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**Teaching English Language Learners in the Art Classroom:
A Survey of Approaches**

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Art Education at Virginia Commonwealth University.

by

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Abstract

TEACHING ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS IN THE ART CLASSROOM: A SURVEY OF APPROACHES

By Alana Cristin Greer, M.A.E.

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Art Education at Virginia Commonwealth University.

Virginia Commonwealth University, 2011

Major Director: Dr. Sara Wilson McKay, Interim Chair and Associate Professor,
Department of Art Education

This study consisted of an online survey of members of the National Art Education Association Elementary Division in which 29 participants answered questions related to their instruction of English language learners in the elementary art classroom. Four participants participated in follow-up interviews as the researcher sought to answer the research questions: What pedagogical and curricular adaptations in the art classroom may be effective strategies for teaching English language learners? What are the perceived challenges of having a linguistically diverse art classroom? Participants offered a variety of pedagogical adaptations but suggested few curricular adaptations. Participants revealed challenges related to their teacher preparation and efforts to communicate clearly with students. The findings of the study also raise concerns that the needs of English language learners may not be recognized or met due to some educators' lack of awareness of cultural differences and the assumption that art is a universal language.

Chapter 1

Introduction

The US population is increasingly becoming more linguistically diverse. According to the 2000 U.S. Census, 18% of the US population aged 5 and over speaks a language other than English at home compared to 14% in 1990 and 11% in 1980 (U.S. Census Bureau, 2003). This increase in non-English language speakers is not taking place only in urban areas (Rivin, 1996) but also in suburban (Fairfax County Government, 2009) and rural areas (Johnson & Boyle, 2006) of the country. In the year 2000 in the state of Virginia alone, at least 134,306 of the 1,276,575 children in the K-12 age range spoke a language other than English, and 43,377 of those children spoke English “less than very well” (U.S. Census Bureau, 2008). As of May 2009, 44% of all elementary students in Fairfax County, Virginia spoke a language other than English at home with more than one hundred different native languages represented in the school system (Fairfax County Government, 2009).

Teachers must consider diversity of linguistic and cultural backgrounds when educating students. Most students who struggle linguistically or academically in core subject classes attend full-inclusion art classes (Nyman & Jenkins, 1999) alongside native English speaking students. Though art is often described as a visual language (Eubanks, 1999, 2003; Feldman, 1982; Henry, 2007; Richardson, 1982), the current teaching paradigms of art education necessitate extensive verbal communication in the art classroom as well. The emphasis on class discussion (Dobbs, 2004; Eubanks, 2003), critiques (Barrett, 1997), and inquiry-driven interdisciplinary activities

(Freedman & Stuhr, 2004), which all attempt to make art relevant and meaningful to students, assumes that students are able to verbally participate in these activities.

Background to the Problem

Though I am an art educator, I also consider myself to be a language educator. Having taught both English and French to non-native speakers in France, Japan, and the United States, I recognize that there are diverse approaches to instructing students in an unfamiliar language. I have also been a student struggling to understand and learn in classes taught in a language other than my native English. Both as a teacher and as a student, I value the use of visual and non-verbal communication to facilitate understanding in the classroom.

As a student teacher at the University of Georgia in 2004, I worked at an elementary school where almost half of the student body spoke Spanish as a first language. Many students were recent immigrants and thus were experiencing American schools for the first time. These students spoke varying levels of English, and all spent regular time in the art classroom. Though my experiences at that time were not part of a formal research project, I noted how the elementary teachers interacted with these students both inside and outside the classroom. My concern was that all students could understand, enjoy, and fully participate in the art classroom activities. At the same time, I began to consider how both lesson content and art instruction could better engage the diverse student body. Linguistic and cultural misunderstandings may often appear to teachers to be disciplinary problems (Hernandez, 2001). I have observed how the art classroom develops a community framed by the teacher who models attitudes and language while providing learning opportunities. I wonder how teachers, who may have limited experience learning a new language or relocating to another country, identify with or understand the perspective of many of the students in their classes.

Ultimately, I am interested in how language instruction and art instruction can be formally combined to facilitate students' language acquisition. However, before I pursue this specific research problem, I have found the need for a nationwide survey of how art educators adapt their classroom practices to better educate and engage diverse English language learners (ELLs) in the art classroom. Throughout this paper, I refer to English language learners or ELLs as opposed to English as a Second Language (ESL) or Limited English Proficient (LEP) students. The term "English language learners" acknowledges that students already have proficiency in one or more languages prior to learning English thus focusing on student accomplishments rather than limitations (Ed.gov, 2005). When referring to English language learners in this paper, I recognize the diverse backgrounds and individuality of each student. Since I am writing about hypothetical or anonymous individuals, I cannot be more specific and thus, reluctantly, employ the expression "English language learners" or the abbreviation "ELLs" to refer to students whose unique language abilities and cultural backgrounds must not be overlooked in the art classroom.

Theoretical Framework

My theoretical framework lies between the constructivist and the critical theorist paradigms. I recognize the power teachers hold in developing curriculum, selecting artwork and projects, and choosing how to communicate both verbally and non-verbally to students. The decisions teachers' make affect students in a variety of ways. Teaching is a continually evolving process, reflecting teacher development and learning as well as students' changing needs and interests. Ideally, the classroom should function as a democratic environment where teachers and students learn from one another through an open dialogue (Freire, 1973). I believe that teaching situations are complexly different, varying according to place, time, and social climate. Therefore, what works in one classroom may be completely inappropriate for another.

I place myself in the realm of postmodernism as I do not believe in universal truths that can be applied to all classrooms and recognize the enforcement of such “metanarratives” as potentially detrimental power constructs that often enforce an oppressive norm on those who may hold different values (Lyotard, 1979/1984, p. xxiv). Likewise, I embrace the constructivist belief in “local and specific constructed realities” (Lincoln & Guba, 2000, p. 168) and realize research participants guided this study and its findings by offering their personal perspectives through answering open-ended questions (Creswell, 2003). I also believe in students’ right to have classrooms where their unique voices can be recognized and where they are engaged in appropriate activities that stimulate their development into active and successful citizens in a multicultural society. I am specifically concerned whether or not the needs of English language learners are currently addressed in the art classroom and if teachers view ELLs as students with learning and behavioral problems rather than culturally diverse learners. In this way, I lean toward critical theory which seeks reforms that benefit marginalized groups (Creswell, 2003; Fay, 1987).

Statement of the Problem and Research Questions

Through this research project, I examined art teachers’ perspectives, beliefs, and practices with regard to instructing ELLs. My intention was not to portray English language learners’ perspective of their involvement in the art classroom but rather to understand how participants perceived language learners and the role of the art teacher in the instruction of ELLs. Throughout this study, I sought to answer the following overarching research questions: What pedagogical and curricular adaptations in the art classroom may be effective strategies for teaching English language learners? What are the perceived challenges of having a linguistically diverse art classroom?

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this project was to examine how art teachers address the needs and encourage the success of linguistically diverse students in the art classroom. Every art classroom is unique – from the teacher’s pedagogical style to the students’ backgrounds and interests. By learning about a variety of different classrooms, I hoped to find commonalities and relevant differences that could provide teachers and researchers with a wide scope of possibilities for instructional methods to successfully engage English language learners in the art classroom.

Contextualizing this Study in Regard to Related Research

In preparation for this study, I reviewed relevant literature to more fully understand the role between visual art and verbal language in contemporary K-12 schools. I found that during the 1990s, due to growing concerns for multicultural and bilingual education, art educators began writing explicitly about the inclusion of English language learners in the art classroom and examining the role of verbal language in the instruction of culturally diverse students. The concept of actively building second language skills in the art classroom is a developing field of study which has yet to be thoroughly researched and documented.

Relevant Areas of Research

My literature review included art education research specifically addressing ELLs and the role of verbal and written language in art instruction as well as research in language education and multicultural education. This review revealed several themes including:

- the belief that art is a language (Eubanks, 2003; Richardson, 1982);
- the necessity of verbal communication in the art classroom (Dobbs, 2004; Freedman & Stuhr, 2004);
- art class as a comfort zone for English language learners (Ching, 1993; Eubanks, 2002);
- the use of visual arts to enhance language instruction (Ortuño, 1994; Rivin, 1996);

- the need to adapt educational instruction for English language learners (Hernandez, 2001; Herrell & Jordan, 2008); and
- the necessity of preparing teachers to educate linguistically diverse students (Combs, 2009; Katz, Scott, & Hadjioannou, 2009).

I also reviewed the growing body of research advocating for the rights of non-native English-speaking students which highlights the relationship between language and power (Campbell Wilcox, 2008; Crawford & Krashen, 2007; Devine, 1994; Freire & Macedo, 1987). Admittedly, I identify the most with these authors working to bring the needs of language learners to the forefront of educational reform. Their research and theoretical frameworks affected my analysis of the data collected in this study.

Gaps in the Existing Literature

Review of the literature revealed a lack of research exploring the effect of contemporary art education practices on English language learners. The assumption that all students will have success and find comfort in art class regardless of their linguistic abilities fails to address the likely need for adaptations to scaffold ELLs' participation in the variety of reading, writing, and speaking activities that accompany many contemporary art-making activities. Additionally, much of the art education literature related to working with language learners focuses on pedagogical adaptations rather than suggesting specific ways in which art educators can adapt their curricular content to better engage culturally and linguistically diverse students. Finally, art education research related to the instruction of language learners in elementary art classrooms primarily provides examples of reactionary adaptations as teachers help students try to reach the normal level of participation in the art classroom. While this makes sense from a practical standpoint, I believe changing student demographics necessitates a reevaluation of teachers' curricular

selections and teaching philosophies which may lead to more fundamental changes in the role of art education in public schools that plans for – rather than reacts to – students’ linguistic diversity.

Methodology

I used survey methodology to conduct this research project. I conducted an online survey of members of the National Art Education Association Elementary Division Ning and subscribers to the Division’s Listserv. My goal was to learn about elementary art teachers’ current practices and opinions relating to the instruction of ELLs. Through this survey, I obtained information from 29 participants who represented a broad group of elementary art teachers from across the nation who work with demographically diverse populations. By using a mix of quantitative and qualitative questions, I obtained information that revealed general trends in addition to presenting teachers’ individual opinions (Creswell, 2008); however, the small number of participants limited the generalizability of these trends. After analyzing the survey results, I conducted active interviews with four participants who provided contact information upon completing the survey and responded to an email request to participate in a follow-up interview. Therefore, after constructing a broad view of ELL instruction in elementary art classrooms, I communicated directly with certain participants to clarify questions and better understand their success and struggles when working with English language learners in the art classroom.

Background to the Study

A cross-sectional survey design measures current attitudes and practices and can be completed with a single set of questions (Creswell, 2008). Surveys, though time-consuming to design, can be distributed and completed quickly and with little cost to the researcher (Alreck & Settle, 2004). As a full-time graduate student working within a short timeframe and with a

limited budget, these aspects of survey research were appealing. Surveys are self-administered, meaning the researcher and the participants have no direct contact (Alreck & Settle, 2004). One benefit is that online surveys can be designed to maintain participant anonymity when desired, reducing the level of participant risk in regard to Institutional Review Board concerns as determined by the *Belmont Report* (U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, 1979). Additionally, the use of an online survey reduces costs and material waste and also facilitates the later processes of data analysis.

Several researchers present relevant and convincing arguments in favor of quantitative survey research (Creswell, 2008; Fink, 1995; La Porte, Speirs, & Young, 2008; Milbrant & Klein, 2008) as well as qualitative survey research (Creswell, 2008; Fink, 1995; La Porte et al., 2008). A national survey of art curriculum influences conducted by La Porte, Speirs, and Young (2008) combined quantitative and qualitative questions. By including both quantitative and qualitative questions, I attempted to note trends as well as understand specific teaching situations in more detail. My quantitative questions addressed primarily demographic information rather than attitudinal, but survey participants' interpretation of and response to these multiple choice questions do reflect their personal opinions. Though Likert scales could have been used to assess teacher's attitude and perceptions of teaching ELLs (Creswell, 2008), I preferred to obtain more detailed and personalized answers through open-ended questions. Please see Appendix A for the complete list of survey questions.

I selected the method of active interviews (Burnaford, 2001; Holstein & Gubrium, 1995) to obtain further information about certain research participants. Active interviews allow participants to hear about data already collected during the research study and then to offer further insights by telling their own stories (Burnaford, 2001). The most appealing aspect of

active interviewing for me was the ability of the researcher to actually converse with the participant, adding comments, and creating a dialogue that enriched the answers provided earlier in survey format (Burnaford, 2001).

Design of the Study

Participants and location of the research. Since prior research indicates that the majority of students considered Limited English Proficient (LEP)¹ are enrolled in elementary schools (Kinder 2002) and I am personally interested in early childhood language acquisition, I decided to focus my survey and interview research on elementary art teachers.² This decision helped ensure reasonable parameters for conducting the study given my time-period and experience level. My survey and interview participants are members of the National Art Education Association (NAEA) Elementary Division Ning (<http://naeaelementarydivision.ning.com/>) or subscribers to the NAEA Elementary Division Listserv. Membership in the NAEA is not mandatory nor are all elementary educators in the NAEA active participants in the Elementary Division Ning and Listserv. Therefore, the sampling did not include all elementary art teachers in the nation or in NAEA. However, NAEA membership draws from across the country, thus providing potential access to regionally diverse teaching situations. By contacting this group of elementary educators interested in professional development, I hoped to obtain data that revealed similarities and differences of ELL instruction between diverse populations and regions of the country.

¹ I use the term Limited English Proficient (LEP) here because this is the terminology used by the U.S. government for classifying students learning English as an additional language. The study conducted by Kinder (2002) focused specifically on students considered LEP.

² While I framed the study in order to reach elementary art teachers, some participants also taught high school or were new to teaching. I included the data provided by these participants who were not elementary art teachers, because I felt they provided valuable information for answering my research questions.

I conducted a 30 minute web-call interview with four survey participants who provided contact information at the end of the survey and responded to my invitation to participate in a follow-up interview. I planned to select specific participants based on their survey responses, but the limited number of participants led to my selection of all interested and available participants who worked with elementary students. This selection of interview participants serves as an “opportunistic sampling” since the selection took place after the research project had begun in order to better answer my research questions (Creswell, 2008, p. 216).

Methods of data collection. After pilot-testing my survey questions (Creswell, 2008), I sent an initial email via the NAEA Elementary Division Listserv and posted a link on the NAEA Elementary Division Ning inviting the teachers to participate in an online survey regarding their instruction of English language learners. I designed my survey using the website Survey Monkey which allows for creating a variety of multiple choice and short-answer style questions. Participants had the option of providing contact information if they were willing to participate in follow-up interviews. Otherwise, survey answers were submitted anonymously. All participants received the same survey questions through a static web questionnaire (Alreck & Settle, 2004). Though each of the 24 survey questions required the selection or entry of an answer, all questions included a “prefer not to answer” choice to reduce potential anxiety, discomfort, or pressure to respond when the question does not apply to that participant. Survey questions included fixed-answer (quantitative) questions that address teacher and school demographics and open-ended (qualitative) questions regarding classroom practices and teachers’ opinions on instructing ELLs. Through the open-ended questions, participants were given the opportunity to provide unique and detailed descriptions of their classrooms and practices. See Appendix A for the complete list of survey questions.

After analyzing the survey results and contacting the four interview participants, I conducted an approximately 30 minute long active interview with each participant using the web-call program Skype. I recorded and transcribed each interview. Though I covered similar topics within the interviews, the structure of each interview varied slightly depending upon the initial survey responses provided by participants as well as participants' personal interests and concerns regarding the instruction of English language learners in the art classroom. Topics of discussion included the interview participants' personal experiences which prepared them to work with ELLs, further details regarding specific instances of adapting instruction for ELLs, participants' perspectives on art as a visual language, and the perception of the art classroom within participants' schools.

Data analysis. I initially divided survey data into quantitative and qualitative categories but then found the most rewarding data codes came from cross-referencing questions from the two categories, identifying the relationship between responses to specific questions and analyzing multiple responses from the same participant. After numerous comparisons across the survey data, I began individually reviewing the responses to the qualitative questions and hand-coded the open-ended responses to identify major trends (Creswell, 2003). After reading through all of the responses to each question, I determined my specific codes for each question based on the topics covered within the responses, the depth of these answers, and their relationships to one another. Since a given short answer response to an open-ended survey question contained a variety of different ideas, beliefs, and practices, I divided and coded each response according to mentions. For example, a single response to the question asking participants to describe pedagogical adaptations for working with ELLs could contain adaptations related to scaffolding reading, using pair shares, and providing additional visuals. All of these mentions relate to

different types of adaptations which necessitated a different code. Some participants mentioned multiple topics related to the same code within a given response. Therefore, answers to the open-ended survey responses are listed according to number of mentions rather than number of participants. I created charts of participants' responses to both the quantitative and qualitative questions (See Appendix B).

After color-coding all of the survey data by hand according to the variety of broad categories expressed within the responses for each survey question, I determined the general topics and questions to cover in the interviews in order to clarify issues raised within the survey responses and address topics that the survey failed to include. In this way, I had prior knowledge of how the interview participants related to one another and to the rest of the survey participants based on their responses to the survey questions. I conducted and transcribed the four interviews which involved listening to the recording and rereading the transcripts multiple times. I then identified particularly insightful passages from each interview transcript to construct a profile of the interview participant and to continue the process of answering my research questions. Specifically, I also pulled out quotes from the interviews which related to the codes I had identified within each survey question. Moving between the coded survey data and the interview transcripts, I began to group the data from multiple survey questions and the interviews to understand major trends in the data and to identify a variety of answers to my research questions.

My final presentation of the findings draws from a combination of responses to multiple survey questions as well as from the four interview transcripts. I included quotations from survey participants' open response questions as well as excerpts from the interviews to portray participants' teaching situations and perspectives in their own words. I find that having this abundance of open-ended data makes the findings of the study more authentic and relatable but

occasionally disconcerting when identifying participants who raise concerns regarding the perception of English language learners within the school community and in the art classroom.

Significance of the Study

As discussed in the literature review, little research exists to educate teachers on effective adaptations for working with ELLs in contemporary elementary art classrooms, especially in regard to the regular inclusion of reading, writing, and discussion activities in the art classroom. Rather than assuming the visual aspect of art class will encourage the success of ELLs, additional research must be done to show if this assumption can be validated, how art instruction can benefit English language learners, and what practices are effective. This study provided elementary art educators working in diverse teaching situations across the country the opportunity to share the variety of choices they make to engage linguistically diverse students in daily activities in the art classroom. This study also raises questions regarding the assumption that art class is an automatic comfort zone for language learners and highlights the benefits of further personalizing instruction to meet the unique needs and recognize the interests of linguistically and culturally diverse students.

Findings

The findings of this study include a variety of specific pedagogical and curricular adaptations for working with English language learners in elementary art classrooms. However, this study also reveals that many art educators may find adapting art classroom instruction and content when working with ELLs to be unnecessary. This position against adaptations appears related to the belief in art as a universal form of communication. Even participants who do advocate for making pedagogical adaptations often find adapting curricular content in the elementary art classroom to be unnecessary or unachievable due to administrative mandates.

Participants expressed additional challenges to working in linguistically diverse classrooms which related to a lack of adequate training in their teacher preparation courses, colleagues' low expectations for the art classroom as an academic setting, and inadequate information specifying the specific backgrounds and needs of English language learners.

While not of overwhelming numerical significance, the finding of particular interest for me is some participants' advocacy for the use of choice-based art education when working with linguistically diverse students. According to these participants, opening up the art classroom for greater student choice can encourage students' successful and meaningful art-making regardless of their English abilities while also providing opportunities for authentic conversation. The findings of this study not only enrich my own practice but also provide the opportunity for me to share with art teachers across the country examples of adaptations that can encourage the success of English language learners in the art classroom.

Limitations of the Research

With all surveys, many invited participants did not respond (Fink, 1995) thus making the small number of participants the greatest limitation of the research. Additionally, all survey research risks that participants may misunderstand questions or answer in such a way that is misrepresentative of participants' actual practices (Alreck & Settle, 2004; Creswell, 2008). Also, by contacting only teachers belonging to the NAEA Elementary Division Ning or subscribing to the NAEA Elementary Division Listserv, I drew from a limited pool of participants who may not be representative of the nation's art educators as a whole. Many art educators who work with ELLs may not be members of NAEA, and this survey would not necessarily represent their instructional practices. General classroom teachers may also provide frequent art instruction for English language learners but are likely not members of NAEA. Furthermore, not all school

populations are the same, and all students are unique learners. Therefore, adaptations that work in some classrooms may fail in others. Finally, every teacher is unique, and some participants' suggested adaptations, may not be transferable due to philosophical, pedagogical, and personality differences.

Suggestions for Further Research

Further research could involve surveying specific art teachers who work with large percentages of English language learners (whether or not they are members of NAEA's elementary division) or museum educators who adapt programs for linguistically diverse audiences. Survey research could also assist in finding out how universities can alter their programs to include more ELL-related coursework in their art teacher preparation programs.

Specific classrooms could be studied in depth through a comparative case study to further understand the role of the art classroom in English language learners' elementary school education. Such a case study could introduce the perspectives of English language learners in addition to the views of their teachers. This study does not include how ELLs view art classroom activities and whether or not they enjoy coming to art class. Research in these areas could continue to improve the daily instruction of language learners in art classes while also raising awareness of the potentially positive role the art classroom plays for ELLs as a site of language acquisition.

Conclusions

In conclusion, this study provides insight into the variety of ways art teachers approach the instruction of diverse English language learners. The findings include a list of possible strategies for encouraging the success of English language learners in the art classroom while demonstrating that a variety of pedagogical and curricular adaptations may prove beneficial. The

findings of this study will undoubtedly enrich my personal practice while also providing information that I can share with current educators and pre-service teachers to raise awareness of the unique needs of linguistically and culturally diverse students.

Chapter 2

Literature Review

Despite recent government efforts to standardize educational content and achievement across the nation, school populations are becoming increasingly diverse – thus making each learning environment more unique. Currently in the United States, 1 in every 10 students is recognized as an English language learner (Crawford & Krashen, 2007). This statistic presents two salient concerns for art educators. Foremost, the linguistic diversity of the K-12 population is steadily on the rise. States reported a 105% increase in the Limited English Proficient (LEP) population since the 1990-91 school year while the overall school population grew only 12% (Kinder, 2002). If current trends continue, one in three students will be classified as an English language learner by 2043 (Crawford & Krashen, 2007). The subsequent issue is the actual classification of “English language learner” (ELL) or, by the U.S. government, “Limited English Proficient” (LEP). This grouping of students insinuates homogeneity of ability, needs, and backgrounds. Mass classification fails to recognize the diversity within the large population of students learning English as a new language.

According to state reports in 2000-2001, the K-12 population of the United States spoke one or more of 460 languages (Kinder, 2002). While some educators emphasize the “many faces of English language learners (National Council of Teachers of English, 2008, p. 2), the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act of 2001 categorizes all language learners as LEP and holds them to the same static benchmarks. The LEP label defines students by their deficiencies, specifically in

regard to listening, spelling, reading, and writing (Center for Public Education, 2009).³

Throughout this chapter, the phrase “English language learner” or ELL refers to students that have proficiency in one or more languages prior to learning English and, unlike the label LEP, focuses on student accomplishments rather than limitations (Ed.gov, 2005). Every student is unique, regardless of his or her linguistic ability, and teachers must be wary of drawing assumptions based upon students’ English language abilities.

A growing body of literature addresses student diversity and the teacher preparation necessary to meet the needs of linguistically and culturally diverse students in K-12 schools. This literature review synthesizes relevant texts from the fields of art education, language education, and critical pedagogy in an effort to determine the role of the art classroom in educating English language learners. The goal of this literature review is two part – to more fully understand the relationship between visual art and verbal language and to identify the unique needs of English language learners in the art classroom.

Overview of the Literature

Literature reviewed includes art education research specifically addressing English language learners and the role of verbal and written language in art instruction. Additional literature includes research in language education, multicultural education, and critical pedagogy

³ The NCLB Act fails to recognize the emotional needs of English language learners as well as the diverse cultural and personal experiences they bring with them into K-12 classrooms. Many school programs do not differentiate between disabilities and linguistic development meaning many language learners are misdiagnosed and placed in settings that do not challenge and stimulate their academic development (National Council of Teachers of English, 2008, p. 3). Additionally, the nation’s increasingly public debate of immigration policy (Alden, 2009; Archibold, 2010; Bazar, 2009) challenges many students’ security as welcome members of the student body and threatens their academic success (Bazar, 2009; Ruiz-de-Velasco, Fix, & Chu Clement, 2000). These policy issues may influence the attitudes of participants’ in this study as well as the adaptations they choose to make for working with English language learners.

research advocating the rights of non-native English-speaking students. This literature review, while focusing on contemporary practices and beliefs, also includes art education literature from the 1960s onwards in an effort to chart the perceived role of language in the art classroom. Though researchers and theorists in the fields of educational psychology and childhood psycholinguistic development have influenced many authors included in this review, these primary sources have not been reviewed. This exclusion serves as an attempt to evaluate current practices and research regarding language use in the visual arts in lieu of chronicling the foundations of linguistic psychology.

Historical Trends

Concerns about the relationship between language and visual arts have changed throughout the last half of the 20th century. Articles from the 1960s explored interdisciplinary endeavors to include art in general education classes such as English and French (Solomon, 1963). Art education literature from the 1970s revealed a growing interest in aesthetics and the way verbal communication can positively influence aesthetic inquiry in the art classroom (Bolton, 1973; Cromer, Roselle, Benfey, Stamm, Swartz, Creager, Hawkins, & Davis, 1975). During the 1990s, due to increasing concerns for multicultural and bilingual education, art educators began writing explicitly about the inclusion of ELLs in the art classroom and examining the role of verbal language in the instruction of culturally diverse students (Brunick, 1999; Eubanks 1999, 2002, 2003; Rivin, 1996; Shoemaker, 1998; Vargas, Zentall, & Wilbur, 2002; Wexler, 2001; Witmer, Luke, & Adams, 2000).

In the field of language education, texts from the 1970s and 1980s focused on theories of second language acquisition that differentiate between conversational and academic language usage (Cummins, 1979) and advocate the “natural approach” to language learning (Krashen &

Terrell, 1983, p.57). Krashen and Terrell (1983) pushed for teaching language through meaningful content instruction and allowing students to speak only when they felt ready. In response to the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, language education texts show a marked split between quick-fix resources suggesting adaptations for teachers to employ in their classrooms (Curtin, 2009; Herrell & Jordan, 2008) and critical pedagogy perspectives that call for increased student rights (Combs, 2009), school reform (Crawford & Krashen, 2007), and revisions to teacher education programs (Katz, Scott, & Hadjioannou, 2009; Ren Dong, 2004). Overall, critical pedagogy theorists of the past two decades follow in the tradition of renowned educator and theorist Paulo Freire (Freire & Macedo, 1987) and recognize the role of language as a tool of power (Devine, 1994).

Presentation of the Literature

Throughout the review of this literature, the goal remains to more fully understand the relationship between visual art and verbal language and to identify the unique needs of English language learners in the art classroom. Review of the literature reveals several themes including:

- the belief that art is a language (Eubanks, 2003; Richardson, 1982);
- the necessity of verbal communication in the art classroom (Dobbs, 2004; Freedman & Stuhr, 2004);
- the use of visual arts to enhance language instruction (Caldwell & Moore, 1991; Rivin, 1996);
- art class as a comfort zone for English language learners (Ching, 1993; Eubanks, 2002);
- the need to adapt educational instruction for English language learners (Hernandez, 2001; Herrell & Jordan, 2008); and
- the necessity of preparing teachers to educate linguistically diverse students (Combs, 2009; Katz, Scott, & Hadjioannou, 2009).

The following sections explore the diverse perspectives of these themes found within the literature.

Relationships between Visual Art and Verbal Language

One of my primary search criteria as I explored art education literature was identifying texts that addressed the relationship between visual art and verbal or written language. Similarly, I paid close attention to the mention and use of visual art in language education texts. While art education texts highlighted a belief that art is a language, contemporary literature also emphasizes the necessity of verbal expression in the art classroom. Language education texts revealed that art is used in language learning contexts to alleviate anxiety and contextualize learning. In this way, visual art functions as a means to make language learning more relevant and meaningful for students. Finally, some language educators also use visual arts as an assessment tool for student listening and reading comprehension.

Art as a language. Art educators frequently refer to art as a language⁴ but debate whether or not visual art functions as a universal tool of communication. The National Art Education Association (NAEA) position statement for the 1980s was “art means language” (Richardson, 1982, p. 10) with the goal of situating the art class within the curricula mainstream (Feldman, 1982). While serving as president of NAEA, Feldman (1982) portrayed visual communication as the root of verbal language, stating: “Speech...is a confirmation through vocal gesture of what has already been experienced through our visual, tactile, and kinesthetic senses” (p. 8). Richardson (1982) believed that visual images conveyed a direct and instantaneous meaning. However, Richardson (1982) and Colbert (1984) both articulated students’ need to use verbal language in order to explain the intended meaning of an artwork and to fully realize their

⁴Additional authors in the field of art education who view art a visual language or system of visual communication include Ching (1993), Caldwell and Moore (1991), and Henry (2007).

artistic intentions. Essentially, Richardson (1982) and Colbert (1984) acknowledge the need to translate the languages of art for the understanding of others.

Forrest (1984) and Eubanks (2003) both acknowledge that visual images are not bound by rules of grammar which dictate that there are right and wrong ways to communicate. These educators believed that, unlike verbal language, visual expression is a more freeing form of communication (Forrest, 1984) that is “more holistic, less linear, and sequential than verbal language” (Eubanks, 2003, p. 15). This view of the language of art will play an important role later as I address the view of the art classroom as a comfort zone for English language learners.

These authors from the field of art education viewed art as a communicative tool similar to spoken language but free from the restrictions placed on verbal communication. If making art equates with communicating, then is verbal communication necessary in the art classroom?

The roles of verbal language in contemporary art education. Having completed my art teacher training during the early 2000s, my only models of designing lessons have included significant use of literature, writing, and discussion activities. My review of contemporary art education literature highlights some of the reasons for the significant incorporation of activities traditionally associated with language arts classes.

In Discipline Based Art Education (DBAE), one of the dominant paradigms in contemporary art education, verbal expression functions as an assessment tool for student learning. Dobbs (2004) wrote, “The DBAE-educated young person is able to view and talk about works of art, how they are made, and what they mean” (p. 706). Under DBAE guidelines, the art classroom must include extensive activities governed by verbal communication. As a facet of DBAE, Barrett (1997) heralded the use of student art critiques to increase student motivation, improve art making, develop critical thinking skills, and make art a meaningful part of students’

lives. While Eubanks (2003) believed that these in-class critiques and critical discussions develop students' verbal language skills, Dobbs (2004) acknowledged the initial challenges of using words rather than tangible media to express ideas in the art classroom. Dobbs (2004) assumes an audience more familiar with the creativity/self-expression paradigm of art education, proponents of which Dobbs found reticent to "academicizing" the art classroom by supplementing studio activities with more discussion and research-intensive activities (p. 707). Other proponents of art criticism activities, such as the Visual Thinking Strategies model (Yenawine, 2003), make overt connections between developing visual literacy and language skills.

