

Community Support for Visual Arts Programs:
Artist-in-Residence in a K-6 Elementary School

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Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Science in Education

School of Education and Counseling Psychology

Dominican University of California

San Rafael, CA

August 2011

Acknowledgements

I thank my professor Dr. Madalienne Peters for her support, direction, encouragement and humor and my professors Dr. Sarah Zykanov, Dr. Margaret Golden, and Dr. Suresh Appavoo for their guidance and support. I thank Alicia Rouverol and the Steele Lane Enrichment Foundation for giving me the opportunity to conduct my study. Thanks to those teachers and students who gave me a heart felt reception and helped me conduct my research. I would also like to thank my boys Luke and Hunter and my husband, Mark for their patience and support. Thanks to my father who supported my further education in teaching and who left me with the means to make it a reality. I would finally like to thank Karin Demarest and the Art Education Alliance of Sonoma County for supporting my efforts by granting me interviews and allowing me to be part of this dynamic group of arts education supporters and advocates.

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Abstract

A sustainable plan for arts education is not allocated in the operating costs of many elementary school districts. Arts education is becoming expendable, as budgets become tighter and emphasis is placed on test scores in accountable subject areas. High stakes testing, pre-identified supposed outcomes, and public concern about school productivity has resulted in a focus on the student's ability to test rather than the child's relationship with learning. Arts education has been linked with critical thinking skills, higher student engagement, positive self-esteem, conceptual and perceptual thinking and creative cognition. Studying the arts contributes to differentiated thinking, concept formation and imagination. As public schools are cutting funding for arts education, local communities are finding themselves responsible for providing the resources to fund school arts programs. Assets are found in the private sector, through parent organization fund raising, grants, community arts education advocate associations and museum outreach. This paper examines a community effort to support the arts in a local public school with the combined effort of a pilot outreach program and a parent run foundation.

Chapter 1 Introduction

The intuitive mind is a sacred gift and the rational mind is a faithful servant. We have created a society that honors the servant and has forgotten the gift. ~ Albert Einstein

It became apparent to me that arts education in public elementary school was in the domain of community support, as soon as I sent my eldest to our neighborhood elementary school. The children were offered an in-class introduction to music through a private contractor, supported by the school Parent and Teacher Association. In the upper grades they had the option to participate in band, which was taught by a credentialed music teacher, facilitated through a pull-out process where students needed to make up missed work and band practice was slotted at seven a.m. before the regular school day began. The upper grade music program was funded by a district renewable bond measure. The visual art program was run entirely by parent volunteers. Since I have an undergraduate degree in fine art, I pursued teaching lessons in my own child's classroom, to insure a level of instruction that I felt he and other students deserved. Once my children left elementary school and entered junior high, where art was offered as an elective and taught by a credentialed teacher, funded by the school district, I was satisfied that the expertise needed to teach art to my children were met. It was however, clear to me that passion not policy, was responsible for the existence of art programs in elementary schools.

The Arts Education Alliance of Sonoma County is a non-profit, volunteer organization whose mission is to support and promote arts education. Its board members are community leaders in arts education, museum directors and education curators, teachers, artists and community members. Through this organization I was introduced to a school whose foundation

was looking to employ an art specialist as an independent contractor. The school has been in program improvement for five years, it has an, 87% free or reduced lunch population. Yet it has a strong parent run foundation that supports visual arts. The combinations of an underserved population, who can still find time to conduct fundraising, so that the school could benefit from art lessons taught by an art specialist, seemed unique. I met the board members and in December 2010 became their art specialist for the remainder of the school year. I am interested in the special relationship that this school has with the Arts Education Alliance of Sonoma County and their pursuit of a quality arts education for all students. Community support of arts education is born of a passion and respect for the arts as a necessary and significant academic pursuit. Children need art in their curriculum to become engaged whole learners.

Statement of Problem

Elementary school arts education funding has been steadily reduced. Teaching art is sometimes trusted to classified personnel, community members or by parents who have an interest in, but have not necessarily been trained in art or art education. This budgetary strategy is electing to eliminate credentialed art educators or in some cases eliminate access to quality art education altogether in the elementary public school curriculum.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this paper is to document the importance of arts education in cognitive and whole child development. A second purpose is to explore the role of privately funded art enrichment positions as art education outreach in a primary K-6 public school. The focus will be on artist-in-residency and art docent positions, as well as a community outreach program known as “Adopt-a-school”. Although California state standards for visual and performing arts (VPA) are present

in the California state board of education curriculum and instruction information, the presence of art programs and credentialed art and music teachers funded by school districts are disappearing.

Standards based curriculum is not present, but instead arts education has jumped to privately funded enrichment, which was originally supported by the state to augment visual and performing arts programs, not replace them. Partnership with local arts organizations may lend support to schools in a variety of ways including artists-in-residency programs, professional development for teachers, online resources and curriculum materials, performances at school sites, and organizing field trips to performances and exhibits. Parent run school organizations, are sometimes providing the financial support needed to finance positions to coordinate the outreach that is available. The art teacher position is changing into a privately funded school enrichment provider.

Research Questions

What is the value of arts education to students in schools? How is this impacting student engagement and learning? How are communities and schools compensating for the lack of funding and adequate time allocation in K-6 arts education? Through fundraising activities, school foundations and non-profit parent organizations, which sometimes control the hiring of art docents as art teachers or art specialists in their schools. By establishing artist-in-residency programs or organizing parent volunteer driven art docent programs, the school, parent community, and local partnerships are pooling resources, for what the local, state or federal government is not providing.

Theoretical Rationale

For the past 25 years, Howard Gardner has been involved with Project Zero through the Harvard Graduate School of Education, and worked in the design of performance-based assessments,

education for understanding, and the use of multiple intelligences. He has made the point that all people do not have the same interests and abilities and all people do not learn in the same way. Schools should help children create meaning from experience; this requires an education that includes a connection to the senses, meaning and the imagination. Curriculum should foster the theory of multiple intelligences and creative cognition (Gardner, 1990). Art contributes to the overall development of the mind. The development of artistic interests and abilities are important aspects of cognition and learning.

Elliott Eisner made the case for developing focused attention to the cognitive in art. He stressed that environment shapes artistic attitudes and that art education has unique contributions to make in the education and intellectual growth of children. He also argues that approaches, which simply gave children arts materials in the hope that their creativity might flow, resulted in programs that had little or no structure, limited content and less meaning (Eisner, 1990).

Children need access to a variety of experiences. We need to teach the literacies that enable our students to read images and performances that will help them understand their own culture and the cultures of others. From different forms of representation we develop different modes of cognition, learning to think through deconstructing the written word is one, learning to think in visual terms, to read a narrative through music, to see poetic images and understand metaphor are only a few of the ways the arts impact the development of our senses and the understanding needed to refine our sensibilities (Eisner, 1990). Through a quality arts education, students can begin to better understand how art fits into their everyday lives. In our homes, our dress, the way we speak and move. The influence good design has on the cars we drive, tools that aid us, in the buildings we occupy and environments we witness.

Assumptions

Federal, state and local education agencies all agree that there is a need to educate creative thinkers for our future economic markets, however funding and assessment are not supporting the VPA standards that were placed by those agencies. The responsibility has fallen on parent organizations and art advocacy groups. The private institutions may include museums, symphony, opera and dance educational outreach and privately funded arts enrichment teachers. Parent organizations, art advocacy groups and private outreach programs are taking the need for art education into their own hands. This is a valiant effort, however state standards are not being met and many times the credentialed teacher, and pedagogical expertise are left out of the equation. Quality Arts education is at risk.

Background and Need

The William and Flora Hewlett Foundation funded SRI International to conduct a series of studies to examine California student access to the arts in their schools. This was prompted by policies enacted at both state and federal levels. California subject content standards for visual and performing arts and the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) provisions recognize the arts as a core subject. The University of California and California State University systems requirement of the completion of a single year-long approved arts course from a single VPA discipline: dance, drama/theater, music, or visual art, shows a commitment to arts education. Even though there are expectations in place, there is little information about student access to and performance in the visual and performing arts.

An Unfinished Canvas: Arts Education in California is an extensive report conducted over a five year period resulting in the publication of nine related reports. The final report, *An Unfinished Canvas Arts Education in California: Taking Stock of Policy and Practice*, revealed

that the majority of California schools failed to meet guidelines due to inadequate and unstable funding, insufficient instructional time and limited teacher capacity. Budget realities that drive policy discussions create a gap between the goals for arts education and the existence of access in our schools. Some of the key findings were broken down into the following categories; failing to meet state standards, insufficient funding, time allocation for the arts, lack of trained specialists teaching the arts, lack of dedicated facilities and specialized materials, unequal access and lack of proper infrastructure (Woodworth, K. R., Gallagher, H. A., Guha, R., Campbell, A. Z., Lopez-Torkos, A. M., and Kim, D. 2007).

