virgins up there talking about having sex. You need somebody who's having sex up there.

Even though this made Dina uncomfortable, she felt it was valuable conversation and the students engaged in a thoughtful dialogue. It has been moments like these for Dina that have built up her confidence to engage in deeper discussion and new topics.

Even though the teachers acknowledged the prevalence of visual culture within their students (and their own) lives, and that visual culture artifacts (billboards, advertisements, etc.) are constantly being created, this understanding was rarely

addressed in the classroom instruction. In fact, there was a consensus amongst the participants that the inclusion of visual culture artifacts did not contribute to successful student artwork. Katy explained to her students, "taking something cheesy is not fine art…like cartooning or animation; you have to make it fine art." In high school, there is a bizarre, mutually agreed upon understanding of what quality student artwork looks like. Realism, and technical skill are highly valued; in the absence of these characteristics, artwork may be categorized as "cheesy." Neatness, and ease for the viewer are also expected. A principal needs to be able to understand the artwork hanging in the school's hallway.

The participants in this study expressed fear and pressure as a result of the state standards they felt dictated their curriculum. Teachers felt like administrators monitored them and that they had to adhere to their district's learning priorities. Liz always made sure her curriculum was cleared through her arts administrator before she proceeded; Dina's district art coordinator would make visits to Dina's classroom to provide support and to help her align her curriculum to the district's curriculum; all the participants made sure to have artwork visible at all times to provide visibility to their administrators, and worried about the security of their positions with pending district budgets. There was also an implicit understanding of what is appropriate and what is inappropriate within high schools; they way you dress, the way you talk, what the art should look like, and how you advocate for your art program. These considerations were always looming within the classroom space.

Unintentional VCAE

Despite the understanding that visual culture is a large part of their students' lives, the majority of the teachers did not create VCAE lessons intentionally. Inclusion of visual culture artifacts in study participant classrooms was largely accidental, and not deliberate within lesson instruction and project completion. Students would reference visual culture in an art project but that was often unplanned and not the equivalent of the teacher including visual culture artifacts as learning objects during a lesson demonstration. Of all the participants, Dina would most be identified as deliberately aligning to the concepts of VCAE to her instruction, followed by Nik, Michelle, Liz and lastly Katy who had the fewest incidents of VCAE incorporation (Figure 5.1).

Visual Culture	Dina	Nik	Michelle	Liz	Katy
Continuum	Urban	Suburban	Suburban	Urban	Suburban

More Visual Culture, Less Technically Skilled

Skill-centered, Less Visual Culture

Figure 5.1. Visual culture continuum.

One of the problems with the VCAE paradigm is that its definition is continually morphing. Stankiewicz (2004) notes, "like art, visual culture is an open concept with new candidates advancing almost daily and a loose set of family resemblances tying instances of the use of the concept together" (p. 6). Smith (2003) challenges VCAE application to art classrooms arguing, "we must expect change, but do we need accept the abandonment of our core" meaning the teaching of art techniques, formalism and traditional Western

art history (p. 3). For reference, VanCamp (2004) describes a formalist style of teaching and learning as "focusing only on certain perceivable properties of the work itself and divorced from information about the creator and the context of creation" (p. 35), whereas a VCAE inclined lesson would be interested in the contexts, the creator and the culture surrounding the visual. Traditionally art classrooms' pre- and post VCAE literature have been taught from a formalist perspective, or a skills-based technique driven curriculum and still align to the Discipline Based Art Education (DBAE) paradigm developed by the generously funded Getty Foundation in the 1980's with a focus on "fine art, mostly from the European tradition or it's derivatives" (Smith, 2003, p. 4). DBAE focused on four disciplines of art, including aesthetics, art history, art production and art criticism, and DBAE still has a lingering visibility in the culture of the art classroom.

> Dina rationalizes the incorporation of popular imagery in her classroom this way,
> I try really hard to make things relevant to students, so their culture—in school,
> their culture is way more important than my popular culture because they don't
> even know what that is most of the time, right? You know, but I try to listen to
> what they're talking about and try to incorporate that a little bit or use some music
> that I know they like or…

Dina had the highest frequency of including visual culture as learning objects during her lesson demonstrations as she recognized that her students responded positively to the inclusion of visuals they were interested in or exposed to. This also opened up the notions of teachers understanding of what was "relevant" art learning for their students, along with the teacher's perception of what was of value to learn in the art classroom.

Teachers also understood visual culture as a way to connect to a larger, more global community. Michelle explains,

> Like, it's crazy like people don't, I think, realize that every time they see a commercial or a book cover or a billboard or the clothes that you wear and how much has been designed and created by someone. [The] visual world really defines our world. I mean, they say that you've seen like so many images per day.

Katy recognized that a big part of art is teaching students how to express ideas through visual communication, stating

> I think it's an idea and I think art is such a broad concept, but in visual art, it's sort of like this idea expressed in a visual way or visual communication, but I think text can be art, and I think fashion can be art, I think Lady Gaga had shown us that, right? It's really about communication, it's really about this idea.

The teachers largely understood the importance of recognizing symbolism, semiotics and the message within an image. They would discuss this with their students during class time even if there was no evidence of this understanding in the students' artwork. This should be considered unintentional VCAE wherein the topics of discussion were generated by students asking a question, which then turned into a classroom dialogue, ultimately including the teacher's active participation in guiding the discussion.

Visual and pop culture was understood as ubiquitous topics of conversations, and a central facet of students' free time activities. Nik reflected,

> Before I was obsessed with I'm going to teach you how to draw, I'm going to make you better at drawing, I don't mean to make you, you know, amazing artist, but I will make you go from here to here and that's how I started and then we

went into shading and now I feel like the kids today that aren't interested in art, or

art, interested or art because of the social media and everything there is, I think

pop culture is so much more in your face, you know, we went to school, we didn't

see anything 'til we got home and watched MTV.

Because visual culture and pedagogy was not addressed in her schooling, it was assumed

that it should not be addressed in their teaching. That assumption was one of the hardest

habits to break. Their education background and experiences all suggest that visual

culture was not art. Nevertheless, Nik worked on staying current with what her students

were interested in and engaged with outside of school.

Artifacts that would encompass the inclusiveness of VCAE were occasionally

used during instruction, but were generally not allowed in the actual final art product.

Students' would show teacher's their sketches in progress for approval and the teachers

would typically steer them towards a concept that was more aligned with traditional

school arts content. To clarify, visual culture art objects – in the VCAE-aligned sense of

using a visual culture artifact to spark a dialogue evolving in a variety of responses –

were rarely used from the onset of a lesson or as a prompt to build a lesson around.

Rather, visual culture artifacts would emerge from student's art responses. Visual culture

art objects were used during instruction, not for unraveling the significance of an object

or an image, but rather as a basic way to connect art to the world around them to enhance

their technique or understanding of an art concept. Katy would bring in and discuss the

names of paint chips from the local hardware store as a way to learn to choose colors that

might reflect their subjects, or say something about them. But when a student re-

appropriated and painted an image of the actress and singer Jennifer Lopez with half of

her face melting off, the drawing was rejected as an assignment and the student's work was moved to the back of the classroom despite its technical accuracy.

Liz and Dina were the only participants to address more global concepts in their classrooms. Liz had her students working on a letter exchange with disabled students in South America. She created a stencil project where students were asked to choose a topic of concern, then create a stencil that would send a message to their community about their chosen cause. In Dina's technology class, she had them create public service announcements (PSAs) within two class periods. Students had to come up with a concept, write out a script, cast actors, prepare lighting, digitally film the concept, edit the footage into a short clip then upload it to YouTube. One of the resulting student clips was titled, "My Ambition: No Bullying." The group of students wrote, and prepared a rap with quick editing cuts of imagery and different angles. Dina showed these videos to her studio class for motivation, and students were excited to see what other high school art students can accomplish in an hour. These aforementioned projects required that the students consider their audience, which was part of the planning and production process.

Nik and Michelle allowed for the use of visual and popular culture artifacts in artwork, however students had to ask permission in order to begin a project. Nik shared an example of how her students were struggling with traditional still life drawings (e.g., flowers, animal skulls, etc.). She wanted to find a way for her students to access still life drawings, so she asked them to bring in objects from home, fast food packaging, anything that was interesting and relevant to the student's lives for drawing subjects. She summarized,

But as the years go on and you realize that you have all of these other challenges, and you have to kind of back it up a little bit. They're not interested at that level in drawing a still life in my classroom. So I've started saying, "What are their interests and how can I teach them something about art wrapped around that?

Although Nik's intent for the lesson was to have the students create still life drawings based on objects in the art room, she shifted the criteria for the objects of the drawing to include artifacts that the students' brought in, art objects that they wanted to draw and compose a still life arrangement of. But when the students' interests were taken into account, the final art product was perceived as less serious or skilled when in most cases the final pieces were inventive and more technically accurate. In Freedman et al.'s (2013) study, researchers addressed the notion of learning technical art skills through visual culture art objects with one of the students mentioning, "I think that you can learn proportions and you can learn how stuff could look even it it's not how it can look in real life" (p. 109). By practicing, interacting and participating in visual culture study, Freedman et al. (2013) notes that art techniques improved across a variety of art media.

Wilson (2003) writes about how classroom infiltration of visual culture, perceived as low culture, and its border crossings with high culture, has been unsuccessfully policed by teachers and art critics. He furthers writes,

> For more than a century, some art educators have tried to keep children's art free from the influence of popular culture, and they succeed only through rigid control of what they permit them to draw, paint and construct. (Wilson, 2003, p. 110)

While he questions if the borders between high and low culture will ever disappear, in the art classrooms I observed the border clearly still exists to varying degrees.

Typically students were allowed to access visual culture during their free time in the art classroom, or after they finished an assignment. Most teachers had the students working on sketchbook assignments during free time, or puzzles or worksheets not necessarily related to art learning. Dina elaborated on her usage of worksheets and other free time activities rationalizing her practice saying,

> But I also have been trying to have things that are fun… like maybe they'll do something on a computer like there's some Marvel comics where you can build your own superhero or there's a Polyvore site where they could do like a fashion set that's kind of interesting. I try to have some fun stuff like that, but sometimes they'll just do a good alternate assignment.

The notion of free time art activities as "fun" or more flexible was common. The idea of having "free" time in a classroom is problematic because most of the class time is loosely structured to ensure work-related activity throughout the class period. Visual culture is not viewed as a serious topic or subject in the visual art classroom, and when it was part of the student's work, the teacher would typically describe their rationale for supporting the inclusion of popular imagery as being marginally acceptable.

VCAE was actually more evident within non-weight bearing assignments, or assignments where no grade was to be assigned. In Nik and Michelle's classrooms, they had the exiting seniors create a mixed media ceiling panel that would permanently stay in the classroom as their legacy. Students could choose to paint or represent anything they wanted to remember of their time as a high school student. Nearly all the pieces were well crafted, thoughtful, referenced current visual culture, and involved research and planning but were "just for fun." This assignment, designed as a reward would be

considered unintentional VCAE, as the students were given a ceiling tile but then were charged with coming up with a concept, a moment in time, their favorite artist, or phrase to memorialize their time in the high school. The ceiling tiles served as painted visual time capsules of the imagery that was important and valued by the students.

Dina's Classroom

Out of all the participants' Dina's instructional model was the closest in alignment to VCAE tenets. However, VCAE can present itself in a variety of iterations, as highlighted by Paul Duncum's (2006) book, *Visual Culture in the Art Class: Case Studies*. The case studies presented in the book offered a diverse interpretation of VCAE in a variety of classroom age levels, verifying the ever-changing nature of VCAE literature as a "work in progress" (p. viii). Duncum (2006) notes that VCAE may appear through an inquiry-based model of teaching, which may make it more challenging to define if the content aligns with VCAE. He further argues, "their approach celebrates individual student's idiosyncratic interests, and while these usually involve popular visual culture in some way it need not be the case for some art educators to regard their practices to be visual culture art education" (Duncum, 2006, p. xii). It was clear that the teachers engaged in discussion surrounding visual culture with their students. They knew the movies, music, television and current events, but incorporating these visual culture objects into their art instruction was rarely evident.

Stankiewicz (2004) writes that there is no clear-cut definition of VCAE, per se, but rather

A number of overlapping definitions exist, each pointing out certain features over others…like art, visual culture is an open concept with new candidates advancing

almost daily and a loose set of family resemblances tying instances of the use of the concept together. (p. 6)

But by far, Dina's classroom was the closest example of adhering to VCAE model of teaching, although she was completely unaware of this alignment. She rationalized her practices saying, "I mean they try to limit that actually more than encourage it sometimes because you get the clichés. They want to do, you know, a lot of words of things they like or whatever you know. So sometimes you have to try to limit that but also to get them excited about something and to have it be relevant, you have to incorporate what you can." Accessing visual culture served as a gateway for learning more about art in Dina's class. Even though she was hesitant, due to her fear of her student's artwork not appearing serious (or technically realistic) a sizeable portion of the student's work reflected some aspect within VCAE.

Dina found a fair amount of her curricular material via the Internet or derived from student conversations. She accessed lesson ideas, browsed YouTube, and explored online resources. Her classroom was the only classroom I visited that integrated the Internet into classroom instruction. Students could access assignments, lesson demonstrations, worksheets, and student work through the blogs she created for each class. When asked about her practices she said, " I just Google things a lot." She is transparent and aware about her teaching methods as a way to help her students connect to art in some way. This really works for her program, however her students are considered low-skill, low technical ability in the high school visual art class. Dina's student work looks more graphic, or cartoon-like. She sets up parameters for

assignments, but she offers a lot of flexibility in the art making process if the student is really interested in trying something new.

Dina was also clever and resourceful with the art material that was available to her. For example, she had a surplus of wooden rulers that were going to be thrown out, so she looked online for inspiration for what she could do with the rulers. She engaged in a discussion with the students about where the rulers came from, discussion about the school closing and why the rulers were being discarded and then had the students create timelines on the rulers. I noticed as I walked around that there was a lot of visual culture evident within their projects.

In fact, nearly every visit to Dina's class produced some art product that used cultural icons and images and phrases that you might hear on an everyday basis. Whether they were working on the task at hand, or engaging in free time the room was welcoming to a variety of subjects. On one student's ruler there were pictures of Tweety Bird and the timeline of cartoons. Another student made a timeline of hip-hop artists. She had them print images from the computer of things that they liked, and they then glued them onto their rulers. Dina ended up being disappointed in the final product of the ruler timelines because they did not look finished to her. She joked that maybe they "needed some glitter because they just did not look polished." This is a common misconception with incorporating visual culture; the finished, presentable product is not aligned with what school art is imagined to look like under traditional teaching methods.