Other art education movements also emphasize verbal and written communication in order to create meaning in the art classroom. Leading figures in visual culture art education stress the use of discussion and verbal inquiry in order for students "to recognize and understand the ambiguities, conflicts, nuances, and ephemeral qualities of social experience, much which is now configured through imagery and designed objects" (Freedman & Stuhr, 2004, p. 821). Likewise, structuring units of art instruction around Big Ideas assumes opportunities to discuss and reflect on the various relationships between art exemplars and larger human issues (Walker, 2001). Some educators also incorporate journal and sketchbook writing exercises in order to enrich the meaning of students' art making (Eubanks, 2003; Rivin, 1996; Wexler, 2001; Witmer, Luke, & Adams, 2000).

Based on current practices in the art classroom, verbal and written communication play a central role in helping students meet the goals set for a successful art class experience. How might visual arts play a similar role in language education classes?

Correlation between art and language instruction. Visual arts can help contextualize new vocabulary while providing opportunities for authentic dialogue. The majority of language education authors in this review specify the need to teach new languages in a contextual setting in which language relates to interesting and comprehensible subject matter (Crawford & Krashen, 2007; Curtin, 2009; Krashen & Terrell, 1983; Rivin, 1996; Sandsberry, 1979; Shoemaker, 1999). This emphasis corresponds to the concept of Second-Language Instructional Competence (SLIC) which is “the level of language proficiency required to learn in English-language classrooms” (Crawford & Krashen, 2007, p. 22). SLIC levels vary depending upon individual student background as well as by subject matter. Crawford and Krashen (2007) use math class as an example of a subject that is “easier to contextualize using nonlinguistic means” (p. 23), and students consequently develop SLIC more quickly. Based upon the earlier exploration of art as a language, art is also a subject which could expedite the development of SLIC skills contextualizing content through nonlinguistic means. English language instructors also recognize how technological advancements and the omnipresence of visual culture are creating difficulties in separating written language from its visual and auditory components (Royce, 2002). Thus, language instruction must now address “alternative ways of communicating” that can be “interpreted in concert with language” (Royce, 2002, p. 201).

Visual art provides an engaging context for students’ language acquisition. As far back as 1979, English language instructors employed advertisements to contextualize English learning, provide cultural information, and make meaningful connections between classroom experiences and daily life (Sandsberry, 1979). Similar to contemporary trends in art education, Shoemaker (1999) described the prevalent movement of content-based instruction in the English language classroom, also known as “sheltered instruction” (Curtin, 2009, p. 121), through which students

learn English in the context of a theme with a greater meaning. This teaching strategy is akin to art educators' use of Big Ideas to provide a greater theme to art instruction (Walker, 2001). Rivin (1996) taught meaningful content using contemporary art in her English classes. By reading stories, examining art work, and learning about artists, students could connect their personal experiences to the thematic content (Rivin, 1996). Students also created collaborative artworks in what became the most memorable lessons of their English class (Rivin, 1996). Other language educators used artwork as a topic of conversation and inspiration in French classes (Solomon, 1963), Spanish classes (Ortuño, 1994), and poetry classes (Benton, 1992).

Art-making can also develop a variety of linguistic and reading comprehension skills within language classroom settings. Caldwell and Moore (1991) and Thoms (1985) advocated the use of drawing as brainstorming prior to creative writing in order to add depth of meaning. Drawing helps elementary students to capture their story's structure while motivating them to write (Caldwell & Moore, 1991). Benton (1992) also explored ways in which picture-book reading, making, and manipulating can develop students' communication skills, story-telling abilities, and comprehension skills. Curtin (2009) suggested prompting students who have difficulty writing to create a collage, cartoon strip, maps, dioramas, or exhibits in order to better express themselves (p. 165). Gangwer (2009) placed particular emphasis on students using photographs they have taken as well as drawings to illustrate dictionaries based on thematic content and their daily lives.

Finally, visual art also functions as an assessment tool in language learning contexts. The Bilingual Syntax Measure (BSM), a standardized test used to measure proficiency in English and Spanish, consists of "seven colored pictures about which children are asked questions designed to elicit responses on the English grammatical morphemes" (Gass & Selinker, 2001, p. 105).

Students taking the test respond to verbal prompts by identifying and describing the appropriate elements of the images (Gass & Selinker, 2001). Other activities suggested to develop language include drawing activities to test students' understanding and having students examine images for similarities and differences (Gass & Selinker, 2001). Visual arts are also used as a tool of assessment in English classes for exceptional learners. Eubanks (1999) described how deaf and hard of hearing students' explanations of their artworks demonstrated their grasp of such grammatical concepts as singular/plural relationships, use of descriptors, and vocabulary comprehension.

Summary of the relationships between art and verbal language. Review of art and language education texts reveals a variety of ways in which visual arts are used to develop students reading, writing, and speaking skills. The literature also reveals parallels between art and language educators' use of meaningful themes to contextualize learning and make class content more relevant to students' lives. This relationship between visual art and language education seems more akin to contemporary art education practices of making art-class meaningful for students than to the belief in art as a universal language. More so, visual art seems to be a consistent source of engaging topics for discussion and an opportunity for students' to process their ideas in a nonlinguistic format.

English Language Learners in the Art Classroom

While many educators view the art classroom as a welcoming environment for English language learners, both art and language educators recognize the need for pedagogical and curricular adaptations across subject areas to meet the unique needs of these linguistically and culturally diverse students. The correlation between art and language instruction helps facilitate the incorporation of these adaptations into the art classroom.

Art class as a comfort zone. According to several authors, the art classroom may serve as a safe haven for English language learners. Ching (1993) described the art class as a “low-risk environment” (p. 22) that can lower ELLs’ anxiety levels and increase their confidence in using English. In the same vein, Eubanks (2002) recounted how art educators instructing large ELL populations described art class as:

a comfort zone where students get their first bit of confidence, a place where there is no pressure, where all students can be on equal footing, where there are no wrong answers, where success is guaranteed, where students can be just like everyone else, where students can be good at being visual learners. (p. 44)

This view of the art classroom recalls Eubanks’s (2003) belief in a visual language that offers a counterpart to verbal expression. Brunick (1999) detailed the therapeutic experiences of art making and story-telling for recent immigrants and refugees. These students found art approachable, allowing them to examine their fear, frustration, and identity confusion (Brunick, 1999). Shoemaker (1998) recounted how a museum program for ELLs motivated students to voice inquiries and tell their own stories with the unexpected result that many participating schools changed ELLs’ schedules to include more art classes. In some cases, ELLs’ art can engage English speaking classmates and help alleviate social strain between the two groups (Ching, 1993). Vargas, Zentall, and Wilbur (2002) also found that Spanish-speaking students had adapted to have “better than average visual abilities to compensate for their language differences” (p. 158).

In the case of instructing non-English speaking students in Italy, Henry (2007) found that students were highly motivated by the opportunity to share their culture, language, and artwork with English-speaking art educators.⁵ These students naturally drew images when they lacked

⁵ In this case, the teachers do not speak Italian – the language of the students. However, Henry draws a correlation between this teaching situation and working with students in the

expressive vocabulary, and the language barrier was not seen as a significant barrier to art instruction (Henry, 2007). Henry (2007) stressed the need to understand the “emotional, as well as the cognitive, needs of ESL [English as a second language] students” (p. 34). Henry’s (2007) emphasis on the emotional needs of language learners reflects the position of many language educators who recognize that each language learner’s unique background also plays a significant role in their educational experience (Combs, 2009; Curtin, 2009; National Council of Teachers of English, 2008).

While most art education literature focuses on the qualities which make art class a comforting environment for English language learners, other literature in this review specifies the need to make pedagogical and curricular adaptations for working with English language learners both inside and outside the context of the art classroom.

Recommended adaptations for working with English language learners. Some researchers in the field of art education suggest specific pedagogical adaptations for working with English language learners in the art classroom. Eubanks (2002) suggested using cooperative learning groups that invite social interaction and collaboration – aspects of learning that might be more culturally familiar for some students while providing a lower anxiety conversational setting for all students. Teachers of large ELL populations also recommend the following adaptations: visual cues, peer tutors, speaking students’ home language, and step-by-step instruction and simplification of art-making processes (Eubanks, 2002). Brunick (1999) advocated non-directed drawing opportunities to provide ELLs of diverse backgrounds the opportunity to express their feelings through art making. Museum educators also recommended

United States who do not speak English since the art teachers are using English as the primary language of communication in both cases. This study abroad opportunity serves to help prepare pre-service art educators to work with students who do not yet speak English fluently (Henry, 2007).

the use of animated speech, the repetition of key concepts, attentive listening, patience when awaiting student responses, and modification of vocabulary to reinforce and explain expressions students initially find confusing (Shoemaker, 1998, p. 43). When engaging in art criticism, some educators found students were more enthusiastic to discuss objects created by artists who shared their same cultural background (Shoemaker, 1998). However, other students found these examples to be historical artifacts unrelated to their daily lives and were more responsive to contemporary pieces whose themes were more familiar and engaging regardless of the artist's specific cultural background (Rivin, 1996).

While both art and language educators specify pedagogical and curricular adaptations to encourage the academic success of English language learners, language educators in particular emphasize that content must remain challenging for ELLs (Crawford & Krashen, 2007; Kinder, 2002; National Council of Teachers of English, 2008). Parallel to art educators' use of Big Ideas (Walker, 2001), language educators suggest that curriculum be organized around "big questions" (National Council of Teachers of English, 2008, p. 4) that involve a variety of classroom experiences and culturally relevant content (Combs, 2009) that makes instruction more meaningful for students much like the examples described in the previous section.

Content should be presented through "comprehensible input" in which students receive appropriate language support to understand academic content (Krashen & Terrell, 1983, p. 55). Facilitation of comprehensible input includes classroom labels for items and areas, drawings and diagrams pertaining to course content, and word walls of relevant vocabulary (Curtin, 2009; Herrell & Jordan, 2008). Learning centers that emphasize specific skills such as writing, listening, or computer usage can also provide ELLs with structural support to understand class content (Curtin, 2009). Other recommended adaptations from the field of language education

include “slow but natural speech, clearly enunciated speech, repetition and paraphrasing, visual reinforcement of academic content through graphic organizers, controlled vocabulary, and frequent checks for comprehension” (Combs, 2009, p. 35).

Teachers should also recognize the difference between Basic Interpersonal Communicative Skills (BICS) and Cognitive/Academic Language Proficiency (CALPS) (Cummins, 1979). Curtin (2009) explained that BICS refer to the noticeable conversational language developed within the first one or two years of learning a language. BICS are demonstrated through pronunciation, vocabulary, and grammar as well as comprehension, knowledge, and application of language. CALPS, or academic proficiency in a language, involves semantic and functional understanding reflecting more complex cognitive processes such as analysis, synthesis, and evaluation. CALPS develop within four to seven years but are not always easily noticeable (Curtin, 2009). Providing extended time for ELLs to answer questions in class (Ren Dong, 2004) can aid in the development of both BICS and CALPS.

In the art classroom, students may demonstrate strong Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills (BICS) by participating in classroom discussions and explaining their artwork to the teacher (Doman, November 2010). However, the same students may surprise their art teachers with reflective self-evaluations or quiz responses that do not reflect the learning they so easily communicated to their teacher orally (Doman, November 2010). These Cognitive/Academic Language Proficiency Skills (CALPS) require greater time to develop, so teachers may need to alter assessment methods to accommodate students who are still developing academic language skills (Doman, November 2010). Both art and language educators advocate that teachers set language objectives as well as content objectives for each lesson (Doman, November 2010; Ren Dong, 2004).

Recognizing each student's unique needs. While these adaptations and teaching strategies may prove helpful in diverse classrooms, teachers must recognize the individuality of each student (Combs, 2009). Curtin (2009) stresses the importance of getting to know English language learners in order to better understand their culture, country of origin, previous educational experiences, length of residence in the United States, and personal interests. Curtin (2009) provides an extensive list of questions to ask ELLs (p. 56) but suggests collaborating with guidance counselors and fellow teachers in order to obtain this information in a way that alleviates student discomfort. This information can help teachers be more sensitive to specific cultural differences such as appropriate gestures that convey respect or disrespect (Curtin, 2009). Also, knowledge of students' languages and cultural backgrounds can help teachers position student knowledge as a resource that can enhance the educational experience rather than hinder academic success (National Council of Teachers of English, 2008).

Even with my personal interest in language acquisition and prior experience teaching English language learners, my review of the literature revealed facets of the language acquisition process of which I was unaware. How can art teachers be prepared for working in linguistically diverse classrooms if teacher training programs do not include this information?

Necessity of Preparing Teachers to Work with English Language Learners

When art teachers are unaware of student's linguistic abilities and the unique needs of language learner, teachers might rely on the belief that art is a language which requires no classroom adaptations. In such cases, English language learners are left to sink or swim – struggle with classroom content or academically fail. Hernandez (2001) refers to this hands-of approach as “submersion” or the immersing of English language learners into exclusively English language instruction without scaffolding their learning (p. 132). Hernandez (2001)

cautions that the “submersion” of English language learners erroneously assumes that all ELLs will have a similar experience acquiring English (p. 132). There is no empirical evidence that “submersion” helps language-minority students develop English language skills faster and, in fact, sees many of these students distressed due to an inability to understand fully and communicate effectively (Hernandez, 2001, p. 132). This style of teaching heightens student anxiety since they are unable to understand classroom instruction (Crawford & Krashen, 2007).

Without prior exposure to linguistically diverse populations, pre-service teachers may begin their teaching careers unknowingly holding language biases which predispose them to negative opinions of students. Hernandez (2001) discussed language biases in terms of the correlation between levels of success in U.S. society with degree of accented speech. Teachers may judge students based on initial impressions of linguistic proficiency, speech pattern, or accent. Teachers’ attitudes often reinforce students’ attitudes toward their own language use and the language of their classmates (Hernandez, 2001). The mere inclusion of ELLs and other linguistically exceptional students in the art classroom does not insure the absence of teacher bias or the successful participation of these students in the activities valued in contemporary art classrooms.

Art education literature related to English language learners fails to address the relationship between power and language acquisition and usage. Functioning as more than a tool of communication, language usage can either reinforce social hierarchies or promote democratic change (Freire & Macedo, 1987). Textbooks and lessons represent values, social norms, and selective histories through language and content as “it is no longer possible to have the text without context” (Freire & Macedo, 1987). Freire and Macedo (1987) called for teachers to take responsibility:

Educators must develop radical pedagogy structures that provide students with the opportunity to use their own reality as a basis of literacy. This includes, obviously, the language they bring to the classroom...the students' language is the only means by which they can develop their own voice, a prerequisite to the development of a positive sense of self-worth. (p. 151)

Devine (1994) explained that minority students may “discover through painful trial and error” what behavior and language is preferred in the classroom, eventually adopting the speech, actions, and values of the majority (often middle-class) population (p. 228). On the other hand, the efforts of linguistic minorities “to introduce alternative literacy values, norms, and behaviors...can be understood to pose a serious threat to the dominant culture” (Devine, 1994, p. 233) which may negatively influence employment opportunities, education, and social status (Devine, 1994). This struggle can be seen in current popular media coverage of debates regarding bilingual education (Crawford & Krashen, 2007), immigration policy (Alden, 2009; Archibold, 2010), and access to higher education (Bazar, 2009). Schools with large populations of non-mainstream language speakers often suffer from “low standardized test results, reduced resources, and reductionist approaches to instruction” (Katz et al., 2009).

Language educators suggest specific ways in which pre-service teachers can begin to develop awareness of linguistic hierarchies and their role in shaping their future students' perception of the power of language. Studies show that students in teacher preparation courses who have more multicultural coursework develop greater sensitivity to students with language differences (Katz et al., 2009). Additionally, future teachers' negative attitudes toward language learners decreased when their pre-teaching interaction with speakers of non-dominant languages increased (Katz et al., 2009). Ren Dong (2004) stressed four areas of importance regarding teacher preparation:

- building empathy toward second language learners' language difficulties and cultural differences,

- increasing understanding of the process of second language acquisition,
- adapting the curriculum and instruction to students' cultural and language needs, and
- integrating discipline specific language and literacy skills into area of instruction (p. 202).

Some teachers enter linguistically diverse classrooms feeling ill-prepared and inadvertently dilute course content while still employing difficult speech patterns or even excluding ELLs from class discussion (Ren Dong, 2004, p. 202).

Combs (2009) believed teachers must cultivate skills to encourage social justice such as learning to create collaborative communities of practice that develop student trust and providing a dialogic space that invites questions and critique. Katz, Scott, and Hadjioannou (2009) recommend that teacher preparation programs regarding the future instruction of language learners should utilize inquiry approaches to content learning as a model for bringing student interest and meaningful content into the classroom. Specific suggestions to develop this inquiry model include having future teachers document their own language histories to determine the origin of their attitudes toward language usage or recounting firsthand language encounters that left an emotional impression (Katz et al., 2009, p. 107).

Criticism of the Literature

Review of the literature reveals a lack of research exploring the effect of contemporary art education practices on English language learners. The belief that art is a universal language ignores how cultural background can lead to different interpretations of visual symbols and narratives. Art educators must be aware that not every student speaks the same language of art and that language is a tool of power. Due to lack of research in these areas, many art educators may be unaware of their role in shaping students' language learning.

According to the literature reviewed, teacher preparation currently lacks sufficient opportunities for pre-service teachers to understand and experience the perspective of English language learners. Not only should teacher preparation include suggested adaptations to use in linguistically diverse classrooms, but also future teachers should evaluate their own language usage and biases. This criticism of teacher preparation refers to pre-service teacher training across disciplines but not to art teacher preparation specifically. The lack of discussion of these facets of teacher preparation in art education literature suggests that learning to work with English language learners may not be a topic of significant interest in art teacher preparation programs.

Need for Further Research

Consequently, this study seeks to understand the practices and challenges regarding the instruction of English language learners in the art classroom through the following research questions: What pedagogical and curricular adaptations in the art classroom may be effective strategies for teaching English language learners? What are the perceived challenges of having a linguistically diverse art classroom?

Further research could expand upon the pedagogical adaptations made for ELLs and suggest possible curriculum changes that would more effectively build language skills. Second language instructors' reliance on the use of visual elements invites exploration of how the art classroom can explicitly enhance students' language acquisition.

Conclusion

The literature reviewed reveals the necessity of productive linguistic communication in the art classroom (Barrett, 1997; Dobbs, 2004; Freedman & Stuhr, 2004) as well as a growing concern for how this verbal communication affects English language learners (Brunick, 1999;

Eubanks, 1999, 2002, 2003; Hernandez, 2001; Rivin, 1996; Shoemaker, 1998). Critical pedagogists from the field of language education highlighted the need for art educators to cultivate skills in addressing the unique needs of English language learners and to actively identify power relationships stemming from linguistic and cultural differences (Combs, 2009; Devine, 1994; Freire & Macedo, 1987; Katz et al., 2009).

Chapter 3

Methodology

In order to answer my research questions, I conducted an online survey of elementary school art teachers across the nation and follow-up interviews with four survey participants. In selecting survey methodology, my goal was to reach a diverse group of art teachers whose personal backgrounds, geographic locations, and teaching situations might influence their choice of pedagogical and curricular adaptations for working with English language learners as well as their perceived challenges of having a linguistically diverse art classroom. In this way, I hoped to learn teachers' current practices and opinions relating to the instruction of ELLs. By using a mix of quantitative and qualitative questions, I sought to obtain information that reveals general trends in addition to hearing teachers' individual opinions (Creswell, 2008). After analyzing the survey results, I conducted active interviews with four participants who provided contact information and were willing to participate in further research. Therefore, after constructing a broad view of ELL instruction in the elementary art classroom, I communicated directly with certain participants to clarify questions and better understand their success and struggles when working with English language learners in the art classroom.

Background to the Study

The purpose of this project was to examine how art teachers address the needs and encourage the success of linguistically diverse students in the art classroom. The research questions shaping the development of research methodology were: What pedagogical and

curricular adaptations in the art classroom may be effective strategies for teaching English language learners? What are the perceived challenges of having a linguistically diverse art classroom? Though I initially considered conducting a case study of an art teacher who worked extensively with English language learners, I determined that the lack of research detailing the current practices of art educators in regard to the instruction of ELLs necessitated a study that was broader in scope. While previous research in the field of art education focuses on specific case studies of special art programs including English language learners (Ching, 1993; Henry, 2007; Rivin, 1996; Shoemaker, 1998) and offers suggested adaptations for ELLs in the art classroom (Eubanks, 2002), these studies do not explore if art teachers in diverse teaching situations find these ways of teaching to be effective in their day-to-day teaching experiences. Moreover, previous research does not focus on how art teacher preparation programs frame teachers' perception of having linguistically diverse classrooms and influence teachers' instructional practices when working with English language learners. As a rich by-product of the research questions, this study revealed the need for alterations to art teacher preparation programs in order to provide teachers with a knowledge base for working with ELLs which would likely increase teachers' confidence and preparedness when working in linguistically diverse classrooms.

Selecting Survey Methodology

Recognizing that every art classroom is unique – from the teacher's pedagogical style to the students' backgrounds and interests – I chose to begin my research using survey methodology. By hearing from diverse teachers working in a variety of different classrooms, I hoped to find commonalities and relevant differences that will provide teachers and researchers

with a wide scope of possibilities for instructional methods to successfully engage English language learners in the art classroom.

Other practical concerns influenced my selection of survey methodology for developing this research study. Surveys, though time-consuming to design, can be distributed and completed quickly and with little cost to the researcher (Alreck & Settle, 2004). As a full-time graduate student working within a short timeframe and with a limited budget, these aspects of survey research were appealing. Surveys are self-administered meaning the researcher and the participants have no direct contact (Alreck & Settle, 2004). Online surveys can be designed to maintain participant anonymity when desired, reducing the level of participant risk in regard to Institutional Review Board concerns as determined by the *Belmont Report* (U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, 1979). Additionally, the use of an online survey reduces costs and material waste and also facilitates the later processes of data analysis.

Researchers in art education have used survey methodology in order to gain a broad understanding of factors influencing art curriculum development (La Porte, Speirs, & Young, 2008), to develop a general profile of art teacher educators (Milbrant & Klein, 2008), and to better understand the practices of art teachers working in multi-age classrooms (Broome, 2009). Studying these previous surveys, I found surveying art educators could provide insight into diverse teacher perspectives but that open-ended questions better facilitated gathering personalized data in the form of specific examples and participant opinions. Additionally, I realized that multiple-choice questions related to teacher and school demographics could enhance and contextualize the participants' open-ended responses. Also, I recognized that selecting a broader group of survey participants – rather than targeting only teachers who worked with a large percentage of English language learners – could invite responses from teachers who

do not have many language learners in their classes and that their participation could still be useful. I hoped that these participants might provide insight into the perceived challenges of having linguistically and culturally diverse students, even if those perceptions come without direct experience. Reviewing prior art education surveys raised many questions regarding the benefits of survey research and helped me anticipate potential challenges related to the formatting and execution of my survey research.

Choosing to Conduct Follow-Up Interviews

In addition to outlining current teacher practices across the country, I also wanted to understand participants' teaching situations in as much depth as possible. Therefore, I chose to conduct follow-up interviews with interested survey participants. Each survey participant answered a question as to whether or not they would like to be contacted to participate in further research. I sent all participants who provided contact information an email inviting them to participate in an individual follow-up interview. I originally intended to select specific participants from the pool of survey participants who provided content information using the criteria of informative, thoughtful, and relevant responses to the open-ended questions. However, only six survey participants responded to participate in further interviews. One of these six participants primarily worked only with high school students, while another fell ill at the time of the interviews. Consequently, I accepted all four interested survey participants who were available for interviews and corresponded to the intended participant demographics. In the end, I conducted follow-up interviews with four of the survey participants who each represent different geographic locations as well as unique teaching situations.

I selected the method of active interviews (Burnaford, 2001; Holstein & Gubrium, 1995) to gain further insight into the teaching practices and specific concerns of the selected research

participants. Active interviews allow participants to hear about data already collected during the research study and then to offer further insights by telling their own stories (Burnaford, 2001). The most appealing aspect of active interviewing for me was my ability to actually converse with the participant, adding comments, and creating a dialogue that enriched the answers provided earlier in survey format (Burnaford, 2001).

Through the combined methods of survey and active interviews, I developed a broader understanding of current art educators' practices regarding the instruction of English language learners while also exploring certain teacher perspectives more in-depth. Using data collected through both of these means, I determined helpful suggestions for all art educators and suggest improvements for art teacher preparation programs.

Design of the Study

This section details my selection of the survey and interview participants and explains my development of the survey questions and interview protocol.

Participants and Location of the Research

Initially, I thought my study could involve art educators from across the K-12 grade levels. As I began to explore avenues of contacting potential participants, I also contemplated how the instruction of English language learners may differ greatly across grade levels. Additionally, I reviewed statistical data which indicated the majority of students considered Limited English Proficient (LEP) were enrolled in elementary schools.⁶ Also, I read that language educators caution elementary teachers that even though young children often appear more adept at learning language because they are "less self-conscious about making mistakes

⁶A US Department of Education survey found stated over 67% of all students considered LEP during the 2000-2001 school year were enrolled at the elementary level, where they accounted for more than 11% of the total school enrollment (Kinder, 2002).

and thus speak more freely with adults,” student’s eagerness to verbally participate in classroom activities does not preclude the need for educational adaptations (Crawford & Krashen, 2007, p. 33). With an increased awareness of the need for further research regarding the instruction of English language learners at the elementary level, I decided to focus my survey and interview research on elementary art teachers.⁷ This decision also reflects my personal interests in that I have the most experience working with elementary students and am interested in early childhood language acquisition.

Selection of survey participants. My survey participants belonged to the National Art Education Association (NAEA) Elementary Division Ning⁸ (See Figure 1) or subscribed to the NAEA Elementary Division Listserv at the time of invitation to participate in the study. My advisor at Virginia Commonwealth University brought this community within NAEA to my attention. When I learned of the Elementary Division’s Ning, I thought the community of collaborative educators could be an ideal forum for reaching elementary art educators interested in improving their practice and participating in educational research. I approached this group of participants via their current president who also served as the Ning leader and the Listserv distributor. At the time of my survey, the Ning consisted of approximately 600 members while the Listserv had approximately 150 subscribers. These two groups potentially overlap as Listserv subscribers may also be Ning members.

The link to the online survey (See Figure 1), hosted by Survey Monkey, was open for participants to complete from October 15, 2010 until November 16, 2010. Forty-seven

⁷ While I framed the study in order to reach elementary art teachers, some participants also taught high school or were new to teaching. I included the data provided by these participants who were not elementary art teachers, because I felt they provided valuable information for answering my research questions.

⁸The National Art Education Association Elementary Division Ning is located online at <http://naeaelementarydivision.ning.com/>.

participants agreed to the letter of informed consent on the first page of the survey, while 29 participants completed the survey in its entirety. The discrepancy between those who agreed to participate and those who completed the survey could be attributed partly to participants who first agreed to the letter of informed consent and then decided to answer the actual survey questions at a later time. Restarting the survey required agreeing once more to the letter of informed consent. Since participants' IP addresses were masked to provide anonymity, it is difficult to know how many participants restarted the survey at a later time. However, all survey responses likely represent different participants due to the lack of overlapping data. Therefore, the final number of survey participants was 29.



Figure 1. Screenshot of NAEA Elementary Division Ning forum post with survey link. The forum post also included a letter in which I briefly explained the study.

Limitations of the survey participant selection. The NAEA Elementary Division Ning members and Listserv subscribers represent a nonprobability “convenience sampling” in that they are not necessarily representative of the entire elementary art educator population in the US, but I benefited from having access to this specific sample group who had the potential to help answer my research questions (Creswell, 2008, p. 155). Membership in the NAEA is not mandatory nor are all elementary educators in the NAEA active participants in the Elementary

Division Ning and Listserv. Therefore, this convenience sampling did not include all elementary art teachers in the nation or in NAEA. However, NAEA membership draws from across the country, thus providing potential access to regionally diverse teaching situations. By surveying this group of elementary educators interested in professional development, I hoped to obtain data that revealed similarities and differences of ELL instruction among diverse populations and regions of the country.

Selection of interview participants. As stated previously, I initially planned to choose interview participants based on my analysis of the survey participants' responses, selecting those participants who provided detailed, seemingly reflective analysis of classroom practices including successful and unsuccessful attempts to engage ELLs and intentions to improve teaching practices in the future. Selecting specific teachers based on their survey responses would serve as an "opportunistic sampling" since this selection is undertaken after the research project has begun in order to better answer my research questions (Creswell, 2008, p. 216). However, though 14 participants provided contact information with the understanding that I would later send an email request for a follow-up interview, only six participants actually responded to this invitation to participate in an interview. Of these six participants, one participant primarily taught high school and, I felt, fell out of the parameters of the research project. A second participant fell ill during the interview time period. In the end, I interviewed the four remaining participants who each represented a different geographic location as well as very unique teaching situations. Therefore, this phase of the research benefited from another convenience sampling (Creswell, 2008) as I worked with participants who were available for further research. As with the survey participant sampling, the selection of interview participants means that data will not be generalizable. However, for the purpose of my research study, I feel

that understanding a variety of specific teaching more in-depth also provides valuable answers to the research questions.

Methods of Data Collection

I employed a combination of both survey and interview methods of data collection to answer my research questions.

Survey design. I developed a cross-sectional online survey consisting of 24 questions. Cross-sectional survey design measures current attitudes and practices and can be completed with a single set of questions (Creswell, 2008). I designed my online survey using the website Survey Monkey which allows for a variety of multiple choice and short answer responses. All participants received the same survey questions through a static web questionnaire (Alreck & Settle, 2004). On the final page of the survey, participants had the option of providing contact information if they were willing to participate in follow-up interviews. Otherwise, survey answers were submitted anonymously, and participants' IP addresses were masked. After pilot-testing my survey questions (Creswell, 2008), I sent an initial email via the NAEA Elementary Division Listserv and posted a link on the NAEA Elementary Division Ning inviting the teachers to participate in this online survey regarding their instruction of English language learners.

