WORKING TOWARDS A GUIDED EXPLORATION APPROACH:

DESIGN-BASED RESEARCH OF A VISUAL ARTS PROGRAM IN A PRESCHOOL

CLASSROOM

By

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES

LIST OF FIGURES

ABSTRACT

There is an ongoing debate about the importance of visual arts in early childhood classrooms. On one hand, arts are viewed as essential to the learning and curriculum for young students. On the other hand, heightened concern for rigorous academics often pit early literacy and math instruction against arts. This debate influences the decisions educators make regarding the inclusion or exclusion of classroom visual arts experiences and, if included, how these experiences are facilitated. Researchers have advocated for the guided exploration approach to visual arts for years, but we still have limited understanding of what such an approach looks like in action and how to plan and implement in classrooms.

This study aims to address this debate in visual arts experiences by explicating the facets of the guided-exploration approach (Bresler, 1993) in a preschool classroom. Through a 2-year design-based research study in a preschool classroom taught by both an early childhood educator (myself) and a visual artist-in-residence, I investigated the three research questions: (1) What is the resulting visual arts program based on the guided exploration approach? What changes are made to the program through the design-based research? (2) How do preschool students experience this visual arts program? and (3) How is the design-based research conducted through collaboration of an artist-in-residence and the early childhood teacher? What struggles and successes do the teachers encounter in each phase of development? Data collection spanned two full years, collecting pieces such as video and audio recording of each of the sessions, pictures of student progress of their individual paintings, and lesson plans and reflections from both myself and the visual artist-in-residence. Data analysis was a recursive process that corresponded with each research question. The first research question employed axial coding in regards to moments of change within the program. The second question employed in vivo

coding to uncover students' experiences. Finally, the third research question began with descriptive coding identifying moments of frustration within the program development.

The findings of this study uncover four essential components of the guided exploration approach: observation, communication in and through the arts, attending to the aesthetic qualities, and facilitation of the artistic identity. Facilitated by an artist-in-residence and an early childhood professional, this dissertation provides empirical evidence that a collaborative teaching experience is not established until the preschool students are valued as partners in the planning and implementation of the guided-exploration approach. Essential strategies to facilitate this approach to visual arts in early childhood are modeling and facilitating art discoveries and play.

CHAPTER I

Introduction

The observations point to a major chasm between scholarly and teachers' advocacies for the arts on the one hand, and classroom practices on the other. A key factor in that chasm is the discrepancy between school goals and the essence of art as it is perceived by teachers. School goals can be categorized into two broad classes: academic achievement and disciplinary. The pressure for academics is directly related to what is widely considered to be the primary role of school: the acquisition of knowledge, high achievement in academics as represented in high scores in standardized tests (Bresler, 1992, p. 410-411).

Visual arts are a powerful multimodal means that young children use to communicate their understandings and interpretations of the world (Bae, 2004; Danko-McGhee & Slutsky, 2003) and it offers learning and developmental benefits as they critically elaborate on meaningful life experiences and ideas (Bae, 2004; Burnaford, 2013; Eisner, 1994). There is an ongoing debate about the importance of visual arts activities and artful representations in the early childhood classroom. On the one hand, the National Education Association (NEA) refers to the arts as "essential" to the learning and curriculum for all students. Early Childhood Art Educators (ECAE) position statement clearly states the vision for the learning of young children: "Every child will have a quality early education in which rich and meaningful experiences in the arts are embedded" (2000). An objective that is defined in which to accomplish this vision is, "ECAE will encourage research in the early childhood visual arts to expand and extend existing research" (2000). In concert with the ECAE position statement, NAE states, "Every student deserves the benefits of a comprehensive fine arts program and instructors uniquely qualified to deliver it" (Holcomb, 2007).

On the other hand, many recent policy decisions focus on "academic" learning, such as mathematics and literacy (e.g., NCLB, 2001, Common Core Standards-Based Testing, 2013),

which result in undervaluing the function, purpose, and skills afforded through visual. Despite the original inclusion of the arts in the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, the arts have never been included as part of the "core" curriculum (Holcomb, 2007). With heightened concern for rigorous academic assessments as schools aim for "Adequate Yearly Progress," the arts are weighted against mathematics and literacy (Chapman, 2004). Often considered extracurricular, the pressure for teachers and students to show progress in academic standardized tests takes away from the benefits and value of the arts (Sabol, 2010).

This debate has practical implications that influence the decisions educators make regarding the inclusion or exclusion of classroom visual arts experiences and, if included, how these experiences are facilitated. Against the backdrop of this large sociocultural context, my study aims to address this debate in visual arts experiences by explicating the facets of the guided-exploration orientation in a preschool classroom.

Defining Visual Arts

In an attempt to differentiate this specific field of visual arts, definitions in the arts must be put forth. While "arts education" is often discussed, this term encompasses a broader perspective of the various art disciplines situated in the larger body of education. Art education, on the other hand, is a more finite definition, and does not include drama, music, dance, etc. A common definition of visual arts education must be asserted to understand the breadth of this field; Davis (2008) defines visual arts as, "teaching and learning in and about art that you can see in two- and three-dimensional media such as painting, sculpture, or photography" (p. 14). I adopt this definition of visual arts throughout the dissertation.

The field of art education is vast, and there is very little congruence within the field regarding the definitions that explain the art discipline in concert with the academic curriculum.

2

These constructs, which will be detailed below, are continuously changing and being redefined as artists and researchers use and subscribe to these definitions.   Davis (2008), an avid arts researcher, delineates the nine expansive constructs situated in the broader perspective of art in education:

1. Arts Based: Teaching and learning are based on the arts. The arts, whether dance, visual arts, music, etc. supply the subject matter and are considered a "gateway" to learning across the many disciplines in education (p. 16).

2. Arts Integrated: Arts and other disciplines in school are equally shared, implemented, and valued. Acting in concert, each of the disciplines are mutually informative.

3. Arts Infused: The arts are brought in, often infused through artists or specialists, to support knowledge of another subject. Under the umbrella of this definition, "methods have been developed that help infuse artists' contributions into the objectives of the curriculum rather than letting them stand as disconnected events or intrusions" (p. 17).

4. Arts Included: Arts are required courses, in which progress in the arts is expected and valued equal to the academic counterparts.

5. Arts Expanded: Education in the arts is conducted outside of the school institution, often occurring in the community in places such as museums.

6. Arts Professional: A very rare form of arts education, arts professional is demanding, in that students intentionally prepare for careers in the arts.

7. Arts Extra: The most common form of arts in education, art is defined as "extracurricular" or "nonessential" (p. 19). Unique to this form of art education, art specialist are rarely involved in the planning or implementation of these art activities and are viewed as extras in comparison with the academic curriculum.

8. Aesthetic Education: The priority here is perception and interpretation, viewing the arts as a thought processes.

9. Arts Cultura: The arts are viewed as means in which culture is understood.

These many art constructs provide a broad perspective of the field of art in education. While we know that these art constructs are extracted from arts classroom implementation and facilitation, the field of visual arts is in need of systematic research to understand the methods that are built from these constructs. Upon beginning the program under study, we initially subscribed to an 'Arts Infused' curriculum, in which a visual artist-in-residence supported the knowledge of the arts and other core curriculum subjects.

Visual Arts Curriculum

The interpretation of visual arts curriculum has impacted the type of research conducted in visual arts during the consequential paradigms. To explore the paradigm in which this study is situated, we must explore the previous paradigms and how this frame of thought has impacted teacher implementation and research.

Creativity and self-expression. The twentieth century was dominated by the thought that the purpose of art was for a person to explore and build their creativity and personal self-expression. This time period did not encourage students to make connections between their art and their culture, as art was not seen as intellectual; according to Irwin and Chalmers (2007), "They believed children had innate creative abilities that would be hindered by intellectualizing their art making" (p. 180). With a focus on individualism and student-centered learning in schools, children were encouraged to engage in art for purposes of pure enjoyment and wonder. During this paradigm, the aesthetics of the art were vacant from research and teaching in visual arts, with a heavy emphasis on the student's natural creativity. Research and practice during this

time focused mostly upon what the student created, rather than the act of creating, and art was viewed as tool for development in other areas of the curriculum, such as development in social-emotional skills.

Aesthetic education and discipline-based arts education. The aesthetic education paradigm took a shift away from creativity, as art began infusing cultural heritage and artifacts within the subject of the arts (Irwin & Chalmers, 2007). Aesthetic education is defined as, "Planned activities with a focus on perceiving images, artifacts, and the natural world help focus subject-based curricula across specific objectives, learning events, and assessment tools" (Irwin & Chalmers, 2007, p. 181). An impactful voice and proponent of the infusion of aesthetic literacy for children was Elliot Eisner (1985), in which he advocated for aesthetic education in both practice and research (Irwin & Chalmers, 2007). During this time, the art world began writing curricula with a focus on the aesthetics for teachers to implement in the classrooms. Students' natural creativity was honed by an appreciation for the artistic qualities used to convey an understanding.

Discipline-Based Arts Education is closely aligned with aesthetic education, however the main difference is that the aesthetics, history, and cultural component of the arts is used in art making as well (Irwin & Chalmers, 2007). Students are taught to critically analyze famous works of art with an emphasis on the aesthetics and history that makes the piece a unique cultural tool. The research and practice conducted during this paradigm integrated experiencing the visual and visualizing experiences for young children, however the emphasis is on perceiving the visual, in which the designing of the visual is not emphasized. This perspective views perceiving and designing in visual arts education as two separate entities.

Arts integration. The paradigm of arts integration places great emphasis on the benefits of integrating the arts into other curriculum subjects. The complexity of arts integration involves not only students and teachers, but also artists and community members as research and teaching begins to use arts as a medium through which other topics are learned (Irwin & Chalmers, 2007). During this paradigm, research begins to employ different methods of teaching, such as artists-in-residence and master art teachers in the schools. Bresler, DeStefano, Feldman, and Garg (2000) identify a continuum of how the arts are integrated in practice, from a subservient integration to a full and co-equal integration. The former includes the arts as a small piece of the curriculum, where as the later considers the arts as a dominant and equal partner to the corresponding piece of the curriculum.

Inquiry art. Viewing art as a reflective practice, this recent paradigm views artists as solving problems through the artistic medium. Advocates of this paradigm insist, "art practice is research" (Irwin & Chlamers, 2007, p. 184). Inquiry art emphasizes the process of art as an ongoing reflective practice.

Taking into account the previous paradigm shifts in visual arts practice and research, the present study aims to blend these paradigms to provide preschool students opportunities to experience art as an artist, through play, observation, and art making. To be able to explore these famous artists work, such as Vincent van Gogh and Claude Monet, we must look through these artists' perspectives. Yet, of utmost importance to this program is that the students' ideas and understandings are at the forefront and the famous artists techniques and culture are supportive to the students' artistic exploration. With these premises, each of these paradigms influenced the guided-exploration approach.

6

Visual Arts Approaches

Visual arts is frequently implemented across preschool classrooms in varying capacities, however there is very little research conducted across classrooms to differentiate the philosophies and implementation strategies. Bresler (1993) conducted a three-year study in kindergarten through third grade classrooms in the United States with the purpose of understanding the arts teaching and curricula. While not only specific to visual arts, Bresler (1993) examined and defined three orientations to arts curricula: the little-intervention orientation, the production orientation, and the guided-exploration orientation.

As defined by Bresler (1993), the little-intervention orientation is characterized with students' freedom of choice to explore and create, and teachers' minimal guidance and scaffolding. A classroom implementing the little-intervention orientation may have an art center with several materials, such as crayons, markers, paints, pom-poms, and glitter, and the students are left exploring the materials independently. This orientation acts as "arts extra" in which art specialists do not oversee the implementation of the arts, and with little guidance, it tends to be viewed as nonessential.

A stark contrast is the production orientation. This approach emphasizes students following teachers' directions and creating arts after a model prescribed by teachers (Bresler, 1993). These visual arts projects often look the same, and the purpose of the activity becomes more aligned with fine motor objectives. This orientation does not align with the arts in education constructs, as this is not considered art upon comparison to the definitions.

The guided-exploration orientation encourages students and teachers to use an aesthetic lens in planning and creating art. The guided-exploration orientation positions teachers as facilitators "provide(ing) guidelines that help children observe things carefully, use their

7

sensitivities, and express their ideas when they create artwork" (Bae, 2004, p. 248; Bresler, 1993). The goals of such orientation is to foster children's observation, listening, and communication skills through the arts, and enhance enjoyment of aesthetic experience of arts (Eckhoff, 2013). Through this approach, students are not just creating art, but they are becoming an artist. This orientation is most closely aligned with "arts infused" education, in which the objectives of the arts and the everyday curriculum overlap and support each other, yet this approach differs from arts integration in that it is not a co-equal integration or hybrid approach to education with the arts.

As observed by Bresler (1993), the guided-exploration orientation requires thorough planning, learning, and professional development for the teacher prior to implementing this visual art teaching practice. While we have some sense of what the guided-exploration orientation should be, there is noticeably little research conducted to understand the complexity of this guided-exploration orientation, on which the present study focuses.

Research Statement and Questions

The purpose of this study was to explore and explicate the guided-exploration approach to visual arts (Bresler, 1993) in early childhood education, specifically preschool education, sorting out both the pedagogical and program details of this approach. Through a 2-year design-based research study in a preschool (Anderson & Shattuck, 2012; Collins, Joseph & Bielaczyc, 2004; Design-Based Research Collective, 2003), this study examined three areas of this approach: the program, the preschool students' experience, and the teachers' experience. The following research questions guided this study:

1. What is the resulting visual arts program based on the guided exploration approach? What changes are made to the program through the design-based research?

2. How do preschool students experience this visual arts program?

3. How is the design-based research conducted through collaboration of an artist-in-residence and the early childhood teacher? What struggles and successes do the teachers encounter in each phase of development?

Significance of the Study

To successful integrate visual arts into a preschool classroom, one must understand the facets of such a program. By conducting a design-based research study, we were able to understand two distinct areas of this visual arts program adopting the guided-exploration orientation that work together to provide a successful and high quality visual arts facilitation for young children.

Research to date on the implementation of the guided-exploration orientation is very sparse. Bae (2004) conducted a qualitative ethnographic study in an art classroom to investigate the roles of the teacher adopting the guided-exploration orientation. Bae (2004) concluded that teachers adopt a guidance role, in that they are reactive to the students needs and interests during visual arts activities. However, with only one such study, we should explore this guidance role further. While this research supports the role of the teacher, the students' perspective of this role is vacant from this study.

Angela Eckhoff (2013) investigates the guided-exploration approach, both teacher and student perspectives, through the use of an artist-in-residence program model. Exploratory research aimed to explain a collaborative relationship between an artist-in-residence and an early childhood educator (Eckhoff, 2011). Adopting a guided-exploration approach, the artist used techniques such as modeling, student collaboration, encouragement, and experimentation during center time to facilitate visual arts in the classroom (Eckhoff, 2011). While the early childhood

teacher was supportive and involved, it is clear that the artist-in-residence is leading these visual art experiences (Eckhoff, 2011). This collaborative endeavor must be explored further to understand the effectiveness of an artist-in-residence model in preschool education.

While the use of design-based research methods continues to grow (Anderson & Shattuck, 2012), there are still very few published studies in early childhood research employing this methodology (Bradley & Reinking, 2010). Further, there is yet to be a published article in visual arts research employing design-based research methodology. I aimed to address this methodological gap by employing design-based research and integrating both the early childhood and visual art disciplines. By employing design-based research methods, I intended to bring together educational research and practice by studying and learning from the complexity in the real world preschool classroom. This design-based research study investigated the interaction of these two distinct areas of research to provide an overall understanding of the guided-exploration orientation in visual arts facilitation of a preschool classroom.

Overview of the Dissertation

In designing an investigation of the visual arts program adopting the guided-exploration orientation, a conceptual framework based on the ideas of two theoretical lenses are helpful in informing this inquiry. The leading theory is Vygotsky's sociocultural theory of human learning. In addition, perspectives of multimodality also helped to inform different aspects of this project. These theories, as well as the relevant literature will be discussed in Chapter 2.

Chapter 3 details the research method employed, design-based research. In this chapter, I begin by delineating the design-based research methodology in relation to the current study and research questions. A detailed description of the methods, consisting of the research site,

context, participants, data collection, and data analysis will be discussed. Finally, I discuss in-depth my role in this study as a researcher and lead teacher.

The results and discussion in Chapter 4 are organized around the research questions--beginning with the visual arts program adopting the guided exploration approach, followed by the preschool students experience and the teachers' experience in this visual arts program respectively.

In the final chapter (Chapter 5), I discuss the main themes of the findings. Based on these findings, I make recommendations to teachers in implementing the guided-exploration approach to visual arts and discuss the research implications.

CHAPTER II

Review of Literature

The scarcity of literature on the operational visual arts curriculum in ordinary schools is all the more intriguing in view of how little can be known about arts practice in the schools without actively exploring it (Bresler, 1994, p. 92).

The claim made here by Bresler continues to pervade visual arts research. With little empirical and systematic research in visual arts, this study aimed to advance the research in preschool education. I begin this chapter by discussing the theoretical framework—the sociocultural theory and multimodality perspectives that inform my project, and then review three strands of research in early childhood visual arts: existing early childhood visual arts approaches and programs, the teacher's role and experience, and the students' experience and learning.

Theoretical Framework

To be able to understand current visual arts research, we must begin to understand the complex theoretical contributions to the field since the late 19th century (Papandreou, 2014). Several fields (i.e. psychology and education) have begun to examine early childhood visual arts through the analysis of children's drawing using the developmental framework of drawing. Originating with the work of Jean Piaget, this systematic research studied the developmental progression of young children's drawing abilities (Piaget & Inhelder, 1956). Piaget did not focus specifically on the cognitive benefits that drawing provides, but contended that drawing was an artifact for adults to understand the cognitive capabilities of young children (Piaget & Inhelder, 1956). Early research on children's drawing, specifically Luquet's seminal research (1927/2001), drew upon Piaget's cognitive developmental stage theory, identifying several chronological stages that children progress through when drawing: scribbling, pre-schematic,

failed realism, schematic, and visual realism.   However, as developmental stage theories have accepted disparagement, so too have the developmental drawing theories (Fawson, 2009). As Margaret Brooks (2009), a prominent visual arts researcher, interprets, "A Piagetian developmental framework suggests that children's drawing follows a consistent, universal, sequential progression over which the adult has little influence" (p. 1).

This developmental progression limits visual arts teaching/facilitation and research; first, the progression from scribbles to symbolic drawings takes away from the mediation and supports or scaffolding that a teacher or peers can provide to the young child. Matthews (2003) suggests that this frame of thought aims to view children's drawings as insufficient until they reach the "realistic" stage of representation, limiting arts curricula to be simplified (Papandreou, 2014). Also, following Piaget's developmental theory of drawing, research is limited in that the mediation and scaffolds that the teacher can provide are understudied.

Essentially, through Piaget's developmental lens of drawing, the unit of analysis is the final product created by the child: the drawing (Papandreou, 2014; Ring, 2006). Analyzed as a solitary activity, the context in which the drawing and/or visual arts activity takes place is vacant from the research. Upon analyzing with this developmental perspective of visual arts, Papandreou (2014) contends, "it is unlikely we will ever be able to 'see' the true nature of drawing as a sociocultural activity, or recognize the purposes and ways in which children use it or its potential to function as a learning and teaching tool" (p. 86). This quote speaks to the shift in visual arts research, to analyzing the context in which visual arts activity takes place through a sociocultural lens. The guided exploration approach values the teacher as a mediator and the students experiences and contributions, in which this study is guided by the sociocultural theory and multimodality.

Sociocultural Theory

For years, developmental research had viewed learning and the sociocultural environment as two separate entities to study. However, with the introduction of the work of Lev Vygostsky (1978), the interdependence of the individual and the sociocultural world in which we live in is now studied cohesively. As cited in Rogoff (1995),

> …Vygosky's interest in the mutuality of the individual and the sociocultural environment
> is apparent in his concern with finding a unit of analysis that preserves the essence of the
> events of interest rather than separating an event into elements that no longer function as
> does the whole (p. 140).

In studying young children's visual arts activity, Vygotsky's sociocultural framework lends itself to the world that students learn in; young children are not independent, as they are a true extension of their family and environment as they begin to develop their culture and identity. School itself is a social practice, requiring a situated perspective of how knowing and learning are socially bound (Lave & Wenger, 1991). Without this sociocultural perspective, "the richness and diversity of children's lives" may be disregarded (Robbins, 2005, p. 152). Children are active and dynamic participants impacted by the sociocultural community: people, activity, and cultural artifacts or tools.

This study is grounded in the sociocultural theory that asserts the interdependence of the individual child and the sociocultural world (Vygotsky, 1978). Through the tenet of mediation, or the appropriation and use of signs, this theory provides a lens to evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of the visual arts approaches, specifically focusing on the meditational roles of the teacher and of the tools in a visual arts program (Vygotsky, 1978).

14

Zone of Proximal Development and Mediation. In order to understand mediation, we first need to examine Vygotsky's concept of zone of proximal development (ZPD). ZPD is interpreted as a dynamic space that lies between actual development and potential development, and it is often associated with scaffolding in the form of instruction or guidance from adults and more capable peers (Newman & Holzman, 1993). Vygotsky argued, "the only good kind of instruction is that which marches ahead of development and leads it; it must be aimed not so much at the ripe as at the ripening functions" (Vygotsky, 1986, p. 188).

Vygotsky (1978) asserted that all activity is mediated, whether by signs or tools, in which Bodrova and Leong (2007) understand and define mediation as, "something that stands as an intermediary between an environmental stimulus and an individual response to that stimulus" (p. 51). More contemporary visual arts research views visual arts activity as a joint activity of both the teacher and the student and highlights the meditational role of the teacher and the physical tools. For example, Ji-Hi Bae (2004), a visual arts researcher contends

> Creativity, which is highly valued in early childhood education, does not only come from inside the children but also from human and physical environments outside the children. In this sense, adult and peer mediation is an important aspect of helping children become creative (p. 253).

Vygotsky (1978) suggested that social interaction, particularly language use in social interaction, is a critical mediator in children's cognitive development and learning. Upon integrating this lens in visual arts research, recent empirical studies are beginning to look at the language a teacher uses with a child as mediation (Bentley, 2011; Brooks, 2005; Chang & Cress, 2014; Coates & Coates, 2006; Eckhoff, 2013; Edens & Potter, 2004; Papandreou, 2014; Schiller, 1995; Thompson & Bales, 1991).

Guided participation, however, a term introduced by neo-Vygotskian Barbara Rogoff, specified the interpersonal communication, whether verbal or nonverbal, situated in sociocultural analysis (1990). As defined by Rogoff, guided participation "...stresses the mutual involvement of individuals and their social partners, communicating and coordinating their involvement as they participate in socioculturally structured collective activity" (1995, p. 146). Teachers are important "social partners" who mediate young children's learning. Aligning closely with "guided participation," the guided-exploration approach to visual arts teaching values the joint activity of both the teacher and the student; teachers mediate children's meaning making with art through techniques such as scaffolding observing skills, facilitating communication in and through the arts, and attending to the aesthetic qualities (Bresler, 1993; Eckhoff, 2013).

However, adjusting our role and meditational techniques in the classroom proves to be difficult, after a long understanding of learning as acquisition. Based on empirical research, Kouzlin (2003) concluded that there was "(a) low level of effective spontaneous mediation among teachers. The teachers either avoided the meditational approach altogether, using instead directive teaching strategies, or were unsuccessful in their meditational attempts" (p. 20). Through the analysis of the guided-exploration approach to visual arts teaching, meditational techniques are explored to provide an understanding of how these techniques can be implemented and potentially impact student learning in visual arts.

Research examined in this review all use the sociocultural lens, as the empirical studies relied upon in this review of research are largely published after 1993. Using this lens, visual arts activity is understood as a collaborative and mediated activity.

Multimodality

Multimodality suggests that meaning making is the result of multiple modes of communication practice including language, speech, gesture, gaze, image and writing (Bezemer & Jewitt, 2010; Kress, Jewitt, Ogborn & Tsatsarelis, 2001). The present ideas of multimodality stem from three separate perspectives, one of which helped to inform this study. Of particular interest to this study is multimodal interaction analysis. This perspective places emphasis on understanding interactions between individuals and the affordances of multiple modes used to communicate.

Historically, language has been viewed as the most important and direct mode of communication and meaning making. Multimodal interaction analysis allows for a lens beyond verbal interchange. Using a multimodal perspective we can recognize that there is more happening in addition to language and context. Focusing only on language might result in an incomplete picture of the preschool students' experiences. A multimodal perspective allows the researcher to consider additional modes of communication and presume that one mode of communication is not superior to others, yet working together to communicate a given meaning jointly. For example, the meaning that is communicated by a preschool student as he/she engages in painting is enhanced by jointly considering his/her language, gestures, and sound effects.

Multimodal interaction analysis allows myself, as the researcher, to recognize that other modes play a central role in the overall meaning making that is happening during visual arts. In the present study, preschool students are encouraged to collaborate, elaborate on other's ideas, and appreciate other's artwork, whether a peer or famous artist. With this underlying understanding, the meaning that is created by students is impacted by several modes of several different interactions. Student's paintings are undoubtedly influenced by the famous artists

piece, the student's conversations at the table during art making, and the teacher's meditational techniques. Norris (2004) suggests, "…we analyze not only the messages that an individual in interaction sends, but also how other individuals in the interaction react to these messages. Thus, there is a constant tension between what a person consciously does and what that person expresses" (p. 4). By analyzing the ongoing co-construction of interactions between teacher-student, student-student, and student-famous artist, I aim to understand the meaning that is also co-constructed.

Therefore, based on the Vygotskian theory and multimodality, this study explores and describes the guided-exploration approach to visual arts teaching, specifically focusing on the teachers' experiences, the preschool students' experiences, and the program development.

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Review of Literature

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Three bodies of literature inform this study including: early childhood visual arts approaches and models, visual arts teachers' roles and experiences, and student experiences and learning in visual arts programs.

Early Childhood Visual Arts Approaches and Models

Approaches. Bresler (1993) identified three classroom art approaches in early childhood, identifying the role the teacher assumes in response to their own pedagogy, pressures from the school, and underlying understanding of the benefits of visual arts. The little-intervention orientation is characterized with minimal teacher involvement, as students are encouraged to explore materials in different ways independently (Bresler, 1993). In contrast, the production orientation focuses more on following directions, as the teacher expects exact replication of a teacher art model (Bresler, 1993). The guided-exploration orientation, dissimilarly, is characterized by teacher facilitation of the art experience with specific focus on observation,

18

aesthetic development, and artistic expression (Bresler, 1993; Bae, 2004). This approach mirrors that of the fine art world, as students are guided to embody artistic characteristics and qualities.

Bresler's later research (1994), a three-year qualitative ethnographic study, identified the three visual arts curricula that coincide with these three approaches: the open-ended student-centered orientation; the rote, teacher-centered orientation; and the higher-order cognitive orientation. However, Bresler (1994) contended, "The scarcity of literature on the operational visual arts curriculum in ordinary schools is all the more intriguing in view of how little can be known about arts practice in the schools without actively exploring it" (p. 92). Often, art is integrated into the early childhood curriculum as subservient to the other 'academic' subjects (Bresler, 1994).

Models. Arts Integration is an example of education in the arts in which the arts are equally interweaved with academic subjects, with goals of improvement in both the arts and the non-arts subject (Davis, 2008). Integration itself dates back to William Heard Kilpatrick (1918), a collaborator of John Dewey, in which he put forth "The Project Method" encouraging education to consider a thematic or project approach to teaching and learning. However, in 1931, John Dewey responded to this assertion, clarifying the need for "the interrelation of subjects with one another" (Kliebard, 2004, p. 150). While the impact of this push was not significant to arts education at the time, it provided grounds for a seminal report issued through the National Council of Teachers of English in 1936 called "A Correlated Curriculum" which reported upon interdisciplinary and integrated research that "disregard(s) discipline lines" (as cited in Burnaford, 2007).

A long-lasting project and initiative in arts integration, or comprehensive arts education, is the Arts in Basic Curriculum (ABC) Project. Initially began in 1987 with a grant to the South

Carolina Arts Commission, this project greatly impacted the Education Accountability Act in 1998 with the inclusions of arts education language. Identified as one of the education reform models in 2003, this research project has increased dramatically in school participation and grant awards. Beginning with kindergarten, this project developed visual arts curriculum standards based on several categories, such as curriculum and scheduling, staffing, materials and equipment, and facilities. The following dissertation was influenced by these four categories in regards to the developing guided-exploration curriculum.

Chicago Arts Partnerships in Education (CAPE), a four year Department of Education supported grant program founded in 1993, is said to "engage(s) students, inspire(s) teachers, and demonstrate(s) impact by weaving visual, digital, and performing arts into classrooms across Chicago." A program developed from this grant, Partnerships in Arts Integration Research (PAIR), aimed to integrate teaching artists into schools to support the facilitation of arts integration in 4th, 5th and 6th grades. Research that unfolded from this grant has had major implications on both arts integration and the value of teaching artists, or artists-in-residences. Catterall and Waldorf (1999) examined the role of a teaching artist supported by this grant, including their experience, influence in the classroom, and the related school culture. Based on interview and survey date, one of the major findings of this research report suggested that planning arts integrated units with trained teachers proved to be one of the most challenging facets of this approach, impacting teaching artists ability to co-equally integrate the arts. With supportive empirical evidence of the artist-in-residence model in fourth through sixth grades, this model must be explored in early grades, such as preschool.

Research has suggested that there is a link between arts integration and student achievement, however in 2002, Karen DeMoss aimed to address specific cognitive changes

reflected in students in CAPE programs. A relatively small study, 30 students in grades ranging from 1st-9th grade were interviewed and observed during arts integration lessons, 10 from each achievement range. Most notable from this research report, students were more intrinsically motivated and began to recognize academic barriers as challenges rather than inabilities (DeMoss, 2002). Moreover, research conducted by Burnaford (2013) used standardized tests to understand student achievement in PAIR programs. Comparing students in arts-integration classrooms versus non-arts integrated classrooms, while both groups of students standardized tests scores increased, the degree and rate at which the students' scores improved in the arts-integrated classrooms was more significant. A conclusion from this research report, directly impacting the investigation of this dissertation, is, "The results indicate that the arts are among the best methods for deep and wide levels of student engagement in academic learning, and that the arts may hold the key for overall school improvement" (Burnaford, 2013).

Oklahoma A+ Schools (OAS), originally founded in North Carolina by the Kenan Institute for the Arts and the Kirkpatrick Foundation in Oklahoma, is a group of 60 elementary schools that implement arts integration as a school reform initiative focused on creativity. The 2002-2006 research report on OAS schools provides quantitative data that suggests statistically significant evidence that OAS schools surpass non-OAS schools within the district on the Academic Performance Index (Barry, Gunzenhauser, Montgomery, & Raiber, 2003). Qualitative data, viewing each school as individual components based on their own school environment, suggests that success hinged on empowerment and support from administration and other teachers (Barry et al., 2003). Important to note, empirical research on this school reform initiative has not been reported outside of these previously mentioned research reports. The

disciplines of arts and early childhood education are in need of systematic research in preschool education.

Artist-in-residence. There is an ongoing debate about the educational benefits of the arts and this often collides with the nature and facilitation of the arts in an early childhood classroom (Bresler, 1993). Early childhood is unique to higher education, as classroom teachers, often not trained in art, are expected to teach art to young children (Bae, 2004). The value of visual arts is diminished due to the pressure to improve test scores in areas such as mathematics and literacy (Korn-Burszytn, 2002), and teachers lack knowledge, experience, and often self-efficacy in their ability to facilitate the arts (Bae, 2004).

Arts partnerships, often regarded as artist-in-residences, teaching artists, or guest instructors, became more forthcoming in education in the 1960s and 1970s (Remer, 1996). Two reports published by the Arts Education Partnership (AEP), beginning in 1999 and later published in 2002, "reflected a growing trend for describing the nature of partnerships involving public schools, arts organizations, and universities," and "contributed to the discussion of arts education that involves classroom teachers as well as arts specialists and teaching artists" (Burnaford, 2007, p. 3).

