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**UTILIZING THE MARRIAGE OF IMAGE AND TEXT TO IMPROVE
NARRATIVE WRITING IN URBAN ELEMENTARY STUDENTS**

by

Sharon Sullivan-Rubin

A Dissertation

Submitted to the
Department of Educational Services and Leadership
College of Education
In partial fulfillment of the requirement
For the degree of
Doctor of Education
at
Rowan University
March 21, 2017

Dissertation Chair: Dr. James Coaxum III

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Dedications

I would like to dedicate this manuscript to the memory of my parents, James and Anna Sullivan, who inspired my curious nature by teaching me the intrinsic value of education, so that I might dream bigger and reach farther; and who never allowed the word *can't* to enter my vocabulary. Thank you for giving me wings.

And to my children, Ashleigh, Jamie, and David, who taught me how to fly—ultimately teaching me what is important in life. The lives of my immediate family were deeply impacted by my participation in this program. After giving much thought to the journey this experience has had on all of us, I would like to summarize with a stanza from Robert Frost's 1916 poem *The Road Not Taken* and share my thoughts with you.

I shall be telling this with a sigh

Somewhere ages and ages hence:

Two roads diverged in a wood, and I—

I took the one less traveled by,

And that made all the difference.

Thank you to my family for helping me laugh, love, and live life to its fullest. I hope you know that even when I am physically absent, you are in my heart and mind always. And, know that everything I have done has been for you. I love you all.

Acknowledgments

“...the best way to lead people into the future is to connect with them deeply in the present.”¹

I would like to express my sincere appreciation to my dissertation chairperson, Dr. James Coaxum III, for patience and guidance throughout this research. It was your unwavering belief in my success that sustained me during personal challenges and uncertain times. With faith, you taught me to manage ambiguity by embracing it, and to see my challenges as opportunities to be a steward of change for a better future.

I would also like to thank my dissertation committee members, Dr. Susan Leshnoff and Dr. Joanne Manning, for their commitment of time, inspiration, and support for this research. As leaders, you demonstrate through example and change lives by the knowledge you impart to others.

A special acknowledgement goes to the industry professionals who graciously gave their support to this project: Susan George, stylist; Luciana Pampalone, photographer; Ken Pivak, photographer and co-owner of the Digital 1 to 1 website; Dale Schmidt, Visual and Performing Arts and 21st Century Life and Careers Coordinator for the NJ DOE; Dr. Emile Talerico, Montclair State University; Wendel White, photographer; Eric Weinstein and Stephanie Baum, both editors and friends; and Kevin Scherer, for graphics expertise. To the dedicated administrators, teachers, support staff, and students in New Urban School District (pseudonym): without your contributions, this study would not have happened. I am eternally grateful to all of you.

¹Kouzes, J. And Posner, B. (2009). To Lead, Create a Shared Vision. *Harvard Business Review*. Retrieved from <https://hbr.org/2009/01/to-lead-create-a-shared-vision>

Abstract

Sharon Sullivan Rubin
UTILIZING THE MARRIAGE OF IMAGE AND TEXT TO IMPROVE NARRATIVE
WRITING IN URBAN ELEMENTARY STUDENTS

2017-2018

Dr. James Coaxum III, Ph.D.
Doctor of Education

Using action research with qualitative data collection methods, this study documents the leadership of the researcher's implementation of a collaborative arts integrative teaching model in the literacy and art classrooms of an urban elementary school for grades three, four, and five. Understanding by Design (UbD) (Wiggins & Mc Tighe, 2005) was used as the unifying theoretical framework by which a constructivist pedagogical methodology was developed. Pedagogical techniques and methods used were adopted from Writing for Understanding (WU) (Hawkins, et al., 2008) with the Painted Essay (Leddy, 1999), Visual Thinking Strategies (VTS) (Housen, 2000-2001, 2001-2002), and new media technology. Digital photographic techniques, graphic organizers, brainstorming, mind-mapping, and storyboarding techniques were employed to teach students to create a photo essay. The photo essay was used as a teaching strategy intended to awaken and enhance students' metacognitive/artistic visual connections and conceptions, and support critical thinking as evidenced in their narrative writing. The assessment of student work involved two separate pre-tests and one post-test, employing methods, assessment tools, and rubrics borrowed from Curva and Associates (2005) and VTS (Housen, 2000-2001, 2001-2002). The research ultimately revealed teacher support for continued classroom use of the researcher's suggested methods (photo essay, Painted Essay) for teaching narrative and expository writing.

Keywords: art classroom, collaborative arts teaching model, interdisciplinary curriculum, literacy classroom, photo essay, professional development, teacher training.

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Chapter 1

The National Political Context

In 2003, the National Commission on Writing sounded the alarm about the state of writing instruction in American schools. In “The Neglected “R”: The Need for a Writing Revolution,” the commission challenged all levels of American public education to teach all students to write effectively, clearly and thoughtfully (Hawkins et al., 2008). The Bush administration responded by making literacy a political priority in its reforms. According to Klein (2015, para. 4), the law—which arose from concern that the US education system had ceased to compete internationally—focused on states’ efforts to effect performance improvement among typically lower-achieving student groups, such as English-language learners, special education students, and those from low-income and minority households. State compliance with the new law’s requirements was not mandatory, but a state’s failure to comply could result in its losing federal Title I funding.

In the name of accountability, the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB) required high-stakes, standards-based testing to be administered as part of the methodology for tracking “adequate yearly progress (AYP).” This was designed to ensure each US state would be held accountable for all its students. Various subgroups of the student population including racial and ethnic minorities, special education students, and English language learners would each be individually tracked. By 2013-2014, each subgroup would need to meet 100% of their state’s proficiency standards. If a school missed this target, the law imposed several draconian sanctions that the state could carry out. These included large-scale faculty removal, school reorganization into a (frequently non-union) charter school, or being closed altogether. After just two years of a school’s

failure to meet AYP, NCLB enabled affected students to move to another school in the district; after three, the school would need to offer free tutoring, and set aside 10% of its Title I funding to pay for school choice and/or tutoring (Klein, 2015).

NCLB also required all teachers to be “highly qualified” by 2005-2006. This necessitated each teacher to possess a bachelor’s degree, state teacher certification, and sufficient subject area content knowledge in their area of expertise. The details of sufficient content knowledge were left up to each individual state (Walsh, 2004). It was also the states’ responsibility to ensure an equal proportion of teachers meeting these requirements were available to teach in both wealthy and poor districts (Klein, 2015). Many states took advantage of their position as both compliance watchdog and as the entity subject to such compliance to ensure that the definition and interpretation of laws were applied in ways that allowed the status quo to largely continue. Thus, in many instances, teachers still working toward certification—often non-union hires by charter schools, or students in an Alternate Path to Teaching program—were ultimately deemed “highly qualified,” particularly if they taught in harder-to-staff poorer districts. This significantly undermined the intended impact of the HQT provision on teacher quality and equity across districts. What had been intended to improve the education and training of teachers—and to provide a fairer balance of experienced high-quality teachers across socio-economic and racial groups—mostly failed to do either.

Many education professionals deemed the Bush-era NCLB a series of unfunded or underfunded mandates that the states could ill afford (especially after the Great Recession) and that the US federal government could, but that could not be adequately enforced. President Obama’s administration responded by creating the Race to the Top

(RTTT) initiative. This was a \$4.4 billion series of competitive grants that provided much-needed educational funding—if and only if states realigned their educational priorities with those of the incoming administration.

McNeal (2013) explains that through RTTT, federal funding would be available to schools providing incentives to teachers—via merit pay awarded based on teacher performance evaluations linked to student performance—to enhance the quality of their instruction. In response, many states seeking additional federal funding changed their teacher tenure laws to make teachers accountable for the performance of their students.

The significant scale of RTTT's funding grants during a time of recession and massive public underinvestment meant the neo-liberal school reform movement was bound to gain widespread implementation, regardless of the mistrust and disdain with which many education professionals greeted it. McNeal (2013) observes that divergent views emerged on the use of standardized test scores as a measure of teacher performance. While proponents argued for the logic of measuring teacher contribution to the goal of educating students by their achievement outcomes, opponents (including economists, statisticians, and psychometricians) viewed student test scores as unreliable in indicating teacher effectiveness.

Even with RTTT's carrots and sticks, and with the built-in loopholes states afforded themselves when applying the self-regulation described earlier, it soon became evident that many of NCLB's mandated targets would be missed en masse. This situation prompted President Obama and Secretary of Education Arne Duncan to face either the shutdown of a massive number of American schools, or the embarrassing spectacle of handing out a staggering number of waivers to prevent such an unmanageable situation.

The government understandably chose the latter. A degree of bureaucratic embarrassment could be tolerated, but a massive and immediate disestablishment of America's institutions of public education disproportionately affecting the poor could not.

The Local Political Context: Inequality, Abbott Districts, and NCLB/RTTT in New Jersey

Historically, New Jersey has featured a remarkably large number of America's best-performing suburban public schools, but also a considerable contingent of very low-performing inner-city schools compared to the national average. The spending gap between best- and worst-off districts at the 5th and 95th percentiles was nearly \$10,000 per student in 2014, more than twice as wide as the national average (Klein, 2015). Closing the achievement gap between rich and poor, white and black, and city and suburb has been a central focus of New Jersey education policy over the past half-century. The 1980s brought the historic Abbott vs. Burke decision (Howard, 2006). It is recognized as:

...the most important education litigation for poor and minority schoolchildren since Brown v. Board of Education.... The argument was that the State's method of funding education was unconstitutional because it caused significant expenditure disparities between poor urban and wealthy suburban school districts, and that poorer urban districts were unable to adequately meet the educational needs of their students.

(Education Law Center, n.d., para. 2-3)

In 1990, in Abbott II, the NJ Supreme Court upheld the administrative law judge's ruling, finding the state's school funding law unconstitutional as applied to children in some "poorer urban" school districts. The court's ruling directed the

legislature to amend the existing law or enact a new law to “assure” funding for these urban districts. This was required to be both at a level “substantially equivalent” to that in successful suburban districts; and “adequate” to provide for supplemental programs necessary to address the extreme disadvantages of urban schoolchildren. The court ordered this new funding mechanism be in place for the following school year, 1991-92 (Education Law Center, n.d., para. 6).

The ramifications of the case have been litigated by the Abbott districts and the state for issues of funding constitutionality and enforcement for more than twenty years. The decision has morphed over time; the name “Abbott” has been dropped when identifying these districts, while issues of proper funding, access, and equality persist.

In May 1997, the New Jersey Department of Education mandated that the 31 former Abbott districts, comprising the poorest districts in receipt of the most state aid (Wichert, 2011), give up much of their curricular freedom in the teaching of reading (Klagholz, 1997). Instead, they were to choose a reading program from a list of programs designated by the federal government as “research-based” (www.nj.gov/education/title1/program/). Many of these reading programs disempower, underutilize, and ultimately de-professionalize teachers (Datnow & Castellano, 2000; Pollak, 2009; Meyer & Whitmore, 2011; Maderazo, 2013). Systems such as “Success for All” approach the pedagogy of reading as a scripted, teacher-proof system; heavily based in remedial phonetic methods and lacking the necessary components to build comprehension for higher-level thinking (Sawyer, 2004; Duncan-Owens, 2009; Maderazo, 2013). Like New Jersey, approximately half of the states have adopted some level of “student achievement data to assess teacher quality” (McNeal, 2013, p. 495).

It is against this background that we can attempt to understand how the Teacher Effectiveness and Accountability for the Children of New Jersey (TEACHNJ) Act was adopted by New Jersey in 2012. Its stated intent was to improve student outcomes by improving the overall quality of instruction, as per NCLB's remit. This would be done by "rais(ing) student achievement by improving instruction through the adoption of evaluations that provide specific feedback to educators, inform(ing) the provision of aligned professional development, and inform(ing) personnel decisions" (NJDOE, 2012).

TEACHNJ mandated a new teacher evaluation system to implement its objectives. This new system was known as ACHIEVE NJ. The funding for TEACHNJ/ACHIEVE NJ came from New Jersey's successful application for RTTT funds (Callahan & Sadeghi, 2015). ACHIEVE NJ's new evaluation systems judged teachers by newly regulated criteria. In the face of a significantly weakened tenure environment, it gave sharper teeth to school districts wishing to free themselves from teachers they did not find to be performing as they might wish.

In theory, and from a federal perspective, districts had a variety of choices they could employ to comply with the new teacher evaluation system. In reality, and at the state and local levels, the expense and complexity of implementing the law meant most districts found themselves working with a single external provider with strong local business and government connections. In NJ, a single approved model, scripted by the Danielson Group (<https://www.danielsongroup.org>) based in Princeton, was adopted by 60% of the state's nearly 500 school districts. The Danielson Group has been dominant in teacher evaluation for many years, especially in districts aligned with the school reform movement's agenda.

While ACHIEVE NJ (<http://www.state.nj.us/education/AchieveNJ/>) provided enhanced support for those teachers the new evaluation system found to be underperforming, it also provided a mechanism for allowing administration to dismiss those same teachers. This could be accomplished within two years, even if such teachers had already achieved tenure and had shown themselves to be successful under the old system. As critics noted, older tenured teachers who were more likely to cost school districts more money to employ could now be released from service, allowing districts to employ younger, cheaper, and often less qualified teachers to replace them (Kain, 2011; Ziedner, 2014).

The Core Curricular Content Standards Initiative

The Common Core State Standards Initiative (CCSSI) began as a pathway to bridge the educational gap by creating a clear set of rigorous standards across states. These standards demonstrate the kind of knowledge and skills a student must have in order to be successful in college and in today's workplace (Common Core State Standards Initiative, 2015). Their aims encompass global communication, financial literacy, and 21st-century technological skills, but include math and English as their overarching and central focus (<https://www13.state.nj.us/NJCCCS/>).

As part of this initiative, and as mandated by NCLB, a standardized method of assessment must be adopted by each state and school district. Student achievement must meet a predetermined increment of improvement each year until the predicted mastery is achieved, as defined by college readiness and workplace standards. New Jersey has met this requirement by aligning with the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) consortium of states, which worked together to create a

standard set of K-12 assessments in mathematics and English to align with Common Core standards in a way that would ensure that federal RTTT funding would be provided to them.

Designed with fewer questions than the previous standardized test (the NJ ASK), the PARCC assessment includes questions designed to meet what it describes as “21st-century college and workplace readiness standards.” PARCC attempts to embody the frameworks of problem-based learning and authentic assessment, based on the belief that the information obtained can help inform instruction when used alongside other formative assessment methods. PARCC efforts have met with significant criticism from parents, teachers, and academic researchers alike (Shepherd, 2014; Ravitch & Di Gregorio, 2015). The PARCC's emphasis on student achievement as part of the evaluative process for teachers has been particularly controversial. An opt-out movement is growing in New Jersey, where potential funding sanctions may apply to districts if a mandatory percentage of the student body does not participate in the testing. The outcome of this political situation is yet to be determined.

From NCLB to ESSA

From a national standpoint, around 2014 things began to change, at least on paper. A popular backlash (which mirrored the majority opinion of academics in graduate schools of education, and of most teachers’ unions) was that NCLB was draconian, bureaucratic, and led to little real improvement in school success. What it did lead to were public school closures, with new charter schools often opening in their places—often with private-sector, for-profit capital, and a conspicuous lack of democratic input from the communities they served. Meanwhile, particularly in urban schools, the intense

focus on “math and ELA (English and Language Arts) began pushing out electives, like art” (Tooley, 2015, para. 4).

In late 2015, Congress finally replaced NCLB with the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) (<http://www.ed.gov/essa?src=rn>). ESSA calls for “...states to test students from grades three through eight and once during high school” (Tooley, 2015, para. 11). Such test results will still inform the assessment of the schools’ performance and will continue to count towards some part of student assessment. The requirement continues for states to analyze school performance for each demographic subgroup, and to intervene in schools where specific subgroups of students are chronically performing extremely poorly. However, ESSA “...allows states to develop their own school accountability rating systems, providing only rough guidelines for how to identify schools in need of improvement.... States must only step in if districts are unsuccessful in helping schools improve” (Tooley, 2015, para. 11). To many, this sounds very much like “NCLB-lite.” ESSA, for example, has no requirement that states put teacher “...accountability and improvement systems in place” (Tooley, 2015, para. 11), although this is a clearly-stated goal of ESSA.

Noteworthy within ESSA is the change in the wording defining the arts as compared with NCLB. NCLB defined the arts as a “core subject,” but the same law was also “criticized for pushing non-tested subjects to the sideline” (Zubrzycki, 2015, para. 8), while ESSA includes the arts as part of a “well-rounded education.” Zubrzycki (2015, para. 10, 18, 19, 32, 33) highlights these changes and notes ESSA’s potential pitfalls, observing that NCLB’s inclusion of the arts as a core subject shifted it into focus and provided recognition for it within the other titles, despite its lack of testing. In contrast,

without such a definition for the arts within ESSA, administrators could overlook the arts as part of a well-rounded curriculum and therefore divert federal funds away from educational arts programs.

Best-Practice Instructional Practices

Hawkins et al. (2008, p. 6) cite Reeves (2002) as a proponent of the use of non-fictional and expository writing in the classroom. Reeves believes we must be serious about raising the achievement of our most disadvantaged students. He insists that educators must make sure these students are “in the game.” Such inclusion is accomplished through writing in school, frequently and clearly. Such inclusion-through-writing must allow for thought and understanding, as well as for expression of student voice and experience. The approaches of Reeves and of The Vermont Writing Collaborative (Hawkins et al., 2008) derive from the seminal work of James Moffett, Janet Emig, and the National Writing Project (Gray, 2000), and build upon that prior work within the framework of an era defined by standards, testing, and reform.

Many proponents of direct instruction in language are also proponents of research-based language curricula. The era of NCLB placed an emphasis on acquiring discrete skills that were then assessed using standardized testing. However, the process was inadequate to create or to assess higher-level learning and came under review to revise this thinking, which would involve demonstrating how and why students engage in and process meaning from information, learning through abstract concepts, and connecting universal themes with subjective perceptions. The artifacts or products of such learning would be the output; evidence of the student’s ability to transfer this knowledge to real-life, authentic applications.

A paradigm known as holistic education (Reeves, 2002) has been challenging current mainstream assumptions by placing emphasis on learning through project-based performance tasks. These authentic assessments determine the degree of student comprehension. They also assess how well students have employed the content they had read, and how creatively they deploy concepts in situations that mimic real-world conditions. Such assessments promote higher-level learning situations. Students use discrete and abstract concepts in the creation of synthetic understanding, making connections to universal themes, and building perceptions and understanding. This kind of learning demonstrates not merely knowledge retention, but the transfer of knowledge. Learning through process-based and project-based performance tasks, such as authentic assessment, determines what students require in order to help them master content and concepts. Miller (2007) posits that intrinsic within holistic education are the principles of *balance* (an appropriate relationship among each aspect of an individual and the whole individual); *inclusion* (the linkage of various educational vantage points for authentic learning); and *connection* (which arises from a focus on the various dimensions of experience and their interrelationships, along with those between individuals and other living beings).

Art, authentic instruction, and assessment. Authentic instruction places student experiential outcomes at the heart of assessment. It presents new information within familiar contextual frameworks and connects it to other meaningful information. In this way, learning experiences become both integrated and multi-sensory. Anderson and Milbrandt (2005) describe “authentic instruction as meaningful learning that connects to the real world beyond the classroom, and authentic assessment as evaluating students’

learning in ways that respect the qualities of the specific learning experience, rather than through standardized indicators” (p. 25).

Authentic assessment uses a variety of measures for proof of student understanding and transfer. Some of the most common forms of authentic assessment are Socratic seminars, portfolios, and exhibitions. All are accepted methods of determining student mastery levels of content, process, and product through performance-based learning; and all are assessment types akin to visual arts instruction.

Beattie (1997) defines these as assessment strategies that employ activities or tasks to form a basis on which to assess students’ demonstration of their learning. These types of assessments might require students to demonstrate processes, products, or both.

In art education, portfolios and exhibitions are both examples of performance-based strategies used in both process- and product-oriented assessments. Instruction is designed to demonstrate understanding in multiple dimensions of student cognitive skills and knowledge, which creates transfer to new learning. The creation of a portfolio can be viewed as both a formative and summative assessment, as it will require assessment of the individual pieces as well as the whole body of work. Beattie (1997) notes that a portfolio conveys the story of a student’s “...efforts, progress, or achievement in (a) given area(s)...” (p. 15) and confirms that it can replace other types of assessments, in addition to serving as a useful teaching tool.

The Socratic seminar can be another effective teaching tool in an arts classroom. In Socratic seminar activities, students hold group discussions to collectively parse ideas, issues, and values presented in texts. The purpose of a Socratic seminar is for students to help each other reach an understanding of a text’s content; the seminar is not a forum for

assertion of opinions. Through these activities, seminar participants have the opportunity make meaning and find common ground through listening to and conversing with each other ("Socratic Seminar," 2016).

In this vein, classrooms can inspire students and help them to explore through rich conversations about big ideas in art and aesthetics, and to critically think about art's place in their own lives and in the world around them.

The arts offer a natural vehicle for authentic assessment and use of the arts for authentic assessment is not a new idea (Darling-Hammond, 1994; Burger & Winner, 2000). The approach these authors describe offered an effective response to the demands of NCLB's accountability benchmarks and a respite from the years of sanctions some school districts had to endure. As we have seen, high-stakes testing for NCLB focused on literacy and math. However, the cognitive skills and abilities and the ethical and aesthetic sensibilities that structure understanding and success in those subjects are not always best developed exclusively within them. Howard Gardner's Theory of Multiple Intelligences (Gardner, 1993) provides a model that broadens the definition of how understanding is achieved, how it is manifested in multi-sensory applications, and how it provides for transfer of knowledge to new situations. To understand the implications of Gardner's theory is to understand much of what is wrong with the limited curricula resulting from high-stakes testing in high-needs, at-risk communities.

According to Brown (2005), learning in and through the arts offers different avenues of thinking, reacting, and reflecting (Fowler, 1996; Gardner, 1999a). Multiple Intelligence (MI) Theory demonstrates the unique and necessary contribution to learning that the arts can make. According to MI Theory, learners process information in a variety

of ways. These include verbal-linguistic; logical-mathematical; visual-spatial; musical; kinesthetic; interpersonal; intrapersonal; and naturalistic intelligences (Gardner, 1999a). Project-based learning through the arts demonstrates a variety of these intelligences effectively.

According to Wiggins (1990), “Assessment is authentic when we directly examine student performance on worthy intellectual tasks” (para. 1). It is essential that teaching is designed as a broad curriculum, within which performance-based and portfolio-based assessments include the arts as a necessary component. Such authentic instruction and assessment could begin to prepare all our students—not just those from wealthier districts, which can afford to retain the arts in their traditional form—for 21st-century learning and for life.

Purpose

Throughout this research, I document the impact I make as an instructional leader, improving student learning through interdisciplinary curricular methods and 21st-century modes of instruction. My goal was to create a collaborative arts education model. To achieve this, I utilized the talents of professional photographers. Working in part as a professional photographer and art specialist within the role of participant researcher, I provided professional development in the arts to classroom teachers.

For this research, my contentions are that based upon my teaching experience, self-contained general academic classroom teachers—coached in the curricular unit planning methods of backwards design, the technical training for classroom applications of new media, and the aesthetic process-oriented approaches utilized in visual thinking strategies (VTS)—will gain an effective toolkit to improve student writing. They will

also develop a new perspective on how to utilize new media in their classroom, and a new appreciation of its impact on the learning process. Through the implementation of multiple modalities and/or multi-sensory methods, teachers will better meet their students' individual learning styles and needs. Learning will become better organized and more tailored to student learning styles. Learning acquisition should become both more manageable and more meaningful to students; assessment will demonstrate both the understanding and transfer of the learned skills (Gardner, 2004; Wiggins & McTighe, 2005).

Following the action research methodology best suited to carrying out this work (Brydon-Miller, Greenwood, & Maguire, 2003; Hine, 2013), and using interviews, observations, notes, and videos, I document the combined use of the suggested methodologies, including digital photography and the Painted Essay in the interdisciplinary writing classroom, and Visual Thinking Strategies (VTS) in the art classroom. Teachers will identify the barriers that hinder them from successfully implementing methods taught in the professional development/training for new media arts integration (Understanding by Design and Writing for Understanding), whether actual or perceived. Teachers will also identify whether any barrier to change comes from a source within or beyond their control. Finally, they will reflect upon how they could positively contribute to support a shift in school culture towards a 21st-century learning model (Kotter, 1996; Wiggins & McTighe, 2007).

NCLB and Art

It is ironic that NCLB, which had in practice often led to cuts that undermined arts education in poor districts across America, did in fact classify the visual and performing

arts as an academic core content course of study (Sabol, 2010; Beveridge, 2010). NCLB also required all students to be trained in 21st-century skills, including technology and career education. Thus, for a district to receive accreditation for its programs from the state and federal government, a rigorous study and broad scope and sequence in arts and technology curricula was mandatory, at least theoretically. Arts teachers with a technical background and experience in new media-based arts have, in fact, found demand for their skills—in some school districts, at least. For the first time, the New Urban School District and other urban districts in New Jersey actively recruited these highly skilled teachers and trained using the alternate route to teacher certification. Prior to NCLB, this was almost unheard of, because of budgetary restrictions that translated into cuts in specialist areas. Thus, most of the cuts occurred in the area of the arts. NCLB allocated funding for technology, and districts allowed this money to cross over into arts spending. Districts saved costs by having certified teachers deliver an arts curriculum at the elementary level. Some districts also hired “artists-in-residence” to enhance curricula at the elementary level. In this way, districts saved funds on salary and benefits by not making full-time hires, and tapped into grant resources made available specifically for this purpose. Yet, even with all the opportunity provided through federal supports, many schools still lack arts instruction in New Jersey (New Jersey Arts Education Partnership, n.d.).

The employment of artists-in-residence has created a significant philosophical gap between districts and arts organizations like the National Art Education Association (NAEA), which “frowns upon the use of resident artists in public schools as a replacement for the arts education certified specialist” (S. Leshnoff, personal communication, March 2011). Thus, the use of artists in residence was thought to create a

vicious cycle, because when districts approached curricular delivery this way, they would be less inclined to bear the cost of hiring certified art teachers, as this approach would be more cost-effective for the districts. Research has shown that this practice compromises instructional delivery of the curriculum (Stake, Bresler & Mabry, 1991; Bresler, DeStefano, Feldman, & Garg, 2000).

The use of artists in residence as the sole means to satisfy the art accreditation requirement of NCLB was obviously highly problematic. This was especially true in the context of NCLB's emphasis on high professional standards in teaching, and the requirement for all teachers to attain Highly Qualified Status within a set timeframe. ESSA, however, eliminates this requirement, under the presumption that all states should have achieved this status a decade ago, and eliminates the responsibility of enforcement by the US Department of Education regarding surrounding issues of teacher certification (Sawchuk, 2015).

While many studies demonstrate some correlation between arts education and increased student achievement (Winner & Hetland, 2000; Deasy, 2002), research also shows that student achievement is often a direct result of good teaching (Darling-Hammond, 2000). Thus, to derive the full benefit of an arts curriculum fully integrated within a standards-based curriculum, professional arts educators will be essential. Such integration will be necessary if the arts are to deliver the structuring understandings that help students succeed in subject areas across the curriculum, as posited by Gardner (2004). However, simply holding a degree in education and achieving Highly Qualified Status may not be enough to do the job of school improvement that education in the arts can deliver.

Art-Specific Pedagogy and Best Practices

Current pedagogical studies emphasize the effectiveness of performance-based assessments (Wiggins, 1990, 1993, 1998; Brualdi, 2000). Such assessments offer teachers opportunities for exposure to arts appreciation and expression. However, delivery of an effective art education program requires specialized content knowledge and technical expertise (National Art Education Association, 1994). In general teacher education programs, these skills are rarely taught in an in-depth way. For a teacher to truly master these skills, there is no substitute for formal art education and studio practice. Therefore, having a teacher who is professionally trained and experienced in the arts in an arts classroom is not only highly desirable, but also essential to the academic outcomes first mandated by NCLB. Darling-Hammond (2000) suggests that when combined with his or her subject matter knowledge, a teacher's pedagogical skill level may improve or diminish his or her performance; but that standards at the international, national, and state levels—as well as best practices in the arts—call for arts education as a key component of 21st-century P-12 education.

Professionally trained teachers have acquired the ability to develop and implement authentic curricular frameworks that address the needs of their students. Authentic curricular design examines many contextual issues and utilizes various problem-solving approaches. These are often found within the local community and the society at large. Authentic assessment within this context is reflective of contemporary thought and its real-world application, giving breadth and rigor to student outcomes and their projects (Anderson & Milbrandt, 2005). This utilitarian curricular approach to teaching and learning is contained within a theoretical base of visual culture art education

(VCAE) (Barker, 2010). VCAE is a dynamic contemporary direction for arts education. A brief history of VCAE theory demonstrates this direction for curricular considerations. Li (2007) notes that contemporary art education includes all forms of art, daily life, and culture visually experienced through normal interactivity. The dominant notion of art, which primarily comprises European fine arts, was constructed according to a Eurocentric ideology (Dikovitskaya, 2005). This ideology is biased and confining, as several European artists themselves realized as early as the late nineteenth century.

Today, a more global, less Eurocentric approach to art is required. Moreover, visual culture art education suggests that the study of art should include not only the refined (fine arts), but also a critical appreciation of design, a developed literacy of the functional, and an aesthetic and utilitarian appreciation of the everyday (Duncum, 2002). This approach can contribute to a more culturally inclusive and responsive pedagogy of art education. Moreover, it includes a more expanded acceptance of all analog and digital media forms. If using a Eurocentric lens, electronic media forms would have likely been overlooked; ignored as acceptable works of art when compared with traditional visual arts media, such as painting and sculpture.

Research Questions

The research questions I attempt to assess are as follows:

1. What impact does the training offered by art specialists in a collaborative arts model have on academic teachers' actual implementation of the same in their classroom?

2. How much technical knowledge does a teacher need to possess in order to automatically “think” with new media technology? What supports are needed in order to successfully implement the same in the classroom?
3. Does the combination of the researcher’s suggested pedagogical methods (UbD framework, integration of new media, VTS and WU/Painted Essay) improve students’ writing skills?

Barriers to consider may include organizational assumptions and attitudes imbedded in the school culture (Schein, 2004), the teachers’ own beliefs about using technology in the teaching and learning process, and issues of methodology or technique required to help teachers bridge gaps and meet their students’ needs (Kotter, 1996; Evans, 1996; Fullan, 2001).

Conclusion

In this chapter I have explored the chronology of both federal and state educational policies and laws that have driven public education since the inception of NCLB and currently with ESSA. I have noted some particularly concerning trends that exist in education because of federal legal policies. NCLB’s accountability demands made a negative impact on urban local educational agency (LEA) funding due to its requirements for student achievement to be measured through standardized testing. This created restrictions on curriculum, changed teachers’ certification requirements, and impacted teachers’ curricular pedagogical decision making and voice. As an educator and leader, I am motivated to examine these issues by asking questions intended to resolve problems and improve the lives of the students we serve. In the next chapter, I explore research-based literature relating to the research questions I have posed in this chapter.

Chapter 2

Literature Review

The purpose of the literature review is to ascertain the latest thought on the topical areas of interest and inquiry. It is from this information that I formulate a base understanding and devise a methodology to perform a cyclical inquiry process and reach conclusions to the original research questions. For this research, I investigate the foremost studies on the current state of educational policies driving education, and the current thought on art education, new media technologies, Visual Thinking Strategies, teacher training and classroom methodologies, and Understanding by Design.

Twenty-First Century Context: Politics, Policy, and Educational Reform in the Classroom

No Child Left Behind, teacher quality, and professional development. No Child Left Behind (NCLB) mandated continuous professional development for the nation's teachers. To this end, funding is available for a variety of continuing education and professional development programs. Several of these programs attempt to help teachers improve teaching skills by creating partnerships between universities and school districts.

The Teacher Quality Partnership (TQP) was first instituted under the Higher Education Opportunity Act in 2008; the Bush administration funded the program with \$43 million. The Obama administration continued to fund the TQP via the Educational Recovery Act, with \$100 million for 2009 (US Department of Education, n.d., p. 1). The purpose of the TQP is to improve the quality and the capacity of teacher pedagogy skills in high-needs schools, thus improving scholastic achievement. The partnership provides

training to all teachers and administrators, with special programs that focus on beginning teachers in high-needs districts and early childhood education. Built within the parameters of the program are the criteria for evaluation of the program's success. Evaluation took place over a four-year period, from 2009 through 2012.

Using this data to set the stage, Race to the Top (RTTT) works alongside previously implemented NCLB mandates and further increases the federal government's role in influencing education policy, as Manna (2006) predicted in his Borrowing Strength Model. According to Alyson (2010), under an Obama administration proposal, states seeking federal funding for disadvantaged students would have to adopt college and career readiness standards for reading and math. The proposal was a means of linking the Elementary and Secondary Education Act's Title I program to the administration's path to achievement of higher academic standards.

In promoting this agenda, Secretary of Education Arne Duncan was accused of clothing a mostly conservative school reform agenda in the rhetoric of the civil rights movement when he said that access to a quality education should be "the civil rights issue of the decade" (Hirsh, 2010, para. 17). While the sentiment may be indisputable, the means of going about achieving these ends are, as my research postulates, open to debate.

What has become evident to political and educational policymakers is that quality teaching must be supported; however, defining quality teaching is not easy. Most American taxpayers are still willing to invest in their children's education with their tax dollars and their disposable income, but the costs can be high. Successful inexpensive alternatives to traditional teacher training and development are the exception rather than the rule, as indicated by higher attrition and failure rates for alternate route program

candidates (Darling-Hammond, Holtzman, Gatlin, & Heilig, 2005; Boe, Cook, & Sunderland, 2006; Tamura, 2008).

The president of the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education, discussing the report *What Matters Most: Teaching for America's Future* (Darling-Hammond, 1997) stated, “Studies have shown that teacher expertise is the single most important factor in determining student achievement... fully trained teachers are far more effective with students than those who are not prepared” (p. 15).

The difference one teacher can make. A study on the potential impact of a single teacher on student achievement was documented by Wright, Horn, and Sanders (1997). They concur that the most important factor affecting student learning is the teacher. In addition, the study results show wide variation in effectiveness among teachers; its authors believe more can be done to improve education by improving the effectiveness of teachers than by any other single factor. Citing Haycock (1998), Marzano (2003) notes that “Sanders’ results are most revealing in determining the achievement differences between students who spend a year with a highly effective teacher as opposed to a less effective teacher” (p. 72), and stating that on average, “the most effective teachers produced gains of about 53 percentage points in student achievement over one year, whereas the least effective teachers produced achievement gains of about 14 percentage points over the same period.”

To this end, this study should consider Marzano’s research when evaluating the relationship between student achievement and teacher training through professional development. However, considerations should be given to the developmental/grade levels of the student, and to the subject matter being taught. The Marzano study made these

claims by comparing scores in mathematics, and we do not have the same data to compare with in visual arts. However, the point that good teaching has lasting effects on the student is certainly acknowledged and understood.

Value-added assessment. Race to the Top (RTTT) has positioned the issue of merit pay and value-added evaluation systems for teachers' rise at the top of the political agenda in education. The concept of value-added assessment is rooted in the idea that the ability of a school system or teacher to teach students can be measured, as in the models cited above. Value-added assessment attempts to use these measurements to ascertain whether standards and benchmarks set forth in policy and legislation are being achieved, and by whom. This methodology was employed in in the 1990s in Tennessee. After a study completed by Sanders and Horn (1998), several other states began to employ the strategy, since it presented itself as an empirically measurable model linking teacher effectiveness to student achievement.

In “Value Added” Assessment: Tool for Improvement or Educational ‘Nuclear Option’” (Saltman, 2010, para. 1), Saltman states, “The Obama administration has aggressively embraced it, making states' eligibility for \$4.35 billion in competitive federal Race to the Top grants contingent on states linking teacher evaluation to student test data.”

Some supporters of value-added assessment want to use this data to transform university teacher preparation programs. They suggest that test score outcomes should be used to determine which teacher education programs produce teachers who help students the most.

Difficulties with the data. The growing enthusiasm over value-added assessment, however, belies what may be a damaging policy for public education. Kelly and Monczunski (2007, para. 1) demonstrate how easy it is to get the data wrong, and note that “volatility suggests that the traditional use of cross-sectional data cannot reliably estimate the production of achievement by schools, and therefore schools may be unfairly sanctioned under such a system.” In “Teacher Effects and Teacher Effectiveness: A Validity Investigation of the Tennessee Value-Added Assessment System,” Kupermintz (2003) examines the mechanisms used to calculate teacher effectiveness, and the relationships between their estimates, student ability, and socioeconomic background characteristics. Kupermintz finds structural weaknesses that effectively undermine the system’s reliability. In “Controlling for Student Background in Value-Added Assessment of Teachers” (Ballou, Sanders and Wright, 2004), the research team had to modify the TVAAS results by introducing controls for student demographics and socioeconomic status to prevent them from appearing misleading, and thus adversely affecting perfectly good schools and teachers.

“Models for Value-Added Modeling of Teacher Effects” (McCaffrey, Lockwood, Koretz, Louis, & Hamilton, 2004) shows that the issue is even more complex. These findings address the omission of socioeconomic variables at the school level, concluding that controlling for student-level socioeconomic and demographic factors alone will not be sufficient to remove the effects of background characteristics, especially in districts serving heterogeneous populations. They warn against even using the updated Ballou, Sanders, and Wright model. Additionally, Reckase (2004) argues that the nature of the tests that value-added models use to derive estimates of teacher and school effects is

problematic, because what is tested shifts within and across grade levels. Reckase posits that this shift renders the use of value-added models in test-based accountability systems as a misguided decision.

Deeper issues with value-added assessment. Value-added assessment may present problems more deep-rooted than just poorly substantiated data. Its use may also contribute to the burnout experienced by teachers at ever faster rates. Kohn (2011) thoroughly dismantles the logical presuppositions of and the uses for value-added assessment, arguing that such evaluation is part of a reform process whose political aim is to help dismantle teachers' unions, de-intellectualize teachers' jobs, and refashion schools according to corporate-profit-making initiatives.

Kohn (2011, para. 11-13) proposes that three objective questions must be answered to determine whether value-added assessment makes sense:

- Does this model provide valid and reliable information about teachers (and schools)?
- Does learning really lend itself to any kind of “value-added” approach?
- Do standardized tests assess what matters most about teaching and learning?

Most education professionals who have studied these issues would, as shown above, answer “maybe not” to these questions.

Value-added assessment is attractive to supporters because it offers an objective measure of teacher performance; one that can be numerically quantified and tracked. It also appears to promise the ability to distill from data those teaching methods that result in higher test scores; however, the studies cited above indicate how problematic it is, in fact, to distill that data. The dream for proponents of value-added assessment is to

identify those teaching methods and behaviors that raise test scores, and then require teachers to adopt those allegedly successful methods. Additionally, value-added assessment promises to reveal those teachers who do not sufficiently raise test scores, thereby adding pressure on teachers and administrators. Recent standardized test cheating scandals in Atlanta and Washington are among the negative consequences of such pressure on both teachers and districts to achieve results (Severson, 2011).

Value-added assessment also puts pressure on teachers' unions. In many states, politicians have begun to suggest that job security, salary, and even firing be linked to student test score improvement or decline rather than to professional review, tenure, and seniority. Teaching unions, which favor a system that is equitable and just for their workers (and one that includes a modicum of job security), will not be anxious to give up such hard-won gains. This exemplifies the way arguments over value-added assessment have become part of current larger cultural and political struggles in the United States. This study must consider this contextual space, inasmuch as how these same pressures affect teachers' daily capacity and performance. Consideration should be given to contextualization of the congruence (or lack thereof) of expectations between and among district administration, local teaching union contracts, and teacher evaluation.

The teacher, the content, and the standards in NJ. For the US to remain among the most successful nations in the field of education, many education professionals recommend renewed investment in its educational system in general, and specifically in research on the topic of teacher professional practices. These professional teaching practices can be thought of as a core body of knowledge and skill sets that all teachers are expected to have to be effective. These practices are to be demonstrated and assessed

through student engagement and achievement as defined in the National Board of Professional Development Teaching Standards (<http://www.nbpts.org/national-board-standards>).

It is by these standards that the New Jersey Professional Development Standards criteria are modeled (<http://www.state.nj.us/education/profdev/profstand/>). In New Jersey, for example, it should be possible to gauge the skill sets, core knowledge, and pedagogy of teachers through the evaluation of these criteria alongside a variety of assessment tasks. These include but are not limited to high-stakes tests used in the state, currently the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) assessment system. This group of assessments provides testing in English language arts/literacy and mathematics at the end of each school year for students in grades 3-8 and high school. It serves to measure current student performance and to indicate what students must master before they graduate high school, so they will be prepared for college and/or careers (Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers, n.d.).

By developing a framework where these criteria can be seen together, along with adequate background information about the students taught and tested, we may begin to deliver a more holistic approach to the value-added model. The sources cited to this point indicate that change is both possible and required. High-stakes testing, meanwhile, remains a problematically overburdened assessment of knowledge for both students and teachers. The issue of high-stakes testing versus authentic assessment remains an outstanding issue that must be explored. It would be short-sighted to ignore the role this testing issue currently plays in teacher professional development initiatives. Ideally, these

initiatives will ultimately lead to new approaches for improving student academic achievement overall.

The arts and authentic assessment. Using the arts as a vehicle for authentic assessment to demonstrate student understanding and transfer in any given subject is like a peanut butter and jelly sandwich: the individual products are wonderful on their own, and when they mix, they complement each other. The arts naturally speak to students' learning styles (Gardner, 1993). Visual art is a natural vehicle for creating understanding because it is a non-verbal language. Art and language share certain elements. They both use signs and symbols. The philosopher Nelson Goodman defines language as “a symbol system that conveys complex ideas” (Goodman, 1976). Eubanks (1997) further postulates that the common elements of visual and verbal language “...are organized by a code, syntax in verbal language, or the principles of design in visual language. The symbols and the code together create meaning, semantics in verbal language” (p. 31), and notes that an art education curriculum explores this relationship, a key concept within national and state core content standards defined for visual art.

Artistic style, form, process, and arts education. Artists use the elements of design as a tool to compose their images formally and symbolically; to communicate their thoughts, experiences, and perceptions of the world around them. When an artist organizes symbol systems using the elements and principles of art and design and unified composition, creating a work of art, he inherently speaks to others about those same thoughts, experiences, and perceptions. He uses the banks of his memory from his experiences to create a story or a design. Peterson (1993) has “categorized a similar mental process of visual comparison of mental images from within a ‘related-image

bank' in the brain as 'reconstrual'" (p. 153). This is the process by which the mind composes and evaluates a picture, and it includes various levels of visual decision-making and determinations, both aesthetic and intellectual. Thus, the reconstrual process is described as a basic and vital component of visual creativity, problem solving, and connective thought.

Freedman (1997) expounds on this idea and reframes artistic form and written process as intertextual and intergraphical concepts that are seamlessly woven themes, ideas, and symbols. Gradle (2009) cites Schaefer-Simmern (1948) in noting that whole structures—gestalts—result from the development of artistic forms, and the clarification and transformation of visual ideas.

Schaefer-Simmern (1948) believes that the mission of art education is to uncover man's innate latent creativity and artistic ability. He believes that artistic vision organizes structural rules and formal concepts of making art with a rigorous exploration of critical intellectual thought, big ideas, and global themes that are essential to unfolding abstract concepts, knowledge, and skills.

The educational implication is to construct a curriculum that examines the larger social condition rather than its individual parts. Thoughtful curricular material is meant to help students uncover the big ideas and the overarching themes recurrent in real life. Teaching methods require teachers to help their students make connections, and critically think through their work by using a taxonomy of questioning, which helps students make meaningful connections to what Wiggins calls "enduring understandings" (Wiggins & McTighe, 2005).

When students connect personally to the curriculum and understand it, learning has a deeper meaning to them. Moreover, for students have a meaningful connection to a task, they must be able to achieve a positive result from a learning experience. It is the concept of success breeding success, as we consider sparking students to become lifelong learners by encouraging their intrinsic motivation to learn. Hence, the context and content of the visual arts curriculum demonstrates overarching, deeper meaning outcomes for student learning and transfer thereof.

Understanding by Design. In their book *Understanding by Design*, Wiggins and McTighe (2005) ask the reader to consider what constitutes knowledge and skills, and how this is different from understanding. Which information is essential, and which big ideas are worth exploring in order to attain transfer of skills and knowledge? How do we design curricular units to teach our goals for learning and assess the same so that we know that students have learned the same? In *Understanding by Design: Professional Development Workbook*, Wiggins and McTighe (2004) create a teacher template for designing unit learning to answer these same questions.

Using “backwards design,” units are constructed with the end in mind, which is congruent to the thought process of a designer or an engineer. Using the UbD template, teachers are guided through the process of unit design based around big ideas and enduring understandings, which transcends the performance task, and produces deep understanding evaluated through authentic assessment.

The framework includes three stages of unit design. Stage One focuses on the transfer of learning using essential questions that allow the learner to make meaning of skills and knowledge, and supports the goal for learning as defined within the Core

Content Standards. Teachers are asked to unpack the standards and their criteria for mastery of learning, from which they define goals for learning.

In Stage Two, the teacher is asked to consider the evidence needed to demonstrate that students have achieved the desired results. Wiggins and McTighe (2004) explain that as curriculum designers, teachers need to think about the kinds of assessments needed to validate that students have actually learned before they design a performance task. Stage Three is where the teacher creates the activities, designates the sequence of tasks, and decides which materials to use to teach so that students achieve understanding and knowledge transfer.

Pedagogy, understanding, and creativity. Assessment is a natural vehicle for this approach to learning, as it is designed to measure the student's ability to work constructively, to construct a product, and to determine a level of mastery. A meaningful, successful learning experience will intrinsically motivate the student to learn. With repeated successful experiences, the student will be motivated to learn more in order to produce more masterful works, which are the marks of a creative mind, and the results of professional training for teachers in an arts curriculum (Ryan & Deci, 2000).

Stewart (2006) provides an excellent way to utilize difference in the way various people problem-solve and create. This can offer powerful pedagogical approaches in the classroom. She analyzes the types of creative thinking necessary to produce an artwork, noting how convergent and divergent types of thinking can produce different results from the same source. While convergent thinking tends to be "linear in progression and is a highly focused, problem-solving technique... familiar through the scientific method," she states, divergent thinking is "more open ended"; while "convergent thinking is usually

more efficient, divergent thinking is often more inventive” (p. 135). Stewart (2006) offers specific pedagogical approaches for the teacher to use in the classroom to launch the type of “thinking” and brainstorming methods that will produce the best results. Stewart explores making lists, using a thesaurus, exploring verbal connections, and keeping a journal. She is particularly interested in investigating how exploring connections through words helps visualization.

Similarly, Hayes (1990) wants to see the connection between the cognitive processes that are necessary for one to be highly creative. He considers existing research studies to answer two questions: “Do creative people have high IQs?” and “What cognitive processes are involved in creative acts?” To answer the first question, Hayes purports that “school performance is not correlated with I.Q.” (p. 2). His explanation is the “certification theory,” which states that there is no correlation between IQ and creativity among professionals. Being creatively productive depends upon getting a job that allows one to be creative. However, because of the degree requirement necessary for obtaining employment—and by which society measures success—we may be inappropriately discouraging a large portion of creative individuals in our society who do not fit this academic model, one that weeds out many students (Hayes, 1978). Hayes’s thinking also supports the argument that we should not rely solely on standardized test scores as a measure of student academic proficiency. Thus, Hayes’s theory supports authentic assessment measures.

However, Hayes (1990, p. 3) also finds contradictory evidence. Considering studies that focus upon cognition and personality traits such as that by Guilford (1967), Hayes presents evidence that divergent thinking is a major factor in the creative process;

others such as Mansfield and Busse (1981) find no such evidence. However, Hayes does find agreement around identifiable personality traits, which are distinctive. Hayes looks at four of the sixteen traits and notes that devotion to work, independence, drive for originality, and flexibility are the most evident among the highly creative. In distinguishing which cognitive processes are involved in creative acts, he finds “that creative acts are, in principle, unanalyzable; and second, that creative acts involve special processes which are not involved in other kinds of thought” (p. 5). Hayes believes in motivation; ultimately it is these motivational differences that cause cognition differences that we can see in the work of creative people. This indicates that using art and technology integration as a “hook” to increase student engagement (Wiggins & McTighe, 2007) and an assessment task makes complete sense. When we tap into the individual’s learning style, we gain student interest. Thus, natural inquiry, which acts as a scaffold to intrinsic motivation, can be instrumental in achieving student success in the classroom.

Gradle (2009, p. 8) notes that Davis (2004) provides a teaching and learning model that is guided by thoughtful inquiry. The model applies Socratic dialogue, and informs the learner through deep understanding and connection with overarching, recurring concepts that inform general knowledge. This method draws on knowledge that the student already has and how he or she uses it to make connections and form a relationship to new information. The learner takes ownership of his learning by making informed decisions and purposeful choices about the artistic process, connecting media and production with context and interpretive meaning.