Survey questions. Survey questions included fixed-answer (quantitative) questions that address teacher and school demographics and open-ended (qualitative) questions regarding classroom practices and teachers' opinions on instructing English language learners. Several researchers present relevant and convincing arguments in favor of quantitative survey research (Creswell, 2008; Fink, 1995; La Porte, Speirs, & Young, 2008; Milbrant & Klein, 2008) as well as qualitative survey research (Creswell, 2008; Fink, 1995; La Porte et al., 2008). A national survey of art curriculum influences conducted by La Porte, Speirs, and Young (2008) combined

quantitative and qualitative questions. By including both quantitative and qualitative questions, I sought to note trends as well as understand specific teaching situations in more detail. Though each of the 24 survey questions in my survey required the selection or entry of an answer, all questions included a “prefer not to answer” choice to reduce potential anxiety, discomfort, or pressure to respond when the question does not apply to that participant. Please refer to Appendix A for the full list of all 24 survey questions.

Figure 2. Screenshot of multiple choice survey questions as seen on the Survey Monkey website. Questions with drop-down menus allowed for only one answer but provided short blanks for qualifying answer choices of “Other” when appropriate. Questions featuring button selection boxes, such as Question 3, allowed participants to give multiple answers to a single question.

My quantitative survey questions addressed primarily demographic information rather than attitudinal. I used a mix of drop-down menus, multiple choice buttons, and blanks for write-in options for the multiple choice questions (See Figure 2). For each question, participants could select from several multiple choice answers or select the “prefer not to answer” option. The survey consisted of the following multiple choice questions which I wrote to gain more information about participants’ background and current teaching situations:

1. Where do you currently teach?
2. How long have you been teaching at your current school?
3. What grade levels do you currently teach?
4. How long have you been teaching?

5. Are you male or female?
6. At what degree levels have you studied art education?
7. Did your teacher training include coursework related to the instruction of English language learners (ELL)? [Note: Schools may have referred to this coursework as the instruction of ESL (English as a Second Language) students or LEP (Limited English Proficiency) students]
8. How large is your school's student body?
9. What percentage of students speaks a language other than English at home?
10. What languages are spoken by your school's student body?⁹
11. What are the languages you feel comfortable speaking?
12. What are the predominate languages spoken by teachers and other school staff?

Through these multiple choice questions, I sought to better understand how long participants had worked as art teachers and what preparation participants had for working with English language learners in the art classroom. I thought factors such as the size of the school, the percentage of ELLs within the school, and the number of years having worked at a current school might all influence the kind of adaptations participants made for ELLs in their classrooms. I wondered whether or not recent Art Education graduates received more coursework preparing them for working with ELLs since the percentage and awareness of language learners within the U.S. educational systems seems to be gaining greater attention in recent years. I also thought participants' fluency in other languages might influence their ability to work with or empathize with linguistically diverse students.

I began the survey with these multiple choice questions hoping to put participants at ease with fairly simple, easy to answer questions. In terms of using the data from these questions for statistical purposes, participants reported information such as the percentage of ELLs at participants' schools or the languages spoken by school staff based on their own perceptions. Additionally, by asking participants to qualify the amount of coursework they had regarding the

⁹For Questions 10 – 12, the multiple choice answers provided came from 2000 US Census Brief's list of the "top 20 languages spoken at home by the population five years and over" (U.S. Census Bureau, 2003). I qualified Chinese as either Cantonese or Mandarin and left a response for writing in other languages.

instruction of ELLs as either minimum, moderate, or significant leaves that qualification up to the interpretation of each participant. Any conclusions based on these questions then may be statistically inaccurate or lack standardization, but the responses reveal participants' unique and potentially biased perspectives of their teaching situations and preparation. By recognizing the nuances of the quantitative responses, I view the participants as individuals rather than representatives of the field of art education as a whole.

Though Likert scales could have been used to assess teacher's attitude and perceptions of working with ELLs (Creswell, 2008), I preferred to obtain more detailed and personalized answers through open-ended questions. Through the open-ended questions, participants were given the opportunity to provide unique and detailed descriptions of their classrooms and practices. The second half of the survey invited participants to provide short answer responses to the following questions:

13. How do you use literature and language arts in your art classroom?
14. In what ways do you work with other teachers in your school in regard to students' verbal and written language development?
15. How do you select the art exemplars and art historical examples that you show students in your classroom?
16. Do you consider the students you teach to be linguistically diverse? Why or why not?
17. What pedagogical adaptations have you tried in your instruction of English language learners?
18. What were some of the specific goals for English language learners that motivated your changes in teaching strategies?
19. Please describe any curriculum changes you have made to improve your instruction of English language learners in the art classroom.
20. Please describe how English language learners participate verbally in your art classroom.
21. Please describe how English language learners participate non-verbally in your art classroom.
22. Please describe the social interactions of English language learners in your art classroom.
23. What are your greatest challenges in regard to teaching a linguistically diverse student body?
24. In what ways do you think art teacher preparation programs could be improved to aid teachers in the instruction of linguistically diverse students?

While Questions 17, 18, 19, and 23 overtly relate to my two research questions, I wrote the other open-response questions anticipating that many of them may inform the research questions as well. By asking about participants' use of language arts and literature in the classroom, I hoped to find how they adapted this regular use of verbal and written language for students still learning much of the English language. Questions regarding the selection of art exemplars could reveal curricular adaptations. Additionally, questions regarding the perception of students' linguistic diversity as well as the details of students' social, verbal, and non-verbal participation in the art classroom could reveal participants' attitudes towards and struggles working with English language learners. Finally, while not an overt research question in this study, I determined that participants' suggestions for teacher preparation programs could further reveal their perceived challenges to working in linguistically diverse art classrooms.

Interview design. After reviewing all of the survey results and determining the relevant participants as described above, I conducted one approximately 30 minute active interview with each of the four interview participants using the online web-call program Skype. I recorded and transcribed each interview using the Pamela Call Recorder application. The structure of each interview varied slightly depending upon the initial survey responses provided by participants as well as participants' personal interests and concerns regarding the instruction of English language learners in the art classroom.

Once beginning the call with each participant, I first let the participant know the pseudonym that I had assigned to her and to her school then asked permission to begin recording. Each interview began by confirming the participant had received an emailed copy of the Letter of Informed Consent, answering any questions the participant had regarding the study or letter of consent, and recording the participant's agreement to the statement of consent. For each

interview, I first briefly reviewed the survey responses the participant had given regarding her study of Art Education and the amount of coursework related to working with English language learners included in her teacher preparation program. I then asked the participant to either describe the ELL-related coursework or to describe other academic or non-academic experiences which helped prepare her for working with English language learners. After that point, each interview varied depending upon each interview participants' particular experiences and interests.

Prior to the interview, I created around 10 questions that I thought might be useful to ask the specific participants. While each interview varied, I included, when relevant, a question related to the perception of the art classroom within the participant's school¹⁰, the role of the art classroom in developing students' language skills, and the participants' opinion regarding art as a visual language. I spent the majority of each interview inviting the participant to describe her teaching situation, specific instances of working with language learners through art, and specific struggles when working with ELLs. After approximately 30 minutes of conversation, I brought the interview to conclusion, thanked the participant for her contribution to the study, and explained my intention to convey the results of the study through a later forum post on the NAEA Elementary Division Ning. As a small token of my appreciation, I sent each participant a \$10 digital Amazon gift card immediately after the conclusion of the interview.

Data Analysis

My data analysis began after the one month period of survey data collection ended. I began by reading all of the participant responses for each survey question – both quantitative and qualitative. This initial review of the data informed the development of the interview questions I

¹⁰For one participant, the question regarding the perception of the art classroom within the class was irrelevant as she was currently a full-time graduate student pursuing her licensure to teach.

wrote for each of the four interviews. After conducting the follow-up interviews, I continued the process of data analysis by simultaneously reviewing both the survey responses and the interview transcripts in order to answer both of the research questions: What pedagogical and curricular adaptations in the art classroom may be effective strategies for teaching English language learners? What are the perceived challenges of having a linguistically diverse art classroom?

Process of Survey Data Analysis

During my first reading of all the survey responses, I listed questions I had regarding the survey responses and noted questions that might lend themselves to various response filters or cross-comparisons. I then filtered all of the survey questions using the Survey Monkey website in order to identify all of the responses by participants who listed working with higher percentages of English language learners or stated they had studied ELL-related coursework. I flagged these participant responses on my unfiltered master copy of the survey data so that I would be aware of this particular demographic data when reviewing the other questions.

For the quantitative questions, I applied various filters in order to find correlations and better understand each participant's background and teaching situation. Filtering is a data analysis function of the Survey Monkey website which allows for the comparison of participant data based on the selection of specific answers. For example, for those few participants who listed working at schools with very large student bodies, I cross-referenced those responses with the question regarding the grade levels participants teach. In this way, I was able to find out that one of the participants working at a large school was referring to a high school and not an elementary school. I also filtered within the answers to questions, which allowed survey participants to select multiple answers, such as Question 6, which asked participants about their

study of Art Education. By filtering the responses to this question, I found that seven participants selected answers that indicated they studied Art Education at both the undergraduate and graduate level.

I also used the Survey Monkey website to create charts for viewing the quantitative data. When designing this study, I originally thought such charts could reveal nationwide trends in school and teacher demographics. However, the low number of survey responses resulted in some states only having one representative while other states were not represented at all. Therefore, the charts of only quantitative data did not prove as useful as I had originally anticipated and did not help inform answers to my research questions.

While I did use quantitative data to filter and contextualize the qualitative data, I began by reading and hand-coding the answers to each open-ended question individually (Creswell, 2003). In this way, I viewed every open-response question as capable of being coded, and I applied multiple codes to a single answer when applicable. For example, when listing pedagogical adaptations, one participant explained five different adaptations within a single response. Some of these adaptations related to group activities while other adaptations related to visual prompts. Therefore, I coded those parts of the response differently. Sometimes participants mentioned an issue multiple times within a single response. For Question 13 in which I asked how participants select art exemplars to use in their classes, one participant listed “prints” three different times but qualified them as “poster prints” or “Picturing America Prints.” Due to the repeated listing of related topics within a single response, I began coding the survey data by the number of mentions rather than the number of participants. I only listed the number of participants who gave “prefer not to answer” or simple “yes” or “no” answers. Otherwise, the

open-ended responses were nuanced, and I coded them in such a way as to reflect participants' emphasis on certain facets of their responses.

When coding the open-ended questions, I developed codes for each survey question, which I kept track of in a codebook (Creswell, 2005, p. 175), and color-coded the responses on my master copy of the survey data using colored pens and highlighters. Color codes did not relate across the different questions, because I first reviewed each survey question individually. My codes emerged from repeated reading of the survey answers for a given question. For Question 13 about the selection of art exemplars, I immediately noticed the references to textbooks and mandated curriculum as well as participants' use of the internet to select the images they thought most useful for their students. I then began using separate color codes for these different mentions. I grouped these codes according to the reasons teachers selected art exemplars and the resources teachers used to find the art exemplars. All of the codes for this question fell within these two main categories unless the participant preferred not to answer the question. Throughout this process of coding the responses to each survey question, I used my codebook to keep a record of the codes and number of mentions for each code within a given question. The codebook also served to document my process of grouping the codes within each question into broader categories.

After coding the individual survey questions, I considered how the responses to the different questions related to one another by identifying how the codes I used within one question related to codes in other questions. In order to facilitate this comparison, I used a different color of sticky notes for each question and then wrote on each sticky note one code, the number of responses from that question which related to that code, and notations of the specific responses to which that code applied. After writing out all of the codes for each question on

sticky notes, I put the notes on a wall and began grouping them by related codes. I then looked at these groups of related codes and responses to determine how the data answered my research questions. This phase of data analysis also included data collected from the interview participants as described below.

In addition to looking at what participants stated overtly, I also reviewed the survey responses to see what went unsaid. From participants' choice not to answer certain questions to their occasional off-topic or highly negative responses, I also included this unspoken or less overtly stated data in my process of coding and later interpretation. In particular, I considered why the participant may have provided less information to one question and lengthy responses to other questions. During my process of sticky note manipulation, I was able to easily compare which questions received fewer numbers of responses or answers that fell outside of the primary codes. While I recognize that my interpretation of the data could misrepresent the participants' intention, I looked at all of the other answers provided by that survey participant in order to better understand the response to the question under review.

Process of Interview Data Analysis

After coding the individual survey questions, I moved to the interview transcripts to see how the interview participants elaborated on the different survey questions. Rather than coding the interviews, I flagged which sections pertained to the survey questions and wrote out relevant quotes on sticky notes. I then examined if those quotes supported specific codes for the survey question or if the interview data deviated from the original codes. For example, I highlighted and pulled out quotes from interview participants' responses to my question "In what ways does the linguistic and cultural diversity of your students influence the content you select to cover in your art class?" and compared these quotations to the survey data regarding curricular

adaptations and participants' selection of art exemplars. I also flagged enlightening anecdotes or helpful quotations and wrote those out on sticky notes as well. I deemed quotations to be helpful if the response provided detailed information, particularly in regard to why participants made certain adaptations in their classrooms. Often the survey participants provided bulleted lists or simple statements rather than explaining the reasons or logic behind those responses. Finally, I then used the interview transcripts to craft profiles¹¹ of each of the participants in order to situate answers to my research questions within a specific context. These profiles offer a setting to better understand the reasons participants choose to make certain adaptations or identify specific challenges to working with language learners. Part of this process of creating profiles involved searching for word frequency using words I had noticed repeated throughout the interviews as well as negative contractions and "not" (See Appendix C for a chart of the word frequency data analysis).

After analyzing the interview transcripts, I returned to the coded master copy of survey data and my charts which noted the number of mentions and wrote these codes and mentions out on color-coded note cards. I also re-read the survey responses and wrote particularly intriguing or explanatory quotes on sticky notes. Using note cards of survey data codes and sticky notes of quotations allowed me to view all of the survey and interview data in relation to each other rather than simply question-by-question responses. This process also helped me recognize which survey questions provided useful information for answering the research questions. By manipulating the cards and sticky notes, I grouped the data in a variety of ways until I could

¹¹ While my profiles cannot be considered full portraits of the interview participants, I recognize the value of portraiture as a research methodology (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Hoffmann Davis, 1997). In the future, I may consider expanding this study to create in-depth portraits of the interview participants.

identify trends that answered both of my research questions. Additional trends unrelated to my survey questions also emerged during this final phase of data analysis.

Conclusion

By combining both survey and interview methods of data collection, I learned of a variety of teacher perspectives regarding the instruction of English language learners in elementary art classrooms across the country. The follow-up interviews allowed me to clarify my interpretation of participants' survey responses while providing greater insight into four distinctly different teaching situations. The survey and interview data provided answers to my research questions, though I do not consider these specific answers to be exhaustive with regards to either of my research questions. Rather, the data collected in this study provide diverse suggestions for working with English language learners while suggesting the need for further research.

Chapter 4

Findings

This chapter presents the findings based on data collected from both the online survey and the four follow-up interviews. Though the survey data informed the development of the interview questions, the data analysis developed primarily from a simultaneous coding of both the survey data and the interview data. Rather than presenting the individual analysis of each survey and interview question, this chapter combines information gathered through both methods in order to answer the primary research questions: What pedagogical and curricular adaptations in the art classroom may be effective strategies for teaching English language learners? What are the perceived challenges of having a linguistically diverse art classroom? Following the presentation of data related to the research questions, this chapter also includes a discussion of additional trends which emerged from the data regarding art teacher preparation programs and the perception of art as a visual language.

Method of Data Analysis

Throughout the analysis of the survey data, I relied on the number of mentions of a certain topic as recognition of this topic's importance to participants. Within a single open-response answer, some participants mentioned an issue more than once or listed two responses that essentially said the same thing. In this way, each open-ended survey response yielded a variety of information related to answering the research questions. If I were to consider each open-response answer as a single data entry, much of the information and nuances of the survey

data would be lost. Therefore, I primarily present qualitative data based on the number of mentions of the topic within each open-ended survey question. When participants provided no specific data in response to an open-ended survey question, I grouped the data according to the narrow answers such as simple “yes” or “no” responses or “prefer not to answer” responses and counted the number of participants for each response. I considered these groups of responses as capable of being coded and referred to this data according to the number of participants who gave such answers. For example, when asked to describe the social interactions of English language learners in their art classroom, five participants preferred not to answer. However, other responses to the question included six mentions that students’ personality remained the greatest factor in their participation.

Due to the limited number of survey participants, I gave equal weight to all mentions during my process of data analysis. Though a topic may be mentioned only once or twice, I still considered this brief mention to be of importance. Due to the unique teaching situation of all participants, a single mention could reveal the specific needs of that participant’s students or reflect the participant’s personal teaching philosophy. However, I do note within this chapter when certain topics received an overwhelming majority of mentions since this information reveals a possible trend among the responses of survey participants. Throughout this chapter, I seek to answer my research questions by pulling from the survey data as a whole rather than dividing the analysis up by survey questions. In order to better compare the full spectrum and number of mentions provided in response to each survey question, please see Appendix B which includes charts of mentions for all 12 open-ended survey questions as well as charts of the quantitative data collected through the multiple choice questions.

The survey data provided by the interview participants is included within the listed mentions of responses to survey questions rather than listed separately. I did not code the interview transcripts according to mentions since each of the interview participants provides insight into a unique teaching situation and teacher perspective. I did, however, count the word frequency within the interview transcripts as an attempt to construct differentiated profiles of each interview participant. The word frequency data analysis revealed certain trends, which I included in the profiles of interview participants presented below and addressed briefly within my answers to the research questions. See Appendix B for a full listing of the word frequency data analysis.

Much of the data provided by the participants directly answered the first research question regarding adaptations employed for teaching English language learners. However, understanding the motivations for selecting these specific adaptations as well as identifying teachers' challenges to teaching in linguistically diverse classrooms resulted primarily from researcher interpretation of open-response questions and interview conversations that could possibly be interpreted differently by another researcher. This chapter begins with a profile of the participants in order to contextualize the framework for the researcher's interpretations and understanding of the data.

Profile of the Participants

The following profile of the survey and interview participants combines data acquired through the quantitative demographic survey questions, relevant data embedded within the open-ended survey questions, and data gathered through the interviews.

Profile of the Survey Participants

Twenty-nine participants completed the survey in its entirety. Though 47 participants began the survey and 34 completed all the demographic questions, the data provided by the participants who did not complete the survey is not included in this analysis.¹² See Figure 3 for a visualization of the change in the number of participants over the course of the survey.

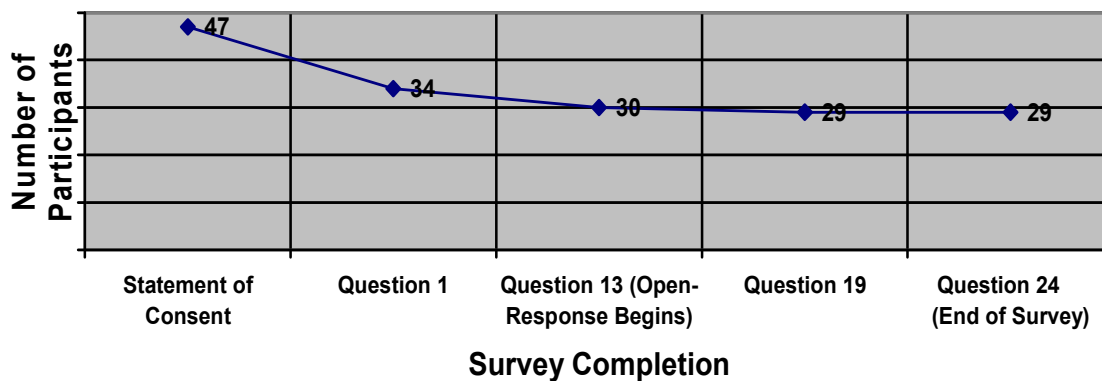


Figure 3. Changes in the total number of survey participants over the course of the survey.

Teacher background and preparation. Survey participants were overwhelmingly female (89.7%, 26 participants) with only 3 male participants (10.3%). The majority of participants studied Art Education at the Masters level (72.4%, 21 participants) while 11 participants (37.9%) studied Art Education at the undergraduate level and one (3.4%) at the Doctoral level. Two participants (6.9%) responded that they had not studied Art Education at any of these levels, implying they had received no formal degree specifically in Art Education. However, these participants may have taken coursework related to Art Education. One of these participants without a degree in Art Education explained in an open-response question that she was a former language development teacher with English as a Second Language teaching certification.

¹²However, it is interesting to note that two of these participants who began but did not complete the survey represented two of only three participants who responded that they work at schools where “over 80%” of students speak a language other than English at home.

The majority of participants (86.2%, 25 participants) reported that their teacher preparation did not include any coursework related to the instruction of English language learners. The few participants who did report having some coursework related to ELL instruction qualified this coursework as being minimal (2 participants), moderate (1 participant), or significant (1 participant). The one participant reporting significant training related to ELL instruction explained in a follow-up interview that this coursework was in conjunction with an elementary education certification program rather than an Art Education program. Eleven participants (38%) reported being able to speak the following languages in addition to English: Spanish (5 participants), French (3 participants), Gujarati (1 participant), Italian (1 participant), and Vietnamese (1 participant). Presumably, all other participants (62%) speak only English.

The survey participants represented diverse amounts of teaching experience, though few new teachers responded. Only two participants had taught for less than six years (6.9%). Twelve participants (41.4%) had taught for over 20 years. The second largest group represents those teachers having six to ten years teaching experience (34.5%, 10 participants). See Figure 4 for the complete distribution of survey participant teaching experience. Perhaps the lack of ELL-related coursework correlates to the time-period in which many of the survey participants completed their certification programs when working with students who did not speak English may not yet have been a primary concern for many American teachers.

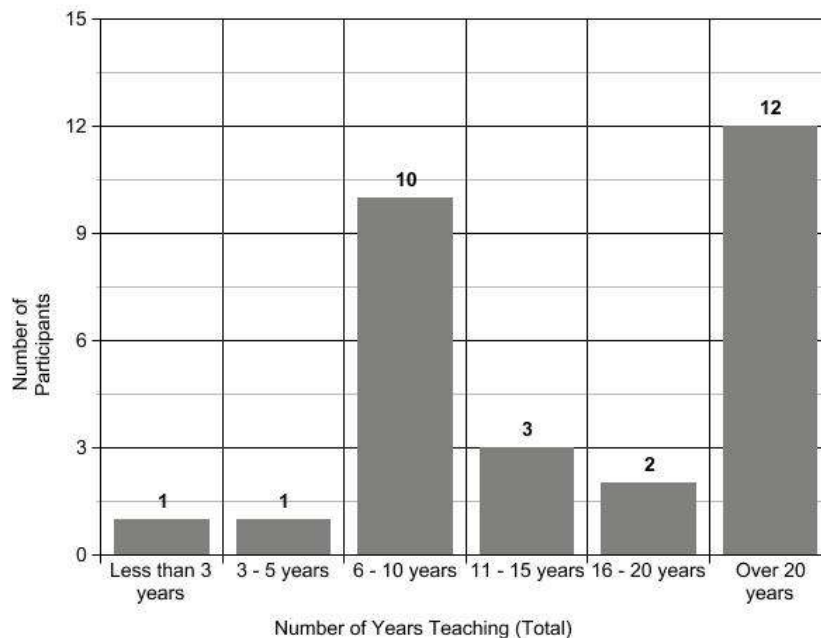


Figure 4. Survey participants' years of teaching experience.

Teaching location and school demographics. All of the 29 survey participants taught within the United States, representing 19 states. The largest percentage of participants worked in Virginia (20.7%, 6 participants). This majority of Virginia teachers is most likely due to the connections I made with fellow elementary art educators at the Virginia Art Education Association 2010 conference at a workshop about working with linguistically diverse students. Additionally, teachers affiliated with Virginia Commonwealth University's department of Art Education may have been made more aware of the NAEA Elementary Division Ning through conversations with me. In considering the use of the of the National Art Education Association's Regional Divisions, perhaps it is important to note that 41.4% of participants taught in the Southeastern Region, 27.6% in the Western Region, 17.2% in the Eastern Region, and 13.8% in the Pacific Region. For a full report of all survey participants' teaching locations, please see Appendix B (Figure 9). Due to the small number of survey participants, no generalizations can be drawn about which regions are more linguistically diverse.

The length of time survey participants had worked at their current school varied considerably with 3 – 5 years and 6 – 10 years each representing 27.6% of the responses (8 participants each). Please see Figure 5 for the complete distribution of number of years participants had taught at their current school. I included this demographic question in the survey with the expectation that prolonged length of time teaching at a school with a high percentage of English language learners may increase survey participants' use of adaptations. Interestingly, the length of responses provided by those participants who had taught at their school for over 20 years were significantly longer than those participants who had taught at their school for less than three years. Comparing these two groups of participants, the participants who had worked for over 20 years at their current school provided more possible adaptations for working with ELLs and recounted significant amounts of collaboration with other teachers in the school to support students' language acquisition in the art classroom regardless of the percentage of ELLs at their school. Those participants who had worked for less than three years at their current school provided very short responses to the majority of the survey questions and none of them reported collaborating with other teachers to help support language acquisition in the art classroom. Therefore, it seems the length of time spent teaching at a school allows teachers the time to try a variety of strategies for working with English language learners and also gives art teachers the confidence to approach others and share their concerns regarding their instruction of ELLs. The responses provided by participants who had taught at their current schools for between 3 – 20 years did not present significant generalizable information. Rather, the variety of adaptations and participants' attitudes toward working with ELLs seemed dependent more so upon the participants' personalities and teaching philosophies rather than the length of time they had taught at their current school.

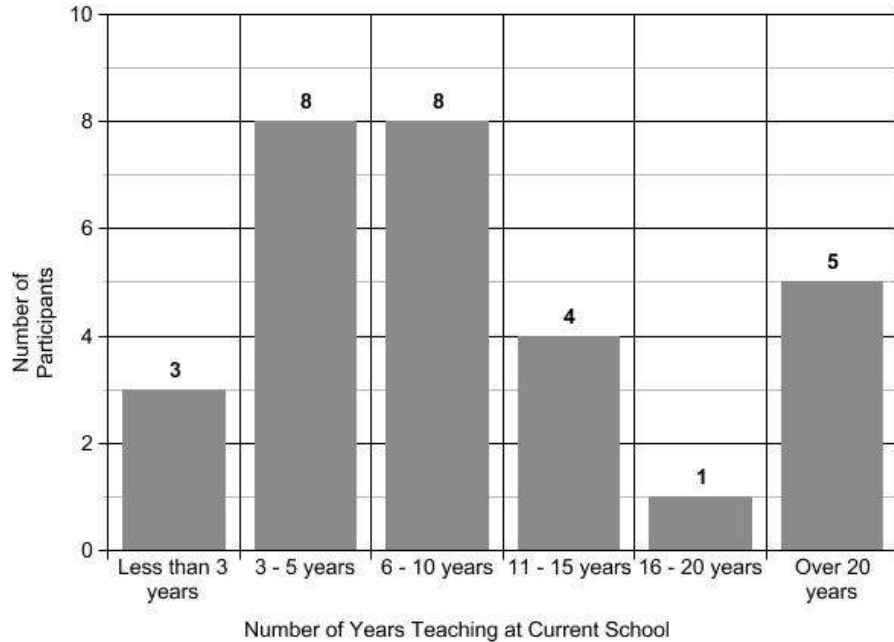


Figure 5. Survey participants' number of years teaching at current school.

Most teachers (93%, 27 participants) reported currently teaching multiple grades of elementary school including pre-kindergarten to sixth grade while one participant currently teaches high school. The sole participant who selected “prefer not to answer” explained in a follow-up interview that she is currently a full-time student in an Art Education certification program. The size of participants' student body varied greatly and did not correlate to regional location or percentage of students classified as English language learners. Overall, most participants (65.5%) reported working at schools with approximately 300 – 600 students. Two participants reported schools with over 1000 students, but one of these refers to a high school. I included the data provided by the high school art teacher in my data analysis, because I felt this participant's responses provided relevant answers to the research questions. See Appendix B (Figure 16) for a full report of the size of all participants' schools.

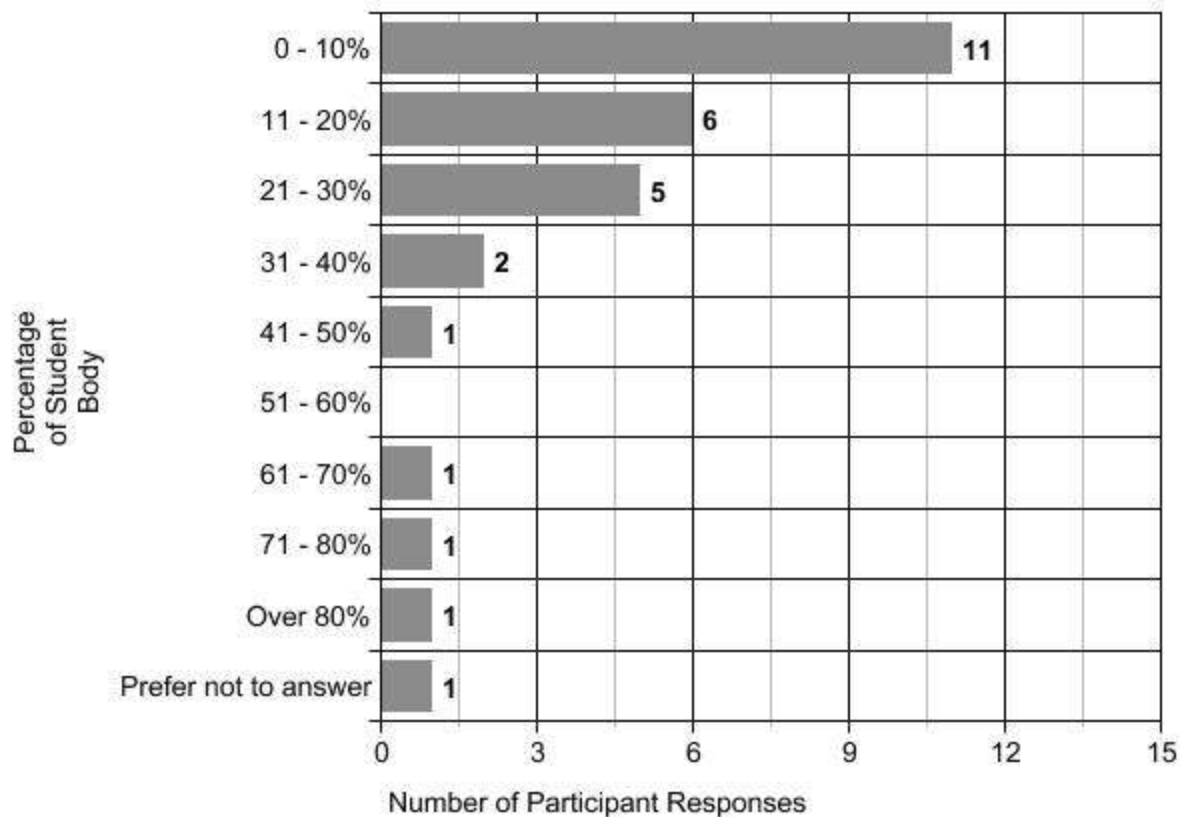


Figure 6. Survey participant responses qualifying percentage of students at their school who speak a language other than English at home.