In an attempt to improve this area of inquiry, researchers have begun exploring and examining an artist-in-residence, or teaching artists, model of visual arts facilitation (Bresler, DeStefano, Feldman & Garg, 2000; Eckhoff, 2008; Eckhoff, 2011; Eckhoff, 2013). The purpose of this model is to invite an artist, and in this case a visual arts specialist, into the school environment focusing on the fine art world of art history, art appreciation, and art criticism (Bresler et al., 2000). To explore this approach, Bresler et al. (2000) conducted a large-scale mixed-methods study to understand this model in eight different urban schools, focusing on third

through eighth grades. The quantitative results of the pretest-posttest comparisons revealed, "students' knowledge of art related vocabulary and ability to analyze, interpret, and evaluate artwork increased after participation in the sixteen week residency" (Bresler et al., 2000, p. 19). However, the qualitative results provide insight into the difficulties of this method; student gains were most evident when there was co-equal collaboration between teachers and the artist-in-residence, as the school values and fine art world values are dissimilar (Bresler et al., 2000).

Museum-based programs provide a different context from which to understand the fine art world. Angela Eckhoff's (2008) research integrated the art gallery with studio art for preschool students. In argument for fine art viewing in early childhood classrooms, Eckhoff's (2008) research provided insight into the strategies that teachers use in a museum-based program to enhance art viewing activity for young children, of which are questioning, game play, storytelling, and technical strategies.

To understand the complexity of the partnership and collaboration of teachers in an artist-in-residence program, Eckhoff's later research (2011; 2013) focused specifically on the role of the teachers. Both of these studies revealed strategies used by both the artist-in-residence and the early educators such as modeling, student-to-student collaboration, encouragement, and experimentation in art making and art viewing (Eckhoff, 2011; Eckhoff, 2013). The findings of these studies provide evidence that artist-in-residence programs promote high quality conversations and peer interactions during visual arts activity, even while students worked independently (Eckhoff, 2011; Eckhoff, 2013). Moreover, these programs were more successful when there was collaboration between the artist-in-residence and the early childhood educator (Eckhoff, 2011; Eckhoff, 2013).

There is very sparse research on artist-in-residence programs in visual arts, however the previous studies demonstrate that this program model can function to support existing early childhood visual arts curricula. All studies reviewed suggest collaboration between teachers is necessary for student and program success.

Reggio Emilia. Reggio Emilia is a philosophy in early childhood education that focuses on broadening the definition of language for young children to encompass other modes of communication, such as visual art, gesture, socio-dramatic play, etc. The Reggio philosophy contends that art is a language for young children to communicate meaningful ideas in graphic and visual ways, emphasizing that the arts are central to children's learning as one of the hundreds of languages for expressing and communicating to others (Danko-McGhee & Slutsky, 2003; Follari, 2010).

This child-centered model for early childhood education has four main elements: "1) image of the child, 2) environment as third teacher, 3) teacher as partner, and 4) documentation" (Danko-McGhee & Slutsky, 2003, p. 13). In this unique learning environment, the Reggio Emilia philosophy uses an atelierista, a teacher that is well educated in both early childhood and art education. The atelierista is the person that encourages young students to pursue the language that fits their interests and project the best, providing guidance as students explore and experiment with these varying languages of the arts (Danko-McGhee & Slutsky, 2003). This role, an attempt to integrate the early childhood world with the fine arts world, is reminiscent of the artist-in-residence model in visual arts research.

Upon reviewing the existing literature, a key component of design-based research methodology (discussed in Chapter III) is deriving principles from previous research to refine educational research and practice. These previously researched approaches and models impact

24

the design of the visual arts program in the present study. Most importantly, with little research on the guided-exploration approach, this approach is the foundation of this visual arts program. As Bresler (1994) contends, there is little research regarding the visual arts operational curriculum, or how the curriculum is implemented. For this reason, I seek to extend upon this literature by focusing on the teachers role and students experiences.

Visual Arts Teachers' Role and Experience

Research studies on visual arts teaching have taken into account the operational curriculum, the visible teaching methods and materials, as well as the hidden curriculum, the beliefs behind the implementation of visual arts in early childhood (Bresler, 1992; Bresler 1993; Bresler 1994). Through analysis of both non-art classroom teachers and artists-in-residence, we are able to better understand the teacher's role and the educational goals behind such teaching approaches. Dependent on many factors, such as curriculum, teachers' beliefs about the visual arts, and school support, the teachers' role in an early childhood visual arts classroom varied (Bresler, 1992). In the context of schooling, the arts and academic school goals are dichotomized, in which teachers' feel pressure to promote the academics, rather than recognizing the benefits of visual arts activity (Bresler, 1992).

In reference to the previously discussed approaches to early childhood visual arts, I now provide insight into the teacher's role that corresponds with each approach. The role of the teacher in the little-intervention orientation is "open-ended" and "student-centered" (Bresler, 1994, p. 90) in which there is very little teacher involvement in the visual arts activity. In contrast, the production orientation is "teacher-centered," in which the teacher directs each move of the visual arts activity (Bresler, 1994, p. 90). Finally, the guided-exploration orientation is

termed as the "higher order cognitive approach" in which the teacher is viewed as a guide or facilitator during visual arts activity (Bresler, 1994, p. 90).

Teachers' strategies in visual art facilitation. Research in early childhood visual arts has turned to an analysis of visual arts teachers and artist-in-residences to understand the strategies implemented with a facilitative approach to visual arts. An overall agreement in the literature, the facilitative approach is driven by the students' interest (Bae, 2004; Eckhoff, 2008; Eckhoff, 2011; Eckhoff, 2013). To understand the guided-exploration orientation, Bae (2004) conducted an ethnographic study of preschool art teachers. Findings suggested that as a "guide," there was a balance between teacher-guided and student-guided time during art class, as they have a "mutual influence on one another" (Bae, 2004, p. 249). Teachers stated that their goals were to be more reactive than directive, by stimulating young children's' thinking through interactive conversations, questions, modeling, and demonstrations (Bae, 2004). Focusing on the strategies that a visual artist-in-residence implemented (Eckhoff, 2008; Eckhoff, 2011), similarities in findings suggested that teachers facilitate modeling, student-to-student collaboration, encouragement, and experimentation. Eckhoff (2008; 2011) furthered this area of research providing specific strategies such as questioning, game play, storytelling, and technical discussions around famous works of art.

Conversations and dialogue. With a contemporary focus on the sociocultural context that drawing activity occurs, there has recently been much more empirical research on the dialogue and conversations that occur during drawing activity, with a focus on how teachers can facilitate effective art conversations (Brooks, 2005; Eckhoff, 2014; Chang & Cress, 2014; Cotner, 2010; Papandreou, 2014). A vast agreement in the literature is the need for communication during drawing activity, specifically viewing the adult as a partner in the

conversation (Brooks, 2005; Eckhoff, 2014; Chang & Cress, 2014; Cotner, 2010; Papandreou, 2014).

The literature on adult facilitation of conversations during visual arts activity strongly suggested that discourse is valued as collaborative, allowing children to have the power and lead conversations (Chang & Cress, 2014; Cotner, 2014; Eckhoff, 2014). The findings of Cotner's (2014) naturalistic study suggested that talk should be viewed as "contemplator" talk, which "invite(s) independent thinking on the part of the student" (p. 81). Similiarly, Eckhoff (2014) argued that talk during visual arts should be open-ended and encouraging of student ideas.

A child-directed understanding of dialogue in visual arts activity with young children places student ideas at the forefront (Brooks, 2005; Chang & Cress, 2014). Brooks (2005) discussions urged teachers to discuss student ideas and meaning, and is echoed in Chang and Cress's (2014) study, stating

> Drawing cannot merely be viewed as a precursor to writing. Critically important is an adult attending to what children intend to convey to be cognizant of the children's views and to learn their inner world. Listening to children attentively allows adults to make an informed decision as to what questions and answers may be delivered and gathered to keep children in the communication loop and to promote their language development (p. 421).

By promoting child-centered dialogue, teachers were able to understand students meaning making during visual arts, rather than unintentionally or arbitrarily interpreting the students' work (Brooks, 2005; Chang & Cress, 2014).

Finally, it is essential for teachers to include art talk in conversations, such as art criticism, art history, studio art, and aesthetics (Althouse, Johnson & Mitchell, 2003; Bresler et

al., 2000; Cotner, 2010). Cotner (2014) specifically refered to this talk as having an "informational function," yet it must be done in a collaborative and thought provoking way for students. While not an empirical piece, adding to this conversation, Althouse et al. (2003) suggests that art talk and art appreciation be facilitated through the "use of correct art terms, an introduction of new art concepts with action, and talk about artists from various cultures and countries" (p. 136-137).

Teacher self-efficacy in visual arts. While there is very little research on teacher self-efficacy in visual arts, this research is essential to highlight as it adds to the difficulties that teachers face in implementing visual arts in early childhood. To date, only one empirical piece has highlighted the early childhood teacher's self-efficacy in implementing the arts. A quantitative study, Garvis and Pendergast (2011) aimed to illuminate early childhood teachers perceived levels of self-efficacy in the teaching of arts education as compared to the teaching of English and Math. The results of this study, while focusing on a convenient sample, provided insight into the disparity between "academic" subjects and the arts, stating that teachers content knowledge was perceived stronger in English and Math than in the arts (Garvis & Pendergast, 2011). Garvis and Pendergast (2011) argue, "Teacher self-efficacy beliefs about their capacity to deliver arts education shapes their perceived competence in teaching the arts, which in turn impacts on the degree and nature of inclusion of arts in the curriculum" (p. 3). For these reasons, research must aim to provide support to teachers of young children, as the arts, and specifically visual arts, are essential to the curriculum for young children.

In Canada, funded by the University at Ottawa, elementary schools (grades kindergarten through eighth) have taken steps to address this issue, partnering with the university to deliver arts partnership courses to pre-service teachers to improve their ability to integrate the arts when

beginning as teachers in the school districts (Andrews, 2006). This study suggests that university and district partnerships improved the quality of teacher-candidates' arts learning and confidence to teach the arts in their own classrooms (Andrews, 2006). This study has specific implications to the following dissertation, as the collaboration between a visual artist-in-residence and an early childhood education teacher, specifically a preschool teacher, has possible effects on both teachers' confidence in their arts teaching.

Essential to the present study was the role that the teachers assumed adopting the guided-exploration approach: a facilitative guide. Implementing this program at the Early Childhood Education Lab School, this role coincided with their child-centered philosophy. Drawing from previous research, teaching strategies that were planned for and implemented in this visual arts program were modeling, student-to-student collaboration, demonstrations, and experimentation. By deriving these principles from previous research, this research can provide more insight into how these teaching strategies impact students' experiences, and how these teaching strategies are understood and implemented by an early childhood teacher and a visual artist-in-residence.

The following section provides an overview on the research conducted in early childhood visual arts on the students experience and learning. This area of research is limited, focusing on art conversations with students.

Student Experiences and Learning

To be capable of (creative insights), the individual requires freedom – freedom to explore, freedom to be himself, freedom to entertain ideas no matter how wild and to express that which is within him without fear of censure or concern about evaluation (as cited in Sawyer, 2015, p. 2).

Understanding and interpreting their world. An overall theme in the visual arts

literature is the affordance of the communicative potentials both in and through visual arts. In early childhood, it has been recognized that young children must consider and reason about their ideas, feelings, and experiences in the world and find ways to express this (Bae, 2004).

An overwhelming agreement in the literature is that students are able to use visual arts to communicate their understanding of personal experiences around them (Bae, 2004; Bentley, 2011; Brooks, 2009; Cox, 2005; Hanes & Weisman, 2000). Of these qualitative studies, much of this analysis took place in both nursery school (Cox, 2005), preschool (Bae, 2004; Brooks, 2009) and across mixed age groups of two to five years old (Bentley, 2011; Hanes & Wiseman, 2000). All of these studies that reached this understanding were in-depth studies, using triangulation to propose their findings. With the use of naturalistic, ethnographic methods, researchers aimed for an understanding of how experience is understood through the process of the invention of symbols. For example, Brooks (2009) explored the process of drawing shadows based on observations that students made right outside of their school. Findings of this study suggested that students were able to make sense of shadows through the use of drawing as a mediated tool aiding in transfer from spontaneous concepts to scientific concepts (Brooks, 2009). Drawing mediated students' abilities to create new understandings of how a shadow is created. Similiarly, Cox (2005) used naturalistic observation, as she was interested in the process of students' drawing to understand their intention. Accordingly, the results suggested that drawing represents thinking in action, and children are "actively defining reality" in which their drawing is situated (Cox, 2005, p. 124).

Students must also interpret their emotional understanding of the world. The visual arts invites creative construction as children find ways to interpret feelings into "concrete images of things that do not have a physical presence…as well as things that do not have physical

30

properties" (Bae, 2004, p. 250).   Danko-McGhee and Slutsky (2003) discuss the abstract nature of feelings, and their findings suggested that children are able to explore and differentiate these feelings through the medium of visual arts. Not only are students able to identify feelings, but alternatively research also suggested that students evaluate their own artwork with respect to their feelings (Edens & Potter, 2004). For example, Edens and Potters (2004) suggested that students evaluate their own artwork using criteria labeled "autonomous" and "adult responses." Preschool students were able to identify how their artwork will make themselves as well as others feel (Edens & Potter, 2004). As the visual arts are used as a language for young children to interpret their world, visual arts also offers an multimodal medium for young children to explore.

Arts rich discourse. Young children are capable of engaging in dialogue during visual art making and appreciation about famous artworks. With teacher scaffolding and guidance, students engaged in arts rich classroom discourse with teachers and peers (Eckhoff, 2013; Schiller, 1995). For example, research conducted by Schiller (1995) suggested that students discussed famous artwork in five different ways: "(1) favoritism, (2) beauty and realism, (3) expressiveness, (4) style and form, and (5) autonomy" (p. 27). While Thompson and Bales's (1991) findings suggested that students discuss artwork in an egocentric way, the researchers argued that these egocentric comments made by young children provide others an opportunity to engage in dialogue with them about the famous artwork.

Brooks (2009) analyzeed the collaborative and communicative approach to drawing, encouraging students to discuss their drawings with other peers. Sharing the drawings and the information that the students gleaned from this drawing process helped to extend the class discussions (Brooks, 2009). Each drawing gave a visual representation of understanding, and

31

increased student discussion was continuously observed (Brooks, 2009). Further, Thompson and Bales (1991) argue that by allowing young children to discuss their drawings, drawings come alive with both the narrative and the action within the visual art representation. Qualitative analysis of preschool shared workspaces of visual arts suggested that conversation and collaboration is an integral component in student understanding in visual arts (Eckhoff, 2013).

Multimodal activity. Research in visual arts has veered away from analyzing the product created by students, and focuses more on the meaning making that is communicated in a social and cultural context. Meaning making must analyze not only the visual arts process, yet is now coupled with the semiotic means accompanying the process. For example, the communicative potential has been analyzed through narratives, discussions, and movements around this visual arts medium. Coates and Coates (2006) argued that visual arts activity is a naturally unfolding process, and by analyzing the various modes surrounding this activity, researchers are able to understand how students add depth and purpose to this activity.

Many early childhood studies in visual arts specifically choose qualitative methods, such as naturalistic observation and interviews, as recognition of the multimodal potential that visual arts affords (Bentley, 2011; Papandreou, 2014). It is no longer relevant to study meaning making in visual arts without taking into account the context in which the study is situated. Both Papandreou (2014) and Bentley (2011) analyzed case studies within the sociocultural context. Papandreou (2014) employed a collective case study, three kindergarteners, in both family and school contexts. Papandreou (2014) concluded that children use drawing to communicate with others, and they often co-construct symbols and meanings, improving communication. Bentley (2011) focused on the reality of artistic practice, and included narratives as a mode of visual arts analysis.

Student evaluation. Young children evaluate their own artwork (Edens & Potter, 2004) as well as the visual arts activity itself (McArdle & Wong, 2010). It is important that we appreciate and teach children to appreciate and evaluate their artwork. Young children evaluate their own artwork using four different criteria: autonomous, aesthetic, correctness, and in reference to an adult response/approval (Edens & Potter, 2004). Further, McArdle & Wong (2010) conducted a cross-cultural study through the use of interviews to understand why students engage in visual arts activity. While this was only a comparison of two different classrooms, the findings are significant in suggesting that young children viewed and evaluated visual arts activity on the basis on how the adults viewed it. For example, if adults viewed the activity as a task or product so will preschool students. If adults valued the visual arts activity as natural and a process, the adult modeled this behavior for the young children. This study suggested that teachers' beliefs about visual arts activity highly impact young children's beliefs about the purpose, function, and enjoyment of the arts.

By reviewing literature relevant to students' experiences and learning in the visual arts, principles are derived in reference to the second research question. First and foremost, when analyzing students' experiences, a sociocultural and multimodal perspective is crucial for an in-depth understanding of the preschool students experiences in the visual arts program. Upon analyzing this component of the program, I took into account students' collaborative and interactive narratives, discussions and movements surrounding their visual art making to create meaning. This allowed the present study to see the whole picture, rather than just focusing on the product of the art making itself.

Design Principles Drawn from the Literature

33

A main argument and support for design-based research (see Chapter 3 for details) is the iterative successions of refinement of the educational design based upon previous research and continued design and redesign in an authentic classroom. Prior to implementing this program, this framework situates previous research to help to build a foundational design to begin with, identifying initial goals of the program.

There has been some concerted effort to define and clarify the guided-exploration approach. For example, Angela Eckhoff, a researcher specialized in visual arts pedagogy in early childhood education, explored and established qualities of the guided-exploration approach that a visual artist-in-residence represented in teaching visual arts to young children through discourse: observe, listen, communicate through artistic expression, and appreciate aesthetic qualities (Eckhoff, 2013). Each of these qualities implemented by the visual artist-in-residence provided a foundation for the development of this visual arts program in the current study.

In building this program, Eckhoff's (2013) research impacted the initial understanding and positioning of both of the teachers, the visual artist-in-residence and the early childhood professional. This collaborative discourse was a key component to the pedagogy of this program, as we intended to challenge and encourage students to observe, listen, communicate through artistic expression, and appreciate aesthetic qualities (Eckhoff, 2013).

Scaffolding Observing Skills

Preschool students have a natural ability to observe the world around them. Visual acuity and sensitivity is defined as "…when children's attention is purposefully focused on noticing nuances in their lived environment" (Kindler, 2010, p. 9). It is important for teachers to scaffold students' observation skills and build the foundational skills of visual acuity and sensitivity because they were shown to closely relate to later academic success (Cameron et al., 2015).

34

However, observation of artwork adds another layer, as students must also use their observations to interpret the artist's intent and meaning of the piece (Epstein, 2001). Observation skills are foundational for art making experiences, aesthetic experiences, as well as encounters with art (Eckhoff, 2008; Eglinton, 2003).

Most of the literature on scaffolding students' observational and listening skills centers on the context of art appreciation and art viewing instead of art making. To foster and hone children's observation skills during art viewing, setting up a respectful environment where students feel comfortable and safe in expressing their opinions is the first and foremost important step (Epstein, 2001). Interpretation of the art can differ depending on each individual student, and an essential component of art appreciation is valuing other's understandings and interpretations of art. "It is important to accept a child's interpretation of what he or she sees, even if it is not the conventional view" (Hohmann & Weikart, 1995, p. 322).

Besides creating an accepting and respectful environment, Eckhoff (2008) also provided four specific strategies that a visual artist-in-residence practiced that can scaffold art viewing experiences and hone observational skills-- questioning, game play, storytelling, and technically focused talk. Questioning was the use of both open- and close-ended questions to introduce the students to the art techniques and the context of the artwork (Eckhoff, 2008). Game play focused specifically on finding elements within a piece(s) of artwork (Eckhoff, 2008). Storytelling was an adventure for the students, engaging students in imaginative play housed within the specific piece of art (Eckhoff, 2008). Finally, technically focused talk, generally observed concurrently with questioning, guided the students' to pay attention and discuss the materials used in the art making process (Eckhoff, 2008).

The existing literature suggests some important strategies to use in fostering children's

observational skills in the art viewing and appreciation process, which help to build an initial goal for the current intervention and study. For example, an essential component of the visual arts program in the current study was allowing students to discuss their interpretation of art work, whether their own, a peers, or a famous piece. Both the visual artist-in-residence and early childhood professional began with an initial understanding of the teacher as a guide, implementing strategies such as questioning, game play, storytelling, and technically focused talk.

Unfortunately, no known research has examined how this can be fostered in art making process. Art-making context provides rich opportunities for children to observe and make meaning of their own work. Thus, in this study, I continued to investigate the teachers' meditational role in developing children's observation skills in both art appreciation and art making.

Facilitating Communication in and Through the Arts

Communication in the arts refers to the meaningful conversations that take place during the art viewing and art making context (Schiller, 1995; Eckhoff, 2013). However, the reflection of art as a language in and of itself is also conveyed through the guided-exploration approach. Bresler (1993) explained this process, suggesting that an artist, or child's, role is to "communicate these sensitivities to the creation of a form of representation."   There has been considerable research conducted with young children regarding the dialogue and conversations that the visual arts affords young children in the context of both art viewing and art making.

In the context of art viewing, children should be given opportunities to talk about art, whether it is a discussion about a piece created by a famous artist or by a peer (Schiller, 1995; Eckhoff, 2008). Parsons (1987) asserted that children begin to understand art from a very young

36

age. With this empirical support, Schiller (1995) argued that teachers should be aware of this inherent ability, in order to model and support students communication about art. Further, Eckhoff (2008) provided four strategies of teacher art talk that scaffolded students' ability to naturally discuss art: questioning, game play, storytelling, and technically focused talk.

Moreover, recent research with young children in visual arts intentionally analyzes both what the students are creating coupled with the narrative that children discuss with others during the process (Coates & Coates, 2006; Eckhoff, 2013). Coates and Coates (2006) research suggested that studying the conversations during art marking provides "evidence of the thinking process" (p. 237); to support students interactive discussions during art making, the researchers asserted a collaborative context where the teacher models, reinforces, stimulates, and supports the artistic conversations. Research has begun suggesting strategies for teacher's to position themselves as co-creators of knowledge in art (Papandreou, 2014; Eckhoff, 2013; Epstein, 2001). Eckhoff's (2011; 2013) research studied the interactions of the students and visual artist, and four practices emerged in this analysis: modeling, collaboration, encouragement, and experimentation. Through these strategies, the teacher was able to build an arts rich discourse from teacher to student and student to student.   These strategies impacted the development of this visual arts program in the current study, as each of these strategies were used during whole and small group facilitation of art exploration and art making.

However, art also affords intrapersonal conversations, suggesting that the art form is a language itself (Brooks, 2005). Gardener (1973) posits drawing as a symbolic system, and Reggio Emilia practices share the belief that art is a language among young children (Katz, 1998). Children ascribe meaning to their mark making from a very young age (Papandreou, 2014). Through the sociocultural analysis of students' art, early childhood visual arts research

(Papandreou, 2014; Brooks, 2005) values both the learning environment and the pedagogical strategies that intertwine and provide potential for art as a form of communication.

To study how students use art as a form of communication, researchers have studied how students evaluate and interpret their own work. Ji-Hi Bae (2004) has studied teachers' roles and rationale for what they do in teaching art to young children. While students engaged in the creation of art, teachers focused on listening intently and reacting to the child's own depiction of their artwork. This reactive role and teacher stance allowed students to have the power in conversations, leading the discussions with their own understandings and ideas (Chang & Cress, 2014). Positioning the teacher as a partner in the conversations "… could also eliminate the possibility of adults' arbitrary interpretations that may miss or mistakenly conceive children's intended meaning" (Chang & Cress, 2014, p. 415). Epstein (2001) suggested that teachers should use descriptive terms when talking about student artwork rather than evaluative terms. Rather than saying "I like your art," teachers should focus on identifying a feeling that the art conveys (Epstein, 2001). In hearing an evaluative comment, students heard a clear message that what they produced is accepted; however teachers need to allow students to evaluate their own artwork (Papandreou, 2014).

While there has been a concerted effort to analyze and understand the communication that the visual arts affords to young children as a representational language, I sought to further this area of research by exploring and identifying specific strategies that a visual artist and early childhood teacher use to employ in-depth conversation with students during art making and art viewing. We began this program situating teachers as reactive to students' understandings and conversations, as a goal of the program was to provide an environment in which the teachers and students are co-creators and partners in knowledge building.

Attending to the Aesthetic Qualities

Aesthetic qualities are inherently tied to all of the previously discussed characteristics of the guided-exploration orientation. However, attending to the aesthetic qualities in art is bound with emotion, pleasure, and beauty. Butler-Kisber, Li, Clandinin, and Markus (2007) emphasized the pleasure and new understandings that the aesthetics provides as "a way of knowing through the senses" (p. 226). The aesthetic qualities of visual arts are essentially a lens through which one is able to make sense of the feelings that the art evokes (Davis, 2008).

In seeking to attend to the aesthetic qualities, teachers should model a critical engagement with the visual images and artifacts, allowing students freedom to "perceive the qualities, values, and meanings within works of art that in turn open up a greater appreciation for daily life and the natural world while engaging their imaginative and creative capacities" (Irwin & Chalmers, 2007, p. 181). Anna M. Kindler (2010) suggested that teachers must pay specific attention to developing visual sensitivity and an artistic frame of mind rather than on the pictorial representation. In doing this, both the early childhood professional and the visual artist-in-residence will challenge young minds to extend their visual interests and reflect on meaningful understandings and the pleasures of the world (Kindler, 2010).

Students should be encouraged to attend to these aesthetic qualities in other's work, as well as consider and apply these aesthetic qualities to their own work. In existing early childhood visual arts research, the application of these aesthetic components is consistently discussed through the informal conversations that take place during art making. Douglas and Swartz (1967) have found that engaging in an interactive dialogue with students encompassing the aesthetic qualities, feelings, and responses one has to the children's artwork increased the overall aesthetic quality of children's work (Colbert, 1984). Epstein (2001) suggested using

39

visual graphic elements and descriptive words in discussions during art making to enhance students' aesthetic responses, rather than identifying objects within a student's visual representation, increasing student's ability to find pleasure in the visual language by modeling the feelings that the visual arts evokes. While Eckhoff (2013) identified four categories of teacher interaction in regards to dialogue of encouragement in the art process, these strategies were useful in encouraging students to evoke aesthetic qualities in their own work: modeling, collaboration, encouragement, and experimentation.

Interestingly enough, students tended to evaluate their own artwork in regards to the aesthetic appeal, through comments such as "cause it's pretty" (Edens & Potter, 2004). While student recognition of the aesthetic appeal is discussed in the literature, my study sought to examine how a teacher is able to provide students opportunities to attend and apply the aesthetic qualities of art. An initial goal of this program, derived from previous research, focused specifically on the interactive dialogue this visual arts program could facilitate. We aimed to use informal conversations with descriptive words and emotional connections in discussing artwork to model and encourage students to attend to the aesthetic qualities of art.

Fostering "I'm an artist" Identity

The most understudied component of the guided-exploration orientation in early childhood art facilitation, teachers aim to support students in developing their identity as an artist. In an effort to provide authentic art experiences, this component of the guided-exploration orientation allows students to embody the entire process of art making from start to finish. The overall process of art is an ongoing and iterative process, and children can engage in this authentic process as well. Binder and Kotsopolous (2010) explicated this creative, nonlinear

process that children undergo as, "…the importance of preparation, incubation, inspiration, and verification" (p. 24).

While this area of research is sparse, some relevant research indicates strategies for teachers as children embark on this identity journey. Discussions about artists' techniques and history allowed for the child to develop as an artist. Arnheim (1989) promoted a child-initiated art exploration, where discussions of artists' techniques were woven throughout the exploration (Epstein, 2001). By capturing student interest, children wanted to transform and reimagine the techniques used by the artist in conjunction with their own personal experiences (Epstein, 2001). Further, comparisons of artwork helped students reflect on artistic intentions and feelings conveyed (Epstein, 2001). Artistic exploration should not only be valued in the classroom, as students need to make real connections to their creative process in and outside of the classroom (Epstein, 2001).

However, research in early childhood visual arts must continue to explore the possibilities in allowing students to undergo the process an artist values in creation. Students should not be just experiencing art as a product, but they should be immersed in the art process through empowerment of decision-making, creativity, and individual differences. Thus, in this study, we examined how the teachers fostered students' artist identity during both art view/appreciation and art making.

This research aimed to illuminate the struggles that early childhood teachers and/or artist-in-residence faced as they began to reconsider and attempt a shift in their pedagogy and approach to visual arts teaching. With this empirical research, teachers may begin to feel more comfortable in establishing, maintaining, and implementing a guided-exploration visual arts approach in early childhood classrooms.

41

CHAPTER III

Research Methodology

We view the purpose of educational research as relating to two main goals: to produce new knowledge; and to improve educational practice. The history of educational research shows that these two goals have mostly been viewed as mutually exclusive… In contrast, we started from the mindset that working on these two goals can, and in many cases should, be synergistic and simultaneous… In the last decade, researchers, practitioners and policymakers have argued, lobbied, and legislated for new forms of research that bring research and practice closer together through mutually-beneficial interactions (Ormel, Pareja Roblin, McKenney, Voogt & Pieters, 2012, p. 986).

By employing design-based research methods, I intended to bring together educational research and practice by studying and learning from the complexity in the real world preschool classroom. This framework aims to optimize the "impact, transfer, and translation" of educational research to address authentic classroom problems (Anderson & Shattuck, 2012; Wang, Christ & Chiu, 2014, p. 1077). In this chapter, I begin by delineating the design-based research methodology in relation to the current study and research questions. Next, I provide a detailed description of the methods, consisting of the research site, context, participants, data collection, and data analysis. Finally, I discuss in-depth my role in this study as a researcher and lead teacher.

Methodology Overview

The purpose of this study was to develop the guided-exploration approach to visual arts (Bresler, 1993) in early childhood education, specifically preschool education, sorting out both the pedagogical and program details of this approach. In addition, I focus on two important areas of this program: the teachers' experience and the preschool students' experiences in this visual arts program. The following research questions guided this study:

42

1. What is the resulting visual arts program based on the guided exploration approach? What changes are made to the program through the design-based research?

2. How do preschool students experience this visual arts program?

3. How is the design-based research conducted through collaboration of an artist-in-residence and the early childhood teacher? What struggles and successes do the teachers encounter in each phase of development?

Methodologically, this dissertation was guided by the design-based research framework (Anderson & Shattuck, 2012; Collins, Joseph & Bielaczyc, 2004; Design-Based Research Collective, 2003). The goal of design-based research as defined by scholars Bradley and Reinking (2010) is, "Systematic and disciplined inquiry into real problems in authentic classrooms (which) is vital to developing workable solutions to support teachers if they are to implement instructional practices that benefit children" (p. 1).

While the use of design-based research methods continues to grow (Anderson & Shattuck, 2012), there are still very few published studies in early childhood research employing this methodology (Bradley & Reinking, 2010). Further, there is yet to be a published article in visual arts research employing design-based research methodology. Much of early childhood design-based research focuses on science (Danish & Saleh, 2015; Kinzie, Whittaker, McGuire, Lee, & Kilday, 2015), literacy (Wang et al., 2014), mathematics (Kinzie et al., 2015), and technology (McPake & Stephen, 2015). I aimed to address this methodological gap by employing design-based research and integrating both the early childhood and visual art disciplines. This overview will comprise information in regards to relevant terms, definitions, and relevant but different methodologies.

Relevant Terms

Design-based research continues to evolve, for which it is necessary to discuss the relevant methodological terms. Design-based research methodology was first proposed by Alan Collins in 1990 using the term 'design experiment,' followed by Ann Brown in 1992. Ann Brown (1992) put forth the initial rationale for design experiments, primarily to develop new theories in exploratory research. In 1999, the Design-Based Research Collective was founded, in which the term 'design-based research' was coined.

More recently, Dr. Douglas Clements (2007) continued to develop upon design-based research, putting forth the Curriculum Research Framework (CRF). CRF focuses specifically on synthesizing and developing curricula, theory, and empirical research, in which design-based research is a component of this process. However, the purpose of this term, CRF, is upon the development of curricula.