Similarly, Benjamin Bloom (1956) created a taxonomy to promote higher order thinking in students. His work identified three domains of learning that occurred in

students: the cognitive (knowledge and skills); the affective (the emotional areas of the self and others); and the psychomotor skills (one's physical skills). Bloom suggested that educators designing curriculum need to be cognizant of all three domains of learning. To aid this, he designed a taxonomy of higher order thinking, beginning with lower level skill sets such as remembering, understanding, and applying; extending to higher order thinking skills such as analyzing, evaluating, and creating (The Performance Juxtaposition Site, n.d.). Teachers are encouraged to use this taxonomy when developing lessons as a guide to scaffolding lessons based on rigor. Connecting this to Gradle's (2009) reference to Davis's (2004) model of questioning, Bloom's Taxonomy can also be used as a guide to designing questions/questioning based on rigor, as occurs within the Socratic method, for similar classroom discussions.

In her research on the work of Schaefer-Simmern, Gradle (2009) cites Abrahamson (1980), who acknowledges Schaefer-Simmern's concept of convergent thinking. Abrahamson describes convergent thinking as "the ability to understand one's own artwork as a whole, and also perceive its relation to the larger body of art" (p. 14). The significance is that the learner gains an understanding about how his work fits within a larger body of work that he creates, and how that body of work fits within the context of the art world. It validates for the learner his own values, judgments, and aesthetic preferences as he communicates his connection to the world. Moreover, the learner further understands the relational aspects of his work as it signifies the holistic integration of this experience in his life.

In "Another Look at Holistic Art Education: Exploring the Legacy of Henry Schaefer-Simmern," Gradle (2009) explores the work of Schaefer-Simmern (1948/1961,

2003), whose art education theories speak of an alternative yet viable, holistic approach to teaching and learning. Some contemporary thinkers find that art instruction is a valuable part of contemporary holistic pedagogical practice. Gradle (2009) notes that Schaefer-Simmern's theories, while proven through his comprehensive research to work with diverse learner groups, are still not well-understood or known in art education. However, asserts Gradle (2009), his ideas are applicable in holistic approaches to teaching art that explore the way artistic behaviors shape an individual; that promote an individual's ownership of the creative process in order to spur his or her artistic thinking; and that use art to develop problem-finding and problem-solving skills that an individual can then use in other areas of life.

Gradle (2009) further observes that Schaefer-Simmern (1970) postulates that "...visual thinking must occur in addition to intellectual inquiry if the artmaker is going to form an artistic vision that results in a visual work" (p. 4). Schaefer-Simmern also believes that "the majority of people have the ability to visually express their perceptions of experiences" (p. 5). Moreover, Schaefer-Simmern's theory suggests that experience, reflection, and artmaking aid in the development of artistic forms, ultimately leading to visual ideas becoming whole structures known as *gestalts*.

Gradle (2009) describes the theoretical implications for Schaefer-Simmern's (1970) work. She cites Davis and Sumara (2006), who conceptualize learning as a trigger, rather than a cause, for a learner's transformation; and who observe that changes may be both behavioral and physical. Gradle also notes that educators Askew and Carnell (1998) explained transformative learning as the learner's participation in the entire experience of learning, without emphasis on facts or objective knowledge. According to Gradle (2009),

“This is a paradigm shift in education to consider the learner as agent, the context in which they learn as contributory knowledge, and the active processes that make this possible essential to transformation” (p. 13). Furthermore, she asserts, Schaefer-Simmern’s (1970) approach is an earlier expression of these “definitive ideas on transformation, and his work describes a deep reflective learning process that ultimately transforms the learner” (Gradle, 2009, p. 13).

NEA study on VTS research. Expanding the scope of these findings, the National Art Education Association studied some of the background research to the Visual Thinking Strategies (VTS) program in the report *Jump Starting Visual Literacy: Thoughts on Image Selection* (Yenawine, 2003). In this study, Yenawine and the Museum of Modern Art teamed up to observe and identify the stages of visual literacy through aesthetics.

Yenawine (2003, pp. 7-8) cites Housen (2000-2001), who provides a framework to view the first three aesthetic stages to make curricular, pedagogical decisions, and to monitor and adjust materials to help students reach understanding. However, Housen (2000-2001) denotes a total of five stages of aesthetic development.

In Stage I, Housen (2000-2001) defines “accountive viewers” as a species of critical-interpretive storyteller. Accountive viewers use personal associations to form concrete observations about a work of art that are woven into a narrative. Viewers enter the work of art. Once there, they use their emotional faculties and personal memories to experience its unfolding narrative.

Stage II deals with what Housen (2000-2001) calls “constructive viewers.” These viewers build a framework for interacting with art by using only the most logical and

accessible tools: their everyday perceptions of “reality,” the natural world, and conventional, social, and moral value systems. Constructive viewers are less comfortable accessing their imaginations and allowing them to interact with whatever intellectual or aesthetic sensibilities they have developed. If the art they encounter does not conform to their world view, they dismiss it. At this stage, art is acceptable if it mimics the world as they see it.

In Housen’s (2000-2001) explanation of Stage III, “classifying viewers” adopt an analytical and critical stance that mimics that of the art historian. Classifying viewers attempt to “identify the work as to place, school, style, time and provenance. They decode the work using their library of facts and figures, which they are ready and eager to expand” (Yenawine, 2003, p. 8). This viewer believes that properly categorized, the work of art’s meaning and message can be explained and rationalized. This kind of understanding generally requires a base of pre-existing knowledge about the subject matter, but the frame of mind that seeks to classify can exist even without a large base of pre-existing knowledge.

Yenawine (2003) defines and applies how teachers may best organize the kind of information found in Stage III, based upon where the student is in the continuum of learning, in order to demonstrate understanding, skills, and knowledge.

Housen (2000-2001) defines Stage IV as *interpretive*. This viewer has a personal dialogue with the work of art which he describes and interprets from a spontaneous reaction to the work, making references to the formal and the subjective subtle qualities of the work. The viewer interprets the work using symbolic conventions and personal experiences, creating new meaning from the work.

Finally, Housen (2000-2001) explains that Stage V concerns an experienced viewer who has spent much time critically analyzing work and is willing to put the conventions aside to come to the work with a fresh new eye and with a level of comfort that being familiar and knowledgeable about the work bring to the viewing experience.

Implications for teaching. Of course, this has implications for teaching. Teachers need to be aware of their students' developmental levels and assumptions, class and cultural biases, and maturity levels and experiences in order to help them grow and develop. To serve their students, teachers must first become cognizant of their own limitations, assumptions, and biases (Kunjufu, 2002). The better informed that teachers can become about their students, the better the opportunity for teachers to create connections and deepen understanding. Thus, teachers will be in position to broaden student understanding, awaken student imagination, and help students accept and genuinely encounter all types of art and literature.

Yenawine (2003) cites Housen (2000-2001, p. 9) and recommends that the educational implications lie in developing programs that engage the viewer at each stage at the appropriate level in order to foster aesthetic development that is observable and measurable.

According to Yenawine (2003), viewers in Housen's Stages I and II draw conclusions by connecting their observations, creating mental and perceptual associations through memories, facts, and emotions as an attempt to organize and make sense of what they are viewing in a new work of art. It is with this schematic understanding that students make personal narratives with the new work as a way of creating meaning, and transferring prior knowledge to new encounters with art. The more of their own

experience these early-stage students find within the work, the more meaning they will be able to create from their encounters with it.

Teachers working with such students might choose images and stories that are closely related to the students' own life experiences, and environmental influences. Even if the teacher's objective is to expand the repertoire of student experience, Yenawine (2003) believes it is essential to successful learning transfer to begin from a place of familiarity with the student's life and experience. Without such connections, interpretation of any kind, at any stage, might never happen at all. Yenawine (2003) agrees, saying "photos can serve as a bridge to understanding what artists do. Beginners know what it's like to look through a camera" (p. 9).

As Housen and Yenawine (2000) point out, peculiarity and subjectivity are typical characteristics of beginners' viewing behaviors. Thus, images selected should contain multiple valid readings and possible meanings. The more a work is open to interpretation, the more likely the viewer's intuition will be meaningful. Thus, subjects selected should draw students in and sustain their interest. In Housen's (2000-2001) view of artistic interpretation, we see that the life of the work of art depends on both on the creator and the viewer to take place. The more sophisticated the viewer, the greater the amount of meaning the work can generate.

Housen's (2000-2001) vision shares similarities with that of Rosenblatt (1994). Housen suggests the work of art's meaning comes from the transaction between the object and the viewer, just as Rosenblatt finds that the meaning of text is created in transactions between the reader and the text in reader-response (or transactional) theory. The work of both Rosenblatt and Housen gives educators an entry into a student-centered

approach to arts education: the student as interpreter is as much a focus of the artistic event as is the work of art or literature.

Rosenblatt's reader-response theory and Housen's Stages of Aesthetic Development can be used together by educators to aid in developing knowledge construction and acquisition through the process of intertextuality. This concept reinforces the hypothesis that the visual narrative/photo essay can be instrumental in understanding the relationship between the visual arts and literacy/writing, and bridging the gap between them.

According to Friedman (1991), intertextuality is the reference a reader makes to various other texts s/he has read. The process of intertextuality might be said to take place in the conceptual space between texts. Rather than focusing on the text at hand, reading necessarily focuses on the conceptual space between various texts, between texts and images, or even ideas and historical events. Friedman's ideas of intertextuality were no doubt influenced by Bloom (1973, 1997), and literary influence criticism or influence theory. What Friedman wrote about written texts is now generally understood to appertain to all artistic and cultural (and even historical) experience. Each thing we encounter is informed by what we have experienced before, and will inform what we go on to experience. If this were not the case, we would have to learn to understand each new text that we read—or each new experience we have, artistic or otherwise—from scratch; we would not be able to relate one to another. In a discrete sense, writers would not be able to use techniques like simile, analogy, and metaphor; in a larger sense, the development of intertextual abilities and processes makes the experience of culture and life more resonant with cumulative meaning.

The same type of conceptual space exists for and between visual culture and the other arts, including what has been called art traditionally in the context of curriculum. Scholars such as Freedman (2003) have refocused intertextuality towards a visually-centered discussion of art and culture. In her book *Teaching Visual Culture*, Freedman (2003) introduces the term *intergraphicality*, first stating, “knowledge construction takes place through intertextuality in which references are made by a ‘reader’ to various other texts that person has read in the past” (p. 121).

Through intergraphicality, Freedman explains, our minds can recall and integrate a vast array of images and their associated meanings. Cognition involves reference to interactions between dispersed references to various forms of representations. The images we have encountered in the past become attached to association related to the context in which we saw them, including the context of thoughts about or the conceptual space between the previous experiences.

Freedman’s (2003) work also investigates various developmental models and approaches to increase student understanding of visual culture in relation to its production and critique, and the curricular implications of such. She provides the teacher with a framework to guide his or her choices about curricular subject matter, and instructional materials based upon specific criteria and objectives, and aligned with the students’ interests and skills. It is very important for students to learn not only what is being taught, but also to make meaningful connections beyond the classroom.

Connecting Concepts to Learning in VTS Performance Tasks

When creating a performance task, connecting concepts to learning experience is the goal. The teacher’s approach or methodology will determine the amount of meaning a

student will use later. Housen (2000-2001) designed the Visual Thinking Strategies (VTS) Curriculum based on her theory and research about aesthetic growth stages, matching imagery and questioning to the developmental stage of the viewer. In this method, the teacher asks a sequence of guiding questions about carefully selected work. Through critical discussion, students deconstruct the images to construct meaning about them. They are also exposed to the thinking of others, which can create a shift of perspective in their own thinking. The VTS curriculum's sustained professional development includes on-site training and yearly museum visits. Teachers are trained in the same techniques required of the students. The teacher acts as a coach to foster critical thinking. Thus, the classroom becomes a center of inquiry, and students also make yearly museum visits.

Housen (2001-2002, p. 102), in her work "Aesthetic Thought, Critical Thinking and Transfer," discusses the outcomes of a longitudinal study in the Byron School District, the Minneapolis Institute of Arts, and Visual Understanding in Education (VUE), a private educational research company founded by Yenawine and Housen. This five-year study supported the joint aesthetic growth hypothesis of these organizations. They demonstrated that their curriculum was the reason for that growth, and that VTS was the catalyst responsible for students' growth in the area of critical thinking. VTS created transfer into other content areas and contexts (Housen, 2000-2001). The significance of the study lies in the qualifying criteria and instruments developed to measure the growth of critical thinking. These included two principal instruments of measurement: the Aesthetic Development Interview (ADI) and the Material Object

Interview (MOI). Of the two, the ADI became important for the project design of this study.

Housen (2000-2001, pp. 108, 109) explores transfer across social context and proves that both student groups involved in the study demonstrated growth, with the experimental group showing more. She also studies transfer across content to see if the students' critical thinking indicates transfer not only across social context, but also to the content to which it is applied. The experimental group's mean score was twice as high as the control group, supporting this hypothesis.

Housen's (2000-2001, p. 110) work is sequential. The 1993-1998 Byron VTS study tests Housen's idea that there is a sequence to transfer, and that context transfer happens earlier than content transfer. Housen had also postulated that VTS would create an increased rate of aesthetic development, which was determined to be a cumulative outcome by year five. Significantly, the results proved that the experimental group as a whole exceeded Stage II. Harvard Project Zero (Tishman, MacGillivray, & Palmer, 1999) replicated the study using a different design, and found similar results to those Housen (2000-2001) obtained in the Byron study.

Using VTS Beyond the Context of Art

A later study entitled *Artful Citizen Project* (Curva & Associates, 2005) utilized VTS strategies to foster critical thinking skills to improve student achievement in other academic areas, and to foster socio-emotional maturity through self-esteem and respect for others. This was a joint venture involving the Wolfsonian-Florida International University (FIU) in partnership with three elementary schools in Miami-Dade County Public Schools (M-DCPS); Visual Understanding in Education (VUE), a private

educational research company started by Yenawine and Housen; faculty from the FIU College of Education; and Curva and Associates (2005, pp. 1-3), a team of independent education researchers.

The program's objectives were to teach visual literacy, to influence children's character and social development, and to improve academic achievement. Academic progress was measured through norm- and criterion-referenced tests, such as the Florida Comprehensive Achievement Test.

Findings showed that students participating in the Artful Citizenship program for three years achieved significantly more growth in their visual literacy than a control student group. The study also found a significant relationship between growth in visual literacy and improvement in student achievement in both math and reading. Strong correlation was found between improved visual literacy and three out of four students' academic achievement measures in the treatment schools. Correlations were between .35 and .40, considered exceptionally high for student achievement variables. The comparison school had no such results to mark.

However, the initial design featured flaws that required correction. There were five psychosocial scales in the original design, but their reliability coefficients fell below acceptable levels. Researchers then collapsed two scales into a combined scale; however, psychosocial scales remained untrustworthy; predictive and construct validity were not evident from associations with other variables. No relationship between changes in the four psychosocial measures and participation in the program, nor between psychosocial measures and student achievement, could yet be determined.

Methodology and delivery of the Artful Citizen program also received formative assessment, and this constituted the second part of the evaluation. Researchers gained insights into curriculum segments that functioned productively in the classroom, as well as those that would benefit from revision through their interaction with and observation of art and classroom teachers. Researchers observed firsthand how administrative support, particularly by school principals, played a crucial role in program quality and teachers' curricular fidelity.

According to Curva and Associates (2005), "Learning Visual Literacy led to the development of students' critical thinking skills" (p. 4). Through their use of evidential reasoning, students in the Artful Citizen classrooms used critical thinking skills by providing factual and logical support to their assertions. The VTS method, which promotes the use of *because* statements in responses, provided solid support for students' use of evidence to back up their statements. The team observed students applying these critical thinking skills beyond art and social studies classrooms; the learning transferred to other curricular areas including math, language arts, and writing across the curriculum. By facilitating a process of building on the ideas of others, the curriculum fostered collaboration among students. Students readily adopted and successfully used the language and logic of the VTS method, with its emphasis on linking and synthesizing student ideas. According to Curva and Associates (2005), "The curriculum promoted good citizenship skills, cooperation, respect, and tolerance for the views of others" (p. 4).

However, the demands of administration posed a challenge to incorporating art into the curriculum. All teachers were under extreme time pressure simply to stay current with teaching the required general curriculum. As a result, implementation of the social

studies component of the curriculum was uneven across schools and classrooms within each school (Curva & Associates, 2005, p. 4).

The widespread outcry of parents objecting to PARCC’s perceived overemphasis on high-stakes testing (Clark, 2015a), noted previously in Chapter 1, was in part based on the difficulties schools experienced in maintaining balance with these non-tested parts of the curriculum. Such curricular imbalances imply that district curricular demands and administrative expectations must be balanced with the teachers’ ability to follow the student learning objectives when implementing this research. Curricular pacing guides must be managed carefully during the implementation of this research, without adding too many extra responsibilities for the teachers.

Using Art to Guide Thinking

A goal of visual art education research is to explore the impact of art education in the context of core content areas and to correlate critical thinking skills with achievement in these subject areas. *Artful Thinking: Stronger Thinking Through the Power of Art* (Tishman & Palmer, 2006) is a report that Project Zero of Harvard University carried out for the Traverse City Area Public Schools. The work focuses on “a set of six thinking dispositions that have special power for exploring works of art and other complex topics in the curriculum.” Tishman and Palmer (2006, pp. 8, 9) identify these as: 1) questioning and investigating, 2) observing and describing, 3) reasoning, 4) exploring viewpoints, 5) comparing and connecting, and 6) finding complexity.

Each of the six dispositions represents a form of thinking that is powerful in terms of exploring and appreciating works of art, and all six represent forms of thinking that are powerful in terms of building understanding in other disciplines. Dispositions form when

individuals routinely engage in specific patterns of behavior (Tishman & Palmer, 2006, p. 9). A key part of Artful Thinking involves making students' thinking visible by documenting their unfolding thought processes as they use thinking routines. The routines become the ways in which students go about the process of learning. This study utilizes these pedagogical methods to improve student writing by improving thinking. Tishman (2006) describes each of these methods.

Pedagogical methods: Thinking through art and writing. A consideration of this research leads to a review of other research that investigates/identifies which art-integrative pedagogical methods have demonstrated improvement in aesthetic and conceptual understanding and one's expression thereof.

In *How We Understand Art*, Parsons (1989) discusses his theory of aesthetic development and judgment. Within the book, his reference to art is somewhat limited to discussing paintings. He does acknowledge other media forms; however, not with the same depth of commentary. Parsons (1989) describes his five stages of development through four topical concerns of aesthetic theory. The topics to be explored are 1) subject matter, 2) expression, 3) medium, form, style, and 4) judgment (p. 15). He acknowledges that depending on where the viewer is on the developmental continuum, his or her formative conceptual understanding may be between stages. Parsons recognizes growth through the framework of the stages; he acknowledges the natural hierarchy in its context. Thus, stage one denotes one's earliest understanding, and stage five represents the learning continuum that one experiences with continued practice and exposure to greater amounts of artworks.

For the purposes of this research, it is important to note that Parsons discusses photography by way of understanding painting. He claims that at stage two, we understand the photographic image. The implication of his (1989) work as it relates to this study is similar to that of Housen's (2000-2001) work in VTS. Parallels include the use of the visceral response to images by providing descriptive analysis. This response is then analyzed by common criteria that demonstrates the learner's aesthetic level of development. However, Parsons's stage two refers more to the formal/structural content aspect of understanding art/aesthetic, whereas Housen's stage two criteria is a bit different. Housen identifies not only the viewer's formal understanding of artwork, but the viewer's knowledge of social constructs and context as well—in other words, the story in and behind the artwork. This information is relevant to this study in analyzing the student population's various performance levels.

In a postmodern approach to curriculum and creating art, Ewald, Hyde, and Lord compile stories, methods, and the results thereof in *Literacy and Justice Through Photography* (2012). Using a choice-based approach to art education, the authors created a book based upon the work at the Center for Documentary Studies, which is the Literacy Through Photography (LTP) curriculum. They illustrate this curriculum with stories about the students who participated in the project, the socio-political/theoretical base for the work, and its connection to promoting global communication and literacy. Their work creates lesson units featuring themes/social issues of race, language, historical world events, and body image through books, posters, multimedia presentations, and installations that communicate the students' understanding of self and the world around them.

Rifa-Valls (2011) interprets the role of visual storytelling in the individual portfolios of three pre-service teachers. The conceptual precepts within the portfolios incorporate themes of autobiography, reflexivity, deconstruction, intertextuality, self-assessment/meta-assessment, and multi-literacy. The students' cumulative skill sets are visual stories, which Rifa-Valls relates as reflections and as critical feminist narratives of self, social changes, and political changes, citing Barone (1992); Razack (1993); and Sleeter (2008) as they learn to become teachers (p. 304).

Rifa-Valls (2011) states, "Visual storytelling is a critical strategy (Aveling, 2001; Barone, 1992; Garrett, 2006; Cahnmann-Taylor & Siegesmund, 2008) in contrast to other forms of storytelling..." (p. 294). She explains that as a visual narrative conveys (as a story) an event or series of events, art education examines the connection between the actual story and how a visual narrative tells that story, because the visual narrative itself plays into the story to create a "totality of actions and situations" (2011, p. 295) that creates learning through both the storytellers' act of storytelling, and through their viewing the story as an audience.

In *Viewing Places: Students as Visual Ethnographers*, Powell (2010) considers the practical limitations of traditional cultural research approaches of an in-depth study in the classroom, and suggests micro-ethnographic research as a practical alternative because it is time-sensitive. Critical ethnography is an approach by which teachers can help students become the creators of their own learning; make connections to the world as they uncover it socially, politically, and historically within an academic context; and learn to "describe and interpret the cultural and social practices of people" (Powell, 2010, p. 45). Powell provides suggestions for teachers to incorporate ethnography into the

classroom, providing an eight-step summary emphasizing the thoughtful connections that students can authentically make to connect their artistic practice with community, history, and cultural stories. She recommends that students focus on a specific issue or in a specific community for a short period. They take field notes, perform interviews, and take photographs to document their observations. Then they analyze their results by categorizing and arranging the collected materials to find themes, issues, and/or possibly contradicting trends (Glesne, 2005; Bogdan & Biklen, 2006). Through analysis, organizing, and categorizing, students can then come to deeper understandings of the social context. According to Powell, “Photo essays are a particularly powerful mode of visual documentation of places and presentation of final work. A photo essay generally has a narrative intent and format” (2010, p. 47).

Consistent with the research of Powell and Ewald is the work of Van Horn in *Reading Photographs to Write with Meaning and Purpose, Grades 4–12* (2008). The book is designed for pre- and in-service teachers of social studies and English, so that they can use the illustrated units in their own classrooms, integrating visual ethnography into their pre-existing curricula. Van Horn (2008) looks at various genres of writing such as memoir, poetry, and narrative writing, and provides comprehensive lesson units that teachers may use in the classroom. Like Friedman (1991), she presents concepts such as intertextuality, multiple meanings, encoding (what photographers do when telling a story in a photo), and decoding (which is, in this context, the process by which the viewer of the photograph makes meaning to understand the photographer’s story). In contending that students must learn to read photographs, Van Horn (2008) describes a three-layered reading process of 1) surface reading, 2) critical interpretation, and 3) reflection and

refinement through written response. Van Horn argues that the reading process (steps one and two) must happen before good writing can be done, and this requires reflection on the photographer's intent as a prerequisite to any subjective interpretation of meaning.

We see a similar connection to process evident in the writings of Cartier-Bresson in *The Mind's Eye* (1999). Here he provides the reader with a glimpse of his thoughts and observations about photography. However, in this case the photographer discusses his inspirations and intent of his artistic style, and conceptual process about the creation of his photographs. The book features his photographic perspective about "the decisive moment" along with his observations about his experiences in Moscow, Cuba, and China during unstable times, and his interactions with his subjects and peers. His thoughts about photography are about his experiences in the profession and with the medium itself. He discusses the aesthetic of photography through composition and continuous exploration of the scene being photographed through multiple exposures. Cartier-Bresson encourages the reader to seek the human experience and use the medium as a means to record the same.

Arts integration, stakeholder collaboration, and student learning outcomes.

In *The Arts Are an "R" Too*, a study conducted for the Mississippi Arts Whole Schools Commission, Corbett, Wilson, and Morse (2002) noted several outcomes in support of the arts integrated as an assessment vehicle within the academic curriculum. First, within regular classrooms, the arts helped teachers to devise a variety of ways of teaching and reinforcing critical material. In the arts classrooms, teachers aligned their activities with regular classroom content. As a teacher stated:

The arts offer multiple opportunities for students to grasp concepts. They can learn by hearing, seeing, and doing. This allows for light bulbs to go off at different times, in different ways, and in different places. It gives kids permission to learn in different ways. (p. 16)

The second connection between the arts and academic achievement was that arts-related activities increased the breadth and depth of students' life experiences. It provided them more concrete "hooks" on which to "hang" the concepts, content, and skills they were being taught in school (Wiggins & McTighe, 2005). The arts, in other words, grounded what students were taught in ways that helped make what they were learning tangible and visible. This helped them to increase their understanding, and make connections to all subjects and to real life. "Kids need a background of experience in order to learn. The arts provide that. Learning is authentic. Our little children come to us starved for experience" (Corbett, Wilson, & Morse, 1999, p. 16).

Thirdly, educators proposed that students' enthusiasm for arts-integrated lessons infused all their learning. These art lessons, in turn, paid positive dividends in the classroom, including some payoff even at test-taking time. As one teacher reported, "...for some students, [success in] the arts is the only success they feel in a day. Success in the arts leads to a willingness to try academic subjects. Learning becomes defined as fun, interesting, and exciting" (Corbett, Wilson, & Morse, 2002, p. 16).

Given the success of this study, "Whole Schools" is a viable model for arts-integrated or magnet schools across the country. This model could gain popularity in low-income or rural areas of the country, where students might not otherwise have available or satisfactory access to arts education. In many cases, budgets are limited. Perhaps only

visual arts or music may be offered, but not dance or theater. The “Whole School” model seeks to change that. The implications of the whole school model in relation to this research reside within the transformational impact of the suggested pedagogical methodology across the curriculum.

Arts integration, the political context of authentic assessment, and its implementation at the local level. Since the implementation of the Core Curriculum Content Standards (CCCS), New Jersey has adopted a form of problem-based authentic assessment as part of its high school graduation requirement. CCCS make it mandatory that students pass these locally assessed interdisciplinary units, yet their credits do not themselves count towards graduation. Authentic assessment presentations usually incorporate a presentation of a product; a written reflection that incorporates the integration of knowledge from several subject areas, including the arts; and a panel-driven question/answer session, which a local panel will evaluate using an approved rubric. Combining CCCS measures with authentic assessment implementation is a burden that falls primarily at the district and school level. Using authentic assessment in a CCCS-driven environment comes with a series of benefits and challenges. The challenges include the added planning time and effort to create such assessments in an already time-sensitive schedule. Benefits include creating an assessment system to include multiple measures that can be simultaneously balanced, rigorous, aligned to standards, and still sufficiently flexible for local design and control.

There is significant research into the beneficial effects of housing assessment systems—and their attendant responsibilities—at the local level, including heightened degrees of teacher buy-in, raising expectations, and engendering reflective practice

(Herman, 2010). In addition, the process of developing and scoring authentic assessment at a local level has benefits for school-wide collaboration and collegiality (Darling-Hammond, Holtzman, Gatlin, & Heilig, 2005). Thus, continuous assessment of data at the school level in a professional learning community is necessary for continued success. As we have seen, contemporary studies support the performance-based assessment model. Leadership, then, must be directed toward adapting these approaches, and guiding instructional pedagogies through systemic professional development in order to increase student achievement.

Implementing data-driven instruction in an arts-integrative model. Much information can be derived from classroom use of teacher-driven action research that targets, within a pilot study, student achievement strategies, teacher interests, and curricular methods. This information can affect the direction of critical reforms and organizational planning. Teachers, having demonstrated positive results from prior work with students in this area, would be able to assist other teachers, and perhaps even lead a workshop for professional development. However, this enlightened planning can only occur with a supportive administrative team, and a positive school culture and climate; one that respects teachers for their knowledge and experience.

Competing pressures, however, might lead teachers to reject such guidance. Previous research documents teachers' interest in maintaining their autonomy over curriculum and pedagogy (Lortie, 2002; McNeil, 2000). In attempting to retain authority over what and how they teach, teachers have been shown to resist mandated curricula and close supervision because of a feeling of professional pride and a fear of losing spontaneity (Jackson, 1968).

Art Education and Transformational Learning

For educational reforms to be sustained, all stakeholders need a shared vision of what education is. This vision is best brought about through a positive, democratic, collective process that supports and sustain long-lasting change in school culture. Transformational leaders look to empower their followers through engaging them to act for the good of the organization rather than that of the individual. The real purpose of leadership is to become transformational, which Burns (2004) defines as “when one or more engage with others in such a way that leaders and followers raise one another to higher levels of motivation and morality.... Their purposes, which might have started out separate, become fused” (p. 14). Fullan (2001) identifies vital change concepts on which leaders should focus, to help them lead when conditions are less than optimal. He denotes the motivations of change agents and defines them as having a moral purpose; understanding change and relationships; supporting organizational learning and capacity building, and creating congruence and solidarity. He provides detailed discussion on these themes, and discusses how leadership is successfully achieved to create sustainable change and a culture that supports the same.

Collaborative leaders build resonance and a shared vision. In addition to articulating a vision for the school, they influence teachers, staff, other administrators, students, and parents to work together to turn that vision into a reality. Nelson (2008) examines the Ford Arts-Ed Initiative: a national, multi-year effort launched in 2004 with two overarching goals: improving “the quality of students’ education by providing integrated arts education opportunities across urban school systems,” and fostering the belief that “the arts are an essential part of a high-quality education (p. 1).” The Ford

Arts-Ed Initiative works to achieve these goals by developing comprehensive advocacy strategies, and by building sustained district commitments to arts education. The community partners are essential to the collaboration as they provide important professional development for the LEA. They do so by coordinating and organizing individuals and groups to meet the training goals. Nelson (2008) states, “Collaborative defines arts integration as ‘Artists, arts educators, or classroom teachers present lessons with dual objectives—in both an art form and in another content area—to enhance students’ learning in both areas.’ The collaborative then constructs a long-term strategy to bring integrated arts opportunities to schools” (p. 6).

Conclusion

This literature review examines both scholarship purporting to offer approaches to effective arts integrative program creation, and scholarship examining evolving reforms underlining contemporary educational policies (NCLB, RTTT, ESSA, CCCS). These reforms drive teaching and learning in today’s classrooms and provide the context under which any implementation of these approaches would have to be carried out. Studies such as Curva and Associates (2005) for the Wolfsonian Museum study, Housen’s (2000-2001) aesthetic understanding through Visual Thinking Strategies (VTS), Wiggins and McTighe’s (2005) Understanding by Design (UbD) and Leddy’s (1999) development of the Painted Essay (PE) were found promising. Clearly, they required further implementation, evidence, and data to support their validity. Likewise, Van Horn’s (2008) discussion using photographs as visual prompts to write about imagery in the form of memoirs, poetry, and narrative writing in grades four through twelve presented as promising for use. Van Horn did not include lessons for grade three, and research has

shown that there can be a large developmental gap in the writing abilities of third-graders (Halliday, 2004). Ewald, Hyde, and Lord's (2012) research sought to improve visual literacy by creating photo essay projects with inner-city high school students, and provided a partial model into which the other theories could be integrated.

My review of the literature revealed that improvement in elementary student writing with the suggested methods of VTS, UbD, and photo essay in combination either did not yet exist, or was slight. In this context, conducting this research would be particularly useful, and would respond positively to addressing gaps in current literature. Even if the validity of my action research study would be limited in scope and breadth, it could provide a useful model for further examination. The benefits of a constructivist approach using these multiple pedagogical methodologies in a new model of new media arts integration invited examination via action research and appeared evident. Doing so in an urban elementary classroom setting where many of the pressures of the school reform movement have been shown repeatedly in this chapter to be the most acute offered itself as both a fruitful and a necessary condition to such work.

Chapter 3

Methodology

Introduction

Within No Child Left Behind (NCLB), the focus on high-stakes testing, in which local educational agency (LEA) funding became dependent on successful test results, has dramatically impacted how art education is prioritized and delivered in today's schools. The implementation of the Core Content Curricular Standards (CCCS) in 2013-14 created the greatest backlash to high-stakes testing to date. Parents protested the overemphasis of testing in lieu of a balanced curriculum (Clark, 2015b), and in lieu of the opportunity for students to learn in ways that mirror authentic applications of knowledge in the 21st century.

Gabbard and Laws (2012) summarize the importance of a visual arts education by stating, "Providing an excellent visual arts education for every student must be a priority if our country wants to remain a vibrant, innovative nation that provides endless opportunities" (p. 1). Meaningful educational experiences include collaboration and inclusion of the arts. Visual arts education is made up of more than crayons, markers, and paint; it weaves together materials, processes, traditions, cultures, and values that have endured throughout the ages.

Gabbard and Laws's (2012) advocacy for arts education is mirrored within the impetus motivating this research. Through my own professional experience, I understood that visual arts thinking could spawn innovations in the way we teach writing, through its natural intertextuality of mediums and conceptual themes. The literature that supports and informs this research similarly revealed this understanding to me.

Using new media to teach multi-sensory, interdisciplinary lessons based on authentic experiences, this research examined whether student comprehension and literacy as expressed through writing would improve when coupled with visual prompts created by the student and new media technology. It also examined teachers' potentially increased capacity to integrate art in future lesson design. Such future implementation might instigate positive shifts in school culture towards more productive literacy pedagogies integrating technology and the visual arts.

Throughout this research, I documented the impact I made as an instructional leader, improving student learning through interdisciplinary curricular methods, and 21st-century modes of instruction. My goal was to create a collaborative arts education model. To achieve this, I employed the talents of professional photographers, working in part as a professional photographer myself, and as an art specialist. In doing so as a participant researcher, I provided professional development in the arts to classroom teachers.

Professional and teaching artists can participate in the professional development of classroom teachers. They offer sample approaches of visual thinking, industry-quality models, and standards for photo essays. Teachers and students learn 21st-century skills through digital photography. Students create a visual and written narrative to demonstrate their knowledge and understanding of critical thinking through a performance-based assessment task. The model is implemented and tested to ensure its compliance with a rigorous, standards-based curriculum, and it is delivered according to a high professional standard. This model intends to bring innovative techniques, contemporary arts, postmodern conceptual issues, and 21st-century skills to both adult and student learners.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided this study:

1. What impact does the training offered by art specialists in a collaborative arts model have on academic teachers' actual implementation of the same in their classroom?
2. How much technical knowledge does a teacher need to possess in order to automatically “think” with new media technology? What supports are needed in order to successfully implement the same in the classroom?
3. Does the combination of the researcher's suggested pedagogical methods (UbD framework, integration of new media, VTS, and WU/Painted Essay) improve students' writing skills?

This chapter details the plan of action research in the participant/researcher's school district, which the researcher hoped would embody a holistic, progressive pedagogy that would facilitate meaningful investigations into the research questions that provoke and animate this thesis. Methods included the collection of qualitative data on teachers' approaches to the proposed model of instruction in their academic and art classroom; evaluative observations on results produced; and the preparation of a series of semi-structured interviews, digital recordings, and videotaping of subjects, both within and outside the classroom. This chapter describes the instructional materials used and varieties of student work products targeted. It accounts for the subjects examined in the study, including administrators, teachers, students, professional photographers, and this participant researcher. It also investigates why the researcher believed it might be

possible to evaluate classroom norms, school climate, and culture in her effort to maximize the potential validity and usefulness of the research undertaken.

Research Design

Action research was used to collect qualitative data on the teachers' approaches to this model in their academic classrooms, and in the art classroom. The research approach involves a qualitative methodology coupled with the action research data collection process. Hinchey (2008) posits that the use of action research is an interpretivist paradigm, and is based in the belief that multiple realities coexist in a specific educational context. Thus, interpretivists believe that acknowledging the multiple perspectives of stakeholders involved in a situation is a prerequisite to designing strategies for improvement. Interpretivists generally share their work in the hopes of affecting change in the context of a similar situation, and providing to others with a similar issue some ideas about potentially useful methodologies, strategies, and insights (pp. 29-30). The cycles of action research have evolved to observing, reflecting, and acting (Kemmis & McTaggart, 1998; Stringer, 1999).

The observational and reflective aspects of this process formulate an outcome that uses a social constructivist narratology consistent with Rosenblatt's (1978) work on the transactional nature of the reading process. Social constructivism is a sociological theory of knowledge according to which human development is socially situated, and knowledge is constructed through interaction with others. Transactional theory, as it applies to literary criticism and the teaching of literature, suggests a "reciprocal, mutually defining relationship" (Rosenblatt, 1986) between the reader and the literary text. Thus, the research process communicates and examines stories recorded through the researcher's

observations and semi-structured interviews. It also examines a variety of instructional materials, student pre-tests and post-tests, and student work products. The cycles of action research data collection document the experiences, thoughts, and actions of stakeholders within the research model. Also documented are observations of classroom norms, school climate, and culture.

During the reflection phase, the data are interpreted and the multiple viewpoints are communicated and discussed among those with a stake in the process. Next comes the action phase, which involves planning implementation, and evaluation. In this current form of action research, the researcher and others work as agents of change. According to Glesne (2006), Stringer (1999) addressed “community-based action research,” a research process in which a group collectively defines a problem and then acts collaboratively to reach resolutions. In addition to all major stakeholders, the process uses a researcher to facilitate keeping the research cycles moving.

The action research cycle presents a scaffolding process for all participants in the study. Each action research cycle builds on the previous one. Through professional development and discussion, the teachers obtain information. They present that information to their students, who then produce projects based on what they have learned. Student outcomes are evaluated based on specific criteria, and participating teachers then reach consensus on adjustments to the pedagogy and materials presented. Study participants prepare the next steps, and the process is repeated.

Action research was specifically chosen because it allowed practitioners to remain professionally active in the classroom while allowing reflection in and on practice

(Schon, 1984). It also develops strategies for participant researchers to become agents of change through increasing awareness and understanding of the issues examined (Bogdan & Biklen, 2011; Glesne, 2006). Hinchey (2008) notes:

The key criterion that distinguishes action research from other types of research is that there is always someone directly involved in the situation who serves as a researcher.... To qualify as action research, at least one stakeholder—teacher, principal, staff member—must be engaged in finding the answer to some question he or she deems important. (pp. 33-34)

Context and participants. For the purposes of this research, the school shall be known as the French Immersion School (FIS). It is located in what this thesis shall refer to as the New Urban School District (NUSD). The term “the administration” shall be used to refer to the staffed administration within FIS.

The student population chosen for this study was one class from each grade level in the third, fourth, and fifth grades at FIS. The school housed two classes of each of the designated grade levels. Classes were chosen by the willingness of the teachers who volunteered to participate and lend their time to this research. The population of administrators, teachers, and students used was a sample of convenience. In statistical terms, a sample of convenience is “a type of nonprobability sampling in which people are sampled simply because they are ‘convenient’ sources of data for researchers. In probability sampling, each element in the population has a known nonzero chance of being selected through the use of a random selection procedure” (Lavrakas, 2008). All classes in the study were nearly evenly gendered. Overall, the NUSD was consistent with

the general socioeconomic status population of the New Urban Town. At the time of this study, the United States government continued to use the term “Caucasian” to identify Americans of European descent as well as other groups not covered by traditional US racial minority status. The general population was 88.5% African American/Black and 7.9% Hispanic, with only 4.1% of the population Caucasian/White (<http://www.census.gov/quickfacts/table/LND110210/3419390>), according to the 2010 US Census. The student population proportionally reflected the district socioeconomic status within its overall student population, except that it had no Caucasian students.

The teacher population for grades pre-kindergarten through grade five—including specialist teachers in gym, art, music, French, and library—totaled 20 teachers. The ethnic percentage breakdown of the teachers at FIS at the time of the study was 65% African American/Black, 30% Caucasian, and 5% Hispanic. The socioeconomic and racial balance in the FIS teaching staff was not consistent with the population of student body or the general population of New Urban School district. The teaching staff included an equal split of African-American and Caucasian staff members at every grade level, except the fifth grade, which had one Hispanic and one African-American teacher. The specialist teachers were also equally divided between African-American and Caucasian. However, the gender balance was unequal; only one quarter of the teaching staff was male.

Data collection strategies. The research process follows the cycles of action research to collect qualitative data. The major data collection approaches used for this research study included observations, interviews, collection of digital photography artifacts of student work, and collection of student testing scores.

Observations: Videotaping/field notes. Action research supports the use of observations as a method of data collection as a part of a researcher's fieldwork. Research supports the use of videotaping as a practical method of data collection. Grimshaw, in Bottroff (1994), as cited in Glesne (2006), avers that density and permanence are the primary advantages of videotaping, noting, "The density of data collected with videotape is greater than that of human observation or audio recording, and the nature of the record is permanent in that it is possible to return to the observation repeatedly" (p. 63).

Hinchey (2008) observes, "Researchers who want to know what others think about a topic has [*sic*] an obvious option: ask them. In many circumstances the people directly involved in a situation can and do provide the most reliable information available" (p. 81).

To record the teacher and student observations and interviews, I used both videotaping and field notes to document them. This included my observations of students in art room lessons on proper use of the elements and principles of art to create an image; students' learning digital photography and post-production work; student brainstorming activities on group and individual topical development; art criticism by students; analysis of students' group and individual photos; student self-assessment of digital photography; and the pre- (group) test of photographing a photo essay. It should be noted that the pre-test for photography was conducted outside the school in the playground and the neighborhood, which surrounded the school.

In each grade level class, I sought to document the instruction of the students and their learning process of the Painted Essay, the actual writing of their individual essays, and the written pre- and post-tests using the VTS model.

According to Bogdan and Biklen (2011), field notes may include “good description and dialogue relevant to what occurs at the setting and its meaning for the participants” (p. 122). Bogdan and Biklen also observe that field notes will emphasize “speculation, feelings, problems, ideas, hunches, impressions, and prejudices” (p. 122); and include clarifications and corrections of misstatements and misunderstandings, and notes for future research.

Field notes, both handwritten and dictated with the iPhone 5 Dragon application, were employed to record observations, thoughts, and feelings throughout the entire project at the FIS during fall 2011 through spring 2012. Final student interviews were documented via handwritten notes in September 2013, when the newly promoted students were in their new grade-level classrooms. Since the interviews took place during the students’ lunch period in a noisy cafeteria, this method was the most convenient to use under these circumstances.

Interviews. For videotaping, a Canon Vixia HF R100 video camera on a tripod was used. On occasion, when technical difficulties (such as running out of battery power) were encountered, an iPhone placed on a table as a backup camera was employed. The same population in the art classroom in the French Immersion School (FIS) was videotaped while engaging in the methods described in this research from spring 2011 through spring 2012. Teacher interviews during January, August, and September 2012 were videotaped, and a transcription company in India transcribed them in June 2012 and

September 2012. The purpose of the teacher interviews was to collect demographic data about the teachers' general educational background and professional development experiences, and to inform the study with their educational perspectives within the scope of the research questions, intending to answer the same.

Audio recordings were used only when videotaping was inconvenient due to time or space impediments. Ives (1974), as cited by Bogdan and Biklen (2011), notes the importance of treating the audio recorder as a visually impaired observer requiring nonverbal cues such as gestures to be translated into verbal language. The implication here is that video recording would be preferable to audio recording where possible.

Audio was recorded using the internal recording device from an iPhone 5 placed on a table while conversations took place, including an interview with the school principal of the FIS in October 2011; and a fifth-grade final student interview in September 2013, while the student was in sixth grade at a magnet school for the visual and performing arts in the New Urban School District during her visual art class time.

Digital photography. Bogdan and Biklen (2011) posit that photos can provide clues about the personal preferences of the photographers who captured them, as well as their views on important subject matter to include. Using small (approximately 1.5 to 5 gigabytes; varied due to manufacturer design) digital point-and-shoot cameras, students recorded their vision by creating photographs at FIS in October 2011 and November 2011, and from February 2012 through May 2012. The student-produced photographs became part of the final assessment for the student individual projects used in this research.

Artifacts/documents. Glesne (2006) affirms the role that documents play in corroborating observations and interviews, therefore providing credibility for research findings. Furthermore, Glesne (2006) notes, documents and artifacts can lead a researcher to question his or her initial premises, thus carving new paths of inquiry within the research.

Student and teacher artifacts were collected as data for this research. The documents collected were student work samples (written and photographic), including student assessments. Official documents such as the district benchmark scores—hand-recorded by the classroom teachers using Edusoft district-licensed software for writing assessment—and the NJ ASK standardized test scores for language arts were collected and used to provide information on students' current levels of academic performance. The purpose for pre- and post-testing in this research was to determine student cognitive growth as expressed/assessed in writing and scaffolded through a methodological framework centered in the tenets of UbD, WU, the Painted Essay, and the photo essay. Teacher-created pre- and post-tests (Appendices S, T) were distributed to students, graded by the researcher and academic teachers, and then collected as data to help assess the impact of the methodologies on student achievement presented in this research.

Other documents that are important to note are the packets of professional development materials created for the teachers and teaching materials created for the students to use during their classroom time (both art and regular). There were three training packets distributed to the teachers throughout the research. The first packet was distributed during the initial training. This packet included UbD practice materials from the UbD 101 online course, printed materials and online videos by Wiggins on UbD in a

nutshell, and the UbD framework, example units, essential questions, authentic assessment, performance tasks, and rubric design. In addition, it included a Writing for Understanding (WU) overview with a teacher plan template; an Abernaki unit [a model used with the Painted Essay (Hawkins et al., 2008; Leddy, 1999, p. 104)]; the Painted Essay example and template; the Frayer model of vocabulary development; and a list of vocabularies for art and the photo essay. Examples from the teacher packet can be viewed in the Appendix section of this research.

Also included in the first packet was a unit lesson plan on Wendel White's *Small Towns, Black Lives* (2003), based on work that I developed for the New Jersey Department of Education (NJDOE) and the New Jersey Network (NJN). This learning unit was eventually published in an edited form by the NJDOE in conjunction with the Public Broadcasting System's (PBS) Learning Library (<https://nj.pbslearningmedia.org/resource/sa13.la.ws.process.blacktown/the-photographer-as-storyteller/#.WRB-KtLyuUk>).

The second teacher training packet distributed during Cycle Two included exemplar unit lessons from Van Horn's *Reading Photographs to Write with Meaning and Purpose* (2008), pp. 1-22, 35-42, 51-58, 63-70, 116-123; and exemplar units from Ewald and Lightfoot's *I Wanna Take Me a Picture* (2001), pp. 29-30, 47-65, 119-127.

The final packet was distributed to the teachers at the end of the school year during Cycle Three. It included sample sheets on the elements and principles of art, the teacher post-survey questions, examples of student writing samples from the Artful Citizen/Wolfsonian study, and the students' post-test materials (Appendices A, B, C).

The student work packets that were introduced during the training sessions in Cycle One and used throughout the research work process included pertinent vocabulary, explanation of the photo essay, the elements and principles of art sheets, storyboard planning sheets, and an after-shoot self-evaluation sheet (Appendices O, P, Q, R).

Theoretical Framework

At the heart of this research is my personal connection with understanding the world as it is expressed through visual thinking, both abstractly and in a narrative form, since I have been a photographer for over half of my life. It is this personal connection with photography that inspired me to consider how I could use my innate personal understanding as a catalyst to inspire my own students. Moreover, informed by the research of Ewald, Hyde, and Lord (2012), and their successful outcomes using photo essays in their work with high school students, I chose to use the photo essay as a tool to visually organize student thinking, perceptions, and experiences; and intertextually manifest the same through writing. Additionally, I was a student of the late Dr. Grant Wiggins for over five years, and his influence in teaching for understanding using the UbD framework is deeply ingrained in my daily pedagogical practices. It is an overarching unifier within the conceptual framework of this research.

Photographic Theoretic Philosophy

I subscribe to the philosophy of Henri Cartier-Bresson (1999), who loosely described the mind's eye as a photographer's organic sensory response to stimuli in his environment, and his innate ability to visually express the same. According to Gradle and Bickel (2010):

Schaefer-Simmern theorized that there were three steps—not always sequential—before an image moves from the realm of intuitive thought to a visual presentation. First, an idea makes a deep, lasting impression in one’s mind, one that must be slowly savored in order to be fully developed. As the student or artist begins to work with materials, the image is transformed. It is not an exact replica of what was in the mind, but emerges with a life of its own through the process. By taking what the artist or student knows intuitively about the image, and the knowledge of working with materials, the problem is slowly resolved into a complete visual form. Schaefer-Simmern hypothesized that the majority of individuals have the innate ability to perceive their experiences, and given tools and materials, humans throughout history have found ways to present their ideas visually. As the visual conceptions become more unified through revision, the organization of the work seems to simultaneously invoke the transformation of the art maker, leading to greater integration of the person. (p. 12)

In discussing Fiedler’s (1876) investigation into what occurs when artists form images in their minds, Munson (1971) describes the way an artist begins by selectively perceiving “certain forms and relationships between these forms that constitute his environment” (p. 9). The artist then restructures these forms into a single image and communicates it via “form symbols and symbol structures, which are in turn viewed as a unified form” (p. 9). By selecting appropriate symbols, the artist composes, discerning those he or she intends from those he or she does not intend.