Though most participants (37.9%, 11 participants) responded that only 0 – 10% of their student body spoke a language other than English at home, the remaining responses collectively indicate that over 58.6% of the participants work at schools where more than 10% of students speak a language other than English at home. See Figure 6 for a complete report of all participant responses to this question.

In response to the survey question “Do you consider the students you teach to be linguistically diverse?,” survey participants further revealed information and attitudes regarding the diversity of their student body. Fourteen participants (48.3%) considered their students to be linguistically diverse, six (20.7%) considered their students to be somewhat linguistically diverse

(based on the number of different languages spoken at the school and by individual students), and ten (34.5%) did not consider their students to be linguistically diverse at all. Two participants specified that approximately 30 countries were represented by their student body, while two participants explained that some students speak up to three languages prior to beginning school. Interestingly, one participant responded that her student body was “not really” linguistically diverse qualifying that: “there are only two languages used. English and Spanish. Our student population is over 50% hispanic. The students who are African American and White who live in this area of [state in the Western Region] are exposed to hispanic culture and language on a regular basis.” As mentioned in Chapter 3, this statistical information as well as the identification of diversity are self-reported by the survey participants and may reveal their perceptions of the student body rather than the accurate demographics. Since this study seeks to better understand teachers’ perceptions, understanding, and struggles in regard to working with English language learners, this potential for statistical error does not deter from the interpretation of the data. Later in this chapter, survey participants’ perception of their schools’ diversity will be discussed as an influential factor in their selection of pedagogical and curricular adaptations.

In regard to specific languages spoken by students at their schools, participants cited 26 different languages. Almost all of the participants selected Spanish (93.1%, 27 participants) as a language spoken by their students. Only 22 participants specified that English was spoken at their school; however, I assume participants who omitted selecting English viewed this as a given. The omission of English as a language spoken by students could reveal a bias towards English as the norm while other languages seem abnormal or problematic. Arabic (31.0%), French (27.6%), and Korean (27.6%) rounded out the top five languages reported as being spoken by participants’ student body. See Appendix B (Figure 18) for the full list of languages

spoken by participants' students. In contrast to students' linguistic diversity, the majority of the staff at participants' schools spoke far fewer languages with only five languages reported – English (96.6%), Spanish (31.0%), Cantonese (3.4%), Portuguese (3.4%), and Russian (3.4%). Clearly, the languages spoken by school staff do not correlate with even the most prominent languages reportedly spoken by participants' student bodies. Therefore, according to the survey participants, many students attend a school where no staff members speak the language the students' use at home.

Summary of survey participant profile. In general, most survey participants were female elementary art teachers with degrees in Art Education that included no training to prepare them for working with English language learners. Mostly monolingual, the survey participants work at a variety of different-sized schools – over half of which have student populations where more than 10% of students speak a language other than English at home. Therefore, the adaptations for working with English Language Learners proposed by the participants likely have been learned on the job or through professional development after completing their teacher training.

Profile of the Interview Participants

Four survey participants were willing and available for follow-up interviews. Like the majority of survey participants, all four interview participants were females. I assigned each interview participant a pseudonym and provided a pseudonym for her school. The following are brief profiles of each of the interview participants I constructed based upon our interview conversations and the participants' survey self-report responses. Quotation marks within these profiles indicate direct quotations taken from participant interviews and survey responses. I constructed the profiles in order to help the reader understand the data presented throughout this

chapter from the interview participants. Each interview stands as a vignette that provides a glimpse into the teaching situation and concerns of an individual teacher in a unique teaching environment. While these interviews do not provide generalizable results, each interview presents in-depth explorations of diverse ways teachers may choose to work with English language learners and provide further insight into the answers for the research questions.

Anna. Anna has worked at Harvest Elementary School in the NAEA Southeastern Region¹³ for the majority of her 6 – 10 year teaching career. While earning her Masters in Art Education, Anna received no coursework in instruction related to teaching English language learners. However, Anna’s school has over 700 students who speak many different languages including: Arabic, Cantonese, French, German, Greek, Hindi, Japanese, Korean, Persian, Spanish, Russian, Tagalog, and Urdu. Though Anna herself speaks French and Spanish in addition to English, she finds her school lacks resources in communicating with children who speak many of these other languages. Harvest Elementary’s English as a Second Language (ESOL) teachers are very supportive and work with individual students in the classrooms, including Anna’s art class. The “ESOL teachers” also hold various workshops throughout the year. In addition to this professional development programming, Anna has sought out resources and research on her own in order to better understand how to adapt her teaching to suit the needs of her linguistically and culturally diverse students.

Anna expressed that she strives to create a low-anxiety art classroom environment that overtly helps all students develop their language skills. One of her main strategies for facilitating language acquisition is to set language objectives for each lesson in addition to the content

¹³ The NAEA Southeastern Region includes Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, Puerto Rico, South Carolina, Tennessee, Virginia, and the Virgin Islands (National Art Education Association, 2011).

objectives. However, her teaching colleagues overall view the art classroom as a place where English language learners “will have a lot of [academic] success” simply because students can “come and take a break.” In this way, Anna sees that her colleagues do not view the art classroom as an academic setting but rather as a place for students to take time off from their academically rigorous school day. This view of the art classroom also reveals her colleagues’ belief that language learners risk academic failure due to their specific language abilities. Anna emphasizes the important interplay between visual and verbal communication in the art classroom and wishes her colleagues could see the value of art classroom activities in developing students’ communication skills and creativity. Anna offers many suggestions for pedagogical adaptations which will be explored later in this chapter.

Marcia. Marcia has been teaching at Fairview Elementary School in the NAEA Eastern Region¹⁴ for the majority of her 38 year teaching career. She studied Art Education at both the undergraduate and graduate levels. However, she describes her teacher preparation as primarily studio-based with no mention of English language learners or students with special needs. In her words, art teachers at the time that she attended university did not work with students with any special needs as these students were “some place else completely.” Thinking she would be working in an urban environment with many Spanish-speakers, Marcia studied Spanish in school. However, Fairview Elementary School has mostly students who speak French in addition to English. Of her 600 students, Marcia is unsure how many speak a language other than English at home.

¹⁴ The NAEA Eastern Division includes Connecticut, Delaware, District of Columbia, Labrador, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Brunswick, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Newfoundland, Nova Scotia, Ontario, Overseas Art Education Association, Pennsylvania, Prince Edward Island, Quebec, Rhode Island, Vermont, and West Virginia (National Art Education Association, 2011).

In addition to her French-speaking students, Marcia also works with a large percentage of special needs students who are classified as “non-verbal” and struggle to speak any language. Marcia equated the teaching strategies of working with both English language learners and non-verbal students and answered the majority of the survey questions based on her work with non-verbal students. I also see similarities between working with ELLs and non-verbal students based on my review of the literature (Eubanks, 1999) and personal experience observing art instruction for students who are deaf, hard of hearing, and often non-verbal. Therefore, I have included Marcia’s survey and interview data as another facet of the instruction of language learners which provides insightful answers for my research questions. Marcia seems very concerned with providing personalized adaptations and individual instruction for all of her students, specifically those with special needs related to verbal communication. She works with multiple students outside of their regular art class period believing that additional time working with her through various art activities is beneficial to developing students’ socialization and communication skills. Some of this individualized instruction is the result of collaboration and support from the school’s special needs staff. One of Marcia’s major struggles is a lack of enough time in which to provide these personal adaptations and one-on-one interactions with students.

Marcia runs a choice-based art classroom that emphasizes students’ individualized studio practices akin to professional artists. Students are free to select the concept and medium they wish to explore, though Marcia will often encourage students to explore their ideas of interest with more depth over a longer period of time. Marcia views art-making as a natural form of expression that is both exciting and innately familiar to students. Her teaching colleagues view the art classroom as a place for all students to simply have social interaction rather than actively

acquire more advanced communication skills. Marcia often feels isolated as the only art teacher within her school and actively pursues involvement in professional organizations like NAEA to stay current with the field and to have contact with fellow art teachers.

Beverly. Beverly works in the NAEA Pacific Region¹⁵ at Spring Hill Elementary School which is a dual language school. Students at Beverly’s school spend half the day learning in English and the other half learning in Spanish. Beverly’s classroom functions as a dual-language classroom where the official “language of the day” determines which language she uses to present instruction and communicate with individual students. While Beverly does not describe herself as bilingual, she does speak conversational Spanish that allows her to teach and interact with students using the official “language of the day.” Beverly stated that she continually seeks to develop her own skills in Spanish. Consequently, Beverly and all of her students are language learners, though many of her students are quickly becoming bilingual or tri-lingual. Having taught for over 20 years, Beverly has been at her current school for four years. Beverly’s Master of Art Education program did not include coursework for teaching English language learners. Beverly gained preparation for working with English language learners in two different settings. Beverly’s undergraduate degree in elementary education allowed her to gain significant ELL-training particularly through her reading and methodology courses as her university responded to the needs of the high population of Spanish-speaking students in the area. Years later, as the result of a civil rights complaint in the city where she was then teaching, everyone in Beverly’s former school system completed a series of courses related to the instruction of English language

¹⁵ The NAEA Pacific Region includes Alaska, Alberta, American Samoa, Arizona, British Columbia, California, Colorado, Guam, Hawaii, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, Oregon, Utah, Washington, Wyoming, and the Yukon Territory (National Art Education Association, 2011).

learners. Beverly learned the strategies and actually taught some of the classes because she was an administrator at the time.

Beverly specifically sought out the opportunity to work in a linguistically and culturally diverse school. When she started teaching at Spring Hill Elementary, Beverly decided to switch to a choice-based art classroom in order to provide more opportunities for diverse language usage and acquisition. She follows the model of Teaching for Artistic Behavior (Douglas & Jaquith, 2009) and has mini-studios around her classroom which students select from each class period. Beverly frequently supports general classroom content by integrating relevant materials and exemplars into the studio options for students. Beverly emphasizes students' tendencies to make art as a form of visual expression, but she is also attuned to students' verbal accompaniment to their art-making.

Roxanne. Roxanne will soon complete her Master of Art Education and licensure program at Southeastern Region University. Neither her undergraduate degree in studio art nor her graduate program in Art Education included coursework related to teaching English language learners. However, Roxanne is one of the few survey participants who consider herself bilingual. As an elementary student, she spent a year classified as an English language learner herself. Consequently, she is both empathetic towards and interested in working with linguistically and culturally diverse students. However, her lack of formal training in working with these students leaves her feeling nervous and unprepared for such a school environment. Roxanne is very interested in the development of community through art-making and art teaching. Therefore, if she were to find a job working with linguistically diverse students, Roxanne would talk to other teachers at her school to find out how better to work with the students at her school.

As an English teacher for the AmeriCorps program, Roxanne began to integrate reading activities with art-making. She has continued to use this practice in her student teaching and looks for opportunities to develop students' literacy in the art classroom. Roxanne believes art-making can help diverse students better relate to one another. She is also very interested in personalizing the art historical and thematic content of her curriculum so that it relates to the unique students in her classes. Roxanne views developing this cohesive, yet personalized, curriculum as one of her greatest challenges as a new teacher.

Summary of the interview participant profiles. By including these profiles of the interview participants, I intend to provide a context for the data I collected from each interview. The interviews greatly informed my answers to the research questions, and I included quotations from the interview participants throughout this chapter as I discussed the findings of the study. Each interview participant represents a unique teaching context and background. While Anna, Marcia, and Beverly provided many anecdotes from their many years of teaching, Roxanne's stories highlighted the struggles and goals of a pre-service art teacher. All four perspectives enrich this study by providing specific examples of pedagogical and curricular adaptations and by highlighting specific art teachers' challenges to working in linguistically diverse art classrooms. The interview participants also provide examples of how teacher preparation and personal experiences can encourage art teachers' confidence and success when working with language learners.

Suggested Adaptations for Working with English Language Learners

The survey and interview participants suggested a variety of pedagogical and curricular adaptations that may be effective strategies for teaching English language learners. Survey questions 17, 18, and 19 specifically asked participants to list these adaptations as well as the

goals for employing these strategies. In addition to these three directly related questions, participants' responses to other open-ended survey questions provided additional insight into answering the research question: What pedagogical and curricular adaptations in the art classroom may be effective strategies for teaching English language learners?

Use of Language Arts and Literature in the Art Classroom

In order to answer my research questions which involve looking at participants' adaptations and challenges to working with English language learners, I thought it important to first establish a baseline for how the survey participants used literature and language arts in their art classrooms on a regular basis. I specified literature and language arts, because I thought such language-intensive activities might necessitate significant adaptations for working with ELLs. Specifically through survey Question 13 which asked "How do you use literature and language arts in your art classroom?" I found that participants use a variety of language arts activities in the art classroom which can be divided according to reading (50 mentions), writing (27 mentions), and speaking activities (13 mentions). Please see Appendix B (Figure 21) for a more detailed listing of these mentioned activities. Perhaps the most interesting aspects of this language arts baseline are the extensive use of reading in the classroom as well as the possible overlook in speaking as a facet of language arts.

This language arts baseline provides a context for understanding the following sections on pedagogical and curricular adaptations – many of which relate directly to scaffolding reading, writing, and speaking activities when working specifically with English language learners in the art classroom.

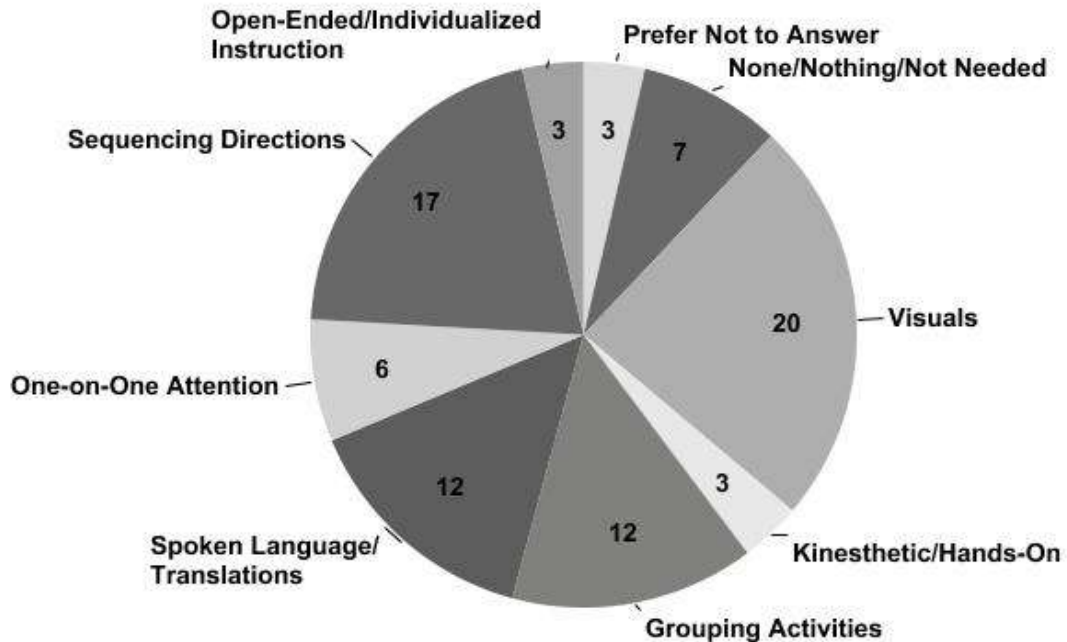


Figure 7. Categories of survey participants' suggested pedagogical adaptations (by mentions).

Pedagogical Adaptations for Working with ELLs

First, it is important to note that seven participants responded that they do not adapt their instructions for English language learners, and four participants preferred not to answer this specific question (Question 17; Figure 7). Of the 11 participants who make no adaptations or preferred not to answer, three participants work at schools where 0 -10% of the student body speaks a language other than English at home. Therefore, the majority of participants who do not adapt their pedagogical styles do have a significant number of students who are linguistically and culturally diverse. One participant qualified her lack of pedagogical adaptations explaining that “since it is visual art, usually I do not made [sic] adaptations...” Thus, the variety of adaptations suggested in this section originates from only 18 different survey participants which include the four interview participants.

Structuring lessons to convey content more clearly. Many survey responses suggesting pedagogical adaptations included adaptations to improve language learners’

understanding of class content (8 mentions). Adapting pedagogy to more clearly convey course content relates to the language education strategy of “sheltered instruction” (Curtin, 2009, p. 120) which received one mention in this survey. “Sheltered instruction” encompasses a variety of scaffolding techniques for facilitating students’ English language acquisition within an academic context (Curtin, 2009, p. 120). Based on the survey responses, suggested pedagogical adaptations for facilitating students’ understanding of course content relate primarily to sequencing art-making lessons and clarifying instruction through repetition and visuals. Specific adaptations suggested included presenting content and technique using a pre-determined sequence (3 mentions) through which information can be “chunked” (1 mention) to make it more comprehensible for language learners. Other mentions emphasized using demonstrations (6 mentions) with one specification that each step of the art-making process should be demonstrated and accompanied by visuals (1 mention). These visuals might also include examples of the final product of the projects (2 mentions) and pictures of “what needs to be done” (1 mention). Providing both written instructions (1 mention) and verbal instructions (1 mention) for students can reinforce this step-by-step way of structuring lessons similar to adaptations suggested by Eubanks (2002). Written translations of relevant information in students’ primary languages could also aid in clarifying course content (2 mentions). Students’ acquisition of content-specific vocabulary could be facilitated by repeating key words and instructions (2 mentions), using graphic organizers (2 mentions) and dictionaries (1 mention), and writing vocabulary on the board (2 mentions) or on cards (1 mention). Roxanne highlighted her desire to “use language that’s friendly to...ESL students or to people who might not speak English as a first language.” All of these adaptations seek to help English language learners meet the teacher-determined objectives for the art-making assignment while learning art vocabulary related to the specific

project. In this way, these adaptations correspond to language educators' advocacy that academic content must remain challenging for all students (Crawford & Krashen, 2007; Kinder, 2002; National Council of Teachers of English, 2008).

Catering to individual student needs and interests. While the step-by-step structuring of course content assumes that all students will engage in a similar process of art-making, other mentions indicated the benefits of creating more opportunities for individualized instruction and open-ended inquiry when working with language learners. Suggested pedagogical adaptations included the use of a variety of instructional methods (5 mentions) in order to reach diverse learners including additional hands-on activities (4 mentions) such as manipulating items to communicate.

Several survey responses included mentions that the majority of English language learners' verbal participation in the art classroom occurs one-on-one with the teacher (5 mentions) (See Appendix B, Figure 30). Suggested pedagogical adaptations included increasing the one-on-one attention teachers give to ELLs (6 mentions). Though this personalized attention could clearly take place during the course of highly structured art-making activities, Beverly explains how individualized instruction emerged as the most desirable pedagogical framework for her dual language art classroom:

If students have a more realistic place to create their own art that was more like a real art studio that a real artist uses if they're an adult, then their experimentations with tools and with media would lead to a deeper understanding of art... I can give you a lesson, and I can say "Everybody, we're going to do landscapes" and I can say that in English and Spanish. But if we all produce the same landscape, with the same pattern and the same process, that's a very limited language [usage]. If, on the other hand, I turn the kids loose with two different kinds of paint and say "Ok, this is the way watercolor behaves; this is the way liquid tempera behaves. Now here is this kind of paper, and this kind of paper. Here are these different lengths of brushes. Tell me what you would like to do. And, after you have put together your painting and designed what you're going to do and done it, then I'm gonna ask you to make an artist statement... and I want you to tell me what you want the person who's looking at the piece of art to know." So, that child is going to be

speaking to the viewer. It's much like a journaling experience...except that it's very natural.

In addition to providing a rich opportunity for language usage, participants specified that choice-based art classrooms allow students to personalize their art-making experiences. Marcia introduces skills or media without stipulating specific projects, allowing her students to explore the different media and develop their own unique body of work. Marcia finds this open-ended inquiry and individualized instruction helps meet the needs and enrich the art classroom experience for her students with special needs. This use of open-ended activities echoes Brunick's (1999) suggestion that non-directed drawing opportunities can provide language learners an outlet to express their feelings and unique perspectives. Participants' goals of using open-ended instruction for English language learners seem to create opportunities for varied and authentic language usage as well as cater to students' different learning styles and developmental needs.

Ensuring the success of all students. Whether providing open-ended provocations or structuring lessons sequentially for the whole class to follow, participants indicated a strong desire to ensure the success of all students in the art classroom and to create environments where students feel comfortable. Survey responses explaining the goals for making pedagogical adaptations included six mentions related to the success of English language learners in the art classroom (Appendix B, Figure 28). Survey responses describing the linguistic diversity of participants' students included two mentions of concern for English language learners' academic "struggle" (See Appendix B, Figures 24, 25, & 26). Survey responses related to participants' collaboration with other teachers included mentions of seeking help for individual students in order to develop students' language skills (4 mentions) and collaborating with general classroom and language education teachers to improve students' performance in the art classroom (5

mentions) (See Appendix B, Figure 22). One survey response included the following explanation: “I ask advice from the classroom teacher when I notice a student having trouble...They know the student much better than I do and can help give me insight on how to reach that child.”

Survey responses and interviews indicate that English language learners’ success in the art classroom relates to feeling comfortable in the classroom environment. Survey responses indicated that students will participate more verbally (6 mentions) and non-verbally (6 mentions) when they feel comfortable in the art classroom (See Appendix B, Figures 30 & 31). Within descriptions of English language learners’ social interactions in the art classroom, survey responses suggested that student confidence (3 mentions) and feeling accepted (6 mentions) increased ELLs’ social interactions (See Appendix B, Figure 32). Additionally, survey responses indicated that English language learners’ social interactions in the art classroom really depended upon each student’s unique personality (10 mentions). It is interesting to recall that the art education literature reviewed in Chapter 2 emphasized the art classroom as a comfort zone for English language learners (Brunick, 1999; Ching, 1993; Eubanks, 2002; Henry, 2007). The data gathered through this survey suggest that participants see English language learners’ comfort level in the art classroom as something which must be fostered rather than assumed. Based on these responses, many of the adaptations described above were, presumably, participants’ attempts to increase ELLs’ comfort levels and success while recognizing students’ individuality.

Two interview participants offered models which they specified increase students’ comfort levels in the art classroom. Marcia has a high percentage of students with diverse special needs, including students who struggle to communicate verbally. Marcia feels the choice-based open studio model provides a safe environment for students, because they can work

at their own pace and “explore at the depths that they feel they can.” Describing a recent class when she invited a non-verbal student to use a digital camera, Marcia explained how she introduces specific media that she feels certain students can use and will be comfortable using. Anna, in contrast, provides students with additional support related to the art-making lesson the whole class is completing. Anna’s student body speaks over a dozen different languages, so she uses adaptations like sentence frames (explained below) to help students meet the language objectives for each lesson. When describing a sentence frame she would use for an art activity to mix paint to make a created color, Anna stated:

I might have a sentence frame to support the kids in actually talking about their artwork. And a sentence frame is basically a sentence that has some words that are missing that the kid must fill in to make the sentence their own. So it might say, “I mixed *blank space* to create *blank space*.” So, in my case, I might say “I mixed yellow, white, and red to make paprika.”...And what I think is really great about this is...there’s no question mark about whether or not the child understood the content objectives or the language objectives...You’re supporting the children with that sentence frame so there’s just a little less anxiety associated with talking at that point. It’s very important. And then...you’ve kinda left it open for the child to kind of make some decisions for themselves. So, there’s support and then there’s freedom all within this one sentence structure, or sentence frame.

Based upon their interviews, both Marcia and Anna are concerned with student choice and student comfort, but they approach their adaptations to meet student needs with varying levels of classroom structure. Anna is particularly concerned with student comfort levels and anxiety as they progress through the developmental stages of language acquisition and develop confidence in communicating with their peers.

Providing opportunity for conversation. Like Anna’s explanation above, other survey responses specified making pedagogical adaptations in order to facilitate students’ conversational language development (3 mentions) (See Appendix B, Figure 28). Some survey responses qualified English language learners’ verbal participation in the art classroom as “silent” (1

mention), “non-participatory” (1 mention), or “independent” (1 mention) (See Appendix B, Figure 30 for all mentions related to ELLs’ verbal participation). Other responses described ELLs’ social interaction as being very little or quiet (3 mentions) (See Appendix B, Figure 32 for all mentions of ELLs’ social interactions) which likely refers to students who are still in the preproduction or “silent” phase of language acquisition (Herrell & Jordan, 2008, p. 2). Survey responses explaining how ELLs choose to communicate non-verbally included the use of writings, drawings, and illustrations (6 mentions) while other ELLs simply observe their classmates (5 mentions) “trying to follow along” (1 mention) (See Appendix B, Figure 31 for all mentions of ELLs’ non-verbal participation). Survey responses detailing how English language learners participate verbally in the art classroom included eight mentions that students use English. However, some of these mentions qualified ELLs’ English usage as “the necessary English” (1 mention), “basic” (1 mention), “broken” (1 mention), or “simplistic requests for help” (1 mention). Therefore, many participants identify the challenge of encouraging English language learners’ verbal participation in classroom activities.

In regard to class discussions (Appendix B, Figure 30), one response suggested using Visual Thinking Strategies, a method of art criticism (Yenawine, 1998), during group discussion to encourage and facilitate the participation of all students. Another response suggested encouraging English language learners to ask questions during class discussions (1 mention). Other responses suggested inviting ELLs’ to demonstrate techniques to the class (2 mentions) which effectively places English language learners in a position of power and perhaps raises their comfort level in communicating verbally with their peers in a large group (Appendix B, Figure 31).

Many survey responses regarding pedagogical adaptations detailed utilizing a variety of grouping techniques in art classes with English language learners (12 mentions) which implies an effort to create conversational opportunities for all students (Figure 7). Anna specified frequently using cooperative learning groups in her classroom, explaining, “I do this [cooperative learning groups] a lot because the majority of classes that I have have a large percentage of ESOL or learning disability students. And I think that one of the best ways to process information is not all listening to it, listening to someone, but also through speaking.” Anna sees her students exit the silent phase of language acquisition when they are “feeling comfortable and having fun interacting with their peers.” During our interview, Anna recounted how her fourth grade students were currently working in groups to create a mural for the school. Researchers who offer strategies designed to help teachers work with English language learners also emphasize the use of cooperative learning groups (Curtin, 2009; Eubanks, 2002; Herrell & Jordan, 2008). Interestingly, Anna is the only participant who specified using this type of grouping. Most likely, her specific knowledge of cooperative learning emerged from her extensive personal research or from professional development workshops sponsored by the “ESOL” teachers at her school.

Many of the grouping activities which encourage ELLs’ social interactions can be divided into teacher-determined (7 mentions) and student-determined groups (6 mentions) (See Appendix B, Figure 32 for all mentions of ELLs’ social interactions). Teacher-determined groups include cooperative learning groups (1 mention), pairing ELLs with helpful buddies (3 mentions), and assigning table groups (2 mentions). When discussing ELLs’ verbal participation in the art classroom, responses included five mentions of pair work but stipulated three times that these pairs related to interpretation (See Appendix B, Figure 30). Student-determined groups

include student-selected collaborations (2 mentions), choice-based media cohorts (2 mentions), and students pairing or discussing on their own (2 mentions). One response stated that some students will self-group occasionally by language or ethnicity but usually refrain from speaking Spanish when a non-Spanish-speaking student joins their group. While teacher-determined grouping could occur in any classroom, student-determined grouping implies that teachers invite socialization and some degree of student-choice in their art classroom. When comparing the two types of grouping techniques, the teacher-determined groups seem most related to increasing student understanding while the student-determined groups seem related to creation and sharing of ideas.

Improving language usage. Other responses suggested pedagogical adaptations directly linked to increasing language learners' English vocabulary acquisition and speaking skills – regardless of a conversational context. Labeling materials and items around the room (2 mentions; Appendix B, Figure 21) as well as extensive use of visual prompts (20 mentions) help students develop print awareness (1 mention) while building vocabulary (Figure 7). In her dual language choice-based classroom, Beverly's mini-studios feature media menus with all of the materials needed to work at that studio labeled with pictures and words. One side of the menu is English, and the other side is in Spanish. Students have access to both languages and can relate the words and pictures to learn the vocabulary in both languages. Beverly explained, "When a child is learning the language innately, if all the language and all of the vocabulary on the wall and all of the books in the room are in that language, the child is much more comfortable learning it." Beverly's comment specifically relates to her dual language setting where all students receive the support they need to succeed in both English and Spanish.

One survey response suggested scanning, projecting, and pointing to text being read in class so that students can read along more easily. The teacher can then call on students to read based on her knowledge of students' ability levels. The teacher can also define words as she goes along to aid students' understanding. This same response emphasized that in the art classroom "text is everywhere!" The participant who wrote this response thoughtfully scaffolds students' interaction with written language while providing an abundance of accessible texts.

Using students' primary language. Four survey responses specifically stated that participants use some Spanish (students' primary language) to communicate with their students (Figure 7) while six responses mentioned that teacher preparation and professional development should include additional training in relevant languages (See Appendix B, Figure 35). Based on these responses, the use of students' primary languages relates both to communicating course content and better connecting with students on a personal level.

Summary of pedagogical adaptations. Survey and interview participants explained their use of a variety of pedagogical adaptations for working with English language learners. Overall, participants made adaptations to ensure the success of all students in the art classroom. Some participants sought to help ELLs by providing greater structure to their lessons or by opening up their classroom activities to cater more to individual student needs and interests. Participants adapted their pedagogy to provide greater opportunity for conversation and to help improve students' language usage. In terms of their own professional development, many participants noted their attempts to use students' primary languages and to improve their own abilities to communicate with English language learners.

The following list summarizes participants' goals for making pedagogical adaptations and the specific adaptations they found useful for meeting these goals:

1. Structuring lessons to convey content more clearly
 - Pre-determined lesson sequence with step-by-step visual and verbal instructions
 - Demonstrations of art-making processes
 - Examples of finished projects
 - Repetition of key words and instructions
 - Use of students' primary language to convey key concepts
 - Vocabulary reinforcement through graphic organizers or other visuals
2. Catering to individual student needs and interests
 - Differentiated instruction
 - One-on-one attention for students
 - Hands-on activities (including manipulatives)
 - Open-ended art projects
 - Artist statements
3. Ensuring the success of all students
 - Choice-based art education (Douglas & Jaquith, 2009)
 - Language objectives for each lesson
 - Sentence frames for conveying ideas and accomplishments
4. Providing opportunity for conversation
 - Visual Thinking Strategies (Yenawine, 1998)
 - Encouragement to ask questions
 - Technique demonstrations by English language learners
 - Cooperative learning groups
 - Pair work (interpreters or helpful buddies)
 - Collaborative art-making (student selected)
5. Improving language usage
 - Labels for materials and environment
 - Visual prompts
 - Projected text and read-along activities

While I anticipated participants would list adaptations such as increased visual prompts, demonstrations, and labeling, I was pleasantly surprised to learn of participants' use of choice-based art-making, scaffolded group discussions, and reflective writing when working with ELLs. These open-ended and personalized art-making experiences – as well as thoughtful group dialogue – likely reflect participants' desire to personalize their instruction for each student while viewing their students as capable learners and artists. When trying new pedagogical adaptations for working with English language learners, I believe art teachers should refrain from diluting the sophistication and authenticity of classroom activities. Adaptations should still challenge

students in a way that makes them feel that their contributions are valued, respected, and unique. I am also encouraged that so many participants articulated the benefit of learning additional languages and valued the staff members at their school who specialize in working with language learners.