In her media arts class, Dina applies the students' learning to real world experiences within the school community. The class creates the school news announcements and videos and she notes,

So, we try to give the kids as much responsibilities as possible. I mean, there's a lot that they're not responsible for, but we try to keep pushing them. As the year goes by, it gets better. They have, this year we've started having jobs where they're a director. There's a director, an outside director, a script copy editor, and a video editor.

Dina has the students research community events, school news and research and practice the roles within video production. She shared that sometimes her lesson designs do not always work according to plan, but she works hard to recognize areas where students might need more experience in order to succeed in the classroom. This past semester she brought in journalists, and had the students write. Dina also rationalizes this experience as tied to how you would act in the "real world," preparing them for life after high school. Most of the media students repeat the class with her, with some students taking the class all four years of high school. She really worked to show students how they could apply their art learning to the "real world," as her students were equally as likely to join the work force immediately on graduation as they were to continue on to college.

Dina teaches the class about animation by watching the viral YouTube sensation, "Marcel The Shell." Marcel is seashell with one googly eye, and shoes that have been stop-animated in order to talk about his observational shell's-eye view. The students ask her to play the video over and over again. She then places a bunch of random household items, like toilet paper, dollar store figurines, lollipops, a hammer, a screwdriver and asks the students to choose one item to make a stop motion animation with in the style of "Marcel The Shell." Her students also like to draw and reference popular cartoons,

explaining "that's sometimes what they want to do and truthfully with the lower levels, if that's what motivates them and that's what makes them create something in some ways, it's okay with me." Her main objective is to keep her students engaged in learning during the ninety-minute art period.

Dina also teaches kindness, cooperation and asks students to consider their actions, not necessarily within their art projects, but as a classroom community. She would regularly engage the class in discussions about fairness, inequality and would ask for student input in how they would like the class to run. In the front of the classroom written on board of paper is the quote from Oliver Cromwell "he who stops being better, stops being good". She often discusses human nature, and how to co-exist in and out of school. She reminds her students to treat each other with kindness and respect. This is a big part of her classroom teaching. While all of the participating teachers were responsive to their students' interest in some capacity and cared about their students' well being in the school community, Dina's classroom offers examples that would qualify as adhering to some facets of VCAE, even if she did not recognize her teaching as being loosely aligned to the VCAE model.

VCAE, Democracy and Student Choice

Creating a democratic learning space is one of the aspirations of VCAE. Curricular material and topics can come from student interests. Teachers are encouraged to develop content based around the classroom community's lived experiences where "teachers can position popular culture in a dialogic engagement with everyday experiences" (Tavin, 2003, p. 200). Another goal of VCAE is to empower students to be able to interpret and understand the meaning of the visual culture that surrounds them in

their every day lives along with contributing their interests and concerns to the classroom learning.

Stewart (2012) writes, "issues of power, liberty and social justice are issues that are central to freedom and democracy" (p. 50). It was apparent to me that issues of democracy in the classroom, along with the creation of opportunities for students to make their own artistic choices both played an interesting role in the classrooms observed. While there were incidences of democratic learning detected in this study, there were more instances where students input was overpowered by the teachers' pedagogical practices regarding "letting" students make choices. Amburgy (2011) shares that one of her teaching goals for training art teachers "is to critically understand how visual culture helps to place some categories of people in positions of privilege and social power, and keep others in disadvantaged or subordinate positions" (p. 6). This section will illustrate how privilege and power played out in the art classrooms.

Gude (2009) recommends that in order for students to learn how to engage in democracy that "the artistically engaged individual couples intense awareness with a strong sense of agency, a belief that he or she can shape the world…we must believe that what we do affects the world around us, that what we do makes a difference" (p. 7). Additionally an individual must be "able to tolerate a sense of aloneness…paradoxically, a pre-condition for fully joining a democratic life is the ability to sustain a sense of identity when not immersed in the collective" (Gude, 2009, p. 7). These goals provide an map for students to begin to understand their identity, agency, and the choices they can make in the world.

In order for a class to function as a democracy, however, the teacher has to release some of their power within the classroom and "some art educators are reluctant to allow students to develop their own ideas; in the highly regimented school culture, it is difficult to give up control and predictability" (Hermann, 2005, p. 43). Hermann (2005) furthers,

> Art education becomes more relevant to student learning when boundaries are questioned and traditions are investigated…it can also involve instruction in which knowledge is shared among all participants rather than handed down from an expert; knowledge is seen as available to all. (p. 41)

In the schools I observed, the teacher was the giver of information and the students expected approval on their art products from the teachers at various points during an art lesson.

Hermann (2006) shares an example of her interpretation of VCAE in an art classroom lesson that was based off the television program "The Swan." Her intent was to approach the lesson through a VCAE lens as a teacher noting, "as the instructor, I suggested materials when a student told me what he or she wanted to do or I taught techniques as they became necessary for the student's work…student's ideas came first, followed by an investigation to find a material or process that might best communicate their idea" (Hermann, 2006, p. 148). This exemplar presents one model of democratic instruction leading to increased student choice in their art making practices aligning to VCAE principles.

In most classroom observations in this study, the phenomenon was evident of teachers "letting" students start a project, make decisions, etc. as a way to control the look of the art product. The processing of "letting" students choose a subject, or material

seemingly allows for students' to make choices in their art production. In reality this method of the teacher approving or disapproving a sketch or telling a student when their art work is finished ultimately affects the look of the student art product as the teacher already has a desired outcome in mind. The students learn that they cannot move onto the next step or call a project finished until the teacher says so. Gude (2013) notes, "the influence of teachers can support as well as stifle individual creativity and meaningful exploration of content" (p. 7). This notion of "letting" students do something was central to the visual art classroom. For examples Nik identifies some material limitations with her students,

> I let them choose their medium. So if we're going to do a still life, I'll say, "Okay you can do…(she gives them material options)." I'll tell them, "You can paint it, you can do pastel…" Because I've already had them for two years working in those mediums, you know…they can't do everything.

Even though she states she lets them choose their own medium, she still provides them with preferred media depending on the student's skill level and exposure to a material to ensure the end product looks polished and finished.

Similarly, during free drawing time Katy offers students prompts for what they might do when they are finished with a class assignment, sharing,

> It's just a whole bunch of ideas of things they could do. Like here, think of two normally unrelated objects. Draw them together and create a drawing or painting of it. So example, what do you get when you cross a toaster with an alligator? And then name the new object. So I have things that they can go to if they are stumped, but they can also just do their own thing. It just has to be art related and

that's pretty broad, so they can suggest things and say does that count and I'll

probably say yes, usually.

Though it is categorized as free time, this time is still structured by the teacher. Not to

mention the underlying message to the students that regardless of their idea, they will still

have to seek approval from the teacher in order to proceed with their free drawings.

On the subject of choice, Liz offers,

I want them to have a lot of choice but I also want them to have plenty of

parameters. I really believe that guidelines, or parameters or requirements or

whatever you call them actually boost creativity. They don't stifle it, if for

example, I might say to my students, you have to have a border, you have to use

overlapping, you have to crop something in the composition. Those things don't

stifle them. They create opportunities for creative expression.

She continues to explain her process as,

I definitely look at things, look at preliminary sketches and talk to them and offer

suggestions on how to improve or change them or sometimes I don't have to offer

suggestions. Sometimes they are already there. But I definitely look at

preliminary work before they go to final.

This was common practice across all the classrooms observed. Not that the teachers ever

explicitly told their students they needed their approval, students seemed to intuitively

ask for the teacher's permission almost automatically. Students learn in school that their

idea is only valid after an adult tells them it's good or bad. Students often resisted

assignments with looser parameters and less teacher direction. Dina noted her students

discomfort in the assignments where she asked them to come up with the content stating, "they want you to tell them what to do."

All of the teachers demonstrated, to a degree, responsiveness to their students' interests and needs. This required the ability to go-with-the-flow, which was not always easy for some of the teachers to do. Dina had the highest incidence of including democratic learning in her classroom and shared her philosophy of curriculum development as, "like the kids will ask me some time, "What are you doing next?" I'm like, "Well, sometimes I haven't decided yet," (laughter)." Another example of the democratic moment in classroom pedagogy occurred in Liz' class when she asked students to help decide on what art work examples they would like to see, and allowed their aid in selecting a due date for an assignment. It may be a small moment of democracy but it's important because it demonstrated that students had agency in the art classroom.

Teachers often had to nudge students to help motivate them to begin, and continue working on projects. Outside of the first day introduction to a lesson, the workdays seemed to be implied workdays with little direction. For example, when Dina introduced a project on product design, she initially engaged students with a variety of resources: Internet clips, past student examples, and a PowerPoint. However, she did not typically engage in transition dialogue with students, meaning she did not ask them how they might apply these examples to inform or inspire their work. She would typically hand out a worksheet for students to brainstorm with, but it often fell flat and students would lose momentum. Her intention to appeal to the student's interest was a democratic start to the

lesson, however despite her good intentions this attempt of pedagogical democracy structurally failed due to lack of follow through.

There were other democratic learning moments, where teachers asked for feedback or ideas from students regarding the classroom environment and course materials. Dina had her students complete a short writing exercise at the beginning of one class called. "Look to the Future, Look to the Past." She prompted students to answer the following:

- "Write something you have learned I this class." (Student response examples: "to take my hat off; iMovie, pathos, selective focus; taking good pictures and lighting; communication; rule of thirds.")

- "Share something you like in this class." (Student response examples: "computers; cameras, interacting with the class; taking pictures; movies; letter and font exercises; the class is easy.")

- "Write something you think would make the class better." (Student response examples: "more challenging assignments, more computers, more cooperation, a little more art than media (use of more traditional art materials)")

From my observation the first question provides a checkpoint for Dina to understand what they are retaining from her lessons. The second question asks students to reflect on their experience, and third question allowed for the students to share their ideas on how they felt they could enhance their learning experiences. This was the only reflective class experience observed where students genuinely felt outwardly empowered from a lesson prompt. They came together as a class and shared their opinions with Dina. She used this

exercise as a way to let the students know that she was listening to her students, and that she valued their input.

My participants all suggested that the art room was a place where you could potentially engage in a variety of learning opportunities with students. Liz works on a collaborative installation with one of her senior students with the work all being done on the school's campus. Nik's students wanted to finger paint so she had them create portraits in the style of Chuck Close. However, she noted that this project was a disaster because they found they could not be accurate using their fingerprints to represent their subject realistically. Nik is resilient though, and shared that she might tweak the project a little bit or do a different subject if she were to repeat the project. All of the teachers in this study try to listen to the students, and engage in new ways of learning with them even if the result is not what they expected. I found many examples of incorporation of non-traditional images even though they were not identified as driven by the goal of providing VCAE.

Although I have outlined some incidences of democracy in the classroom, these examples do not completely align with the VCAE paradigm. In order to align to the central tenets of VCAE, Amburgy (2011) clarifies that in visual culture art education, "it is important to teach students to think critically about all the visual representations that surround them, including art, and to see themselves as agents for social change" (p. 11). From my observations, this facet of VCAE was not as evident as one might have expected, and it is unclear if students left the art room feeling empowered as agents for social change. To determine this, further study would have to incorporate the perspectives of the students in order to grasp a better understanding.

CHAPTER 6: FACTORS INFLUENCING CURRICULUM

Based on best practices, art education standards, and policy, curriculum literature
is designed for flexibility in its implementation in order to accommodate diverse teaching
and learning environments (Freedman, 2011). Ultimately, the aim of current art education
research, including VCAE, is to address current needs and interests in art education, and
to imagine how research findings can be actualized in school settings (Freedman, 2011;
Smith 1978). As previously mentioned, this study aims to address the following
questions: If VCAE is not evident in the visual art classroom, what are the dominant
norms and privileged curricular practices in the art classroom? If research suggests
VCAE is a valuable model of art teaching offering access and equity to students, to what
extent is the model implemented? What kind of learning is occurring and favored in the
high school visual art classroom?

Developed with both national and local standards and policies in mind, ideally a
teacher's art curriculum is "a statement of what every young American should know and
be able to do in the arts," a reference to both student achievement and appropriate content
in the visual arts (Popovich, 2006, p. 33). When I proposed this study and began to
explore the national and state standards, I examined how the VCAE model could align to
the standards. I assumed that facets of VCAE would emerge in the high school
classrooms I proposed to observe over the school year. I assumed this because of the
influx of new technologies, such as smartphones, iPads, access to computers and Internet
culture in addition to music, film and television. In my mind, these sites are
commonplace amongst adolescents, so I felt that they would have infiltrated the art
classroom in some form by 2012. As the previous chapter illustrated, the degree of

implementation of VCAE varied, for multiple reasons. If VCAE was not central to the teachers' practice, then what factors did influence the highs school visual art curriculum?

Chapter 5 explored the degree to which the VCAE model is being implemented, and how teachers view the potential incorporation of visual culture in their classrooms. Visual culture was being used in the classroom, but not in ways that were informed by art education literature or identified with the language of art education research. By examining study participant perspectives regarding visual culture in the classroom, I began to understand the arts learning behaviors these teachers valued, as well as their pedagogical beliefs as to what constitutes a high quality art education. If VCAE is implemented without the knowledge of current art education literature surrounding VCAE, and yet visual culture implementation is evident in the classrooms to varying degrees, what are the common factors impacting participating teachers' art curriculum? Interestingly, what emerged was evidence of certain factors that (a) actively prohibited implementation of VCAE and (b) caused missed opportunities to incorporate VCAE's central tenets in the curricula.

This chapter will explore the influences that guided the participants' creation of high school art curriculum stemming from their expressed curricular perspectives specifically addressing the following initial research questions: What are the embedded art learning objectives and forces the teachers felt were central to the creation of their visual art curriculum? What kind of curricular parameters are evident, if any, within the curriculum in the classroom? What factors influence how teachers create curriculum in the art classroom? What kind of choices do students have in their art making

experiences? Are students positioned to take initiative and if and when does VCAE play a role. This chapter will also highlight curricular trends that were evident across all sites.

In order to understand the factors that influence curriculum development by K-12 art teachers, LaPorte, Speirs, and Young (2008) conducted an empirical study with mailed surveys and open-ended questions to art teachers. Briefly, this study suggested that "undergraduate coursework, personal interests, national and state curriculum standards and student issues" were influential in the creation of K-12 art curriculum (p. 363). While LaPorte et al. (2008) did occasionally inform the discussion that follows in this chapter, our studies were critically different in methodology and, consequently, the findings our studies were able to generate. My qualitative methodology allowed me to explore, in a detailed manner, teacher perspectives that inform curriculum, whereas the LaPorte et al. (2008) study relied on pre-determined factors for survey participants to rank quantitatively. Their quantitative findings can now be further illuminated with teacher perspectives provided by my study.