Design-Based Implementation Research (DBIR) was a term developed by Barry J. Fishman and colleagues in 2013. While similar to design-based research, DBIR "challenges education researchers to break down barriers between sub-disciplines of educational research that isolate those who design and student innovations within classrooms from those who study the diffusion of innovations" (2013, p. 137). Although my work aligns well with DBIR, a more encompassing and well known term, *design-based research (DBR),* was chosen for this project.

Definitions and Key Features of DBR

The definition of design-based research is expansive, and according to Anderson and Shattuck (2012), encompasses several major components. First, design-based research must be situated in a real educational context. By studying the natural environment of the preschool classroom, the complexity is heightened and variables cannot be disentangled. Second, design-based research focuses on the design, redesign, and testing of a significant intervention with

44

multiple iterations. By implementing the guided-exploration approach to visual arts as an intervention in a preschool classroom, several iterations were necessary to refine and understand the impact on the preschoolers' learning. Essential to the definition of design-based research is the collaboration and partnership of researchers and practitioners. The collaborative and mutually respectful relationship between myself, as the teacher/researcher, and the visual artist-in-residence enhanced our ability to integrate our strengths in this intervention. Finally, design experiments must lead to sharable theories that assist in explaining relevant practical implications (Design-Based Research Collective, 2003).

Design-based research, according to Cobb, Confrey, diSessa, Lehrer, and Schauble (2003), "always has two faces: prospective and reflective" (p. 10). Prospectively, researchers and teachers must hypothesize the learning process for students and continuously act on contingencies that arise. Yet, researchers and teachers must reflect throughout the entire process, allowing cycles of analysis and refinement. I had to act as both an advocate and a critic throughout the iterations of the intervention, acknowledging dual intellectual roles (Design-Based Research Collective, 2003). For this reason, multiple sources of data were collected for triangulation in this design-based research study. Data sources include video and audio with accompanying field notes, reflections from myself and the artist-in-residence, lesson plans and email communication regarding planning between myself and the artist-in-residence, photos of students' artwork each week, interviews with the artist-in-residence, and interviews with the preschool students. With an array of data sources, I was able to reliably analyze the innovative intervention and make trustworthy and credible assertions.

Relevant Methodologies

45

With evolving definitions, distinct differences between action research, experimental design, and design-based research must be put forth. First, action research focuses solely on the practitioner's actions in the classroom and are initiated by the practitioners. Design-based research generates knowledge that directly applies to the authentic classroom through the mutually beneficial collaboration of researchers and practitioners (Carter & Crichton, 2014). As cited in Carter and Crichton (2014) this relationship is defined as 'interprofessionality,' which is explained as

> the development of a [socially] cohesive practice between professionals from different
> disciplines… by which professionals reflect on and develop ways of practicing that
> provides an integrated and [socially] cohesive answer to the needs of the
> client/family/population… through continuous interaction and knowledge sharing
> between professionals organized to solve or explore a variety of education and care issues
> (D'Amour & Oandasna, 2005, p. 9).

Both myself and the artist-in-residence integrated our strengths to begin to address the problem of visual arts facilitation in the preschool classroom. Much of the visual arts opportunities provided in a preschool classroom are either production oriented or little intervention oriented (Bresler, 1993). With little focus on visual arts skills, observation, and appreciation, visual arts facilitation is undervalued.

Further, design-based research differs fundamentally from the traditional experimental design. Experimental designs often aim to control the environment, yet design-based research improves ecological validity by taking place in complex "learning ecologies." Cobb et al. (2003) defines the learning ecology as, "a complex interacting system involving multiple elements of different types and levels – by designing its elements and by anticipating how these elements

46

function together to support learning" (p.9). Second, experimental design aims to test the effectiveness of a predetermined intervention, while design-based research begins with an intervention that is continuously analyzed and refined through iterative cycles (Wang et al., 2014). Finally, while design experiments often employ quantitative methods, design-based research integrates both quantitative and qualitative methods to grasp an array of characteristics and the impact of the design (Wang et al., 2014).

Methods

Research Site: the Early Childhood Education Lab School

The two-year design-based research was conducted at a lab school/preschool program at a research-intensive state university located in the northeastern United States. This program has a three-fold mission: high quality early childhood education, teacher education, and research. Firstly, this program focuses on the development of the whole child, "stressing the interaction of social, emotional, intellectual, and physical aspects of growth," through a supportive play-based and child centered environment. Secondly, as part of a teacher preparation university, the lab school provides pre-service teachers hands on opportunities for internships, in which they develop upon their classroom practices in an early childhood setting. Finally, the program provides a context to enhance the body of knowledge, through research, regarding teaching and child development.

The daily curriculum facilitated and implemented at the research site is child centered, in that it revolves on what is occurring in the students' lives. For example, the students begin the school year exploring topics such as 'Getting to know myself, my family, my classroom, and my peers.' With changes occurring in the seasons as they begin school in August/September, they next explore the fall season. The students begin the day with a 'Morning Meeting,' where the

47

teacher facilitates a whole group activity around a literacy event, usually by reading a story to introduce the students' theme of play for the day. Then, the students have approximately an hour for free play/centers. During this time, the students can play wherever they choose, and the teachers provide support and guidance as they play through prompts and guiding questions. After this hour of playtime, the students continue their play outside for approximately a half hour, closing the end of their half-day at school.

The center has two physical classrooms, yet three class cohorts. In the morning, there is a Preschool I (Toddlers) and a Preschool II (Preschoolers). In the afternoon, there is only only class, identified as the afternoon class, Preschool III. The classroom in which this program took place, the classroom under study is the Preschool II classroom, students ranging from three to four years old.

The student population is culturally and linguistically diverse. Based on data from the 2014-2015 and 2015-2016 school years when I collected my data, there were 2% (2014-2015), 8% (2015-2016) African American, 25% (2014-2015), 14% (2015-2016) Asian American, 14% (2014-2015), 10% (2015-2016) Hispanic, 48% (2014-2015), 65% (2015-2016) White, and 11% (2014-2015), 4% (2015-2016) Middle Eastern students. While the lab school and preschool program is situated in the university setting, many families are brought in from the surrounding communities, of which the students are mainly from middle- to upper-class families. This setting is an integrated preschool, with approximately14% (2014-2015) and 22% (2015-2016) of students receiving services and support with IEPs or IFSPs.

Visual Arts Program in Preschool Class

Visual arts is a program implemented once a week led by both the visual artist-in-residence and an early childhood professional and teacher, myself. Aiming to facilitate a visual

48

arts program adopting the guided-exploration orientation (Bresler, 1993), this visual arts program focused on three major areas of the visual arts: art viewing, art making, and art appreciation. Students were led, through both large and small group activities to pay specific attention to technique, color, style, form, and representation. In each phase, students worked on their own individual art work, a large canvas, which they added an element to each week for the six weeks of the entire program.

This design-based research consisted of three phases. Due to the enrollment of students on opposite days, there were two five- or six-week sessions conducted in each phase. The initial intent of the program was to provide high quality visual arts facilitation to the preschool classroom. My own interests in the visual arts as well as the responsibility I had to my own students' engagement and interest called for the collaboration of my practical and research knowledge. The following table, *Table 1*, represents the three phases of the visual arts program. Each phase will be further explained in the following section.

Table 1. Breakdown of the three phases of the visual arts program.

Phases						
	Phase 1: Fall 2014		Phase 2: Fall 2015		Phase 3: Spring 2016	
Famous Artist and Artwork	Session 1A: van Gogh *Starry Night*	Session 1B: van Gogh *Sunflowers*	Session 2A: Monet *Lilypads*	Session 2B: Monet *Sunset over Venice* and *Sunrise*	Session 3A: van Gogh *Starry Night*	Session 3B: Sunflowers (several artists, such as van Gogh, Monet, Rivera, Warhol)
Teachers	Josephine – main teacher Keely – support (classroom management)		Josephine & Keely - equal planning and implementation, co-teaching		Keely – main teacher Josephine – support (art techniques and organization)	
Students	Class 1A	Class 1B	Class 2A	Class 2B	Class 3A	Class 3B

| Changes made moving into next phase | • Integrate student interests to increase engagement
• Collaborate and provide training to pre-service interns.
• Develop lessons to be aligned with developmentally appropriate guidelines, such as less whole group and more hands on activities. | • Create and integrate a more holistic curriculum around the focal artist.
• Provide Keely with more independence in teaching
• Allow more student independence and choice by providing students with many famous art models. | |

Phase 1. The initial design was developed by the artist-in-residence, Josephine, in collaboration with the program director and associate director. Josephine began this program with four overall goals, of which she defined through initial notes in planning the program:

1. "Invite and inspire children to look at the world around them and through the eyes of artists: the question of "what do you see?" can last a lifetime. Training of the senses and focusing perception will contribute in learning and interpretation of the world and the world of art, through the eyes of an artist.

2. With practical application of concepts, the child starts to create a sense of "mastering by doing," through painting.

3. The art piece chosen as a starting point is not meant as a final product. Interpreting will be the child's own doing and process. But guiding the steps will help the child building his/her own visual and verbal language.

4. Art can be seen as an international language."

50

The initial phase was facilitated by Josephine, with my own support in the form of classroom management. This phase was implemented with students in Class 1A and 1B. Both the first and second session focused on the artist Vincent van Gogh's artwork, *Starry Night* and *Sunflowers*.

Phase 2. In the second phase of this design-based research, Josephine and myself equally contributed to the planning, development, and implementation of the program to enhance the effectiveness and interest of the students. Through continuous communication by e-mail and in person, Josephine and I continued to refine our skills as facilitators and co-teachers through the artist, Claude Monet. Beginning in the Fall of 2015, these two sessions were implemented with students in Class 2A and 2B.

Phase 3. The final phase of this design-based research continued with the same group of students, Class 3A and 3B. Working and learning with many of the same students in Phase 2, we were able to begin to broaden students understanding and appreciation for famous art, as we encouraged students to look across famous artists work to inspire their own painting. For inspiration, the topic of sunflowers was chosen to provide an authentic learning context, as Spring flowers began to bloom outside of the classroom windows. Artists that painted sunflowers were used as models, such as Claude Monet, Vincent van Gogh, Diego Riviera, and Andy Warhol. Both sessions 1 and 2 lasted 6 weeks. This session was facilitated mainly by myself, however each of the two sessions, Josephine attended two times to provide guidance and support to myself and the students.

Participants

With two years of data collection, the groups of students changed at the beginning of each school year. Data was collected during the Fall 2014 and the following full school year, Fall 2015-Spring 2016.

As per enrollment of the preschool program, visual arts was offered a different day of the week each session as to provide this program to students that did not attend every day. For example, class 1A (detailed in *Table 2* below) was students attending the preschool program on Wednesdays. To allow all students the opportunity to participate in this program, class 1B, while offered the same year, was students attending the program on Tuesdays. Due to this distribution, there are some students accounted for in several of the classes, overlap due to enrollment in the program everyday.

Table 2. Descriptive statistics of student participants.

		Participants				
	Class 1A	**Class 1B**	**Class 2A**	**Class 2B**	**Class 3A**	**Class 3B**
White	53%	44%	54%	50%	63%	69%
African American	6%	11%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Asian	34%	39%	15%	21%	20%	12%
Hispanic	6%	6%	23%	21%	13%	19%
Middle Eastern	0%	0%	8%	7%	3%	0%
Total Students	16	9	13	14	15	16

Class 1A & 1B. This visual arts class was a very diverse group of students. There were a total of 19 students participating in this visual arts implementation, all with various backgrounds and cultures; there were a total of seven different languages, other than English, spoken among these students: Mandarin, Swahili, Russian, Korean, Spanish, German and Italian. However, many of these students were fluent in both English and another language represented in the previous list. Out of these 19 children, three were considered English

Language Learners (ELL's), as recent newcomers to the country and to the school community, and three had IEP's. Of the 19 students, 7 were boys and 12 were girls. Due to enrollment everyday, 6 students participated in both sessions of this program and are represented in Class 1A and 1B.

Class 2A & 2B. With a total of 17 students participating in visual arts during the 2015-2016 school year, the student make-up resembles that of Class 1A and 1B. With a total of 5 languages spoken in the classroom, English, Spanish, Kannada, Hindi, and Mandarin, the visual arts function as a universal language for this diverse group of students. All students were between the ages of three and five years old, and five of these students have identified disabilities and receive special education services. With a fairly even makeup of students gender, there were a total of 9 boys and 8 girls.

Class 3A & 3B. The students in Phase 3 of the implementation of this program, Class 3A and 3B, attended the program during the 2015-2016 school year, the same as the previous students in Class 2A and 2B. These students will be described in detail as the previous classes, yet overlap will be more consistent and explained thoroughly.

In total, there were 22 students of which 14 were boys and 8 were girls. Of this diverse group of students, five languages were spoken: English, Spanish, Mandarin, Portuguese, and German. Six of these students received early intervention services, including speech therapy, occupational therapy, physical therapy, and special education itinerant teacher (SEIT).

Looking across all participant groups, some students are represented in several of the participant classes. Seven students participated in four of the sessions, in which they are represented each time in the participant class. One student participated in five of the sessions, as

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he was enrolled in this preschool classroom for two years. There were no students that participated in all six sessions.

Focal preschool students. I purposefully chose three focal student who represented a wide range of backgrounds and experiences to conduct an in-depth analysis of their experiences in the visual arts program adopting the guided-exploration orientation. **Sawyer**, a three-year-old boy, was one of the youngest in our preschool classroom. He was often found enacting dramatic play scenes from books or television shows that he has read in school or at home. He was very social and tends to lead his own play in the classroom. This child's mode to create meaning relied heavily on dramatic play, yet he was very rarely found creating meaning through the visual arts, such as using drawing or painting. Sawyer experienced four total visual arts sessions, Phase 2 Session 1 and 2, and Phase 3 Session 1 and 2. **Elizabeth**, an almost five-year-old girl, loved to create meaning through movement and dance, yet she was an avid writer in the classroom. Elizabeth was often found at the art center during centers at free play, yet she often created visual art that was representative of production orientation artwork. Elizabeth participated in the least number of visual arts sessions, only two in total, Phase 2 Session 2 and Phase 3 Session 1. **Anthony** was a four-year-old boy who was recently diagnosed with Autism Spectrum Disorder. He was generally a very happy child found building with blocks or Legos. He required a significant amount of support in the classroom, and during data collection, he was beginning early intervention services including special education, speech, occupational therapy and physical therapy. Anthony was a Chinese student, and while he understood both Mandarin and English, he did not speak often, as his speech was delayed in both languages. Anthony experienced the most sessions, five in total, Phase 1 Session 2, Phase 2 Session 1 and 2, and Phase 3 Session 1 and 2. It was not until Phase 2 that Anthony began participating in our visual

arts classes. These three students provide interesting cases, and they differ dramatically on their interests, age, gender, and strengths.

Artist-in-residence: Secondary participant. The secondary participant in this study was the visual artist-in-residence, Josephine, who was hired from a museum community program that has partnerships with the preschool program. This teacher, Josephine, is in her mid- to late-sixties. She has been an integral voice in the development of this museum community program that focuses on cultural play in early childhood. With no specific training in early childhood, she currently teaches art classes to four- to ten-year olds with a similar design as the program under study, paying specific attention to a famous artist and his/her artistic patterns as a model. She is an expert in visual arts. In her home country, the Netherlands, she studied both textiles and visual arts in depth in college. She continued with the career, teaching art classes in the Netherlands to high school age children. When moving to the United States, she taught for a few years in a preschool classroom as a teacher assistant, however she has very little experience as a lead teacher.

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Data Collection

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The data collection process spanned the Fall 2014 through the Spring 2016 school years. While much of the data collection process remained the same, collecting pieces such as video and audio recording of each of the sessions, pictures of student progress of their individual paintings, lesson plans and reflections from both myself and the visual artist-in-residence, this iterative process of this design-based research study employed changes in each phase of the data collection. This process was extremely extensive, and is detailed in the following table, *Table 3*. The changes or unique contributions of each phase are highlighted. Each piece of data will be described, followed by a detailed explanation of the changes employed following each phase.

Table 3. Sources of data in each phase of data collection.

Data Collection		
Pretest Interview and Artifact – 20 students		
Phase 1: Fall 2014	Session 1A	· 6 sessions video and audio recorded · 15 students, pictures of artwork progress after each of the 6 sessions · 6 lesson plan documents (visual artist-in-residence) · 6 reflections after each session from visual artist-in-residence · 6 reflections after each session from myself, early childhood teacher · Posttest interviews – 14 students
	Session 1B	· 6 sessions video and audio recorded · 9 students, pictures of artwork progress after each of the 6 sessions · 6 lesson plan documents (visual artist-in-residence) · 6 reflections after each session from visual artist-in-residence · 6 reflections after each session from myself, early childhood teacher · 2 interviews with the visual artist-in-residence o October 22nd, 2014 o December 2, 2014
Phase 2: Fall 2015	Session 2A	· 6 sessions video and audio recorded · 11 students, pictures of artwork progress after each of the 6 sessions · 6 pre-briefing videos and artifacts with interns · 6 lesson plan documents/email communication (visual artist-in-residence & myself - early childhood teacher) · 6 reflections after each session from visual artist-in-residence · 6 reflections after each session from myself, early childhood teacher
	Session 2B	· 5 sessions video and audio recorded · 12 students, pictures of artwork progress after each of the 6 sessions · 5 pre-briefing videos and artifacts with interns · 5 lesson plan documents/email communication (visual artist-in-residence & myself - early childhood teacher) · 5 reflections after each session from visual artist-in-residence · 5 reflections after each session from myself, early childhood teacher · 1 interview with visual artist-in-residence o October 28th, 2015

		· 2 student interviews and 2 art talk checklists (See Appendix I)
Phase 3: Spring 2016	Session 3A	· 6 sessions video and audio recorded · 13 students, pictures of artwork progress after each of the 6 sessions · 6 pre-briefing videos and artifacts with interns · 6 lesson plan documents (myself) · email communication between myself and visual artist-in-residence · 2 reflections after each session from visual artist-in-residence · 6 reflections after each session from myself, early childhood teacher
	Session 3B	· 6 sessions video and audio recorded · 16 students, pictures of artwork progress after each of the 6 sessions · 6 pre-briefing videos and artifacts with interns · 6 lesson plan documents (myself) · email communication between myself and visual artist-in-residence · 2 reflections after each session from visual artist-in-residence · 6 reflections after each session from myself, early childhood teacher

Main Data Sources

    Video and audio recording. Each of the hour-long sessions was video and audio recorded in it's entirety. With four total video cameras and accompanying audio recorders, whole group and small group sessions were video and audio recorded from several different angles. Because of the extensive amount of equipment provided, I was able to capture all students' process while working on their artwork from their perspective as well as the teachers' perspectives. In entirety, there were 35 hour long sessions video and audio recorded.

    Pictures of artwork progress. Each week, students worked on their own individual painting. After each session, photos were taken of each student's contribution to their painting. Throughout the program development, there were a total of 76 pictures of students'

artwork. This was employed so that I could see the process evolving in each students painting, as well as changes made or elaborated upon in each student's artwork each week.

Lesson plans. Lesson plans were consistently saved throughout this design-based research study. However, each phase the lesson plans were written differently. For example, the first phase, the lesson plans were written by only Josephine, as she was the main facilitator of visual arts during this time. The second phase, the lesson plans were written collaboratively by myself and Josephine, as we were co-teaching during this time. The third phase I was the main facilitator of visual arts, so the lesson plans were written mainly by myself with input and suggestions from Josephine. In total, there were 35 lesson planning documents throughout the program development.

Reflections. Reflections were essential to the process of data collection. After each session, both myself and Josephine would reflect individually, sharing our overall thoughts of the program itself and students' progress each week. In phase three, reflections were written by myself each session however Josephine only gave reflections for two of the sessions in which she attended. In total, I wrote 35 daily reflections, however Josephine only wrote 27.

Additional Data Sources in Each Phase

Before beginning the visual arts program, I wanted to understand the students' initial understanding and experience in visual arts. To do this, I conducted pretest interviews with twenty of the students in which they engaged in a typical visual art making experience. Due to the previous visual arts pedagogy, these interviews were based upon the little-intervention orientation (Bresler, 1993), in which several visual arts materials were provided to the student yet very little guidance and direction was provided by the teacher.

Phase 1. Essential to this phase were 14 posttest interviews with the preschool students. Each of these interviews lasted approximately five to fifteen minutes. These interviews were conducted with myself, in which the students were probed in an unstructured interview to describe the process and product of their artwork made in the visual arts program. Also, two extensive interviews were conducted with Josephine in order to understand her thought process throughout the facilitation of the program, her overall reflections, and her future directions in facilitating visual arts at this program. Each of these interviews were approximately forty five minutes in length.

Phase 2. Added to the data sources this session were 11 pre-briefing sessions with the pre-service interns that lasted about 10-15 minutes. These sessions were added for the purposes of best supporting preschool students during individual painting and best supporting the pre-service teachers' practices of facilitating communication with preschool students. These sessions went through the schedule of the hour program, as well as provided pre-service interns with open-ended questions to facilitate discussion with students while students' painted. Also, additional interviews were added to the data pieces. An interview was again conducted with Josephine to assess and discuss the progress of the visual arts program after significant changes were made, lasting approximately one hour. Additionally, interviews were conducted with two of the preschool students in an effort to assess their art talk, in which the Art Talk Checklist (See Appendix I) was employed (Althouse, Johnson & Mitchell, 2003).

Phase 3. Upon entering Phase three, the main change to the data was that the lesson plans were written by myself, with consistent email communication between myself and Josephine throughout the sessions. Also, reflections were now written by Josephine only two times each session, due to the fact that she was only attending two classes each session.

Data Analysis

Data was analyzed to explore and develop upon the guided exploration approach (Bresler, 1993) in a preschool visual arts program, sorting out the pedagogical and program details. In the next section, an in-depth description of each type of data analysis will be explained in accordance to the research questions.

The Resulting Guided Exploration Approach (Research Question 1)

Data analysis was a recursive process in which I was initially open to several coding methods, allowing the data to speak for itself. Using design-based research, I served as both the data collection instrument and the anlaysis instrument, adjusting data collection methods while analyzing each phase of development.

First round of analysis. Field notes from video recordings, lesson planning documents, email correspondences, and teacher reflections, both my own and Josephine's, were most significant to this research question. Looking across the data in regards to the program, I made note of moments in which change was evident. The moments of change were transcribed in full. For example, I made note when there was a clear change in planning, both the approach and the documents. These moments of change provided me data to develop to open codes, identifying initial codes such as "Holistic" and "Modeling."

Additionally, previous research studies results (Bresler, 1993; Eckhoff, 2013) based upon the guided exploration approach provided initial codes regarding elements of the guided exploration approach. I began with codes such as "Observing," "Communicating," and "Aesthetic Qualities."

Throughout this initial coding process (Saldana, 2013), I kept analytic memos periodically asking myself questions in which I needed to return to upon the second round of

60

analysis. For example, one of my analytic memos was titled "Interdisciplinary Lesson Plans: Was this initiated by myself or Josephine in the lesson plans. This is the first-time other disciplines are worked into the sessions."

Second round of analysis. The second round of coding, I returned to these moments of change and looked across data sets for triangulation. Axial coding then allowed me to disaggregate the initial codes into initial themes focusing specifically on the moments of change, such as "Facets of the Approach," "Planning," and "Teaching Strategies" (Saldana, 2013). These more refined categories created an overall understanding of the program development throughout the three phases of implementation.

Preschool Students' Experience (Research Question 2)

Qualitative data analysis was employed to understand preschool students' experience in the visual arts program adopting the guided-exploration orientation. Regarding the students' experiences, data sources relied upon during analysis were field notes, students interview transcriptions, reflections (both my own and Josephine's), and photographs of weekly student progress of their artwork.

First round of analysis. Again, pre-coding was employed to capture the initial nature and quality of the students' experiences from the field notes (Saldana, 2013, p. 19). I reviewed all 35 of the video and audio recordings, creating field notes and jotting down pre-codes. Based on previous pilot studies, it was incredibly notable that the students' art talk encompassed several different modes, such as gestures/body movements, sound effects, and drawing/painting, in which a pre-code developed 'Multimodal Descriptions.'

In this initial phase, a codebook was assembled, in which I listed all of the codes and descriptions for a reference for myself. Additionally, during the initial phase of analysis,

61

choosing three focal participants/students significantly condensed the data pertaining to students' experiences.

The first cycle of coding employed the In Vivo coding method, yet I was open to other coding methods, allowing the data to speak for itself (Saldana, 2013). Addressing an ontological question about my preschool students experiences provided an ideal situation to explore my preschool students personal meanings through coding with their choice of words. In capturing the essence of young children's meaning, "In Vivo Coding (is used) to honor children's voices and to ground the analysis from their perspectives" (Saldana, 2013, p. 61). Salient and impactful words that the preschool students used were applied as codes. Examples of these codes were, "You're red! You're like a strawberry!," "Arter" (a young child's construction of the word 'artist'), and "Look at mine!"

Second round of analysis. Following the initial coding, codes were categorized and integrated to create themes. A second phase of coding was conducted using Pattern Coding (Saldana, 2013, p. 218), in which themes provided a deeper understanding of the students' experiences in this visual arts program.

Teachers' Experience (Research Question 3)

The final research question focused on the teachers' experience, both Josephine and myself. Data sources relied upon to answer this research question were field notes, interview transcriptions, reflections, email correspondence, and video of pre-service teachers' pre-briefing sessions.

First round of analysis. All of the interviews with teachers were be transcribed in full. Field notes were completed for each class paying specific attention to the struggles and frustrations that were evident, compiling a total of 35 class sessions and field notes.

Initially, pre-coding was employed to capture the initial moments "worthy of attention," which I noted particular frustrations in the teachers based upon language, body language, and tone of voice (Saldana, 2013, p. 19). Pre-coding was done during the collection of the field notes and transcription process. In this initial phase, I began to compile a codebook, in which I assembled all of the codes and descriptions for a reference for myself. Examples of initial codes were "frustration," and "co-existing."

The first round of coding employed the Descriptive coding method, yet I was be open to other coding methods that illuminated the data (Saldana, 2013). Descriptive coding allowed me to identify the topics of frustration, in which I identified two main topics, "Program Structure," and "Communication."

As a researcher/teacher, I also consistently kept reflections of the coding process and the data analysis through the use of analytic memos (Saldana, 2013). These written entries assisted me in digging deeper into the data and the complexity of the data each week. Focusing on myself in this question as a participant and a research instrument, analytic memos were crucial for this question. I continually asked myself why I acted or said the things I said, in which other data sources were used to begin to triangulate.

Second round of analysis. A second phase of coding, Pattern Coding, was employed to "strategically reassemble data" as this study explored a "wide variety of data forms" (Saldana, 2013, p. 218). The nature of the research questions, gaining insight into the teachers experiences during the visual arts program adopting the guided-exploration orientation, provided an opportunity to strategically analyze four additive elements of the program, as recognized by Saldana (2013): the context, the conditions, the interactions, and the consequences (p. 221-222). The codes were clustered together to form categories in the second phase of data analysis

were used to create an overall understanding and research story of the teachers' experience. Examples of categories were "Facilitation and Program Structure," and "Guide."

Researcher's Role

Design-based research, or "progressive refinement" approach raises significant challenges for researchers and teachers (Collins, Joseph & Bielaczyc, 2004, p. 18), yet many of these challenges are parallel to those encountered in conducting qualitative research. Creswell (2013) suggested that "Qualitative researchers need to 'position' themselves in their writing" as a way to illuminate the biases, values, and experiences that impact the issue under study (p. 216). Creswell (2013) asserted a two-step approach, which he defined as the concept of "reflexivity", wherein the researcher first "talks about his or her experiences with the phenomenon being explored" and also "discuss(es) how these past experiences shape the researcher's interpretation of the phenomenon" (p. 216). Following this suggestion, my history and experience in preschool education and visual arts instruction is first explained. What follows is a discussion on how I believe that experience influenced my analysis and interpretation of the findings, elucidating trustworthiness.

My Preschool and Visual Arts Experience

My teaching experience in preschool education developed alongside the pursuit of my Masters degree in Early Childhood/Childhood Education. I began teaching in a preschool classroom in 2010 as one of the lead teachers. By beginning my preschool teaching career in a lab school, the site in which this research took place, I was afforded opportunities to implement and experiment with the teaching practices that were discussed in my Masters courses. Throughout my first few years of teaching, I began to grapple with the kind of

preschool teacher that I embodied in my own classroom as well as my beliefs in early childhood education.

As the primary instrument of inquiry throughout this research, Peshkin (1988) suggests that the researcher should identify his/her subjectivities, in an attempt to be "meaningfully attentive to their own subjectivity" (p. 17). I identify my biases, including my beliefs as a preschool teacher as well as the practices that I implement in my preschool classroom, as the following:

1. I view the world and my research through my social-constructivist worldview (Creswell, 2009). With this worldview, I see that meaning is co-constructed through human interaction and/or dialogue. The social and cultural background is imperative to how others interpret the world.

2. Being a preschool educator, I encourage our student's voice to be heard, and my guidance depends on the students understanding. In my interactions with my students, I strive to use open-ended questions, students' prior knowledge, and modeling as a base for making meaning. Therefore, I identify my beliefs and actions within a preschool context to be child-directed/centered.

3. Students and teachers learn together. I view my role in the classroom as a facilitator, assisting in social interactions within the classroom to advance students' understanding.

In the beginning of my career as a preschool teacher, the visual arts were integrated into the curriculum as a center for exploration for the students. Students were encouraged to make meaning through various visual arts opportunities, such as drawing, molding clay, and painting, yet the center adopted a stance that the students should experiment with the materials in an open-

65

ended and unstructured way, reminiscent of what Bresler (1993) defines as the little intervention orientation.

Upon developing a relationship with a community museum program in the Fall of 2014 and at the beginning of the pursuit of my Ph.D. in Curriculum Instruction and the Science of Learning with a focus in early childhood, I took interest in the opportunities that I facilitated in my own classroom in the visual arts. We began a visual arts program in our preschool classroom, in which the visual artist-in-residence led an exploration of a famous artist's work, focusing on art viewing, art appreciation, and art making. At the start of this program, I began investing myself in visual arts research specific to early childhood, in which I began to contrast my everyday visual arts facilitation with that of which this visual artist-in-residence was aiming for. As the visual artist-in-residence and myself began to see stark differences in the two approaches, this research study began to unfold.

Trustworthiness

My role as a researcher was unique in this study because I am not only the researcher, but also the lead preschool teacher in this study. With my full participation in this program (Glesne, 2011), I had prior knowledge and a relationship with all of these preschool students. Because of this relationship, a mutually meaningful rapport was established with the students prior to the research, providing an advantage in maintaining trust throughout. However, due to this relationship, conflicting roles (researcher and teacher) were evident in the research processes (Glesne, 2011). My students recognize my role as a co-constructor of knowledge, which is my role as a teacher and facilitator in the classroom. This personal relationship with the students could be viewed as both a strength and a limitation of the study. Although it could be argued that my relationship with the students could bias my perceptions and interpretations of their

66

perspectives, I made an effort to set aside my own assumptions concerning these students' academic experiences.

In an effort to maintain trustworthiness, my time in the field was extremely extensive, 2 full school years. *Table 3* details the amount of time that data was collected as well as the data sources that were relied upon, from the Fall of 2014 to the Spring of 2016, and due to this prolonged engagement in the field, observations were extremely persistent (Creswell, 2013). All data sources were triangulated in an effort to be consistent throughout the analysis process.

This process was extremely extensive, and being at a research center, a supportive research group was formed for peer debriefing in analysis as well as data collection. This research group consisted of the director and assistant directors of the center, my co-teachers in the preschool classroom, as well as my co-teacher in the visual arts program, Josephine. My students always came first throughout this program, in which the research center's research assistant did much of the videoing and audio recording for this project. This afforded me the ability to focus on my teacher position during the program and the researcher position throughout reflection and preparation.