The work of Cartier-Bresson (1999) and Munson’s (1971) discussion regarding Fiedler on the mind’s eye also influenced my decision to change the way I asked students

to think about their pre-imaging exercises. Originally, like Ewald et al. (2012), I suggested the use of the storyboard as a way of organizing the sequence of imagery. However, knowing that these images were not exactly as planned because of the nature of the medium, I changed this from storyboarding to the shot list so that students could learn to “capture the moment,” to quote Cartier-Bresson (1999).

The concept of previsualization or visual perceptions, which begin in the mind’s eye, was also noted by Schaefer-Simmern, who referred to this as the gestalt. As humans, we have a basic need to communicate to others, because we live in an interconnected, intrapersonal, generative society that influences our thoughts, experiences, cultures, and perspectives. Gradle (2009, p. 5) cites Dissanayake (2000), who has noted examples of how tools and materials have influenced artistic thinking through form and function of its own creation, regardless of one’s artistic intent at the onset of its creation.

According to Gradle (2009), Schaefer-Simmern’s (1948) theory of visual conception stipulates that visual thinking must accompany intellectual inquiry in order for a visual work to result. Gradle connects this to the amount of exposure and opportunities provided to a student to engage in artistic thinking, and art-making. Gradle explains that within the process of forming gestalts—artistic forms that students can pre-visualize more clearly as they gain experience in art-making—specific visual elements become clearly delineated, and that relationships among separate parts of a whole form develop and allow for establishment of meaning. She concludes, “To bring an art work into being involves artistic cognition used from solving problems, organizing structures into wholes, establishing a figure ground relationship, and therein creating unity” (p. 6).

Henri Cartier-Bresson explains the process of visual thinking as almost a reactionary cognitive process that occurs even before a photographer presses the camera trigger. Taking a photograph requires several visual, physical, and cognitive functions to occur at the same instant to document one's perceptions of events as they occur: to stay acutely aware of "capturing the moment" (a phrase attributed to Cartier-Bresson) is to describe an almost intuitive moment in time by which picture taking can be figuratively compared to using the camera. The photograph as a two-dimensional flat media becomes part of the process of capturing and permanently recording an event, which is multi-dimensional and specific to the fourth dimension—time. "Capturing the moment" describes the formal visual and metacognitive processes used by the photographer to record his perceptions of "real-time" experiences, first captured as light, then printed or projected onto a two-dimensional surface. This secondary process forces both the photographer and the viewer to make meaning of the artwork by extrapolating originally unintended and unrelated dimensional elements and structures into a formal gestalt framework, thus visually creating new connections, relationships, and meaning, which unifies the artwork. Cartier-Bresson (1999) describes this phenomenon as a joint operation involving the eye, brain, and heart, whose objective is to depict an unfolding event through shooting images attentively and intuitively, but not excessively.

The photographer's selectiveness of subject and decisiveness of timing can be affirmed by Schaefer-Simmern's (1948) and Arnheim's (2004) works on visual conceptions, metacognitive processes, and mental structures, known as gestalts, all of which are part of the visual toolbox used by photographers. Teachers need to be aware that if students are too rigid in their photographic approach to subject matter, their images

may become too planned, and static. If the student does not understand the need for exploration and experimentation with his subject matter, the spontaneity and intuitive nature of the medium is encumbered. If the student is limited by his own preconceived ideas and images of the right vs. the wrong image to take, he may miss a good moment because of hesitation. However, the opposite can also be true, whereby a student may almost shoot blindly, not casting any thought to what his goal is for picture taking and come back with images irrelevant to his topical goals for the project.

Thus, the implications for art education pedagogy are grounded and supported by the research inherent in the work of each theorist and summarized by Hausman, Ploof, Duignan, Brown, and Hostert (2010), who recognize that "...creating, perceiving and responding to images in our lives should be given balanced attention with verbal and cognitive learning (Elkins, 2003; Tavin, 2003)" (pp. 270-271).

Understanding by Design

Understanding by Design (UbD) uses a thematic approach to curricular unit development based upon big ideas and overarching understandings. It accomplishes this by building understanding through designing learning activities from students' previous knowledge and constructing new knowledge from essential questions and authentic assessments that provide evidence of the transfer of knowledge to achieve the desired results.

This framework was used to develop the conceptual structure for Writing for Understanding, on which the Vermont Writing Collaborative (Hawkins et al., 2008) based their research for the writing workshop, and the Painted Essay (Leddy, 1999). The

Painted Essay is a color-coded structural graphic organizer for writing. It was chosen for use in this research because of its visual connection to writing through color.

Another means of connecting the visual response to conceptual development and thinking intertextually was by using the brainstorming of words and images in the group classroom exercises through mind-mapping. My goal for my students' learning was to provide as many visual connections to stimulate this type of thinking intertextually.

However, unlike the practice of providing a student with a single image as a teacher-chosen prompt, my goal was for my students to connect to their world through photography. Van Horn (2008) utilized single images in many instances, but also allowed students to work from multiple personal images when writing memoirs. The research of Ewald and Lightfoot (2001) and Ewald, Hyde, and Lord (2012) employed the photo essay as a performance task for teaching socio-political, economic, and cultural themes. This literature informed this research and the use of digital photography as a pathway to improve student writing. Understanding is created by learning to read the image and then writing about it. This was the impetus for guiding students to photograph their own work and use the structure of the photo essay to inform, inspire, and structure their own writing.

However, the research of Wiggins and McTighe (2005) demonstrates the importance of creating connections to a student's prior knowledge as a bridge for a student to make meaning and connect with new skills and knowledge. Thus, before my students actually photographed their own work, it was important for them to develop an understanding of compositional constructs and rules. They viewed numerous master

photographers' works and practiced critique with Visual Thinking Strategies (VTS) before they photographed their own projects.

Before beginning the project with my students, I established a pre-test to determine their initial levels of understanding. We began with a single image, assessing student understanding of visual thinking using tools and rubrics developed by Housen (2000-2001) and researchers from the Wolfsonian-Florida International University (FIU), Curva and Associates (2005), in pre- and post-tests. I continued to use these tools and rubrics to meet my goals for student learning with their individual projects with photo essays and creative writing, utilizing rubrics specifically developed to assess the same. I also considered and analyzed district-wide assessments and state standardized testing to determine whether there were any connections from prior knowledge assessments to the newly attained knowledge gained through the strategies presented in this research methodology.

The conceptual framework for this research is organized using UbD as our umbrella, from which the strands of pedagogical methodologies and student performance tasks are formed and then implemented. This is illustrated through the chart below.

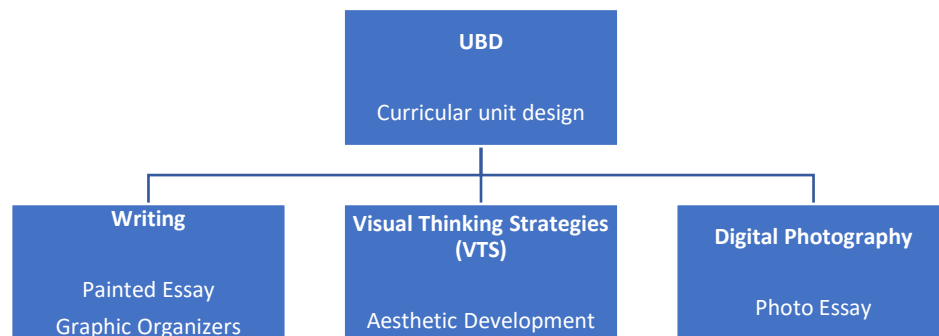


Figure 1. Chart demonstrating the theoretical framework of methodology.

UbD requires the designer to think through teaching for understanding by first identifying specific mastery content to be assessed before deciding which learning activities are to be introduced to students. Thus, UbD becomes the overall curricular framework that drives the chosen performance task, and the order in which information is organized and presented to students to maximize understanding and transfer. To that end, student writing samples produced from the photo essay, student writing produced as the assessment of the pre- and post-tests, and student photographs all become the performance tasks that are assessed to determine mastery levels of multiple curricular objectives.

The Pilot Study

A trial run. The trial run of the pilot took place for one week with two non-tenured novice teachers who were not regular full-time employees of the New Urban School District (NUSD). The two worked during summer 2010 along with me as participant researcher. It was my initial intent to conduct this work in the novice teachers' classrooms in the fall. However, due to issues arising only after I received access approval, I was unable to work with them in the fall at their respective school assignments.

My role consisted of providing training in the UbD framework and guiding the group through the Digital 1 to 1 online library of instruction (<https://www.udemy.com/user/digital1to1/>). I also assisted onsite as needed if an issue arose, and served as an informal professional mentor to these novice teachers. Ken Pivak, co-owner of Digital 1 to 1, visited the school and further explained some of the technical aspects of digital photography to the students and novice teachers. Luciana Pampalone, a

professional commercial photographer in New York (<http://www.lucianapampalonestudio.com/#/genre/photography>), and Susan George, her stylist and former creative director for macys.com (<http://www.susangeorgestyle.com/skyscrapers-studios>), served as artistic training resources to the summer teachers, and discussed with the novice teachers their stylistic approaches to image making, artistic conceptual development, and interdisciplinary connections.

Overall, the students' photography demonstrated clear understanding of formal compositional structures and technical competency. The photographs revealed that the students had gained knowledge about the powerful use of the closeup in framing, the compositional rule of thirds, and the light patterns that they observed. However, the scope of the subject matter was limited due to the restrictions imposed by school administrators, who only allowed our group to travel two blocks from the school.

We attempted to use the Painted Essay as a writing structure for the students. The teachers completed a pre-test, and then taught the process to the students using "The Abernaki," a model used with the Painted Essay (Hawkins et al., 2008; Leddy, 1999, p. 104) for practicing color-coding as a structure for organizing writing. This idea arose from a WU workshop training I attended. The students then wrote their own essays based upon a current event. We used the British Petroleum (BP) oil spill, which had recently occurred, as a practice example. Unfortunately, the post-test, which was to be based upon their photo work, did not receive the time and follow-through needed. Many of the students who had attended the class earlier in the week did not attend the last day of summer school, when the test took place.

The instructional materials for students were chosen after the pilot with teacher input during spring 2011, and further revised during fall 2011. The consensus among the teachers was to continue to use and modify the Painted Essay (in its color-coded format) to help students structure according to their writing style and organization. The teachers also agreed to create opportunities for both paired and individual students to take photographs during and after school hours.

The study expanded to include the fifth grade at the beginning of the 2011 school year, to allow observation of student outcomes over a longer period. The advantage of this was that a larger percentage of the class population had been previously exposed to digital photographic processes, and/or had become familiar with writing using the Painted Essay (Leddy, 1999) during the previous trials in either third or fourth grade. The establishment of a control group was considered, but deemed infeasible due to lack of volunteers. A few of the teachers revealed either in writing or verbally that they felt the project would become too time-consuming for them, and chose not to participate.

The next trial run was scheduled for spring 2011. During this trial, we made revisions and improvements to the information learned during the summer. The trial occurred in regular teacher classrooms in the French Immersion School, with teachers assigned students from their respective grade levels. All participants in the study provided proper permissions, and schedules were established for presentations, teacher training, and for students to leave the building to shoot their photographs.

To achieve my goals for both teachers and students, we used web-based resources such as Digital 1 to 1 and photographers' websites, and I invited Professor Wendel White (<http://wendelwhite.com>) to visit our school. Professor White is a professional

photographer, chairperson of the Visual Art and Design Department at Stockton University, and the author of the book *Small Towns, Black Lives* (2003).

To build understanding of concepts like the photo essay and what a photographer does as a researcher, Professor White gave a presentation to teachers and their classes in grades three and four. Unfortunately, just before his talk began, there was a power outage in the neighborhood, so we had to improvise from our planned PowerPoint presentation. He gave the talk, and we showed the images to the audience by holding up the book and passing an extra copy around for all to see. Only half of the classes who had planned to attend the in-person presentation were able to attend it because the principal of the school would not allow the classes to leave their rooms and walk in dark hallways and stairwells while the power was out. Instead we videotaped the presentation, and later showed the video to the students who had been unable to attend.

I worked directly with visiting artists Pampalone, Pivak, and White to review their presentations and oversee their use of instructional materials before they worked with the district teachers. This included their incorporation of and access to pertinent online resources. I requested that the artists use their work to create a visual presentation and explain its development. Since the objective for students was to learn digital storytelling, which is a “creative process in which a traditional story is combined with personal digital technology, such as a computer, video camera, and sound recorder” (Yuksel, Robin, & McNeil, n.d., p. 1); the artists’ lectures included explanations of the technical aspects of photography, the kinds of images that might constitute a visual narrative as a photo essay, and what a body of work might entail. As a leader, it is my responsibility to check the

kinds of images presented to my students, and I reviewed the artists' presentations for clarity and developmental appropriateness.

Although each attempt was based in the same conceptual methodology, the students seemed to connect with Wendel White's photographs on a deeper level. This might have been because we spent time on building a background of understanding of his work historically and aesthetically. In a documentary video in which NJN interviewed White, he explained his work as an artist; this appeared to be particularly helpful in developing student schema so that the students could make meaning from White's photographs (Wiggins & McTighe, 2005).

Training materials for both teachers and students were based on a model unit I co-authored, "The Photographer as Storyteller" (PBS Learning Media™, n.d.), as part of a collaborative project between the New Jersey Department of Education and Public Broadcasting System's Educational Learning Library. It is based on the historical photo research created by White for his book *Small Towns, Black Lives* (2003). This unit may be viewed in the Appendix section of this paper.

Obstacles and issues encountered during the trial run. I had a specific timetable in mind when I ventured to complete this part of the project in spring 2011. Within my timetable, I had planned at the beginning of this phase to review preliminary school data such as the New Jersey Assessment of Skills and Knowledge (NJ ASK) writing scores, and district benchmark writing scores for those classes involved in this research. I requested the scores from the appropriate administrative personnel, intending to assess the students' writing levels using third- and fourth-grade data as a preliminary benchmark prior to putting the project in place. However, I was not granted prompt

access to this material, even after repeated requests. I finally obtained the NJ ASK scores for grades three, four, and five the following school year.

I distributed permission letters (Appendix M) to the teachers and gathered student release forms for permission to participate in the study, interviewed teachers participating in the study, and organized the necessary permissions to work with them. I had originally distributed teacher and administrator online surveys via an email link to Zoomerang, the host site, but despite my gentle reminders to everyone for approximately one month, none of the administrators or teachers completed the online surveys. After this unsuccessful approach, I changed the format of the survey questions and used those to guide me in conducting a semi-structured interview with each individual during Cycle One. The advantage to interviews is that the interviewer can solicit a greater span of questioning and unprompted responses from the interviewee, which provides rich data.

During this trial run of the research, in several situations we faced technical problems. Cameras broke, batteries ran out, and there was a power outage in the community during Professor White's visit to our school, which precluded his ability to show his PowerPoint presentation during his lecture. Due to the slow speed of district internet servers, we experienced streaming issues with the Digital 1 to 1 website, and the videos took too long to download. In addition, the video camera's external microphone did not record sound while documenting some of the initial UbD training with the third- and fourth-grade teachers.

Other ongoing difficulties with implementation included time restrictions, teacher overload, teacher resistance, and a lack of administration's interest and participation. This seeming lack of interest may have been equally due to district personnel feeling

overloaded with existing demands made on their time and attention. In such an environment, even a compelling project may serve as a distraction rather than a potential solution, particularly at the very end of the school year.

Another pitfall during this trial was the midyear loss of our school-based technology specialist; thus, technical support was unavailable to me in the spring. I had already had the privilege of working with the specialist during the summer pilot, and it made a huge difference in our ability to resolve our daily technical difficulties.

Since my work schedule only allowed me to work at the FIS three days per week, I was limited to working with the students during my class time. My prep and lunch periods during the trial were supported by administration, and my schedule afforded me opportunities to go into the classroom and to work with the teachers. This same support and accommodation by administration would change by the following school year, as the top-level administration and Board changed over the summer.

The research process and test/performance sequence began with the student pre-tests, both visual and written. Later, they would photograph, learn VTS and the Painted Essay, photograph some more, and then write about their work. During the trial, I accomplished the entire process with the fourth grade, but not the third. The third grade was only able to complete the first steps of the writing aspect of the project using Wendel White's work. This lesson was videotaped. I collected student products and reviewed them with the classroom teachers to gather feedback and adjust as needed in order to prepare for the action research process with Cycle One.

The fourth grade did complete the entire process, but the last writing occurred on the last full day of school. Since some of the students did not attend school that day, the

project became rushed at the end. Mr. P., the fourth-grade teacher who was scheduled to teach the Painted Essay and writing supports, was called out of class for an extended period of time; thus, I taught it myself due to time constraints. Unfortunately, this kind of situation occurred with disturbing frequency.

I had planned to revise my project according to what I learned in this trial, and then repeat it with said revisions during the first cycle of action research in the fall of the 2011-2012 school year. I implemented adjustments and modifications to the methodology and practice of Cycle One, to help ensure the greatest level of success possible within the circumstances under which this project was permitted to take place.

Overview of Action Research Cycles

The first of the three cycles of action research I conducted was an attempt to implement the methodology described, including the collection of qualitative data on teachers' approaches to this model in their academic and art classroom(s). It tracked a series of semi-structured interviews, digital recordings, and videotaping of subjects, both in the classroom and during interviews; and it examined instructional materials used and student work products produced. Subjects included administrators, teachers, students, professional photographers, and myself as a participant researcher. During Cycle One, teacher training in UbD, WU, and digital photography occurred. The students were given a written and photographic pre-test, and were then taught VTS strategies, art criticism, and brainstorming techniques; and completed self-reflection questionnaires and storyboards prior to completing an individual project in Cycle Two and the post-test in Cycle Three. Cycle One also documented observations of classroom norms, school

climate and culture, and the difficulties of carrying out this methodology as planned in this environment.

The second cycle of action research included the collection of qualitative data on teachers' approaches to this model in their academic and art classrooms. It documented changes to methodology and implementation in order to solve problems identified in the first research cycle; and tracked a series of semi-structured interviews, digital recordings, and videotaping of subjects, both within the classroom and outside it. It continued to examine instructional materials employed and student work products produced; the students continued to photograph and process them through post production 2.0 technology. Subjects were the same as in the first cycle. Observations of classroom norms and school climate and culture were again documented, along with the new challenges that emerged in the execution of this partially revised methodology.

The third cycle of action research completed the collection of qualitative data on teachers' implementation and approaches to the model in their academic and art classroom. This cycle included further adjustments made to methodology and its implementation in order to solve problems identified in earlier research cycles. It completed the coding and analysis of all data collected through tracking of semi-structured interviews, digital recordings, and videotaping of subjects both within the classroom and outside it; the instructional materials employed; and final evaluations of the student work products. Included in this cycle were the same subjects as in earlier cycles, as well as documentation of classroom norm observations, school climate, culture, and the challenges that remained at the end of the project.

Data Identification, Coding, and Analysis

The data analysis examined the methodology and execution of triangulated data collection in order to maximize the validity and efficacy of the findings of this study's investigations into the research questions that provoke and animate this thesis. According to Glesne (2006), "The purpose for methods triangulation is not the simple combination of different kinds of different kinds of data, but the attempt to relate them as to counteract the threats to validity identified in each" (p. 36).

A transcription service in India provided the transcriptions of the video and audio data collected during the research cycles. This data was organized and coded into twelve separate categories as identified by the major themes that prevailed. Student writing samples were evaluated with rubrics that were both teacher-created and from standardized State of NJ sources. The student writing samples and photo essays were evaluated using teacher-created rubrics, and the scores were peer-reviewed. The data analysis for both writing and photography used the average scores given to each student from his/her academic classroom teacher and myself as a participant researcher and art teacher. The written pre- and post-tests were analyzed using rubrics created by Housen (2000-2001), which were the descriptors of her theory of the five stages of aesthetic development. The written pre- and post-tests scores were all peer-reviewed.

Validity

It should be noted that this is a qualitative method study using a sample of convenience. Therefore, the results of this research are unlikely to satisfy scientific criteria for statistical significance. The study should thus be viewed as a pilot project that prepares a model for future implementation. Nevertheless, this study may provide

valuable insights into the professional development of classroom teachers in visual arts integration, with teaching digital photography in the classroom, and such teaching's impact on student writing. This study did apply the statistical method of triangulation to validate its claims through analyzing and interpreting the data collected from each of its cycles through student work samples/artifacts, peer-review and validation, and through pre- and post-testing results. This action research should be viewed as an alternative to traditional workshops; as a component of professional development; as a partial paradigm for future larger-scale, statistically valid studies; and for further scholarly research in various areas.

Conclusion

While I could see that it was not possible to provide an ideal environment to carry out this study in my district, I also felt that it was useful to use the considerable quantity of background research I had done in my review of the literature, and the pedagogical methods in which I had been trained. Any successful future action research might serve to further address critical issues facing contemporary arts education in a data-driven, high-stakes environment. By integrating many promising strands of progressive and innovative pedagogy, it seemed possible that through my agency, I would be able to effectively to drive positive change in writing, technology integration, and the arts, given the strategies outlined above. However, I remained realistic about the large challenges I might face, considering my years of experience in a particularly challenged district subject to all the adverse influences that commonly affect our poorest and least stable educational environments.

Chapter 4

Action Research: Cycle One

Introduction

This chapter provides an account of the first of three cycles of action research conducted during implementation of the constructivist methodology—the use of Understanding by Design (UbD), Writing for Understanding (WU), the Painted Essay, Visual Thinking Strategies (VTS), and the photo essay. It follows the progress of the action research, including the collection of qualitative data on teachers’ approaches to this model in their academic and art classrooms. It tracks the series of pre-tests, digital recordings, and videotaping of subjects. Along with the issues and events of carrying out the testing, interviews and work products created during Cycle One within this environment are noted.

During Cycle One, the researcher introduced the project to the fifth-grade teacher for the first time. She was briefly trained in UbD, the Painted Essay, and the final project assembly methods. All proper permissions from students and parents for the paired in-school photo session were distributed and collected at the beginning of the school year. The pre-tests, both written and photographic, were performed. The NJ ASK scores from the previous school year were obtained and reviewed during this cycle.

Writing pre-test/post-test design. Pre-writing and post-writing test design (Appendix S) assessed the impact of the visual narrative as an inter-contextual gestalt theory (Arnheim, 1997; Freedman, 1996). This was evidenced within the students’ critical written responses to VTS (Housen, 2000-2001) with questions adapted from the Wolfson model (Curva & Associates, 2005). The test itself was a teacher-designed

writing sample essay. It incorporated the use of a picture prompt for writing, with a single photo provided with or without student input in the image choice. In a separate activity, students brainstormed and then wrote narrative stories. The testing process occurred both before and after the teaching of the visual narrative/photo essay and the Painted Essay. To validate this testing process, two advisors, Dr. Susan Leshnoff, former chair of Art, Music, and Design at Seton Hall University; and Dr. Emile Talerico, Director of the Online Master of Educational Leadership at Montclair State University, were consulted. Details of this consultation are noted later in this chapter's discussion of the first pre-test.

The first set of pre- and post-test(s) was created to assess student ability to critically analyze photographs. Student knowledge and skill sets were evidenced by the ability to demonstrate a written analysis of an artwork using the Visual Thinking Strategies (VTS) model of critique. The pre- and post-test(s) required students to viscerally respond to an artwork with a demonstrated level of mastery in formal descriptive analysis. A rubric (Appendix H) was created to evaluate each student's performance. Students were required to make specific references to the artwork in order to defend their responses and overall critical perspective using specific evaluative criteria. The students' facets of conceptual understanding were ranked using appropriately leveled developmental and meta-cognitive response criteria.

One pre-test was created with a single teacher-chosen photo that would appear on both the pre- and post-tests. Another approach of the same model was created to be conducted with one variable; students were permitted to choose one photo of a group of photos from *The Great Themes* (Time-Life Books, 1982). This pre-test was administered to every student in attendance for grades three, four, and five.

The first pre-test. When I gave the first pre-test, I provided each grade with the opportunity to choose from approximately a dozen different images. The number of images from which the students could choose varied according to the size of the class being tested. This approach was notably different from the Wolfsonian/Artful Citizen study, because my approach allowed for a greater number of variables. I chose to approach the “choice pre-test” this way because of my own underlying pedagogical assumptions. At this point of the study I assumed that a student could apply the process of critique to any image that was developmentally appropriate, and that if the student chose the image, he or she would demonstrate this knowledge in writing more enthusiastically. These sample images are from the books *The Great Themes* (Time-Life Books, 1982) and *Great Photographers* (Time-Life Books, 1983). To see all the choice images, refer to Appendix T.



Figure 2. Sample images from choice pre-test (Time-Life Books, 1982)ⁱ.

Through the process of action research, I reflected on my practice and noted that this approach produced too many variables, and that I needed to gather input from my

advisors on the execution of the pre-test images. I consulted committee members Dr. Susan Leshnoff and Dr. Emile Talerico, with whom I worked on the NJ Model Curriculum project, for some critical feedback about this approach. Both advisors recommended that I change my method for the pre-test to use only one image, and to use the same image as the post-test. This image is from the book *The Great Themes* (Time-Life Books, 1982).



Figure 3. Single image pre- and post-test (Time-Life Books, 1982)ⁱⁱ.

Theoretical baseline for the intertextual model. I first began the project by creating a baseline of each student’s skill level and understanding of writing about photography, and asked each to respond to a photograph using the same questions used on the Wolfsonian’s testing protocol, the Artful Citizen Visual Literacy Assessment (Appendix U). These questions included “What is going on in this picture?”; “What do you see that makes you say that?”; and “What more can you find?” (Curva & Associates, 2005, p. 90). No further instructions were provided to the students about the imagery. It

was impressed upon the class that ethical testing behavior expectations were in place, and that they must not discuss with their neighbors what they were writing; nor should they lift the photos from the table. Imagery from *The Great Themes* (Time-Life Books, 1982) (Appendix T) was placed inside paper frames to block descriptive information about the photographs.

Each class was given a different grouping of images, mainly based upon the size of the class, as there were five tables in the room with six chairs each. Students grouped around each table with the image in the center of the table. The images ran an array of themes such as landscape, cityscape, still life, and portrait. The goal was to determine whether the students could viscerally respond to the images with minimal prompting.

Context to the literature: Goal for learning. Using a constructivist approach, I wanted to see how much prior knowledge students would apply when responding to the images. “Constructivism is a learning theory based on the idea that new knowledge is ‘constructed’ on top of learners’ existing knowledge” (Citizens of the World Charter School, n.d.). For instance, within students’ written responses, I looked for specific references to details of the images, and usage of appropriate art vocabulary such as *elements* and *principles of art*. The elements and principles of art are the individual design components, when combined, that create a unified formal artistic composition.

All the students would have learned visual vocabulary from art classes in prior years of learning, as this is defined within the scope and sequence of the district art curriculum. Thus, my goal was to ascertain the students’ aesthetic development, and their conceptual understanding of the criteria for responding to a photograph structurally through the process of description, analysis, evaluation, and judgment (Mittler & Ragans,

2007). A line of questions was developed based on the VTS model (Housen, 2000-2001). The reason for the variety of photographs was to differentiate between the skill of applying vocabulary within the description, and the critical ability to judge and evaluate a work of art. The third grade used two pictures, the fourth grade used three pictures, and the fifth grade used two pictures.

This points to the importance of creating performance tasks that involve multiple cognitive processes and develop a student's ability to actively engage in processes such as aesthetic development/VTS (Housen, 2000-2001), intertextuality (Friedman, 1991), and visual conceiving and gestalt (Arnheim, 1997). These processes reinforce the student's ability to make meaning from information and connect their understanding of *big ideas* and *enduring understandings* (Wiggins & McTighe, 2005). These processes also support the notion that clarity of communications—regardless of the form (visual, oral, and/or written)—benefits from the use of an organized structure (e.g., frameworks for thinking such as VTS, a model of art criticism) (Mittler & Ragans, 2007), and the color coding of the Painted Essay (Leddy, 1999) when expressing one's thoughts and ideas. For transformational change to occur within a teacher's pedagogy, these understandings must be evidenced in the student product, and the pedagogical methodology should be replicable. Student models and reliable rubrics are thus required.

Performance task: The photo essay. The performance task required the students to create a visual photo essay about a topic and then write about it using the imagery to prompt and organize their narrative writing. The task utilized the students' own photographs (created with their chosen themes), and 2.0-technology software. This software was especially suited to the photographic process in creating the final image(s)

for the visual narrative prompt. Having practiced working with digital media and the Painted Essay techniques for writing structure, the students completed the project by writing an essay based upon these same sequential images and applied the Painted Essay color coding to their final essays. The essays were evaluated using the grading criteria established in the New Jersey Registered Holistic Scoring Rubric (Appendix K). This set of grading criteria was significant because it was based on the same rubric used to evaluate the writing section of the New Jersey Assessment of Skills and Knowledge (NJ ASK), a fourth-grade high-stakes test (http://www.state.nj.us/education/assessment/es/specs/Overview_njask_lal.pdf).

The work was also assessed for technical aspects of photographic composition and exposure, the exploration of the visual process, and the topic. It was further assessed for each student's ability to discuss their own and other students' work using the academic vocabulary of the discipline: i.e., the language of art and photography specifically, and the language of aesthetics generally.

Rubrics. As recommended by Wiggins and McTighe (2005), rubrics were created to assess the students' level of understanding and knowledge transfer with regard to the unit's other performance tasks. These competencies included the mechanics of writing, the control of digital media, the consistent use of artistic formal structures in the composition, and the students' ability to create a visually coherent, thematic body of work in a photo essay. A photo essay is a series of images and writings organized sequentially to tell a story. I sought the input of each classroom teacher after I graded the work using the appropriate rubric to evaluate student success. Divergent observations of the data were noted and are further discussed in the findings section. To ensure the

validity of these evaluative tools, the tests measured learning anchored in authentic tasks. This conformed to the criteria of the six facets of understanding, which contain equidistant performance levels and employ parallel descriptors. To ensure objectivity, the cutoff point by which the grade was determined was clearly indicated (Wiggins & McTighe, 2005).

Four separate rubrics measuring student conceptual and structural performance both visually and written were originally used (Appendices G, I, J, K). Since the classroom teachers were using the holistic writing rubric used for the NJ ASK, the same rubric would be used to compare those scores with the writing rubric that was created for this research, based upon the seminal work of Burke in *The Six Traits of Effective Writing* [rubric] (Burke, n.d.), and sample rubrics from the Greece, NY School District (Greece Central School District, n.d.), as recommended by Wiggins and McTighe (2005). One major difference between the NJ Holistic Scoring Rubric (NJHSR) (Drumthwacket.org, n.d.), and the writing rubric created for this research is the area of voice. The NJHSR does not measure the student voice, which is important in creative and narrative writing.

The other rubrics that were created to assess the student work in this research were to identify the measured criteria in formal image composition; creativity, which is essentially the voice in images and story; planning and organization of the photo essay; and the transitional aspects of intertextuality (going from image to text). The VTS rubric was created to measure the aesthetic understanding levels created for the Artful Citizen/Wolfsonian research study by Curva and Associates (2005).

The writing rubric was modified in the third cycle and redefined by what the data revealed. Student work was assessed using multiple rubrics. These included the previously mentioned modified NJ Holistic Writing Rubric; a rubric created for the Artful Citizen Project (Curva & Associates, 2005) which accompanied the pre- and post-test to assess the issue of aesthetic development criteria; a rubric developed for creative writing structure; and finally, a rubric developed for the formal and technical aspects of the photography.

Writing pre-test impressions. The pre-tests were graded during the third cycle of this research. Initially, I had allowed the students to write about a photo of their choice. These photos were printed on original pages in a book, which were removed and mounted into paper frames to hide photo details included in the book. This proved to be problematic because the students were working in groups, looking at photographs, copying answers from each other, and lifting the frames to see what was written underneath.

During the second pre-test, using a single image that would be the same image used for the post-test (per the recommendation of Drs. Leshnoff and Talerico), I managed to resolve the behavioral issues by having students sit separated, leaving a chair space on each side of each student. However, despite overcoming the behavioral issues, the majority of students in both pre-tests answered the questions superficially, omitting many details. Overall, many of the student responses simply named the items in the pictures, without describing the images for their compositional aspects or trying to make meaning of the images' stories. Moreover, issues of language mechanics, such as spelling errors, were also evidenced in student writing. This was also a mastery criterion within the NJ

Registered Holistic Writing Rubric used in this research. An example of this is demonstrated here from the single photo pre-test by one of the fifth-graders:

What's going on in this picture?

Student: Water sprinkeling out

What do you see that makes you say that?

Student: Water hoes [Note: probably meaning hose]

Write down what you think is happening in the picture, and don't worry about the spelling.

Student: Whats happening is that sprileing a stach of people

What more can you find?

Student: buildings

In other words, what do you think the point of the picture is?

Student: The water (KM5, 2011a)

When making my decision about which students would prove to be the exemplars, I looked for more context clues and descriptive writing in their answers. I wanted to see evidence of direct reference to the image for story, context, and understanding of the image's composition, if it was possible.

This is an example from fourth-grade exemplar student AR4's response to the same image:

What's going on in this picture?

AR4: A fire hidret is squirting out water on a boy and his mom.

What do you see that makes you say that?

AR4: What I see is a dark volumed fire hidret squirting water on a boy and on women on the sidewalk.

Write down what you think is happening in the picture, and don't worry about spelling.

AR4: I think that someone made hole in the fire hidret with an ax. And a boy and his mom were walking by and it squirted. And since it was a hot day they decided to stay and let it wet them.

What more can you find?

AR4: I can find an apartment, street, garbage cans and other things that make shapes like square windows in the background.

In other words, what do you think the point of the picture is?

AR4: I think the point of the picture is that sometimes unexpected things can happen but they can be fun, and that sometimes these things help family bond.

(AR4, 2011a)

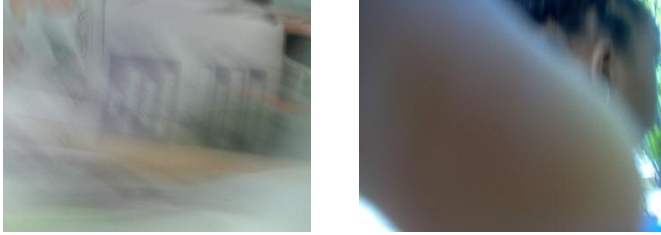
AR4's answer was far more descriptive than the other example from a fifth-grader. The fifth-grade example reflects the majority of answers received from among the students, regardless of grade. These students gave one- or two-word descriptions, with no specific reference to where the named object was within the picture (e. g., background, foreground, or mid-ground). AR4's answer included adjectives such as "dark volumed," and she demonstrated a prerequisite knowledge of the elements of design by referencing shape when she said, "other things that make shapes like square windows in the background." Moreover, AR4 attempts to summarize the image by transferring her

schematic understanding, and by providing her moral of the story by discussing the *big idea* (Wiggins & McTighe, 2005) of unexpected family fun and bonding.

Photo pre-test impressions. As with the writing pre-test, a photo pre-test was conducted to gain a baseline impression of what the students understood about creating an image. The students were instructed on the proper technical controls on a camera prior to receiving one, and were asked to take photos of the neighborhood around the school. Like the written pre-test, the photo pre-test was not fully analyzed with the designed rubrics until the third cycle of this research, due to logistical issues faced in attempting to work with the classroom teachers, who were frequently not available.

Another similarity of the photo pre-test to the written pre-test was the outcomes of its products. Many of the students did not have the habits of mind to pre-visualize their images and create compositionally pleasing images. Most just took snapshots of their friends, rather than critically looking at the environment and responding accordingly with intent and focus. Moreover, in all grade levels, students experienced technical issues with their images because they did not follow instructions on using the cameras properly. A small number of students mistakenly set the cameras to the video setting and did not even end up with photos, so they had to reshoot.

Below, examples of unsuccessful pre-test images from third-grade and fourth-grade students demonstrate some of the technical and compositional deficits with which many of the students contended during the pre-test.



(SS3, 2011 & AR4, 2011b)

Figure 4. Third- and fourth-grade students' photos with technical and compositional deficits.

However, there were other students who were compositionally and technically successful in taking their pre-test photos, and who produced some very good images, yet were not chosen to be the exemplar students because their writing demonstrated less critical thinking than that of the exemplar students. An example of this comes from a fifth-grader who took the photo below of a bird on a lawn. This image shows an understanding of the compositional rule of thirds; the exposure is perfect, and the timing exceptional. This work comes from the same student who wrote the problematic pre-test example mentioned earlier.



Figure 5. Example from a fifth-grade student whose photographs were exceptional, but who had many problems with writing (KM5, 2011b).

For further discussion of exemplar students, see Chapter 5.

Teacher training and packets. None of the teachers had received training in UbD, the Painted Essay, the Frayer model of vocabulary development, round-table brainstorming with images/words, or the photo essay before the start of my project, but they were all knowledgeable in project-based assessment and grading with rubrics. During Cycle 1 training for teachers, I reviewed all teacher and student training materials (Appendices A, B, C, S, T, U) and the technical aspects of digital photography, along with all supplemental materials (Appendix A).

The first teacher training of the third- and fourth-grade teachers occurred in spring 2011 with a meeting of approximately an hour and a half, where I presented them a brief overview of the UbD framework. There were also three meetings where I reviewed the Painted Essay and digital photography with the third- and fourth-grade teachers in spring 2011. In a separate meeting during fall 2011, I introduced the fifth-grade teacher to the Understanding by Design (UbD) unit framework and the Painted Essay model (Appendix B). The fifth-grade teacher's training in these two frameworks consisted of two sessions rather than four, due to administrative scheduling changes made to my teaching schedule in the beginning of the school year.

In fall 2011, I introduced the Frayer Model for vocabulary building and reviewed the Painted Essay with the third-, fourth-, and fifth-grade teachers (Appendices B, C). Digital photography was also introduced during a session with all three teachers in fall 2011. Periodically, I would go into these teachers' classrooms to observe, or the teachers would accompany their students to my art classroom, and we would usually spend a few minutes reviewing related information and sharing notes.

The teachers were all already implementing a form of UbD by using essential questions (already built into the new district-wide mandated *Journeys* curriculum), brainstorming through mind mapping, and Venn diagrams in their teaching before I introduced these as a strategy in this work. During spring 2011, I trained the third-grade teacher (DW) and fourth-grade teacher (DP) in UbD in two sessions before the beginning of Cycle One. I also trained them using a PowerPoint presentation I had originally created to train newly hired and first-year teachers in the district during summer 2010. I showed some of the UbD videos to which I had access, and clarified the stages of backwards design through study of the template. With the third- and fourth-grade teachers during three other meetings that spring semester, I also had time to review the details of VTS, the Painted Essay, and the Frayer model; and some Digital 1 to 1 videos on basic camera functions and compositional techniques. These teachers had attended Professor Wendel White's presentation at the French Immersion School (FIS) when he visited.

Beginning with Cycle One, the major data collected was from interviews with teachers and administrators, classroom observations, student work products, teacher-created instructional materials, a photo small group pre-test and writing sample, and teacher-created art criticism pre-tests.

The UbD framework was employed as an overarching framework of instructional unit design at the level of the individual lesson. In UbD, Wiggins and McTighe (2005) create a teacher template for designing curricular units that not only develop knowledge and skills but understanding and transfer. Using backwards design, units are constructed with the end in mind.

Writing for Understanding (WU) and the Painted Essay (Figure 6) employ the conceptual structural framework of Wiggins and McTighe's (2005) concepts in UbD and provide teachers with a framework and methods for teaching writing. WU provides teachers with a process to identify students' misunderstandings of the writing process and offers models and exercises to empower students with key concepts for identifying themes, answering essential questions within their writing, and using those same skills (transferring) in other applications and situations (Hawkins et al., 2008).

The Painted Essay is an important structural strategy used to help students improve writing in WU. Leddy (1999) designed the Painted Essay and was one of the authors of the Vermont Writing Collaborative (Hawkins et al., 2008), who created the WU framework. The Painted Essay offers students structural support for their writing by incorporating visual strategies such as employing color-coded visual clues to support text flow and sequencing.

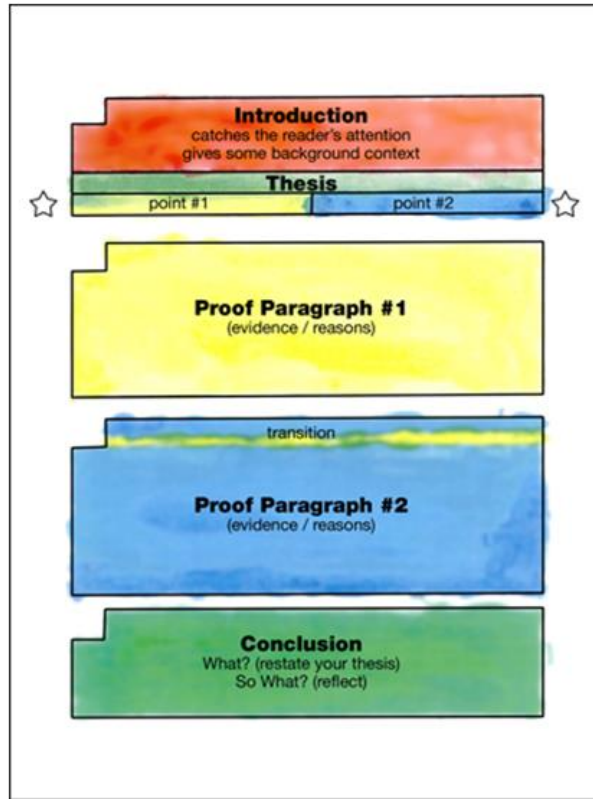


Figure 6. The Painted Essay by Leddy (1999).

Since the fifth-grade teacher (SO) did not sign on to the project until fall of the following school year, there was less time available for her to receive training, and the training she received was not as detailed. This was mainly due to schedule conflicts with the implementation of the new *Journeys* curriculum. This situation affected the fifth-grade teacher's training most adversely in the areas of digital photography and UbD. However, links to videos, PowerPoints, and all printed materials (Appendix B) were supplied to this teacher. I continued to provide SO with support for UbD, the Painted Essay, and the photo essay, sometimes while I was in her room teaching her class art; and as I had done for the other teachers, I made myself available to her for help and questions whenever I was needed.

The fifth-grade teacher did not attend Professor Wendel White’s lecture on his photo essay book, *Small Towns, Black Lives* (2003), but did receive background on his work by viewing the video from PBS/NJN’s Learning Library, which accompanies the lesson unit I coauthored, “The Photographer as Storyteller” (PBS Learning Media™, n.d.).

I provided material packet handouts so that the teachers could study on their own. The school administration also received a packet. Each packet contained links to the Technology Survey for Administrators; Teacher Training Evaluation; and the Teacher Attitude Survey/Art/Technology Integration; links to lessons on digital photography through Digital 1 to 1 training videos; links to select UbD online videos and accompanying materials; a link to the Vermont Writing Collaborative website; and a link to Writing for Understanding (Hawkins, et al., 2008) supporting materials, including the Painted Essay (Leddy, 1999) (Appendices A, B, C).

Since the third- and fourth-grade teachers had carried out the procedures of the project in their classrooms at least once by Cycle One, I sought their input on potential modifications for practical classroom implementation, the relative value they perceived our work to have, and whether they might consider using either the Painted Essay or digital photography in their own classrooms. I also wanted their opinions on what (if any) implementation barriers existed to integrating UbD, the Painted Essay, and art/digital photography into their own lessons.

Teacher interviews. Using the same approach, and based upon the same sources, interviews with the grade 3, 4, and 5 teachers (one teacher in each grade) were also conducted. These interviews were conducted to gather background demographic data and

to assess the teachers' experience level with Understanding by Design (UbD) and new media technology. Each interview was based upon the online surveys that were originally created for teachers to complete. The data revealed that all three classroom teachers had undertaken at least one major and one minor field of study within their undergraduate degrees, had masters' degrees, had worked in other careers prior to entering the teaching field, and had become certified through an alternate route/fast track program at a university that taught via online courses. One of the teachers had a background in photography, and the others were experienced in using point and shoot automatic digital cameras. All the teachers were trained in smartboard technology and possessed word processing and computer skills.

According to the third-grade teacher DW, the district lesson planning format was in contradiction to UbD. However, she found ways to incorporate parts of it, even with the pressures of "teaching to the test" and the restrictions of the lesson plan format. She found it a worthwhile approach to teaching with the end (assessment) in mind. DW stated, "Yes, I would actually use it.... I like to break it down all the way to the root and then I can build it up." She continued, "I always go and look at the assessment to see what is needed to be done and then I develop my lesson plan according to the assessment." Even though she faced pressure to "teach to the test," DW felt that UbD helped her enrich her lessons and reconnect her students' varied strands of learning. She explained that this meant that "...even though I'm teaching to the test I still ...bring in a lot of other things that they are learning as well, *while* I'm teaching to the test." DW didn't want her students to think that "...learning is separate; every subject is separated. They are interrelated together." She felt that UbD helped her focus her teaching in ways that

allowed her students to have connected learning experiences, "...to see the world as it is," she said (DW, personal communication, January 26, 2012).

The fourth-grade teacher, DP, reported some similar responses. These included his desire to teach at a pace that allowed for "teachable moments." Teachable moments are discussions and activities that critically deconstruct information that was previously unanticipated or ignored, but that opens a pathway to new ideas and connections within the curriculum. The district's mandated curricular pacing guide left many teachers feeling restricted and cautious, as their evaluations would be linked to their students' testing results after this school year. Not keeping pace would mean that their students would not be prepared for the testing, which would result in poor test scores. This would translate to a lower score on the recently adopted NJ state teacher evaluation system. DP stated, "Pacing guides ... kind of limits ... how much time we can spend doing things. I think that is probably the biggest challenge" (DP, personal communication, September 23, 2012).

The teacher evaluation system in NJ is research-based and created by pedagogical theorist Charlotte Danielson. It includes a rubric-based system with benchmarks divided among four critical domains of pedagogical traits and dispositions that define the role of the teacher. These best practices define specific domains of instructional strategies, content knowledge, classroom management, and the school community at large. This increases the overall pressures for teachers to ensure that they are "teaching to the test" and provides less time for experimentation.

In soliciting teacher opinions, I asked the teachers to determine whether they integrated visual arts into their lessons, and if so, how often; which media they used, and whether they might incorporate new visual media they hadn't used before. Having

observed each of the three teachers' classes, I knew that all the teachers in the research were proficient in word processing, PowerPoint, and use of the Promethean Board. I was particularly interested in knowing their self-evaluated levels of proficiency in working with digital photography, and the degree to which they felt comfortable incorporating digital photography into their lessons. DP did implement digital photography in his classroom, and found that it helped his students "sequence their ideas on the paper, and their pictures ... when they go and write the story it is better, because you know they already went through the process." DP clearly saw the benefit of continuing to integrate digital photography in his classroom teaching, and observed, "They remember what they did. You know, they can see their movement ... when you take the picture they see the smile on it ... their words are more visual, you can imagine" (DP, personal communication, September 23, 2012).

My work with the teachers revealed that both the third- and fourth-grade teachers had implemented the methods of the Painted Essay and the photo essay, integrating them into their English/LA lessons. DW expressed that her "students' writing, and even in their thinking, is bringing in their own experiences and ... those personal pictures allow you to either relate or have the student's idea ... going out there." DW felt that digital photography was helping students make meaningful connections between the classroom and their own lived experience in the world. "I have experienced that' is a big deal with our children," she said (DW, personal communication, January 26, 2012).

These training sessions eventually led to discussions regarding their experiences with the implementation of the Painted Essay and the photo essay, because these teachers' classes were the first to have exposure to this material during the practice run of

this research. DP affirmed that his classes were “going to be coming back to it ... as we move towards like preparation for State test.” He felt it provided “...a good foundation ...as they move to expanding and stretching their writing outlook.” He felt the Painted Essay might be even more effective if taught at an earlier grade, averring, “If you start a lower grade with the color coordination, by the time they get here, it’s like boom, boom, boom” (DP, personal communication, September 23, 2012).

Preparation for photo pre-test. The expectations and procedures for the photo essay were reviewed with the teachers and students. These included discussions about the procedural and technical aspects of handling a camera, and basic workflow processes for after shooting. At least once, the participating students in grades 3, 4, and 5 were taken out in pairs during art class to photograph in the local school vicinity. They participated in completing a packet of exercises designed by this researcher to create a photo essay for sequence and visual impact on the viewer. The packet included a description of the photo essay, its purpose, applications, history, ideas/themes for subject matter and procedures; a storyboard to work out ideas, potential compositions, and the chronology of the story; and a student self-assessment form to complete after a shoot. With the decision to enable the students to take the cameras home for the individual assignments, a new letter for parents was created with changes stressing the safekeeping and property agreement between the researcher, parents, and students (Appendix N). Distribution of this letter required administrative approval. This approval took seven weeks to obtain from the building principal, causing serious delays in implementing Cycle Two.