In order to understand the factors that impact the development of art curriculum in the high school visual arts classroom and how these factors relate to VCAE, this chapter will examine common themes and art learning components across the study sites. The analysis in this chapter emerged from a dataset of a qualitative analysis of five high school art teachers (see Chapter 3 for more detail) (Table 4.1).

The type of students in their classrooms emerged as central to the development of curriculum for each classroom featured in this study. More specifically, I found that participating teachers in this study differentiated curriculum depending on student artistic

technical skill[5], student behavior, and course level (advanced versus introductory). Another common element in the creation of curriculum was the inclusion of the Elements and Principles of Art and Design, a conventionalized set of criteria for art making (further elaborated upon later in this chapter and in Chapter 2). Teachers also expressed the importance and a demonstrated reliance upon the inclusion of drawing activities within the art curriculum. The use of technology was also a factor in the creation of curriculum, especially given the lack of integration of technology that remained apparent during the span of the school year. And lastly, the Scholastic Art Awards influenced curricula to a surprising extent by imposing the rigidity of a standardized test and by dictating a particular style of art expected of high school aged students under the perception of what college-level art products should look like. These factors will be further explored along with the implications they make on VCAE.

Conformity of High School Art Classrooms Observed in This Study

This chapter provides evidence for types of art learning in the classroom that participating teachers considered valuable, the factors that influence the decisions participating art teachers make when designing their curricula, and why visual elements inclusive to the VCAE model are or are not included. The following sections will describe a set of factors that affect teacher decisions and assessment priorities, but it is

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[5] This chapter frequently refers to students' level of "technical skill", which is used here to refer to their mastery of realism, precision, and traditional art tools. It is important to note that the VCAE model's definition of student skill would significantly diverge to include aptitudes for understanding a visual image's contexts, including social, cultural, and identity contexts, as illustrated in Appendix A (Freedman, 2003).

worth noting the uniformity of many of the classroom procedures and pedagogical approaches within the art classrooms I observed. The conformity amongst these classrooms that is discussed in the remainder of this chapter suggests that teachers share a common pool of factors that influence decisions of curricula, and that these factors may also be prohibitive to the implementation of VCAE.

There was a particular look to the student artwork in the observed classrooms. I noticed similar bright colors, pencil and charcoal drawings, along with adolescent subject matter. It was evident that across all sites, all teachers in this study sharing some adherence to the "school art " paradigm where the style of the student artwork, the colors, the materials, and the subject matter were similar. As Bresler (1998) wrote, "the meaning of any kind of art is inseparable from the conditions under which it is generated and experienced…school art functions in contexts that are neither artistic nor elitist" (p. 7). Efland (1976), Bresler (1998), and Wilson (1994) have identified a very widespread and systemized conformity inherent in the high school visual art curriculum (see the "School Art" section of Chapter 2 for greater detail) and this was evident in the school settings I studied as well.

The classrooms were visibly structured and controlled by the teachers. Students are told when to begin a project and when to stop. Students also learn how to behave in an art classroom. There are rules for safety, rules for behavior, and rules for art making. The "good" art goes up on the wall for display, while the less technically accurate artwork remains in piles, or on shelves in the classroom. Bresler's observed (1998) that "keeping school art nice, teachers believe, makes art manageable within school confines, and management is a primary concern for school practitioners," and this was evident in

all the schools (p. 8). With these parameters, and rules it was difficult for teachers to imagine working outside of the routines of the art room and the school culture. This includes the incorporation of visual culture art objects that were thought of as distractions by all the teachers at various points of classroom instruction (ex. text messaging, talking about music videos, discussions about classmates who were killed in a drunk driving accident). These instances were brief in the classroom, and usually took place while students were working on class projects until the teacher asked the students to change topic and focus on their artwork.

Scheduling and managing time and space are a big part of being an art teacher and impact the way the teachers create their curriculum for a class. Art classes take place at a specific time every day, in fifty-to-ninety minute class periods, where the teacher typically gives a five to fifteen minute introduction with the remainder of class time reserved for students to work on the art project. These time constraints are not necessarily representative of artistic practice outside the school setting, and can be viewed as restrictive to the teacher and student in the 'stop and go' pace of the course. It is worth noting that the above similarities among classroom conditions providing a largely structured, sanitized environment are not ideal for achieving the goals of VCAE. In VCAE, students would be free to draw upon their own sources of visual information and be exposed to visual artifacts from a wide range of cultural backgrounds. Since artwork is so indelibly stamped by the environment in which it was created, as Bresler noted (1998), these classroom attributes restrict the ability of students explore, learn, and create in a manner encouraged by VCAE.

Interestingly, national and state standards have been written to be highly flexible to suit the needs of a diverse totality of schools (Friedman, 2011). My research supports that teachers recognized the standards allowed for teaching flexibility. Katy commented that her curriculum was developed within her department and "it's based entirely on the New York State Teaching Standards, so it's really open-ended and we wanted to do that on purpose because there is overlap in what we teach." If formal standards are understood to not limit the arsenal of a teacher's curricula, what are the implied limitations and expectations? I will outline the parameters and limitations that emerged from the data and provide insight into how these factors may inhibit VCAE.

Student Technical Skill Influences Curricula

One of the facets within VCAE suggests that art learning can take place in the form of a dialogue in lieu of the production of an artwork. Students can become analytic spectators of visual culture, and in theory not produce any art at all (Eisner, 2001). This adaptation to the VCAE model would not work at all in the classroom settings I observed. Technical art skill and production of final art pieces are central to all the participants' curricula. All the teachers agreed that if a student could productively make it through their studio class, typically they would find success in their advanced classes. Liz explained:

> I think that kids who come to us with some stronger basic skills can really thrive, and they are challenged, they feel a personal connection to the curriculum because I think we have so many opportunities to be expressive in our curriculum. Kids who have lower skill levels, they like the stuff, but they might sometimes feel frustration or that cannot say what they want to say visually. They are the ones we

are going to be careful of, because you can really turn them off and that's why

I'm always teaching shortcuts.

Study participants all wanted their students to feel successful in the art classroom, but were concerned that students who lacked basic technical art skills would not enjoy or continue on with art courses.

The perceived quality of the students' artwork, and the expected appearance and presentation of high school visual art projects set by the teachers or administrators, also impacted teachers' curricular choices. From an administrative viewpoint, teachers cited "poor scheduling, and lack of financial support" affecting their class enrollment as an impediment to student success, a contributing factor to their own personal stress regarding their job security, and a detriment to their perceived value within the school (Hatfield et al., 2006, p. 44). Teachers choose what art to hang up in the hallway or display in a case, while other students' work remains in the classroom-shelving units. Hallquist (2008) shares, "in my art classes I noticed how much administrator and parental support played a part in what artworks I allow students to create and display" (p. 43). Like Hallquist (2008), the teachers who participated in this study also worried "if the content of a student's artwork is questioned by the community, will the administration support my goals as an educator? Could I be out of a job next year?" (p. 43). Teachers had to consider not only their students' needs, but also the perceived needs of the school community. Katy elaborates:

> I think there's a bigger push to show our work than there had been in past years, and I think in part that comes from budget issues and concerns, like, if we're going to spend money on these art classes, we want to enjoy the end product. So I

think there's more emphasis on product than there was when I first started teaching.

Student artwork displays are seen as tangible proof of teacher and student ability. Teachers feel administrators quickly recognize or judge artwork as "good." Typically the pieces that are easy to comprehend (in technical skill or content) or are aesthetically pleasing become the agreed conventions signaling a strong art program. Hatfield et al. (2006) supports this notion of a teacher's negotiated relationship with administrators. The end goal for all art teachers, in Katy's words, was to create a "strong art program." Aligning VCAE with this belief would prove challenging, as the focus of VCAE is not necessarily a polished end art product, and the topics or art objects could be viewed as controversial or not as "art" from a viewer with a limited perspective of art.

Study participants also had some input on the type of students they allowed in their classes, although all the teachers noted that they let any interested student enter their class. The types of student in a particular class would then inform each teacher's choice of activities, which materials students could have access to, and the content students could address in an artwork. Advanced students were assumed and expected to be well behaved, and as Michelle noted, "willing to think outside the box, and engaged to be creative and divergent people." Whereas students in the introductory studio class are viewed as more unruly and unfocused, this was mainly because anyone could take the introductory art classes, rendering the mix of student abilities and personalities more diverse. Studio classes had assigned seats either at one point or throughout the semester as a way to control student behavior. Advanced students had more freedom and options within the classroom space. The introductory studio class acted as a gateway into the

advanced classes, as the students learned the rules and ideal art room behaviors in the introductory level.

Taken together, this evidence suggests that teachers are tailoring their curricula to the technical skills of their students. This is consistent with LaPorte et al. (2008), who found that "curriculum content choices sometimes revealed particular relationships with grade level and demographic information." Although it might be perceived as positive for the VCAE that students are willing to flexibly tailor their curricula to suit their students, the tailoring seems to be defined by what their students cannot do, rather than what they can do or want to do. Further, it was important to teachers to generate art products that could be readily enjoyed by audiences outside of the art classroom, rather than share visual images that could be enjoyed within the classroom.

The Elements and Principles of Art and Design Influence Curricula

Across all five sites, there were universal components to the teachers' curricula that addressed students' acquisition of technical skill and art language. These components mainly revolved around the inclusion of the Elements and Principles of Art and Design, described by Gude (2004) as the "big seven (elements) [e.g., line, shape, texture] + seven (principles) [e.g., balance, contrast, unity]" (p. 6). The Elements and Principles of Art and Design provide "a menu of media, a list of domains, modes and rationales" and serve as foundational principles of learning for teachers to incorporate into their curriculum (Gude, 2007, p. 6).

It is important to note, however, that an over-reliance upon the Elements and Principles as a teaching tool has been cautioned by academics. Duncum (2010) found the Elements and Principles "hopelessly inadequate as a means to organize a curriculum

commensurate with the world in which we now live". (p. 10) Gude (2004) believed the Elements and Principles maintain their influence "not through persuasive argument, but through seemingly endless repetition in formally oriented textbooks or, during the last decade, as government mandated standards" (p. 6). Additionally, the Elements and Principles are a fixture in a DBAE orientated curriculum. However, the language of the Elements and Principles do not accurately reflect or describe visual culture artifacts. The reliance on – and belief that – fluency in the Elements and Principles centrally allows viewers to describe and analyze visuals does not apply to the breadth and depth of visual culture to which students and teachers are exposed today.

Elements and Principles provide a common language and objective assessment

I found that the Elements and Principles continue to dominate the high school visual art classroom today, providing structure to all the teachers' curricula in this study. Every classroom, except for Katy's, had Elements and Principles posters on the wall, the exact same ones you will find in the back section of any art supply catalogue (Figure 6.1). The Elements and Principles were a natural part of the classroom landscape, as it was understood that the language of the Elements and Principles were a foundational platform to art learning (Short, 1998). Teachers also used the Elements and Principles of art as a way to legitimize their work to other colleagues, and as a way to structure their curriculum and content. These posters are visual signposts implying yes, *this* is an art classroom. They serve as an art teacher's Periodic Table, replica human skeleton, or chart of mathematical formulas.
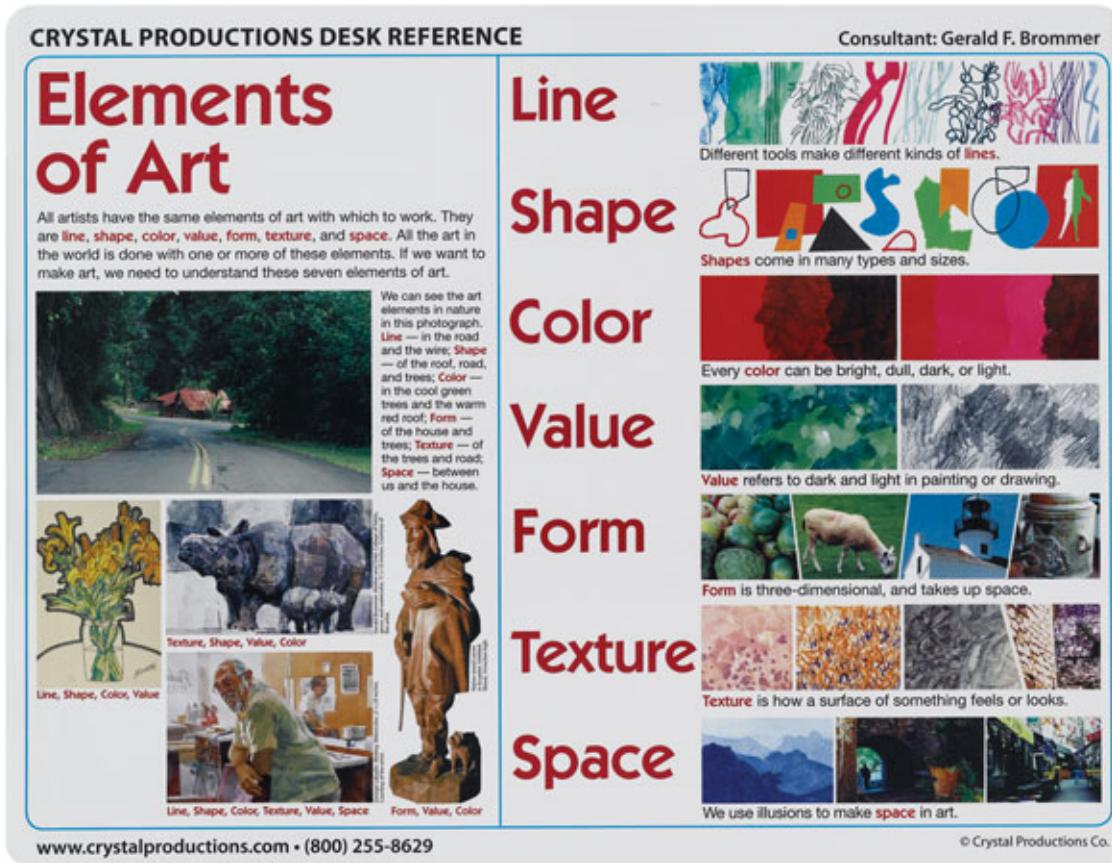
Figure 6.1. Sample poster depicting the Elements and Principles of Art and Design, which was ubiquitously found in the art classroom. Copyright Crystal Productions Co.