California Schools are Failing to Meet State Standards

Almost nine out of ten (89%) of schools fail to offer standards based course of study in all four arts disciplines (Woodworth, et al., 2007). More than one in four (29%) do not offer standards based course of study in any arts discipline. Methods of delivering arts instruction vary by school level, especially elementary with a limited experience and limited participation at the secondary level. Standards alignment, assessment and accountability practices are uneven in arts education, and often not present at all.

Funding for Education is Insufficient and Unstable

Funding inconsistencies create a harmful environment for sustainability for the arts. California lags behind the national average on per pupil funding for education, which reflects the spending per pupil on elementary arts education (Woodworth, et al., 2007). Without sufficient general funds for California schools, outside funding sources for arts education result in significant inequities in California student access to arts education. Stable funding is key to developing and supporting a standards-based course of study in each of the four arts disciplines and the hiring of full time arts specialists.

California Elementary Schools Spend Less Time on the Arts

Schools in other states dedicate sufficient time and resources to offer both music and visual arts instruction to 100% of students, beginning in kindergarten. Other states may have more time for arts instruction because they have longer school days. California school weeks (at the time of this study) are two hours shorter than the national average (Gallagher, H.A., Campbell, A.Z., Esch, C.E., Malin, H., Mayes, N., & Woodworth, K.R., 2008).

California Elementary Schools Lack Trained Art Specialists

California's elementary schools are lacking full-time arts specialists, and regular classroom teachers are unfamiliar with the standards. Thirty-nine percent of California classroom teachers reported that a credentialed arts teacher provided music instruction to students in their class, while other arts disciplines were much lower. Visual arts were reported at 16 %, dance 9 % and theater 7%. Sixty-five percent of classroom teachers are unfamiliar with Visual and Performing Arts standards in any discipline (Woodworth, K. R., Gallagher, H. A., Guha, R., Campbell, A. Z., Lopez-Torkos, A. M., and Kim, D. 2007). With the absence of credentialed arts teachers, art education in elementary schools will not likely meet state standards. Elementary classroom teachers are not well supported to teach the arts, with teachers in poor or lower performing schools reporting lower levels of support from district leaders, principles, colleagues, and parents than their more affluent and higher performing counterparts.

Arts Facilities and Materials are Lacking in Most Schools

Add to the lack of training in teachers, many schools are also without dedicated or adequate space with special equipment for either all or some of the arts disciplines. Elementary schools fair much worse than secondary. Of those offering arts instruction only 31% have dedicated space for music, 13% for visual arts, 10% for dance and just 6% for theater (Woodworth, et al.,

2007). This is not typical of the country as a whole. A recent study of arts instruction in public schools nationwide indicates that California's elementary schools have far fewer facilities dedicated to visual arts and music. The national average for elementary schools providing equipped, dedicated space for arts instruction in music was 67% compared to 31% in California. For visual arts, 56% of schools in other states have dedicated art rooms and special equipment compared to 13% of schools in California (Woodworth, et al., 2007).

Unequal Access to Arts Education

Overall, California public school students have limited access to comprehensive arts instruction at both the elementary and secondary levels. There is an even higher incidence of lack of access to disadvantaged populations. In 37% of high poverty schools there are no standards based course of study in any arts discipline. Only 25% have access to music, 29% to visual arts, 8% to theater and 7% to dance in high poverty schools (Woodworth, et al., 2007).

California Districts Lack the Infrastructure to Support Arts Education Programs

California school districts do not have strategic arts plans, committees or arts coordinators to build towards implementation of state arts standards. Higher-capacity districts are more likely to support a strategic plan for arts education.

Chapter 2 Review of the Research

Introduction

Chapter two examines art education through an historical perspective in the United States. An overall view of the progression of fine art as a subject from the turn of the 20th century to its present day status as a core subject in United States education policy is presented. Public assumptions of the study of fine art in elementary education, good practice methods, curriculum considerations and perceptual development in children are addressed. Legislative impacts on art as a core subject, statistical information concerning access to the arts and performance in the arts in schools are reviewed. Local art education policies can be an alternative method of maintaining focus on arts in the schools and some recommendations are considered. The effects of budgetary reorganizing and quality art education are also explored. Finally, an interview with an art education leader and consultant, discusses the future of art education in California public schools.

Historical Context: A Narrative of Arts Education in the United States

Arts education policy wanes and flows, traveling from peaks to valleys and back through the years, depending on the political, economic, and social factors present. Opinions are varied on where exactly the value of arts education should be placed. Some believe it is basic to comprehensive education; opposing views place it as a low priority or expendable when compared to other core academic subjects. Many believe arts education to be an enriching part of the civic and social fabric of American life. John Dewey, American psychologist and educational reformist, believed that arts were a fundamental component in education because it fostered creativity and self-expression. Even with the support of educational theorists, success in schools and the public and private recognition of the importance of including the arts, its placement in the educational curricula is ambiguous. According to a recent survey, since the enactment of No

Child Left Behind (NCLB) instructional time for reading, language arts and math has increased between 45% to 58 % while arts education time has decreased by 16 % (Helig, Cole, Aguilar, 2010).

Arts education entered the classroom in the United States in the late nineteenth century and was initially introduced as practical training for industrial employment (Helig et al., 2010). Classes consisted of technical drawing and drafting. When the growing post industrial economy produced a thriving middle class, the idea that art and leisure resided in the domain of only the wealthy was challenged. The changing social structure brought a need for access to arts and culture, which in turn changed the attitude towards teaching art. Arts and cultural enrichment became important to school curriculum. At that same time John Dewey focused attention to a new approach to education, child-centered experimental learning. His theories suggested the need for children to receive authentic education, education instruction that gave them the opportunity to grow to be creative critical thinkers. He believed that access to arts education encouraged inquiry that expanded perception and created understanding. It was a progressive era that introduced studio-based learning into U.S. high schools.

From the turn of the twentieth century to the 1930s educational approach to the arts was less restrictive, visual arts courses were separated from industrial arts courses (Helig et al., 2010). It was the first time arts education concepts were advocated and curriculum reflected arts prominence in education. At the end of the 1920s the arts had a firm place in the curriculum. Then in October of 1929 the stock market crashed and created an economic slump that did not end until 1941, the Great Depression. Teacher pay was cut and thousands of schools were closed. At the same time child labor laws were enacted and enrollment increased, especially in urban

areas. School districts needed to cut costs while addressing enrollment needs; many districts did this by cutting their arts programs (Efland, 1983). Communities undertook the responsibility of providing school arts programs themselves. What resulted was a low-cost, decentralized, local approach to arts education, which many times included arts programs based solely on community owned art pieces, visits to local buildings and the establishment of local arts periodicals and galleries. This pattern of cutting costs by cutting arts programs could be seen for decades to come. During World War II, when funds were short, arts curriculum again was not considered a priority for students.

Arts Education, in the 1950s was greatly influenced by the global and social context of its time. The booming economy brought education funds back to the arts. Local school boards increased funding for arts programs and specialist teachers were trained and employed. The status for arts education began to rise once more, until 1957 and the Soviet launching of Sputnik. This event ignited the space race between the Soviet Union and the United States. During the height of the Cold War many Americans feared nuclear attack, to them the success of the Sputnik program represented an educational crisis in the United States. A new emphasis on science and mathematics pushed arts education into the background.

Arts Education was once again in jeopardy, but many who felt their discipline and work was threatened, chose to organize and mobilize their efforts to place arts education back into a secure position within education policy. Arts Education professionals and advocates began to lobby for a permanent position of the arts in core curriculum. Between 1963 and 1968 the United States Office of Education supported research and curriculum projects in visual, literary and performing arts, which led to arts education policy for curriculum based instruction. President Lyndon B. Johnson's set of domestic programs called the Great Society, recognized and

supported the arts in schools and communities, which resulted in an increase in arts enrichment and cultural exposure at the K-12 levels. In 1965 the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) was formed. In arts education, the NEA focused its support on artists-in-the-school programs and not on art specialist teacher led programs.

Ronald Regan appointed Frank Hodswell as head of the NEA in 1981 (Helig et al., 2010). Although only a small percentage of the budget was spent on arts education it was very influential to policy. Hodswell questioned the NEA's sole focus on the visiting artist concept and argued for sequential curricula, comprehensive testing, improved teacher quality and increased educational responsibility. The political direction of the 1980s directly effected the stronger federal involvement in education in the 1990s. Unfortunately, over time the concepts evolved into specific policies of NCLB, which resulted in hurting the very arts programs Hodswell was trying to improve.