Photographic skill-building requirements. To prepare the students to think independently and creatively with the photographic medium—a studio art—it was essential for them to learn to make informed decisions about subject matter, composition, lighting, and camera controls, since there is a strong technical aspect to creating an image with digital photography. This technical aspect is different from those in other art forms such as writing, and other visual media like painting, sculpture, and analog photography. In analog approaches to photography, traditional darkroom applications would be employed for both color and black and white photography. The photographer would connect to the media physically, through touch, during the development process of the pre- and post-latent image and after its printing. The photographer might be thought of as working like a painter with light in the enlarger; yet might also be thought of as working like a methodical scientist while running the image through the necessary film and print processes.

With the advent of digital photography, this connection—or pathway—does not occur in the same way. Software manufacturers make references to these analog processes when naming the editing and processing tools for the editing of digital images. However, for someone who lacks this schema, these concepts are abstract and vague. Layers in Photoshop are meant to simulate the layers of film but are very different. Celluloid and pixels are from different origins and working with each of these media requires a different mindset, thus producing different results.

However, the photographer's eye and sense of timing remains the same. Whether one is recording the light and image onto a celluloid layer or an electronic semi-conductor, aesthetic considerations (as well as social, political, emotional/psychological,

economic, and other considerations and choices) still apply. As a professional photographer for thirty-five years, and a public-school teacher for twenty, I have contemplated how this understanding might best be translated to students. It is slowly becoming impossible to find traditional black and white darkrooms in schools these days, due to both the cost and the health and safety issues involved.

The issue is no longer a matter of student interests or access to a darkroom; today's students are digital natives. They choose to create art, receive information, and communicate with others via digital means because digital media has infused their everyday lives. The internet makes it convenient and easily accessible with a computer, phone, or tablet. Thus, creating in this form becomes automatic and natural to them. Photographs are easily published and shared through socially-based media as photographic creativity is standardized through Instagram. Hicks (2012) observes that students have "embraced the digital world" (p. 5) and cites Wilks, Cutcher, and Wilks (2012), stating, "Guided by their teachers, students can learn how to use digital technologies to imagine, generate, develop and produce artworks and to critically and creatively evaluate both products and ideas" (p. 57).

Using a choice-based approach to art education, Ewald and Lightfoot (2001) and Van Horn (2008), in their respective books, developed lesson units that promote the use of photography to create lessons with similar themes and social issues of race, language, historical world events, and body image through books, posters, multimedia presentations, and installations. They contend that this approach to connecting photography and writing will enable students to better communicate their understanding of themselves and the world around them in multiple modalities.

Teaching critique. To help them understand the way photographers tell stories, the students received an overview of what comprises a photo essay. They viewed the works of master photographers and participated in classroom discussion through guided questioning to build schema. Included were a sequence of images expressing individual perspectives and experiences with subject matter in compositional backgrounds and touting an aesthetic style. Participants were instructed in design principles to create strong compositions in a photograph. They were shown how lighting is key in creating dramatic effects. The photographers whose work was viewed were Magnum Photographers in *New York September 11* (Halberstam, 2001); Kendall Messick in the Impermanence installation (<http://www.kmessick.com/main.htm>) and the Projectionist installation (<http://www.theprojectionist.net/>); Wendel White in *Small Towns, Black Lives* (White, 2003); Tillman Crane in *A Walk Along the Jordan* (Crane, 2009); and Walker Evans in *Walker Evans, Photographer of America* (Nau, 2007); along with various examples provided in the Time-Life Encyclopedia of Photography's volume *The Great Themes* (Time-Life Books, 1982). The students were also introduced to the black and white charcoal and found object installations depicting a generational family in *Portrayals* by African-American artist Whitfield Lovell (2000). Lovell is not a photographer; however, many of his themes overlapped those we had been investigating. The exchange below exemplifies student development of a conceptual understanding of photo essays and determining meaning in the specific photo essay being presented.

Researcher: What is this a story about?

Student: The 9/11. (...)

Student: It's about the twin towers, how it fell down and who got killed down and what hit it.

Student: It's about the fire fighters. (...)

Student: It's two planes.

Researcher: Who else is it about?

Student: Cops.

Researcher: The police.

Student: The people.

Researcher: It's about the people; it's about—what about the people?

Student: They were trapped.

Researcher: Wait a minute, say it loud.

Student: A tragedy. (S. Sullivan Rubin, personal communication, October 18, 2011)

In the selection above, the students were looking at a book photographed by Magnum Photographers about the terrorist attacks on the United States on September 11, 2001. I used a series of guiding questions to demonstrate the connection of the image to the text; to show the students an example of how a professional photographer creates a story with pictures, and then to get them to interpret that story and to write about it. To demonstrate to the class that writing was as much a part of the artistic process, we read excerpts from White's *Small Towns, Black Lives* (2003) and Cartier-Bresson's *The Mind's Eye* (1999) and made note of the descriptive language used by the authors to help readers create pictures in their minds. This was in preparation for demonstrating brainstorming activities.

We have the picture [as a point to] creating the story, correct? Yeah. So now, who are these people? What do the photographs tells us about them? I want you to look at it and think about these questions. What is their story? (Sullivan, personal communication, October 16, 2011)

Also reviewed was the technical language of photography, and the interchangeability between certain words/concepts in photography and writing. It is important to clarify specific contextual meanings between the written word and the image, because certain words are used interchangeably but mean different things in each art form. A good example of this would be the word perspective. When used in visual arts it describes spatial relationships on flat surfaces, but in writing it describes the state of one's ideas, facts, and meaningful relationships. Thus, making such distinctions for students was very important for building content understanding.

During my work with the New Jersey Department of Education on the NJ High School Art 1 Model Curriculum, I learned of the importance of technical/academic language in building content knowledge, including the use of tiered words (Schmid, 2012). Beck, McKeown, and Kucan (2002), in accordance with the National Core Content Standards, developed a tiered ranking system for words in complex texts, and stated:

Tier Three words (what the standards refer to as domain specific words) are specific to a domain or field of study, and key to understanding a new concept within a text. Because of their specificity and close ties to content knowledge, Tier Three words are far more common in informational texts than in literature. Recognized as new and “hard” words for most readers

(particularly student readers), they are often explicitly defined by the author of a text, repeatedly used, and otherwise heavily scaffolded.

Tier Three words are obviously unfamiliar to most students, contain the ideas necessary to a new topic, and are recognized as both important and specific to the subject area in which they are instructing students. Teachers often define Tier Three words prior to students encountering them in a text and then reinforce their acquisition throughout a lesson. (p. 33)

Since this research was conducted within the context of the regularly scheduled art classes, it followed the objectives listed in the district curriculum for art history and criticism. Lessons were given on artistic styles and approaches through aesthetic theories, and the formal elements and principles of art were stressed. Also explored were the theories of institutionalism and expressionism, but the emphasis was placed on formalism in this discussion. In one lesson, students followed a model of art criticism to learn analytical skills in order to respond to a work of art using the elements and principles of design. The model provides the viewer with a framework for evaluating art: description, analysis, interpretation, and judgment (Mittler & Ragans, 2007). At the elementary grade level, the curriculum stresses elements of design, but within this research, principles of design were also reviewed with the students. These same materials were shared with the classroom teachers to help inform their instruction.

The results of this lesson proved mixed. There were many instances of misbehavior from the students, as they were generally unhappy with art lessons, which involved applications of critique and writing in a technical fashion. The students

completed brainstorming exercises such as mind mapping to help them generate ideas, using broad themes of community, family, and self to explore photographically. They used this process prior to the paired shooting experience in Cycle One and repeated the same during their individual projects during Cycle Three to help them brainstorm personal themes for their photo essays (Sullivan, personal communication, November 15, 2011).

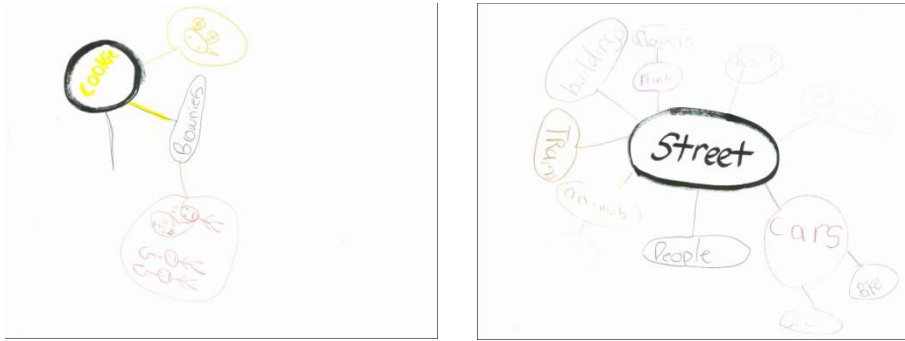


Figure 7. Brainstorm exercise of beginning with a word and each student adding onto the story.



Figure 8. Brainstorm activity beginning with a shape/image and each student adding on.

As recommended by Stewart (2006), the brainstorming activity helped students generate multiple topics and ideas to identify their themes and discuss their ideas with me prior to photographing them. Students were asked why certain topics interested them and how they planned to carry out their projects. The goal was to determine whether completing the projects would be feasible within the timeframe allowed for the students to use the equipment.

Gradle (2009) cites educator Davis (2004), who:

...defines Socratic Method as the questioning technique in which the instructor draws forth knowledge from the student. The premise underlying this method suggests that some knowledge is innate; it resides within the learner; and can be called forth as a readily available resource by the astute inquirer. (p. 8)

It is Gradle's (2009) contention that Schaefer-Simmern proposed that intellectual inquiry and visual thinking must go hand in hand in order for an artmaker to produce a visual work. Moreover, Gradle (2009) documented Abrahamson's (1980) account of Schaefer-Simmern's teaching, stating, "He observed that his mentor would guide the student-artist through a series of questions designed 'to challenge, lead, suggest, inform and encourage discovery and self-evaluation', and this came after the student had worked for a while" (p. 42). The objective was for the student to learn to assess his work. This happens when the student has critically evaluated his work and "recognized the generative rules of their own work" and "closely related to an existential, experimental reciprocity between the poles of making and knowing" (p. 9). The goal for students was that repeated practice and photographic application would provide them sufficient

opportunity to develop and synthesize concepts and images, producing a deep level of understanding.

Students were instructed in the technical aspects of digital photography prior to this marking period. A review of the camera parts and mechanics occurred prior to the photo (shooting) pre-test. Aesthetics concepts and their compositional applications in photography (lighting, framing, focus) were explored through class discussion while viewing masterworks, and through videos from Kodak (Kodak, 1988; Kodak, n.d.) and Digital1to1.com (<https://www.udemy.com/user/digital1to1/>) with photographers Ken Pivak and Santino Zafarana.

Before taking each class out to photograph in the neighborhood, I made arrangements for another adult to accompany the class with me to oversee order and to ensure safety of the students. I narrowed the students' options by providing them with sample topics from which to choose. I requested that they partner with someone with whom they could work compatibly to reduce behavioral issues observed between students during the trial run.

Student self-evaluation. After each photo session, whether it was the teacher-guided photo pre-test or the individual project, each student was required to self-evaluate his or her experience on the form from the teacher-created packet. This proved to be a challenge overall, as many students were reluctant to complete this part of the learning strategy. Many students, including the exemplar students, lacked the kind of independent follow-through in this activity that I was hoping to see. In addition, this part of the learning process occurred while I worked independently with other students on their photo essay themes, and on individual technological problems that continually surfaced

during production of their independent projects. This limited my ability to continuously monitor individual student progress on the class self-evaluations, and produced less than marginal results overall.

Using a learning strategy from Ewald and Lightfoot (2001), I asked the students to create storyboards with imagery about their chosen topic; this was to teach the concepts of sequence, order, telephoto for detail photos, and wide angle for broad area images. However, I do not believe the storyboard strategy is the only way students should plan their photographs and sequence. The alternative to this is using a shot list. Stewart (2006) also recommends using a list as an organizing tool to generate ideas. I use this process in my own photographic work to help me visually organize [the gestalt] and plan the story I want to convey to my audience. It is less time-consuming than creating a storyboard, and provides me with a certain freedom to allow my instinctive photographic eye to process what is happening at the moment and capture it.

Taking from the research, once each student had chosen a topic, I asked him or her to create a shot list so that he or she could have the freedom to innovate and be creative while taking pictures. Gradle (2009) notes that Abrahamson (a student of Schaefer-Simmern) stated that Schaefer-Simmern "...did not dictate subject matter. Rather he directed students to examine what they might see in their daily lives that had meaning to them" (p. 9).

According to Yenawine (2003), viewers in Housen's Stages I and II "...use a wide range of observations to draw conclusions that are full of associations, memories, facts, and emotions" (p. 9), in an attempt to create a narrative that helps them to make sense of an encounter with a work of art based on things and experiences they already

know. The more authentic the students' experience is with these early-stage encounters of the process, the more meaningful the product creation will be for them. Teachers working with these students should choose images and stories that are closely related to the students' own life experiences and environmental influences. Even if a teacher's objective is to expand the repertoire of student experience, Yenawine (2003) believes that beginning from a place of familiarity with the student's life and experience is essential to successful learning transfer.

I wanted students to develop their eye for composition within the viewfinder of the camera and with an intuitive sense of timing and knowing how and when to take a picture. To achieve this, it became evident that I needed to know when to let go from leading them, to let the student artists emerge on their own. This is the reason I decided to replace the storyboard with the shot list. Gradle (2009) posits:

Transformative learning, as explained by educators Askew and Carnell (1998), involves participation in the entire experience of learning, without emphasis on factual information and objective knowledge as a privileged component in curriculum.... This is a paradigm shift in education to consider the learner as agent, the context in which they learn as contributory knowledge, and the active processes that make this possible essential to transformation. (p. 13)

Conclusion of Cycle One

Cycle One provided many opportunities to examine and refine my underlying assumptions around this research. Issues requiring attention surfaced, such as schedule changes and limiting the number of variables I would use in the pre-test. The issue of schedule changes seriously affected the amount of time I would be able to work and

engage in dialogue with the classroom teachers about the project to help them gain a deeper level of understanding about the methods employed in the process.

In a properly supported research study, administration would have allowed me to attend grade-level meetings with the classroom teachers and would have created an opportunity for professional development (PD) for all of us with the creation of a professional learning community (PLC). PLCs are a natural space to conduct action research, allowing all stakeholders to learn together to improve student outcomes. Utilizing this action research is a natural outgrowth of the same and supports us as a learning organization. According to DuFour, DuFour, and Eaker (2007):

A corollary assumption is that if the organization is to become more effective in helping all students learn, the adults in the organization must also be continually learning. Therefore, structures are created to ensure staff members engage in job-embedded learning as part of their routine work practices. (para. 6)

When I created my methodology, I counted on having weekly meetings with my colleagues over our common lunch period to discuss the progress project. During spring 2011, I had the approval of the administration for the allotted time needed within the school day (using my lunch and prep periods) to work together and learn. However, with the district implementation of the Houghton Mifflin Harcourt *Journeys* language arts program, that opportunity disappeared. Thus, I began to consider which aspects of my approach needed refinement or alteration so that we might achieve a greater level of success in the upcoming cycle. I discussed it with those involved in the research, and re-examined the literature to deepen my understanding of the issues that had brought about

this work in the first place. The end of the cycle afforded an opportunity for sustained reflection about what had gone well, what had gone wrong, and what had helped to structure my action research project in ways that might prove productive moving forward.

Chapter 5

Action Research: Cycle Two

Cycle Two of this action research examines and documents the progress of the student individual projects; technical obstacles; and difficulties; and continued teacher supports with implementing the researcher's suggested methods. Also documented are observations of classroom norms, school climate, and culture. Student photography, writing products, pre- and post-tests were analyzed by the individual rubric (teacher-made, NJ ASK, Curva et al., 2005) criteria for continuity from image (composition and technique) to text (sequence, grammar, structure, voice and flow). The students' responses on the teacher-made packet for the photo essay were analyzed for the alignment of pre-planning process to the students' actual chosen themes. To demonstrate this alignment in the context of this research, I chose three students whose work I considered exemplary. Each student's work was analyzed for specific qualities, and I discussed how those qualities were met and measured within each rubric, and the students' scores on the pre- and post-tests.

Preparation for Individual Projects

Criteria for selection of exemplar students. Based on the pre-tests, generalized impressions and observations were made. These observations allowed me to choose which students I would use to be the exemplars in this study. The use of exemplars (rather than a median case example) was a prerequisite condition of this research as defined by the department chair authorizing this project. Moreover, the use of exemplars allows the researcher to carefully examine the individual and specific criteria,

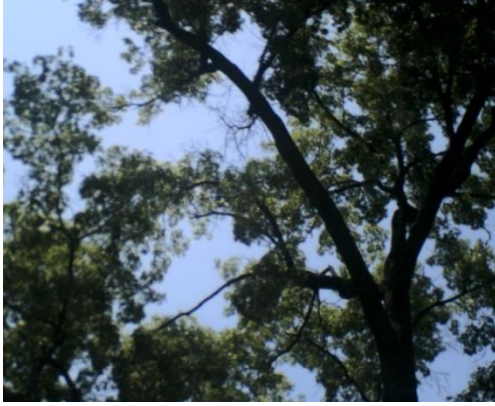
characteristics, and traits from which the work considered to be the best example and a model for other work bearing the same.

When choosing the exemplar students in this study, I looked for evidence of understanding demonstrated intertextually—both written and photographically. Using AR4’s pre-test image below as an example, we can see that her understanding of her environment and her thoughtful composition come through in this image. She cleverly uses juxtaposition to produce asymmetrical balance in her image. The textured diagonal lines help lead us around the picture, and bring us to the center of interest, the graffitied walls of this building in her neighborhood. We have already seen the example of her written pre-test, so one can understand why she would be considered exceptional. The same criteria were used in the selection of exemplar students BF5 and SS3.



AR4 (AR4, 2011b)

Figure 9. Photography pre-test images from each of the exemplar students.



BF5 (BF5, 2011)



SS3 (SS3, 2011)
Figure 9 (continued).

Background information for individual projects. Within this cycle, the focus was to develop the students' individual projects. After students had photographed the neighborhood around the school during Cycle One, and I had reviewed their photographs with them, it became apparent that they should not be limited in their experiences with the cameras. If the goal for student learning was for students to “own” their images, and create both visual and written essays, the students would need opportunities with cameras outside school in order to experiment and visually explore subjects in depth.

In this cycle, distribution of cameras began for individual student photo essays in grades four and five. Before they began creating photo essays, the students were required

to complete a teacher/researcher-created packet about the photo essay. This packet included a questionnaire and a brainstorming technique (see Appendix O) designed to assist them in narrowing their topics of interest.

The students in grade five brainstormed and chose individual topical areas to explore photographically, followed by those in grades four and three. I wanted them to understand that the process of photographing an essay and then writing about it would require them to have more than one experience with the cameras, and that they should take multiple pictures from numerous angles before thinking that they were done. As previously stated, it was important that they have opportunities to explore multiple solutions to the same issue. Gradle (2009) notes that Schaefer-Simmern (1948) postulated that for an artmaker's artistic vision to lead to a visual work, the artmaker must pair visual thinking and intellectual inquiry. Moreover, Gradle identifies that both Schaefer-Simmern (1948) and Arnheim (1997) shared the view that "re-visitation of the artistic form leads to a deep understanding of an idea, rather than superficial engagement with media or tools" (p. 15). Knowing that the students needed opportunities to practice their photography skills so that they would have some mastery over the mechanics of the camera, I wrote a separate contract for parental permission for students to take the cameras home overnight or for a weekend at a time, and sought to procure permission from the school's administrators.

The initial response from the administration was that I needed to add some changes to the wording. They explained that since this was my doctoral research, conducted at my expense, the school would not assume any liability if the cameras were broken or lost. To obtain the necessary permissions, I had to create a contract that

indemnified the district from any liability regarding the security of the cameras; and I was to inform the students' parents that they would then be held responsible for their children's handling and safety of the equipment while it was in their possession.

Thus, in Cycle Two, the fourth- and fifth-graders took the cameras home with them to create their visual narratives/photo essays, exploring topics of their choice. Third-grade students did not get their cameras until the middle of Cycle Three due to the untimely return of the cameras from fourth- and fifth-graders. Remembering Gradle's (2009) note of Abrahamson's report on Schaefer-Simmern, who directed students to examine their daily lives for meaningful subject matter rather than specifying such, I accordingly encouraged students to explore human, social, or environmental issues that interested them, and to take photos in places to which they would be able to return more than once, if possible.

The elements and principles of art were taught by examining canonical works of art, and then having the students describe, analyze, interpret, and evaluate the work, which are the steps to art criticism that were approved as part of the district curriculum. These steps were also outlined in one of the district-approved classroom texts (Mittler & Ragans, 2007, p. 48). Steps from the Artful Citizen Project were employed during the process in the group work with the students while they sorted, analyzed, and captioned their group photos.

As the students began to photograph their own images, they were required to keep logs of their work by completing self-evaluation sheets (Appendix P), analyzing what they produced, and judging whether the actual photos resembled what their "mind's eye"

saw prior to the photo session. They organized and sequenced the work in preparation for the writing component of the project.

During this time, I collaborated with the classroom teachers to reintroduce the Painted Essay (Leddy, 1999) into their general writing curriculum, using the students' own essay writing from what they were studying in the newly adopted Language Arts curriculum prior to their developing written essays from their photo essays. Teachers were also provided a second training packet. The second training packet distributed during Cycle Two included exemplar unit lessons from Van Horn's *Reading Photographs to Write with Meaning and Purpose* (2008), pp. 1-22, 35-42, 51-58, 63-70, 116-123; and exemplar units from Ewald and Lightfoot's *I Wanna Take Me a Picture* (2001), pp. 29-30, 47-65, 119-127 as models of the types of lessons that used arts integration with photography, and English Language Arts and Social Studies curricula.

However, upon examining the students' draft essays and comparing them with the rubrics that I had originally created for this research, within the work I found issues that I had not previously considered. I had not anticipated some of the student and teacher misunderstandings that the data revealed. These misunderstandings were evident in the color-coding of the Painted Essay. It was clear that the teachers and students were learning together, and each took away something different from the process. The rubric was unclear and needed to be reworded. Models of the intended outcomes were provided to address these clarity issues. The dialogue below (SO, personal communication, November 15, 2011) illustrates some of the misunderstandings that occurred while the students were practicing the Painted Essay using the suggested practice material provided by Authentic Education.

Teacher: The topic sentence and this is the topic sentence... okay, now I have to select a different color and I'll use blue. I like blue [IB] this color I want you to tell me what are the details, what are the detail [IB]?

Student: I think they have [IB].

Teacher: That's right so Caroline is worried, those are the very words and they're telling us about her being worried, okay.

Student: I think [IB].

Teacher: Very good now what topic, if I wanted to find the topic sentence you did it. If I wanted to find the topic sentence for this paragraph, what color do I need? What color do I need [Jaesia]?

Student: You need purple.

Teacher: Purple, thank you. So I got to go back here and select, pick a color I think it is. So now, somebody please that didn't have a chance already raise your hand and read the topic sentence [Shaylene]?

Student: [IB] that's why you got to get all of these things together.

(SO, personal communication, November 15, 2011)

One crucial aspect of good pedagogy is anticipating student misunderstandings; another is knowing how to pose questions that lead to higher order thinking. Effective techniques can include anything from conducting Socratic dialogues to the use of guiding

questions based upon Bloom's Taxonomy (1956). Methods such as these can guide students to critically analyze the concept at hand and create new solutions and applications to apply the information learned. As teachers, we want to anticipate and isolate the major conceptual inconsistencies that come with learning new material, and replace those with new information that supports students in taking ownership for their own learning. The misunderstandings that arose while students were practicing the Painted Essay resulted in my reevaluating the contextual and developmental criteria and measures from my previously developed rubrics and reworking them to the one that I ultimately used for the final project grading. As the fourth-grade teacher said, "They struggle with themes and figurative languages... in writing. [If] they're struggling they will struggle with them visually. I see no differential in correlation..." (DW, personal communication, January 26, 2012).

I videotaped and transcribed (through a transcription service) each lesson in which the classroom teacher introduced or reinforced a lesson on the Painted Essay and presented a lesson about writing from photo sequences. The data revealed evidence of one teacher changing the colors used in coloring and decoding the Painted Essay, as designed by Leddy (1999). In this example, the teacher introduced the Painted Essay sequence as part of the regularly scheduled Language Arts curriculum. The teacher then applied the Painted Essay color coding sequence to what the students had been previously working on in class. This was mostly successful. It should be noted, however, that the teacher in this case did not follow the recommended color patterning as delineated in the Writing for Understanding training.

Teacher: Oh beautiful, so we got to put that in what color is it
[Jaesia]?

Student: Pink.

Teacher: Pink, okay. Now, what color am I going to use for the
details for this paragraph. What color [Hamad]?

Class: [Blue].

Teacher: And please read the details for this paragraph [Hamad].

Student: We had [IB]

Teacher: So she's trying to tell her that everything will be what?

Class: Alright.

Teacher: Alright yes. So we put that in...

[CROSSTALK]

Teacher: Okay now, we are, now we are on another paragraph
again so what are we looking for first or what do we write
first?

Class: The topic sentence.

Teacher: Okay what color do I need for a topic sentence Tamara?

Student: You need...

Teacher: What color do I have on the topic sentence? What color is
it [Jazara]?

Student: Pink.

Teacher: Yes the topic sentence on my essay is pink. Now, where
is the topic sentence? You will have your chance.

(DW, personal communication, June 12, 2012)

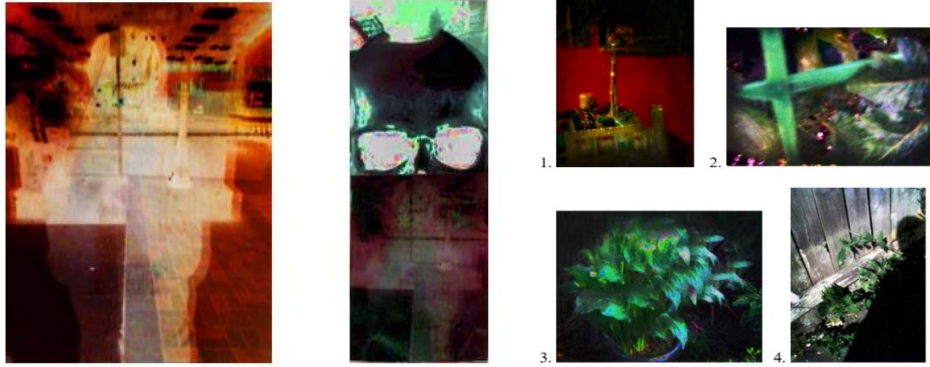
Student training in post-production. After each individual photo shoot, the students continued to learn how to download, manipulate (in Google's Picasa editing software), and print their images. However, the process was slow, and we found that the edits were overcomplicating some of the images as the students became more involved with the editing process.

The students began to overwork the effects and filters that the photo editing software had to offer, causing some of the images to lose something in the transition from their initial concept to their final product.



Figure 10. Student photographs in which the filtration detracted from the image (RT3, 2012).

However, the exemplar students used the filters effectively to enhance the images, rather than to detract from them.



(BF5, 2012)

(SS3, 2012)

Figure 11. Samples from BF5's and SS3's individual projects demonstrating filtered enhanced photographic effects.

Complications in cycle two. Other complications began to surface during Cycle Two. The main issue concerned the students not acting in a responsible manner, and not returning the cameras on time. I had anticipated this to a degree, but the problem spiraled out of control when a couple of students held onto the cameras for several weeks at a time. The classroom teachers were cooperative and helped by adding the reminder to the homework assignment board, yet this did not resolve the problem in all cases. Although students and their parents had agreed contractually to the safe, responsible, and timely return of the cameras, without the necessary reinforcement at the school/district level, some of the students still acted irresponsibly, and did not return the cameras as agreed.

Moreover, these issues were exacerbated by the fact that half of the digital point-and-shoot cameras would not retain data if the batteries ran out of power or if their electrical connection was disconnected. This was a problem since each student had the option of keeping a camera for a week. If a student left a camera at home without downloading the data, the student would lose his work. Also, when cameras were accidentally jostled in the students' book bags, their inexpensive plastic bodies would

loosen, severing the electrical connections and causing students to lose their work. This was frustrating for all concerned.

However, the students were resilient and willing to reshoot. There was still a backlog of students who had not been able to get a camera at all. There were also issues involving the parents who refused to allow their children to participate because they did not want to be responsible for the cameras at home. This occurred with a couple of students in the third and fourth grades [not including the others in the self-contained class]. With these students, I modified the assignment and allowed them to include only the photographs around the school. I felt this was better than not having them participate at all. At the time, I wrote:

The concentration for the independent part of the project has been in grades four and five. There will be limited opportunity for the third grade to participate on the individual projects. This has been impacted by the small number of parental releases on the camera contracts, and the amount of working cameras that are available. Since I have been lending the cameras to the students, I have lost eight of them due to breakage and one has been stolen. This amounts to nearly half of the total cameras I purchased for this work. As I know, the students and their parents have signed a contract, which would allow me to ask for replacement value, I have watched the fearful eyes of my students who know their parents will be angry, and I have not enforced it. In the case of the stolen camera, the parent is aware of the loss, but has offered me no compensation. It is my feeling from the administration in other situations that involve this work that if I pressed this issue,

I would receive a backlash, so I have chosen to leave the situation alone, and accept the losses. (S. Sullivan-Rubin, personal communication, March 23, 2012)

The principal demonstrated further inconsistency concerning contractual agreements between the researcher, students, and the parents. I had purchased the cameras, and the parents had signed a contract approved by the school principal. However, he criticized me in front of my students while I was attempting to enforce the binding terms of the contract.

I can't believe what happened today. Mr. J. came in and started yelling at me because Annie (pseudonym) went to him and cried that I just yelled at her for not bringing in the camera again in front of the entire class. He told me I had no right to demand my cameras back from any of the students regardless of what the paperwork stated because this was "my thing and had nothing to do with the school." I tried to explain to him that she has had the camera out for four weeks and that it wasn't fair to the other students who haven't been able to use the cameras yet. He said he couldn't care less if she had been holding onto it so long and that I had no excuse to become angry with her. I just said fine and walked away from him. He told me that he wasn't through with me and I told him that I was through and proceeded to teach my class. (S. Sullivan-Rubin, personal communication, April 12, 2012)

Time constraints and teacher concerns. Right after the NJ ASK, the students wrote their essays, using their photos as the inspiration. This was not ideal; however, further requests for time, when teachers were under pressure for attention prior to the test,

would have proven futile. As the fifth-grade teacher explained to me, “So I think there we struggled greatly with having it to finish it after testing when kids were dying...” (SO, personal communication, August 8, 2012).

The self-reflection process. The self-reflection was an assignment that the students were given after photographing their subjects and receiving their printed photographs. It was part of the lesson because it required them to think critically about their photo essays to create a visual chronology to lead viewers through their thought processes. DeSantis and Housen (2009) have noted that Housen, in her studies from the 1970s, would watch people in museums demonstrate patterns of outward behavior, conveying patterns that reflected their inner thoughts. Using reference from Vygotsky’s research in language and thinking, Housen used visceral responses to an artwork as a means of assessing what the viewer was thinking when engaging a work of art.

Taking from her research, I sought to apply this same visceral response to guide students to reflect on their own work and purposes; and the interests, personal experience, and critical thinking dispositions upon which they drew in order to organize their thinking and writing about their photography. Self-reflection is a tool with which the students could learn to think through the major themes evidenced in their final photos. Some students would begin with one thing in mind and end up with something different when the photos were printed. This self-reflection tool was to help them sort through this. Ewald et al. (2012) stated:

Teachers can choose where, and when a scaffold will help their student deal with the risky subject matter and provocative themes... they provide students the chance to explore—with honesty, creativity and critical thinking—important

social, personal, and political topics that otherwise are easily avoided in the classroom. (p. 11)

Furthermore, the self-evaluation correlates with Harvard University's research in Artful Thinking. Tishman and Palmer (2006) discussed the effectiveness of thinking routines for different types of learning. The Creative Questions routine "helps deepen student thinking, to encourage students' curiosity and increase their motivation to inquire..." (p. 31). It is used when the objective is for students to "think deeply about works of art" (p. 31).

The self-reflection task after shooting was developed to help spawn inquiry to set the stage for developing the students' individual final projects. Although the questions were addressed specifically to the project at hand, the goal was the same: to engage students to think deeply about their own works of art. The series of self-reflection questions asked the students to think deeply about their own planning, organization, and outcomes, through:

- beginning with the concept of pre-planning/anticipation—to demonstrate the student's artistic conception and intent for his or her work,
- demonstrating his or her thoughtfulness in planning through sequence and organization,
- reflecting and making a judgment about how well the pre-planning aligned with the final product, and finally,
- thinking about multiple paths to an outcome.

Overall, the results of the self-evaluations were rather limited among the students in all the grades. Although they were required to complete the self-evaluations, many

students in each of the three grades did not do so at all, or did so only partially for numerous reasons. At times, we simply lacked enough class time for the students to write after they took their photographs as we attempted to keep up with the rigors of the shooting sessions. In addition, technical issues with the cameras complicated things and affected the amount of time each student had to photograph.

Discussion of Individual Projects

Fifth-grader BF5. Although BF5 did not start with a murder mystery in mind, she created an enjoyable story, which reflected her ethnic Caribbean roots, and integrated a “whodunnit” plot derived from her daily experiences at home and in school. She photographed herself, her friends, her home, and the classroom, and produced a photo essay that illustrated her fictional story.

BF5 relied heavily on readily available photo editing apps to enhance the effects of her images. She approached her work through playful discovery, and experimented with the elements of art in her photographs. Throughout the story, she focused on one image, like the skull, and repeated it. She applied new techniques via the use of filters or through a cut and paste method of collage. Because of the way she worked, particularly with photo filter experimentation, she was less afraid of error, and took artistic risks in her art-making process, thus demonstrating a more advanced level of design thinking than her classmates.

Her use of the elements and principles of design in abstract, ghost-like images clearly demonstrate this kind of thinking. She expresses her unique voice through repetitive and juxtaposed imagery with contrasting light and color. She demonstrates her

innate sense of timing by capturing a fleeting moment in her environment, and then abstracts that image by recreating the same moment in a digitally altered form.

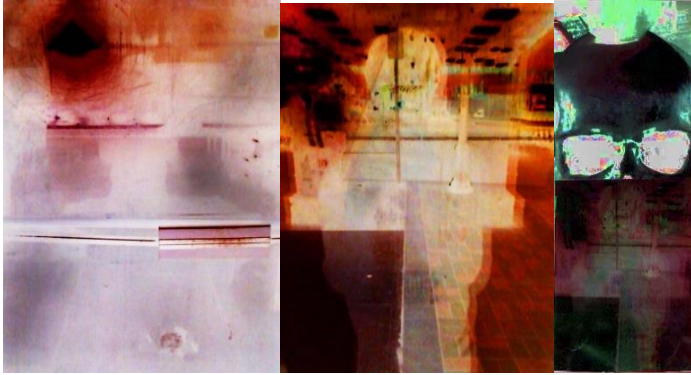


Figure 12. Images from BF5's individual project (BF5, 2012).

Within BF5's overall visual story, the above three images are the most successful. Her work transcends that of other students at this level because of her inescapably courageous approach to new media, particularly working in abstraction of image. This is a rather sophisticated approach to making an image, and more often appears in the work of a more experienced artist. Arnheim (1969, p. 182) verifies this line of thought when he states, "In painting or sculpture, the artist often endeavors to abstract a movement or action in a timeless image. Such a static image crystallizes the nature of a more complex event...." He attributes this to one's cognitive abilities, opportunity, and experience with making art. Arnheim (1969) summarizes visual thinking by stating "...visual thinking calls, more broadly, for the ability to see visual shapes as images of the patterns of forces that underlie our existence...." (p. 315).

In his book *A Whole New Mind* (2005), author Daniel Pink states:

Story is an ancient art—but like all art, it can be enhanced with modern tools. Digital cameras, inexpensive audio and video editing programs, Photoshop, and CD burners are allowing anyone with a story in their hearts to tell it with pictures.... (p. 123)

BF5 demonstrates this kind of creative experimentation and storytelling through filter manipulation and collaged images to create a new perspective or symbolism to her work.

Looking at the literature to help assess the level of the student's aesthetic knowledge, I draw on Housen's (2000-2001) Stages of Aesthetic Development for clues. Housen's stages are the cumulative results from her research and are based on students' verbal responses to visual stimuli in artworks, her criteria for the context of visual reference, and she provides us with models of this phenomena in critical thought.

Assessing BF5's writing, we see a lively, imaginative account of a fictional experience, in a storyteller's style: "On a cold bitter night when three friend [*sic*] were enjoying a party... Alisa is one of the friends, she is on the right" (BF5, 2012).

However, there are various clues that this student has begun to break away from some of the conventions that describe Stage One. The visual interpretations vacillate between stages; however, her cultural influences surface in her story, as she continues to include her Caribbean influences:

Alisa went to a voodoo man, his name was Omakahoo. Omakahoo gave Alisa a decade skull. When Alisa touched it, she has seen the life of that person. It had seem [*sic*] she know that person.... She could see through the eyes of the person in the flashback.... (BF5, 2012)

Sociologist Elaine Bell Kaplan, in her work with photographs created with Mexican inner-city students from the Los Angeles School District, noted the research of anthropologist William Madison. She stated that Madison's research found that witchcraft played an important role in Mexican-American lives, and serves a purpose in four separate areas of the believer's life:

1. It provides a culturally validated explanation for chronic illness, and death without known causes,
2. It provides an outlet for the release of hatred and resentments,
3. It serves as a means of temporarily reducing anxiety and resentment, and
4. It provides social control of deviance from approved patterns of behavior.

(Kaplan, 2013, p. 131)

BF5's photographs and writing demonstrate a belief and value system deeply rooted in similar culturally accepted background in the occult, and rituals from the Haitian/Caribbean religion known as Vodou. According to the Congress of Santa Barbara on Haitian Vodou, known as Kosanba:

The presence, role, and importance of Vodou in Haitian history, society, and culture are unarguable, and recognizably a part of the national ethos. The impact of the religion qua spiritual, and intellectual disciplines on popular national institutions, human, and gender relations, the family, the plastic arts, philosophy and ethics, oral, and written literature, language, popular, and sacred music, science, and technology, and the healing arts, is indisputable. It is the belief of the Congress that Vodou plays, and shall continue to play, a major role in the grand scheme of Haitian development and in the socio-economic, political, and cultural

arenas. Development, when real and successful, always comes from the modernization of ancestral traditions, anchored in the rich cultural expressions of a people. ("Declaration," 1997, para. 5)

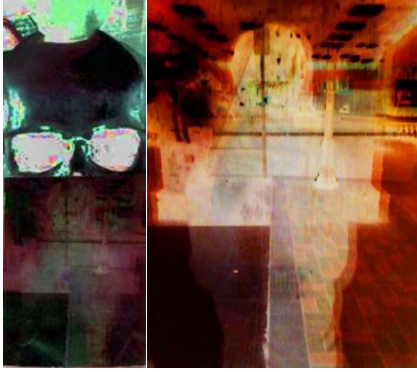


Figure 13. BF5's individual project photos (BF5, 2012).

In both these images created by BF5, the skull and the ghost imagery demonstrate her cultural connections to these beliefs. According to Wikipedia (which is the only source in which I have been able to identify a breakdown of the gods in Vodou), there are 43 Vodou gods ("Vodou gods," March 26, 2013). "Bacalou is a feared loa (or spirit), represented by a skull and crossbones" ("Bacalou," March 20, 2017).

A *bokor* is a sorcerer or magician who casts spells on request. They are not necessarily priests, and may be practitioners of "darker" things, and are often not accepted by the mambo or the houngan. *Bokor* can also be a Haitian term for a Vodou priest or other practitioner who works with both the light and dark arts of magic. The bokor, in that sense, deals in *baka'* (*malevolent spirits contained in the form of various animals*). ("Haitian Vodou," July 1, 2016, para. 25)

Whether BF5's family practices Vodou in their home is not something I can assume, but it is evident that she has demonstrated some connection or fascination with the religion, and is somewhat knowledgeable. According to Van Horn (2008), "If we agree that photographs are texts, then they too can become cultural tools or artifacts: objects that give us information about the ideas, customs, and values that are passed down from one generation to another" (p. 6). In this case, the student used learned cultural influences, folk tales, and her own social conventions and conformities to address the framework of the story. BF's images of skulls and layered ghost-like images speak to her cultural/environmental influences. Van Horn (2008) reflects, "...these photographs may exemplify his or her life outside of school" (p. 6). In BF's writing sample, she reveals to the viewer the violent environment of the town in which she lives, by stating, "She clicked on a video and saw a fight. The fight was so brutal" (BF5, 2012).

If we use Housen's criteria as a guide to aesthetic thinking, then her Stage Two as a constructive viewer stage would be approximate to BF5's visual expressive thinking levels as well. According to Housen (2001), "This viewer strives to map what she sees onto what she knows from her own conventions, values, and beliefs, her observations, and associations become more linked and detailed" (p. 4). This is how students make meaning of their life, environment, and purpose. Van Horn (2008) states, "we must access our background knowledge before reading a photograph" (p. 6).

Efland (2002) references Wolf and Perry (1988), who describe a framework that supports this line of thought "...as a repertoire of visual language as well the wit to know when to call on each" (p. 47).

Sandell (2011), quoting Texas A&M (n.d.), states:

Art teachers traditionally have provided access to the meaning of art as a language, and thus are instrumental in developing visual literacy—that is, “the ability to interpret, use, appreciate, and create images and video using both conventional, and 21st century media in ways that advance understanding, thinking, decision making, communication, and learning. (p. 48)

To develop visually literate citizens, teachers must engage all learners with art in its myriad forms, ideas, and purposes, using it as a qualitative language that—like poetry—explores *how* rather than *what* something is. Through the informative process of critical response, art learners perceive, interpret, and finally judge ideas that are connected to visual imagery and structures, past and present. Through the transformative process of creative expression, art learners generate artistic ideas that can be elaborated, refined, and finally shaped into meaningful visual images and structures.

The work of Rosenblatt (1994) and Friedman (1991) and their concept of intertextuality reinforce this line of thought. The conceptual framework of intertextuality demonstrates the student’s ability to transfer their understanding of text and images synonymously; and in this student’s case, to use new media to recreate imagery and provide a new context for the work. Van Horn (2008) cites Mitchell (1994), who states that “all media are mixed media and all representations are heterogeneous; there are no purely visual or verbal arts...” (p. 5). BF5 reinterprets her imagery post-shoot through filtration. She uses these effects to integrate text and image, constructing new meanings of her personal story.



Figure 14. BF5's individual project with filtration (BF5, 2012).

BF5's work was considered exemplary because it was organized and a planned sequence of thought. Arnheim (1969) states that "the components of intuitive thought processes interact within a continuous field. Those of intellectual process follow each other in a linear succession.... Representative examples of intellectual thought process are the stringing of concepts in verbal sequences..." (p. 234). BF5 clearly thought through the process of what she wanted to say before she executed it, and then took clear steps to complete the process. This is evident from her post-shoot self-reflection (Appendix P). This reflection was a series of guided questions to scaffold critical thinking and critical art analysis as part of the editing process.

BF5's reflection. Among the three exemplar students highlighted in this study, BF5 made more of an effort than did her peers to complete the self-evaluation. Her responses are noted below. Although she failed to answer the first three questions of the survey, she did answer several others. The questions she did not answer were:

- What do you anticipate will be a major moment in this series?
- Name the order of the images by number and title if you have one.
- What do you think was your strong point/show stopper images when you were taking the pictures, and why?

Her remarks in response to the following questions were thoughtful:

Were your final images meeting what your “mind’s eye” saw when you were actually taking them? Elaborate and explain the similarities and differences.

My 4 pics about my face and the skulls show how life have [sic] twists. It kinda looks like my skull in a x-ray. C there is a lot of illions [sic].

If you were to go back and do this again, what images would you keep and which ones do you need to reshoot? Please explain in detail.

I would keep the skulls and I will redo the ones with my face.

When you reshoot, what will you do differently and how will you go about accomplishing this?

I would try to get a better angle of my face.

What images are your favorite and your least favorites; explain why?

My favorites are the skulls out of the whole pack. But I choose 4 pics only to write about. My least is my face. (BF5, personal communication, October 10, 2012)

What was most desirable from this exchange was the fact that she did think carefully about what she felt she could and would do better if there were an opportunity to do this again. This is an important observation. Barrett (1997) states that “Criticism is dependent on art-making, and it sometimes influences art-making.... If critiques are interpretive, students will learn that their artworks can convey meaning” (p. 5). Although her answer seemed more confined to the obvious self-conscious nature of completing a self-portrait, and then seeing the results for the first time, she was aware of the steps she could take to create a new and better version of her work next time around.

As successful as BF5's project was, there were also some outstanding issues with it. This problem was pervasive throughout the fifth-grade class since the project was completed at the end of the school year, and according to the interview with the classroom teacher (SO, personal communication, August 8, 2012), the class was minimally focused and cooperative about doing any work that required sustained effort.

Compared to BF5's other classroom writing samples, her writing for this final task seems rushed, as if she just wanted to get it done and over with. She began with some very descriptive language, but the last two paragraphs were less wordy, and could have been further developed. This is where the classroom teacher should have stepped in and encouraged more thinking about the story's ending.

Lev Vygotsky's Social Development Theory (1978) research has created awareness that all learning is a social activity. We learn from conversations and our interactions with others. Vygotsky spoke about the Zone of Proximal Development in skill development. He defines this as the place where students are still learning and need scaffolding to help them reach independence. Adjusting my approach in viewing the mistakes of the classroom teachers—specifically using the wrong color-coding on the Painted Essay—and based what I already knew (from the writing samples collected earlier in the year to the products at the end) about the level of writing being produced, I found that these misunderstandings of the student and teacher were not so important to the end result. Although BF5 did not specifically write about her photos in terms of her experiences when taking them, or use any other method of art critical discourse, she did properly arrange the work in a logical sequence of images and created a wonderful piece

of creative writing that followed the imagery she developed. In the end, her final project matched the rubric created for the individual projects, and her overall score was a four.

Fourth-grader AR4. A study by Anna Petersson (2010, p. 141) denotes a phenomenon known as spontaneous memorialization, citing the research of Azaryahu (1996a) and Haney et al. (1997) and states:

In the last 20 years, spontaneous memorialization, referring to the placing of, for instance, fresh flowers, lighted candles and photos at the sites of motor vehicle accidents, homicides, catastrophes, terrorist attacks and the like, has been acknowledged as also having the power to produce new memorial places and new rituals for veneration and remembrance connected to unexpected and violent death.



Figure 15. AR4's individual project images (AR4, 2012).

AR4's visual and written account of the funeral of singer Whitney Houston captures these kinds of public expressions of grief. She uses the camera to capture and frame these moments in very pleasing compositions emphasizing the elements of color, texture, and shape, along with the principles of repetition, asymmetrical balance, and emphasis. It is through the environment and her style of descriptive snippets of sensory writing that we come to see how she observed the event. She demonstrates her ability to intertextualize this experience in her compassionate visual essay. In this way, she captures the overall emotive expressions of the public. Petersson (2010) states:

...the practice of placing material things associated with the deceased by the site of the grave, the accident site or the home, may be seen as a way for the surviving relatives to generate the presence of the deceased, charging the memorial place with remembrance and giving it meaning.
(p. 143)

Whitney Houston was raised in the Newark, NJ area, and grew up singing in the New Hope Baptist Church with her mother, Cissy Houston, leading the choir in song. It was her mother's desire to have a nationally broadcasted "coming home" service, as the media referred to it. The outcry of fans expressing their grief for the pop star's death was captured by AR4 in her photos and her words.

The student utilized the Painted Essay as a visual to aid in the structure of her final story. Writing for Understanding (WU) recommends the use of graphic organizers like the Painted Essay to demonstrate visible thinking and help the student keep track of the information they are gathering, as well as collect and refine their ideas (Hawkins et al., 2008, p. 103).

However, in this case, AR4 did not follow the standardized color formatting for the Painted Essay, as prescribed by Leddy (1999). She changed the colors, perhaps due to the colors that were available to her in the classroom at the time. However, despite the color differences, she demonstrates that the colors helped her visually organize groups of written information.

She begins her writing with onomatopoeia, a convention that has been specifically taught to increase scores on the NJ ASK. Students are expected to use this convention in their essay writing. For a detailed discussion of student writing, refer to Chapter 4. Although AR4 conforms to this writing style, it is clear that she has made it her own. According to Hawkins et al. (2008), “As students grow and develop ... this reflection often becomes a deeper level of thinking, of synthesizing” (p. 105).