Curricular Adaptations for Working with ELLs

When refining my research questions, I qualified adaptations for working with English language learners as either pedagogical or curricular. Much of the art education literature I reviewed centered on pedagogical adaptations for working with ELLs (Eubanks, 2002; Shoemaker, 1998) or presented the art classroom as an environment naturally suited to encourage ELLs' success (Ching, 1993; Eubanks, 2002; Henry, 2007). Absent from much of the art education literature regarding the instruction of English language learners is suggestions of how elementary school art curriculum content could be altered to better engage students who bring linguistic as well as cultural diversity into their classrooms. As indicated in the language arts and literature baseline detailed earlier in this chapter, many survey participants regularly use storybooks, journaling, and creative writing in their classrooms. Are these activities designed to relate to the unique interests of the specific students in the class?

As art teachers, we often have greater leeway in structuring and altering our curriculum, especially in comparison to other disciplines subjected to standardized testing. Therefore, I was quite shocked that by the lack of responses to the specific survey question regarding participants' curricular adaptations (Figure 8). Twelve survey participants stated that they made no curricular adaptations for English language learners or that such adaptations were not applicable to their classrooms. Additionally, four participants wrote in that they preferred not to answer the question. Other survey responses to the question offered additional pedagogical adaptations or

provided general answers that omitted any specific adaptations. Specific curricular adaptations were mentioned only 17 times. Findings in this section are primarily derived from survey responses to questions related to the selection of art exemplars and efforts at teacher collaboration in order to understand how participants have adapted their curriculum to engage English language learners more fully in the art classroom (See Appendix B, Figure 22 & 23). Overall, though some survey responses indicate participants' general interest in personalizing curriculum for students, only one of these suggestions relates to personalizing the curricular content to reflect language learners' unique backgrounds and interests. Though survey responses regarding the selection of art exemplars included six mentions of choosing artwork that is relevant and interesting to students, this thread surprisingly does not carry over into the suggested curricular adaptations for English language learners.

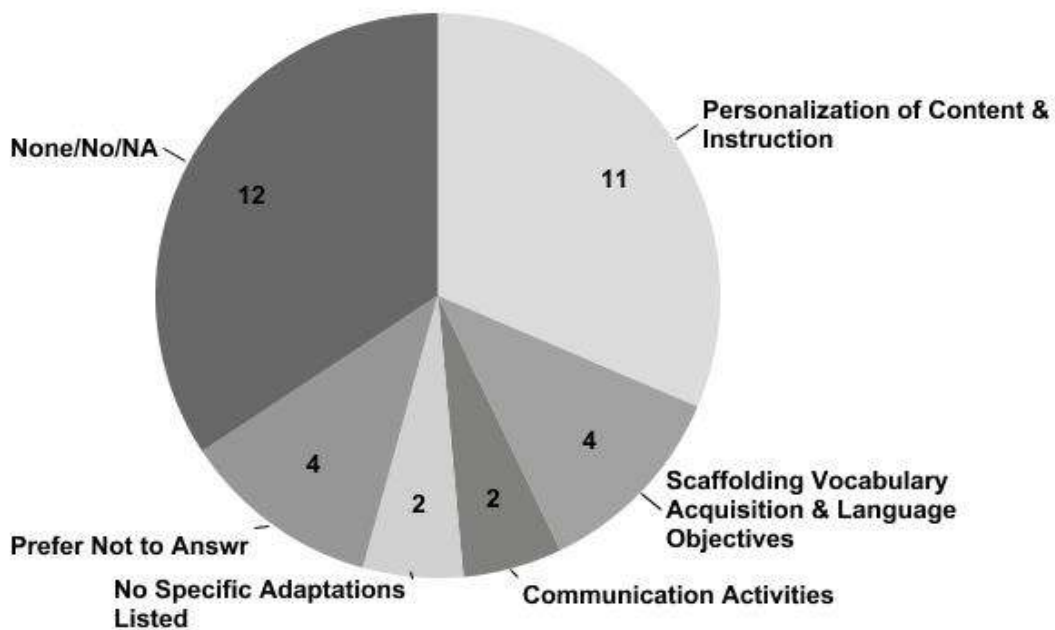


Figure 8. Breakdown of survey participants' responses regarding their curricular adaptations for working with English language learners (by mentions).

Possible obstacles to making curricular adaptations. When explaining the process of selecting art exemplars, some survey responses indicated that curriculum was mandated via state/district curriculum and standards of learning (10 mentions) or textbook selection (4 mentions) which prohibited altering curricular content. Two responses also referenced district-mandated collaboration with other teachers within participants' schools. Both of these collaborative mandates seem designed to improve student literacy. Perhaps the lack of suggested curricular adaptations for working with English language learners relates to participants' lack of freedom to alter their curriculum due to state and district mandates.

Process of selecting curricular content. In contrast to those participants who felt restricted by curricular mandates, several survey responses stipulated that participants overtly select art exemplars that correspond to content they feel is important to teach students (11 mentions). Responses indicated that participants selected exemplars based on their familiarity with the work (1 mention) through internet searches (6 mentions), prints or reproductions (5 mentions), a variety of books and storybooks (4 mentions), digital images (3 mentions), and lesson plans from others (1 mention). One survey response included the following explanation of this selection process:

I find resources that will give visual clues to help them [students] see better what the objective is I am trying to teach them. I look for a variety of examples to make sure I am not just reaching the same pool of children because they all learn in different ways.

Some responses indicated that participants overtly select multicultural exemplars or those exemplars that reflected diversity (6 mentions). As mentioned above, some survey responses indicated that participants select exemplars that are relevant and interesting for students (6 mentions) or reflect students' cultural backgrounds (2 mentions). Based upon her recent teacher preparation, Roxanne anticipates using Big Ideas (Walker, 2001) to incorporate artists from a

variety of cultures – including those with which specific students in her class may identify – to show students how diverse artists examine the same theme and how “it’s interesting to learn about different culture’s besides their [students’] own.” Roxanne also plans to invite students to share elements of their own culture in her future art classroom. Though Anna did not originally alter the art historical content of her lessons based on the demographics of her student body, many students in her class – including English language learners – became excited during certain lessons and contributed their own art historical and visual culture exemplars. Once students introduced this content to Anna, she retained the information for use in her future teaching of that unit and began to recognize the value of including content relevant to students’ lives within her curriculum.

Suggested curricular adaptations for ELLs. Survey responses specifically listing curricular adaptations made for English language learners included adaptations to content-related vocabulary as well as a few activities which should be included in the course curriculum. In regard to vocabulary instruction and selection, survey responses included providing content words in both languages (1 mention) and selecting level-appropriate vocabulary (1 mention). Teachers’ ability to teach vocabulary that relates to students’ English proficiency-level suggests a certain amount of freedom in terms of curricular adaptations. One response emphasized having the class define a vocabulary word by discovering how they can relate to the word. Survey responses also contained suggestions to include additional group discussions (6 mentions) which invite students to share their unique opinions (3 mentions) and can serve as motivation to use their developing language skills (1 mention). Another response detailed introducing reflective journaling as an adaptation for English language learners.

As discussed previously, Anna added language objectives to her content objectives for each lesson. In regard to the sentence frame example explained above, Anna offered that her content objective for that lesson would be “students mix colors to make a created color” while the language objective would be “students explain how they make their color and to name it.” This suggestion is perhaps the most teacher-friendly curricular adaptation described by participants, because teachers would not need to re-invent their classroom structure or their lesson plans in order to add this layer of scaffolding and linguistic assistance for their English language learners. The use of language objectives would likely benefit English-proficient students as well.

When suggesting curricular adaptations for working with English language learners, three participants specifically mentioned creating choice-based classrooms. Beverly’s switch from a traditional art classroom structure to a choice-based classroom based on Teaching for Artistic Behavior (Douglas & Jaquith, 2009) represents an extensive curricular adaptation to meet the needs of her dual language school and students. In her case, Beverly chose to re-think how she taught art and whether or not specific content should drive students’ art-making. A survey response from another participant who teaches in a choice-based art classroom explained that students create a “self-directed curriculum.” In this participant’s classroom, the teacher occasionally selects art historical exemplars that may be relevant and interesting given students’ cultural backgrounds; however, students primarily “select exemplars most important to their work and ideas.” In her choice-based art classroom, Marcia often works intensely with individual students, particularly those with special needs, in an effort to build relationships with that student and to facilitate students’ interactions with their peers.

Summary of curricular adaptations. Though survey responses included only a limited number of possible curricular adaptations, participants' goals for making these curricular adaptations seem to mirror the goals influencing their pedagogical adaptations as well. Participants sought to personalize the art classroom experience for English language learners with some participants opening up their curriculum for more student-choice. These curriculum shifts also included creating additional opportunities for dialogue. As in the selection of pedagogical adaptations, participants make curricular adaptations to encourage the success of each student in their classroom.

The following list summarizes the curricular adaptations participants suggested making when working with English language learners:

1. Improving vocabulary and understanding
 - Content words in English as well as students' primary language
 - Level-appropriate vocabulary
 - Language objectives as well as content objectives for each lesson
2. Personalizing art class curriculum
 - Additional group discussions for students to share their opinions
 - Choice-based art classroom

Summary of Adaptations for Working with ELLs

Survey participants overall seem more hesitant to suggest and make curricular adaptations in response to having linguistically and culturally diverse students. I expected suggested curricular adaptations to include a greater number of references to how students' personal interests and culturally backgrounds influenced participants' selection of course content. However, many participants apparently find state and district mandates and Standards of Learning to be significant enough hurdles (or excuses) to prohibit making changes to art class curriculum. In contrast, the pedagogical means of conveying this content seems highly adaptable but also more prescriptive. Suggestions for pedagogical adaptations for working with English

language learners can easily be found in texts that apply across disciplines (Curtin, 2009; Herrell & Jordan, 2008) while suggestions for curricular adaptations are generally student-dependent and require more teacher investment and decision making in order to determine what is appropriate for a specific art classroom. Despite the listing of a variety of pedagogical and curricular adaptations, survey participants also recognize several challenges to having a linguistically diverse classroom.

Perceived Challenges of Having a Linguistically Diverse Art Classroom

This section seeks to answer the second research question: What are the perceived challenges of having a linguistically diverse art classroom? While survey question number 23 overtly asked participants to list their challenges, responses to several other questions also revealed participants' perceived challenges to working with English language learners. Nine participants refrained from answering survey Question 23 (See Appendix B, Figure 33). Since this is the next to last question, lack of participant response could reflect growing fatigue with answering open-ended questions. However, only five participants chose not to answer the final survey question regarding possible improvements for teacher preparation programs (See Appendix B, Figure 34). Therefore, participants seem either uncertain or uncomfortable articulating the challenges they face when teaching linguistically diverse students or perhaps see no challenges to working with language learners. Of those survey responses that detailed challenges to having linguistically diverse classrooms, the mentions related to challenges within the classroom, challenges within the school, and personal challenges for teachers.

Challenges within the Classroom

The survey responses related to participants' challenges working within linguistically diverse classrooms related primarily to communicating clearly with students and developing students' confidence.

Communication challenges. Survey responses overwhelmingly identified communication with students as participants' greatest challenge to teaching in a linguistically diverse classroom (11 mentions). Of these eleven mentions, seven mentions related to teachers' lack of fluency in students' primary language while two mentions related specifically to students' understanding of classroom communication. One response specifically addressed the diversity of languages spoken by the student body but the low percentages of students speaking each language. The implied challenge may be a lack of resources for better communicating with students and their families in their primary language.

Development of student confidence. Five survey responses listed increasing students' confidence as one of the greatest challenges to working with English language learners. Some of these responses specified the need to establish students' trust (1 mention), boost students' self-esteem (1 mention), and make sure students feel comfortable (1 mention). Meanwhile, another response explained the struggle of having students who seemed uninterested in being in art class. These concerns seem tied to the goal of making adaptations to increase students' comfort levels.

Challenges within the School

Some survey responses detailed challenges related to the instruction of English language learners which seemed beyond the survey participants' control. These challenges, which relate to the greater school environment, include participants' lack of information regarding students'

needs, the lack of administrative level resources, and low school expectations for the art classroom.

Lack of information regarding students' needs. During her interview, Marcia expressed her frustration with the lack of information she received regarding students' special needs. One survey response detailed the participant having no preparation before new students entered the art classroom. The participant described wanting a phonetic pronunciation for students' names as well as background information for each student – especially when students enter the art classroom mid-year. In her interview, Anna echoed this challenge when she stated, “Sometimes, kids are sent to your room and you don't know. You don't know they don't speak English.” Anna suggested that school administration inform teachers of students' background information including whether or not students have even been to school previously and basic greetings in the students' primary languages. According to Anna, an ideal scenario would be having support staff that either spoke or could research each student's primary language and construct a basic vocabulary list in each language for teachers to use in their classroom.

Lack of administrative level resources. Unfortunately, hiring additional, specialized school staff requires additional funding that many districts cannot or choose not to afford. Based on her administrative experience, Beverly elaborated on this challenge:

I think that frequently it's politically not expedient to put huge amounts of resources and money towards children that don't have the greatest amount of political power. And so I think that it's kind of a hard sell when the economic situation gets really tight to be able to say that we have children who would learn so much better if we used some of these techniques.

Beverly continued to explain the difficulty of changing “beat structures” or institutional norms when many officials designing curriculum or making decisions at the district level may have

never belonged to “cultures that were changing or in flux...for some people, it’s a simple lack of exposure.”

Most participants’ survey responses did not overtly critique the perception and treatment of English language learners within their schools nor did survey participants mention greater policy issues related to immigration or bilingual education. However, I feel Beverly raises an excellent point by explaining that the lack of school resources available for teachers working with ELLs could be related to more deeply-rooted issues of power structures or ignorance of social and educational needs. Beverly’s concerns echo topics raised by the critical pedagogists reviewed in Chapter 2 (Combs, 2009; Devine, 1994; Freire & Macedo, 1987; Katz, Scott, & Hadjioannou, 2009) who advocate for the unique needs and rights of students who speak languages other than English before coming to school in the US.

Low school expectations for the art classroom. In addition to the lack of important information and resources for working with language learners in the art classroom, many survey participants face the additional challenge of their colleagues’ low expectations of the art classroom. Within their descriptions of how they collaborated with other teachers to facilitate students’ language development, survey responses included 16 mentions of how the art classroom served as a site of support of other classes’ core content.¹⁶ In contrast, only one response mentioned how student work created during art class later served as a writing prompt in another class. These responses may reflect the struggle to legitimize the art classroom as a

¹⁶Survey participants listed that the art classroom supported language strategies and concepts (7 mentions) through artist statements, journal writing, research, and group discussions as well as through collaborative poetry projects with the English class. One participant mentioned supporting the reading and writing skills that special education teachers were introducing to their students. Participants also mentioned seeking out general classroom teachers to find out how to support the units, themes, and standards the classroom teachers were teaching (7 mentions). One participant recounted selecting multidisciplinary exemplars in order to make these connections.

rigorous site of academic learning. Three of the interview participants voiced their concerns about the perception of the art classroom within their school. Consistently, interview participants revealed their concerns regarding their colleagues' respect for the learning taking place within in the art classroom. Marcia stated that "art's not considered very significant in the school." Marcia continued to explain that special education teachers did not provide prescriptive information regarding students' learning needs; instead the special educators simply hoped the art classroom would give their students a social outlet. Similarly, Beverly explained that at her dual language school, "It's been difficult enough to convince the rest of my teaching colleagues that this [art] really is a serious subject."

Expressing her desire to help students understand and meet objectives, Anna explained that teachers often hold misconceptions about English language learners' participation in the art classroom. Anna stated, "I don't think that there is a lot of thought to art being the place where children are going to strengthen their English speaking skills or comprehension skills." She continued to explain that student artwork, viewed by someone unfamiliar with the assignment, might be viewed as a beautiful success. However, as the art teacher, she knows whether or not the student successfully met the objectives for the lesson. Anna conceives of her responsibility as an art teacher to help students understand what is expected of them in the art classroom and to help students articulate the thought-processes behind their art-making. Anna is disappointed that her colleagues do not recognize the necessity of language usage and the possibility of language development through art classroom activities.

Related to this lack of respect for the art classroom, Marcia also expressed feeling isolated within her school. Being the only art teacher can be very lonely and also challenging when looking for support. Marcia stated that she participates in professional organizations like

the National Art Education Association in order to stay in tune with the bigger picture of art education. Within the survey responses related to participants' collaboration with other teachers, three responses indicated no collaboration with other teachers while three other responses indicated participants rarely collaborate. One response specified that other teachers were "too busy" to collaborate. In this case, low school expectations for students' participation and success in art class may limit the role of the art teacher in working specifically and productively with English language learners.

Participants' Personal Challenges

The remaining challenges to working in linguistically diverse classrooms relate to participants' struggle with the lack of time for adapting their instruction, the lack of preparation for working with ELLs, and the subsequent lack of confidence working with language learners.

Lack of time. Three survey responses specifically listed the greatest challenge to working with English language learners as the lack of time necessary to make appropriate adaptations including breaking down art-making tasks, differentiating instruction, and working with other professionals. Marcia, who strives to provide individualized adaptations for all her students with special needs in particular, seemed particularly concerned with lack of time. She referred to the issue of time 15 different times in her approximately 30-minute interview. Marcia attributed a significant cause of her lack of time to the influence of the No Child Left Behind Act, which has led to her school's focus on increasing test scores above all. Other participants' lack of replies or rushed responses may also reflect the harried nature of many teachers who feel spread thin when asked to participate in meaningful research or to adapt their teaching.

Lack of training and teacher confidence. When discussing their challenges, survey participants' responses conveyed a lack of confidence in regard to their abilities to instruct

English language learners. While one survey participant acknowledged a strong self-confidence in working with ELLs, this participant attributed her confidence to having obtained an additional certification as an English language instructor. Meanwhile, one response explained the greatest challenge to working in linguistically diverse classrooms was having no appropriate training while another explicitly stated “I feel incompetent.” Another response detailed a participant’s lack of confidence by revealing that she often overlooked basic instructional steps when breaking down instructions for students. Beverly also expressed her concern with maintaining a professionally appropriate level of Spanish in her dual language school. As a new teacher without training in working with English language learners, Roxanne stated, “I wish I was educated more in [working with ELLs], and if there’s any other training or workshops that I could attend [about]...how to teach English language learners, then I’d reach out to them, then I definitely would.”

Exposure to different languages and different cultures seemed to increase participants’ confidence. Ann, Marcia, and Roxanne acknowledged the benefit of travelling abroad in preparing them for working with English language learners. Anna explained, “Traveling abroad...gives you a consciousness of what children experience when they come into your room, of having to translate what’s being stated to you all the time. That’s probably been the best non-academic teacher I’ve had.” However, many teachers do not have the opportunity to travel or study abroad.

Summary of Challenges of Linguistically Diverse Classrooms

All teachers routinely juggle many responsibilities. Often, going beyond required duties or being asked to re-evaluate their completion of these duties may seem overwhelming or even impossible. Participants’ desire for more training on how to work with English language learners

and the suggestion by six participants that ELL-related teacher preparation coursework be required implies that pre-service training at the collegiate level is a desirable setting for developing the bulk of these skills. Participants' expression of their lack of time, resources, and collegial support echoes this desire for more teacher training by suggesting that on the job specialized adaptations are often difficult to understand and achieve. Finally, participants desire additional support from school administration in order to better understand the needs of their students. When addressing their challenges to having a linguistically diverse classroom, the participants raise valid concerns that their teacher preparation did not prepare them to work with many students and that educational mandates and lack of resources complicate their attempts to improve their practice. The following section takes a closer look at participants' suggestions for improving art teacher preparation programs in regard to teacher candidates' future instruction of English language learners.

Need for Additional Teacher Training

When asked to list what ways art teacher preparation could be improved to aid teachers in the instruction of linguistically diverse students, survey responses overwhelmingly mentioned having more coursework and time devoted to covering strategies for working with ELLs (18 mentions) with 6 of these mentions specifying that this coursework should be required (See Appendix B, Figure 34) Other suggestions included practicum teaching in linguistically diverse settings (3 mentions), coursework specifically related to teaching language learners through art (3 mentions), and opportunities to work with local ELL or "ESOL" instructors (4 mentions). Some mentions of suggested ELL-related coursework specified including more about the following techniques (1 mention each): non-verbal ways to communicate instructions, electronic translators, demonstration, visual aids, immersion, and researching cultural backgrounds of

schools. All of these suggestions to improve teacher preparation programs suggest participants' recognition that more pre-service training is necessary in order to better adapt their instruction for working with English language learners.

Other suggestions to better prepare teachers for working with English language learners included providing opportunities for cross-curricular projects (1 mention), including coursework in intercultural communication (1 mention), and advocating constructivist and choice-based teaching methods (2 mentions). Each of these participant suggestions suggests the need to look at the art classroom through a broader lens – one that recognizes the interdisciplinary capacity of art-making and the potential for developing communication skills in the art classroom.

In contrast to these thoughtful suggestions for teacher preparation improvement, three survey responses expressed participants' belief that teacher preparation need not be changed, specifying the following:

- “If teachers could understand that art is a potential valuable and basic way of expression.”
- “I believe that the nature of being an art teacher gets to the basis of human nature.”
- “I think it comes naturally to most art teacher[s] to figure out how to connect with these students [ELLs].”

These statements hint at the belief in art as a universal language while suggesting that art teachers also possess a special skill set when working with students who do not yet speak English fluently. While I recognize that art teachers do often think and teach quite differently than other subject teachers, I question our ability as art teachers to innately relate to English language learners. Perhaps I most agree with Roxanne who stated, “I always thought that art, you know, helped to reach out to different students.” Talking about and creating artwork can be a successful means of connecting with students and helping them communicate with their peers.

However, I believe it is naïve and potentially detrimental to students to view art teachers as having a natural skill set for working with language learners that does not require development.

The belief that art educators are innately suited to instructing English language learners has not only practical implications regarding teachers' instruction of linguistically diverse students but also reveals a philosophical mindset that may limit all students' experiences in the art classroom by implying that art is a universal language.

Art as a Visual Language

While I caution against the view of art as a universal language that can be understood by all regardless of personal experiences, cultural backgrounds, and linguistic abilities, I also believe visual expression can function as a form of communication. Throughout the survey responses, I noted participants' references to art as a visual language (8 mentions). As discussed in Chapter 2, some art educators presented art as a visual language that can be understood as a tool of communication by people from all backgrounds (Eubanks, 2003; Feldman, 1982; Henry, 2007; Richardson, 1982). Three survey participants, as noted above, specifically voiced their belief that art teachers – who focus on visual communication – are innately capable of working with language learners.

In my opinion, those survey participants who chose not to adapt their pedagogy or curriculum for ELLs also likely view art as a universal form of expression which precludes the need for adaptation. While answering my research questions, I primarily focused on participants' recognition that English language learners benefit from certain adaptations. However, other survey data indicates a lack of participant awareness of or empathy for ELLs' unique needs and perspectives. In contrast to the data referenced to answer the research questions above, other participants indicated that they perceive no difference between English language

learners and English-proficient students in terms of their participation in the art classroom. Survey responses included variations of the expression “same as other students” to describe ELLs’ non-verbal participation in the art classroom (6 mentions), social interaction in the art classroom, (5 mentions), and verbal participation in the art classroom (1 mention). Two survey responses qualified ELLs’ verbal participation by explaining that the students are immersed in English in the art classroom. While these responses could come from participants who have few ELLs in their classes, these short and all-encompassing answers do not indicate that these participants ever considered the unique needs of language learners in the art classroom. Having fewer language learners in each class may alleviate teachers’ urgency to adapt their pedagogy and curriculum as these students may easily blend into the classroom crowd.

Concerned by these survey responses that implied a belief that visual images have universal interpretations or that all students communicate in the same manner, I asked the four survey participants their opinions on whether or not art is a visual language. The interview participants expressed the following three views: (a) art can be a universal communication tool; (b) art is a one of the multiple languages of children; (c) and art educators facilitate learning how to speak the languages of art.

Art as a Universal Communication Tool

Roxanne believes in art as a universal language. She qualified this statement by explaining that since art is visual, it offers “people from different backgrounds including English language learners and native English speakers” the opportunity to “cross boundaries and communicate with each other, express their thoughts to each other...it breaks boundaries between people who might not be able to communicate regularly.” Throughout her survey and interview responses, Roxanne emphasized communication and community development.

Though she views art as a universal language, Roxanne seems primarily concerned with how visual images can help people communicate when speaking and writing fail to convey the intended meaning. Similarly, Anna stated that “art...reinforces this idea that there are ways of communicating beyond words.”

Art as One of the Multiple Languages of Children

Marcia and Beverly emphasized that art is a visual language which children naturally speak. Marcia explained her perspective:

I think that kids naturally make images...it's the first way that they communicate and...we spend a lot of emphasis on teaching them how to kind of symbolize with words, and, that's important but they just naturally use the arts. They explore it, they are pleased with what they've done and what they say through the arts, and very excited about it.

Citing the Reggio Emilia early childhood teaching philosophy and *The Hundred Languages of Children* (Edwards, Gandini, & Forman, 1998), Marcia explained that she believes children have many languages or ways of communicating including the use of math. Marcia continued to explain that children later criticize their work and struggle with realistic depictions. At that point, children cease to enjoy communicating through the arts as adults reinforce students' critiques of their work. Similarly, Beverly stated, “with children who are free of all of those rules, and all of the constraints that will be put upon them later, they automatically draw and color and they take the blocks and lay them out in the middle of the room and they create worlds.” Beverly explained that students' art-making provides a “window into what the child's thinking” revealing to her that art is a “visual language with so many nuances.” Beverly and Marcia recognize that, though children naturally make images to communicate, each child chooses to communicate differently through their unique visual language.

Learning to Speak the Languages of Art

Three of the interview participants addressed the need to develop skills in speaking the language of art. These skills relate not only to interpreting artwork but also to being a critical consumer of visual culture. Recognizing that art is “such a critical part of human expression,” Beverly expressed her surprise that “other people don’t consider it to be a visual language.” Marcia likewise explained that “we’re bombarded with images all the time” and that “to use art to be able to kind of train to look and to see discriminating[ly] is a good thing.” Anna also recognized that “art is definitely a visual language. Unfortunately, I don’t think that most of the world is prepared to understand that language.” In both of their interviews, Marcia and Anna drew parallels between understanding works of art and interpreting aspects of visual culture which people encounter daily. Both Marcia and Anna indirectly suggest that art teachers can help students learn how to deconstruct visual images in order to better interpret the meanings and, thus, better understand the visual languages of art.

Anna and Marcia also recognize the correlation between visual and verbal expression. Anna emphasized students’ need to narrate their works of art in order to fully express their intentions when employing a visual language. Similarly, Marcia explains to her students “that art is not just a project that you make but something that should say something and you should be able to talk about it.” In both cases, the participants recognize that visual expression may be misunderstood by others and that verbal explanations can assist in better conveying the intended meaning. However, Marcia’s comment also suggests her encouragement that students make art with a message rather than simply creating a formulaic image.

Summary of Art as a Visual Language

If teachers view art as a universal visual language, then pedagogical and curricular adaptations to better engage English language learners may seem unnecessary or overly complicated. However, the interview participants emphasized the need for students to develop their ability to interpret visual images and to verbally communicate their own unique visual perspectives. The recognition of art-making as a valid facet of personal communication validates the art classroom as a valuable learning site for all students – particularly language learners. On the other hand, art educators must recognize that students each have a unique manner of visual expression and help students learn to discern the nuances of the visual languages of art. As art educators, we have the opportunity to help students cultivate an awareness of communicative differences – both visual and verbal – and to create an environment where diverse creative expressions are welcomed.

Conclusion

The findings of this study raise concerns over art educators' recognition for the need to make pedagogical and curricular adaptations to their teaching when working with English language learners. While some participants made no adaptations for the ELLs in their classroom, this lack of adaptation could be attributed to a belief that art is a universal form of communication. Participants who do make pedagogical and curricular adaptations seek to ensure the success of all students in the art classroom and make a variety of adaptations related to:

- structuring lessons to convey content more clearly;
- selecting ability-appropriate vocabulary and using students' primary languages;
- improving students' language usage and including language objectives for lessons;
- providing opportunities for conversation and social interaction; and

- catering to individual student needs and interests.

While participants specified numerous adaptations for working with English languages learners, participants also articulated the following challenges to teaching in linguistically diverse classrooms:

- struggles to communicate with students and develop student confidence;
- lack of information regarding students' needs;
- lack of administrative level resources;
- low school expectations of the art classroom, and
- lack of time, training, and teacher confidence.

Though the findings of this survey relate to unique teaching situations across the United States, these suggested adaptations could serve as inspiration for art teachers seeking to better understand and respond to the needs of their linguistically and culturally diverse students.

Meanwhile, participants' perceived challenges of teaching in linguistically diverse art classrooms raise broader concerns for art teacher preparation programs including practical instruction of language learners, philosophical exploration of art as a visual language, and advocacy for the role of the art classroom in developing students' language skills.

Chapter 5

Conclusions

Focusing primarily on the perspectives of elementary school art educators, the findings of this study raise concerns regarding the preparation and support art educators receive in their instruction of English language learners. However, the findings also show that many elementary art educators who answered this survey seek additional professional development to work better with ELLs and have consequently made a variety of pedagogical and curricular adaptations in their classrooms. At the same time, participant responses revealed that some art educators may overlook the needs of linguistically and culturally diverse students due to multiple reasons including a lack of exposure to these student populations during teacher preparation, the belief that art is a universal form of communication, or inhibitions to change due to administrative mandates and low expectations of the art classroom as a site of valuable language acquisition.

Significance of the Study

While studies regarding the instruction of English language learners in the art classroom have increased in recent years, this growing body of research has yet to address the diverse ways in which elementary art educators regularly adapt their instruction to meet the needs of their linguistically diverse students. Prior research examining the relationship between ELLs and art-making focused on short-term programs, specialized settings, or localized cohorts of art teachers

(Brunick, 1999; Ching, 1993; Eubanks, 2002; Henry, 2007; Rivin, 1996; Shoemaker, 1998).¹⁷

While those studies do offer very useful and valid suggestions for pedagogical adaptations, the research conducted by those authors primarily focused on the instruction of English language learners outside the context of a traditional elementary school art classroom. My study, in contrast, invited elementary art educators from across the country to present the array of choices they regularly make to engage linguistically diverse students in daily activities. In this way, I intended this study to serve as an opportunity to explore the ‘norm’ of contemporary art education practices in regard to elementary art educators’ instruction of English language learners in the art classroom.