In the 1990s stronger federal involvement in education resulted in a set of lists of basic subjects, which were written into legislation. In 1994 the National Voluntary K-12 standards for the arts were published (Grey, 2010). The standards were based in disciplinary content and written by highly qualified professionals from the National Art Education Association in music, dance, theater and visual arts. Attributed to organized lobbying efforts, the K-12 arts teacher associations had their subject matter made congruent with other core subjects when Goals 2000: Educate America Act was made law in 1994. It stated that all students must demonstrate competency in English, mathematics, science, foreign languages, civics and government, economics, art, history, and geography. A new focus on arts education was gaining momentum. Then George W. Bush was elected president.

President Bush drew his ideas for the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 from Texas education policy, where math and language arts testing served as the primary method of measuring student, school, and district success (Helig et al., 2010). High stakes accountability through testing became policy when the No Child Left Behind Elementary and Secondary Education Act was signed into law in 2002. Although NCLB listed the arts as core subjects and claimed its equal standing with reading, math, science, and other disciplines that lead to improved learning outcomes, those areas not tested directly on high-stakes exams were receiving less and less attention in the curriculum. Even though arts curriculum was not tested, by 2005, forty-nine states had established content and/or performance standards for arts education, and forty-three states required schools or districts to provide arts instruction.

The accountability era has changed education policy from local control to increased state and federal influence and direction. Nationwide arts education has not been discontinued, however the focus of NCLB lies elsewhere. Education standards are present for the arts, but testing and accountability is not. AYP scores in math and reading are the only subjects the federal government holds states accountable for. Arts Education, in the era of accountability finds its presence in school curriculum controlled by funding allocations in the state and federal levels, set aside for high stake subjects and not by the standards established by state or national agencies. Time allocated for AYP subjects dominate the focus of our schools at the expense of a variety of other subjects. Foundation core courses being tested nationwide, the main incentive and litmus of educational goals, continues to stealthily legitimize the neglect of arts education.

Review of the Previous Research

Status of Art Education

In the 1980s standards-based accountability was initiated; it has since expanded to NCLB of 2001 and has resulted in the marginalizing of art education (Chapman, 2005). In the 1990's hopes were high for a sequential, standards based art education, resulting in access to instruction and quality teaching and learning. However, hopes have changed as the result of our current federal policy. "NCLB is the most developed case of federal micromanaging of schools in the United States history" (Chapman, 2005, p. 118). In exchange for federal funds NCLB requires schools to show "adequate yearly progress" (AYP) in raising test scores in reading, math, and science. NCLB does include the arts in its list of core academic subjects, but it does not support education in the arts, foreign language, or humanities and social studies. The Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) have given these neglected subjects a title, "the lost curriculum" where the Council on Basic Education (CBE) calls them "the atrophied curriculum" (Chapman, 2005, p. 118) Between 1997 and 2004, most elementary schools offered some sort of art education, many being merely token support for the subject. Despite the designation as a core subject in NCLB, art education is routinely treated as a non-core or enrichment subject. The status given to arts education depends on the financial resources of the state or community in which the school is located. Policies that ensure a focus on learning art on school agendas are also significant. Some inequities may be the result of low expectations for learning in the arts, which result in fewer opportunities for learning.

A concentration under the banner of arts-based reform or arts magnet programs can be found as a solution in some schools. Initiatives for improvement call for integration of the arts back into the curriculum. But this is unlikely in elementary schools, as administration policies

can prevent specialists from co-planning with classroom teachers or other arts specialists, while the majority of multi-subject classroom teachers are unprepared to offer standards-based arts instruction on their own. With the extraordinary pressure to improve test scores in the three focus subject areas, we may see more integration of the arts into the regular curriculum, but this would require cooperative planning.

Art as a bribe or reward is found in some school settings where art “enrichment “ classes can be earned by students who master material on time, leaving others to engage in remedial work. Or the most worrisome of all, art programs will be entirely extracurricular or cut altogether. In 2004 the CBE found that 25% of principals had cut arts education and 33% anticipated future reductions. In high minority populations, 36% of schools reported decreases and 42% anticipated them in the near future (Chapman, 2005).

Interestingly enough, a recent survey indicated that 82% of parents of public school students and 80% of the general public are concerned that an intense focus on tests in English and mathematics "will mean less emphasis on art, music, history and other subjects" (Chapman, 2005, p. 135). Laura Chapman urges other professionals to report, monitor closely and resist policies that overly demean the arts and the pursuit of its study.

Public Assumptions of Art Education

Elliott Eisner, as professor of education and professor of art at Stanford University, listed misconceptions about art education, as the following myths:

- Children Need Only Materials and Encouragement
- Art Is for Developing Creativity
- Attend to the Process, Not the Product

- Children See More Clearly than Adults
- Children's Art Should Not Be Evaluated
- Verbal Analysis Kills Art
- The More Media the Better

The first myth puts the art instructor in the position of nurturer, supply distributor and possibly as cheerleader, rooting for but not necessarily an active team member. This misconception supposes that children are natural artist and therefore their only stumbling block toward artistic development is the judgment that adults place on their products and the self-inhibitions born as a result. Of course this is false and doesn't support sequential instruction or its purpose. Love and materials are not enough; children are ready at various stages of development to perceive, which is a learned ability (Eisner, 1974).

Myth number two, *Art is for Developing Creativity*, if we look at art as a means to develop general creativity, as a perfect vehicle, since it is nonverbal and not necessarily achieved through logic, it can tap creative critical thinking skills that are less likely to be reached in other academic disciplines, this is actually a grounded point of view. If we look at art as a subject that only children who will become future artists should study, which will be only a small percentage, we are denying the benefits of this academic subject to the rest of the student population. All children possess creative potential and if too many constraints of logic and rule are the norm of school life, it can weigh heavily on a child, an alternative should be available. Art in school has a great contribution to students when it unlocks the creative capacity that each child possesses (Eisner, 1974).

Myth number three, *Attend to the Process, Not the Product*. Eisner says that

dichotomizing process and product is just misdirected in the first place. There can be no product if there is no process. If we disregard what a child has produced, there can be no basis for making judgments of the educational merit of an activity. “Processes can be improved by attending to the product and products improved by making inferences about the processes. To neglect one in favor of the other is to be pedagogically naïve” (Eisner, 1974, p. 94).

Myth number four, *Children See More Clearly than Adults*. This myth supports a belief that children have not been jaded, as have many adults and therefore are free to express themselves with freshness and spontaneity. Evidence shows us that the refinement of perceptual skills is gradual and achieved often through years of intensive work (Eisner, 1974).

Myth number five, *Children's Art should not be Evaluated*. In not evaluating children's art, the educator is being irresponsible (Eisner, 1974). If teachers do not evaluate the work of the student, how would improvement be instructed? Constant approval of what children create based on anything other than quality of the product or effort in its execution, only teaches the child that the work is not to be taken seriously. Assessment can be made in several areas towards evaluation of the final work, creative expression, technical competency, and aesthetic quality. In other words one can appraise the child's satisfaction in the work, engagement in it, and applicable comments made concerning the work of others and the work of their own.

Myth number six, *Verbal Analysis Kills Art*. Since visual art is a non-verbal activity and should be experienced through a direct visual experience, words cannot adequately replace the work of visual art as the same sort of experience or insight. If artwork could be replaced by discourse then visual art and visual communication would vanish (Eisner, 1974). Verbalization kills art only when the talk is out of sync with the level the student is working at.

Myth number seven, *The More Media the Better*. If the experience contributes to growth,

and is not offered merely as variety, where the time frame is so quick there is little opportunity to develop skills in one medium, it becomes a materials management experience rather than a creatively expressive or an aesthetic experience.

Lessons from Art Education

In 2002, the Dewey Society asked Elliot Eisner to deliver an address concerning education and what might be learned from the arts about education. “...I intend to examine what a conception of practice rooted in the arts might contribute to the improvement of both the means and ends of education” (Eisner, 2002, p. 4). Before education became a scientific field of study through research, it was associated with psychology and the endeavor to make it a scientific enterprise connected to the hard sciences.

Although some were optimistic about this comparison, others were not. James and Dewey did not believe that science could provide exacting theories to apply to teaching. By the end of the 20th century schools were becoming “efficient manufacturing plants” (Eisner, 2002, p. 5). Science and art somehow became estranged. Science was believed to be dependable, cognitive, teachable and accessible. Art was considered emotional, a matter of preference, talent based and not teachable. Science was tangible, art decorative. We live in a time of measured outcomes and the ability to predict success in what is to be accomplished.