“Wow!” The outside has so many features. Some are proud and grateful honors, stating that even though some people die their spirits live on and aren’t forgotten. Big white signs, with dark and light colors, balloons and flowers small and bright, are little ways to show that you care about their spirits. (AR4, 2012)

For an unknown reason, AR4 colored this entire opening paragraph yellow. In WU, yellow is used as a transitional color, rather than the introduction or a main point. Nevertheless, AR4’s chronological placement of the images matches the unfolding descriptions in her writing. Her visual and written work are parallel, and present poetic sensibility. Sensory descriptors appear throughout her story, directly inspired by the images she first created. Hawkins et al. (2008) further noted “...student’s solid

understanding, structured to show and drive her internal plan for the thinking, actually leads the student to deeper thinking and understanding” (p. 105).



Figure 16. AR4's individual project images (AR4, 2012).

AR4's imagery and writing style meet Friedman's (1991) definition of intertextuality. However, the same concept is less clear when using Housen's (2000-2001) Aesthetic Stage definitions, since her definitions and criteria were intended for art viewing and criticism vs. creation and writing. However, they can be loosely applied when considering the overall thought processes that AR4 demonstrated in her final product. Anderson and Milbrandt (2005) state:

When art is seen as symbolic communication about things that count, students explore, and come to understand not only their personal ideas and feelings but also the ideas and feelings of others. Making art can become social as well as personal development. (p. 28)

AR4 created poetic text inspired from her photographs as a picture prompt, which was the objective for the individual projects, for which I developed a different scoring guide. AR4 created a lyrical description of a day, an experience with the environment, and the evocative mood due to the events of the day. This requires careful thought and

creating personal connections to the same. Stage Two requires the viewer to access their own perceptions and knowledge of the natural world, and values of their social, moral, and conventional world to create a framework for looking at art (Housen, 2000-2001, p. 4).

For a student to create works of art that demonstrate intertextuality, one must be acutely aware of the framework in which the images and words mingle, and use them seamlessly, as AR4 did. For this reason, her work is exceptional when compared with that of her peers. The specifics of her score will be discussed in the next section.

AR4's wording was a bit clumsy at times, though lyrical. Some of her wording lacked flow. However, what it lacked in flow, it made up for in descriptiveness, and overall it was very successful.



Figure 17. AR4's individual project images (AR4, 2012).

When looking at AR4's work strictly from a compositional viewpoint, both images demonstrate control of the rectangular frame within the camera's viewfinder. Most notably, the desaturated, nearly black and white image of the building is striking because of the large black shape bending towards the center of the frame. This pulls the viewer's attention towards the vertical rectangular windows creating repetition in the

photograph. In both images, AR4 used asymmetrical balance and juxtaposition, creating a center of interest. Moreover, in the image of the curled paper, the student's visual use of triangular shape, balance, and space brings the viewer's eye toward the center of interest, which is a flower surrounded by a mourner's words of sorrow and admiration for the pop diva. It makes a beautiful sentiment and image, which captured the overall mood of the day.

AR4's reflection. Unfortunately, AR4 was on an extended leave of absence toward the end of the school year and did not complete a self-reflection analysis of her project. Nevertheless, her poignant and thoughtful marriage of image and text surely merits and deserves the critical analysis provided by this researcher.

Third-grader SS3. This student's work was considered exceptional compared to that of her peers because she took very clear steps to organize and prepare for her final product. She did several drafts of her final writing before creating her final project. However, it was evident that her writing was rather scripted. For a detailed discussion of what I describe as a scripted/prescriptive writing process driven by standardized testing, see Chapter 6.

As previously mentioned, since there is so much emphasis in the school environment on the state testing and scoring, methods of scoring have been examined, devised, and drilled into students. Students have learned to write with a scripted format, driven by prompts from the Writer's Checklist (see Figure 19). Each student used this list, checking off as many strategies as possible as they used them in their essay. However, preparation for the NJ ASK is not the only use for the Writer's Checklist. The

checklist encourages writers to use these strategies to make their writing clearer, and more informative, interesting, and enjoyable to the reader.

The Artful Citizen researchers also discuss the developmental issues surrounding the writings of third-grade students and the potential problems for accurately scoring said responses in their study. This was very much evident in the post-test results, as well as in the final projects. As noted in the Wolfsonian study by Curva and Associates (2005):

...because the writing process is a developmental process, it is common for there to be a wide range of abilities in third grade writing (Halliday, 1980). Typical issues, which surface at this age, are issues of grammar, spelling, punctuation, along with other conventions and styles (Bissex, 1980; Chomsky, 1971). Typically, third graders are afraid to take risks, and look for, and hold on to structures to rely on that provide the correctness that relieve their anxiety about writing, in general (Calkins, 1986). (p. 24)

Considering the strong emphasis on writing for high-stakes testing, holding on to these structures would seem even more important from the eyes of a student. As previously discussed within the methodology section of this research, a similar phenomenon can surface when one is beginning to learn a new form of art or photography. Since the new learner is usually struggling with how to work with the medium, they are more likely to stick with typical conventions and strategies, rather than to take risks. When artists intrinsically understand the media, it becomes second nature to them, and their artistic decisions reflect this understanding. Hence, their final artistic products purposely maximize the potential of the same.

SS3's images were pleasing and unpretentious in their overall quality. Her essay was about spring planting, and the imagery quietly invited the viewer to come along and take part in the photographer's personal experience. She begins her series, titled Introduction—Grown Tomatoes, by asking her audience to engage with her experience of growing tomatoes in her family home. SS3's recounting of this experience is a visual and verbal memoir or accounting of a day in her life while planting with her mother.

The most outstanding images overall within this body of work are below.

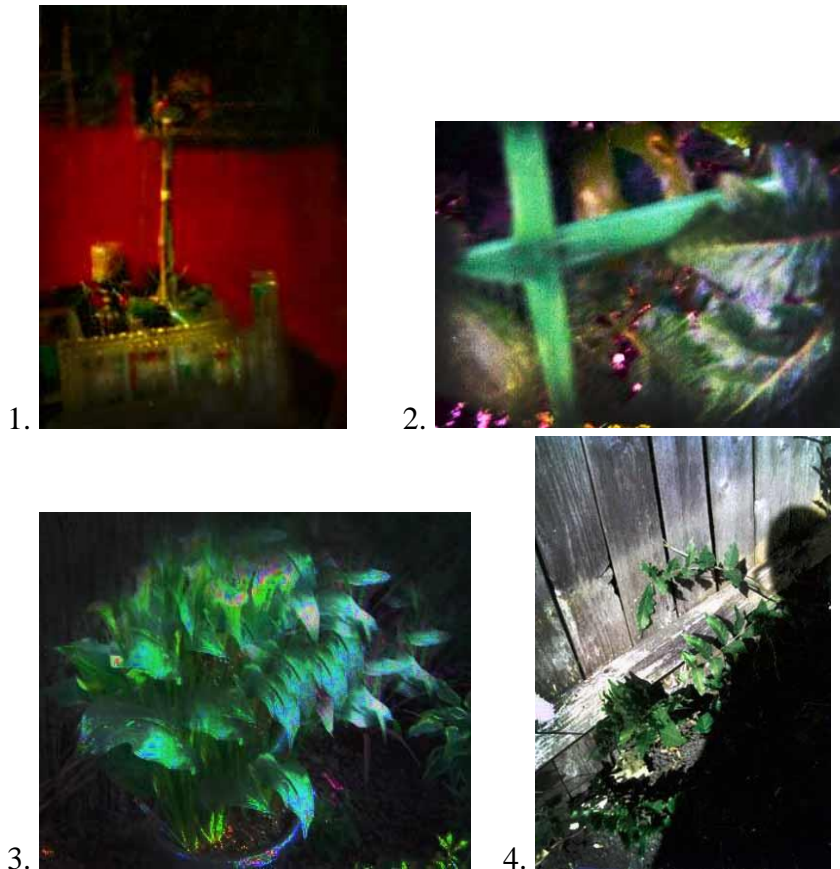


Figure 18. SS3's individual project images 1-4 (SS3, 2012).

The first image is a still life of the student's living room. It is in rather soft focus, as many of her images were, due to low light and camera shake. If one were to look at the shake from a strictly technical viewpoint, it could be considered a mistake. However, with the filtration applied afterward, the shake created a romantic soft-focus look, which in fact enhanced the images rather than distracting the viewer's eye.

Using the burning and dodging functions in the photo effects tool, SS3 created dramatic shadow effects by darkening the edges of the photos, resulting in a vignette effect and bringing the viewer's eye toward the center of the images. She used these same techniques on the three strongest images.

However, SS3's fourth image serves as the strongest in terms of overall composition. Here the student really shows that she understands composition, because this was the only image that we did not crop after the fact. She saw the shadow and used juxtaposition and asymmetrical balance to create a visually pleasing image that creates a curious feel for the viewer. One wants to know more about the individual whose shadowy outline enjoys a curious prominence within the image.

SS3 begins the series of photos with the image of her living room, yet the story's beginning does not correlate with imagery. She begins by describing the planting process she had with her mother:

Do you grow Tomatoes? It all started when my mom and I found some tomatoe seeds in the backyard. We wanted to plant it. So I grabed a bag of dirt and you know whats funny the bag just for vegetables. My mom and I planted them up in the front where we grew turnips, and Potatoes. Did you know that the'yre both underground plants. Finally, we started diging. We

dug and dug and dug. It nearly took 30 min because the soil was thick and rich. I finally put the seed in. It looked like a beautiful piece of nature because the sun was shining. My turnips are nice a colorful Grass surrounded by my tomatoe. It was just right. (SS3, 2012)

The next image is the bag of soil, then the vertical stake of the planted tomato, hands holding the worm, the cross stake of the tomato twice, then a wide shot of flowers in the pot, and finally, calla lilies in a pot.

SS3's writing proceeds in a logical sequence, but her images do not have the same flow. However, viewers can connect to some of the sequential thinking demonstrated in her writing. SS3 had fewer images from which to choose, compared with the fourth- and fifth-grade exemplar students whose work was previously discussed. Her camera batteries died while she was shooting, she lost all her images, and needed to reshoot her work within a couple of days. As previously stated, the fourth and fifth grades had been assigned the cameras first, but many students did not follow the contracted agreement to return the cameras in a timely manner, and this affected the third grade the most. Nevertheless, SS3 persevered and created a successful project overall.

Her story continued with the images of the staked tomatoes and the hands holding the larva, and she writes:

First, my mom and I found some seeds in backyard. It was a pack of tomatoe seeds. We thought about planting the tomatoe seeds. So we did.

First, we found some soil it for vegetables, so my mom and I took it to the front. It was heavy as a lot of rocks. Next we found a nice spot for the soil.

We opened the soil. It was thick rich soil. It took us 30 minutes to dig the soil. Then we put the seed in and watered it. (SS3, 2012)

SS3's writing style tends to be conversational, and she demonstrates spelling and tense issues. The spelling errors, however, were not counted against her when she was evaluated. She uses metaphors and descriptive adjectives in a sequential, systematic, procedural account of the planting process.

SS3's numerous misspellings and punctuation errors are typical of an early writer, particularly one trained in a Whole Language (WL) setting. Inventive spelling practices imbed themselves within the whole language WL approach to literacy. WL is based upon the premise that students will learn to spell through the same processes with which they learned to speak, inferring that learning to spell requires little instruction. WL holds that unassisted, invented spelling can develop students' knowledge about the phonemic and semantic uses of words, and their meaning and usage (Groff, 1994; Templeton, 1992; Hoffman, 1990; Norris, 1989). Recent findings debunk this practice, and advocate for a blend of direct systemic instruction to develop phonemic awareness through interdisciplinary and project-based learning.

At the time SS3 wrote her essay, the New Urban School District had recently adopted the Houghton Mifflin series *Journeys* for use at the elementary level. This literacy series creates a "teacher-proof" program that integrates phonemic skill building threaded through interdisciplinary content performance tasks. This series blends best practices in direct instruction of alphabetic phonics and contextual semantics.

The misspellings in SS3's writing make clear where she held a common misunderstanding and lacked skill in phonemic awareness. Groff (1994, pp. 5, 48),

postulates that teaching inadequacies are at the root of most spelling disabilities because these learners were not afforded the opportunity to learn through developmental spelling. Using this as a framework to evaluate SS3's spelling, she would be considered a later speller as she would not have had the opportunity to learn this skill yet.

When evaluating SS3's work through the framework of Housen's (2000-2001) Stages of Aesthetic Understanding, her visual and written work is clearly consistent with Stage One for its storytelling quality, which is to be expected of an early learner. A student's range of experience with media and opportunity to write at this level is limited and narrative in nature. With future exposure and opportunity, SS3's ability to move to a higher level of thinking and production would be inevitable, as she is solidly performing at grade level, and continues to demonstrate the capacity to grow beyond her current levels of performance.

SS3's reflection. As previously stated, the third grade was the last class to work with the cameras, and several students in this grade level did not have an opportunity at all to shoot the individual projects due to time constraints. The students who photographed their individual projects did not have the opportunity to complete the self-reflection exercise. However, these students were afforded this opportunity during the coupled pre-shoot at the beginning of the school year.

I reviewed SS3's self-reflection of the photographs that she and her partner had done in the fall to see if there was any indicator of planning and thoughtful reflection on how to improve her work. She did attempt thoughtful reflection for the following questions:

What do you think was your strong point/show stopper images when you were taking the pictures and why?

My point was to show the color of the images.

Were your final images meeting what your “Mind’s Eye” saw when you were actually taking them? Elaborate and explain the similarities and differences.

That I am going to get the best pictures when I think about it

If you were to go back and do this again, what images would you keep and which ones do you need to reshoot? Please explain in detail.

I would keep the houses and reshoot the others.

When you reshoot, what will you do differently and how will you go about accomplishing this?

I would go around and take pictures from different communities. (SS3, personal communication, September 19, 2012)

SS3’s response briefly mentions her intention to use color in her work. This indicates that she is just beginning to think about her work through a formalist aesthetic, which is a good practice for an early learner. More references to her uses of other art elements such as line or value would have been better, but I was pleased that she made mention of a formal element in her response.

The formal aesthetic provides a new learner a structure of what is considered “good” and “acceptable” or “pleasing” to the eye. Formalism provides rules for composition, color use, perspective, and focus, and these all provide a new learner the guidelines to help them create a pleasing, acceptable, and successful experience with a new medium. Like writing, photography and art have guidelines and structures that are

important to learn. By developing a solid control of the medium, and having an eye for composition, a new learner will create a successful product and have the confidence needed to repeat this artistic practice. In *Outliers*, Gladwell (2008, p. 41) stated, "ten thousand hours is the magic number of greatness." His research examined studies in elite performance and concluded that in many fields, one must practice for ten thousand hours in order to become accomplished. He notes that training should begin when one is young and should happen often, because through effort comes mastery.

For an educator, a goal of educating one's students is to provide them with a foundation for a future of productivity in their lives. Building confidence through successful artistic experience is a pathway to achieving this lifelong pursuit.

Photography, due to the instant nature of the medium, can do that for students. After seeing the work that SS3, AR4, and BF5 produced, I am confident that photography will continue to be a lifelong artistic practice for all of them.

Conclusion of Cycle Two

In conclusion, Cycle Two allowed me to test and improve the structure of my research, and the ways the research project was executed. Unfortunately, it also presented new problems and limitations to manage. Technical issues arose with the handling, securing, and mechanics of the cameras. Inconsistencies in timeliness with the students in the fourth and fifth grades affected the amount of time that the third-graders would have with the cameras for their individual projects during the following cycle.

Looking at the use of the Painted Essay (Leddy, 1999), it was discovered that one of the teachers disregarded the recommended color-coding by Leddy, and used independently chosen colored pencils. However, it was discovered that the color coding

process did help the students structure their work, even if the colors didn't follow the color theory within the suggested process from Leddy.

We also discovered that the rubrics did not cover every type of writing that the students would actually produce. The Painted Essay was designed for expository writing but could be adapted to narrative. Yet many students produced fantasy-based stories from their imaginations. The criteria of the rubrics didn't consider this kind of writing and made it difficult to evaluate the same.

By the end of Cycle Two, it was clear that my reflections and considerations had to be aimed squarely at finishing the project as effectively as circumstances might allow; and at being as creative and flexible as possible within best-practice guidelines to facilitate the best outcomes for the students, the teaching participants, and for the research we were attempting to accomplish. Again, I took the opportunity to discuss this with those involved in the research, and to reexamine existing literature and seek new research that might help me bring about a successful conclusion to the research cycles.

Chapter 6

Action Research: Cycle Three

The focus of Cycle Three was to continue to build upon the narratives already in progress with the third, fourth, and fifth grades. Students worked with the images and workbooks they had created in Cycle Two to complete their final visual and written narratives with the classroom teachers during Cycle Three. The classroom teachers were also asked to distribute the post-test to students after they had completed the final individual assignment, which involved a critical analysis of a master photographer's photograph. The visual and written work was assessed by the researcher and the classroom teacher in June 2012 using rubric designs discussed in detail later in this chapter.

The teachers were provided with a materials packet that contained example lessons from Van Horn (2008), the elements and principles of art, the post-tests, and the exit survey. The teachers also received video cameras and tripods to record lessons in their classrooms. During this time, I had to take a medical leave of absence for six weeks. The classroom teachers were required to complete an exit survey interview based upon the protocol of the Wolfsonian/Artful Citizen Study, and to give their input on the entire project experience. Discerning whether they had internalized this process—and to what extent—was crucial at this juncture of the research, for this would indicate whether there was a rational basis to argue for its continued application in their classrooms.

DW: We did action work, action pictures. The children had their—you know, pick an activity they wanted to do in the picture. Some of them did flips, some were dancing, some were

throwing the ball, or hula-hooping and different things like that; and then I gave them the pictures. I gave it to them and so they had to create a story around that picture, and they had to give me a snapshot which is complete detail of what they were doing and how they were doing.

Researcher: Did you do that before or after... like since we started doing this project, was that practice of yours before we started this research or since then?

DW: Since then.

Researcher: Since then you think this research has influenced that in your teaching?

DW: Yes, very much so.

(DW, personal communication, January 26, 2012)

The 2010-2011 NJ ASK and spring 2011 district writing benchmark scores of each class were analyzed during Cycle Three. However, NJ ASK scores for 2011-2012 were not available until much later in the calendar year, and so these scores were not analyzed until the analysis portion of this research. These results were then used for the purposes of triangulation. This involved comparing recurring themes and extrapolating the important issues of this research.

In Cycle Three, I conducted the final interviews with the teachers and worked with them to grade all the student projects according to the rubrics, and to evaluate their writing samples as compared with their prior work for significant differences in the work.

The video materials were sent to a transcription service and coded during the final cycle of this research.

Data Collection

Data analysis and themes. Once the data was collected, the process of analysis began. The categories we used for data analysis were Technology; Instructional Strategies/Writing for Understanding; Student Behavior/Classroom Management; Misunderstandings; Teacher/Student Dispositions; Feedback; Student Engagement; Photo Essay to Text Development; Administrative Supports/Interference; and Time Restraints. These themes ran throughout all three cycles non-concurrently.

Writing program observations. From the recent observations in my classroom when students were completing their pre-test photo evaluations, and from watching the students in class, I noticed that the writing process was very contrived for these students. What I found particularly interesting across all three grade levels was the use of onomatopoeia in the first word in their essays. Their writing programs currently use a prescriptive approach driven by NJ ASK preparation and by the district curriculum adoption of *Journeys*. The Writer's Check List is a format that all students use in all upper elementary grades at the French Immersion School (FIS). This list allows students to check to make sure that they have included the essential elements of writing. Many of the students used this list verbatim, and as a result their writing became contrived; the writing throughout each class reflected the same format and structure.

NAME	DATE
WRITER'S CHECK LIST	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Strong opening <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Writing template <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Sensory details <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Many details <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Complete sentences <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Capital letters <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Punctuation <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Great spelling <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Onomatopoeia <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Similes (2 times) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Question <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Descriptive words <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Dialogue <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Verb agreement <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Commas (series) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Indentation <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Synonyms <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Organization <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Strong closing <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Followed directions 	
TEACHER'S CHECK LIST FOR WRITERS	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Strong opening <input type="checkbox"/> Writing template <input type="checkbox"/> Sensory details <input type="checkbox"/> Many details <input type="checkbox"/> Complete sentences <input type="checkbox"/> Capital letters <input type="checkbox"/> Punctuation <input type="checkbox"/> Great spelling <input type="checkbox"/> Onomatopoeia <input type="checkbox"/> Similes (2 times) <input type="checkbox"/> Question <input type="checkbox"/> Descriptive words <input type="checkbox"/> Dialogue <input type="checkbox"/> Verb agreement <input type="checkbox"/> Commas (series) <input type="checkbox"/> Indentation <input type="checkbox"/> Synonyms <input type="checkbox"/> Organization <input type="checkbox"/> Strong closing <input type="checkbox"/> Followed directions 	
Grade/Points _____	
Comments _____	

Figure 19. The Writer's Check List that all students are required to use when writing.

Most school writing is expository. The purpose of expository writing is to inform, describe, explain, or define the author's argument about a given subject to the reader. Expository writing in school settings often nods towards some (frequently highly artificial) employment of Hegelian dialectic to investigate and/or prove a point, and ultimately to deposit or transfer specific, explicitly stated information from the writer to

the reader. Such writing requires the strong organizational and planning skills both teachers and employers frequently look for. These skills can be easily assessed by reasonably experienced readers through using standardized, impartial rubrics. Expository writing is the most frequently used type of writing by students in elementary schools, middle schools, high schools, and in many subject areas in college and university classrooms. However, it is not the only kind of writing necessary for fully functioning members of society to be able to practice well.

Creative writing (both fiction and non-fiction), journalism, advertising copywriting, most public relations writing, and the majority of social media communications depend on narrative abilities that lie well outside the bounds of expository writing. The kinds of rubrics developed by schools whose primary concern was and is still expository writing are often less than helpful when directed towards the assessment of non-expository texts. Moreover, influential figures in the Core Content Standards movement, such as Common Core State Standards Initiative (CCSSI) chief editor David Coleman, have derided creative writing: “Nobody in the real world gives a shit about what you feel, and what you think” (Swasey, 2012, p. 1), and have used the CCSSI to limit the amount of non-expository writing students can have in schools.

Cycle Three points particularly towards the consequences of that increasingly unhealthy imbalance. The teachers I worked with were bound to the district curriculum and limited by many factors due to the pressures of high-stakes testing. This project depended on educating the teachers I was training to understand the project clearly and well. It also depended on the degree of willingness and cooperation I received from each of those teachers. There was notable variation in the degree to which different teachers

worked with me to make this project a success. Some teachers did a better job than others in getting students to realize both the individual steps and the overall goals of this project. Thus, it is not surprising that different students ended up with considerably varied ideas about what they could or should write about. Students also had different experiences with the Painted Essay. In their writing, some classes received more structure and support than others. Some classes clearly felt freer than others from the constrictions of the expository form. Therefore, some of the writing I received seemed unnecessarily and unhappily wedded to the expository form, often at the expense of maintaining a close relationship with the narratives of their photo essays. Other writing did not reflect this, and took imaginative flight, often (though again, not always) in meaningful conjunction with the students' photo essays.

Writing products analyzed. Student photography writing products were analyzed according to the rubrics' criteria for continuity from image to text, sequence, and flow. To understand the progression of each student's thought, we cross-referenced student answers with the teacher-made packet on the photo essay to see if each student had outlined the ideas/thought processes of his or her chosen theme in a thoughtful sequence prior to actually photographing the chosen theme. As Hawkins et al. (2008) have observed:

We have found that, when children are first working with the Painted Essay or a similar structure... it restates the focus in some way, with just a bit of the student's own reflection. As students grow and develop, however, this reflection often becomes a deeper level of thinking, of synthesizing. The student's solid understanding, structured to show and

drive her internal plan for the thinking, actually leads the student to deeper thinking and understanding. In this way, the act of writing is, indeed, as Hillocks points out, a form of “discovery.” (p. 105)

Pre- and post-testing and results. The purpose of the pre- and post-testing was to establish a baseline of which knowledge and skills the students possessed when asked to read and critically think about a photograph, and then express their thoughts and reflections in writing. In doing so, it would be incumbent upon the students to include in their writing a description of the visual elements of the photograph for animation of topical subject, composition, and design elements; and to discuss the purpose, intent of the work, and why it was of value. An analysis of the pre- and post-testing results is found later in this chapter.

Assumptions. Art criticism is a skill embedded in the National and State Core Curricular Content Standards in visual and performing arts. This mandatory skill set is written into the New Urban School District’s P-12 curriculum. Thus, any art student I had taught during my tenure in this school district prior to this study would have learned a formal approach to art criticism during the normal course of my teaching. All students would have been asked to critique an artwork by following these steps: Describe, Analyze, Interpret, Judge (Mittler & Ragans, 2007, p. 48).

Students would have been prompted to talk in group settings, and/or to write about a masterwork of art (as developmentally appropriate as defined in the district curriculum), and their own artwork, since Pre-Kindergarten. This approach to art criticism is adjusted to meet the developmental thinking/reasoning of the group. At some point, all the students would have been exposed to this kind of thinking and talking about

art. My teaching and visual examples at the elementary level tended to involve masterworks using more traditional mediums like paint and collage, as opposed to using works created with machine-driven mediums such as cameras and computers for older students.

There are differing thoughts on how to determine which artwork a student should view in order to determine his or her skill level using a formative approach. From my personal experience in teaching art for over 20 years, my expectation for my students was that they should be able to apply aesthetic knowledge to any piece of art. This was why I originally decided to let each student choose a photo about which to write during the first pre-test.

However, I later found that in terms of conducting research, limiting variables and using a single image for the pre- and post-test provided more consistent outcomes from the data analysis. According to Hinchey (2008), "Since truths/facts exist independently in the world, the purpose of positivist research is to discover them. Such discovery depends upon carefully controlling possible influences, or variables, in order to identify the relationship of one factor to another" (p. 21). Thus, I conducted a pre-test, test, and post-test of each student in grades three, four, and five, with parallel imagery to determine their aesthetic levels of knowledge and reasoning as defined by Housen (2000-2001). This was also the approach used in the Artful Citizen Literacy Assessment (Curva & Associates, 2005), as the artworks were not identical, but similar in subject matter. The complexity of subjects changed with the grade level. Then, for reliability's sake, I conducted another test using the same image, and again using this same image in the post-test at all grade levels, because it was a photograph that was appropriate for viewers

at all levels. The image subject areas consisted of themes such as people/family, landscape/cityscape, and still life.

Using Housen's rubric from the Wolfsonian Artful Citizen research study (Curva & Associates, 2005), I adapted the Artful Citizen research tools to determine whether my students had learned to understand art both before and after they made their own work. My intention for this was to correlate the students' connection and understanding of master images as a catalyst to help them understand and create their own work, in order to be able to produce a visual essay. According to Parsons (1989), "...we reach the complex understandings of our maturity by a series of steps. We are not born with these abilities, but acquire them" (p. 10) The process of art criticism is a structured and scaffolded cognitive framework for viewing and responding to artwork (in an oral and/or written format), and is applicable to any work of art, in any media.

The implications for teaching, then, involve developing performance tasks that target multiple cognitive processes, and develop a student's ability to engage in processes such as intertextuality (Friedman, 1991); visual conceiving and gestalt (Schaefer-Simmern, 1948; Arnheim, 1997); and Visual Thinking Strategies (VTS) (Housen, 2000-2001). Such performance tasks reinforce a student's enduring understanding (Wiggins & McTighe, 2005) that communicating for understanding and clarity, regardless of the form (visual, oral, or written), uses an organized structure (e.g., frameworks for thinking such as VTS, Feldman, and the Painted Essay) when expressing one's thoughts and ideas.

Since my goal was to ascertain the students' aesthetic development, and their conceptual understanding of the criteria for responding to a photograph structurally through the process of description, analysis, evaluation, and judgment (as explained in

Chapter 4), I developed the pre- and post-tests, which were a line of questions (Appendices S, T) based on the VTS model to assess the students' ability to critically analyze a photograph. The objective was to evaluate students' knowledge and skill sets evidenced in their ability to demonstrate a written analysis of an artwork using the VTS model of critique. The VTS model requires students to viscerally respond to an artwork with a demonstrated level of mastery in formal descriptive analysis, making specific references in the artwork, to defend one's evaluative perspective on the artwork. A rubric was created to evaluate students' performance, including defending their answers/responses and referencing specific data in the photograph by ranking their facets of (conceptual) understanding with appropriately leveled developmental and metacognitive response criteria (Appendices G, H).

All test tasks prompted students to respond using the questions described above. In other words, although the works portrayed different experiences, the visual prompts for each were similar, designed to yield responses that would consistently conform to the criteria of description, analysis, evaluation, and judgment.

The Artful Citizen study. The Wolfsonian Florida International University (FIU)/Artful Citizen study (Curva & Associates, 2005, pp. 16, 21) used two images to ensure reliability, but used different prompts for each grade level. The researchers' intent was to decrease the likelihood that scores might be affected by using a weak visual prompt. They wanted all the students to respond to both images in their grade level. The researchers gave half the students in each class one of the images for the pre-test, and then reversed the images for the post-test. Then the researchers used grade-level writing models and graded the student work according to the rubric created by Curva and

Associates (2005). The developmental levels of each grade level and their impact on the students were considered. Thus, the students were graded on their messages rather than issues of misspellings or grammar. The grade-leveled writing samples provided reference for the readers, as they compared the criteria to our students' writing and made the appropriate adjustments where necessary. Each paper was hand scored by two trained readers, the researcher and a classroom teacher. Examples of the Artful Citizen sample anchor papers and scoring analysis can be found in Appendix A with other training materials used to the teachers who participated in this study.

Artful Citizen's rubric (Curva & Associates, 2005) seeks:

...to assess levels of visual literacy and critical thinking. The four performance domains were defined as description, animation, analysis, and interpretation.

These cognitive skills grow increasingly difficult as the viewer moves from literally naming and describing to critically analyzing and interpreting (Bloom, 1956; Fleming, 1982), as symbolized by the shading of the rubric domains. (p. 24)

The Artful Citizen's rubric also describes the levels of performance response from 0-6, with a 6 being a sophisticated answer that includes many descriptive details, making specific references to the image.

Findings

This project's intention was to teach students about establishing narrative, both in digital photography and in the writing process. It was designed to teach how much writing and photography have in common, and to encourage students to begin exploring the intimate connection between word and image, which exists everywhere in our world. Word and image are married to tell stories on stage and screen; in print and online; in

journalism, advertising, cinema, and art. The marriage of the word to the image within our world is fundamental to the way we now live now. Most of this marriage occurs outside the expository setting. Increasingly in the world around us, narrative, creative writing matters.

However, walk inside a contemporary American school, and you would hardly know it. Expository writing rules our schools. Common Core has only intensified this imbalance. As I argued previously, the expository style of writing continues to dominate the school experience of writing, to the extent that creative writing has become almost invisible to many students and teachers. I myself was not immune to this oversight.

For this reason, employing the Painted Essay initially seemed appropriate for this project. After all, many believe it to be an excellent way to help develop an understanding of the structure of good expository writing, and to help students begin to make connections between art and writing because of its use color theory when color-coding the parts of an essay. Only much later did it occur to me that using the expository focus of the Painted Essay might require rethinking to be effective in teaching the narrative-making skills of creative writing, which are central to many instances of the marriage of the image and the text. In other words, while the needs of critical expository writing and creative writing overlap, they are not identical. The Painted Essay, in its most common form, is best designed to facilitate critical rather than creative writing projects.

The Rubrics

During the assessment of the students' writing, a larger issue presented by the New Jersey Holistic Writing Rubric (NJHWR) (http://www.state.nj.us/education/assessment/es/specs/Overview_njask_lal.pdf) appeared.

The NJHWR is largely geared to criteria primarily suitable to expository writing, and lacks several categories and criteria necessary—and helpful—for the proper assessment of creative (or at least non-expository) writing. For this reason, I ultimately created a second rubric with which to more fairly assess the students in this project. I used elements of a rubric from Jim Burke, a major figure in the National Writing Project, and a general figure in the Writing Across the Curriculum (WAC) movement; and I used the Central Greece, NY writing rubric. Wiggins and McTighe (2007, p. 95) recommend both of these as outstanding examples of rubrics, addressing aspects of writing beyond those normally assessed by expository-focused rubrics. However, I also decided to retain the New Jersey Holistic Writing Rubric. This is the rubric used to grade the NJ ASK, the compulsory NCLB-era high-stakes tests that would be used to evaluate my New Jersey-based sample group. Further discussion and description of the rubrics used in this research (Appendices G, H, I, J, K, and L) can be found in Chapter 4.

As I worked on these rubrics, I came to understand that the best way to determine how well a rubric works for any assignment is to use it and assess its adequacy to the task at hand. Where a rubric fails, it should be modified according to the needs of the project. Thus, developing a best-practice rubric and learning to employ it properly is a gradual process of learning, observing, and adjusting. This process is part of the cycle of reflective pedagogy. As educators, we would ideally provide finished rubrics for students to consider before they begin working, so that they would know the exact basis on which they will be evaluated. However, in the process of developing new teaching, this perfect scenario will not always be possible.

As I evaluated the rubric I had created, I began to see that there was too much overlap between the gently modified rubric of the NJHWR (http://www.state.nj.us/education/assessment/es/specs/Overview_njask_1al.pdf), which provided the first half of my own, and elements of the Greece rubric (see Appendix J), which provided the second. I was covering the same material twice. However, my hybrid rubric did provide for more writing possibilities, especially those that fell outside expository frameworks.

By the end of the grading, I also realized that my own rubric should have left more explicit room to recognize the imaginative energies and creative content that some students brought to their work. I also wanted to differentiate between planning and execution, which were separately assessed in both of my guiding rubrics, but my own rubric did not do this.

My developing understanding of the modes of writing, and the rubrics needed to adequately assess them, will certainly develop in my future work, as will my ability to assess and respond to the pedagogical politics that structure the kinds of writing allowed or favored in schools. In a future version of this project, large enough and well-designed enough to provide a high degree of validity, I would need to make clear to teachers which specific kinds of writing were encouraged and/or allowed. I would certainly encourage modes of writing that would enable the construction of narratives lending themselves to the happy marriage of text and image. I would work with teachers to understand the importance of these choices when structuring their classes' writing help. For narrative writing and storytelling in a secondary setting, working from aspects of Aristotle's *Poetics* (Aristotle, 350 B.C.E.) and Joseph Campbell's *Hero with A Thousand Faces*

(Campbell, 2008) might be a more meaningful starting point than the five-paragraph essay from which to describe some of the potentialities of narrative development. The rubrics used to assess such work must reflect that as well.

Classroom profiles. For student participants in grades four and five, we used the previous year's NJ ASK scores as a benchmark of expository writing literacy scores to determine generally where each student had begun the year. We were then able to compare them with the district benchmark scores done in late March/early April 2012, subsequently compare the consistency of those scores with the essay scores based upon the rubrics created for this research, and determine the overall impact of this research.

The NJ ASK is not given in the second grade; therefore, we did not use that as a benchmark for student participants in grade three. We instead used the district scores as the benchmark to see how the research project scores related.

The graph below represents the entire class score ranges. The NJ ASK score reflects the number of possible raw score points (20) for students who were scored on the full set of regular items (<http://www.nj.gov/education/assessment/ms/5-8/ref/SIM11.pdf>). The students had taken the tests during the prior school year. Thus, the scores for a fifth-grade student, for example, had been created during the end of the prior school year, while the student was in fourth grade. The rubric for the District Benchmark utilizes a similar holistic writing rubric that the NJ ASK uses with a 5.0 - 1.0 scale. The rubric for this research is based upon a 4.0 - 1.0 scale. The actual rubrics are located in the Appendix section.

Table 1

Grade Level Testing Score Comparison Range

Student(s) Grade	NJ ASK Writing Task	District Writing Benchmark		Visual Score Range	Essay Score Range
		<i>Baseline Prompt</i>	<i>Narrative</i>		
5	14.0 – 2.0	4.0 - 0.0	5.0 – 2.0	4.0 – 1.5	4.0 – 1.0
4	14.0 – 2.0	4.0 - 0.0	4.0 – 0.0	4.0 – 1.0	4.0 – 1.0
3	NA	4.0 - 0.0	5.0 – 3.0	4.0 – 1.0	4.0 – 1.0

Grade Level Comparison Range

The overall fourth- and fifth-grade scores on the NJ ASK are similar in range. The baseline prompt scores of the District Writing Benchmark are the same for grades three, four, and five. The scores of the Narrative portion of the District Benchmark reveal that the fifth-graders are working at an overall higher level, as compared to the fourth grade. Whether they are developmentally more mature writers because they have had more practice in taking these kinds of tests, or are simply stronger writers, cannot be determined from this data. There is only a three-point range in scores as compared with the four-point range in the fourth-grade scores. However, the third-grade narrative scores are higher than the other two grades with only a two-point spread in the range of scores, indicating even stronger writers overall.

Comparing the fifth-grade scores on the District Benchmark to the scores from the researcher’s rubric, the fifth-graders scored .5 point higher on the low range, as compared to the fourth-graders on the visual score range. However, the range of scores on the writing rubrics were identical for grades three, four, and five.

Table 2

Paired Project Comparison Scores

Student(s) Grade	NJ ASK Writing Task	District Writing Benchmark		District Writing Benchmark	Essay Score Range
		<i>Baseline Prompt</i>	<i>Baseline Prompt</i>		
BF5	12.0	3.0	5.0	3.0 - 4.0	4.0 – 5.0
KM5	14.0	4.0	4.0	3.0 – 4.0	1.0 – 2.0
AR4	12.0	3.0	4.0	3.0 – 4.0	4.0 – 4.5
ZM4	NA1	NA1	NA1	2.0 – 3.0	3.0 - 3.5
SS3	NA	2.0	5.0	3.0 – 4.0	3.5 – 5.0
TT3	NA	NA ¹	5.0	2.0 – 3.0	4.0 – 5.5

¹ Prior test scores are unavailable because the student transferred mid-year.

Paired Project

According to the paired scores, the students showed overall growth with an average of a two-point increase from the baseline prompt to the narrative. The greatest increase is seen in the third grade by student SS3, with a three-point increase. However, the scores from the researcher's rubric do not reflect as great an increase as do the district scores. The researcher's rubric scores reflect a more moderate increase in growth, with an average increase of 1.5 points.

Between the district narrative benchmark scores and the researcher's writing scores, the scores that fifth-grader KM5 received reflect an obvious discrepancy. On the district scores, her teacher determined KM5's range of scores to be between 3.0 and 4.0. However, on the researcher's writing score range, KM5 scored between 1.0 and 2.0—two points lower than the district scores. Because of this discrepancy, I questioned the classroom teacher about why KM5 might have received these lower scores, and learned that the district's benchmark testing is computerized, and done with software from Edusoft. I asked to see the student's actual test but was told it was unavailable since it had been completed on the computer.

Studying this student's work from the pre-test and work samples previously collected, I found that the student had numerous grammar, syntax, and spelling issues, suggesting that the discrepancy could have resulted from some underlying language-based learning issue. However, I am not a clinician, nor trained as a learning disability consultant, so I hesitate to claim with certainty that an organic issue exists for this student. Nevertheless, my personal experience as a teacher and a parent suggests that my observations and resulting caution should be given consideration.

Table 3

Comparison of Individual Scores Among Exemplar Students

Student(s) Grade	NJ ASK Writing Task	District Narrative Benchmark			Median Visual Score Range	Median Essay Score Range
		<i>Baseline Prompt</i>	<i>Narrative</i>	<i>Median Score</i>		
BF5	12.0	3.0	5.0	4.0	3.5	4.5
AR4	4.0	3.0	4.0	3.5	3.5	4.0
SS3	NA	2.0	5.0	3.5	3.5	4.75

Dimensions of Rubric and Criteria Commonalities of Individual Assignments

Analyzing the common dimensions and criteria that describe the exemplary projects reveals various commonalities among student scores in several areas.

Individual profiles. As previously explained, the rubric developed for this project considered the project's major objectives both visually and verbally, with the connection of the images to the writing, and the success of that connection. In this section, exemplary works produced by each student were examined, analyzed and discussed to identify the specific criteria which makes this work stand out. The students' work was assessed by

comparing the individual essays to how they measured in each rubric category. For more information about the rubrics, see Chapters 4 and 5.

Analysis of Pre- and Post-Testing Phases

The tables below demonstrate the range of results for each area tested at each grade level. The first table distinguishes the dates of testing chronologically for the choice pre-test, the single image pre-test, and the single image post-test. The colored boxes represent the total number of students who achieved that specific score during that specific testing date. The second table represents the mean scores in each tested area at each grade level.

Graphic (Grade 3)

Grade 3 (3 Data Sets)	Grade Set	0	1	1.2	1.5	1.7	2	2.2	2.5	2.7	3	3.2	3.5	3.7	4	4.2	4.5	4.7	5	5.2	5.5	5.7	6	
Rubric Learning Level	Score																							
	Grade 3, Total Tested = 6, Date = 2015-04-06			1	2	1	4		3	1	1													
	Grade 3, Total Tested = 6, Date = 2015-05-17						3	5			1	1	1	1	4	1								
DCS	Grade 3, Total Tested = 6, Date = 2015-06-12		2		1					2	1	1	3		1			3	3					
	Grade 3, Total Tested = 6, Date = 2015-06-12																							
	Grade 3, Total Tested = 6, Date = 2015-06-12																							
AMI	Grade 3, Total Tested = 6, Date = 2015-04-06		2		2	2	4	1	2	1	1													
	Grade 3, Total Tested = 6, Date = 2015-05-17		3		1		2	4			2	1		1		1								
	Grade 3, Total Tested = 6, Date = 2015-06-12																							1
AMS	Grade 3, Total Tested = 6, Date = 2015-04-06		2		1		6	1	3		2													
	Grade 3, Total Tested = 6, Date = 2015-05-17		3	1	1	1		3	1			1	1	1	1	1								
	Grade 3, Total Tested = 6, Date = 2015-06-12																							
MIT	Grade 3, Total Tested = 6, Date = 2015-04-06		3		3		4	3			2													
	Grade 3, Total Tested = 6, Date = 2015-05-17		3		2		2	3			1		1											
	Grade 3, Total Tested = 6, Date = 2015-06-12						1					2	1	2	5	1	2					1		

Figure 20. Third grade pre- and post-test phase scores listed chronologically showing class populations on the days of testing.

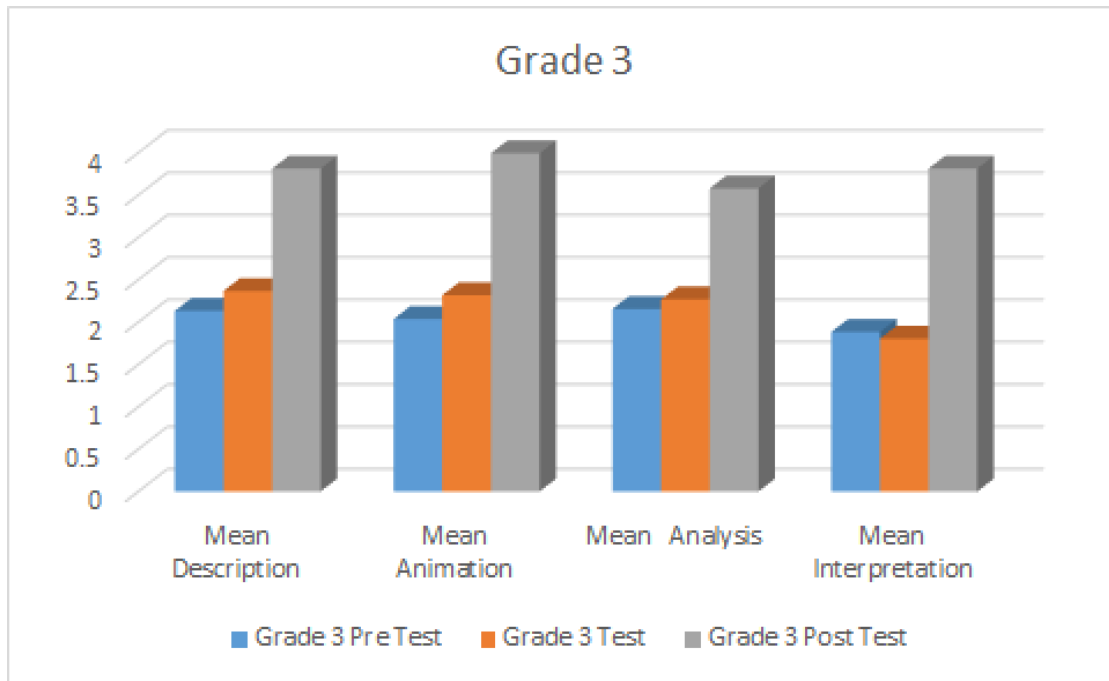


Figure 21. Grade level mean scores of the pre- and post-testing phases of the third-grade students in each dimension.

This chart illustrates the individual scores of the third-grade students in each of the dimensions listed in chronological order for the first pre-test with variable images, the singular image pre-test, and the singular image post-test.

According to the information in the chart, the student scores have increased from the low-level scores range of 0 to 2 in each category of both pre-tests to 2.2 as the lowest score in the post-test. The largest increase in scores among the highest scores occurs in the post-test, with the highest range of scores in areas of description and animation, and the highest score of 6 by a student in this area. Mid-score areas of 2.2 to 3.0 increased as well. Here we see scores of two students increased to the higher mid-levels of 3.2 and above. All areas saw scores significantly increased from the original pre-tests to the post-tests; to a 5.2 in description and analysis, and 5 in animation and interpretation.

Grade 4 (Grade 4)

Grade 4 (4 Data Sets)	Grade 4 (4 Data Sets)	0	1	1.2	1.5	1.7	2	2.2	2.5	2.7	3	3.1	3.5	3.7	4	4.2	4.5	4.7	5	5.2	5.5	5.7	6
DES	Grade 4, Total Themed = 22, Date = 2013-05-07		1		1	4	3	1	1		3	3			2	2	1		1				
	Grade 4, Total Themed = 21, Date = 2013-05-04			1	1		3	6	1		2	2	1		1	1		1		1			
	Grade 4, Total Themed = 19, Date = 2013-05-16				1	2	6	3	3	1		1											
	Grade 4, Total Themed = 15, Date = 2013-05-05	1				4	6	1	1		1												
	Grade 4, Total Themed = 23, Date = 2011-10-07	1	1	1	4	3	1	1		3	3	2		2	1		1	1					
	Grade 4, Total Themed = 21, Date = 2013-05-04	1	1	1			4	5		2	3	1			1	1		1					
AMI	Grade 4, Total Themed = 19, Date = 2013-05-16				1	4	5	4	3	1	1												
	Grade 4, Total Themed = 19, Date = 2013-05-16	1	1			1	0	2	1		1												
	Grade 4, Total Themed = 23, Date = 2011-10-07	3	2	3			4	1			3			1	1	1	2		1				
	Grade 4, Total Themed = 21, Date = 2013-05-04	2				1	5	4		1	4				2				2				
	Grade 4, Total Themed = 19, Date = 2013-05-16				2	1	7	5		2	2												
	Grade 4, Total Themed = 15, Date = 2013-05-05	1	1			3	7	2			1												
AMS	Grade 4, Total Themed = 22, Date = 2011-10-07	3	3				5			1	2	2				1	3						
	Grade 4, Total Themed = 21, Date = 2013-05-04	3					5			1	2	2				1	3						
	Grade 4, Total Themed = 19, Date = 2013-05-16						6	4	1	2	2		1		1		1		1				
	Grade 4, Total Themed = 21, Date = 2013-05-04	3					6	4	1	2	2		1		1		1		1				
	Grade 4, Total Themed = 19, Date = 2013-05-16			1	1		11	2	2	1	1												
	Grade 4, Total Themed = 15, Date = 2013-05-05	1	1			3	6	1	2		1												

Figure 22. Fourth grade pre- and post-test phase scores listed chronologically showing class populations on the days of testing.

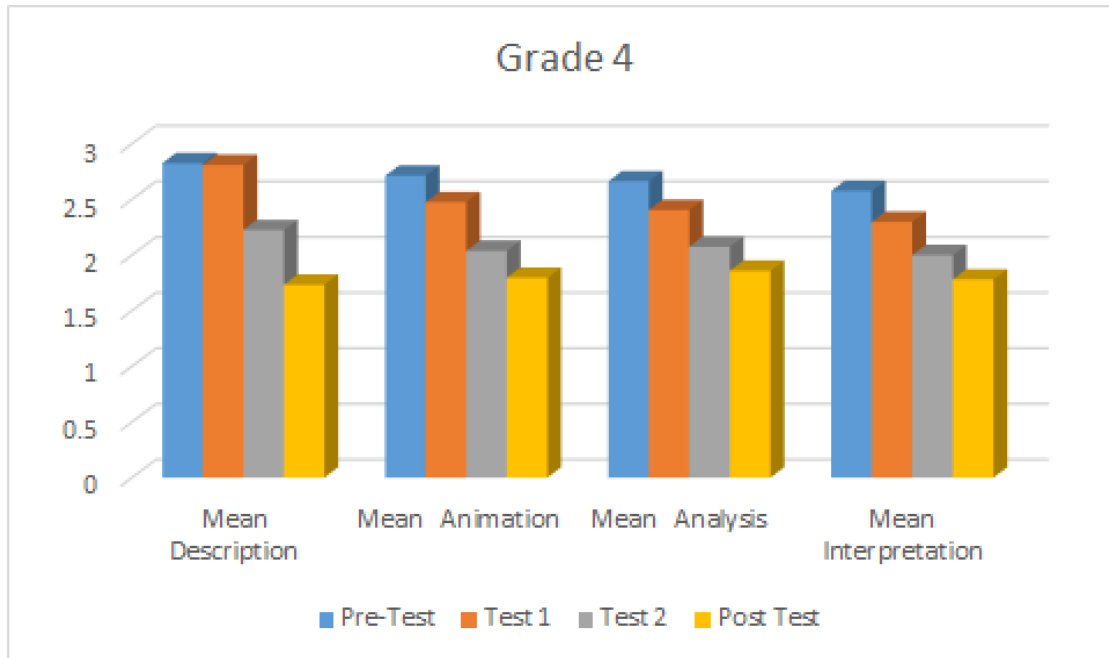


Figure 23. Grade level mean scores of the pre- and post-testing phases of the fourth-grade students in each dimension.