Due to the iterative process of this methodology, a reflective stance was consistent throughout for both myself and the visual artist-in-residence. For example, after every session, we would reflect separately and share our thoughts with each other by email. By collaborating, we were able to continually build towards our own strengths and the students' strengths. This reflective process has also enabled me to use member checking with the visual artist-in-residence throughout analysis. Member checking was also consistently used with the preschool students. For example, several interviews were conducted throughout the program with the students to understand their experiences and their interpretations of their own artwork.

67

An interesting and difficult process, myself as the research instrument and the teacher of interest in this study, I often used my own writing, in both reflections and analytic memos to capitalize on the one-on-one relationships I established with both the artist-in-residence and my preschool students. As warned by Karen Hale Hankins (2003), a narrative teacher-researcher, sometimes the conclusions drawn from my own writing were jarring and uncomfortable to explore, however in order to tell a true picture in which the relationships impact the overall facilitation and development of the program, I could not be afraid to explore those frustrating moments. I realized through data collection that my presence as a teacher impacted all three research questions to some degree, in which I had to really understand the shifts in my ideology and philosophies as a teacher to understand the program and guided exploration approach. As cited, and as illuminated by Hankins (2003), "The process is dialectical not linear" (Agar, 1980, p. 9).

My research questions were created from genuine struggle and emerged from important and immediate concerns in my own classroom. In concert, my questions were created in part from my building knowledge as a graduate student, in which I attempted to integrate my knowledge and struggle "to make the familiar more familiar" (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 2009). This dissertation did not only act as research to me, but also as professional development and continuous questioning and understanding of who I am as a preschool teacher and a visual arts teacher.

CHAPTER IV

Findings and Discussion

As this program unfolded and evolved, I continued returning to the motivation that propelled these changes in our visual arts program: the students' engagement and genuine love for the artistic medium. When not in visual arts sessions, I wrestled with different strategies to improve their focus and attention while learning; but when engaged in the visual arts program, the students' would naturally paint longer than I expected, sitting for twenty minutes as we discussed how they were painting, what colors they were choosing, and the intent and story of the painting. This piqued my interest as a researcher and a teacher. The research questions, driven by the sociocultural theory and multimodality, guide the organization of the presentation of the results:

1. What is the resulting visual arts program based on the guided exploration approach? What changes are made to the program through the design-based research?

2. How do preschool students experience this visual arts program?

3. How is the design-based research conducted through collaboration of an artist-in-residence and the early childhood teacher? What struggles and successes do the teachers encounter in each phase of development?

I present the results in three main sections: the resulting guided exploration approach, the preschool students' experiences, and the teachers' experiences. Each of these sections will focus on the iterative process Josephine and myself engaged in as well as the resulting program adopting the guided exploration approach. I will then conclude each section with a discussion of the main themes, examining meaningful practices and affordances the visual arts provided for preschool students.

69

The Resulting Guided Exploration Approach

There have been some concerted albeit limited efforts to define and clarify the guided-exploration approach in the field of visual arts and early childhood. For example, Angela Eckhoff, a researcher specialized in visual arts pedagogy in early childhood education, explored and established qualities of the guided-exploration approach that a visual artist-in-residence represented in teaching visual arts to young children through discourse: observe, listen, communicate through artistic expression, and appreciate aesthetic qualities (Eckhoff, 2013).

With this initial understanding of the guided exploration approach, it was essential to further define what this looked like in our own visual arts program, implemented both by a visual artist-in-residence and an early childhood teacher (myself) and to illuminate and expand upon any changes or additional content that we included to create this program. The following section will discuss three main themes in regards to the resulting guided exploration approach after several phases of iteration: the facets of our guided exploration approach, planning toward the guided exploration approach, and the teaching strategies of our guided exploration approach.

Facets of the Guided Exploration Approach

As identified by Dr. Liora Bresler (1993), the guided exploration approach is more than just encouraging and allowing students to create art. Teachers must be able to scaffold observation and listening skills, facilitate communication in and through the arts, and encourage students to attend to the aesthetic qualities of arts. This dissertation expanded upon these qualities identifying another integral counterpart of the guided exploration approach in teaching visual arts, which I've chosen to call fostering "I'm an artist" identity. Each of these essential aspects highlights the diverse and expansive discipline of the visual arts.   The following section

explores what each of these essential components of the guided exploration approach looked like, identifying changes that occurred throughout the phases of iteration and refinement.

Observing. Throughout the course of this visual arts program, students were encouraged to use various forms of artistic medium as inspiration for their individual artwork. While a guide was provided for organization of the large canvas, student agency was at the forefront when making decisions about their unique pieces of art. Students were encouraged to make observations, and the use of various famous artworks, children's literature, nature, and photographs all provided opportunities for students to do this.

It was evident, through the description of Josephine's overall goal for the program in Phase 1, that observational skills were essential to her visual arts program and ideology. Josephine stated,

> (I plan to) Invite and inspire children to look at the world around them through the eyes of an artist: the question of 'what do you see?' can last a lifetime. Training of senses and focusing perception will contribute in learning and interpreting the world and the world of art through the eyes of an artist (J. de Jong, personal communication, September 10, 2014).

In Phase 1 of the visual arts program, Josephine's approach to scaffolding the students' observational skills was implicit and not easily identified through the planning documents. Across the first eleven lessons of visual arts, Phase 1, a conjecture can be made that Josephine consistently scaffolded these skills through suggestions of replication. In the following exchange, Katia, a preschool student, was working on her canvas using *Sunflowers* by Vincent van Gogh as her inspiration. Episode 1 occurred as Katia continued painting.

[Episode 1 "I like that" (Phase 1, November 25, 2014)]

71

1. Josephine: Wow, look at that. Listen to me, look at me, look at me. The bodies (stems) that are holding up the flowers, are they going up like that? *(Josephine holds her hands and arms vertically. Katia nods her head.)* Do you know where you want to have that? Look here, if you have here are the flowers *(pointing to picture of "Sunflowers")* going out of the vase. See? (*Katia continues painting below the vase.)* Would you like to do a little bit darker for your stems? Ya?
2. Katia: I want some orange.
3. Josephine: But do you know what, we don't do the flowers yet. We only do the bodies for the flowers… So do you have here the body, the stems for the flowers?
4. Katia: Ya those are the bodies.
5. Josephine: Those are the bodies. And are they this way *(horizontal)* or are there a few going that way *(vertical)*?
6. Katia: A few going that way *(vertical). Katia follows the directions and paints some stems vertical.*
7. Josephine: Can you show me how that look like? *Katia paints more stems vertically.* I like that, I like that. And it comes out of the vase. Am I right? Real cool. See, now I know where you want some flowers connected. I like that. Really neat. *Katia begins using the green color she has been using for her stems and covers the brown/gold vase that she painted in an earlier session with the green.*

In reference to the vignette, Episode 1 creates a clear picture of the suggestive nature of Josephine's informal interactions with the students throughout their painting experience in Phase 1. While Katia attempted to express her creativity, create meaning, and display her understandings through her artwork in turn 2, Josephine consistently redirected her experience within the painting to replicate van Gogh's work. We can speculate that Josephine's intent during this exchange was to direct Katia's attention to van Gogh's painting, observing the qualities and characteristics of van Gogh's stems. However, the suggestive nature represented in the comments made by Josephine directed Katia to comply with the teacher's requests and change or shift her original ideas. After Katia changed her idea in turn 6, looking for teacher approval, and followed the suggestion of the Josephine, she was immediately praised in turn 7 through the comments "I like that," "Real cool," and "Really neat." During this short discussion between Josephine and Katia, we can assert that although Josephine intended to mediate the student's ability to consider her observations of the painting, she struggled in determining the

difference between wrong and artistic observations. While *Sunflowers* was used as a model and physical tool for artistic techniques, it became salient through the discussions between Josephine and the students in Phase 1 that elements used within the artists work were "correct." Rather than aligning *Sunflowers* as a model for the students to imitate, Josephine instructed students to observe and replicate this famous work of art.

Explicit instruction of observing was absent from these sessions in Phase 1, yet Josephine intended to create an environment rich with artwork in which the students natural abilities to observe would be afforded. It can be argued that the environment and set up was integral to allowing a respectful and accepting art environment. Each week Josephine would line the room with van Gogh's artwork. Several versions of van Gogh's paintings were hanging at eye level for the preschoolers all over the room. As students entered the room in the morning, their artwork was positioned and hung throughout the classroom for students to notice. Josephine aimed for an arts rich environment each week.

However, beginning Phase 2, Josephine and I began to be more intentional with opportunities that we facilitated in our visual arts program, in which particular lessons focused on observing media and the world around us. We incorporated other media forms as inspiration to observe, such as non-fiction and fiction books, the Internet, and real photographs.

In the following exchange, during Phase 2, Session 2, lesson 2, Sawyer and myself sat down at the table after a hands-on discovery of water and the life that lives in the water. During this exploration in a water bin, Sawyer's small group of friends added many animals and explored the nature and impact of these animals on the water itself, and Sawyer proudly exclaimed, "I want to make a busy ocean." We then provided time for students to plan their painting and show their understanding through the use of watercolor pencils. Sawyer

continuously referred to what he was about to create as a "busy ocean," but upon sitting down

with the watercolor pencils, he was unsure how to capture this effect in his drawing. In order to

understand what Sawyer was defining as a "busy ocean," I began to provide Sawyer with

opportunities to create meaning through the use of Google images.

[Episode 2 "There is a lot of creatures" (Phase 2, November 12, 2015)]

1. Me: We are looking for a busy ocean. So I'm going to type in, do you want a wavy ocean, should I type busy ocean, what do you think I…
2. Sawyer: A BUSY OCEAN!
3. Me: Ok busy ocean. That's what I'm typing here. And let's see what kind of pictures come up. Ok, so let's look up images and they're going to be small, but we can click on them to make them bigger. So which one would you like to see?
4. Sawyer: *(Looking closely at the iPhone and pointing)* This one.
5. Me: That one here in the corner?
6. Sawyer: Ya.
7. Me: Wow. What do you notice in that busy ocean?
8. Sawyer: There is a lot of creatures. THAT'S the busy ocean I want to make! *(jumping up and down)*

In this short exchange between Sawyer and myself, the child's interests guided his exploration

with the watercolor pencils. He began by contemplating how he himself defined a busy ocean,

as he was unsure how to draw this upon sitting down. Once he found and observed the

inspiration in a photograph, he identified what made the ocean he was looking at "busy": a lot of

creatures or animals.

Though Sawyer had an initial idea, he needed the additional medium of the photograph to

assist him in moving forward to follow through with this idea. These moments of planning, in

which we called "quiet think time" provided students with opportunities to really consider and

contemplate how they would follow through in their own art making and became salient in our

facilitation of observation skills. By allowing Sawyer to observe a real ocean, he was able to

make a connection between real life and his artistic decisions.

In addition, group discussions were planned and facilitated in Phase 2, Session 2, for students to make observations about famous artwork. In the following vignette, on December 10, 2015, Phase 2, Session 2, Lesson 5, the group of students, twelve in total, were gathered in a whole group around Claude Monet's artwork titled *Sunrise*. I began a discussion using the common game, "I spy," to observe, discuss, and interpret Monet's intention and artistic choice made by painting a silhouette. We began looking at the painting with the overall goal to discuss and interpret the painting with each other, when Elizabeth insisted, "I know how they're people." This clear and final answer, to Elizabeth, prompted a discussion between the students to decipher what the silhouette could represent. The following vignette is a clear example of how students were encouraged to work together to observe famous artwork.

[Episode 3 "I think that this is a thing that revs up and goes vrrrrrrrm" (Phase 2, December 10, 2015)]

1. Me: Sawyer, what do I spy in this painting *(I'm looking at the painting with a magnifying glass)* What do you think? *(pause)* What is that? Look, Sawyer is pointing to something in the painting *(Sawyer is pointing to the silhouette.)* What is that?
2. Elizabeth: People.
3. Me: Where do you see people? Elizabeth, can you show us where you see people?
4. Elizabeth: *(pointing to the silhouettes)* Here and here.
5. Me: How do you know that they are people?
6. Sawyer: No I don't believe you, because I think they're *(pauses)*
7. Me: What do you see Sawyer?
8. Sawyer: I believe that this and this are not a person *(pointing to silhouettes)*
9. Me: You don't think it's a person. So what do you think it is? So Elizabeth says she thinks that this and this, these are people?
10. Elizabeth: I know how they're people.
11. Me: Tell me how you know. *(Sawyer looks like he is about to say something)* Hang on, and then you can tell us Sawyer.
12. Elizabeth: These and this *(pointing)* is like you can row *(rowing motion with her hand)* and that, this thing, is like a little hand.
13. Me: So Elizabeth is seeing, this is what she is seeing in this silhouette, she's seeing…
14. Sawyer: *(hops up)* I think
15. Me: Hang on a second. She's seeing that this is what the person is using to row. So what do you think he's on Elizabeth? Why does he have something to row?
16. *(Sawyer raises his hand)*

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17. Elizabeth: umm because
18. Sawyer: I think that this is a thing that revs up and goes vrrrrrrm.
19. Audrey: *(to Amanda, a teacher, whispering)* I think that's a boat.
20. Me: Ok, so explain to me a little bit more Sawyer. So let's hear Sawyer's idea now.
21. Sawyer: I think this is a thing that revs up and goes vrrrrrrm.
22. Me: So it revs up and goes vrrrrm. What kind of thing revs up like that – vrrrmm.
23. Audrey: A boat!
24. Sawyer: A vehicle!

This activity was planned for purposes of observing famous artwork, but the students understanding guided the discussion. In turn 3 and 7, I encourage both Sawyer and Elizabeth to support their own arguments with observations by saying, "What do you see?" Further, in turn 11, I said, "Tell me how you know," encouraging the students to look back at the artwork to clarify their observations.

Theses activities which were planned to encourage students to observe became more salient after this conversation, as we were able to see the students successfully make observations. An essential part of the guided exploration approach, we planned specific activities such as individual planning time and group discussions around famous artwork or peers' artwork, for students to make observations.

Communication in and through the arts. Communication in the arts refers to the meaningful conversations that take place during the art viewing and art making context (Schiller, 1995; Eckhoff, 2013). However, the reflection of art as a language in and of itself is also conveyed through the guided-exploration approach. Bresler (1993) explained this process, suggesting that an artist, or child's, role is to "communicate these sensitivities to the creation of a form of representation."   There has been considerable research conducted with young children regarding the dialogue and conversations that the visual arts afford young children in the context of both art viewing and art making.

Communication takes on various forms, and Josephine made it evident to the students from the very first day of visual arts that each of them could communicate verbally in the arts, as well as through the piece of art that they were creating. Many of the painting sessions consisted of informal dialogue with the students about what they were painting and how they were painting it.

In Phase 1, Josephine continually began her questions and discussions with students by saying, "Is that…?" By beginning a conversation like this, it could be inferred that the preschool students were being told what or how their art communicates to an adult. However, by using closed ended questions such as this one, does the student have the opportunity to interpret their own artwork? Through this type of questioning, Josephine seemed to hold the power of interpretation of the art. This was consistent throughout Phase 1 of visual arts, as Josephine interpreted the students artwork for them rather than allowing the student to interpret their own artwork.

While some students allowed Josephine to interpret for them, other students pushed back as they struggled to understand their role in interpreting and communicating in Phase 1. In the following short excerpt, Eleanor, a four-year-old preschool student, corrected Josephine in her interpretation. Upon sitting down to paint, Eleanor told several of the preschool teachers that she was "painting a girl." In watching her paint, the girl was symbolic in nature, as parts of a person were clear to the observer, such as the head, eyes, hair, and a bow on top of the girl's head. As she continued to add details, Josephine noticed her artwork:

[Episode 4 "I think it's a girl" (Phase 1, October 28, 2014)]

1. Josephine: Eleanor, are you going to do a very *strong* table? Because I know you have a face, but your flowers want to stand also on the table.
2. Eleanor: I think that is a girl.

This short exchange portrays a struggle between how Eleanor would like to interpret her painting versus what Josephine interpreted and wanted to see in her painting. Josephine recognized what Eleanor was aiming to create in turn 1, saying, "Because I know you have a face" but she followed this up with what Eleanor should be creating. This struggle led us to reevaluate how we were facilitating conversations in our visual arts program.

There was a shift in the conversations in Phase 2. The whole group conversations were no longer "presentations," yet encouraged the students to discuss with each other their understandings. The small group conversations began to expand, as both Josephine and I listened to the students' interests and interpretations, which allowed us to better guide each of the students. At the end of Phase 2, Session 2, our conversations had evolved to allow students to communicate what their paintings conveyed. We planned to use the last couple minutes of our visual arts program this day to allow the students to discuss their artwork with each other. This final wrap up, Episode 5, depicts this conversation, as one of the five children that wanted to discuss their paintings stood in front of the classroom with his painting.

[Episode 5 "This is snow and this is ice with walruses" (Phase 2, December 10, 2015)]

1. David: This is snow and this is ice with the walruses.
2. Me: So the walruses are living in the cold water?
3. David: And they're always fed. And that's what they look like. And they also (inaudible), they also trying to get to each other *(pushing his fists together)*.
4. Me: Oh, boys and girls, David is telling us about the 2 walruses in his painting. One is over here, and where is the other one David? Show me. *(He points to one side of his painting.)* Over here. And they're looking for each other. I see.
5. David: The snow is making them colder and colder. So they can't, so they're frozen into ice. So they cant touch anything, so they can't get together to this one.
6. Me: So they're trying so hard to get together. *(Audrey raises her hand.)* And Audrey, you had a question for David. Go ahead and ask your question.
7. Audrey: David, I just thought polar bears live in cold, that's not walrus.
8. David: Well the back flippers, that's near the back and the front flippers, are like fingers.
9. Me: So tell me David, Audrey's question was, she said polar bears live in the cold too. Do you have any polar bears in your painting or no?

78

10. David: Nah uh. There the snow is really getting stronger and stronger and stronger and it's raining snow twisters.

This conversation depicts how the conversations began to change in Phase 2 and into Phase 3. In turn 2, I rephrase David's question to be sure that I understand his interpretation. Both Josephine and I allowed the child an extended period of time to discuss his artwork with his peers, in which a child, Audrey, feels comfortable to add to the conversation in turn 6. Yet, in turn 10, David listens to Audrey's suggestion, yet continues with his own interpretation. The conversations began to change in that they were driven by the students' own ideas.

Additionally, at the end of Phase 2 and into Phase 3, we began recognizing our mistakes in our conversations with students. We wanted to have lengthy conversations with each and every student, but when facilitating a class of 12-14 students, it was difficult to do this. Josephine and I discussed this over email, as we both grappled with this frustration. Our role as teachers at this particular center involved teaching preschool students and teaching student interns learning to become teachers. Josephine stated, "For me to guide the process of working with small groups and the teachers, is a bit more challenging. I am feeling a sense of lacking to guide the assisting adults properly" (J. de Jong, email communication, September 30, 2015). I echoed this concern, "I have to agree with you that the process of working in small groups can be more difficult on our part (myself and you). It is difficult to trust that other small group conversations are going well, lead our own small group, and then manage the entire classroom on top of that" (K. O'Connell, email communication, September 30, 2015). For this reason, we began pre-briefing with our student interns before visual arts began to provide them with prompts and discussion points to help facilitate these meaningful conversations with the preschool students. This became a consistent practice in Phase 3. For this reason, we felt more comfortable giving the preschool students the power in the conversation, and Josephine, myself,

79

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and our student interns acted as the facilitators of the conversations, bringing the ideas back to the main points when necessary, prompting students, and questioning students. These discussions with our student interns allowed Josephine and myself to reevaluate the way we talked to our preschool students. We began identifying key strategies to encourage students to communicate in and through the arts. For example, we consistently rephrased what the student told us the artwork communicated, we aimed to facilitate with open-ended questions, and we encouraged the students to work together by asking questions to each other. The resulting guided exploration approach focused more on student ideas than on our contrived ideas of communication.

Attending to the aesthetic qualities. Attending to the aesthetic qualities in art is bound with emotion, pleasure, and beauty. Butler-Kisber, Li, Clandinin, and Markus (2007) emphasized the pleasure and new understandings that the aesthetics provides as "a way of knowing through the senses" (p. 226). The aesthetic qualities of visual arts are essentially a lens through which one is able to make sense of the feelings that the art evokes (Davis, 2008). In attending to the aesthetic qualities of art, one must be sensitive to dynamics, form, shape, color, and balance (Bresler, 1993).

Beginning from Phase 1, color and shape were consistently discussed with the students during art viewing and art making. However, as our conversations improved, giving students more power in the conversations, our ability to lead students to attend to the aesthetic qualities also improved. Upon beginning the program, we provided colors for the students to use in their painting. Yet, we began to revalue this due to the fact that we were not aiming for students to recreate the famous artwork but rather to reimagine the famous artwork. We then began giving students a plethora of colors to choose from, however depending on the medium of paint we

were using, we often ended up getting muddled colors of browns. We knew at this point that we had to reevaluate our color choices to be intentional about our choices.

By Phase 2, Josephine and I began purposefully choosing the colors that we would bring out each week for the students. We would bring out shades that we knew would mix from primary to secondary colors to allow students to attend to these color mixing properties. We also allowed students opportunities to create new tints of paint using white paint as a lightener and new shades, using black to reduce the lightness. These two colors, black and white, we intentionally brought out every session so that we could allow students to explore with these shades and tints.

This decision not only changed our ability to facilitate conversations of color mixing, but also allowed students to attend to the different tints and shades that they could create and use in their own artwork. In the following vignette, Episode 6, students were walking down the hallway art gallery to begin our second lesson in Phase 2, Session 2. With approximately three students per teacher, discussions were focused on what they noticed in each other's artwork, identifying colors and lines that students chose to use in our first lesson. As the art gallery walk was coming to an end, we encouraged students to sit down in the hallway to view the gallery as a whole. Sawyer eagerly sat up wanting to discuss his artwork in front of his peers. Josephine encouraged him to stand next to his artwork, in which the following conversation occurred.

[Episode 6 "You're gonna see different color blues" (Phase 2, November 12, 2015)]

1. Me: How did you make the water, Sawyer? Can you tell us? Like, how did you paint the water? *(Josephine holds his painting up high so that all of his peers can see it while he talks about it.)*
2. Josephine: Is your water the same color as your sky?
3. Sawyer: *(smiling)* You're gonna see different color blues.
4. Josephine: A little bit different color blues. Yes.
5. Sawyer: And this is the dark blue and this is the lighter blue *(pointing to the canvas)*.
6. Josephine: The lighter blue that he did for his ocean.

81

7. Sawyer: And this light half can have, gets all of the blue water onto the horizon, and it goes down to here. And it…
8. Josephine: Did you hear that guys? The water goes all the way to the horizon. Is that what you said?
9. Sawyer: Ya. And it comes out! And it can come out.
10. Josephine: Wow, so we painted a big ocean, with water that goes all the way up to the horizon.
11. Sawyer: Ya, and it will come out!
12: Josephine: And do you know what, do you think Sawyer has a quiet ocean? Sawyer, do you have a quiet ocean or is there a LOT happening?
13: Sawyer: There's a LOT happening!

As Sawyer stood next to his artwork, he was able to identify the sky and the water. While both of these contexts are often associated with the color blue, Sawyer pointed out an artistic decision that he made to decipher the sky from the water – the color blues were different. The smile in his face was apparent, and a conjecture is made that he was proud of himself for this artistic decision in which he attended to the aesthetic quality of the tints and shades of blue that he created himself. As he explained this aesthetic decision, he continued to explain the lines he created with a story-like quality in turns 7 and 9, describing the movement he created in his water.

The choice of materials also impacted the depth and saturation of the paint. Upon beginning the program, we initially taped watercolor paper to cardboard to provide students with a large canvas, pictured below (Table 4, left column). However, upon shifting to acrylic paint, we realized that the watercolor paper would no longer sufficiently show the depth that the layering the acrylics afforded. For this reason, we decided to begin Phase 3 of the program with cotton canvas panels (see Table 4, right column).

Table 4. Comparison of materials.

Watercolor paper taped to cardboard to create student canvases, Phase 2 Session 1	Cotton canvas panel, Phase 3, Session 2

All of these steps and decisions of pedagogy, the paint medium, color choices, and the material students would paint on, encouraged students to actively create the aesthetic qualities. These intentional program choices impacted our ability to facilitate the guided exploration approach.

Identifying as an artist. Upon analyzing each session, it was clear that there was another facet that played a part in our guided exploration approach. Many pedagogical choices made by the teachers, both Josephine and myself, encouraged the students to identify as artists implicitly from the beginning.

For example, upon beginning the program, we encouraged the students to make their own choices when painting, such as the color/shade/tint, the paintbrush used, the focal point, and the purpose and use of the artistic techniques. Josephine led the first session of Phase 1 with intent to finish the session by encouraging the students to title their artwork and allowing each student to put his/her unique wording to the name of the painting, as a real artist would do. We discussed these artists as people in our classroom, using a puppet of "Vincent" and "Mr. Monet," encouraging the students to build a connection with each of the beloved artists.

Josephine's planning documents upon beginning the program conveyed the different steps that artists take in the process of creating artwork, and these helped to guide the purpose of each visual arts session. For example, the students worked on the same piece of artwork for five to six weeks in each session. Each week, the preschoolers would add to their existing painting, creating more depth. Josephine explained this thought process in a reflection, stating "Persistence is a highly regarded feat (for artists) to bring creations to completion" (Josephine's Daily Reflection, Phase 1, October 1, 2014). In reference to this quote, one can infer that Josephine saw these students as artists before beginning the program.

Upon noticing this facet, we began to refine these discussions with students, making sure to incorporate these intentional decisions and choices that artists make into our daily conversations with the students. Additionally, we began interweaving conversations about emotions, encouraging students to feel something, a connection to their artwork. These pedagogical choices and intentional revisions become integral to our visual arts program adopting the guided exploration approach, as students felt proud of their accomplishments.

Planning Toward the Guided Exploration Approach

Initially an artist-in-residence program, Josephine did the program planning and set up completely independently in Phase 1 of the program development. She entered the classroom in hopes to infuse visual arts into the curriculum, however without initial buy-in from myself, the visual arts program acted as a disconnected event. Without seeing her lesson plans, I initially treated these sessions as an extra event entering my classroom, allowing and encouraging her to lead independently while I acted as behavior management support. With several objectives and a short summary detailing each session, Josephine's lesson plans acted as her own guide in facilitation. These lesson plans generally began with a whole group (lasting approximately 20-30

minutes) followed by extended time (approximately 30 minutes) for students to each paint their

own canvas. To illuminate the changes made to the planning of the program, the following is

provided as an example of Josephine's lesson plans in Phase 1 of the program. The following

lesson plans (Table 5), which she typed, were planned and implemented for Phase 1, Session 1,

Lesson/Week 3:

Table 5. Lesson Plans Phase 1, Session 1, Lesson/Week 3.

Objectives
*A1 Obj.: Respond and React: the children express an interest in art of others (peers) and of a well-known artist. (Vincent van Gogh) *A2 Obj.: Identifying similarities and differences: the children are willing to engage in viewing artwork of others. *B1 Obj.: children also learn and identify natural occurrences as in earth and space around them. *B2 Obj.: children will identify and name shape as well as components of shape. *C1 Obj.: Children will self-select tools (brush size) and colors needed to actively create their version of lights. *C2 Obj.: Children will engage in routine needed to enable a workable art session. *D Obj.: Children will try to create with paints lights in their sky. *E Obj.: Children will appreciate and learn to compare work of self with others and develop a sense of accomplishment. (Ownership)
Organization

Introduction: Vincent as guest!
    • Question and identify position of being an artist.
    • Vincent as a boy in Netherlands.
    • Vincent as a painter in France.
    • Vincent's saying about the night: The Night has more COLORS than the Day!
Circle time: 10 minutes
 	
Vincent's work: STARRY NIGHT!
    • How did Vincent create this work?
    • How did Vincent see the stars?
    • What did he want to express, people to see?
    • How did he do that?
    • Shall we try?
    • Demo with 2 paper plates!
    • Can we twirl with our arms? Like clouds and stars?
    • Where do we have our own space for it on work?
    • What colors did Vincent need to create his stars?
    • What happens in the blues?
Circle time: 10 minutes

Why does Vincent need this? LIGHT!
- Now class will get ready for their stars.
- Very important is: CLEAN water! Light colors need clean water. Ask help from teachers.

Circle time: 10 minutes

Routine to preparation
- Focus on sky.
- Choose size of brush(es).
- Paints: white/yellows/orange/blue/turquoise.

Art Making: 30 minutes

Circle time to view work or story about Vincent
5/10 minutes

These lesson plans provide an initial understanding of the program schedule and facilitation. However, I felt confused each session going into these sessions blindly without seeing these lesson plans. I did not know what to expect as far as the schedule for our visual arts time, and I did not understand how I could best support her when it seemed as though children were uninterested or acting out. Yet, Josephine and I both continued this way in Phase 1 Session 1, with her as the artist-in-residence and myself handling the behavior management. Being the first time we implemented this program, we did not know the extent of the program development. Were we going to continue with visual arts after this first session? Was this how Josephine wanted the program to run? Was this how I wanted the program to run? Was this how the administration of the center envisioned the program running? There were many unanswered questions as we finished Phase 1 Session 1.

The first lesson of Phase 1 Session 2 felt hectic and forced. With some new students added to the mix, as we chose to offer the second session of visual arts on an opposite day of the first session, the dynamic of the program had changed. The following short excerpt is the introduction lesson to Phase 1 Session 2.

[Episode 7 Introduction of van Gogh's *Sunflowers* (Phase 1, October 28, 2014)]

1. Josephine: Look what Vincent did with this *(holding up Sunflowers painting)*, but first Vincent had to decide where is the bottom part, the table part *(touching the bottom of the painting)*, and where is the wall part *(touching the top of the painting)*. Because inside the house, we don't have the sky and the ground. Inside the house, we have the wall, do you see this? *(pointing to the wall in the artwork)* Haley, do you see this part? This is the wall, and this is where the table is, where the flowers are. Do you see that?
2. Matthew: *(not looking at Josephine)* Can we go outside?
3. Josephine: Now we have to, Haley, Haley. Now we need to think for our painting what we are going to do with the top part and the bottom part. And I'm going to turn this around *(referring to the white board next to her, she gets up from her chair and turns it)*. Because we have to decide. I'm turning this around and you need to help me. Here is another surprise, because Vincent loved Sunflowers.
4. Me: He loved to paint sunflowers.

It is clear that the beginning of Episode 7 involved Josephine talking at the students. Josephine initially speaks to Haley in turn 1, a repeating student that she knew from the first session of visual arts. Haley does not respond, and then Matthew asks in turn 2 about going outside. I was aware at this point that the children were uninterested in the introduction of visual arts, and I insert myself in the presentation in turn 4 with little depth to add to the discussion. Both Josephine and I reflected negatively toward this introduction session, shown below.

> The dynamic was already a bit different from Wednesday session. In circle time, oral information did not get the attention by all. Several children were alert not to miss out on other children's actions (Josephine's Daily Reflection, Phase 1, October 28, 2014).

> This was our first class with the Tuesday group of kids. Although there are many kids doing this Visual Arts session for a second time, the group dynamic is different on Tuesdays. Circle time in the beginning was a little long for this group, especially considering only one child was really engaged and responding during circle time discussion. I would try to keep this to only 5-10 minutes, and be extremely specific with instructions so that they know exactly what is expected (My Daily Reflection, Phase 1, October 28, 2014).

We both commented on the dynamic of the classroom, both using that word in particular. Josephine realized that her circle time information was not transmitted to the students, and I blamed it on the length of time the entire circle time lasted. We both did not reflect positively about this session, and at this point, we both knew that we had an entire session to get through

with these students. This session, a turning point in the program, spiraled the beginning of the design experiment. For this reason, after Phase 1 Session 2 (October 28, 2014), I asked Josephine to begin sending me her lesson plans so that I could better support her by knowing the routine and schedule for the day. After this session, I realized that I was not acting as a lead teacher or co-teacher during this program, so I felt it was important to begin to learn from Josephine and possibly collaborate with her on program planning, set up, and implementation.