What is expected is hard data and the stiff methodology we call AYP testing of standardized subjects. We look for the best methods without looking at context, we do more testing than any other nation, and we seek curriculum mediocrity so that parents can compare school to school through test scores, as if this were a good reflection of quality education (Eisner, 2002). By creating the industrial culture that is found in our schools there is no attention

given to engagement, or intrinsic satisfaction. The focus is placed on achievement, ignoring the importance of inquiry.

Current educational reform mimics the industrial age education concepts of order, uniformity, efficiency and control. Eisner references an English art historian and poet, Sir Herbert Read who argued that education should be conceived as the preparation of artists. Artists meaning individuals who have ideas, skills, sensibilities and imagination to create work that is skillfully executed, that is to say an artist can be a surgeon, engineer, chef, carpenter, physicist, scientist or teacher (Eisner, 2002).

The distinctive forms of thinking needed to create artistically fashioned work are relevant to all aspects of our lives. It requires measured sensitivity to relationships, the only difference being the method of expression. To succeed as an artist a person needs to make judgments about relationships within and around their work. There is no pre-determined formula. The process is distinctive to solving the challenges in a particular work, in contrast to the learning of a singular answer to a singular problem. Learning to observe in a way that is a mode of thought, which can be applied to both theoretical and practical purposes, we become more qualitatively intelligent (Eisner, 2002). We need to help students learn through inquiry, not only what someone is saying, but how the argument is constructed and what were the motivations?

In the arts, the end result may follow the means but also the end result may change in the process. What Dewey, as cited by Eisner (2002) called “flexible purposing” (p. 10) as the process of shifting aims during a work in progress. Flexible purposing uses the opportunities at hand, capitalizing on current conditions and relationships. Unfortunately the exploitation of surprise in our current rigid standardized environment is incongruous with flexible purposing.

Education as we know it today emphasizes prediction and control and loses sight on exploration, inquiry and discovery.

Form and content are inseparable and this is a lesson that the arts teach in a perspicacious fashion. Exploring how history is written, how one tells a story, creating a form whose content is right for a purpose, these considerations are the difference between automated response and enlightened discovery. The culture of education is in need of a change. Significance needs to be redirected, placing more value on exploration, surprise, imagination and the metaphorical, valuing the quality of the journey as opposed to the speed of attainment. These are visions that evoke change to the current paradigm and can help to restore purpose to create the kind of schools children deserve and society needs (Eisner, 2002).

Not everything can be articulated in language. As Dewey is cited by Eisner (2002) once again, "...science states meaning, the arts express it" (p. 12). Discovery is connected to the cerebral and is completed by the expressive. We appeal to the poignant to say what literal language cannot say, we rely on poetry when prose will not do, religious practices are composed in music and choreographed in actions. Each material in each discipline imposes its own specific demands; to use mediums well is to learn to think within the specific limitations they impose (Eisner, 2002).

Curriculum Considerations

Education has a responsibility to teach students all literacies, not only reading, writing and numeracy, but also the ability to read images, performances and cultural interpretation. "...this literacy requires knowing how to recover meaning in the social forms we call the arts, humanities and sciences" (Eisner, 1990, p. 62). Education should be concerned with developing the minds of our students so that they can think critically and speculate possibilities for the future. How can

schools support productive individual thinking? They must first provide teachers with an environment that supports the same values, less constraint and more liberating conditions. This would entail a significant systemic change in school reform.

Curriculum is another consideration. There are two kinds of curriculum, what Eisner calls intended and operational (Eisner, 1990). Intended curriculum is contained in plans, materials, textbooks and worksheets to control the focus and content. Operational curriculum is how teachers decide to interpret, deconstruct and present the material. Creative curriculum gives teachers the opportunity to interact with the curriculum in a way that amplifies that teacher's skills not constrain them. Ideally the teacher will then exploit the individual interests and abilities their students show, give them opportunities to work at their own pace and hunt down different ends to a problem, increasing rather than suppressing individual differences (Eisner, 1990). This kind of freedom does present a problem to the teacher when it comes to lateral assessment practices, which cannot readily be applied. When objective assessments cannot be applied, judgment must then be the recourse, and making intelligent judgment can be a lot of work. It depends on the rational, not the mechanical and can cause mistrust. Eisner says, "Good curriculum materials provide resources that amplify the teacher's ability, given the circumstances in which he or she works. Amplification contains the idea that good curriculum development not only teaches students, it helps the teacher learn as well" (Eisner, 1990, p. 67).

Creative curriculum should teach ideas, skills and forms of perception, activities should be intellectually challenging and stimulate deeper learning and a high order of thinking. The content should be presented in more than one mode and students should be able to relate the content to other areas of their life, including connections made in and out of school. In other words, teachers should have multiple options in which to encourage learning and present

concepts. In providing challenging curriculum, encouraging children to do their best does not however mean continual positive reinforcement when improvement is necessary to success. Creative curriculum development provides challenging activities that require higher cognitive processing, and puts less emphasis on teacher direction, which can often times perpetuate dependency. The student will know when they succeed and when they need to approach things from a new perspective, this is intelligent failure.

“Forms of representation are the means through which concepts become public” (Eisner, 1990, p. 70). Visual, auditory, movement, text and numeracy, are all modes of communication and representation, the social contexts are namely visual art, music, dance, literature, science and mathematics. Each form must operate within its particular constraints cultivating a different experience and varied meaning. This is perfect for applying educational equity through differentiation.

If the only modality being addressed in a classroom is literal, students who learn best through visual or metaphorical forms are disadvantaged. In the same regard, understanding what students have learned is dependent in many classrooms upon testing, which is inadequate. With the variety of cultures present in our society, different people convey their experiences through many different forms. They have different things to say through their particular cultural relationship, and use dance, poetry, music, art, history, and literature to express them. Curriculum approaches that exploit diversity have the potential to broaden the outlook and develop cognitive skills formally neglected.

Aesthetic Development in Children

A child develops perceptual powers very rapidly in early childhood, but seeing and understanding are two different things. It takes time and training to learn observational skills.

When it comes to the visual, perception rises smoothly from childhood with limits raised not by age but by exposure. A child needs cultural context when learning, and aesthetic sensibility, not what is seen but how it is seen and how to make sense of it. Early investigations show that an absence of training and exposure to the arts, results in a child's poor and flawed conception of art. They feel the merit of a work can be perceived by the size or subject matter, misunderstand the motivation behind creating a piece of art, and can see no connection between their own artwork and that which may be found in a museum (Gardner, 1990).

By the age of 10 the very immature conceptions of art change and become a single standard to which children will apply judgment to the work. Representational work is always admired, while work that may be experimental and less formal are viewed as insufficient. Once children reach adolescence, sensibilities change again, viewing all artwork or artists equally, rejecting prioritizing one over another, assuming judgment is a matter of taste (Gardner, 1990).

A child's perceptual capacities can most likely change rapidly, but older individuals are not as likely to, as conceptualization realization is dependent upon an understanding of relationships in physical and social terms. If an enhanced understanding is the objective, it would involve a significant exposure and regular interaction with a symbolic domain and a chance to interact regularly with slightly more sophisticated peers, which would result in ample time for reflection and critique (Gardner, 1990).

Artistic development of skills in the visual arts in the west can be considered to have systematic evolution in the course of a child's growth, which can be universal in normal child development. Most two year olds love to scribble and discover independently how to make lines and simple shapes. By age three or four children are beginning to draw representationally, human figures, the sun, a tree, animal figures and things that appear in daily life and are important to a

preschooler. At age five or six, objects don't float around unconnected, but are becoming more organized and generally have reference to a skyline or other grounding element, the beginnings of compositional construction (Gardner, 1990). When a child reaches age seven or eight, there is more interest in producing acceptable content and form, trading experimentation in color and compositional arrangements for more conventional representation, valuing a likeness closest to realism.

Researchers are uncertain that the shift to realistic preference is a natural development, one caused by cultural preferences or encouraged by teachers and peers. Whatever the reason, children seem to draw less frequently as they get older (Gardner, 1990). This may be because they are frustrated by the lack of skills needed to effectively mimic true realism, or drawing skills are not as prized as other academic skills, or the distraction of more pressing academic demands.

Legislation: Impact on Art Education

When NCLB was passed in 2001 concerns were raised about the narrowing of the curriculum offered in United States schools. Would state and local districts concentrating on the law's primary emphasis on reading, math, and science, move resources to those areas, at the consequence of other curricular areas? Is there evidence that NCLB legislation has caused harm to arts subjects in schools? Grey points out that a report from the Center for Educational Policy in 2007 concludes that as a result of NCLB, 22 % of schools reduced instructional time for art and music (Grey, 2010). There is less attention given to non-tested subject areas, and those areas are becoming invisible, resulting in less interest in developing those areas, as pressure to focus on tested subjects ensues. Initially, the arts were included in the core subjects, but in 2003 the Bush administration terminated small categorical programs in order to fund higher priorities,

limiting funds to focused integration of the arts into the curriculum (Grey, 2010). NCLB focuses on tested, basic education classes at the expense of arts education.