The Elements and Principles also played a pivotal role in many observed classroom activities too numerous to list, although a few examples are provided here. For example, Dina and Liz used composition and space as crucial elements for understanding the idea of placement on a page. Dina often shared that there is a "right way" to take a picture with a camera by using the rule of thirds, an aesthetic guideline that major visual elements should be placed along lines imagined to divide the composition into equal thirds.

The participants all shared that they focused on the Elements and Principles in their curriculum primarily as a way to develop a shared language of art. They found

Elements and Principles to provide a way to communicate the technical qualities of student artwork and understanding through the language of space, form, harmony and shape. I cannot conclude if providing these rules actually aids students in, for example, "taking better photographs." How do you really learn what a "good" photograph, or a "good" painting looks like through the Elements and Principles? Do all of the rules have to be present in order to qualify as good art? Some of the teachers seemed to believe that certain Elements and Principles provided a formula or a loose guideline to creating a more visually appealing artwork, however it is beyond the scope of this study to evaluate the effectiveness of these guidelines, much less an understanding of how students interpret these "rules."

Teacher disconnections inherent in Elements and Principles observed usage

I identified two major forms of disconnect between the way teacher's perceived their use of Elements and Principles and my observations of Elements' and Principles' incorporation into art curricula. My observations indicated that the Elements and Principles were heavily used in the art education classroom, however teachers were quick to downplay the role these guidelines play in their classroom. Further, teachers often spoke of the Elements and Principles providing a reductionist starting point from which critical discussions of the formal qualities of an artwork could follow. However, I did not observe this transition taking place.

First, the inclusion of the Elements and Principles were evident in every interview and observation. Even though all of the participating teachers used the Elements and Principles, they assured me that they were not a central motivator to their curriculum development in spite of all the evidence to the contrary. For example, when I asked Katy

about the Elements and Principles, she replied, "I don't teach to those and I think some teachers do in studio class." Regardless of this statement, she did use the language of the Elements and Principles during her art instruction and during class time.

Second, participating teachers often claimed that the Elements and Principles provided an opening for a rich discussion on the formal qualities of an artwork. Liz illustrates this point reflecting, "You can teach graffiti and you can talk about line, shape, color, and positive and negative space and all those things. So we integrate it into everything we do." However, it was not made clear from the participants in this study how connections and meaning were made using the Elements and Principles. I did not observe instances where a discussion founded on the Elements and Principles led to an engaging discussion of an artwork's formal qualities, deeper meaning, or context. It was evident that the Elements and Principles provided a technocratic language of artwork more than it did an entry point into the deeper meaning of an artwork. These observations are consistent with Gude's observations (2004) of using the Elements and Principles, noting, "I rarely see meaningful connections being made between these formal descriptors and understanding works of art or analyzing the quality of everyday design" (p. 6).

Taken together, these results indicate that observed patterns of Elements' and Principles' implementation (it is heavily used) differ from teacher perceived patterns of usage (it is not heavily used or only used as a foundation). What then does this mean for VCAE? While the heavy implementation of the Elements and Principles does not leave much room for VCAE, the stated, explicit intentions of teachers recognize the need to move classroom discussions beyond Elements and Principles that would be well served by VCAE.

The incongruence between participating teachers' perceptions of using the Elements and Principles and my observation of their use of Elements and Principles cannot be definitively explained in this study. Further studies will be required to determine whether, perhaps, teachers' understandings and language of art is so fundamentally built upon the Elements and Principles that the system is used without the teachers' intentions. Alternatively, perhaps, teachers internally feel that Elements and Principles are important to the art classroom or are skeptical of alternative postmodern approaches moving beyond reductionist terms, but are unwilling to voice these sentiments in a landscape of contemporary art education pedagogy that is increasingly favoring postmodern methods. While a definitive answer remains elusive, comparing my data with that of LaPorte et al. (2008) might begin to elucidate an answer. Teachers responded to the anonymous survey that – second only to the final art product – understanding and utilizing the Elements and Principles are critical to the creation of curriculum (LaPorte et al., 2008, p. 364). Since their anonymous survey data indicated a much stronger dependence upon Elements and Principles than my personal interviews, this could be interpreted to support the latter explanation. Perhaps teachers internally feel differently about Elements and Principles vis-à-vis other methodologies (e.g., VCAE) than they are willing to disclose to fellow colleagues. More specific inquiry could definitively test this, while also determining whether these internal hesitations stem from (a) issues of teacher discomfort with postmodern methodologies or (b) pedagogic disagreements between practicing teachers and academia as to the relative benefits between these methodologies.

Drawing

Similar to Hickman's (2001) research, drawing was unanimously identified as the most central skill to art learning in the high school visual art classroom in my study. Additionally, it is particularly important to this dissertation topic, as VCAE theory has identified drawing to be just one of many ways a student could respond to a visual culture prompt. Drawing assignments defined a large part of every teacher's curriculum. Every class I observed completed multiple assignments that included a drawing component. Sketchbooks were mostly drawing based. It is also important to note that the drawing component to the introductory art classes were noted as one of the reasons students strayed from enrolling in art classes in high school. Art classes are equated with drawing. The assumption is that drawing requires a technically skilled hand, or at least the willingness to continue to work on becoming a more technically skilled drawer. Liz elaborates:

> Well, the thing about Art is that kids say it all of the time, "I'm not going to take Art because I'm not good at drawing." No, of course you are not good at drawing that's why you take Art. You don't take French because you speak it fluently. That would be a ridiculous waste of your time. So that's what I'm always saying to kids, "It's a language, it's a language, it's a language." You have to learn how to speak it and I don't expect you to be fluent yet.

The drawing component in the visual art curriculum plays an important role in student retention and recruiting students to consider taking art if it is offered as an elective. If a student feels like they cannot draw, teachers noted they typically did not take art beyond the introductory studio art class. VCAE does not stress the importance of realistic

drawing skills. Visual culture art education also does not emphasize the introduction to art through drawing as a gateway to art learning and understanding.

Regardless of this perception, teachers continued to stress the importance of drawing and acquiring technical art skills in their curriculum. One of the main concerns for the teachers was the lack of visible drawing skills in their students. Liz notes:

> I've seen basic skills go down and it's really sad to me. I don't want to put blame on anybody but I think that a lot of it has to do with how, as art teachers, we have to recruit kids now. It's all about selling the program and doing, learning basic skills is boring and tedious and hard and takes a lot of time. I think as art teachers we're always trying to make our programs so much fun, engaging and to draw people to them that we, and I'm part of that, we have gotten away from the classical way of learning to draw. Looking at blocks and learning to draw them and figure-drawing and portrait drawing and still-life drawing and all of those things because we are always trying to appeal to the audience. It's kind of like going before you learn phonics or how to read well, going straight to creative writing. You know? You feel like the basic foundation is missing.

These kinds of beliefs impede the implementation of VCAE given the contemporary nature of the model and the incorporation of students' visual culture interests. Nonetheless, teachers were troubled that contemporary practices, while trying to make art learning "fun", neglected a skill (i.e., drawing) that they considered essential to the visual art curricula. The perception among teachers was that developing artistic "skill" is mutually exclusive with contemporary practices that develop student engagement: this

perception might remain an important barrier for more widespread implementation of VCAE.

Teachers' described students who drew in a more graphic or cartoon-like style (i.e., simpler) as "less skilled'. Liz noted that her students' basic drawing skills have diminished, partly because her art program has suffered low enrollment due to competition from the core classes (Math, English, courses with mandated standardized tests). As a result, she has to find a way to sell the class as fun for students. Liz included opportunities for students to work on schematic drawings as a way to engage students. Students were given a worksheet in Dina's class to learn how to draw a Japanese kanji (letters or characters). There are step-by-step instructions on the worksheet and students are asked to follow the instructions in order to create the knot on an adjacent grid on the paper. There were also schematic cartoon worksheets that asked the student to re-create the comic on the other side of the page. Liz offered samples of pattern designs for students to think about and use if it helped them to begin a project. Michelle prepared documents that showed different kinds of surface designs, and Nik copied examples of textures within a grid drawing from a *School Arts* magazine. This was where VCAE began to intersect with drawing because students began to engage with visual culture objects (like manga) in order to make meaning and acquire artistic skills.

Free drawing is also considered a central component in the art classroom, but only after a student finishes their assignment during class time. Free drawing also occurs within a sketchbook, resulting in a sketchbook style schematic, with drawings of eyes, written out song lyrics, manga and comic book figures throughout. Visual culture artifacts like music lyrics artfully drawn, adolescent issues of isolation, bullying, and

sexual identity arose, but these drawings or sketches were considered just for fun, or to fill empty class time. Katy would place examples of successful sketchbook pages on the wall and encourage students to emulate the style of the free drawing examples. Even though sketchbooks were presented as an opportunity to freely create artwork, there were still parameters students had to adhere that limited freedom. For example, students were required to submit a number of drawings per week and sometimes were presented specific prompts (in one example, a drawing of an eye). The tenets of VCAE do not provide this specific type of structure, nor support this type of structure for drawing or any medium.

Technology

VCAE supports the inclusion of visual culture objects inherent in our everyday lives. Within the past ten years, the usage of technology has dramatically changed and altered the way we live our lives and potentially impact how we learn in schools. May (2011) wrote "if we are to consider contemporary life outside of schools as we develop curriculum for our art students, we will find a steady increase of user-friendly digital technologies designed to enhance collaborative methods of communication" allowing for art educators to explore new curricular possibilities in the art classroom (p. 39). Students now have access to personal technology devices and computers, and technology usage is a part of their everyday life – more so than the participating teachers' generation. It is argued that the teachers' generations are "no longer connected to the students' lives in contemporary institutional education" when it comes to comparing their school learning experiences to their students' school learning experiences (Ballengee-Morris & Stuhr, 2001, p. 6). VCAE recognizes this problem, and it further argues that the digital domain

is a critical landscape where students gain visual experiences. According to VCAE, incorporating the digital landscape, among others, into the art classroom is critical. Given that this study was completed in 2011-2012, my data indicate the usage of technology in the classrooms seems minimal and limited.

Technology can be divided into high technology (computers, digital cameras, personal cell phones), and low technology (basic tools like pencils, rulers, tracing paper, clay, etc.). This chapter focuses on "high technology" and will therefore refer to it simply as "technology" for clarity, while acknowledging it is elsewhere appropriate for "low technology" to be also referred to as such.

During interviews, teachers universally agreed that incorporation of technology in the art classroom can enhance art learning experiences. All teachers expressed interest in using the latest technology and noted the benefit of being highly connected to the worlds outside their classroom. When I asked the participants what their "dream class" might look like, the unanimous response was one with "great technology." Dina explained her interest in using more technology stating, "I think that the video art, the photography, the advertising design, it's all more accessible to someone who hasn't had as much experience". Technology provides another democratic avenue for students to make their "mark." Dina's students, by her description, were weak at drawing, however they were by far the most advanced with computer technology out of all the five observation sites because she developed more curricular opportunities for her students to access and implement technology into their art projects.

Additionally, Dina was the most proficient with using and incorporating technology into her curriculum. She witnessed the success it had in her classroom, and

was comfortable with trial and error. She began every lesson with some form of technology, and students would use technology during class time. She kept class blogs, frequently used the Internet for instruction, created computer presentations, and used digital cameras and computers for inspiration and for assignments. She was not afraid to try new things and approach non-traditional art learning prompts in order to engage her students in learning. Although Dina did not identify as aligning with the VCAE model, she demonstrated a willingness to adapt her instruction based on her students' interests and her willingness to try new things in order to keep her students engaged.

The teacher's philosophy on the use of personal electronics varied from classroom to classroom, but all had fairly open ideas about the use of personal technology. Generally, students were on their phones, accessing social media sources such as Facebook, Twitter, email, and text messaging. Liz shares;

> I would never have to say, 'put it away or unplug it' because I don't think they
> should be unplugged. I think they should be plugged in all the time. And they
> should know how to do that in a respectful way; that's the thing. So if I am
> talking, they are not texting, but they have access all the time. I really enjoy that
> part of what is happening with technology right now.

Dina expressed, "I mean, we definitely still had to tell them, 'Get off Facebook!' You know, 'Quit spending all that time goofing around. You need to get to working and participating during class time.'" Social media sites, like Blogger and Tumblr were used in Dina's class, and she was the only participant who had interest in learning how to create digital portfolios for her students. Dina also found that having students make podcasts was a successful project for her media class. Nik allowed her students to use

their smartphones to access imagery to draw from observation. New media was beginning to seep into the classroom, and the teachers noted that they had to negotiate how to adapt.

Trust and responsibility were factors that played into implementing technology, feeding into the notion that the teacher was in charge and students were to do as told. There was an understanding that technology tools were a different or new type of art tool, and the rules on how to use these digital tools were foggy to teachers and students. If you break a pencil, no big deal; you get another pencil. If you break one of two class digital cameras, or run out of budget money for batteries, the lesson is disrupted. Use of technology in the classroom relies on teamwork and cooperation of students, which takes time to learn and understand. In Dina's class, frequently she had equipment that needed repairs or batteries, limiting student access. Teachers addressed technical hurdles in the implementation of technology into their art curricula, and expressed a greater interest in keeping to more traditional art forms. Teachers' still seemed hesitant to give up control or consider opportunities with technology where they students could inform learning through their experiences.

My research indicates that teachers are willing to incorporate the digital landscape into the art classroom, which bodes well for VCAE. Teachers can learn to tap into their students interests and knowledge of new technology as a way to co-create learning experiences in the classroom (Wilson, 2003). In fact, in Dina's classroom where students did not exhibit high levels of traditional art "skill", technology was integrated into the art classroom, which resulted in seemingly successful and engaging art learning moments. Nonetheless, the widespread availability of technology to make art was not observed,

indicating that while technology is perceived to be important to access visual culture, it is less important to generate visual culture.

The Scholastic Art Awards Influence Curricula and Inform Perceptions of College Art

A very specific example of how teachers assessed and compared the quality of their students' artwork was by participating in and viewing The Scholastic Art Awards (discussed further in the following text) and preparing their students to enter college level art programs after high school. Another program similar to the Scholastic Awards, The Advanced Placement (AP) exam in art was used in Liz's school instead of Scholastics, due to the school's number of art staff (Liz's art department has 4-5 art teachers, whereas other schools in this study had only 1-3). The AP Exam in Art is a yearlong course designed for advanced art students that results in a comprehensive art portfolio that is submitted to the AP board for assessment. If a student receives a high score on their portfolio, they could potentially apply the course work for college credit if their institution accepts AP credits. While art education literature includes discussion of the impact of AP (Graham, 2009a, 2009b), only Katy's school offered this program. Since Scholastic Awards also provide a form of assessment based on standardized, expertly judged criteria imposed from outside the classroom, I have used Scholastic Awards in this study as a proxy for external, standardized criteria that are most often represented by AP in the literature.