The previous episode provide an initial basis and vision of the first Phase of implementation, in order to understand the changes that occurred in regards to planning throughout the phases of iterative refinement. Lesson planning was an immense component of the program as a whole. When Josephine and myself began to work together, the lesson plans evolved based on two main elements – holistic planning and opportunities to integrate and situate student's interests and abilities at the forefront.

Holistic planning. After Phase 1 Session 2 Lesson 1, I recognized that we had to improve the program for several reasons; first, it was important for the students to be interested in the program, developing a connection to the piece of artwork, so I hoped that we could integrate students' interests into the visual art medium. Secondly, I realized that I was not doing my job as a teacher if I did not support Josephine, which in turn impacted my students. Additionally, my job in the classroom was twofold; I taught preschool students, but I also taught pre-service teachers interning in my classroom. I hoped to provide our student interns with training and pre-briefing regarding the program, in which each of the interns could act as support and equals in the classroom with myself and Josephine. Finally, at this time I began to understand the visual arts in early childhood research and literature. I began to understand the

current existing research and practices that were taking place in other visual arts programs with young children. These reasons drove us to evoke changes in the program.

During the initial Phase, Phase 1 Session 1, Josephine included activities that seemed to integrate other disciplines than just the visual arts. Acting as supporting activities to the more prominent visual arts objectives and goals, Phase 1 Session 1 Day 5, Josephine planned a small group activity that began to integrate science, literacy, and visual arts. After an introduction to Vincent van Gogh's signature found on much of his artwork, students were encouraged in small groups to look through art books at van Gogh's artwork, acting as detectives in which they would look for his signature on his various famous pieces of artwork. In the following excerpt, Episode 8, Alexander showed excitement during this small group activity.

[Episode 8 "I found it!" (Phase 1, October 15, 2014)]

1. Alexander *(excited):* I found it! I found the name!...we need a different book, there are no more signatures!"

Alexander screamed with excitement as he played detective. He avidly looked through each book, each painting, scanning the page for van Gogh's signature. This excitement was difficult to ignore no matter what group you were working with, as he was able to scream over the entire class' murmur in small groups. Both Josephine and myself reflected on this activity in positive regard. Josephine stated, "The 'detective part' went really well, thanks to the teachers available today," (Josephine's Daily Reflection, Phase 1, October 15, 2014) while I echoed her reflection stating, "I loved the detective group work, looking for Vincent's name on his artwork. Many of the students I was working with made this connection of how proud Vincent was of his own work, but it also turned into a literacy activity, as the students kept saying to me, 'I found the V in Vincent's name!'"(My Daily Reflection, Phase 1, October 15, 2014). The student's

89

excitement during this activity urged myself and Josephine to consider the value of integrating the students' visual arts learning with other disciplines to strengthen the program.

With small glimpses of holistic planning and implementation in Phase 1, the intentional and purposeful integration became more prevalent in Phase 2. Beginning in Phase 2, almost a year later, we continuously discussed our ideas and plans over email. Each week we would typically converse two to three times back and forth until we both agreed upon our focus and plan of implementation the following week. With Josephine and myself co-planning during this session, we were able to integrate each of our expertise to implement a well-rounded program for young children. The following, Table 6, is an example of one of our emails in which we had finalized part of our plans for the next week. Table 6 details the plans for Phase 2 Session 1 Day 4.

Table 6. Lesson Plans Phase 2, Session 1, Week 4.

1. Small Groups

    *   Experimenting with different objects, materials, and animals discussing what sinks vs. what floats. We then bring that lesson back to the lily pads.
    *   Discussion about frogs - movement like a frog jumping from lily pad to lily pad (lily pad looking rugs).
    *   Model how Monet paints lily pads, and how we can convey what we see outside in visual arts form (I really love when you model the techniques for them, as painting a lily pad is a different technique that painting the waves.)

This lesson plan was intentionally holistic. This first part of the lesson plan incorporated science, as students were experimenting with objects to understand the concept of sink versus float and movement as students moved like a frog. Focusing our learning around Claude Monet's *Water Lilies*, students began to experiment and explore with the phenomena that we were preparing to paint ourselves.

After this session, it became natural to incorporate other learning disciplines into our visual arts program, providing students with many play opportunities to understand some of the

90

abstract visual arts concepts. Colors and color mixing are primary concepts for young children to explore in preschool. We began to see mixing and creating secondary colors as an experiment, as children would accommodate their understanding of colors, with new colors, shades, and tints. To engage in this playful learning, Josephine and I took advantage of our light tables for students to investigate colors during Phase 2 Session 2 Day 1, November 5, 2015. We planned for small groups of three to four children to sit around a light table with various primary color toys such as transparent blocks, transparent sheets of paper, and clear colored glue. My group consisted of a boy and two girls. As we played, the students began to be able to describe coloring mixing.

[Episode 9 "It looks like lime juice" (Phase 2, November 5, 2015)]

1. Me: Nicole, what do you notice? I see you put two of them together.
2. Nicole: It makes green.
3. David: If I have two yellows, they would just be yellow.
4. Me: They would be just yellow.
5. David: If I had just two blues, they would just be blue.
6. Me: But then look what Nola did. Nola put a yellow and blue together. What do you notice?
7. Nicole: It looks like a lime.
8. Me: It does look like lime green, you think? Like a lime?
9. Nicole: It looks like lime juice.
10. Me: Oh, like lime juice!
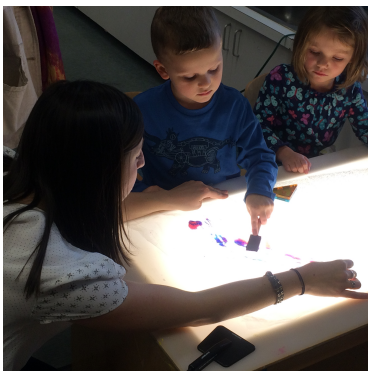
Figure 1. Photo corresponding with Episode 9.

In this short exchange, students were able to identify the primary color mixing properties, describing that mixing blue and yellow creates green. We continued this play creating both purple and orange as well. This experience encouraged students to experiment with the paint that they were given later to create the color and shade that each child wanted on their canvas. By incorporating the light table, students had the opportunity to explore in a medium that was not as permanent as the paint on their canvases.

By Phase 2, Session 2, our planning discussions centered around integrating the students learning into the daily curriculum by incorporating other disciplines into our visual arts program. For example, we planned to begin sessions with read alouds, both scientific and literary, to illuminate the visual arts concept for the day; we incorporated a story about the purpose and function of a stem of a plant so that the students could identify and consider what their stems would look like in their painting. We read a story about a young girl going to an art gallery to set the scene as we began to set up our own art gallery for conversations about each other's paintings. We allotted time in the program to go to an art gallery near our school, to encourage students to discuss elements of art in famous artwork.

By creating a holistic program, we were able to build connections between what the preschool students were learning at school and during visual arts. By Phase 2, Session 2, this program no longer felt like a disconnected event entering our room, but an extension and enhancement of our existing preschool curriculum. By Phase 2, we had looked at our daily curriculum goals and made connections with the visual arts goals. The resulting guided exploration program, while still a visual arts program, built connections with what was going on in students' lives and a natural holistic approach unfolded.

Planning around the students' interests and multimodal abilities. Prior to beginning this program, Josephine did not know or have a relationship with these students. Upon first meeting the preschoolers, she was already planned and ready to implement Phase 1 Session 1 of the visual arts program. Implemented only once a week, there was not an extended period of time allotted for Josephine to get to know each of the students, and this was clear in her reflections from the initial phase. For example, in Phase 1, Session 1, Josephine consistently referred to the students in her reflections as "the students" or "one of the students," with very few individual references. Students continuously yelled," Miss Keely," throughout Phase 1 Session 1, as they had a consistent relationship with me, yet I felt uneasy and unaware of how best to guide them during these visual arts sessions. Being with them every day, the students knew what to expect in my classroom and with my teaching. Josephine did not know what interested the students from day 1, which meant their individual interests were not incorporated into the lesson plans initially.

An assertion can be made that the scheduling of this program impacted the relationships formed between the teachers and students. Specifically, Phase 1 took place during the 2014-2015 school year, only being implemented in the first semester from September through December. However, Phase 2 and 3 took place over an entire school year, 2015-2016, in both the first and second semesters from September through April; Josephine, and the visual arts program, became consistent in these students schooling.

Beginning amidst Phase 1, Session 1, we discussed and re-discussed our lesson plans for each week, in which we made changes and edits based upon the group of students we were working with. Starting in Phase 2, we identified an overall goal and famous piece of artwork for support for the students, yet we did not have each class planned ahead of time as Josephine did in

Phase 1. Beginning Phase 2, there is an apparent shift in our planning documents, emails, and reflections. Both of us began referencing specific student progress and questions for us to consider regarding particular students engagement and abilities.

Unfolding Phase 2 Session 2, our conversations became even more in-depth about the specific students, in which a transformation occurred in our planning – we began to plan around students' interests and abilities.   The last day of Phase 2 Session 1 finished, October 21, 2015, and the students went to centers/play time as they usually did. One of the 3-year-old preschoolers, Chris, sat down at the writing center and began drawing a picture. Josephine was roaming the room and beginning to clean up from our session when Chris's illustration caught her eye. She began to talk to Chris about his drawing, and Chris told her that he was drawing a night sky. With reds and purples in the sky, it was evident that Josephine had an idea. The next week, I received an email from Josephine stating, "For the new art session, I have taken the inspiration from our own Chris, who came a few weeks ago with a night sky of sunset colors, after he learned to paint a sky! Monet has some of my faves with sunrise, earning a name of the whole approach of his style: 'Impressionism.' Whether the sun rises in the East and sets West will not be important to know for children. I like them to know that when sun just to comes out or is about to leave, the sky can be so much more than a blue one with clouds" (J. de Jong, email communication, Phase 2, November 5, 2015). Chris's drawing inspired Josephine for the next art session, from the topic to the colors to the famous artist focus. This moment stimulated a change in our planning. Interesting to note, Josephine calls Chris "our own Chris;" these students were no longer mine but ours.

Continuing Phase 2 Session 2 with the same group of students, Josephine had prior knowledge and relationships with these students. Upon introducing our next art project, Josephine proudly held up Chris's drawing.

[Episode 10 "Because you gave the inspiration…" (Phase 2, November 5, 2015)]

1. Josephine: Chris, because of your beautiful picture, we are going to make sky that is different from the day sky. Isn't that fun? Because you gave the inspiration for that."
2. Chris: (*smiles)*.

She continued this introduction, making a comparison between Chris's work and Claude Monet's artwork. It was evident by the smile on Chris's face that he was proud of this acknowledgement. This was the first direct reference to allowing the students to inspire the lesson plans, yet it did not end here.

Focused on the night sky during this session, we began this lesson with a walk outside paying specific attention to the horizon. Children were identifying what they saw in the sky and then questioned about how it would look different if it were nighttime. Sawyer, another 3-year-old boy continuously referred to the many clouds in the sky on this day. Following the walk, Josephine modeled at the whole group rug how to begin painting the sky, using large brush strokes and mixing colors such as red and blue to create hints of color mixing in the sky. Sawyer looked incredibly interested, asking questions throughout her modeling session. As we transitioned to painting at the tables, Sawyer showed interest in Josephine's painting, sitting next to it and touching it with intent. He began to touch the bottom of the canvas that was not painted yet, and Josephine took note of this behavior. While the following, Episode 11, is somewhat of a side conversation, it becomes an important interaction between Josephine and Sawyer.

[Episode 11,"…then you have to make the sea" (Phase 2, November 5, 2015)]

1. Josephine: And that is my ground.
2. Sawyer: No, then you have to make the sea.

3. Josephine: We could do the sea if that's what you would like to do. This is another time. Today, we do the sky.

Following this session, I received an email from Josephine regarding the next session. "I am having this thought about Thursday: Have Sawyer become the next artist to set the tone/input. We had last week my other buddy doing this role. When I heard Sawyer talk about what should go next, I thought that I try to let the students take a bit the lead. I will start with having all paintings out against wall. We all get an idea of all beautiful skies. We can ask questions and have some of Monet's pics to see what he did. Then we ask Sawyer if he could give ideas of what will come next. Children can direct adults" (J. de Jong, email communication, Phase 2, November 12, 2015). Josephine speaks specifically to this theme as she said, "Children can direct adults." This was the beginning of allowing the students to plan and lead the visual arts lessons.

Each session following, a student took the lead, and our curriculum began to emerge, reminiscent of the emergent curriculum practice. Phase 2, Session 2, we began our planning for the next session from one of the students interactions or interests in the previous session. For example, Chris's drawing depicting the night sky inspired Lesson 1. Lesson 2 was inspired by Sawyer, as he showed interest in the sea during a discussion with Josephine. During lesson 2, Elizabeth was dancing to show her understanding while painting the sea, in which the topic for our third session unfolded, focusing on creating movement with our bodies and showcasing that in our artwork. As we finished up lesson 3, we encouraged students to identify animals from non-fiction and fiction books that they wanted as part of their own artwork. These discussions were the inspiration for our next lesson, lesson 4, which each student identified and created their own animal. At this point, and the resulting visual arts program adopting the guided exploration approach, there was an engagement and relationship that we forged with each student as an artist.

96

As we allowed the students to lead the planning, incorporating their ideas and strengths, student engagement was evident. At this point in the visual arts sessions, students became artists and Josephine and I became co-teachers.

Teaching Strategies for a Guided Exploration Approach

At the beginning of the program implementation, both myself and Josephine agreed that we, as teachers, would act as a guide. During art making, we both intentionally sat with the students as they painted, moving from one student to the next to discuss their ideas and techniques with them while they painted. This part of the day, art making, seemed natural for both Josephine and myself from day 1. This practice during art making occurred in almost every session throughout the program development.

However, as we continued to refine our program, in Phase 2, we began to implement and facilitate different experiences for students that we did not practice in Phase 1 of the program. Beginning in Phase 2, both modeling and the facilitation of art discoveries and play became essential pieces to the program.

Modeling. This program was a new experience for the students and myself in the beginning. We were learning together how to use these artistic tools that differed from our own; with real acrylic/watercolor paints, cotton canvases, and paintbrushes, we were learning to work with materials that real artists used and we did not have available in our classroom prior to the visual arts program. Our previous materials, children's paint brushes and washable paints, did not move and mix the way these new materials did. Each week of our visual arts program was a new experience for each of us, and for this reason, we had to explore different ways to allow the students to have these new experiences.

97

The second session of Phase 1 was the first time that Josephine incorporated specific time to model in front of the whole group. With a new technique of using the paintbrush, a swift flick of the paintbrush to create the petals of the flowers that were reminiscent of Vincent van Gogh's sunflowers, Josephine wanted to show the students how to do this. Stated in the lesson plan on December 2, 2014, the last lesson of this Phase 1 Session 2, "I will show with a brush and paint how I would paint bright yellow petals around the heart." A very busy preschool class, the tone of the class completely changed during this modeling session. Calmness emanated in the room, and a conjecture can be made that the students were interested in Josephine's painting, as their attention and gaze were directed right at Josephine. In my own reflection after this session, I stated, "They loved painting the flowers and using the technique that Josephine taught them to paint the flowers. Many students made several flowers, mixing different yellow colors and white together" (My Daily Reflection, Phase 1, December 2, 2014). Upon looking at the students' artwork in Table 7, this technique is clearly used in several of the students' artworks, yet each piece looks different. Below are several students' finished products, in which the technique is evident.

Table 7. Three different students completed artwork using Josephine's painting technique.
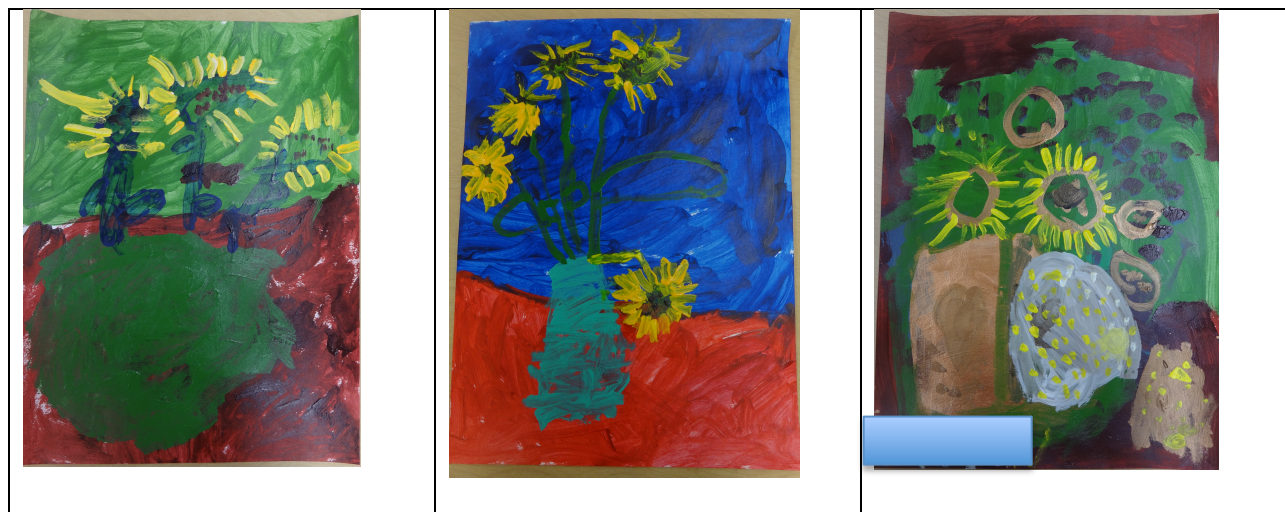
In an email following this session, as we discussed ideas for our next session, I made the comment to Josephine, "I really love when you model the techniques for them, as painting a lily pad is a different technique then painting the waves" (K. O'Connell, email communication, Phase 1, October 14, 2015). By Phase 2, Session 1, Lesson 4, it was evident that this technique became consistent and routine for Josephine and myself and a necessary strategy to facilitate the guided exploration approach.. Each time a new technique was introduced, we would intentionally plan time to model these techniques for the students, whether in whole or small groups. Prior to painting, we would show the students how the artist used the paint, and we would then encourage them to try that technique in their own painting. While modeling, Josephine and myself would talk aloud the movements we were able to create and how we were creating them to allow students to both see and hear how we were able to do what we were doing with the paint.

As students' precision and fine motor skills developed both in and outside of this program, the students were able to use the materials more accurately and with more detail. The more we showed the students, the more both Josephine and I realized they were capable of while painting. Techniques that were modeled one day we would see in artwork several weeks later, as students were able to recall how we were able to create different strokes with their paintbrush.

In Phase 2, Session 1, we began to intentionally incorporate modeling into our daily interactions with the students during the visual arts program. For example, as we painted the sea, during whole group, we modeled different types of waves that one is able to create with a paintbrush, including small, medium, or large crashing waves. We also modeled using different and new art materials; we placed clear transparent stickers on our artwork in Phase 2, Session 1, Lesson 5 to leave a blank space for our lily pads the following week. We modeled how to place

these stickers in week 5, and then how to take them off in week 6. Modeling became a strategy that Josephine and I relied on beginning in Phase 2 Session 1, which was necessary in our resulting guided exploration approach to visual arts.

Facilitation of art discoveries and play. The preschoolers' conceptual art knowledge was documented through the use of Althouse, Johnson, and Mitchell's (2003) Art Talk Checklist. One of the main focuses of this checklist is "an understanding of the basic elements and principles of design" (Althouse et al., 2003, p. 130). Young children's art knowledge was apparent through their discussions of these elements within their own paintings, their peers' paintings, and the famous artists paintings, such as color, line, shape, texture, and space. A combination of these elements creates the principles of design: "balance, pattern, emphasis, proportion, unity, and movement" (Althouse et al., 2003, p. 130). Both of these, elements and principles, are put into practice when appreciating and creating artwork.

Prior to the visual arts program, students were used to my own philosophical beliefs about the arts, the implementation of the little-intervention orientation. Exploring materials and the ability to use these materials to create something new, I very much allowed students to lead this exploration independently and rarely discussed the specific visual arts components. Many of these preschoolers came to this class with shallow understanding and prior knowledge of colors, lines, and shapes, however Josephine and myself facilitated art discoveries through play to further this basic art knowledge. There were moments when students would identify colors -- blue, red, purple, etc.; however these art discoveries were opportunities for students to physical manipulate the colors and art materials in ways that students' displayed an emotional connection to their play. Small and whole group activities were facilitated to engage students in an exploration of these elements and principles.

While there were hints of play elements in Phase 1 of the program, these play opportunities were very much led by Josephine or myself. For example, the focus of Phase 1, Session 2, Lesson 3 (November 11, 2014) was creating stems for our flowers, using van Gogh's *Sunflowers* as our inspiration. Josephine created a large cardboard vase to play with to show the students that the stems inside of the vase would not be visible to us as they were hiding inside. As she began to play with this great prop, it was evident that she was planning on using it herself and not with the students. She stood in front of the students presenting and manipulating the prop, but she did not ask the students to participate. She then turned to me and asked me to do the same. As I moved in the vase, I prompted the students to be involved in my play as I said, "Where did my legs go!?" However, this play experience was led by the teachers and did not really incorporate the students' play. We knew at this point that we had to reevaluate how we would plan playful activities for the students.

As we began to explore a new art medium, watercolors, in Phase 2, Session 2, Josephine realized in Lesson 1 the cursory prior knowledge that students had about colors, as they were able to identify colors and primary color mixing from memory, yet a hands-on exploration allowed students to physically manipulate colors for the purposes to understand secondary colors, shades, and tints. By exploring with the principles underlying creating new colors, we wanted students to play with these principles before making permanent choices on their own canvases. The light table (or light box) was an incredibly useful tool to observe and understand color mixing.

Josephine and I set the stage for this play, incorporating small group lessons focused on play with the topic of the famous artists painting or the underlying principles of the visual arts. This playful discovery was evident while observing Sawyer at the light table. Sawyer, a three-

101

year-old boy, had knowledge of his colors prior to this program, however the materials at the light table provided an aesthetic experience for Sawyer. Josephine and I provided students with many color-mixing materials: primary color glue and transparent primary color tiles and plastic sheets. As Sawyer began playing with transparent color tiles on the light table, he began to recognize the power that he held while playing with these tiles.

[Episode 12, "I turned you red like a strawberry!" (Phase 2, November 5, 2015)]

1. Sawyer: (excitedly, in a sing-songy voice) Look Miss Amanda, you're red! You're like a strawberry! You look like a strawberry! I turned you red like a strawberry!"

This moment of pure joy, an art discovery, provided Sawyer the opportunity to be the artist as he was able to physically manipulate the colors, which he later used as the focal element of his artwork (Figure 2).

Figure 2: Sawyer's artwork after Phase 2, Session 2, Lesson 1 of visual arts.

These art discoveries were also planned during art making to allow students to learn how to physically manipulate the watercolor paints on canvas, combining the elements and principles of design. At the end of this first lesson, in Phase 2, Session 2, students worked on creating the sky in their painting. Before painting, Josephine modeled a new technique to create clouds on her own painting. This technique essentially provided students the opportunity to soak up some of the paint on their painting by using a paper towel. Most students took up this technique

during art making, as students discovered how they could represent their own skies. Upon the first round of analysis, it was clear that this technique provided a moment of discovery for the students as they experimented with the media, watercolor paints. After lesson five of Phase 2, Session 2, several weeks later, I interviewed both Sawyer and Elizabeth separately, asking them to describe their paintings. The following excerpts from the interviews provide evidence that both students paid particular attention to this special technique discovered during play.

[Episode 13 "You can just soak up the paint" (Phase 2, December 10, 2015)]

1. Elizabeth: That's because that's the sunset and that's part of the moon.
2. Me: Oh! How did you do that?
3. Elizabeth: She (Miss Josephine) told me that, to use the paper towel! You can just soak up the paint.

[Episode 14 "I pushed really hard" (Phase 2, December 10, 2015)]

1. Sawyer: Ya, they're clouds!
2. Me: Oh, tell me about how you made those clouds.
3. Sawyer: I used some, a paper towel. And I *(pushing the floor with his hand)* I pushed really hard.
4. Me: Oh, I can tell you're pushing very hard. And then what happened when you took it off?
5. Sawyer: It made a cloud!

Both students were able to recall the technique, but used the technique in different ways. While Sawyer identified this made object as a cloud, similar to Miss Josephine's description, Elizabeth used the technique to create the moon in her painting. These planned art discoveries, or moments of playful experimentation, allowed students to further their conceptual art knowledge creating memories for each of them. Upon realizing the impact that this playful event had on these two students, we began purposefully incorporating and facilitating play into the guided exploration approach program.

In Phase 3, we began an exploration of van Gogh's painting *Starry Night.* Phase 3, the final phase of this program, incorporated these playful experiences consistently in both Session 1

and 2. For example, lesson 2, we encouraged children to lie down on their backs with the lights turned off and use their "telescope" (a toilet paper roll) to look at the stars in the sky. While this activity happened inside with no real stars in the sky, this experience encouraged students to imagine a night sky full of stars before we painted stars on their own canvases. The following lesson, Phase 3, Session 1, Lesson 3, students used clay and real rocks to create craters on the moon, diving their rocks, or asteroids into the moon to see the hole it created. This playful experience provided the students with a hands-on exploration of the moon, which allowed students to understand the moon before painting it. The incorporation of these art discoveries allowed students to experience what they were getting ready to paint each week and became essential to the program development.

Discussion

The findings from the first research question regarding the resulting visual arts program based on the guided exploration approach illuminate three overall necessary components to developing this approach. First, the four facets of the guided exploration approach, observing, communication in and through the arts, attending to the aesthetics, and identifying as an artist, provide an overall view of different aspects of the program. Secondly, and important to the overall program, planning provides a behind the scenes look at intentional and purposeful choices that made the program flourish. Thirdly, this dissertation honed in on the necessary teaching strategies, modeling and facilitation of art discoveries and play, used to implement this program. Using the design based research methodology, it is essential to uncover and begin with difficulties, the development of the program, and finally leading into the final program choices.

The Guided Exploration approach. By understanding each facet of this approach, teachers can recognize the essential components that work together in guiding children to

identify themselves as artists. The most understudied component of the guided-exploration orientation in early childhood art facilitation, teachers aimed to support students in developing their identity as an artist. In an effort to provide authentic art experiences, this component of the guided-exploration orientation allowed students to embody the entire process of visual arts from start to finish. The overall process of art is an ongoing and iterative process, and children can engage in this authentic process as well.

Some relevant research indicated strategies for teachers as children embark on this identity journey with young children. Discussions about artists' techniques and history allow for the child to develop as an artist. Arnheim (1989) promotes a child-initiated art exploration, where discussions of artists' techniques are woven throughout the exploration (Epstein, 2001). Consistent with this research, Josephine and myself modeled new techniques, drawn from the famous artists work, for students to explore with.

Binder and Kotsopolous (2010) explicate this creative, nonlinear process that children undergo as, "…the importance of preparation, incubation, inspiration, and verification" (p. 24). While the goal of this dissertation was not to define identity development in a young child, this construct played an important role in our guided exploration approach. Research in early childhood visual arts must continue to explore the possibilities in allowing students to undergo the process an artist values in creation. Students should not be just experiencing art as a product, but they should be immersed in the art process through empowerment of decision-making, creativity, and individual differences. Thus, this study illuminates a newfound interest in artist development in young children.

Planning toward the Guided Exploration approach. This program, initially aiming for the guided exploration approach, did not begin by facilitating this approach. Initially, with a

105

visual artist-in-residence entering the preschool classroom, this approach could have been defined as Davis (2008) calls 'Arts Infused,' meaning that a specialist enters the classroom to infuse the arts into the current curriculum.

Yet, as pedagogical choices were sorted out and refinements made, a conjecture is made that this program resulted in a program more in line with arts integration. Speaking directly to the holistic planning that resulted in this program, objectives from several disciplines worked together with the overall goal of progress in each of these areas. By finding ways to connect the famous artists work under study to the current curriculum and the students lives, the integration felt seamless and natural. This artist-in-residence model shifted to an attempted equal collaboration of ideas from each perspective, the early childhood perspective and the visual arts perspective. Yet, with conflicting definitions within the field of visual arts, this dissertation highlights the need for common definitions and congruence across the field of visual arts. Are the guided exploration approach and arts integration similar feats? Is there a continuum of each of these approaches in which strategies and overall concepts of study overlap?

Teaching strategies for a Guided Exploration approach. There has been a concerted effort to identify teaching strategies that master art teachers or artists-in-residence use in preschool art education practicing the guided-exploration approach (Bresler, 1993). Eckhoff (2008) focuses specifically on art viewing, only one component of visual arts facilitation, in which four teaching strategies were identified: questioning, game play, storytelling, and technically focused talk. Eckhoff's later research (2012) hones in on the interaction between an artist-in-residence and preschool students during art viewing and art making, asserting four practices of modeling, collaboration, encouragement, and experimentation. The present study sought to look across the program as a whole, including art viewing, art making, and art

106

appreciation, a significant difference compared to the previous studies. In addition, this study analyzes two teachers' strategies in providing a supportive visual arts program, the early childhood teacher (myself) and the visual artist-in-residence.

In the present study, one practice emerged that was consistent with Eckhoff's current research (2008, 2012). Modeling was an essential teaching strategies used by both teachers. Modeling occurred in several different avenues, during whole group, small group, and individual activities. Important to note, this guided exploration pedagogy was not only new to the teachers but for the students as well. For this reason, it was necessary to model during art viewing, art making, and art appreciation. Both teachers modeled discussions around famous artworks and a appreciation and connection with the artwork. During art making, modeling was necessary as teachers introduced new techniques, which provided an authentic opportunity to model for the preschool students. The students used techniques that they had never used before, so they were often captivated by the novelty of each of these modeling sessions.

However, this study adds an additional significant supportive pedagogical practice to the implementation of the guided-exploration orientation. Both the early childhood teacher and the visual artist-in-residence relied on creating play experiences, bringing the content alive for the students through the facilitation of art discoveries and play. While the visual artist-in-residence in Eckhoff's (2010) research encouraged students to experiment with the materials available, the teachers in this study incorporated play experiences for the preschool students that supported their understanding of the famous artwork under study and their own artwork. A conjecture is made that the merging of the two disciplines, early childhood education and visual arts, supported the development of this essential component of the visual arts program under study. Play is the essential foundation of early childhood education, yet is vacant from early childhood

107

visual arts facilitation. These play opportunities not only allowed students to play with art materials but also interdisciplinary materials (i.e. water bins) to support the learning in the arts.

Summary

Based on this design-based research, this dissertation highlighted three areas of program development and refinement: the overview of the program, planning, and specific teaching strategies including modeling and the facilitation of art discoveries and play. We now turn to the preschool students' experience, highlighting three differing focal students' experience in each of these facets of the guided exploration approach.

<div align="center">

The Preschool Students Experience

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There were several significant participants in our visual arts program adopting the guided exploration approach, but the most valuable players were the students. The students experiences, ranging from uninterested to engaged to thriving, were what perpetuated many of the changes and refinements that occurred in the program. Guided by the sociocultural theory and multimodality, we now explore three focal students' experiences across the major facets of the guided exploration approach: observation, communication in and through the arts, attending to the aesthetic qualities, and identifying as an artist. Students' language, sounds, gestures, and movement were all crucial to making conjectures regarding their engagement, conceptual knowledge, and growth in the visual arts.

Focal Children as Telling Cases

By purposefully choosing the focal participants, or "telling cases" (Mitchell, 1984), I aimed to create an in-depth analysis of three different students in a visual arts program adopting the guided-exploration orientation due to their maximum variation and experiences during visual arts. The visual arts program is explored as a case, or a "bounded system," in which all of the

students share the same context, yet individual experiences (Creswell, 2013, p. 97).