This chart illustrates the individual scores of the fourth-grade students in each of the criteria dimensions listed in chronological order for the first pre-test and post-test with variable images and followed by the singular image pre-test and post-test.

The scores for this class are inverted. To find an explanation for this, I again reviewed field notes and video data of the taped classes to find errors, but found none. Thus, these are the scores. In considering what may have occurred to skew the scores to reflect the results obtained, and unlike the third and fifth grades, the following observations were made:

Population size drops in each test, with the smallest population tested during the post-test. The percentage of SPED students in this class was high. This class had a population of 22 students, eight of whom had either an IEP or 504 accommodations. This proportion was higher than those within the third or fifth grades who were also tested.

This may have affected the test scores because the test was given by following the exact administration rules of the Wolfsonian, and without consideration of student IEP accommodations. In her Byron study, Housen (2001-2002) witnessed a similarly skewed observation:

Researchers sometimes encounter the unanticipated. From time to time, unplanned events can lead to unexpected findings. In our case, we had not one, but five unplanned aspects in the study. Since many of these circumstances actually undermined the likelihood that the experimental group would outperform the control group, these factors can actually be seen as adding strength to our argument. The first three unanticipated conditions had to do with sample and implementation... the older experimental group happened to have more special needs students and fewer gifted students than the older control group. (p. 113)

The variable post-test and single image pre-tests were completed during the NJ ASK testing. The students were less than willing to take another test after a morning of high-stakes testing, and expressed the same.

The regular classroom teacher did not administer the final post-test in this grade. The third-grade teacher completed it on the very last day of the school year because the fourth-grade classroom teacher was too busy closing up for the school year, and had forgotten. This certainly created less than optimal testing circumstances, similar to testing during the period after students completed taking the NJ ASK. However, this was worse, as the students were focused on summer, and not on testing at all.

The overall scores in the area of description were higher than in the other dimensional areas tested, which indicates that students may have been more comfortable

with this task than with the others. Another possible interpretation for the high description scores for the multiple image pre-test is that students were best able to describe what they saw when they either chose an image that they liked, or for which they felt safest in discussing the subject matter.

Graphs (Grade 5)

Grade 5 (Data Set)	Data Set	0	1	1.2	1.5	1.7	2	2.2	2.5	2.7	3	3.2	3.5	3.7	4	4.2	4.5	4.7	5	5.2	5.5	5.7	6
Roberts Learning Level	Score							1		1	2		1	2	1			1					
	Grade 5, Total Tested = 10, Date = 2012-05-02							1		1	2		1	2	1			1					
	Grade 5, Total Tested = 12, Date = 2012-05-16		1				1		1	1	1			1									
DCE	Score						1	1		1	1	1	1		1	1							
	Grade 5, Total Tested = 12, Date = 2012-05-16						1	1		1	1	1	1		1	1							
	Grade 5, Total Tested = 12, Date = 2012-05-04						1	1		1	1	1	1		1	1							
ANI	Score						1	1		1	1	1	1		1	1			2				
	Grade 5, Total Tested = 10, Date = 2012-05-02						1	1		1	1	1	1		1	1							
	Grade 5, Total Tested = 12, Date = 2012-05-16		1				1	1		1	1	1	1		1	1							
ANS	Score						1	1		1	1	1	1		1	1							
	Grade 5, Total Tested = 12, Date = 2012-05-04						1	1		1	1	1	1		1	1							
	Grade 5, Total Tested = 10, Date = 2012-05-02						1	1		1	1	1	1		1	1							
AMT	Score						1	1		1	1	1	1		1	1							
	Grade 5, Total Tested = 12, Date = 2012-05-16						1	1		1	1	1	1		1	1							
	Grade 5, Total Tested = 12, Date = 2012-05-04						1	1		1	1	1	1		1	1							

Figure 24. Fifth grade pre- and post-test phase scores listed chronologically showing class populations on the days of testing.

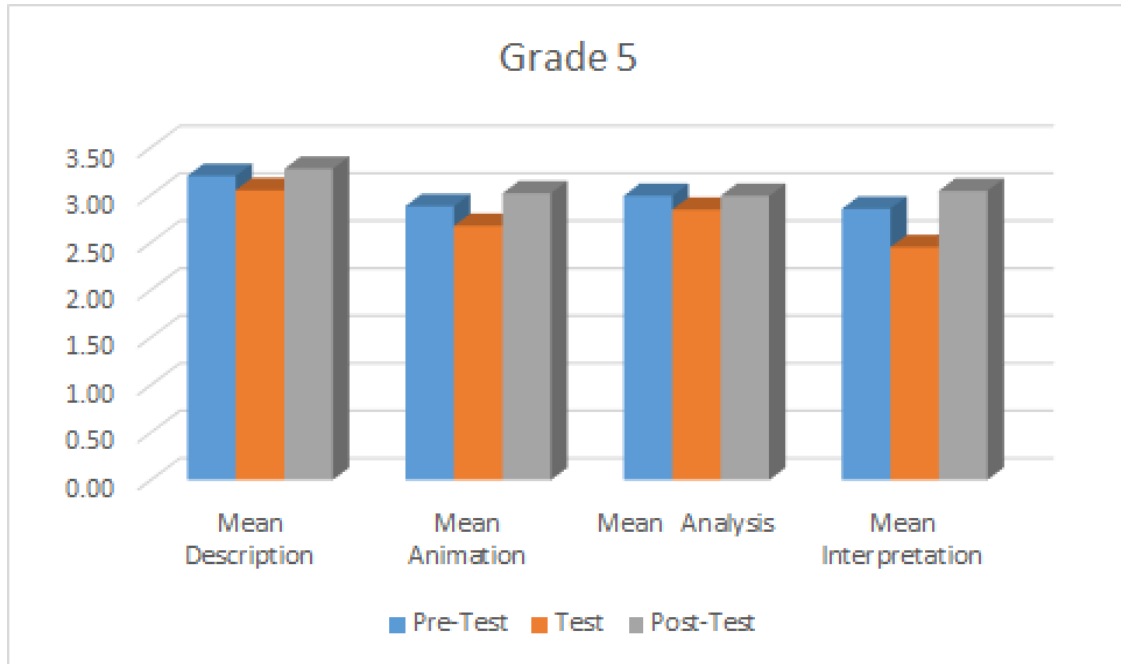


Figure 25. Grade level mean scores of the pre- and post-testing phases of the fifth-grade students in each dimension.

This chart illustrates the individual scores of the fifth-grade students in each of the dimensions listed in chronological order for the first pre-test with variable images, and then the singular image pre-test and the singular image post-test.

It is noted that the scores of the first pre-test with multiple images produced the highest scores of all the tests combined. When the students took the single image pre-test, their scores dropped. The single image pre-test was also completed during the NJ ASK testing, directly after the students completed the high-stakes testing. The choice pre-test suggests that the students' interest and comfort in discussing images that they liked or for which they had some prior knowledge encouraged their engagement and inspired more detailed and descriptive writing. Similar to an observation made about the results of the fourth-grade tests, it is observed that when students are tired after high-stakes testing, they will be less likely to focus or put forth their best efforts at that point.

The other noteworthy data is that the lowest score range of 0-1.7 had shown an increase to 2.0 and above by the post-test. However, the overall increases in scores were marginal, and are best illustrated within the mean graph chart.

Research Questions and Teacher Reflections

As part of the triangulation process, I summarize the overarching evidence presented to determine the outcomes of the data as they relate to the original research questions. They are:

1. What impact does the training offered by art specialists in a collaborative arts model have on academic teachers' actual implementation of the same in their classroom?
2. How much technical knowledge does a teacher need to possess in order to automatically "think" with new media technology? What supports are needed to successfully implement this technology in the classroom?
3. Does the combination of the researcher's suggested pedagogical methods improve students' writing skills?

Research questions one and three. The researcher addressed the first question during discussion with the teachers in their final interviews. These interviews refer to the teachers' impressions of "what worked" while they participated in the professional development offered by the participant researcher, and what the teachers applied in their classrooms (refer to Chapter 4 for teacher training details). The third research question attempts to determine whether the same methods taught by the art specialist improved student writing skills. The following interview excerpts attempt to answer both, as both

questions were addressed during the same sets of interviews. The second question will be answered separately, in a later part of this chapter.

The professional development training given to the teachers was not what I had originally planned. My original goal was that we would meet as a professional learning community and continue to meet bi-weekly for training, reflecting, and sharing ideas and information. Unfortunately, that was not what occurred (as previously stated), due to the implementation of the new district literacy program.

The project began with a pilot study in spring 2011 with the school presentation of the photography and book *Small Towns, Black Lives* (2003) by Professor Wendel White of Stockton University in New Jersey. On the day of his presentation, there was a neighborhood power outage while the students were walking to the gym, and the school principal did not allow some of the classes to leave their classrooms. Thus, the fifth grade did not participate, but I did provide the fifth-grade teacher and her students a background in White's work by showing them a related video from PBS/NJN's Learning Library, which accompanies the lesson unit I coauthored, "The Photographer as Storyteller" (PBS Learning Media™, n.d.).

Because the third- and fourth-grade teachers participated in this project from its inception, they initially received more training in the areas of UbD unit design, WU, the Painted Essay, and digital photography techniques than the fifth-grade teacher did. The pilot study period also helped all of us work through some of the procedural issues and provided more exposure and practice to the methods of learning explored in this study for all its participants.

Since the fifth-grade teacher agreed to sign on to the project in the fall of the following school year, there less time was available for her to receive training, and the training she received was much less in-depth. This was mainly due to schedule conflicts with the implementation of the new district-wide curriculum. This most adversely affected the fifth-grade teacher's training in the areas of digital photography and UbD. However, links to videos, PowerPoints and all printed materials were supplied to this teacher. I also offered alternative times to train her during my preparation period and after school, but she did not take me up on my offer.

Some of the approaches for improving writing that I presented to all the teachers during the first two training meetings during fall 2011 (prior to the schedule change from the implementation of *Journeys*) included the Frayer Model for vocabulary acquisition, topical brainstorming with mind mapping techniques using words and images with groups, a Venn diagram for words, and a round table technique for images (see Appendices A, B, and C). The researcher attempted to answer the research questions during the interviews with the classroom teachers, in assessment of student products, and through analysis of the pre- and post-testing.

What worked. Of all the suggested methodologies in the UbD approach to teach writing, the WU Painted Essay was the most popular among the teachers and was most readily adopted into daily practice by all of them. The teachers found that the color-coding approach helped reinforce many of the key skills that they were already emphasizing in the classroom and offered a new approach to reaching those skills.

During our interview, fourth-grade teacher DP and I discussed his experience with the students while using digital photography and the color-coded practices prescribed in

the Painted Essay's approach to organizing writing. DP felt the Painted Essay helped his students "make the connections, and that the color coordination actually made it easier.... They really took to it.... Definitely it was helpful" (DP, personal communication, September 23, 2012).

The fifth-grade teacher, SO, agreed that the Painted Essay was a valuable tool. She intended to continue using it in her praxis. This teacher had been appointed to the position of school reading coach beginning in the fall of 2012 and stated that she would recommend this method to be used at numerous grade levels. "I thought that was great.... It can be used anytime.... The color coding is definitely [something] that can work again. I think that if we tackle it in the beginning by testing, they would... be able to transfer the information." Asked if she might continue to successfully implement this work in the future, SO replied, "Now that I've done it, yes. I don't know if I would be able to if I didn't do it [with you first] Now that I know exactly what it entails, absolutely" (SO, personal communication, August 8, 2012).

All three teachers agreed that using the UbD template was more difficult in their district because they were forced to use a different district-based lesson-planning format. In spite of this, they found it helpful to plan with the end in mind. They could incorporate UbD into their daily praxis, regardless of lesson format. Even with the pressures of a culture of teaching to the test, teachers found ways to incorporate parts of UbD.

Regarding the value of incorporating UbD and backwards design, DW affirmed:

Yes, I would actually use it.... I'm the kind of teacher that, I like to break it all the way down to the root, and then I can build it up. I like to work both ways. Even though I'm teaching to the test.... I bring in a lot of other things that they are

learning as well *while* I'm teaching to the test.... After you assess, you re-evaluate the results, and then you go back and you re-teach... where they (only) partially mastered. So you re-teach from there” (DW, personal communication, January 26, 2012).

Fifth-grade teacher SO also felt that the UbD template and approach to lesson design held value, though she expressed concern about timing, stating, “[I] would have much more preferred to do it earlier in the year” (SO, personal communication, August 8, 2012). She felt that this would have given her more time to experiment with UbD and other parts of the project. For a future implementation of the process, she stressed the importance of a rollout in the beginning of the year, and her feedback mirrored the third- and fourth-grade teachers’ sentiments.

I would like to see their products done by Christmas because I think that they would have more drive. By the time we really got in there and were really inviting those that were lazy in December, forget it.... I think that you can definitely work with this, with speculative writing.... (SO, personal communication, August 8, 2012)

SO also noted that she would model the actions she expected of her students: If I was going to do again, I would go out with the kid, shoot the pictures, come back... when everybody has their pictures... I'd model it. If the first color was red, I would write in red and they write and that would be the only way for them to practice for me—for fifth grade at least. (SO, personal communication, August 8, 2012)

In fact, all three teachers felt that using digital photography in the classroom as a writing prompt was a method of praxis that they would adopt and continue in the future, but earlier in the year. They felt that the timing should coordinate with the narrative and fictional writing aspects of the district's language arts curriculum.

Fourth-grade teacher DP also expressed his thoughts about the importance of the project timing and pacing with the content of the curriculum. He reported a positive response from his students in their discussions about the photography and storytelling aspects of this work.

I think the end was good. We got a chance to really look at and do the photograph. I could see that they could see the excitement came when they got to see their work.... I think they were very enthusiastic about the whole entire process. I think when they got to finally do the writing they were really anxious to tell their stories.... anytime we have students interacting in the community, writing about, you know, where they are living... this is a good thing for us to look at. Because it takes... the kids out of these walls and it brings the learning outside. (DP, personal communication, September 23, 2012).

The newly adopted Language Arts curriculum in district affected how and what the teachers could do in the classroom, imposing deadlines to meet the district mandated pacing guide and testing schedule. "Time on task... I think that is probably the biggest challenge," (DP, personal communication, September 23, 2012).

I posed the same question to the fifth-grade teacher, SO, and her response was similar: "I think that if we did it early enough, and... know what to do... I can definitely run with it" (SO, personal communication, August 8, 2012).

Not meeting expectations can result in adverse consequences for both teacher and student. For the teacher, this can result in a poor job evaluation, and eventually the loss of employment. Accountability standards from high-stakes testing make having a bad day on the wrong day potentially dangerous to a teacher's career. This is an enormously stressful situation for already deeply-stressed urban teachers. The need to vertically align curricula, reflected in the district decision to adopt the Houghton Mifflin *Journeys* series—supposedly pre-aligned with the new National Common Core Standards—may add further stress. Currently, 46 states have adopted the new Core Curriculum standards (Common Core State Standards Initiative, 2015).

Given this set of circumstances, SO felt the methodology we introduced was something she could own. “I definitely think especially with the persuasive writing now—it’s going to be the new push for Common Core Standards—it’s definitely something that you know you can put in” (SO, personal communication, August 8, 2012).

As for issues with students’ vocabulary expansion, SO was trying:

...to implement that the elements and principles of design and getting them used to the language of art and using it... words like *perspective*, [which] is used in drawing and photography, you know, might have a different meaning according to its use in writing or you know, the idea of depths of field, or composition, those kinds of words.” (SO, personal communication, August 8, 2012).

The Frayer model was introduced to help reduce the potential for student misunderstandings and support student academic language acquisition. Thus, SO might very well use the Frayer model again, as well, she said. “It’s very big deal, it has to be

taught... now with the new Common Core standards, everybody is talking about accountability in vocabulary” (SO, personal communication, August 8, 2012).

Research question three. Research question three seeks to answer whether the combination of the researcher’s suggested pedagogical methods (UbD framework, integration of new media, VTS, and WU/Painted Essay) improve students’ writing skills. Again, interviews indicated that pressures of accountability weighed heavy on these teachers. Due to mandated curricular pacing, testing, and the implications for punitive evaluations, the teachers experienced high levels of stress in their classrooms, which adversely affected both project training and implementation. As a result, the projects were rushed to completion at the end of the school year, and this may have affected classroom averages, which were less than optimal in some cases. However, my data still indicated that all teachers felt the methods were valid, and their potential for increasing student capacity for writing was overall encouraging.

SO remarked:

...it is very hard, especially in elementary, because everything is testing, testing. Maybe we have to finish before testing.... So I think that we struggled greatly with having it to finish it after testing... it was such a rush in the end... I think it can be successful. I definitely think we just needed to finish it earlier” (SO, personal communication, August 8, 2012).

Fourth-grade teacher DP had a positive experience with the project and felt that it did add valuable experience to the students’ learning process but did not think that the suggested methods of teaching were the sole reason students demonstrated improvement.

DP stated that he:

...definitely saw this as tool to reinforce what we were already learning, and that's just as important...we are working on skills of supporting details and adding details to your writing or identifying the main idea of the paragraph and the topic sentence. (DP, personal communication, September 23, 2012)

However, he agreed the project also offered another potential mode or passageway of learning.

Suggested future revisions from classroom teachers' point of view. The major complaint from all the teachers was that there was a six-week lull in the project. This occurred while we awaited administrative approval of parental permission contracts for camera use. During that down time, the students lost momentum, particularly because of the stressful demands for their performance on the NJ ASK. The fourth-grade and fifth-grade teachers agreed—beginning this project earlier in the year would have optimized the students' results, as the content being taught then would have been best matched with the researcher's suggested methods for instruction. "It was a lull," fourth-grade teacher DP commented.

The kids kind of lost it a bit... when you start off earlier, when you start getting into... rough drafts, and you can really get to see them move through the process a lot more... I would say earlier to that. (DP, personal communication, September 23, 2012)

The third-grade teacher, DW, agreed that starting in the beginning of the school year was optimal. She also felt that the suggested methods for teaching were sound, and was already implementing several of these methods into her classroom. She felt our project had made a powerful impact on the students' learning:

When you take the picture, they see the smile on it. They see their teeth grinning and their eyes shut or their eyes wide open.... Their arm and foot is up in the air, or you know, their hands are up in the air, one hand goes up, the other one goes down. And I don't want them to say, 'it was fun' because you know, fun is not detail! And trying to drive it out of them, the picture, you know, really brings out their writing—how can I say it? It's more... their words are more visual you can imagine. (DW, personal communication, June 28, 2012)

VTS. Using the Wolfsonian Museum's research tools, which were based on Housen's (2000-2001) VTS methods for assessing students' aesthetic levels of understanding, I sought to find a connection between the style and quality of writing produced when students critiqued a master artwork vs. their critiquing a writing sample inspired from student-created images. I hoped that the data would show some level of transfer from the students' critiques to their writing about their own photographs. However, after reviewing the student data, I was unable to make this connection because the student writing products were vastly different.

Although the data from the pre- and post-testing provided much useful information, the students' writing style when answering the VTS questions "What do you see in this picture?"; "What more do you see?"; and "How do you know?" produced a wholly different genre of writing, compared with the creative stories that the students wrote based on their own pictures. In fact, many of the students, particularly in the third grade, created a fictitious story from the picture in the post-test, and many of the students did not refer to the picture using any of the language of visual arts at all. They created character names, a situational conflict, and a resolution, which is a typical structure of a

narrative story. Thus, the criteria used to assess the individual project was different from the assessment criteria used in the Artful Citizen/VTS rubric.

Misunderstandings. The difference between the assessment criteria that was applied to the individual projects and that presented in the Artful Citizen/VTS rubric arose partly because of the way the classroom teachers interpreted the individual writing assignment when they carried out these teaching methods independently in their respective classrooms.

In addition, my own assumptions created a misunderstanding for me. In expecting the students to produce stories about their images, I held the preconceived idea that they would create a style of work resembling memoirs. Instead, many of the students produced work based in fantasy, and unrelated to what I had envisioned. This was due to my own biases as a seasoned artist. I expected the students to think like me, which was unrealistic. In my own notes, I wrote:

I realized today that the kind of writing that the kids produced is definitely more storytelling, which is what I told them to do, but I thought I would have seen more narratives about what they were taking pictures of, instead of completely fictional stories. Now what I have is a range of work that I didn't anticipate the kids would write. I really have a gamut of genres that I'm not sure even work with the Painted Essay, since that was designed for expository writing. When I started this thing, I thought that the kids would write more narratives based on the story of a community, or an experience they had, and I do have some of that, but I also have these wild stories that

the kids made up and I'm not sure if the Painted Essay is really appropriate for. (S. Sullivan Rubin, personal communication, July 2012)

Due to my own misunderstandings, I felt I might have poorly communicated my expectations to the teachers. However, from the data, that was not evident. What the data revealed was that teachers took this material and integrated it as best they could within the parameters of their curricular commitments and expectations.

The third-grade teacher, DW, had the largest number of students who wrote a fictional story about the post-test image. Owing to this, I specifically asked DW in our final interview if I had clearly communicated what we needed to accomplish, and she affirmed that I had. DW also spoke positively regarding her students' feedback about the project.

They enjoyed doing it, the whole process. They were excited. They were like, I didn't get my camera yet, get me my camera, I'm still working on it. They were taking pride in their work, and they thought about what they liked taking pictures of, especially like SS3; she knew she wanted to grow something. (DW, personal communication, June 28, 2012)

In further efforts to ascertain the appropriateness of my concerns about applying the Painted Essay approach to forms of writing for which it was not originally intended, I continued to reach out for the feedback from the teachers. Their responses were positive and supportive of this method, citing its use in multiple genres and subjects as well. In conversations with the fourth-grade teacher, I wanted to learn whether he saw any differences between the writing produced when the students had initially worked together photographing and writing as a team and the final writing products they completed

individually. DP told me that he was “not sure” about this. However, he found the process of sequencing and visual organization important. DP remembered that at the beginning of this part of the project, things weren’t in order, and some of his students became frustrated:

...because they wanted to tell a story. They’re sitting there trying to jigsaw puzzle it, and they were trying to recollect again... from the time and development.... I think they did a good job and you know came up with finished product [in which] they talk about their lives. (DP, personal communication, September 23, 2012)

DP felt the Painted Essay was “a little bit more towards the expository,” and that because of the structure, it could be adapted for use in both narrative and expository writing. With a little creative tweaking, he felt that the Painted Essay could work with narrative writing. Moreover, he was interested in continuing to utilize art integration in his work. “It was,” he said, “a definite way it could work” to improve student writing (DP, personal communication, September 23, 2012).

The fifth-grade teacher, SO, responded similarly. “I think that you can definitely work with this with speculative writing, instead of trying to make it a non-fiction piece. Have that picture start a story” (SO, personal communication, August 8, 2012).

Research question two. Research question two asks how much technical knowledge teachers must have to effectively utilize and work creatively with new media technology, and what supports are needed to successfully implement the use of new media technology in the classroom. In the semi-structured interviews, I asked each teacher to describe their experience levels with technology, photography, and arts integration.

The third-grade teacher, DW, described numerous applications in which she employed digital photography, videotaping, and other more traditional forms of arts integration that allowed the children to be physically active in the classroom together in a cross-curricular approach. She described how she had the students choose an activity they wanted to do in the picture. “Some of them did flips, some were dancing, some were throwing the ball, or hula-hooping.... They had to create a story around that picture and they had to give me a snapshot” (DW, personal communication, June 28, 2012). This kind of activity, designed to allow the snapshots to then be sequenced into a narrative pictorial story, was directly inspired by and based on the work she had done with this project earlier, but incorporated her own sense of what would work for her children in her classroom. When asked if she believed that this research had influenced that in her teaching, DW replied, “Yes, very much so,” and affirmed that she wished that influence to continue (DW, personal communication, June 28, 2012).

DW recognized that the children’s joy in doing and in creating was integral to the success of the project, but the students’ enjoyment of the project would not be enough without their learning. She appreciated that this project allowed for both joy and meaningful learning, and that each reinforced the other. “Yes, they remember what they [learned and] did. You know, they can see their [own] movement” (DW, personal communication, June 28, 2012). DW appreciated that taking a picture to capture a moment in time was helpful when her students became frenetic, as it helped them to accurately reflect on and capture more precisely what they had been doing while they were active.

Expanding on the theme of creating narratives from drawings and still photographs, DW saw many ongoing opportunities for similar projects using video cameras and writing. In a personal communication, she explained that she was already beginning to integrate video and science writing in her classroom, explaining that they used video to record their own science projects all the time. DW was also using video to record her own teaching, reflect on and evaluate her own performance and that of her students, and to show others what they were all accomplishing. “Oh, yeah, I love... I use video. I use the Sony camera... I usually take pictures of the children doing their activities in the classroom as proof to what goes on in here,” she said (DW, personal communication, June 28, 2012). Beyond providing evidence of class efficacy and its use as a tool for self-evaluation (neither of which was required by the district), DW also found that use of the camera to post still pictures of class activity helped her students to feel happy and engaged. They liked looking at themselves. She explained, “I like to put the pictures on the walls; it’s what they want.” Posting these pictures on the bulletin board provided another advantage, as well. Referring to a previous class project in which she had used video and photos, she said, “They have to develop their stories with their pictures [and when that’s done], that’s a great [classroom] bulletin board” (DW, personal communication, June 28, 2012).

Reflecting on this, we can see that given the supports in place for this project, and her own creative imagination and professional capacities, third-grade teacher DW proved extremely technologically adept. She incorporated interactive technology on the classroom smartboard and used new media for various projects at different times in the year. She used digital photography to create a bulletin board of displaying all her

students' faces, writing samples, and videotaped science projects. She integrated whenever possible. Unfortunately, she felt restricted by the limited resources at the FIS and the lack of support from the school technical support officer assigned to her building.

Fourth-grade teacher DP had been a hobbyist photographer during his time as a college undergraduate. Like DW, he was adept at using educational technology resources when available, and integrated technology whenever possible. However, he also felt the school and district did not provide enough support, especially as he tried to learn more about and better use digital resources. He explained that while he was “actually into photography,” he would “probably need, you know, a partner, or... someone a little more savvy in terms of the technology. What cords go where...” (DP, personal communication, September 23, 2012).

For DP, this project's real value lay outside the technical skills he and his students were acquiring. “It was a good assignment,” he told me. “I think anytime we have students interacting in the community... writing about, you know, where they are living... I think this is a good thing for us to look at.” He felt it was important to “...get the kids out of these walls. It brings the learning outside. I think that's really good thing.” DP also suggested some minor alterations to the camera distribution process, as he observed, “...that was a little bit hard in terms of collecting the cameras” (DP, personal communication, September 23, 2012).

The fifth-grade teacher, SO, described herself as having developed technological competence out of need, because of the lack of technological supports available in the school.

I'm pretty [good]... with technology. I don't go to anybody else. I do it all myself. So, I guess that's kind of a plus. Because, you know, we didn't have very much support... [for] lots of things that I did. I did on my own self. (SO, personal communication, August 8, 2012)

SO was particularly interested in highlighting this project's need for gaining consensus among other staff members and administrators. She felt this was necessary to allow procedural planning for putting new media in place, and at multiple grade levels. SO said, "I think if you saw the evidence that it worked, yes, yeah, definitely [the principal would budget] for it" (SO, personal communication, August 8, 2012).

SO also felt that a preparatory videotape done by the project instructors might help orient the teachers to work with the materials and help the classes to run more smoothly.

If I had done it the year prior, I think, it would have flowed a little bit smoother, because I would have known what is there. I think it would be a great idea that if this was something you were going to implement, you should walk it through. Like, videotape everything... maybe not even with the class, just with you—almost like a YouTube video. Because everything is visual. And I think that if I had seen what it was supposed to actually have been, it would have flowed a little bit better. It would have given me an idea. (SO, personal communication, August 8, 2012)

Questioning the validity of research question two. Summarizing the above teacher reflections and attempting to answer Research Question Two reveals that the question is not valid within this research. Although this research attempted to answer

Question Two, the researcher asked the wrong question. A better question would have considered the simplistic mechanical design of the point and shoot still and video cameras on the marketplace, as they are marketed to a general consumer market for their ease of operation. It does not take great technical savvy to take a photograph with one of these cameras.

As I studied the data, I realized that I might have been blinded by my own short-sightedness. As an active professional photographer, I never use a camera whose settings I cannot control. However, what expertise does it really take to operate a point and shoot camera? Essentially, one must be able to hold the camera steady and must not be visually impaired; beyond that, little else is required. So, what is important for teachers to know and what should they be able to do in order to use new media technology seamlessly? They must have necessary technological tools readily available to help them reach optimal student achievement results. However, for teachers to obtain the time and tools they need to do these things, they also need the support of the school's leadership team, and that is where things can become murky.

All three teachers who participated in this research are knowledgeable and proficient in their use of new media and educational technology. Their proficiencies include digital cameras, video cameras, smartboards, internet websites, 2.0 technology, and photo editing software. They can operate computers and other word processing software on a daily basis for individual and classroom work; all these skills are considered basic proficiencies that teachers should know and be able to use in today's classrooms. Thus, teachers and students must be provided with the appropriate hardware

and software to accommodate teaching in a 21st-century, 2.0 classroom. Funding and professional development must be available to the teaching staff on a continuous basis.

Conclusion of Cycle Three

As I completed my cycles of research, it was clear to me what a rich and fascinating experience this research had been. The teacher interviews revealed that each of the teachers had internalized the process and objectives of this research. Certainly, there was plenty of room for improvement, but knowing that the teachers found the work worthwhile and had begun to employ parts of the work in their daily pedagogy was very encouraging.

As a participant researcher, I had experienced exhilaration in moments of discovery and frustration at circumstances such as my own illness, which was out of my control and impacted my time to work with the teachers. Other instances of frustration came from not having access to standardized and district level data in a timely manner; the fact that many of the third-graders never had the chance to take a camera home for a week as the fourth- and fifth-graders had, which was deeply unhelpful to the progress of the research and the success of the participants; and subsequently realizing that despite great difficulty, much might have been accomplished. Nevertheless, I looked forward to the process of review, analysis, and discovery, which I anticipated would bring this project to a successful conclusion.

Chapter 7

Summary, Conclusion, and Implications

This research was a study of the impact of using a collaborative new media arts integrative model in an urban elementary school (grades three through five) to improve student achievement in writing. The study began with identifying the federal and state laws and policies that continue to drive educational funding allocations, curriculum and assessment, technology, and professional development, thus creating an impetus and purpose for this study. Through investigation, I researched the theoretical base that informs policy, critical theory, curricular methodologies, the effects on urban school districts, teacher qualifications, professional development, and student performance. The literature review allowed me to gather a thorough understanding of the ideas, theories, and significant literature published on my topic. It informed the formulation of the methodology that my action research study would follow.

Wiggins & McTighe (2004) created Understanding by Design (UbD), a framework for curricular development and lesson planning units, which not only develops knowledge and skills, but understanding and transfer. Using “backwards design,” units are constructed with the end in mind. UbD was used as an overarching framework within the methodology of this research; it was introduced and later embraced by the teachers who participated in this work. As an approach to teaching student writing, Writing for Understanding (WU) (Hawkins et al., 2008) and the Painted Essay (Leddy, 1999) were employed as literacy strategies for aiding structure in writing.

Also supporting this research is the work of Schaefer-Simmern (1948), who suggested that an artmaker’s artistic vision could become visual work only when

resulting from the coupling of intellectual inquiry with visual thinking (Gradle, 2009). He denotes that “artistic forms develop with experience, reflection and artmaking—visual ideas become clarified and transformed into whole structures, called gestalts” (Gradle 2009, p. 6). Schaefer-Simmern’s work describes a deeply reflective learning process that transforms the learner.

The NAEA studied some of the background research for the Visual Thinking Strategies (VTS) program. Using the work of Abigail Housen, Yenawine and MOMA observed and identified the stages of visual literacy through aesthetics. Housen developed a VTS framework to describe five aesthetic stages that define viewer understanding of art to make curricular, pedagogical decisions, and to monitor and adjust materials to help students reach understanding of the image.

To teach socio-political, economic, and cultural themes, Ewald, Hyde, and Lord (2012) used the photo essay as a performance task. Students following the photo essay process gain understanding by learning to read an image and then writing about it. In this study, students photographed their own images and then planned—through storyboarding—the structure of their photo essays; the overall process served to inform, inspire, and frame their own writing.

Action research was used to collect qualitative data on teachers’ approaches to this interdisciplinary model in their academic classrooms, and in the art classroom. The research approach involved a qualitative methodology informed by narrative inquiry and coupled with the action research data collection process. Cycles of action research provided a scaffolding process for all participants in the study, as each action research cycle built on the previous one. Data was collected through video, audio, observation,

note-taking, and artifact collection, and was later analyzed and coded for the themes that evolved from the analysis.

A pilot study took place for one week during summer 2010, with two non-tenured novice teachers who were not regular full-time employees within the district. The pilot was used to test the organization of content, instructional, and testing materials with both teachers and students, and to introduce the concept of the photo essay with professional photographers.

Cycle One included training third-, fourth-, and fifth-grade teachers. However, the fifth-grade teacher would receive only half the planned training because of a change in schedule due to the district adoption of a new Language Arts curriculum. Training was provided on digital photography, UbD lesson planning, the Painted Essay, the Frayer Model, and the photo essay. I observed and videotaped the teachers during classroom lessons implementing the same.

During Cycle One, students were given two pre-tests in writing, and one photo pre-test. All the writing pre-tests made use of the Artful Citizen's VTS tool to evaluate the students' prior knowledge of critique and levels of aesthetic development. The students were instructed on digital camera mechanics, composition basics, and the concept of working within a themed topic prior to the photo pre-test. To prepare for the individual projects, a contract was created to stress the safekeeping of the cameras. Distribution of the contract letter required administrative approval and took seven weeks to obtain, causing delays in implementing Cycle Two.

Cycle Two's focus was to develop the students' individual projects. The students were required to complete a teacher-created packet about the photo essay. This packet

included a questionnaire and brainstorming technique designed to assist them in narrowing their topics of interest. As the students began to photograph their images, they were required to keep logs of their work by completing self-evaluation sheets. They organized and sequenced the work in preparation for the writing component of the project.

In Cycle Three, the students worked with the materials they created in Cycle Two, completing their final visual and written narratives with their classroom teachers. The classroom teachers were also asked to distribute the post-test to the students after they completed the final assignment. In June 2012, the researcher and the classroom teachers analyzed student writing products, photography, and pre- and post-tests according to individual rubric (NJ ASK, teacher-made, Curva et al., 2005) criteria for continuity from image (composition and technique) to text (sequence, grammar, structure, voice, and flow). To understand the progression of student thought, we cross-referenced the students' responses with the teacher-made packet for the photo essay to see if the students had outlined the ideas and thought processes of their chosen themes in a thoughtful sequence prior to their photographing the chosen themes.

To demonstrate how this worked within this research, I chose three students whose work I considered exemplary. Each student's work was analyzed for specific qualities, and I discussed how those qualities were met and measured within each rubric, and the students' scores on the pre- and post-tests. I then analyzed the data collected from the overall class scores on each of the pre- and post-tests.

There were two significant findings from the pre- and post-tests:

1. When the students were able to choose their own images, their scores were higher. Further testing would be required to identify the reason for this; however, I believe that students would generally choose to discuss an image for which they had sufficient schema in the first place, and that if they liked the image they would be more likely to stay engaged when writing about it.
2. Both third- and fifth-grade scores increased from pre- to post-testing. However, the fourth-grade scores were inverted. Upon investigation, I found that there was a higher level of SPED students in that class vs. the other two. Housen (1999) noted a similar experience in her Byron research study.

Summarizing the outcomes from the final teacher interviews, the following points were noted:

1. All the teachers agreed that if we were to do this again, we would need to begin the project in the beginning of the school year, when narrative writing is typically taught. We noted that by the time we began the individual projects and wrote the final essays late in the school year, the students had disengaged.
2. All the teachers agreed that utilizing photography/art integration in the classroom was a pedagogical approach that they would continue to practice.
3. All the teachers agreed that they would continue to incorporate the Painted Essay when teaching narrative and expository writing.

Using an action research model with a constructivist methodology, we sought to collect data to answer three research questions. It is evident from the collected data that the suggested methods in this study had a positive impact on the structure and content of

the students' writing. The analysis section sought to answer the research questions using both qualitative and quantitative analysis.

Two of the three research questions examined the impact that a collaborative teaching model mixing new media arts integration with specific pedagogical methods could make on improving the writing of students in grades three, four, and five. The other question examined how much technical knowledge would be necessary for a teacher to integrate new art media in the classroom.

Research Questions Addressed

To answer the first question (“What impact does the training offered by art specialists in a collaborative arts model have on academic teachers’ actual implementation of the same in their classroom?”), qualitative data from videotaped classroom observations and interviews was collected and analyzed. The observations revealed that the classroom teachers had used the Painted Essay method within their classrooms, integrating it with the school district’s mandated writing curriculum to the best of their ability. All the teachers were committed to continuing to use the Painted Essay as a part of teaching narrative and expository writing beyond this research, as they felt it was valuable.

Also revealed in the teacher interviews was that they found the photo essay to be a sound approach to teaching students a method of organizing their thoughts prior to writing. The use of picture prompts for writing stories is not a new approach, but these teachers had not previously introduced sequential student-created images as a visual story to prompt students’ writing. With this type of engagement, the students’ visual/written connection (the intertextuality of content) strengthens and increases their critical thinking

skills. Through the processes of brainstorming, planning, storyboarding, photographing, editing, sequencing, enumerating, outlining, drafting, writing, and rewriting, students develop their voices and express themselves. It is through this process that students critically engage with their environment in an authentic experience and create visual/written products that reflect their personal vision.

The second question the research attempted to answer was “How much technical knowledge does a teacher need to possess in order to automatically ‘think’ with new media technology? What supports are needed in order to successfully implement the same in the classroom?” The data revealed that this was not a worthwhile question and thus the research was inconclusive in this area. This was largely because the teachers who participated in the study were equally savvy in using all modern educational technology and media available to them, and did so in their daily classroom practice. However, the data also revealed that when technological equipment shortages and failures occurred, a lack of support at the school level resulted in untimely repairs and resolutions. More hardware and other types of equipment were needed to meet student demand. Many of the available notebook computers were old and broken, so students needed to share them, which delayed their individual progress. Teachers felt less supported here and wanted to see more accountability in this area from school administration.

The third and final research question asked, “Does the combination of the researcher’s suggested pedagogical methods (UbD framework, integration of new media, VTS, and WU/Painted Essay) improve students’ writing skills?” To answer this question, both qualitative and quantitative data was collected and analyzed from participant interviews, videotaped classroom observations, pre- and post-testing, and student

artifacts. As illustrated in the results for the first research question, using the Painted Essay approach to the structure of essay writing helped the students at all grade levels to write more successfully, and could help to drive more success if modified to suit creative and narrative writing modes in addition to expository writing modes. Although there were points at which teachers allowed students to use colors other than the recommended colors to highlight their paragraphs, student and teacher interviews showed that the students still benefited from the process, regardless of the actual colors used.

The integration of new media technology and art in the regular classroom setting also positively affected the students' learning because it supported many of the same learning objectives in both the art and regular classrooms. With the push for 21st-century learning in the New Jersey Core Curriculum Content Standards for all subjects, integrating digital photography into the writing curriculum and the art curriculum met this goal. Moreover, the use of digital photography to create a photo essay proved to be an effective multi-sensory pathway to increasing student use of intertextual understanding and creativity. It allowed the students to critically think about the connections between the images they created, and how these connected images could prompt their writing. Hence, from the first topical brainstorming exercises before the students took any pictures to their organizing their images in a purposeful sequence prior to story development and writing, interviews revealed that this process benefited students in a twofold manner. First, it provided a catalyst for them to demonstrate their duality of thought, showing intertextuality as a parallel skill that could be expressed through both visual and written media. Second, the photo essay became a scaffold for student learning in narrative writing. This was apparent in the teacher interviews, in which the teachers

expressed that they felt the photo essay supported student writing in the areas of structure and sequence as a means to achieve clarity and voice when writing. It was not clear, however, whether using the photo essay made a direct impact on improving the quality of student writing. Nevertheless, the teacher interviews revealed that using the photo essay approach for teaching writing provided a way to keep the students engaged. This kind of engagement is imperative to overall student motivation to learn and to continue improving skills in writing (Wiggins & McTighe, 2004).

The data from the teacher interviews on the UbD framework also shows that although the teachers all found value in the structure of creating learning units this way, they were contractually restricted to adhering to the district-mandated lesson planning format. Thus, in this case, proving that the UbD approach worked as a viable method for teaching writing was inconclusive. Nevertheless, beyond the scope of this study, a plethora of existing research demonstrates the benefits of using this framework as a means of teaching students to think critically through effectively aligned authentic learning and project-based assessments.

My data further indicates that the use of pre- and post-testing with the VTS approach did not lead to remarkable results in and of themselves. However, after discovering initially skewed scores in the testing model, we considered the inclusion of our special education population as a variable and corrected for this, resulting in our positive results becoming more marked. Housen (2001-2002), in her Byron study, noted the impact of unexpected scores due to a larger population of SPED students vs. gifted students.

Similarly, the researchers in the Wolfsonian study considered the ELL community and the scaffolding needs of third-grade writers, but their research does not indicate that the teachers who proctored its tests took into consideration the IEPs and their direction for the specific learning needs of students with language-based learning disabilities, where writing an essay to critique an image might present difficulty. Such tests marginalize students in this population, as they do not test the children's strengths or appropriately level the playing field. IEPs must be followed, and the methods of recommended modifications or accommodations used in testing should be indicated and described in any assessment and research. This type of information is particularly important as it could compromise the validity of the scores in such research.

My research realized this implication during analysis of the fourth-grade data, which showed a steady decline in the scores between the pre- and post-testing, with and without using the same image in the VTS critique. It was determined when comparing these scores to those of the third and fifth grades that the outstanding variable between the classes was the fourth grade's larger population (than the two other grades) of SPED students or students receiving basic skill interventions. Moreover, when using the VTS line of questioning as a pre- and post-testing procedure, the participant researcher followed the directions verbatim as described from the testing tool located in the Appendix section of the Artful Citizen/Wolfsonian study. Following these procedural directions, no accommodations were made for the SPED population, and the entire class was tested in the same manner.

Each student was provided with the same amount of testing time, the same seating placement, and the same written format, simply because those were the directions for the

testing proctor on the testing materials used from the Artful Citizen/Wolfsonian study. Based on this data, the details of the study, its methodology, research basis, and outcome, it is reasonable to view this as a testing bias within the Artful Citizen/Wolfsonian study, and more broadly in Housen's VTS program statistical research outcomes as well. Thus, it is recommended for future research using VTS written testing methods that the researcher should clearly state whether 504s or IEPs for students with disabilities were followed during the testing; this cannot be an assumption. As previously stated, Housen (2001-2002) does note in her Byron study that she also observed a similar situation (skewed scores in classes with high populations of SPED students) in her testing as well. However, here too she does not clearly express whether 504s or IEPs were followed during testing.

Leadership Reflection

When I began this work, I was motivated to study this subject because as an educator, I understand the importance of communicating one's thoughts and ideas in a clear, concise, and thoughtful way. I also know from personal and professional experience how difficult a task that can be. Writing is hard work, creating art is hard work, and at times, motivating others to take part in hard work can be hard work itself. Nevertheless, I did not let that hinder my taking on this project. I chose to do this because I wanted to make a positive difference in the lives of the students I taught, and contribute my knowledge and skills—specifically those from my years of study and working with Dr. Grant Wiggins (of Authentic Education) and my work as an art teacher and a professional photographer—to my colleagues at the New Urban School District.

Fullan (2001) describes this as acting with *moral purpose*. He states, "...moral purpose means acting with the intention of making a positive difference in the lives of employees, customers, and society as a whole" (p. 3). However, Fullan (2001) also warns us that having "...moral purpose without an understanding of the change process will lead to moral martyrdom" (p. 5). Certainly, I was not looking to become a literal martyr for my cause, but I was genuinely hoping to effect change in order to help my students write better, and I knew that I could not do that alone.

However, many of the suggested methodologies offered in this work were new to the faculty members with whom I worked in this research. Moreover, for this research to be successful, I needed to employ the knowledge and skills of my colleagues, who knew their students well as writers. These were the teachers who taught them writing daily. They knew their students' strengths, weaknesses, personalities, preferences, families, and educational histories. They were close to these students not only because they taught the same group of students as part of their daily working agenda; but because they too were driven by a moral purpose as the caring educators they all were. If they had not been, these teachers would not have agreed to be a part of this research in the first place. I had to employ their expertise to put this research in motion and fully engage the students in the work.

The classroom teacher's knowledge is both explicit and tacit. I knew I needed to employ both kinds of knowledge to be able to change the way we thought about how we were to teach our students. Fullan (2001) cites Nonaka and Takeuchi (1983, p. 8) and states:

...the distinction between explicit knowledge (words and numbers that can be communicated in the form of data and information) and tacit knowledge (skills, beliefs, and understanding that are below the level of awareness) ... knowledge expressed in words and numbers represents only the tip of the iceberg. They view knowledge as being primarily tacit, something not easily visible, and expressible tacit knowledge is highly personal and hard to formalize, making it difficult to communicate or share with others. Subjective insights, intuitions and hunches fall into this category of knowledge. Furthermore, tacit knowledge is deeply rooted in an individual's action and experience, as well as in the ideals, values or emotions that he or she embraces. (p. 80)

When a professional has been perfecting his or her craft for many years, professional experience gives him or her the edge of having tacit knowledge. It was this kind of knowledge that I wanted to employ and convey within this research; thus, the reasoning behind my decision to employ the help of Luciana Pampalone, Ken Pivak and Wendel White. I also knew that I needed to make sure I had worked out my procedures prior to approaching the teachers for their help on this project, particularly when I was not in a leadership position myself, but their colleague simply looking for their help. Fullan (2001) describes that leadership requires the ability to maintain and improve relationships. He notes that it is the relationship that creates a successful enterprise, and states "...moral purpose, relationships, and organizational success are closely interrelated" (p. 51). Knowing this, I set out to build relationships in the early stages of this research, and together with a team of photographers and classroom teachers, I sought

to create a combination of pedagogical methods and strategies that would improve student writing using a constructivist arts integrative model. To achieve this, I sought consensus by using a democratic approach to leadership amongst my colleagues, asking for their input on issues such as the sequencing, timing, and presentation of the materials used for this research. It was important to me and this work that their voices be heard and their input respected.

I used a pilot as a testing ground to help identify the best way that I could direct and then coach other teachers to use and present the materials to students for the best result. Since I was working with new volunteer teachers over the summer, I knew that I would need to use a more directive approach as I taught them the techniques of working with WU and digital photography. This was the most efficient approach when considering our time constraints. As the teachers practiced with students and became more comfortable with both the Painted Essay and creating a photo essay, which the students would use as a writing prompt, I was able to assume more of a coaching style. However, the teachers needed to engage in continuous coaching and daily reflecting on the teaching and learning process. I realized this was as much growth as I could expect to see within the continuum, considering the time constraints.

As mentioned previously, at the onset of this research, I worked with school administration to create a schedule that would accommodate the teachers and my responsibilities to them as a trainer. However, the schedule changed, and frequently the teachers and I had no time together other than a common lunch period, since the art period was normally scheduled as the classroom teachers' prep time. Wiggins and McTighe (2007) state, "... leaders model openness to rethinking habits and assumptions

in their conduct as well as goals and practices for running meetings” (p. 120). Since I did not have control over scheduling the team meetings, I relied on situational leadership. I used a selling approach to encourage the teachers in this study to participate in training during their lunch periods, and a telling approach during our half-hour meetings in order to deliver the information and methodologies in the fastest way I could within these time restrictions.