The Scholastic Awards provide examples to teachers of what exemplary art should look like, and serve almost a kind of ad hoc visual arts standardized test in Central New York. Earning these awards is a way that schools and teachers can visibly show

success. The Scholastic Awards for Young Artists and Writers is a program where students can submit their artwork to be evaluated and selected for exhibition regionally and nationwide. These exhibitions "give audiences the opportunity to see the work of the nation's top young artists and writers, inspiring appreciation for the teens' maturity, talent and originality" (Scholastic Art and Writing Awards, 2013, n.p.). The Scholastic Awards have recognized talent in the early careers of Richard Avedon, Andy Warhol and fashion designer Zac Posen when they were high school students. The contest is sponsored annually by corporations like Scholastic, Amazon.com, Bloomberg, New York Life to annually distribute awards over $250,000 in total.

In order to submit work to the Scholastic Awards program, you must be a student enrolled in grades 7-12. There are multiple categories and awards to which a student can submit work, but for this study I only look at drawing and painting to illustrate the process of the teachers and students in my study. There are special guidelines and rules for submission in each category. The Scholastic Awards (and AP exams, for that matter) also impose written restrictions on the visual representation of visual culture in student art products, directly limiting the inclusion of VCAE in art programs that participate in the Scholastics. For both the drawing and painting category, the rules cite that "drawings/paintings copied from published photographs, the internet or existing works should not be submitted and will be disqualified" (Scholastic Art and Writing Awards, 2013, n.p.). This is further complicated as the submission site outlines plagiarism in a guide for teachers, stating, "plagiarism is an ethical violation. If you take another person's words, materials, images, etc. without citing them (i.e., if you pass someone else's work as your own), the work is plagiarized and the submission will be disqualified.

This applies even if you have only copied a part, rather than the whole, of another's work" (Scholastic Art and Writing Awards, 2013, n.p.). If a school is interested in submitting and winning a Scholastic Award, these kinds of rules dictate a certain style of approach to curricula, and any implementation of visual culture, with its postmodern appropriations, becomes risky.

Additionally, the Scholastic Awards rules note that submitted artworks are evaluated based on three criteria: originality, technical skill, and personal vision or voice. The description for personal voice best sums up the criteria stating:

> We all know what the personal visions and voices of Awards alumni Andy Warhol, Truman Capote, Richard Avedon, and Sylvia Plath looked and sounded like when they became professional artists and writers. But what did their works look and sound like when they were teenagers? This is precisely the question we ask our jurors to consider during the judging process. It's no coincidence that The Awards have identified some of the most creative minds of the past nine decades. We are in the business of identifying the self-possessed, unique voices and visions of teenage artists and writers. (Scholastic Art and Writing Awards, 2013, n.p.)

The key ideas to take notice of here are "business" and the implied notion of adults being able to identify future artists. This is very problematic for the students and for the teachers when applied to the classroom, as this places artistic value and worth on winning, and equates failure as an artist with the failure to be selected. While award criteria will inevitably center on the concept of winning, it becomes a critical complication when these award criteria are found to heavily influence the classroom curricula and assessment, if not the classroom culture. In contrast to the traditional

product-based assessment, VCAE emphasizes exploration and connection to art, which would be difficult to coexist with Scholastic Awards criteria.

Scholastic Awards influence perceptions of college art

Liz noted she felt the Scholastic Awards were "inconvenient and not a fit for her program." Graham (2009) explains that "the structure of the AP portfolios help shape a definition of college-level foundational skills that occasionally conflicts with current arts education ideology" (p. 19). Contrary to the way that VCAE was not explicitly evident in the classrooms during this study (in terms of adhering to the academic language and structure of the VCAE paradigm), the Scholastics and the AP exam set the bar for high quality high school art product. It is not clear from this study whether teachers' perceived requirement to teach to Scholastic Awards and AP assessment criteria crowded out other assessment criteria, such as VCAE methods. A discussion of the prevalence of assessment based on the Scholastic Awards follows, along with implications of this strategy to the VCAE model.

The Scholastic Awards are often viewed as purely political because elite suburban schools with the biggest budgets typically win the most awards. Four of the teachers noted the specific schools they felt had an advantage in the Scholastic Awards, and noted that these schools start preparing their students for the Scholastic Awards competitions in middle school. After examining the Scholastic Awards exhibition of the winning artworks, there was evidence of certain school dominating the awards and other regional schools absent from the exhibit. Katy said "I don't think Scholastics is about the kids, I think it's about the teachers who want to pat themselves on the back." The teachers who

win are perceived to be the elite teachers in the region because their students' work is regularly selected.

The teachers also found the entry fee for the Scholastics competitions challenging because of their limited budgets and the inability of some students to pay $5 per piece submitted. Katy acknowledged:

> We cannot ask our students to pay the fees, so the district covers it, but every year the budget is tighter and tighter and it does make a really big difference when I found us bringing three busloads of kids in to help set the show up, do whatever, it's like there is clearly favoritism because of that and it's like we don't have the money to do that, they won't let us bring kids, they don't even let me go, I can't go to the set up.

Dina, Michelle, and Katy noted that her students began to recognize the inequalities, so they do not submit work to the Scholastic Awards as frequently, or at all. The recognition of the socio-economic inequality between schools in the region was recognized by the teachers and students, however rarely discussed during class time. Through a visual culture lens, this would be a perfect opportunity to spark a dialogue about inequality, what qualifies as winning art, etc.

Dina had stopped submitting her students' work to the Scholastic Awards, explaining:

> I've had talented students over the years, but I rarely get kids into the Scholastics, because they focus more on the traditional skills, and we just don't have the time to get into that, because…I would drive my stuff all the way up there, I would pay

the fees myself, because the city wouldn't pay them at that time, and I could never
get anything in.

She ended up feeling like she was wasting her time and money submitting because she
simply felt she did not have the resources to compete. "I have money to buy, you know,
three different colors of acrylic paint. They (the suburban schools) have money to buy oil
paint, you know, I mean it's just a totally different world." These schools also had more
art class options, which Michelle felt made it challenging to compete because she only
has two to three course offerings. Nonetheless, Katy and Michelle both had students'
work selected to be shown at the regional Scholastic Awards at the local community
college.

Even though all the teachers in this study recognized inequalities inherent in the
Scholastic Awards, they still submitted entries and created lessons that would fit the
criteria for the awards. Katy had her advanced students work on three projects directly
inspired by Scholastic Awards winners. The first project that I viewed assigned students
to find an example of a winning Scholastic Awards project from the Scholastic Awards
website and to "choose an element" from the award winning art work to copy or emulate,
to practice the winning style of the artist artwork. This project took them seven weeks to
complete, so the students really had time to focus on their adaptation as well as to
understand the winning qualities of an Scholastic artwork. This represented, perhaps, the
most direct example of Scholastic Awards criteria heavily influencing large portions of
class work. It could be argued that the students' ability to find their own inspirations
within these works represents an empowering exploration of visual culture. However, one
cannot ignore the implication of the student's inferiority: a non-winning student is forced

to allow the subjugation of his or her own work by a formally recognized, award-winning student.

Another project was titled "The Scholastic Mission." Katy showed the students' Scholastic winning art works in a PowerPoint presentation and presented the lesson as such:

What motivates for Scholastics? Think about your work and self-critique in terms of what you trying to achieve? Are you meeting your own goals? IS your project successful? (She shows scholastic winner images and the images happen to all be a very high skill and very realistic.) Did you think about reflection, repetition, realism? (She tells them that they still have an opportunity after break to work on these. As she continues to show students artwork, she clicks through slides.) How are you spending time in class and is it efficient? There's three weeks until the Scholastic deadline and that's going to be a big motivator for this next project (field notes, 11/16/11).

She shows specific examples of the product that students should be aiming for if they want to have their work selected. Katy continued with the PowerPoint describing the actual lesson assignment:

Scholastic Art challenge number 2. Size: huge! Think big! You can think about sexuality, orientation, political view, difficult moments, controversial moments. These are successful concepts to think about. Think about if your concept stands a chance to get into the Scholastics. If you want to make a painting about legalizing marijuana, you can do that, I'm just not going to place it in the principal's office. That's what the real artists want to see. Make art that shocks the viewer. Make it

huge. That's what art is about. Not all is created equal. Pick cool hands, old hands. Using popular culture or TV, that's dumb! Eyes! Are dumb. Middle school kids do that kind of stuff. Think about your gross toe with the cuticles. Think about what is going to the interesting to look at (field notes, 11/16/11).

This was critical to witness, because she outlines the essence of what high school-aged art should look like, or rather is thought to look like. She runs the class though a handful of other strategies to ensure success in the Scholastics, like point-of-view and perspective exercises. Cartooning, animation, and other "cheesy" subjects are not considered fine art (field notes, 11/16/11). She stresses that students create a work that will impact the viewer, but I wonder who the students think the viewer is and how they interpret creating a work with "impact."

College Art

The Scholastic Awards provided a surprising framework within the high school art classroom that I was not anticipating. The Scholastic Awards speak to the implied qualities of high school art works that will help a student get into a college art program along with ideas of what colleges are looking for in a high school visual art student's portfolio. Michelle, Katy, Dina and Nik noted that the Scholastic Awards pieces that received awards and recognition provided a visual framework for art success, and implied a quality of artistry that college art programs would be looking for in a potential student to the high school teachers. Graham (2003) believes that "most secondary art programs are designed for students who will choose to become art majors or go on to art schools" and that it is accepted that drawing is the fundamental skill in the high school visual art classroom (p. 162). Realism and drawing were identified as central qualities in order to

continue on in art post high school. Teachers also felt that colleges liked to see figure drawings. High schools typically do not hire models for figure drawing the way an art college would, so this is also problematic in finding figures to draw. I also question the emphasis of high school students drawing nude figures, as well as challenge the idea that figure drawing is considered essential college art learning today.

How the teachers understood what college art was expected to look like, and what students needed to include in a college entrance portfolio is unclear to me. In hindsight, I would have probed the participants to learn about their perspectives on college art. What I did learn was college art was reliant on realistic drawing and described as "visually good," in Michelle's words. Dina supported this:

But yeah, I think they should know how to draw from observation, how to make a good composition, they should know about all art elements, the principles, they should know what makes a quality piece of work, they should have some knowledge of some of the basic techniques in art.

As you can see, she relies on the language of the Elements and Principles of design and emphasizes art technique as a measure of success. Michelle shared this belief stating:

I mean I always get scared when I've had students who have completed the program where they don't have very strong drawing abilities and then they're talking about going to college for like graphic design or something, and then I'm like, (sarcastically) "Oh! I hope you take a lot of drawing classes."

I also began to notice how skill-centered teachers' felt the college portfolio process is, and how none of the participants mentioned the *content* or *message* within the artwork. Posing a misalignment with VCAE theory, the college portfolio is expected to

demonstrate a breadth of art skill, not a body of work exploring a concept, an issue, or pushing a medium through a process.

Further, students who were identified as college-ready are thought of as independent and motivated. Students who were viewed as aimless typically were not viewed as potential college art students. Liz also noted the significance of work ethic as a sign of college readiness stating, "I think I can tell pretty well who is going to do well and who is not, whose work is going to be accepted and what schools are going to accept which students." This declaration is especially important considering the development of a college portfolio based on the assumption that college art programs are seeking highly skilled students, and care less about concept. This belief that teachers' had about what college art programs are seeking certainly requires further investigation. Ultimately this is the business and another mark of a successful art teacher; if a student is accepted into a college art program and serves as curricular motivation to create art experiences that will provide materials for the college art portfolio.

Teachers' perceptions that discipline in the art classroom must generate (a) successful products that (b) fit their perception of college art can present a problem for the implementation of VCAE. A student's careful consideration and reflection during the process of artmaking or their rejection of traditional techniques and media, while encouraging signs under VCAE, might be considered aimless and assessed as a poor learning experience. Thus, these perceptions tend to reveal a fundamental discord between teachers and VCAE proponents in the benefits believed to be derived from VCAE and, further, the hallmarks of successful art learning experiences.

Summary

My study revealed that teachers privileged art teaching practices that were familiarly aligned to their own past art learning experiences and expectations for arts learning. The most commonplace practices featured a heavy reliance upon proficiency in drawing, the incorporation of the Elements and Principles of Art and Design, a scant use of new media technologies along with favoring realism. Art learning in high school has become systemized in a way, and it seems hard to break the expectations of what a *good* art teacher does, and of what *good* student artwork looks like. There were a select few examples of teachers resisting the Scholastic-style of art-making by finding ways to integrate technology into the classroom, and tapping into students' experiences as a way to create curriculum. However, it was a challenge to work against the School Art model of art-making, and the expectations of what an art product should look like, to ensure a teacher's perceived value within the school setting. Katy supported this, sharing,

> "I think there's a bigger push to show our work than maybe there had been in the past years, and I think maybe in part that comes from budget issues and concerns, that it's sort of like we're going to spend money on these [inaudible] classes, that we want at least to see the result. We want to enjoy the end product" (field notes 2/28/12).

While realism, and polished art products still reign supreme in the high school, teachers did not report feeling the need to conform to national or state standards or curricula as Liz notes, "We have a curriculum that we developed a few years ago as a department and it's based entirely on the New York State Teaching Standards, so it's really open-ended and we wanted to do that on purpose because there is overlap in what we teach" (field notes, 2/18/12). The organizing factors driving the similarities between

classrooms appeared to be a collection of factors that acted as a *de facto* set of standards for high school art classrooms, aligned to the past art learning experiences and expectations for arts learning in the lives of the teachers. For example, teachers so heavily favored the technical skill of drawing, they uniformly implemented drawing exercises at the expense of other postmodern teaching methodologies (e.g., VCAE). In recent literature, technology was widely perceived to be an important part of an art experience. However, technology was scarcely used at all by most teachers in the art classroom, and never used for art making outside of Dina's Media Arts class. Surprisingly, of the *de facto* art education standards described here, teachers most strictly adhered to the Scholastic Awards set of criteria and visual templates of what good art looks like, which appear to heavily favor more well-funded schools. Taken together, these observations indicate that while teachers will explicitly acknowledge a need for the types of learning experiences VCAE would provide, the curricular choices they make often do not reflect that acknowledgement.