Table 8. Focal Students' Descriptive Information

	Sawyer	**Elizabeth**	**Anthony**
Age During the Visual Arts Program	3-4 years old	4-5 years old	3-5 years old
Linguistic/Cultural Background	English speaker	English speaker	Mandarin and English speaker, Mandarin is his first language
Family Background	Family of 4: Dad, Mom and younger brother	Family of 5: Dad, Mom, older sister and younger sister	Family of 3: Dad and Mom
Personality in the Classroom	Social child, loves dramatic play	Loves dance and writing	Often found by himself using building materials
Identified Disability	None	None	Autism, receiving OT, PT, Speech and Special Education services
Number of Sessions Attended/Phases	4 of 6 Phase 2 & 3	2 of 6 Phase 2 & 3	5 of 6 Phases 1, 2 & 3
Student Descriptor	**Multimodal Thinker and Communicator**	**Eloquent Speaker**	**From Uninvolved to "Jackson Pollock"**

Sawyer, a three-year-old Caucasian boy, was one of the youngest in our preschool classroom. Sawyer was often found enacting dramatic play scenes from books or television shows that he has read in school or at home. An English speaker, he was very social and tended to lead his own play in the classroom. This child's mode to create meaning relied heavily on dramatic play, yet he was very rarely found creating meaning through the visual arts, such as using drawing or painting.

Elizabeth, an almost five-year-old Caucasian girl, loved to create meaning through movement and dance, yet she was an avid writer in the classroom. Elizabeth was often found at the art center during centers at free play, yet she often created visual art that was representative of production orientation artwork. As one of our older preschool students, Elizabeth had a few

109

close friends, both girls, who she tended to spend time with at school that had similar interests as she did.

Anthony was a four-year-old boy who was recently diagnosed with Autism Spectrum Disorder. He was generally a very happy child found building with blocks or Legos. He required a significant amount of support in the classroom, and during data collection, he was beginning early intervention services including special education, speech, occupational therapy and physical therapy. Anthony was a Chinese student, and while he understood both Mandarin and English, he did not speak often, as his speech was delayed in both languages. Out of all the students that participated in this program, Anthony attended the most sessions, five of the total six sessions. However, the first session he attended, he did not participate, often running up to the loft to get away from the activity. It was not until Phase 2 that Anthony began participating in our visual arts classes. These three students provide interesting cases, and they differ dramatically on their interests, age, gender, and strengths. The table, Table 8, details each student's characteristics and differences.

In the following sections, each students experience is explored individually. Subsequently, a discussion and comparison of the three cases and a summary will conclude this section.

Sawyer: The Multimodal Thinker and Communicator

Sawyer, the youngest of three focal preschool students, began at the center during Phase 2, Session 1. Sawyer attended school everyday, Monday through Friday, which is how he ended up participating in 4 of the 6 total visual arts sessions.

Observations. Throughout our visual arts program, students were encouraged to make observations through many avenues: famous artwork, peers artwork, real photographs,

illustrations, real life, etc. However, all of these observations were unified by a purpose, in support of the visual arts.

Young children naturally create meaning with various modes, such as drawings, paintings, gestures, movement, etc. (Charles & Boyle, 2014). In the context of this visual arts program, it was evident that the medium, paint, had natural affordances and potential offerings as a semiotic tool (Shanahan, McVee & Bailey, 2013); however, what is essential to illuminate is not the natural affordances of this available semiotic resource, but how various modes were used simultaneously by the preschool students and encouraged by the teachers to create meaning in many facets of the guided exploration approach.

Students were encouraged to make observations in whole groups, small groups, and individually. Beginning the program in Phase 2, Session 1, Sawyer participated in a total of 4 sessions. Throughout the program iterations, one thing persisted with Sawyer, in that he relied on many modes to communicate his understanding.

Our first session of Phase 2, Session 2 began with a walk outside. Josephine and I chose to focus on Claude Monet's *Sunrise*, yet we wanted to probe for students' prior knowledge of the sunrise and sunset prior to delving into the subject. We went outside to take a walk, encouraging students to make observations of the daytime sky and consider what would be different if it were a sunset or "dinner time sky" as Josephine often referred to it as. As we stood outside on the grass looking into the sky, Sawyer, part of my small group, could barley contain his excitement.

[Episode 15 "Way over there, you can see pshhhh" (Phase 2, November 5, 2015)]

1. Sawyer: Clouds! Lots of them! *(jumping with excitement)*
2. Me: Do you see where the sun is peaking out?
3. Elizabeth: *(pointing)* Ya, over there.
4. Sawyer: Way over there, you can see pshhhh *(moving his hands from together to apart creating a line)*.

A conjecture can be made that the "pshhhh" sound in turn 4strengthened his ability to explain his observation of the horizon. As he used his hands to show the horizon in turn 4, I then led into a conversation about the horizon. He was able to identify, by combining gesture and sound, where he saw the horizon, a particularly important element of every piece of artwork we created. Upon coming back into the classroom, we all sat down at our whole group rug to discuss our observations as a group. Sawyer was eager to share his observations with the group as I began our discussion.

> [Episode 16,"I really saw tons of clouds" (Phase 2, November 5, 2015)]
>
> 1. Me: What did you notice way up in the sky? What does the sky look like? Can you tell me?
> 2. Sawyer: I really saw tons of clouds.
> 3. Me: Tons of clouds, we saw today, tons of clouds. But does the sky always look like that?
> 4. Sawyer: No because when the tons of clouds go down it might be nighttime and there will be no tons of clouds when it's daytime.
> 5. Me: Really good point, Sandy. So sometimes when it's nighttime, we don't see all those clouds.

Sawyer was able to follow up his observations that he made outside and critically think about what would be different had we been outside looking at the sky at night. He was able to communicate his observations to the group using various modes of communication.

We now revisit Episode 3 (p. 75-76), a whole group working together to interpret Claude Moet's *Sunrise*, but focus specifically on Sawyer. This activity took place on December 10, 2015 in Phase 2, Session 1, Lesson 5.

This vignette is a clear example of how sound and movement/gestures, semiotic modes, integrated with language, supported Sawyer in making observations. As students grapple to interpret the silhouette in Monet's painting, his descriptions are strengthened and further understood by peers and teachers through the use of different modes. Sawyer's sound effect in

112

turn 18 and 21, 'vrmmm,' supported his own meaning making in making observations about Monet's silhouette, as he began to consider and further Elizabeth's explanation of the oars moving. While many small boats use oars to propel, Sawyer added to this knowledge by providing another option, an engine, through the use of his sound effect.

These multimodal descriptions and observations were consistent for Sawyer throughout the program. Sawyer's feelings were easily identified by the volume in his voice or the excitement that was displayed through his body movements. As we began to value Sawyer's different modes of communication, Josephine and I were better able to understand Sawyer's thought processes, progress, and conceptual knowledge.

Communicating in and through the arts. The visual arts are an avenue of communication for young children. In addition, the communication that happens during the visual arts program, whether between peers or a student and teacher, is also crucial to young children's' understanding of the arts. Sawyer was not a shy child, and he would communicate his understandings in any way that he knew how.

During Phase 2, Session 2, Sawyer chose to paint something that was important to him – a Tyrannosaurus Rex. His artwork during this session, titled in the end "Land T-Rex that Eats Meat," told a story in which he named characters, objects created in the painting, and the movement or story happening within the artwork. This artwork was not static in nature to him but communicated a story to be told. In Episode 17, at the end of Phase 2, Session 2, I interviewed Sawyer about his artwork, in which he began to tell me the story associated with it.

[Episode 17 "These are the zip lines…" (Phase 2, December 10, 2015)]

1. Me: Tell me about these colors!
2. Sawyer: These are the zip lines that the t-rex goes past them, they will hit 'em in the face.
3. Me: Oh goodness.

113

4. Sawyer: And they will fall down on their back.
5. Me: So do the t-rexes like the zip line?
6. Sawyer: No. They're not fun for them.
7. Me: Can you show me where the zip lines are?
8. Sawyer: These ones. *(pointing to black lines in his artwork)*
9. Me: Oh I do see, I see lines, are these the lines your talking about? *(pointing to the same lines)*.
10. Sawyer: Yeah, these are the zip lines.
11. Me: Yeah. And how do those lines move, can you show me?
12. Sawyer: There's a little thing that goes and you have to hold on to the thing on the bottom and it ZIPS down. FSHHH! *(showing me how it zips, running around the room)*.
13. Me: Woah, it zips right down just like that. All right zip back over to your painting.

Figure 3: Sawyers' Finished Artwork, titled 'Land T-Rex that Eats Meat.'

While Sawyer was not able to describe the type of lines he created, he followed them with his finger to show the various lines in his artwork, in which he labeled them "zip lines." These different types of lines that he was able to create influenced his ability to communicate through his artwork. In addition, his artwork told a story which he wanted to communicate about the dinosaurs on the zip lines. This story was meaningful to Sawyer, as displayed through the excitement in his body throughout the conversation, leading into his movement around the room in turn 12.

In addition, Sawyer seemed to understand that artwork was a tool for communication. Sawyer often worked with his "best buddy" during art making, always wanting to sit next to him.

114

Sawyer showed an interest and enjoyment in peers' artwork, which took the form of discussion and questions of peers art making. For example, while Sawyer was working at a table painting during Phase 3 Session 1, he turned to his friend and said, "What are you making buddy?" While his friend named his created objects, Sawyer intently focused on his friend's artwork, watching and listening. This was consistently observed throughout Phase 2 and 3, as Sawyer felt comfortable asking his peers their ideas and creations.

Attending to the aesthetic qualities. Upon beginning the program, Sawyer was not afraid to tell everyone his favorite color, brown, which stayed consistent throughout the visual arts program. Sawyer concentrated on how he could integrate his favorite color into his artwork each session, yet loved to explore with new colors, shades, and tints.

Josephine and I began to see Sawyers interest in color and color mixing in the beginning of Phase 2, Session 2. To explore color mixing, Josephine and I set up small group activities around the light table. Sawyer was working with my co-teacher at the time, Miss Emily, Josephine, and two other preschool students. Josephine placed primary color glue on the light table and handed Sawyer a paintbrush to begin to mix with. Episode 18 is the conversation that follows.

[Episode 18 "P, p, purple!" (Phase 2, November 5, 2015)]

1. Josephine: What color are you making, Sawyer?
2. Sawyer: Brown! I washed it away. I washed it away.
3. Josephine: You did a little miracle. I see blue, and red and another color. Did you notice the color? What's the name of the color?
4. Sawyer: *(mixes the glue more)*
5. Emily: Oh, the color is easier to identify now.
6. Sawyer: P, p, purple! *(yelling with excitement)*
7. Emily: Purple, yes!

While Sawyer immediately wants to make his favorite color brown in turn 2, a speculation can be made that he was captivated by the new color that he created in turn 6 as he yells with

excitement. Following this activity, Sawyer went to his own canvas to begin painting, and it was clear that the red and blue mixing that happened on the light table impacted his color choice later that day during art making.

Figure 4: Sawyer's Artwork Created in Phase 2, Session 2, Lesson 1 (November 5, 2015)

Sawyer was very intentional with his color choices, and often had conversations with myself and his peers about his color choices. I often referenced Sawyer in my own reflections, but beginning in Phase 3, I did not write as much detail about him in my reflections. For example, during Phase 3 Session 2 Lesson 1, I wrote at the end of my reflection "I had some great discussions about color mixing with both Sawyer and Anthony. They had the opportunity to explore and experiment with the new paint, a new medium for them, and I think this part of the day was successful" (My Daily Reflection, Phase 3, March 23, 2016). At this point in the program, his fourth time beginning visual arts, both Josephine and myself began to see Sawyer as a leader in our program. His strong sense of what he knew he wanted, his ability to experiment with and understand color mixing, and the stories that accompanied his artwork made his experience special.

Identifying as an artist. Many pedagogical choices made by the teachers, both Josephine and myself, encouraged the students to identify as artists. However, it was crucial to analyze the students' uptake of these pedagogical choices, looking at their emotional reactions and listening to their interpretation of their feelings as they painted. Sawyer was often very vocal regarding his feelings and decisions made.

Sawyer, a very verbal three-year-old, was able to describe his feelings in an interview after completing his painting in Phase 2, Session 2, stating, "I'm happy. I feel happy. Because I like to paint" (S. Taber-Thomas, personal communication, April 4, 2016). However, a moment between Sawyer and Josephine during Phase 2, Session 2 while painting in our last lesson truly evoked this artistic identity. After a large group discussion around Monet's *Sunset Over Venice*, Sawyer sat down to paint and spent very little time adding to the canvas, only approximately 3 minutes which was not typical for Sawyer. With conversations bursting around him about water animals, he looked visibly upset.

[Episode 19 "It's a dino! It's a t-rex!" (Phase 2, December 10, 2015)]

1. Ronald (a student intern): What are you trying to paint Sawyer?
2. Sawyer: I'm done.
3. Ronald: You can't be done already. Why do you want to be done?
4. Sawyer: *(puts down his paintbrush and looks sad)*
5. Josephine: Hey Sawyer, tell me what you are painting here?
6. Sawyer: I can't remember.
7. Josephine: Oh, do you need to look in the book? (Sawyer looks visibly sad.) Are you going to paint in the water or are you still with the dinosaur idea? Cuz the dinosaur is fine! This looks a little bit like land. Shall we do a little bit green? This looks like land *(pointing to his artwork)*.
8. Sawyer: It's a dino! It's a t-rex!
9. Josephine: A t-rex. I like that. You know what a t-rex does?

Throughout this short exchange, Sawyers demeanor changed drastically. With his peers around him painting water animals, he seemed frustrated to follow this idea. Josephine, listening to Sawyers ideas in previous weeks, suggested that Sawyer follow his initial idea of a dinosaur in

117

turn 7, and Sawyer began to show joy as he smiled and yelled his response in turn 8. This short excerpt reminded Sawyer that he had the power to make choices and decisions in his artwork, upon which he immediately returned to his initial idea of representing a dinosaur in his artwork. A conjecture is made here that Sawyer realized that he was the artist of that artwork in front of him, which allowed him to feel proud and happy.

As Josephine and I reflected upon finishing the process of this design-based research after Phase 3, Session 2, Sawyer's growth and progress stood out to both of us. Josephine wrote in her final reflection, "While Sandy has a stronger sense of expressing himself in a specific way, one can recognize as his "style." The palette of Sawyer came close to the work of Frank O'Hara: In Memory of my Feelings. His story so well verbalized. A ship and dimension of water overtaking the flower (sense of dimension). I am always fascinated noticing an unusual blend of colors and shapes, setting work apart from most" (Josephine's Daily Reflection, Phase 3, April 27, 2016). Out of the many preschool students that we worked with, Sawyer's progress stood out to Josephine. His ability to view his artwork as a story, which also showed in his painting style, Sawyer's experience was captivating.

Elizabeth: The Eloquent Speaker

Elizabeth began the program in the preschool classroom at age 4. She only attended the research school two days a week, Tuesdays and Thursdays, which is why she participated in the program only 2 of the 6 sessions. The other 3 days a week, she attended a different school that was closer to her home. While participating in fewer sessions than the other two focal children, her experience merits interest in comparison with the other two boys.

Elizabeth was a very vocal and methodical child. She wanted to do things 'right,' and she would only answer in a whole group when she thought she was right. With advanced social

skills, Elizabeth was able to problem solve her way out of an argument completely independently. She was often found in the art center, but her creations were often more reflective of crafts than arts. During her year at the research school, her interest in writing exploded, as she would constantly sound out new words and write down her understanding. Timid, yet funny and independent, Elizabeth acted as a leader in the classroom.

Observations. Like Sawyer, Elizabeth was very vocal about her observations, however a key difference in the two was that Elizabeth's observations were often very articulate.

Revisiting Episode 3 again (p. 75-76) on December 10, 2015 in Phase 2, Session 1, Lesson 5, Elizabeth's part in this conversation cannot be ignored. During this whole group discussion, interpreting the silhouette in Claude Moet's *Sunrise*, Elizabeth is adamant about her observations, stating, "I know how they're people" in turn 10. In turn 12, Elizabeth follows up her observation with key references from the painting, as she points out the oars, or what she called the "is like you can row" with hand rowing motions and, while a very small detail of Monet's painting, she points specifically to a hand holding onto the oar, calling it a "little hand." Similar to Sawyer, she too uses several modes of communication as she explains her observations, as she did not know the vocabulary word "oar." Yet, she makes sure to get her point across by using language, gesture, and the artwork as support. Her observations in this Episode are precise.

Elizabeth also made clear observations during art making. When Josephine or I would model painting in front of the students, Elizabeth always paid particular attention to the way we used our brush, the strokes we created, and the colors we used. She was often very quiet during these modeling activities, with her gaze directly on the teacher. This impacted her painting, and she would make the same choices in her artwork that the teacher had modeled prior to her

119

painting. I first noticed this during Phase 3, Session 1, Lesson 1, in which I reflected on in after the session stating, "Many kids were following Josephine's model, creating swirls in the sky with their paintbrushes and their sponges. Elizabeth was very particular about following Josephine's model exactly, as she continued with both blue and purple with a horizontal stroke" (My Daily Reflection, Phase 3, February 4, 2016). Below are two photographs to showcase the observations and attention the aesthetics that Elizabeth displayed.

Figure 5. (left) Elizabeth's artwork after Phase 3, Session 1, Lesson 1
Figure 6. (right) Josephine modeling painting the sky during Phase 3, Session 1, Lesson 1

While not exactly the same, Elizabeth used her observations of Josephine's painting to recreate it in her own work, using similar colors, lines, and color mixing.   This continued throughout the rest of this session, the last session she attended, as she emulated what Josephine or myself created and tried to recreate it herself.

Communication in and through the arts. Elizabeth communicated very eloquently for a four-year-old child. She spoke clearly and was able to tell detailed stories with reference to time and place. Not only was she able to communicate through language, but also she felt comfortable and confident using the arts to communicate her understanding.

Students created meaning through painting, drawing, movement, dance, gestures, and sound effects. In the following short discussion between Josephine and Elizabeth, Elizabeth was using watercolor pencils to draw the animal that she wanted to paint in her artwork later in the

program. With prior knowledge of the ocean, as she used to live near the beach, Elizabeth sat down to draw a dolphin. As she contemplated how to represent the dolphin, she used her body to capture what she was trying to create in her artwork.

[Episode 20 "REACHING!" (Phase 2, November 12, 2015)]

1. Elizabeth: That's actually called...*(standing up and jumping, like a dolphin)*…REACHING!
2. Josephine: Reaching, ya! Did you see how she makes the dolphin reach? *(Turning to one of Elizabeth's peers.)* Can you do it again? Look she's reaching! *(Elizabeth jumps again for her friend to watch.)* Do you see what she's doing? Her dolphin *(pointing to her drawing)* is reaching.

This short interaction between Elizabeth and Josephine portrayed Elizabeth's ability to use her body to create meaning during visual arts, showing us, rather than relying on telling us, how dolphins move in turn 1. By integrating her movement, language, and her visual arts piece, we were able to further understand the meaning of her painting.

Living her early life in San Diego near the beach, Elizabeth had a personal connection to the ocean and memories that she would reminisce about as she created her artwork. In week five of Phase 2, Session 2, her representation of dolphins was symbolic, in which her story that accompanied the artwork below (Figure 7) brought the artwork to life:

[Episode 21 "…and they're kissing right now!" (Phase 2, December 15, 2010)]

1. Elizabeth: And this is the sunset and that dolphin leaps from there, and it's going to go into the water *(uses finger to show the movement/action)*…and that's the mama!...and that's the father…and they're kissing right now!

Figure 7: Elizabeth's Finished Artwork, titled 'Dolphin Sparkle Aquarium.'

Upon analyzing Elizabeth's final product, it is evident that Elizabeth's original idea, discussed in week two, was consistent in week five. This vignette provides several features of art talk, in which she identifies her created objects, elaborates on her story, and follows through with her original intention or idea. In addition, the composition of her artwork is impactful with symmetrical balance. The story she created supports her artistic decision of symmetry along the noses of the dolphins. Her artwork communicated to herself as the artist and to her audience, in that this story accompanied what the audience should be understanding as they view and appreciate her artwork. These two dolphins, the focal points of her artwork, are characters that she represented in her painting.

Attending to the aesthetic qualities. Elizabeth smiled from ear to ear as she finished up her artwork in both Phase 2, Session 2 and Phase 3, Session 1. Upon wrapping up Phase 2, Josephine and I had planned to allow students time at the very end to discuss and present their paintings as a group to their peers. With slight hesitation from myself, we decided we would do this depending on the students' engagement and behavior throughout our last class. Sitting down together with the artwork set up around the classroom as an art gallery, I opened this discussion by saying, "And I feel like I'm in an art gallery. Just like the one we went to on campus when we

122

walked to the art gallery. So I want you to look around for a second. Look around at all of the beautiful paintings, and if you would like to tell us about your painting..." This began an unfolding conversation where approximately half of the class presented their artwork to their peers. Standing in front of their peers with smiles, Elizabeth choose to present her finished artwork. As she asked questions of her peers' art work and answered questions regarding her own, a conjecture is made that Elizabeth was proud of what she had accomplished and wanted to share it with others. Elizabeth smiled shyly as she began her presentation in the following excerpt.

> [Episode 22 "Because Dolphin Aquarium Sparkle is a very pretty name" (Phase 2, December 10, 2015)]
>
> 1. Elizabeth: *(smiling)* It's a dolphin city.
> 2. Me: Dolphin City. And you called it, the title of it is 'Dolphin Sparkle Aquarium.' Why did you call it that?
> 3. Elizabeth: Because Dolphin Aquarium Sparkle is a very pretty name.

By referring to her title as pretty, we can speculate based upon her demeanor and her choice of words that she is proud of the artwork she created and presented to her peers. She volunteered immediately to share, suggesting that she wanted to show and discuss the beauty of her artwork with others. Josephine reflected on this final session stating, "Indeed the students did well. Having their heart as well in the seasonal setting, they were willing to go into Monet's mind and engaged in painting as well as really telling very well their ideas. The work of the kissing dolphins was really very good in expression and inspired other students to think about a story as well" (Josephine's Daily Reflection, Phase 2, December 12, 2015). Elizabeth was proud of her own artwork, and myself and Josephine were proud of what had unfolded with our students

during our visual arts sessions. We too, appreciated the progress the students made throughout visual arts and their ability to speak so eloquently about their own ideas and artwork.

However, her ability to discuss the beauty in her artwork seemed to peak at the end of both of these sessions. During an interview after both of these sessions, Elizabeth and I sat down to discuss her paintings. It was clear she had a special connection with her first painting, titled 'Dolphin Sparkle Aquarium' (Figure 7). As we discussed some of the decisions she made in creating her art, she specifically discussed creating a tint.

[Episode 23 "Because…I don't want it too dark" (Phase 3, April 7, 2016)]

1. Elizabeth: (leans forward towards her painting) I used a little white here (using finger to one of the dolphins in her painting)
2. Me: Mhm…Why did you decide to mix a little white there? I noticed that.
3. Elizabeth: Because...I don't want it to dark (staring at her painting).
4. Me: Okay.
5. Elizabeth: Like this one (points to one of the dolphins in her painting).
6. Me: Ya, I see there some white mixed into this one right?
7. Elizabeth: Yes
8. Me: So what did that white do to your black?
9. Elizabeth: It made it Gray, and that's what I want

Elizabeth makes an artistic decision as she created this artwork. She specifically says, in turn 3 that she did not want the dark contrast of black on her painting, so she used white to lighten the tint. A conjecture can be made that Elizabeth made this choice as she was attending to the aesthetics of her artwork, as she stated, "that's what I want" in turn 9. It is very clear that this was her own choice and not anyone else's choice.

Identifying as an artist. Elizabeth's idea of an artist was all encompassing. Elizabeth, a very eager preschooler who was always ready to try anything, showed a love for the visual arts program. She took advantage of art making time each week and was an avid participant in discussions around the famous artworks and artistic discoveries. Elizabeth enjoyed discussing her artwork with peers and teachers each week, always volunteering to present her ideas and

stories within her artwork to the class as a whole. Upon speaking to Elizabeth in an interview about her artwork after Phase 2, Session 2, and watching back video of her creating her artwork during the program, her definition of an artist emerged.

[Episode 24 "And one time, I made up a word in a song" (Phase 3, April 14, 2016)]

1. Me: So, he (Claude Monet) is an artist. And Miss Josephine is an artist too. Do you think you're an artist?
2. Elizabeth: Uh huh. And one time, I made up a word in a song.
3. Me: You did! So does that make you an artist?
4. Elizabeth: Ya, and it was *(singing),* "Will the sun, will the sun shine? Will it snow, or will the tulip grow?" The tulips when they grow was my word.

Elizabeth understood the word artist in relation to many art forms, both visual arts and music. It is important to note, in turn 2, that Elizabeth refers to an active choice or change, which she identifies as a component of an artist. She is able to change the words in a song, making her an artist; we can assume that she regards the visual arts similarly, in that she has the ability to create making her an artist. Beyond just this interview, Elizabeth's paintings were always meaningful to her and never generic. Elizabeth had a personal connection with the topics she choose to paint and the focal points of her artwork. These paintings were a sincere display of her knowledge, experiences, and understanding. During the same interview, we discuss the inspiration for her artwork, in which she is able to describe where she built this idea from in her artwork.

[Episode 25 "I used to live there" (Phase 3, April 14, 2016)]

1. Me: So tell me about why you decided on all of these colors in the sky. It's so beautiful.
2. Elizabeth: Umm…because it looked like…there's lights.
3. Me: Mhmm…tell me more about that.
4. Elizabeth: And it's in California…I used to live there, and my dad lived there, and my uncle lived in Europe.
6. Me: Did that inspire you when you were painting? Like, what made you decide to paint the ocean, the sunset, and the dolphins. How did you decide that?
7. Elizabeth: I pictured it.
8. Me: You picture it? How did you do that?
9. Elizabeth: In my head! *(smiling)*

125

While we used Claude Monet's artwork as a model and support for artistic techniques, Elizabeth displays a personal connection to her artwork that gives the work meaning for her. With a loose guide as to main foundational pieces of the artwork, such as the sky and water in the background, she was able to "picture" where she used to live and combine that with Claude Monet's artwork. This artistic decision, the inspiration for her artwork, portrayed her ability to create meaningful artwork as an artist.

Anthony: From Uninvolved to "Jackson Pollock"

Out of the three students, Anthony was part of the most numbers of visual arts sessions. Beginning his first year of preschool, Anthony participated in five of the six visual arts sessions (Phase 1 Session 2, Phase 2 Sessions 1 and 2, and Phase 3 Sessions 1 and 2). Yet the progression of Anthony's participation throughout the five sessions is distinguished. Anthony was much more limited verbally. Upon beginning visual arts, he was able to speak two to three word sentences. With no diagnosis at the beginning of visual arts, Anthony's behavior was peculiar and repetitive. During Phase 1, Anthony often did not participate in visual arts. He would often escape to the loft in the classroom where he would spin tinker-toys continuously. His behaviors were often labeled as intrusive, as he would yell loudly during a whole group discussion or try to play with building toys, distracting other students from painting. Beginning Phase 2, Anthony began early intervention with support from a special education teacher, physical therapist, occupational therapist, and speech therapist. These support services always choose to push in to the classroom, in which many of them also joined visual arts. In addition, myself and Josephine began to fully understand Anthony's needs, as we began to recognize accommodations that we could make during visual arts. Beginning Phase 2, Anthony joined the students at the tables to paint for the first time. Phase 2, coinciding with the support Anthony

126

was receiving at this time, seemed to interest Anthony. I made note of this change in Anthony during visual arts in my reflection, stating "Anthony's SEIT teacher was there today during visual arts. Because of this, he got much more 1-on-1 attention, and he was able to sit down and paint with her. In reflecting on his painting after the session, it looks as if he was trying to paint his name over and over on the painting. Although Anthony is not participating in our exploration of the water and sunset, he seems to be using the visual arts to communicate his own ideas. I do think that this program is beneficial to him in his own way, especially today having 1 on 1 assistance" (My Daily Reflection, Phase 2, December 3, 2015).

Observing. Austin was a fast-moving preschool boy, yet he was intrigued by certain toys which he would play with for an extended period of time (10-15 minutes). He loved to build, generally using tinker toys or legos. The creations he made with these tools were intricate, often creating pendulums or windmill looking creations. He was observant about how to make things work.

During visual arts, it seemed as though he was not interested in the famous artworks of Monet, as he never really paid particular attention to them. However, upon beginning van Gogh's Starry Night in Phase 3 Session 1, there was a noticeable change in Anthony's interest in the famous artwork itself. As we began to take a closer look at the night sky, the stars, and the moon, Anthony showed excitement as he joined the group for activities. Phase 3, Session 1, Lesson 3 was about the moon, in which we pretended to get into a spaceship and get closer and closer to the moon. Each time we got closer, I would show a real photograph of the moon closer up. These photographs varied in color, shape, and size, and my intention was to encourage the students to make observations about the variations in the type of moon that they could create themselves. Anthony was so happy he could hardly contain his excitement.

127

[Episode 26 "Mars Moon!" (Phase 3, February 18, 2016)]

1. Daniel: It's a red moon.
2. Me: Yes, this one looks like it has a red tint to it.
3. Anthony: A red moon, mars moon! *(smiles with excitement)*
4. Me: It is the what moon?
5. Anthony: Mars Moon!
…looking at a different picture a couple minutes later.
6. Anthony: That is a full moon.
7. Me: That is a full moon. Why do you say that Anthony? Why is it a full moon?
8. Anthony: This moon is shiny.
…looking at a different picture a couple minutes later.
9. Me: What do you notice about the color of this moon?
10: Anthony: White, black, red.
…looking at a different picture a couple minutes later.
11. Anthony: This is a yellow moon! This is a sun moon!
…looking at a different picture a couple minutes later.
12. Anthony: This is the Earth moon! I see a blue moon!

As we looked through the different pictures of the moon, Anthony's observations were specific. He was able to use different colors to describe the moon, in turns 3, 10, 11, and 12. In addition, he used descriptor words such as "full" in turn 6 and "shiny" in turn 8. While Anthony's verbal skills were limited, in both English and Mandarin, he was able to describe his observations very clearly as we clicked from one picture to the next on the computer.

In my reflection from that day, I commented on Anthony's interest in the solar system, stating, "As soon as we looked at the picture with the moon up close, he (Anthony) immediately said "asteroid" in reference to the craters on the moon. I've noticed that Anthony has a lot of knowledge about the solar system ever since we started working on this painting" (My Daily Reflection, Phase 3, February 18, 2016). This painting, *Starry Night,* was of interest to Austin, and his engagement in the lessons during this session reflected that.

Communicating in and through the arts. When Anthony began visual arts, Phase 1, Session 2, he did not join the group at all. Most often he would escape to the loft, a quiet area in

the classroom that is raised by stairs, but every class he would seek out and play with his comfort toy, the tinker toys. Throughout this entire first session, Anthony did not participate in visual arts, not once making a mark on his canvas or partaking in any of the activities.

Phase 2, Session 1 began, and although Anthony did not join the initial activities, he did sit down at his canvas to paint during art making. Not many marks were made on the canvas, but this was the first time that Anthony showed interest in the visual arts program at all. Important to note, at this time, Austin had begun full services, in which we already were seeing gains in his social skills.

The very next week, we noticed that sitting in a chair at a table was hindering his ability to move while painting. During art making, we first moved him to an easel to stand while painting. Noticing the increased time span that he had spent painting, the following week we encouraged Anthony to find a place that he was comfortable painting, in which Anthony choose to sit/lay on the floor. Anthony sat down with a smile on his face and immediately began painting next to my co-teacher, Miss Emily. He began his conversation with Emily saying "Boom!" as he hit the canvas with a large brush. Episode 27 details the sounds and movement associated with Anthony's description of his art making.

[Episode 27 "Boom!" (Phase 2, October 7, 2015)]
1. Anthony: Boom
2. Emily: Yes, it looks like a water splash. Like the froggy jumped onto the lily pad.
3. Anthony: Boom, boom! *(Anthony is using a large paintbrush and making lines on the canvas.)*
4. Emily: Woah! Just like splashes.
5. Anthony: Fire!
6. Emily: It looks like fire?
7. Anthony: A volcano!
8. Emily: A volcano.
9. Anthony: *(Making dots over and over on his canvas with a large paint brush.)*
10. Emily: What do volcanoes do?
11. Anthony: *(Making dots on the canvas and the paint is splattering.)* Pew!

12. Emily: Look at how when you splash it down like that, tiny little strings come off of paint. What happens when you swirl it all around?