There are some positive impacts that NCLB has had on the arts, namely its designation as a core subject. Because of this, there has been more study done and thus more information available, resulting in a reaction by many private arts education organizations that are anxious to intervene to support students from the dwindling arts education curriculum. Education outreach from museums and orchestras, theater groups and dance ensembles are positive, but cannot replace valid quality arts instruction. The profile of art education has been raised in the public eye through arts education media coverage, and the support of arts education collaborations with communities. Raising the profile of arts education may lead to heightened oversight leading to greater access to instruction and better quality of teaching and learning (Grey, 2010).

Considering diminished financial support and varying academic support for the arts is there room for a policy to encompass a variety of art education philosophies? There is still argument as to where the arts belong in the curriculum and who should teach the arts. There is even less agreement on how the arts should be assessed and who should conduct the assessments and apply standards (Remer, 2010). To help build effective local art education policies new approaches need to be considered. First of all, policies should be regularly reviewed. All students should learn the fundamentals of dance, music, theater arts, the visual arts, film and media, choosing one or more areas for advanced sequential learning. Connections to other academic subjects should be made through interdisciplinary planning.

Quality arts teaching by certified arts educators with ongoing professional development should be assured. National, state and local standards and curriculum frameworks should be referenced for curriculum development, instruction, and assessment practices. The arts and

cultural community should be invited to participate in establishing an ongoing relationship with students, through outreach and internship opportunities. Parents should be urged to engage in arts learning and encouraged to become “regular observers” of their child’s artistic work (Remer, 2010, p. 83). Networking and collaborative program development should be encouraged and shared throughout the district. Tax levies or alternative support for art education should be line-item budgetary expenses at the school district to ensure sustainability. These are only a few of the possible policy changes that can positively impact arts education and provide control on a local level.

Statistical Information

Equal access to arts education is compromised on both a national and state level due to poverty related factors. Reported in the 2008 National Assessment of Educational Programs (NEAP), it was found that achievement in the arts could be related to poverty levels. Other determinate factors considered were, race, gender, parental education level, and private vs. public education. In this national assessment of eighth graders, high-poverty schools scored 45 points lower in music and 43 points lower in visual arts than those scores found in low-poverty schools (Aud et al., 2010).

Even though music and visual art are different disciplines and results cannot be compared, patterns between student groups were seen in both music and visual arts. The NEAP scales ranged from 0 to 300 with an average set at 150. Average scores varied by student characteristics; females averaged 10 points higher than males in music and 11 points higher in visual arts. Looking at race and ethnicity factors, White and Asian/Pacific Islander students scored 29 to 32 points higher in music than those of Black and Hispanic students, and in visual

arts, White and Asian/Pacific Islander students scored 22 to 31 points higher than Black and Hispanic students.

Parental education is also a factor in how well students performed, gaps between students whose parents finished college and those who did not finish high school were 34 points for music and 24 points for visual arts. Private school students scored 14 percent higher in music, but there was no measurable difference between the visual arts assessment. High poverty schools are those with a population of more than 75% eligible for free or reduced-price lunch (FRPL). High poverty schools had average scores 45 % lower in music than low-poverty schools (25 percent or lower FRPL). The visual arts scores revealed a similar pattern (Aud et al., 2010).

Administrative Records

The California Arts Council, on February 8, 2010, published: *Proclamation Concerning Visual and Performing Arts Education in California Schools from the California Arts Council*. This was in collaboration with the California Alliance for Arts Education (CAAE) a privately funded organization promoting arts education for forty years and dedicated to making the arts a core part of every child's quality education. The proclamation supports arts education and its status as a core subject, its benefits to students and recommends a realignment of the value of art in our state curriculum.

The California Arts Council also supports the Artists in Schools program, integrating professional artists in a community with non-profit organizations. The program is supported by the proceeds from the sale of Arts License Plates and is subject to varying grant funds. The program guidelines state that the artist residency be conducted in an after school setting and all residencies must have matching funds from the arts organization and/or the school. All projects are to provide hands on participation and the program must apply California Visual and

Performing Arts Content Standards of Aesthetic Perception, Creative Expression, Historical/Cultural Context, Aesthetic Valuing and Connections. As a supplemental art enrichment program this has value, but the danger is in accepting temporary grant funded programs in lieu of in-school programs. District funded programs can provide equal access to sequential art instruction and art specialists, who have training in teaching children and possess an understanding of pedagogy.

Budgetary Summaries are rather tedious to read, but informative as one can see where real dollars make significant differences in programs. Some of the information presented here illustrates the slipping support and/or reauthorization of arts education in government fiscal budgets and proposals, starting with 2005 and ending with the 2011 proposal.

In archived information by the U.S. Department of Education for 2005, the budgetary summary shows programs for proposed elimination in the President's 2006 budget request, the termination of 48 programs, reducing costs up to almost \$4.3 billion. The programs include the elimination of Arts Education, resulting in a \$35.6 million dollar funding cut.

The programs proposed for elimination in President Bush's 2006 budget request shows the termination of the 48 programs, which frees up almost \$4.3 billion—based on 2005 levels. Executes non-competitive awards to Very Special Arts (VSA) and the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts as well as competitive awards for national demonstrations and Federal leadership activities to encourage the integration of the arts into the school curriculum. Eliminating funding for the program is consistent with Administration policy of terminating small categorical programs with limited impact, in order to fund higher priorities. Arts education programs may be funded under other authorities (U.S. Department of Education, 2005).

In the Fiscal Year 2011 Budget Summary Elementary and Secondary Educational Act (ESEA) The Reauthorization Consolidation reorganizes arts education to be incorporated along with 14 other programs into one program heading of Effective Teaching and Learning for a Well-Rounded Education. The program change justifies the action and accounts for a reduction of \$40 billion dollars. The program change reads as supporting noncompetitive awards to VSA, a national organization which sponsors programs to encourage the involvement of, and foster greater awareness of the need for, arts programs for persons with disabilities, and to the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts for its arts education programs for children and youth, as well as providing competitive grants for the development of model arts education programs and for professional development for arts educators. The proposed Effective Teaching and Learning for a Well-Rounded Education authority would support similar activities (U.S. Department of Education, 2010).

Special Collections

The Wallace Foundation is a nationally recognized philanthropic charitable organization supporting and sharing ideas and practices that enrich opportunities for children. Their vision for all children is to have access to good schools and a variety of enrichment programs both in and out of school. Their mission is to improve learning and enrichment opportunities. Commissioned by the Wallace Foundation, a study was conducted by Project Zero at the Harvard Graduate School of Education entitled, *The Quality of Quality: Understanding Excellence in Arts Education*, published in 2009. Children in the United States have diminished access to formal arts instruction and many don't have any access at all. Access is a national challenge but there is also another serious concern, quality in arts education. The study focuses on the challenge of

understanding and creating high quality arts learning opportunities and the “character of excellence itself” (Seidel, Tishman, Winner, Hetland, Palmer, 2009, p.5).

What is quality arts education? Looking through the lens of student learning it is engagement, purposeful experience, honesty and openness, experimentation and inquiry, and ownership. Students need to be engaged in their own learning. When engagement is realized the intrinsic value can be experienced “Students described such experience as ‘serious fun’ – both incredibly demanding and truly exhilarating” (Seidel et al., 2009, p.30). Purposeful experience in project-based instruction takes a long time for sustained in-depth exploration; time is precious and not always protected in school settings. Emotional honesty and a sense of safety in which to share that honesty need to be present, so that powerful responses may be encouraged and witnessed. Engaged in the real work of experimentation and inquiry involves authentic problem solving and assignments with real learning, bringing them into new territory of discovery. Deep engagement in learning involves ownership in the work and requires student-centered learning.

Quality as seen through pedagogy can be found in authenticity, modeling, participation in learning, and making learning relevant while utilizing transparency. Authentic arts learning can be defined as artists and arts professionals doing what they do in their own work, and passing that on to students. Model artists, social role models and model learners can be passionate quality teachers, instilling an enthusiasm in their students to ask questions and explore ideas. Learning side-by-side through inquiry practiced by contemplating art both as teacher and student is what educators can and should do. Creating links between the student’s lives and art learning, using their social context and interests, reflects a quality experience. When a teacher readies a room and creates clear goals and intentions, it’s called planning, the mark of a good teacher is knowing

when to let go of well laid plans and follow the needs of the moment. The balance of preparedness and spontaneity is essential to a transparent teaching environment.