In contrast to the previous studies in the field of art education which found art class to be a natural comfort-zone for language learners (Brunick, 1999; Ching, 1993; Eubanks, 2002), this study revealed that many art teachers diligently work to develop students’ comfort levels in the art classroom – meaning students’ comfort and success are not guaranteed. Moreover, many contemporary art educators – including those surveyed in this study – integrate extensive reading, writing, and speaking activities into the art classroom. Though English language learners, who often struggle with verbal and written language, attend art class alongside native English speaking students, prior research does not focus on the means by which ELLs succeed in the

¹⁷ I would like to note that during the course of writing up the findings of this study, Macintyre Latta and Chan (2011) released a new text which examines the instruction of English language learners across the arts. Though this text provides relevant and exciting theoretical connections between the arts and language acquisition, the section related specifically to visual arts instruction focuses on lessons and adaptations for the secondary art classroom. I hope the recent publication of this book indicates a shift from quick-fix pedagogical adaptations for working with English language learners in the art classroom to encouraging a more philosophical examination of the powerful way in which engaging with visual arts can improve students’ verbal expression and understanding. This book could be a useful addition to art teacher training curriculum as it combines philosophies of art education with practical instruction through the specific framework of working with ELLs.

current art education environment. Through this study, I found that elementary art educators scaffold students' participation in language arts activities by setting language objectives, providing sentence frames, and supporting students' reading and writing by cultivating familiarity with students' unique ability-levels. Through these adaptations and others, several elementary art educators in this study advocated for the art classroom as a site for language acquisition and development while maintaining a challenging art curriculum for all students.

Perhaps the most interesting and significant finding of this study is the intentional selection of choice-based art-making as a model (Douglas & Jaquith, 2009) for working with English language learners in the art classroom. While two survey participants mentioned their own choice-based art classroom, Beverly and Marcia provided specific examples in their interviews as to how a choice-based model can benefit English language learners in the art classroom. Even though the use of choice-based learning did not receive an overwhelming number of mentions, I find this model of teaching stands out in significance due to its role in creating a context for authentic language acquisition and fostering a classroom in which the unique needs of all students shape the art-making experience. In the ELL-support literature available for both art educators and general classroom teachers (Curtin, 2009; Herrell & Jordan, 2008), I found that most adaptations revolved around pedagogical changes to simply, clarify, and more tightly structure pre-existing curriculum. Prior to this study, I anticipated some participants may mention restructuring their curriculum to include a greater diversity of art historical exemplars including examples from students' cultural backgrounds – much like previous studies (Rivin, 1996; Shoemaker, 1998). However, I was genuinely surprised to find at least four participants taught in art classrooms where students choose their art-making pursuits to independently develop a body of work and that these participants viewed this setting as an ideal

situation for language learners. While choice-based art classes could seem like a setting where students do whatever they want without accountability or standards, these participants detailed working individually with students to develop skills in diverse media, pursue independent research, challenge their conceptual and technical abilities, develop portfolios, and write reflectively about their work. These activities not only reflect contemporary art education trends to increase the personalization and meaningfulness of students' art-making but also correlate to many pedagogical adaptations for English language learners designed to increase opportunities for authentic language usage through conversational dialogue and personally relevant content.

In short, this study facilitated my personal connections between the content of my graduate studies which emphasized contemporary education models such as visual culture studies (Freedman & Stuhr, 2004), Big Ideas (Walker, 2001), and Reggio-inspired guided inquiry projects (Edwards, Gandini, & Forman, 1998) with my personal research interests regarding language acquisition through art-making. I am encouraged to find that some participants believe personalized, open-ended art activities coupled with meaningful dialogue can facilitate students' language acquisition. While I anticipated the findings of this study would be useful for many art educators whose teacher preparation programs did not include ELL-related coursework, I must admit that I did not anticipate this study would completely redirect my personal pedagogy regarding the instruction of linguistically diverse students. Whether I teach in the United States or abroad, I will likely instruct students from a variety of linguistic and cultural backgrounds. In fact, like some of the participants in this study, I am inclined to seek out schools with such diverse student populations. In preparation for my next art teaching position, I intend to further explore establishing a choice-based art classroom while specifically

searching for language acquisition texts which advocate for student-choice and student-centered instruction.

Findings

The findings of this study reveal that many art educators who participated in this study received no training in how to work with English language learners. Most of these teachers speak only English, and many struggle to communicate with students and their families who recently immigrated to the U.S. Despite this lack of preparation and language proficiency, the majority of the elementary art educators surveyed work with many English language learners regularly. For those art educators who recognize the need to adapt their instruction to meet the needs of language learners, lack of teacher training often makes working with ELLs appear a daunting task. Based upon the findings, teacher preparation courses should include coursework and practicum teaching with student populations who are not yet fluent in English. Based on participant responses as well as my own personal experiences, I would also advocate that teacher preparation programs include an international component which places a future teacher in the role of language learner and cultural minority in order to cultivate empathy, understanding, and communication skills for working with English language learners.

Despite a lack of preparation, many elementary art educators in this study recognized the need to adapt their instruction and course content due to the linguistic and cultural diversity of their student body. Survey participants' suggested adaptations for working with ELLs ranged widely from tightly sequencing the instruction of pre-existing curriculum to establishing choice-based art classrooms which invite students to participate according to their personal interests and abilities. Suggested pedagogical and curricular adaptations which could be adapted for use in a variety of art classrooms include:

- regularly utilizing a variety of grouping activities to encourage authentic dialogue;
- scaffolding class discussions through projected texts, question prompts, additional visuals, or Visual Thinking Strategies (Yenawine, 1998);
- employing students' primary language whenever possible through peer translators, dictionaries, or written translations;
- labeling items around the room with text and images to increase comprehension and vocabulary skills;
- providing opportunities for students to write reflectively about their art-making; and
- researching art exemplars that appeal to and stimulate the creativity of the specific students in the class.

According to participants, these pedagogical and curricular adaptations can be effective across the elementary grade levels. However, as many participants recognized, all students are individuals with unique personalities, emotional needs, and developmental levels. While these adaptations may not work for all students, elementary art teachers should be encouraged to try a variety of strategies in order to find a combination that works for their particular classroom and their unique students.

Though the participant numbers of this study limit the generalizability of the findings, this study does raise concerns that many elementary art teachers in this study feel isolated within their schools and believe their colleagues do not respect the art classroom as an important site of learning for all students. Participants explained that school staff often view art class as an automatic place of success for English language learners – a belief which inadvertently reveals the belief that art class is not a serious content area. Some participants seemed to agree with this perception by responding that ELLs participate in the art classroom just like everyone else, requiring no adaptations since art class emphasizes visual communication. Additionally, this study confirms that many contemporary art educators who answered this survey emphasize

creating opportunities for all students to read and write in the art classroom. While many teachers likely view this integration of language arts as a meaningful and personalized experience for students, my interpretation of the findings of this study is that many elementary art educators support language arts as well as other disciplines in the art classroom in order to validate the inclusion of art in elementary school curriculum. This inclusion of reading and writing in the art classroom can support students' language acquisition but simply adding on language arts enrichment activities for the sake of portraying the art classroom as a valuable content area fails to recognize art as a subject that already provides opportunities for fostering students' linguistic development.

Limitations of the Research

Above all, the small number of participants in this study limits the results of the findings. As in all surveys, many elementary art educators invited to participate in the survey did not respond to the invitation (Fink, 1995). Also, by contacting only teachers who belong to the NAEA Elementary Division Ning or subscribe to the NAEA Elementary Division Listserv, I drew from a limited pool of educators that may not be representative of the nation's art educators as a whole. Many art educators who work with English language learners may not be members of NAEA, and this survey would not necessarily represent their instructional practices. General classroom teachers who work with English language learners may also provide frequent art instruction but are likely not members of NAEA. Therefore, this study could be improved by directly contacting a larger number of art educators and general classroom teachers who frequently work with high populations of English language learners. However, access to such information is limited, making identifying and contacting these schools and teachers difficult.

Another limitation to the study relates to the nature of conducting survey research in that, without direct contact with the participants, questions may be misunderstood, answered quickly without thoughtful reflection, or misrepresentative of actual classroom practices (Alreck & Settle, 2004; Creswell, 2008). Specifically, I found that multiple participants found the survey question regarding the diversity of their student body to be confusing. Some participants interpreted the question as referring to individual student's linguistic diversity while others referenced the linguistic diversity of their student body as a whole. Additionally, the question regarding the participants' amount of ELL-related coursework left the qualification of this coursework as "minimal," "moderate," or "significant" to the discretion of the individual participants. While all 29 survey participants answered the same questions, many of the participants may have read the questions with a different interpretation of what I was looking for in their answers. Also, given the length of time it takes to respond to open-ended survey questions, the length of the survey may have caused certain participants to quit the survey early or provide rushed answers to open-ended questions.

Finally, not all school populations are the same, and all students are unique learners. Therefore, techniques that work in some classrooms may fail in others. Also, students' linguistic and cultural backgrounds are diverse, and some adaptations may be more effective with specific populations and less effective with others. Every teacher is also unique, and some teachers' suggested adaptations will not be transferable due to philosophical, pedagogical, and personality differences.

Suggestions for Further Research

Further survey research related to this study could expanded the scope of the participant population by specifically inviting the perspectives of art teachers who work with significant

numbers of English language learners but may not be members of NAEA or the Elementary Division Ning. Improvements to the survey protocol and questions could be made at this time such as shortening the length of the survey and clarifying the wording of problematic questions. A future version of this survey could take the form of hardcopy survey distributed through the mail with the option of completing the survey online. I feel that distributing the survey in this way might let the new sampling of participants know they were specifically selected because of their school demographics and perhaps encourage a greater number of responses. In addition to looking at elementary art educators across the U.S., further survey research could invite the perspectives of teachers working in international schools around the world who regularly work with very culturally and linguistically diverse student populations. Though I was able to obtain answers to my research questions through this version of the study, the results might be different if the number of survey participants could be increased.

Related research could also include slightly altering this survey to be distributed to museum educators to find out ways museums have altered their educational programs to invite in and work with linguistically diverse populations. At the recent NAEA 2011 convention, I was intrigued to find that, aside from my own presentations, the other presenters specifically addressing the instruction of language learners belonged to the Museum Education Division. These museum educators explained thoughtful and diverse new programs that included collaborative service-learning components as well as traditional museum education courses, which valued art making and art criticism as tools of language acquisition. Future research could benefit from combining the efforts of both museum educators and those art educators working in K – 12 schools.

Further research could examine the role of English language learners in the art classroom. How do English language learners perceive art class? What do they enjoy about art class? What are their struggles? This research could take the form of a comparative case study of classrooms selected for their large percentage of students considered English language learners or for the art teachers' personal interest in working with linguistically diverse students. Combining both teacher and student perspectives could lead to the development of a curriculum that considers students' linguistic and cultural diversity as a primary concern in the art classroom. While I had originally thought such a curriculum would necessitate specific content-rich lessons, I am now aware that choice-based art classrooms could re-direct the framework of future studies. Studying a choice-based classroom could lead to a curriculum that includes ways to establish and maintain diverse classroom mini-studios, to develop stimulating daily prompts, and to build upon students' interests to adapt individual and group activities that encourage the development of student's verbal and written language skills. Comparing multiple art classrooms could yield rewarding insights into the diverse art education settings which appeal to and engage English language learners. Language instructors' reliance on the use of visual elements to develop students' language skills invites further exploration of how the art classroom can explicitly enhance students' language acquisition.

Finally, other related research could include examining university teacher preparation programs to find how they prepare teachers to work with culturally and linguistically diverse students and what program changes seem particularly beneficial. One survey participant specifically mentioned the program at Moore College of Art and Design in Philadelphia which offers a Master of Art Education degree with an emphasis on special populations. At the recent NAEA annual convention, I also learned that Kutztown University of Pennsylvania recently

restructured their Art Education Department's required courses to include three hours of ELL-related coursework in addition to nine hours of coursework related to working with other student populations with special needs (M. Stewart, personal communication, March 20, 2011). The diverse efforts of university departments of Art Education to prepare student teachers for working with ELLs deserve further investigation if only to aid other universities in creating similar opportunities. Future research might also examine the professional development offered or required by school districts with high percentages of English language learners. Several attendees at my NAEA presentations suggested certain school districts that offer a variety of professional development opportunities to meet the district-mandated standards of working with linguistically and culturally diverse students. Comparing the efforts of both higher education teacher preparation programs and district-supported professional development courses could yield beneficial results for the development of future programs in both of these categories. Survey participants' desire for further preparation to work with English language learners suggests this area of research could be very helpful for the field of art education.

Concluding Thoughts

At the conclusion of this study, I find myself encouraged that art educators are interested to discuss how they work with linguistically diverse students. I still believe that the art classroom can serve as a valuable site of language acquisition for all students, but many art educators in this study do not yet recognize the power they hold as teachers of English language learners. Adaptations that maintain the status quo of the art classroom fail to recognize how slight shifts in instructional content and classroom activities could significantly increase the role of the art classroom in developing students' language skills. Additionally, the belief that art is a universal language ignores how cultural background can lead to different interpretations of visual

symbols and narratives. The assumption that visual images are not lost in translation could reflect an educational mindset that is still insensitive to cultural diversity. Art educators must be aware that not every student speaks the same language of art and that language is a tool of power. Due to lack of research and teacher preparation in these areas, many art educators may be unaware of their role in shaping students' language learning.

At the same time, the adaptations suggested by participants in this study do offer starting points for art educators who seek to improve their instruction of English language learners. The first step to improving our teaching practice is to recognize the need for change. Hopefully, teacher preparation programs will begin to integrate more effective coursework regarding the instruction of linguistically and culturally diverse students in the art classroom. Meanwhile, professional development organizations such as the National Art Education Association provide opportunities for art educators like myself to continue the learning process by connecting with colleagues from across the country, gaining insight into other teaching strategies, and reminding ourselves that we are not alone in our belief that the art classroom can be a valuable learning environment for all students.

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Appendix A

Survey Questions

This appendix includes the 24 questions in the order listed in the online survey. All questions were forced-answer questions – participants had to select some answer in order to proceed with the survey. The first 12 questions were multiple choice. Some questions allowed for multiple responses (“check all that apply”) while others required a single response, as noted below. All multiple choice questions included a “prefer not to answer” response. For the remaining 12 questions, the survey included a space for a short response. Participants had to provide some answer in order to progress in the survey but were invited to write in “prefer not to answer” when applicable.

Multiple Choice Questions

1. Where do you currently teach? (Single Response; Drop down menu listed choices by state)
2. How long have you been teaching at your current school? (Single Response; Drop down menu listed choices in three year ranges up to 20 years and “Over 20 years” response)
3. What grade levels do you currently teach? (Multiple Responses; Button choices listed choices by grade level Pre-K – 12th)
4. How long have you been teaching? (Single Response; Drop down menu listed choices in three year ranges up to 20 years and “Over 20 years” response)
5. Are you male or female? (Single Response; Button choices of male or female)
6. At what degree levels have you studied art education? (Multiple Responses: Button choices included Undergraduate, Graduate, Doctoral, and a “None of These Options” choice)

7. Did your teacher training include coursework related to the instruction of English language learners (ELL)? [Note: Schools may have referred to this coursework as the instruction of ESL (English as a Second Language) students or LEP (Limited English Proficiency) students] (Single Response; Drop down menu listed Yes and No choices with the Yes answers qualified as “minimal,” “moderate,” or “significant”)
8. How large is your school’s student body? (Single Response; Drop down menu listed choices in 100 student ranges up to 2000 with an option of “Over 2000 students”)
9. What percentage of students speaks a language other than English at home? (Single Response; Drop down menu listed choices in 10% ranges up to the “Over 80%” response)
10. What languages are spoken by your school’s student body? (Multiple Responses; Button choices listed the following languages which were taken from the 2000 US Census Brief’s list of the “top 20 languages spoken at home by the population five years and over”: Arabic, Armenian, Chinese – Cantonese, Chinese – Mandarin, English, French, German, Greek, Gujarati, Hindi, Italian, Japanese, Korean, Persian, Polish, Portuguese, Spanish, Russian, Tagalog, Urdu, Vietnamese. Participants could also write in a different answer in the spot for “Other”)
11. What are the languages you feel comfortable speaking? (Multiple Responses; Button choices listed the following languages which were taken from the 2000 US Census Brief’s list of the “top 20 languages spoken at home by the population five years and over”: Arabic, Armenian, Chinese – Cantonese, Chinese – Mandarin, English, French, German, Greek, Gujarati, Hindi, Italian, Japanese, Korean, Persian, Polish, Portuguese, Spanish, Russian, Tagalog, Urdu, Vietnamese. Participants could also write in a different answer in the spot for “Other”)
12. What are the predominate language spoken by teachers and other school staff? (Multiple Responses; Button choices listed the following languages which were taken from the 2000 US Census Brief’s list of the “top 20 languages spoken at home by the population five years and over”: Arabic, Armenian, Chinese – Cantonese, Chinese – Mandarin, English, French, German, Greek, Gujarati, Hindi, Italian, Japanese, Korean, Persian, Polish, Portuguese, Spanish, Russian, Tagalog, Urdu, Vietnamese. Participants could also write in a different answer in the spot for “Other”)

Short Answer Questions

13. How do you use literature and language arts in your art classroom?
14. In what ways do you work with other teachers in your school in regard to students’ verbal and written language development?
15. How do you select the art exemplars and art historical examples that you show students in your classroom?

16. Do you consider the students you teach to be linguistically diverse? Why or why not?
17. What pedagogical adaptations have you tried in your instruction of English language learners?
18. What were some of the specific goals for English language learners that motivated your changes in teaching strategies?
19. Please describe any curriculum changes you have made to improve your instruction of English language learners in the art classroom.
20. Please describe how English language learners participate verbally in your art classroom.
21. Please describe how English language learners participate non-verbally in your art classroom.
22. Please describe the social interactions of English language learners in your art classroom.
23. What are your greatest challenges in regard to teaching a linguistically diverse student body?
24. In what ways do you think art teacher preparation programs could be improved to aid teachers in the instruction of linguistically diverse students?

Appendix B

Survey Responses

This appendix includes data charts of the responses for each survey question as completed by the 29 survey participants. I charted the responses to the quantitative, multiple choice questions (Questions 1 – 12) according to the number of participants who selected a given multiple choice answer. For the majority of these charts, I omitted listing the multiple choice options that participants did not select. For example, in the chart of Question 1 responses, I only listed the states represented by the participants rather than listing all fifty states on the chart.

While the quantitative data lent itself to traditional bar graphs and pie charts, the qualitative data required more non-traditional presentation based on my coding of the data. For the qualitative data responses (Questions 13 – 24), I charted the data according to the codes I determined within each question. In these tables, I grouped the data by the mentions which fell within one of the major themes. While I did identify the number of participants who provided no data (“prefer not to respond,” etc.), the numbers listed on the charts for the coded, qualitative data responses refer to the number of mentions of that topic rather than the number of participants. As explained in Chapters 3 and 4, some participants mentioned a topic more than once within their response. Believing this repetition to be significant, I counted these mentions individually.

Charts of Survey Responses

Question 1: Where do you currently teach?

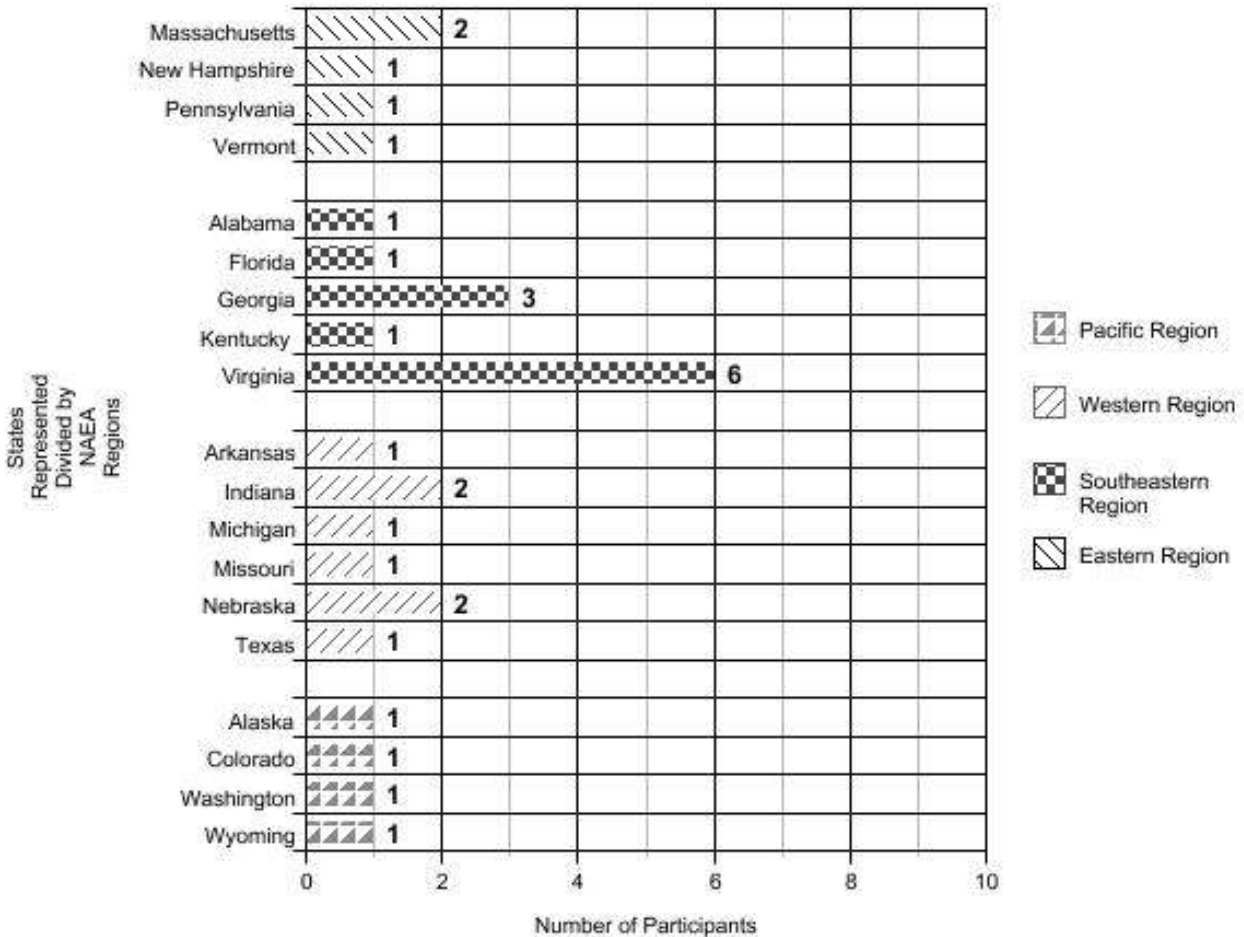


Figure 9. Survey participants' teaching location. Though all 50 states were given as an option and write-in answers allowed, participants represented only 19 different states. In this chart, I divided the states where the survey participants reported teaching according to the regional divisions recognized by the National Art Education Association as this information may be useful to the Elementary Division and State Associations of the NAEA.

Question 2: How long have you been teaching at your current school?

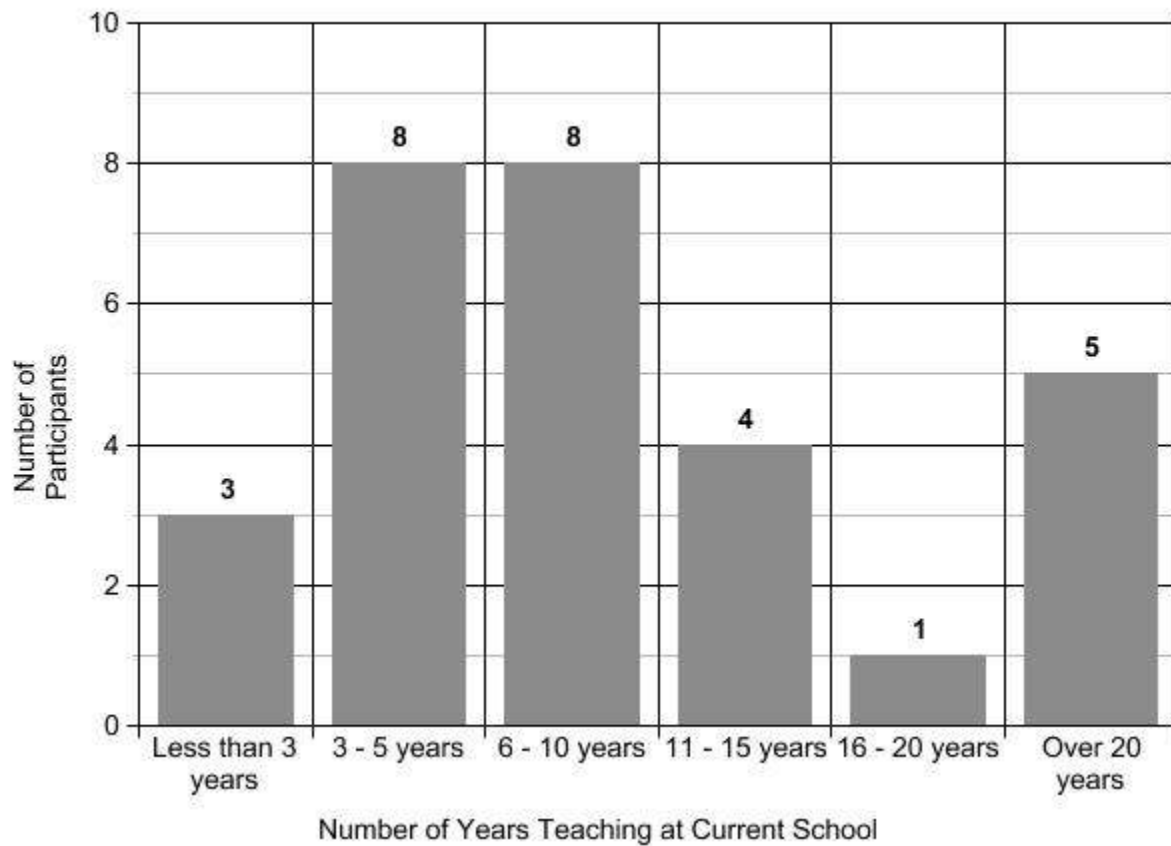


Figure 10. Survey participants' number of years teaching at current school.

Question 3: What grade levels do you currently teach?

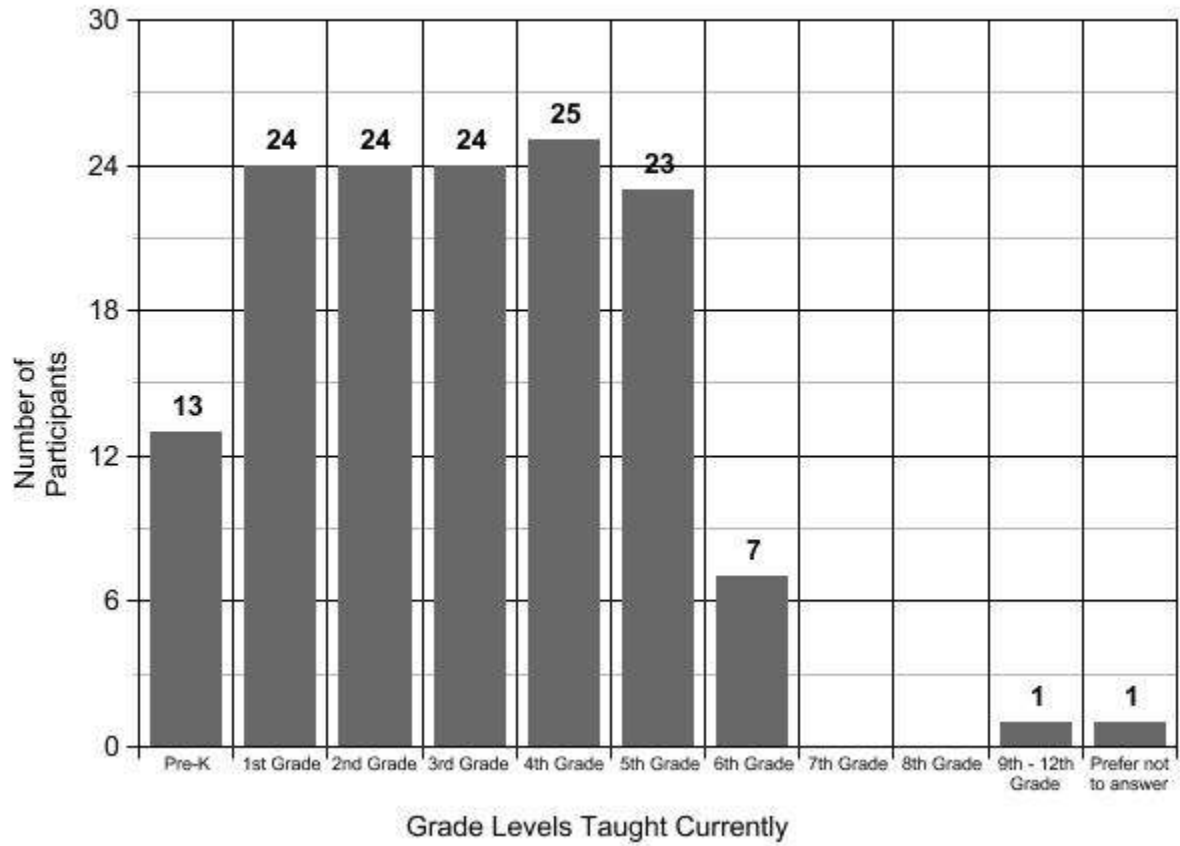


Figure 11. Grade levels currently taught by survey participants.

Question 4: How long have you been teaching?