13. Anthony: *(Making faster dots.)*

14. Emily: Take your paintbrush and swirl it.

15. Anthony: *(Adds water to his paintbrush)*

16. Emily: That one is so light, with just a tiny bit of paint and a lot of water. Wow.

17. Anthony: *(Makes more dots, then switches to a larger foam paintbrush and spreads the paint.)*

18. Emily: Woah, that's neat.

19. Anthony: *(Puts the large paintbrush in the water cup and only uses the foam brush. He spreads the paint back and forth.)*

20. Emily: That's so neat. It's spreading all of the paint around. That's great! What's happening when you move that foam brush?

21. Anthony: Clean paint up. *(Moving brush back and forth)*

22. Emily: It's blending everything, isn't it?

23. Anthony: *(Looks at his paint brush, and then continues moving it back and forth.)*

24. Emily: What colors are blending? Wow, do you want me to show you how to make clouds? Do you want to make clouds with your paint? It's really neat.

25. Anthony: Clouds! *(Still moving his foam paintbrush back and forth.)*

26. Emily: That's one way to make clouds. I'm going to go get a paper towel and show you another way.

27. Anthony: I'm trying. (Inaudible) I'm trying.

28. Emily: You're going to squeeze it. Then you put it in the water. And you can press it in like that *(pushing a paper towel into the watercolor paint, pulling the watercolor off of the canvas.)* Look what happens, a cloud!

29. Anthony: *(Uses paint brush to paint back over the white spot).*

30. Emily: Would you like to try it? Like that? *(Creates another cloud.)*

31. Anthony: *(Looking at his paint brush)* I don't see any clouds!

32. Emily: Yeah see, this is how you make clouds. Do you want to try?

33. Anthony: *(Covering up the white spots again.)* I can't see any clouds.

34. Emily: Try it, press it down.

35. Anthony: No *(smiling and throwing the paper towel)*

36. Emily: No, you don't want to. Ok, maybe there are no clouds in your sky.

37. Anthony: Dark. *(Painting on the top of the canvas now.)*

38. Emily: Look how there are tiny little flecks of blue from using that tool.

39. Anthony: I can't see any clouds. Some is raining!

40. Emily: It's raining?

41. Anthony: Ya. This brush is raining.

42. Emily: Ya. See, I like how that turned out *(pointing to his canvas)*.

43. Anthony: There is…it's dark.

44. Emily: Is it dark? Do you want to use your paintbrush again?

45. Anthony: *(Looking in the water cup.)* No, the dark! *(Picks up a clean paper towel and scrunches it up. He then puts it in the paint cup.)*

46. Emily: Oh, that's a good idea.

47. Anthony: Dark! *(He pushes down the paint covered paper towel on the canvas. He tries twice, but no paint comes off of it.)* What is?!

48. Emily: That's interesting. I wonder why it's not making any sort of mark. You could try…try to make a…
49. Anthony: No! (Uses the foam paintbrush to paint again.)
50. Emily: I love how it looks white in the middle. That looks just like a cloud.

Anthony's sound and movement provide a narration to his experimentation and creation. When Anthony said in turn 41 "This brush is raining," a conjecture is made that he was experimenting with each paintbrush as the paint hit the canvas, deciphering his ability to create different types of lines and shapes. He was able to identify and switch paint brushes based on his discoveries during art making. Anthony loudly exclaimed, "Dark!" in turn 47 to identify and communicate his representation of clouds to the teacher. An assumption is made that he did not want white clouds, created by the teacher using the paper towel to pull the watercolor paint off of the canvas, as he kept painting over the white spots the teacher created. By investigating his movement, we were able to understand that he wanted dark rain clouds, which he attempted to create by putting paint back on the canvas.

It was this session that Anthony may have realized that his art communicated to an audience. This session was a turning point for Anthony. After this session, Anthony participated in almost every session with slight accommodations. His artwork became more detailed each session, adding more dimension, color, and lines to each piece. Below, Table 9, you can see the progression of Anthony's artwork.

Table 9. Anthony's artwork from three sessions.

Anthony's Phase 2, Session 1 artwork.	Anthony's Phase 2, Session 2 artwork	Anthony's Phase 3, Session 1 artwork

131

Attending to the aesthetic qualities. Phase 2 Session 1 Lesson 4 was the first lesson that Anthony participated throughout the entire visual arts session. Acting as Miss Josephine's "assistant," which she referred to him as, he smiled through the entire session. Miss Josephine gave him a job, in which Anthony giggling as he added color to each small group water bin while they explored the quality of water. While Anthony does not say much, his demeanor, gestures, and facial expressions define his ability to attend to the beauty of the colors. As he used a small pipet dropper to add food coloring to the water in the bins, he would gasp and smile as the water turned a color. He followed Josephine, as she went from small group to small group, bin to bin, continually adding different colors and watching the color mixing. This was Anthony's way of attending to the beauty of the colors in the water.

Identifying as an artist. Phase 2 Session 2 began without Anthony because he was absent from school that day. Our first activity for lesson 2 was a gallery walk, in which Josephine and I lined the hallway with the preschool students artwork that they had begun lesson 1, for purposes of art appreciation and planning aloud what we would paint next. Anthony began the gallery walk and took notice of the blank canvas on the end, which was left for Anthony. His behavior changed drastically. Our active and loud Anthony sat quietly right in front of the blank canvas and starred at it for several minutes. While discussing what would come next, with the help of Sawyer's idea, Anthony just sat quietly in front of his blank canvas. Josephine and I

were astonished by this behavior, and Josephine reflected on the meaning of this for Anthony in relation to the rest of the day. "He walked right up to the empty white canvases in the "art gallery" and stayed there as if waiting for him to claim one as his. He was not attending class last week. His color of choice for ocean puzzle today was dark grey. Every time I showed him a blue pencil, he would very resolute tell me no, that 's blue. He knows what he wants and what he does not" (Josephine's Daily Reflection, Phase 2, November 12, 2015). This was the first week that we began to see Anthony identifying as an artist. A conjecture is made that his quiet and calm demeanor in front of his blank canvas was his way of taking ownership to his canvas. He was adamant about his color choice, in which he realized that he was the one making the decisions in his own artwork.

Upon finishing up the program, Josephine referred to Anthony in discussions with me as "Our Jackson Pollock," and it was evident that he had made the most progress from beginning to end. In Josephine's final reflection, she couldn't hide her excitement for his progress saying, "He (Anthony) came along so far!!! Fire works!!" (Josephine's Daily Reflection, Phase 3, April 27, 2016).

Discussion

With the sociocultural theory and multimodality guiding this dissertation study, we are able to get a much larger picture of all three students progress and abilities. We no longer view their finished artwork as static pieces, yet each students experience with and around the artwork, throughout the program, is meaningful in understanding the students experience in the guided exploration approach.

Multimodal abilities of young children and visual arts. Most notable, this dissertation provides empirical evidence to support a multimodal approach to facilitating visual arts with

133

young children. We were able to see a full picture of all three focal students as we took into account their artistic creations, language, gestures, and sounds. We would not have been able to see the progress that Anthony made without this approach, who arguably made the most progress in this study. Although some empirical research combining visual arts and young children have used this approach to guide their research (Bentley, 2011; Papandreou, 2014), there is little empirical research combining these two avenues of work. This study argues that there is a need to document systematic research with young children in the visual arts, as the preschool students experience is understudied.

Understanding the world with the visual arts. All three students truly enjoyed the creation of their artwork, which was evident through their facial expression as they smiled proudly while working. In addition, all three students viewed art as a language, considering it as a symbolic system to communicate with (Katz, 1998). The current study suggests that all three of these focal children ascribed meaning to their artist experiences.

Elizabeth and Anthony, while very different children, both used the visual arts to understand and interpret their real world. For example, Elizabeth's artwork conveyed her past, living in San Diego near the beach and the dolphins, in which she chose the dolphins as her focal point. Anthony, on the other hand, took intense interest in the solar system, and as we began to explore *Starry Night* by Vincent van Gogh, we saw his ability to use the visual arts to interpret his world. Anthony used the visual arts to mediate his understanding of the solar system, as Brooks (2009) research suggests. Alternatively, Sawyer explored a pretend world, as his artwork often told pretend stories about dinosaurs and dragons.

Independence. Throughout this visual arts program, students were provided with incredible independence and freedom in their decisions, in art making as well as art talk. Student

agency drove each of their individual art pieces, in which their prior knowledge and experiences were apparent in their design. Yet, even when students would work on their own artwork, the process of creating provided a context for teamwork. While students were free to explore their own interpretations, the culture of the classroom in which all student voices were heard and encouraged provided students the opportunity to work together and appreciate one another.

Personal connections with the artwork afforded authentic experiences for the students to create their own meaning. For example, with a focus on Claude Monet's paintings of water, all students had some experience with water that they could transform in their artwork. By providing opportunities to play in water, through the use of water bins, students engaged in authentic experiences in the classroom that they could convey in their paintings with their prior knowledge of water.

Artistic identity. Previous research (Bresler, 1993; Eckhoff, 2008) suggests that young children are able to observe, listen, communicate in and through the arts, and attend to the aesthetic qualities, but essential to all of these facets, findings from this study suggest that students are able to identify as an artist through the implementation of the guided exploration orientation. By experiencing the development of artwork from beginning to end, young children engaged in a process reminiscent of an artist. The students began with inspiration and planning, followed by the exploration of the artistic medium over several sessions. Once the artwork was complete, the students created a title that his/her artwork truly represented. The findings of this study suggest that students took ownership over their artwork in this program, as each student was able to tailor this exploration to their own interests and abilities.

An understudied aspect of the guided exploration orientation, this study highlights the preschool students' ability to understand an artist's craft and enjoy the process and development

135

of an artist identity in them. This identity manifested in several different ways or feelings for young children, such as appreciation, happiness, and a proud demeanor. This program adopting the guided-exploration approach encouraged students to explore with their own identity, as they began to integrate and understand what the identity of an artist is like. Students engaged in authentic experiences of artists, such as observing their natural environments, observing, appreciating, and interpreting other's artwork, exploring with media (watercolors, acrylics) and techniques, etc., where their own ideas were at the forefront of the art exploration.

Summary

By looking across these three focal cases, we are able to understand the range of abilities these young children showcase in the visual arts program adopting the guided exploration approach. While we are unable to generalize these three cases to all preschoolers, we are able to understand the immense abilities and learning experiences that these three preschool students were able to have during this program. Lastly, we will now explore the relationship and collaboration that ensued between myself, the early childhood professional, and the visual artist-in-residence.

<p style="text-align:center">The Teachers' Experience</p>

Working together for the first time, Josephine and I had to navigate our relationship as teachers, collaborators, and friends. We were forced to reevaluate what we knew about young children and visual arts and reflect on our disposition and attitude toward the program development and our own teaching practices. Throughout the design-based research project, we faced many struggles and achievements that impacted the program refinements and our comprehensive model of the guided exploration approach. The following section will begin with the teachers' backgrounds, both Josephine and myself. I will then delineate the struggles and

triumphs that we faced in each round of development. Finally the discussion will analyze the system of collaboration between a visual artist and an early childhood teacher.

Teachers' Backgrounds

In this section, I will discuss the teachers' backgrounds, including our past experiences and our teaching philosophies.

Josephine. The visual artist-in-residence, Josephine, was hired from a community program that has partnerships with the preschool program. Josephine was in her mid- to late-sixties during program development. She was an integral voice in the development of this community program that focuses on cultural play in early childhood. With no specific training in early childhood prior to our visual arts program, she was in the process of teaching art class to four to ten year olds with a similar design, paying specific attention to a famous artist and his/her artistic patterns as a model. The students enrolled in these classes have a particular interest in art and/or have an art background. In an early interview with Josephine, she stated that behavior management skills are rarely needed, as these students have great interest in the topic before attending the class, which in turn does not impact the decisions she must make in this type of setting (J. de Jong, personal communication, October 22, 2014). She is an expert in visual arts.

In her home country, the Netherlands, she studied both textiles and visual arts in depth in college. She continued with the career, teaching art classes in the Netherlands to high school age children. When moving to the United States, she taught for a few years in a preschool classroom as a teacher assistant, however she had very little formal experience as a lead teacher.

In the beginning of this partnership, Josephine met with the administration of the center and explained her vision for visual arts and proposed the program. Aiming for the guided exploration approach, Josephine wanted to use a famous artists work to inspire the preschool

137

students to reimagine their own creation. With a focus on artistic techniques and the culture behind the famous artworks, Josephine began implementing her plan in my preschool classroom. She entered the classroom as a disconnected event, as we had planned an hour once a week for her to come in and teach.

Keely. Prior to beginning this program, I had been teaching preschool for approximately 4 years as a lead teacher. During those four years, I had finished a Masters in Early Childhood and Childhood Education, and I was certified in New York State to teach students birth to sixth grade. As an advocate for play in early childhood education, I positioned myself in my own classroom as a guide, allowing and encouraging students to play and explore thematic centers with my support to challenge their thinking and developmental skills. I would plan, set up, and implement thematic centers daily that integrated developmental domains crucial to early childhood, such as fine motor, art, math, science, literacy, etc. My role, during play time, was to provide students with questions and prompts to connect their play and learning.

The visual arts were incorporated in my classroom daily, and changed based on the theme that coordinated with what was going on in the students' lives. I had many art materials in my classroom, such as washable paint, watercolor paint, crayons, markers, tempra markers, glitter, pom poms, etc. My lesson plans were creative and fun for the students. However, at the art center, I tended to allow the students to explore more with the materials, reminiscent of the little-intervention approach to visual arts (Bresler, 1993).

At the beginning of the development of this program, I had begun the pursuit of my Ph.D. in Curriculum, Instruction, and the Science of Learning with a focus in Early Childhood Education. I was still sorting out my interests and direction in the program when we began the partnership with the museum and Josephine. My preschool students were always a priority in

my career, and upon beginning the visual arts program, I observed the students and myself struggling. Josephine presented a lot of material to my preschoolers, and at the time, I felt my philosophy as a guide and co-constructor of knowledge with my students was being questioned. I tried to support Josephine by taking the lead in behavior management, but I felt as though I was not really supporting her or doing my own job by only functioning in this role. At this time, I began investing myself in the research in visual arts and early childhood to better support my own development as a teacher and, most importantly, my students' success.

Being a teacher/researcher, I began to work with Josephine, the artist-in-residence, to continuously improve students' engagement and understanding. Each session, Josephine and I discussed and identified struggles within the program, whether independently or collectively as a group, and in turn, made changes in the program planning and implementation. These struggles, which will be explained throughout this section, influenced change within the program and within us as teachers. Implementing the guided-exploration orientation for the first time as individuals and as required co-teachers, we both needed time to explore our own assumptions and art practices prior to and during the initial program development.

Phase 1: Negotiation of Power and Independence

Three major players facilitated this visual arts program: myself (the early childhood professional), Josephine (the visual artist-in-residence), and the preschool students. Each of these players enacted an integral role in the learning the occurred each week, both positively and negatively. As we began this program, in the first Phase of development, it took time to navigate the importance and relationships between each of these individual players and his/her knowledge base, and it is evident that there, at times, was tension between each of the players.

Early childhood professional versus visual artist-in-residence. Initially, Josephine, the visual artist-in-residence, did the planning for the visual arts program solely. I originally acted as though this was a disconnected event entering my classroom, with the understanding that I should act as support to Josephine. I knew the overall goal of the program and a very basic understanding of the painting, *The Starry Night,* which would guide the students learning. Josephine knew our overall philosophy at the center, yet she had never observed a day in our classroom. She knew very little about our students' personalities and developmental progress. In addition, Josephine and I knew very little about each other as teachers and as people. Initially, we did not have much of a relationship but essentially co-existed in the classroom.

Referring back to Table 5 (p. 85-86), this lesson plan depicts a typical visual arts session in Phase 1, Session 1. We would most often begin with several activities that would lead up to art making. For example, this lesson plan begins with three topics identified by Josephine, an introduction, Vincent's work, and a description of why Vincent needed the light. While these topics integrated and supported the preschool students in what they were beginning to paint, the presentation of this material was different than how I introduced activities to the students. As identified in the lesson plan, the first three activities were facilitated as a whole group totaling approximately 30 minutes, the first half of our class. Following this presentation, the students would then go to their individual canvases at the tables for art making for the remaining 30 minutes.

Beginning this program, my teaching was minimal. I often sat with students to give them more support at whole group while Josephine presented the material. I took the lead on organizing the artworks, handing the canvases out to the students and setting them up with paint. During art making, Josephine would make a point to discuss with the students about their

artwork, but with so many preschool students painting at once, it was difficult to spend significant time with students.

As we negotiated our relationship, tension and frustration between Josephine and myself was evident throughout Phase 1 of development. In the following excerpt from my own reflection on week four of Phase 1 Session 1, it is clear that I am not on the same page as Josephine:

> From what I observed today, it seems as if the students were very antsy after they finished painting. This is a long time (30 minutes) for a 3-4 year old to sit and listen without being physically active. Because we have so many adults in the classroom to assist with visual arts (student interns), rather than sitting down to talk about each painting, why don't we walk through and look at the paintings with an adult facilitating – create an art show and the adults can discuss the paintings, encourage students to ask questions, and make inferences about the meaning of the painting. Encouraging the students to appreciate each other's work, as well as their own work, is important, however sitting and listening to direct instruction for more than 8-10 minutes is really not developmentally appropriate for their age (My Daily Reflection, Phase 1, October 8, 2014).

In this short passage, I reference a key frustration of my own during Phase 1 of development in which I create a dichotomy immediately upon implementation of this program: direct instruction versus child directed learning, labeling immediately the consequent as Josephine's versus my own teaching strategies. While I recognized the importance in art appreciation, I felt that this could be facilitated in other ways that were more developmentally appropriate for preschool students. In addition, I did not discuss this with her, but put this reflection in a shared document

141

(Google Document), immediately placing us against each other. I offered a suggestion, an art show or gallery walk for the students to appreciate art, however I did not know much about Josephine's experience nor did I have a discussion about this with her. I mention, "Because you have so many adults in the classroom to assist," yet I made no mention of the student interns schooling, degrees, or understanding of visual arts. Without this understanding, my suggestion could not be facilitated.

In the following vignette, Episode 28, Josephine led a whole group activity to introduce the students to the horizon created within Vincent van Gogh's *Sunflowers*, the introduction lesson of Phase 1, Session 2. The presentation about the representation of the wall and the table ensues very little back and forth conversation or discussion with the students, in which I realized the students were passively listening. I interjected several times, in an attempt to help reengage the students' interests.

[Episode 28 Wall and table (Phase 1, October 28, 2014)]

1. Josephine: Look what Vincent did with this *(holding up Sunflowers painting),* but first Vincent had to decide where is the bottom part, the table part *(touching the bottom of the painting),* and where is the wall part *(touching the top of the painting).* Because inside the house, we don't have the sky and the ground. Inside the house, we have the wall, do you see this? *(pointing to the wall in the artwork)* Haley, do you see this part? This is the wall, and this is where the table is, where the flowers are. Do you see that?
2. Matthew: *(not looking at Josephine)* Can we go outside?
3. Josephine: Now we have to, Haley, Haley. Now we need to think for our painting what we are going to do with the top part and the bottom part. And I'm going to turn this around *(referring to the white board next to her, she gets up from her chair and turns it).* Because we have to decide. I'm turning this around and you need to help me. Here is another surprise, because Vincent loved Sunflowers.
4. Me: He loved to paint sunflowers.
5. Josephine: He did so much, he painted lots of sunflowers.
6. Katia: I can see the sunflowers! *(There are three different versions of Vincent van Gogh's Sunflowers paintings on the white board.)*
7: Josephine: Lots and lots of sunflowers, do you see that? Are they all the same?
8. Katia: No *(in the background, Matthew is making loud car noises.)*
9. Josephine: Did he do the wall the same and the table? No he chose different colors.
10. Katia: I can see Vincent's name.

11. Josephine: Did you see Vincent's name?

12. Me: *(talking over Josephine)* Point to it.

13. Josephine: Did you see here? *(Josephine begins pointing them out in each painting.)*

14. Me: *(again, talking over Josephine)* Go ahead Katia.

15. Josephine: She said I don't see Vincent's name.

16. Me: Do you want to point? I think she said I do. *(Katia gets up and points to Vincent's signature on his artwork.)*

17. Josephine: There, very good. Did you see Vincent's name here? *(pointing to another painting of van Gogh's.)* And I think he liked it, but he didn't put his name. Very good, Katia. Now let's do this, and you need to help me. If Vincent starts to think about his wall, and I did two purple vases let's see what it will look like. *(She picks up two cut out purple construction paper vases and two large orange construction paper rectangles.)*

(Josephine's presentation continues 5 minutes later…)

18. Josephine: So both pictures have a table and both pictures have a wall. And do you know what you guys are going to do. You guys are to make a line with a pencil on your painting where you want where you want your table and where you want your wall. Remember how we did it with the sky? Now we do it with our new painting. Ok? So you choose, here comes my table or here comes my table. See, Vincent has all different ways. Do you see, he has different colors also? So you might think, hey if I do brown for the table then I might do a different color for the wall. And we have a lot of yellow and orange sunflowers so you might not do your wall yellow. Ok?

19. Me: Boys and girls, I want you to look at our walls. What color are our walls in our school? What do you think?

20. Katia: I know! I know! Pink.

21. Haley: Pink, pink, pink.

22. Me: Now look at our counters over there. What color is our counter?

23. Audrey: I know.

24. Me: What do you think Audrey?

25. Audrey: White.

26. Me: Ya, so we can do lots of different colors. Vincent decided to do browns and blues and a white wall. Our classroom has pink walls…

27. Haley: Pink, pink, pink.

28. Me*: (nodding at Haley)* …and a white counter. So you have lots of choices.

29. Josephine *(speaking to me)*: And we start today with the tables so we can next week already do the wall and then the vases maybe, just planning.

30. Me *(speaking to Josephine)*: Ok, so we are just painting the table today?

31. Josephine *(speaking to me)*: We start with the table and if we are faster we can start with the wall because we are with a small group.

32. Me: So boys and girls, did you hear what we're going to do first today we are going to paint the table. So is the table on the bottom or the top of our painting?

The tension impeded the room, as both Josephine and myself looked visibly frustrated and tried to push through this whole group activity. With an early childhood background, I realized that the children were not listening throughout this whole group presentation. There were very few responses from the preschool students, and in line two, one child is talking about going outside. In addition, noted in my reflection as well as in the transcript, only one child (Katia) is responding to the minimal questions asked by Josephine. In turn 14, I tried to make an adjustment to circle time by allowing children to be more active, but Josephine continued, not realizing what the child wanted. In turn 19, my aim was to make this painting relevant for the students by making a connection with something they knew well, our classroom. I too easily assumed that Josephine should know what each of my moves indicated, however Josephine did not have an early childhood background. This assumption lead me to question Josephine's decisions in planning and implementation of the program, which in turn, impacted our relationship as co-teachers.

Figure 8: A photo corresponding with Episode 28, October 28, 2014.

Figure 8 captures this initial tension well. Josephine, sitting in the chair, (on the right of the photograph) presented the information to the students. I functioned as the leader of behavior management, which is depicted as my arms around three different students, one in my lap and

one student on each side of me. Also evident in this photo, I had a relationship with the students that Josephine was unable to forge immediately. In Phase 1 Session 1, Josephine and I co-existed in the visual arts program, yet we did not co-teach or collaborate.

Josephine and I consistently reflected during all of Phase 1, Session 1, however at the time, we put these reflections in a Google Document that was shared among the two of us, the director and associate director of the center, and the research assistant of the center. Our reflections were very short and cursory, and these reflections did not help us to forge a relationship with one another.

For this reason, after Phase 1 Session 2 (October 28, 2014), I asked Josephine to begin sending me her lesson plans so that I could better support her by knowing the routine and schedule for the day. I assumed that if I were frustrated with that session, she must have been too. I had hoped to email with her to have conversations about each session, rather than separate reflections.

After this session, our email communication was consistent. Often emailing back and forth three to four times a week, we began getting to know each other and the goals that we each had for the students. Upon beginning Phase 2, our emails helped us to narrow from large goals to how we would facilitate the upcoming lesson. Table 10 provides a look into our email communication before Phase 2, Session 1, Lesson 3. The following table shows three emails, beginning with one from Josephine to me, my reply, and then Josephine's final reply before implementation of the next visual arts session.

Table 10. Email communication between Josephine and I, Phase 2, September 30, 2015

From Josephine to Me:
I am sending you my considerations for Wednesday's session: Monet 3

What I want to accomplish:
   *All children will have 2 or 3 cut out water lilies to place on their bottom half of painting, the water area.
   *All children will be able to take home their colored puzzle, so they can involve their family at home.

What I like the children to create/learn themselves:
   By looking at Monet's miniature water garden, children can draw an outline of a water lily (I 'll bring the container with water)
   We can first talk about shapes: triangle versus circle, square versus rectangle. (In big group)
   Working in smaller groups, teachers are asked to cut out the shapes in special blocking paper.

   INTRO/DEMO
   shapes/INPUT
   children/DRAWING
   children/CUTTING
   teachers/Placing on painting

The Ellison cutter from the building will be used and I will bring from the museum the stencil for the small puzzle. Some children need to color or finish their puzzle first (Keely: same setting as last time?)

*Optional: Reading another or new story could accompany these activities (Keely?)
If this might not fill the whole hour, we could work with play dough to create a water lily. A soft pink play dough might be a good incentive for senses. I can bring play dough for class. You have tools?
It could become a display of a garden, too. Green pipe cleaners could shape pads.

Before end of session:
   If we can place the cut out lilies on the paintings, that would be a good start for next painting session.

I'd like your feedback and also want to know:
   Were there last time children that did not paint at all? I remember 2 or 3? Do I bring prepped paint for sky for these? Just in case? Would we be able to accommodate these children? I would prefer them catching up with what we are doing now and let them catch up on their painting next week when we all will paint. (Less disruptive and less obvious they are set apart.)

This session: Goals
   Children will learn about shapes and how to recognize them in objects, e.g. water lily.
   Children will try through shaping with play dough, to create a lily. Vision/touch/intuition.
   Children will get more info, visually, about organizing their own water garden picture.
   After Keely's story time about Monet and the water lily, children will get emotionally

146

drawn into the artist's work and his love for nature.
Looking forward to your feedback, so I can start to prep. Thank you!

My Response to Josephine:

This sounds like a great plan! I love the idea of using play dough first to make the water lily, as I think this will be great to exemplify a water lily in several mediums, especially for our students that are not drawing symbolically yet.

I want to make sure I'm understanding your progression for the hour session, so let me know if this makes sense to you and that I'm following you correctly:

> **1. Circle/Whole Group:** Sing hello song; Look closely at the water lily garden that you brought last week, noticing the different shapes on the lily; Discuss shapes in regards to the lily (triangle, circle, square, and rectangle).
> **2. At the tables: Play dough!** Students will look at examples in the book that you provided and the water lily garden and create several water lilies.
> **3. As the students finish, we will break into small groups** (approximately 3 children with 1 teacher - these can happen anywhere in the classroom; at the tables, on the rug - wherever that group chooses). In these small groups, students will first draw on a piece of regular white paper their water lilies (2-3 water lilies). Teachers will cut these water lilies out on the special stick paper. Students will then stick them on their painting where they want in the water.
> 4. As they finish, they will go to the rug and finish **coloring and/or cutting out their puzzle** using the Ellison machine.

I think this will definitely take the hour, because I think the small groups (#3) is going to take quite some time! Next week, we will focus on painting! :) I agree with you that I think we should catch Sam and Anthony up with painting next week when we are all painting. As far as the play dough, we have light pink play dough made already, so don't worry about making it yourself. We also have the pipe cleaners, so I will have all of that set up for Wednesday morning. We are excited for Wednesday! Thanks!

Josephine's Response to Me:
You got it right! Thanks for having the play dough already. I'll bring in the mini water garden setting. The 2 see- through containers with lilies and details will stay for remainder of sessions in your classroom. They will serve us well for water part painting and recognize "reflection" in water. The students will love it, with small bridge and doggie from the story. If you did not get to the story, we could be flexible to add it any time it allows for it.

Email chains like this facilitated our ability to build a connection, as people and co-teachers. A preschool classroom is always hectic, no matter how organized it is. Visual arts started at 9:00 am and ended at about 10:00 am, but my students were at school until 11:30, so I did not have

time to discuss or debrief each session at 10:00 am, being that I had to continue teaching. The emails functioned as our communication time, whether we were debriefing, pre-briefing, lesson planning, or getting to know each other.

The first email from Josephine to myself gave a general idea of goals that she had for the following session. Beginning with a big idea, Josephine asked me some questions about facilitation and materials. My reply back provided her feedback, and I began the email very positively by saying, "This sounds like a great plan!" I then used her ideas to plan the hour, with specific steps and direction regarding our facilitation. Finally, her email back clarified the plan, and we were ready to implement the next session. These emails became consistent, and helped us to discuss our ideas and goals for our students and the program.

As we each gave ideas in the emails, we shared the responsibility of taking the lead in facilitation based on whose initial idea it was, and we would support each other and collaborate while teaching. Figure 9 shows the shift from co-existing to collaborating as teachers.

Figure 9. Phase 3, Session 1, Lesson 1, February 4, 2016

This figure provides an example of how we worked through the initial tension and began working together. This introduction lesson we facilitated together; I took the lead in facilitating

the group discussion between students, as they looked at photographs on the computer of the day sky versus the night sky and made a chart of their observations. Josephine then made the connections of their observations and prior knowledge to the famous artwork, *Starry Night.* At this time, by Phase 3, we functioned as a team.

Phase 2: What is a Guide? Communicating and Questioning

The role the teacher assumes is undoubtedly intertwined with the strategies used when communicating with students. While Josephine taught in this classroom as an artist-in-residence, she was not used to assuming the role of the co-teacher or co-facilitator. Josephine's earlier experience impacted this understanding of herself in the classroom and her role immensely in Phase 1 of the program development. In an early interview with Josephine, she discussed her previous experience in comparison to this experience and our evolving visual arts program. In this interview, she revealed to me that many of her art teaching experiences in both library and museum programs took on the role of "presenting" (J. de Jong, personal communication, October 28, 2015). However, Josephine recognized that "…my role must change" (J. de Jong, personal communication, October 28, 2015). Prior to implementation of this program, Josephine wanted and intended to position herself as a guide to the students. Yet, in Phase 1, her informal interactions with students were reminiscent of this "presenting" approach.

My previous visual arts experience with young children impacted my ability to confidently implement the developing program initially. I continuously questioned my own role, which in turn, impacted my relationships with my students. I had prior knowledge and a relationship with all of these students. Because of this relationship, a mutually meaningful rapport was established prior to the program development and research, providing an advantage

149

in maintaining trust throughout with my students. However, due to this relationship, conflicting roles (researcher and teacher) were evident in the sessions (Glesne, 2011).

My students recognized my role throughout the day as a co-constructor of knowledge, which was my role as a teacher and facilitator in the classroom. Yet during visual arts, Josephine led the facilitation and conversation. Used to allowing the students to discuss and enact their understandings, I looked to Josephine as a model as to how to interact with the students during the visual arts program.

Prior to this visual arts program, I always allowed my students' words to supersede my own. When they would create artwork during playtime, I would write on their artwork exactly what they said about it, as they dictated the importance in each of these creations. However, as I listened to Josephine during the visual arts program, I realized myself that she interpreted for the students, making connections between their artwork and the famous artist. In one of her first reflections, she stated, "One little boy painted a soccer ball high in the sky! For this age that represents a big star, too!" (Josephine's Daily Reflection, Phase 1, October 8, 2014). While she let them identify objects in their painting, she would reinterpret, as evident in the previous quote, to reflect a connection between their own artwork and the famous artist.

In the end of each phase of implementation, we would guide the students to title and author their own artwork. At the end of Phase 1, Session 1, we sat down in small groups to support the students through this process. We began by discussing what a title was, and then encouraged the students to come up with their own title. In the following short excerpt, I wrestled with the power and independence between my student and myself. Katia confidently named her painting "Title Hole." Concerned that Katia did not understand the word title in the previous explanation, I attempted to suggest another option.