CHAPTER 7: CONCLUSION

In this dissertation I have examined the utilization of a visual culture model of art education in the classroom through an integrated qualitative approach. This concluding chapter will serve to first summarize my findings from the preceding chapters, and will subsequently explore implications and suggestions for pre-service teacher preparation programs, university representatives, and to support high school teachers in how to bridge the gap between theory and the practice in incorporating visual culture into the art classroom.

Key Research Findings

This study included a qualitative multi-case study analysis combining interviews, classroom observations, and collections of visual artifacts from five high school art teachers (Chapter 3). The methodology was crucial to the success of the study as it enabled me to explore a variety of teacher perspectives over the span of a school year. Although a growing sentiment in the art education field urges greater utilization of the Visual Culture Art Education (VCAE) curriculum model (Chapter 2), the extent to which these suggestions are being implemented in the art education classroom remains unclear.

The Art Teacher

In Chapter 4, I explored the historical perspectives and preferences of the art teacher. This section relied particularly on interviews with practicing teachers, with pertinent questions opening up insight into their art learning experiences, their pedagogical philosophies, expressed understandings of their art teacher identities, their paths toward the teaching profession, and evidence of current practices in high school visual art classrooms.

Taken together, my analysis of this dataset showed that teachers tended to teach in the style that they learned from their own K-12 experiences and their pre-service training. I also learned that all of the participants did not intend to become teachers during their undergraduate studies, but rather opted to enroll in master's level programs in education to pursue licensure. They shared what they remembered from their licensure training programs and what they found meaningful from their experiences. Teachers in this study identified having strong mentors as critical to their career paths and towards the development of their approaches to teaching in the classroom. They wanted to model their teaching based on the impact and inspiration of their mentors. Participants also shared their need for more art-specific professional development opportunities in their schools along with more opportunities to network with other art teachers in the area.

Visual Culture Education in the Classroom

In Chapter 5, I directly examined the extent to which the Visual Culture Art Education (VCAE) model (see Chapter 2 for details) was utilized in the classroom. Interviews, observations and visual artifacts[6] contributed equally to my analysis in this chapter to address the degree of implementation. These data indicated that teachers would incorporate visual culture into their curricula, however, this was not motivated by a desire to incorporate VCAE, per se, but a convergent perspective from teachers that visual culture is a part of their students' everyday lives and is part of classroom youth culture in contemporary schools. If a teacher used a visual culture art object as a lesson prompt, it was not specifically used in order to align to VCAE, but rather unintentionally. As the

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[6] Unfortunately, example visual artifacts cannot be included in any reports of this research to protect anonymity. See Chapter 3 for details.

researcher I used the current literature surrounding VCAE into order to better discern the lesson's intent or whether the inclusion of a visual culture artifact was intended as a learning prompt or was just part of the classroom work time discussion.

Teachers participating in this story were unable to define VCAE as a paradigm, however they could outline their understanding of visual culture and the relevance of visual culture in today's visual landscape. This chapter also identified disconnects between the academic theory of VCAE and its translation to current practice, as well as an unfamiliarity and discomfort with academic language and discourse in general.

This chapter also provided a snapshot into Dina's class, the classroom practice I identified as the one most aligning with the varied definitions of VCAE. The last section of Chapter 5 provides examples of student choices and moments of democratic education as defined as one of the intended outcomes of VCAE. Although there were opportunities for students to make choices, most of the choices were filtered through a teacher-directed approval process. Classroom discussions also remained far afield from heavier topics, and either held discussions that were likely to prove more challenging discussions at a mere topical level, or allowed such discussions to trail off and end.

Factors influencing curriculum

In Chapter 6, I addressed the following question: If VCAE was not a model that was influencing curriculum (Chapter 5), then what are factors that influence the creation of contemporary curriculum? I examined the factors that contribute to and influence teacher-designed curriculum in the high school visual art classroom. Interviews, participant observation, and textual analysis were analyzed for this chapter.

Chapter 6 demonstrated the pervasiveness of the Elements and Principles of Art and Design evident in the high school visual art classroom. This chapter also discussed the reliance on drawing as a central foundation to art learning. The usage of technology in the classrooms was also examined, and was typically observed as underutilized except for in Dina's Media Arts classroom. The last section of Chapter 6 explored assessment in relation to the Scholastic Art Awards as a visual benchmark or standard for exceptionally skilled high school artwork. The Scholastic Awards influenced teachers' curriculum, specifically regarding those criteria that formed a template of "college art." There was evidence that participating in the Scholastic Awards that made winning the competition a political endeavor, limiting schools that do not have the budget for submission campaigns, and explicitly excluding entries that contained visual culture referents. In two of these factors (emphasis on drawing and Elements and Principles), discrepancies were observed between teacher goals explicated during interviews and teacher goals pursued during observations.

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Key Themes and Implications

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VCAE Theory to Practice

Overall, a formal understanding of VCAE as a term or concept through an awareness of art education literature was not evident. Despite not being able to define VCAE, the teachers had an understanding of visual culture and demonstrated instances of classroom learning experiences that would align with VCAE's philosophies. The teachers in this study voiced trepidation when asked to discuss what they knew about current art education literature. As a researcher this was a point of tension, as I did not intend to make them feel uncomfortable. To an extent, the literature that I was immersed in my

doctoral studies (Chapter 2) did not align with the teachers' curriculum and practice in the art classroom.

Even though I only observed five teachers' classrooms, I encountered a diversity of levels of implementation of VCAE and the tenets that comprise it. Some of the teachers seemed to understand that using or allowing visual culture in their classrooms made the art material more accessible to a variety of students. However, at other times, teachers made sure that students avoided elements of visual culture in their artwork and student instruction. They had clear ideas about what was acceptable art learning and what was unacceptable in the culture of the high school visual arts classroom.

The determining factor rested in learning how to incorporate visual culture, or the students' interests, into their idea of what high school art curricula should look like. As I mentioned in Chapter 5, there was a big difference in the teacher using visual culture as an art object prompt to introduce a lesson, rather than a student responding to an assignment by appropriating a visual culture image in their art product. The teacher's intent was the critical piece in identifying a lesson that aligned with VCAE. Additionally, the critical engagement and agency over visual culture images by the students was instrumental in identifying a lesson that aligned with VCAE tenets. Chung and Kirby (2009) state that "all visual culture forms are sites of ideological struggles, representations of cultural practice, and embodiments of social reality", becoming prompts for learning in the art classroom (p. 34). The problem lies in trying to unify skill building with appropriate lesson content. Liz offers this insight:

Obviously, that [connecting the skill building to more engaging content] is what we tried to do but I just don't think we're figuring it out well enough. I personally

don't feel like I'm figuring it out well enough. I would love my students to spend

hours trying contour and contour drawing. Hours but they get bored and then they

don't want to take art and then you lose them and then you lose your funding and

then you lose your program and then you lose your job. And so, it's like this

thing, this monster. It's a slippery slope kind of thing and I want to provide

opportunities that are meaningful to kids. But a lot of kids don't find meaning in

the hard work of making art. But if they don't have the basic skills, it's frustrating

to them.

The teachers in this study shared a uniform belief that the most important element to art learning is acquiring "the basics." However, they struggled to fuse the acquisition of art techniques with meaningful content so as to keep students engaged and program numbers healthy. Stankiewicz (2004) writes that "for many art educators' the [inclusion of a] 'broader range of stuff' is the most salient characteristic" of VCAE (p. 6). Incorporating visual culture prompts complicates the range of art learning objects and understandings within those visual prompts, which could ultimately overwhelm the amount of important "stuff" teachers already feel they have to address in the art classroom.

Stewart (2012) summarizes the counterpoint to this teaching concern, observing that:

Teaching a narrowly defined fine art curriculum limits students from the many

career paths that are available to them apart from the painting and sculpture

studio…popular culture may not be fine art but it is the place where our students

reside and will and should be reflected in their work. (p. 54)

Although I did not encounter the formal implementation of a well understood concept of the VCAE model, it was nonetheless encouraging that visual culture images were repeatedly visible in the art classroom, albeit sporadically. This suggests that although teachers may lack a formal grasp on the literature guiding teachers to use VCAE in their curricula, the innate interests of art teachers indicate the basic prerequisite awareness required to implement VCAE. If this is indeed true, this suggests that teachers simply lack the experience and comfort around implementing the model, and further suggests a strong incentive for increased professional development and outreach between academia and practicing teachers. Further, if the disconnect in the translation from theory to practice has long been recognized by academics (Hermann, 2005), then either the literature has been addressing this concern ineffectively, or we have yet to build a sound structure to bridge the gap from research in academia to the practice in the K-12 classroom.

Conflicting Internal vs. External Curricular Goals

This study presents data findings that illuminate the traditional ways of teaching art that is privileged in the K-12 visual art classroom. Additionally, the teachers' perspectives presented a glimpse into the dominant narrative of how art teachers conceptualize visual arts learning. During interviews, teachers recognized the need for building technical art skills while finding projects or content to engage in the students interests, but this goal was not always actively pursued when designing curricula. First, teachers recognized that traditional drawing exercises did not challenge students' perceptions of art, yet much of the curricula revolved around traditional drawing exercises. Second, teachers ubiquitously devoted art critique discussions in the

framework of the Elements and Principles, although they would be quick to minimize the role Elements and Principles play in their curricular strategies. These constituted discrepancies between their curricular practices and stated curricular goals.

Since a third piece of information, teachers' personal unstated curricular goals could not be elucidated, the discrepancy either lies between their practices and unstated goals or between their unstated and stated goals. In the case of the former, teachers might simply be unaware that their practices do not achieve their curricular goals. In the case of the latter, they might be hesitant to embrace curricular practices that would effectively allow them to achieve their stated curricular goals, instead paying lip service to the curricular goals they feel they should be pursuing.

A previous study employing anonymous teacher surveys found similarities between the curricular goals stated in the surveys (LaPorte et al., 2008) and the curricular practices I observed, suggesting that under the cover of anonymity, teachers do not feel compelled to state curricular goals including more critical pedagogies, including VCAE. It remains unclear why teachers do not practice curricula that would allow them to achieve their stated curricular goals, but two possibilities are that (1) teachers are uncomfortable with pedagogical models like VCAE that would achieve those goals or (2) teachers are legitimately skeptical of the benefits of postmodern art education models. If the former were true, further professional development and curricular tools could facilitate the implementation of VCAE. If the latter were true, greater outreach from academics espousing the benefits of VCAE to practicing teachers is necessitated to build a consensus on what effective contemporary art education might look like.

Another avenue for further discussion regarding the implementation of VCAE into the high school visual arts classroom is the element of working against the institutionalized school culture setting. As I have evidenced in Chapter 6, there are unwritten rules and structures to the high school visual art curriculum. This warrants further investigation into the following questions: Where are teachers learning and understanding how an art room is supposed to operate? How do they know what is appropriate behavior, content and structure in the art classroom? What artwork qualifies for display on the walls and how do they "just know" as Michelle noted? Where do these guidelines and understandings for conformity in the visual art classroom exist?

In institutionalized school settings like the ones I observed, teachers and students thrive on structure and routines. VCAE theory does not specifically address this K-12 phenomenon of day-to-day student teacher interaction. Additionally, VCAE literature does not fully address the necessity that a teacher has to provide and plan curricula for a variety of classes and provide lessons to administrators for the course of a school year. There are a multitude of factors that impact and often impede the creation of curriculum along with the implementation of VCAE or any kind of change that teachers have to explore and reflect on in order to adjust their curriculum.

Past Experiences Influence the Present

Franzak (2002) states that ideally, an "emerging teacher's educational experience embraces the long journey from K-12 throughout university years" and that "each soon to be teacher has been constructing meaning within the field of education for most of their lives while living through the multi-faceted process related to being taught" (p. 279). This notion would suggest that the practicing teacher has been reflecting on their past learning

experiences, and this was hard to determine. Conducting the life history interview with each teacher was insightful because you could see the stories and philosophies unraveling as they related their narratives of what brought them to their current career in art education.

Based on teacher life histories, it was clear how much their art learning experiences influence their teaching. For example, if someone were a painter, their curriculum would include more paintings. Katy liked to travel, so her assignments would have a multi-cultural element reflecting her experiences. At one point Katy told her class that in essence, they were really doing Katy's artwork, and that she could claim their work as hers as she had given them the idea. This was a pivotal moment for me as a researcher, as it confirmed that she had realized that she was teaching what she likes and the styles she had learned in her schooling, and she was passing them along to her students. She teaches the way she likes to be taught, and her art lessons and student art product reflected that.

Hermann (2005) confirms, "teachers maintain tradition by teaching the way they were taught. As the art world continues to question traditions, it is appropriate for art educators to question the validity of their own continuing in contemporary times" (p. 44). Thus, reflecting on the precedents for one's pedagogical practice is a central piece towards making change in the classroom. Without reflection, identification, and modification, these teaching patterns will continue to repeat themselves. There needs to be a provision for teachers to find time to reflect on their practices on a regular basis, as well as having access to best practices in art education.

To summarize, my data indicate and support that teachers' previous experiences inform their own teaching styles. Thus, it may be difficult to grossly change an experienced art teacher's teaching style unless a comfortable entry point was provided, for example through visual culture and/or appropriate professional development opportunities, as well as opportunities through in-service coursework in continuing education. This may seem like a redundant finding given the review of literature. However, for art education researchers this provides insight into continuing to research the ways that art teachers could feel like they could approach a new medium, or concept as well as further explore the ways of teaching art that are privileged in the K-12, and university settings.

Lost in Translation: Lack of Language/ Exposure to Literature

The teachers in this study stressed a feeling of marginalization within their schools and alienation in relation to their local university. Milbrandt (2006) observed "for the overwhelming majority of art teachers, the enterprise of teaching is one of isolation from other colleagues in the same discipline" (p. 16). Teachers exhibited resistance regarding the study or relevance of academic language when encountering higher education institution representatives (like myself, or a student teacher for example). For example, the participants, as a group, had a vague-to-good understanding of what visual culture is, but could not identify the term VCAE. Since my study revealed that teachers expressed fear they were not up to date on current art education theory during interviews, I believe that the teachers looked to university representatives for guidance in order to become more familiar with new terminology and language in art education literature. It was unclear how the teachers understood terms like *critical*,

postmodern, and *constructivism*. As a practitioner at heart, but a researcher by trade, I feel it is my duty to serve as a conduit between the academic community and the K-12 art teaching community. Visual culture is pervasive and was clearly a part of the art classroom to varying degrees, however the framework of the VCAE model was not a part of their pedagogical vocabulary. This disconnect certainly deserves more attention through further research involving practicing art teachers and how art education literature is made available to the larger art education community.