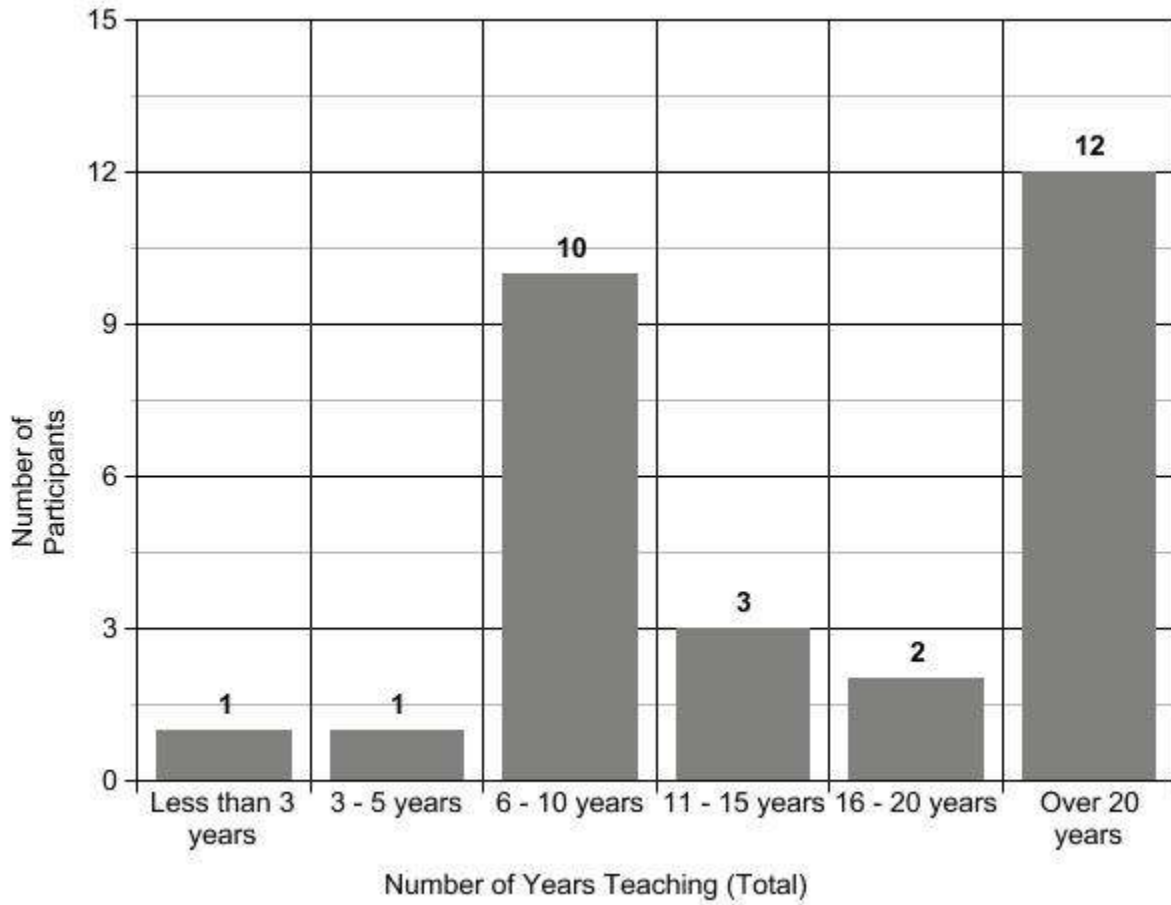


Figure 12. Survey participants' years of teaching experience.

Question 5: Are you male or female?

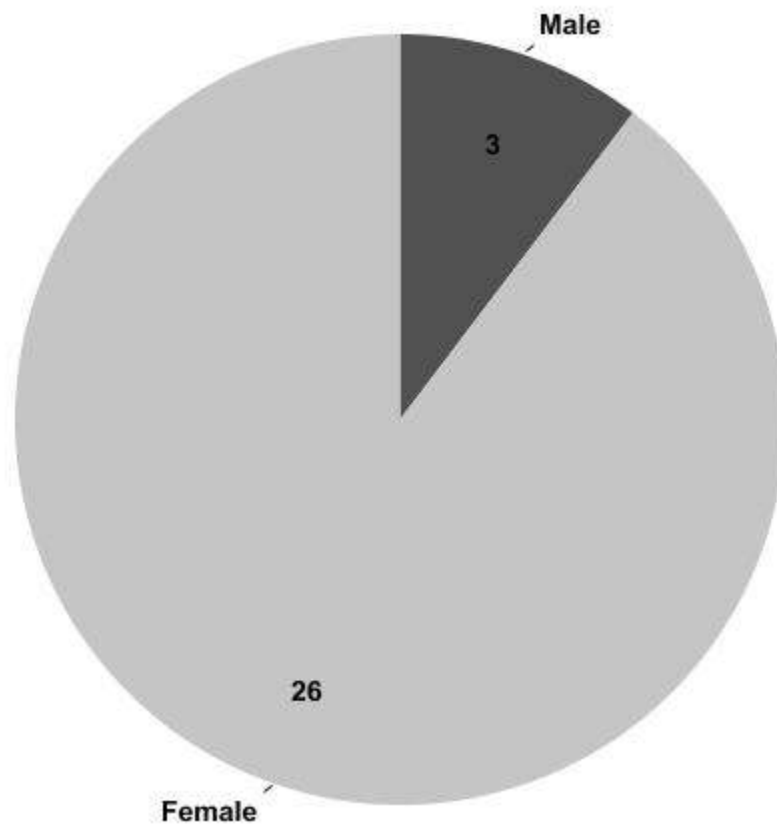


Figure 13. Number of male and female survey participants.

Question 6: At what degree levels have you studied art education?

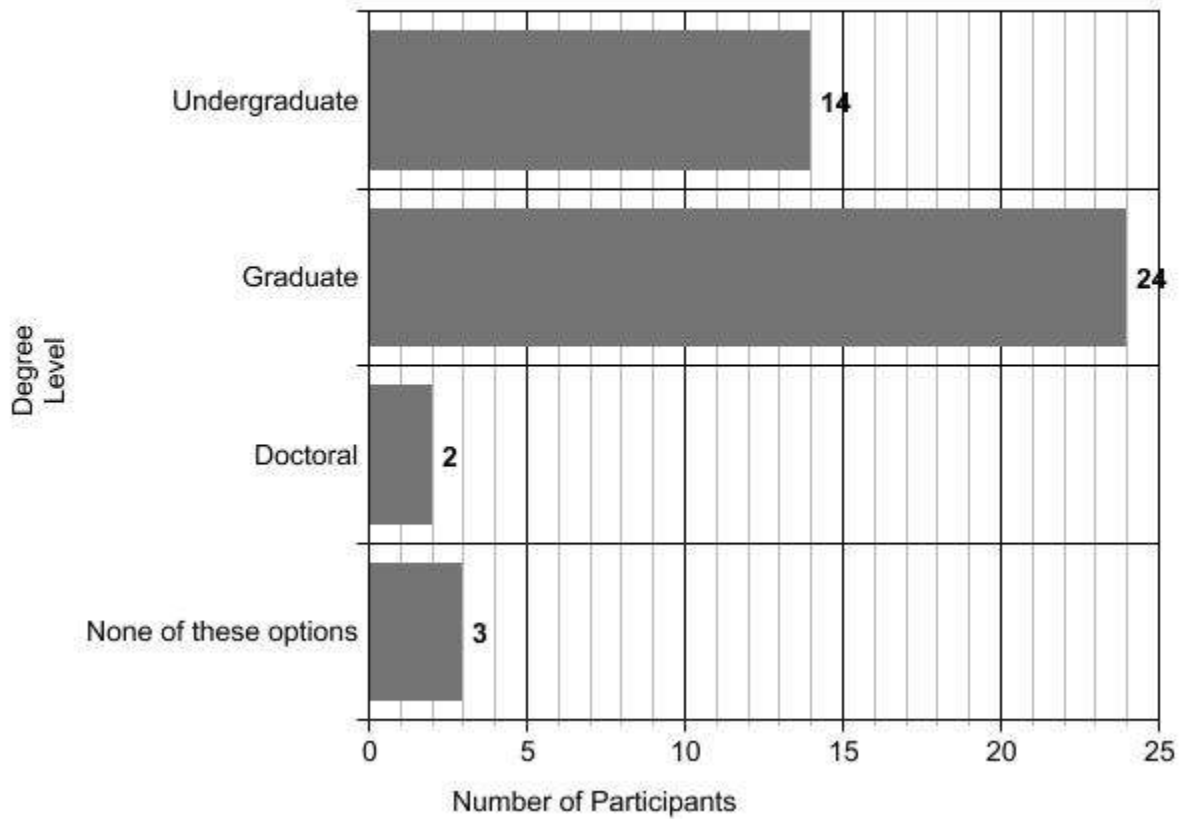


Figure 14. Survey participants' degrees in Art Education. Since this choice allowed for multiple responses, some participants indicated holding multiple degrees in Art Education. Seven participants hold both undergraduate and graduate degrees in Art Education. The two participants with doctoral degrees in Art Education hold graduate level degrees in Art Education.

Question 7: Did your teacher training include coursework related to the instruction of English language learners (ELL)? [Note: Schools may have referred to this coursework as the instruction of ESL (English as a Second Language) students or LEP (Limited English Proficiency) students]

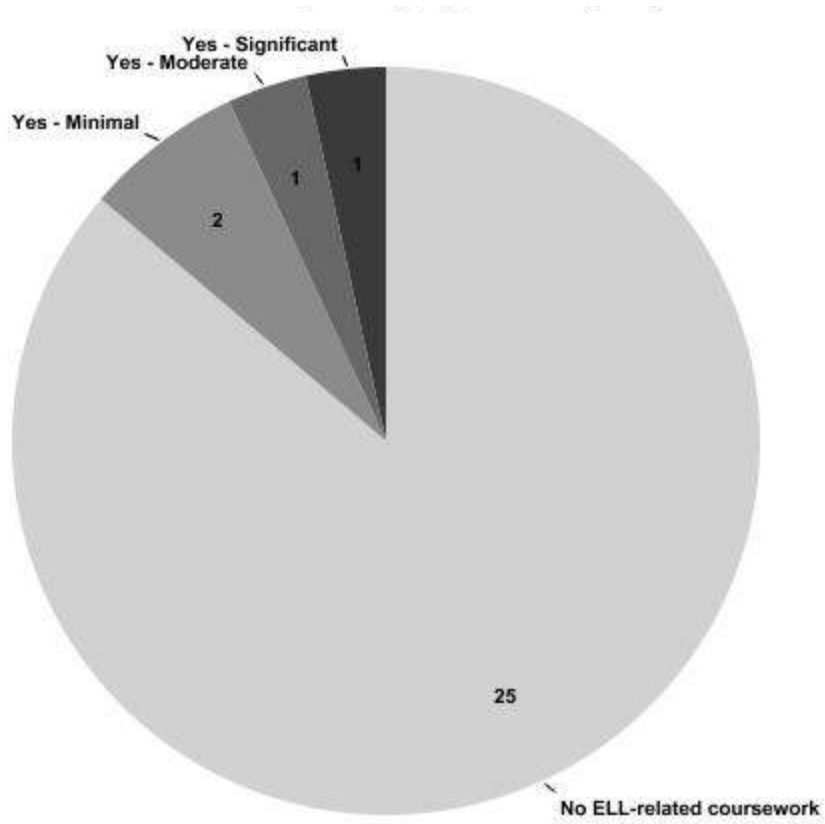


Figure 15. Percentages of survey participants whose teacher preparation included ELL-related coursework.

Question 8: How large is your school's student body?

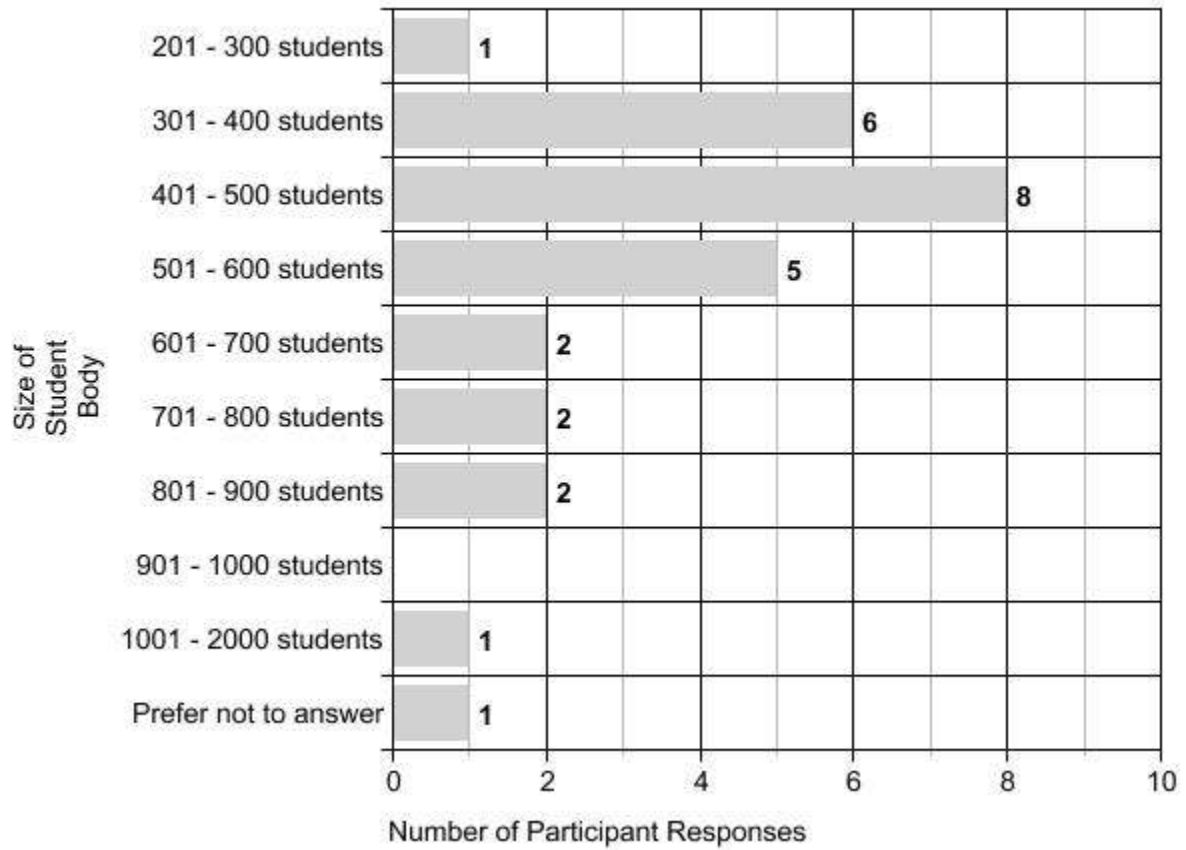


Figure 16. Number of students at survey participants' schools.

Question 9: What percentage of students speaks a language other than English at home?

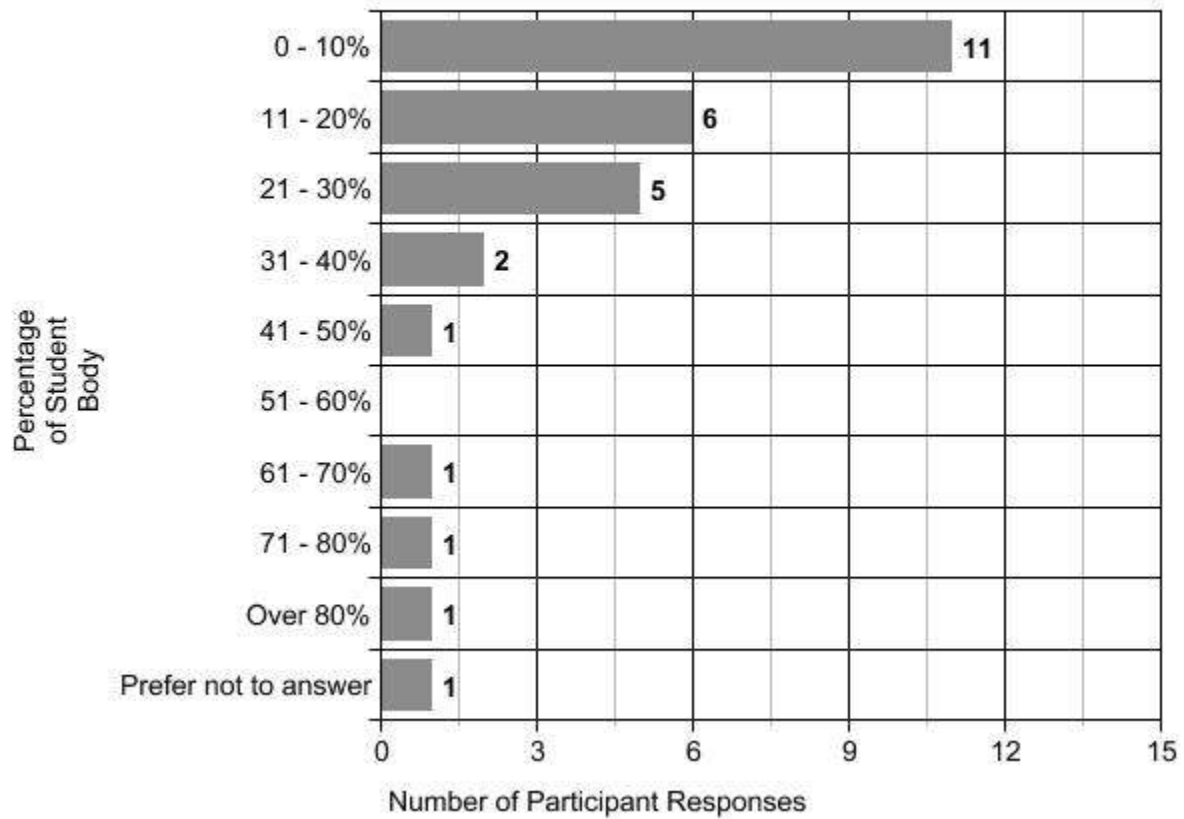


Figure 17. Percentages of students at survey participants' schools that speaks a language other than English at home.

Question 10: What languages are spoken by your school's student body?

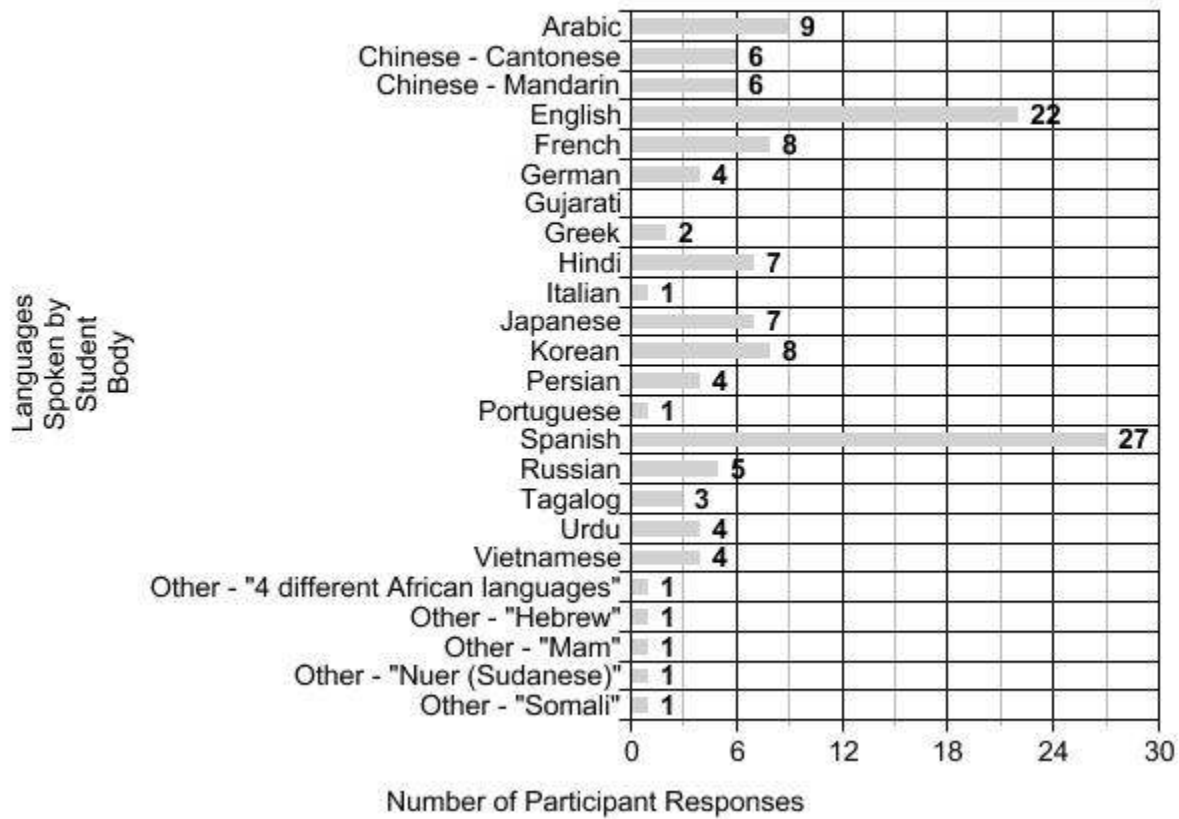


Figure 18. Languages spoken by the student body at each survey participants' school. Participants specified that their students spoke 18 of the languages listed in the multiple choice answers and provided some write-in responses as well.

Question 11: What are the languages you feel comfortable speaking?

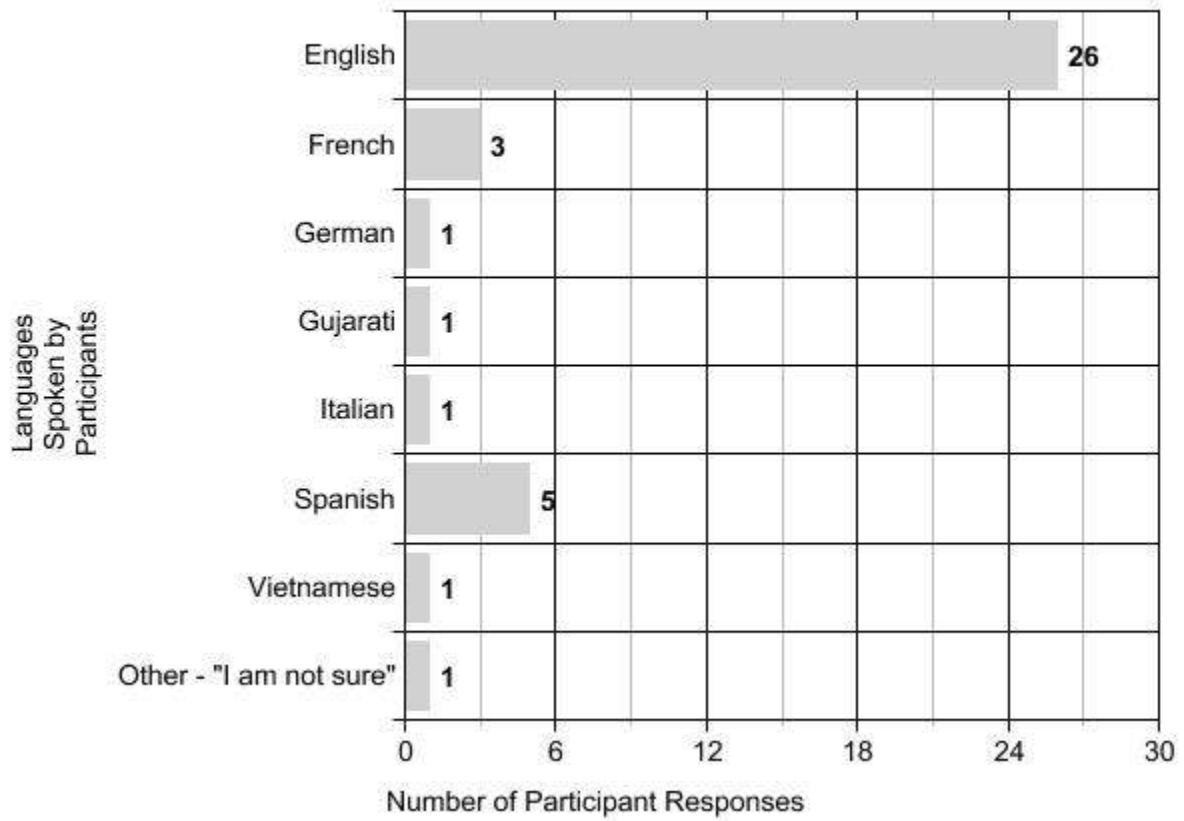


Figure 19. Languages spoken by survey participants.

Question 12: What are the predominate languages spoken by teachers and other school staff?

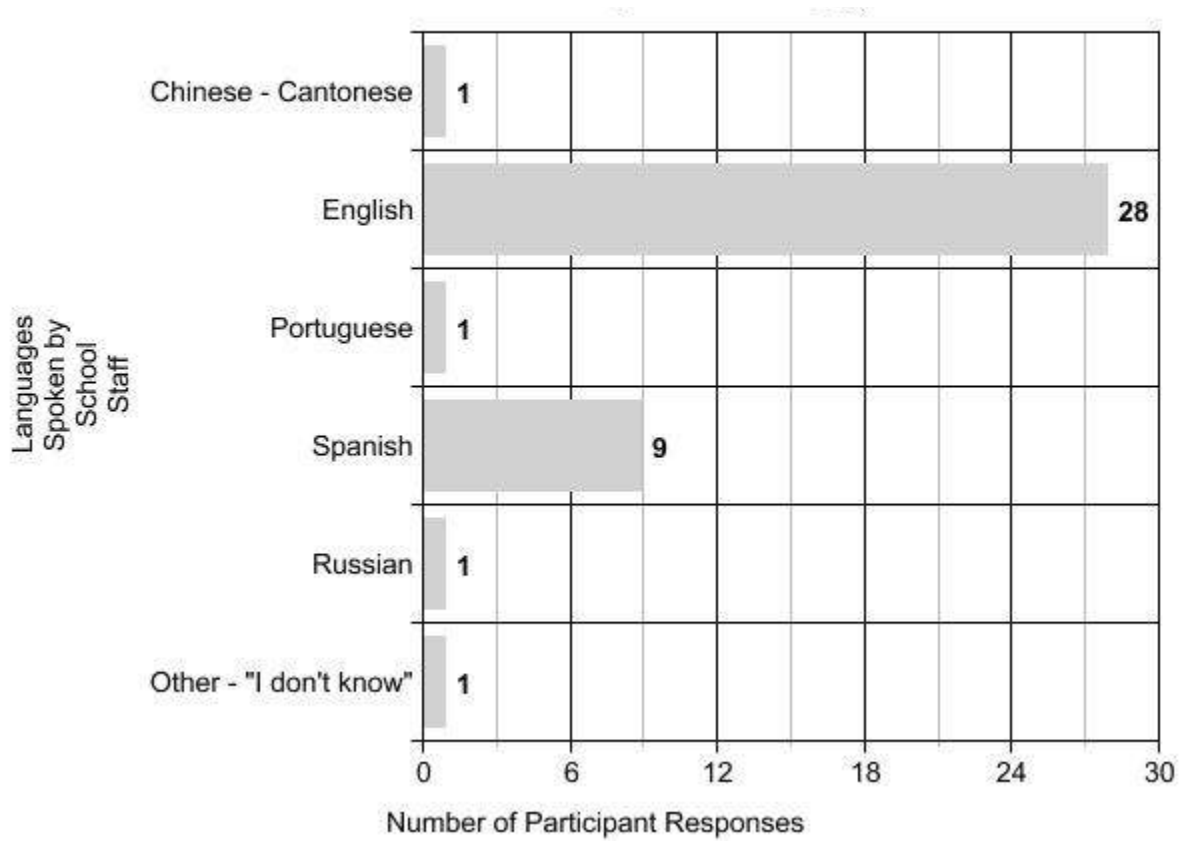


Figure 20. Languages spoken by the staff at survey participants' schools.

Short Answer Questions

Question 13: How do you use literature and language arts in your art classroom?

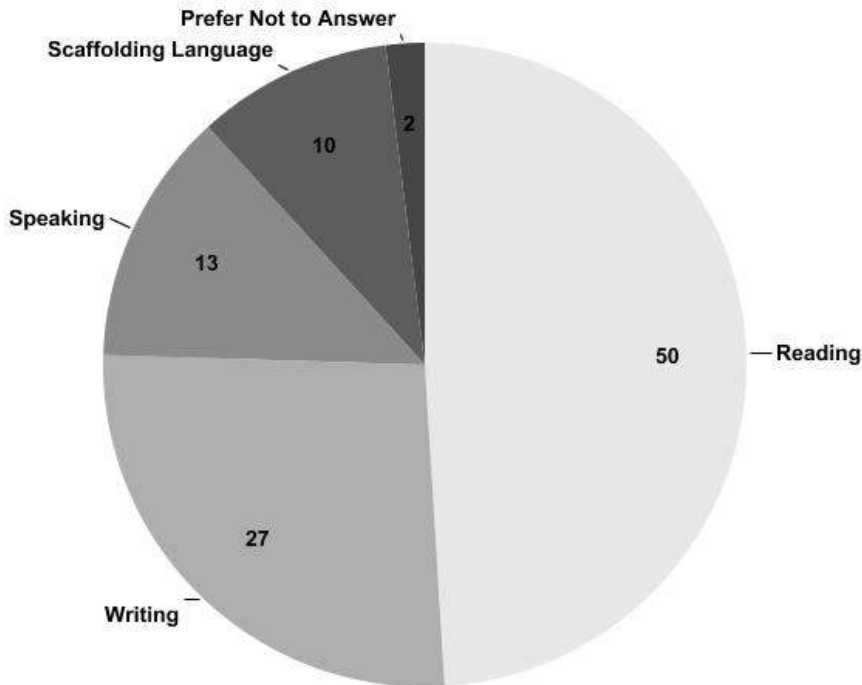


Figure 21. Categories survey participants mentioned of how they use literature and language arts in their art classroom (by mentions). The numbers provided refer to the number of times participants mentioned this category within their survey responses. Reading activities included using storybooks to introduce lessons and provide inspiration for students (17 mentions), assigning readings related to specific content and objectives (12 mentions), acquiring art vocabulary (7 mentions), specifying research projects to be completed using books and computers (5 mentions), reading aloud in groups or pairs (4 mentions), providing written instructions (3 mentions), and maintaining in-class libraries for student perusal (2 mentions). Writing activities included students' reflective writing about their artwork (8 mentions), creating artist statements (5 mentions), writing about art historical examples (4 mentions) or their classmate's artwork (1 mention), journaling (3 mentions), creating stories to accompany their art (3 mentions), and writing as component of assessment (3 mentions). Speaking activities included the teacher reading aloud (4 mentions) or delivering verbal instructions (1 mention) as well as students participating in discussions (6 mentions), narrating their art (1 mention), and talking about art as a form of assessment (1 mention). Language scaffolding strategies mentioned included scanning (1 mention) and pointing (1 mention) to text, reviewing vocabulary weekly (1 mention) and writing it on the board (1 mention) or on cards (1 mention), labeling the room (2 mentions), using graphic organizers (1 mention), using exit slips (1 mention), and calling on students to read based on their ability levels (1 mention).

Question 14: In what ways do you work with other teachers in your school in regard to students' verbal and written language development?