With the support from the library of videos from Digital 1 to 1 and Ken Pivak, Ken Pivak and I taught the teachers and students some basics in digital photography. Since the task was to provide a large amount of technical information in just two days, I had to rely on a more directive style to keep the program moving. However, when Ken demonstrated compositional techniques to the group, I knew his expertise level was top-notch, so I completely delegated this work to him. I used the same hands-off approach during the presentations by all the professional photographers who participated in the formative stages of this work. Delegating to Luciana Pampalone and Professor Wendel White was a natural decision, as I am familiar with their respective bodies of photographic work and publications. In preparing for their presentations, we exchanged several emails and held several telephone conversations about nature of the presentations, and continued discussions afterward as needed.

Since this research was arts-driven, it was also incumbent upon my leadership skills to be cognizant of the soft and transferrable skills that the data would reveal, even if what the information revealed was not what I had originally set out to prove. The data in this work supported much of the literature considered in this research. Critical thinking through new media arts as evidenced in image and word was the driving conception of

this research. Eisner (2002) supports the thinking that the arts teach us much about every historical period through literature, visual arts, music, dance, and drama. One must not only learn to appreciate the arts, but must be given opportunities to actively engage in creative processes and products.

Another perspective from which I can assess my leadership is through collecting and interpreting data. The fourth grade's pre- and post-tests revealed inverted results, which was cause for concern and for revisiting the source for the scores. What was revealed as one possible cause for the scores was that the fourth-grade teacher did not give the post-test himself and relied on the third-grade teacher to complete it for him because he had put it off until the very last day of school, when he was busy preparing for summer break. This demonstrated a lack of care, which translated to the students, who did not put their best foot forward; and it was compounded by a disproportionate population of special education students (as compared to the third and fifth grades at FIS), or students in need of basic skills intervention.

A circumstance out of my control arose during the end of May 2012, as I was hospitalized and unable to return to work before June. This forced me to completely delegate the execution of the final post-test to the classroom teachers. It is obvious to me now that the fourth-grade teacher was not ready to handle this sole responsibility, and delegating was not the best leadership style to have used with him at the time. Nevertheless, as stated earlier, several things were beyond the scope of my control from the inception of this project. If I were to do this again, and were not incapacitated as I became, I would have tried a participating approach, and would have personally overseen the classroom teacher's implementation of the test to make sure that his charge was

carried out properly. According to Wren (1995), “Effectiveness is dependent upon the leader, the followers, and situational elements. In managing for effectiveness, a leader must be able to diagnose his own leader behavior in light of his environment” (p. 148).

My other concern regarding these same scores came from the realization that the test protocol used in this study, which was adopted from the Wolfsonian study (Curva & Associates, 2005), made no reference in the final report data that accommodations for students with special needs, as per their IEPs, were followed. This realization was significant because the assessment tool and its rubric were created to measure student aesthetic growth via Housen’s (2000-2001) stages through a written assessment. Although not the only data collection/assessment method used by Curva and Associates (2005), the written assessment potentially remains an unfair assessment of what an individual knows if his or her disability is a language-based disability that would affect his or her writing abilities. Since the final report did not definitively state that IEPs were followed and appropriate accommodations were honored for students with language-based learning disabilities, their findings would become subjective for that population. The same subjectivity lay within this study, as implied by my data, because I followed the same procedures and did not make special modifications or accommodations for students with IEPs when I gave the test; thus, my scores were skewed. This pattern was documented in Housen’s (2001-2002) Byron study as she referred to her unexpected findings with a SPED population. Schmoker (1999) also states, “Data makes the invisible visible, revealing strengths and weaknesses that are easily concealed” (p. 44).

Overall, the results and outcomes of this research demonstrate affirmative results that are supported in the literature. Transformative results were obtained from the

teachers' commitment to continue using digital photography and the color coding techniques of the Painted Essay in their classrooms, within the constraints of the pacing guide and curriculum. Confirming the transformative results of this work was the commitment of fifth-grade teacher SO to incorporate the use of the Painted Essay and digital photo essays as an approach to teaching narrative writing in the beginning of the following school year. In fall 2013, SO became the language arts coach at FIS, giving her the authority to implement this methodology at FIS, and to train other teachers to use this approach to teaching in all the language arts and writing classes throughout the school. Additionally, suggestions for further research could arise from tracking student learning outcomes resulting from this research's suggested pedagogical methodologies.

Recommendations

Validity and reliability of the study. The study's validity was ensured through member checking and peer debriefing during the cycles of action research. Through a variety of feedback from colleagues, participants, and advisors, objectivity was maintained. Bogdan and Biklen (2011) describe reliability in a study as the "consistency between the data collected, and report and the empirical world studied" (p. 274). Using this approach to check the unfolding data allows us to determine if the qualitative research is accurate and reliable. Triangulation of data from the participant interviews, collected artifacts, and videotaped observations provided the evidence needed to build the justified argument of the themes that emerged through the cycles of action research. According to Glesne (2006), Creswell (1998) describes "...verification processes, which include prolonged observation, triangulation of multiple data collection methods, sources,

and/or perspectives, and peer review and debriefing procedures—all in an effort to create a valid and reliable study” (p. 37).

Limitations of the Study

The manner in which this study was conducted resulted in certain inherent limitations. To begin with, this study was created with a sample of convenience. The sample population was limited to one school and three classrooms, because the teachers of these classes were the only teachers willing to volunteer their time to participate in this research. In addition, challenges arose concerning limited time for general professional development, and for teacher training in a full UbD program; time for training the students and teachers in a full VTS program within a professional learning community; and lack of access to sufficient equipment for all participating students and teachers because of funding issues. Greater support from the school leadership could have prevented these obstacles during this project.

Sample of convenience. Certain limitations exist within the sample population of the New Urban School District, which is primarily African-American and Caribbean-American, with few other ethnicities present, and located in a particularly economically depressed urban setting. Thus, this research occurred with a sample of convenience. No payments or other financial gratuities were made for the participants’ time, and the work was accomplished through teacher volunteerism.

Further research would ideally consider the work produced by students from varying ethnicities and demographic locales and examine how these students’ work compares with or differs from the work produced by the students in this study. What types of stories and images would an African-American, Hispanic, or Caucasian student

create in a suburban or rural setting? It would be interesting to study the evidence of socioeconomic and cultural references in the work of students from other ethnicities and demographics, as compared with the work produced by the students in this study, and to explore the curricular implications of such understandings. If one wanted to determine the validity of these methods across a state, province, or regional population, a sample size large enough to accurately reflect the statistical composition of its population would be needed. To determine the validity of these methods across a national population, a sample size large enough to accurately reflect the statistical composition of the nation in question would be needed; globally, the same would hold true.

Limited teacher collaboration time. Other limitations occurred in the form of scheduling time for teacher collaboration. Had this been a study deemed important to the district's goals and objectives, rather than taking place for the sole purpose of teacher graduate studies, there would have been more urgency for the school's administrative team to create time in the daily schedule for the art teacher become a part of the grade level team meetings. The NUSD typically designates specialist teachers' non-teaching time as coverage periods for classroom teachers while the classroom teachers attend grade level meetings or require coverage during their preparatory periods.

Funding limitations. Technology funding issues created additional limitations for this study. A lack of funding for the quality of cameras the students needed for their photos limited the type of cameras to which the students would have access, leading to limited results in many cases. The researcher purchased the cameras for this study from personal funds, but financial restraints made the purchase of digital 35mm cameras impossible. This type of camera provides the photographer the ability to control the

camera's settings to enhance images and pinpoint the mind's eye right in the camera. Moreover, a 35mm digital camera is designed for through-the-lens viewing, allowing for instantaneous feedback and better technical and artistic decision-making and results.

Working with this kind of equipment would have produced better results, since there would have been fewer issues with image loss from dead batteries. Higher-quality digital 35mm cameras tend to use lithium rechargeable batteries and are far sturdier than the plastic Polaroid point-and-shoot cameras used for the study. The higher-quality digital 35mm cameras are far more expensive, averaging \$300 or more per camera, as compared to the \$25 cameras used in this study. However, using more expensive cameras might have led to other problems, since the students did not take responsibility for safely handling the cameras and returning them in a timely manner. With costlier cameras, the issue of theft would have become a greater concern.

Limitations due to standardized testing. Another limitation to this study resulted from the accommodation it made for standardized testing and its schedules. The teachers in this study repeatedly discussed the impacts of the high demands made on them due to overemphasis on standardized testing in the curriculum. This caused their focus on work associated with this research to be a low priority throughout the project, although they all gave this research as much time and focus as they could.

In several instances, the teachers were unable to spend time reading training materials, because of the lack of time during the day for training. This resulted in the teachers being unprepared to apply new teaching methods during the next class sessions. In some cases, they asked me to do it for them because they were overextended. Moreover, it did not allow some of the originally suggested teaching methods within the

context of UbD/WU (for example, the Frayer model) to come to fruition, so they were not introduced. This includes students' use of the VTS process to assess their own imagery.

The NJ ASK testing dominated all aspects of the curriculum, assessment, staff management, and schedule of the school. This delayed the administration of the pre- and post-testing for this project until after the preparation for the NJ ASK. Preparation for the NJ ASK also led to the school principal delaying for six weeks his approval of the parent permission letter, as he too was overwhelmed by the new *Journeys* elementary schoolwide curriculum implementation that fall.

This intense focus on the standardized testing affected the students as well. In some cases, the students were taking the post-tests immediately after four hours of state-mandated high-stakes testing and were completely stressed and burnt out from the process, unable to give their all at that time. This negatively affected their test-taking abilities, and their post-test scores in VTS produced suboptimal results in those cases.

Assumptions and Subjectivity

Researcher biases. Another impediment to the success of this project lay within my unforeseen biases regarding my view of photography, and how much technical knowledge one should have to think as a photographer. Glesne (2006, p. 120) explains that subjectivity exists when one is engaged and suggests using it to shape new questions through reexamining assumptions. When I chose this topical area for research, I assumed there would have been a greater need for the teachers to train as photographers themselves to be able to teach fluently with this medium. In the end, I learned that this

was not important, since the point and shoot cameras that we used for this work required their users to have little technical knowledge.

All the teachers in this study were technically proficient with educational media, and capable of working easily with new media technology in their respective classrooms. This research's second question was weak in its conception, because it was created with bias from a professional photographer's viewpoint. My deep understanding of the medium hindered my objectivity, and the data proved that I was misguided, as I believed the teachers would need more focused instruction on the technical aspects of digital photography. The research ultimately illustrated that this was unnecessary for the classroom teachers to achieve the results needed to complete this research.

The choice pre-test. When designing the pre-test, I assumed that the students would be able to effectively and viscerally respond to any developmentally appropriate image. When I decided to let the students choose an image to which they would respond in the first pre-test, I allowed for too many variables, as reinforced by Dr. Leshnoff, and thus I changed the pre- and post-test to include a single, pre-chosen image.

Use of the Painted Essay. Another assumption I made while conducting this research was the way each teacher would interpret use of the Painted Essay when teaching writing. The Painted Essay was originally designed to be used with constructing an essay with expository writing. However, for this study, it was used as a means to structure narrative writing, because of the nature of writing from a photo essay. I wanted the students to produce stories derived from their own images. The writing style that they would use to achieve this was left to the classroom teacher's interpretation of the objective, and this was how inconsistent student products surfaced. In some instances,

students created fantasy stories, which I had not anticipated nor considered as a student writing outcome. According to how these teachers explained the writing part of the project to the students, the products reflected this unique interpretation. Some students created stories that were fictional, and others based upon their actual experiences. In either case, the data suggested that the students benefited from using the Painted Essay and that it had helped to improve their writing as well.

Implications for Future Research

This study examined the impact of a collaborative new media arts integrative model on the writing program in an urban elementary school, for grades three, four, and five. A further study to achieve significantly increased validity would need to include more grade levels within the school and multiple classes at each included grade level, in order to compare classes at similar grade levels. Moreover, it would be important to have a control group for results comparison, to provide a basis in for generalization. Another approach would be to broaden the population within the district, such as with middle and high school students in the same school or in different schools, using the same qualitative methodology, employing the photo essay as a catalyst for students to structure their narrative writing. Researchers Ewald (2011) and Van Horn (2008) have conducted similar studies with students from urban demographics at higher grade levels, such as high school and college, and have obtained positive results. Examining how this approach to learning might improve the writing of the students within the New Urban School District could prove to be helpful in improving students' academic success overall, as suggested by the results of these researchers. The results would further expand if similar research were conducted in other geographic regions to determine whether similar

success would be achieved in other settings (for example, a rural setting) with similar research controls.

Furthering this type of research in this way, including the SPED population, and directing that all IEP-prescribed student testing accommodations be met during testing could produce a significant difference in scores on a larger scale. It is possible that employing the Artful Citizen/Wolfsonian's study's ADI tool in a different setting, including all populations, and purposefully, effectively modifying testing to meet these same needs would yield further results to reiterate the importance of visual arts education for all students. Housen's (2000-2001, 2001-2002) research demonstrates the connection between visual arts education and aesthetic development, as illustrated through written visceral response to an artwork. This suggested research could further support Housen's work, increasing student scores and maintaining her intended contention that VTS is a viable connection to learning through critical thought, analysis, and their curricular implications for creating learning outcomes through understanding.

Conclusion

A final thought for the future implications of this research comes from considering educational policies currently affecting art education. We need to consider the current direction of educational policy with the recent adoption of Every Student Succeeds Act of 2015 (ESSA), which President Obama signed on December 10, 2015. The law was enacted to replace No Child Left Behind (NCLB), thus providing state and local educational agencies (LEAs) more control of assessment, standards, distribution of funding, evaluation and certification requirements of teachers and principals, and the restructuring of accountability and punitive measures for failing or focus schools. These

measures were adopted in reaction to the fierce criticism of the Common Core Standards nationally and locally; NCLB's overemphasis of high-stakes testing in both student and teacher evaluations, and as previously stated, the draconian punishments for not meeting Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) targets, which becomes a specific issue for many LEAs who are educating higher populations of SPED, ELL, and economically disadvantaged students, when compared with wealthier districts who house larger populations of Caucasian students.

ESSA has allowed LEAs greater local control in the areas of curriculum and instruction, standards, and testing, because it is assumed that at the local level, the individual needs of their students and the community at large are best understood, identified, and addressed, thus providing greater opportunity to successfully close the achievement gap.

Although the bill was supposedly proposed and legislated with the best interests of all students at heart, the federal government did use this as an opportunity to wash its hands of the commitment to ensuring a highly-qualified teacher in every classroom. As previously explained, this is because it was expected that all states would have previously complied with this commitment as it was a requirement from NCLB (Sawchuk, 2015). However, if a state did not have content standards for art education while NCLB was in place (when art was specifically defined as a core content subject), what would be the implementation motivation now for a state that did not deem the arts central to a student's education? The issue lies within ESSA's definition of a well-rounded education, and the way lawmakers interpret the same, given the broad definition and inclusion of subjects such as physical education, health, economics, and technology.

According to "A Snapshot of State Policies for Arts Education" (2014): "All but one state—Iowa—have established elementary and secondary arts education standards" (p. 4). However, a more thoughtful consideration (and in my professional opinion, one that is more reflective of how importantly the arts are truly perceived) is not only the state adoption of standards, but how many states have defined art as being a core content subject area. As of 2014, only 27 states had listed the arts as a core content subject. "Defining the arts as a 'core' or 'academic' subject in state policy [as 27 states currently do] puts the arts on equal footing with other core subjects for support and assistance" ("A Snapshot of State Policies for Arts Education," 2014, p. 3).

This data reveals many underlying assumptions about how the arts are funded and taught.

In recent years, the term STEAM (science, technology, engineering, art, math) education has become a buzzword in education, promoting the use of arts integration in the classroom in a cross-curricular manner with STEM subjects. As noted by Zubrzycki (2015):

The acronym STEM has often been broadened to include the arts in casual usage: Schools advertise STEAM programs (the A is for arts) and entire organizations exist to advocate for arts integration. Now, the connection between arts and STEM has been acknowledged in federal law: ESSA provides support to schools that integrate subjects, including the arts, into STEM... So many STEM projects include some design or arts element. It's been there all along. But wasn't recognized as something that can be addressed specifically for a grant. (pp. 15, 17)

However, from my own professional experience, this creates the potential for the arts to be viewed as an add-on subject, particularly if one does not understand what a properly arts integrative model looks like. This leaves the arts vulnerable to the perception that the arts are only there to support other academic subjects' curricular objective(s), rather than reaching objectives specific to the arts within the same lesson as well. In a properly implemented arts integration model, both subject area objectives are met, rather than just the academic content; for example, in science (Silverstein & Layne, 2010). The absence of such a model can potentially demean the importance of art education for its own sake, particularly when funding issues are considered, because the bottom line remains that assessments in the arts are recommended, but not mandated.

Even if a performance-based assessment and an art portfolio or body of artwork were agreed upon and deemed at state and local levels as a valuable measurement of what students know and can do, as expressed through art, it would be a more difficult argument to make for using art at the elementary and middle school levels, due to a lack of standardized assessments. The requirements of ESSA call for "standardized and calibrated scoring rubrics... to ensure inter-rated reliability" (Every Student Succeeds Act of 2015[c]) and would need to be addressed.

At the high school level, this is certainly easier to achieve for students taking AP/IB Studio Art courses, because the rating system used by the College Board/International Baccalaureate is considered a standardized measurement of skills as defined by ESSA. Nonetheless, there is still evidence that many minority and disabled students have less access to this type of rigorous course work than their Caucasian and

non-disabled peers (Handwerk, Tognatta, Coley, & Gitomer, 2008), which ESSA recognizes, and aims to change.

The Every Student Succeeds Act of 2015(b) states:

(v) engage and support teachers in developing and scoring assessments that are part of the innovative assessment system, including through the use of high quality professional development, standardized and calibrated scoring rubrics, and other strategies, consistent with relevant nationally recognized professional and technical standards, to ensure inter-rater reliability and comparability.

The language of the law does support teacher input in the development of high-quality assessments. Using the peer review option, as defined in ESSA, there are more options to develop more goals, objectives, and standardized and formative types of assessments aimed at helping students meet and surpass standards, whether they are Core Content or State defined. This should be viewed as an opportunity for more teachers to get involved, and design assessments at all government levels.

From an advocacy standpoint, arts education can benefit students within the intent of the law, if all stakeholders act with transparency within the letter and heart of the law, and if states and local educational agencies (LEAs) embrace ESSA's emphasis on educating the whole child.

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Appendix A

Teacher Training Materials for Teaching the Photo Essay

Procedures for Wendel White Unit

After the UbD framework was explained, the teachers were given this brief procedural format for modeling the unit in the classroom once they were ready to write.

Explain the narrative writing expectations and make comparisons to storytelling.

Explain how the photographer uses pictures to tell a story and show White's images for the prompt.

Make schema connections to the photographer's images and the community. Who are these people? What do the photos tell us about them? What is their story? How does the photographer use his photos as a visual narrative?

Discuss how vocabulary: perspective, point of view, composition, depth and setting are used both in photography and writing, and determine how they are alike and dissimilar.

Use VTS strategies to demonstrate the connection between the essay and the art.

Demonstrate with the following exercises:

- a. Begin a word and have students make a graphic organizer by passing the words and connecting new words which show how they connect and build by passing this around the room as each student contributes and builds upon the words. Do the same thing by creating a short story by starting with a nonsensical descriptive sentence and pass it to each person in the room to add

another sentence until the story is complete. Discuss the visual metaphors created in the writing and then do the same concept with a drawing that is passed around the room and completed by the group. Teacher continuously reminds students how this process builds upon itself and how words create imagery and vice versa.

- b. Demonstrate a sample application to the painted essay framework along with other Painted Essay samples (the Abernaki). Have students identify the essay parts, their coordinating color and explain why as teacher models the technique. Then students should try a sample essay from the Writing for Understanding text and color a sample work to gain practice with the technique prior to working with their own work. Have students write an essay using the WU model based upon using the images from Wendell White's *Small Towns, Black Lives* provided from the Whitesboro series.

Wendel White from *Small Towns, Black Lives*



Three Girls
Whitesboro, New Jersey, 1989

Three girls wait patiently for activities during the Whitesboro Community Reunion at the Martin Luther King, Jr., Recreation Center.



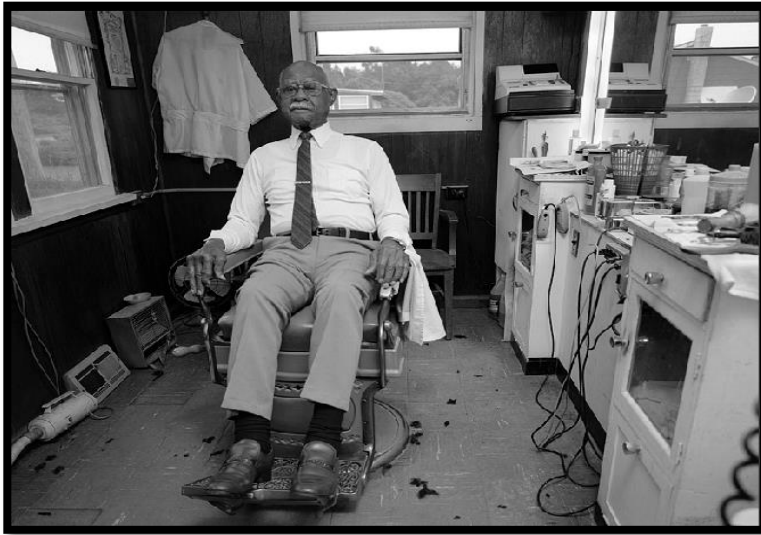
Preparing the Grill
Whitesboro, New Jersey, 2001

Two men are preparing food for the 11th Annual Whitesboro Community Reunion.



Male-Tones Gospel Singers
Whitesboro, New Jersey, 1989

Four members of the Male-Tones, at the First Baptist Church. From the left the members are Paul Reynolds, Johnnie Richardson, Tommy Wise and William Halliburton.



**Woodie Armstrong's Barbershop
Whitesboro, New Jersey, 1989**

Woodie Armstrong recalled childhood memories from North Carolina of Congressman George H. White, founder of Whitesboro. Mr. Armstrong visited Whitesboro many times before he retired in 1958, moved to Whitesboro, and opened a barbershop in his home.

Appendix B

Teacher Training Materials for UbD and WU/Painted Essay

Sharon Sullivan Rubin

Training Materials and Survey Links

Technology Survey for Administrators:

<http://www.zoomerang.com/Survey/WEB22CB9EFRE2K/>

Materials for Teacher Training:

Surveys:

a) *Teacher Training Evaluation*

<http://www.zoomerang.com/Survey/WEB22CBPSG26WQ>

b) *Teacher Attitude Survey Art/Technology Integration*

<http://www.zoomerang.com/Survey/WEB22CBQHM2M35/>

c) *Digital Photography*

Please review the following materials on the web from Digital 1 to 1 for training in digital photography

Go to: <http://www.digital1to1.com/Default.aspx?k=sharonsullivan>

Please review the following short videos (about 3-5 min. each)

The Art of Photography • Previsualizing the Image First NEW

Building Blocks of Composition • Composition - Introduction • Composition -

Framing • Composition - Rule of Thirds • Composition - Perspective •

Composition - Proportion • Composition - Depth of Field Elements of

Composition • Shadows

Using the iPhone - Camera • Camera Operation • Downloading Images to
Computer

Making Prints • What is Aspect Ratio

Know Your Media • JPEG (Differences) • Media and Memory Cards

Using the Flash • Outdoors • Indoors • What is Red Eye

Shooting Situations • Point-of-View • Foreground vs Background • Attention to
Backgrounds • Open Shade

d) Understanding by Design


UbD is a framework which allows curriculum units to be written using a
backwards design with authentic assessment. The framework seeks to align the
standards with the essential questions of the content area in order to reach student
understanding and transfer of the big ideas for learning and life.


<https://www.authenticeducationonline.org/login/index.php>

*I realize there are a lot of files here, but no need to panic, it's not as bad as it
looks. I put in supporting files as well. UbD is quite complex, but my main emphasis for
you is to listen to the videos.*


*If you can't get through all of the videos and files right now, not to be concerned
just hit the ones that have the highlight for the moment this way you'll have some
understanding when I speak with you at the grade level meetings and train you in UbD
and Writing for Understanding.*

Please review the following information:


 VIDEO: Grant on What is UbD? and Why UbD? file


 1 What is UbD? Narrated Powerpoint


 Sample Unit with written Commentary Word document

 UbD in a Nutshell

‘by Design’? What is exemplary unit design?


 VIDEO: Grant on ‘by design’ file

 3a By Design? Narrated PowerPoint file

 3b By Design? Narrated PowerPoint file


 VIDEO: Middle School Case Study - Social Studies file

 Annotated Blank Template for drafting your own units Word document

 1-page template in WORD document


 Quick Design - 1-page


 VIDEO: Grant Discusses STAGE 1 file


 4. Stage 1 Narrated PowerPoint file

 VIDEO: A Kindergarten teacher on UbD file

 Narrated PPT: on UbD and the Primary Grades

 5. What is a big idea? Grant offers some thoughts in writing.


 VIDEO: Grant on long-term goals and dealing with state standards file


 VIDEO: Grant Discusses the problem of getting transfer

 VIDEO: Grant discusses essential questions file


 6. Essential Questions Narrated PPT file

 VIDEO: The Power of Essential Questions (Classroom Case Study) 4:02 file


 Brief Essay: What is an Essential Question?

 VIDEO: Grant on ‘understanding’ file


 VIDEO: Grant discusses misunderstandings file

 7 Understandings Narrated PPT

Stage 2:


 VIDEO: Grant discusses Stage 2

 VIDEO: Grant discusses performance tasks file

 10. What Are Tasks? Narrated Powerpoint file

 VIDEO: Geometry Headquarters Project (Classroom Case Study) 8:05 file

 Unit Overview of Geometry Headquarters Project Word document

 Authentic vs typical task

Stage 2: Rubrics


 VIDEO: Grant discusses rubrics and criteria in assessment file


 Rubrics and Criteria: Narrated PowerPoint file


 VIDEO: 5th grade performance assessment file

 Unit Plan for 5th Grade Unit Word document

 Rubric for 5th grade project Word document


 VIDEO: Grant discusses rubrics and giving grades file


 A rubric for all 6 facets of understanding Word document

 A set of trait-specific rubrics to mix and match Word document


 Reflective Writing Rubric Word document


 Literary Analysis Rubric Word document


 Class participation rubric Word document


 Depth of Knowledge Rubrics

STAGE 3 Overview: The Learning Implied by Goals & Assessment


 VIDEO: Grant discusses Stage 3 file


 FAQs on Stage 3 Word document


 VIDEO: Grant discusses teaching via essential questions file

 VIDEO: Case Study - middle school history


Stage 3: Acquisition, Meaning-making, Transfer (AMT) - the 3 types of learning


 VIDEO: Grant discusses AMT (Acquisition, Meaning-making, Transfer) file

 Grant's 1-page Tips on Teaching for Transfer Word document

 The 3 goals of academic learning - A M T Word document

 Mini-lessons on literacy strategies for grades 4 - 12 Word document

 Resources on designing learning for understanding PDF document


 VIDEO: Students making meaning - 9th-grade Socratic Seminar file

 VIDEO: Socratic Seminar Comments file

 Socratic Seminar - A Guide with Tools and Resources

Stage 3: Thinking about Differentiation and Sequence - the 'T' and the 'O' in

WHERE TO

 VIDEO: Grant discusses adjusting a unit file

 VIDEO: Grant discusses sequencing in a unit file

Please also go to The Vermont Writing Collaborative: Writing for Understanding Website and review it. The Painted Essay and the lesson formatting templates are attached here.

Go to: <http://www.vermontwritingcollaborative.org/>

e) *What Is The “Painted Essay™”?*

When we write, we are both constructing and communicating meaning about some body of knowledge or set of ideas. To be effective, a piece of writing must be a connected, coherent chunk of thought. When students are learning to write, there are several aspects of the process that may present difficulty.

The first is knowledge. Students may be trying to write about something they really do not know very well. For example, a child who is trying to write an informational piece (a report) about Susan B. Anthony is not going to produce a successful piece of writing if her knowledge of Susan B. Anthony is sketchy or inaccurate.

Besides knowledge, students need a focus—a perspective through which to think about the information. An effective report does not simply give back information about Susan B. Anthony; rather, it synthesizes the information around a controlling idea, or focus. (“Susan B. Anthony worked for the vote for women” is a focus, while “Everything I know about Susan B. Anthony” is not.)

The second aspect of writing that may cause trouble for student writers is language. Even if they “know” what they are writing about (for example, fixing a broken bike chain), they may never have orally articulated that knowledge in

words, or at least not with any fluency of language. With a lack of oral language about a subject, writing about the subject will be difficult.

The third aspect of writing that may challenge student writers is structure. Typically, young students have heard many stories, so they carry a “story structure model” in their heads. They have not typically, however, heard or read lots of articles or other chunks of informational writing. They do not carry “expository writing models” in their heads. When they come to write a report, they are frequently at a loss as to how to begin or how to build their writing.

This is where the Painted Essay comes in.

The Painted Essay was developed by Diana Leddy, a Vermont elementary teacher. It was based on the idea that students are visual learners, and need a very clear visual model of what informational writing actually looks like as a whole, complete chunk. The Painted Essay is a way of “seeing things whole”, as Stuart Little might put it. It uses a clear, patterned structure tied to certain colors so that students are able to use and internalize a template for thinking—and therefore, writing.

The Painted Essay is NOT meant to suggest that all expository/informational writing fits neatly into four paragraphs, or even that all informational writing should be built in a “statement/proof” structure. What the Painted Essay is, however, is a very flexible, easy-to-modify organizational structure that helps students to both think and write clearly.

The introduction is colored red because it needs to get the reader’s attention.

Next is the focus (controlling idea). It's green for "Go this way!"

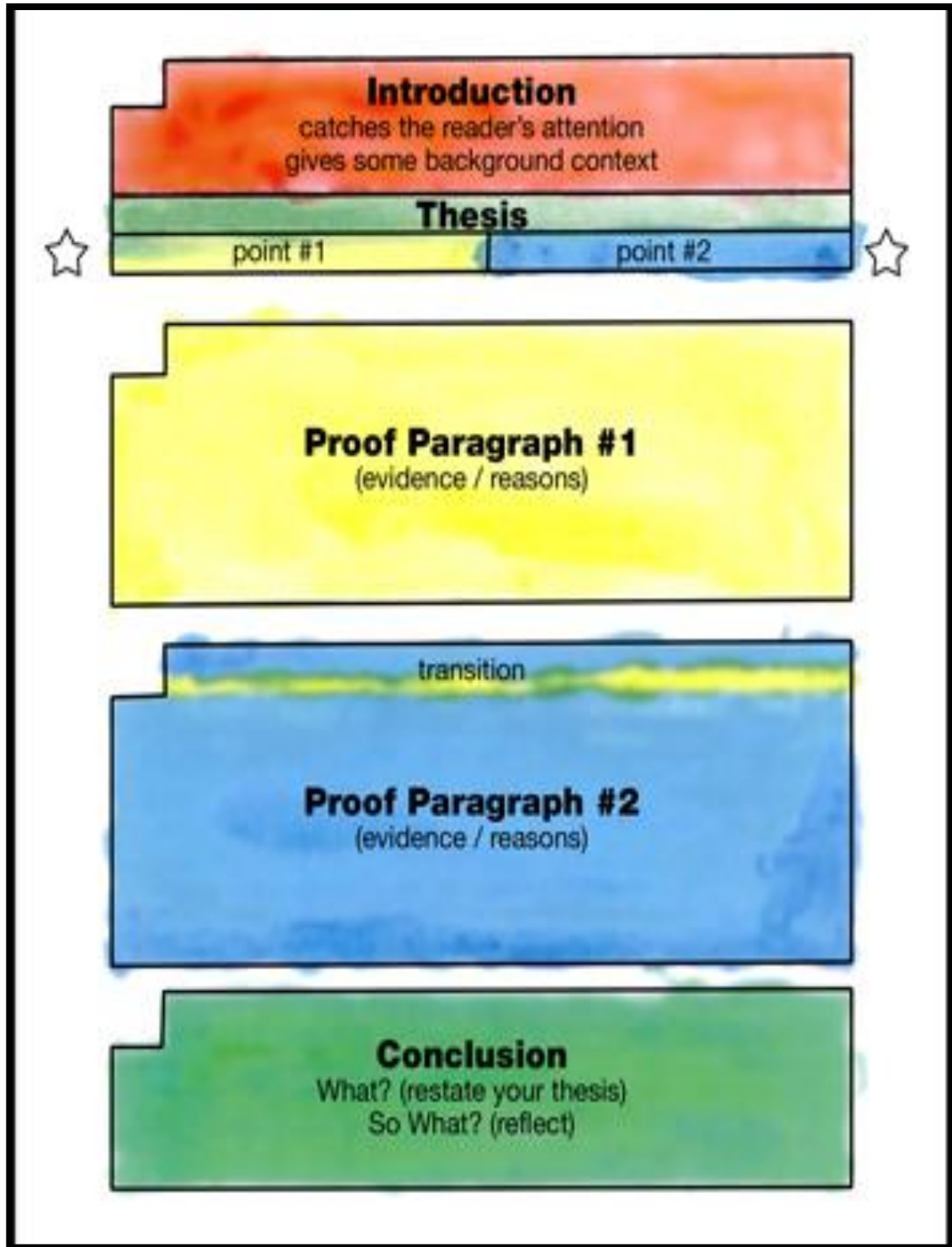
Sometimes, the green is omitted for primary children. Point 1 is the "yellow" part of the (green) focus. Point 2 is the "blue" part of the (green) focus

The yellow block is the first body paragraph. Since it supports the first part of the focus, all of its details are yellow.

The blue block is the second body paragraph. Since it supports the second part of the focus, all of its details are blue.

The conclusion comes last. Since it reminds the reader of the focus, and synthesizes the yellow and blue ideas again, it is green. It is both the "what" (here's a reminder of my focus) and the "so what" (here's a bit of reflection on or extension of that focus).

The Painted Essay



Writing for Understanding Instruction

Teacher Plan

Lesson Plan format from Writing for Understanding

Teacher _____ *Class* _____ *Date* _____

Writing genre _____

Topic/Subject/Text

CENTRAL IDEAS

Content:

Reading:

Writing:

Focusing Question

Focus (answer to focusing question)

Building Content Knowledge, Understanding of Writer's Craft

- vocabulary
- guided reading
- text mapping
- paraphrasing
- summarizing
- visualizing/
- imaging
- dramatizing
- oral processing / guided
- conversation/think/pair/share
- experience
- debating
- taking notes (graphic organizers, T-charts, 2 column notes, etc.)
- craft lessons (intro, transitions, conclusions, etc.)

Structures

How will students know how to organize their ideas and construct the piece of writing?

- graphic organizers
- teacher-written models
- teacher-and-student written models
- various types of templates or frames (example: Painted Essay)

Writing/Revising

How will students draft / revise so that their final writing is clearly focused organized, and developed to show understanding of the central ideas

- group write, fully or in part
- write section at a time
- write full piece independently
- revise /share full group
- revise /share partners
- proofreading in partners
- proofread w/tubaloos

Lesson Sequence

What steps will I follow so that students are able to effectively show their understanding in writing?

Assessment

How are students doing? What are my next steps as a teacher?

Next Steps: Gradual Release of Responsibility

Samples of Student Writing Samples from the Artful Citizen/Wolfsonian Study

(Curva and Associates, 2005)

A Description of the Scoring Categories and Sample Anchor Papers

Third-Grade Prompt A

Possible Scores:

Six: A sophisticated response. Includes substantial description of visual elements. Describes social, personal, or political conflicts. Attributes actions to characters. Demonstrates understanding of the whole by relating elements in cultural or historical contexts. Connects visual elements to artist's intent. May connect content to cultural values. May design solutions. Evaluates success of the work.

I think the thing that's going on is that people are working hard and these people are from long time ago. For this type of work today they use tractors and other modern vehicles not people to carry those sacks. I think they're from long ago too because today guards don't wear those clothes. I think the artist is trying to explain that the people from long ago had a very difficult time.

Five: An accomplished response. Describes visual elements in detail. May identify social, personal, or political conflicts. Attributes actions to characters. Demonstrates understanding of the whole by relating some elements. Connects some visual elements to artist's intent. May evaluate the art/artifact. Relates tangential information to the task.

Men are working and the woman is giving food to the baby. It makes me say that because two men are carrying this bag and the woman is touching the baby's chin. I think the people are in Mexico and they are working for the homeless people. I think that because it is sunny and there's like a line in front of the woman.

Four: A proficient response. Describes identified visual elements. May name a conflict or problem. Attributes actions to characters. Relates some elements of the image to each other. May discuss context. May connect visual elements to artist's intent. May be incorrect in reading and may include tangential information or opinions.

I think they are working and moving the hay. One man is drinking water. A lady is with some children. Some men have sacks on their backs. There is a big house. There are geese and they're working in a barn. A child is holding the man's leg. There's a thing that has a string to the cart. ...People are working hard with hay and sacks and ... they are plowing the fields.

Three: A literal response. Describes particular elements. May label visual traits, such as shape, symbols, or structural details. Attributes actions to characters. Relates some

elements of the image to each other. Often answers questions. Provides little or no evidence. May be incorrect reading.

I think they are in the desert working. What makes me say that is because it is sunny and they're working. They're working in the desert and it is hot and sweating. I see ducks.

Two: A developing response. Two or more elements are identified. May randomly list elements. Attributes actions to characters. Provides little or no evidence of analysis. Provides little or no evidence of interpretation. May be an incorrect reading. May give opinion, but lacks support.

A guy is drinking water because he is thirsty. Men are taking sacks of cement. A pitchfork is on top of the rack.

One: A limited response. Blank or illegible. Lacks detail. May be off topic. Description may be inaccurate. Provides little or no evidence of animation, analysis, or interpretation.

I see a man drinking out of a cup....

Third-Grade Prompt B

Possible Scores:

Six: A sophisticated response. Includes substantial description of visual elements. Describes social, personal, or political conflicts. Attributes actions to characters. Demonstrates understanding of the whole by relating elements in cultural or historical contexts. Connects visual elements to artist's intent. May connect content to cultural values. May design solutions. Evaluates success of the work.

The church is on fire and the people with horses are running for the water to put on the church. I see fire and the birds are flying away. The people and the horses are running too. The people are screaming, "Help, help." There's a truck beside the fence and there are men. A woman is looking at the church that is on fire, and the little child is putting her hands up to her mom. A man is putting the little cows where they need to be, and the other man is looking at the church. He is going to help all the other people.

Five: An accomplished response. Describes visual elements in detail. May identify social, personal, or political conflicts. Attributes actions to characters. Demonstrates understanding of the whole by relating some elements. Connects some visual elements to artist's intent. May evaluate the art/artifact. Relates tangential information to the task.

I see smoke in the house and fire. The horses are running crazy and the mom is protecting the child from the fire. The men are trying to get the animals safe from the fire, and I see trees, a car, house, garden. I see yellow flowers, a white gate, and ground. The people are scared.

Four: A proficient response. Describes identified visual elements. May name a conflict or problem. Attributes actions to characters. Relates some elements of the image to each other. May discuss context. May connect visual elements to artist's intent. May be incorrect in reading and may include tangential information or opinions.

A house is on fire. People are running around. Some people are helping put out the fire. People are helping take out the horses that are in the house and the cows. I see smoke.

Three: A literal response. Describes particular elements. May label visual traits, such as shape, symbols, or structural details. Attributes actions to characters. Relates some elements of the image to each other. Often answers questions. Provides little or no evidence. May be incorrect reading.

I see a fire in a house and I see a mom and her little girl. I see a boy protecting the mom and the little girl.

Two: A developing response. Two or more elements are identified. May randomly list elements. Attributes actions to characters. Provides little or no evidence of analysis. Provides little or no evidence of interpretation. May be an incorrect reading. May give opinion, but lacks support.

There is people, animals, a car, a tree, a home on fire. A house. A mom and a boy. A cow. Flowers.

One: A limited response. Blank or illegible. Lacks detail. May be off topic. Description may be inaccurate. Provides little or no evidence of animation, analysis, or interpretation.

I see a car. I see people running.

Fourth-Grade Prompt A

Possible Scores:

Six: A sophisticated response. Includes substantial description of visual elements. Describes social, personal, or political conflicts. Attributes actions to characters. Demonstrates understanding of the whole by relating elements in cultural or historical contexts. Connects visual elements to artist's intent. May connect content to cultural values. May design solutions. Evaluates success of the work.

What's going on in the picture is that this man had lived on an island until a company destroyed it and built a city off the coast of the island. Three of his best friends died and the trees represent their graves because around the trees there are small hills. The city is new and everything in the city looks very white. I also see a sort of raccoon shape on a hill and it looks like the man is in his 50's. He has a sad expression. The company that built the city might have been called Mega Corp because everything looks so new in the city.

Five: An accomplished response. Describes visual elements in detail. May identify social, personal, or political conflicts. Attributes actions to characters. Demonstrates understanding of the whole by relating some elements. Connects some visual elements to artist's intent. May evaluate the art/artifact. Relates tangential information to the task.

I see a man on an island in New York that is lonely and sad about the island because it has three, old, dead trees and grass. I say that because that's how it looks in the picture. I can find an ocean, sand, and tall buildings. He is wearing a gray hat.

Four: A proficient response. Describes identified visual elements. May name a conflict or problem. Attributes actions to characters. Relates some elements of the image to each other. May discuss context. May connect visual elements to artist's intent. May be incorrect in reading and may include tangential information or opinions.

I see a man standing with his hat on and he is putting his hands in his pockets. He's on an island. He looks sad that his is stuck on an island. Behind the man is the city with buildings. There are small hills on the ground. The trees are old, no leaves just branches.

Three: A literal response. Describes particular elements. May label visual traits, such as shape, symbols, or structural details. Attributes actions to characters. Relates some elements of the image to each other. Often answers questions. Provides little or no evidence. May be incorrect reading.

A man is watching the view from an island. I see water and a city far away. An ocean, broken trees, and a city.

Two: A developing response. Two or more elements are identified. May randomly list elements. Attributes actions to characters. Provides little or no evidence of analysis. Provides little or no evidence of interpretation. May be an incorrect reading. May give opinion, but lacks support.

A Sunrise. Ocean. Bird. A man is standing. A hill with trees.

One: A limited response. Blank or illegible. Lacks detail. May be off topic. Description may be inaccurate. Provides little or no evidence of animation, analysis, or interpretation.

I see a man look. The city. Water.

Fourth-Grade Prompt B

Possible Scores:

Six: A sophisticated response. Includes substantial description of visual elements. Describes social, personal, or political conflicts. Attributes actions to characters. Demonstrates understanding of the whole by relating elements in cultural or historical

contexts. Connects visual elements to artist's intent. May connect content to cultural values. May design solutions. Evaluates success of the work.

I see people going on a subway because the adults have to go to their jobs. I also see a child and her mother going to church because the child has a book in her hand. I also see some of the men reading a newspaper about their country or state. And last I see worried faces on some of the women or men because something bad is happening that is read in the newspaper. Another thing I see is that out of the window it looks like it is raining and there is a flood which is why some of the men and women are worried. But some other people think it will be over soon. And last I see an old man talking to the woman's daughter saying that nothing bad will happen.

Five: An accomplished response. Describes visual elements in detail. May identify social, personal, or political conflicts. Attributes actions to characters. Demonstrates understanding of the whole by relating some elements. Connects some visual elements to artist's intent. May evaluate the art/artifact. Relates tangential information to the task.

I see people reading and looking at one another and a little girl with a box tied together. I see signs on the subway and a man with a light colored hat looking at the newspaper. And a man looking out the window. I see a woman looking at the man, and the old woman looking at the little girl's mom and the man by the Black on the right looking at the window. I can see the fan. I can see the little girl is sad and the mom looks sad too. And the man by the other man seated on the left is reading the funny comics.

Four: A proficient response. Describes identified visual elements. May name a conflict or problem. Attributes actions to characters. Relates some elements of the image to each other. May discuss context. May connect visual elements to artist's intent. May be incorrect in reading and may include tangential information or opinions.

What I see in this picture is people on a train. And most of them are reading a newspaper. I say that because I can see them doing something in this picture. Everybody is wearing a hat and some are not. Some are just sitting down reading.

Three: A literal response. Describes particular elements. May label visual traits, such as shape, symbols, or structural details. Attributes actions to characters. Relates some elements of the image to each other. Often answers questions. Provides little or no evidence. May be incorrect reading.

I see lots of people. It looks like their on a train. I see a fan. I see little posters by the side. I see the people holding ropes.

Two: A developing response. Two or more elements are identified. May randomly list elements. Attributes actions to characters. Provides little or no evidence of analysis. Provides little or no evidence of interpretation. May be an incorrect reading. May give opinion, but lacks support.

Hats. Signs. People reading newspapers. A girl with a hat on.

One: A limited response. Blank or illegible. Lacks detail. May be off topic. Description may be inaccurate. Provides little or no evidence of animation, analysis, or interpretation.

I see people on a subway going somewhere. Nothing else.

Fifth-Grade Prompt A

Possible Scores:

Six: A sophisticated response. Includes substantial description of visual elements. Describes social, personal, or political conflicts. Attributes actions to characters. Demonstrates understanding of the whole by relating elements in cultural or historical contexts. Connects visual elements to artist's intent. May connect content to cultural values. May design solutions. Evaluates success of the work.

In this picture I see two women debating something. They are leaning out their windows and talking. The woman on the left-hand side of the picture is listening while the woman on the right side is talking and using gestures to express what she is saying. Above the woman on the right there seems to be a crow sleeping. I can see a bed in the room behind the woman on the left. Both the women are leaning on rags. There seem to be some kind of wires hanging down from the ledge about the heads of the women. The ledges are carefully etched in with designs and seem to be built out of stone. The rest of the building is built out of bricks. This may be a picture of everyday life in a small city somewhere.

Five: An accomplished response. Describes visual elements in detail. May identify social, personal, or political conflicts. Attributes actions to characters. Demonstrates understanding of the whole by relating some elements. Connects some visual elements to artist's intent. May evaluate the art/artifact. Relates tangential information to the task.

There are two ladies talking with each other. They look like they're poor for the way they're dressed. There is a bed behind one of the girls. I think it's the girl's bed. These two girls look like they are trying to solve a problem. There is a rope coming down from the roof. I think the building the girls are in is where they live. It looks like the two girls are friends.

Four: A proficient response. Describes identified visual elements. May name a conflict or problem. Attributes actions to characters. Relates some elements of the image to each other. May discuss context. May connect visual elements to artist's intent. May be incorrect in reading and may include tangential information or opinions.

I see two girls that look bored and upset. What makes me say that is because I think an artist usually uses black to show they're bored or something like that. I can also find that they are in a brick motel. I think I see a bird on the top of the page.

Three: A literal response. Describes particular elements. May label visual traits, such as shape, symbols, or structural details. Attributes actions to characters. Relates some elements of the image to each other. Often answers questions. Provides little or no evidence. May be incorrect reading.

There are two ladies that look like they are talking out the window. I see them with their heads out the window. A wire is hanging down from the top of the building, and I see a bed and some curtains.

Two: A developing response. Two or more elements are identified. May randomly list elements. Attributes actions to characters. Provides little or no evidence of analysis. Provides little or no evidence of interpretation. May be an incorrect reading. May give opinion, but lacks support.

Ladies hanging out the window talking. The ladies. A building with things around it.

One: A limited response. Blank or illegible. Lacks detail. May be off topic. Description may be inaccurate. Provides little or no evidence of animation, analysis, or interpretation.

Don't do that. Great kids get A's.

Fifth-Grade Prompt B

Possible Scores:

Six: A sophisticated response. Includes substantial description of visual elements. Describes social, personal, or political conflicts. Attributes actions to characters. Demonstrates understanding of the whole by relating elements in cultural or historical contexts. Connects visual elements to artist's intent. May connect content to cultural values. May design solutions. Evaluates success of the work.

I think that the man with the bible, gun, and sword was a great hero, because almost everyone around him is bowing to him. I also think he accomplished killing someone because of the blood at the tip of the sword. Or he was driven out of the country because he freed the slaves. The man right next to him has tears in his eyes, and everyone is looking ashamed that he is leaving, except the judges. The color of the background part of the picture is dull. It looks like it is during the time of slavery for African-Americans. I think so because some people are wearing broken chains on their hands. I also see a Ku Klux Klan hat at the right corner of the picture. It's like a meeting to decide if the man should leave or not. The judges don't look very excited about him.

Five: An accomplished response. Describes visual elements in detail. May identify social, personal, or political conflicts. Attributes actions to characters. Demonstrates understanding of the whole by relating some elements. Connects some visual elements to artist's intent. May evaluate the art/artifact. Relates tangential information to the task.

I see a man with a sword and I think that he is the leader because there are other people on the ground with chains. Those people are looking up at him and they look poor because of their clothing. I also think that the man with the sword is the main person in the picture because his picture is the biggest. I also think the man with the sword is killing the other people, or those people might be slaves for him. On the top of the picture I see some men who might be working because they have a paper in front of them and I think they have some kind of machine.

Four: A proficient response. Describes identified visual elements. May name a conflict or problem. Attributes actions to characters. Relates some elements of the image to each other. May discuss context. May connect visual elements to artist's intent. May be incorrect in reading and may include tangential information or opinions.