VCAE as a Bridge to New Media and Art Content

A common misconception regarding VCAE's application is that the building of art skills is ignored or undervalued. I would argue firmly against that, stressing that learning art skills can incorporate some form of visual culture inclusion, and skills can be acquired more meaningfully as students become stakeholders in the content they are learning about. Stankiewicz (2004) felt that,

> Art education for an information age should provide differentiated, sequential curricula that enable students to communicate through traditional and newer media but also to step back and reflect on how images and objects show and shape cultural values. (p. 9)

Art skill building for the twenty-first century incorporates a whole new set of art skills that are underrepresented in schools today. Additionally, K-12 visual art curriculum continues to privilege a particular group of artists, who I refer to as The Dead White Guys (for example; Vincent Van Gogh, Pablo Picasso, Edgar Degas, Claude Monet, Paul Cezanne, Andy Warhol, Jackson Pollack, etc). From my classroom visits as a supervisor and researcher, K-12 art classes typically highlight the work of these artists through

lessons that ask students to create an art product "in the style of…(Picasso, Monet, Cezanne, Warhol, etc). I have seen Van Gogh's "Starry Night" recreated as ceramic tiles, a school mural, tempera paintings and collage among other iterations. I often wonder, how do students relate or interact to this kind of art production? How do the Scholastic Awards, teacher-training programs, art textbooks and art materials used in the classroom continue to support the work of the Dead White Guys, and to illustrate that their art matters most? Obviously, the works of the Dead White Guys do matter (as demonstrated in textbooks, reproductions and museum presence), but so do various other artists of assorted gender, culture, ethnicity, medium, etc. There are a variety of artists, or topics that also would engage a variety of learners and potentially turn students on to learning. Additionally, recognizing the curatorial nature of maintaining a blog, or presenting links on a Facebook page, or being able to recognize credible sources on the Internet also serve as sites for exploration and learning.

In fact, we may be doing our students a disservice by not incorporating new media. For example, my three-year-old son has been fluent in the usage of the iPad since he was six months old. Touch screen technology, and interactive computer learning have been a part of his visual landscape since birth. I often wonder, when he arrives at kindergarten, what he will think of chalk boards or white boards, lined paper, and flip charts. We are not preparing to teach this new technology-literate generation at this point within the art education field.

The problem lies in that the focus of the art classroom is *making* stuff. Students and teachers rely on the physical product of an art lesson as a way to assess learning. Art teachers put *stuff* on the walls in school. Students bring *stuff* home to show their

caregivers. This is the expectation of the visual art classroom: you make and show *stuff*.
New technologies, and visual culture prompts are assumed to produce a non-tactile
product, and sometimes this is true depending on your definition of art or medium. We
need to consider the necessity for realizing a bridge between the theory and practice in art
education with this in mind.

So, when will we arrive at the gap and what will this bridge look like? Given
recent technology, social media, and the availability of information at the touch of your
fingertips, we are already there. There will come a time where we will absolutely have to
negotiate a shift in our thinking about art curriculum and we will all have to build a
bridge in order to address the needs of our students, and emerging technologies. The
question remains: how do we decide what we are going to teach students, and inform
ourselves as educators in order to keep up with current information, technologies,
theories and practices?

Graham (2012) reflects that school art curriculum practices are in the midst of a
post-modern shift and that,

> This change in emphasis reflects a re-conceptualization in the field of art
> education characterized by a shift in curriculum from more traditional modes of
> art making to a more critical, socially responsible, historical, political and self-
> reflexive engagement with art and visual culture. (p. 7)

He also notes that in addition to VCAE, there are now a plurality of modes by which to
expand art education into areas such as material culture studies, place-based art
education, eco-art production and arts-based research (Graham, 2012, p. 7). It is
impossible to teach from all these approaches, to teach all the world's cultures, and all the

art processes in the world, but we can begin to be more thoughtful about the curriculum-making process in order to reflect our students' visual culture contexts. We can also develop ways to incorporate ways to re-think art skill building through VCAE and other art education paradigms as this study has evidenced a reliance on the development of technical art skills.

When Efland (1976) wrote his seminal paper on "School Art Style," he explained that the "School Art Style" of art pedagogy and production had been reproduced for the last half of the century. However, in 2012 the same art products are still visible within the K-12 school setting. Hickman (2001) furthers, "his [Efland's] remark that we should be trying to change the school in order to change the art that it generates is probably more relevant today [in 2001] than it was in 1976" (p. 7). In 2013, we are still generating similar art products to those in the past fifty years, especially those influenced by DBAE (Disciplined Based Art Education) and other traditional art education models originated prior to 1980. Disrupting these "School Art Style" habits will involve a shift in school culture thinking, art education policy, and national and state standards. More importantly, pre-service university instructors will have to do a better job of providing opportunities for pre-service teachers and in-service teachers to practice and learn about new models or ways of approaching art education.

Limitations and Future Research

Methodology

This study used an intense longitudinal qualitative study to assess the utilization of a theoretical model in curriculum design (Chapter 3). This methodology proved effective in answering the stated research questions, and reflects, to my knowledge, the

most thorough characterization of VCAE's implementation in the classroom to date. This methodology provided a rich observational dataset, and a thorough participant background understanding, all with a large sample size of five teachers. The interviews, observations, and visual artifacts synergistically provided deep insight into the classroom. The analysis of any one facet of this dataset would have been severely hampered by the absence of another facet. It is recommended that this methodology be employed by other researchers looking to better understand a theoretical model's curricular implementation.

However, every methodology has its limitations. Across all the classrooms there was a uniform impression that the teachers felt they needed to control the students' behavior. Every participant discussed behavioral issues with me, and typically it was always one of the first things they would share with me when I came in to observe. More specifically, I was nudged to come visit the "good" classes," which was code for the well-behaved student, and typically high-skilled classroom. I believe that because they knew me prior as a university supervisor of student teachers it was a challenge to shift roles in the teachers' minds, and I was extra cautious of this realization. Although my prior role as a university supervisor of student teachers gave me access to school settings in the region, it may also be viewed as a breach of anonymity, as the teachers and I had already established a professional relationship from past experience. Nonetheless, the familiarity provided me with credibility and the comfort for teachers to open up and share their stories. My recommendation to future researchers in the classroom is to be aware of the role of familiarity, and to consider this role in the methodology more carefully.

Another limitation of this study was that I only had female participants. Perhaps to avoid this I could have cast a wider net when recruiting participants. In no way did this

reflect a criterion for exclusion – simply that only females agreed to participate. Whether or not gender differences, race, class – or other aspects of teacher diversity – would have had an impact on the results of this study is therefore beyond the scope of this study. However it is important to note this limitation as the data set could have been broadened by incorporating a greater diversity of participants, and factoring in varied cultural approaches to the use of visual culture including those specific to a teacher's life experience and schooling environment.

Additionally it is important to consider the personal and professional dispositions of the teachers who chose to participate in this study. These teachers were willing to open up their classrooms for observational study and participate in interviews to share their experiences. All the participants demonstrated a level of confidence in their practice and pride in their work. Not all teachers are willing to accept researchers or student teachers in their classrooms for various reasons, so this compliance is worth recognizing as the teachers felt compelled to share their ideas, discuss their philosophy of art education and mentioned that they appreciated being listened to.

Lastly, this study was limited by IRB protocol in that I did not include the consent from the students to include their artwork in the writing of this study. Obviously, this study is visual in its nature and the inclusion of imagery would have been beneficial. More specifically, I would have liked to include students' artwork. Without the student and parent consent, I cannot include student artwork as there are identifying elements within the work. If I were to approach this study again, I would seek to obtain permission and develop student consent protocols from the onset in my IRB application.

Recommendations and Best Practices

Theory to Practice and Recommendations for Academic Research

Graham (2012) notes that there is a generative tension between structure and openness in designing curriculum and learning environments" (p. 7). People tend to feel comfortable with what they know, and are unlikely to be accepting of change, especially when the literature suggesting change is (1) not accessible, (2) intimidating, and (3) does not offer prescriptive instruction on how to implement new ideas or theories. As academics, we must commit to increasing the accessibility of our findings and ensuring that our discussions are rooted in realistic practice. Academic researchers cultivating experiences in the K-12 art classroom can best facilitate this. Academics must also be cognizant that academic discussions can be intimidating to audiences who are not familiar with the relevant jargon, historical perspectives, and most relevant scholars. When academics advocate for any given theoretical position to an audience that might include non-scholars, language should be clarified accordingly. Finally, academia must be more proficient in producing prescriptive tools that can be readily discovered and utilized by practicing teachers.

Freedman et al. (2013) offer eight recommendations on incorporating visual culture learning in the classroom, however I will highlight three as they apply to my findings:

1) Art making knowledge develops across as well within visual culture forms;

2) Students have a desire to learn about visual culture forms not included in curriculum;

3) Art making can promote social networking, which reinforces art making. (p. 113)

We need to provide opportunities for dialogue between teachers and university teachers. We need to embrace the qualities of lifelong learners, and work to bridge the perceived gap between schoolteachers and university instructors.

Based on Freedman's (2013) aforementioned recommendations here are my thoughts on applying them to pre-service and in-service teachers. I would suggest creating avenues to provide teachers with opportunities to incorporate visual culture into their own practice by identifying visual culture interests that are relevant to the teachers first. This approach would also apply to ensuring the implementation of other kinds of contemporary curriculum approaches such as material culture studies, place-based art education, eco-art production and arts-based research. We learn best by reflecting on our own understanding, and if teachers can learn to unpack their own interpretations they can begin to apply the process to their students' interests.

Teachers in this study recognized their students' interest in visual culture, but either ignored it as just work-time chit-chat, or declined joining in the conversation. As I have suggested, if teachers can explore their interests in visual culture or other curriculum approaches, this might serve as a gateway to begin to try to understand students' interests in new curriculum content. By engaging in dialogue with their students on topics that are pertinent or exciting to them, this would provide as an entryway to Wilson's (2003) notion of the teachers learning from the students and vice versa, creating a more democratic learning space open to new curricular possibilities.

The teachers in this study were asked to frame what lifelong learning might look like for all parties involved. The ideal learner would bring a "fresh perspective" according to Katy. Liz's dream learning environment would include:

Students who were interested in learning… They definitely would not have to be great artists. They would just be people who were curious and brave and willing to go out on a limb… I like the idea of a life-long learner.

As academic researchers, we need to remember our classroom roots and stay connected to that environment. Remembering my days as a schoolteacher, I never went to any conferences, nor did I have any interest in going to an art conference. I wanted to make art and I wanted to be a thoughtful teacher. I ended up taking a Visual Culture course at my alma mater from the credits I received for hosting a student teacher and it was that experience that sparked my interest in pursuing a doctoral program. This particular professor, Dr. John Broughton, encouraged me to use my experiences from the classroom and apply them to the theory we were reading. I was the only schoolteacher in a graduate class full of education philosophy students who were not teaching in schools. He really valued my experiences with students in the classroom and helped me to apply theory to what I was viewing in my practice. He taught me to push my dialogue further, not to overgeneralize and to re-consider stereotypes. As a pre-service teacher just trying to make it through a certification program, I never had time to reflect. I was always reacting. I was not trained to fully grasp theory beyond a basic level. I needed the guidance from this professor to help me to learn how to push beyond the surface level messages.

As a pre-service teacher trainer today, I hold onto this memory as I reflect on the best practices for my students. Without reflection, I would repeat the patterns and practices that are comfortable, but remaining in one's comfort zone is not what makes a life-long learner and a responsive teacher. This experience serves as a reminder to me,

clearly illustrating the critical importance of pre-service teacher trainers to encourage pre-service teachers to think beyond their comfort levels of teaching, just as these future teachers will one day ask of their students.

I have argued that teacher's teaching styles are, to some extent, crystallized long before completing their own education. This might be disheartening to VCAE theorists writing that teachers need to start including or embracing the qualities of VCAE. For future research, it would be fascinating to examine whether teacher strategies can be deconstructed and re-crystallized during their education or professional practice. Hypothetically, I might propose to observe teachers before and after professional development opportunities and this could be a tremendous boon in finding increased support for professional development opportunities for art teachers.

Recommendations for High School Visual Art Teachers and Administrators

Art teachers need more opportunities for meaningful professional development "to maintain their status on school faculty, certified arts educators advance their teaching and artistic knowledge through ongoing professional development" (Richerme et al., 2012, p. 3). Art teachers are often neglected during school professional development days, and the participants in this study unanimously shared this concern. Art teachers should be given the opportunity to attend art conferences, visit museums, take art courses, visit art supply stores, or engage in new media. Given that my findings indicate that art teacher's curriculum overwhelmingly reflect the limitations in their own education, it is critical to counter this effect by increasing their exposure to new methods and techniques.

Millbrandt (2006) summarizes,

Historically the mission of art education has shifted to accommodate the needs of

society, yet in a pluralistic society with multilayered needs, the strength of our

field may lie in our ability to diagnose specific contextual student needs and use

particular philosophical practices and strategies to best meet those needs. (p. 20)

Stewart (2012) elaborates this pedagogical responsiveness, arguing "students are not

empty glasses to be filled by facts, but living human beings who need to interact,

consider, reason and examine the life they are living and the life that lies before them" (p.

49). We need to reexamine art content and the importance, and realities of our students'

interests and lived experiences.

Teachers also need not shy away from engaging in visual culture dialogue with

their students. I found that some of the teachers had a hard time following through with

conveying some of their pedagogical concepts, or with finding supports or examples after

the initial lesson demonstration. Students either felt motivated to begin work right away

or felt motivated to chit-chat off topic. One less successful technique involved providing

a lesson demonstration and following immediately with a worksheet as a brainstorming

tool, rather than engaging in a dialogue about the lesson topic. This would stop the flow

of energy within the classroom. Typically when the teacher engaged students in further

dialogue about the proposed lesson, students were more excited to move forward with the

project.

Teachers need to have more opportunities to practice engaging in dialogue. Pre-

service teachers must be trained to unpack dialogue with students and should be offered

opportunities to experiment. Being able to push past oversimplifications,

overgeneralizations and stereotypes during a student led conversation is a good place to begin examining how to take the discussion to the next level.