Interview with an Expert

The Arts Education Alliance (AEA) of Sonoma County was founded seven years ago as a response to a growing need to develop a guide for teaching art in Sonoma County. There were at the time, teaching artists and other advocate groups attempting to teach art in schools, as a response to the accelerating atrophy of art as a subject, taught in the local public schools. At the time there was no place for these agencies to go for help in organizing, there was no resource guide for them to reference. A public effort was made by AEA and collaboration formed with Sonoma County Office of Education (SCOE), who contributed funds towards the development and distribution of a comprehensive guide to teaching art in elementary school. The resource guide was for distribution to all public elementary schools, so that teachers in Sonoma County would have access to it. Karin Demarest joined the organization in 2005. She had an idea to offer, a professional development workshop for elementary school teachers to encourage art subject efficacy. At the same time AEA changed its focus slightly, to an over arching goal of supporting arts education in a diverse manor, encompassing all of the state VPA arts components. AEA is an organization under the umbrella of the Arts Council of Sonoma County. Ms. Demarest is the facilitator of the group but a non-voting member, as she is an employee of the Arts Council and the rest of the members are volunteers. The professional development in the arts for teachers was not highly attended, which was a clear message that it was not a high priority for teachers or administrators. A new strategy needed to be envisioned. Adopt-a-school began development and was launched in April 2010.

Adopt-a-school would change the art support focus to one school at a time and give that school all that AEA could offer in a single year. This would make a very visible and perhaps a more lasting impact as to the benefits of arts education and appreciation. Criteria were established for schools interested in their support. Because low poverty schools had more parental organization involvement and larger organizations such as Kawanas or Rotary preferred funding those schools in their immediate neighborhoods, it was determined that high poverty schools should be given higher priority. Other criteria were established; schools must have an English as a second language (ESL) population of 25% or more and a socio-economic disadvantaged population. The AEA asks for matching funds to equal the amount donated by the Arts Council. Funds were used to hire teaching artists, organize assemblies and performances and other professional arts enrichment. Many local institutions gave generously to support the program through free performance tickets, free admission to museums, and free exhibit based curriculum. The Santa Rosa Symphony alone gave discovery cards to every student, which could be used with their families to attend symphony performances or Saturday morning rehearsals.

The short term goals of adopt-a-school is to create a relationship with one school, give every student in that school the opportunity to have some type of arts experience that they would not normally have access to, and build an awareness and appreciation of the arts through that experience. The long-term goals are to grow the program exponentially, to include many schools. The first school awarded the adopt-a-school program grant was the elementary school in which I conducted this study. This was a very deserving school with a strong parent foundation, however obstacles ensued. The school has just finished its fifth year of program improvement and was required to teach a mandated number of minutes in reading and math instruction in an effort to improve AYP subject test scores. Because time is strictly monitored, it can be difficult and in

conflict with special art programming hours or visiting artists or performers schedules. The mandates can often times be in direct competition for student hours. Little time is made available and hours and minutes fervently protected for language development, dictated by a state approved and pre-determined curriculum.

Credentialed teachers understand scope and sequence, teachers are trained to provide scaffold knowledge based curriculum. This is essential to higher-level understanding of any type of subject including art. Sending someone into a classroom to do a lesson is one thing, connecting lessons to a higher learning goal through a unit of study, building upon prior knowledge, differentiating, and understanding pedagogy is another. Ms. Demarest says we are lacking in this, but there are others out there who are doing fantastic work training artists to come into the classroom. The danger is when professional development is provided to teachers with the expectation to integrate a subject into the curriculum that they have no background in. Let's take music for instance. A multiple subject teacher who comes into the profession from a music background will understand music theory and have a depth and breadth of the subject. "But many will just play a piece of music, ask the kids to write a piece of poetry and call it integration." says Ms. Demarest.

She is not, however against teaching artists in the classroom. Arts integration specialist programs providing K-12 teachers and teaching artists in public schools can provide insight, understanding and the skills required to provide engaging and effective art and arts integration lessons in school curriculum. Working artists trained to be effective teachers through organizations specializing in that model are also valid.

There are such groups out there, born of the remarkable need specific for this compromised epoch in education. Teaching Artists Organized (TAO) is a membership

organization established by a group of founding arts and educational organizations in 2004 and included Cal Shakes, Berkeley Repertory, Creative Education Institute, Theater Bay Area, Dancers Group, Community Network for Youth Development, and a group of individual artists.

The mission of TAO as published on their website is:

... a collaborative of organizations and individuals committed to the professionalization of our unique and emerging field. Guided by our members and advisors, we offer services and supports to address overarching challenges to our field, working to be recognized as equally valued partners with our education and community partners to meet the logistical challenges of working in our field, and to support and celebrate the creative practice inherent in our work. (Teaching Artists Organized, 2011 p 2).

Schools should be responsible to step up and provide access to the arts for their students in school curriculum; the reality is they are not. Organizations creating a model providing support are a good thing. Teaching artists who are trained to be good teachers is the next best alternative to adequate art educators. When asked how she sees arts education in an environment that does not support core subjects, which are not tested, changing in the future? Ms. Demarest replies, "I've talked to some administrators who don't believe the arts can be tested, if there are standards present, assessment is applicable. I don't see things changing until the entire education system experiences some kind of overhaul and reform." Charter schools focusing on the arts as a priority, community action in the school consumer market, driven by parent consumers could create a change. Parents choosing schools based on programs offering an education that include what they value, can have an impact.

Model arts programs can be defined and quality can be established. This is an ongoing discussion among arts educators and advocates. The AEA has determined quality arts education to be a top priority. A standards based arts education taught by qualified teachers, not just parent

volunteers who happen to like art, is what is envisioned, there needs to be quality control.

Perhaps the next step is to support and promote parents as the vehicle for change.

When asked what type of art is important and what is essential? In depth instruction in all four disciplines, Ms. Demarest answers, “I try not to use the word art enrichment, because that sounds like an extra and the truth is art is a core (subject). Crucial is in-depth instruction using a consistent framework. If every student received that, just think what kind of human beings they could be. Empathy taught through theater, to be in another’s shoes. Our students need to think about being in the shoes of people half way across the world. It’s important to educational development and that of the human spirit. The arts do this like no other subject in school. There is room for different answers; there is no one right answer. In the arts (children) get to be who they are, they don’t have to be the child with the right answer. It’s a big yes to be you and find yourself. Not that there isn’t any structure, but there is freedom within the structure and we need that to find places to touch them all, find a way to touch every child.”

Why is art education important to the Arts Council? They have a long standing commitment to arts education and one of the reasons is that study after study, according to Ms. Demarest, show that those people who have been exposed to the arts, grow up being patrons of the arts and show an interest in the arts as adults. In a Knights Foundation report done in 2006 *Magic of Music Final Report: The search for Shinning Eyes*, evidence shows that traditional participatory music programs, which includes instrumental lessons and choral programs, are directly related with later attendance at orchestral concerts. Traditional exposure programs, such as classical concert hall offerings for children, seem to have little enduring effect on later symphony patronage (Wolf, 2006). The Arts Council of Sonoma County is interested in building

future audiences for the arts. They also believe in the power the arts hold, to change lives, give us meaning, and enhance communication with others.

Ethical Standards

This study adheres to the ethical standards established by the American Psychological Association (2009) regarding the ethical treatment of human subjects in research. Additionally, the study was reviewed by the Dominican University of California Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subject, approved, and assigned number 8239.

Summary

Despite efforts to promote the proven benefits of art education to the cognitive, social and comprehensive development of children, educational policy is ignoring the need for equal access to quality arts education, the need for more resources for materials and dedicated spaces and more prominent inclusion in curriculum in our California state public schools. The proliferation of limiting school subject emphasis to those of NCLB mandated AYP subject tested areas has had a profound effect on access to other core subjects. Records show us that access to arts education is substantially compromised due to poverty levels. There is inconsistency in the qualifications of art teachers and a trend to categorize the arts on a local level from core subject to enrichment.

What skills do our students need to compete in the global job arena in the 21st century? According to a 2007 report, as cited by Madeleine Holzer, *Tough Choices or Tough Times*, from the National Center on Education and the economy (NCEE) to stay economically competitive, we must educate our students to be creative and bring new products and new vision into the world. Creativity can be linked with imagination, according to the Lincoln Center Institute, the basic underlying efforts in exploring imagination through aesthetic education is a way to

discover new possibilities through wondering. Before you can learn to create, you need to learn to imagine (Holzer, 2009, p. 378).