In this picture the man that is standing up with a sword just freed some people from slavery. I think that because the man that has on the chains looks happy that he got saved. I also see a crowd around the man with the sword. They all look sad. There is a guy in the background dancing because he got freed from slavery.

Three: A literal response. Describes particular elements. May label visual traits, such as shape, symbols, or structural details. Attributes actions to characters. Relates some elements of the image to each other. Often answers questions. Provides little or no evidence. May be incorrect reading.

I think the people in this picture are fighting. I say this because I see a man with a sword and other people with tools. I can find a man in chains and I can see a man carrying a hay stack and a man with a rake.

Two: A developing response. Two or more elements are identified. May randomly list elements. Attributes actions to characters. Provides little or no evidence of analysis. Provides little or no evidence of interpretation. May be an incorrect reading. May give opinion, but lacks support.

A fight because a guy is holding a sword in his hand. A guy is holding a chain in his hand. The guy with the sword was tracking down food.

One: A limited response. Blank or illegible. Lacks detail. May be off topic. Description may be inaccurate. Provides little or no evidence of animation, analysis, or interpretation.

I see a man.

Understanding Formal Analysis

Performing Arts in Art

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Elements of Art

The elements of art are the building blocks used by artists to create a work of art.

Line is a mark with greater length than width. Lines can be horizontal, vertical, or diagonal; straight or curved; thick or thin.

Shape is a closed line. Shapes can be geometric, like squares and circles; or organic, like free-form or natural shapes. Shapes are flat and can express length and width.

Forms are three-dimensional shapes expressing length, width, and depth. Balls, cylinders, boxes, and pyramids are forms.

Space is the area between and around objects. The space around objects is often called negative space; negative space has shape. Space can also refer to the feeling of depth. Real space is three-dimensional; in visual art, when we create the feeling or illusion of depth, we call it space.

Color is light reflected off of objects. Color has three main characteristics: *hue* (the name of the color, such as red, green, blue, etc.), *value* (how light or dark it is), and *intensity* (how bright or dull it is).

- White is pure light; black is the absence of light.
- Primary colors are the only true colors (red, blue, and yellow). All other colors are mixes of primary colors.
- Secondary colors are two primary colors mixed together (green, orange, violet).
- Intermediate colors, sometimes called tertiary colors, are made by mixing a primary and secondary color together. Some examples of intermediate colors are yellow green, blue green, and blue violet.
- Complementary colors are located directly across from each other on the *color wheel* (an arrangement of colors along a circular diagram to show how they are related to one another). Complementary pairs contrast because they share no common colors. For example, red and green are complements, because green is made of blue and yellow. When complementary colors are mixed together, they neutralize each other to make brown.

Texture is the surface quality that can be seen and felt. Textures can be rough or smooth, soft or hard. Textures do not always feel the way they look; for example, a drawing of a porcupine may look prickly, but if you touch the drawing, the paper is still smooth.

Principles of Design

The principles of design describe the ways that artists use the elements of art in a work of art.

Balance is the distribution of the visual weight of objects, colors, texture, and space. If the design was a scale, these elements should be balanced to make a design feel stable. In symmetrical balance, the elements used on one side of the design are similar to those on the other side; in asymmetrical balance, the sides are different but still look balanced. In radial balance, the elements are arranged around a central point and may be similar.

Emphasis is the part of the design that catches the viewer's attention. Usually the artist will make one area stand out by contrasting it with other areas. The area could be different in size, color, texture, shape, etc.

Movement is the path the viewer's eye takes through the work of art, often to focal areas. Such movement can be directed along lines, edges, shape, and color within the work of art.

Pattern is the repeating of an object or symbol all over the work of art.

Repetition works with pattern to make the work of art seem active. The repetition of elements of design creates unity within the work of art.

Proportion is the feeling of unity created when all parts (sizes, amounts, or number) relate well with each other. When drawing the human figure, proportion can refer to the size of the head compared to the rest of the body.

Rhythm is created when one or more elements of design are used repeatedly to create a feeling of organized movement. Rhythm creates a mood like music or dancing. To keep rhythm exciting and active, variety is essential.

Variety is the use of several elements of design to hold the viewer's attention and to guide the viewer's eye through and around the work of art.

Unity is the feeling of harmony between all parts of the work of art, which creates a sense of completeness.

Appendix C

The Frayer Model for Vocabulary Development

Definition in My Own Words	Facts / Characteristics / Illustration
Examples	Nonexamples

Appendix D

Teachers' Semi-Structured Interview Protocol

These questions were originally created for teacher surveys; however, the teachers didn't find the time to complete them, hence the change in protocol.

What is your highest level of education?

Please tell us your major/minor in each of your degreed area of studies.

Did you gain your teaching certification through traditional or alternate routes?

How many years have you been a school teacher?

The following questions relate to your personal experience with Understanding by Design (UbD), also known as "backwards design" and/or project-based assessment.

Have you ever taken a workshop or a college class where you previously studied either UbD/backwards design or project-based assessment? If yes, please provide details of what/where you studied and the type of training you received?

If you have studied UbD/backwards design and/or project-based assessment, do you currently practice this methodology in your classroom? If yes, please provide details about the ways you use it in your teaching including the subject areas.

If you are trained in UbD, but not currently using it, can you please explain why? If there are barriers to using this methodology other than personal preferences, will you please identify them and expand upon what they are?

If there are identified barriers to using UbD in your classroom, are you interested in overcoming them? If so, what strategies might you use to overcome the barriers, please explain?

How often do you integrate visual arts into your classroom lessons?
Have you ever used digital photography in the classroom?
If you do not use visual arts/photography in the classroom, would you like to do so?

What subjects do you usually incorporate it with?

English Language Arts
Mathematics
Science
Social Studies
Other, please specify

When you do use it, is the focus of the photography decorative in nature?

How do you rate your personal technical ability with digital photography?

If you don't use it often, is it because you feel that you lack technical expertise?

If you had additional training would you find ways to use it more in the classroom?

Please expand on the types of conditions or supports needed, and/or any challenges to incorporating new media technology in the classroom.

How do you think you can improve your current situation in order to best incorporate new media technology in your classroom?

Appendix E

Teacher Exit Interview Protocol from the Artful Citizen/Wolfsonian Study (Curva & Associates, 2005)

Interview with Teacher

- Q19. What challenges did you encounter implementing and using the Artful Citizenship activities and materials?
- Q20. Which topics and/or activities did your students enjoy or relate to the most?
- Q21. Which topics and/or activities did your students enjoy the least?
- Q22. What suggestions do you have for improving the Artful Citizenship Program?
- Q23. What suggestions do you have for improving the delivery of the program?
- Q24. How visible is the program in the school at large?
- Q25. Is there support from administration, collaboration with other departments or organizations, parents, or other dimensions of school and community involvement?

- Q26. Did you receive enough support from The Wolfsonian to effectively implement the program?
- Q27. Did you have access to enough resources to teach the Artful Citizenship curriculum?
- Q28. What information did you use?
- Q29. Where did you get the information?
- Q30. What contributed to the success of the Artful Citizenship program in your class?
- Q31. Describe a situation where Artful Citizenship made a real difference for a child or a group of children?

Appendix F

Administrative Survey from the Artful Citizen/Wolfsonian Study (Curva & Associates, 2005)

Interview with Site Administrator (school administrator, principal, etc.)

Met with: name _____

title _____

Q37. Do you know about the Artful Citizenship project and goals?
Yes ___ No ___

Q38. Does the program fit into the school's mission? ___Yes ___No
In what ways?

Q39. What additional resources have been contributed by the school or community (monetary, material, other – e.g., supportive scheduling, promotion school-wide, release time for teacher, pro bono services, etc.)?

Q40. COMMENTS/SUGGESTIONS:

Appendix G

Rubric Used in Evaluating the Photo Essay and Student Writing

Creating a Photograph: Visual Narrative / Photo Essay / Picture Prompt

Teacher Name: **Ms. Sullivan-Rubin**

Student Name: _____

CATEGORY	4	3	2	1	Score
Design/ Composition	Student applies design principles (such as unity, contrast, balance, movement, direction, emphasis, and center of interest) with great skill.	Student applies design principles (such as unity, contrast, balance, movement, direction, emphasis, and center of interest) with fair skill.	Student tries to apply design principles (such as unity, contrast, balance, movement, direction, emphasis, and center of interest) but the overall result is not pleasing.	The student does not appear to be able to apply most design principles to his/her own work.	
Color Choices	Choice and application of color shows an advanced knowledge of color relationships. Color choice enhances the idea being expressed.	Choice and application of color shows knowledge of color relationships. Colors are appropriate for the idea being expressed.	Choice and application of color shows knowledge of color relationships. Colors are, however, NOT appropriate for the idea being expressed.	Student needs to work on learning color relationships and using that knowledge in his/her work.	
Planning and Explanation	Student can describe in detail at any point during the photography	Student can somewhat describe how s/he envisions the final product	Student can describe how s/he envisions the final product but finds it	Student has thought very little about the project. Is present but is	

	process how s/he envisions the final product and how they intend to reach their goal. Very focused and goal-oriented.	and can describe some of the steps s/he will use to reach the goal. Focused with some planning.	difficult to describe how s/he will reach that goal. Has set a goal, but let's things evolve in somewhat random manner.	not invested in the product.	
Point of View - Purpose	Establishes a purpose early on and maintains a clear focus throughout.	Establishes a purpose early on and maintains focus for most of the presentation.	There are a few lapses in focus, but the purpose is fairly clear.	It is difficult to figure out the purpose of the presentation.	
Images	Images create a distinct atmosphere or tone that matches different parts of the story. The images may communicate symbolism and/or metaphors	Images create an atmosphere or tone that matches some parts of the story. The images may communicate symbolism and/or metaphors.	An attempt was made to use images to create an atmosphere/ tone but it needed more work. Image choice is logical.	Little or no attempt to use images to create an appropriate atmosphere/ tone.	
Creativity	Student has taken the technique being studied and applied it in a way that is totally his/her own. The student's personality/voice comes through.	Student has taken the technique being studied and has used source material as a starting place. The student's personality comes through in parts of the painting.	Student has copied from others and/or source material. There is little evidence of creativity, but the student has done the assignment.	Student has not made much attempt to meet the requirements of the assignment.	

Visual Essay to Written Essay	Student clearly outlines or numbers sequences and defines the parameters of image to text. Pictures and text mirror each other in theme and there is a logical sequence demonstrated between story told and the presentation of the images.	Student either outlines or numbers sequences, or defines the parameters of image to text, but not both. Pictures and text coincide but have some minor inconsistencies theme or sequence of thought demonstrated between story told and the presentation of the images.	Student enumerates the sequence of images but the text does not follow the sequence presented. The story's theme is not logically presented but still applicable to the images.	Student does not enumerate images, nor makes any thematic connection to the image to the text. there is no logical sequence of text and image.	
Economy	The story is told with exactly the right amount of detail throughout.	The story composition is typically good, though it seems to drag somewhat OR need slightly more detail in one or two sections.	The story seems to need more editing. It is noticeably too long or too short in more than one section.	The story needs extensive editing. It is too long or too short to be interesting.	
Grammar	Grammar and usage were correct (for the dialect chosen) and contributed to clarity, style and character development.	Grammar and usage were typically correct (for the dialect chosen) and errors did not detract from the story.	Grammar and usage were typically correct but errors detracted from story.	Repeated errors in grammar and usage distracted greatly from the story.	

Appendix H

Rubric for Art Criticism

Analysis of a Work of Art

Teacher Name: **Ms. Sullivan-Rubin**

Student Name: _____

CATEGORY	4	3	2	1
Description	Makes a complete and detailed description of the subject matter and/or elements seen in a work.	Makes a detailed description of most of the subject matter and/or elements seen in a work.	Makes a detailed description of some of the subject matter and/or elements seen in a work.	Descriptions are not detailed or complete.
Analysis	Accurately describes several dominant elements or principles used by the artist and accurately relates how they are used by the artist to reinforce the theme, meaning, mood, or feeling of the artwork.	Accurately describes a couple of dominant elements and principles used by the artist and accurately relates how these are used by the artist to reinforce the theme, meaning, mood, or feeling of the artwork.	Describes some dominant elements and principles used by the artist, but has difficulty describing how these relate to the meaning or feeling of the artwork.	Has trouble picking out the dominant elements.
Interpretation	Forms a somewhat reasonable hypothesis about the symbolic or metaphorical meaning and is able to support this with evidence from the work.	Student identifies the literal meaning of the work.	Student can relate how the work makes him/her feel personally.	Student finds it difficult to interpret the meaning of the work.
Evaluation	Uses multiple criteria to judge the artwork, such as composition, expression, creativity, design, communication of ideas.	Uses 1-2 criteria to judge the artwork.	Tries to use aesthetic criteria to judge artwork, but does not apply the criteria accurately.	Evaluates work as good or bad based on personal taste.

Appendix I

Jim Burke's Rubric: The Six Traits of Effective Writing

The Six Traits of Effective Writing		
<p>IDEA DEVELOPMENT: The heart, main idea, or thesis of a text; refers to the details, examples, or images that develop and support the main idea.</p> <p>5 <i>Text is clear and focused; captures reader's attention.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Topic is narrow and manageable. <input type="checkbox"/> Details are relevant, interesting, vivid, accurate. <input type="checkbox"/> Point is clear, tells whole story; no trivia. <input type="checkbox"/> Details support the paper's main idea. <input type="checkbox"/> Ideas engage, inspire, or intrigue reader. <p>3 <i>Text's ideas are focused but general, obvious.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Topic is fairly broad, but understandable. <input type="checkbox"/> Details are loosely related, obvious, or dull. <input type="checkbox"/> Point vague; gives general idea; incomplete. <input type="checkbox"/> Details provide weak support for main idea. <input type="checkbox"/> Ideas leave reader guessing, not specific. <p>1 <i>Text lacks clear idea, purpose, and details.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Topic lacking; no evident focus or purpose. <input type="checkbox"/> Details are missing, incorrect, or unclear. <input type="checkbox"/> Makes no point; cannot identify main idea. <input type="checkbox"/> Details repeat each other, seem random. <input type="checkbox"/> Ideas confuse and frustrate the reader. 	<p>ORGANIZATION: The internal structure of ideas. Effective organization begins with a purposeful lead and moves toward a logical, thoughtful ending.</p> <p>5 <i>Order compels, enhances, and moves ideas.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Introduction intrigues, invites; conclusion resolves. <input type="checkbox"/> Thoughtful transitions show how ideas connect. <input type="checkbox"/> Sequencing is logical and effective. <input type="checkbox"/> Pacing is well controlled and purposeful. <input type="checkbox"/> Organization flows smoothly, matches purpose. <p>3 <i>Order moves reader through with confusion.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Introduction and conclusion are evident, weak. <input type="checkbox"/> Transitions often work well; connections are vague. <input type="checkbox"/> Sequencing shows some logic but lacks control. <input type="checkbox"/> Pacing is inconsistent but fairly well controlled. <input type="checkbox"/> Organization offers limited support; inappropriate. <p>1 <i>Order is missing or random; no identifiable structure.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Introduction and conclusion ineffective/missing. <input type="checkbox"/> Transitions and connections absent or confusing. <input type="checkbox"/> Sequencing is random; lacks any purpose. <input type="checkbox"/> Pacing is awkward, frustrating, or missing. <input type="checkbox"/> Organization makes it hard to identify main idea. 	<p>VOICE: You hear the writer's heart and soul, conviction and wit; the text has energy and connects you to both the writing and the writer.</p> <p>5 <i>Writing is compelling, engaging; aware of audience.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Tone is interesting and appropriate for audience and the purpose. <input type="checkbox"/> Author's presence is evident, powerful. <input type="checkbox"/> Expository writing is committed, persuasive. <input type="checkbox"/> Narrative writing is honest, engaging, personal. <p>3 <i>Writing seems sincere but not engaged; it's plain.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Tone is nondescript; shows limited awareness of audience; not very appropriate for purpose. <input type="checkbox"/> Author sounds earnest and pleasing, but safe. <input type="checkbox"/> Expository writing shows minimal commitment. <input type="checkbox"/> Narrative writing is reasonably sincere but plain. <p>1 <i>Writer is indifferent, distanced from topic/audience.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Tone shows no awareness of audience, inappropriate for the audience or purpose. <input type="checkbox"/> Author sounds monotone, flat, even bored. <input type="checkbox"/> Expository writing lacks any commitment. <input type="checkbox"/> Narrative writing shows no attempt at voice.
<p>WORD CHOICE: The right word, used in the right way, at the right time. The writer chooses words that create the intended effect, impression, or mood.</p> <p>5 <i>Words are precise, maximizing, engaging, powerful.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Words are specific, accurate; meaning is clear. <input type="checkbox"/> Words and phrases are striking and memorable. <input type="checkbox"/> Language is natural, effective, and appropriate. <input type="checkbox"/> Verbs are lively, nouns precise, modifiers effective. <input type="checkbox"/> Choices enhance meaning and clarify meaning. <p>3 <i>Words are common and obvious; they lack energy.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Words are adequate and correct in a general sense. <input type="checkbox"/> Words and phrases convey; but aren't memorable. <input type="checkbox"/> Language reaches for color; thesaurus overload. <input type="checkbox"/> Verbs are passive, nouns common, modifiers dull. <input type="checkbox"/> Choices are random: first word that came to mind. <p>1 <i>Words are simple or vague; limited in scope.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Words are nonspecific, distracting, and vague. <input type="checkbox"/> Words and phrases are dull; detract from meaning. <input type="checkbox"/> Language is used incorrectly, carelessly. <input type="checkbox"/> Verbs, nouns, adjectives show limited vocabulary. <input type="checkbox"/> Jargon or clichés distract, mislead; redundancy. 	<p>SENTENCE FLUENCY: Language that flows with rhythm and grace, logic and music. Sentences are well-crafted and want to be read aloud.</p> <p>5 <i>Writing flows with rhythm and cadence. Elegant.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Sentences are constructed to enhance meaning. <input type="checkbox"/> Sentences vary in length and structure. <input type="checkbox"/> Sentences use purposeful, varied beginnings. <input type="checkbox"/> Connecting words join and build on other words. <input type="checkbox"/> Writing has cadence; it moves, has a music to it. <p>3 <i>Writing moves along but feels more business-like.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Sentences are routine; they lack craft and music. <input type="checkbox"/> Sentences are usually constructed correctly. <input type="checkbox"/> Sentences are not all alike; there is some variety. <input type="checkbox"/> Connecting words absent; reader hunts for clues. <input type="checkbox"/> Parts invite reading aloud; choppy, awkward, stiff. <p>1 <i>Writing lacks flow; it is difficult to read.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Sentences ramble, are incomplete or awkward. <input type="checkbox"/> Sentences do not connect to each other at all. <input type="checkbox"/> Sentences begin the same way; monotonous. <input type="checkbox"/> Endless or no connectives (<i>and, so then, because</i>). <input type="checkbox"/> The text does invite reading aloud; no music. 	<p>CONVENTIONS: Includes punctuation, spelling, grammar, and usage. It does not include layout, formatting, or handwriting. The final editing phase.</p> <p>5 <i>Observes and uses standard conventions; few errors.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Spelling is mostly correct, even on difficult words. <input type="checkbox"/> Punctuation is accurate, even creative and effective. <input type="checkbox"/> Capitalization skills are evident and consistent. <input type="checkbox"/> Grammar and usage are correct and enhance the text. <input type="checkbox"/> Paragraphing is sound; reinforces organization. <input type="checkbox"/> Writer may manipulate conventions for style. <p>3 <i>Reasonable control of conventions; distracting errors.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Spelling mostly correct; errors on difficult words. <input type="checkbox"/> End punctuation mostly correct; internal errors. <input type="checkbox"/> Capitalization generally correct; some errors. <input type="checkbox"/> Grammar and usage problems are not serious. <input type="checkbox"/> Paragraphing lacks cohesion and organization. <p>1 <i>Errors distract the reader and make reading difficult.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Spelling errors are frequent and distracting. <input type="checkbox"/> Punctuation is often missing or incorrect. <input type="checkbox"/> Capitalization is random; only easiest are correct. <input type="checkbox"/> Grammar and usage errors are obvious and serious. <input type="checkbox"/> Paragraphing is missing, irregular, or frequent.

Adapted by Jim Burke. See *Creating Writers* (Addison Wesley Longman) by Vicki Spandel for complete exploration of the Six Traits model.

Appendix J

Greece, NY Public School District’s Expository Writing Rubric

Skill Area	6 – the writing:	5 – the writing:	4 – the writing:	3 – the writing:	2 – the writing:	1 – the writing:
<p>Meaning: the extent to which the writing exhibits sound understanding, analysis, and explanation – of the writing task and the text(s)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> conveys an accurate and in-depth understanding of the topic, audience, and purpose for the writing task offers insightful and thorough analysis and explanation in support of the topic 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> conveys an accurate and complete understanding of the topic, audience, and purpose for the writing task offers clear and explicit analysis and explanation in support of the topic 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> conveys an accurate although somewhat basic understanding of the topic, audience, and purpose for the writing task offers partial analysis and explanation in support of the topic 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> conveys a partly accurate understanding of the topic, audience, and purpose for the writing task offers limited analysis or superficial explanation that only partially support the topic 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> conveys a confused or largely inaccurate understanding of the topic, audience, and purpose for the writing task offers unclear analysis or unwarranted explanations that fail to support the topic 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> provides no evidence of understanding the writing task or topic makes incoherent explanations that do not support the topic
<p>Development: the extent to which ideas are elaborated using specific and relevant details and/or evidence to support the thesis</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> develops ideas clearly and fully, effectively integrating and elaborating on specific textual evidence from a variety of sources effectively discriminates between relevant and irrelevant information and between fact and opinion 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> develops ideas clearly and consistently, incorporating and explaining specific textual evidence from a variety of sources discriminates between relevant and irrelevant information and between fact and opinion 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> develops some ideas more fully than others, using relevant textual evidence from a variety of sources attempts to discriminate between relevant and irrelevant information and between fact and opinion 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> develops ideas briefly or partially, using some textual evidence but without much elaboration or from limited sources may contain a mix of relevant and irrelevant information and/or confuse the difference between fact and opinion 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> attempts to offer some development of ideas, but textual evidence is vague, repetitive, or unjustified contains irrelevant and/or inaccurate information and/or completely fails to distinguish fact from opinion 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> completely lacks development and does not include textual evidence contains irrelevant and/or inaccurate information and completely fails to distinguish fact from opinion
<p>Organization: the extent to which the writing establishes a clear thesis and maintains direction, focus, and coherence</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> skillfully establishes and maintains consistent focus on a clear, compelling thesis exhibits logical and coherent structure with claims, evidence and interpretations that convincingly support the thesis makes skillful use of transition words and phrases 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> effectively establishes and maintains consistent focus on a clear thesis exhibits a logical sequence of claims, evidence, and interpretations to support the thesis and effectively used transitions makes effective use of transition words and phrases 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> establishes and maintains focus on a clear thesis exhibits a logical sequence of claims, evidence, and interpretations but ideas within paragraphs may be inconsistently organized makes some attempt to use basic transition words and phrases 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> establishes but fails to consistently maintain focus on a basic thesis exhibits a basic structure but lacks the coherence of consistent claims, evidence, and interpretations makes an inconsistent attempt to use some basic transition words or phrases 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> establishes a confused or irrelevant thesis and fails to maintain focus exhibits an attempt to organize ideas into a beginning, middle, and end, but lacks coherence makes little attempt to use transition words and phrases 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> fails to include a thesis or maintain focus completely lacks organization and coherence makes no attempt to use transition words or phrases
<p>Language: the extent to which the writing reveals an awareness of audience and purpose through word choice and sentence variety</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> is stylistically sophisticated, using language that is precise and engaging with a notable sense of voice and purpose effectively incorporates a range of varied sentence patterns to reveal syntactic fluency 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> uses language that is fluent and original, with evident awareness of audience and purpose incorporates varied sentence patterns that reveal an awareness of different syntactic structures 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> uses appropriate language, with some awareness of audience and purpose makes some attempt to include different sentence patterns but with awkward or uneven success 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> relies on basic vocabulary, with little awareness of audience or purpose reveals a limited awareness of how to vary sentence patterns and rely on a limited range syntactic structures 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> uses language that is imprecise or unsuitable for the audience or purpose reveals a confused understanding of how to write in complete sentences and little or no ability to vary sentence patterns 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> uses language that is incoherent or inappropriate includes a preponderance of sentence fragments and run-ons that significantly hinder comprehension
<p>Conventions: the extent to which the writing exhibits conventional spelling, punctuation, capitalization, and grammar</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> demonstrates control of the conventions with essentially no errors, even with sophisticated language 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> demonstrates control of the conventions, exhibiting occasional errors only when using sophisticated language (e.g., punctuation of complex sentences) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> demonstrates partial control, exhibiting occasional errors that do not hinder comprehension (e.g., incorrect use of homonyms) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> demonstrates emerging control, exhibiting frequent errors that make comprehension difficult (e.g., subject verb agreement, use of slang) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> demonstrates lack of control, exhibiting frequent errors that make comprehension difficult (e.g., subject verb agreement, use of slang) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> is illegible or unrecognizable as literate English

EXPOSITORY WRITING RUBRIC — Greece, NY Public Schools

Appendix K

New Jersey Registered Holistic Scoring Rubric

NEW JERSEY REGISTERED HOLISTIC SCORING RUBRIC Picture Prompt & Persuasive Writing Task

In scoring, consider the apt of written language	Inadequate Command	Limited Command	Partial Command	Adequate Command	Strong Command	Superior Command
Score	1	2	3	4	5	6
Content and Organization	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> May lack opening and/or closing Minimal response to topic; uncertain focus No planning evident; disorganized Details random, inappropriate, or barely apparent No apparent central idea Severely/numerous errors Assessment of incomplete and/or incorrect sentences Errors so severe they detract from meaning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> May lack opening and/or closing Attempt to focus May drift or shift focus Attempt organization, few, if any, transitions between ideas Details lack elaboration, i.e., highlight paper Numerous errors Excessive monotony/same structure Numerous errors Numerous serious errors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> May lack opening and/or closing Usually has single focus Some lapses or flaws in organization May lack some transitions between ideas Repetitious details Several unelaborated details Errors/patterns of errors may be evident Little variety in syntax Some errors Patterns of errors evident 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Generally has opening and/or closing Single focus Ideas loosely connected Transitions evident Uneven development of details Some errors that do not interfere with meaning Some variety Generally correct No consistent patterns of errors Some errors that do not interfere with meaning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Opening and closing Single focus Sense of unity and coherence Key ideas developed Logical progression of ideas Moderately fluent Attempt compositional risks Details appropriate and varied Few errors Variety in syntax appropriate and effective Few errors Few errors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Opening and closing Single, distinct focus Unified and coherent Well-developed Logical progression of ideas Fluent, cohesive Compositional risks successful Details effective, vivid, explicit, and/or pertinent Very few, if any, errors Precision and/or sophistication Very few, if any, errors Very few, if any, errors
Usage						
Sentence Construction						
Mechanics						

	Content/Organization	Usage	Sentence Construction	Mechanics
(FR) Fragment	Communicates intended message to intended audience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Topic formation Subject-verb agreement Pronouns Word choice/meaning Proper modifiers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Variety of topic structure, and length Correct construction 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Spelling Capitalization Punctuation
(OT) Off Topic/ Off task	Relates to logic			
(NE) Not English	Opening and closing			
(NR) No Response	Focused			
MON-SCORABLE RESPONSES*	Logical progression of ideas			
	Transitions			
	Appropriate details and information			

*Note: All non-scorable responses (NSRs), with the exception of NR, must be coded by the Scoring Director.

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Appendix L

Writing Rubric Used Within the Artful Citizen/Wolfsonian Study (Curva & Associates, 2005)

Six: A sophisticated response. Includes substantial description of visual elements. Describes social, personal, or political conflicts. Attributes actions to characters. Demonstrates understanding of the whole by relating elements in cultural or historical contexts. Connects visual elements to artist's intent. May connect content to cultural values. May design solutions. Evaluates success of the work.

Five: An accomplished response. Describes visual elements in detail. May identify social, personal, or political conflicts. Attributes actions to characters. Demonstrates understanding of the whole by relating some elements. Connects some visual elements to artist's intent. May evaluate the art/artifact. Relates tangential information to the task.

Four: A proficient response. Describes identified visual elements. May name a conflict or problem. Attributes actions to characters. Relates some elements of the image to each other. May discuss context. May connect visual elements to artist's intent. May be incorrect in reading and may include tangential information or opinions.

Three: A literal response. Describes particular elements. May label visual traits, such as shape, symbols, or structural details. Attributes actions to characters. Relates some elements of the image to each other. Often answers questions. Provides little or no evidence. May be incorrect reading.

Two: A developing response. Two or more elements are identified. May randomly list elements. Attributes actions to characters. Provides little or no evidence of analysis. Provides little or no evidence of interpretation. May be an incorrect reading. May give opinion, but lacks support.

One: A limited response. Blank or illegible. Lacks detail. May be off topic. Description may be inaccurate. Provides little or no evidence of animation, analysis, or interpretation.

Appendix M

Permission Letter for Students

Participants Under 18

I am a graduate student in the Education Leadership Department at Rowan University. I will be conducting a research project under the supervision of Dr. James Coaxum, as part of my doctoral dissertation, a study entitled “Increasing Student Achievement Through New Media Technology with An Artist/Community Model of Professional Development” conducted by Sharon Sullivan Rubin. The purpose of this case study is to identify and utilize best practices that successfully support the use of new media technology integration in the classroom to improve student writing and achievement.

The data in this study will be compared to other data in the field to examine innovative ways in which we can successfully support the teaching and learning process, increase literacy, and contribute to the field of research in this area.

During this study, I may videotape and take still photographs of the students and teachers working together. However, your child's name will remain confidential and only first names will be used for identification purposes. The videotapes may be viewed by other researchers when data is presented at a professional conference. All data will be reported in terms of group results; individual results will not be reported.

Your decision whether or not to allow your child to participate in this study will have absolutely no effect on your child's standing in his or her class. At the conclusion of this study there will be a summary of the group results made available to all interested

parents. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact me at 973-493-9014, or you may contact my advisor, Dr. James Coaxum at 856-256-4779.

Sincerely,

Sharon Sullivan Rubin

Please indicate whether or not you wish to have you child participate in this study by checking the appropriate statement below and returning this letter to your child's teacher ASAP.

_____ I grant permission for my child, _____, to participate in the study.

_____ I do not grant permission for my child, _____, to participate in the study.

Parent Signature: _____

Appendix N

Parent Camera Contract Letter

January 2012

Dear Parents,

As part of my ongoing doctoral research on photography and writing, I have asked students to choose a theme to photograph, which they will write about afterward. It is my hypothesis that when students take and use their photographs as a way of visually organizing what they think and see, it will help them structure and organize their written narratives and become better storytellers and writers. We have practiced this in the classroom and around the school grounds. However, in order for students to individualize their work, and make it their own, they will need to be less encumbered by the boundaries of the classroom. Thus, I would like the students to have the opportunity to take a digital camera home with them so that they may explore their photographic theme/essay within their own environment. This is where I need your help and cooperation.

The cameras that your child will be using were purchased for the express use of this research by Ms. Rubin, and therefore are not the property of the East Orange Board of Education or Ecole Toussaint Louverture. As I'm sure you can imagine, this was a significant economic commitment for an individual teacher to make, but I am excited about bringing this opportunity to your child. Learning digital photography will enhance each student's technological savvy in an ever-advancing digital society, and provide him with a glimpse of a future career option, as well. Moreover, this study is the only elementary level program of its kind in the district. Your child's participation in this research will be highlighted in a display of photography at the East Orange Board of Education in Board Room A, in the month of April 2012. This show will be comprised of the photography of students from ETL and Campus 9 – STEM Academy only. As your child's teacher, I am excited and proud, but we have much work to do.

As previously said, the cameras in this work were personally purchased by me for this study. If the cameras are lost, stolen or damaged while in your child's possession, I would not be able to afford replacement of the same, and this would be detrimental to my ability to continue my doctoral research. Thus, I am asking you to help your child be responsible for them, and to return them in the same condition they were received the next day. There will be multiple opportunities for them to borrow the camera once they demonstrate that they are responsible and mature with the loan. They will have the opportunity to take them home on a Wednesday or a Thursday and return the next day. I am only at ETL on Wednesday through Friday, so I must have all cameras back by Friday, no exceptions. The cameras range in cost between 15 to 30 dollars, so if a camera is lost, stolen or damaged while assigned to your child, it will be your child's obligation for replacement or reimbursement as such. I am going to send home a schedule so that you are aware of when your child would be assigned the camera and you can assist him in taking photos and safe return of the camera. Camera loans will begin right after Thanksgiving and continue through December just before the holiday break with Ms. Osorio's 5th grade

class. If there is a better day out of the two indicated above, please let me know that when returning the contract attached. If you have any questions regarding this you may reach me on my cell 973-493-9014 or email me at ssrart@gmail.com. Thank you again for your understanding, help, and continued support of this research.

Sincerely,
Sharon Sullivan Rubin,
Art Instructor, Ecole Toussaint Louverture School,
Doctoral Candidate, Rowan University

Please return this page signed ASAP to Ms. Rubin. No cameras will be allowed to go home without this page signed by a parent and returned to me.

I give permission for my child

_____ to borrow a camera from Ms. Rubin and to photograph their chosen theme for their photo essay at home. I am aware that the camera must be returned to school the next day in the same condition received. If my child loses the camera, damages the camera, or if it is stolen while in their possession as a loan, I will take full responsibility for this loss by replacement or reimbursement of the same. This is an agreement solely between Sharon Rubin, researcher, and the legal guardian/parent of the above named student. This agreement holds harmless the East Orange Board of Education, Ecole Toussaint Louverture School, all district stakeholders and its said representatives.

Please print your name:

Your relationship to the above named student:

Dated: _____ Home Phone: _____

Cell Phone _____ Business Phone: _____

Email address: _____

Home Address: _____

All of the above information will be kept confidential and will only be used if I need to reach you to notify you if your child is in possession of a camera, or in case of a loss, which will hopefully not be the case! So let the photography begin—say cheese and smile :-)
Have a great day!

Appendix O

Student Work Packet Sample

How to Create a Photo Essay

Teacher reads the following description to the class. This may be copied and distributed to the students for future reference.

Text adapted from the Time Life Encyclopedia of Photography: Photojournalism (1983)

The Photo Essay: A New Way to Communicate

The photo essay is one of the most complex end-products of photography, involving, as it does, the use of several pictures and the talents of more than one person—an editor in addition to the photographer, and usually a design artist as well.

Creating a photo essay requires the organization of a number of pictures on a single theme so that they give a fuller, more intense view of their subject than any single picture could. The subject can be anything—an idea, a person, an event, a place—and the organization can be either chronological or thematic. The form itself is flexible; what matters is that the pictures work together to enrich the theme.

In newspaper and magazine work, it is the editor who sends photographers on specific assignments—often detailing particular shots to make—confident they would come back not just with pictures to use but how to use them: large or small; in sequences for dramatic effect or for information; to inspire humor, anger, curiosity, disgust.

Today the photo essay is thriving—and not just in picture magazines. By the mid-1970s, daily and weekly newspapers in several regions of the United States were running photographs that often approached the quality of those in the large-format picture

magazines: dramatic without being sensational, concerned with the human consequences of an event rather than focused only on the instant of action.

Making Personal Pictures Tell a Story

The problem with amateur photographers is a lack of editing and planning. Essentially they lay out their essays in the chronological order in which they were shot and include every shot. By planning, editing, and organizing around themes, the amateur can look professional.

The key is to tell a story, and to do this you must choose what images are going to be the broad introduction to the story. These are typically the images that are usually shot to incorporate more background and aerial space. Then find details that are important to the story and zoom in on those and fill the frame to create emphasis. Perhaps the highlight of the story can be an extreme closeup, and when it is laid out some shots can be larger than others, using layout techniques like double page spreads for greater emphasis.

For instance, a professional would be armed with a photo script on a shoot. The photo editor would give him a list of images that he would want to see in a magazine spread. The scripts are detailed and elaborate. Consider a hypothetical picture story about a fire company. The script might call for several different kinds of pictures: major shots that will establish the framework of the narrative (views of the firehouse and close-ups of individual firemen working on the engines), transitional pictures that can be used to guide the viewer from one idea to another (the hook and ladder tearing out of the firehouse en route to an alarm), action pictures that convey the drama of the firefighting (the burning

building, a fireman overcome by smoke), pictures that bring the story to a conclusion (the exhausted firemen drinking coffee back in the firehouse).

The amateur's shooting script need not be so detailed. To prepare a picture essay on the Cub Scouts' visit to zoo, for example, the photographer might jot down in advance a few essential shots—the Scouts boarding the bus, the stop for lunch. Beyond that the amateur—like the professional—must remain flexible as the action unfolds, taking additional pictures the script may not call for. The tearful boy who drops his ice cream cone, for example, is a gift no alert photographer should miss. But the script is necessary to keep the photographer on the track and to guarantee a story with a beginning a middle and an end—a series of related photographs that become a single storytelling entity.

In pursuit of this goal, the professional does not skimp on the amount of images he shoots. It is better to shoot more than less, and explore the subject from numerous points of view and angles. Also, by using a more rapid shoot approach to recording images, you are sure to be ready to seize the moment when that Cub Scout begins to cry. Don't sit back and wait for the perfect shot, because that is the sure way to miss the moment. The "decisive moment" is a phrase that was coined by photographer Henri Cartier-Bresson, who would seek out a location and look and wait for something to happen. Then he would shoot a lot of film to ensure that he would have the image that he wanted.

It's All in the Presentation

Once a photographer creates enough images that are technically well-exposed and the images are well composed, the job of editing to retain the strongest storytelling images comes next. In other words, it puts the images in the context of a visual narrative.

The proof sheet is used to mark up the best crop (composition) for the images, and to decide which of the batch will be the major show-stopping images and which will be the detailed images to help with transition. Sizing the images up will also make a more ordinary image into a show-stopping, double-page spread, for instance. The next step would be to organize the order and write a number on the backs of the images in pencil so that you know what the layout will look like.

Your written assignment is to write out your photo script in detail so that you have an idea of what kinds of shots could be possible for you and then draw some fast thumbnail images so that you can identify what kinds of shots create themes and narrative imagery.

Ideas for some themes could be:

- Retracing one's ancestry—getting the flavor of history by documenting the buildings, homes and customs of a community.
- A day in the life of: (you can shoot anything here. a day in the life of a school nurse, a boy, a barbershop... it can be anything.)
- Recording the human epic: pieces of reality
- Capturing the moment in a news story: photojournalism

Major theme threads:

- Who am I—the best of me (about one's identity and heritage)
- Who are we: (about you and your family and your place within that family)
- Who are they—the community and its members
- What is happening around us—issues that are created through bigger social issues like the environmental shortages, pollutants, injustice, crime, racism)

- Time in and time out—comparing and contrasting the old and the new (can be people, place or thing)

Appendix P

Student Self-Assessment After Shooting

STUDENT SELF ASSESSMENT AFTER SHOOTING/EDITING

Name, Date and Grade:

Theme Title:

Description of theme:

Shot list:

What do you anticipate will be a major moment in this series? A lesser or transitional moment?

Name the order of the images by number and title if you have one.

What do you think was your strong point/show stopper images when you were taking the pictures and why?

Were your final images meeting what your "mind's eye" saw when you were actually taking them? Elaborate and explain the similarities and differences.

If you were to go back and do this again what images would you keep and which ones do you need to reshoot? Please explain in detail.

When you reshoot, what will you do differently and how will you go about accomplishing this?

What images are your favorites and your least favorites, explain why.

Appendix Q

Student Planning Before Shooting

STORY BOARD FOR PRE-SHOOT

Name, date, grade:

Theme title:

Appendix R

Student Exit Survey

Name:

Class:

Student Survey

1. In your opinion, is photography art? Why or why not?
2. In your opinion, what makes a good photograph?
3. What types of photographs do you like to take, and why?
4. What makes taking photos different than other types of art that you made before?

5. What have you learned from completing your photo essay? Please discuss the topic, the elements and principles of art, and the use of technology.

Appendix S

Single Image Pre- and Post-Test

Name

Teacher/Date:

Photo Pre/Post Test



1) What's going on in this picture?

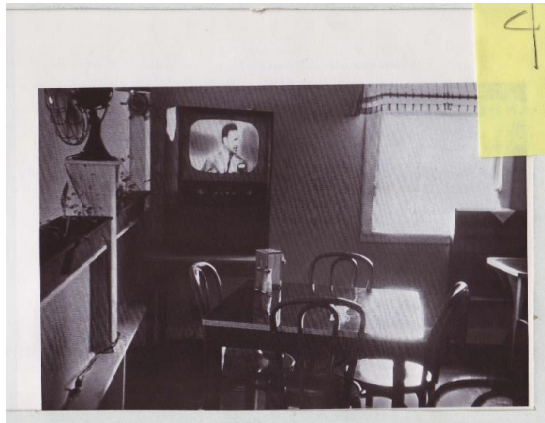
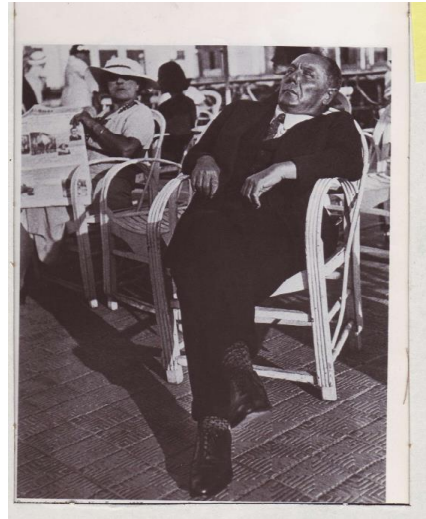
What do you see that makes you say that?

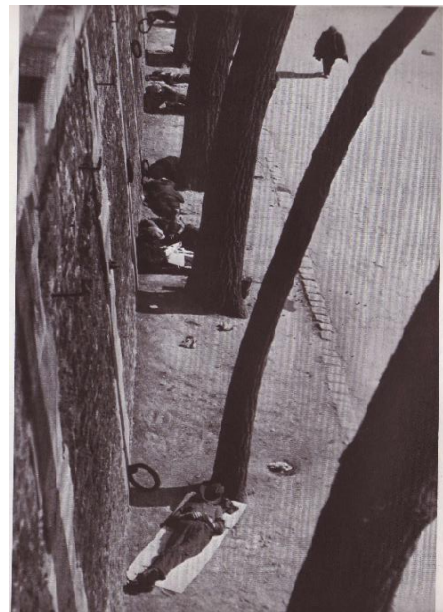
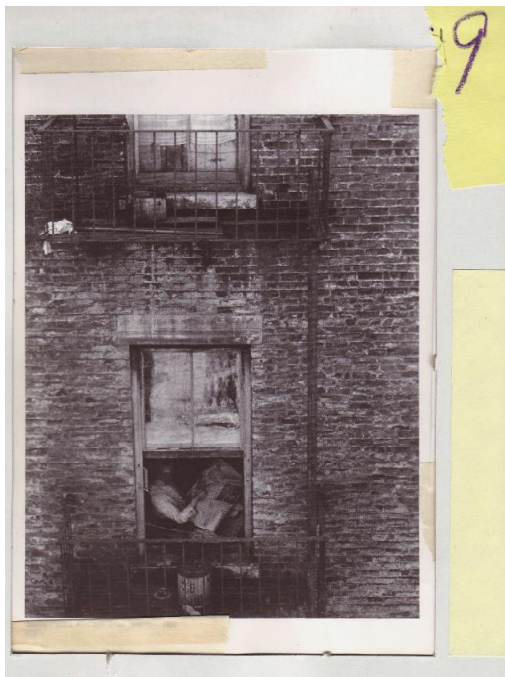
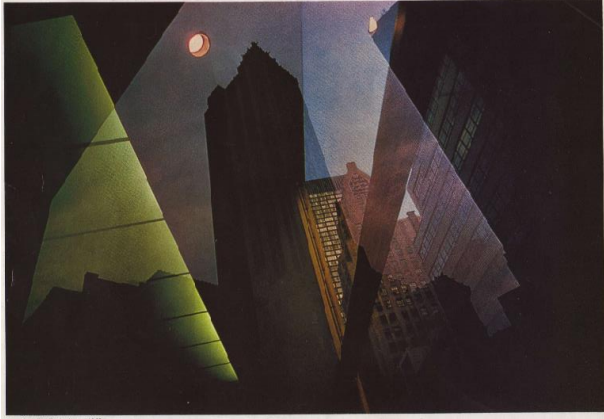
Write down what you think is happening in the picture, and don't worry about spelling.

2) What more can you find?

In other words, what do you think the point of the picture is?

Appendix T
Choice Pre-Test Images





Choice Pre-Test Photo Credits

From the top left to right of page 382:

All photographs used in all of the pre- and post-tests were found in the Time-Life Books, Life Library of Photography, *Great Photographers*, 1983, with the exception of the black and white photograph of the five women at the piano by James Van Der Zee, *Song Birds*, 1932, which is from the Philadelphia Museum of Art, and is the last image on the bottom of the page.

Edward Steichen, *Diagram of Doom-2*, New York, c. 1922, courtesy The Museum of Modern Art, New York.

Lisette Model, *Promenade des Anglais*, Nice France, 1937, © Lisette Model, courtesy Sander Gallery.

Henri Cartier-Bresson, *Abandoned Windmill*, Beauce, France, date unknown, from Magnum.

Eugene Atget, *Café La Ronde*, Boulevard Montparnasse, date unknown, courtesy George Eastman House.

Robert Frank, *U.S. 1, Leaving Columbia*, South Carolina, 1955.

Diane Arbus, *A Family on Their Lawn One Sunday in Westchester*, New York, 1968, Estate of Diane Arbus.

From the top left to right of page 383:

Ernest Haas, *New York City Reflections*, 1960s.

Dorothea Lange, *Spring in Berkeley*, 1951, courtesy The Oakland Museum Collection.

Edward Steichen, *Sunday Papers: West 86th Street*, New York, 1922, courtesy The Museum of Modern Art, New York.

Andre Kertesz, *Sur la Qual de la Seine*, 1926, © Andre Kertesz.

Last photograph on the page:

James Van Der Zee, *Song Birds*, 1932
Philadelphia Museum of Art, Gift of the Young Friends of the Philadelphia Museum of Art, 2003, 2003-64-2 Copyright: © Donna Mussenden Van Der Zee

Appendix U

Original Test Tool from the Artful Citizen/Wolfsonian Study (Curva & Associates, 2005) Used with the Choice Pre-Test

Guidelines for Administering Artful Citizenship Visual Literacy Pre-Surveys and Post-Surveys

Note: This instrument is to be administered twice—once at the beginning of Artful Citizenship program, and once at the end of the program.

Materials:

- One copy of image for each student
- One copy of Visual Literacy Assessment Form for each student

Administration: (*Bold/italicized* text is suggested direction to students)

1. Have children arrange themselves so that each student has sufficient room to examine the visual image and write on the Assessment Form.
2. Explain the activity to students (read the following):

Today we are going to look at an image and answer some questions about that image. There is no right or wrong answers to these questions. This is not a test. When you're finished, I will collect your papers and put them right into an envelope without reading them. Your answers will help us come up with new ideas for teaching art. We are interested in knowing what each one of you sees in the image and what you think about it. Please work individually on these— not in groups.

3. Distribute answer packets to all students and assist them in completing identifying information at the top of page 1.

4. Ask students to set answer packets aside and explain:

Now I'm going to give everyone a copy of an image. I want you to look at your image for a couple of minutes.

5. Distribute the images.

6. I'm going to give everyone 1-2 minutes just to look at the image. I want you to think about what is going on in the picture and what makes you think that.

7. Now, let's answer question 1:

“What's going on in this picture? What do you see that makes you say that?”

Write down what you think is happening in the picture, and don't worry about spelling. I'm going to give you a few minutes to answer. (allow 5-15 minutes)

8. Now, let's answer question 2:

“What more can you find?” In other words, what do you think the point of the picture is? I'll give you another 5-10 minutes to answer this question.

Collect the papers, place them in the envelope provided, and return to your teacher.

Visual Literacy Assessment

DIRECTIONS: WRITE ANSWERS IN THE BLANK SPACES.

USE THE BACK OF THE SHEET IF NEEDED.

1. What's going on in this picture?

What do you see that makes you say that?

2. What more can you find?

Appendix V

Endnotes

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- ⁱ Choice Pre-test images from left to right: Edward Steichen, *Diagram of Doom-2*, New York, c. 1922, courtesy The Museum of Modern Art, New York; Henri Cartier-Bresson, *Abandoned Windmill*, Beauce, France, date unknown, from Magnum; Andre Kertesz, *Sur la Qual de la Seine*, 1926, ©Andre Kertesz.
- ⁱⁱ Single Image Pre- and Post-test image: Leonard Freed: *Fun with a Fire Hydrant*, 1967, Leonard Freed from Magnum.