Recommendations for Pre-Service Teacher Programs

To find out how licensure programs might influence what kind of teachers are sent out into schools, it is up to the academic community to determine what is actually transferred from coursework, field experiences, and prior non-education course work. "Pre-service preparation sets the stage for professional identity and lays down a foundation, but over time decreases in importance as practice takes over" (Hatfield et al., 2006, p. 44). The information gleaned from pre-service programs indeed lays the foundation for future professional teaching practice (Chapter 4). If we are introducing new paradigms and new ways of thinking about art education to our students it is our duty to help them learn how to put these ideas into practice. Even though the VCAE model has certainly evolved and has perhaps even shifted over to new art education paradigms, the core elements of VCAE can still be read about in today's art education literature. The visual culture phenomenon is pervasive, and it is critical that we arm teachers with the tools to understand their own visual culture experiences before they can go out and teach this approach to pedagogy.

Challenging pre-service teachers to examine their past learning experiences through reflection sets a foundation towards understanding their calling to the art teaching profession. I frequently challenge my students: "What do you remember from your schooling that you did not like? Okay, now remember that incident and don't repeat it in your teaching practice." We do not have to teach the way we were taught and pre-service teachers need to feel empowered to accept that and really think about how and

what they want students to learn. Encouraging students to develop a reflective philosophy would allow them to build confidence in their abilities and feel safer to take curricular risks.

Additionally, as pre-service teacher educators we should foster a reciprocal relationship within our K-12 art community by bringing cooperating teachers into the classroom to discuss their perspectives and to share their stories. As Milbrandt (2006) wrote,

> The educational setting cannot ever be separated from the realities of its community, but we can each reach beyond the walls of our individual institutions to interact, problem-solve, and grow professionally with educators teaching a variety of levels with different strengths, experiences, and geographic locations dedicated to lifelong learning and ethical practice. (p. 20)

In the spirit of VCAE theory, as university representatives and academic researchers we can learn a great deal from the perspectives of teachers as they practice in K-12 settings every day.

Appendix A

Table 8.1: Example scope and sequence for teaching visual culture. (Reproduced directly from Freedman, 2003).

ORGANIZER	PRIMARY LEVEL	MIDDLE LEVEL	HIGH SCHOOL LEVEL	HIGHER ED. FOUNDATIONS
Society	Art is made by and for people.	Art has many social purposes and contexts.	Art has social, political and economic conditions.	Art is a form of social production.
Imagination	People use their imaginton to create art.	Art involves imagining forms of ideas and emotions.	Art is created through the imagitive use of metaphor, symbol, and related concepts.	High-level visualizations and creation requires broad knowledge and reflexivity in the use of imagination.
Point of View/Stance	Art suggests a point of view.	Through the expression of a point of view in their work, artists can take a stand.	Point of view of stance determiens choice and handling of subject matter and the interpretationsof those choices.	Art professionals philosophically position themselvesthrough the stance(s) of their creations and interpretations.
Interpretation	Different people interpret art differently.	Art asks questions that have many possible answers but some are more supportable than others.	Interpretation of art enables audiences to make cognitive connections that personalize and extend meanging.	Complex meaning develops through varioius interpretaive filters that enable sophistiacated reflection and analysis.
Identity	Each person makes art about himself/herself and his/her world.	Art helps people construct and become conscious of identity.	Individual and culture identities are constructed and revealed through art.	Art is a personal statement, in a cultural context, with an individual style.
Culture	The people of each culture make art in their own way.	Art is central to the developmentof cultures and subcultres, including student subcultures.	Art is a culture carrier: it is shaped by culture conditions and reveals them.	Art, and its professional communities, promote cultureal retification and critique.
Mediation	People tell stories through art.	Throut artistic narration and representation, people communicate with each other.	People mediate knowledge, attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors through art.	Art mediates other cultural forms, connecting people and cultures, past and present.

Appendix B

Life History Prompts

Tell me about becoming a teacher.

Tell me about yourself as an artist.

What are some of your interests other than art and education?

Can you tell me about your course work in your teacher education program?

What is an art teacher supposed to do?

How you would you describe your learning style?

How would you describe yourself as a teacher?

What are the expectations for the teachers in your school?

Tell me about your curriculum.

Tell me about your relationships with your students.

What kinds of art things are important to share with your students?

What do you want your students to take away from an art learning experience in your classroom?

Ask about class schedule for Wednesdays.

Set first visit.

Appendix C

Interview #2

1. What does your "dream" classroom look like?

2. What does your classroom "from hell" look like?

3. What do you typically have students do during free time/ when a project is finished?

4. Where do you get your ideas/ lessons from? (Ask for specific examples)

5. If you look at websites, what specific sites to you look at for inspiration or instructional purposes?

6. What are your objectives for each class? What do you want them to learn/ take away?

7. Tell me about the elements and principles of design. Do you use them?

8. Tell me about grid drawings?

9. What does a student need to know in order to continue on n art at a college level?

10. How do you know if a student is college ready artistically? Are there any identifiers?

11. Do you participate in the Scholastic awards? If so, what can you tell me about the Scholastics?

12. Ask for re-cap of semester projects.

13. Can you show me an example of a successful artwork and an unsuccessful artwork? What makes them so?

Appendix D

Final Interview #3

1. Tell me about your professional development experiences (conferences, workshops, etc).

2. What, if any, changes have you made to your curriculum over the years?

3. What if any changes have you seen in student work during your tenure?

4. What kind of student does your curriculum speak to/ engage the most?

5. Tell me how you guide your students or help them to begin a project?

6. When a student begins a project, what kind of choices do that have?

7. What is the appropriate art content/ aesthetic response to a project? Art product?

8. What do you want your students to take away from an art learning experience from your classroom?

9. Can you share with me a lesson that you thought was particulary successful?

10. How might you approach a student who might not be so stron skill wise?

11. As far as classroom rules, what is forbidden to talk about in the art room?

12. What do you hear your students talking about during classtime?

13. Classroom layout/ wall space: how do you decide what materials/ artwork/ posters go on display?

14. Based on your art education training, could you associate your teaching style with a particular art education model?

15. Can you tell me about some teaching models you are familiar with?

16. Can you tell me about DBAE?

17. What can you tell me about VCAE?

18. How would you describe visual culture?

19. What is the role of visual culture/ popular culture in school and in the art room? Is there a place for VC in art, and how do you envision it?

20. Within your curriculum, does visual culture influence your lessons? Student work?

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Wilson, B. (1994). Reflections on the relationships among art, life, and research. *Studies in Art Education*, *35*(4), 197-208.

Wilson, B. (2003). Of diagrams and rhizomes: Visual culture, contemporary art, and the impossibility of mapping the content of art education. *Studies in Art Education, 44*(3), 214.

Wilson, B. (2005). More Lessons from the Superheroes of J. C. Holz: The Visual Culture of Childhood and the Third Pedagogical Site. *Art Education, 58*(6), 18-34.

CURRICULUM VITA

kristin a. goble

as of January 2013

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Education

SYRACUSE UNIVERSITY School of Education, Syracuse, NY.

Ph.D. (A.B.D.) in Teaching and Curriculum, Art Education concentration

Dissertation: *Applying Curricular Filters: A Qualitative Study of High School Visual Art Teacher Perspectives and Practice of Visual Culture Art Education in the Classroom.*

Committee Chair: Dr. James H. Rolling; Dr. Sharif Bey and Dr. Elizabethe Payne

COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY Teachers College, New York, NY.

M.A. Art and Art Education with NY State certification 2004

Thesis: *Exploring Community Through Photography*

UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN School of Art and Design, Ann Arbor, MI.

B.F.A. Photography, Magna Cum Laude 2002

Teaching Experience

Academic Faculty/ Assistant Professor of Art Education, University of Wisconsin-Whitewater, Whitewater, WI. August 2012-present.

Adjunct Professor of Photography. Onondaga Community College, Syracuse, NY. 2008-2012.

Instructor. School of Education, Syracuse University, Syracuse, NY. 2011-2012.

University Supervisor. School of Education, Syracuse University, Syracuse, NY. 2007-2011.

Research Affiliate & Arts in Action Fellow. The Queering Education Research Institute, Syracuse University, Syracuse, NY. 2010-present.

Teaching Assistant. School of Education, Syracuse University, Syracuse, NY. 2008-2011.

Graduate Assistant. School of Education, Syracuse University, Syracuse, NY. 2007-2009.

Visual Art Teacher, Grades 4-12. The Hewitt School, New York, NY 2004-2007.

Photography Teacher, Grades 9-12 The Heritage School, New York, NY 2002-2004.

Graduate Assistant. Department of Photography, Teachers College, Columbia University, New York, NY. 2002-2004.

Artist in Residence. Rivertown Arts Council. Hastings-on- Hudson, New York, NY. 2003.

Undergraduate Student Instructor. School of Art and Design, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, MI. 2000.

Professional Certification

K-12 Art Education Licensure and Certification, New York State. 2004.

Teaching Leadership

Coordinated and invited cooperating art teachers, and local art teachers to speak to Art Education majors about their teaching experiences. Fall 2012.

Advising

Art Education Program Coordinator. 2012-present.

Curriculum Development

Co-Sponsor, *Drama in Education*, with Dr. Edric Johnson. Fall 2012.

Professional Development

EdTPA Workshops. Spring 2013.

Participant, FIrst Year Faculty Program, University of Wisconsin-Whitewater. 2012-present.

D2L Training, Fall 2012.

Smartboard Training. Fall 2012.

Community Engagement

Research Affiliate & Arts in Action Fellow. The Queering Education Research Institute, Syracuse University, Syracuse, NY. 2010-present.

Visiting Artist. The Q Center, Center for LGBTQ Teens, Syracuse, NY. 2008-2010.

Activity Therapist: C.S. Mott Children's Hospital, University of Michigan Hospitals, Ann Arbor, MI. 2000-2002.

Film and Education Research Academy, Teachers College, Columbia University. 2006-2009.

Research and Scholarly Activity:

Manuscripts in preparation

Goble, K. & Payne, E.C. (in prep). Agency in Image: LGBTQ/A Students Visual Representations of Identity and Experience in Schools.

Goble, K. & Payne, E.C. (in prep). Legitimizing LGBTQ Experiences as Curricular Content in the Art Classroom.

Rolling, J. & Goble, K. (in prep). Finding the Easter eggs: ferreting out gender stereotypes and other oversimplifications in popular culture.

Rodgriuez-Suarez, E. & Goble, K. (submitted). Gender defined in Canarian carnaval.

Professional Presentations

Educating in Muddy Waters: Engagement, Excuses and Exposure in Teaching LGBTQ Students, Legitimizing LGBTQ Experiences as Curricular Content in the Art Classroom (Peer Reviewed). American Education Research Association, San Francisco, CA, April 2013.

Art Exploration and Documentation. Early Childhood Conference at UWW, Whitewater, WI, April 2013.

Teacher as Filter; How do Art teachers Apply/Resist Visual Culture Art Education (Peer Reviewed). NAEA (National Art Education Association), Fort Worth, TX., March 2013.

Living the Mark, Avoiding Taint: The Continued Stigma of LGBTQ in School Spaces. Agency in Image: LGBTQ/A Students Visual Representations of Identity and Experience in Schools (Peer Reviewed). American Educational Studies Association, Seattle, WA, November, 2012.

Gender and Visual Culture in the Art Classroom. National Art Education Association Conference. Baltimore, MD. April 2010.

Art or Technology? National Art Education Association Conference. Minneapolis, MN. April, 2009.

Invited Lectures

Filters in the Art Classroom. NAEA (National Art Education Association) Conference, Fort Worth, TX. SRAE (Seminar for Research in Art Education) Graduate Research Session Marilyn Zurmuehlen Working Papers Series, Fort Worth, TX. May 2013.

Globalization and Eco-Art Installation. Social Studies Methods, Professor Katrina Liu. University of Wisconsin-Whitewater. Fall 2012.

The Artistic Development of Children. Professor Judith Burton. Teachers College, Columbia University. December, 2003.

The Artistic Development of Adolescents, Professor Judith Burton. Teachers College, Columbia University. March, 2004.

Music Videos In the Cultural Context. The Hewitt School, New York, New York. January, 2005.

Field Observations in Art Education. Teachers College, Columbia University. February, 2006.

Academic and Artistic Recognition

2012 Faculty Exhibition, Ann Felton Gallery, Syracuse, NY.

2012 Travel Award, School of Education, Syracuse, NY.

2011 Faculty Exhibition, Ann Felton Gallery, Syracuse, NY.

2010 Faculty Exhibition, Ann Felton Gallery, Syracuse, NY.

2010 Travel Award, School of Education, Syracuse University.

2010 Lila G. Bull Trust Award, School of Education, Syracuse University.

2009 Travel Award, School of Education, Syracuse University.

2005 Recipient of Headmistress' Grant for Professional Development.

2005 Photography commissioned for *The Manhattan Gay Mens' Choir;* Book to be published by Random House.

2004 Student/ Teacher Art Exhibition. Macy Gallery, New York, NY.

2003 Photography commissioned for Derald Wing Sue (2003), <u>Overcoming our Racism: The Journey to Liberation</u>.

2003 Photographs selected for Student Exhibition, Teachers College, Columbia University.

2002 Painting selected for Student Exhibition, Teachers College, Columbia University.

2001 *Self portrait* drawing chosen for the University of Michigan's School of Art and Design National Portfolio Workshop Poster disseminated to 700 high schools across the US.

2001 *Self Portrait* drawing chosen and exhibited for School of Art and Design Judged Student Exhibition, University of Michigan.

2000 Alumni Association's Scholarship, University of Michigan.

2000 Photography Series, *Hidden Ann Arbor*, selected for full two page spread in *The Michigan Daily*.

2000 Recipient Columbia University's Gold Circle Award Third Place, Sports Photography, National Collegiate Newspaper Competition.

1999 Best of Show- University of Michigan Film Festival (short film chosen as the best student film for 1999).

1999 New York photo chosen and exhibited for School of Art and Design Judged Student exhibition.

1998-2002 Class Honors-6 semesters Dean's List-6 semesters University Honors 6 semesters.

1998-2002 National Collegiate Honors Society.

Grants

Finalist, *Margaret Cargill Foundation Art Education Grant*, Minneapolis, MN (Pending).

Service:

Department Service

Member, Curriculum Committee. 2012-present.

Member, Program Coordinators Committee. 2012-present.

College Service

Member, Global Education Research Committee. 2012-present.

Presentation of Art Education program, Art Student Convocation. 2012-present.

Workshop for interested Art Education major at the Art School. 2013-present.

Coordinator

Coordinator for UWW Student Art Education Association. Only student chapter in WI as of 2013. 2012-present.

Art Education Program Coordinator 2012-present.

Professional Memberships

National Art Education Association (NAEA). 2004-present.

American Education Research Association (AERA). 2012-present.