The merits of arts in the mainstream curriculum are abundant, yet public policy is a roadblock to creative development. This brings into question just how well our current students will compete in a future global market where, creativity, communication, empathy, collaboration, connectivity, problem solving, synthesis, context, critical thinking, artistry and design comprehension will be more and more important. The importance of training minds to become artistically aware, authorities of good design and monitors of social significance cannot be overstated. Let's think for a moment about what kind of work force we wish to produce, what kind of education we wish to provide, what kind of people we want to surround us? Art and design can affect lives in surprising ways, but it will not affect those who don't have an opportunity to experience their benefits.

I decided to take a calligraphy class . . . I learned about serif and sans-serif typefaces, about varying the amount of space between different letter combinations, about what makes great typography great. It was beautiful, historical, artistically subtle in a way that science can't capture, and I found it fascinating. None of this had even a hope of any practical application in my life. But ten years later when we were designing the first Macintosh computer, it all came back to me, and we designed it all into the Mac. It was the first computer with beautiful typography. Steve Jobs, 2005 Stanford University Commencement Speech (Helig et al., 2010 p.136)

Chapter 3 Method

Research Design

Data collection for this research included student survey or interview dependent on the age of the participant, personal observation and input from various informal discussions between teachers, administrators, foundation members and myself. The results of a teacher survey administered by Karin Demarest were also shared with me for the purpose of this study.

Sample and Site

The student survey was conducted in a public K-6 elementary school in Sonoma County serving approximately 400 students. According to the Executive Summary School Accountability Report Card (Santa Rosa City Schools, 2010). enrollment was at 410 students with 21 fully credentialed teachers. 1 % Black or African American, 2% American Indian or Alaska Native, 6% Asian, 71% Hispanic or Latino, 1% Native Hawaiian/ Pacific Islander, 17% White (not of Hispanic Origin), 3% two or more races, 87% socioeconomically disadvantaged, 50% English learners, and 9% students with disabilities. The school has an active parent community in both the Parent and Teacher Association (PTA) and English Learners Advisory Committee (ELAC) there is an organized foundation that supports the school in the development of cultural arts by raising funds through a variety of methods. This school was the AEA of Sonoma County 2010-2011 adopt-a-school program recipient. Student performance in English-Language arts scored 40% Proficient and above in Standardized Testing and Reporting (STAR) testing results, mathematics at 47%, Science 25% and History-Social Science, non applicable. Academic Progress indicators show a 2010 Growth Academic Performance Index (API) Score at 730, and a statewide ranking of 2. This did not meet 2010 AYP requirements, of the number of criteria met, out of the number possible, 16 of the 17 possible were met. Program improvement status for the 2010-2011 school

year is in year five. The school meets all or most standards of good repair in the districts Facilities Inspection Tool developed by the State Office of Public School Construction.

The student survey was conducted by controlled random selection for each class and grade level insuring equal gender representation. All students had full access to the art lessons provided by me under the foundation title of art docent and artist-in-residence. The lessons followed California state VPA standards, although that was not a criteria or a requirement of the position by the school enrichment foundation.

Access and Permissions

When first hired as the art docent and artist-in-residence by the school foundation, I met with the school principal and requested that I be able to conduct my study while providing art specialist services from December 2010 to May 2011. She had no objections because the survey was directly related to my professional position and fell within the scope of that position.

Furthermore, I am a credentialed teacher who maintained records at the school district. No parental approval was determined to be necessary. The principal was offered the results of the findings.

Data Gathering Strategies

The survey was completely voluntary and individual students were not identified. The surveys were done at the end of the final art lesson or within the final week of the school year and did not interfere with other instruction. All records were under the control of the investigator and were stored in a locked file with access limited to myself. Records will be destroyed within six months of their collection. The survey was a singular, consistent canvass and used for all age groups. There were 13 questions on the survey, seven addressing value, three addressing self-efficacy, two opinion questions and a conjecture.

If the student could read the survey, they completed it independently, but could ask for clarification of questions. If a child could not read the questions adequately, I asked them individually in a private interview. This was the case in all of kindergarten and most of first grade investigations. Simple age-appropriate elementary vocabulary was used and four questions were designed as yes, no, or maybe responses.

Analysis Approach

Eight questions were charted according to the answers given by the students to determine how they valued the arts they were exposed to this year. These were both value and efficacy questions. The opinion questions were grouped, if applicable and the direct conjecture question recorded individually. These showed me what performances, interactive programs or art lessons they found the most meaningful. The last question was about how they used their imagination, and samplings of those answers were recorded to determine their understanding and application of imaginative thinking.

Chapter 4 Findings

Description of Site, Individuals, Data

The school site has been described in some detail earlier in this paper, however I will review the major points and reasons this particular school was chosen to be the recipient of a pilot art emersion program sponsored by the AEA of Sonoma County. The school is a high poverty school, yet has a parent support non-profit foundation, which raises money to hire an art specialist, and is capable of providing matching funds for the adopt-a-school program.

The adopt-a-school program began in the fall of 2010, the art specialist teacher was hired by the enrichment foundation and given the title, art docent along with an additional position as artist-in-residence, and provided services for the spring semester of 2011. The individuals surveyed were students in kindergarten through sixth grade, ranging from five to twelve years of age. The survey results were divided into two age groups, lower grades (K-3) and upper grades (4-6) to compare results between children closest to a generally compatible emotional and cognitive development range.

Populations

The survey was given to both boys and girls and answers were sorted by lower grade level, upper grade level, and overall totals. Efforts were made to represent every classroom.

Summary of Themes

The major themes were values placed on art forms by the students. The self-efficacy experienced in visual art, and how the exposure to various forms of art; performances, interactive programs, and art lessons, impacted their appreciation of art forms. A view on the utilization of a child's imagination in everyday life was also considered.

Chapter 5 Discussion /Analysis

Summary of Major Findings

Kindergarten Through Third Grade Survey Responses

In the kindergarten through third grade age group, values were placed overall on desirable art activities. If given a finite dollar amount to spend on seven choices of arts related activities, 38% of children surveyed, would prefer to visit a museum, 38% would like to paint a picture, 10% would like to take a dance class, 10% would like to see a play and just 4% would like to see a choral group. The children were asked to value preferences as to what they would like displayed in the classroom. Of those surveyed 51% would like their artwork displayed in the classroom, 47% would like a science project displayed and 2% would like a book report displayed.

When children were asked to value art forms by predicting the likelihood of their personal engagement, students responded by choosing a yes, no or maybe response to four questions. When asked if they would like to visit a museum this summer, 83% responded yes, 12% said maybe, 5% said no. To making art, 83% responded yes, 12% maybe and 5% no. To seeing live theater, students responded by a 70% yes, 15% maybe, and 15% no. Finally to seeing a live musical performance, 75% responded yes, 20% said maybe and 5% said no.

In the spring semester some art lessons carried a multi-cultural theme, in an attempt to bring awareness of other world cultures to students through a visual art lesson. These lessons were based on a particular culture and many times the traditional music of that culture. When asked if they had learned new things about other cultures 50% of the students felt they had learned a lot about how different cultures make art, while 28% felt they had learned a little, 10%

felt they know about the same as before, and 10% felt they had learned nothing new about art making styles of other cultures.

To determine self-efficacy in visual art, three questions were posed. “How do you feel when you have an art lesson in school?” 74% thought art was fun, 18% felt good about making art, 8% liked it but felt it was hard, none disliked their art lessons. When children were asked if they thought they were very good at art, 62% responded, “yes, I am very good at art”, 29% said they were kind of good at art and 9% said they were ok at art, none felt they were not good at all in art.

Since lessons were designed with high expectations of student learning, many art lessons were not completed in the allotted 50-minutes of class time, once a month, and needed to be completed later as homeroom teachers could allocate the time. I wanted to know if students felt unhappy or unsuccessful if they were not able to finish the lessons in the relatively short and infrequent time frames we worked with. I struggled with a desire to provide challenging content, but at the same time I did not wish to cause them stress, if finishing the project completely was not possible, for some individuals. The question I posed then was “Have you ever had an art lesson you weren’t able to finish? How did you feel about it?” Fifty percent claimed they would finish it when they got around to it, a rather low-stress reaction. Twenty percent said they didn’t care, which may indicate less efficacy or less interest in finalizing their artwork, and 30% said they couldn’t wait to finish as soon as they could, which may indicate a highly motivated student with high efficacy.

Grades Fourth Through Sixth Survey Response

The fourth through sixth graders were given the same set of questions and all were capable of responding independently, they did not put their names on the survey and emphasis was placed

on the fact that there was no grade applied, no right or wrong answers, the survey was only looking for opinions and complete honesty, and this was reinforced in the written directions. When valuing art activities, 18% chose to see a band, 10% would choose to see a play, 18 % would take a dance class, another 18% would rather visit a museum and 36% would choose to paint. Seventy two percent of upper grade students would like their artwork displayed in the classroom, 18% would prefer science projects displayed, and 10% do not like any of their work displayed in the classroom.