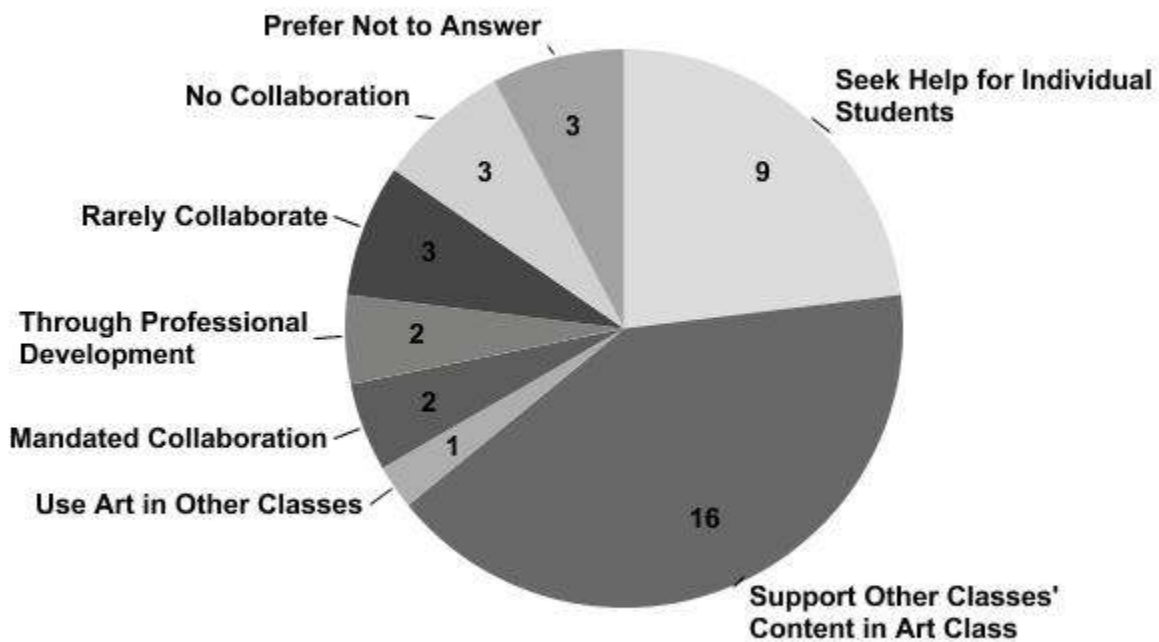


Figure 22. Survey participants' types of collaboration or lack of collaboration with other teachers in their school (by mentions).

Question 15: How do you select the art exemplars and art historical examples that you show students in your classroom?

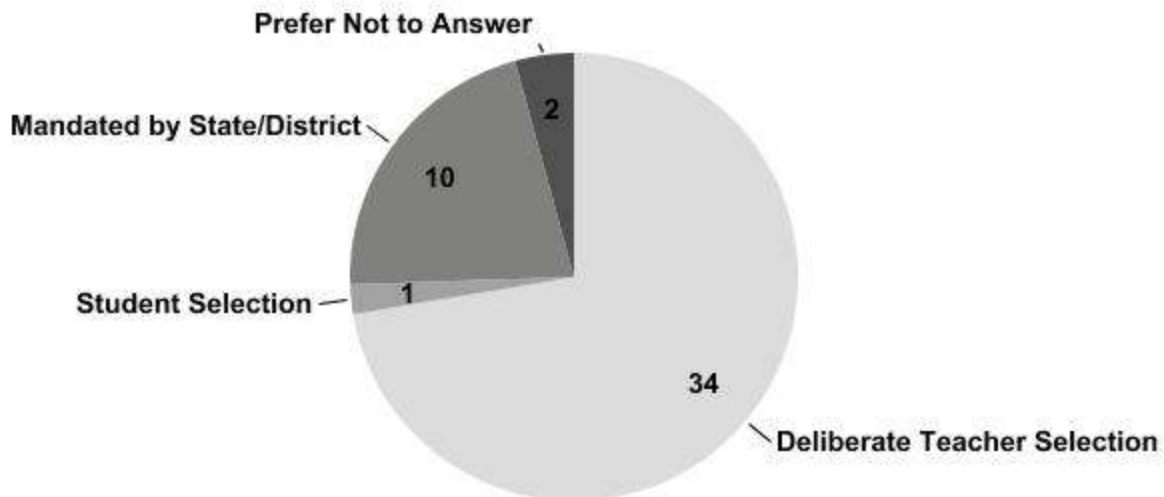


Figure 23. Breakdown of survey participants' selection of art exemplars and art historical examples (by mentions).

Question 16: Do you consider the students you teach to be linguistically diverse? Why or why not?

Note: The ambiguous phrasing of this question caused survey participants some difficulty. Some took the question to mean “Are individual students linguistically diverse?” while others assumed the question meant “Is the student body at your school overall linguistically diverse?” My intention was to find answers to the latter question. However, survey participants’ interpretations of and responses to the questions yielded interesting data including participants’ definitions of linguistic diversity and some participants’ explanations for why (or why not) their students are linguistically diverse. Since some participants included aspects related to individual students as well as the student body as a whole, this data is presented by number of mentions. The following charts present the overall breakdown of the data (Figure 22), the breakdown of mentions regarding the linguistic diversity of individual students (Figure 23), and the breakdown of mentions regarding the linguistic diversity of the student body as a whole (Figure 24).

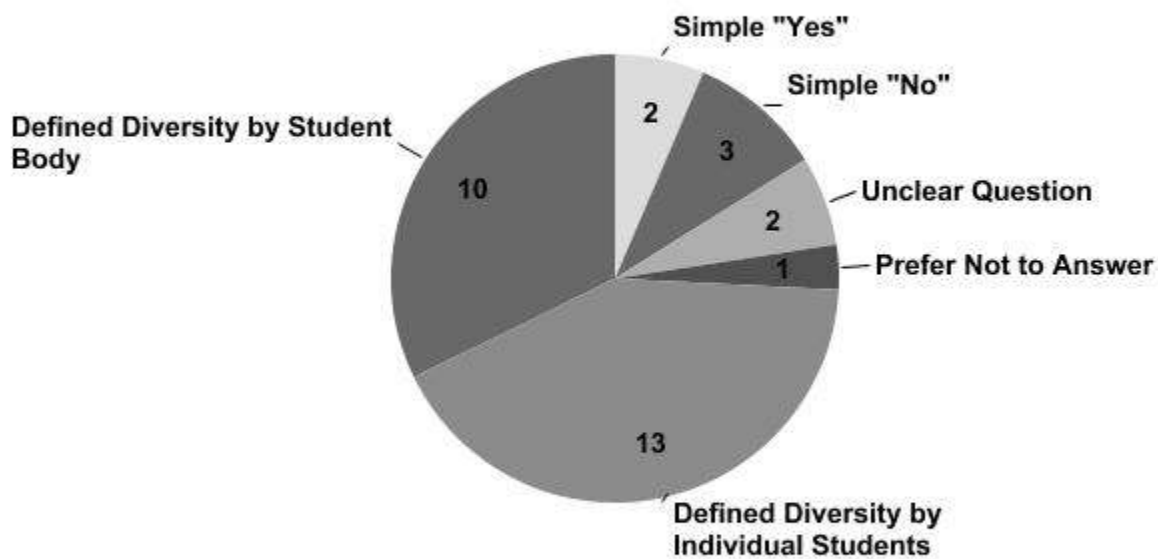


Figure 24. Breakdown of survey participants’ perception of the linguistic diversity of their students (by mentions).

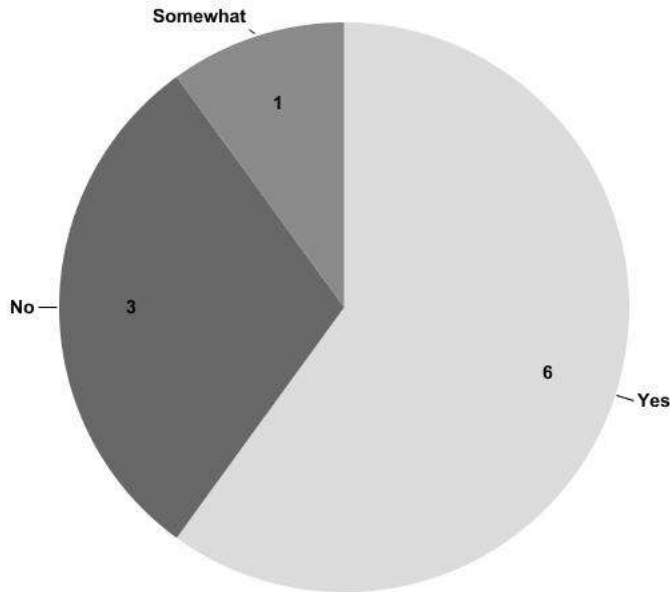


Figure 25. Breakdown of survey participants' perception of the linguistic diversity of their individual students (by mentions). Survey participants qualified that they viewed their individual students as linguistically diverse when they spoke more than one language. Likewise, those participants who viewed their individual students as non-linguistically diverse explained this was because their students only speak English and are unfamiliar with other languages. The mention that individual students are “somewhat” linguistically diverse served as a recognition that all students are different and have diverse linguistic knowledge and experiences.

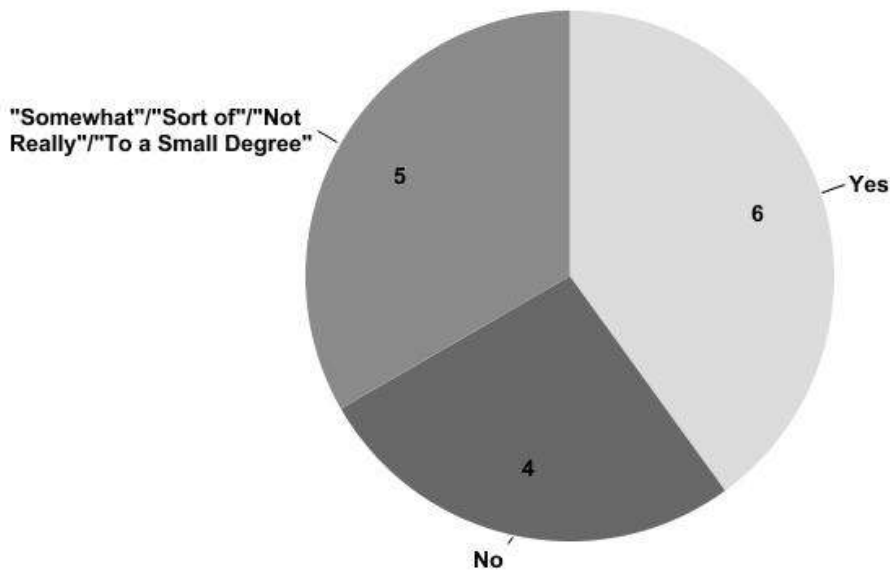


Figure 26. Breakdown of survey participants' perception of the linguistic diversity of the whole student body at their school (by mentions). Mentions of “yes” were sometimes qualified with the number of countries represented by the student body or the number of languages spoken by the student body. Most mentions of “no” or “somewhat” related to the small percentage of the student body classified as English language learners, though one “not really” mention was surprisingly applied to a school with 50% Hispanic students.

Question 17: What pedagogical adaptations have you tried in your instruction of English language learners?

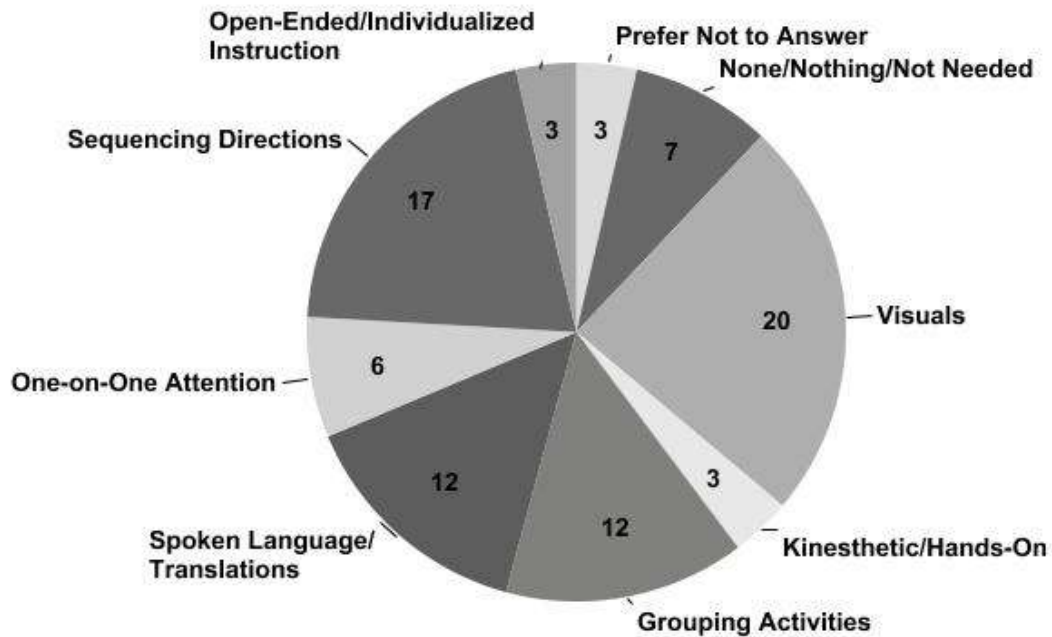


Figure 27. Overall categories of survey participants' suggested pedagogical adaptations (by mentions). The further breakdown of these categories, as well as their implications for answering the research questions, is explored in depth in Chapter 4.

Question 18: What were some of the specific goals for English language learners that motivated your changes in teaching strategies?

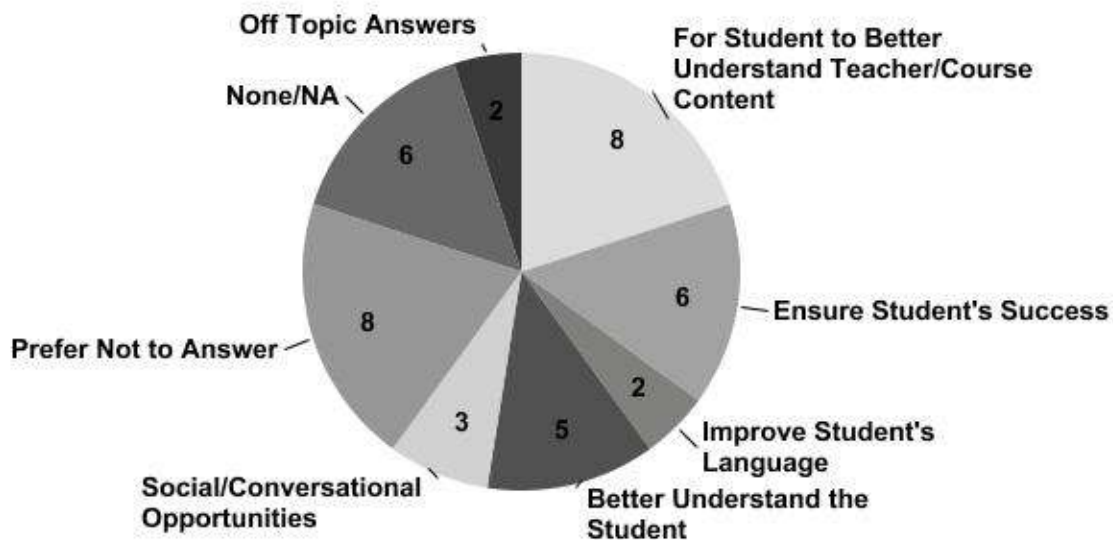


Figure 28. Survey participants' goals for changing their teaching strategies when working with English language learners (by mentions).

Question 19: Please describe any curriculum changes you have made to improve your instruction of English language learners in the art classroom.

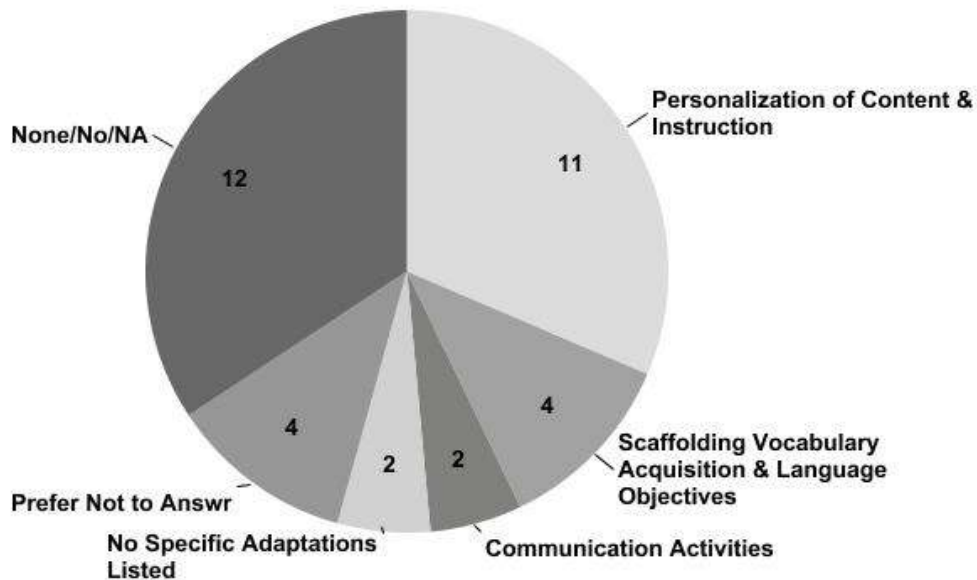


Figure 29. Breakdown of survey participants’ responses regarding their curricular adaptations for working with English language learners (by mentions). Mentions regarding the personalization of content and instruction included using multicultural exemplars or those from students’ cultural background (2 mentions), sharing opinions through discussion (3 mentions), using open-ended activities through the Teaching for Artistic Behavior model (1 mention), and including self-reflective journaling (1 mentions) among others.

Question 20: Please describe how English language learners participate verbally in your art classroom.

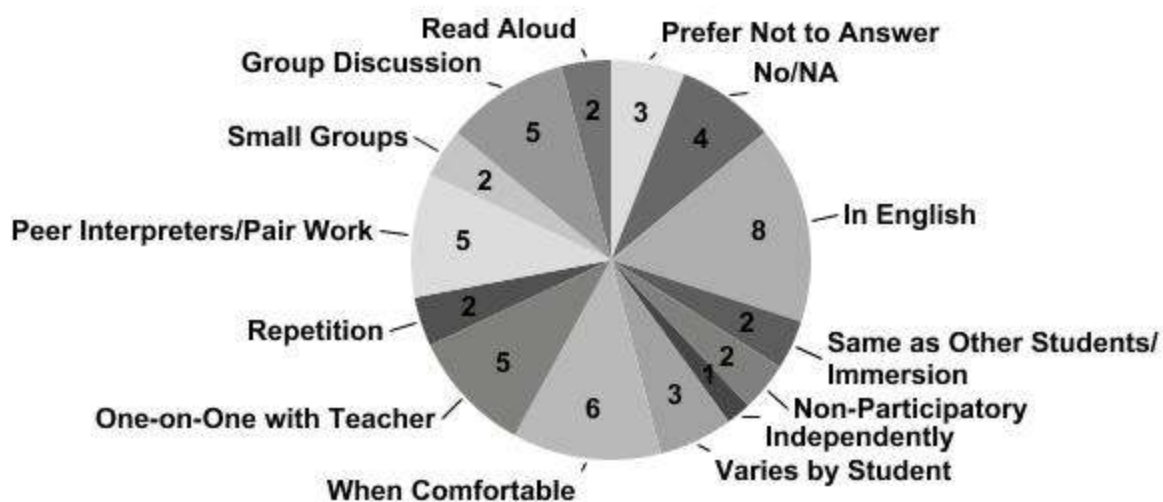


Figure 30. Survey participants’ descriptions of how English language learners participate verbally in the art classroom (by mentions). Many mentions of students speaking English qualified this speech as variations of “the necessary English” or “basic English.”

Question 21: Please describe how English language learners participate non-verbally in your art classroom.

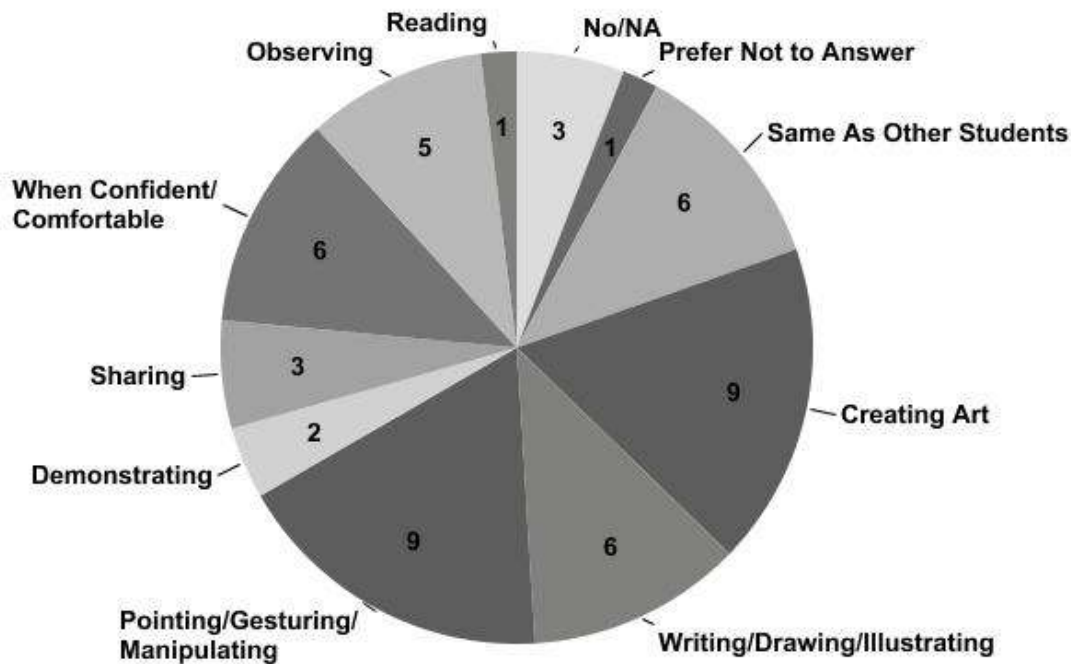


Figure 31. Survey participants' descriptions of how English language learners participate non-verbally in the art classroom (by mentions).

Question 22: Please describe the social interactions of English language learners in your art classroom.

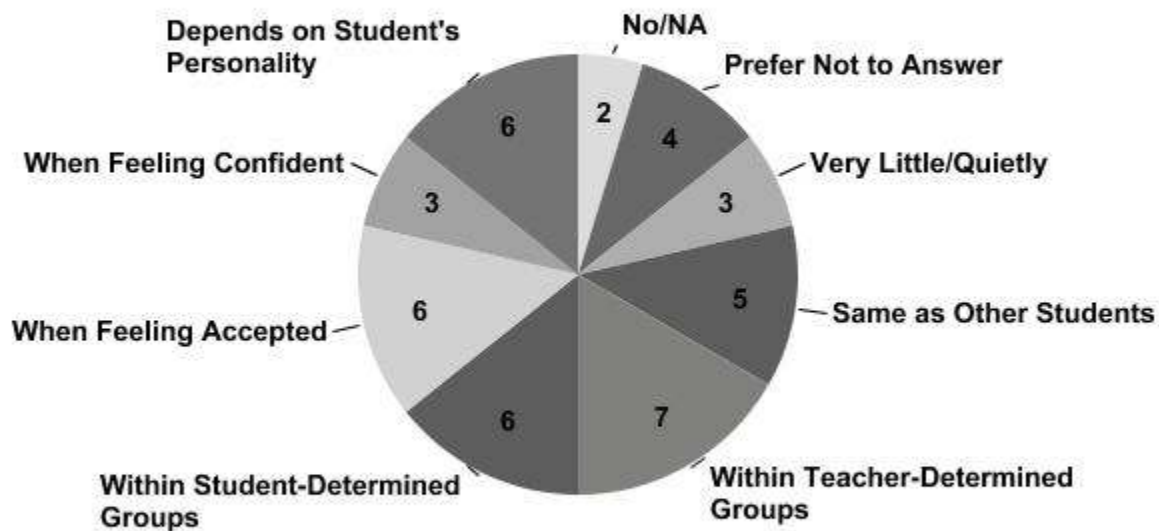


Figure 32. Survey participants' description of how and under what conditions English language learners engage in social interactions in the art classroom (by mentions). For details of the specific teacher- and student-determined groups mentioned by survey participants, see Chapter 4.

Question 23: What are your greatest challenges in regard to teaching a linguistically diverse student body?

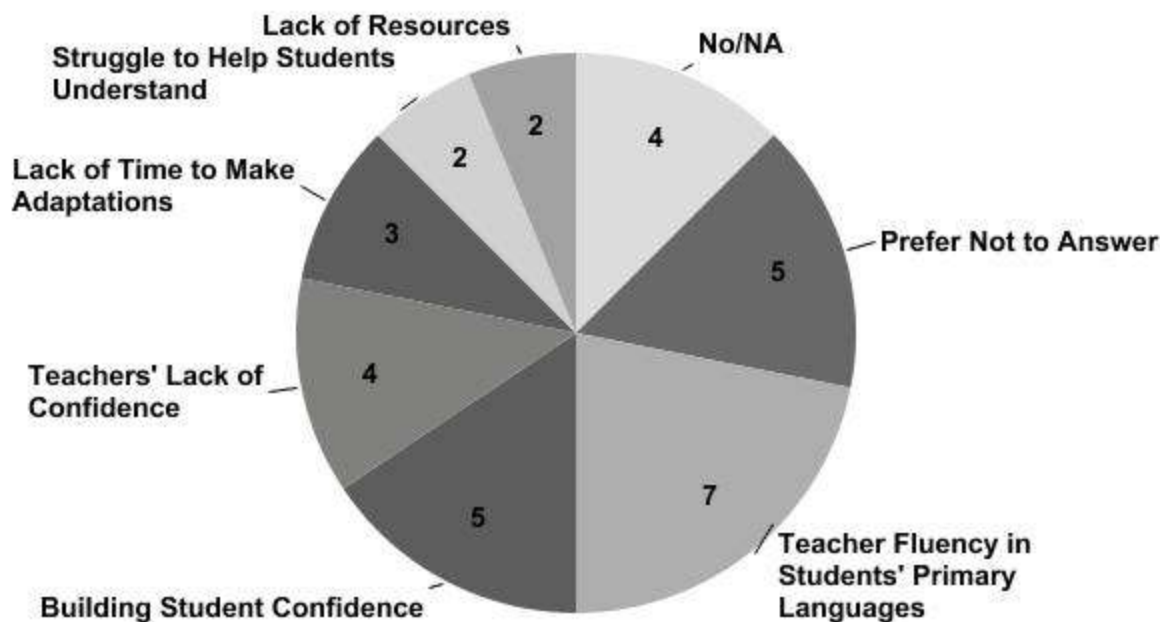


Figure 33. Survey participants' challenges to teaching in linguistically diverse classrooms (by mentions).

Question 24: In what ways do you think art teacher preparation programs could be improved to aid teachers in the instruction of linguistically diverse students?

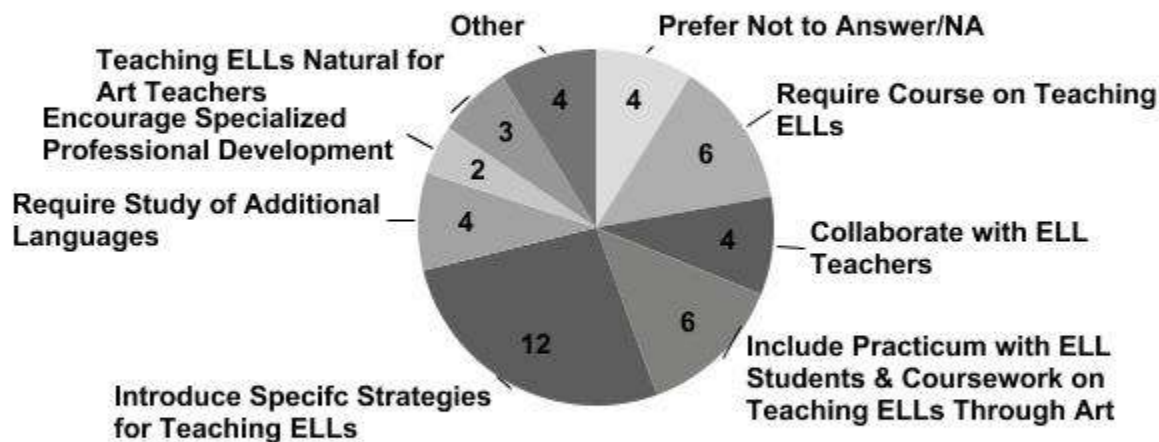


Figure 34. Survey participants' suggestions for improving art teacher preparation programs in regard to working with English language learning in the art classroom (by mentions). The category "Other" includes mentions of requiring the following coursework: constructivist learning (1 mention), choice-based education (1 mention), intercultural communication (1 mention), and cross-curricular projects (1 mention). The mentions of professional development acknowledged the difficulty of knowing what languages and strategies are most relevant prior to identifying the student population with whom teacher candidates will be working.

Appendix C

Word Frequency within Interview Transcripts

I conducted a word frequency count within each of the four interview transcripts using words that appeared in several quotations I took from the interviews during my process of data analysis. I wanted to understand if certain topics were of particular interest to some participants more than others. This data influenced the development of the profiles for each of the interview participants as detailed in Chapter 4.

WORD USED DURING INTERVIEW	INTERVIEW PARTICIPANT & WORD FREQUENCY			
	Anna	Beverly	Marcia	Roxanne
anxiety	2	0	0	0
choice/choose	3	2	4	0
comfort(able)	2	3	0	0
communicate/communication	2	1	5	3
freedom	1	0	0	0
objective	12	0	0	0
not	17	8	24	21
-n't (contraction)	17	17	37	12
problem	0	0	7	0
real	0	3	0	0
relationship	0	0	7	0
standard	0	3	0	0
strength	1	0	0	0
struggle	0	0	0	0
time	3	3	15	2

Figure 35. Word frequency within interview transcripts.

Vita

Alana Cristin Greer was born on September 14, 1982, in Houston, Texas, and is an American citizen. She graduated from Grissom High School in Huntsville, Alabama in 2000. She graduated Summa Cum Laude with her Bachelor of Fine Arts in Art Education and Bachelor of Arts in French from the University of Georgia, Athens, Georgia in 2004. Since then, she taught art as a long-term substitute at East Jackson County Middle School, Commerce, Georgia in 2005. Additionally, she served as an English teaching assistant in Lyon, France during the 2005 – 2006 school year and in Osaka, Japan from 2007 – 2009. As a graduate student at Virginia Commonwealth University, she made multiple presentations related to her research interests at the Virginia Art Education Association 2010 Professional Development Conference, the 2011 National Art Education Association Convention, and the South Asian Studies Association 2011 Conference. This thesis is submitted in partial fulfillment for the degree of Master of Art Education from Virginia Commonwealth University in 2011.