[Episode 29 "Title Hole" (Phase 1, October 22, 2014)]

1. Katia: It's Title Hole.
2. Me: Title Hole? Let's think of a diff…I like that idea, the Hole idea, but let's think of a different word instead of Title…(*pause*) Or do you like that Katia? Do you want to call it Title Hole?
3. Katia: Ya!
4. Me: Alright, let's write Title Hole. I think that's a great idea.

In turn 2, I think aloud my own concerns with the program implementation and my expectation of what I thought I had to do during this program. I considered helping her rename her artwork, but then I worried I was taking away her authority, independence and creativity. I paused and then returned to my previous beliefs about early childhood education, allowing her to keep the original title name.

Yet at times, I questioned my own beliefs and philosophy causing tension between my students and myself. At the beginning of Phase 1 Session 2, we looked to Vincent van Gogh's *Sunflowers* for inspiration. In beginning this second session, Josephine led the students through an initial whole group to begin the background of their painting, in which they would paint the wall and the table that the sunflowers would sit atop of. I overheard Eleanor stating to her peers that she was painting a girl. Prior to Eleanor's conversation with Josephine about her painting of a girl (in Episode 30), I walked over and interjected in the conversation between Eleanor and her preschool peers.

[Episode 30 "She's painting a table" (Phase 1, October 28, 2014)]

1. Eleanor: I'm painting a girl.
2. Me: You're painting a girl on your table. So your table has some decorations.
3. Haley: She's painting a table?
4. Me: Ya. So Eleanor decided that she wants to decorate her table.

Again, an internal struggle within myself, as well as with my students, I struggle with what Eleanor should be painting. Josephine instructed the students to paint the wall and table, and I was concerned that Josephine would change Eleanor's representation. Another one of our

students, Haley, even questioned the authority in turn 3, in which I asserted my authority by offering a neutral ground and combining what Josephine expected and what Eleanor wanted to create. Following this session, I used my reflection as my outlet, which I later emailed to Josephine. Rather than confronting her about this struggle that I was having, I reflected negatively about the overall interaction with the students on this day stating, "As we began to paint, I noticed that the students who painted "Starry Night" prior to this class really wanted to be creative in their painting. They all had ideas of their own, and were told that they had to do the table and walls of the Vincent Sunflower Painting. As to not stunt their creativity, I would allow them to explore with the paints as much as possible" (My Daily Reflection, Phase 1, October 28, 2014). In this statement, I seemed to admonish Josephine and my own ability to guide the students in an effort to allow students' independence. Again, comfortable with the little intervention orientation, I wanted to allow the students to paint what they wanted to paint, especially the students that had participated in the very first session of visual arts.

The previous examples make it clear that both Josephine and I were struggling as we communicated with the students. However, with as we addressed other concerns, such as the structure of the program, tt was not until Phase 2 that we were able to begin to explore and reevaluate our ways of communicating with the students.

Yet, as Josephine and I began working together more frequently and watching each other teach, our facilitation of discussions improved. We now revisit Episode 3 again (p. 75-76), depicting the change in facilitation of discussion and communication with the students. Introducing Phase 2, Session 2, Lesson 5, I began a discussion using the game, "I spy," to discuss and interpret Monet's intention with the use of a silhouette in the painting. Throughout this vignette, questions are provided to students to ensure that students are thinking critically.

Several times, I asked, "How do you know…" or use phrases such as "explain to me…" to allow the students to problem solve and analyze their understanding further. These questions encouraged students to persist in their descriptions and appreciation for the famous artwork.

Not only did the purpose of questioning shift in Phase 2 of the development of the program from directive to problem solving, but also Josephine and I begin to use each other's questions as guidance for the students. Beginning in Phase 1, Session 1, Josephine felt strongly about allowing students to appreciate their own artwork as they finished painting. She would continuously hold the painting up for the student to see the entire canvas, asking the question, "Shall I hold it up?" While this question didn't allow students to necessarily discuss, it prompted students to view and appreciate the entire canvas of what they had created. As weeks progressed, it was evident that Josephine and I no longer co-existed, but more importantly, we were learning from each other. In Phase 2, Session 2, Lesson 4, it was evident that I began to value this question as a prompt to the kids, as I encouraged one of the students to hold his painting up to view what he had added to the canvas that day. Additionally, Phase 2 of development of the program, Josephine began to pose questions to the students during her whole group lessons, asking, "How do you know?" We both began to value the teaching strategy of questioning to provide students with prompts to consider, problems to solve, or discussions to have with each other.

Discussion

One of the central questions and arguments surrounding visual arts in the early childhood classrooms pivots on who should teach the arts for meaningful learning experiences to young children. Research highlights a divide between artists that are trained in the arts and classroom teachers, upon which the context of schooling dichotomizes the fine art goals and the academic

153

goals (Bae, 2004; Brelser, 1992). With no specific art training, research argues that classroom teachers lack the knowledge, experience, and self-efficacy to effectively teach visual arts to young children (Bae, 2004; McArdle & Wong, 2010). To remedy this central debate, an artist-in-residence model is held in high regard and has begun to occupy much of recent visual arts research with young children and classroom practices (Bae, 2004; Eckhoff, 2011; Eckhoff, 2013). Research regarding the artist-in-residence model in early childhood, much like the present study, suggests that collaboration between the artist and the classroom teacher can strengthen existing arts curricula (Bae, 2004; Eckhoff, 2011; Eckhoff, 2013). Eckhoff (2011) states, "…the establishment of a collaborative, open relationship between the classroom teacher and the artist-in-residence supported the transformation…" (p. 382).

This dissertation study was unique in that it began as an artist-in-residence model but transformed beyond that. Both the artist-in-residence and early childhood professional had struggles throughout the development of the program, which research integrating the fields of visual arts and early childhood does not address. By highlighting the struggles that the teachers faced and how they worked together to solve these difficulties, it is evident that time is needed to undergo these transformations of approaches and in this case, philosophies. As new approaches are put forth, teachers need time to struggle as they begin to shift in their thinking.

Early childhood teachers are unique in that they are expected to facilitate a well-rounded curriculum for young children. These teachers teach all of the subjects, not becoming experts in any subject in particular, yet becoming an expert in child development. Garvis and Pendergast (2011) research speaks to the difficulty an early childhood teacher, like myself, faces as they begin to facilitate the arts. In beginning this program, my own self-efficacy regarding facilitation of the arts was low, but this program development supported my own professional development

154

and my perceived self-efficacy facilitating the arts. By partnering with an artist-in-residence, I was able to use the opportunity to learn and appreciate the arts.

Data suggests that a collaborative, open relationship was not established immediately, yet took time and experience with one another. Beginning this project, Josephine and myself were expected to work together, in that she would be facilitating a visual arts program in my classroom, as an artist-in-residence (Eckhoff, 2011; 2013) or artist-in-school (Snook & Buck, 2014) method. We operated in the classroom by co-existing, consistently worrying that we would be stepping on each other's toes or disagreeing with each other. We valued only the goals of our own discipline.

Upon the second phase of implementation, we began a co-equal collaboration suggested by visual arts researchers Bae (2004) and Eckhoff (2011; 2013). We emailed and communicated regularly to advise each other on classroom and art related goals. My perceived competence in the arts increased, and Josephine's perceived competence in a preschool classroom seemingly increased as we began experimenting with strategies and activities that would engage and interest students successfully in the visual arts. While we began to value each other's expertise, we still viewed our respective goals, academic and art goals separately.

The present study analyzed this relationship and transformation further through the use of design-based research and a sociocultural perspective positing a key player is missing from this collaboration: the preschool students. Without the struggles, in reference to the negotiation of power between myself, Josephine, and the preschool students, we all would not have been able to successfully collaborate and develop as both artists and teachers. Upon implementation of holistic lesson plans and activities designed around the students' interests, we began involving the students as an integral piece in this co-teaching relationship, which current research does not

155

fully address. While Eckhoff (2013) investigates and advocates for a collaboration from the artist-in-residence and the students, research has not explored this development of the teachers and students in concert. Visual arts research uses the term "co-creators" of knowledge and art (Eckhoff, 2013; Epistein, 2001; Papandreou, 2014) and suggests that teachers act as partners in conversations (Chang & Cress, 2014), but students really being part of the planning process and modes of meaning making has not truly been explored. Not only did it take time to forge this relationship but disagreement and negotiation allowed each of us to learn from one another. Beginning Phase 2 Session 2, students and teachers began to take up practices from other players, showing a understanding of each player's contribution and knowledge.

While early childhood teachers incorporate art experiences into their classroom for young children, the implementation often lacks quality, reminiscent of the production orientation or the little intervention orientation (Bresler, 1993). As observed by Bresler (1993), the guided-exploration orientation requires thorough planning, learning, and professional development for the teacher prior to implementing this visual art teaching practice. The method used in this study, data based research, allowed an extended period of time for data collection and analysis, in which a progression and learning curve for all players in this program, myself (the early childhood teacher), the visual artist-in-residence, and the students emerged. This development not only impacted the early childhood teacher but also the visual-artist in residence and the students; this development and urge for understanding manifested in all three players as frustration and push back. It can be argued that a collaboration between all three players did not occur until the incorporation of students' interests and abilities in the lesson planning and implementation. At this time, all players were made equal and the facets of the guided-exploration orientation were clear throughout each lesson. In agreement with the Reggio Emilia

child-centered model, the teachers became partners to the students in their learning process (Danko-McGhee & Slutsky, 2003, Follari, 2010).

Often a scary feat for teachers, power was given to students, encouraging students to be part of the learning progression from the little intervention orientation to the guided exploration approach. This program altered students' traditional routine in the arts, in which a development was also necessary for the students. This research study asserts that without the collaboration of the teachers and students, the guided-exploration approach is not truly valued and implemented.

Summary

By exploring the struggles that both an early childhood teacher and an artist-in-residence faced as they implemented the guided exploration approach, I now begin integrating research and practice by suggesting a comprehensive model of the guided exploration approach in preschool education. I will begin with theoretical implications, followed by practical implications and suggestions for teachers. Finally, this dissertation will uncover the limitations and future directions.

CHAPTER V

Conclusions

This study furthers our understanding of the guided exploration approach in visual arts by analyzing the program, the students' experiences, and the teachers' experiences through design-based research. While the arts are commonly implemented in preschool classrooms, this design based research study provides a bigger picture of the set backs and progress of initial implementation of the guided exploration approach. Viewing the visual arts through the lens of the present study, it is clear that a collaborative relationship between teachers and students optimizes students' experience and success in this visual arts program. This dissertation addresses the need for a comprehensive model of the guided exploration approach to visual arts in preschool education. Finally, this chapter conduces with theoretical implications, practical implications for teachers, as well as limitations and future research directions.

The Integration of Academic Learning and the Arts

Recent policy decisions (Common Core Standards-Based Testing, 2013) have impacted the state of the education system for young children. With heightened concern for stringent "academic" testing, the arts are no longer valued as essential to the curriculum (Chapman, 2004; Holcomb, 2007). With this shift in schools, the arts are pitted against the "academic" subjects and considered not as important. However, this study speaks directly to the debate dissolving the argument, as there is specific evidence of cognitive growth and holistic learning taking place in this program. Young children do not learn based upon discipline, yet they learn holistically. This program views the preschool students as whole children, integrating the domains of development for young children. This guided-exploration approach values different facets of the approach, not focusing solely on the visual art product, but the process that a young artist

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undergoes as he/she begins to show his/her understanding through the arts, specifically visual arts in the current study. This study suspends the debate and encourages teachers to uncover the potentials of young children through the arts.

Comprehensive Model of the Guided Exploration Approach to Visual Arts in Preschool Education

The findings of this design-based research study expand and inform current early childhood and visual arts practices by providing a comprehensive model for program development, in which the students' experiences and teachers' experiences uncover contextual factors that impact the overall design.

The multiple components within the model take into account the various building blocks contributing to visual arts facilitation. By adapting and building upon previous researchers goals of the guided exploration orientation (Bae, 2004; Bresler, 1993; Eckhoff, 2013), this dissertation provides four key components of the guided exploration approach including scaffolding observation skills, facilitating communication in and through the arts, encouraging and modeling attending to aesthetic qualities, and providing a context in which students identify as artists.

Within these components, this dissertation suggests practical mechanisms impacting the overall facilitation of this approach to visual arts. Eckhoff (2011) suggest specific teaching strategies to facilitate this model successfully, such as modeling, student collaboration, encouragement, and experimentation. However, Eckhoff's (2011) research does not look at the overall program development, in which this dissertation study suggests strategies as teachers' begin to plan this implementation. Of utmost importance to planning, students' voices and interests must be at the forefront of the development of this program. By providing a context in which students are intrinsically motivated to participate, play, and learn, the students drive the

159

guided exploration approach. For example, the teachers in this dissertation study were continuously making observations regarding students' natural abilities, strengths, and interest. These were then naturally incorporated into the planning and facilitation of the program.

Additionally, by incorporating and integrating the existing curriculum into the visual arts program, this no longer felt like a disconnected event (Davis, 2008) entering the classroom. As students explored the scientific topics integrated into these famous artworks and the literacy that supported the students understanding of the famous artwork itself, the program became holistic and a more natural learning process for the students.

Additionally, this dissertation study provides additional empirical evidence to suggest that modeling is essential to the guided exploration approach. As Eckhoff (2011; 2013) suggests, modeling supports students as they begin to explore with new techniques and materials. This essential teaching strategy engages students and teachers as learners, encouraging students to experiment in different ways. In addition to modeling, teachers must consider how to facilitate art discoveries and play throughout the program. Research provides ample empirical support for play in early childhood curriculums, yet prior to this dissertation study, play was absent from research regarding the guided exploration approach. Similar to experimentation (Eckhoff, 2011), play experiences are meaningful opportunities for students to understand the topic or artistic medium under study.

How to Implement a Visual Arts Program Adopting the Guided Exploration Approach in Early Childhood Education Classrooms.

In the following section, I provide a detailed description and suggestions on how to plan and set up, organize the program, and structure each lesson.

Getting started. Prior to beginning the program, both visual arts and early childhood teachers should consider how to select model artwork, prepare for paint mediums and materials, and prepare the classroom space.

Selecting model artwork. Prior to implementing the program, it is important to identify famous artists that the children can identify and connect with. In doing this, we looked at many famous artists' painting techniques, medium, as well as the content of their paintings. For example, Vincent van Gogh, a Dutch Impressionist painter, is immediately intriguing because of the brush strokes and style he portrayed in many of his famous artwork. The swirling and circling strokes are reminiscent of how young children begin to explore with paint and paintbrushes. On the other hand, Claude Monet, a French Impressionist painter, is of interest to the program as the focus of Monet's artwork is on natural landscapes. This content is widely available to young children by walking outside or looking out the window. We intentionally chose to focus on artwork that children could connect to, whether it was a night sky full of the bright moon and stars or water lilies floating in the pond. Such consideration can be adapted to diverse art forms such as pop art, abstract art, or even modern art. The most important consideration is the connections to children's lives and interests, which can be built through teacher's guidance.

The model artwork provides a starting point for the students and valuable structure for children to explore their own creations. It is important to note that the model artwork is *not* used for the purpose of replication. Instead, students are learning about techniques that the famous artist used and adapting these techniques to their own artwork. Within the focus of each week (e.g., nocturnal animals), if a child decides that they are going to paint a dinosaur, the child is guided to consider the accuracy of the decision (e.g., "what do you think dinosaurs are doing at

161

night?") and techniques that the famous artist used to create that dinosaur. Their free expression is the focus of the art making. The model artwork and children's final creations diverge greatly.

The children's learning throughout the visual arts program is guided by what is going on in their lives and their environment. Although our program is initially designed as a visual arts program, it is important to incorporate other domains (literacy, science, math etc.) in order to enhance their learning across curricular areas. For this reason, the program organically evolved and became holistic, integrating the domains of the whole child. Thus, when choosing a piece of art to use as a focal piece, it helps to consider what thematic unit is occurring in the classroom and the connections that can be made with the students. For example, after a theme focused on "All About Me," children would naturally take interest in creating a self-portrait like van Gogh's. In addition, the use of van Gogh's Sunflowers pairs effectively with a unit in the spring on plant growth and the life cycle.

Prepare for paint mediums and materials. To diversify this experience for preschool students, we chose to work with different paint mediums each session. Beginning with Vincent van Gogh's artwork, we had chosen to recreate his works through the exploration of acrylic paint. Being consistent with the artist's artwork, the exploration of Monet's painting allowed the students to play with watercolor.

Aiming to provide students with an authentic exploration of the visual arts, we chose to invest in high quality materials for the students to use during visual arts; this choice is crucial to creating an environment in which the students have an opportunity to feel like a real artist. For example, we invested in a set of acrylic paints and watercolor tubes. Paintbrushes were necessary in a range of sizes, small for details and larger for the background. Large cotton canvases (11x14) were bought for each individual student to take ownership of. The sizes of

162

these canvases were important, considering the development of preschoolers' fine motor skills; children needed room to move their arms when creating brushstrokes. Also, large prints of famous artwork were necessary for students to explore in whole and small group sessions.

Besides the aforementioned high quality materials, we supplemented with many affordable household materials. For example, two yogurt cups side-by-side allow students to mix and compare different shades. In addition, smocks were made out of small towels, cutting a round hole for the children's head.

Prepare classroom space. Essential to our planning was the layout of the classroom as we wanted the students to have ample room to create their individual artwork on a sizeable canvas as well as opportunities to discuss and collaborate with their peers, and view each other's artwork. In providing students with their individual workstations, we feel that large tables of groups of four to five students provided opportunity for independent activities and collaboration.

Six-week overview. Interpreting and re-imagining famous works of art is an incredibly thoughtful process. Prior to implementing each visual arts session, we would break down each focal piece of artwork based upon the content of the painting. Essentially, each class of the visual arts program focused on a different element in the artwork, continually scaffolding students to refine a focus for each week.

To envision this breakdown, an example is provided below of the six-week program using Vincent van Gogh's *Starry Night (1889):*

- Week 1: Introduction to Painting
- Week 2: Stars
- Week 3: Moon
- Week 4: Movement/Swirls
- Week 5: Additional Elements, including nature and/or animals
- Week 6: Title, Sign, and Date

163

This breakdown allowed the students and teachers to focus on different aspects of the piece, yet continually refer back to the artwork as a whole.

Weekly lessons. Weekly sessions incorporated both whole and small group activities. To clarify this picture, an example of a single lesson plan is as follows, implemented Week 3 of the previous breakdown:

Vincent van Gogh's *Starry Night*: The Moon

1. **Whole group at the computer: Look closely at the moon (15 minutes)**
   On the computer, show students several real photos of the moon, beginning with the far away perspective (how students see the moon from the ground), gradually moving closer and closer. As they get closer, pretend to ride on a spaceship and land right on the moon. Guide students to identify the holes/craters in the moon.

   Objective: Students will be able to make observations about the moon, identifying and discussing the moon in various real pictures with both a far and close perspective.

   Guiding Questions to encourage discussion:
   - What color is the moon?
   - What shape is the moon? → Show a sphere/ball.
   - What do you notice about the moon?
   - What is a crater?

2. **Small groups at the tables: Play to feel and see the craters on the moon (15 minutes)**
   First, model this activity for students. Then, allow students to play with the clay and rocks to create their own moon with craters.
   - Make a sphere with clay.
   - Use real rocks, as examples of asteroids or comets, to hit the clay with. Discuss what happens when the rocks hit the clay.

   Objective: Students will be able to analyze the relationship of the moon and asteroids, identifying craters.

3. **Whole group at the rug: How does Vincent van Gogh interpret and paint the moon? How do illustrators interpret and paint the moon? (10 minutes)**
   Look closely at van Gogh's moon, discussing the colors and shape that he chose to use. Then, compare this to how illustrators in books represent the moon. Finally, allow students to discuss and decide how they will represent their own moon.

   Objective: Students will be able to compare van Gogh's representation of the moon to other illustrators' moons.

164

4. **Small groups at the tables: Painting the moon (20 minutes, or as long as the child needs to paint their own moon)**
Students will have several choices of paint colors to create their own moon – black, white, and several shades of yellow. Discuss with the students why they chose the colors they did. Encourage the students to use black and/or white to make shades and tints of their choice of color.

Objective: Students will be able to mix black and/or white to create tints and shades for their representation of the moon.

Culminating Class. The culminating class of each session allowed the students to complete their artwork as an artist does. This class provided the preschool students with the opportunity to title, sign, date, and present their artwork to their peers. When encouraging the students to come up with a title, students read some of their favorite books and viewed some of their favorite paintings to discuss why the author titled it, or named it, the way they did. Students then dictated their own title to the teacher based on the focal point or meaning of their painting and the teacher used the student's own words. Then, students independently wrote their name on their artwork to finish it up, encouraging each student to be proud of their accomplishment and work.

Essential to conclude each visual arts session is the presentation and discussion time. In small groups, students explained their paintings to each other, in which their peers were encouraged to ask questions and make comments about the artwork. In addition, students invited their families to our school art gallery, held at the finish of each session.

Practical implications and guidance for teachers. These findings lead to some specific suggestions for early childhood and visual arts teachers to productively facilitate a visual arts program adopting the guided exploration approach with young children. It is important for teachers to recognize the breadth of skills and abilities that comprise the arts discipline, specifically visual arts. Art is much more than just the creation of artwork, yet students are able

165

to observe and appreciate artwork, communicate through the artistic medium, recognize and identify aesthetically pleasing artwork, and identify as artists. In recognition of these facets, there is an overlap and integration of academic school goals and art goals.

First, the preschool teacher can infuse famous artwork into the classroom and provide students the opportunity to view, discuss and appreciate the artworks. By hanging famous artwork on the wall or using it as a model at a center during playtime, the famous artwork becomes a natural and organic part of their world. This is the first step in encouraging students to value the arts around them. In addition, viewing the arts as static in nature constrains students' abilities to communicate. Allowing students to integrate the arts disciplines, in which the arts provide a means of communication to adults and peers, is crucial. If you want your students to identify with and discuss famous pieces of art, you must be willing, as the teacher, to model a love for qualities in the artwork. Talk about famous artwork beginning discussions around the colors, shades, lines, shapes, and topic. Make statements such as, "I love how van Gogh used different shades a blue. I see both light blue and dark blue. What do you notice about the colors he chose?"

In addition, it is important for teachers to value the preschool students as planners, learners, and doers. Students need opportunities to be equal partner of the planning process, suggesting ideas and interests to add to their learning. With their interests infused into the curriculum, the students are motivated to learn and enjoy their learning. In addition, by providing hands-on activities focused around the topic of exploration, students are able to consider multiple ways to represent their learning through the arts. For example, allowing students to play with water prior to painting water or play with rocks and sand prior to drawing the ground, students' hands-on experiences support their learning through the arts.

The findings from this study suggest specific teaching strategies to optimize students' experience and understanding. For example, teachers should be encouraged to model an appreciation for the arts, facilitate art discoveries and play through the arts, and use questions to guide discussions rather than telling students what they need to know. While students are painting, sit next to them and discuss their artistic decisions. Ask them questions or prompt them to think about a decision more. For example, say to a student "I see that you are making circular strokes to create the movement in the sky. Tell me how you make those strokes." These specific strategies incorporate the teacher as a learner with the students.

Theoretical Implications

The visual arts have undergone a shift in theoretical underpinnings and contributions. Early visual arts research with young children looked at the product as the unit of analysis, focusing on the developmental progression of young children's artistic abilities (Piaget & Inhelder, 1956). Recognizing the limiting factors of this approach, a Vygotskian framework allows a researcher to hone in on the dialogue and conversations that support the product created, encouraging a more fluid and natural process for young children rather than a sequential procedure (Brooks, 2009; Matthews, 2003; Papandreou, 2014). The current study integrated the principles of both Vygotsky's sociocultural theory and tenants of multimodality to analyze both the students' experiences and the teachers' experiences. Multimodality impacted the analysis of this visual arts program drastically from both the students' perspective and the teachers' perspective.

Students' perspectives. Young children naturally use various modes to communicate their ideas and understandings. At preschool age, young children's language is not always fully developed, as they are learning new vocabulary words daily. Conducting this research in a

diverse preschool setting, a multimodal perspective allowed me to consider and analyze young children speaking various languages and showcasing different abilities.

Anthony, one of the three focal students, added an interesting element to this research. With significant speech delays in both English and Chinese, the multimodal perspective allowed me to showcase his understanding and success in the program. Without multimodality, significant data would have been missed or misunderstood.

Teachers' perspective. The teachers' experience in this visual arts program encompassed both of their dispositions, strategies, and attitudes during visual arts implementation. To understand both adults' dispositions and attitudes, multimodality opened an opportunity to analyze the body language, tone, and gestures used during interactions with each other and the students. Withholding these key components of communication and meaning making would have limited this study, specifically the negotiation of power, frustrations, and struggles that surfaced. In addition, multimodal interaction analysis provided a lens to understand the uptake of practices and knowledge by both the teachers and the students, in which the initial mode of communication impacted the following. For this reason, a collaboration surfaced as both teachers began to communicate and facilitate conversations that were reminiscent of the other teacher's practices.

Methodological Implications

This dissertation study used design-based research to choreograph and manipulate the program to develop a comprehensive model of the guided exploration approach to visual arts in early childhood education. The goal of this methodology is to combine research and practice through "mutually-beneficial interactions" (Ormel, Pareja Roblin, McKenney, Voogt & Pieters, 2012, p. 986). The complex real world preschool classroom, both the teachers' experience and

the students' experiences, provided a context in which researchers and teachers can integrate visual arts and early childhood education research and practice.

Beginning with a real world problem, Josephine and I were implementing a visual arts program that was a new experience for both of us. Previous research regarding the guided exploration approach (Bae, 2004; Bresler, 1993; Eckhoff, 2013) provided a basis for beginning the program, in which design principles were drawn from the research and literature. While we both had an understanding of what we wanted it to look like within the classroom, our goal for the guided exploration approach took time and several changes and iterations. As iterations occurred based on the real world complexity of the preschool classroom and the collaboration of the two teachers, the information gleaned from this research study informs both research and practice.

First, this dissertation adds value and empirical evidence to the guided exploration approach. Uncovering the four facets of the guided exploration approach, research can now continue to hone the specifics of this program and the effectiveness of the program in an early childhood classroom, which this dissertation study was unable to do.

Additionally, this research provides specific experiences and strategies for teachers in the field of visual arts and early childhood. My study successfully discovered new practices for teachers as they implement this type of program and approach within their own classrooms. While the design based research study cannot be generalized, the rich contextual factors learned from both the students' experiences and the teachers' experiences provide both researchers and teachers an initial basis and understanding for generalizability.

Limitations and Future Directions

169

This study is the beginning of exploring this approach to visual arts facilitation, the guided exploration approach. First off, the only artistic medium the teachers facilitated and the students used during data collection was paint, both acrylic and watercolor paints. This is only one medium comprised of the visual arts, in which students are able to use markers, crayons, collaging materials, oil pastels, etc. The medium in which the students engaged in was limited based on resources and continuity throughout the design based research study. Due to the nature of paint, the natural affordances of the movement and mixing abilities with paint, students were able to appreciate their impact on the artistic medium. Theoretically, this guided exploration approach should be explored using different mediums, as well as several other disciplines in the arts.

With several iterations and changes throughout the program, it was difficult to hone in on the effectiveness of the program overall. With very little data regarding students' initial visual arts experience prior to the program implementation, a comparison should be made in order to identify specific gains and progress made by the students both artistically and academically. Student cognitive and social growth was not analyzed or assessed in this study. With observational data, the aim was to use social patterns to analyze and understand the program development, students' experiences, and teachers' experiences of the visual arts program. Future research should begin systematically with an understanding of students' base line knowledge and analyze the impact that the visual arts program adopting the guided exploration approach has on the students.

While the current study only focuses on the preschool classroom, the early childhood program in which this visual arts program was implemented in impacts the overall success. The lens in which this study is understood stems from the overall educational practices and

170

philosophy of the early childhood center and teachers. The research-based early childhood center in which this was implemented is play based and child centered, encouraging teachers to guide students learning in thematic learning centers through play. Implementation of this guided exploration approach could drastically change based on the initial educational beliefs of the teacher, as well as the center.

This visual arts program and partnership with the museum program was initiated and very much supported by the administration team at the focal center. I was able to continuously debrief with the Director and Assistant Director of the center, in which I was provided support in exploring and making changes to the program. The very nature of the design-based research method makes it impossible to generalize to other preschool settings. However, this study provides an example of the gradual changes and progress made through consistent implementation and collaboration.

Holding research and professional development in high regard, I was encouraged by my administration to research my own classroom, a difficult research instrument and method. My emotional investment in these students undoubtedly impacted my decisions as a teacher and researcher. Future research should focus on the implementation of this visual arts program from an unbiased stance, observing outside of this collaborative dyad.

This dissertation is only the beginning of my own research career. This dissertation opens up many avenues of future research and areas of interest for myself. First and foremost, this study impacts the field of arts education. With little empirical data supporting the benefits of visual arts instruction in early childhood education, this dissertation provides evidence that there are cognitive benefits for young children in the arts. Upon the backdrop of this dissertation,

171

future policies should consider the integration of the arts within the education standards, in which I intend to continue my own future research and publications.

An interesting component of this study is the teacher development, both Josephine, the visual artist in residence, and myself. This research can make an impact on the field as we begin to study what contexts and mechanisms provide teachers deep and profound learning within themselves. Throughout this study, I changed and developed as a teacher, looking closely at the strategies and dispositions I carry in the classroom that allowed the students to respond the way that they did. Future studies will unpack the mechanisms that support this evolution within the teachers.

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173

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Appendix I
Art Talk Checklist

FIGURE B.1 Art Talk Checklist.

Child's Name_____   **Date** _____

COLOR

   Hue

Names *primary* colors   Names *secondary* colors

_____ red   _____ green

_____ blue   _____ violet (purple)

_____ yellow   _____ orange

Mixes primary colors to make secondary colors   And can state how they are made

_____ green   _____ green

_____ violet (purple)   _____ violet (purple)

_____ orange   _____ orange

Uses the words *hue* and *color* interchangeably _____

   Value

Names *neutral* colors   Mixes black with color to make a *shade*   _____

_____ white   States that adding black to a color makes it darker   _____

_____ black   Mixes white with a color to make a *tint*   _____

_____ brown   States that adding white to a color makes it lighter   _____

_____ gray   Recognizes a range of a hue's value in artwork   _____

                                  Uses a range of a hue's value in his or her artwork   _____

   Comments:

LINE

Uses various lines in artwork: Describes lines as:

_____ straight   _____ straight

_____ curved   _____ curved

_____ zigzag   _____ zigzag

_____ horizontal   _____ horizontal

_____ vertical   _____ vertical

_____ diagonal   _____ diagonal

(continued)

FIGURE B.1 *(continued)*

SHAPE

Uses various shapes in artwork: | Names shapes as:

_____ geometric   _____ geometric

_____ circle   _____ circle

_____ square   _____ square

_____ rectangle   _____ rectangle

_____ triangle   _____ triangle

_____ oval   _____ oval

_____ diamond   _____ diamond

_____ organic (natural)   _____ organic (natural)

_____ free-form   _____ free-form

COMPOSITION

Uses *balance* in artwork: | Identifies *balance* in artwork:

_____ symmetrical   _____ symmetrical

_____ radial   _____ radial

_____ asymmetrical or overall _____ asymmetrical or overall

CHILD TALKS ABOUT ART

Without prompting, describes his/her artwork to adults _____

Talks about lines _____ Comments: _____

Talks about shapes _____ Comments: _____

Talks about colors _____ Comments: _____

Talks about content _____ Comments: _____

Tells a story about the artwork _____ Comments: _____

Talks about discoveries during art exploration _____

Talks about specific media used in artwork (e.g., paints) _____

Talks about special techniques used in artwork _____

Uses planning with artwork:

_____ verbalizes plans _____ plans on paper Comments:_____

Appears to contemplate artwork _____ Comments: _____

Shows and describes artwork to children ("Look at my picture" or "I made green") _____

Comments: _____

Makes suggestions to other children ("Draw a tree here" or "Wash your brush first") _____

Comments: _____