There was 45% student responses indicating they were planning to make art during their summer vacation, 45% thought possibly they would and 10 % said they would definitely not. Visiting a museum got the highest positive response from this age group with 73 % expressing a desire to visit a museum, 18% saying maybe and 10% not decided. Visiting the theater to see a performance also got high preference results with 64% responding yes, 18 % maybe, and 18% not planning to see a theater performance. When it came to seeing live music, 64% responded yes, they would like to see a band this summer and 36% saying maybe, no one responded in the negative.

When asked if they learned anything new about other cultures through art forms that year, the response was 54% saying they had learned a lot, 36 % said they had learned a little and 10% said they know about the same now as they did before.

In determining self-efficacy in art, 80% think art is fun to do, while 20% like it, but consider it difficult. When asked directly “Are you good at art?” only 36% thought they were very good at art, 18% said they were kind of good, 27% said they were ok at art and 18% said they were not good at all in art. How did these upper grade students feel when they were unable to finish a lesson in class? Sixty four percent would opt to finish the project when they got

around to it. Those with high enthusiasm couldn't wait to finish and made up 18% of the responses, those with low enthusiasm didn't care if they finished or not which made up 18% of the students.

Overall Results

Kindergarten to third grade students surveyed held an equally positive value on participatory art forms (painting, taking a dance class) and passive engagement of art forms, (seeing a play or music, or going to a museum). The upper grade students preferred engaging in art forms over passively observing them. Overall the lower grade students would like to engage in art both passively and actively over the summer, where upper graders tend to think they would more likely go to a museum, see a band or a play rather than make art.

About 50% of all students surveyed agreed that they had learned a lot about the art forms of different cultures, and about an equal amount said they had learned only a little or know about the same as before. Students of all age groups viewed doing art as pleasurable, 80 to 75%, yet upper grade efficacy drops by 29% compared to the lower grades. They thought of art lessons as fun, but most felt they were only kind of good or not good at all. Efficacy can also see its reflection in the student considerations to finishing work. In the upper grades, an equal amount of students showed high enthusiasm for finishing their work as low enthusiasm responses, of not caring if they finished or not. Most would just finish when they got around to it, in both upper and lower grades. Lower grades had a higher desire to finish as soon as they could.

The Pleasures of Imagination

There is current research being conducted that professes the power of play. It is noted that play reduces stress, increases social cognition, improves working memory and self-regulation. When adequate time is not permitted for children to engage in play, cognitive and social development

may actually be inhibited. Children, who spend less time playing, struggle with executive function, possess less self-control, shorter attention spans, and poorer memory skills (Bartlett, 2011). I don't think anyone can argue that during play a great deal of imagination is present. Children love to pretend while at play and it should make sense that they would love to use their imagination, and have a reasonably sophisticated understanding of what is pretend and what is real. Research shows us that imagining is our number one pastime, even with adults (Bloom, 2010). Why do toddlers enjoy playing make-believe, and we are moved by stories? Why do both adults and children alike care about characters in animated or live action films, plays or books, or even how our friends react to our favorite characters? The emotions fiction provokes can certainly be real, even if the intellect tells us the actual events are not.

At the end of the survey I wanted the students to tell me if they liked using their imagination and to give me an example of when they would use their imagination. Some answers were predictable and often times very endearing, as many younger children were not quite sure what imagination was or couldn't articulate its meaning in their lives. The following are some of their responses:

A first grade boy, "Yes, when I'm at the park pretending."

First grade girl, "Yes, at Six Flags"

Second grade girl, "When I sleep, then I think about my family."

Kindergarten girl, "I was thinking about being in the forest."

Kindergarten boy, "I was drawing the very hungry caterpillar."

Kindergarten boy, "Playing with my friends, imagining I was Batman or Superman."

Second grade girl, "Yes, sometimes drawing and sometimes writing."

Third grade girl, "I used my imagination during our art lesson, when we were building with rocks"

Fourth grade boy, "I dream of G.I. Joe and sonic shoes, I could run faster than anyone!"

Fourth grade boy, "Yes! I love using my imagination, I remember when I was drawing a picture with my imagination."

Sixth grade girl, "I don't know"

Fifth grade girl, "During art, when I was drawing the banyan tree"

Fifth grade boy, "I sometimes like using my imagination because it makes me feel like a little kid."

From this study we can determine that the students surveyed find value in art, they like making art and observing theater performances, storytelling and music, most understand and like using their imagination, while some students when they get older feel less confident in their abilities. From my observations and discussions with teachers and foundation board members, I can determine my students look forward to their once a month art lessons. I am told that some students that normally have trouble focusing are very engaged during my lessons.

I am greeted each day with hugs and enthusiastic questions, "Are we going to have art today?" "Are you coming to my class?" "When are you coming?" "What will we be doing today?" I am not saying every student reacts this way and I know there are students who do not feel capable and do not necessarily like the art hour or the lessons I provide, but through my experience this year I can safely deduce, they are in the gross minority. For what ever reason, be it a chance to explore, dream, safely make mistakes, let go, use under appreciated intelligences, or play with possibilities, they appreciate and value art.

Comparison of Findings to Previous Research

Creative cognition and comprehensive education, intellectual and social development in children and left and right brain integration, are these the things we need to provide for our children, so that they can be better prepared for future global competitiveness, a life of potential cross-cultural awareness and/or possibly happier people? Consider this, as juxtaposed to the decreasing funds for arts education, decreasing time allotments for art education, decreasing access and opportunity for this and other atrophied curriculum, and decreasing hours in our school week. These are just some of the findings prior research directs us to. There is a glaring reality of need, which is not matched up with action.

Limitations/Gaps in the Study

The results of this survey were not intended to project to other high poverty schools in California. The target school is somewhat atypical in that there is an unusual combination of a high poverty demographic and high parent support for recognizing and funding art enrichment. Limited assumptions can be made as to the overall positive academic and developmental affects of the adopt-a-school program and art lessons provided by the art specialist, because this would take years of lateral study to determine. It is safe to assume that the student responses to my questions would reflect that of average students in similar school settings receiving the same arts support in a California school.

Implications for Future Research

Research shows us that there is unequal access to the arts, and how that can result in differing performances in the arts, based on poverty levels, gender, and race factors. There are still significant concerns as to what the long term affects of a diminishing arts program will have on education and the economic impact it may predict. Are schools killing creativity? According to

Sir Ken Robinson,” creativity now is as important in education as literacy, and we ought to treat it with the same status” (Robinson, 2006). When considering access to the arts, it is hard not to also consider the role art holds in education and further, what the benefits are to understanding the specific type of non-verbal literacy it utilizes. Once we consider the benefits of studying art, we can also consider what we lose when the subject is absent, and what those consequences are. Looking at the diminishing respect for art as an academic subject, we must also consider how we have come to this point of disregarding its importance. Then we must consider the consequences of a school day that does not give time for creativity, and the negative impact this poses on learning. It seems to me that the problematic lack of quality art education in schools doesn’t narrow when we investigate it, but grows larger and larger, as we understand how it connects so essentially to so many aspects of our lives.

Overall Significance of the Study

During the literature review for this study, it is clear there is a direct correlation between the federal mandated NCLB laws and the disappearing liberal arts subjects in both elementary and secondary schools. It is also clear that the hardest hit are elementary schools and urban high poverty schools. It is apparent that there are many private support advocacy and outreach groups, working to provide children with exposure to the arts or art education in the schools. It is also clear that the support from outside organizations is not enough to provide children with the type of learning experience that only a sequential curriculum and physical engagement can provide.

Children need guidance while allowing them time to explore, make safe mistakes, interact in social cognition, engage in non-verbal intelligences, create and dream. Children benefit from a curriculum that includes all the arts. How do we leave the 19th century industrial age educational construct behind and bring education into the 21st century? We need to abandon

the idea that spitting out answers as if from a vending machine is the right way of doing things and embrace an environment that will connect kids rather than alienate them. We need to encourage divergent thinking, taking chances, and being creative, rather than encouraging fact repetition and acknowledging only a narrow outlook on intelligence and ability. Quality arts education belongs in the curriculum and needs to be respected for its academic contributions.

There is a need to research new educational models and understand the most effective method of reform. Industrial age educational platforms are outmoded; there is a compelling necessity for a new paradigm. We need to engage what we know and imagine a model for our future, believe in it, and act on it. This will require dedication, inspiration, taking some risks and of course a good dose of creativity.

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